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MUSICIAN

THE JAGGER PHILOSOPHY: MUSIC, GOD & COUNTRY

GEORGE HARRISON

THE QUIET BEATLE FINALLY TALKS... ABOUT EVERYTHING

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

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COVER PHOTOS: GEORGE HARRISON BY CHRIS CUFFARO; MICK JAGGER BY BEN WEAVER/CAMERA 5

Mick Jagger

Love and hope and sex and dreams. Can a Rolling Stone grow up? Mature Mick talks about his past, the Stones' future, and *Primitive Cool*.

By Mark Rowland

NOVEMBER 1987 NO. 109

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A BILLBOARD PUBLICATION

George Harrison: Alive and kicking

WILL Clapton, Starr and Harrison hit the road? WHAT was the source of "Do You Want to Know a Secret"? WHY won't George work with Phil Spector? WHEN did the Beatles pretend to be Fleetwood Mac? WHO did Harrison punch out? WHICH band inspired "All Things Must Pass"? The Quiet Beatle talks and talks and talks.

PERSUASIVE PRODUCTION

Although basic principles of recording remain constant, all great producers have a certain touch that permeates their recordings. Four of the best and boldest talk about what they hear and how they get it, plus a look at the mix-down of the future.

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LETTERS

Bowie's Pupils

The article on David Bowie written by Scott Isler (Aug. '87) was great. However, the contents page says, "Peter Frampton remembers his pal back when both Bowie's eyes were the same color." This cannot be true as eye color changes usually shortly after birth and Peter F. was not in existence until a few years later. It was the size of David's pupil that changed (it's now paralyzed) in the teenage fight.

Natalie Weeks
Victoria, B.C., Canada

Smart aleck, eh? – Ed.

Tipper Wary

I am very happy. Charles M. Young and Tipper Gore (Aug. '87). A dream date. I thank you from the depths of my dark underbelly.

Jim Emerson
Seattle, WA

I thought Senator McCarthy was dead, but he is alive and well and living in the body of Tipper Gore. Gore already wields considerable power as head of the PMRC. Among the groups affected by her censorship have been the Beastie Boys (lyrical content) and Bon Jovi (album sleeve photograph). Can you imagine what would happen if she became First Lady? Musicians would have to flee to Canada or elsewhere to pursue the freedom of expression that the Constitution is supposed to afford them.

The reason the censorship types fear people like the Dead Kennedys' Jello Biafra is because they speak the truth. And the truth sometimes hurts.

John Curley
Rutherford, NJ

As a musician, I do not agree with everything Gore has to say, but I would at least let her say it. She was right about the sexist videos, e.g. "Hot for Teacher." Young doesn't want to see a female's point of view; he comes off as a typical sexist male. Tell him to grow up!

Kellie Williams
Haleiwa, HI

Charles "M." Young must have indeed found Gore to be a likable person. He had to have been suitably disarmed to open and close the article with such snide, yellow-journalistic comments. The interview itself recalled a Phil Donahue-esque whine, with Young in the silver-head seat, sure of the correct view.

I think Gore is way off the mark, for reasons outlined in the more purposeful sections of the article. But a magazine such as yours should rise above Young's brand of sophomoric, defiant posturing. I never thought I'd see crap like this in *Musician*.

Daniel Lenehan
Chicago, IL

I love your magazine. Okay? I also usually like Charles M. Young's writing. But I have to admit being mightily disappointed by his treatment of Tipper Gore. He displayed an infantile closed-mindedness that I would normally expect from only the most reactionary conservatives. I may not agree with Gore's musical politics, but in the course of the interview I found her responses to Young's childishly confrontational questions to be lucid and reasonable. Why can't someone from the other side of the fence at least have an even-handed interview?

Rick Anderson
Arlington, MA

Biting the Bit

What 8-bit piano patch!??? (*Developments*, Aug. '87) The Kurzweil 250 uses (and has always used) an 18-bit floating point format. There are a number of unique benefits of the 250's technology, not the least of which is the ability to maintain a high signal-to-noise ratio throughout the entire decay of a note. This is something that a linear format (even with 16 bits) cannot achieve because in a linear system as samples get smaller during note decay the signal-to-noise ratio also gets smaller.

Raymond Kurzweil
Kurzweil Music Systems, Inc.
Waltham, MA

Jock Baird replies: "I was under the impression the first prototype of the Kurzweil 250 shown at Chicago NAMM in 1983 was 8-bit, but I defer to its inventor."

Gurdjieff Grief

In the David Sylvian *Faces* story (Aug. '87), Robin Schwartz mentions that the record includes "voice snippets from J.G. Bennett (a pupil of Goethe)." Goethe!? Goethe, who wrote *Faust* and died in 1832, had nothing to do with Bennett. Bennett was a pupil (although that word is not entirely accurate) of Gurdjieff. I find it surprising that this could slip by, especially with the ghosts of Robert Fripp and Rafi Zabor lingering around the office... or was it that long ago?

Andrew Essex
Fresh Meadows, NY

Hiss Me, Hiss Me, Hiss Me

Being a musician, I firmly believe that everyone has a right to their own opinion (even music critics). However, I was appalled to see the corruption of Robert Smith's lyrics in Kristine McKenna's review of the Cure's *Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me* (Aug. '87). At her own convenience, McKenna jumbled together lyrical excerpts from different songs to form one absurd lyric. This is a serious misrepresentation of an artist's work. I think an apology to Robert Smith and to your readers is in order. Or maybe McKenna should consider writing for the *National Enquirer*.

Joseph La Brecque
Abington, MA

Kristine McKenna replies: "Perhaps it was a bit unfair not making it clear that the lyrics quoted were in fact littered throughout the record rather than drawn from one particular song. However, I do feel that paraphrasing those lyrics provided an accurate reflection of the overall mood of the record."

Kill for Peace

Is it really necessary to run ads by the army trying to sucker kids into joining their ranks on the pretense of getting musical experience in the military? Having grown up in the '60s, I've always felt that music and art are the antithesis to war.

Leonard Trent
Centerville, CA

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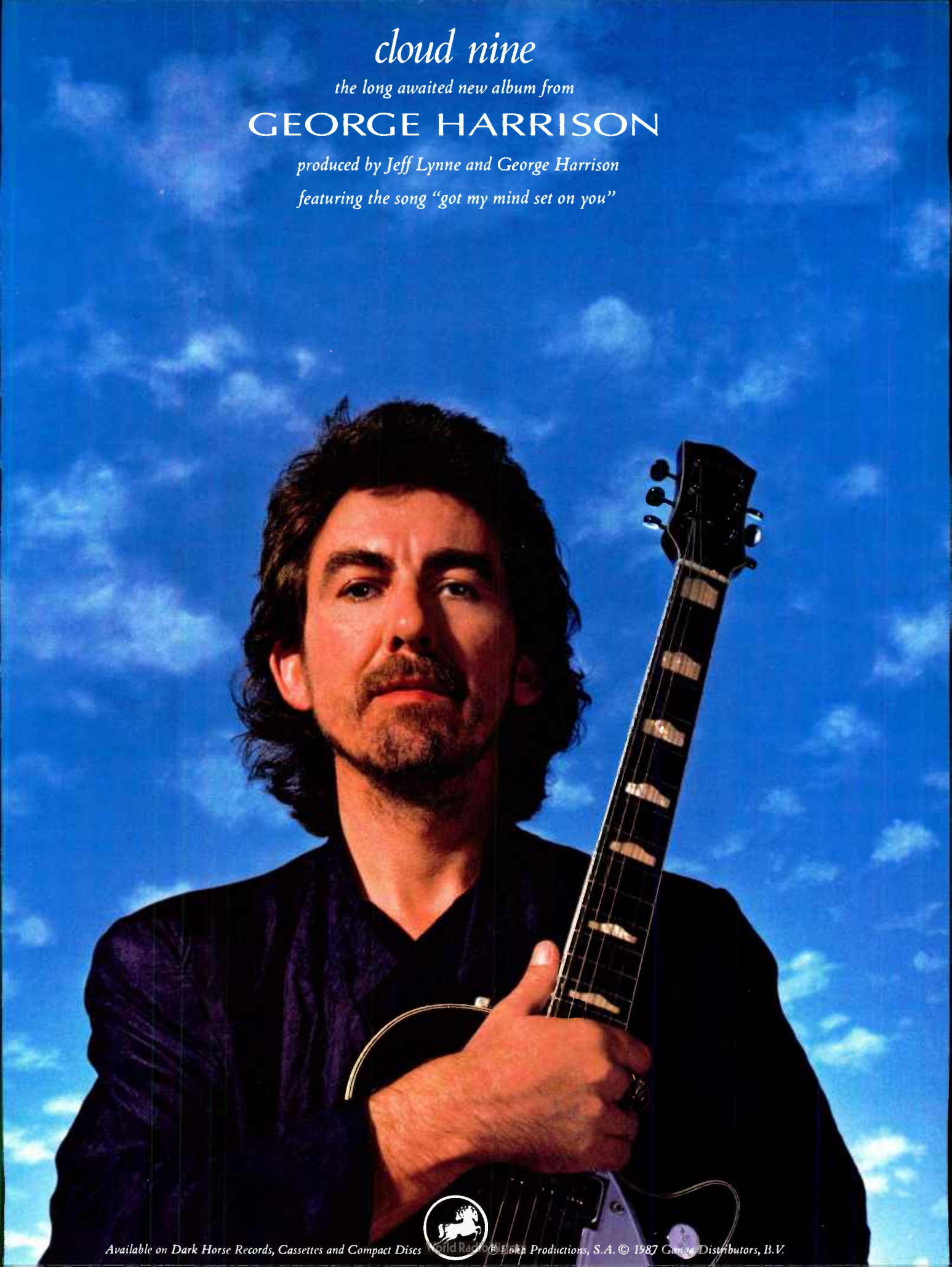

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MICHAEL PUTLAND

MICHAEL JACKSON

At Home With a Regular Fella

I couldn't understand all this big to-do folks have been making about how "reclusive" and "inaccessible" Michael Jackson is, so I fell by his house and knocked on the door. Mike answered, wearing faded jeans and a "Born to Raise Hell" T-shirt. He seemed happy to see me again, went to the kitchen and reappeared later with a couple of brewskis.

"You know," he said after a thoughtful sip, "I don't know where all that 'inaccessible' crap comes from. That's just how the press is. If they ain't got a story, they make one up. I'm the same dude I've always been, man. Just plain ol' Michael Joe from Gary, Indiana, tryin' to make a living." He punctuated it with an emphatic belch.

Mike seemed happy to have someone to talk to. Eagerly, he pressed me to listen to tapes of his new LP, which he was thinking of calling *Good*. I listened to the title cut and suggested reworking it and calling it *Bad*. "Oh God," he said enthusiastically, "what a great idea! I would've never thought of that!" I had done the same for him a few years back when I convinced him that, as a hook, "Beat It" had more bite than "Please Go Away," that song's original title. Then, as now, Mike's profusion of thanks embarrassed me.

I listened to more of the album as Mike waited anxiously for my opinion. I liked the music, but something was bugging me and I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Mike is singing *hard* here, like he's trying to blow a vein in his neck. He says, "Get on, girl!" with the assurance of a ghetto hustler and croons "chum own" (translation: "come on") like a black mother caring for her babe. On "Man in the Mirror," Mike and a full choir even manage to evoke the spirit and fire of black gospel. Looking up, I caught sight of Mike's newly pale skin, his curly locks, and what had been bothering me suddenly crystallized. "Mike," I heard myself ask, "what's it been like for you as a white man making black folks' music?"

"You wouldn't understand," he said simply, and paused. "The Jackson family has been real nice about it ever since the adoption. But you can't know what it's been like all these years, pretending to be something I'm not, not knowing who I am or what my roots are. That's why I quit the skin treatments, why I'm coming out of the closet. People will have to accept me or reject me for what I am. I'm white and I'm proud," he said defiantly.

There was nothing I could add. I got up to leave. "You know what makes it worse?" Mike said, following me to the door. "Black music. The moves. The soul. The *fire*. I've got 'em *in* me and there's nothing I can do about it."

I opened the door. Mike grabbed my arm. I turned back and there was desperation in his face. "Just tell them I'm not strange," he pleaded. "I'm not a recluse. I'm not crazy. I'm just Michael Joe, trying to make a living. Trying to get by in a black man's world."

– *Leonard Pitts, Jr.*

Art Rock

It's an art book! It's a music book! Abbeville Press' *The Art of Rock: Posters from Presley to Punk* manages to cover both bases thoroughly. Paul Grushkin's overwhelming collection of rock graphics includes the much-heralded psychedelic posters of late-'60s San Francisco, of course. But the book is a seemingly exhaustive survey—both chronologically and geographically—of all types of posters, ads, etc. At 500 oversized pages, it's not for the faint of heart; and at $85 a pop, not for the faint of wallet either.

ALEX CHILTON

Honor Without Profits

The Replacements named a song after him. The Bangles covered one of his tunes on *Different Light*. And hip cats like R.E.M. and the dB's count him as a primary influence.

All of which makes Alex Chilton an authentic cult hero. But the Memphis-based singer/guitarist sees things differently. "Every project I've done has been an attempt to have commercial success, although it may not always seem that way," he smiles wanly, looking back on a 20-year course full of detours and dead ends.

Chilton started at the top, contributing gruff lead vocals to hits by the Box Tops in the late '60s. Reflecting on chartbusters like "The Letter" and "Cry Like a Baby," he observes coolly, "The Box Tops were the project of producer Dan Penn. Most of my performances with them were just bad imitations of the way he sang."

EBET ROBERTS

However, Chilton took the reins in the early '70s as the leader of Big Star, whose first two albums remain the basis of his appeal to cognoscenti today. "I don't mind if people think we had a great band and want to sound like that," he says. "At the time, we thought the Beatles were great and wanted to sound like *them*."

Record company hassles and poor sales contributed to the demise of Big Star in mid-decade and launched Chilton on a shaky solo career, with much of his time spent "hanging around, being confused, taking drugs and drinking." Following a two-year stint as guitarist and producer for rockabilly primitive Tav Falco, Chilton swore off alcohol and left Memphis for New Orleans in early 1982. He shunned the music scene for a spell, working as a dishwasher, janitor and tree surgeon before getting the bug again in late 1983. He returned to vinyl with an EP two years later, followed last year by "No Sex," an X-rated look at AIDS and sexuality.

Designed to be "a little more acceptable for radio play," his new *High Priest* LP combines crisp originals with frisky versions of songs from such diverse artists as Skeeter Davis, Guitar Slim and Domenico Modugno (yes, "Volare"). While the album's title is a joking reference to his exalted reputation with younger musicians, Chilton has no intention of resting on his laurels. "I'd like to learn more about jazz and write arrangements for orchestras. Now, I'm in between being an idiotic rock 'n' roll player and an idiotic jazz player."

The man whose sounds have launched a thousand power-pop bands laughs and adds, "I'm almost able to play some legitimate music, but not quite."

– Jon Young

THE SILOS

They'd Rather Be Right

Some bands make fine records, but can't get it right live; others are good in bars but can't capture it on record. The live Silos sound very different from the Silos on vinyl, but here's the miracle: Both Silos sound great. On *Cuba*, the band's second album, singer/songwriter **Walter Salas-Humara**'s folk-tinged songs get the sort of delicate support (female harmonies, steel guitar, violin) that hasn't been used tastefully since 1971. At a recent show at New York's CBGB, those same songs were hijacked by singer/lead guitarist **Bob Rupe** and driven right across the center line. (Maybe this has something to do with violinist Mary Rowell being on a leave of absence to a Vermont orchestra.)

"I don't look at the live show and records as being related," Salas-Humara says. Bassist **John Ross** adds that being able to cut loose at CBGB was a special treat; the Silos often have to play tiny rooms where loud music is frowned on. That's the price of having a Band/Crazy Horse style in '80s Manhattan.

"It's a timeless sound," Rupe says. "I don't want to date our music by trying to make it sound commercial. That's bullshit. Listen back to stuff from '74, '75. You can hear Frankie Valli picking up on disco; okay, it was big then, but it's over. While there's other material from that era that still carries on into the '80s and people are still turning on to. Neil Young's a perfect example."

The arrangements on *Cuba* are startlingly bare. "We cut it down to the bone," Rupe says. "The key is keeping it very simple and very listenable, so it doesn't overwhelm you." "Most of the stuff I hear on the radio," Salas-Humara adds, "sounds like it has 80,000 insects in the background." Drummer **John Galway**: "We'd start with 24 tracks and then *dump* tons of stuff."

MICHEL DELSOL

Right now the Silos put out their albums themselves. They refused to sign with one big indie label because they don't want to be cogs in someone else's machine. They have no manager—hell, they can't even get a decent booking agent to come see them—which is tough on them, but good for us. 'Cause in 1987 we can still see the Silos playing in local clubs. Someday we'll brag about that to our grandchildren. They're that good.

– Bill Flanagan

JANE IRA BLOOM

A Female Saxist Updates Tradition

While fusion and neo-traditionalism still dominate the so-called New Jazz boom, there is hope yet for daredevils. Soprano saxist Jane Ira Bloom's *Modern Drama* follows on the heels of last year's Tim Berne LP as an uncompromising New Jazz project on the mighty Columbia label. Bloom was blessed by the creative *carte blanche* extended her by executive producer George Butler. "He felt confident in letting me go and letting me do what I do best. Thank God."

Her music doesn't jive easily with the marketplace. "It's eclectic. That's who I am; I do have many influences that go on in my writing, but the main feeling for me that I wanted to get across was the raw energy of our playing." Drummer Tom Rainey, bassist Ratzo Harris, pianist Fred Hersch, vibist David Friedman and percussionist Isidro Bobadilla help give flesh and fury to one of the year's most exciting jazz albums.

Growing up just outside of Boston, Bloom studied with the renowned Joe Viola, who steered her towards soprano. After getting her master's at Yale in 1977, she fled to New York, seeking out like-minded players and starting her own label, Outline. Later albums on Enja and JMT gained her increasing critical favor.

Bloom's approach is not definable in five words or less. On *Modern Drama*, the tough, twining lines of "Cagney" contrast with the oblique Wayne Shorter-esque luster of "More Than Sinatra." The free-spirited adrenaline of "The Race" abuts the perverted Fats Domino lope of "Rapture of the Flat." And then there is the sinister Ivesian/Braxtonian mix of menacing motives and a march on "NFL." "I guess it is dark," she admits, "but we were all laughing in the studio."

It's an auspicious "debut" for a veteran who has long recognized her slight ineligibility from the status quo of tradition. "I always felt that what I was doing was, in my own way, extending that tradition. I always feel like what I'm doing has to be reflective of where I am in time and society. It's 1987 and not 1955." – *Josef Woodard*

Hearing Aid

"Turn it up!" is a familiar cry at rock concerts. But some people worry that it refers less to a faulty p.a. than an audience's increasing deafness. Last April *Musician* ran an article ("Turn It *Down*!!!") about the potential effects of loud music on the players. What about the listeners?

According to a recently issued Dutch study, young people exposed to loud music suffer no permanent hearing damage. The 10-year study involved periodic checkups on the hearing of 100 youths, most of them regular concert-goers. Audiologist Henk Lindeman found "no significant long-term effect" on the hearing of those who attended shows and discos.

"That is the biggest bunch of horse manure you'd ever want to see," fumes Dr. Wayne Kirkham, a Dallas-based ear, nose and throat specialist who treats many well-known rock figures. "It's like saying the sun will not cause skin cancer." He adds that one study cannot refute the U.S. investigations that reached an opposite conclusion in the 1970s. "That's why industries have noise abatement laws."

But other specialists tend to agree with the Dutch report. Dr. Dixon Ward, professor of communication disorders at the University of Minnesota and a friend of Lindeman's, says the evidence that loud music contributes to hearing loss is "iffy at best...Individual susceptibility has got to play a role here." That is, music can seldom be blamed for hearing problems.

"A lot of the American research was done haphazardly and without too much thought," says Dr. Aram Glorig, author of *Noise and Your Ear* and an authority on the subject. He allows that for rock band members playing "three or four nights a week" over a period of time, "it's bound to have some effect." In general, though, club- or concert-goers just don't get enough exposure to loud music to cause ear trouble.

Dr. James Sheehy of the Otologic Medical Group in Los Angeles says he "would not expect a major problem unless you're sitting or standing right up front in a low-ceilinged discotheque. Continued exposure to that extent of noise can, in many people, cause a temporary threshold shift"—a clogged-ear feeling. "Repeated episodes of temporary threshold shift can lead to a permanent threshold shift. We rarely see it." Although he says "you're more likely to have a problem wearing a Walkman at full blast" than from attending clubs or concerts, Sheehy warns that "it's always best to avoid excessively loud noise."

And just so you rock musicians don't feel discriminated against: Studies have also shown hearing losses among members of symphony orchestras and the United States Marine Band.

DONNA PAUL

Is Our Face Red?

Yes, we were just testing our readers' perspicuity when we illustrated the September *Faces* story on Regina Belle with a photo of Regina—different singer, different record company, different race. And you came through with flying colors! Here's the real Belle. (Hope we got Michael Jackson's skin color right this issue.)

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Raw Horsepower: Frank Sampedro, Billy Talbot, the boss and Ralph Molina.

CHRIS CUFFARO

CRAZY HORSE

BY DAVE DI MARTINO

WHO IS NEIL YOUNG'S BAND, ANYWAY?

Does Crazy Horse have day jobs or something? These guys have played on the Neil Young records most people swear by. From 1969's *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* to 1975's *Zuma* to 1979's *Rust Never Sleeps*, there have been very few albums released with the "Neil Young and Crazy Horse" dual credit, and most of them are among rock's very best. There have been others—1979's *Live Rust*, 1981's *Re*Ac*Tor* and 1987's *Life*—that might not quite measure up, but that isn't the point. The dates they were recorded is. 1969, 1975, 1979, 1981, 1987. That's a lot of years in between. Imagine having to wait around 20 years for phone calls from Neil Young.

"We don't have a manager," says guitarist Frank Sampedro. Crazy Horse's newest member, Sampedro has been with the band for close to 14 years. He, bassist Billy Talbot and drummer Ralph Molina have put together another solo Crazy Horse record, but no one is shopping it around to labels. "It's hard for a manager to step into the situation, really, because we're already working for Neil. He can't really book a tour for us, because we ultimately want to be ready to play with Neil. So you start telling managers stuff like that and that instantly scares them away. They want someone who's at *their* beck and call—a working band that they can actually put out on the road whenever they want to."

The unreleased Crazy Horse album, if and when it comes out, will be the band's fifth record, their second with Sampedro. It will follow four very different albums—1971's *Crazy Horse*, 1972's *Loose*, 1973's *At Crooked Lake* and 1978's *Crazy Moon*. Plug those dates in the general scheme of things, consider what Sampedro just said, and here's what you come up with: One of the best rock 'n' roll bands in the world has too much free time on its hands.

Twenty years ago, in L.A., one band gradually dissolved while another ended abruptly. When Neil Young left the Buffalo Springfield he also caused the break-up of a band called the Rockets. For Young, the six-man group almost made it too easy—their sole album, *White Whale*, displays a band already split in half. Side one is devoted to the songs of guitarist Danny Whitten, bassist Billy Talbot and drummer Ralph Molina, side two to the songs of the Whitsell brothers, Leon and George. Rocket number six, Bobby Notkoff, who plays violin throughout the proceedings, wrote nothing.

"When Neil left the Springfield, he was looking for a rhythm section," recalls Molina. "Danny kind of knew him. And Neil would come up to Billy's house and play acoustic guitar and sing. We had a show at the Whiskey A Go Go in '69, and we told Neil to come down and sit in, and he did. And he took the rhythm section—which was me, Danny and Billy—and we had to tell the other guys, 'We'll see you soon.' The band split."

Young had already recorded his debut album, *Neil Young*, with producer Jack Nitzsche. The addition of the Rockets' rhythm section gave Young his first real performing band since the Springfield. Dubbed Crazy Horse, they swiftly recorded *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* and began a professional association with Young that has now lasted 18 years. Hard feelings? Ex-Rocket Bobby Notkoff played violin on the album's "Running Dry" (subtitled "Requiem for the Rockets"); George Whitsell, also left behind, showed up later on *On the Beach*'s "Vampire Blues." "It was weird," Molina now says, "because Neil took the rhythm section, you'd think there'd be some animosity, but there wasn't. Maybe it's because we were younger at the time."

Playing clubs in '69, Young and the newly-dubbed Crazy Horse soon met the 16-year-old Nils Lofgren in Washington. He joined them in L.A. to record *After the Gold Rush* and eventually put together his own band, Grin. In the meantime, Crosby, Stills & Nash invited Young to join, and Danny Whitten had a drug problem. The ultimate result:

CS&N became CSN&Y and released *Deja Vu*, and Crazy Horse released their first Young-less album. Filled with surprisingly moving material by the disintegrating Whitten, and helped along by Lofgren and Jack Nitzsche, the record still sounds great.

Why the split? "Danny was into the drug trip," says Molina. "That's why he died. Neil wrote that song, 'The Needle and the Damage Done,' with the lyric, 'Came to the city and I lost my band.' He sat down with us and said, 'I can't do it anymore.' But at the same time, he also got an offer to go with CSN, and that was a step for him, too. He told us, and we said, 'Fine, do it.' I mean, we're not going to say, '*Don't* do it.' So we tried our own thing."

Whitten, in sad shape, died of an overdose in 1972. "We couldn't tour because of Danny," recalls Molina. "Danny was really into it. Which was a drag, because if he hadn't been, it would've been a whole different thing."

Did he expect Danny to die so young? "Yeah," Molina says, pausing. "There was one point where he went into a hospital, and then he left and came and stayed with us for a while. My son was maybe two years old at the time. Danny was really far gone. He got into the methadone thing, and he started drinking lots of wine. He got real heavy. We were up north, me and Billy and Jack and Danny, and he couldn't make it through rehearsal. Finally, Billy and Jack said, 'Well, it's up to Ralph.' I mean, we *grew up* together, me and Danny. Finally I said, 'We can't do it anymore, Danny,' which was really hard to do, but we couldn't do it anymore. You know what I mean? He tried the cure and he didn't do it. During the *Harvest* album, Neil told Danny to come on up—I was on the road at the time—and that didn't work out, because he couldn't do anything. So he had to leave. And that's when he died."

Ex-Rockets George and Leon Whitsell and guitarist Greg Leroy came in to replace Whitten and helped record 1972's *Loose*, the second Crazy Horse album, which suffered considerably from Whitten's absence. The Whitsell brothers were replaced by Florida's Curtis brothers for 1973's *At Crooked Lake*. Then for five years there were no more Crazy Horse solo albums.

Meanwhile, Neil Young *sans* Crazy Horse recorded *Harvest*. His new band, the Stray Gators, and the "Heart of Gold" single helped make the album Young's best-selling effort.

Crazy Horse struggled along. Frank Sampedro ran into Billy Talbot in Mexico after *At Crooked Lake* was released and they decided to try to write some songs together. Pretty soon, with Molina, they were trying to put together a new Crazy Horse album in L.A. Then came a call from Neil.

"The very first time I played for him," says Sampedro, "I'd never even met him. Billy called and said, 'We're gonna fly back to Chicago for some sessions at Chess Records.' That was always a dream of mine, to even see the place, let alone record there. So we went to those sessions and we tried recording some of the stuff that he was doing for the *Homegrown* album, which had more of a country flavor. And that's when he realized Crazy Horse could be a two-guitar, bass and drum band again." Nothing else fruitful came from the session, however. Says Sampedro, "I felt particularly bad because we didn't get anything done, and I told him, 'I hope my being here didn't mess things up for you.' He said, 'No, no, no—don't worry about it. On the road we're gonna be getting something together. This just wasn't for us. I wasn't expecting this.'"

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Crazy Horse went back to L.A.; Young finished *Homegrown* in Nashville.

"The next time I saw Neil, he had a listening party for the *Homegrown* record. He had all the guys from the Band there—Rick Danko and Robbie Robertson and all those people—and then he called us up. So Billy, Ralph and I went over and listened to *Homegrown*. And everybody's going, 'Oh *yeah*.' And then he said, 'Listen to this,' and pulled out *Tonight's the Night*. It was an album that wasn't gonna be released, but Elliot Roberts, his manager, made some changes and put a couple of songs on it. Neil says, 'Listen to what Elliot did with this album.' And everybody flipped out and said, 'Don't release the first album—release *this* one.' After that, Neil released *Tonight's the Night*, and we started playing."

Young's *Tonight's the Night*, recorded in a rehearsal hall in '73 and released in '75, thematically took off from "The Needle and the Damage Done" and provided a full-blown tribute to Crazy Horse's Whitten and CSN&Y roadie Bruce Berry, both victims of drug deaths "who lived and died for rock and roll," according to the album's liner. Whitten himself was featured singing "Come On Baby Let's Go Downtown" with Crazy Horse; it, like the album, was simultaneously poignant and creepy. Warmly received, *Tonight's the Night* solidified Young's critical base.

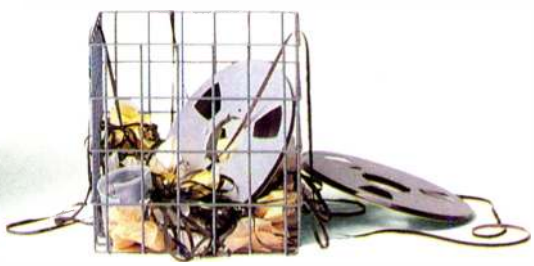
With Crazy Horse, Young put together the superb *Zuma*, some tracks on *American Stars and Bars* including the much-loved "Like a Hurricane," and *Rust Never Sleeps*, significantly relighting his career for yet another decade. The *Live Rust* album and movie followed. Another Crazy Horse album, *Crazy Moon*, emerged in 1978, for the first time featuring Young's lead guitar on some tracks, and all was looking well for Young and the band. Sampedro fit in perfectly, Young's melodic gifts were back in full, and the new, younger "Rust" audience swiftly discovered that the composer of "Heart of Gold" kicked royal ass.

"After *Rust Never Sleeps*," Neil Young says, "people stopped asking me why I play with Crazy Horse." Young calls the magic, "The Force of the Horse." "You never know what Mutt Lange or somebody like that could do with Crazy Horse," he suggests. "Imagine making a record with today's technology with that driving Force of the Horse. The Horse is a strong machine, very simple. It is what it is. You can't take it somewhere where it shouldn't be or it'll break everything. It's clumsy, it's a bull in the china shop. But if you get it in the right area—it's perfect."

Which suggests the method in Young's madness. Maybe part of the reason Young and Crazy Horse work so well together when they do hook up is because Crazy Horse *is* still a garage band. If Young used them all the time, for all his experiments, maybe neither he nor they would sound as fresh. In fact, the problems of trying to stretch a hot streak too far appeared after the one-two punch of *Rust Never Sleeps* and *Live Rust*.

"We got together after that and started recording *Re*Ac*Tor*," recalls Sampedro. "Neil was kind of having some personal problems, some family problems then. You know, he has a son that's handicapped, and he was spending a lot of time with him. So we didn't spend quite the time on that album that maybe we should've. We kind of just put it together—his mind wasn't focused on the music a lot then. It really shows, I think, in the album.

"And then after that, we started recording *Trans*. We really weren't doing too much computer stuff at first,



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and then, all of a sudden, the computer stuff came in. And that's when Crazy Horse got phased out. And then he just forgot all that stuff and went to Hawaii to make a mellower album, and he incorporated Nils Lofgren, and he got Ralph involved over there, to be the drummer. They were just gonna do some sessions, and it ended up they went on the road, and they did the *Trans* album material. But he ended up using some of *our* tracks on the *Trans* album. It's hard for us to figure out, sometimes, what happened. Because when you look at the album, it says we played on it—but a lot of people don't think we did."

Says drummer Ralph Molina, "When I got back from the *Trans* tour, Frank and Billy and I got together again, and there was no animosity." Nor, must we presume, was there animosity when Crazy Horse was left high and dry for another four years, from 1982 to '86.

Four years is time enough to record a new Crazy Horse album, even if it might not get released. Four years is time enough to go back on the road with Neil in 1986 and play the unfamiliar material of *Landing on Water.* Four years is time enough to record the tracks for the new songs that make up *Life,* the first album credited to "Neil Young & Crazy Horse" since *Re*Ac*Tor.* Four years is time enough to sit back and wonder.

Billy Talbot, original bassist of the Rockets, original member of Crazy Horse, sits in a couch in a Newport Beach hotel and speaks very carefully. Asked why people like the albums Neil cuts with Crazy Horse best, Talbot says, "We like to jam more than studio guys, so Neil comes up with songs like 'Down by the River,' where he can sing the words and then play guitar to help describe what he was talking about," says Talbot. "And he can do it for an extended amount of time, because we like to do that. People get the feeling of what he's talking about in more ways than one. He doesn't do that with anybody else for some reason, and I don't know why."

How do you guys get along with him?

"We're real good friends. The best of friends."

Do you feel strange when he's out doing his country thing, or when he worked with the Stray Gators, say?

"Oh yeah, I get real pissed. Oh yeah."

Do you tell him?

"Yeah."

What does he say?

"Nothing, but he knows how we feel. I've told him how we felt. I don't mind

him doing country stuff with the International Harvesters-type guys, but like on the *Trans* tour, when he did 'Hurricane' and stuff like that, and 'Hey Hey, My My' without us there—that bummed me out. So he doesn't do that anymore. Because it wasn't that good of a tour for him, and *we* do that stuff the best together. Now we're starting to do everything with him, except for the pure country. Because we get along really good.

"It's been 20 years, and we've been doing it more and more, and we've been doing it the most with him—it's the most fun for him and us. I think he has a better understanding of what it's all about, as far as we're concerned, and so do we."

Talbot says it's frustrating when Young's off playing with someone else and Crazy Horse are looking for work: "I don't want to go into it in detail, but when he was doing Live Aid, I was working at some job. And I was *real* pissed off, because we weren't up there doing 'Hurricane' and songs like that for billions of people all over the world. But that's in the past. It's not really what I like to talk about. Let's put it that way."

Ralph Molina adds, "Some people say it's Neil's sound. When we got together as Neil Young & Crazy Horse, Neil didn't have a sound, and we didn't have a sound. He was with the Springfield, we were with the Rockets. I think that sound was created by the four of us. I mean, we added three-fourths of it to the songs and his style of playing. And Neil *loved* Danny. [The Neil Young & Crazy Horse albums] are the best albums, because it's the *real shit*. When we get together and play, it's just...*real*. Because Neil is a real feeling guy, very emotional, and that's how we are. We're not chops players."

Is there always the sense that he's the boss? "Well, yeah. He *is*, you know? But he gets feedback from us, too. It's not like, 'Hey, it's my song, and I'm not gonna ask anything. Just do it.' Neil is a very—well, sometimes, he's very *intense*. But I think we get along fine."

"We know there's multiple bands waiting in the wings to play with Neil," says Sampedro. "There's Crosby, Stills & Nash, there's Buffalo Springfield, there's the country group—he has all these options open to him, and we're just happy that when he does want to play with us, we try to make the best of it."

In Costa Mesa one cool August night, Neil Young & Crazy Horse begin their U.S. tour. Young, opening the show, plays an acoustic set featuring a wealth of older material, including the Spring-

field's "Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing" and "The Old Laughing Lady" from his debut album. Crazy Horse joins him for the last two numbers: upbeat blues on which Young wails away, Chicago-style. Probably another album, another style in the works. An electrifying second set follows, featuring prime material from *Everybody Knows* onward.

So these guys are at Neil's beck and call? They'll be there whenever he wants to play? "Oh, I'd say *definitely*," says Sampedro, backstage with little to do.

What do you do when you're not with him? How do you live? "Well," he says, "I worked in a recording studio, just doing whatever jobs I could do. Some engineering, a little guitar playing, a little producing. We did a couple of video soundtracks with some friends of ours. You know, whatever we could get going. Not much. We keep going along and doing our own thing as well as we can when he doesn't call." M

GALLOP POLL

Onstage, **Frank Sampedro** mainly plays a '53 Gibson Les Paul gold-top through a Boogie amplifier. "For a lot of the studio stuff or lighter stuff, I just play it through an old '55 Fender Deluxe amplifier," says he. His non-garage band keyboard rig includes a Yamaha DX7, Akai AX80, Oberheim Matrix 12, a Roland D-50, an Akai sampler, an Emulator II and a Yamaha TX816 rack. All is MIDIed through a J.L. Cooper MIDImixer. Frank does all his own programming; "it's hard for someone else to do it for you, because only you know what you want to hear."

Billy Talbot uses a Fender bass with an old maple Telecaster neck. "It's a big sucker, and it's got a lot of sound," he says. "I keep the strings up high, because I like to get a lot of punch." He also uses a Boogie amplifier with two 15" speakers; "it's a tube amp, the best amp I ever had." Synth supplies include a Roland Axxess Keyboard Controller, with "a couple of Yamaha TXs and a Super Jupiter and a 360 Systems MIDI Bass. That has chips with samples of real bass sounds." It all goes through Bag End speakers, 18" bottoms and 12" tops, with horns, and Gallien-Kreuger amps for the keyboard sounds.

Ralph Molina heartily endorses Ludwig drums, and in fact is listed as playing them on the back of *Life*. Included in the kit are 14" and 15" rack toms with level heads, an 18" floor tom, two snares (one 8"and one 5"x14") and a 22" bass drum. "I swear, they're *great*," says Molina. Also in use are Zildjian cymbals: three 18" crashes, two thins and one medium, a 20" splash and two 14" medium high-hats.

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ROY ELDRIDGE

BY BURT KORALL

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES, "LITTLE JAZZ"

"Roy really knows what living and music are all about. As I got older, he was the only person I really wanted to talk to and be around." – Jo Jones

One sunny spring day in 1941, on an afternoon tempered by a suggestion of wind and cold, I was ushered into New York's Paramount Theater with the promise of witnessing a special event. What my father had in mind was the great drummer/bandleader Gene Krupa, the headliner of that afternoon's stage show, and indeed Krupa performed memorably. But it was the sharp-looking little guy sitting next to him whose trumpet playing put some pungent topping on what my father had succinctly called "a treat." The sparkplug of Krupa's ensemble, he reached into the audience during his solos to hold you in his hand. He also sang in a personal, buoyant manner with Anita O'Day, and played drums when the other musical acts came on. By concert's end, even a kid could sense the charisma of Roy "Little Jazz" Eldridge.

Much later I came to realize Roy was responsible for opening some doors to jazz's future. Though perhaps not as well known to contemporary fans as Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie, he was very much their peer, and a crucial link on trumpet between Armstrong's New Orleans-inflected "hot jazz" and the bebop innovations Gillespie helped pioneer. Eldridge's style isn't as closely associated with a genre; moving through a wide range of feelings, his performances are not about a particular place or time. But they define certain musical truths—the power of deeply felt emotions when combined with formidable technique, for example—and those who seldom look over their shoulders at their musical forebears would benefit by coming to terms with his legacy. For without Roy Eldridge, it can be argued, some of the blocks on which today's jazz is built would never have been discovered. If it hadn't been for Roy, there might not have been a Dizzy or Miles or Wynton Marsalis or Lester Bowie—at least not as we know them.

"The trumpet's a very mean instrument; it'll do you in."

Roy Eldridge stopped performing in 1981 following a heart attack, but at 76 he remains young at heart, recalling his life with humor and vivid, often poignant insights. His voice, like his trumpet, crackles with an inner musical pulse.

"I was a drummer first, you know," he is saying. "My mother played piano. Often she'd go out for an evening's diversion at the silent movies. When she came home she'd play what she'd heard, and I would accompany her on drums. I was six. World War I had just begun.

"Later I played drums in the carnival. I left home young and got stranded in some shows, but the carnival was a ball. Being a bitty kid, I loved the animals and I made some extra money tearing down the tents. Even then I had to deal with the race thing. I had had no real problems growing up in Pittsburgh. I went to an integrated school. The city was very prejudiced, but somehow it hadn't reached me; I hung out with all kinds of people. As I moved out into the world, the more I traveled, the more I realized how bad it was.

"My brother Joe taught me a great deal. He could arrange, knew harmony, could read all sorts of music. Joe played the reeds, and violin, too. We were together in a small band with drummer Zutty Singleton at the Three Deuces in Chicago in the 1930s; we also traveled with McKinney's Cotton Pickers. I must say I got around in those years. Usually I didn't stay with any band for too long. When the money got funny, I got funny and left. The money always seemed funny back then. Later it was only

FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION

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Soweto's political unrest inspired some of the most magically rhythmic music of 1987.

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strange at times.

"I used to spend eight or nine hours a day practicing. Music was a 24-hour-a-day thing. I'd practice, play the gig, then go look for a session after hours. I lived with the horn, slept with it. We had a nice relationship. It carried me to a lot of places. Everything I wanted to achieve, I've achieved—except get rich.

"How did I get with my horn? I played bugle first, then moved over to trumpet. I always tried to play like a saxophone. I'd got my first job in the carnival because I could play Coleman Hawkins' chorus on Fletcher Henderson's 'Stampede.' I was always involved with saxophonists in some way. I liked their speed and the way they played on changes. I dug Coleman, Benny Carter, later 'Prez' [Lester Young] and Chu [Berry].

"When I got to New York in 1930, I began playing sessions and working with bands in Harlem. I had been concentrating on technique—I could play as fast as greased lightning. But Chick Webb told my brother, 'He's fast, but he ain't saying nothing.' Then, in 1932, I heard Louis Armstrong at the Lafayette Theater. The man taught me pacing, continuity, how to build a solo to tell a story."

Satchmo & Eldridge in 1944

New York musicians were a critical bunch. Hot Lips Page said Roy sounded too "white"; other players offered advice. While evaluating their comments, Roy stuck to his practice regimen: He took his horn everywhere, even the bathroom. At jam sessions he'd often start by playing off to one side of the bandstand, ultimately making his way onto the stage.

Jam sessions, which often included head-to-head competitions called cutting contests, were tough, sometimes cruel tests that measured a musician's heart as much as his chops. A year before he'd come to New York, Eldridge had been engaged in one by the formidable Jabbo Smith, a contemporary of Armstrong. Eldridge still hasn't forgotten that one: "Yeah, Jabbo was mean. We battled at a place in Milwaukee called The Rails. I dug his playing. He was a hell of a trombone player too, oh yes! I was only 18 years old, the people were all in my corner—but this cat was blowin'. He wore me out before the night was through. He knew a lot of music. We didn't speak for a week or two. Then everything was alright."

Eldridge wasn't easily deterred, though. At another session, he remembers, trumpeter Rex Stewart "screamed a high B-flat. I had never heard a high B-flat, I couldn't believe it. So I went into the woodshed and practiced until I could play that note and move easily in and out of the high registers."

As the depression decade wore on, the scrappy trumpeter developed a more burnished, personal sound. He reached the point where he could play anything that came to mind. And he'd picked up a few tricks on his own. Fellow horn player Eddie Barefield recalls that "Roy used to act drunk when we'd go to the after-hours spots. He'd lay over in the corner until the trumpet players got their horns

FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION

ADVERTISING INDEX

out and began playing. Then he would rapidly recover and play the way he could. Almost immediately the other trumpeters would pack up their horns and leave."

Roy's sensitivity and tart personality came through in his performances. Often he could be startling. All you have to do is listen to some of the early records he made with the Teddy Hill band in the mid-1930s. The band sounds somewhat dated; Roy, on the other hand, is a bright light—facile, flowing, modern, adept through the various registers of the horn.

That was the Eldridge story through the 1930s: with the Teddy Hill band; a 1936 edition of the Fletcher Henderson band, including such standout players as tenor saxophonist Chu Berry, bassist John Kirby and the much-admired Big Sid Catlett on drums; with the burning little band at the Three Deuces in Chicago and his own big band at the Arcadia Ballroom in New York City in 1939.

The evidence of his mastery is on records, too: Try the 1938 Commodore sides with Chu Berry, Big Sid and others; the 1936 Victor sessions with the Gene Krupa Swing Band, featuring Benny Goodman, Chu, pianist Jess Stacy, Goodman guitarist Allen Reuss and Israel Crosby on bass. Once you've heard "Swing Is Here," from that February 29, 1936 date, you'll never forget it. Along with "Wabash Stomp" and "Heckler's Hop," made with the Three Deuces band in 1937 on Vocalion, it's an excellent example of a decisive, often definitive player at work. Uninhibitedly Eldridge crosses bar lines and moves through harmonies that few others really knew how to use. Dizzy Gillespie, for one, was listening closely. Roy wasn't perfect; he'd get too excited at times and the flow and balance of a solo would be affected. But he had a great sense of structure and each of his solos told a story. Overall, he was the best.

"When I played my horn," says Eldridge, "I was like a guy writing a book. I'd give you an introduction, then get going on my story, building to a climax. The better I told the story, the more satisfying it was to me.

"I was in Harlem for two years before I went downtown for the first time. There was that much happening. Hey, I remember Art [Tatum] used to pick me up all the time and we'd be out till maybe three in the afternoon, making all the spots. We used to go to one particular club all the time—a place with a raggedy piano. I often played that fella when Art would sit out. Back then, a musician had to do his homework. The good players would carry you through the keys on a piece of music. You'd get badly hung up if you didn't know....

"Let me tell you something about the trumpet. It's a very mean instrument. It don't care nothin' about you. If you ain't ready, it'll do you in. The trumpet is not like other horns. It's difficult to get a sound out of it sometimes. If you ain't feelin' too good, you certainly can't get it to behave."

Roy joined the Gene Krupa band in 1941. Krupa paid him well and broke ground by establishing Roy in the orchestra; genuinely integrated big bands were still rarities.

Eldridge continued to suffer indignities common among black musicians in those years. He couldn't stay in the same hotel as the other players; he had difficulty finding a place to eat away from the black section of the towns and cities the band visited. He never knew what would happen from one appearance to the next. The South was an anathema.

continued next page

The music industry chose the Ensoniq ESQ-1 as the Most Innovative Keyboard of 1987 ...over the Yamaha DX7II, the Roland D-50 and Korg DSS-1

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A sensitive man, Eldridge was hurt by this kind of unreasonable, often impossible behavior. He fought back as best he could. But he remained uneasy.

Roy remembers that first gig at the Paramount Theater with the Krupa band. He told writer Gary Giddins: "I'd be juiced like a dog when that elevator started coming up and the people out there whistling and clapping. Then the light would hit me; the butterflies would start and my knees would be shaking. It's a strange thing, but after four bars, the light would take over and surround me and I wasn't aware of the band or the people and I'd just play. I must have drunk a quart of whiskey that first night."

Roy's sense of concentration was redemptive. As a result, he did some of his best work with Krupa. Several records with the drummer's band are essential for the serious jazz fan. On such items as "Let Me Off Uptown," "The Walls Are Talkin'" and the fast and furious "After You've Gone" (available on *Gene Krupa, His Orchestra* and *Anita O'Day Featuring Roy Eldridge* [Columbia]), his solos are fiery, well-developed and surprising, in a language that harkens to Armstrong. Yet the Eldridge sound, tough and bristling on the surface, gloriously lyrical and emotional at its foundation, is as identifiable as a signature. "Rockin' Chair," arranged by mentor and friend Benny Carter, provides the kind of concentrated, thoughtful improvisation that could teach any musician lessons about solo construction. His performance is comforting and daring. I've heard "Rockin' Chair" hundreds of times; it never gets old.

About a year after the breakup of the Krupa band in 1943, Roy joined Artie Shaw's new band, remaining for nine months. But despite his prominence as a featured soloist, he was happy only while playing. "In the 1940s, when you were the only black cat in the band, you *really* stood out," Eldridge explains. "I remember one night in San Francisco—it's difficult to forget. The previous evening, we had played across the Golden Gate Bridge at Sweet's Ballroom in Oakland, and things had been great. I was excited about getting back to the band and playing the Frisco gig. I spent the whole day getting ready. In fact, I showed up early for the job. No good! Though my name was on the marquee in front of the place, *I couldn't get in!*

"After a while, I happened to see Artie's wife, Ava Gardner, and told her to talk to someone about my problem. She worked it out, I walked in. Artie

continued on page 112

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BY BILL FLANAGAN

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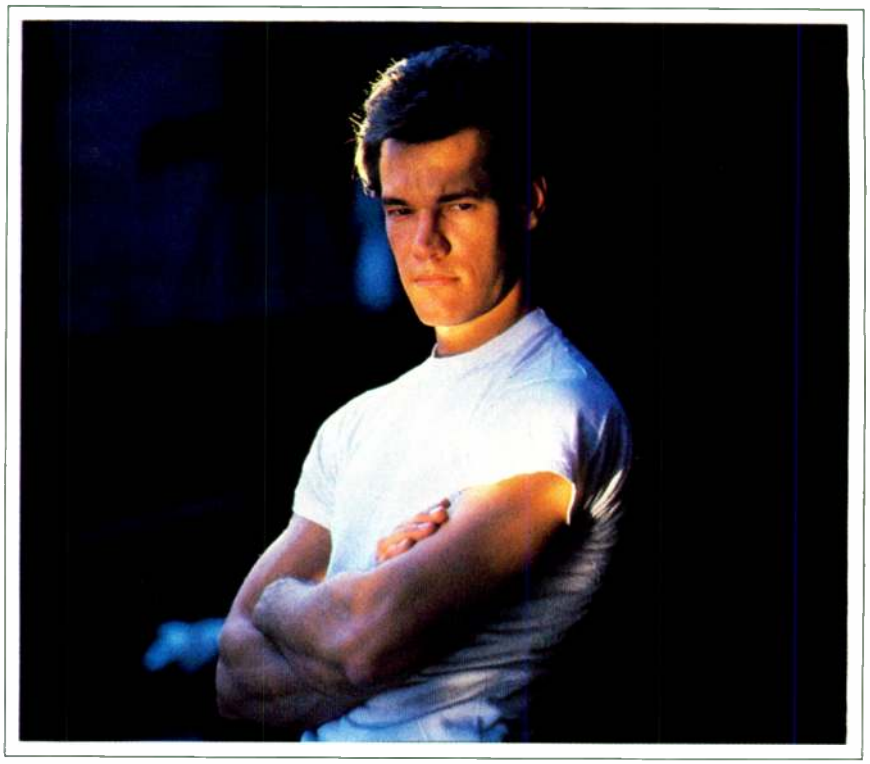

A man who never listened to rock 'n' roll.

I met Randy Travis in the summer of 1985 in Nashville. Janice Azrak, who works for Warner Bros. Records there, kept telling me I had to hear this wonderful kid who washed dishes at the Nashville Palace and sang like George Jones. I begged off, and finally she asked if I could at least meet Randy for a drink after his Friday night show. I said, okay, which bar? No bar, she said: an ice cream fountain. She wasn't kidding. I met Randy Travis and his manager Lib Hatcher at a Nashville soda fountain where he rewarded himself for a week's hard work with a milkshake. Randy explained that much as he loved ice cream, dairy products messed up his sinuses, which messed up his singing voice. So he only indulged after the week's final performance. In a profession full of singers who deny themselves no intoxicant before taking the stage, Randy Travis was obviously a guy dedicated to his art.

But there was some doubt about whether his art was dedicated to him. While Janice thought Travis was the greatest, Warners was not rushing to make a commitment. The label offered Travis a singles deal, which meant that Randy would get to put out a 45; if it were a hit, he might get a shot at making an album. If it were not a hit, he should hang on to his dishwashing job. Travis didn't seem to realize that the odds against getting a hit with your first single—especially with no album behind it—are enormous. As we ate our ice cream he laughed and shook his head, talking about how the record company people thought he should go to an expensive barber and pick out some new clothes. He just didn't see what any of that had to do with singing. Oh boy, I thought, what a shame that a great guy like this doesn't have a prayer in the music business.

Wrong again, pal. Randy Travis' single, "On The Other Hand," came out that autumn. It went to number one on the country charts and Randy got his album deal. The LP, *Storms Of Life*, appeared that winter. It had a sparse lonely quality you don't hear much anymore—not in the community-based C&W of Willie and Cash, nor in the chip-on-my-shoulder new-wave country of Earle and Yoakam. Travis' was country music with a wind blowing through it.

The second time I met Randy Travis, in the summer of 1987, he's arriving at NBC to be a guest on *Late Night With David Letterman*. He's had a string of hit singles and two smash albums. Randy Travis is a country superstar. "I think the type of songs are very consistent," Travis says as he finds his dressing room, "all the way through both albums. Not to say there's not ballads, medium-tempo and up-tempo songs. But they're all traditional *country* songs. That's hard to explain—the way country songs are written, melody-wise, too." Travis laughs. "I guess I'm not that versatile!"

One man's lack of versatility is another's sustained vision. Travis' songs—those he writes and those he chooses—are unified by a sense of the serious effort it takes to plow through ordinary lives. Tunes like "Reasons I Cheat," "On the Other Hand" and "The Truth is Lyin' Next to You" sketch a picture of a man who values truth and monogamy, but is torn by the temptations of the flesh. In Randy Travis songs marriage is treated as a state of grace requiring constant effort to maintain. "I try to write and find songs that people can actually relate to," Travis says. "Songs that really say something, songs about things that really can happen. Of course, we do have 'Send My Body (Home on a Freight Train),' which is *kind* of fictitious."

I hope so—it's a song about a man about to be executed. In fact, that song about death is—musically—the *happiest* thing on Travis' first album. "It's a kind of a novelty song," Travis smiles. "'Diggin' Up Bones' was the same way; it's a fun song to listen to, it's really upbeat, but if you listen to the words it's a very sad situation." That hit, in fact, compares a man going through the souvenirs of a broken marriage to someone digging up a grave: "*Exhuming* things that's better left alone." A little morbid, Randy?

"Yes," the singer chuckles, "a couple of people have said that. But at the same time they liked the song. That's just one of those songs I think we've been very lucky to find. 'On the Other Hand' is a

standard. Nothing to do with the way I sing it, but I think the song is a standard like 'Swinging Doors' or 'He Stopped Loving Her Today.' I wish I could sing as good as George Jones. I think 'Diggin' Up Bones' is the same type of song. 'Forever and Ever, Amen' looks like it might be that type of song. There are three guys—Paul Overstreet, Don Schlitz and Al Gore—who between them have written 'Forever and Ever, Amen,' 'On the Other Hand,' 'Diggin' Up Bones' and 'No Place Like Home.' I don't know how Paul writes so quick. I have written songs with him and it's almost like you just sit and pick out the best lines he comes up with."

Travis and his songwriting sidekicks (Randy wrote two songs on his first album and three on the second) hit more than gold with their combination of no-frills lyrics and Travis' warm, weathered voice. His albums have not just been smashes by C&W standards, but are platinum-selling pop successes, too. The Letterman show, usually closed to country acts, is just one sign of Travis' popular breakthrough. Still, Randy appears to regard it as just one more gig. He just flew in, jet-lagged and trying to shake the flu. Tomorrow he'll fly to a date at a midwestern fair. He says he feels like he's sleepwalking.

In the main studio, rehearsals for the TV taping are under way. I take a look in and see a cat jumping through hoops. Remembering his sinus trouble, I go back and ask Travis if he's allergic to cats. "Yeah," he laughs, "you won't believe this but I am. Why do you ask?" I break the news. He shrugs and says his new doctors promise that in one year of shots they can rid him of his allergies. He says that after 28 years of sneezing, he can stand one more.

Lib Hatcher, Travis' manager and mentor, is out in the corridor chatting with Warners rep Ronna Rubin. Lib's devotion to Travis has been absolute for over 10 years, since 17-year-old Randy got up at talent night at a North Carolina nightclub Lib had just taken over. "I'd had the place for about three months," she says. "First time I had ever been in a club in my life. I bought it and started running a talent contest to try to help business. Talent contests are usually real bad. When I heard Randy I dropped what I was doing and said, 'This is something different!' I gave him a job a couple of nights a week, which became full-time. He stayed there six years.

"We had some real hard times. A lot of people said we were crazy. I sold the club, sold my house, I had a little motel—I sold that, and moved to Nashville and started pitching his songs and going to labels and doing everything we could to get him a deal. We put out a couple of singles on Paula Records out of Shreveport. Then after about a year in Nashville I started managing the Nashville Palace and Randy started working there, cooking and singing. We got turned down by every label in town. We got a band together for him and he was singing full-time, but we never had enough help in the kitchen so he did both for three and a half years. Even after he was on Warner Brothers and had a hit record he was still sweeping the floors, washing dishes, cooking or whatever I needed done." In March 1986, Lib and Randy left the Nashville Palace to go on the road. They haven't stopped since. Of Warners' initial reaction to Travis, she says, "I think they believed in him in the beginning, but it was 'Stand back and wait and see what happens.' Since the second single they've just been behind

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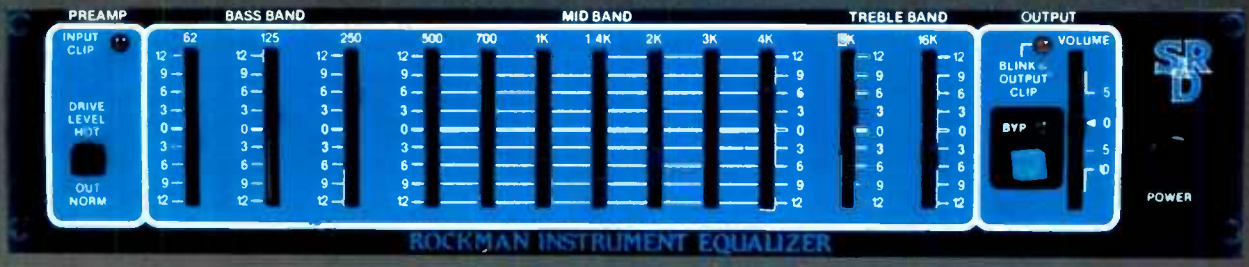

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him a hundred percent." A few minutes later she adds, "In the last year and a half people in Nashville have really changed—to Randy and I both."

In the studio it's Travis' turn to rehearse. Late Night bandleader Paul Shaffer reveals himself to be a much tougher musical director than his on-screen demeanor suggests. When Travis and two of his band members step into the studio to run through "Forever and Ever, Amen," Shaffer's Late Night Band is already familiar with their arrangement. They play it once, it sounds good—twice and it sounds very good. But Shaffer isn't satisfied. He thinks he hears an off-note among the harmonies. He refers to a cassette of the album, he sings parts himself, he asks his band to sing their backing vocals against his piano. A third try and Shaffer suggests they go into the sound booth and listen to a playback. Still not happy, he brings everyone back out to do the song again. All for music that will be heard through cheap American TV speakers. If all this militant perfectionism ruffles the sleepy Travis, there is no visible evidence.

Finally Travis returns to his dressing room and the subject of his songs—specifically how he chooses which covers to record. "We're really hard on songs," he says. "Instead of looking for two or three singles and then putting on a lot of filler, we really try to fill each album with what we think are great songs. Our first album had four singles. I'm very involved in it. Warners v.p. Martha Sharp and I do most of the leg work, going to the publishers. Kyle Lehning, our producer, listens to a lot of music. Then Martha, Kyle, Lib and myself sit down and whittle 'em down, pick out what we think is the best. On our first album we cut 20 sides to pick out the best 10. That's what we did for the second album and that's probably what we're gonna do for the third. Just about every show we get some tapes, and we get an average of one a day in the mail at home. To tell you the truth, we recorded six songs so far for the third album—and we're going through a lot of songs and not having as much luck so far finding what we think are great songs. We only have one that we know will be a single. But then I guess that's better than none.

"When you're looking for songs you have good and bad periods," he figures. "If a person writes 10 songs and there's one real good song in that 10, that's a very good average." He's tough on his own compositions, too—regularly booting Travis tunes in favor of Overstreet songs. One of the best songs on his second album is "Tonight We're Gonna Tear Down the Walls," a Travis original Randy kicked off the first album: "Me and a guy named Jim Sayles wrote that and to tell you the truth, that was one of those songs I didn't know was quite as good as it was. Sometimes it's hard to look at what you helped write and have a good view of it. That wasn't real easy to write. That took a few hours. Usually when I help write a song we finish it in about an hour; I don't know why, but the better ones usually come quick. This one finally just wore us down. It didn't make the first album. It came back around when we were working on the second album and Kyle had not heard it. He said, 'I believe this song's pretty good.' I said, 'Are you sure?' He said, 'Yeah, I think you may be overlooking this one.'"

"Tear Down the Walls"—like the earlier hit "No Place Like Home"—lets a little light into Travis' dark picture of life's struggles. Both songs end with a husband and wife putting aside their marital troubles and giving each other a second chance. After all the heartache of a Randy Travis album you're grateful for any modest hope—and a little surprised when it appears. "It's hard to find songs that have that little twist," Travis nods.

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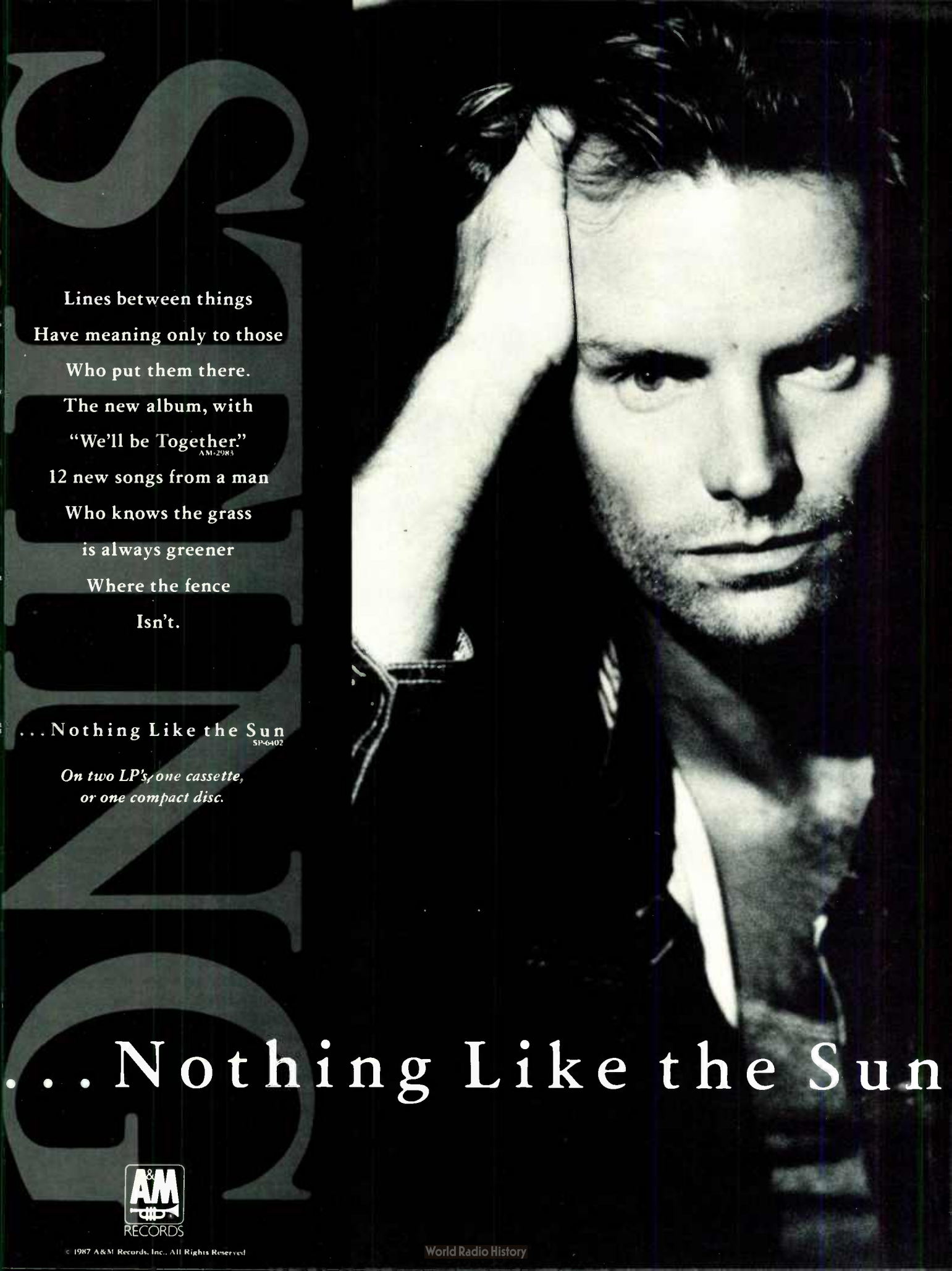

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Ted Greenwald, Assistant Editor, *Keyboard* (NAMM Winter Market Wrap-Up): The Indefatigable Roland led the way with the D-50 Digital Synthesizer, the obvious highlight of their prolific new offerings and possibly of the entire show.

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Simon Trask, *Music Technology*: Whichever way you look at it, the D-50 is one hell of a good instrument and one that has already booked itself a place in the synthesizer's hall of fame. ”

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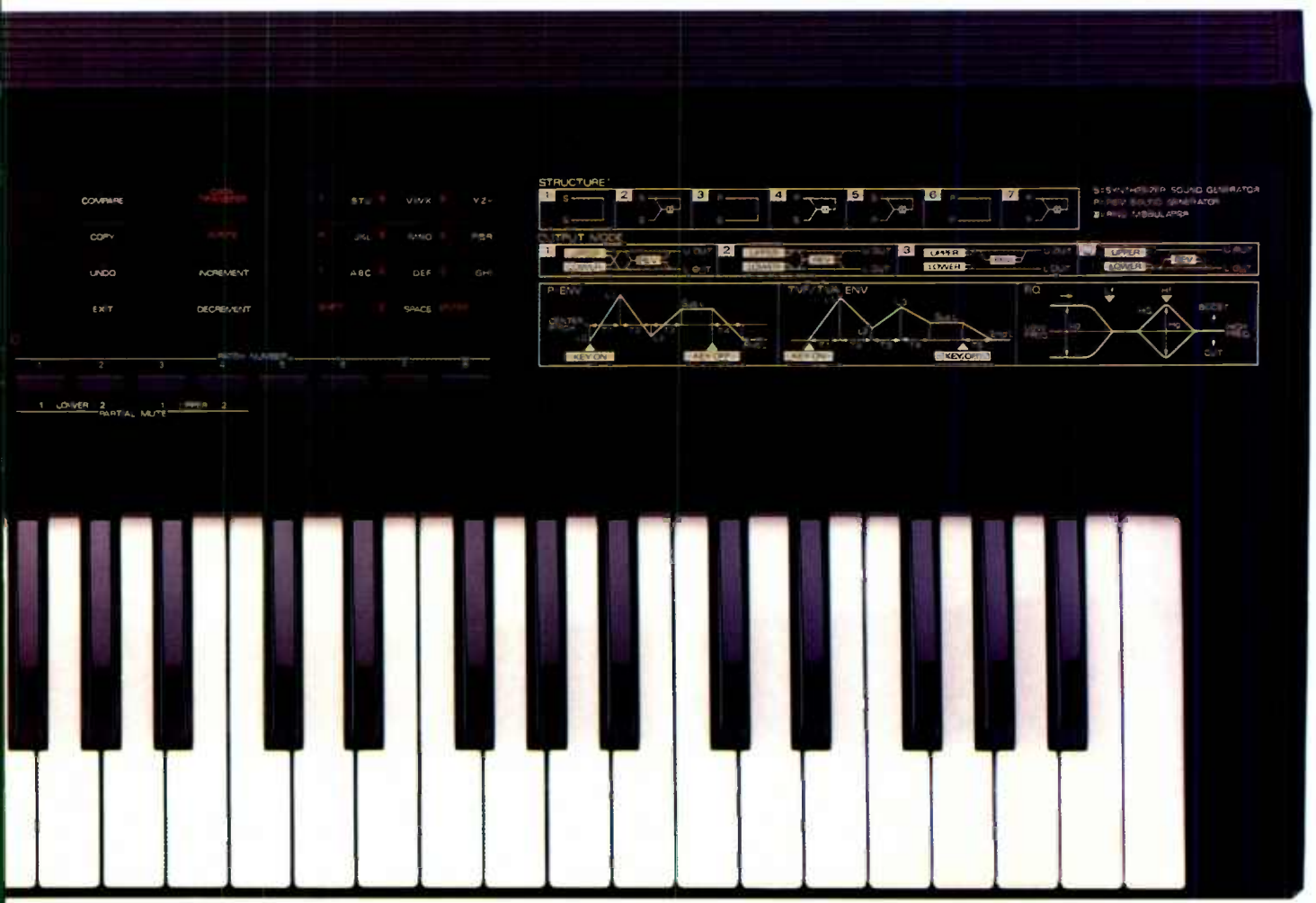


MOSS?

The Stones may or may not be rolling, but Mick Jagger's not letting the grass grow under his feet.

By Mark Rowland

Summer passed briefly through London during the middle of August, but its arrival could manage only a poor third as a topic of conversation—trailing well behind the mass murders in nearby Hungerford, and the mass genuflection before the vision that is Madonna. English tabloids, which for pure sensationalism make the *National Enquirer* look like the *Paris Review*, were chock-full of pix of Her Virginity, while tickets for her three shows at London's 70,000-seat Wembley Stadium sold out weeks ago. Everyone, it seemed, had Madonna on their mind, and Mick Jagger was no exception.

"David Bowie and I decided to chat her up," he says. "So we went to this party, and the first person we saw when we walked in was Sean." He flashes the famous devilish grin. "David started talking to Sean," he goes on confidentially, "while I chatted up Madonna, and after about 45 minutes, we switched places: I talked to Sean and David chatted up Madonna. I don't think Sean ever noticed," he laughs.

"And I liked her," he continues more seriously. "Except that she seems so obviously...aggressive. Over here," he smiles, "the whole trick is to make a success without really looking like you're trying."

MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

It's a style Mick Jagger has honed to perfection. Few stars in any field have been scrutinized so assiduously for 25 years, and no one has proved more adept at parrying what "enquiring minds want to know" with a wisecrack or dismissive, baleful glance; he's managed the illusion of seeming accessible without really giving himself away. Perhaps that simply reflects the dual impulses of his larger art, the introspection and mystery of a songwriter whose work stands up to any in rock, and the sleight-of-hand of a natural vaudevillian who likes to leave 'em asking for more.

In the last couple of years, however, Jagger has taken one of the riskier turns in a storied career: attempting to create a music and persona apart from the Rolling Stones. His first solo effort, *She's the Boss*, more or less bombed. But instead of licking his wounds and hobbling back to the world's greatest (or at least oldest) rock 'n' roll band, Jagger has now upped the ante by putting together a considerably more ambitious followup. On *Primitive Cool* he's assisted by Sugarhill Gang sessioneer Doug Wimbish on bass, drummer Simon Phillips, guitarist G.E. Smith and ringer Jeff Beck.

Musically, *Primitive Cool* is a mixed bag, from familiar groove-rockers ("Shoot Off Your Mouth") to funky shuffles ("Peace for the Wicked") and a personal manifesto slyly disguised as a dance track ("Let's Work"). Jagger happily revives his penchant for well-crafted melodies on such adulterated pop as "Throwaway," "Say You Will" and "Kow Tow" (the last two co-written with Eurythmic Dave Stewart), and cadges a tear from your eye with "Party Doll," a gorgeous country weeper. But it's the song "Primitive Cool" and the record's finale, "War Baby," *which explore musical frontiers inconceivable on a Rolling Stones record, essaying contemporary culture from* Jagger's personal vantage point—as a '60s icon, but also as a father in his 40s whose earliest memory was the sound of bombs exploding in war-torn London.

> "Rock isn't just for teenagers. If you're a mature singer/ songwriter you can't just leave rock behind and do schlock."

One suspects the relative failure of *She's the Boss* was a kind of liberation for Jagger. Having outgrown his image as rock's bad boy, he's ready to let his music and lyric interests mature as well. Though *Primitive Cool* is not the kind of album necessarily destined to rule the charts, as a declaration of independence from the myths and expectations which have long surrounded Jagger, it is a triumph.

Emblematic of that confidence, he had begun rehearsals with his new bandmates in anticipation of a fall tour through Europe and eventually America. After three weeks of practice, however, Jeff Beck walked out, reportedly upset with his limited role on the album and the possibility that singers and dancers might be added to the tour group—"turning it into a circus," in the words of one Beck associate. Rehearsals ground to a halt, concert bookings were postponed indefinitely. At this writing, Beck has returned to the group, guitarist G.E. Smith has left, and singer/violinist Soozie Tyrell, of Buster Poindexter fame, is a definite maybe. Nobody ever said life without the Rolling Stones would be easy.

In the course of this tumult, we met for lunch at an unobtrusively upscale Chelsea cafe. If Jagger seemed anxious about the events unfolding about him, he never showed it; then again, for a guy who has been around the block this often, maybe it wasn't worth worrying about. For all his gossip-titillating experience, he remains a canny and surprisingly sane character. He can be either charming or off-putting on cue; a group at the next table who had the temerity to gaze at him too long were rewarded with a nasty-looking pout that reduced them to staring at their plates. He owns a quick wit, but his opinions on topics from songwriting to the '60s to contemporary global politics are serious and well-considered. At 44, Jagger seems healthy and happy; no doubt his reasonably steady relationship with Jerry Hall, which included the birth of a son last year, helps. But he's one artist who still chooses to reveal himself more deeply through his art. Some might consider that a virtue.

MUSICIAN: *For fans of the Rolling Stones, warming to you as a solo artist has perhaps prompted some adjustment. Has it been difficult for you to adjust as well?*

JAGGER: It's difficult analyzing yourself; it's much easier having others do it for you. But I'd like to explore as many areas as I can, and at the moment I thought I should do more solo work. In a band, everyone is supposed to contribute, which is a wonderful way of making records, but there are other ways of making music. And I had a very clear idea of what I wanted to do and should sound like. The other musicians are very talented and they had ideas, but most of the things came out as I planned them on demos. The Rolling Stones rarely did demos. We expected things to happen in the studio.

MUSICIAN: *How is this going down with the rest of the Stones?*

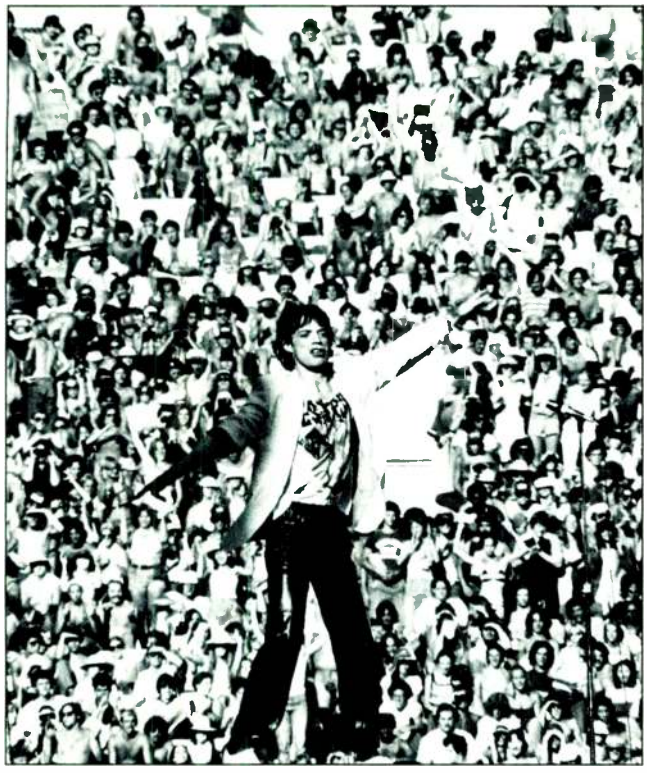
JAGGER: I think they've all got lots to do. I hear Keith's working on his album in Canada. I won't even go to Canada! [*laughs*] My tour's not going to be anything like a Stones tour, so I don't think anyone should feel threatened.

MUSICIAN: *You still view the Stones as an ongoing entity?*

JAGGER: Yes I do, very much. And I think the Stones should go on the road, and so on. I don't believe in forcing things when they're not right, though. It's a mistake, 'cause they tend to really fall apart.

I saw the last Who tour in Philadelphia, and that was a classic example. They did the tour for money, and they weren't getting on; they were hating each other, and it came across onstage. I was upset, as a member of the audience. And then it was the end. It taught me a lesson. I didn't want to be in that situation of not getting on with people but being forced into this intensive situation of working and living together. If we had done our tour and someone had said, "Is this the last time?" we probably would have said, "Yeah!"

You've got to be in harmony when making music, you really must. It's bad enough to work in an office with someone you don't get along with. You can have a bit of an edge, and obviously there are disagreements. But if someone in the band wants to go on the road, everyone has to agree. It's not just the money. As a prime member of the band, I felt that if I wasn't



Mick hard at work discouraging his myth...

totally happy, my opinion should be respected because I had valid reasons. Even if they weren't, I still have an opinion.

MUSICIAN: *But it sounds like the rest of the band may have been scared that you were really calling it quits without saying so.*

JAGGER: Yeah, they were! But I wasn't. I don't think they believed me then, but I think they do now.

MUSICIAN: Primitive Cool *sounds a lot less like a record you'd make with the Stones than* She's the Boss. *But you also seem more in control on this record, more sure of what you want to do.*

JAGGER: I was less clear before; it was very much a learning experience. Though the first album has validity, I think. You have to have that first experience. But this time I felt more confident. I wanted to have the same center on this record, for the bass and drums to be the same people. I had different keyboard players, different textures and so on, but I didn't think the core should shift. I shifted that around on the first album and it didn't work as well as it could have.

MUSICIAN: *You certainly seem more comfortable with the songs, and your voice sounds more relaxed.*

JAGGER: I knew the songs better, I'd demoed them more, sung them longer. A lot of times when you're working in the studio, you don't get inside them and work them out as well as you should.

MUSICIAN: *Are you still discovering ways to use your voice?*

JAGGER: Oh yeah. When Dave [Stewart] and I wrote "Say You Will," I said, "I'm never gonna be able to sing like that because he's got this chord sequence running up to the sky," and I just about managed it. I'd like to hear someone with a real amazing voice do it. Working with Dave was stimulating because we were into things that neither of us had done, we were up for anything. I'd certainly never written a song like "Say You Will." But we wanted to surprise people.

MUSICIAN: *People describe this record as unusually personal...*

JAGGER: People con themselves, they think a solo album has to be personal. The music's personal, it's full of your life's efforts and sweat. I don't think it's more or less personal than a lot of the other work.

MUSICIAN: *But every record has its own gestalt, so to speak. And the perspective here does seem different from what you were singing about three or four years ago.*

JAGGER: It's pretty grown up? [*laughter*] I think it is very important to be able to mature. This is what everyone's been going on about: "How are you going to live in the rock music world?" Rock isn't just for teenagers, you have to cover everybody without condescending and you can do that in an album. If you're a mature singer/songwriter you can't just leave rock behind and do schlock. You've got to make the music grow with you, as well as sticking with the good, exciting basics, what's good in your work—and still try to push the genre. The subject matter doesn't have to be tedious or boringly complicated, I don't mean that. But I wouldn't have done "Primitive Cool" or "War Baby" before. The Stones have their own history and there are things perhaps they wouldn't attempt. So I have to attempt it in my own way. I shouldn't be so defensive about it [*laughter*]. But this is new ground; I don't know where it comes from, but there it is!

MUSICIAN: *The other night I was watching an old World War II movie on TV. I was thinking how that war was still such recent history when I was a kid; for kids growing up today, it must seem like sheer fantasy.*

JAGGER: A lot of children, like in the United States, don't remember the real horror of it, because they never had to, as they do in Europe and Russia and so on. I'm not saying America didn't have a terrible experience, but it never came home to them that way. You had rationing and shortages, and people got killed and coffins came home. But you didn't have the experience of the block opposite being destroyed when you got up in the morning. So "War Baby" is kind of a reminder.

MUSICIAN: *I suspect that's a root cause of a lot of political misapprehensions today between the U.S. and Europe.*

JAGGER: We disassociate the idea from the reality, whereas in Europe you've got places like Poland, that have been constantly invaded for hundreds of years, merely because it's "in the way."

...and tuning Keith's guitar.

MUSICIAN: *We want to cling to the myth of simple solutions.*

JAGGER: Short-term solutions in Central America. From the way they run the small countries beneath the guise of large corporations. Did it in the Philippines, supporting these people like Marcos and Somoza right up to the brink, when we shouldn't have been supporting them, probably ever. And then we wonder why we're getting unpopular. They were terrible people! There's not one person in the contras who has any political force at all [in Nicaragua]. They're dreadful. It's a self-destructive policy. I don't think I'm being totally naive in thinking that if America had taken the right tack in their revolution, we would have more control now, just in real political terms.

MUSICIAN: *Though in your song "Indian Girl" you imply a certain skepticism about the Sandinistas as well. All of which*

LINDA MATLOW/PIX INT'L

makes you wonder what effect, if any, the '60s have really had on people's thinking. What do you think?

JAGGER: It's a broad question. But I think the effects were very great, just on social terms. It's hard to remember just what that period was like, but I can assure you it was extremely different from now. There was attitude, things you take for granted now they wouldn't then: social values, the way people mix, racial segregation, sexual segregation and orientation, the opportunities people would or wouldn't have, class and money. And the list goes on. Each period takes off from the last, nothing happens in a vacuum. The '50s were the beginnings of a consumer revolution. A few books like *Absolute Beginners* give a reasonably accurate flavor of the period if you weren't there or can't quite remember; I was very young.

MUSICIAN: *The emergence of Elvis seems like a demarcation.*

JAGGER: Yes it was. And over here Frankie Lymon and Gene Vincent, all those people who were playing here a lot, where Elvis didn't...Jerry Lee Lewis was huge, Buddy Holly was the biggest thing ever. So that was the beginning of [the '60s], a dry run or rehearsal if you like. And all the people we mentioned, the entertainers were American, their styles were absorbed, and the explosion of British music was obviously founded on those hero figures, Chuck Berry and the like.

MUSICIAN: *I think everyone understood that freedom, subconsciously at least—which put the Stones on the cutting edge.*

JAGGER: People recognized it as a social force. It already was, of course; it's just that some journalists and parents didn't realize it. But the rebellious thing, the identification with certain songs...If you look at percentages, say the Stones and the Beatles, the so-called serious material was few and far between. There are songs that break new ground, and an awful lot that don't. Some did, like "Goin' Home," but no one ever thought about it when we did it. In a lot of ways the ground was easy to break. In "Primitive Cool" there's that line, "Did you break all the laws that were ready to crumble?" They were just sitting there, waiting.

MUSICIAN: *But people were startled nonetheless.*

JAGGER: Yes, slightly. America loved the norm—still does—and didn't like non-conformist patterns. They didn't like them here either. I really never set out to, but it was very easy to shock people [*smiles*]. After a while one just did it for fun, once you found out how easy it was. And of course the press would exploit that.

MUSICIAN: *It's amazing to remember that "Let's Spend the Night Together" was banned from the radio for risqué lyrics. And when the Stones appeared on* The Ed Sullivan Show *you were supposed to change the words to "Let's Spend Some Time Together."*

JAGGER: I refused to change them, though. So they revved up the screams and crowd noise from the audience so you couldn't hear it anyway.

MUSICIAN: *After the Stones first appeared on the show, he claimed he'd never have you on again.*

JAGGER: Yet he had us on again. Ratings, I think.

MUSICIAN: *Is it also true that you began composing the song "We Love You" from your jail cell?*

JAGGER: [*laughs*] No! Oh, no. It's a wonderful image, though.

MUSICIAN: *Have you felt guilty for the consequences people paid who tried to emulate the bad-boy reputation of the band?*

JAGGER: No, not me. I did feel that some people liked to imitate the lifestyle they imagined Keith had, and to a certain extent must be admitted that he did. I think people thought that was very glamorous. And I don't think some of them found out it was.

I'm not into myth-mania. I like to destroy myths. I don't think encouraging myth-mania is fruitful, I dislike it. There are too many myths attached to musicians and their lifestyles. It limits you artistically if you're constantly fighting your myth, or encouraging one. You have to explode it. In this album I just tried to work towards something more real than posing as a decadent rocker. That's something one has to be careful of.

> "It was very easy to shock people in the '60s. One did it just for fun, once you found out how easy it was."

MUSICIAN: *You feel that inhibited your role in the Stones?*

JAGGER: Yeah. I'm not blaming them, 'cause I'm them. I can only blame myself. But I can say I found it rather stultifying 'cause it clings so much. When you move over from it to a new project, you're more able to relax and find new avenues. You're setting yourself apart from it, and maybe people will look at it in a different way.

MUSICIAN: *You're generally associated with an image of hedonism, which obscures the fact you've been writing and performing great songs for so many years. I thought "Let's Work" hinted at that point—that what you've done takes real effort.*

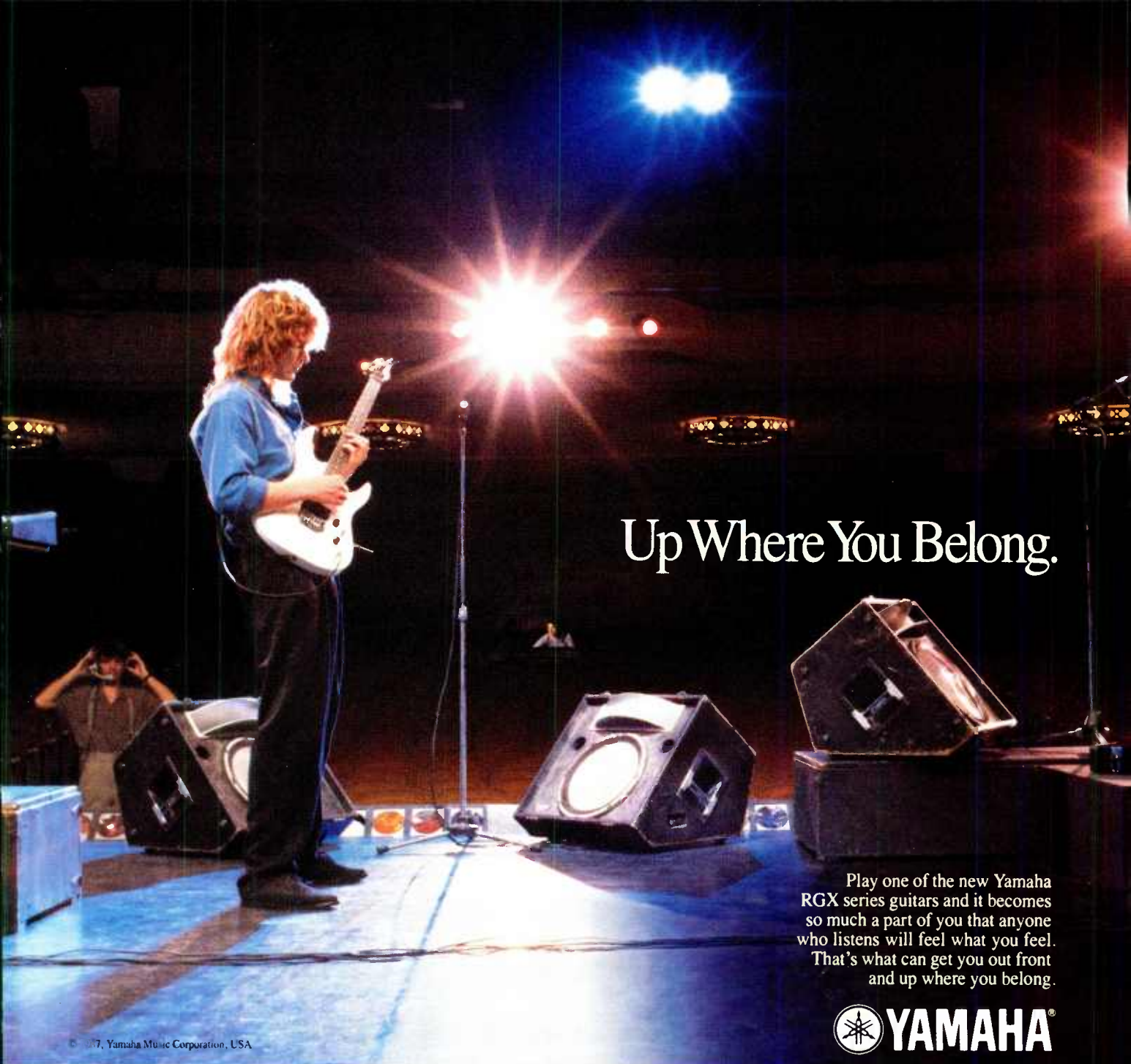
JAGGER: Yeah, it does, a lot of craft, a lot of hours. It's not manual labor, though, except for the singing.

MUSICIAN: *It's not like becoming a miner.*

JAGGER: I'm not saying it is, that's the reason I chose not to be a miner. Too much hard work, guys. This is something I like to do. Every year I like to produce something. And only if it's really shitty would I not put it out. Because I believe you never know how good or bad something is until later. It reflects what you were going through at the time, what you were doing musically, more or less. So unless you think it's really substandardish you put it out. Some people wait around forever. I was disappointed with this last Stevie Wonder album, *In Square Circle*. I think he's a great musician. But we waited five years, and when this album finally came out I felt, "He could do that every year, couldn't he?" It wasn't so groundbreaking, so what was he doing spending five years on it?

MUSICIAN: *He set up impossible expectations.*

JAGGER: That's what happens. So I believe in just doing it. I write a lot of songs. I wrote a lot more for this record. It's just that you don't want two that are the same. I found that I was writing better melodies in the country, which seems obvious when you think about it. You need to get away from this constant noise so the melodies you have in the back of your mind can come to you easier. And I find that I write better in the mornings than all this late-night business that I was always into before. And after that you can relax a bit. When I worked with Dave, we'd start pretty early and by three o'clock we'd be



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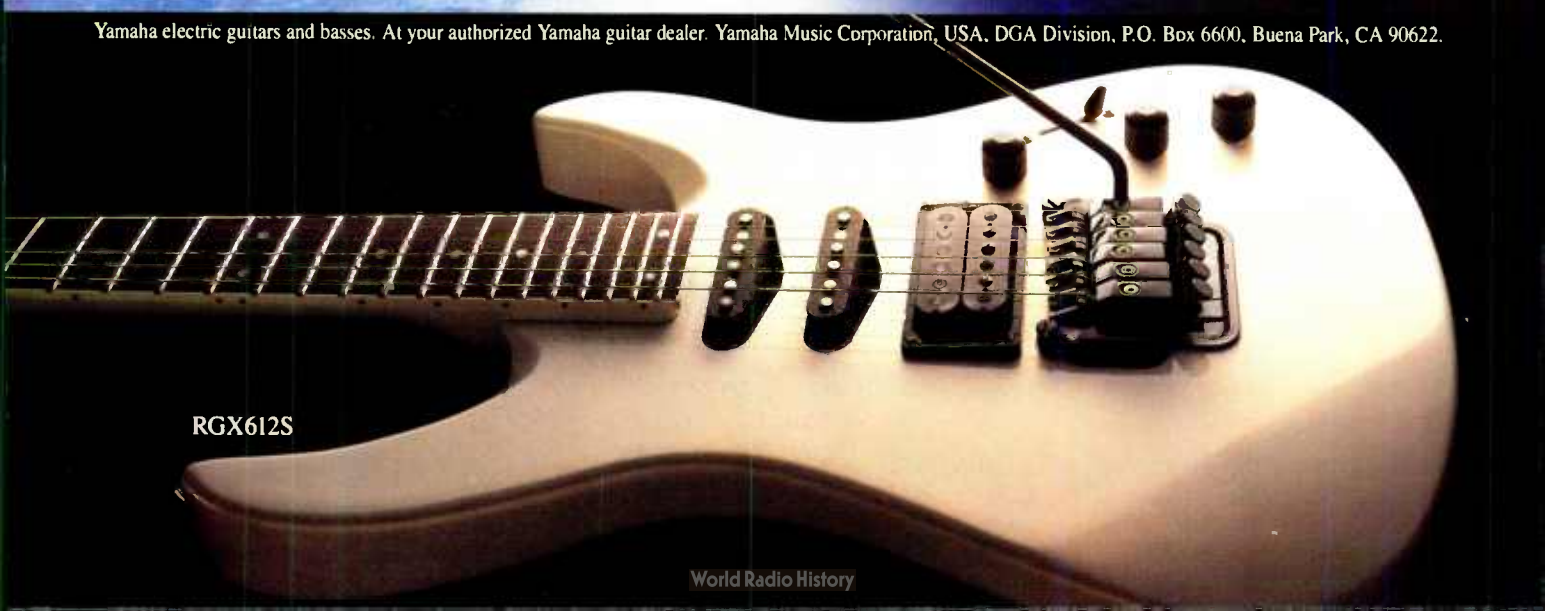

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done. It was healthy and more fun. And lyrically I got more, though sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night, like when I wrote "War Baby." I woke up with the melody and my tape recorder had run out of batteries, and I was in such a state. Because I was half asleep and I don't really write music; but I remembered the little bit I can do. And fortunately I remembered it in the morning.

MUSICIAN: *Do you set up a schedule when you write?*

JAGGER: I'll put aside certain periods of the day. I've started using drum machines when I get an idea, 'cause I'm a bit of a groove singer. I'll start to play on the keyboard, and get the drums going. It really gets me loose; I can just go with the sequence. Sometimes it's easier that way. And if you're a writer, you learn a lot about what you want, not what the drummer wants to impose on you.

I wouldn't say I'm a great musician. I'm adequate enough to write songs and play simple parts. And I would like to become better, the same as a lot of musicians. My main thing is to sing, but my most enjoyable thing is writing, the buzz when you first write that tune.

MUSICIAN: *You and Keith began writing when your manager Andrew Loog Oldham locked you in a room...*

JAGGER: That's more or less true.

MUSICIAN: *I've always wondered how many other managers since then locked their singers in a room, without much result. But do you think you would have come to songwriting eventually of your own accord?*

JAGGER: I can't imagine I wouldn't. I wish I'd started earlier. I like melodies, and writing lyrics, putting them together.

MUSICIAN: *Why did you start printing your lyrics recently?*

JAGGER: I think if the lyrics stand out, I don't mind them going on. One of the reasons I don't like to explain songs to people, it's nice for people to have their own interpretations. You know how disappointed you are when you read a book and it's made into a rotten movie, and you never imagined the character like that. I don't want to say, look, it's about this, so don't get it wrong. If someone's completely off the track, like "Sympathy for the Devil" is about drugs or "Party Doll" is about getting drunk, then I'd put them right. But I don't want to be dogmatic about it. There's a lot of ex-schoolmasters in the songwriting trade, and they get a bit explanatory sometimes. And I don't like to talk about it in these other magazines where people are not really interested, they're just after some angle. But for a magazine like *Musician*, I don't mind talking about what songs are about or how they get written. It's kind of fun.

MUSICIAN: *My favorite song on the record is "Party Doll", which has a pure country feel and bittersweet sentiment, like a Hank Williams tune.*

JAGGER: Thank you, that's very nice. I'd like to hear it by a country singer, like Dwight Yoakam. But in a way it's also pre-country, or pre-Nashville, because it's got the pipes and fiddle, which is very Irish, or Celtic. It's hard with a song like that to set the right mood.

MUSICIAN: *It's also the one song you produced by yourself.*

JAGGER: Yeah, that time there was no one else around [*laughter*]. Dave and Keith [Diamond] both had ideas on how to do the song which I didn't agree with. I was hearing it with acoustic instruments. I didn't want it with electric or electronic. They had good ideas, but—sorry, guys.

I'd like to do more country songs on tour. I don't know how

THEY'RE THE BASS—AND DRUMS

A self described groove singer doesn't underestimate the importance of his rhythm section. For *Primitive Cool* Mick Jagger relied on the deceptively disparate talents of bassist **Doug Wimbish** and drummer **Simon Phillips**. Wimbish's resumé includes stints with the Sugarhill Gang house band, Fats Comet, the funk/rap/industrial-noise aggregate Mark Stewart and Maffia, and his own band, Tackhead. Phillips' credits include work with English popsters from Roxy Music to Jeff Beck, with whom he shares a passion for flashy sports cars. Wimbish joined Beck and Phillips during a tour of Japan last year, so when Wimbish and Beck ended up on *Primitive Cool*, they naturally pulled Phillips on board as well.

Wimbish, a breezy guy who doesn't stand on formality (he calls Jagger "Michelob") was hired after an audition ("first time in my life—I thought it was funny") and worked most closely with the singer during the record's early stages. "We did all the basics and a lot of overdub work," he recalls. "He had his voice and a drum machine. Then he'd sing while I played to the click track. Before each song we'd talk it out: He'd describe the setting, paint a picture for me. You work together long enough, you develop key patterns, a chemistry Mick communicates from the heart. He knows what's needed; when he doesn't know, he doesn't mind asking."

"I came in a little further down the line," Phillips says, picking up the thread, "by which time the tracks were more finished. I helped add a more serious 'live' feel. A drum machine or click track can lull you into a false sense of security; a real kit puts things into perspective. One good thing: We didn't spend a long time on each track, but cut them quickly, which I think is very important in all types of recording. It's good to think about it, play it a couple of times and then leave it."

Wimbish and Phillips were both hopeful Jagger's tour would eventually come off, and include Beck. "It's a fabulous band," Wimbish says, "and I'm confident that the nucleus will work its way through. We watch each other's backs. Mick doesn't have to discuss things with us, but he does, he lets us feel we're involved. When you come from a band background for 25 years, like he has, I think it's in your blood. So I think he needs people he can trust."

Wimbish's basses of choice include Fender Jazz and Precisions, along with three fretless Spector basses (two custom-made) and one with frets; a five-string Ripley stereo bass that allows panning each string through different speakers; a couple of Guild Ashbory basses, a T.U.N.E. six-string bass and a Chapman Stick. Effects include a tc electronics 2290 digital delay with 32-second sampling capability, an Akai S900 sampler used with MIDI Step bass pedals, a tc electronics 1140 equalizer with vowel-type effects ("for my wah-wah sound"), a Scholz Rockman X-100 (for distortion), a Yamaha SPX90, and a set of Boss pedal effects comprising three digital delay boxes (two with sampler pedals, the other with a hold function to repeat patterns) and a flanger.

For variety, Wimbish enjoys his Ibanez guitar synthesizer and a Yamaha TX816 rack-mount unit. He records through a Yamaha mixing board. Amp/speaker systems are Trace Elliot and include pre and power amp, two 15″ speakers (with separate cabinets), two sets of four 10″ speakers and two sets of 5″ speakers.

Simon Phillips plays a Tama Artstar kit that includes two 24″ bass drums; four 11x14″ rack toms; 15″, 16″ and 18″ floor toms; a 14x6″ snare, 14x5″ metal snare, 20″ gong drum, and four Octobans. His Zildjian cymbals are two sets of 14″ platinum "new beat" high-hats; a pair of 13″ Z series; two 24″ swish knockers (one without rivets); a 21″ brilliant ride; 19″ thin crash; 17″ and 18″ paper-thin crashes; and a 12″ splash platinum. He employs a Meyer monitor system to hear everyone else. No electronic drums.

the punters, as we call them here, the public, will react, but I think it's gonna sound real nice. 'Cause I like that part of me, that music. It's the music of where we are. It's very English.

With the Stones, we just did the odd [country] number. But that's not what the [Stones] are, you understand what I mean? So therefore you can't do it. We'd come out with an acoustic number and everyone in the audience would yell "rock 'n' roll!" [*laughter*] We'd play "Far Away Eyes" in the stadiums, remember? And it just didn't work. You should only go to stadiums and play hits, and that's the bottom line, right? Play hits and make a lot of money. That's the name of the game.

MUSICIAN: *John Lennon complained that everyone paid lip service to the Beatles' great body of songs, but you heard only the same 10 hits on radio. Has that been frustrating for you as well?*

JAGGER: Yes, and outside the U.S. it's even more so. It's about four songs: "Jumping Jack Flash," "Brown Sugar," "Satisfaction" and...one of your choice. [*laughter*] There's nothing you can do about it. If I would go on the road and do some shows off this album, which I hope to, I'd like to try some of those more obscure Stones songs. If they work. I don't want to pin myself down, but I've messed around with doing "2000 Light Years from Home," "She's a Rainbow," a weird version of "19th Nervous Breakdown." I was also running through other people's songs I've liked: Marvin Gaye, James Brown, Muddy Waters. I don't know what I'll do, but there's a lot of styles in there.

MUSICIAN: *Is there any period of your career you're particularly proud of, or that stands out in retrospect?*

JAGGER: I like *Beggars Banquet* and *Let it Bleed* very much. And the first Stones albums were wonderful. There are others, but they're the ones that come to mind. That period was really fruitful and that 1969 tour was a high point for me. I've always had good memories of it. There were other great tours, but I think that was really groundbreaking. The band played so well, really tight...and the live album [*Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!*] was pretty representative.

MUSICIAN: *Do you worry about falling into a rut?*

JAGGER: Oh yeah, that's why I feel now I have to get out. I'm getting a little stuck. I'm not blaming anyone else; I'm the one who is getting in the rut. Or maybe I wasn't, but thought I was and had to do something. I didn't want to be traveling down the same groove.

Though you can't be totally new all the time. I like to graft the new onto the old. I don't wanna be a dinosaur, stuck in one era. I don't wanna be in 1969, because we're not living in 1969. I did some great things then, there was a great movie. But you can't recreate that. I don't want to recycle those memories. Not in new material.

MUSICIAN: *What would you say is your greatest gift or talent?*

JAGGER: I think one of the contributions of myself and Keith, and the Rolling Stones, was that maybe we helped build or expand the framework of pop that the music sits on today. That's the long term. Short term, it's probably as a performer that people think of me.

MUSICIAN: *You once said that onstage you could become 11 or 12 years old. Do you still feel that way?*

JAGGER: I think you can be the whole audience. You are the audience. You have to grasp that mentality, and the idea of having fun, run the gamut of emotions—what they feel and are thinking. Of course, as you get more experience and as they

know you from other incarnations, you have to be all those things too.

MUSICIAN: *Do you consider yourself spiritual or religious?*

JAGGER: Spiritual, but not a deep born-again Christian or a Buddhist who rings bells or anything. I do have moral and spiritual standards that I don't want to transgress, though I might have pushed them a little when I was younger [*smiles*] and didn't realize what they were. I wouldn't do it now.

I mean, I'll go for almost anything in a song if I think it's good—'cause I'll write it from the standpoint of someone else. Then I can show the subject in its bad light. There are uncomfortable subjects, but you don't have to imply that you're endorsing it. You have to be able to write around it, from the point of view of someone else. There were certain songs on *Dirty Work* that were done that way.

But I don't see the point of endorsing things for shock value. There are lots of writers, young writers in England who like to do that. Well, good luck—when you're young that's what you do—but I don't have to. Shock value can be useful, but it has to be written from the right standpoint. And without condescending to your audience, you have to realize that they don't always want to listen to what the song is always about—like "Let's Spend the Night Together."

MUSICIAN: *In recent years it seemed as if you were getting more interested in movies than in music. But some of those projects fell through, and now you've refocused your energy toward music.*

JAGGER: Movies are very fragile. I'd like to do those projects but they're very time-consuming. Probably this album refocused me a lot toward developing musically and concentrating on one thing. I'll probably continue pretty intensely with music for the next year, and after that if I could have a break I will. I'd like to be other things besides a rock musician. Not that it's a bad thing. But as to what, I'd rather not say, because until you do it it's rather all fru-fru. [*mimics a bore*] "Yes, I'd like to breed hunting birds in Saudi Arabia."

MUSICIAN: *You once said you were born happy. Do you believe in genetic fate?*

JAGGER: I think you're influenced by a very strong genetic makeup—a sense of humor, for instance—if you're not scarred early on. If you are, there's not much you can do. Some people seem to be genetically untogether, or unhappy. I'm kind of lucky, really.

MUSICIAN: *What I mean is, do you feel this is what you were meant to do?*

JAGGER: I think I would have been capable of doing other things, but probably in the same vein, writing and performing. If rock 'n' roll hadn't existed, I probably would have been an actor, or a writer, a movie director or something. It would have involved similar things. But, you know, rock 'n' roll got me very hooked, very young [*laughs*]. So there I was.

MUSICIAN: *What's your motivation at this point?*

JAGGER: I have a lot of interests but music is the main thing. And I like performing, which I haven't done a lot of recently. I like creating. And I do it for fun, and I get lots of fun out of it and...dare I say, "satisfaction"? M

George Harrison

Reconsidered

After all those years of mania and moptops, dark suits and deep blues, here comes the fun.

He came as soon as he heard. It's 10:37 a.m. on Tuesday, August 25, 1987, in Burbank, California, and although he's been missing for five years, nobody minds. Because today he swore he'd deliver.

George Harrison arrives alone at the headquarters of Warner Bros. Records, carrying the master reference disc of his new album direct from Bernie Grundman Mastering, where he's spent the last 24 hours facing the music and deciding it was finally time to share it. No one at the company has listened to the finished version of *Cloud Nine*. And no one was invited to—until this moment.

He strides through the morning haze, his pale fingers gripping the plain white cardboard sleeve that holds the end product. Dressed in a raven tweed jacket, white silk shirt, charcoal slacks, black bucks and red-and-gray argyle socks, he takes the tiled front steps with a tread as heavy as his attire.

Lenny Waronker, bashful and boyish president of Warner Bros., meets him at the threshold of his office with a warm smile and a wary electricity in his gaze. Two literally trembling hands present the perspiration-pocked dust jacket, *George Harrison* inscribed across it in careless script from a felt marker. Waronker cups the prize at its lower corners, holding it against the front of his short leather driving jacket as if it were a citation.

"George!" calls a voice over Waronker's shoulder, and from an adjoining office suite appears Mo Ostin, chairman of the board of the Warners record group. Balding,

By Timothy White

Photograph by Chris Cuffaro

beaming, his white sport clothes and bronze skin telegraphing an easy zeal for the unfolding ceremony, Ostin beckons the two principals and a guest inside. Two chairs are angled before Waronker's deskside turntable for the private listening session. Mo reclines on a couch behind them.

In the instant before the stylus finds the pressing, there is no sound in the room but that of George Harrison, 44, sipping sharply from a cup of tea. Lenny leans forward, his eyes now closed. Mo contemplates the ceiling.

The first track, "Cloud Nine," descends upon the paneled room with absolute authority, an unmistakably reverberant vocal suffusing its space with biting, angular grace. The arrangement is rich but focused, pretty but austere, and when it surprises at the bridge with an exquisite upward spiral of harmonies, the composer makes his opening comment. "I put," he states above the surging music, "some 'Beach Boys' at the bridge." Mo manages a horizontal nod. Lenny places his palms over his sealed eyelids.

"That's What It Takes" bursts forth, attacking the ears as if from a windswept dashboard radio. "Fish on the Sand" is next, heightening the sense of breeze-tossed forward dispatch. The singer is biting the words, snapping them off with an aggressive drive. "Just for Today," a ballad of bottomless sadness, takes hold. Then "This Is Love" builds a case for new promise, the vocals full of yearning. Quickly, a fresh aural landscape approaches with "When We Was Fab," the tantalizingly familiar filigrees acting as magnets for the arrangement's sly twists.

As the song fades, Waronker looks up from his cradled hands. "That was," he says, "a *killer* sequence of tracks."

"I can't wait," Ostin giggles, "to catch the second side." And "Devil's Radio" is worth the anticipation. The ferocious rocker is an unearthly delight. Harrison permits himself the merest smile of impish satisfaction, which widens as whoops erupt from his audience.

"I had to rescue this song, redo it to give it a better chance," he volunteers, his dense Liverpool diction slicing through the speaker's throb, as the ethereal "Someplace Else" begins. "This was wasted on a soundtrack to an unsuccessful Madonna-Sean Penn film I produced."

The tough, tart "Wreck of the Hesperus" is the third track on the second side, its witty vocal parries a neat counterpoint to the stabbing guitar. The lush "Breath Away from Heaven" provides an atmospheric slice of intrigue. Then, as the finale, "Got My Mind Set on You," kicks in with a primitive rock 'n' roll wallop, George Harrison reveals his glee with the wry ode to checkbook romance. "This'll teach the yuppies!" he crows.

"This album'll teach a *lot* of people something," Mo Ostin rejoins, on his feet and radiant with relief. "We'll give them 'Got My Mind Set on You' as the first single!" "And then for the second single," adds a jubilant Waronker, "we can choose from 'That's What It Takes,' 'This Is Love' or 'When We Was Fab.' The 'Fab' track is like a movie, it's so vivid, and it's a graceful and riveting acknowledgement of the past. This whole album's got the good rock roots and new excitement radio has been needing."

Harrison's jaw drops: "Then you mean that I passed the final examination? Well, hooray for that much!" A hearty round of backslapping and guffaws erupts as the former Beatle is reminded of an incident way back in his Liverpool origins, when 16-year-old George burned his report card (he'd failed every subject but art) in 1959 and quit school. By that time George, John Lennon and Paul McCartney had already played together in the Casbah Coffee Club, a cellar cafe owned by future drummer Pete Best's mum, Mona.

You likely know the rest: The Beatles fire Pete Best in August 1962 and hire Rory Storm & the Hurricane's drummer, Ringo Starr. Whereupon irate Pete Best fans enter the Cavern Club and blacken George's eye in a fracas. That September the Beatles cut their first single, "Love Me Do," in EMI's Studio 2 in St. John's Wood. Producer George Martin asks the lads, "Anything you're not happy about with us?" "Yes," George quips, "I don't like your tie."

Several hundred million records later, on November 1, 1968, the first outside LP project by a Beatle, George Harrison's *Wonderwall Music*, is issued on Apple Records. In 1969, shortly after the Beatles notch a number one U.S. hit with Harrison's "Something" from *Abbey Road*, dissension in the group grows grievous. In early 1970 the Beatles disassemble. George Harrison, after releasing the experimental *Electronic Sound* on the Zapple subsidiary, makes a massive individual impression in 1970 with the three-record set, *All Things Must Pass*, and thereafter plots a new path for himself.

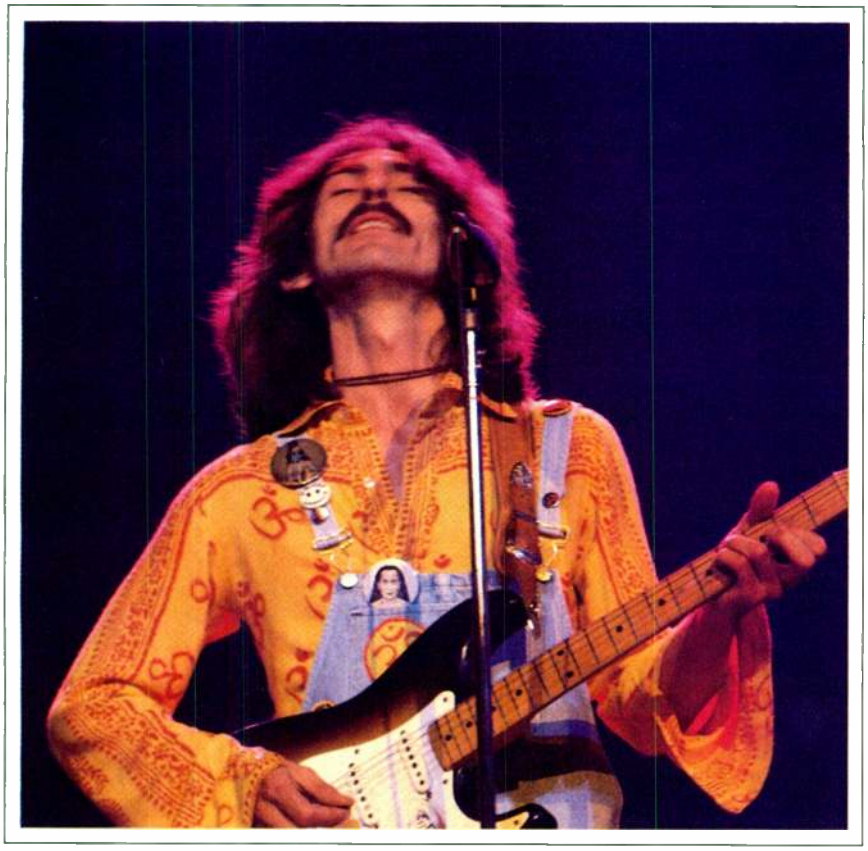
Cloud Nine, produced with Electric Light Orchestra maestro Jeff Lynne, is George Harrison's thirteenth solo album (if you count *The Concert for Bangla Desh* and a Capitol greatest hits collection). It's the fifth of his Warner Bros. albums in the States, and his only LP since the unjustly ignored *Gone Troppo*, a genial 1982 gem. Moreover, in Lenny Waronker's estimation, "*Cloud Nine* is the finest album George has made since *All Things Must Pass*, and probably his best ever."

Harrison's core band for the record consists of George on guitars and sitar; Jeff Lynne on bass and guitar; Ringo, Jim Keltner and Ray Cooper on drums and percussion; Elton John and Gary Wright on keyboards, and Jim Horn on horns. Also featured is Eric Clapton, still George's best friend after fabled misadventures, principally luring away wife Patti Harrison in the mid-'70s—"but I also pulled a chick on him once," George has noted. Indeed, Harrison was such a forgiving soul that he, Paul and Ringo performed "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" at Eric and Patti's wedding reception.

"You've come a long way from Liverpool Technical Institute," I observe, after Harrison and I bid goodbye to the Warners brass and press on to our appointed lunch/interview. "Well, yes and no," George assures with a mischievous blink of his brown eyes, "because the Gretsch guitar I got several months after splitting from Liverpool Tech is the very same one I'm holding on the cover of *Cloud Nine*!"

MUSICIAN: *How did you hook up with Jeff Lynne?*
HARRISON: I'd been trying to imagine, for a few years, somebody who could co-produce my albums. I'm sure there's plenty of talented people out there, but I haven't really worked

"For two or three years I only played sitar. After I got back to guitar, I found I couldn't really play solos or get a good sound. I started playing slide, thinking, 'Maybe this is how I can come up with something half-decent.'"



In the presence of the Lord Buddha, 1974.

with many people on the production line. In the old days we just had George Martin working with us. And after that, well, I worked a little while with Phil Spector. That became more trouble than it was worth, and I ended up doing most of the work myself.

MUSICIAN: *People sometimes forget Spector was involved in* All Things Must Pass *and* The Concert for Bangla Desh.

HARRISON: Well, on *All Things Must Pass* Phil came in and we did half the backing tracks. Then, because of the condition he was in, he had to leave and I completed the rest of the backing without him. And did maybe 50 percent of the overdubbing, all the backing vocals and all the guitar parts. Then he came back when I was mixing it. All of this was over a four, five-month period. But he still had to keep going to the hospital, seeing a doctor. He was going through a bad time with drinking and it made him ill.

MUSICIAN: *What was his role in recording* Bangla Desh?

HARRISON: Phil was at the concert dancing in the front when it was being recorded! There was a guy, Gary Kellgren, who did the key work in the live recording. Then when Phil came to the remix, again Phil was in and out of the hospital.

Phil worked on the second solo album, *Living in the Material World*, but by that I mean he was around. Again, he kept falling over and breaking his ankles, wrists. The guy who was his helper was having heart attacks.

Phil was never there. I literally used to have to go and break into the hotel to get him. I'd go along the roof at the Inn On The Park in London and climb in his window yelling, "Come on! We're supposed to be making a record!" He'd say, "Oh. Okay." And then he used to have 18 cherry brandies before he could get himself down to the studio. I got so tired of that because I needed somebody to *help*. I was ending up with more work than if I'd just been doing it on my own.

MUSICIAN: *Wasn't "Try Some Buy Some" from* Living in the Material World *supposed to be on a Ronnie Spector album?*

HARRISON: That's right. It didn't come out, because Phil couldn't last in the studio for more than a few hours. We did about four very rough backing tracks. A couple of the songs Phil had written. One of them was very good in his pop vein.

He liked my "Try Some Buy Some" so we orchestrated it and knocked off a B-side for a Ronnie single on Apple in '71. The B-side's a killer, "Tandoori Chicken." It's a 12-bar thing done on the spot with Mal our roadie and Joe the chauffeur—"I told Mal/ my old pal/ to go with Joe/ and they should go/ and get some tandoori chicken." And a great big bottle of wine! [*laughter*] We did it one-take, with a lot of improvised scat singing in the middle. It's hysterical.

We also did a song which I later used on *Extra Texture* called "You." It was high for me, singing it, because I wrote it in Ronnie Spector's key and put my vocals on the instrumental track we'd completed.

I loved those Ronettes records and those Phil Spector records. I still do. And I love Phil. He's brilliant. There's nobody who's come close to some of his productions for excitement. Tina Turner's "River Deep Mountain High" probably was one of the only Cinemascope-sized records ever. But Phil didn't have enough energy with me to sustain an album for Ronnie. Still, he had a sense of humor, and if you're reading, Phil, I still think you're one of the *greatest*. He is, you know, and he should be out there doing stuff right now—but not with me!

After that I just worked on my own, although during 1978 I did one album, *George Harrison*, with Russ Titelman, who was a great help . At that time I felt I didn't really know what was going on out there in music, and I felt Russ, who was in music day by day, would give me a bit of direction. I didn't do an album until *Somewhere in England* in 1980-81 and then *Gone Troppo* the next year. The problem is that when you write, perform *and* produce there's a good chance of getting lost.

So recently I thought, "Who could I possibly work with?" I don't really know many people who would understand me and my past, and have respect for that, who I also have great respect for. And then I hit on Jeff Lynne, thinking he'd be good—*if* we got on well.

I'd never met him, but I was talking to Dave Edmunds and he said he knew and had just worked with Jeff. "Well," I mentioned, "if you talk with him, tell him I'd like to meet him." Dave called me back and said Jeff was going to be down in London, and I said to ask him if he wants to come over the house. So I met him like that and we had a nice dinner and a couple of bottles of wine and I got his phone number.

We hung out a bit. It's been two years now since I met him,

KEN REGAN/CAMERA 5

and the more we got to know each other it just evolved into this thing. Jeff was fantastic, the perfect choice. I couldn't have worked with a better person.

MUSICIAN: *You and Jeff cooked up "When We Was Fab" as a homage to your formative years.*

HARRISON: I got this idea for a few chords, and I started the tune while Jeff and I were messing around in Australia last November at the Australian Grand Prix. I began the song on a little guitar someone loaned me, and I got three or four chords into it when the string broke. We had to go to dinner but luckily there was a piano at the person's house where we went, so with people frying stuff in the background, we got on the piano and pursued three chords. They turned into the verse part of "When We Was Fab."

The first thing I constructed was a tempo announcement, with Ringo going, "One, two, *da-da-dum, da-da-dum!*" Next we laid the guitar, piano and drum framework, and I wasn't too sure what it was gonna turn into. But the idea was that it would evoke a Fabs song. It was always intended to be lots of fun.

MUSICIAN: *Maybe it's this California setting, but the first bygone Beatles track it made me think of was one you wrote for* Magical Mystery Tour *based on your temporary 1967 L.A. address between Beverly Hills and Laurel Canyon.*

HARRISON: "Blue Jay Way." It's in there. And also this funny chord, an E and an F at the same time, like one I had on the old Beatle record, "I Want to Tell You." It also has that chord in John's "She's So Heavy."

Anyway, every so often we took the tape of "Fab" out and overdubbed more, and it developed and took shape to where we wrote words. This was an odd experience for me; I've normally finished all of the songs I've done—with the exception of maybe a few words here and there—before I *ever* recorded them. But Jeff doesn't do that at all. He's making them up as he goes along.

That to me is a bit like, "*Ohh nooo*, that's too mystical. I wanna know where we're heading." But in another way it's good because you don't have to finalize your idea till the last minute. We put wacky lyrics in the last line of each chorus like, "Back when income tax was all we had." Another one says, "But it's all over now, Baby Blue." It's tongue-in-cheek and shows how Jeff could assist my muse. To do it live, we'd need the Electric Light Orchestra for all those cellos!

MUSICIAN: *The Beatles were a huge influence on ELO, but a nice thing about* Cloud Nine *is that it doesn't sound like Jeff Lynne, but rather like George Harrison saying, "I'm back!"*

HARRISON: That's the great thing about Jeff. He wanted to help me make *my* record. But there's so much in there Jeff contributed to. "Fab" was a 50-50 contribution, but "This Is Love" was a song where I said, "Why don't you write me a tune?" So he came down with lots of bits and pieces on cassette, and almost let me choose. I routined that song with him, and we wrote the words together. In fact, he had so many permutations of how that song is, he can still write another three songs out of the bits left.

I think he's one of the best pop songwriters around. He's a craftsman, and he's got endless patience. I tend to feel, "Okay, that'll do," and go on, and Jeff'll still be thinking about how to tidy what's just been done.

MUSICIAN: *Are you a Jeff Lynne-like saver of tracks and ideas?*

HARRISON: Not consciously, but I think all experiences go in here [*taps his head*] and our nervous systems compute them. If something's good, you tend to remember it, [*smiles*] and sometimes if it's bad, too. I don't think you can get away from your past, if you want to put it like that.

MUSICIAN: *Tell me the story behind "Got My Mind Set on You."*

HARRISON: That's something that I've just had in the back of my head for 25 years. It's a very obscure song, and I had it off an old album by this guy James Ray. In the very early '60s our manager, Brian Epstein, had his two NEMS—North End Music Stores—shops at Charlotte and Whitechapel Streets in Liverpool, and he made it his policy to have at least one copy of every record that came out in England. We used to go through all the records in the two shops, and that's why the Beatles records in those very early days were made up of both all the obvious things we liked, like Chuck Berry and Little Richard, but also things which were obscure. Most of them were American records, but a lot were not even known there!

We did a James Ray song, "If You Gotta Make a Fool of Somebody," in our show for years. When we started making records we did a lot of covers but we never covered that one—although we might have done it live in some BBC recordings. But all these North of England bands started doing a lot of the tunes we used to do, and actually had hits with some of the tracks. The Swinging Blue Jeans took Chan Romero's "The Hippy Hippy Shake" from what we used to do.

So I came here to America in 1963—*before* the Beatles came here—and I bought that James Ray album that had "If You Gotta Make a Fool of Somebody." The album itself was really terrible, but the best three songs were written by this guy who

In London: signing against apartheid.

PHIL LOFTUS/LONDON FEATURES

"I was pissed off at Lennon and McCartney for the grief I was catching during the making of the Beatles' white album. I said I wasn't guilty of getting in the way of their careers."

discovered James Ray, a former mailman named Rudy Clark. Clark wrote "It's Been a Drag," and "Got My Mind Set on You Part One/Part Two"—although it didn't have any break in between. If you listen to the song now it's very different from how I've done it. I've updated it and changed the chords, because I preferred it the way I heard it in my head. Clark and Ray's version of it was coming out of the old jazz/swing era, and it has these horrible screechy women's voices singing those backup parts.

I did that song because Jim Keltner got this drum pattern going one day that was a cross between swing and rock. Gary Wright turned around and said, "Hey! Doesn't that remind you of that song, 'Got My Mind Set on You'?" [*laughter*] I was so surprised that anybody else had *ever* heard that tune!

MUSICIAN: *You've covered some rare chestnuts on your own. On* Gone Troppo, *you cut "I Really Love You," a bouncy R&B number that was a hit for the Stereos in 1961.*

HARRISON: Yes! And if you remember that song then I'll tell you that the Beatles wrote a song that I think was actually a nick, a bit of a pitch off that one. It was a song that John wrote and I sang on the very first Beatle album called "Do You Want to Know a Secret." If you check that against the song you're referring to on *Troppo*, that's round two of where "Secret" came from [*laughter*]. It's a fun track.

MUSICIAN: *What was it like working with John on* Imagine *in 1971? You contributed slide guitar or dobro to "Crippled Inside," "How Do You Sleep?" "I Don't Want to Be a Soldier Momma," "Gimme Some Truth" and "Oh My Love."*

HARRISON: It was nerve-wracking, as usual. Previously I'd worked on "Instant Karma." At that time very strange, intense feelings were going on. Sometimes people don't talk to each other, thinking they're not going to be the one to phone you up and risk rejection. With John, I knew Klaus Voorman, the bass player, so I could at least *ask* what was going on over at his little 8-track studio in his house at Tittenhurst Park, and how Klaus was doing. John said, "Oh, you know, you *should* come over," so I just put me guitar and amplifier in the car.

I turned up and he was openly pleased I came. I enjoyed "How Do You Sleep?"; I liked being on *that* side of it with Paul [*chuckles*] rather than on the receiving end. Moreover, I was earnestly trying to be a slide guitar player at that time but I always blacked out at solos, especially live ones. I seemed to have no control over what was happening and my mind'd go blank. That was one of them where I hit a few good notes and it happened to sound like a solo. We did all that work in one day.

MUSICIAN: *Just as "How Do You Sleep?" and "Crippled Inside" were John's snipes at McCartney, your song "Wah-Wah" on* All Things Must Pass *was aimed at Paul during* Let It Be.

HARRISON: [*nods*] I'd left the band at that period. Everybody's seen that film [*Let It Be*] now, and what was supposed to be us rehearsing new material. They were going to film us recording it live, but the rehearsal became the movie. After we got over all the rows we had, us recording it live just ended up in Apple Studio and on the roof.

I just got so fed up with the bad vibes—and that arguments with Paul were being put on film. I didn't care if it was the Beatles, I was getting out. Getting home in that pissed-off mood, I wrote that song. "Wah-Wah" was saying, "You've given me a bloody headache."

Further on, the song worked well live at the Bangla Desh concert, considering there was no rehearsal. *That* whole show was a stroke of luck. I'd rehearsed *some* with Ringo, the horn players and the guys from Badfinger, but it was all happening so fast it's amazing we managed to get anything on tape.

MUSICIAN: *"Not Guilty," on* George Harrison, *written during the sessions for the Beatles' white album, was a pointed barb at your old bandmates.*

HARRISON: It was me getting pissed off at Lennon and McCartney for the grief I was catching during the making of the white album. I said I wasn't guilty of getting in the way of their careers. I said I wasn't guilty of leading them astray in our all going to Rishikesh to see the Maharishi. I was sticking up for myself, and the song came off strong enough to be saved and utilized.

MUSICIAN: *You've drawn some strong statements from sorrow. "Deep Blue" was very affecting, and since it was on the flip side of the "Bangla Desh" single, it became a jukebox favorite in bars in the States.*

HARRISON: I'm glad you noticed that one. You're sure they weren't just punching up the wrong side of the record? I got the impression people never heard a lot of these songs.

When I was making *All Things Must Pass* in 1970, not only did I have Phil Spector going in the hospital and all this trouble, besides organizing the Trident Studios schedule in London with Derek & the Dominos—who many forget got their *start* on that record—but also my mother got really ill. I was going all the way up and down England to Liverpool trying to see her in the hospital. Bad time.

She'd got a tumor on the brain, but the doctor was an idiot and he was saying, "There's nothing wrong with her, she's having some psychological trouble." When I went up to see her she didn't even know who I was. [*voice stiffing with anger*] I had to punch the doctor out, 'cause in England the family doctor has to be the one to get the specialist. So he got the guy to look at her and she ended up in the neurological hospital. The specialist said, "She could end up being a vegetable, but if it was my wife or my mother I'd do the operation"—which was a horrendous thing where they had to drill a hole in her skull.

She recovered a little bit for about seven months. And during that period my father, who'd taken care of her, had suddenly exploded with ulcers and he was in the same hospital. So I was pretending to both of them that the other one was okay. Then, running back and forth to do this record, I wrote that song. I made it up at home one exhausted morning with those major and minor chords. It's filled with that frustration and gloom of going in these hospitals, and the feeling of *dis*-ease—as the word's meaning truly is—that permeated the atmosphere. Not being able to do anything for suffering family or loved ones is an awful experience.

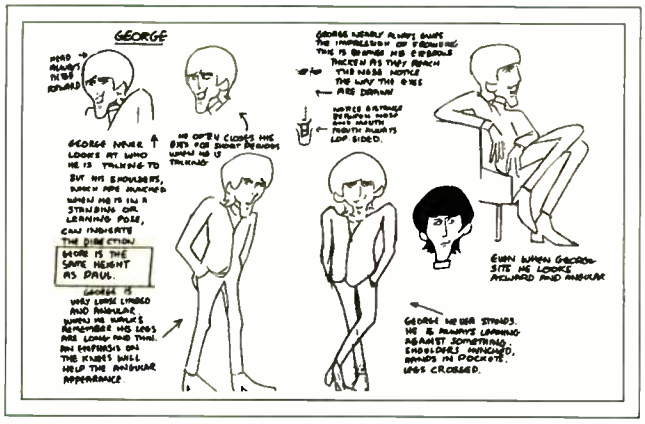
MUSICIAN: *Let's talk about "Devil's Radio," a raging track!*

HARRISON: That was a tune I hit on accidentally. I passed a little church in England near where my boy Dhani, who's now nine, goes to school. There was a poster on the side of this church saying, "GOSSIP! THE DEVIL'S RADIO! DON'T BE

"My mother got a tumor on the brain, but the doctor was an idiot and he was saying, 'There's nothing wrong with her, she's having some psychological trouble'...she didn't even know who I was. I had to punch the doctor out..."

A BROADCASTER!" I just thought it was a dead ringer for a rock tune. At that point I'd just been to see Eurythmics a couple of times and I'd forgotten about that kind of straightforward rock 'n' roll song that they go for so effectively. Somewhere down the line I'd gotten into all these thick chord songs and I forgot, until I was watching Eurythmics, how great that straight-from-the-gate force in rock rhythm is. I thought, "God, I can do this!" So the song was the result of seeing that poster and then the Eurythmics. The only thing missing is that it should be Bob Dylan singing it. [*laughter*]

That song starts out like a voice from on high: "I heard it in the night/ words the thoughtless speak/ like vultures swooping down below/ on the Devil's Radio/ I hear through the day/



Peter Sander's 1965 storyboard characterization for *The Beatles* TV cartoon series

airwaves getting filled with gossip broadcast to and fro/ on the Devil's Radio."

MUSICIAN: *There's a line that seems to refer to your reclusive profile of late: "You wonder why I don't hang out much."*

HARRISON: Yeah, it's something about [*haunted-house voice*]: "It's wide and black/ like industrial waste/ pollution of the highest degree/ you wonder why I don't hang out much/ I wonder why you can't see/ it's in the films and song/ and on your magazines/ it's everywhere that you may go/ the Devil's Radio!" Boo!! [*laughter*]

But really, gossip is a terrible thing. We all do it and all our minds are polluted by it. You know what I mean? Somebody said, "The next time you gossip, gossip about yourself and see how you like it." It just creates a mud of negativity, false information, and puts bad atmosphere out. Like the church poster said: "Don't be a broadcaster." I like to remind myself of this, because I'm just as bad as everyone else.

MUSICIAN: *Recently in* Rolling Stone, *they had a rock trivia quiz in which John Lennon's* Two Virgins *was said to be the first Beatle solo album. But that's wrong. You stuck your neck out four weeks before the November 29, 1968 release of* Two Virgins *with* Wonderwall Music.

HARRISON: [*grinning*] And it's not trivia, it's history! I remember doing it in London at the end of 1967, and then went to Bombay and recorded part of it in a studio there. There was this guy who directed the movie, *Wonderwall*, called Joe Massot. I don't know where I met him, but he said he wanted me to do the music to this movie—which didn't come out until 1969. I said, "I don't know; I haven't got a guess of how to write music for a movie." He said, "Aw, we've got no budget for the music anyway, so whatever you give me, I'll have it!"

I was real nervous with the idea, because he wanted music running through the whole film, but he kept on with me. What I'd do was go into the film studio with a stopwatch—it was really high-tech stuff, eh?—and I'd just be what they call "spotting" the scene to see where the music was going to go, doing click-click with the watch. I'd go back into my studio and make 35 seconds, say, of something, mix it and line it up with the scene.

It gave me a great opportunity. I was getting so into Indian music then that I decided to use the assignment partly as an excuse for a musical anthology to help spread it. I used all these instruments that at that time weren't as familiar to Western people as they are now, like shanhais, santoor, sarod, surbahars, tablatarangs. I also used tambura drones and had Eric Clapton playing blues guitar backwards over them. And loads of horrible mellotron stuff also.

MUSICIAN: *I got a kick that there was a snatch of "Crying" from* Wonderwall Music *spliced in, 13 years later, at the close of* Somewhere in England's *"Save the World."*

HARRISON: You spotted that? Three points for you! The whole "Save the World" song blows up in the middle, where we all get nuked, with babies crying. That latter song is very serious, but at the same time is hysterical. The lyrics have got a lot of funny things about "dogfood salesmen" and "making your own H-bomb in the kitchen with your mom." At the end, I just wanted to let the whole song go out with something sad, to touch that nerve and maybe make you think, "Ohhh shit."

I thought of that instrument I used on *Wonderwall Music* called the thar-shanhai, which means "string" shanhai. It's like a one-string fiddle, a bowed instrument with the sympathetic strings resting over a stretched skin, so it has that hollow, echoey resonance, a wailing, crying sound.

MUSICIAN: Electronic Sound, *released on the Zapple label in May 1969, was your second solo album. How'd you go from touting these esoteric acoustic Indian instruments to creating that dense mass of synthesizer gizmo effects?*

HARRISON: All I did was get that very first Moog synthesizer, with the big patch unit and the keyboards that you could never tune, and I put a microphone into a tape machine. I recorded whatever came out. The word avant-garde, as my friend Alvin Lee likes to say, really means, "'*Aven't-got* a clue!" So whatever came out when I fiddled with the knobs went on tape—but some amazing sounds did happen.

MUSICIAN: *Only two albums appeared on Zapple,* Electronic Sound *and John Lennon's* "Life with the Lions: Unfinished Music No. 2." *The third scheduled release,* Listening to Richard Brautigan, *was never issued.*

HARRISON: See, we conceived of an offshoot of Apple Records that would be arty music that wouldn't normally gain an outlet, a series where people could talk or read their work, as with the

Brautigan thing. The intention was to get Lenny Bruce and all these kinds of people. But as with so many other things at Apple, it seized up before it really got going. Both of the albums that *did* come out are a load of rubbish, yet they're interesting from a collector's point of view. The theory was, we wanted to let serendipity take hold.

MUSICIAN: *You told Mitch Glazer in* Crawdaddy *in 1977 about the entirely happenstantial origins of Cream's "Badge" in 1968: Eric Clapton mistook your scribbled note about the song's "bridge" for the title "Badge," and the lyric "I told you 'bout the swans, that they live in the park" was just a drunken mumble from Ringo.*

HARRISON: Uh-huh. Nobody'd asked me about "Badge" before. That whole song was quite silly. Ringo was sitting around drinking, out of his brain, saying anything. The part about "Our kid, now he's married to Mabel," well, "our kid" is a common Liverpool expression that usually means your younger brother. We were amusing ourselves. And my "L'Angelo Misterioso" credit must have been thought up by Eric. I just saw it on the back of the album when it came! In those days, of course, if you played on anybody else's album or even one track, EMI used to get funny about it, thinking, "Oh, the fabulous Beatles publishing catalogue," and try claiming royalties on it. So if we did that we always had to make up names. Ravi Shankar used to put on "Hari Georgson" or "Jai Raj Harisein." John preferred "George Harrisong."

MUSICIAN: *What were the influences on your slide guitar playing over the years? It's an incredibly distinctive signature.*

HARRISON: I'm not sure of the influences. The first time I ever played slide was in 1969. I suppose I stuck one of those things on my finger somewhere before that, but in 1969 Eric Clapton got his manager to bring Delaney and Bonnie over to England, and Eric was in the band. I went to see the first show in December. It was such a good rocking crew; I figured it'd be nice to be in it. They said, "Okay, we're coming to your house in the morning." And they pulled up the bus outside my house, and said, "Come on!" I just grabbed a guitar and an amp and went on the road with them.

They had a song out called "Comin' Home," which Dave Mason had actually played slide on. Delaney gave me this slide bottleneck and said, "You do the Dave Mason part." I'd never attempted anything before that, and I think my slide guitar playing originated from that.

I started writing some slide songs on that tour, one of which later came out on *33⅓*, called "Woman Don't You Cry for Me." Then I started playing that way at home, and I suppose I was always trying to pretend to be a blues player in my style. Another thing that influenced me was, during the '60s, I played the sitar and got heavy into Indian music. That may account for some quality that you can't quite put your finger on; it's in there somewhere and comes out. For two or three years I was only playing the sitar.

After I decided I'd better get back to playing the guitar and writing pop tunes in the late '60s, I found I couldn't really play these solos or get a good sound, because I hadn't touched the guitar other than the Beatles sessions for records; I started playing slide, thinking maybe this is how I can come up with something that's half-decent. I got into doing corresponding guitar harmonies to the bedrock slide parts, double-tracking them, like on "My Sweet Lord" and other portions of the *All Things Must Pass* album.

MUSICIAN: *Is there a certain guitar you use for slide playing?*

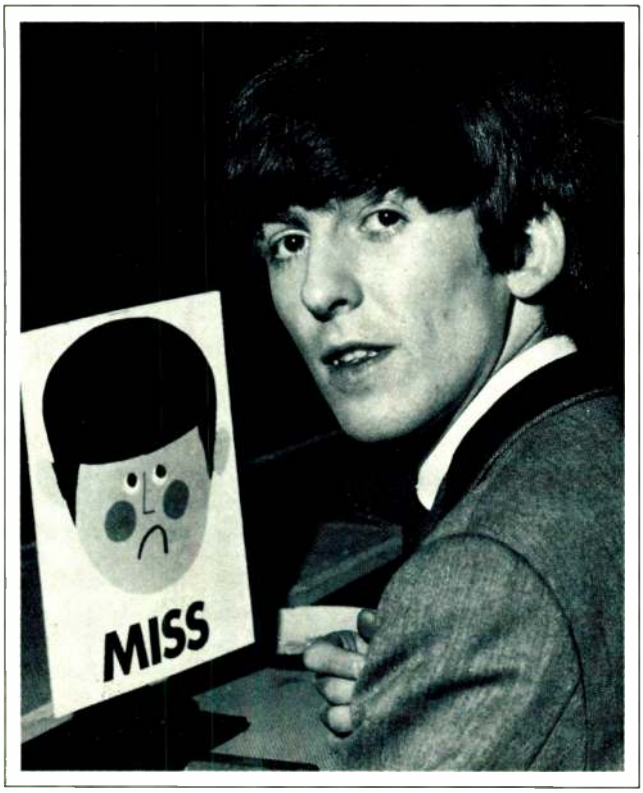
HARRISON: I used to use anything; I didn't understand how to do it properly. Eventually I found the best way: Ry Cooder, who is my favorite guitar player in that vein, has his bridge cranked up high, with heavy-gauge strings. That's what you really need, otherwise you get all that rattling on the frets. Ry's got a good touch and a good ear for melody. It's one thing to be able to play slide efficiently, but if you can't get a tune out of it, too, it's not very likeable.

I set up this Strat, an early-'60s model that was originally pale blue, for slide play before we did "Nowhere Man." In the late '60s I painted it psychedelic—it was the one I used for the '67 satellite thing for "All You Need Is Love" and also on "I Am the Walrus" on *Magical Mystery Tour.*

But I've never had the technique that Ry Cooder has with finger-style picking. I've tried to get this without a flat pick, using your right hand so that you can dampen down all the notes. But if you were to isolate my slide tracks on some of the old records there's all this *racket* going on behind. Whereas, I'm sure if you were to do the same thing with Cooder you could hear just what he's playing—it's really clean.

I've got two slides, and the main one I've used is actually a piece off the old Vox AC-30 amplifier stand. I asked the roadie we used to have in the Beatles, Mal Evans, if he could get me one, and he just got a hacksaw out and sawed through a piece of the amp stand. I used that a lot, and I had some glass slides made also. I find the glass slide tends to be a warmer sound, whereas the metal one is more slippy and is brighter. But I couldn't tell you which one I've used where [*chuckles*], because I don't make notes on it.

MUSICIAN: *Do you have any hobbies besides film-producing and being a Grand Prix buff? On* Somewhere in England *you were shown on the cover in front of a Mark Boyle painting. Do you collect art?*



Beatle George evaluates Bobby Vinton.

"I like certain artists, but by the time I got to like them they were too expensive to collect. Paul's got a bunch of Magrittes. He bought them for, like, 50 dollars each. Now they're worth millions."

HARRISON: That painting was wonderful. He'd done a cast of the pavement and the gutter and a piece of the road. It's quite an amazing process, like a sculpting of the street. I like certain artists, but by the time I *got* to like them they were too expensive to collect, like Dalí and Magritte. Paul's got a bunch of Magrittes. He bought them for, like 50 dollars each. Then the guy died in 1967 and now they're worth millions.

MUSICIAN: *Whatever happened to the four songs—"Lay His Head," "Tears of the World," "Sat Singing" and "Flying Hour"—that Warners dropped from* Somewhere in England*?*

HARRISON: Funny you should ask that, with us discussing art. I'm doing another book with Genesis Publications, who did my 1980 book, *I, Me, Mine*. For some reason, and I don't remember why, *I, Me, Mine* later came out in a cheap version, but it was only really made as a limited edition, because how it's made was almost more important than what's inside.

But there's this new book I've been working on with an artist, Keith West, for about two years now. He's illustrating the lyrics to my songs. It could only be done in a limited edition because if you printed it cheap, you'd lose the value of it. We're making it two volumes.

To answer your question, we decided to put a free record inside the books of some songs that have gotten left out over the years. I finished the record for the first book just before I came here, and it's of those four songs you just mentioned—and a live version of "For You Blue." It all comes in a big leather box with a little drawer for the record. It's called *Songs by George Harrison* and it should be out by Christmas, but there's only 2,000 copies being done, and it does cost 200 pounds. It's expensive, yes, but in a world of crass, disposable junk, it's meant to be a lovely thing.

MUSICIAN: *That anticipates my next question. Now that the surviving Beatles are suing Nike for the "Revolution" sneaker ad, what's your view of the commercial-abuse controversies regarding the Beatles' recorded legacy?*

HARRISON: Well, from our point of view, if it's allowed to happen, every Beatles song ever recorded is going to be advertising women's underwear and sausages. We've got to put a stop to it in order to set a precedent. Otherwise it's going to be a free-for-all. It's just one of those things, like the play *Beatlemania*. We have to do certain things in order to try to safeguard the past. The other thing is, even while Nike might have paid Capitol Records for the rights, Capitol Records certainly don't give us the money.

It's one thing if you're dead, but we're still around! They don't have any respect for the fact that we wrote and recorded those songs, and it was our lives. The way I feel, I don't care who thinks they own the copyright to the songs, or who thinks

they own the masters of the records. It was our lives, we set it, and they should have a little respect for that.

MUSICIAN: Dark Horse, *the album and the single, made for a powerful but pessimistic image of desperate competition with your former bandmates and with yourself.*

HARRISON: That album had some good material but the pressure I got under that year was ridiculous. I went through so many things: produced two other albums, *Shankar Family and Friends*, and *The Place I Love* by Splinter. And I produced an Indian music festival, which had taken me years to get together, with 15 or 16 classical Indian musicians all playing ensemble, like an orchestra—which they never do. In India you see solo players or two performers with a tabla player. In 1974 I went to India, got them all together, they came to Europe, Ravi wrote all the material. It *rocked*. Then came my own album and this tour I had lined up. And I also met my wife Arias around then.

I wrote the song "Dark Horse" in the studio with Ringo and Keltner and I never got to finish it. I took this half-finished album with me to tour rehearsals in Los Angeles and got my voice blown out by singing all day long. I decided, because I had to teach the band the songs anyway for the tour, that we'd mike up the soundstage in one of the studios at A&M and record it live. If you listen now, it's *sort of* okay. It was all done in a rush, with rehearsals by day and mixing at night.

For the artwork on the inner sleeve. I was so behind that moments before we went on the road I got a blank dust cover and wrote out all the credits by hand, put a few thumb prints on it and gave it to the record company for the printers. The cover shot was my high school class photo from Liverpool Institute, with lots of gray students who all look the same, and this big gray building in the background. I positioned the blown-up photo so that I'd be in the middle, put an album cover over the length of it and cropped it off. I moved the headmaster, who never liked me anyway, from where he was in the photo and I put him in the middle with a bull's eye Capitol logo on his chest. I got the art guy to paint the Himalayas in the background with a few yogis in the sky, and put exotic T-shirts on everybody.

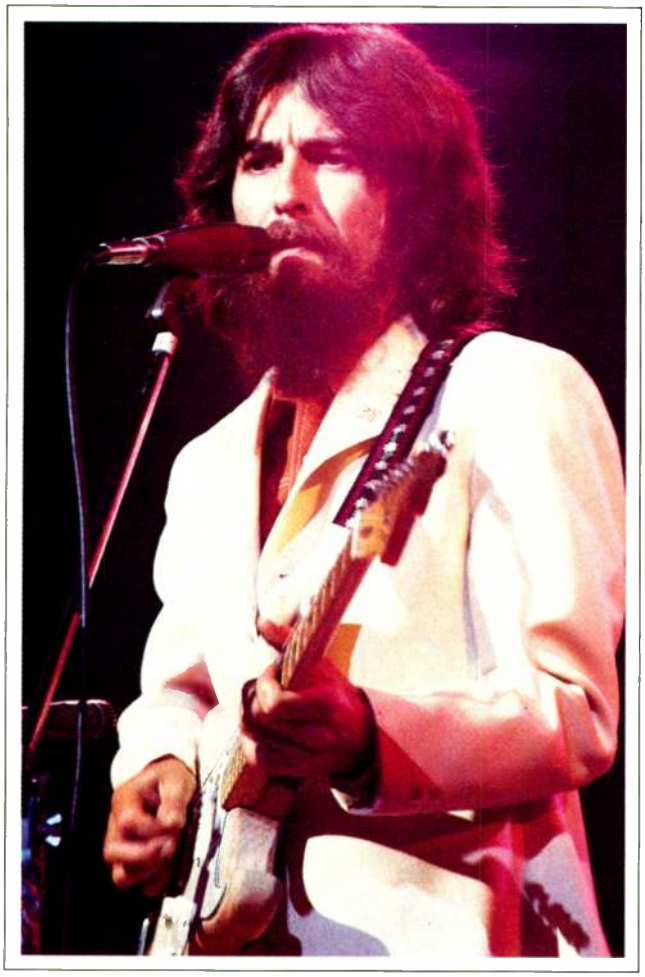
MUSICIAN: *Is that Peter Sellers you're with on the inside shot?*

HARRISON: Sure, that's us strolling 'round Friar Park. I was quite close with Peter. Long before I met him I was a fan of *The Goon Show*, and then I used to see him at parties. I got to spend a lot of time with him in the '60s when I was with Ravi Shankar, because Peter liked Ravi a lot.

Once Peter Sellers, Ravi and I all went to Disneyland in 1971. Can you imagine all of us going on the Pirate and the Haunted Mansion rides together? Peter was a devoted hippie, a free soul. He came on tour with me in 1974, flew on the plane with us. When Peter was up, he was the funniest person you could ever imagine; so many voices and characters. But that was his problem: When he wasn't up, he didn't know who he was supposed to be.

He was a considerable influence on my getting into the film world. Peter used to come to my Henley house with all these 16-millimeter films and we'd sit 'round and have dinner and watch. His favorite picture—which has been mine ever since Peter showed it to me—was Mel Brooks' *The Producers*. He kept saying, "You've got to see this movie!" Eventually we put it on, and I've never taken it off.

The bubble caption in the photo of Peter and me on the *Dark Horse* jacket is from *The Producers*, from Max Bialystock's line to his partner Bloom: "Well Leo! What say we promenade



Singing for Bangla Desh, 1971.

through the park?"

MUSICIAN: *People always say you're so serious and broody, but I'd say you have a ready sense of humor.*

HARRISON: Me too! I've *always* had a sense of humor—and I think it's absolutely necessary. I think what happened is, I was tagged as somber because I did some spiritual things during a sizable phase of my own career, and sang a lot of songs about God or the Lord or whatever you want to call Him. You can't be singing that material laughingly, but if you're not smiling people draw that conclusion of *seriousness*.

I don't think anybody's all serious or all comical, and I've seen comedians who are deadly serious when they're offstage. Frankly, I always thought it was very funny when people thought I was very serious! Maybe it's also because the last time I did interviews back in the 1970s it was all that heavy hangover from the hippie '60s, when everybody was into this discipline, that doctrine and the other. I've got a very serious side of me, but even within that, I always see the joke too. That's why I always liked Monty Python.

MUSICIAN: *Which brings up* The Life of Brian *and your other film production. It's a great body of work—from* Time Bandits, *on through* Mona Lisa *and* Withnail And I*—that you've done with partner Denis O'Brien for your Handmade Films.*

HARRISON: It's my hobby! It's taken time, but we've gained a little respect from film people. We try to be nice to people—it's not always easy—and most of the things we've done were films nobody else wanted to do; they were rejects. The only film that was *not* enjoyable making was the only one on which we've ever been involved with anybody from Hollywood: *Shanghai Surprise*. We were a day away from scrapping that when suddenly Sean Penn and Madonna got involved. But that was such a pain in the ass!

We've got good relationships with other people we've worked with, however, like Michael Caine, Maggie Smith and Bob Hoskins. *Withnail and I*, the first film Bruce Robinson's directed, was a chance to support a project everybody else turned down. It's the same right now with a movie we're shooting about a band of gypsies in Czechoslovakia that Bob Hoskins has written, directed and is acting in himself. It's called *Raggedy Rawny.*

I'd like to think we help people achieve some of their ambitions. At the same time, when we took on *The Life of Brian*, I was so into Monty Python I didn't care what anybody thought. In those days we had to put up all the money, didn't get any advances from studios—nothing.

MUSICIAN: *When you produced* Life of Brian *many people questioned why the man behind "My Sweet Lord" would produce a supposedly sacrilegious biblical farce.*

HARRISON: Ah-hah! Actually all it made fun of was the *people's* stupidity in the story. Christ came out of it looking good! Myself and all of Monty Python have great respect for Christ. It's only the ignorant people—who didn't care to check it out—who thought that it was knocking Christ. Actually it was upholding Him and knocking all the idiotic stuff that goes on around religion, like the fact that many folks often misread things and will follow anybody. Brian's saying, "Don't follow me. You're all individuals."

It's like Christ said, "You'll all do greater work than I will." He wasn't trying to say, "I'm the groove, man, and you should follow me." He was out there trying to, as Lord Buckley would have said, "Knock the crows off the squares," trying to hip everybody to the fact that they have the Christ within.

MUSICIAN: *You're a fan of hipster comedian Lord Buckley, which is where your 1977 hit "Crackerbox Palace" came from.*

HARRISON: I was down at that MIDEM music publishing convention in France in 1975, and I was stuck at some boring dinner when I saw Dylan's manager, Albert Grossman. I went over to him and he was with this fella George Greif, who was himself a manager. We got talking and I said to Greif, "I don't know if this is a compliment or an insult, but you remind me of Lord Buckley." He said, "I managed him for eighteen years!"

I couldn't believe it, so we spent a few hours talking and he said that Buckley lived in this little shack he called Crackerbox Palace. I wrote that down on my cigarette packet and, again, like Devil's Radio, it was a good phrase for a song. Near the end of the single there's a line in it in direct relation to Lord Buckley: "I met a Mr. Greif/ and he said/ I welcome you to Crackerbox Palace/ was not expecting you/ let's rap and tap at Crackerbox Palace/ know that the Lord is well and inside of you." I made the raw input into a story about getting born and living in the world, but again, everybody thought I was talking about the *other* Lord.

MUSICIAN: *You mention knowing Albert Grossman. I always wondered how the Band came to invite you up to Woodstock in November 1968. You wrote "I'd Have You Anytime" with Dylan during that visit.*

HARRISON: I wrote "All Things Must Pass" there as well. To this day you can play *Stage Fright* and *Big Pink*, and although the technology's changed, those records come off as

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I knew those guys during that period and I think it was Robbie Robertson who invited me down. He said, "You can stay at Albert's. He's got the *big* house." I hung out with them and Bob. It was strange because at that time Bob and Grossman were going through this fight, this crisis about managing him. I would spend the day with Bob and the night with Grossman and hear both sides of the battle.

Artistically, I respected the Band enormously. All the different guys in the group sang, and Robbie Robertson used to say he was lucky, because he could write songs for a voice like Levon's. What a wise and generous attitude. The hard thing is to write a song for yourself, knowing you've got to sing it. Sometimes I have a hard time singing my own stuff.

"Ringo can't wait to tour, and Eric tells me he's going to be in the band."

MUSICIAN: *You once remarked that you were trying to write a Robbie Robertson kind of song with "All Things Must Pass."*
HARRISON: "The Weight" was the one I admired, it had a religious *and* a country feeling to it, and I wanted that. You absorb, then you interpret, and it comes out nothing like the thing you're imagining, but it gives you a starting point. We used to take that approach with the Beatles, saying, "Who are we going to be today? Let's pretend to be Fleetwood Mac!" There's a song on *Abbey Road*, "The Sun King," that tried that. At the time, "Albatross" was out, with all the reverb on guitar. So we said, "Let's be Fleetwood Mac doing 'Albatross,'" just to get going. It never really sounded like Fleetwood Mac, just like "All Things" never sounded like the Band, but they were the point of origin.
MUSICIAN: *What was it like writing with Dylan? He was still a hermit from his motorcycle accident of July 1966. Was he shy?*
HARRISON: We were *both* shy. He'd been out of commission socially since his accident. I was nervous in his house and he was nervous as well. We fidgeted about for two days and only relaxed when we started playing some guitars. The song "I'd Have You Anytime" was an accident. I was just saying, "Hey, man, how do you write all these words?!" Which people probably said to him all the time.

I kept thinking he would come pouring out with all these lyrics! He wrote the middle—"All I have is yours/ all you see is mine/ I'm glad to hold you in my arms/ I'd have you anytime"—and it was *simplicity* itself. [*smiles*] Meantime he was saying, "How do *you* get all them chords?" I showed him some weird

SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE

Of all the former "Fabs," to use his customary term, George Harrison has remained the greatest creative homebody. While Paul McCartney, for example, has gone from New Orleans to Nigeria to a yacht anchored in the Virgin Islands in search of ideal studio settings, George has rolled out of bed and returned again and again to Friar Park Studios, Henley-on-Thames (or F.P.S.H.O.T., for short) to tinker, compose and do his formal recording.

George bought Friar Park, his 30-room castle in Oxfordshire, on January 14, 1970. Built in the 1870s by Sir Francis Crisp, the spired and turreted mansion was used as a Roman Catholic convent until 1969. Besides *Cloud Nine*, George recorded the *Dark Horse*, *33⅓* and *George Harrison* albums in his F.P.S.H.O.T. atelier, located in what was formerly a ballroom of the house.

"The studio was installed 'round 1971 and there's been a few updates, 'cause when I originally put the studio in it was a 16-track. In terms of the monitoring system, after all those years in the Abbey Road EMI Studios, I put in Altec speakers. My experience in Abbey Road was that whenever the Beatles worked there and we thought we had a great sound, we'd play it back on the Altecs and it sounded terrible—ordinary. So they're very boring in a way—and this must sound strange—but they're also accurate!

"See, the Altecs don't flatter the sound; it's not easy to get good bass and drum sounds with them. But when I built my studio I didn't want hype. I wanted what I'm hearing to be what it *is*. That way, when you play it back anyplace else it sounds fantastic!

"At that time people were talking about quadrophonic sound, and while I didn't think it'd catch on—since you do only have *two* ears—I figured I better have that just in case. Those old quad pan pots [stereo channel potentiometers] are the main giveaway of the board's vintage, but I've taken the four speakers down. Never found them useful anyway.

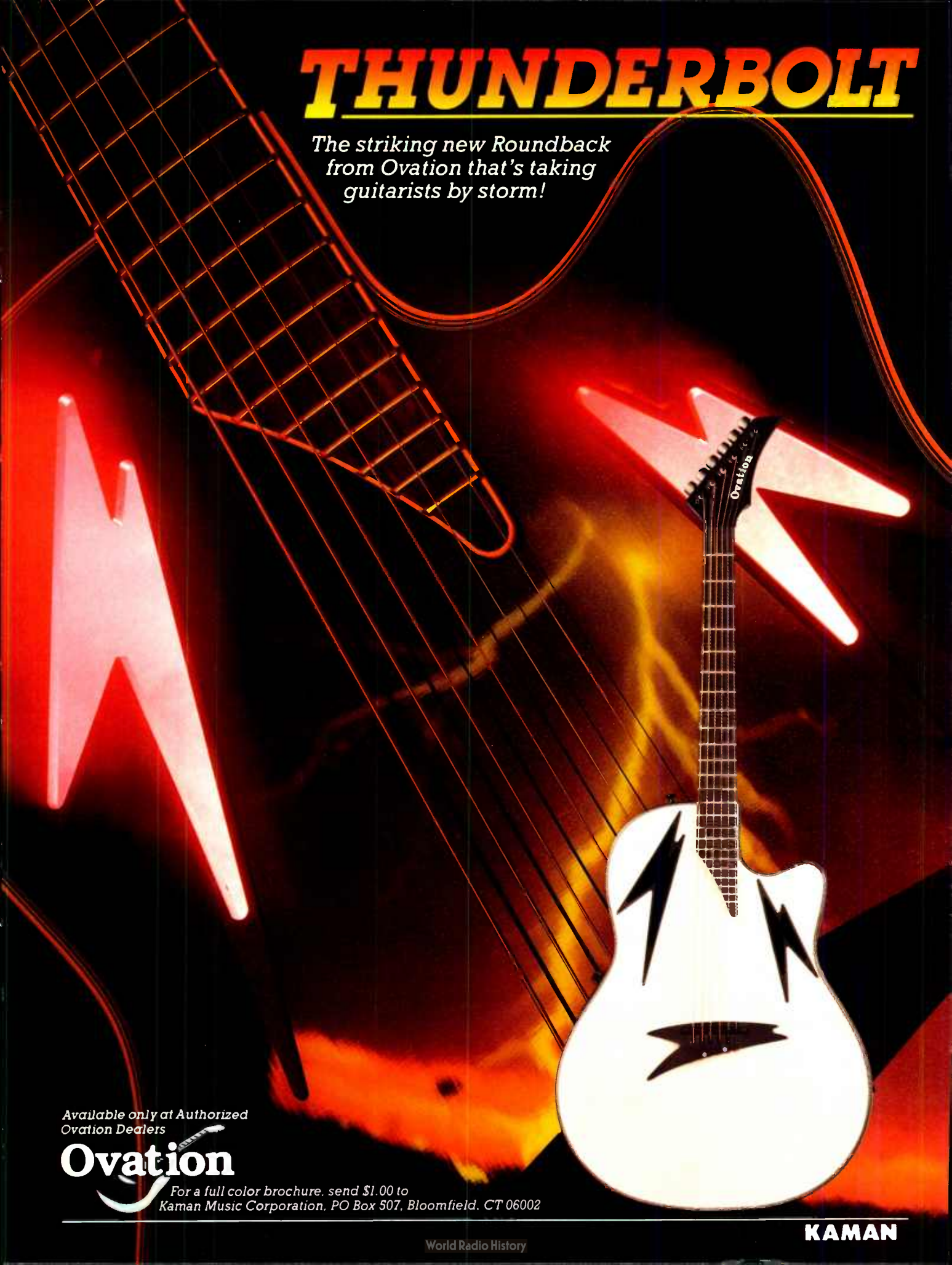
"I've since made F.P.S.H.O.T. into a 24-track board. Unlike the old EMI board, it's got the newer carbon faders. I've added different outboard equipment as the years have gone by, but it's basically Cadac [British console] components.

"In other studios, I could never understand it when you had to rough mix the record but you still had more work to do it. You'd have to break all the board settings down to put it back through to mix it. So I had them build me a board that's really two boards—now everybody probably uses it—where you have your input section, and when it's playing back, it comes up through the remix section. So you've got all the echo, pan pots, EQ, and can just make a proper mix, even though it's a re-mix. Or the producer can screw around with the EQ and effects without affecting what's on tape.

"I'm thinking of having a few variations on the equalization because, to tell you the truth, it's very subtle. *Maybe* a really great engineer can distinguish between the settings. In comparison, Jeff Lynne has a little old board up at his house and it's got such radical EQ, when you turn on the knob you really *hear* the change.

"Still, the studio is a versatile place, and I'm not the only one who seems to like working there. At the end of January/beginning of February, Duane Eddy came to England, because Jeff had promised him he'd produce a couple of tracks. So we did them in my house right after we finished the drum tracks on my album. One was a really nice song Jeff wrote called 'Theme for Something Really Important,' which sounds like it should be on a movie, and the other was something Ravi Shankar sang to me once called 'The Trembler.' They're funny titles but serious work! And everybody was comfortable and satisfied with my equipment, which pleased me. I'm going to get a few different choice modules made soon, but I don't really want to go for a brand new SSL board and all that. Automation is nice in some respects, but I got my first skills at Abbey Road, so I prefer the old components, and spending a friendly weekend getting the manual mix you want. Just as I much prefer my ancient Fender Strat."

ALAN DAVIDSON/RETNA



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ones and happened to hit those two major sevenths, one after another. They turned into that melody. Understand, I sang that opening lyric off the top of my head to try to communicate with *him*: "Let me in here/ I know I've been here..."

MUSICIAN: *The man who built your Henley Castle, Sir Francis Crisp, was both a prominent lawyer in the 1800s and an architect. I've heard that inscriptions and artwork he added to the interior inspired such songs as "The Ballad of Sir Frankie Crisp (Let It Roll)," "The Answer's at the End" and "Ding Dong."*

HARRISON: It's a Victorian house, and when I bought it, it was about to be demolished, so I got it in its roughest state. Over the years I've fixed it up and it's a fabulous place, a treasure of Victorian artifacts, even though a lot of things originally made for the house had been sold before I bought it. But there are inscriptions all over the place: some in Latin, some in Old English, many of them poetry of obscure authorship.

"Ding Dong," which I wrote in five minutes, came from some Tennyson carved over either side of the fireplace with little bells: "Ring out the old/ ring in the new/ ring out the false/ ring in the true." Outside in the building where the gardener's sheds are, carved over one window is: "Yesterday—today—was tomorrow." The adjacent window has: "Tomorrow—today—will be yesterday." And those parts became the middle eight of "Ding Dong."

The quote above the entrance hall says: "Scan not a friend with a microscopic glass/ you know his faults now let his foibles pass." Opposite, it reads: "Life is one long enigma true my friend/ read on, read on, the answer's at the end." *Extra Texture*, where that was used, was a grubby album in a way. The production left a lot to be desired, as did my performance. I was in a real down place. Some songs I like, but in retrospect I wasn't very happy about it. "Grey Cloudy Lies" described clouds of gloom that used to come down on me. A difficulty I had. I've found over the years that I'm more able to keep them away, and am quite a happy person now.

MUSICIAN: *The flip of "Ding Dong" displays the cloudy side of you. "I Don't Care Anymore" never appeared anywhere else.*

HARRISON: I had to come up with a B-side and I did it in one take. The story was in the attitude: I-don't-give-a-shit!

MUSICIAN: *Yet you often seem to care a great deal about the care and feeding of many of your songs, to where you've done sequels to several.* Extra Texture*'s "This Guitar (Can't Keep from Crying)," and "Here Comes the Moon" on* George Harrison, *are dramatic examples.*

HARRISON: Concerning my "Guitars" songs, if you're a guitar player, guitars have a genuine fascination and it's nice to have songs about them. I recently saw a guitar program on TV in England and it got into how it's phallic and sexual. Maybe that's so. I don't know in my case, but ever since I was a kid I've loved guitar *and* songs about them, like B.B. King's "Lucille." But the sequels in this case had to do in large part with me not enjoying "Guitar Gently Weeps." I love what Eric did on guitar for the original, but versions I did live are better in some respects. See, in the Beatles days, I never liked my singing. I *couldn't* sing very good. I was always very paranoid, very nervous, and that inhibited my singing.

"This Guitar (Can't Keep from Crying)" came about because the press and critics tried to nail me on that 1974-75 tour, got nasty. I had no voice on the road and I was shagged-out, knackered. I had a choice of cancelling the tour and forgetting it, or going out and singing hoarse. I always think people will

"We who love music love the people who make it, we love the sound of it, and we love what it does to us, how it makes us feel, how it helps us love."

give others more credit than they do, so I assumed they'd know I'm in bad voice but still feel the music's plentiful and good. I wrote that song about being stuck on a limb, and being down, but not out.

For "Here Comes the Moon," I think I was on LSD or mushrooms at the time and was out sunning in Maui. The sun was setting over the ocean and it gets pretty stunning even when you're not on mushrooms. I was blissed out, and then I turned 'round and saw a big, full moon rising. I laughed and thought it was about time someone, and it may as well be me, gave the moon its due.

MUSICIAN: *Did "This Song," the single about the "My Sweet Lord"/"He's So Fine" suit, provide you with any catharsis?*

HARRISON: It did get it all off my chest; it was a laugh and release. Saying "This song's got nothing Bright about it" after Bright Tunes Publishing sued me, was amusing, at least to me. I also cracked, "This song could be 'You,'" meaning the Ronnie Spector song, and then had Eric Idle of Monty Python dub in two arguing voices saying, "Sounds like 'Sugar Pie Honey Bunch'"; "Naw! Sounds more like 'Rescue Me'!" I see now where everybody's doing videos with courts and judges like I did for that single—not to mention Madonna helping herself to "Living in the Material World" for "Material Girl." I was ahead of my time. [*chuckle*]

MUSICIAN: Living in the Material World, *the album after* All Things, *was a smash hit in America. It was number one for five weeks in the summer of 1973, with the "Give Me Love" single on top simultaneously, and it's sold over three million copies.*

HARRISON: Yes, but they [Capitol-EMI] still never gave me the royalties, did they? No! Ugh!*

MUSICIAN: Cloud Nine *rescues two worthy songs, "Someplace Else" and "Breath Away from Heaven," that you wrote for that Madonna/Sean Penn movie,* Shanghai Surprise.

HARRISON: I never did a soundtrack album, because the film got slagged off so bad and we had such a rotten time with them while making it. I didn't want to lose the songs, especially "Breath Away from Heaven," which has nice words—although I haven't included the lyrics to any songs on this album. I always did before, but I thought that the practice is getting passé. Maybe I'm looking for a few new leaves to turn over.

MUSICIAN: *Could they include a return to touring?*

HARRISON: It's a possibility. Ringo can't wait to go out, and Eric Clapton keeps telling me he's gonna be in the band. Eric's such a sweet cat. I caught one of his own shows in the Los Angeles Forum just before Easter of this year. I stood at the side of the stage, holding up my cigarette lighter for the

*According to a Capitol-EMI spokeswoman, "All recording royalties due him since 1973 have been paid to date."

encore. [*laughter*] Really! I love him that much!

Through the thick and the thin, Eric and I have always preserved and protected our friendship. One of the only things that Eric's ever held against me is that I met Bob Marley while I was out here on the West Coast in the late '70s, and Eric's always wished he'd been the one. He's never forgiven me for not taking him along to meet Bob Marley.

[*Sighs*] It's hard to see the greats go, and I'm a big fan of so many kinds of rock and popular music, from Bob Marley to Cole Porter to Smokey Robinson to Hoagy Carmichael. I mean, I wrote "Pure Smokey" on *33⅓* as my little tribute to his brilliant songwriting and his effortless butterfly of a voice. The Beatles did Smokey's "You Really Got a Hold on Me," and there was a song John did that was very much influenced by Smokey—"This Boy." If you listen to the middle eight of "This Boy," it was John trying to *do* Smokey. It suddenly occurs to me that there's even a line in "When We Was Fab" where I sing, "And you really got a hold on me"!

As for Hoagy Carmichael, I've been nuts for him since I was a kid. I cut his "Hong Kong Blues" on *Somewhere in England*, and there's still a few more of his I wouldn't mind doing, like "Old Rocking Chair." Maybe one day—not just yet, but one day when I get a bit older—me and Eric can sing "Old rocking chair has got me...."

There seems to be a running thread here about music and its powerful hold, eh? And it's that way, too. We who love music, we love the people who make it, we love the sound of it, and we love what it does to us, how it makes us feel, how it helps *us* love.

When I was writing "Cloud Nine" I had these ideas in mind. I'd read once in some spiritual context that the bad part of you is your human limitations, and the good part of you is God. I think people who *truly* can live a life in music are telling the world, "You can have my love, you can have my smiles. Forget the bad parts, you don't need them. Just take the music, the goodness, because it's the very best, and it's the part I give most willingly." M

He passed the audition.

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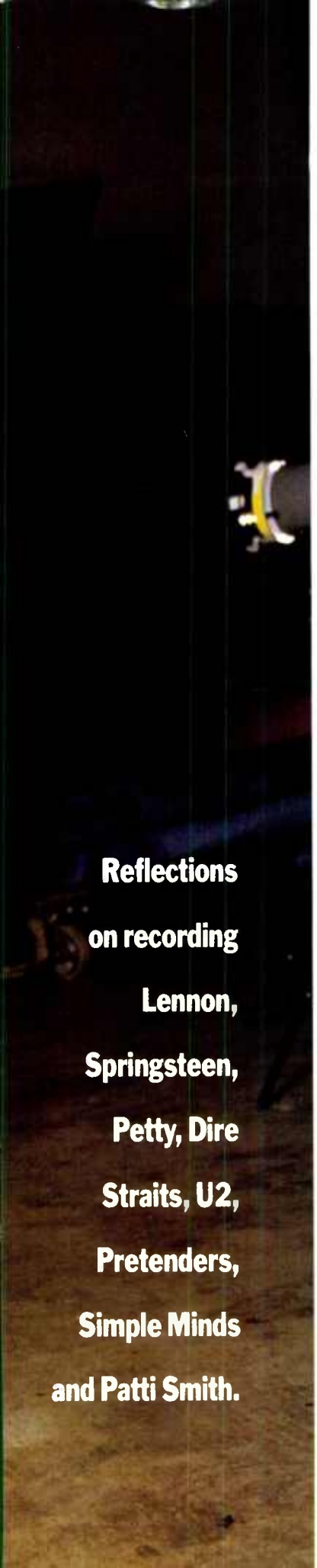


Reflections on recording Lennon, Springsteen, Petty, Dire Straits, U2, Pretenders, Simple Minds and Patti Smith.

The Essential Jimmy Iovine

By Vic Garbarini

I only work with people who I think can deliver lyrically," says Jimmy Iovine, "and then I push them and push them and push them until I think they've done the best they can do. I *torture* them. I really do. If you're not strong, you'll crack working with me. I used to torture Tom Petty even during the mixing to keep him writing. If an artist doesn't like writing they should either work with me or completely avoid me, 'cause I'll make them write forever, or until the album is in the damn stores."

A keen aptitude for torturing his clients may not be mega-producer Jimmy Iovine's core skill. After all, in his 15-year career behind the board he's also demonstrated a talent for discovering artists with a lot to say and getting it out of them fairly close to the way they hear it. Equally as remarkable is his consistent ability to integrate his clients into the corporate world of major label success, both sonically and financially. Still, keeping rock's best and brightest artists on the creative hotseat until they give up something that's worthy of them probably has as much to do with Iovine's remarkable track record as anything. He's helped make turning-point records for the likes of John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, U2, Dire Straits, Tom Petty, Patti Smith, the Pretenders, Simple Minds, Lone Justice, Alison Moyet, Stevie Nicks and more. I mean, the guy must be doing *something* right.

The first time I met Jimmy Iovine he was wearing a white Rossignol baseball cap. That was in 1980, when he was working with Dire Straits on their *Making Movies* album in the Bahamas. In those days Jimmy was like some character from a Scorsese film, a Brooklyn punk with a sense of humor and the proverbial heart of gold who'd managed to work his way up from the mean streets without losing his essential spark. He might affect an ignorance of geography and history (his references to Django Reinhart as "that Jaco Pastrami guy, right?" had Mark Knopfler in convulsions), but the man was nothing short of a genius in the studio. He'd cut his teeth working as an

Photograph by Chris Cuffaro

engineer with John Lennon and Bruce Springsteen circa *Born to Run*, but it was as producer of Patti Smith's 1978 *Easter* album (particularly the explosive "Because the Night" single) that he had secured his rep as the industry's hot new producer (and forever implanted himself on the impressionable ears of many later clients).

With "Night," Iovine proved that so-called underground/punk artists could make a commercially successful record that not only preserved, but actually enhanced their integrity. Now with Dire Straits he was helping to take an already successful guitar band and expand their range to include orchestral dynamics. It was a crucial transition for Knopfler, and one that set the conceptual groundwork for *Love Over Gold* and *Brothers in Arms*. During the seven years since then, Iovine has continued to exhibit an almost uncanny ability to suss out potent bands and provide them with that breakthrough album that effectively drop-kicks them through those platinum goalposts without messing with their vibe.

"That's my thing," agrees Iovine as he tucks into his linguini. "I love taking a band that's kind of raw, but has that visionary thing, and taking them to the next step." We're dining at Little Italy's legendary Umberto's Clam House, which Jimmy's assistant refers to as his "second office." Jimmy eats with his hat on. A Rossignol baseball cap, to be exact.

Discerning crimebusters will remember Umberto's as the place where colorful mob-person Joey Gallo was blown away a

Making *A Very Special Christmas*: Behind Jimmy Iovine's All-Star Charity Album

Jimmy Iovine knew he wanted to make a Christmas album like Phil Spector's early '60s classic, but he wasn't sure at first what reason he had to do it. (All he knew for sure was: "I didn't want to keep the money!") He also didn't want to tie his holiday project to a charity that was in any way political. The answer dawned when Iovine's wife Vicki, a volunteer worker with the Special Olympics, was invited to a reception at the home of Maria Shriver—whose parents are the backbone of that charity. "I just went as Vicki's husband," Iovine says. "I was standing around talking to Sargent and Eunice Kennedy Shriver and they were saying how hard it is for them to raise money. They didn't say so, but I think mentally retarded people are not considered a very *hip* charity. I said, 'I got this idea—I want to make this Christmas album.' Eunice said, 'What a great idea. How can we help?'"

Thus inspired, Iovine set out to convince his rock star pals to join his crusade. He and his wife wrote letters or left phone messages, and those who didn't call back were not bothered twice. ("We didn't hassle anybody, I didn't feel that was right for the album.") Of the 15 artists on the finished *A Very Special Christmas*, eight were produced or co-produced by Iovine, and seven sent him finished tracks. Only two songs have appeared in any form before (Bruce Springsteen's "Merry Christmas Baby" was the flip side of last year's "War" 45, Sting's "Gabriel's Message" was a single in the U.K.) and none have appeared on any album. Of all Iovine's diplomatic accomplishments, none equalled getting the publishers of all the Christmas chestnuts to throw their mechanical rights to the songs into the charity pot.

Iovine tantalized *Musician* with snatches of the album for months before he finally got us a complete copy and sat down to run through the tracks in late summer. The first thing we noticed about the kickoff track, **the Pointer Sisters'** version of **"Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town,"** is that it's basically the same arrangement used by Springsteen, which was very close to Spector's. "Right," Iovine says. "Because that was one of my inspirations. I felt at some point I should salute the Spector record. I figured, okay, this is the way to do it. So I combined both versions and did it as a little salute. Roy Bitten and I co-produced that. I always wanted to do that song with the Pointers because they are one of the few real girl groups right now. Each of them can really sing.

"Dave Stewart produced the **Eurythmics** track with a guy named Richard Feldman—a keyboard player who lives across the street from David's house. I asked what they wanted to do and **"Winter Wonderland"** were the first words out of Dave's mouth. I said great 'cause that was one of my favorites. I was glad somebody who was really excited about doing it was doing that song."

Think it'd be tough to get **Whitney Houston** to cut a record for free? Think again, says Jimmy: "It wasn't tough at all. Clive Davis was an early supporter. Whitney had done the Special Olympics TV show and was involved with the Shrivers on that. I sent Whitney five or six songs and she picked **"Do You Hear What I Hear"** and I produced it. It was everything you thought it would be. She walked in and sang her vocal in an hour and a half, natural as could be. She sang gospel music her whole life, so I wanted a gospel arrangement for her. She flew in from Little Rock, cut an impeccable vocal, and then went and played a concert!"

Was Iovine tempted to grab a shot at producing something else with Whitney? "Yes," he admits. "Of course I was. But I said to myself throughout the whole project I'm here to do a Christmas album for a great cause, and not think about anything else. And I really kept the project pure—for a lot of reasons. It makes the biggest cynics say, 'God, there must be something else going on. Try and put a soundtrack together and it's impossible! But here's 15 acts."

One thing you'd never get for a soundtrack is a **Bruce Springsteen** cut. "We're friends for a long time," Iovine explains. "Vicki wrote Jon Landau a letter. Barbara Carr

few years back. Jimmy finds the atmosphere congenial, the cuisine unbeatable. The circumstances remind me to ask him about rumors that he's just a fast-talking, pushy little Godfather who relies on his engineers to do all the real work. Iovine looks bemused. "If some people are still saying that then they should take me to the racetrack, you know what I mean? Because I must be the luckiest guy in the world."

For all his cheerful loquacity in private, Iovine seldom talks to the press and has never been the subject of a major profile. Jimmy is currently excited about the long-awaited Patti Smith comeback LP he's producing and about signing on as Lone Justice's manager, but the real reason he's finally going public is to grease the wheels for his newest project, a superstar charity Christmas album to benefit the Special Olympics, complete with a song apiece from Bruce, Sting, Bono, Madonna, Whitney, Chrissy and many more [*see box, next page*]. Iovine explains, "My dad passed away at Christmas two years ago, so I thought I gotta do something at Christmas in his memory to make it all feel a little better. I'd always loved the Phil Spector Christmas album, so I decided to ask all my favorite singers to sing their favorite Christmas songs. Since I don't believe that anyone should make any money over Christmas—except maybe FAO Schwartz—we're giving the proceeds to the Special Olympics."

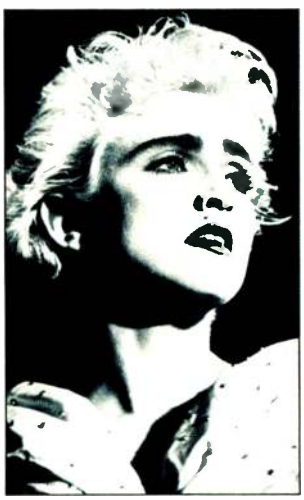
So Jimmy, why are you still wearing that damn Rossignol cap? "Because I basically haven't changed much since I was

contacted Bruce and he sent us a tape of **'Merry Christmas Baby.'** We got it in the mail. That's the way he is. You just say, 'Bruce, I'm doing something and I could use your help and he's not even like *hey, no problem!* He's just *there*. I've never seen him let a friend down."

"We did **Chrissie Hynde** in late December last year. It was Christmas time, December 18th, shopping week. We went and bought every Christmas record you could possibly imagine, then we went to my house and Chrissie, Vicki and I sat on the floor and played every song. Vicki said, 'How about **"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"**?' We went in the studio and she just sang it like she owned it. She shows who she is as a singer. It's a different side and she kills it, does a great job. That's the one on the album that gets you, because it was really recorded at Christmastime." Iovine laughs. "That's Chrissie's kids singing 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' on it. Chrissie doesn't even know it yet! She didn't know I was rolling the tape! She's gonna die!"

Anybody who thinks **John Mellencamp** is trying too hard to prove he's a serious artist will have to think twice after hearing his lovably silly contribution: "That was his idea," Iovine says. "'Okay, I'll do **"I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus."'** He produced it himself, with Don Gehman, sent us the tape mixed and everything." One of the nice things about Mellencamp's choice is that it shows he can still take it easy. The nice thing about **Sting's** contribution is that it shows how his serious, meticulous approach to music can produce something full of warmth. "Most people haven't heard Sting's arrangement of **'Gabriel's Message,'"** Iovine says. "On this album you get to see all these people looking at you from the corner of their eyes—giving a sensitive little look."

Well, except maybe for **Run-D.M.C.**, who along with producer Rick Rubin cooked up a rocking original called "Christmas in Hollis." "I think that's a hit song!" Iovine chuckles. "We approached them through my lawyer, Paul Shindler, who's their lawyer as well. They said, 'We're down!' Half-way through they said, 'Look, we can't come up with anything, so we're going to write our own.' What work went into that! What a production!"



U2 were torn between recording a traditional Irish Christmas song and an R&B number. They went with the latter: **"Christmas—Baby Please Come Home."** "It's a Darlene Love song off the Spector record," Iovine says. "We did that live at a soundcheck in Scotland. That's Darlene Love and Edge on background vocals. U2 were great sports about it. They just said okay, we'll help out. In Ireland the north and south work together on the Special Olympics. It's one of the few—if not the *only*—things they work together on."

It's not hard to guess which album track will hit number one—the same one that wrenches the Betty Boop crown away from Cyndi Lauper. Iovine: "Only **Madonna** could pick that song for herself. I wish I could say I thought of it, but she called me up and said, 'Hey, get **"Santa Baby"** by Ertha Kitt. Here's the key, I'll be in to sing it on Saturday.' That's how professional it was! She came in, sang it, and it was just great. It was an orchestra jazz arrangement—very different for me. I got to work on gospel music, a jazz orchestra! I had to dig down deep, do a lot of research.

"I called **Bob Seger** and he said he'd love to do it. But I had to send him a tape—you can't get Christmas songs in March! But I'd already bought every Christmas album ever made. So Bob came over to my house and sat around and played all the Christmas songs and sang 'em on the piano and said, 'Okay, **"The Little Drummer Boy."'** We went in the studio the next day with the Silver Bullet Band and a choir and did it! I haven't had this much fun in a long time.

"We asked **Bryan Adams** and he pulled a remote truck up to the Marquee in London where he was playing and did **'Run Rudolph Run,'** which he really likes. That was a real simple one. He sent it to us and Clearmountain mixed it. **Bon Jovi** were great sports. They cut **'Back Door Santa'** at Nassau Coliseum at a concert in the middle of the summer! I was just the secretary after a while—this album has got nothing to do with me now. This is everybody's album.

"I knew **Alison Moyet** 'cause I did a record with her, and I wanted to make it an international album. Alison's very big in Europe. She's the one I knew. If I'd known Kate Bush I might've asked her. Alison came up with **'Coventry Carol,'** a great thing. You know I've known **Stevie Nicks** for years, and she always sang **'Silent Night.'** There was never any question what song she was gonna do. She even added a little bit to the song! Thank God it's public domain!

"When I went to Special Olympic events the first thing I noticed was a lot of people stay away. Some people think you can catch it! That really blew my mind! I just got really plugged into it. It just relates to Christmas to me. The mentally retarded are shunned a lot in society. I think besides the money we raise, maybe in schools and neighborhoods kids will say, 'Gee, if Whitney Houston and Bruce Springsteen and U2 think it's okay....' Maybe they'll associate it somehow, maybe it'll help a little bit." – **Bill Flanagan**

17." There's a grain of truth in that. Iovine's never lost touch with the spark that rock 'n' roll can ignite in a kid. And he's managed to develop the kind of musical radar that brings him in contact with artists who are genuinely nurturing their own inner flame, so together they can fan that spark into a conflagration. Even if it takes a little torture to get it going.

The Iovine Method

Before I go into a studio with a band, the first thing I usually assess is: Can they really write? Do they have a culture they're trying to express? Do they have...not a message, that sounds corny, but do they have a theme? Is there something there, or is this a bunch of kids just trying to make a pop record? If that's the case, then I'm not interested. But if that's going on, then I know I'm going into the studio with somebody I don't mind losing an argument to. Because I know that they know something that I don't. I'll still fight for what I believe in, but I know that if I lose an argument with a band like that, I'm gonna be okay. I will not enter a studio with someone where I'm afraid if it goes their way, we're all going to be embarrassed. For instance, I knew when I went in with Mark Knopfler to do *Making Movies* that it was going to be his way, I was going to lose a lot of battles. And I was fine with that because I knew his vision was that strong.

The word nowadays is subculture, and that's basically what it's all about to me. U2 has it, Simple Minds have it and the Pretenders have it. Same goes for Run-D.M.C., 'cause those are bands that capture a culture and a vibe and make a statement—they bring something to the party. All those early blues guys, all those early rock 'n' roll guys, that was about having a subculture. My favorite band of all time was Sly & the Family Stone. I remember when I was a kid going to the Electric Circus and watching this guy just jump off the stage and walk down to West Fourth Street and we'd all follow him out there. Then he'd hop back onstage and finish "I Wanna Take You Higher," and that really made me feel I was part of a culture. And I've just tried to follow those traditions in the music I make. Here I am working with Patti Smith again; and what was Patti? Patti was a whole environment—if you were part of that audience, you were part of that thing. When that thing is there, all the pieces fall together.

When I worked with John Lennon, that was the first album [*Walls and Bridges*] I ever did, and I thought, "Wow, this is what it's supposed to be like!" Talk about expressing a culture, there was a whole new society. And so I went from there to Bruce, and there it was again. So, yeah, I guess I was a bit spoiled, wasn't I? [*laughs*].

Great Piano Sound

Roy Cicala was John's post-Beatles engineer, and I was working at the Record Plant answering phones. One day he and John fired their assistant and came over to me and said, "Hey, you want to fill in?" It was a very casual atmosphere and eventually John suggested to Roy that they take me under their wing and teach me how to make records. Roy showed me the technical end, and John the musical end. John would say, "Hear the way this feels right and that doesn't. You see why the vocals work here?" He took the time to do that. Nobody does that today. I spent three years with them. How they broke me in was during the overdub process. Roy would go home and show me what to do before he left and I'd do it.

One night, Elton John came by for the "Whatever Gets You Through the Night" session, and Roy had to go home because his baby was being born. So Roy tells me not to worry, you'll just be doing organ tonight because John said he didn't want piano on it. Then we were going to do Bobby Keys on sax and record John and Elton's vocals, and that was my mission for the night. I said, "Okay, I got that, but shit, man"—I was nineteen at the time—"I hope I don't have to record this guy's piano," because this was 1974 and everybody wanted to get the Elton John Piano Sound.

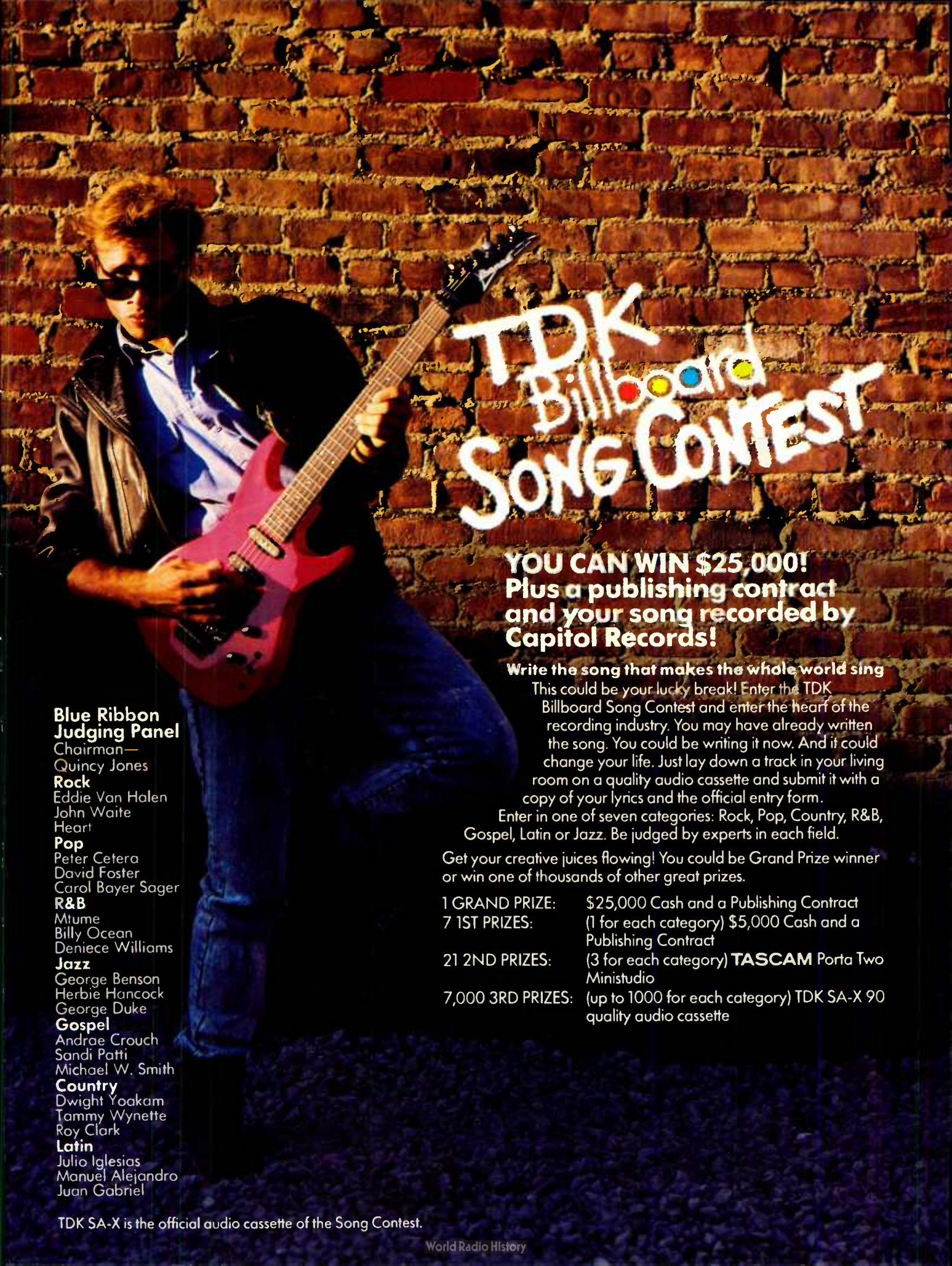
So the session was going really well, and I said to John, "Man, I'm really nervous here." He said, "Don't worry about it, everybody else is much more nervous being here than you are." Which I really appreciated. He knew people got that way around him because he was a Beatle. So at the end of the session Elton goes, "Listen, I know you don't want to do it, but lemme try a piano." I said, "Oh shit, no...." I'd only recorded piano three times in my whole life. I just grabbed a couple of microphones that I thought I saw Roy use with keyboards and placed them where I thought they should go—which I later found out was completely wrong. Elton sat down and played, and then he came in and said, "Hey, kid, great piano sound!" And John says, "Well, sure, that's why I use him, because of his piano sound." [*laughs*] And I learned that day that, yeah, you have to know something about engineering, but a lot of the vibe in the sound that everybody gets so much credit for actually comes from the guy who's playing it.

The Album in Your Head

Patti was just really directional, really focused, like she was burnin' a hole wherever she stood. I wanted to capture that vibe she had, because they were making this "noise," but it wasn't being interpreted very well on record. A lot of times artists are afraid of the word "production." If you can read an artist right, they have a sound in their head that they want, and if you can get close enough to that person you can get that sound out exactly the way they want it, and you'd be surprised how great that sound can be. The artist doesn't even know sometimes that the record sounds better. They don't say, "Oh, my God, this record sounds big or bold," or whatever. They just say, "Hey, yeah, that's just the way I heard it in my head." Tom Petty, that's exactly what he wanted *Damn the Torpedoes* to sound like.

"Because the Night" came about because when I was engineering *Darkness on the Edge of Town* for Bruce we'd cut over 50 demos. I went over to see him one night at the Navarro Hotel and I said, "Boy, I've got a great album going with Patti here, but I don't have the song that'll make everybody hear the damn thing." He picked up his acoustic guitar and said, "What about this one?" And after the first four chords I knew what song he was playing. It was never going to go on *Darkness*. I'm not sure, but I think he always felt it was a female song. I brought it to Patti and she loved it and added some lyrics.

I'll be very frank. I'm still trying to make that record. At the time, I was just trying to make a Doors album, something that exciting. And now I always have a little album in the back of my head when I produce a song or album. With *Damn the Torpedoes*, for instance, it was *Walls and Bridges*. But the record that inspired me when we were making "Because the Night" was "It's My Life" by the Animals, with a little bit of "The Boxer" thrown in. You know, that part that goes, "La-di-



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CHRIS CUFFARO

"It's tempting when you get successful to get sucked into wanting to do hits."

da, POW!" I wanted to make that noise. I wanted it to come on the radio and have people go HAAAAA?! Nobody does that anymore....I don't do that anymore and it really aggravates me, you know? It's one of the records I'm most proud of. Remember, at the time everybody was making Linda Ronstadt-sounding records and here we come out of Record Plant Studio B with this unorthodox-sounding thing with all this echo and the big drum and the drama. Now they try to get that sound synthetically, which is really a drag.

Technically, how did we do it? [Engineer] Shelley Yakus was a big part of that. I was working all day with Bruce at the time, from 12 to 12. We started mixing "Because" at one o'clock in the morning and finished at 10 the next morning. What we did was just push the echo chamber as far as we could, which is not as easy to do as it seems. This was before electronic echo and drum sampling and all that stuff. We just kept trying different combinations and pushing until we caught the exact sound. We finally pushed it to the point where it sounded completely *ridiculous* to us, and I said, "Okay, that's the record."

Getting Petty

I heard Tom's first two albums and then Debby Gold called me up and said that Tom's looking for a record producer. "Not any more, he's not!" I said. I got Denny Kordell on the phone and said, "Hey, man, I can make a hit record with this guy in a minute. In a *heartbeat*, okay?" I felt I knew exactly what to do to get him to the next step.

I went out there and he played me two songs, "Here Comes My Girl" and "Refugee," and asked me, "Whaddaya think?" I told him he was in pretty good shape songwise and I didn't think he'd need too much more...and that's the *last* time I ever said that to anybody. [*laughs*] And for one entire year Tom and I talked every night on the phone for an hour about the record, about the feel. It took four weeks to make "Refugee" work; it just felt stiff. We kept pounding away until we got it. Tom had something going lyrically that I really liked. That's something I got from John Lennon: to get to the musical and lyrical point of the song and stress it. That's why he did things like "Instant Karma," really powerful and directed at the lyric.

And on all the records I work on, I like the person to sing live—we use about 80 percent of their live vocals. When people say that they don't make records like they used to, they're right, and a big part of that is because the artist was singing live when they made that record. There's a big difference between standing out there with your band and singing with them and just going out there alone with phones on and staring back at everybody through the glass. You can still get it that way, but there's a certain thing that goes on that you'll never get.

Alive & Kicking

It's so tempting when you get successful as a producer to get sucked into wanting to do hits, and all of a sudden some big act invites you to do their record. But you have to fight that. And, yeah, a few years back I found myself drifting into a place that I didn't want to be. What kind of a place? Well, it's what people call... L.A. [*laughs*], which is predictable, going for hits but not doing anything that means anything. What was weird was that I didn't realize what was going on. I still thought I was Patti Smith's record producer, and I wasn't anymore. I thought, "Wait a second, this has got to stop." So I flew off to Ireland to meet with the guys in U2 and, later, Simple Minds, and then I found Maria [McKee of Lone Justice] and I said, "Wow, here it is again!" In a sense, U2, Simple Minds and the Pretenders were really comeback albums for me.

So I met U2 and we decided to do this live [*Under a Blood Red Sky*] album together. A year before that, Jim Kerr had called me to work with [Simple Minds], so those two things fell together at the same time. They're both these real fiery bands, guys that really want it, like John did, like Bruce did. I realized that these guys were fighting for their lives, that they wanted it even more than I did, that they cared about what they're writing about, and it really turned my head around. And to be honest, if some people feel I'm really doing well now it's because these people—U2, Simple Minds, Pretenders and Lone Justice—put me in a place where I can feel really good about what I'm doing.

While we were doing the demos with Lone Justice, I got a phone call from Bono saying he'd seen this amazing girl with a country dress and army boots on a video, and could I find her 'cause he wanted her to open his tour. That made me feel really good about Maria, who's actually been a big inspiration to me, because she combines a lot of things from all of the people I've worked with.

Send in the Clones

The point is to help an artist realize their vision, not to impose your own on them. Like, on the Pretenders album we had this song, "When I Change My Life," that just didn't sound right. I told Chrissie to just play it on acoustic guitar, and all of a sudden it came to life. That was the essence of what Dylan did; everything he wrote was based on his acoustic guitar. Because we have so much technology today, we spend a lot of time making our records sound like somebody else's record. It's actually become the currency in America. And that's a real problem with the record companies; it's a real problem with radio. I think it's gonna cause another recession in the record business. That's why England spawns

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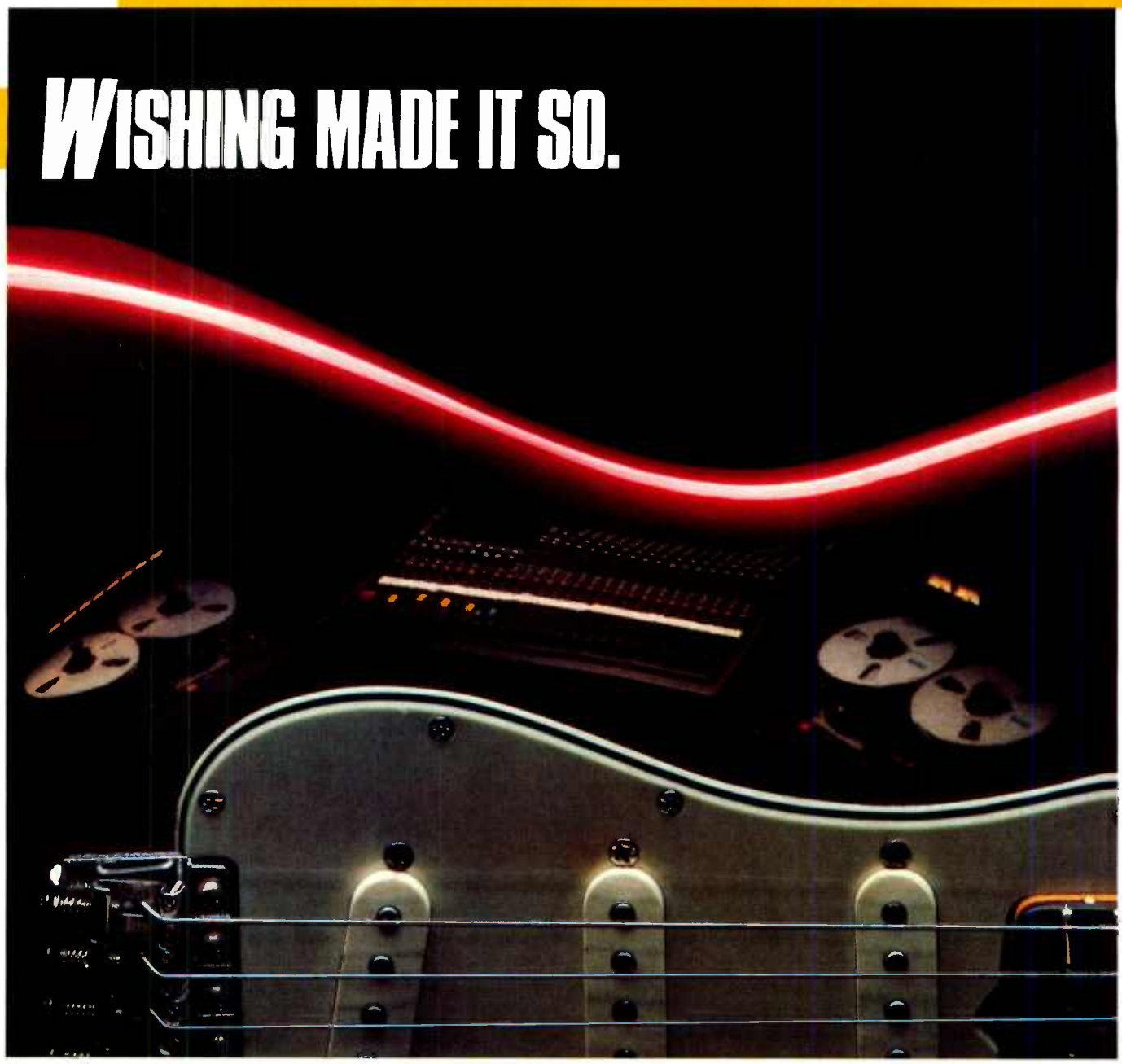

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much hipper bands than we do, because the currency there is *not* to sound like someone else.

Seventy percent of what gets signed in this business are sound-alikes. After a while it gets to be a vicious circle. Record companies mess up when they let radio dictate who they should sign. The radio dictates to the kids what to listen to, and what they hear seeps into their culture, so the kids think that's who their heroes are. That's how the bullshit begins. And every now and then a U2 manages to break through.

A lot of times a young band will walk into a record company and the company will play the young band whatever the latest hit they have is and say, "Listen to this. *That's* what you should sound like." That scares the shit out of a band, and that's why the record companies are six months behind all the time.

I get depressed when I walk around record companies and all I ever hear is, "We want bands like"—guess who?—"Bon Jovi, Cinderella." That's what a lot of record companies want and there are a couple of young guys at each company saying, "No, no, this is not what we need...." And I like Bon Jovi—for the same reason I enjoyed *Lethal Weapon*, you know? He's legitimate because he doesn't want to be Bruce Springsteen or U2, he wants to be himself. He has this thing he wants to do and he does it fantastically. But we don't need 20 of them. And don't look for poetry there. Go to Bob Dylan. That's all okay, but my negative thing right now is that originality is not being encouraged. Did you ever read those radio prompt sheets? Those poor guys in Concrete Blonde, they may be a good band, but when the tip sheets came out it was, "Hey, sounds like a cross between Fleetwood Mac and the Pretenders." I'd wanna *kill* myself if I were those kids.

Simple Suggestions

It's a producer's job to move things around, to move musicians around, to help make an artist's dream come true. To preserve the total integrity of their vision while adding a spice, a color or a sound that makes it work for them. Take that Simple Minds hit, "Alive and Kicking." When I was a kid in '74 or '75 David Bowie was making *Young Americans* downstairs while I was working upstairs with John. I just loved that album, and that was my little ghost album in the back of my head when I was doing the Simple Minds. I remember at the time asking who was singing those amazing backup vocals and somebody said it was a girl named Robin Clark. I thought, "I'm going to remember that girl, because someday, if I get the chance, *I'm going to make that sound.*

So we're in the studio with Simple Minds and we'd hired some background singers and I said, "Gee, there was this girl that sang with Bowie..." and they said, "Oh, you mean Robin Clark?," and I said, "Yeah, that's her, get her in here!" I suggested to Jim that "Alive and Kicking" was a great song, but why don't we have Robin sing in the middle? And Jim said, "Let's do that, because the female point of view will work in the context of the song anyway." That's how that came about.

That drum sound on the Simple Minds' record was Bob Clearmountain's thing. Bob is one of the greatest engineers of all time, and a great producer. And a lot of what he added to that record was that atmosphere he gets, which is why I wanted to work with Bob.

The strategy with Simple Minds was to keep all the heat,

continued on page 130

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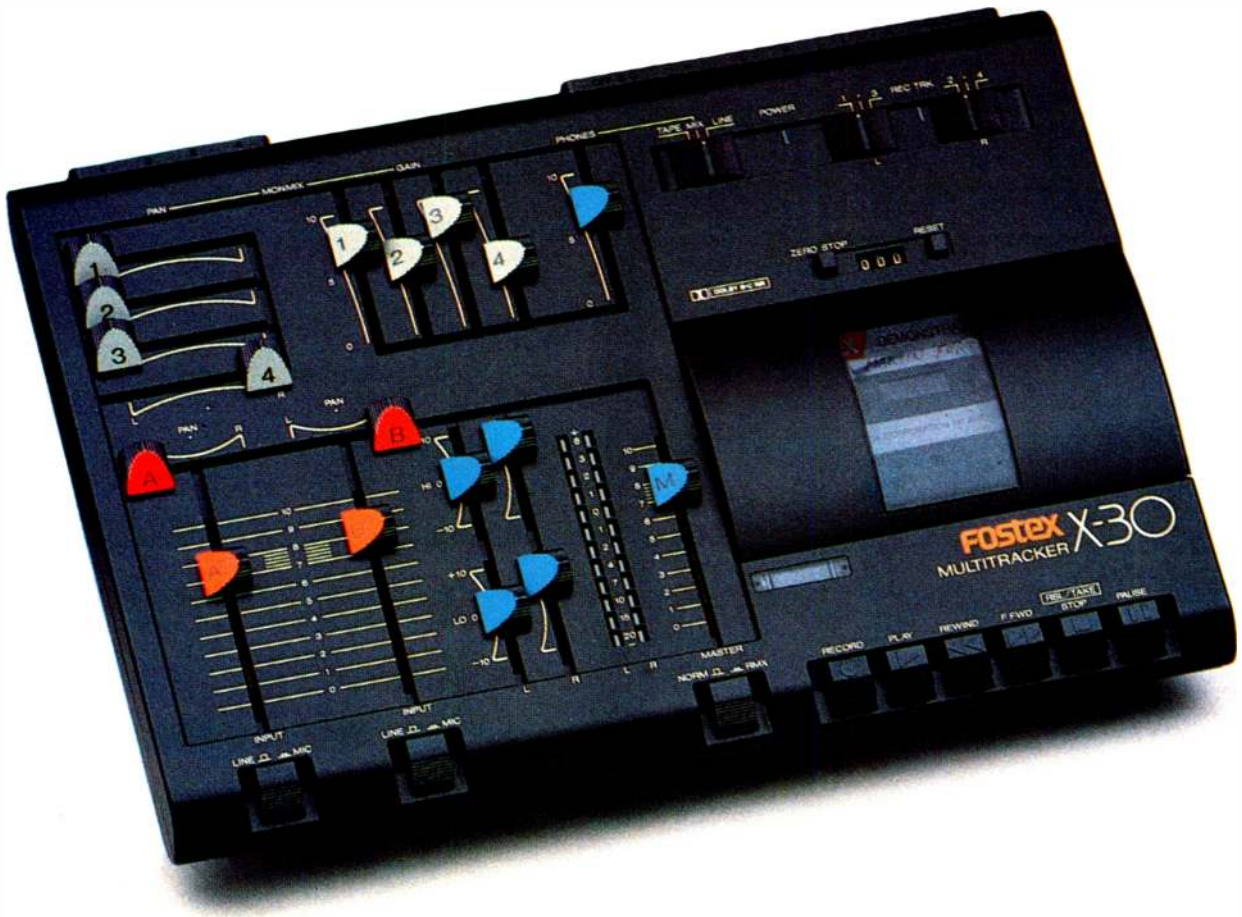

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Jim Dickinson and the New Low-Fi

Wherein a dangerous redneck weirdo becomes studio godfather to post-punk's finest.

By Tony Scherman

Motoring home on Highway 61, Jim Dickinson gets stuck behind a monster John Deere combine and swears all the way through the land of the blues. Under a white-hot Delta sky, traffic crawls north: past Lyon, where Son House murdered a man in 1928; past Stovall, where a young Muddy Waters brewed sour mash. Just above Lula, Charley Patton's home in 1930, Dickinson finally shakes the combine and speeds his red '76 flame-decaled Fury all the way home: a tiny hamlet near Hernando, Mississippi, 35 miles south of Memphis. It's here, according to singer Johnny Shines, that his pal Robert Johnson—the greatest bluesman of all—was buried in an unmarked grave.

Cutting the Fury's motor, Dickinson sits waiting for the dust to settle. Live-oak and dogwood thickly overhang a lake's green shallows. Dickinson, highly myopic, squints through thick-lensed shades. "Out here's just dirt and water and sky," he says. "That's what the music's about, the music that's been my whole life."

But James Luther Dickinson is no moss-grown folklorist, no antiquarian lost in a sleepy Delta past. This gentle and paunchy, slyly chuckling 45-year-old, by turns driven and slug-lazy, is suddenly—to his own amused surprise—one of America's hottest producers of new rock 'n' roll. In just 18 months, Dickinson has produced the Replacements' *Pleased to Meet Me*, Green on Red's *The Killer Inside Me*, the True Believers, Joe "King" Carrasco and his own gang of middle-aged Memphis roots-boppers, Mud Boy & the Neutrons ("we're the white boys from the blues festivals"). Present in Memphis at rock's raunchy birth, Dickinson remains a firm adherent of sock-in-the-guts immediacy. Add a certain affection for chaos—the typical Dickinson cut careens along, cheerfully leaking notes—and you've got the ideal guru for full-tilt ravers like the Replacements' Paul Westerberg and Green on Red's Danny Stuart. In today's anti-technopop backlash, label execs who once shunned him as a dangerous redneck weirdo are clamoring for Dickinson to play Big Daddy to their squalling post-punks.

Not everyone is so fickle. "Jim Dickinson's always been a fabulous producer," says colleague Ry Cooder; "the man's a damn resource. It's just that most of what he's done has been invisible to the naked eye"—keyboardist and idea-man on Cooder's lauded movie scores, classic Memphis sessions as a pianist, and bizarre producing gigs untold, from porno-flick soundtracks to gonzo LPs by Memphis wrestlers.

Dickinson didn't start out as what he is today—a hip white Southern cat; it took him until he was eight or nine. A fifth-generation Arkansan ("I'm a displaced hillbilly, not a redneck; rednecks are crazy"), li'l Jim moved to Memphis with his family in 1949. One Sunday he and his businessman daddy came strolling past a foul little downtown alley. Jim stopped, transfixed. A bunch of black musicians were playing lowdown blues; a white couple staggered drunkenly. It was Will Shade's Memphis Jug Band, buskers since the '20s, singing "Come On Down to My House Honey, There's Nobody Home But Me." That was all it took—"damned greatest thing I'd ever heard. Of course, it helped that my father yanked me away in disgust. If your parents don't hate it, it ain't rock 'n' roll."

Jim entrusted his musical tutelage to his parents' black yardman, Alex: "We'd listen to race-music radio while he ate lunch, and he'd teach me the important things in life: playin' cards and throwin' knives. He had a piano-player friend, Butterfly Washington, who told me, 'All music is codes.' Wow! Captain Midnight! Secret codes! That was for me!" Butterfly's "codes," of course, were "chords." "Take a note, any note," he told Jim, "put your finger on it and go three up, four down, just like poker, and you playin' a code"—a major triad, first

inversion—"and now wobble your hand. You playin' boogie-woogie!"

Struggling at Baylor and Memphis State universities to abandon Demon Boogie, Jim finally gave in, and by the mid-'60s he was a full-time Memphis music man. As a pianist, he played on the Rolling Stones' "Wild Horses" ("I'm the cracker on the sofa next to Keith in *Gimme Shelter*"), Arlo Guthrie's "City of New Orleans," Aretha Franklin's *Spirit in the Dark* and all of Cooder's acclaimed soundtracks—some 200 releases in all.

In 1966, he started engineering at Memphis' storied Ardent Studios, his home base today. Dickinson the grit-voiced shouter made 1972's *Dixie Fried* ("my so-called artist album") for Atlantic; critic Nick Tosches called it "one of the most bizarrely powerful musics of this century." And as a producer, Dickinson cut Cooder's early-'70s classic, *Into the Purple Valley*, and then gained notoriety as a wild *auteur* of unreleased flops: in 1972, Alex Chilton's Beatles-ish *Big Star 3* (the chief source of Dickinson's acclaim among post-punks); a 1970 Carmen McRae pop-soul project shelved by Atlantic, grumbles Dickinson, to push Roberta Flack ("and it's killer, *killer!*"); and *Emmett the Singing Ranger*, an out-of-control early-'70s Dan Penn session "that might've ended a lesser man's career. One cut, 'Tiny Hineys and Hogs,' had two Harleys, one playin' rhythm, the other lead, both of 'em shootin' four feet of blue flame across Sun Studios."

When released, his projects tended to stiff; *Pleased to Meet Me*'s 90,000 copies represent by far Dickinson's biggest success. He continues to profess a prideful aloofness to sales: "The fuck do I care? I make *records*. 'Product' ain't my word, it's theirs, the businessmen. I don't mean to be pretentious in calling what I do 'art,' but I've never wanted to do anything *but* art."

For Dickinson, the great producers—Sam Phillips, Jerry Wexler, Huey Meaux—were all master psychologists. "What I do is almost all psychodynamics. You've gotta be indirect, create a diversion, *trick* the artist into giving something he doesn't wanna give. Something extra, magic—his *soul*, dammit. Good production borders on the criminal."

Or on the schizophrenic. To get Green on Red's Danny Stuart to "really project," Dickinson quit trying to work with someone named Danny and dealt strictly with Lou Ford—Stuart's current persona, the lean hard antihero of novelist Jim Thompson's crime tales. Nor did the role-playing end there: "Danny insisted on calling me 'Bubba'—his rather annoying perception of me as this jolly cracker asshole, some damn bass fisherman. Luckily, I own a real nice bunch of fishing hats. Oh, I've got lotsa hats. Pure and simple, a producer's an actor."

If Stuart demanded bullying—"Get tough with me, Bubba," he'd say—Dickinson took the opposite tack with Paul Westerberg, "*the* most sensitive kid I've ever recorded. I'd pretend to ignore Paul, pretend I was preoccupied. He'd get real uncomfortable when he felt I was listening to him too hard."

And it took counseling skills to usher the low-tech Replacements into the digital world. "I had to show 'em you can come into a high-tech studio and still act like a punk"—the point of "I Don't Know," which opens with Westerberg & Co. rudely snickering at Ardent's $60,000 Fairlight, programmed to sound like a cheesy beat-box.

Psychodynamics or not, "you can't afford to be afraid of machines"—this from an ex-engineer, no machine-smashing Luddite. "I used a Fairlight on almost every Replacements track, but as a sampler, not as a musical instrument—because it's *not* one.

"In the early digital era, I couldn't do

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squat. I had to wait for high-tech to humanize. Today, Ardent's got a new SSL 6000E. It's made less like consoles of the recent past, more like ones thirty years ago. It has built-in compressors that give me a sound like the old-time tube compressors and limiters I love. My idea of great-sounding records is Howlin' Wolf's early stuff with Sam Phillips; sounds like it's boiling up from the bottom of *hell*. Phillips ran everything through a monaural radio limiter; when those things get to pumpin', the whole studio throbs. I wanted the Replacements to sound like that, like a ghetto-blaster cranked so loud the limiter's pumping. That's what I try for with the SSL."

Hedging his bets, he lays in lots of old, pre-solid-state gear: "Before I even hit

continued on page 111

BUBBA'S BAIT BOX

Ardent Studios owner] John Fry," says Dickinson, "trains every one of his engineers himself. Ardent's an ongoing institution, a mentality. Even when engineers change, I always know what everything'll sound like. It's very scientific; it's run like a lab." Chief engineer Joe Hardy is Dickinson's usual Ardent henchman. "Joe complements my ignorance with his extreme technical knowledge. It's *all* technical to Joe. He doesn't really like the music!"

Dickinson uses the studio's 40-input SSL 6000E console and Mitsubishi X-850 32-track digital tape recorder ("first digital multitrack that works, it's that simple"). Though he'll use a 16-bit Publison for sampling and echo, his main sampler is Ardent's Fairlight Series III.

He "has to have" his old tube gear: Pultec full-range equalizer, Fairchild stereo limiter and Ampex 8-track Series 300 (used as a preamp). "Reverb gear I leave up to the engineer; any engineer worth his salt's got his own snare sounds, mikes and reverb."

Instruments? You asked for it. On Cooder's soundtracks, Dickinson plays a Kawai electric grand MIDIed to a Fairlight, and Farfisa Combo-Compact and Professional organs. The Replacements liner-credits' mysterious "East Memphis Slim" (guess who?) plays a Roland RD-1000 and a Hammond M-100: "same as a B-3, except with a console speaker and different percussion. Booker T. played one. With acoustic pianos, I never play a grand if I can get an upright," for that whorehouse sound. At home are a Busch & Gertz upright and the Kawai. A Dickinson keyboard's liable to get doctored; an octave-and-a-half section of the Kawai, for instance, is kept in quarter tones.

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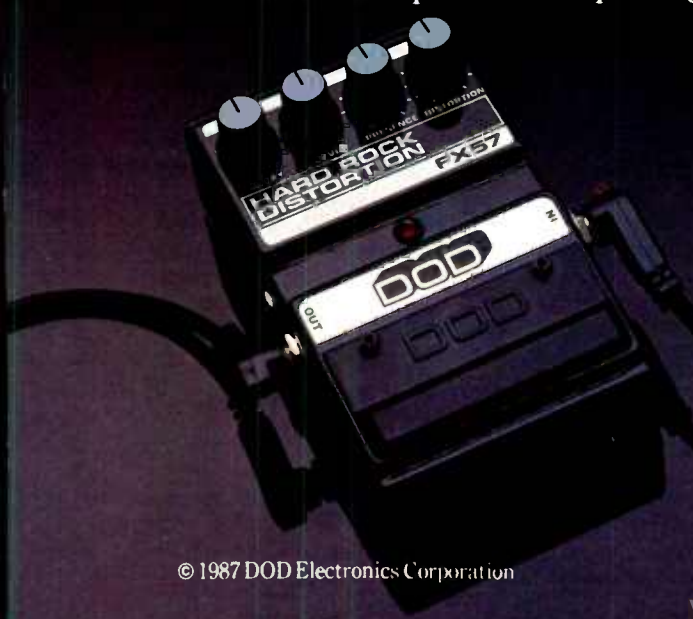


Robotic Recording:

Computerized mixdown

finally trickles down to

the MIDI masses.

By Alan di Perna

Illustration by David Cowles

MIDI Automation

In the evolution of techno gear, we musicians belong to a unique and important species: Chumpus Voluntaricus—the Willing Guinea Pig. We're the critters who'll actually pay to test virgin, Version 1.0 products. Our species, you understand, has a keen nose for ideas whose time hasn't *quite* arrived yet. We plunk down our hard-earned bucks on a new product and patiently wait for third and fourth software revisions. Occasionally we get stuck with a usurer-friendly ripoff. But more often, because of our lemming-like leap of financial faith, the geniuses who first thought up the idea can actually afford to make sure its time *does* arrive. In short, we're the humble creatures who grease the evolutionary wheel. It's a dirty job; but someone's gotta do it.

Just once, though, wouldn't it be nice if musicians could stroll demurely into a technological field that had already been cleared by somebody else? Well, you can leave those new Ottorini Bassi shoes on; that's exactly what has happened with the new MIDI-based automated mixing systems that have recently been sprouting up like irradiated alfalfa. You see, recording engineers and producers have been struggling with console automation ever since the days when trousers were flared and guitar solos interminable. *They* lived through the gaucheries of Compumix and Allison Fadex in prototype. *They* bore the indignities of primitive tape-based systems before the big breakthrough to storing automation data on computer disk. And *they* paid the astronomical prices that amortized the R&D which led to such present-day automation marvels as SSL Total Recall and the GML Moving Fader system.

And now all this pro audio sophistication is starting to trickle down into the M.I. marketplace, where *we* can snap it up for what would have seemed a song to our early-'70s precursors. Console automation technology and MIDI are mating like a pair of Woolly Mammoths in heat; and their union is proving very fruitful indeed. The offspring range from relatively simple little "snapshot" mixers to brainy prodigies that can memorize and re-enact every fader move you make—every subtle little twist of the EQ knobbie.

The Fantastic Fader Follies

Many of the earliest automation systems were add-on units, designed to interface with just about any mixing console. These primeval implements were notoriously unreliable, but the underlying concept was a good one. You could use the console of your choice to process the signals from your multitrack; and you could use the automation system to remember and reproduce the actual fader moves you made. The idea was such a good one, in fact, that it's still around today. You'll find it in about half a dozen add-on systems which will let you automate fader levels, channel mutes and solos on any console. They also allow you to put multiple channels into a single group for automated control by a single fader.

These systems are, of course, more evolved than those early automation devices, but they still bear a remarkable family resemblance to them. Like their Australopithecine ancestors, several of these Nouveau Automateurs are

based on Voltage Controlled Amplifiers (VCAs). Others use Digitally Controlled Amplifiers (DCAs), but the basic premise is still the same. The amplifiers do the actual changing of volume levels, muting, soloing and such. You need one VCA or DCA for each channel, master or return you're going to automate. The

Yamaha DMP7

systems we'll be discussing here are configured so that you can buy as many, or as few, VCAs/DCAs as you need for your particular mixing board.

The VCAs/DCAs are plugged into line inputs on the console. (Effects insert points are typically used for this.) The control signals which "drive" the VCAs/DCAs are derived from MIDI commands. Using an input device of some sort (the different types will be covered below), you record your mix moves onto a MIDI sequencer. It's the same as recording a keyboard performance.

So all the add-on automation systems we'll be discussing consist of three basic parts: a **VCA or DCA unit**, an **input device** (i.e., mixing controls of some sort) and a **sequencer/data storage device**. These parts may be packaged in separate black boxes or grouped together; but these three elements are always in the system.

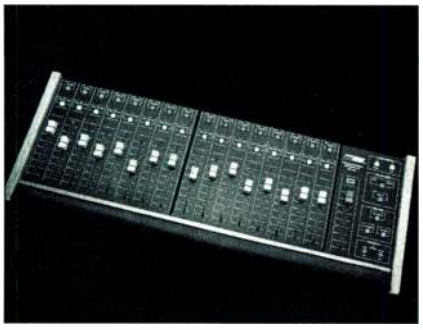
Once you get beyond this common ground, however, you find that add-on automation systems veer off in a few directions. For one, they take different approaches to recording and storing automation data. Some systems are based on those ever-popular personal computers. The Megamix from Musically Intelligent Devices works with the IBM PC; the Kia (formerly A-kia) XZ-100 and Stramp CP-1 both work with the Commodore 64. With each system, a VCA or DCA pack is attached to the computer, which runs the system software and takes care of storing automation data on diskette. And MIDI Clock data, which enters the system via the MIDI interface box for the computer, is the main means used to synchronize the whole spectacle to tape. In order to sync to SMPTE time code, you use a SMPTE-to-MIDI conversion box, such as the Roland SBX-80 or Friend-Chip SMPTE Reading Clock (SRC).

Up on the computer screen, each of these systems gives you a display of faders, mute buttons, etc., which you can manipulate using your friend Mr. Mouse (on the MegaMix and Stramp) or the computer keyboard (on the Kia). But if you want to use real faders to do your mixing—and many people do—each of these companies also manufactures an optional fader module. As an additional option, the Stramp systems will let you use a MIDI keyboard to make fader moves. You slide up the keyboard to move the fader up, and down the keybard to move the fader down.

That's one approach to recording and storing automation data. Other devices, such as the Microsystems ProMIX MCA-100 and Iota Systems Midi-Fader, are set up to let you store automation data on *any* MIDI sequencer. In both cases, the sequencer is connected to a single module, which contains both the mixing controls and the VCAs.

The mixing controls on each system, however, are very different. The ProMIX gives you a fader for every channel you order. Here, the faders come as a standard part of the system rather than an add-on option. And, because you can see where every fader is positioned, you don't really need a computer screen.

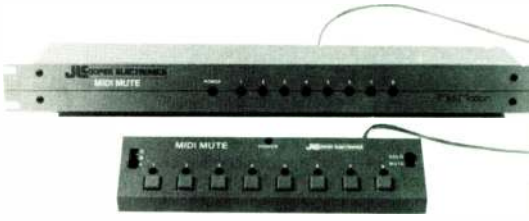
Despite its name, the Iota Midi-Fader doesn't have a single fader on it. Instead, there's a rotary dial, which can be



Microsystems ProMIX MCA-100

assigned to one channel or parameter at a time. An LCD gives you a visual readout of channel levels and other parameters. But for those who just gotta have that fader, or who want to set more than one parameter at a time, the system does let you map channel attenuation and other mix parameters to MIDI continuous controllers. So if you have a synth or some other MIDI device with several slider controls, you can use those to do your fader moves.

Because these two systems are designed to work with any MIDI sequencer, you use whatever sync-to-tape facilities are provided by the sequencer itself. Most of them sync to MIDI Clock data, some have their own SMPTE readers and others may use some other sync code entirely. Any of these approaches is valid. The important thing is to get the automation system locked up to your multitrack master so that fader



J.L. Cooper MidiMation system

moves, mutes etc., always happen at exactly the same point in the song every time you play it back.

When it comes to facilities for recording and storing automation data, J.L. Cooper's MidiMation can go several different ways. The core system is made up of the Midi Mute module, plus the MAGI VCA unit and MAGI Controller. (MAGI, which is pronounced "Maggie," stands for Mixer Automation Gain Interface.) Data generated by these devices can be recorded on any sequencer. Or it can be sent to another member of the MidiMation family—a box called SAM. (No relation to the present author's Militant Foodie alter-ego. This SAM is a SMPTE Automation Manager.) From SAM's various output ports, the data can be stored on floppy disk (via the SAM Disk Drive), tape, or any other medium. Unlike some MIDI sequencers, SAM will sync directly to SMPTE (i.e., it doesn't require a SMPTE-to-MIDI converter) and can even write SMPTE onto your multitrack master.

The MidiMation system also gives you a choice of optional, add-on fader modules. Beyond that, Mr. Cooper's family of contraptions will even let you do a little TV-watching while you play with them. There's a card for the MAGI Controller that enables you to connect it to a Mac or Atari ST and view fader positions, mute status, etc. In other words, it gives you the same kind of display as PC-based systems.

So now you know the different ways

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As for the CZ-1's MIDI spec, it doesn't come more advanced —an 8-note, multi-timbral system that lets you assign the eight voices in any polyphonic combination over the 16 channels of MIDI for virtually any sequencing need.

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these systems record and store the automation data that controls the VCAs and DCAs. They also differ in the ways they *structure* that data. There are a number of ways to make MIDI's musical messages behave as though they were console automation messages. Like many behavioral problems, this one can be solved by role playing. MIDI Note messages and Continuous Controller messages are the most popular actors in the Theater of Automation. The roles they play are not their ordinary, real-life ones. But they're similar enough to make the psychodrama effective.

When you use Note data, you're essentially getting the faders to respond as if they were keyboard keys. As the scene opens, a Note On status byte enters. The MIDI Spec says he always has to come on first, so the audience will know what kind of MIDI message the author wants to communicate. Following the status byte is the first of two data bytes. Now in ordinary life, this byte's job is to call out a particular note and tell it to play. "Do your stuff, Middle C!," he might exclaim. Or "G5, you're on, baby." In this case, he might say something like "Channel 2 fader, go for it!" After this happens, the next data byte comes on. His real-life job is to tell the note how loud to play. He's a Velocity Man. But tonight, he's here to tell the fader how much to attenuate the signal, i.e., how loud to make it. Needless to say, he's a natural for the part.

When you use Continuous Controller messages, you're dramatizing a very similar scenario. Again, you have one status byte and two data bytes. One data byte addresses the fader; the other sets the attenuation level. Both scripts require a trio of bytes to act out what happens every time you give the fader a little shove. But of the two, the Continuous Controller approach is generally the most streamlined data structure to use (i.e., the one that's less likely to clog up the MIDI line). How can this be? Well, the problem is another little clause that's written into the MIDI spec. It says that Note On messages must always be accompanied by a Note Off message.

It's a perfectly reasonable thing to ask for when you're dealing with notes. After all, you never want a note to ring out forever (unless you're into New Age instrumentals, of course). But Note Off messages have little use when you're using them to control mixer faders. Still, some of your more dogmatic sequencers won't record data properly unless they see those Note Offs, so they generally have to come along for the ride down the MIDI cable.

This being the case, you might think that people would always want to use Continuous Controller data for automation systems. But the Note On approach has its advantages, too. For instance, many sequencers use editing grids which make it a lot easier to edit note events than any other kind of events. So automation systems that work with external sequencers—such as the ProMIX and Midi-Fader—let you choose the MIDI data structure which best suits your needs. As a third option, the ProMIX also lets you use Polyphonic Aftertouch data to automate your console.

No matter which data structure you choose, all you're doing is jerking MIDI data around whenever you put a mix move into the storage device. So as we've hinted already, mixes can be edited the same way sequencer compositions are edited. You can overdub, for one. Say you get the drum dynamics down on one pass. You can then go back and overdub the vocal fader dynamics in another pass. You can also punch in on a

spot where you screwed up a fader move, redo it and then punch out.

Then there are cut-and-paste-style edits. For example, you might want to merge the verses from the first mix you recorded with the choruses from your second mix. Or you might want to take one channel from your first mix and plug it into your second mix. Edit moves that would have had automation's first generation shaking their beshagged heads in disbelief have been made standard procedure by MIDI.

As we've mentioned several times, yet another difference among all these systems is that some use VCAs while others use DCAs. And here we come to the perennial question: the key moral issue for Twentieth Century Man... *analog or digital?* VCAs (the analog guys) were used in some of those prehistoric automation systems, where they gained a bad reputation for being a noisy and degrading lot. (Degrading to the signal, that is; they were never known to pick on women or minorities.) Analog opponents say that VCAs still exhibit these anti-social traits.

"Oh, *do* give us a break," retort analog's staunch defenders. "It's been a long time since VCA technology crawled out of the cave. Just listen to well-bred VCAs like the dbx (used in the J.L. Cooper and Stramp systems) and the B&B 1537A (used in the MegaMix and ProMIX systems). They're well within the bounds of audio decorum."

"That may be the case," counter DCA boosters, "but digital is *still* quieter."

The VCA advocates then retaliate by smirking over something called "zipper noise"—embarrassingly audible jumps in gain produced by the digital circuitry. And at this point, fisticuffs generally ensue. The whole thing is, as I said, one more manifestation of the eternal yin/yang struggle: warm, cuddly, sloppy analog vs. cold, precise, goose-stepping digital. Which is better? That question is best answered by that ancient Zen Audio koan: Whatever sounds best to you is best *for* you.

This is all wonderful, you may be saying to yourself by now, but why do all these systems only deal with volume-related parameters like fader levels and mutes? What about things like panning? EQ? They're an important part of most mixes. Can't they be automated too?

Theoretically, yes; you can put a VCA on a pan pot or the cut-and-boost knob on an EQ control. But in actual practice it's not an easy thing to implement. Those volume-related parameters are easily accessible on most mixing boards. As we said earlier, you can just plug your VCAs or DCAs into the effects insert points. But it's not always as easy to patch into panning and EQ modules. And different console manufacturers place their pan pots and equalizers at different points in the channel signal path. Then there's the whole knotty audio problem of placing more than one VCA in each channel's signal path. One may be acceptable; but more than one is definitely pushing things. So if you want to automate EQ, panning, effects sends and the like, you'll have to go to another type of system.

The MIDI Camera Club

In the dim, dark days before automation, it was not an uncommon practice in recording studios to take a Polaroid of the mixing console at the end of a day's work. This form of audio tourism enabled our forefathers to log where every knob, switch and fader on the console was set. When they returned to the studio, they could recapture the setup for a song (or a rough-hewn approximation thereof) by looking at the Polaroid and setting the

continued on page 110

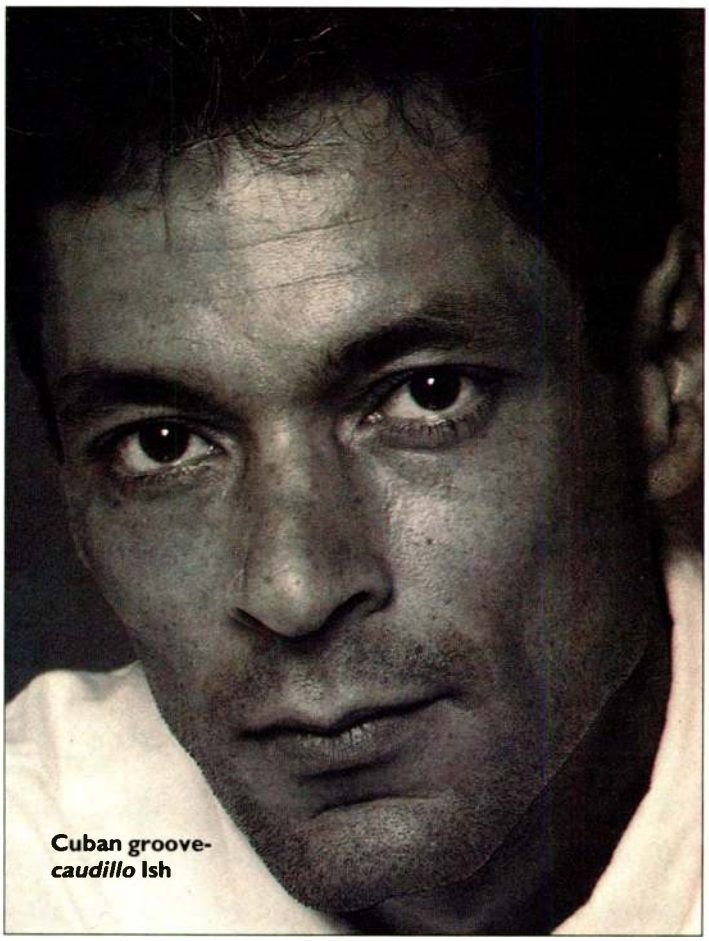
The Miami Sound Hits Big

Emilio Estafan, Ish and Lewis Martinee head up a veritable hotbed of dance production.

By J.D. Considine

It doesn't take too long a look at the charts these days to realize that, for all the success of rap and hip-hop over the past five years, Miami is quickly becoming the Dance Music Capital of the United States.

Walk into a dance club or flip the radio to any "hot hits" station and the synth-smart, Latin-tinged groove typical of the Miami Sound all but bowls you over. Whether through such made-in-Miami hits as Expose's "Point of No Return," Company B's "Fascinated" and Debbie Gibson's "Only in My Dreams," or sleek imitations like Madonna's "Who's That Girl" and Jellybean's "Who Found Who," dance-oriented playlists invariably operate on the same premise. As Gloria Estefan so succinctly put it, when it comes to the Miami Sound, it's inevitable that "Rhythm Is Gonna Get You."



Cuban groove-*caudillo* Ish

Ubiquitous as it might be, however, the Miami Sound isn't so easily defined. "It sounds bottom-solid, but then it sounds bright on the top, too," says Lewis A. Martinee, the producer who created Expose. "New York mixes are usually duller, as far as the sound goes." He also cites both Miami's Latin music market and the disco-era heritage of T.K. Records (K.C. & the Sunshine Band, Voyage, Foxy).

On the other hand, Emilio Estefan of the Miami Sound Machine—now billed as Gloria Estefan & the Miami Sound Machine, because "for 12 years it was Miami Sound Machine and nobody knew the singer's name"—points to his group's single "Doctor Beat" as having "really started the Miami Sound, with a lot of synthesizers, a lot of percussion, horns. It was a mixture between the Latin flavor and the pop market."

On the other hand, argues Ish, the architect for Company B, Promise Circle, Tiger Moon and other dance acts, "Miami Sound Machine doesn't particularly do the kind of sound that everybody else does out here. They're more like a pop thing, a straight pop thing. You can tell it's Latin, but it doesn't sound particularly like everybody else's.

"I don't know," he adds. "We just live here and do the music here. Definitely we have like a Latin thing to it, but other than that, I thought the Miami Sound almost came out of New York, from hearing New York hip-hop records a few years back. That kind of started kicking things off down here."

Maybe so; it certainly isn't hard to hear a similarity between the Miami Sound and the salsa-styled cybernetics of "Looking for the Perfect Beat" by Soul Sonic Force, or even the latter-day Latino hip-hop of Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam. Still, if you want to get at its roots, says Ish, "the Miami sound was K.C. & the Sunshine Band." Although the T.K. sound was originally "completely R&B," K.C. added a different twist by putting "a lot of percussion in it. And it was simpler—their singing wasn't all that great by technical standards, but they sure did the trick."

Ish came up through the T.K. machine, back in the days when he was still Ish Angel. He started his career in a popular Miami group called the Bird Watchers, and "then I formed Foxy when I first heard disco music. Being that we're all Cuban, we kind of got into it because it was more dance-oriented." Foxy started out doing "very, very faithful covers" of disco hits, but moved up to doing studio work by 1975. "We went over to T.K. Records, and started being the back-up band for a lot of people

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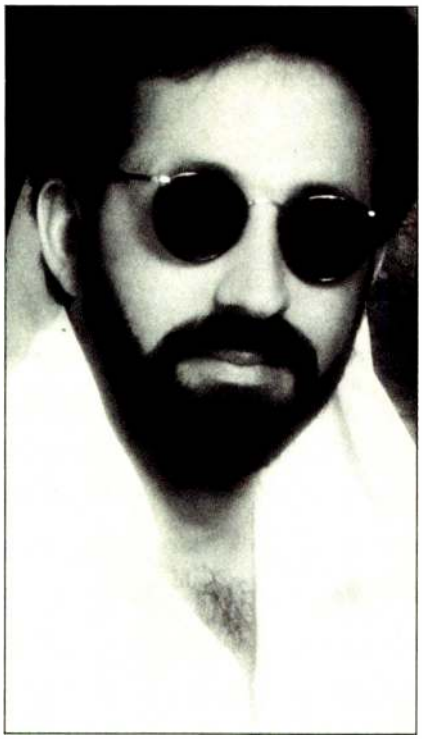
like Gwen McRae and Betty Wright and Jimmy Thomas. Eventually we started making our own records. We had a few dance hits, but back then if you did dance hits that didn't cross over into radio, there really wasn't much money in it." Foxy, which had been signed to a T.K. subsidiary called Dash, did manage to break the top 10 with two singles, "Get Off" and "Hot Number," but, says Ish, "we started becoming popular toward the end of the T.K. thing. Then it fell apart, and we fell apart."

While some members of Foxy remained in Miami, eventually joining Miami Sound Machine, Ish moved west to L.A. and formed a pop-oriented new wave band called OXO, which signed with Geffen. "It did okay, but it didn't do great," he shrugs. After that, "they signed me as a solo artist and I did a record; it was good, but it was a little too complex—kind of hard to listen to unless you're a musician. Then they were trying to break into dance all of a sudden. I told them, 'You should have told me that you wanted me to do dance!' But then it was too late.

"I got fed up with that whole thing and I came right back here and just started doing local records. I just wanted to get local hits so we could get some work. The Company B thing was from my wife, Lori. She asked me to make her a group, so I made her a group. And taking it not too seriously, it ended up doing really well. I think it's the top-selling 12-inch so far this year."

Curiously, though, Ish doesn't approach dance records stylistically. "I don't get influenced by any particular kind of music; I can more or less hear a vibe," he says. "That's the way I see it, putting a vibe across." Take Tiger Moon as an example. Ish put this project together around Mark Chambers, a singer he describes as having "a voice somewhere between Stevie Winwood and Eric Clapton. Now that group, what I did is I used a lot of Eurodisco, as far as the drums and bass, and then I colored it with Indian instrument samples.

"I use samples because it takes less time," he adds. "I do all the music myself. Basically it's just a couple of instruments, just a keyboard and a drum machine." Although Ish came up as a guitarist, "guitar doesn't really have much of a home in this kind of music right now," he says. "I've just put it aside and I play keyboards. I'm pretty musical—I could more or less just pick up an instrument and go with it, the way it dictates that it should be played. But a lot of the parts that I have on keyboard sound like guitar parts."



Emilio Estefan: feel in the machine

His modus operandi is the essence of simplicity. Refusing to spend more than three days on a single, he puts his energies into getting the right feel instead of working out slick, flashy instrumental lines. "I don't sit there and think of a part," he says, "I just *play* the part. I'm the only guy there, so if I sit there and start thinking about what I'm doing, I won't get anywhere, you know? I just think of a vibe. 'How do I want people to feel when they're dancing?' Then, when I devise a strong enough vibe, I'll create a sound for it."

For "Something Tells Me," the Tiger Moon single, Ish explains, "I want them to think they're like animals, you know, so I got this guitar that's going around, like 'eerow, eerow,' like that," he says, imitating the whine of an Indian sarod. "It just keeps revolving around, and all these little tablas and Indian percussion. If you listen to the record it makes you feel that way, and people act funny towards it. They move like that. It's hard to explain because it's a color, all the different groups have a different color."

The set-up Ish uses is simple enough: an Oberheim DX drum machine with an OB-8, an E-mu E-max, a Roland D-50 synthesizer, "and for bass, an old Moog Source." His percussion parts are entirely pre-programmed. "Depending on the other parts," he says, "half of them might be sequenced and the others are just played live." He chuckles and adds, "They're essentially all very simple parts. Nobody with any kind of good coordination would have any problem playing them.

When Emilio Estefan sets up a rhythm track for the Miami Sound Machine, he also mixes programming with live instruments, but because he's working with an actual band, he approaches the process in a rather different fashion.

"You know, sometimes you have to use computer drums because of the sound," he says. "But Miami Sound Machine uses a lot of live percussion, because I love the acoustic difference. It makes the whole thing a little bit warmer, it makes the whole music more realistic. I'm even using acoustic guitars and everything a little bit more to the acoustic, because I think sometimes everything sounds the same."

So, what Estefan does is layer the two, using drum machines and sequencers for structure, but basing the arrangement and the feel on live playing. Citing "Rhythm Is Gonna Get You" as an example, he explains that "we use a Linn 9000 to trigger most of the synthesizers. Then we use a lot of light percussion: bongos, timbales, congas, bells. We even use one African box that our percussionist kept just for this. It's sort of a kalimba." Estefan adds that he slowed down the basic track "just to be in the same pitch as the box, so it would sound like it was tuned to the track."

Although the Linn is mainly used for organizational purposes, Estefan admits, "We put the Linn on the track, yeah. But we use a lot of live drums, too. We combine all these real cymbals, sometimes high-hats, so the whole thing will sound more realistic."

Estefan himself plays some of the percussion, but leaves the Linn programming to Joe Galdo, who he calls "one of the best Linn programmers in the country. Joe was the guy who used to play in Foxy, so he's a real drummer. A lot of the new guys now, when they go to work with the machine, they only know how to work with the machine. They've never been performers. I think it helps a lot when you've been a performer; you know how to program things, in a way that would be like a real performance. This guy is incredible—sometimes he spends, I would say, eight hours on a roll, to make it sound like a real drummer. Which makes the whole difference."

Unlike some Linn users, Estefan and

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Galdo haven't found the 9000 to be especially temperamental, but then, "We sample. Almost every sound that you hear in Miami Sound Machine is pre-sampled. We don't use any of the sounds that the machine has."

How does the Miami Sound Machine put a track together? Pretty much the same way the band would rehearse for a live performance, Estefan says. "What we do first, we prearrange a lot of things. We spend a lot of time doing everything live, then I get together with Joe Galdo and we put everything back to the machine. Most of the time we try to get everything like it's going to be a live concert. We get all the ideas, and all the breaks and everything.

"For example, 'Rhythm,' we did it between Gloria, [drummer] Kiki Garcia, [percussionist] Rafael Padillo and me. Then we give it to Joe, and he puts everything that we give him in the computer. Sometimes he adds a couple of things. He's a great arranger. The other thing we do is Joe makes a groove in the machine, and then he gives it to Rafael Padillo, and Raffi comes out with the melody and lyrics. 'I Betcha Say' was done that way."

Is it difficult to work things out that way? "Not really," Estefan says. "Both of them, they have the Cuban descent but they grew up in the States, so they have the same feel."

Which is? "I would say exactly like, for example, maybe a black guy playing bass, and maybe a pop guy playing bass. I think that the black guy has more soul when he plays, and I think the Latin people, it's just in our blood; percussion goes straight to your blood. It's more real to do it, it's more natural for us."

That hasn't stopped other people from wanting to get into the act though, especially now that the Miami Sound Machine has become a proven hit-maker. Estefan at one point interrupts the interview to take a call from Barry Manilow ("I'm co-producing a duet between Gloria and Barry," he says; "it's going to be an up-tempo tune, not really like 'Copacabana'"), and E Street Band saxophonist Clarence Clemons is one of Estefan's clients ("It's going to be an album for the pop market, but with a lot of Latin percussion").

But that's about par for a successful producer, especially in Miami now. Since putting Expose into the top 10, Lewis Martinee also has found his talents increasingly in demand. As in: "I'm producing the Flirts' Pauline in the next few weeks. I just finished a tune for the Cover Girls, too. Came out pretty cool. I'm also working with Jermaine Stewart, and with a lot of new groups that are coming out. If you want to write a whole list, I can give you...."

That's okay, we'll take your word for it. But Martinee understands. "As soon as we crossed over into Top 40, we started getting interest. Before, we had to track people down."

Like Estefan, Martinee entered production from a drummer's chair. Back during the disco era he worked with such acts as Amante and Ceili B, "engineering, mixing, and playing drums and percussion. Sometimes I would do one thing, and sometimes the other. Sometimes both." At first he was just a hired hand, but by '82 he'd come up with his own project, Technoluv. "It was a 12-inch; the song was called 'Woman.' It did real well here in Miami, and a little bit in New York."

Two years later he created Expose, which also lit up the local dance clubs. The first single was "Point of No Re-

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turn," which "blew up here in Miami, big-time. And then Arista licensed it from us, and they had a huge hit with it, but they didn't really cross it over to pop. Then we came out with 'Exposed to Love' the year after that, and then 'Come Go with Me' really opened up the doors because it went national, number five on the pop chart. So we re-released 'Point of No Return.' It's a totally remixed version, totally redone. New vocals, new backgrounds—60 percent of the music is redone. And the 12-inch was also redone, totally, for a new dance mix, a new radio mix. Both different."

So what's the difference? "For radio, I tend to keep the drums a little softer and the vocals a little louder. Then for the dance mix, I bring up the drums [and] percussion, and the vocals I leave at a good level. I change the focus and overall sound—plus make it longer."

Going the other way, Martinee reins in much of the sonic dazzle when he takes a record from its dance floor version to its radio edit. "I take a lot of things out for radio, like brash horn shots, and effects and bangs and crashes and noises—I take them all out. Crazy edits, too. People in radio freak out when they hear crazy things."

Chart success may not change Martinee's sound, at least no more so than the usual transition from the dance floor to radio, but it is beginning to change the way he works. Take Expose, for instance. Although the group started out as a concept, with Martinee composing the tracks and dropping in an anonymous trio of singers for the vocals, he feels that's only fair. "A lot of groups start in the studio," he points out. "Whether it's a band concept or a single-person concept like Expose, somebody has to come up with the idea and the name of the group, and what the music sounds like. Whether it's Rush or Bon Jovi, somebody came up with the idea."

Now that Expose is successful, however, Martinee feels that there has to be a group there, not just an idea. "The reason a lot of dance groups don't become touring groups is because they don't break out in the pop market," he explains. "Once it breaks out in pop, there's always somebody smart who says, 'Hey, we've got to get a tour together, so we have to get a band together to promote it.'"

Nonetheless, Martinee sees no reason to change his own approach. "There's always going to be dance music," he says. "There always was. I just try to do the best that I can do, and hope for the best." M

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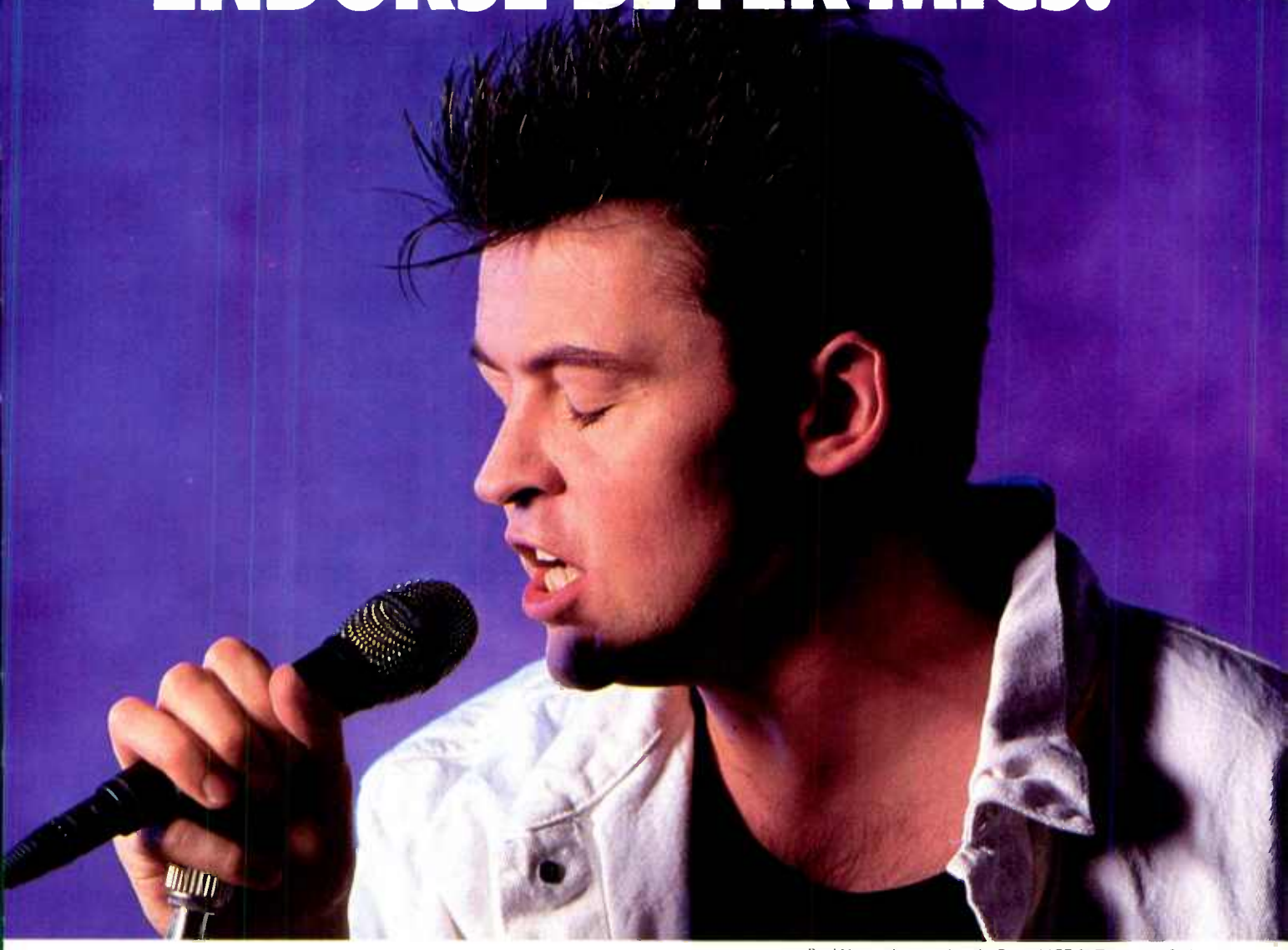

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Craig Leon's Cutting Edge

The U.S. expatriate who signed and produced the Ramones prospers in the U.K. underground.

By Richard Buskin

I don't know if rock exists anymore—it's now pop music—but rock music is a folk idiom to me, and it really has to be written fast, done fast...not to the point of sloppiness, but there has to be an immediacy that must be captured. It shouldn't be dwelt on for nine or ten months, like every record has to be *Sgt. Pepper* or something: that's ridiculous."

This is not to say that producer Craig Leon would shy away from time-consuming methods should the material warrant it. It's just that the artists whom he chooses to record tend to be those whose raw style accommodates a few well-planned rough edges. What kind of raw are we talking? Well, Leon signed the Ramones and produced their first album. He's produced young Americans like Rodney Crowell, the Climax Blues Band, Moon Martin and Chilliwack, as well as engineered for Blondie and the Roches, and co-produced a Martha Velez record with Bob Marley. And in his latter-day reign as U.K. hitmaker he's done everyone from the venerable Sir Douglas Quintet to young upstarts Flesh For Lulu and the Men They Couldn't Hang. This past year he's put eight records into the top 75 in the U.K.

"I generally don't go for those types of artists that need to have perfection—as they see and hear it—in every line, because to me that doesn't sound true. I'm sure it works for some people, but I don't produce those kinds of people. If I do, then it'll take that long, it's whatever the project will bear, but there's no point in recording a live album for Flesh For Lulu, for example, and doing it for a year. If anything, you're going to lose the intent of the record by beating it to death.

"On the other hand I've done things like recording the Roches, which consisted of three girls and three acoustic guitars, for eight weeks, and it wasn't boring at all! That was the one where we were going to get it absolutely perfect, in the balance and everything, with live mike placement, rather than using outboard equipment and echo to enhance it. So we had the three girls in there and strung about 18 mikes around the studio, and then when it came to the mix we could get a different vocal effect by pushing up one of the [Neumann] 84's as opposed to the 87's, and so forth. In that way we could actually change the timbre of words, so it warranted taking quite a bit of time over it."

While one Leon specialty is taking established artists and producing a "radically new" sound for them, the preferred trait of his career has been to discover and collaborate with new bands. "I go after things that I like musically," he says, "regardless of what their past performance has been. A lot of the bands I've worked with have had no records at all, or have just had a few that have caught my ear, and I like to help get their stuff released, even when nobody quite knows what they're going to sound like!"

After building his own all-tube 8-track studio in Florida, Craig Leon began producing demos and recording local bands. When producer Richard Gottehrer rehearsed a band there, he was sufficiently impressed to offer Leon work as his assistant, and after selling his own studio Craig was on his way to New York and Sire Records.

After he had recorded the likes of the Climax Blues Band, Sire employed Leon in an A&R capacity to scour New York for raw young talent, and he responded by inking the Ramones and producing their first album. "It was about '75, and I was in the audience at CBGB's where Talking Heads were opening for the Ramones," Craig recollects. "I went back and told Ritchie that we should sign both those bands, which we eventually did, but it was the Ramones that I really got off on.

"They were very professional and had a total concept of what they were doing. We just went for a very big live sound in a very big live studio, did the album in about three or four days, put it out and radio threw up on it! When the punk stuff

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made its way to Britain about a year later it was taken in a much more social vein and developed much further than in New York, but the deejays at first were saying, 'Let's burn these records,' as they had with rock in the '50s.

"Things can work live that don't necessarily work on records, and believe it or not the Ramones' record consisted of pre-production—which I like to do a lot of—and considerable rearrangement of material. They would not be happy if they all ended a song on the same chord! So major production breakthrough: 'Everybody ends on B on this song'! There was a lot of work, actual hooks and background vocals thrown in there, and it was far more complicated than it was later credited as being."

The Ramones, in fact, feature among the artists whom Leon has most enjoyed working with—"in those good old days of 10 years ago, when everything was live!"—alongside recent projects with the Pogues and the Men They Couldn't Hang. "The folkier bands are the ones who, because of the nature of what they are doing, will be allowed by radio and record company standards to be what they are. So those are the projects that I really get into. Like a single I did with the Pogues, which was done all live in one afternoon ['Haunted']. That was one of the last things done at Olympic Sound Studios in South London before its changeover from the old valve equipment—the last homage to the Stones!"

Leon prefers big live rooms, such as those at Abbey Road and Air in London, and Electric Lady, Indigo Ranch, Sound City and Capitol in the U.S., but perhaps fondest in his memory is New York's Plaza Sound, where he did the Ramones and, with Gottehrer producing, Blondie: "Plaza was 16-track, with no noise reduction, and a totally different ball game then to today's trend towards being so pristine. It would just be a case of "let's set that to +8 and see if it won't saturate," y'know. Extremely high-level recording, putting everything into the red like the old '50s records, and it was a revolt against all this Emerson Lake & Palmer hi-fi nonsense that was coming out around the same time, and which is now unfortunately coming out again, only with a disco beat! Plaza Sound had an API console with 550 EQ, a 3M M79 and 30 i.p.s. very hot level Agfa tape. There was a whole bunch of valve mikes, and it was in the old room where Toscanini used to rehearse the NBC Symphony. It was about 60 by 40 feet and really live, and had a small control room, with a tie-line in the Radio City Music Hall down below which you could bounce things down to after midnight and use as an echo chamber. Next door was an equally big room which wasn't part of the studio but which was where the Rockettes rehearsed, and I used it as an isolation booth for the bass, with the guitars in the studio and the drums in another room. Phil Spector was a big influence on me, and I got into the business hearing his records, and tracks on the Blondie album such as 'In the Flesh' with all of the choir and so forth in the background were very much a reflection of that."

"In terms of my own stamp on the records I work on, some people say there is in the type of room ambience that I like to use; real as opposed to digital reverbs. In certain things like that people have said that I do have a sound, but I try not to actually. There again there is no sound that can pervade the live folky sound of the Pogues and the machine-oriented sound of Dr. & the Medics; their records are a million miles apart. There has to be something individual about an artist that attracts me in the first place, and that's what I try to keep on a record. Nowadays it's getting

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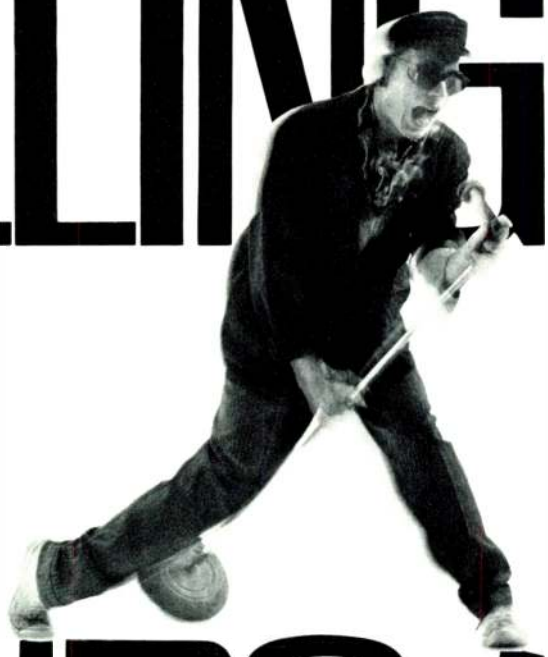

Announcing the return of the Best Unsigned Band Contest. MUSICIAN Magazine, in cooperation with Warner Bros. Records, invites you to send your best original songs for the chance to be one of ten bands featured on an upcoming MUSICIAN-Warner Bros. LP.

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No purchase necessary. One cassette per artist/band. Maximum two songs per cassette. **Name, age and address of each band member, photo of band/artist and a $5.00 handling fee must accompany each cassette and entry form (or facsimile).** All entries must be received by December 15, 1987. All music must be original. If chosen, artists are responsible for final mix to appear on album. Artists cannot be signed to a label. Tapes become property of MUSICIAN Magazine and will not be returned. Artists retain rights to their music. All decisions are final. Employees of MUSICIAN Magazine, Warner Bros. Records, JBL Professional, Otari, Beyer Dynamic and affiliated companies are not eligible. Void where prohibited.

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Contact Name

Submitted song titles

Signature and date

tougher and tougher to do that."

Tougher in the United States, that is. That was the main reason Leon decided in the mid-'80s to move his activities to the U.K.: "Getting bands in Britain like the Pogues having hits on Stiff Records, and the Smiths—possibly the most influential band coming out of England from an indie background—just wasn't happening in America. In America the only indie-type thing that you had was heavy metal, and there wasn't a great outlet for any of these bands which some people consider as 'left field.' I saw the possibility of working with these types of bands in England, because they can creep into the system in a funny way.

"I find that American artists can generally play better when they are first signed to record companies, simply because they have to perform for God knows how many years before they get out of their home town to a major city where an A&R guy can see them. Then he has to take about two or three years in order to decide whether or not he wants to sign them, so they really get their live chops together! There again, because of that they are often locked into whatever their sound is—this is a generalization, I should point out—and personally I like it in Britain where you can get some bands who have just come out of their house, played four or five gigs and have been signed.

"Believe it or not—and people find this weird when I say it—England's far less boring and far less contrived than the States in terms of recording. You can do something slightly out of the ordinary, and have it thought of as a legitimate mainstream piece of work. Engineers are much more experimental in England. The American engineers are very conservative, and that's why English engineers are a pleasure; you don't have to sit there and say, 'Hang that microphone 24 feet away from the amp and put it out of phase on purpose,' as they'll think of that themselves. Lately I'm learning that very few engineers know how to mike anything live to begin with, but that's another story! "

Equipment-wise, Craig favors the new DDA consoles for their clean high-tech quality, counteracting any sampling noises, while he also likes old Neve boards and SSLs utilizing Focusrite equalization. Favorite machines include the Kurzweil 250, Fairlight III, the Publison Infernal Machine and the old Lexicon 224.

Leon is also extremely wary of "the homogenized sounds that are coming

continued on page 121

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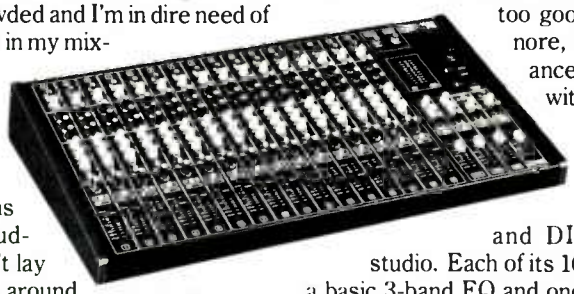
Developments: Solving Input Shortages

What to do when your gear outstrips your mixing board, plus new mike and power amp action.

By Jock Baird

Like many of you out there, much of my recent musical capital investment has been in the computer/MIDI area. Lately though, the situation in my basement studio has started to get electronically crowded and I'm in dire need of more channels in my mixing board—hey, at least 16. Naturally all this other gear I've bought has dented my budget, and I can't lay out more than around $1400. Is this happening to you too, bunky? Well, I hope you remember that old comic book hero the Human Target, because that's what you and I are right now. By my count, there are at least nine new consoles near that price or temptingly just above it, and they're all aimed at us.



$1500 Electro-Voice BK 1632

Let's start basic and work up. For raw channel-for-dollar impact, two new **Roland** mixers gotta get your attention, the M160 and M240. One is a 16-channel, rack-mount job for $1100, the other is a console-format 24-channel job for $1400. Both are comparatively basic mixers, with no on-board equalization. They do, however, have four effects circuits per channel, three in stereo and one in mono, so it'd be simple enough to patch in an EQ if desired. Note, however, that the inputs are unbalanced phono plugs, not balanced XLR connectors, making the M160 and M240 primarily an electronic-based studio tool.

Shure 849 condenser

The **Yamaha** MC1602, billed as a sound reinforcement board but, at $1300 too good a buy to ignore, does have balanced XLR inputs with pads and 48-volt phantom power, so it's better for a mike- and DI-box-based studio. Each of its 16 channels has a basic 3-band EQ and one effects loop. There's also PFL, or Pre-Fader Listen, so you can see whether or not you're actually improving the naked input signal, and three bonus independent auxiliary sends are also in the 1602. And how about that talkback capability and light socket?

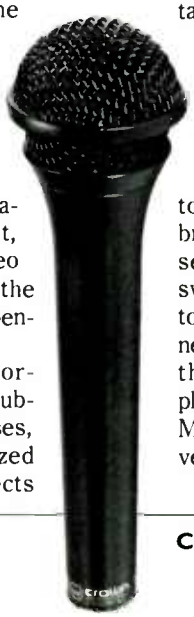
Another worthy 16-channel board is **Biamp**'s $1629 Rackmax, which also has balanced XLR ins with phantom power, three effects loops, 3-band EQ, and even a cue/solo system. This is a nice little board, which can be made nicer with a $400 option that adds an **Alesis** digital reverb inside. Then there's the new **Electro-Voice** BK1632, which at $1500 also gives 16 channels with XLRs and phantom power, but adds more complex PFL capabilities and a crude headphone "solo" (hearing only one channel) feature. Only one effects loop out, but it can be doubled with a stereo cord. Like the Yamaha board, the E-V 1632 has three helpful independent sends.

All well and good, but major-league consoles have several submix circuits, called program busses, to do things like run personalized monitor mixes, do special effects routings or just help organize a mixdown. (In tradespeak, mixer configurations are described with the busses in the middle, as in 16x4x2.) You are not supposed to get busses on $1500 mixers, but somebody forgot to tell **Peavey** and **Tascam**. The new Peavey MD421 has four busses to subgroup its 16 inputs, each of which has balanced ins with phantom power, a 3-band EQ with sweepable midrange, two effects sends and PFL, and post- or pre-EQ taps for the signal path. The MD421 also has its inputs and outputs on the top, not the back, so it's easier to patch.

$1100 Roland M-160

The Tascam entry, the $1700 M-216 has virtually everything the Peavey has, but adds an important extra: switchable tape returns. With most low-end boards, if you're recording something and want to play it back on the same channel, you'll get electronic feedback loops within the mixer. On all the mixers I've mentioned, you have to patch around that weakness, bringing the tape inputs in on a separate channel. Boards with switchable tape returns allow you to monitor through the same channel, just by hitting a button to hear the playback. It can save you plenty of headaches. The Tascam M-216 is not new, but a 24-channel version, the $2400 M-224, is.

Getting out of our original



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range? Yeah, but sometimes I can be talked into going over my budget when I can get a lot more. That's why I'll mention three more units you should look at. One is the **Rane** MM 16 Micro-Matrix rack-mount mixer, with six busses, solo/mute capability, switchable tape returns and remote power (for less hum). The MM 16 has a slightly unusual layout, with its buss controls on every channel rather than grouped on the right. Another rack-mount with a ton of big-bucks features is from **Aries**, a popular British company. Both Rane and Aries units are under $3000. And **Biamp** also has a swell 16x4x2 console for $3169 that has all the goodies we've mentioned. Hmmm, maybe if I sell my car and never eat out....

Turning to the world of microphones, we are now well into the Age of Affordable Condensers. And they're not just affordable—the new ones are tough enough to survive Roger Daltrey-level abuse. The $168 **Shure** 849-LC and 869-LC are good examples, the latter being a ball-type vocal mike with a presence peak at 5kHz, the former primarily an instrument mike. **Beyer** has a new TourGroup series of mikes, with the MCE 80 and 81 falling in the mid-200-dollar range. Beyer also has a tough new dynamic job called the M 700 which will handle humongous drum levels. And **Yamaha** has added two new drum mikes to its MZ line, one with a beryllium diaphragm for higher-pitched drums, another with a polyester diaphragm for deeper percussion sounds. There are also two vocal entries similarly equipped.

But the hottest new condenser mike act of the summer comes from **Crown**. It's the CM series, which has two firsts: one is a hand-held, ball-type PZM omnidirectional mike, the CM-100 PZM, intended for broadcast and interview use but very useful in stage and room miking. Then there's the CM-300 Differoid mike, a combo of cardioid and differential. Differential mikes, invented in 1919 and used in World War II by tank commanders, have exceptional off-axis rejection by phasing out background noise. Trouble is, they don't sound great. Crown took that principle and designed it into a pro cardioid condenser mike that has unbelievable gain-before-feedback characteristics. As a nice added touch, the CM mikes are available with gorgeous hardwood casings.

Crown is also breaking new ground in power amps, with the first 10,000-watt amp ever. Called the Microtech 10,000, they've already installed one at the Indy 500. Just one? Yup, that's all it takes, where 10 were once needed. A warning, though: better have hernia insurance for this baby. Crown also has an update of its popular Powerbase series for us less power-mad citizens. Also more in the realm of the regular guy is the RP500S from **Kaman/KMD**, a 250-watts-per-side, fan-cooled power-pump that comes with a four-year warranty.

When it comes to tough, though, take a look at **RIC** amps from **Rickenbacker**, made for them by **Sony**. From their reinforced chassis design to the large toroidal transformers (which are an enclosed doughnut-shape and generate no external field like regular transformers), these are the Mercedes Benzes of ampdom, so indestructible they were specified for the Singapore Hilton since they could function in a hotel fire emergency. Numbered RA300 and RA600 because of their output in bridged mono (half that per side for stereo), the RIC amps actually deliver almost twice their rated wattage. Not cheap, with the RA600 priced at $1250 and the RA300 at $900, but the dealer price structure allows for more flexibility in discounting. Call (714) 545-5574 for more info.

A small footnote: in my September column I rather sweepingly simplified

BBE'S PSYCHOACOUSTIC BREAKTHROUGH

Psychoacoustics is probably the last frontier of music technology, Although we can improve that electronic signal in mind-boggling ways, it still has to get from the speakers to our ears. This is the realm of the psychoacoustic processors or aural exciters, an area about which there is still strong disagreement. Products like the EXR system (now handled by DOD) or the Aphex Aural Exciter sounded revolutionary to some and simply tinny to others. When asked to explain in detail what their machines did, inventors feared ripoffs and kept mum, thereby losing credibility. But in the last year or so, a new psychoacoustic processor made by Barcus Berry Electronics or BBE has appeared that almost everyone agrees improves listening to music through speakers.

BBE sees the big problem as one of harmonics. Every note has a fundamental pitch we usually hear loudest, for example middle C, but then also generates shorter, higher multiples of the same sound wave which go all the way to the upper edge of our hearing. Higher harmonics actually are very important to the color of the sound, especially in the high end. One way to represent harmonics is a harmonic spectrum, which looks like a vertical bar graph with the fundamental on the far left and the higher harmonics a series of bars repeating to the right of it. Ideally, you hear the spectrum from right to left: higher harmonics first, then the fundamental. But inherent electronic and speaker limitations change that natural listening order. What the BBE process purports to do is to get those harmonics back in the natural order, adding more subtlety and clarity to a sound. Does it really work? We decided to get a BBE 802 pro unit and see.

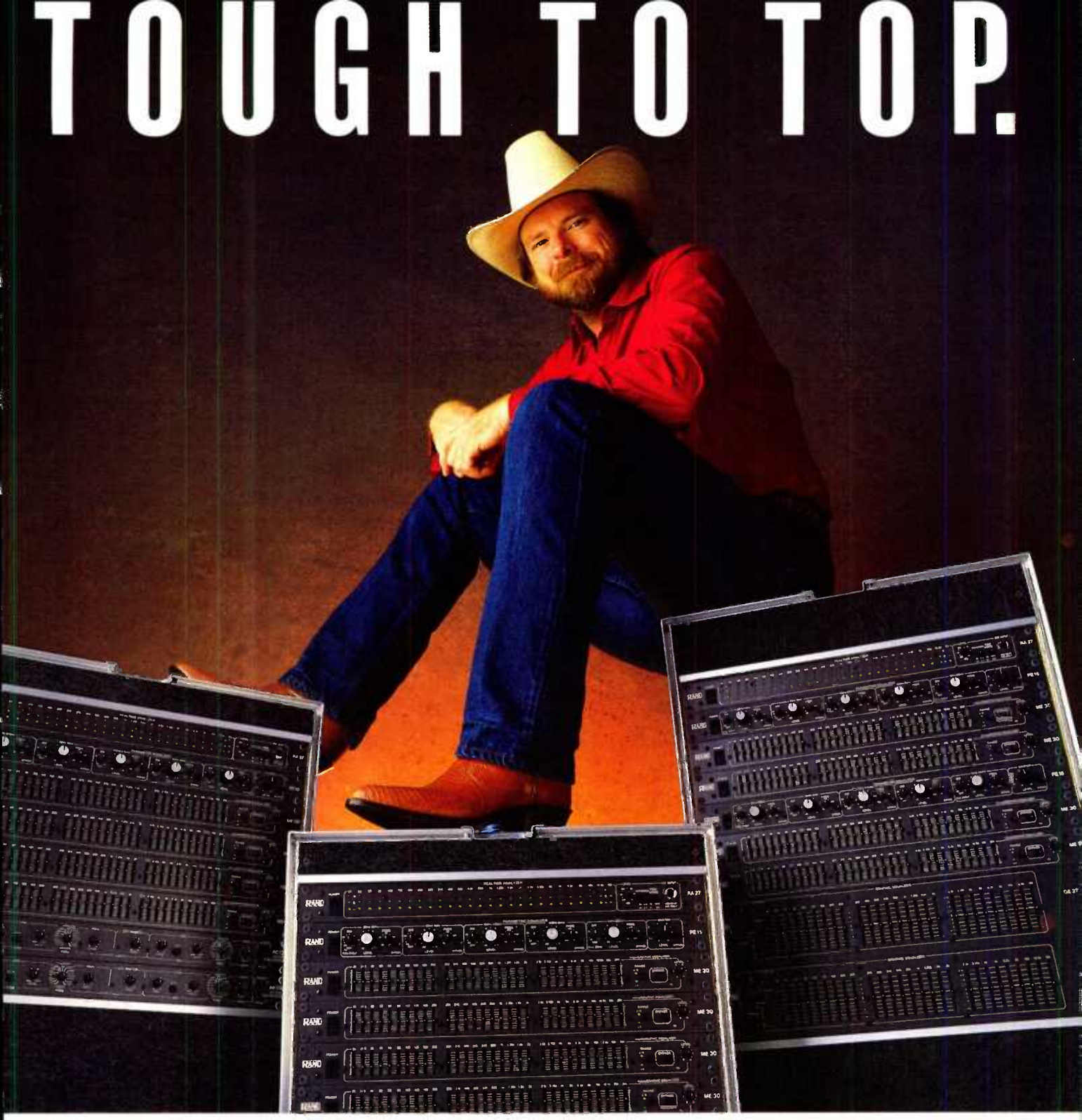
Most of the action tends to go on in the upper end, so it works best with a three-way—or at least a two-way—speaker system. I found BBE most striking on single-note melody lines like voice, guitar or horn. It added detail without treble, and made the sound's image much clearer. It also added a lot to whole mixes, improving the stereo perception. After much A-B comparison of different sounds with and without BBE, my first reaction was surprise that I'd put up with such a flat monitor system for so long. My second was to vow that from now on I shouldn't record anything without it. That may be extreme, since low frequencies like drums and bass seem unaffected by it (great cymbals, though) and for now I'd prefer to use it mainly on the lead melody instruments where it turns my aging $150 dynamic vocal mike into an AKG 414.

The BBE brigade now consists of three units: the $500 model 802 is considered the pro unit because it's got balanced XLR ins in addition to phone jacks and line level controls. Then there's the $300 402 and a new model for spoken-word lecture or paging use. The 802 and 402 are completely stereo and both have low-frequency adjustments for tuning to specific speakers (the 802 has them as a screwdriver adjustment so it's harder to accidentally change). Both also have big knobs and indicator LEDs for setting the level of the processing, so you can use it more selectively.

One interesting facet of BBE is that you can print directly onto tape with it with no need of a decoder on playback. This raises the question of whether to use it while putting down individual instruments or on the mix as a whole (using it twice will screw things up). My experiments were inconclusive on this point, but not on the others. Definitely make room on your outboard gear rack for one.

– **Jock Baird**

TOUGH TO TOP.



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RANE

the keyboard stand universe as "basically a variation on the Tinker Toy." Although this made for purpler prose, I did unintentionally minimize the uniqueness and popularity of **Invisible**'s tensioned support system. Apologies for literary overkill are in order. Well, that's all till next month's Christmas wish list.

MIDI from page 91

knobs accordingly.

Snapshot automation, as its name implies, works on the same principle. Only instead of actually photographing the board, the settings are stored in digital memory. And of course, there's no need to physically reset the controls. Just punch up the appropriate memory number and the settings are all there. It's the same as calling up a patch preset on a synthesizer. In fact, MIDI Program Change commands are what you use to click from snapshot to snapshot.

There's no denying that snapshot automation is a relatively static thing, when you compare it with the continuous moves that VCA- and DCA-based systems are capable of reproducing. The difference between the two is kind of like the difference between a slide show and a movie. But that doesn't mean snapshot automation can't put audiences at the edge of their seats. A continuing succession of aural "stills" makes a great backdrop for real-time action. In other words, snapshot automation is great for changing mixer setups while both your hands are busy.

This means that snapshot mixers are ideal for keyboardists, drummers or anybody else who has to manage more than one noise-maker at a time. Onstage, snapshot automation can deliver you from that sadistic breed of Lesser Ham-Fisted Numbskull which inhabits the region just behind the house P.A. board at many venues. If you've got a synth, drum machine or some other device that can put out MIDI program change commands, you can control most mix functions right from the stage.

But the uses of snapshot automation extend far beyond the footlights. Like all MIDI data, program change commands can be recorded on a sequencer, too. So when you play the sequence back, you can have the mixer settings change as the appropriate parts of the song come up. Synchronize your sequencer to tape in your usual manner (SMPTE-to-MIDI Clock conversion, FSK or whatever) and you've got a nice little home studio automation system going. Here too, the

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the SSL I'm coming up through a whole set of tube preamps, getting a weird, distorted, overcompressed sound." His main preamp? The one inside an ancient Ampex 8-track tape deck, the model Les Paul designed in 1951 and still uses. ("Only reason people quit using tubes is their noise," says Dickinson; "anyone'll tell you they sound warmer, better.")

With his mix 'n' match fervor, Dickinson routinely jumbles Ardent's Studio B into a Rube Goldberg funhouse, jerry-rigging the $250,000 SSL and brand-new Mitsubishi digital 32-track to his dinosaur Ampex and beloved old limiters: a '60s Fairchild ("the Beatles put it on all their stuff; Ardent had it propping open a door") and a nasty-looking Gates Level Devil emblazoned with lightning-bolts and a grinning red Satan. "[Replacement] Chris Mars' drums don't just sound like they're being hit, but like they're flying apart, *exploding*. That's the limiters, pulling up the rattle, taking lots of attack off."

His funky antiques, Dickinson says, keep the digital gear "from sounding like everyone else's, the digital risk. But hell, I love new machines. What I'm interested in—and I think you only learn about it from black musicians—is not so much the notes as the space *between* them. That's where the interesting shit happens. And it's why digital's beautiful, especially for loud music—elimination of noise. Like in the Replacements' 'Can't Hardly Wait,' when the horns and strings cut off. Absolute silence just rushes in."

When the digital silence/sound contrast is too sharp, Dickinson "fills the silences with weirdness. Barbecue sauce. Listen to the way most people fill the space between the notes, like on the [latest] U2 album. A Fairlight humming, multilayered, plastic, monotonous. There's spots on the Replacements' record where you swear instruments are playing and they're not. I'm doin' stuff like taking the echo and *syncopating* it, creating a kind of groove with nothing but the effects loop. Used to try that stuff in the '60s; people said, 'Wow, that sounds like shit.' It was too noisy. But with digital gear I can do it.

"Producing, I still think very much like a musician. Instead of notes, I'm manipulating elements of the sound structure: echo, volume, frequency." Playing a zillion-dollar studio like a piano—a whorehouse piano. "I used to love Phil Spector for making cheap records that sounded expensive; today, I'm making

expensive records that sound cheap. It's the new Low-Fi."

Whatever it is, it's in demand. Green on Red returned in July to cut a single at Ardent, where Dickinson is also closeted with the Blue Lights, a new Arista band from North Carolina ("they're mountain power-pop"). Mud Boy & the Neutrons are starting their second LP for the French label New Rose; the first, *Known Felons in Drag* (cut on a mere five grand), made critics jump 'n' shout.

The fat man's fantasy productions? Bob Dylan ("I do monsters, people with a problem"); Dwight Yoakam ("There's something happening with his upper lip that I could definitely record"); Isaac Hayes ("Oh *man*, what a sad story; could've been the black Elvis") and a wild man's dream-team: "Van Halen with Henry Rollins. *Killer*!"

If Dickinson often broods that "I just don't fit in, I'm lucky to be working at all," the ringing phones are starting to sway him. "Could be, man, that my time has come. All this work's gotten my producing chops into great shape. I'm pumped! I just might jump up somebody's ass!

"But hell," he sighs. "Took me so long to get lost, I may not want to be found. I could just keep moving further South. Open a bait shop. Catch crickets. Get a rockin' chair and a sign reading 'Blind Luther's Bait.' On one side it'd say 'Worms.' On the other—'Closed.'" M

ELDRIDGE from page 30

started the band. But I was just too ticked off. I threw my mutes and things around; I began to cry. I knew it wasn't my fault. Finally I was told to take the evening off. And all I wanted to do was play my horn!"

Having Roy in the band gave the ensemble two major soloists. Shaw—the other—built arrangements with Roy in mind—i.e. "Little Jazz"—and showcased him with the band-within-the-band, the Gramercy Five.

"I got Roy because I always was impressed with him," Shaw says. "He was at one of his peaks during our association and gave the band an edge it wouldn't have had without him. The energy, the life force that filled his playing were so uplifting. At times he sounded exactly like Louis Armstrong. And frequently he would suggest in solos Dizzy, Miles and other new guys."

But by the mid-1940s and the emergence of the beboppers, Eldridge seemed to lose his place at the pinnacle. As the public grew increasingly fascinated with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and their disciples, Roy tried putting together another orchestra, without much commercial success; the group was impressive, but big bands were doing a fade. He rejoined Krupa in 1949 and worked for Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic.

Roy's assessment of the musical developments he helped launch was understandably equivocal. Except Dizzy ("who always plays music"), Howard McGhee, Thad Jones and later Clifford Brown, Little Jazz felt the modern trumpeters sacrificed personality and sound for speed.

He began to travel more, remaining in Europe after an early 1950 tour with the Benny Goodman sextet that also featured the late tenorist Zoot Sims and pianist Dick Hyman. Taking residence in Paris, the trumpeter continued to play and record, but also wrote a music column for the *Paris Post*, painted and took the time to re-examine the new shape of jazz and his place in it. He returned home in 1951.

Drummer Phil Brown, who was in Roy's small group and big band that year, recalls, "The guy had so much feeling that I got goose bumps playing with him. He was the definition of jazz—maybe the best of them all. I didn't get the same kind of feeling playing with Bird or Stan Getz. They were more intellectual, more complex. Though Roy played advanced ideas, he had great simplicity. He went directly to the heart. I guess that's what I'm trying to say—he had extraordinary heart."

As he entered middle age, Eldridge continued his familiar regimen, playing combatively and whenever he could, practicing to fill the gaps. Little Jazz favored his musical relationship with Coleman Hawkins, a man he respected more than a little. And for several years Roy appeared nightly at Jimmy Ryan's club in New York.

Joe Muranyi, the clarinetist who played in that band until its end, says,

"That last night at Ryan's, right before his heart attack, it was all there. He was feisty, mercurial, tasty, emotional; his temper flared when something was not quite right. And he wasn't ashamed of playing the melody or improvising on conventional chords and breaking them just enough so the audience could follow and get a bang out of what he was doing. In some ways he marks the end of an era. Young players are into a different sort of music. I don't think a musician like Roy could develop today."

Life in 1987 for Roy Eldridge is calmer, less demanding than in years past, and that's the way he wants it. He no longer misses playing. After almost 60 years with the horn, he has tired of the routine, the hard work that made great playing possible.

The change was progressive. Before Roy left, he'd become an increasingly thoughtful ballad player. There were indications of the electricity of the past. But more and more he inclined to quieter, meditative music and a restful, relaxed life. Very simply, Roy loved music and the horn and gave and gave. With the onset of illness, the process quickened. Ultimately, he put the trumpet to bed.

"My wife Vi and I have this house," he is saying. "There's always something to do. I have books on carpentry, radio engineering, electronics...But I can't seem to get into study the way I did. I've been ill off and on over the last six years. I guess I've lost my patience. So, I spend my time fixing things.

"Music? I'm still involved. But I don't come into town unless I have some sort of job. You know, I often think of what I've done; I've had enough applause and praise. I'm interested in other things now. The race problem is still out there. I speak about that and the bad working conditions for musicians. There still aren't places for musicians to rest, wash and change clothes in most clubs in this country. Do you know that most people don't dig jazz? They like what they know and can recognize; they want to be entertained. I can dig that. But somehow you hope for more. Critics? They know the way but can't drive the car. And don't forget to mention good 'time' is one of the keys to great jazz playing. Enough about my feelings and opinions! Causes are no longer my scene. I'm a home person who hangs out with his wife, his kids and his cat." M

STILL OFF THE WALL, BUT NO THRILLER

MICHAEL JACKSON
Bad
(Epic)

Few artists view their own achievements as narrowly as Michael Jackson. This was illustrated most poignantly a couple of years back, when *Thriller* received the *Guinness Book of World Records* citation for top all-time album sales. Of all the honors he'd won, said Michael, this was the most special, the one that made him sure he'd really done something. In other words, it's mostly a numbers game so far as he's concerned. But after the parade of stuffed pets, signature perfumes and Pepsi deals, who thought otherwise?

Fortunately Michael's intentions have never been the measure of his art. ("Billie Jean" was a great record for reasons he'll never even understand.) As the stakes go up, though, that seems to be changing. This time, you see, Michael reputedly wants to rock the house to the tune of 100 million units. And it follows that with such big numbers in mind, he's not about to rock the boat musically. Thus *Bad*: 11 songs that seek to outstrip *Thriller* by adding more octane to the same formula.

Bad is almost as contrived as that scenario implies. But not quite. Just to hear his voice again counts for something, and a few songs manage to overcome their artistically constricted settings. "Bad" itself is the only genuine triumph, a bracing presence on the radio that's propelled as much by Jimmy Smith's vibrant organ break as by Jackson's whoops and snarls. The ostensibly soulful "The Way You Make Me Feel" and the apparently funky "Speed Demon" come on strong, but wear thin fast. The more intricate rhythms and vocal arrangements of "Dirty Diana" and "Smooth Criminal" give those songs more staying power.

The biggest musical disappointments of *Bad* are the ballads, which range from the merely banal "I Just Can't Stop Loving You" to the patently wretched "Liberian Girl," possibly the low point in Jackson's solo career. That's surprising, since he's proven himself a consummate ballad singer. The problem may be that he's doing virtually all of the writing himself, and he's never written particularly memorable ballads. Or it may be that he's simply too scarred and angry to give himself over to the kind of plaintive love songs he used to sing so well.

In any case, *Bad*'s ultimate failure is not a matter of schlocky ballads, of which *Off the Wall* and *Thriller* had their share. Nor is it just because producer Quincy Jones is really about as well suited to the musical climate of the late '80s as Burt Bacharach. It's not even Michael Jackson's inability to write a better song than "Beat It" or "Billie Jean": Rather, it's the slavish way he goes about trying to construct better songs from the same old ideas. Without getting into the Bernhard Goetzian overtones of the long-form "Bad" video, suffice to say that the musical portion rips off the "Beat It" video so baldly that Jackson should

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look into suing himself.

The album is full of similarly cannibalized gestures. Some are obvious, such as the substitution of Steve Stevens for Eddie Van Halen as token rock guitar soloist, and of Stevie Wonder for Paul McCartney as vocal foil in a love rivals' duet. (Does this mean Michael's going to buy Stevie's publishing catalog next?) Less apparent—but finally no less grating—are the subtle likenesses between "Thriller" and "Smooth Criminal," from the cartoonish sound effects to the late-night horror show cachet. All these things add up to give *Bad* an aura of desperate calculation—it's *product* in the most offensive and limiting sense. Listening to the album is exhausting, not exhilarating; it's like watching a defeated marathon runner hobbling grimly down the home stretch.

Bad proves by negation just how brilliantly Michael Jackson seized a moment and shaped it to his own purposes in 1979 and 1983. *Off the Wall* was a near-perfect coda to the disco era, and *Thriller* came along at just the right time to catalyze a change in the composition of CHR radio. *Bad* simply doesn't have the spark to start such a fire. That by itself is no sin: Imagine Prince trying to top *Purple Rain* each time out, or Bruce Springsteen perpetually repeating *Born in the USA*. The problem is that *Bad* deliberately invites comparisons to *Thriller*, and never rewards them.

– **Steve Perry**

BILL FRISELL
MELVIN GIBBS
RONALD SHANNON JACKSON

Power Tools
(Antilles/New Direction)

Bill Frisell is a jazz Slowhand—the most original electric guitarist to emerge in the last decade. Oh, you could get yourself an old Gibson SG, a D'Armond volume pedal, a tc electronics compressor, an Electro-Harmonix 16-second digital delay and a Microverb and run it through a 1-12 Marshall Jubilee tube amp—but that wouldn't necessarily make you sound like him. Frisell's genius is a matter of intuition and sensitivity, not aerobic gimmicks. He gets into the heart of his electronics to reveal different ways of suspending and elongating time, tiers of sweet and sour textures, new melodic contours that elevate the guitar beyond obvious scalar conceits and chopsmanship. The outward gentility and lyricism of his demeanor—the seeming simplicity of his approach—mask something far freer and more sinister: your future.

In this powerful new collaboration with bassist Melvin Gibbs (who distinguishes himself as a composer on the translucent ballads "Wadmalaw Island" and "A Song Is Not Enough") and drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson (who, with Gibbs, galvanized electric jazz in his own Decoding Society), the explosive surface of heavy metal is alchemized by the country & eastern/free jazz/heavy funk sensibilities of these renegade modern jazzmen. Gibbs' bass playing is springy and muscular, reminding this traveler of an R&B-tinged Henry Grimes/Sirone; Jackson's melodic figures slip easily from torrid timekeeping to a painterly flow of colors and explosive accents. By the very act of being egoless, Frisell orchestrates their surging polyrhythms into high drama. On Gibbs' masterful "Howard Beach Memoirs"—the album's centerpiece—Frisell's wavelike, majestic chords toll lightly against the rhythm's fattening thunder, until they burst forth into a crackling fury, demonic power chords and howling shrieks answering the rhythm in kind. Likewise, the divebombing "Unscientific American," "The President's Nap" and "Blame and Shame" fulminate like some unholy alliance between Jimi Hendrix, King Crimson and Albert Ayler.

Strong—sometimes too strong; intermittently astringent and unsettling in a way that more playing time and fine-tuning will evolve and polish. Yet listen to how Gibbs and Frisell become one instrument on "When We Go"; or how "Unchained Melody," of all covers, becomes something deeper than an affectionate parody. These Power Tools answer the rage and confusion of the world with love. Love sure is loud. And this is the kind of jazz a head-banging bluesman born after 1960 could learn to love in a hurry. – **Chip Stern**

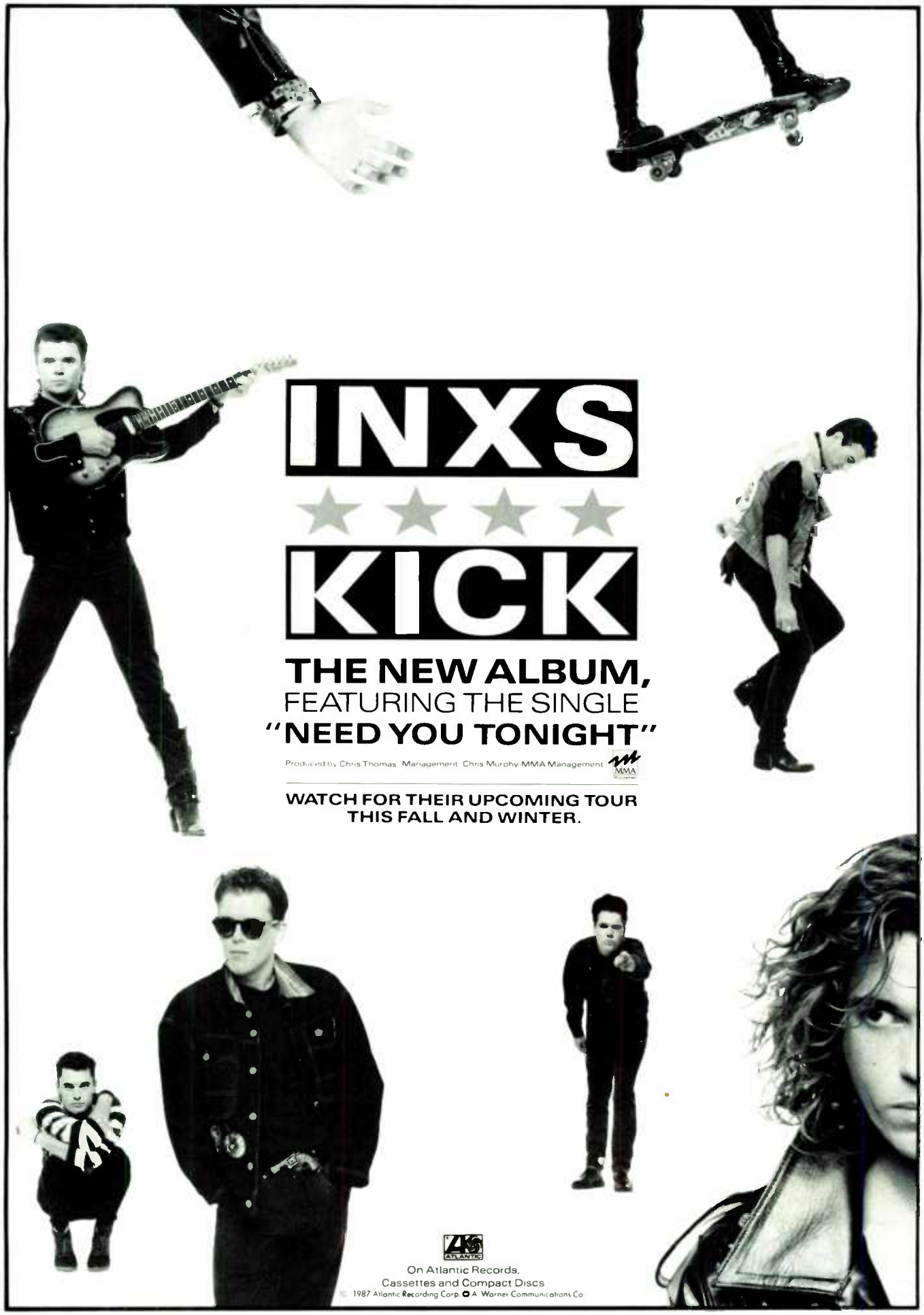
NEIL YOUNG & CRAZY HORSE

Life
(Geffen)

This is Neil Young's best album since the underrated *Hawks & Doves* seven years ago. Yet for some reason, *Life* doesn't seem to be getting the attention it deserves. Maybe fans are still mad over Young's wild shifts in the early '80s and disappointed by *Landing on Water*, last year's failed return to rock. Maybe everybody said, "That's it, Neil! You've pushed me too far!" and quit listening.

Life has a little of the synth slickness of *Landing on Water*, but the mighty, mangy Crazy Horse keeps things from ever getting too polished. On side two's raunchier passages that bit of slickness is all that keeps the Horse from stampeding into a *Re*Ac*Tor* mess. There are a couple of nice ballads tossed in, too, so the LP maintains a listenable balance. And what are the songs about? Oh, the usual Neil themes: rock, lost love, right-wing politics and Incas. But listen, Neil Young's themes and attitudes are a lot more consistent than his detractors realize. Because what Neil really hates—and always comes back to—is *bullies*. And bullies—be they record companies, Lebanese terrorists or Spanish conquistadors—are all the same.

Neil said in "Don't Be Denied" that he was the kid who got creamed in the schoolyard, and ever since he's been sticking up for whoever's about to be lynched. That's how the same man can condemn Nixon in office ("Ohio") and sympathize with Nixon kicked out ("Campaigner"). That's the line that runs from the left-wing "War Song" to the right-wing "Hawks & Doves." Those confirmed leftists who loathe Neil for supporting Reagan will find all their worst fears realized in "Mideast Vacation": *Life*'s lead track recounts the adventures of a military man who fails to kill Khaddafi only to end up charging alone into an anti-U.S. mob in Iran. But



that song leads into "Long Walk Home," a stately ballad about how hard it is for America to give up those old TV verities—and how much it costs us "from Viet Nam to old Beirut." Hardly the ravings of a conservative zealot—just the lament of a Canadian who still wants to believe the U.S.A. is the good guy.

While no audience *owes* a musician their support, it would be good if an artist as important as Neil Young could have the freedom to go off and experiment, and still have a big audience to come back to. On the last song here, Neil almost seems to be explaining his '80s work: "If you don't really know where you want to go/ it hardly matters which road you take/ I hope it's not too late." Then he adds, sadly, "We never danced the night away." Don't be silly, Neil. Of course we did. – **Bill Flanagan**

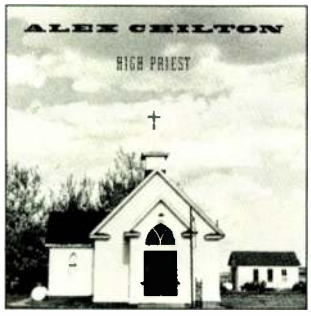
MOTORHEAD
Rock 'n' Roll
(GWR/PRT)

Modern metal falls roughly into three categories: Louder-Than-Springsteen, in which a cute guy sings about being a hero in the face of overwhelming odds; Penthousian Sleaze, in which a wasted guy sings about being stiff in the face of overwhelming pussy; and Death, in which a manly guy sings about being dead in the face of overwhelming death. One of the progenitors of Death Metal—not only for their relentless doom but their relentless speed as well—Motorhead long ago transcended the genre that still paddles in its wake and thus deserves no category other than Motorhead (even if they are metal and still sing about death a lot). But we must have some concession to form.

Last year's *Orgasmatron* was my favorite metal album since AC/DC's *Back in Black*, and the title song had one of the all-time great lyrics (sung from the point of view of a god specializing in lies, obedience and state-sanctioned murder) over a colossal riff that throbbed at approximately the beat you'd flog a sailor for stealing an extra ration of hardtack. A perfect song on a near-perfect album.

I was expecting Motorhead's next effort, *Rock 'n' Roll*, to be about 80-to-90-percent of *Orgasmatron*, which it is, but even there it's at least 115-percent of any other metal you're likely to hear this year. My suspicion is that singer/bassist Lemmy Kilmister got tired of people not noticing he can write words, so he had his voice mixed a little higher. I miss the effect of him drowning in a sea of boiling guitars. Another difference between *Orgasmatron* and *Rock 'n' Roll* is that Bill Laswell produced the former and Motorhead produced the latter. Laswell apparently has a taste for two hairs more chaos in the guitar sound, while Motorhead goes for two hairs more clarity. I'm a two-hairs-to-chaos man myself.

On the solidly plus side, Motorhead probably opted for clarity on the grounds that they are tremendous musicians, and they are, no quibbles about it. This is a guitar attack the Iranians would sell their oil fields for. And they'd pee on the Koran for a drummer like Philthy Animal Taylor. Lyrically Kilmister's at his best when he's blowing hostility at the dark underside of politics ("Eat the Rich," "Dogs") and rather generic when describing life on the road ("Stone Deaf in the USA"). Biggest laugh I've had all year from an album is Michael Palin's sermon at the end of side one. In summary, this is excellent, but not perfect, Motorhead. – **Charles M. Young**



ALEX CHILTON
High Priest
(Big Time)

Like Jonathan Richman, Alex Chilton is an American pop primitive. He doesn't sound remotely like a "professional singer"; you can hear him straining for notes, his taste in cover material is downright weird, and his career decisions are inevitably out of sync with the marketplace. But since debuting in 1967 as leader of pop confection the Box Tops, Chilton's proven himself one of the wittiest and most inventive iconoclasts ever to commit career suicide. That's something that Alex, bless his reckless heart, has done more than a few times.

This being Chilton's first LP in seven years, his devoted cult might be a tad disappointed to discover that only four of the 12 tunes here are original compositions; however, the borrowed songs he performs are perfectly suited to the split personality that's always been at war in his music. Coming on one minute like the oiliest sleazebag ever to try to bum a 'lude, the next like an angelic adolescent pining for the Girl Scout next door, Alex is the quintessential Southern boy struggling with temptation. Yeah, he's been around the block once or twice, but as the Shangri-Las so eloquently put it, he's good bad but he's not evil.

The wicked tunes here are the most fun and the album kicks off with the best of that lot, "Take It Off." Like the wonderful "Thank You John," from his 1985 EP *Feudalist Tarts*, "Take It Off" is a pimpy kind of number: "Take off your wig/ and let me feel your afro," purrs the protagonist, as he peels a tarted-up street gal down to the bare essentials. In a similar mood is "Make a Little Love," which celebrates processed hair, manicures and two chicks on every arm.

Alex's evil twin loses control of things on "Let Me Get Close to You" (a virginal pledge of devotion by Goffin & King), a gospel hymn called "Come by Here" and "Dalai Lama," a sort of "Alley-Oop" meets "Secret Agent Man" melody featuring the stellar Chilton lyric "I hear he never swats a mosquito/ that's 'cause he's a follower of Buddha." Backed by a raggedy band that sounds like a lounge combo you might stumble across in a seedy nightspot in Georgia, Chilton hits his stride as a vocalist on the kitsch Italian anthem, "Volare" (like I said, the guy's aces when it comes to cover tunes), and brings the album to a close with the aptly titled instrumental "Raunchy." Why "Raunchy," you may well ask? The composer, Alex explains, "wrote this tune in an attempt to write the worst song he possibly could." Could any song come with a better recommendation?

Pieced together from neglected treasures, R&B rhythms and discarded clichés, *High Priest* is, like all classic pop, a lovable mongrel that belongs nowhere and everywhere.

– **Kristine McKenna**

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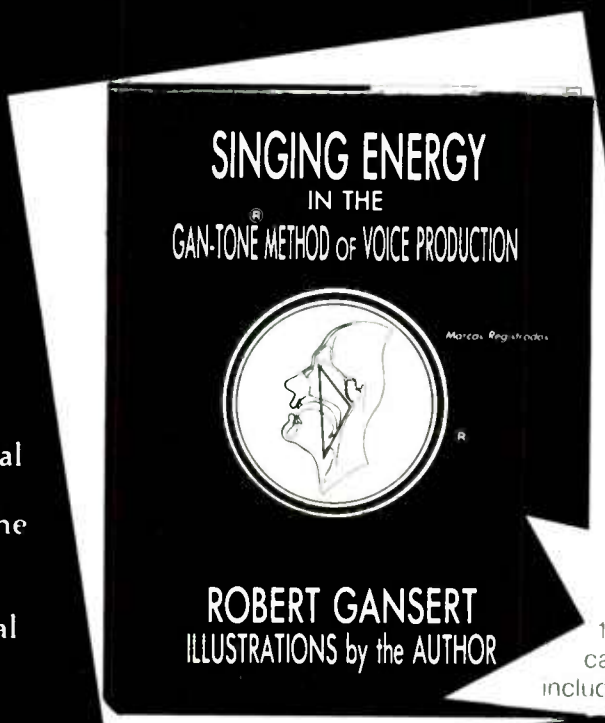

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TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY

Introducing the Hardline According to Terence Trent D'Arby
(Columbia)

You can't call Terence Trent D'Arby shy. On his audacious, uneven debut, this extroverted youngster co-produces, writes most of the tunes and sings 'em in a big, self-assured voice intended to prove he's the boss. Indeed, D'Arby practically offers himself as the successor to the legendary soul men of the '60s.

Arrogant? You bet. But everyone from early rockers to today's rappers has known that self-promotion is an essential part of the routine, provided you've got the chops to back it up. D'Arby does, so even the weaker moments of *Introducing the Hardline* bear hearing, offering a promise of better things to come.

What's available right now ain't too shabby. Blessed with powerful pipes, D'Arby combines a hint of a Sam Cooke rasp, a sexy falsetto à la Al Green, a smooth croon suitable for the mellowest urban formats, and plenty of the friendly warmth of a Bobby Womack. In other words, the kid can sing 'bout anything he likes—given more experience, he'll be so authoritative that comparisons won't be necessary.

So what's your pleasure? The old-fashioned stomper "If You Let Me Stay" finds D'Arby wailing like a man who ain't too proud to beg, a bended-knee stance repeated in his hearty cover of Smokey Robinson's sublime "Who's Loving You?" "If You All Get to Heaven" uses ominous chanting as the backdrop for some of the sweetest trilling this side of you know where, generating a frightening sense of impending doom. This apocalyptic bent resurfaces in the lovely "As Yet Untitled," a sprawling *a capella* epic reminiscent of black spirituals that anticipates conflict on blood-stained soil, presumably South Africa. On a more mundane note, the ultra-romantic "Let's Go Forward" ought to be covered by Kool & the Gang immediately.

The LP has its flaws. The oversized arrangements go on too long, emphasizing the monotonous quality of a quiet tune like "Sign Your Name." And though D'Arby is American, *Hardline* was recorded in England and co-produced by Martyn Ware of Heaven 17. That's a polite way of saying there isn't always enough funk in the grooves. "Wishing Well" and "Dance Little Sister" both aspire to a state of dirty lowdownness they can't quite sustain. A little more Famous Flames next time, please.

Occasionally D'Arby's portrayal of relationships seems too glib, until he turns your head with an unexpected note or arresting lyric, e.g., "I'd rather be in hell with you baby/ than in cool heaven." Then there's "I'll Never Turn My Back on You (Father's Words)," which is darn near perfect. A brisk brew of ripe harmonies, skipping rhythms and chunky, Chic-style guitar, this letter from a father to a son in trouble should melt the most skeptical hearts. Such affecting moments make *Introducing the Hardline According to Terence Trent D'Arby* an exciting calling card from a potentially great artist. – **Jon Young**

VAN MORRISON

Poetic Champions Compose
(PolyGram)

If my heart could do the thinking, and my head began to feel," pleads Van Morrison on a song from his latest album, a sentiment that could serve as the credo for the Irish singer/songwriter's two-decade trip into the mystic. From his first solo album, *Astral Weeks*, Van the Man has fused the mythical aspects of his Celtic background with the soulful grit of his R&B roots and cloaked them in airy jazz-like instrumentation.

That formula remains pretty much the same here. While Morrison has grown alarmingly jowly, when he opens his mouth one of the great blue-eyed soul croons of all time emerges intact, with a yearning that cries out to shuffle off its mortal coil. If Van's recent work has wavered between the dreaminess of *Veedon Fleece* and the harder edge of *Wavelength*, he has created a more consistently superior body of work than any of his contemporaries.

Poetic Champions Compose is framed by three instrumentals—"Spanish Eyes" and "Celtic Excavation" open sides one and two, while "Allow Me" closes the album—that feature Morrison on wistful sax, cutting through cascading

keyboards. This trio forms the inarticulate speech of the heart at the core of the LP, which Morrison originally planned to be a vocal-less jazz-oriented album. The lyrical songs flow seamlessly as Van's patented murmur bubbles up from the mud below to the sky above. "The Mystery" and "Queen of the Slipstream" use swirling strings and a seductive harmonica to draw you in like a siren beckoning to a whirlpool. In "Give Me My Rapture," the spiritual thirst turns to erotic longing as Van looks to "get filled up from [your] loving cup."

While *Poetic Champions Compose* seems more focused in its folk traditions than last year's *No Guru* LP, it certainly isn't like anything that's happening on today's Top 40. No, there's no "Domino" or "Wavelength" here, though songs like "I Forget That Love Existed" and "Someone Like You" are worthy successors. Perhaps the much-maligned "new age" phenomenon, which also stresses the contemplative, meditative aspect of music, can train the yuppie audience's attention on Morrison's muse as it did for the Grateful Dead, another batch of graying philosophers.

The vision of Van Morrison squirming uncomfortably onstage underneath the hot lights, trying to shut out the audience's gaze by turning inward, leaving his paunchy shell altogether and heading into the mystery with his marvelous voice and sense of wonder intact, remains. And the optimism and hope conveyed throughout *Poetic Champions Compose* suggest that Van, while still wandering, is getting closer to home all the time. – **Roy Trakin**

TRAVIS from page 36

Travis hopes more young listeners are giving country music a chance. But though he agrees kids were turned off by country's long romance with Vegas pop, he is too nice a guy to badmouth anybody. "A lot of people had a lot of success doing it," he says. "I wouldn't call Kenny Rogers lush pop, 'cause I think Kenny's great at what he does. Alabama are great at what they do, too. I think that's fine; I think it broadens the listening audience," he says, choosing his words carefully. "But I still like to be able to turn on the radio and hear Merle Haggard or George Jones, or over the last few years George Strait and Reba McEntire. That's just what I love, and if I'd never had any success I'd just be glad to see these people come back around and do this kind of music.

"You know people never once said anything to me about changing what I do," he says. "There again, I doubt I could. I don't think I'd sound right singing anything else. I know I wouldn't *feel* right doing anything else." Randy Travis smiles. "For some reason, I just have a voice to sing country music." Ⓜ

LEON from page 104

across the boards. You know, so many people using an SSL, wanting the same type of sounds, and the misuse of sampling is unbelievable. It's a great tool to be able to sample things, but now there's about four stock drum sounds, and nobody used to bother about that before. You never listened to a Little Feat record and worried about the echo on the snare! So all of that tends to homogenize stuff, and I'm trying to still let people come over in their own individual styles." Ⓜ

JAZZ SHORTS from page 122

serenity...Along these lines, you might also like the work of those renegade string players, the Kronos Quartet. Of several releases, the one I find myself going back to most is their recording of Thelonious Monk arrangements by Tom Darter, ***Monk Suite*** (Landmark). Something very magical happens on "Well You Needn't" as those eternally modern chords are strung out to fly with Ron Carter grooving along underneath (suggesting how closely aligned we might be someday when Ellington's conservatory generation of the future is conversant in both idioms). Wynton, you got two cents to add here? Oh go on, we know how shy you are... Ⓜ

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SHORT JAZZ TAKES

BUFFALO CHIPS: Is that a male impersonator singing "Yesterdays" on Marianne Faithfull's new release ***Strange Weather*** (Island)? Oh, there's some nice settings; "As Tears Go By" is given a lovely chamber-like reading; Dylan's "I'll Keep It with Mine" well-suits her blasted voice and benefits from the shimmering guitar of Bill Frisell and Robert Quine; originals by Tom Waits and Doc Pomus/Dr. John ring true. The band and production are first-rate. But on half the material, the voice that sounded so harrowing and haunted on ***Broken English*** is laughably portentous in jazz settings. I wouldn't get all that worked up over it, but even so wizened a poohbah as Dean Robert Christgau likened the effect to a rock 'n' roll Billie Holiday. Hmmm, Hildegarde's more like it. Dr. Chip prescribes a cold shower and extended listenings to ***Lady in Satin*** (Columbia) and ***The Last Live Recordings of Billie Holiday*** (RIC)...Mr. Sonny Rollins, King of the Tenor, has finally released the live album jazz yentas like yours truly have been whining about for most of our adult lives. Taken from the soundtrack of Robert Mugge's film *Saxophone Colossus*, ***G-Man*** (Milestone) is the most overwhelming display of tenor gladness Newk's committed to wax in 15 years. In Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Rollins finally has a percussive foil who can cut the funk and calypso grooves, and swing like fury too. What a difference a drummer makes...Perhaps I blinked, but whatever became of Atlantic's plan to revive their extraordinary jazz catalog?...I deeply love Charlie Watts and the Rolling Stones; Charlie's one of the classic groove merchants in rock and blues. Still, in case you haven't been warned, the Charlie Watts Orchestra ***Live at Fulham Town Hall*** (Columbia) is one of the sloppiest group gropes imaginable and does little to substantiate Charlie's well-documented love of jazz...

Now, some esoterica in the jazz-hyphen pantheon: The growth of country music and western swing parallels the development of the Afro-American tradition of syncopation and phrasing. Norman Blake is a virtuoso on guitar, mandolin, banjo—you name it—and his steadfast refusal to go modern (i.e., stupid) has allowed him to synthesize a unique viewpoint on, oh, let's call it pre-jazz-age American folk musics. ***Original Underground Music from the Mysterious South*** and ***Lighthouse on the Shore*** (both on Rounder) are engaging, knowing portrayals of caucasian soul and string musics from around the globe. The rhythms are the old European ONE-two-THREE-four, but the long, loose gait of the melodies, the jazz-like impulse to swing and swoop and cry, parallel the African impulse in the birth of a nation... Bless Paul Simon for bringing Africa into the foreground, but India's elaborate polymetric and vocal tradition is every bit as rich and ancient as Africa's poly-rhythmic signatures. Yet violinists as brilliant as the brothers Subramaniam and Shankar are compelled to go fuzing or popping if they're to eat. Rockers like Lennon, Harrison, Hendrix and Byrne have seen Indian music's potential for complex melodic and textural architecture inside of a simple drone beat. One of the most fully realized fusions of American and Indian classical traditions has been that of ***Rainbow*** (Verve/MPS). Violinist Subramaniam, sarod master Ali Akbar Khan and alto saxophonist John Handy find a common ground in the pentatonic communion Paul Robeson used to preach 'round the world—a kind of bouncy Carnatic blues that swells with melodic charm and syncopated verve. Now if Handy could help the Indians get with some chordal modulations, they'd really have something...

For most Americans, contact with the East was nurtured by Ravi Shankar's historic collaborations with Yehudi Menuhin and George Harrison, most notably, and of course his appearance in *Monterey Pop*. Now Rykodisc has digitally remastered John McLaughlin's acoustic devotional, ***My Goals Beyond***, which brought a lot of musicians into touch with the new modality back in 1970. On CD all the incidental colors and contrasting guitar orchestrations gain perspective, depth and clarity; compare the strategies here with the Hendrixian fury of McLaughlin's work with Larry Young on ***Devotion*** (now available from Celluloid on CD), which was recorded around the same time. For electric guitarists who'd missed Coltrane (but not Miles), McLaughlin's work with Mahavishnu and Shakti carried comparable—well, tangible—weight. John McLaughlin brought a lot of impressionable fusionoids into ragas and jazz...

To Hear the World in a Grain of Sand/World Music Live at the Donaueschingen Festival (Soul Note/PolyGram Special Imports) sports equally lofty goals, what with a rhythm section culled from the idioms of America, Uruguay, India, Trinidad and Brazil. It makes for a likeable melange, but either the German/Nordic contingent of horns brought an omnivorous European 4/4 to dinner, or there just wasn't enough time. Dom Um Romão's Brazilian romp "Fire Fly" yields the most coherence and the purest groove...Not that we have anything against Europeans (well, maybe a couple Parisians), but it's long been a dream of forward-thinking musicians to try to get American and European classical forms to nurture each other. This third-stream fusion has been wildly uneven: half-baked Schoenberg from free-jazz savants who haven't mastered either discipline; stiff, well-meaning mawk of the Boston Pops vintage; and let us not forget certain friends who mix Mahler/Yes/Return To Forever into pseudo-Hollywood bombast. There have also been convincing inquiries by Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, Max Roach, Steve Reich, Phillip Glass, Ornette Coleman, Gunther Schuller and John Lewis, the last-named achieving a remarkably supple interweaving of elements on ***Three Windows*** (Atlantic) with the Modern Jazz Quartet and the New York Chamber Symphony. In tune with his love of counterpoint and the baroque, Lewis expands on his recent Atlantic recordings of Bach in settings which radiate a tippling sense of form and

continued on page 121

BY CHIP STERN

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SHORT Rock TAKES

New Order
Substance (Qwest)

Because albums, not singles, comprise the standard against which artistic achievement is measured in contemporary rock 'n' roll, it would be tempting to dismiss the dozen A-sides collected here (with a dozen more B-sides on the CD) as just another greatest-hits collection—were it not that New Order's most enduring statements have all been made through 12-inch singles. Why? Mostly, it's a matter of form; the demands of the dance floor insist upon unthinking, gut-level stimulation. And that's what gives these performances their energy, focus, intensity and appeal.

Pink Floyd
A Momentary Lapse of Reason (Columbia)

As head Pink David Gilmour puts it in "The Dogs of War," "We all have a dark side, to say the least." Do tell. From its stage-managed musical menace to its obsessive attention to acoustic detail, this whole album is an attempt to "have a *Dark Side*." Without Roger Waters on hand to provide conceptual consistency (not to mention decent melodies), it wallows in pompous self-absorption, suggesting that the Floyds' lapse of reason was more than momentary.

The Cars
Door to Door (Elektra)

Several years ago, Ric Ocasek told this magazine that ELO was one of his favorite groups. This is where he proves it.

Various Artists
Forces Favourites (Rounder)
Sounds of Soweto (Capitol)

South African pop isn't all *Graceland* guitars, y'know. *Forces Favourites*, an album of S.A. underground rock, shows astonishing diversity, from the Kalahari Surfers' industrial dancebeat to the Brechtian theatrics of Jennifer Fergusson; though the music is often overly derivative, its spirit stays strong. *Sounds of Soweto*, by contrast, chronicles Zulu jive's transformation into an indigenous R&B. Rough edges remain, as on Condry Ziqubu's "Gorilla Man," but the likes of "Third World Child" by Johnny Clegg & Savuka display impressive intelligence, daring and hooks.

The Chieftains
Celtic Wedding (RCA Red Seal)

Brittany's Celtic heritage approaches that of Ireland, so it should be no surprise to find the Chieftains, Ireland's great traditionalists, recording an authoritative album of Breton wedding music. Unlike Alain Stivell's hippie impressionism, this music is feisty and passionate, rowdy and romantic.

Throwing Muses
The Fat Skier (Sire)

Now that the precocious invention of their debut has settled into an almost predictable vocabulary, the Muses' range seems to have shrunken somewhat. Gnomic as Kristin Hersh's writing can be, even her most self-referential lyrics touch vividly on the universal. And her singing, much as it might suggest Marianne Faithfull's petulant little sister, remains utterly in character.

Wilson Pickett
American Soul Man (Motown)

Age cannot wither, nor custom stale, the righteous power of Wilson Pickett's voice. Still, he hasn't made a great album in 17 years. This doesn't quite break that streak, but it comes close. The rhythm arrangements are lean and functional; the song selection—particularly "(I Wanna) Make Love to You"—is superb; even the remake of "In the Midnight Hour" works. We should all age so well.

Guns N' Roses
Appetite for Destruction (Geffen)

Like so many glam bands, Guns N' Roses is more a matter of attitude than music—meaning that if you don't look at Aerosmith as being pretty cool for old guys, you may as well skip ahead to the next review. Though the band's appetite for sex, drugs and tabloid sleaze is itself guaranteed to attract at least a few fans, the Roses' way with a riff is the reason this record kicks, boasting a snarl that makes Mötley Crüe sound almost genteel by comparison.

Go-Betweens
Tallulah (Big Time)

Arch and allusive Australians, this group has only recently come into a sound befitting its vision. Having ditched the quasi-country mannerisms of its last effort, the Go-Betweens settle into a wry, wordy song-style stressing Robert Forster's narratives, but never at the expense of the melody. Thus the band is brainy without becoming boring, as the most affecting songs—"Someone Else's Wife," "The House That Jack Kerouac Built," "Hope Then Strife"—are as tuneful as they are intriguing.

Live Skull
Don't Get Any on You (Homestead)

Much as the music on this live album depends on the clamorous groan of intentional dissonance and alternative tunings, what makes the music interesting—hell, compelling—is the way its noise plays into a surprisingly well-articulated pop sense. That's not to say you'll walk away humming from this disc, but it is guaranteed to provide not only a key to what's happening in these songs, but also a reason to relisten. (P.O.B. 570, Rockville Centre, NY 11571-0570)

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
Disorderlies (Tin Pan Apple)

Beverly Hills Cop II this isn't, but it's not bad, considering. Forget the Fat Boys' flatulent "Baby You're a Rich Man"; the real action here comes courtesy of the women: Bananarama's engagingly propulsive "I Heard a Rumour," and Gwen Guthrie's knowingly droll "Fat Off My Back." It may be musical junk food, but baby, it sure is sweet.

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

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MIDI from page 110

snapshots make a picturesque backdrop for real-time action. Most snapshot mixers come with a manual override mode. So while MIDI program changes take care of routine switching functions, you can have both hands working overtime, moving faders and tweaking settings while the mix goes on two-track.

It isn't surprising, then, that the snapshot-style automated mixing systems now on the market tend to fall into one of two groups: mixers that are geared toward live work and recording-oriented boards. The latter category includes the 8-channel/99-memory Akai MPX-820, the 16- or 24-channel/100-memory Soundtracs PC MIDI Series and the 16-, 24- or 32-channel Allen Heath Brennel CMC Series (Mark I and Mark II). By themselves, the CMC boards can store 32 mute combinations and signal routing assignments. Adding AHB's CMR MIDI module ups the ante to 1000 snapshots, and makes the whole thing accessible via MIDI program change commands.

I've grouped these boards together as recording-oriented snapshot mixers because each is laid out more or less the way recording consoles have always been. That is to say, there is a knob, switch or fader for every console function. Each input has a channel strip with a gain control, pan pot, EQ, effects sends, etc. There's a fader for every channel and master; there's effects return controls and all the usual stuff you find on a mixing console. On the Akai MPX-820, the settings for every one of these controls can be written to memory. On the Soundtracs and AHB boards, only mutes and signal routing assignments can be stored in memory.

Now if one of our early automation pioneers could be transported from his Bee Gees or Jim Croce session and zapped right here, smack in the middle of 1987, he'd have little trouble recognizing any of the above-named boards as precisely what they are—mixing consoles. But snapshot mixers like the 8-channel/64-memory Simmons 8:2 and 8-channel/128-memory Peavey PLM-8128 might give our friend a harder time. These mixers look more like rack-mount effects or synthesizer tone modules (which of course didn't exist back when Cat Stevens was gently rocking the charts). And indeed they're built on the same basic premise as most modern synths. Rather than having an external control for every mix parameter—which really isn't necessary when the user is presumably going to have both hands on his/her instrument—the Simmons and Peavey mixers have a small group of master controls which are used to access and set parameters one by one. This has allowed both companies to fit a full-blown mixer—with pan controls, effects sends and all that good stuff—into one or two rack spaces. And, as with the Akai MPX-820, every parameter that can be set can be written to memory.

Then we have another group of snapshot devices that are like certain doctors—they specialize in doing just one thing and doing it well. But unlike medical specialists, these rack-mounts don't kill you with the bill while they cure your ills. The price is scaled to match the capabilities. So if you only need to automate volume control, for example, you could call on something like the Akai MC76, a 7-channel 32-memory module that only stores level settings. It can be used alone, or in tandem with the company's PEQ6, which provides 6 channels of 7-band EQ, again with 32 snapshot memories. Peavey is also planning to bring out a multi-channel snapshot EQ module. It seems the company deliberately left EQ off the PLM 8128 in order to allow users to choose the EQ module that best suits their needs.

So the options are many for those who are interested in snapshot automation. And there *are* ways around that static, "slideshow" quality. For example, the Akai MPX-820, Simmons 8:2 and Peavey PLM 8128 all let you program what's known as a "fade time." It's an idea that comes from stage lighting controllers. Basically, you can determine how long it takes to switch from one snapshot to the next: from a slow dissolve to an instantaneous change.

Say you have a track that you want to fade in gradually, or maybe pan slowly from left to right. What you can do is store one snapshot with the fader or pan pot in its initial, "start" position. Then you'd move that one control to its "destination" position (i.e., where you want it to end up), and store that in another memory location. Then you'd program in a nice, slow fade time, and switch from the first snapshot to the second. Your fader or pan pot will travel, gradually but confidently, from its first setting to its second setting—as though it were being moved by some supernatural hand.

And there's more. The initial release of 8128 will also include some facilities for assigning individual mixing parameters and MIDI continuous controllers. Future updates will implement this capability more fully. What this will enable you to do is take the mod wheel on your synth, for example, and use it to control things like panning. What's the big deal about that? Well, this mod wheel action can then be recorded to a sequencer and used to reproduce your panning moves every time you play back.

Here, we have reached the point where we transcend mere program changes and leave the slideshow behind. We escape the click, click, click of static snapshots and break on through into the cinematic real-time of *continuous* automation control.

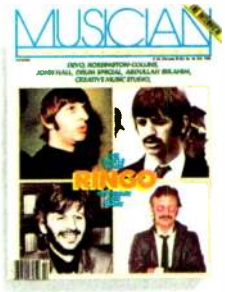
A New Species Emerges

We now come to a single mixer that does all of the above and then some: the Yamaha DMP7. It derives many of its unique features from the fact that, unlike any of the other devices we've been discussing, the DMP7 is an entirely digital system. Incoming signals are digitized as soon as they arrive at the channel inputs; and stay digital until they make their exit from the console via the master outputs.

Once that audio input has been reduced to a bunch of numbers, you can do just about *anything* to it. Not only can you pull off the usual panning, equalization and attenuation, you can also add digital reverb, delay and other effects. Yes, tucked inside that innocuous-looking little mixer is the equivalent of a few SPX90s.

But let's back up a moment. First of all, the DMP7 is a fine little snapshot mixer. It can store 30 programs onboard and an additional 67 programs in a RAM cartridge which plugs into the top panel. There's a separate fader for each of its 8 channels, its effects return master and its master output buss. The channel faders can be set to control channel volume level or effects send level for each channel. The faders are motorized, so you never have to worry about where you left them. When you switch between channel level and send level, the faders automatically move to their last position for that particular parameter.

You can use MIDI Program Change commands to switch between snapshots. But using the DMP7 only for basic stuff like this would be like getting a top-of-the-line El Deluxo Cuisinart just to make carrot pennies. The real strength of the DMP7 is its ability to do continuous, real-time automation of just about everything *but* your Cuisinart. Connect



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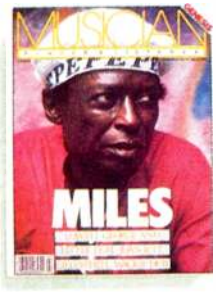

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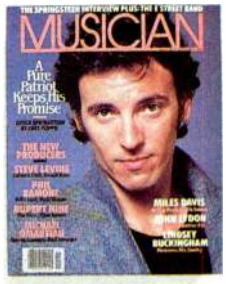

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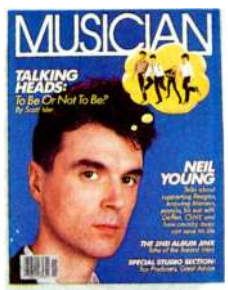

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the DMP7's MIDI Out port to the MIDI In on your sequencer and start the party by recording and playing back some fader moves (channel volume, channel effect send level, master effect return level and master volume).

As the festivies gather momentum, you won't want to forget that *every single parameter* within the DMP7 can be assigned to *any* MIDI Continuous Controller. This includes not only the usual mixing board parameters, but also the effects parameters as well. You can take something like reverb delay times or early reflection settings, assign them to a mod wheel, and use the wheel to vary the parameter continuously as your song plays. Of course, the whole thing can be stored on a sequencer as well. So as the part really starts to swing, you can add to the fun by continually varying the size of the "room" where your instruments are playing.

Or, instead of using a mod wheel, you can also control parameters with the DigiDesign Q-Sheet program for the Apple Macintosh. It has a page which allows you to assign DMP7 parameters to on-screen, mouse-driven faders, knobs and switches. Between the DMP7's on-board controls and the Q-Sheet's software controls, you can have instant, simultaneous access to quite a few parameters. Overdub a couple of passes on your sequencer and you can get a very sophisticated mix going.

Here, then, we move up another rung on the evolutionary ladder. Not only is it possible to control synths, drum machine, mixer and effects from a single sequencer, we can now also get inside the effects devices and automate individual effects parameters on a continuous, real-time basis.

Where's it all heading? Well, you'll recall that this whole affordable, MIDI-based automation fracas was touched off by a couple of ideas from the professional recording world. When pro recording types get together today, you'll hear them talking about another idea—something called the "Virtual Studio." Essentially, this is the Studio of Tomorrow, where every single link of the recording chain is commanded by a central computer controller. As you've seen, MIDI has already put us pretty close to achieving this goal. The impending arrival of "intelligent" tape machines, which can respond to MIDI Time Code Set-Up commands, will bring us even closer. But whatever the next step may be, it looks like there'll be plenty of fresh fodder for Willing Guinea Pigs everywhere. M

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IOVINE from page 78

the atmospherics, the dreams, and just make it more to the point so you get what they're trying to deliver. They just needed that little bit of focus. Now they can develop more of that atmospheric thing, but they'll never lose that core of strength they achieved. I don't know if other producers think about that stuff. I think Daniel Lanois thinks about that, about the overall concept and the band's career. You've got to.

The Vacuum Upstairs

I rarely have a problem with record companies and I think that's because I only work with people that have really strong vision. I think the record companies feel, "Okay, this band knows what they want to do, let's see what they come up with." Of course if you blow it, they'll be all over you like a cheap suit. But I don't get into bed with somebody unless I know I've got that hand. I'll walk into a room when I know a band is involved in the album cover, the artwork, the music, the songs, the sequencing.

There are A&R guys that I usually work with at record companies who respect the band, and we take their input. Look, if somebody's going to go out and work your record, you've got to let them have some sense of participation, so they feel involved. I'll play things for people while I'm working to get them excited. The record business is still basically people who like music and want to be involved in it. It's like building a house where even if you were just there for a little while during the building you can come by when it's finished and say, "Wow, that's my doorknob."

Where you run into problems is when a band doesn't have that vibe, they don't have that strong conviction, and they walk in there and people sense that. Like when you watched the Leonard/Hagler fight, you knew he was confident and had a plan. But if you come in all scattered and scared—and the record companies get a bad rap for this—then they're put in a position where they have to do things on their own that they shouldn't have to do. Then it's, "Okay, here's your album cover, here's your video." There are some potential career-ending videos made. I mean, I don't know who did that Billy Squier one, or Patty Smyth with that goddam makeup on her face—that's frightening stuff! Sometimes it's the artist's own mistakes, but there must have been a vacuum there and somebody filled it. I see the producer's role at times as helping to fill that vacuum.

IOVINE'S IRONS

Jimmy and long-time cohort Shelly Yakus have recently made a permanent home at A&M studios in L.A. The main board is the Neve from Air Studios in Montserrat, while the tape machines are analog Studers and digital Mitsubishis. Iovine no longer uses big studio monitors, and does all his listening through Yamaha NS10s, powered by Yamaha amps. "Bob Clearmountain got me into that. He actually got me into a more casual way of recording. He uses all the latest technology but doesn't get hung up on bullshit. He's gotten me back to that spontaneous thing, just making a record, keeping more of a live atmosphere."

Iovine and Yakus are surrounded by all kinds of digital miracles, but if left to their own devices will go with tape delay and live reverb chambers every time. Twist their arms, though, and they might patch in an EMT 140 plate, a Yamaha REV 1 or a Lexicon 480L (with Larc). Fave compressor/limiters are Neves and Fairchilds, while for EQ they'll go with Pultecs and Rupert Neve's Focusrite system. For mikes, Neumann TLMs, 87's and 47FETs, Sennheiser 421s or a good old Shure SM57 will do nicely. Their synchronizer is a Lynx.

Future Schlock

Look. Put yourself in some kid's place. Here he is, 20 years old. Do you know how strong he's got to be? Do you know how many barriers he's gotta get through? Did you ever *meet* some of these people on the lower echelons of the music business? Did you ever meet some of these club owners, the local A&R guys? By the time you get a record contract and get on the radio, unless you've got it, you're dead. That's why you get all these bands that look like they've come from fucking *Star Search*. But that's what we're breeding with the white conservatism in this country. There are bands out there that think they look like U2, but they completely missed the point.

You can blame the record companies all fucking day 'cause, sure, they're asking people to sound like a certain thing, but they've always done that. The guys that are running the record companies now are the same guys that signed Hendrix and Janis and Dylan. You think if Hendrix walks in the room they're not gonna sign him? Moe Ostin's gonna miss that? Clive Davis's gonna miss that? Jerry Moss is gonna miss it? Who's gonna miss it? Nobody. So that's bullshit. Is it just the record companies' fault that there are so few great songs out now?

The problem is with the kids. It's got to start there. What's happening is there's no heat coming from the young society. Why are college campuses so quiet? I'm not a politician, but is everything in our society okay now? There's more fucking problems than ever, and yet look how weird it looks that Amy Carter and Abbie Hoffman actually stood up and said something about what's going on with the CIA. But there's so little of that right now, and it's really reflected in the music, so what you get is this bland mediocrity.

But there's starting to be a lot of social consciousness right now with Amnesty International and all this other stuff, and I think that young kids are beginning to see that it isn't all just wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am. And these young kids are going to become the new writers. It's gotta come from these kids. Stop just blaming radio. Stop blaming the record companies. Sure, they want to sell records, but they'll put out whatever sells. You know what gives me hope? Who were the biggest acts of the last two years? Bruce Springsteen and U2. Guys who have something to say. That gives me hope. M

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