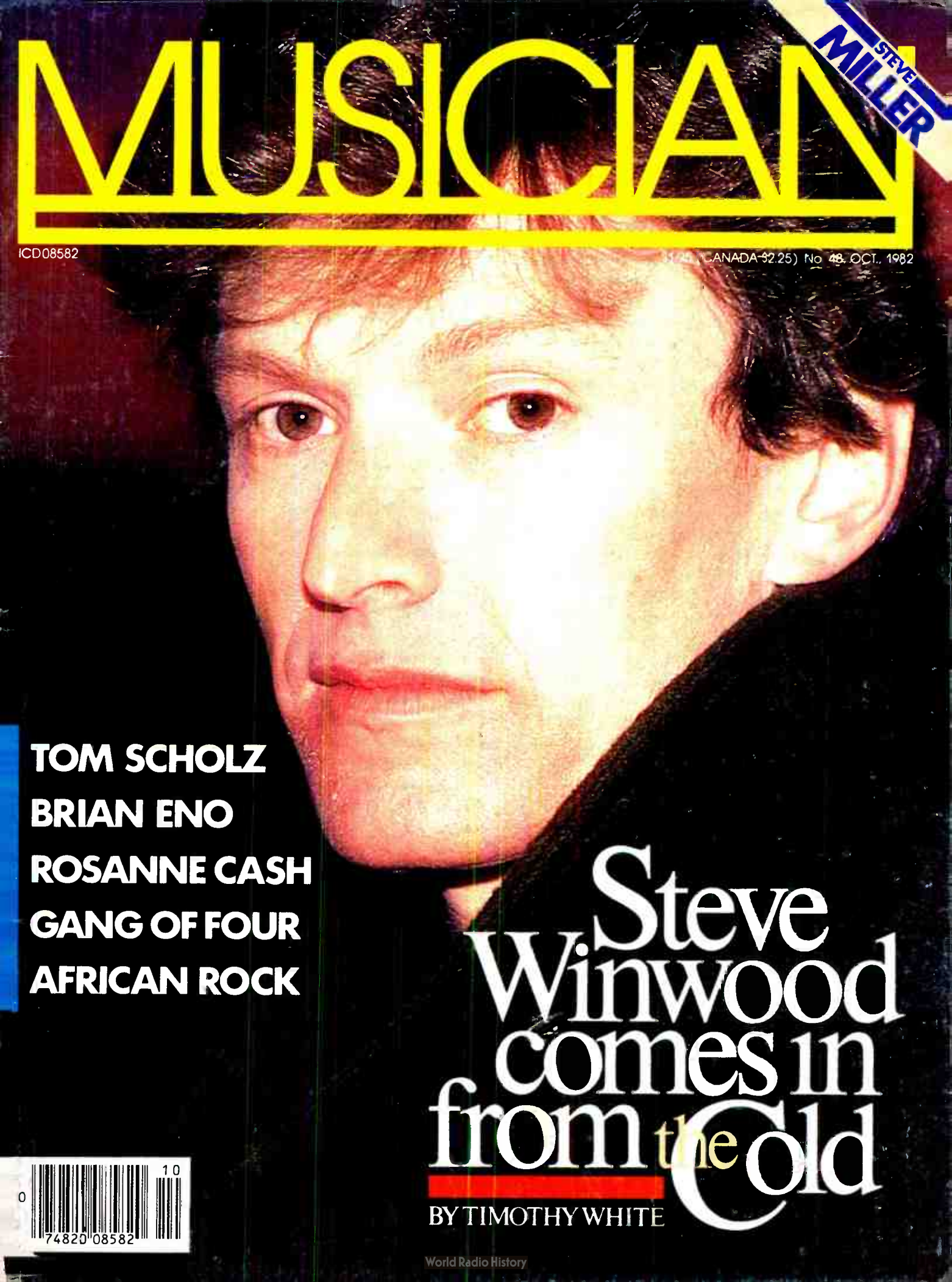
MUSICIAN

STEVE MILLER

ICD08582

(U.S./CANADA $2.25) No 48 OCT., 1982



TOM SCHOLZ
BRIAN ENO
ROSANNE CASH
GANG OF FOUR
AFRICAN ROCK

Steve Winwood comes in from the Cold

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

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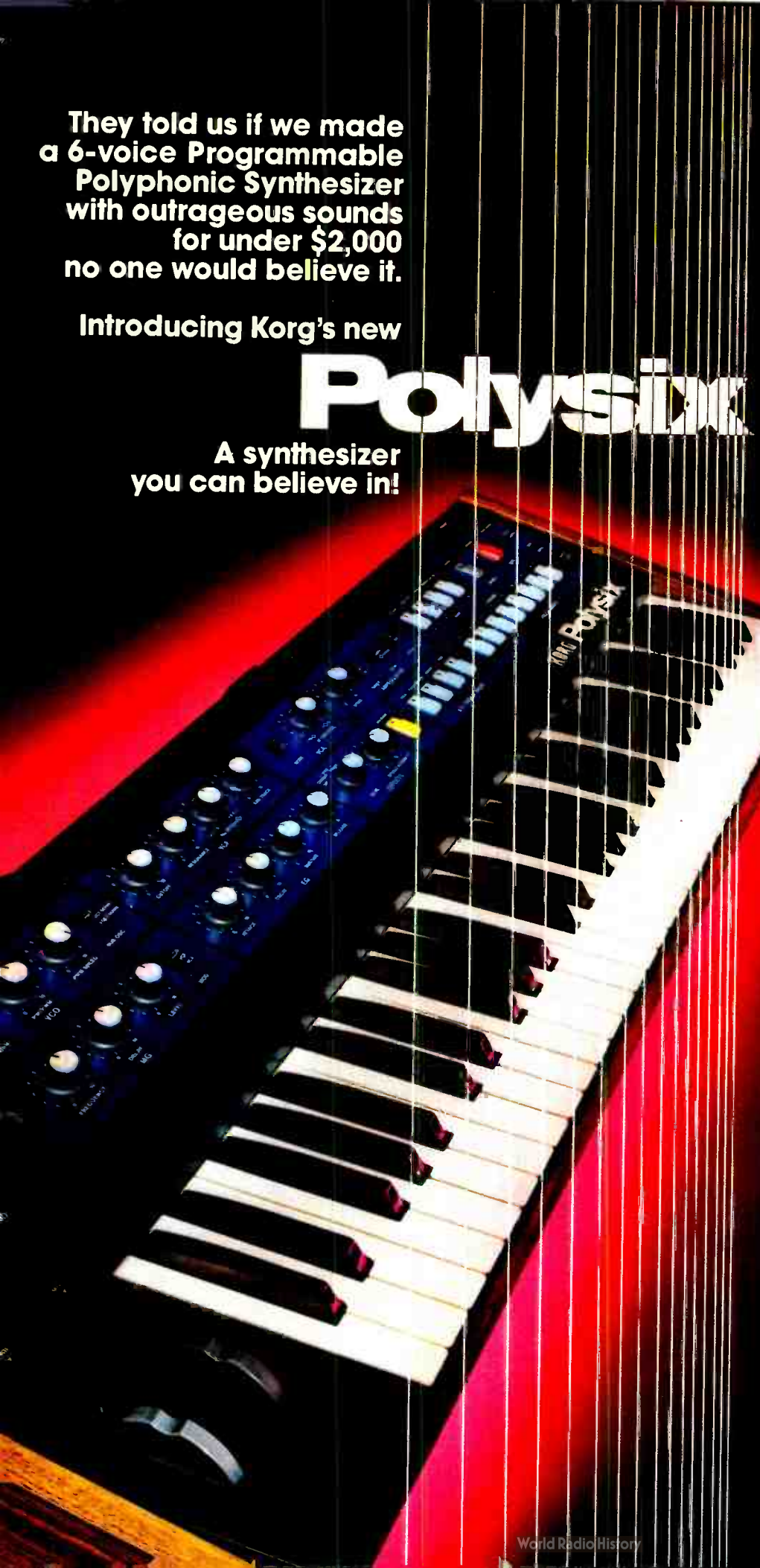

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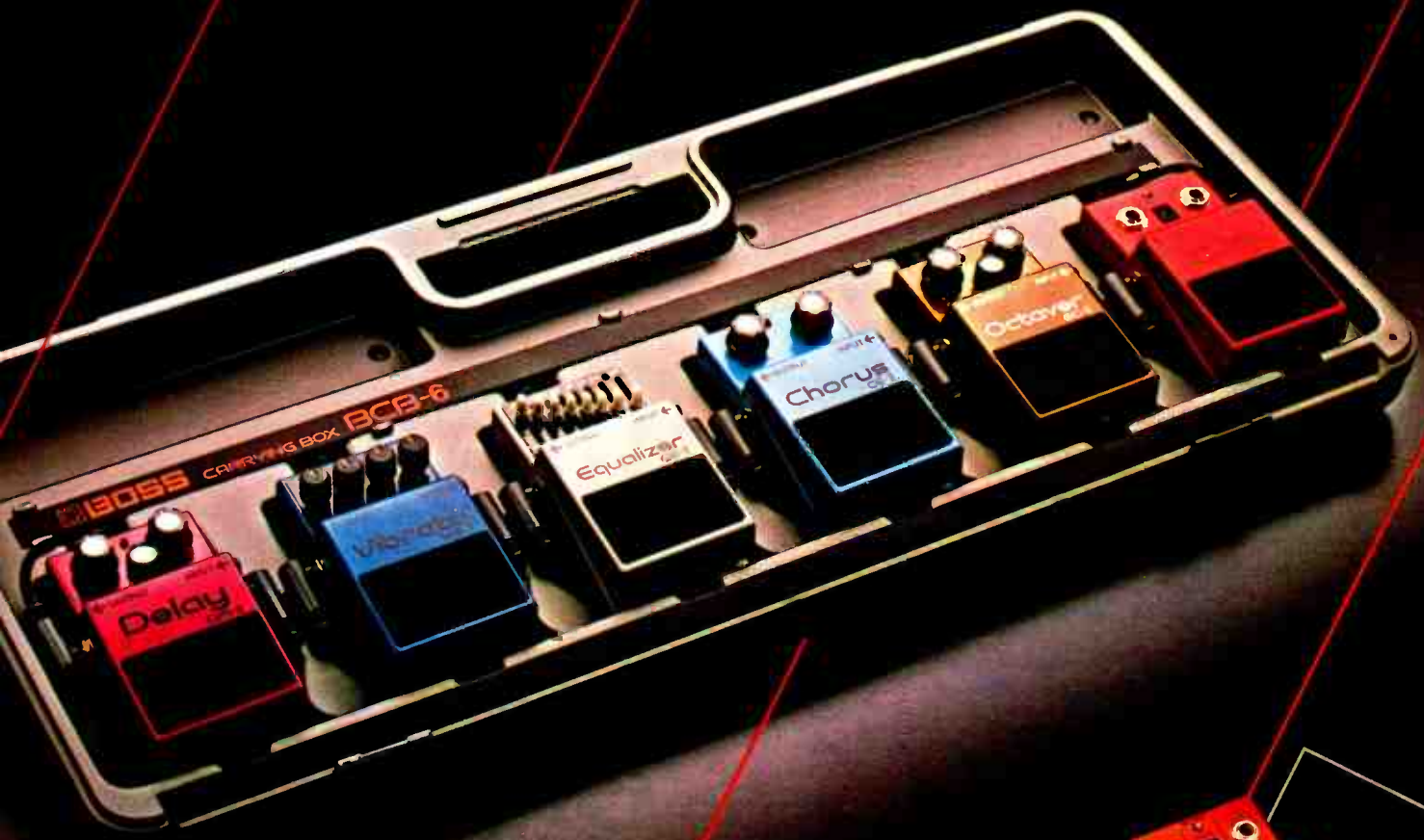

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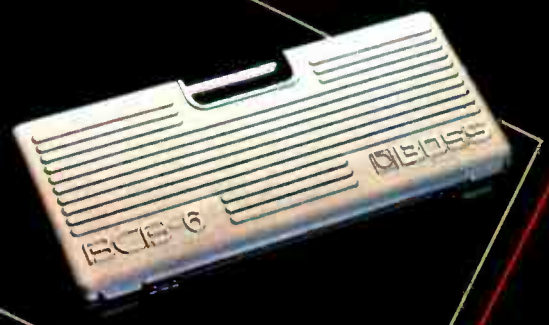

B C B - 6

P S M - 5

MUSICIAN

NO. 48, OCT., 1982

Steve Miller has been "knockin' 'em on their ear" for fifteen years now with his tight, boogie, rock 'n' blues and blockbuster LPs; with his new "Abracadabra" and a hot, updated Steve Miller Band, the man of many masks is up to his old tricks again. Dan Forte observes the Space Cowboy slipping into the future. Page 48

Brian Eno, the ambient Brainiac of avant-pop, has never stopped reinventing his music; his work with Roxy Music, David Byrne and Talking Heads, Robert Fripp and others spawned whole movements, but by the time acceptability set it, Eno had moved on. Kristine McKenna talks to him about his recent musical insights and his new "On Land." Page 64

Steve Winwood remains one of the most important and original artists of the last two decades, from his breakout with Spencer Davis and the seminal Traffic to Blind Faith and his 1981 comeback triumph "Arc Of A Diver." Timothy White visits the Berkshire manor of the unflappable gentleman of British rock royalty. Page 54

Columns & Departments

Features

Working Musician

Cover Photo by Lynn Goldsmith

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ABC

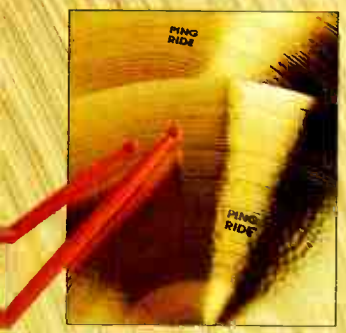
WHEN STEVE SMITH RIDES HIS ZILDJIANS, YOU'RE IN FOR AN EXCITING JOURNEY.

Steve grew up just around the corner from The Zildjian factory. Of course, for the past few years he hasn't been around all that much, what with his touring with Jean Luc Ponty, Ronnie Montrose and of course the enormously successful group, Journey. However, recently Steve took a break in his wild schedule and had a chance to sit down and talk with us.

On Starting Out. "I started out playing in the fourth grade when I was nine years old and had a really good teacher. When I was in high school I got serious about playing and I got a job as a paper boy to save money to buy cymbals. My teacher used to bring me to the Zildjian factory so I could go in and pick out my own set of cymbals."

Flying high with the success of Journey, Steve Smith is one of the most versatile and talented drummers in music today.

On Rock and Roll. "After college I had a lot of experience playing jazz and fusion and I had virtually no experience playing rock and roll professionally except for some high school rock things. I really wanted to follow that direction, because nowadays a drummer has to play rock and roll as well as jazz in order to be well-rounded as a musician."



On Zildjians. "The kind of music we play with Journey demands a lot of power. I've found that the cymbals in the Zildjian rock line are the only ones that can really do the job for me – that can carry the big halls and not sound thin. Zildjian cymbals have extraordinary projection but at the same time they have this wonderful, full musical tone. I also particularly like the Ping Ride – I got my first one back in the eighth grade and I've been playing one ever since."

On Career. "You know if you should get into music. It's something you can just feel. If you have to ask yourself the question, then don't bother. Being a musician isn't just a career it's a way of life.

"I find that most successful musicians don't think about success as much as they think about being a good player or songwriter. To try to focus on success is a little too contrived and usually just doesn't work."

If you're a serious drummer, chances are overwhelming that you, like Steve, are already playing Zildjians. Zildjian: a line of cymbals played by drummers on six continents – a line of cymbal-makers that spans three centuries.

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LETTERS

THE CARROT & THE STICK

Of the many opinionated letters you must receive every month, it appears that only the gratuitously favorable specimens are preserved in your correspondence museum. It is my sincere desire to make a moderately negative comment, but first I shall pay a few dues in the flattery forum in the hope of having my editorial published. Yes, your magazine is excellent. I buy it regularly for entertainment and education. *Musician* outclasses all competitors, giving me a legitimate reason not to read *Rolling Rock*, (or whatever it's called). Can I make a nasty remark now?

The next time *Musician* puts someone on a plane to interview John McLaughlin, for reader's sake—chain Robert Fripp to the nearest Mutual of Omaha flight insurance machine! I appreciate Mr. Fripp's excursions into the amelodic cosmos and I admire his willingness to make contributions in music journalism, but I didn't expect to read his diary on pages supposedly devoted to John McLaughlin. "Coffee and chocolates for two guitars" is all fine and good but I guess you had to be there. The beauty and intelligence of John McLaughlin's music deserves honest curiosity and respect, not the self-indulgent intrusion of Robert Fripp.

Benjamin Livant
Edmonton, Alberta

THE FACTS CLASHED

It was patently obvious from Roy Trakin's review of *Combat Rock* (the Clash) in the August issue that not only had he not listened to the LP, he hadn't even seen the cover. If he had he would not have described it as blurred or located the band at a crossroads (they are sitting on a railway line). As to his review of the record itself—splutter, choke! To suggest that the ordinary "Should I Stay Or Should I Go?" (Clash sell out?) is comparable to "Train In Vain" is mortifying. How could Trakin like "Ghetto Defendent" yet be deluded into thinking it has a reggae beat? Not only should you let him have a copy of the album he is reviewing, you should lend him a reggae album—he's obviously never had one. He seems to enjoy "Straight To Hell," truly *the* standout track but doesn't know what it's about. I know we British, as the Liverpudlian folk song says, "Speak with an accent exceedingly rare," but clearly the song is a commentary on one of Vietnam's lasting tragedies, the Amerasian offspring of American soldiers. Of course if you'd given him an inner sleeve, he could have read this himself.

The Clash are probably the most consistent, original, intelligent, melodious and innovative rock band since the demise of the Beatles and Creedence Clearwater. As such they deserve to have their latest album reviewed by someone who has actually seen and heard it. Don't jeopardize your credibility by cheapness or the laziness of an amateur—you tell me which it was.

Michael Aidan
Martinez, CA

WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION

Your recent interview with Pete Townshend was great. The man is the master of rock guitar. He also is a fine composer as well as singer. The article was great except for one thing! The writer Vic Garbarini and Townshend are both so full of bullshit it's not funny. It takes a while to read the article, and then extra time to figure out what the hell he was talking about. If I want religion or philosophy, I'll take a course. Why can't your reporters write in plain English? One question that really killed me, "What kind of line do you have to walk to grow old in rock and still be creative and contemporary, as you've managed to be?" Who the hell cares how old he is? He still rocks his ass off!

Rick Clarke
Rockford, IL

OUT OF HIS DEPTH

If the "depth" of Pete Townshend's music matched that of his prolific interviews, perhaps rock 'n' roll would be in better shape.

Jin Scnillat
King of Prussia, PA

JORDACHE JOURNALISM

All right gentlemen (and ladies), enough is enough. Your article "Rock Fashion" made this reader cringe. What's next? "Rock Footwear: Blue suede boots," or better still "Designer Jeans and Rock 'n' Roll: Do the Jordache Brothers give the music 'the Look'?" How about an article on the Go-Go's hairstylist? How could you even give the article so much (wasted) space??!!

On the whole you put out an intelligent magazine on music: must we suffer filler articles such as this? (If it wasn't a filler, then woe's to the world!) Hats off to Rick Smith of Lansing, Michigan in your August letters column. Let's get serious and keep *Musician* a magazine about music, not material more suited for *Cream* or *Teen Idol*. Shape up or lose out!

Jay L. Mazur
Brooklyn, NY

UNPLANNED OBSOLESCENCE

Gee, I'm embarrassed. I've wasted years of my life learning to play a *real* instrument (bass) in *real* time, only to discover they're obsolete. Once, I even wanted to exhibit "virtuoso musicianship, linked not to artistic concepts but to musical gymnastics." I guess "purely human playing" is out of vogue—maybe I should join the "new synth-pop rage."

Synthesizers will figure in the future of music, there's no question. But to claim that musicianship is obsolete is as silly as any other claim I've heard by British fad bands. When somebody comes along who can do more than "turn a few knobs and play it with one finger," the Human League will look as mediocre as they are.

When I listen to Hendrix, Knopfler, Entwistle or any other virtuoso, I say, "How'd he do that?" When "Don't You Want Me" invades my airwaves, I say, "Why'd they do that?"

R.E. Somers
Columbia, MO

ÉCLAT FALLS FLAT

Alas, Mark Rowland's review of Squeeze's *Sweets From A Stranger* is a showcase of ignorance. Rowland's first mistake was writing, "Sheer precocity does not the new Lennon and McCartney make." This he might be forgiven, as it is a common error. Read any other piece on Squeeze (as I've done) and it is only in the author's own words that Lennon and McCartney appear. Rowland also misidentified the LP's producers: in addition to Elvis Costello, they included Dave Edmunds and Roger Bechirian.

The unforgivable blunder, though, was Rowland's assumption that the lyrics are Glenn Tilbrook's. Tilbrook writes the *music*, to fit the lyrics written by Chris Difford, whom Rowland barely mentioned. That information was in the piece by Geoffrey Himes in the same issue, but Rowland had only to read the cover flap of the album to learn that. See what happens when you assume?

It is this mixing up of what are now well-known facts by a sadly misinformed, self-proclaimed critic in a once-respected magazine that shoots down its credibility. So much for media éclat.

Aimy Amoon
Nyack, NY

POLKAHOLICS MONOGAMOUS

It was with great appreciation that we read Wayne Cresser's excellent story on Brave Combo in your August issue. Cresser managed to capture the essence of "nuclear polka" in a few brief paragraphs.

However, we must take exception to his comment that Brave Combo might not be a hit at a wedding reception. The band played our wedding reception over two years ago. Even my grandparents danced! The music was a bigger hit than the Lowenbrau...and we are still married. Polkaholics, unite!

David & Jennifer Bennett
Austin, TX

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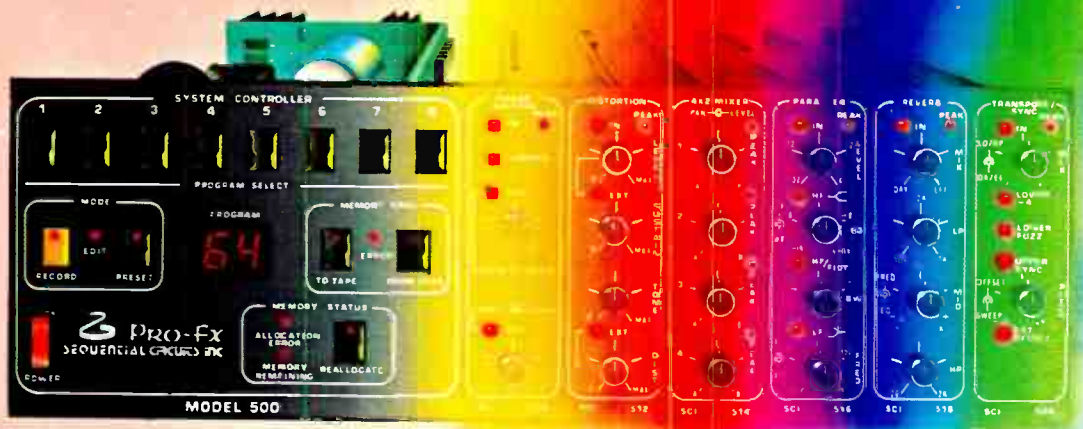

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music industry news

Megabusiness Tips for Superstars

You say you're the world's richest rock 'n' roll band and don't know how to set up your business? Take a lesson from the **Rolling Stones**. A leading Dutch newspaper, *De Volkskrant*, has done some extensive digging into the Stones' labyrinthian financial network, headquartered in the "fiscal paradise" of Holland. Out of one cluster of Amsterdam offices, the glimmer twins & band run ten separate "limited liability" companies with Wall Street names like Promotour BV, Musifilm, Promobill and Musidor. Each of these is in reality a holding company which owns large amounts of stock in foreign firms doing business for the Stones, firms which, not surprisingly, pay a large percentage of their profits to the stockholders. Because the Amsterdam companies' fixed assets (buildings and equipment) are low and their employees are few, the Dutch taxes are minimal and there is no public scrutiny of their profits. The system was set up by a London tax wizard, **Prince Rupert**, (who once directed a prestigious banking house) and is so well-constructed that it is used as an example to train Dutch tax inspectors.

Copyright Infighting

The U.S. Senate jolted the industry-wide coalition to tighten up copyright protection when it passed by voice vote an amendment to a "housekeeping" copyright office bill that would exempt non-profit veterans' and other fraternal organizations (American Legionaires, Elks, Groundhogs) from paying performance royalties to ASCAP and BMI. The copyright owners, hanging around Washington to lobby for the home taping levy, were outraged, charging that all exemptions erode the value of an owner's work and that they way would be cleared for new exemptions by dance studios, country clubs and educational institutions. The sneak passage was engineered by a former juke box operator, Senator Edward Zorinsky (D.-Neb.). ASCAP and BMI are going head-to-head with the American Legion to stop the bill in the House.

The Wall, a cinematic adaptation of **Pink Floyd**'s 1980 opus opened in London to mixed reviews and some outright pans. The film's director, Alan Parker (*Fame, Bugsy Malone*) said, "What we're showing is the effect of rock music on a mindless audience. I honestly believe that a rock 'n' roll Nurenberg could happen." Said the film's star, Boomtown Rat **Bob Geldof**, "It all had an amazing impact on me. And I'm rarely shocked into silence." The fusion of live action, animation and the Pink Floyd soundtrack reportedly led to some acrimonious disagreements between director Parker, cartoonist Gerald Scarfe and Floyd bassist **Roger Waters**. *The Wall* will have come to America by the time you read this.

Arbitrary Arbitrons

A renegade ratings service is giving Arbitron a bit of soul-searching and some low-key competition. There had already been grumbling within the industry about steady price hikes by the Ma Bell of ratings and an All-Industry Radio Committee was recently formed to roll back some of the new rates. Now entrepreneur **Tom Birch** and his Birch Report is claiming that sampling techniques used by Arbitron have built-in prejudices. He notes that Arbitron's use of listening diaries favor listeners who are cooperators who like adult contemporary and "beautiful music" stations while Birch's use of telephone interviews get the listening habits of people who aren't interested in religiously filling out a daily diary. Birch's ratings for AOR and urban contemporary stations show stronger figures than the Arbitrons do.

Ratings are never that simple however. Arbitron until recently used Birch's phone sampling techniques to poll black listeners and just went to a diary system (paying black families a few dollars more than usual). The result was not lower urban contemporary numbers, as Birch's hypothesis would dictate, but higher ones. Expect more from this debate....Two issues ago, we incorrectly reported Boston's WCOZ had its ratings fall from 12.8 to 4.7; the actual drop was only to 6.7. WCOZ fought back to 7.4 in the newest figures.

Joni Mitchell has finished her long-awaited new album, produced by Joni and Henry Lewy and described as closer to *Court And Spark* than some of her more recent jazz-fused stylings. Winners in the bidding to market the LP: Geffen Records....**Elvis Costello** interrupted his Australian tour to produce a single for Aussie comers, **Mental As Anything**, entitled "I Didn't Mean To Be Mean"....**Bryan Ferry** of Roxy Music got married....**Bruce Springsteen** is about to release a solo album, entitled *Nebraska*, done entirely by himself on a 4-track with just guitar and piano. Not to worry, though, a new LP with the E Streeters will follow in the spring....The **Andy Summers-Robert Fripp** collaboration, *Advance Mask*, will be out soon, but a fall tour was canceled owing to schedule conflicts.

Chart Action

A triple juggernaut of Fleetwood Mac (*Mirage*), Robert Plant (*Pictures At Eleven*) and Crosby, Stills & Nash (*Daylight Again*) entered the charts four weeks ago and ravaged the big boys, leaving the Mac numero uno for two weeks and the others at #5 and #8 respectively. *Asia* lumbered on near the top, as Survivor's *Eye Of The Tiger* punched its way to #2. John Cougar's *American Fool* took the revenge of the suburbs to #4. Steve Miller (featured elsewhere in this ish) leapfrogged up twelve places to #6 while REO did the same to get to #7. Dizzied but still tough were Willie Nelson, Toto and Loverboy (after only 39 weeks). Less fortunate casualties included the Stones' live LP and .38 Special, both of whom plunged from the top ten into the twenties, and tailspins by Van Halen and Rick James. Tough teenagers like Genesis, Chicago and the Human League gained some hard-won ground while the Clash grimly hung on to chart respectability at #20. Adrian Belew's *Lone Rhino* made it to #82, no doubt on the strength of *Musician*'s hearty endorsement.

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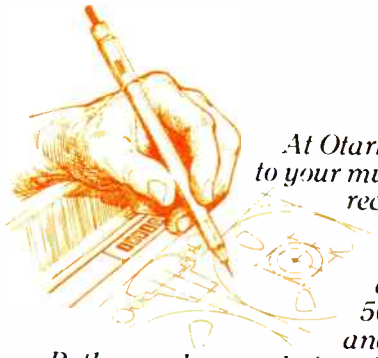

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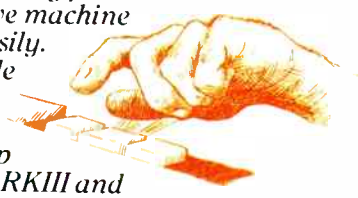

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GANG OF FOUR: THE REVOLUTION LIGHTENS UP

While their political passion remains undimmed, these post-punk party comrades are now using heinous capitalist tactics like great melodies, gang vocals and good humor.

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Clockwise from top left: Sara Lee, Hugo Burnham, Andy Gill and Jon King.

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

Hugo Burnham leaned forward with a look of exasperation on his face, and tried to explain the Gang of Four's image problem. "It's difficult," he said, "because your image in people's eyes is going to depend on what those people expect of you. I mean, how many hundreds of times in the last four years have people approached us after a concert and said, 'That was a surprise—it was such fun, we had such a good time! We expected to see four guys in grey raincoats with long, dour faces.'"

There were no raincoats in sight in the group's New York hotel room, either, although the sweltering July weather probably had as much to do with that as anything else. Nor do the Gang—drummer Burnham, guitarist Andy Gill, singer Jon King and newly-recruited bassist Sara Lee—seem anything less than jovial. In fact, when the conversation periodically dips into politics, the Gang's combination of earnest ideology and irreverent wit leaves them sounding more like a Monty Python cross-talk act than a Marxist colloquium.

So why the image problem? Because the Gang of Four isn't just another post-punk dance band—it's a post-punk dance band with an acute political consciousness. Take "To Hell With Poverty," a dance-floor smash in new wave clubs across the country. Over throbbing bass and drums and feedback-laden guitar, King sings, "In this land, right now / Some are insane, and they're in charge." The flip side is the slower, but no less funky, "Capital (It Fails Us Now)," the chorus of which urges, "Comrades, let us seize the time."

No wonder people get ideas. Even the band's name has political overtones, deriving as it does from the tag given to the widow of Mao Tse-tung and three other Chinese government officials accused of counter-revolutionary activities by Hua Kua Feng and the post-Mao government. The question is, though, just how deep do the Gang's politics run? "I don't know that much about Maoism," King admitted. "I know that it's a branch of Chinese communism...."

As it turns out, the name was chosen as much for laughs as anything else. "We knew exactly who they were," King said, "but it was suggested because it was a good name for a band."

"Obviously, it was chosen in the first place because it was naming what we were," said Gill, "and in the second place because it had associations with a radical group. It was a joke in a sense, and serious in a sense."

"The irony of it now," added King, "is that in England, the people who are called the Gang of Four in the papers are the Social Democrats, the right-wing pull-offs from the Labour Party. So now we're asked, 'Did you name yourself after the Social Democratic Party?'"

"And they're three years our junior," snorted Burnham.

Although the Gang confess that the leftist sensibility of their lyrics accurately reflects their political views, the Gang of Four, as King put it, "are not politicians, we're not like evangelists spreading correct ideology." In fact, the only aspect of

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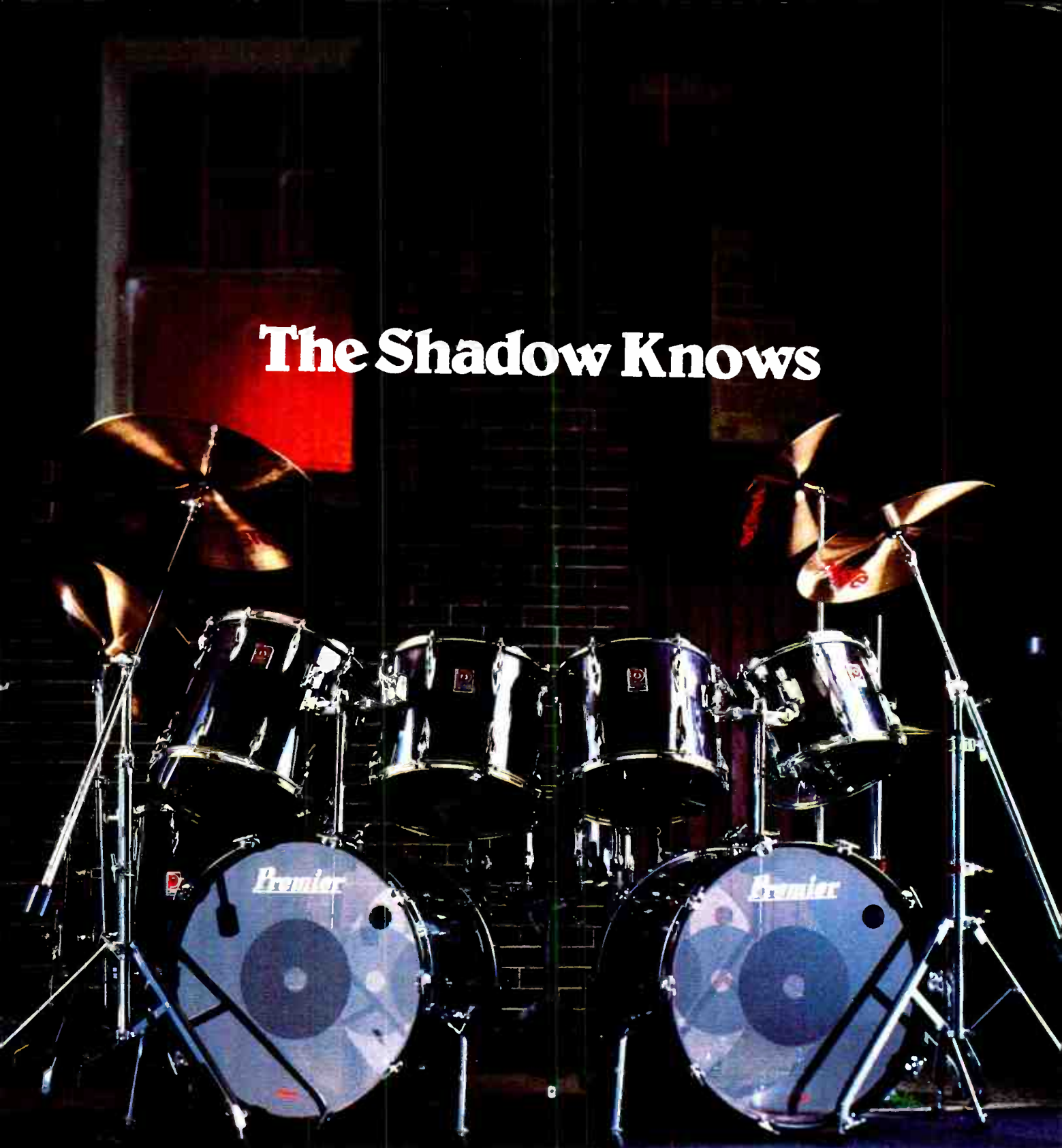

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the band that was intentionally revolutionary was the music.

With songs like "At Home He's A Tourist" and "Damaged Goods," where brittle, noisy guitar and flat vocals are played off against an assertive, disco-inflected rhythm section, the Gang of Four seemed to anticipate much of the current Brit-funk craze. But where bands like Positive Noise or Haircut 100 copied American R&B devices, the Gang of Four took only the momentum and drive; their concept of funk's "how to" was purely their own.

"I think that's because it was a quite thought-out approach," Gill offered, "thought-out almost before we even picked up the instruments, in a sense. We did have a more rudimentary talent than we do now, but that was unimportant because we had quite ambitious ideas. We spent a lot of time thinking out the drum beats before we actually sat down and jammed together." Gill felt that it was this conceptualization that gave the rhythmic crosscurrents in songs like "Natural's Not In It" their urgency.

These days, though, there is less discussion. "We've less to talk about," Gill said flatly. "Then we were very concerned with making *different* drum patterns. It wasn't straight 4/4, but was dynamic and changing, as interesting as a traditional lead instrument. I think we've probably changed our approach somewhat in that we now see the drums as being a very necessary rock to tie the whole thing to, in terms of feel. We're trying to go for a more epic beat."

"*On Songs Of The Free*," said King of the Gang's latest album, "the drums were put down with quite an elaborately worked-out computer drum machine. Hugo was absolutely, totally screwed down in time."

"It's great," confided the screwed-down Burnham, "because unless you're playing a song that you've played and played until you know it in your sleep, it's real difficult when you come to record it to keep the tempo right as well as the feel. We used it as a sophisticated click track so that I didn't have to worry about the time, I could just concentrate on the *feel* of the beat."

Aside from a more direct beat, the newer songs are noteworthy for their greater emphasis on vocals and harmony. Compared to their severely structured forebears, these new songs sound positively lush, with "Call Me Up" and "I Love A Man In A Uniform" almost recalling the energetic pop of Motown. Why the change? "There's no point in repeating," shrugged King. "Also, we definitely wanted to move towards using melody more in the songs. We ended up spending a lot more time in the writing and the production, working particularly on vocals, so that we'd be putting vocals down very early on."

It was in this that Sara Lee proved especially valuable. After David Allen,

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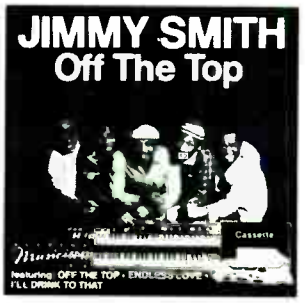

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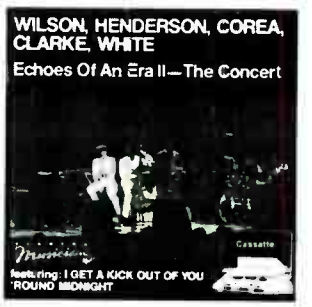

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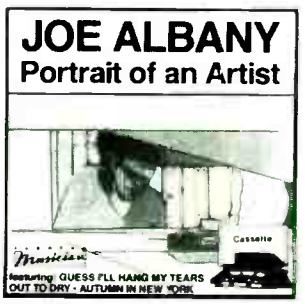
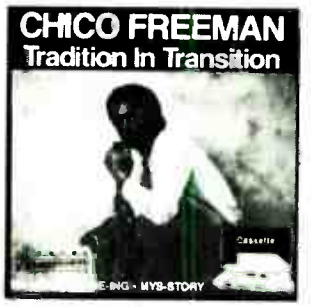


Joe Albany/Portrait Of An Artist
Featuring: Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry, Autumn In New York



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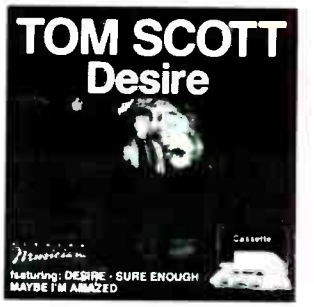

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the original bassist with the Gang, bailed out midway through the band's last North American tour, the Gang of Four filled in with substitute players like Busta Cherry Jones before hiring Lee, whose prior experience included stints with the League of Gentlemen and Jane Aire & the Belvederes. King openly admitted, "We did want a woman"—"Call it political credibility," interjected Gill—but said that Lee got the job on her ability, and that her vocal abilities were a surprise.

"We didn't know she could sing," he said. "You hadn't sung, had you?"

"Well," she said, "I did a bit in the one previous to this, Jane Aire. And the League of Gentlemen were *heavy* on vocals," she added sarcastically.

"Robert Fripp has got a fantastic voice," laughed King.

"We actually got Robert singing 'Great Balls Of Fire' once at a soundcheck," she added, laughing harder. "It was great! With a *Dorset* accent...."

When the laughter died down, King continued. "When Sara joined the band," he said, "there was the possibility of a third voice, because Dave couldn't sing. Actually, we wrote songs with an eye to women coming in to sing them, session singers. There's a woman called Edi Reader playing with us live."

"I think another reason for that sort of change," said Gill, "is that there is a kind of belief that inaccessible music, or music that refers to avant-garde structures, or conceptually based music, is necessarily a better carrier of radical ideology. I think we came to see that as being an erroneous idea," he continued, looking as if he were about to come to some sort of theoretical conclusion. "I think we felt a need to use more of the stylistic devices of popular commercial music to...."

He paused for effect, then quickly concluded, "...make more money."

The rest of the band broke into a mixture of laughter and sarcastic coughing, while Gill feigned a flustered recovery. "Uh, so we can make more money for the Cambodian refugees," he blurted, sounding like one of Michael Palin's low-budget con men, and the laughter got louder.

Capital, it failed them then. M

Carrack *from pg. 12*

tin Belmont gets a credit for helping out with the "middle eight" in a hotel room one night) their "fifty-fifty" brainstorming of such lyrics as "I need you like a fly needs a plate/I need you like a bull needs a gate" produced many an obscene couplet.

While the record reflects Carrack's steeping in Motown and Memphis traditions, his own "Always Better With You" is a virtual country-rocker. More R&B, but still the album's most idiosyncratic song, is Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook's "Out Of Touch"—for which Carrack asked the blessing of his old

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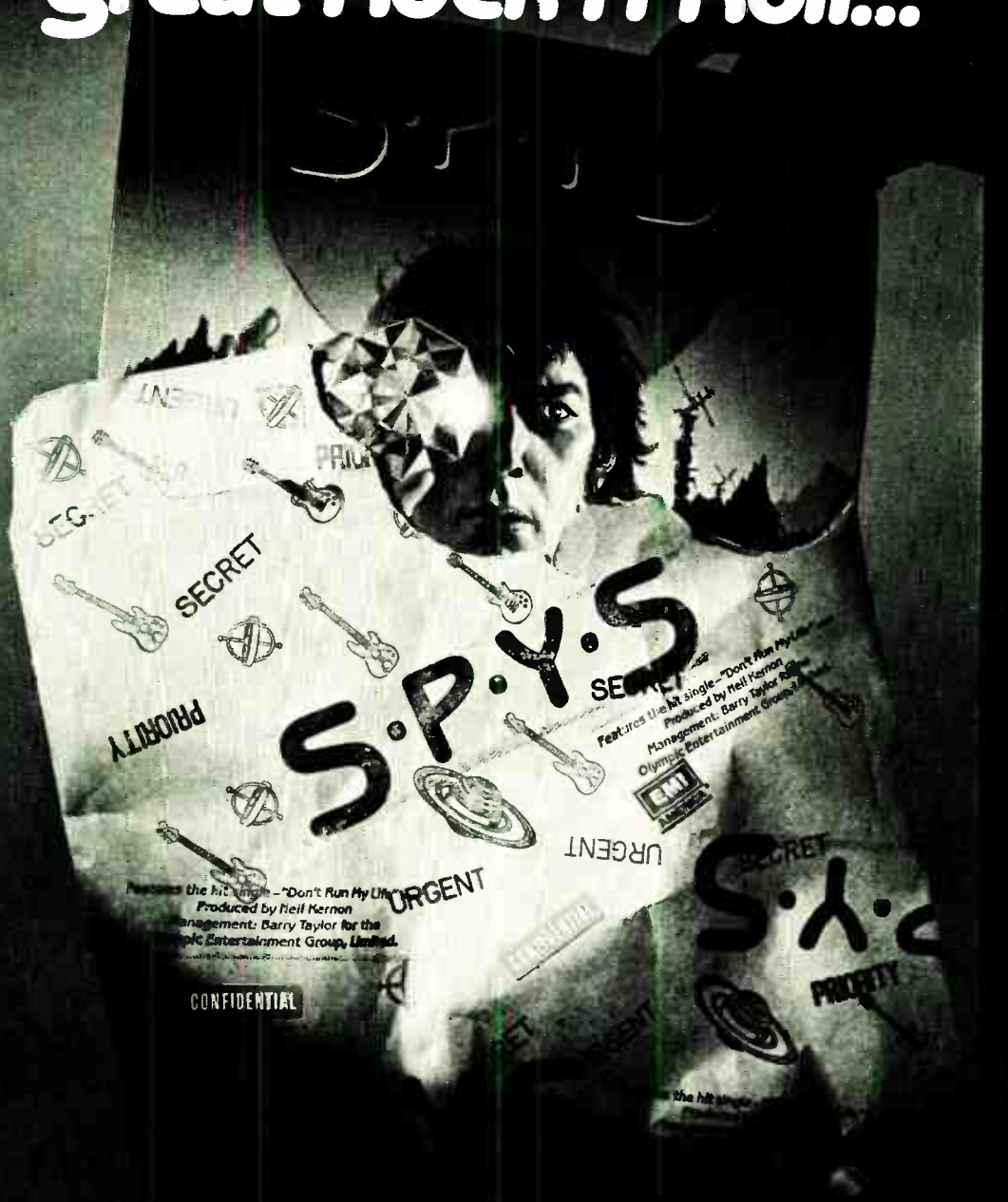

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mates before including the song on *Voodoo*. Squeeze's version, on their current *Sweets From A Stranger*, sounds almost decadently Euro-pop next to Carrack's straightforward, piano-pumping treatment. "I just thought the song suited me well," he says, "It's like an R&B groove, but the lyrics have that Chris Difford magic. I *am* a big fan of his, you know."

Carrack takes pains to point out his solo move is not a case of arrant egotism. "I don't like to make things sound larger than life. Music is something we really like to do—it's not like I'm carving a huge legend." Still, his solo spots during Carlene and Nick's road shows have gone down very well. Does he feel ready to carry a whole set alone, as front man on his upcoming tour? Carrack's wary smile inches wider as he contemplates it. "Although I'm very introverted in many respects—very unshowbusiness—I think I might find it easy if the album makes a big splash. I might rise to the bait, you know?" M

Rosanne *from pg. 42*

know what to do."

Last year's *Seven Year Ache* was a definite leap forward. "Between those two albums," Cash explains, "I got married and had a baby. I grew up a whole lot, and I learned to sing better. With maturity, you've got a wider variety of expression, more colors to choose from, just because you've experienced more. There's no way 'Seven Year Ache' could have been on *Right Or Wrong*—not any of it, the arrangement, the lyrics, the interpretation, even the melody. I couldn't have sung it technically because it crams a lot of words into each phrase. I couldn't have written it, because I wouldn't have known how.

"Songwriting is a real elusive process. In most songs, it's just finding a new twist, a new way to say the same old thing. I usually sit down with a pencil and paper and start messing around with lyrics—not singing them, just writing them. I almost always write lyrics first. In my journal the other day, I came across pages of verses and lyrics for 'Blue Moon With Heartache.' Some of them have lines that are in the finished product. I just wrote and wrote and then refined. I'd take a line here and twist it and stick it in another verse to see how it fit there.

"*Seven Year Ache* was conceived as a concept album. When we started gathering material, we were conscious of what the songs were saying about this woman's relationship. There were some songs we threw out because they didn't fit. It was a progression of what was happening in her relationship; the story is the album."

The story describes a woman who tries to maintain both love and self-respect when her man treats her badly. Steve Forbert's "What Kind Of Girl Am I?" and Asleep at the Wheel's "My Baby Thinks He's A Train" are both swaggering, funny assertions that she can make it on her own. Her own "Blue Moon With Heartache" and Glen D. Hardin & Sonny Curtis's "Where Will The Words Come From" both ponder the possibility of saying goodbye for good. The story has a happy ending, though, as she falls in love again with him on Crowell's "I Can't Resist." The lush arrangement, sensual saxophone and Judy Garland vocal on this last song prefigured the next leap forward on her newest album, *Somewhere In The Stars*.

The new album presents a wider musical range. Crowell's "Ain't No Money," Cash's "Somewhere In The Stars," and the couple's first songwriting collaboration, "Looking For A Corner," all feature the progressive country sound they perfected on *Seven Year Ache*. Cash is in better control than ever as her voice judiciously balances the songs' conflicts between the private love of marriage and the public pressures of a career. John Hiatt's "It Hasn't Happened Yet" is a proud boast to an ex-lover that she's getting along quite well, thank you. Cash's voice weaves through the song's slow, confident soul groove with a tone as deep and grainy as the tenor saxophone behind her. Susanna Clark's "Oh Yes I Can" is a woman's defiant crow that she can not only survive but will actually thrive on her own. This cut is the closest Cash has ever come to mainstream rock 'n' roll, and she romps. Asleep at the Wheel's "I Wonder" sounds like a vintage swing vocal by contrast. Cash displays an appropriately light touch, breathily whispering the words with the same understatement as the brushes circling the drumheads and the fingertips tickling the ivories. The eclectic material is unified by Cash's consistent confessional persona.

"The vocal comes from my mood," she explains. "I create the mood, and the vocal comes naturally. I'm more interested in creating atmospheres than in doing an absolutely perfect interpretation—perfect in the sense of technical singing or perfect in what the song is talking about. I can add to a song by creating a slightly different mood. That's my talent.

"I create a mental state by drawing on my past experiences. On 'Third Rate Romance,' I imagined an experience I had with Rodney. I tried to daydream about it. I try to conjure up those old feelings and emotions and put myself into that and then put a vocal through it. It's like a mist. It's like what I went through to prepare for a scene in acting school. It's exactly analogous.

"It's not a matter of interpretation. Everybody understands what a song is about. So if I want to get more nuances into a song, I have to add my own. You find something inside yourself and you express it, either through acting or sing-

continued on page 108

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BY DAVID GRISMAN

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complexity and simple lines of sheer poignancy—all with a rich, clear, warm tone and a level of intonation that sets a new standard for the bass. Even more important, his work in a rhythm section is particularly supportive; he cooks his ass off, yet with invention, subtlety and taste.

Although he lives in Denmark with his wife and three daughters, NHØP does a lot of traveling (mostly in Europe) and most frequently may be heard these days with Oscar Peterson and/or Joe Pass. He has recorded four solo albums for Steeplechase (the wonderful Danish jazz label), and occasionally leads his own trio which usually includes Belgian guitarist Philip Catherine and American Billy Hart on drums. His most recent solo effort, *Dancing On The Tables* (Steeplechase), was recorded in America with reed player Dave Liebman, guitarist John Scofield and Billy Hart. According to Niels-Henning, the record emphasizes "the way I play when I'm playing for other people, rather than the bass featured out in front all the time." NHØP is also a prolific composer whose tunes have appeared on recordings by Kenny Drew and George Shearing, as well as on his own.

I first met NHØP in Edinburgh, Scotland at the first gig of a brief tour celebrating Stephane Grappelli's seventieth birthday. I was immediately impressed not only by the musician but also by the man, for Niels-Henning is an exceedingly warm and *human* person, with down-to-earth sincerity that reaches out and communicates. NHØP played four concerts at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall with Oscar Peterson in March 1981, his only appearance in this country last year, en route from Australia back home to Denmark. This conversation was recorded as we drove through the scenic hills north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Grisman: *I read that the reason you took up the bass was because you were in a musical family and you were left with that instrument.*

Pedersen: Yes, I was the youngest. My mother is an organ player in a church—so is my sister. We all had classical training as piano players. I had played piano since I was six, but we all did, so that was too many piano players for one band. It was no big deal. I've never been determined to become a musician. It was just like, why not? So that's how it came about.

Grisman: *What were your earliest musical memories?*

Pedersen: I was four or five years old. My older brothers had the Count Basie records from '39, like "Sent For You Yesterday, Here You Come Today" with Jimmy Rushing singing, and "Swinging The Blues"—those kinds of things. We also listened to a ragtime piano player named Winifred Atwell, just by accident. Somebody just went and bought the record. I also listened to a lot of classical music like my sister was playing. Handel's "Largo" was one of the first things I remember. Every Sunday we used to play from these books—my sister would play the piano part, which more or less would be the orchestra part, and one of my brothers would play the trumpet. I started taking classical bass lessons from a very good teacher when I was twelve, and continued for five years.

Grisman: *What was your first experience playing jazz?*

Pedersen: I have a friend named Ole Kock Hansen. We grew up together; I've known him as long as I've lived. He's one of the reasons I play bass, because he was a piano player. We were two pairs of brothers that played together. We couldn't have two piano players, so I played bass. Later, he recorded with me on my first solo album, *Jaywalkin'* (Inner City). As you can hear on that album, he's a very good piano player, and already then was very good.

Grisman: *Is it true that you played with Bud Powell when you were only fifteen?*

Pedersen: Yes, that was a fantastic experience. I was very young at the time, and he was about the first real great player I worked with. He was ill, so we couldn't rehearse, but he was ever so nice. Here I am fifteen years old, not knowing that many famous songs. I mean, what can I tell you, I had *no* expe-

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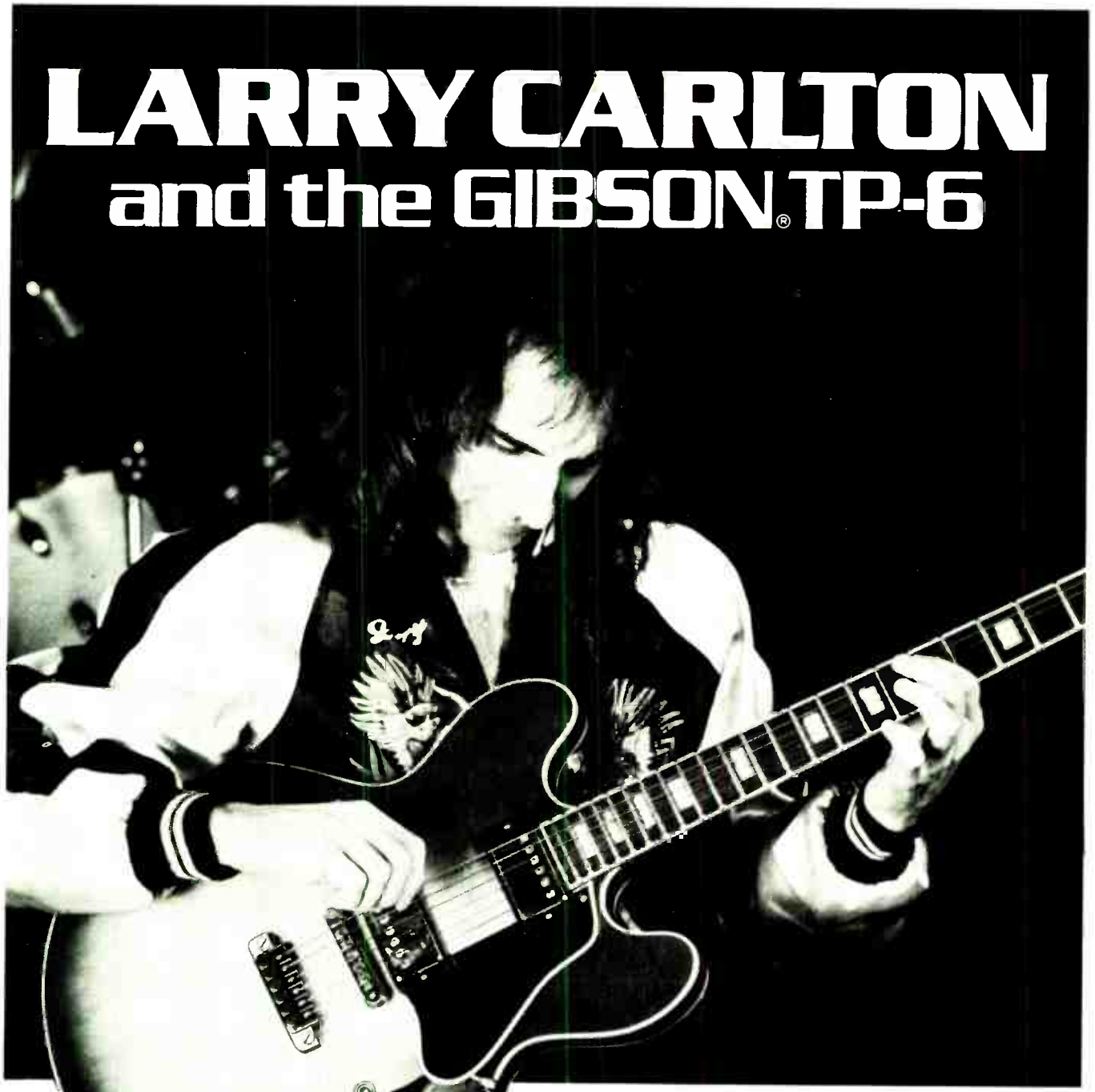

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- *Featuring all the great hits, the milestone performances, out-of-issue pressings and unreleased recordings.*

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As a result, the Country Music Foundation Official Archive

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Also included will be the unforgettable recordings of such long-time *favorites* as Hank Snow, Ernest Tubb and Merle Travis. The *legendary giants:* Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Jim Reeves, Flatt and Scruggs, and Jimmie Rodgers. And recordings that reflect regional influences and evolving musical styles – *bluegrass, Cajun, country gospel, western swing, honky tonk* and *rockabilly.*

The collection will include such *rare recordings* as Vernon Dalhart's 1924 recording of 'The Prisoner's Song' – country music's first million selling record, and Loretta Lynn's early classic 'Honky Tonk Girl' – now out of issue. And from the Foundation's archives will come *previously unreleased recordings* – studio "takes" never before made generally available.

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rience! The first night he just looks at me, smiles, and starts playing, and I'm just standing there not knowing what's coming up! I couldn't even see the keyboard. You learn by ear of course. I think that one of the most important things is not to try to make too many excuses for yourself. Perfect opportunities don't exist. Here I can't even see the keyboard, he doesn't want to rehearse. I don't know the tunes—plenty of excuses for not making it. But if you look at the positive effects, here I am having the opportunity to play with one of the greatest of all times. We'd play one song, and I'd make a little sketch and make sure that the next night I'd know a little more about that song. That was fantastic for me.

Grisman: *Who were some of the other jazz greats you played with during those early years?*

Pedersen: Oh, there was Kenny Dorham, Roland Kirk, of course Dexter (Gordon) came up, Don Byas, Lucky Thompson—I can't remember, there were so many. This was a time when the Montmarte Jazzhus in Copenhagen was really booming, and we were the house trio; Tete Montoliu, Alex Riel and myself. Tete—now here's a guy, blind, from Spain. I don't think you can name another Spanish jazz musician. I don't know any, and I live in Europe. Here's a guy that comes out with the freshest approach you can imagine. It was tremendous. It was like giving you a kick every night—ridiculous! There were so many people coming up at that time, it was like a treat. You always think that everything is happening in America, and to an extent, of course, it is. But you miss a lot in the standard situations, because in America you're a member of the Stan Getz Quartet *period*. You don't get to play with that many other people. Our lot was we were located there. It was too expensive to bring the whole group from the States to Copenhagen, so the leader would go alone. Consequently, we were members of everybody's group. The list of names is endless. We had a chance to play with Albert Ayler, Don Cherry, Archie Shepp, and also Stuff Smith, Harry Edison and Roy Eldridge. That kind of situation gives a totally different perspective to music. The conditions of a trio like that would be that you just had to play with everybody. Completely different than saying, "Hey man, I'm hip... I can't play this kind of music."

Grisman: *Let's talk about some of the early horn players like Ben Webster. What was that like?*

Pedersen: Absolutely fantastic. At the age that I worked with him, you're embarrassed of showing your feelings. I mean that happens to a lot of us, right? People would rather keep that sort of a straight image like, "I'm cool, man," you know. But when you stand behind Ben Webster on a Saturday night in a joint filled with people who are drinking and

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having a good time, and all of a sudden he plays "My Romance" and you can hear a pin drop, then it takes you right by the heart, I mean, there's no way you can say you're not touched. And actually Ben sometimes would wipe a tear off from himself, playing, and you're just sitting there and you see this whole room so involved in it.

Grisman: *Were you guys jamming or did you have arrangements?*

Pedersen: Well, Ben had some very peculiar material. Ben liked to play "Danny Boy" in the key of *D*, which is unusual for jazz players. The sharp keys have never been jazz players' keys. Ben would play "Danny Boy" in *D*, another tune in maybe *E*. The *sound* of the instrument in those keys was amazing! Now, Dexter was one of the major influences, because Dexter stayed there so long we actually rehearsed sometimes. I used to laugh at it at that time, because he would literally be giving drum lessons while the piano player had a solo! I worked a lot with Dexter; I learned a lot from him. I have to think of Dexter with gratitude because there are all kinds of prejudices—in this case I can say that I was blushing being white and European, just the opposite situation. In other words, you had to really prove yourself.

Grisman: *You did a lot of playing with Dexter and Kenny Drew.*

Pedersen: Kenny is another major influence from that time, because we worked together for many, many years. Kenny didn't try to run the trio. He didn't say, "Listen, this is what we do. We do *this*. You play this." He was completely open. Anything you played..."Oh yeah, that's a good change." So consequently, I guess we both developed, whereas other people could have been more restrictive. So I was lucky that I can look back working with a guy who never had that attitude. He always said yeah.

Grisman: *I'm sure you've had to play many different ways for all these people.*

Pedersen: Yes, and that's the nice part about it. I remember years ago, somebody couldn't understand that I would want to play with Paul Bley. I did an album with Paul Bley, which was one of the greatest experiences of my life, because it was completely different. There are so many other possibilities, and that's one of the ways that you wake up and learn about it. You don't have to "cook" all the time or play really hot. All of a sudden you have to find a different approach. I think that's maybe the best education you can get—to play with all these people.

Grisman: *You've done an immense amount of recording. Any favorite sessions?*

Pedersen: I made a record for Steeplechase with a piano player named Kenny Knudsen (*Pictures*), who is actually an architect. I heard Kenneth play and I thought, "Here's a guy that has an absolutely different approach to anything." It's one of the albums that I like the most because I think it doesn't force the issue. I mean, it doesn't sound like a duo with a drummer who isn't there. It uses the fact that there are two instruments. I like it very much. Have you heard the album of Dexter's with Philip Catherine and Billy Higgins (*Something Different*)? On "Freddie Freeloader," Philip's swinging so hard, man, and Dexter's playing is so mature! The actual reason for that recording was that I was doing my first album, and I wanted to use Billy Higgins. So since he was in town anyway, and since Philip was in town, that's when Nils Winther (Steeplechase producer) got that brilliant idea to use Dexter with a guitar player. That's really my favorite Dexter album. There's another one coming out—a trio with only Alex (Riel), myself and Dexter. Wait till you hear that, because I mean Dexter's really *playing* on that! Also, things I did with Joe Pass, like with Svend Asmussen. I like it, we just play, and all of a sudden, it *is* a record. If there is any art form called "jazz," which I think there is, then that's maybe what *that* is all about. It isn't something you work on, it's something you have inside you.

Grisman: *Who are some of your favorite bassists?*

Pedersen: I've listened to a lot of people. One of the first ones I listened to was Walter Page from Count Basie's orchestra of 1939, because he was swingin', that's all! Freddy Greene and him, Jo Jones, Count at the piano—great music! Then later on, the guy who really was my main influence was Paul Chambers. He was just a revolution for me, the way he

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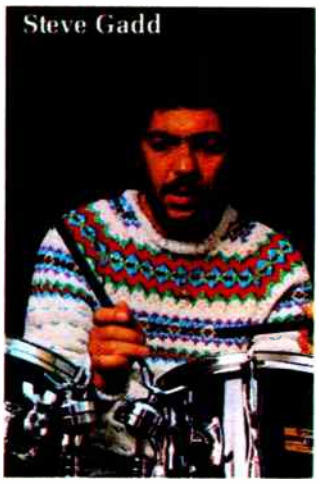

Because I've always been very concerned with the quality of sound in a drum, I use the Recording Custom Series drums, with these beautiful all-birch shells and a black piano finish. They give me a very controlled resonance with a lot of tone. They let me relax with the music, so I can adjust my touch to any volume requirements. Yamaha drums are very sensitive, and there's always a reserve of sound.

I've always tended to go for simple equipment like the Tour Series snare drum with eight lugs, because it's easier for me to get the sound. Same thing goes for my hardware, which is why I like the 7 Series hardware. I don't require really heavy leg bracing so the lightweight stands are just fine; very quiet, too.

With some drums, there isn't too much you can do to alter the sound. Some will give you a real deep thud, and others are real bright. With Yamaha, I can get both sounds, they're just very versatile. Mostly I like a deep round sound with tight definition, since my concept is that a drum is a melodic instrument like anything else. I can hear drum pitches, and Yamaha lets me achieve that without a lot of constant re-tuning.

As far as their hardware, the snare drum stand and boom stands are very well thought-out. They feel like they were designed by a drummer, and they're not limited at all. The 9 Series snare drum stand's ball tilter is fantastic; you can get the perfect angle for your playing posture. And the boom stand tilter can double as two stands because it doesn't have a long handle. So the boom slides right inside the rest of the stand if you don't need it. All in all, Yamaha is the perfect set of drums for tone quality, sound, and ease of set-up.

I'd been playing the same set of drums for ten years when I met up with the Yamaha people during a tour of Japan with Rainbow. I told them that if they could come up with a kit that was stronger, louder and more playable than what I had, I'd play it. So they came up with this incredible heavy rock kit with eight ply birch shells, heavy-duty machined hoops and a pair of 26" bass drums that are like bloody cannons. And since I'm a very heavy player who needs a lot of volume, Yamahas are perfect for me. And the sound just takes off—the projection is fantastic so I can get a lot of volume without straining.

There isn't an electric guitarist in the world who can intimidate me, and I've played with the *loudest*. Yamaha drums just cut through better, like a good stiletto. They have the fattest, warmest, most powerful sound of any kit I've played and they can really take it. For my style, Yamaha is the perfect all-around rock kit.

Yamaha makes professional equipment with the professional player in mind. They're just amazing-sounding drums, and the fact that their shells are perfectly in-round has a lot to do with it. The head-to-hoop alignment is consistent; the nylon bushing inside the lugs are quiet and stable so Yamahas tune real easy and stay in tune, too. I have a 5½" snare and it's good as anything out there. It speaks fast, with a really brilliant sound and a lot of power. When you hit it hard, the drum just *pops*. And the throw-off mechanism is quick and agile, with good snare adjustment—it's a basic design that works.

And Yamaha hardware is really ingenious, every bit as good as the drums. I like the 7 Series hardware because it's light and strong, especially the bass drum pedal, which has a fast, natural feel. What can I say? Everything in the Yamaha drums system is so well designed, you want for nothing. Once you hook up with them, you'll stay with them.

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YAMAHA

The Viking's Weapons **By Bill Amatreek**

I play an old German bass, probably a Mittenwald without the typical features, made between 1830 and 1840. I don't have a particularly low action, like a lot of people think. I use Thomastic strings on the three lower strings, and a Piastro on the top string because it sustains longest. I like the lower strings to have a short decay.

My amplification system is really great; it actually consists of two systems. The first is a system that I came up with the idea for. It utilizes two modules wired into the sides of the bridge with a great deal of tension, so you get the tension of the bridge. It was built by a friend of mine from Holland, Henk Van Zalinge, a racing car mechanic who just loves to play the bass. The other system complements the first and was built in Denmark by Elkit. It consists of a metal bar placed behind the saddle (nut), with the string knobs on metal also, so there's power going through the strings, in conjunction with four pickups mounted about an inch from the end of the fingerboard, one under each string, which I use with a mixer. So if I find that the bass is not being amplified evenly enough, I can turn up a little more of the *G* string or *A*, or *E*, *D*, and bring out my high register with all the clarity. That allows me to play all the way up to high *F*. Elkit invented and installed that system. For an amplifier, I think the Polytone Mini Brute III is about the best.

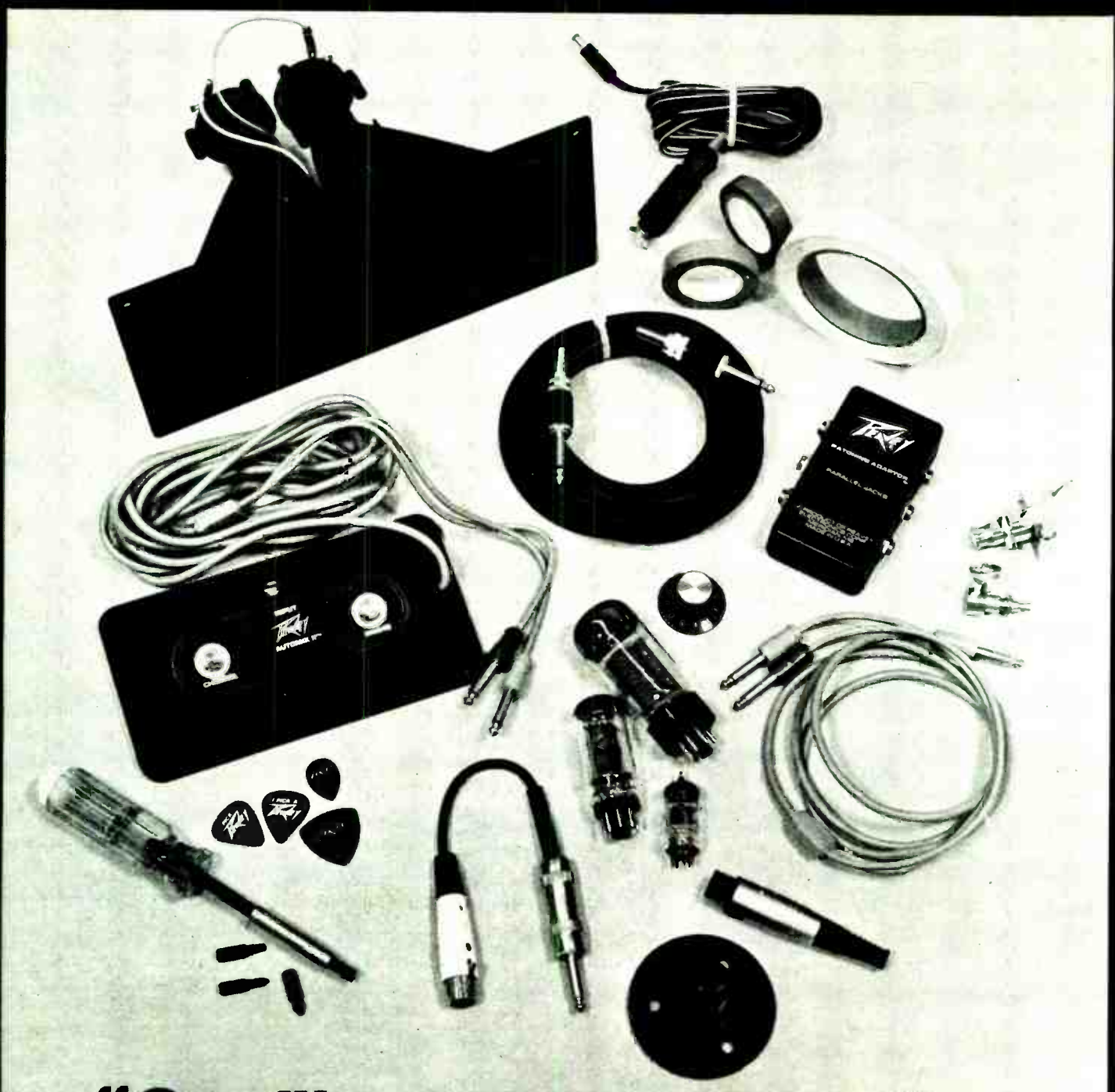
built lines away from the tonic and the fifth. He stretched it out and used a lot of chromatics. His timing was great, and of course the group he was working with ... Miles Davis, he knows about that stuff. Right now, one that I like very much is Jaco Pastorius. Before Jaco, nobody was thinking that much about harmonics. Mind you, *I* was, which is not to say anything, but all of a sudden, he brings out a totally different aspect of that instrument. I think he's one of the very good ones.

Grisman: *Do you have a philosophy of bass playing or about music in general?*

Pedersen: Yes, maybe not a philosophy, that sounds heavy. The way I look at it is almost like you should *disregard* the instrument. You should think about what you want to play and use the instrument to play it, not the other way around. There's always people who have the ability to find the obvious things for an instrument and for making it sound right. I think that's very fine, but that will only take you to a degree. If you want to go beyond that, then you should think of the music, not of the instrument. If you look at the history of the bass, it was always linked with, "It's amazing that he *can* do it!"—which didn't say much about what it actually sounded like. It was more like a phenomenon that someone was able to do something on this big instrument, which is a bit of a poor musical attitude.

The other thing is, the only way I feel you can survive—and I'm not talking about any kind of money or commercialism—is by having an open mind. Go out and see what it's all about. I mean, Duke Ellington once said there's only two kinds of music; good and bad music. I'll leave it right there, because everything else is not important. I will never use the label "the world's greatest," because I think that's a big mistake. One of the things we have to learn in this art form is that that kind of thinking belongs in the sports world, for heaven's sake. One of the great things about music today is that there's so many different musicians and kinds of music—all good. I mean, you're playing with Stephane (Grappelli); Chick Corea and Gary Burton get together—that's fantastic! There are so many good players, you should appreciate them for what they play. That's the great thing about the art form, that it's *individuals*.

David Grisman is probably the world's leading jazz mandolinist and exponent of "Dawg" music, a blend of bluegrass, jazz, classical and Middle-Eastern styles. His latest Warner Bros. album is entitled Mondo Mando *and his* Stephane Grappelli/David Grisman—Live *LP is still on the jazz charts.*



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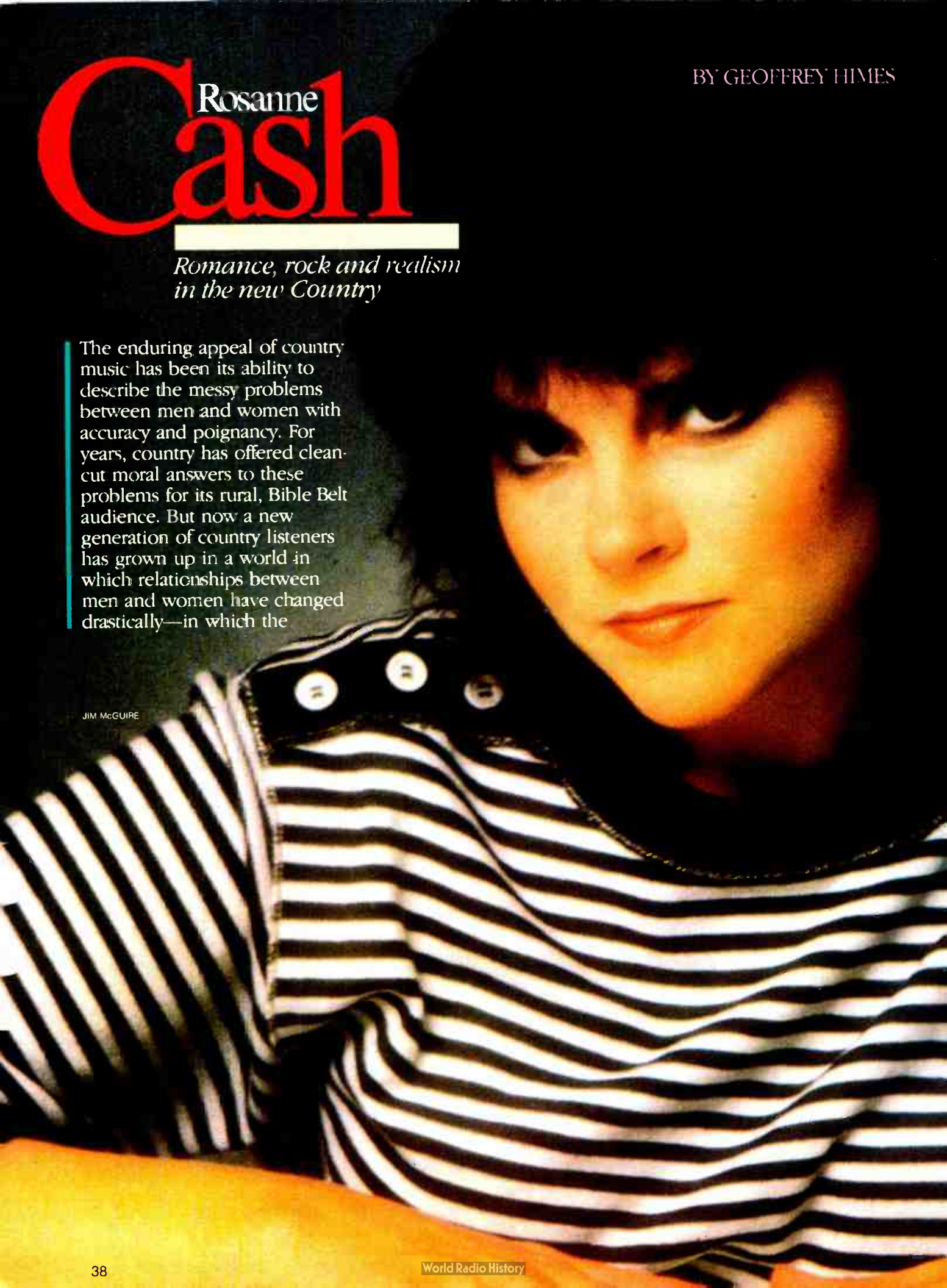
Rosanne Cash

BY GEOFFREY HIMES

Romance, rock and realism in the new Country

The enduring appeal of country music has been its ability to describe the messy problems between men and women with accuracy and poignancy. For years, country has offered clean-cut moral answers to these problems for its rural, Bible Belt audience. But now a new generation of country listeners has grown up in a world in which relationships between men and women have changed drastically—in which the



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Continuous program	150 W	300 W	300 W	400 W	300 W	600 W
Continuous sine wave	75 W	150 W	150 W	200 W	150 W	300 W
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conclusions are not so obvious, not so certain. Songs that can accurately describe this generation's experiences will have to be couched in complexity as never before.

Rosanne Cash has filled this need better than any country artist. Her smokey voice has drenched three albums in rich, rewarding irony. Her second album, last year's *Seven Year Ache*, yielded three consecutive number one singles on the country charts. The finely shaded drama of those songs stood out sharply from typical sermonizing soap operas. Now Cash has released a third album, *Somewhere In The Stars*, which contains her most ambitious, most successful work to date.

Cash was perfectly positioned to take country music off the farm: she has strong family ties to country's past and its future. Her father is Johnny Cash; her stepgrandmother is Mother Maybelle Carter of the Original Carter Family. Rosanne's stepsister is Carlene Carter; her husband is singer/songwriter/producer Rodney Crowell, whom Emmylou Harris has described as "expanding the parameters of country music." Crowell produced Cash's three American albums, and his band, the Cherry Bombs, plays on them. Still, it is Cash's dark expressive voice that best embodies the new sophistication of country music.

On her album covers, Cash is mesmerizingly photogenic: her bluish-black hair shines under lights; her deep brown irises swim in wide eyes; her glistening red lower lip pouts seductively over a tough, angular jaw. In person, she doesn't appear as perfect or as distant. She's more casual and far more accessible that her photos would suggest. She drives this reporter out to her large log ranch house in the rolling hills south of Nashville and drafts him into making chicken salad for lunch. During the interview, she sits cross-legged on her den floor and breast-feeds her six-month-old daughter, Chelsea Crowell.

PAUL NATKIN PHOTO RESERVE

The Cherry Bombs add a punchy backbeat to Rosanne's dark, expressive voice.

The best of her hit singles is "Seven Year Ache," the classic country tale of a woman left at home while her man goes downtown tomcatting. Yet Cash's approach to the situation is anything but traditional for a female singer. The woman in the song isn't willing to give in to the man and let him get away with hurting her. Nor is she willing to give him up without a fight.

"I love ambiguity," Cash asserts. "This woman is not going to compromise beyond her principles to keep him. She's not sitting at home getting fat, crying and wallowing in self-pity. She still has her strength, her sense of humor and her own sense of herself. She really

loves this guy, and he's really hurting her, but she's not going to let her life disintegrate around it."

The ambiguity is not just in the lyrics that Cash wrote; it's also in her voice as she squeezes several possible nuances out of every line. She sings the line, "The girls say, 'God, I hope he comes back soon,'" with a sultry purr that reflects both her jealousy of those girls and her empathy with them. When she delivers the song's key question, "Baby, what is so great about sleepin' downtown?" she understates it with both the acknowledgment that sleeping around has its advantages, and also with the stubborn confidence that she has something better to offer.

"I like irony," she claims. "I think if you mix up emotions, if you make it more complex than just a straightforward statement, it's far more appealing and far more true to human beings. It's very seldom we feel exactly one way about something without any other shades of feeling about it."

This is quite different from a lot of old country songs where the underlying morality was always black and white, either/or.... "...God and the devil," Cash agrees. "Yeah, I can think of a lot of examples. It was straight-ahead cheating, womanizing, drinking, stand by your man. There was none of this screwing around and then wondering about it.

"The woman always assumed the angel role. Or else they were the victim—the good woman who's been stomped on, and they're going to lie there and take it from their man. That's a bunch of crap. Nobody does that. Well, I guess they do, but it's such a drag to even think of it."

"Third Rate Romance" has been done to death by every bar band south of the Mason-Dixon line. Yet Cash has made it sound brand-new on her new album. Where the original version by the Amazing Rhythm Aces was bouncy and boastful, hers is slower, sexier and sadder.

"My sex was one new thing I could bring to the song," Cash explains. "The song is so true the way it talks about one-night stands; it's like a short story. But I've never heard a cover version by a female; I never heard that side of the story. I just felt more sex from it. I was seven months pregnant when I sang it, but I think that's the most sex I've put on record. It has that lasciviousness. I also feel a lot of resignation in that song. She says, 'You don't look like my type, but I guess you'll do.' It was sad, and yet she was aroused. She was resigned: 'This is all I'm going to get tonight.'" Cash breaks up into giggles.

Rosanne Cash, now twenty-seven, was eleven when her parents divorced. She lived with her mother in Ventura, California but saw her famous father often on holidays. "My dad was a mysterious figure when I was young," she remembers. "He was not there on a day-to-day basis so we could get used to him being around as a normal guy. He was on the road a lot, and he was in and out. He was real intimidating—his energy, his size, his fame. Now I feel real good about my dad and that legacy. It's a strength. His songs are a big influence. 'Picking Time' and 'Five Feet High And Rising' are my earliest memories of songs."

Nevertheless, she was hardly a big country fan in high school. "Nyah, I wasn't interested at all," she remembers. "I was listening to the Doors, the Beatles, Buffalo Springfield, Fleetwood Mac. I thought country was too weird." When she graduated from high school, though, she joined her father's road show with her two stepsisters: Rosey Nix and Carlene Carter. They just wanted to travel with their dad, but to get a tax write-off, they had to do something, so they became the tour's laundresses.

"I still wasn't into the music or the audiences," admits Cash. "Then my dad started teaching us these songs and we were really getting into them. So he made this four-page list of all the songs we should know, and he taught us every single one. It was like a lost city of music that I had found. I loved its simplicity and its melodies.

"At one point, they said, 'Why don't

you girls sing this one line offstage backup. Aw hell, why don't you just come and sing it onstage.' So then we got into our little dresses and we went out. We had our arms around each other and shook the whole way through it. Then it grew to where we actually came out and did a solo number. Then Rosey and I were opening the show. We were terrible and dad was so proud of us."

After three years on her father's show, she decided to strike out on her own. She spent six months in England and then came back to Nashville to attend creative writing and acting classes at Vanderbilt University. Deciding on acting as a career, she enrolled at the Lee Strasberg Acting School. During one Christmas vacation, she visited a girlfriend in Germany who worked for Ariola Records. The execs there asked her for a demo tape "probably because I was Rosanne *Cash*," she frowns. She had only met Crowell twice at parties, but she was attracted to his songwriting, so she asked him to produce her demos. Ariola wanted her to make an album, but not with Crowell producing.

"So I went over there," Cash notes sourly, "and had a thoroughly miserable experience making an album. I was so distraught; I didn't know what the hell I was doing over there by myself for two months. And this asshole producer wanted me to record these jerk-off songs, this disco crap. We fought from the very start." The album has never been released in the United States, and Cash swears she will do everything possible to see that it never is.

While Cash was in Germany, she wrote letters of commiseration to Crowell, who was also struggling with his own first album. The letters soon became love letters and their professional relationship became a romantic one. When Cash returned, CBS Records in Nashville wanted to release one song from the German album, Crowell's "Baby, Better Start Turning 'Em Down," as an American single. "Rodney and I went to them," Cash recounts, "and we begged, 'Please don't release it. Give us a chance to do it over.' It turned into an album."

Right Or Wrong (Columbia), released in 1979, featured four Crowell compositions, including "No Memories Hangin' 'Round," a duet between Cash and Bobby Bare, and "Anybody's Darlin'" from the German album. Also included were two Keith Sykes songs, Rosanne Cash's "This Has Happened Before" and Johnny Cash's "Big River." Except for a handful of tracks, Rosanne Cash now finds the album pretty immature. "I didn't have a sense of my voice—what it was, how to place it or what its limitations were. I was at the mercy of my voice. If it was working a little bit, I was really happy. If it wasn't working, I didn't

continued on page 22

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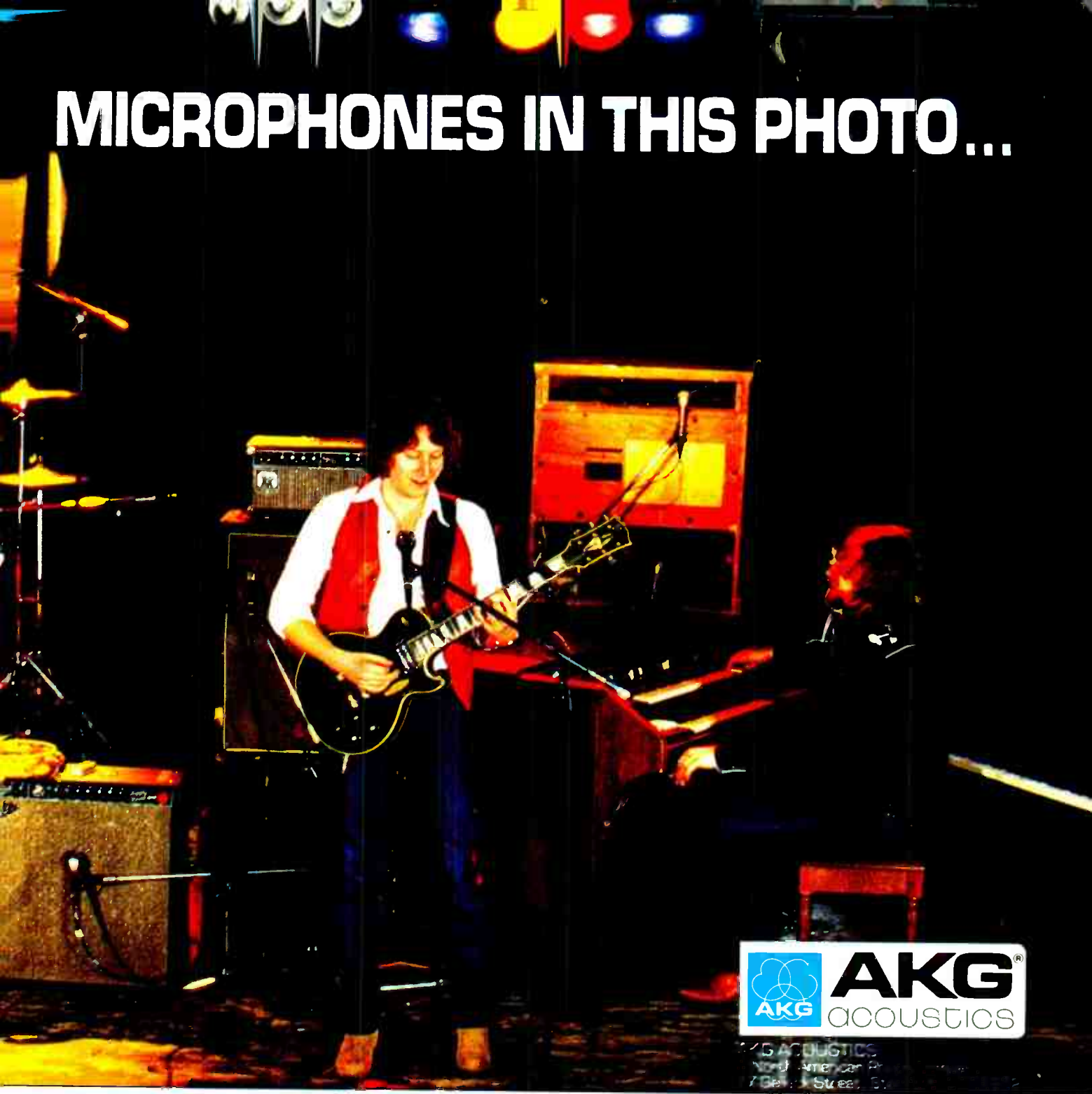

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FACES

CHRIS WALTER/RETNA

Stray Cats

PIGBAG

Question: What English band of bohemian types with similar eclectic, jazzy tastes originally got together after eating some magic mushrooms and then rehearsing in a room nonstop for half a day? No, the answer isn't some 60s relic like Pink Floyd or even the Bonzo Dog Doodah Band, it's ...Pigbag! Presently England's oddest hitmakers, Pigbag's seven-man lineup emits a propulsive, loosely-knit, double-funk signal that sounds a bit like Fela's Nigerian brass jamming with James Brown's guitarist (circa 1967) in a London pub, while the rest of the patrons pound their goblets on the bar in wild abandon. Pigbag had a major hit single on their first outing last year, the million-selling instrumental "Papa's Got A Brand New Pigbag," which topped the British charts for weeks. "Papa" combined the pleasantly braying horns of tenor saxist Ollie Moore and trumpeter Chris Lee with a thoroughly Anglican reappraisal of Ivory Coast percussion traditions, all pinned to the dancefloor by drummer Chip Carpenter's four-beat foot and Simon Underwood's snaking bass lines. "Sunny Day," the followup single, served up even thicker slabs of Pigbag funk, as guitarist James Johnstone's slightly deranged chicken-scratching sparred with the Pigbag horns' loping open-fifth harmonies and punchy rhythmics.

Unlike some other trendy English horn bands today—like the ultra-pop and at times sticky-sweet Haircut 100 or the sincere but largely un-funky Dexy's Midnight Runners—Pigbag doesn't rely on coifs, clothes or even vocals to push their point. In fact, in a recent midsummer appearance at Gotham's Peppermint Lounge, the band showed fewer pretensions and more desire to just play music than any British group to hit these shores in a long spell. All the players switched freely between various percussion instruments, synths, and just doing a wobbly, 80s-style boogaloo onstage, and while no one even comes near to being a virtuoso soloist here, enthusiasm and fun are high priorities for Pigbag; their free-wheeling approach to arranging, song form, and solo structures evokes, ironically enough, a primitive rock parallel to Charles Mingus's panoramic fluidity as a jazz composer/arranger.(Not surprisingly, Ollie told me that afternoon at sound-check the band's major favorites "would probably include Ornette Coleman, David Murray, *gamelan* music, Latin rhythms, Fela—we basically want to create music with energy, and I guess it just ends up being danceable as well.") Their newest single, "The Big Bean" (available domestically on Y Records), suggests a movement toward more South American rhythms with less emphasis on the funk, but live at the Pep, the group's eccentric, slightly goofy fusion of elements sounded like nothing else but—Pigbag. Alas, though, the New York crowd at the Peppermint Lounge applauded loud, but danced little after the band's action-packed set, and so the hardest working Pigbag in show business, much dismayed, refused to do an encore. Maybe next time. — *Crispin Cioe*

Pigbag

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

STRAY CATS

The Stray Cats, a trio of twenties-ish Long Island boys who moved to England and became major European stars, look the spitting image of their numerous 50s icons—Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent, Carl Perkins, Buddy Holly. And it's in the Stray Cats' image and presentation that an uncompromising rockabilly stance is most apparent. Brian Setzer, the group's singer and guitarist, is an intricately coiffed, tattooed young man who's a stickler for using a 1957 Gretsch Chet Atkins hollow body guitar with a similar vintage Fender Bassman amp. His rhythm section of Lee Rocker and Slim Jim Phantom assist in recreating the echoing spaces of early rock records, utilizing Rocker's unamplified slap-bass and Phantom's distinctly crisp snare drum.

Their fondness for archetypes as de, the Stray Cats insist that both they and their audiences are not mere nostalgists who wish the clock had stopped in 1959. As they played to a closely packed, overheated incipient mob at New York's Roseland Ballroom, the Stray Cats overlaid their tools from the past with distinctly contemporary communicative devices. Even Eddie Cochran would have had to admit that the Stray Cats' cover of "C'mon Everybody" owed as much to the high-intensity volume of the Who's "Summertime Blues" as it did to Cochran's perky original.

The Stray Cats' reception bore little resemblance either to the somewhat muted reverence attached to truer-blue revivalists like Robert Gordon or Buzz & the Flyers, or to the exuberance displayed in the presence of the gymnastic Rockats, another young practitioner of the rockabilly sound. At many times, there were enough upraised fists flailing the air to make an onlooker feel they'd inadvertently stumbled upon some heavy metal scenery. Setzer's ability to double punch his rawly energetic vocals with huge howling screams indicated a far more intimate involvement with the audience than my childhood memories recall of late 50s rock package shows. Especially when a jerk in the crowd set off a smoke bomb and 1,500 people hovered on the edge of panic then obliviously carried on dancing, were you forced to realize that this was the present, a time when people were going to get their $10.50 worth, no matter what.

Rock's increased instrumental complexity has also left its mark on the Stray Cats. While their album, *Built For Speed*, is a compilation of twelve songs all under 3½ minutes, Setzer is very much a *lead* guitarist in the way he interprets those songs onstage. On a standard 12-bar blues called "Drink That Bottle Down," Setzer abandoned his ordinarily concise twanging for a solo as ponderously predictable as those of a hundred Southern boogie bands. Yet the same audience who rejects the pretentiousness of arena rock applauded him madly. Admittedly, this event was very much a homecoming for the group—who were asked to be on the *Friday* show and support several Rolling Stones dates before they ever had an American record deal—and to their fans, the Stray Cats could do no wrong.

Yet I wonder if anyone else at Roseland felt as if they shifted uneasily between feet-on-the-floor reality and the same sort of warped time travel so frequently indulged in by cinema. When the Stray Cats sang such unselfconscious rockers as "Rev It Up And Go" and the Chuck Berryish "Built For Speed," they were easily acceptable as an ingenuous rock 'n' roll band. But as they moved into their narrative theme song, "Stray Cat Strut," the music took on a determined nature—as if this song must capture the very essence of the 50s. Instead, it encapsulated the group and their chanting followers as effectively as if they had been preserved under glass in a museum of teenage attitudes. The Stray Cats, for their own self-preservation, would be well advised to forego any further dependence on second-hand memories. Their own do well enough. — *Toby Goldstein*

MILES DAVIS

Submerged in sodden, hot, poisoned and calamitous air alongside the berth of a 'merican aircraft carrier and macho jetfighters—your tax dollars in action—was probably not the best way for us to hear music, but that was how the Dr. Pepper Summer Whatever-it-is presented Miles Davis, and we went. It probably beat hearing him open for Diana Ross—*Diana Ross*?—on Long Island or for Pat Metheny—wonder how Pat felt—on Boston Common. How was he? Well, I haven't spoken to his doctor, but he sounds fine. The chops are doubtless stronger than they were a year ago. He doesn't have to put his gorgeous tone to work covering up weak spots, nor does he have to devastate us emotionally so we'll forgive him the short lines and the occasional clam (though the trumpeter capable of "Kix" on *We Want Miles* hardly needs apologia or excuses).

Miles Davis

TERRY KELLEY

Is that why he sounds, as a friend pointed out, less dramatic than he did a year ago, less a revelation? Though the man played, I'll tell you, he pulled a few pages from his 60s book, read a few chapters for Gil Evans, opened the inevitable volume of light. In sum, he shows some promise. And the band?

This magazine, under which heading I include myself, was the only publication in this great land of ours that did not fling little gobbets of goo at Mr. Davis for his band last year. I thought they made a kind of sense, accorded Miles a sufficient and commodious space. I even like the way they sound on *We Want Miles*—I guess the next album will be *We Want Blood*—but by now they're so established in their routines that almost nothing comes through. They've learned they can get away with it. Me, I wish they still felt uncertain.

Miles kept his solos short. Guitarist Mike Stern's felt interminable. I'm perfectly willing to believe that in another context Stern is a fine, an imaginative, even a relatively wonderful guitarist, but with Davis he is stultifying. His solos alternate the hoariest rock clichés with rote and ill-fitting bop exercises. There is no sense at all of anyone creating anything, only that of someone trying to fill the necessary space with whatever he already knows. I get a greater feeling of personal creativity from saxophonist Bill Evans, who makes an attempt to play something new, avoid the obvious; but aspiration isn't everything, and rebounding from Coltrane to Liebman to Shorter defines a limited range. He'll grow. Bassist Marcus Miller seemed a marvel a year back; he still sounds good when he isn't popping the strings at you, as if to say, "Hear me! Hear me!" I've heard better conga players than Minu Cinelu. Al Foster sounded okay, but there wasn't a hell of a lot of nuance to his work, and that surprised me. The space had gone out of the band, and most of its room to breathe.

It sounds to me like time for a change, as if a stronger Miles needs a stronger band, and I've begun to wonder what he'd sound like with a killer altoist like Paquito D'Rivera and a more imaginative and lethal guitarist (Scofield?), or, for that matter, in a new collaboration with Gil Evans, whose *Sketches Of Spain* the band evoked toward the end of its long set, insinuating Spanish modes into a performance of the nursery rhyme "Jean Pierre" that was the most satisfying and satisfyingly collective music of the stifling afternoon and early dark. Aw, maybe it was just the weather. — *Rafi Zabor*

HAIRCUT 100

Scramble the lyrics that sing the praises of B movies starring Hayley Mills, halcyon days in the country and the pleasures of returning home, with trumpet riffs that recall Alan Civil's work with the Beatles. Add soul, funk, and salsa cross-stitching to the basic mix, and what you come up with, if you happen to be Haircut 100, is some of the most infectious pop to hit these shores in years. Pegged, maybe mistakenly, by the British media as a funk/high fashion hybrid geared for the young teen market, lead singer Nick Heyward and company seem far less mannered and a lot more down to earth than the advance publicity would have one believe.

"About the fashion bit," says Heyward, "that started when we turned up to tape *Top of the Pops*. The studio was freezing, you know? So we all geared up for the show by putting on sweaters, woolly ones with high collars, and then we put on these socks which we pulled up over our pants.

"Next day, the radio and papers are talking. Who was that band? They touched on the music a little, but they really soared on that clothes bit. We had a laugh about it at first, but now it's rather embarrassing."

Another part of the Haircut myth that Heyward is quick to dispel is any association with the latest breaker on the British new wave scene, London's love affair with funk.

"There are about 40,000 funk bands in London at the moment, and none of them sound like us. I mean, most of them either can't play, or they're saying grandiose things like they're going to do for funk what the Police did for reggae. Whereas we feel we've got to prove ourselves. Show them we can play, or whatever it takes."

This sounds refreshing coming from a band that was signed to a record contract even before they played their third gig together. Up until ten months ago, the six members of Haircut 100 were either looking for, or working day jobs. Heyward was a commercial artist; percussionist Mark Fox was teaching German at a university; and American-born drummer Blair Cunningham, a veteran of sessions with everyone from Rufus Thomas to the Doobies, was looking for a band.

Their signing to Arista and success were almost simultaneous. "It's no fun for us to play Britain right now," Heyward tells me. "People just go mad for us, screaming girls and such, because we're young.

"Here in the States it's quite different. It's like Chicago is one kind of little country, Detroit another, Boston another. The size of this country is incredible. We're playing to really different audiences all over the place. And when we take the stage, we're hungry; here's another audience we have to win over.

At the Metro this evening, Haircut 100 is exuberant. Heyward's Mersey beat melodies are bolstered by a pastiche of rhythmic currents. Graham Jones's guitar work is full of vitality. Bassist Les Nemes and Cunningham kick in with a soulful Stax-inspired bottom. Percussionist Fox slides back and forth against the grain of Heyward's catchy pop 'n' funk compositions.

On top of this, the brass section, featuring Phil Smith's torrid sax, heats things up to fever pitch. From the opening blast, a nod to Latin/funk source War ("Low Rider"), the crowd on the dancefloor seems to be inflicted with a massive attack of Saint Vitus's Dance.

Putting the funk on the back burner, the band also works in an unabashed pop groove. Not as busy as the funky stuff, these songs give the audience a chance to zero in on Haircut's oddball wit and peculiarly British charm.

When Heyward tosses off a line like "We're lost without Hayley Mills today," you get the feeling that his intent is only slightly as silly as it sounds. Deep down inside, he really means it.

"If I pushed hard and wrote an up-to-date sort of lyric, like UB 40 about social injustice or something political, I'd sound pretentious. It just wouldn't be me," says Heyward. "I mean, I wrote 'Fantastic Day' (which is scheduled to be the group's next single), when I was fifteen, and it's one of our biggest songs now. I've always had that sort of thing in me." — *Wayne Cresser*

Haircut 100

ADRIAN BOOT/RETNA

Steve Miller

He Space Cowboy, Gangster of Love, the Joker and now, Uno Vibrato... Steve Miller, a feisty, show-stealing kid, has gone from Haight-Ashbury to double platinum and back.

BY DAN FORTE

It would be an easy enough scenario to write. Son of a well-to-do doctor grows up around music and the arts, learns his first guitar chords from the inventor of multi-track recording. Moves with his family from Milwaukee to Dallas at an early age and learns electric blues licks and showmanship from a patient of his father's, a man called T-Bone Walker. Goes to college at Madison, Wisconsin, where his band is booked years in advance on the frat circuit. Journeys to nearby Chicago where the cocky rich kid starts competing for (and earning) club gigs with the likes of Paul Butterfield and Muddy Waters. Is drawn to San Francisco at the height of hippiedom and in no time is blowing all comers off the stages of the Fillmore and Avalon ballrooms. Signs a lucrative deal with the same company that signed the Beatles

"We'd come in to the Avalon and play hard-core shuffles and just knock 'em out. Then the next band would come out and be so stoned they could hardly play their guitars."

and the Beach Boys, and puts out a few adventurous "artistic" albums before striking a chord with radio listeners that yields a string of hit singles in the mid-70s. Plays innumerable football-stadium concerts, is voted *Rolling Stone*'s Artist of the Year, makes a *lot* of money—virtually enough to relax in semi-retirement for four years. Comes back with an uneven album that is almost unanimously panned by the press. Takes a cushy gig as a high-paid has-been playing Lake Tahoe showrooms where old fans still flock to hear him play his hits of days gone by.

This *could* have been Steve Miller's story. Up to the final chapter, it *is* his story. But Steve Miller is not the Beach Boys, and it seems unlikely that he will ever be content to rest on his past reputation. When his first album in four years, 1981's *Circle Of Love*, was ravaged by the rock press (and "only went gold" as a result) he immediately went back into the studio as if to say, "I'll show those guys who's a has-been."

And as with so much relating to the man and his career, his followup album, *Abracadabra*, is his "I told you so" to all who ever doubted him. The album is contemporary, a progression into the 80s for Miller, but displays a commercial sensibility not unlike *Fly Like An Eagle* and *Book Of Dreams*. And with the success the LP's title track is enjoying in the top ten, it's not hard to imagine *Abracadabra* selling the sort of multi-platinum units enjoyed by its predecessors of six years ago.

So what is Steve Miller doing at the Sahara in Lake Tahoe, where the following week the stage he is on tonight will be occupied by magician Doug Henning and blonde airhead Suzanne Somers? He's doing what he's been doing for twenty-six years—"knocking them on their ear," as he likes to put it. From the opening harmonies of "Swingtown," all the way back to "Living In The U.S.A." and all the way up to the extended "Macho City," the crowd of 1,800 (most of whom have never before set foot in a showroom) react like any other rock 'n' roll audience, albeit a somewhat well mannered one. Tuxedoed maitre d's seat blue-jeaned twenty-five-year-olds at padded booths with white tablecloths while waitresses strain to hear drink orders over the din that goes up from the crowd when Miller's seven-piece band launches into "Rock 'N Me."

"I'll tell you what," Miller laughs backstage, "I don't think we're going to be back here. I don't think it's worked out quite the way the Sahara expected. We're just tearin' the joint up. I mean they're standing on top of the tables, goin' nuts. It's a real rock 'n' roll party. And I didn't know what was going to happen. I was scared to death when I came in here. I thought like: (mimics lounge singer *a la* Bill Murray) 'Hey, I'm the Gangster of Lu-ove. Hit it, baby...Ladies and gentlemen, the Spaaace COWBOY!' But it's just a bunch of twenty-five-year-old kids getting to see a good rock 'n' roll show in a nice environment."

In the mid-70s, nine albums into his recording career, Steve Miller's bluesy laid-back sound—his high, strained voice softened with digital delay accompanied by guitar riffs so familiar he was sometimes accused of plagiarism—struck a universal chord with radio listeners and record buyers alike, and our rich kid turned blues rocker could do no wrong. After selling a million copies of *The Joker, Fly Like An Eagle* sold four and a half million, thanks to three hit singles ("Take The Money And Run," "Rock 'N Me" and the title tune), and *Book Of Dreams* sold another two and a half million (with three more smash singles: "Swingtown," "Jet Airliner" and "Jungle Love"). Those two platinum albums and the *Greatest Hits* package which was hot on their heels combined to sell more than fourteen million records worldwide, and Steve Miller remains Capitol Records' top-selling solo artist ever.

But four years away from the music scene, Miller admits, was one year too long. "I'm looking for my audience, too," he explains. "I think I've found *part* of my audience here. See, I personally would rarely buy a ticket and go to the coliseum to see somebody perform. They'd have to be real special. My audience isn't going to go to the coliseum right now. I pretty much lost my young audience at this point, I think. I haven't put anything out in four years. So a kid who was only twelve when I was at my peak, who's sixteen now, he doesn't even know who I am. I think three years is about as long as you can go, and I went four years. I'm thirty-eight years old now, and I don't want to go out and have to play something I think has to be written expressly for a sixteen-year-old kid who wants to drink some wine and boogie hard. But we are a boogie/rock 'n' roll/blues nightclub act. That's, basically, what I've always been—even when I went to San Francisco and recorded *Children Of The Future*. It was just a bunch of shuffles strung together."

BLUES FOR A FLESH-COLORED CADDY

Miller stayed away from the scene as long as he did because, in his words, "I was really tired. I've been doing it for twenty-six years, so it's nothing for me to take four years off and come back. I planned to keep playing all along. Right now I've got a big appetite for work, for music. And I've got the best band I've ever had. We've got six vocalists now and three guitar players."

He describes his current band as his "vocal group," something he's been wanting to do onstage for a long time. Along with veterans Gary Mallaber on drums, Byron Allred on keyboards and Gerald Johnson on bass, the group includes two brand-new guitarists, John Massaro and Kenny Lee Lewis. And taking time off from his solo career for another tour of duty with Steve is harmonica virtuoso Norton Buffalo. With the exception of Allred, everyone in the band doubles on background vocals. "By the time we get back from Europe," the leader assures, "we're going to be somewhere between what the Beach Boys were and what the Eagles were, with a more blues base."

It is ironic that it's taken Miller this long to put together a vocal-based band. He's had some excellent singers in his organization in the past—including drummer Tim Davis and guitarist Boz Scaggs—but they seldom harmonized. "This tour, I'm just now beginning to get to do what I did in high school," Steve exclaims. "Before I came to San Francisco I had multi-vocal groups. But I could never get it together, and Boz didn't want to do it. That's when Boz and I really had the falling out; he didn't want to do the vocal stuff."

Miller's association with Scaggs goes all the way back to St. Mark's High School in Dallas, Texas and the Fabulous Night Trains that played fraternity parties all over the Midwest while both attended the University of Wisconsin. After Boz rejoined Miller in San Francisco and contributed to the band's first three albums, the two went their separate ways, with Scaggs forming his own blues-based unit, which in the beginning owed much to the sound of his former leader, though Scaggs never seemed as at home with the blues. "Boz was always really good with me when we played blues," allows Miller. "But I grew up in Texas and learned all that stuff, and it was just a part of the way I functioned. Then I taught Boz how to play guitar, and then Boz learned his blues kind of second-hand, in a white-guy shuffle band. But he missed the whole Chicago thing."

The blues was Steve's deepest musical love if not necessarily his first. "First I knew a lot about jazz as a child," he recounts; "I knew Red Norvo when I was five or six, Tal Farlow used to come over to the house, and Charles Mingus. Les Paul and Mary Ford would come over Sunday afternoon and eat at our house and then go do their gig in Milwaukee, and my dad

would record them. So I got into that and into country & western from listening to the "Grand Ole Opry." Then we moved to Texas when I was six, and I instantly became aware of gospel music and church music, because my dad was just fascinated by it. Then T-Bone Walker used to come over to the house and play parties and stuff. He was a patient of my dad's for two or three years; he was a hypochondriac. When I was eleven years old, T-Bone Walker came to my house, showed up in a flesh-colored Cadillac with leopard-skin seats. I got up to go to school, and there was a rented piano that was delivered to the house. I said, 'What's going on?' My mom said, 'Well, a man named T-Bone Walker is coming over tonight, and we're having a party.' And I got sick right away and stayed home—didn't move, man. Along about four o'clock in the afternoon, T-Bone comes up—in that off-purple sort of flesh-colored Cadillac convertible. They played from five in the afternoon until six the next morning, and my dad recorded the whole thing! It was a real bizarre party—they had a magician and T-Bone Walker. T-Bone showed me how to do the splits and play the guitar behind my head."

JIM MARSHALL

Children of the future, 1967: (l. to r.) Miller, Boz Scaggs, Tim Davis, Jim Peterman (behind) and Lonnie Turner.

After T-Bone Walker, whom Miller credits with teaching him taste, Steve's biggest blues influences were Jimmy Reed and organist Bill Doggett's group. "I knew 'Leaps And Bounds' and 'Honky Tonk' and all that Bill Doggett stuff when I was twelve. I loved that group—the organ, the guitar, the sax, everything. That was the epitome of cool music for a long, long time—that and Jimmy Reed. Jimmy Reed used to come and play at LouAnne's in Dallas. I backed him up when I was fourteen—my band, the Marksmen Combo, with Boz. To this day, Jimmy Reed is my favorite. We could put on a cut of 'Mr. Luck' right now, you'd just go, 'Damn, he's *great*!' That crazy, loping shuffle thing. We're still doing it."

Fans who can remember when the majority of the Miller Band's repertoire was straight-ahead blues are still bemoaning the fact that there is little documentation of that style on his records. But Steve promises that a blues LP will be added to his catalog in the not-too-distant future. "Everybody's afraid to do a blues album, because they're afraid they'll get killed for it," he explains. "I've been trying to make a blues album forever. It would have to be a classic Jimmy Reed album. But I don't want to do that album until I can sell two million copies of it, until I've got people paying enough attention to actually put it over. It'll happen. I still figure I've got that whole blues thing ahead of me to do. Certain things you just don't do until the time is right. And I bet there'll be a time when that blues album will save my ass. There's no doubt in my mind if I did all of Jimmy Reed's best stuff on one record with two Bill Doggett tunes, it would be an absolutely classic wonderfully fantastic album. But it should come out at a time when everybody would enjoy it, not just 130 people liking it."

SHOW-STEALING AT THE FILLMORE

When Steve drifted down from Madison to Chicago in the early 60s he made his way to the nightclub stages the same way he had in Texas and everywhere else. "I've always relied on my own ability to entertain people," he states. "And in Chicago the only way you could get work was to steal gigs from other bands. I'd walk right into somebody's thing and sort of ask if I could sit in, and just steal their show—by being able to out-entertain them. I did that to Corky Siegal a lot," he laughs; "just miserable little pissant gigs, forty bucks a night. I was very competitive. Like I was telling my little brother, if you want to work, go look at the place you want to work, instead of taking the one where you *can* work. If you want to work at Big John's in Chicago, what does that mean? You gotta go get Paul Butterfield's gig, right? That's the real test of whether you should stay in the biz or not."

In 1966 Miller moved to San Francisco, where his competitive, survivalist attitude was greeted by the Bay Area's blossoming hippie community. "The first thing I did," he remembers, "I walked into the Fillmore, where Paul Butterfield was playing, and the Jefferson Airplane were doing their farewell to Signe what's-her-name (Anderson). Grace Slick had just joined that night. Butterfield let me do three songs, and I tore the joint up. Introduced myself and told this hall who I was and where I came from and what I was there for. And within a week I'd called up my friends in Chicago and said, 'Hey guys, there aren't any bands out here. This is it.' And we got help instead of competition. Quicksilver helped me out. John Cippolina got sick so they said, 'Steve, you want to come down and play the Matrix?' 'Sure do.' I'd sold my tape recorder and was living in Berkeley. I had paid the rent for two months, $125 a month, so I had two months to make it or break it. Played the Matrix and just knocked them out. Because we were a lot better than Quicksilver Messenger Service. We were used to entertaining people. Those guys could hardly tune their guitars they were so stoned. That was the scene. They had the other side of it going; everybody knew they were real important because they were Quicksilver. Then Chet Helms saved my life—paid me $500 to play the Avalon Ballroom with Buffalo Springfield. Blew them off the stage! We came in and played hard-core shuffles. I mean, it wasn't a bad band; after all, Boz and I were in it. We'd do these tight sets. After forty-five minutes everyone would go nuts at the end of the set. Then the next guys would come out and tune, and dink around, tune, and dink around...the Grateful Dead would play 'Midnight Hour' out of key. The thing about the Dead, it was fun to listen to Jerry Garcia rap. He's a great *talker*."

Although Miller had been associated (or, more accurately, lumped in) with nearly every category of rock 'n' roll, he still feels a close tie with San Francisco, even though he has lived in Oregon and Washington for the past eight years. "I stayed in San Francisco for eight years and worked that scene," he says; "I built that scene. I mean, I kept the Fillmore alive. There were times when the Steve Miller Band played the Fillmore seven nights in a row, six weeks in a row, backed up Chuck Berry, backed up somebody else, then played the shows and kept the doors open when they couldn't get anybody else in. We built the scene, but we couldn't have done it if the other people hadn't been there. If Victor Mescoso hadn't been there, if Kelly and Mouse and the new art work hadn't been there, if Headlights hadn't been there, if Chet Helms hadn't been there putting that scene together, if Bill Graham hadn't been there to exploit it. When I went to San Francisco what I saw was that the

Grateful Dead couldn't play worth beans, but they had created a social scene. And the Jefferson Airplane couldn't play worth beans, but they acted like rock 'n' roll stars. And the 'go' that was put into the scene was brought in by bands like myself and Butterfield. Then all of a sudden B.B. King was playing there. I mean, when we came out there, we literally told these people about all these other musicians. So you had a scene that had room for something as goofy as the Plasmatics—or, in this case, Blue Cheer. I remember seeing Blue Cheer with, I think, three double stacks of Marshalls—no, six! Absolute nonsense. But it ranged from that to Ray Charles and Aretha Franklin. It was a really intelligent musical scene. You could see Ray Charles or the greatest British rock band of the day or Fleetwood Mac when they were just a bunch of scruffy kids, or the Modern Jazz Quartet. I played lots of shows with Charles Lloyd, with Keith Jarrett; I did shows with Miles Davis. I used to jam with Cannonball Adderley; took him on the road with me. And I also did shows with Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry—not to mention Johnny Cash."

OF AIRPLAY AND AIRHEADS

Ironically, during the Renaissance days of San Francisco rock, radio stations (AM and FM alike) wouldn't touch any of the music coming out of the ballrooms. It wasn't until the late "Big Daddy" Tom Donahue started KMPX (and cast the mold for "underground" FM stations all over the country) that Miller, the Dead, the Airplane and Quicksilver made it to the airwaves. And it wasn't until after the demise of the eclectic bills at medium-sized halls that Miller crossed over to AM listeners with "The Joker." That began an unbroken string of hit singles that stopped only when Miller quit touring and releasing albums in 1978.

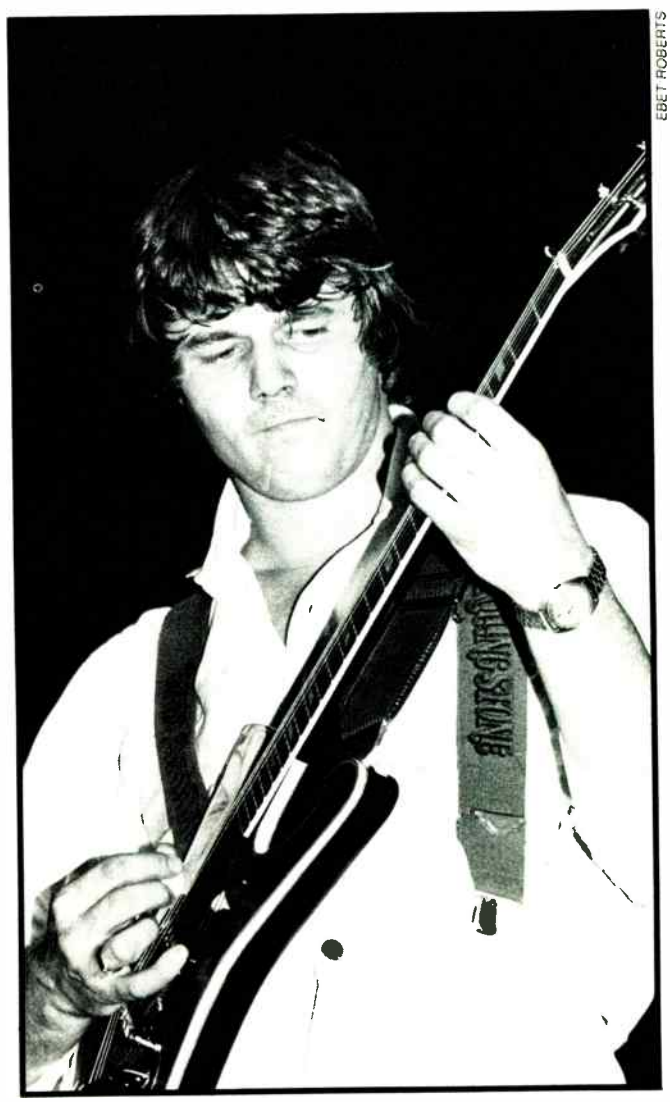
His comeback release, *Circle Of Love*, missed the mark by about about a mile, with both critics and record buyers. "What I'd done," Miller admits, "was I had not realized the state of radio. Radio's totally different today. I was living in Seattle, listening to Seattle radio. I didn't understand that 75 percent of AM radio's market was gone, and FM was so diversified—I couldn't get into some stations because I wasn't heavy metal, etc. And I learned that real quick. Because one of my jobs is making radio sound good. That's why *Fly Like An Eagle* was such a smart record, and I knew it was going to do so well, because there was such a weakness of material at that time. That's when you had all the Southern bands with one good hit and sixteen junk guitar songs. Before I mixed *Fly Like An Eagle* I took the top ten albums and listened to them. It was atrocious. I knew I couldn't miss, man! I had ten good songs."

In hindsight, Miller feels satisfied with the music on *Circle Of Love*, especially the guitar playing which he feels is some of his best on record. "I want to do a metamorphosis in front of my audience now," he explains. "I want to change and be able to play the kinds of things I like. One of the things I was trying to do with *Circle Of Love* was, I want to get away from having to make twelve three-minute songs. I like the challenge of making singles, and it's difficult, because you have to put so many ideas and edit so much down into the three minutes. But just as a mode of expression, to me it gets tiring having to always make three-minute cubes."

The American press dumped on *Circle Of Love* almost to a person, but that still didn't prepare Miller for the reception he got when he met with the English rock reporters. "I was like a turkey that was delivered on Thanksgiving Day to be cut up," he moans. "They just *hated* me. I'd never seen anything like that happen in my life. I went over there to see what the hell was going on, and then I realized it was just an attitude that was real popular to have. They were really in trouble, their economy was really bad, their whole direction was real screwed up. There's a real cultural difference now between England and America; it's not like it was at all. And people don't understand, but England has been in a depression now for ten years. Last time I went I said to my friends, 'They're cannibalizing their culture. They're just destroying everything, just to destroy it.' It was really frightening. It's not like Jolly Old England, and good old Eric Clapton and the Who."

As for the new wave that originally came out of England, Miller doesn't have much nice to say. "Music is a ritual," he feels; "it involves the present and the past and the future. There's a lot of people who do it really well, and the masses understand that. Then there's new things that are spectacular that get foisted on the public. I think the new wave thing basically boils down to the Go-Go's. They make nice, fun records, but to compare them with a lot of bands that have sustained themselves over the years is silly. I don't think they're a real motivating force in music. I consider myself a musician who's been lucky enough to get some of that mass public appeal as a musician, without having to be the Monkees. I feel like we've just gone through kind of a damaging attack on music, really. Everyone wants something new and sensational, and it almost doesn't matter what it is if it's the right packaging. And music hasn't really improved much. You keep seeing groups like Triumph and Loverboy—it's been going on forever. It's kind of like Paul Revere & the Raiders, only it's 1982. It's amazing how long that same formula can exist."

To make Miller's problems with the English press even worse, his overseas label, Phonogram, did what Steve calls an "unbelievably unprofessional job" in getting *Circle Of Love* into stores. Miller hasn't been entirely pleased with the treatment he's received from his domestic label, Capitol Records, either, and he doesn't mince words in explaining why. "They don't know what they could do if they were intelligent and encouraged their artists," he begins. "Instead, they're stingy, they're stupid, they're dumb. They spend eighty percent of



Miller continues to craftily reassemble his first love, the blues, into contemporary hits.

their time doing politics and twenty percent doing business. And they win by default, because they have a distribution system. The way our relationship has been, any time I have any strength I have to hold them up. And I help them. I'm real quick to do things for them; for instance, I waived $50,000 of my royalties on *Circle Of Love* so they could discount my product 6 percent to get it in stores. And then they didn't release it the way they were supposed to. A short, edited version of 'Macho City' was supposed to be the first single, and they didn't release it at all. That's the way they do business.

"I was trying to negotiate a new contract with them for six months before *Circle Of Love* came out," he continues. "And I read my little book on negotiations to refresh myself, and I figured out in June that they wouldn't even respond until October 1. And, my God, they called me at 3:30 on October 1. I just went, 'Geez, this book's good! What do I do next?' It was the dumbest thing in the world. It took them six months to come to grips with what I told them was going to happen."

REAL BUSINESS

Like Fleetwood Mac, the Rolling Stones and very few other major artists, Steve Miller is his own manager. His current game plan in terms of his relationship with Capitol is to deliver two more albums this year—a live LP from his current tour, and a studio album that is already in the works. "We're on a big roll, creatively, right now," he enthuses. "Capitol is going to find themselves in a situation where they were ten years ago—where everybody's going to be wanting to sign me, and it's going to be an open bidding war. But the thing is, I don't really want to change labels and go over to the other label. 'Hi, babe, how are ya? Really love *Fly Like A Beagle*. You're the Space Cadet, right? Followed you all my life.' Those guys, you know, they're all the same. It doesn't matter which company it is. They're all distribution systems and accountants and lawyers who don't know or care anything about music. I'd like to get an astute label that understands the difference between good, bad and real business. I represent real biz."

Capitol, Steve feels, got cold feet after *Circle Of Love* was panned, but now that *Abracadabra* is showing signs of being the hit that Miller promised it would be, the executives are once again hot on Steve Miller. "The song 'Abracadabra' was written and not put on *Circle Of Love*," Miller points out, "because I wasn't quite happy with it. So I knew I hadn't lost my knack for writing singles or anything like that. And *Abracadabra* is a more commercial album, but it's not like I tried to make things for what I thought was happening. I just took what was available to me and put it together in a more commercially acceptable package."

While Miller wrote "Give It Up" and the title track from *Abracadabra*, the remaining eight tunes were penned by past and present band members in various combinations. The album was coproduced by Steve and drummer Gary Mallaber, who the leader divulges recorded many of the basic tracks at home. "When I finished in 1978," Miller details, "I bought as a gift for every member of my band an 8-track tape recorder. It's a real tool. Lonnie Turner got one, Gary got one, everybody got one. But Gary took his and set up a little studio in his garage. Then he ran into John Massaro and Kenny Lee Lewis doing session work in L.A., and they wrote six or so songs on the album; Lonnie and Gregg Douglas wrote two. See, I wanted them to take part in what was going on with the band more, and I was really pissed off at all my other writers—the guys that wrote 'Swingtown' and 'Wild Mountain Honey' and 'Jet Airliner.' They made $90,000 for each song or something, went and got a cabin in the woods, and haven't done a goddamn thing since. And it's real hard to sit down and write ten great songs by yourself. Then Gary sent me all these tunes, and I said, 'This stuff is great. Who are these guys you're singing with, and when in the hell did *you* start singing?' So he gave me the 8-tracks that he recorded in his garage, and we took them into a studio, overdubbed it, and transferred it to a 24-track Studer. That album was basically cut in a garage; it's a garage album. Cut on a Tascam 8-track in Mallaber's garage, ninety percent of it."

"I've pretty much lost my young audience at this point. I haven't put anything out in four years and I think three years is about as long as you can go."

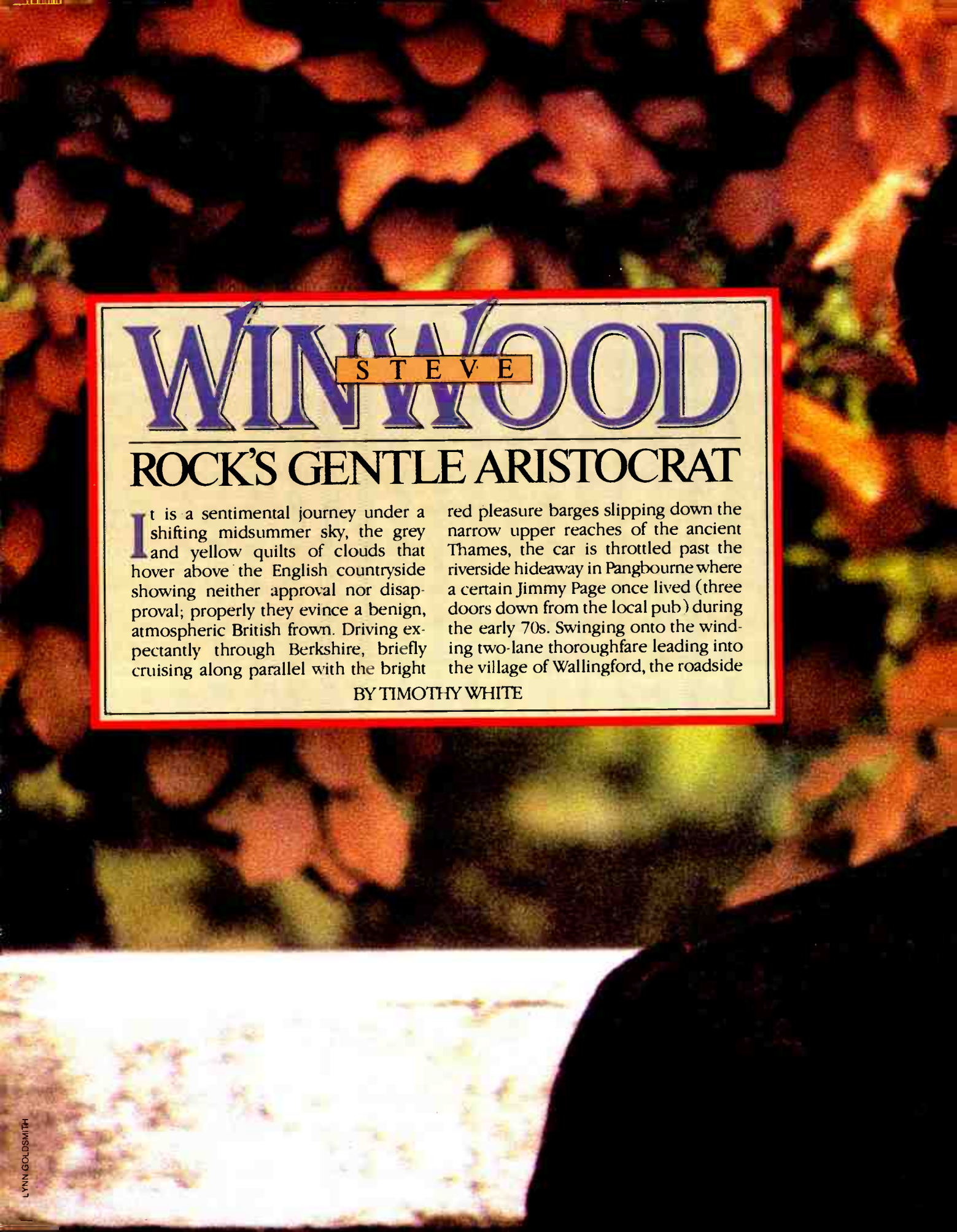
Which explains why *Abracadabra* features far less of Miller's guitar work than did *Circle Of Love*. "That's because most of the tracks were already done," he laughs. "And it was more vocal-oriented. We started to put guitar parts on, but it really didn't need it. And when I was doing *Circle Of Love*, I was basically doing all that by myself, and I was pretty far away from a band concept at that time."

Having built and subsequently abandoned his own high-tech recording studio in the middle of Oregon, Miller has arrived at the philosophy that simpler is better. "You and I could set up my 24-track studio in one hour right in this room," he claims. "As a matter of fact, guitars sound better in a living room than they will in a studio. Studios are terrible places to play guitar, because they're so dead. We stopped using Dolby and all that stuff, too, because it turns out all Dolby does is just constipates everything. I think almost all of *Circle Of Love* was cut at home, except for some overdubs and the mixing, which we did at Kaye-Smith. We had some problems with the phone ringing and planes going over, but you'd be surprised at what you can live with and what you can clean up when you go back into the studio. I'm telling you, you could make any album you've ever heard just about right here in this living room. Then you have to go someplace good to mix it."

Abracadabra was put together at a cost of $36,000 and finished in six weeks. "The truth of the matter is," Miller believes, "if you're real good and well-rehearsed, there's no reason you couldn't go and make thirty minutes of music in four days. There's no great solo that's going to happen in the studio that you couldn't have rehearsed ahead of time in the garage. I've never seen anybody capture anything real fabulous in a studio anyway."

With all the success Steve Miller has enjoyed over the years it's obvious that he doesn't need to make albums and go out on the road to make a living. So why did he come out of his semi-retirement? "Your kids nowadays, they're good players, but they don't have any role models. I mean, is Jimi Hendrix a role model? All Jimi Hendrix is a role model of is a huge waste of a fabulously talented man. And I mean he was the Duke Ellington of our age; that guy had a lot of music in him. The young players now think they've got to sniff cocaine and live it hard and fast and play it real loud. And, technically, they're brilliant. I saw that girl Pat Benatar; she's got a guitar player in her band—I don't even know his name [Neal Geraldo]—he's a monster. Ten years ago people would have *made* him president. Today, guys like that are just one of twenty-five. Whether they have sensitivity and taste is another question, but technically they're giants. But these guys don't have any role models except for living in hotels, hustling girls, taking drugs and playing loud guitar. And, of course, the music industry just encourages that—the record executives, the managers. It's an incredibly self-destructive business."

As far as the term "comeback" applies to Miller, he admits that "after *Circle Of Love*, in one sense, I said, 'Well, I've got no place to go but up.' I wasn't worried about my ability to come back and go on—like my record company was. I'm thirty-eight years old, I'm at the absolute physical peak of my life; as far as my musical ability, I'm still learning. This idea that you're all washed up—hell, I'm just getting smart." M



STEVE WINWOOD

ROCK'S GENTLE ARISTOCRAT

It is a sentimental journey under a shifting midsummer sky, the grey and yellow quilts of clouds that hover above the English countryside showing neither approval nor disapproval; properly they evince a benign, atmospheric British frown. Driving expectantly through Berkshire, briefly cruising along parallel with the bright red pleasure barges slipping down the narrow upper reaches of the ancient Thames, the car is throttled past the riverside hideaway in Pangbourne where a certain Jimmy Page once lived (three doors down from the local pub) during the early 70s. Swinging onto the winding two-lane thoroughfare leading into the village of Wallingford, the roadside

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

LYNN GOLDSMITH

> "Those were heady times, a whole era filled with a vast, unfounded pleasure at tearing down any and all barriers."

attractions along the route evolve in a gentle blur from unassuming dry good stores and vegetable stalls to genteel shops selling fine riding apparel and outfittings for the hunt. Not too distant from here, of course, is Lambourne, home of the Queen's stables and paddocks, where her mounts are trained.

Bursting out of the town square, one finds oneself poised upon a sloping rise overlooking the breathstealing Berkshire downs, acre after prime acre of flowing farming, riding and hunting lands stretched out in all directions. It's a sight to tranquilize the peasant's soul and to fire the poet's imagination. And the grand, sweeping patchwork with its undulating emerald and gold waves of thriving wheat, potatoes, asparagus and barleycorn—especially barleycorn—heralds the proximity of a humble repository of rock 'n' roll mythology, the quaint cottage to which Jim Capaldi, Dave Mason, Chris Wood and Steve Winwood retreated in 1967 to sow and harvest the first seeds of Traffic's musical legacy.

This is the land of "Berkshire Poppies" and "Coloured Rain," where heaven was ever in the lads' sometimes hash- and acid-addled minds, as they tripped down to a pub in tiny Aston-Tirrold called the Boot to shoot the breeze about Mr. Fantasy, the Pearly Queen, 40,000 headmen and fellows with no face, no name and no number.

"It was some house, some era," Capaldi now recalls fondly. "The rented cottage was our permanent address for two years, and then it became a jam center for us and all our heavyweight space cadet companions, like Denny Laine and Ginger Baker. We always had a running battle going with the gameskeeper. He looked after the property for the laird, William Pigot Browne, a friend of Chris Blackwell, the head of our label, Island bloody Records! The gameskeeper used to put big sticks with nails stuck in them across the roads to foil our jeeps and keep us off the damned property!

"Some heavy numbers went down there, for sure: a friend on acid flying off the roof of a mini-van as it headed down the driveway into the path of William Pigot Browne, the poor tripper waking up the next day in the hospital with a broken collarbone; the band recording hundreds of tapes outdoors, many of them filled with birds tweeting wildly in the background so you could scarcely hear what the devil we'd been aiming for; tough Teddy Boy gangs coming 'round occasionally to break in; Joe Cocker & the Grease Band taking over the cottage down by the last bend, joining in the festivities as only they could. Indeed, quite an era...."

It's not much further now, just past the fork that leads either to Aston-Tirrold, or to the small bustling grainery beyond which squats the gamekeeper's house, a scarecrow with a white tin pail for a head swaying in his garden. Up the tire-rutted chalk road and there, in the center of a copse of hazelnut and pine trees, is a two-story wisteria-draped white brick dwelling with a slate roof and squat red chimney, the song-immortalized "House For Everyone."

My bed is full of candy floss
The house is made of cheese
It's lit by lots of glowworms
If I'm wrong correct me please
The village is a pop-up book
The people wooden dolls
The roads are made from treacle
Think it's time that I moved on

"Listen, I'm not claiming everything we wrote and recorded back in that time was fabulous," says Capaldi. "Many things backfired or we were off the mark. But I sometimes look back and feel that we were an experimental group that went out into the natural wilds just to sort of hammer it all out. Back then, all the rock music was anchored to the city life. The fact that the four of us—all country boys from the Midlands to begin with—went back out to the country to abandon the urban distractions and get into the music set a definite trend."

Many miles deeper into the countryside, outside a lovely manor house, "dating back to the *Doomsday Book*" according to its rock star owner, and nestled in the vicinity of Highgrove, official residence of the Prince and Princess of Wales, Steve Winwood sips a cup of tea in a typically English garden and cements his colleague's point.

"There was a justification then for moving to the countryside to make music," says Winwood, attired in well-worn jeans, checkered flannel shirt and leather walking shoes. "It was the peace, information and satisfaction you get from actually hearing yourself thinking out loud."

From inside the house, in the recesses of the kitchen, comes an inadvertent rejoinder. "Too true! While you see a sandwich, take it!" booms Capaldi, cracking a joke at the expense of the title of Winwood's runaway hit single of 1981, "While You See A Chance." A houseguest helping himself to a portion of the batch of fresh egg salad on cracked wheat sandwiches prepared by Winwood's wife Nicole, Jim has arrived to cut an album in his buddy's bucolic home-recording center, just as Steve has completed *Talking Back To The Night*, the followup to the surprise chartbusting LP of last year, *Arc Of A Diver*.

Steve's gleeful laughter shatters the pastoral concord. "Okay," he giggles. "Let's go inside and talk about bloody rock 'n' roll."

Winwood is slight and small-boned, with smooth pink skin just this side of translucent, and when he walks it's with the puckish, bopping lope of a man perpetually, unabashedly, preoccupied with his own errant muse. His voice is soft yet sharply reedy, and in conversation he punctuates strongly felt points with trembling emotion, which begins as a flush of the angular face and then slowly builds into an impossibly small hand gesture, a flick of the fingers upon his temples or a determined tapping upon his own wrist. However minute, these actions and reactions can be curiously moving to behold, coming as they do from a man rarely given to hastiness and unsusceptible to the fleeing impulse. A singular presence, Steve Winwood's taciturn, quietly smiling manner combines the spectral aura of a David Bowie with the awesome hunger for life that smolders within and illuminates the delicate, resolute central characters in Dickens's novels. Say, a David Copperfield.

It's all in his eyes: burning, unblinking, fearless, when everything else about him seems sadly timid.

A country gentleman residing in his dream house in Gloucestershire for a decade, Steve Winwood was born on May 12, 1948 in Birmingham, England and well-nigh weaned on rock 'n' roll, making a living at the craft when most prospective candidates from the provinces wouldn't know a riff from a rafter. Famous by age sixteen, he's been praised and panned, celebrated and nearly eulogized in the years since. While assured of a place in the rock 'n' roll Hall of Fame, he was almost dismissed as a lifeless trophy on two legs before he strode seemingly out of nowhere to reaffirm his status as one of the most original and sagacious talents in the music industry.

But as we should have learned long before now, thirty-four-year-old Steve Winwood couldn't possibly come out of nowhere to do great things.

"He's been on Island Records for eighteen years," says Chris Blackwell with pride, "and the album he's just completed will, I think, come to be judged as his best work yet. After all he's accomplished, all he represents in his totally unassuming way, I think that's amazing. The week in 1964 that I signed him,

I was up in Birmingham with Millie Small ("My Boy Lollipop") for a TV date, *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, and I squeezed in time to catch two local bands I'd been tipped about. One was called Carl Wayne & the Vikings, which later became the Move, and the other was the Spencer Davis Group. I passed on the first, which was a good group but not to my taste, and signed the second because they had a kid out front who could sing like Ray Charles while still sounding like himself; quite an achievement.

"But that's not what makes him so wonderful for me. And I can only explain that with a little story. Back in 1965, when I managed the Spencer Davis Group and they were on tour in Norway and a very hot band worldwide, this guy talked Steve and me into accompanying him through miles and miles of snowdrifts, to what he had billed as this fantastic party. When we got there, there was only me, Steve, a cheap tinny record player, half a bottle of whiskey—which was illegal in Norway—and forty too-young girls who wouldn't let this seventeen-year-old rock star leave. And we couldn't understand a word they said. No wonder there are so many suicides.

"It was a total washout. At the end of the night, when we finally talked someone into taking us for the incredibly long journey back to our hotel, Steve turned to me, smiled that schoolboy's grin of his and shrugged good-naturedly, as if to say, 'No problem.'

"I swear to you, if that happened to us again tomorrow, he'd show the same sweetness, control, strange innocence.

"In spite of all his ordeals, he's completely unjaded. That's what makes him Steve Winwood. And that's why he's a success. All over again."

MUSICIAN: *You've been at the rock 'n' roll game for a remarkably long time, since before your teens if I'm not mistaken, yet I've never read anything about your home environment as a boy; how you were raised and what your parents were like.*

WINWOOD: That's 'cause nobody's asked me. I grew up at 70 Atlantic Road, a pleasant tree-lined street in a suburb of Birmingham called Great Barr. It was a small house, with a piano in the parlor. The whole family was musical on both sides, with my mother's father being a church organist who could also play flute, fiddle, tin whistle. Same with my dad's people. We'd have musical parties at Christmas, playing folk songs. My father's a very sensible man, a very hard-working man—and strict. Neither he nor my mother nor even my grandparents ever drank or smoked. As a result I think I was much better brought up than most of my friends.

Frankly, a big part of my development was the Boy Scouts; I was both a Cub and a Boy Scout, with the 236th Perry Barr Troop. The Scouts are a fantastic movement. I was reading in the paper the other day where some idiots are trying to get rid of the Boy Scouts, saying that a brilliant man like Baden Powell, the founder, had created nothing more than a sort of fascist youth movement. I was absolutely incensed! I loved the time I spent in the Scouts, camping and hiking in Plymouth, Devon, Cornwall, sometimes up north to Cumberland; and doing bob-a-job: working at odd jobs in the community for a shilling. Got a lot out of it; I went straight from the Boy Scouts into rock 'n' roll (laughter). Fancy that!

As for parental guidance, my father was not the sort of fellow to sit me down and give me a lot of heavy advice but both he and my mother were very helpful in terms of overall support and encouragement. My dad was the manager of Hall's Iron Foundry in Birmingham, laboring in the same profession as his

Blind Faith: (l. to r.) Eric Clapton, Rick Grech, Ginger Baker and our hero; fine album, "vulgar, crude, disgusting" shows.

DAVID GAHR

father, and he would have liked me to carry that on, but exerted no pressures. On the contrary, he taught me a few tricks about being a working musician. He played a variety of instruments, mainly sax, bass and drums, and led various bands, but he used to advertise for his own group as if they were two different bands, one very expensive and snobbish, and the other very working class and cheap. One way or another, he always got work. Pretty shrewd, I thought.

MUSICIAN: *So he endorsed your musical ambitions?*

WINWOOD: Very much so. But you must be aware that rock 'n' roll is not now nor ever has been considered real music in Britain. Please don't take this lightly; this is a crucial point for anyone trying to understand the outlook and perspective of an aspiring popular musician in this country. Ours is a very stratified, disdainful social structure in which anything produced after the days of Elgar and Vaughan Williams is not considered to be of any value whatsoever. It isn't *considered*, period. And I'm not exaggerating. I was kicked out of Great Barr Comprehensive School at age sixteen because of my "unsavory activities" with the Spencer Davis Group. A warning came at a school assembly, where it was announced publicly that "certain students" in the school were known to be connected with untoward musical companions.

Soon afterwards the headmaster, one Oswald Beynon, summoned me to his office for a one-sided discussion. I stood before him in my uniform of grey slacks, black blazer with the school crest on the pocket, and green, white and black striped tie, and he sacked me on the spot for playing rock 'n' roll. Being sixteen, my attitude was, "Well, screw you too, geezer!" But what was most important was that my father and mother backed me up and were not upset that I'd been kicked out. They regarded the whole matter as being thoroughly ridiculous, which I've always deeply appreciated.

MUSICIAN: *Well, you've taken some hard knocks and been handed some raw deals in your post-Great Barr Comprehensive School experiences. It's not generally known, but you nearly died from a bout with peritonitis during the period (1972-'73) that you were touring and recording* Shootout In The Fantasy Factory.

WINWOOD: True. That was when I was writing songs like "Sometimes I Feel So Uninspired." That song reflected a lot of things: the state of the rock 'n' roll world at that point, my own frame of mind, struggle with my health. It was just an honest thing; the song was talking about a definite sometime-feeling I get. We can't be inspired all the time, can we? And those of us who are made to feel that we have to be, grow weary and even ill from the stress of the crazy, unfair responsibility put on us.

My peritonitis started as appendicitis and what happens is that these poisons spread throughout your entire body and you virtually fill up with toxins. I was desperately ill, trying to keep touring and functioning, and my condition was such that it wasn't until I'd gone through several doctors, various trips to the hospital and exploratory surgery that they figured out I was in a most delicate and serious state. Peritonitis, by the way, is what killed Houdini. My recovery was slow and painful. A terrible, terrible thing for me. One of the toughest times of my life—but by no means the only one.

The laird in his typically English garden; Winwood's music has always been laced with pastoral and religious overtones.

MUSICIAN: *Hmmmm. Makes me reluctant to ask what the others might have been.*

WINWOOD: Well, disbanding Traffic in 1974 was difficult, of course. But the period between the completion of the long-promised—or threatened—Steve Winwood solo LP in the spring of 1977 and the release of *Arc Of A Diver* in 1981 was

LYNN GOLDSMITH

quite hard for me professionally. The music industry went through such a strange stretch in 1977, especially in this country, with the whole punk rock thing coming about. Punk was rebellious—and justified in that response—but it had very little to do with music, and so it created a highly-charged but frighteningly floundering atmosphere that I found very, very disheartening. Musical quality for me has always been an important part of rock 'n' roll—and winning recognition for that has long been an uphill battle all the way. Punk seemed like rock 'n' roll utterly *without* the music.

MUSICIAN: *Did you also suddenly feel as if there was no audience receptive to your reemergence? That your music had suddenly become anachronistic in the marketplace?*

WINWOOD: Not really; I was concentrating less on the marketplace than on myself. I realized that if I was going to carry on in this business, then 1977 was the beginning of my ultimate trial, but rather than let that burden lay too heavily on me, I decided that the creation of the sequel to the first solo record was the key objective. My career needed new continuity. Also, at that time I was going through writing problems as well. Capaldi, who was the only person I'd ever written with, in terms of a true ongoing partnership, had moved away to Brazil for tax reasons. I had no lyricist I could rely on, and no band. In the days of Traffic and the Spencer Davis Group, there was always a group requiring new things to play, so I'd somehow dig in with a collaborator like Jimmy Miller or Capaldi and get it done.

It's funny, though, because in this case as well as others, the really bad periods for me have tended to be rather good periods after a while. It's the bad periods that were the times of realization and gestation which made possible the resurgences.

MUSICIAN: *If you were so hard up for collaborators, why didn't you simply follow Capaldi to Brazil?*

WINWOOD: Well, because I couldn't put a price on not living where I wanted to live; I was too selfish. I was willing to pay the disastrously dear price of giving 95 percent of what I earned to the British government in order to stay where I was. It was pretty decadent of me, when you think about it, and pretty stupid too. Thank God, things aren't so bad now with the Thatcher government.

I'll tell you straight: the pressures on me were huge. I was quite literally running out of money. Following the Steve Winwood record, which I cowrote with Capaldi and Viv Stanshall, I knew I was looking at my last shot to stay in the business. If the next album wasn't at least mildly successful, I would have had to leave the record industry because I simply couldn't afford to be in it any longer. I would have had to undergo some drastic professional and personal lifestyle changes.

MUSICIAN: *Are you saying that, with the lack of significant sales of the first solo album and the second looming before you, Steve Winwood was considering quitting as a performer?*

WINWOOD: Quite possibly, yes. I knew I was going to run out of cash and resources soon, and I was thinking about exploring other areas, perhaps getting a job with a record company as a producer. My brother Muff is head of A&R at CBS in England. I'd considered and tried sheep farming, cattle farming, all kinds of alternate ways of making a living. But I quickly realized that all the mistakes I'd made in the record business over the years were very valuable, that I'd paid my dues and, for better or worse, staked out my territory in terms of competence.

MUSICIAN: *So you literally approached* Arc Of A Diver *as a make-or-break project?*

WINWOOD: (nodding grimly) But I suppose I still refused to believe that the strain from such a situation is what maybe makes a successful album. I expected absolutely nothing from *Arc Of A Diver. Nothing.* And I thought, "I'm just going to make a record and then I shall settle up financially, and move, if necessary, to a small flat or join a gypsy caravan. I figured I'd continue doing some things that I like doing and enjoy life as best I could in diminished circumstances.

MUSICIAN: *You almost had to give up this house?*

> "Because the pressures on me were huge, I knew I was looking at my last shot to stay in the business."

WINWOOD: Oh, sure. And I would have done that easily, although there was almost no two ways about it. I was going to be forced to.

MUSICIAN: *Must have been pretty scary.*

WINWOOD: See, now this is the thing: when it gets right down to it, it's *not* scary at all. I would have managed to have a gentle, peaceful life, somehow. You don't have to have a big house and a lot of land to have a peaceful life. You can create it in other ways.

But, as I say, although that was such a low point, it was a good juncture too because I came to a lot of realizations about myself and about materialism. It was just material things that I was really worried about. I figured that I could do without them, and so I was able to take a lot of the load off myself. If I'd have been making a record feeling, "This has *got* to be a hit," there would have been no hope at all. These were the kinds of things that were on my mind, I can tell you, when I wrote "While You See A Chance."

MUSICIAN: *You also seemed to be attempting to minimize the heat you were feeling artistically by billing* Arc Of A Diver, *on the inner sleeve, as "an album of songs by Will Jennings, George Fleming and Viv Stanshall." How did you come to take your perilous last plunge in that company?*

WINWOOD: Just from needing to find lyricists. I was working with a lot of different ones, and that proved to be good because it taught me a lot about songwriting. *Talking Back To The Night* is the first time that I've actually sat down calmly and written songs. Right now, I'm in the position where I truly want to write so much, but I don't seem to have the time, basically due to the fact that I'm now making records in this solitary and very time-consuming fashion.

On the new record, Will Jennings basically wrote the lyrics and I wrote the music but there was a bit of a dynamic collaborative overlap too. I have not written a lot of songs by myself, mind you. The first song I ever wrote, at the age of twelve, was "It Hurts Me So," which the Spencer Davis Group recorded several years later. I wrote "Empty Pages" by myself for Traffic, with a bit of help from Capaldi; I wrote "Had To Cry Today," "Sea Of Joy" and "Can't Find My Way Home" for Blind Faith, and I wrote "Two-way Stretch," the B-side of "There's A River," which is on the new album but which came out first as a Christmas single in 1981.

MUSICIAN: *Those early Spencer Davis Group hits you wrote with Jimmy Miller, like "I'm A Man," how did those come about?*

WINWOOD: Jimmy was brought in by Chris Blackwell to produce the Spencer Davis Group, and we just knocked around in the studio. We'd all write and cut three or four songs in a day's work. Back then, if you only completed two tunes in a single session, you were screwing off. As for Chris, I met him in 1964 at Digbeth Civic Hall in Birmingham, which has always been a big center for Jamaicans in England; they used to hold their dances there, and naturally Chris was in on the ground floor in terms of Jamaican ska and rocksteady. Business-wise, he and Island *were* the ground floor.

Anyhow, I'd been playing at Digbeth since I was fourteen with the Muff Woody Jazz Band, my brother's group. And that was where I met Spencer Davis, too. But my own Jamaican connection goes back to Digbeth Hall in 1961, when I jammed there with Rico, the trombonist who had worked with the Skatalites and all the other great early Jamaican acts. I was

"You've got to forget all preconceptions when you sit down to record and let things happen."

just thirteen but I used to go there and play with Owen Grey, Tony Washington and Wilfred "Jackie" Edwards. Jackie, you'll recall, wrote the Spencer Davis Group's first number one hit in England, "Keep On Running," and a followup, "Somebody Help Me." I wrote "When I Came Home" with him for the group.

MUSICIAN: *You've worked in the studio with a lot of very different people: Stomu Yamashta and Michael Shrieve, the Fania All-Stars, Marianne Faithfull, Sandy Denny, Toots & the Maytals, George Harrison, Mike Oldfield, even Hendrix, playing the organ on "Voodoo Child." But there must have been some unheralded live backup work in the early days, when the Spencer Davis Group and the early Yardbirds were doing gigs at haunts like the legendary Crawdaddy Club in Richmond, Surrey.*

WINWOOD: Sure! I did backups for Sonny Boy Williamson—as everybody did—but also for T-Bone Walker, Charlie Foxx, John Lee Hooker, Memphis Slim. John Hammond, too. I met John on a train, while going down from Birmingham to London; this would have been about 1963 and I was fifteen. He told me he had a gig in Birmingham the next week at the College of Advanced Technology and I showed up and played piano behind him. Those kinds of spontaneous musical meetings were special back then, and definitely helped shape my growth. I also played with Jimmy Page for a solo album of his after he'd left the Yardbirds. The music wasn't heavy like Led Zeppelin, as I recall. It was quite nice.

MUSICIAN: *Who would you say were your biggest influences vocally, apart from Ray Charles?*

WINWOOD: Just about every blues and R&B singer I heard on the radio as a lad had an effect on me, but particularly people like Garnett Mimms and Jackie Wilson. I used to hang out a lot in a Birmingham record store called the Diskery—which is where Capaldi claims I first met him in 1966—and I loved to listen to all the great black American singers. I also listened to a lot of skiffle too; Lonnie Donnegan and the rest. Oddly enough, I was not a big record buyer. Back in the 50s, my uncle Alfred, who was a marvelous inventor and electronic wizard who had worked on the design of the Norton motorcycle, constructed a tape recorder from scratch and then gave it to Muff and me. For a homemade model it was fairly good-looking and we used to keep it up in the bedroom we shared. At night we'd stay up and tape everything off the radio. It was much better than a record player, really, and owning a tape recorder at that time was quite a novelty. Before long, we had a wonderful collection of tapes of Fats Domino, Louis Jordan, Ray Charles, you name it.

MUSICIAN: *I can hear all of those people threaded through your own work, but one thing I've always been curious about was the integration of the Hammond organ into your sound. How did that come about?*

WINWOOD: It was accidental, actually. I got into playing the organ because the Place, this club in Stoke-on-Trent that the Spencer Davis Group used to appear at, had a Hammond organ there as a fixture for use by the various acts. It was the type of place that would feature a Cabaret Night on a Thursday and a Rock 'n' Roll Night on a Friday and I had the opportunity to fiddle around on the organ, instead of the usual piano. I just grew to love the large, swelling sound.

Frankly, I'm not that good a piano player. Elton John is much more accomplished on the piano; it's a percussion instrument and he knows how to get the most of it in terms of figures, chording and live performing. But I don't think he's as good an electric piano, organ or synthesizer player as I am.

The difference between piano and the other three is vast. You can get expression from organs and synthesizers through pedals but generally not through touch. The feel, the dexterity and the dynamics are arrived at from different directions, but I would argue that the musical possibilities are the same, qualitatively, for percussive keyboards and electronic ones. Yet it is peculiar how the truly fine piano player is frustrated by the technology and lack of immediate subtlety in organs and synths. Actually, the "touch" *is* there for the latter, lying beyond the basic key-contact tonality, but you must learn how to find it.

For the last two albums I've used a Multimoog for bass and some lead lines and a Prophet 5, a polysynthesizer made by Sequential Circuits, for most leads on *Arc Of A Diver*. I also used a Steinway piano and a Yamaha CS-80, too, as well as a host of different guitars: an Ovation acoustic, this 1954 Fender Stratocaster, an Ibanez mandolin on a track of *Arc Of A Diver*.

On this last album, I used the Prophet 5 exclusively, which is very limiting; I would never have dreamed that I'd find myself doing that. I just never found the need for any sound I couldn't get out of the Prophet 5. And the Multimoog is where I get the effect that everybody thinks is a saxophone. In terms of drums, I use a Haman kit, with a Ludwig snare, and a Linn Electronics LM-1 box. Lastly I use a Roland Vocoder and an ANS Phaser, model DMT20. By using a 16-track machine, you overcome most limitations on the part of the instruments, in addition to several of one's own shortcomings. And with my new-found wealth, I've already ordered a new 24-track custom board.

MUSICIAN: *But one wonders if this one-man show of yours is improving your musicianship?*

WINWOOD: Well, it's expanding the number of things I can conceptualize in my head—dramatically. Now, people think I play difficult things on piano and organ. My part on "Glad" sounds difficult, but it really isn't. I shouldn't say this, but it's true. When I was very young, I received about two years formal training at the Birmingham Midland Institute, studying theory, technique, a bit of the classics, so that gave me a foundation. But I'm not a virtuoso. What I got from the experience was the knowledge that I was *never* going to be much of a piano player—and that was very valuable. At least I knew then that the way for me was organs and synths. My old teacher's name was John Rust. As Neil Young says, (laughs) "It's better to burn out than to rust!"

MUSICIAN: *How do you overdub your vocals on these solo albums?*

WINWOOD: I generally put a vocal down fairly early on, and then I do a second one when the track is nearing completion. Usually I end up using the original. I find that in my original there are a lot of deft lines that I patch in to the master. I don't keep going until I sing one track that is right all the way through. I've found out at great cost that that's not the intelligent way to use recording equipment.

MUSICIAN: *How do you mean, "at great cost"?*

WINWOOD: By erasing great performances that contained flaws while working to get one that was absolutely correct! My God! I can't think of any instances where that *hasn't* happened! I was talking on the phone the other day with Peter Townshend, and he was saying how he always does all these damned demos for himself. I said that I had recently vowed that I was *never* going to make another demo! You've got to resolve to capture the original spirit. In the old days, you wrote the song, went in and cut it , and that's how it should be. Forget these demos, because when you make them you decide in the first place that it's not going to be any good, that it's just to play for so-and-so who might want to use the song or give you a deal. Why limit the possibilities?! It makes no sense! I say, cut every track as if it might be a worldwide smash and then utilize it from there! Chop it up any way you please but use what's good. I've decided to value everything I do—but I must say that the tape gets very expensive.

I did a lot of trial tapes for *Talking Back To The Night*, recording them at slower speeds to save tape space. I tried to

recut them later but said, "Sod it!" and went back to the originals. You've got to forget all preconceptions when you sit down to record and let things happen. Especially when you're working alone. That way surprising things can be allowed to occur.

MUSICIAN: *Give me a recent example of an unexpected moment that was saved for the record.*

WINWOOD: The ethereal beginning of "While You See A Chance." What happened there was that in the studio, I had record switches for each track that were mounted flush with

Winwood in the cockpit; Steve avoids studio sterility by reviving the first-take focus and flat-out commitment of his early recording days with Spencer Davis and Traffic.

the board desk, on top of which was habitually piled reams of notes and paperwork.

At one point, I inadvertently knocked a record button on as I went down into the studio to do a vocal. Twenty bars into the song, I suddenly said to Nobby Clarke my engineering assistant, "I can't hear the bloody drums!" He stopped the tape immediately, and we found that we'd accidentally wiped the drums off the first part of the track—originally they'd come in at the top of the tune. I spent months trying to patch in the drums again, and never got it right. We were getting close to delivery day for the tapes to be mastered, so I just left the drums and vocal out, and reshifted all the verses. It actually *made* the song. That's how bizarre the recording process is.

MUSICIAN: *You've got to have the ears of an engineer, a producer, an arranger and a composer to pull these new albums off, plus the instincts of an A&R man. Who critiques your daily output?*

WINWOOD: I do, and Chris Blackwell, plus my wife Nicole, who has very good ears, and can be quite demanding, in a kindly way.

MUSICIAN: *She also has a powerful voice, judging from her backing vocals on the new single, "Still In The Game." But don't you ever get lonesome for the companionship of other musicians in the studio?*

WINWOOD: Sometimes. Other times I'm too wrapped up in what problems I'm solving and what discoveries I'm making to be awfully concerned. Also, I save money—which was critical until just recently, you'll recall. And (beaming/blushing) I'm proud of myself.

MUSICIAN: *There's always been a churchlike feel to your playing, something oddly ecclesiastical about your keyboard work, your musical themes and the reverential intonations in your singing. Songs like "Rainmaker," "Sea Of Joy," "Can't Find My Way Home," "No Face, No Name, And No Number," "Coloured Rain," "Dear Mr. Fantasy," "Many A Mile To Freedom," "While You See A Chance," "There's A River"—they all sound like they'd practically be acceptable in an Anglican cathedral. Would you agree?*

WINWOOD: (grinning) "There's A River" is downright hymnlike, isn't it? Actually, I rather like church music, and to do my part for the local people out here in Gloucestershire, I actually play organ at a nearby church on the average of twice a month. As a boy, I sang in choir at St. John's, Perry Barr. Used to get into a bit of mischief back then as well, mucking around behind the altar screen during services, making nasty cracks or horsing around afterward in the vestry and stealing the communion wine. They were good days; not overly reverent.

In terms of my singing, I have always loved to hear the sound of the big voice resonating in my head. It's so thrilling, and never fails to keep me happy. I loved the vibrations and the auras that choral singing brought out in my voice, so I must have gravitated toward that music a bit for that reason alone. The churchlike overtones are definitely there in my music and I would say that that dimension came on naturally and not deliberately. I like that people hear it in there. They're not just imagining it.

MUSICIAN: *Are you religious?*

WINWOOD: No. Not really. I don't pray. I do feel very strongly about natural law, however, and the importance of people respecting it. That's become a kind of religious conviction for me, but I'm not a conventional churchgoer. I have my philosophical side, but it's not dogmatic.

MUSICIAN: *So where does the spookiness, the prayerlike poignance and the almost aching wistfulness in much of your music stem from?*

WINWOOD: There is a sense of longing there, perhaps, but I don't analyze it. To touch a listener is great, though. Those moods and emotional shadings are there but I like to think that I'm down-to-earth with them, particularly as of late. As time goes on I feel more rooted, more grounded. In the early 70s, I was like a lost soul, wondering what the hell I was going to do with my life. And from 1974 to 1977, I did almost nothing except to kick back and get to know people I'd never known before, like farmers, simple tradesmen and country folk who had no idea who the hell I was.

Interestingly enough, the fact that I wasn't doing much music during those years didn't bother me because, Lord knows, I'd been at it for twelve years by the time Traffic broke up in 1974, just shortly after we'd released *When The Eagle Flies*. (laughing) I couldn't feel guilty about it when I'd been playing professionally literally since I was in short pants!

MUSICIAN: *Are the royalties from your early work substantial?*

WINWOOD: Well, the royalties from "Gimme Some Lovin'," and from most of the various Traffic records are. As I said before, I've been pressed for money in the recent past, but I don't want to make it sound as if I was almost completely down-and-out.

> People think that the things I play on piano and organ are difficult, but they're not. I'm not a virtuoso."

MUSICIAN: *What was the best-selling Traffic record, to the best of your knowledge?*
WINWOOD: I think it was *The Low Spark Of High-heeled Boys*. Not *John Barleycorn Must Die*, as some believe. *Barleycorn* came after the breakup of Blind Faith in the early 70s. I'd knocked around a bit with Ginger Baker's Air Force and then I was supposed to do my solo album; I was going to call it *Mad Shadows*. But Capaldi and Chris Wood joined in and it turned into a Traffic album.
MUSICIAN: *"John Barleycorn" is an ancient British folk song with hundreds of versions. How did you come to record it as the title track of a Traffic album?*
WINWOOD: That goes back to the basis upon which Traffic was formed. The reason I left the Spencer Davis Group in 1967 was because I didn't want to continue playing and singing songs that were derivative of American R&B. I'm sure it's no accident that "I'm A Man" was one of the last things I ever cut with the group. It was a fine record, which we did on the first or second take. It was intended for some sort of Swinging London-type film called *The Ghost Goes Gear*, or whatever; one of those silly films we were involved with back then. I just believed I had more to offer than that. Also, I wanted to play with younger people, fellows my own age. I was fifteen when I joined up with Spencer, Muff and Peter York. They were all a bit older than me, with different musical orientations.

I'd begun to make younger friends like Dave Mason, who was working for Spencer Davis as a roadie, and Capaldi, who was the lead singer in a group I'd jammed with called Deep Feeling. And I sang some blues stuff briefly with Eric (Clapton), Jack Bruce on bass, Paul Jones played harp, and so on; we were called the Powerhouse. When Jim, Dave, Chris Wood and I went up to the Berkshire cottage in 1967 to start Traffic, it was the result of a lot of enthusiastic planning and time spent playing together informally. What came out of those talks and things was a desire on the part of the four of us to make a uniquely British form of rock 'n' roll that incorporated or evoked traditional music like "John Barleycorn"—the Berkshire cottage was in the center of acres of wheat and barley—while breaking new ground artistically.
MUSICIAN: *Are you saying that there was no determination collectively to turn out a variation on the psychedelic rock then gaining ground commercially?*
WINWOOD: No, no! Absolutely not. We would smoke our share of pot and hash and so forth but that was never on our minds in any specific way when we wrote songs. We were trying to keep the images in the music clear and simple, not complex and cerebral. We were hippies of a sort, I guess, and those were heady times; a whole era—sitting with a colorful, nervous, lovely bloke like Hendrix in a Greenwich Village studio, or brain-storming in the Berkshire cottage with Traffic—that was filled with a vast, unfounded kind of pleasure at tearing down any and all barriers. I'm not sure why, now, because if you destroy too much you're just left with a gigantic mush, which is kind of what happened a bit, isn't it?

And then again, Traffic can't take credit for removing barriers as much as others because we were so keen to work in established areas of folk and folk-rock music.
MUSICIAN: *Did you believe at the time that you were getting anything concrete out of your hash-smoking reveries in the cottage?*
WINWOOD: I thought I was getting something from it, yes, but I've since realized I got nothing whatever from it. I see myself as having been misled. The whole notion of reaching another consciousness through the smoke was a lot of crap. But I've few regrets. There're probably little batches of songs here and there during the period which, with hindsight, I should not have released or put out in their now permanent form, but to be very honest, I figured, "What the hell! Put it out, sod it." It's not all great, but, I mean, how often is anything great?
MUSICIAN: *The way you record now, so meticulously, at your own pace and on your own terms, the temptation to go back and tinker with your old material must be enormous.*
WINWOOD: Oh, you don't know! You can't imagine! Especially in light of all I've learned about the studio. But I don't want to drive myself batty over it. The answer is, "Yes, certainly. But I'd have to be crazy."
MUSICIAN: *The cover of* When The Eagle Flies, *Traffic's swan song, was as bleak and funereal as the music within. Was that a reflection of a collective state of mind?*
WINWOOD: Yes. It just kind of turned out that way; it doesn't seem like a Traffic record so much, does it? The whole record is very doomy, and I suppose it's the way we saw both Traffic and the music of the era going. It was an extension of "Sometimes I Feel So Uninspired." The kind of depression that comes from endings and ultimatums, and the title of the album reflects that as well.
MUSICIAN: *What occasioned the demise of the band? On precisely what day did it fold?*
WINWOOD: If there was a single, final moment I can't recall it now. We'd broken up so many times previously, with Dave (Mason) leaving and coming back, the Blind Faith sideline after the first three Traffic albums, and us constantly adding new players like Rick Grech, Rebop, Roger Hawkins. But I shed no tears. On the contrary, I felt a great relief. Same with my Spencer Davis exit. As I left I felt very cold and callous about the action and much excitement about the future.
MUSICIAN: *You've been quoted as saying you "walked out" on them.*
WINWOOD: I can't deny that. But what I was trying to convey was that it was time for all of us to disperse. I don't know of any hard feelings between any of us.
MUSICIAN: *Is it true that in the summer of 1976, just before you began the first solo album, you'd seen graffiti around London that read: "Steve Winwood Lives!" And that it rattled you considerably, as if the public actually had given you up for dead?*
WINWOOD: It was weird, except that I knew who was responsible. It was this bloke who was trying to become my manager. That was his idea of creating new excitement about me. I had friends who'd seen it in Kensington and 'round the side of Harrods and told me about it. So this bloke eventually came to me and said, "You see what I can do for you?" I said, "That's what you can do for me? Remind me I'm still breathing?! Thank you very much and move on, you bloody fool!!"
MUSICIAN: *Do you have any hobbies or interests that give you a little release from all these musical chores you're locked into?*
WINWOOD: Well, I do have an absorbing interest in field sports, game birds, hunting, falconing and coursing—which is hunting with hounds. But I don't like to talk about it much because I fear people might not understand how and why I can enjoy such things.

In 1970, I thought that I would become a vegetarian, and I kept on with it for about six months, but I had such a craving for meat. So I decided that if I was to go back to eating meat, I must learn how to kill my own, doing it efficiently, humanely, respectfully.

Also, I resolved that I would not hunt for the mere sport of it, or kill more than I could or would definitely eat, to keep the bargain honorable, and I've stuck to it, I'm happy to say. It seems to have more integrity to me than going to the market to buy a fowl, like most people, yet not facing up to the reality of the situation. Also, things like falconing and the hunt are commonplace in these parts.

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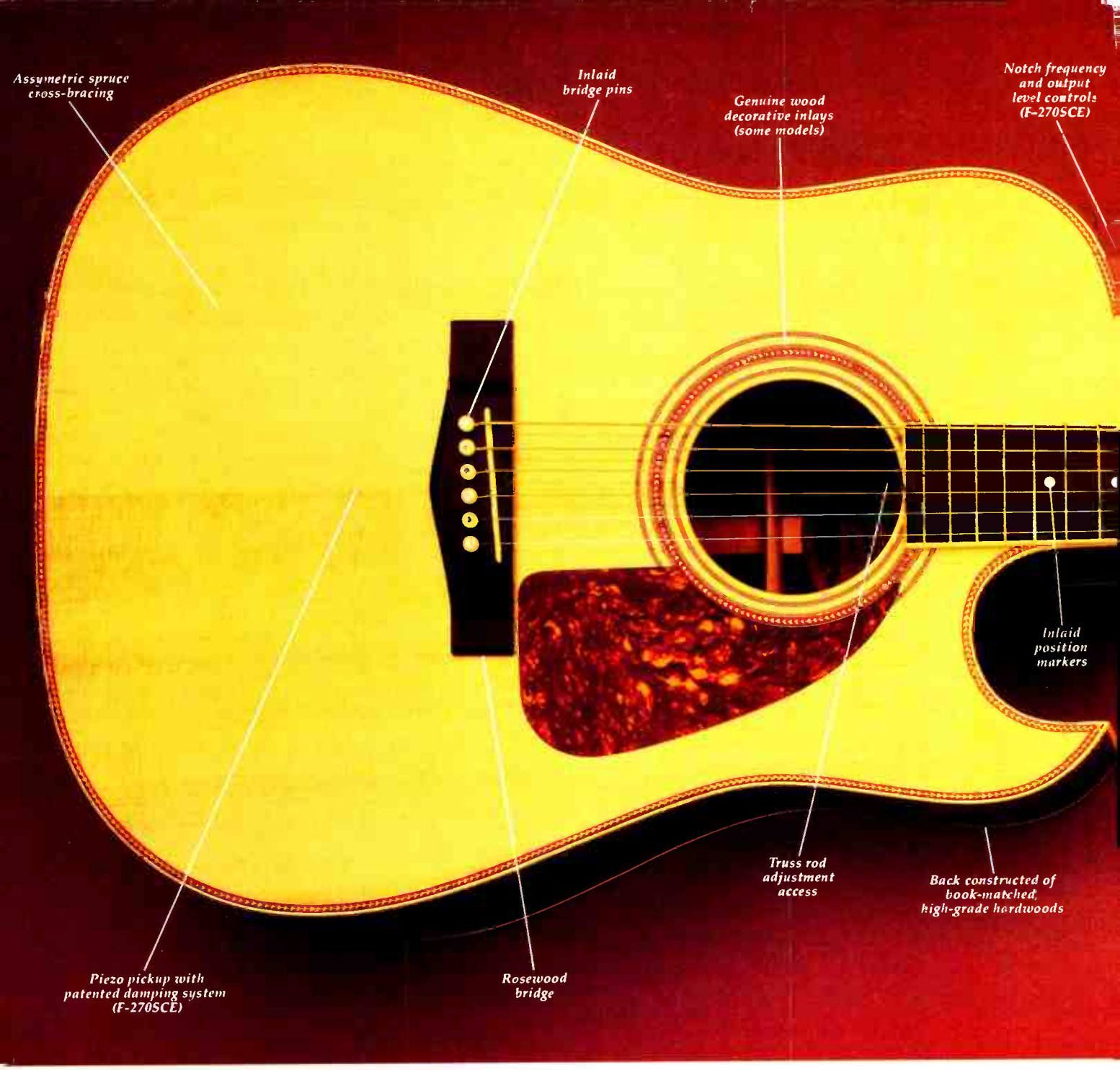

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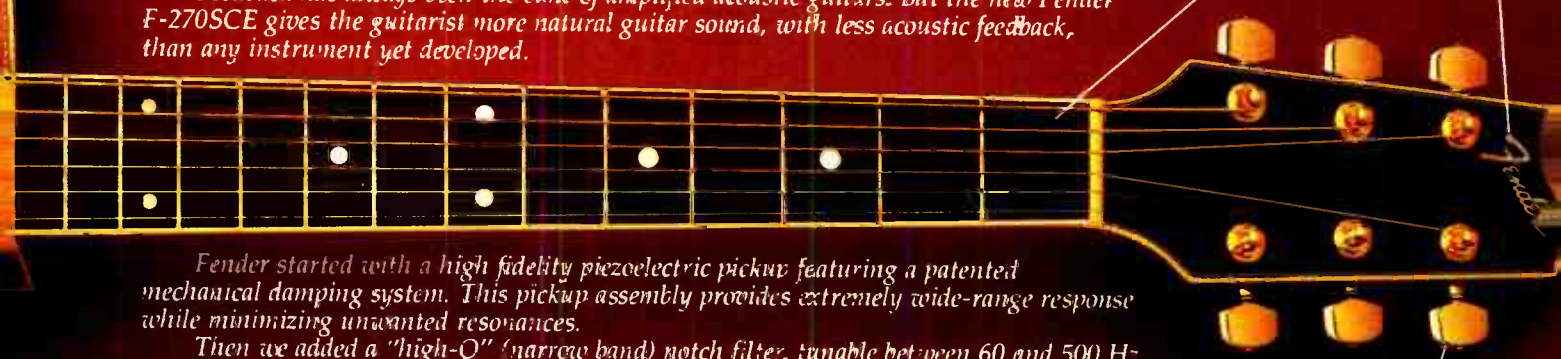
Look carefully inside the body of a Fender acoustic: notice the finely grained bracing and the absence of excessive glue. Observe how the binding and the decorative inlays—many of genuine wood—fit perfectly, without breaks or rough spots. Feel the smooth precision of the tuning machines. And most importantly of all, listen to the brilliant warm sound of a Fender acoustic. Your eyes, your ears, and your fingers will tell you that this is indeed a special instrument.

AN ELECTRIFIED ACOUSTIC BREAKTHROUGH

Feedback has always been the bane of amplified acoustic guitars. But the new Fender F-270SCE gives the guitarist more natural guitar sound, with less acoustic feedback, than any instrument yet developed.



Fender started with a high fidelity piezoelectric pickup featuring a patented mechanical damping system. This pickup assembly provides extremely wide-range response while minimizing unwanted resonances.

Then we added a "high-Q" (narrow band) notch filter, tunable between 60 and 500 Hz. This filter provides over 18 db rejection of feedback, with virtually no effect on the guitar's natural acoustic sound.

Model	Type	Top	Back & Sides	Neck	Fretboard	Tuning Machine
F-200	Folk	Spruce	Mahogany	Mahogany	Rosewood, natural	Chrome w/cover
F-210	Dreadnought					
F-210LH	Left-handed Dreadnought					
F-220SB	Dreadnought Sunburst					
F-230	Dreadnought		Rosewood			
F-240A	Dreadnought Sunburst		Mahogany			Chrome/ diecast/enclosed
F-250	Dreadnought		Andes Rosewood			
F-260S		Solid Sitka Spruce	Rosewood		Rosewood, stained	Gold-plated diecast/enclosed
F-265C	Dreadnought Cutaway Sunburst	Spruce				Chrome/ diecast/enclosed
F-270SCE	Electric Cutaway Dreadnought	Solid Sitka Spruce				Gold-plated diecast/enclosed
F-330-12	12-string Dreadnought	Spruce				Chrome w/cover
F-360S-12		Solid Sitka Spruce				Gold-plated diecast/enclosed


F-250


F-260S


F-265C


F-270SCE


F-330-12


F-360S-12

CLASSIC GUITARS

Painstakingly crafted from hand-selected hardwoods, Fender classic guitars offer the same meticulous detailing as Fender acoustic steel-string instruments. All four models feature traditional classic construction, with mahogany necks, rosewood fretboards, and genuine wood marquetry soundhole inlays.

Three-on-a-side type tuning machines with open gearing feature a high gear ratio for sensitive adjustment. These machines provide smooth operation with minimum backlash.

We believe there is no greater value available in a classic guitar, and invite you to judge for yourself.

Model	FC-100	FC-110	FC-120	FC-130S
Top	Spruce			Solid Sitka Spruce
Back & Sides	Mahogany	Ovankol	Rosewood	
Neck	Mahogany		Mahogany w/Rosewood inlay on back	
Fretboard	Rosewood, stained			
Tuning Machines	Nickel-plated			Gold-plated

Fender®

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1300 East Valencia Drive, Fullerton, CA, USA. 92634

FC-130S

FC-100 FC-110 FC-120

MUSICIAN: *Do you ever ride to the hunt?*
WINWOOD: I used to have horses, which I gave up. A very good friend of mine works for the hunt, but he doesn't ride. He's more of an organizer of it. I like coursing better, I think. I love the outdoors, hurrying about in the fields, if only for the scenery.
MUSICIAN: *Since 1977, you've been threatening to perform live again with a band. In 1980, you went so far as to say you had a "world tour" in the offing. Same thing in 1981. Obviously, all of these promises have come to naught. I'm not trying to give you a hard time, but do you sincerely want to face the road again, to regain the live vigor you displayed at the beginning of the 1972* Low Spark *tour?*
WINWOOD: (smirking) You're not going to believe me now, whatever I say, are you? But seriously, I've been to a couple of concerts in the last few months—Van Morrison and Marianne Faithfull—and at both of them I stood offstage and thought, "God, I want to do some live stuff!" And in fact, I think the material on *Arc Of A Diver* and *Talking Back To The Night* would be hot, rousing live material. "While You See A Chance," "Valerie," "Help Me Angel," "Still In The Game," they all have the proper feel to connect with crowds.
MUSICIAN: *You aren't plagued by stage fright are you?*
WINWOOD: Stage fright comes out of a feeling like, "Am I really *certain* I want to be doing this?" That kind of trepidation. Not from thinking, "I can't wait to get out there!" which I've surprised myself by experiencing recently. Perhaps after a few rehearsals I'll feel a bit more shaky, wondering if I look stupid doing this or singing that. But let's say this: my stage fright will probably come further down the line, when it's part and parcel with the physical organization of an agreed-upon set of gigs. I'm not shying away from the sensation of the concert stage so much as reminding myself it's a constant possibility. And I have no secret fear of wide-open arenas or large amounts of people.
MUSICIAN: *The biggest tour you've ever been on was the one that had the least to do with your career—the 1969 U.K.-U.S.A. Blind Faith cavalcade. While I'm not one to belittle the album critically—actually, I've always liked it a lot—the Blind Faith tour was one of the tackiest rock circuses of all time. You opened to a horde of 100,000 in Hyde Park in London in June and proceeded to bend every ear in America near the breaking point for two months cross-country. Though it didn't last long, it was a fairly vulgar spectacle, and turned off a lot of people who, understandably, took Clapton, Baker, Grech and yourself seriously. Could that have lastingly soured you on your own personal in-concert presence?*
WINWOOD: The album stands up very well on its own merits. But the show *was* vulgar, crude, disgusting. It lacked integrity. There were huge crowds everywhere, full of mindless adulation, mostly due to Eric and Ginger's success with Cream and, to a more modest extent, my own impact. The combination led to a situation where we could have gone on and farted and gotten a massive reaction. *That* was one of the times I got so uninspired.

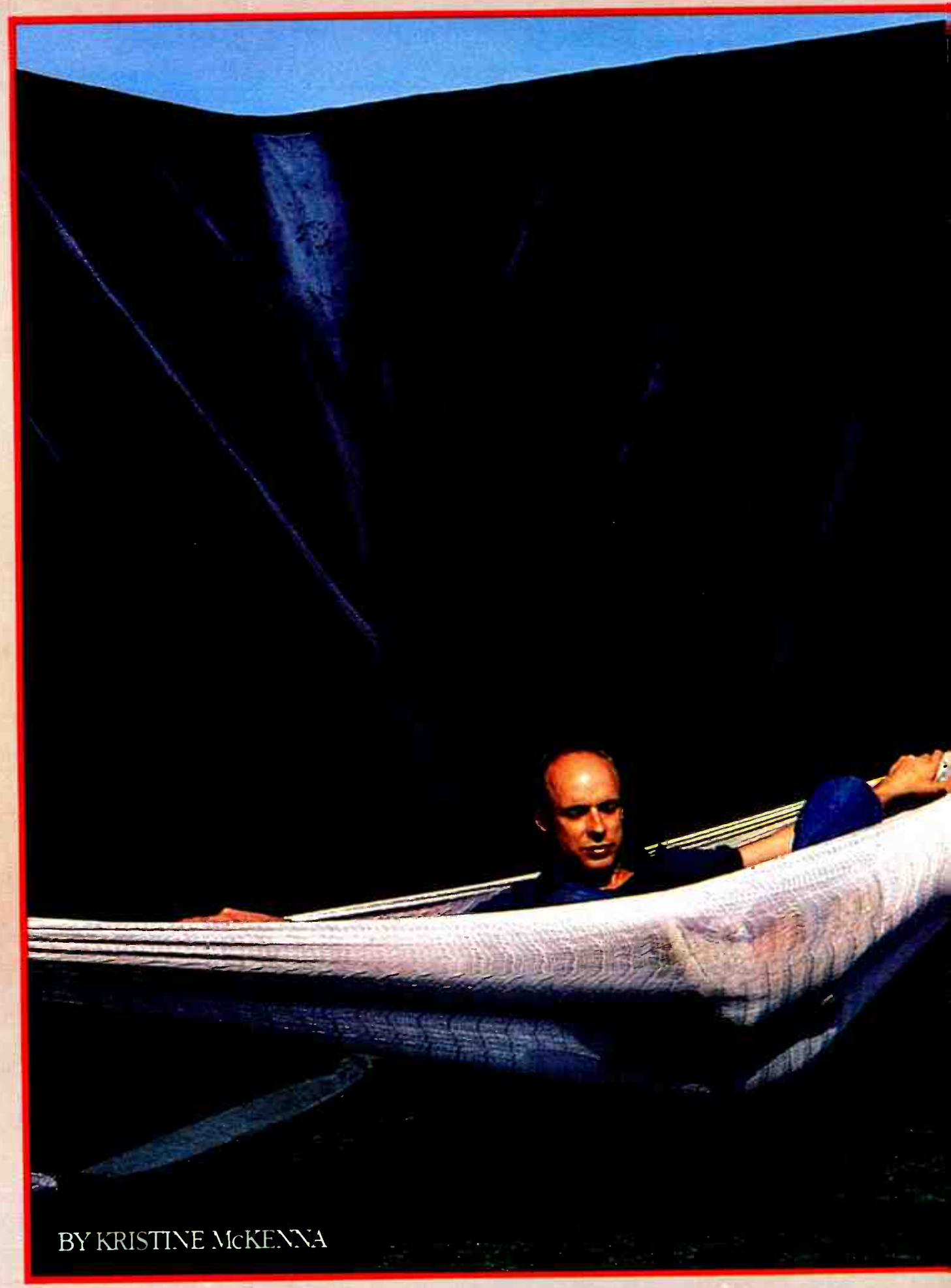
The attitude backstage was, "These people think we're great and we better damned well *give* them something great," but it didn't help. And it wasn't the audiences' fault. The blame all rightfully belonged in our laps. We did not sound good live, due to the simple lack of experience being a band. We'd had no natural growth, and it was very evident onstage.
MUSICIAN: *Whose idea was Blind Faith?*
WINWOOD: Eric and I had known each other for ages and had been saying we must get together sometime and play in a real, stable band. Since I'd just left Traffic and Eric had canned Cream, we decided that was the time, and we rehearsed for two weeks at Eric's house in Surrey. We went in and cut the record, and then toured.

I still say, however, that it's better to have a good record and a bad tour than vice versa. Memories always mellow, but the record lingers on intact. At least the album indicates that we could get on a bit musically. But we had to break up because that was the only way we could get out of the whole mess. And it was a complicated deal, because Eric and Ginger were held by Atlantic, and the deals for each member were struck individually, with Chris (Blackwell) working a thing out with Ahmet Ertegun for me. Not the best way to form a group. Live and learn.
MUSICIAN: *Are there any lingering miscomprehensions that you think the public has about Steve Winwood that you'd like to set straight?*
WINWOOD: Yeah! I've read in a number of places, both books and articles, about Steve Winwood being "a victim of the drugs he ushered in," or "a casualty of the drug scene." When Will Jennings, my writing collaborator, first met me, he thought from all this rubbish in print that I was a junkie, or at any rate had been! Because that's what the writers seemed to be implying.

Over the years, my blood has really gotten up about this crap. I'd be all set to take legal action, but then I'd calm down again—only to see me described in yet another rock anthology, by someone who's never met me, as a "burnt-out relic." Just when I was ready to boil over again for the last damned time, I saw that *Arc Of A Diver* was at the top of the charts around the world. I said to myself, "That's satisfaction enough for me."
MUSICIAN: *Any other vintage axes to grind?*
WINWOOD: One more. People think—and this happens much more in England—that I'm some kind of a recluse, which I strongly object to. I've spent a lot of time on farms in the recent past, granted, and these new records require me to do the work of eight people, so I often seem to be living in the studio. But I work on these things for my enjoyment and, hopefully, the enjoyment of others, and when people turn around and call me an anti-social freak I resent it!

I do concede that I was out of the mainstream from 1974 to 1977, but ever since, I've still been labeled a hermit. It's understandable, I suppose, because I don't tour, but I want people to know that I do get out of my cave and see a lot of friends and lead a fairly full social life.
MUSICIAN: *Not to pry, but who would some of those people be?*
WINWOOD: Actually, besides old and dear friends, there are people I've known vaguely over the years that I seem to be drawn closer to these days, like Pete Townshend and Van Morrison, whom I see a lot of. We seem to have gone through similar experiences and have much to talk about. It's bringing us very close together.
MUSICIAN: *Do you feel like you're part of a fraternity of elder rock statesmen?*
WINWOOD: (shy grin) Yeah. Definitely. We can sit together and observe younger musicians doing things brilliantly or badly and identify with them, or criticize them, or cheer them on. This is really why I want to get on to producing, because I want to pass on a certain amount of knowledge to others. More and more, I find that I can instantly pinpoint what's wrong with certain records, although I rarely dare to offer it at all. That seems wrong, but I understand that you need to have a context for such things. I'm working with Capaldi now, and he's the first person, aside from myself, that I've ever produced.

I heard this great futuristic group the other day called Yazoo, and I thought, "My God, this girl can really sing her heart out! And the band is proficient!" That's rare in England, where acts get signed when they're too young and then are discarded. Over here, rock stars aren't considered artists. But I must say that things are very promising everywhere these days on the music scene. I'm very pleased by the new things I'm hearing on record.
MUSICIAN: *Are there any things you've cut during the last year that haven't made it onto vinyl yet?*
WINWOOD: Just one. I did a song called "Waiting For Orders" that didn't get used on the new album, for the simple reason that it wasn't as good as the other tracks.
MUSICIAN: *Considering the title of the tune, perhaps that's a symbolic irony.*
WINWOOD: (smiling) You may have hit on something there. For myself, I'd say that most of the waiting is over. M



BY KRISTINE McKENNA

ENO

Voyages in Time & Perception

Music theorist Brian Eno, who first came into prominence as a member of Roxy Music, has been a powerful bellwether of popular music for the past decade. One of contemporary music's most inventive and controversial producers, Eno has done collaborative projects with some of rock's most exotic figures and is largely credited with introducing synthesizers and African rhythms into the new wave vocabulary, yet his own compositions have grown increasingly *un*pop as the years

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

"With this record, I wanted to find out if, in fact, I *can* tap into the past and make use of those feelings."

have passed.

For the past six of them, Eno has been investigating what he refers to as ambient music. Atmospheric aural washes that exert a subtle presence akin to a slight shift in the weather, this music has not been very popular, perhaps because people misunderstand its intent and measure it with the same yardstick they'd apply to a Rolling Stones record. Eno contends that music can be used in a variety of ways and these records are not designed to occupy the center of one's attention, as do most rock records. They're to be approached more with the frame of mind one might bring to a panoramic view or a leisurely trip by car.

Eno's latest exercise in ambience is called *On Land* and he feels it's the best work he's ever done. On March 19, 1982 we talked about this record, time, space and gospel music.

MUSICIAN: *What's the most widely held misconception about your work?*
ENO: That it's cold and unemotional. Many people think that, probably because it doesn't have the sort of obvious passion of the Clash or the Rolling Stones.
MUSICIAN: *Do you think that's passionate music?*
ENO: No, I don't. It's obviously dramatic but there's a difference between drama and passion and this stuff of mine, particularly my new record, isn't very dramatic—if anything, it's melodramatic. But for me it's far from cold and unemotional.
MUSICIAN: *Are there taboos in music?*
ENO: There are social taboos, for instance, "going soft" is taboo. People often say of composers who, like myself, started off doing things that seemed wild and manic, then do some things that aren't wild and manic, that their music has become escapist and has nothing to do with the world we live in. My reply to that is we live in many different worlds and can to some extent choose which world we live in. And acknowledging only the harsh urban reality, the grit, grime and struggle, then you create that world too. You don't just reflect it, you make more of it. If I insist on living in a world that's more mysterious and diffuse than that, then I create that too—not only for me but for other people who also agree that that world exists. Most taboos are ideological positions that people fail to realize are merely temporary positions. The one I just referred to—the harsh urban reality— assumes that it can't be music unless it has those abrasive qualities, but that's just not true. This is something of this time and place and plenty of other music has existed without any of that aspect at all.
MUSICIAN: *Why are the ideas of newness and innovation so valued in art?*
ENO: They're overvalued really. Or, I should say that they're valued to the point where they become a target for people to aim at and that's a self-defeating proposal. It's like calling someone up and saying, "Look, next Friday we're going to get together and have a really interesting conversation. Really brilliant now, we're going to think some really new things!" Then you call a few days later and say, "Don't forget Friday, this conversation is going to be *really* interesting." You build this up and by the time Friday comes of course you're tongue-tied because you daren't say anything that's clumsy or familiar. You daren't do any of the things that are likely to open you up into a new area. New ideas are nearly always slight shifts of things that are already very familiar to you.
MUSICIAN: *Then the reverence for originality is the very thing that prohibits its surfacing too frequently?*
ENO: Definitely. One of the things that's interesting about nearly all ethnic music is that it doesn't have that idea. In reggae you hear the same riffs year after year in a shifting context. The idea there is to use a thing for as long as it still means something. The idea in the fine art culture is to drop something as soon as you can no longer claim it as only yours. As soon as other people are onto it you have to drop it and go elsewhere—and that's such a stupidly childish attitude.
MUSICIAN: *How do you intend for your new record to be used?*
ENO: The way I use it, which isn't necessarily the way anyone else has to use it, is I sit in the little soundproof room I have at home—a luxury to begin with—with the lights dim, and I listen and imagine I'm in the places that the music represents to me.
MUSICIAN: *I read an essay you wrote about the making of* On Land *wherein you inferred that the record is concerned with the realm of memory. The past seems to be a source of great unhappiness for most people—sort of a one-way ticket to melancholy—yet you seem to be presenting memory as a source of pleasure.*
ENO: First off, the record is very much connected with thinking about my childhood again. I agree with you that the past is a source of melancholy but I like melancholy and have never found it to be the same thing as moroseness or sadness. I've always enjoyed being melancholy, perhaps because that mood is very much a feature of the environment where I grew up. It's a very bleak place and most visitors find it quite miserable. I don't think it's miserable but it's definitely a sort of lost place in a lost time—nothing has changed in this part of England for many hundreds of years.
MUSICIAN: *Do you think most people look back fondly at their past?*
ENO: I think they do but they also look back regretfully, as though they can't tap into it anymore. One of the things I wanted to do with this record was to find out if, in fact, you *can* tap into the past and make use of those feelings again. Instead of looking back and saying, "Those were the days, it's all gone now," I view it as, "Those were the days and they're still present in my mind if I choose to call them to my attention."
MUSICIAN: *The music on* On Land *strikes me as a bit spooky. Was that intentional?*
ENO: Yes, a little bit, a nice kind of spooky. It sort of gives you the willies, you know, that slightly thrilling sense that you're almost in some other time, not quite in touch with the present. I've been thinking a lot about that sensation of not being in touch with the present and that's a sort of misleading description of the feeling because what's really happening is your sense of the present is actually expanded beyond what it normally is. For instance, when I'm in New York and I use the word "now," what I mean is sometime between yesterday and tomorrow. When I'm in the place where I grew up and I use the word "now" I'm referring to a much more extended time period that goes back a long way and into the future a long way. I think peasant-type people commonly feel that, because they're in touch with their relatives and ancestors so there's some kind of reality to that continuum they belong to. I think their sense of "now" is nowhere near as crisply defined as the urban sense of "now."
MUSICIAN: *In your essay you used the phrase "listening to the world in a musical way," and I assume that in one respect this record is intended as a tool to teach people to enjoy non-musical sounds. But most ambient noise—in the city at least—is filled with anxiety and tension—the very things we turn to the artificial language of music to escape.*
ENO: I agree. If you listen to city noises close up they are very hard to take and are filled with angst and trauma. But if you listen to anything in the city at the right distance, you cease to hear the individual event and it becomes a kind of hum that I find exciting and not threatening in the same way. When you're out in the country you hear sounds that seem quite lovely and

pastoral but those too are probably the sounds of emergency. That little bird singing is probably sounding some kind of an alarm and the screeching monkey has probably lost his mother. So it's really a question of your mental proximity to the source of the sound. If you're slightly removed from it, you hear it not as an individual and terrible emergency, but as part of the fabric of things, which is composed of joy, pain and everything else. So it's a feeling of moving back from it a little bit. The same applies to the videos I've been doing. I recently realized that what made them nice was the fact that they show everything at a distance. It's as though they push the city away in order to restore it to the kind of mythical place it once seemed—a mysterious hive of activity with all sorts of curious human interaction going on.

MUSICIAN: *Do you still find New York a creatively stimulating place?*

ENO: Lately I've found it more so. I went through a period where I was very unhappy in New York but I got through that and now I'm quite enjoying living here. I think that's partly because I have my little soundproof room, which is a most crucial counter-balance to the rest of the city for me.

MUSICIAN: *How much time do you spend in this room?*

ENO: A terrific amount of time. If I'm not in a recording studio or in some other country, I spend between six and twelve hours a day in there. It's a small room—about eleven by twelve feet—but it's somehow got a very nice quality about it. I don't know why but I still get excited when I walk through that door. I feel that I'm entering a sort of sacred space somehow.

MUSICIAN: *What prompted you to build it?*

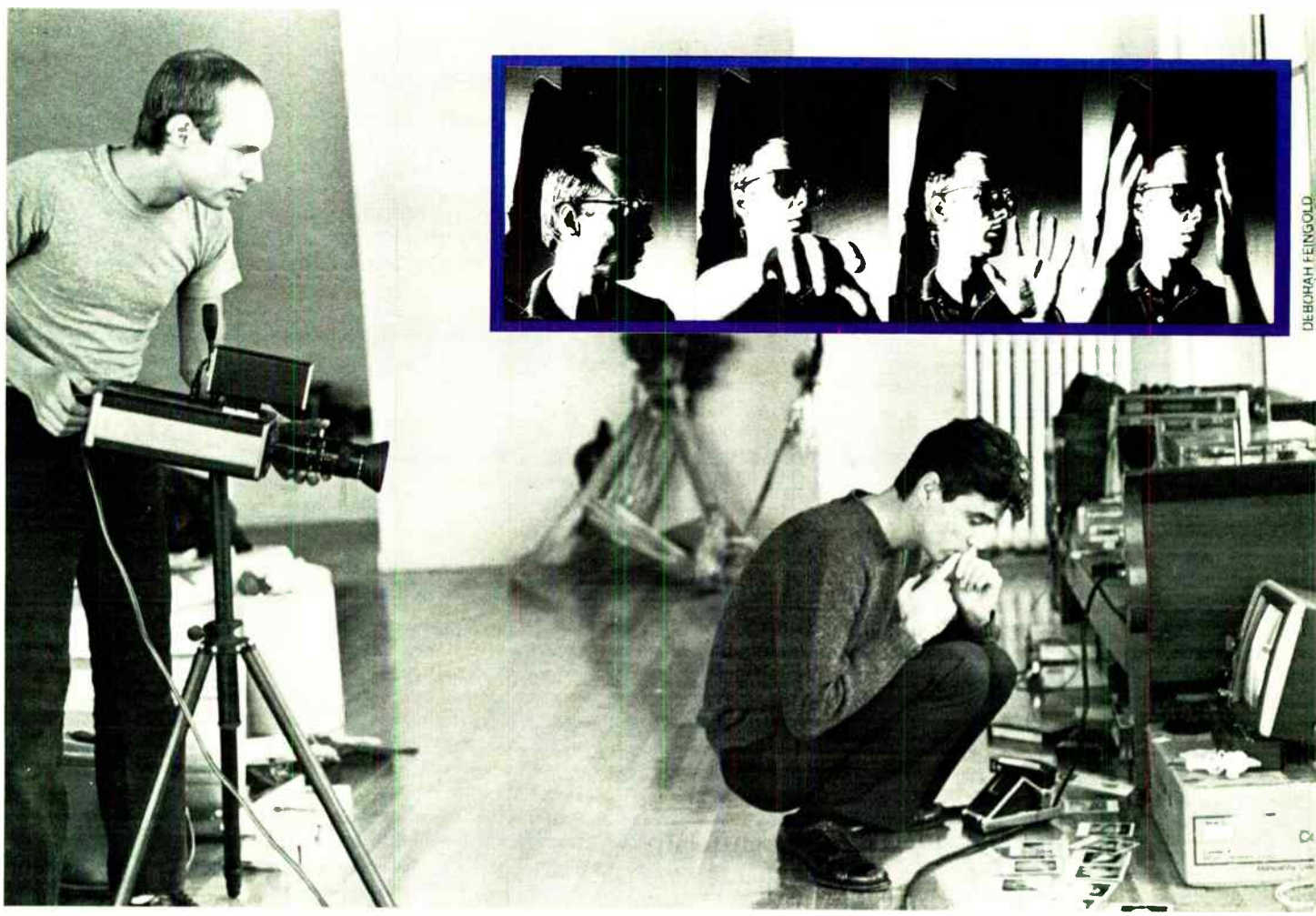
ENO: When I lived in London I had a tiny room which was half the size of this one. I had my tape recorders and whatnot in there and I used to spend a very long time in that room as well. I always looked back on that time and remembered how much I enjoyed working in that room. I didn't enjoy it all the time—working is sometimes very boring—but my overall memory of that period was sitting in this little room and doing things that interested me. So when I bought my loft in New York, it was large enough to build a large studio and my first feeling was, "Oh, good, now I can have a big room to work in." Then I thought about it and realized that I actually like small spaces. I can keep a small space tidy and well organized, whereas in a bigger space I end up with heaps of unfinished things sitting in corners and the room loses its quality of being purposeful. So I thought, "There's three things I need in this city; silence and darkness, and this room I can make totally dark and nearly silent." The other thing I wanted was to be able to make noise that nobody else could hear. That's quite important as I hate thinking that people are listening to me make a fool of myself.

MUSICIAN: *Will working in this room make your next record very different?*

ENO: Definitely, although I don't know how different because *On Land* came out of this room in a way. Although I started the work some time ago, the assessment and finishing of the thing really came from being in that room and listening to it over and over again. The thing about this room is that it's a controllable environment where I can change the sound, light, smell and temperature. So I started experimenting, listening to things to see what effect it had to change the conditions in the room. What's the difference between listening to something in total darkness and bright light? The difference between a warm room and a cold room?

One of the things I realized is that there's really a need to clarify what various pieces of music are for. Records all look the same, are sold in the same places, packaged in the same way and played on the same equipment, so the inclination is to think that it's all the same thing, which is a mistake. It's like thinking that everything that has printed words on it is a novel.

Erstwhile collaborators Eno and David Byrne, who together introduced African sensibility to new wave, ponder video experiment.



EBET ROBERTS

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

"So much of the music I hear has all the right ingredients but none of the soul, the solid idea at the beginning."

In the printed word format we have ready-made distinctions, newspapers, books and whatnot. We have ways of knowing what the intended focus, mood and endurability of the work are. Records are presented as though it's all the same stuff, and I realized in fiddling with the conditions in my room that it makes an enormous difference in how you treat music as far as what you'll understand from it.

MUSICIAN: *But a record buyer is fiddling with parameters in the editing process he or she uses prior to making a purchase. I'm sure that someone buying one of your records assumes to a degree what they're going to get—and whether it's there or not that's probably what they hear.*

ENO: Yes, there's definitely an interplay between one's expectations and what the work actually provides—and any piece of work that's good will allow expectations to operate to an extent.

MUSICIAN: *Which is stronger, the tools available to a musician or the preconceived ideas and experiences that the listener brings to a work? Whose will is apt to reign?*

ENO: In between those two conditions is the work itself. You have a set of intentions and tools that produces this "thing," then you have this "thing" that triggers a set of expectations. It's possible to imagine a piece of work that is completely transparent in either of those directions, where all the listener hears is the tools and ideas and it's very apparent to him that that's all that exists. A lot of the most doctrinaire avant-garde music is like that. All you hear is somebody's musical system being worked out on tools that are deliberately non-evocative, so the work has a diagrammatic quality. That's one end of the spectrum. The other end of the spectrum, the one that interests me, is the possibility of the listener being presented with music that he has no idea *what* it relates to. My early musical experiences were a lot like that. When I first heard doo-wop I was really young and I had no idea where America was, let alone where doo-wop came from. I can remember the fascination I had with this music that just appeared without any ancestry that I knew of. It was like discovering some animal you couldn't dream of, with two heads, one leg and a big eye.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think that the more we're able to intellectualize a thing, the less power it has over us?*

ENO: If a work is presented in such a way to make intellectualizing happen more than anything else, then I think it has somehow failed. More and more I find myself wanting to have experiences with music that are sort of religious. That doo-wop experience was sort of religious for me.

MUSICIAN: *What was the last religious musical experience you had?*

ENO: I'm embarrassed to admit it, but with my new record. It sounds a bit arrogant to say it, but I listen to this record almost with bated breath. I find it really moving and actually think it's the best work I've ever done.

MUSICIAN: *How do you feel about your early records?*

ENO: I don't discount them, but they all seem to be pointing towards whatever I'm most excited about at the moment. I can say, yeah, that's good and fine, I like it and it had to be that way at the time but the real thing is this one now. Actually the real thing is the one I'm going to do next.

MUSICIAN: *Are you working on another record now?*

ENO: Yes, before I finished *On Land* I started thinking about a new one. Something that made a big difference with *On Land* was the notes I took long before the record was finished. They weren't originally intended to be notes for the record and I wrote about 25,000 words on general thoughts about music. In doing that I started getting a much clearer idea of what I was doing than I've ever had while I was actually in the midst of making a record. Usually I just sort of stumble on things. I'll find myself intrigued by something so I'll carry on with it until there's a result and I release it. This project started that way but at a certain point it came into consciousness in a way things don't normally do until they're finished. So I began to think not only of this record but of what could happen after it.

MUSICIAN: *Are there specific issues that are best addressed in music?*

ENO: I think there is something that particularly belongs to music and that's the way it allows you to monitor the changes in your perceptions over a period of time. This is, by the way, only true of recorded music. But in listening to a record repeatedly, you're hearing something that you know is identical every time it's played. It doesn't change, so if something seems different a change has clearly happened in you. So as you listen to a piece of music over a period of years and it assumes different levels of mood, connotation and meaning, what you're really hearing is your own shift going on.

MUSICIAN: *I've always felt you have an appealing voice and it's something I've missed on your recent records. Why have you eliminated your voice from your records?*

ENO: I like singing very much. I always have done and still sing a lot in my soundproof room. But singing on a record is a problem because with this record, and some of the others I've done, I didn't want to have a personality in them. I didn't want singing in the foreground.

MUSICIAN: *Will a voice always upstage whatever else might be going on musically?*

ENO: I think it's very hard to arrange it otherwise. It's only a really great singer who's able to use the voice to point up what the instruments are doing. Van Morrison is an example of someone who's able to work that way.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think of yourself as a classical composer?*

ENO: That term has so many unfortunate connotations that I'm a bit reluctant to use it but I suppose I am starting to think in those terms. I certainly lean more in that direction than in the rock direction. For a start, I don't think of my work in the short term, which I think is one of the differences. I don't think of *On Land* as an early 1982 record, or even an early 80s record. I hope it has a quality that it won't be earmarked as being specifically of this time.

MUSICIAN: *It seems that your compositions are very dependent on your own idiosyncratic skills. Do you have hopes of your works being performed by other players in the future?*

ENO: Somehow I don't think that can be. I think of them as having the kind of position a painting has. The records are objects in themselves and in a way have nothing to do with performance. A painting is what it is. Someone else might do an interpretation of it later on, but that doesn't necessarily relate to the intentions the first painter had when he did his. He thinks of his as being the definitive statement.

MUSICIAN: *What step in the music-making process most often proves to be the undoing of a musician?*

ENO: That's an interesting question. I would say the first step—having a solid idea and commitment to begin with. So much of the music I hear has all the right ingredients but none of the soul. The solid idea, the beginning, is soul of some kind. It's believing that working in this medium will benefit you spiritually and will somehow free a part of your spirit that is otherwise locked up because it can't find a convenient place to exit in the normal, day-to-day world. I guess it's what people call conviction. If you have that, you can work with any set of ingredients no matter how rubbishy they are. I've been listening to a lot of gospel music recently and some of the recordings I have are atrocious. The acoustics are dreadful, the

pressings are filthy—everything is wrong. They've got none of the ingredients normally considered to be part of a successful work, but they have so much of that other ingredient that you don't even notice the lack of those other things. What I hear with so many of the new English synthesizer bands is all the ingredients for contemporary pop respectability. You can check them off: use of the studio in a "creative" way, electronics, modern rhythms, clean productions, slightly meaningful lyrics, correct haircuts, the right ideological stance—the whole bag of bananas. They have all that stuff but they miss because they don't convey any sense that doing music is really critical to their lives.

MUSICIAN: *What governs whether or not a person has that magic ingredient?*

ENO: I know it's not a matter of ambition. That's not to say you couldn't have that quality and be ambitious as well—that's obviously quite possible. I think it's particularly a matter of stubbornness.

MUSICIAN: *That soul quality seems to be connected with having the strength to reveal vulnerability.*

ENO: That's right—daring to expose something. Nearly all the music I like now is totally exposed. It's so open to criticism, it's as though it's let its pants down. Everything's wrong with it and yet somehow the music just rides above all that.

MUSICIAN: *Does innocence equal soul?*

ENO: That's part of it. In a sense, innocence is deciding not to concern yourself with certain considerations. For instance, one of the interesting things about being an artist now is that there are two very obvious ways to get critical acclaim. One is to be "safe" and within a format, but to work rather well within that format. The other is to be "radical." Those are both easily defensible positions. With one you can say, "I'm doing my job, I'm doing it well, people like it, it's cool." People will criticize it within those terms and say, "Yeah, it's a great dance record"—which is fine. There's nothing wrong with a great dance record. With the other safe position, the radical, avant-garde stance, you say, "I'm staying true to my ideas and principles and they're terribly important to me blah blah blah." People will rally round and say, "God, it's so great, I can't understand it." The difficult position is to be somewhere between those two poles and most of the music that interests me falls in that middle ground. It isn't radical just for the sake of it and it's innovative, radical and familiar almost by accident. It happens to connect with things within one. This is the area where the critics will hit you because they think you've not made a commitment to either pole.

MUSICIAN: *What would be an example of that? Not gospel music—that doesn't even enter the realm of criticism.*

ENO: That's why—because it's in exactly that area. Gospel music is very innovative but it doesn't intend to be. You don't imagine gospel groups sitting around talking about Steve Reich.

MUSICIAN: *In the essay you wrote you listed the rules you set for yourself in the making of* On Land. *Does it free you creatively to impose arbitrary boundaries?*

ENO: It did in this case. I think I'd gotten a bit blasé about the use of the studio, in fact, I think everyone's pretty blasé about the use of the studio at the moment. This is one of the major problems with contemporary rock records. Studio technology allows people to work with a kind of semi-commitment because they know they can erase their mistakes and try again. That's all very well but what makes live recordings and old records, where they didn't have that option, so exciting is the feeling that that person was actually on the line when they did it. That's a kind of spiritual quality you can't quantify but I'm convinced you hear it in music and see it in films when it's there. In listening to the music that I love I've come to realize that the common thread that runs through it is the fact that at the moment these people made these noises, that was their reality. They weren't thinking I can do it again later or fiddle with it in the mix. This was it, this was the moment for them, and that sense that the thing was real when it was being made is what communicates in a piece of work.

MUSICIAN: *Then one of the primary pitfalls of success is knowing you'll always get another shot?*

ENO: Yes, I think that's a very dangerous area to be in. And if you're in that position, you must construct ways, sometimes quite contrived ways, to foil that thing in yourself.

MUSICIAN: *Do you still use Oblique Strategies*?*

ENO: Yes, but now I use them in a much more discreet way. I remember most of them now so I don't often go pulling them out of the pack. They're sort of in my mind now and they frequently come to mind when I'm working.

MUSICIAN: *What percentage of your work and ideas do you discard?*

ENO: Of the work, quite a lot. The discarding is often temporary in the sense that I'll throw something away but then it gets actually physcially built into something later on. I use the same pieces of tape and take little bits out of them, or play with the speed of them. At first making of something I'd say I discard about eighty percent and sometimes it goes up to a hundred percent. But I don't discard many ideas because I don't idly pursue ideas. If something excites me once, it continues to excite me, and nearly every idea I've ever had has been built into something somewhere. Some of the ideas in *On Land* are absolutely years old and were among my first musical ideas. And they just waited in line until they were used.

MUSICIAN: *Now that you've employed them in a way you find satisfying, are you finished with those ideas?*

ENO: No, I really feel that I've just started. That's why when I was doing this record I was already thinking about the next one. The reason I'm so excited about this and so anxious to tell the world about it is because I feel like I've stumbled into this really rich territory that's full of possibilities. I must say, I'm more excited about this than I ever have been about anything.

MUSICIAN: *How do you expect* On Land *to do commercially?*

ENO: Very poorly compared with my other records—which haven't done too well either. My reputation is far bigger than my sales. I was talking to Lou Reed the other day and he said that the first Velvet Underground record sold 30,000 copies in the first five years. The sales have picked up in the past few years, but I mean, that record was such an important record for so many people. I think everyone who bought one of those 30,000 copies started a band! So I console myself thinking that some things generate their rewards in a second-hand way.

MUSICIAN: *The music on* On Land *is very evocative. How do you see this music in relation to film? Are you interested in*

continued on page 109

*Oblique Strategies is a deck of cards described by inventors Eno and the late Peter Schmit as "over a hundred worthwhile dilemmas." Some sample strategies, to be drawn at random to consider a problem: "Discard an Axiom," "Cluster Analysis," "Mechanicalize Something Idiosyncratic," "Do Something Boring," "Overtly Resist Change," "You Can Only Devise One Dot at a Time" and "Water."

EBET ROBERTS

Bongoes AND THE GROOVIES

On the Road with a Nigerian Rock Band

RANDALL F. GRASS

For years most people have experienced African music via Hollywood as something mysterious, primitive, even threatening; or, courtesy of social scientists, as something arcane, exotic and ultimately unintelligible. Lately, new wave bands (most famously Talking Heads) have been exploiting one or the other of these distortions, going so far, in one instance (*Burundi Black*), as to use an ethnomusicological rendering of Burundi (some would say tribal, I would say traditional) drumming. Yet there's a continent full of popular music styles that has nothing to do with such images. A whole lot of young African musicians are creating a new music.

My first awareness of African pop music came nearly ten years ago from a magazine article about Paul McCartney recording his *Band On The Run* LP in Nigeria amid a thriving pop scene in Lagos. I wondered what African pop musicians played and how they fit their music making into African society. Those questions set in motion a chain of events that ended with my stepping out of a plane on the runway of the Lagos airport.

The long flight and sudden transition from brisk, autumnal America to the steambath of Lagos left me exhausted and somewhat dazed. It must have been about 2 a.m. when I awoke in the darkness of my hotel room in a dusty, dilapidated Lagos slum, stirred by a deep throbbing emanating from the night. *Drums!* It seemed like a cliché coming to life, until I detected amid the hypnotic pulsations the heavy muttering of an electric bass.

And only a day later, I was out of the steambath, seven hundred miles to the north, on the edge of the Sahel, the lip of the Sahara. In the Nigerian city of Kano, humidity gave way to dry heat and instead of throbbing pulsations, the desert drone was in the air—that modal drone extended by a musical chain reaching from India to North Africa, the ancient caravan route. In Kano, my search for new African music began against the background of thousand-year-old traditions. Many scholars have (simplistically) traced the blues to this savannah region. If this was the headwaters of the rock 'n' roll river, I wanted to check new currents at the source.

Walking down the streets of most West African cities is like taking an instant tour of world music. From loudspeakers outside dozens of shops comes a mighty hodge-podge of sounds and rhythms spewed forth by records, tapes and radios. The thump of disco funk mixes with plaintive, echoing wails of Indian film soundtracks; the blaring horns of highlife wash over the rolling rhythms of *juju* and Afrobeat. Clear rippling guitar lines of "Congo" music ring out amid romantic country ballads or flat-out rock 'n' roll. The muezzin's quarter-tone filigrees wail from mosque speakers. The urban African man-in-the-street, adding to this musical circus with a radio tuned to pop and folk music from the BBC, Voice of America, Radio Moscow or dozens of other global broadcasts, may be more musically sophisticated than his counterpart anywhere in the world. Here and there, a man dances a solitary jig of ecstasy in front of a speaker, and a circle of little girls skips and hops in an ancient dancing game ("Double Dutch Bus" recently sold over a million copies of this tradition; that jump-rope game is descended from African dance).

Amid the sonic barrage, I bought a newspaper and scanned the entertainment listings. Sunny Ade & his African Beats. Fela & Africa 70, Ebenezer Obey & his Inter-Reformer Band and dozens more were at one club or another around the country playing "until dawn," according to the ads. A poster on a nearby signpost caught my eye—in Kano, Bongoes & the Groovies were playing at the Central Hotel, until dawn also, it seemed.

It was with no small curiosity that I gazed at Bongoes & the Groovies' equipment spread out under the stars on the smooth pavement of the Central Hotel's patio. Somehow the punky, tongue-in-cheek band name didn't mesh with that slick watering hole for the elite. Except for a Malian xylophone standing stage left, the array of amplifiers, drums, P.A. speaker columns and microphones could have belonged to any pop band in America.

Just like the old American soul revues, the Groovies walked out and tuned up for a warm-up set before the entrance of lead singer Bongoes Ikwue. They launched into a loose, funky jam that sounded like Santana with horns or Osibisa with a heavy metal edge. But when Bongoes walked out in front of a microphone, looking dapper in slacks and a dashiki, the Groovies began playing the loping 3/4 time of a country ballad. Sure enough, Bongoes was singing a Jim Reeves oldie (the late Reeves was one of the biggest-selling artists in Africa). Then they shifted into the guitar chunks of an original reggae tune from their debut LP recorded at Ginger Baker's ARC studios in Lagos, the same 16-track McCartney had used, the first such facility in West Africa.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LESLIE EVANS

The lead singer, wearing dark glasses and high platform shoes, was gamely striking cool poses and shouting Americanisms like "Right on! Get the groove!" to the audience.

Between sets, someone told Bongoes I was a musician and, with the openness I experienced time after time with African musicians, he came right over, shook my hand and asked if I'd like to play a number with the band.

"Sure, but what will I play?"

"Anything," he replied. "Just start playing and the band will follow you."

Someone had told them I was a guitarist so I took the guitar they offered, nodded to the members of the band who were smiling encouragingly at me, and wondered what to play, especially since keyboards is my main axe.

When in doubt, rely on the blues. I jumped into the heavy shuffle of "Kansas City," heard the bass player fall in with the riff, and everybody kicked in neatly behind me. I sang a verse and the Dahomian lead guitarist took off on a screaming, soaring excursion—his hero seemed to be Jimi Hendrix. Everyone caught my cue and, incredibly, we finished together amid generous applause. (Interestingly, another band who often invited me to jam always ripped off a letter-perfect rendition of the Stones' "The Spider And The Fly" when I joined them onstage.)

I shook everyone's hand, letting it be known that I was really a keyboard player. It turned out their organist had left the band and soon I had a standing invitation to play with them. They were going on tour as soon as their hotel gig was finished.

When I showed up for rehearsal, I rapidly discovered that the average African pop musician knows a lot more about playing American music than I knew about playing African music. I took my place behind an old Farfisa combo compact as Yunusa, the saxophonist and arranger, supervised tuning up. Unfortunately, that tuning process ended before the job was done—a tendency with a lot of African pop groups. Yunusa counted a tune off and the band kicked into a James Brown funk riff (the JBs, along with Mandrill, War, Santana and the Meters were major sources of inspiration during the mid-70s). Yunusa took a blistering saxophone solo that ended with some upper-register squeals (his hero was Junior Walker) and John the trumpeter shifted out of a circular little dance he was doing to blow spare, asymmetrical lines in the manner of Miles Davis. I had my solo shot and found it easy enough to comp along with the rock-solid rhythm section. African rhythm sections *do* tend to be strong!

When it came time to work on some highlife and Afrobeat material, things got tricky. Many highlife tunes are built around circular I-IV-V progressions that never seem to resolve. The harmonic pattern is merely a context for improvisation—rhythmically and melodically. So it was dead simple for me to play sustained I-IV-V chords but meshing them rhythmically with the band led me to try a syncopated approach. "You can't play it like rock," Bongoes cautioned me after listening to my accents stumbling through the rhythm. He meant I was phrasing too sharply, instead of rolling with the pulse. People who say that African music is syncopated are trying to shoehorn African music into Western concepts of meter. African music is not metered according to symmetrical units of time. Meter in most African musics is established by a central pulse articulated by a leader/percussionist (in a multi-instrument ensemble). This pulse is formed by a pattern of notes with a certain rhythmic quality. The length of the pulse determines the basic unit of duration for improvisations. The other members of the ensemble improvise within this pulse, contributing accents that complement certain aspects of the rhythm. Sometimes the pulse will be merely implied, not articulated, but the musicians know the rhythms so well that they do not need to actually hear the pulse in order to know the correct limits for their improvisation.

When the Groovies played "Otachikpokpo," an innovative fusion of traditional percussion ensemble, Afrobeat, highlife and funk that also is the title cut of their third LP, the main rhythm was articulated by a wah-wah guitar figure lasting at least eight Western beats. This guitar figure was playing the role of a lead drum pattern in traditional ensemble music. I had great difficulty playing my organ part, which consisted of simply two repeated two-note phrases, to be played at the proper intervals. Only when I began to hear the central pulse articulated by the guitar as the controlling measure of time was I able to play those simple phrases in the right places.

Dele Ajiboye, the guitarist, hovered around me when I played organ, in order to pick up pointers. He was attempting to teach himself keyboards but it was strictly trial and error. Like most young African musicians, he had no access to formal music instruction (there are few music teachers and most musicians can't afford them anyway) and in the pop field there are few equivalents of the master musicians who have traditionally imparted musical knowledge in Africa. Fela Anikulapo Kuti is somewhat an exception to this—he drills his Africa 70 band meticulously and relentlessly. The first thing I told Dele was to use only a few voices on the Farfisa to avoid the tinny, whiny sound that is the instrument's unfortunate forte and which seems to be favored by so many organists around Africa and the Middle East. I was also able to find him a copy of

Hendrix's "All Along The Watchtower," which he treasured.

Soon I was on the road with Bongoes & the Groovies, a trip that made that storied hard life on the road experienced by American musicians seem like a holiday. As an honored guest, I rode with Bongoes in his Honda Civic—in most African countries, even a Honda can be a prestigious item. With us was a long-time sidekick of Bongoes, a guitarist/singer who specialized in highlife and was coming along for a few gigs. The rest of the band and the roadies (who at a dollar a day plus meals came very cheap) were crammed into a Ford Econoline van along with all the equipment. A "good" road offered a ribbon of blacktop wide enough for two cars. Otherwise, driving meant jouncing along in the heat amid clouds of dust on laterite or dirt roads. A 300-mile trip might easily take eight hours or more, amid delays created by slow-moving cars, trucks, wagons, sheep, cattle or camel herds, and crowded villages with their teeming marketplaces and serpentine climbs up hills.

When we arrived at our destination, a provincial capital called Jos, Bongoes cruised slowly through the streets stopping every few blocks to meet and greet a multitude of people, mostly pretty young ladies (they began knocking on his hotel room door as soon as he arrived). A sumptuous young woman in a brightly-colored wrapper, bedecked with gleaming bracelets, necklaces and earrings, flashed an inviting smile.

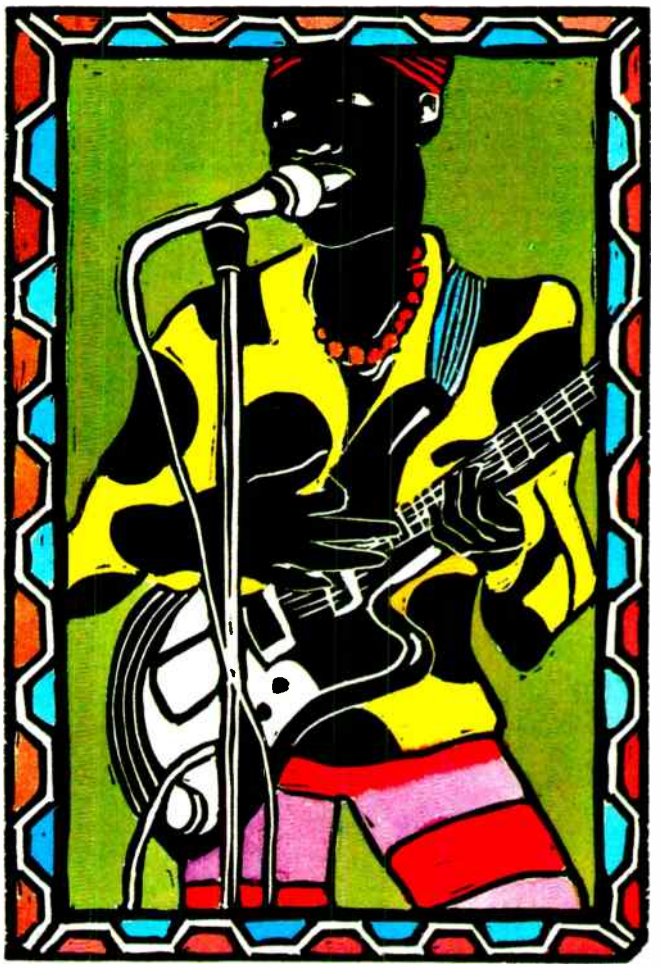
"If either of you want her, speak up," Bongoes said. The groupie factor is evidently constant worldwide.

Bongoes Ikwue shatters the usual stereotypes of African musicians. University-educated, he has organizational ability and sufficient versatility to play any kind of gig. The wide range of material played by his band (and his insistence on stage uniforms) meant he could play in the finest hotels or the funkiest of bars. His vocal idols were Sam Cooke, the Impressions, Brook Benton and Jim Croce. He composed a lot of his melodic, easy-going material on acoustic guitar—his demo tapes sounded like any other singer/songwriter's, if you ignored linguistic and melodic variations. It seemed perfectly natural for us to careen around town, harmonizing on old Sam Cooke numbers like "Chain Gang" or "Twistin' The Night Away." He knew the obscure ones, too.

Following that night's gig, we were off into the bush for the much smaller town of Oturkpo. There are no Howard Johnsons on African highways—at least not yet. When we stopped, it was usually at a small roadside stand, where instead of a hamburger, we'd down a plate of peppery rice and meat and maybe a lukewarm Coke. At one of these stops, a solitary stand in the middle of nowhere, we took a break in the cool night air. Out of the forest silhouetted in the bright moonlight came the heavy rumble of drums from a nearby village, the vibration seemingly transmitted by the earth as well as by the air. Above the drums we could hear singing, a full, harmonized chorus, repeating a lusty refrain that echoed in the night.

"They're having fun tonight," was Bongoes's comment, instantly giving a prosaic context to music that the romanticists would describe as "primitive tribal ritual." It was just a song-and-dance fest, created by nothing more than drums and voices, albeit one of great vitality and power, a kind that can never be matched by electrified music. African pop musicians are not yet isolated from this vitality.

Our gig in Oturkpo was at the Afro Club, an open-air "nightclub." The town had electricity and pipe-borne (rather than well-borne) water and a few other amenities but, except for a larger number of frame houses than usual amid mud-baked/thatched or tin-roof dwellings, it was little more than a village. The band luckily had found accommodations at a hostel (they had complained bitterly, even mutinously, when the manager failed to find accommodations for them at earlier stops). The ritual plugging in of equipment was accomplished by means of a fantastic and dangerous-looking Rube Goldberg contraption which attached dozens of outlets together on a piece of plywood, a necessity since the club only had one outlet. The lights dimmed visibly when we plugged in.



We played our usual warm-up set: "Hot Pants Road" by the JBs, Mandrill's "Fencewalk," "Funky Stuff" by Kool & the Gang, an original called "Smokey," which mixed modal scales and Afrobeat rhythms with free improvisation by the guitar and horns, and the obligatory highlife tune. Many younger African musicians regard highlife as "old people's music." It was the hot new African pop of the 50s and 60s, and some innovative highlife still comes out of Ghana, but most urban African young people tend to be into American funk, reggae, rock and versions of Fela's electronic Afrobeat. Yet most young African pop musicians have at least a passing familiarity with highlife's Caribbean rhythms and jazzy improvisations.

When Bongoes came out to sing, the band shifted gears into the rolling rhythms of his Congo-style material and the more insistent beat of reggae and Afrobeat. Chris Onura, the bassist, played fat, spare lines with strategic pauses to accentuate the rhythms. African bassists, like reggae bassists, tend to leave a lot of space in their lines so that they comment on the rhythm rather than merely replicate it. They also tend to play a lot of lines high on the neck—repeated patterns that impart a very sensual undulation to the music, a sound that sometimes seems to replicate the swooping sound of "talking drums" (squeeze drums). In *juju* ensembles (Sunny Ade's group is a good example) this bass sound meshes seamlessly with the drums. The audience, men in comfortable pajama-like lace outfits or Western suits, the women swathed in yards of brilliantly patterned cloth or sleek European fashions, had long since risen from the drink-laden metal tables to dance. They danced with subtle, understated movements of hips, arms, head and hands, so the entire crowd of bodies harmonized in a gentle undulating sea of motion.

It's not unusual for African bands to play a tune for thirty or forty minutes without pause. By the time we slid into the fifteen-plus climactic minutes of "Otachikpokpo," both bands and dancers formed a bottom scarcely distinguishable from

the percussion ensemble we'd heard the night before. But the electric yawping of the wah-wah and the blaring solos and harmonized lines of the horns pulled the music away from the village into the tension and aggressive energy of the city. The song's chorus was a chant, sung by the entire group in a manner not very different from the chorus of villagers we'd heard. For once, the audience could understand Bongoes's Idoma lyrics—he was in home territory. Most pop bands resolve the dilemma of deciding whether to compose in their native tongue (which, in a multi-lingual country, can only be understood by a portion of the populace) or in a European language (English or French, depending on the country's former colonial status). Fela meets this problem by writing most of his lyrics in pidgin English, a lingua franca in English-speaking West Africa. Artists such as Victor Uwaifo only recently have begun singing in English because of the limtied audience for lyrics in Edo. African artists want access to the international market too.

I left the bandstand early that night with headache, backache, fever and overwhelming fatigue which turned out, when I saw the only doctor in town, to be malaria. Nevertheless, the band was due for an audition the next day for FESTAC, the second World Black Arts Festival, in Lagos, several hundred miles away, and my services were needed as driver of a newly-acquired car. Fortified by an injection from the doctor, I drove bleary-eyed with head swathed in towels for twenty-four hours over roads pitted with bomb craters left over from the 1967 civil war. We arrived in Lagos shortly after dawn, just a few hours before the audition. Fortunately, I did not have to participate, since the state government sponsoring Bongoes's band felt a white American somehow didn't mesh with the black arts festival concept.

Lagos, the site of FESTAC, is a mecca for West African pop music. It's a stinking, overcrowded city of impossible contradictions whose denizens seemingly live to party. A multitude of nightclubs, from fancy cabarets and posh hotels to rough-and-tumble nightspots and hole-in-the-wall bars stuck in the middle of unpaved, open-sewered slums, offer a staggering variety of music—classical highlife (Dr. Victor Olaiya), *juju* (Ebenezer Obey, Sunny Ade, Dele Abiodun), Afrobeat (the legendary Fela), *apala* and dozens of funk, pop, rock and Congo ensembles, Then there are the many street musicians—drummers, singers, flutists and others playing homemade instruments—who try to make a little spare change or just play for the hell of it. This sampling represents just West Africa, a mere chunk of a huge continent; the vast scope of African music is staggering and elusive. Along with Accra, Abidjan, Monrovia and Dakar, Lagos constitutes the bright-lights, big-time glitter of West Africa.

This glitter, an illusion of Hollywood-New York-dreams-come-true, lures young African pop musicians. Many of them play in bands for the same reason American rock and funk musicians play: girls, glamor and bucks, or, at least, the hope of big bucks.

I remember catching a local band in a small cafe. The lead singer, wearing dark glasses and high platform shoes, was gamely striking cool poses and saying, "Right on! Get the groove!" to the audience. No doubt, he was replicating the moves of some American singer from the Wattstax movies shown so widely throughout Africa. Young urban Africans have seen films with Western pop stars and they read the magazine tales of fame and fortune. In Eastern Nigeria, there has been the so-called "Eastern rock" sound which draws its greatest inspiration from the Beatles, of all people. Musically, the novelty of emulating Western style may cause a band to re-create funk, punk or rock styles just as a Western rock musician finds it fascinating to appropriate African, Middle Eastern or West Indian styles. Some of these musicians fall prey to the cultural imperialism of Western merchandising; in West Africa, the big record companies are EMI, Decca and Phonogram. Local music can easily be swamped by streams of well-packaged American or European records, replete with foreign mystique. As a result, some African pop musicians begin to lose touch with the traditonal music around them. The most progressive African musicians, though, are looking for ways to fuse the multitude of African rhythms, melodies and instrumentation with Western approaches to music-making and new technology.

MAGNUM/BRUNO BARBEY

Pan-African rebel: Fela preparing for a show at the Shrine, his personal club in Lagos.

Joe, Bongoes's conga player, suggested we catch Fela at the Shrine, his personal club which was closed by the government soon after we saw him there (he has since built a new Shrine). More than any African musician, Fela has met the world on his own terms and fashioned a powerful amalgam of African and non-African musical elements in his own image.

As we stepped into the Shrine's packed open-air courtyard (after being patted down for weapons), a warm sea of sound hit us. A percussion section of several conga players, a trap drummer, *shekera* (beaded gourd), and sticks percussionists laid down a complex foundation of rhythm as an electric bassist played huge, intermittent slabs of sound. Two guitarists played choppy James Brown-style guitar figures, giving the music a funky bite. A brace of saxophonists and trumpeters played sustained, harmonized phrases.

Over the sea of bobbing heads, ringed on all sides by the seventy-plus African flags that proclaimed Fela's pan-Africanism, we could see the great man himself, legs apart, blowing looping, swooping saxophone solos in all registers. When he got tired of that, he jumped behind the electric piano and played jabbing solos. Then he would grab a microphone, pace back and forth in front of his band, and preach to the audience, chanting, singing. reciting satirical lyrics in pidgin English or Yoruba. His lips pouted petulantly, his jaw was thrust out defiantly and, now and then, he laughed lustily as he bantered with the audience. His every gesture proclaimed a defiance and assertion of self that would not be appropriate in traditional African music. He's a rebel and therefore a hero to African teenagers.

Jazz streams forth from Fela's horn and funk is stuttered out by his guitarists and bassist, but the rhythms, the call-and-response interchange with chorus and audience, the spontaneous approach to the music (songs usually last forty minutes or more) is African, stamped indelibly with Fela's personality. It's new African music that just might take the world by storm one of these days.

When African musicians succeed in their fusion efforts, wedding their traditions with pop, the results can be dazzling. In dozens of little bars I heard that fusion emerge, spontaneously, at certain random moments and then fade. With Bongoes's band, it usually happened at some point every night. As these bands begin to grab hold of this exhilarating new music, the global pop of the 80s will emerge. M

Mick Avory
Barriemore Barlow
Alvino Bennett
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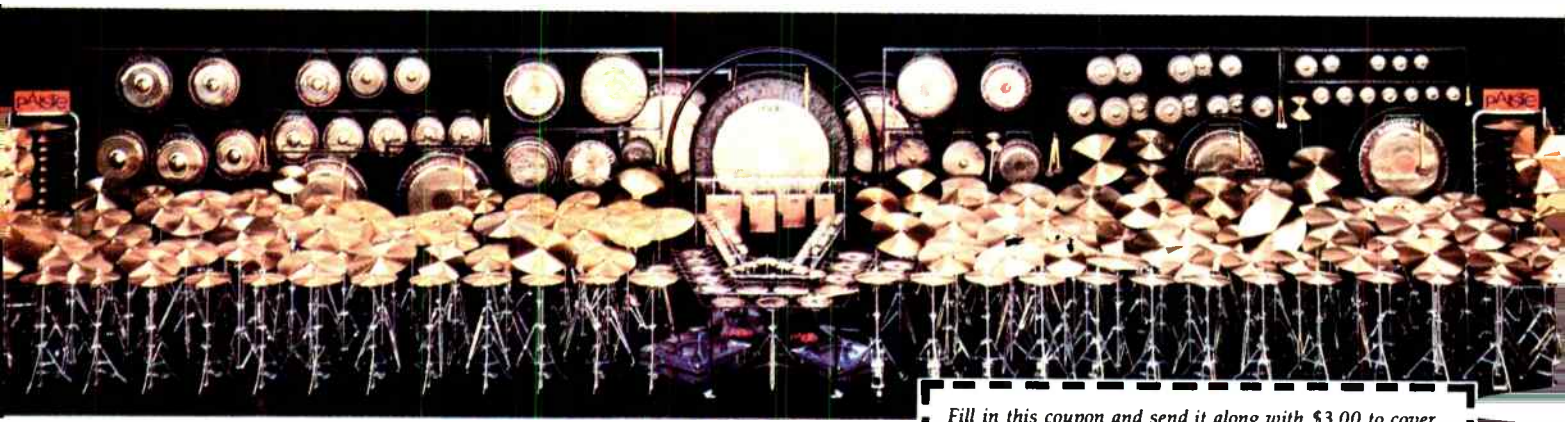

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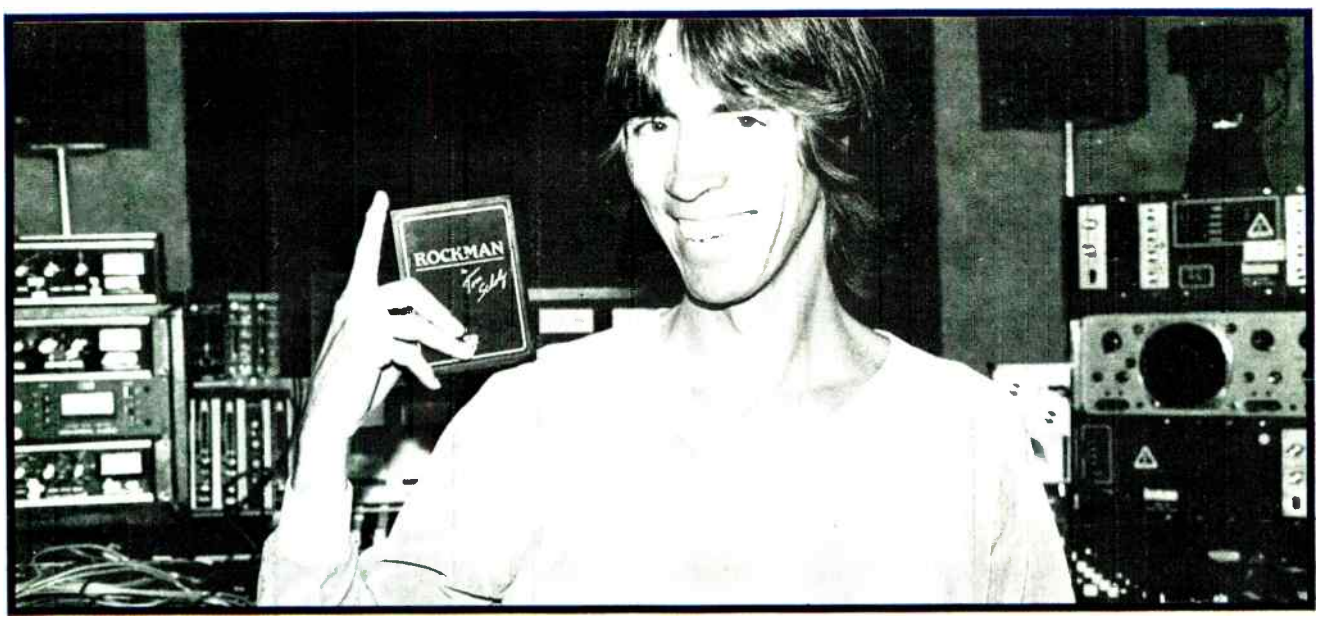
TOM SCHOLZ AND HIS ROCKMAN



Boston's innovative producer/guitarist sells his sound—to go, with a side of phones.

BY JOCK BAIRD

Tom Scholz, mastermind/guitarist of the group Boston and sonic architect of hard pop, is sitting in the super-tech control room of his basement home studio, tucked away in an unassuming suburban Boston development, reflecting on the interaction of his two very successful music careers. Scholz the star musician/producer has recently had a lot less to say to the world than Scholz the inventor/manufacturer, particularly since Scholz Research has not only just finished selling its ten thousandth Power Soak distortion unit but is now bringing out a small, mobile sound-processor/headphone amp, the Rockman (a cheerfully borrowed variation on the Walkman). "Whenever a new device happens, it happens," said the Tom Swift of rock, "but I kind of wish in this case that the Rockman came out *after* the new Boston album I'm working on, because it can look pretty bad for you...you know, four years without an album and you're putting out a musical instrument device while there's several million people bugging you for a record."

I asked if Tom's record company, Epic, had been calling twice a week to inquire about his progress. Tom smiled ruefully, "The company's beyond that. They've been past annoyance for several years now, but there's nothing they can do. The record's taken a solid two years just in the studio, and I want to make sure it sounds like something I'm going to be happy with when it's done. I *am* confident that it'll be done this year, though." "Finished this year or out this year?" I asked. "The company will probably bring it out in a week," laughed Scholz. "It could be the fastest release of all time."

Epic's impatience and that of the legion of Boston admirers is understandable. One of the freshest and most mature first albums of the 70s, *Boston* not only was the largest selling debut LP ever (7,740,000 copies to date) but became a prototype of pop production and state-of-the-art guitar sound. With the public clamoring for a sequel, Scholz's time-consuming album assembly process was rushed along by Epic; he now feels that side two of *Don't Look Back* wasn't ready to go out, and in recording Boston's third album, entitled *Third Stage*, he has been especially militant about discarding mediocre tracks: "You work something up and it sounds great that night, but the next day Cindy (his wife) or someone will say, 'I don't know....' You have to write ten songs and throw nine out."

As Tom played the nearly completed first side of *Third Stage* for me, it became apparent that his perfectionism has paid off handsomely. The new record is less monolithic and sonically dense than its predecessors; everything is more open, with a moody airiness and a more careful and dramatic use of dynamics. The trademark Boston sound is present, naturally, but is used strictly to enhance the songs. Despite Scholz's

PHOTOS BY RITA RIFF

insistence that he hasn't listened to any popular music for the last four years, *Third Stage* could (and no doubt will) fit very comfortably into the top of the 1982-'83 LP charts, a tribute to how much the current AOR monopoly has been influenced by Scholz's innovations.

The crucible of creativity for Scholz is his basement studio, in which the last Boston record was also recorded. It consists of two small (10' x 15') rooms with the board facing the opposite direction at the back of the control room so Tom can see the VU meters while he's playing in the other room. The studio barely accommodates a set of drums, a couple of Marshalls and a Yamaha electric piano, but that's all the space needed because Scholz himself plays most of the parts except the drumming duties, which are handled by Boston regular Sib Hashian and Tom's old friend Jim Masdea.

Scholz begins layering each song by playing rhythm guitar with the drums "to get a good feel," and then adding bass, more rhythm guitars, piano and his signature solos. Vocalist/songwriter Brad Delp, whose high, bell-clear lead vocals are an essential part of Boston's success, also does all the backup vocals. Tom likes to keep Brad's voice slightly undermixed so he has to work a little harder to get over the instruments. The result is a massive stadium-filling sound that seems almost comical when set against the background of Scholz's small, one-man operation.

The tiny control room is filled to capacity with exotic outboard equipment that surrounds the 24-track Audiotronics board, including the Fadex digital mixdown system ("It's cut my working time in half; this album would've taken four years without it").

Tom uses one such piece of outboard gear to shape his now-famous guitar sound, a somewhat bulky and unglamorous wooden box on the floor next to the board. He mikes a Marshall ("I got 'em around and basically couldn't find anything better, so I use 'em") that's been Power Soaked and then runs the signal through the box—a patchwork of separate compression, eq entering *and* leaving (and some of his contours on the 10-band MXR are *very* unusual) and other assorted delay and amendment devices—and then into the board. For every change of sound, Scholz has to redo every setting and the sheer clumsiness and inefficiency of the system finally led him to consider taking action. "We still have these big, clunky amplifiers that you have to put all kinds of garbage in front of and then have to run through boards and more crazy stuff just to get what you've got on a record. It was a mess, getting a good sound from a Marshall, and I just got fed up with it."

Scholz used his substantially self-taught electronic engineering background and Polaroid work experience ("I designed a sound processing system for their ill-fated instant movie cassette system that never sold") to simplify the process, but saw limited interest in it as a sellable concept until another recent technological development: "The (Sony) Walkman is *incredible*. I think that was *such* a breakthrough engineering-wise! Those headphones were miraculous. When I heard them, I said, 'Now it makes possible a whole new set of things.'"

Gear galore; Scholz at home, honing *Third Stage*, the long-awaited new Boston LP.

Thus was born the Rockman, a small black box with some very large implications for guitarists. Tom plugged an Ibanez electric into his only working prototype and said, "What the hell, let's give it some *power* here. might as well go all out." He pushed a four-position switch all the way over to "distortion" and did the same with the three-stop volume control, then began spinning off bursts of rock 'n' roll guitar fire, which I heard over a companion set of phones ("You've got to have another headphone outlet; how else can you *impress* anybody with how great you are?") The sound, including chorus and a sleek but restrained echo was very full, balanced and quite exciting. It was not the Boston/Scholz sound I expected; it was really your basic meat 'n' potatoes rock guitar sound, but a very well crafted and subtly distinctive one. It became even more apparent that the unit was not a Boston-clone device as Tom switched to half-distortion, an intermediate setting "you could use for rhythm"; as he picked harder, the distortion increased, as he lightened his touch, it cleaned up.

Then Scholz plugged in my Gibson ES-345, the first semi-hollow he's ever run through the Rockman and tried two "clean" settings. One enhanced the mid-range of my guitar and brought out all its natural warmth. Then he demonstrated a second setting, explaining why he decided on two different equalization patterns: "If you look at the difference between a Fender and a Gibson, they're at opposite ends of the spectrum; incredibly different. That was what led me to include two clean settings. This second, higher position is also what you'd do for an electric piano, pushing the highs a *lot* and shoving the bass in a reasonable place."

The larger issues of Scholz literally selling his sound seemed to have reverberations and I asked him if he felt there were any dangers to it. He quickly refuted my suggestion: "Oh, it's not *my* sound. That's the nice thing about it; that's why we have all these choices." Scholz then quickly demonstrated a series of totally different rock sounds, including a T-Bone Walker blues, a Byrdsian ring, a Joe Pass thick-and-dry jazziness and a top-forty sheen.

"Somebody once commented that if I make the Boston sound available to everyone, I'll be out of a job. Lots of people will be able to get my sound with the Rockman if they really want to; all they have to do is use a Les Paul, some SGs'll do it, a set of DiMarzio super humbuckings, turn the volume down a little bit and use the bridge pickup and they'll be all set. But it won't play the guitar for you. It certainly won't put Boston out of business. It'll make it a little easier for all the producers and engineers who've been trying to cop the Boston sound for the last five years, but I'm not worried."

Scholz has good reason not to be. Tom's playing techniques have a lot more to do with his brilliant guitar textures on record. These include his careful harmonizations and doublings ("You can't be too far off what you did on the first track, but you can't do the exact same thing either or it'll sound too mechanical"), his ability to sustain notes naturally and his style of picking with both his pick and the meat of his thumb to produce a harmonic an octave above his high notes. Unfortunately, the Rockman will do none of these for you (although the compression will help you with the last technique).

The more the details of the Rockman were explained, the more impressive Scholz's engineering job began to seem. "All the basic production decisions you have to make are included in the four settings. Flip from one to the other and there are a lot of changes made, changes in eq, compression, chorus, echo. There's eq going in and coming out. That's why the switches aren't con-

tinuous; it could've been done, but it would've been too expensive for the buyer." (The Rockman lists for $249.) Scholz is especially happy with the reverb: "We did a lot of research and development on that. I think we broke some new ground. We've got an analog system that I don't think anyone has equaled for *anywhere* near that price. In fact, we may offer that later as a separate effect."

The unit has a red light that winks on and off, an indicator of the fact the power supply (which requires eight AA batteries) is on only a third of the time, giving an ample forty hours of use per set. Since half of its small volume is batteries, the miniaturization was the principal design problem: "It's *tiny*, and there's so much in there. There are so many IC's. It was not an easy engineering job."

Scholz is publicly pushing the Rockman as a practice device and makes a convincing case: "It's inspirational. You put on the phones and play and you get a great guitar sound. I finished writing two things for the new album that I'd had a tough time trying to complete. And I'm using it now. You notice my mike is disconnected from that Marshall now." Tom then played me another possible album track with a lead played on the Rockman that sounded indistinguishable from the other *Third Stage* tracks done with conventional processing.

But Scholz is soft-pedaling the *full* implications of the Rockman. It's not primarily a practice amp to take to the beach; it's a serious professional tool that actually obviates the need for a supposedly essential piece of equipment: the amp. "I think it'll take a little while before people realize that you can actually *throw* your amplifier *away*. But we're not going to tell anybody that for now, because amps are so ingrained, people don't want to hear that. So we say, 'Use it direct or use it through headphones' and they'll just use it through phones. But after awhile they'll put it down, plug into their amp and then go right back to the Rockman. That's something I think'll happen by itself gradually.

"I remember at this show I did, I was playing it for this guy, and he says, 'This is for practice, right?' and I said, 'Yeah, this is for practice, but of course you can play through it live.' And he says, 'Well, what would you do, play it through your amplifier?' And I said, 'Well, you *can*, but you're better off putting it into your P.A., because your regular amplifier is not a high quality sound system.' And he says, 'You don't need an amplifier?' I said, 'Nope.' So he thinks for a minute and finally says, 'Well...*no*body'd want *that*!'

"So we're taking it easy on the throwing away your amp stuff. Who knows...? *I'm* using it, that's for sure." M

D E V E L O P M E N T S

YAMAHA PRODUCER SERIES

A Flexible World of Headphone Sound

BY JOCK BAIRD

The versatile MA10 headphone amp, front & center, with phones and MM10 mixer.

If, as they say, the best presents come in small packages, then Yamaha's new Producer Series headphone system—which comes in two paperback-sized boxes—will be like having Christmas every day for the committed player/recorder. With the MM10 mixer and MA10 amplifier, you can do it all with headphones—from rehearsing a four-piece band (with vocals) to recording live or overdubbing on a 4-track deck, not to mention practicing alone in the bedroom or wide open space of your choice.

More important than eliminating weighty speaker cabinets and complaints from angry neighbors, the Yamaha system is an education in mixing. Going under headphones is really a preview of the recording process and a chance to produce yourself, to develop a new studio discipline while shaping and organizing your music coherently. It can help turn a good live band into a good recording one.

The system's most striking attribute is its flexibility. The MA10, the amplifier module ($125), not only takes a standard RCA plug input in stereo from the mixer (or tape deck/radio/turntable), but has another main input with treble/bass controls and two volume controls, so you can overdrive the signal for a terrific raunch guitar sound. There are two "monitor" circuits with two separate level controls that can be patched to an effect, run into a tape machine and back (you can record and play back your parts without repatching), hooked up to other MA10s in series or connected with completely new inputs. Between the amp and the four-input plus stereo auxiliary jacks mixer ($110), you can plug in *nine* separate signals and control them all independently.

Another important innovation in the Producer Series is the 10 millisecond analog delay which synthesizes the psychoacoustical perception of room sound. "The whole idea was to get the sound out from between your ears and in front of you," explains a Yamaha spokesman. "The 10 millisecond delay affects different frequencies differently and spreads them out in the phones. A 100 Hz sound will be slightly louder in one side while a 150 Hz might get canceled a little by the delayed signal. It synthesizes an aural depth of field."

The imaging and low noise of the MA10 combine to make the instruments more distinct, and individual pan controls on each mixer input (there are no tone controls) make the most of the separation. With a beefy output stage, volume into the headphones is not a problem, although Yamaha's MH10 headphones (extraordinarily clear for a $29 set) are open-ended and not as loud or bassy as close-ended ones. By Y-plugging the two outputs, four of the close-ended phones stay amply loud (although it drains the six AA batteries faster).

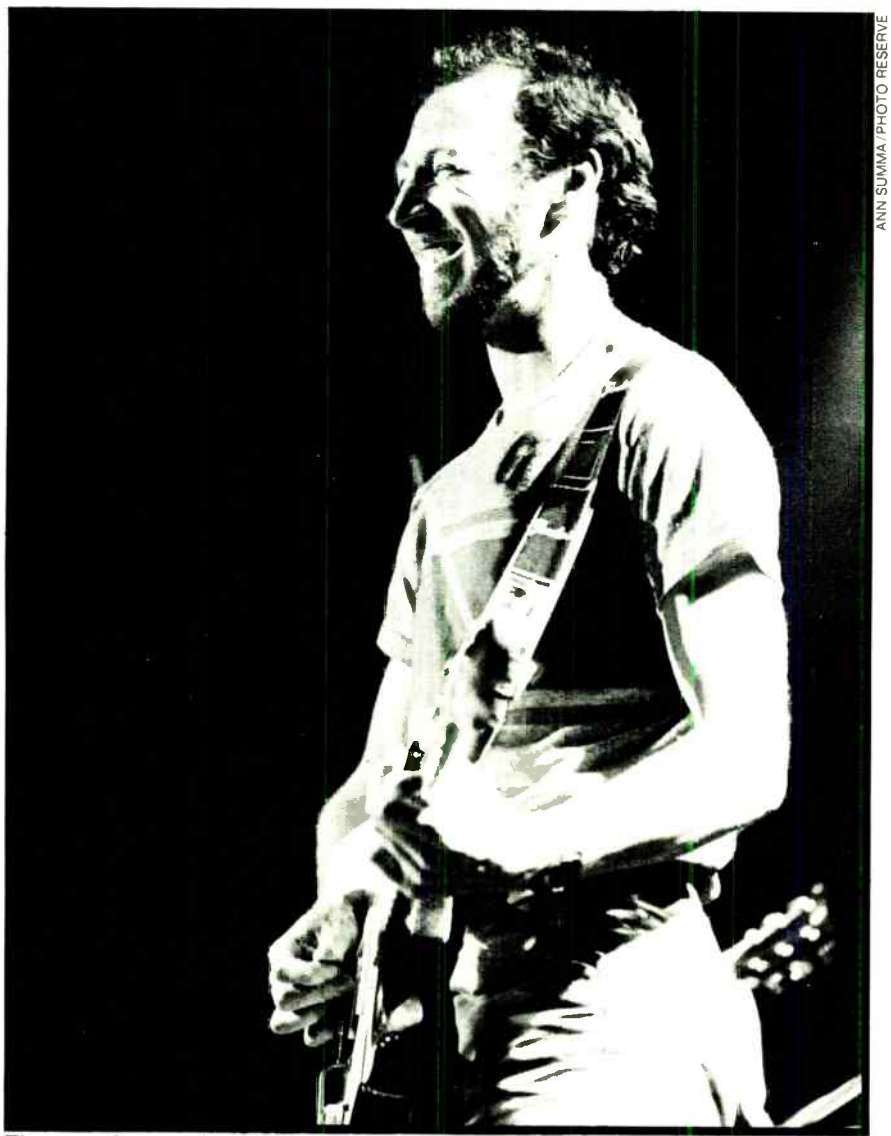
The only drawback to the Producer Series is its need for outboard gear. The lack of reverb will send you scurrying for your echo or delay effect. You may also want to add a small equalizer or other goodies like chorus and compression. But considering that these little boxes are replacing your entire bulky studio/rehearsal mix and monitor system (and sounding even better), it seems a small thing to bring along a few pedals and boxes. And you may never go back to the world of clumsy and incorrigible room acoustics again. M

P L A Y E R S

RICHARD THOMPSON

From Fairport to Coltrane, Reverently

BY DAVID FRICKE



ANN SUMMA/PHOTO RESERVE

Thompson's evocative playing and eclectic influences make him a unique guitar stylist.

It could have been the Second Coming. When English singer/songwriter/guitarist Richard Thompson shuffled out from behind the black stage curtain at New York's Bottom Line last May, the sold-out house erupted in a roar that would have embarrassed a Blue Oyster Cult crowd at Madison Square Garden. And t happened every time he announced a song, played a particularly juicy guitar flourish and flashed one of his big quarter-moon smiles (his already thin almond-shaped eyes dissolving into Oriental slits). When they weren't staring at him in religious awe, they raised the roof in his name.

In fact, this was Thompson's second coming, to New York anyway. A solo all-acoustic visit three months earlier marked the end of a self-imposed decade of exile from American stages that started after a 1971 U.S. round with British folk-rock pioneers Fairport Convention and a low profile '72 jaunt backing up a solo Sandy Denny. This time around, he came packing the superb, highly acclaimed album *Shoot Out The Lights* and a 24-carat band in old Fairport cohorts guitarist Simon Nicol and drummer Dave Mattacks, accomplished Yankee bassist Pete Zorn and his raven-haired Scottish beauty of a wife and singer Linda Thompson. The devoted are still swooning.

The general public is not. Miraculously, Richard Thompson has subsisted on a meager diet of cultish favor and critical huzzahs to make an extraordinary series of solo and duet albums with Linda that include his playfully eccentric '72 solo debut *Henry The Human Fly* and the Thompsons' intensely personal, almost religious statement (they are both Moslem converts), 1975's *Pour Down Like Silver*. If Joe Average knows Richard Thompson at all, it is probably as a major architect in Fairport's Great Electric English Folk-Rock Experiment of the late 60s. But he should also learn to know him as a brutally emotional, melodically inventive songwriter. Rooted in those plugged-in Childe ballad variations, Thompson's songs also incorporate strains of post-bop jazz, daring exotic Middle Eastern harmonic curves and the high jump of classic rock 'n' roll. More important, he should know Richard Thompson as a highly individual guitar stylist because it is his evocative playing, from solos on down, that is the lynchpin on which his best songs turn.

A severe case of modesty, however, only permits Thompson, thirty-two, to stress his importance as an accompanist even on his own records. "Basically, what I do best on the guitar is accompaniment, working behind the scenes," he mumbles bashfully, his tall elastic frame with the prematurely balding crown stretched across a Manhattan hotel bed. "I'm glad to do instrumental tracks and records. But I often feel long solos are rather self-indulgent. It's nice to have the opportunity to play them once in a while in my band, but usually what happens is we'll be playing a two-minute song live, I take what should be a short solo, and I wake up ten minutes later.

"I used to really like Zal Yanovsky," a reference to the lead guitarist with the Lovin' Spoonful whose tasty solo breaks, much like Thompson's, were less ego bursts than the cream filling in John Sebastian's folk- and blues-based songs. "Zal was a good kind of synthesis player, playing a good mixture of styles like blues and country."

Thompson's guitar style is also the fruit of an original synthesis, rock 'n' roll almost by default. "That's the style of music I grew up with. Besides, I mostly play electric," he notes dryly. Yet in his deft multi-tracked acoustic rendition of

Duke Ellington's "Rockin' In Rhythm" on *Strict Tempo!*, the high-amp Link Wray-style rumble of *Shoot Out The Lights*'s title blast, and the impassioned Stratocaster stretch in the live "Calvary Cross" on the '76 compilation *Live! (More Or Less)*, one hears echoes of early influences like Django Reinhardt and James Burton as well as the advanced modal sax slide of John Coltrane, the classical shimmer of Debussy and folk pickers Davy Graham and Mike Seeger. If this is rock 'n' roll, it is influenced by traditions far outside it.

"Something like 'Calvary Cross,'" he suggests, "is very repetition-oriented. You play a line, a phrase, twice, four or six times, and you work on it, evolve the phrase. That is a more traditional music style, derived from Scottish bagpiping where you do variations, as many as sixteen, on a single theme." He points out the similarity to jazz improvisation, where Coltrane would take a song like "My Favorite Things" and elaborate on the melody over and over again until it became something else entirely. "Yeah, it's the same thing except that piping is a lot simpler. There are a lot less notes. On the guitar, it's probably somewhere between the two."

Thompson remembers hearing Scottish pipes music around the house at an early age—his father, a Scotland Yard detective, was an amateur musician and ardent record collector; his mother was Scottish. But he did not come to his folk-rock crossroads until well into his Fairport days. Smitten first by his father's Les Paul records and the jukebox down the road that played Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue" long and loud, he went through the usual post-Shadows school combo apprenticeship, even playing in a Who-ish R&B band with a young Hugh Cornwell (now a Strangler). At fourteen, he started frequenting London folk clubs. But when four years later, in 1967, he cofounded Fairport Convention with Simon Nicol and bassist Ashley Hutchings, it was as a pop band with Byrds/Jefferson Airplane leanings.

"When Fairport started," he explains, "we were always more interested in bands that drew on ethnic music like the Byrds and the Lovin' Spoonful. But we wanted a stronger identity. We couldn't play blues and country music as well as Americans just because we weren't part of that culture. We wanted to do something that was part of ours."

"We found particularly when Sandy Denny joined as singer, that we had another source to draw on," continues Simon Nicol, a stocky soft-spoken gent with long black hair, joining the interview. "She knew English folk music and brought material into the band, which we were able to get at least tentative hooks

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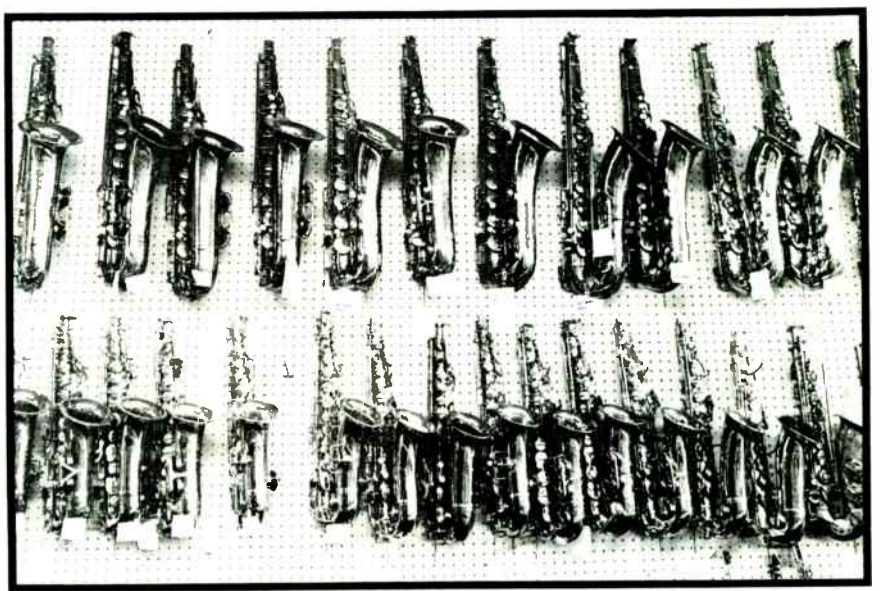
E Q U I P M E N T

PAWNSHOP HORNS

Bargains & Busts Off the Beaten Track

BY MICHAEL SHORE

RITA RIFF



Row upon row of gleaming brass may promise great deals, but play before you pay.

I used to walk by them every morning on the way to work—two pawnshops bookending the 10th-11th Street block on Manhattan's Third Avenue. The display windows, full of oddments from cameras and watches to curios like telescope-sights and TV picture tube testers, were festooned with all manner of old used horns. Alto, tenor and baritone saxes and that white elephant of jazz history, the C-melody sax, which looks like an unSanforized tenor someone left out in the rain (it's pitched somewhere between an alto and a tenor). Burnished trumpets and cornets in gold and silver. Ancient marching band instruments nobody plays anymore, like alto horns (looks like a shrunken euphonium, which in turn is a shrunken tuba) and mellophones (a slightly smaller French horn with trumpet-like piston valves instead of flat French horn keys). Silver metal clarinets, and clarinets with bodies of real wood. They were all invariably tarnished, but that only added to their beauty, their *mystique*—the ghosts of jazzmen past practically peeked out of every bell.

Sure, they *looked* neat. But what did they *sound* like? I hooked up with a couple of fine professional hornmen to find out: reedman Ralph Carney (recently with Swollen Monkeys, formerly of Tin Huey—who, Ralph says, are reforming—and recently on tour with the B-52s) and cornetist Olu Dara (leader of his own splendid organic-fusion Okra Orchestra, collaborator with Henry Threadgill and Material, among other leading post-modern likes).

"I've never bought a new instrument," says Dara, "I *always* go to pawnshops. There's something about those old, tarnished horns, makes 'em sound more funky, more in touch with the ancient feeling. But you gotta be real careful."

Indeed. Standing in front of the Stuyvesant Curio Shop (52 Third Avenue at 10th Street), Olu picked out a couple of nice looking cornets: an Olds for $149 and a Getzen for $99, both with gleaming gold bodies and shiny silver fittings. Entering the shop, a claustrophobic affair with guitars hanging from every inch of ceiling space, the first thing the salesman said after Olu told him which horns he wanted to look at was, "Are you going to be buying today, sir?"

"They always try to intimidate you like that," Olu whispered to me. To the salesman, Olu responded, "Maybe, but I gotta see how they play before I pay." "But will you buy it if you like it?" the salesman grumpily countered. Finally, he got the two cornets. Olu tried out the Olds first—"I play an Olds Ambassador cornet myself," he explained, "it's a fine make nobody really knows about, 'cause the

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company went out of business a while back. $149 is a pretty good price if the horn's working." After noting the horn's unusual side-saddle spit valves, Olu checked the slide mechanism on the lower-front tube, then executed some low-to-high tone flutters and smears. "Nice," he concluded, "but the third valve's leaking. This'd have to go back to the shop." The Getzen performed a little better, but its tube-slide action was messed up. "This needs work too," Olu explained, "but $99 is a great price. It's essentially a good horn. Now you could spend up to twice that price to get it fixed, but if you really like the sound and feel of the horn, it could be worth it."

To Olu's shock, the salesman offered to bring a new Olds Ambassador out of the stockroom. Sure enough, it was fresh out of the case and sounded great. Price? $189. "I could get this uptown for $125," said Olu, referring to "music instrument row" on 46th-48th Streets. No sale.

"What it is," Olu explained, "is they're looking for suckers. People who come in and point to something and say, 'I want *that*, and here's the money,' without bothering to try it out. But you *gotta* try 'em out. These aren't official musical instrument shops. Who knows what kind of shape the horns are in? You can't tell just by looking, that's for sure. If you're gonna shop in pawnshops, you gotta know what you're doing, or if you're a beginner, you have to bring a professional musician in who can try it out for you. Check the construction, the valve action, the slide action, and see how it sounds."

On the way out, Olu spotted an old silver alto horn hanging in the window, a horn he said he used to play in school. It was labeled tenor horn. "No such thing as a tenor horn," Olu said. Furthermore, its mouthpiece-fitting was broken off at the neck. "That horn is useless because it's an old, old horn, and you'd have to go some to find the right fitting for it. And they want $159 for it! They got a real nerve, these places."

So: caveat emptor, no matter what the horn's condition or price tag. "If you're just window shopping," Olu advised, "a good way to tell if a trumpet's a real professional model is if it has *two* spit valves at the front of the horn. Most of these horns," he continued, gesturing at an antiquated Excelsior trumpet for $89, "have only one spit valve. That's either a real old horn, or a cheap student model. That's not to say it might not serve someone's purpose—but not if they're real serious about horns. Don't worry if it's tarnished, though, it's still worth a try. When the metal tarnishes, that means it's aged, and since the horn's *made* out of the metal, that'll affect its sound. And

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P R O D U C I N G

WILL ACKERMAN'S WINDHAM HILL

Making Quality Records for Less

BY PAUL D. LEHRMAN

RONALD W. MAY

Guitarist/producer/exec Will Ackerman.

High quality means big bucks. That's what everyone in the record business tells you, especially when they try to justify high prices or poor pressings. If you want a great-sounding recording, the rap goes, you have to pay for it: $18 or so for a Telarc digital, a Sheffield Labs direct-cut or a Mobile Fidelity or Nautilus half-speed mastered disc. So how come a small label out of the San Francisco area called Windham Hill Records can make money on digitally-recorded or half-speed mastered albums, pressed on superb vinyl, that consistently wow the critics with their romantic delicacy and instrumental prowess—and cost only $9.98?

"High technology doesn't really cost that much more," contends Will Ackerman, guitarist and founder of the label. "Our masters are cut by Stan Ricker at Mobile Fidelity, and he's not charging us $600 a side. Record Technology, Inc. (RTI), who have handled Sheffield Labs and other custom clients, do our pressings, but it works out to only about 8 cents more per disc than if we used a conventional plant. We use Quiex II vinyl, which is the best domestic formula, and that represents about 28 cents more a record. We keep our cash flow good and pay all our bills quickly, some of them even ahead of time, and that saves money. And we sell a lot of records. We're not rolling in bucks, but we're making enough to keep everybody—our artists, our suppliers and our distributors—happy, and we're able to sustain ourselves."

Ackerman didn't start out wanting to be a record mogul, nor did he ever intend Windham Hill to become the darling of the super-fi set, a kind of American ECM. After dropping out of Stanford University in the early 70s, he made a "very nice" living for several years as a general contractor in the Bay Area, and at the same time composed and played music for a local theater group. "People kept saying to me, 'Why don't you make a recording?' So the people in the group chipped in five bucks or so each, and I booked some time in a studio in San Mateo. I had about $300, and the studio assured me I couldn't make a record with that, but after the engineer, Scott Saxon, heard me play, he told me the studio time was on the house. So we finished the record, and did a private pressing of about 300 copies, glueing some of the cover sheets onto jackets left over from a prison work-song project done by the Louisiana Folk Song Society."

About that time, Ackerman the contractor started working on new retail and warehousing space for Chris Strachwitz, head of Arhoolie and Kicking Mule Records. "He heard the tape," says Ackerman, "and offered me a deal on the spot. I listened to what he had to say, and I figured I could exploit myself better on my own."

He did well indeed—with guidance in many areas from Strachwitz. Windham Hill Records now has over twenty titles in its catalog. None of the albums has sold fewer than 10,000, and pianist George Winston's *Autumn* has sold 150,000 copies. For a time, it was the most requested jazz record on Boston's WGBH radio, and was selling just behind the Stones' *Tattoo You* in Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon, according to Ackerman's distributors.

Windham Hill's quest for quality starts with the recording. Ackerman is very fond of tube mikes, particularly U47s and U67s, and he uses them whenever possible, paying extremely close attention to placement to achieve the desired effect, whether it's close to an artist's head or at the other end of an empty

2,000-seat concert hall. It was Scott Saxon, Ackerman's first engineer, who initially showed him the miking technique that has become standard on his guitar recordings. "He just took two AKG mikes and crammed them right up next to the neck above the sound hole, in a sort of X-Y pattern," Ackerman recalls. "It's not a 'purist' sound, in that I'm not trying to reproduce a live performance, but it's beautiful, and it's what we wanted to hear. It's a completely different sound from what everyone else was doing.

"Scott also suggested overdubbing, which I had never dealt with, and I discovered I was so good at double-tracking myself that we started to get all these incredible natural phasing effects. I still do all my phasing like that."

Lest he be thought of as a reactionary, Ackerman is quick to point out that the primary mikes on a recent recording of Russel Walder, oboist, and Ira Stein, pianist, were Crown PZMs.

Currently, the studio of choice for Windham Hill's projects is Different Fur Recording in San Francisco, primarily for its Studer ½-inch stereo mastering machine. "The ½-inch format may be analog recording's last gasp," says Ackerman, "but it's a significant improvement. At 30ips, with no noise reduction, it makes a remarkably clean recording. We get the highest signal-to-noise possible—we saturate the tapes to the point of distortion, and we never use limiting, except as an effect."

Windham Hill has also done digital recording, using a Sony PCM-1600. "I haven't heard any of the problems with digital that everyone says are there," Ackerman says, "and *Passage*, our digital album, has the cleanest sound we've gotten so far. I'm also keeping digital archives, on 1-inch videotape, of everything we do.

"But so far it's just been 2-track, either live or mixed from analog. Multi-track digital is very expensive, and so is editing. We work at Master Digital in Santa Monica. We were using Sony's standard video editor, but the 1/30-second resolution just didn't make it, and we were also getting a lot of clicks and pops. Now they have a prototype of the new 1/900-second editor, which is absolutely flawless.

"I do have on order three of the new Sony F1 digital convertors, and as soon as they come out with a ½-inch Beta video machine that can really take stereo digital information, we'll be able to do our own editing, and multi-track bouncing as well."

The finished tapes, analog or digital, are delivered to Stan Ricker at the Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs cutting center. When Ackerman first connected with him, Ricker was experimenting with half-speed techniques at JVC's cutting lab, and Ackerman was completely unaware he had stumbled onto something that everyone would be clamoring for a few years down the line. "You have no idea how naive we were about making records," Ackerman grins. "We were all set to go with our usual company, and then Scott happened to sit down with Stan at an Audio Engineering Society convention and they started talking. We knew nothing about half-speed—and we didn't even mention it on the jackets for two years—all we knew was that Stan's stuff sounded good. He asked us where we planned to have the thing pressed, and when we told him we had a local place lined up, he said he wouldn't allow the record to be pressed by anyone but the best, so he set us up with RTI."

Windham Hill uses a three-step pressing process, instead of the usual five-step, with metal parts by RTI, Sheffield or Location Recording Service. The three-step process requires Ricker to produce as many as six identical lacquers for a production run of 10,000. Ackerman is reluctant to let any stamper make more than 2,000 discs, and often discards them even earlier. "Cutting multiple copies isn't a big deal for Stan," Ackerman says. "We don't need much in the way of eq or limiting from him, so he gets it set up for one, and then just repeats the process without changing the controls."

But one of the most important ways that Windham Hill keeps its costs reasonable is by paying close attention to recording budgets. "*Passage* was our most expensive album," says Ackerman. "We put in $46,000, which is a hell of a lot of money, but that included posters, gatefold covers and all that. But it was worth every penny. The studio time, however, was only about $7,000. On the other hand, we've also produced an album for $357.

"We've never lost money on an album," he adds. "We can't. Everybody's in this thing together, and it works." Somewhere, there's a lesson in this for everyone in the record business. M

P E R C U S S I O N

ELECTRONIC DRUMS

The Shape of Traps to Come

BY CHRIS DOERING

Roger Linn's correctable swingable LinnDrum uses digital recordings of real drummers.

Drums are finally moving into the electronic age and it's about time. Keyboards have been electric for about fifteen years and guitars for almost three times that long. But the conventional trap set remains the scourge of pickup designers. Only the piano covers a wider range of fundamental tones and no instrument produces a waveform as complex as that of a drum or cymbal. Roland's TR-808 Rhythm Composer, for example, uses six oscillators to approximate one floor tom.

A new wave of electronic wizardry is changing that. As far back as the early 70s, Joe Pollard introduced his Syndrums, a drum synthesizer best known for the sweeping tom-tom effects on many disco mixes and the laser blasts in *Star Wars*. Now artists as far afield as George Benson ("Turn Your Love Around") and British synthesists the Human League ("Don't You Want Me") have put the Linn LM-1 Drum Computer to "hit" use and King Crimson drummer Bill Bruford raved in a recent issue of *Musician* about his Simmons electronic

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drum kit. And there is plenty more where that came from. True, the new drum computers and even electronic drum kits—which incorporate analog synthesizers and digital technology in various mixtures—can be programmed by someone who doesn't know a flamadiddle from a ratamacue. But unlike the "automatic sidemen" of yesteryear, the purpose of these units is to replace only the drums, not the drummers.

Bruford has already described at great length in these pages the wonders of Simmons electronic drums. To briefly reiterate, the Simmons V drum set (manufactured in England) features 2-inch thick hexagonal plastic pads which respond to dynamics and rim shots like an acoustic drum. The pads trigger a rack-mountable electronics section with space for seven synthesizer modules (and mixer) which are plug-in units. Each produces one of the five basic drum sounds—bass, snare, tom, high-hat, cymbal. The modules have four presets, one of which is factory programmed, leaving the others for personal variations on noise, tone, bend and decay.

The Simmons's big selling point—aside from portability and ease of amplification—is that they perform the same functions as acoustic drums but, through the miracle of modern technology, lend themselves to unorthodox techniques like Bruford's use of two electric foot pedals, one for bass drum and one for a snare sound. This allows him to play the basic rock backbeat with his feet and frees his hands for polyrhythmic elaborations. For those drummers whose lives are not centered on cross-sticking and four-limb independence, the Simmons kit comes with synth inputs so you can program them with a sequencer.

MXR has just jumped into the electronic drum game with its Kit, also English-made. The Kit's seven touch-sensitive pads (set into a square black plastic frame that sits comfortably in your lap) trigger bass, snare, high and low toms, open and closed high-hats and a combination crash/ride cymbal. Each sound has its own level control, and there is a rhythm unit with variable tempo and time signature to set off the high-hats. Optional extra pads produce the classic Syndrum sweep, timpani and hand claps.

More a home hobby device than a pro stage unit, Synsonics Drums by kiddie kings Mattel could become the Casiotone of microchip percussion. With four touch-sensitive pads, an automatic metronome/bass drum and three programmable sixteen-beat memories, Synsonics is somewhere between an electronic drum set and a compact rhythm unit like Roland's Dr. Beat or JTG's SR-88. The memories are programmable with the pads, which respond in real time, or with a series of keys on the front panel which play the nearest eighth, sixteenth, or thirty-second note. This feature makes Synsonics a potential learning device for aspiring drummers who want to compare their playing with a metronome. Synsonics also comes with a headphone output and the jacks and adapters necessary to hook up with your stereo so you can cop Ginger Baker's "Toad" licks.

These three units all use synthesizer technology to produce drumlike sounds, which makes them analog devices. Oberheim's DMX and Roger Linn's LinnDrum—the successor to the LM-1—use digital recordings of real drums. Those recordings are done in a studio and the

Oberheim DMX; Q & A readout.

tapes digitally sampled and transferred to floppy disc using a micro-computer. The digital information is then stored in micro-circuit chips called Erasable Programmable Read Only Memories (say hello to EPROM, everybody), ready to be played back at the touch of a button.

That all sounds very impressive, but the DMX and LinnDrum are basically descendents of the dreadful rhythm boxes employed by only the tackiest of lounge acts. But two essential features enable them to overcome the stiff mechanical march of their ancestors. One is variable error correction, which assigns an "event" or note to the nearest exact time value and can be set anywhere from quarter notes to thirty-second note triplets. The error correction can even be defeated for a resolution value of 192nd notes, audibly indistinguishable from real time.

Then there is Swing, the result of Roger Linn's rather painstaking time measurement studies of master tapes by well-known drummers. A former professional guitarist, Linn was always interested in the difference between "stiff" and "loose" drummers and the exact nature of that elusive "behind the beat" feel. He found that while a few drummers like the late Al Jackson do play the snare a bit behind the beat, especially on ballads, the "behind the beat" feel isn't really behind the beat at all. Instead the term refers to the fact that most drummers play repeating eighth or sixteenth notes (such as high-hat patterns) somewhere between exact time (where each note occupies half or one-quarter of the beat) and shuffle time (where the beat is divided into thirds or sixths). Both the LinnDrum and DMX can introduce a gradual amount of unevenness, from barely perceptible to full shuffle, into the time of any drum.

They have their differences. The DMX, with seventeen sounds, has two more than the LinnDrum as well as a more sophisticated alpha/numeric display, which can ask questions of the user. The LinnDrum boasts a more flexible mixing section with volume and pan controls for each voice. But while both all-digital units eliminate the expensive, time-consuming process of setting up, tuning and miking a trap set in a recording studio, they do not eliminate the drummer's session fee because he is most likely to be able to program the unit for the best sound and feel in the least amount of time. Cars drummer David Robinson, for example, did all the programming for the Linn LM-1 used on the *Shake It Up* album.

For the home demo crowd, these machines are a blessing. The non-drumming artist can take all the time he or she needs to program a song into the memory and can save tracks by using the feature that lets these machines generate their own sync pulse on one track of a tape. Come mixdown, your 8-track deck suddenly has 23-three tracks as the drum machine plays back an 8- (DMX) or 16-track (LinnDrum) stereo drum mix in perfect sync with the instruments and vocals.

If limited cash is one of your problems (digital technology is still expensive, although getting cheaper), Roland's Drumatix is one possible solution. The synthesized precussion voices on the Drumatix are limited to the standard trap set and they are not as realistic as those in the digital units, but they are fully programmable and available for about one-tenth the cost of the all-digital units. Roland also makes a companion unit, the Bassline, which plays programmable bass patterns in perfect sync with the Drumatix.

Perfect sync, perfect time, no back talk and no double scale—it's enough to make any drummer nervous. But remember this while you're tossing and turning at night: the same computer circuitry that enables these units to duplicate the sound and feel of a live drummer has also transformed the mechanical rhythm box into an instrument anyone, but particularly drummers, can really make music on. It may look like a box full of electronics, but it's really just another trap set. Ⓜ

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D E V E L O P M E N T S

REMO PTS HEAD

Pre-tightened Means Less Hardware

BY DAVE LEVINE

Drummers, take a good look at this drumhead; you're going to see a lot of it in the near future. Remo recently celebrated their 25th anniversary with the introduction of what may be the most significant drum hardware breakthrough since the original plastic head. About eighteen months ago, the company's research and design crew "accidentally" discovered a way to shrink the plastic film on a head so it becomes permanently tight. (The company is keeping the "accident" a secret for now; the process is still patent pending.)

This discovery suggests some exciting practical applications, and Remo has hit on the first with their new Pre-Tuned System heads, or PTS for short. PTS heads need no further tensioning, just a method of mounting them on a drum. In eliminating the tension screws, lugs and counterhoops drums have always had, PTS means the drum shell itself can be less massive. Less hardware and wood also mean the drum can sound good and still be less expensive. Remo's first move, then, was to offer PTS drums to the student and amateur market, with a PTS snare drum retailing for $45 and a five-piece kit going for under $400.

But the PTS concept presents some interesting possibilities for the working drummer as well. Pre-tuned heads can be easily used on conventional drums where the basic tuning of the head can then be adjusted. Clamps that hook onto the hoop of the head, with the traditional tension rod securing it, are available for about a quarter apiece. Four or five are plenty for a snare drum. PTS heads are also priced the same as popular replacement heads. They feel a bit stiffer to the touch, but the familiar sound is there and they are durable (even resilient).

It is a bit too early to accurately gauge the impact of Remo's PTS heads. Remo spokesmen admit they are still learning about the PTS process themselves. Drummers who want to use PTS heads will, at least for the time being, find their options somewhat limited. Three relative "tonal variations" (dark, mellow and bright) are offered but, while the technology is there, no plans have been made to produce PTS heads in any other weights or types than Ambassador coated. Presently, PTS heads are available in 12-, 13-, 14-, 16- and 22-inch sizes, although Remo intends to expand to marching percussion which will necessitate a full range of sizes.

Other drum companies are already looking at ways of redesigning drums to accommodate PTS. Others may be forced to adapt to it. But one thing is certain—the pre-tuned drum age has arrived. Ⓜ

TURBOSOUND TMS3

High Watts, Lightweight

BY MARC SILAG

I remember when the band's P.A. at the high school dance or frat party consisted of a 4-channel mixer (Bogen, of course) and two Atlas "Bells"—basket-shaped tan-painted metal speakers mounted atop two heavy-duty stands that also doubled as volleyball net supports. Investing in such a P.A. was a real commitment for the band, but when they really got serious they went out and purchased a pair of Altec A-7s. Well, the days of lightweight P.A.s are back, though there's no room for lightweight sound. People are accustomed to hearing quality sound these days—in concert halls or Holiday Inn lounges. Turbosound, a European-based audio development and manufacturing firm, is spearheading their entry into the Stateside marketplace with the Turbosound TMS3 loudspeaker system, a full-range modular loudspeaker that packs a huge sound into a small, relatively lightweight enclosure.

Standing a mere 33 inches high by 40 inches wide and 23 inches deep, the TMS3 is a three-way (tri-amped) system capable of handling 800 watts RMS. Emphasizing high efficiency in components through an interesting amalgam of audio theory, design and application, the TMS3 appears to be just what a number of professional and semi-professional performing artists have been looking for and listening for.

The low-end of the system places two 15-inch drivers under high air pressure on both sides of the cone for decreased distortion and increased clarity of the low frequencies. The mid-range utilizes a "revolutionary" coupling device on two 10-inch Turbosound drivers effecting increased efficiency over the mid-range spectrum. Turbosound's Allen Wick claims a remarkable four-octave range in this bandwidth, which is wider than usual, by virtue of the combination of driver, enclosure and the patented coupler, decreasing residual distortion in the process.

High-frequency freaks will be pleased to know that Turbosound has drafted the highly acclaimed North West Audio 340 horn coupled with a TAD 4001 2-inch high-frequency driver. The combination of these components in this design configuration provides smooth dispersion throughout the spectrum while remaining uncolored throughout the easily tainted mid-range and high-end.

The system is dependent on an active electronic crossover, but phase and frequency alignment are integral to the TMS3 design. Recommended crossover points are 250 Hz and 3,700 Hz on the high end; this adds considerably to the performance characteristics of the 4001, which heretofore had been accepted as superlative in its category.

The TMS3 is the nucleus for the system used at the Dr. Pepper Festival—New York's annual summer series of pop and rock concerts—and when one considers that 10,000 people are hearing so much for a mere eight cabinets per side, then the TMS3 must be considered high-end audio. Yet its small size and weight (less than 300 pounds per cabinet) make it easily transportable. Touring groups like the system for this reason. One can easily see how transportation costs can be cut in light of the fact that Jackson Browne's recent European tour carried thirty-two TMS3 cabinets on the "dance floor" of one semi, to cover venues of up to 20,000 seats. At $3,500 per cabinet, they're not cheap. But you get what you pay for. (Contact Turbosound Inc. at 611 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012.) Ⓜ

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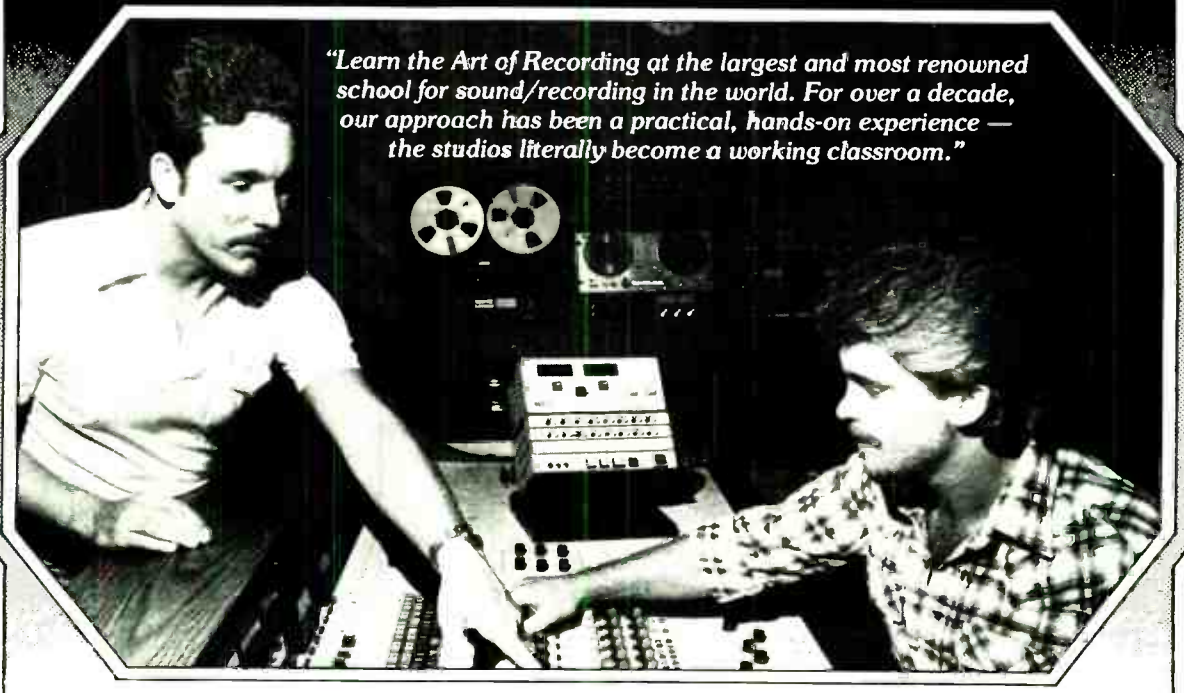

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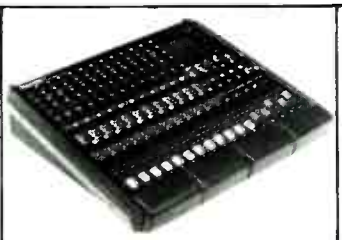
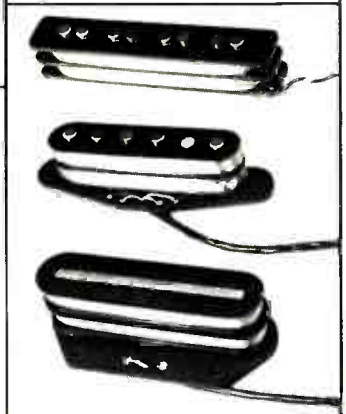
Delta Lab proudly announces the Effectron, designed to offer every musician an ultra low cost natural-sounding digital delay system. Shown is the ADM 256, with a suggested retail of $499, a full band-width, wide dynamic range, special effects digital delay processor that features flanging, doubling, chorusing and echo effects with up to 256 milliseconds of high performance delay. The ADM 1024 ($699) is identical except it provides over a full second of high performance delay. Delta Lab, 27 Industrial Avenue, Chelmsford, MA 01824. (617) 256-9034.

Korg proudly announces the new EPS-1 Piano Plus Strings Keyboard, a 76-note, 6½ octave, dynamic action keyboard instrument with outstanding piano voicings, plus exciting string layering effects in one portable compact package. The EPS-1 features six different piano voices, selected by LED pushbutton switching. Voicings cover a wide range, from rich acoustic pianos to mellow electric piano, vibraphone and funky "Clav" sounds. Features include: keyboard dynamics controls, 3-band equalizer, overtone boost control, tremolo and chorus effects with variable speed and intensity. The separately articulated string section features touch-sensitive string attack time, making the EPS-1 the first low cost instrument to offer dynamic articulation of strings. Playing softly produces gently swelling strings, while playing loudly produces sharp, forceful string attacks. Unicord, 89 Frost Street, Westbury, NY 11590. (516) 333-9100.



Panasonic Professional Audio Division has introduced two new Ramsa audio mixing consoles, models WR-8112 and WR-8118. Both models are compact, high performance professional mixing consoles designed for production, sound reinforcement, and multi-track recording applications. WR-8112 provides 12 inputs, while WR-8118 provides 18 inputs. Both have four group, one mono and two master outputs.

These units have been engineered to incorporate some of the latest technology, with such features as a 3-band equalizer with switchable frequencies on high and low and sweepable midrange. Both models offer access jacks on each input as well as the group output, L&R master and mono outputs. There is stereo tape monitoring on each channel, switchable to stereo effects sends. Ramsa, 50 Meadowlands Parkway, Secaucus, NJ 07094. (201) 348-7000.



Seymour Duncan introduces the Stack, a breakthrough noise canceling design for Stratocaster, Telecaster and Jazz Bass pickups. The new Stack series updates the famous single coil sounds by eliminating the noise. Each model has two versions: the Classic, which faithfully reproduces the vintage tonal and output qualities, and the Hot version which has increased output, a more effective sustain and tonal response without being muddy.

All models are recommended for studio and stage work and come with a special cover, a 4-conductor lead wire for optimum wiring combinations and a wiring diagram. Seymour Duncan, Box 4746, Santa Barbara, CA 93103. (805) 963-0676.

La Voz Corp. recently announced the new Hemke Premium reed for alto saxophone. La Voz asked Dr. Frederick L. Hemke, the distinguished saxophone virtuoso, to help design this new addition to its Premium line of reeds. Designed for the artist who prefers a filed reed, the Premium alto sax reed boasts consistent minimum thickness, a sanded vamp and a completely new cut to give the reed a smoother feel, plus added response and consistency. Suggested retail price of a box of five of Frederick L. Hemke saxophone Premium reeds is $6.80. La Voz Corp., P.O. Box 487, Sun Valley, CA 91352.

The **Cerwin Vega** model V-23 is a compact 3-way vocal column designed for a variety of portable applications. The V-23 is small enough to blend easily into a tight stage layout, making it ideal for vocal monitoring as well as P.A. applications. The unit has a wideband, low-distortion sound with good pattern control, is extremely versatile and is an excellent starter system for later expansion.

Unlike the majority of column systems which use a single type of driver, the V-23 is a 3-way system incorporating the 12" linear, high-efficiency ER122, a single MF-81 8" cone midrange covering a decade of response, and phenolic dome compression driver and horn. The use of differing types of drivers in the classic column format results in significant performance advantages over simple line sources. Cerwin Vega, 12250 Montague Street, Arleta, CA 91331. (213) 896-0777.

UN-REAL DRUMS

The Oberheim DMX Programmable Digital Drum Machine is the best sounding and most versatile percussion unit available anywhere. This new breed of instrument for composers and performers has capabilities that place it light years beyond the ordinary rhythm box, yet the DMX is easy to use, and easy to play.

To begin with, all 24 of the sounds on the DMX are digitally recorded, and stored in digital memory chips. Bass drum, snare, toms, hi-hat, cymbals and percussion are actual instruments. Bass and snare have three programmable dynamic levels so your accents mean something. You have six toms, two ride cymbals plus a crash cymbal, and a percussion section that includes tambourine, shaker, rim shot, and handclaps.

Not only does the DMX sound like a drummer, it can play things that up to now, only a real drummer could play; like rolls, flams, odd time signatures, uneven phrases, changing tempos, or even off the beat.

The DMX can store and recall up to 100 different rhythms. Using these rhythms, you can compose up to 50 different songs. Include intro, breaks, variations of rhythms, tempo changes, and ending; the DMX will remember it all.

Two separate recording modes make programming the DMX easy. In real-time mode, a programmable metronome and an intelligent display make it easy to punch in your own great rhythms. The timing can be quantized to automatically correct your playing to the nearest beat. In single-step mode, you can "stop the clock," and play in your rhythms one note at a time.

The DMX's comprehensive editing capability makes it easy to create compositions: Change a sequence in a song, merge sequences together, and even erase individual notes. The Drum Machine will sync to its companion DSX Digital Polyphonic Sequencer and to audio or videotape, as well as most other sequencers.

Any extra goodies? The tempo of each sequence is programmable, so you can get precise, repeatable tempo changes. Trigger and Control Voltage inputs for all voices let you control and modulate the drums from external sources (like footpedals, sequencers, and envelope followers).

Additional Features

- Battery backup of memory
- Cassette interface for storing sequences
- All drums tuneable in pitch +/− half octave
- Built-in 9 input stereo mixer plus individual outputs
- Programmable crystal-controlled metronome
- Programmable time signature
- Sync-to-tape for overdubs
- Modular plug-in voices are interchangeable
- Footswitch inputs for live performance control

Notice To Oberheim Customers

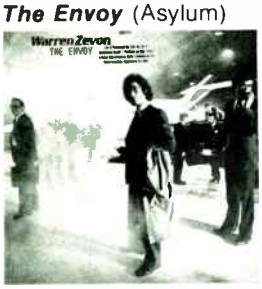
Oberheim has an ongoing program to improve and update its product line. Many of these improvements are retro-fitable, some being at no charge to the user. The only catch is we need your warranty card on file in order to reach you! To keep abreast of the latest changes, send in your warranty card!

Some things are better than others.

OBERHEIM ELECTRONICS, INC.
2250 So. Barrington Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90064

RECORD REVIEWS

Warren Zevon
The Envoy (Asylum)



The Envoy, Warren Zevon's latest and best album, finds the songwriter overcoming the dichotomy between the self-conscious macho and self-conscious irony that limited much of his earlier work.

The songs that earned Zevon the most notoriety ranged from straight novelty to tales of thieves, mercenaries and self-indulgent burn-outs. Sure-fire props like guns, wars and exotic locales beefed up songs whose substance might otherwise have been questioned. Younger listeners could accept Zevon's vision as tough, while older listeners could chuckle that it was ironic. Yet for all his skill and substantial entertainment value, much of Zevon's work was safe. Walking the detached line between commitment and satire gave the writer and his listeners a convenient excuse for maintaining distance from the characters and situations.

With *The Envoy* he has resolved his dichotomy by, apparently, becoming more comfortable with himself. Suddenly Zevon is speaking in the voice of life-size and intelligent characters; half-observers, half-participants, they are mostly strong men recognizing and struggling with their own flaws. Zevon's characters are no longer hip deep in the heart of darkness. They are the men who have looked in from outside and come away to tell of the dark paths they chose not to follow.

"Charlie's Medicine" is the album's finest song and the best example of Zevon's new restraint. The story is of a cleaned-up drug user who hears that his former dealer has been murdered. The emotional complexity of his reaction drags up old guilt. The singer and the dealer were once mutual dependents, and the pervasive, unspoken suggestion is that but for strength of will, the singer might have ended as Charlie did. "Charlie's Medicine" has a depth of moral vision that the lovely "Carmelita" with its heroin addict narrator, seems in retrospect to have lacked. In building characters who inspire admiration rather than sympathy, Zevon has purged his work of condescension. Zevon breaks down the wall between himself and his characters—and thus between himself and his listeners—that was maintained by his past irony.

This new empathy has diminished neither his wit nor his imagination. The diplomat hero of the title song (Philip Habib as a rock 'n' roll metaphor?) is simply closer to life than the mercenaries of "Jungle Work" or "Roland The Headless Thompson Gunner." The embezzler of "The Overdraft" (Thomas McGuane as a rock 'n' roll songwriter?) is more life-size than Jesse James.

Zevon has enforced his new lyrical restraint with a greater attention to his musical composition. The music is no longer simply embellishment for the words; Zevon has learned to trust his composition to fill in moods left opened by more compact lyrics. On half these songs we remember the melody more than the imagery, and both "Looking For The Next Best Thing" and "Let Nothing Come Between You" are unaffected pop tunes in which Zevon reminds us that even smart guys can be happy. The enthusiasm of the young lover proclaiming, "Got the license, got the ring/Got back the blood test and everything" manages to be witty *and* sincere.

The only problem with the music here is some rather intrusive effects that suggest Warren and guitarist coproducer Waddy Wachtel may have spent a little too much time in the studio searching for unusual *sounds*. The migraine synth part on "Ain't That Pretty At All" can be excused on the grounds it fits the migraine mood of the piece, but the mosquito guitar on "The Overdraft" should have been left buried in the tomb of "Pictures Of Matchstick Men." Still, these are minor complaints. With *The Envoy*, Warren Zevon has made a leap comparable to a talented young novelist who finds his own voice after a period of imitation and affectation. Once the wall is broken down it can never be raised again. — *Bill Flanagan*

ABC
The Lexicon Of Love (Mercury)

What *is* this? Some awesome new liver-gnarling strain of Angloid perversity? Have they lost their *minds* over there? White Motown? From Sheffield? Synthesizers *and* strings? AOR opera?

ABC's debut is, among other things—among *many* other things—probably the most flipped-out disco album of the 80s to date. Like Spandau Ballet, Haircut 100 and the rest of the current British party squad, ABC has fallen head-first into the funkpot. But what were they *on* when they toppled in? "Show Me," the opening track here, starts out like a pit warm-up for *Jesus Christ Superstar*—you can almost picture chorus boys cat-stepping across a glitz-blitzed stage in some godforsaken Tahoe of the soul. But then the rhythm section cranks up the oomph quotient, and Martin Fry's vividly tormented vocals slide in and ...well, it's all several degrees to the south of such ice kings as Ultravox and Visage, but still not the sort of thing you want to snuggle right up to.

All ten tracks (one clocks in at 58 seconds) are rampantly inventive—there's so much going on, it leaves you a little breathless. On first listen, you might notice echoes of the Spands ("Tears Are Not Enough") and fellow Sheffieldians the Human League ("The Look Of Love"—although the Humes wouldn't have countenanced that oopy string figure arcing over the chorus). On second hearing, you might find yourself preoccupied by Fry's goofy vocal mannerisms—his Sinatra-cum-Bowie croon of "zoobie doobie doo doo doo" in "Date Stamp," or his corny woe-begone-loveman recitative in "The Look Of Love" (his friends, they all tell him: "Marty, maybe one day you'll find true love..."). And then, after repeated spins through *The Lexicon Of Love*, all the weird stuff'll start sinking in: the rather grand Gene Pitney-Phil Spector reunion on "All Of

My Heart," the unabashed power chords and general harmonic mayhem of "4 Ever 2 Gether," the shimmery little Keith Richards guitar figure going into "Date Stamp." Deeply weird.

All of this is taken completely over the top by producer Trevor Horn—ex-Buggles, ex-Yes, lately atraipse in Appalachia with born-again folkie Malcolm McLaren—who has laid on every possible aural overload: your basic red-hot bass 'n' drum rampage goosed up with surging strings (on the winningly berserk "Valentine's Day"), dense, sparkling keyboards (on the remarkable "Poison Arrow"), basso mutterings and warbling falsettos, and, at the end of "All Of My Heart," an inscrutable, timbre-shifting instrumental tag that's tossed off like a used boutonniere.

ABC has a lot of interesting bases covered. Their music abounds with fresh ideas, and it's couched in a studio sound that's "big" enough to be commercially acceptable to U.S. radio. The disco underpinnings of it all may put some rock loyalists off—the record doesn't begin to make much sense until you Turn It Up, but that's not to say it's a rock 'n' roll album. And while Fry and company are certainly inventive songsmiths, ABC's total embrace of the rather shallowly rooted dance-pop/sweet R&B tradition sometimes seems a mere formless affectation. Fry's high-pitched, wound-up vocals are a bit of a problem, too: although strikingly executed, they lack the compelling tonal variety and the warped vibrato of David Bowie, obviously one of Fry's subliminal models. There's a peculiar lack of effect; as a unit, ABC comes across as a face without a brain, or a heart—bright, and unremittingly witty, but lacking an emotional center. The songs are really something, though—these guys are no flash in the pan—and on its own terms, *The Lexicon Of Love* is very nearly perfect. But perfect *what*? You tell me, and I'll break the bad news to George Clinton. — *Kurt Loder*

Steve Winwood
Talking Back To The Night (Island)
Paul Carrack
Suburban Voodoo (Epic)

Under ideal circumstances, the combination of keyboard player, songwriter and singer should produce a special insight into what the shape of the sound will be, from start to finish. But his or her willingness to permit external thinking (producers, musicians, engineers) into the song's final mix is often the easiest way to differentiate between these multi-talented musical types.

For Paul Carrack and Steve Winwood, two Anglo soul shouter/keyboardists mainly separated by a musical generation, the issue of musical interaction with the "outside world" becomes crucial. Carrack has paid dues with Ace, Roxy Music and, more recently, Squeeze—in fact, his languid, blue-eyed R&B vocals have graced international chart-toppers like "How Long" and "Tempted." But he's smart enough to know that he needs Nick Lowe's considerable talents as a producer and songwriting collaborator to really distinguish his first solo album, *Suburban Voodoo*, from the blur of new product flooding the marketplace.

If Lowe was lax on his own recently-released solo LP, *Nick The Nife*, he's taken the energy ostensibly saved on that one and put it into *Suburban Voodoo*. The sound is consistently excellent, combining a crisp, pop feel with natural-sounding rhythm tracks that give each song more propulsive motion. On less-than-great material like Neil Hubbard's "I Found Love" or Carter-Lowe's "I'm In Love," Lowe uses just enough studio guile in the background to keep the listener interested.

And Carrack has the tools. His smooth, Motown-influenced vocal delivery is a bit limited but always under control. He has mastered all of the rock and R&B conventions on piano and organ and takes no great pleasure in soloing for its own sake. On his best tunes—"Lesson In Love," "A Little Unkind" and "Call Me Tonight" (cowritten with Alan Spenner)—he somehow transforms nearly cliched hooks into resurgent, uptempo pop ride-outs that have guaranteed FM airplay written all over them.

Even given his vast body of work and exceptional vocal and instrumental gifts, Steve Winwood's decision to continue the format of playing all of the instruments and producing himself on *Talking Back To The Night* ultimately works against him. His technical abilities on piano, organ, synthesizers, guitar, bass and drums range from superior to stiffly adequate. Which isn't the point. In the history of do-it-all-yourself rock recordings, only Stevie Wonder has transcended the lifeless, monochromatic sound which invariably results from this approach. The magical spark produced by the chemical reaction of different musical personalities relative to a given theme is irrevocably lost with this type of record, which means that any substandard song will become even less distinguishable.

Winwood is so good at what he does that outstanding tracks like the haunting title tune, an irresistibly funky "Help Me Angel" or the world-weary but elegant "Still In The Game" evoke a singular presence miles beyond annoying problems like still-life instrumentation. Less appealing are "Big Girls Walk Away," "It Was Happiness" and "While There's A Candle Burning"—here, the cloying blandness of the songs heightens the sepulchral coldness of Winwood's onanistic instrumentation. And these outnumber the memorable moments just enough that the final impression left by *Talking Back To The Night* is one of Winwood as the gifted but jaded recluse, occasionally breaking through an icy veil of insulated sound to reach out to us. Touring might serve to remind him that playing with other people can be a more effective means of communicating an idea or a mood. — *J.C. Costa*

Aretha Franklin
Jump To It (Arista)
Donna Summer
Donna Summer (Geffen)

Two high-powered and very successful artist/producers have turned their considerable talents toward rejuvenating two former superstars, and if Luther Vandross and Quincy Jones could do for every woman what they've done for Aretha Franklin and Donna Summer, Oil of Olay would quickly be out of business.

Luther Vandross's production of Aretha, *Jump To It*, is a labor of love, his tribute to Lady Soul. He brings all the passionate freshness of his *Never Too Much* LP, as well as superhero bassist Marcus Miller and a terrific sense of backup vocals (Luther, after all, came up as a backup vocalist). His obvious affection for Aretha's chatty gospel looseness makes him craft the songs in her image, with lots of open space for her to rap, scat and gallop. "Ree" wastes no time in taking advantage of the situation; she unpacks the same mojo magic that every producer since Jerry Wexler has tried to get from her and failed (although Aretha's two other Arista albums show glimpses of success).

The title cut and hit single, "Jump To It," is spare, snappy and supple, with a tantalizing turn-the-beat-around lope (drummer Yogi Horton really earns his pay, folks). Luther adds his charismatic voice on his "Love Me Right" but is not afraid to bring on the guest stars: Aretha shines in an outstanding doo-wop vocal with Levi Stubbs and the rest of the Four Tops, "I Wanna Make It Up To You" (which she wrote and arranged).

Other high-quality Lutherisms include "If She Don't Want Your Lovin'" and "(It's Just) Your Love," a brooding, expanding Latiny gem with a George Duke walk-on. But strap down your furniture when Aretha starts messing around with the Isleys' "It's Your Thing." It's an incendiary send-up that triumphantly returns Lady Soul as a major

power on the 1982 funk-soul map. God bless Luther Vandross for making it so!

In any season but this one, such an accomplishment would dwarf the R&B topography, but what Quincy has done for *Donna Summer* surpassses even Luther's Olympian efforts. Rather than molding the LP around Donna, he has written a whole new work which she adapts and rises to. This is really the successor to Quincy's *Dude* (*The Dame*?) with a leading lady, and the compositional quality reflects that. Every song (save one) is a masterpiece in miniature, with big-name cast, high-tech effects (Quincy has more fun with synthesizer bass than most) and an astonishing variety of material.

The clever N.R.A.-approved lyrics to the hit "Love Is In Control (Finger On The Trigger)" are the centerpiece for a playful overlay of dancefloor textures. A Harvey Mason-led fife and drum corps adds a touch of irony to the chunky street-corner optimism of "Livin' In America," while a wonderful baroque keyboard invention ornaments the James Ingram-Donna duet vehicle, "Mystery Of Love." Donna even does a convincing Linda Ronstadt and a sensational torch rendition of Billy Strayhorn's sophisticated "Lush Life."

But the real interest in *Donna Summer* will be sparked by two breathtaking tracks. The first is a new Bruce Springsteen tune, "Protection," which is done totally authentically, down to Ernie Watts's imitation of Clarence Clemons (having Springsteen and Roy Bittan play on the session also helped). Donna sings the song as the Boss would've, with a surprising toughness and subtlety, and real commitment. This is *not* a token crossover effort. The other groundbreaker is Vangelis and Jon Anderson's "State Of Independence," an unabashed Third World anthem which features the legendary "superchoir" (shown last month on these pages). Donna's slippery, syncopated phrasing builds seductively over a two-chord bolero, inspired by the power and complexity of the choral singing and climaxing in massive cinematic chaos. A cut (and an album) not to be missed; no one will ever call Donna Summer "just a disco singer" again. — *Jock Baird*

The Go-Go's
Vacation (I.R.S.)

On their second album, the Go-Go's prove that they're not a flash in the pan, that they can write and play as well as any band, and that they're eager for another trip to the top of the charts. More power to 'em, say I. But

BEWARE SUBURBAN VOODOO!

Paul Carrack casts a spell with his solo debut, "Suburban Voodoo." He's the man whose song "How Long (Has This Been Going On)" went all the way to #1 for Ace and whose hot, soulful voice has been haunting the airwaves again with "Tempted," the big hit for Squeeze.

"Suburban Voodoo" is a potent combination of musical talent. Besides Carrack, whose vocal and keyboard prowess were powerful forces for Squeeze, the album is produced by Nick Lowe, with songs co-written by Lowe, Carlene Carter, Squeeze colleagues Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook, as well as Roxy Music participants Neil Hubbard and Alan Spenner.

Who needs "Suburban Voodoo"? You do! You do! But be forewarned—"Suburban Voodoo" may bring new life to your living room.

Catch the magic of Paul Carrack in concert:

9/ 9	Worcester, MA	9/15	Philadelphia, PA	9/20	New Haven, CT
9/10	Boston, MA	9/16	Passaic, NJ	9/22	New York, NY
9/11	Hampton Beach, NH	9/17	Asbury Park, NJ	9/25	Mount Vernon, NY
9/12	Poughkeepsie, NY	9/18	Waterbury, CT	9/26	Washington, D.C.

PAUL CARRACK'S "SUBURBAN VOODOO." BE WARY OF IT!
ON EPIC RECORDS AND TAPES.

Produced by Nick Lowe at Rockfield Studios and Mixed at E[illegible] Recorded live at Rivers Global Records Productions Limited

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even though this album is more fun than a sock hop without chaperones, it still leaves doubts as to whether the Go-Go's aren't really as shallow as they pretend to be.

First, the good stuff. The title track, which should be a hit single by the time you read this, is a terrific example of how the band has grown. Belinda Carlisle's vocals have taken on a toughness commensurate with the lyric's sentiment, and the band's drive train roars as if turbo-charged. In short, the Go-Go's sound like a *rock* band, which is just what the song needs to rise above the cliché it wants to trash.

In fact, most of the tricks the Go-Go's attempt come off wonderfully well. "I Think It's Me" is a solid 60s-style pop-rocker of the type Blondie used to reinvent, while "Beatnik Beach" is the genre-mash its title implies. Again, a large portion of the credit goes to Carlisle's singing, which is far more assured and dynamic, but it's also worth noting how solid the writing has become, with Charlotte Caffey and Carlisle producing the best songs overall.

Still, I worry. Instrumentally, Gina Schock's drumming clearly dominates the band, which is fine except that the guitars should be a little closer to narrowing the gap. The inclusion of "Cool Jerk" is a great idea, since it seems to be a tailor-made cover, but they needn't have included the band introductions from the live show and it bothers me that nobody noticed how silly they sound without the visuals. And while the vocals are otherwise outstanding, it bugs me that "This Old Feeling" is set in a key that makes Carlisle sound like a twelve-year-old boy by the end.

Of course, some of that is nit-picking. *Vacation* is a good album. The only thing that bothers me is that it isn't a *great* album. Because, girl-group jokes to the contrary, there's a major rock 'n' roll band lurking deep within the Go-Go's. Let's hope it breaks out soon. — *J.D. Considine*

The Henry Threadgill Sextet

When Was That? (About Time)

Here, finally, is the first album from one of the finest new bands in the music. It's easily one of the strongest entries of the year, and the other day its distributor told me he expects it to do real well and sell about 3,000 copies, and maybe I'm stupid or naive but I got all upset thinking about the substanceless drivel that routinely sells 50,000 and is likely thought a failure for having done so, so I went out and strangled a few sheep and now I feel all better and I'm ready to write the review. Sure I am.

Even people relatively familiar with Air, even the happy few acquainted with the deleted thrills of *X-75*, may not be ready for the strength of Henry Threadgill's writing for this band, or for the way it's wedded to the three invincible voices that make up the front line. Threadgill, trombonist Craig Harris and cornetist Olu Dara get to live out some new convolutions of the Ellington paradox: the tighter they play as section, the more powerfully individuated they become, and the more faithfully they play the compositions, the more completely the music becomes their own. Nor, fearful reader, is that music very forbidding. It's what used to be called jazz, and it has at most the satisfying bitterness of strong coffee. Accessibility without insult, contemporaneity without squeals. There are three dirge-like ballads, a terrific hallelujah tune in rapid march time, and another fast piece called "10 to 1" that is the album's only serious flaw: Threadgill has stronger pieces in the band's book than this one, and I wished he'd used one of them.

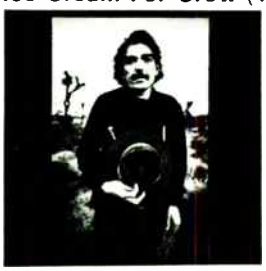
The rhythm section is nearly as unusual as the front line. Fred Hopkins is on bass, and augmented by Brian Smith on piccolo bass, they add to the music's already impressive solidity. Threadgill used two drummers for the date, Pheeroan Ak Laff and John Betsch, and even this difficult gambit comes off without the clutter, overplay and band-wide deafness that usually ensues. If you counted, you'll notice that this sextet has seven pieces, but never mind. If any sin-

gle instrumentalist comes off best, it's probably Olu Dara, who has never been this well recorded—the sonics throughout are state-of-the-art—and whom Threadgill's themes suit to a T. Dara has needed an adequate forum for some time, and this is it.

I could quibble about Threadgill spending too much time on the flute and kvetch that on the longest ballad he weakens the ensemble by playing clarinet instead of the tenor saxophone he favored in live performance, but the ballads are worth the price of two albums anyway, the alto solo on the title tune is a gem, and "Soft Suicide At The Baths" rewrites "White Christmas" for the 80s. Threadgill's authorial voice continues to gain authority, and this is some of the strongest new jazz composing of the past ten years. What do you say 10,000 or so of us get together and give Yale Evelev a big surprise. He works at New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012, and that's where you get the album if you can't find it in your favorite store. Go get 'em. — *Rafi Zabor*

Captain Beefheart & the Magic Band

Ice Cream For Crow (Virgin)



It happens every two or three years. Captain Beefheart, easily rock's most abused underdog after fifteen years of beating his head against fame's door, issues another of his brilliant, confounding vinyl missives—vivid demanding documents of colliding technicolor imagery, exhausting primal rhythms divided into bizarre fractions and alien instrumental eloquence—and the critics cry "Breakthrough! Hitsville! This is the one!" The rock comics' oracle has predicted Beefheart's commercial triumph so many times it's no wonder the AOR mindslaves dismiss it as the empty bluster of a few dozen typewriting malcontents.

But just maybe this time he's really pulled it off with this album's breathless opening shot, "Ice Cream For Crow." "Turn up the speakers/Hop flop sqwack/It's a keeper," Beefheart bellows in an awesome tubercular rap over new drummer Cliff Martinez's whiplash boogie rush, roaring like a demon-possessed caller at some offworld square dance. The song's double-time crack with the polyrhythmic fragments flying off Jeff Moris Tepper and Gary Lucas's steely choogling guitars is guaranteed to liven up the platter selection at even the hippest rock disco, at once giant steps ahead of today's plague of synthetic funk records, yet still deeply rooted in its elemental John Lee Hooker

PERFORMER 500 SERIES

The DOD Performer 500 Series employs the latest technology and brings together many innovative and previously unavailable features.

Our constant research allows us to incorporate new ideas, materials and techniques in producing the best performance and finest products available.

Each Performer has a solid die cast metal case, modular design with plug-in circuit card, AC adapter included (USA models), heavy duty power connector, active switching, exceptionally long battery life and newly designed circuitry.

All Performer 500 Series effects are backed with a three-year limited factory warranty.

PHASOR 595

The DOD 595 Phasor is a six stage regeneration phase unit with up to 1080° degrees of phase shift. The DOD 595 produces all the classic phase shift effects, along with a broad spectrum of regeneration phase shifting. Three controls are provided on the DOD 595 Phasor allowing a wide range of colorful sounds.

WAH FILTER 545

The DOD Wah Filter 545 is a bandpass filter that can be swept across a portion of the audio range. The peak frequency of the 545 is determined by the level of the input, the stronger or louder the signal, the higher the wah effect. By varying playing techniques the 545 will act as a touch controlled wah—wah adding expression to all types of instruments.

DISTORTION 555

The DOD Distortion 555 delivers a wide range of useful effects from a warm tube type overdrive effect to a hard driving distortion or fuzz sound with a long sustain. The 555 can give the presence of a powerful sound without loud volumes, making the 555 a useful effect for all types of performances.

DELAY 585

The DOD Delay 585 uses the latest bucket brigade technology to electronically simulate echo and reverberation. The Delay 585 is completely electronic and requires no mechanical or moving parts, making it totally maintenance free. The Delay 585 provides continuous delay times from 60 to 300 ms (milliseconds) with a dynamic range greater than 90 db.

STEREO CHORUS 565

The DOD Stereo Chorus 565 is a time delay effect. The chorus effect of the 565 is accomplished by mixing the original voice with a delayed voice whose pitch varies slightly from the original. The DOD 565 also includes a synthesized stereo output allowing the use of two amplifiers to produce a realistic stereo presence. Because of the tonal characteristics produced by the 565, its applications are many.

FLANGER 575

The DOD Flanger 575 produces its comb filter type of effects through the use of time delay circuitry. Using short delay times, the 575 can produce a wide range of effects from regeneration flanging and chorus to quivering vibrato, and many melodic effects in between. The 575 has a dynamic range greater than 90 db with a very wide frequency response, making the 575 a natural for studio or stage.

COMPRESSOR LIMITER 525

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shuffle and Beefheart's glass-shattering Sonny Boy-oh-boy blues harp bursts. And if you think I'm just crying wolf here, note that Epic Records—which distributes Virgin—is releasing "Ice Cream For Crow" as a single (with a non-LP instrumental B-side). The dancefloor beckons.

As a whole, *Ice Cream For Crow*—Beefheart's twelfth album on his eighth label (if you include Epic and count Warner Bros. twice)—is a spirited successor in the recent *Shiny Beast* and *Doc At The Radar Station* line of *Trout Mask Replica*-rooted experiments with some bold distinguishing marks. With the exception of "Ink Mathematics" and "The Witch Doctor Life," in which his voice tumbles over the words in cracked growls, crusty croons and wizened trollish cackles, Beefheart does not so much sing here with his usual octave-defying bravado as rant, rave and rap like a poet in motion over the boiling beat cauldron of the Magic Band. He bitterly swallows the Molotov lyric cocktail of apocalyptic fear and barbed religious imagery in "The Host The Ghost The Most Holy-O" ("Why, not even a rustler'd have anything to do/With this branded bum steer world"), read in a stony monotone heavy with dread and scolding over Martinez's choppy drumming and the guitar's pleading whine. In a lighter mood is "Cardboard Cutout Sundown," a typically Beefheartian word landscape of a picture-postcard desert evening intensified by the overlapping contrast of pointed melodic stabbing and altered Western twang in the Tepper-Lucas guitars.

Which is the other thing *Ice Cream For Crow* is all about—guitars and Beefheart's inventive harmonies and voicings for the instrument. Consider Gary Lucas's solo spot "Evening Bell," an astonishing exercise (in the style of his brief *Doc* outing "Flavor Bud Living") in knuckle-cracking inversions and flamenco trills played live on a Fender Strat (the bass sound is actually the low E string tuned down to D). Then consider that Lucas transcribed the piece note-for-note from a piano study by Beefheart. That combination—piano-based note clusters and jagged electric attack—gives the Magic Band's ensemble guitar frolics a physical rock 'n' roll thrust belying the daunting complexity of Beefheart's song structures. Which is one way of saying that "The Past Is Sure Tense" and the fearsome instrumental traffic jam underneath the free verse of "Hey Garland, I Dig Your Tweed Coat" both cook with smarts.

Ice Cream For Crow does not have the expanded orchestral color of *Doc* (with its Stravinskian string synths), and at times Beefheart's poetspeak takes on the tones of a lecture-in-rhyme. But with the rockum-sockum of the title track on one hand and the harrowing guitar stutter and Beefheart's overdubbed crying-geese sax duet of "The Thousandth And

Tenth Day Of The Human Totem Pole" on the other, what you can't dance to you won't be able to ignore either. Maybe this won't sell big. But like Beefheart says, if you're gonna eat crow it might as well be ice cream. Dig right in. — *David Fricke*

Romeo Void

Benefactor (415/Columbia)

California's post - punk sweepstakes is clogged with contenders—X, the Gun Club, the Circle Jerks, the dire Dead Kennedys — but on the evidence of this second album, the real winner may well be Romeo Void. This subtly artful San Francisco quintet seems at first to be a sort of American analog of England's Siouxie & the Banshees—a resemblance that's most pronounced here on the detached but unabashedly beautiful "Flashflood." Romeo Void, however, is a more intimate and engaging group, thanks to singer Deborah Iyall's lyrical candor ("I might like you better if we slept together") and moving, quasi-mundane imagery ("You used to smile when you walked in the door...not any more"), and to the fact that each member of the band makes a substantial contribution to the songwriting. Thus, the almost subliminally hypnotic bass-and-guitar riff that animates "Never Say Never" (coproduced by the subliminally disposed Ric Ocasek —Ian Taylor produced the other eight tracks) and the abundance of aural hooks in the madly percussive, rather bent calypso called "Undercover Kept." Frank Zincavage's inventive bass, Larry Carter's fat but unoppressive drums and the seductive interplay between Peter Woods's guitar and Benjamin Bossi's saxophone—all wrapped around Iyall's imaginative vocals—make for a sound, brought off with both skill and spirit, that's as distinctive as any in contemporary pop.

Romeo Void can genuinely rock, and do on the charming "Chinatown" and their neo-funky rendition of Isaac Hayes and David Porter's "Wrap It Up" (the album's one cover, a surprisingly effective update of the venerable Stax/Volt sound). But they can also lay back without lying down: "Orange," with its glimmering guitar arpeggios, is almost lilting, and "S.O.S.," an abstract ballad, is downright dreamy—without going adrift.

Benefactor is the sort of album—rare in any era—that rewards repeated close listening. Romeo Void are clear-eyed, sometimes hard-boiled romantics with some refreshing things to say about love, and about the ever-evolving possibilities of pop structure and rock dynamics. It's the stylish stuff of future stars. — *Kurt Loder*

Crosby, Stills & Nash
Daylight Again (Atlantic)

So what did you expect? "Hello, David, Graham . . . ? This is Stephen. I'm getting kinda bored lately and I was wondering if you guys feel like doing an album? My dad's got a barn we could rehearse in. We'll each put in a few tunes. David, you ramble on; Graham, you talk issues and innocent love; I'll tell the world how all the young girls are still breaking my heart. Then we'll work up some three-part vocals and invite some guests like Art Garfunkel and Timmy Schmit and whambam, we've got ourselves a reunion album. Afterwards we can even tour if we like, but jeez, guys, we've all put on *more* than a few pounds, and David, it's not too good for our image to have you getting busted for loaded guns."

So what if it sounds like the 60s revisited? What did you expect? Especially without hardcore Neil Young to kick this angelic threesome in their creative derriere. Still, *Daylight Again is* a well-produced album. "Turn Your Back On Love" and "Southern Cross" sound like old Stills material and "Delta" is the best Crosby's done in some time. The bulk of the album contains generally *nice* songs; "Since I Met You" and "Too Much Love" would've fit comfortably on a Manassas LP, and the single, "Wasted On The Way," is custom-designed not to offend anyone between the ages of eighteen and forty-five. The weakest songs are the ones in which Graham Nash steps forward; he's a great backup vocalist, but when he's out front I feel like going down to the corner for some smokes.

Daylight Again ends with a reprise of "Find The Cost Of Freedom," but leaves us wondering whether CSN is still stuck at Kent State or is suggesting that the real cost of freedom has yet to be paid, just as real freedom is yet to be won. While I suspect the latter, there is too much evidence of nostalgia for its own sake to be sure.

So what did you expect? — *Richard Ellis*

Joe Jackson
Night And Day (A&M)

The best pop music of the 40s was imbued with jazz swing and exquisite craftsmanship. Yet the lyrics usually embraced the status quo and the atmosphere sought to resolve or pacify tension—in sharp contrast to the

rebellious, tension-provoking rock 'n' roll that soon followed. Ambitious singer/songwriters of the post-Beatles era have tried to marry the craft of those swing-pop standards with the tension of rock 'n' roll. The first to try were Californians Randy Newman, Tom Waits and Rickie Lee Jones; now Britishers Elvis Costello, Squeeze and Joe Jackson are giving it a whirl.

Jackson prepped for this marriage of forms with three albums of snarling lyrics and poppish new wave music and then last year's *Jumpin' Jive* with its respectable revivals of Cab Calloway and Louis Jordan tunes from the 40s. *Night And Day*, "written and recorded in New York City," is the wedding of these two strands. As it turns out, the witty, melodic, jazzy music is far more impressive than the overly serious lyrics.

There's not a single guitar on *Night And Day*. Instead the album is dominated instrumentally by Jackson, who never played much before, but now doubles and triples on keyboards, vibes and alto sax. Only the leader and bassist Graham Maby are left from Jackson's original quartet; the new quartet includes drummer Larry Tolfree and Latin percussionist Sue Hodopoulos. She adds invaluable barrio salsa touches to the otherwise stately ballroom music.

Jackson has always had a knack for imaginative chord progressions and memorable melodies. Working now at slower tempos, he unfurls these progressions and melodies elegantly and then gathers them into grand climaxes. A good lyricist when he was spitting out sarcastic one-liners at brisk new wave tempos, Jackson has failed to adapt to the more leisurely pace and different focus of his nine anachronistic compositions.

The paranoia lyric to "Target" and "Cancer" might work if roared through in a fast song, but can't stand the spotlight of deliberate enunciation over the drool cha-cha music. "Real Men" tackles the complex subject of changing sex roles with sufficiently complex music built atop an arresting progression. Unfortunately the lyrics stoop to a simple-minded attack on the easy target of ultra machismo. Equally simpleminded is the attack on video junkies in "TV Age."

The elegant, melancholy music evokes the longing for "A Slow Song" amid all the jibber-jabber far better than the song's verbal editorial. The record's best songs are "Another World" and "Chinatown," where Jackson's musical journey into other cultures is matched with narrative journeys into unfamiliar territory. The music throughout *Night And Day* is so consistently rich that one can only hope Jackson will pursue this direction and eventually solve his lyrical problems. — *Geoffrey Himes*

Mel Lewis & the Jazz Orchestra
Make Me Smile (Finesse/CBS)

When trumpeter Thad Jones emigrated to Denmark three years ago, he left drummer Mel Lewis at the wheel of a ghost ship. Even with the prolific Jones doing most of the writing, the Jones-Lewis Jazz Orchestra had always been primarily a soloist's band. But now its chairs were occupied by eager but derivative Berklee types not equal to the standards set by the Kneppers and the Adamses and the Harpers and the other rugged individualists who had lifted the band to poll-winning prominence shortly after its charter as a Monday night Village Vanguard rehearsal band in 1966.

The story has a happy ending, though, and like all happy endings, it points to another beginning. Lewis was able to persuade alumnus Bob Brookmeyer to come aboard again, as musical director this time, and under Brookmeyer's guidance, the Orchestra has made a smooth change of course. It's an arranger's band now, a vessel for Brookmeyer's writing, and one of the finest big bands now active.

Recorded live at the Vanguard last winter and compressing more than an hour's worth of music on one disc, *Make Me Smile* is even better than *Bob Brookmeyer Composer/Arranger*, the impres-

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sive 1980 release which first documented the Brookmeyer-Lewis working agreement. The charts Brookmeyer assigns the Orchestra here (five originals and a dour, streamlined "My Funny Valentine," stitched together in a kind of suite) are quaintly modernistic in their orientation and their appeal—they're little concertos for soloist and orchestra, reminiscent of some of the more ambitious scoring done in the late 50s and early 60s by writers associated with the Third Stream, particularly Gil Evans and George Russell. While the Orchestra can boast no major or even near-major soloists, Tom Harrell—a trumpeter with a pang of melancholy to his tone—and Dick Oates—a dry, worried-sounding saxophonist—are fine interpreters, and even a merely Coltrane-competent saxophonist like Joe Lovano sounds positively inspired with the full band reading Brookmeyer's bubbling premonitory figures behind him. The Jim McNeely-Marc Johnson-Mel Lewis rhythm section is exemplary, swinging the band with ease and assurance through the most ponderous orchestral passages.

One complaint, perhaps an irrelevant one: Brookmeyer himself—a gruff but graceful trombonist whose sound is equal parts burlap and silk and not heard as often as it might be these days—plays only on the album's closing number. I hope he features himself more prominently next time. — *Francis Davis*

Rosanne, *from pg. 22*

ing. Then you get down to your little technical stuff. You keep the mood and refine the technical aspects."

Rosanne is well aware of country's current crisis and feels that its credibility as *adult* music may be its strongest asset. "The reason I didn't like country music when I was younger," theorizes Cash, "is it's grown-up music. It's not for teenagers the way rock 'n' roll is; it's adult music. It doesn't talk about the first time you're in love or the first time you feel that passion. It talks about when you've been through a couple relationships, when you've felt it before. Country music is talking about a little farther down the line. It's still got the passion, and it's still true to life, but it doesn't have that newness.

"But the country audience has changed. These people live in the city. A lot goes on in their lives. That's why their relationships have to be sung about in a more contemporary way, a more cosmopolitan way. That's why country music is changing. And it's still going to change more. There are a lot of people who don't want it to change, who are holding onto it like it was.

"But you see, it's changing in a lot of different directions. It's changing in the direction of me and Rodney and Emmylou Harris. It's also changing in the real traditional direction that Ricky Skaggs

and George Strait are going. It's also changing in a real MOR, Las Vegasy direction, where it gets so lush it's indistinguishable from easy listening. That stuff is so wimpy; it's so mushy. There's no edge to it. It's like Velveeta. It's lyrically impotent. It's too sappy; nobody feels like that. It just glosses over the feelings. It seems to me, if you're going to disguise the feelings, you've missed the whole point of country music." M

Eno, *from pg. 69*

scoring films or do you see this as an entirely separate pursuit?

ENO: No, I don't see it as a separate pursuit. I'm really interested in scoring a good film and I've been sent many scripts but they haven't been that interesting. Unfortunately people send me scripts relating to what I was doing six years ago. So they're all films about punk rock and I'm supposed to write witty new wave tunes.

MUSICIAN: *What steps do you take to edit the input you get from the world?*

ENO: I don't see or hear that much, so I guess I do edit a lot. That sounds like an ostrich activity but concomitant with that is the fact that I really value what I do see and hear. My main input at the moment is not from music but from paintings and films and I spend a lot of time looking at both of those. The way I look at paintings is perhaps a screening process. I go into a gallery and walk through it very quickly. I don't try to look at everything but if something catches me I stay with it and just look at that. I take a little folding chair with me to the galleries. My idea right now is rather than trying to absorb everything, which is an impossible, tiring and rewardless task, to concentrate on fewer and fewer things. For the past few months I've been playing the same three records: gospel music and a record of an Arabic man singing the Koran.

MUSICIAN: *What would you like to change about your life at this point?*

ENO: I wish I had a place to live in a quiet, isolated place. It's just stupidity that I've not organized that yet. I think my little room is sort of a substitute for that. I'd also like to change the fact that I'm quite easily distracted. I like walking and I walk a lot in New York because when I'm walking I can sort of take over and think in a nice slow way. But I also have to look at everything that passes. I wish I weren't so fascinated by every little phenomenon that comes my way. M

Thompson, *from pg. 82*

into and use on the second album *What We Did On Our Holidays* (released in the U.S. as their debut LP *Fairport Convention*). And those weren't really arrangements or adaptations. They were just her singing and us rambling around in the background. That was really when the seed was planted."

The full flower was 1969's *Liege & Lief*, a collection of mostly traditional English tunes played with respect for tradition but with the kick and volume of rock. A particular highlight is the epic ballad "Tam Lin," taken at a brisk strut and featuring Thompson in a soloing dogfight with Dave Swarbrick, his guitar darting over and around the latter's violin in involved modal sax/pipes-like patterns.

"The success of that song, " Nicol hastens to add, "was more in Sandy's ability to tell a story, a difficult and lengthy story. We actually worked out that arrangement in a rather flat way. By the same token, though, if she had sung it unaccompanied, you would have to be a folk purist just to get through it."

Curiously, at this time, Thompson was playing the nimble reels and spritely turns of Fairport's altered English folk with the comparative brute force of a '55 Gibson Les Paul, having graduated from an old Hofner V3 and a Gibson 175 ("I remember seeing a guy in Moby Grape with the big Jazz model; he used to get a great sound and I thought I might get one, too"). A pre-humbucker model, his Les Paul had a fairly trebly tone for its kind. "I find that the older pickups are a bit thinner in tone. Or maybe it was something in the wiring."

But a stronger desire to emulate guitarists like James Burton, Buddy Holly and Robbie Robertson eventually led him to the Fender Stratocaster. He got his first Strat in late '69 or early '70 (compare the meaty turns on "Tam Lin" with the moody Strat sting of his classic

continued on page 114

ROCK

By J.D. Considine

SHORT TAKES

Translator

Steve Forbert

David Bowie

Josie Cotton

Translator — *Heartbeats And Triggers* (415/Columbia) "Everywhere That I'm Not" is the best unrequited love song I've heard in a long time—ingenious, obsessive, hauntingly melodic. Its moody refrain and catch-in-the-throat delivery give it the sort of impact you used to expect from Dylan. The other songs on the album aren't quite so stunning, but their potent infusion of folkie modality and a punkish jackhammer beat into a basically post-power-pop approach make them wonderfully addictive. If you're looking for a new record to wear out, this is it.

Killing Joke — *Revelations* (Editions EG/Malicious Damage) What made earlier Killing Joke great was the way the guitar was used to reinforce the wallop of the drums. What makes this album so wretched is the way the guitar has been watered down in favor of the whining vocals.

REO Speedwagon — *Good Trouble* (Epic) If *Hi InFidelity* sounded like static to you, be warned; this group is going to keep on bugging you. *Good Trouble* further establishes REO's place in rock's heartland with another helping of wholesome melody and gosh-I-love-you sentiment, which no doubt means it will be all over the airwaves through Christmas. Still, we could do worse. The sound of this one is more richly detailed than its predecessor, and makes a surprising show of the band's country roots. All in all, nearly likeable.

The Late Bronze Age — *Isles Of Langerhan* (Landslide) Imagine, if you will, Pere Ubu with a southern accent and a near-accessible sense of melody; add onto that notion the supposition that Captain Beefheart is really an R. Crumb comic strip character; mix in the better part of a bottle of Jack Daniels (just to keep you in the mood) and you've got a rough idea of what this sounds like. Well, at least the parts that don't sound like what country music would if Jimmy Rogers was an extra-terrestrial. Fun? You bet. Just don't expect to understand any of it.

David Bowie — *In Bertolt Brecht's BAAL* (RCA) Question: Are you going to spend $5.98 (or the local equivalent) for a mere eleven minutes of not very interesting ballad singing? Better question: Now that we've fallen for *Changes Two*, *Christiane F.* and this, when are we going to get a new Bowie album with something new on it?

Steve Forbert (Nemporer) Although Steve Forbert continues to show signs of becoming a better-than-average country singer, he still won't give up on the idea of being a below-average pop/rocker. Consequently, this album is a mess. Even if you restrain the desire to snigger through the metaphors of "He's Gotta Live Up To His Shoes," you can't help but wonder what the Jordanaires are doing in there, 'oooooh-ing in rich harmony behind every twisted phrase. Is it a joke? If not, why is it so funny?

Tom Robinson — *North By Northwest* (I.R.S.) The performances here are so roughly hewn that the album almost sounds like a collection of demos. While this has its advantages—for one thing, Robinson is wonderfully relaxed and expressive—it nonetheless imbues the album with a sense of unfulfilled potential. A shame, too, because the songs here are hookish and buoyantly melodic, from the bittersweet "Now Martin's Gone" to the sly, wicked "Merrily Up On High." Here's hoping we'll be hearing some of these again with a full band instead of this skeleton crew.

Billy Idol (Chrysalis) If the fashionably danceable *Don't Stop* EP struck you as disappointingly shallow, cheer up. This time 'round, Billy Idol lives up to promise most of us didn't know he had. No trendiness here; instead, Idol shows off an astonishing command of mainstream idioms ranging from the Mott-the-Hooplish bite of "Come On, Come On" to the semi-Springsteen romance of "Hot In The City." But the real surprise is how well Idol sings. Not only is his delivery smooth and resonant, but he manages some characterizations on "White Wedding" that would make Bowie envious.

Josie Cotton — *Convertible Music* (Elektra) Cheap imitation nostalgia by someone who is to the Go-Go's what Billy Falcon is to Bruce Springsteen. If you think this is what the girl group sound was all about, save your money for a Ronettes album.

The Reddings — *Steamin' Hot* (Believe In a Dream) It might have taken guts for Otis Redding's son to attempt a remake of "The Dock Of The Bay," but it took talent to pull it off, and talent is the bottom line with this group. Although their first two albums have been impressive, what sets this one apart is the confidence with which the Reddings define their own sound, a smoothly sophisticated funk similar to the Brothers Johnson but not half as slick. The key? Not the singing, which does the name proud, but Dexter Redding's punchy bass lines, which provide an unshakable foundation for each solidly grooving track.

Eddie Money — *No Control* (Columbia) Eddie Money would like to be Rod Stewart the way a Big Mac wants to be Salisbury steak—mostly 'cause he wants to be in the gravy. But Money's efforts are mostly corn, his material full of beans,

continued on page 114

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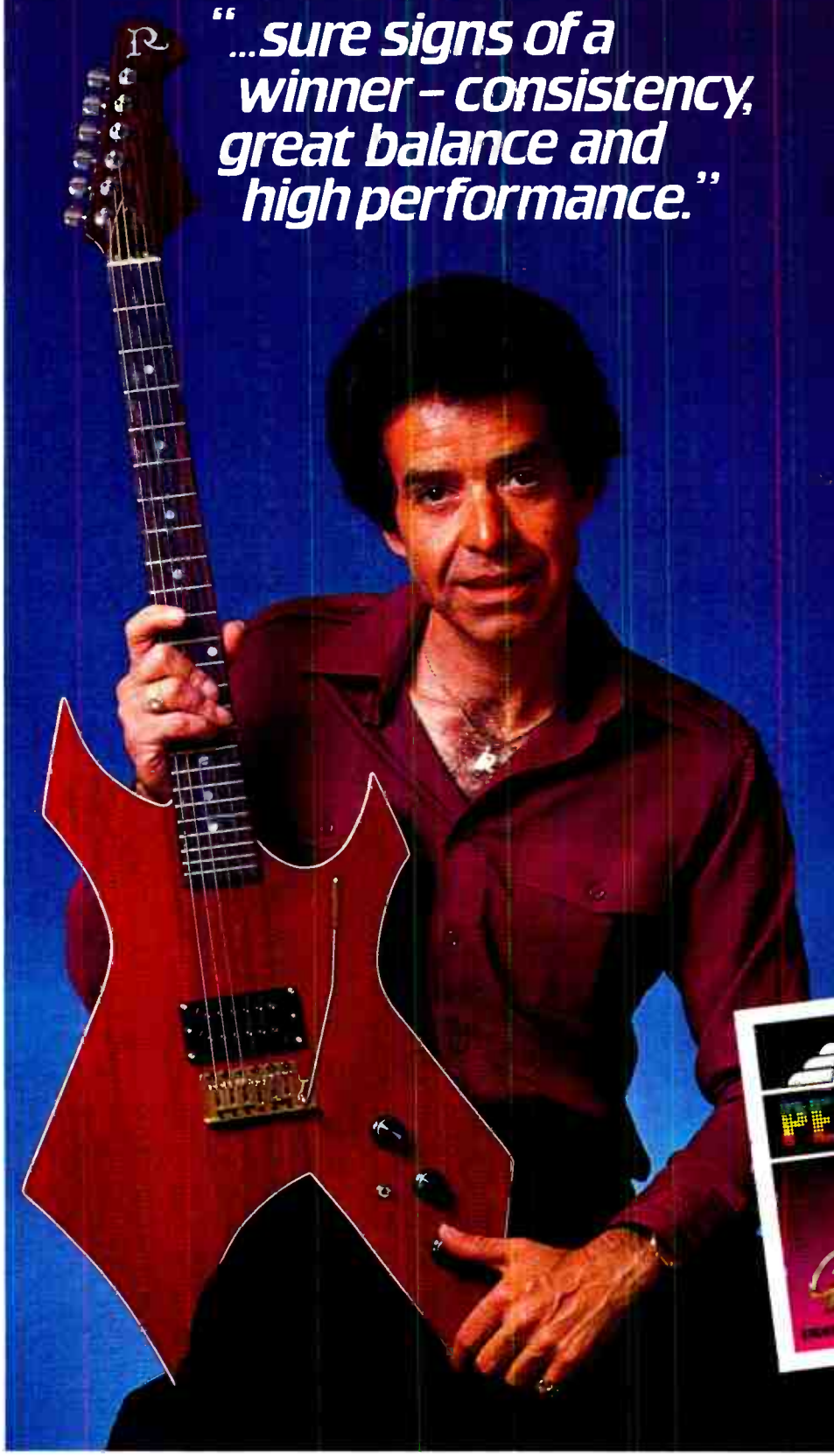

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JAZZ

SHORT TAKES

By Brian Cullman

Summer has traditionally been a time when record companies go into a holding pattern, waiting and watching; it's cheaper (and cooler) to go into the vaults than into the studios, and so summer brings on reissues, anthologies, collections, compilations and best-ofs, and this summer has produced a bumper crop, the best in memory.

First and foremost is **Ray Charles**'s *A Life In Music* (Atlantic Deluxe), a five-record set that spans his (first) tenure at Atlantic—roughly 1952 to 1960. Charles may not have invented rhythm & blues, but it's hard to imagine what rhythm & blues would have been like without him; he was able to combine the sophistication of Nat Cole and Charles Brown with the wail of Big Joe Turner and the jump-blues of T-Bone Walker and added to that mix an unerring sense of gospel (not just a sense of spirit and salvation but a yearning to throw both your sins and your strengths straight at the Lord and have done with it, the strange and simple longing to get out of this life *alive*).

Five records are barely enough to cover Ray Charles's invention and style (his years at ABC in the early 60s deserve another five albums), and this set mixes his best-loved songs ("Lonely Avenue," "What'd I Say," "Yes Indeed," "Hallelujah I Love Her So," a live version of "Drown In My Own Tears") with his most adventurous instrumentals ("Soul Meeting" with Milt Jackson, "Cosmic Ray," "The Genius After Hours") and with any number of unremembered or half-forgotten gems ("Sinner's Prayer," "What Would I Do Without You," "Losing Hand"). The talent and the spirit on these records is simply awe-inspiring, and Atlantic deserves a tip of the hat for the elegance and care that went into this set.

Other releases on Atlantic Deluxe are almost as successful. Blues guitarist **Albert King**'s *Masterworks* draws most of its strengths from his classic album *Born Under A Bad Sign*, though his recent recordings with Allen Toussaint still show a lot of fire. King's sound and style are far better known than he is; Eric Clapton lifted King's solo on "Crosscut Saw" almost verbatim for "Strange Brew" and you can hear King's pure tone in Johnny Copeland's recent work. This release may bring Albert some deserved attention.

The Coasters' *Young Blood* is the best retrospective of the great old band (and there must be half a dozen *Best Of The Coasters* and *Coasters' Greatest Hits* floating around) mostly because it carries the group through the late 60s with songs like "D.W. Washburn" and "Down Home Girl" instead of simply ending in the late 50s. These are some of the wittiest and most peculiar songs in the language, with characters like Smokey Joe, Little Egypt, Jones and Charlie Brown that have all slipped into our collective memory.

Professor Longhair's *The Last Mardi Gras* is a live two-record set recorded in 1978 by Albert "I'm better than Elvis, yessir!" Goldman. If you can ignore Goldman's fatuous and self-serving liner notes (I obviously can't), it's a pretty good record, far better than *Live On The Queen Mary*. The album was recorded at Tipitina's, the New Orleans club named for Fess's most popular song, and features the good Professor backed by a sloppy but eminently spirited band (which includes Tony Dagradi, now tenor saxophonist with Carla Bley and, under his own name responsible for two less than memorable albums on Gramavision).

Atlantic Deluxe also planned late September releases of works by **Philip Glass** (*Einstein On The Beach* and *Dance*), **Duke Ellington**, **Woody Herman** and **Lee Konitz**. Which is all welcome, but if Atlantic plans to reach into their vaults they could *really* reach in and rescue Otis Redding, Ruth Brown, Carla Thomas, Johnnie Taylor, Aretha and even little Bobby Darin. [*I thought this was supposed to be a jazz column*—Ed.] Oh, and Ornette!! *Save Ornette!* [*Whew.*]

RCA has released three two-record sets of the **Tommy Dorsey/Frank Sinatra** sessions out of some perverse obligation to be definitive. While I defy anyone to listen to all eighty-three cuts without registering Republican and hanging around debutante parties, it's actually refreshing to hear a young Sinatra crooning away without the ring-a-ding style of his 50s albums or the world-weary-I-done-it-all cynicism of his later work. What you hear is a callow young man in love with his own voice charming his way through the dreadful and the exquisite songs of the early 40s. What you also hear is the enormous debt so many rock singers owe Sinatra—not just David Bowie, but Jim Morrison (try "Crystal Ship").

PolyGram Classics has begun reissuing great classic Verve albums from the late 50s and early 60s all in their original covers. **Dizzy Gillespie**'s *Have Trumpet, Will Excite* is a buoyant, open-hearted record, more good-natured than groundbreaking. Backed by Junior Mance on piano, Les Spann on flute and guitar, Sam Jones on bass and Lex Humphries on drums, Dizzy plays that rarest of musics: a happy man's blues. **Ella Fitzgerald**'s *Ella In Hollywood* is a sassy live date from the Crescendo, a small nightclub, in 1961. Backed by the ever-tasteful Jim Hall on guitar, Lou Levy on piano, Wilfred Middlebrooks on bass and Gus Johnson on drums, Ella is in top form, gliding effortlessly through passages that would leave lesser vocalists in the dust. Sometimes it seems a little too effortless; Ella never tears a song apart the way Billie Holiday or Sarah Vaughan will, ripping through the gloss of a lyric or a melody to get to a song's dark heart. But she is a formidable stylist and often finds her way through to other and less primal secrets, the secrets of a chanteuse. *Cool Heat—Anita O'Day Sings Jimmy Giuffre Arrangements* is a bit less successful. **Anita O'Day** has a pure and graceful voice, but her mannerisms seem dated (fair enough; I don't think anyone will be able to listen to Bow Wow Wow's Annabella or X's Exene twenty-five years down the road). She may not transcend her era, but Giuffre's warm and supportive arrangements do. Giuffre is a sorely underrated saxophonist and arranger and should be heard more often.

Duke Ellington's *The Girl's Suite & The Perfume Suite* (Columbia) shows that even the Duke had his off days. Roy Eldridge's *Roy Eldridge—The Early Years* (Columbia) shows the scrappy trumpet player leading his own band as well as soloing with Teddy Wilson's orchestra, Gene Krupa and Mildred Bailey. Eldridge brings the best out of the

vocalists he supports, and the cuts with Billie Holiday, Gladys Palmer and Anita O'Day are gems, but even Roy couldn't salvage dead weight like Howard Dulany and Johnny Desmond.

No dead weight on **George Winston**'s solo piano album, *Winter Into Spring* (Windham Hill). Winston has a sure and delicate touch, reminiscent of (yes) Keith Jarrett or a more playful Steve Kuhn, though he actually approaches the keyboard more like a guitarist (John Fahey or Egberto Gismonti, say) than like a pianist, pedaling and spacing the way a guitarist might in an open tuning or with a dropped E string.

The Tango Project (Nonesuch) is a jaunty reworking of classic Argentine tangos by **William Schimmel** (accordion), **Michael Sahl** (piano) and **Stan Kurtis** (violin). It's a loving reconstruction of the tango that veers closer to the conservatory than to the dance hall, but it's still heartbreakingly beautiful and evocative, the perfect music of lost love, regret and late summer.

Baltazar Benitez, a guitarist from Uruguay whose *Latin American Music For Classic Guitar* (Nonesuch) remains one of my favorite albums, has a new record out of arrangements of *Bach/Scarlatti* (Nonesuch). Benitez has the skill and dexterity of the best classical players, but he also has a sense of swing and verve that makes his records jump; they fit perfectly next to the best work of Baden Powell, Bola Sete and Julian Bream.

Last year Rounder Records scored with the year's best blues album, Johnny Copeland's *Copeland Special* by the then-unknown Texas bluesman, and they look ready to do the same this year with **Ted Hawkins**'s *Watch Your Step*, a terrific debut by a brilliant vocalist and guitarist from Mississippi who is currently serving time in prison. Hawkins has an open, heartbreaking voice reminiscent of Sam Cooke and, occasionally, Joe Tex and has a deceptively simple rolling guitar style. The songs are as pure and as troubling as any in the language, from the pathos of "The Lost Ones" to the tender "Sorry You're Sick." While a number of cuts feature Hawkins backed by a good-natured Stax/Volt style section, most of the album is just Hawkins accompanying himself on guitar...and just by himself he shines. If he gets out of prison (which he is scheduled to this fall) and can *stay* out of prison, he can be a star.

If you've been hoping that Soft Cell or Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark would stop singing and get into fusion, then **Paul Woznicki**'s *Woz* (Ulterior) might be just the record for you. If you never thought about it, it might not be.

Claus Ogerman, the arranger responsible for turning many of Antonio Carlos Jobim's albums to soup, and ace saxophonist **Michael Brecker** team up for *Cityscape* (Warner Bros.). Ogerman's compositions and arrangements are less syrupy than usual; he comes in with some surprisingly lovely string charts, and Brecker's tone and phrasing are impeccable throughout, but the album still comes off as hip elevator music. Next stop: Main floor—men's shirts, raincoats and quiche. Ⓜ

Sonny Stitt
1924-1982

Too many deaths and now his. He was one of the most brilliant instrumentalists in jazz, and although he never developed as distinctive a stylistic signature as, say, Sonny Rollins or Dexter Gordon, on a good night he could surpass either of them in the sheer flow and abundance of his ideas, and the good nights were many. His voice on alto was Birdlike, his tenor fundamentally Lestorian, and he was his own. The last time I saw him he was soaring past a dreadful house rhythm section for chorus after chorus and then, after his solos, boozed and embittered, he hovered over the pianist, insulting him audibly every thirty-two bars. Stitt eventually swung his basilisk glare in the direction of his audience, face pitted and hair gone grey, I work places like this for people like you with this kind of rhythm and they still call me "Sonny." Edward Stitt. Not even sixty. It was cancer. Jazz has lost one of its most expert, ignored, and inspired voices. — *Rafi Zabor*

"Sloth" solo a year later). His current baby, which he found in 1972, is vintage 1958 with no customizing and played through an old Fender Deluxe amp set at half treble, half bass.

"I've always used the in-between pickup setting on my guitar. I put the five-position switch between the second and third pickup to get a hollow ring, more sustain, since I pick fairly light most of the time." Thompson's picking is actually a combination of plectrum on the lower bassy strings and finger-picking up top, coupling that rock 'n' roll thrust with the almost classical agility of his artful trills and weepy harmonic slides as on the new ballad "Just The Motion" from *Shoot Out The Lights*.

"I've always done that," he giggles. "I started out flat picking and then took classical lessons. But I was too lazy to put the pick down altogether. I don't strum much, though."

It's only appropriate that the current Richard & Linda Thompson Band, blessed with one of the most distinctive and poignant original songbooks in either English or American pop, is short on hardware hounds. Dave Mattacks, whose simple but forceful articulate drumming both with the Fairport/Thompson family and on copious sessions invites comparisons with the Band's Levon Helm, uses a spare Yamaha kit with bass drum, two toms, three cymbals and snare. Simon Nicol plays tasteful rhythm and supporting fills on a mutant mid-60s Strat with the wrong body and a crooked neck. He also owns a 12-string Rickenbacker but didn't bring it on the last tour because he doesn't have a case. For acoustic numbers, Thompson sticks with a triple O-size Martin. Only Pete Zorn, who did some time with Gerry Rafferty, can boast any choice gear—a custom-designed bass by Wall of England that in concert he plugs right into the instrument P.A., using his amp as a monitor.

Yet with such alarmingly ordinary equipment, Richard Thompson—not to mention his band—makes astonishingly expressive music, at once as personal as his religious devotion yet as wide open as his world music view. That doesn't just go for the Fairport work or his albums with Linda; there is also a rainbow collection of session appearances to consider, from the troubled balladry of the late Nick Drake to the fractured dadaist art-punk of Pere Ubu singer David Thomas's recent solo LP *The Sound Of The Sand*. But all this praise is making our subject uneasy.

"You'll have to excuse the self-deprecating Englishmen here," says Nicol, who just finished citing Thompson as his only guitar influence. "It's very hard to say to another Englishman that he's great. It's an old English tradition. Americans go on patting each other on the back all the time. We get truly embarrassed."

"Actually," Thompson announces with mock pomp, "I'm great, you're great, we're all great," gesturing across the tiny hotel room at Mattacks and Zorn, "together, I mean."

"But Richard," Nicol casts a sly wink my way, "is truly great." M

Rock Shorts, *from pg. 110*

and his band sounds as limp as a wet noodle. Pass the bicarb.

Ted Nugent — *Nugent* (Atlantic) In these ten songs of sex, violence and rock 'n' roll, the Motor City Madman sets himself up as a sort of heavy metal John Wayne, buzzing with patriotism, integrity and unfocused aggression. I think I'd find the political songs, like the anti-Iranian "Bound And Gagged," a lot funnier if I thought the Nuge was joking; as it is, they sound like our current foreign policy through Marshall amps. On the other hand, Ted Nugent is probably the only guy in the world who could do a song like "We're Gonna Rock Tonight" and make me believe it.

The O'Jays — *My Favorite Person* (Philadelphia International) Few groups try for the old Philly Soul magic these days, and fewer still pull it off with the panache of the O'Jays. Perhaps that's because the O'Jay's were one of the few groups in the Gamble & Huff stable who valued harmonies over the groove; in any case, it has been those wonderfully lush three-part vocals that have kept the group sounding fresh, and they carry the day here—particularly the ballads, with "Your Body's Here (But Your Mind's On The Other Side Of Town)" ranking among their best work ever.

continued on next page

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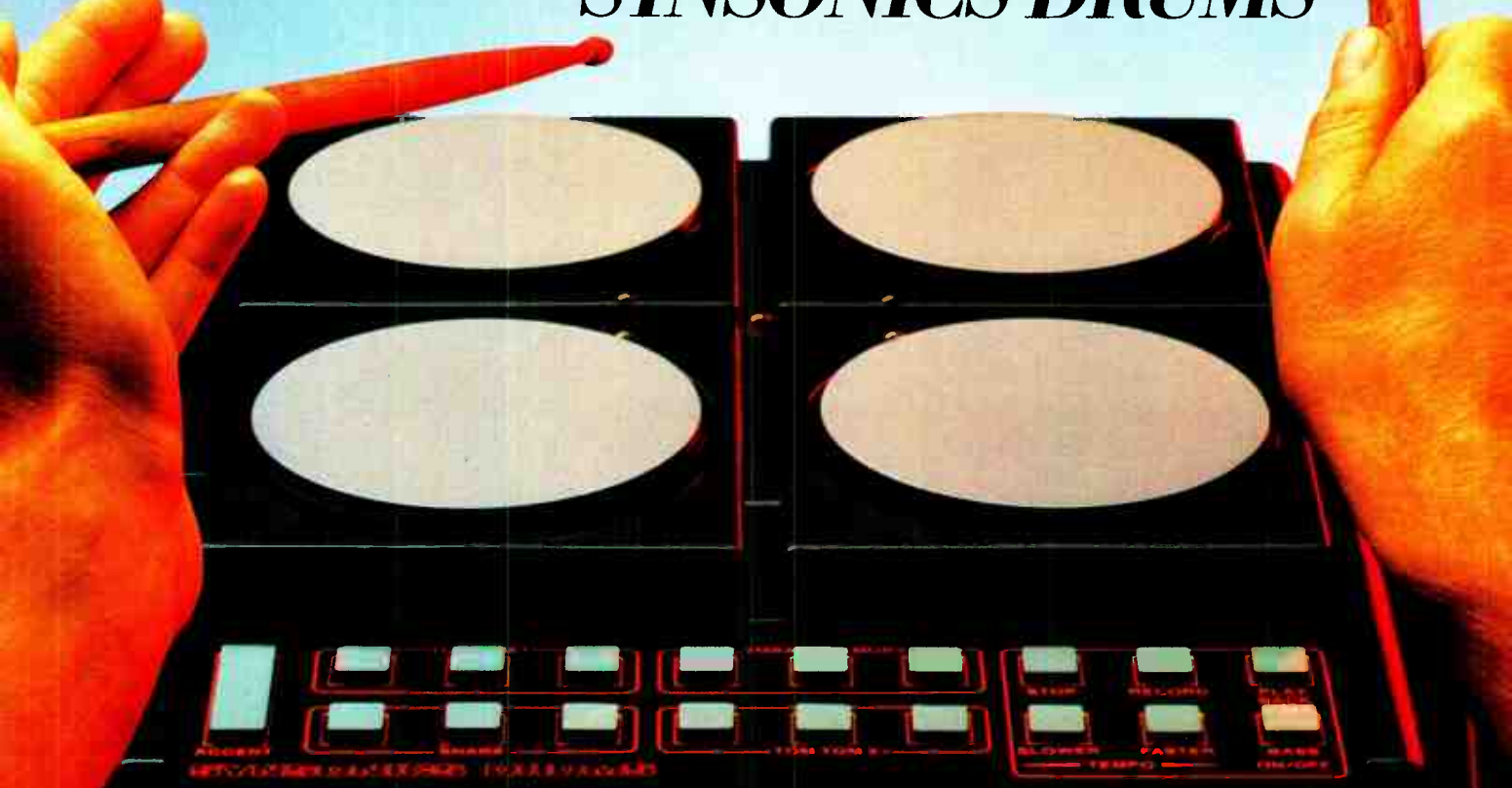

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Rory Gallagher — *Jinx* (Mercury) If life were fair, Rory Gallagher's guitar technique and bluesmanship would have long ago earned him the fame and fortune accorded Eric Clapton. As things stand, we'll just have to hope this album settles the score some. The material is melodic enough for Gallagher to sink his teeth into, but close enough to roots that his guitar doesn't lose any of its bite. In short, the sort of great blues-rock album everybody thinks they don't make anymore.

Leon Ware (Elektra) If Marvin Gaye were still writing mainstream R&B, and if we were very lucky, his next album would sound a lot like this. Of course, Ware's voice makes a lot of difference—deeper, drier, it does well in capturing the wistful desire of "Why I Came To California," but somehow misses the joy implied in "Miracles." On the whole, though *Leon Ware* is the kind of album that hangs in the air like a pleasant aroma, and always leaves you hungry for more. Ⓜ

Pawnshop Horns, *from pg. 84*

like I said, I *like* the way a tarnished horn sounds."

If there's this much trouble with trumpets, I thought, then what'll saxes bring? Saxophones are incredibly complex, delicate pieces of work. If one little key or pad is off, if one little section of

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that intricate metal latticework that connects the whole thing together is askew, you've got big problems: the whole horn could be affected by a missed connection at one of the octave keys, for example, which means a few hundred dollars in repairs, possibly.

Ralph Carney started off rather simply, trying out a Three Star metal clarinet at Stuyvesant (after the usual "buy today" rigamarole). Problems abounded: some stuck, rusted keys, a few pads rotted away, and *no reed* in the mouthpiece. Luckily, Ralph had brought his own clarinet reed, and finally got the thin silver clarinet to sound. "Not bad," he concluded, "especially at $69, but it'll need at least twice that much put into it to fix it. Metal clarinets are a rare item, though, so it could be worth it if you really want one. They sound a little brighter than wood or plastic clarinets, but they don't sound like soprano saxes either, which is what some people expect. And though metal clarinets look a lot thinner than wood or plastic ones, they're not really—their bodies are thinner, but a plastic clarinet is just thicker. It's about the same size bore inside in either case. Lester Young used to play a metal clarinet." Ralph also tried out a Bundy clarinet with a body of beautiful red-brown wood and a full, mellow tone, and though sorely tempted by its $79 price tag, demurred, explaining, "The wood's already a little warped. This is an old

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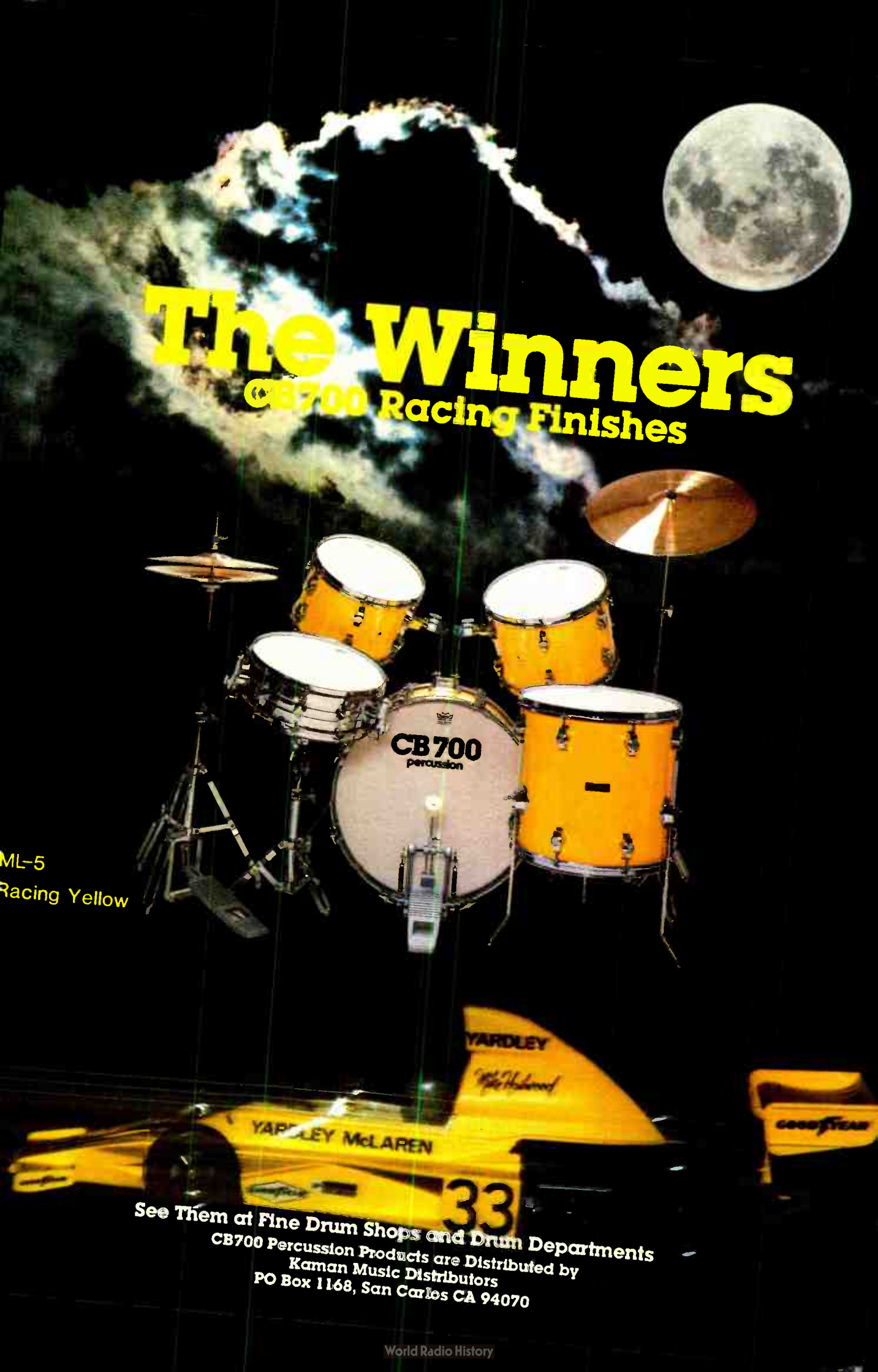

horn. That's why they stopped making them with wood, because after a while it warps or cracks. Then you've got real trouble." Ralph handed the clarinet back.

At Bargain Spot (64 Third Avenue at 11th Street), Ralph was smitten by a Buescher C-melody of slightly tarnished silver, priced at $169. This time, a nice old gent let Ralph play all he wanted. "Mmmm," cooed Ralph, "*very* nice. This is actually in good shape. And these babies are hard to find." As Ralph tootled away, I thought of Frankie Trumbaur, Bix compatriot and king of the C-melody; Lester Young, who started on a C-melody, often cited Tram's influence. Many accuse the C-melody of sounding wimpy, like a circus horn, but in Ralph's able hands, it sounded just fine—indeed, somewhere between an alto and a tenor. Why, I wonder, has it been forgotten? In the right hands, it's a horn that can go higher than a tenor and lower than an alto and still sound nice with its round-edged tone. Heartbroken, since he had no cash handy, Ralph gave the sax back to the salesman. Just then, a Chinese guy walked in and exclaimed "A C-melody! I'll take it!" Sure enough, he bought it on the spot. "That guy got a deal!" Ralph sighed.

At the same shop, Ralph also tried out a made-in-Italy Grassi alto sax, a gorgeous, shining gold-bodied instrument with silver keys and pads, very clean-looking. Even though its lower-octave key was stuck, it had a nice, full tone, as well as a top-notch Selmer octave key on the crook of the neck. "For a pawnshop sax," said Ralph, "it's not bad. You could get that one key fixed for a reasonable price, but your best bet would be to get it overhauled, 'cause it *felt* like it wasn't aligned quite right. That would cost a few hundred bucks, but it's a beautiful horn, really, and $199 is a good price. For a horn like that new, you could pay up to $800, so if you spend a total of $500 buying it and fixing it, you still make out."

We then walked up Third Avenue to check another pawnshop in my neighborhood—Gramercy Pawnbrokers Inc. (318 Third Avenue at 24th Street). There in the window were two gold baritone saxes, a Buescher and a Pan-American (both made in Elkhart, Indiana, like so many pawnshop horns, which apparently come from the middle-American polka belt), plus a shiny new silver Wurlitzer "low pitch A" alto ($289).

Ralph tried out both baritones (no salesman hassle). The Pan-American ($275) had a huge old rubber mouthpiece and what Ralph termed "caveman fingering," but didn't sound bad. The Buescher ("A pretty reliable old make as far as pawnshop horns go," said Ralph) had a sleek Auto-Link metal mouthpiece and, though it too had strangely distended finger-key positioning, sounded great and, priced at $349, didn't need much work besides a minor tuneup. Again, Ralph, who was actually looking to buy a baritone, had to reluctantly hand it back. "The fingering may have been a little awkward," he concluded about the Buescher, "which could make it hard for some people to play, but it's basically a great horn, a very sound instrument. You could pay at least twice as much for a new baritone of comparable quality, but then again, with a new one you're pretty much guaranteed that nothing'll be wrong with it."

So, there may be deals to be had, but pawn-shopping is basically an adventure, and in these Murphy's law offices where who knows what could be wrong with the instruments, it could be a very frustrating adventure for the uninitiated. If, like Olu Dara, you want that "ancient," "funky" sound, you'd better bring along someone who's at least been playing a while, if not a professional musician. Of course, there are always professional music shops, like those on music instrument row in N.Y.C., where you can find dependable new and used models that'll do fine for the beginner. Reliable makes for trumpets include Conn, Holton, Bach-Stradivarius, Schilke, Getzen, Olds and Benge; for saxes, Selmer, Conn and Yamaha (for flutes, of course, there's always good old Gemeinhardt, and LeBlanc for clarinets). Some companies, like King and Bundy, make solid trumpets *and* reeds. Surely we've missed a few "name" manufacturers, but in any case, if the pawnshop experience frightens you off, just go to a legitimate instrument dealer and ask for a reasonably-priced, quality instrument. In any event: *caveat emptor*—play before you pay! Ⓜ

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