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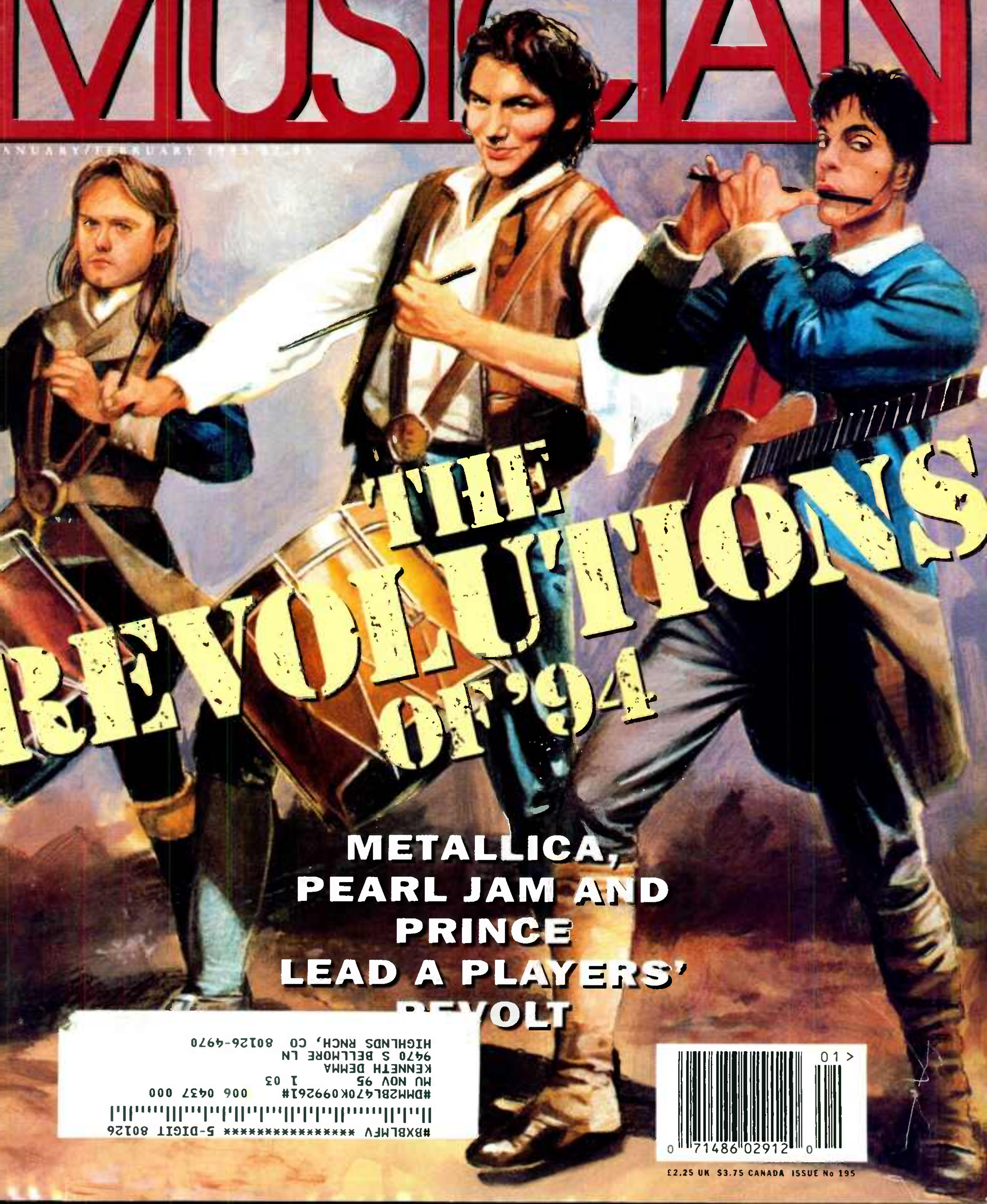

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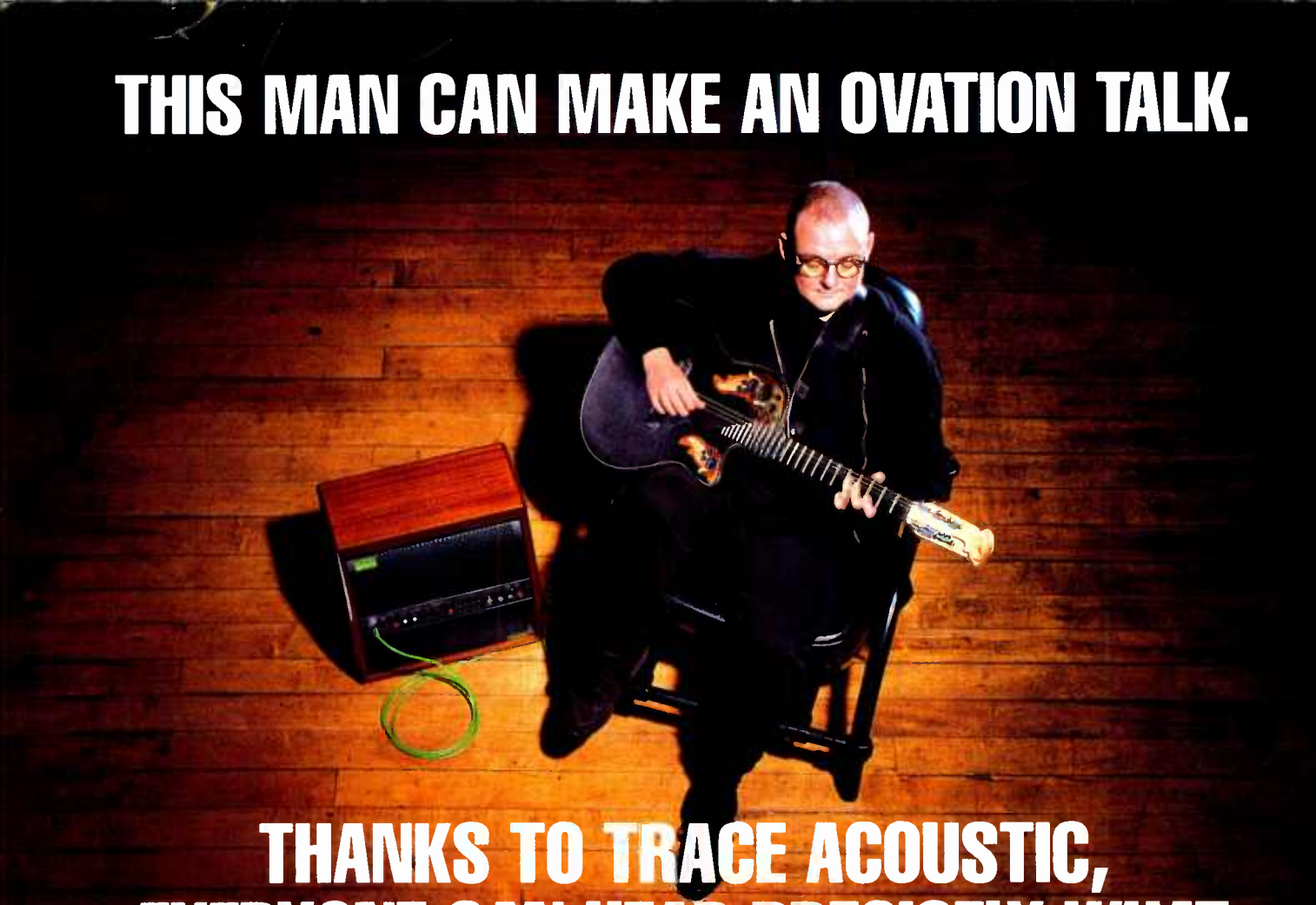

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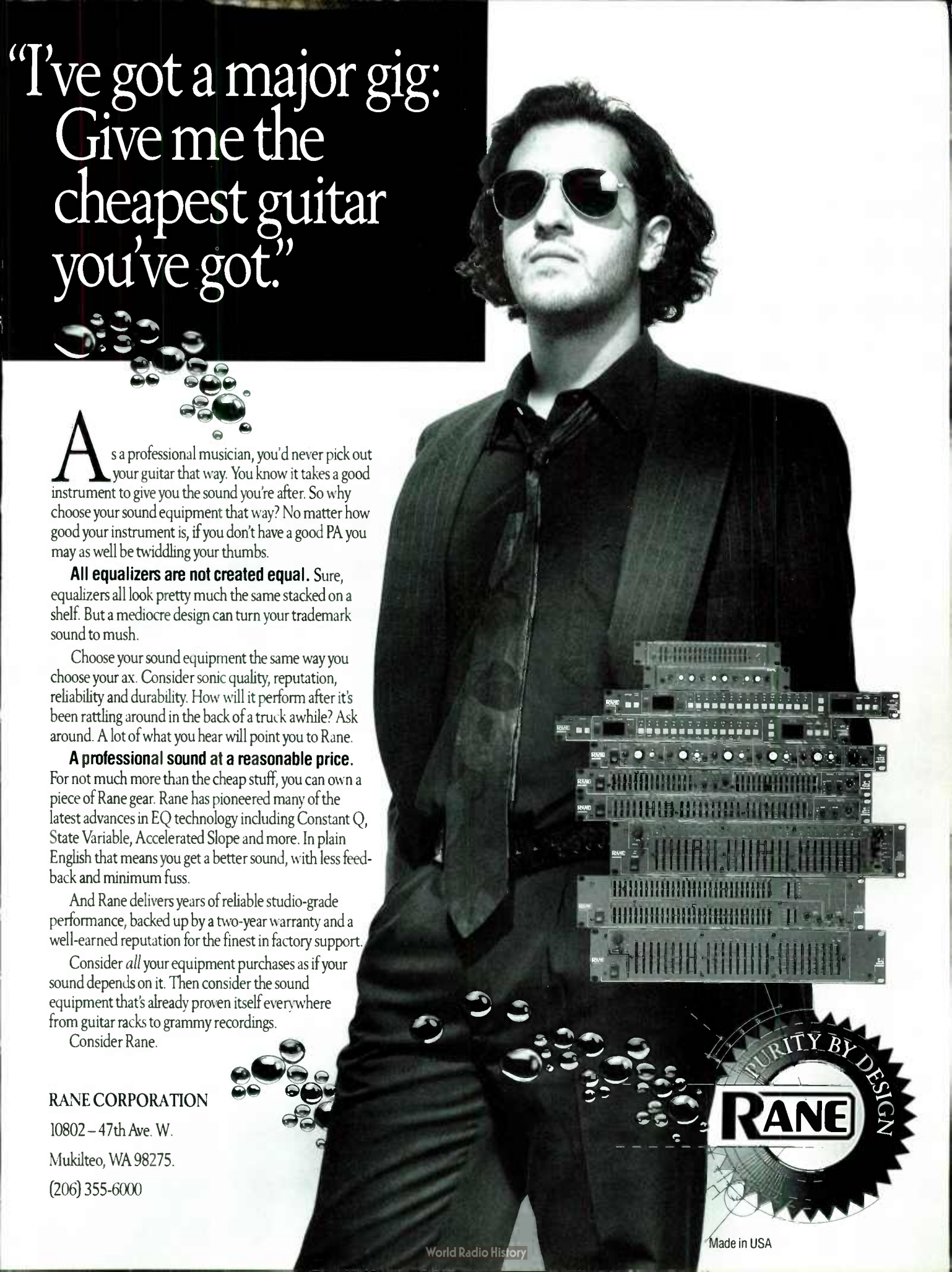

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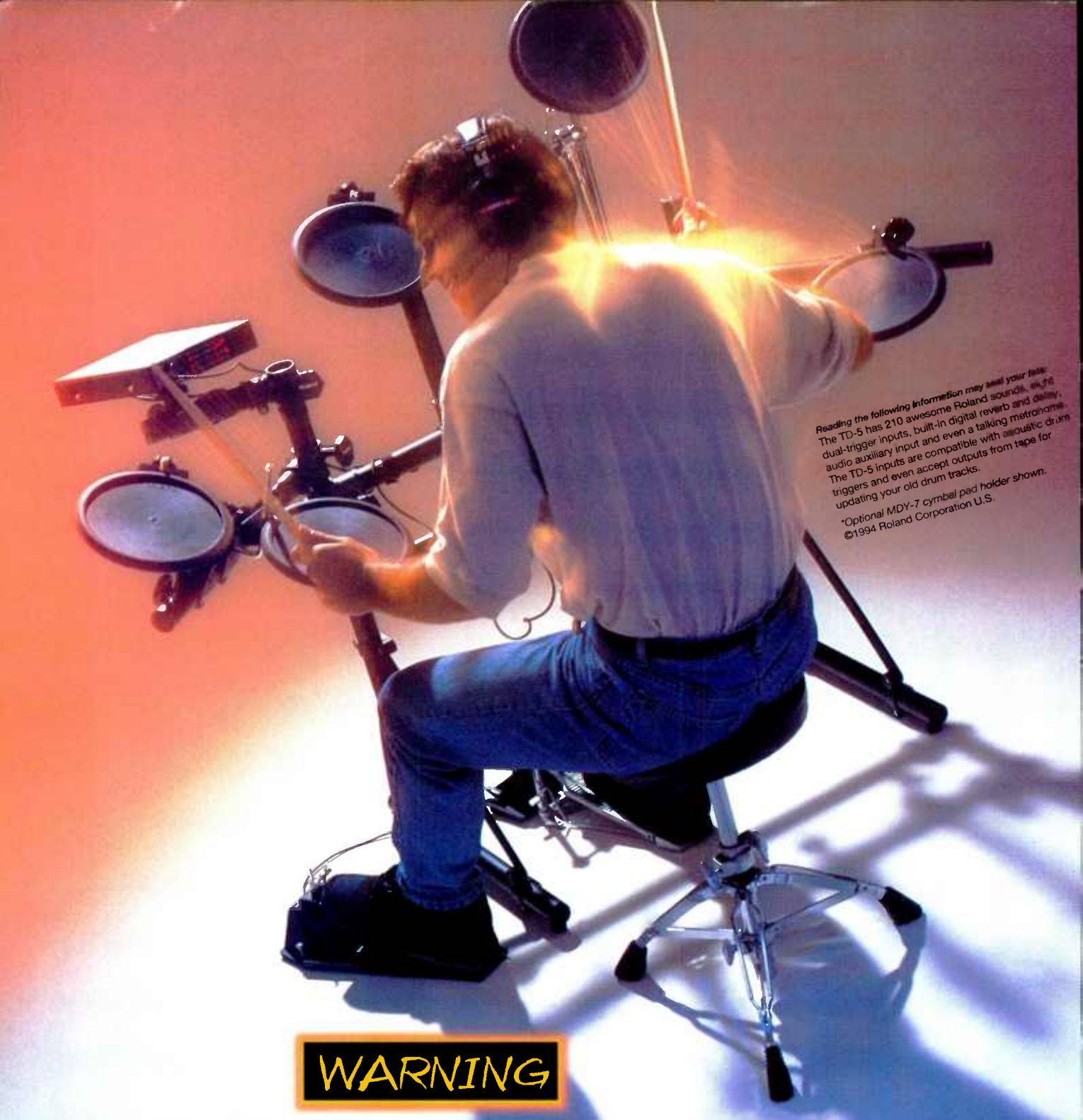

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JOHN MELLENCAMP

"The guy says, looks like you had a heart attack—when do you think you had it?"

You stopped touring because of health problems. What happened?

I had a heart attack. I've got one artery that's closed off a hundred percent. It comes from eating McDonald's and smoking 80 cigarettes a day. I had a cholesterol count of 300, plus smoking...that'll stop your heart.

Did you have any warning signs?

No, I didn't even know I'd had one. It was weird. I was out on tour, and one night after the show I woke up at three in the morning and thought I was getting the flu. So I stayed in bed the next day, then went on with my tour—20 more shows. I had a week off and it was time for my normal checkup. The guy says, looks like you had a heart attack—when do you think you had it? I couldn't imagine. He said, well, did you feel like you got the flu or something? So that was it.

They told me, you can go on with your tour if you want, you're obviously doing alright. But it just pissed me off so much: I'm not gonna be able to correct my diet or stop smoking on the road, or stop being stressed out getting on airplanes every day and walking onstage. If I want to make these changes, I need to stay home. I'm sorry for the fans, but—

But after a heart attack you're allowed to take stock of your life?

And that's what I've been doing. Don't get me wrong, I don't wish this on anybody, 'cause it does fuck with your head. Now every time something starts hurting it's like—what's that?! What's really unbelievable, George Green, the guy I write songs with, *he* just had a heart attack three days ago. We're both 43, we grew up together. I just saw him in the hospital. I said, "George, do you have to do everything I do?"

Didn't you guys write "The Big Jack" together? With the line "I want a heart attack"?

Yeah—we got what we wanted. [*laughs*] It's spooky.

So what are you going to do about it?

I've been doing what they suggested, changing my lifestyle—exercising. I'm down to five cigarettes a day but I have to quit a lot of things I love, like eating red meat—my new motto is, if it tastes good, spit it out. But, put this in the article too—if it can get me, it can get you. 'Cause it's not like I'm some fat, drug-using slob. I'm 5'8", 147 pounds, I haven't used drugs since 1971—I'm a pretty healthy guy!

Will you go back on the road?

I don't know what I'm gonna do. I'm not gonna do anything I *don't* want to. I'm thinking about going around and playing bars in college towns and not doing any of my songs—sing "Stand" by Sly and the Family Stone, or something by the Red Hot Chili Peppers. You know, party songs for college kids. I'd like that, go out weekends on a bus to Ypsilanti or somewhere, come home Sunday night. I started out that way. I want to see if it's still fun.

How hard do you try to conjure a song? Do you wait for the ideas to come or consciously work them up?

The ones that come easy are the best—I'm sure you've heard that before. If you labor over them, they sound labored over. But you've got to be writing to get the easy ones. I wrote a song yesterday that sounds terrible—but I had to write it. Two weeks ago I wrote a song that was great. Some days you get a good one, some days you don't.

Was the simplicity and casualness of* Dance Naked *partly a reaction to the time and effort you put into* Human Wheels*?

It was. *Human Wheels* was not a fun record. I think it's the best record I ever made, but it was hard, it was long, it was expensive. This was the complete opposite, it took like a week and a half to make and everybody kinda laughed and it wasn't a "big thing." With *Human Wheels* we were trying to reinvent ourselves; with *Dance Naked* the guys didn't hear the songs until the day we recorded them. Me'Shell [NdgéOcello] didn't even know "Wild Night"; she thought I wrote that song. I decided to do it on the ride out there.

It's weird that song was such a hit, but the album hasn't really taken off.

I can tell you the weirdness—they changed record company presidents! Look at the numbers. PolyGram got rid of Dick Asher in 1989 and nobody sold any records that year. They've had three or four presidents since then, and they can't get that company back on. Now they've got another guy in there. So we'll see what happens. But those records are as good as anything I've made, they got great reviews, the shows were getting great reviews—it's not my fault! [*laughs*]

And this is my fourteenth record, and after a certain point, your core audience only does one thing—it diminishes. Even when the Rolling Stones make a new record I don't go out and buy it—I've already got all the good ones, that's how I feel. *But* their record company had *Voodoo Lounge* so well displayed that when I went into the record store to buy *another* record, I bought that too. So that's how you've got to sell artists who've been around for more than two weeks, you've got to price and position them. That's how they hooked me on that Rolling Stones record.

Of course, that was two months ago, and I still haven't taken off the shrink wrap. [*laughs*] But I bought it.

MARK ROWLAND

PHOTOGRAPH BY HARRY SANDLER

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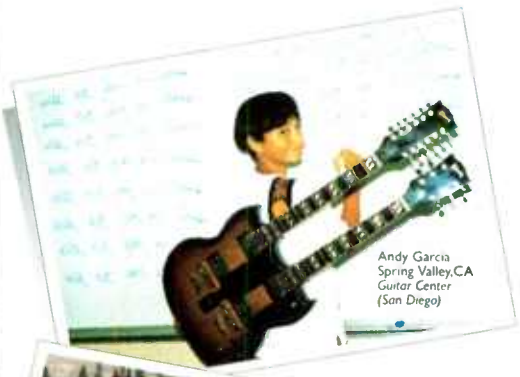

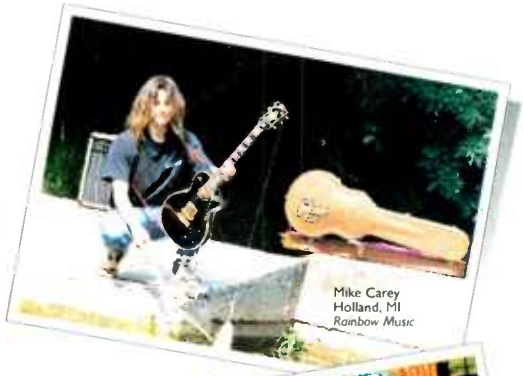

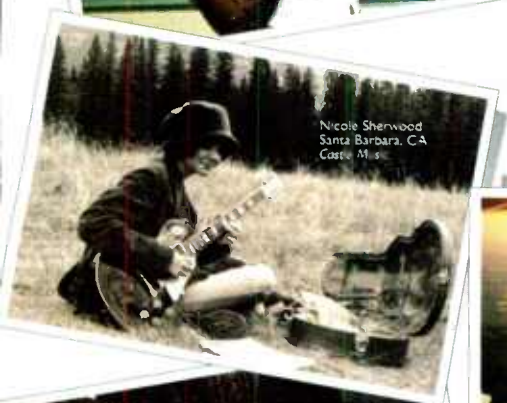

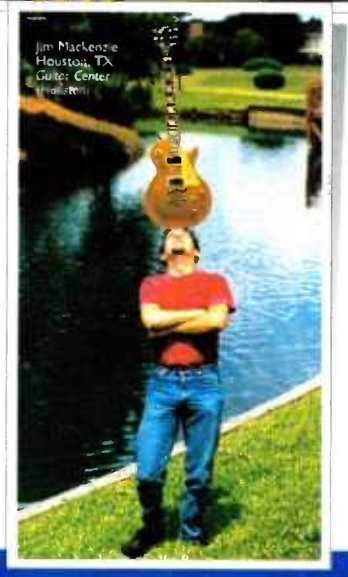

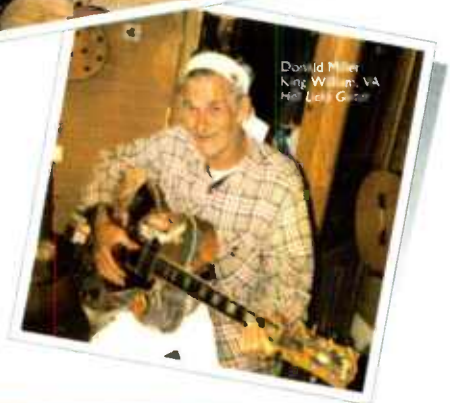

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LETTERS

PAT MARTINO

Chip Stern's article on Pat Martino (Nov. '94) is one of the most transporting profiles I've ever read. I really want to hear this guy's music! I've subscribed to *Musician* for a long time—thanks for the great quality each and every issue.

Alexandra Simms
Edmonds, WA

I have taken lessons with Pat Martino on and off for about two years. From Pat I haven't just learned about the guitar, but also about myself. It is almost as if he is more than a man: a mystical force. Pat is essence, he is Music, he is a true master. I have often wondered why people didn't discuss him more often. Thank you for doing such a great article on him.

David Ullman

READERS EMIT MOANS

I have been a fan of R.E.M. ever since *Fables of the Reconstruction* and I would have to say that the band has gone downhill. The *Green* album was about as "Loud And In Your Face" as the band can get. The two subsequent albums sound tired and stale; Buck's E-chord formula of rock 'n' roll is more worn than an old pair of Levis. On the positive side, Stipe's voice sounds refined and higher-reaching than ever. Let's hope that the *Monster* tour can revitalize an otherwise mediocre collection of songs.

FarmBoy24@aol.com

Hurray! Hurray! R.E.M. is on the cover of *Musician*! I was starting to think you might make it through four or five issues without another mind-numbing exposé of the dullest band on earth. I didn't subscribe to the R.E.M. fan club—or at least I didn't mean to. I subscribed to *Musician*.

David Bradley
Sterling, VA

BLUES

In fairness to Eric Clapton, I have to respond to Billy Altman's thoughtless, "sloppy" review of *From the Cradle* (Nov. '94). *Musician* made a mistake by approving an intern to espouse his neophyte opinion on one of the precious few major artists committed to doing something right for this industry. We need smarter musicians to lead this difficult business into better times, with better product, and with guys like Clapton as an example. As a manager and musician, I would encourage anyone buying the album to listen without prejudice. Altman's mistake was to compare this to Clapton's past rock or pop output—instead, pretend he's some blues guy you never heard of, which won't be hard considering how varied and different and revealing these performances are. What you will find is the man, not the mystique.

T. Aronburg

Your recent feature on jazz, "Jazz Becomes Big Business" (Nov. '94), brings up some interesting points about the industry. Back when I was a "young lion" piano player, my first LP was caught in the mire of disco and I faced complete rejection. That is when I started Southport records and Sparrow Sound Design recording studio.

I am now 40. There are over 30 projects released on our label. The powers at the "major" labels have tried countless ways to market jazz. Perhaps instead of looking for the next "wave" the producers and the money people should concentrate on the music.

How can a person like Richard Seidel make a statement like "...the quality of songwriting isn't what it was"? Has Mr. Seidel heard all the new compositions of the last 20 years? Remember, Dizzy Gillespie was never signed to a major label. I guess Richard Seidel didn't dig his songs either.

Bradley Parker-Sparrow
Southport and Sparrow Sound Design
Chicago, IL

I listened to *From the Cradle* honestly expecting sub-standard replicas and was astonishingly delighted. The best "review" for Billy Altman is a job he can handle without garnering public humiliation for incompetency.

Michael Paul Morgan
Manhattan Beach, CA

BLACKLIST

How sick and hypocritical that our government tried to blacklist certain rock songs that "tended to promote or glorify the use of illegal drugs" (*Backside*, Aug. '94), yet at the same time the CIA and the Army were actively involved in drug-running in Vietnam, in some cases smuggling the illegal drugs back home in the body bags of dead soldiers slaughtered in a bullshit war. This same wonderful government of ours also used prisoners and minorities as guinea pigs in the 1940s and '50s to test the effects of LSD and other drugs. Not to mention their secret experiments with the syphilis virus on blacks in the '40s and Agent Orange on unwitting soldiers in Vietnam. But what can you expect from a government that murdered our own president.

On another note, comparing winkingly playful rock songs about recreational drug use with angry, violent, misogynist rap songs is like comparing oranges with rotten apples. I'm all for freedom of speech, but for me at least, gangsta rap rhymes with crap and belongs in the toilet.

Ralph Haselmann Jr.
Hampton, NJ

NEW ISSUE DATE

In an effort to coordinate our newsstand on-sale dates better, this issue of *Musician* (#195) is dated January/February 1995. The following issue will be March '95 (#196), then April '95, and so on. We will still produce 12 magazines this year, and subscribers will still receive 12 issues per year per subscription.

ERRORTA

Illustration credits for Warren Linn, whose work is actually on page 78, and Marcos Sorensen, whose illustration is on 82, were switched in our Dec. '94 issue. On page 75 of the same issue, the screen shot depicted is actually the Lyrrus Bridge, not MOTU's Freestyle for the Mac as described in the caption. The Lyrrus Bridge is reviewed on page 80.

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JINGLE BILLS

Is the composer of dish-soap jingles as deserving of financial reward as one whose tunes are fodder for the Top 40? As far as Manhattan's Federal court of appeals is concerned, he isn't. On August 24, the *New York Times* reported that Steve Karmen, composer of such prime-time staples as "Weekends Are Made for Michelob" and "Aren't You Glad You Use Dial," lost his final lawsuit against ASCAP. Karmen sought a royalty rate for broadcast of his jingles equal to that afforded other composers of popular songs.

ASCAP pays one royalty rate for broadcast performances of music for the general marketplace, and another—much lower—rate for commercials. In fact, the royalty payment for a piece of music written for a commercial can be as little as three percent of what a song by, say, Michael Bolton would accrue, even if it were used in an identical commercial. That's because Bolton's work is considered an "artistic creation," while a jingle is—well, a jingle.

According to the court, Karmen's lower rate is balanced by the fee paid up front for jingles and the large volume of broadcast performances credited to him.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK MATCHO

DAVID CORIO

ROUGH

NEW SIGNINGS

Into Another N.Y. hard-core quartet goes west (Hollywood)
Circle Jerks L.A. punk legends cum around again (Mercury)
Caulfields Northern California power pop/punk keeps Holden on (A&M)
Elisa Fiorillo Chanteuse pal of the former Prince and Jellybean Benitez (A&M)

Caulfields

DENNIS KEELEY

How I Wrote That Hit Song

by Melissa Etheridge

FROM THE very beginning, "I'm the Only One" was what I consider a typical Melissa Etheridge song. It fits. I have wanted for so long—and have tried, a little bit—to write a slow, kind of blues-shuffle beat. That's one of the rock staples, and I really didn't have one. And I knew that vocally I could do it justice. I played a G chord, played a slow shuffle, thought about what I wanted to write about, and knew that that energy and emotion and inspiration were there. Kept it pretty simple. Wanted the verses to paint the picture of the feeling of desperation, and then the choruses to give a strong, powerful answer to the verses.

I'd never performed it prior to recording it in the studio, which was tough. But I wanted to make sure it could be presented live as well as it was in the studio. And the way I do that is just to make sure we *record* it live—and it was, from vocals on down.

I was pleased that the record company decided to go to pop radio with it after it had done very well at rock radio, because I felt it was the truest example of what I do. "Come to My Window" is very much a part of me, but it was kind of my soft side and hard side all together. But "I'm the Only One" is, you know—that's what I *do*. I rock, I sing from the gut.

Probably the closest song I'd written to it would be "Bring Me Some Water"—they both kind of come from the same bluesy background, it's just more of a modern version of that. This one came pretty fast, one of those lucky ones—maybe in a day. The normal place that I write a lot of my songs lately is on my tour bus—my tour bus and hotels—and this one especially I remember writing in Europe. I believe I started it in Austria, going to Vienna. Of course it then takes weeks after to polish up, but the bulk of it came *boom*—the melody, and the idea of the chorus.

I'm thinking of writing a faster shuffle next. I like to keep myself open to writing—I don't like to restrict myself. And I don't like to put pressures on, thinking, "Oh, I have to write a hit." I like to keep it open and see what happens.

I think people relate to emotion, pure and true emotion, the *soul*. We don't have enough of that in our day-to-day lives, and I think people go towards that. I think that's the appeal of "I'm the Only One." I was real happy to have written it, and I was excited to perform it live. I felt like in concert it would really grab people. And it has.

MIX

RETRO RULES

According to the latest RIAA statistics, vinyl sales have increased 80 percent this year from 1993, from half a million to about 900,000 units. That's small potatoes, unit-wise, but still a sales percentage increase that tops cassettes, CDs and videos combined.

Coincidentally, PolyGram Group Distribution, a subsidiary of Phillips (inventor of the CD and Digital Compact Cassette), has selected BASF 911 analog tape as the back-up medium for their archive, which includes the Verve and Mercury catalogs.

Why not digital? "We don't feel that digital tapes that are on the market have the shelf life that analog does," according to Jim Nevins, who is in charge of the masters. Oh.

NAKED CITY UNDER FIRE

Avant-garde saxophonist John Zorn is under attack by Asian-American activist groups for his use of "anti-Asian and sexist imagery" in his album artwork. A statement issued by a New York–based organization called the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence criticized the artwork for the LP *Torture Garden* (pictured below) and a release by Zorn's group Naked City, *L'eng T'che*, which uses photos of the dismemberment of a Chinese man. Both

albums have been available for several years, and are examples of Zorn's penchant for using provocative, violent images. Because of the furor, Zorn stopped U.S. distribution of both albums and offered to cover the artwork in black plastic wrap. "I understand their point of view, and have tried to make decisions that are both respectful and sensitive to their position," wrote Zorn in a response to the accusatory statement. "At the same time, I hope that these 'P.C.' special-interest groups will someday be able to make similar gestures, so that we can really begin to bridge these great misunderstandings that exist between politics and art."

This month's Rough Mix was written by Nathan Brackett, Dave DiMartino, Andy Gilbert, Ted Greenwald, Michael Lipton, Ken Micallef, Mark Rowland and Devlin Sherlock.

TALENT

JAMES CARNEY No one can accuse jazz pianist/composer James Carney of lacking ambition. He not only produced his debut recording on his own label, the New York native drew upon his eventful years in Southern California to create *Fables from the Aqueduct*, an impressionistic sojourn through the Southland's scarred psychic landscape.

With a top-notch cast of young L.A. jazz talent, including his former CalArts classmates Darek Oleszkiewicz (bass) and Ravi Coltrane (tenor sax), Carney takes on such Angel City landmarks as L.A.'s former police chief (in "Daryl and the God Squad") and the 1992 civil disturbances (in "Walpurgis Night"). There's no shortage of excellent solos, but it's Carney's arrangements that hold center stage.

"I'm more concerned with the whole than with piano pyrotechnics," Carney says. "A lot of people think that everything out here is fusion. But you don't have to be in New York to be motivated to write stuff that takes chances. The future is here, and it's going to be interesting."

HARVEY WANG

PORTISHEAD

KEVIN SALEM After stints with Boston's influential Dumptruck and with Freedy Johnston, tunesmith Kevin Salem headed to New Orleans for a fling with misery and depression. Consulting the local tarot readers only worsened his quandary.

"I've toyed with fortune tellers a lot," says Salem, "seen the hangman drawn a few times. I've lost best friends and I've lost some illusions. Reality is the only thing that works for me now." The hard-luck collection of songs on his solo bow *Soma City* are magnified by raw production and Salem's scratchy yelp of a voice. But beneath the folky settings and his Dylanish howl Salem seeks a spirit of rebellion to blank out any sadness.

"If Porno for Pyros represents rebellion for today, then we're screwed," he says. "Maybe there is no rebellion left in young people, but it's my belief that there's still plenty to rebel against. I'm tired of seeing the package."

Produced by Niko Bolas (Neil Young, Melissa Etheridge), Salem took the unusual tack of signing with death metal label Roadrunner, sandwiching himself between bands such as Deicide and Obituary. "Most of these labels are a black hole where snakes eat snakes," he reasons. "I'm happy where I am."

KAREN KUEHN

KEVIN SALEM

HELMUT LIPSCHIS

JAMES CARNEY

CONTINENTAL DRIFTERS

PORTISHEAD "I've kinda gone anti-technology," says Portishead mastermind Geoff Barrow, shaking his head. "I'd spent three years gazing into a computer screen trying to make this record and I realized I couldn't achieve what I really wanted musically."

So instead of pressing the button marked "atmospheric sound" on his synth, the 22-year-old Barrow, whose remix credits include Neneh Cherry, Paul Weller and Primal Scream, created his own atmospheric sounds for Portishead's spooky debut, "Dummy." With hauntingly slow break-beats and the smoky vocals of engaging chanteuse Beth Gibbons, Portishead (named after their English hometown) combine This Mortal Coil–like goth, later-period Talk Talk and the movie-score sensibility of Barry Adamson and John Barry. The result sounds like a '90s soundtrack for your favorite '60s French spy flick.

"There are a lot of records that have a lot of noise and strange things going on, but they're not very *musical*. I like a little melody," notes Barrow. "Having a noise for the sake of being weird isn't worth it."

CONTINENTAL DRIFTERS "This band is my redemption for being in the Bangles," Vicki Peterson said with a smile. The comment was not as much a slag on her hit-making, power-pop '80s quartet as it was a tribute to her latest endeavor, the Continental Drifters. Peterson's passion is equaled by her bandmates', a crew with stellar if not diverse resumes: rock 'n' roll couple Peter Holsapple (dBs, R.E.M.) and Susan Cowsill (yes, that Cowsill), Carlo Nuccio (Subdudes), Robert Mache (Sparks/Steve Wynn) and Mark Walton (Dream Syndicate/Steve Wynn). The result is an earthy mix of solid grooves, rich harmonies and classic tunes. While the group's self-titled debut (on New Orleans' Monkey Hill label) recalls the timelessness of the Band and the close harmonies of the Mamas and the Papas, it's but an appetizer for the group's eclectic live shows.

"The music is as comfortable as an old pair of jeans," says the affable Holsapple. "We all have different musical obscurities but we're of a like musical mind. Most of all, it's really important that everyone's soul is satisfied."

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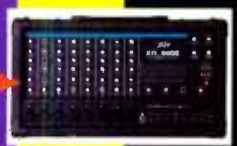
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Below (l to r): Stephen Malkmus (on guitar), Steve West, Mar[illegible] Rob Nastanovich, Scott Kannberg; bottom left: Ibold; bottom right: [illegible]

PAVEMENT

IN THE

INDIE-ROCK'S MOST OBSCURE OUTFIT SHUFFL

BY NATHAN BRACKETT

BLISTERS

SUN

ITO THE SPOTLIGHT.

I'm sort of at a loss on how to enter that world with dignity."

"That world" is the music biz, and Stephen Malkmus of Pavement is, for once, unquestionably serious. He's talking about the place where something that used to set him apart from the stars at the top of the pops—his post-punk roots—has become commodified. "I know a lot of people in bands," he continues, "who are just happy to play on the signifiers of this generation to make a quick buck."

Malkmus should know something about signifiers—his band has become one for a generation of garage rockers. Dozens of new bands, from Weezer to the Palace Brothers to the Archers of Loaf, have been tagged as "post-Pavement" or "Pavement meets [blank]," and not just because rock critics are generally lazy. Musical virtues aside, Pavement has built up a prodigious mystique because they're considered to be largely untouched by the hand of commerce. Until this year, their identities had been kept a semi-secret, and they hadn't made any videos, despite a successful debut album. They were also reportedly bumped off Lollapalooza because Malkmus called out headliners Smashing Pumpkins in the song "Range Life," complaining that "I don't understand what they mean, and I don't give a fuck."

"'Range Life' was like an indie-rock dis," he says now, "like, 'I'm trying to say something, but I'm too repressed and nerdy and white to really say anything mean.' It was just to make it interesting in the end, to give our songs some life."

Not that Malkmus has ever been afraid of a little snotty obscurantism if it serves his musical purposes. What many people first hear on Pavement records is the studied looseness of the instrumentation and purposefully rough production values. But a foundation of angular riffs,

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANNY CLINCH

inventive tunings and tight hooks lies beneath. Similarly, Malkmus's lyrics, while often jaded and opaque, can offer redemption in pop songs, girls and dreams. Pavement speaks in an outwardly dispassionate tone because many of their listeners won't trust any other. But in the end, they're looking to stir the thoughts and bob the heads of a cynical audience. "I like things that sound like ear candy," Malkmus admits.

Pavement is at the end of their longest, most ambitious tour up to this point, a nine-month trip to Japan, Prague and "The Tonight Show," among other places. The journey left drummer Steve West with a positive impression of the post-Nirvana sea-changes in the music industry.

"These times are a blessing for a band like us," he says. "Everywhere we went, from Prague, Vienna, to New Zealand, Australia and Japan, we always had at least four or five hundred people out to see us, even in the smallest places. There were 1000 people at our Prague show. That wouldn't have happened five years ago. For the Replacements, or even R.E.M. in '83 or '84, when they were at our level, to go to Prague, or even to fly to Australia would have been impossible."

Their last show is in the Amherst College Campus Center in western Massachusetts, in a smallish, modern function room more suited to some undergraduate playwright's debut than a rock concert. A couple of college journalists loiter in the hall, waiting for soundcheck. Pavement's bassist, Mark Ibold, stands by the stage, keeping an eye on the soundman and making uncertain promises as to when all of the band will be in one place. "I try to present the appearance of organization," he says.

The group is self-managed by co-founder (with Malkmus) Scott Kannberg. They're also their own roadies, which is a bit unusual considering where they've played this year and that they've sold over 100,000 records. But lack of pretense and the do-it-yourself aesthetic are the order of business in any Pavement enterprise. Of course, some members are more DIY than others. "I think my sense of responsibility increases while we're on tour," says Ibold, "because there are a couple of people who don't have a sense of responsibility."

"I just kinda walk around," says Malkmus, "and pretend to be cranky and threatening to any business interests."

Malkmus is a tall, dandyish 27-year-old with a slightly precious Northern California twang in his speech, as well as lack of intonation that makes it difficult to tell when he's being sarcastic, which he is often. For example, it's hard to know how straight he's being when he calls Ketchum, Idaho, a privileged movie-star retreat where his parents live, his home. It's well documented that he spends more time in New York City.

"Jamie Lee Curtis helped me out of a snowbank once," he relates in his inscrutable deadpan. "Steve Miller lives there. So does Peter Cetera. That had an effect on our last album. Seeing those guys around, and listening to Chicago."

The band's everyman on the road is Bob Nastanovich. A classmate and fellow college DJ of Malkmus's at UVa, he was enlisted in 1990 when it became apparent that Pavement's former main drummer, Gary Young, was a slim reed to lean on. Bob now serves as Pavement's percussionist, keyboard player, back-up singer (or screamer, depending on the song) and tour manager. "I was going to be the roadie on the first tour," he says, "and as it got closer, Steve suggested that I get a couple of drums and play along, because Gary was so inconsistent, dropping his sticks and running around in the crowd." Young's antics—propelled by the sheer weirdness of an out-of-control 40-year-old man playing in an underground band with four quiet youngsters—often overshadowed the music. Which wasn't necessarily always a bad thing at the time.

"There would be nights when he would be completely obliterated," says Nastanovich. "And when we weren't as experienced, the tragedy of it was probably entertaining for the crowd. But it was always really humiliating for us. The theater aspect was overemphasized, especially by the English press, who love to see human tragedy on the stage."

"The thing was, there would be some nights where he would literally not be able to make contact with the drums," says Ibold, "and then on the next night he would be the best drummer I've ever played with." After a serious bout with pneumonia, Young quit. West, a high-school buddy of Nastanovich's, replaced him in the summer of '93, with Nastanovich staying on as jack-of-all-trades.

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The SATANIC YOUTH just adopted your lyrics as an *anthem.*

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SCOTT KANNBERG isn't happy about the venue tonight. The larger hall that the band agreed to play in fell through, and the show is looking suspiciously like a study break for the 150 or so attendees. The rest of the band is in good spirits, however. Some old friends are in attendance, most significantly Dave Berman of the Silver Jews, a band that also includes Malkmus, West and Ibold.

Pavement will never be as erratic live as they were with Gary Young, but they'll never be the Famous Flames, either. Where their recorded efforts are crafted to sound as if they're about to deconstruct, the live unit is still finding itself—Malkmus has even been known to stop in the middle of a song to correct a bandmate.

But tonight they're as tight as they'll ever be. They tear into "Ell Ess Two," a swelling anthem without a chorus that evokes California sprawl and bloat, and maybe even Ketchum ("Range Rovin' with the cinema stars/But I wouldn't want to shake their hand"). Malkmus sings from the side of the stage, a baseball cap pulled down over his bangs, peppering non sequiturs into his between-song banter—"Spiritualism," he pronounces at one point, for no reason—but obviously committed to delivering the goods.

After an interesting detour or two, Malkmus sings the first few bars of "Gold Soundz," one of *Crooked Rain*'s straightforward pop songs, and the band suddenly lurches into a minute of bleating ersatz free jazz. Drummer West twists in his seat and erratically pounds, a stream-of-consciousness scat coming out of his mouth. Finally, Malkmus sings, "and we're coming to the chorus now..." and the band returns to 4/4 time. Even the flirting freshmen in the back of the room are paying attention.

Pavement's end-of-world-tour party is held in a smoke-filled college conference room littered with beer bottles. The next day Nastanovich drives 18 hours straight to his home in Louisville, Kentucky. Kannberg flies back to the West Coast, and Malkmus, Ibold and West return to New York City.

BY THE STRICTEST definition, Pavement is Malkmus and Kannberg. They make the records, as they have since they recorded their

STEPHEN MALKMUS plays a Gibson Les Paul strung with GHS Boomers through a Fender Twin Reverb amp. His secret weapon these days is a fuzzbox made in New Zealand by one of the former members of Split Enz called a Hotcake. SCOTT KANNBERG runs his Sunburst Strat through a Twin that used to belong to DJ Dmitry of Deee-Lite, a friend of Mark Ibold's. For pedals he uses a vintage ProCo Rat, as well as a Turbo Rat, and his strings are D'Addarios.

MARK IBOLD plays a Fender Precision bass guitar through an Ampeg V4B. His fave fuzzbox is a Japanese guitar pedal made in the '70s called a Companion, and his strings are DGs, which he plays because they're handmade and "have a real nice sustain."

The star of STEVE WEST's drum kit is a brass Ludwig Pioneer snare from the '20s. The bass drum comes from a Pearl Export kit, and his 18" floor tom is also a Ludwig. He uses Zildjian cymbals. He loves his "egg mallets," which are Lexan mallets with egg shakers gaffer-taped halfway up the sticks.

Percussionist/keyboard player BOB NASTANOVICH plays a 16" Ludwig floor tom hooked up to a Zildjian cymbal. His Moog Prodigy is in the shop, and for touring purposes he's been using a Roland Juno Six.

self-released seven-inch "Slay Tracks" in 1989 under the pseudonyms "S.M." and "Spiral Stairs," respectively. Their playground was a garage studio outside of Stockton owned by Young. After releasing a couple of singles and an EP on Chicago-based indie label Drag City Records—now compiled on the *Westing (By Musket and Sextant)* LP—Pavement signed with Matador, an independent now distributed by Atlantic Records.

Kannberg, a soft-faced, quiet 28-year-old, lives in San Francisco and handles the group's business affairs out of a spare bedroom in his apartment. He's been covering the band's business since Malkmus took an extended trip abroad after college, leaving him to put out the first single. He's contributed one song to each of the two Pavement albums ("Two States" and "I Hit the Plane Down"), and helps with arrangements and production.

Slanted and Enchanted was released in 1992 on a shoestring budget. "The basis of our sound was playing guitar through a really old bass amp," recalls Kannberg. "We would record all the guitar tracks first, and Gary would play over that."

"We were lucky, because this metal band were in the studio before us," says Malkmus. "They had these giant amps and really nice equipment," continues Kannberg, "and would work from like one in the afternoon until ten at night, and we would come in at 10:30 and use their settings."

Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain was recorded in what Kannberg calls "the twentieth floor of some Manhattan skyscraper." It was nevertheless heavily informed by the Golden State, from the epic scale of "Unfair" to the homage to fellow Stockton townie Dave Brubeck on "5–4=Unity." Whether California will loom as large on the next album, to be recorded in Memphis in 1995, remains to be seen.

"Steve and I don't talk as much anymore because he lives in New York," says Kannberg. "He works out the songs in New York, and then we go into the studio. I couldn't live back East. Can't deal with the people."

So Kannberg stays in California, the business manager of a group known for being ambivalent about business. Pavement does each record for Matador on a one-off basis and will own the masters to *Crooked Rain* in five years.

Predictably, the band members give sketchy answers when asked about Pavement's future. "The band's a very temporary thing," says Kannberg, "kind of like going to college." He and Ibold already have ideas of what they'll do when the band is through: He'll finish a degree in urban planning, and Ibold expects to go to culinary school.

And Malkmus? The closest he comes to talking about the future is in a conversation about Pavement's appearance on Jay Leno: "This guy Pancho from Crazy Horse was telling us how when Neil Young was on 'Saturday Night Live,' they had edited out all the good parts, and then made him do it again after the rehearsal, not the way he wanted. He told us, 'This isn't rock 'n' roll, this is bullshit. You can't expect this to be anything that's good about music.' As soon as I thought of it that way, it was fun."

And you got to meet Drew Barrymore and Harry Shearer.

"Meeting stars doesn't excite me unless they live in my town or something."

But you'll look back at it fondly someday.

"I'll look back. It'll be behind though. And not forward. Forward is, you know, opening for the Stones at the Grammys."

And being covered in *Musician*.

"As long as Steve Vai transcribes 'Range Life,' I'll be happy."

BY CHIP STERN

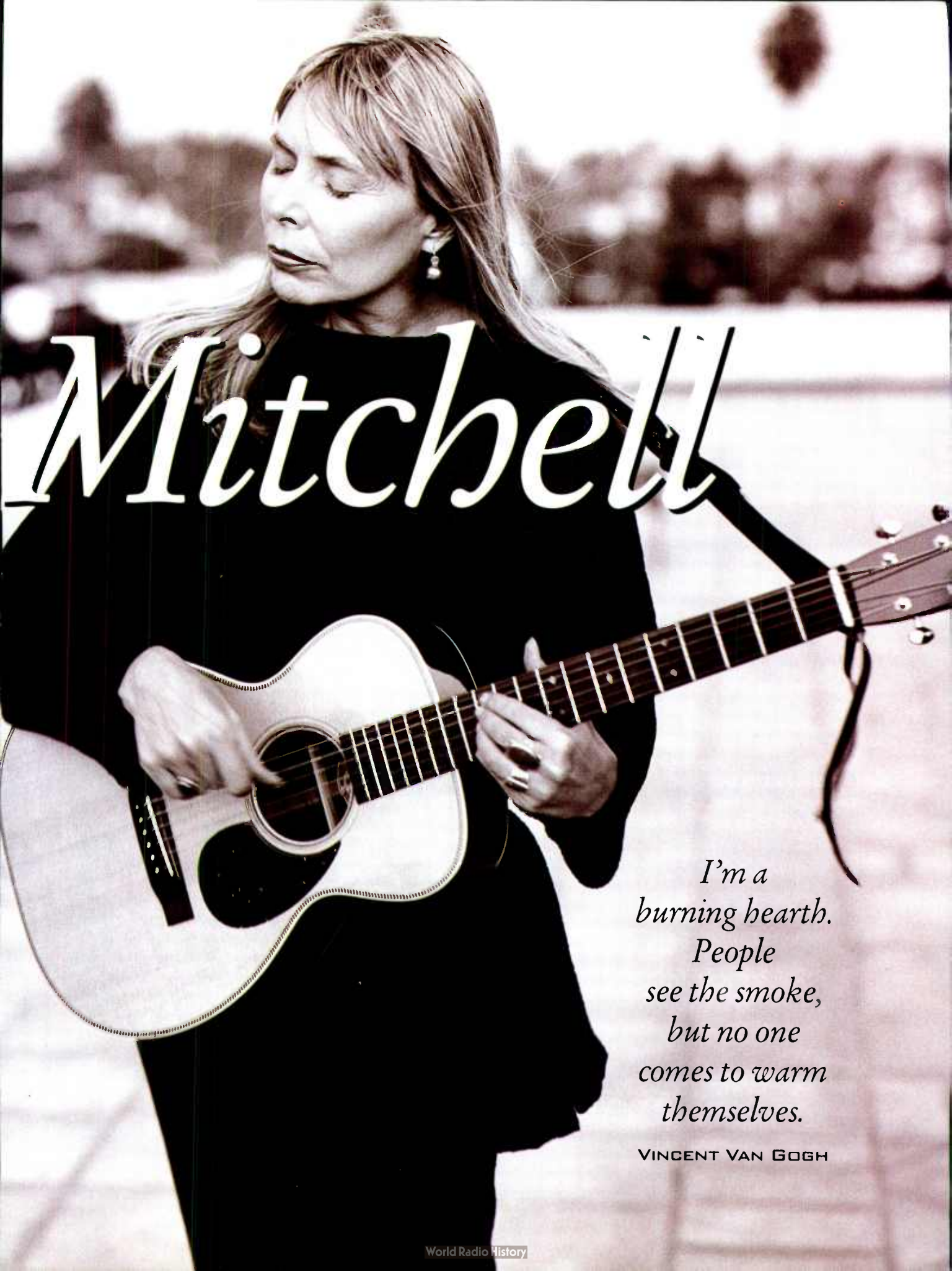
SONGS TO AGING CHILDREN

Joni

PULLS YOUR EAR

To go on to the next period you have to be able to withstand a tremendous amount of rejection," asserts Joni Mitchell from behind a curtain of cigarette smoke. "Everything I loved was completely snickered at, razzed and ridiculed at the time of its release." Her voice rises and falls in singsong cadences and subtle changes of inflection, as she leaps forward like a proud mama lion in defense of her brood. "You see," she says with escalating animation, "I've done 17 albums since 1968, and each one of them is like a dear child. I'm protective of my babies. I'm ready to defend them, and so I should be. There's beauty there waiting for you," she adds earnestly. "So if I'm defensive you have to understand that these are my children that have had their noses bloodied."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY THURNHER



I'm a burning hearth. People see the smoke, but no one comes to warm themselves.

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Joni Mitchell is one of those artists about whom there is very little middle ground. For my tastes, she has few peers as a singer/songwriter, save for Dylan and Neil Young, and she's really stretched out in the studio, creating innovative audiophile recordings and progressive electronic hoodoo every bit as hip as anything Peter Gabriel, Weather Report, Kate Bush or Brian Eno have done. But musicianship doesn't have that much cachet in our whathaveyoudoneformelately alternative nation. Every artist has their admirers and detractors. To my astonishment (because most artists never cop to reading their clippings), Joni seems to have heard every positive and negative word ever uttered in regards to her singular milieu, and seems to take it personally—very personally.

"I can remember the essence of the rejections for nearly every project," she affirms. "They were out of sync with their time, frequently off by about two years. I've been kicked out of every school of music there is, basically. A classical musician includes some of my music in his concert in London and they haul him up on the carpet to explain why. The Grand Ole Opry thought I was a country singer because I was on the Johnny Cash show, and when I took the LA Express in—a jazz band—they never had me back there. And then they excommunicated me from the airwaves for doing the *Mingus* project. Well, you know, that led to the decline of my popularity. Suddenly the press began to say her work is jazzy. And people would go, 'Jazzy the dreaded jazzy, we hate jazzy, we don't like it, we can't understand it!' I was pretty much eradicated from the music scene at a certain point. It's like nobody wanted me to exist, you know," she declares matter-of-factly, concluding with mischievous triumph that "it was a good period for exploration, because no matter what I did they were going to hate it. So it provided a kind of freedom."

I'm sitting across from her at a table in the Polo Lounge on Manhattan's East Side. The beauty of her craft, the freedom of her vision and the striking originality of her songs and orchestrations have been an enormous source of inspiration for me, going back to the '60s. Like Miles Davis, she is a lyric artist with an exquisite, personal style that is easily identifiable yet impossible to copy. Their music seems to emanate from secret places far removed from the safe havens of conformity. Both were driven by a compulsion to keep growing, and had the guts to turn their backs on those whose affection for a particular peak period was so profound they'd have frozen them in amber if they had half a chance. Like Miles, Joni never really played to her fans, speaking directly only to her muse, with nary a backwards glance except to invite audiences along for the next bumpy ride. And from the grace of her folk period through the outreach and charm of her pop breakthrough *Court and Spark* to the painterly collages, jazz harmonies and profuse orchestrations of her mature works following *Mingus*, Joni Mitchell has endured in this fan's heart, because she dares to take chances, to push the envelope of her art at every stage, to acknowledge and nurture her childlike aspects—to strive for originality, no matter how dear the price (as measured in hits).

> "I'VE BEEN KICKED OUT OF EVERY SCHOOL OF MUSIC THERE IS, BASICALLY."

> "I CAN'T AFFORD TO CARRY EXTRA BAGGAGE IN MY SPIRIT. I HAVE TO FIGHT THIS THING WITH CHEER."

OUT CHORUS

Lately for guitars Joni's been using a fairly recent Martin D-45," explains long-time accomplice Joel Bernstein, "and a pair of Martin-style guitars by a luthier named Collings, I believe, which are based on D-28 and 00-45 styles." Joel helped her develop a system wherein she could come up with a performance set based on her roughly 40 tunings, and play them on six guitars, which Joel would adjust between songs.

"Each of these tunings is like Alice going through the looking glass—you enter another world, quite different than in standard tuning. And in many of these tunings, the chords Joni came up with, and the fingerings, were completely idiomatic, and she began writing in them. And to pop people, because of the combination of her chords and melodies, her tunes began to sound more jazz-like, particularly on *Hejira*, and especially on *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*. She has been an innovator in this area, and very few people have delved into it at all, and for me, the one other person I've heard do something creative with this approach is Michael Hedges.

"As the years went by, and her voice deepened, so did the tunings, and a lot of them that used to derive from a D, are now open C–based, and beyond. Now, Joni uses a normal medium-gauge set on her guitars, but I'd probably use an .058 instead of an .056, maybe even go up to an .060, if you wanted to really ring true C. On 'The Magdalene Laundries' from the new album, the tuning is B-F#-B-E-A-E. When you tune the low string that slack, it gets pretty floppy down there, like a dumbek, and there's a tendency for the string to go sharp and go flat."

"In my own peculiar way, I invented the chorus," Joni adds. "This is Fred Walkee's tale of the invention of the chorus machine. On *Hejira* I doubled the guitar and I doubled it in a way that Wayne Shorter and Miles double up on *Nefertiti*. It's like silkscreening—it's not tight doubling. I'm playing the part twice but there's some variations on it so they're not perfectly tight—they're shadowing each other in some places. That sound was satisfactory for me for that project, so when it came time I asked Fred, 'Do you have anything that will break the signal on a guitar and double it? I need to somehow or other duplicate this sound in performance.' He said, 'Gee, I don't—there's nothing like that.'

"So, the Japanese were very earnest at that time and interested in how their products were doing and were checking in with them from time to time. Some salesman from Roland came to see me, and I asked them, do you have anything for spreading the signal and doubling the guitar part? 'Oh, no.' So they went away and in a very short space of time they came back to Fred with the original Roland Jazz Chorus amp."

What do you like best about your DA-88?

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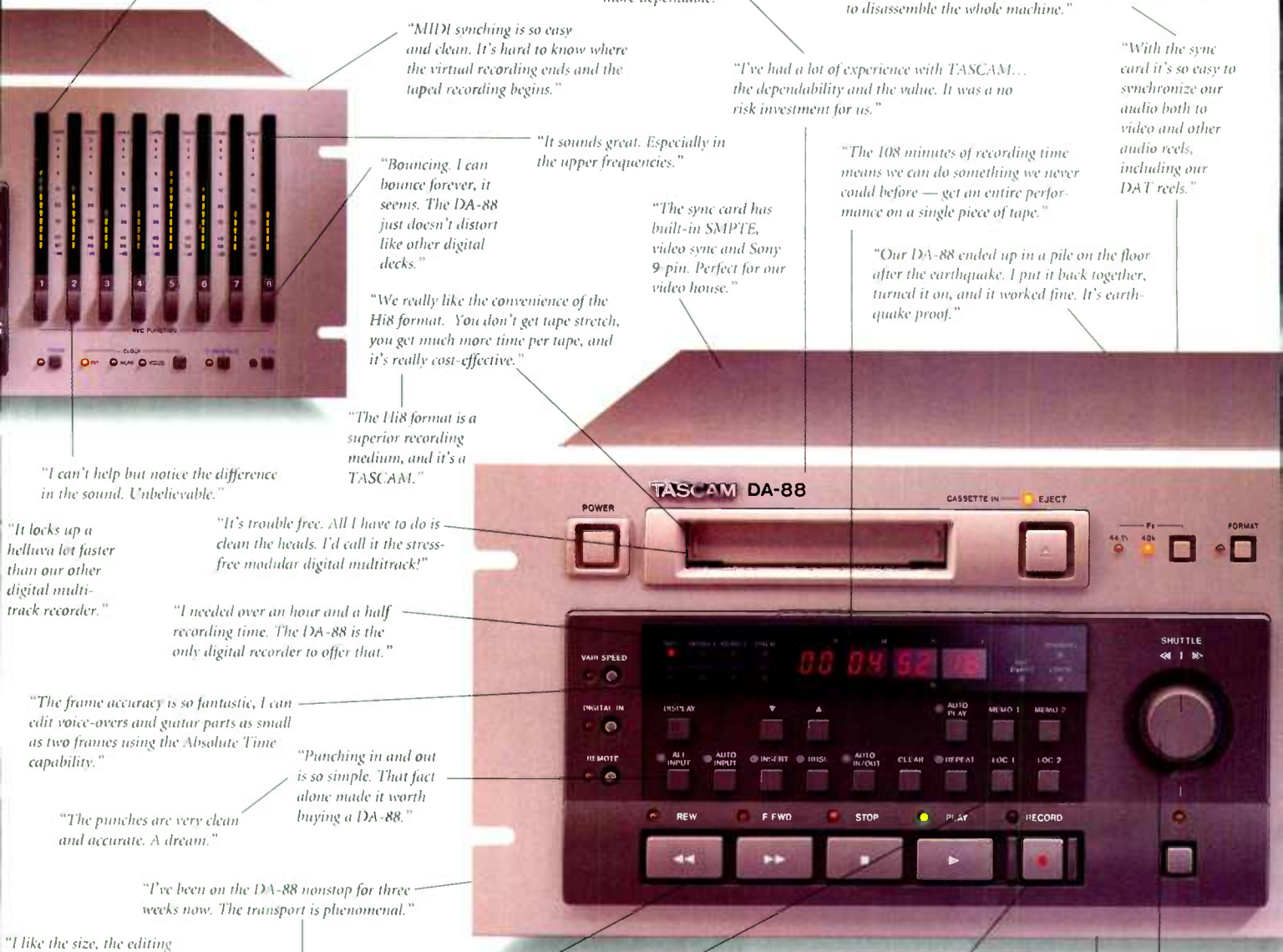

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Yet when it comes to making music, she's fearless. "I think it's very important to teach people to take the risk, and view failure as one step towards success," she declares. "You should not be afraid to fail, especially if you want something fresh. Say you have five solutions to a problem, and all of them are commonplace. Well, throw it into randomness. Often, out of the chaos, come these great juxtapositions. I do it with film, I do it by twiddling the strings into a different tuning—I throw it open to the cosmos. Then when you discover something that has an element of divine intervention, it's like a blessing—and it's real exciting. And it also restores your faith in the greater ether," she laughs. "It draws you into a state where synchronicity can come in."

"I THOUGHT I CAN'T AFFORD TO BE IN THE BUSINESS ANY LONGER. IT'S TIME TO CASH OUT AND GET OUT."

Here's the woman who defined a liberated feminine (not feminist) persona years before Liz Phair, Tori Amos or Madonna got their first hickeys, who dealt openly and honestly with her own sexuality, and had the grace to acknowledge romance in a more mature vein with *Wild Things Run Fast* (which marked the occasion of her romance with, and marriage to, bassist Larry Klein, launching a fruitful series of musical collaborations). Looking into her eyes, I have a vision of Joni as a feisty 90-year-old, holding court in her rocking chair like some éminence grise, railing against conformity and spiritual indifference, nothing but damn copycats, afraid of you if you've got anything new to say, as she looks around furtively for the nurse and leans forward toward her guest, asking in a stage whisper: "Young man, are you sure you don't have any cigarettes?"

Now comes her seventeenth album, *Turbulent Indigo*, which is magnificent—as vital as anything she's done. The record is an edgy, unsettling work. Mitchell confronts the darkening clouds on America's horizon, decrying the abuse and dehumanization of women, the herd mentality that drives art, the artificial barriers we erect that keep us apart, the pain and bitterness we endure as the toll charge for sensitivity. Painting her canvas in broad, vivid strokes of instrumental color, the orchestrations on *Turbulent Indigo* are all the more lovely for the shadowy tales of fear, anger, regret and isolation these songs depict. In the end, the wayward pilgrims who populate *Turbulent Indigo* vent their rage and wrestle with their doubts, but come out on the side of the angels—and like Job, endure with grace and move on.

"Well, you know," she cautions, her voice dropping down for emphasis, "there's always a danger of reading too much into these songs. I mean, I'm not saying I'm Job. There was this one writer who was just convinced that 'Sire of Sorrows' was autobiographical, and I had to explain to him that the text was right out of the Bible. I've always tried to make the meanings of my songs broad enough that listeners could find themselves there. But I am cleaning out a lot. This album represents a lot of soul cleansing for me, getting out the crap, you know? I mean already the new songs on the next album are of a different nature. I can't afford to be carrying extra baggage in my spirit. I have to fight this thing with cheer."

At first listen, *Turbulent Indigo* is an aural banquet for the senses. Half-speed mastered LPs of *Court and Spark* were popular demo records at high-end audio emporiums a generation ago, and this CD should achieve similar audiophile status. The stereo field is unbelievably broad and deep; all the instruments are rendered with wonderful detail and resonance; Wayne Shorter's soprano saxophone is serpentine and mellifluous, and Joni's voice bobs along like a harvest moon on a slightly hazy night. Her offhanded observation about how sex drives everything...and, oh, by the way, "Sex Kills," is accompanied by a swirling, diabolical whirlpool of sounds that would make Robert Fripp feel right at home. A breezy, almost countryish wash of textures, and Seal's engaging background vocals, wrap her lovely reading of Dan Hartman's "How Do You Stop" (a possible airplay anthem) in a cool, elegant R&B aura. And the title tune, with its poignant conversations between Shorter and Mitchell, essays its tale of stifled creativity in general (and Van

Gogh in particular) in an almost flamencan rhythm style.

"You can hear it that way," Joni allows, "that's the interesting thing about it, you can hear it that way, but it's swinging, too. That's my attempt at playing a black Southern shuffle. But my thumb has a very vertical pattern to it, which is similar to a Balinese monkey chant. So it's very Senegalese in its effect—it's swinging and it's vertical at the same time. So it's almost as if you were watching an airplane propeller; it's swinging to the right and all of a sudden it holds still and it swings to the left? It's an audio illusion."

Conceptually *Turbulent Indigo* seems to be a reaffirmation of Joni Mitchell's roots and fruits, in which the best elements of each stylistic phase are integrated within the orchestral canvas she's been evolving with greater success since *Wild Things Run Fast*. There's a renewed focus on the relationship between her spatial acoustic guitar tunings and *that voice*, which has mellowed and deepened into a rich, mature instrument, more mezzo than soprano, melodically confident and assured, as if carrying on an extended conversation with herself.

"Well, maybe this is my *Amarcord* in a certain area, you know what I mean? There come periods of synopsis. I don't have the hindsight to see that yet. I played it against the last album and I thought *Night Ride Home* was a lot sparser than I remembered. At first, I thought *Turbulent Indigo* was a greater departure. But I still have a lot of orchestration in my system. And I would have orchestrated this one more, except it wouldn't hold it. We added things and took them off and added things and took them off and it came to rest as it is. Part of the reason for that is some of the guitar tunings I came up with. The low bass string on my guitar is frequently much lower; it's down to B on 'The Magdalene Laundries,' which is really into the upper mid of the bass's range. So, if the bass moved around too much, it was eating the bassline on the guitar. Also, Klein had taken some of my sounds—for instance, the sounds of drums that I selected for projects—and they began to go out onto the projects of another woman, so...we had to go off in a fresh direction—things we'd done in the past had to be reinvented. And one of the things I did was to curtail movement on the bottom end of the bass. We had to go in a new direction, because not only had I done it already, but others were doing it. It was too common, I had to lay some restrictions down and it was

difficult at first, trying to find a way. But we ended up with very simple pads and the lack of movement gave this clarity of movement of the bass and the guitar. As for my voice, sure, it's deepened over time, but I never was, I don't think, a natural soprano. I was singing in falsetto because it was the style of the time and the type of music that I entered into, but I'm naturally more of a midrange voice."

The waiter finally comes with our food, and some casual fans will be unnerved to discover that Joni did not order a bowl of oats, a side of sprouts and a tofu daiquiri. She had a steak, friends, and tore into it like the carnivorous earth goddess she is, praise the lord.

"I first realized I was a musician when I was about seven or eight. I used to dream I could play the piano beautifully. We went to see this Kirk Douglas movie called *The Story of Three Loves*. It was three short films and the theme music was 'Variations on a Theme by Paganini.' To this day I think it's the most beautiful melody I ever heard, and I used to go down to a store in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, where you could go into a booth and take the record out of the sleeve and listen to it before you purchased it, and I'm just swooning over this beautiful music. So I wanted to learn how to play it.

"But I could learn it faster by ear than I could by reading it, and so my teacher would rap my knuckles. And that took some of the joy out of it. I wanted to compose, and as a matter of fact I found something I had written for piano at that time, called 'Robin Walk.' But my teacher discouraged that. She said, 'Why would you want to compose when you could have the masters under your fingers?' So, the lesson was on a Saturday morning and I think it conflicted with Wild Bill Hickok or something, and I lost interest. I was viewed by my parents then as a quitter, so later in my teens when I wanted a guitar my mother refused to buy me one and said, 'You won't stick with it, it will be just like the piano.' So, I bought my own instrument; I bought a baritone ukulele.

"My father was in the North Battleford Kinsmen's Band, it was a marching band in the town. My father was briefly the leader of the band, and I wanted to play drums, terribly. They said girls don't play drums, so that was denied. My father played trumpet. He would have liked to have been Harry James but, as he put it, he couldn't interpolate. And he used to play duets with my piano teacher who rapped my knuckles.

"Then I was stricken with polio and my legs were taken from me, temporarily. I kind of made a promise to my Christmas tree, that if I could get up and walk that I would pay it back somehow. So when I got out of the hospital I joined the church choir. And I asked particularly for the descant part. I called it the pretty melody. The descant was a melody that threaded everything together. And it had wide intervals, that some people couldn't learn because they were too weird.

"I don't think I lasted too long in the choir, but I did learn to smoke there. One night after choir practice—in the winter—one of the girls had a package of cigarettes that she'd taken from her mother, who was a chain smoker, and left a pack in every room. And we sat by the fish pond, which was empty for the winter and full of snow, and we'd pass these cigarettes around. Most of the girls coughed and winced and choked, but I took to it like a duck. And after that I sold pop bottles and newspapers and made enough petty cash to afford a pack-a-week habit. It seemed to ground me. My ninth year was a real emotional ordeal. I had three killer diseases in a row, and a sense of estrangement

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from the world. It was just a private celebration; it was between me and nobody. And in a way I'd been through so much travail by the age of nine, that I felt like I'd earned my adult right to smoke.

"At the age of 11, we were listening to Louis Jordan: 'Saturday Night Fish Fry' and 'The House of Blue Lights.' My next love came when rock 'n' roll was born. And from let's say seventh grade until my second year of grade 12, I was a rock 'n' roll dancer. At that point I was looking for dance halls. And there were school dances all over the place, and the emergence of some public dance halls. That became kind of my reason to be. And specially the jukebox at the Avenue H swimming pool and the jukebox at the CM Lunch, which was on the west side of town, where I was forbidden to go. 20th Street then had the highest crime rate per capita in Canada. It was called Little Chicago.

"Then there was this group of guys: They were my dance partners—we used to call them Ocean's 11. Three or four of them went to New York City and came back with scruffy little goatees, and berets and striped T-shirts and one of them wanted a mural of beatniks on his bedroom wall. And I'd always painted. I was always kind of the school artist. That was how kids identified me, and it was my identity. So, I do believe he paid me with a jazz record. Anyway, somehow or other, into my record collection crept Lambert, Hendricks & Ross's *The Hottest New Sound in Jazz*, Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* and my first rap record, Oscar Brown Junior's *Signifying Monkey*, and that really began to interest me in private, because there was no scene for it around me.

"Then in grade 12 I picked up the baritone ukulele and began to introvert: sit in the corner and pick on this thing. I was still in high school but a lot of my friends were in college, and the new style of partying was emerging where people sat around and sang folk songs. I enjoyed that. We used to go out in the bush and drink beer and put our cars in a circle and turn all the radios on at once and dance wildly in the stubble. I liked that too, but I also liked this more pensive kind of partying. I wasn't serious at all, it was just for the fun of it. It wasn't for a while that I began to write songs. I had always written poetry, but I didn't see the correlation between poetry and songwriting, until Dylan's 'Positively 4th Street.' It's the first time I ever heard anger expressed in a song. And I thought, gee, you can write about anything. So that was a catalyst to think about a lot of things."

And the rest, as the scribes say, is history. Young Roberta Joan Anderson was swept up in the wake of turbulent indigo, and became Joni Mitchell. Between sips of coffee, two aging children go back and forth across the years, rehashing the triumphs and tribulations, and always that little glint of frustration rises to the surface. Joni Mitchell has driven herself to move forward, ever forward, while keeping the divine child of her inspiration alive, but at what price? And where's the applause? Even earth goddesses get the blues.

"I came to the crossroads," she sighs, "and I had to decide in this last year if I really wanted to get out of the business. I'd just had it with it. I thought I can't afford to be in the business any longer, basically—it's time to cash out and get out, you know. I'm being told repeatedly that everything I do is no good. With exceptions. There have been a few champions here and there, but they were really swimming against the tide," she smiles gently. "So I just thought, what's the point? I mean it's

time to get off; it's time to develop my painting, it's time to write some books—there's a lot of things I'd like to do. If I cash out now and get out of town, I could live modestly and well. The thing that stopped me, really, was that I felt that this album was important…but if I gave it to Geffen no one would hear it. And either I would give it to him and call it *Swan Song* and get out, or I would give it to Mo [Ostin, of Warner Bros.] and straighten out some of my back business with him, and then I would have to go another…whatever, you know, ten or 12 years with bean counters at the top; with a conglomerate over my head of unknown people who care nothing about music but only digits pushed; with a myriad of out clauses where there are many, many ways to dump me." Joni smiles and flips back her hair in a gesture of defiance. Her sensitive child recedes for the moment, and her diva reemerges, proud and sassy—a bad girl ready to stir up some trouble. "But that's my ace in the hole," she whispers conspiratorially. "I don't give a damn, you know. Dump me, see if I care!" Her voice drops an octave, and takes on an ancient mojo tone. "I was born in the briar patch," she laughs.

We part warmly, but a week later I am treated to a long-distance grilling by an ornery Joni Mitchell, the likes of which I haven't experienced since my collegiate oral exams. How did this misunderstanding come about? Maybe I'd done something to hurt her feelings? Or, perhaps, as Lester Young once characterized it: "You're with someone, and you think they're cussing you out, but they're actually calling themselves a motherfucker, and you just happen to be in the same room."

My rapt enthusiasm for *Turbulent Indigo* seemed to Joni to indicate a relative lack of esteem for the rest of her post-*Mingus* canon. She felt like I was sitting in judgment of her. Anyway, after we talked out our misunderstandings, Joni told me that "I'm basically a very, very open person, and that's the way I communicate with everyone. But when talking with the press, I often find myself going back over things I said, and feel like I've left myself very vulnerable. I need to be reassured."

Why are you so sensitive?

"Why am I so sensitive?"

Yeah. What do you care what people think? So long as they keep talking about you. Ultimately, you can't please anybody. You can only please yourself.

"Exactly."

Right, so tell all these motherfuckers to go fuck themselves—and tell me to fuck off, too, while you're at it. You're Joni Mitchell.

"Well, look, I'm not whining and I'm not complaining. Sensitivity, I find, is a very important perspective."

The most important perspective. How else can you open yourself up to creativity?

"You need all four major perspectives. You need I know, you need I see, you need I feel, and you need I sense." She pauses. "I'm very childlike in a certain way. Like, you like me, I like you. You don't, I don't. You know what I mean?" she laughs.

And what's the nicest thing someone ever said to you, Joni?

She brightens right up. "You know, in my entire adult life, my favorite compliment—and I think a true compliment should be inspiring, not just flattering—was received from a blind black piano player. And what he said was 'Joni, thank you for your music—it is genderless and raceless.'"

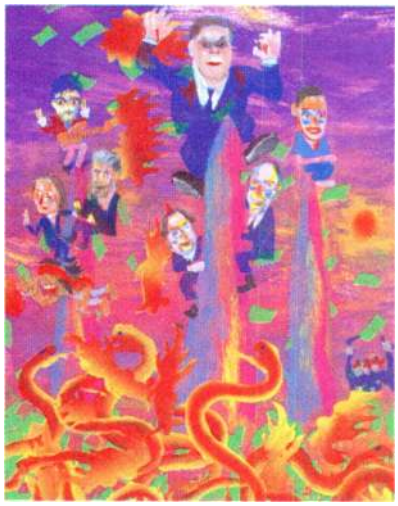
THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1994

THE YEAR

THE SYSTEM

STARTED TO UNRAVEL

WHAT A YEAR FOR THE MUSIC WORLD! Musicians were going on strike against their record companies, the record executives were staging mutinies against the corporations that owned them, the corporations were firing top executives and trying to screw musicians and technology was mutating so quickly that no one was sure who was going to need who by the time the dust settled and people began to think about playing music again. Your faithful native guides at *Musician* have condensed all the news, theories, slander and gossip into one easy-to-carry ball—which we now take great delight in lobbing at your head. DUCK!



LABELS REBEL AGAINST THE CORPORATIONS

WITH FREEWHEELING chairman Steve Ross dead, button-down Time Warner corporate began to try to bring the unruly honchos of the Warner, Elektra and Atlantic record labels into line with what they consider proper business decorum. Execs bitter about the turn of events said that Time Warner's Robert Morgado (the Warner Music Group's chairman and chief executive and bean counter supreme) was finally free to do what Ross would not have allowed—remake the self-governing labels in the corporate image. Morgado walked around announcing that he was going to teach these record executives that the music business was a business and should be run like any other business! He told MTV CEO Tom Freston that he was going to "bury" him and his network—along with anyone else in the industry who acted like a maverick.

Why should musicians care about what happens among these millionaire businessmen? Because as much as the old-guard label chiefs may be snakes, they're *our* snakes—they are music men. The new corporate megastructure climbers are interested only in the bottom line. They have no use for the type of serious rock artists upon whom Warners and Elektra built their labels. They would rather have a pop assembly line that keeps the product coming. To such people the notion of waiting five years for an album from a Paul Simon or Peter Gabriel is nonsense—it would be like Kellogg's being told there'll be no Frosted Flakes this year 'cause Tony the Tiger isn't feeling inspired.

Warner/Reprise, Elektra and Atlantic represent the glory days of the freewheeling U.S. record business. Each label has its own personality and creative history. Morgado set out to put an end to all that. Atlantic's Ahmet Ertegun and Elektra's Bob Krasnow have both had health problems. Ertegun had already passed the running of Atlantic over to his co-chairman, Doug Morris. Krasnow's Elektra had been struggling with a bad run. Only the Warner/Reprise label*, headed by legendary chairman Mo Ostin and president Lenny Waronker, was still operating with its old guard at full strength.

Morgado turned that old world upside down with one move: He put Atlantic's Doug Morris in charge of all the WEA labels. Predictably, Ostin and Krasnow quit. Nerves at Warn-

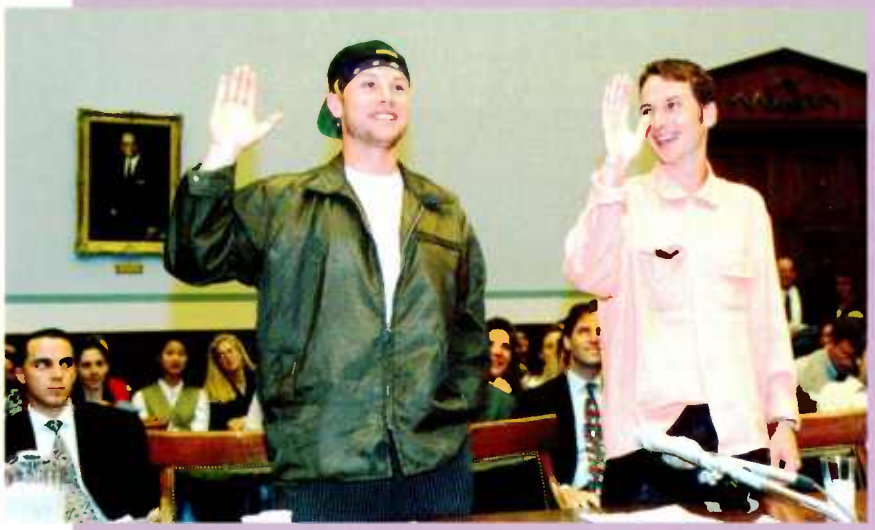
*To avoid confusion we are referring to the overall corporate structure as Time Warner, the combined labels as WEA, and Ostin's Warner Bros. label as Warner/Reprise.

BY BILL FLANAGAN

ILLUSTRATION BY GARY PANTER

pearl jam's ticket wars

IN 1994 PEARL JAM showed they weren't just the biggest band in America, they were the most revolutionary. Now that's a combination we haven't seen in a while. Consider: The band refused to make any videos for its massively successful second album, *Vs.* They released no singles in the U.S., and in the U.K., where they did put out a single, "Animal," they released it without a bar code, more or less stifling attempts to track its sales. They didn't tour, of course—not exactly a political act in and of itself. But the drama behind their decision to *not* tour became, at least in the music business, the David and Goliath story of the year. Vs., indeed.



Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard testifying in D.C.

This was, after all, the year in which large-scale concert prices shot through the roof. Fifty bucks for the Rolling Stones? Seventy-five for Pink Floyd? $150 for the Eagles?! Golly, them old yuppies got the bucks. But high-profile shows like the aforementioned have the unfortunate effect of raising ticket prices across the board. Teenage rock fans may not care that old farts like the Eagles are gouging their fortysomething customers, but chances are they'll be shelling out more dough too, the next time Smashing Pumpkins or Soundgarden come to town.

Enter Pearl Jam. Spurning the reigning rock star attitude of noblesse oblige in favor of good old-fashioned populism, on the cusp of the most anticipated tour of the year Eddie Vedder and company demanded a $20 ceiling on ticket charges, including a top service charge of ten percent. This last stipulation put them at odds not only with concert promoters but with gargantuan service agency Ticketmaster, whose virtual monopoly on arena contracts made a large-scale tour without their cooperation difficult at best. Indeed, Pearl Jam's attempt to structure a tour around "alternative venues"—i.e., those not bound by Ticketmaster contracts—proved impossible to put together on short notice. But Pearl Jam's militancy also hit a nerve, partly because of their stature, and also because of rumors throughout the music industry of sweetheart deals and kickbacks among some promoters, managers and service agencies that were inflating prices.

The controversy made its way to Washington in June, where Pearl Jam put these issues before TV cameras and a panel of preening congresspeople, while raising the spectre of Ticketmaster's vulnerability to anti-trust legislation. In the end, the band never did tour, and Congress turned its attention to new sources of sound bites. A new twist in the fray occurred in October, when Green Day announced a national tour with tickets priced under $20 (albeit including 15–20 percent service charges) and with Ticketmaster's enthusiastic support. But with the release of Pearl Jam's new album *Vitalogy*, expectations of another tour—or war—in '95 are once again in the offing. Stay tuned.

Beyond Pearl Jam, large-scale rock concerts generally raked in what the market would bear, which in the case of certain '60s icons turned out to be a case of feast or famine. Sure, the Stones and Pink Floyd cleaned up, not to mention that enduring symbol of the counterculture Barbra Streisand (that'll be $350 a ticket, thanks, *plus* service charge); on the other hand, the Traffic reunion required a certain amount of, uh, downsizing.

For sheer audacity and greed, however, nothing quite compared with the Eagles "reunion," a snore-fest that packed amphitheaters at tickets ranging from $75 to $150 a pop, while giving new meaning to the phrase "Take It to the Limit." In a minor stroke of genius, Boston's WBCN drew national attention by offering its listeners the chance to turn in their Eagles tickets in exchange for an unreleased live-performance CD by—who else?—Pearl Jam.

BY MARK ROWLAND

PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMAN ARCHIVES

er/Reprise were calmed a little by news that Lenny Waronker, Ostin's deputy, would replace him. There was some hope that Lenny could keep the legacy alive. That hope was dashed in October when Waronker announced that he, too, would walk when his contract ran out at the end of 1995.

At that point two weeks of madness erupted in the record business during which label presidents accused each other of treason, resignations flew, and the multinational corporations got a first-hand lesson in why the music business will never fit comfortably into a corporate pyramid structure. Krasnow had been replaced as Elektra chairman by Sylvia Rhone, an African-American woman who had been successfully running Atlantic's East/West imprint. No one was going to protest that. Then Seymour Stein, the brilliant, eccentric head of Sire Records, a Warner/Reprise imprint, was offered the job of president of Elektra under Rhone. Stein equivocated—there was talk that he would take the job but that his right-hand men, Howie Klein and Joe McEwen, were reluctant to move with him. Then it was rumored that in the wake of Waronker quitting, Stein told Morgado and Morris to take the job and shove it. Then gossips said that Stein would indeed take Elektra, but was covering his bets as anti-Morgado sentiment erupted across the industry.

Doug Morris found himself in a lousy position. He was seen by the other label chiefs as the turncoat, the guy who sold out his peers to side with the evil corporate bean counter. Morris was perceived as having allowed himself to be used to get rid of Ostin and Krasnow. He was the public face of Morgado's attempt to turn the Atlantic, Warners and Elektra labels into one homogenized corporate entity.

There was about to be more blood on the walls. Morgado decided to bring Warner UK chief Rob Dickins to America to replace Ostin at Warner/Reprise. An outsider, a *foreigner* was coming to take over the flagship of the last American major! There was wild talk of massive walkouts. There was speculation that major acts such as R.E.M., Neil Young and Eric Clapton would follow Lenny and Mo out the door. An executive of a rival label told *Musician*, "We're just sitting here watching in amazement as Morgado single-handedly dismantles the most powerful record company in the world."

Remember the old Lenny Bruce routine about the Lone Ranger and Tonto surrounded by a band of wild Indians? The Lone Ranger says, "What are we going to do, Tonto?" Tonto says, "What do you mean *we*, white man?" That is the situation in which the Lone Morgado and his faithful sidekick Doug Morris found themselves as the wild record execs circled them screaming for blood. Morris turned to Morgado and said, Whadya mean *we*?

WEA employees whisper that things got so hot Morris took a swing at Morgado (well, they admit, he didn't *connect*). Morris decided this had all gone too far. Morris went to Time Warner Chairman Gerald M. Levin and got backing to usurp Morgado's power over label appointments. Reportedly Morris said that he, Elektra's Sylvia Rhone and Atlantic president Danny Goldberg were all prepared to resign if Morgado's rampage wasn't stopped. Levin must have been taken aback. Ostin was gone, Krasnow was gone, Waronker was going, Stein was (*maybe*) ready to go, and now Morris, Goldberg and Rhone were set to quit? Who the hell would sign the T&E's?!? Levin sided with Morris against Morgado.

By the time Morgado's man Dickins landed in America and unpacked his suitcase his new job was gone. Morgado, publicly humiliated, went back to Time Warner with his tail between his legs. His dreams were further dashed the next day when Levin announced that he was giving the presidency of the whole Time Warner corporation (a job Morgado supposedly coveted) to surprise choice Richard Parsons, a banker. Morgado had in one 48-hour period been cut down from above and below. WEA employees danced around singing, "Ding dong the witch is dead" and talking about how when the chips were down Doug Morris remembered he was a *record* man and saved the day. Morris quickly moved to put his own right-hand man, Danny Goldberg, into the chairman's job at Warner/Reprise. Goldberg is a music man, former top artist manager and free speech crusader. It seems that the forces of good triumphed over darkness.

"We're just watching in amazement as Morgado dismantles the most powerful record company in the world."


Robert Morgado

And they probably did, they probably did. But there is one other scenario, a scenario no one really wants to believe and even if it is true we will never know. What if that swing Morris took at Morgado missed on purpose? What if, having gotten themselves into an impossible corner, the Lone Ranger and Tonto decided to play a little game of good cop/bad cop to fool the other Indians?

What if, way up in that Time Warner penthouse, Morgado and Morris are locking the door, exchanging high-fives and saying, "We got what we wanted, and they *bought* it. Atlantic, Elektra and Warner/Reprise have been folded into one corporate culture. Mo and Lenny and Krasnow are gone. We'll get rid of their loyalists as we go along."

Unlikely? Sure. By the time you read this Morgado may have exited Time Warner altogether. He's already being blamed for decisions—such as big layoffs at Elektra—that he had nothing to do with. Certainly, WEA staffers who might have felt morally obligated to walk off their jobs before now have an excuse to say, "Well, the good guys won," and go back to work. And if the work they are going back to has a little less room for, say, a Randy Newman—who's really going

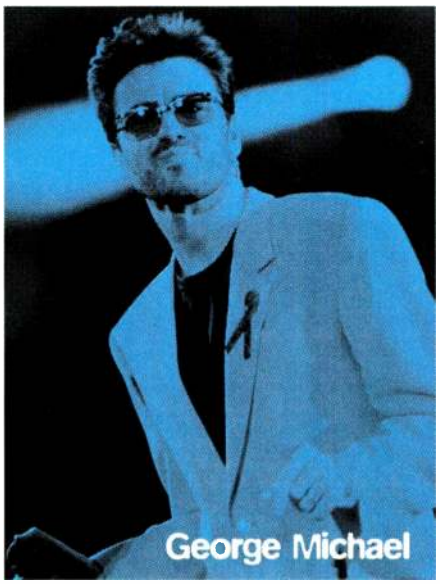
to notice? Maybe Warner/Reprise and Elektra could learn a lesson from Doug Morris, who it is probably fair to say is a little less concerned with pampering the artists than Mo Ostin was, and a little more comfortable with a philosophy of *push the record as far as you can as fast as you can.*

It's not the '60s anymore. Hell, it's barely even the twentieth century anymore. None of this was meant to last forever.

MUSICIANS REBEL AGAINST THE LABELS

ONE OF MORGADO'S transgressions was that he gave musicians a stick with which to beat the record companies. Allegedly Metallica, one of Elektra's biggest acts, had reached an oral agreement with Bob Krasnow for the return to the band of ownership of their master recordings. When Krasnow was deposed, Morgado refused to honor the agreement. That brought down on WEA the bad blood of both the artist community (who saw it as proof that the new WEA management was untrustworthy) and the music executives, who do not want to see Metallica win a court ruling that could set an anti-label precedent other acts would follow.

See, Metallica are challenging Elektra's right to their contract under California Labor Code 2855, which limits the length of any personal services contract to seven years. The labels have been dreading the day some artist would invoke that law to break a record deal. Don Henley tried first.


George Michael

George Michael and his lawyers presented a case that would have made Jimmy Hoffa side with management.

Henley let it be known some time ago that he was unhappy with Geffen Records and would welcome offers from other labels. The trouble was that Henley takes years to make an album and he still owed Geffen three—as many as he'd made in the first decade of his solo career. After a decent amount of complaining, Henley launched a lawsuit to dissolve his Geffen deal under the seven-year law.


Don Henley

The ears of the music industry perked up! Every recording artist wanted to see that law tested, and Henley's contention that the major record labels maintained a tacit agreement to not sign artists who invoked it to get out of other deals had (as Thor used to say) the ring of truth. While the lawsuit was being fought out Henley kept his face before the public with charity work, high profile appearances and helping to put together *Common Thread*, a tribute album to the Eagles by top country stars. When that was a smash, the Eagles reunited for a tour, TV special and album. Ultimately Henley and Geffen settled out of court, Geffen got the Eagles reunion album, and Don's future looks lucrative. Unfortunately for other musicians, the way labels do business was not tested in the court.

But wait! It might be for the best. There was one big impediment to Henley's legal case—an impediment Geffen would surely have beaten his head against; like many successful artists Henley had, during the course of his record deal, renegotiated his contract. Geffen would have made the solid argument that such a renegotiation began a *new* seven-year period. The same cannot be said of Metallica, who signed a ten-year contract with Elektra Records and *never renegotiated*. Metallica's suit maintains that they stuck to their initial deal, their seven years is up, and they want out.

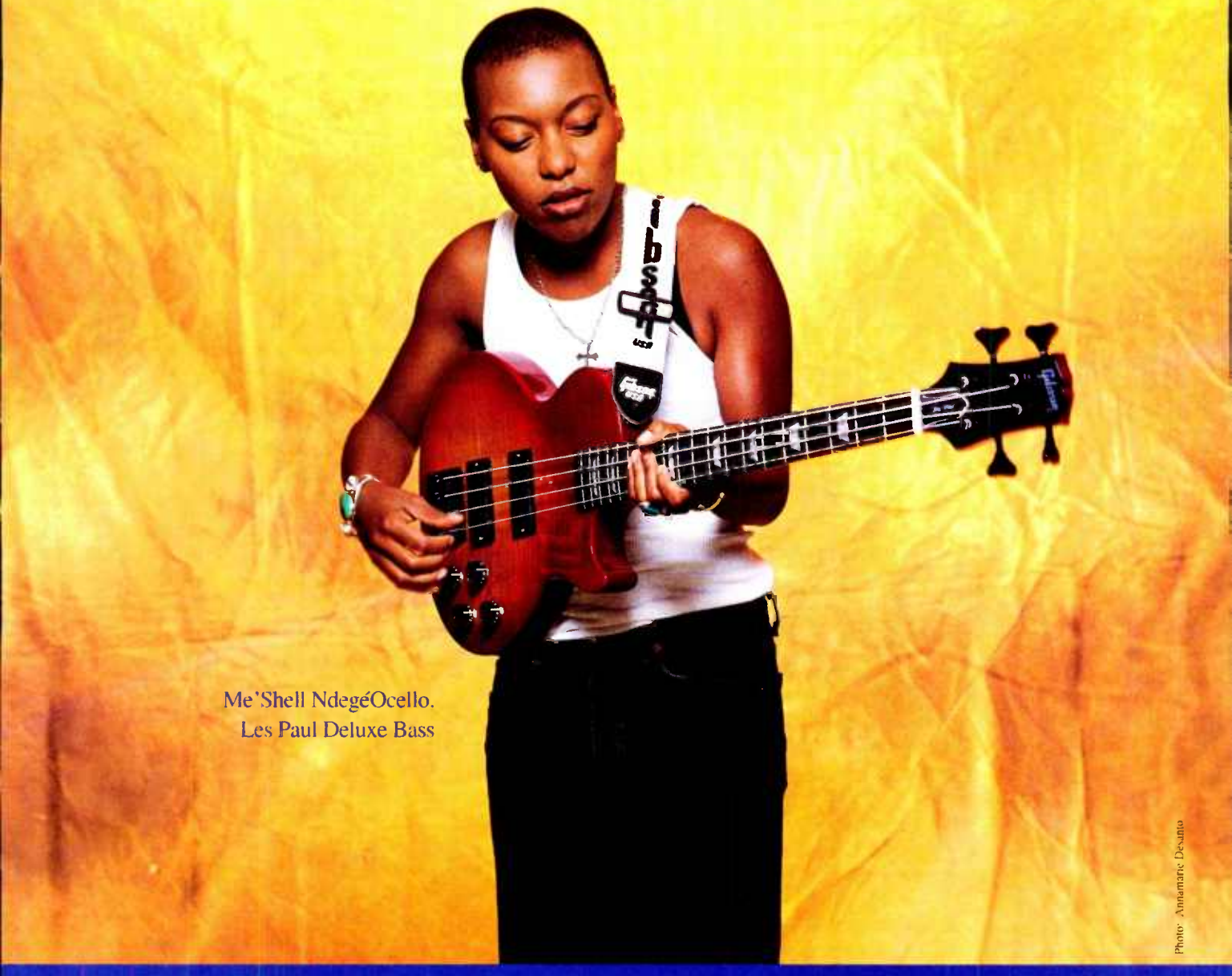
If the courts rule with Metallica, Bob Morgado will have inadvertently been the catalyst for the biggest blow against standard record deals in years.

The possibility of a Free-Agency for musicians is the sub-text of a lot of maneuvers in the music business these days. Several major acts were also vying for the chance to be first to test the strength of the deals that bind musicians to record labels in the courts of Britain. When George Michael brought suit against Sony in London, there was a lot of speculation that this would be the blow that would prove that the standard record deal was so weighted against the artist as to constitute an unfair restraint of trade.

Unfortunately for other musicians, Michael and his lawyers presented a case that would have made Jimmy Hoffa side with management. Rather than focus on the ways in which virtually all record deals put the artist at a disadvantage, Michael's case seemed to be based on the assumption that George Michael was the most important performer in the world and if any other Sony artist were promoted more than George Michael, it was self-evidently unjust. Michael's attorneys suggested that there was something unprofessional in Sony Music president Tommy Mottola's label promoting the career of Mottola's then-girlfriend (now wife) Mariah Carey—which is pretty hard to sustain when you consider how many millions of records Carey has sold.

Michael's main complaint was that Sony had not promoted

Me'Shell Picks Gibson!



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Michael's self-consciously artsy *Listen Without Prejudice* album with the same enthusiasm that they had poured into the more pop *Faith*. Now aside from the fact that it appears to be untrue—*so what if it were*? What court would demand that record companies are obligated to push uncommercial albums as hard as they push those with a chance of selling ten million? No doubt Sony spends more on promoting Michael Bolton than they do on Bruce Cockburn, which is no reflection of artistic value but is a reasonable investment.

What really sank Michael's argument, though, was that he himself refused to promote *Listen Without Prejudice*. He did virtually no interviews for the record and refused to appear in its videos. By unintentionally presenting their client as a self-absorbed prima donna, Michael's lawyers set back the cause of artists' rights by a mile.

Prince's ego may have inspired his rebellion against Warners as much as Michael's did his against Sony, but Prince gives every impression of being a lot smarter. Having signed a multimillion-dollar deal to great fanfare, Prince was surely upset when his recent albums did not sell well enough to trigger the big payday his new contract called for. He let it be known that his relationship with Warners had deteriorated to the point where he had little interest in continuing with the label. He said he would fulfill his contract by delivering albums made up of unreleased material from his large archive, and look for other ways to get his new music out.

Unlike George Michael, Prince's main complaint was not that he wanted the record company to do more for him—he just wanted the label to get out of his way. He explained that he records much more music than Warners is willing to release (the accepted wisdom is that more than one album a year dilutes the market and hurts an artist's sales) and that his inability to get all his music out is stifling.

Warners seemed to be pretty gracious about letting Prince try a few experiments. He released a maxi-single "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World" through independent distribution and scored a big hit. Then, simultaneous with the release of the archival album *Come*, Prince released an album of songs written and produced by him (with other artists performing them) on his own label and available through an 800 number. At a concert in New York in July Prince played a whole set of new material and, smiling, told the ecstatic audience that he would rather come out and play his songs live than have to deal with record companies at all.

Prince seems more likely than other musicians to really challenge the way the music business operates, because more than most musicians he seems to sincerely value making the music above making the money.

RACING FOR THE WIRE

ONE EARTHQUAKE THAT set off these shockwaves came from the efforts of everyone in the music industry—musicians, label chiefs, corporate honchos, lawyers, managers, retailers and manufacturers—to get their own positions protected as we move toward the information superhighway that will change the way music is sold to consumers. A year ago *Musician* ran a cover story called "Future Shocks: The End of the Music Business as We Know It" that caused a riot in the industry by showing how the coming capacity to sell music by direct transmission from artist to fan (over telephone lines, cable or satellite transmission) would call into question the need for record stores and even record companies as they are now structured. *Musician* was hit with requests from up and down the industry—from superstars to mainstream reporters to the boardrooms of multinational corporations—to send over piles of the issue, to advise on setting up electronic distribution systems and to discuss the ramifications of the new gold rush.

Musician had brought out of the closet a subject the music industry was struggling to figure out and to keep quiet: In a world where there is no cassette, no disc, no record to sell—who's going to own the music? Ethically, it seems obvious that the artist should, but nobody ever said this business was run by ethics. In 1994 the record companies scrambled to assure themselves of a future in this new world, most obviously by lobbying through the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) for a new law that would grant labels a royalty payment each time a recording is broadcast. Today "broadcast" means played on the radio or TV, but the law makes clear that it also covers music transmitted into individual homes. The American Federation of Musicians managed to get tagged on a provision to include payments to performers in this law. You can see that as either a great accomplishment for artists (their first-ever broadcast royalty) or a buy-off to keep the labels in the power position. The bill (sponsored in the Senate by Republican Orrin Hatch and Democrat Diane Feinstein) did not make it through this year, but will almost certainly reach a vote in 1995.

In the new world musicians will need a gigantic corporate distribution system less than a few smart advisors.

Also on the lawmaking front Vice President Gore, a big champion of speeding up the creation of the information highway, backed legislation that would deregulate the information industries (allowing for easier mergers of, for example, cable and phone companies) in exchange for those companies promising open public access to the systems they create. That is crucial if musicians are to have the ability to get their product into the electronic marketplace without having to make deals with big media companies in order to get on line. It means that everyone with a modem would have an equal chance to sell their goods on the superhighway.

Obviously the mega-corporations would prefer to have a monopoly on the means to the market; they would prefer to block freelancers and small operators from selling their music alongside the bigwigs. One characteristic of mega-corporations is that they are for laissez-faire capitalism and the free market only to the degree that it helps them. When free market helps the little guy they run for protective legislation like commissars to the Politburo. The superhighway deregulation bill was among the laws blocked by the Republicans in their autumn filibusters—an orgy of obstructionism in which the G.O.P. stopped a mountain of progressive legislation from being voted on. It does not seem too cynical to suppose that when a new, more conservative congress convenes next year it will be even tougher for information deregulation to pass.

Which is not to say that direct home transmission is not inching forward. Aerosmith got a ton of attention this year when they piped a new song onto the Internet and let wired-in fans download it for free.

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David Geffen, the head of Aerosmith's label, was reportedly peeved when he heard about the project—why encourage a trend that implies, at the very least, that the labels are preparing to abandon record stores at a time when the labels still *need* the record stores? But Geffen was convinced that as the Aerosmith transmission had already been announced it would be worse P.R. to pull the plug. So the experiment went ahead and the Aerosmith song was sent down the infobahn—although the music took so long to download that some cynical computer hackers bitched that it was all a plot to make people think that computer delivery would not be worth the effort.

RETAILERS VS LABELS

DAVID GEFFEN was right to be worried about offending the record retailers—all this talk about their coming obsolescence was pissing off the record stores to no end. At the National Association of Record Merchants (NARM) convention in San Francisco in March, label after label got up and promised the retailers that they would never let this silly little superhighway come between them. (Meanwhile Blockbuster Video, an upstart in the record business, was jumping into the fiberoptic future with both feet.) But record store owners know when they're being snowed. No sooner had everyone gone home from NARM than the labels were cooking up interim methods of going around the record stores. One of the most successful was EMI's campaign to sell specially made low-price CDs by Garth Brooks, Tina Turner and other stars through McDonald's! Buy a happy meal, get a half-price copy of a new Roxette CD before the music on it is available in record stores.

Oh the cruelty! Retailers were up in arms, but EMI was looking prosperous. The promotion sold more than nine million CDs in a month. Record stores are feeling so alienated from the labels that one large national chain is thought to be preparing to launch a record company of its own. There's one label that won't be going on line too soon!

Does a record chain owning a record company sound like an anti-trust violation? You ain't heard nothin' yet! In October the entertainment business was jolted by the announcement that superstar talent agent Michael Ovitz of the powerful Creative Artists Agency was linking CAA with three of the "baby Bell" telephone companies—Nynex, Bell Atlantic and Pacific Telesis—with plans to begin transmitting movies (and video games, they did not mention music) over phone wires into people's TVs on a limited basis *at the end of next year*. The deal was doubly shocking because Ovitz, an agent, is in effect setting himself up as a studio. There was far less squealing in August when the Walt Disney Company announced a similar deal to deliver programming through three phone companies—Southwestern Bell, BellSouth and Ameritech. But the long-term impact is the same—entertainment corporations want to team up with delivery systems and cut out the middlemen.

Michael Ovitz's biggest client is Steven Spielberg, and the week before announcing his new partnership with the phone companies Ovitz got together with David Geffen and Jeffrey Katzenberg for a powwow. That is significant because just as Ovitz was constructing a talent/hardware supercompany, Geffen, Spielberg and Katzenberg were announcing plans to start an entertainment empire of their own. In a subtle way the Geffen team's front-page move may have helped inspire those WEA chiefs to revolt against *their* corporate bosses. [*cont'd on page 78*]

BETA Bio

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DISCOGRAPHY:
"Come On Come On" (1992), "Shooting Straight in the Dark" (1990), "State of the Heart" (1989), "Hometown Girl" (1987). All on Columbia Records.

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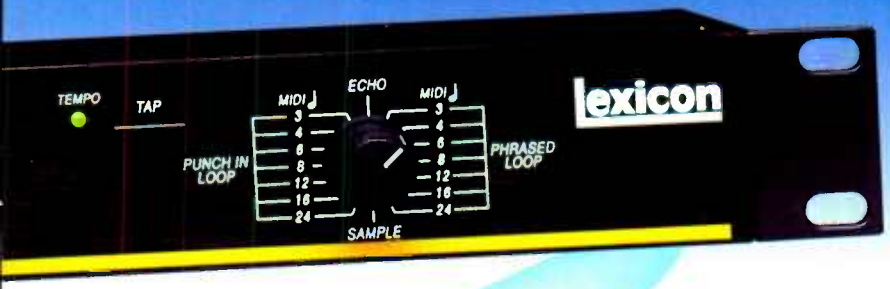

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Joe Gore, Guitar Player, March, 1994

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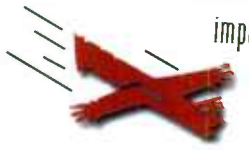
Bob Ross, Recording Magazine, September, 1994



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Stephen Sondheim is an American treasure, our greatest theatrical composer, a brilliant songwriter etc. etc. etc.—but the opening scene of his new musical *Passion* is one of the goofiest things we've ever stifled a laugh through. A handsome man and a lovely woman recline on a bed and croon a corny Jeanette MacDonald/Nelson Eddy–style love song to each other; both are naked. The Broadway audience sits stone-faced while these two harmonize and tweak each other's nipples. We kept looking around to see if Zero Mostel and Gene Wilder were standing in the back of the hall rubbing their hands together. A truly lame-brained opening to a truly mundane show, which cleaned up at the Tony Awards.

JOAN MARCUS

lo-fi hits big time

1994 WAS THE YEAR LO-FI ARRIVED: Beck had the nation's youth nodding their heads to his Casio noodlings, the Beastie Boys committed their raps to posterity on plastic mikes, and the retired schoolteacher in Guided by Voices—who once said that "we've used all four tracks before and it sounded too slick"—has been getting MTV play. Wary of the potential widespread dumbing-down of musicians' gear collections, equipment manufacturers plied players with zeitgeist-reflecting accessories like DOD's Grunge Pedal.

But should lo-fi be considered an end in itself? "You read all these things about how lo-fi is supposed to be about personal directness," says Stephen Malkmus of Pavement, who are touted as low-fidelity kingpins, "but we did lo-fi stuff out of necessity, because we didn't know anyone to ask to produce our records."

There's at least one bright spot to the phenomenon, even if the thought of a new generation of musicians playing toy guitars strung with piano wire makes you wince: Hopefully fewer newly signed groups will be blowing their advances at the Hit Factory.

—NATHAN BRACKETT

1994 THE YEAR

GROWING FASTER THAN THE NATIONAL DEBT AWARD

To the crowd who came to Woodstock '94. On the first night of the concert the audience was estimated at 150,000. By the end of the weekend MTV and other media were happily upping the number to 175,00 and even 200,000. By a week after the event, 250,000 was being thrown around. Recently we saw a reference to "perhaps as many as 300,000" concert-goers. At this rate Woodstock II will pass the million mark by spring!

OUTLINE/CHARLIE SAMUELS

artist of the year

NINE INCH NAILS

IN A MUSIC SCENE increasingly divided between flannel grunge and techno gloss, Trent Reznor and Nine Inch Nails turned those divisions inside out. A series of records that helped create a groundswell for an industrial sound that's been relegated to the margins of pop since the days of Throbbing Gristle culminated in 1994 with what may be his masterpiece, *The Downward Spiral*. Sounds at once grating and elegantly textured, songs that tread emotional landscapes from raw carnality to abject pathos, dance rhythms robotic and liberating, the record became a critical and commercial triumph, while his live shows revealed the reticent, handsome Reznor as a galvanizing stage presence. His triumph was ultimately confirmed at Mudstock II, where Nine Inch Nails not only stole the show, but suggested the magic of Jimi Hendrix at Mudstock I, by offering an alluring invitation to a strange new world. By producing a second album, the soundtrack to Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, only months after *The Downward Spiral*, Reznor demonstrated his intention to keep pushing at the walls.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH CULTICE

IN MUSIC

synths learn to respect musicianship

SINCE 1987 OR SO, the basic palette of most synthesizers has been sampled acoustic sounds. This makes for instruments with a lot of sonic oomph. It also makes for instruments that sound pretty much the same whether they're played by experts or beginners—which is one reason why you keep hearing the same sounds over and over again on the radio.

But that's about to change. Advances in digital signal processing that have been snowballing over the past two decades reached critical mass this year when Yamaha and Korg, working independently, introduced the first synthesizers based on *physical modeling* (PM). On the evidence of Yamaha's VL1 keyboard and Korg's WaveDrum, the new approach will have as dramatic an impact as did sampling and, before that, digital FM synthesis.

PM rests on the notion that a physical system—say, a vibrating string—can be described as a mathematical equation. A musical instrument, being a group of such systems, can be boiled down into a string of equations. A microprocessor, working with input variables such as wind pressure or picking force, crunches the numbers and generates a sound paralleling that of the real thing.

That's a step forward all by itself, as a sampled guitar string is always "plucked" with the same force no matter how you play it back, and previous methods of pure synthesis haven't been great at imitating natural sounds. The fun begins when you start tampering with the equations to model fantasy instruments—for instance, a PVC guitar with rubber strings 30 feet long. To top it off, all of the gestures that go into a performance can be built into the model, so your fantasy guitar responds properly to slapping, damping and the like.

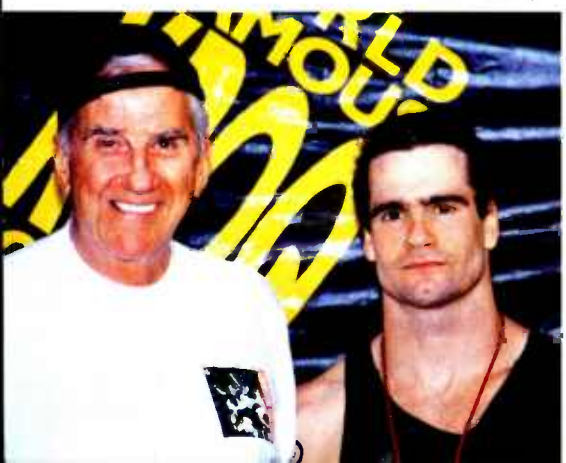
But enhanced expressive power doesn't come without a cost. For years, electronic instruments have had the effect of "democratizing" music, making high-gloss sounds available even to players who haven't spent any time or effort learning how to produce them. If they are truly to rival the saxophone or the violin, PM synths are likely to be just as difficult to play—perhaps even more so. Whether or not that's an improvement depends on which you value more: greater access to sounds or greater responsiveness to an individual player's unique talent. In any case, now we have a choice. —TED GREENWALD

THE TED NUGENT MEMORIAL HUNTING TROPHY

Cellist Anne Conrad-Antoville quit the Eureka (Ca.) Symphony in protest of their performing "Peter and the Wolf." The musician claimed that the classic "teaches children to hate and fear wolves and to applaud a hunter who kills a wolf," thus leading to "destructive misconceptions." Yeah, like classical musicians are smarter than rockers.

STEVE ALLEN JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES AWARDS

To Henry Rollins, singer, author, comedian and businessman. Seen here comparing monologues with fellow renaissance man Ed McMahon.



IF YOU DUG THE SINGING NUN...

COMMUNICATION IS the revolution of our time, and in 1994 the mainstream pop scene reflected an ever-shrinking global village. From Robert Plant and Jimmy Page recontextualizing their Zeppelin hits with Algerian "Rai" rhythms, to mainstream crooners like Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men retracking their hits in Spanish, to Neneh Cherry and Youssou N'Dour sharing a universal message in two languages on one song, performers and listeners showed a willingness, even hunger, for a wider world of pop.

But nothing had quite the impact of a 15-year-old recording by a cloistered order of Catholic monks in the hills of Spain. When an album of their vocal chants, first released by EMI/Spain in 1978, began to show an upsurge in popularity among that country's teenagers, the label decided to reissue the record by the Benedictine monks of Santo Domingo de Silos on CD—simply titled *Chant*—and the results were phenomenal; over five million copies of the CD have been sold worldwide, including two million copies in the U.S., to an audience ranging from grungemeisters to grandmothers.

The monks themselves were reportedly happy that their music has been received so well, but less than thrilled with the media attention, so prospects for a follow-up album seem uncertain. Sticking with the Catholic motif, however, Angel Records is following *Chant* with a new recording of twelfth-century chants by Hildegard of Bingen, a German nun and mystic, her music somewhat contemporized by producer Richard Souther's synth beds and quasi-world rhythms. It's got a beat, and you can pray to it.

maternal life

PUTTING MOTHERHOOD THROUGH AN AMPLIFIER

1994 WAS ANOTHER OF THOSE YEARS when "Women in Rock" got a lot of attention. But you had to wonder why so many female musicians—and critics of both genders—seemed to think that the only way women were empowered was by strapping on male cock-rock clichés. It often seemed as if the champions of L7, Come, Babes in Toyland, Bikini Kill and even Melissa Etheridge (if not the artists themselves) figured that women who postured and made a big loud noise were making a breakthrough. Meanwhile the legacy of many women who had genuinely expanded the sensibility of rock—Laura Nyro, Aretha Franklin, Joni Mitchell, Joan Armatrading—was ignored, disparaged or dismissed as *not really rock 'n' roll.*

OUTLINE/SHAWN MORTENSEN

Chrissie Hynde and daughter

It's not a new phenomenon. From Suzie Quatro to Joan Jett, when a woman comes onstage in a black leather jacket and strikes a macho pose she gets credit for taking on the boys at their own game. But when a woman expands rock's vocabulary to include a genuinely female perspective, she is said to not be a rock musician. You want proof? How's this: At the end of 1990 there were a slew of articles about the fact that in that year no rock album got to number one on the *Billboard* chart. What no one ever mentioned was that in that year both Sinéad O'Connor's *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got* and Bonnie Raitt's *Nick of Time* held the number one position for weeks. O'Connor and Raitt were not considered rock 'n' roll. Want to bet Peter Gabriel and Jackson Browne would have been?

So it was a real inspiration to find, slipping around the corners of public perception this year, some new albums that continued the long effort to open up rock enough to contain female sensibilities. On *Hips and Makers* Throwing Muses leader Kristin Hersh created a world that was genuinely compelling and not a little scary—the world of a young mother struggling to keep her identity separate from her child's. Hersh said that she was trying to create "female" song structures—compositions not bound to repetition and climax. On *Universal Mother* Sinéad O'Connor peeled back her psyche to explore all the ramifications of motherhood—noble, selfish, sacrificial, demanding, holy and profane. It was O'Connor, in 1990, who wailed, "You know how it is and how a pregnancy can change you!" To which the men in the rock audience could only look at their shoes and mumble, "Well, actually no, I don't—but tell me more..."

On that song, "Jump in the River," O'Connor used rock 'n' roll as a vehicle to howl about a world-shaking circumstance common to women: pregnancy. If men can use rock to sing about their penises (let's face it, that's what a lot of them do) it should not have been a shock to hear a woman use rock to sing about her womb. But it was. O'Connor's song was not the first (Patti Smith recorded "Kimberly," a rocker about childbirth, in 1975) but it was startling in a genre in which the feminist ideal had become almost completely fixed on adopting some of the most obnoxious sexual attitudes of men.

On *Last of the Independents* Chrissie Hynde demonstrated that a woman's sexual experience—including not just *having* sex but pregnancy, childbirth and nursing—was as potent a subject for rock 'n' roll as fast cars or fistfights. "You want to suck on my breast/It's no surprise you do/I'm the source and the force you owe your life to, brother," she sang—after which "My Big Ten Inch" seems a little, well, flimsy. She sang about the sadness of raising "daughters in a pornographic town" and about the joy of feeling a lover on her back. She also boasted, "I understand blood and I understand pain/There can be no life without it—I'm a mother."

What Hynde got for her effort was one of the best albums of the year, disappointing record sales and the head-scratching misunderstanding of critics whose notions of feminism were still stuck in a freshman seminar. But in the long run that won't matter. In the long run Hynde, O'Connor, Hersh and all the other musicians who are infusing rock 'n' roll with a sensibility broad enough to encompass both types of human beings are making the art form a more hospitable place for their daughters *and* their sons. —BILL FLANAGAN

book of the year

LAST TRAIN TO MEMPHIS

THE RISE OF ELVIS PRESLEY

By Peter Guralnick

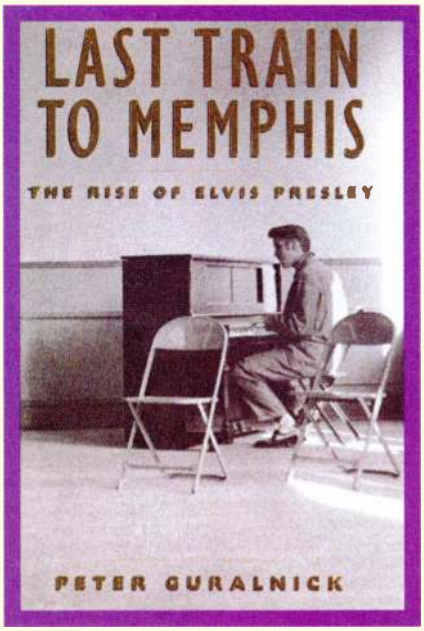
Reviewed by Elvis Costello

ALBERT GOLDMAN WROTE a good book once. At least I remember being quite taken by *Ladies and Gentlemen, Lenny Bruce* when I was 20 or so. Of course Mr. Bruce did not provide quite so much evidence to contradict the grave robber, so I could be mistaken. Later on I found that the main virtue of Mr. Goldman's writing was that it bounced. His Elvis biography rebounded very sweetly from the wall where I often seemed to fling it. Since his death Elvis Presley must have reached more people than he did in life. Yet he is caught in a smudge of tabloid fantasies, bio-flicks and gimmick books—the kind that are glued to a cassette message from beyond the grave.

Peter Guralnick's *Last Train to Memphis* is much more than the book that was needed to set things straight. It is the great human story of the otherworldly soul who inhabits the Dorsey and "Ed Sullivan Show" clips and the spookiest Sun sides. At first older women gather, almost innocently, at his side. Later on the little girls understand.

Now *you* would probably want stained-glass windows in the front room and the odd parade of fancy cars if you had grown up as poor as told here. There *is* a dark chorus of sullen relations with names that sound misheard but the gothic and social-engineering elements are left to lesser writers. Mostly it is the pure, thrilling discovery of the Sun sessions (and the roadwork!) that drives the book along.

The country must have appeared twice as big in those days with only a few berserk radio madmen to point the way. Back-scratching country show business didn't really care if Elvis was part Dean Martin and part pine marten until, suddenly, he was everywhere and they were less than history. However, he really might have stayed a wonderful country freak with a few forgotten hits without the Colonel's carney greed and cunning. After that there is a life that is no longer his own, paid friends and the sad falling curtain of occasional greatness struggling against trumped-up RCA excitement. Just listen to "Party" next to "Blue Moon" and you'll see what I mean.

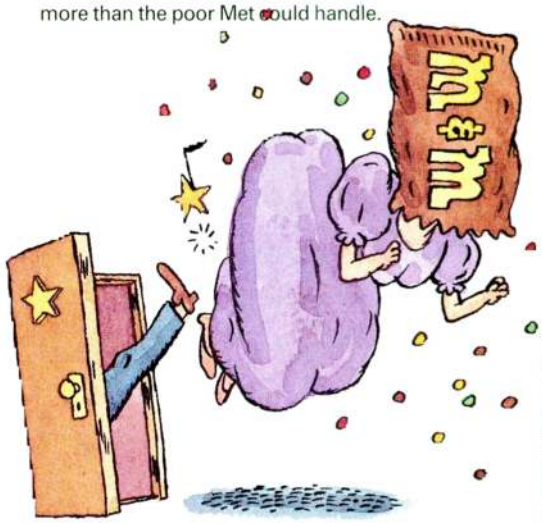


Last Train to Memphis is short on penis envy and pop psychology and long on first-hand account. I am not happy to hear that Ira Louvin was a bigoted hot-head but glad that Bill Monroe emerges heroically. There are characters absent from other tellings of the tale such as tough Biloxi girlfriend June, who faces down the oafish pranks of Elvis's guys. Five hundred pages take us only to the Army. The tragedies that must lie ahead in volume two will be hard to take.

As with his other writings on American music, *Feel Like Going Home, Lost Highway, Sweet Soul Music* and *Searching for Robert Johnson*, Peter Guralnick sends you rushing back to the recordings with fresh ears. This is the finest compliment that I can pay someone writing about music. What else can I tell you to persuade you to read this book? How about the raw Elvis belching on the mike under a deluge of screams and mumbling, "Fuck you very much, ladies and gentlemen." Gladys grooming every girlfriend to cook and take care of her son. The transcript of Elvis really losing his famous politeness in the face of a smart-arse interviewer who suggests that he is dragging church music onto the rock 'n' roll stage. The search for the perfect take of "Heartbreak Hotel" with so much at stake. The account of his mother's death that may keep you awake at night. The picture on the steps of Graceland, inconsolable in unbuckled shoes. Some would say this is the beginning of the end. Volume two will be a difficult book to write. Here at least the writer has made the man better than the myth.

BATTLE-AXED AWARD

Metropolitan Opera diva Kathleen Battle was fired amid great controversy after pulling one prima-donna stunt too many. There is, however *no* truth to the rumor that her demanding bowls of M&Ms with the brown ones removed was more than the poor Met could handle.



SLAP AT RAP

In July *Newsweek* reported that rap artists are commonly paid less by record companies than rock musicians of similar stature: "Rap acts are routinely signed for half the $300,000 advance that the average new white alternative band can expect for their first album." They get much lower royalties, too. Rap earned the record industry $800 million last year but the biz seems less than grateful. The labels appear to have accepted that rap stars will not have long careers and so are not worth big investments. That perception will not be changed by the disappointing sales of Public Enemy's 1994 release, *Muse Sick N Our Mess Age*, and the commercial failure of Arrested Development's *Zingalamaduni*—the follow-up to their multi-platinum debut. If Public Enemy and Arrested Development, two superb and previously successful rap groups, cannot sustain their fan base who can? In the November issue of *Rap Sheet* Public Enemy's Chuck D. put some of the blame for the genre's inability to support long-term careers on the fickleness of rap critics: "We've got to build the music of hip hop and its best and brightest to be where Robert Plant or Peter Gabriel types are for rock... White journalists write about the Rolling Stones and even if they don't make an album for ten years those motherfuckers come in to RFK Stadium and sell out two nights." Are critics obligated to support artists year after year? Is fan disloyalty the price of constant innovation? Are record labels and radio stations too quick to jump on the newest sound? If Doctor Dre has a flop next time out, you'll know there's no hope. And Coolio—better buy some savings bonds.

TODAY'S K2000.

"Workstation" is too small a word for it.

THESE DAYS, EVERYONE likes to call their electronic instrument a "workstation." Truth is, most of them are only scratchpads.

Today's **Kurzweil K2000 Series** combines multi-platform synthesis and sampling for complete sound design; then adds a powerful 32-track sequencer, Advanced File Management System, SCSI, and up to 24 MB of on-board ROM sounds. In fact, the K2000S is the only sampler which offers ROM sounds on-board. Those who demand more can install up to 64 MB of sample RAM, an internal hard drive and digital I/O. Now that's a *true* workstation!

Kurzweil's innovations in sound processing (V.A.S.T.®), connectivity and upgradability have earned the K2000 many awards around the world, including the prestigious *TEC Award*. But we didn't stop there. Today's K2000 has two new, groundbreaking upgrades: **Version 3 Software** and **Contemporary ROM**.

Version 3 Software introduces AFMS (*Advanced File Management System*) which allows you to load and save selected objects and create powerful file-management macros. There are also helpful backup and copy utilities, and more. Version 3 Software's 32-track sequencer performs functions usually found only in advanced computer-software sequencers, like automated mixdown, input quantization, and triggering sequences from the keyboard.

The new **Contemporary ROM SoundBlock** adds 8 MB of dynamic contemporary sounds to the K2000's permanent memory – from *Distorted Lead Guitar* and *Analog Synths* to *Tabla* and *Hip-Hop/Rock Drums*. Combine it with the **Orchestral ROM SoundBlock** and internal ROM banks for a stunning 24 MB, available at the touch of a button, with no disks to load. Thousands more additional samples are available on disk and CD ROM – and because the 2000 Series also reads current sampler formats from Roland®, Akai® and Ensoniq®, the K2000 gives you access to the world's largest sound library.

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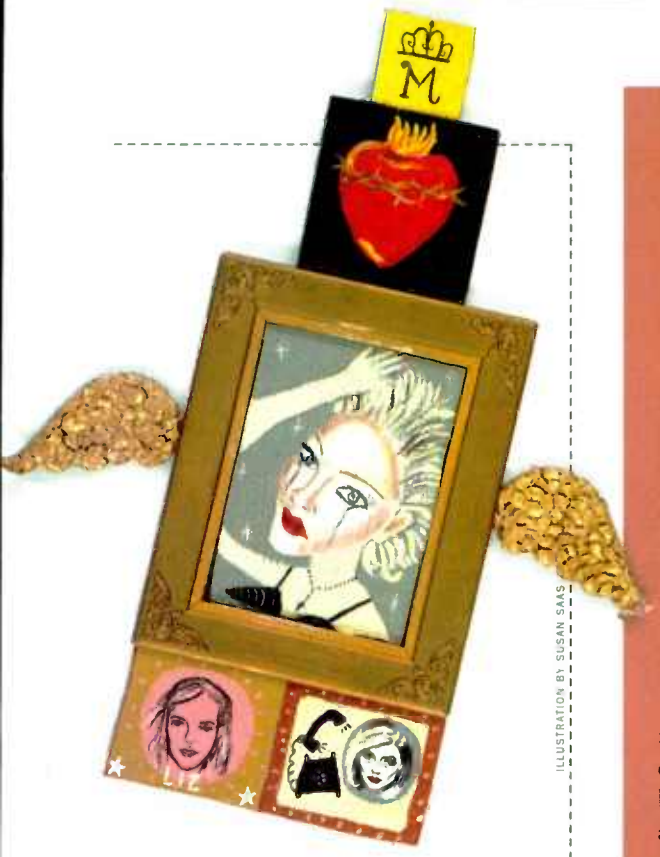


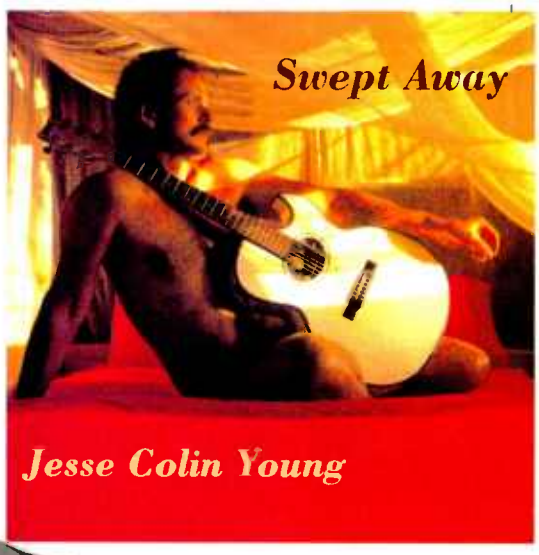
ILLUSTRATION BY SUSAN SAAS

ANNUAL MADONNA'S DONE IT AGAIN AWARD

To begin the blitz for her new album *Bedtime Stories*, Madonna let it be known that she was hurt to be unappreciated by Liz Phair and other women rockers for whom she had "opened the door." Uh, Madonna, Debbie Harry on line two.

DOES THIS MEAN HIS WIFE SLEEPS IN THE GUITAR CASE?

We've had a soft spot for Jesse Colin Young since the 1960s, but isn't a little late in the day for J.C. to start doing nude album covers?



on line services poised to take over...everything

OVER A DECADE AGO, if you had a modem and a computer you could dial a national on-line service (or your local branch of the military/industrial complex) and watch green text crawl across the screen. But it was only this year that the maze of jeep trails known as the Information Superhighway finally got its first coat of asphalt. Thanks to improvements in technology, modem speeds soared, prices dropped and the hype machine kicked into high gear. Suddenly everyone is a cyberspace cowboy.

Things got off to a blazing start in February with *Billboard*'s front-page announcement of Internet Underground Music Archive (IUMA), a databank of digitized audio clips that represents unsigned bands exclusively. The two UC Santa Cruz students behind the IUMA were hailed as gurus of the new distribution network, but Geffen and Aerosmith seized the day by releasing a new song via CompuServe that took a mere 90 minutes to download. Snatching a few promotional brownie points, techno-weenies Future Sound Of London beat Aerosmith by a day or two when they launched a remix of one of their songs via the New York "alternative" site SonicNet.

Leaving no promotional vehicle unrevved, record companies established on-line forums and Internet nodes at an astonishing pace. By September, the Internet made room for East/West (World Wide Web *http:///www.music.net/*), American (e-mail *american@american.recordings.com* or World Wide Web *http://american.recordings.com*) and Mammoth (e-mail *info@mammoth.com*, World Wide Web *http://www.nando.net/mammoth/*, anonymous file transfer protocol *ftp.nando.net*). "Vendor's forums" on CompuServe and America OnLine (AOL) overflowed with labels offering album artwork, artist bios, soundbites, video clips, tour dates, fan chat and the like, and artists from Lou Reed to Bob Mould made live on-line appearances. Not to be outdone, Delphi declared itself the "official on-line service of the Rolling Stones Voodoo Lounge Tour."

A comment from Marc Geiger of American Recordings hones in on the bottom line. "This concept," he says, "is the equivalent of having an exclusive American Recordings record store and TV channel in everyone's home."

Not a bad way for record companies to find customers. But what about players trying to find other players, or a manufacturer's technical support department? This kind of service dates back at least to 1981, when the Performing Artists Network (PAN) was founded. This year, virtually every major equipment manufacturer set up an e-mail address—usually via CompuServe or AOL—and ASCAP and Mackie, to name two, set up their own bulletin boards. Which is not to ignore numerous local boards, such as Baltimore's Crescendo (301-490-4775) and Calgary's Keyboard BBS (403-246-6943), where musicians can meet and exchange information.

The future is up for grabs. The time is ripe for new businesses, such as Taxi and MIDI Vault, that serve essential needs of the musical community. And for publicity stunts, as glamsters Cinderella surely realized when they staged auditions last September on CompuServe, advising drummers to upload a .WAV file. And for Utopian ventures (often indistinguishable from publicity stunts), as when Gand Music, a Chicago-area retailer, arranged for students living on military bases across the globe to jam via the Internet last July. A fast modem and subscription to an Internet gateway should be considered standard equipment for musicians in 1995.

—TED GREENWALD

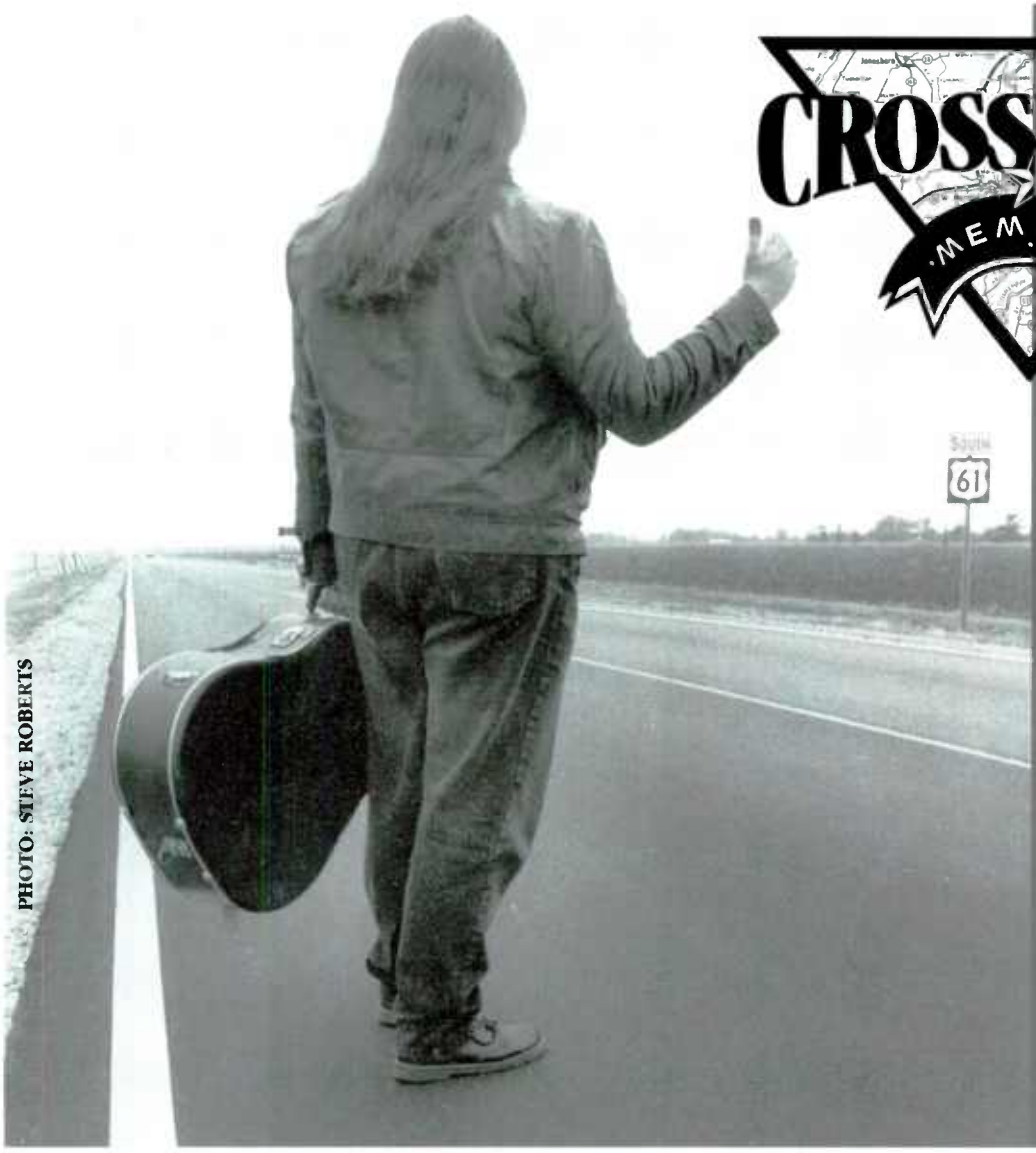


PHOTO: STEVE ROBERTS

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ARTIST OR BAND NAME

CONTACT PERSON

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE *FAX* *NUMBER OF BAND/GROUP MEMBERS (total number of people on stage)*

TYPE OF MUSIC: *Check ONE catagory that best discribes your music.*

- ☐ *ALTERNATIVE*
- ☐ *BLUES*
- ☐ *COUNTRY*
- ☐ *GOSPEL*
- ☐ *URBAN/R&B*
- ☐ *JAZZ*
- ☐ *RAP*
- ☐ *POP/ROCK*
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- ☐ *SINGER/SONGWRITER*
- ☐ *METAL/HARD ROCK*

COMPUTER AIDED CREATIVITY

CAN THINKING MACHINES BECOME OUR CREATIVE PARTNERS?

HUMAN BEINGS ARE anthropomorphizers. We attribute personality and intention tvery-thing, from the weather to other animals to our machines and tools—especially our tools. We love our tools, and since it's tough to get emotional feedback from inanimate objects, we pretend that they are otherwise. Good thing, too: Would B.B. King play with the same power and grace if he didn't regard Lucille as his partner in the dance?

While transforming a guitar into a woman is an impressive feat of imagination, sensing human qualities in a computer is a good deal less so. From their backlit graphic displays, computers virtually ooze consciousness. Already, they have invaded just about every activity in modern life. Now, having forced us to rethink the concept of "intelligence," they are poised to draw a bead on our notions of "creativity" as well. Unless you plan to retire to the Andes and touch nothing but panpipes, no matter what kind of player or composer you are, no matter your level of skill or commitment, there's a serious music computer in your future. Not for use as a sequencer, patch editor, sample tweaker, digital recording deck or any of the applications that have become standard in these fast-moving times. No, the computer in your future will be an equal partner in your pursuit of personal expression.

BY CONNOR FREFF COCHRAN

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DIAZ

"THIS IS SOFTWARE FOR MUSICIANS. IT ISN'T DESIGNED TO

We're talking silicon sidemen, automated arrangers, cathode-ray-tube collaborators. Maybe even electronic lyricists.

It's inevitable. And no matter how laughable the idea might seem or how primitive its *current* embodiments are, once this new level of technology truly arrives, it will be the greatest boost to individual musical artistry since the days when Marconi pioneered radio broadcasting and Edison patented the wax cylinder.

HARD TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH YOURSELF

Peter Gannon, the PG in PG Music, didn't set out to be in the vanguard of a revolution. A medical doctor from a long line of jazz musicians, he had hoped that computers would make it easier for him to continue honing his guitar chops after a stint at Berklee ended and his tenure at medical school began.

"At the time, I expected computers to automate the process of making music," he recalls. "I wanted to sit in my studio and have another musician to play with any time I wanted. Much to my disappointment, I found that if I wanted to learn, say, 'Satin Doll,' it would take as long as it took to program that tune into the sequencer, and by the time I was done, the one song I would *never* again want to hear again was 'Satin Doll.'"

Gannon knew a little about computers and software. Why not put together a program that enabled users to type in chords and generate an arrangement? Thus was Band-In-A-Box born.

Algorithmic composition is the phrase used on the academic side of the computer music universe. But Gannon's approach was more like a software version of a Music Minus One record.

In 1988 he started offering his creation as a commercial product, mainly because his accountant advised him that a money-losing business would shelter some of his medical income. Six years later, Band-In-A-Box is available in both professional and stripped-down versions for Mac, PC and Atari. PG Music has sprouted a dozen or so other products, and the company's advertising budget has ballooned from classified ads to double-page spreads.

Band-In-A-Box is simple to operate. The screen presents a blank "lead sheet" on which you type the chords of any song using standard symbols. Then you add flourishes such as drum fills, enter a key signature and—here's the crucial part—*pick a style*. Jazz Swing, Country Contemporary, Ragtime, Mozart or Sam Cooke, Gumbo or Hip-Hop. PG Music supplies 150 styles, all using from three to five instruments, all capable of playing properly across the changes you've provided. The program churns out musical patterns through your computer's soundcard or an outboard network of MIDI devices, and you can play along. It also provides lower-level arranging tools such as automatic harmonization. Using the "Super-Sax" style, for instance, you can play a single-note line and Band-In-A-Box will generate four-part harmony in sax-section "drop-two" voicing.

"This is software *for* musicians," Gannon insists. "It isn't designed to replace them. It just takes out some of the grunt work."

AN ORCHESTRA IN EVERY LIVING ROOM

Much of the high tech sold in musical instrument stores has early roots in academia. FM synthesis, sampling, sequencing, the concept of instrument networks that ultimately led to MIDI—all originated in university-based research hubs such as Princeton's Center for Electronic Music, Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA, pronounced "karma") and Carnegie Mellon University's School of Computer Science. Roger Dannenberg is a senior research scientist at the latter institution. He is also an accomplished trumpet player and composer, qualities that deeply influence his work.

What intrigues Dannenberg is computers' potential for integrating composition with improvisation. "Composers have struggled with this problem for years. Improvisers, too. Combining formal structure with spontaneous creation is very hard. I try to write computer programs that do the sort of composition that I like to do, but *very quickly*, so they can generate a composition in response to an improviser. This leads to a different concept of a 'composition.' It isn't fixed notes on a page, but the process that takes you to those notes."

He elaborates with an example. "In my latest piece, *Nightly News*, the computer analyzes what I'm doing on my trumpet and picks out certain features—whether I'm playing with lots of excitement; what mode I'm in; my tempo; whether I'm hitting long notes or short ones—that affect what the computer puts out. If I stop playing, it continues as a kind of robot ensemble. But when I play, the whole thing comes to life with a lot of coordination and interaction."

The fruits of Dannenberg's research are available with the recent release of Vivace, a hardware/software package from Coda. Vivace allows soloists to play freely while the computer syncs the accompanying musical arrangement—a standard MIDI file pumped through a General MIDI sound generator based on E-mu chips—to *them*. The musician simply plays, and the computer follows as though it were a pianist or an orchestra or a string quartet.

The degree to which it follows tempo changes is adjustable; beginners can lurch around without derailing the ensemble, while experts can interpret musical phrases with assurance the accompanist will be right with them. Vivace knows ahead of time what notes to expect from the player, so it jumps ahead seamlessly if you skip a few bars or an entire chorus. If you play a clam, it figures you didn't really mean it and keeps right on playing.

"Previously, a good ensemble of players had to be either extremely well rehearsed or to have played together for many years," Dannenberg says. "But we can design computers that know how to play drums, bass and guitar, and know how to listen. They can even whisper to each other about what they are going to do. They'll be ideal partners for solo performers who want to do their thing but can't afford living musicians. Groups that would like to be backed by an orchestra will have that on command—and who knows what orchestras are going to do with it!"

REPLACE THEM. IT JUST TAKES OUT THE GRUNT WORK."

ESI-32

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Looking for your first sampler? Or a reason to retire the one you've got? Look no further. ESI-32 delivers more power than samplers costing twice the price—at a price that will leave you wondering what the catch is.

No catch. No joke. The ESI-32 digital sampling instrument is jammed with the same features that has made the Emulator® IIIx professional digital sampling system indispensable in both studio and performance environments worldwide. Try these on for size...16-bit audio resolution; 32-voice polyphony; up to 32MB of sample memory; complete compatibility with EIIIx, Emax II and Akai S1000/S1100 sound libraries (That's over 50GB!); 32 4-pole digital resonant filters and a variety of powerful DSP functions (like time compression/expansion and virtually distortionless pitch transposition over 10 octaves)...just for starters. We've even included ten user-assignable front-panel trigger keys for playing sounds without connecting a keyboard.

That's right. All those BIG features that used to come with a BIG price tag are now yours for a price that's—small. Standard models start at just US $1,495, to be exact.

While ESI-32 is ideal as a first sampler, it could also very well be your last. Right out of the box, ESI-32's professional features, stellar audio quality and incredible ease of use make it a great value at any price. But ESI-32 also offers expandability so you can customize your unit as your needs grow. Load it up with 32MB of RAM SIMMs, opt for S/PDIF digital I/O and advanced SCSI interface upgrades and replace the onboard floppy drive with a 3.5" Syquest 270MB removable hard drive.

Yep...ESI-32s can be a powerful introduction into digital sampling or ultimately support all of your power-user needs in full-blown studio and performance situations.

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Naturally, you're going to want to see how ESI-32 stacks up against the competition. We invite the comparison. We're confident that when you see what you'll have to pay to match ESI-32's features, you'll make the next logical move...through the door of your local E-mu dealer to check it out in the flesh.

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"TODAY EVERYBODY—EVEN AT CONSERVATORIES—HAS

Visions of the New York Philharmonic Black Box Symphony aside, Dannenberg's career has been driven by a simple dream. "I hope computers will enable people to connect more with music," he says. "Anyone can put together a pickup basketball game. But how easy is it to put together a pickup brass ensemble?"

(Dannenberg offers the CMU MIDI Toolkit, a programming environment for MIDI-based music composition, in both Mac and PC versions for $30. A C compiler is required. Write to Dannenberg at the School of Computer Science, CMU, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.)

MUSICIANS DO IT WITH SENSORS

Fifteen years ago, MIT professor Nicholas Negroponte wandered around the campus showing a diagram to every influential person he could find. It showed three overlapping circles marked "entertainment," "computers" and "communication." His point was that these fields were quickly converging, and that by the time all information existed in digital form, the three circles would merge and Everything in the World Would Change. This isn't startling news today, but in 1979 it was a profound insight. Negroponte was convincing enough that MIT finally, in 1985, opened an interdisciplinary center for science and the arts called the Media Lab.

Tod Machover has been at the Media Lab since the beginning. Before that, he spent seven years as director of musical research at IRCAM (Pierre Boulez's facility in Paris), and before that he was that rarest of mid-'70s anomalies, a Juilliard student working with computers. Throughout, his work as theorist, composer and instrument designer has been some of the most innovative, challenging and downright enjoyable stuff in the field.

"So far, the biggest creative push that computers have given composers has not been anything conceptual," Machover points out. "It's been about productivity. Today everybody—even people at conservatories—has a sequencer and some kind of music manuscript program. It wasn't like that when I was at Juilliard. There was this macho ethic about composing: You were supposed to be like Beethoven, deaf, so the whole process was about imagining music and then writing it down."

As valuable as he has found the skills this attitude engendered, working at IRCAM gave him a taste of the spontaneity and feedback offered by computers. "It was incredibly liberating," he recalls. "I felt like a sculptor molding clay or chipping stone. Part of the music became what happened between you and it, between the part in the real world and the part in your head. Ever since MIDI, that is how composing has felt."

Machover is not a strong believer in algorithmic composition, feeling that it is years away at best. But an interim step called *seed music* developed by a Media Lab grad student has grabbed his interest. In this approach, the computer analyzes a little bit of music—some two to four seconds, the "seed"—according to 30 parameters, and generates a set of rules from which original music can be regenerated. Machover has designed a set of sensors that detect subtle motions of the fingers, hand, wrist and arm, and translate those movements into musical control signals. Originally designed as part of a modified acoustic "hypercello," this technology is now part of a "musical magic trick" that he has been creating with magician-turned-cyberpunk Penn Gillette and his silent partner, Teller.

"Everything we're doing here at the Media Lab," Machover says, "is based on the idea that there are certain parts of the musical process that you want to automate, and others that need to be under precise and expressive personal control."

OFF-THE-SHELF OPTIONS

It's nice that places like the Media Lab are forging the future, but it's even nicer to be able to buy something off the shelf. People with IBM/Windows computers can explore something in between Band-In-A-Box and seed music with the Jammer Pro from Soundtrek. Like Band-In-A-Box, it automatically generates music in a variety of styles based on chord changes. Somewhat like the seed music, it offers detailed control over a wide range of musical parameters. The result is a terrific tool for both practicing and composing.

And though it doesn't quite analyze your music and invent more on its own, programmer Dave Castles claims that is on the way. "I think we've covered the bases for the recreational musician," he says. "Our next goal is to do the same for folks who get down to the atomic level. Bottom line? Ten years from now, I want to be able to sit down in my studio and talk with this program just like it was Mr. Data." Castles has even set his sights on (can you believe it?) a lyricist program, an English-language equivalent to the Jammer. You would provide information about things like structure, form, style, feelings, key words, context within which to speak, then set the probability weights for factors such as use of metaphor, simile and alliteration—and let 'er rip.

Clearly, the possibilities for computer-aided music composition and performance are boundless and exciting—if we fully realize them. This is the lesson taught by Xavier Serra, so it's fitting to give him the last word. Having trained at Stanford's CCRMA and worked as a computer synthesis designer for Yamaha R&D, Serra now resides in his native Barcelona where he directs another university-based computer music research center, the Phonos Foundation.

"The computer is still far from being a mature musical tool," he admits. "The people who are writing music with computers either borrow their language and ideas from the past, or they break every rule and design things that will go nowhere.

"One of the great original ideas of computer music, one which has never been carried forward," he states, "was the dream of fusing *sound* concepts and *compositional* concepts into a single unified entity. That's where we need to go as composers. In a sense, the future of computer music will be a return to its original ideas, to the days of the '50s and '60s when no one knew anything, really—only this time we'll have the tools we have always needed, and can just now begin to build."

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Aria's AVB-SB series, designed by fretless wizard Steve Bailey, features an ash body with a bolt-on, 34"-scale maple neck and ebony fingerboard (with or without frets). Four- and five-string models come with dual single-coil pickups, while the six-string version sports humbuckers. The instrument's exaggerated cutaway and 24 frets facilitate upper-register pyrotechnics while the extended upper left bout keeps the neck in balance. ◆ Aria, 9244 Commerce Hwy., Pensauken, NJ 08110; voice (800) 877-7789, fax (609) 663-0436.

new Star-cast mounting system, a variation on Purecussion's RIMS. Star-cast mounts are sized for particular drum sizes (rather than one-size-fits-all), and don't interfere with removal and installation of drum heads. ◆ Ibanez, 1726 Winchester Rd., P.O. Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020; voice (215) 638-8670, fax (215) 245-8583.

NEW TOYS & NEW TOOLS

GUITARS & BASSES

◆ The retro-style **Alvarez** Electric Classic series, built with alder bodies, maple necks and rosewood fingerboards and a 1-1-2 pickup configuration, now includes the AE40TBK Classic 4 (with string-through-body fixed tailpiece) and AE50AVS Classic 5 (with non-locking tremolo). Alvarez's acoustic 5062 Wildwood has been updated with a solid spruce top for increased volume and bass response. Meanwhile, several Alvarez-Yairi models are newly fitted with the acclaimed System 500 piezo pickup system. ◆ The Wah-SP from **Morley** is a switchless wah pedal. It enters wah mode the moment you step on the pedal and passes dry signal when you lift your foot. The Matchbox, also from Morley, is a level-matching direct box for patching a guitar directly into a tape machine, plugging it into a PA system or maintaining signal integrity across long cable runs.

KEYBOARDS & MIDI

◆ The XC-3 organ from **Hammond/Suzuki** is an updated version of the C-3, faithful to the look, feel and sound of the original but featuring digital tone generators and MIDI capabilities. ◆ Three new sound disks are available for **Ensoniq**'s ASR-10 (also compatible with TS-series instruments). *AS6: The Drum Doctor* includes three stereo drum kits designed by Ross Garfield. *AS-7: Baldwin Pianos* represents two concert grands. *AS-8: Appalachia* includes dulcimer, saw, jaw harp and other mountain instruments of the U.S. ◆ New sampling CD-ROM discs from **Q Up Arts** include *Tonal Textures* by guitarist David Torn (loops and textures), *Psychic Horns* by Jason Miles (brass notes, stabs and riffs plus drum patterns) and *Master Drums* by Charlie Morgan (patterns).

AMPS & SPEAKERS

◆ Loaded with three Celestion Vintage 30s, **Trace Elliot**'s SC312P speaker cabinet is designed for wide dispersion, allowing guitarists to control feedback from positions other than directly in front of the speaker. Also, the solid-state AH1200SM bass head boasts 470 Watts into 8 Ohms RMS per channel (600 Watts into 2 Ohms) plus 7-band graphic EQ. ◆ The single-channel Mini Combo line from **Matchless** is intended to put the tone of their DC-30 combo in a small, portable cabinet. Spitfire is the basic model; Tornado adds tremolo; Lightning features "interactive" tone controls. ◆ The PRO series from **Ampeg** comprises three bass enclosures: The SVT210PRO offers two 10" speakers and a horn; the SVT410PRO has four 10" cones and a horn plus casters; the SVT50PRO IsoVent includes two 15" and two 10" speakers and a horn, and rolls on casters. Also, the B2 bass combo houses 200 Watts of solid-state power, 1×15 and a horn. Features include nine-band graphic EQ, limiter, balanced XLR output and effect loop. ◆ **Cincinnati Wireless** offers the Unplugged line of solid-state dual-channel combo amps powered by rechargeable batteries. The 25-Watt model has one 12" speaker and delivers 20 hours of battery life per charge, while the 50-Watt cabinet houses two 12" speakers and plays for 10 hours per charge.

SIGNAL PROCESSORS

◆ The Dual Parametric D.I. from **Fishman** combines a two-band parametric EQ with a direct box. The unit can be powered by either batteries or AC, and each EQ band can be switched independently. ◆ **ART**'s MR-1 repackages the RXR Elite digital reverb in a table-top case. The 16-bit unit provides 16 preset effects. ◆ **Audio Control Industrial** introduces the PCA-200 two-channel subharmonic synthesizer for enhanced bass response. Controls allow the user to adjust the frequency range in which the input is to be processed, frequency spectrum of the enhanced signal and the wet/dry mix.

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

◆ Merge 2×2 from **MIDIman** is a self-powered two-in, two-out MIDI merger. It also functions as a one-to-two MIDI thru box and includes an all-notes-off "panic button" function. MIDIman also offers a joystick-to-MIDI adapter, the Sound Card MIDI Cable, that adds MIDI connectors to any PC sound card equipped with a standard 15-pin DIN jack. ◆ UltraSound MAX is a PC audio board from **Advanced Gravis** featuring 16-bit wavetable synthesis and 3D processing. Three data compression schemes are included to minimize the hard-disk space occupied by edited sounds. ◆ *The Musical World of Professor Piccolo*, an educational CD-ROM for children ages 8 and up is now available for the Mac from **Opcode**. The disc provides an interactive introduction to music notation, theory, form and instrumentation as well as history and style.

MIKES & MIXERS

◆ The MD504 from **Sennheiser** is a compact cardioid mike for instruments that fits into tight spaces around drum kits. Also, the BF1052 wireless guitar system and BF1053 wireless lavalier instrument pickup are medium-priced diversity systems with two switchable frequencies and noise reduction. In addition, Sennheiser debuts two headset mikes, the MKE48ST (cardioid) and MKE 2 ST (omnidirectional). ◆ **Audio-Technica**'s 300 series of affordable wireless systems features extended range and improved audio quality with a choice of 20 VHF frequencies. The ATW-0321G is designed for guitars and features a remote on/off switch for pedal effects. Models are also available for lavalier, headset and hand-held mikes. ◆ The **Nady** Wireless One, an affordable single-channel VHF wireless system for guitars, has been upgraded for longer transmitter battery life. ◆ **Audio Centron** introduces the Eclipse line of powered mixers, including the ACM8PD (8 channels) and ACM12PD (12 channels), each offering 125 Watts into 8 Ohms. Onboard DSP delivers effects and time alignment functions. Each channel includes XLR and ¼" input, peak LED, three-band EQ, three aux sends, pan and fader. ◆ **Mackie**'s 24•E is an optional 24-channel expansion board for their eight-bus mixers. The 24•E essentially duplicates the 24•8 console but without the master section.

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

◆ **Walkabout** offers wireless, battery-powered MIDI percussion controllers built into a harness that fits over the player's shoulders, enabling mobile performance. ◆ **Island Trader** makes a line of handcrafted kalimbas, xylophones and tongue drums. ◆ The latest addition to **Pro-Mark**'s Autograph Series of sticks is the Dave Abbruzzese model. The stick is 16¼" long, ⅝" in diameter and made of hickory with a nylon tip. ◆ The 8A Nylon Tip drumstick from **Regal Tip** features a "bullet-style" nylon tip, combining the brightness of nylon with the versatility of this tip shape. ◆ **Vater** debuts two new sticks. The Classic features a barrel-shaped tip and a quick taper from shoulder to tip. The Universal, designed for high-volume playing, has a sturdy neck and round/oval tip.

RECORDING & PLAYBACK

◆ Version 5.0 of the OS software for **Otari**'s ProDisk digital audio workstation adds new features, including an improved user interface, database functions, Magneto Optical support and sync/locate to VITC. ◆ **Sennheiser**'s HD25-SP headphone is designed for durability and light weight in studio applications. All parts are modular for easy repair and replacement.

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LM-3204

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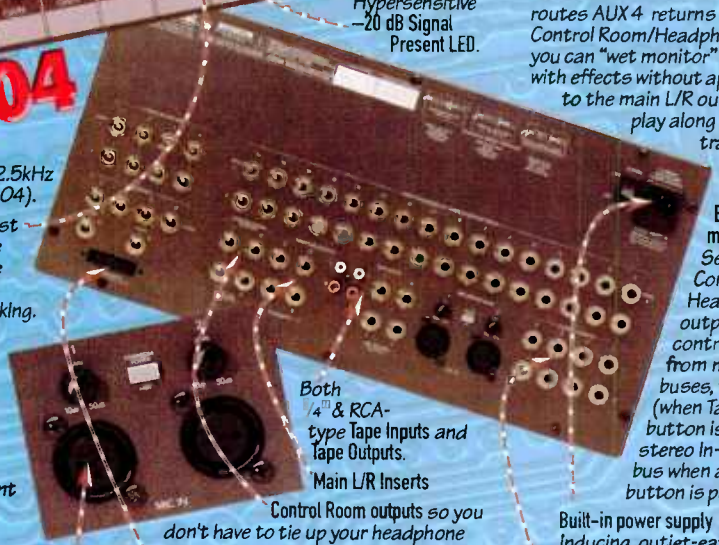

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HYBRID GUITARS

Combining magnetic and piezo pickups, a new class of guitars opens creative doors.

BY E.D. MENASCHÉ

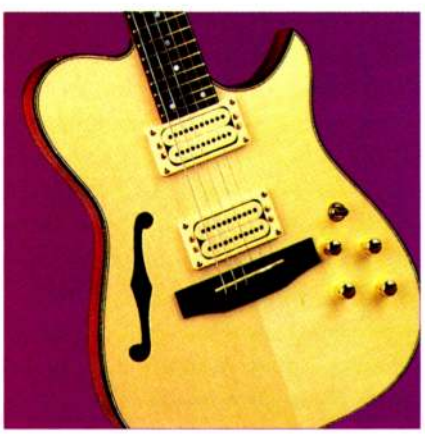
SEVERAL COMPANIES now offer guitars that combine magnetic pickups—the hallmark of an electric guitar—with a bridge-mounted piezo, the favored transducer for amplifying acoustic guitars. These instruments deliver both "acoustic" and "electric" tones depending on the pickup selected. To differentiate them from the current flood of acoustic/electric guitars—conventional acoustics with piezos built in—it seems appropriate to use the term "hybrid" guitar, examples of which are available from Buscarino, Carvin, Hamer, Parker and Yamaha.

Some of these have other novel features as well, including hollow chambers and unusual bridge designs, which contribute to timbre and response characteristics markedly more resonant than those of solidbodies, yet more articulate than those of traditional semihollows such as the Gibson 335. Piezo pickups add the advantage of broader frequency response, capturing a richly detailed sample of the instrument's tone. Their main failing, especially when bridge-mounted, is a strident high end and "clanky" lows. These traits can be improved somewhat with a good preamp.

How successfully the mag/piezo combination simulates true acoustic tone is a matter for individual judgment. None of these instruments—except Yamaha's, which is fully acoustic—sounds like an acoustic when played unamplified. But that's an unfair yardstick. A better one is the tone of an acoustic guitar amplified using a bridge-mounted piezo, and by that criterion they all fare quite well. In fact, to these ears, mating the piezo with, say, a neck-position humbucker produces a tone more natural than that of many piezo-equipped acoustics.

The most obvious beneficiaries of the hybrid approach will be players who (a) don't want to haul a big-box acoustic onstage, (b) don't like having to adjust to the stiffer action of an acoustic or (c) want to switch timbres in midsong. But electric diehards should listen up too, because the mag/piezo combination opens new sonic territory as well.

Acoustic players interested in enhancing their sound should try Yamaha's archtop AEX1500 ($1795). The simple control layout enables you to switch between a floating mini-humbucker at the neck and a piezo mounted in the violin-style bridge. The piezo runs through an active preamp that includes three-band EQ with variable midrange plus a mix pot for tweaking the magnetic/piezo balance. Unfortunately there's only a mono output, but Yamaha reports that it can be modified for separate mag and piezo outputs.



From top left clockwise: Parker Fly, Yamaha AEX1500, Hamer Duo-Tone, Carvin AE185.

Although it's designed for jazz, the AEX1500's tone and feel are excellent for singer/songwriter accompaniment. The small body is comfortable to hold and play, and the warm response makes it a good alternative to high-end shallow acoustic/electrics.

The ultra-lightweight Parker Fly ($2195), which generated quite a buzz when it was announced but hasn't received nearly enough attention since its release last year, lies at the other end of the spectrum. This virtually solid guitar employs extremely unusual materials and design concepts. For instance, it resonates across its entire surface—basically, the whole instrument behaves like an acoustic guitar's top. The neck is made of basswood, resonant but soft, a choice made possible only by encasing it in a high-tech skin. The Parker is the only hybrid that offers a tremolo bridge, which is fully adjustable and contains the instrument's custom Fishman transducer.

The result is a startling acoustic tone. A single jack provides both mono and stereo outputs (depending on the plug you use), and the onboard preamp allows the two DiMarzio humbuckers to bypass the active electronics. The electric tone is bright and jangly with a

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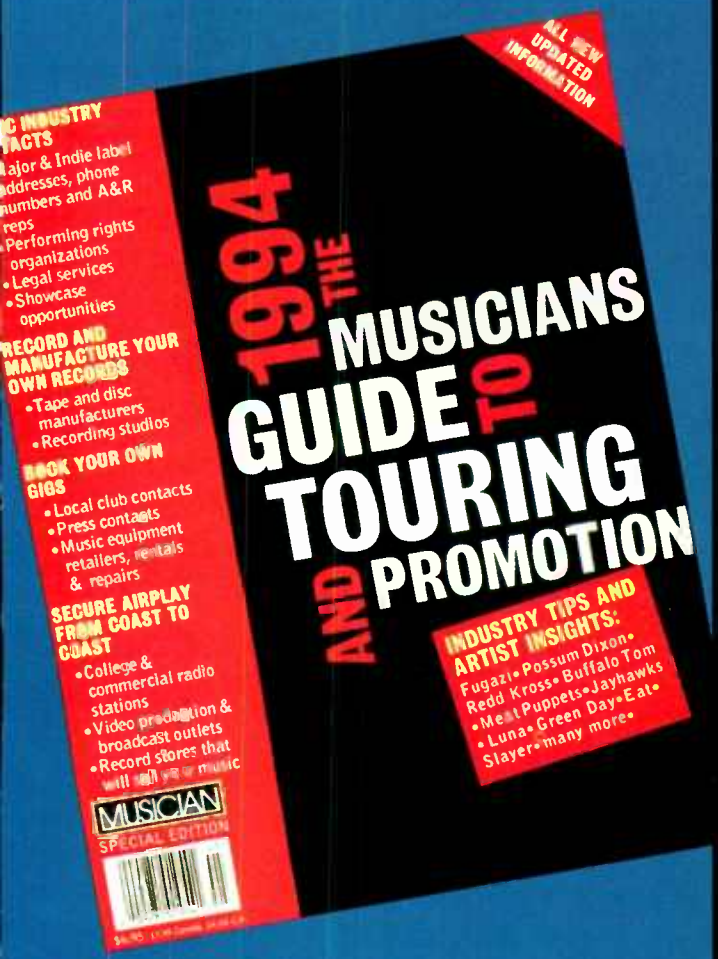

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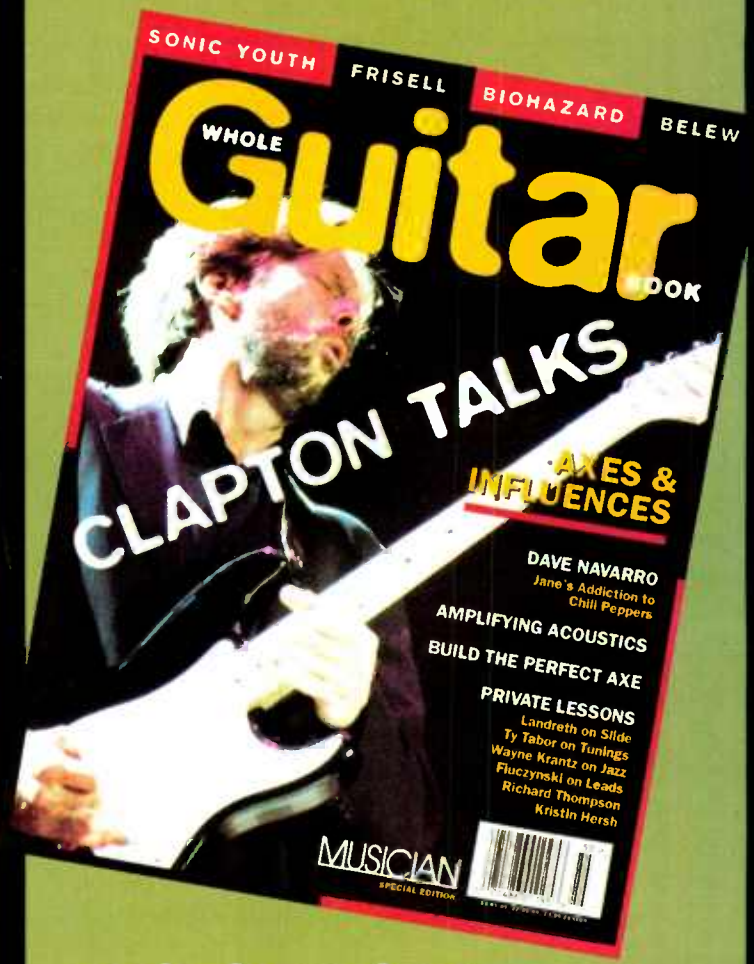

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smooth, tight low end that remains articulate even when distorted. The two-octave fretboard is made from a synthetic composite and the frets are glued on rather than laid in, imparting a unique feel and eliminating dead spots.

Generally, the others are all hollowed-out solidbodies with acoustic-style bridges flush-mounted to the top. Still, their materials and construction vary, giving each a distinctive look, feel and sound. And, happily, they all provide stereo outputs.

John Buscarino is one of the pioneers of the mag/piezo approach. His Hybrid (from $1995) is built to order, so the 24¾" scale of the neck—and the body materials—are by no means standard. The test model has alder wings surrounding a solid block of maple, hollowed out under the rear humbucker and covered with a distinctive maple top. The bridge rests on solid wood and, as with the Hamer and Carvin, the strings pass through the body. Matched with medium-gauge nickel strings, the Hybrid offers a nice balance between electric and acoustic feel and one of the most comfortable necks anywhere. Even without the piezo, it's a fine all-purpose guitar especially suited for fusion, country and blues, with a warmer, smoother tone (from its magnetic pickups) than that of a solidbody.

Hamer's Duo-Tone ($1799) resembles their fine sunburst series of double-cutaway solidbodies both cosmetically and in the slick feel of its 22-fret, 24¾"-scale mahogany neck. The body is mahogany with a spruce top. The Hamer's rosewood bridge rests half on solid block, half over a hollowed cantilever chamber designed to enhance low-frequency response (which this guitar provides in abundance). Equipped with a pair of Seymour Duncan humbuckers, the Duo-Tone has a big, fat tone, excellent sustain and drives a tube amp to distortion easily, while the custom EMG piezo handily captures the guitar's low-end punch—and you can switch between the two using a toggle. Hamer placed the controls for the piezo's active EQ on the back of the guitar—a potential inconvenience at gigs. Nonetheless, this axe is an excellent choice for rockers who don't want to change guitars for the occasional ballad onstage, and for those who like a fat electric tone with a complex, resonant character.

At $799, the Carvin AE185's list price is less than half that of the others. The 25"-scale, two-octave mahogany neck runs through the body, which is hollowed out asymmetrically to include an area under the ebony bridge that imparts impressive resonance. The AE185 uses a Fishman piezo and a pair of Carvin's unique 22-polepiece humbuckers, whose sound is on the bright side. The output isn't switchable but uses a pan pot. The Carvin is very easy to play—almost as lightweight as the Parker—and delivers excellent performance for the price.

Making the most of these instruments is more complicated than simply plugging in and letting rip. Operating in stereo, the ideal amp system is a two-stage affair: a standard guitar amp for the mags and a full-range system (either a PA or an "acoustic" amp) for the piezo. Sending both sets of pickups through a full-range system with a compensated preamp, such as the Tech 21 SansAmp, between the mag pickups and the mixer works too. Bypassing the preamp, the mags add warmth to the piezo's acoustic tone; kick the preamp on, return to electric crunch.

(Conversely, driving a tube amp to distortion with a piezo is less ungainly than you might imagine. In fact, it's pretty cool. And it works much better with these guitars than with a standard pickup-equipped acoustic.)

More adventurous players may want to try this experiment: Feed the piezo into a digital delay with lots of regeneration. Play a figure with the magnetic pickups disengaged. As it repeats, flip back to the mags and rip. And therein lies the crux: While there's no question that being able to switch between piezo and electric sounds is a convenience, the best thing about hybrid guitars is the door they open to experimentation and developing a personal approach to your sound. Even electric players who have no interest in simulating acoustic sounds might find that worth exploring.

◆ **Buscarino**, 1250 Seminole Blvd., Largo, FL 34640; voice (813) 586-4992. ◆ **Carvin**, 1155 Industrial Ave., Escondido, CA 92029; voice (619) 747-1710; fax (619) 747-0743. ◆ **Hamer** c/o Kaman, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002-0507; voice (800) 647-2244, fax (203) 243-7102. ◆ **Parker** c/o Korg, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590; voice (516) 333-9100, fax (516) 333-9108. ◆ **Yamaha**, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622-6600; voice (714) 522-9011, fax (714) 522-9832.

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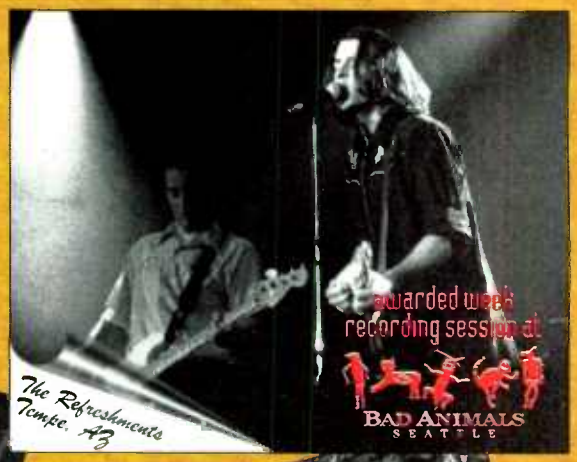

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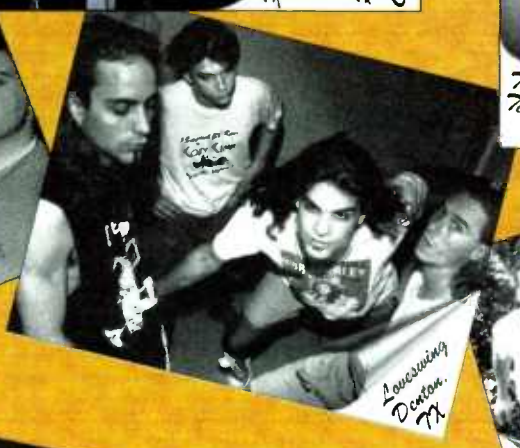
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STICK IT

New drumstick shapes coax a variety of tonal characteristics from the same old drums.

◆

BY RICK MATTINGLY

GIVEN CONTEMPORARY music's emphasis on tone color, drummers are investing in a variety of drums and cymbals, even electronics, in search of aural variety. What many don't realize is the tremendous potential of the lowly drumstick. Several recent designs expand on the palette offered by the usual round, oval and acorn-shaped drumstick tips.

Zildjian's Louie Bellson model features a wooden oval tip with a flat ring around it, hence the designation "Saturn tip." Using it effectively on a ride cymbal calls for a consistent attack, as it produces various sounds depending on which part of it impacts the cymbal. The flat part of the ring produces a bright sound rich in overtones. The area above the ring invokes a darker tone with more click. You probably wouldn't want to mix and match them at random, but the two types of articulation can add character to jazz ride playing, especially in settings in which subtleties are audible.

Vic Firth's Hammerhead stick has a tip that, appropriately enough, resembles the head of a hammer. It is designed for heavy rock players, who often use large sticks with fat beads. But while an oversized bead is great for getting a big sound without denting your drum head, it can create an unwieldy wash of overtones with a ride cymbal. Hammerheads produce a more focused ride sound, a fat tone with tom-toms and aren't too hard on heads.

Joe Porcaro would be the first to tell you that his [*cont'd on page 79*]

◆ **Vic Firth**, 65 Commerce Way, Dedham, MA 02026; voice (617) 326-3455, fax (617) 326-1273. ◆ **Joe Porcaro**, 13608 Valley Heart Dr., Sherman Oaks, CA 91423; voice (818) 789-5403, fax (818) 981-2487. ◆ **Slappers**, P.O. Box 190040, Brooklyn, NY 11219; voice (718) 435-3423. ◆ **Zildjian**, 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061; voice (800) 229-8672, fax (617) 871-3984.

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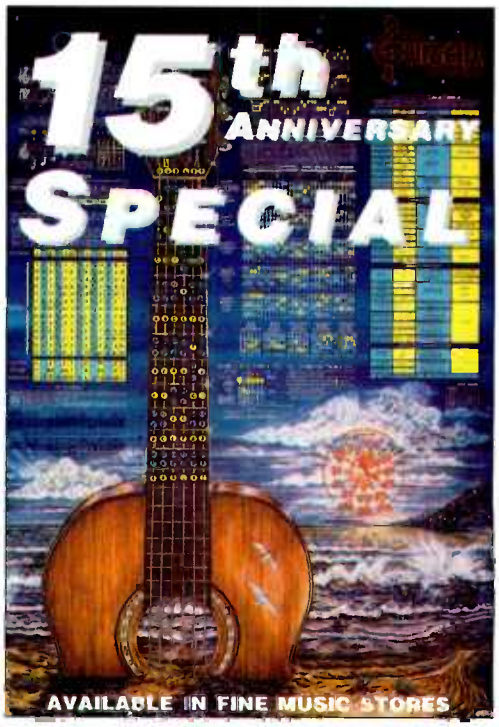

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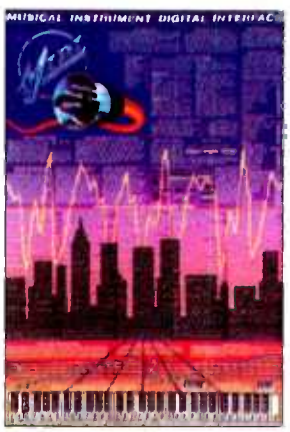

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WEEN'S HOME

FAST FORWARD

"IT'S A PIGSTY." Dean Ween surveys the hardware scattered across the floor of a spare bedroom in his New Hope, Pennsylvania home. He nudges aside cables and pedals with his foot, clearing space to sit. "We've never recorded in chairs—not a note," he explains. "We've always done it on the floor." Assembled in other venues, this jumble, more or less, constitutes the studio in which Dean and longtime partner Gene Ween (pictured at right) recorded their first three albums. For their fourth and latest, *Chocolate and Cheese* on Elektra, they bought a load of new equipment and set up shop elsewhere, but the old homestead remains a favorite playground.

Ween's taste in gear tends toward the studio equivalent of the Pet Rock—mass-market kitsch, yesterday's trendy audio effects and stuff most folks would sooner throw away than repair. (No lie—they spin their fave records on eight-track!) A **DOD R-908** digital delay ❶ notwithstanding, the processor collection consists of stompboxes: an **Electro-Harmonix Poly Chorus** flanger ❷, **Y Triggered Filter** ❸ and **Micro Synthesizer** ("the ugliness box") ❹; **Boss RBF-10** flanger ❺ and **DS-1** distortion; **Ibanez Swell Flanger** ❻ and **WH10** wah; **Mutron** triggered filter ❼; **DigiTech Whammy** ❽ and **Dunlop Crybaby** wah ❾—that's just the ones at the top of the pile. "We run everything through the pedals," Dean states.

Indeed, their recordings exhibit a special talent for pushing effects to the limit. But sometimes that isn't enough, and the duo is forced into more drastic measures. Recording "Candy" for the new album, Gene rode through a rainstorm in the trunk of Dean's Cadillac, yelling into a wireless phone while the receiver was miked in the studio. Another time, Gene stripped to his underwear, hung a mike out the window and sang outdoors in a snowstorm. "Whatever it takes," Dean says. "That's the concept."

Usually it takes an **Alesis SR-16** drum machine ❿ augmented by a **Roland Juno-60** ⓫ and **Realistic Rap-Master** ⓬. Dean, who plays most of the guitar parts, favors **Fender Stratocasters** ⓭ and **Musicmasters** ⓮ plugged into a **Mesa/Boogie TriAxis** preamp ⓯. Gene strums a **Martin** acoustic and picks a **Fender Precision** bass ⓰, alternately belting and crooning through a **Shure Beta 58** or an unidentified **Radio Shack** model ("the one that costs $25") ⓱.

Instruments and mikes are routed through a **Mackie CR1604** mixer ⓲ to an **Alesis ADAT** ⓳ with **LRC** remote ⓴, upstaging their beloved **Tascam 424** four-track ㉑. Mixes are recorded on a **Tascam 103** cassette deck ㉒, and everything gets blasted through a **Hafler PRO2400** amp ㉓ and **Tannoy** monitors ㉔. They claim never to use their **AKG K 240** headphones ㉕. "Dude, I have no concern for neighbors," Dean warns. "I make enemies everywhere I live."

BY TED GREENWALD

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAFAEL FUCHS

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Sleepless in Seattle

PEARL JAM
Vitalogy
(EPIC)

WITH ITS GENEROUS, EYE-CATCHING 34-PAGE mini-book presentation, Pearl Jam's third album will strike true believers as yet another sign of the band's high regard for their audience: These guys give good product. And cynics, of which there are many, will harp on that "product" angle and maybe, depending on their age, throw in veiled references to the cardboard-heavy '70s monolith that was *Chicago IV*. Cynics, of course, can be assholes.

Being a cynic who thinks Pearl Jam are a very fine rock 'n' roll band, I'll choose Door Number One, thanks. I'll do it with some uneasiness: One reason Pearl Jam go down so well with me personally has less to do with their music than their pro-consumer, anti–Big Biz political stance—and somewhere after the 55th cover of "Biko," that rationale dropped to the bottom of the potty where it belongs. Still, Pearl Jam deliver the goods with *Vitalogy*, and the goods, no matter how spiffy the package or correct the politics, are still the goods.

Two things have made Pearl Jam the exceptional band they remain. First—like all those Seattle bands were supposed to do—they took the smelly corpse of guitar-driven hard rock, deformalized it and made it fresh. Three albums into their career, and Pearl Jam make the sort of albums Led Zeppelin once made: You've got absolutely no idea what each new track will sound like, and that's fine by you. The first 30 seconds of *Vitalogy* sound like Captain Beefheart's Magic Band; bizarre "novelty" tune (no printed lyrics) "Bugs" is as unexpected as was Tom Verlaine's "Yonki Time" 15 years ago. But it all sounds like Pearl Jam, and this is as it should be.

Secondly, there is Eddie Vedder, who has become one of the finest, most compelling frontmen in rock 'n' roll. There is a richness and texture to his voice that's striking—particularly in the '90s, when, in major-label alternative marketing terms, one-dimensionality becomes the easiest sell of all. How 'bout that Green Day, dudes?

Vedder's lyrics on *Vitalogy* are all we'll be hearing about soon; most deal with depression, suicide, helplessness and painful relationships between deeply troubled couples. This isn't new ground for Vedder, but with the death of Kurt Cobain, songs such as "Last Exit" and "Nothingman" are open to frightening personal interpretation. And you can bet they'll be interpreted. Frighteningly.

In 1994, rawness, unpredictability and artistic depth are rare. That America's most popular rock 'n' roll band boasts all three attributes—and sounds damn fine to boot—is an absolute hoot. With Pearl Jam, you get what you pay for. Screw the service charge.

—Dave DiMartino

PHOTOGRAPH BY NILS VAN ITTERSUM/REUTERS

WILLIE MITCHELL ON GETTING HI WITH AL GREEN

THOUGH THE biggest hits on *Hi Times: The Hi Records R&B Years* belong to singers like Al Green, Ann Peebles, Otis Clay and O.V. Wright, the Hi sound itself belongs to producer Willie Mitchell. It was Mitchell, after all, who fostered the laid-back Hi groove—a rhythm that had roots in Memphis soul, but seemed a world away from the frenetic thump of the Stax/Volt hits—as well as the label's deep, rich sound.

It wasn't something Mitchell developed overnight. "It was one of them things where you work on it," says Mitchell. "I worked on the sound a lot."

Mitchell describes the difference in the Hi sound as having "more jazz chords and prettier music" than other soul productions, but adds, "I still had the bottom on it real good." Just how he got that bottom—particularly the Hi drum sound—has inspired more than a few rumors. For instance, there's a legend that Mitchell used to split the drum kit between Al Jackson and his brother, with one playing kick and snare, the other handling the hi-hat. True?

"No, no, no, no," laughs Mitchell. "I had two drummers, Howard Grimes and Al Jackson. Sometimes I'd use Al, sometimes I'd use Howard. But Al didn't have no brother playing sock cymbal, no."

Then there's the story that Mitchell got his snare sound by putting that drum atop a floor tom. "No, no, no. The snare stood on the floor. We used Howard Grimes on conga when Al Jackson was playing the regular drums."

Mainly, what Mitchell did was pay a lot of attention to how the drums were set up and recorded. "I would tune the drums to a piano, tune 'em real good," he says. "And there was how you'd mike 'em, or what kind of heads you had on your drums. We spent a lot of time trying to get some thunder out of the bottom of it. And once we found it, we never changed 'em."

For all that, the singing mattered most to Mitchell. "Every time we'd cut the rhythm track, Al Green—or whoever was singing—would sing their part on it, and we'd build from that. *Then* we'd bring the horns in, and the strings, the voices and everything else." **—J.D. Considine**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Woodstock '94

(A&M)

WHETHER YOU WERE PHYSICALLY PRESENT or not, there was no getting away from Woodstock '94. At least not while it was going on. Unlike the first Woodstock, where mainstream America had virtually no clue as to what was happening, the second Woodstock was promoted to an America where (as *Time* magazine recently noted) everyone is hip. The result was a media barrage, and with few exceptions, everyone believed the hype—that this was indeed a monumental musical and cultural event, separate from, but spiritually connected to Woodstock I.

Still, within 48 hours of the end of the event, one was hard pressed to hear *anything* more about it. Despite the adverse conditions admirably and peaceably survived by thousands, and despite the impressive variety of music heard throughout, there has been absolutely no resonance to Woodstock '94. Could it really be that, when all is over but the moshing, Woodstock '94 will go down in history as (horrors!) just another rock festival, as ultimately disposable as the US Festival?

If you believe the answer is yes, then it's difficult to say what the average listener will get from this two-CD collection. The selection of performers and performances seems arbitrary. It's unclear as to why, for instance, Youssou

N'Dour or the Allman Brothers, who received nearly universal praise for their sets, are not represented here, while Sheryl Crow and Traffic, who received nearly universal pans, are. What's more puzzling is the track-by-track lineup: 27 songs by 27 different artists. For the most part, these are not big hits, or even best-known songs. Producer Larry Hamby has admitted that "in discussions with the artists and their managers," he looked "for tracks that would serve their best interests as well as mine." Is that why we get Aerosmith doing "Draw the Line," Metallica doing "For Whom the Bell Tolls," Blind Melon doing "Soup" and the Neville Brothers doing the Beatles' "Come Together"? Sorry, but one doubts that the *fans'* best interests have been served with decisions like these.

Make no mistake there are terrific performances here, such as Melissa Etheridge's bluesy "I'm the Only One," the Violent Femmes' skittish "Kiss Off," Nine Inch Nails' marrow-sucking "Happiness in Slavery," Live's folk-rocking "Selling the Drama" and Collective Soul's insinuating "Shine." And plenty of curiosities, too: Paul Rodgers huffing and puffing his way through "The Hunter," Jackyl making a big play to become the next Black Oak Arkansas, and the Cranberries' Dolores Riordan trying to get a hootenanny going on "Dreams"—when even *she's* having trouble hitting the notes. Plus an assortment of lowest-common-denominator-seeking noise-drivel like the Rollins Band ("Right Here Too Much"), Candlebox ("Arrow") and Primus ("Those Damned Blue-Collar Tweekers").

NEIL PRESTON

OODSTOCK

Still, if one has to come away from *Woodstock '94* with one basic impression, I suggest that veterans of Woodstock I go straight to cut five on CD two, where you can hear Crosby, Stills and Nash singing their excess-pound-aged heads off—completely off-key, of course—on the apropos "Deja Vu." After 25 years, it's good to know some things never change. Here's mud in your eye.

—**Billy Altman**

COME

Don't Ask Don't Tell

(MATADOR)

AT A TIME WHEN MUCH of American rock exists largely on attitude and aggression, Boston's Come are a revelation. Using a bedrock of blues and punk (instead of warmed-over heavy metal), the quartet connects on a grandly visceral scale, creating a roughly frayed sound whose threads may be lost on the mainstream of the current "alternative" audience.

Building on the powerful if claustrophobic *Eleven Eleven*, *Don't Ask Don't Tell* is an unruly, unsettling and uneasy listen. As drummer Arthur Johnson and bassist Sean O'Brien expand and contract the rhythm like so many broken, ugly sentences, guitarists Chris Brokaw and Thalia Zedek intertwine portentous conversations like birds on barbed wire. Come have mastered the illusion of falling apart, tottering over a slow tempo on one song ("German Song"), only to kick in with a glorious Keith Richards swagger on another ("In/Out"). Calling over the din are Zedek's declarations of alienation and fear, sung like Patti Smith through the mouth of a sleepwalker. Whispering the line "Don't you ever try to walk away from my loving fists" may not be sweet, but the diminutive Zedek obviously thrives on raw emotion and the need to tell all.

HOUSE PARTY

Name your 1994 faves!

AMY GRANT

1. "Fairway to Heaven" golf tournament for VH-1
2. Sheryl Crow in Orlando, Florida
3. Hootie & the Blowfish, Orlando, Florida
4. Alison Krauss at the Ryman Auditorium, Nashville
5. Ashley Cleveland & Delbert McClinton at the Ace of Clubs, Nashville

BAABA MAAL

1. Ali Farka Toure & Ry Cooder—Talking Timbuktu
2. Khaled—N'ssi N'ssi
3. Malcolm X (film)
4. Tougher Than Tough reggae compilation
5. CB4 (film)

RODNEY CROWELL

1. Bono's speech at the Grammys
2. W.O. Smith School Benefit performance with Emmylou Harris, Vince Gill and the original Hot Band in Nashville
3. Johnny Cash—American Recordings
4. The Band at 328 Performance Hall
5. Sheryl Crow—Tuesday Night Music Club

FREEDY JOHNSTON

1. Jeff Buckley—Grace
2. Merle Haggard induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame
3. Brief reunion of Brix Smith with the Fall
4. Esquivel!—Space-Age Bachelor Pad Music
5. Prince (or whatever his name is)—"The Most Beautiful Girl in the World"

REVIEWS

Don't Ask Don't Tell is initially a harsh listen, accustomed as we are to shallow songs and cheap deliveries. But Come's is music best taken with a strong shot of reality.

—Ken Micallef

LISA GERMANO

Geek the Girl

(4AD)

NOTHING IN LISA GERMANO'S PAST—SHE played violin for John Mellencamp and has released two quirky pop albums under her name—quite prepares one for this bleak little gem. Recorded with a minimum of embellishment, *Geek the Girl* is made up of lightly sweetened demos. It features the doomy, watery sound of crunchy but lugubrious guitar, faintly overheard piano, plodding but emphatic drums—a consistently realized bad dreamscape tempered by simple melodicism and given resonance by Germano's whispery flat-as-though-stunned delivery.

LISA GERMANO

If that sounds like it might add up to flavor of the month—alternative angst meets woman's perspective—then it's a credit to Germano that the album sounds so original. Her lyrics tend to be direct, with a sparse plainness that indicates intelligence and control (paradoxically, since the persona on the album is of someone befuddled and adrift). It's this calculated compression that makes the disc's centerpiece "...A Psychopath" work so well. Using a real 911 call by a woman who sounds like she's about to be murdered at the very least, Germano takes something that could have merely been repulsive into a more disturbing area: Amid all this horror she sings, in a barely audible voice, "I drift away/I drift away/Am I asleep yet...I hear a scream/I hear a scream/Is it from memory..." With a few deft strokes she conveys a damage that goes deeper than assaulted flesh and bone.

Not everything here is quite so heavy as that—the title song worries about not being cool, while painfully aware that this is a dumb thing to worry about. Germano's artful simplicity seems to best serve her darker visions—the relative optimism of the last two songs ("Of Love and Colors" and "Stars") comes across as naive. But if Germano sounds like another confused and distressed soul, she also seems to be on to herself—the disc's title is a caricature of her genuine outsider feelings. And on "Cancer of Everything," she mocks the whole suffering artist genre. Singing at times in a weird goo-goo doll voice that sounds like a wicked parody of Kate Bush, Germano makes her point with typical directness: "I'm not trying hard/I'm not sleeping well/I'm not growing/I won't do anything/ This isn't good for me/ But just you wait and see/How much attention I get." It's a knowing song and for whatever reason the attention comes, it will be well deserved.

—Richard C. Walls

NIRVANA

MTV Unplugged in New York

(DGC)

THIS ALBUM, DRAWN FROM NIRVANA'S November 1993 appearance on MTV's demi-acoustic concert showcase, is inexorably linked to Kurt Cobain's suicide the following April. The network aided in the perpetuation of that association by incessantly airing the show on the weekend following the discovery of Cobain's body. For many, the band's "Unplugged" appearance has become a *memento mori*.

But do the 14 performances contained on the album version constitute good music? Frankly, no. While the de-juiced vibe and the stillborn tempos of most of the tracks may strike an evocative chord with still-grieving listeners, Nirvana's "Unplugged" set is decidedly low-watt. While Cobain and his mates dicked with the lifeless format of the show to the best of their abilities, one finally longs for the febrile snap of electricity that's been sapped from the proceedings.

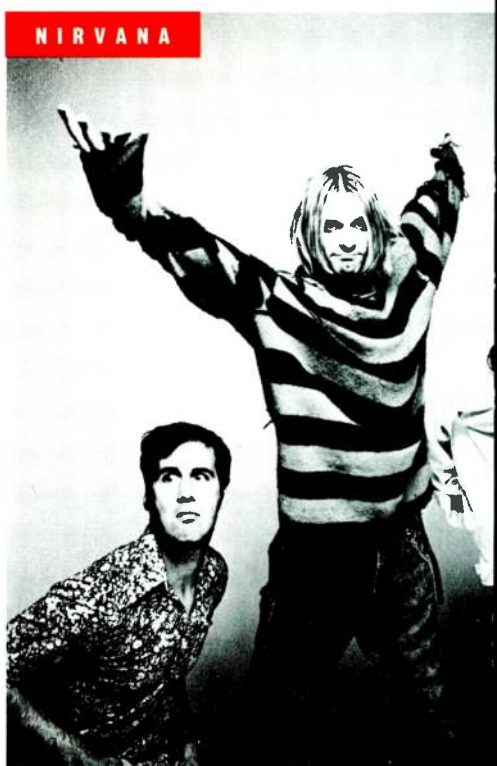
Nirvana gamely tries to shake itself out of its torpor with well-meaning cover versions: the Vaselines' "Jesus Doesn't Want Me for a Sunbeam," David Bowie's "The Man Who Sold the World" and a trio of Meat Puppets numbers, enlivened somewhat by the screech of Pup' Cris Kirkwood, who sits in with sibling Curt. With the exception of the Bowie number, none really holds its own.

Most of the album is taken up by lugubrious versions of lesser items from the Nirvana canon, which are not suitably dressed by Dave Grohl's brush work or Lori Goldston's throaty, superfluous cello; even "Come As You Are," the most essential song here, pales next to its studio rendition. Nirvana simply does not *rock* here, and no amount of songcraft or fanciful instrumental embroidery makes up for the full-on roar of the band in electric flight.

Only in its finale does *Unplugged* achieve any real bite, as Cobain sinks his fangs into Leadbelly's "Where Did You Sleep Last Night?," which he originally recorded with Mark Lanegan on the Screaming Trees singer's 1990 album *The Winding Sheet*. Cobain explodes this accusatory blues with throat-shredding venom; in this performance, one encounters the go-for-broke intensity caught definitively on bootlegs of Nirvana's last European shows in the spring of '94.

Unplugged will be a convenient forget-me-not for some, but there are those of us who prefer to remember Cobain and his band with the amps turned up. Maybe DGC will oblige us with a more suitable souvenir sometime in the future.

—Chris Morris



NIRVANA

GERI ALLEN

Twenty One

(BLUE NOTE)

GERI ALLEN IS NOT EXACTLY A GRACEful pianist. She lurches more often than she soars, and her lines are frequently interrupted by jabbering chordal agitations that disrupt all notions of continuity. Rather than dancing Oscar Peterson–like into the fanciful upper register, she stabs fitfully, wielding the top octave like an icepick. She's willing to risk the outlandish double-time runs and patterned sequences more reserved pianists would edit, and this gives her playing a dangling-on-the-precipice suspense: Even when she falters, the excursion is memorable, exhilarating, human.

Allen has worked with trios in the past (her collaboration with Charlie Haden and Paul Motian remains a model of interactivity), but it's somehow odd to encounter her in a traditional "standards trio" setting—particularly in the company of Ron Carter and Tony Williams for her third Blue Note effort, *Twenty One*. Sitting where Herbie Hancock used to sit, leading what many consider the most empathetic rhythm section in the history of the music, Allen is practically forced to pick a strategy. Does she uphold the tradition of polished execution that includes Hancock, Bill Evans and others, or does she follow her considerably more reckless spirit? Does she honor the tunes, or cultivate telepathy?

ANTON CORBIJN

Wisely, she does not choose. Poised one minute and assertively sloppy the next, *Twenty One* is Allen's celebration of extremes. It contains some of her most exacting compositions, yet achieves a heedless, crash-and-bash interplay absent from her more ponderous settings. It's loaded with ginger declarations of melody, yet remains overwhelmingly percussive. It finds her applying composerly touches to standards (note the stormy coda to "Old Folks"), yet all the while celebrating the jagged-edge personality of her writing.

If Allen—who is 37, and easily the most provocative current creator of music for small jazz ensemble—has a fault, it's that she tends to disappear behind her compositions, using her solos to paraphrase and re-outline their internal logic. Not this time. On the samba-tinged "A Place of Power" and the agitated "RTG," she confidently states her themes and develops them in methodical, often stepwise derivations. Other originals intentionally cast her in a supporting role: On "Drummer's Song," Allen establishes a staccato repetitive phrase, then a robust bass counterline, then a "hook" that leans on the effusive Williams for elaboration.

Though Allen has played aggressively in the past, she's never swung with such abandon: With unassuming syncopations, crosstalking cymbal strokes and that unerring sense of implied time, Carter and Williams keep her alert to the challenges of the moment. They demand that she participate equally in the reinvention of a workhorse like "If I Should Lose You." More importantly, they help uncover elements of Allen's musical identity—her feistiness, her wholly personal time feel—that have been obscured too long.

—Tom Moon

GRANT LEE BUFFALO

Mighty Joe Moon

(SLASH/REPRISE)

ONCE UPON A TIME, GRANT LEE BUFFALO frontman Grant Lee Phillips was a film student, and though he eventually opted for music over movies, there's a persistent cinematic quality to the songs his band spins. The images aren't always sharp and clear, but the compositions carry a moody wallop.

Their sophomore effort swells in gentle waves, swirling together bright threads of delicate pop and a kind of Gothic folk gloom—making them rural relations of Morphine and, more distantly, Codeine. The slow, dark and tuneful strains of "Mockingbird" suggest a postmodern incarnation of the Beatles' "Blackbird." The trio's take on the legend of Lady Godiva transports the unabashed noblewoman to a sprawling, crawling country-western context with David Lynch overtones. "Last Days of Tecumseh" is a brief, methodical banjo ballad; "Side by Side" is a dirged-out roots rocker based on a low-key clangor that waxes and wanes in a

ET CETERA

THELONIOUS MONK

The Complete Blue Note Recordings

(BLUE NOTE)

ONCE CONSIDERED impossibly avant-garde, Thelonious Monk has become not only perhaps the most universally respected composer in jazz (is anyone covered more these days?) but rivals Miles Davis in popularity among non-jazz fans as well. His playful melodies and distinct rhythmic approach blew minds in its time; now that his innovations have been embraced so widely, his musical personality—an utterly appealing mix of romance, intellectualism and cultivated eccentricity—shines through. This four-CD box brings together over a decade's worth of his early recordings, including definitive studio renditions of several classics—"Skippy," "Mysterioso," "Criss Cross" etc.—while the final disc captures a 1958 Five Spot performance with John Coltrane, Roy Haynes and Ahmed Abdul-Malik, finally released at the proper pitch. Nicely packaged with fine liner notes by Bob Blumenthal, it's a natural cornerstone of almost any record collection.—*Mark Rowland*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The R&B Box: 30 Years of Rhythm & Blues (1943–1973)

(RHINO)

WHILE THE music on this six-CD set is indisputably wonderful, Rhino's estimable compilers have bitten off more than they can chew this time around. *The R&B Box* suffers from a surfeit of ambition: It attempts to summarize the history of the genre through a 108-track overview offering one cut by each artist. This gambit inevitably distorts history—were the Chords and Gene Chandler as important as Ray Charles and James Brown? Licensing hassles and oversights also interfere with a definitive presentation: Several key King artists are absent, Motown is underrepresented, and some seminal artists are missing. Students seeking a deeper understanding of the music are directed to the comprehensive boxes devoted to Atlantic, Stax and Motown, and to Rhino's excellent doo-wop box. For most, *The R&B Box* will serve as a solid soundtrack for house-busting parties.—*Chris Morris*

THE BAND

Across the Great Divide

(CAPITOL)

THE CHOICES make sense. Seven from *Big Pink*, eight from *The Band* and highlights from the rest. Third disc is for collectors: early singles, unreleased NYC demo of "Orange Juice Blues" (which sounds very close to the Basement Tape), live recordings from Woodstock, St. Louis, Watkins Glen (soon to be a live album itself) and the Lone Star Cafe in NYC, 1986, with Richard Manuel, a month and a half before his exit. Only incongruous element is Chet Flippo, who in his essay takes an inappropriate (and inaccurate) swipe at Robert Christgau for not liking them enough, believes the Band were never a critics' band (!) and doesn't bother to make a case for any post–*The Band* recordings except *The Last Waltz*, when several tracks ("The Moon Struck One," "Acadian Driftwood") illustrate they could still pull it together when the spirit moved them.—*Rob O'Connor*

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, 1923–1934

(LEGACY/COLUMBIA)

THERE PROBABLY ought to be a neon sign over this boxed set in the record store: "Start Here." Not just to learn about jazz, but to appreciate the broad evolutionary arch of twentieth-century popular music, and marvel at the way one restless man could so dramatically change it. This four-disc box, annotated by Dan Morgenstern, concerns itself with Armstrong before he became a pop icon, during his fertile early period from 1923 to 1934, when he was at the center of cataclysmic change: from sideman to leader, from New Orleans traditionalist to architect of a less rigid, wildly influential improvisatory approach, from novelty song specialist to master interpreter of Tin Pan Alley, from tentative soloist to agile singer. Whether sparring with saxophonist Sidney Bechet ("Cake Walking Babies") or transforming "I Can't Give You Anything but Love" into an elegy, he squeezes rivers of humanity and emotion through his horn—an artist whose spirit outshines the antiquity of his surroundings.—*Tom Moon*

manner reminiscent of the Waterboys but without the histrionic edge. In the same vein, "Sing Along" is a kind of understated epic that gradually builds, culminating in a wailing guitar outburst and a hushed closing couplet.

This is music both pleasing and difficult. The surface embellishments have a soothing familiarity—slide guitars, acoustic strumming, the echoey reverb that makes you feel like you're alone together in a cool cavernous space—but looming below, like the rumbling drums that anchor these tunes, are currents of complex emotions that keep pulling you in.

—Sandy Masuo

SHORT TAKES

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

EAGLES
Hell Freezes Over
(GEFFEN)

DESPITE GLENN FREY'S crack that the band "just took a 14-year vacation," this doesn't just pick up where *The Long Run* left off. If anything, it's a sequel to *Common Thread*, positioning the Eagles less as rockers with country roots than a country band that rocks. The oldies tend to be twangy and the new ones do, too, from the well-strummed sensitivity of "Learn to Be Still" to the high-harmony heartache of "Love Will Keep Us Alive." And while Don Henley may seem too urbane to fit with the Stetson set, it isn't all that hard to imagine Travis Tritt covering "Get Over It."

DAVID SYLVIAN/ROBERT FRIPP
Damage
(VIRGIN)

THOUGH THE tunes are thinner than the singer ever was, the playing on this exquisitely recorded disc is so rhythmically inspired and texturally intense that the music exudes the heat King Crimson once radiated. Fripp's ultra-tasteful fills get credit for some of that, but it's the chemistry between stickman Trey Gunn and master colorist Michael Brook that really kicks things into gear. Nice package, too.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Vision: The Music of Hildegard of Bingen
(ANGEL)

Vision may begin with the music of medieval Abbess Hildegard of Bingen (offered with sonorous simplicity by Emily Van Evera and Sister Germaine Fritz), but by the time it adds synths, samplers and electrobeats (tastefully applied by Richard Souther), it emerges with a sound somewhere between the accessible spirituality of Chant and the opulence of Enya. Hardly the choice of purists (Emma Kirkby's lustrous, austere *A Feather on the Breath of God* should fill that bill), but this makes for uplifting listening nonetheless.

DIONNE FARRIS
Wild Seed—Wild Flower
(COLUMBIA)

WHATEVER FARRIS'S work with Arrested Development (that's her waxing soulful on "Tennessee") might have left you expecting, odds are this isn't it. Sure, Farris sings beautifully, delivering all the diva-style power with none of the ego. But rather than make the obvious moves toward hip-hop or R&B, Farris stakes out a style of her own. Drawing from rock, funk and blues, she creates a hybrid as original as Sly Stone's—and as catchy, even if tunes like "I Know," the crunchy, funky "Passion" or her elegant, bluesy take on "Blackbird" don't always take the obvious path.

BLUE RODEO
Five Days in July
(DISCOVERY)

ALTHOUGH BLUE RODEO has drawn upon the bedrock of rock and country traditions, the band's sound has never seemed that rootsy—a quality the group shares with another (mostly) Canadian combo, the Band. This outing is less raucous than their last, which enhances the rural overtones in the music while adding a sense of intimacy that brings the world behind these tunes into sharp focus. As a result, songs like "Bad Timing" or "5 Days in May" convey the emotional impact of confessionals while sounding as catchy as any country-rocker.

VIDEO

STEVE BAILEY
Fretless Bass
(REH VIDEO)

KICKING OFF with a trio performance featuring Carl Verhoven on guitar and Joel Taylor on drums, fretless monster Steve Bailey wields his six-string here in a blistering display of chops and style. It's a fitting introduction to what is certainly the best tape on fretless technique that I've come across. The only low points occur when the maestro periodically tries his hand at comedy—Steve, don't give up your day job!

Bailey presents a slow, methodical practice routine that covers every interval. Focusing on intonation, he emphasizes "muscle memory" as the key to staying in tune. By continually placing your hand in the proper positions, over time you'll develop the ability to stay in tune even when you can't hear yourself play. Bailey encourages practicing each interval with alternate fingerings to increase mobility and facilitate melodic playing. His single-string scale exercises will increase your ability to shift up and down the neck; right-hand dexterity exercises are included as well.

The video covers artificial harmonics, sliding harmonics, double stops, vibrato and Bailey's unique use of his thumb on the fretboard (in a technique similar to that for the acoustic bass, his thumb takes the place of other fingers to facilitate fingerings high up the neck). Bailey is an articulate teacher and offers a wealth of exercises sure to benefit beginning and advanced players alike.—*David C. Gross*

SHADY
World
(BEGGARS BANQUET)

THIS IS A ROUGH ONE. IT TAKES OFF ALL over the place and lands nowhere in particular. Long intros, meandering verses, sound effects that overpower the songs, the kind of thing that convinces you those English guys take too many drugs. Then you look down at the CD insert and find that you can write the band's P.O. Box in *New York*. Americans? Who woulda thunk it?

World was, however, recorded in London. Of course, it was recorded in Dublin, Memphis, Baltimore and New York as well, so that shoots the anglo angle. To further confuse matters, Shady isn't really a band. It's the work of former Mercury Rev singer David Baker, who got his friends to back him up. He's pretty well-connected, too. A couple of guys from the Boo Radleys and Rollerskate Skinny showed up, a guy from Swervedriver, Bitch Magnet and Th' Faith Healers, even his own sister made the sessions. This guy throws a party like there's a Ringo Starr album being made.

Don't know if his lovable quotient is near Ringo's, but his musical one's a good head and shoulders above. The songs may be densely packed—it's not uncommon to think you're listening to a tuba solo when suddenly the bass guitar sneaks up from behind and does the real work—but the album's pleasurably paced and kept at a manageable 48 minutes, which in these days of 70-minute *ne plus ultras* is a blessing.

The instrumentation is overall routine; the sounds produced are outreaching. By the time you arrive at the cover of Gene Clark's "Life's Greatest Fool," the near-straightforward C&W lurch can throw you. Other tracks like "Narcotic Candy" or "Real Ease" have so many parts you'll swear you've tracked several songs further. Though the effects are heady, in the end what casts *Shady* a cut above is David Baker's voice, sometimes melodic, sometimes drony, but always keeping the human touch intact. —Rob O'Connor

REVOLUTIONS

[*cont'd from page 40*] 'Cause that's what Geffen and his allies are doing.

Follow this, it's interesting. A few years ago the Japanese hardware conglomerate Matsushita bought MCA, including the MCA movie studio (which has a deal with Spielberg), MCA Records and Geffen Records. Eventually the American movie and record people decided they didn't like answering to the Japanese corporation. At the same time that Geffen and Spielberg announced they were leaving to form their own studio/label/home entertainment company with former Disney president Katzenberg , the MCA chiefs (presumably supported by MCA Records chairman Al Teller) were trying to get the Japanese to sell them back their company. Matsushita said no, and at press time it seemed likely the MCA executives would follow Geffen's lead and walk out the door. (Geffen Records executives were being asked to renew their employment contracts early—before David gets his new company opened and hires them all away.)

The scenario Geffen has written (and which former A&M chiefs Herb Albert and Jerry Moss have also played) is awfully attractive to record men: You build up a company, sell it to a multinational corporation for, say, a billion dol-

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lars, and then you quit and start up another company of your own. If the executives and artists from your old company chose to follow you across the street—hey, that's the American way.

It is not the way of, say, Japan—where a person joins one corporation for life. But it may be a necessary evolution if the record business is to survive the transition to the brave new world of direct transmission of music into the home. In that world artists will need a gigantic corporate distribution structure far less than they'll need a few smart advisors who they feel they can trust. In other words, R.E.M. or Metallica will need Lenny Waronker or Bob Krasnow a lot more than they'll need MCA or Time Warner.

The sweetest irony is that virtually everyone in the music industry is convinced that the man who will be asked to run the new Geffen/Spielberg/Katzenberg record label is...Mo Ostin. It is assumed that Lenny Waronker will eventually join him there, along with some disenfranchised Warners acts. If the bean counters can't appreciate an artist-oriented record company, the assumption goes, here are some folks who can.

The week after the Morgado war ended one Warner/Reprise executive smiled and said, "*Everyone* in the music business can't go over and work for David Geffen." But in saying to the multinationals, "Hey, I don't need *you*, you need *me*, see you later," Geffen is writing the lyric that more and more musicians and record executives are learning to sing.

DRUMSTICKS

[*cont'd from pag* 66] Diamond Tip sticks aren't suited for high-impact use, as they will definitely dent your heads. This is a stick for jazz drummers who want increased articulation from ride cymbals and who have a light touch on snare drums and toms. The nylon tip produces a brighter sound than wood, but the sharp edge of the "diamond" yields a more focused sound than traditional nylon beads.

The most radical design comes from Billy Amendola, whose Slappers—flat slabs of wood that look like oversized tongue depressors—are recommended for situations in which you want to lay into the drums without generating a lot of volume. On cymbals and hi-hats, the narrow edge seems to work best, bringing out the brighter overtones. For snare and tom playing, they produce a penetrating click when slapped against the head with the wide, flat side. You can also hold two of them together, which adds a high-pitched slap to the sound of the drum. Despite their oddball proportions, it doesn't take long to get used to the feel. And when you lay them on your floor tom, they don't roll off!

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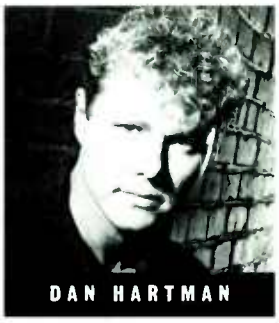
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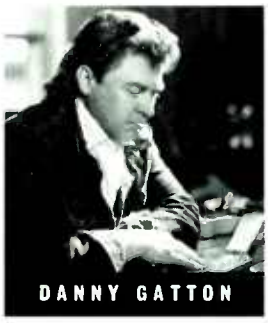
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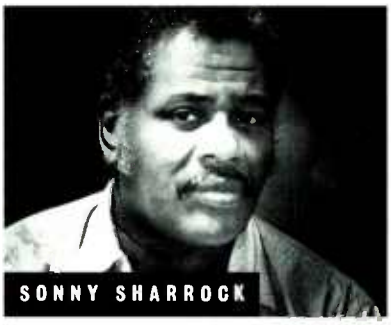
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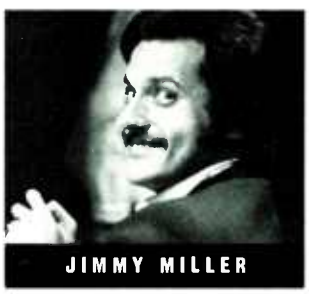
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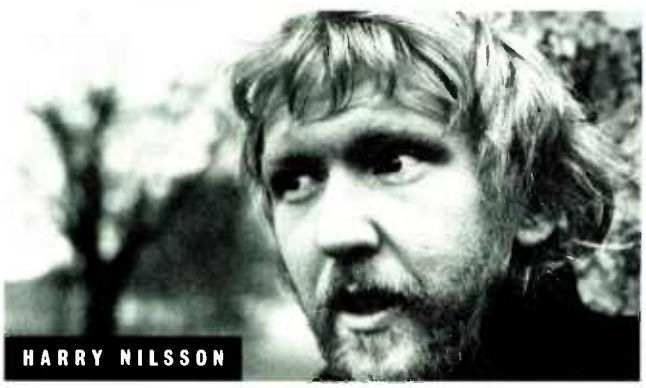
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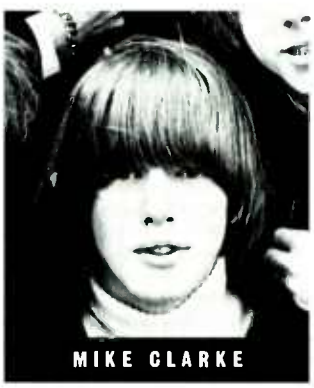
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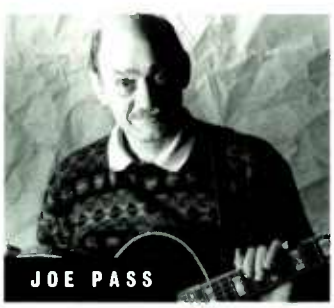
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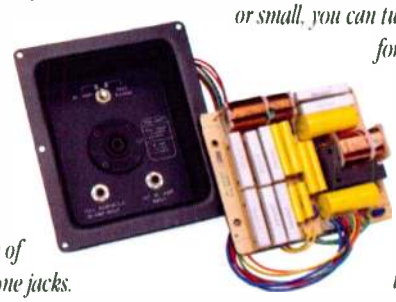

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