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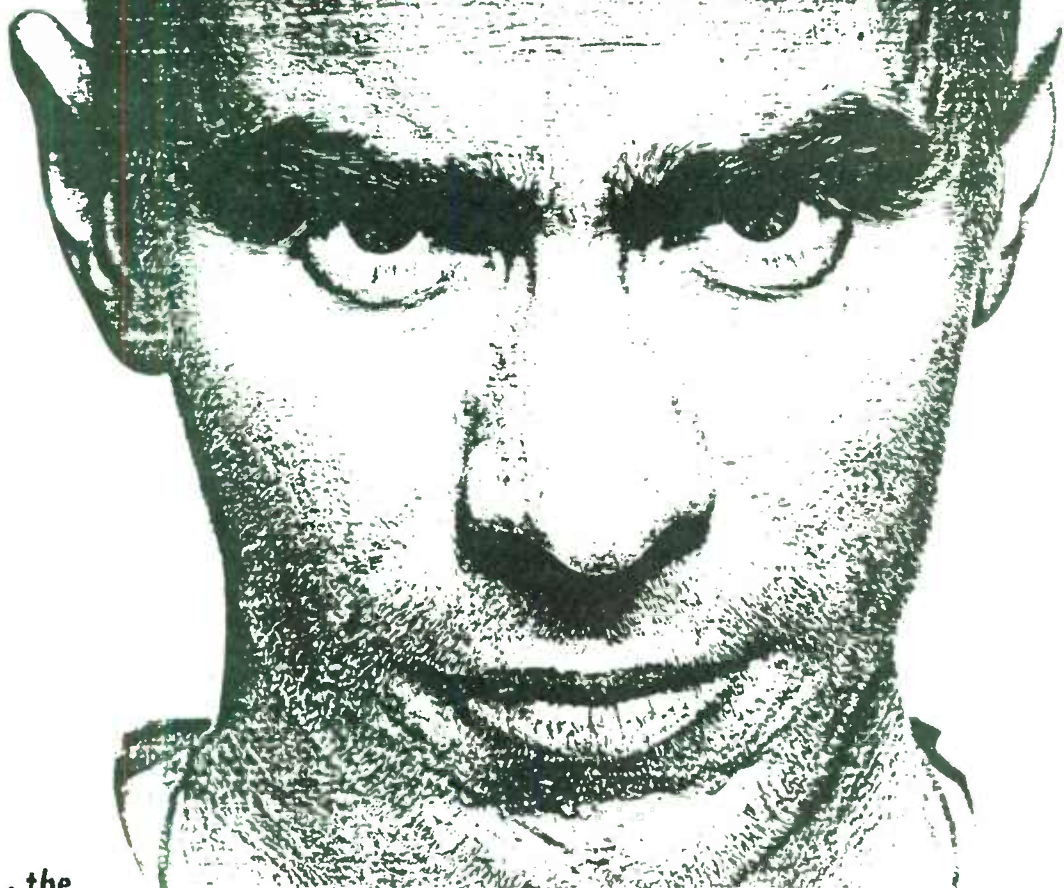

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A Billboard Publication *No. 132 • October 1989*

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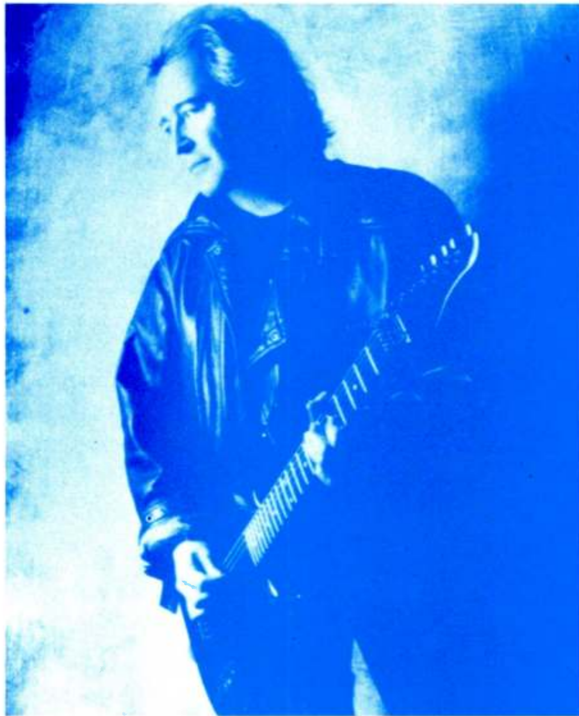
MICK JONES



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MUSICIAN (USPS 431-910) is published monthly by Amordian Press, Inc., 33 Commercial St., Gloucester, MA 01930. (508) 281-3110 Amordian Press, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Billboard Publications, Inc., One Astor Place, 1515 Broadway, New York NY 10036. Billboard Publications, Inc. is a subsidiary of Affiliated Publications, Inc. MUSICIAN is a trademark of Amordian Press, Inc. ©1989 by MUSICIAN, all rights reserved. Second class postage paid at Gloucester, MA 01930 and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions $21 per year, $40 for two years, $57 for three years. Canada and elsewhere, add $12 per year. U.S. funds only. **Subscription address: MUSICIAN, Box 1923 Marion, OH 43305. Send address changes to above address. Call 1-800-347-6969 for subscription in the cont. US and 614-382-3322 elsewhere.** Current and back issues are available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Billboard Publications, Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer: Gerald S. Hobbs; Executive Vice President: Samuel S. Holdsworth; Senior Vice President: Ann Haire; Vice Presidents: John B. Babcock, Paul Curran, Martin R. Feely, Rosalee Lovett, Lee Zhito.

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LETTERS

Who's Generation?

THANK YOU for your cruel, mean-spirited and manipulative attack on the greatest band in history ("Who's Back," July '89); it was worth it to see Pete Townshend put Charles M. Young in his place. Townshend is possibly the most intelligent man in rock, and a brilliant author; Young is a self-centered idiot asking all the wrong questions, and a bad writer. To ask Pete Townshend a question with 10 first-person singular pronouns in it is an insult to him and to us.

Robert Handel
Williamstown, MA

NEVER IN MY LIFE have I been so sickened by an article in a magazine. And never in my life have I been so proud of an interviewer as I was with Charles M. Young. Three cheers to Young for fearlessly confronting Pete Townshend on his shameless money pandering. They did it to me in '82 and now they're doing it to me again: destroying my image of what I considered the best damn rock 'n' roll band ever. It's as if everything they ever said was for a buck. After reading this article, you couldn't drag me to see these ancient sell-outs. Thanks for enlightening me. And God bless Charles M. Young.

Marty Revels
Smyrna, SC

AS A 16-YEAR-OLD fan, I obviously missed the glory years of the Who. Nevertheless, their music is inspirational and important to me. Pete Townshend in particular represented artistic ambition and honesty in music. When I learned of their tour, I had mixed emotions. Your article has confirmed my doubts. It seems that, past their prime, the Who have become bitter, greedy old men willing to sell their songs and integrity for a buck. That's not what it's about. I won't be buying a ticket.

Chris Forsyth
North Brunswick, NJ

EVERYONE WHO HAS followed the career of the Who knows that Pete Townshend changes his convictions as often as he changes his underwear. Thus I was not surprised to learn that all of Townshend's vows in 1983 that the Who would never play together again were just so much hot air; I expected as much then. But I was saddened to find the man long celebrated as one of the most committed and idealistic in rock expressing his willingness to sell himself and his songs so shamelessly.

I seem to remember Townshend insisting years ago that we would never catch him "rocking in a wheelchair." I predict that this will prove to be another example of his hollow posturing. Check back with Pete in 30 years; if the money's right, he'll be there.

Eric Meyer
St. Louis, MO

CHARLES M. YOUNG could also be describing himself when he says that Pete Townshend is "extremely sensitive and chronically overwhelmed by his own emotions." From his hatchet job on the band it's clear that Young was just a little hurt by Townshend's caustic responses to questions on selling out. Why was there no mention of the donations to charity from dates on this tour?

John Hislop
Los Angeles, CA

FORGIVE ME, St. Pete, but I choose to retain my idealism. I will not judge nor argue the pragmatic logic of your arguments regarding the use of your music by sponsors. It's yours, and you have the right to do with it what you will, God bless ya.

I won't defend Charles M. Young's position, which appealed to sentimentality.

I will say that music, or art in broader terms, is essentially honest expression. It panders to nothing except the artist's vision. Commercials, on the other hand, are nothing less than manipulative lies which attempt to control, and in doing so, make a "sale."

Pete Townshend was once an artist. Now he's an entertainer, a collaborator. Unfortunately, until this summer I thought the former was still true. Won't get fooled again.

Shane Edwards
Chicago, IL

PETE TOWNSHEND can't rationalize his way out of a paper bag.

Michael C. Smith
Colchester, VT

AFTER READING the interviews with the members of the Who, I can only say one thing: I hope I die before I get old.

Gene Mayne
Burlington Flats, NY

Mike Leaves a Mark

IT'S NICE to see Bill Frisell (July '89) get the recognition he deserves. However, the guitarist "Mark Miller" in your article is probably Mike Miller, as named in a previous interview in *down beat* (April '86). Mike now lives in Los Angeles, and has played with the Yellowjackets, Gino Vanelli and the Fowler Brothers' Air Pocket. He is currently touring Europe with Abraham Laboriel.

Lori Lynner
Don Ayers
Salt Lake City, UT

And Still They Come

BAD REVIEWING is not a crime. Kristine McKenna walks the streets openly. She should, however, be congratulated for her review of *I Get Joy* by Al Green (*Records*, July '89) in which she redefines poor criticism.

McKenna dismisses Green's lyrics simply because they speak explicitly about his religious beliefs. Instead of exploring the implications of Christianity or how well he supports his claims, she just wonders why he couldn't be more obscure and why he has to sing about Jesus at all. Could it be that Green is merely examining his life like every artist and expressing his answers clearly albeit unpopularly?

If *Musician* wants to be liberal and enlightened, it must discuss ideologies with logic and wit. How will rock 'n' roll ever grow up if it can't graduate from the sphere of ideas and thinking found in a sophomore English class?

David Delp
Willingboro, NJ

FYC F.Y.I.

YOUR ARTICLE on Fine Young Cannibals (May '89) said that A&M Records distributed FYC's debut album on I.R.S. That album was released after I.R.S. had left A&M distribution for MCA; no Fine Young Cannibals material was released through A&M.

Randy Kosht
Anaheim, CA

Bonnie Drumming

THOUGH I WAS delighted with the article on Jackson Browne and myself (Aug. '89), I had to write to correct an important oversight.

You inadvertently left my long-time, very talented drummer out of the list of credits for my band. Please let everyone know that he is Tony Braunagel and he plays Gretsch drums, Sabian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks, Remo drum heads, Purcussion and May/EA system miking.

Thanks a lot.

Bonnie Raitt
Los Angeles, CA

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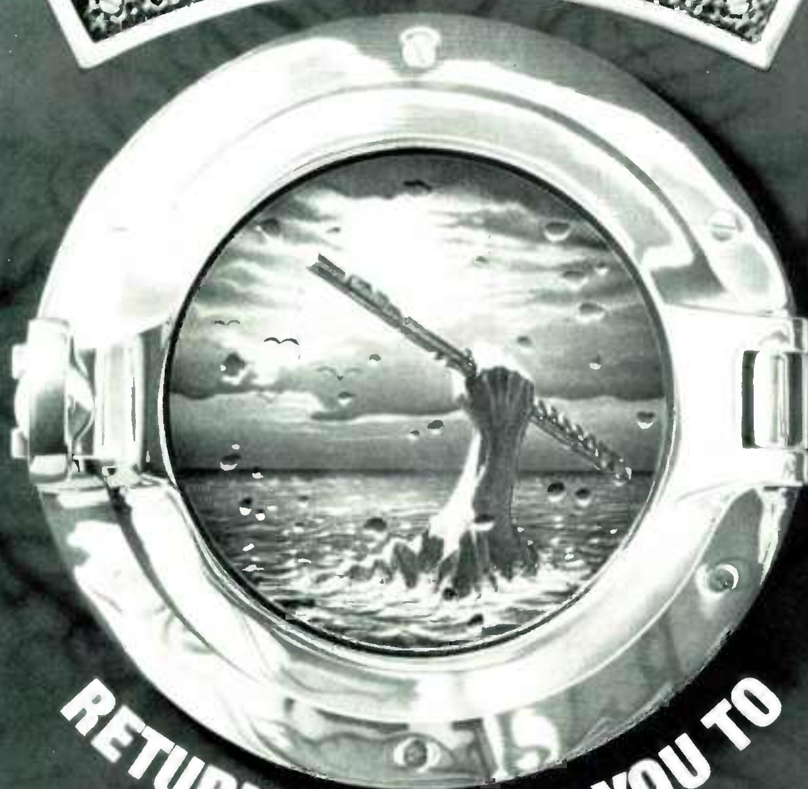

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26 Th	TORONTO, ONT	Maple Leaf Gardens
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28 Sa	WORCESTER, MA	Centrum
29 Su	PORTLAND, ME	Cumberland Cty. Civic Ctr.
31 Tu	NEW HAVEN, CT	Coliseum

NOVEMBER

1 W	PROVIDENCE, RI	Civic Center
2 Th	PHILADELPHIA, PA	Spectrum
3 F	HEMPSTEAD, NY	Nassau Coliseum
6 M	AUBURN HILLS, MI	The Palace
7 Tu	CLEVELAND, OH	Public Hall
8 W	PITTSBURGH, PA	Palumbo Center
9 Th	EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ	Meadowlands
11 Sa	ANN ARBOR, MI	Hill Auditorium
12 Su	COLUMBUS, OH	Veterans Auditorium
14 Tu	CHICAGO, IL	Ari Crown Theatre
16 Th	MILWAUKEE, WI	Riverside Theatre
17 F	ST. PAUL, MN	Forum
19 Su	CINCINNATI	To be advised
21 Tu	BIRMINGHAM, AL	Coliseum
22 W	ATLANTA, GA	Omni
24 F	MIAMI, FL	To be advised
26 Su	TAMPA, FL	Sun Dome
28 Tu	NEW ORLEANS, LA	Lakefront Arena
29 W	HOUSTON, TX	Summi
30 Th	DALLAS, TX	State Fair Coliseu

DECEMBER

3 Su	DENVER, CO	McNichols Arena
5 Tu	LOS ANGELES	Universal Amphitheatre
8 F	SAN DIEGO	Sports Arena
10 Su	SAN FRANCISCO, CA	Civic Cente

World Radio History

FACES

Poi Dog Pondering

Hawaii Six-O

You may have seen Susan Voelz playing violin in John Cougar Mellencamp's band on a recent "David Letterman" show. The day after that taping, Voelz turned down an offer to play second fiddle to Mellencamp's three-chord concern on a regular basis. Sorry, she told the American Bryan Adams, but Poi Dog Pondering comes first. What the heck's a Poi Dog Pondering, you ask? Hey, so did Mellencamp.

"Poi Dog" is Hawaiian slang for a multi-breed or Heinz 57 dog. True to that designation, Poi Dog Pondering is a musical mutt comprised of free-spirited players from such places as Honolulu, Milwaukee, Los Angeles and their home base, Austin. The ragtag army's musical backgrounds are equally diverse: Drummer Dick Ross was in Joe "King" Carrasco's Tex-Mex band; bassist Bruce Hughes is a veteran of several funk groups; Voelz served an apprenticeship with Ronnie Lane's Slim Chance. Poi Dog's Hawaii contingent, Frank Orrall and Ted Cho, has played everything from reggae to bluegrass, while trombonist Dave Crawford, well, plays the trombone.

In little more than a year this musical mongrel has gone from playing for spare change on the streets of college towns to attracting a wild signing war which ended in June with their name on Columbia's dotted line. Their debut will be a repackaging of two EPs they released on the Texas Hotel label.

Richly melodic and boundlessly rhythmic, Poi Dog plays happy music in an era when optimism normally spells ignorance. Sometimes they come off like Up With People in Birkenstocks.

"People are always telling us, 'Oh, you're such a happy band,' and I guess we are real happy when we play," chief songwriter Orrall says. "But I also think there's some sweet melancholy in our music. There's that place when you're drunk and listening to some of your old records and a certain mood comes over you. I love that feeling. It's kind of depressing, but beautiful. That's the place I'd like to think where some of our songs are."

—Michael Corcoran

At Long Last DAT

Electronics, Recording Companies Agree to Agree

Digital audio tape—DAT—has been touted for years as the home sound reproduction medium of the future. Now it may actually have one. An early-June Memorandum of Understanding between recording companies and DAT deck makers has cleared a hurdle toward full-scale introduction of the new technology into the U.S. consumer market.

DAT had previously turned up the flame under a long-boiling feud about home taping between the Recording Industry Association of America and the Electronic Industries Association. The RIAA charged that DAT—with its ability to clone recordings, allowing virtually infinite copies with no sound degradation—would encourage illicit dupping and render copyright laws meaningless. The EIA maintained that DAT, like its analog cassette-tape predecessor, would prove a boon to sales of prerecorded music.

The breakthrough was an anti-copying device known as the Serial Copy Management System (SCMS). This allows DAT users to make a direct digital copy of any copyrighted digital material, such as a compact disc or commercially prerecorded DAT. The DAT copy, however, receives an inaudible signal that prevents it from being used for second-generation copies.

The system is a decided improvement on the notorious Copycode, [*cont'd on page 105*]

Photograph: Gina Evins Doyle

World Radio History

TWO NICE GIRLS

More fun than feminism

EVEN BEFORE you shred the shrink wrap, Two Nice Girls' debut album sounds promising. The contents include a cool cover of (normally) unsung Canadian hero Jane Siberry, a medley matching Joan Armatrading with Lou Reed, and originals with inspiring titles like "I Spent My Last $10.00 (On Birth Control and Beer)."

The music evokes the Roches' delightful debut: three-part harmonies, sensitive yet quirky lyrics and a primarily acoustic sound. But neither the Roches, nor Indigo Girls, nor Tracy Chapman—nor any of the comparisons thrown at Two Nice Girls—have written warmly and openly on the subject of lesbian love. (Phranc is more strident.)

"I think that people are really able to handle a lot more than music has been giving them," says singer/guitarist/songwriter Gretchen Phillips, who pens about half the Girls' original material. Guitarist/vocalist Kathy Korniloff admits she sometimes takes the stage wondering about audience reaction to a few sapphic songs, "but it's always better not to focus on the fear and try to win them over."

With an emphasis on fun over feminism, Two Nice Girls have been winning them over ever since Phillips met Laurie Freelove, the other songwriting Girl (and yes, guitarist/vocalist) in Austin in 1985. For a few weeks they *were* actually *Two* Nice Girls. Then they met Korniloff, whose electric guitar and vocal arrangements were too good to ignore, and shrugged off a name change. "Remember when the Jackson 5 changed their name to the Jacksons? I hated that," Phillips says.

TOWNSHEND REDUX

OUR READERS MAY have been shocked and/or angry about our July cover story by Charles M. Young on the exhumed Who (see this issue's *Letters*)—but not Who mainman Pete Townshend himself. "People felt that my interview with Chuck was confrontational," Townshend later told *Musician* contributing editor Timothy White, but "they should have been in the room with us. It was a great intellectual exercise."

Townshend further noted that "everywhere I go on this tour people want to discuss that article. They keep bringing it up. A lot of people seemed to assume I wouldn't like the article, but I loved it. I found it incredibly stimulating."

But did he get the same message our letter-writers got?—*Scott Isler*

JAMES INGRAM

Funk for the whole family

THE FOLLOWING lesson in how to put the critic in his place comes to you courtesy of James Ingram.

Q. *[In so many words] James, I love the second side of your new album,* It's Real*: strong, expressive, gut-wrenching singing. But, buddy, side one is another story. I mean, it sucks wind, man. What's a singer as talented as you doing wasting your chops on these limp funk leftovers?*

A. How old are you?

Q. *Thirty-one.*

A. See, the buying market is from 13 to 24, so side A is not for you. I'm 37. Side B is for me and you and people of our age.

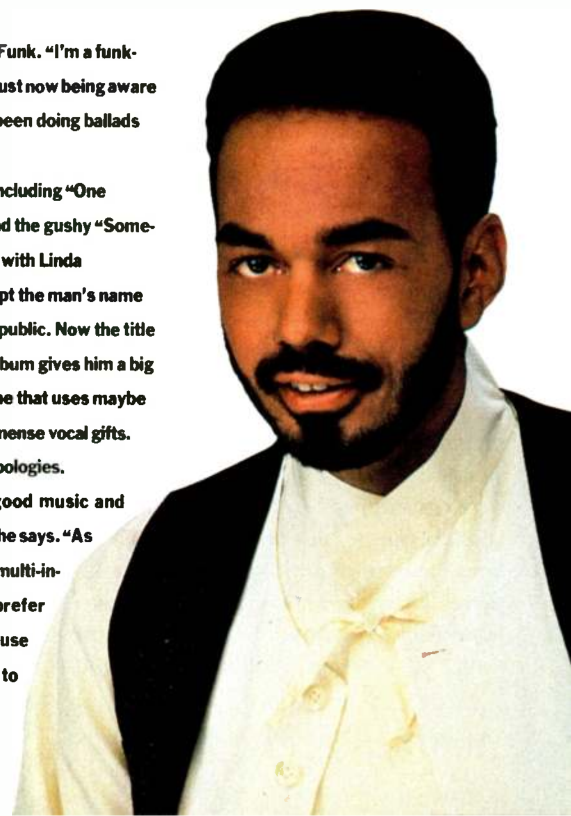
* * *

Well, whatever Ingram's faults, lack of candor sure ain't one of 'em. Most of his peers would be playing the wounded artiste at this point, professing their intense, lifelong love of kiddie funk. Ingram, on the other hand, points to the demographic studies. *Then* he professes his lifelong love of the funk.

Indeed, Ingram migrated from Akron to Los Angeles with a group called Revelation Funk. "I'm a funkateer. People are just now being aware of it because I've been doing ballads and things."

Those ballads, including "One Hundred Ways" and the gushy "Somewhere Out There" with Linda Ronstadt, have kept the man's name before the buying public. Now the title track of the new album gives him a big dance hit, albeit one that uses maybe an eighth of his immense vocal gifts. But he makes no apologies.

"There's only good music and bad music to me," he says. "As a musician [he's a multi-instrumentalist], I prefer to play funk, because you have a chance to



World Radio History

The trio became Austin's favorite traveling slumber party with a live show that included audience questionnaires, song sheets for sing-alongs and onstage matings of Jimi Hendrix with K.C. & the Sunshine Band. When labels came a-courting, they weeded out majors jumping on what Phillips calls the "women in music/1988-89 phenomenon bandwagon" and signed with indie Rough Trade. Producer Lisa Byrd's challenge, Korniloff says, "was to do away with the schtick and let the songs speak for themselves."

Songs and shtick are on display now, as the trio—in modified form—travels from Austin out to the big world. Concerned with the group's increasing electrification, Freelove departed in early summer. Thanks to new member Meg Hentges, however, Two Nice Girls remain three, and keep shaking the tree of pop conventions. As Korniloff admits with a grin, "It's my goal to be a female guitar hero to a lot of 13-year-old girls"—a new rock 'n' role model.—*Marianne Meyer*

do something: interlock pieces and change rhythms around. In a ballad, all you do is lay down the chords and sprinkle a few notes."

Of course, the way *this* crotchety old observer sees it, it's not a matter of ballads versus non-ballads. No, the issue is real, sweaty, dangerous funk versus a sanitary, drum machine-driven approximation of it.

But perhaps that's just senility kicking in. As Ingram notes, "The older we get, we tend to get away from the funk."

Excuse me while I count my liver spots.

—*Leonard Pitts, Jr.*

Darling Cruel

Art-rock in extremis

Gregory Darling likes to call his music "movies for the mind," but he'll entertain a more prosaic description. "We're a traditional art-rock band," declares the singer for Darling Cruel, a Los Angeles-based combo whose colorful debut actually resists such simple labels. Although *Passion Crimes* sometimes recalls the baroque extravagance of Queen and the later Beatles, it also features Danni Bardot's screaming metal guitar, a dose of good-time rock, and Darling's flamboyant singing, which suggests the *Ziggy Stardust*-era Bowie driven mad by some exotic drug.

If one term applies to this unorthodox stew of noises, it's "extreme." As the surprisingly soft-spoken Darling notes, "People are gonna decide we're either fantastic or we suck badly."

The modern-day Darling Cruel is a far cry from the aimless mid-'80s funk band Darling Cool. "For a while, I thought I was Prince," Darling laughs. "I went through a real identity crisis." The group gradually took its music in a "more twisted direction," although a distinctive style stayed just out of reach. Enter producer Bob Rose. "Before we met Bob, we were in the midst of serious soul-searching, drifting in space. He gave us an edge."

In the studio with this "mad scientist producer," the tunes became more and more elaborate, with a boys' choir and symphony players providing support as Darling unleashed his classically trained, four-octave voice. "We weren't aware it was gonna turn out *that* strange!" he exclaims, seemingly taken aback at his own excesses.

"We feel comfortable with what we're doing, though," he hastens to add. "We've found our niche and we're gonna take it farther on the next album." But is there an audience for such an off-center sound? Darling has a theory. "Everyone's been following Guns N' Roses for two years now, and people are starting to look around for new stuff. I think we could be it."—*Jon Young*

Memory of a Free Festival

Now that Woodstock: The Anniversary Hype (*Faces*, April, '89) is a just a pleasant memory, let's examine the market prices for souvenirs of the free event. (Due to our early-August deadline, the status of the following items may have changed when the actual anniversary date induced mass hysteria.)

- **Posters used to advertise the original event sold for $2500-$2600.**
- **Program books widely distributed at the festival (for free): One seller asking at least $1500. Unsold.**
- **Tickets for the three concerts, on one perforated strip: Some 30-50,000 of these tickets were left over in a warehouse. They were advertised for sale for $45 and less as recently as last year. One former festival attendee was asking $24,000 for his uncollected ticket. (Did anyone buy a ticket for this event—originally $24 for the three shows—*and* surrender it to a ticket-taker?) He received an offer of $8,000 for one of the three connected stubs but was unwilling to break the set. Would now consider selling the item intact for $15,000.**
- **Someone who worked in the light show has held on to her muddy, ragged Woodstock backstage performer pass and figures now is the time to cash it in to buy her teenaged son an automobile. An appropriate $20,000 (firm) will obtain this black-and-white slip of paper/valuable piece of Americana.—*Scott Isler***

Photographs (clockwise from left): Mike Jones; Pat Blashill; Chuck Pulin/Starfile

World Radio History

NOISEMAKERS

The Pixies: Feedback & Applesauce

Practice + sonic grunge – sarcasm = cool rock songs

BY

Jim Macnie

BLACK FRANCIS is making it easy for me to describe how his band, the Pixies, concoct their ratty brand of power pop (yeah, power pop). Over breakfast at the Deli Haus in Boston's Kenmore Square, he's rubbing his potato knishes in hot mustard and applesauce. Voilà! Drop the needle on *Doolittle*, the third Pixies disc for the 4AD label, and the inspired balderdash which screams out of the box will slap your head with just enough skronked-up guitar flak to be modern (the mustard) and just enough naturally sweet structural hooks to keep you coming back for more (the applesauce). *Doolittle* is disheveled, funny, exasperating, fragmented, incorrect and right-on. So right-on, in fact, that it's cracked the *Billboard* charts. Not bad for unrepentant indie music of the late twentieth century.

"Feedback is major, a major thing for us," accounts guitarist/songwriter Francis, a 24-year-old whose real name is Charles Thompson, "but the song has always got to come through. I don't know where that idea comes from, maybe from the fact that I listen to larger amounts of classic rock than underground punk. I just got a rental car and I've kept the radio stuck on the oldies station in town. For the most part, you're guaranteed a chill, a goosebump once every 10 minutes. Bam, bam, 'Surfin' Bird,' 'Please Mr. Postman.' That stuff is great; college radio isn't like that."

Black Francis, Kim Deal, David Lovering & Joey Santiago

Perhaps not, but college radio has been helping to anoint the Pixies in the marketplace since their first record, an EP called *Come On, Pilgrim*, trickled out in '87, and was followed last year by the much improved, wonderfully bent *Surfer Rosa*. 4AD's new-found distribution deal with Elektra has made *Doolittle* the band's most visible release. "Monkey Gone to Heaven," the track that has made a surprising amount of non-college playlists, delivers the classic goods—riffs, melodies, rock-steady drums—but finds the singer bellowing maniacally about the holes in the sky, and "Hebrew numerology." Even Francis is a bit surprised it's gotten as far as it has.

"I don't know too much about airplay," he shrugs. "I can't really gear my writing to the radio. I suppose I would be that much wealthier that much quicker if I could pull it off." He has another theory as to why the Pixies can afford rental cars these days. "I'm not trying to brag. I don't think we're real good musicians or anything, but when we first got together, we'd be in that rehearsal studio—a shithole with mosquitoes and sewage—every fucking night. We'd look down the corridor and all the other spaces would be empty. I was shocked; it cost like $500 a month. Where were those other bands?"

Evidently they weren't out at the Rat (Beantown's most glorious dive), clocking sets and absorbing contempo sounds like the Pixies were. The others weren't deciding how to deploy random interrupters like sonic grunge, intra-song conversations, affected vocals and screw-loose instrumental segments like the Pixies were. For all their claptrap, the Pixies—with Joey Santiago on guitar, Kim Deal on bass and David Lovering on drums—seem pragmatic as hell. Where other underground bands revel in their shitstorms, the Pixies, on *Doolittle* especially, portion out their moments of ugliness. "That kind of thing is a standard of cool these days," says Francis. "For some bands it's the only thing. I don't agree."

So the feedback gets *utilized*. For all their wiseacre smirks and red-line blather, the Pixies aren't anti-social. Even though Francis is a constant yelper—he sings full-bore anytime he wants, even when it's unnecessary—there's an earnestness in his frenzy. "We stay away from sar-

Photograph: Bob Gruen

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casm," he states bluntly. "We have no concept of being obnoxious or offending anyone; that's not our orientation. If we start to trash around, it's not to present an attitude, it's to be ballsy. Our goal is to come up with cool rock songs."

Cool in this case involves lyrics that cock-tease with relevance, non-sequiturs which are pregnant with meaning but never add up to anything useable. "Talking sweet about nothin,'" Franny whispers in "Tame." 'Nuf said. "Some of the stuff is borderline surreal," he confesses. "We spend time on the riffs and chord progressions, and not so much on lyrics, although we do pay close attention to what will become the lyrics—rhyme scheme, meter, accents. Music is pretty mathematical, obviously; it involves repetition. So structure's important. It's about sounds; sometimes an *anng* word or an *eeey* is on your mind, just sounds. In the end I'll come up with something, although it might be about nothing. The main thing is that it fits. 'Tame' is a good example. I could have said 'pain,' I guess, but I could never write a song with the chorus of 'pain.'"

So wisdom doesn't flap out of his yap. But in his runaway imagination, certain phrases do crop up. Interviewers have been bugging Francis about the blood-and-guts factor in his lyrics. Dumb-ass stuff, according to him. "Anyone who thinks I'm gory is only reading the titles," he says with his fur up. "'Gouge Away,' 'I Bleed'—if you check the words, you'll see that they're not about urban decay or violence. 'Wave of Mutilation' is about the ocean. I keep it vague. 'Monkey Gone to Heaven' isn't about ecology—I just stuck a reference to the environment in there because the ocean and sky are romantic, places everybody's sung about—classical topics. I couldn't sing about trash in the street, but a hole in the sky, that's pretty wild. Forget about whether the planet is going to survive, the hole is pretty interesting in itself."

The band has toyed with random factors in their music as well. In the past they've knocked around songs that start up, drop out and charge back. *Doolittle* finds them more locked together. The rhythm section shows a new-found command. It's this kind of development that has aided the success of "Monkey." "But remember," muses Francis, "if we're a bit more accessible, it has more than a little bit to do with our bigger budget and our producer Gil Norton; he's totally pop-oriented. Real British—he's into OMD and Yello, not Black Flag—but he's a great arranger and he likes our music. There was good tension between us. [cont'd on page 26]

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Pixie Sticks

FRANCIS has got all the dope on Pixie hardware. "JOEY uses any variety of Les Pauls, that's basically all he uses. We both use Marshall JCM 800s, which are dual-channel things. We use them for dirty channel and clean channel. We get more sounds out of them without using boxes and stuff; it's easier. I play any variety of Teles I can get my hands on. I have a newer, Japanese-made Fender, with lots of pickups so I can not sound like a Tele if I want. I've got a Fender Twin Reverb that I combine with the Marshall sometimes. KIM uses a Marshall head that she covers over with masking tape because she's so embarrassed about using such a macho, boyish amp. She plays a Japanese-made, really bad Aria Pro II bass. We just make it sound good other ways." DAVE LOVERING speaks for himself. "I use the Tama ArtStar II, good sound, deep and powerful. Cymbals are all Zildjian, except for a Paiste ride."

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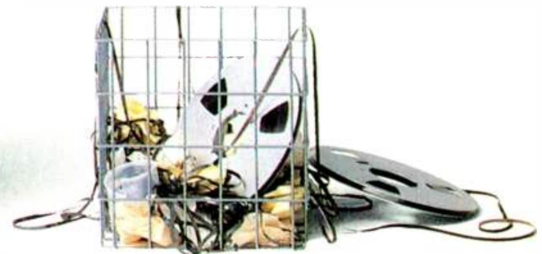

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World Radio History

The Hidden Mel Tormé

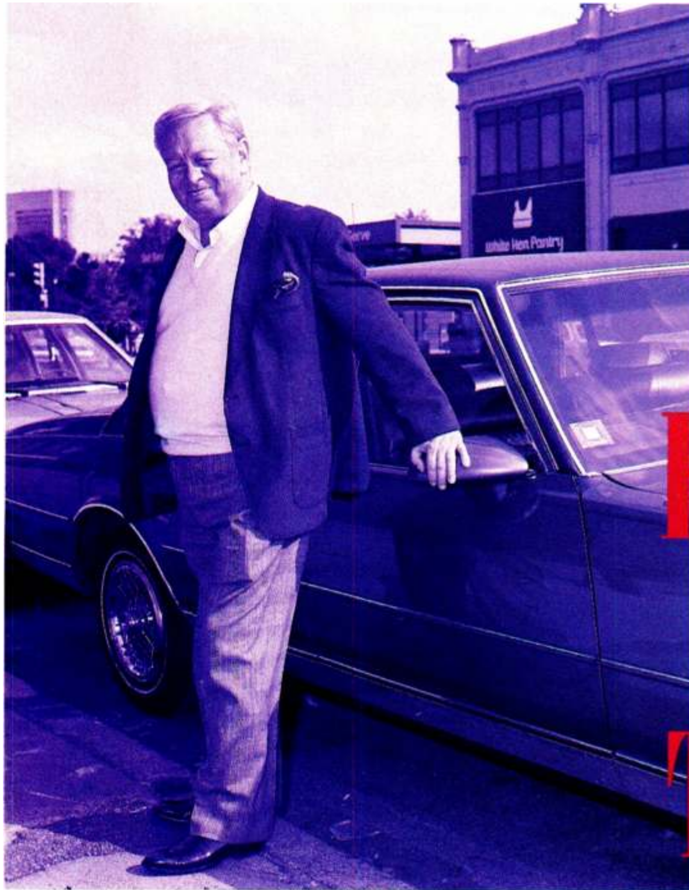
Behind the vaunted "velvet fog" lies an extraordinary musical mind

BY

Burt Korall

FANS WITHOUT long memories might find this hard to believe, but when Mel Tormé first came to New York in 1947—playing the Copacabana at the ripe age of 22, with a face and a voice that suggested he was even younger—he was regarded in certain quarters as not only a would-be teen idol but a punk. "Sure, I was assertive and cocky," Tormé recalls. "Having sung and played drums since childhood, in addition to acting on radio for almost 10 years, I was to all intents a veteran. When people treated me like a young squirt, saying, 'What do you know? You're just a kid'—that made me very rebellious.

"I had worked hard, tried to soak up everything around me. By the time I got to New York, I had developed some sort of intelligence. I didn't like being rudely dealt with, or dismissed in the press as a youngster whose main claim to fame was dating Ava Gardner. Of course I reacted. I was *serious*."



Four decades later, Tormé hasn't lost his drive, only his edge. He packs concert halls, his records sell; he's a regular guest on TV and radio. He's written three books—a memoir, *The Other Side of the Rainbow: With Judy Garland on the Dawn Patrol*, a novel about a singer, *Wynner*, his autobiography, *It Wasn't All Velvet*—and is deep into a fourth, a biography of his drum idol Buddy Rich. He writes TV and film scripts (he's acted in several TV shows and movies), creates musical arrangements for his act, practices and otherwise deals with the business of being Mel Tormé.

The work ethic prevails on the bandstand as well. "It doesn't matter how he's feeling. He can be up, upset or angry. But he goes out there and it's always the best he can do," attests Tormé's bassist, Jay Leonhart. "Mel's a lot of fun on the stand, he's got much less to prove now. He's no longer tempestuous as in the old days."

These days Tormé seems almost too affable, at least in front of an audience. At 64, he radiates the confidence of an artist whose taste, musicality and formidable energy still pay dividends as a popular singer, even without pop's seemingly requisite qualities of youth and MTV attitude. Or as Tormé puts it, "I really think there is a middle-of-the-road way that allows you to remain reasonably contemporary—and still permits you to adhere to principles you have as a musician."

But it hasn't always been that way for Tormé. Though his natural metier as a musician has always been in jazz, there have been times when he's reached out for more commercial acceptance, seldom completely disappointing dedicated listeners in the process, but often trying their patience. No one ever questioned Tormé's formidable talent. But finding one's true "voice" often takes time. For Tormé, it's been part of the adventure of his career in show business, one that almost literally spans a lifetime.

Mel Tormé began singing professionally at the age of four. "Looking quite droll in my sailor suit," he notes, "I got a job with the Coon-Sanders band at the Blackhawk club in Chicago, my hometown. The band was *big* back then."

"The idea of being a band leader, a *musician*, never left my mind."

Photograph: Mim Michelove

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Listening to the band's broadcasts on the family Stromberg–Carlson cathedral table radio, Mel had become familiar with their repertoire and was singing the tunes around the house. His folks, impressed, took the precocious crooner to the club, where he received an audition and was promptly hired. "I sang with the band every night for six months, one song a night. I got $13 and the family was given a free dinner."

Tormé performed with other bands in the Windy City through the early Depression years—with trumpeter Louis Panico, with Frankie Masters' orchestra, with motion picture star Buddy Rogers' band and in 1933 at the Chicago "Century of Progress" exposition. Not content with one career, he also became a child actor on "virtually every radio show emanating from Chicago in 1934-41." He took up the drums early on as well, driving neighbors crazy with jazz patterns learned from the Bob Crosby band's Ray Bauduc ("my first drum hero"), Gene Krupa, Chick Webb and of course Buddy Rich. A few years later when Tormé began writing pop songs, he learned to play the piano, but never studied either instrument in the formal sense. He learned by listening and doing.

"As far back as I can remember, I had a burning desire to be a drummer/singer/bandleader," Tormé says. "But by the time I reached any kind of maturity, the bands were relegated to a minimal kind of visibility and the singers were making their stand. I followed the path that seemed most fruitful and became a singer. But the idea of being a band leader, a *musician*, never left my mind. I've always considered myself part of the community of musicians."

By age 16 he'd already penned his first songwriting hit, "Lament to Love," which charted for Harry James' band in 1941 (Dick Haymes on vocal). Other bands covered it on vinyl, or, like Gene Krupa's, played it on the air. "It gave me some clout," Tormé recalls. In 1942, he left Hyde Park High in Chicago to work with the Chico Marx band (yes, *that* Chico Marx) as vocal arranger, vocal group leader and drummer.

By 1945 he was on the verge of becoming a national figure with his innovative vocal group, the Mel-Tones. They'd begun recording with Artie Shaw, one of Tormé's early champions, on Musicraft. In arranging the quintet as one would the sax section of a big band—two altos (women), two tenors (men) and one lower range—Tormé expanded the reach and impact of the form, while pushing the arrangements in an adventurous jazz direction.

Though inspired in part by the Modernaires and Three Hits and a Miss, the Mel-Tones, as Tormé writes in *It Wasn't All Velvet*, "pioneered open-voiced harmonies, a process of inverting the notes in chords so that the range of four or five singers is extended beyond the limits of close harmony." A good example can be heard on "What Is This Thing Called Love?," among the more memorable Tormé-Shaw collaborations on record. Tormé knew how to make singers swing.

By 1947 Tormé had received exposure on records and radio with the Mel-Tones and in such movies as *Pardon My Rhythm* and *Higher and Higher* (with Frank Sinatra). His songs, most of them written with Bob Wells ("The Christmas Song," "Willow Road," "Born to Be Blue," "County Fair," "Stranger in Town"), enjoyed a good degree of currency. His drumming in Hollywood clubs led to offers to go on the road with band leaders Gene Krupa, Stan Kenton and Tommy Dorsey. Most important, his voice and presentation convinced a number of music-biz insiders—notably Woody Herman, Les Brown and Tormé's manager Carlos Gastel—that he could make it as a solo singer.

Tormé certainly had his own sound. His voice was light, romantic, mellifluous; he could accurately reflect the feelings of young fans, the bobbysoxers. Giving the

Tormé as '40s crooner

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impression of vulnerability, he was musical—but limited. His recordings from this early solo period, which include material on *I Can't Give You Anything but Love* (Musicraft Vintage Series), document his musical sensitivity, apt and inventive phrasing and responsiveness to lyrics. But he was short on range and without an underlying concept that would give him authority.

"When Carlos Gastel pushed me to be a crooner for teen fans, I hated it," Tormé admits. "But I did it. It got me launched, but in the wrong direction. After all, jazz was my thing. But Carlos wanted me to be like Nat King Cole, a client of his from jazz who did so well in the pop field."

Still, Tormé had considerable success as a pop singer. He had hits: "Again," "Blue Moon," "Careless Hands." A vocal smoothie, he was tabbed "the Velvet Fog" by a New York disc jockey, a descriptive label he's never lost, or liked.

"It was a gimmick, a means of identification. I never was comfortable with it. I didn't like the way I was singing. Couldn't listen to my records. What I did between 1946 and 1953 was motivated by management. But little by little, I moved away from that one-dimensional image—I didn't want to sink my own ship by moving too quickly.

"When I signed with Bethlehem, a small jazz label, in 1955, I made a real break with the past. I reinvolved myself with jazz in a major way, making my first records with [arranger/conductor] Marty Paich and a band patterned after the Miles Davis 'Birth of the Cool' nonet and Gerry Mulligan's Tentette. The sonorities were fresh, pulsating and ear-pleasing and I got a chance to get out of the strait-jacket that I had created for myself. I sang great standard material and some jazz pieces, and loosened up my interpretations, becoming more improvisational. Until then, I guess I had just been surviving, waiting... It was a new beginning. There would be steps back and other errors. But what I did in '55 ultimately set the stage for my breakthrough later on."

It was Tormé the *musician* who finally took hold and gave his work the foundation it needed. He worked toward that emancipation through the late 1950s, '60s and early '70s, making some memorable recordings along the way, notably with Paich. Check out *Mel Tormé Swings Shubert Alley* on Verve. A 1960 compilation of Broadway show tunes ("with jazz potential," Tormé observes), the album is identified by lean yet colorful scores for 10 musicians that focus on the sound of the French horn and tuba. Tormé functions both as another instrument or "horn" in the band and a lyric interpreter, a progressive tendency through the years. The band dances and the singer is rhythmically provocative. But he was still a distance from what he would become.

Lacking real focus until the mid-1970s, Tormé moved from record company to record company, sometimes making albums and singles that are best left unmentioned. He had an occasional hit, e.g. "Comin' Home, Baby" on Atlantic, in an R&B mode. As he got older his voice changed, becoming deeper, more resonant and expressive.

"I really worked at improving my range, particularly the lower reaches of the voice. But the truth is, nothing other than the passage of time was able to do it. The Atlantic album I made at the Maisonette of New York's St. Regis Hotel with the Al Porcino Big Band in 1974 was the breakthrough for me. I sounded different; I felt easier about everything; my time had come. Other albums followed and I found I could listen to them. I'm proud of the record I did with Buddy

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Rich's band on Gryphon; it was wonderful having Buddy play my charts. I'm also partial to a recording I made in England with arranger Chris Gunning, also on Gryphon, called *Tormé: A New Album.* And I really like my work for Concord, particularly the LPs with my pal George Shearing."

Seeing Tormé perform today is an uplifting experience. Full of feeling, facile but not slick, he makes a case for musical literacy while meeting you halfway. "It's gratifying to grab an audience, to get to first base," Tormé explains, and a recent engagement at Michael's Pub in New York underscores this point. As usual he'd come to town with an entirely new show—"something people expect of me," he says. The well-paced hour included "Autumn in New York," "Soliloquy" from *Carousel*, a medley of songs from *Guys and Dolls* and the inevitable "scat" vehicle, "Lady Be Good."

"The man's encyclopedic," says Jay Leonhart. "He knows thousands of songs, arrangements and solos. What he does is the result of a lot of information gathering and more than a little personal growth."

Marty Paich, who conducted and scored *Reunion*, Tormé's most recent Concord studio album, concurs: "He knows what makes projects work. He has a backlog of knowledge and experience. Therefore I can challenge him. For *Reunion*, I wrote out parts, and when he came to the studio, he had them nailed. He's quick, flexible; he has good intonation and time. And he works hard. That's why he keeps getting better."

Tormé, typically, is still seeking new frontiers of his own. "The big career step is a one-man show on Broadway, set for May of next year. Broadway is literally the only area of show business with which I've never been involved," he points out. "I'll have a lot of help—a big band, six or eight dancers. I'll write all the charts and the script. But I certainly won't be alone out there.

"I'm happy! That's my thing: being active, keeping myself combat ready." Ⓜ

PIXIES

[cont'd from page 18] The smart ideas we kept and the corny bullshit producer ideas got thrown out. Like 'Sorry, Gil, no way are we going to put handclaps on that part, but yeah, the tambourine sounds great there, keep it.'"

Seldom have off-the-wall and accessible shaken hands as productively. "Debaser," *Doolittle*'s opening track, sounds like U2 with dung on their clothes. And though Francis says they probably won't ever get any cleaner than they are (unless it was for something "really good, epic, like the Beach Boys or Bowie"), their take of Neil Young's "Winterlong" on the new charity compilation *The Bridge* is a straight-ahead reading. "It's the best thing we ever recorded, an amazing song. We sped it up and it came off like the Everlys." For all the band's fickle debris, Francis and Deal boast the most potent man/woman harmonies since Doe and Cervenka. When their voices fall in together, a classic feel emerges.

"That's what it's all about," he concludes. "Forget the analytical context, just try to get off on the tunes. Never mind what year it's from, does it *move* me or not? For me rock music has got to be easy, natural and satisfying. Buying records, going to a friend's house, playing them—it's the best thing in the world, amazing entertainment. It never ceases to kill me." Ⓜ

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Dennis Chambers has performed with such diverse artists as; Parliament-Funkadelic, John Schofield, Special EFX, Bernard Wright, Thomas Dolby, Michael Brecker and David Sanborn.

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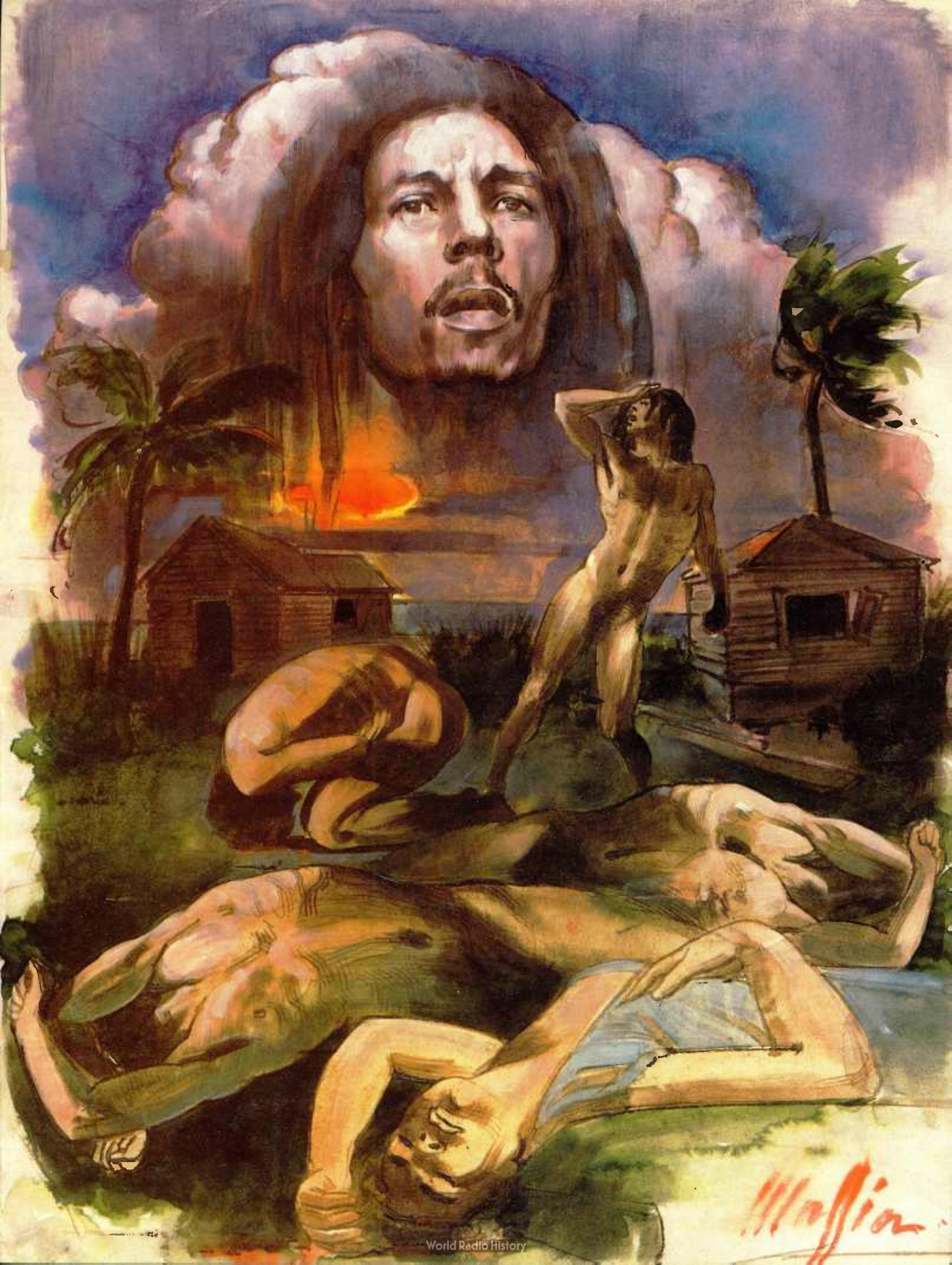

World Radio History

DAYS of DYING

The Wailers worked hard to escape the ghetto but Trench Town took its vengeance

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

All his professional life, since he cut "Judge Not" for producer Leslie Kong in 1962, Bob Marley had been consumed with the vision of his socially observant reggae. He looked at shantytown in Jamaica's capital city of Kingston and saw the raw eloquence of its strivings; others drawn to him in his Trench Town environs saw just the snakepit in which he created. In the ghetto, only dreamers and vipers flourished, and the lifespan of either was short. No step forward was won without new tensions and entanglements. No poker match was ever so perilous.

In the many years since Bob Marley's death due to liver, lung and brain cancer in May 1981, there has been a tendency to cloak his enormous accomplishments in a public relations corona. The Jamaican government's award of the Order of Merit to the dying superstar proved a shrewd tactic, making him a national hero yet simultaneously defusing his status as the Caribbean's most potent firebrand. The country's tourist board prefers Bob be portrayed for visitors as a timeless Rasta host, ever-smiling, neatly dreadlocked, his struggles and dire concerns now deemed quaint as Jamaica resumes its enforced role as a client state for the cynical multinational interests that control its economy.

But the facts are far less tidy. For the *sufferahs*, the downtrodden that still dominate Jamaica's populace, the future is even bleaker than during the three decades that Bob Marley dedicated himself to giving global voice to their plight. In a specially expanded and updated edition of *Catch a Fire—The Life of Bob Marley*, I distilled considerable research and fieldwork, court records and trial testimony, police reports and government documents, and many new and supplemental interviews, into a detailed saga of all that has transpired since Marley's passing. The material sheds often-startling new light on a difficult past as well as an ominous present.

The work of any great artist lifts us up because, in our hearts, we instinctively know that his expressions are an announcement of the person he hopes to one day become, not the unfinished mortal he knows himself to be. Yet both of these perspectives—indivisible—are the truth of any man. The two excerpts from my book that follow disclose the pitched battles in Kingston circles that raged throughout the 1972-82 era that has come to be termed the Golden Age of Reggae. Court testimony in the first excerpt, drawn from the 1987 trial of music publisher Danny Sims' Cayman Music Inc. vs. the Bob Marley Estate to determine proper ownership of copyrights of many of Marley's most famous songs ("No Woman No Cry," etc.; the Estate was ultimately victorious), makes it plain that the forces arrayed against a ghetto youth seeking an international forum for his topical Jamaican rock were formidable indeed. Former Marley manager Don Taylor and Jamaican soccer star Alan Cole (a longtime ghetto bredren of Bob's) took the stand in court to depict a world far harsher than many reggae fans might have supposed.

Reggae kept its riddims tough by retapping the source. But that source could tap back

[In an effort to establish the climate of tension, violence and uncertainty surrounding Bob Marley, Don Taylor was called to the docket and asked about the near-fatal shooting of Marley on December 3, 1976.]

Q: Do you know who was behind the assassination attempt?

A: Yes... There was two guys—and it was a mixture of political, it was a thing that Cole had run a racketeering horse race [at Kingston's Caymanas racetrack] and they thought that Bob was behind it because Alan [Cole] was driving Bob's car. Alan, he fix horses at the track. He had fixed this big race and took off with the money. And Bob, oh, they must have felt that Bob was behind it... Bob must have financed it, because Alan didn't have no way to get that kind of money away from Bob.

This mixed-up idea that he believed in the People's National Party, and so did I, and we had a lawsuit against Clement Dodd who was

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Bob's first recording company, that I started for not paying Bob, and tried to get back some of the copyrights, all those factors together caused the assassination . . .

Q: What happened to the alleged assassins?

THE COURT: Do you know what happened to them?

THE WITNESS: Yes . . . They were hanged. I saw one hung.

Q: The government of Jamaica hung them?

A: No, our friends down in the ghetto tried them and hung them.

Q: Who?

A: Guys we were raised with from Trench Town.

Q: Where were the police?

A: They was not around.

THE COURT: Did you see them hung?

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir. I was 30 feet away when they tried them and hung them, the people in the neighborhood, in the gully. They tried them in the gully. They had me fly down. They had me say, "That's the one who shot me."

Q: Were any of the alleged assassins brought to trial?

A: No, none of the alleged assassins were brought to trial. None of them are alive.

Q: Did Bob Marley have anything to do with the alleged assassins not being alive?

A: The people. I don't know if Bob Marley did. Because of the love of Bob Marley by the people, the people took it on themselves. They felt the government wasn't moving fast enough. They could move better than the government. They could investigate better than the police . . .

The prosecution also grilled Don Taylor on the particulars of violence he experienced at Bob Marley's hands in Gabon in 1980.

Q: Can you describe the beating in Africa?

A: We had a situation where . . . I dealt with this promoter who gave me deposits on two artists, on Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff, and my office gave him separate receipts. When we got to Africa, promoter came here, he said he wanted to cancel Jimmy Cliff show. He would like his money back. I said, "You are crazy."

He find a way to tell Bob Marley that the money he gave me for Jimmy Cliff was really for Bob Marley, and I was trying to take that money for myself. Bob Marley . . . he believe the guy, and he jumped up and started hitting me in front of the . . . that was in Gabon, Africa, Intercontinental Hotel. That was our physical thing. That was the start of it in 1980.

Q: When was the second beating?

A: The second beating was OK. We started in 1980 from Gabon. I had told him I was never going to work for him again. So he was really angered because he knew that I was the only person who made all this money. I made all this money for him in six years. So he doesn't like to be defied. He said, "You are going to defy me."

He call me one day, say, "Taylor, come over to the house . . . let's work out our problems, because I really want you to work with me."

So I went over there, because he lived right around the corner from me, and he was sitting by the pool. We were sitting by the pool, and he says, "I hear you say you are not going to work for me again." I said, "Yes, man, I can't be bothered working for you." He said, "Come into the bedroom with me . . . I got something I want to show you." I walked in the bedroom with him, and he says, "Yvette, bring that piece of paper."

Q: Yvette is who?

A: Yvette Morris was working for him as one of the secretaries, and he said, "Bring that piece of paper I asked you to type." He looked at the paper. I saw Alan Cole coming through the door with an Uzi submachine gun.

Q: That's the Israeli submachine gun. And the piece of paper had what on it?

A: He wanted for me to sign that I relinquish all commissions, all rights, anything I had claim to.

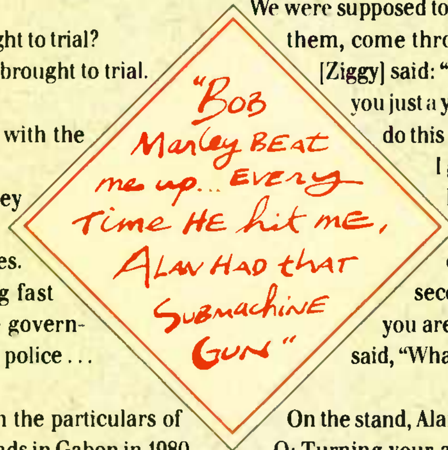
Q: Were you claiming that Bob Marley owed you commissions?

A: On the contract, because I had a lawyer write it.

Q: Did you sign the piece of paper?

A: He beat me up. Alan had the submachine gun. Every time he hit me, Alan had that gun. I couldn't believe Alan hold that gun at me. We were supposed to be all right. Finally Bob's kids, Ziggy and all of them, come through the door, and that's how it stopped. He [Ziggy] said: "Don is so good to you. He take six gunshots for you just a year ago [during the assassination attempt]. You do this to Don?"

I got real mad. I went to the police, reported it in Miami, bought . . . to the Tamiami Gun Shop and decided I was going to kill somebody. I couldn't believe he did that to me. That's the second time. All this time, in the next breath, "Don, you are a good man. I still want you to manage me." I said, "What's up to this man?"



On the stand, Alan Cole was asked his side of the story.

Q: Turning your attention back to 1980, at Miami, Florida, was there an incident there relating to Don Taylor?

A: Yes.

Q: Would you tell Justice Wilk and the jury what happened?

A: Well, it was three weeks before we started the U.S. tour that ended prematurely [after Bob Marley became terminally ill]. And we invited Don to come over to Bob's mother's house for an argument, a little talk. Bob hadn't seen him in a couple of months. And he came, eventually he came after, took time for him to come . . . . He didn't really want to come at first when we spoke to him. But eventually he came. An argument developed inside of that room. And I closed the door. And it got rough. We got rough, and things like that.

Q: Got beaten up, right?

A: He got shaken up, beaten up . . .

Q: Did you point an Uzi submachine gun at Mr. Taylor?

A: It wasn't an Uzi . . .

Q: What was it?

A: It was an automatic .45, I think . . . there was a rifle around, but I didn't point no rifle.

Cole was also asked to testify about "rough" behavior on Bob Marley's behalf that he purportedly participated in during the early 1970s.

Q: So, let's talk for just a minute about monitoring or making sure that Mr. Marley's records get played on the air. What, if anything, did

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you do in . . . the period '72, '73, '74 through '76, to see to it that Bob Marley's records got played in Jamaica on the radio?

A: Well, in those days, it was very difficult for Rastafarians to get airplay unless we were aligned to the big record companies. When I started working at that time as manager, we went independent. So we had a lot of problems in the record industry getting airplay and things like that. So it was my duty to see that we got proper airplays, see that our music was on the charts, and, you know, things like that.

Q: Well, let me be blunt now, Mr. Cole. You understand now you are under oath, do you not? . . . I'm asking you specifically to tell Justice Wilk and this jury what, if anything, you did or caused to be done in the '70s to get Bob Marley's records played on the air.

A: Well, as I said, it was a difficult period in that time. And for us to get airplay, we had to put a lot of strength, what you call muscle, to get played from the various disc jockeys, and things like that. So it was my duty to see that these things happened . . . . Well, sometimes we had to go there and, you know, beat disc jockeys and deal with program directors and things like that . . . . So in that sense, we had to use a little muscle, some force, to get airplay. . . . Occasionally we had to beat—we had to beat disc jockeys. We had to send guys to—smash their cars or things like that. Threaten them . . . . If you didn't play our records you have to leave the station. Things like that.

Q: Did anyone leave the station as a result of threats or beatings?

A: Yeah, quite a few people left the station during that year. Disc jockeys, I believe, program directors, left their jobs. Some went out to leave the country.

Q: And during that period of '76, were you then successful in getting Bob Marley's records played on radio?

Q: During that period of time . . . yes. Well, that was the period of time that we got most of his number-one songs in Jamaica . . . .

Q: And that was your job, both before Don Taylor and when Don Taylor came aboard, right?

A: Before and when he came.

Q: Would you mind telling the court who Ted Powder is?

A: Ted Powder was a subpublisher that worked for Federal Recording Studio or Federal Recording Company. . . .

Q: Wasn't he also the sublicensee for Jamaica for Danny Sims, Cayman Music? . . . So that, in fact, if royalties were owed to Bob Marley, and Cayman Music, for sales in Jamaica, it was Ted Powder that was responsible to pay Bob Marley?

A: That is correct.

Q: Now, did there come a time when you were passing either as manager or when Don Taylor came aboard as overseer, as you put that word, that you had differences with Ted Powder?

A: Yeah, we had differences with Ted Powder.

Q: Yes? Would you tell the court and jury, please, what happened?

A: Well, we had a conflict once . . . with Mr. Powder. About some money. And it got, what I would say, out of control. We had to beat Mr. Powder before we could get our money. . . .

Q: How many people beat him?

A: About three guys. We had about three guys beat him about all of that time.

Q: And after that, is it a fact that Danny Sims came running down to Jamaica to pay Bob Marley some money?

A: Yes, Danny Sims came right after that. And we got some money.

Q: Was there any question in your mind whether Danny Sims knew about your beating or causing disc jockeys to be beaten to get records played on the air?

A: Everybody knew that.

Q: Including Danny Sims?

A: That's right.

Q: Was there a meeting in your room or suite, whatever it was, at the Essex House?

A: Yes. We had a meeting with Mr. Sims [in 1980] . . . .

Q: Now, at that meeting, was there a confrontation or discussion about copyrights?

A: Yes, there was . . . .

Q: OK. Tell Justice Wilk and this jury what happened.

A: OK. We were in my room and they were discussing about songs, you know. Copyright in general. And it got a little out of hand. And we had some brothers—some Jamaican—you know, some Jamaican entourage. And it got real heated. And one of the brothers threatened to shoot Mr. Sims in the room. And he left . . . .

Q: How did he threaten Mr. Sims? What did he say?

A: He tell him that he shoot him in his head.

Q: And that was because Danny Sims was questioning him about the fraud?

A: Yeah. He was questioning about his copyright, yeah. About the fraud in general.

Q: And what did Danny Sims do? Did he stay there and continue to demand his rights and ask somebody to admit that the fraud had taken place?

A: He left like a bird.

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Q: Did he appear to be frightened?

A: He had to be frightened.

Attorneys for both sides knew full well that nothing could excuse the menacing and violent behavior Bob Marley and his associates had used in conducting certain of their affairs with individual music publishing figures and particular Jamaican disc jockeys. However, there had been reasons for this behavior. What was implicit in the revelations during trial testimony was that a ghetto-spawned and ghetto-fed sense of desperation and retribution influenced Marley's actions.

The rise in Jamaica of the musical culture of the sufferah had caused a welter of conflicts between the poor Rasta musician and the JA media establishment that bordered on outright class warfare. For even as Bob gained renown outside of Jamaica, the upper and middle classes controlling the JA airwaves had little but scorn for his "Dungle ditties." As he watched his music being repeatedly and systematically denied broadcast in his native land, and as he saw his publishing revenues inexplicably withheld, Marley sought recourse through tactics consistent with those of the politically tribalist bad men and street-minded sportboys who had been his friends or foes since youth. In his hurt and outrage, Marley felt these reprisals should come as no surprise to either savvy or elitist JA radio DJs or streetwise publisher-manager Danny Sims, who had maintained a residence in Jamaica since 1961 and had moved his entire production company to Jamaica in the rock-steady era of 1967.

When Danny Sims and his counsel brought the tale of Alan Cole's beating of Ted Powder into open court to display the alleged violent atmosphere around Bob Marley, they made a serious tactical error, because Alan Cole told the jury too much about Powder. Not only did Skilly explain who he was—"Danny's man," the sublicensee in Jamaica for Sims' publishing interests—but the dread also went on to detail that, after Powder had been threatened, Sims appeared in Jamaica "right after that. And we got some money."

It had been Alan Cole who had suggested—no, insisted—that direct retaliation was the only way to deal with derisive radio people and slippery subpublishers, largely because this had become the sole strategy that was getting Cole anywhere in Kingston since his soccer career had gone south. Cole still could become one of the greatest soccer coaches in the history of Jamaican football, but sadly, he liked the spree life better. And he had always wanted Bob to like it, too, although that never transpired.

Ghetto bonds run deep, but Marley had never trusted Skilly with anything of consequence after Cole had almost gotten Bob killed in the crossfire of his '76 Caymanas mix-up. Cole was never again involved in Bob's songwriting, either, and Bob didn't let him handle management chores. Henceforth Cole could tag along on tour, acting as an aide-de-camp while enjoying himself on Bob's tab, but that was it.

Don Taylor was another matter entirely. He was a West Kingston kid, sure, but never a back-alley footballer, never a slum bredred who passed the chillum or shared the rice pot, never Rasta. Taylor had told Marley that no straight record-business type or "bald-headed" (non-Rasta) management executive would ever take a dread seriously, and Bob believed him for a spell. But when Bob caught Taylor acting "tricky" in Gabon, that was it for the fast talker from Franklyn Town.

On the witness stand, Taylor put his own verbal spin on the niceties of the Gabon incident. The fracas between Bob and Don in Gabon had centered on the fee that Don had told the Gong his band was getting paid: $40,000. When it was subsequently reported to Bob by Gabon officials that $60,000 had been paid out to Taylor—the manager allegedly setting $20,000 aside for himself—that was when the shouting, and the beating, had erupted. Neville Garrick had tape-recorded the three-hour fracas in Africa; and, according to Marley aide Diane Jobson, who was also present, Taylor confessed to having skimmed money from Marley's concert advances for years. The consequent Miami contretemps with Taylor occurred after Marley realized to his great distress that his estranged manager was, on paper, the only authorized officer besides himself for Bob Marley Music, Media Aids and Tuff Gong (his own publishing, his recording interests and his record label).

For the *Uprising* album, Bob wrote a scathing song about Don Taylor called "Bad Card." The lyric ruminated on the intimate "propaganda" one cunning man can constantly feed a trusting companion until the elaborate nonsense becomes part of the environment the listener inhabits. But inevitably the moment of truth—the slipup in the game—comes as the high-stakes con man deals himself one ace too many. The bad card is revealed in the hand he shows.

As for Danny Sims, he had always claimed to be a wizard at radio promotion; he was the man who would put Bob's unique sound on

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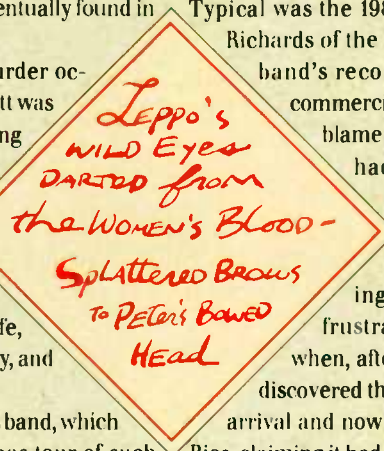
the airwaves. Yet he was always trying to dissuade Bob from actually recording reggae—and "message" reggae, at that. The chief way he saw Bob Marley being a money-maker was, in his own words, "in a rhythm-and-blues, Top 40 style." As Sims himself boasted to a reporter from the *Village Voice* just before the trial, "I discouraged Bob from doing the revolutionary stuff. I'm a commercial guy. I want to sell songs to 13-year-old girls, not to guys throwing spears"—in other words, not to savages in the jungle. Behind Bob's back, his reggae had often been derided as "jungle music." In time, Bob figured out where attitudes like that had come from. And he fought—until he grew too ill—to hold accountable or keep at bay those who gambled on his vulnerabilities.

IN EARLY FEBRUARY of 1987, a mysterious posse of kidnappers abducted Carly and Aston Barrett's father. Rumors in Trench Town had it that Rita Marley was approached for ransom money, and she had refused. Mr. Barrett's decapitated body was eventually found in the brush. It was also armless and legless.

The days of dying had returned. The next murder occurred on Good Friday, April 17, 1987. Carlton Barrett was driving home late that evening, another car trailing his. Barrett parked in front of his Kingston home and was ambling across his courtyard to the front door when an assailant slipped up behind him, pressing a pistol to the base of his squarish skull and squeezing off two rounds. Within days Jamaican police had arrested his wife, Albertine, and her lover, a taxi driver named Lenroy, and charged them with the slaying.



The murder cast a pall over the rest of the Wailers band, which had recently returned from a successful overseas tour of such countries as Israel and New Zealand. After years of indecision and conflict over their future, the band members had recently united to renounce their individual 1982 agreements with former Marley attorney David Steinberg and press a claim against the Marley estate for what they had determined to be a collective $5 million in unpaid royalties. The move coincided with renewed recording activity, including *Jerusalem*, a well-received joint album with Alpha Blondy, a.k.a. Seydou Kone, the Dimbokro, Ivory Coast–born reggae artist whose popularity in West Africa rivaled that of Bob Marley.

But the senseless killing of Carlton seemed to plunge the surviving Wailers into a new paralysis of depression and fear. At the urging of family members and management lawyers, they left Jamaica for their own safety and mental balance, booking concerts in the U.S., Europe, South America, Africa and various Arab countries, with the drumming handled by Cornell Marshall and later Mikey Boo.

After a long period of creative stagnation and business wrangles with his record label, Peter Tosh was busy improving his own reputation, his primary objective being a proposed concert tour, to commence at Madison Square Garden, in support of his EMI-America LP, *No Nuclear War*, which had been issued in July. However, discussions between the record label and Tosh business manager Joe Borzeki had not resulted in any advance funding for the concerts. With much of his income tied up due to numerous legal fights, Peter and Joe decided to try and borrow the necessary cash. As Peter and his common-law wife, Marlene Brown, caught a plane back to Kingston on September 6, 1987, he was telling close friends that the main reason for the tour was that he was broke.

He was also isolated. Tosh's last Jamaican concert had been in December 1983 in Kingston's National Arena; since then he had kept a low profile, his music seldom heard on the JBC, his fellow musicians keeping their distance. Many disliked Marlene Brown, Peter's woman, who had a reputation as a dabbler in *obeah*. Tosh had also broken ties with Bunny Wailer, who he accused of lowering the moral standards of reggae with his dance-hall records. Tosh denounced all singing toasters like Yellowman, as well as the newer dance-hall DJs, calling them "district John-Crows."

Lastly, Peter's former cohorts had tired of his constant bile, his incessant vituperative spiels, since his filing of lawsuits against EMI, Tuff Gong Records, an old manager and a Brazilian record label. Typical was the 1981 collapse of Peter's friendship with Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones, who had brought Tosh to the band's record company. Disgruntled with his limited commercial impact beyond Jamaica, Tosh had begun to blame the Stones, attacking them in the press (as he had Bob Marley) for allegedly thwarting his career. Keith Richards, who had allowed Tosh to use his longtime Jamaican residence for an extended period, ignored such public carping, apparently chalking it up to professional frustration. But the Rolling Stone lost his temper when, after landing on the island for a vacation trip, he discovered that Tosh had ignored all prior notification of his arrival and now refused to leave Keith's hillside villa in Ocho Rios, claiming it had become his property.

Reaching Tosh by phone, Richards engaged him in a brief swap of Kingston bark and coarse London bite:

Keith: I'm coming down to the house. I need it for myself.

Peter: If yuh come anywhere near here, I'll shoot yuh.

Keith: You'd better make sure you know how to use that gun, and make sure you get the fucking magazine the right way 'round, 'cos I'm gonna be there in half an hour!

Peter left the premises. And he found himself no longer welcome at Rolling Stones Records.

Tosh had also lost a long and ugly court battle for custody of the youngest of his eight children by various women, and his last house in Jamaica had been burned to the ground in 1986 by arsonists. He was currently residing in an expensive two-story bungalow on Plymouth Avenue in Barbican, an upper-middle-class section of the Kingston suburb of St. Andrew. His retinue of late had dwindled to local craftsman Michael Robinson, "bush doctor" (occult herbalist) Wilton "Doc" Brown, JBC radio personality Jeff "Free-I" Dixon and his wife Joy, and drummer-percussionist Carlton "Santa" Davis.

There were other habitués at his home, however. These were the "buzzard higgler" and "bad beggarmon" (criminal mendicants) types who were the bane of every Jamaican music personality who had escaped—but not outdistanced—the West Kingston slums. These bad boys crept into even the nicest uptown precincts, knowing how to strike the balance between general nuisance, sycophant and nagging reminder of an impoverished past. A smart

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bad boy on the beg would avoid disrupting suburban life, passing like a phantom through its tidy environs while never letting the former slum residents off the hook, subtly preserving the notion that the social-climbing reggae star and the ghetto sponger were *both* interlopers.

The maxim that "good reggae nevah quail [quit or leave] de ghetto" endured among leading Jamaican musicians as both a slice of wisdom and a warning. From Bob Marley on down, no top-ranking artists from shantytown had ever entirely severed their ties with yard life, retaining a measure of acquaintance with its ways, and carrying an unresolved load of guilt about the brethren left lingering in its awful back lanes. Moreover, Jamaican reggae's triumphs as crossover music had always been tentative or conditional, its international potency still oddly dependent on roots savvy and cutting-edge status in downtown spheres. For better or worse, the ghetto remained the driving force of Jamaican rock, and nobody had ever found a way to keep his riddims tough without retapping the source. Tragically, that source knew how to tap back.

The morning after Peter Tosh and Marlene Brown had returned to Barbican, they were visited by Dennis "Leppo" Lobban, a higgler and self-styled dub poet whose criminal escapades in West Kingston had long paralleled Peter's gains as a performer. The 32-year-old thug, whose smirking, screw-faced features bore a slight resemblance to the singer's, had been hitting on Tosh for cash and kindnesses since the early 1970s. Over the last two years Tosh, 42, had given him money to preserve his "cotch" at 2 Crescent Road in the ghetto, and to help feed a child by his woman.

"Sometimes we had to go there and... beat disc jockeys and deal with program directors"

On this muggy Monday morning in September, Lobban had come to complain that Marlene Brown's brother Dennis had not come through with promised favors. That the first caller since their return should be a cadger set the hot-tempered Marlene off, and she summed up her vexations with the grim crack that she didn't want Peter, herself or anyone else "ending up dead." This acrid jest was reference both to the recent murder by an associate of Leppo's of a couple the friend had been extorting money from, as well as to the police killing of the extortionists just one week ago. (Since August, just before their trip to New York, Tosh had also been griping in the presence of Marlene and others that the grounds of the house had begun to "smell like death," an anxiety she had never fully comprehended.)

Leppo let the matter drop, but he remained on the premises till late afternoon, smoking spliffs and lounging on the white wicker settees in the sunny living room dominated by photo portraits of Haile Selassie and Tosh. Leppo had been a rudeboy since his teens, earning his first three-month jail rap for vagrancy in 1971. In May 1974 he drew some serious time—15 years—for three separate counts of robbery with assault; two months later, the Kingston Home Circuit Court got around to convicting him for assault with intent to rob, robbery with aggravation, shooting with intent to kill and wounding with intent to kill. The minimum aggregate sentence for his spree of larceny and attempted murder was 25 years at hard labor, but Leppo had served only 12 years and five months when he was paroled from prison on October 3, 1986. If all went well, Leppo's parole was to expire on June 6, 1991. On September 11, 1987, a Friday, at 7:30 p.m., Leppo paid his second call to Peter Tosh's residence.

Leppo approached the front gate, knocking and then hesitating in anticipation of someone calling off Peter's 15 guard dogs. He had nothing to fear, for all the dogs but two were tethered, including those that were attack-trained. Tosh's friend Michael Robinson answered the knock. Robinson was surprised to see it was Leppo, who rarely came by after sundown, since the group inside (Peter, Marlene, Doc Brown, Santa Davis) had been expecting Free-I and Joy Dixon. While they'd been waiting for the couple, Santa had been entertaining Peter by describing an uncanny incident in Miami that day in which Pope John Paul II's outdoor mass had been aborted ("Jah lick him down!" Tosh exulted) when lightning struck the altar platform, one thunderbolt scorching a press photographer.

Robinson's curiosity at the sight of Leppo turned to anxiety when he saw two other strangers join the higgler as he made his way down the darkened path toward the house's front stoop. Michael led the trio into the foyer, whereupon the tallest stranger spun around, shutting and locking the door behind the group as he produced a 9mm Browning automatic pistol from the waist of his pants. In seconds, Robinson had three pistols trained on his temples, and he was hustled up the stairs to the living room as the tall man hissed at him not to make "any bumbaclot noise!"

"Everybody belly it!" shouted Lobban, stepping in front of the flickering television in the center of the dimly lit living room as Tosh and his friends gaped. "Everybody get flat!"

Nobody seated before the glowing TV moved, astonishment etched in cool blue-white on their faces. "Get flat!" Leppo repeated in a hysterical tone. "Dis is a holdup!"

Tosh, Wilton, Davis and Robinson sank to their knees and obediently stretched out on the cold floor. Marlene Brown, on her haunches beside the chair, refused to fall to her stomach.

"Where is the money?" Leppo bellowed to Peter, but only Marlene answered, explaining there was no money in the house. She reminded Leppo that his younger brother, who went by the alias of Handsome, had tried to borrow some money earlier in the day, and was told to return after the weekend, when a Monday morning bank trip would make a loan possible.

Leppo turned to her, rage in his bloodshot eyes, and hollered that it was her obeah that had brought this gunplay to pass—spells that stopped Peter from shelling out his customary alms to the bad men. "You dead for this tonight!" he vowed.

The tall gunman was impatient with these exchanges. He shouted for everyone to stand and divest their pockets and persons of any cash, jewelry, watches and so on. When he discovered Santa had J$200 on him, he exploded in fury, wondering what other valuables were being withheld. Tosh was approached, the tall man wresting the gold chain from the six-foot-six singer's neck as he raised his gun hand to pistol-whip him. Peter, being skilled in karate, automatically countered the blow, the tussle causing a nearby electric fan to topple to the floor.

Just then another knock was heard at the gate. As Leppo and his other gunman ordered Tosh to lie back down, the tall fellow spat that Tosh was "dead for that move tonight!" He stepped into the kitchen,

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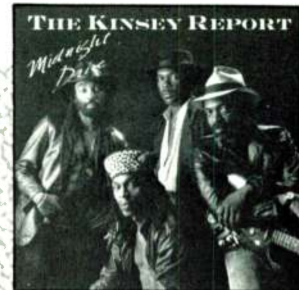
BRAVE NEW BLUES

THE KINSEY REPORT

Midnight Drive



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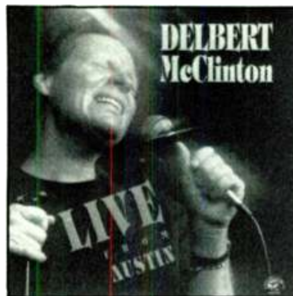

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taking up a machete kept beside the refrigerator for opening coconuts, and strode back to the sprawled Tosh, barking that he would chop his head off if he didn't disclose where the money was.

Marlene was now exclaiming that it must be Free-I and Joy at the gate, pleading with the gunmen not to answer the knocks, to spare them. Outside, the couple had grown quizzical with the lack of response, especially after hearing the fan crash to the floor within, and they pounded on the gate's metal mailbox to draw the attention of those inside the bungalow. The tall stranger appeared to escort them inside, and as soon as the nervous Joy and Free-I were across the threshold, the tall gunman ripped the gold chain from Free-I's neck and then jammed a hand into Free-I's trouser pocket, pulling out a J$400 wad of bills.

Leppo began wandering in and out of adjacent rooms, screaming *"Where's the money?,"* certain Tosh would not have returned from America without some. Peter and Marlene took turns reasoning with Leppo, proposing various possibilities for when the bank opened on Monday. Hearing this, the tall, machete-toting gunman lost all composure, yelping to Leppo, "Do wha yuh come for!"

With that, Leppo wheeled around and fired a random shot at Marlene, who was huddled next to Joy. The bullet zipped across Marlene's scalp, ripping flesh as it sped, and then sliced into Joy's mouth, dislocating teeth, passing out through the side of her cheek. Both women went down in shock and horror, feigning death.

Badly agitated, Leppo's wild eyes darted from the women's blood-splattered brows to Peter's bowed head, and he stabbed his pistol into Tosh's forehead and fired twice, the bullets battering the outside of the singer's skull as they entered. Tosh's body snapped sharply from the force of the shots and then fell limp.

The sight seemed to drive all three gunmen over the brink of composure and they began firing in unison as they scampered about, eight or nine shots crisscrossing the room. A slug slammed into Michael Robinson's thigh as he crawled under a coffee table. There was a pause, and then more reports rang out. Doc Brown took a bullet in the head, dying instantly. Free-I received two shots behind his ear. Another shot was aimed at Michael Robinson, punching through his leather hat and slicing across his pate; he was lying there wondering how long it took a man to die when he felt another bullet burst into his back.

There was a last spray of chaotic gunfire, six or seven bullets bouncing and skittering in all directions. Santa flinched as one creased his shoulder. Joy froze as another pierced her right leg.

Then came an awful stillness. At length it was interrupted at some distance by scuffling feet, the muffled din of a racing VW bus engine and squealing tires.

Once all was again silent within and without, Marlene bolted up and lurched down to the street, screaming for help. Scattered neighbors, alerted by the two dozen booming pistol reports, stood

ES-50 synchronizer and RTS 14 rack sold separately.

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stiffly about, stunned and speechless. All refused to move toward the house. An attorney whose home was directly opposite hastened past the tableau of onlookers and into the house. He bounded up the stairs, taking two at a time, but stalled at the top, jolted by the sight of carnage, the tart stench of gunpowder swirling his senses.

Hurrying back downward and out into the night air, the lawyer shouted to Marlene that he was going to bring his car around to take the wounded to the hospital. Joy and Marlene disappeared into the bungalow and quickly reemerged, bearing the semiconscious Tosh down the front walk and into the attorney's waiting automobile. Free-I was soon lifted inside after him. Lastly, Michael Robinson and Santa staggered into the sedan, which skidded off in the direction of University Hospital of the West Indies in Mona Heights. Left behind inside Tosh's bungalow, Doc Brown's body lay in its own fluids before the TV.

Treatment at the hospital brought the massacre's brutal toll into perspective. Marlene Brown and Joy Dixon were treated for their flesh wounds and released. Santa Davis was admitted for his shoulder wound and was resting quietly. Michael Robinson was in critical but stable condition with three serious wounds. Free-I was in a coma, his doctors deciding he was too fragile to withstand emergency surgery for removal of the two bullets lodged in his cranium.

Peter Tosh was pronounced dead, and hospital authorities and police became anxious to locate a next of kin. They were told by friends and fans that, while his parents might still be alive, Peter had not seen either of them in more than two decades. Detective Sergeant Hugh Miller of the Halfway Tree Police Station was assigned to investigate the shooting melee, which had resulted in the slaying of Tosh and Wilton "Doc" Brown. Three days later, on Monday, September 14, Sergeant Miller's case became a triple murder, as Jeff "Free-I" Dixon expired while still in a coma in University Hospital's intensive care unit.

The following day Mrs. Alvera Coke, Peter's mother, arrived at his Barbican home asking to discuss funeral arrangements with Marlene Brown. Marlene appeared at the front door and denounced Mrs. Coke with gutter slang, castigating her for abandoning Peter when he was an infant. Mrs. Coke attempted to press her proposal of burying Peter in his native parish of Westmoreland, but Marlene would hear none of it, ending the encounter with the words "I don't like you and Peter don't like you either."

On the 17th Dennis "Leppo" Lobban surrendered to officials at the Kingston office of the Human Rights Council, claiming he saw his picture in local news telecasts concerning the warrants issued for his arrest. Police quickly arrived and took the street vendor—who professed innocence—into custody.

[*cont'd on page 114*]

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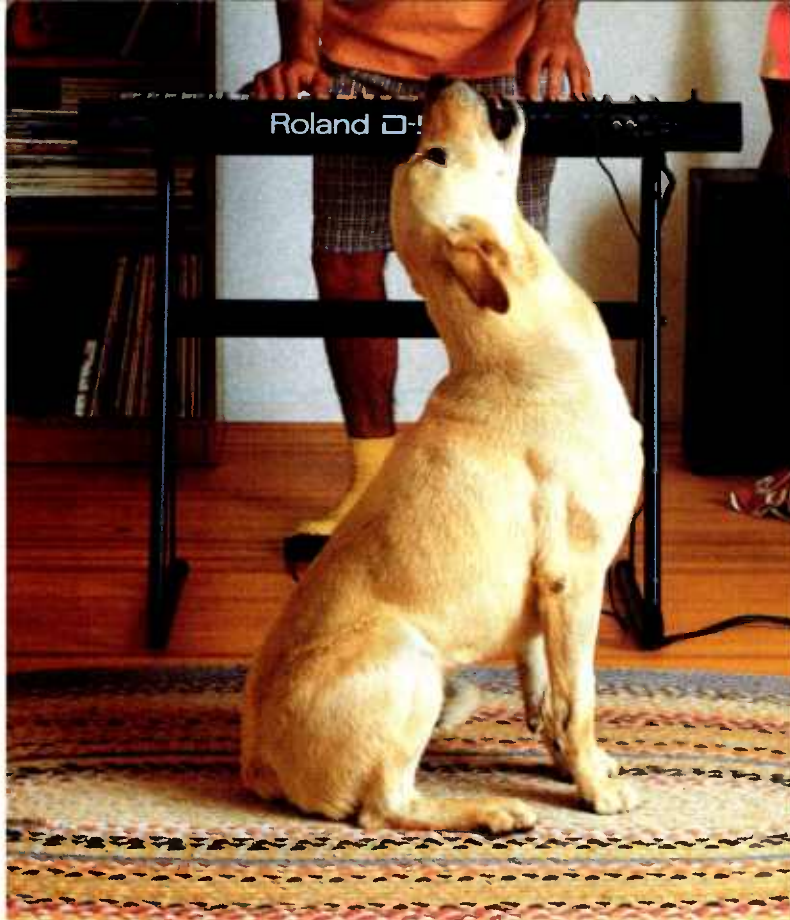

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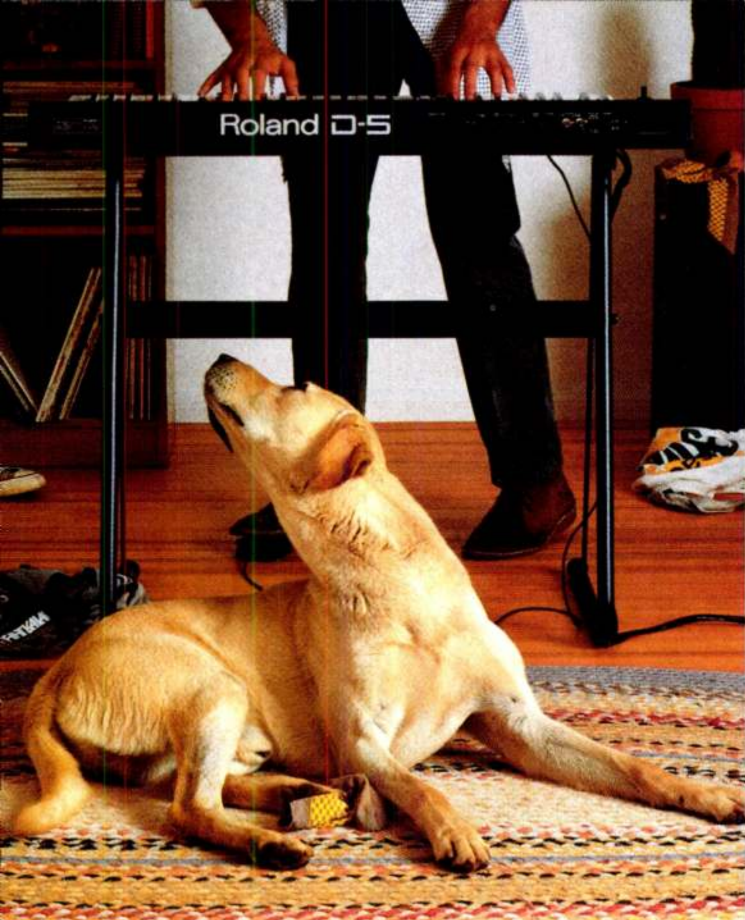

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THE MUSICIAN GUIDE TO

STEREOTYPES

Rock Stars Come and Go, but a Good Image Is Forever

By Sam Selby

AS THE 1990s crawl toward us, aspiring musicians from Warsaw to Waikiki are wondering how popular music will change, which new influences will infect it and how they can cash in. It's not idle speculation; rock's long racetrack is littered with the corpses of players who hopped the wrong trend and got bounced out of the biz on their backsides. Think about the poor slobs who gambled, in 1959, that rock 'n' roll was over and the future was in bossa nova. Or the semi-pros who bet that the Beatles fad would die in six months—and stuck to their flattops and dickies. Today they teach social studies. In our own lifetimes we have seen the sad fate of those who remained faithful to disco or who hung onto the Doobie Brothers look long after MTV knocked the bottom out of beards and shag haircuts. To save today's rock jockeys from climbing up on dead horses, we have undertaken a scientific study of recurring styles and sounds—pop music trends that appear every decade, and will surely need new priests and practitioners in the '90s. Want to be a rock 'n' roll star? Pick one of these prototypes and follow it to the shoelace. That next pop icon could be you.

OPTION ONE:

THE BLEACHED BLONDE BIMBO

'60s: Nancy Sinatra
'70s: Debbie Harry
'80s: Madonna

YOU'RE a cuddly retro sex kitten, pop's own Marilyn—but that's just on the surface. Beneath the glitz is a telling irony, a detached commentary on the very glamour you're subverting while exploiting! It's sex in quotation marks—and money in the bank.

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OPTION TWO:

THE STRUTTING LOUT

'60s: Mark Farner
'70s: Jim Dandy
'80s: David Lee Roth

YOUR hair is long, your exposed chest is bare and your pants aren't just tight—they're *painted on.* Count the bulges, ladies! Hey men, whatdya think? Are these some fine babes or what? AWOOOOO! Hey baby—dig this. *Ripppp.* Oops.

OPTION THREE:

THE FAIRY PRINCE

'60s: Donovan
'70s: Cat Stevens
'80s: Morrissey

OH, you're traipsing through the heather on a foggy British morning, reading poetry to the ducks, when an ugly old man with a briefcase in his hand says he works in the city making smokestacks and guns. You dance through the lilacs but your mind is so troubled, it takes all your strength to sigh. So you recline in a bower and you write a song about how bad it is to make the planet die.

OPTION FOUR:

THE LOUNGE LIZARD

'60s: Richard Harris
'70s: Bryan Ferry
'80s: Robert Palmer

YOU'RE a bit older than these pimply-faced teenage singers with whom you're lumped. More jaded? Perhaps. Wiser? Oh yes, very wise—but at so high a price. Still, Gretchen looks lovely in that dressing gown, and the fire is warm, the brandy—your last friend—as faithful as ever. These are the autumn days, the winsome days, the air itself seems mournful. Bid Gretchen come sit at your feet and stroke your Italian loafers. She's such a pretty thing. Hardly more than a girl. There's so much you could teach her. If you were not so terribly, terribly weary.

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OPTION FIVE:

THE TOUGH WOMAN FOLKIE

'60s: Odetta
'70s: Joan Armatrading
'80s: Tracy Chapman

WHEN you walk out onto that Greenwich Village stage the talking stops and the waitresses quit serving. A glimmer of defiance flashes in your brown eyes. You hoist your acoustic guitar like an Amazon's shield and begin to sing in a deep, powerful voice as strong and nourishing as the earth herself. Throw back your proud head and let loose the angels of your beaten but unbroken existence. There is no sound but your authority, there is no interruption of the spell. And when you finish, the adoring crowd leap to their feet and cheer wildly. You don't speak to them. You don't have to. You are mother of the storm. And you have given them something they desperately need—a way to integrate their record collections without offending their sensibilities.

OPTION SIX:

CALIFORNIA COWBOYS

'60s: The Byrds
'70s: The Eagles
'80s: Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

FLICK that long blonde hair out of your eyes and tune that 12-string electric, it's showtime and 20,000 gents and ladies are ready to party with the folk-rock sounds and sweet Everly Brothers harmonies of the best-looking ladykillers on Sunset Strip. Like these Beatle boots? Picked 'em up in London. Like this shirt? Nudie of Nashville made it. These old blue jeans—aw shucks, had 'em since high school—if these jeans could talk, man. What's that? A little something to get up for the show? Thanks, gorgeous. Hey, is she a model? Oh, an actress, sure. Tell her to go wait in the convertible.

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OPTION SEVEN:
THE BLACK GYPSY

'60s: Jimi Hendrix
'70s: Sly Stone
'80s: Prince

YEAH, the brothers don't dig this white hippie faggot shit but man, some of the brothers got very narrow minds. It ain't about white and black, it's about being part of the cosmic thing, the higher planetary consciousness, the Thank U 4 Lettin' Me B a Merman groove. Check the silk scarves, the pirate sleeves, how the skin-tight satin pants flare out above the high heels. Now check these chops—BZZZZWKAWKAW-KACHEEEEEEEEEEZINNNNNNG. Yeah! Get down, behind the head now VOWEEEEEEEEEEEEHUM-MMMMMMM—ZOT! Uh-huh. On your back, now, with your tongue. VEEDOVEEDOVEEVIIIIIIEEE-EEE! Right. Let's see Mister Bob Dylan do some of that.

OPTION EIGHT:
THE GIRL IN THE BERET

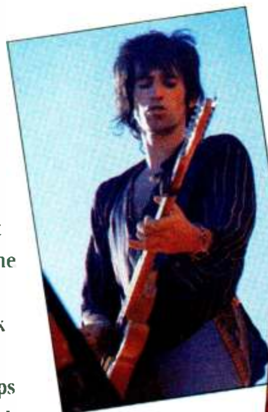
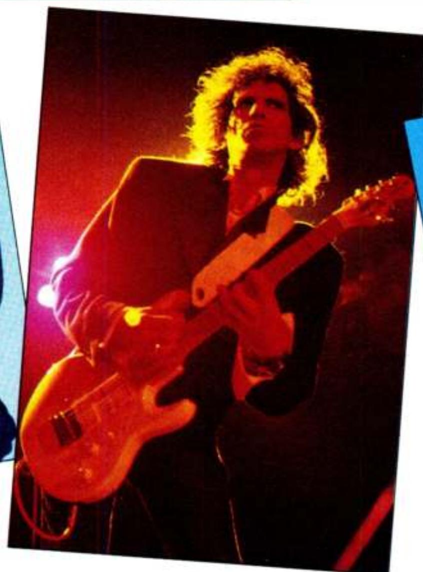
'60s: Joni Mitchell
'70s: Rickie Lee Jones
'80s: Edie Brickell

YOU'RE a shy, artsy woman-child, introverted and sensitive to the hidden beauty and small cruelties that other people don't notice in ordinary life. You paint, you write poetry and—though you're too shy to notice—you break the hearts of the boys who love you but cannot hold you. You write confessional songs about your most personal affairs in language that brings a gasp of recognition from your legion of fans—for the songs you sing in that fragile, little-girl voice seem to shine a light on their own hidden hearts. You're a little crazy, a little jazzy, a bit wild and innocent at once. You play a Martin acoustic guitar when you're happy, you sit in the dark at a Steinway grand piano when you're sad, and you wear—a beret.

OPTION NINE:
WALKING DEATH

'60s: Keith Richards
'70s: Keith Richard
'80s: Keith Richards

MICK is being a pussy again but you'll get this band back on the road. Listen to this lick you just came up with—sounds like Chuck Berry? So what? Where's the Jack Daniels, darlin'? Who let these cops in here? Give 'em some money and tell 'em to fuck off.

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LOVE and Rockets Take Off

Alive in orbit with the Bleak Boys from Bauhaus

By Alan di Perna

DANIEL ASH pushes a magazine into my hands before my eyes have had time to adjust to the dim light of his posh San Diego hotel digs. It's open to a sumptuous photo of a lovingly preserved pink '58 Cadillac convertible. "Beautiful, innit?" he brusquely demands. Quick and purposeful in his speech and movements, the lanky, lipsticked guitarist is eager to cut the usual conversational preliminaries and get right to what *really* interests him. And things with engines

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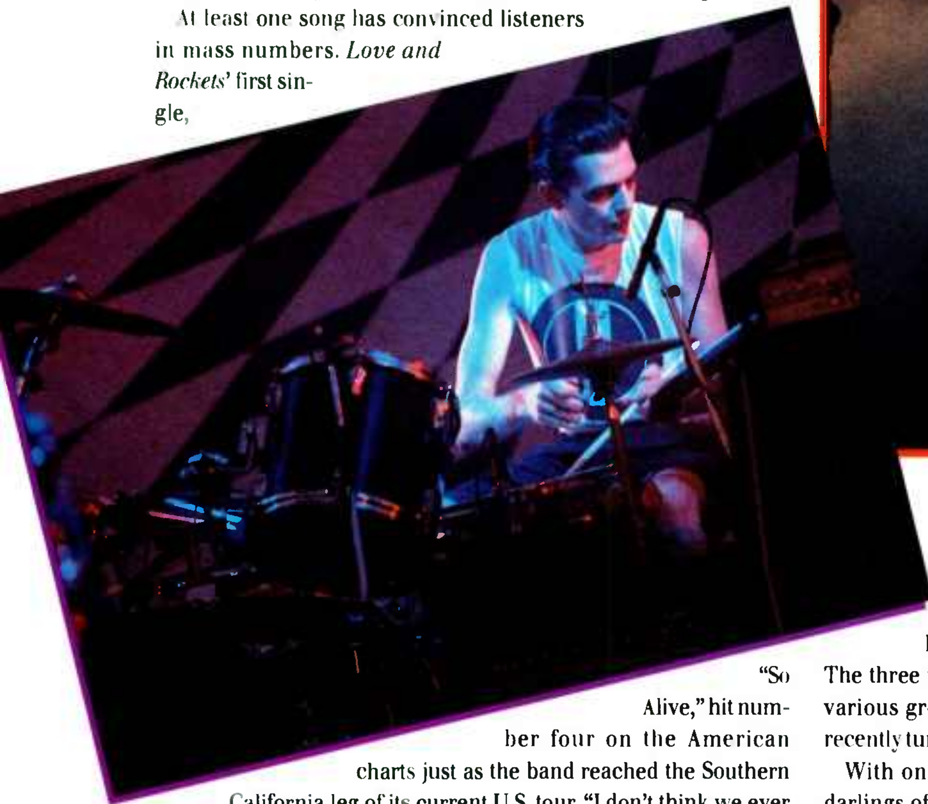
generally do interest him. A lot. There are two songs about his motorcycle on his band's new album, their fourth, simply titled *Love and Rockets*. His head cocks attentively when I mention that vintage Caddies, particularly pink ones, are plentiful in L.A., the next stop on the Love and Rockets tour. In many ways Ash's automotive centerfold sums up the spirit he says the band was trying to evoke on their new album. *Love and Rockets* is lean and powerful, stylishly retro.

"There was this attitude of getting back down to original rock 'n' roll—a 1950s feel, if you like. Subconsciously, I think we wanted to write songs that were more direct, musically and lyrically. Not to write about the cosmos, religion and philosophy, which we have done on previous albums. Obviously, songs about things like motorcycles could be very bland, very clichéd. So it was a challenge to make them sound convincing."

At least one song has convinced listeners in mass numbers. *Love and Rockets'* first single,



"So Alive," hit number four on the American charts just as the band reached the Southern California leg of its current U.S. tour. "I don't think we ever considered that the single would quite get that far," Ash confesses. "We thought we'd be very lucky to get into the Top 40 with it. But we never really thought that much about it anyway."

Time to welcome Love and Rockets to the growing circle of former British cult artists (the Cure, New Order *et al.*) who have finally broken the States, roughly one decade and several fashion cycles removed from the music scene that originally gave them birth. Alternative radio success is one thing. Love and Rockets has had plenty of that, with singles like "Kundalini Express," "All in My Mind" and "Ball of Confusion" from their 1986 *Express* LP. But a mainstream chart hit is something else again, as the band is now discovering. What started as a quiet, routine tour for the L&R lads has suddenly become an endless round of interviews with the lifestyle glossies, explaining for the zillionth time that, yes, the band's name comes from a street-chic comic book by L.A.'s Hernandez brothers, and that's right, ma'am, we all used to be in a band called Bauhaus. That's B . . . a . . . u . . . .

Of the trio, Ash seems to be the one who's taking all this most easily in his stride. At a photo shoot around the hotel's main swimming pool, he mugs on command and chats up the British photographer while bassist David J looks vaguely pained and drummer Kevin Haskins maintains a friendly but impenetrable silence. The three members of Love and Rockets have played together in various groups since their teen years in Northampton. (David J recently turned 30; his mates are somewhere near the same age.)

With one of their many bands—Bauhaus—they became the darlings of the early-'80s, post-punk ghoul set. Perhaps the most overrated group of that era, Bauhaus' tremendous influence was intimately tied to its musical limitations. And most of these had to do with the four-note vocal range of gothic heartthrob Peter Murphy.

"I'd often come up with song ideas and think, 'Well no, that won't suit Pete,'" David J remembers. "So Bauhaus was sort of limited in a way. But it was healthy. It made the style strong to be limited by a vocalist's character. With Love and Rockets, though, things are much more open. Anything goes, really."

From left: Kevin Haskins, David J and Daniel Ash, normal and in drag: "I'd like to break through those barriers—particularly in the Bible Belt."

Ash, David J and Haskins tend to use the term "openness" more frequently than Mikhail Gorbachev. It's a quality that's central to their attitude toward making music. But it ultimately became the undoing of Bauhaus in '83, when work began on what was to be the group's final album, *Burning from the Inside*. With Murphy sidelined by illness and studio time already booked, Bauhaus' three in-

Photographs: Joe Pedulo; previous page: Jeff Katz

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strumentalists began cutting tracks without their singer. Kevin Haskins can vividly recall the result.

"We suddenly found ourselves feeling completely open and free. There were no boundaries to what we could do. It just flowed like it hadn't done in years. Those sessions were really the genesis of Love and Rockets. We ended up getting about six backing tracks down; Danny and Dave cut a few vocals. Peter turned up, and understandably he felt a bit put out. I remember him saying, 'What am I supposed to do when we play these songs live, then? Sit on the side of the stage and play tambourine?' That comment hit us; we thought, 'This is not quite right.' Because we always had the attitude that, if anybody wants to try something, that's cool, you know? No one should have any inhibitions whatsoever. In the end, Peter agreed to let those tracks go on the album as they were. But deep down inside we all knew it was coming to an end."

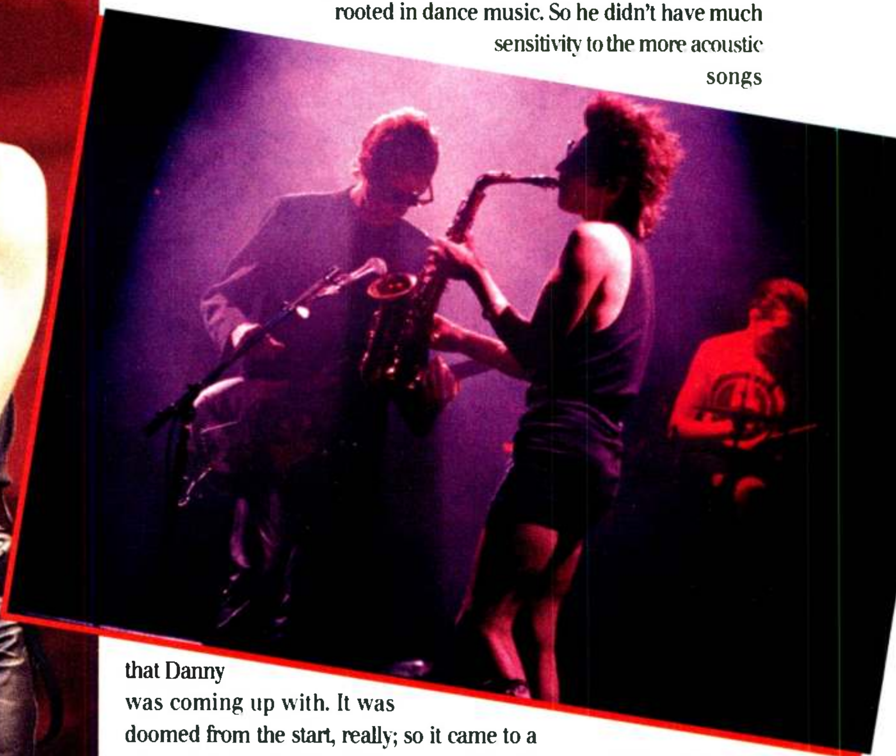
So Bauhaus disbanded. Murphy started a duo called Dali's Car with bassist Mick Karn from the group Japan, and later went solo. Ash and Haskins wound up together again, forming Tones on Tail with bassist Glenn Campling. Haskins: "I went to Danny and said, 'I'm lost and very insecure. Do you need a drummer?' He said okay."

David J went his own way, releasing solo albums and playing bass for Britain's idiom-hopping Jazz Butcher. "I think Danny and Dave needed to have a break from each other," says Haskins. "They've both got very strong personalities and they're at opposite extremes in their musical tastes and the way they form songs."

Indeed, as musical teams go, Ash and J make Lennon and McCartney look like identical twins. It's difficult to imagine two more dissimilar people. Ash is very much the British Rock 'n' Roll Guitarist, Androgynous Division—outgoing, flamboyantly moody at times, but generally affable. J, in contrast, seems like a sickly child who doesn't get outdoors much: quiet, pale and freckled, anemically thin, perpetually veiled behind thick shades. His songs often express disillusionment with pop stardom and a preoccupation with sin and salvation.

Mr. J lounges on the balcony of his hotel suite, dressed in a white T-shirt decorated with ornate Renaissance angels and '50s-style red devils. The balcony overlooks a lush, manicured garden. The conversation pivots to David's musical explorations after Bauhaus' demise. "It was very liberating. I was not very well off financially. But in a funny way, that was part of the liberation. I didn't have a contract, so you might say I was . . . *extremely* liberated."

During this same period, Tones on Tail produced two solid albums before musical differences split them up in 1985. Again, the issue was "openness," as Haskins explains. "Glenn Campling was rooted in dance music. So he didn't have much sensitivity to the more acoustic songs that Danny was coming up with. It was doomed from the start, really; so it came to a close. At that point, David, Danny and I had been socializing. We looked back on that last period of Bauhaus and realized that there was a special chemistry there. And that's what decided us to get back together again."



Haskins is almost painfully shy at times, but full of the perceptiveness and honesty that reticent types often have. He plays a stabilizing role in Love and Rockets' personal chemistry, anchoring the yin/yang interplay between Ash and J. "I think Danny and I are constantly trying to break new ground and be innovative. Whereas David is more steeped in a classical rock 'n' roll style. He's comfortable with that and it's fine. But if Dave comes in with a song that's a bit *too* classic rock 'n' roll, for instance, I'll try to push it in another direction, maybe by using some interesting sampled sounds rather than just playing high-hat, snare and bass drum."

The fact that David and Kevin are brothers doesn't seem to

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complicate the situation. The two have consistently downplayed their kinship, as can be gleaned from David's discarded surname. "I never really think of Dave as my brother," says Kevin. "He doesn't look like me, for a start. He's just a very good friend who's in the same band with me. We're very close to each other, although we're not the type of people who show it all the time. I suppose it's quite an English thing, where you hide your emotions."

What Kevin and David do have in common is that they've both recently become dads. While Ash is traveling solo on this tour, the brothers Haskins have their wives and kids in tow. "They're always moaning to me about being woken up at all hours by their children," Ash winces. "So I wrote a song about it. It's called 'Wake Up.'"

For the band's encores, Ash performs the campy, loungy number in rhinestone earrings and a slinky minidress, giving new meaning to the chorus: "It's a drag, drag, drag to be woken from your dreams."

"One day I wore a dress at the gig, for a joke. I just fancied doing it 'cause... I dunno, I do things like that sometimes. It definitely works, so we kept it in the show. And I do like the idea that young kids are seeing that. So that they're no longer hung up on the idea that you have to be 6'4" and a big macho guy to be a man, or that you have to have big tits and long blonde hair to be a woman. I'd like to break through those barriers—particularly in the Bible Belt areas of this country."

Is it any wonder that Love and Rockets is a band with an identity crisis? Their "anything goes" artistic creed has made their four-album catalog a study in stylistic schizophrenia. They're unabashed about showing their influences, often not bothering to transform what they've taken in any major way. It's only the giddy diversity of those influences that saves Love and Rockets from being dismissably derivative. To paraphrase one of their contemporaries, their minds are so open that anything can crawl right in. And it usually does: swamp blues, Beatlesque melodies, breezy jazz, arty atonality... you name it. The glammier side of '70s rock seems to be home base, though. Bowie and Gary Glitter get "quoted" a lot. And the band's fondness for fitting Eastern mystical lyrics over quietly strummed acoustic guitar chords evokes comparisons to Pink Floyd.

"We're not afraid to steal from wherever," Ash confirms. "But it's strange that people say we sound like Pink Floyd. We don't like them. I don't think any of us owns a Pink Floyd record, apart from the early Syd Barrett stuff. But it's the later Pink Floyd we're compared to, and we don't listen to that."

Aww come on, not even *Dark Side of the Moon*?

"Well, that one I have got. I mean, that is a classic record, I don't deny that. But after that record, I didn't bother keeping up on Pink Floyd at all."

Love and Products

DANIEL ASH's main guitar is a Fender Telecaster covered with two-inch squares of what appears to be tin foil. Onstage with Love and Rockets, he also plays a Fender Coronado, an ancient Hofner bass, an Ovation 12-string and Takamine acoustic 12. The electrics get plugged into two H&H IC100S heads with Marshall 4x12 cabinets. The guitars also go through a DOD chorus pedal, and Ash makes frequent use of an E-Bow. A 1957 Selmer Mark VI saxophone completes his onstage rig.

DAVID J plays the same early-'70s fretless Fender Precision bass he has used since Bauhaus—though it's been repainted countless times since then. The bass goes through Boss distortion and chorus pedals and into a Trace Elliot amp stack. David also plays an Ovation acoustic onstage and a Fender Tele, which goes through a Carlsboro jazz combo amp. He blows into Hohner Blues Harps and Lee Oskar harmonicas.

KEVIN HASKINS pounds a Tama drum kit consisting of a snare, 20" bass drum, 13" rack tom, plus 16" and 18" floor toms. He uses a Premier bass drum pedal, Zildjian crash, ride and high-hat cymbals and "a Chinese ride cymbal that comes from some way-out, Far Eastern, obscure place. It doesn't have any name, but it's brilliant." On the techno front, Kevin has C-ducer triggers on all his acoustic drums, plus two Roland PD-21 pads and one PC-31. Signals from these devices go into a Roland PD-16 pad-to-MIDI converter and from thence into an Akai S900 sampler equipped with a Hybrid Arts hard disk drive.

What do Pink Floyd's album-rock profundities have to do with Bauhaus' minimalist code? Very little indeed, which is just the point. The men of Love and Rockets seem to thrive on reacting against their previous work. "I remember after Bauhaus, when I was in Tones on Tail, we deliberately all wore white clothes," says Ash. "It was definitely a reaction against wearing all black in Bauhaus and against the whole dark atmosphere of that band."

Love and Rockets' ping-pong ball tendencies have given their recorded output an oddly cyclical quality. Their first and third albums (*Seventh Dream of Teenage Heaven* and *Earth Sun Moon*) are quiet, moody affairs, while their second and fourth (*Express* and *Love and Rockets*) are up-tempo and poppy. Not surprisingly, the two last-named records have had the most commercial success. Kevin Haskins has an interesting theory about the band's development.

"It seems to be happening in reverse for us, for some reason. Our first LP sounds like the sort of record bands make the fourth time around. Looking back on it, there's a certain pompousness, which usually happens as you go on. We've found our identity with this new album. We've finally produced a record where we're satisfied with every song. It seems more fulfilling than our other records."

Many would agree. The Rocketmen attribute the record's success to several factors. Where the often-tedious *Earth Sun Moon* was recorded in the sleepy Wales countryside, *Love and Rockets* was cut in wide-awake London. And for the first time the band had a full year to make an album. They spent about three months of that year in the studio. The balance was devoted to honing the songs on the road.

Also, Ash and J's disparate personalities seem to have fallen into perfect sync for the record. Danny's decision to write about motorcycles and leggy girls rather than the Bhagavad-Gita complements David's willingness to let his lifelong blues fixation emerge in songs like "Bound for Hell" and "**** (Jungle Law)."

It is to the band's credit that, given a full year to fritter away, they managed to maintain a hit-and-run spontaneity in the studio. In both melody and disposable groove orientation, "So Alive" evokes another key Love and Rockets influence, T. Rex—right down to Ash's Bolanesque, "written in the taxi en route to the session" lyric. It's easy to believe him when he says the song was penned and recorded in one day.

"I just had a riff, those two chords and the first line of the lyric. We did the rest in the studio. Quite a spontaneous moment. With any art form, those are the most potent moments. It hasn't got too much to do with hard work, art. I remember it was much the same feeling when we recorded 'Bela Lugosi's Dead' [Bauhaus' 1979 underground hit, their first]. We notice when we're re- [cont'd on page 92]

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Graham Nash

Member, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

Fostex Equipment: E-16 MTR, 4050 MIDI Remote, T-20 Headphones.

Recent Projects: Graham's recent solo album, "Innocent Eyes" (Atlantic) was recorded in Los Angeles, Hawaii and Massachusetts. Most of the compositions and arrangements were worked out at home on his E-16. The hit "Shadowland" from CSN&Y's latest album, "American Dream" (Atlantic), was recorded on the E-16.

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Musician/Composer

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Recent Projects: Nationally recognized band leader of "The Pat Sajak Show", Tom's latest albums are "Streamlines" and "Flashpoint" (GRP Records). He also scored the NBC TV Movie "American River", and the film "Sea of Love" starring Al Pacino features his distinctive sax.

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DON HENLEY

THE END OF THE INNOCENCE

There's the boys' bus and the girls' bus. At 11 a.m. the road crew and Cincinnati hotel porters started loading suitcases and guitars into the bellies of the two vehicles. At noon the members of Don Henley's band emerged blinking into the sun for the few steps from the lobby to the bus doors. The five male musicians greeted the four female musicians with smiles and cheery good mornings, and then segregated by sex. As the boys got onto their bus and out of sight of the girls, their smiles dropped and the moaning began. After last night's show several of them went off to a Kentucky disco to have some drinks and meet women. The female band members said they'd be sorry. They are. But they'll be damned if they'll give the women the satisfaction of showing it.

HEY, IF YOU WERE ACCUSED OF SEXISM, SATAN WORSHIP, SCREWING UP THE EAGLES AND INTRODUCING GARY HART TO DONNA RICE, YOU'D BE CRANKY TOO

***By* Bill Flanagan**

Photograph: Chip Simons

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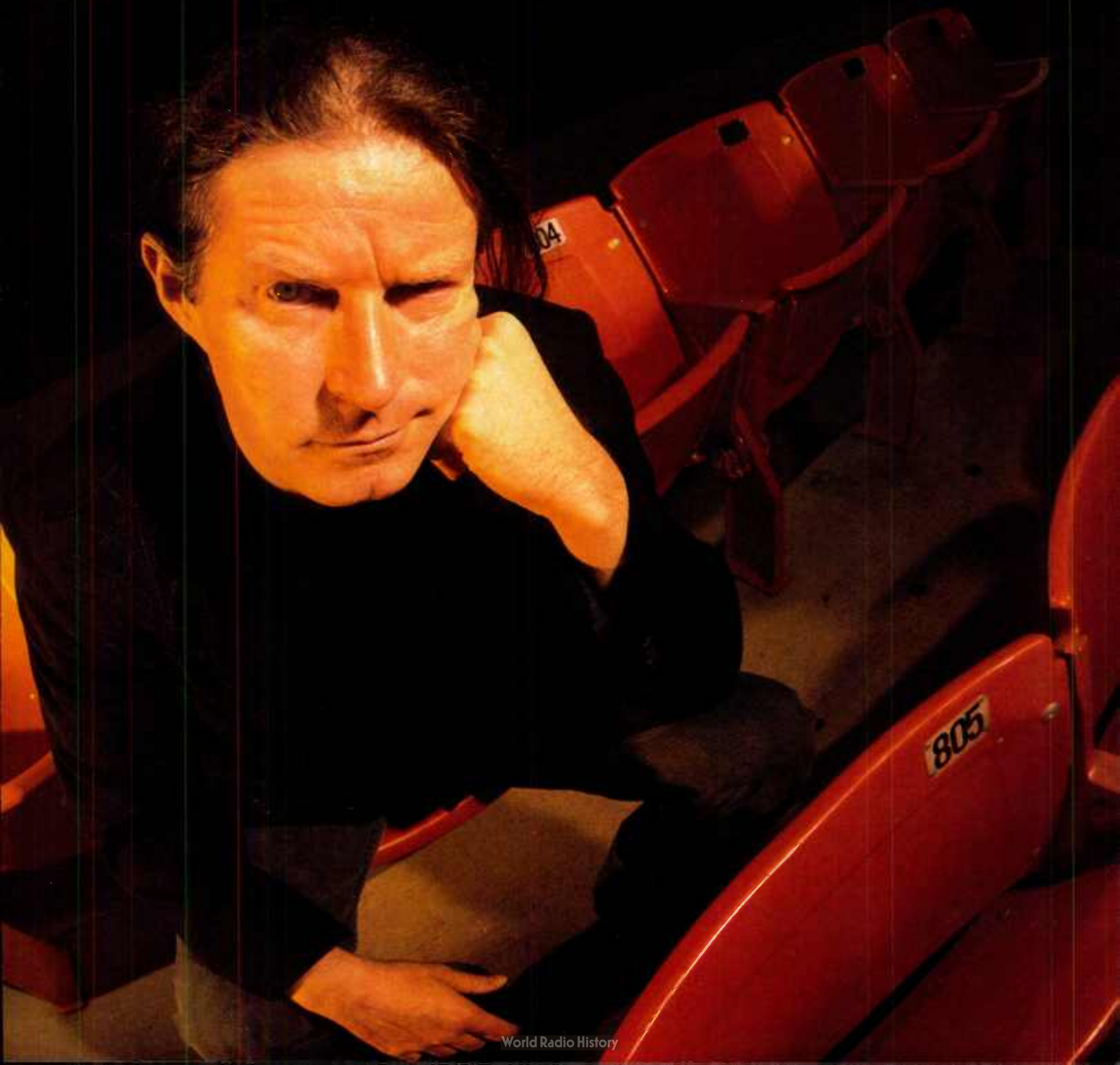

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At 12:30 Andy Slater, Henley's aide-de-camp, bounds onto the bus in good humor and little round sunglasses. "H. here yet?" he asks. The boys mumble no. Drummer Ian Wallace, an old pro, smirks and reminds the younger players that *he* went straight home to bed last night and now feels *great*. They don't need to hear that. A little before 1:00 a man in four layers of shirt and a backwards baseball cap emerges from the hotel, cradling a bottle of water and walking as if he just got belted in the belly. It's Don Henley, nursing a brutal hangover. He climbs the steps of the bus like he's walking on nails, greets his comrades and drops into the first seat. With the chief aboard, both buses pull out for the six-hour drive from Cincinnati to Detroit. Last night was the second show of what may turn into a very long tour. Says Henley as he looks for aspirin, "Well, at least I got *that* out of my system early."

In the 17 years since the Eagles had their first hit single, Don Henley has been accused of being both a hedonist and a moralist. Which seems hopelessly contradictory until you meet the guy. Then you realize he could be either or neither, depending on where you fix the center of your own compass. He's a man who alludes to the Biblical admonition that the body is a temple in order to joke, "It's my temple; if I want to tear it down I will." Henley carries himself like an ROTC lieutenant, or the high school gym teacher who terrifies the freshmen but the seniors love. He's firm, he's tough, he's probably a terror to work for. But he's also forthright and articulate, a man who knows just what he thinks and isn't afraid to tell you to your face. He's *The Great Santini* as a rock singer.

"I've been called a moralist, I've been called a curmudgeon," Henley says as the bus climbs an on-ramp. "I've been called a lot of things. When I write a song I try to write about something I know, about something that I've felt. Sometimes it's not even my point of view; sometimes I will write a song from a character's point of view. If people want to think that I'm angry, that's fine. I certainly don't ever want to be too complacent."

A Texan, Henley is a man's man, with all the contradictory implications that archaic compliment suggests. It means he can take hard questions without blinking, and doesn't censor his answers to project a hip image or to be liked. It also means that he can lament the effect he thinks feminism has had on America's domestic values: "People are so career-oriented in this country now, with the rise of feminism. Not only that, but people have made their careers their whole lives. That's the most important thing. Relationships suffer that way. The traditional family unit is not being cultivated as it once was. Women are getting out of the homes and going to work. People are traveling more. Especially in my business."

"BEING A DRUMMER HELPED ME SING RHYTHMICALLY, TO GET OUT OF MY OWN WAY."

He says this tour cost him 600 grand before the first show, and he spent over a million dollars of his own money making his new album. "That may seem a little extravagant, but it was all work, there was nothing frivolous about it, and I have every confidence that I'll get it all back and then some. I don't worry about that part of it." The past 17 years have undoubtedly left him with a nice financial cushion. Over the course of the Eagles' eight-year career Henley went from being Glenn Frey's second-in-command to star of the band—the distinctive, raspy soul voice of "Hotel California," "Best of My Love," "One of These Nights," "The Long Run" and "Life in the Fast Lane." After Frey split up the group in the early '80s, Henley was the only Eagle to surpass his work with the band, surprising cynics with a strong album called *I Can't Stand Still* (1982) which included the nasty, new-wavey hits "Dirty Laundry" and "Johnny Can't Read." Henley (who usually composes by writing lyrics and melodies over someone else's chord progression-and-rhythm track) had found a new partner in Danny Kortchmar—the L.A. session vet and longtime James Taylor sidekick. The two men brought out talents in each other that had been obscured in their previous work. In late 1984 the Henley/Kortchmar team produced a second album, *Building the Perfect Beast*, which included Henley's brilliant single "The Boys of Summer."

That was a big enough hit that the singer felt comfortable delaying the follow-up until the summer of 1989. He reappeared at prom time with "The End of the Innocence," a perfect high school graduation song—in spite of its grand metaphors about the decline of America—set to Bruce Hornsby's piano and drum machine. The album of the same title is another big hit, and now Henley's hit the road to work at getting his concert career back up to Eagles level.

The long bus ride gives Henley a lot of time to talk. As we roll through cities and corn fields, past farms and auto plants, the singer becomes more open, more feisty and more opinionated. At one point he looks up and sees Dayton, Ohio rolling by. "What the hell city is this? I hate this new architecture, it's really cold and heartless and soulless. I have a thing about architecture. It says something about where we've come, and it's frightening. There's a lot of these in L.A., temporary architecture for a temporary town." He squints out the window. "That's a nice old building right there."

Curmudgeon? Naaah. He just doesn't like to mess with success. He won't switch his method of writing from scraps of paper to a word processor: "I just won't do it 'cause I'm afraid that it will change something." He won't even let go of his tonsils. "I'm afraid it will change my voice. Even though my doctor's assured me that it won't. I've still got 'em. They've tried to take 'em several times and I've refused." Henley admits he rarely listens to records, does not *get* U2

Photograph: Ron Wolfson/LFI
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or R.E.M. or heavy metal or Simple Minds. He's disgusted by what he perceives as a rising intolerance on both the left and right, appalled at the popularity of religious fundamentalism and dismayed by the cheapening of politics and shallowness of the news media.

Henley has a lot to get off his chest and he doesn't mince words. Buckle your seat belts—this is life in the bus lane.

MUSICIAN: *Axl Rose sings with you on "I Will Not Go Quietly," but the real jaw-dropper was turning on the American Music Awards and seeing you playing drums with Guns N' Roses.*

HENLEY: That sparked arguments all across America. I got calls from friends of mine from L.A. to New York saying, "I'm having a fight with my wife! She says that was you with Guns N' Roses and I say it wasn't." I'd say, "Yep, it was me." That was a hoot, that was a lot of fun. I was flattered that they asked me. The way that came about was that Axl came down to sing on my record, and I got to know him a little bit. We're on the same label. A couple or three weeks later Danny and I were in the studio and the phone rang and somebody said it's Axl. He said, "I've got a proposition for you. You're either gonna think it's really crazy and stupid or you're gonna think it's okay. We gotta play the American Music Awards and our drummer's ill and we want you to play drums with us." I was completely taken by surprise. I turned to Danny and told him and he said, "Oh, you gotta do this, man, you have to do this!" I said, "Yeah, I guess I do, don't I?" I asked Axl what song it was—if it was one of those killer fast ones I didn't know if I could hack it. Although I guess I could have. He said, "No, no, it's a ballad. It's a song called 'Patience.'" I said, "Oh, piece of cake! I'll be there." It was a lot of fun. They weren't thrilled about being on television. They kind of resented being there and felt that they were a little bit out of place on a glitzy show like that. It really brought back a lot of feelings. I had a lot of empathy for them, because I remember feeling exactly the same way and it manifested itself as anger and swagger. From where I sit, being 42 years old looking back, I really feel for those guys with what they're going through right now. They have sold eight million copies of their first album! Now that will really spin your head around. Trying to cope with that sort of thing will put you through some major changes. I mean, the Eagles didn't sell anything like that with our first album. It did all right, we had some hit singles immediately. But coming off a first album like that and having to do your second album is a major burden. They're pretty controversial, as you well know. But I empathize with them, I hope they make it through all this stuff. I hope they get past it and realize things are going to be okay.

"I'm an extremist to some degree, but whatever I do, I can handle it."

You go through a lot of feelings when you first taste success like that. First you think you don't deserve it. That's one of the big problems I had. I'm always reminded of that Paul Simon song called "Fakin' It." You think that somebody's going to find out you aren't really as good as they think you are—even though you may be. Because it's so disproportionate—the amount of success and money you get just doesn't seem right somehow. So it flips you out for a while. Some people get through it all right and some don't. I hope they do.

MUSICIAN: *There's something about Guns N' Roses that's comparable to the Eagles in the '70s, and something else quite different. What's similar is the young, hottest band in L.A. coming out of nowhere, getting real big, and singing songs about the dark side of the*

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Hollywood dream.

HENLEY: Right. And some lifestyle similarities too, some recreational things.

MUSICIAN: *Well, that's none of my business. But what's real different is that Guns N' Roses come out of the rock tradition of total abandon. Welcome to the jungle, pal. They'll say anything, manners and morality don't come into it. You said before that people have accused you of being a moralist. That tag fits someone like Bono a lot more than you. It always seemed that the Eagles had one foot in each camp. You sang about, for example, "Life in the Fast Lane" and made it in some ways very compelling—but you always gave yourself an escape clause; there was a point in each song when you stood back and said, "But here's the moral..."*

HENLEY: Yeah. We tried to do that. That point gets missed a lot of the times. "Life in the Fast Lane" is mistaken as a song glorifying that type of lifestyle, when in fact it's not. I'm just trying to give others [*laughs*] the benefit of my experience. We tried to be careful. We got slammed for all kinds of stuff—being sexists, the word "misogyny" has come up, which I think is completely ridiculous. People are always looking for something to jab you for. It's very strange to me sometimes the way people interpret songs. There's a lot of nitpicking going on today in every facet of life. I mean from women's rights to smokers to non-smokers. There's just a lot of intolerance going on and a lot of "My way's the only way." But I'm digressing.

"Glenn just got tired of how serious and worrisome it all was."

MUSICIAN: *I always saw "Life in the Fast Lane" as lyrically a cautionary tale: "Don't do this."*

HENLEY: Yeah. That's the way we saw it.

MUSICIAN: *But the rock 'n' roll music, the sound of those guitars, has a very powerful, metamorphic effect on the lyrics.*

HENLEY: That's true.

MUSICIAN: *So you've got energy cranking, music that's saying "Faster! Harder! Faster!" powering phrases like "He had a nasty reputation as a cruel dude." The scene you set is very vivid and compelling. A lot of kids listen to all that excitement and "They had one thing in common, they were good in bed"—and when that song ends the kid is not going to say, "Gee, I've learned my lesson! I better stay away from all that stuff." The kid's going to say, "Where do I sign up?"*

HENLEY: Yeah, well, that's the risk you take. On the other side of the coin, those thrashing guitars and pounding drums get their attention—otherwise they wouldn't listen to the message at all. Sometimes you have to get 'em in the crotch first and then their hearts and minds will follow. Sometimes you have to put cheese sauce on broccoli. But yeah, that's the risk you take—that you'll be misunderstood and misinterpreted. A lot of songs are, by a lot of different artists. I've had some incredible misinterpretations. One guy came up to me one time and said, "I know what 'Desperado' is about. You're talking about the Symbionese Liberation Army, aren't you?" People misinterpret things all the time. I get letters from religious fanatics trying to save me all the time. That's just the risk you run. If you're in the entertainment industry you're going to be misunderstood by a certain segment of the population.

MUSICIAN: *But "Life in the Fast Lane" gets its juice from the dark things it portrays.*

HENLEY: Well, the Stones have made quite a career out of that, haven't they?

MUSICIAN: *Yes, and the Stones have not equivocated. If the Stones are going to sing about "Dead Flowers" they'll say, "I'll be in my basement room with a needle and a spoon." That's like Guns N' Roses.*

HENLEY: Yeah, and the Stones get away with it.

MUSICIAN: *Well, I think if you asked Keith Richards about that song he'd say, "Yeah, I* was *in a basement room with a needle and a spoon."*

HENLEY: Yeah, they just cop to it, they don't make any bones about it. And I think that's why they've gotten away with it all these years. They just take a fuck-you attitude. And get away with it. But the lyrics say, "Life in the fast lane surely make you lose your mind." It's fairly obvious. But everybody has a dark side. I'm not afraid of mine. If some people are afraid of theirs then that's their problem. I think you have to acknowledge it. Just like there's night and day. Read a book once by Hermann Hesse called *Demian* that was about that problem. He wrote about the god Abraxas, which means we all have God and the devil in us. So I think sometimes you have to take a good hard look at the dark side in order to understand it, in order to deal with it. There are those who don't want to look at it at all, they want to deny it. I don't think that's healthy. I'm not condoning living on the dark side. I'm sort of an Aristotelian when it comes to that. I think living the mean—the nice middle ground between deficiency and excess—is kind of the answer.

I have seen some friends and some of my favorite songwriters—and this is horrible—I have seen them get married or get straight and their music definitely was not as good. Now I suppose that would all depend on your frame of reference; their music might be just as good but it's definitely lost some kind of an edge. But that's all right, they made that choice. They chose to be happy in love or happy in life. I envy that in a way. In some sense I think they just said, "Screw it, if the songs aren't going to be better, that's okay." But I keep thinking that there must be a way to do all of it. And I'm going to try to do that. I was in a very happy relationship when I did my first and second solo albums, so it's possible. But I think it's a dilemma a lot of

Photograph: Ebet Roberts

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artists face. That choice. But surely it must not have to be an either/ or question.

I'm an extremist to some degree, but whatever I do, I can handle it. I've gotten to a point in my life where I'm through jumping off cliffs. Pretty much. I might jump off a few more low ones, but I'm not going to jump off any more high ones, I don't think. I've seen what I can do, I've tested my limits, I've pushed it about as far as I want to push it on the outside. I think I can go much further into my own mind and soul. I think that the space I have to conquer now is *inside* me.

As far as songwriting is concerned I think there are frontiers I've yet to cross. I think there's still room for improvement there. But as far as lifestyle and stuff, I've calmed down considerably. A lot of people in rock 'n' roll aren't nearly as crazed as the rumors about them. If they were they couldn't be doing the work they're doing. But people feed on those sorts of things. Those kinds of rumors make careers sometimes. Americans have a morbid curiosity. Look at this Elvis-is-alive phenomenon; that is the sickest thing I've ever seen. That's why I make the comparison to Elvis and Jesus in that song "If Dirt Were Dollars." That's the part of the American psyche I don't understand; that's what I think is dark, that offends every sense of propriety and dignity that I have. Yesterday Geraldo Rivera was digging up poor Marilyn Monroe again, speculating on whether she was murdered. I say let people die with dignity. It's an amazing thing that you can make more money dead than alive in this country. If I'm on an airplane and something goes wrong, I always turn to whoever's sitting next to me and say, "Well, we're gonna sell a hell of a lot of records now." Instant immortality.

MUSICIAN: *The dangers of celebrity have been a theme of yours from "Certain Kind of Fool" to "New Kid in Town" to "Dirty Laundry."*

HENLEY: We were chronicling the end of our celebrity from the time we got it. Which is why that article in the Sunday *New York Times* by Stephen Holden was one of the stupidest things I've ever read. It trotted out the tired old hoo-hah about California hedonism and how the dream has gone sour. It was an article about me and Jackson and Ronstadt and Joni, and about how we used to glorify California. We never glorified California! We were running it down from the beginning. It was the old crap about the California lifestyle and the California hedonism. Those are three of the hardest-working people I know! If living in California and making records is hedonism, then I'm sorry. It was a strange article. How'd I get on that?

MUSICIAN: *We were talking about your songs about the misery of fame. "New Kid in Town" said...*

HENLEY: Here today and gone tomorrow, enjoy it. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may because this doesn't last very long. We were always acutely aware of that, that fame is fleeting and that you are built up only to be torn down or self-destruct. They'll do it for you or you'll do it yourself. So we were always intensely aware of that and wrote about it quite a bit. And sure enough... [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Does Glenn Frey's current career weird you out? All through the Eagles you two were linked in the public mind. Then your first solo albums were simultaneously released and you took a big step forward while Glenn went to "Party down in party town."*

HENLEY: Well, I'm certainly not here to sit in judgment of how Glenn wants to handle his career or live his life or anything else. I think I understand him. I think you could maybe draw a parallel to Paul McCartney. I think Glenn just got tired of how serious and worrisome it all was and he just wanted to have a good time. I really think he'd had a belly full of it by the time the Eagles were over, and I think he just wanted to relax and enjoy it. And if that's his way of enjoying it—fine. Whether I agree with him or whether I like it or not, I'm not here to pass judgment on what he chooses to do. I mean, the inevitable comparisons come up all the time, but I respect him. He taught me a lot about songwriting and arranging and production.

"I DON'T WANT TO GO OUT THERE BY MYSELF! I'M A BAND GUY."

MUSICIAN: *When the Eagles started he was the lead singer.*

HENLEY: Yeah. It was his band, pretty much.

MUSICIAN: *But by the last three albums he only sang lead alone on one song on each album.*

HENLEY: Yeah. He was very generous in that respect. He would push another guy up to the front of the line and say, "You carry the ball for a while and I'll just sit back here and block." He was a good team player that way, a good captain. He was very team-oriented. I think that's one thing he eventually got tired of. He felt like he was sacrificing a lot of his creativity to placate other people's egos and he wasn't getting enough for himself. I can certainly understand that too. We had a hard time keeping everybody happy. There were five of us and we were trying to be as democratic as we possibly could, although it's virtually impossible to do that, as anybody who was ever in a band will tell you. But we spent a lot of time and energy that could have been creative energy just trying to keep the band together and trying to keep everybody happy and deal with everybody's emotional problems. There was a lot of hand-holding and pep talks and rapping. Just a lot of energy expended that could have gone into songwriting. He got tired of that and so did I. I got an ulcer because of that crap during *Hotel California*. But I wouldn't change a thing if I could do it over. I'm very grateful for that whole experience; it took me further than I ever expected to go.

MUSICIAN: *If Glenn's creativity was so compromised by having to*

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placate the Eagles, once he got out on his own I'd think he would have wanted to create something really good—rather than goof around.

HENLEY: He wanted to do something he enjoyed and he wanted to play the kind of music he enjoyed, which is rhythm and blues, soul music, Memphis music—he loves that stuff. I think we're all better off in groups, we're all better off when we collaborate, and he and I just happened to be a great combination.

MUSICIAN: *I'm surprised it was such a strain to keep everybody happy in the* Hotel California/Long Run *days—'cause by then Randy and Bernie, the other two original members, had left and you and Glenn had hired the three new guys. Why didn't you just run it like Steely Dan—say, "Okay, it's our band—you guys do as you're told."*

HENLEY: Well, it was for a while, and then there was another uprising, fueled by some guitar players. I could go wild. The group once again split up into factions. There's always going to be rebellion against authority. And then in the end even Glenn and I were not necessarily on the same side of the fence, although the split in the group was certainly not primarily because of a rift between Glenn and myself. There were rifts all over the place between all kinds of people. But yeah—it was great there for a minute and then the same old demons reared their ugly heads. It happens every time. The more you give, the more they want.

"GET 'EM IN THE CROTCH FIRST, THEN THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS WILL FOLLOW."

MUSICIAN: *Of course it must also be a result of bringing very powerful people into the band—taking Joe Walsh, who was already a star, and putting him in the Eagles.*

HENLEY: Yeah. When we brought Joe in he definitely helped the band. But I think Joe had the attitude that *he* was doing *us* a favor. In fact, his career was in really bad shape at that time. He wasn't getting anywhere. It was a shot in the arm for his career, certainly, and he was a little reluctant about it. I think he was almost ashamed of it for a while; I think he would make excuses for it. Then later on he became a little more gracious about it, but he always kept his little corner, his career, separate. And he caused some trouble; he definitely caused some trouble. We used to laugh and say about Joe, "He's an interesting bunch of fellas."

I understand he's on the Ringo tour and he's doing "Life in the Fast Lane," which is a source of some aggravation to me because I don't feel like it's his to do. He wrote the opening guitar riff [*hums first 10 notes of "L.I.T.F.L."*]. That's all he wrote. Frey and I wrote the rest of it and I sang it on the record. So given that he has his own career and he has his own legacy of songs, I don't quite understand why he's not doing his songs instead of what I consider to be one of mine. Like I said, he's an interesting bunch of fellas.

MUSICIAN: *When Walsh sang "Life's Been Good" on the* Long Run *tour he changed the lyrics to, "I'm making records, [Elektra chairman] Joe Smith he can't wait/He writes me letters, tells me I'm late," which—after how long Elektra begged for that album—was kind of funny.*

HENLEY: Oh yeah. He was *funny*. He's got a great sense of humor.

MUSICIAN: *When you look back at* The Long Run *now, was it worth the grief and time it took to make?*

HENLEY: No. I don't think it's a very good record at all. It depresses me to listen to it. Although I did hear "Teenage Jail" on the radio the other day and I laughed out loud in the car. At that point we were just saying to hell with it. We were so miserable making that album that it actually got funny at one point. Our humor got very dark and very sick and that's how "Teenage Jail" and "The Greeks Don't Want No Freaks" ended up on the record. I heard "The Greeks Don't Want No Freaks" the other day, too, and I thought that was funny. But by and large I don't think that's a very good record. We didn't have a good time making it, we were sick and tired of each other, we'd been on the road. We were just burned out. We needed a vacation. We needed to take some time off and away from each other and we didn't do it. We just kept going until we burned out. 'Cause there was that pressure from record companies and ourselves to follow up *Hotel California*: "Give us another one of those!" You can't do that again. I think we realized we had peaked. I think in the back of our minds we knew we had reached that zenith that all groups reach. We had seen our finest hour. We were creatively and spiritually exhausted and really had nothing to say.

MUSICIAN: *Would you consider writing with Glenn again?*

HENLEY: [*pauses*] I made that offer a few weeks ago. I think his answer was, "Let's just keep in touch, see what happens. You're gonna be busy with your tour and album." [*sighs*] The reason I made the offer is because Elektra is going to put out another repackage of our greatest hits, whether we like it or not. So I was just trying to make it worthwhile for the consumer by putting a new song on there. 'Cause they're gonna do it anyway. Don Felder's been going back through the vaults. We were not a band like the Allman Brothers, where there's a bunch of gems or blues classics lying around. Anything we did that was any good at all went on a record. There aren't any undiscovered pearls. Felder went through the tapes for weeks to find out what we already knew—that there's nothing back there. So they're just going to come up with some kind of new cover and some new photos, I guess, and put this thing out. Which I wish they wouldn't do. It would be nice if there were a new song on there. But Glenn's just not in the mood.

MUSICIAN: *Too bad.* The Eagles Greatest Hits Volume 2 *only had two albums to draw from anyway.*

HENLEY: Yeah, I know—it wasn't much of a greatest hits album. It

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was a big rip-off as far as I'm concerned. Glenn just does not want to go back. Under any circumstances. He's got a whole new life now. Which is not to say he won't change his mind at some point in the future, but for right now, no. So okay, fine, I'm not going to worry about it. I'm busy, too.

MUSICIAN: *In songs like "Little Tin God" and "Dirty Laundry" you've taken the position that some things people do are just nobody else's business, and some things the media exploits. What is fair game? What are the limits of decency?*

HENLEY: Not only privacy, but just human dignity. I was brought up to respect the dignity of another person no matter what their circumstances or their level in life. We have become an absolute bottom-line society, and the media's a prime example of this. Everything is about the bottom line and nothing in between. It's about ratings, it's about money, it's about beating the other guy. It's every man for himself. And that is a very dangerous thing. I think we're still in the Me Decade. You see all these corporate takeovers, just a lot of ruthless, grasping behavior. With no concern for the community as a whole, the nation as a whole. There's no sense of brotherhood, of the future, of what kind of legacy we're going to have. There's no sense of what this behavior leads to.

And the media is just as sick as any facet of society in my mind. I am very disturbed in particular by the status of this thing we call *celebrity*. And what it has become. I was very upset when John Lennon was killed, still haven't really gotten over it. This little girl Rebecca Schaeffer got shot in Hollywood the other day—that is so pointless and so useless. People in the entertainment industry it seems actually have *less* protection under the law than other citizens. My life has been threatened on several occasions. One night a disturbed guy called me up. He was doing a lot of drugs and went off the deep end. He lived in my neighborhood, he started fixating on me, camping in the yard outside my house. One night he called and said, "I'm coming over to get ya!" I called the cops. They said, "Well, there's nothing we can do until he gets you." I said, "Well, that makes a lot of sense! I'll call ya when I'm dead!"

I'm still here and he's doing okay now, fortunately. But we're citizens and tax-payers just like everybody else; we need to be afforded some kind of protection. I don't want to change the constitution or anything but I think they ought to make it a little more difficult for people to track other people down. All this lunatic who shot Rebecca Schaeffer did was call up a private detective agency in Tucson, Arizona and pay them to get her address. All they did was send a dollar to [*a government agency*] and get her address. Anybody can track down anybody! It shouldn't be that easy. There are books going around with my home address in them. "Write to the stars at their homes." I have an office, the address is on the album covers, people can write to me, and generally I'll write to them. But I do not like getting mail at my home. I figure I owe my audience this: I owe my fans the best songs I can write, the best records I can make and the best performances I can give. And other than that I feel like my life is my own. I get a lot of fan mail from very disturbed kids every week. There's some real sick people out there. And it's getting worse.

The line between *Time* magazine and *People* magazine and between *People* magazine and the tabloids is growing very thin. The media's becoming very sensationalistic and that bothers me. Their rationalization is that people *want* this kind of stuff. "Look what a market there is for this!" Maybe we should give people what they *need* rather than what they want. I don't think it's healthy for the society at large, I think it breeds a kind of mentality that's really very dangerous. It says to me that people's own lives are so empty and so miserable that they have to live a fantasy life through somebody else. And that's extremely unhealthy.

Even conversation has become a spectator sport! I watch CNN pretty much all day; I keep it on in the background and information drips into my consciousness. And I watch the network news and the local news and "20/20." I think there should be more shows like that; we just get the surface of the news. We don't get much analysis. The coverage of political events is just ridiculous. It will puzzle me till the day I die why Reagan is known as the Great Communicator. We're living in an age of style over substance and form over content, which is a theme I deal with on this album a lot, and have dealt with in the past a lot.

"I THINK JOE WALSH HAD THE ATTITUDE *HE* WAS DOING *THE EAGLES* A FAVOR."

MUSICIAN: *I always thought it was a gonzo footnote that one of the Eagles [Bernie Leadon] was dating Reagan's daughter.*

HENLEY: Well, so did we. But I actually like Patti, we get along now. I sort of resented her being around at the time because I thought she was butting in. I mean, she co-wrote a song ["I Wish You Peace"] and he *insisted* that song go on the album. We didn't want it on there, but we put it on anyway, another gesture to keep the group together. Then I read somewhere that she said, "I write songs for the Eagles." Which could have been taken out of context. But she's basically a good person. I understand her more now than I did then, and she understands me and that's all water under the bridge as far as we're concerned. She's an interesting girl. She's had quite a life. It's a very tough position, it's not an easy life to live.

MUSICIAN: *The Eagles played benefits for Jerry Brown when he ran for president in '76. You're friendly with Gary Hart. You do more than read about politics in the paper.*

HENLEY: I know a lot of people. I know a lot of politicians. I still think Gary Hart's one of the finest political minds this country's ever produced. It's just very unfortunate that he got in this trouble, because he would have been a great leader. The man is a great thinker and a very bright individual. A decade or two ago it probably wouldn't have mattered much. But the press has got this *wilding* mentality, this pack mentality. I really don't think what a man does in the bedroom has much to do with his abilities at leadership. I know that people will immediately jump in and say, "Well, it has to do with his character and decision-making abilities and his morals." I don't think it necessarily follows.

I mean, from Thomas Jefferson to FDR to Eisenhower to Kennedy, it's a long tradition. There's a certain type of men that make good leaders, and that kind of behavior is part of the personality profile. It's been true throughout recorded history. The personality profile of great and powerful leaders includes that sort of behavior! So what do you want? Do you want some perfect android to run this country? We're not going to get anybody decent, nobody in his right mind would want this job. So the quality of our politicians, I'm afraid, is going to continue to sink. Because who wants that kind of scrutiny? Who wants to live under that bright a light? Nobody with any con-

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cern for his dignity or his life.

MUSICIAN: *But you are part of the media, too. Your voice comes through the radio—and on this album you sing about the TV preacher caught in the motel room in "Little Tin God," you sing about Donna Rice in "If Dirt Were Dollars." Does she not have every right to hear that song and say, "Why can't Don Henley just leave me alone?"*

HENLEY: First of all, the song is not about Donna Rice. You can allude that from it if you want to; it's about two or three different people I've met, it's a composite character. It's more about a set of events, the scandal in general, than anybody in particular. I mean, I've met Fawn Hall, too, for that matter. Who is one of the most confrontational and argumentative people I have ever met. I mean, the girl has really got something to prove.

But Donna put me through quite a lot of aggravation. Looking back on it now I'm a little more sympathetic than I was then, but I really thought the way she chose to exploit the whole situation was kind of unfortunate. And my role in the thing was blown so completely out of proportion that I was fairly indignant about it. I thought, "Here they go again! I'm getting pounced on again and I really didn't do anything." I mean, I knew this girl, I dated her three or four times. She was at my house, he was at my house. I don't know who introduced them; I think [Warner Bros. Records president] Mo Ostin did. But I got credit for it. Then I had reporters swarming my property, taking pictures of my house. *Time* magazine got my home phone number in L.A. and called me at home and I was completely indignant. I said, "Okay, I'll tell you what you can print! You can print this: 'This is another case of the American news media as proctologists, as America stares up its own asshole.'" They said, "Well, I think you're being a little hard on us, aren't you?"

But I just wanted to be left alone. Judge Louis Brandeis, who was a Supreme Court justice Brandeis University is named after, said, "We all have the right to be left alone." I demand that right.

What difference did it make who introduced whom? It's funny how somebody published a rumor that I introduced them and the rest of the media took it as gospel. Nobody ever called me and asked me! Fact-checking is a relic of the past as far as I can see. So I wrote a letter to *The New Republic* and said, "In the end what fucking difference does it make who introduced them? Pun intended." *They* took the actions. There was even a rumor going around that I was paid to set them up. I thought that was really a beauty. I just don't want to be involved in that stuff; I don't want that kind of attention. My skin has gotten a lot thicker.

MUSICIAN: *Sure, but you see my point—you take shots at famous people, too. The TV preacher in the motel room, and Reagan.*

HENLEY: Yeah. In "Little Tin God." Again, that song is about more than preachers, it's about Reagan, too. It's about heroes with feet of clay, it's about these authority figures that we hold up on pedestals and we really don't know anything about. I think I have a right to shoot at Jimmy Swaggart 'cause of what he said about rock 'n' roll. I mean, he's one of our worst enemies. My feelings about preachers and about organized religion go way back. My father didn't go to church at all, my father sat home on Sunday morning and drank beer and washed clothes. I was baptized Southern Baptist, basically out of pressure and out of fear. I don't care for preachers much. Not the kind I grew up with anyway, the Bible-beating, fire-and-brimstone, "You're all going to hell!" kind of preachers. Organized religion is kind of a puzzlement to me, too. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. I think it's warped a lot of people. I think it's done us more harm than good.

"SOME OF MY FAVORITE SONGWRITERS GOT MARRIED & THE MUSIC WAS NOT AS GOOD."

MUSICIAN: *Unless they're telling the truth and they really do deliver eternal life. If that's true then the grief is worth it.*

HENLEY: That's fine. I am disturbed about the self-righteous mentality of the American Christian community and the Americanization of God. God is not an American! I don't like people who wrap themselves in the flag or hide behind the Bible and say, "This is the truth." I think fanaticism is the most dangerous thing in the world, whether it's religious or political or patriotic or anything else. So yeah, I took a shot at a preacher in the song. I'll cop to it. Sure did. Took a shot at him, took a couple of shots at Reagan. And may do it again. It's an easy target. But when I think about it, I'm not so much taking a shot at them as I am the people who worship them. What I'm really saying is "Look to yourselves, don't be sheep." I've tried to say that a lot on my records: Hero worship is not a healthy thing.

There's another thing that I find laughable and pathetic and even frightening at the same time. There's a rumor going around—and has been for years—that the Eagles were a satanic band and *Hotel California* was a satanic album and there's actually a picture on the album of either Satan or Anton LaVey, who I understand is the head of the Church of Satan in San Francisco. I think this was all started by some country preacher from Texas or Oklahoma who wrote it in a book as if it were fact. This rumor has grown, it's taken on a life of its own, and I get letters about it fairly often. On the inside of the cover there are a lot of people standing around, people we cast. There's a girl up in the balcony. She was a black model, a light-skinned black girl. I think she was drunk or something; she had a very sharp-featured face, prominent features. And she's leaning forward with her arms spread like wings. The picture is not reproduced that well, especially as time goes by. And people think this black girl is the devil or Anton LaVey. Now in America at the end of the twentieth century

 Photograph: Chip Simons

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it completely boggles the mind that that kind of thinking and that kind of superstition still persists! I don't know what to make of it; I don't know whether to laugh at it or be upset by it or what. But I don't think it bodes well for the future of this nation when people are running around like this was the middle ages.

MUSICIAN: *Let's talk about the song "The End of the Innocence." For all its political and sociological ramifications, I really like it as a kind of high school graduation, first romance song.*

HENLEY: You can take it that way if you want. I tried to write it on all those levels so you can take it any of those ways. The song has the sweet romantic side to it but it's also a metaphor for the nation. It's a metaphor for America as a broken home. The first verse is your normal American broken family, where the father leaves. I've met a lot of people over the last few years from broken homes, where in most cases the father took a walk. It really does irreparable damage. I'm fortunate in that my mother and father stayed together. They might not have if I'd never been born, but they toughed it out until they got too old to fight about it anymore. So that's what the first verse is basically about. We're brought up with fairy tales read to us and happily ever after, and life is not necessarily that way. Then the second verse is about father figures politically—the President or what have you. Again, these people we look up to as being strong and wise aren't necessarily strong and wise, and they can betray us too. I believe Mrs. Reagan actually refers to Mr. Reagan as "Daddy" on occasion.

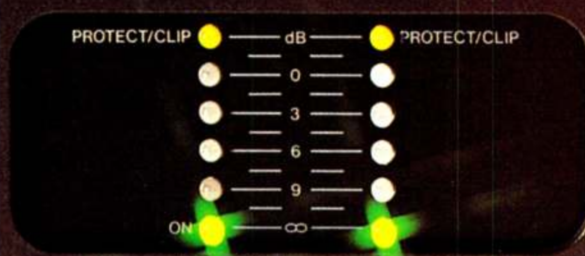
"Defense" in this song means several things. Defense in the sense of getting a divorce lawyer, defense in the sense of the girl defending her virginity, defense in the sense of all our military arsenals, the Pentagon. The second verse deals with that, nuclear armaments; the one line I got from the Bible, "beating plowshares into swords," could be interpreted as saying we're taking the money that should be given to the farm crisis and spending it on weapons.

The last verse is longing for the time when this was a simpler country and most people lived on farms and in rural areas. We had small-town values and small-town morals, and now that's disappearing. When I say, "Who knows how long this will last," it could be talking about the relationship with the girl, or this country that we call "the noble experiment."

When I say, "I know a place where we can go that's still untouched by men," I'm talking about love and romance. We haven't ruined that yet, although God knows we've tried. I'm making a metaphor between a beautiful place in nature—a meadow perhaps—and the sanctity of love. That's all we have left, ultimately. So you can listen to it that way, fine with me; I'd prefer to listen to it that way myself.

MUSICIAN: *The first time I heard that song on the radio I thought the rhythm track was pretty cheesy. Then I started liking it. Was that a click track that you decided to keep?*

HENLEY: It is kind of cheesy. That's all Bruce [Hornsby] and his little drum machine, just the way he wrote it in the living room. Same drum sound. I had to argue with Danny to leave it cheesy. Danny wanted to put a big snare drum on there going *wop!* I went, "No, no, it's supposed to sound like people are [cont'd on page 111]



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WORKING MUSICIAN

NES GET THEIR YA-YA'S BACK

Producers Chris Kimsey & Mick Jagger Talk About the Making of *Steel Wheels*

By Richard Buskin

"I LEARNED AN AWFUL LOT working with the Stones—about music, about feel, about leaving spaces and knowing when *not* to play, and about performance . . . I've done that part and I enjoyed it, but I don't want to go back to it."

Photographs: Alexandra Burke; Michael Putland/Retna (inset)

Thus producer Chris Kimsey, at the end of 1986, swore he'd never again work with the Rolling Stones. He'd spent a good part of the late '70s and early '80s engineering the *Some Girls* and *Emotional Rescue* albums, and co-producing *Tattoo You* and *Undercover*. And he was less than enthralled with whiling away more of his life in the studio, witnessing the band's endless writing, rehearsals and jam sessions, which usually started around 2 a.m. No longer, Kimsey vowed, would he spend a year recording and mixing a Rolling Stones album.

Cut to Montserrat, a little over two years later, and there is Chris happily ensconced with the Stones at AIR Studios recording *Steel Wheels*, the band's first album since 1986's *Dirty Work*. The mood is right, the collaboration's working, matters are progressing at a relatively brisk pace. So what happened?

Just before Christmas 1988, when Jagger first approached Kimsey about co-producing the new record, both men were working in Australia: Jagger on a solo tour, and Kimsey in the studio with Noiseworks.

Kimsey was agreeable, provided that Jagger and Keith Richards would compose all of the songs and fine-tune them with the rest of the band in pre-

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Chris Kimsey:

"One of the enjoyable things about this record has been the attitude of 'We've got four days to do five mixes? No problem!' A mix used to take all week."

production. Recording sessions could last no longer than three months. Stacking the odds in Kimsey's favor was a tight schedule, demanding that the new record be delivered in time for a fall tour of the States.

"I was really glad to be back working with the band again, after having been apart for so long," says Kimsey, recanting his earlier vow. "We'd all gone through a lot of changes. One of the most enjoyable things about this record has been the attitude of, 'Okay, we've got four days to do five mixes. We'll get that done, no problem!' And that's great. Whereas on the other records a mix could take all week. It's definitely been one of the most exciting albums that I've worked on since *Some Girls*."

"It was good to have that pressure," asserts Mick Jagger, "although I could do with a month off now, rather than actually getting involved with the tour! I hope the album doesn't reflect that things were done too much in a hurry. You've got to compromise a little bit, but I think you've got a lot of good energy there."

Chris Kimsey's professional relationship with the Stones stretches back beyond even the *Some Girls* album to 1971, when he assisted Glyn Johns on *Sticky Fingers*. Having joined Olympic Studios in South London as a tape-op-cum-tea-boy at the age of 16 in 1967, he also worked with Johns on records by Led Zeppelin, Delaney and Bonnie, the Eagles and Leon Russell before undertaking his own engineering assignments with Billy Preston, Spooky Tooth, Ten Years After, Bad Company and Peter Frampton.

In addition to the Stones, Kimsey has produced Escape Club, the Cult, Marillion, Psychedelic Furs, Killing Joke, Noiseworks and, recently, Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, & Howe. It was this ever-expanding track record, together with the success of their previous collaborations, that played a major part in his being requested to co-produce the latest Stones disc.

"He was still very much in the swim of things," says Jagger, "and when I saw him in Australia it sort of reminded me, you know, because sometimes people are out of sight, out of mind. I thought that as we had to do the record quickly we didn't have the time to get acquainted with someone new; that sort of period in which you're dusting off rough edges with people and getting to know them. Chris was just there at the right time and everyone seemed to think it was a good idea, so that was how it happened. I think he's done a very good job."

Mick and Keith composed about 50 songs —some incomplete—during a six-week period in Barbados. "Keith and I wrote a lot together without anyone around," explains Jagger. "There were a couple of things that we already had, but most of the stuff was done in this very compressed time period: January and February of this year.

"I'd get up in the morning and have breakfast and just go to it. For tools I had [a Korg] M1 synthesizer and some other keyboards, a couple of guitars with different tunings, very simple drum machines and some microphones. Keith really only played guitar most of the time—he didn't do a lot on keyboards on this, as he sometimes does.

"I think I do everything that it is possible to do in terms of writing the songs. I mean sometimes Keith and I would sit with two guitars and just play and get certain licks. He would have a lick that would counter what I was playing, and if he would come up with a certain riff I would counter that. Sometimes I wouldn't play guitar at all; I would just sit there and clap hands and make up top lines. Sometimes I would just get a drum groove going and sing to it, and sometimes I played keyboards and just had a bass drum going. There again, I might have a lyric idea to start with and I would then come to the melody, and on other occasions they'd come up at the same time. So I wouldn't get stuck in one way of doing it, and you get different things happening that way.

"Then we ran it straight to cassette, because I didn't want to mess around. I've given up messing around with four-tracks, where you spend all of your time trying to make little records and not enough time actually creating.

"Then later on the next person we got in was Matt Clifford. We would do our songs and he would get keyboard parts, and also by that point it would be our job to arrange them, to get them down to some sort of order and size."

The Glimmer Twins enlisted Kimsey's help in choosing the strongest numbers, and then had Ronnie Wood, Charlie Watts and Bill Wyman join them to begin routining the material. Six weeks were spent recording the band—including Clifford on

Mick Jagger:

"I was afraid we were going to be stuck in this 'reruns of the Rolling Stones' groove, so I said, 'Look, don't let's limit ourselves.'"

keyboards—playing live at AIR in Montserrat. Chuck Leavell later overdubbed more keyboards.

"It was a really tight rhythm section," says Kimsey. "Mick played a lot of guitar and a lot more harmonica on this album, which is

Photographs: Alexandra Burke (top); Michael Putland/Retna

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great because he's a wonderful harmonica player. Not only does he play it, but he also gets all of those breathy noises that the old blues harp players used to make, and I don't know anyone who can play like that."

Jagger would play the harmonica and lay down guide vocals while the rest of the band played live, undeterred by the inherent problems of crossing over between singing and blowing on the mouth-organ.

"One of my main things has always been that people should play as much of the song as they know, in order to get the right feel," says Kimsey. "So we did have a bit of cross-over leakage, but we used that to our advantage. It had a really nice sound."

Three or four tracks would be recorded in succession before embarking on overdubs and then proceeding to some more tracks. This meant that rather than getting stuck in a rut, there was a continuous flow of music for the six-week recording period. "Most of the selected takes were only like take three, or sometimes even the first take," says Kimsey, "and so it would never take more than about three hours to lay down each rhythm section."

While Bill Wyman spent a couple of days in Antigua, announcing his engagement to Mandy Smith to the press, Ron Wood took over on bass for "Break the Spell" and "Hold on to Your Hat." "Ronnie plays a lot more notes," says Kimsey with a smile. "He plays it almost like a lead guitar and it works. It's very fast and very melodic; a lot of movement. It sounds great and it's a nice contrast to Bill. I just hope that Bill can do the same thing on those songs on the tour! [*laughs*]

"Bill knocked me out on one track in particular, called 'Terrifying.' His bass playing was so lively yet steady, and it just pounds you away. I think the bass on this album is even louder than on most of the other ones, and a lot of that is to do with Michael Brauer, who is wonderful at mixing bottom-end."

One track not recorded live was "The Speed of Love," which required an Eastern sound and chord structure. Jagger recorded a basic riff on the Korg M1, then he and Matt Clifford programmed some drum and percussion sounds into a C-Lab Notator, and this was taken to Morocco, where an AMS Audiofile was used to record the Joujouka tribe. Thereafter Charlie Watts overdubbed drums, Lisa Fischer, Sarah Dash and Bernard Fowler sang backing vocals, Ron Wood played an acoustic bass and Keith Richards proved adept at playing not only a 12-string but also a bicycle wheel!

"Mick was writing the song in Barbados and he was playing the riff," Kimsey recalls. "Keith walked in and there was a bicycle in the room, so he picked it up and started spinning the wheel and tapping it, and it sounded fantastic! So we kept that idea in and recorded a bicycle! We messed around with a stick, a brush, a spoon, a knife—quite a few bits and pieces—to hit the spokes, and recorded it all with a Sanken microphone. Keith's very proud of that credit!"

Kimsey was somewhat concerned that recording the band digitally—Charlie Watts' drumming in particular—might result in too clean a sound, but he need not have worried. The huge dynamic range enabled by digital meant that any kind of drum sound, from a soft tap to a very hard hit, was perfectly captured. "With analog, tapping the drums you'd hear the tape hiss more than anything else, and then when he'd lay into it you'd just hear distortion or compression. The digital really worked, and it was wonderful!"

Kimsey also thought that because Watts had not played with the band for quite some time, sampling might be required. His fears proved unfounded. "Charlie was like hammering everyone to death in the studio. I mean, he played rock-solid all day, and Keith would come in and say, 'Wow, man, we're bloody knackered! Charlie doesn't stop. He's on the money every time!'

"When they were rehearsing in Barbados I phoned up to see how things were going and I spoke to Charlie. He said, 'I hear you've been working with Bill Bruford. What's he like, what's he got?' I told him Bill's got a

Chris Kimsey:

"Charlie Watts was hammering everyone to death in the studio. Keith would come in and say, 'Wow man, we're bloody knackered! Charlie doesn't stop. He's on the money every time!' "

Simmons drum kit, a programmed computer, everything, and Charlie said, 'Well, I've bought some new equipment.' I said, 'Oh, really? What did you get?' He said, 'I bought a new pair of sticks and a new snare head.' That was his new equipment!

"I remember on *Emotional Rescue* I sat down at the drum kit and I was looking at the skin, and there was all this confetti. He said, 'Oh yeah, that's from the Hyde Park gig.' The confetti had just trapped itself in the rim, and with the drum never having been cleaned it had remained there since 1969!"

Kimsey constantly likens the new album to *Some Girls* in terms of the quality of material. He feels that the playing of all of the band members—as well as the singing voices of both Jagger and Richards—is stronger than ever. The opportunity to

Photograph: Dimo Safari

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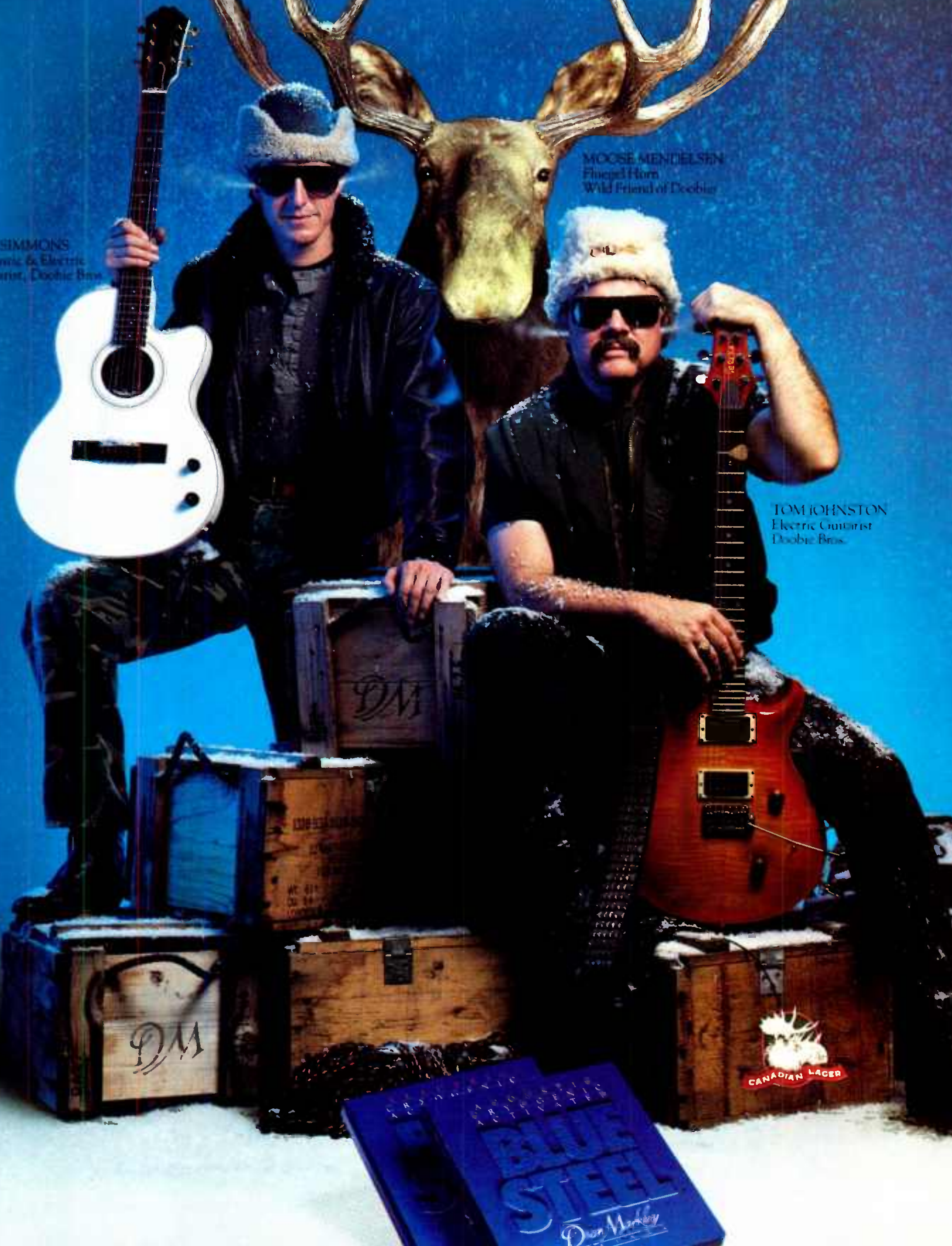

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pursue their solo projects has seemingly whetted their appetites for a new group effort, and the collaborative bond is stronger than it has been in more than a decade.

"Working with a committee is always difficult, as most people know," says Jagger. "You never can do quite what you want. Doing solo projects you have more say, but you still don't have 100 percent control working with good people who contribute things. There's more committee work with a band and I've never enjoyed that, but what I do like about it is the kind of family aspect.

"I was afraid that the problem here was that we were going to be stuck in this 're-runs of the Rolling Stones' groove, and play all of the licks backwards. There's quite a bit of traditional material on this album, some of which emanates from me—I'm always the one that moans about it and I come out with these very traditional songs [*laughs*]—but at the beginning I said, 'Well, look, don't let's limit ourselves. If we come up with good ideas and other directions, let's explore them and at least go down the road with them.' I don't want to feel we're stifling other creative aspects of the Stones.

"I always liked the Stones when they didn't mind to experiment with things, y'know, a lot of which in the very, very old days was down to Brian [Jones]. I felt we were getting a bit stuck in one sort of hard-rock corner, and we weren't even doing ballads very much really. I don't think it's necessarily to do with age. I mean some bands are very kind of stuck in grooves from the first album. They invent a style and they just stay up there! So I felt we should go back to being able to go a little bit off the wall sometimes, which I think we've done. Like with ["The Speed of Love"] for instance; I don't think we've done anything like that in ages. I don't think you need a lot of that, but even one or two things like that give people the idea that you're not dead as far as trying things out." Ⓜ

Forging Steel Wheels

Steel Wheels, **co-produced by Chris Kimsey with the Glimmer Twins and engineered by Chris Potter, was recorded at AIR Studios in Montserrat utilizing 20 channels of a 48-channel SSL 4000E console, together with a Mitsubishi X850 digital 32-track tape machine and JBL 4350 monitors. The mix, which also involved Michael Brauer, took place at Olympic Sound Studios in South-West London, utilizing the SSL 4000 G Series 56/32/4 consoles in Studios 1 and 2.**

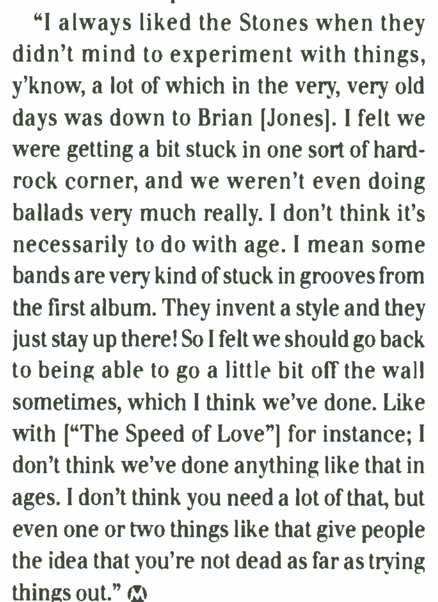
MICK JAGGER's vocals were miked with a combination of Shure SM57, AKG 414 and a tube Neumann U-47. KEITH RICHARDS' vocals were also miked with an AKG 414. "The 414 gives you a lot of top and bottom," says Kimsey, "and you don't have to get right on top of it when you sing. With Keith that's quite important, because he likes to move around the room when he's singing. I used the 414 on Mick on songs where he was singing fairly quietly, to pick up all of the warmth and the presence, and the Shure was used for a couple of the blues songs, just to get a little more of an authentic approach to the sound. The 47, on the other hand, I've always used on Mick and he can really belt into it. His mike technique is the best of any singer I've worked with."

CHARLIE WATTS played his Gretsch drums in a corner of the studio, unscreened, and he was miked with a Shure SM57 on the snare, an AKG D-20 on the bass drum, a Shure SM7 on the high-hat, AKG 414s on the overhead, Shure SM87s on the toms, a tube Neumann U-47 placed in front of the kit and a small Sony condenser mike at head level behind him. "That mike saved the drum sound," asserts Kimsey. "It covered off the very high-end and the very low-end and this great mid-range—this great cracking sound . . . that became the drum sound. We also built a tunnel around the bass drum to amplify the bass drum sound."

BILL WYMAN played his Wal bass next to Charlie, and he was recorded with a combination of DI and FET 47, a small Ampeg Portaflex amplifier being placed in the adjacent booth.

The guitars, situated in a line, were all screened off in small booths: Keith Richards played his five-string Music Man and Fender Telecaster, and Fender Stratocaster, mainly through an old Fender amplifier miked with a Neumann U-67. When overdubbing, he introduced a Marshall amp and a tiny four-inch speaker that had been built by his roadie, and he played a gut-string acoustic on "Blinded by Love," "Slipping Away" and "Almost Hear You Sigh." RONNIE WOOD was recorded through a Fender amplifier, miked with a tube Neumann U-47; Mick Jagger, borrowing one of Keith's five-strings, was recorded through either a Mesa-Boogie or a Fender Twin, miked with a Shure SM57. His harmonica was miked with a Bullet. "It doesn't have a lot of high or bottom-end, just a lot of mid-range," says Kimsey. "We put that into a Scholz Rockman, overloaded it and distorted it, and it sounded really thick and worked great."

Keyboards were a mix of Dled Korg M1 and electric piano, as well as a resurrected Hammond organ.



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Steve Stevens, Atomic Playboy

Fusing post-nuke guitar and black leather to blast boredom to bedlam

By J.D. Considine

Steve Stevens is not the sort of guitar player anyone would ever accuse of being typical.

Take the picture session he's enduring this muggy Manhattan afternoon. With what seems to be more hair than everyone in Dire Straits combined, and an array of rings, heavy gold bracelets and chains, Stevens' looks seem extravagant even by rock standards. Unfortunately, black patent-leather is the last thing a sane human would want to wear in 98-degree heat and high humidity, which is what Stevens faces at the end of a New York pier. For any other rocker, it would be tantrum time. Yet Stevens not only proceeds with the photo shoot, he perseveres even as his more sensibly attired publicists are on the verge of passing out. More incredible still, he actually manages to look good in the bargain.

But then, that's vintage Stevens. Not only can he be depended on to get the job done, but he does so with an uncanny sense of style—except instead of merely looking good, he sounds it, too. Whether it was the way he turned standard new-wave rhythm licks into a semi-metal firestorm in Billy Idol's "Rebel Yell," or transformed a feedback guitar solo into a bit of sonic SDI for Michael Jackson's "Dirty Diana," Stevens has consistently managed to add an unexpected twist to his playing. It's as if mere normalcy would have annoyed us as much as it bores him.

And though the technical prowess he demonstrated with the Billy Idol band made him something of a guitar idol himself, Stevens has little patience for the sort of masturbatory displays in which most fret-wizards indulge. "What the guitarist is doing within the song is only as good as the song itself," he says flatly.

So he's not about to squander his songs on flashy guitar fills, especially now that he's on his own, having left Idol to pursue a solo career (though he wanted his solo record to "co-exist" with his work with Idol, "as time went on, I saw that this was going to be a full-time thing"). "I don't consider myself just a guitarist," he insists. "If I were just a guitarist, I'd be on Bleecker and MacDougal with a glass of wine on the house, you know? I make records for a living, and I'm involved in all aspects of that."

That means he's just as concerned about what his songs mean as how they sound. Thus, the idea for his bandname, Steve Stevens Atomic Playboys, came not from some cheap sci-fi flick but a pro-nuke government propaganda film. "What the term came from was, in 1953, when the United States was detonating all those atomic bombs down in the Bikini atoll, the Secretary of Defense sent this General William Blandy to oversee this thing. He gave this long-winded speech about how the bomb will not destroy gravity, it will not put a hole in the ocean... and at the end—I saw this in the film *Atomic Cafe*—he says, 'I am not an atomic playboy.'

"And I thought, 'Ooh, that's a good line.'"

Stevens has a knack for remembering good lines; part of "Pet the Hot Kitty" came from being in New Orleans with Idol and hearing a Bourbon Street barker refer to a stripper as "a gender-bender, a real trouser arouser." But for "Atomic Playboys," Stevens had something a little darker in mind, something that satirized the atomic arms race while describing an apocalyptic world of post-nuclear golems protecting what was left of the human race. ("I'm very much into horror and science fiction films," he says.)

Consequently, *Steve Stevens Atomic Playboys* opens to the sound of air-raid

Photograph: J.H. Maddocks

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sirens and a blandly official voice lecturing, "The bomb will not start a chain-reaction in the water, turning it all to gas . . . ." It's a classic scene-setter, but what really grabs the listener is the guitar playing that follows, from the aggressively edgy rhythm behind Perry McCarty's vocal to the death-ray feedback that brightens the fills.

Both, naturally, are staples in Stevens' guitar arsenal, and have fairly well-known antecedents. The ray-gun stunt, though best-known through "Dirty Diana," actually dates back to the solo from Idol's "Rebel Yell." Explains Stevens, "I had been collecting toy ray guns for a while, so I was thinking, 'How can I get that phaser sound out of a guitar?'"

How? With a digital delay, it turns out. "That's achieved through digital delays made by Lexicon," he says, citing the PCM-41 as a particular favorite. "There's terrific delay on them. That's what that is, just using the modulation; you drive the unit into total modulation, so there's no note left to it. When you use that, playing a high harmonic with sustain and distortion, you just end up with this [ray-gun sound]. I just spent some time with it, and kind of tweaked my way through it."

Stevens is a bit bored with that effect, however; as he puts it, "There's hardly any of that stuff on this record because, after doing that with Michael Jackson, that was the topper.

"Probably the thing I'm recognized most for is the rhythm guitar aspect," he says. "What I had done on 'Rebel Yell' and 'White Wedding,' that very stagnant, syncopated rhythm-guitar thing. That repeating riff over a four-bar pattern, which I got from Marty Rev of Suicide. If I just played that for you on its own, you'd go, 'Oh, that's not very good,' but it's the elements around it, with changes within the keyboards and the bass, that are making what I do interesting. You can learn that from anywhere. It's math anyway; music is all broken down into numbers, and it's how you subdivide it and work it within the math of the other people, where they meet and where they don't, cross points."

It does seem amazing that Stevens—a guy whose guitar tone was so crunchy and conventional that at early Idol gigs, "there would be people in front of Billy with Public Image T-shirts, and people in front of me with Ozzy Osbourne and Iron Maiden T-shirts"—would even be listening to Suicide,

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much less learning from its abrasive electro-minimalist sound.

"It just happened to be Marty Rev," Stevens shrugs. "But it was also the fact that on the keyboard . . . What you cannot do on a guitar is, you cannot play an arrangement with an independent bass line to a chord line. The only way you can do that is if you fingerpick it, like the intro of 'Rebel Yell' in which the stagnant upper part of the guitar and the bass part are independent.

"Maybe when I heard Marty Rev on some of his Suicide stuff—just that one stagnant upper part and the bass line moving around it—it kind of gave me an idea of what I could do as a guitarist that maybe other people were missing. And even I found similarities in some of the stuff Keith Emerson is doing, not so much in Emerson Lake & Palmer, but

Atomic Playthings

ALTHOUGH THERE'S more than one Atomic Playboy, STEVENS played all the guitar and most of the bass on his album. His main guitars were Hamer maple-neck Californians, Strat-style instruments with hand-beveled Floyd Rose tremolos and Seymour Duncan pickups bolted straight into the body, augmented by a '53 Les Paul with '59 P.A.F. pickups, and a Dan Armstrong for the slide work (in open D tuning), generally strung with a .009-.040 set of Van Halen S150 strings (distributed by Kramer) and played through one of several mid- to late-'60s plexiglass-front 100-watt Marshall amps powering Celestion speakers. The major exception was on "Action," which replicated that Queen guitar sound with Guild's Brian May model, played through Vox AC-30 Top-Boost amps with ambient miking.

His steel-string acoustics were Taylor guitars, while his nylon-string numbers were performed on a 1976 Ramirez flamenco model strung with Savarez super-high tension strings. "The jazz guitar stuff on 'Evening Eye' was a Fender Jimmy D'Aguisto model," Stevens reports, while his bottom-line instrument was a Spector four-string bass with Dean Markley strings.

Interestingly, he uses only one stomp box, an ancient Clyde McCoy wah-wah pedal. "It's the original wah-wah pedal," he says. "Before they became the Cry-Baby, it was just called the Clyde McCoy." Otherwise, everything is rack-mounted: He uses the Eventide Ultraharmonizer "for most of my effects" and Lexicon PCM-41s, with a PCM-60 reverb. "And all the effects are used in a Bob Bradshaw switching system," he adds.

MAQX

Produced and written by Michael Hutchence and Ollie Olsen

includes the single

"Way of the World"

MMA International

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with the Nice, when he did some of the Dave Brubeck stuff."

From Suicide to the Nice?!? If that seems like an odd leap, wait till you hear Stevens rhapsodize over Marvin Gaye or James Brown ("Soul on Ice," a blistering metal tune from the new album, is actually "about James Brown being in prison"), then rave about Steve Howe or Gentle Giant. Working the gap between art-rock and funk isn't as unprecedented as you'd think, though; "Chris Squire really wanted to be Larry Graham," says Stevens. "I mean, the whole end bit of 'Roundabout' is 'I Want to Take You Higher' by Sly and the Family Stone. And I nailed Chris on it, too, when I met him."

Tellingly, Stevens lists Prince among his personal heroes. "He's inventive as a guitarist; he's got soul," he says. "He's influenced me a whole lot, man. He's made it a lot easier for people to accept me, the way I dress, the way I conduct myself, my being flamboyant and not just being called a poseur."

Stevens' non-conformity runs deep; recounting his youth, he's apt to say things like, "And when I was thrown out of public school for not saluting the flag...." That's part of the reason why this nice Jewish boy from Rockaway Beach (he was born Steve Schneider, but changed his name because "I just can't see 20,000 people in Madison Square Garden going '*Schneider!*' It'd sound like a Bund rally or something") fit in so well with Billy Idol's stylistic extravagances; it's also why the *Atomic Playboys* album ended up with such a wide-ranging sound.

"At this point in my career, it's important to do a record that gave me back the excitement I felt about a lot of music when I was growing up," he says. "That's why there's not one style prevailing on this record. It's really just blurting stuff out. This could create a lot of problems for me—it could confuse the hell out of the record-buying public—or it could create something really great.

"A sense of imagination is really what it comes down to, more than anything else. More than anybody coming away saying, 'Wow, this guy sounds like he's been practicing his nuts off.' You know?

"That's largely why I'm making records with Warner Bros.; they said, 'What do you want to do?' and I said, 'I want to be given the same opportunity you gave Prince. Let me learn how to make records, let me learn how to write music.' Because at least it's going to sound like me." Ⓜ

Here Comes Action Jackson

Paul Jackson, Jr., that is, L.A.'s hardest-working session guitarist

By Alan di Perna

There's another Jackson living in L.A.'s tidy, middle-class suburb of Encino—right near Michael, Jermaine, Jackie and the rest of the platinum-ovipositing siblings. Paul Jackson, Jr. isn't one of "those" Jacksons. Not in the strict sense of blood kinship, anyway. But he has chilled extensively with the brothers (if one can properly be said to "chill" in a place like Encino), contributing guitar tracks and songs to such briskly-selling Jackson product as *Thriller, Bad, Triumph, Destiny, Let's Get Serious,* etc.

This Jackson has been called the "most recorded studio guitarist in the world." His pristinely crafted, clean Strat sound has soldiered in the service of Lionel Richie, Chicago, Whitney Houston, Anita Baker, Barbra Streisand, the Pointer Sisters and several dozen other quite creditable names which would pale in such stellar company.

Back in Encino, *chez* Jackson bristles with the rewards of Paul's session labors: a black Porsche among the cars out front, a newly-erected 24-track studio behind the swimming pool. But the carefully-spoken guitarist grew up in a different part of town: a

Photograph: Glen La Ferman

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section of south-central L.A. lodged between Watts and Gardena. Ah, now comes the part where you're invariably told the old neighborhood was "full of music," right, raw talent busting out on every street corner. Such, apparently, *was* really the case for Paul, who spent his school days among a coterie of soon-to-be session aces, including Gerald Albright, Kenny Flood, Cornelius Mims, Kipper Jones and Ronald Clark. The neighbor who was to play a key role in his career, however, was Patrice Rushen.

"I lived down the street from her. And when I was in the eleventh grade, I decided I wanted to be a musician. I'd played a little guitar, but I hadn't really studied or practiced real hard. So I went and asked her, 'How does a person become a musician?' She introduced me to Lee Ritenour and [Earth, Wind & Fire guitarist] Al McKay."

McKay, tied up with EWF commitments, bequeathed Jackson the guitar seat in Rushen's live band in 1977, but it was a hard one to fill: "I wanted to be a jazz guitar player. My big influences were George Benson, Lee Ritenour and Earl Klugh. But after working with Patrice for a while, she said, 'You know, Paul, your soloing is coming along real well, your acoustic technique is fine, but your rhythm playing needs a little work.' She suggested I go back and listen to Ray Parker, Jr. and Al McKay. So I really studied what they did."

The payback was swift: "1977-78 was the year when Ray Parker, Jr. and Lee Ritenour both decided they were going to do solo records only. And Al McKay was really in Earth, Wind & Fire. So what happened was there was a void of guys who could really play rhythm guitar and read music well. So Ray, Lee and some of the others started recommending me for sessions, and that's how I got in the studio."

Paul's jazz background has given him a mania for discipline. He's had a positive orgy of formal training and once maintained a 10-hour-a-day practice schedule. Does this overqualify him for the job of throwing down pop and funk grooves? He thinks not.

"Even though you're playing simple funk

Jackson's Actions

Paul Jackson, Jr.'s principal guitars are two Valley Arts Strats, serial numbers one and two. One has Bartolini pickups, while two has two Fender Lace Sensors and a Seymour Duncan hot rail. Jackson also brings about eight other instruments to studio dates, including a '58 Telecaster with rosewood fingerboard, an Ibanez GB-10, a Tom Anderson custom, Takamine 12-string and Guild D50NT acoustics, Takamine high tune, a banjo and mandolin. Strings are by GHS, S.I.T. and Just My Strings in gauges ranging from .010 to .046.

The Jackson rack includes ADA and Mike Soldano preamps, which feed a Carvin power amp. Effects are a t.c. electronics 1210 chorus, CS5 tri-stereo chorus, ART Smart-Curve EQ, Yamaha SPX90 and stereo compressor, Alesis Quadraverb, Lexicon PCM-70, Ashly noise gate and Rane ME-50 stereo graphic EQ. Paul uses KK Audio ported, closed-back cabinets loaded with 12" Electro-Voice EV12Ls.

Paul has compiled a sample library of his hottest guitar sounds for Ensoniq's EPS Signature Series. He's an avid MIDIphile and has stocked his home studio with a Yamaha DX7, a MIDI-retrofitted Minimoog, Ensoniq VFX and two EPSMs, Roland's D-550, S-330, Super Jupiter, Alpha Juno 2 and MX-8 MIDI patchbay, all driven by a Sequential Studio 440 sequencer.

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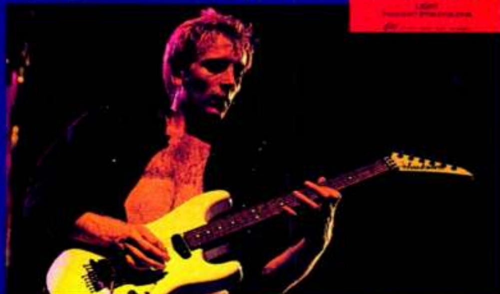

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lines, a lot of times those lines have to fit through chord progressions that are complex harmonically. Consequently, the more you know about harmony—what notes go where—the easier it is to come up with simple parts that work through complex settings.

"But I hate to think of myself as a studio musician, or to say that it takes a special demeanor. Yeah, you have to be open to a constant influx of ideas, many of which are ridiculous and won't work. You have to be able to try things, make good suggestions and be able to work with people. But if a person is a good musician they can be good in the studio, onstage, wherever."

Let's not forget the self-effacing quality that session work demands—that ability to be creative but stay in the background. Where others might be [cont'd on page 90]

BASS EXPATRIATE

U.K. phenom Gail Ann Dorsey makes headway in a corporate world

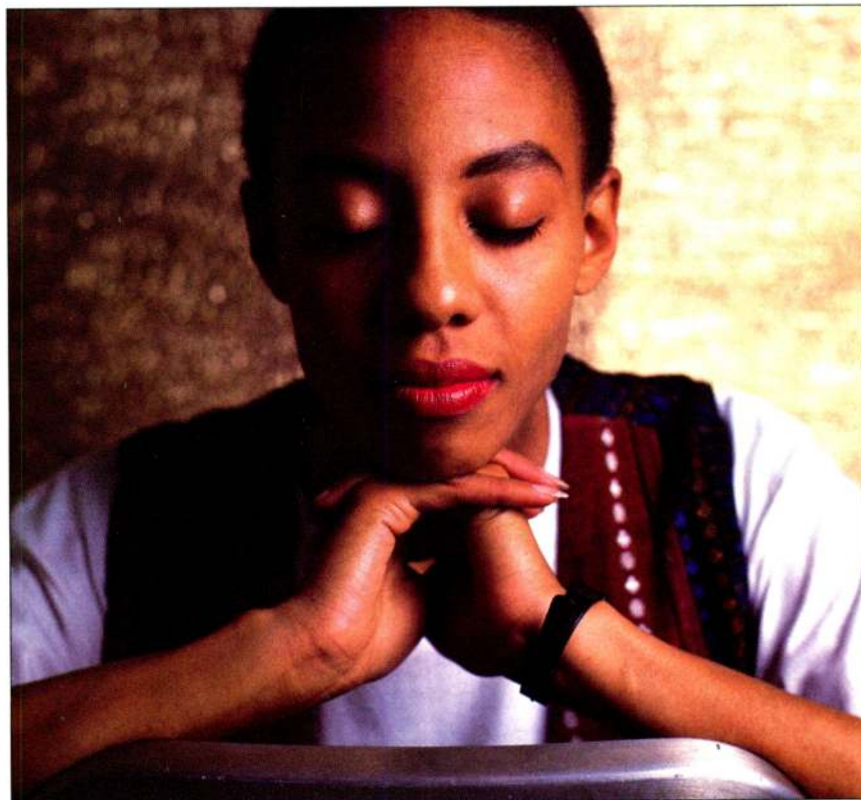
By **Bill Flanagan**

Who is this 26-year old black American woman and how did she end up playing British Rock? She's Gail Ann Dorsey, a U.S.-born, U.K.-based musician who made her mark in England as a session bassist (from Boy George's pop to Courtney Pine's jazz), singer with Charlie Watts' Big Band and—for one international tour—bass player with Thrashing Doves. If we slow down to list all Dorsey's jazz club and reggae sessions we'll never get to the point, which is that Sire Records has released her first album, *The Corporate World*, on which G.A.D. proves herself one hell of a nimble composer, lyricist and acoustic guitar picker, as well as the pro singer and bassist we expected.

Did her years as a sideman change Dorsey's approach when it came time to lead her own band? "Absolutely. There are a lot of singers and players now who haven't ever been in a band. They make a record and then they get a band. I've worked with singers who are only singers—nothing wrong with that if you're a good one—who get involved in things because they think they *should.* They say, 'No, don't do that on the bass, I want it to sound like *this.*' And they 'explain' something to me about which they really don't have any idea. You might change the way you play it a bit and they say, 'That's *it!*' Thanks, that's what I was doing before. If I hire a musician, I've hired them for a reason; I like something specific about the way they play, and I like them to get on with it. I don't like to have to say, 'Do this, don't do that.' Of course, at the end of the day if I don't like the whole thing something's got to change, but I like to give musicians the freedom to do their job."

Dorsey's choice to produce her album was—surprise—another session bassist, Clapton bottom-man Nathan East. East recruited peers like drummer Steve Ferrone and, on one song, Clapton himself to back Dorsey. Pretty fast company. Those band tracks are slick, solid rock that reveal unexpected depth on close examination. Then, when you get halfway into side two, the state-of-the-art sheen is peeled back; Dorsey pulls out her Takamine, sends East home and rips through some soul-spilling acoustic songs that sound like Joan Armatrading jamming with Leo Kottke. Gail Ann Dorsey is pretty unpredictable.

"I had a lot of ideas about the sort of album I wanted to make," Dorsey says. "Nathan East has been one of my favorite bass players forever. It was amazing to work with Nathan. But I think some of the single-oriented songs were a little bit too *polished* for my liking, a little bit too smooth. I like sounding a little rougher. The very clean-sounding, perfect kind of pop record doesn't stick with me very long. But regardless of that, I'm very pleased with my album. Next time I'll try to avoid some of those influences that come from everywhere, not just from yourself and the producer, but from the musicians, from the engineer, from the



Photograph: Aldo Mauro

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record company. If you're not strong enough the idea can get a little diluted."

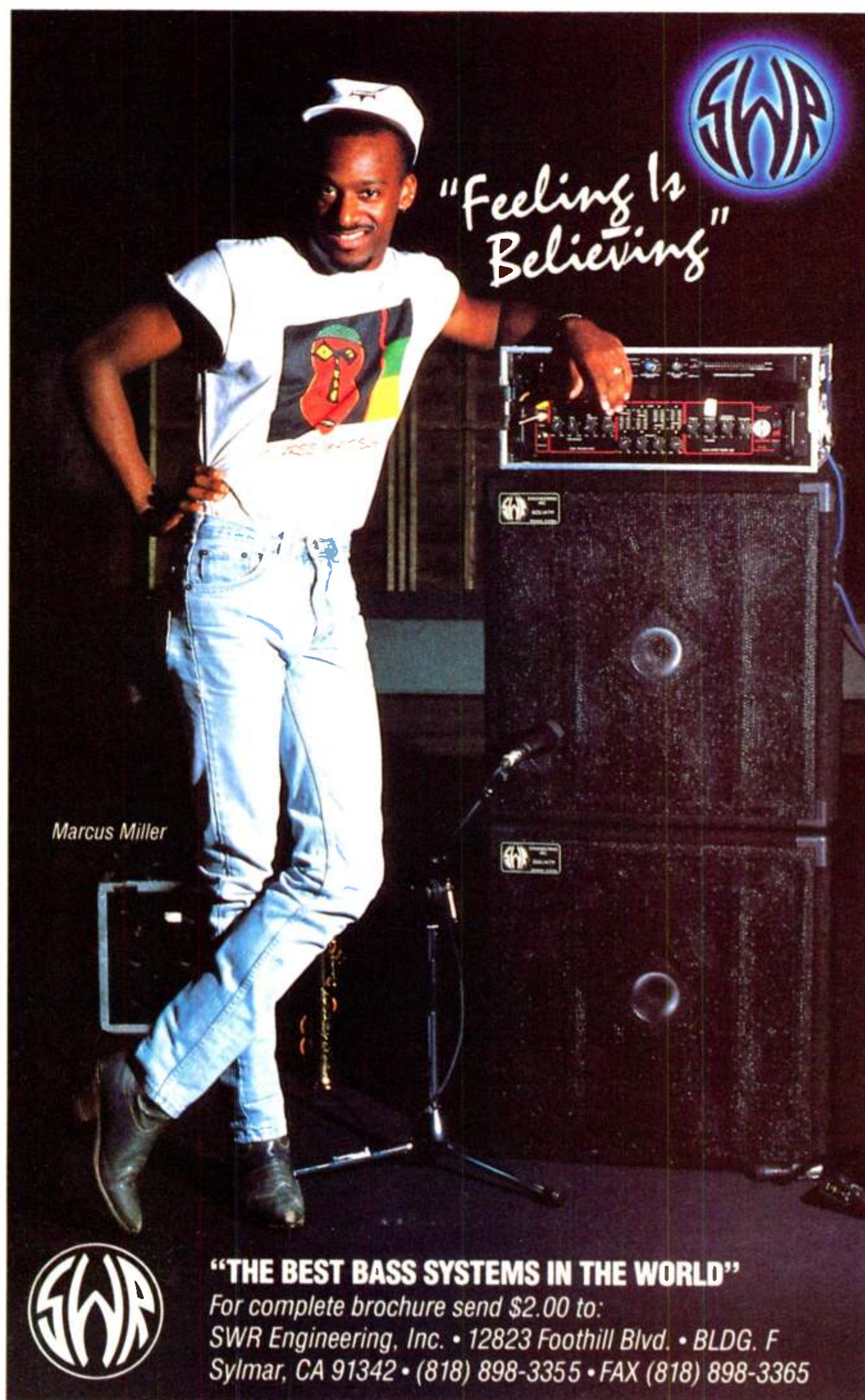
But where did she come from? Dorsey says it started when she heard a record by another American expatriate. "I got my first guitar when I was nine," she says. "I heard a Jimi Hendrix record and thought, 'What is that sound? I've got to get that sound!' I got an acoustic guitar from Sears on my ninth birthday. No one else around me played. I fiddled around with the tuning pegs a little and I learned from listening to records. My favorites were early Rufus. Terry Kath from Chicago was my favorite guitarist. But I still had no one to show me E-A-D. Finally I went and got a music book and a pitch pipe—and the first time I tuned my guitar I was completely lost—I had to start all over again.

"I was very much a rock 'n' roll kid in a black neighborhood in Philadelphia. I'd go into school and say, 'Have you heard the new Led Zeppelin record?' 'Who's Led Zeppelin?' I'd be going on about Jimmy Page and Keith Richards. See, I was born in 1962 and when I was eight or nine my sister, who's seven years older, went through a hippie phase. And she had a lot of those records. When she moved out of her hippie phase I inherited all her albums. I still have them! That was my music. Only when I was about 18 or 19 did I go back and start listening to soul music."

So Gail set off to become a musician, and caught the electric lady bug. "I had always wanted a Stratocaster like Jimi Hendrix had, and I could never afford one. I was living here in New York when I turned 20 and there was one at We Buy Guitars. I'd walk by there every day and think, 'Oh God, somehow I've got to get that guitar.' It was only $400, but in 1982 I didn't have $400. I was terribly embarrassed, but I called my mother and she bought it for me for my twentieth birthday. She said, 'Well, if you've been playing this long I think you deserve a Strat now.' So that's a very prized guitar for me; it's the burgundy guitar on my album cover."

As a guitar nut and a Cream fan, Dorsey was especially tickled when Eric Clapton came by to play on her song "Wasted Country": "I knew I wanted a solo that was very bluesy and down home. I said to Nathan, 'Who should I get to do this, I don't want to do it, it's not me.' He said, 'Why not Eric Clapton?' I said, 'Come on, he's not going to come and do this!,' and put it out of my mind. Then I walked in the studio on a Thursday and I saw, set up, a Fender Twin exactly like mine—but I looked in the corner and there was mine. I walked in the control room and there was Eric. He said, 'I'm pleased to be here, Nathan's told me a lot about you.' He listened to the song and loved it. We just cleared as many tracks as he wanted. He played bits of rhythm in the background, did four takes of the solo, and we picked the best one. He'd take different approaches on each solo. And he had a chorus pedal exactly like mine, the Boss CE3. I went and checked all the settings to see if I could sound like that after he left." She laughs. "And it didn't."

Dorsey's been touring Europe for a year now, promoting her album and waiting for the stardom that seems due. She quit America because she was sick of the tendency, musical and otherwise, toward narrow-mindedness, forcing people into categories. She found England more conducive to allowing jazz, folk, soul and reggae to rub shoulders with rock. But in the course of the last year, Dorsey says she's also seen a prejudice peculiar to the U.K.—the need for glamor: "I've had to change a few people in



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my band not because I didn't like their playing, but for other reasons I don't want to go into." She hesitates. "More visual reasons. In England I'm kind of thrust into a pop audience, as most things are. And the way you and your band look is very important to the kids and to your record company. I've had to actually lose a few members because they were too old. And that hurts. Including Bub Roberts, who was the only member of my band who played on my album and who is just great and who Nathan adored. He's a great guitar player but he's not young, and he's not particularly hip and trendy. But God, can he play!"

So the British record company axed him?

"Unfortunately at the moment they pay the bills. If things aren't working it's very easy to use the band as scapegoat. If the record's not taking off or you don't sell out a particular night they say, 'Well, it's because people think the band's too old.' I say, 'Well, they may be too old but they play well!' Probably in America I'd be able to find a young band who can come close to matching the standard of playing on my record, but in England I don't think I'm going to find kids who are 17 who can play the drums like Steve Ferrone."

Like her song says, "You can't break the door of the corporate world."

DORSEY IS a lot happier talking about her passion—instruments. "I play Music Man StingRay basses. I don't have a five-string yet but I might get one. Dean Markley bass strings, medium to light. I just purchased a new Fender bass amp called the BXR Dual Bass 400. They are 400 watts stereo, graphic EQ, and they have transistors, which is kind of strange. This is just the best bass amp I've heard in years. I used to use an SVT with an 8x10 cabinet. At the moment I use an old Yamaha cabinet, but I'd like to try the Fender 3 8x10. I don't use any pedals on bass.

"My acoustic guitar is a Takamine EF 360 SC, which is the finest acoustic guitar I've ever played. I've been playing it for three years and for recording I literally do nothing to it—I just plug it in. Maybe a bit of digital delay. Onstage I use a Boss Chorus with it, but that's it. And I have a very old Yamaha nylon-string." Electrics? "I primarily play a Fender Stratocaster; I use that onstage and mainly in recording. It's my favorite guitar—again, you can use it for anything. It's a '76 or '77, with a maple neck. I also have a Hohner headless G3T. I like it for the [cont'd on page 113]

Performance of the Month

Eef! Wowl! Squonk!

Adrian Belew hits the solo trail

By Ted Drozdowski

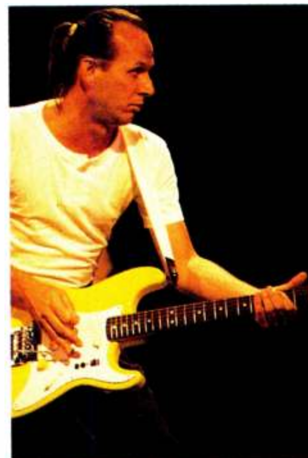
YOU KNOW the résumé, you've heard the guitar sonics. Now learn the horrible secret: Adrian Belew has put his daughter in a box crammed with crickets, frogs and other beasties, and there she must stay for the duration of his tour.

But don't panic. Little Audie is safe and sound—digital sound. She's part of a three-day sample-a-thon Belew and his new bandmates keyboardist Rick Fox and drummer Mike Hodges conducted before setting forth on behalf of Adrian's new *Mr. Music Head* album and single, the MTV-friendly "Oh Daddy." At a mid-July stop at Boston's Paradise, Audie's voice and the squeaks, squawks and awks of Belew's electric zoo were on tap in the MIDI brain of Fox's keyboards. And Belew was on top of the world, enjoying his first "hit" and bringing music he never thought he'd play live to the stage.

"For the first half of recording, I had no plans to play *Mr. Music Head* live. So the more complex, dense group of songs on the second side were the first I recorded, while I was still touring and making the *Rise and Shine* album with the Bears," the Wisconsin-based git-wiz explains. "Then I wrote 'Oh Daddy,' and when I played it for the people at Atlantic Records they said, 'That's great. We love it. You're planning to tour, right?'

"When we decided to play this music live, the older songs on the album really cried out for MIDI sequencing and a more high-fidelity approach. Right off the bat I knew I wanted to do this in a trio format. I felt it would look very clean and be more challenging for the players. Through many conversations with Rick about the possibilities of sequencing, I also realized my life-long dream of having my guitar sounds change automatically.

"But I didn't want us to sound like a MIDI sequencer band, so to counteract that concise feel you get with a sequencer, nine of the songs in the show are sequenced and the rest are all live. Those are the songs we stretch out on. We take 'Three of a Perfect Pair' and 'Heartbeat' from King Crimson and improvise in the middle of them. We also do some surprise versions of 'Superboy' from the Bears and 'Big Electric Cat.' So there's more fluidity than a sequencer band. Yet you're always hearing three guys sound like a four-piece band, because Rick is playing keyboard bass and keyboards at the same time."



Belew's less-and-more-is-more approach generally works. But Crimson-o-philes will still miss Tony Levin's big Stick and Robert Fripp's soft-centered guitar on the rearranged "Three of a Perfect Pair" and "Heartbeat" respectively. Adrian counters that he's just reclaiming his own: "For 'Heartbeat' in particular I felt that my more rhythmic approach was in keeping with my original intention for the song. 'Heartbeat' was a song I'd written myself and brought into the band. And of course Robert, Tony and Bill [Bruford] made their own parts. That changed the song from what had been on my mind's turntable. So I thought that since seven years had passed, it might be time to take back my original version." He's even been thinking

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about recording the should-have-been hit again, if his ex-Crimson mates don't object.

Given Belew's longstanding commitment to band camaraderie, you might ask, "Where's the Bears?" And he might answer: "I thought that this was a very personal group of songs I was working on. I had very, very specific ideas for the sound of the record and the style of each player. So rather than filter those ideas through other players, I wanted to play as much by myself as possible to give a more true and personal vision to the music."

And he mentions other complications. His three fellow bruins are chasing their pop muse through the bars of Ohio as the Raisins, which was their band's name before Belew joined; Bears *[cont'd on page 90]*

MULTI-EFFECTS ×2

Multi'd to the max: hands on the ART SGE and the Peavey Multifex

By Jock Baird

IF LAST YEAR was the "Year of the Workstation," 1989 is shaping up to be the "Year of the Multi-effect." Everywhere you look there are little black boxes reverberating, echoing, chorusing, flanging, compressing, distorting and lord knows what else, often all at the same time. In our ongoing effort to keep track of all this activity, we're going to test-drive two new multi-effects that are trend-setters of a sort. One is the ART SGE, which can run as many as nine digital effects simultaneously. And the other is the Peavey Multifex, which has four separate processors that can be run independently. Both take the multi-effects concept a step further.

It's easiest to examine the Peavey unit first, because once you get the concept, the rest is simple. Imagine four stereo-in, stereo-out effects units lying side by side, each with its own input trim and output level knobs. Then picture them all drawing on the same memory bank of programs, numbered 1-128, and give each processor its own mix control on a scale of one (dry) to 100 (wet). That's about it. The Multifex has this humongous 40x2 LCD window that shows you the four simultaneous effects and mix values. Then you save the setups of all four processors as a "patch," which can be recalled via MIDI program change. That's about as straightforward and user-friendly as it gets in multi-effectsville, pal.

Burned into the heart and permanent memory of the unit are 128 "library" algorithms, divided into "banks" of five and 10. You take the library patch that's closest to what you want, modify it (if you can—the first 50, reverbs all, can't be altered) and save it to one of the 128 "preset" numbers, which can be given five-character names.

So the reverbs can't be edited, huh. Is this a big problem? Not really, because changes in decay time and reverb coloration are varied in the 50 programs. As for the non-reverb effects, there's plenty of programming punch available, with an average of three or four parameters on effects 50-99 and up to 12 parameters on some of the combination programs that make up libraries 100-127. Among the algorithms is a genuine parametric equalizer—with Q-control, mind you—and even some dual-reverb ones that allow you to run eight independent mono reverbs. And if you wanted to chain together two effects with more pinpoint control you could also just run the output of one into the input of another—the good old-fashioned way.

Overall the quality of the Multifex's reverb sound is good, though perhaps slightly lacking in complexity and diffusion subtleties. The small rooms are especially appealing, as are the gated reverbs. The delays, choruses and flanges need to be user-customized for best results, but definitely do the job and then some. It's intuitively laid out and easy to program. The Multifex costs $1200; not cheap, but $356 cheaper than four Peavey Addverbs.

So much for parallel effects. Now we're gonna talk series. And boy does the ART SGE know how to chain 'em! This $650 unit seems to have its prime audience in the guitarist's world, judging by the weight of distortion-heavy factory presets, but has so many other capabilities built in it could easily be called a studio Swiss Army knife. The nine effects it can do at once are culled from a vast menu of processing chores, including a harmonic exciter and equalizer, compression and expansion duties and on into a host of multi-tap delays, choruses, flanges, echoes and reverbs—lots of reverbs. And don't forget the panning, filters, pitch shift and distortion control. Whew!

Considering how much it does, it's fairly easy to run. To create an effects chain, you hit an Add Effects button, stepping sideways through a continuous menu of available processing dishes; when one strikes your palate, you hit an enter key and continue on. Since different programs take up different amounts of processing power, some chains can be longer than others. Once you have all your effects chosen (don't worry, you can add or delete later if you change your mind) you step back and fiddle with the parameters—as many as 43 per program. Unfortunately there's no mute or solo function so that you can edit one stage in isolation, but there are ways to get around this. Between the three-digit LED, a very welcome 16x2 LCD display, 14 buttons and three sliders,

• Series and parallel: The ART SGE (top) and the Peavey Multifex •

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When it comes to the wet side of the street, there's enough on the SGE to get you soaked. When you select a reverb or delay, you actually pick from among several reverbs depending on how much processing power it'll require. Thus a room, plate or hall from the Reverb 1 group will be considerably less complex than one from Reverb 3 or Gate-Verb-3, but also saves more processing power for other effects. Reverb controls also include decay, high-frequency damping, a "position control" that moves you between the front and rear of the "room" and a diffusion control. These are quality reverbs, cut from the same cloth as the famed ART ProVerb, MultiVerb and DR1.

As for delays, the SGE has six types, with up to half a second of hang time in both mono and stereo varieties. The pitch transposer—with three algorithms—can go an octave up or down. Now factor in the SGE's "Performance MIDI" capabilities, meaning up to eight parameters can be slaved to an external controller via MIDI. Go ahead, put that distortion drive level onto a foot pedal controller, use that sustain pedal to kick in the multi-tap delay or go from the back row to the front of the hall just by flipping a mod wheel. To set up a Performance MIDI map in your preset, just add it like any other effect and edit the three menu pages that regulate the target parameter, the source controller and the scale or ratio of movement for each controller needed. It makes an otherwise difficult chore run-of-the-mill.

In a way, though, one of the best features of the SGE is how it handles non-MIDI programs. As part of a mapping capability that gives any one of its 200 user presets a separate MIDI program number, you can also set up your own program chains and switch from a good old voltage footswitch. If the chain is only two numbers, it goes from one to the other, just like your old stomp box. But if you want to add more steps to the chain, you can step through any number of programs in any order. This makes a lot of us poor folks who don't have a MIDI foot controller (yes, there are some of us still around) a lot more comfortable about bringing the SGE along on a gig.

You simply won't find a more versatile processor for $650, especially one that'll do so many little jobs in the studio. Granted some of the individual effects may not be as full-service as a completely dedicated pro processor would deliver, but when you total up the sum of its parts, the SGE is one of the real overachievers of the current multi-processor crop. Of course, with the way they're coming off the assembly line, who knows how many processors they'll be cramming into one box a year from now. Four? Nine? Sixteen? Do I hear 24?

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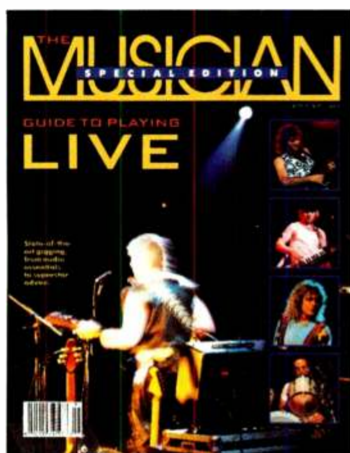

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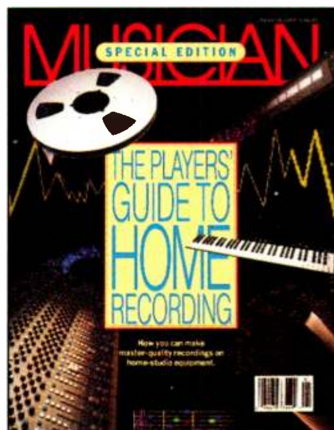

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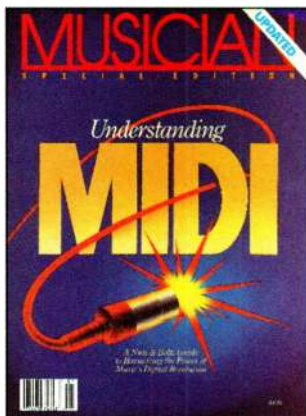

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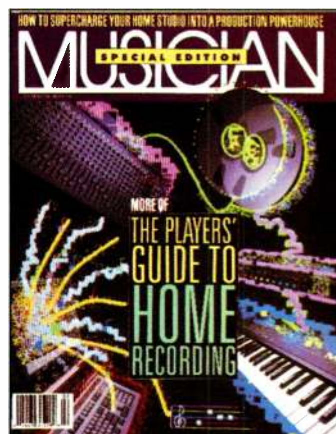

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BELEW

[cont'd from page 86] singer/guitarist Rob Fetters is stalking a solo deal; and when I.R.S. axed its Primitive Man label, the Bears preferred terminating their contract to joining the parent company. So don't look for a third Bears record soon.

Do, however, expect to hear much more from Belew, who's "meeting people who have no idea who King Crimson ever was." New audience, new sounds. "This time I've got a digital stereo set-up which consists of a Roland JC-120 and a Fender Twin, which gives me two very different sounds," says Belew. Adrian's guitars are Fender custom Strats with Sperzel locking tuners, Kahler whammys, Fender's Lace Sensor pickups and Roland's GK-2 synth pickups. His stage synth is a Roland GR-50. He also has Roland's GF-6, "for stereo delay and chorus," and GP-8. "Along with that, I brought a couple of my ancient devices: the Foxtone, which gets the screaming tones in 'Big Electric Cat,' and a ring modulator that helps me get the guitar sound predominant in 'Bumpity Bump.'" But this tour's fave toy may be his Roland Pitch Shifter, which allows Adrian to play backwards guitar live. "I've always been a real lover of backwards guitar," he says delightedly.

He was less than delighted, however, by the response to his previous solo album, 1986's inventive, all-instrumental *Desire Caught By the Tail*. "I was very disappointed that there wasn't a place for it in the world," Belew reflects, "and disappointed that it got very little promotion—or even criticism. I think I collected six reviews, which just made me feel sick. I'd put a year-and-a-half of my life into making it.

"*Desire* also basically killed my relationship with Island Records, because they just threw their hands up and said, 'I don't know what to do with this.' And that was it. Their next offer was such a joke that it was basically like saying, 'We don't want you on our label anymore.' So I left. I guess there just doesn't really seem to be a place for forward-thinking instrumental music.

"When I finished *Desire* I was inspired to move back into the realm of pop music. To me the challenge of pop is to create a more interesting form of music within a traditional format, combining elements like a good dance beat, accessible melody and interesting lyrics with things like oddball guitar and Indian instruments. I guess I'm still way back in the time when you could hear 'I Am the Walrus' and 'Strawberry Fields' on radio, and they were hits!"

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JACKSON

[cont'd from page 82] eager to claim credit, Paul's quick to give it away: "I remember when Scritti Politti's 'Wood Beez' came out. My friends were calling me saying, 'Man, you played on the Scritti Politti record! Wow, how did you think of that kind of stuff?' I didn't. They came up with it all. We had a blast. Green [Gartside] and David Gamson [Scritti Politti's vocalist and keyboardist] had come up with a lot of the parts. I remember doing 'Wood Beez' and watching Steve Ferrone overdub his drum part to this sick bass part that David Frank had done. Then it was my turn to overdub. I added a few ideas of my own but most of the stuff they had written out."

Paul speaks of Michael Jackson in similarly glowing terms. Publicly, the singer may come off like a lobotomized marshmallow, but Jackson says he's very much in control of his records: "A lot of times, when

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BEST UNSIGNED BAND

CONTEST

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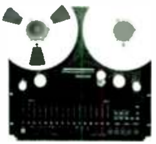

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Michael's writing songs, he'll have me come over to the house and sing me a few things. A case in point is the solo on the song 'Heartbreak Hotel' that Michael did a few years ago. I played the solo, but Michael sang it to me. He put a tape on and said, 'Paul, these are the notes I want you to play. Can you do that?' I said, 'Let's just take it a phrase at a time.' He comes up with a lot of parts like that in the studio."

Since 1981, Paul has cultivated a songwriting partnership with another Jackson: Jermaine. They've written material for Syreeta, for Jermaine's own records and have collaborated on a tune for the forthcoming new Jacksons album. "It was Jermaine who got me to start writing," says Paul, who sees solid songwriting as the best antidote for the overproduced, techno-saccharine formulas that slobber up much contemporary R&B.

"That's why people like Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis and L.A. & Babyface are some of my favorite production teams. Because they're songwriters first. They don't get so caught up in technology that they sacrifice the song. So they make great records *regardless* of the technology they use. I mean, they use a Linn 9000, which is an eight-bit drum machine that's four years old. They cut great records on it. Because records are so easy to make today, in a lot of respects, I think some people get lost in the grooves and the technology and lose sight of songs."

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Like many emerging songwriters, Paul soon found himself wrestling with his own home studio, inspired by Ray Parker, Jr. Over the years, Paul's studio has become a full-blown 24-track affair, housed in a separate building and consisting of an MCI/Sony JH-24 multitrack, Neve 8102 console and Westlake BVM S115 monitors. Jackson's in a position most home recordists would kill to attain: working at some of the world's best studios and getting to pick the brains of brilliant engineers and producers all day. His approach to recording guitars was influenced by engineer Humberto Gatica.

"From Humberto, I learned about Neumann U-47s. They're my favorite guitar mikes. Just stick one in front of the guitar cabinet, slightly off axis. Don't position it directly in front of the cone, because you get a real harsh signal that way. But if you place a 47 just off to the side, it always gives you a nice warm guitar sound."

Jackson has begun producing other artists. He's cutting albums for Tina Madison and ex-Atlantic Starr member Barbara Weathers, and he recently put out a solo album of his own, 1988's *I Came to Play*. (He's currently at work on a followup LP, due this month.) Paul describes the format of both albums as "Wes Montgomery meets Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis.

"What puts me to sleep on a lot of records is this: Say you buy a saxophone record, and hear the *same* sax on every song, doing the same thing: melody and then a solo. So I tried to break my record up with different soloists and a few vocals here and there. And different guitar sounds: this one distorted, this one clean, this one a hollow body, this one an acoustic. I don't necessarily see myself as a jazz guitarist or an R&B guitarist or a whatever guitarist. I'm a guitarist. That's really my first love."

LOVE & ROCKETS

[*cont'd from page 50*] cording that the things which take longest usually aren't the best tracks. The tracks that actually flow, and that you get down in a day or two, usually end up to be the best ones."

While in the studio, the band also cut several tracks that didn't appear on *Love and Rockets*. David J describes them as

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"quite an odd bunch of little songs." Some of them, including the aforementioned "Wake Up," have been earmarked for release as a separate EP to be called *Swing*. "That title is very indicative of the style. There's a certain swing influence in the songs. They're quite jocular in a black sort of way. We're not sure what came over us."

Side projects are plentiful in the Love and Rockets camp. Ash and J both have new solo records in the works. Danny's is a collection of cover songs, including "Me and My Shadow," "Day Tripper" and "Always Something There to Remind Me." It'll feature an appearance by the guitarist's old Tones on Tail cohort Glenn Campling and vocalist Natasha Atlas. And then the band may do a video project as the Bubblemen, a studiedly silly alter-ego. All these diversions provide a bit of therapy and one more way of reacting against Love and Rockets, particularly in its more pretentious incarnations.

But the first priority right now is to produce a followup for "So Alive." To that end, the band has elected to re-record Ash's "No Big Deal," a Crampsish, three-chord rocker from the *Love and Rockets* album. "It's taken on another character since we've been playing it live a lot," David J observes.

So the band's going into the studio to commercialize the song?

"Oh no. We're going in to beef it up. To make it sharper, more aggressive and pointed. And . . . yeah . . . well yes . . . and to make it more commercial, I suppose . . . in a way, yeah."

But not in a calculated way?

"Well, there's a certain amount of calculation there. But it's not going to be a sweetening. Just a sharpening of edges for a single."

On the album, "No Big Deal" is a distorted, gleefully nasty track that seems more likely to please Bauhaus' old following than the new Top 40 audience attracted by "So Alive." Can there be a rapprochement between the two? Both Ash and David J speak of having come full circle as regards Bauhaus. Maybe they're reacting against the notion of reacting against that band. Their current live shows are oddly reminiscent of Bauhaus, right down to the inept musicianship of yore. Ash's underweight guitar tone and J's bum notes on the fretless bass don't quite gell with the big-budget arena lighting Love and Rockets are carrying. But the mood and intention are clear, as Ash confirms.

"We came to the conclusion that the music we now do is not dissimilar in its energy and power to Bauhaus, so why fight against that? We've been through that stage and we're not really hung up with Bauhaus. That dark side is still there. I know it is within me. And I remember injecting a big part of that into Bauhaus. So I think it's more a case of carrying on being who you are and what you are."

So now that Love and Rockets has finally ceased reacting against its past, does the success of "So Alive" pose a strong temptation to nix the stylistic mood swings and get on with producing more hits? Ash answers cautiously.

"Obviously, it has an effect on you. You think, hey, this is great; a lot of people are getting to hear our music now. Let's try and keep this going. Why not? I mean, we'd be jerks to do nothing or just react against that. We definitely want to go with it. We've never been adverse to commercial success to any degree anyway. . . ."

He pauses, roughs up his moussed hair with spread fingertips and starts to laugh. "It's just that commercial success never really came our way before." Ⓜ

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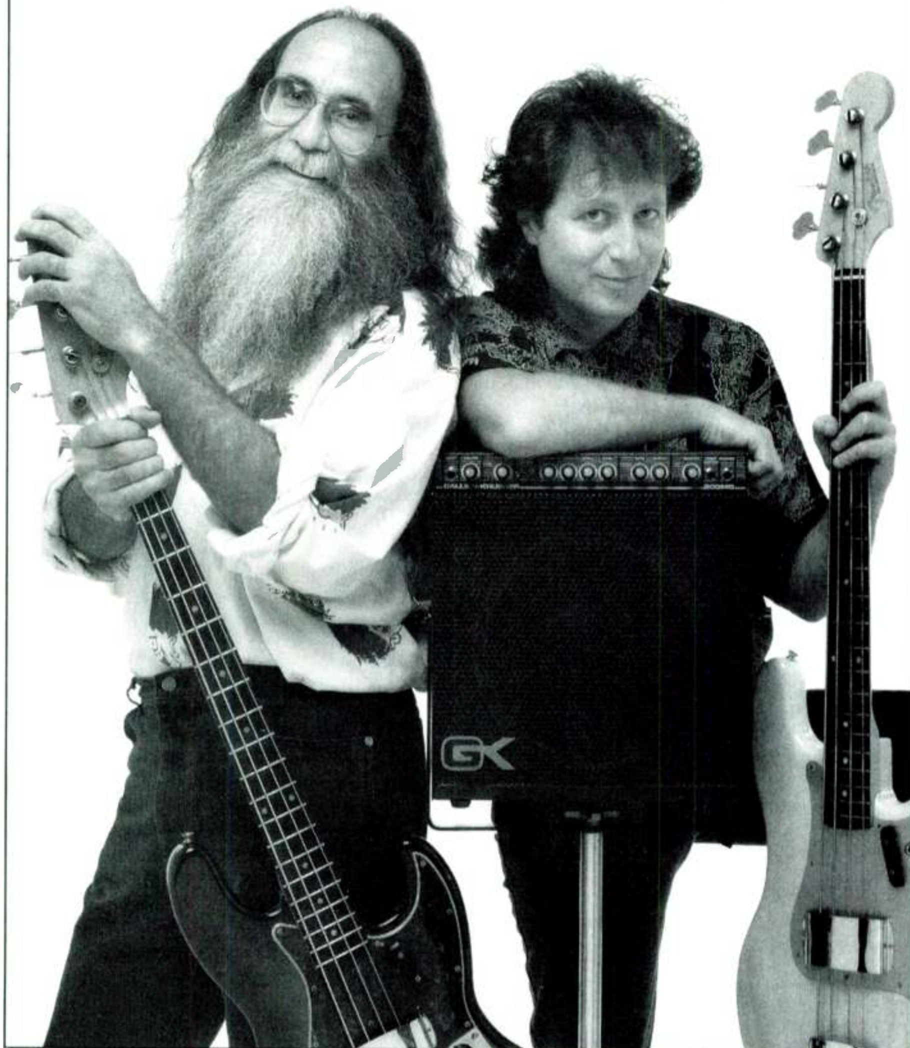

RECORDINGS

Living in a Political World

Dylan and Chapman Take the Higher Ground

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Tracy Chapman *Crossroads*
(Elektra)

Bob Dylan *Oh Mercy*
(Columbia)

PERHAPS our greatest living songwriter, Bob Dylan has had his future written off by critics for most of his career. It was happening years before the widely esteemed *Blood On the Tracks* appeared in 1974 and it hasn't let up since. Fans of more recent records can point to *Slow Train Coming* and *Infidels* as very respectable milestones in what's become an epic career, and virtually every album he's ever made bears the stamp of his willful originality—a sound, a song, a turn of phrase that gives you a new way of looking at the world. But for some people, anything less than a flat-out masterpiece from Dylan is seen as proof that he's a has-been.

On the other hand, it's tempting to tout a strong album like *Oh Mercy* as just that, a masterpiece. It would be the easy thing to do—but as the philosopher Richard Nixon once pointed out, that would be wrong. So let's just say *Oh Mercy* is the most deeply satisfying collection of songs to appear from a major pop artist this year.

Musicians often say that as they mature they learn which notes to leave out; *Oh Mercy* is a case in point. Its 10 songs encompass a range of musical styles and are bound together by succinct imagery and clear, uncluttered arrangements. Dylan has always been strongly influenced by black blues and church music—"Disease of Conceit" is actually delivered as a sermon—and the repetitive rhythms and cadences of that language help underscore his sense of moral purpose. You can hear it in the roiling "Political World," less a song than a fusillade of indictments about a society that

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lacks spiritual focus. You can hear it on "Broken," a black-humored litany of things falling apart, and again on "Ring Them Bells," a tune as tender and elegiac as anything he's written since "I Shall Be Released." The technique is less apparent on two brokenhearted love songs, "Tear Drops" and "Most of the Time," though the mood feels the same.

This is the first Dylan record in memory that pulls you in by its sound. An Eno disciple, producer Daniel Lanois has a knack for giving weight to the space between the notes, a cinematic ambience that complements Dylan's distinctive vocals. It's a thrill to hear Dylan showcased as a singer. His is not a technically great voice, obviously, but he knows how to turn his limits to advantage; listen to the insinuating rasp he brings to "Man in a Long Black Coat," for example, while still phrasing more brilliantly than any pop singer this side of Aretha Franklin.

For all that, *Oh Mercy* is not the sort of record that proclaims triumph. Indeed, songs like "What Good Am I?" suggest that the religious crusade Dylan began with such a clamor on *Slow Train Coming* has come full circle. *Slow Train* and *Saved* evoked the fire-and-brimstone, DeMille version of the Bible; *Oh Mercy*, a more personal quest, is introspective, penitent and ultimately unsettling. It has the aura of a man shouldering a cross.

It's a wonder no one ever called Tracy Chapman the new Dylan, but then no one had time: her debut album was the musical phenomenon of 1988. The two have plenty in common, including roots in folk and blues, a gift for simple but compelling melodies, an upright sense of social justice—and after Chapman's stunning debut, an audience unlikely to settle for much less than perfection.

Crossroads, Chapman's second collection of songs, sticks with the spare sound and feel of *Tracy Chapman*—an approach that only a writer of her lyric gifts and passion could hope to keep pulling off. Compared with the string of gems on Chapman's first album, though, it's a little disappointing—as if earnestness weren't enough.

It would be easy to ascribe the differences to second album syndrome, but that would be wrong. One trait that distinguished *Tracy Chapman* was her knack for giving political ideas a strong personal context; you could grasp how an unjust society can ruin people's lives. New songs like "Subcity" and "Material World" make similar points, but in a manner that seems flat, generic. Her new songs about relationships have similar flaws: "Bridges," which seems like it should be the record's showpiece, makes a cautionary point—"All the bridges that you burn come back to haunt you"—but unlike "Fast Car," without a narrative that shows how.

Still, a transcendent song is a rare thing, and *Crossroads* has two. On the love lament "Be Careful of My Heart," Chapman's voice drops to a quiet quaver as she evokes the heartache of giving away so much there's nothing left. The album closes with a companion piece, "All That You Have Is Your Soul," that tells all you need to know about her personal resolve and sense of dignity. Tracy Chapman may be at a crossroads, but, like Dylan and a few others, she'll merit close attention whichever path she takes.

—**Mark Rowland**

Exene Cervenka

Old Wives' Tales
(Rhino)

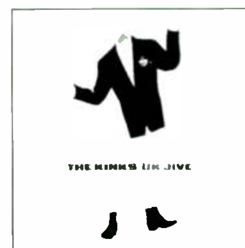
FORMER PUNK GODDESS Exene Cervenka, of the magnificent band X, always had the heart of a folk singer. So it's not surprising that her debut LP as a solo artist has as much in common with protest music as it has with punk. Even when X was at the peak of good fortune she seemed to sniff at success with suspicion and disdain; since then she's left the fast track of L.A.—the city that was like a muse for X—for life as a wife and mother in a small town in Idaho. But the change in lifestyle hasn't altered her obsessions or dulled the furious passion that's always informed her music.

Produced by Tony Gilkyson (who co-wrote three of the songs), *Old Wives' Tales* is musically diverse, including a spoken-word piece, a laid back Chuck Berry riff, a cool piano-bar number evocative of Mose Allison, raunchy rock and straight country. Two songs here careen out of the speakers with the bracing rush of X at its best. Cervenka is not a great singer in the conventional sense, but, like Bob Dylan or Patti Smith, she's a distinctive one. She has a bruised, mournful voice made to snarl out the phrase "you can go to hell." And her writing is her chief creative strength. *Old Wives' Tales* features some of the most elegantly turned lyrics you're likely to hear this year.

The most significant constant in Cervenka's work—now and in the past—is its overwhelming sense of melancholy and loss. It's hard to recall a single light-hearted tune from her pen. This time out she spins tales of disillusionment and domestic messes, takes a sneering look at glamour and success, exhorts her listeners to fight the powers that be, and, after surveying the earth in ruins, turns ecological activist on "Leave Heaven Alone." The Catholic church left an irrevocable mark on Cervenka, and bloody saints and martyrs continue to abound in her songs. Every single tune on the album is pretty darn blue.

For the record, though X is not officially broken up, they haven't recorded a studio album in more than two years, and none of Cervenka's old bandmates turn up here. If the purpose of their absence was to prove she can do it on her own, she more than makes her point on this fine album.

—**Kristine McKenna**



The Kinks

U.K. Jive
(MCA)

IT'S IRONIC that this summer marked much-ballyhooed reunions of the Stones and the Who, while the Kinks, a British Invasion contemporary of both groups, quietly released their twenty-sixth album, *U.K. Jive*, in a career that spans 25 years. Unlike those two seminal bands, though, the Kinks and their out-of-time leader Ray Davies have never pretended to be dedicated followers of fashion. While the

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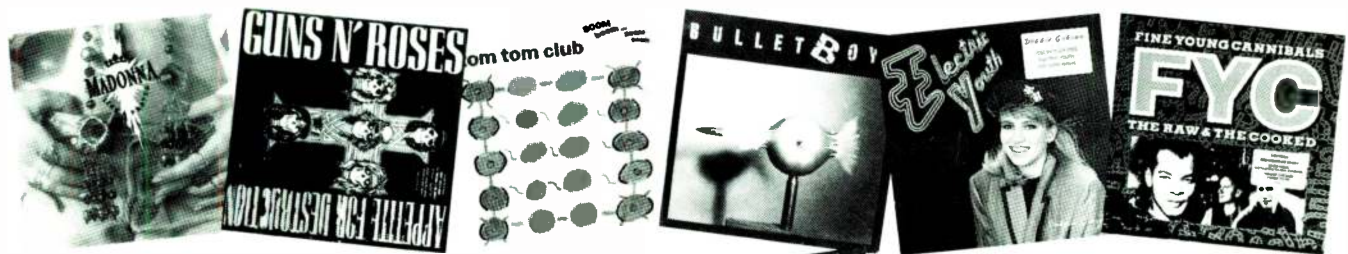

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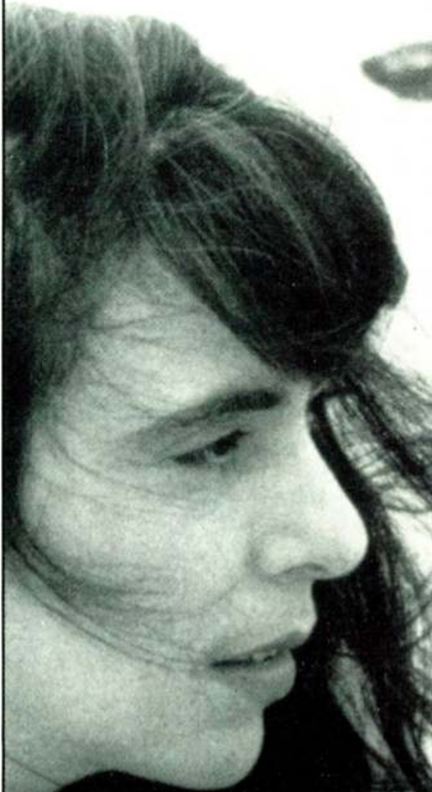

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Who toasted "their generation" and Jagger promised not to be caught singing "Satisfaction" at 40, Davies shunned the youth cult and modern times for a more "civilized" era: before England's great empire experienced its Waterloo Sunset.

Since moving over from Arista to MCA in 1986, the Kinks had fallen into one of their frequent commercial troughs, occasioned largely by Ray's family feud with guitarist Dave Davies, who keeps trying to move the band into an area of faceless arena-oriented rock. With *U.K. Jive*, Ray regains control and proves why his songwriting skills are among the most emulated in rock 'n' roll, from Paul Weller to Paul Westerberg, from Morrissey to Andy Partridge.

Like most of Davies' best work, *Jive* is a concept album about current-day perils. In "Aggravation," he assumes the persona of the frustrated commuter stuck in a traffic jam, fretting about pollution, ozone layers and "mass contamination." A metallic Dave Davies guitar flourish opens "How Do I Get Close," a classic Ray ballad which illuminates another long-standing concern—connecting one-to-one "in this world without feeling/Where words have no meaning." The title track is one of those "Come Dancing"–styled tributes to the Kinks' music-hall roots, with the sing-song, pitter-patter of *Lola*'s "The Moneygoround."

With its heavy-metal blasts at the exploitation of sex and violence in the media, "Entertainment" shows how close Ray's nostalgia can get to the conservatism of the P.M.R.C., though "Dear Margaret," an Elvis Costello–like critique of the current U.K. administration, leaves no question where Davies' true political leanings lie.

But what makes *U.K. Jive* the most affecting Kinks effort in years are subtler touches: the Merseybeat harmonies of "War Is Over," as Davies paints a vision of the disillusionment in Britain after "the Great War"; or the loss of innocence he suggests in "Long Balloon," a neo-psychedelic whimsy where Ray compares *terra firma* to a lazily-floating object loosed from its moorings to "just drift away." It is for moments like this, musical epiphanies which transcend rock 'n' roll, that the Kinks deserve to be celebrated.

For capturing "minor" insights instead of "major" truths, the Kinks still tend to be underrated. Why else have they yet to be voted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame? Let's hope *U.K. Jive* provides the impetus to correct that oversight.—Roy Trakin

George Clinton

The Cinderella Theory
(Warner Bros.)

STYLES SHIFT, FADS FADE, but the funk endures. More than an unstoppable groove, a state of true funk means being in harmony with that big Cosmic Thang, dig? When you've got the funk, reality almost makes sense. Without it, your bad self is stuck in workaday muck.

George Clinton still feels the funk in a major way. Though not the originator—James Brown got down first—he's kept the faith for two righteous decades via Parliament, Funkadelic and a passel of other projects. His offspring are legion, meaning not just rappers, but everyone who puts a whomp in the sound. (Right, Prince?) Now he's back to collect some credit with *The Cinderella Theory*, a typically loopy stew of warped good humor and rubber rhythms, transcendent fun served up with the single-minded dedication of a true believer. As "Serious Slammin'" observes, "We don't want no fakes around."

Driven by friendly drum blasts and belching synths, these sprawling grooves ring just as fresh as they did when the Mothership landed soulful eons ago. The graceful "Airbound" makes good use of the amiable mob of singers (over two dozen on *Cinderella* in all), working up to a heady chant of "We gone/We gone/We gone . . ." to simulate the thrill of flying solo. Revisiting Clinton's canine concerns, "Why Should I Dog U Out?" rumbles and sputters drunkenly, name-checking Deputy Dawg, Pound Puppies *et al.*, and even trots out a few choruses of "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?" Raunchy business erupts in the sizzling "French Kiss," a cheerfully lewd come-on sure to scare delicate sensibilities.

Only a sucker would take Clinton for a simple court jester, however. "There I Go Again" is a flat-out gorgeous ballad: romantic yearning swathed in radiant melody. Featuring Chuck D. and Flavor Flav of Pub-

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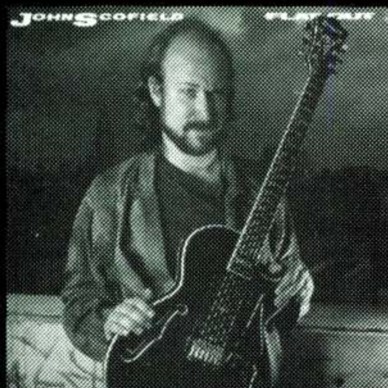
Nuff Said: "FLAT OUT"



The long awaited release from downbeat magazine's 1989 Critic's Poll Winner:

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lic Enemy, "Tweakin'" injects jarring hints of violent street life into the mix. And it's hard not to hear an axe grind in "Dog U Out?" with the lines, "Get a little funk/Then you sell out . . . We did all of that/Without selling out." Anyone special in mind, GC?

Swell though it be, *The Cinderella Theory* doesn't boast a classic to match "Flash Light" or "Atomic Dog." For sure it's not his version of "The Banana Boat Song," which has a forced quality found nowhere else on the album.

It's a minor glitch in the divine plan. Like a mighty force of nature, George Clinton just keeps rolling along, liberating all in his path. Long may he funk.—Jon Young

John Lee Hooker

The Healer
(Chameleon)

WHEN THE HELL are people going to realize that if they stop messing around the blues, the blues won't mess around with them?

Maybe I'm a damn purist, but all-star blues sessions, of which *The Healer* is a particularly misguided example, seem to me to be essentially pointless exercises.

Rather than record a blues artist with the sympathetic accompaniment of his own band, the culprits involved opt for the marquee glitter of big-name sidemen, who more often than not can't get with the nominal star's eccentric groove.

It should be pointed out from the git-go that John Lee Hooker has always been a willing co-conspirator in this racket. In fact, the Hook was one of the trailblazers in blues super-sessions—he cut *Hooker 'n' Heat* with honkey bluesters Canned Heat back in 1970, and followed through with a set with Van Morrison in '72. But while Hooker may not be adverse to the scam, he is also the bluesman who is least adaptable to it, for his style ranks among the most irregular and unpredictable in the form.

On *The Healer* (Hooker's 110th album!), the 72-year-old star is joined by a constellation of rock artists, most of whom sound like they are playing on different records. Much of the disc conjures the unnerving effect of two radio stations playing at once. The title cut, which mates Hooker with Carlos Santana and his band, is teeth-gnashingly incongruous. Los Lobos have never sounded as ill at ease as they do on "Think Twice Before You Go." Tracks pairing Hooker with Robert Cray's band and with Bonnie Raitt and slide guitarist Roy Rodgers (who also produced most of the sessions) are inoffensive but uninspiring. Even a cut made with old cohorts Canned Heat and harp player Charlie Musselwhite raises very little sand.

Only on the record's relatively unadorned second side do things begin to sound authentic and genuinely stirring. In fact, *The Healer* reaches its emotive heights on two tracks, "Rockin' Chair" and "No Substitute," which feature nothing other than Hooker, his guitar and his trademark foot stomps. It's a strategy that has stood the bluesman in good stead for most of his 60-year career.

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Hmm. Solo John Lee Hooker—whatta concept. Maybe next time, okay, guys?

—Chris Morris

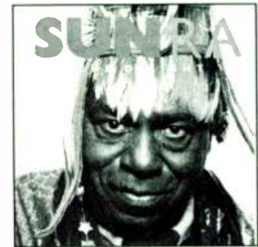
Sun Ra

Blue Delight
(A&M)

Out There a Minute
(Blast First)

ABOUT 16 YEARS AGO, when Impulse! Records was on what seemed its last legs, the label flooded the market in a few months with about 10 prime Sun Ra recordings going back to the late '50s—all drawn from his vast Saturn catalog, all gussied up with otherworldly artwork, all destined for the cut-out bins within months. Sad to say, that's been the best treatment afforded Sun Ra by a major label since he traveled his very first spaceway.

Now comes another brush with the Big Time. With *Blue Delight*, A&M presents late-model Ra at his most approachable, guaranteed to delight those who've heard his name for years and never dropped a dime on the man. From the outset—with its cover depicting the apparent long-lost granddaddy of George Clinton and the Wild



Tchoupitoulas—everything about the record reeks of accessibility and professionalism. Much like Ra's live orientation of the past half-decade, the music celebrates the traditional-via-big-band arrangements of standards; here, "Out of Nowhere" and "Days of Wine and Roses" get the celestial treatment, and Ra's own material, including the title track, fits right in. The days of shrieking saxophones, extended percussion pieces and nonexistent liner notes are apparently over, or at least on hold: *Blue Delight* boasts well-written liner notes and, surprise of surprises, track-by-track solo credits.

Ra has never been so well recorded—his piano rings clear as a bell throughout—and the well-miked Arkestra (expanded to include drummer Billy Higgins, among others) actually sounds *slick* at times. Yet those things which made Ra's Arkestra so compelling in the old days—the solo saxwork of John Gilmore, Marshall Allen and Pat Patrick, Ra's avant-organ excursions, Ronnie Boykin's bowed bass, say—largely take a back seat to ensemble playing, as do some of those players (only Gilmore and Allen make appearances). It's good, it's accessible, it's honoring a legend—but for some, it's not the Ra they remember, not the Ra who boldly placed his portrait alongside Copernicus and Galileo when ESP Records was more than a memory.

Those seeking a glimpse of Ra at his most heliocentric are thus advised to check out Blast First's *Out There a Minute*, which is everything *Blue Delight* is not: poorly recorded, poorly annotated ("Featuring John Gilmour [*sic*] and Marshall Allen," read the sole personnel credits; recordings, we're told, are "from the late 1960s, made in and around 42nd Street, New York City, Earth"), and a fine sampler of what makes Sun Ra so special to so many. Familiar tracks like "Other Worlds" and "Next Stop Mars" (cas-

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sette and CD only) show up next to tunes last heard on so many of those Saturn specials; Ra shows up on piano, celeste and God knows what other keyboard instruments; and John Gilmore's saxophone—long heralded as an influence to John Coltrane, among others—shows up most of the competition. And the recording quality isn't really *bad*, mind you—just Ra-like. Like it's always been.

Of the 100-plus records the man and his Arkestra have recorded since the mid-'60s, about six Sun Ra albums currently remain in print in this country. So here are two more. In these days of deluxe boxed sets by Charlie Parker, Bill Evans, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk and other jazz legends, don't you think some enterprising record company somewhere could get it together long enough to deal with Ra's legacy?

—Dave DiMartino

Jon Hassell/Farafina

Flash of the Spirit
(Intuition/Capitol)

FOR OVER A DECADE, Jon Hassell has been layering his processed trumpet over rhythmic beds borrowed from the far corners of the world. His new collaborative project with the West African group Farafina comes as no real surprise, in either conception or end product; there are Hassell's long notes slicing across the percussive turf like locusts having a field day in waves of grain. What *is* surprising is that Hassell's signature pastiche sounds so utterly contemporary.

Once an intriguing outsider, Hassell has anticipated recent turns of events in the musical global village. More directly than the minimalists (among whom he circulated in the late '60s), more effectively than Paul Simon or Peter Gabriel, Hassell inserts a personal voice inside extant ethnic structures and finds resonant chords within that blend, rather than bringing the mountain to

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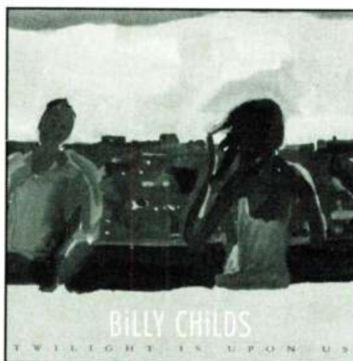

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DECADE IN MUSIC

TRIVIA CALENDAR

Packed with over *2,000 music trivia facts*. Includes: birthdays, major concert and recording dates, obscure facts and top music events, as well as the #1 *single* and *album* for each month of the decade from *Billboard's pop singles & albums charts*. Plus a collection of *Musician*'s top-selling covers. *100% music!*

World Radio History

Mohammed. His insistence on obscuring the natural trumpet sound via harmonizing could be considered a timbral opiate, except he uses the technique to coloristic and structural ends. In music this freely-constructed, the lack of a clearly discernible, monophonic melodic voice becomes its own emotional language.

Hassell finds ways to subtly impose the same style on Farafina. What would otherwise be a simple, joyous chant over bubbling percussion on "Air Afrique (Wind)" is set into mysterious relief by parallel wind and synth harmonies, hovering like ghosts in the backdrop. At other times, the electric piano and angular trumpet (however disguised) recall Miles Davis of *Bitches Brew* and *On the Corner* vintage; atmospheric music that retains the spirit of improvisation while having little to do with chops.

Major labels are jumping on the ethnic music bandwagon, and a lot of dubious instrumental material has lately resulted. But the cream rises. Hassell has stuck to his guns and he sounds fresh as ever: This music is a refuge from inanity in the age of New Age.—Josef Woodard

STEREOTYPES

Photographs on pages 42-45:

OPTION ONE *Debbie Harry: R.J. Capak/LFI; Madonna: Ron Delany.*

OPTION TWO *Mark Farner, Chuck Pulin; Jim Dandy: Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve; David Lee Roth: Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve.*

OPTION THREE *Donovan: Michael Putland/Retna; Cat Stevens: London Features; Morrissey: Douglas Cape/Retna.*

OPTION FOUR *Richard Harris, Darlene Hammond/Retna; Bryan Ferry: Jocelyn Fiske/Star File; Robert Palmer, Gary Gershoff/Retna.*

OPTION FIVE *Odetta, Retna; Joan Armatrading: Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve; Tracy Chapman: Phil Loftus/LFI.*

OPTION SIX *The Byrds: Star File; The Eagles: London Features; Tom Petty: Jay Blakesberg.*

OPTION SEVEN *Jimi Hendrix: Jim Cummins/Star File; Sly Stone: Jim Cummins/Star File; Prince: Ron Delany.*

OPTION EIGHT *Joni Mitchell: Tom Reushe/Retna; Rickie Lee Jones: B.C. Kagan/Retna; Edie Brickell: Larry Busacca/Retna.*

OPTION NINE *Keith Richards: Thom Lukas, Jay Blakesberg, Jay Blakesberg.*

DAT

[*cont'd from page 13*] CBS' 1984 plan to prevent digital duping by carving an audible "notch" out of the original material's frequency range. (Copycode bit its last bit after a 1988 National Bureau of Standards report concluded that it was easily defeated and worked at the expense of the music it was trying to save.) SCMS is even an improvement over current "gray market" home DAT decks, which forbid digital-to-digital taping: Instead, a digital source signal has to enter the analog domain before being recorded, thus introducing the possibility of sonic erosion.

Does the international agreement mean we'll all get DAT recorders in this year's Christmas stockings? Not quite. The Memorandum *does* unite hardware and software companies in addressing governments to pass legislation permitting only SCMS-encoding home DAT units. In the U.S., legislation wouldn't appear before 1990 at the earliest. And even then, don't expect to find the recorders on sale at Woolworth. A spokesperson at Philips, which developed SCMS, expected its new DAT machines to sell between $1,300 and $1,500.—*Scott Isler*

VIDEOTAKES

[*cont'd from page 110*] his groups), he's still best recalled as the singing teenager on his family's '50s TV show. That early success and Nelson's characteristic, smooth-as-silk rockabilly seem so effortless it's still hard to realize the original and distinct quality of his performances—at least until you feel the chest pangs as he croons "Lonesome Town." Whattaguy.—*Mark Rowland*

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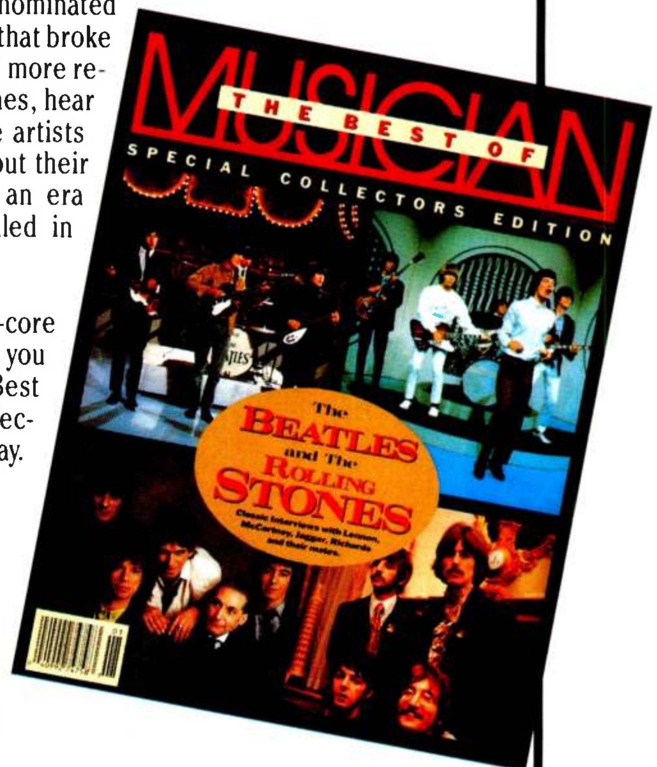

World Radio History

SHORT TAKES

SO MUCH MUSIC, SO LITTLE TIME

ROCK

By J.D. Considine

Daniel Lanois

Acadie (Warner Bros.)

PERHAPS THE BEST lesson Lanois learned from Brian Eno was how to make technology sound human; listening to the sonic garden he's cultivated here, it's hard not to be impressed by how sheltering and warm Lanois' electronics seem. It's not all production smarts, either. Just as Lanois knows how to humanize technology, he also has a gift for modernizing tradition, leading him to such unlikely conclusions as the Cajun post-modernisms of "O Marie" or the otherworldly blues of his amazing "Amazing Grace." An incredible album.

Various Artists

The Bridge (Caroline)

JUST AS NEIL YOUNG'S own work continually vacillates between the inadvertently commercial and the unlistenably audacious, the performances assembled on this Young tribute album seem equally schizoid. Poignance (Henry Kaiser, the Pixies) sometimes meets pointlessness (Flaming Lips, Dinosaur Jr.), though the balance is generally to the good. Sonic Youth's wrenching reprogramming of "Computer Age" and Loop's crunchy "Cinnamon Girl" are appropriate appreciations of Young's Crazy Horse wildness, while Victoria Williams' "Don't Let It Bring You Down" and Nick Cave's crooning "Helpless" pay apt tribute to his folky geniality. (114 W. 26th St., New York, NY 10011)

Malcolm McLaren and the Bootzilla Orchestra

Waltz Darling (Epic)

THAT MALCOLM McLAREN has latched onto "voguing" seems only too appropriate. This little cul-de-sac of gay culture, in which the strike-a-pose stance of runway models becomes the basis for dancefloor one-upmanship, has all of his favorite attributes: It's high concept, high fashion and high camp. What makes this of interest musically is the unexpected spin he puts on voguing's house-driven sound by layering famous waltzes—"The Blue Danube," "Waltz of the Flowers"—over a relentless 4/4 beat. Even more ingenious is McLaren's contracting Bootsy Collins to build this house beat, and Jeff Beck to rattle its rafters.

L.L. Cool J

Walking with a Panther (Def Jam/Columbia)

AFTER PUSHING verbal aggression to its limit with his first two albums, Cool J has gone in another direction with this one. He does his share of woofing—"Droppin' Em" opens the album with the usual I'm-bad blather—but the most interesting numbers are those which prefer the implied threat of total confidence, like the quietly nasty "I'm That Type of Guy." If only L.L. would love his ladies with a little more tenderness than "Big Ole Butt" or "Fast Peg" show, he'd really be the most respected cat in the jungle.

L.A. Guns

Cocked and Loaded (Vertigo)

... AND SHOOTING BLANKS.

Tom Jones

Move Closer (Jive)

IT'S WEIRD ENOUGH that Tom Jones looks as much a hipster as he did in '65; what's scary is that he can still *sound* the part. *Move Closer* is larded with enough bathetic balladry that it remains comfortably square, but if Jones ever cut an entire album of sizzlers like "Kiss" and "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," well . . . hipness might never be the same.

Boris Grebenshikov

Radio Silence (Columbia)

THOUGH RUSSIAN ROCK seems the unlistenable trend of the season, there's more to Grebenshikov than his "red rocker" gimmick. *Radio Silence* owes a lot to the way producer Dave Stewart fleshes out Mr. G's melodies, but that's only part of its appeal; the rest comes from Grebenshikov's ability to find the music within a lyric, and bring that magic to his listeners.

Faith No More

The Real Thing (Slash)

BECAUSE THE BEST METAL usually slips a bit of mystery into its gothic tunes and droogy grooves, it often seems larger than life as it pours from the speakers. But Faith No More sounds even bigger than that; the eerie melodies and uncanny ensemble playing could have emerged from another dimension, where metal, hardcore, fusion and rap have been meshed together into one all-encompassing roar of power and frustration. Frankly, that's about as real as it gets.

The B-52's

Cosmic Thing (Reprise)

WITHOUT RICKY WILSON'S wacky guitars to provide textural interest, the B-52's have become so completely dominated by vocals that Fred, Cindy and Kate might as well have gone back to singing over records. At least that would be intriguing, which is more than can be said for the predictable grooves they rant over here.

Mary's Danish

There Goes the Wondertruck (Chameleon)

WITH A SOUND that's equally reminiscent of X, the B-52's and Voice of the Beehive, Mary's Danish isn't exactly long on originality. (Did I mention how much the name reminds me of Alice Donut?) Fortunately, there's enough charm in M.D.'s archly melodic pop songs that you can write off these debts and take the band for what it is—loose-limbed, light-hearted fun.

Babyface

Tender Lover (Solar)

WITH ITS SLICK SYNTHS and insistent, insinuating percussion, *Tender Lover* seems poised for chart success—and no wonder. Along

World Radio History

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World Radio History

with Antonio "L.A." Reid, Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds is half of the most hit-oriented songwriting/production team in R&B today. Yet for all its promise, this album doesn't quite deliver; lovable as Babyface may be on beat-intensive numbers like "My Kinda Girl," his featherweight voice lacks the sinewy strength expected of a soul man, leaving him a little too tender to make a convincing lover.

JAZZ

By Chip Stern

Bill Frisell

Before We Were Born (Elektra/Musician)

JAZZ "SLOWHAND" Bill Frisell is the most original electric guitarist to emerge in the last 20 years. His collaboration with John Zorn on "High Plains Drifter" is a shockabilly collage of crackling sonic explosions, while the quirky instrumentation of "A Little Song and Dance" (featuring Julius Hemphill's virile alto saxophone and drummer Joey Baron's off-center syncopations) proposes a B-movie accord between Thelonious Monk, Ornette Coleman and Bob Wills' Texas Playboys. Less satisfying are three freeze-dried, insular songs produced by Arto Lindsay and Peter Shere.

Eddie Lang / Joe Venuti

Stringing the Blues (Columbia Special Products)

WITH HIS FIRM, INDEFATIGABLE 4/4 beat, Eddie Lang (Salvatore Massaro) gave the jazz guitar a distinctive rhythmic presence and solo voice in the era before amplification. Some of this two-record set's roaring-'20s Whiteman-style material is kind of creaky, but the chamber-sized ensembles with violinist Joe Venuti are a joy. On "Bull Frog Moan," "Two Tone Stomp" and "A Handful of Riffs," the spectral harmonics, bluesy bends and modern harmonies Lang conjures up with 12-string legend Lonnie Johnson sound as fresh and funky today as they did 60 years ago.

Marvin "Smitty" Smith

The Road Less Traveled (Concord)

DRUMMERS, PLEASE NOTE: Want to have a career in music? Study keyboard harmony, like all the great band-leading drummers have. Here's a rhythmic virtuoso who subsumes his considerable energy to the dictates of his arrangements and there's nary a bloated drum solo in sight. He has a mature feel for ballads, his torchy reading of Bill Bruford's "Gothic 17" will turn some fusoid heads, and no drummer under 30 swings this hard.

George Marsh

Upon a Time (An Album of Duets) (New Albion)

THIS BAY AREA DRUM MASTER proves himself a force to be reckoned with on these spacey, singing duets with guitar synthesist John Abercrombie and his old section-mate, bassist Mel Graves. The tone of these encounters runs the gamut from Afro-Oriental rituals to free-jazz spellbinders and new-age impressionism—Marsh's approach to percussion is loose, breathy and swinging, and he has matched his array of bells, DW drums and A. Zildjians for optimum tonal effect (584 Castro Street, #515, San Francisco, CA 94114).

Cecil Taylor

The Complete Barnaby/ Candid Cecil Taylor (Atlantic)

FAR BE IT FROM ME to disagree with platoon-mate Peter "Mookie" Watrous, but I thought his review of Mosaic's recent four-CD release required a second opinion. In terms of Cecil's ultimate goals, these are baby pictures, like the Atlantic Ornettes. Much as O.C.'s Bird-like post-modern blues echoed bop, C.T.'s youthful vision of a modern jazz/twentieth-century classical synthesis plays like Elliot Carter and Thelonious Monk on a weekend bender.

This is a portrait of the artist in transition ("The Great Divide" as annotator/bassist Buell Neidlinger characterizes it), featuring the youthful stylist suspended between two worlds: on one hand, there's the milieu of his jazz role models (Erroll Garner, Horace Silver, Ellington and Monk); then there's the contrasting pull of his own atonal, polyrhythmic inclinations—and the clear implication of future forms. The tension between his polytonal aspirations and the strictures of the classic swing rhythm section makes for some bouncy, angular performances. There's also an idiosyncratic Ellington date (with Clark Terry and Roswell Rudd); Sunny Murray's previously unissued recording debut (which finds him very much into his Philly Joe bag); some dynamite trio work with Neidlinger and Billy Higgins (the serialistic blues "O.P."); and the dark interludes of "This Nearly Was Mine," which ranks as one of C.T.'s most poignant, poetic depictions of Afro-Eurasian surrealism.

INDIE

Fairport Convention

Red and Gold (Rough Trade)

AFTER 22 YEARS of deaths, line-up changes, zilch record sales and bouncing from label to label with mind-boggling regularity, folk-rock stalwarts Fairport Convention are back with their strongest album in years. Unlike recent outings where they've hedged their bets with guest shots from former members or simply rehashed older material, the 1989 Fairporters stand on their own with a solid brace of originals and covers by fellow travelers like Dave Whetstone and Ralph McTell. Singer Simon Nicol, once a decent vocal pinch-hitter, is now good by any standards; violinist Ric Sanders' "The Rose Hip" offers his most attractive playing and writing. A rollicking version of Dylan's "Open the Door, Richard" brings the band full circle to its earliest days. Here's to the next 22 years.—*Thomas Anderson*

Ciro Hurtado

In My Mind (ROM)

A MEMBER OF THE Latin-American ensemble Huayucaltia, Hurtado is a guitarist who combines the dexterity and elegance of the Spanish classicists with the romantic and rhythmic imperatives of South America. As this effort shows, he's also an outstanding composer and arranger who knows how to work pop instrumentation into a sound that evokes rather than dilutes his Peruvian roots. Still, the best moments here are achingly pretty solo pieces: an Afro-Peruvian "marinera," a sweet tango (with bandoneón accompaniment), the aptly titled "Spanish Heart." Discover a major talent. (Box 491212, Los Angeles, CA 90049.)—*Mark Rowland*

Lazy Lester

Harp and Soul (Alligator)

LOUSIANAN LESTER is an excellent blues harpist and a sleepily soulful singer who lulls you into powerful grooves. The ones here feature well-chosen covers of blues famous (Muddy's "I'm a Man," the ballad "Raining in My Heart") and obscure, cranked into gear by a band that includes Kenny Neal, one of the tastiest guitarists to come down the pike in a while. There's a jambalaya of influences from country to R&B, but what's best is the mood Lester conjures, as redolent of down-home living as a catfish on a skillet. (Box 60234, Chicago, IL 60660.)

—*Mark Rowland*

Phil Ochs

Gunfight at Carnegie Hall (Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab/A&M CD)

SEEMINGLY DOOMED to recapitulate Bob Dylan's career, protest singer Ochs committed his electric apostasy in 1970—appearing onstage in a gold suit and performing Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley songs. As documented here, the tension was palpable, the performances transcendent. Incredibly, this is *Gunfight*'s debut U.S. release. More's the pity that this, Ochs' last

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recording before his 1976 suicide, finds him in such good form not just on the oldies but his own post-protest material as well. Shame on Mobile Fidelity for not listing band personnel or songwriting credits on an otherwise laudable reissue. (1260 Holm Road, Petaluma, CA 94952.)—*Scott Isler*

Tuli Kupferberg

Tuli and Friends (Shimmy-Disc)

ONE OF THE MAIN creative forces in the Fugs, Tuli Kupferberg was one of the great radicals of the '60s, and, contrary to the prevailing image of that generation in the media, he is still a great radical. Thus the media ignores him. You shouldn't. This record is both charming and inspiring, largely because of Kupferberg's ruthless honesty. His rhymes, puns, meter and pitch are often outrageously bad, but it all contributes to the hilarious sense of catharsis. All those who hate Republicans and feel out of step with the times, listen to Tuli and know the problem is the times, not you. (Box 1187, New York, NY 10116.)

—*Charles M. Young*

Glenn Branca

Symphony No. 6
(Devil Choirs at the Gates of Heaven)
(Blast First/Restless)

BRANCA REMINDS ME of Steve Reich at his most train-like, rolling hypnotically through the night, reassuring because of the inevitability, unsettling because of the power. Conducting an orchestra of 10 guitars, keyboard, bass and drums, Branca goes for no melody, just drone and pulse that build to exquisite tension and then release. Yes, that does sound like sex, and the Devil Choirs made me say it.

—*Charles M. Young*

The Happy Flowers

Oof (Homestead)

THE OTHER DAY I saw one of the neighborhood schizophrenics in deep argument with a mailbox. If you took that guy and slapped him around until he was in a drooling frenzy of terror and rage, and you put him in a recording studio with a kindergarten rhythm band and a 14-year-old guitarist who'd just discovered feedback . . . if you did all that and *enjoyed* it, you'd still want to give the Happy Flowers several bottles of Thorazine. (Box 800, Rockville Center, NY 11571.)—*Charles M. Young*

The Butthole Surfers

Double Live (Latino Bugger Veil)

IT'S ONE THING to bootleg metastars like Guns N' Roses, and quite another to bootleg the Butthole Surfers, which is about as low as art thieves can sink. Whoever and whatever Latino Bugger Veil is, they are scumbags. That said, Latino Bugger Veil has done quite a good job, recording the Buttholes DAT, clearly labeling the songs and providing a semi-historical booklet with recognizable photographs—none of which services the Buttholes themselves would ever provide lest they destroy their mystique. The mystique of this music is, however, indestructible. These guys live are the purest example of Dionysian madness I've ever experienced. I own #135 of 10,000 copies pressed—that leaves 9,865 chances for you to become experienced too.

—*Charles M. Young*

CLASS

By Chip Stern

Andrés Segovia

1927-1939 Recordings, Volumes One & Two
(EMI)

SEGOVIA WAS THE FIRST artist with the guts, ambition and charisma to showcase the guitar in big concert halls as a legitimate solo instrument, going on to become this century's preeminent guitar hero (and rescuing the instrument from the indentured servitude of polite salon accompaniments). This wonderful Keith Hardwick/EMI remastering of ancient 78s represents exactly what digital quality was meant to be: an opportunity to retrieve, preserve *and* enhance great art for posterity (which is why you should take a rain check on the putzy Is Horowitz/MCA Segovias).

Pablo Casals

Bach: Suites for Cello, Volumes 1 & 2
(EMI)

Yo-Yo Ma

Bach: Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello (CBS)

THE OLD MAN DANCES, the young man soars, and this tale of the tape illustrates just how much diversity of feeling you can encounter in contrasting interpretations of the same piece. Casals was already an old man when he put down this definitive Bach set. His playing has a rough, soulful power, each note as tawny and aromatic as tanned leather. The brilliant young virtuoso Yo-Yo Ma takes that leather and buffs it into a suede finish, at times bordering on the pastel sheen of the new age thanks to an ambience-rich digital recording (when blasted at rock and roll volume levels, each note is a comet, trailing a neon tail of hall reverberation in its wake). Yo-Yo Ma's intonation is every bit as overwhelming as that of jazz counterpart Wynton Marsalis, but there's an earthy, folkish quality to Casals' interpretation that, in its own way, is as cold-blooded and vocalized as anything by the old man's 1936-37 contemporaries, Robert Johnson and Louis Armstrong.

VIDEO

Bruce Weber

Let's Get Lost (Little Bear)

CHET BAKER NEVER bared his soul to anyone: not his wives, his lovers or his children. Perhaps only to his music, and even then, not often. But filmmaker Bruce Weber has shone a light through the nicks in Baker's hip exterior to illuminate the beauty, tragedy and lies that the singer/trumpeter lived. Through interviews, recollections and performances, the California-bred James Dean of jazz—who, at 57, looked like a living portrait of Dorian Grey when *Let's Get Lost* was filmed two years ago—comes across as a natural musician; a handsome kid with a brilliant future; an unrepentant junkie who disappointed his kids, spouses and mother; a liar; a wayward lover; a man not wholly devoted to anything except himself. The movie's shot in grainy black and white, a "jazz film" cliché, but its only real flaws occur when Weber forgets he's telling a man's life story, not shooting another Calvin Klein ad.—*Ted Drozdowski*

Frank Gambale

Monster Licks and Speed Picking
(DCI Music Video)

FRANK'S FLEET FINGERS give new meaning to the term "digital sound"; here the amiable Aussie refashions standard scale patterns in a manner that allows faster movement across the fretboard. The vid package includes sheet music for easy reference, and Frank plays everything nice and slow the first time, so no need to feel intimidated. Good tips here for future fusionoids, or even if you're one of those rare guitarists who likes to show off for friends. (541 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10011.)

—*Mark Rowland*

Various Artists

A Tribute To Rick Nelson
(Rhino Video)

PATCHY BUT QUITE MOVING video includes on-screen memoirs from Fats Domino, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison, and enough footage of Nelson to underscore the fact that he belongs in their company. Rick might be the only pop performer who has sold over 50 million records and remains underrated; a naturally unaffected singer and uncompromised musician (check out the quality of sidemen in [*cont'd on page 105*]

World Radio History

[cont'd from page 67] standing around clapping, almost like a hoedown." So we left it that way. And sure enough, people in the audience clap along. It's almost like a little gospel thing. Yeah, it's cheesy. But it works for the song.

MUSICIAN: *The last song on the album, "The Heart of the Matter," deals with a theme you often come back to—the inability to let love go. It's in "I Can't Stand Still" as jealousy, it's in "Boys of Summer" as longing, and in "Heart of the Matter" Don Henley, the perfectionist, the workaholic, sings to his lost love that "Pride and competition cannot fill these empty arms/And the work I put between us doesn't keep me warm." I know you're not comfortable with that image of you, but it makes that message more powerful.*

HENLEY: "The Heart of the Matter" is a very personal song that was wrought out of a relationship, quite a long serious relationship that I had, that broke apart about three years ago. Most love songs just kind of recycle the same old clichés and they don't really get into reasons why. I wanted to write a love song that got down to some kind of truth about what goes wrong. And it was a very difficult song for me to write. It took a few cocktails to get some of that stuff out. But I felt a lot lighter after I wrote it. And of course my friend J.D. Souther helped me with it.

MUSICIAN: *At what point in writing a song that personal do you bring it to a co-writer?*

HENLEY: In this case he's a very close friend of mine, so I didn't mind bringing it to him, even though it was very personal. He knew what it was about immediately. 'Cause he's been there, too. He heard the song in two different stages. He heard the track when Mike Campbell gave it to me. Then I must have had 60 or 70 percent of the lyrics when I went to him with it. It was toward the very end of the album. We write that way. I always take things to him at the very end when there's a lot of pressure because we both work well under pressure; it forces you to give up things you might want to hang onto, it forces you to bare everything. 'Cause you know you have to finish the record and you know you want the song to be good.

MUSICIAN: *You know the woman you lost is going to hear your song about her. Does that affect how you write it?*

HENLEY: No, 'cause I know that it's not going to change anything. I know that she's going to hear it, but I also know that other people who are in the same situation are going to hear it. You try to deal in *universal truths*; you operate on the assumption that what's true for you is on some level true for a lot of other people. And when you really tap into something, it's very powerful. Sure she's going to hear it, but I have no illusions about it bringing her back. She's not going to come rushing over to my house and say, "All is forgiven."

But it was something I had to say to her and to myself. It's something I had to get off my chest. And I felt better, it was like therapy for me. It was a wall that I had to climb. To get that personal on a record. It took me 41 years to write that song, to get to the place where I could say that. My songs do grow out of personal experiences by and large. "The Heart of the Matter" is about lessons learned. I learned something that I had coming. You make mistakes and you try to do better next time. There comes a time in your life when a relationship and family and those things become more important. And that time is approaching for me. I thought that time had come a few years ago, but evidently I was wrong. My work will always be important to me, but you have to balance that with some other, more lasting concerns. I think I'm getting better at being able to write songs without having to live through them first. I hope so anyway. 'Cause if I have to live through all of these I'm not going to live very long. Ⓜ

HEART OF THE METER

I've always been in a band," Henley says. "I'm a band guy. That's why I have these people around me now. I'm just not the kind of guy to go out there with a guitar. I admire guys who can do that. James Taylor can sit down by himself and mesmerize people for hours. But I'm a band guy and I need support. I like to interact with people, I like to collaborate."

Which is our cue to go meet Don's touring band and peek in their road cases. Famous IAN WALLACE plays Yamaha Recording Custom series drums with Evans heads. He uses Zildjian cymbals and Zildjian sticks, Ramsa microphones, a Linn Akai MPC60 sequencer, an Akai S-1000 HD sampler and an Aphex Impulse triggering device. Keyboard player SCOTT PLUNKETT carries a Yamaha DX7 and a YM 8000, a Korg M1R, a Roland D-550, a Roland Super Jupiter, an Akai S1000 HD, an Alesis QuadraVerb, Yamaha's GEP 50 and MEP 4, a 360 Systems Audio Matrix, a Southworth Jam Box 4+ and two Yamaha MV802 mixers. Guitarist FRANK SIMES has two "Frankenstein" guitars, assembled from B.C. Rich necks (flat with jumbo frets), EMG pickups and Floyd Rose locking systems. When that gets too confusing, Frank reaches for his '57 Strat or his '58 Les Paul Junior. Or perhaps he thinks again and chooses the Hamer or even the B.C. Rich electric. It's a picker's prerogative to change his mind. Whatever axe he picks, you can bet Frank will be sending it through his two 1971 Hi-Watt Custom 100s and his Marshall 4x12. The sound will be sweetened with a Roland digital delay and a dbx 160 compressor, and distorted with a Rat 22DU (and gals—it's rack mounted). Frank loves his Cry-Baby wah-wah, appreciates his Samson Wireless and enjoys his Korg tuner, too. He plays Ernie Ball strings—regular gauge for a regular guy.

JOHN COREY, not to be outdone, plays guitar and keyboards. A simple old-fashioned man, John's only effect is a Roland digital delay and his amp is a 100-watt Marshall. The guitars are as straight: a noble '58 Stratocaster (John's favorite), a stately 1960 Les Paul Jr., a rough-hewn '68 Rickenbacker Deluxe 12-string and two rugged 1968 Les Paul Customs. Not a man afraid of new challenges, John also wields a Gibson Chet Atkins model acoustic/electric. And yes, like the Rawhide Kid target-shooting with both hands at once, John blasts into "Hotel California" with a shiny new Gibson double-neck SG. Then John ambles over to his Casio synthesizer guitar, which triggers two keyboards, a D-50 and a DX7. Oh yeah, then he plays those two keyboards by hand, too.

Keyboard cat TIMOTHY DRURY sits down at a Yamaha C5 grand piano with a Forte MIDI mod where its belly button should be. He's also packin' an Akai S-1000, a Roland D-550, a Korg M1R, a Roland ME160 Mixer, an Alesis Quadra-Verb, a Yamaha GEP 50 distortion device, a Yamaha KX88 Controller and the "DX7II-FD with E!" As Tim says after an especially impressive performance—*wow!* Bassist JENNIFER CONDOS plays Yamaha basses, Yamaha amps, has a Paul Demeter pre-amp and uses La Bella strings. That's it, Jennifer? You're not interested in talking equipment? Okay, get back on the *girls'* bus, then. Who else is there? Oh yeah—him. DON HENLEY plays two Telecasters onstage, one that looks to be about a '58 and the other that looks to be younger than Princess Di's baby. In the studio Don sings into a Neumann U-47 mike, but if he took that mother onstage you'd never see his face! In concert Don uses AKG microphones.

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DORSEY

[cont'd from page 84] tremolo. I use Dean Markley strings for the electrics, Takamine strings for the acoustic. My amp is a Fender Twin, the new model. With a [Yamaha] SPX90. Usually I use my chorus onstage, and I use a Cry-Baby wah-wah. I'm getting into that again after all these years.

"I'm not really a keyboard player, but I have a Korg DW 8000—for writing it has a great range of sounds. I write all my songs at home. I have a Tascam Porta 2. My favorite drum machines are Rolands: I have a TR626, a 505 and an old 808 which I'm starting to dig out of the closet and use a bit more."

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World Radio History

(cont'd from page 39)

Marlene Brown made arrangements to have Peter Tosh's remains buried at Dovecot Memorial Park on Constant Spring Road in Kingston, but the prime minister's office phoned her at the Barbican house on Wednesday, September 23, to inform her that she had no right to custody of the body and must accede to Alvera Coke's wishes to have Peter laid to rest in Westmoreland in the village of Belmont.

Brown belittled the new burial site, claiming that it was beside Coke's pigsty, but Tosh's mother told the local press the grave and pen were separated by at least three "chains" (a common Jamaican measure for 66 feet or used to note distances of less than a mile).

On Friday, September 25, Peter Tosh's body was laid out in state at Kingston National Arena, with some 12,000 mourners filing past for a last viewing of "The Toughest." The next day the national arena was the scene of a funeral ceremony attended by approximately a thousand friends, family members and the general public. The casket was then driven 120 miles to Belmont, where it was installed in a makeshift crypt overlooking the Caribbean Sea.

Kingston remained ill at ease about the deaths. The edginess revived on Friday, October 2, when excited reports spread that Marlene Brown had escaped harm after being bushwhacked during the predawn hours while pulling her car into her driveway. She claimed the ambush came from four men in a car who brandished M-16s and fired at her as they sped past in the darkness.

As Marley saw his music denied broadcast and publishing revenues withheld, he resorted to menacing, violent behavior.

In late March of 1988, during an interview with the *Daily Gleaner* at his Solomonic Records office in the corporate area of St. Andrew, Bunny Wailer told Jamaica he did not care to be a reggae martyr. "Dat is what de people want all de time, somebody ta make a sacrifice, but the people dem don't want ta make none. Dey always want an individual ta come and go on the cross, but dem don't want ta make no sacrifice.

"Bob sing a song, say, 'How long will they kill da prophets/While we stand aside and look. Then some say dat's just a part of it/You have to fulfill da book.' Den dey go back to sleep.

"Me nuh inna nuh sacrifice business. Me have ta be here ta see de victory of good over evil and me not making nuh mistake. If Jah will dat I should go, I will go, and when I go, He will be with I, 'cause I not going because of nuh will of man."

The trial of Leppo began on Monday, June 13, 1988, in Kingston in the Gun Court Division of the Home Circuit Court, with Mr. Justice Patterson presiding. The crown, represented by Mr. Garth McBean, acting deputy director of public prosecutions, Mr. Paul Dennis, assistant director of public prosecutions, and Mrs. Lorna Erra-Gayle, crown counsel, called 11 witnesses during the five-day proceedings.

Leppo was charged jointly with Steve "Honey" Russell, 26, a chauffeur and purchasing clerk with Hermes Ltd. who lived on Grosmond Avenue in Patrick City, St. Andrew. Russell testified that one of his co-workers at Hermes had asked him to take Leppo and two other men in a company van to Tosh's house, where he was told to wait. Upon hearing shooting, Russell said, he had started the engine to flee when the gunmen clambered into the van and directed him at gunpoint to drive. One witness confirmed that Russell had been in possession of the company van on the evening of the slayings, and another testified seeing Russell in the van as the men ran from the house and got inside the vehicle. Russell was subsequently freed when Judge Patterson upheld a no-case submission made by his two attorneys.

That left Leppo as the sole defendant, his two accomplices unaccounted for. Leppo testified that he was a "brethren" of Peter's and had last visited the singer's house on the Wednesday before he was killed, Tosh then loaning him J$1000. Leppo acknowledged having availed himself of Tosh's largesse since their youth together in Trench Town: "Peter gave me assistance. Anything I wanted he gave me."

But Leppo denied murdering Tosh, and produced one witness to support an alibi that he was far from the scene on the evening of the killings: "Between six and eight p.m. on the night in question I was in a shop on Crook Street in Jones Town. I was dere having a drink wit friends for about four hours. While dere I heard da news of my friend's death. I became astonished."

The jury of eight women and four men retired for six minutes on Friday, June 17, and returned to the court with the verdict: guilty on all three counts of murder. Glancing at Leppo, who stood under police escort wearing a gray-and-blue-striped shirt and blue corduroy slacks, Judge Patterson told the jury: "I would have arrived at the same verdict. I have no doubt in my mind that he went there that night and killed Tosh and the others. It was just by chance that the other four survived or we would have had seven people lying dead."

Leppo was sentenced to hang. "I am innocent, sir," he told the judge, but he was led away under tight security and consigned to St. Catherine District Prison, Spanish Town, where he joined 188 other condemned criminals on Death Row. Ⓜ

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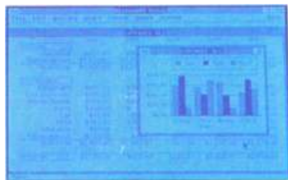

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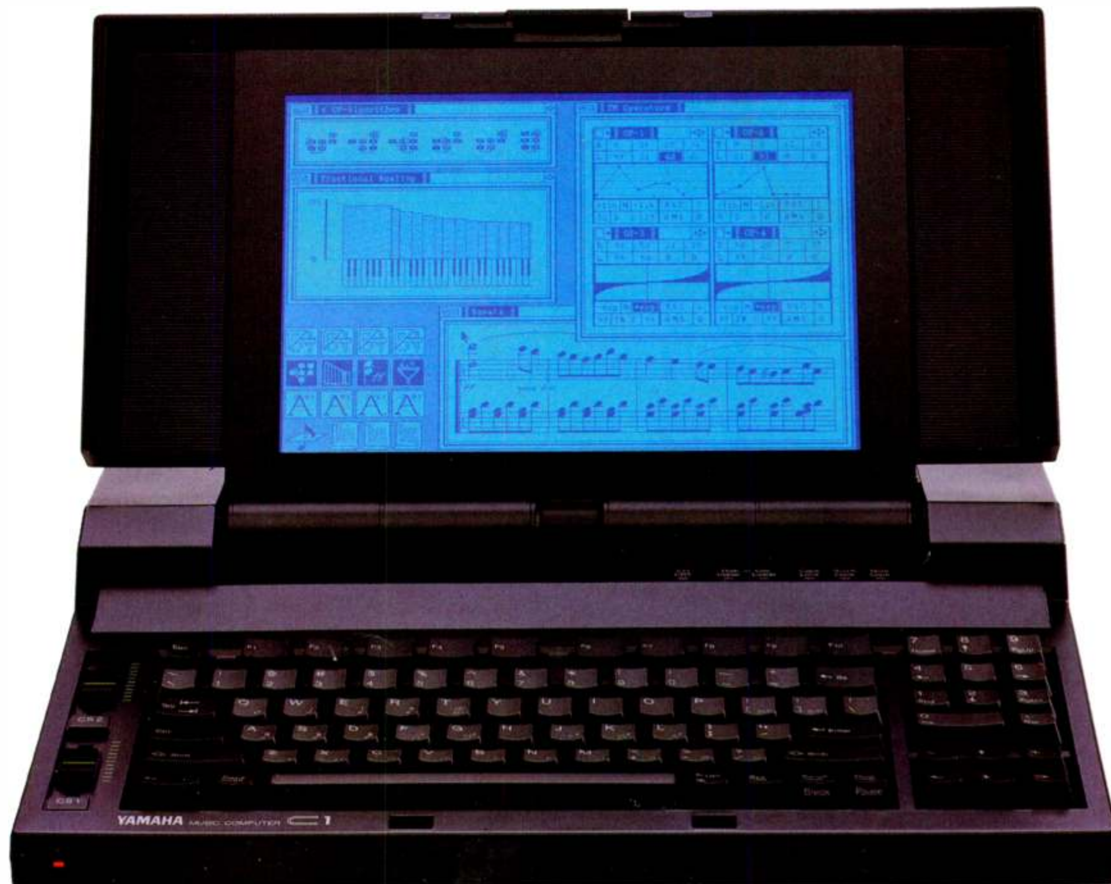

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