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DECEMBER 1988 NO. 122

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LETTERS

PHALLUS DEI

AFTER DRAGGING MY EYES through the intensely tedious Third Annual Big Guitar Issue (Sept. '88), I finally understand why the guitar is seen as a phallic symbol.

Karl Rossman
Warren, MI

AH, THE YEARLY ISSUE TO PANder to the 14-year-old metalheads. Well, thanks for informing us that Eddie Van Halen is on the wagon but his new album is about being off it, Sammy Hagar can racially stereotype with the best, the Scorpions actually refer to their album covers as art, and Kingdom Come is going to release a second album (*Kingdom Come II*, maybe?). Please spare me this shit, but give me more articles on real rock bands like the Georgia Satellites. I expect those kind of articles, not articles that read like record-company promos.

Douglas Wood
Chamblee, GA

MONSTROUS PHOTOS

I REALLY LOVED TED DROZdowski's "Monsters of Guitar" piece (Sept. '88). Unfortunately, the piece was tarnished by that awful two-page photo of what is obviously not a Monsters of Rock tour photo. Don't you care that an incorrect photo leads into a major piece? I'm not even going to mention how awful the photo was of Eddie Van Halen on the cover, or the fact that that photo and the one inside of Eddie and Sammy are outdated. What good is a good story with bad (incorrect) photos?

Joe Kramer
Los Angeles, CA

COOKIN' WITH ZZ

I ENJOYED STANLEY BOOTH'S Billy Gibbons article (Sept. '88). However, he erred on one point. ZZ Top performed live on *The Tonight Show* May 16, 1986, accompanied by the Tonight Show horns. They played "Tush" and "Sharp Dressed Man" while Johnny and Doc sported ZZ-style clip-on beards.

Having opened several dates for ZZ with the Jay Boy Adams Band (also managed by Bill Ham) in 1977-78, I feel qualified to say that as well as having world-class musicianship and songwriting ability, Billy Gibbons also can cook up a *mean* chicken enchilada.

Woody Key
Amarillo, TX

COLOUR'S COLOR

"CRYSTAL CLEAR" IS THE ONLY way I can describe Steve Perry's article on Vernon Reid and Living Colour (Sept. '88). Very seldom can you pick up a music magazine that vibrates your social sensibilities. I applaud *Musician.*

Robert Swinton
Georgetown, SC

WHAT IS THIS SHIT ABOUT A "Black Zeppelin"? Vernon Reid's guitar sounds nothing like Jimmy Page, nor do Cory Glover's vocals echo Robert Plant. Why can't this group of talented black musicians be labeled as a black rock band without being labeled as a black version of a white rock band?

Gary Tyson
USS Constellation
APO San Francisco, CA

DON CARLOS

CARLOS SANTANA (SEPT. '88) says that when "B.B., Albert, Jimi...finish playing this hurts [*grabs his foot*], this hurts [*grabs his heart*] and this hurts [*grabs his crotch*]." I don't know if that's true, but after reading Santana's rambling, pretentious, self-indulgent interview, I felt a pain here [*points to ass*].

Suzy Finarski
Hamtramck, MI

TIME OUT

IF GEORGIA SATELLITE DAN Baird (Sept. '88) really believes that session drummer Hal Blaine "couldn't keep time," then his thinking is as simple as his chord changes. Blaine, like many seasoned stickmen, intentionally nudged tempos in order to create exuberance. Want to hear Hal Blaine play perfect time? Just listen to Steely Dan's "Josie."

The measure of a great drummer is his ability to use tempo as a malleable form, capable of generating excitement and momentum in a rhythm track. Lesser drummers simply let their own excitement overpower their control. Hal Blaine will always number among the former.

David Houghton
Toronto, Canada

BEACH BUMMED

WHAT A TERRIBLE IDEA IT WAS to hitch up Brian Wilson and Patti Smith for a compare-and-contrast record review (Sept. '88)! And how tremendously shallow of Kristine McKenna to rip through Wilson's powerful and sweet-hearted latest work without even focusing enough upon it to mention a single song title.

Christine Bowman
Ossining, NY

I'M NOT WRITING ABOUT Kristine McKenna's contention that Brian Wilson's solo album is merely "laudable"; everyone is entitled to an opinion. What does bug me is the way the best album of Brian Wilson material in 20 years is dismissed so easily, so quickly.

For too long now your magazine has been too concerned with politics and computers. I would respectfully suggest that you spend a little more time on the music itself.

Jack Madani
Philadelphia, PA

AGE SPOTS

JIMMY PAGE, ROBERT PLANT, George Harrison, Eric Clapton, Paul McCartney and Boss, U2, Boss, U2, Boss 'til one's eyes bleed...Who are you guys going to write about when these geezers finally kick? You won't know anything about contemporary music-makers because you've ignored them, or given them slight treatment, to an alarming extent.

Michael Welch
Minneapolis, MN

I RECENTLY NOTICED THAT YOU have added a glossy finish to the front of the more current issues of *Musician.* I pointed this out to a friend of mine and he said, "Yeah, it must be a coat of polyurethane to protect those aging rock stars."

Eddie Nicholson
Columbia, MD

ERRATA

JOCK BAIRD'S REVIEW OF THE Korg M1 in the October issue contained some technical errors, to which he now confesses: "Most seriously, I stated that the M1's sequencer can't transpose and that the M1's different effects can't be used independently on different tracks or voices. In fact, the M1 has both capabilities. In addition, I declared the M1's effects changes couldn't be recorded via MIDI, when in fact two CV foot pedals can be used to dynamically record the relative level of either or both of the two effects. In my defense, I can only say I wished the manual had been clearer and longer, but the M1 is obviously a more powerful machine than I gave it credit for in my review."

Please send letters to: *Musician,* 1515 Broadway, 39th floor, New York, NY 10036

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FACES

▼ Cowboy Junkies

The Family That Plays Together

When Michael Timmins returned to Toronto in 1985 "to say hello to everybody and hang out for a month," the last thing on his mind was forming a band. He'd already tried that in New York and London, with little success.

Once home, though, he began jamming in his family's garage with two brothers and sister Margo sitting in on vocals. "It sounded great," the 28-year-old Timmins recalls. "There's that strange communication that happens between families. We can tell each other what we're thinking without playing mind games."

Cowboy Junkies are, however, the farthest thing from the Cowsills. The band's second album, *The Trinity Session*, is one of the year's spookiest and most striking records. The basic framework is country music—Hank, Waylon and Patsy, a 19th-century mining ballad, and Timmins originals—but thanks to Margo's husky, spectral voice and the sparse accompaniment, the result is unearthly. "There's a country feel," Michael says, "but there's something a little warped about it."

On the advice of producer Peter Moore, the band—Michael, Peter and Margo Timmins, and bassist Alan Anton—recorded in Toronto's acoustically spacious Church of the Holy Trinity, knocking off the entire album in one 14-hour session. Aesthetics aside, the band also turned to religion for reasons of economics: The sole upfront cost was $150 for renting the church.

The Junkies (recently expanded to a seven-piece) have been cost-conscious all along. They formed their own record label and manage their own career. RCA has picked up *The Trinity Session*, but Timmins isn't leery of the big boys. "It's nice that what was good enough for an independent," he says, "is good enough for a major corporation."

—*David Browne*

Motown's Pulsebeat

He was *the* bass player at Motown in the 1960s, but James Jamerson's name was never as well known as his notes. Now, five years after his untimely death, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown: The Life and Music of Legendary Bassist James*

***Jamerson* (distributed by Hal Leonard) should give him the credit he always deserved. Doctor Licks' biography follows Jamerson from childhood to unraveled end through a slew of interviews with associates, friends and family. The book comes with two 60-minute cassettes on which 26 bassists—from Paul McCartney and John Entwistle to Marcus Miller—demonstrate Jamerson's bass lines, which are also transcribed in the book. It looks like a solidly executed tribute to a troubled genius.**

– *Scott Isler*

DAVID GAHR   MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES

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▼ BOOTSY COLLINS

Drug-Free Is Not Always Sane

I feel like an accident getting ready to happen," warns (William) Bootsy Collins with a laugh.

For the millions of funk lovers treasuring worn copies of Bootsy's Rubber Band's "Body Slam," "The Pinocchio Theory" or the group's other dance-floor hits, news of the return of Hurricane Bootzilla has been a long time coming.

But as *What's Bootsy Doin'?* hits the stores, it begs the question, "What's Bootsy *been* doin'?" Rumors circulated about everything from a drug problem to a car accident, but cock's recent *Perfect Machine* LP, on which Bootsy gets second-billing. Another recent project is Malcolm McLaren's forthcoming album, where Bootsy's bass meets Jeff Beck's guitar in what looks to be the funk-rock pairing of the decade.

But Bootsy is most proud of his new LP. Five years in the making, the 10-song set adds rap and even ballads to a high-tech version of the LSD-drenched P-Funk Bootsy pioneered with Clinton.

Today, Bootsy says he's through with drugs. "It done did me all the good it could do me.

ART: KATHY DEMPSEY

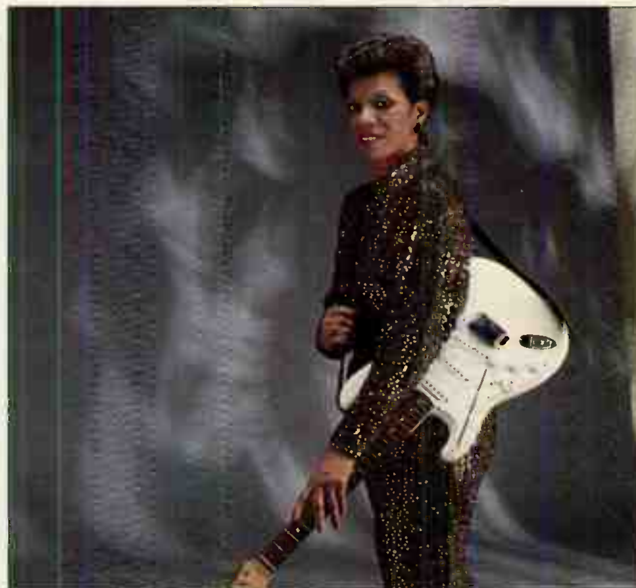
Bootsy stayed pretty busy behind the scenes. While management worked through the legal tangle of a label change from Warners to Columbia, Bootsy was stockpiling songs, producing new acts like his funk protégé Mico Wave and working with old pal George Clinton as a sideman and co-producer. "The time off helped me to find out who Bootsy the artist was and who Bootsy the producer was," he says. "He [producer Bootsy] don't like everything Bootsy [the artist] does."

Bootsy credits much of his new, objective point of view to his friendship with Bill Laswell, co-producer of Herbie Han- The acid days brought me to where I'm at now. I don't need nothing now. I was experimenting, trying to find myself. I done found it."

But drug-free and sane are two entirely different things. With his star-shaped bass, space specs cassette deck glasses and new, elaborately processed pompadour, Bootsy is more Bootsy than ever.

"We're still out there. I never have been a formula-type guy. I think it had a lot to do with the acid days. I mean I want to get close, I want to get some play on the radio and stuff like that, but I don't never want to be normal."

—Larry Nager



▲ BARBARA LYNN

Good Thing She Didn't Give Up

I'm a Capricorn, and Capricorns don't give up," Barbara Lynn laughs, explaining how she's endured years of obscurity. "All this time I've had the patience and determination to get where I wanted to go."

Chances are she's needed every ounce of perseverance at her disposal. In 1962 Lynn wrote and recorded the smash hit "You'll Lose a Good Thing," a leisurely, soulful gem showcasing her bluesy singing, and seemed headed for greatness. But despite a series of strong singles over the following decade, she never came close to that kind of success again, and by the early '70s her recording career was effectively kaput.

Until now, that is. After an extended stay in limbo, working small clubs and waiting to be rediscovered, Lynn is back with a new LP, *You Don't Have to Go.* Though the voice is a shade deeper and the dance grooves a touch more prominent than in the old days, the album proves Lynn is still a master of the sensual slow burn she perfected a quarter-century ago.

Growing up in Beaumont, Texas, Barbara Lynn Ozen never seriously considered any calling besides performing. "Back in the sixth grade, I was having a lot of headaches and my mother took me to the doctor," she recalls in her gentle drawl. "He found out there was nothing wrong with me, and told my parents I was just a musically inclined person who wanted to sing. And do you know, when they bought me an $8.95 Arthur Godfrey ukelele, my headaches disappeared. All I needed was music!"

By high school graduation in 1960, the "lady Elvis," as her friends knew her, was leading a band and headlining dates in the Beaumont and Lake Charles, Louisiana area. ("I was probably the only black girl around playing left-handed guitar at the time," she notes.) Two years later, she caught the ear of legendary producer/manager/hustler Huey P. Meaux, who whisked her off to New Orleans to cut "You'll Lose a Good Thing."

While admitting the prolonged absence from the scene was "kinda hard" to take, Lynn says she didn't get discouraged. "I never thought about retiring. I don't know what it's like to work a nine-to-five job, and I thank the Lord for that. There may come a time when I'll have to, but right now, God's given me the talent to sing, and I want to use it."

—Jon Young

World Radio History

Cliff Gallup, 1930-1988

As Gene Vincent's original lead guitarist, "Galluping" Cliff Gallup earned his nickname with a series of recorded guitar solos that stunned everyone who heard them—including Brian Setzer, Dave Edmunds and Albert Lee, who are quick to acknowledge his influence. Gallup himself listened to Les Paul and Chet Atkins, yet his combination finger- and flat-picking style was his own.

But Gallup was a man whose family came first. He left Vincent after a hectic half-year in 1956 and stayed in Virginia for the rest of his life, content to play on local radio and at area dances with country and gospel groups. He played one such date on October 9. The next day Gallup, 58—who hadn't felt well the previous couple of weeks, according to daughter Bonnie Jones—suffered a massive heart attack at home and was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

"He was a very private man, a very humble man," Jones says of her father. "I always wondered why he didn't capitalize on his fame a little more. But he just loved to play. That's all he wanted to do."

— Scott Isler

▼ Bobby Previte

Pen as Mighty as the Stick

ELIZABETH MCCULLOUGH

Forget the resumé, we'd be here all day. Like most open-minded virtuosos on the NYC creative music scene, drummer Bobby Previte has played with 99 percent of the musicians in town. Name a context—overt swing, industrial pummeling, electronics—and he's dabbled in it. From flams to chick-a-booms, brushes to mallets, keyboards to car keys, Previte's made his mark with all things percussive.

But if it's his sticks that have won him attention in the past, it's his pen that's helping to define his work these days. Last year's *Pushing the Envelope* was a crafty outing for a medium-sized ensemble that came off sounding more grandiose than its instrumentation would suggest possible. Dramatic without being gooey, dynamic without resorting to predictable flourishes, the brand new *Claude's Late Morning* is even more expansive. It unfolds in a structurally savvy way that stands linear logic on its head.

"I like it when something four minutes into a tune explains a motif that occurred in the first minute," Previte chuckles, "because I don't regard what comes before as immutable. It's like changing history in a way. My sound is about creating different ways of going to the same places."

The LP's offbeat instrumentation—tuba, harp, accordion and pedal steel all play a crucial part—is something that Previte "just heard." He's previously made points depicting somewhat somber moods ("I run, but those dark tones follow me"); the new pieces are sunnier. "It took me a while to decipher what it was I was hearing this time, figure out the components. Everyone has a distinct role to play."

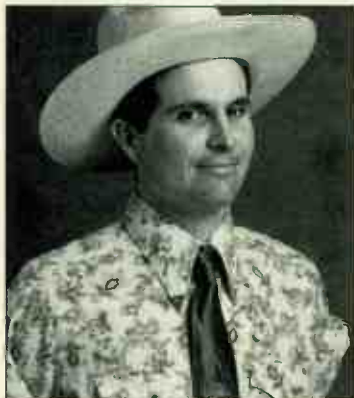
The action on *Todos Santos*, a new trio outing with Wayne Horvitz and Butch Morris spotlighting the music of Robin Holcomb, is different. "That band is obviously more improvisational, we create the arrangements as we go along. Playing with less structure is absolutely exciting. At its best we're of one mind, and how often can you actually say that?"

Still, it's his own work that has Previte glowing. "The instrumentation may be eclectic, but I hope the sound isn't. I feel most of my pieces are similar, and I hope anyone who knows it will be able to pick it out, even if it's being played by 100 kazoos."

—Jim Macnie

▼ Randy Erwin

A Ring-Ding of a Yodel



"When I was a small child, my family used to sing all this stuff: Gene Autrey, Bob Wills, Hank Williams, even Roy Rogers," Randy Erwin confesses with a laugh. "It was a form of brain-washing. That's why I kinda lean more towards a Bob Wills/Tommy Duncan jazz approach with a Jimmy Rodgers sorta blues, and a little of the Elton Britt fast yodeling school."

Erwin certainly took to yodeling like the proverbial duck to water. Sliding into his upper register, he turns vocal toe loops with dizzying clarity, precision and speed. Sometimes his voice seems to hang in mid-air; other times, it's more a turbo-yodel.

Dallas-based Erwin's doing more to resuscitate old-time cowboy music, by injecting it with a level of hipness and r-e-s-p-e-c-t, than any handful of Nash-Vegas crooners. Rather than take the traditional country-music route, Erwin enlisted the help of Carl Finch of Brave Combo. Erwin's released an EP and LP on Brave Combo's Four Dots label, and the band has recorded with him.

But if Erwin looks familiar, it's probably less from a string of localized personal appearances than from a cameo in David Byrne's film *"True Stories."* He's also licensed to a British record company, and, hey, even managed to quit his day job.

"Money's all well and good, but it's not that important," admits the singer, who describes himself as "on the edge of poverty." "It's the moment that matters, and it's the singing that counts when you're doing it."

—Holly Gleason

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World Radio History

EDIE BRICKELL & NEW BOHEMIANS

by bill flanagan

Hiding Out in Front of the Microphone

More or less equals: Houser, Brickell, Withrow, Bush, Chamberlain and Martin.

"I'm not aware of too many things," are the first words Edie Brickell sings on the New Bohemians' first album. "I know what I know if you know what I mean." The ode to restraint in the face of pretension, profundity and pomp builds up to the chorus declaration, "What I am is what I am/Are you what you are or what?" It's an assertion of self-knowledge worthy of Popeye, a song that has college radio buzzing and a Texas band moving albums faster than their record company ever expected.

"What I Am" by Edie Brickell and New Bohemians sticks up for the rights of people who don't want to talk about saving the world or spiritual hunger on the first date. But Edie is no know-nothing. The song's "Don't let me get too deep" refrain is the philosophy of a 22-year-old Texas woman smart enough to know she's heading toward a strange career in the public eye, and determined to keep her inner life private.

"'What I Am' is about that I'd rather die than be thrown into all these heavy, deep conversations with people," Edie says in Dallas in October. "I just get tired of it. I don't like conversations where I feel like I'm treading water, and if I start to get deep I hate myself. I just don't like to get real heavy. I mean, I do—but not to strangers and not to just anybody. It's like it's not sacred anymore.

"There was this real cosmic trend happening in Dallas where I was introduced to this..." She stops herself from getting too specific. "A lot of people were getting into crystals and spirituality and cosmic consciousness. Which is very fine, I can respect all that stuff, but for some reason a lot of people were coming up to me like *I* was really into it. And I've never expressed that; that's real intimate stuff. I don't like to share my beliefs with people. Especially strangers. That's what inspired that song."

Edie is straightforward and friendly, but she doesn't give away very much. She's obviously one of those people who thinks 10 sentences for every one she speaks, and invasions of privacy are high on her list of offensive behavior. The songs on her album, *Shooting Rubberbands at the Stars*, concern a woman whose eccentric behavior should not be judged by outsiders ("She"), someone whose friends are worried that she is turning into a hermit ("Circle"), and trying unsuccessfully to penetrate a lover's silence ("Nothing"). If that sounds like the album should be called *Mind Your Own Business*, understand that Edie's manner is gentle and generous, her voice as warm as Mom's biscuits. In concert she goes out of her way to establish closeness with the crowd, chatting with the fans between songs, leaning forward to take requests, and spending the time between sets listening intently to the stories and opinions of folks from the audience. Is it tough to be so courteous?

"Sometimes it is," she admits, "if people are really drunk or something and they don't know when to politely cut off the conversation. I'm not very good at that, either. I don't want to seem like I'm stuck up, but that's really hard."

And the ones who are already showing up at New Bohemians gigs with all the lyrics memorized and adoring looks in their eyes? "It makes me feel good that I'm relating to people, that's all I want to do." Those people obviously feel that they know the real Edie from listening to her songs. Do they? "No," Edie laughs. "Not at all."

THE EMPIRE IS A LARGE BRICK BOX NOT FAR from downtown Dallas, a former dinner theater turned into a rock club, with plush interior intact. The headlining band tonight is "The New Bohemians"—Edie Brickell's name is not listed above the group's, as it is on the album. The opening act finishes at 10:15, leaving the Bohemians to play another three sets of originals for a packed house of ardent fans, disinterested singles, rowdy football nuts and linedancing secretaries thanking God it's Friday. The cover charge is five dollars and many of the revelers are well-lubricated before they think to ask who's playing. Anyone expecting a slick recreation of the *Shooting Rubberbands* album would be thrown: Although some of those songs appear over the course of the band's long evening, the sets are dominated by material less reliant on Edie's voice and persona, songs with emphasis more equally distributed between the six players. The New Bohemians began four

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years ago as a ska trio, heavily influenced by the English Beat and with an affection for American funk as processed through British bands like Haircut 100 and Style Council. Only one original Boho, bassist Brad Houser, is still in the group that was hijacked one night by a girl from the audience who asked if she could get up and sing. As far as Geffen Records is concerned, Edie is the whole show; and the Edie-focused production of the album suggests that producer Pat Moran felt the same way. But here in Dallas the New Bohemians are as they see themselves: a six-piece as eclectic as a triple bill at the Fillmore West.

They play funk, they play disco, they play reggae, folk-rock and psychedelia. Their one cover is a Led Zeppelin tune. They have several songs that sound a lot like vintage Santana (a nod, perhaps, to percussion player John Bush) and a couple of acoustic ballads. The New Bohemians also jam like Jerry Garcia: One long piece evolves out of an unrecorded song called "Love Is" into a section of hippie noodling and comes to rest in a spontaneously generated composition in which Edie improvises lyrics as the band throbs behind her. It's a remarkable performance, though it has only passing connection to the record that is catching on in the world outside.

"We're all so different in sounds and styles," Edie says in the dressing room. "We mesh together. I don't think any of us really focus on a particular sound from any other artist. We just do what comes naturally, try to get that inner feeling to come out. That way it's kind of an independent song."

"Everybody's pretty good about give and take," John Bush adds. "If there's a disagreement it's no big deal. We've gotten a lot better about that."

"Yeah," Brad Houser says, "We never really fought about it, but now..." Edie snickers at that, and Brad laughs.

"Well," guitarist Kenny Withrow shrugs, "No one got *hurt*."

The next day, driving around Dallas in a yellow pickup truck, Edie admits that there's a "big scab over the band"—the result of the hard feelings and wounded pride that developed when the all-for-one equals found themselves suddenly reduced, in the studio, to "Edie and." Geffen signed the group in the fall of 1986; and a full year passed before they settled on Welsh producer Pat Moran (best known for his work with Robert Plant) and landed in Wales to begin work. In that year the band had gotten a little lazy, chops were not all in top shape, and they were introduced to the hard side of the studio: Moran demanded they get

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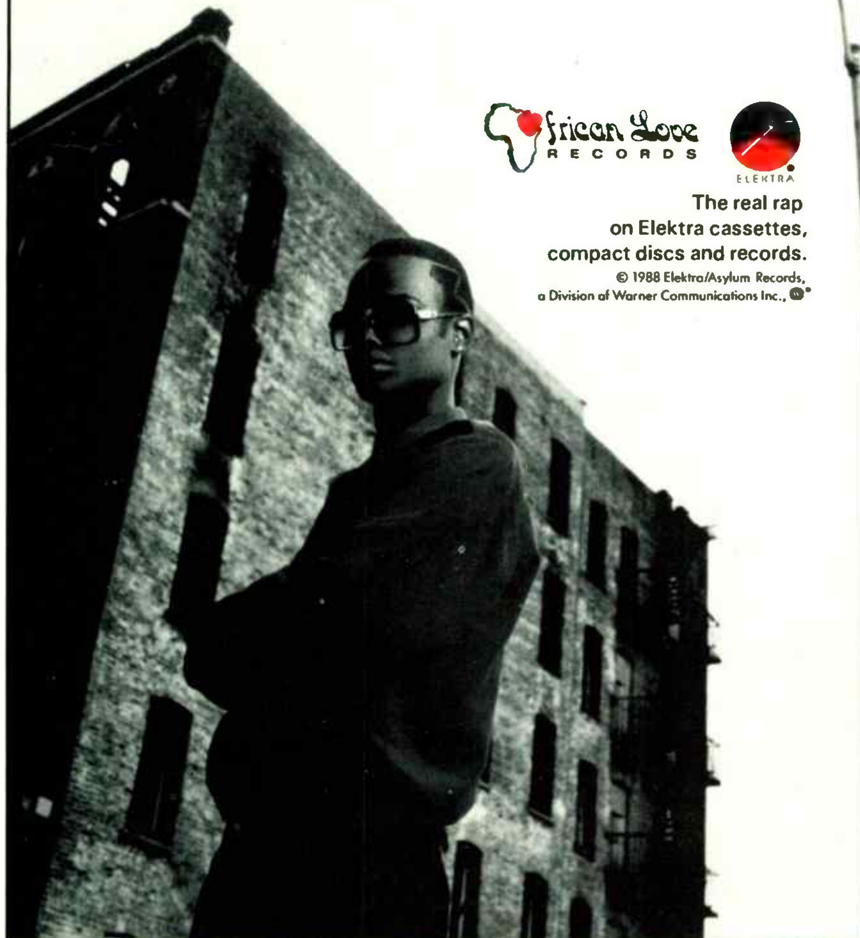

WHAT I PLAY

Kenny Winthrop plays an Ibanez Artist guitar through a MusicMan amp with a couple of Roland delays and Yamaha SPX-90s. Associate guitar player **Wes Martin** plugs a "bastardized Fender Strat" into a Roland JC-77 and a Roland GP8. "But I want to get BIGGER Roland stuff!" Both guitarists use GHS Boomer strings. **Edie Brickell** plays an Ovation acoustic with Martin strings, and what she calls a "Homer" blues harp; you know what she means. Percussionist **John Bush** whaps LP congas with his hands. He uses sticks on the toys and percussive oddities: 3/8" LP timbali sticks for ringing sounds, and Vic Firth sticks the rest of the time. Drummer **Matt Chamberlain** uses Vic Firths too on his Sabian cymbals, Tama drums and the new Ludwig Black Beauty snare "that kicks butt." Bassist **Brad Houser** plays a Beaver five-string fretless bass and a Chandler four-string. "I'm getting another five-string built now. I like the five-string for the low notes, and the extra string gives you better possibilities up the neck. And you can play chords." Brad bottoms out through an SWR amp and SWR speaker cabinet "with a really nasty Ibanez delay and a Chandler tube driver." He plays Dean Markley Blue Steel strings

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their parts together. Drummer Brandon Aly had the most physically demanding job and was most disturbed by the pressure. Finally Moran brought in a session drummer and Aly left the band.

What was developing into a feud between musicians and producer became something more painful when Edie refused to side with her bandmates against Moran. She admits that as singer she had an easier technical job than the players, but she was damned if she was going to let laziness and misplaced loyalty excuse making a crappy record. Moran may have been a tough taskmaster, but he was right: The songs deserved to be played well, and if that meant using studio musicians, Edie would back him. When the producer told Kenny Withrow he wanted to bring in Plant sideman Robbie Blunt to play guitar, Kenny went to Edie for support. Edie said that if it took Robbie Blunt to get the job done, bring in Robbie Blunt. Edie figures that at that moment Kenny thought her the coldest person in the world. But she was determined to protect the album.

Catching wind of all this, Geffen Records decided it would be foolish to promote a band that was headed for breakup. They changed the name to "Edie Brickell and New Bohemians," warning that if the musicians didn't like it, the label would be happy to call it just "Edie Brickell." When the band returned to Dallas, Withrow, Houser and Bush were bitter about the music business, and doubting Edie's loyalty. Finally, on the eve of the record's release, she blew her top. She said she was not going to apologize for making a good album, and she was not going to keep insisting she was loyal to the band while they sneered. She did what they dreaded. She quit.

And a couple of weeks later she came back. If Edie's leaving confirmed her bandmates' worst fears, her return seemed to prove her contention that she really did not want to be a solo star. The battered group pulled themselves together, replaced the departed drummer with L.A. transplant Matt Chamberlain, and added a second guitarist, Wes Martin, to fill out the sound. "We all came out better for it," Houser says of the album war. "There were times of disappointment, just because we didn't know what we were up against. It was our first time around the block, and it was weird having all these outside opinions on something that was so close to your heart. At first it was great: Here's this guy with all these ideas, smoothing things out. Then when some stuff got closer, and parts had to be changed, that was a little harder to deal with. It was rough at times, but it's easier to swallow now."

John Bush says, "In a lot of ways we needed other opinions to realize *ourselves* where we were coming from. You don't know what you're standing on till you have to defend it." A week ago the whole band went to L.A. and told their record company that from now on it was just "New Bohemians." On Friday night Withrow says that Geffen has agreed to the change. On Saturday morning manager Monte Krause says that maybe it would be premature to print that. On Saturday afternoon Edie says, nope, it's settled. Her name is off.

"I've already talked to our A&R guy at Geffen," Edie says over Mexican lunch. "He's promised me that's the way it's going to be. Because I can't handle it this way, I don't like it. I really just..." She sighs. "I pretty much hate it." It seems likely that, fellowship with her bandmates aside, Edie wants her name off to avoid the invasion of privacy that comes with fame. Which may work if the album stays where it is today: in the lower reaches of the top hundred. But if Geffen starts getting hit singles with "Edie Brickell and New Bohemians," changing that name will be tougher than spelling "Mellencamp."

"Regardless," she says firmly, "the

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next album will just be called 'New Bohemians.' I mean, it's going to be obvious who's singing, the attention is enough. I don't want to swing the spotlight in my direction. I don't like that. That's not the way I am, but that's what I feel I'm doing with my name up at the top. It's like I'm standing up goin' 'Me me me me me!' And I don't want that; it just makes me uncomfortable. When people start wanting to pick me out, I'll be able to say, 'Look, it's a band effort.' And they won't be able to go, 'Hey, your name's up front, what are you talkin' about, sweetheart?' That's what they've been doin'.

"I like the record. The music itself represents the band. I don't like the packaging, with all the pictures of me inside. It should be more of a band. Those aren't even my clothes, those are the photographer's clothes. My luggage got lost. So I look at it and I feel a little uncomfortable."

As public attention increases, Edie's discomfort level seems likely to rise. Listen to her explanation of "She," her musical defense of eccentricity: "It's just about a home girl. People don't understand her—somebody who may seem off the wall. Just let 'em be, y'know, that's all. It seems like sometimes when somebody's so busy doing their own thing, other people want their attention, they want to stop them or slow them down. You feel a closeness to somebody, but they're too busy to be close back. You just don't fit into their life."

Which is also the theme of "Circle," a song that switches perspective from a friend worried that her old pal is becoming a recluse, to the old pal who just wants privacy. Which is closer to Edie? "Both," she laughs. "I flip-flop. Lots of times I want to be alone and lots of times I don't. But as far as being in a band and hurting people's feelings, being in the public eye is unusual for me. Doing all this publicity. When I do have a little time to myself, I just want to be a hermit. I do want to get in my room and concentrate on producing more songs or doing something else. Lots of times that means not going out with my friends as much as I used to. And it is hard for them to understand. I'm not being stuck-up or anything, I haven't really changed, but before I had all this time to be by myself *and* to be with friends. Now, it's *band thing, band thing, band thing,* and I do want to come home and be alone. That's the one thing that is really hard, 'cause I really love my friends and I like seeing everybody, but if I don't get some time to myself I'll just go crazy."

Her mistrust of celebrity and public attention is best realized in "Little Miss S.," a song inspired by '60s model/star/drug casualty Edie Sedgwick. "I was over at a friend's house and I saw *Edie* on their bookshelf. Naturally I was attracted to it 'cause it was my name. I started flipping through it, I read a few paragraphs here, a few paragraphs there, and when I was driving home that song just came into my head. That's why I left it kind of vague, why I didn't state specifically who it was about; I wasn't sure if I got all the details right. Those were just impressions from what I read."

"Little Miss S." conveys a feeling of downtown New York in the '60s as much by the lyric structure as by content. It's easy to imagine Sedgwick peers such as the Velvet Underground and *Blonde on Blonde* Dylan delivering lines like, "The Village idiots in her bed never cared that her eyes were red, never cared that her brain was dead in the hours that her face was alive." From the hopped-up internal rhyming to the biting indictment of glamour, it's a neat evocation of the days when the ghost of electricity howled in the bones of her face.

The more attention one spends on Edie's songs, the more such craft one finds. Her little-girl-in-the-liquor-cabinet voice makes the tunes sound warm and

continued on page 104

The record speaks for itself.
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Fame and Obscurity

by peter guralnick

WHEN IMAGE GETS BIGGER THAN ART

It's difficult to be a legend. It's hard for me to recognize me. *You spend a lot of time trying to avoid it. It's really . . . unbearable. The way the world treats you is unbearable.*

—*James Baldwin, to interviewer Quincy Troupe*

I was thinking, as I wrote the liner notes to *Folkways: A Vision Shared*, an all-star tribute to Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly, about the price that fame exacts, on art and on the artist. Maybe Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie were better off for not having achieved the celebrity of some of their latter-day acolytes, for not having lived in an age of celebrity in which, as Baldwin suggests, living up to your own legend becomes a full-time occupation whether you like it or not. And yet in order to celebrate Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly, you need to put fame at the service of *their* legends. In order to make sure that attention will be paid, you need to enlist the services of Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, John Cougar Mellencamp and to suggest somehow that this becomes a transcendent *event* not so much on account of the cause that they are serving as because of their participation in it. We look for such events throughout our culture, summarizing achievements after which the artist—whether it be Saul Bellow or Elvis Costello—might as well not bother to show up. Perhaps it simply boils down to the search for the perfect wave, plays into all of our natural propensities for list-making. To seek out and discover the Best, to light upon the supreme moment will perhaps eliminate the necessity of scrutinizing all those naggingly ordinary and extraordinary moments which went into its make-up. This is the talk of the town, the pursuit of excellence, this year's model.

Well, maybe. But is this year's model any better than last year's? Is Leadbelly's or Woody Guthrie's own music somehow outmoded by contemporary interpretation? Is the well-known any better, or worse, than the little-known and little-celebrated?

I don't think so.

Does it matter that lost legends like Butch & Willie never got their moment in the Big Spotlight?

Country Negro Jam Sessions (Arhoolie) is one of the most exciting, vibrant, engaging and infectious blues albums that I have ever heard, one of the greatest encapsulations of a musical moment of any sort that I know. I continue to listen to it more than 25 years after first stumbling upon it at the Harvard Coop with a high school friend named Bob Smith; I continue to take the greatest pleasure in its wonderful vagaries of harmony and melody, its joyful dissonance and rhythmic waves—and yet I doubt that in the 28 years since it was initially released on the tiny Folk-Lyric label it has sold more than 10,000 copies. Recorded under the most informal circumstances in and around Zachary, Louisiana by folklorist Harry

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Oster (who also discovered the great blues singer, Robert Pete Williams, who puts in a brief appearance here from the Angola State Penitentiary), it was the album which served primarily to introduce Butch and Willie to the world and remains virtually their only exposure to it.

Butch and Willie were a guitar and fiddle-playing duo who combined all the zest of entertainers accustomed to playing country frolics and all-night dances with the infectious humor of the medicine show, the fervor of gospel music, and the directness of blues and country and western. Butch Cage, the older of the two, is the fiddle player, whose antiphonal lines bring to mind a generation that grew up before the blues was born while evoking all the feeling of the blues itself both on his and Willie's joyously shouted numbers and on the three "deep blues" that then-27-year-old Clarence Edwards contributes to the sessions. Willie Thomas, born 18 years after Butch, in 1912, whacks away on the guitar in a ringing, flailing style, taking most of the vocal leads in a hoarse, high-pitched voice that breaks out of sheer enthusiasm and is unpredictably joined by Butch's deep near-harmonies and close-to-unison singing. It is wonderful home-made music of the sort that *A Vision Shared* clearly evokes, but just as clearly cannot *be*, and suggests a world which has all but vanished with a verve that puts that world on the map. Most of the songs are familiar in one form or another, but whether they stem from recorded or oral sources, they should forever put to rest the myth of originality. Butch and Willie didn't have to make up their songs any more than Jerry Lee Lewis did on his Sun sessions; they put their own stamp on every song that they sang, and it comes through on a record that sounds as if it was recorded not for your living room but in theirs.

I only saw Butch and Willie once. I missed them at the Newport Folk Festival in 1960, where their performance was described as like nothing anyone in the audience had ever seen or heard, but I saw them no less incongruously on the stage of Carnegie Hall in 1962, I think, where they appeared with the Appalachian folk singer Roscoe Holcomb. It was a wonderful, unclassifiable moment, but nowhere near as wonderful or unclassifiable as the moments that Harry Oster captured with his modest portable recording equipment in Butch Cage's home or the Angola prison yard and that Arhoolie Records has preserved since the demise of Oster's Folk-Lyric label in the mid-to-late 1960s.

Does it matter who Butch and Willie are, though? I don't know. I don't think so. For me they exist as a photograph, a fleeting memory, and the joyously uninhibited voices heard on this and a couple of other records that are even less readily available. If Butch Cage and Willie Thomas showed up on MTV tomorrow, would that make them any more real, would it confer upon them a more elevated place in history? Are they "better than" others who may be better known? I don't know; I don't think it really signifies. They are, simply, themselves, an achievement without ideological component. Popularity does not confer worth or the lack thereof, and seeing your name in the paper does not constitute either validation or disgrace. It is, simply, irrelevant, just as Butch and Willie's obscurity is irrelevant to the sounds you hear on this record.

Take another example, another blues record of incomparable individuation and beauty. *Down on Stovall's Plantation* (Testament), is a collection of recordings made by folklorist Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress in 1941 and 1942 in and around Clarksdale, Mississippi. Mostly they feature the recording debut of a 26-year-old sharecropper named McKinley Morganfield. McKinley

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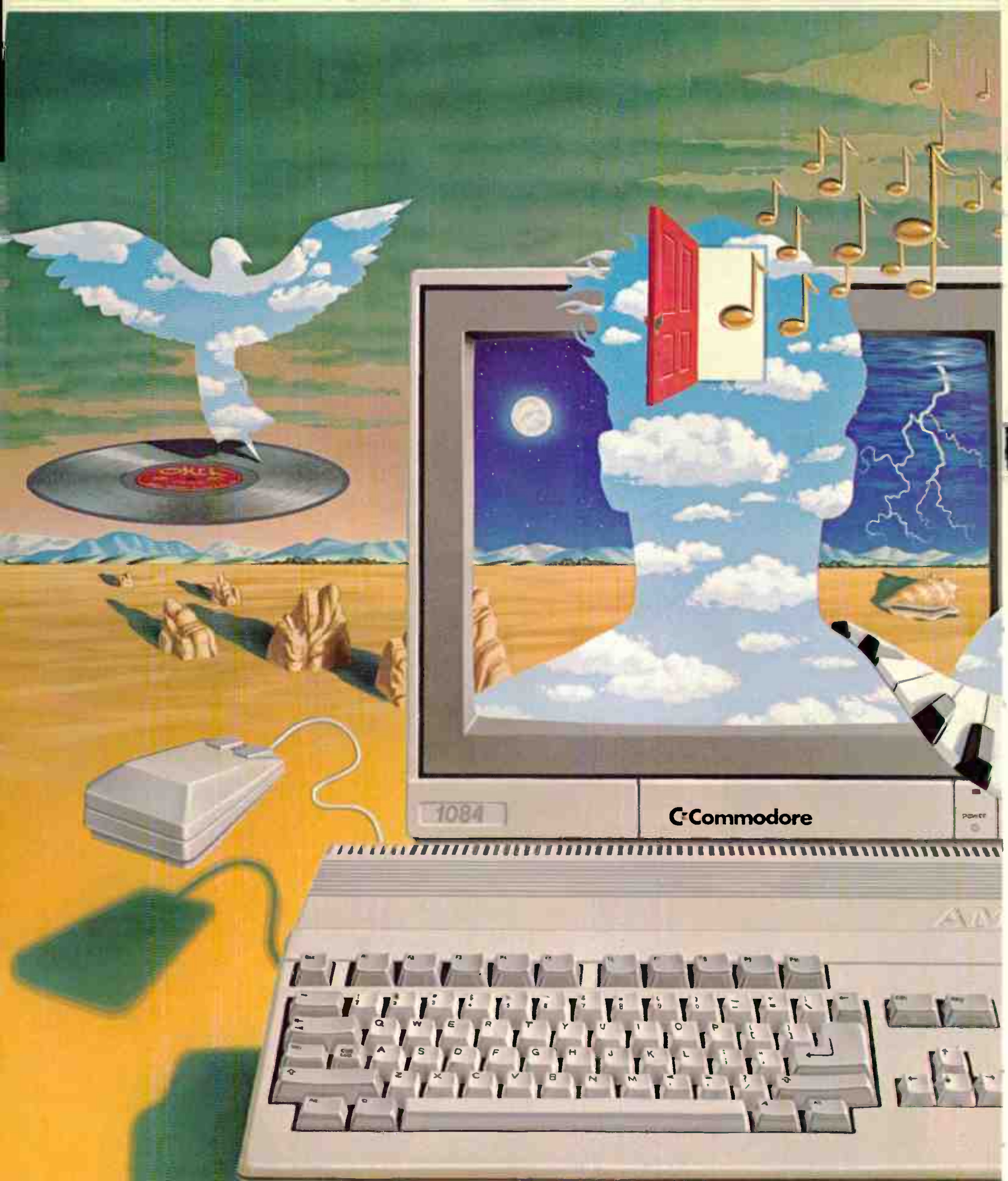

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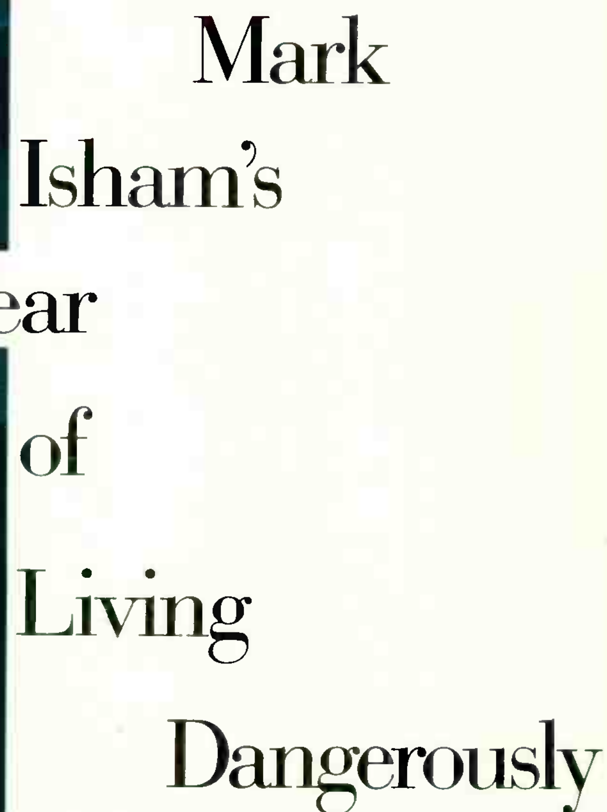

Mark Isham's Year of Living Dangerously

It was only five years ago that Mark Isham was living in a leaky two-room basement apartment in Sausalito. He was trying to maintain his band, Group 87, amidst the S.O.S. of their final album. He had just released *Vapor Drawings*, a synthesizer album on then-all-acoustic Windham Hill Records, and he'd done scores to two small films.

"I had done one big studio picture [*Never Cry Wolf*] and had done one independent picture [*The Times of Harvey Milk*] and I had probably gotten an agent and knew the chances were that I could probably move up at least one income tax bracket," he says, laughing at the recollection. "But I don't know if I was imagining *this*."

"This" is a new album on Virgin Records, his first in five years, as well as his pick of soundtrack projects and invitations to play

By John Diliberto

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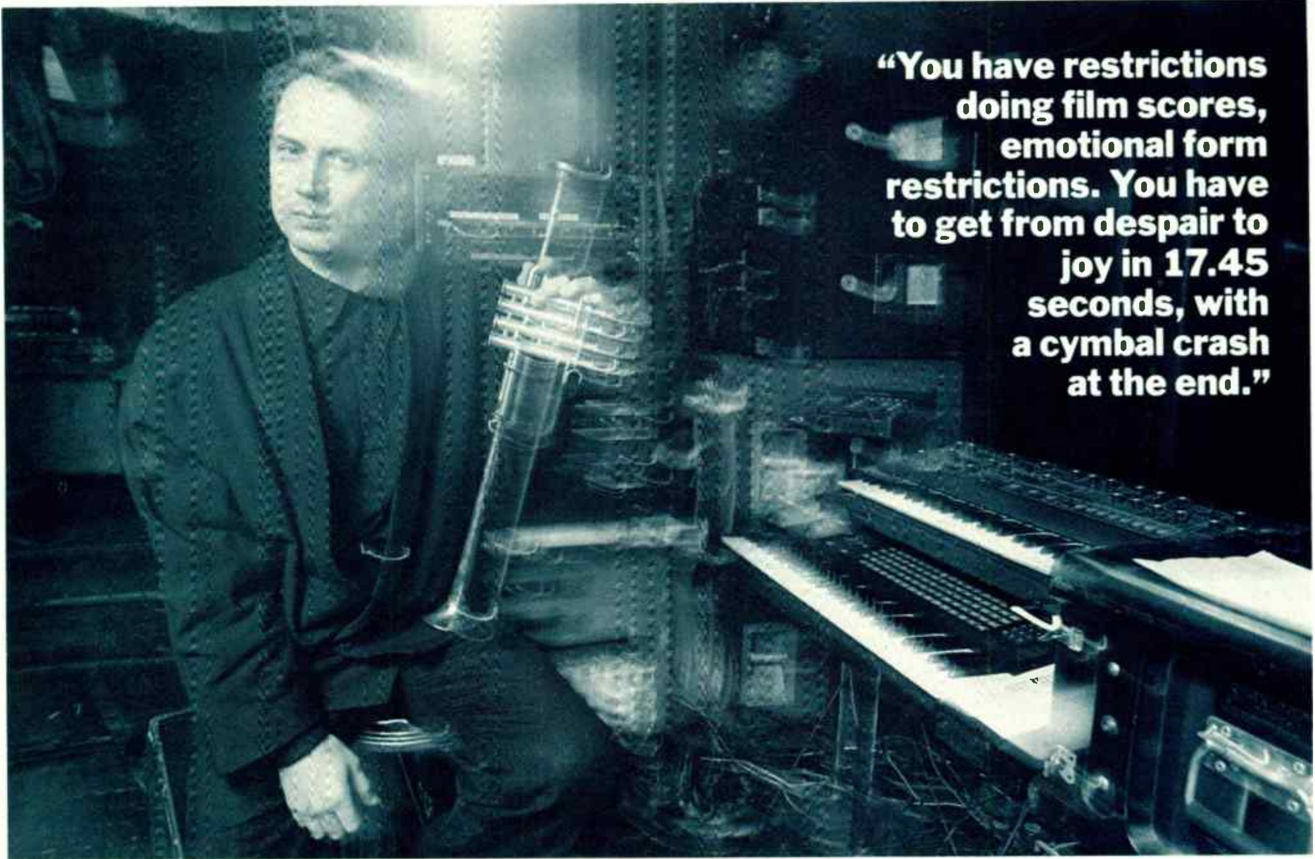

trumpet sideman on any number of select art-rock recordings. Instead of a leaky basement, he looks out a picture window from his 24-track recording studio while assistants for both him and his manager/wife, Margaret Johnstone, scurry about.

Looking back, Isham's career seems like a strategically conceived three-pronged attack: film scores, trumpet playing and synthesizing. In the process he's created music that challenges easy categorization, and has found himself the center of an incestuous coterie of rock and jazz renegades.

Isham, guitarists David Torn and Peter Maunu, David Sylvian and Mick Karn from the British art-rock group Japan, ex-Missing Persons and Zappa alumni Terry Bozzio (drums) and Patrick O'Hearn (synths) and drummers Michael Shrieve and Bill Bruford all play together in such a maze of permutations that "Rock Family Trees" archivist Pete Frame would probably scribble off the page in delirium. "Yes," laughs Isham when I reel off this list of names, "it's a lot of people who've been staring across a room at each other in different situations.

"You know what it is," he offers in explanation, "it's the people who get grouped into jazz and new age but who don't feel comfortable in either one. And because they're exploring similar areas that don't really fit traditional definitions of those two categories, they end up playing a lot together."

Many of them reconvene on Isham's 1988 album, *Castalia*, where he combines lyrical improvisation with sculpted compositions, electronic timbres with acoustic complexity. With Torn's ambient guitar loops filling in the dark shades, Isham effectively deploys Middle Eastern rhythms on "Tales from the Maidan," sentimental balladry on "My Wife with Champagne Shoulders" and Milesian fusion on "A Meeting with the Parabolist." Yet, for all the crafted sonic architecture of *Castalia*, when he leads his electro-ensemble of Bozzio, Torn, Karn, electronic percussionist Kurt Wortman and keyboardist David Goldblatt, the improvising is frenzied. "There's great improvisers in the band," Isham says, "so you can't turn down the opportunity to construct some music that really allows that chemistry to be used to the full advantage."

Rock drive vs. jazz intelligence, structure vs. improv, synthetic vs. acoustic, chops vs. mood. . .these are some of the creative tensions that enliven the music of Mark Isham. When we spoke, he'd just returned from a recording session, playing trumpet for XTC. A few days earlier he was putting the finishing touches on his demonic electronic Middle Eastern score to *The Beast*. And a few months before that he was playing burning improvisations in a rock context with Torn for David Sylvian's tour. Of course, the rock part of Isham's musical makeup has been with him since the beginning.

He could have played it safe, sitting in the trumpet section of the Oakland Symphony Orchestra, which Isham did early in his career. "Oh, yeah," he reflects. "I mean, I'm now 37 and I might have been able to get into a symphony orchestra by now as a full-time job and then it would be like punching the clock. I mean, the music is beautiful, the music is wonderful, but it's not what I wanted to do, just in terms of motion. I need to be a little more active than that."

Instead, he did session work and even toured with the Beach Boys. "I did some Beach Boys tours which were mega-dinosaur tours," he laughs. "You know, with 14-piece bands, entire boats being flown in across the stage, and ridiculous things. But that was just getting the rent paid and trying to get a down-payment on a synthesizer."

Pop music continued to pay the rent with more sessions—Triumvirat, Tom Fogerty, Bernie Krause—and an extended four-album stint with Van Morrison. But Isham was already being seduced by jazz, apprenticing with pianist Art Lande's Rubisa Patrol, a group that combined knotty compositions with terse improvisation. In 1979 he formed Group 87 with Maunu, O'Hearn and Bozzio. It was an adventurous fusion ensemble

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that inverted Joe Zawinul's Weather Report dictum, "We always solo and we never solo."

"Group 87 was a conscious effort, at least in the beginning, to get away from melody/solo section/melody, and get very compositional and really limit the improvisation," says Isham. "If there was any improvisation in that first album, it was not really to be recognized as any different from the composition."

Group 87 recorded two albums, with Peter Van Hooke replacing Bozzio on the second, *A Career in Dada Processing*. Despite their commercial failure, the compositional ideas of Group 87 remain important to Isham and all of the members insist it will "rise from the ashes."

"That's very near and dear to me, that whole period," Isham fondly recalls. "No one really understood what we were trying to do at that time. I mean, it's hard enough even now with this new acceptance of instrumental music. But then, something that defied jazz and defied any previous commercial instrumental music didn't have much chance at all."

His 1983 album, *Vapor Drawings*, wasn't that innovative to anyone who'd been listening to European synthesists like Tangerine Dream and Vangelis, but the Windham Hill release brought Isham to an audience that truly appreciated his pristine sequencer rhythms, gossamer synthesizer refrains and haunting trumpet melodies.

Vapor Drawings is a signpost album of new age electronics, and to some degree, it was designed that way. "I felt I put the limitation myself on *Vapor Drawings* in not pushing the boundaries of what I thought Windham Hill could comfortably promote and be enthusiastic about promoting," confesses Isham. "So I don't consider that album to have been a sellout or anything like that, but it was thoughtfully tailored for a marketplace that was known to exist. Because I was also at that point very interested in selling records and not having another Group 87 experience." It worked. *Vapor Drawings* has sold in excess of 121,000 units.

That album so identified Isham that it's part of the new contract he signed with Virgin Records this year. "Yeah, actually it's quite humorous," he reflects. "We have a clause trying to define the nature of the recordings that I will deliver to them. Because I refused to say that I will deliver new age recordings—I felt that was very misleading. So they actually defined it by *Vapor Drawings*. I can't remember the exact wording, but it's an interesting legal exercise in how they did that: 'The style as shown by my previous albums.'"

However, *Castalia* shares little with *Vapor Drawings* other than Isham's unifying aesthetic. It's an ensemble record drawn from Isham's inner circle, augmented by other players including Oregon's Paul McCandless. Where *Vapor Drawings* was sparse, pretty and refined, *Castalia* is dense, full of textures and improvising lyricism. "Most definitely," concurs Isham. "Just bigger in all respects. Lusher, bigger rhythmically, more aggressive rhythmically. Just a fuller exploration compositionally. I mean, I've grown a lot since then, but on *Castalia*, I sort of stepped out a little more dangerously, I suppose, and didn't try to consciously tailor it. I just said, Virgin Records is hip enough and big enough to sell and I should have progressed enough careerwise to do what I want to do."

One thing that hasn't changed is Isham's use of loops as a compositional tool. A devotee of the minimalist music of Steve Reich and Philip Glass, Isham uses technology to achieve their cyclical tendencies. On *Vapor Drawings* he got them from tape loops and random sequencer patterns off his ARP 2600. Now it's from digital sequencers and delays. Isham likes to work in blocks of sound and styles, shifting them through an electronic landscape like a surrealist mathematician juggling formulas. "What I'm comfortable doing these days is making these constructivist projects where you add elements together and can improvise compositions by improvising structures," he explains. It's a way of tying rock technology to jazz improvisation and a classical sense of composition.

"As soon as somebody realized you could build a track up one person at a time, one role at a time, even building a country and western track, you had a constructivist approach. But you can take that approach a little further. Rather than say, 'Okay, now I'm going to do the bass, now I'm going to do the guitar, now I'm going to do the snare,' you can start breaking down the traditional orchestration but still use the layering idea of building things upon each other. So that you might just start with a loop that gives you a space that you're operating in, or a sampled thing that defines a rhythm, and you build a drum track of sampled sounds around that. In other words, you're placing sounds item by item, almost as if you were building something physical like a house. You'd place one tile upon the next. Or you might look at it as painting. You put a splash of something here, then a splash of something there. And you can ignore a lot of the traditional rules that way. You say, 'Well, maybe what we need here is a snare,' but what you really need is a splash of blue, or something."

One of Isham's frequent colors is guitarist David Torn. They first played together on Torn's album *Cloud About Mercury*. His textural guitar style encompasses extensive processing and digitally looping ambiences, and have played a role in almost all of Isham's music in the last two years. Torn is all over *Castalia*, Isham's Windham Hill video *Tibet*, and his soundtrack to *The Beast*. Sometimes Torn is there even when he isn't. He let Isham use several digital recordings of his looped performances. "Yeah, and I stole some, too!" Isham gleefully confesses. "I love the textures he builds up through looping technology. And with some techno guys I work with, I've developed this way of translating loops that Torn might build on the guitar into samples of the loops, continually relooped

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within the sampling environment. So I actually have huge choirs of looping Torn off the keyboard."

Isham brings a cinematic breadth to his music, which makes sense considering the number of films he has scored. *Never Cry Wolf* in 1983 was followed in increasingly quick succession by *The Times of Harvey Milk, Mrs. Soffel, The Hitcher* and *Country.* He's just finished *The Beast*, directed by Kevin Reynolds, and will soon work on *Jackknife* and *The Tender* with John Travolta. He's developed a long-term relationship with Alan Rudolph, the director of the eccentric films *Trouble in Mind, Made in Heaven* and *The Moderns*. Isham even appears in the recording session scene near the end of *Made in Heaven*. He's the one who looks like Billy Crystal playing trumpet.

Isham's scores cover a wide stylistic range. While his early film music like *The Times of Harvey Milk* and *Never Cry Wolf* would have fit comfortably on *Vapor Drawings*, Isham's later projects reveal a broader sensibility. *Mrs. Soffel* used pianist Lyle Mays and a recorder to create early-20th-century parlor music. *Trouble in Mind* had a hip electronic jazz score and *The Hitcher* brimmed with malevolence. One might wonder where

MARK'S ICONS

Mark Isham will be the first to admit that his synthesizing arsenal isn't quite up to nuclear deterrent levels. "If you want the latest Korg MIDI'd to the DX3 MIDI'd to the DX7Q, with all the latest stuff, I'm not the guy," he says with a certain degree of smug assurance. "I don't invest in that. I've invested in a studio. I've got a 24-track studio locked to video so I can do my film timing, any electronic scoring at home."

Isham's sound generating is centered by a Prophet V, the Oberheim Xpander and a Prophet 2000 for sampling, and a Roland Vocoder. And he just got a Super Jupiter rack mount for his tour. He also uses an E-mu Drumulator, a Sequential Circuits Poly Sequencer for fast sketches and an Oberheim DPX-1 with hard disk to play samples. It's all MIDI'd together with a Zaphod MIDI switcher and the Southworth Jambox for SMPTE interface. Processing is courtesy of a Lexicon Prime Time, a Yamaha SPX90, two Lexicon PCM-70s, a Roland SDE-3000 delay with sampling module, two Alesis Microverbs, an old ART reverb, MXR pitch transposers and pitch shifters, a new t.c. 2290 DDL and an Eventide H3000 Ultra-Harmonizer.

For composing, sequencing, manipulating and storing, Isham uses a Macintosh Mac Plus computer with hard disk drive. Southworth's MIDI Paint is the only software he uses. "I was one of those experimental people that tried out Southworth when it first came out, and stuck with it," he says ruefully. "I should be given a medal, I think, for that."

Much less exotic, but equally important, are his array of trumpets. He wails through a Yamaha piccolo trumpet, an Olds flugelhorn, and a few hybrids that he designed himself: a Bach C trumpet body with a Benge lead pipe and a Benge bell, and a Benge body with a Schilke bell. His Martin trumpet is wired in with the Perkiphone.

Where Isham has spent his money is in the recording end of things. It's all set up in a bedroom overlooking Hollywood Hills and, despite no evidence of soundproofing, he records all his synthesizer trumpet tracks here through direct injection and open mike. The centerpiece is a Trident Console "which we use mostly just for monitoring." For actual mixing Isham uses a set of the Focus-Rite modules made by Rupert Neve. He lays his tracks on an Otari MX-80 24-track tape machine and mixes to a Sony F-1. Smack in the middle of the recording chain are a Urei LA2A limiter/compressor, and Sontech Massenberg equalization monitors and a custom speaker, all driven by a Yamaha Professional Series P2200 Amplifier.

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Isham truly stands, with all his stylistic jumps. Is he a chameleon, making music to order, or is the film music separate from his own? "It's not completely separate, no," answers Isham. "Because stylistically, compositionally, I'm growing as one individual. So that anything I've ever done in the movies will always go back and feed my ability to make records, and anything I learn or experience making records will always go back and feed my ideas for movies."

Yet composing for films presents different limitations and restrictions. Not the least of which are the layers of people the music has to filter through before it hits the screen: producers, directors, sound mixers and money men. "Certainly, with movies, it's a collaborative art," admits Isham, "and although you're fairly high on the list of collaborators in terms of personal input, you still have an allegiance to the hierarchy: the director and sometimes the producer and the studios. I like to get myself in situations where that hierarchy is very clear cut and you won't have a lot of weird political maneuverings in terms of the actual collaborative relationships between people.

"And then, of course, you have the more technical side of it," he continues. "You have time restrictions, you have form, emotional form restrictions. You have to get from despair to joy in 17.45 seconds, with a cymbal crash at the end. And sometimes that can feel like a restriction, obviously, because you might come up with a melody that, goddammit, takes 19.45 seconds, and you have to figure out how to lop two seconds off of it. And you get pissed and then you figure it out and it's all right. But I also find it very inspiring to discover new things, because in figuring out how to do that, you might find a musical device or some bizarre thing that will solve that problem that you might never have had to push yourself to do if you had a complete open canvas, as it were, and you were the boss. In terms of orchestration I find this more and more all the time."

Isham actually forms de facto groups for his soundtracks, like the Raincity Industrial Art Ensemble (with saxophonist Pee Wee Ellis) for *Trouble in Mind* and L'Orchestre Moderne, fronted by violinist Sid Page, for *The Moderns*. The latter film is set in 1926 Paris and centers around mythologized expatriates Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and others. The music is barely recognizable as being Isham's. Rather than his usual synthesizer orchestras, Isham evokes the period music of the swinging '20s with two violins, marimba, vibraphone, snare drum, acoustic bass and piano. "I would have never written for that combination for a record," he says. "I don't think I would ever have dreamed of that, and yet it's the perfect, evocative sound for that picture."

The Beast, on the other hand, draws from the recent history of the Russian occupation of Afghanistan. Isham's synthesizers are joined by David Torn, an electro-MIDI-cellist named Tom McVeety, tablas and a santour. "It's a story of an incident in the Russia-Afghan war," explains Isham. "So I wanted a few instruments and sounds that were evocative of the Middle East. But also we needed the real aggression of McVeety and Torn and sampled percussion for the violent aspect of the film."

Sometimes forgotten in the film scores and synthesizers is the fact that he has one of the most recognizable trumpet voices in contemporary music. It's Isham's trumpet more than anything else that gives his music that open-ended jazz sense of exploration. An often muted style, full of melancholic spaces and long-sustained clarions, it's not unlike that of Miles Davis, whom Isham is quick to cite as an inspiration. Even the trumpet occasionally gets treated to electronics. Isham was an early cham-

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pion of the Steiner Electronic Valve Instrument (EVI) that has since become the Akai EVI, but it was never very comfortable or natural for him to play. Now he has a new device called the Perkiphone, a MIDI trumpet made by Bill Perkins that is wired into a conventional trumpet. It's heard extensively on *The Beast* and *Tibet*, with Isham's fluid lines triggering trails of MIDI parallels and echoes.

Isham is diffident about his trumpet playing because he works so much with synthesizers and composing, and goes long stretches without touching it. Yet when Isham is called to do a session, it's usually not his keyboard ability they want, but his trumpet. "That's fine with me. It's much easier," he laughs.

"You see, I fight it in a very personal way, because I don't practice all the time," he confides. "And I must admit, when I do pick up the horn, I'm insecure because I don't feel like I'm always up to where I should be as a player."

When Isham arrived in Oslo, Norway in January last year to record *We Begin* for ECM with Art Lande, an album of intuitive improvisations for piano and trumpet had originally been planned. "We got to the recording session and I found that I just did not have the chops," he recalls dejectedly. "I had been playing so little trumpet in the six months previous to that; we played about a half a day, and everything we played back, I said, 'I'm sorry, it's just not cutting it. It doesn't sound very good.' So we said, 'Well, what can we do here?'"

Enter Isham's "constructivist" compositional approach. They pulled out the synthesizers and drum machine and conceived a music that had elements of jazz, but not quite. "We sort of built a series of compositions that way," relates Isham, "using his vocabulary as a keyboardist, my vocabulary of sounds and a lot of basic material that Art, who is a very prolific writer, had brought with him. And one piece that I had prepared. And a lot of joint improvisational writing."

The record wasn't entirely successful, and for Isham it outlined his problems with the jazz production style. "I feel a record cannot be really done successfully within the jazz record-making tradition of only four or five days," says Isham. "To do a record that attempts compositionally to take on a larger scope, you really need a little time to play with the elements more and to give yourself just more time."

Yet jazz remains important to Isham. He recently recorded a session for Michael Shrieve that included Torn and ex-Police guitarist Andy Summers. They were all calling it jazz, but I suggested the line-up sounded more like fusion. "That's a strange word for me," cautions Isham. "It connotes a lot of stuff I don't like that happened in the '70s. But yes, obviously there were two electric guitar players, one of which was a member of one of the biggest pop bands of all time. It's going to have an element of seemingly fusing different individual personalities, musical personalities together. But all of us have jazz training and backgrounds. Even Andy Summers; it was very refreshing to discover that he's actually a good jazz guitar player."

Isham and most of his circle see themselves as outsiders with one foot in the mainstream's door. Patrick O'Hearn says "they're the off-beat and avant-garde, not in the wild sense but in the pop sense."

"I don't think that anybody in this crowd, the jazz or rock players, is here by default," reckons David Torn. "I haven't met anybody who's on a crusade. There's something going on. I know that in America there's a lot of room for people to be reached by music they haven't heard before instead of this ground-out industrial crap we're fed."

He pauses, then reconsiders: "I guess we *are* on a crusade." ▣

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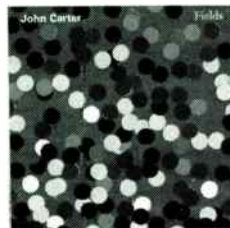

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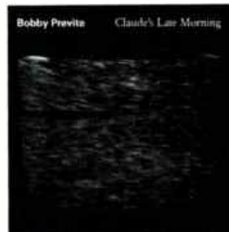

"Claude's Late Morning", featuring: Bobby Previte–drums, marimba, keyboards, drum machine, vocals; Wayne Horvitz–hammond organ, piano, harmonica; Ray Anderson–tuba, trombone; Bill Frisell–electric guitar, banjo; Josh Dubin–pedal steel guitar; Joey Baron–drums; Carol Emanuel–harp; Guy Klucevsek–accordion; Jim Mussen–electronic drums, sampling... Previte deftly creates a modern chamber music that rips, roars, and stops to think.

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Glyn Johns

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through the glass darkly

"I made a decision when I was very young to avoid any kind of promotion of myself within the media. Because I sat and watched, when I was a kid of 17, this lunacy going on around me, and I saw how skin-deep the whole thing was, how one could be very up one minute and extremely out the next. And one of the things responsible for that was the media. They'd set you up to knock you down. They love to love you when you're successful, and then it's boring to write about you being wonderful any-more so they steam in and rip you to pieces. I decided to avoid the whole issue as much as I could. I'd just go with what I was doing. And that seemed to work quite well, because my career has lasted quite a long time and it seems the media treat me with a degree of respect."

Glyn Johns sits back on the couch of a friend's Manhattan townhouse. His relatively low profile may have helped extend his career as a record-maker, but surely it annoys him that he has often been denied full credit for popular albums that he ghost-produced? "Didn't bother me in the least," he insists. "It wasn't why I was doing it. In the early days, when I made it as an engineer, the role of producer was somewhat different anyway, and it was difficult to become one. They were almost all in-house. And so we accepted the fact that most producers, when I started, were complete idiots. One got used to doing their work. And listen, I profited from it very well. A lot

by bill flanagan

JOSH CHEUSE

World Radio History

of producers who weren't very good would come to me! I worked a lot, I became very popular. I knew that eventually I would benefit financially and receive acknowledgment for what I did. My peers knew. That was the only important thing. The whole idea of publicity or credits has always been bullshit to me. Credits are nonsense. I don't think anybody outside the industry really need know who does what behind the scenes. It's the artist and their career that's most important."

If credit—or lack of credit—for the work he's done doesn't concern Johns, that is his strength and his virtue. But to tell the truth, the man's accomplishments are so remarkable that he can afford to be generous. Listen to a few of the albums on which he *is* credited as producer: *Slowhand* and *Backless* by Eric Clapton; *Joan Armatrading* (the LP with "Love and Affection") and the three albums that followed it; *Get Yer Ya Ya's Out!*; the first three Eagles LPs, *Who's Next, Who by Numbers, Who Are You* and *It's Hard*; Bob Dylan's *Real Live*; *Rough Mix* by Pete Townshend and Ronnie Lane; the Faces' *Ooh La La* and *A Nod's as Good as a Wink*; *Humble Pie* and *Rock On*, and about 65 others, from Boz Scaggs and the Steve Miller Band to Fairport Convention and McGuinness Flint.

Not bad, eh? Now listen to some of the albums on which his credit is fudged—with attributions like "Mixed by Glyn Johns, Made by the Clash," or "Director of Engineering: Glyn Johns," or—most often—"Produced by (fill in the band), engineered by Glyn Johns": *Combat Rock, Led Zeppelin, Their Satanic Majesties Request*, almost everything by Small Faces, and countless other records—go to your shelf and look for yourself. These are albums on which Johns could make a reasonable claim to having been *de facto* producer (one could arguably add Rolling Stones productions credited to Andrew Oldham, such as *Out of Our Heads* and *December's Children*; Johns resists that). Some rock aficionados know only this about Glyn Johns: He engineered all or part of *Beggar's Banquet*, "Ruby Tuesday," *Let It Bleed, Sticky Fingers, Exile on Main Street* and many other Rolling Stones records. If that were all he'd ever done, he'd have a corner in pop Valhalla. Instead he's got a whole castle.

He hates to talk about it, though. Longtime *Musician* readers will recall that Johns has made cameos in our pages twice before, to focus attention on fallen comrades. He (and others) recounted his work with Ronnie Lane in and out of Faces, his organizing of the ARMS benefit concerts, and contempt for Rod Stewart in issue #63. He eulogized his friend Ian Stewart, and recounted the early days of the Rolling Stones in issue #89. But getting Johns to talk about Johns is tough.

"My major problem with the Eagles was Glenn Frey's desire to be leader. And Glenn and Don's opinion that their writing was far stronger than anyone else's."

He's in Manhattan for a wedding and has a day to kill before flying back to the UK. Reluctant as he is to speak about his work, Johns has agreed to an interview in order to register a plug for his latest LP, John Hiatt's *Slow Turning*. Recording sessions for the follow-up to Hiatt's acclaimed *Bring the Family* broke down last spring, and A&M Records asked Johns to perform a rescue mission. The collaboration took. *Slow Turning* is not the emotional gut-punch its predecessor was, nor is it meant to be. It is a fine rock 'n' roll record built for the stage, performed tough and recorded beautifully. The LP's closing song, a soul ballad called "Feels Like Rain," has the nerve to step right up to its antecedents ("I Wish It Would Rain," obviously, but also Otis Redding and Percy Sledge) and stand toe to toe. If A&M releases it as a single, deejays will have to play it or be defrocked.

Johns expects the collaboration with Hiatt will be ongoing. He is also enthusiastic about his work with a British singer named Helen Watson on whose first album (unavailable in the States) he enlisted sidemen such as Little Feat, Bernie Leadon and the British keyboard wiz called Wix. Her second album will appear here on Capitol/EMI in early '89.

At 46, Johns is a gentleman of wealth and taste, quick to laugh at even bad jokes and far more generous with his time than most hosts with an intercontinental flight looming. The "quick meeting" he promised *Musician* stretched to three hours. Johns dislikes gossip, but he is not a hypocrite; if he thinks a particular musician is a skunk he will not pretend otherwise for the sake of diplomacy. That is an unusual attribute in an industry in which most successful men have at least two faces, just as Johns' apparent lack of insecurity is rare in a business that thrives on neurosis. But then, he has every right to be secure; he knows how valuable he is.

JOSH CHEUSE FRANK DRIGGS

World Radio History

MUSICIAN: *How long had you been in the business when you recorded the first Rolling Stones session?*

JOHNS: I started as a tea maker, an assistant tape operator, in 1959 at IBC Studios. In those days it was considered the best studio in Europe. We worked on everything: film music, American television music, jingles, a lot of big band, and band singers. There wasn't a lot of rock 'n' roll in those days. It really started at the end of 1960. The old senior engineers didn't understand rock 'n' roll at all. A bit like me now. That's what made way for us youngsters. We just took over.

MUSICIAN: *How did you come to see the Stones?*

JOHNS: Ian Stewart was a friend, we lived quite close to each other, and he was the local guy who had the great blues collection. It was Stu's band, so I knew them. One of my closest friends Colin Golding was actually bass player in the band for a few weeks; just a local guy who sat in for three quid a night. When I was young, I used to run a little club every other week, in a hall behind a pub called the Red Lion. We decided we'd make Fridays R&B night, and we booked the Stones. We paid them about three pounds, I think, and about four people turned up.

I took them in the studio for the first time. It was very exciting. It was very clear that Brian Jones was the leader. I took an instant dislike to him [*laughter*]. It was great. I'd been into Jimmy Reed for a long time, although he wasn't known in England. I was really into American folk and R&B, so when the Stones happened I was amazed that an English band could get anywhere close to that, that they even knew about it.

MUSICIAN: *Once the Stones were signed, their manager Andrew Oldham became their official producer. Did he know what he was doing in the studio?*

JOHNS [*makes a series of comical pained faces and then says*]: Yes. Andrew was the one who encouraged Mick and Keith to write in the first place. They probably would have done it eventually. His contribution to the band initially was quite extraordinary. I wouldn't hear anybody say any different. In the studio he certainly seemed to me to have quite a lot of control over what was going on. He didn't sit there and read the bloody newspaper, I can tell you that! He was extremely outspoken and quite influential over a lot of the records. I don't think there's any question about that. My only query with Andrew, as far as how good a producer he was or wasn't, is he didn't do a lot else. So it's quite difficult to judge. Working with people as talented and different as the Stones clearly were, it's quite difficult to remember who was really responsible for what. I can assure you, with a great deal of the artists I've worked with people give me credit for a lot that, really and truly, I was there and—yes, alright—I got the bloody bass sound or whatever, but it wasn't me that came up with the mind boggling song or that incredible turn in the arrangement! It was them. And I think there was a lot of that with Andrew and the Rolling Stones. However, he *was* there and he did it for a long time and he was outspoken.

Initially I refused to work with him. That's why I didn't work with the Rolling Stones the first year. I said to him, "You don't know what you're doing, you haven't got a clue, and you're not gonna learn off my back, so sod off! The day you prove to me you can produce, I'll work with you." And eventually he did. He came one night and played me two records he'd produced for other people and said, "Now will you work with me with the Rolling Stones?" And I said yes.

MUSICIAN: *When you got to* Satanic Majesties *did you feel liberated 'cause suddenly there was no producer in the room?*

JOHNS: Yes, I suppose I did. It was a drag that it was *Satanic Majesties* I was supposedly liberated into, however [*laughter*]. It wasn't a particularly good record. It was their psychedelic

venture and, really, most of it's a complete load of old nonsense. They'd come in with a box of percussion instruments and go in the studio and play with them for fifteen minutes while I'd run the tape. Then they'd come in and listen to it and go, "Nah, that's no good, we'll do another." So being liberated into *that* wasn't particularly good. But it was good for me, really, 'cause Mick was constantly putting me under pressure to come up with different sounds, different approaches, and break the rules. That was obviously the influence of the Beatles more than anything else. Everybody was trying to come up with a different approach, and they would look to the engineer to do it. I suppose I wasn't particularly innovative in that regard, but he did make me think about things in a different way.

MUSICIAN: *Jimmy Miller came in with* Beggar's Banquet *and stayed through the glory days of* Let It Bleed, Sticky Fingers *and* Exile on Main Street. *Was he a hands-on producer?*

JOHNS: Nobody with the Rolling Stones can be a hands-on producer in the normal sense. But he certainly influenced tremendously what they did. You can hear it if you listen to the records; they're very different. Mick came to me one day and said, "Look, I want to get a producer in and I want to get an American." I thought, "Oh, Christ, we'll get some New Yorker and I'm really gonna get it from some bloody egomaniac who'll fly in here thinking he's God's gift because he's been asked to produce the Rolling Stones! And I'm going to have to deal with this guy! I've got to put my thinking cap on and sort it out." So I said, "Ah, there is a guy who's already here." I'd heard the Traffic album Jimmy had done and thought it was brilliant, and I'd met him a couple of times briefly and he was a very nice man. I said to Mick, "Look, this is absolutely the guy you should get!" Mick went and met him and he got the gig. And the first thing he did was fire me! [*laughs uproariously*]

I don't think he knew I'd recommended him, I don't think he knows to this day. The engineer he'd been using was named Eddie Kramer. So they worked with Eddie a little while and they decided to get me back in. When I got back I actually got on very well with Jimmy. I didn't always like working with him, but he did a great job. I think those are the best records they made, and they wouldn't have been like they were if Jimmy hadn't been there. He had a great relationship with Mick and Keith. You have to understand that Mick and Keith were producing their records—with whoever was there. But when you're out in the studio and there's someone else in the box, you're not producing yourself. Nobody really knows or understands who does what. They happened to go through a particularly good period running parallel with his involvement: the material was great, they were very positive about what they were doing, they were very inventive in the writing. And I think Jimmy improved on that with the way he recorded them. The arrangements were really strong as well.

MUSICIAN: *When* Let It Bleed *appeared, it was a sonic kick in the head. The first thing everyone said about the rock tracks was,*

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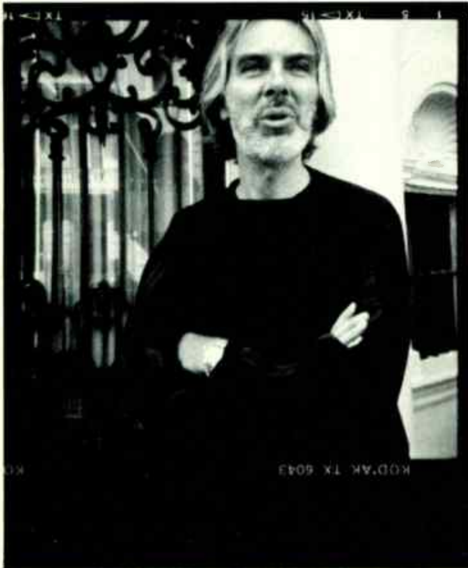

"You can't hear Mick's voice!" Exile *buried the vocals even further. But in fact, as you cranked those albums up and played them over and over, the voice began to emerge.*

JOHNS: That always cheesed me off, I have to tell you. He insisted on burying his voice. Always cheesed me off. I don't think there's any excuse for that. You say if you crank it up you can hear it—*I* think the records would have been far better if there had been more vocal on them. By a long way. However, that was his decision. I must be honest with you, I don't think Mick and Keith have a clue how to make records. I don't think they've really ever had that much of a clue, if you really want to know. They were enormously frustrating to work with. To me the Rolling Stones was unequivocably the best rock 'n' roll rhythm section I've ever been in a room with. And to take something as natural as that and work it to death until it deteriorates into something in my opinion quite bland—to take the amazing adrenaline rush that they got together when they were playing well and just dissipate it by flogging it to death the way they did and be so very critical about it—I never understood it, they left me behind. I found it really frustrating. I've watched these guys who I knew were just wonderful playing worse and worse until Keith would come in and say, "That's the take!" For some reason better known to the Lord than anybody else!

MUSICIAN: *But how could they not have a clue how to make a record if you say (a) that they always really produced themselves and (b) that they made some great records?*

JOHNS: Okay, I should be more specific. I think they made some great records but the *manner* in which they made them was a lot of nonsense. Most of the time. I don't really think they know even now what the role of a real producer is. Maybe that's a good thing, maybe that's why their records are as good as they are—because they don't have that precise direction that a producer would bring to them, maybe that's an advantage, I don't know. But I think they've made a lot of really awful records and in my view they need never have made an awful record in their entire career. Because the talent that's there is boundless. But they are the *kings* of taking two years to make an album. How the hell can you be objective about that? You cannot.

MUSICIAN: *Quite unlike those Rolling Stones mixes, your Eagles productions were dominated by vocals and fretted instruments. The bass and particularly the drums were far back. Was that compensating for a weakness in the rhythm section?*

JOHNS: No, I wasn't compensating for anybody's weaknesses in the least. I personally didn't think that they could play rock 'n' roll. When I first saw the Eagles they were doing Chuck Berry stuff and they were blatantly, bloody awful. It was a complete cacophony. You had Glenn Frey, who was a good little rock 'n' roll guitar player, on one side and Bernie Leadon, a great country picker, on the other, and you had a rhythm section in the middle being pulled in two directions. There was no cohesion. I thought they were bloody awful, though I knew they could sing. So I turned it down. But David Geffen wouldn't accept my saying no. He kept after me. I said, "I won't go to another gig but I'll see them in a rehearsal situation." The rehearsal was awful. They took a break and somebody picked up an acoustic guitar and they sat down and sang a song four-part. I said, "This is what this band is all about!"

From then on I had a picture of what the band should be or could be. I took them in the studio and made the first record—which they all hated, it turned out. Nobody came to me and said, "We don't want to do this," or "This sucks," but they got back to California and said to Geffen, "We don't like it, we don't think it's what we are." Then they had three hits off it and I think they liked it a bit more.

When we made *Desperado* they literally carried me out of the studio on their shoulders thinking they had achieved the almighty whatever. The record was released and it didn't sell diddly squat. They blamed me immediately. When it didn't sell it was my fault.

MUSICIAN: *So if they'd followed their initial impulse we'd have been blessed with a lot of "Chug All Night"s?*

JOHNS: Probably, initially. But listen, they made some bloody fine records without me. Fantastic records. But the reality of it was they were really strange to work with on that level. They were so insecure, it seemed. I say "they," I mean Henley and Frey, really. Although Randy's a bit weird. He sat me down after *Desperado* and said, "I want to have a serious talk with you. I don't like the way our records sound." Well, I'm very proud of the way those records sound, so I said, "I'm very sorry, how can I improve it for you?" He said, "I'd like our records to sound like Motown." I said, "Ahhh, um, we might have a bit of a problem here."

That's the sort of thing one has to deal with! The other thing he said was, "There's a station I can't really receive very well on my radio, there's a lot of interference, and our records don't sound very good on that station." How do you deal with that?

MUSICIAN: *They evolved over the three albums you did with them from a group of four writers/four players/four singers to the Don and Glenn band. In retrospect it's easy to think that it was really the Don Henley band, with Glenn Frey brought along to give Don the swing vote.*

"I don't think Mick and Keith have a clue how to make records. They'd take the best rock 'n' roll rhythm section I've ever been in a room with and work it to death, getting so critical, until it deteriorated into something bland."

JOSH CHEUSE

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World Radio History

john hiatt's southern drive

"It's kind of a body, these last two albums," John Hiatt says. He's explaining why his recent concerts include only material from *Slow Turning* and *Bring the Family*. "They kind of fit together." There is a clear theme to Hiatt's show: the search for maturity and stability as tested by the memory of wilder ventures. Both albums begin with a travel song—"Memphis in the Meantime" and "Drive South"—depicting the American South as a promised land. Which is just what Nashville has been for Hiatt, both musically and personally.

"I think *Slow Turning* is more southern than *Bring the Family*," Hiatt says. It's not just that ex-Eagle Bernie Leadon plays mandolin and banjo on many of the tracks, and that Hiatt recorded with the Goners, his electric swamp trio from Louisiana. After all, his songs have long been covered by southerners, from Rosanne Cash, Conway Twitty and Emmylou Harris to the Neville Brothers and Johnny Adams. The genial Hiatt retains the vocabulary of an Indianian, but on *Slow Turning*, Hiatt *is* a southern boy. Hell, in concert, "Ride Along" sounds like Lynyrd Skynyrd. "You know, I didn't mind Lynyrd Skynyrd, not one bit," Hiatt says, grinning. "As a matter of fact, the amplifier that I had the pleasure of playing some on this album—particularly the opening bit to 'Feels Like Rain'—is an old Fender Vibrolux that the guitar from 'Sweet Home Alabama' was played through.

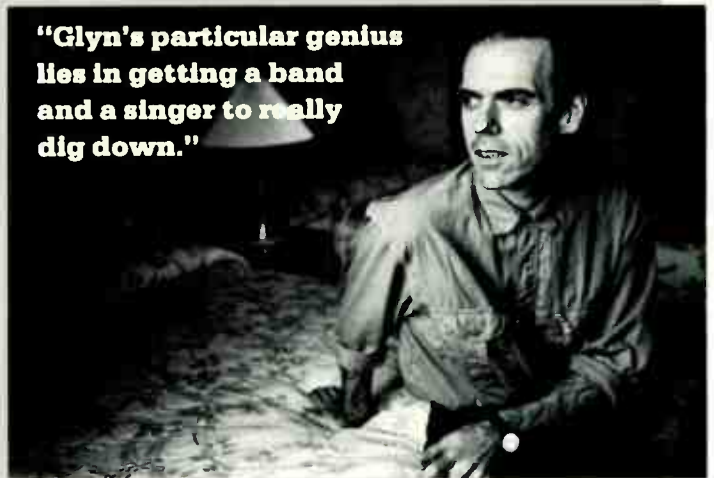
"It was a weird process by which we finally arrived at making this record," he continues. "None of these moves were necessarily conscious, and it's only with hindsight that they seem to work out." He began with the same lineup that made *Bring the Family*: producer John Chelew, guitarist Ry Cooder, drummer Jim Keltner and bassist Nick Lowe. But "that all fell apart, or blew up in our faces," so Hiatt replaced the band with guitarist David Lindley, bassist John Doe of X and Fairport Convention drummer Dave Mattacks. After eight days in the studio, Hiatt decided "it just didn't add up to an album," and began yet again.

His label, A&M Records, recommended Glyn Johns, who flew to Nashville in May. By then, Hiatt had decided to record with the Goners, his touring band from *Bring the Family*: Sonny Landreth, a guitarist who has played with Clifton Chenier and Beausoleil; bassist Dave Ranson, who lives in a trailer on a Louisiana swamp; and drummer Ken Blevins.

"I've never had to live up to even the modest success that *Bring the Family* was," Hiatt says, explaining the false starts. "So it was tricky. Human nature being what it is, you start second-guessing yourself—you want to repeat it, but you don't want to repeat it. It was a pretty emotional year—a little bit of success can be a very scary thing, and it affects people in odd ways. Ultimately, I'm just grateful that I managed to stay partially sane.

"Glyn's amazing to work with. I think his particular genius lies in getting a band and a singer to really dig down. He doesn't come to you with a stamp or a style like a lot of producers do. He makes *you* come up with it.

"When I wrote 'Feels Like Rain,' it was major sevenths on acoustic guitar, and I didn't have a clue what the music was going to be. And the first time Glyn heard it, he said, 'I hear horns.' I was kind of curious: 'Oh really, you hear horns?' But in my head I'm thinking, 'You're fucking nuts.' As we talked about it, he said, 'It sounds like "Dock of the Bay."' So then I got a fix on it—sort of a Memphis soul ballad. That's when I came up with that opening riff, and got to pretend I was Pop Staples or Curtis Mayfield. So he had a lot to do with shaping that, without sitting down and saying, 'Let's get an arrangement.' In fact, he did very little of that. You go through this thing whereby you learn the song, then you tear it apart, then you get bored with it, then there's some kind of rebirth—if, in fact, you're on the right track. And he was very instrumental in pushing that along." Johns' technique, Hiatt says, was to force the band to play songs again and again until "you want to lunge at him and kill him. He doesn't like to waste time. We'd be futzing around, and he'd go [*claps hands briskly*], 'Come along now. It's rock 'n' roll, come along.'"



"Glyn's particular genius lies in getting a band and a singer to really dig down."

Although he has never worked twice with the same band or the same producer, Hiatt now wants to establish some continuity by sticking with the Goners and recording with Glyn Johns again. If Johns has his way, Hiatt may even record "Since His Penis Came Between Us," a poignant peak in his solo sets.

There is an underlying anxiety to his recent work, but also the hard-earned satisfaction of a misanthrope learning to love diapers, mortgages and his station wagon. Although he says his cult "kept me going a lot of the times," it also may have trapped him in the lovable-screwup mode which played so well on record and so poorly in his life.

"You become a parody of yourself. That's the real danger. How do you keep on moving? That's a lot of what *Slow Turning* is trying to talk about. Okay, the narrator seems to be saying, you've got it great. You've got a marriage that works, you've got a family, life's good. Are you gonna fuck it up? How do you keep moving and changing and growing and prospering? I think those are all good questions."

—*Rob Tannenbaum*

JOSH CHEUSE

World Radio History

THE GADD GANG
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The Gadd Gang rides again, covering musical territory ranging from classical pop to R&B to jazz. Led by superstar drummer Steve Gadd, the Gang includes the extraordinary talents of Cornell Dupree on guitar, Eddie Gomez on bass and Richard Tee on keyboards.

MUSIC THAT WON'T BE PIGEON-HOLED.

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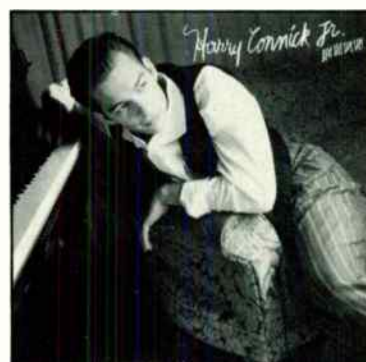
"Her kinetic approach to the soprano sax cuts through the barriers often erected between jazz and contemporary music," is how one critic describes the sound of Jane Ira Bloom. Combining electronics, improvisation and imagination, Jane plays without a safety net—perfectly balanced on the cutting edge.

KENT JORDAN
"ESSENCE"

New Orleans-born flutist, Kent Jordan, plays traditional jazz with unconventional instrumentation. Imagine a piccolo lead on Monk's "Well You Needn't" or "Stella By Starlight" performed with flute and acoustic guitar! Contributing to these inventive arrangements are stellar guest players like Branford Marsalis, Kevin Eubanks and Kent's gifted kid-brother, Marlon.

JAZZ...AND BEYOND.
ON COLUMBIA CASSETTES, COMPACT DISCS AND RECORDS.

HARRY CONNICK, JR.
"20"



Twenty-year-old Harry Connick, Jr., has already established himself as one of today's most exciting pianists with his highly-acclaimed debut album of instrumental jazz. On his new album, "20," he adds a voice full of New Orleans soul to his unique keyboard talents, creating his most exhilarating music yet.

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World Radio History

JOHNS: No! It was not the Don band with Glenn along! Glenn Frey was far more verbose about being the leader of the band than Don was! My major problem with the Eagles was the desire of Glenn Frey to be the leader of the band. And Glenn and Don's opinion that their writing was far stronger than anyone else's. They were quite superior in their attitude to the others' songs. And they *were* better songwriters. I happen to think Randy wrote a couple of great songs, and Bernie's written some nice things, but he isn't the songwriter that they are. I've always seen it as a responsibility of the producer to keep the unit as a unit. Part of that is satisfying everybody's desires without tainting the overall thing. And I think that's quite easy to do. However, Don and Glenn weren't about to have that happen, and they became so insecure about the end result that they weren't going to have anything that they didn't think was up to their quality of writing on the record. Now they may be right to think that way, I'm not knocking them out of hand, but I didn't agree with them. And I could see that it would cause a hell of a cleft in the band. It could quite easily be dealt with if they'd just relax a little bit, and the band would stay together as a great musical unit. Which it was. But without any one of those four guys that band was going to change radically, and I didn't think that should happen. So there was a clash. And eventually they became what they considered to be rock 'n' roll. They filled the band with guitar players who could play rock 'n' roll. They turned themselves into what they thought was a rock 'n' roll band. A pretty lame one in my view. Awful. But they are wonderful at other things.

MUSICIAN: *You must have felt redeemed by what they did next. When they finished* On the Border *they put out two singles that were attempts to rock 'n' roll—"James Dean" and "Already Gone"—and nothing happened. A year later someone found "Best of My Love" on side two and it became a smash. So their attempt to prove themselves a real electric rock band...*

JOHNS: Didn't work at all. I was actually fired halfway through *On the Border.* I must say it put a large grin on my face when "Best of My Love" was a hit a year later. That was the record that really put them on the map. Although the first two albums had reasonable airplay, they hadn't sold that well.

MUSICIAN: *I have to warn you we're going to race from band to band as if we're on a 10-day tour of Europe. You worked with Small Faces from the time of "Itchycoo Park."*

JOHNS: Oh, before then. I did their first single!

MUSICIAN: *I met Ronnie Lane and Steve Marriott after Small Faces was over, and maybe they'd changed, but I cannot imagine those two guys being partners in anything.*

JOHNS: Funny, isn't it? Yet I can't imagine anybody being partners with Marriott. I think he's one of the most objectionable little pricks I've ever been in a room with. Maybe he wasn't so bad then. I guess he wasn't. When he was successful he wasn't so bad. They were a great team together, they wrote some great stuff, I think they were very good for each other. I don't think Ronnie is quite as good a writer without Marriott; he's written some fabulous stuff since, but not in the same rock 'n' roll vein. They were a phenomenal little rock 'n' roll band. If they had ever come to America they would have blown this country apart. There's no question about it, they'd have taken America by the ears and turned it upside down. They were physically tiny guys who got the most enormous sound onstage. I'm not just talking volume, but excitement, energy. Marriott was the major source. They were a great band.

ST. JOHNS' GOSPEL

"I'm terribly prejudiced," **Glyn Johns** laughs. "I try not to be and in many ways I wish I wasn't but yes I am." The object of the producer's bias is all the technology that has developed around him since he started working in recording studios 30 years ago. He sees a lot of unclad emperors.

"We could start with SSL consoles," he says, "which are like a child's building kit. I find them particularly unmusical and they have been as responsible as several other major things for lowering the standards of quality in recorded music. As a result of the computer. They became as popular as they did because they facilitated a new method of working. But in the process the quality of the *sound* went by the by. I'm told that the more recent models have improved considerably, but it does seem extraordinary to me that a company like SSL could take over the way they did. Virtually no studio was able to stay in business without one, because everybody wanted one! And the reason was technical, it was in the method, the actual physical way of making the record, rather than anything to do with the *quality* of it.

"I think the whole way that technology has led recording has done an enormous disservice to the music. I can understand that the computer and the use of synthesizers hooked to computers can be an extraordinary tool. However, I believe that what's happened as a result of that is that people don't write songs anymore, they write grooves and sounds. Personally I *miss* John Hiatt, I miss that kind of writing. There are people who are wonderful performers who haven't gone with the technology and therefore have been dropped as if they were complete idiots. I think that's disgusting. I don't think everything should stay still and everybody who was recording in the '70s should still be doing it. Quite the reverse! I saw lots of great songwriters who'd been successful in the '70s really scrabbling in the early '80s and going, 'Yes, I'm in the '80s, man! I've got four synthesizers and I've gone to UCLA to learn how to program them!' And they've never been heard from since. In recording, the manufacturers have always led us by the nose. They'll put flashing lights on it and give you a manual that's four chapters long and very badly translated and everybody runs out and buy it. Then you spend four days trying to get an echo on something. In our day we had a chamber or a plate and the biggest decision was how long the decay should be.

"I'm fascinated by new stuff, but not all of it is so wonderful. And a lot that isn't is 'state of the art' and supposedly essential. The other day I walked into a control room to try out the monitoring. A very enormous artist had just finished working there the night before. It was a large room, which I like. I put my tape in and turned around and behind the console the room was floor-to-ceiling outboard equipment. A wall of stuff! Thirty or 40 or 50 pieces of outboard equipment stacked up! Now if you move one large piece of furniture in most control rooms, it'll affect the sound of the speakers. Can you imagine the effect this wall of equipment must have had on the monitoring? And they'd been working in there! The studio was demonstrating their monitoring to me with all this stuff in there! It's astounding."

So what does Glyn like? He says it's not his job to make money for manufacturers, but we twist his arm. "I work on old Neve desks when I can find them. They seem to be the most musical, the most reliable to me. I favor tube microphones; I generally use a lot of Neumann microphones. There's been a whole fad in this country recently. People are realizing the old tube mikes really are better. I don't like small monitors, it's like mixing on a television. I have Ureis at home—they've been great—but Tannoy's were the speakers I used for years and made all the records I'm really proud of on."

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MUSICIAN: *Kenny Jones does not strike one as an incredibly versatile drummer, but if you listen to* Ogden's Nut Gone *by Small Faces,* Ooh La La *by Faces and* It's Hard *by the Who, it's clear he really rose to the demands of three very different bands.*

JOHNS: I'm a little biased here; he's a very dear friend. Kenny Jones was the only other drummer who could have been in the Rolling Stones. Kenny's a great straight rock 'n' roll drummer, he has a basic feel which is uncluttered and is his own and is quite powerful. For most forms of simple rock 'n' roll you won't get a better drummer. Charlie has his own thing, there isn't anybody like Charlie, but Kenny cut a demo with the Rolling Stones, "It's Only Rock 'n' Roll." I heard it and I had no idea it wasn't Charlie! I know Mick's always thought very highly of him.

As far as his involvement with the Who was concerned, I think that was one of the most difficult gigs anybody could have been given, and he was the only person I can think of who could have fit the bill. I'm not saying there aren't other drummers that could have played with the Who, but from personality, previous experience, to step into the shoes and not be out of place with all the bullshit that goes on around that posture—he fit the bill in every way. He was already a star in his own right. Nothing would faze him. I think he dealt with it brilliantly.

The first record the Who made with Kenny was *Face Dances*, with Bill Szymczyk producing. It was very strange: almost entirely throughout Kenny's career, I had worked on the records that he made, and he gets a gig with the Who, a band that I'd engineered or produced since the beginning, and I wasn't producing it. He was quite nervous about stepping into Moonie's shoes. Moonie's style of playing was quite different to Kenny's, and Moonie's loony, uncontrolled style was very much part of the sound of the band. So it was an awkward thing, he was stepping into a situation where he didn't really have a friend, working with a producer he didn't know. As it turned out the record wasn't particularly good anyway, didn't cause much of a stir one way or the other, so it didn't matter. But it was unfortunate, I did feel for him in that situation. I thought he dealt with it brilliantly. I saw him play with the Who many times and I thought he played great.

I find it really sad that Daltrey didn't share my views. Daltrey and I talked about it on numerous occasions. [*Roger Daltrey told interviewers he thought adding Jones to the Who had been a mistake.*] I think he dealt with it really badly and the way he chose to deal with it caused Kenny an immense amount of embarrassment. It must have affected his confidence. It would have to! Roger is perfectly entitled to his opinion, but to bandy it about in public like that when the guy's in the band! The Who have always done that, haven't they? They've always used the press to send messages, which is pathetic.

MUSICIAN: *All mythology aside, if you listen to* Who Are You, *the last album with Moon, and then* It's Hard, *the second record with Kenny, there's no doubt* It's Hard *is the far better rock 'n' roll record. Moon's drums are sometimes buried on* Who Are You. *Was he in tough shape during that recording?*

JOHNS: I don't really want to talk about it. Keith is no longer with us. I loved him dearly and I'd only want to say something good about him.

MUSICIAN: *Well then, let's talk about* Who's Next, *a record he was great on.*

JOHNS: Brilliant. It started out as a musical science-fiction film script, and the film was not forthcoming. There was a lot of consternation about what should happen and I said, "Why don't

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we just make a record of bloody songs!" Pete had written the songs for the story. If you isolated each song, a lot of them wouldn't make a great deal of sense lyrically because they're not tied to the story. I didn't see that mattering because the demos that Pete made were, as usual, stunning. Musically, they were amazing. And I didn't think it mattered if you didn't understand what each phrase of the lyrics was literally talking about.

MUSICIAN: *Yeah, it was fun to hear "Behind Blue Eyes" on the radio not knowing it had been written for a movie villain. "Gee, Pete's singing about what a rat he is." I've always wondered how many Rogers you piled up for that primal scream on the end of "Won't Get Fooled Again."*

JOHNS: He just did it. Have you ever seen him do it onstage? It's the same sound. There's some echo on it but that's all.

MUSICIAN: *Good for Roger. Another wild howl you captured was Robert Plant's on the first Led Zeppelin album. The image history gives us of that session was that it was two studio pros and two guys fresh from the country still chewing on pieces of straw.*

JOHNS: They weren't chewing on pieces of straw, they had rehearsed before they got in the studio. They were an extraordinary unit when they started playing on the first session. That record was made in nine days. Mind- boggling. It was the most amazing buzz to be part of. It was rock 'n' roll like I had never heard it played before. It inspired me to get a sound that I'd never got before as well. The whole thing was just amazing. I really enjoyed making the record. I couldn't believe my ears when I heard what they were doing. Jimmy and I grew up in the same town, so we knew each other from when we were about 13. I went to his first sessions, I knew him very, very well. He called me up and said he had formed a band and asked me to engineer. I said, "I won't engineer 'cause I know bloody well that if there isn't a producer I'm going to end up producing it." I'd got to that point by that time. I said, "I'll tell you what, I'll co-produce it with you." So he said okay. And to be fair to him, when they got into the studio they knew exactly what they wanted to do, the arrangements were done and they were quite extraordinary. I can take no credit for that. All I can take credit for [*laughs*] is what happened once they set foot in the studio. I produced it from there on in. I never got credit for producing it, I never got paid for producing it. Which is still something I don't feel particularly happy about. I got well and truly screwed by the band. And by my friend, Jimmy Page.

So on one side of the coin I have extraordinary memories about the artistic involvement. I'm very proud of the record. On the other hand, it's a very sour memory.

MUSICIAN: *Well, here's a follow-up that may get me tossed out of here. I was backstage at the ARMS concert five years ago, when Ronnie Lane's girlfriend came up to me all upset. She said that just before Jimmy Page came on—his first post-Zeppelin New York appearance—you went in and told him you hated him, leaving Page to go onstage shaking.*

JOHNS: That's absolute, complete nonsense! Absolute rubbish! First of all, I'd never go to anybody immediately before they went onstage unless they were refusing to go on. I saw Jimmy Page once after the Led Zeppelin album that we made together. Three or four years later he asked me to come back and produce another and I told him to shove it. The next time I saw him was in 1983 at my house at the rehearsal for ARMS. And by then the hatchet had been well and truly buried. There was no animosity. As far as I was concerned he was coming out of the woodwork to help Ronnie Lane, and I was

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amazed he did what he did. It was an extraordinary thing—he actually played for the first time in years and he did it for someone else. That was extremely generous. It put him under the most immense pressure. I was blown away, and I never had a cross word with him.

MUSICIAN: *ARMS focused new attention on Ronnie Lane, and how remarkable the Faces—Lane, Ron Wood, Rod Stewart, Ian McLagan and Kenny Jones—had been. It seems like Lane, Wood and Stewart had a songwriting chemistry in any combination that none of them has equaled since.*

JOHNS: I think that Woody and Ronnie were great together. There was an empathy that was extraordinary. As far as Stewart's concerned, no comment.

MUSICIAN: *Stewart gets sole producer credit on his album* Never a Dull Moment, *but the first track, "True Blue," is engineered by you, drums by Kenny, bass by Ronnie, guitar by Woody, and keyboards by Mac. Did he nick that from a Faces session?*

JOHNS: Well, I'm buggered! I didn't even know about that! He owes me some money, that little shit!

MUSICIAN: *Woody's style was so distinct in Faces, and it seems to have disappeared in the Rolling Stones.*

JOHNS: Probably the worst choice they could have made, in my view. I thought it was an absurd musical choice. I'm sure he got the gig more on his wonderful personality and his friendship and all the rest of it. It was an easy transition for them. But musically, I don't think he fits with the Stones at all. I don't think the band has benefited from having him and he's not benefited from being in. He might have benefited financially, he may well have enjoyed being in the band for other reasons, but to me the man is an extraordinary musician and he's being completely wasted. I don't think he's been given an opportunity to grow. He might tell you differently. The guy was wonderful, he had a very individual style. Woody seems to me like the court jester somehow. I think that's unnecessary and it's degrading.

MUSICIAN: *You've produced Eric Clapton. How was that?*

JOHNS: Fantastic. Frustrating on many levels but wonderful. You can never get tired. I'm very fond of him.

MUSICIAN: *Is it intimidating for other musicians to come in to record with him?*

JOHNS: Yes, and it's intimidating for him as well, because he's aware of them dancing around him all the time. It must be uncomfortable for him. He doesn't want people to dance around him any more than you or I would. So whoever's playing guitar in his band has got a bastard bloody job really. They don't want to tread on his toes. Albert Lee was in his band for however long. You never heard him! I never heard Albert at any gig I ever went to! I couldn't hear him in the studio! He always underplayed because he's such a gentleman and modest; he was too subtle the whole time because he never wanted to get in Eric's way. And as a result he wasn't particularly good in Eric's band, in my opinion. There was never anything for Eric to lean on because Albert was dancing around it all the time. Anybody would. Tim Redding did. Andy Fairweather-Low, a *great guitar player*! But you put a guitarist in the same room with Eric Clapton, mate, you're not gonna be that relaxed. And in my experience Eric never really communicated to another guitar player exactly what he wanted him to do.

MUSICIAN: *It's fascinating when Clapton plays with Jeff Beck. At ARMS or especially at the Secret Policeman's Ball, Beck came on like, "Hey, I'll show ya who's the hotdog!" And he sure*

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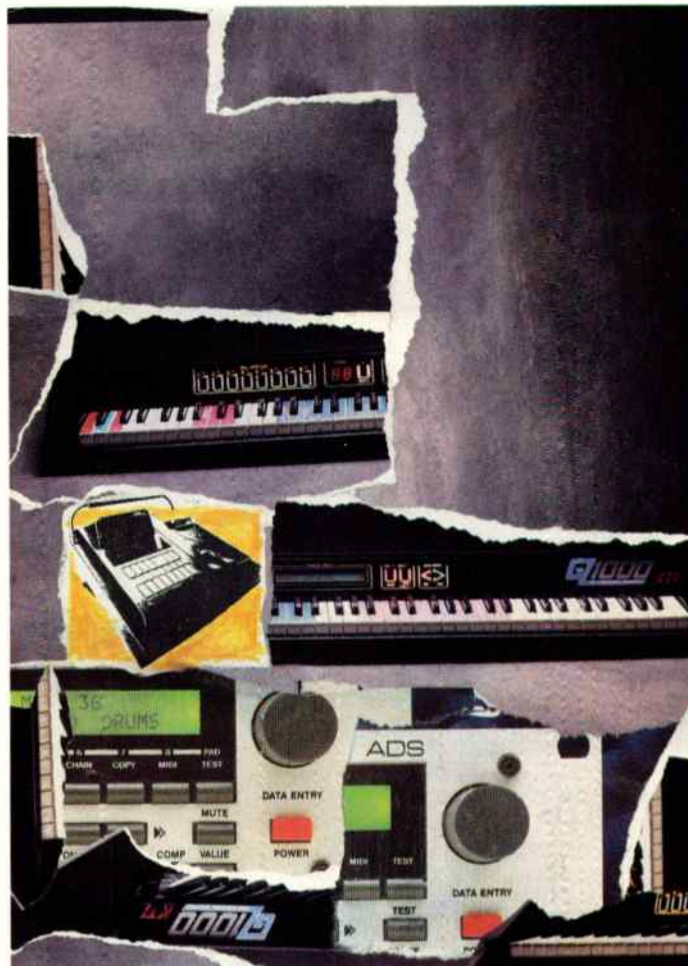
Developments



Tales from Finishing School: Gwendolyn Gets Rhythm

by Alan di Perna

DEAREST MUMMY,

Things are going swimmingly here at Miss Overload's Techno Finishing School. The girls elected me president of the Multi Timbral Club. (That vulgar little Amelia Thistlewaite was absolutely livid.) And there's so much to *learn* here. When I come home for spring break, you'll no longer recognize me as the awkward thing who used to pronounce "Moog" as though it were the sound a cow makes.

But it's not always easy. Oh, why did you and Daddy teach me that the whole world revolves around *keyboards*? It's placed me at a real social disadvantage now that other techno cliques—like electronic percussionists—are coming into their own. I hate to be the one to tell you, dearest, but society no longer smiles on a girl who thinks a workstation is a keyboard with a sequencer inside, or that a sampler is a keyboard that makes digital recordings.

Now I know you've always frowned on drummers. (Those tank-tops and big hairy arms *do* look a bit gauche around the dinner table.) But some of these new electronic percussion products are just dripping with sophistication—enough to make even the most stuck-up keyboard elitist go simply ga-ga.

I mean really, Mummy, you can't call something like **Simmons'** SDX just another gate-crashing drum box. Yes, I *know* what you're thinking: those Simmons people have been at it for ages, trying to get us to take their precious SDX seriously as a computer music system. But now it really *is* ready to move into the fashionable neighborhood of digital workstations, thanks to its smart new sequencer software. Sequencing was about the only missing item on the SDX's dance card. You could always make simply divine 16-bit samples on it and use either drums or a MIDI keyboard to play them back. And it's always had SMPTE read/write, SCSI and all those things every girl dreams of.

Now, as I say, it also has 64 tracks of sequencing, which can be assigned to any of its 16 voices or to external MIDI devices. There's scads of editing facilities. You can quantize and offset tracks till you ruin your manicure—and even after! The sequencer will run on the basic two-meg SDX configuration. SDX owners can get the software for a disk-copying fee that's comparable to the price of other computer sequencer software. (Not that *I* ever read price tags.) The SDX itself is no budget item, but Daddy always says nothing's too good for his little girl.

Speaking of which, why didn't you and Daddy ever tell me about **Dynacord**? *Everyone* at school knows they're major M.I. over in Germany, and that they're intent on making a giant splash over here as well. They'll have three yummy new samplers in the stores this November: the ADD-2, the ADS and ADSK. And once again, all this ravishing new technology stems from a drum product—their original ADD-1 drum sampler.

The new ADD-2 has inherited a lot of the ADD-1's character. But this new drum sampler is definitely higher class. Input sampling resolution is a full 16-bit linear (as opposed to the ADD-1's companded system). Storage resolution is 24-bit and output resolution is 20-bit at 88.2 kHz. There's two meg of memory and a SCSI port. I think "16-bit and SCSI for less than the S-900" is written somewhere on the Dynacord crest. (Or something like that; you know

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I never paid attention to those Latin lessons you insisted I take.) So you see, Mummy, we're talking silver spoon here—eight audio outs with thorough routing, two fully programmable loop points with all the autoloop convenience a girl could want and a *dreamy* "sound merge" feature which lets you combine up to eight different samples as a single sample, so you can conserve voices and memory.

Like the SDX, the ADD-2 can be controlled by a MIDI keyboard as well as drum triggers. And since you can sample or load up any kind of sound—not just drums—isn't it silly to dismiss devices like this as "just some more *déclassé* drum gear"? But if you haven't got even the *teensiest* craving to trigger samples with drums, there's always the Dynacord ADS, which is basically the ADD-2 without the trigger inputs and *with* stereo sampling. There's also a version of the ADS with a keyboard. It isn't much to look at, I'll admit, but still, it makes the line complete.

As a matter of fact, Mummy, I attended a garden party at the Dynacord's just last week and found the whole family of products really charming. I had a simply delightful time with the new Dynacord digital reverb, the DRP-20. The clever thing will let you take two separate effects programs and chain them in series or parallel or run them in dual mono. It has 128 user-programmable memories with 100 factory presets and all the *de rigueur* programming features, including MIDI addressability, oodles of early reflection patterns, room types and a programmable gate. Its 32-bit floating point processing system gives it a smooth, articulate sound. Yes, Mummy, I've become infatuated again—I confess.

But at the same time, another digital reverb has turned my head. I hope you don't think me terribly cheap. It's just that the new **Alesis** Quadraverb has *four* different effects lines which can be used simultaneously, in various combinations. Then there's those 100 programmable memories with 90 factory programs which Alesis claims will make you not even want to use the no-fuss, MIDI controllable program parameters. Tell me, darling, is it true that a girl can never have too many reverbs? With all these products set to debut around Christmas, it looks like Daddy . . . er . . . Santa's going to be wearing out his little ermine-lined boots making trips to the music store. Tell him not to worry, though. As always, Alesis will be offering the Quadraverb at a price my physics teacher says defies the laws of nature.

But I wouldn't want this letter to make

JOCK BAIRD

Trickle-Down Reverb

Lexicon's LXP-1 & "Dynamic MIDI"

by Jock Baird

"Trickle down" technology is a term often used to keep the music market happy and on the edge of its collective seat. Sure, the optimists chant, as technology marches on, all the features and capabilities of big, expensive products will gradually become available in less expensive ones. And we've certainly seen quality digital reverberation trickle down to previously unthinkable price levels. But sometimes "watered down" is the operative term for this phenomenon, and the product is really an exercise in market share. Now comes Lexicon, maker of mighty reverbs, with its $500 half-rack LXP-1. Well over a year after the Alesis Micro-Verbs I and II have come to dominate the half-rack home-studio market, is the LXP-1 a case of too little too late, or does it have something genuinely new to offer?

Let's first deal with the L-word, and I don't mean Liberal. Lexicon has always been at or near the top of the pro reverb sweepstakes, from the 200X to the 240X to the current 480L. Hey, they know what sounds good in digital. They also set the first great trickle-down reverb epoch in motion a few years back with the PCM-60, a unit that still sounds great today, and definitively established what a multi-processor should be able to do over MIDI with their PCM-70. So some cynics will immediately guess that what is being offered in the LXP-1 is snob appeal, some indefinable quality in the reverb. And I have to admit I very much like the warmth and spaciousness of the LXP-1's 16-bit reverb sounds—especially the plate. But on sheer sound quality alone, it's not going to blow its competitors out of the water. So what else has it got? Well, for starters, the LXP-1 gives you active, hands-on control of two parameters, and lets you create 128 "registers" of your own programs. What's more, four of its program/algorithms are actually effects, with two choruses and two very hip digital delay lines. But that's not the big news here.

It's what Lexicon calls "Dynamic MIDI," the ability to alter parameters in real time (i.e., while the music's playing) with a remote MIDI controller like a CV volume-type foot pedal or pitch/mod wheel. Sure the higher-priced crowd can do this MIDI-control act, but nothing I know of at this price can. And there's no fine print: The LXP-1 Dynamic MIDI function performs exactly as promised. You can indeed write your own MIDI program/map, calling it up and running it from any remote MIDI controller, be it keyboard, foot pedal, or guitar. Both changeable internal parameters—the choice of which two is theirs, sadly—can be accessed simultaneously, and upper and lower ranges can be set for the amount of change. And through system exclusive and a new remote editor/controller from Lexicon called the MRC, as many as eight parameters can be edited into presets, making it about as programmable as any $500 processor could ever hope to be.

You may well ask how a little box with six knobs and one button—and no display whatever—does all that. It's not that hard, actually. The LXP-1 uses a passive system of command whereby you push its all-powerful MIDI button and it listens to the master controller on the business end. If it does anything

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Electronic Courseware Systems Inc. — Keyboard Tutor

Dr. T's Music Software — ESQapade™

SONUS Corporation™ — SD - 80 Design

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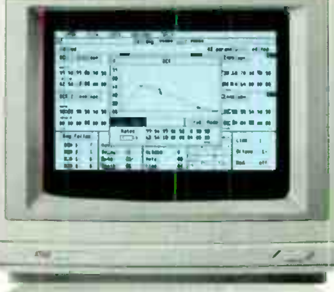
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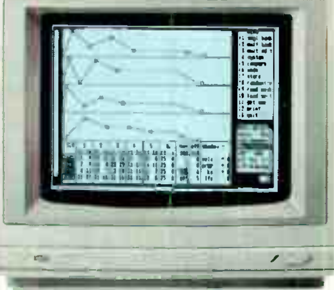
Dr. T's Music Software — K-5 Editor™

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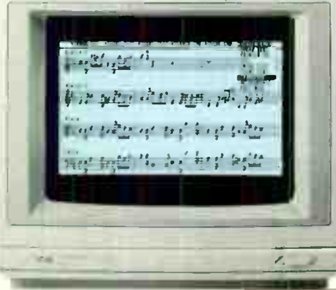
Quiet Lion™ — Mu-Script I™

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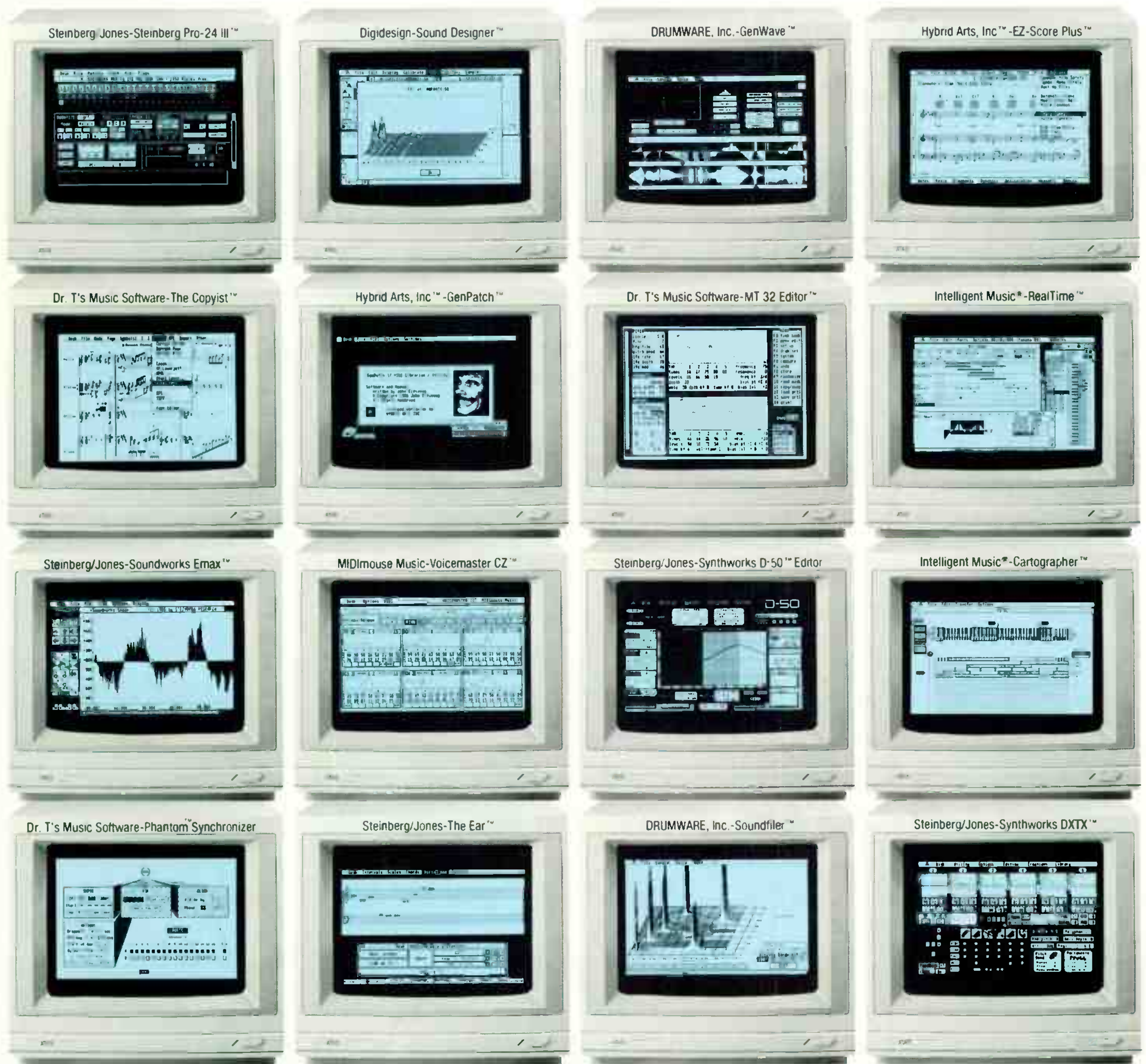

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you think I've been going around snubbing keyboards. *Au contraire*: some of my best friends here at Miss Overload's are keyboard controllers. Even as I write, my latest school chum is the new **KTI** GZ-1000 Performance Keyboard. She's really grand: hammer action, 88 wooden keys, and everything else you'd expect from someone in her class. And, like a perfect hostess, she'll go out of her way to make you feel comfy on her keyboard. Apparently these KTI people don't like to do anything by half measures. So they gave their GZ-1000 a wheel that physically sets overall keyboard action; *and* they made it so that you can set the weight of each hammer individually. Along with all this, there are the usual electronic sensitivity controls too.

The keyboard can be split into eight different zones or layers—yes, assignable to any MIDI channel. (Need you ask?) And with 100 locations for storing these setups, there's little worry about being overdrawn at the memory bank. But what I really like about dear GZ-1000 is that she's so exclusive—system exclusive, that is. She can also save sys ex patch data from any and all MIDI devices at her command and send them out whenever you summon a new setup from her memory. Mummy, with two MIDI In jacks, eight MIDI Outs and Thrus, all kinds of merging/mapping functions and more pedals and wheels than Daddy has silk ties, this is it.

But that's just one of the keyboard controllers in my social circle. There's also the new **Roland** A-50. Mind you, this controller is more down-to-earth than the GZ-1000, with just 76 keys (JX-10 action), only four split points/zones, 64 internal and external memory locations, four MIDI Outs, two MIDI Ins and one MIDI Thru. But she's got what really counts: she's willing to learn. In fact, her built-in Learn function allows her to save system exclusive patch data to memory cards. And with 12 assignable controllers per zone, the ability to merge her MIDI inputs and a "Panic Button" for fixing stuck notes, she's a credit to our little finishing school. It *finally* looks like there are some vivacious *new* keyboard controller debutantes on the MIDI scene. So the dear old Yamaha KX88 can count on some serious competition.

But now I'd better toddle along, dearest. It's almost nighty-nights time and I still have to memorize all 13 Linear Arithmetic Structures for my Protocol and Deportment class! Was life this hard when you were at finishing school? Kiss-kiss for Daddy.

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IF GUNS N' ROSES ARE OUTLAWED, ONLY OUTLAWS WILL HAVE GUNS N' ROSES

"If I'd gone on through school," Axl Rose says, "I'd probably be a lawyer. Then I could take half the people who screw with me to court. I was watching this show the other day with four top criminal lawyers, and they talked about feeling how, when they're in a courtroom, it's like them against the world. I feel that way too: There's always a million obstacles up to the time you go onstage, times I don't even want to go on. But once I'm there, I don't know where it comes from, but it's like, 'Boy, this is great.' Even if you're having a terrible time, you're just jazzed that you made it."

Texas Stadium, Dallas, and not a 10-gallon in sight. Back in the concrete bowels of the arena, where leathered rockers and their roadies confab with pot-bellied security guards and limo drivers, the sound from the stage is a blotch of noise. Out on the field it's about the same, only louder.

It's a hot afternoon with a tease of rain, like a barbeque pit that occasionally sizzles. Forty thousand kids are having a wing-ding, sampling an international pop smorgasbord that includes reggae prince Ziggy Marley, perennial cult icon Iggy Pop and Australians INXS, the headliners.

Running second on the bill this day is Hollywood garage band Guns N' Roses, whose debut album *Appetite for Destruction* has rather unexpectedly sold over six million copies, and whose "Sweet Child of Mine" is currently the nation's top-selling single. It's their last gig at the end of a nine-month tour, a chance to go out in a blaze of concert glory. There's just one problem: The band doesn't want to be here. They're wasted, they're cranky, they hate INXS. And, as usual, they're very upfront about their feelings. "What are they gonna do," cracks guitarist Izzy Stradlin, "kick us off the tour?"

The afterthought of Hurricane Gilbert begins to drizzle over the multitudes as the five members of Guns N' Roses—Axl, Izzy, lead guitarist Slash, bassist Duff McKagan and drummer Steve Adler—crank into "It's So Easy," their paean to the wild life; it's all they can do to move around without falling on the slippery stage. The band can't hear

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through their monitors as they slog through "Mr. Brownstone," Izzy's "little ditty about heroin," a ballad called "Patience"—"guess I could use a little, huh?" Axl says by way of introduction—a bluesy instrumental rave-up from Slash, and the band anthem, "Welcome to the Jungle."

It's a mess, but it works. Back in the bleachers, the faithful are singing along to every indecipherable word. Girls—and there are many—in Guns N' Roseswear scream like in old Beatles movies while their guys pump their fists forward. Is that static electricity in the air, or just plain sex?

Back onstage, the band's still pissed. "Guess nobody wants to play today," Axl admits, before taking soccer practice with one of the monitors. Next up is "Sweet Child," the crowd singing "where do we go?" with gospel fervor, as if Axl knew the answer. Then it's "Paradise City" and as quickly as they came the band is out of here, Duff smashing his bass in frustration, Slash cursing because he doesn't have a guitar to smash; "they forgot to bring a cheap one." It's less than 40 minutes into a scheduled 75-minute set. "Does it get any worse than this?" someone asks backstage, missing the point. Even at their worst, Guns N' Roses are real, and it connects. On the field the crowd is still cheering.

BY MARK ROWLAND

World Radio History

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assignment, unaware that getting the five members of Guns N' Roses together for anything but a gig or a party means bucking odds not dissimilar to the space shuttle's. An hour passes; two hours. So far only Izzy has arrived; Duff, Steve and Slash call in periodically to see if anyone's heard from Axl. Dream on.

"The first thing I remember about Axl," Izzy is saying, "this is before I knew him—is the first day of class, eighth or ninth grade, I'm sitting in the class and I hear this noise going on in front, and I see these fucking books flying past, and I hear this yelling, and there's this scuffle and then I see him, Axl, and this teacher bouncing off a door jamb. And then he was gone, down the hall, with a whole bunch of teachers running after him. That was the first thing," Izzy laughs. "I'll never forget that."

Stradlin has the gaunt, classic look of a guy who was born to play guitar. When he's in the mood he radiates a kind of shy charm, and he punctuates his stories with droll, cynical humor. "When I was 11 or 12 I had this friend whose older brothers were like hooligans; they rode bikes, would get drunk and fight all the time, and they'd have these bands play at this big farmhouse, it was like an airplane hangar. So I'd be hanging out there, getting shitfaced, and after a while they'd be so drunk they couldn't even play and they'd go, 'C'mon up here, little kid, and play the drums!' So that was the first adrenaline rush. Other than that my life was completely boring."

Izzy grew up in Indiana, "so far out in Bumfuck I could drive to somebody's house for 10 miles all on dirt roads." His parents split up when he was a teenager; he moved with his mother to the slightly larger burg of Lafayette, where he and Axl eventually met and formed their first garage band. They were into punk, and Lafayette's bars only had room for country and cover bands—"which we hated at the time. When you're 16 you hate everything you see when you live out there."

After trying his luck in Chicago and Indianapolis, Izzy threw his drum kit into the back of an old Chevy Impala and headed for L.A. Within three days he was in a band—"since I had a car and a drum kit, I was an asset"—whose next gig was in a downtown warehouse. "We're getting ready to go on," Stradlin recalls, "and these guys show up completely in drag! I mean, lipstick, eye liner, pink Spandex, Afros . . . this was my band! They didn't tell me there was a motif, you know? And it was like, slam music, one-two-three-four. We made it through about three songs, and then all these skinheads were onstage spitting and beating the fuck out of the band. I took a cymbal stand, took a few swings and was out the back door.

Slash as Jimmy Page: "I'm a workaholic. The music never stops for me."

"That kind of broke me into the way things were out here. After that I had no problems with how anyone looked or sounded, or if they didn't like you. So I guess it was a good way to break the ice."

That was 1979. The next year, Easter morning, "Axl shows up on my front door, soaking wet with a backpack. He'd been looking for me for about a month. He didn't know how big this place was." A couple of years later, Izzy was playing guitar and they were living in Hollywood, "slumming it here and there. We started writing songs in this roach-infested pad off Franklin Avenue. We were doing speed like there was no tomorrow, and night after night we would just pump out this fast, upbeat, insane music. Literally slapped together a band, and I'd tell club owners we were playing parties and could easily bring in 500 people. When 20 would show up they'd get really upset and we'd never get paid. But we were slowly getting it together."

The band, Hollywood Rose, eventually broke up. After going their separate ways for a time, Izzy and Axl reunited and decided, "let's not waste any more time. We moved up in life; we moved to West Hollywood," Izzy jokes, "and met Slash and Stevie and Duff. It's funny, before I even met Slash I'd seen this drawing he made of Aerosmith in a music store. And I thought, 'I gotta meet this guy.'

"Once we got that line-up together, everything we did revolved around the music. I think 'cause we were all so fed up, that was all we thought about. It's still that way—so if we disappear tomorrow, at least the music's there."

Stradlin is the closest thing in the band to a loner; when he's on tour he likes to wander the streets by himself, and his girlfriend mentions he'd like to buy a house in the desert. But with success, he says, "I enjoy life more now, I'm not so pissed off all the time. When you got no bread, drug problems, no money and winos in your alley throwing up, it does tend to aggravate you. It's much better now. I can live like a normal person. I mean, for the 10 years I lived here, I never had a bed. I just bought one—and it's a futon. I guess I'm used to lying on the floor."

One night during their recent tour, Izzy saw his father for the first time in eight years. "He comes walking backstage unannounced, completely out of the blue. Took a second or two to recognize him. It was a real trip. But it was definitely not"—Izzy catches the thought and brings it back home—"well, I don't want to get into it.

"I mean, in 10 years I've only been back to Indiana twice. I don't even know anyone there anymore; I don't keep in touch like Axl does. But when I look back, I do see some kind of stability that comes from growing up in a fucking cornfield. You're at one with the earth," Izzy laughs. "You don't give a shit about much. It's a simple life."

So how does that explain Axl? "Well, that has a lot to do with how he was brought up and how he sees things. He's very uncompromised. He's the first one to say, 'Fuck this.'"

As if to prove the point, Axl never shows up for the photo

ROBERT JOHN

World Radio History

shoot. After three hours Izzy decides he'd better hit the road. "I know this guy," he says. "If I don't leave now and he does show up, we'll have to wait five hours next time."

VICKI HAMILTON IS AN "INDEPENDENT" A&R WOMAN AT GEFFEN Records. Her beat is the street, or more specifically the sprawling L.A. club scene where she's discovered acts like Mötley Crüe and Poison. She first saw Guns N' Roses playing at the Troubadour for about 100 fans; watching the show, Vicki found herself with "the feeling I get in my stomach when I see a band that's going to make it. I watched them for three months and I remember thinking, 'Why isn't anybody [in the industry] going for this?' After meeting the band I knew. They were definitely outlaws. And I thought, 'This may kill me, but they're so great, I have to do it.'"

The band, she recalls, was living in a small one-room apartment that doubled as their rehearsal space; they'd built bunk beds above the floor. "There was a girl over there one night, and she wouldn't leave Axl alone and he got pissed, so he ripped off her clothes, threw her out and locked the door. So she went to the cops and said he raped her." The upshot was that Axl ended up living in Hamilton's apartment—"The Fugitive"—and when the police raided their studio, the rest of the band followed. They stayed four months, during which time Hamilton was negotiating her managing agreement while the band negotiated its record deal. "I had four or five labels throwing bids, and the dollars were getting bigger."

McKagan, Rose and Stradlin perform their tribute to Leadbelly.

Tom Zutaut, Geffen's head of A&R, signed Guns N' Roses to a $75,000 advance. Hamilton, who hadn't yet signed a contract to manage, was cut loose by the band, and eventually sued to get back $10,000 she'd invested in them. She did get a job with Geffen, though, and says she's managed to retain good relations with the band—save one member.

"Axl won't talk to me. Why? Maybe because I sued them, but I gave up trying to figure him out years ago. There are times when he's the sweetest boy you could know, but when he gets mad, he's like a top spinning off. He's not consistently evil," she laughs sharply. "And he's not consistently nice either. It's two distinct personalities. That's what's so scary.

"But you're talking about street creatures. They had never had any money before and suddenly it was like, 'Life's a party now.' The day they signed I was crying because I knew what was lying ahead."

Such was the crucible in which Guns N' Roses created their aptly titled *Appetite for Destruction*. "A very heavy drug period for the band," Izzy says frankly. "A lot of the music is a reflection of that. There's always a lot of abuse going on in Hollywood, but at that time it was like we were in the middle of a pinwheel."

As rock 'n' roll stories go, this part's not unique. But what made *Appetite for Destruction* special was not simply the band's penchant for extreme experience but their ability to reflect it in their songs without wallowing in romanticism or cheap sentiment. The power of a song like "Mr. Brownstone," which Izzy admits he wrote "in about five minutes, while I was cooking something up," is in the way it evokes not only the thrill of the fast lane (the Bo Diddleyish rhythm) but also, through Axl's frantic cadences, its implicit terror. No matter how far-flung the band's other themes—from the come-hither decadence of "Welcome to the Jungle" to the prayer for deliverance in "Paradise City," the paranoia of "Out to Get Me" or the wary, fragile hopes expressed in "Sweet Child of Mine"—the point of view is invariably existential. The songs ask interesting questions.

What's equally impressive is how the band's collective spirit and individual signatures are woven into this musical fabric. Axl's remarkable vocal shifts from song to song suggest multiple personas, though always projected with near-palpable intensity. Slash's guitar solos are emblems of flash and taste, skimming acrobatically off Izzy's angular, quirky chord changes. All would make their mark in any event—but check out the melodic, understated bass lines of Duff McKagan, whose steady propulsion plays off Steve Adler's happy-go-lucky drum patterns while anchoring the overall sound.

"I think the best way to be noticed is for not being noticed," McKagan says. "In 'Sweet Child,' for instance, I thought of old Faces/Rod Stewart bass lines—real cool, not overplaying, but unique. Before we recorded, Stevie and I would rehearse songs together for hours and hours each day. We got his timing together, and my legs.

"It's funny," says McKagan, who comes from a Seattle family of musicians, "but it was never my idea to 'make it' by joining a commercial band. And in fact, this is not a commercial record. Its appeal has really amazed me.

"None of us are the greatest musicians, you know. We all have big technical holes. But what puts us apart from other bands is that it's always rough and real. We'll never be like Rush; we'll never be that good! But I think we're way more honest. In some ways it's a calling of a rebel spirit to kids. 'Cause we always do what we want."

With the album's release Guns N' Roses hit the highway, opening for such established acts as Iron Maiden, Mötley Crüe and finally Aerosmith, the band which comes as close as any to being Guns N' Roses' role model. "We hate to admit it," Slash admits, "but they are sort of like teenage heroes." In concert together, Aerosmith were by far the more polished performers. But Guns N' Roses were thrashing out the dramas of their lives, and Axl's Janis Joplin-like stage presence connected on a deeper emotional level. By tour's end they were the opening act in name only, drawing half the crowds and running away with the T-shirt concessions. Record sales were no contest.

As the group's popularity ballooned, so did their bad-boy reputation, to the point where some members began to feel like cartoon characters. "It worried me," Izzy says, "when

MARK WEISS/MWA

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these kids would come up and try to give me coke and stuff. I'd go, 'Uh, no thanks, not this part of the tour.' 'Cause the first two months you go for it, and the next thing you know they're dragging you onstage from the bus."

"You know, I really liked it when the kids loved us and we were still sort of underground," Slash says. "Now it's gotten to the point where we're sort of a circus act for normal society to go, 'Look at them fall down. Isn't that cute?' Sometimes it just pisses me off. I always thought of us as basically nice guys who were over-exaggerated about. I mean, we don't rob banks, we don't beat up girls, we don't smash guitars over kids' heads in the front rows. I don't see why it's such a crime to be us.

"The fact is, we're all really sensitive people. And that's probably why, for one, I drink so much, why Axl flies off the handle and has these huge fits of total depression. Because we're still living life, and sometimes that's hard to deal with.

"There's no big macho sense in this band. Duff's married; Axl's got a girlfriend he loves very much. Maybe sometimes we have relationships or other things that just drive us crazy. No one wants to know about that, though. Because at this point, it's not 'Guns N' Roses' for any of that to happen."

DAYS GO BY; NO AXL. NOTES ARE DROPPED OFF AT THE HOTEL where he's living with girlfriend Erin Everly, the inspiration for "Sweet Child." He's spotted around town, hanging out with Slash at a party, cutting a background vocal track for Don Henley, helping to put the final mikes on the acoustic tracks for Guns N' Roses' forthcoming EP. He dodges a second photo shoot, ducks an interview appointment. Nothing personal, it's explained, it's just Axl's way.

Vicki Hamilton recalls that on the day Guns N' Roses were slated to begin their tour with Aerosmith, no one knew where Axl was or even if he'd make the gig. People who knew the band were sitting in the Hard Rock Café taking bets on it. (He did appear that evening, one hour before showtime.) Much later, toward the end of that tour, Axl approached Guns N' Roses' gregarious road manager Doug Goldsmith, concerned, Goldsmith says, that others felt he'd become a prima donna. "I haven't changed, have I, Doug?" Axl inquired. "Of course not," Goldsmith replied affectionately. "You've always been a prick."

That's pretty much the attitude regarding Axl: frustration

continued on page 113

AMPS N' AXES

Guitarist **Slash** says he's still "paying off a guy $100 a week" for a '59 Gibson Les Paul he played on *Appetite for Destruction* and in concert; he has several other guitars, like the '59, all Les Pauls and equipped with Seymour Duncan pickups, including two '68 black beauties and a '56 gold top. He cranks them through 30-watt Marshall Heritage amps. And that's it.

Izzy Stradlin also plays Gibson guitars, both semi-hollow-bodies, but through Mesa/Boogie amps. "I get this growling kind of sound, a little twangy." He's also lately been playing custom guitars and pickups made by Bill Lawrence.

Duff McKagan usually plays live the same bass he uses on the record, an '85 jazz special; he also has a similar model by Kramer. He uses two Gallien-Krueger 800RP heads, one 2x15 cabinet with Peavey 400-watt speakers, and a 2x15 Gallien-Krueger cabinet with Peavey 200-watt speakers.

Steve Adler plays Tama drums and Sabian cymbals. No special microphones for **Axl Rose**, says road manager Doug Goldsmith: "He breaks too many."

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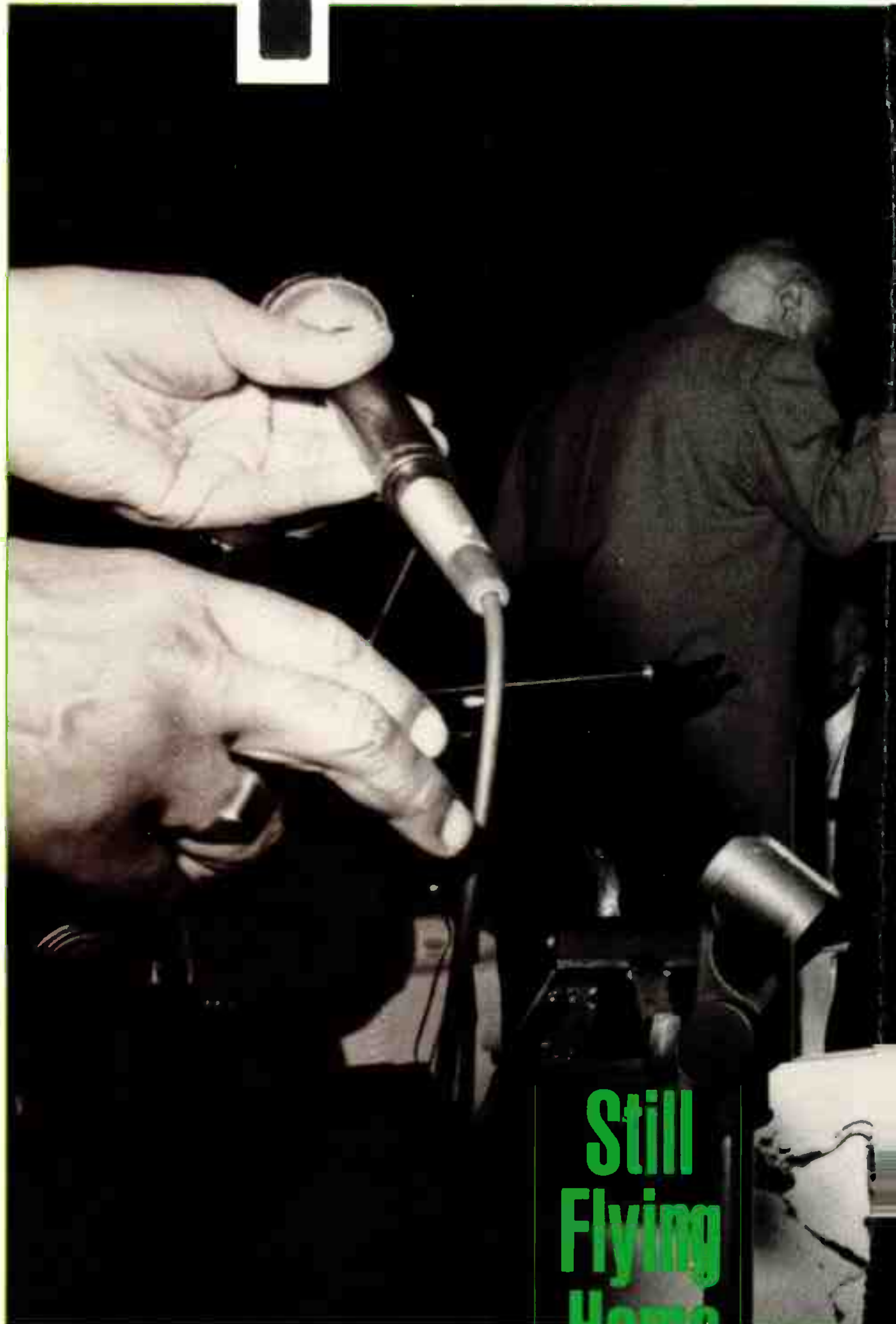

Still Flying Home

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Jazz histories mention Illinois Jacquet in passing, if at all. Music buffs who know his name often lump him with the histrionic R&B saxophonists whose "honking and screaming" he inspired—though that was just one fleeting phase of his career. Critics once scorned his "freak high-note effects," only to embrace them a generation later when adopted by the post-Coltrane avant-garde. For nearly 20 years Jacquet has languished without a domestic recording contract, sustained by European tours, sporadic club dates and, ultimately, a teaching post at Harvard.

And yet Jacquet is—excepting only Coleman Hawkins, who introduced the instrument to jazz—the most influential tenor saxophonist in history. For all the prowess of the beboppers, modalists and free-jazzers, it's *his* grainy, bawdy, bluesy tone you hear pouring from the horns of latter-day disciples on late-night TV shows, music videos and beer commercials. He was by far the most popular instrumentalist of the '40s and early '50s, and he's one of the last of the huge-toned, heartstring-tugging swing tenor men still active today, a mature master whose ar-

PHOTOS BY ENID FARBER

World Radio History

tistry has deepened and ripened through the years.

The teenagers who thronged his Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts are middle-aged now, but many remember his ecstatic solos and the pandemonium they caused: In 1986, Jacquet took his recently formed big band into New York's oldest and most prestigious jazz club, the Village Vanguard, and broke the 52-year-old club's all-time house record. Earlier this year he charmed a multinational audience at the Blue Note with a set of burnished ballads and deep-dyed blues. When at length Jacquet brought a soul-drenched solo to a bawling, squealing climax, a slightly inebriated Danish businessman turned to his companion and said, "That's the closest thing to an orgasm you'll ever hear."

One of Jacquet's most devoted fans is Atlantic Records producer Bob Porter. As a youngster, Porter sneaked in to see Illinois at Connolly's Stardust Room in Boston; later, as a junior staffer at Prestige, he was delegated to tell his idol the label was dropping his option. "It was the most difficult thing I'd done in my life," he says, "and I swore that if I ever could record him, I'd do it." Porter persuaded Ahmet Ertegun to visit the Vanguard, where the Atlantic chairman reportedly turned heads at the bar by singing along as Jacquet wailed his signature solo, "Flying Home." "I was really knocked out," says Ertegun, who first heard Jacquet some 45 years earlier at the same club. So in August 1987 Porter brought Illinois and a star-studded 16-piece unit into the Atlantic studios for a historic comeback session.

(Below) Driving in New Orleans, 1960s; (right) driving at home, 1988

The result is *Jacquet's Got It!*, a masterpiece of swing-era sonority that captures the glory of Illinois' roaring, crooning, exulting tenor with digital fidelity. The vintage material composed by the likes of Lester "Prez" Young, Chick Webb, Arnett Cobb and Jacquet himself, is showcased in updated arrangements by Wild Bill Davis, Eddie Barefield, Phil Wilson, Jacquet and his manager, Carol Scherick. The musicians include invited guests like trumpeter Jon Faddis and drummer Duffy Jackson as well as regular band members like trumpeters Johnny Grimes and Irvin Stokes, pianist Richard Wyands, alto saxophonist Joe Cavaseno and tenor saxophonist Barefield (who in 1930 coached the eight-year-old Jacquet to victory in a Cab Calloway-sponsored contest).

"It's interesting," notes Porter, "that you've got Marshall Royal, who was in the Lionel Hampton band with Illinois, and then Milt Hinton, who was in the Cab Calloway band with Illinois, and Rudy Rutherford, who was in the Count Basie band with Illinois. So there are guys on this record from almost every stage of his career."

"Of the recent big-band records," says Ertegun, "I think it's one of the most vibrant and energetic and swinging. It's got that real loose Kansas City feel, which I think most of the new big bands lack. And it's very exciting for me to hear Illinois play because he's such a fabulous soloist."

Porter concurs: "If I were in a band, and I needed one musician to play one solo that was as good as anything anybody ever played, Illinois would be the guy I'd choose. Because when he's on, there's nobody in this life who can compare with him. At least not anymore."

Jacquet has lived in the same snug, unpretentious brick house in St. Albans, Queens, since 1949. He bought it on the advice of Count Basie, he says, in order to avoid the constant pressure of jam session invitations and unannounced drop-ins. Over the trophies on the living room mantel hangs a signed photograph of Illinois with Jimmy Carter at the White House, as well as a framed thank you letter from Harvard president Derek Bok, a certificate of appreciation from the Smithsonian Institution and a commendation of excellence from BMI for his "long and outstanding contributions" to music. Downstairs, a plaque on the wood-paneled wall identifies the "Count Basement rehearsal studios," documented by a laminated photo blown up to life-size of Jacquet and Basie embracing. Here Jacquet, a nervous intensity leaking through his affable manner, tells the story of a career he attributes to divine grace. "I just thank God for giving me some of the things I asked for. I'm sort of careful about who I am and what I think; religion, to me, is something deeper than the eye might see."

Jean Baptiste Illinois Jacquet was born not in Illinois but in Broussard, Louisiana, in the heart of Cajun country. He was named after his paternal grandfather, with "Illinois" added in honor of his Indian mother. Although his family moved to Houston's Fifth Ward when he was an infant, he spoke only French until entering school (his surname, he explains, is properly pronounced "zha-kay"), and he continued to spend summers in Louisiana. "We never did lose the heritage of where we came from," he says.

His father, Gilbert Jacquet, played violin, sousaphone and bass; while working for the Southern Pacific railroad, he led a New Orleans-style big band, first in Broussard and then, with some of the same musicians, in Houston. The youngest of six children—all musical—Illinois got an early start in show business. "I was singing and dancing before I even knew I was doing it," he says. "My oldest brother Julius played saxophone with all the carnivals and tent shows, and he took me around with him. One trip he took me to Galveston and put me on a radio program, a little three-year-old kid singing, 'If I could be with you one hour tonight.' They were advertising a minstrel show in a theater, so they put me on that show. And that night—I can still remember—they had a line around the

DAVID REDFERN/RETNA

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ENID FARBER

theater just to hear me sing."

Illinois began to absorb the jazz tradition before he could walk. "I crawled on the floor all through my father's band while they were playing," he says. "He had a great band. They used to battle the 'territory' bands that would come through Houston, like Troy Floyd, Don Albert, Alphonso Trent. Those bands were just as good as the big-name bands, but they hadn't made records. I never did much hear any type of music but jazz and blues—that was my mother's favorite. When I was five my parents brought me to see Louis Armstrong, and once you heard Louis you would never forget that sound."

The precocious youngster went from toddling to tap-dancing, "the same thing the Nicholas Brothers and Bojangles were doing." At one point the Four Jacquet Brothers—Julius, Linton, Russell and Illinois—were a dance team, but as they got older "it was three, then two, then one—me—because they went on with their instruments." His reputation preceded him to Phyllis Wheatley High School, where his sister had taken him to perform in shows. "The teachers couldn't wait until I came to high school," he says, "but when I got there the only instrument they had left was a snare drum. So I took that up. Then someone graduated and left a B-flat soprano—I hopped on that soprano before he could get out of the building."

By his senior year Illinois had switched to alto, and had joined Arnett Cobb and Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson in the reed section of trumpeter Milton Larkins' band. "Cedric Haywood was the arranger," says Illinois, "and what he wrote was like thunder. It was just a gift he had. When he wrote something creative he'd stand there and laugh, because not everybody could play it. One day he wrote something and *I* couldn't play it, so I took the music and hid it behind the piano until I finally got my part together. They found out I had hid the music, and Arnett's still talking about that. Arnett used to call me 'Caille,' or 'Couche.' Caille is a kind of clabber, like buttermilk, and couche-couche is like couscous, only made with cornmeal. In Louisiana they would have that for breakfast; I guess I used to eat that all the time, so that was my name."

A territory band, Larkins' unit traveled a circuit stretching from Louisiana to Missouri, and it was in Kansas City that

"The critics were not only panning me, they were panning Jazz at the Philharmonic. But we didn't need them; the people didn't care what they were saying."

Jacquet encountered the soon-to-be father of bebop, Charlie "Yardbird" Parker. "He took me to some club after Milton played a dance," says Illinois, "and we sat up and jammed from two o'clock in the morning until two o'clock the next afternoon. When he heard me he couldn't believe what he heard, and when I heard him I couldn't believe what *I* heard. I didn't even realize I had played all morning. When we got through the people in the club were having lunch. I said, 'Where's the bus?' Finally I caught up with the band—I was scared to death. But he was something else."

Although he later flirted with bebop, Jacquet's most lasting influence was the dark-toned, Coleman Hawkins-inspired Texas tenor of Herschel Evans. "I heard Herschel with Troy Floyd's band when they were battling my father," he says, "and that sound really stuck with me. Later on I heard him with Lester Young in Basie's band, then I heard Chu Berry with Cab Calloway's band. I was still playing alto, but when I heard those tenors, I knew that was the sound."

Despite its palmy musical atmosphere, the racial climate in Texas was bitter. "There were problems everywhere," says

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Illinois. "I knew it was going to be an obstacle that would probably destroy the love I had for this music. So I left Milton's band after graduation. My father had a railroad pass, I took that and went to Los Angeles. I just wanted to get out of Texas."

In Los Angeles, Jacquet met Nat "King" Cole, who "invited me to a jam session: Jimmy Blanton was on bass, Sid Catlett on drums, Charlie Christian on guitar and King Cole on piano. Man, it just played itself. Then King Cole invited me out to the Radio Room in Hollywood to jam with his trio; I used to go there every night, and that's where he introduced me to Lionel Hampton. Hamp said if I could play what I played on alto on the tenor he would give me a featured spot in his band."

Hampton had won fame as the vibraphonist in the Benny Goodman Quartet. He'd co-written "Flying Home," recorded it with Goodman's sextet and with several other ensembles before trying it out with his new big band in the spring of 1942—with the 19-year-old Jacquet as tenor soloist.

Illinois recounts: "I said to myself, this is my first record, and I'd better not sound like Herschel or Prez. For the first time, I'd better get myself together and try to get *me* in there. Because I had no style until 'Flying Home'; sometimes I would sound like Prez or Chu Berry, and most of the time I would sound like Herschel. And it was not easy to carve around them and get something original; it was about the most difficult thing I've ever experienced. But it worked. I experimented at the Apollo Theatre, and one day I played a solo similar to the one I did on the record, and the house stood. So I said, 'Wait a minute. I'd better concentrate on what I played out there.' When we got ready to make the record, as I was walking to the mike, Marshall Royal, who was the straw boss in Hamp's band, said, 'Go for yourself, man,' because he knew I could do it. And I *heard* that."

This time "Flying Home" was a stupendous hit, and Jacquet's burly piledriver of a solo—repeated at one-night stands across the country—became the model for a whole school of frantic saxophone howlers. "When I played that solo, nothing could happen for at least half an hour," he says. "You couldn't play another number, because they weren't going to listen to it. You couldn't hear anything on Hamp's vibes for at least an hour. That kind of bothered him."

With his dancer's background, it was only natural that Jacquet would move around the stage while playing, but he never writhed on his back or walked the tops of bars like his more flamboyant followers; he even refused Hampton's request to march down theater aisles. And aside from backing proto-rock vocalist Wynonie Harris on a couple of sessions, he never played R&B per se. And yet, to his chagrin, he's often pigeonholed as a bar-strutting honker. "You get branded," he says. "Some writer who doesn't know anything will say that, and people believe it."

Exhausted after a year of non-stop touring, Jacquet quit Hampton's band in 1943. "I was young, thin, I wasn't eating right. And I had seen New York—it was not the place to be in the condition I was in. I was hanging out, jamming on 52nd Street. The joints never closed; you could go all night at Minton's." Chu Berry had died, and Cab Calloway asked Jacquet to join his band in New York. "Cab was like an MC," says Illinois. "He did the singing and entertaining, and he had shows with dancers and comedians. Hamp was a showman, but not a talker like Cab. But I didn't have as many solos, and the band didn't make any recordings." Although the musicians' union had declared a recording ban that year, the Calloway

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band did appear in the movie classic *Stormy Weather.*

After leaving Calloway, Illinois returned to Los Angeles, where he formed a five-piece band that included his brother Russell on trumpet and the young Charles Mingus on bass. "When I first got there Mingus would be knocking on my door every morning: 'Wake up—let's go play!' So we got a four-week engagement at this little club, and the first night a cracker guy walked in there half-drunk and said, 'What're you niggers doin'?' Mingus took his bass and went across the guy's head. His bass went into splinters. And he swept all the whiskey bottles right off the bar—just took all the whiskey and smashed it. Mingus was mad, man. So I knew that was the last note of our band in *that* club. The owner said, 'Get your stuff out of here and don't come back.'"

The band's next gig was at Billy Berg's Swing Club in Hollywood. "Billy Berg invited me there for a Monday-night jam session," says Illinois, "and when he heard the band he said, 'I'm going to hire you for two weeks.' He had hired us because he wanted to sell the place; he had been losing money, and he wanted to make the club look good. But he made the biggest mistake of his life. He sold it, and the new owners kept us in there nine months. We were just like movie stars. Finally the chamber of commerce requested that we get that band out of Hollywood, because we were drawing too many people, and the crowds were getting too 'mixed.' They got us out of there after nine months, and we went into the Downbeat, on Central Avenue [in Watts]."

Meanwhile, Jacquet had been playing Sunday-afternoon jam sessions with Lester Young at the behest of promoter Norman Granz. In the summer of 1944, Granz asked him to perform in a benefit at Philharmonic Auditorium for the defense of several young Chicanos imprisoned after the so-called zoot-suit riots that year. "It was Nat 'King' Cole, Les Paul, J.J. Johnson, Jack McVea, Johnny Miller, Lee Young and myself. At that time there were no records being made by the musicians' union, but the Army taped the program for Armed Forces Radio overseas. We didn't know it was being recorded. The place was packed; it was the biggest concert I had seen up to that time."

Jacquet had studied clarinet in high school and doubled on the instrument in the Calloway band. "When I played that concert," he says, "all of a sudden I was doing some clarinet fingerings, and these notes were coming out. The people started applauding, and I didn't know what I was doing, but I was creating things I'd never done before. Had I known it was being recorded, I probably would have been more sedate. But here you had guys like King Cole and Les Paul feeding you, and the people were going crazy; they had never heard anything like that, and neither had I. And it was all on record."

The record, "Jammin' the Blues," was broken out of a 10-inch LP and issued on four 78 r.p.m. sides. "Part 2," containing Jacquet's epic solo, was a jukebox smash, and from that point Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic went on to become an institution, with Illinois touring intermittently as a regular member until the mid-'50s. Jacquet's prolonged, squealing high notes—far above the saxophone's normal range—were anathema to critics, ambrosia to fans. "We were breaking box-office records," he says. "We were the biggest thing out there. And the critics were not only panning me, they were panning Jazz at the Philharmonic. But we didn't need them; the people didn't care what they were saying. We played all the concert halls and opera houses, opening doors all over the world. I went into Houston when it was segregated, and I integrated

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the audience for the first time. I said, 'Here's my chance to do something about what I left my home town for.'" Jacquet, Dizzy Gillespie and Ella Fitzgerald made headlines when they were arrested backstage.

In the months between his last Swing Club performance and his first JATP tour, Jacquet was also a member of the Count Basie Orchestra; his solos on "The King" and "Mutton Leg" drew such a reaction that he realized he was upstaging the band. Jacquet left when Granz "made me an offer I couldn't refuse," but he and Basie "remained the best of friends; any advice I needed, I could go to him."

Through the '50s he performed in Vegas-style reviews with pop stars like Frankie Laine, Patti Page and Nat "King" Cole, and toured Europe with Coleman Hawkins and Sarah Vaughan. He appeared on the first nationwide broadcast of the Ed Sullivan show. In 1952 he waxed "Port of Rico" with Count Basie sitting in on organ; it was one of the first organ-tenor recordings and a harbinger of the soul- and funk-jazz yet to come. On the strength of that hit, he organized a big band to play theater dates and recorded an album that included "You Left Me All Alone," the first song he ever wrote. "I'd written it because my high school sweetheart was going to move to San Francisco, and I was heartbroken," he recalls. "So I got Tadd Dameron to arrange it for a big band, because it was really my first song, and I wanted a big sound."

Jacquet continued to record, with musicians from Ben Webster to Art Blakey and Kenny Burrell, for such labels as Philo, RCA, Savoy, Roulette, Clef, Verve, Mercury, Cadet, Epic and Prestige through the late-'60s. When the American jazz scene soured in the '60s, Jacquet formed a trio with Jo Jones and Milt Buckner and headed back to Europe. Through the '70s and early '80s he played the Continent with a quintet featuring Richard Wyands and bassist Slam Stewart. After hearing the Berlin Philharmonic he became infatuated with the bassoon; he began studying the instrument with Manuel Zegler of the New York Philharmonic and after 1965 played it with his group. "I wanted a bassoon because it's the most difficult of all the instruments," he says. "It was a challenge. It's still a challenge."

By now an elder statesman, Jacquet was invited to lecture Harvard bandmaster Tom Everett's jazz-history class in 1982. The following year, through the efforts of educator/percussionist Joyce Kouffman, he initiated a program called "Jammin' at Harvard" and was hired for two semesters to teach master classes as Kayden Artist in Residence. "I didn't think I would have as much fun as I did, but I got a lot out of it," he says. "The students were crazy about me, and listened to every word I said. And when they had to perform, they sounded so good, it gave me the idea to form a professional band."

Selecting a cross-generational group of New York musicians, Jacquet rehearsed them in his basement, using charts by Jimmy Mundy, Wild Bill Davis, Tadd Dameron, A.K. Salim, Milt Buckner and Phil Wilson. The band debuted to a warm reception at Fat Tuesday's, but Village Vanguard owner Max Gordon remained skeptical. "He called me for the small group," says Illinois, "and I told him I don't work that way anymore. I said, 'If you want me, you'll just have to have the big band.' He said, 'Well, I'm going to lose a lot of tables; my club is not that big.' This went on for a year, and finally he booked the big band. So we hired a publicist, we advertised, we put up handbills. The first night there was a rainstorm; it

continued on page 87

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MIDNIGHT OIL: BAND MOST LIKELY TO BE ASSASSINATED BY THE CIA

"Let's start the article with the human genome project," suggests Peter Garrett. "I can't explain it to the average AC/DC fan, but you could. You're the writer."

In the case of Midnight Oil, for which Garrett sings and declaims, the human genome project is as good a place as any to start. The multi-billion-dollar effort to decipher the 50,000 to 100,000 genes that compose the blueprint for the human body is going to be a catastrophe, just like building the atomic bomb, because the knowledge will be controlled by the same thugs and morons who control everything else in the world. They'll create a race of automatons who watch "The Bill Cosby Show" while the

by Charles M. Young

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GLYN JOHNS *from page 53*

is a hotdog, he rips it up. While Clapton appears completely disinterested in the cutting aspect; he seems to just lay back, smile, and say, "Go, Jeff."

JOHNS: First of all, Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton are extremely good friends. They have an equally high regard for each other's abilities as guitar players. So I don't believe that Jeff ever tries to take Eric on. I think he has too much regard and respect for him. Their styles of playing are so totally different that maybe if you put Eric and Jeff together it would *look* like Jeff was trying to blow Eric off the stage, because his technique is so fancy or whatever you want to call it. *Fast.* To me, the man's a genius. But he's a genius in a completely different way to Eric. Eric can play one note and you'll cry or you'll laugh. Actually I believe Beck can do the same thing, he just doesn't choose to. His style has developed in a different way. So Beck's not an egomaniac in that way, and I don't think he sees it as a battle between him and Eric.

As far as the way Eric plays, Eric is extremely confident in who he is and what he is when he's got a guitar 'round his neck. It wouldn't matter who he was on stage with. He wouldn't see it as a battle, because he would have immense respect for whoever they were, whatever they were doing. They would be doing their thing and he would be doing his.

MUSICIAN: *At the same time you were working with Clapton, you made those great Joan Armatrading albums. For warmth and a sense of genuine performance in a pop recording, those are about the best.*

JOHNS: Yeah, if I were to choose an example of mixing to emphasize the best aspects of the song, the arrangement and the presenting of the artist—which is of course all that we're here to do—those records I made with Joan would be my proudest examples. I was very, very proud of those records. I got the most enormous buzz. I miss not working with her tremendously. After I stopped working with her it was like walking around with one leg for a long time. She opened up for me a whole area I didn't even know I could tap into. Her music took me down avenues that I'd never really gone down before, and I really enjoyed it. I think she's very, very special. She's quite brilliant. It's terribly sad that she has not had more success. I don't think she's recognized worldwide as she should be. The way things are going with Joan I can't see that she's ever going to make it any different. The last record she made doesn't seem to be a great deal better than the one before, and so on. I believe Joan felt frustrated when she was working with me. She hadn't had commercial success. We had success on every other level, but she wasn't really knocking them dead in the stores. So she made a conscious decision to try and make herself more commercial. And one of the major decisions she made was to stop working with me. So she'd get a new sound. Which at the time hurt me tremendously, but I understood. Anyway, she went off and did that and initially, immediately, she had more commercial success. *Me Myself I* and *Walk Under Ladders* both sold far more than any record I'd made with her. Possibly a degree of that was because it was a steady build anyway, but it had the desired effect. But then it stopped. And I think actually she sold herself out a little bit in the way she was writing and the way she was thinking. I don't think she's been done justice by herself or by the people who produced her.

MUSICIAN: *Her song structures were so unusual on the records*

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ROBERT APPLETON

THE RETURN OF THE MASKED MARAUDERS

THE TRAVELING WILBURYS

The Traveling Wilburys
(Wilbury/Warner Bros.)

What becomes a legend most? Another legend, it would seem. On a moonlighting lark from their solo careers, Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, Jeff Lynne, George Harrison and Roy Orbison have joined forces as the Traveling Wilburys, and all five megastars sound more relaxed than they've seemed in ages.

Casting themselves as a traveling family band content with singing for their supper and the adventures of the road, the Wilburys hearken to a time when music had a small-town flavor and a song made its point without the help of a three-minute visual aid. There's a faint whiff of nostalgia here, but the result is no museum piece; this is buoyant, young music, refreshingly free of irony (the creeping fungus that infects much current pop), and performed with great warmth and humor.

No doubt overjoyed at not having to bear a record's full weight on their respective shoulders, the Wilburys come off here as a playful band of rogues out to rock up the dance hall. Featuring 10 new songs, all jointly credited, the album is a lesson in democracy; though Jeff Lynne's production style tends to dominate the record (which he co-produced with Harrison), the five distinct voices are given equal billing and allowed to shine. At the same time, they manage to mesh and interlock in the manner necessary for the Wilburys to function as a legitimate band, rather than a superstar jam session.

The record kicks off with "Handle with Care," a mid-tempo rocker with George on lead, Roy on the bridge (which basically consists of the line "I'm so tired of being lonely"—obviously a Roy lyric), and Bob on yowling harmonica. It's a fluffy little number with "hit single" written all over it. Next up is "Dirty World," a randy plea for love that finds Dylan begging "let me drive your pick-up truck and park it where the sun don't shine!" (Dylan's wonderfully peculiar sense of humor colors the entire album.) "Rattled" is a rockabilly rave-up with Jeff Lynne on vocals, "Last Night" a Tex-Mex tune a la Doug Sahm, with Tom Petty at the mike, and "Not Alone Any More" is Orbison's turn. While the latter song doesn't feature any of those incandescent high notes he's known for, it is fitted out with appropriately Orbison-esque sha-la-la backing vocals. Ladies and gentlemen, don't the boys sound sweet tonight?

"Congratulations," a bitter farewell to an evil-hearted wench, finds Dylan in that snarling mode he gets into when he dips way down deep into his lower register (these foolish things make a longtime Bob fan smile). "Heading For the Light" is George's song, and echos of the Beatles hang heavy here. The harmonies, scale and structure of the song are very

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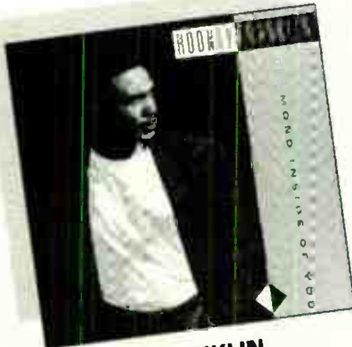
VENTURE BEYOND THE EXPECTED



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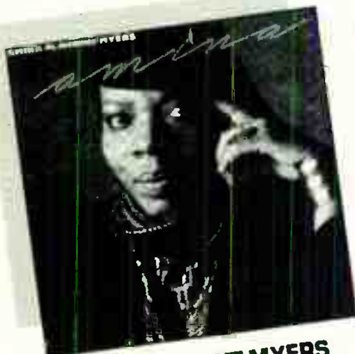

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Fab Four. "Margarita" is vaguely evocative of the country tune "Queen of Hearts"; propelled by a surging synthesizer, the song has a great feel but it's almost pure production. "Tweeter and the Monkey Man" is one of those rambling Dylan fables, this one about a Viet vet on a bad bender. Built around a bluesy bayou groove, the song cops directly from the ELO tune "Showdown"—at least they filched from one of their own.

Everybody takes a verse on the grand finale "End of the Line," which is a "don't

worry, be happy" anthem for the '80s. "Well it's all right," they sing, "doin' the best that you can, yes it's all right, as long as you lend a hand." Sage advice from a bunch of sages who've gone it alone long enough to understand the value of a helping hand.

— **Kristine McKenna**

LOS LOBOS

La Pistola y el Corazón
(Slash)

La Pistola y el Corazón, Los Lobos' first all-Mexican album, is an odd piece of work. Unmediated—this is a safe guess—by the desire to make it big, the music, all acoustic and played on a variety of Mexican instruments from all over the country, has the rough-hewn

quality of an inexpensive documentary; it sounds live and it doesn't have the kiss of the studio to it.

Nine tracks cover some of the immense variety in Mexican music and culture. Two tracks are *sones Jarochos*, from the Veracruz area; black culture is big there and the tunes rock. There's a fiddle tune from Michoacan, the instrumental break on the end of their video of "La Bamba," and a *son Huasteco* where David Hidalgo's beautiful voice arches the melody over a stomping beat and a fiddle tears up the song. And they also play a *ranchera*, Tex-Mex music from the border, which mixes the polkas of German immigrants to Texas with native Mexican music, which is part Spanish anyway. All the stuff is played well, and if anybody wonders where Los Lobos' intensity comes from, here's a major clue.

Though I suppose connections will be made between this and Linda Ronstadt's Mexican album, they'll probably be made on the wrong grounds. Ronstadt's frozen interpretations—she doesn't speak Spanish—are of pop music. These tunes are much closer to folk, Mexican equivalents to blues or rock 'n' roll.

Odd a commercial move as it may be, *La Pistola y el Corazón* fits right into a predominant cultural trend: the need to evaluate the past. Whether it be the dark side of Reagan's appeal, where he created images of a unified pre-Vietnam nation, Bush's slathering over flags and pledges, or a reinvestigation of the good aspects of our culture—see the reissue boom, interest in roots music and culture—the past is being sifted through, dug up, re-examined.

Two generations ago, a Mexican-American child speaking Spanish in a Texas school would be beaten; today Chicano culture is something to be proud of. America is a big place, and the Americans who make up Los Lobos are investigating their pasts. Their past just happens to be Mexican; by extension, if one believes in the potential of the country, it's all of our pasts as well.

— **Peter Watrous**

THE COCTEAU TWINS

Blue Bell Knoll
(Capitol)

The head nannies of pram rock, the Cocteau Twins make their American debut with an LP featuring such gooey confections as "Suckling the Mender" and "Spooning Good Singing Gum." Holy Mary Poppins! You just know this group has to be British! The musical equivalent of a Beatrix Potter fairy tale, *Blue Bell Knoll* submerges the listener in a shimmering pool of sound unsullied by comprehensible lyrics, message or ideology. The Twins don't concern themselves with linear narrative, opting instead to speak in nonsensical gibberish which is woven into a gossamer cloth of sound that signals to the dreaming heart like a fluttering white lace hanky.

Formed in 1982 and fronted by vocalist Elizabeth Fraser, the Twins are in fact a threesome who employ bass, guitar, synthesizer and a large load of effects. Ms. Fraser's lilting voice and the group's inventive production style form the cornerstone of their highly mannered sound, which may owe a small debt to Bryan Ferry and perhaps a tip of the hat to Wall-of-Sound Spector, but is for the most part remarkably original. Built around layers of celestial vocals that swoop and swirl in ever intensifying arcs and spirals, this swept-away music is romantic on a scale worthy of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Occasionally the Twins' ambitious cathedrals of sound cave in on themselves—the honey glaze on the title cut is at times too cloyingly sweet to digest. Mostly, however, it's a rapturously wonderful record. A musical meringue that hits the ear in sugary wisps, *Blue Bell Knoll* is at turns decadent, treacly and arch, but always beautifully ethereal. Perfumed with a sense of ineffable longing, this music seems to speak with the voice of a non-verbal toddler, unable to articulate thoughts as yet, but already intoxicated with glimmerings of things that exist beyond language.

— **Kristine McKenna**

JOHN HIATT

Slow Turning
(A&M)

The follow-up to one of 1987's most acclaimed albums," imprinted on *Slow Turning's* cover sticker, says it all. Hiatt's previous *Bring the Family* garnered press drool so uniformly it's a sure thing this one will draw yet another consensus—*"good but not great," "guitars don't kick as much ass"* or *"not as deep, man."*

All three assessments may be accurate, but they don't tell the whole story. Deep albums about lives in turmoil are usually the result of lives being in turmoil. Lyrically, *Bring the Family's* best

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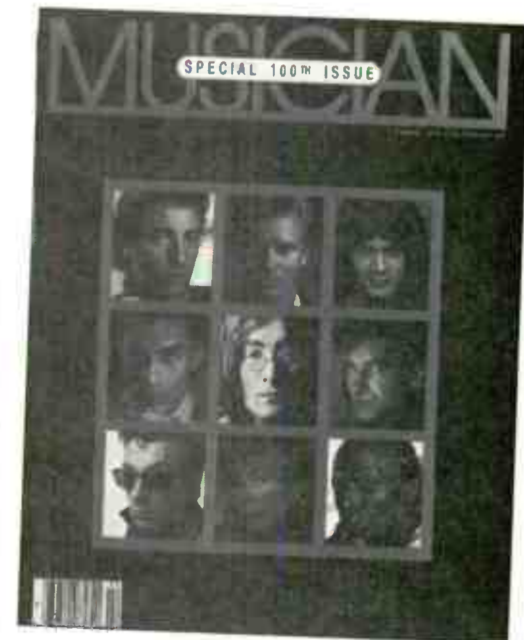

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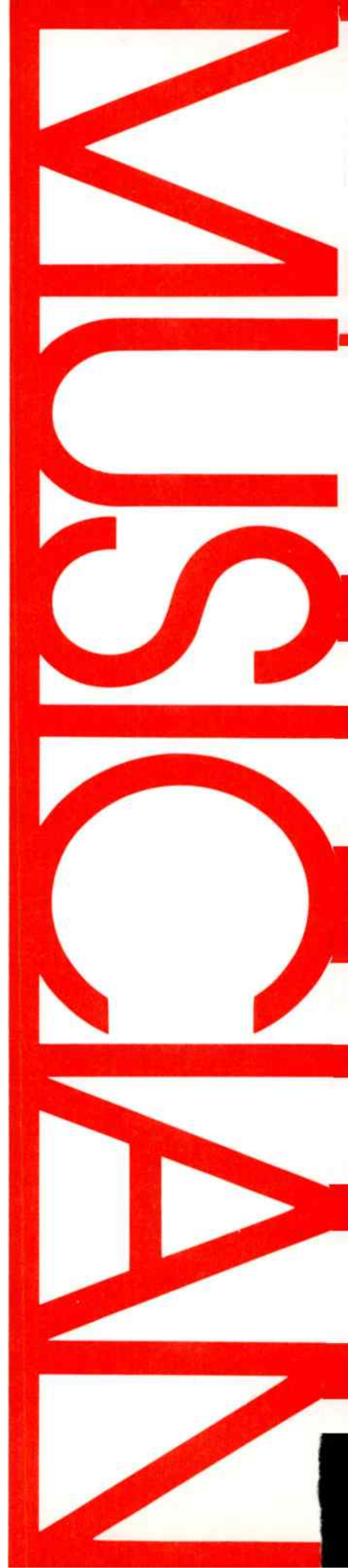

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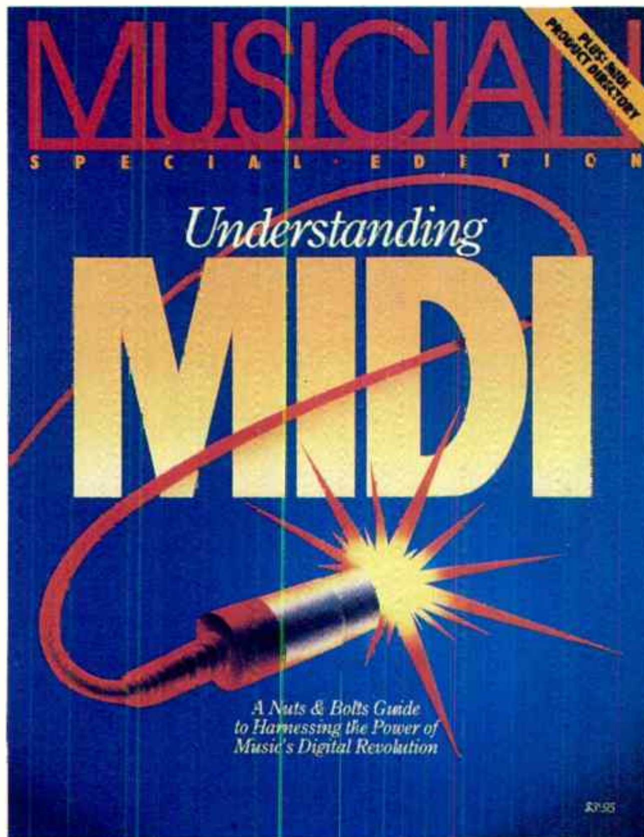

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moments hinged on Hiatt's brief flashes of self-hatred and despair; the song that rings most true on *Slow Turning*, however, is "Georgia Rae"— Hiatt's proud ode to his baby daughter. Anybody want to argue with *that?*

Most noticeable about the other songs is their feel, less heartfelt and more crafted—by a man who happens to write songs for a living. That same sense of craft dominates other aspects of this album: Ry Cooder, Nick Lowe and Jim Keltner have been replaced by Hiatt's

road band, the Goners, and producer John Chelew, who made *Bring the Family* sizzle, is replaced by the more stately Glyn Johns. There are no accidents here, no misplaced notes left in, no false starts; what's left is a fine-sounding album, with little emotional punch, that does not sizzle. Hiatt's lyrics sound like a mixture of his "Memphis in the Meantime" and Springsteen's *Nebraska*; politically too-correct figures such as Charlie Watts, Ray Charles and Elvis Presley all show up somewhere, and so, like yet another Elvis, does a tendency toward too-cute wordplay. "His beer was warmer than the look in her eye," Hiatt sings at one point, and God knows what he means.

So he's reaching. One major downside of getting rave reviews for good albums is that your next album has to get reviewed, too. The other is that you end up writing lines like "They talk about you in the press/They got you figured out, I guess," when you'd really rather be making another baby.

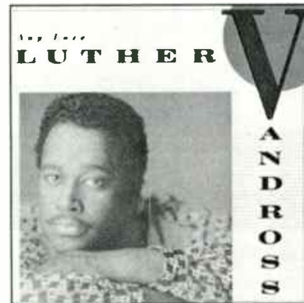
— **Dave DiMartino**

LUTHER VANDROSS

Any Love
(Epic)

Any Love, which will probably be Luther Vandross' seventh platinum album, is one song after another of unrequited passion—a sorta 100 ways to feel rejected by your lover. Exactly why Luther ain't gettin' his remains a mystery. He's a great producer and songwriter, with vocal chops so chummy they can bear-hug any melody—pop, jazz or R&B. Vandross doesn't have the strength to *explode* a song with volume; rather, it's that sinuous flex in his voice which allows him to bend at any point in his range, dribbling melismas off his raps like honey down a spoon. Charge that silly-puttiness with a cross-genre musicality and you get singing that responds to the tiniest subtleties of syncopation. On "I Wonder" (his funky ode to being dropped by a very "easy" girl), his cool-blue falsetto zips effortlessly in and out of the cross-fire textures, nearly adding a rhythm track of its own.

Notwithstanding the lyrics, *Any Love* is no self-sorrowing album. It's danceable, and if played low at night, a little tranceable. Brazilian percussionist Paulinho da Costa keeps the backbeat perky, even if most of the rhythmic foundations



are synthed, and Miles' main man Marcus Miller maneuvers his keyboards to sound nearly orchestral. But it's ultimately Luther's teddy-bear warmth that makes these mid-tempo cuts so pushy. Behind all the flash and sass one suspects there's a choir boy who started out one day singing nice and smooth for his mama and just got bigger and bigger. Luckily for us, he's never ditched his soul.

— **Pamela Bloom**

THE BALANCING ACT

Curtains
(I.R.S.)

Perhaps Miles Copeland's search for the next R.E.M., recently departed for the greener pastures of Warner Bros., should begin in his backyard. The Balancing Act has so far evolved from the unadorned acoustic *New Campfire Songs*, through the hearty essentials of *Three Squares and a Roof* to the embellished sonics and relative luxury of *Curtains*. But this trio hasn't made the mistake of building its house without a foundation. The Balancing Act does things their way, filtering their diverse influences through an ironic hootenanny fervor—part Kingston Trio on pot, part Violent Femmes without the "psychedelic, '60s-influenced art-band" (*their* term) pretension. Any group which can

cover both Captain Beefheart ("Zig Zag Wanderer" on the first EP) and George Clinton ("Can You Get to That" on the new one) and make them sound like originals, has something going for them—in this case, an insinuating folk/country/R&B/blues/gospel/jazz/pop amalgam that's the thinking man's take on Camper Van Beethoven.

More New Left than Yippie, but with a sense of humor, their latest "Act" has a number of musical moments worth savoring: Jeff Davis' acoustic ode to the power of electricity ("Generator"), a scrap-metal guitar solo by producer Andy Gill slicing through guest singer Victoria Williams' soaring plaint on "Can You Get To That"; the "El Condor Pasa" flamenco exoticism of "Lost in the Mail"; Willie Aron's slyly surreal "Fishing in Your Eye," which crosses over while you're not paying attention; the sing-song tale of a disturbed war vet that comes on like Simon & Garfunkel, only to hit you with such sardonicism as "When he talks to the furniture/Sometimes we send for help." Neat.

If I.R.S. can keep coming up with back-to-basics urban populists like the Balancing Act and Timbuk 3, it won't be the end of the world as they know it. More like the beginning of a new age.

— **Roy Trakin**

THE SMITHS

"Rank"
(Sire)

The Smiths have been slagged by cynics from day one as much for lead singer Morrissey's overwrought, whiny songwriting as for his falsetto yodels. At his worst, Morrissey's self-administered bloodletting does indeed turn his fragile

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lyrics into so much mawkish drivel. But history must give Morrissey credit for being the most notable rocker to openly declare his homosexuality and not shrink from its implications: When, in "How Soon Is Now?", he states with simple dignity "I am human and I need to be loved/Just like anybody else does," one recognizes a true and original voice.

The Smiths were far more than Morrissey with his heart on his sleeve, however, and "*Rank*," recorded at the National Ballroom in London, 1986, shows why. Guitarist Johnny Marr weaves a gossamer web of sound textures, underpinning each song with brilliant and inventive chording. "*Rank*" also proves that the Smiths could rock *hard*; Marr's snarling guitar break on "Panic" effectively accents Morrissey's call to "hang the deejay" for narrow-minded and restrictive playlists.

THE SMITHS
"RANK"

Most of the songs here are from *The Queen Is Dead* and *Louder Than Bombs* LPs, which is unfortunate because trailblazing songs such as "How Soon Is Now?", "What Difference Does It Make" and "Headmaster's Ritual" from earlier (and better) albums are almost wholly excluded. Marr's only solo outing, the weak "The Draize Train," proves that even singular talents need their collaborators, which makes his more recent teaming with Chrissie Hynde seem so promising. But while "*Rank*" won't rank with the Who's *Live at Leeds* or the Stones' *Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!* as a great concert document, it's certainly no embarrassment; the Smiths were one band fully capable of turning up the heat when the pressure was on.

— **Tom Graves**

RICHARD THOMPSON

Amnesia
(Capitol)

Given the high quality of Richard Thompson's output over the years—album after album of heart-

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stopping guitar solos, track upon track of heartrending vocals—about the only way he could startle an old fan these days would be to make a really crappy record.

Bob Dylan, Lou Reed, et al., may have resorted to that trick at times, but happily, Thompson hasn't. Apart from a few lulls, *Amnesia* bristles with emotional energy. Whether deadly serious or fooling—the guy owns a wicked sense of humor, despite severe tendencies—Thompson pursues his subjects to dizzying extremes. The lumbering, six-minute "Gypsy Love Songs" depicts bizarre sexual misadventures, Thompson's craggy singing verging on hysteria as dread steadily escalates. Violence shows its face in "Don't Tempt Me," a hilarious, rip-roaring portrayal of jealousy unchecked. Thompson bellows his threats with comic gusto, so study carefully before your next barroom brawl.

Our man remains a card-carrying guitar hero, of course, as awesome as Page, Beck and precious few other axe-

slingers. Although *Amnesia* boasts fewer tour-de-force displays than hardcore thrill-seekers might want, the finest bits are choice indeed. Lend an ear to "Jerusalem on the Jukebox" 's angry daggers of noise, or the woozy "Reckless Kind," graced by delicate, unpredictable fills. The sheer audacity Thompson brings to "Gypsy Love Songs" and "Can't Win" triggers explosions of anguished notes sure to rouse even the terminally blasé.

After such savage virtuosity, moments of tenderness are almost shocking. "I Still Dream," with rich textures and a Salvation Army band ambience, recalls the Band at their homespun best; the misty-eyed "Waltzing's for Dreamers" makes a body wish ex-wife Linda was still around to share the refrain. Yep, Richard Thompson sure knows how to tug those heartstrings—it'd be great to see him tackle an LP of Hank Williams tunes. Until then, remember *Amnesia*.

– **Jon Young**

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easily entered. But Edie, who says she can't stand to waste a line, pays a lot of attention to subtlety. Take the baffling couplet in the first verse of "What I Am": "Philosophy is the talk on a cereal box/ Religion is the smile on a dog." It sounds like an off-rhyme and a nonsense image. In fact, the song has a convoluted structure that produces the pay-off rhymes nine lines later: "Philosophy is a walk on the slippery rocks/Religion is a light in the fog." Nice juggling act, Edie. So the smile on the dog is just a rhyming device, right?

Wrong. "Say, there's a dog in a room full of people," Edie explains. "And somebody says, 'Hey look—your dog is smiling!' Well, some people see it and some people don't. And those people who *do* see it see it differently. That's the way I feel about religion."

But don't try to press Edie about the hint of some system of spiritual beliefs that seems to run just beneath the surface of her songs. She'll remind you that she avoids heavy topics. Edie's determination not to give away too much seems inextricably linked to her warmth, her positive mental attitude, the openness that leads to a brick wall if you push her too hard. One suspects that anyone this smart and creatively ambitious who holds so firmly to determined optimism either once indulged a dark side, or is keeping some melancholy at bay. At the Empire gig, the New Bohemians launched into a spontaneous version of Billy Preston's "Nothing from Nothing." As soon as it began, it was clear that Edie would have a hard time singing the line, "You gotta have somethin' if you want to be with me." Unlike any other hundred performers you could name, she seems to be constitutionally incapable of holding herself up as an object of desire. Sure enough, when that line came up she changed it to, "You gotta have something if you want to *be happy*." And then she repeated "be happy" over and over.

In a song called "Love Like We Do," Edie sings, "I don't believe in hatred anymore." She did once? "Oh, just growing up, when I was in school. You know, you get angry with people and say, 'I hate that! I hate this!' Just being overly critical every day. Then one day..." She stops herself and shrugs. "I don't know, it's just a funny thing. You learn not to be so critical. When I was in high school I would write things and look at them later and go, 'God, that is so full of it! It's just so self-indulgent.' It was *morbid*. I don't want to wallow in stuff.

"I want to write positive songs, without being slushy or corny. Because it's easy for me to write a really negative song, it's easy to be that way. I know, I've been really negative before. And I realized it's just not worth it. I'd rather make something positive without making it *blatant*. I want to write songs that make people feel good and escape and lose themselves in it. When I'm driving on a great day with the windows rolled down, I want to hear something that accentuates it, that makes that mood blow over the top. I don't want to hear something that'll bring me down. I want to hear something I can relate to that makes me feel good. So that's what I want to present to people." M

ERASURE

The Innocents (Sire)

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VIXEN

Vixen (EMI/Manhattan)

AS MUCH AS THE LEATHER-AND-LINGERIE look tries to insinuate that they're "tough chicks," their sound reveals Vixen as heavy-metal Bangles, definitely a band born to be mild. —*J.D. Considine*

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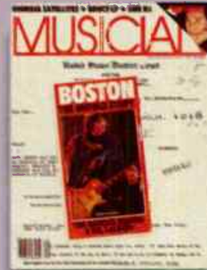

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37... **Reggae,** The Rolling Stones, Rickie Lee Jones
42... **Hall & Oates,** Zappa, Jaki Byard
44... **Nick Lowe,** Graham Parker, Lester Bowie
45... **Willie Nelson,** John McLaughlin, the Motels
58... **The Kinks,** R.E.M., Marvin Gaye
61... **Jackson Browne,** Eurythmics, Keith Jarrett
64... **Stevie Wonder,** Reggae 1984, Ornette Coleman
67... **Thomas Dolby,** Chet Baker, Alarm, Marcus Miller
70... **Peter Wolf,** King Crimson, Bass/Drum Special
71... **Heavy Metal,** Dream Syndicate, George Duke
77... **John Fogerty,** Marsalis/Hancock, Los Lobos
80... **Phil Collins,** Joan Armatrading, Josef Zawinul
84... **John Cougar,** Bryan Ferry, Maurice White
86... **Joni Mitchell,** Simple Minds, Hall & Oates
90... **James Brown,** Tom Petty, Brian Setzer
93... **Peter Gabriel,** Steve Winwood, Lou Reed
94... **Jimi Hendrix,** Prince, 38 Special
96... **Tina Turner,** Paul McCartney, Frank Zappa
98... **The Pretenders,** the Clash, Mick Jones
99... **Boston,** Kinks, Year in Rock '86
101... **Psychedelic Furs,** Elton John, Miles Davis
102... **Robert Cray,** Los Lobos, Simply Red
104... **Springsteen,** Progressive Percussion
105... **Coltrane,** Springsteen, George Martin
106... **David Bowie,** Peter Wolf, Hüsker Dü
107... **Robbie Robertson,** Tom Petty, Big Guitar Special
108... **U2,** Tom Waits, Squeeze
109... **George Harrison,** Mick Jagger, Crazy Horse
110... **Sting,** Jaco Pastorius, Peter Tosh
111... **R.E.M.,** Year in Rock, 10,000 Maniacs
112... **McCartney,** Bass Special, Buster Poindexter
114... **John Lennon,** James Taylor, Robyn Hitchcock
115... **Stevie Wonder, Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash**
116... **Sinéad O'Connor,** Neil Young, Tracy Chapman
117... **Jimmy Page,** Leonard Cohen, Lloyd Cole
118... **Pink Floyd,** New Order, Smithereens
119... **Billy Gibbons,** Santana/Shorter, Vernon Reid
120... **Keith Richards,** Steve Forbert, Crowded House
121... **Prince,** Steve Winwood, Randy Newman

94
Jimi Hendrix
Prince, Let's Active

112
McCartney
Bass Special, Buster Poindexter

86
Joni Mitchell
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114
John Lennon
James Taylor, Robyn Hitchcock

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World Radio History

ROCK

SHORT TAKES

THAT PETROL EMOTION

End of the Millennium Psychosis Blues (Virgin)

NOBODY WRITES POLITICAL SONGS THIS potent: From the light ironies of "Cellophane" to the cool, quiet bitterness of "Price of My Soul," That Petrol Emotion addresses the Northern Irish situation so explicitly you don't even need to follow the words to understand how the band feels. Still, there's more to life than class struggle and religious strife, and the Petrols understand *that*, too, rounding out the album with songs as blissfully rhythmic as "Groove Check" and "Goggle Box." If you can't hear the hope between those poles, go back and listen again.

GAME THEORY

Two Steps from the Middle Ages (Enigma)

SCOTT MILLER IS NOTHING IF NOT PROlific—with a mere 13 tunes, this new album seems almost skimpy when compared to last year's 27-song *Lolita Nation*. Yet its intelligence and melodic resilience suggests painstaking care and attention to songwriting detail. As a tunesmith, Miller is the Harmon Killebrew of American guitar pop, hitting one out of the ballpark with every other chorus, while his lyrics, whether addressing love as politics ("Throwing the Election") or describing an air disaster in teasingly oblique terms ("Room for One More, Honey"), are never less than provocative. A taste well worth acquiring.

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

STEVE MILLER

Born 2B Blue (Capitol)

EASY IT MIGHT BE TO LAUGH THIS OFF AS "blues lite," but there's more going on here than Miller's mood-music surface would suggest. For one thing, his taste in songs ("Philthy McNasty," "Mary Ann," "Willow Weep for Me") and sidemen (Milt Jackson, Phil Woods, Ben Sidran) is reassuringly sophisticated. And despite the sound's satiny finish, none of these guys pull their punches.

THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS

All of This and Nothing (Columbia)

IF EVER A BAND DESERVED THE VINDICAtion of a greatest-hits album, this is the one. As we true-believers already know, the Furs were the first to channel the ragged fury of the Sex Pistols into a tunefully accessible approach; the first to find a danceable groove in the pell-mell aggression of punk-rock drone. But what makes *All of This* such a delicious "told you so" is that the band's charms haven't faded with time. So if this package doesn't convince you of their greatness, nothing will.

KENNY LOGGINS

Back to Avalon (Columbia)

THAT LOGGINS ATTACKS THE EXCITERS' oldie "Tell Her" as if he wanted to out-ELO Jeff Lynne is laughable enough. When it turns out that this may be a concept album to boot, it's time to rethink that lyric about being "Nobody's Fool."

JON HASSELL

The Surgeon of the Nightsky Restores Dead Things By the Power of Sound (Capitol)

NOW HERE'S A DIFFERENT KIND OF SWAMP music. As Hassell's wraith-like trumpet arches across the nightsky, deep-thrumming drums and eerie synths twine beneath. As with all his albums, the music's otherworldliness never gets in the way of his sense of composition; for all its dark burblings, *The Surgeon* evinces a lyricism that recalls the cool intelligence of *In A Silent Way.*

BON JOVI

New Jersey (Mercury)

GIVEN THE SURPRISINGLY SPRINGSTEENIAN overtones of some of the songs here, you could be forgiven for thinking that maybe Bon Jovi has pushed its home-state advantage too far. Particularly considering that the virtues here are such industrial-strength rockers as "Bad Medicine" and "Born to Be My Baby," not overblown tripe like "Blood on Blood."

FISHBONE

Truth and Soul (Columbia)

AS MUCH AS THE BREAKNECK BEATS OF "Ma and Pa" or "Subliminal Fascism" suggest youthful bravura, the instrumental precision and quietly insightful lyrics that go along with all the noise convey an unexpected maturity. Any band capable of remaking "Freddie's Dead" as convincingly hard-rocking as these guys do is definitely a force to reckon with.

BAD COMPANY

Dangerous Age (Atlantic)

ALTHOUGH THE CONSISTENT QUALITY OF the music here makes a strong case for the argument that Mick Ralphs and Simon Kirke had more to do with Bad Company's sound than Paul Rodgers ever did, the fact that the revamped line-up's first album went almost totally ignored suggests that, on the whole, nobody cares. A shame, really, because *Dangerous Age* delivers all the bluesy punch of the first BadCo albums without any of the excess that eventually drove the band to strutting self-parody.

LONNIE MACK

Roadhouses and Dance Halls (Epic)

OLD ROCKERS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST MAKE a career of "Not Fade Away." Or so Lonnie Mack tells it in 10 tunes ranging from the "I yam what I yam" declarations of "50's/60's Man" to the one-bar-band-too-many lament of "High Blood Pressure" or "Hard Life." As close as he comes to self-pity, though, his sure sense of the blues keeps the album on track from the first cut to the last.

THE ICICLE WORKS

Blind (Beggars Banquet)

NEVER MIND THE SEEMINGLY CHILLY NAME; this band definitely knows how to burn. "Shit Creek," in fact, kicks like early Zeppelin, while "Sure Thing" is a white funk workout that'd do INXS proud. That said, this band's greatest strength is less versatility than a passionate commitment to their songs.

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JAZZ

SHORT TAKES

BY CHIP STERN

Giants of the Tenor Sax

Lester Young & Friends (Commodore)

THE SPECIAL MUSIC COMPANY AND PAIR Records are now distributing Milt Gabler's legendary Commodore label. These excellent digital restorations have yielded a generous sampling of tenor masters like Chu Berry/Lucky Thompson, Coleman Hawkins/Frank Wess and Ben Webster/Don Byas (as well as Billie Holiday's classic sides and trad masters like Jess Stacy, Bud Freeman and Bobby Hackett). *Lester Young & Friends* is my personal fave, comprising as it does the President's superb small group work on tenor *and* clarinet ("I Want a Little Girl") with the Kansas City Six (and Buck Clayton), and the historic Kansas City Five Sessions. The latter showcases the seminal work of Freddie Green *and* Eddie Durham, who was (along with George Barnes) a pioneering electric jazz guitarist in the days before Charlie Christian. It's not that Durham's technique per se is so great (it's a bit klutzy), but his musicality and creativity are phenomenal, full of vocalized interval leaps, odd voicings, quirky downstroking and lateral movement (check out "Countless Blues" and "Love Me or Leave Me"). Durham defined the future of electric guitar. The music is bright, swinging, alive and oh so happy. Our own depression-in-waiting should only sound so good. (Essex Entertainment Inc., 87 Essex St., Hackensack, NJ 07601)

Herb Ellis/Freddie Green

Rhythm Willie (Concord)

FREDDIE GREEN'S IDIOMATIC STYLE OF rhythm guitar is so firmly emblazoned in the collective unconscious that often we take it for granted. Playing an unamplified f-hole arch top with the strings about an inch off the fretboard, Green's firm, insistent 4/4 provided the quiet fire in Basie's all-American rhythm section. Here, in the company of Concord stalwarts Ray Brown, Ross Tomkins and Jake Hanna, Green gooses along the understated electric blues stylist Herb Ellis in a program of ballads and blues that suggests the best elements of Basie, the Kansas City Five and Charlie Christian—and the commonality of two generations of guitar masters.

Count Basie

Count Basie Get Together/
Basie and Friends (Pablo)

NORMAN GRANZ'S DOCUMENTS OF BASIE'S final years are beautifully recorded and eminently likeable. *Get Together* is just a stone-cold blues groove with the Count and an octet of rhythm Freddie and fellow Basie-ites like Clark Terry, "Sweets" Edison, "Lockjaw" Davis and Gus Johnson (and the ageless ringer Budd Johnson). *Basie and Friends* finds the no a'Count in the company of Oscar Peterson and friends (Ray Brown, Louis Bellson and Green), doubling on piano and organ, and feeling a tad more expansive. But it's the taciturn piano trio stylings of settings like "Love Me or Leave Me" and "Madame Fitz"—choosing only the prettiest, swingingest notes, and later for the rest—that suggest the link between Basie, Christian and Monk.

Buddy Rich

This One's for Basie (Verve CD)

Ray Charles

Genius + Soul = Jazz
(Dunhill Compact Classics)

WITH THE HELP OF THE DISTINGUISHED ARrangers Marty Paich (Rich), Quincy Jones and Ralph Burns (Charles), the power and grace of the Basie bands come alive in these excellent CD releases. Rich's baby big band fits him like a glove, and this beautifully recorded 1956 session is probably one of the warmest, least showy musical excursions in the drummer's discography. There *is* a fairly unbelievable drum feature on "Jumping at the Woodside," but the focus here is on the ensemble and the kind of tight, steamy blues grooving that made the Basie sound such a labor of love for the drummer in his pre-"West Side Story" days. The Charles date highlights a series of digital delights on Dunhill Compact Classics Ray Charles Collection (including the legendary *Ray Charles and Betty Carter*, two volumes of *His Greatest Hits* and *Greatest Country & Western Hits*) from the soul man's archive of master tapes. Again, the focus is on that Basie feeling, featuring the juggernaut arrangers' band of the '50s and early '60s (with Ray substituting for Basie on a barking, percussive Hammond organ), as well as an all-star band featuring the likes of Budd Johnson, Roy Haynes and Clark Terry.

Gary Burton

Times Like These (GRP CD)

PROBABLY THE BEST GARY BURTON ALBUM in a decade. Not coincidentally, this CD marks his return to the vibes/guitar combination that attained such a lush blend of blues, balladry and country notions on his early recordings (wish he'd relent and tour with a guitar again). *Times Like These* reunites him with former sideman John Scofield, whose own playing has grown immeasurably over the last 10 years, and the Bass Desires rhythm team of Peter Erskine and Marc Johnson. The reflective Evansesque quality of Burton's lyricism doesn't suggest any lessening of intensity—just the assured relaxation of a mature artist.

Various Artists

Music from the Morning of the World
(Nonesuch/Explorer)

THIS WORLD-MUSIC CLASSIC HELPS INAUGUrate a reissue line of Explorer series cassette and CD samplers. Balinese gamelan music fuses the ceremonial rhythms of the Indonesian dance with moments of transcendent improvisation, orchestrated by tuned gongs and mallet instruments—the notes seem to hang in the air like a reverberant chorus of talking timepieces. Then there's "Ketjak," the Ramayana monkey chant, a chilling incantation and rhythmic exorcism. This chorus of voices invokes martial percussive chants, accented by odd echoes of the Bo Diddley beat and otherworldly babble that sounds like a cross between Linda Blair and Frank Nastasi (you remember Soupy Sales' buddies White Fang and Black Tooth—bloowah, man). It burns like all of hell on parade.

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in
SHORT TAKES
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MICHAEL HURLEY
WaterTower (Fundamental)

IF YOU THREW THIS OLD-BEFORE-HIS-TIME singer/songwriter in a room with the rest of the prime movers from today's "folk revival," he'd stick out like a slightly sour piano note on a well-tuned Steinway. That's a compliment. Hurley is the ultimate busker, one of the few who's able to utilize rural roots (bluesy chord patterns, shanty-tinged acapella) and still come off strikingly singular. Thank his topics: monkeys, sorrow, crows, porkchops, hot dogs, death and front porch sex are all a part of his three-chord universe. Though this new dispatch from Hurley World doesn't live up to the work of his Raccoon and Rounder outings (a near-impossible task), it remains a must to those enchanted by a skewed sense of traditionalism. By imbuing the cosmic with a tangible voice (and vice versa), he connects us all. *– Jim Macnie*

SANDY BULL
Jukebox School of Music (ROM CD)

MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST BULL NEVER quite fit anywhere in the 1960s, and on this—his first album since 1972—it's a pleasure to say he still doesn't. For just over an hour, the digitally recorded *Jukebox* parades his heterogeneous taste—salsa, country, Isleys, guitar and oud improvisations—in equally diverse arrangements. No vocals and no other musicians, except (still) drummer Billy Higgins on one cut. Bull's earlier recordings haven't dated; there's no reason to expect this one to either. (Box 491212, Los Angeles, CA 90049.) *– Scott Isler*

ROSCOE MITCHELL
Four Compositions
(Lovely Music Ltd./N.M.D.S.)

WHEREIN THE ART ENSEMBLE EXPERIMENTalist spotlights his composer persona, mixing swingless written scores with improvisation. It's a process he's investigated for eons, but here the results are scattershot. The flute/bassoon/piano update of "Nonaah" meanders ceaselessly, employing a lock-step "rhythm," while flutist Robert Cole tries valiantly to seduce with his visceral, breathy attack. Mitchell's isolated instruments for years, so when Vartan Manoogian's violin traipses right along with the deftly oozed alto tones, they find a nexus where texture has as much say as melody. Silence is one of the composer's fortes, and the format accentuates it well; the CD sounds pristine without feeling vacuum-packed. *– Jim Macnie*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
A Town South of Bakersfield Two
(Enigma)

PETE ANDERSON UNDERSTANDS REAL country music is played every night in the trenches to a handful of blue-collar beer drinkers spent from their day jobs. It's not always pretty work, but that's where character comes from—and it's that sensibility he's tapped into here. Though not as consistent or showy as its predecessor, *Two* has its bright spots (John Brown's plaintive wail on "Louisville," Jim Lauderdale's straight-ahead honky-tonk heartbreak on "What Am I Waiting For," Victoria Williams' gentle folksiness on "Dark Side of Life") and makes a compelling case for the edge of California country. Even if this doesn't match the original, it's nice to know the pilot light of country's scrappy underbelly hasn't gone out. *– Holly Gleason*

SUN RA & HIS ARKESTRA
Love in Outer Space (Leo/N.M.D.S.)

AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO BEGIN YOUR Sun Ra collection, this well-recorded live set features the man from Saturn in moods meditative (piano solos on "Blues Ra," "Fate in a Pleasant Mood" and "'Round Midnight"), and joyous, as he leads a dance band that takes its cues from Fletcher Henderson by way of Ghana. LP includes killer John Gilmore saxophone and the obligatory chant "Space is the Place." Well, isn't it?
– Mark Rowland

ZEENA PARKINS
Somewhere Out There
(Recommended/N.M.D.S.)

ELECTRIC HARPIST PARKINS HAS LEARNED some lessons from her employers. The idea of extending your instrument's functions comes from Skeleton Crew; the goal of bonding fragments into a whole from John Zorn. This new record of duets finds her jostling sound around a bit, and that, along with an ever-changing stream of partners (notably Christian Marclay and Samm Bennett), allows her traditional instrument to come off as a contemporary voice. There are points during the 14 cuts where you almost can't tell she's playing a harp; I hear pedal steel, kora, organ, even fuzz-tone guitar. Unlike many improvisation records of late, this has an ear for tunefulness (although there are no melodies per se). It's what some used to call abstract lyricism, and it's refreshing.
– Jim Macnie

ROY ACUFF & THE SMOKEY MOUNTAIN BOYS
Fly Birdie Fly (Rounder)

THE GRAND OLE OPRY'S A LONG WAY FROM Universal Studios; how folk music transmutated into art (and subsequently, with Acuff's Opry acclaim, commerce) is shown off on this reissue of rambles, laments and gospel sides. The boys made it big because they knew all about hokum, ensemble unity, what makes people dance, what makes them cry. Even in his more maudlin moments, though, Acuff's "plain-folks" aesthetic squelches cloying boohoo tendencies. He knows it takes gumption to throw gravel over the grave. *– Jim Macnie*

BY ALL HANDS

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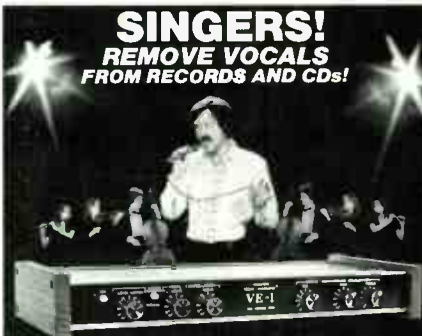

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GUNS from page 72

mitigated by sympathy and respect. Maybe because he's so valued as a gifted (and lucrative) artist, maybe because all the tales of drugs and debauchery surrounding the band have disguised more serious problems related to Axl's mercurial temperament. Sources around him say he's on drugs—the prescriptive variety—to alleviate symptoms of manic depression. Sometimes he doesn't take them. And one thing everyone agrees on: No one tells Axl what to do. The result is that one can never be sure where Axl Rose will show up, and, if he does, which Axl will show.

One afternoon, though, Axl does appear—a thoughtful and amiable Axl with some time on his hands before popping over to a party for George Michael, of all people. "I've read reviews where people who like us say we're not the kind of band that'll be caught spinning the *Faith* record. And I used to have that attitude, before I started listening to the record over and over. Now all I know is that, listening to his record, it'll teach you how to deal with women."

The subject of women brings to mind the first *Appetite for Destruction* album cover, from the same-titled artwork by Robert Williams. The cover was pulled by Geffen—and is now, of course, a collector's item—after protests that its imagery condoned sexual violence toward women.

"We didn't put that out to outrage people," Axl protests. "I thought it was a very cool piece of art that would stand the test of time. I don't think it was encouraging sexual abuse at all. I think it's an idea in people's heads that she is attractive, a sexual fantasy. Like, this poor girl got abused and you're thinking about how your husband wants to fuck her so you're upset. People get scared of their own thoughts."

What thoughts scare you?

"That people are always trying to provoke some kind of fight so they can sue me. I'm scared of thrashing an asshole and going to jail for it. For some reason I can walk into a room and someone will pick a fight. That's always happening with me.

"Like, I went into a store once to buy a stun gun. We were headlining the Whiskey and things were getting out of hand, so I figured, 'I'll buy stun guns. We won't have to break their jaw; we'll just zap 'em and carry them out.' So my brother and I walked into the store and I said, 'Excuse me, sir, can I see this stun gun, please?' Being very polite. And the guy goes, 'Listen, son, I don't need your bullshit!' And my brother says, 'Listen, he just got signed, he can buy 10 of these,' and the guy says, 'I don't care, I'll sell them to you but not to him.'

"That happens to me a lot. If I'm breaking the law, fine. But when I'm just being a nice guy..."

Axl has delicate features and a slender physique which belies his notoriety as a hellion. Back in Indiana, he says, he was thrown in jail at least 20 times, though he never did anything worse than get drunken rowdy. "I was one of the craziest of my friends, but also one of the smartest, so they figured I was the ringleader. They never got me for anything, though. Once this girl picked me up in a car; she was 16 or 17 and her mom reported it stolen. The police tried to get me for grand theft auto, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, statutory rape—and I didn't touch this girl! After they filed the charges I went over to her house and we had a party. Then I left town."

He started singing in church at age five, the oldest child of three in a family of holy rollers. "It was in the country; you'd get up and sing old gospel songs and hymns, and gospel hits of the '70s. I loved to work on harmonies. I was always getting in trouble in choir practice for singing everybody else's parts."

Axl won Bible contests, taught Sunday school, played the piano. He saw amazing religious occurrences, miracles, but became disappointed when nothing happened to him. Secular music became the true revelation. He developed eclectic pop tastes; to develop his singing, he locked himself in the bathroom every day and sang along with Nazareth albums and *The Eagles' Greatest Hits*. Now he likes to listen to Ennio Morricone and old Frank Sinatra records.

Writing songs, "I try not to follow any rules. Slash'll sit with his guitar and I'll run through ideas as he plays; we connect the pieces together. We push each other. Izzy and I write real quick off the top of our heads. We write a lot of fun stuff." Lyrics though, require solitude. "It has to be how the situation really is. But it's still an abstract version. I want to write about some of the situations I've seen and types of people I've met in the last two years, and I don't want anyone to influence that. People look over your shoulder and say, 'I don't know if you should say that, man, that's a little heavy.' I don't want to be censored before I bring the song to the band."

He mentions that there are songs on an upcoming EP that will probably "freak people out." He's decided to deal with it by writing a note of explanation/apology on the album cover. He also mentions that

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T-shirt
50/50
Black or White

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Sweatshirt
50/50
Black or White

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he recently bought a custom Corvette. "It's got a Chevy engine, a four-cam that goes 180-plus miles an hour. I'll join a racetrack where they'll teach you how to drive it fast. I like the idea of having a car where I won't be so eager to put my gun in the car and shoot somebody."

Oh. And how are you dealing with success? "Right now it's hard. It's gonna take a little time from living like a rat in the streets to being able to manage my accounts, find places to live, buy houses. I'm getting a place here and in the Midwest, and eventually I'd like to live in New York, and get ideas for songs on the street. But right now I'm just trying to move real fast, get this crap out of the way and get myself stable, 'cause we have another record to make, and I really want to make that record. It's like a dream: We get to be 'the big talented artists,' respected by people in the business. I hope to do as much material as possible, maybe a double album. So if anything happens to the band, it'll still live on for a while. Right now I think it's too early for people on the outside to really tell what we're all about.

"I hope I'll be really satisfied after that. I don't want to go solo, but there are areas I'd like to explore—maybe movies—where I might not be able to stay in the band to do it. So I'm not going to say we'll be around forever, but I hope I'll write the kind of music that sticks around for a long time, whether you hear it on the radio or not. That's what I want, to be part of a band that gets a little place in history."

The way he says it gives the thought weight; Axl is the kind of guy who seems almost uncomfortably alert to changes in the weather, to the sensitivity of a lyric, the nuance of a song, a sudden shift of mood.... "Only because I react to everything," he says quietly. "I react to thoughts. I can be sitting here in a good mood and think about something really fucked, and if I can't get it out of my head, I'll react to it. If I hold it back, I walk around frustrated for a very long period of time. When I talk with an interviewer, it hurts my feelings if they act like my best friend, then chop me down. I always try to let people know what they want when we're talking.

"I think I'm growing. I have more insight into things. I know when I listen to music, I really want something to be there. Like, I hated Metallica, but then eveyone started talking about them so I bought their records. And the song that really caught me was 'Fade to Black.' I got addicted to that song. It was the only thing I could put on at the end of the day, which was usually around dawn. It's a song about suicide, but I would put it on before I went to sleep and it would make me relax. For some reason it made me want to try harder. I'd think, 'Yeah, I can get up and face tomorrow.'

"The only thing that worries me about death is, I have this record to make and I'll be really pissed off if I die before I make it. After that I won't give a shit. That's when it's gonna get dangerous." M

LXP-1 from page 56

at all, the LXP-1 changes to its MIDI channel. If a MIDI continuous controller movement comes down the line (like a pitch-wheel squiggle), the LXP-1 prepares to map it to a parameter—then you simply choose which parameter and the range of movement. If a MIDI program change comes down the wire, the LXP-1 writes the current setup into its memory at that number. Now if a program change comes down the line when the MIDI button's *not* being pressed, the LXP-1 changes to the same number internal register, complete with your maps. That's about it.

It seems weird at first, because there's nothing much on the front panel that tells you the current program or whether you've accomplished what you wanted (except when you write a new register—then it flashes energetically for a few seconds). Some potential users may ultimately grow frustrated without at least two characters of display power, but others will be relieved at the simplicity and overall logic of the system.

The accessible parameters for all 12 reverb algorithms are Decay time (or RT60) and Predelay, and it's surprising how many useful variations you can get by doing things like cutting back the decay of the big hall or increasing it in a small room. The two delays available include one that has a great four-tap stereo bounce to it, and you can diddle with things like feedback, delay spacings and depth of pitch shifts over MIDI with much effectiveness. And with input and output level controls as well as a wet-dry mix knob, you can patch the LXP-1 into any configuration imaginable, although many will find it particularly useful onstage—a little cut-off remote switch input in the back helps a lot.

So is the Lexicon LXP-1 trickle-down or watered-down technology? No question about it, there's about as much good-sounding high-tech in here as can be crammed into one little $500 half-rack box. And unless you plan to get very literal about how wet a reverb sound should be, there's nothing watered-down about it at all. M

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