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MUSICIAN

$2.25 NO. 76 FEBRUARY, 1985

PAUL McCARTNEY

After the Broad Street Fiasco, a Search for What Went Wrong

ARTIST OF THE YEAR?

The Picks, Pans and Peculiarities of 1984

RICKIE LEE JONES

An Exclusive Interview By Timothy White

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The introduction of digital synthesizers ushered in a whole panorama of new and complex sounds not previously available on conventional synths. But these instruments also brought with them an entirely new and foreign control system that made it a lot harder for musicians to get to those sounds. If you've ever tried to program a digital synth, you know what we're talking about.

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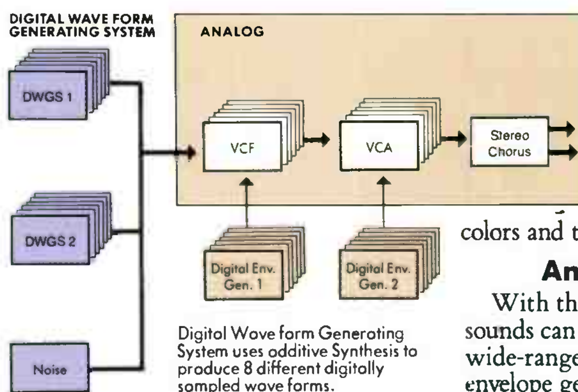

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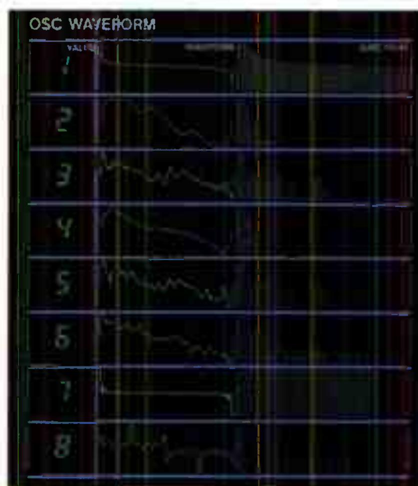

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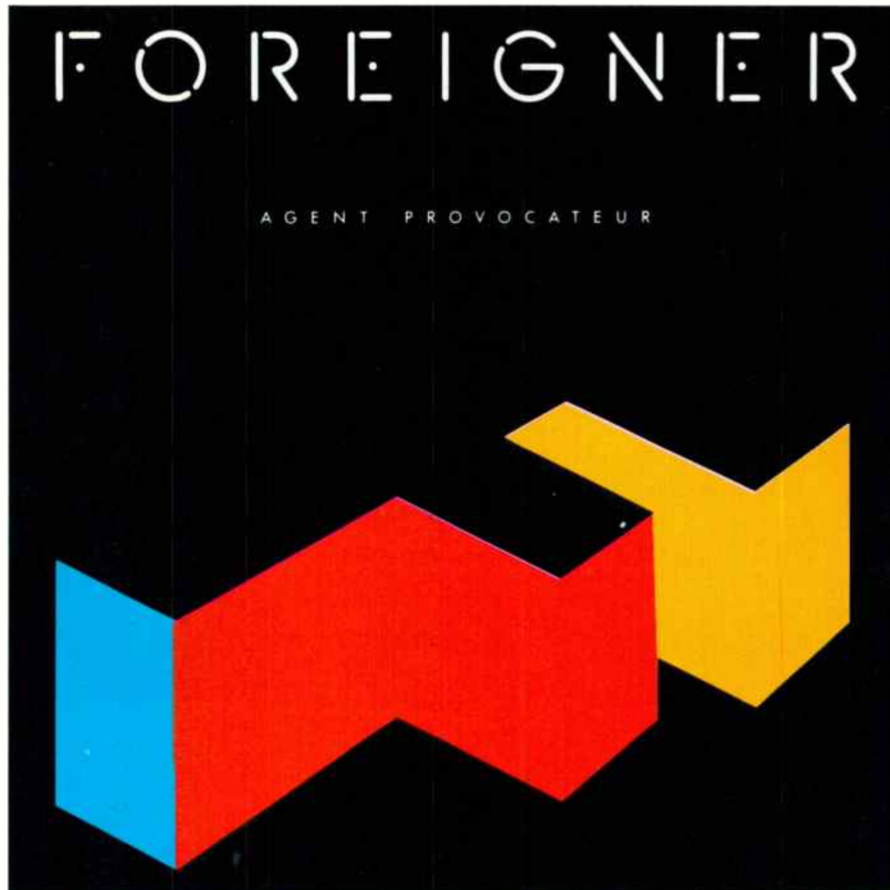

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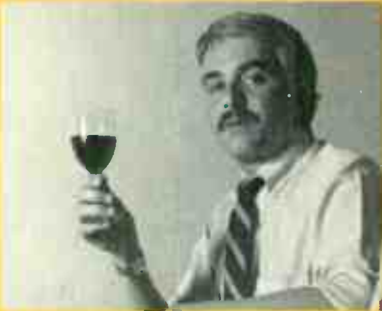

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PAUL McCARTNEY

Fifteen years after the breakup of the most influential group in rock history, the Cute Beatle launches a staggering press blitz in support of the ill-fated Give My Regards to Broad Street. Some of the many interviews he gave shed important new light on McCartney's work during and after the Beatles. What went wrong? What went right?
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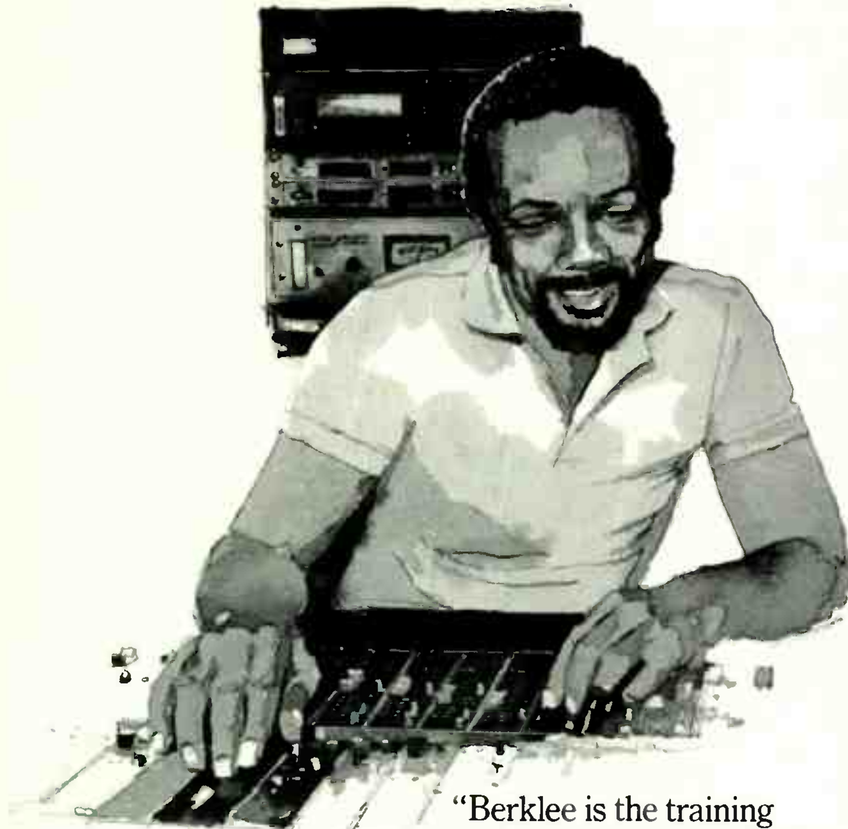

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Roland

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Bitches Brew

When I first read the Miles Davis interview (November '84) and saw the quote under his picture stating "Miles discovers Bill Evans posing for the bitches," I really didn't think twice about it for two reasons. One: *I* knew it wasn't true. Two: I spent most of my time around Miles for the first three and a half years after his comeback (I met him in 1980) playing with him and getting to know him personally. One aspect of Miles' which came to my attention early on was how much he liked to put the press on! After reading the article it was obvious to me that Miles was putting Tom Moon on when he gave this particular quote. It was, however, unfortunate the way *Musician* used it. I feel I owe it to the readers to clear up this misinterpretation. The way the interview is set up, by putting this particular quote under Miles' picture (and by the way, I wasn't even in the band when the picture was taken!) it makes the small, silly quote of Miles' look like a serious shot at my professionalism. I believe, and I'm sure the readers would also agree, that this was done in poor taste. After all, when I was onstage with Miles, I had more important things to think about.

Bill Evans
New York, NY

I have respect for Miles Davis as a musician, but there have been times when I have felt him to be quite insensitive as a human being. In my opinion, the hostility that is evidenced in such a remark about a musician (Bill Evans) who gave all of himself while working with Miles (not only in musical ways) is demeaning, unprofessional and indicates a resentment towards a musician's decision to actually leave the "great Prince of Darkness" to pursue his own career. Sadly, the press eats up such garbage. Anybody who knows Bill Evans will attest to the fact that he is a serious musician and a fine gentleman. There is no way that he would use his position in such bad taste. And placing the caption "Bill checking out the bitches" under an ambiguous photo of Miles onstage is ridiculous.

David Liebman
Peconic, NY

Born To Write

After reading Chet Flippo's interview with Bruce Springsteen, I was immediately driven to do two things: listen to my practically worn-out copy of Bruce's latest album, and pound out this letter. Thanks for the interview; good buddies like me and Bruce need to keep in touch once in a while. Okay, so we're not good buddies, but we do have a couple of things in common, like wearing headbands and being born in the U.S.A. Let freedom ring.

Jim Turano
Chicago, IL

Enough has been said in the media about Bruce Springsteen's patriotic aspirations. And this is the key to Springsteen's massive success. But it (the patriotism-freedom attitude) is probably one of the biggest come-ons ever perpetrated by an entertainer.

Ultimately, when Bruce Springsteen changed his music format into pseudo-americana, flake-music attitudes—all of which were bought up like hotcakes by the mass media—some of us became resentful and alienated. Here was some fake folk-hero, telling us *who* we were (losers; dreamers) and what America was like (Asbury Park, NJ). This type of condescension will only be viable for just so long. Yeah, mon, we believe that Springsteen's fame is about over with. Fin. Roll over, Bruce.

Johnny Guitar
Tacoma, WA

I am writing this letter in order to more specifically identify Bruce Springsteen's main guitar, which you described as a '57 Fender Esquire.

When I first saw Bruce play, circa 1973, at the Student Prince in Asbury Park, he was playing a Gibson Les Paul. I was so blown away by Bruce's playing that I sold my guitar—a '62 Tele with a '57 Esquire neck—to a local guitar trader (Phil Petillo—who does much of the repairs on Bruce's guitars today), and bought a Les Paul just like Bruce's.

Less than a month later, to my amazement, Bruce sold his Les Paul and bought my guitar from Phil Petillo, and that's the story of the Boss' main guitar.

Rich Bamberger
West Long Branch, NJ

It takes a damn fine musician to admit to the possibility that they might have "overplayed"; I found Max Weinberg's comment to that effect most refreshing. While he would know best about his own work, I must say that I have found him to be a very effective drummer on the occasions I have seen him—he didn't seem to overplay at all. It's been my immense pleasure to see the E-Street band (and of course, its *fearless* leader) twice in my "concert-going career" and every player was simply *superb*. Thanks again to Max for reminding me to acknowledge my errors and inadequacies, and to get with it and correct the problem. Rock on, Max!

Cyndy Keeton
Metairie, LA

Nicks Knocks

Thanks for the piece on Lindsey Buckingham and his brilliant *Go Insane*! I must make a point, however, sure to appall Mr. Graham and other self-important arbiters of rock tastes: "Nicks fan" and "Buckingham fan" are *not* mutually exclusive terms! Many of us enjoy both, and find it unnecessary to censure one to appreciate the other! I found Graham's snide bias regarding Stevie Nicks both jarring and intrusive in an otherwise informative article.

Susan Wachsmuth
San Antonio, TX

Back Coverage

I must say I was horribly shocked, nearly to the point of tears, when my copy of the November issue arrived in the mail with Barry Gibb on the cover. All kinds of dreadful thoughts crossed my mind, but I realized there must be some mistake, and turned it over. To my relief there was Bruce's grin. I felt even better when I flipped it open to find the great stories on John Lydon, the Gun Club and Miles Davis. Best of all I couldn't find anything about Barry Gibb.

David N. Lewis
Midland, TX

I hope that MCA Records paid you folks a lot of money to be able to do their back cover ad in the November 1984 issue. Your magazine usually has more integrity; it is, after all, called *Musician*—not *Advertiser*. I realize that *Musician* isn't a non-profit enterprise, but I was surprised that you would allow your image and your credibility to be used in such a misleading and blatantly commercial manner. And for Barry Gibb!

Joe Mobilia
Brooklyn, NY

Just for the record, no one at Musician *knew before publication that MCA's ad would look like our cover. Sneaky, sneaky...guys.*

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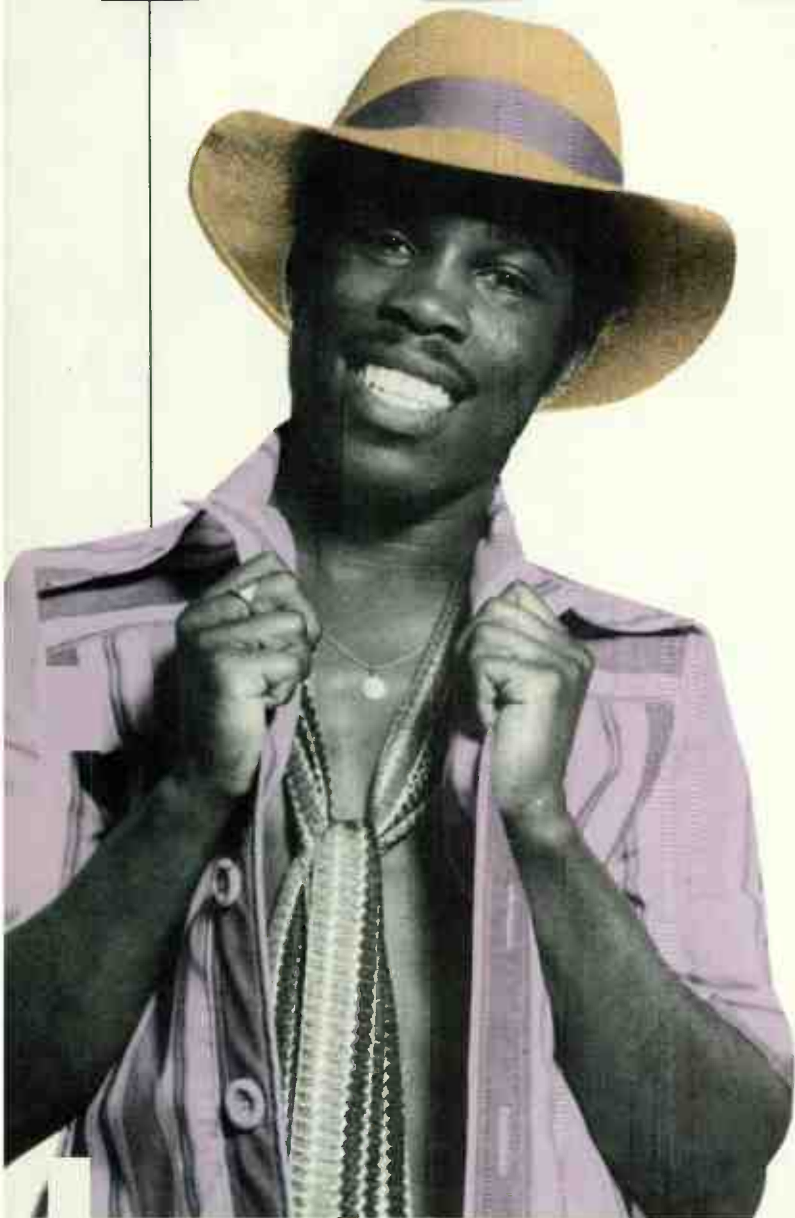

MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

BILLY OCEAN

No "Making Waves" Jokes Please— We're British

The former Leslie Sebastian Charles says he chose **Billy Ocean** as a stage name because he was looking for something with a bit more "zap." He picked "Billy" because it went well with "Ocean." And why "Ocean"? "I've always been fascinated by the sea. I can't swim, but the sea to me represents freedom. You can't trap that water."

The freedom Ocean says his name represents must seem especially ironic to him in light of the artistic restriction he says he suffers in his home base of England. The complaints aren't new, and Ocean isn't the first black British artist to make them. Imagination and Junior have also described an English musical establishment with built-in racism. Ocean claims the monolithic British Broadcasting Corporation views all black pop musicians as "dance" artists—a death sentence as far as airplay is concerned. He's found some relief in the States, where he's best known for unpretentious, straight-ahead R&B like the number one hit "Caribbean Queen" and "One Of These Nights."

Ocean was born in Trinidad amid tropical rhythms. So when he moved to London as a child he noticed he couldn't dance to his new country's music. "The rhythm never turned me on," he says in a soft voice accented by more than one culture. "The next best thing at the time, as far as rhythm was concerned, was black American music."

However, he was attracted to the simplicity of English pop song structure. And as if Motown, Liverpool and Trinidad weren't enough for his musical melting pot, young Les Charles had an African landlord who played him plenty of music from his own homeland. "I've been very, very fortunate, and lucky in that I was interested enough to listen to all these different things," Ocean says, "or be in the right place at the right time."

Despite the broad-ranging taste, Motown music appears to have had the most influence on him. Ocean's is invigorating but not innovative R&B—which isn't to say that it's clone music. He is a strong singer, and his phrasing, notably on "Caribbean Queen," certainly has its interesting idiosyncracies.

"I'm not saying I don't take things from other people and I'm not influenced by other people. But gaining confidence as you go along, being able to appreciate knowledge, is understanding yourself. If you are doing something with honesty, and *you* think you're doing it honestly, go ahead and do it. Die for it." – *Leonard Pitts, Jr.*

Wanna Buy A Label?

Nearly a year and a half after it was first announced, the proposed record company merger of PolyGram and Warner Communications Inc. has gone the way of Dynaflex and quadrophonic sound. Only this time the impetus came not from consumer resistance but the Federal Trade Commission.

The plan was controversial from the start: Both PolyGram and WCI have major record concerns. Estimates had a PolyGram-WCI merger staking out twenty-six percent of the domestic record market. (CBS Records has twenty-three percent.) Fearing a possible monopoly, in March the FTC filed a preliminary injunction against the merger. In April the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles ruled against the injunction, but two days later the FTC got a stay for an emergency appeal. In October PolyGram and WCI themselves asked for a delay in the FTC's administrative trial, and the handwriting was on the wall.

"These proceedings would have taken several years to complete," read a brief press release issued jointly on November 6 by WCI and PolyGram's corporate parents; therefore "it was no longer feasible to keep the record operations and personnel involved in a further state of uncertainty."

Having lost over $200 million in the last several years, PolyGram seems eager to hook up with *somebody*. Rumors have the outfit now conferring with MCA Records—with whom a merger would be less intimidating than the towering WCI to outsiders—or possibly Capitol Records. Unlike the proposed worldwide WCI plan, a merger with one of these labels might be confined to the U.S.

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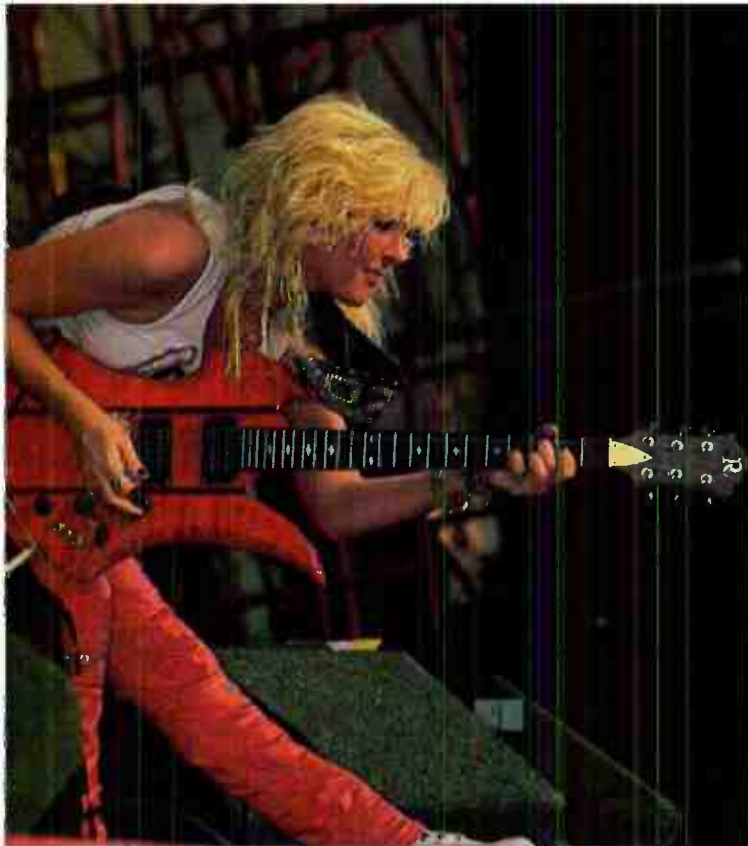


EBET ROBERTS

LITA FORD

Crashing the Boys' Club

The Runaways were a bunch of young girls who didn't know what they were doing," **Lita Ford** says of the band that catapulted her to dubious fame. "I'm not a young girl anymore, and I know what I'm doing."

At the moment, that means fronting the Lita Ford band. Like fellow Runaway alumna Joan Jett, Ford sings lead and writes most of her band's material. She hasn't quite developed Jett's flair for hooks, but she's more than made up for it with her work as lead guitarist. Ford is more than fast; her playing is clean and fluid, with a deft agility that suggests Michael Schenker but balanced by a jazzy linearity that makes hers an utterly distinctive instrumental voice.

Hearing her live is something of a shock, especially for those of us who remember her competent-but-unexceptional work with the Runaways. How did she get so good? Part of it was practice.

"I've been playing since I was eleven years old," Ford says, "and I'm twenty-five now. I couldn't play fast when I was younger, but I could play clean. So I thought that was okay, as long as I could play slow and *perfect*. Now that I've got my speed, I can play *fast* and perfect."

It helped having almost two years to woodshed—between the demise of the Runaways and her decision to get back into the business. Her first backing band suffered from unstable personnel. With a current lineup less likely to go AWOL and a stage show ready for the coliseum circuit, Ford seems well on her way to earning her piece of the heavy rock audience. The boys-club attitude of most heavy rockers bothers her not in the least; the prospect of being the first "guitar heroine" in a field of guitar heroes strikes her as basically irrelevant.

"Woman or not," she says, "I don't think it makes any difference anymore. But I want to be a good guitar player; I don't want to be 'good, for a girl.'"

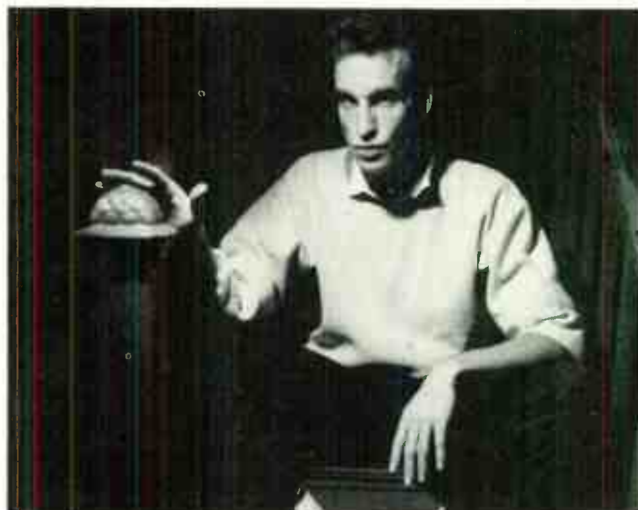
– J.D. Considine

JOHN LURIE

Not Just Acting The Part

Chin in hand, droopy eyes cocked sideways, **John Lurie** stands onstage at New York's Danceteria observing the new edition of his band, the Lounge Lizards. They may sound cacophonous—bleating horns and strangulated guitars crawl atop thumping rhythms—but when Lurie joins in on alto sax, the group glides into a taut, sinuous melody that evokes Monk and Ornette Coleman as much as PiL.

Similarly, Lurie must temper the chaos in his offstage life. Lately his phone's been ringing off the hook with congratulations and offers of employment. But it's not music that has brought this seven-year veteran of the downtown New York arts scene his latest dose of recognition. It's the movies: Lurie stars in *Stranger Than Paradise*, the surprise hit of last year's New York Film Festival.



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Though he insists music won't take a backseat to acting, Lurie, thirty-two, is somewhat concerned. "You know what I'm wondering," he muses; "is Woody Allen taken seriously as a clarinet player? I don't want to come off like an actor 'cause I'm real serious about the music. I think I can make both happen. But it's driving me a little crazy right now just because actors are supposed to get up at 8:00 in the morning and musicians are supposed to go to bed then."

Lurie would like to act in a couple of movies this year and continue writing for films. (The impressive Bartokian soundtrack for string quartet in *Stranger* is his ninth score.) But his present main concern is preparing the Lounge Lizards for a European tour and two albums, the first titled *Mutiny On The Bowery*.

"I'm just trying to get this band going," Lurie explains. He and his pianist brother Evan are the only extant members of the original Lounge Lizards, founded in 1980. "We had a rave following a few years ago, but as with all New York bands, you can be hot for a while and then you're forgotten. The thing is, it's a completely new band now. And it's definitely better than it ever was. I used to leave rehearsals with this sick feeling, and now, for the first time, I leave feeling better than when I went in."

– Robert Seidenberg

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Fripp For Hire

Calling (almost) all guitarists: Now's your chance to study with the inimitable **Robert Fripp**. Starting the last week in March, the Crimson king is hosting a series of five-day residential seminars in guitar playing at the Claymont School in Charlestown, West Virginia. The course is open, perfesser Fripp says, "to anyone who's played plectrum guitar for a minimum of three years, and has a fluency in English." (He really is a funny guy—for a teacher.)

Fripp's method grows out of a system he developed as a teenager and has refined since. His approach is not to teach music but "to conserve and develop energy—develop tension in how the two hands work together. Most guitarists I've met have a very sloppy approach to how the two hands work."

If you're interested in finding "a direct relationship with music by working with the discipline of playing guitar," Fripp may be your guru. "Using basic exercises in two to three years of applied work, you can get to a point of musical development that would take seven years otherwise."

Pencils ready? The address is Claymont Court, Route 1, PO Box 279, Charlestown, WV 25414.

What's in a Name?

Just *how* prolific is **Prince**? A lot more than record credits let on—that is, if copyrights on file with the Library of Congress are any indication. Label and cover copy to the contrary, Prince is registered as writer or co-writer of all but two tracks on six albums (not counting his own) released in the past two and a half years: three Time LPs, Vanity 6, Apollonia 6 and Sheila E.

The copyrights aren't under Prince's name but his alter ego, Jamie Starr. The Library of Congress Copyright Office identifies "Jamie Starr" as "a pseudonym"; correct names aren't required. However, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) lists both Prince and Starr as owners of Tionna Music, the Time's music publisher, and notes "Jamie Starr was elected to membership under the name Prince Rogers Nelson." So much for early fictions (from Prince and the Time's Morris Day) about the mysterious Mr. Starr.

Sheila E.'s hit "The Glamorous Life," credited to herself on the label, is copyrighted under the name Jamie Starr—as is her entire album, except for "Noon Rendezvous," co-written by Starr and Sheila E. The discrepancy between copyright applications and album credits on the Time's second album, *What Time Is It?*, prompted a letter to the law firm administering the songs. They replied, and ASCAP agrees, that the songwriter's name on the copyright applications—"Jamie Starr (a pseudonym)"—is correct.

The Time's self-titled debut album is suspiciously devoid of any songwriting credits, save the line, "All jams published by Tionna Music." These "jams" were originally published by Controversy Music, Prince's company. Three weeks before the record came out Prince switched title to his four-and-a-half songs to Tionna. Then-Time guitarist Dez Dickerson got the title to his own "After Hi School" and half of "Cool." Dickerson is also sole author of Vanity 6's "He's So Dull."

Of course, copyright information isn't necessarily the last word on actual authorship. The Time's Morris Day reportedly wrote "Partyup" and donated it to Prince's *Dirty Mind* album as a favor. According to Pete Escovedo, Sheila E.'s father, Prince "stayed out of the credits" on *The Glamorous Life* so as not to steal the spotlight. The differences between printed credits and filed copyright information suggest that Prince is at least a shrewd businessman—and probably more than that.

OBO ADDY

From Munich To Portland

So what's a nice Ghanian master drummer like **Obo Addy** doing in a place like Portland, Oregon? Living there, incongruously enough. Even more incongruously, Addy's crack band, Kukrudu ("earthquake"), is with one exception all white. There's still some fire under this melting pot.

Formerly one of Portland's better-kept secrets, Addy and Kukrudu recently wound up their first national tour. A second album, *Obo*, on Portland's Avocet Records, showcases Addy's stunning hand drums. A little bit of Africa has taken root in the Pacific Northwest.

Now forty-eight, Addy discovered America in 1973, courtesy of a U.S. cultural enrichment program. He relocated to Seattle in 1977, and moved to Portland a year later; Chicago and New York were too big. His father was an Accra priest and medicine man. Addy grew up with the songs, dances and drums of Ga ceremonies. But when he turned professional musician at age nineteen, it was by playing Western pop. Not until he was past thirty did Addy join an arts council to learn more about Ghana's traditional music. "It's not like you go to Ghana and see everybody playing drums," he says.

Having gone native, he had occasional trouble with Ghanian audiences and employers who expected less ethnic music. Addy faced more respectful (or at least curious) crowds when the arts council sent him on international tours, including Israel, Australia and the 1972 Munich Olympics. He formed the Portland-based Kukrudu in 1981. At one point Addy brought over three Ghanians for the group, but discovered geography was no guarantee of authenticity; "they were all brought up to play American music." Two of them left, embarrassed at being taught their own music.

Addy terms his sound "modern African music." "I'll talk something in my language and then write it down to play." He says he splits traditional rhythms among bass, guitar and drums. Most of his band come from a jazz background; "there are lots of very good musicians here."

Anomalous? Only if you believe we're not all in this together. His country-folk "who are called intellectuals," Addy says, "don't do anything about our culture or our traditional music. They dress like Americans, they call our music witchcraft music." On this side of the ocean, though, Addy is a musical missionary.
– *Scott Isler*

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HOODOO GURUS

No More Dog Days

Australia's **Hoodoo Gurus** got their first break in 1981: Don Lane, the Johnny Carson of Down Under, booked them to appear on his talk show. As chief Guru Dave Faulkner recalls, however, it wasn't your typical TV gig.

"We backed Molly the Singing Dog, live, in front of three million viewers," he laughs. "Actually, she didn't sing very well; she just howled a bit. And they kept us in the shadows because we looked too weird."

Not surprising. Back then, the Sydney-based Hoodoo Gurus sported zoot suits, exaggerated quiffs and a three-guitar lineup without bass or drums. They played "psychedelic stuff with rockabilly overtones—just thrash music."

Today the Gurus are somewhat more conventional, though no less irrepressible. The quartet's recent LP *Stoneage Romeos* is a bracing blend of garage-rock grunge and power-pop pizzazz. "Dig It Up," for example, is a ghoulish

ANN SUMMA/RETNA

psychobilly stomp. "In An Echo Chamber," Faulkner explains, was inspired by a *Get Smart* episode in which Larry Storch played the "Groovy Guru"—a megalomaniac DJ who traps Max Smart and 99 in an echo chamber and tries to kill them with feedback.

So much for the Gurus.

But what became of Molly? "She got a movie contract," Faulkner reveals, "and made a grade-Z kids' film that bombed at the box office. And I'll tell you a secret: they had to dub her voice on the soundtrack. The dog couldn't cut it in the big time." – *Jon Young*

FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Musician Say: What's It All About, Frankie?

Frankie Came To Hollywood and fourteen other North American cities last November and December as a critical experiment: Could Frankiemania survive a transatlantic crossing? Despite a staggering British track record—simultaneous number one and two singles, an advance album order of over one million copies—**Frankie Goes To Hollywood** were still hanging out at Schwab's as far as the U.S. was concerned. "Relax," their naughty debut, was a non-starter; "Two Tribes," with politics replacing sex as subject matter, was walking, not running, up the Top 100.

Not even Frankie's members can explain their extraordinary U.K. appeal. Two years ago they were a homosexual cabaret act splicing heavy dance rhythms to leather-boy imagery. They had a devoted cult following in Liverpool, and even a video. But FGTH only started going places in late 1983 with "Relax." The single had already leapt into the British top ten when the BBC banned it, thereby assuring its popularity. The British love to be shocked.

On vinyl, at least, the most important member of Frankie Goes To Hollywood isn't in the band: Producer Trevor Horn gives the group an impressively bombastic sound to insinuate their subversive messages. Off vinyl, perhaps the most important member still isn't in the band: Paul Morley is a music journalist turned co-founder (with Horn and his manager) of ZTT Records, Frankie's label. Having played the pop game on both sides, Morley takes a Malcolm McLaren-esque pleasure in calculating FGTH's outrages. He'll also mouth off at length to anyone who'll print his spontaneous philosophies.

With such powerful backers, the band itself tends to recede to the status of puppets; Morley deviously encourages comparison to the Monkees. "The most important thing is to have a hit record," says Phil Cooper, managing director of Island International Ltd., which oversaw Frankie Goes To Hollywood's domestic sales strategy. (ZTT is an Island Records subsidiary.) "It doesn't really matter who the artist is." In England, ZTT kept Frankie fever raging with thirteen (!) versions of the band's two singles, and omnipresent "Frankie Say" T-shirts. At least the Beatles had personalities.

By the time FGTH settled into New York's Ritz club for three sold-out nights, the hype threatened to overwhelm the group. The band was surprisingly low on stage presence; they played, and Holly Johnson sang, in place while prancing Paul Rutherford supplied the only visual interest. At the second of the three shows the packed crowd was enthusiastic but not Frankiemaniacal. The climactic "Two Tribes" got a cursory performance—more a pity since the band displayed solid chops throughout the less-than-generous set.

"We had a dream of a marketing campaign," Cooper says of FGTH's British barnstorming. Almost a year after the furor started there and swept Europe, the U.S. may be next in line. The band's overseas popularity sparked stateside press interest, which whetted public curiosity. *Welcome To The Pleasure Dome*, Frankie Goes To Hollywood's two-LP set with a $12.98 list price, dented the top forty after three weeks on the charts. Radio airplay on "Two Tribes" helped the album make an impressive splash. "Active rotation" on MTV helped even more.

After Frankie's double encore—a rousing version of Bruce Springsteen's "Born To Run" and a reprise of "Relax"—the band members were jubilant, basking in the audience's response (acceptance?). Immediately afterward the faithful cued up in the Ritz's lobby to buy their "Frankie Say" T-shirts.

Welcome To The Pleasure Dome is an ambitious but underwhelming album—possibly a case of too much too soon. It gives the impression that Frankie Goes To Hollywood are two-hit, eleven-remix wonders. Even the cocksure Morley admits ZTT can't order the universe: "For all this theory that I'm expounding, it is an accident," he says of FGTH's popularity. The pop world, Johnson says, is "ever so shallow and superficial." As for FGTH, "We're trying to say something. Aren't we?" – *Scott Isler*

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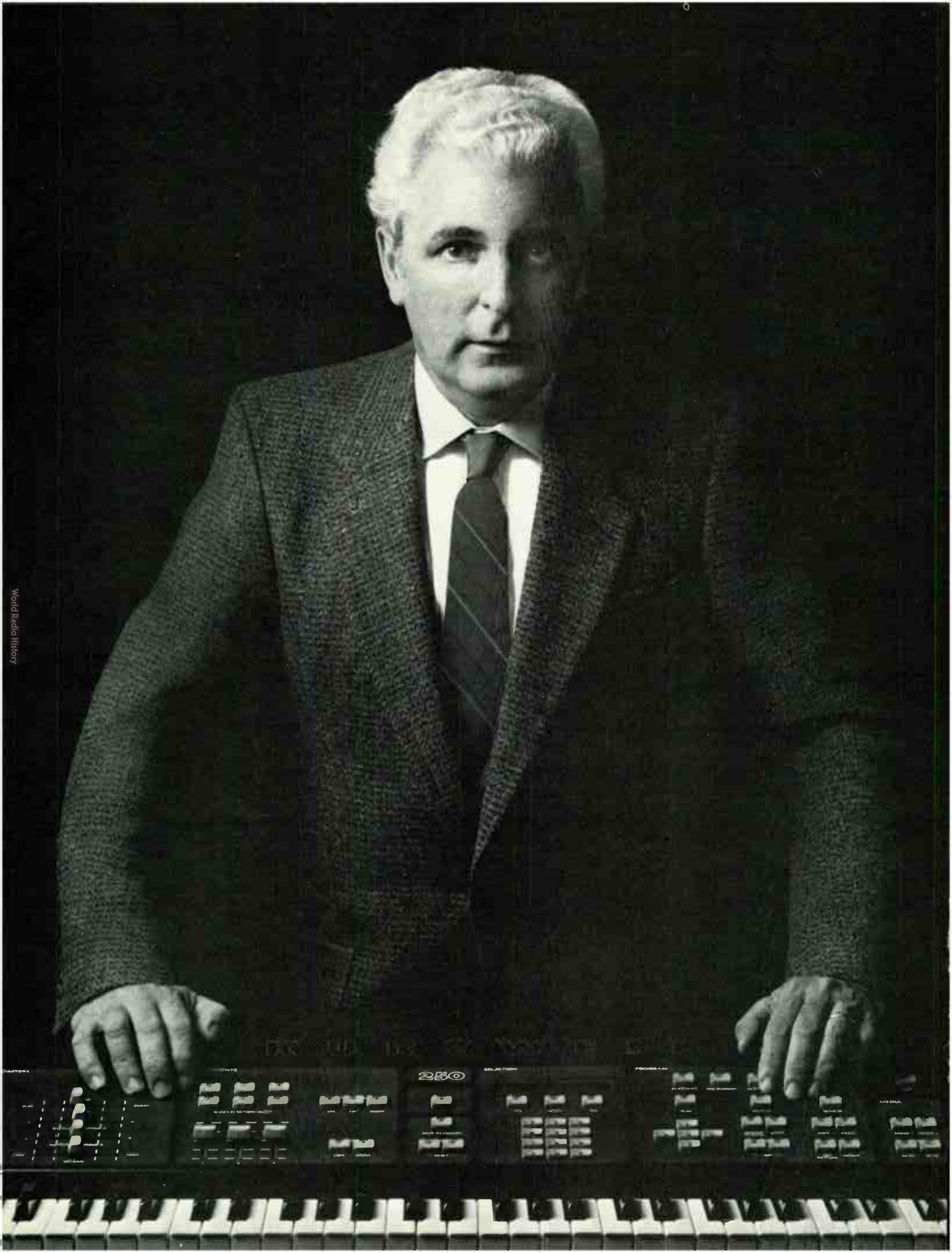

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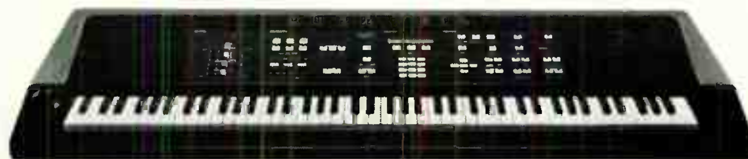

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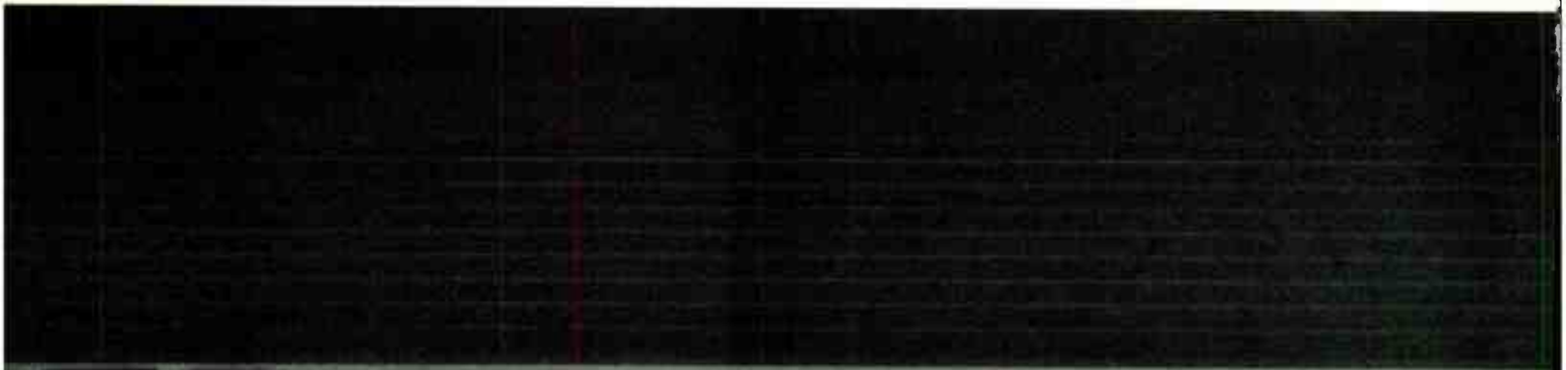

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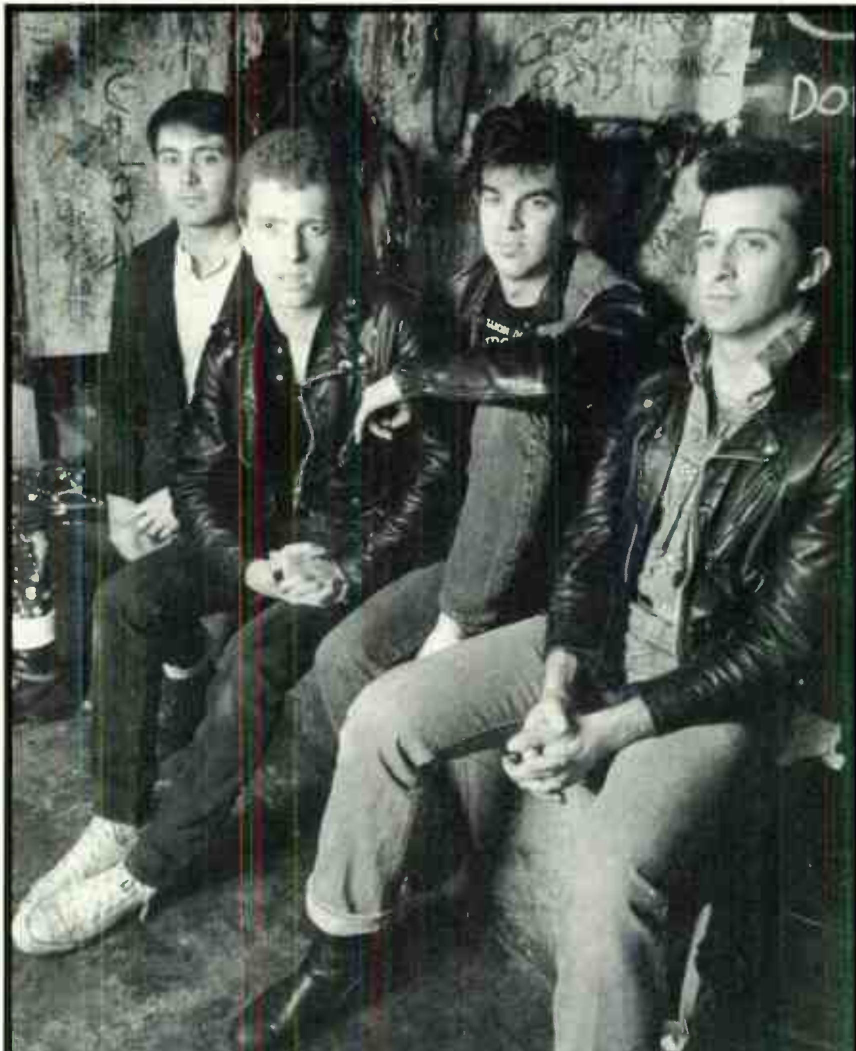
DEL-LORDS

CHARLES M. YOUNG

THE PERILS OF PLAYING GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL WITHOUT AN IMAGE


Unpigeonholeable Manny Caiato, Frank Funaro, Eric Ambel & Scott Kempner.

BC KAGAN

The Del-Lords had a tough time getting signed for the same reason I've been having a tough time getting this article written: You just can't pigeonhole these guys. Probably the most accurate label you can stick on them is "rock 'n' roll," a term that means all things to all people. The Del-Lords plug into the pure essence of rock 'n' roll, that indefinable something that makes a great band: They have a good beat and you can dance to 'em. I dance to 'em, anyway, at every opportunity.

What they don't have is an image. They don't have David Lee Roth arranging his fifty-three interchangeable epigrams into a street philosophy. They don't have Boy George wearing a dress and undulating his hips like a fat girl in junior high. They don't have Dale Bozzio putting fishbowls on her tits and adopting an accent that could pass for either very thick Valley Girl or Rumanian.

"And there's nothing wrong with that stuff," says leader Scott Kempner, sitting in a modest New York one-bedroom near Grand Central Station. "Rock 'n' roll has always allowed people to redefine themselves. I *like* David Lee Roth. He's too good at what he does for him not to be expressing some real part of his personality. I just can't play that role myself. My personality is in the music."

That music, as heard on *Frontier Days*, the Del-Lords' first album, is very American. The influences are right there in Kempner's numerically undaunting but impeccably tasteful record collection: Johnny Cash, Woodie Guthrie, Robert Johnson, the Beach Boys, Bruce Springsteen. Nothing obscure—and there's nothing obscure about the Del-Lords.

Which makes them so hard to understand. They have returned to the eternal verities and found them worth reaffirming. All four Del-Lords sing. They play major chords on Fender guitars and eschew show-off solos. Their rhythm section delivers the backbeat through rain and snow and gloom of night. And their lyrics make me happy.

They sing mainly about overcoming poverty ("How Can A Poor Man Stand Such Times And Live" followed by "Get Tough") and being in love ("Burning In The Flame Of Love," "Pledge Of Love"). They do not sing about lust (everyone else is). The closest they come to the misogynistic norm is "Shame On You," in which Kempner appears to be pissed off at a former girlfriend but breaks all rock 'n' roll precedent by not equating her with Satan. It is altogether endearing. What I *don't* like about this band is that they don't bite the heads off of bats, or die of drug overdoses in the bathtub, or put avocados in their jockstraps, or....

"I know. I worry about that too," Kempner says. He looks vaguely rockabilly with his sleeveless T-shirt, Al Davis-style pompadour, and Stratocaster tattoo on his biceps. "Several record companies and producers turned us down, saying we had no focus or image. I think what they were talking about was packaging, the way Madison Avenue invents a disease and sells you a product to cure it. But I think it could be a real kick in the ass for people to figure us out for themselves. So many bands, you put the needle down for fifteen seconds and you know exactly who they are. With us, there are so many aspects that even the twelve songs on the first album don't cover them. It may take more than one record to connect with our audience. I guess the precedent would be Bruce Springsteen. We're both trying to sing about reality, not fantasies for people to

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escape into. And it took him a while to connect with his audience, too."

But even Springsteen sings an awful lot about cars and girls.

"Well, I think he likes cars and girls. Just because you get older and your interests change doesn't mean you have to leave *everything* behind. I can't say I know Bruce well, but I am proud to be able to call him a buddy. The times we've met him, he went out of his way to be nice. He's a genuinely unpretentious guy."

So is Kempner, who grew up in the Bronx with a deep love for rock 'n' roll. He never played it, though, until he attended State University of New York at New Paltz in the early 70s. There one Andy (Adny) Shernoff, a drunken sophomore given to flavoring salami sandwiches with chocolate syrup, was publishing *Teenage Wasteland Gazette*, one of the first rock fanzines. Shernoff expanded his horizons by founding the Dictators, a pre-Spinal Tap metal parody band with real crunch in the riffs; he tapped his buddy "Top Ten" (Kempner) for rhythm guitar. The Dictators' 1975 debut album, *Go Girl Crazy*, was one of the funniest in the history of rock 'n' roll. Unfortunately, it was also one of the worst selling in the history of Epic Records.

A couple of years later the Dictators resurfaced on Elektra. *Manifest Destiny* and *Blood Brothers* didn't sell much either, despite the band opening countless gigs for Blue Oyster Cult, Kiss, ZZ Top, Styx and Uriah Heep, among others.

"I can't say we didn't get our shot," Kempner says. "No one forced those tours down our throat. I remember when punk happened, I thought, 'Where were these people when we needed them?' In retrospect, we should have played only headline gigs and built a following gradually through the club circuit."

What will the Del-Lords do differently?

"With the Dictators, everyone had a different idea what the band was about: comedy, heavy metal, pop. The Del-Lords are completely unified about how we should sound. And if we do open any gigs, we're going to make sure we have a fair shot with a compatible band and the full P.A."

These lessons came too late to help the Dictators, who broke up in 1978. After four years of following Shernoff's lead, Kempner found himself rudderless, extremely depressed, and in bed with a bum knee from a stage accident. Then Helen Wheels asked his help in putting together a band. He himself didn't join, but he noticed something strange in working with other guitarists: They might know a lot of weird chords and might have better technique, but Kempner thought up better riffs—and he cut them all as a performer.

Pulling himself onto this rock of insight from his slough of despond, Kempner stole his first Del-Lord from Wheels. Manny Caiati was a geophysicist who packed in his seismograph for a bass after seeing the Ramones one night. Next came guitarist Eric Ambel, once of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, later of Joan Jett & the Blackhearts (from which he was expelled for uppity questioning of the financial set-up). Last came Frank Funaro, who destroyed the drumset at his audition but with terrific taste.

Naming themselves after a director of Three Stooges movies, the Del-Lords debuted in March of '82 and knew immediately they were onto something. Forswearing second jobs and all manner of creaturely comforts, they played every day; Kempner, as was his habit since the Dictators, wrote every night. Then something strange happened: The songs got good. Then something even stranger happened: Kempner married Maraleen Erwin, a waitress he met in St. Louis, and the songs got even better.

"She's helped me keep it all in perspective," Kempner says. "A lot of my old friends don't understand the songs or me anymore. I'm a different person now, and the songs are something that I have to do alone. It puts me into my own world so much of the time that it's hard

continued on page 28

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MAL WALDRON

Waldron may not exactly be a household name, but he's played with the likes of Mingus, Coltrane and Dolphy.

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

DON PALMER

JAZZ PIANIST AS PRINCE OF DARKNESS AND EARL OF EMOTION

Mal Waldron hunches over the keyboard with his back to the audience and a stare of intense concentration on his face. Dressed in dark corduroy and velour, a patch of gray hair adorning a gently sloping widow's peak, and smoking an ever-present cigarillo, he typifies the romantic image of jazz artist as Prince of Darkness. When the music breaks he lights another smoke and remarks succinctly and elegantly upon the proceedings. His self-confidence never seems arrogant, though; like his music it is tempered by an air of quiet introspection. The music is also dense, uncompromising, and regardless of its format—solo, duet, quintet—offers few concessions to the uninitiated.

Waldron's works are at once pithy and wandering. He blends the energy of hard bop with the expansiveness of free jazz in loose, symmetrical structures. He comps with soft chords and bent harmonies that challenge soloists to stretch beyond their stock of predictable licks. He swings without resorting to cascades of notes or comfortably reliable accents. His right hand probes the possibilities of melodic phrases with spare, understated single-note lines while the left supplies irregular intervals and brooding, blue-hued vamps. Like Elmore James or Jr. Walker, Mal Waldron knows how to milk a handful of sounds for every drop of emotion.

He also evidences almost no concern for the commercial possibilities of his art. Three decades ago Waldron began to establish himself as one of the pioneers of jazz piano and composition, through sessions with Charles Mingus, John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy. In the intervening years he also accompanied Billie Holiday during the last years of her life, recorded the first album ever released on ECM, and produced music on a variety of labels notable for its range, energy and consistent level of invention. He is a popular figure on the jazz circuits of Japan and of Europe—where he has resided since the mid-60s, and his peer reputation is formidable; at the Village Vanguard, for instance, where Waldron performs with increasing regularity, his quintet includes Ed Blackwell, Woody Shaw and Sonny Fortune. Yet in this country, even among jazz fans, Mal Waldron remains virtually unknown.

He doesn't seem to mind. "If I wanted to make money I'd be in some other business," he explained recently over a barbeque ribs dinner not far from the Vanguard. "The point of my making music has nothing to do with people's acceptance. I'm on earth to realize my full potential, and since my natural bent is music, I must develop myself as a musician to the fullest extent possible.

"A jazz musician must be born a gypsy," he went on. "Your music must be carried to everybody and your music has to change. I've changed—you

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change every minute of your life."

Waldron's own musical sojourns began as a kid in Queens. His father, one of the first black mechanical engineers on the Long Island Railroad, decreed that little Mal should learn piano, so he dutifully practiced three hours a day, mostly to avoid being "stepped on" by his father. "After school," he recalled, "you always came home and listened to Symphony Sid's radio program: Lester Young, Jimmy Lunceford, Erskine Hawkins. It was quite an influence in my life." But it was not until Waldron was seventeen, and attending Queens College to study composition, theory and orchestration, that he began to move beyond playing classical repertoire. "I had always been interested in composing and getting my ideas out into the world. To me jazz is really instant composition."

In 1954, Waldron joined the experimental Jazz Workshop of Charles Mingus, an association which lasted three years and considerably sharpened Waldron's improvisational skills. "Mingus helped shape me into what I am today," Waldron testified. "He got me out of the habit of playing in the middle of the piano. At that time my harmonic sense was also very rigid, since I was coming from Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. Mingus showed me sounds on the piano, clusters, that sort of thing. He also made me aware of a different approach to composition."

In 1957 Waldron left Mingus to work with Billie Holiday, an association which lasted until her death two years later. "It was a real gas for me," he said with affection. "She was a beautiful person, and like an older sister. Working behind her helped me to understand space, how to play behind the beat, how to phrase. She made me aware of the importance of words; until that time songs were just changes to me."

The Holiday years also provided experiences that eventually led to Waldron's decision to live in Germany. "The mentality of Americans at that time was to make a black jazz musician the low man on the totem pole. Police would treat you like drug addicts. When you came out of the clubs, they'd stop you and search you, you had to have a cabaret card, and you had to go down and be fingerprinted like a common criminal. In Europe with Billie, I got an opposite view. They were treating me like a god."

Waldron's heart may have leapt abroad, but for the moment his recording studio was still located in New Jersey. This proved to be an extremely productive period. As a composer and pianist for Prestige Records, starting in 1957, Mal penned such jazz classics as "Soul Eyes," "Fire Waltz," and "Status Seeking." At this time he recorded with Coltrane, Dolphy, Booker Little, Gigi Gryce and Jackie McLean. Waldron remembers that job as "a real pressure cooker." I'd stay up all night to write the tunes and then get up in the morning, go to Hackensack, and record until about six that night. Blowing was the most important part of the session, so I'd make my changes easy and then write my melody over them. It brought a lot of musicians together who ordinarily would not have played together. I didn't even think about personalities at that time. I *was* impressed by the fantastic drive of Coltrane—he didn't take the sax out of his mouth—but I didn't think of him as The Great John Coltrane. He was a friend, a buddy. If you think of someone as great, it tends to make you a little inhibited."

By now, Waldron had fully digested the styles of his most obvious influences: Monk, Ellington, Tatum and Powell. Through the early 60s, he was an integral member of the remarkable Eric Dolphy/Booker Little Quintet whose recordings opened up an entire area of jazz innovation that even today remains somehow obscured. In 1966, convinced that Europe offered more avenues for creative expression, Waldron moved to Munich, where he lives today.

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Big Country

ROY TRAKIN

SINCERE SCOTS FORGE A NEW FOLK TRADITION FOR THE ELECTRONIC AGE

Fierce hearts Tony Butler, Stuart Adamson, Bruce Watson and Mark Brzezicki.

Big Country's idealistic leader Stuart Adamson tends to wear his heart on his sleeve, or, in this case, on his T-shirt. Today, his sleeveless pullover blares the warning, in Frankie-style lettering, "HEROIN IS A LIFE SENTENCE." His bandmate Bruce Watson also boasts an anti-drug message on his chest with an earnestness that discourages any questions about the duo's sincerity. The lads are a long way from their Dunfermline home, pulling on Heinekens in PolyGram's 34th floor Manhattan conference room and discussing *Steeltown*, the much-anticipated successor to last year's surprisingly successful debut LP, *The Crossing*, and its hit single, "In A Big Country."

The latter was such a full-blown, complete statement that it's hard to imagine the band improving on it: the droning bagpipe guitars, the yearning vocals, the solid bottom, anchoring the Celtic dreams of transcendence to the harsh realities of the beloved land itself. Despite unavoidable echoes of *The Crossing*, especially the bagpipes, *Steeltown*'s firm rock 'n' roll conviction and inventive, aggressive guitar grooves avert the danger of self-parody that their interim EP *Wonderland* suggested. Adamson's songwriting is more consistent, his vocal delivery less soapboxy and more at home in the tracks. Of course, he's still singing about *patria chica* and the raised glass of ale, still penning anthems for the good earth, home and hearth.

Native Scots Adamson and Watson still live "within 400 yards of each other" on the east coast of the industrial belt which stretches from Glasgow to their hometown, once a prosperous shipbuilding center. To the north are the romantic Highlands, to the south, the hill farming area which borders England. The twosome are fiercely proud of their roots. "We can still go to the same places and kick about with the same people," claims Stuart in his sing-song Scottish burr. "They don't stand on ceremony with us. We get ribbed about what we do. They don't talk to us about being rock stars in the local pub, which prevents us from getting wrapped up in the bool-shit of the music business."

While this isolation from the mainstream has helped Big Country forge an identifiable sound and image, on parts of *Steeltown* it threatens to turn their universality into parochialism. Songs like "Flame Of The West" and "East Of Eden," while ambiguous, are political diatribes against the reigning superpowers, most specifically, the U.S.A. Not the most gracious response to a country that embraced Big Country so warmly their first time out....

"The problem in America," insists Stuart, "as with all right-wing governments, is they seem to care more about big business and profits than the grass roots people. That's not just true over here, but in Europe, too. I write about the people involved, the human aspect, not the governments. Although the inspiration of a song might have come from the area I live in, I try to be worldly. Instead of writing things in straight black and white, I tend to be more descriptive by delving into feelings and emotions. Still, people in our area are proud of what we've done. We've brought some attention to the struggles they go through, and they appreciate that."

Steeltown looks to the masses on songs like the title track, which mourns the closing of a local factory and the effect it has on the surrounding town. "The Great Divide" is, according to Stuart, "about the growing rift between union and management in England." Bruce Watson, who's been quiet up until now, reveals that his own father's been out of

TOM SHEEHAN/HOME SERVICES PICTURES

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"We just wanted to go out and play music we felt a deep affinity with, for people who felt the same way we did," adds Tony Butler. "We all despised that rock star syndrome where you competed to be the best drummer or guitarist in the world. Stuart said from the very start Big Country would be a four-man group and we would all be recognized as individuals, the ultimate democracy."

Finally, though, Stuart Adamson would like us to think that Big Country is more than just the sum of its individuals' musical parts, but an unspoken Concept shared by both members and fans. It is one of the reasons Adamson has never left home. "I think Scottish and Irish groups tend to stay where they are, rather than move to London," he says. "Maybe because they feel a greater sense of community. I love it where I am. One of the things about the people around me is their sense of optimism in the face of adversity. The idea for 'In A Big Country' came from seeing the unemployed maintain their sense of humor and pride, which is hard when you're living on fourteen pounds a week. You have to have something to believe in."

Still, what does Stuart Adamson believe in besides Big Country? "Free beer and housing for the masses," he smiles, and it's more clear that Big Country are part of a long Scottish tradition of anthemic chanties for the working masses to sing along with, a new folk tradition for the electronic age. But if that's true, then, why *is* Big Country so damn serious? Where's the wit and high spirits that come across in conversation? Why does Big Country's music seem to sit on a pedestal of Meaning?

"Everybody portrays us that way," agrees a smiling Stuart. "I actually think we have a great sense of humor, but it's something I really don't have the time to put into the songs. We want to be proud of the songs, so we only write about things we care about. I'd much rather write a song like 'Steeltown' than 'Bruce Farting On The Tour Bus.' I guess I'm scared to put humor in the songs because it sort of cheapens the rest of it. In that sense, I'd say, yes, we're a serious band. But we're definitely not 'po-faced.' Hey, we enjoy a good laugh as much as anybody else."

To illustrate the point, Stuart deigns to tell me a joke in parting: "What's black and white with a dirty name?" he grins.

What, I ask.

"Sister Mary Fuckface."

I guess you had to be there—which may sum up Big Country's main problem best of all. ▣

Tending The Big Country

Stuart Adamson plays a Yamaha SG-2000S, a Fender Stratocaster and an occasional acoustic Fender Del Rio. His strings are Superwounds, made by Rotosound in England ("They're good because the core of the string actually passes over the bridge, which makes the guitar ring a lot more," says Stuart). He plays through two Fender Showman amplifiers, "one for a clean sound, and one for that over-the-top sound."

Bruce Watson also plays a Yamaha SG-2000S guitar along with a Schecter Telecaster through Marshall and Sessionette amplifiers. He uses a NADY wireless system onstage. Watson swears by his Korg SDD-3000 digital delay unit. Stuart, Bruce and Tony all use MXR pitch-shift harmonizers.

Tony Butler plays a new model Fender Precision bass and endorses the Aria SP-1000 Elite, "for the chord stuff, because the necks are thinner and I can play it like a guitar." Butler prefers the Trace-Elliot 500-watt stack system amplifiers.

Mark Brzezicki plays a Pearl drum kit, with a second snare drum tuned high "like a timbale." His entire kit includes a total of thirteen drums and thirteen cymbals. The set includes Octobans by Tama, four long tubular drums used like timbales, paiste cymbals, two China-type crashes and various Rude high-hats. His sticks are hickory Pro Mark 5As; drumskins are Remo Pinstripes.

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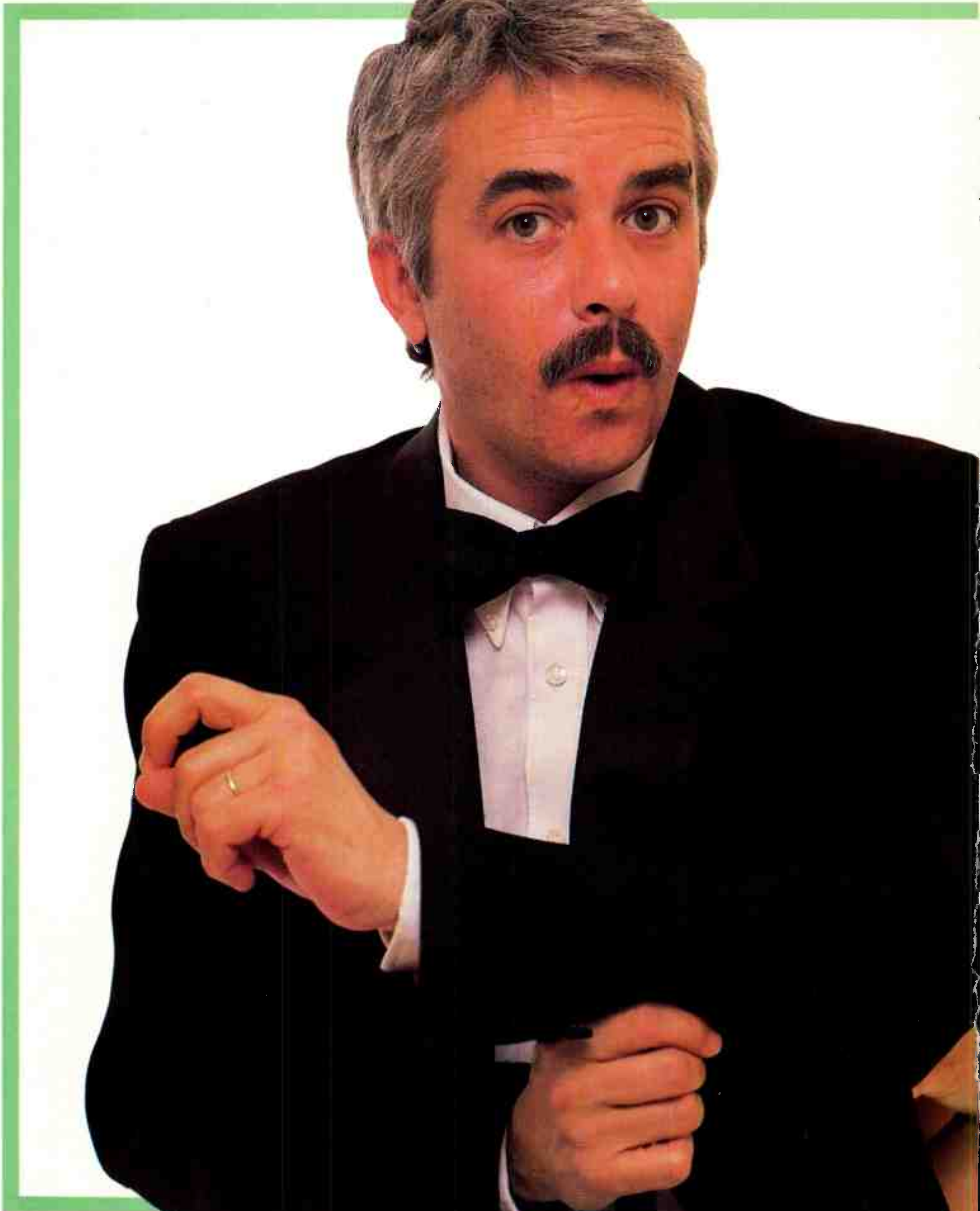

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"Hey Parks, where the hell have you been for the last nine years?"

The bearded, grinning little man at the piano pauses and smooths out the wrinkles in his white tropical suit. Then he peers into the darkness beyond the lip of the stage, scanning the audience for the anonymous heckler.

"If that's a medic out there," Van Dyke Parks answers, "then I'm your man!"

Delighted applause and shouts of approval from the overflow crowd in McCabe's, a cozy little concert venue in Santa Monica, signal the presence of a turnout of Parks devotees. They are a motley crew, ranging from careworn hippie holdouts and fresh-faced young professionals to keen-eyed college kids and dapper showbiz denizens. Young West Indians rub shoulders with thirty-ish preppy housewives from Westwood. They are united only in their generous curiosity and great anticipation.

A brief tinkling of last-minute tuning heralds Parks' seating himself at the piano. Its gentle cacophony summons the chiming brio of the minstrelsy—that unique form of entertainment, dating to pre-Civil War days, that evoked plantation life in the songs, dances and comedy of white (and later black) men working in blackface. The band, numbering nearly a dozen pieces, includes banjo, mandocello, cymbalom (a Hungarian instrument akin to the hammered dulcimer), harp and steel pan. As they launch into a sweeping overture for the evening's entertainment, Parks lifts a glass of red wine to the crowd. "Loyalties die hard," he quips, "and you're here to prove it!"

The Hattiesburg, Mississippi-born composer/singer is perhaps best known for his rococo songwriting collaborations in the late 1960s with Beach Boy Brian Wilson ("Surf's Up," "Heroes And Villains," "Wonderful," "She's Goin' Bald," "Vegetables" and "Cabinessence"), and *Song Cycle*, an impressionist 1968 LP that wove Stephen Foster, Cole Porter, psychedelic studio craft and the vernaculars of great Hollywood movie scorers into one of the most critically acclaimed LPs of the last fifteen years. Regarded by many to be on a par with *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Blonde On Blonde*, *Song Cycle* was a brilliant bridge be-

Van Dyke Parks and Br'er Rabbit Update the Lost Art of the Minstrelsy.

By Timothy White

Photos: Deborah Feingold

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"Minstrel shows were a bilateral agreement, an unavoidable scenario in racial unification. They brought two social elements, black and white, to harmonious display."

tween the loftiest reaches of pop invention and the realm of serious musical composition. It also sold so poorly that Warner Bros. at one juncture offered it at the "introductory" mail-order price of two albums for a penny. (You were instructed to send in a "worn" copy and pass the second new record on to a "poor but open friend.")

It was not exactly the conventional path to rock stardom and riches. With royalties from his Beach Boys efforts less than $1,000 per annum, Parks pressed on to release two more highly regarded but sparse-selling LPs employing calypso and steel pan: *Discover America* (1972) and *Clang Of The Yankee Reaper* (1975). Then he virtually dropped from sight for nine years. On this early spring evening he is presenting the live debut of *Jump!*, a shimmering, tuneful evocation of *Uncle Remus and Br'er Rabbit*, the time-honored distillations of black folk myth adapted by the nineteenth-century *Atlanta Constitution* journalist Joel Chandler Harris.

The subject matter may seem more than a trifle obscure, even for a quasi-"art-rock" artist noted for an unusually esoteric output. But as a child of the deep South, growing up musically precocious and culturally inquisitive, with the Remus stories, the cakewalk and ragtime for psychic wallpaper, Parks has been building for ten years to a peculiarly wonderful reclamation project: a modern recasting of *the* popular entertainment in the United States between 1845 and 1900—the minstrelsy

Why? As Parks sees it, a huge chunk of American popular music—what he calls "the reigning rock 'n' roll of the nineteenth century"—has been unjustly maligned, thoroughly miscomprehended and foolishly discredited. For instance, scholars and sociologists investigating the minstrel show concur that it thrived not when it burlesqued black experience, but when its racial authenticity was most in evidence. The nation got to know itself through the minstrelsy, esteeming the culture of the American black. In short, a crucial link has long been shunned in the bloodlines that lead from the ring songs of African slaves to spirited field hollers and camp-meeting tunes, and on through the blues to rock 'n' roll forms.

Parks has been striving since he was a student composer, and against considerable odds, to restore the minstrelsy to its proper place in this country's musical-historical mosaic. Intriguing enough—but that he's had to sacrifice financial well-being and suffer considerable mental anguish to realize this goal even remotely is genuinely disquieting. The corporate rigidity of the record industry and the casual callousness of its strictly circumscribed marketplace have conspired to impede Parks with the left hand even as they sought to help him with the right. Such are the awesome hardships that befall an original thinker in the music business—in this case a fascinating visionary appreciated principally for session work and bread-and-butter guest shots.

Like Parks' previous works, *Jump!* received lavish critical praise. And this time, though, Parks is determined not to let it follow the others into a commercial void. Tonight's concert is the first step in a year-long campaign to turn the album into a full-scale Broadway production. Following the overture, a swirling, sprightly mesh of minstrel-show bravura and Disneyish zest, Parks offers a richly rendered love song. A quick-strum banjo announces a cakewalk strut tempo, and the melody glides on a bed of horns, keyboards and harmonica. The audience of fans grows positively giddy and glassy-eyed with emotion.

One wonders what it must have been like when W.C. Handy held forth on his cornet in 1896 as the band leader of Mahara's Minstrels. The man often referred to as the "Father of the Blues" would strike up an entry march like Dan D. Emmett's "I Wish I Was In Dixie Land" while the performers appeared and pranced through the opening "walkabout" before arranging themselves in the traditional semi-circle for the minstrel show. And the imagination strays to the saucy sashay of Bessie Smith as she worked the front rows as a member of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey's Rabbit Foot Minstrels.

Such specialty star-turns, taking place in the "olio" segment of the show, would follow exchanges of patter and playful putdowns between the Interlocuter, sitting in the center of the action, and Mr. Tambo and Mr. Bones, the protagonists (named after the ever-present tambourine and bone-clappers) who served as the two "endmen" in the configuration. The finale of each minstrel show was a dramatization, sometimes a parody playlet or whimsical melodrama set to music—a forerunner of the Broadway musical.

THE OLIO

"TO DO MY LITTLE OLIO IN THE MINSTREL sense," Parks says, "to trot out my strengths and let the front rows render a verdict, is to go back into my background and relive the childhood experiences that led me to the music racket in the first place."

He is fiddling in his Hollywood living room with some green beans and a well-done steak his tall, willowy wife Sally has set before him. Parks' home is a pleasant, rambling cottage filled with memorabilia (film posters, vintage photos, sheet music) and the squeals of two pre-school-age children. But his droll volubility eclipses any potential distractions with the greatest of ease.

At forty-one, Parks' skin is still as smooth as an adolescent's. He has quick eyes and a quicker brain. There are two more performances of *Jump!* to be given in Santa Monica before the show goes to New York's Bottom Line club—on a shoestring budget—to look for backers. Parks lays down his silverware, too wound up to eat.

"Take my interest in calypso and steel pan. It was my Uncle Foss, the advisor to F.D.R., who got me interested in Trinidad when I was seven years old. He advised F.D.R. about the strategic importance of Trinidad's oil- and asphalt-producing status for the war effort, as well as monitoring the Nazi reconnaissance subs sighted in the Gulf of Paria between Venezuela and Trinidad. Hence, the presence of 'F.D.R. In Trinidad' on *Discover America* or my producing the Mighty Sparrow's *Hot And Sweet* album for Warner Bros. in the early 70s. Heck, in 1972 I produced a single by Goldie Hawn—yes!—of an old Ernie Smith ska thing called 'Pitta Patta' and it went over pretty damned good with the cognoscenti.

"Repeatedly visiting Trinidad, I became interested in calypso because I saw the age of the

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troubadour, and of 'All The News That's Fit To Sing,' becoming vestigial. I ranked Lord Kitchener and the Mighty Sparrow in the same dynasty of song authorship as I would Hugo Wolf, Schubert, Schumann. I thought this was great music that melodically had all the starch, the marrow, of a truly occidental experience, but was fancified and beveled by the friendly persuasions of ancient African rhythms. Ditto the staccato tremolando activity of the steel drums. There was such placidity in this ocean of emotion!"

He rises, sauntering about the room, then pacing and hastily lighting a cigarette.

"Minstrel shows weren't the nigrification of the black experience in America. They were simply, I think, a bilateral agreement, an unavoidable scenario in the longed-for unification of racial interests. And they brought two social elements, black and white, to harmonious display. They made great entertainment in the course of the experiment.

"In developing *Jump!* I felt that this was something I wanted to restore to the American musical theater in the way of melody, and sentiment, and the socio-political force that is the very reason for musical theater!"

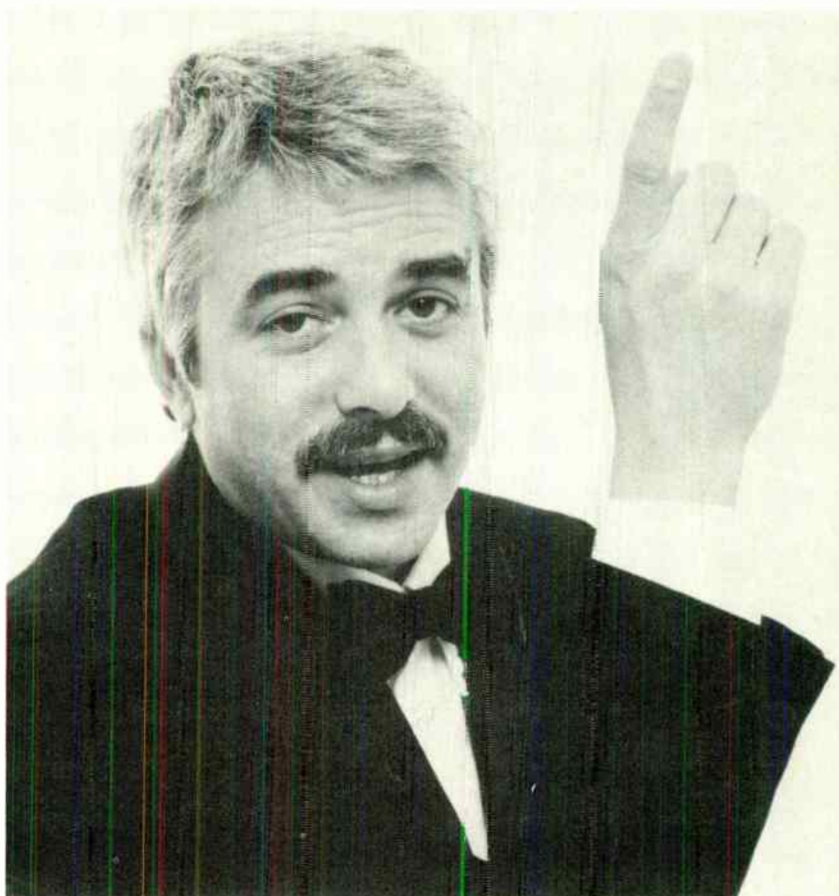
Parks' florid rhapsodizing is heartfelt, but his high hopes are tinged with a pain he cannot conceal. The New York performances of *Jump!* prompted a *Village Voice* reviewer to reflect on Parks' roller-coaster career: "What would have happened if he hadn't been out on the Coast coddled by big record and movie money—if, some years ago, he'd taken his royalties and producers' fees and plowed them into his own off-Broadway show, challenging Stephen Sondheim as the theater's resident hip intellect?"

The writer's ignorance was as appalling as it was cruel. Parks has lived virtually hand-to-mouth for the last twenty years. He is coddled by no one, and has never received any fat advances or residuals. He barely scrapes by, arranging making transpositions and writing charts for sessions, while seeking patrons for his art. He had to borrow $10,000 to pay for the sheet music and substitute musicians required for the Bottom Line dates. It says something about the way this country treats its truly gifted that Parks has never won a major grant or fellowship.

"Few people in the business out here can imagine how much Van has suffered," says a Los Angeles-based Warner Bros. producer. "In terms of prowess, he's the equal of a Quincy Jones or an Eddie Van Halen, but his peers haven't paid attention. That he still has a sense of humor, let alone a dream, is flat-out astonishing."

It is commonly assumed that minstrel shows were racist displays of white song-and-dance men in burnt cork and clownish glad rags ridiculing the music, rural dialects and folkways of blacks in the deep South. The truth is far more complex. The minstrelsy emerged during the turbulent years of Jacksonian democracy, and was rapidly fueled by growing sympathies for the Abolitionist movement. After the Civil War, integrated and all-black minstrel companies flourished. Jelly Roll Morton, Bunk Johnson, Hot Lips Page and even Lester Young are some of the many black jazz greats who got their start in the minstrelsy's rhythmically intricate music.

The Uncle Remus stories Parks has chosen for subject matter have their own complicated capillaries, and have also been misunderstood. *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, a collection of black folktales, proverbs, songs and character sketches, was first published in November 1880. It was a labor of love for Joel Chandler Harris, who continued to gather fables told by former slaves; he issued ten *Uncle Remus* books in all, and was candid in asserting that "not one [tale] nor any part of one is an invention of mine. It may be said that each legend comes fresh and direct from the Negroes."



Harris saw himself as a folklorist, taking credit only for the creation of the yarn-spinning Uncle Remus. Studies have shown that over half of Harris' two hundred and twenty animal stories are clearly African in origin; they offer fascinating insights into the intellectual survival systems of a captive people, as well as being universal allegories for triumph over adversity and the ultimate dignity of the individual.

Considering his own troubled passage, Parks' use of the Br'er Rabbit stories is entirely appropriate. His involvement with the Beach Boys and other pop acts, while indicative of a canny enthusiasm, were only sidetrips for one of the most adroit, eccentric and misunderstood musical talents of an entire generation.

Encompassing a much misapprehended cross-section of American music, the early history of one of the country's pre-eminent record companies, a strangely peregrine Southern genealogy, and the curious pitfalls created when Art collides with Commerce, Parks' saga has all the elements of a sweeping Br'er Rabbit tale...or a minstrel show of epic proportions.

"Because I was a rustic and was interested in things American, albeit eclectic, I somehow became a spokesman for a proud, even though remote, point of view."

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"Warner Bros. was then a free-form creative juggernaut. A one-man Trojan horse, I occupied a perplexing position in this field of forfeit."

THE WALKABOUT

HE WAS BORN ON JANUARY 3, 1943, YOUNGEST son of Richard Hall Parks III and his wife, the former Mary Joy Alter. His late dad had been a member of John Philip Sousa's Sixty Silver Trumpets and piloted a dance band to pay his way through medical school. Richard Parks became a distinguished neurosurgeon, neurologist and psychologist, the first to admit black patients to a white Southern hospital, South Florida State. Van Dyke's mother is a Hebraic scholar.

A clarinetist and a coloratura singer ("I had a wider range than Yma Sumac") in junior high school in Lake Charles, Louisiana, Parks went on to attend the Columbus Boychoir School—now the American Boychoir School—in Princeton, New Jersey for six years, had a contract with the Metropolitan Opera, and sang under the baton of Arturo Toscanini. In 1955, after some television and stage acting, he appeared in Grace Kelly's last film, *The Swan*, with Alec Guinness and Louis Jourdan. Parks also appeared in a "completely lackluster" German TV series of *Heidi* in 1957.

By the time Parks was fourteen, his father was practicing medicine in a suburb of Pittsburgh. Young Van Dyke studied classical piano at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie-Mellon University) in quest of a fine-arts degree. He dropped out after two and a half years to take a job (it fell through) playing clarinet in the studio band for *Art Linkletter's House Party*. Remaining in the West, Parks traveled up and down the California coast with eldest brother Carson; he boned up on Mexican music and the two played for their supper. He became proficient enough on *raquinto* guitar to do a guest shot with Los Tres Ases in the Mexican pavillion at the 1964 World's Fair.

In pursuit of supplementary income Parks became acquainted with songwriter Terry Gilkyson ("Memories Are Made Of This"), and through him got to play and arrange on the soundtracks for several Disney movies (*Savage Sam*, *The Moon-Spinners*, *The Jungle Book*).

He was briefly in Gilkyson's Easy Riders group, toured New England with the Brandywine Singers, and returned to Los Angeles with a song, "Come To The Sunshine," that MGM released; it reached number sixteen in Phoenix, Arizona. The hastily assembled Van Dyke Parks Band included Stephen Stills on guitar and lasted one live date—in Phoenix.

There was a demand in mid-1960s Hollywood for session pianists, so the scuffling Van Dyke set aside his Mexican guitar and took any keyboard studio dates he could get. He sat in with Paul Revere & the Raiders and played with the Byrds on their *Fifth Dimension* LP. In 1965 Parks met Brian Wilson on the front lawn of Terry Melcher's Cielo Drive home in L.A. (where the Charles Manson murder of Sharon Tate would later take place), and the two began work on the Beach Boys' abortive *Smile* album. The rest of the group dismissed Parks when he couldn't give them a cogent explanation of his elliptical Edith Sitwell-on-sensimilla lyrics, but his contributions made it onto the revamped *Smiley Smile*, as well as *20/20*, *Surf's Up* and *Holland*.

In the spring of 1966, future Warner Bros. president Lenny Waronker left his post as a song plugger for the Metric Music division of his father's Liberty Records label and joined the Warners A&R staff. Waronker had admired "Come To The Sunshine" and was equally excited when Parks played him a song he'd written called "High Coin." Warners was then juggling a host of psychedelic Bay Area acts they'd acquired through the purchase of Autumn Records from DJ Tom "Big Daddy" Donahue and partner Bob Mitchell. Parks was asked to groom a band called the Tikis.

He suggested the band be called Harper's Bizarre, "so that I could weed out my love of Cole Porter, Depression-era songwriting. I was so smitten with that music because in terms of orchestration and general songwriting craft, there was so much more effort applied to it than to the songwriting coming out of, say, San Francisco, at the time. I thought the Beatles were doing a good job and I was even more impressed with their record production, but apart from *Pet Sounds* I didn't find anything striking coming out of the United States. So I thought there was nothing wrong with doing something period, or regressive."

Parks produced and arranged the group's 1967 *Anything Goes* album for Warners. They had a modest hit with the title track and also recorded "High Coin"—as did Bobby Vee, the West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band and the Charlatans. Parks next worked with another ex-Autumn Records group, the Mojo Men, producing a top forty hit with their rendition of Stephen Stills' "Sit Down, I Think I Love You."

Late in 1966, Parks signed to Warners as a solo artist. His first release was an atmospheric cover of Donovan's "Colours" under the pseudonym of George Washington Brown. The label was impressed when a *Village Voice* writer who discovered it in a Greenwich Village juke box gave it a good review. Parks got $12,500 in seed money to develop *Looney Tunes* (*Song Cycle*'s original title) and drove out to Palm Desert in a Volvo purchased by Brian Wilson to write the material.

"With *Song Cycle,* I wanted something that perfunctorily covered some autobiographical points, and expressed an American experience which would be uniquely disassociable from the Beatles/British pop viewpoint, which was then dominating the market. I think that because I was a rustic and because I was interested in things American, albeit eclectic, that I somehow became the only spokesman for a proud, even though remote, point of view."

Song Cycle is an awesomely lovely pastiche: antic, affecting, lullingly surreal—the aural equivalent of Groucho Marx in Charles Ives' pajamas. The record melds the heart-tugging delicacy of minstrel balladry and the melodic grandeur of Gershwin with the intoxicating stylistic vocabulary of Hollywood film composers like Alfred Newman and Erich Korngold—all the while detailing Parks' picaresque journey through the pop wilderness. It became the most acclaimed record in pop history. *Song Cycle* is presently out of print.

"The record was produced without any idea of how it could be marketed," Parks says with a world-weary wink. "It did not enjoy a classification, which also may have had something to do with the free-form creative juggernaut that was Warner Bros. Records at that crossroads in its existence. A one-man Trojan Horse, I occupied a perplexing position in this field of forfeit."

World Radio History

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World Radio History

How we lost $35,509.50 on "The Album of the Year" (Dammit)

Two weeks later, and it still looks black for "The Album of the Year"

MR. TAMBO

"I'M SURE THERE WERE FIFTY OR A HUNDRED albums that came out the same year Van Dyke's *Song Cycle* did," Stan Cornyn says. "I remember that one, Randy Newman's first album, which Van Dyke co-produced with Lenny Waronker, and not too much more." Cornyn started at Warner Bros. in 1959. Presently he is senior vice president for the Record Group at Warner Communications.

"He was the spiritual conscience of the king, the Fool who was not a fool. I think that was the role that Van Dyke played in addition to the musical role, which was largely so far ahead of the rest of the pack that it made it difficult to put his records in the right bin in a record store."

From 1966 to 1975 Warner Bros. Records grew from a ragged offshoot of the parent film company into one of the largest and most influential multi-subsidiary labels in the nation. Its roster was a mixed bag, but many artists (particularly Ry Cooder, Randy Newman, Little Feat, Arlo Guthrie, Neil Young and Joni Mitchell) shared an affection for American root music and a capacity for often offbeat reinterpretation. Their vision, like Parks', defied handy categorization and commercial outreach. In other words, their records weren't selling worth a damn. That's where Cornyn came in.

"I had become a minor expert in the whole counter-culture and read the funny newspapers they were selling on the Sunset Strip," the silver-haired, soft-spoken Cornyn reflects, lifting his Gucci loafers onto the chrome coffee table in his plush Burbank office.

"Having read those philosophies, I knew they were different from those at the accounting department of Warner Bros. Records. I tried to be a little bit honest and self-effacing about the whole thing, and therefore *did* tell the truth, saying in the ad copy, 'We can't sell it, we can't get it into the stores, but we think you should hear it.'"

It was one thing to think out loud about a clutch of fledgling hardsells who hadn't yet enjoyed the impact they merited. It was quite another to announce the complete commercial failure of the most distinguished new face on the block.

That's what happened to Van Dyke.

Cornyn confesses the "chagrin" (i.e. mounting insecurity) Warner Bros. felt about *Song Cycle*. "I elected to write an ad whose headline was, '*How We Lost $35,509.50 on the "ALBUM OF THE YEAR" (DAMMIT).*'" The text went so far as to reveal the studio costs for the record—$48,302—and the number of records "moved"—10,000.

By all accounts, the ads broke Parks' heart. Soon afterward another ad appeared nationally. It read, "*TWO WEEKS LATER, AND IT STILL LOOKS BLACK FOR 'THE ALBUM OF THE YEAR.'*" Parks was cast as the Leper Nonpareil. No comparable malady-mongering has ever befallen a recording artist, before or since.

"If someone has put his entire soul into something, as Van had with that album," Cornyn summarizes haltingly, "I suppose some smartass ad writer doesn't help if he points that out. So my insensitivity was exposed. But it was a terrific ad nonetheless; those ads changed attitudes and perceptions for the long run. Yet, sales-wise, it's hard to gauge their effectiveness. I think at that point Van was convinced I killed his career."

Anguished by what was happening to him, Parks hit upon a better idea than costly touring to communicate with potential fans: Warner Bros. Records Television Films Company. In August 1970 he became Director of Audiovisual Services for the label. His objective was to create ten-minute promotional films on Warner Bros. groups. The shorts could be shown in first-run movie theaters or late-night television, here or abroad. As documentaries, they could conceivably be bought with federal funds by music or film schools. Parks sought out some of the best commercial directors and camera crews in the business for 16mm promos for Ry Cooder, Joni Mitchell, Captain Beefheart, Little Feat, Randy Newman, the Esso Trinidad Steel Band, and Earth, Wind & Fire. This was probably the first series of music "videos" produced in this country.

Roughly a year after assuming his post, Parks entered Mo Ostin's office and heard that his films could not justify the bottom line of reportedly half a million dollars. Warners had no cable network then, and could not find enough outlets for the films. The Audiovisual Services department was summarily dissolved, and Parks, as Cornyn puts it, was "orphaned."

Cornyn now functions as part of a "think tank" representing the mutual interests of the companies in the Warners group of labels. "Artistically, Van is still a giant as far as I'm concerned, as evidenced by *Jump!* If we can do it at an appropriate price, we take a religious rather than a financial attitude towards this sort of thing. Although Warners has been in the position of loving to be able to tolerate eccentric and adventurous music, it does so at commercial expense. This has been the Van Dyke Parks story."

MR. BONES

OR HAS IT? IS THE VAN DYKE PARKS TALE that of a savant undermined by lack of commercial savvy? This would imply Parks is a dabbler who has yet to stumble on the right "hook." For better or worse, he has actually been one of the most consistent and focused talents of his day. Unfortunately, as with Ry Cooder, who bristles each time someone labels him a "musicologist" or an "archivist," Parks' art has long been obscured by "Where's the hit?" expectations.

"Van and I understand each other," Cooder says, "because we remember a time when historical continuity in music was still a viable thing. Yet both of us have always lived and played very much in the present. There's no paradox in that!

"In 1969, when I signed at Warner Bros., things were a lot less structured. Randy, Arlo, Van, Lenny and I could do whatever we wanted in the studio without Dun & Bradstreet clearance. I felt sheltered, protected, and thought record companies were fun places. Warners did make a nice transition from No Label to Big Label. But, more than anything, there was continuity in what we were doing, in our own musical treasure hunting.

"A lot of bodies have fallen off the train since—I think of Van Morrison and Bonnie Raitt and others recently being dropped—and I realize how rosy it was back then. Now we have irony and superficial postures integrated into teen culture and popular music. It's so overt that it's all become one big comic strip."

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"Why not have art serve some other purpose than angst, one that's illuminating but not debilitating, that offers the psyche solace and serves as a restorative?"

THE INTERLOCUTOR

LOUIS-MOREAU GOTTSCHALK IS NOT A NAME on everyone's lips these days. But the nineteenth-century composer/pianist, whose "indecorous" works Parks' Carnegie Tech instructors barred him from playing, inspired young Van Dyke Parks; to understand why is to uncover the essence of what Parks has been up to philosophically ever since *Song Cycle*.

Born in the French Quarter of New Orleans on May 8, 1829, Gottschalk was one of the finest pianists of his time. His father was of German-English and half-Jewish ancestry; his French mother was an offspring of titled Santa Domingan refugees. He was in his early teens when he drew the praise of Chopin, Liszt and Berlioz. In 1842 the director of piano classes at the Paris Conservatoire rejected him without an audition because he was an American, the product of "only a land of steam engines...the country of railroads but not of musicians."

Gottschalk's prodigious talent demolished such prejudices, and he fell in with the Parisian *haut monde*. The source of his celebrity was his compositions, faithful arrangements of creole melodies and slave chants he heard while coming of age in Le Vieux Carré.

The minstrelsy was well under way when Gottschalk began performing, but he was a "serious" musician dedicated to writing in the folk idioms of his youth. He was also a tireless popularizer, touring mining camps, jerkwater town halls and the fringes of Civil War battlefields. His death, prematurely at age forty, unleashed mass mourning for a compassionate and magnanimous friend of the common man.

THE FINALE

IT'S LATE AFTERNOON AT PARKS' PLACE. RY Cooder's phoning, talking about getting a small tour together with some mutual musical chums. New York producer Joseph Papp's office is on the horn, looking for copies of *Jump!* Timothy S. Mayer, author of the book for the Tony-winning Broadway musical, *My One and Only*, and translator/director of the recent, rave-reviewed Boston production of Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* is phoning long distance; Parks composed the score for *Mother Courage*, and he and Mayer have two more projects in the works. The little guy barely has time to take the calls, shower, dress and get himself to tonight's gig on time. But he pauses in the center of the room, his striped shirt half-off, gesturing maestro-like with a green bean as he makes a last point.

"I probably shouldn't tell you this," he says, "but my fear is that the way the music business is going, we are finding ourselves facing the possibility of a generation, perhaps yet unborn, with millions of musical hopefuls who would reduce the performance of music to nothing but synthetic hardware. And it seems to me that there's something insane about this. I'm not anti-technology. As far back as 1968, I was playing electric keyboards for Judy Collins' *Who Knows Where The Time Goes*.

"See, I could have taken all the money I got to make *Jump!*, hired no acoustic help, done the whole thing as an electronic trick, and used the

Louis-Moreau Gottschalk, Parks' inspiration.

rest as a down payment on a crackerbox somewhere in cracker land. But I'm not in the music racket for that. Twentieth-century art represents nothing so much as confrontation with industry and the military. Fine, but why must art only reflect angst? Why not have art serve some other Gottschalk-like purpose that is illuminating but not debilitating, that offers the psyche solace and serves as a restorative?"

Four months later, plans for staging *Jump!* are taking shape. Mayer has spent the summer collaborating with former *Saturday Night Live* writer Michael O'Donoghue on the book. Negotiations with Joseph Papp and *Annie* producer Lewis M. Allen continue. Peter Sellars, artistic director of the American National Theater company at the Kennedy Center, will present *Jump!* in Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, *Jump!* is in the top five in Holland and about to be released in England. Label representatives are asking about a tour. On other fronts, Parks contributed two songs to an upcoming *Sesame Street* movie, R.E.M. has approached him about producing their next record, and he's doing the Caribbean-flavored score for the forthcoming Bill Murray/John Cleese film comedy, *Club Paradise*.

Parks, as always, is philosophical about the future...and the past.

"I'm still reeling with this challenge," he says, "to keep my hopes pinned to music which *feels* like it has aspirations, which feels like it *has* tensile strength, *is* on the cutting edge, *does* have something incisive to offer. I want to ensure that it is discerning, that it is anxious, that it flies nervously and not with its grip on the joystick of preordained method. That it remains excited, driven by passion, does not become an oligarchic swill of self-insistence, that it nourishes and flatters our personal dimension and all that's gone into it.

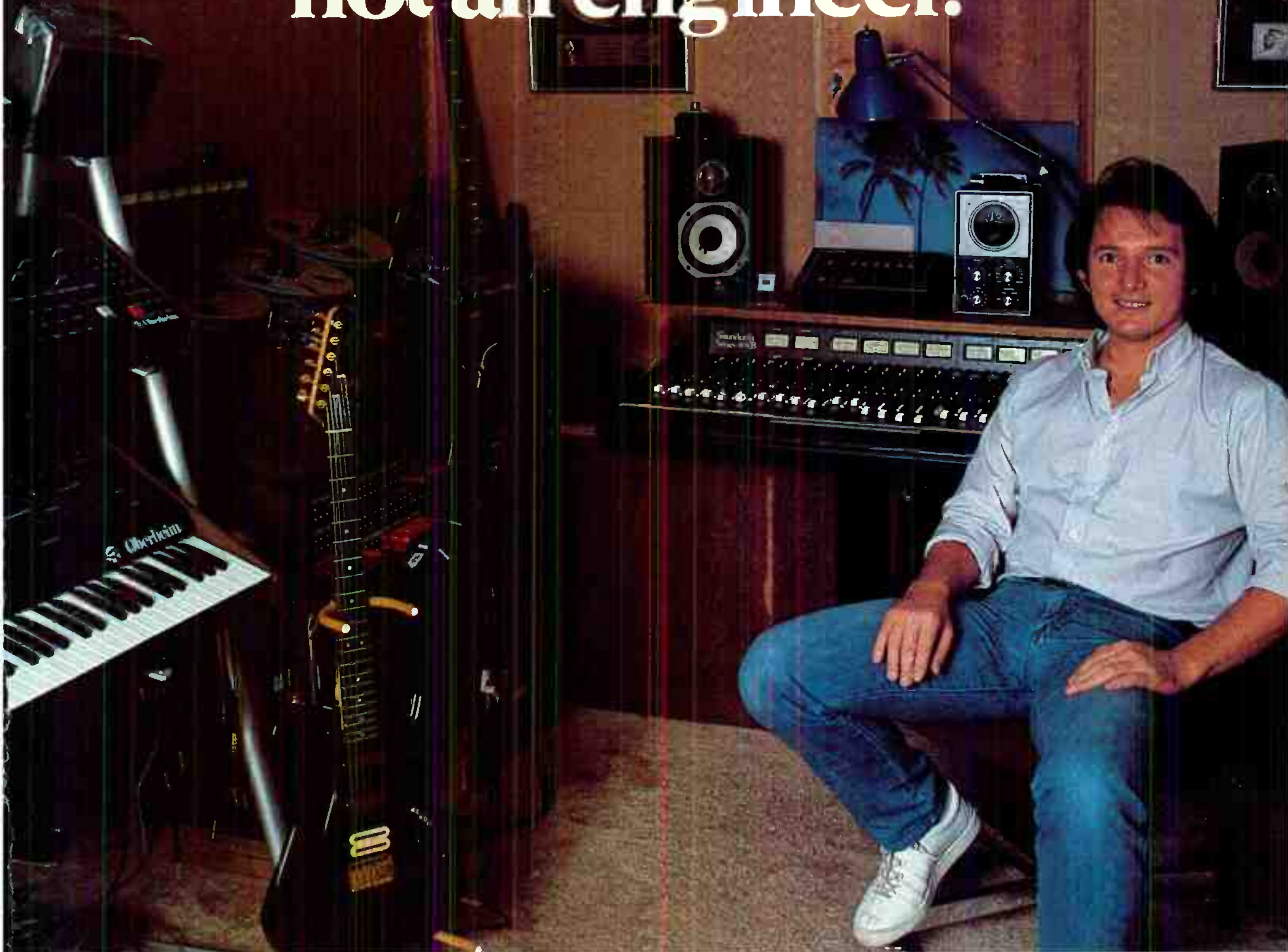
"I wanna be new-fashioned and novel, too, just like this latest song I'm polishing up."

What's the title?

A short pause. "'I'm History.'" ■

World Radio History

"After all, I'm a songwriter, not an engineer."



Songwriters and engineers are not only equipped with very different kinds of talent, they need different kinds of equipment to bring those talents out.

No one is more aware of this fact than Steve Kipner. He's one of the most successful songwriters in the country. You'll find his words and melodies behind many of the industry's top recording artists. Like Olivia Newton John's "Physical", "Heart Attack" and her newest hit "Twist of Fate." Other contributions include songs for Sheena Easton, Dolly Parton, America, and Laura Branigan.

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Steve chose the 400B for reasons that are as solid as gold. "I spend long hours in my home studio, and I never know when the creative spirit is going to strike, even at 3 AM. I spend time at this console laying down tracks, not patching and repatching, or fooling around with a lot of confusing controls. The Series 400B does what I want it to do and lets me do it easily. The quality of the sound is equal to expensive commercial studio sessions, plus I've got the comfort and control of my home environment. After all, I'm a songwriter not an engineer."

It's easy to see why Steve chose the 400B. But of course, at Soundcraft we do more than build the kind of consoles that bring out the best in recording artists and songwriters. We also provide a full line of quality mixers to bring out the artist in the engineer.

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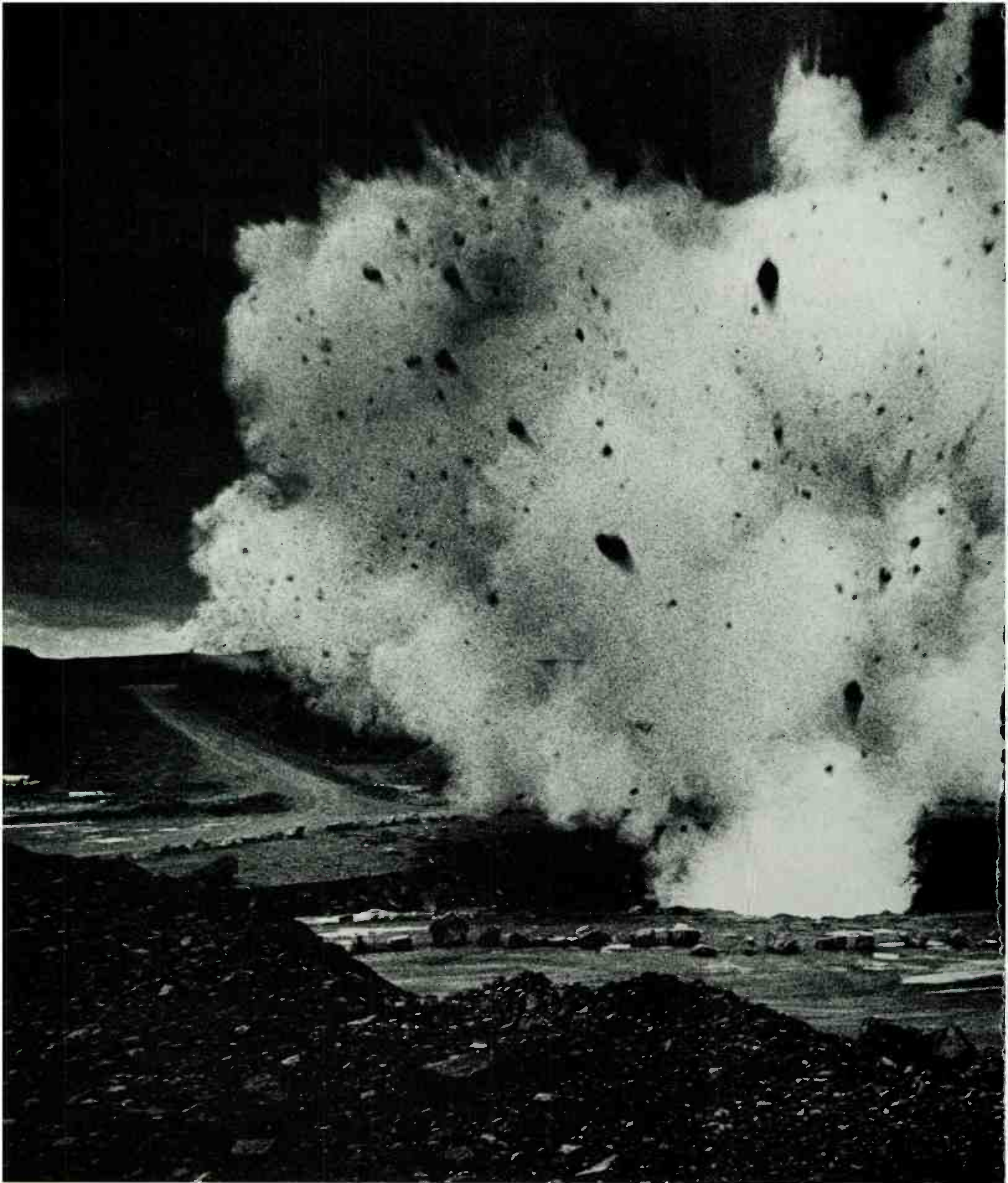

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World Radio History

The Year In Rock 1984 Orwell That Ends Well.........

The Bad News
Marvin Gaye shot dead by his father.
Count Basie, Steve Goodman, Alberta Hunter, Alexis Korner, Machito, Percy Mayfield, Ethel Merman, Norman Petty, Bob Regehr, Robert Share, Big Mama Thornton, Collin Walcott, Jackie Wilson and Philippé Wynne die.
More video jocks.
Record prices go up.
Trouser Press magazine folds.
Reagan wins big.

The Good News
PolyGram-WCI merger falls through.
The Supreme Court sides with home (video) tapers.

LARRY BUSACCA

Bruce Springsteen

Quiet Riot's *Condition Critical* stiffs.
No US festival.
Mondale loses.

Comebacks
James Brown, Jimi Hendrix, Allan Holdsworth, Julian Lennon (reincarnation subdivision), Teddy Pendergrass, Slade, Spinal Tap, Tina Turner.

ARTISTS OF THE YEAR

In our humble opinion, the two leading pop performers of 1984 were Prince and Bruce Springsteen. Despite the massive popularity of each, however, they make very different claims on their audiences. Prince toned down his satyriasis on *Purple Rain*, but still appeals to unbuttoned musical tastes. His genre-busting mix of styles further sets standards for a contemporary pop Esperanto. If Prince seeks a horizontal monopoly on talent, Springsteen thinks vertically. The Boss and his E Street Band dug in their heels to deliver *Born In The U.S.A.*, whose overwhelmingly sincere rock 'n' roll makes up in depth what it lacks in breadth. Consequently, Prince's Dionysus and Springsteen's Apollo hogged the top of the charts for the second half of last year. Both released spectacular albums ripe with hit singles for the picking, and both are engaged in mammoth cross-country tours. Choose just one? You can't, so why should we?

Biggest Disappointments
David Bowie's *Tonight*
Heaven 17's *How Men Are*
The Jacksons' *Victory*
No new Talking Heads LP

Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's Chord Changes
Ray Parker, Jr., "Ghostbusters"

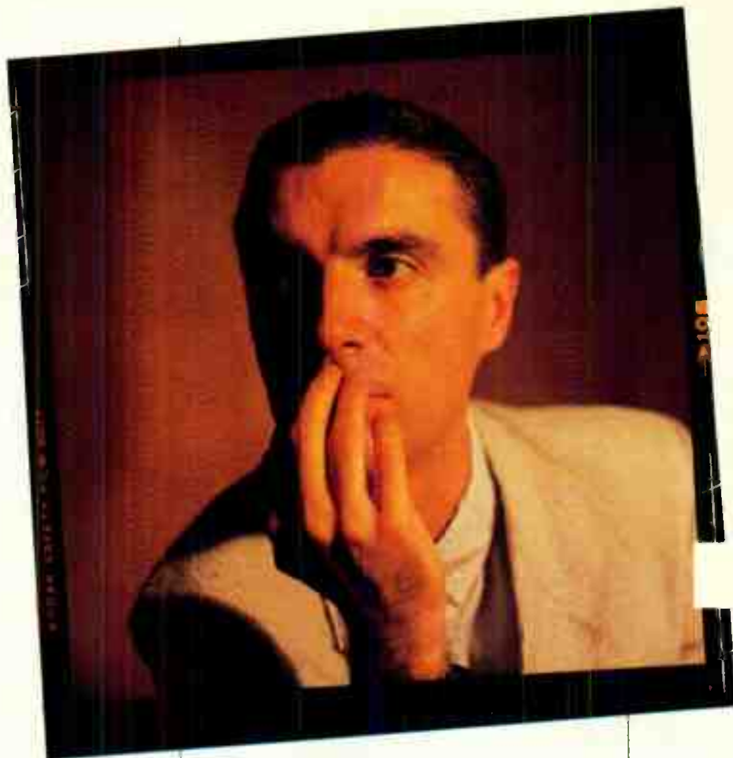
Hello Goodbye
Ted Turner's Cable Music Channel

Hypes
The MTV Awards, The Jacksons Tour, Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Video exclusivity deals, Spinal Tap, Honeydrippers, Youth for Reagan, Australian rock

EBET ROBERTS

Prince

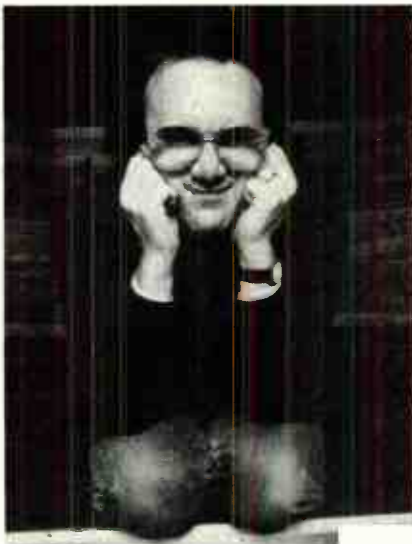
World Radio History



Photographs Deborah Feingold

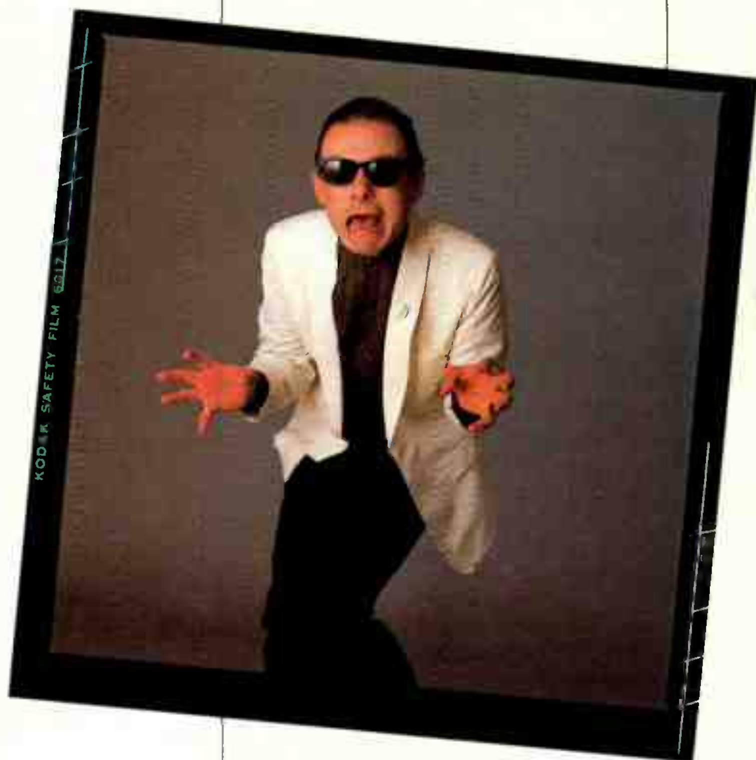
MERITS AND DEMERITS

Best Albums
Solomon Burke, *Soul Alive* (Rounder)
Hüsker Dü, *Zen Arcade* (SST)
Los Lobos, *How Will The Wolf Survive?* (Slash)
Pretenders, *Learning To Crawl* (Sire)
Prince, *Purple Rain* (Warner Bros.)
R.E.M., *Reckoning* (I.R.S.)
Run-DMC, *Run-DMC* (Profile)
Bruce Springsteen, *Born In The U.S.A.* (Columbia)
Tina Turner, *Private Dancer* (Capitol)
U2, *The Unforgettable Fire* (Island)
Peter Wolf, *Lights Out* (EMI-America)
Best Prince Albums
Sheila E., *The Glamorous Life* (Warner Bros.)
The Time, *Ice Cream Castle* (Warner Bros.)
Prince, *Purple Rain* (Warner Bros.)
Concept Album of the Year
The Best Of "Louie Louie" (Rhino)
Best Political Songs
Frankie Goes To Hollywood, "Two Tribes" (Island)
Gil Scott-Heron, "Re-Ron" (Arista)
Worst Political Songs
The Alarm, "68 Guns" (I.R.S.)
The Clash, "We Are The Clash" (unrecorded—fortunately)
Feedback of the Year
David Gilmour, "Let's Get Metaphysical" (Columbia)
Best Videos
Art of Noise, "Close (To The Edit)"
Lindsay Buckingham, "Go Insane"
Cyndi Lauper, "Time After Time"
Malcolm McLaren, "Madam Butterfly"
Pointer Sisters, "Jump"
Twisted Sister, "We're Not Gonna Take It"
Van Halen, "Hot For Teacher"
ZZ Top, "Legs"
Worst Videos
Dennis DeYoung, "Desert Moon"
Lionel Richie, "Hello"
Scandal, "Warrior"
Bruce Springsteen, "Dancing In The Dark"
Billy Squier, "Rock Me Tonight"
Peter Wolf, "Lights Out"
Best Rock Books
Stanley Booth, *Dance with the Devil* (Random House)—with reservations
Gerri Hirshey, *Nowhere To Run* (Times)
Nick Tosches, *Unsung Heroes of Rock 'N' Roll* (Scribner's)
Max Weinberg, *The Big Beat* (Contemporary)
Larry Willoughby, *Texas Rhythm, Texas Rhyme* (Texas Monthly)
Worst Rock Book
Rolling Stone eds., *Rock Aerobics* (Fawcett)
Best Rock Movies
Stop Making Sense, This Is Spinal Tap, Purple Rain
Worst Rock Movies
Give My Regards to Broad Street, Hard to Hold, Streets of Fire, Purple Rain
Best Reunions
Box of Frogs, Deep Purple, Everly Brothers, The Fugs
Best Lawsuits
Neil Young vs. Geffen Records
CBS vs. Boston
Maurice Starr vs. New Edition
Grandmaster Flash vs. Sugar Hill
Best Makeup
Dee Snyder (Twisted Sister)
Worst Makeup
Mötley Crüe
Best Lingerie
Apollonia Kotero
Dee Snyder (Twisted Sister)
Best Impersonation of a Muppet
Cyndi Lauper
Worst Duets
Julio Iglesias and ________ (fill in)
Producer of the Year
Trevor Horn



Trevor Horn

World Radio History

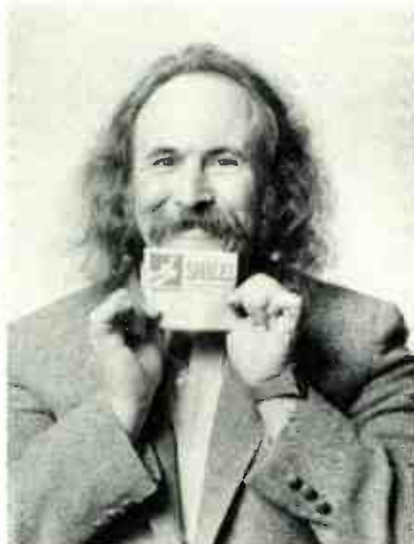


Best Song Titles from a Julie Brown Album
"I Like 'Em Big And Stupid"
"The Homecoming Queen's Got A Gun"
"'Cause I'm A Blonde"
"Earth Girls Are Easy"
(all on *Goddess In Progress*, Rhino)
Rookies of the Year
Bronski Beat, Del Fuegos, Del-Lords, Eurogliders, Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Let's Active, Waterboys
Rookies of the Year Who Weren't Really Rookies
Bangles, Hüsker Dü, Cyndi Lauper, LeRoi Brothers, Replacements, Run-DMC
Clowns of the Year
David Crosby, David Lee Roth
Band Motto of the Year
"Flipper suffered for their music. Now it's your turn."
Nervous Tic of the Year
Billy Idol
Nonevent of the Year
The fifteenth anniversary of the Woodstock festival, held near the original site. It included a "tie-dye extravaganza" sponsored by Rit dye, to "re-create the 60s psychedelic mood." (Quotes from press release.)
Most Encouraging Trend
Breakdancing comes to the suburbs.
Most Disturbing Trends
Heavy metal remains big.
Nearly every song on Billy Joel's *An Innocent Man* becomes a hit. Retromania, anyone?

Picks for '85
The Cure, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Echo & the Bunnymen, Nils Lofgren, Teena Marie, Steve Morse, Paul Young

SPECIFIC HONORS

The Isaac Hayes Money Management Award
Mick Fleetwood
A Pair of Bronzed Designer Jeans
Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen and David Bowie, for Billie, Bobby and Blue (respectively)



David Crosby

The Phyllis Schlafly Platinum Brassiere for Making Sexism Hip
Madonna
The Phil Ochs Gilded Marching Boot
Midnight Oil's Peter Garrett, who (as of press time) was expected to win a seat in the Australian Senate.
The Clint Eastwood "Make My Day" Trophy
Linda Ronstadt, for declaring at a June 27 press conference that she is forever renouncing rock 'n' roll.
Singer Most Deserving of Speech Therapy
Michael Stipe (R.E.M.)
Revoked Visas
Richard Clayderman, Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Julio Iglesias, Andreas Vollenweider

IT WAS THAT KIND OF YEAR

Bands We'll Miss
Fun Boy 3, Gang of Four, King Crimson
Bands We Won't Miss
Kajagoogoo, Roman Holliday
The Singer, Not the Song
Frankie Goes To Hollywood, "Born To Run"
Red Rockers, "Eve Of Destruction"
Tina Turner, "Let's Stay Together"
The Song, Not the Singer
Dan Hartman, "I Can Dream About You"
Robert Hazard, "Girls Just Want To Have Fun"
Rod Temperton, "Thriller"

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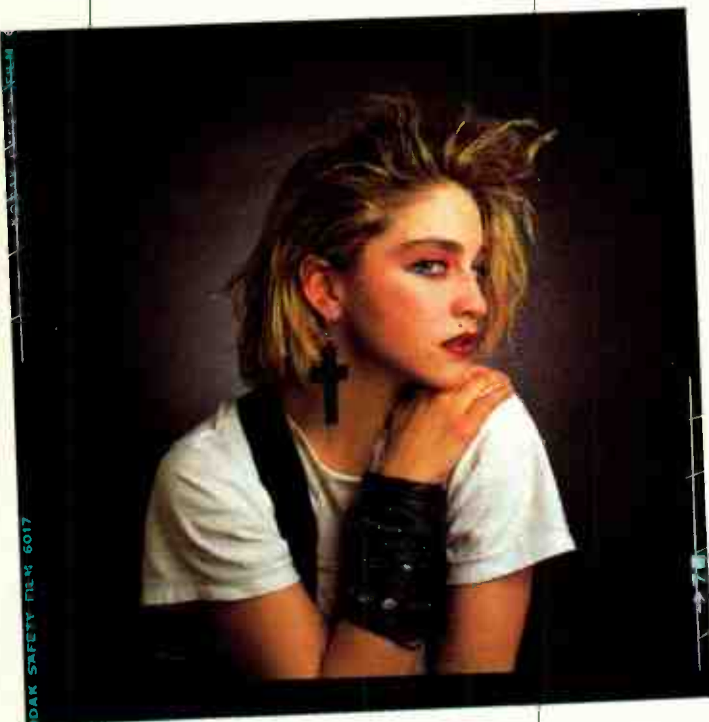

You Can't Go Home Again
Rod Stewart and Jeff Beck, Public Image Limited, the Go-Go's
Meet the New Band, Worse Than the Old Band
Chequered Past, the Clash, Difford & Tilbrook, General Public
Dark Horse
Huey Lewis & the News
One-Hit Wonders
Howard Jones, Naked Eyes, Nena, Re-Flex, Rockwell, Peter Schilling, Talk Talk, Wang Chung
Parodies Regained
Weird Al Yankovic
Days of Our Lives
Chrissie Hynde throws over Ray Davies for Jim Kerr of Simple Minds.
It's About Time!
Capitol Records signs Felá Anikũlapo-Kuti.
Elektra Records signs Rubén Blades.
Run-DMC hits the album charts.
Bananarama, Chaka Khan, M + M, Pointer Sisters, Style Council, Buckwheat Zydeco
Sellouts We Bought
Psychedelic Furs, *Mirror Moves* (Columbia)
Thompson Twins, *Into The Gap* (Arista)
Sellouts We Didn't Buy
Heaven 17, Spandau Ballet, Wham!
Guilty Pleasures
Nina Hagen, *Fearless*
Jermaine Jackson, "Tell Me I'm Not Dreaming"
Paul McCartney, "No More Lonely Nights"
Lionel Richie
John Waite, *No Brakes*
Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty
The following all turned forty in 1984 and may take one free mid-life crisis: Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck, Roger Waters, David Gilmour, Sly Stone, Ray Davies, Al Kooper, Roger Daltrey, John Entwistle, Jack Casady, Diana Ross, Randy Newman, Johnny Winter, Felix Cavaliere, Dave Edmunds, Richie Furay, Robbie Robertson, Jon Anderson, Mike Curb and Peter Tork.
English as a Second Language
Nena, Julio Iglesias, Madonna

Cyndi Lauper

Missing in Action
Adam Ant, Bow Wow Wow, Marianne Faithfull, Debbie Harry, Chas Jankel, Tonio K., Kissing the Pink, Men at Work, New Order, Graham Parker, George Thorogood, Was (Not Was), Warren Zevon
How Can We Miss You If You Won't Go Away?
Marc Almond, the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Starship, Jethro Tull, KC , Manfred Mann, Frank Zappa
Slumps
Blancmange, Dream Syndicate, Jools Holland, Annabelle Lamb, David Lasley, Rank & File
Welcome Back
James Brown, Patti LaBelle, Tom Robinson
Underrated
Terry Bozzio, T-Bone Burnett, Depeche Mode, Los Lobos, Midnight Oil, Steel Pulse, X, XTC
Is It TDK Or Is It Memorex?
John Cafferty & the Beaver Brown Band—a working man's Bruce Springsteen.
Mom Always Liked Him Best
"A lot of Michael's success is due to timing and luck. It could just as easily have been me." – Jermaine Jackson
The Pros and Cons of Offensive Album Covers
Roger Waters
Enough Already!
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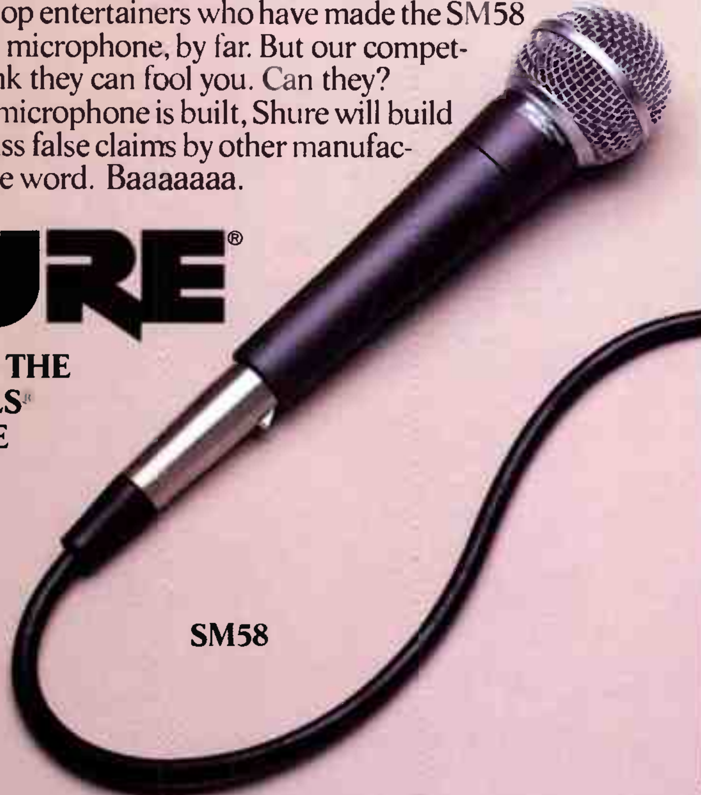

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Has Success Spoiled Paul McCartney?

After the Fall, an Inquiry into What Went Wrong.

By any and all measurements, it had been a complete debacle. *Give My Regards to Broad Street* was excoriated by the film critics. It was reviled by the music critics. And the public gave it a resounding gong by staying out of the theaters in record numbers its first week out of the box. Only days after its premiere, *Broad Street* was ignominiously pulled from release and joined Michael Cimino's epic *Heaven's Gate* in the gallery of Great Stiffs. And the soundtrack album fared little better. After a scant five weeks it had peaked at #21 and had begun a steady descent. What had gone so wrong? Paul McCartney had always had that wondrous ability to go over the heads of the critical pack and rouse the galleries to exonerate him. Now even the *vox populi* was hissing. Had success and superficiality and silly love songs finally spoiled Paul McCartney?

There had been one bright spot in this whole sorry situation: in support of *Broad Street*, McCartney had begun doing interviews with a vengeance. He did the dailies, the weeklies, the monthlies. He nervously rubbed shoulders with Julian Lennon on *Friday Night Videos*. He and Linda even did *Entertainment Tonight*. Most of these were skillfully steered by McCartney toward *Broad Street*, and his response to the inevitable question of his solo saccharinity seemed just candid enough to appear confessional, but invariably ended with a cute shrug and an I've-got-to-be-me Paul smile. But several interviewers managed to crack the McCartney wall of charm and got him to shed valuable new light on the Beatle era, and particularly his relationship with John Lennon. More importantly, they provoked Paul into revealing a number of answers to the question, "What went so very wrong?"

One of the best of these was done by Richard Harrington, portions of which were published by the *Washington Post*. Another was by *Billboard*'s Mike Hennessey; it remains unpublished. Steve Grant of the British weekly *Time Out* also distinguished himself. But the most intimate of all the McCartney interviews was unquestionably by Joan Goodman, who debriefed Paul and Linda over six months; her lengthy interview ran in *Playboy*. What emerges is a portrait of a complex personality torn between creative conscience and controlled comfort. Paul McCartney may yet come back from this disaster and make the unforgettable music he is still capable of, but the road will not be an easy one. Above all, McCartney must stop playing it safe, stop trying to sell us skim milk as cream, and start once again challenging himself and his audience. The alternative is more messy, unmemorable curtain calls like *Broad Street*.

Ostensibly, John Lennon and Paul McCartney were opposites: one raw, driven, deep; the other romantic, sweet, flippant. But when Richard Harrington asked if Paul resented that easy categorization, McCartney sighed, "It's a question of image. You can't help what you are, you know. I was brought up a certain way, I was actually brought up to tip my cap to ladies at bus stops. If someone in a room was nervous, I was brought up to kind of put them at ease. That's the way my family is. Liverpool

By Vic Garbarini and Jock Baird

JOHN LANOIS/BLACK STAR

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people *can* be flippant. You want a serious answer, and they can be flippant. When I look at those press conference films, I think, 'My God, you could have done a serious answer there.' Looking back, it's easy to be serious. But at the time you were just being what you were. To me, it was a blast. I really loved meeting all the press. The other guys in the band didn't. My family in Liverpool was a very big, warm family. John's wasn't. It was a very, very different state of affairs with John's family. I didn't realize what effect all of this would have. So I'm still like that. I'd rather be flippant than serious, it's just me. It doesn't mean I'm any more stupid.

"These are like psychiatrists' questions, I'm trying to work them out for myself, never mind you. All I can do is figure that my character comes out more flippant, but I know it isn't. I know. I used to talk to John. He was no more deep than I am. We were equally flippant. If you look at John's upbringing and my upbringing, mine made me into a very different kind of person. My upbringing was very warm, a very comfortable childhood, not a rich upbringing. His family was richer than mine, nobody knows that. John made himself out to be the big working-class hero—he was the least working-class in the group. John had an auntie who gave him a hundred pounds one birthday and that still is something I wouldn't give my kids. It's just a huge amount of money.

"John's father left home when he was three, John went to live with his aunt and uncle, the uncle died; the kid's got to be starting to think, 'It's my fault.' John's mother lived with a waiter that he didn't really approve of—and in those days that really wasn't clever for your mum to be living in sin. John had all of this shit going down. His mother got run over when he was sixteen. Coming to visit him and goodbye mum, close the door, two seconds later, ding ding on the door, 'Sorry, your mum just got killed by a police car right outside.' He got married, got a divorce. I think that's why John was like John was, why John went into primal therapy. He needed it all. I feel like I don't really need too much of that. I don't want to be drippy, I really don't. I'm as intelligent as John was. I know where he was at, I know what he read and I know what we talked about, and I felt every bit as intelligent. But you're stuck with yourself, you're stuck with your image. If your mommy brings you up to be a nice boy, you're stuck, you're a nice boy.

"I know I've lost my edge. I do need outside injection, stimulation, and it's not there anymore. My stuff has gotten a lot more poppy without that outside stimulus."

Despite his "warm" family memories, Paul lost his own mother at age fourteen. "Actually, that was one of the things that brought John and me very close together," he told Joan Goodman. "Our way of facing it at that age was to laugh at it—not in our hearts, but on the surface. It was sort of a wink thing between us. When someone would say, 'How's your mother,' John would say, 'She died.' The person would become incredibly embarrassed. After a few years, the pain subsided a bit, but I think it helped our intimacy and trust in each other."

From the time Paul first joined the Quarrymen in 1957, Lennon was the unquestioned leader of the band. McCartney tells Goodman, "I definitely looked up to John. We all did. He was older and very much the leader; he was the quickest wit and the smartest and all that kind of thing. So whenever he did praise any of us, it was great praise indeed because he didn't dish it out much. If you ever got a speck of it, a crumb of it, you were quite grateful."

Lennon took particular delight in Paul's Little Richard imitation (Paul even recalls that his audition consisted of "Long Tall Sally" and "Tutti-Frutti"). "John always used to egg me on," he laughed to Steve Grant. "He used to say, 'Come on, Paul, knock the shit out of "Kansas City,"' just when the engineers thought they had a vocal they could handle." Lennon was the catalyst for some of McCartney's finest rock 'n' roll vocals, as Paul explained to Goodman: "It requires a great deal of nerve to just jump up and scream like an idiot! I would fall a little bit short, not have that kick, that soul, and John would go, 'Come on, you can sing it better than that, man! Really throw it up!' All right, John, okay....

"I envied his repartee. But it wasn't a question of envying each other. Each of us was as good as the other. I was very good at sarcasm myself. I could really keep up with John then. If I was in a bad enough mood, I was right up there with him. We were terrific then. He could be as wicked as he wanted, and I could be as wicked, too."

For Duncan Fallowell in a *Chicago Tribune* interview, Paul recounted the genesis of a famous Lennon line: "We were in a big car on our way to the Royal Command Performance and we hadn't written any line of patter and John said, 'Look, I'll just say something like, "You at the back there clap your hands and you at the front just rattle your jewelry."' Bob Hope would need forty writers to come up with a line like that. But John did it in the car on the way. Talk about leaving it late—the balls of it. But the Beatles generally—we always had this confidence in ourselves."

At a key moment in her interview, Joan Goodman asks Paul if it's true he works best off other people, and who is he using as a sounding board these days? McCartney replies, "My kids. I'll play some new tune on the piano. If it's real good, the kids will pick up on it and start humming it." What's gone wrong with Paul McCartney's music? Could Paul have spelled it out any more clearly? He's given up the competition. It's not simply that he lost a collaborator who brought out the best in him and mitigated his weaknesses—that's blaming McCartney for something he had no control over. But why has he never roused himself to find a new partner, to get back into a competitive situation? Even Linda McCartney, in one of the memorable moments in the Goodman interview when Paul is called out of the room, admitted "None of Wings were good enough to play with him—including me, for sure. I mean, how do you go out with Beethoven and say, 'Sure, I'll sing harmony with you,' when you've never sung a note. It was *mad*."

"I *know* I've lost my edge," Paul admitted to Steve Grant. "I like edgy stuff, actually—it was me who decided in 'Norwegian Wood' that the house should burn down, not that it's any big deal. But I do need a kind of outside injection, stimulation, and it's not there anymore. And remember, the edge came from all the Beatles. If Ringo or George didn't like anything—it was out. My stuff has gotten more poppy without that outside stimulus."

It wasn't only the personalities that challenged McCartney. His Beatles and post-Beatles experience is rife with situations that forced him to dig deeper to come up with the goods. One of these came early on, when producer George Martin was searching for another original song to follow "Love Me Do." Martin was still unconvinced Lennon or McCartney were good enough songwriters, as he told Paul Laurence in a 1978 interview for *Audio*. "Their writing was okay, but I wasn't knocked out by it. It wasn't very good, actually. I mean, it didn't show the enormous promise that came later. I had to tell them to go and do better. After 'Love Me Do' and 'P.S. I Love You,' I looked around for a hit song for them, and I found one, written by Mitch Murray, one of the Tin Pan Alley writers

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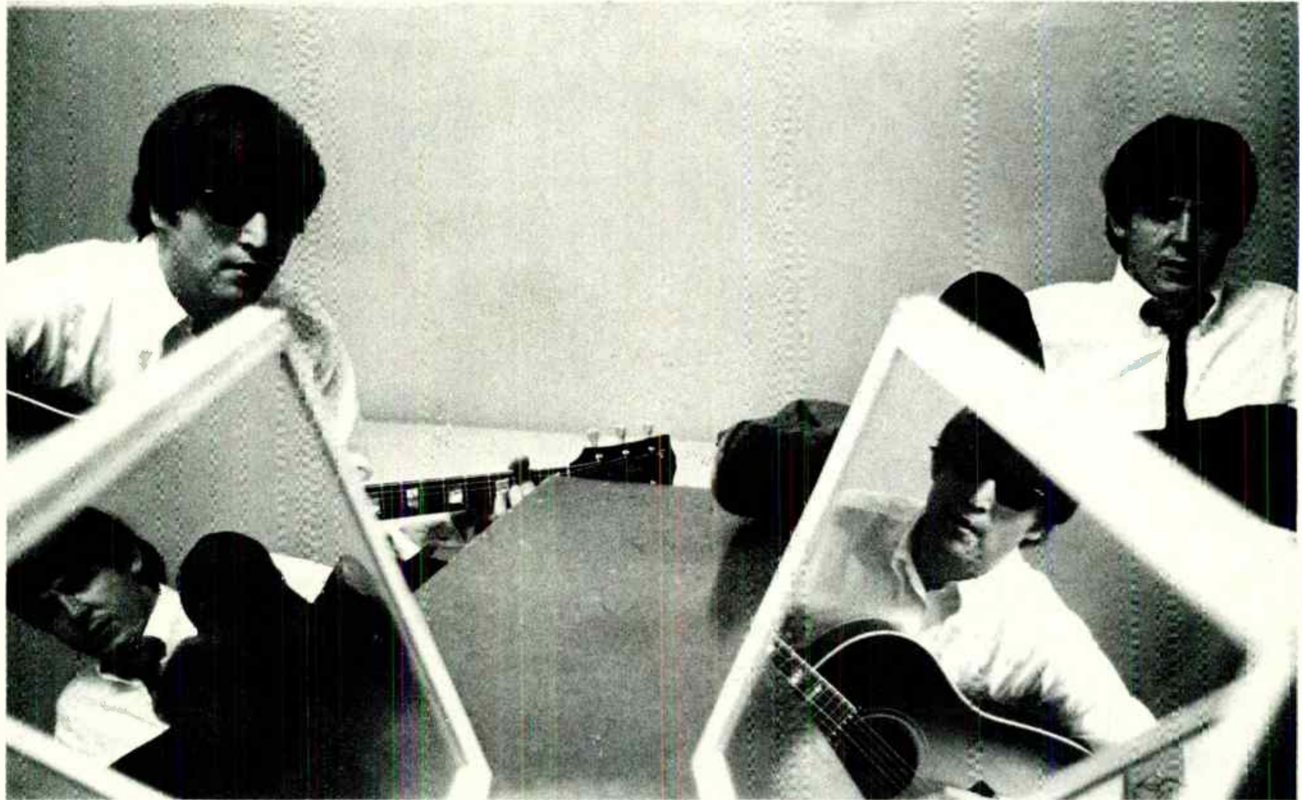

CURT GUNTHER/CAMERA 5

Though Lennon and McCartney had family tragedies in common, each dealt with it in a very different way.

of the day. I told them to record it, and they weren't very happy about it. They did record it—'How Do You Do' was the title—but they came back to me afterwards and said, 'Look, we can do better than this!' and I said, 'Well, I don't believe you can, but show me.' And they came back with 'Please Please Me,' and I admitted that they had a super record, a super tune. *That* was what I was looking for."

Other bands also gave McCartney incentive—in an interesting aside to Goodman, he admitted his first reaction on hearing unfamiliar music is jealousy. Paul told *Musician* that he'd felt one-upped upon hearing the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*: "That album just flipped me out. Still is one of my favorites—the musical invention on it is just amazing. When I heard it, I thought, 'Oh dear, this is the album of all time. What the hell are we going to do?' Our ideas for *Sergeant Pepper* took off from that standard." Paul was further inspired by a Pete Townshend interview in *Melody Maker*: He said the Who had made some track that was the loudest, the most raucous rock 'n' roll, the dirtiest thing they'd ever done. It made me think, 'Right. Got to do it.' I like that kind of geeking up. And we decided to do the loudest, nastiest, sweatiest rock number we could. That was 'Helter Skelter.'"

Friction within the actual recording situation has also jolted McCartney out of his complacency. When *Musician* asked him if there were any Beatles LPs that were aided by creative tension, he immediately replied, "the White Album. That was the tension album. We were all in the midst of the psychedelic thing, or just coming out of it. In any case, it was weird. Never before had we recorded with beds in the studio and people visiting for hours on end; business meetings and all that. There was a lot of friction. It was the weirdest experience because we were about to break up; that was tense in itself."

Another notable example is McCartney's post-Beatles trip to Lagos to make *Band On The Run*. He told *Musician*, "It was going to be a normal Wings album, but then our drummer and guitarist never showed up—left us in the lurch at the last minute. So there was just Denny Laine, Linda and myself in Nigeria. I took a lot of control on that album. And there were a lot of crazy circumstances and weird things happening. At one point we were held up at knifepoint. It was a real fight to make that album." *Musician* then pressed Paul on the usefulness of those kinds of creative pressures. He admitted, "Unfortunately yes, it does help. It's unfortunate because who wants to go around having stress all the time just to aid creativity. But when it happens it does actually seem to help. It's a drag because the logic then follows that we should all walk around even more stressed to make better albums. Who needs it? I'd rather not make albums than do that."

But in avoiding stress, McCartney has gone to the opposite extreme. One need only look at his meticulous re-creation of Abbey Road Studio in the basement of his Soho Square offices, complete with phony firedoors and a massively enlarged photograph duplicating another roomful of equipment; even the clock in the photo/mural keeps perfect time. This is taking a security blanket to ridiculous extremes. In this carefully controlled environment, there's no accident, no dare, no risk of any kind. It's more dangerous hailing a cab out on the street. An interesting contrast was Ringo's reaction when asked to re-record "Hey Jude" for *Give My Regards To Broad Street*, as Paul told Richard Harrington. "Ringo said, 'Oh no, I don't want to do that.' I asked why and he said, 'I've done it. I've done my drum thing on that.' He wasn't trying to re-create it or bring it back. I think his basic theory was probably part to do with the sacrilege thing—no it wouldn't be right. 'Hey Jude' *was* a very special take when we did it. In actual fact, Ringo was in the toilet. I started the song without drums, I thought he was in his drum booth. He heard me starting, 'Hey Jude, don't make it....' Hey, he does up his fly, leaps back into the studio and he's creeping past me, I'm doing this take realizing the drummer is trying to make his way back to the booth, he makes his way very quietly, just got there in time for his entry so it was kind of a magic take. I think he just didn't want to try re-creating that magic again, he wasn't up for that. And a little bit of the sacrilege theory. 'It's been done, we did it

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with the Beatles, why try again?' My question was, 'Why not?'"

It's not that McCartney isn't allowed to re-record old Beatles tunes. In fact, as he said to Harrington, it was part of a "healing process." "I started to realize that I too agreed with people that some of my nicest songs were some of the old ones and there really shouldn't be anything in the way of my singing them except me. I was what was in the way. So I started rediscovering them a bit, started to see new things in the lyrics. Because of the passage of time, they'd mean different things. I thought it was a bit of waste to take all these legend theories and sacrilege theories and start believing them myself. They say that's the biggest mistake. Marilyn Monroe believed in her own legend. I've always been warned off that. I thought, shit, they're just songs really, I'm just song singer; this is now, I'm allowed to sing them, aren't I? Anyone got any mad objections, speak now or forever hold your peace. 'For No One' I'd never done anywhere, ever. I'd written the song, took it to the studio, one day recorded it, end of story. It's just a record, a museum piece. And I hated the idea of them staying as museum pieces."

All well and good, but the prospect of re-creating in the laboratory original accidents of human nature is one that Paul McCartney should approach with great caution. He recalls that "Love Me Do" was originally John's lead vocal; the day of the session George Martin asked John to play harmonica and gave the lead to Paul. He called it "very nerve-racking." How could he ever re-create that moment in his career? How can

Paul & eggman: "Come on, you can sing it better than that."

FRED WARD/BLACK STAR

he repeat the magic of how he got the title, "Eleanor Rigby": "I got the name Rigby from a shop in Bristol, where I was wandering around one day," he told Joan Goodman. "I think Eleanor was from Eleanor Bron, the actress in *Help!* But I just liked the name. It sounded natural." Or the song "Help!," the title of which came from their film deadline desperation?

Or in particular, could he ever replicate the morning he discovered "Yesterday," how "it fell out of bed. I had a piano by my bedside and I...must have dreamed it, because I tumbled out of bed and put my hands on the piano keys and I had a tune in my head. It was just all there, a complete thing. I couldn't believe it. It came too easy. In fact, I didn't believe I'd written it. I thought maybe I'd heard it before, it was some other tune, and I went around for weeks playing the chords of the song for people, asking them, 'Is this *like* something? I *think* I've written it.' And people would say, 'No, it's not like anything else, but it's good.'"

Another irreplaceable component to the McCartney creative equation was the times themselves. Paul freely admits, "We were the biggest nickers in town. Plagiarists *extraordinaire*." He discloses "Not A Second Time" and "In My Life" were Miracles cops, that the Beatles "close-harmony" period was influenced by a then-popular British vocal group the Fourmost, that "Good Day Sunshine" was influenced by the Lovin' Spoonful.

Even more importantly, the social context of the Beatles provided its own momentum. They were completely in the spotlight, every statement closely scrutinized. Richard Harrington asked McCartney if he resented or feared carrying the weight of the 60s movement. "I don't think I was ever really afraid of it," he replied. "See, we knew the truth. We were just the spokesmen for a generation, we were the most visible. We *wanted* to be the most visible, we were the ones who went in the papers and were on TV a lot. But our opinions were the opinions of our entire generation, it was not just us. After those shows, we'd go and we'd sit with the 60s crowd, and we'd talk and they'd tell us stuff. We didn't just lay it down. We weren't gods or gurus. We knew the truth. We were just part of the generation, because we had these haircuts, we didn't invent them but nobody knew that. They'd ask us about the Vietnam war and I'd just tell you what everybody in London thought, and here in America thought. Kids were pissing off to Canada, it wasn't just us. They all knew it was a bad war.

"What kept us sane and what kept us rational—and I don't think we ever really got to fear the whole thing too much—was that we knew we were just really being the spokesmen, that behind us was this backup, this weight of opinion. So we were able to spread the weight that way. I mean, we'd get into hassles of sorts that would make you frightened, those were just misunderstandings like John being quoted about us being bigger than Jesus. You know now the story, which was taken out of context, he was actually trying to say, wow, the churches are doing such a bad job these days that we're even able to be bigger than them, we're getting more people at our shows than the churches. A perfectly valid social comment at the time, still is, but John had to go through great fear. You see the footage of him now answering those questions, boy was he nervous. I remember the hotel room and it was like goodbye, good luck. It was like sending someone off to war.

"Ringo got death threats. Went to Canada and Ringo was going to get shot. Somebody reminded me the other night, it was in Dallas or Ft. Worth, someplace where you don't really need a death threat with its reputation at the time, someone let off a firecracker in the audience and Ringo skipped a beat. We just had to breeze through it, we tended to try to take that breezy attitude. People would ask us, 'What are we going to do now,' and our answer was, 'Something will happen.' There was always this blind optimism."

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ONSTAGE PHOTOS

Paul and Linda stifling yawns at Broad Street *premiere.*

The are revisionist histories of the Beatles, notably Philip Norman's *Shout!,* that paint Paul as ruthless and ambitious. McCartney disputes this theory to the last, as he told Richard Harrington: "This image of me as the sharp, ruthless go-getter, I don't actually think I am. I want to succeed. I don't see anything to be ashamed of in that. My parents had high aspirations for me. My mother wanted me to be a doctor, but I just couldn't do the exams, I just wasn't smart enough. My dad wanted me to be very successful. They wanted me to succeed. We were working-class and you come out of the working class with your dreams. You've seen all the movies, you've seen *Executive Suite*, you've seen rags-to-riches stories and you want to do it yourself. Along the way you'll get jealous people saying, 'Aha, this makes you ruthless.' I don't actually think I've actually ever made a ruthless move. Show me the move that makes me ruthless. I'd be interested to see it. A lot of it's bitchiness, a lot of it's jealousy, and a lot of it is just plain ignorance."

Steve Grant asked him about the sacking of Stuart Sutcliffe. McCartney replied sarcastically, "Ah yes. Well, I virtually killed Stu, didn't I? The problem with Stu was that he *couldn't play bass guitar.* We had to turn him away in photographs, because he'd be doing F# and we'd be holding G. Stu and I had a fight once onstage in Hamburg, but we were virtually holding each other up. We couldn't move, couldn't do it. The thing that concerned me was the music, and that we get on musically, and we didn't. Same with Pete Best."

This concern for the music first and foremost even led to some difficult confrontations with fellow Beatles. In his *Musician* interview, Paul says, "I remember on 'Hey Jude' telling George not to play guitar. He wanted to echo riffs after the vocal phrases, which I didn't think was appropriate. He didn't see it like that, and it was a bit of a number for me to have to *dare* to tell George Harrison—who's one of the greats—not to play. It was like an insult. But that's how we did a lot of our stuff."

One of the more lurid charges in new Beatles scholarship was that Brian Epstein's death was in fact a contract job. Said McCartney to Grant, "He suggested there was a hit. True, the merchandising was in utter chaos. It would have cost us a fortune to police it all. And out of this, there's been created some myth about a hit squad. Knowing Brian, it's much more likely to have been the pills and the booze. End of story." Paul reserves his most savage comments for Peter Brown's charge that Lennon slept with Epstein on a trip to Spain. "I knew John Lennon better than anyone, except his Aunt Mimi and Yoko. I was in a million hotel rooms with him. I was with him when he was pissed. Do you really think he wouldn't have touched me up at least once? That I wouldn't have gotten a hint? Nobody is getting it right! Philip Norman is presenting things that were gray in black and white terms, and it's becoming history."

But McCartney's most newsworthy revelations concern the actual breakup of the Beatles. At the time, the fall of 1969, Paul was trying to get the band to do small clubs again. McCartney tells Joan Goodman that right at the same moment, John told manager Allen Klein that he didn't want to continue with the Beatles, and that Klein advised him not to tell the others until he had completed a solo record deal. The very next morning Paul presented his small-club offensive to the band; John reportedly replied, "I think you're daft." According to Paul, "He then said; 'I wasn't going to tell you until I signed the Capitol thing, but I'm leaving the group.' And that was really it. The cat amongst the pigeons. But the really hurtful thing to me was that John really wasn't going to tell us." John wanted very much to make the announcement, but after several months had passed and Paul's first solo LP was appearing, Paul almost casually made the decision public in a press handout. "I figured it was about time we told the truth. It was stupid, okay, and John was hurt by it, but I thought someone ought to say something. I didn't want to keep lying to people. It was a conscience thing with me."

Goodman's interview also describes a number of dramatic business meetings related to the breakup. In one of these, John asked for a million-pound loan, dropping jaws and ending the meeting in complete chaos. Paul also describes manager Neil Aspinall reading aloud the official document that dissolved the partnership, finally breaking into tears. "He did a Nixon wobble. His voice went. And we were all suddenly aware of the physical consequence of what had been going on. I thought, 'Oh God, we really *have* broken up the Beatles! Oh shit!'" Another memorable event was the final dissolution meeting at the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan. "There were green-baize tables—like the Geneva Conference—with millions of documents laid out for us all to sign. George had just come off tour, Ringo and I'd flown in especially from England, and John wouldn't show up! He wouldn't come from across the park! George got on the phone, yelled,'Take those fucking shades off and come over here, you!' John still wouldn't come over. He had a balloon delivered with a sign saying, 'LISTEN TO THIS BALLOON.' It was all quite far out."

For McCartney, the Beatles' end was the beginning of the most traumatic period of his life. He told Mike Hennessey, "The difference for me was obviously the breakup of the Beatles. Because one day you have one of the greatest jobs in music and the next day you haven't. It's quite a blow—and I took it as a blow. I just could not take it any other way. A lot of music I wrote after that has a lot of pain in it. There's a lot of unfinished stuff." To Joan Goodman he admitted, "I couldn't handle it emotionally. It was a barreling, empty feeling that just rolled across my soul. Until then, I was a cocky sod. Linda had to deal with this guy who didn't particularly want to get out of bed, and if he did, wanted to go back to bed pretty soon after. He wanted to drink earlier and earlier each day and didn't see the point in shaving because where was he going? It was generally pretty morbid." This slough of despond, though short-lived, was a crucial turning point. The acute pain of the breakup, the feeling of being damaged goods, has never left Paul.

It was not really until the death of John Lennon that Paul made contact with this pain. His submersion in the cult of ordinariness and his espousal of "Silly Love Songs" was shattered on his extraordinary *Tug Of War* album. John's death

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shook Paul up, broke down his defenses, and brought him back to writing about something that mattered to him and to us. Rather than spouting clichés, he was sharing something important again. In his breathtaking "If You Were Here Today," Paul eloquently captures the sense of loss: "And if I said I really knew you well, what would your answer be/ If you were here today?/ Well, knowing you, you'd probably laugh and say that we were worlds apart/ If you were here today/ But as for me, I still remember/ How it was before/ And I am holding back the tears no more/ I love you." It's written with a naked honesty that John himself rarely approached in his own work. If Paul would only trust himself, and his audience enough to show us more of his true face, the acceptance that he craves would be freely given. It makes us look again at Paul's best Beatles work: "Let It Be" and its almost archetypical imagery is a far more effective song about motherhood than anything John had done during the Beatles period. And "Hey Jude," written about Julian Lennon, is also a far more evocative elegy on the theme of abandonment than anything John did until well into his solo years.

> "The breakup of the Beatles was a blow. I couldn't handle it emotionally. It was a barreling, empty feeling that rolled across my soul. Until then I was a cocky sod."

The whole issue of "Silly Love Songs" and Paul's sentimentality turns on pain. Paul has known no less than John, and has captured it no less brilliantly. Yet he is labeled superficial, even though Lennon was writing deeply romantic songs at the end of his life without hearing that charge. "Listen, talk to me about it!" said a frustrated McCartney when Harrington brought it up. "I tell you, that's what I'm saying. I know John for what he was. John was a romantic, romantic, God, more romantic than anyone, but he had all these personal problems and he learned to create a shell, so that if anyone came at him with something, he'd just say piss off, I'll hit you. That comes of insecurity. My kind of thing comes out of being lucky with my upbringing. I was contented, pretty much. I was really lucky, I had real ace parents who really got in there. My mother killed herself to bring those kids up. She had cancer when I was fourteen, she just worked like a devil, man. Someone can say, yeah, bring on the strings, but that's not funny. That's deadly serious. The bloody woman died trying to bring us up. Silly love songs, that's what it all means to me, it's deadly serious."

It's impossible not to conclude that for Paul, the biggest single barrier to producing great work is the shadow of the Beatles still hanging over him. Who could disagree with him when he sighed to Goodman, "I like collaboration, but the collaboration I had with John—it's difficult to imagine anyone else coming up to that standard. Because he was no slouch, that boy. He was pretty hot stuff." And yet McCartney's very survival in music now depends on him putting those days behind him and not retreating from pressure and high expectations. He has written more great songs than any songwriter now alive, and that talent is still there if Paul will only acknowledge it and rise to the kinds of challenges he has always met in the past.

When Richard Harrington asked McCartney if it were still difficult dealing with his past, he replied, "Very. I couldn't ever really make the accommodation, it would have been just like I have to change my profession if I really agree with that. But obviously I had to sort of look at the thing and think, 'Wait a minute, let's be realistic: what are my best songs?' They're not of now. I think it's generally agreed that it's the Beatles songs. So, yeah. I had to admit it would be very hard to top them, there, my bloody conscience making me be realistic again, spoilsport, won't let me live in a dream. But you're either going to give up, or you're going to keep trying. If you keep trying, what are you going to try to do, worse? No, I'll try to do better. It doesn't seem too damning to me because at least they're mine, at least I'm not trying to fight somebody else's reputation, at least I can claim them. Hey, okay, you like them better? They're mine, too.

"Obviously, it is not easy to top something like the Beatles, to top that feeling, to ever re-create any of that. What I do is look to some of the things that have happened that have been successful, and whereas this element of my conscience tends to say, 'Oh, no, you can't claim that, it's a load of rubbish,' I'll now fight, stand a bit toe-to-toe with my conscience, wait a minute, c'mon, you've got the biggest bloody record since the gramophone, beat all the Beatles. 'Mull Of Kintyre,' in Britain, that is the highest selling single record ever. I can't just dismiss that and say, 'Well, it was a bunch of suckers bought that, they're all idiots, they didn't really like it, they're just mugs, I forced them into it, it was the promo tour I did.' It's not true. And secretly I have even had the kind of cheek to think recently, I can do bettter even than those songs. I've begun to really go toe-to-toe with my conscience, and say, c'mon, man, this can be done. That's how I deal with that one.

"It's a little too easy to just dismiss the critics, but it's very tempting. Because they can be wrong and because you just couldn't get by otherwise. There are certain criticisms I read where I go, 'You clever bastard, you've got it right.'

"Somebody on this tour said to me I'm bigger than any role I could ever play. Well, if that's it, I'm finished, I might as well go sit on the toilet and take Polaroids of myself. I just can't exist like that, I've just got to get out there. I've got to take all the knocks, all the chances, take John Lennon telling me I suck, I've got to accept all of that crap full in the face and if I still want to keep doing it, I've still got to ride through all that stuff. And it isn't easy, but I'm not pleading mercy. It just comes with the territory." Ⓜ

Paul on his own turf; should he leave home more often?

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The Real End of a

by Timothy White

B*oo!"* squeals the bouncy three-foot witch in the tipsy peaked hat as she greets her classmate, a pint-sized ninja in black pajamas and head-band who's toting a droopy trick-or-treat sack.

"Hey, I gotta dog named Boo," says the bright-eyed blonde woman with a radiant grin, as she watches the costumed pair of kindergarteners scamper through the Halloween fair being held in the local schoolyard, a wispy swirl of sawdust in their wake. It's a brisk late-October afternoon in one of the picturesque canyons above Hollywood, and Rickie Lee Jones, appealingly disheveled in azure jeans, lemon sweatshirt and brand new tennis sneakers, is spending a few hours wandering through a peewee carnival environment in which she is decidedly out of scale.

"It's amazing how the grown-ups here all walk around trying to play the role of big people for all the little people," she says with a gurgling chuckle as she scans the throng of children punctuated by attentive, towering parents. "They're as self-conscious in this kiddie-sized place as the kids are oblivious to it." She expresses delight with the bantam snack bars, the diminutive booths, midget Ferris wheel and shrimpy drinking fountains on the fringes of the festivities, speculating that there can be few other places in a community where tots don't feel threatened by the dimensions of the adult-controlled world. "It never seemed fair when I was a little girl that everything in life was designed for the convenience of adults and the discomfort and obstruction of kids. Made me afraid to grow up—and afraid not to grow up."

Her dark eyes burn with a wistful intensity, a slight but sure smile underscoring the conviction in her declaration. Her words are dispelled by the clang of the bell atop the Jack-in-the-Beanstalk Test Your Strength game, the signal that a feisty twelve-year-old wielding a sledgehammer has driven the counterweight all the way up into the plywood clouds of the angry giant's sky kingdom. After fortifying herself with some pumpkin-shaped pecan cookies, Rickie Lee tries her hand at the Beanstalk concession but slams the weight no higher than mid-stalk.

"Never prejudge a kid," she advises afterward, as she leaves the grounds, heading for her nearby hilltop cottage, "they can have a lot of hidden strength."

Indeed, Rickie Lee's thirty-year-long confrontation with her own phobias and inner might has made for an unpredictable personal saga of no small scope. That the inherent struggles and triumphs of her troubled passage are never far from her mind is only too apparent as she bounds out of her gleaming new Jaguar, calling out to the black-brown Newfoundland puppy romping in the ivy-carpeted backyard.

"Boo! Boo Radley! I'm home, Boo!"

For those unfamiliar with *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel (or the 1962 film) about race relations and the loss of childhood innocence in rural Alabama, Boo Radley was a retarded smalltown recluse who was an object of superstition and fear for the two motherless children of a local lawyer. In conquering her terror of the mysterious inhabitant of the ramshackle house on her street, a young girl befriends a purportedly "malevolent phantom" who later saves her life one inky Halloween night. It is a tale of ordinary courage and the step to-

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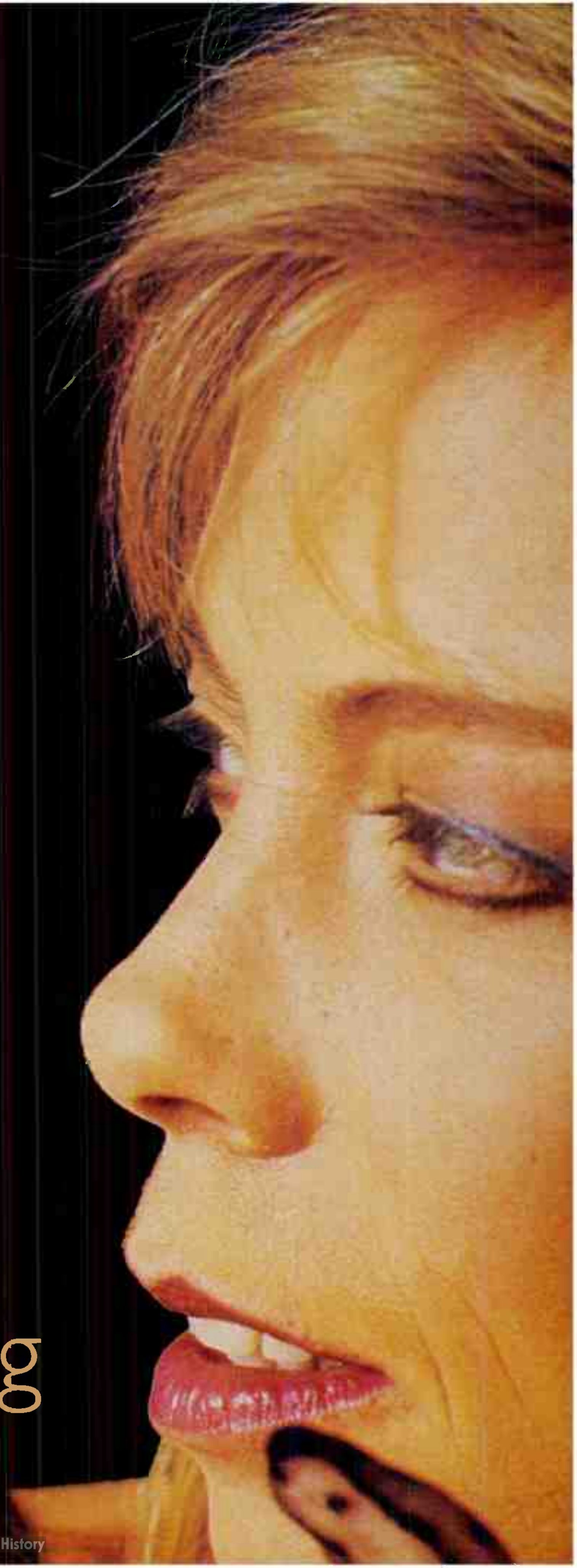
J O N E S

ward self-realization that is its reward. The book, and its lesson, hold great personal significance for Rickie Lee Jones.

"Three fears weaken the heart," according to an old Welsh proverb. "Fear of the truth, fear of poverty, and fear of the devil." Rickie Lee Jones, singer, songwriter and saucy, shoo-bopping second of three daughters (and one son) by Richard Loris Jones

Long Beginning



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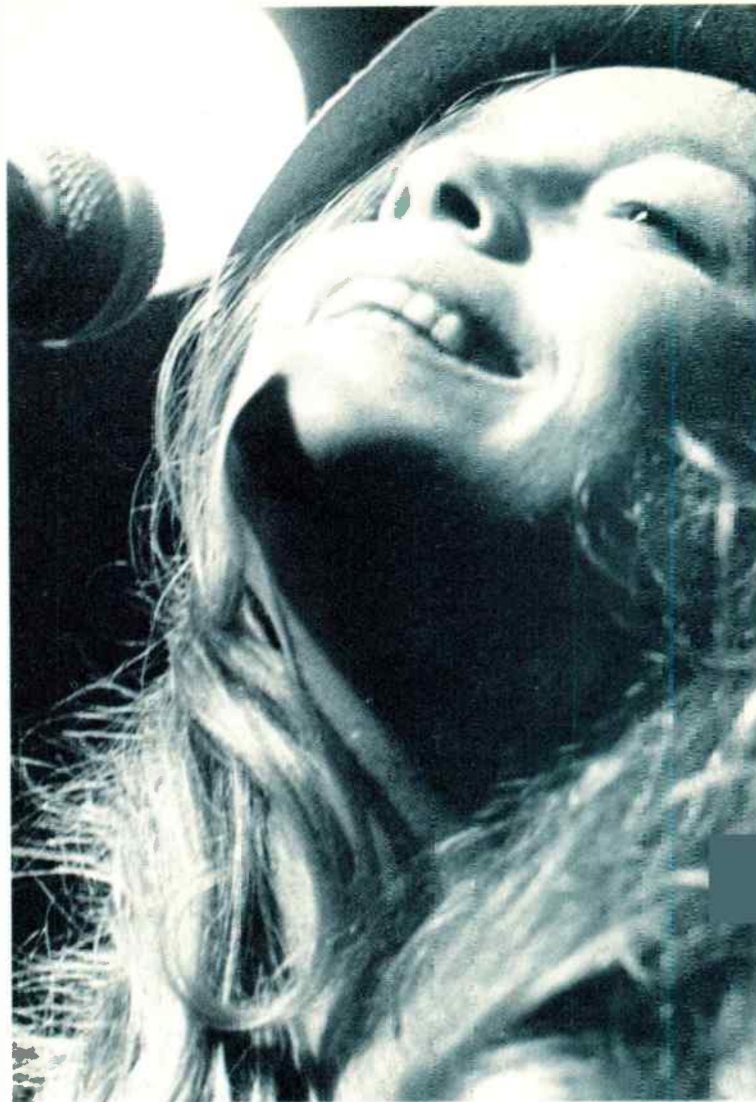
and wife Bettye Jane, is descended from Welsh and Irish stock. Her long-estranged father, the orphanage-reared son of a one-legged vaudeville dancer named Peg Leg Jones, used to tell her as a child that she should be proud of her "gypsy" lineage, because it consisted of "singers, dancers, poets and people who believed in *magic*." It's not easy to embrace one's background when the most flamboyant link to it, the father who exhorted his daughter to a pride of heritage, is a failed actor and embittered rounder who abandoned his brood when Rickie Lee was still in her teens. It was he who taught her to sing and play music, and it wasn't too long before she was following in his errant footsteps, a school truant and tireless runaway with rock rooted in the jazz side of life. Expelled from Timberline High in Olympia, Washington, she drifted from city to city, landing in Los Angeles in 1973 at the age of nineteen. She was wretched, anxiety-ridden and racing with the Old Deceiver, hoping she could somehow, some way locate a safe haven before he got a sturdy grip on her sorrow and fear-scarred soul.

A Tinsel Town mendicant, she slept behind the HOLLYWOOD sign and on the couches of transient cronies, playing for pin money in bars in bohemian Venice, California like the Comeback Inn. Her phobias were numberless but her greatest qualm was also her gravest need: some lasting friends. "I guess I had learned not to depend on anybody else," as she puts it, "'cause once people start affecting what happens to you, it's trouble." Spoken like a true vagabond, knowing the nearness of heartbreak with each fragile reconnection to the world. The big risk—and the resultant payoff—arrived in the form of one unkempt, carburetor-voiced crooner named Tom Waits and sidekick Chuck E. Weiss, both habitués of the storied Tropicana motel on Santa Monica Boulevard.

Buttressed by her buddies, she appeared at the Troubadour on its open-house Hoot Nights, and ambled through a spoken-word hipster monologue peppered with her own songs, the first being "Easy Money." A friend sang the slinky little ditty over the phone to the late Lowell George of Little Feat fame, and he cut it for his *Thanks, I'll Eat It Here* solo LP. Signed to Warner Bros., George's label, due to the support of staff producer Ted Templeman and A&R man Lenny Waronker (who'd caught her at the Troubadour), her debut *Rickie Lee Jones* album clicked in 1979 on the strength of "Chuck E.'s In Love." The single was inspired by a 1977 phone call to Waits from Weiss, who'd lit out for Denver to romance a cousin. "Chuck E.'s in love!" Waits informed Jones as soon as he hung up, and she turned Tom's exclamation into rock 'n' roll folklore.

In the years since she first scaled the charts with her finger-poppin' mixture of Van Morrison/Laura Nyro-complexioned hymns of loneliness, disjunction and bartered love among the urban rootless, she has shown herself to be a wholly unique voice in the recent history of rock 'n' roll, her downbeat swagger and raw jazz balladry soul-piercing in its poignant clarity. Though she is not prolific, her modest output of three LPs (her debut, 1981's *Pirates* and her new *The Magazine*), an EP (*Girl At Her Volcano*, 1983) and a handful of other, scattered tracks has nonetheless attracted enormous attention for its fusion of pop idioms, poetry, jazz, bits of gospel and theater. As her slurred, torchy purr swoops from a sob to a trill to an exhilarating wail, her eccentric, ethereal records take on the qualities of non-fiction musical novels.

Jones has had much to sing about, not all of it particularly joyous. A moody, self-absorbed teenager (her brother Danny liked to joke that she was a "witch") she had a dark premonition one morning as he got on his motorcycle. Moments later, he had his leg torn off in a traffic accident that left him partially paralyzed and the family devastated. All her life she has felt that "things can go wrong on a moment's notice," a dread-steeped outlook that endured through the early days of her



success. When her much-publicized romance with Tom Waits ended in 1980, she became physically ill with grief, and spent months in a daze of heartsickness. Plunging herself into the completion of *Pirates*, itself a partial diary of the breakup, she grew close with musician chum Sal Bernardi, with whom she wrote "Traces Of The Western Slopes." She also collaborated with Bernardi on "Theme For The Pope" for *The Magazine*, but they are no longer romantically involved.

In the last two years, Rickie Lee has grappled with some of her most enduring demons and come out the victor. For the first time since she first ran away from home at fourteen, she has put down roots, and has found what she describes as a stable, nurturing relationship with handsome, soft-spoken actor Gregory Wagrowski. These days the once-boldly curvaceous and careworn singer is slim and athletic, her hair now straw-colored and streaked with silver. Her lifestyle is one of abstinence and simple pleasures and her mood is buoyant as we sit down to a sensible lunch of diet soda and tuna fish salad she prepared. Her world is not without its aches and elegies, however, as she mourns the recent cancer death of dear friend Bob Regehr, fifty-two, the head of artist development and publicity at Warner Bros., and her biggest booster and professional soulmate. And just several days ago she heard from her long-incommunicado father for the first time in years; he was phoning to say that he was about to undergo surgery for cancer.

"Bob Regehr is still here," she says as she sets the food down on a picnic table on the courtyard of her back patio, across from a neat, compact chicken coop where a rooster

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and two hens cluck placidly. "He's alive in my thoughts and hopes. And my father, for all our distances and his determination to keep himself at bay, I know he's never really left my heart." She takes a small, pensive bite of her sandwich and then brightens. "In the sadness of life there is beauty—there truly is—but it comes only in the acceptance of it."

Looking around the property she and Gregory share together, I remind her of something she told me in an interview in 1981: "I'd like to have a place of my own, but I don't like to speak of what I want most because I believe that if you do, you rob that dream of some of its energy and specialness. You jinx it."

She nods at the statement. "You can want things too hard, whether it's fame and money or a centered existence. Gregory and I made this happen, rather than sitting around wanting it to. It's better to take action than to dream, whether it's Gregory going off today for a film audition (we later learn that he got the part) or me now organizing a tour for a record I once couldn't picture the completion of. I'm no longer frightened of my productivity, or of my happiness.

"I don't do many of these," she allows with a smirk, pointing to the tape recorder, as the coppery autumn sun streams into the cozy courtyard. "Turn it on and I'll fill you in."

MUSICIAN: *You've been rather reclusive of late, leaving everyone to speculate about the cryptic Rickie Lee Jones and her enigmatic new record. While* The Magazine *has been well-received, it's been described as a "demanding" listen, and critics have been keen to unlock the meaning of its title. Is this a piece of glossy introspection? A musical ledger? An aural scrapbook with certain pages slyly excised? What's the message contained in* The Magazine?

RICKIE LEE: The first reason I called it *The Magazine* was because the opening line of the song, the first lyric bit that came to me—"Homeboys calling from the corners, station to station, for the magazine...." That line was so important, because in terms of mood it set up everything that was about to happen. Homeboys is a street community drug term; homeboys are lookouts on the corners, and the magazine was the type of dope that they sold. But that's not what it was when I wrote it. It wasn't these guys on the corner, selling drugs. It became the poetry of hope. The words continue: "but her pages are turning out the lights in the windows," so immediately I made the song something else, something less down and out, more forward looking.

MUSICIAN: *Let's discuss the tracks in detail.*

RICKIE LEE: Okay. The first is "Prelude To Gravity," an instrumental that was originally called "Things Made Of Glass," and was meant to accompany a children's fantasy I wrote about two little girls who keep their most prized possessions, thoughts and dreams in these special jars. I'd been writing a number of stories and hoped to match them with songs. The music for "Prelude" was written partly in France and partly in London. I spent four months in France in 1983, starting around late April, early May. After I promoted the little record over there.

MUSICIAN: *The "little record" meaning the 10-inch* Girl At Her Volcano *EP?*

RICKIE LEE: Yeah, the little guy. (laughter) I got an apartment for $800 on the Boulevard des Invalides, where they have all the political demonstrations. I wasn't in such great shape and, appropriately, I lived with the invalids. It's the big street leading to the Napoleon Museum, and on each side are big fields of grass, and then they have this little row of apartments. Actually it was lovely.

MUSICIAN: *Why Paris? Did you give in to some romantic, expatriate notion?*

RICKIE LEE: (softly) Well, I needed a big change.

MUSICIAN: *So what'd you do there? Just write?*

RICKIE LEE: Yeah, but only in fragments and spurts. The first thing I tried to write was "Juke Box Fury." Then "Gravity." I had written "Gravity," or rather the first verse of the first actual song on the record, a few years before that, in 1981. And I had also had these impressions of "Runaround"; I didn't know what it was ultimately gonna be but I had these impressions and it was real Shirelles-like when I first heard it in my head. (sings) "Hut-Oh-Oh-Oh-Oh, Better Wise Up Girl!" I wrote some of that at the same time I wrote "Gravity" but the rest of it didn't come for the next few years. So I had these scattered bits and pieces with me in France.

When I got to Paris I had just finished *Girl At Her Volcano,* and I started drinking again that May, more heavily, *heavily* than I had ever drunk in my life. I drank for about six weeks. When I started waking up and drinking in the day, I figured—umm, bad news. I don't know how I quit drinking; I finally just drank too much one night and said, "That's enough of this, it's awful." I think I went to Paris to put it together; I had to be in an absolutely foreign environment, to take stock. I was very nervous, eating a lot too—you can get away with a lot of eating and drinking in Paris 'cause that's all they do—but I quit both vices while I was there.

So I was staying with a friend, and I wasn't happy, and I started to write "Juke Box Fury," and I had a lot of random portions of it, but could not complete it. So I had moved out and gotten this apartment and I started to write on the typewriter and work in nearby studios. One was called Venus Studios—a big château, on landscaped grounds, with a pool, and they make your dinner—located out in Longeville. And one was

SUSAN WILSON/PICTURE GROUP

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called Uncle Sam Studios and it was right off the Champs Elysees.

I loved Venus Studios. There was a sixteen-year-old girl there named Valerie, and a guy named Gerard who was a drummer for Phoebe Snow, and a woman named Regine. The house was always full of people and it was like a dream. They took me in artistically, not asking for any money, just happy to have me come there and work, and so I'd spend the night in a room of my own.

I was so infatuated with Valerie, this gentle, shy girl would sit and play her acoustic guitar all day, and I remember this melody of hers, as she learned to write songs, that was implanted in my head. (She hums a wistful, bittersweet tune in waltz tempo.) That melody was the narration for all the moments I was there. And I started to write these peculiar images, a lot of pictures but still not getting a song, for "The Weird Beast" while on the train going to and from Venus.

The first song that did emerge in a substantial way was "Deep Space." It was without a bridge, just two verses, but I was very happy and elated. It was enough that I could start to see that maybe I was gonna write again someday. You have to understand that it had been some years, three or four, since I had done any cohesive composing. I'm glad that I'm strong enough to admit publicly that I didn't know if I was going to be capable of continuing as a writer and performer. I was frozen for quite a while, and full of dread. Frankly, I was terrified, and it's important, probably, to know and remember that I was. I felt that if I'm never gonna write again at least I'm gonna go to Paris and go out in respectful obscurity.

Then the songs began to come very quickly. When you stop drinking you can think, so it's just a matter of stopping doing the things that don't let you write and you'll start writing again.

MUSICIAN: *During the summer of 1983 you made a pilgrimage to the Montreux Jazz Festival, right?*

RICKIE LEE: Yeah, I went to visit, just to watch, but I don't remember who I saw there because I was still drinking then. (nervous chuckle) I think the picture I draw now of myself and those days is perhaps worse than the picture people saw, but that's the way I *want* to see it. I was such a decimal then of what I can be, a small percentage of my potential, of what I have to give. I tend to forget, because I feel so much better this year, how badly I felt for the few years before.

MUSICIAN: *I've always felt that one of human evolution's greatest kindnesses is that the mind cannot remember either physical or psychic pain. It's a blessing.*

RICKIE LEE: Boy, that's true, and I wonder why that is. We learn from pain but let the precise memory of it fade away and die. I was able to banish my pain in France, and I was working twelve-hour days on the demos for *The Magazine* when I came back here, trying to finish those songs at Amigo Studios in L.A. "The Real End" came from a resolute emotional intention, me wanting to feel that the real end of a troubled, hurtful time had come. As for the lyrics, they were rather incidental to the music, no big deal to me, except as an expression of release. But the things that are the most loose and effortless are frequently the things other people get the most out of. And the things you work real hard on, that you learn from, half of them never hit home for outsiders, because you did them for *you*.

MUSICIAN: *You compose entirely on piano, and there's so much fire and drama in your singing. Do you think of the instrument that accompanies that vocal passion as a melodic or a percussive instrument?*

RICKIE LEE: Interesting question. I play a Yamaha grand. It's my pencil and paper, it's melodic to me and it supports me. I've never been percussive-minded, but my voice is very feminine and the instrument is pretty masculine, so clearly I have to learn to be percussive to keep the dialogue between it and me going. Women are encouraged to be soft, like I am on "It Must Be Love." I started to mess around with synthesizers when I was making demos for *The Magazine* and found the beautiful melody for "It Must Be Love" on them. Working with Mark Linett, my engineer, I found that synthesizers—mine is a Yamaha DX7—are not as masculine, not as demanding.

Overall, once the album material was brought into Amigo Studios it became pretty painless—but not *that* painless. I started writing in October, 1983. We started recording around January 18, 1984. And we finished around the first of June. A long journey.

MUSICIAN: *How do you view the songs on the new LP?*

RICKIE LEE: They all are chronicles of my recent movement. In "Gravity" there's even a storyline, if you want one, about the passage of time, how it stretches and bends; how a day can actually be as long as a week, or the other way around. Time really does play tricks with your perceptions and emotions. But there are no hard or firm plots to any of the songs.

It's so incredible to me how people write reviews and come up with these amazing storylines for the whole record. There are two of them who found and followed some girl's love affair throughout the whole album. (laughter) I thought, "That's amazing! I didn't know I was telling a story about a love affair!"

I think it's a sexist presumption. They just presume that if it's a woman, she must certainly be writing about a love affair. I don't hear or see anything on "Magazine," for instance, that would indicate there's a love affair going on, much less with a woman. It sounds to me, if anything, like it's a man singing to a woman, or a woman singing to a woman, but it certainly isn't the same love affair that was happening in "It Must Be Love," the previous song. "Cuz you break my heart, Carol," the line in "Magazine," has got to be a signal that it's a completely different and separate story unfolding.

> "I don't feel tied down anymore to being simple or linear. You work with the emotion of a tune, not the actual lines."

To tell you straight—and this has everything to do with the nature of the new album—I don't feel tied down any longer to being simple or linear in any sense. Sometimes you work with the emotion of a tune rather than the actual lines. When I spontaneously sang "Ca-rol" during a session, I listened to that and I went, "Who the *hell* is Carol? How'd she get into this song?!" But I *feel* that the music and the lyrics were leading to that place, so I don't try to twist something that came naturally. I don't go, "Look, Carol, you don't belong in this song." I love these songs because they're mysterious to me, I still follow them and watch them come of age and expand.

MUSICIAN: *So you chose the word "Carol" the way children at play will seize on pleasant sounds to recite and drone, the kids just cherishing the sensations they produce?*

RICKIE LEE: *Exactly.* And I've never done that before. I've never gone for an element just for the feel and tone of it in a song. In the past I had to categorize everything and position it to make sense. This time I said words over and over, anticipating the feeling they would produce in the song, rather than the potential storyline. It's a new kind of writing for me, it's painting with words and sounds.

MUSICIAN: *It seems to be an impressionistic approach. But your previous record,* Girl At Her Volcano, *was very struc-*

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tured. I think the concept behind that EP is still hazy and perplexing to your fans.

RICKIE LEE: Actually, it's awfully simple. I'd always done jazz ballads on tour—"Something Cool," "Lush Life"—and even some Louis Jordan stuff. People were always asking me if I was ever gonna cut any of that stuff, but I didn't want to just stick it on a record. The magic of those things was that they were live, they were vital performance pieces. And whatever I felt that night, raucous or whatever, that was the interpretation captured on tape. I didn't want to go into a studio and slick them up. For *Volcano*, I wanted a very dark, quiet, soft record. We had live stuff that was very upbeat, real good, but I didn't want it. I was on my way to France at the time, and conceptually I didn't particularly have a big image of myself. That's not the way I saw Rickie at that time—so how could I make a record like that? I see these things as pieces of myself that I leave behind, musical photos and pictures of who I am at a certain time, and at that juncture I was smaller and quieter than I am now.

At Warner Bros., I met with incredible resistance to the ten-inch record. The only support I had was from Bob Regehr. It was our idea to release it on a smaller disc like the old jazz albums used to be on, and the company went wild. They said, "We don't know how to market it! They won't put it in the stores! They'll have to make a special bin for it! We can't do it! We must press it on a twelve-inch!" I had to have *meetings* with these people (giggles), and it's very hard to make a record at the same time you're trying to convince a record company to let you do it. It was a drag.

There were also, no doubt, some ego problems on my part, and they had to do with how I was seeing my development and accomplishments up to that point. When I came out with the very first record in 1979 and was doing that jazz stuff, nobody was doing it. I turn around two or three years later and all the girl singers had recorded their jazz albums, and I was pissed off. I remember Peter Asher sitting backstage at Carnegie Hall when I was there, and I thought, "Ronstadt's gonna come out with a jazz record, you watch. She'll do any damned thing that she thinks will sell a record." And they worked on this record of hers (*What's New*) for three or four years, and threw one pass at it away!

(sighs) Anyway, I don't want to be judgmental and I'm really trying to change; I don't like that in me, I'm not proud of that tendency. I think it's very negative and you only use it out of a misguided desire to try to make yourself feel better. Ego generally gets in the way of being a good person.

I guess I'm saying this today to let you know what my point of view was then, 'cause most of the time now, I look at what people do and I go, "Fine." Even if it's pretentious, or an obvious bid for stardom and having nothing to do with art.

I still do what I do regardless of whatever crap any other folks put out, so why should I compete with them? Why should I look at Linda Ronstadt and get angry at her? It has nothing to do with anything. And when that starts to happen you realize somebody's pushing your buttons, somebody's making you compete in the marketplace. I have nothing to do with her, or with Nelson Riddle, so why should her record bother me? The ego definitely threatens or dwarfs spiritual growth.

MUSICIAN: *Reading between the lines, it sounds to me as if you were under a helluva lot of strain.*

RICKIE LEE: Well, also, I was getting pushed to make a record, and I didn't have any damned material. I was told, "If you don't make a record soon, you won't have a career." Hell, I *wanted* a career! It's never like the first time around, when you walk up to the company and you go, (high-pitched squeal) "Gee, I've got all these songs! Will you let me make a record?" You make that record and you're money to them. Things are never the same again.

MUSICIAN: *Tell me your thoughts, in retrospect, about* Pirates, *a musically adventurous second LP, but one that also dwelt on romantic traumas and the dark side of life.*

Jones maintains an ambiguous relationship with her beret.

MICHAEL KAGAN/RETNA

RICKIE LEE: I think *Pirates* is a beautiful record, but it's a little scary to me. It's pretty deep. On tour, we play "We Belong Together" and "Woodie And Dutch On The Slow Train To Peking," and I think "Western Slopes" is an extraordinarily fluid song, but I don't listen to the record anymore. There are ghosts in that song, like the Johnny Johnson I mention, who's the phantom of this broken-hearted preacher who actually haunts a Toys "R" Us store in central California, and there are a lot of ghosts for me in the album as a whole.

In terms of self-awareness and state of mind, the *Magazine* songs are almost totally the opposite of the ones on *Pirates*. Even though I've just said that they don't tell a particular story, it seems to me that *The Magazine*'s messages are more direct than those on *Pirates*. They deal exactly with you, and the spirit of them is kinda joyous. *Pirates* you can't take hold of, which is part of the sadness it describes, you can't hold that woman in there, she slips through your fingers.

MUSICIAN: *Are you surprised to find that you now have a body of work behind you? That your growth is identifiable, your direction can be charted?*

RICKIE LEE: Wow, yeah! What's most apparent is that there's a lot of ways I've grown musically in terms of honesty. If I could be a completely objective critic of Rickie Lee, I would say, "When she began, she had a lot of talent but I didn't see a particular signature." One of the delightful things about the first record was that each song was in a completely different jazz-shaded style—say, a blues, an R&B thing, a this, a that. That integrated simplicity is really attractive to people, but a collection of styles is limited by its own demonstration. People love that record, and I do as well, but I've grown in terms of my candor, perception and personal range, and I have to acknowledge that.

Right now, in my life, because of things that happened to me that were so bad, I've decided to live, and I've decided there is nothing to be afraid of. It's about being me. Why should I pretend on any level to be anything other than exactly who I am at the moment? Why should I ever lie, why should I be afraid? You make up all those fears in order to live in the

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world, but of course they eventually prevent you from being free or feeling protected.

And so with my music, it was a decision of: Hey, people wanna hear me, but why should I pretend to do something else just so they'll listen to me. If I go that route, I'll live an unhappy life and die and never have been exactly Rickie Lee Jones. They're gonna like me or they're not, but I'm gonna take that chance. I'm going to try and develop my own eyesight, knowing very well it's not what anyone else will see.

MUSICIAN: *Are you saying that after the first record you found yourself being pulled into some sort of genre posture?*

RICKIE LEE: Well, I'm not talking about pressure to stick with what worked and sold. I'm talking about being able to accept yourself exactly as you are, and *then* if you want to change it, change it. You can't move forward until you have a complete acceptance of your design. That's down to your teeth, the food you eat, where you were raised, how you make love, how you dress. I decided that if I'm unhappy I must *like* being unhappy; whatever it is, I made it, it was my personal choice.

A year ago I had the design of: Rickie, you'll never be able to live in a house, you'll go crazy. I made that true. Now, I make that untrue. I find I *can* have a backyard, I *can* live here and be happy. And the art that I do can be a part of the discussion at the breakfast table, which can be a part of someday taking the kids to school, all of it intertwined in a healthy way. I'd really like to participate more in a family life, because I've never had that. I can see myself wearing my hair in a scarf one morning, working in the garden with a kid pounding on my back, and also writing wonderful, unusual art.

Professionally, somehow you often assess yourself too much as you create—I know I do sometimes. But I'm losing that. I feel the confidence now of the knowledge that I'm a very good writer. With that confidence I can return to the more naïve state of just banging away at it for whatever reason, unbound by any rules. Then it's a real reward. Perhaps eventually I'll come up with music during which I stand onstage in a bathing cap and recite poetry. Why not? Who knows? The excitement is in believing I can go anywhere artistically.

MUSICIAN: *I know that you're considering employing some unusual staging techniques for your* Magazine *tour.*

RICKIE LEE: Let me explain that. See, the thing I'd like to do through the years is to create a little world of characters and stories. I recently made a list of all the characters I've introduced in my songs, and who's met up with who again on various records. I'll look at Eddie from "Living It Up" and go, "I wonder what kind of car he had when he was sixteen?", and then give him one. I want to make up whole worlds about each of these people and then tie them in together. That's simply short story writing, I know, but being a performer, I can also get to interact with the stories onstage. It's an incredible kind of theater for me, because I can be me and *not* be me at the same time.

Before, that was quite confusing and crucifying for me. Now I look at it as fun, having all these toys to play with. That's a good way to live my life, I think, and not get too serious.

MUSICIAN: *Are you saying you'd like to develop* The Magazine *into a theater piece, a musical play?*

RICKIE LEE: (nodding) With a couple of actors involved, and staging it so it is, for a moment, theater, and then moves back into a concert and vice versa. I'd like to move out of rock 'n' roll and into theater, into acting, into writing for and participating in various aspects of the performing arts. I'm too interested in it to not do it. I think my music has another place where it will fit better, or it can make its own place.

MUSICIAN: *Be specific about the plotting, or the blocking, of certain scenes in the program.*

RICKIE LEE: The interesting part of it is that you don't exactly know when the show begins. We'll start to show some visual suggestions of things you'll later see, but you won't assimilate a lot of it until after the show's over. There's a program I'm trying to write for the show. It may be fourteen pages or so, and I'm trying to get Yamaha or somebody to sponsor the printing of it. In it will be a couple of short stories that would coincide with portions of the show. During the "Theme For The Pope" song from the "Rorschachs" series of pieces, we're going to project a couple of pictures on a screen that will be clues for what comes next, specifically three graphs that show theories of space-time continuums and quantum gravity.

With these and other visual and theatrical tools on hand we'll begin to tell a story called "Gloria in the Kitchen." It begins with a narration about a Saturday afternoon in 1963, at Thanksgiving. At that time in my life, my father had ditched us, we had no money, President Kennedy had just been killed, it had been raining for days, and I was very sick. My brother had made a turkey but forgot to turn the oven off, so it burned up and we didn't have anything to eat. Across the street was this family of hillbillies and one of the young girls was Gloria Moore. And these neighbors brought over this turkey. So that's what actually happened.

Onstage, however, I tell the audience that for me, there is this mythical woman named Gloria by a window, and she watches my father. She must act out and take the butt of all my agony, and his as well. She's a mental bridge between my father and me. Anytime my father looks out of the hiding place he's in, Gloria looks out of the window. When my father takes a glass of bourbon, I'll change Gloria's glass to scotch, so that my father will drink something better and won't die. Gloria is always by the window, never leaves. Any time zone is successful through her, any idea, any person, any image, because she has the window.

On the graphs are the terms "inaccessible past" and "inaccessible future," as if to imply that there is a side of both that can be gotten to. And that's part of the idea of Gloria. I don't think time is a linear thing, and I think that when one thing is true, its opposite or contradiction is also true. I think that time has height and depth as well as forward and backward succession; I think it stretches and turns on itself. The show will reflect that in a series of scenes interspersed or paired with

"Why should I pretend to do something else just so they'll listen to me? If I go that route, I'll live an unhappy life and die and never have been exactly Rickie Lee Jones. They're gonna like me or not, but I gotta take that chance."

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music. I'd like to maybe bring it to Broadway for a limited engagement of a few weeks. It's all about the power of the imagination in the minds and hearts of the child in us.

MUSICIAN: *Talking about access to the past and the future, do you know any longer the person who made the first Rickie Lee Jones album? Do you have access to her, that person you once were, in any sense?*

RICKIE LEE: Occasionally she shows up onstage and bops around a little bit. I think she just grew up. I have access to her, I think she's still here, but I can't be her anymore.

MUSICIAN: *What was she like?*

RICKIE LEE: I think she was a lot more special than I ever knew, 'cause I didn't think she was very pretty or smart. She was real scared of everybody and everything, every staircase she walked down, every move she made, every word she said. But also, she was highly motivated, and a lot stronger than she knew, and courageous. You can't really be courageous if you're not motivated by fear; one doesn't exist without the other.

MUSICIAN: *I think that truly creative people lead often pained lives because they don't easily, readily see themselves in others. On the contrary, they feel their singularity, their onlyness very acutely. The act of making connections with others is for them a profoundly difficult one, and their art is both a defining of their isolation and an announcement of the desperate need to surmount it. En route, you're sometimes capable of an unusual degree of appreciation.*

RICKIE LEE: That's eloquent, very beautiful. And it's absolutely true, too. So you need a good conscience to stay on course. I think I've got a good one. Good moral skills.

Professionally and technically, I feel secure around musicians these days, sure about what I'm trying to do, and relaxed and curious about what I don't know how to do. I'm excited about the process of learning. For me, this is an excellent time, reminiscent of the period of the first record, when I had done something I'd always wanted to do. The thing missing now that was there then is the panic, me saying to myself, "God, I did it—are they gonna take it back?!" Now, I think I cannot lose, because I'm not setting the game up that way anymore. Yet you eliminate some of the extraordinary highs and lows when you set up a game that you cannot lose.

People want to pay for everything, always, over and over. You know how people will scold you, as a kid, saying, "God, *you* really like yourself, don'tcha?" You're told not to like and enjoy yourself. What a shame. It stunts you.

When you're younger, you don't know how to do anything, so everything you do, you do badly till you figure it out. You love badly, you fight too much, you get things wrong. Your angels and your devils become accessible, and you pal around with one or the other until you decide which you like best. Then, if you're fortunate, you begin to learn how to be, and the good and the bad, and the child and the adult, find some balance.

MUSICIAN: *Is there anything else from the old Rickie Lee that's gone now?*

RICKIE LEE: What's also gone is the belief in the idea that there's something in fame and fortune that is going to change life for the better. Whatever the drive was for things beyond making music, it's gone now. Poor people believe that fame and fortune, like God, will save them. The old Rickie Lee, decked out in her beret, had that idea in her mind, thinking, "Okay! Here we go! This is it!"

MUSICIAN: *In other words, you had concocted a role through which to announce yourself?*

RICKIE LEE: It was really important to me to assume a character, probably all the way, even in my personal life. I thought that plain, ordinary me, just standing here, wasn't enough of a character, so I made up something more readily identifiable.

MUSICIAN: *Then the beret was a deliberate prop?*

RICKIE LEE: Sure. It *was* a prop. I used to say that I could send the beret out to buy ice cream, to make personal appearances, to get things done, because people didn't recognize me, they only recognized the hat. And if I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to get into a concert, I'd wear my beret. I like that hat, but I swear, when I put it on, it weighed ten pounds. After a while, I couldn't stand to feel it on my head, and I couldn't wait to get it off.

MUSICIAN: *In the past, you've spoken to me about your determination to "try to make headway towards heaven." How's that quest going?*

RICKIE LEE: Generally, I'm doing great. I've got a man I love, and he loves me right back. I've got a house that's a home, and a garden with a crazy cat in it, a silly old dog named Boo Radley, and three chickens—two of which lay eggs that are so warm to the touch when they pop out that it's a little embarrassing. I've got faith in the future, greater understanding of the past, and a mother who sends me an American Express datebook every year for my birthday.

The other day, I bought myself a new handmade acoustic guitar and I'm gonna put some effort into getting proficient on that instrument again. If I were the typical girl singer, who made homogenous, uncomplicated music that didn't evoke the kind of social feelings and dark, shifting colors mine does, it would be easier for me to go forward creatively. If I didn't feel things so darned deeply all the time, I might move faster, but I have the heart and the soul I was given, and I'm making the best of them 'cause I know they're one-of-a-kind.

I'm not a character anymore, and I'll bet you've never seen me grin as often as I have this afternoon.

MUSICIAN: *Still have that beret around here somewhere?*

RICKIE LEE: Uh-huh. Slowly, I'm starting to wear it once more, because in my eyes my identity is no longer dependent on any beret. (softly, a sudden smile) It's become just a hat again. Ⓜ

"You have to understand that it had been three or four years since I had done any cohesive composing. I'm glad I'm strong enough to admit now that I didn't know if I was going to be able to continue as a writer and performer."

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Tony Mitchell talks to STING

Tracking Sting down to his lunchtime retreat within the maze of Shepperton Studios, where he's currently filming 'The Bride', proved to be less difficult than I'd feared.

I simply followed the long trail of glitter which led to the control room of the recording studio where he's doubling as producer for a new band called 'A Bigger Splash'.

My initial belief that Sting had succumbed to an early seventies fashion kick was dispensed only when I learnt that he'd just been filming a glitter party scene for the movie – a romantic version of the Frankenstein story said to be more in keeping with Mary Shelly's original story than the Karloffian video nasties we're all familiar with.

And there he was, lounging against the control room wall clutching a Fender bass and looking only slightly 18th century in ruffle-necked shirt, brocade waistcoat and riding breeches. His assistant Danny was despatched to make some tea.

Sting bought his Synclavier just six months ago, and like a good novel he's hardly been able to put it down since. His enthusiasm for it is impressive – a combination of reverence for its technical achievement and childlike amazement at the creative possibilities he's still discovering. Ask him to sum up its potential impact on music making and he'll come up with a modest comment such as:

"It's as radical and important an invention as the piano was centuries ago." And so, on to the first question.

MITCHELL: "What was it that first made you think this might be the machine for you?"

STING: "It was a sort of dream of mine, when I first started to actually write music down on a stave – you know it's impossible to read after half an hour – that it would be great if everything you played on a keyboard immediately transmitted into notation. I was sure one day someone would invent it. And one day I was looking at some roadie's magazine in America – and there it was! The Synclavier did it.

I was totally over the moon and it was only then that I got to find out about all the rest of the functions of this amazing machine. And it's great fun, it really is.

Now its kind of taken over my life. It takes a lot of technical application which I think is fun, because it's about learning something totally new, but there's no way you can use it the day you get it."

> *"It's as radical and important an invention as the piano was centuries ago"*

MITCHELL: Between hurriedly gulped mouthfuls of salad – he went on to explain that he'd become very disillusioned with synthesisers and synthesiser bands "because they all sound exactly the same," and because he was inspired to write music by the sound an instrument makes, he was always trying new instruments, and that the synthesiser element of the Synclavier had "this wonderful range of warm, organic, rich sound which makes me want to play with it."

And with the computer, he says, you have a system which allows you "to compose beyond the limitations of your physical skill – in fact beyond the limitations of anyone's physical skill."

STING: "Another thing is that I've never worked with an orchestra before it would be a very expensive experiment for anyone to hire an orchestra for the day to see what happened. But with the Synclavier I have an orchestra at my fingertips."

MITCHELL: If that sounds a mite indulgent, then don't think Sting isn't aware of it. He knows devices like the Synclavier are often branded as rich men's toys but the integral facilities and the constant updating process initiated by the Synclavier's designers convinced him that it would be a very sound investment.

STING: "It's almost the responsibility of those with enough bucks to invest in this kind of thing. It's like, the only people who could afford orchestras in the days of Mozart and Beethoven were the crown princes of Europe. And us rockstars 'ave taken over from that. I see myself as a kind of Medici of the Arts in the 1980's – know what I mean?" (ha-ha)

> *"One interesting feature of the Synclavier is that it translates tempo to frame time"*

MITCHELL: "Has your experience with the Synclavier turned you on to computing generally?"

STING: "No – I'm not really into home economics!"

MITCHELL: "You don't feel the need to have a machine that'll address a lot of envelopes for you?"

STING: "No, I've got Danny to do that!"

MITCHELL: "Can you use the computer for anything else?"

STING: "Well there's a floppy disc floating around somewhere, so you could do your accounts on it, in between scoring something."

MITCHELL: Stifling an inclination to say what a good idea it was to have a musical instrument that can tell you how much you've got left in the bank after you've paid for it, I moved on instead to raise with Sting one of the criticisms which is sometimes voiced against the Synclavier – its restriction, on the digital sampling side, to monophonic sampling.

STING: "Yes, monophonic sampling. That might be a temporary disadvantage but polyphonic sampling is only a short time away. In the meantime, if you want, er, a chord of milk bottles breaking or something, you can do it with a tape machine."

MITCHELL: "One application of the Synclavier that's bound to appeal to a man with tandem careers as an actor and musician is in the creation of film scores. Had that opportunity presented itself yet?"

STING: "Well I've been asked to do the music for this film. And one interesting feature of the Synclavier is that it translates tempo to frame time. You could have written a piece of music that lasted 30 seconds to fit a scene exactly, then the director says he's gonna cut a bit or add a bit to it, and you're stumped. What do you do? You either cut a bit off the music or re-record it. But with the Synclavier you just punch the relevant keys and the music is translated through frame time into the right length, either shortening minutely each note or lengthening it. And that is... outrageous!

I also like the idea that I can play something on the keyboard, record it on the memory recorder then translate it to screen editor so it comes up as computer language, and then you can perfect it. Using the integral recorder is so quick, you can try out things with different voices so quickly. And once polyphonic sampling comes in, you won't need a studio at all, you'll just need a Synclavier. You'll be able to make a record without using tape."

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MITCHELL: Not surprisingly, Sting has no qualms at all about using the device on stage with the Police – he thinks it will be great fun. But I wondered if he'd embarked on a sampling programme, perhaps walking around Hampstead or jogging to the studio each morning, to equip himself with new and unique sounds for that purpose.

STING: "I haven't had that much time, to be honest. I'm quite interested in things I haven't got around the house, like timpani, cymbals or a snare drum. You can just hire them for the day, mess around with them and you've got the full range of what they can do at your fingertips."

MITCHELL: "Do you have the Synclavier in a music room at home?"

STING: "No, I have it in my bedroom. As I crawl out of bed in the morning, I turn it on, I plonk away, and if I hit a good chord, I carry on, and if I don't . . . I have breakfast.

Actually we haven't talked about the resynthesis angle, which is quite new. It basically records a sound and it comes out as a spectral display, a wave form. You can increase the intensity of it and copy it. You can do as many as 54 sections of that wave, so resynthesis is actually very, very close . . . and as a learning device, it's a wonderful way of finding out how sound is constructed. I haven't written any music lately, I've just been doing spectral displays!"

MITCHELL: "But getting back to your disillusionment with synthesiser music because it 'all sounds the same', don't you think there's evidence that exactly the same thing is happening even with these sophisticated sampling devices? Isn't everyone using them to make the same kind of records at the moment?"

"You can compose beyond the limitations of your physical skill - in fact beyond anyone's physical skill"

STING: "That's really where you have to bring back the human element. When the electric guitar was invented you had the same sort of thing – Oh God, everybody's going to sound the same. So you wait for the Bert Weedons to come along and show the way. You can't replace human beings. It's just gonna be different.

At the moment anybody can do it. Everybody thinks they can make a David Bowie record. It's time something new happened and that's why someone is going to have to take it somewhere else."

MITCHELL: "That's got a lot to do with current record industry attitudes – they 'sign up some haircuts and get a producer in to do the rest' syndrome."

STING: "Listen, I was signed up on the strength of my haircut. I mean, let's call a spade a spade."

MITCHELL: "I know, but you had other qualities as well."

STING: "Tight trousers."

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WORKING MUSICIAN

From state of the art studios, from corporate A&R departments, from Grammy Award shows and platinum albums on the wall, you can feel the throb of the recording industry. It's where the money is, where the real action is, but it's not the only action. Great musicians are still creating outside the mainstream, perhaps without power but not without impact. A study in contrasts.

POWER & Passion

Toto **82**
A search for the elusive, defensive heart of the Flying Porcaros, architects of West Coast pop and acrobats in Isolation. By Josef Woodard

Jack Bruce **88**
A Jack of all bass trades remembers Cream and a whole lot more. By Lou Papineau

Keith Levene **92**
Now that he's off the PiL, a post-punk innovator can't stand still. By Julie Panebianco

Dave Grusin **96**
The fine art and great heart of America's most distinguished film scorer. By Jock Baird

The Guitar Synth Wait . **100**
Guitarists are getting impatient. What's the big hold-up? By Alan diPerna

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What, really, *is* this thing called Toto? (a) A runty, nervous pooch responsible for demystifying the almighty Oz; (b) an L.A.-bred megagroup comprised of studio-sharpened players; (c) musician's musicians doing their best to make monster pop, both hip and hooky; (d) Exhibit A in the perennial craft vs. content debate in pop music?

The answer, of course, is a resounding *all of the above*. And as the Toto of (b) and (c) get more firmly enmeshed in the framework of the pop sweepstakes, answer (a) diminishes from memory, even as (d) continues to be a pressing concern. Toto is the epitome of a band whose cultivated musicianship sometimes outweighs the actual emotional ingredients in the equation. The margin for error, or human vulnerability, is somehow all-too slim. But everything, decidedly, is in its rightful place. The center, the musical glue, holds with Toto's music—but if, ideally, pop music mirrors the inner lives of its listeners, who among us are that seamless?

Isolate players like Steve Lukather, guitarist of great taste and heat, David Paich, ace songwriter/keysman, and drummer Jeff Porcaro, nobody's fool, and you've got players with musicianship—and taste—to burn. Somewhere along the line, though, Toto adopted a critical albatross; they've gotten consistent lumps in the press as a totem of what is uncool about Hollywood: purveyors of high-tech gloss in the guise of *real* rock 'n' roll...industry lapdogs...that sort of thing. And as much as you try to sidestep the whole issue, as much as *they* try to shrug it off, it's there, waiting to be confronted just outside the front door of more congenial topics. You can't get around the big question of why the whole story of Toto has been so seldom told. The cold war continues. A reporter walks into the interview den and the publicist is only half-joking when she says, eyes squinting, "We kill writers." She spared me—so far.

But the probable truth is that, once you get a lot of these Toto detractors in a quiet corner and far from the jury of their peers, they would admit that, yes, this is a tightly-meshed band with some highly redeeming and even juicy musical concepts happening. They clearly belong in the realm of guilty pleasures. And by sheer dint of their indelible imprint on pop music in the past few years—as a whole and as coveted studio players—Toto deserves a break today.

Takers of the Toto quiz get extra points if you knew that the band is actually the descendant of two sepa-

TO

As studio players, they helped transform pop; as a band, the critical Cold War continues. Will the real Toto stand up?

by Josef Woodard

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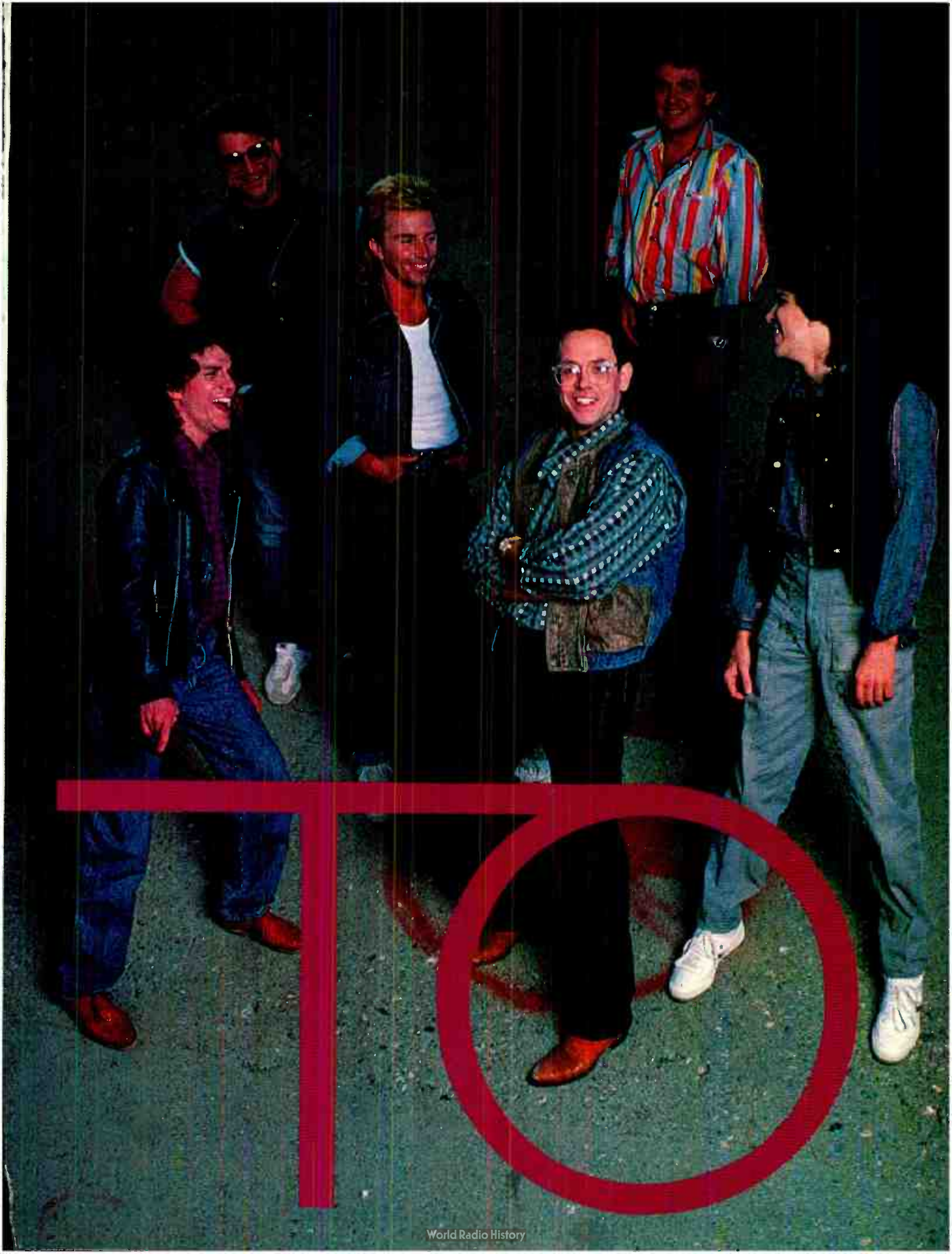

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"Godfather" Jeff Porcaro and guitar phenom Steve Lukather.

ANNE FISHBEIN/PHOTO RESERVE

ate bands, Rural Still Life and the later Still Life, that burned up Grant High School in the San Fernando Valley in the 70s. "It's a fluke," speculates Mike Porcaro, bassist and last of the three illustrious Porcaro brothers to join the Toto ranks. "Who would have thought that our high school band would turn into this thing years later?" David Paich grins: "It's like a circus band—the Flying Porcaros, you know?"

Needless to say, the Porcaro household was musical—percussive, to be specific—to the *nth* degree. Joe Porcaro brought his family out to California in the late 60s, from Connecticut, and fast became a called-upon studio percussionist. But there was only one drum set in the house, and Jeff, the oldest and the most driven, usually won out. "The family tells me that I was the one they picked to be the drummer," laughs Mike. "My time was better than Jeff's back then." Meanwhile, little brother Steve took to the keys. The domestic environment, though, didn't consist of relentless exercises and rudiments every day. "My parents weren't pushy at all; they left it up to us," says Steve. Still, growing up in a house reverberating with Miles Davis and Tchaikovsky has to leave its mark.

The big bang theory of Toto's beginning stems from the day David Paich came over. David's father, Marty Paich, was the arranger on the *Glen Campbell Show* and was Joe Porcaro's employer. They arranged to have their two rock 'n' roll prodigy progeny get together. Jeff remembers, "It was really funny, because he was this Hidden Hills (an affluent neck of the L.A. woods) type, and I had hair down to my shoulders, beads and stuff." Paich adds, "At that time, I hadn't met anybody who could play as well as I could for my age. I mean, I subbed for Joe Sample on my first session when I was fourteen. I was cocky as hell."

Bigger things were around the corner. When Jeff toured later with Sonny & Cher, he took Paich with him, and they both got a taste of life on the road. "Nineteen-year-olds, flying around on a DC-9, doing sold-out Astrodome shows. Wow." Back in L.A., the studio scene began beckoning, and Jeff landed the gig of his dreams when Steely Dan hired him to play a couple of tracks on *Pretzel Logic* and for touring. Porcaro has had something to do with every subsequent Dan project. It is that group, and principally Donald Fagen's input, that seems to be Toto's holy grail in terms of inspiration—pop music of sleek passion and a fastidious finish. "If I was going to crown anybody king of the world, it would be Donald Fagen," Jeff puts it flatly. "There are things I find fascinating about all Steely Dan material. And as a session player, nobody can push you to the limit like they can, in a positive way. The only performances of mine I like are with those guys. I'm always nervous before the session and I want everything I do, every note I play, to be perfect."

Enter Boz Scaggs. Porcaro and Paich had been hired by Boz for an album he was producing for guitarist Les Dudek, and was so impressed with the pair that he co-opted them to help realize his own classic blue-eyed soul work *Silk Degrees*. It was the first chance for Paich to show his stripes as a songwriter. "Lowdown," as it happened, actually came from the *fade* of another Paich tune that he was saving for his own future use; Scaggs put lyrics atop the legendary II-V chord changes, Paich tossed in a bridge, and a hit was born. Porcaro and Paich, along with bassist David Hungate, did a smash tour with Scaggs and the Toto proposition began to seem imminent.

Although Porcaro hadn't even heard Scaggs' music before doing the record, he views him now as a sort of patron saint of Toto. "I'm sitting back in my rented house down in Laurel Canyon that's 775 bucks a month and no way do I ever see myself owning a house. One rainy night, there's a rap at the door and there's Boz. He's got a little album and a white envelope. He says, 'I don't have time right now, but thanks for sticking with me on the album.' There was a platinum album of *Silk Degrees*, and a check for thirty grand. Dig it; here was a cat who was a single artist, who made a lot of money on his album, and a year later he came by with thirty grand that he thought was due us. I bought the house I'm living in today with that money. That cat is right on, man."

Paich adds, "Boz was the catalyst in letting us realize our dream come true, the band Jeff and I had always talked about having. Without that situation, who knows what would have happened?" They needed look no further than their own stomping grounds for the manpower. Back at Grant High, Steve Porcaro was playing in a hot young band now called simply Still Life, featuring the white hot guitar interplay of Steve Lukather and Mike Landau. Jeff remembers, "Paich and I said, man we gotta *grab* those guys. I remember there was a discussion whether we should take Luke or Landau. That got solved by flipping a coin, basically."

The Toto debut album, released in 1978, was a crafty and chartbusting pastiche, the facets of which essentially have directed the musical course of the band since then. It's all there—the cinematic proclivity in an instrumental pad like "Child's Anthem," the staunch power-chorded blast of "I'll Supply The Love" with its semi-progressive polymetric tag section, the soulful simmer of "Georgy Porgy," just to mention the first three cuts of the record. "To me, 'Hold The Line' was a heavy metal R&B song," opines Paich. "You've got this heavy metal guitar with a 6/8 feel and Bobby Kimball singing, and

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that's been one of our calling cards, so we wouldn't have to get bagged or have to do any one thing."

One of the more important revelations of the debut was the emergence of Steve Lukather as a new breed of guitar player. He had taken the melodic prowess of a Larry Carlton and added the fangs of one who grew up playing skull crunching heavy metal. Guitarophile Lukather studied with the L.A. based Jimmy Wyble and later at Dick Grove's school: "I started getting turned on to a whole different set of players—Wes Montgomery, Johnny Smith.... I got into studio players like Carlton, Jay Graydon and Dean Parks. I loved how little they played and how much it said. I also went through a chops scene, when I was listening to nothing but Al DiMeola and

"Steve wrote 'Human Nature' for Toto, but we were into stadium rock then. It backfired on us."

John McLaughlin. I really wanted to be a fusion player, back when I wanted to be the greatest guitarist in the *world*. Ha ha ha." Lukather recovered from his more-is-better fixation with the help of Bruce Springsteen. "I saw him at the Forum and he walked to the front of the stage and played one note. He bent it up and the crowd went nuts, just hysterical. That's when I finally realized, 'What am I doing this for? Why am I seeing how fast I can play 'Giant Steps'? I mean, I still play chops stuff, but I try to play weirder stuff on the Toto records. I started going, 'Wait, did I play that on somebody *else*'s record?' I was doing twenty sessions a week. Burned me out."

The rock press was also burned out—on Toto. "When we got those terrrible reviews for our first album, I was just crushed. I never experienced anything like that," says Lukather, who, despite having played on enough records at age twenty-seven to last a couple of lifetimes, is as friendly and enthusiastic a guy as you'd want to meet. "It brought tears to my eyes. They called us names: not just that they didn't like the music—they thought our parents should have been neutered. It wasn't a dislike; it was a detest." He waxes philosophical on the subject: "I really admire the writers themselves because they came up with some unbelievable adjectives for our music: 'It sounds like a tangerine-orange leisure suit.' How can you sit down and listen to music and say, 'I don't know about you, but it sounds like a leisure suit to me'? It's hilarious."

The situation came to a head by 1982's *Toto IV*, when the avuncular *L.A. Times* rock critic Robert Hilburn used the opportunity of the group's "industry favoritism" to lash out at their "artistic dubiousness." Toto, in turn, had their say when Paich, in accepting their celebrated Grammy award sweep, cheekily thanked Hilburn for "believing in us." This, in turn, stoked more acrid response from both parties. It was one of the uglier artist/critic feuds of recent times. And the quarrel still stings. "I could write a goddamn article on music anytime," Lukather comments. "I know how to conjugate a verb. But I gotta tell you, if you put a guitar in Hilburn's hand and stuck him in a studio, he'd never come out. There'd be nothing on tape. If they were going to burn his wife and kids at the stake unless he wrote a song, they'd have been charred a long time ago. And you can quote me on that."

Ask Jeff Porcaro about it, and you'll be glad it's a phone interview. "What bugs me is that, you know, if you don't like our stuff, don't even write about it. I'm sure there are some starving bands that can't play worth a damn that you love. Then he knocks down your band because he thinks there's a resurgence of poor crippled people in the street that are politically saying something and this is the raw, real shit. *Fuck* you. And all of a sudden these groups that were the punks are now doing dance records with horns and they're trying to get their studio chops together. Come on, stop jerking me off."

On that point, Porcaro's venom is quantifiable; the pendulum of pop attitude *has* decidedly swung back to a greater emphasis on precise, on-the-money craftsmanship. Toto has been living by the rules of precision and personal brinksmanship since the two Still Lifes decided they wanted to be the ruling bands at Grant High. Nepotism will only take you so far; having an itchy finger on the nation's pop pulse is the brunt of the work. And the Flying Porcaros have dedication and creative drive to burn.

It's doubtful that the critics will call their latest album, *Isolation*, a tangerine leisure suit, but they're probably inventing some new creative—if still nasty—descriptions. Most of the album gets right down to the business of Big Beat Rock. There *are* hints of overt musicality scattered throughout. Lukather gets in a number of terse nuggets to show what he's made of, but Jeff Porcaro, whose inventive groove-making on *Toto IV* was one of its saving graces, is here restrained to sixteen-ton snare shots on the even beats of 4/4 meters. The expected Anglo-soul nods are only afterthoughts in tunes like the rhythmically tense "Lion," one of the album's best cuts, and "Endless." For the majority of the ride, *Isolation* is a well-poised exercise in the melodic pop/hard rock area one could call Heavy Petal: fairly straight, pummeling grooves on verses and choruses. Only between the lines will Toto fan out into elaborate instrumental bridges. "That's where we throw in a curve," quips Lukather. But it's more an album of straight lines than curves: "We wanted to consciously make a harder edged album," reports Mike Porcaro.

There were other considerations, such as trimming up the look, that *faceless band* look. "Each year we sit down and sort of plan the year—what do we want to do career-wise?" comments Jeff. "I would think to myself, well, I'm thirty pounds overweight. Two years ago, we said, 'Look what's happening with video and films and stuff.' And I couldn't stand to watch our old videos; they're silly things to me." "Image-wise, we've had no image," Lukather sums it up. That's from whence the Great Lead Singer Search sprang.

Exit Bobby Kimball, enter Fergie Fredrickson. "Bobby was more of a solo artist the way Mike McDonald is, a backgroundy singer/songwriter type of thing," explains Paich. "I think as he developed himself as an artist and we started defining ourselves as artists, we found the differences between us. It was just a natural evolution that Toto started looking for

continued on page 106

The Flying Porcaros' Trapezes

Steve Lukather plays a custom guitar by Mike McGuire of Valley Arts, with a Floyd Rose tremolo and three EMG pickups: a humbucker in back and two Strats in the middle and front. Luke also helped design the Ibanez Roadstar guitar that bears his name, and owns some forty others, including a '51 Fender Esquire, serial number 10003. He uses three MESA/Boogie amps, two 200-watters for clean, one 100-watter for distortion. His rack includes a Dynamite tri-stereo chorus, two Roland digital delays, three API equalizers with Jensen transformers, two API compressor/limiters, a modified Univibe and an MXR digital reverb.

David Paich and **Steve Porcaro** basically share the same keyboards: A Yamaha DX1, an Emulator 2, a PPG Wave 2.3 with Waveterm computer, Roland Jupiter 8s, an Oberheim Expander module, an IBM PC with Roland 16-track sequencer software, a Rhodes 88, an old Wurlitzer and a LinnDrum. Both have also MIDI-fied their acoustic pianos.

Mike Porcaro plays a Fender Jazz bass through an Ampeg SVT head and an Altec 604 monitor. He also admires MESA/Boogies.

Jeff Porcaro plays Pearl drums and Paiste cymbals.

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JACK BRUCE: THE CREAM & THE CROP

A Legendary Bass Maverick Plays Himself

By Lou Papineau

Bruce, who feels bassists should make others look good, doesn't look bad himself.

CHUCK PULIN/STAR FILE

"It's like an actor who gets typecast—it's a problem," admits soft-spoken Scot Jack Bruce. "I'm not ashamed of Cream or sorry about it, but I've done so many other things I think were more interesting, although they didn't get across to so many people."

It *is* a problem. In the past fifteen years the bassist and vocalist has released eight albums bearing his name. He's worked in genres ranging from R&B to heavy rock to jazz-rock fusion to eclectic, progressive tone poems. He's played with a dizzyingly diverse array of musicians—Larry Coryell, Tony Williams, John McLaughlin, Carla Bley, Mick Taylor, Billy Cobham, Leslie West and Corky Laing, Frank Zappa, David Sancious, Robin Trower and Kip Hanrahan, among others. Yet when he recently toured the Northeast with the latest incarnation of Jack Bruce and Friends (guitarist Clem Clempson, keyboardist Robbie Lehay and drummer Bruce Gary), he was invariably billed as "Jack Bruce of Cream."

Bruce formed Cream in 1966 with guitarist Eric Clapton and drummer Ginger Baker. It was an ensemble whose bluesy, lengthy improvisational explosion spawned a generation of power trios. Cream's immortal triad came together around the blues. Clapton had inspired religious adulation as the lead guitarist with the Yardbirds and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. Baker had worked with Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated and the Graham Bond Organisation, where he first played with Bruce. Jack's own musical trek began at age seventeen with a scholarship to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music; he left for Glasgow three months later to play jazz. After performing in Italy for nine months, Bruce went to London and eventually "got caught up in the R&B scene" with Korner, Bond, Mayall and Manfred Mann (in their "Pretty Flamingo" days). Then Cream came together.

They stayed together for a stormy two years, garnering immediate acclaim for their spontaneous concerts and required-listening recordings—*Fresh Cream*, *Disraeli Gears* and *Wheels Of Fire*. The singles "Sunshine Of Your Love" and "White Room" sold some fifteen million copies in three years. There was also their patchwork swan song, *Goodbye*, and a parade of live albums and compilations that dribbled out through 1975.

"The good points are that people related to Cream," says Bruce sixteen years after the breakup. "It was much more of an important band than it seemed at the time. The bad side is that people still associate me as simply the bass player and singer with Cream. It was a good band but the most important thing was the influence it had on the music and on the individual people it moved to make music."

Cream's seminal expansion of rock's song forms came about by way of popular demand. "When we started out we were doing short songs; they were the normal kind of three-, four-, five-minute songs," Bruce explains. "And we went to San Francisco to play the Fillmore in 1967—with the Electric Flag and possibly Paul Butterfield on the same bill. We started off playing the normal kind of gig, and then people were shouting out, 'Just play! Go on, just play!' And it just happened that way; we started extending what we were doing. There also wasn't all that much material, so that helped."

What brought about Cream's abrupt disbandment? "I think we had said what there was to say in that trio format and we didn't feel like touring around for years doing the same thing. We wanted to do what we wanted to do. Of course, the success of that band made it financially possible to do that, where it wouldn't have been possible before."

The notion of a Cream reunion "comes up every now and again. I suppose it could happen one day. Eric said once that the only way he would see that

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happening would be as a money-making venture. In music that seems to be the most important thing these days. It's not the most important thing to me. Money has never been the primary objective of making music."

After Cream broke up, "I wanted to rediscover my roots in jazz, the first thing that really excited me," says Bruce. "I've always wanted to extend my playing and my musical ideas, but it's very difficult. There have been good times for me financially, and bad times, but musically there's only been good times. I would rather it's that way than the other way, to be quite honest."

Bruce busied himself with solo albums (*Songs For A Tailor*, *Harmony Row*) and stints with contemporary jazz-rock players. He then returned to the power trio format with West and Laing. Throughout, Bruce's approach to the bass remained constant. "Although I don't change personally, I like to change the environment I'm playing in," states Bruce. "I never change my way of playing; I always play myself. If I'm playing with a fourteen-piece band like I did in New York [with Kip Hanrahan], I'm still playing exactly me. But I also like to play in a power rock trio. I like to play cello in string quartets. I like to play with Scottish folk singers, which I do where I live in the Highlands. I never think of it as a rock thing or *any* thing; I just hook up with different musicians. One of the functions of a bass player is to make other musicians sound good; a good bass player can make musicians sound much better."

Bruce has been credited with transcending the so-called limitations of the bass by taking it beyond its once traditional role. He welcomes that appraisal. "The most interesting musicians to me are not the ones who play instruments but the ones who play themselves. It doesn't matter if it's Miles Davis or Louis Armstrong playing a trumpet or Charlie Mingus or Jimmy Blanton playing the bass—the instrument is only a medium to express what you want to. And I just happen to be playing the bass, so I'm expressing my personality, my musical ideas, on that particular instrument." Which bassists does Bruce most admire? "I like many but Charlie Mingus was the main guy to inspire me, 'cause he took country blues as part of his thing and applied it to jazz. And he also wrote great melodies. He was definitely the most inspirational bass player."

Bruce has been without an American label since the release of *I've Always Wanted To Do This* on Epic in 1980. (His last solo album, *Automatic*, "which I did just using computers," was done "purely for Europe.") His latest appearances on record were with Robin Trower and on Kip Hanrahan's sublime percussive dreamscape, *Desire Develops An Edge*. But Bruce is philosophical about the current state of business affairs. "Of course it's frustrating, but many great artists have problems with record companies. Obviously record companies are businesses and they exist to make money. They're not trying to improve music. That's not their job. I don't think it ever was."

As a twenty-year veteran of the business, Bruce sees a significant difference in the present consumption of music. "The marketing has become so sophisticated that people lose that sense of excitement. If they're hearing things all the time and seeing videos and being kind of overkilled by all this, of course they lose the excitement.

"Most of the music I hear today sounds very impressive because production has become very sophisticated, but the content very often is not much—sometimes very little," opines Bruce. "I think that's the big difference there is nowadays in music. There was very little production in the great records of days gone by—the content had to be there. I do miss the great performances on records that there used to be. And because of the technology available it's now possible to literally punch in every note, which I believe some people do."

How does Bruce assess his musical legacy? "Everything I do is satisfying

continued on page 118

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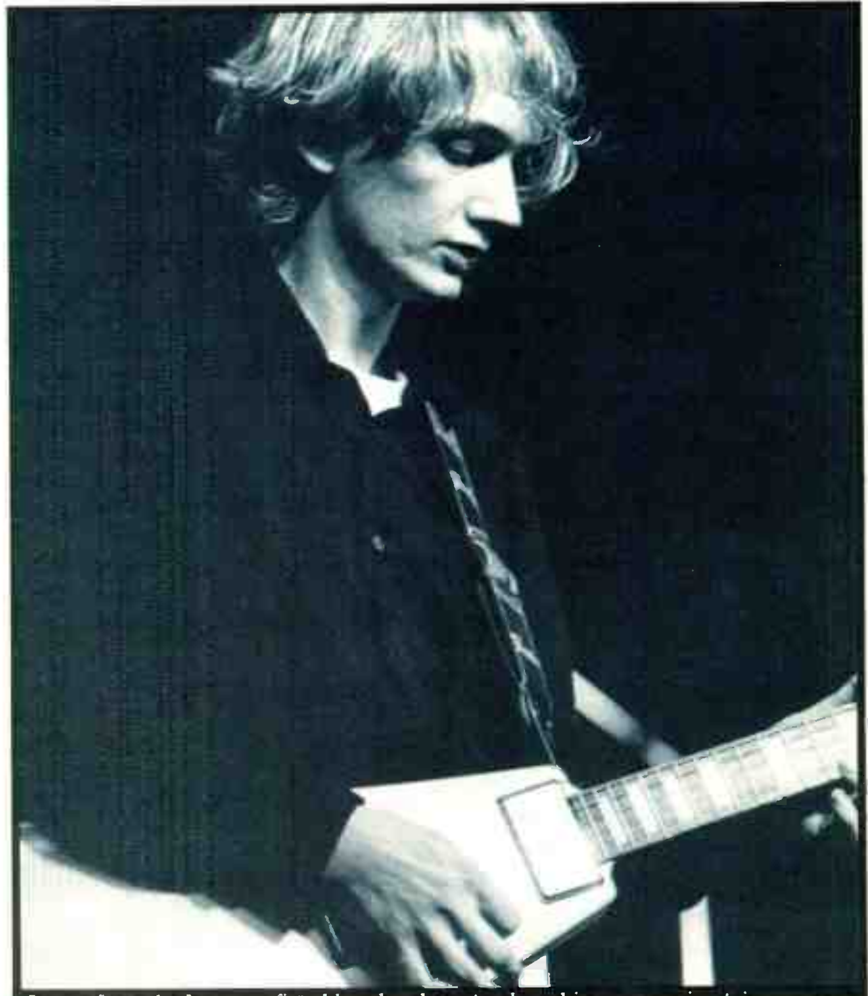
KEITH LEVENE, POST-PUNK PIONEER

Unstinting Innovation from a Guitarist Who Doesn't Blink

By Julie Panebianco

Keith Levene, skateboard kneepads slung around his ankles, has one leg propped on the board of a Fairlight computer, balancing a bright red Ibanez guitar strapped to his chest. "What do you expect from me? Rock 'n' roll or something?" he laughs to his engineer after recording a particularly dissonant chord onto the disc of the CMI. Levene slams out a rapacious rock riff: "Here, name that program, Johnny," he grins slyly, referring to former associate John Lydon. "After Thunders," he emphasizes, "my man."

Levene's collaboration with Lydon in the eclectic, infamous Public Image Ltd. corporation/band came to an end a year ago. It was the culmination of a friendship/business partnership that began after Lydon dumped the Sex Pistols and Levene jumped ship on the Clash (during the recording of their first LP). PiL was an explosive, diverse, much-discussed presence on the music scene, and as they garnered praises (and abuse) Levene was christened the first "post-punk" guitarist.



Levene's explosive, two-fisted bombardment ushered in a new six-string era.

ANN SUMMA/RETNA

Indeed, his two-fisted harmonic wallop sounded like two guitars—rhythm and lead—played at the same time. "People joked that there was someone else sitting behind the amplifier," smiles Levene. His hypnotic style influenced the Gang of Four, Killing Joke, the Psychedelic Furs, and especially U2's guitarist the Edge. "He sounds so much like me sometimes I think it is me," Levene mutters sarcastically.

About PiL's fallout, Levene says, "It couldn't have carried on because we hated each other's guts." There was a year of hassles: "I went through hell with all the legal ramifications of quitting PiL. I was imprisoned on their English label Virgin, and there was a total lack of response from Lydon and PiL—whoever they are now—as to my royalty settlement." And there was still the question of what to do with the tapes of the last PiL album. Levene completed and released them on his own label under the title *Commercial Zone,* while Elektra issued Lydon's version of most of the same songs—with horns filling in for the distinctive guitar parts—as *This Is What You Want, This Is What You Get.*

"I have every right to release this in American territories," Levene declares on a break from his beloved Fairlight at a New York studio. "This is not a bootleg. But I had to get it out of my system," he stresses. "I had to release *Commercial Zone* to end the situation and to fight back, because I was being trodden on by major record companies and repulsive manager-type people. It has all been very annoying.

"What PiL did for their record was use the ideas on the original tapes that suited them, but they re-recorded everything with new musicians.

"I don't really know why," he reflects, "I've heard *This Is What You Want* and it doesn't sound better; I don't know if it was a personal dig at me, or whether they really thought it sounded like shit," Levene shrugs.

He is embittered about the split but a year off, with time concentrated on his wife, ex-Pullsalama member Lori Montana, and their baby son Kirk, has made him a happier man. He has just undertaken a project for Activision, to design software product for home computers and video games; he has also returned to recording.

"Producing PiL and producing myself is one and the same thing," he smirks, "except they aren't there so I get a lot more done, and it's more fun. What I do is, I make it up as I go along. I don't write music, I write everything around a sound. A similar analogy is when you work on a computer, you can store everything you do to disc and edit it later; that's what I do to tape.

"With PiL, our bassist Jah Wobble couldn't play, which was brilliant," Levene laughs, "because he didn't have any pre-set standards about what rock 'n' roll was, or what guitarists were,

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or whatever. Nor did I, particularly. So we both just stood around and made things up. The 'PiL Theme' which is the most structured thing we'd ever done—it's got verse, chorus, a lead bit—we made up as we went along in the studio. We had it on the multi-track—this was our first 24-track experience—and we had to cut a big slice out of the actual two-inch tape and then glue it together in a certain sequence. I do that a lot."

The sounds he records, states Levene, have to "stimulate people." "Like, I'll bombard the tune with high frequencies," he explains, "or I'll layer it, put low frequency underneath and ultra high frequency on top. The tune is irrelevant. I want *them* to write the tune. I want them to hear it on different levels—like when they play it loud, or when they play it and they're doing something else. "Blue Water"—that's a floor shaker—is designed to be listened to really loud, and I used very slow, low frequencies. It can exhaust you, listening to that at a loud volume."

Another tactic Levene favors is repetition. "I like that circular, jangly thing, which is a guitar trademark of mine—it is total repetition; it has an overall effect and an individual effect. For 'Poptones,' on *Second Edition*, each time I play the phrase it has one effect, each note means something else. It's like reggae, I was very influenced by reggae, the deep bass, the repetitiveness.

"If you keep looking at a white wall—if you look at it for a second, you'll see a white wall, if you keep looking at it for five minutes you'll see different colors, you're going to see different patterns in front of your eyes—especially if you don't blink. And your ears don't blink."

Levene's infamous circular rhythms, he claims, indirectly come from things Yes guitarist Steve Howe taught him. "When I was fifteen I went to work for my favorite band as a roadie—which was Yes—and I was a terrible roadie. Yeah, so even though I play nothing like him, Steve Howe is still my favorite guitarist. I don't copy him. I get a lot of my internal knowledge, or feeling on guitar, or what you can do and what kinds of sounds you can make from Steve Howe. I think he is so damned good; he taught me a lot, when I worked for Yes, but he didn't know he was my hero."

When Levene formed the Clash with Mick Jones, he didn't even own a guitar: "Yeah, due to my misspent youth. And Bernard Rhodes, our manager, got me an awful guitar. With the Clash, I played really fast, what hardcore turned into, but with 60s rock 'n' roll material—Mick Jones really had the rock 'n' roll romantic bug. The Ramones album had come out, and there was no lead on it, and I really loved that, the heavy rhythm.

"My style came out with PiL though, and it wasn't what I played, it was what I didn't play. I had this rule, if I made a mistake while I was playing, I'd repeat it twice, just to check it out. A lot of my best stuff came from that, it really did, I'm not saying that to be avant-garde or far out.

continued on page 119

Levene's Machines

"I'm not one of your old guitar freaks," Keith Levene makes clear. He mostly uses a Gibson Les Paul Deluxe, sunburst. "Got a Kramer with a Floyd Rose on it, and an Ibanez Les Paul, which I like because of the tension—the way it goes back in tune every time is great. I used to have a Valino all-metal guitar—used that for the 'Public Image Theme'—but John Lydon's brother nabbed it." Strings: D'Addario or Ernie Ball Lights.

Levene likes to practice on an acoustic guitar—"a typical Ovation, it's blue, mono or stereo, and it's really nice, an '82 or '83 model." He also uses a Scholz Rockman: "quite expensive, but very good." He has a Roland G-707 guitar synthesizer, "one of those Yamaha string things, I've forgotten the model," and a Synthaxe—"it's the best guitar synth out, 'cause it works."

For taping, Levene has a Burnell 8-track one-inch, an Ilia audio desk to go with it, and an AMS true time harmonizer. Also: an Otari half-inch 8-track and 2-track.

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DAVE GRUSIN'S FILMIC FEELING

Mr. Oscar on the Compromised Craft of Big Budget Scoring

By Jock Baird

Triple threat Grusin and pal Phoebe Snow run through a track for Night-Lines.

You're Dave Grusin, blue-chip film scorer, sage recording veteran and now producer/owner of your own successful jazz indie label. The phone rings and you're asked to soundtrack a major new motion picture. Dozens upon dozens of times this call has come, from the directors of biggies like *Tootsie*, *Heaven Can Wait*, *The Goodbye Girl* and *On Golden Pond*. Dozens of times you've responded by seamlessly weaving a theme and background music into the on-camera lives of America's finest actors and actresses. As you hang up the phone, like an old pro, you begin doing what you always do so consistently.

You *panic*.

"I guess it's psychosomatic to some extent," says the outwardly calm Grusin, "but I don't have this built-in background so that I can say, 'Yes, of course I know exactly what to do here.' I *don't* know exactly what to do here. I *never* know exactly what to do. I didn't train as a composer, so I feel really incompetent to write—every time. I have to start over and rationalize this whole musical spectrum every time I sit down."

Add to that, of course, the inherent pressure of filmmaking. If you think making a $100,000 LP is nerve-racking, try a fifteen-million-dollar movie. Does Dave get a lot of nervous phone calls? "*Nervous phone calls?*" he laughs incredulously. "*I* make most of the nervous phone calls. And if *I'm* nervous about it, the directors must be basket cases. I'm amazed by all of it. There are so many people around and involved, and so much coordination needed.... It's so horribly expensive! And how do you fix it if it doesn't work?!"

Despite his anxieties—or probably because of them—Dave Grusin has managed to walk that fine line between emotional and cornball and come up with mainstream film music that functions brilliantly in its cinematic environment. His soundtrack credits read like an Academy Awards Who's Who: *The Graduate, Winning, The Front, Three Days of the Condor, The Champ, And Justice For All, Electric Horseman, My Bodyguard, Reds, Absence of Malice, The Pope of Greenwich Village, The Little Drummer Girl*, the list wends on... From his classically baked acoustic piano motifs, to his funky Rhodes-driven rhythm sections, to his restrained yet full-blown orchestrations, Grusin has demonstrated a singular ability to capture and elicit pure filmic feeling.

Although films are his "bread and butter," the spry fifty-year-old Grusin maintains a substantial "hobby" as producer and session man for his own Manhattan-based GRP Records (as in **G**rusin and engineer/businessman Larry **R**osen **P**roductions). Rather than "trying to get out there and slug it out with the big guys," GRP has nurtured a notable stable of pop/fusion artists like Dave Valentin, Lee Ritenour, (a long-time Grusin stomping partner), Patti Austin, Angela Bofill, Tom Browne and Earl Klugh. He also produces Dave Grusin, Recording Artist, who for most of the fall has quietly kept his new digitally recorded LP *Night-Lines* parked at number four on the *Billboard* Jazz chart. It's a tasty (if somewhat laid-back) sampler of Grusin specialties, including some swell Phoebe Snow comeback vocals and two tunes by Al Jarreau collaborator Randy Goodrum. Grusin did much of the record by himself, working with a modest keyboard stack, a Fairlight CMI and a LinnDrum, and later adding a few ringers like David Sanborn and Marcus Miller ("synthesized bass is wonderful, but it doesn't have great thumbs").

Dave is the first to admit that though his background is very much in straight jazz, "this really isn't a jazz album to anybody who knows anything about jazz. It was never intended to be. I just saw that *Night-Lines* is a spot above Miles' record on the jazz chart. Well that's *stupid!* That's ludicrous. What does that mean?"

Raised near Denver, Grusin was led to the piano by his violinist father; after almost choosing veterinary medicine, he enrolled as a piano major at the University of Colorado ("I used to get Cs

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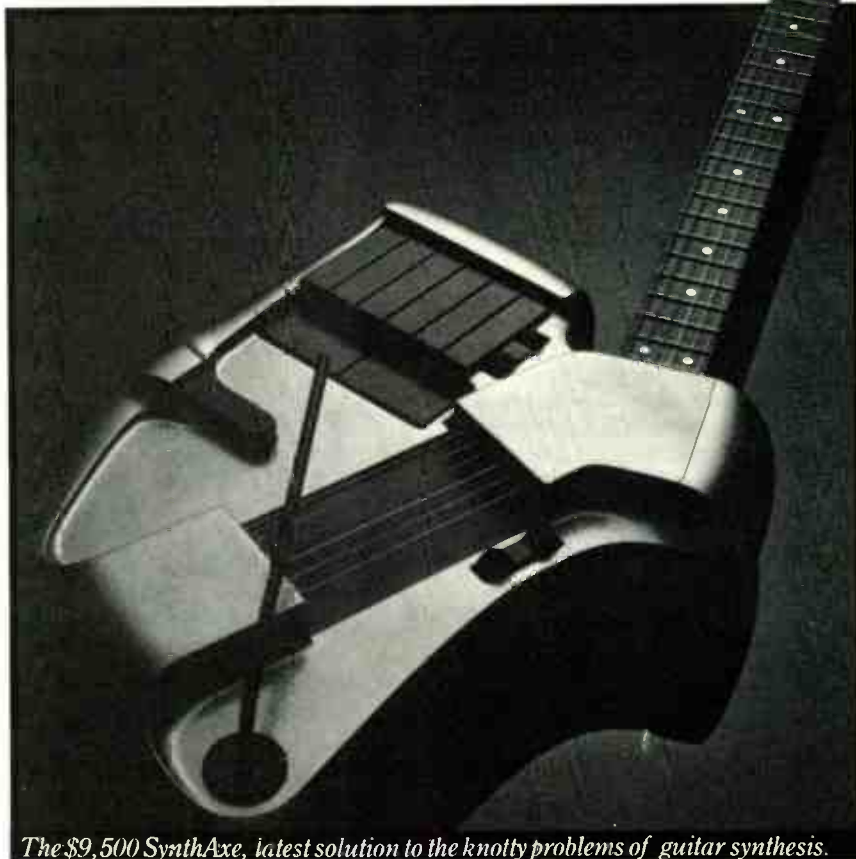

The $9,500 SynthAxe, latest solution to the knotty problems of guitar synthesis.

By Alan diPerna

If you're one of the thousands of guitarists sitting on the synthesizer sidelines, you're starting to get a little antsy about the oft-prophesied Guitar Synth Breakthrough that would result in the same proliferation of under-$1000 models that has proved such a boon to keyboard players. But ever since the ill-fated ARP Avatar, a brave new world for all guitarists (not just the financially well endowed) has been heralded but not heard. Today there is still only one commercially available guitar synthesizer system, the Roland. Why has only one company dominated the field? What technical problems that at first seemed so easy to solve are still resisting today's best and brightest manufacturing minds? Is any headway being made? And most importantly, is there any hope for the committed guitarist, or is it time to start learning keyboards?

Yes, there is hope, but don't look for any instant (or cheap) miracles. It wasn't entirely an arbitrary decision that made the keyboard—rather than any other instrument—the standard controller for synthesizers. The first designers knew what they needed in a music controller: a clean, unambiguous on/off type of pitch input to a synthesizer. For that, unfortunately, there's nothing like an electric keyboard. Nonetheless, manufacturers were eager to come up with a viable guitar-based synthesizer system. Throughout the early 70s though, their good intentions bore little fruit. The first out, the ARP Avatar, went down in music industry annals as a monumental failure and the cause of ARP's eventual demise. The Korg X-911 monophonic guitar synth offered a modest range of capabilities at a modest price. It sold fairly well until Korg discontinued it in 1981. The reason? The notorious tracking problems that plagued all of the early attempts at guitar synthesis.

Most of these early systems used a pitch-to-voltage conversion technique to turn an electric guitar into a synthesizer controller. To put it simply, the pitch sounded on the guitar was sensed and turned into the type of standard control voltage used in analog synthesis to trigger oscillators, filters and other parameters. The problem was that these early pitch-to-voltage devices were easily confused. Related notes, like dominants and subdominants of fundamental pitches, are very similar in their harmonic makeup. Many an E ended up being read as an A or B by the pitch-to-voltage converters.

This situation placed a considerable demand on the guitars used as controllers. The slightest intonation faults or dead spots produced disastrous results. It also asked a lot of the guitarist, who had to be spot-on in his execution if he wanted the synthesizer to track correctly. To make matters worse, there was often a time lag involved as the system read the note being played, converted it to a control voltage and passed the appropriate commands along to the synthesizer. The cumulative result of all this was to put many guitar players off the idea of guitar synthesis—for good in some cases.

One of the first alternatives to pitch-to-voltage conversion was devised by Roland, who introduced its GR-500 in 1978. This system offered a quasi-polyphonic mode of operation that relied on multiple tone generators rather than oscillators. It was followed by the GR-300, which actually did offer two tunable, programmable oscillators plus a VCF and LFO. Just last year, the company brought out its GR-700, a full-blown 12-oscillator guitar synthesizer. It is essentially the same synth as their JX-3P keyboard synthesizer, but with added dynamic sensitivity capabilities and a front-panel layout appropriate for guitar work.

The Roland approach to guitar synthesis revolves around what the company calls its Hex pickup. It is divided into six sections—one for each string. Each section has its own built-in pre-amp. The pre-amps are part of a frequency counting system which takes the sound waves produced by the guitar, squares them, counts them and turns them into digital communication information. This is sent—via six lines of the 24-pin connector Roland uses to hook their guitars up to their synth modules—to the synthesizer's digitally controlled oscillators (DCOs).

Because the system is digitally con-

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trolled, fundamentally, it sidesteps most of the time-lag problems inherent in pitch-to-voltage conversion. Filters, LFOs and other parameters, however, are controlled by analog voltages derived from the digital communication data. "Filters and things like that generally don't require as instantaneous a conversion as oscillators," explains Roland's Jim Mothersbaugh. "If a filter wavers a bit in tracking, the human ear won't notice it the way it would in the case of an oscillator."

While it has solved many tracking problems, the Roland system still imposes rigorous requirements on the guitar to be used as a controller. The slightest fault in intonation or a dead spot on the neck, even if inaudible to the human ear, can confuse the Hex pickup. So while the Hex pickup can be installed on virtually any electric guitar, the work must be done by a specially trained craftsman, according to Roland, working in close consultation with the guitarist. Obviously, if the guitar fails to pass muster, the guitar tech will advise against the retrofit.

Because set-up and neck condition are so crucial to the operation of the Hex pickup, Roland developed its own line of guitarlike controllers aimed at creating the optimal conditions for the Hex pickup. The most recent of these is the G-707. It sports a graphite support bar which extends over the neck, bringing the neck's resonant frequency well below the tonal range of the guitar. The company claims that this does away with the sort of neck response problems that lead to tracking errors.

Up until very recently, the Roland guitar synthesis system has more or less had the field to itself. New England Digital, for example, uses Roland G-series guitars as controllers for the Synclavier digital synthesizer. The output of a stock Roland Hex pickup is sent to a remote control unit, where it is converted to digital commands for the Synclavier. The remote control unit, which can be mounted on the guitar itself or on a mikestand, contains a miniaturized version of the Synclavier control panel, giving the guitarist full programming power over this popular (if expensive) digital keyboard synth.

Recent developments in the guitar synth market, however, seem poised to threaten Roland's hegemony. Among these is the SynthAxe, a MIDI guitar controller created by the British design team of Bill Aitken, Mike Dixon and Tony Sedivy. As an alternative to pickup-style pitch sensing devices, the SynthAxe uses a network of sensors set right into the neck at each fret position for each string. When the player stops the strings at any given fret, the sensors generate a digital pitch code. The neck sensors are supplemented by a series of bend sensors (one for each string) which enable the SynthAxe to accurately track all manner of string bends, vibratos, slides, etc.

The fact that pitch commands are generated entirely by the positioning of the fingers on the strings—rather than by the vibration of each string at a specific frequency, as in conventional guitar operation—has some interesting design ramifications for the SynthAxe. For one, the frets are at an equal distance apart all the way up the neck. The two-octave neck is therefore quite a bit longer than conventional guitar necks, which is why the designers have positioned it at an upward angle relative to the body; it provides easier access to the entire fretboard. Because there is no physical tuning of strings involved, the player can assign different pre-set pitch values to his strings and have a variety of different tunings stored in memory and readily at his command.

Even more peculiar, from the point of view of traditional guitar design, is the fact that notes are triggered by an entirely different set of strings than those used to determine pitches. The SynthAxe's six, short triggering strings are located on the body of the instrument and offer full dynamic sensitivity. There is also a keyboard-like triggering device mounted on the body, with one key corresponding to each string and provi-

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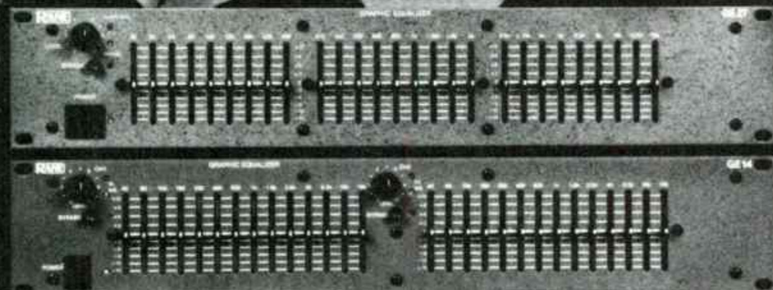

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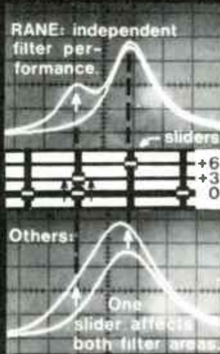

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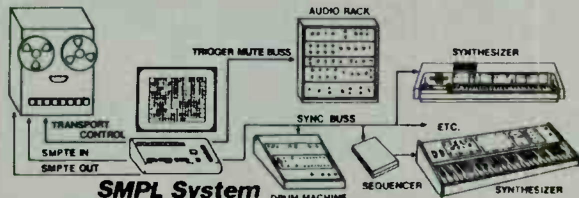

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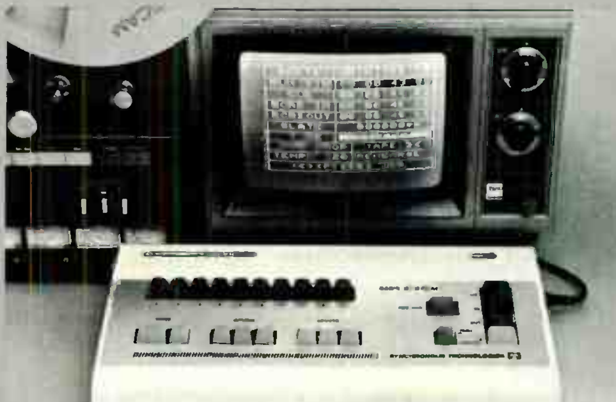

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Developments

The early winter N.A.M.M. heat-up is upon us, and a flurry of new product releases is already underway. The most ambitious of these combines a keyboard sequencer (not including the actual keyboard) and a sophisticated drum computer: the Linn 9000. Well, it makes sense—Linn pretty much invented the digital drum machine, which is a specialized sequencer. Why not use your best talents all the ways you can? The 9000 is one of the new-breed sequencers which memorizes not only notes but dynamics, pitch bends, modulation and synth patches. It can simultaneously control sixteen polyphonic synths at a shot and records thirty-two tracks. Not bad.... The recording and editing functions are set up like a multi-track tape recorder: play, record, fast forward, etc. Storage medium is cassette, but a disc drive will soon be available as a retrofit option, as is a plug-in circuit board for SMPTE interlock.

Linn 9000

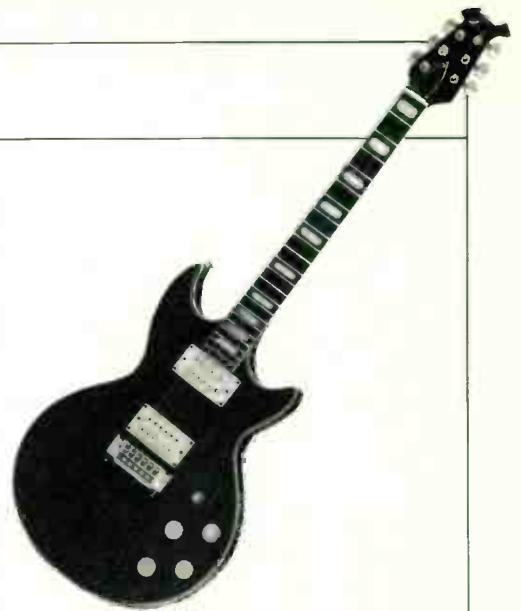
The drum portion of the 9000 incorporates the LinnDrum, one of the two acknowledged top-of-the-line machines, but updates it with velocity-sensitive pads on the front panel, programmable high-hat delay to simulate various foot pedal pressures, a built in mixer, a "repeat function" for rolls, constant sixteenth notes and whatnot, and two ways of tempo setting, numeric and and tap real-time count-off. There are eighteen drum sounds aboard, including four crash and ride cymbals, congas, cowbell, cabasa and 80s handclaps. If these aren't enough, find a copy of the cassette of new LinnDrum sounds—you'll record for years before you exhaust this batch. And if that won't satisfy you, Linn promises a retrofit option that will let you sample your own. The Linn 9000 will list for $4990, from Linn Electronics, 18720 Oxnard St., Tarzana, CA 91356 (818-708-8131).

Another hot spot is Audio Media Research, a wing of Peavey. AMR introduced a nifty 4-track cassette demo recorder and some very impressive reference monitors, called PRM 3s, at last fall's A.E.S. Show. The tape deck, called the DCR 421, can be mounted on one of two new mixing boards (the CDM 420 or 642) for a complete system. It runs at 1⅞ ips, has a dual-motor, 2-solenoid, full logic transport, pitch control and a counter-based autolocater. The noise reduction is switchable to Dolby B or C. The DCR 421 goes for a scant $600, from Audio Media Research, P.O. Box 1230, Meridian, MS 39301 (601-483-5372).

There's also been an striking amount of outboard activity, particularly in digital delays. DeltaLab shocked the world last year with a $239 delay, the Effectron Jr., but had some nagging bugs that forced them to redesign. The new Effectron I, II and III start at a hundred dollars higher than their predecessors, but it's a well spent hundred. DeltaLab also released a new $1000 luxury model, the CompuEFFECTRON, which not only has a state-of-the-art display/switching panel, but features real-time microprocessing that performs necessary calculations instantly. Yamaha introduced the snazzy MIDI-compatible D1500 delay for $900. It includes sixteen memory banks and eye-opening synthesizer interactive ability, in addition to a flexible front panel for simplified setups. Another new outboard achiever comes from dbx: called the 166, it combines the functions of dbx's other compressor/limiters with a noise gate and peak clipper. DOD is also fielding a potent new multi-effects unit, the Chain Reaction. It includes heavy metal distortion, chorus/flanger, parametric eq, and one-second digital delay with its own LED readout. There's also a harmonic enhancer and a footswitch, all for $700.

Yamaha D1500 Digital Delay

A vocoder for a hundred bucks? If you're handy with a soldering iron and enjoy reading Craig Anderton (we do), you can build one of his famous kits from PAIA. It's got 8-band resolution, low noise, an instrument fuzz option, and a threshold control that alters sensitivity. If you're unsure, get a demo cassette from PAIA at 1020 W. Wilshire Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73116 (405-843-9626). Another dark horse delight are the synthesizer instruction videotapes from Ferro Productions (228 Washington Ave., Belleville, NJ). These feature artists like Zappa, Stevie, Paich, Porcaro and Ritenour explaining synth fundamentals and performing techniques. One four-hour course is "The Secrets of Analog and Digital Synthesis"; a second is "Making the Most of MIDI." At $130 for each, they may compare favorably with private lessons.



Ovation Ultra Solid Body

Ovation is introducing a brand new electric guitar, the Ultra Solid Body that will start at $315. Somewhat Stratlike, they'll be equipped with DiMarzio pickups and Schaller tuners, with a Kahler tremolo bar option. Washburn is further enhancing its burgeoning line of guitars and basses with three "hotrod" Panther G-35s, $800 beauties that include blue-chip hardware and a 24-fret, three-ply rock maple neck with improved radius and a special contour. Guitarists are also urged to get their hands on Delrins, a new series of guitar picks from D'Addario that are not only more durable and resilient, but which have a gritty, non-skid surface for sweaty players. Six gauges are available. – **Jock Baird**

Here are a few dates for Simmons clinics featuring drummer "Texas" Tim Root: Jan. 14, Guitar Center, San Francisco; Jan. 16, Pro Music & Drum, Las Vegas; Jan. 19, Colfax Music, Denver: Jan. 20, Luchetti Music, Albuquerque, NM; Jan. 21, Creative Drum Shop, Scottsdale, AZ; Jan. 22, Guitar Center, San Diego; Feb. 11, Sound City, New Orleans; Feb 12, Sound City, Baton Rouge, LA.

Last issue, Freff mistakenly included Dynacord as a manufacturer of an EPROM blower. Simmons' SDS EPB is still the only commercially available unit. A while back, we poked fun at the Guitar Grabber plug-in guitar stand as a copy of the Jakstan. In fact, the Guitar Grabber was an original idea that's been around for a few years now from TEKForm Products, P.O. Box 75, Cambridge, MA 02140.

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MT. ST. HELENS: MAY 18, 1980

UPI/BETTMANN ARCHIVE

It's a little known fact that on May 17 of 1980, a Cerwin-Vega professional speaker system was installed in a local cafe at the base of Mt. St. Helens. With the excitement of owning a Cerwin-Vega system, club owners immediately lost all restraint and turned up the volume on the new P.A.—there was simply no resisting the thunderous bass, astounding dynamic range and ultra-low distortion put out by Cerwin-Vega's professional systems. Fact or fiction? Can a speaker system cause a formerly dormant volcano to wildly erupt?

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Toto from page 86

a front man at the same time Bobby started feeling a little stifled. So at the time this movie *Dune* came along—there's not much for a lead singer to do when you're going to score a movie for a year—things started to drift apart and I think that's where the falling out happened."

Jeff views the change from another angle. "Obviously, if you're a young band...it's not like we're a band that lives together in the pink house on the hill. All musicians go through their own personal crises. *Isolation* was probably the most enjoyable album to work on. The only thing was our change of singers in the middle. That's heavy, to find somebody to come into a tight family scene, to bring in somebody you don't know, but to have him be an equal from the outset. I would have liked to have looked for a year, but fortunately with Fergie, he fit in quite naturally, quite quickly."

It was a hectic spring of '84 for Toto, who, in the thick of wrapping up *Dune* and dashing into the studio to cut a heroic-wafting track for the official Olympics record, were suddenly a vessel without a stern. Rumor spread quickly about the golden job opportunity, but the group kept the hunt low-key, looking at about fifteen video "resumes" before Jeff got sold on Fredrickson. It was the tune "Lifetime" by LeRoux that sealed the deal in Jeff's mind. Then embroiled in production work in Germany, Fredrickson got the word to call the Toto office, and the Toto adoption went through with nary a wrinkle. "This guy one day came into a rehearsal hall and sang four Toto tunes with us," says Jeff. "We played them twice. I said 'Man, this guy's a *mofo*, this guy is unbelievable. Let's get back into the studio and record.'"

"Fergie's what we've needed for a long time," says Lukather, "because we've never really had a focal point. Everybody gets a chance to step out, but I mean somebody that *looks* the part." It's true: Fredrickson, swathed in Aryan vigor and good looks, looks as though he's spent the least amount of time in studio isolation of the Toto boys. Having securely passed the audition, Fredrickson learned first-hand about life inside one of the most definitively close-knit of pop groups. "Jeff was a real Godfather image to me the whole time this was coming down," Fredrickson says. "He looks out for you, in a friendly way. When you talk to the guy and hear his voice you'll understand—he sounds real low and *serious*." Lukather adds, smiling, "A caustic human being at times, in a positive way. He gets shit done." The Godfather analogy is perhaps more fitting than even intended; Porcaro is a tough-skinned, determined musician who looks out for his own, who has a realistic, empirical understanding of how the music business works, and has little or no tolerance for hokum or opposing viewpoints.

If Toto's albums seem less than brilliant, the problem may be more in the editing than the writing. For every Toto album, there have been numerous, completed tunes that didn't make the vinyl. Where does this legendary Toto surplus go? "It goes on Michael Jackson albums," grins Paich. "It's a typical example of what might happen; Steve had this song 'Human Nature' and he brought it to Toto, but we said 'we can't use it right now. We're into songs right for stadium rock situations.' And sure enough, I turn on my TV and there's Michael Jackson singing 'Human Nature' in a stadium. It backfired on us."

Of this phantom unreleased harvest of material, Jeff notes, "We have this dream about a double album called *Great Expectations* with this stuff. It is far superior, musically, to a lot of the stuff that appears on the record. We've tried to make music on albums that follows a pop, rock 'n' roll style—whatever you want to call it—music that's fun to play live. That's why we're a group. If we wanted to do our ten-minute instru-

continued on page 118

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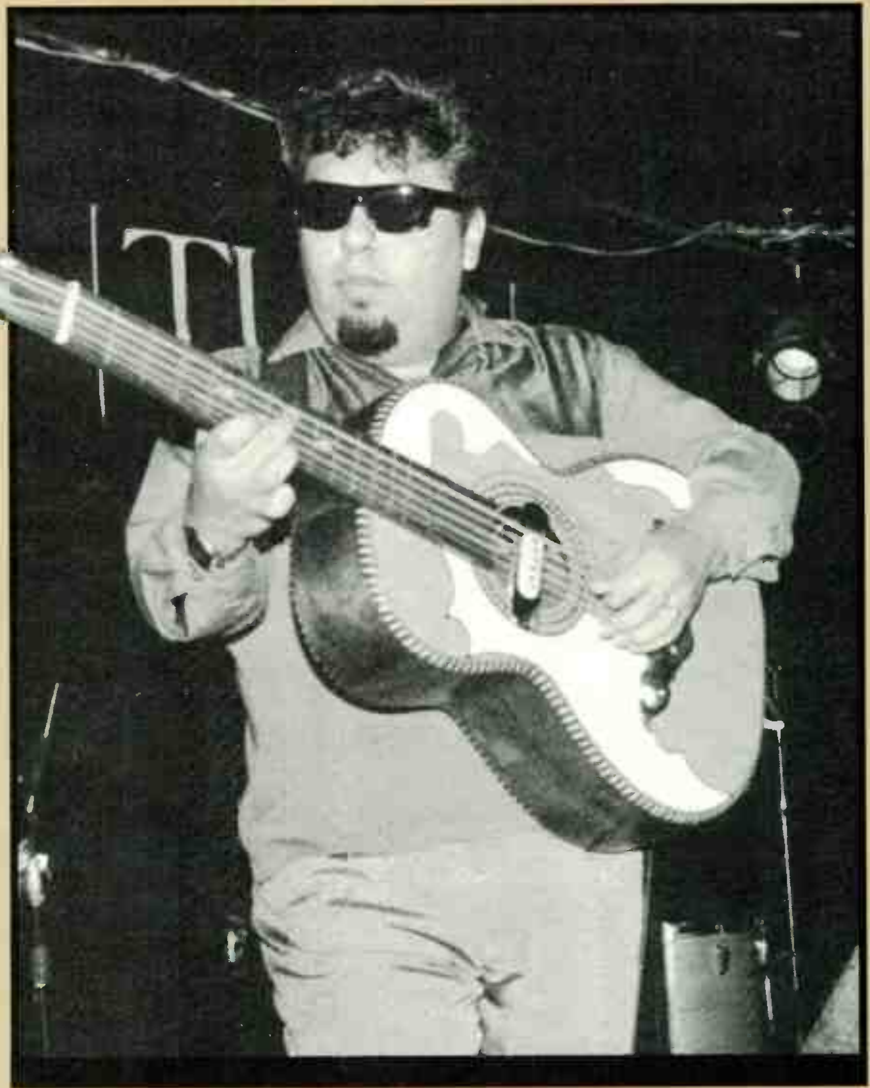
RECORD REVIEWS



PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

Los Lobos—the wolves—survive brilliantly outside the rock 'n' roll melting pot.

LOS LOBOS

How Will The Wolf Survive?
(Slash)

One of the hardest things to understand about this country is that while America is one nation, Americans are quite demonstrably *not* one people. Just look around you, and odds are you'll find fellow Americans whose backgrounds are as different from yours as an Italian's would be from a German's.

Our music used to reflect those differences, too. These days, though, much of America seems eager to overlook our distinctions, wishing instead for the bland uniformity of K-Mart, McDonald's, formula radio and Ronald Reagan's New America. A shame, too, because if America were like that we would never have a band as wonderful as Los Lobos.

Los Lobos may not be the greatest rock 'n' roll band we have, but they are, without doubt, the most *American*. That's an odd thing to say about a group whose early claim to fame was splicing *Norteño*-style accordion onto a rock 'n' roll beat, but the truth is, Los Lobos are no more a Tex-Mex act than the Band were a rockabilly group or Springsteen is a Jersey bar band singer.

Sure, you can isolate areas of musical influence, like the creole lilt that tugs at the pulse of "The Breakdown," or the old-timey Appalachian ornamentation that distinguishes the picking on "Lil' King Of Everything." But the members of Los Lobos are not archivists, and their object isn't to preserve the musics they love in isolation. Instead, they've taken the various threads and woven them into an entirely new fabric. "A Matter Of Time," for instance, mixes country ballad reticence with swinging R&B confidence to produce a song that's something else again, a catchy, slightly melancholy mid-tempo rocker. Strangely enough, Los Lobos' catholic taste has the effect of universalizing their music, until everything from the accordion-fueled two-step of "Corrida #1" to the big-beat stomp of "Evangeline" hits home like an old favorite.

Best of all, Los Lobos really *rock*. Drop the stylus on "Don't Worry Baby" and hear how David Hidalgo and Cesar Rosas lean into the nasty boogie guitar licks framing the vocal; flip over to "I Got To Let You Know" and notice the way Conrad Lozano and Louis Perez drive the polka-beat with the supple grace of James Jamerson and Benny Benjamin; skip to "How Will The Wolf Survive" and marvel as its melodic sweep and rhythmic urgency gives it the breathless power Jackson Browne has spent years running after.

In short, this is incredible music, the kind that makes you glad to be an American with a stereo. Whether or not it will make you a better person is hard to say, but one thing's for sure—after you've

World Radio History

heard *How Will The Wolf Survive?* you're bound to be a happier one. – **J.D. Considine**

RONALD SHANNON JACKSON

Pulse
(OAO Celluloid)

Ronald Shannon Jackson made a name for himself playing with leaders—Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, Blood Ulmer—who always demanded more than you had. Play drums like you wrote this music. Orchestrate my ideas before I can think of them. And—at least in the case of Taylor and Coleman—don't just play what you know. Play who you are.

Jackson certainly went into *Pulse* with such notions in mind. An unseen orchestra seems to hover about the perimeter of this music: these are not so much solos as arrangements, which Shannon acknowledges with his "Mop/Mop—For Big Sid" figures at the beginning of "Circus Of Civilized Fools." Therein lies the essential difference between this project and the popularly detested fart form known as the drum solo. What a Max Roach duly noted, and spiritual sons like Shannon extend, is the idea that the drum kit *is* a mini-orchestra, with melodic, textural and rhythmic contours that need vouchsafe no apologies to "legitimate" instruments.

It also means, as Shannon sees it, a metaphor for the rhythms of life. *Echoes of the body eclectic: heart, lungs, bad gas, dreams of locomotion, skip-a-beat/skip-a-beat. An extension of the human voice, and a first cousin to the shuffling swing of poetic meter. Dues, dues, the blues, songs without words, rhythm of language, rhythm of speech, cascading traps fill up the breach.* And if this road not often taken occasionally falters, it is never from lack of vision.

The long workouts on side one are the more ambitious, but side two's combination of street jive, barbequed doggerel, mescaline marching bands and earthy refrains are more evocative. Shannon's suggestions of free pulse over a rolling, steady rhythm in "Circus" animate charges through duple and triple meter. But the sound and fury of "Richard III, Raven" (with text by those Tin Pan Alley sensations Willie The Shake and E.A. Poe), though physically acrobatic, signify misplaced ambition.

Side two, with its mythological renditions of heroic losers and little guys ("Puttin' On Dog," and "Slim In Atlanta," with text from Sterling A. Brown's 1932 blues poems), fallen idols (Michael S. Harper's "Last Affair: Bessie's Blues Song") and the lonely offices of parenthood (Robert Hayden's "Those Winter Sundays") are more frankly drawn from the residue of Shannon's roots—and are far more affecting. Framed by musical depictions of his African, American Indian, Texan and pulse modulated Buddhist inclinations, they form a suite exaltation of anonymous struggle and redemption, which should come as a revelation to the smirking toothpick and tilted hat crowd who know they baaaad bro, but don't respect the sacrifices made on their behalf, or their responsibilities to those elders. Shannon does, which is ultimately why *Pulse* succeeds as something more important than a drum record. – **Chip Stern**

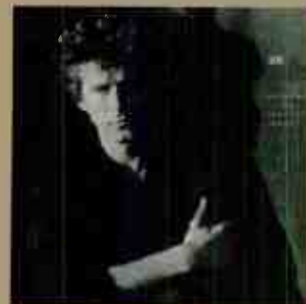
BIG COUNTRY

Steeltown
(PolyGram)

From their name on down, Big Country scream, "We are important!" The promo sticker on their new LP informs us that it is long-awaited; the epic pretensions of both their words and music cry for respect as much as attention. Potentially, Big Country have much to offer. Their guitar attack is forceful but controlled, rarely lapsing into six-string heroics, and Stuart Adamson's lyrics are self-righteous but deeply felt rants against the new political realignment and the devastation it has wrought. At their best, the group make such grand concerns intensely personal and believable, but their ambition often results in an inability to temper abstract rhetoric with the more down-to-earth.

Violence, real and imagined, pervades both the lyrics and the arrangements. Unfortunately, Big Country substitute declarations of passion for the real thing, and the adrenalin rushes of "Flame Of The West" and "Where The Rose Is Sown" are no substitute for hooks. *Steeltown* is full of the guitars-sounding-like-bagpipes anthems that are Big Country's trademark, which gives the LP some thematic unity, but it also means the songs sound similar.

It's the lyrics that permanently close *Steeltown*: such lines as "Grim as the reaper with a heart like hell" sound just as inane in context. Stuart Adamson's idea of poetry is willful ambiguity, a bad omen if his band is to rediscover the inspired balance of dogma and genuine emotion that sparked their early singles. Repeated readings of the lyric sheet reveal Adamson to be outraged in all the right ways. Hopefully next time out he will find a way to channel that righteous anger more effectively. – **Jimmy Guterman**



DON HENLEY

Building The Perfect Beast
(Geffen)

By any sturdy yardstick, Don Henley's 1982 solo debut, *I Can't Stand Still,* was one of the finest albums of that fulsome year. Granted, in the somnolent aftermath of the Eagles, the brilliance of Henley's star turn was slightly muted by the shock of the new; every time a hit-prone supergroup is dissolved, controversies rage over its individual strengths and overall merit.

The fresh team that Henley assembled for his first LP, veteran songwriter-guitar craftsman Danny Kortchmar and gifted producer Greg Ladanyi, is back for the followup, *Building The Perfect Beast.* And as with its predecessor, the separate contributions that made the whole so surprisingly luminous are discernable—if you look closely. Kortchmar writes witty songs that neatly subvert timeless pop concerns like thwarted lust and the hungry heart, his "You're Not Drinking Enough" and "All She Wants To Do Is Dance" artfully turning the tables on the doleful male to reveal his disconnected conscience and chilling arrogance. Ladanyi provides an

World Radio History

astonishingly clean and spacious setting for some of the more atmospheric rock in recent memory.

Which brings us to Henley himself. If *I Can't Stand Still* revealed a sulfurous social conscience and disdain for workaday hypocrisy on tracks like "Johnny Can't Read," "Dirty Laundry" and "Them And Us," he displays a stunning new maturity of vision through *Beast*'s ten uniformly excellent songs, plus a deft, deliberate drumming style. Blessed with one of the most distinctive voices in rock, its reedy urgency honed to a fine point, Henley has also developed a subtlety and a sensitivity in his singing that must have been well-nigh impossible with the macho Eagles. The plaintive directness of his vocal on "You Can't Make Love" possesses a disquieting humility that turns the great lyric into a certified classic. And when he delves into a snarling raver like "Driving With Your Eyes Closed," a parable of folly and flight, he makes one's hair stand on end with his crisply knowing narrative.

"Driving" is a better song than "Life In The Fast Lane," and while it leaves many other worthy Eagles standards in the dust, it does not prepare the listener for the power of the title track and "Sunset Grill." The latter are harrowing, spine-freezing anthems of a societal descent into madness, rife with images of cities of the Last Red Night. Had Riddley Scott filmed the Book of Revelations as a sequel to *Blade Runner,* he could hardly have hoped for a better soundtrack.

Further praise would blunt the impact of discovering this record for yourself. The product of a pop stalwart who has at last found his true voice and his hand-in-glove support crew, *Building The Perfect Beast* is like nothing you've heard before. – **Timothy White**

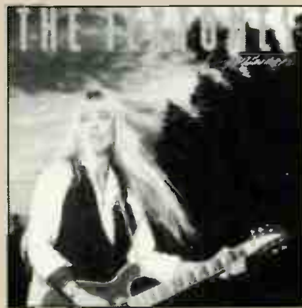
ANTHONY DAVIS

Middle Passage
(Gramavision)

Anthony Davis has an image problem: people keep mistaking this pianist who works with jazz musicians for a jazz musician. This piano recital unabashedly declares Davis' classical leanings, most conspicuously with Earl Howard's "Particle W," a soloist-plus-tape piece that smacks of the academic avant-garde. But if the form is comfortably familiar, the work is still a mind-stretcher for the performer. In the course of echoing (or overwhelming) his abstract taped accompaniment, Davis is pushed to discover new sounds in the piano, and that search characterizes the whole LP.

Though Anthony plays with rigorous control, he often employs an intuitive approach that reflects his background in improvised music. The original compositions here are the fruits of his musings at the keyboard. On the spacious "Proposition For Life," held notes glow and blend after they've been struck, focusing on the piano as resonator. "Behind The Rock" is built on a droning, metallic rumble of bass notes, a unique and rather eerie sonority (given a loosely chugging train-song rhythm to boot).

Even on "Middle Passage," the album's most formally involved composition—in which the lyrical, dissonant, percussive and airy elements in Davis' music all come together—the intuitive pianist takes liberties with the score, playing spontaneous variations consistent with his vision of the piece. Anthony, to his credit, is that rare classical performer who values improvisation, even if he's not inclined to swing. But to express regrets that this music smacks too little of Le Jazz Hot is to misjudge Davis' intentions. – **Kevin Whitehead**



THE TEXTONES

Midnight Mission
(Gold Mountain/A&M)

There's no lack of love songs on *Midnight Mission*, the sturdy debut LP by L.A.'s Textones; what's sharp is that this album explores these private emotions within the broader context of social reality. The way we live as a society colors the way we love as individuals, and the Textones know that bad faith in the outside world means bad news for the inner one.

Notice, for instance, the similarities between the apathetic sods who "say it's not my fault" in the Cougarish cruncher "Hands Of The Working Man" and the soul-dead wretch who can't take caring in Michael Anderson's stirring "No Love In You." And the same grit that urges vocalist/guitarist Carla Olson to demand that we "fight it out somehow" in the anti-malaise anthem "Standing In The Line" propels the heroine of "Number One Is To Survive" (don't sweat, the tune transcends its yuppie title) out of a destructive relationship.

Olson is the only surviving Textone from the combo you may know from their indie releases some years back, and a commanding front-girl she is. Though her phrasing sometimes cramps, she always belts with heartfelt force. Guitar-wise, she and fellow ax-person George Callins give off Stonesy rhythmic heat, tear away on tough lead excursions, and lean back into agreeable acoustic strum fests to give their tunes a variety of textures.

The duo find their melodic complement in sax-man Tom Junior Morgan, who blows splendid solos on the ballads "Number One Is To Survive" and "See The Light." Meanwhile, Dylan's raucous R&B romp, "Clean Cut Kid," brings this disc some welcome humor (despite a promo-sheet claim that it's "a pointed requiem for a Vietnam veteran"), not to mention a bracing dose of rugged slide guitar courtesy of Ry Cooder.

In this ambitious first LP after years of struggle, the Textones fully accomplish their midnight mission. They'll still be with us when the morning comes. – **Anthony DeCurtis**

UB40

Geffery Morgan...
(A&M)

Say the magic word—"reggae"—and watch the room rapidly empty of red-blooded American rock fans. For some reason the U.S. has never taken to the distinctive Jamaican idiom, despite the best efforts of those we *do* like (the Rolling Stones *et al.*) to teach us some respect.

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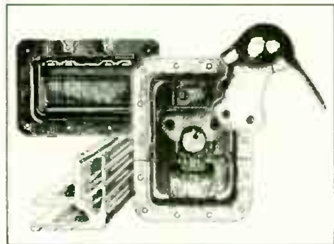

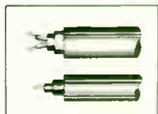

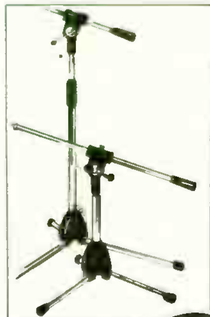

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Geffery Morgan isn't likely to change that situation, and it's a damn shame. Typically, England's UB40 still refuses to compromise its chosen musical style. And they certainly pull no punches in the lyrics department. Kicking off with the militantly anti-establishment "Riddle Me," the album offers an infernal tour of modern ills: the British economy ("As Always You Were Wrong Again"), totalitarian oppression ("You're Not An Army"), paranoia-inducing TV "news" ("I'm Not Fooled So Easily"). Even the love songs ("If It Happens Again," "Seasons") deal with the pains and humiliations of failed relationships. "The Pillow" is a cameo about a drug-addicted hooker who commits suicide.

Well, what did you expect from a group named after a British unemployment insurance form? UB40 has always had gloomy propensities, too often reflected in dirge-like music. But *Geffery Morgan*'s melodies and rhythms offset the heavy ammo of its lyrics. Most of the songs are surprisingly tuneful. The band favors sauntering tempos, with a driving bass competing for attention with relaxed vocals (which make the printed lyrics a necessity). The earnestness may get out of hand occasionally, as on the apocalyptic "Your Eyes Were Open." In general, however, *Geffery Morgan* is a winning example of the medium hiding the message. Earnestness and idealism are welcome faults; UB40 has plenty of both. One listen to this album, and you may be fed up with pop too. – **Scott Isler**

DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND

My Feet Can't Fail Me Now
(Concord Jazz/George Wein Collection)

Classic New Orleans jazz has thrived in the city's black community for over eighty years, but its range has taken a quantum leap in the eclectic innovations of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band. The Dozen's aggressive, contemporized repertoire draws on Duke, Bird, Monk, funk and local R&B, and presents it all in an authentic parade jazz context. This long-awaited debut set captures the band's street-wise synthesis in a typically frenzied performance. The album's mix, however, is a puzzling disappointment—but the drums here are woefully under-recorded. The result is an album that pales beside the Dozen's live sets, and fails to fully document their pioneering extensions of Afro-Caribbean roots music.

Given such problems, the session's sizzling groove is still a life-saver. Rhythm remains prominent through Kirk Joseph's extraordinary tuba basslines, plus the rich textures of assorted percussion. Trumpeter Greg Davis' meticulous arrangements add sophisticated ballast to the band's rowdy exuberance. With these firm anchors, the Dozen romp through complex changes and ever-intensifying solos.

Following the break-neck ensemble theme of "Blackbird Special," for instance, tenor saxist Kevin Harris unleashes a furious, torrential outburst. Baritonist Roger Lewis then enters on the heels of a tension-building vamp, and wails frantically over a riveting tuba ascent. Such relentless dramatics dominate *Feet*, yet never sound stale or mechanical. "Do It Fluid" runs from big-band finesse to avant-garde discord; "Blue Monk" becomes a convincing jazz funeral dirge; while "L'il Liza Jane" displays the band's R&B chops (Roger Lewis also tours with Fats Domino). Jenell Marshall contributes excellent

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second-line snare drum, plus priceless jive vocals and scat singing.

It's a real shame that such inspired creativity is seriously undermined by the set's flawed recording. The Dirty Dozen's debut is an impressive one; it easily could have been brilliant. – **Ben Sandmel**

REO SPEEDWAGON

Wheels Are Turnin'
(Epic)

I once heard a sensitive yuppie musician tell a joke to a sensitive yuppie audience. The punchline called for the name of the dumbest, crudest rock band imaginable—so the sensitive yuppies could feel like superior sensitive yuppies—and you know the name he chose? REO Speedwagon. I got real annoyed, because I was the only one in Carnegie Hall that night who had ever listened to REO Speedwagon. I'd bet you a hundred bucks on that.

To be fair to the yups, REO Speedwagon *is* a bad name. When they started in 1970, it sounded like they were trying to cross the 1910 Fruitgum Company with a then-fashionable veiled drug reference. Now it doesn't connote a damn thing. To be fair to REO Speedwagon, REO Speedwagon is a very good band, within the tradition of midwestern coliseum rock. For full appreciation, however, one must adopt the official Olympic music scoring system: DIFFICULTY OF DIVE, EXECUTION, and WORTHINESS OF SENTIMENT. On DIFFICULTY, REO scores a five. After fifteen years of being REO Speedwagon, it isn't that hard sounding like REO Speedwagon on their thirteenth album, *Wheels Are Turnin'*. They have never, and probably will never, do ten backflips off a high-board to surprise you.

As a result, REO never sounds pretentious and silly like Styx (who usually go for tens in DIFFICULTY, and belly-flop in EXECUTION), or overwhelming and mystical like the Police (who shoot for tens and rarely fall below eight in EXECUTION). REO Speedwagon tries to convey warmth and enthusiasm, and at that their EXECUTION rates a nine. They obviously like each other as musicians, but you gotta subtract one point for occasional lapses into self-pity, like "Rock 'N' Roll Star": "An overnight success created by the press/ But they'll eat you up if you show any stress." Come on, guys. You trying to provoke me?

On WORTHINESS OF SENTIMENT, I give REO another nine, because I think persevering is very worthy. Most of the great REO songs are about persevering. Even when they are love songs, they tend to be about persevering in love. If you are at all prone to lying in bed and staring at the ceiling for weeks at a time—as singer Kevin Cronin apparently is and I definitely am—songs like "Live Every Moment" and "Wheels Are Turnin'" can be a useful inspiration. I deduct one point here because the rhyme scheme in "Wheels" (turnin'/burnin'/returnin'/yearnin'/churnin') was thoroughly explored in "Keep The Fire Burnin'" on REO's last album. Even the best old truths need new imagery now and then. But I'll take an old truth over artsy obscurantism on any day that I need to get out of bed. – **Charles M. Young**

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ROCK S·H·O·R·T T·A·K·E·S

AT THE MOVIES

Fitting out a film with rock 'n' roll songs has become so endemic that Hollywood seems like a satellite of MTV. That's why it's a refreshing change to find pop musicians writing film scores instead of cinematic singles. Especially when they manage to incorporate their own vocabulary into the music. Mark Knopfler got off to an indifferent start with his score to *Local Hero*, but has come back strong with his latest, *Music from the Film "Cal"* (Polydor). The musical idiom is strongly Irish, and Knopfler earns extra credibility by employing former Planxty players Paul Brady and Liam O'Flynn, but what really makes the music work is the wonderful way in which Knopfler's dreamy melodies fit the mournful lyricism of Celtic traditional music. Of course, there's Celtic and there's Celtic, which makes for a world of difference between Knopfler's *Cal* and Robin Williamson's *Cerddoriaeth ar Gyfer y Mabinogi* (Flying Fish). The album, which translates as *Music For The Mabinogi*, finds Williamson rigging a curious approximation of Welsh traditional music to retell the Mabinogi, Wales' ancient heroic saga. There are some lovely harp pieces and a few gorgeous songs sprinkled through an amusing arrangement of melodic miscellany. Should your taste in mythic matters run more to the future than the past, there's always *Dune: The Original Soundtrack Recording* (Polydor), which finds Toto sounding more coherent than ever, in large part because they're simply following in the footsteps of David Paich's father Marty. In any case, none of them sing, which counts for something.

Al Green — *Trust In God* (Myrrh). Seek and ye shall find, the Good Book says, and Al Green has found the Word of the Lord in the most unlikely songs. No complaints, though, when they include Bill Withers' "Lean On Me," a song Green should have covered years ago, and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," which, minus the verses and with some squinting, could almost be spiritual. The album's real highlight is Joe South's "Don't It Make You Want To Go Home," (which mentions God in the chorus), a sweet piece of country soul that puts Green in that Memphis groove we know so well. Let's hope he's home to *stay*.

Deep Purple — *Perfect Strangers* (Mercury). The ad campaign credits destiny with this reunion, but frankly, dead-end solo careers seems more the case. Which is fair enough, because these guys were never as convincing apart as together. Though the chemistry remains intact, from Lord's fulsome fills to Blackmore's grandstanding, the writing remains weak. But then, why should nostalgia always improve upon the original?

Julian Lennon — *Valotte* (Atlantic). Look, if he was your dad, would *you* want to suffer the comparisons? That none of the songs says much is beside the point—"Love Me Do" wasn't exactly *Being and Nothingness*, y'know. Rather, the problem here is that the songs are overworked, as if craftsmanship were any substitute for originality.

Linda Ronstadt — *Lush Life* (Asylum). What's new? Not much. Now that Nelson Riddle has scaled down the arrangements, Ronstadt at least has subtlety as an option, but most of the time all that means is singing some phrases softer than others. The ballads she treats as C&W weepers (her "When Your Lover Has Gone" will make you cry, but not the way she intended), the uptempo tunes as exercises in creative belting. For this she gave up Buddy Holly?

Pat Benatar — *Tropico* (Chrysalis). Speaking of reformed belters, Benatar's transition from guitar-based rock to rhythm-oriented pop makes sense only as an attempt to cash in on the new top forty. Not only can't her band play the new style convincingly, but they can't write for it either. And when she's not indulging in full-throated fury, Benatar could just as easily be Sheena Easton.

Duran Duran — *Arena* (Capitol). If you scream "Simon! Nick! Andy!" loud enough while this is on, you might not notice how utterly incompetent the Durans are live. Then again, you may want to save your voice to scream at the video.

Isley/Jasper/Isley — *Broadway's Closer To Sunset Blvd.* (CBS Associated). In which the second three in the Isleys 3+3 strike out on their own with unimpressive results. The grooves are solid enough, but neither Ernie Isley nor Chris Jasper have enough old-style soul to carry the ballads convincingly. Still, "Serve You Right" will do in the interim.

Al Jarreau — *High Crime* (Warner Bros.). Isn't one Michael McDonald enough?

Everything But the Girl — *Everything But The Girl* (Sire). Forget Carmel, the Style Council and all those other Brit jazzbo poseurs. Not only do Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt have the taste and restraint to refrain from overstepping their abilities, they also have voices that are gorgeously affectless enough to recall Astrud and Joao Gilberto. An absolutely delightful surprise.

The Skatalites — *Scattered Lights* (Alligator). With an approach that sat somewhere between Earl Bostic and Horace Silver, though emphasizing the afterbeat in the ska style, the Skatalites are in many ways the missing link between Jamaican jazz and the development of reggae. The dozen examples collected here will be ear-openers for most fans, and ought to confirm once and for all the validity of Don Drummond's reputation. (P.O. Box 60234, Chicago, IL 60660)

Various Artists — *Under The Coconut Tree* (Original Music). This collection of folksongs from Grand Cayman and Tortola makes an interesting case for the durability of the English ballad tradition. Despite the liting rhythms and occasional patois, there's little here without an equivalent among the old-timey music of Appalachia. In fact, the more you listen, the clearer the connections between our music and that of the Caribbean seem—which, given the current political climate, seems worth pondering. (R.D. 1, Box 190, Lasher Road, Tivoli, NY 12583)

Dan Hartman — *I Can Dream About You* (MCA). Because Hartman has never tried to appropriate the white soul mannerisms his fondness for funk might suggest, his adventures in rhythm have stayed closer to pop than R&B. That makes him annoyingly glib at times, but when he does get ahold of a good melody, his ability with the beat makes his songs stick.

J.D. Considine

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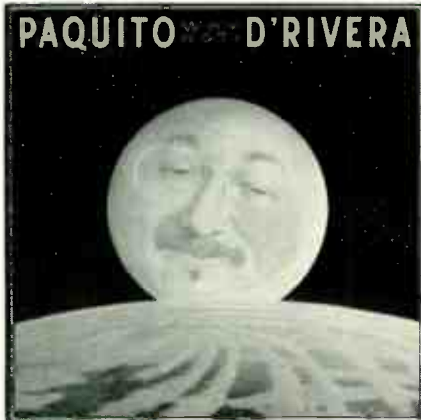
JAZZ S·H·O·R·T T·A·K·E·S



Paquito D'Rivera — *Why Not!* (Columbia). The Afro-Cuban jazz tradition that spawned D'Rivera is such a polyglot to begin with that this attempt at crossover isn't the craven merchandising ploy it would be in most other cases. The studio condiments serve the welcome purpose of holding the notoriously over-excitable altoist in check; likewise, the percussive insistence of D'Rivera's music undercuts guest star Toots Thielemans' fawning sweetness—he and D'Rivera prove surprisingly effective foils. Uneven, and I wish the beats (not to mention the bass line) weren't so grotesquely overpronounced. But the good stuff is irresistible.

Amina Claudine Myers — *Jumping In The Sugar Bowl* (Minor Music, from New Music Distribution, 500 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012). One remarkable thing about Myers is how she manages to come across as completely original while skirting every conceivable clichéd image jazz has given us over the last twenty years (the vertiginous modal pianist, the message singer, the spiritually possessed multi-instrumentalist...). Of course, they're no longer clichés once she's done with them. This trio album qualifies as her best effort to date, if only for best evidence of her ability to maintain so many different personae without spreading herself too thin (the other remarkable thing).

Richard Beirach — *Elegy For Bill Evans*; **Quest** — *Quest* (both Palo Alto). Pianist Beirach's tribute to his mentor (on which he is accompanied by bassist George Mraz and drummer Al Foster) is at once lyrical and hard-edged but sometimes crosses the fine line between homage and imitation. Beirach, Mraz and Foster are all members of Quest, along with Dave Liebman. The saxophonist is still hung up on Coltrane; and in this context, Beirach echoes Hancock and Corea rather than Evans. But the shadings of Mraz and Foster make even the derivative sound fresh and exciting, and this is finally a quartet whose sum exceeds its parts.

Art Blakey — *New York Scene* (Concord). Blakey proves the wisdom of buying name brands—you always know what to expect from the Messengers, and you always know it's going to be good. The New Orleans pipeline has supplied talented young reinforcements in trumpeter Terence Blanchard, altoist Donald Harrison, tenorist Jean Toussaint and bassist Lonnie Plaxico—all of whom have clearly benefited from their leader's drilling. But it's Mulgrew Miller, the latest in a line of Memphis pianists, whose infectious lyricism gives this edition of the Messengers its shine.

Amy Sheffer — *Where's Your Home?* (I Am Shee/N.M.D.S.). Avant-garde jazz blues is the way this unusual singer describes what she does. Earthy and otherworldly at the same time, she tempts comparison to Patty Waters or Yoko Ono, minus the former's banshee inclinations and the latter's camp pomposity. Suffice it to say she's strange, but I like it.

Rhys Chatham — *Factor X* (Moers Music/N.M.D.S.); **Richard Teitelbaum** — *Blends & The Digital Pianos* (Lumina/N.M.D.S.). Two quite dissimilar albums demonstrating that what used to be called New Music (before the record industry co-opted the phrase) can serve a healing function without tasting medicinal. The Chatham features a loopy brass chorale and three guitar raveups à la Branca (but without the stinging animosity); the Teitelbaum couples a provocative piece for three "computer-enhanced" pianos, and an empirical (rather than mystical) cultural "blend" of synthesizer, tabla, and Katsuya Yokoyama's shakuhachi flute.

Mahavishnu — *Mahavishnu* (Warner Bros.); **Kevin Eubanks** — *Sundance* (GRP). Not much new with Mahavishnu, despite the addition of Mitchell Forman's synthesizer atmospherics and Bill Evans' fashionable saxophone mysterioso, and bassist Jonas Hellborg and drummer Billy Cobham's vain attempts to move the rhythm into the pocket. This is still McLaughlin's band, and his tense, brittle, overinflated solos still combine the most Wagnerian aspects of late-60s modal jazz and early-70s stadium rock. Meanwhile, Eubanks comes on like Mahavishnu Jr. on his GRP debut (in all fairness, it should be pointed out that it was recorded a year before the 1983 Elektra album that made a case for him as a guitarist to watch).

Clifford Jordan — *Repetition* (Soul Note/PSI). All tenor-plus-rhythm units should be as harmonious, as seasoned, and as wily in their deviations from the verities, featuring pianist Barry Harris, bassist Walter Booker and drummer Vernal Fournier in support of a lusty, intelligent tenorist who's never gotten his due.

Hank Jones & Tommy Flanagan — *I'm All Smiles* (Verve/MPS). Both of these veteran pianists are such dapper accompanists it's no wonder they complement each other so beautifully. Part of the delight in listening to them is the delight they take in listening to each other on this program of jazz standards from Germany.

Duke Ellington — *Carnegie Hall Concert* (Musicraft). No justifying the mention of Carnegie in the title, but this is a good compilation of Ellington's 1946 Musicrafts, which have never been given the cachet they warrant, probably because it has never been entirely clear who holds the rights to them. Not as panoramic as the 40s Victors, but you need them to complete the picture.

Dino Saluzzi — *Kultrum* (ECM import/PSI). Saluzzi, whose bandoneon (a squeeze box keyboard, like the accordion) lent an unexpected air of mystery and elegance to the recent LP by the George Gruntz Concert Orchestra, proves here that the instrument is no less compelling as a lead voice. And his chanting and percussive tinkling blur ethnic distinctions in an oddly affecting, non-preachifying way.

Art Pepper — *Artworks* (Galaxy). Another echo from the late altoist's triumphant last hurrah, this is the first of three previously unissued albums that he recorded for the defunct Artist House label, all scheduled for release on Galaxy. It boasts a memorable "Desifinato," as well as two searching (if excessively moody) a cappella standards.

Francis Davis

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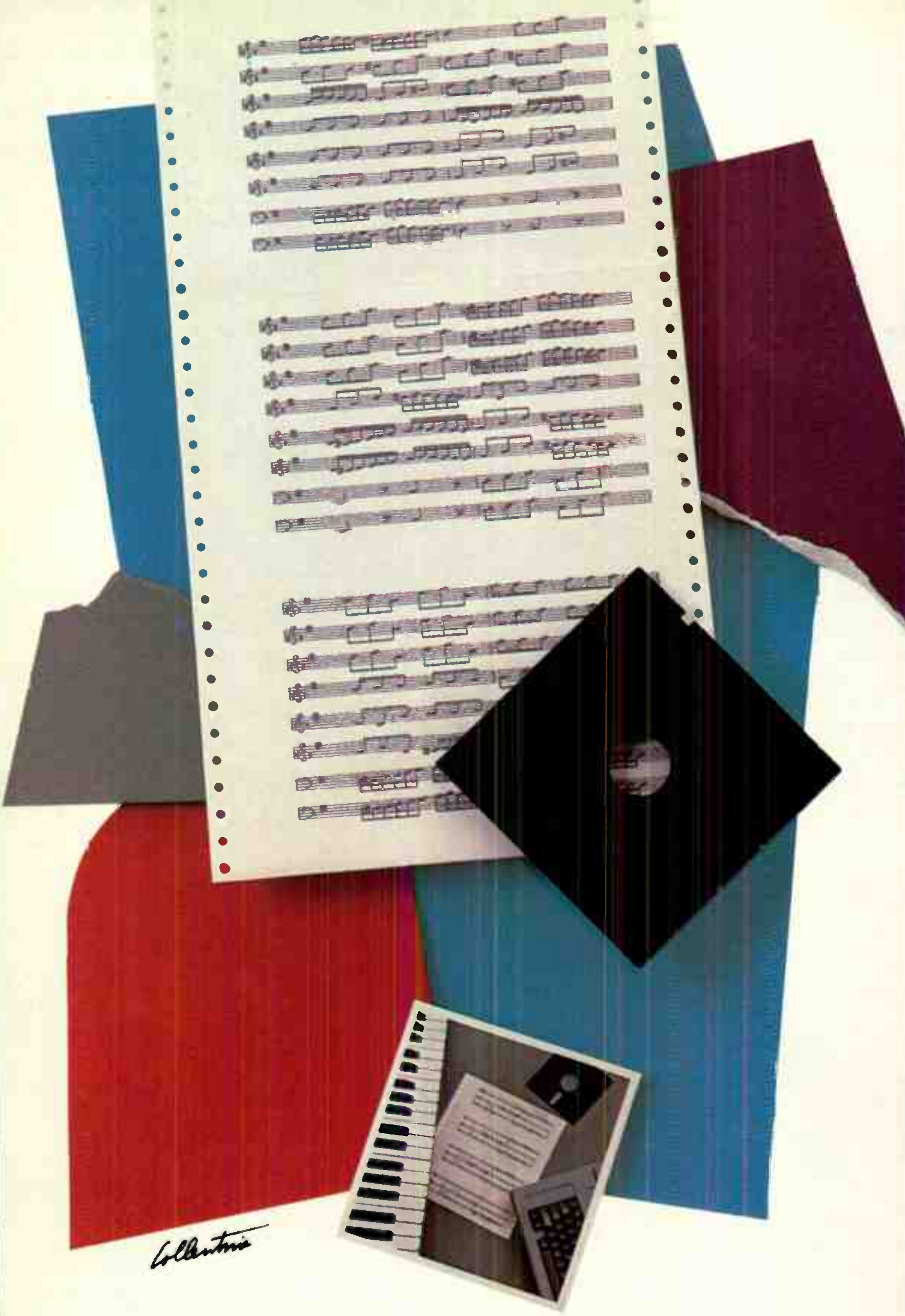

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World Radio History

Bruce from page 90

musically because I wouldn't do it if it weren't. But there are different levels of satisfaction. It was nice to get across to lots of people in Cream. Tony Williams' Lifetime is probably the most amazing band I've ever played with—*definitely* the most amazing band. And the thing with Kip was a very satisfying thing to do—something completely new—and make it work."

Before Bruce leaves the dressing room for the soundcheck, he reflects on being on the road yet again. "The best part of being a working musician is the time you're onstage and the worst aspect is all the rest of it—everything else."

Bruce's Baggage

On his recent tour, Bruce played a Spector fretless bass with EMG pickups and Superwound strings ("great tuning and good harmonics").

"Unfortunately, I'm not using my own amps. I normally use Dynacord amps; they're not available in America and I couldn't afford to bring them over. I'm using an Ampeg SVT and a Marshall. What I really wanted to use was a Gallien-Kruger top and a Cerwin-Vega bottom, 'cause I play in stereo, so that would be the bass side of it. For the top end I wanted to use two little amps I found in Israel, believe it or not, which are Fender amps; I can't get 'em in America. They're little 50-watt combos with one 15-inch speaker and they're great. You can line up as many as you want."

Bruce has been "playing fretless for about six or seven years. For me it's more of an interesting instrument—it's more vocal, because the intonation is up to you. The fret isn't telling you where the intonation is. It was difficult at first to sing and play fretless but it's worth persevering."

Toto from page 106

mental stuff, we wouldn't even try to make records. I'd rather us groove and be sitting in a club somewhere having fun.

"Down the road, we want to get bold. It's funny, we thought 'Africa' was bold and it did pretty good, but lyrically it didn't make a dime of sense. I think it's one of the frustrations of being in this group. I don't want to sound like we're copping out, because we put these things out because we want to get as many commercial tunes on the album, blah blah blah."

Toto got the chance to flex some of their non-pop musical concepts in doing the score for *Dune*, a project involving assorted sonic colorations and orchestrations, *sans* steady backbeats or burning guitar solos. As Paich puts it, "We've been trying to score science fiction outer space things on our albums ever since we began. It's dark, slow, evil music—glue for the movie." In using the still-novel approach of making a score with a self-sustaining band, Toto tried out some new strategies in film scoring. "We worked every day, making what Quincy Jones called 'polaroids'—quick takes of each scene, so there would be no surprises in the scoring stage," reports Paich. "We were experimenting with the procedural aspect of making a movie. I think we learned what we needed to know. One forty-five million dollar epic every couple of years is enough."

At that moment, Quincy himself walks into the room, on his way to the john. Toto's management company shares the building with such entities as Quincy Jones Productions and other music industry strongholds. Lukather tells him about his child on the way. Quincy cheerfully offers a hand: "You talkin' to the dogs, huh?" he says to me. They talk about the latest Quincy Jones production, smoldering on the charts. Luke shakes his head. "How do you do it? Can you touch my head?" Quincy shrugs and laughs, "I'm just scuffling, man."

"There's no message," says Lukather finally of the Toto file, "no deep inner...you know, play this album back-

World Radio History

wards and it will make you want to wear leather and jump in front of cars. It's just simple, straightforward music. We want to make it forever." And Jeff Porcaro offers his own axiom, chuckling: "We all shit the same, that's all I'm trying to say. We're all just regular B-flat guys." Ⓜ

Guitar Synths from page 102

sions for triggering multiple strings simultaneously. This is for use with patches where the player might find keyboard-style action more natural.

Another soon-to-be-introduced system may shape up as something of a compromise between the controller-only premise of the SynthAxe and the blend of electric guitar and controller functions offered by the Roland System. Manufactured by JTG of Nashville, this system made its debut in prototype form at the last N.A.M.M. Show and is due out on the market by the summer of 1985. JTG is unable at this time to disclose all the details of how the system works. But company spokesman John Ellis comments that it is a "digitally-based system that uses modern computer technology. It is highly programmable; you can change tunings very quickly. You don't have to depend at all on the rather fickle type of precise tuning that the Roland system requires. The set-ups are not as critical."

The system consists of one printed circuit board, which is installed in the body of a standard electric guitar, and a separate rack-mountable unit which is connected via MIDI to any appropriately-equipped external synthesizer. The system will not have the ability to actually blend electric guitar and synthesizer tonalities, but it will let the player assign either synth or electric guitar functions to individual strings. The system will be equipped with its own memory for storing string settings and tuning functions. According to Ellis, the company is talking to several major guitar manufacturers, including Fender, Gibson and Charvel, about incorporating the JTG circuit board into stock instruments. It will also be possible to install the board into any existing electric guitar as a retrofit.

With all of these new developments on the horizon, maybe all you impatient or despairing guitarists ought to give the present-day possibilities of guitar synthesis one more chance. You'll probably be surprised at what some of the newer systems can do, especially if you had a bad experience with an earlier design. And for guitarists who have never experimented with synthesis, there has never been a better time to start. Ⓜ

Levene from page 94

"Guitarists always ask me, 'What effects do you use, do you use an echoplex?' I'd say, 'A guitar, through a twin reverb,' and they are really surprised." He points out proudly: "When people say I sound like two guitarists, they mean because of the amount of sounds and harmonics that I generate." He shyly adds: "And I like that."

The music he is making right now he plans to release himself or work out one shot deals with smaller record companies—he has already turned down contracts from two major labels. "I know it's not worth signing the standard artist deal. The only thing they offer is money—it is like an inverted loan instead of borrowing from a bank and paying 12 percent interest on top."

Levene shakes his head, and grabs his skateboard, on his way out of the studio for some coffee. On the street, he wavers on the board unsteadily and almost runs over an old lady with shopping bags. Levene giggles, and confesses that he's recording some heavy metal tunes, "Good stuff, if you like that sort of thing. But mostly I like orchestral things like 'Radio Four,' off *Second Edition*, or *Flowers Of Romance*'s 'Hymie's Hymn.' You know, I much prefer the *1812 Overture* to the recent Michael Jackson single." Ⓜ

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Del-Lords from page 28

thirty-three myself now, and it's been fifteen years since "Hot For Teacher" reflected my immediate concerns.

"I'm not ashamed of not being Def Leppard," Kempner says. "I'm not a kid. I'm a man. And I play better rock 'n' roll now than I did then. The Dictators were the dream that sustained my childhood, and my life hit rock bottom when they broke up. I couldn't even get out of bed much of the time because of my knee. I was forced to grow up. As my confidence returned, I began writing whole songs for the first time. They became more concrete. As I learned the craft, it forced me to realize what I was responding to in other songs. I try to report life as I see it, but the details of an incident aren't important; it's how you *felt*. If I can't be original, at least I can be sincere. That's as unique as I want to be."

But how will anyone know the song is good if you don't bite the head off a bat?

"Heavy metal fans became so intense as a reaction against wimp bands," Kempner says. "I don't think we're the type of band that forced kids into the deepest recesses of heavy metalism. The real fanatics may be turned off, but I think we can generate some crossover. Our audience will be people with open minds."

Grusin from page 89

house Review Room studio to play all of *Night-Lines*' parts himself, and then replacing where necessary with warm bodies. He maintains a determined skepticism about this approach, however: "When you layer it yourself, one track at a time, the sickness is that you try to make it too perfect. Just because you have the facility to do it again, you find yourself doing it again. You start to lose perspective after awhile. And time can be a factor. I just did a score for *Little Drummer Girl*. We had an orchestra and three keyboard players with *banks* of synthesizers. We did the whole thing live, and it was great, because the guys really knew what they were doing. You'd have spent a week overdubbing it."

Grusin remains unrepentant of his fusion propensities: "I have misgivings about the kind of rigid attitudes that jazz fans—and the *enemies* of jazz—have, about what it is and isn't. I'm just not interested in bop anymore. I love to hear it as an audience, as reminiscence. When I first came to New York, I wanted to hear Bud Powell, and I didn't go to hear him play something he'd played before. It was to hear him do something amazingly new and different—which he did! Now it's like the rock fans decided to bring back the 60s and the jazz fans are bringing back the 50s. I don't think that's unhealthy; I'm just not interested.

"My perspective on my own stuff is almost nonexistent. I don't know what's right or what's wrong, and I don't think about it that way anymore. I mean, I've been shot down by Leonard Feather since the first time I ever did anything. And it used to bother me to *death*. Then I finally realized, 'Wait a minute! That's just the way that is.' And anyway, I'm obviously not really doing it for him. So I just try to find some musicality in whatever bag it is, but I don't *ever* want to restrict the bag." Ⓜ

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In the past, low price has often been equated with low quality. No longer!

DOD's R-830B and R-831B EQ's feature computer aided design, low noise, high slew rate, low distortion, and extremely accurate controls. Add to this DOD's low prices, and the result is two of the most popular EQ's on the market today.

- Modular PC board construction
- Center detented, linear potentiometers
- All metal chasis
- Four-level LED output indicators
- Low cut filter
- Bypass switch
- 12 dB boost or cut
- Signal to noise greater than 95 dB
- IM distortion less than 0.01%
- One year warranty

If you haven't yet discovered the true equality, you owe yourself a visit to your nearest DOD dealer for a demonstration.

DOD

5639 South Riley Lane   Salt Lake City, Utah 84107   Telephone (801) 268-8400

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THE PERFORMANCE HAS BEGUN. BUT IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING.

The Yamaha DX7. It's on just about every recent major album, and in just about every major band and studio in the country.

And now, you can be out front, strutting your stuff, with the new KX5 MIDI-controlled, touch-sensitive remote keyboard.

So all the incredible musical power and accurate, flexible voicing you get from a DX7 can now be strapped around your shoulders.

But wait folks, this is just the first act.

There's more coming for the DX7. A whole series of products that will make the most amazing synthesizer ever heard into the most amazing music system ever heard.

'Cause like the song says, "We've only just begun."

In the meantime, why not visit your Yamaha dealer and check out the instrument that started it all—the DX7.

Yamaha International Corporation, Combo Products Division, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622. In Canada, Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 135 Milner Ave., Scarborough, Ont. M1S 3R1.

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