SPECIAL REPORT: CAREER ADVICE FROM 30 TOP MUSICIANS

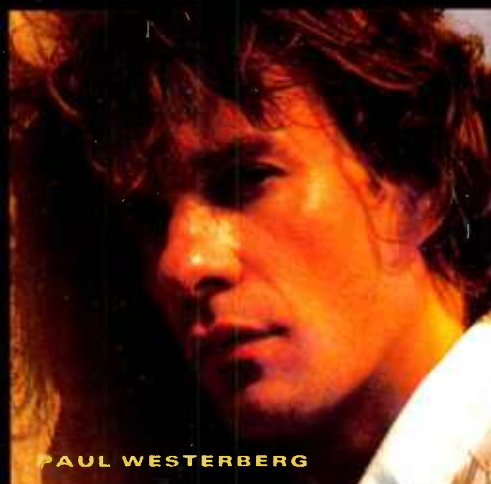
MUSICIAN

APRIL 1995 $2.95

IF I KNEW THEN

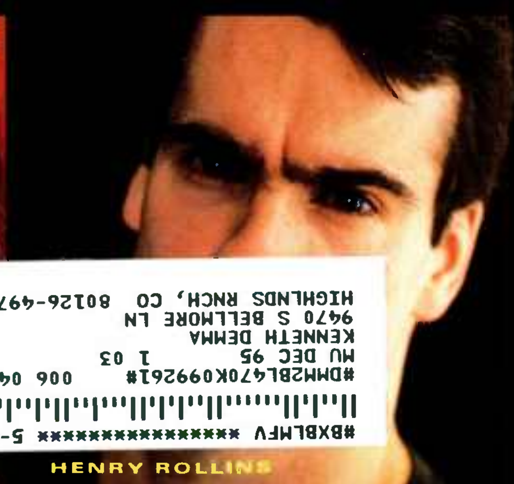

STEVEN TYLER


TORI AM


PAUL WESTERBERG

WHAT I KNOW NOW


MELISSA E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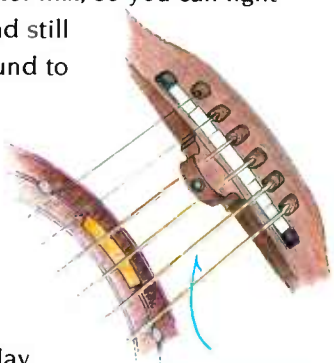

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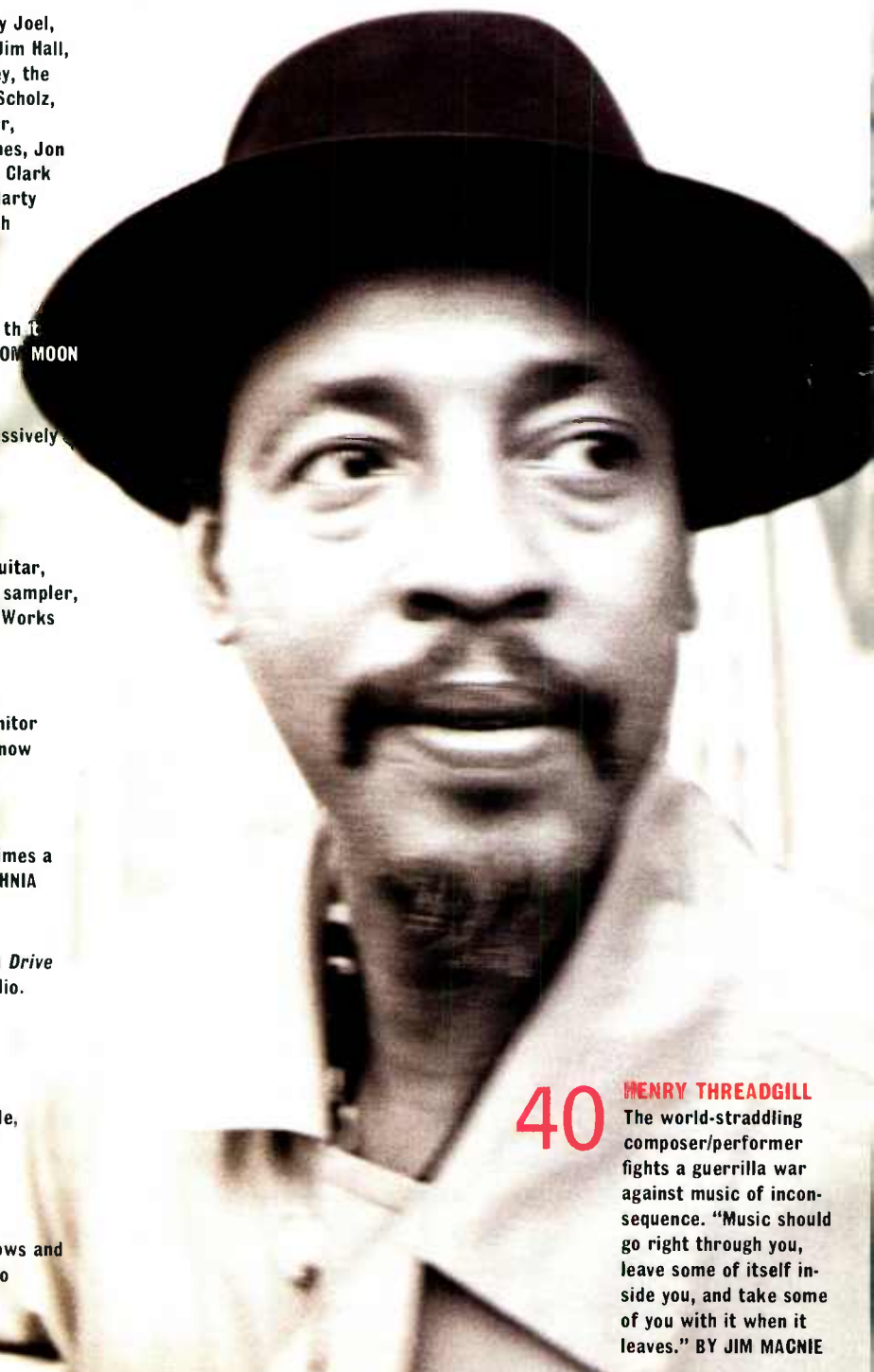

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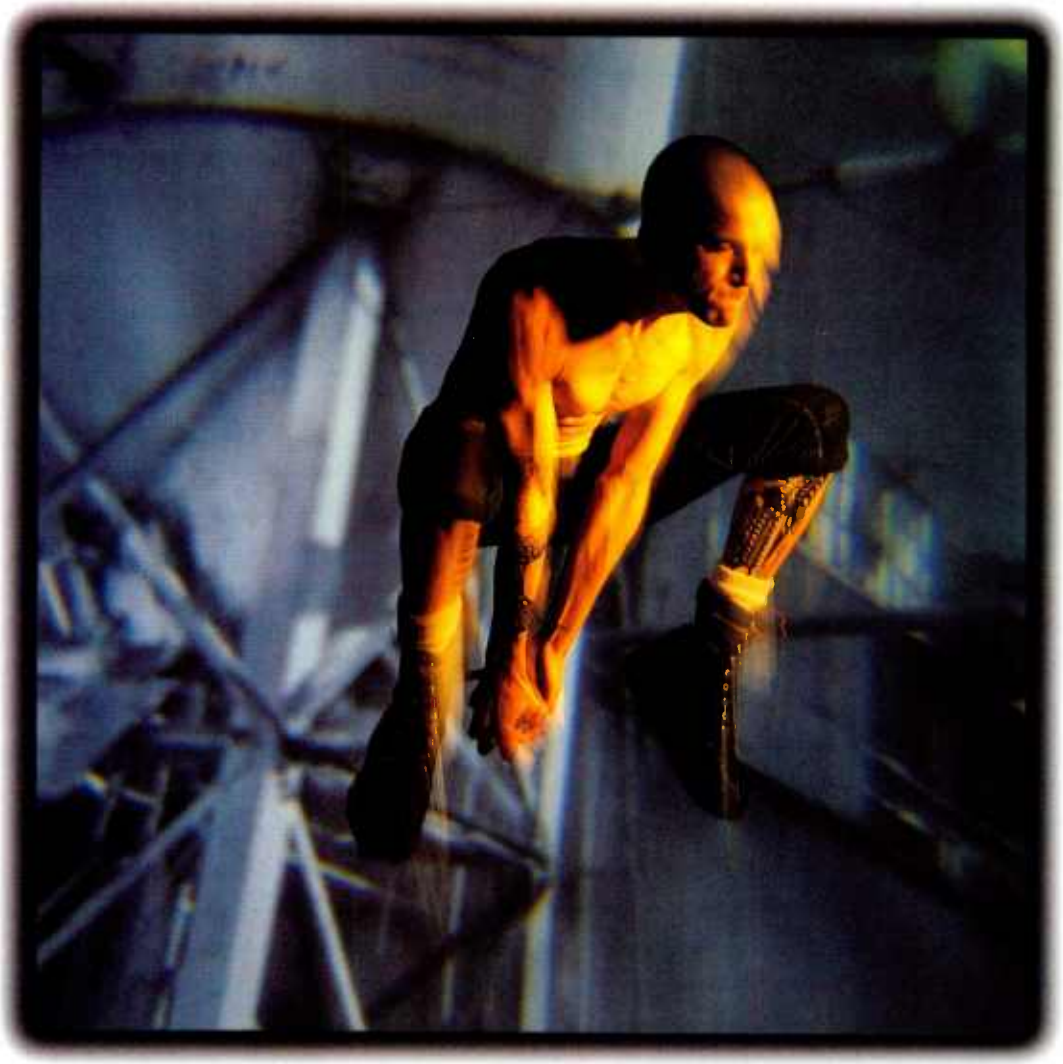

[Perhaps he was expecting a chart.]

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JOSHUA REDMAN

"If everyone liked what I did, I probably wouldn't be playing anything of any depth."

Your relatively short career has been remarkably successful. There are eminent musicians who have never received a fraction of this attention. Have you experienced any backlash?

I'm sure it's out there, but I haven't encountered much of it face to face. Of the older musicians that I've met, most of them have been very supportive and I haven't gotten a bad vibe or a feeling of bitterness from them directly. That might just be that they're being nice to me; when I'm not around there are probably complaints. And there should be; if I were an older musician who had been playing music for 25 years and some little upstart comes along and immediately gets the attention of the press and the industry, I'd be bitter too. But I didn't create my own success. I didn't sign myself, I didn't promote myself, I didn't decide to market myself or try to make myself successful. All I can do is play music and take the opportunities that are given to me. And I think that I kind of go out of my way, not only to pay my respects to older musicians, but to let them know that I realize that my success is, in a lot of ways, based on things other than music.

What things?

I don't think there had been too many young tenor players who were really getting a push from a record company. I came along at the end of a movement which I pretty much detest, which people call the young lions movement—basically, record companies signing musicians based on their age and nothing else. I won a major saxophone competition, which kind of put my name out there. I had an interesting story, I didn't come to the music world through the traditional route, I wasn't even planning to be a musician, there was that "overnight success" hook because I planned to be a lawyer and then I moved to New York and started playing music and things really happened. I was a new face; I think there's something about my personality which appealed to people, I do good interviews—

You write good liner notes—

Whatever. Musically, I think there's an honesty in my music, and hopefully a soulfulness. I really try to communicate when I play, and I think people can tap into that, whether it be jazz listeners or music listeners.

You play a broad range of material—Charlie Parker, Stevie Wonder, James Brown, Monk, your compositions. I think that's exciting and laudable, but I find it a little disconcerting when, in the course of one tune, you veer from jazz phrasing into a Gamble and Huff mode.

Well, that's you. Not everyone is going to like what I do, and that's something I can accept; if everyone liked what I did, I probably wouldn't be playing anything of any depth. As far as a breadth of styles, I guess what you're saying is that you hear things that can be pretty disconnected. I feel that when I play, at least when I'm playing well, there's a thread that runs through everything I do that connects it, and makes it make sense to me. But I'm definitely searching, and right now what you'll hear in my music is a wide variety of styles. I think that as time goes on, and I become more mature, my music will become more focused. I think that a lack of focus is a valid criticism of what I'm doing.

You've written that you don't want people to feel that they "don't get it" when it comes to jazz.

What I wrote is what I think about when I'm not playing music. When I'm playing music, any of that kind of theorizing, what I believe that jazz should be or could be, goes out the window. When I stand up to play, I try to clear my mind and play what I'm feeling at the moment, and because of that there may be a diversity of moods within one solo or one composition. People also mistake something: I'm not crusading to make jazz more accessible. What I'm saying is that if people drop their misconceptions about jazz, they would be able to really be emotionally moved.

Are you happy with your sound?

I like my sound. I think my sound is the core of what I do. I think I've been able to develop my sound to a point where it's very expressive of what's inside of me. But I'm definitely not satisfied; there's a lot of room for improvement. As I have a wider range of experiences and become a deeper human being that will naturally add more depth and soul to my sound.

You've had a rigorous performance schedule and you've been on the road a lot. You've said before that this interfered with the need to practice. If that keeps up, what will you do in order to sustain your growth?

I do have control over what I do and where I go and how much I play. At this point it's very important for me to be out there on the road performing, night after night. Because I'm young and I have the energy and I need this experience. So I don't really foresee my schedule changing that dramatically over the next few years, unless of course people get sick of hearing me play and I don't have any more gigs! What I have to do is change my internal schedule; I have to find the time to ensure my musical growth. And there's a lot of time in the day that's wasted stressing over things which are pointless to stress over. So the time definitely is there.

KAREN BENNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY NATHANIEL WELCH

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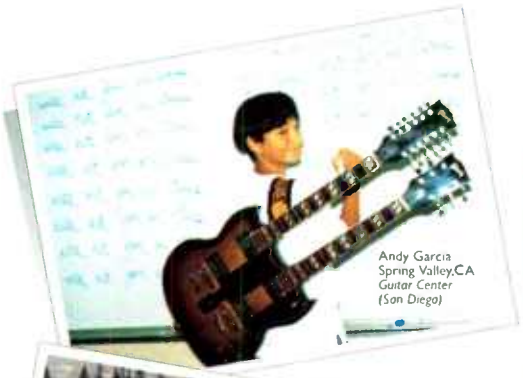
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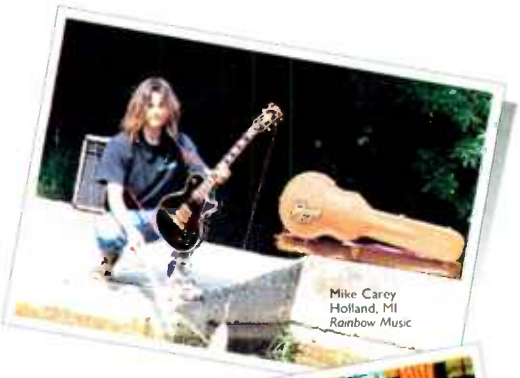
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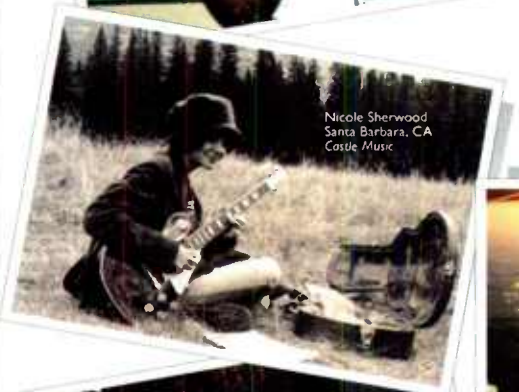
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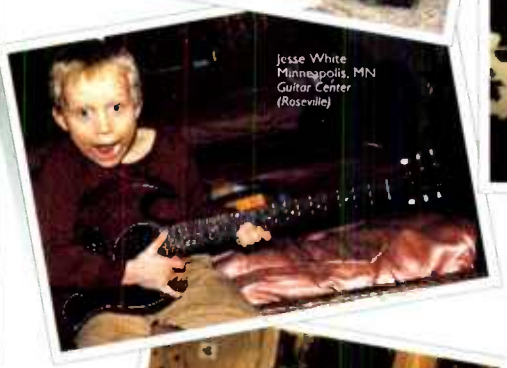
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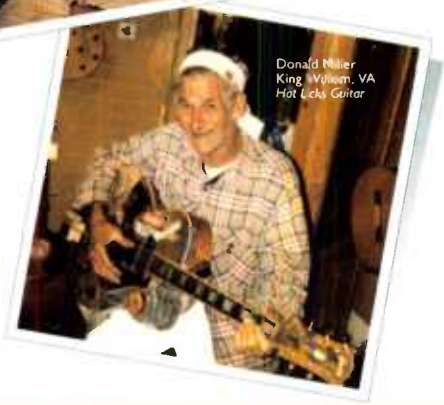
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LETTERS

E-MAIL

Your articles on how information technology will reshape the record industry (Jan./Feb. '95) seem to share the megacorporate/millionaire assumption that there will continue to be just as much money in the industry as there is today. Savvy music consumers expect ways to get a lot more for a lot less. No matter what schemes are developed to ensure compensation for downloads of music, the fact will remain that quality music takes just a fixed amount of storage per minute. Meanwhile, storage costs continue to go down exponentially.

Right now I can buy a four-gigabyte DAT drive for about $1000 and blank tapes for $20. That tape will hold seven CDs' worth of music without compression! With a multitasking operating system, a little software and a quad-speed CD-ROM I could record to that tape at four albums per hour with a minimum of fuss. Having that setup, all I would have to do is post my album collection online, find others doing the same and arrange to trade tapes via snail-mail.

Then there's talk of recordable CD-ROM drives for under $300 within 18 months. Blanks are as low as $10 already. In ten years there will be some media that will hold hundreds or even thousands of albums and cost less than $50. If you think piracy would be controllable under those conditions, then think again. Listeners will probably come to expect the access to music for private use for free as a personal right. Collecting gratuities will be a matter of artists making the donation process convenient—and most of all, writing songs that leave the listeners "grateful." The way it ought to be?

Michael Tesvich

In your December "Rough Mix," I found it curious that you afforded to Collective Soul's Ed Roland at least twice as much space to explain how he wrote forgettable songs such as "Shine" as you allowed for the recent passing of Danny Gatton. Because it was Gatton's desire neither to tour endlessly nor make mass-appeal music, he was known to few outside of Washington, D.C. Nevertheless, Danny Gatton's death was touchingly acknowledged by the Fender company, which took out a full-page memorial to him in the very same issue of your magazine: "He could play it all. Now all we can do is listen."

Martin Secrest
Washington, DC

There's a much simpler explanation than lack of critic loyalty or record company racism for the failure of Arrested Development and Public Enemy ("Slap at Rap," Jan./Feb. '95) to sell well with their '94 releases. They were bad records.

I agree with Chuck D about the Stones, though. I can't describe the sadness that I felt when I walked into a record store and the front-of-store new-releases section was entirely filled with Eagles and Zep reunion CDs.

BUTLAND@NBNET.NB.CA

Thanks, Bill Flanagan, for "Maternal Life" (Jan./Feb. '95). As a mother with a full-time day job and a nighttime original band, it was inspiring to read this dead-on-target article. After I drop my baby off at daycare and begin my trip to work as a librarian, the car stereo gets cranked to "11" listening to women like Hynde, Phair, old Martha and the Muffins and Sheila Chandra. Hopefully, I'm doing my bit too by not only sharing the music but making it.

Avril McInally

Joni Mitchell continues to suffer the Catch-22 dilemma of no airplay and public indifference (Jan./Feb. '95). This is particularly baffling in view of her Geffen recordings, which I feel to be among the very best of her long and richly rewarding career.

Joni spoke of not wanting to give *Turbulent Indigo* to Geffen for fear that it would not be heard by anyone. As of this writing, *Turbulent Indigo* is number 155 and dropping, there is no single being played anywhere, and a promised video ("How Do You Stop") featuring Seal has yet to surface. It would appear that the people at Warner Bros. are no more adept at "selling" Joni Mitchell than the people at Geffen. Someone should tell the people at Warner Bros. to get serious about promoting Joni Mitchell and to do it soon.

James White
New York, NY

JONI

Thank you, Chip Stern, for your piece on Joni. Finally an interview by someone who respects and appreciates her for the major talent (hell, genius) that she is.

James Lake
Joppa, MD

It's refreshing to know that there are still artists out there who don't sell their souls for some commercial success. Whenever I hear Aimee Mann, I'm reminded of Joni Mitchell. Aimee—take a lesson from Joni: Remain true to your art, and you too may become legend!

John Poole
Norton, MA

DON'T TRUST ANYONE OVER...

From articles in your magazine about the music industry I have deduced the following about an artist's chances of getting signed:

- If you're over 40 and not already established, forget it.
- If you don't build a following by playing the club (saloon) circuit, you greatly reduce the chance that an A&R person will become aware of your work.
- If you don't have the money to produce a CD of yourself you will not likely get a fair listen at a record company, or anywhere else.
- If you're over 30 forget it.
- If your audience is not easily targetable through advertising, you won't get airplay, there will be no demand for your stuff, and nobody will be interested in distributing it.
- If you're over 25 the door is closing fast, baby.

Stephen Chandler
Shullsburg, WI

ERRRATA

Two photographs on page 41 and one on page 44 of our December '94 issue should have been credited to Bettman Archives.

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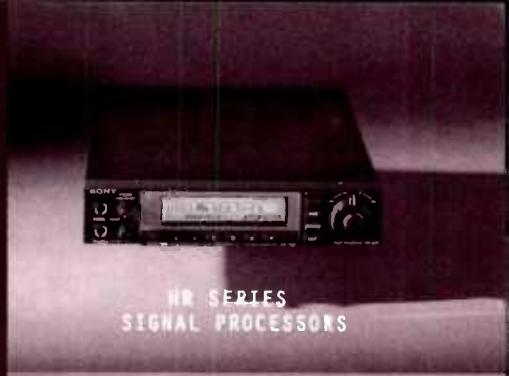

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EXPERT WITNESS

JOBIM AND HAWKINS, R.I.P.

Of the many prominent musicians who have passed away these past few months, no two would seem to have less in common than Antonio Carlos Jobim and Ted Hawkins. Worldly and elegant, Brazilian composer Jobim penned melodies of surpassing sophistication that suggested the effervescence of fine champagne; Mississippi-born Hawkins, no stranger to poverty, homelessness or prison, strummed a guitar and sang country and blues with the elemental passion of a man clinging to a life raft. Jobim's dry vocals had their charm, but his songs—instant standards like "One Note Samba" and "The Girl from Ipanema"—were designed to soar on the wings of jazz solos by Stan Getz or Charlie Byrd. Hawkins' voice was all he had, and it was enough, riveting strollers on the Venice, California boardwalk with his ability to distill a lifetime of hard experience into ballads sung with strange, heartrending tenderness.

Jobim recorded numberless albums in his 30-year career; Hawkins somehow managed six. His most recent was entitled *The Next Hundred Years*, with the faith that one's musical spirit might outlive mortal flesh. Perhaps that's what Hawkins and Jobim shared at last: the ability, possessed by few musicians, to touch the human heart in ways unstuck by time.–*M.R.*

CLAUDIA THOMPSON

ROUGH

MIDI AT GROUND ZERO

Microsoft will integrate Opcode's Open Music System (OMS) into the Windows 95 operating system for IBM-compatible computers. OMS manages the computer's internal MIDI functions at the system level. Incorporating OMS into Windows is expected to stimulate the development of music software for the IBM, which has always lagged behind the Apple Macintosh. Indeed, Opcode plans to have versions of Vision and Galaxy, their flagship sequencer and universal patch editor/librarian, running on the IBM any day now. The first OMS/Windows implementation will be an extension of Windows 95 (that is, a separate file that resides in the system folder). Subsequent versions of Microsoft's operating system will incorporate OMS as an integral feature.–*T.G.*

Be Careful What You Wish For...

by Gilby Clarke

SO HERE I am halfway through my set, as an alcohol-absorbed crowd is singing the words along with me to "Can't Always Get What You Want" in a local rock club in Vancouver which holds about 500 people. Any musician might think that's great—playing music for a living, sold-out show—not everybody gets to do what they really want in life, you know.

I, on the other hand, used to do this a year ago in front of 50,000 to 80,000 people a night. So you want to know what I think of being back in the bars? I think it's the greatest feeling in the world. You see, I just recorded and released my first solo album. I've always wanted to make my own record. I've made albums where I was the songwriter, lead vocalist and guitarist, but it was with a band. When you're in a band you must respect others' opinions and judgments—otherwise why not just make a solo album? So that's what I did.

I started my solo world tour this past summer and, to my surprise, it's been going very well and I'm having the time of my life. For the last three years I was the rhythm guitarist with Guns N' Roses on the *Use Your Illusion* World Tour. We toured the whole world twice and I've been through things most musicians would dream about—and nightmares only Freddy Krueger could think of.

In South America we had thousands of kids at the airport and outside our hotels screaming our names out—just like Beatlemania. It's very hard to keep your cool when thousands of fans are screaming for you all night long. In Canada and Colombia we had riots that police and the army couldn't control. In Germany we played while the worst rainstorm in years hit—which added a sentimental touch to "November Rain." Even Dizzy and Matt, who are covered by the stage and usually stay dry when it rains, joined in to get wet. The tour was so long that seven babies were born to band members and crew and five were conceived before it was over. Izzy, who left the band at the beginning of the tour, came back to replace me for five shows when I broke my wrist in a motorcycle accident. I still can't believe we ever finished.

What's really strange is when you work so hard all those years playing clubs for no money, dealing with record companies, managers, agents, etc...you would think you'd know it all by the time you get a shot. But every artist is different [*cont'd on page 79*]

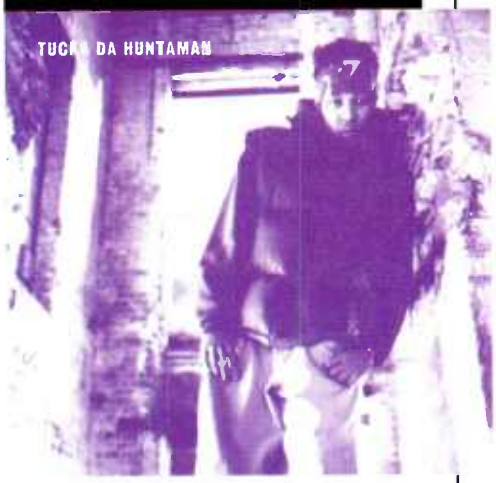
RECENT SIGNINGS

Cold Water Flat Boston-based indie-rock band now on semi-indie label (Fort Apache/MCA)

Specula Chicago duo, "like Urge Overkill if they were still good" (Scat)

The David S. Ware Quartet NY avant tenor sax man finds a home (Homestead)

Tucka Da Huntaman Ragga-style MC straight outta Brownsville, NY (Profile)



MIX

WALK WHICH WAY?

TV Etc., newsletter of the right-wing Media Research Center, describes a fundraising party for Ted Kennedy hosted by Aerosmith at the home of Brad Whitford. Asked to name his favorite Aerosmith song, the Senator looked befuddled until an aide yelled, "'Walk This Way'!" At that, Kennedy ambled off in the direction of the helpful assistant.–*T.G.*

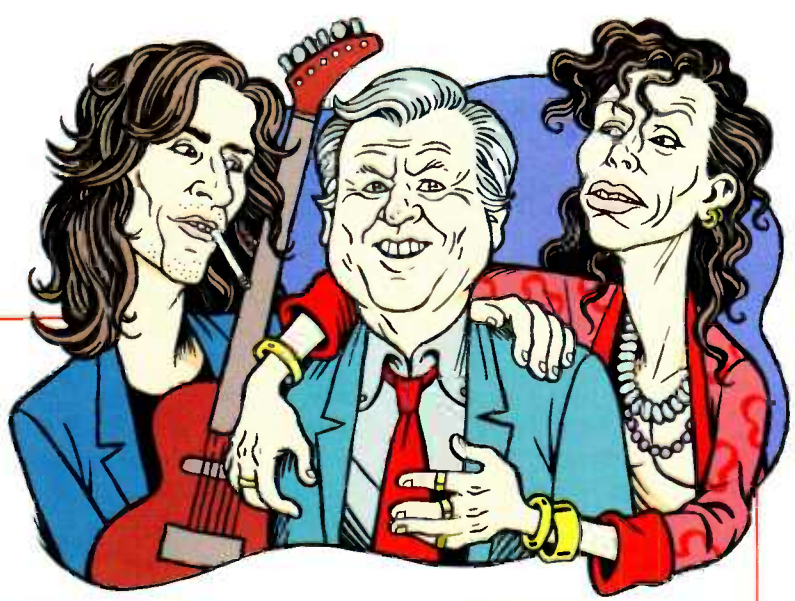


ILLUSTRATION BY DANNY HELLMAN

EXPERT WITNESS

Discovering Hank Williams

by Matt Johnson (the The)

WHAT THE HELL am I doing recording an entire album of Hank Williams songs? I'm not really a country music fan, I've never been to Nashville. I'm a couple of generations younger than Hank and, though I hate categories, I guess I'm what you might loosely term "alternative." And finally (and worst of all), I'm English! I'll try to explain...

To me, Hank Williams was to country music what Bob Marley was to reggae and, to stretch the analogy a bit, what Muhammad Ali was to boxing. That is, bigger than the genre that spawned him. Williams was American music's first great "pop culture" icon. Before Presley, Hendrix, Morrison, etc., there was Hank Williams, dying young before it was fashionable to die young—at 29, in fact.

By drawing upon the universal human themes of longing, love, loss and loneliness, Williams' songs transcended time and space, crossing national and cultural borders in the process. He was one of the first great confessional singer/songwriters in a lineage that I feel also includes Robert Johnson, Neil Young and John Lennon.

It's difficult from our viewpoint to appreciate the impact he must have had in an age when singers tended to sing other people's songs and songwriters tended to write songs for other people to sing. Here was an intense young outsider who not only brilliantly performed his own songs to huge and mesmerized audiences, but also turned them into classics that hundreds of other singers would be performing for decades to come. In fact, he was the first country artist whose songs consistently "crossed over" into the parallel universe of pop.

Like most people of my generation, I was aware of such songs as "Hey, Good Lookin'," "Your Cheatin' Heart," "Jambalaya" and "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," but it was only in the last four or five years that I really began listening to them in earnest with a view to covering them. I can't remember how the initial idea appeared in my head, but I think it probably had something to do with my wanting to simplify my own writing after our *Mind Bomb* album.

I decided to trace back [*cont'd on page 79*]

NO MATCH FOR JAX

Over 15 million copies of Boston's 1976 debut album have been sold according to the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). This makes *Boston* the second best-selling album in history after Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, which stands at 24 million and counting. The Eagles' *Greatest Hits* and Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* previously were tied for #2.–*T.G.*

KEEPER OF THE FLAME

Promoter Richie Suraci is organizing future Woodstock festivals at the site of the original 1969 concert, tentatively entitled "Back to the Garden at Bethel '95" and "Funstock '96" (no, this is not an April Fool's joke). On the bill are "major '60s spirit musical groups and attractions, camping, bonfire and drumming, paint your vehicle contest, alternative lifestyles workshops, ethnic food booths" and more. Bands interested in performing may send a demo tape, bio and SASE to: Fine Art Productions, 67 Maple St., Newburgh, NY 12550-4034.–*T.G.*

ILLUSTRATION BY ICHAYNA GOODMAN

REASONS TO CHOOSE THE MACKIE 8•BUS-PT 1

Lately, several big pro audio companies have gone out of their way to "mention" us in their own 8-bus console ads. Many satisfied Mackie owners have urged us to shoot back with hardball comparisons of our own. But that's not our style.

Greg believes that if a product is really good, it should speak for itself — without resorting to slagging the competition. First in a series, this ad details some of the features that we believe make our 8•Bus the best recording or PA console values available today for under $20,000.

Apparently we're not alone in our belief. In competition with several of the very consoles that keep "mentioning" us in their ads, we recently won a coveted *MIX* magazine TEC Award for Small-Format Consoles. As well as *LIVE! Sound* magazine's Best Small Club Front of House Mixer Award. Both awards were the result of pro audio industry balloting by folks like you. Not negative advertising.

Learn more about the 8•Bus Console. Call us toll-free for our detailed, 24-page 8•Bus brochure.

A Comprehensive equalization for creativity and problem-solving.

To quote Electronic Musician magazine[1], *"It's no secret that the versatility and pristine sonics of the 8•Bus EQ have astonished jaded pros and home hobbyists alike. The 4-band EQ section includes two shelving controls fixed at 12kHz and 80Hz; parametric high-midrange EQ with a 500Hz to 18kHz sweep and a bandwidth that can be adjusted between three octaves and one semitone; and low midrange EQ with a 45Hz to 3kHz sweep. A full 15 dB of boost or cut is provided for each band. In addition, an 18 db/octave low-cut filter is set at 75 Hz. That's a heck of a lot of firepower!"*

No kidding. But we also like that part about pristine sonics. One of the reasons that the 8•Bus Series took so long to ship was that Greg was determined not to compromise EQ sound quality.

The biggest gun in the 8•Bus' EQ arsenal is its true parametric high midrange EQ. Conventional sweepable midrange has a fixed bandwidth of about 2 octaves. No matter how high or low in frequency you sweep it (or how much you boost or cut it), 2-octave EQ's *contour* stays the same. Sort of like being asked to paint a picture with only a bucket of bright yellow paint.

By letting you vary the bandwidth, the 8•Bus' parametric EQ gives you the equivalent of a full rainbow of tonal "colors" in your artistic pallet. Spreading midrange EQ over three full octaves transforms it into an extremely subtle — yet extremely dramatic — effect. Sweet and natural-sounding, it can unobtrusively change the character of a track without noticeable tonal intrusion. And, for those times when you want what can only be called surgical EQ, our hi mid can be dialed to as narrow as 1/12-octave — four times as precise as a 1/3rd-octave graphic equalizer! It's like having a delicate artist's brush for erasing or enhancing tiny details. Between three octaves and 1/12-octave is a vast range of tonal colorations, nearly all possible only with parametric equalization. And, since our "Hi" mid's sweep range extends from 18kHz all the way down to 500Hz, your creative palate extends over six octaves – to our knowledge the widest midrange sweep currently available in a comparably priced console.

24•E Expander — 32•8 Console

B VLZ Circuitry for very low noise.

Why ship 8•Bus consoles with monster 220-Watt Power Supplies? Partially because we love to over-engineer things for added performance. But also to better enable Very Low Impedance (VLZ) circuitry in critical places like our mic preamps.

At room temperature, all electronic components create thermal noise that can cumulatively become audible and objectionable. We design around thermal noise by making internal circuit impedances as low as possible everywhere possible. For example, resistor values in our mix bus are 1/4 the value of those typically used — hence thermal noise is proportionally lower. Another VLZ advantage is that low-impedance circuitry is more immune to crosstalk problems.

Achieving VLZ requires thoroughly buffered circuitry and creates high current consumption. That's one more reason that the 8•Bus console comes with a massive, 31-pound, power supply.

[1] September 1994 issue, page 64, in a sidebar to an article on The British Invasion (of consoles). We urge you to read the whole thing so that we don't get in trouble for quoting stuff out of context.

MACKIE.

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EPIC SOUNOTRACKS Call it Evan Dando's revenge: Perennially overmarketed since the modest Mrs. Robinson video hit MTV, currently avoiding the press, he's engaged in a marketing campaign on behalf of his musical idol and friend, Epic Soundtracks, formerly of Swell Maps.

Evan 'n' Epic on Conan O'Brien mid-November, Evan 'n' Epic touring with an acoustic set apiece, Evan 'n' Epic writing songs together. "It was only a matter of time," smiles Epic, who came up with his moniker as a teenager ("It's the sort of thing you do when you're 17"). "We have a similar sense of dry humor, finding life humorous in its small details."


CHIP WHITE

Epic's latest CD, the one likely to break him in America (though his solo debut *Rise Above* made some '93 year-end lists), is called *Sleeping Star*, perhaps because it reminds Epic of *his* faves, Big Star. But while Evan plays all of the keyboards, drums and pianos on the record, as well as guitar and bass, he's not out to lead a pop revolution; the effect is more quiet, personal. "Don't Go to School," a song about playing hooky with your significant other, would be a raucous teen anthem coming from most rockers. Epic calls it "a subtle form of teen rebellion. To get something over like that," he says, "it doesn't have to be an incredibly loud piece of music."–*J.B.*

CHIP WHITE Drummer/composer Chip White has been on the jazz scene long enough to rack up a range of career milestones. Born in 1946, White studied drums with his father and at Berklee "in the '60s, before it became a factory." After a stint in the Army, he spent two years with Tom Waits, gigged with Frank Wess, James Moody, Carmen McRae, John Abercrombie, Enrico Rava, Jimmy McGriff and Jaki Byard. He also collaborated on a jazz musical with choreographer Kathy Sanson.

Now White, who has spent the last two years playing with the Houston Person/Etta Jones quintet, has his first record as a leader on the new Postcards label. "Harlem Sunset" boasts the refreshing configuration of Robin Eubanks, Claudio Roditi, Gary Bartz, Steve Nelson and Buster Williams, and it showcases White's compositional skill. The drumming, powerful without being bombastic, has the ring of maturity. His debut may have been a long time coming, but the upbeat White has no desire to trade places with any young lions. "It made a difference to *be there* to hear Coltrane, Monk, Bill Evans and Mingus. I'm proud of my age, and I hope to get much older."–*K.B.*

ROBERT EARL KEEN He's appeared onstage in his boxers, sung about starting the day with the wild thing and urged his pal Lyle Lovett to put the moves on a record store clerk. But after listening to his evocative narratives—which range from outlaw tales to the foibles of small-town citizenry—you really wouldn't deem Robert Earl Keen sex-obsessed. "Well...I don't know," counters the Texas singer/songwriter with a chuckle, "aren't we all?"

On *Gringo Honeymoon*, Keen's fifth and best record, there are other subjects essayed, many as common as coitus, but each depicted in a distinctly candid manner. Keen's one of our best detail men, instilling yarns with you-are-there acuity. He doesn't turn his head from the hard truths.

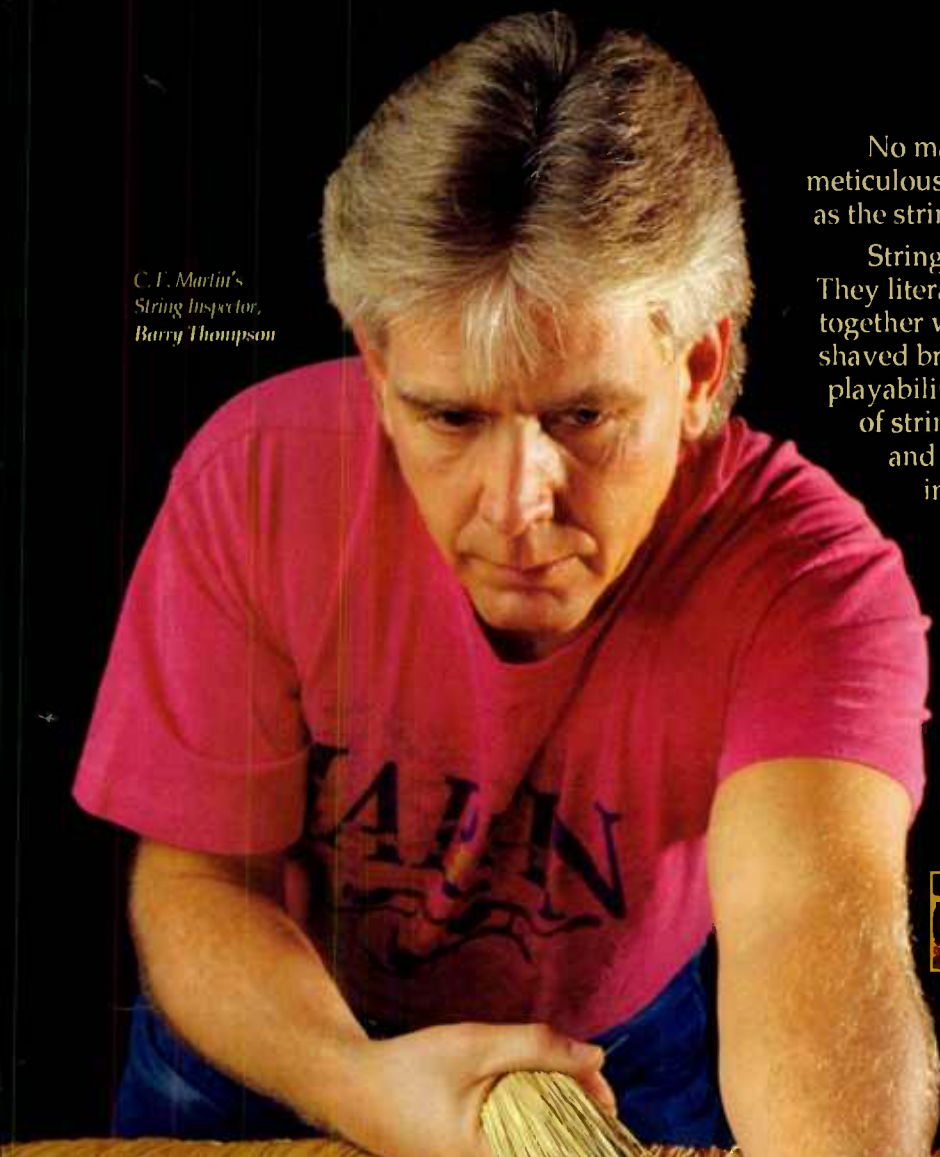

EPIC SOUNDTRACKS


PETER D. FIGEN

ROBERT EARL KEEN

"I try to put action and punch in the narrative, and sometimes maybe a little moral, too," he says. With the sharp eye that paints such vivid imagery in his music, Keen can't help but notice that he's been drawing bigger crowds lately. "The reason I put a band together was because the crowds were becoming too loud for just a guitar," he confesses. "It was a defense of sorts."–*J.M.*

Why We Put More Care Into Our Strings Than Many Companies Put Into Their Guitars.



C. F. Martin's String Inspector, ***Barry Thompson***

No matter how innovative its design or how meticulously it is crafted, a guitar is *only* as good as the strings that power it.

Strings are critical to a guitar's tone. They literally "drive" the soundboard, working together with the bridge and the delicately shaved braces. They also greatly affect playability. A carefully gauged and balanced set of strings greatly enhances the player's style and technique. Because they are so important, we make all Martin® and Martin Marquis® strings ourselves, in the very same facility where we build Martin guitars. And like our guitars, each string is made slowly, carefully, using only premium materials.

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ROUGH MIX

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The Pennsylvania legislature closed in November '94 without passing HB 2982, a censorship bill that would have criminalized the sale to minors of records labeled with the ubiquitous "parental advisory" sticker. It is expected to be reintroduced in 1995. In a gesture that sheds light on the shadowy relationships between art, censorship and commerce, the bill condemns a minor convicted of purchasing labeled merchandise to 100 hours of community service at a domestic violence or rape crisis center. The retailer who sold it is out only $25.–*T.G.*

PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT LYRICS

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BARRON

This month's Rough Mix was written by Karen Bennett, Jill Blardinelli, Nathan Brackett, Ted Greenwald, Jim Macnie, Mac Randall and Mark Rowland.

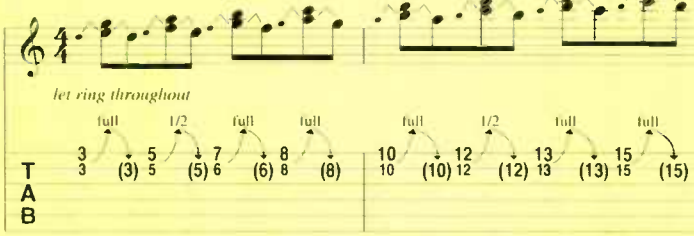
PRIVATE LESSON

DUKE LEVINE

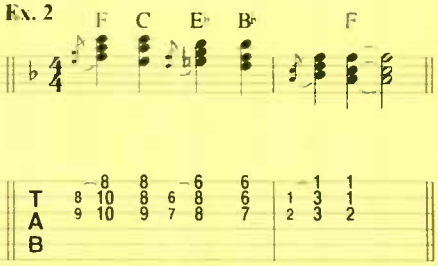
On his latest release *Country Soul Guitar* (Daring/Rounder), ace picker Duke Levine cooks up a hearty roots stew, mixing the sophisticated line-rendering of jazz with the primal wail of the blues and the down-home twang of rockabilly. Among Levine's niftiest tricks is the way he approximates the sound of pedal-steel bends, raising or lowering the pitch of one or more notes while keeping others stationary. Levine advises, "One way to get comfortable with bends is to apply them to a chord and play them all the way through a scale. Take G7; that uses a mixolydian scale, which gets your fingers used to both whole-step and half-step bends." (Ex. 1)

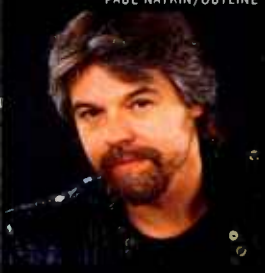
Another way Levine achieves a steel-ish sound is through hammer-ons, as Ex. 2 demonstrates. "Sometimes steel players bend really fast, and it sounds more like a hammer-on," he says. "Also, when you're changing more than one note at a time on guitar, it can be hard to bend them all, so this is an easier way to do it. What's great about these techniques is that they're not just for country-type songs; you can use them for anything."–*M.R.*

Ex. 1



Ex. 2





PAUL NATKIN/OUTLINE

GENE KIRKLAND/RETNA

then IF I KNEW

Every musician who has been playing for a while—those who have made it big as well as those who think they should have—feels that he has figured out how this business/art form/lifestyle works, and if he could go back in time and start over again with that knowledge life would be a bed of roses. It's not just older musicians who bend your ear in bars with stories about the traps and pitfalls waiting for new talent; plenty of players in their 20s will spin tales of the troubles they've seen and how they were suckered.

After years of hearing these hard luck (and sometimes good luck) stories *Musician* decided to perform a public service by assembling as many as we could and running them all in one place. Every musician is different, but there's probably not one alive who could not benefit from thinking about some of the advice offered here. After all, it was the Faces—maybe the most glorious should-have-beens of all—who concluded the last song on their last album with the words, "I wish that I knew what I know now when I was younger..."

WHAT I KNOW

NOW

CHRIS CUFFARO OUTLINE

Paul Westerberg

IF ANYONE gives you criticism that starts off "you should" or "you shouldn't," walk away immediately.

Anyone who tells you *nothing is impossible* is a liar. It's either impossible or it's simple and if it's not simple you're doing it wrong. Whether it's lyrics or drumming or wardrobe: Keep it simple.

Here's the one I should have followed: If you're pretty much the same as everyone, if you're normal, don't try to be different! And if you are different please don't try to be normal. It takes a lot of courage to be different but it takes a great deal of hard work to be the same. I think in the end you get the same result but you've got to be what you are. A lot of people try to be different and it just rings hollow.

If you need your family and friends to come down and see you perform you're no performer.

Never underestimate the value of bad press; in the end it's about the same as good because it makes people talk about you. It's only when they don't write about you at all that you're doing something wrong.

Never let a photographer take you outside. That just means he has a tree he wants to take a picture of and he needs someone to stand in front of it. You don't see Madonna out in fuckin' cornfields!

Lastly, always let them see you sweat.

Melissa Etheridge

I'M ACTUALLY really glad that I didn't know then what I know now, because I might not have been willing to do as much. The thing that I didn't know then was how much work it all is, how much constant giving of energy it was, it is. Then it was all writing and dreams. And there was a great energy that went into that. But it is the music *business*. As an adult I have been willing to say, "Okay, I'm gonna do the business, because because of that business I get to do the art, I get to do the music." But back then it might have seemed very unromantic.

I think with the first album I realized that the record company doesn't just put an album out and then

PETER FIGEN/RETNA

"It's not about production. It's about the immediacy of the music and lyrics."

BONNIE RAITT

TOM SHEEHAN

BRETT ANDERSON (SUEDE)

THE BE ALL AND END ALL of music is that it's got to come from you. You get pushed and pulled in various ways but at the end of the day you can't really fake it. The media gets hold of you and tugs you about and after a while the media turns you into something you're not. I think the only mistake I've made is not being wary enough of that. I'd also say, on a lighter note, never to pull stupid faces in photographs 'cause they always come back to haunt you. Always! Every single bloody time I've done that it's appeared in something with someone taking the piss. So that's my new rule. Don't take yourself too seriously, that's incredibly important. Don't start believing what everyone else is saying about you—good or bad. Keep a grip on reality. Don't take too much influence from outside yourself. You've got your own vision—always believe in that. We went through some real shit times early on in our career; people told us we couldn't play, we were useless, and we didn't have anything to offer. It's really demoralizing for a band when you first start off, 'cause you're up against all these people telling you you're no good. To get through it you have to believe in yourself. The most important thing is to keep at it, to be persistent, to be strong about it. You've got to believe that what you're doing is worthwhile. Suede once played a gig in London with two people there—one of which was our drummer's cousin—and then had to come back onstage afterwards and take the amps off in front of those two people. Music can be a very humiliating business, but it's worth it in the end.

INTERVIEWS BY STEVE MORSE, PETER WATROUS, PETER CRONIN, NATHAN BRACKETT, DEV SHERLOCK AND BILL FLANAGAN

people like it and they go buy it. It's so much more complicated; there's record stores, there's radio stations. If I had known that, I just might have approached it differently. I would say to love what you do. On any level, love it, do it because you have to do it, because you want to do it. Do it for whomever you can, wherever you can, and what happens beyond that is just icing on the cake.

Jimmy Heath

IF I KNEW THEN what I know now I would have started out playing both the piano and the drums. The source of all the harmony is at the piano, and everything rhythmically comes from studying something about drums. As a composer I'd be better at it if I had gone deeper into composition and harmony, through the piano, at an earlier age.

Billy Joel

1 BEFORE SIGNING any documents, I would have sought the counsel of an attorney of my own choosing independent of business managers, record companies or anyone else with a vested interest in my financial future. I would have interviewed numerous attorneys and would have worked out a payment situation best suited for that time.

2. I would have had an audit done at least once every two years of my business manager's books and a professional review of investments made by that business manager. I would have had direct contact with the record company and monitored a manager's dealings with that company.

3. I would have interviewed several accounting firms independent of managers, attorneys, record companies and anyone else with a vested interest in my financial future. I would have chosen an accounting firm to represent my financial interests on the basis of their reputation and my understanding of how business was being done on my behalf. I would have close and constant communication with a key person in that firm who would keep me notified of all transactions and clarify any confusion I might have regarding the music business itself.

4. I would not have automatically assumed that I needed to sign a contract with a personal manager. I have since found that the so-called services of a personal manager can be contracted through various ancillary agencies in the music business. Most of these agencies don't take a percentage of an artist's

TORI AMOS

LOREN HAYNES

I WOULD HAVE SWITCHED to margarine years ago. You're 31 and you look down below that bikini line...

But seriously, I had some lost years musically. Mainly because I stopped writing music to challenge myself. It became about chasing somebody's idea of what was valid. After seven years of getting my tapes rejected, I started to question whether my stuff was effective. A lot of people make choices of what's hot because they're chasing some silly little demographic somewhere. And that's ridiculous, because people respond to what moves them. It took me years to understand that I had to make music that moved me.

As a musician and as a songwriter, you're going to have to find some way to deal with rejection. Sometimes you can turn it into "God, make my stuff better. Maybe they said something I can use here." Or maybe they just don't get it. There are very few visionaries. Most people are looking for what's already happened. You have to kind of weigh it. You can't have a craft when you're completely closed, either. If you love everything you do, something's wrong, and if you hate everything you do, something's wrong.

When you go to church, you're going to get something out of it, but you're going to probably get 20 years of guilt, too. The music business is like that. Nobody wants a dumb musician. We don't have to be stupid, we don't have to not know what goes on, and yet we still can be committed to our work.

I would love to make a harpsichord record. But sometimes I make certain decisions because I go, "You know, if I do this, then I might be touring tiny little 50-seaters in Germany." And to be quite honest, I don't really like the food in Germany. So the harpsichord record has to be just a fragment of the next record. You have to make your choices knowing that there are going to be consequences. Just say, "I can't get fucked off if KROQ doesn't want to play my harpsichord record." If you want to do that 12-tone album, then do it, but take responsibility for it.

There's nothing worse than a whiny musician. Make your work, stay committed to your work, stand by your work and shut up. Just don't feel sorry for yourself. And don't be precious. I don't find it romantic to say, "Oh, it was so much purer when the music was not involved in the music business." Then guess what, honey, don't make records. 'Cause there's thousands of other kids whose space you're taking up with your fucking tape. And you're wasting a tree to fucking write your lyrics on. So stay at home. That's my advice.

earnings or sign them to long-term contracts. In many instances, the artist does most of the work and the personal manager sits in an office and collects commissions—in some cases up to 50 percent of the artist's gross income. The assumption that artists need a "personal manager" is a persistent myth based on misinformation handed down by generations of naive, exploited musicians. Suffice to say, I would not trust any one person to make decisions on my behalf without first consulting an independent source for the proverbial "second opinion." Sad to say, I would not trust anyone in the music business, especially personal managers.

5. As far as musical and career decisions are concerned, no one knows better than the artist what he or she should be doing creatively. I would never let anyone dictate the direction, timing or nature of my art. The moment someone on the business end starts to make those decisions for an artist, their art starts to take on the aroma of a dead horse.

6. Finally, rather than staying on a continual treadmill of writing, recording and touring, I would have spent more time developing the quality of my relationships and personal life. Everyone deserves time together with loved ones and away from the demands of industry. The music business with its constant emphasis on commercial success and endless productivity is particularly stressful. Artists need to have genuine human experiences before they can effectively express human emotions.

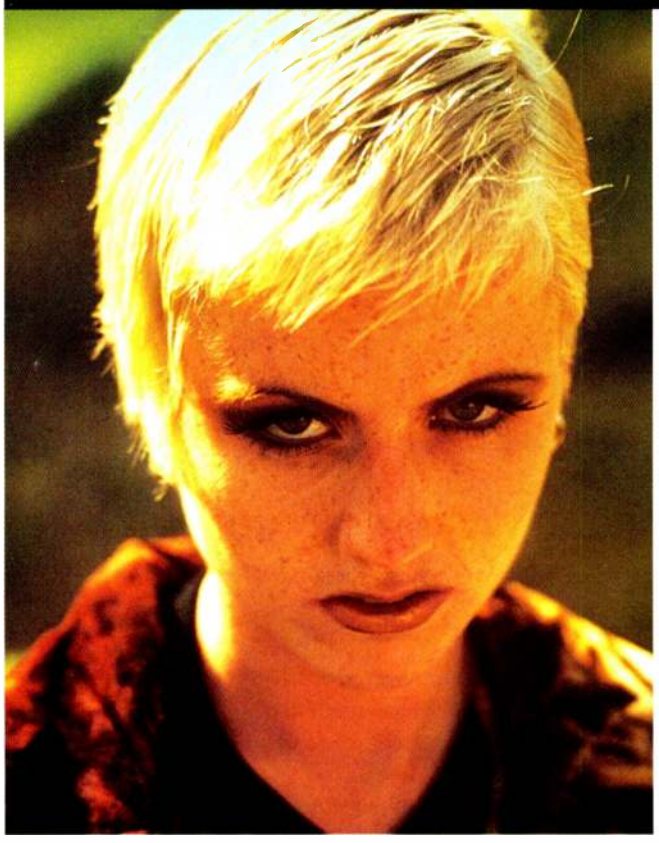
ANDY EARL

DANIEL HASTINGS

"Major labels are the poison in hip-hop. You can make more money selling your own tapes."

KRS-ONE

DOLORES O'RIORDAN (THE CRANBERRIES)



THE FIRST CONTRACT that the Cranberries signed we didn't have a lawyer, and we spent two and a half or three years trying to get out of it. We did all the stupid things, really. We got screwed right, left and center. It's all kind of strange because the lawyers don't only work for bands—they also work for the record companies. So you can have a lawyer who you don't know is also working for your record company. It's pretty crooked.

For the first eight months of the band I was very quiet around management. I never really said what I thought. I was the first one to say something to the boys [in the band] and then they'd think about it. I'd say I didn't like a situation and the guys might think about it but then go, "Yeah but what can we do about it? We're just the band." You learn over time that it's *your* band and you hire everybody that's around you. And the record company aren't nice people; everything they do for you they later take back. They aren't there to be your buddy, it's all business. You can think that people are your friends and they're not.

One of the challenges and one of the drawbacks of becoming famous is that you become aware of the fact that everybody's going to hear what you're singing, so you become a little bit more cagey. You've got to overcome that, you've got to say what you've got to say. Nobody knows exactly who you write a song about unless you use their names, so you've got to fight that fear of *What will they say?*

It's difficult to have time to rehearse when you get busy with promotion and stuff. The best stage set is not worth a shit if you're not performing well. You can spend a fortune on lights but if the band don't sound great, if the passion isn't there, if the songs aren't there you're only wasting your time. You have to remember that the music comes first. That's why you got into this.

Ray Davies

KEEP YOUR NOSE clean and your chin up, even if it requires surgery.

Steven Tyler (AEROSMITH)

ROCK 'N' ROLL is about freedom, so let your thoughts flow and let your true insides come forth. If it's the right beat, you can really have fun with it. And you can make it work for you. On the other hand, there are lots of pitfalls out there that'll get

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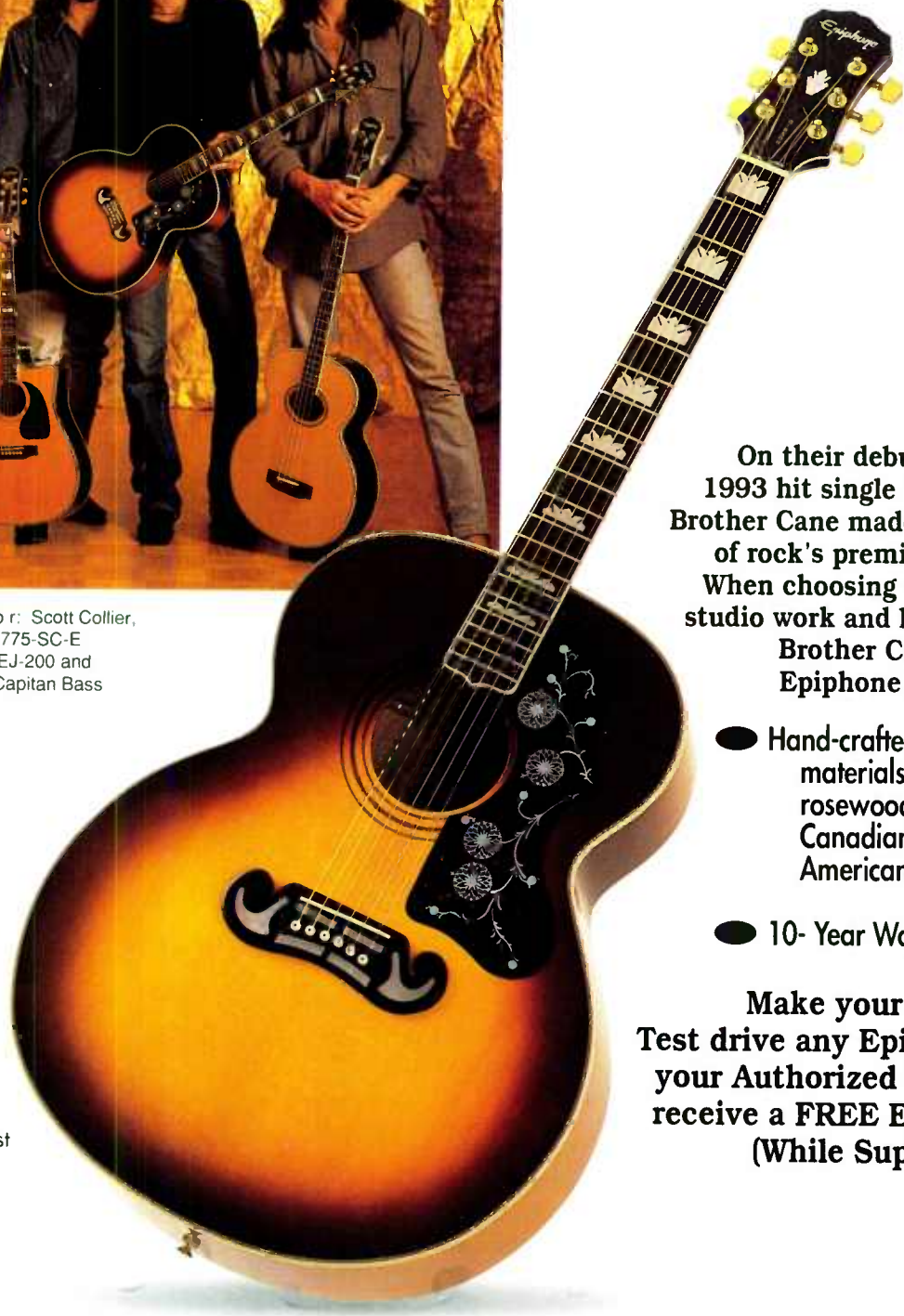
Brother Cane, l to r: Scott Collier, Roman Glick / PR-775-SC-E Damon Johnson / EJ-200 and Glenn Maxey / El Capitan Bass



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CHRIS CUFFARO/OUTLINE

"Because of the business I get to do the music."

MELISSA ETHERIDGE

you down. Like the prerequisites of managers and lawyers and record companies. I would say, don't ever sell your publishing. And if you're gonna sign with a manager, then nothing more than two years.

But one of the things that freaks me out about where we are in the rock 'n' roll circle today is that I can't be definitive anymore with some of my thoughts, because there are two sides to everything. If you go down to tour South America, for instance, it's a case of "Well, we'll blow off Christmas and it's the end of the tour and I may get malaria and there's a lot of cocaine down there. And dysentery." Then I think, "Fuck it. Just fake it, just go. Don't even think about it and just go." And you know, we've gotten more success from that old thought of "Let's just get on the bus and go—and we'll worry about what we're gonna wear when we get there."

Coolio

I WOULD HAVE taken more time in learning how to be a producer and a manager. And I would have been more serious in school and went to college...been more studious in my studies.

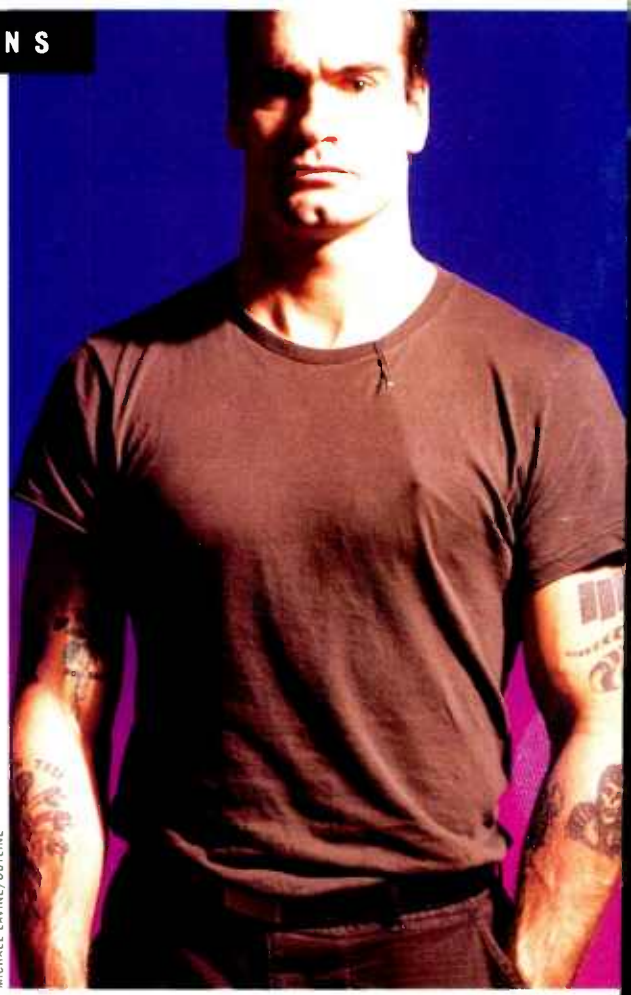
Jim Hall

I MADE ONE decision when I was a kid that I'd actually stick to. I decided to go to music school. It helped me to get a different perspective on music. It exposed me to Gregorian chants and electronic music and Stravinsky, which has helped me stay open-minded. It helped me read and I could write and after I graduated, I took a job with Chico Hamilton, I think because I could do those things pretty well. But there's something else: Musicians should enjoy music. You already have a big payoff by being able to play, and I think we all forget that sometimes.

Bonnie Raitt

I'M THE RECIPIENT of hundreds of [songwriter] tapes—and many of them come with letters apologizing for the quality of the demos. But for me as a musician, the quality of the tape isn't as important as whether it's a heartfelt performance. What I tell people is "Don't worry if you don't have a big budget. Just work on the song." And if a song is good enough, you'll be able to get it heard by someone. There are A&R people at record companies who have paid staffs to listen to these things. I'd suggest looking on the back of a record by an artist that you like,

HENRY ROLLINS



MICHAEL LAVINE/OUTLINE

PRACTICE MORE than any band you know of. After that, practice some more. Don't be afraid to write a bunch of songs and throw them out. Do not be overly precious of every note you make. It's not all going to be good. Even Hendrix and Coltrane had bad days (not many). Tape your jams and listen. Strive for excellence and originality over image, over acceptance, over everything. Play live every chance you get. House parties, whatever. All the great bands were great live bands. James Brown, ZZ Top, Led Zep, Jane's Addiction. The more you play live and learn the band's chemistry, the better. Every band has a chemistry, good, bad or otherwise. Listen to the way Elvin Jones and Coltrane blended. Hendrix and Mitch Mitchell. Mick and Keith. Chemistry. Remember that your instrument accompanies another, the sum of the parts makes the whole. The best bands are tribes.

On the business end: Never sign anything that binds you without an entertainment lawyer first looking over the document. Learn about your publishing and mechanical rights. Some of the mightiest bands on earth have been stung by contracts and bad deals. There are absolute horror stories out there. There is no need for this to happen to you. Never forget that the people who buy your records are paying your rent so respect them and don't ever think that they don't have brains and can't go to someone else's show. Do what I do: Show up on time, play your guts out and don't write on the walls.

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then sending your song with a note to the record label saying, "My music is like Bonnie Raitt's" or "I'm a big fan of Otis Rush," or whatever. Then again, it can work against you if the music is too similar.

Also, I'd say to learn your instrument and be able to emotionally involve yourself in a song. It's not about production. It's about the immediacy of the music and how good your lyrics are. This may seem like simple advice, but it's what I say to people just breaking into the business. To everyone else I just say, "Good luck."

Johnny Marr

I WOULD GET so nervous before going onstage that I'd either get bombed or else my fingers would just freeze for most of the show. These days I just enjoy it and stay loose.

KRS-One

IF I KNEW THEN what I know now, I would have never signed to a major record company. Major labels are the poison in hip-hop. You could make more money selling your own tapes than you can at a major record company. A lot of artists get 60¢, 40¢, 35¢ on an album. Mass produce your stuff at home and sell it on consignment, or sell it as a vendor. It takes a little longer, but you make a lot, lot more.

This transcends all color and religion—we as artists get tricked into believing that we need to sign to a major record company in order to get our stuff out. For the record, when my contract is up with Jive Records I refuse to sign with anybody else. I can't put my records out when I want to, I have to go according to some release schedule and all kinds of bullshit, which really deters my creativity.

Also, I would have kept my friends friends and never brought them into business, and never brought family into business. A lot of artists get caught up in "Let me hook my boy up, I gotta look out for my man," or "My girl been wit' me from the beginning..." Your career is number one, before your mother, your kids, your family. Career is number one. And it's very cruel thinking. But in the long run it all works out.

DAN BORTUS/OUTLINE

"The assumption that artists need personal managers is a myth based on misinformation handed down by naive musicians."

BILLY JOEL

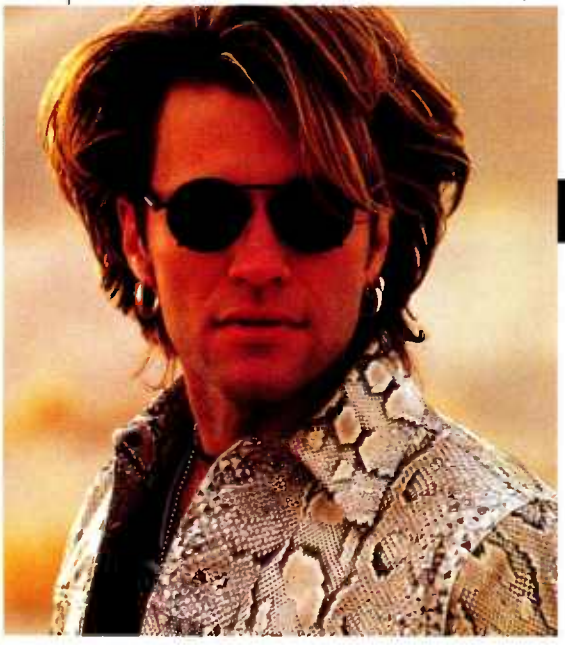
Teddy Riley

WHAT I SHOULD have done was learned the business first, learned about contracts, known the language. Because certain contracts can say one thing and mean another. The contract with my ex-manager, Gene Griffin, was the worst contract that I could ever have signed. I was basically being pimped. I ended up having to pay a lot. It's the price you pay when you go through the business in the fast lane. You gotta slow down.

Avoid the old pro managers that try to get over on people. When a person knows a lot of people in the business, they can do underhanded stuff. A lot of people say it's no good to have your family in the business. I think it is, for the simple fact that you can trust your family. Nobody's going to get over as much as a person who's outside who really doesn't care about you.

Peter Wolf

MY FIRST COMMENT would be: "Go into the shoe business because it has a lot more sole." For the younger musicians, it's



CARRY BUSACCA/RETNA

JON BON JOVI

I WOULD HAVE SIGNED a much shorter-term recording contract when I was a kid. When I was 20 years old—now I'm 32—I signed my deal, and it was one record with eight options—all theirs. And you know, you're a kid, and so you walk around and go, "I got a nine-record deal!" That was bragging when you were 20 years old. But it was all *their* options.

And get a management situation based on net, not gross, so you know that you guys are in it together. As opposed to having a guy who's taking it from the gross, and then after expenses, the band is in the red. That happened [to us] for years.

I also wouldn't have been back on the road with *New Jersey* one year after the *Slippery When Wet* tour ended. By the end of the *New Jersey* tour, we had done 450 shows and back-to-back albums. There wasn't any time to enjoy it anymore. In retrospect, I would have taken a year to just sit down and say, "Wasn't that nice?"

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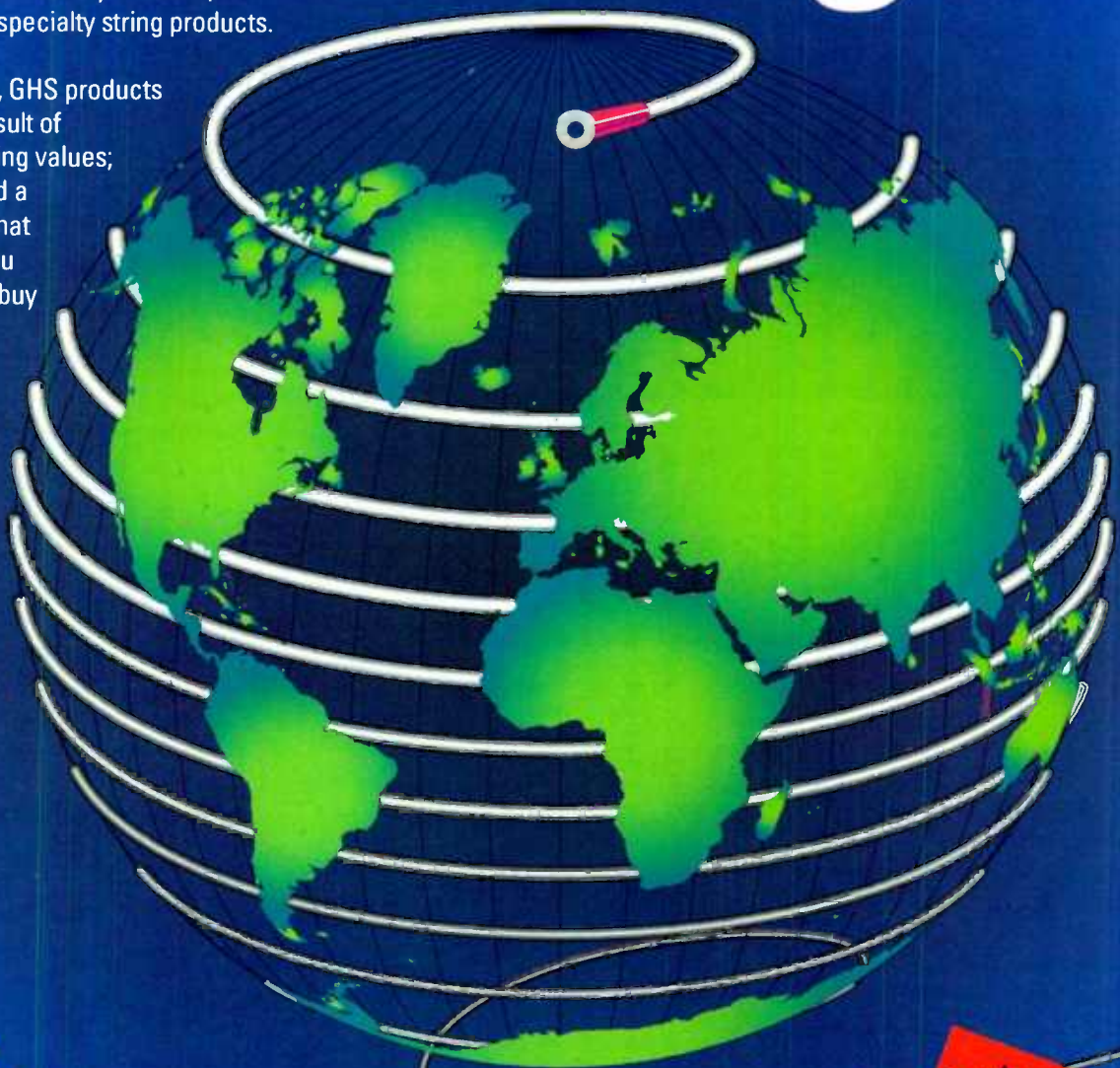

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hard because the accent on commercialism has changed things. People are so focused on the box office, the gross, the merchandising, that it's definitely different. There was a time when a record company would be fighting to have a Prince on their label because he was important, not necessarily because he sold a zillion records. Now, there's no loyalty beyond the corporate profit margins. And I find that unfortunate. It's like that in radio and it's like that in the film industry. My advice would be to hold on and nurture what you have.

Also, I've really tried to place myself back in the important clubs and venues, though the style of music I do is more roots music. It's not coming from a neo-punk music, but I still feel there's an energy in the new clubs that I respond to and always responded to. Even when I was starting in music, a lot of stuff was very Beatles-oriented or very pop and psychedelic. And the first bands I put together were always these tough lounge R&B bands, so I was always outside of that realm anyway. Then when the Geils Band became very big, we were sort of like a bar band playing arenas. We tried to maintain the spirit of a club bar band.

Tom Scholz (BOSTON)

IF YOU'RE A creative musician with ideas and you're a nice person, don't expect that other people in the world are going to treat you the same way that you would treat them. It's sort of like a corollary to the Golden Rule. It isn't "Screw them before they screw you," because they're going to screw you anyways. It's just "Be aware that not everybody follows it."

Pharoah Sanders

I'M NOT SURE I would hitchhike to New York City without any money. Yeah, I'd come with some money.

Jimmy Buffett

MY FIRST COMMENT would be: Never take this seriously. We're not the descendants of philosophers. We're the children of court jesters. I see people out there with angst and all that guilt-ridden kind of stuff. To me, basically, I'm just so happy to still be here and have a career at 48, I couldn't tell you. I never thought I'd be here. I thought I'd have had a run and it would have been a good one and I'd be down in Florida fishing and reminiscing. So that's the first thing I'm thankful for. We were somehow able to carve ourselves out a little following that became a big following. And the way you do that is through playing. It doesn't have anything to do with video or managerial advice. All that stuff is important at certain times, but it all comes down to playing. The more that bands play, the more grounded they become. And that's the way I try to run my little record label (Margaritaville Records).

Also, today the technology affords everybody the ability to be either a musician or an engineer. We never had the tools at that level. It was just your amp and your guitar. Or you were a keyboard player or you were a bass player. But with the technology now, you can be your own orchestra. To me, that sort of isolates you a) from your audience, and b) from interacting with people in bands. All of a sudden, you see people six months into their careers with a little bit of success thinking they know it all from producing and writing to directing and managing their careers. It just doesn't happen that easily.

"Remember that your instrument accompanies another. The best bands are tribes."

HENRY ROLLINS

The thing the kids don't understand is that record companies really don't give a shit. They're just looking for the next piece of product to come along. Nobody cares about whether they have a long and successful career. So you have to plan it and care for it yourself. And like it or not, you have to be a bit of a businessman. I wish it wasn't true, but it's just the way things are these days. If you don't, you get lost. The record companies don't care. And if you become a pain in the ass, they'll go look for the next band to milk until they become a pain in the ass. That's their attitude. It really is. There's not a lot of artist development out there these days. It's unfortunate. But I think that the shining light is that you see a lot of kids who listen to anything from Led Zeppelin to Crosby, Stills & Nash to Dylan. People like that are still influential because they see that there's something in there that's unique.

Bob Seger

THE KEY IS to play in front of audiences as much as possible because audiences never lie. They will tell you if they think you're any good or not. And you need to be really honest with yourself when you judge the audience's reaction. That's how we did it in the 12 years before we made it. It's something a lot of young bands don't like to do. They like to get on MTV or they like to stay in the basement and work things up and plan some elaborate stage show or whatever. But I've found that the best thing to do is forget all that. All that is fine, but the bottom line is playing.

People ask me, "Well, how did you do it for that first 12 years?" I say, "Well, the audiences liked us. So I knew we had something." So that's my main advice. I remember when Don Henley early in his career kept saying, "I want to sell more records." And I said, "Just keep going back. They love it when you go back again." If you play a market and they absolutely love you, make sure you are back in six months. That's how you build your fan base.

I've talked to so many bands who stay in the basement or garage. They say, "We're playing a gig next month and we're getting out then." But that's not the way to do it. You're just fooling yourself—and a lot of young bands do that. You've just got to be honest with yourself and get out there. The audiences will tell you if you're good or not.

Clark Terry

THE MOST IMPORTANT advice I can give is that, whatever instrument a musician is playing, they should master the keyboard. It opens up the avenues to chords and chord progressions, and they're the key to understanding how the music works. It's difficult to get that sort of information by playing a single-note instrument. That's my advice and my regret. I wish I had studied piano when I was younger.

Mike Rutherford

THE LONG TERM is more important than the short term. You're asked to make decisions about things as you go along, but if you look at the big picture and imagine the growth of a group or an artist or a writer, it's often better to take a certain road which seems harder now, but pays off later. That could mean not cutting corners, touring for longer, whatever it takes.

Another thing I'd say...is never be frightened to take enough time to write. I see so many young bands get one album out and they're up and happening, but then you can tell someone is rushing them on the second album and they haven't had time to write the songs properly.

I'd also say to never go to court about anything. It's not worth it. It produces so much negativity and your energies are siphoned into other things. I never have gone to court, but I could have a few times. I think I was right to compromise, to take a loss, a cut, whatever. It's just not worth it. It fills your mind with things you don't want to fill it with.

Harry Connick Jr.

IF YOU WANT to play jazz, I'd say practice as hard as you possibly can. If you want to play rock 'n' roll, just get a band and play for as many people as you can, because for certain kinds of music you really have to be out *playing* music.

And if you're like me, I went to record companies knocking on the door. I did the whole thing—the begging for a contract kind of thing. I'm very ambitious. I probably have more of that than any kind of musical talent. I want people to know who I am.

Jon Pousette-Dart

IF YOU FEEL strongly that music is an essential part of you, then you have to make a lifelong commitment. The notion that you can put together a band, be discovered and wind up on MTV with a nice fat bank account is a pipe dream. While every once in a while this happens, it is a fluke. Your love of music must be your motivation. Nothing else will substitute for that. Music is the expression of virtually everything that happens in your life. If you are honest, caring, persevering and faithful to music, music will find a place for you. If you want to write a bunch of songs, make a million and be a star, you'd be better off buying lottery tickets.

"Be honest with yourself and get out there. The audience will tell you if you're good or not."

BOB SEGER

Record companies are there to exploit an artist as much as is humanly possible. The minute you do not conform to their expectations of profitability you will be out the door. Record companies don't know what good

"If you need your family and friends to come see you perform you're no performer."

PAUL WESTERBERG

music is; they only know what sells and they are for the most part inept at promoting that. A standard recording contract makes you something not far from an indentured servant. All monies advanced to you and spent on your behalf must be recouped by the label before you see a nickel, and that can take many years. It is a disheartening process to watch young musicians learn this hard truth: Companies have no conscience. Realizing that is the first step in taking your future into your own hands. My partners and I negotiated a licensing agreement with Capitol Records to put out a *Best of Pousette-Dart Band* CD on our own label, which we intend to develop into a full-service record company for ourselves and other artists. If you wait for a record label to give you the permission to record and distribute your material you could wait a lifetime. Empower yourself—no one else can do it for you.

Mick Goodrich, a wonderful musician with whom I studied early on in Boston, said, "With a guitar, a metronome and a tape recorder you can conquer the world." While that might seem ridiculous, the essence of what he was saying still rings true to me today. There are no limits except the ones you place on yourself. You don't need a lot of money or equipment to make good music. If you believe in what you are doing and you stick with it you will carve out a place for yourself. Don't let rejection stand in your way. The easiest thing for record companies to say is *no*. Learn to be your own judge.

Make a point of going back and making a study of early blues. It doesn't matter where you start. Early rural blues is the foundation of all popular music as we know it. This is true no matter what instrument you play. We are blessed with having one of the richest musical traditions in the world. No amount of musical technique can make up for not making yourself aware of it. It is the best education you can ever get and it is free.

You cannot be everything to everybody. In order to find out who you are and what you have to offer the world musically you must come to terms with what you are and what you are not. Everybody has a special voice that is theirs alone. Find that voice. Discover who you are by backing up and identifying what you are not. If you do this it will help you immensely in finding a musical voice that is yours alone. Once you find that voice, you will have found the key to a joy that will be with you the rest of your life. Music can lift you up through the most difficult periods of your life. If you let making music be its own reward, you will be repaid a thousand times.

"If you're gonna sign with a manager, nothing more than two years."

STEVE TYLER

Mick Jones (BIG AUDIO)

YOU CAN'T CHANGE the past. But you *can* change what you do and how you behave in the future. And so I chalk up most of my experiences and what they cost me to the price of learning. Sometimes it's a heavy price, sometimes it ain't. But you know, I never stopped learning—and I'm still in development—so I'll get back to you in a couple of years' time if you like and let you know how I'm doing. One thing I reckon, though, is that life can be really great—if you're not enjoying it, you just may as well check out now. I appreciate things more now than I did before. If I knew then what I know now, I wouldn't let anybody under 35 in!

Marty Stuart

IF I HAD TO do it again, I would not have said "old fart" onstage on the night I was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry. I was referring to the older country music audience. It was the night after Roy Acuff had been buried. I'd been praising all the new converts that country music has, but then I played an old traditional song, I think it was "Long Black Veil." And I said, "I'd like to sing you old farts a song." Right there in church.

Iris Dement

I SPENT SO many years saying I couldn't sing, I couldn't write, I could never get up on a stage. I wish I'd have just known I could do it. Just believing in myself and having the courage to follow the dream. I would also say watch out for losing your vision, and don't listen to other people too much. Try to follow what was there in your mind and in your heart when you started. If it changes in your mind and in your heart, then follow that, but make sure that what you're following is what's inside of you. I don't know how I've done that, but I know I've tried.

Jim Kerr (SIMPLE MINDS)

IF I KNEW THEN that our band would last for more than a month, as opposed to 17 years to date, I think probably the first thing would have been to get much more advice on the publishing. Being a Scotsman, the money is very important to me. This thing of getting an advance to make your records, and you make the records, you pay them back, and yet they still own them seems kinda weird to me. If I'd known then that that doesn't *have* to be the case, I'd have sought other advice. I know a lot of artists are doing that now, trying to get their work back. Once you pay back the record company I think the work should be yours.

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But, to be honest, if you had come to me 20 years ago and told me, "Here's the deal: You're going to have a 20-year career," and that we'd have everything that's happened to us, "Take it or leave it," I'd have jumped up then and said, "Give it to me right now!" Because I have very few regrets, very few complaints.

I guess one thing we'd have done differently as a band is, as much as we like touring, we toured too much in the '80s. The consequence of touring for *us* was that we could never write great songs on the road. When you're writing songs you need to really concentrate. The longer we were out on the road—and it got longer and longer—we would drift away from songwriting. *Everything* comes from the songwriting: The road comes from the songwriting, the videos come from it, the records come from it. So I think we would have put *more* time into the songwriting and less into the live thing, because although it was great fun, after a few weeks on the road it's not such a career thing, it's more a thing of passion, and intensity, and even a certain kind of... *athleticism*. It was almost as though the songwriting was like being in school and going on tour was like school being out for summer.

Otherwise I'd have someone to explain how it worked in America. A lot of British bands—even currently—find America very hard to understand. Remember, where we came up there's only one radio station, really, which sucks! We didn't know how it worked here—AM, FM, college stations, Canada, all different things. Pop charts, R&B charts, dance charts—we don't have that. I think everyone's too embarrassed to say, "I don't understand what's going on." So bands tend to cop an attitude, which doesn't work for them in the long run. I think they should send us to college for a couple of months before we come here so that we understand how it works!

When you're young, your attitude is "Hey, we'll pay *you* to let us play!" You'd do it for nothing! Between you and I, we would *still* do it for nothing! If it was all to stop tomorrow, we'd be playing in bars. Because this is what we do, record deal or not, hits or not, we'd play. That idea of art meeting business, when you're young, is anathema. "No, it's completely art!" which is ironic, because your *first gig* is business. We had to hire a PA which cost £20, we had to hire a van which cost £25, a couple of guys to help us which was £10, which made it £55 [total] and we got paid £40. So already we were in the business of losing money. You're having such a whale of a time, you say, "Who cares?" But it *is* business.

The music's taken us around the world many times, it's given us friendships we'd never have had, it's even infiltrated our politics: The fact that we've traveled so much has forced us to see things from a different perspective. It's influenced our lifestyles—our *children* have come as a result of people we've met through the band. How could we complain?

We keep thinking that someday they're gonna come and take it all back from us. The thing I would be most afraid of would be for this thing to pass you by and think, "God, what a ball—and I bitched or I complained." Because you meet a lot of artists who get jaded very early—they don't fit the mold, they like playing but they hate the business, they hate the touring, they hate all that stuff—it seems so miserable to them. Well, stay home then! And make cassettes and give them to your friends—no one makes you do this.

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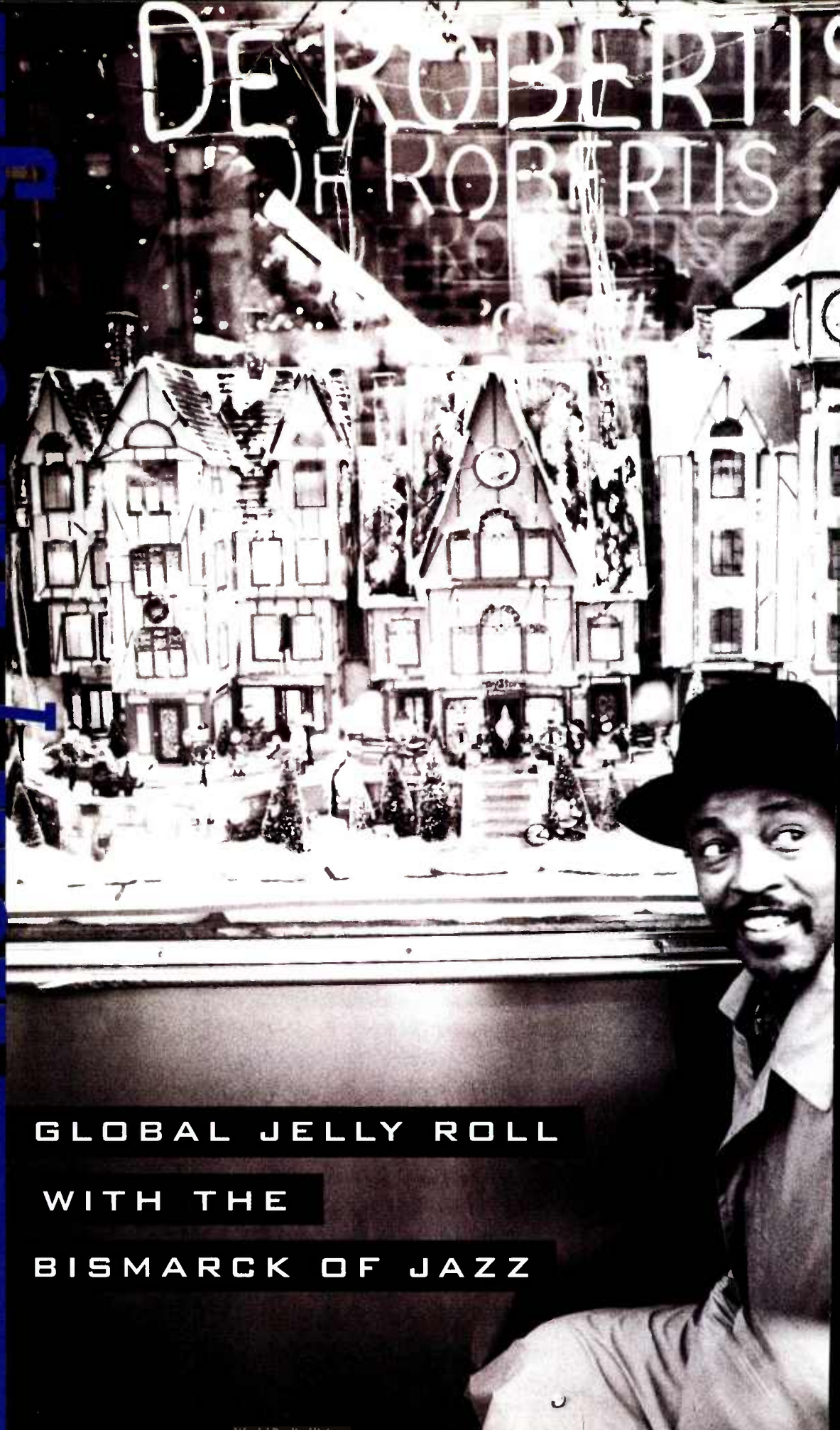
Henry Threadgill



GLOBAL JELLY ROLL WITH THE BISMARCK OF JAZZ

"I'd like to get that choir to sing my stuff,"

THREADGILL SAYS OF THE TINY CHOIR IN THE WINDOW OF A NEW YORK BAKERY

S

By Jim Macnie

SEVERAL YEARS AGO *Henry Threadgill had flown in from a West Coast gig and was in the shower, relaxing a traveler's bones and cleaning up for an evening show. I was fixing some tea for us, and since the kitchen was next to the bathroom, could hear Henry singing to himself, wordless swirls that couldn't be mistaken for what usually passes as melody. Certainly not the gleeful ditties most of us render when bathing, these things had a darker edge: two ominous themes that reemphasized their melancholy with each go-round. At that point Threadgill had written extended symphonic works and spent the entire '80s receiving accolades for the complex pieces brought to life by his acclaimed Sextett. No longer a mere instrumentalist, his jazz persona had widened to the designation "contemporary composer." The two themes that he hummed...and hummed...and hummed stuck with me all week.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC JOHNSON

"I'm interested in things that are a long way from reality."

A couple of years later Threadgill shifted the personnel and instrumentation of the Sextett, creating the larger-sounding Very Very Circus. When their debut disc *Spirit of Nuff...Nuff* hit the CD player, there in the middle of the program was the eerie tune from the shower. It was unmistakable, even though the strains were webbed in a thicket of percussion and guitars. The title, as usual, gave little clue to its inspiration: "Bee Dee Aff." The guy who received commissions from all over the world had created one of his pieces bare-assed, with a wet head and a bar of Irish Spring in his hand.

"Yeah, yeah, I think you're right," concurs Threadgill as he recalls the scene from a six-year perspective. "I write a lot of music that way—waiting on a subway or something. 'Bee Dee Aff' was written right around that time, so it could have been it. Or..." he adds with the cagy grin and twinkling eye that are a usual part of his countenance, "maybe that shower song was 'Dangerously Slippery.'"

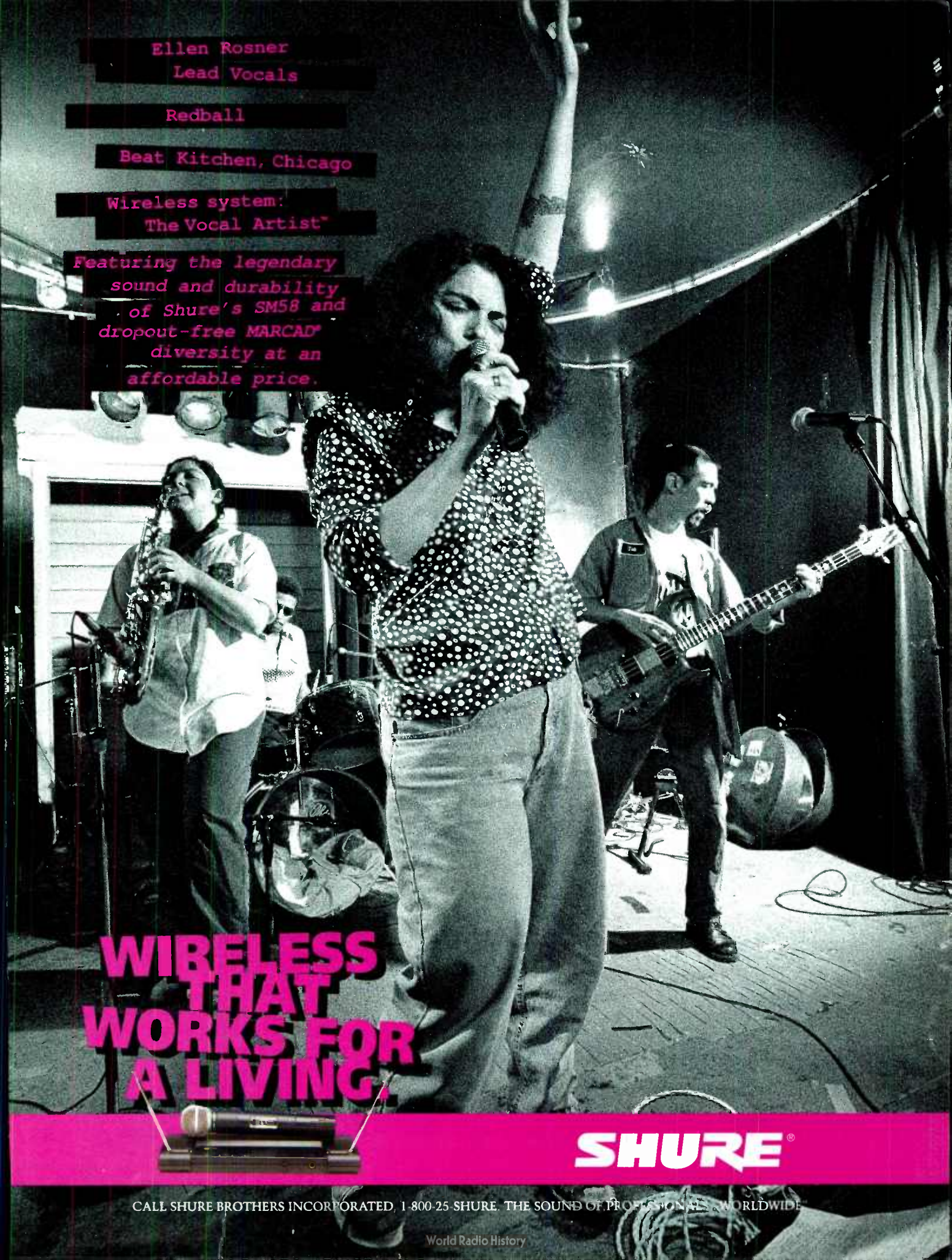
Sly humor, like innovative music, comes quickly to the 51-year-old. Out in front of De Robertis Bakery in the East Village ("one of the oldest coffee shops in New York," he assures, "Spike Lee and Woody Allen have both used the inside to shoot parts of their movies"), Threadgill is mugging for a photographer, swearing—absolutely testifying, in fact—that for a week or so he'd like to live inside the snow-laden wonderland that graces the patisserie's front window. "I'd get that choir to sing my stuff," he says, pointing to a gaggle of cherubs with sheet music in their hands, "and maybe get those guys over there with the sled to play a bit of something. Yeah, I could do that for a week or so; it'd give me a new perspective."

Plumbing a variety of vistas has been the modus operandi of Threadgill's distinguished career. He's a diverse composer and the makeup of each of his many ensembles has been specifically geared toward the demeanor of his latest music. In the late '70s, the trio Air was quixotic, treating their notes as wholly malleable suggestions. The short-lived octet that made *X-75 Volume 1* was a stringcentric band made up of basses and reeds; it applied classical motifs to African pulses. The massive Society Situation was euphonious and phunky, and the celebrated, seven-piece Sextett was a porto-orchestra whose book gave mysterious laments and glorious fanfares equal play.

Recording-wise, the latest addition to the canon is *Carry the Day*, featuring a heavily augmented version of Very Very Circus. It's Threadgill's debut on Columbia, the second major domestic label to offer him a home. Though promiscuous in its use of global influences, it's also pure Henry, utterly convincing in its distillation of far-flung styles. Past turns have demonstrated that he sounds just as natural reworking Kurt Weill's "The Great Hall" as he does honking bawdy R&B licks with elemental bluesman Left Hand Frank. Like its predecessor, *Too Much Sugar for a Dime*, the new album's expansive view is subordinate to the emotional essence that defines the composer's distinct character.

"The latest stuff is geared toward the current reality of American life," he says definitively inside the coffee shop, "especially urban American life. Everything's constantly changing and I've always wanted my music to reflect that. I turned down Second Avenue last week, heading toward Hester Street—I used to drive by there all the time—and the Vietnamese shops that lined the row are all Chinese now. The whole block has been revamped. It goes to show that constant cultural shifts are unstoppable. People all over the world are in motion, and I definitely consider that when I'm writing."

Threadgill, too, is on the move. A little over a year ago he established residence in India, ostensibly to have a new set of societal vibes infiltrate his psyche. Today he's packing his instruments, sheet music and personal effects, getting ready to head back for a spell. But given the amount of European work he's been doing, the gurgle of the Ganges has been seldom in his ear. He's always on the move, traversing the borders of countries as often as he strolls through musical styles. Threadgill has spent years practicing multicultural integration. The desire to be inclusive is part of his attempt to employ a comprehensive world view and to concoct a music of what he fervently calls "fantasy."



"How can I applaud the young guys when they don't take risks?"

"I like cartoons," he bursts. "I watch them and get ideas. I'm interested in things that are a long way from reality. It's nothing to reproduce what's around you. Go see a love story and make a song out of it; what the hell's that? I got that in my house. No imagination there. Is that the best they can do? Replicate life as they see it? That's mundane shit. I don't want to thumb my way through an encyclopedia of life in the name of art. It's already been done."

At the same time he's sure that the seeds of composition can flower at the most mundane moments. "Hey," he says, harking back to the shower inspiration, "ideas can come at any time. I wrote a tune on the bus and finished it walking the two blocks from Third Street over here." Threadgill points back to his apartment while lighting a Commodore on the corner of First and Tenth. "Went right into the house, sat down at the piano and played it out." The multireedist admits that his keyboard prowess is meager, promising that he would never try to play the piano in public. "No, no, no. Real pianists would cut me up and down. I'd be nothing but bones when they were through."

THREADGILL DOESN'T live or die on his soloing abilities. It's one of the things that accentuates the breach between the musicians that came out of the imaginative environs of the '60s Chicago scene (Braxton, Abrams, the Art Ensemble, et al.) and those talented acolytes of hard bop who have prevailed over jazz for the last decade. The cream of the younger dudes can blow—that's certain—but in general (Wynton Marsalis being the notable exception) their writing skills have yet to mature.

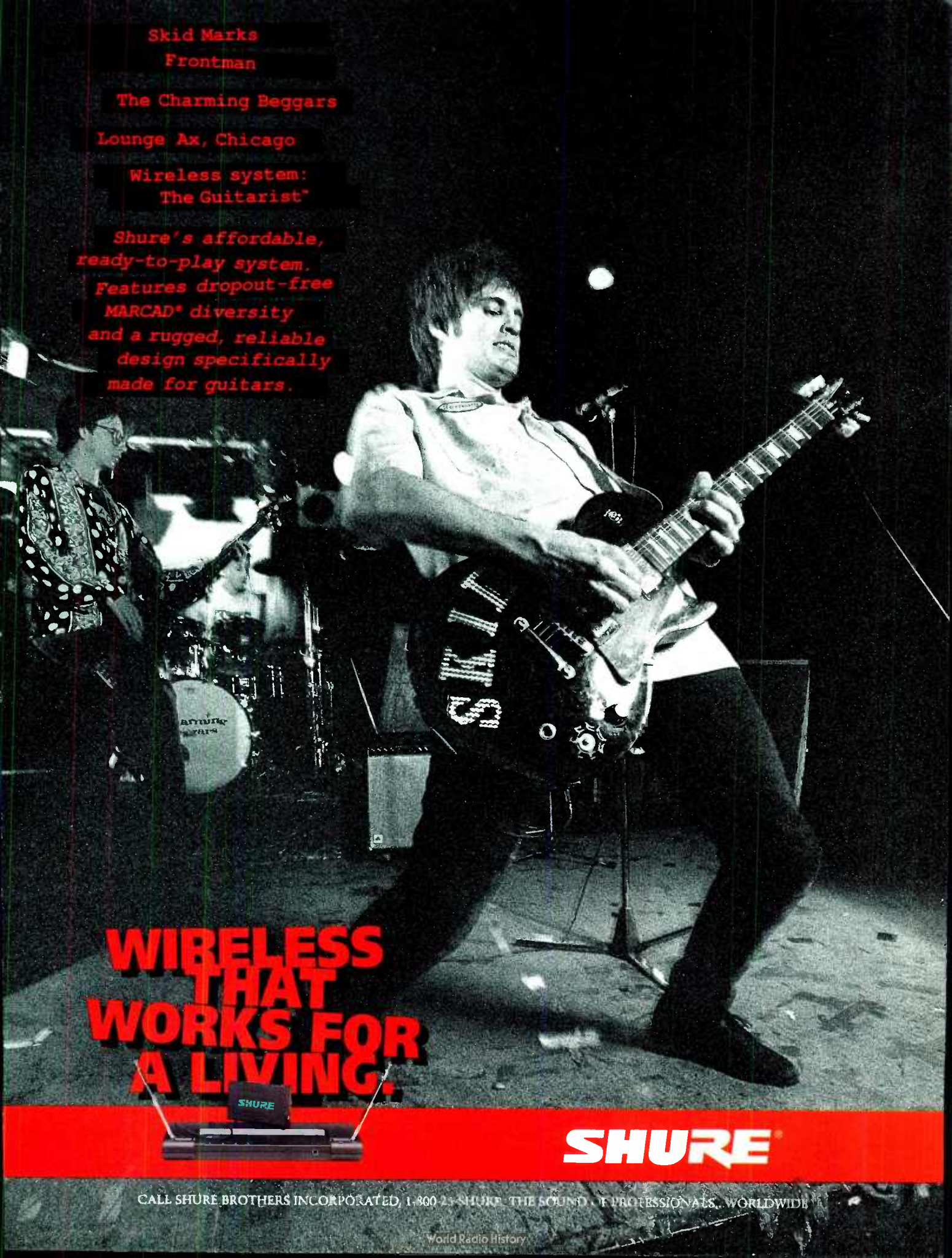
In a nondivisive tone, Henry elliptically shares his thoughts on today's history-smitten jazz scene. "New Yorkers had Coney Island; in Chicago we had Riverview. I loved to go out there on the rides, that ghost house always did scare me." He smiles. "I wish I could applaud the young guys, but how can I when they don't take risks. I don't have to like the music. If they did something different that I hated it would be fine, because it would still be an attempt to get past what we already know. But damn, this vibe today feels like death. Get the flowers ready!"

Dissatisfied with the conventions of bop and resolute in his trek toward tomorrow, Threadgill marches on, forging what's long been assumed to be a correlation between Crescent City polyphony and free jazz collectivism. But as the topic shifts to the duties of journalists, he makes a puss and straightens out a dominant critical consensus. "They used to say that my stuff was born from New Orleans dirges," he says while an incredulous look slowly blossoms on his face. "Brass bands are fine with me, but they certainly had nothing to do with what I put together structurally. I've never been to Louisiana in my life. And dirges? I don't know nothing about dirges. If music of a sad nature is automatically called a dirge, well...that's not even close. In Chicago I played in polka bands, blues bands, marching bands and Mexican bands and lots of bop. But New Orleans—I don't think so. The closest I got to any music down there was Kansas, the boogie-woogie and ragtime piano players out of Kansas City like Jay McShann. That's the stuff. As far as today goes, well, there's almost no Western music I pay attention to."

Carry the Day is a testament to that. The title cut's a rave, full of the enthusiasm found in Colombian cumbias or Kenyan benga tunes, teeming with bravado. Chanting, accordion, rhythmic grids, at least two entwined melodies, implications of a third theme darting from the leader's acerbic alto—uniting disparate pools of music, Threadgill's literally resourceful on the new record. He says that he named the band Very Very Circus not because of allusions to the big top, but because his music has so many things going on at once. A prayer here, a party there, and you've got a complex opus by a guy who holds dear all things kaleidoscopic.

"Purism and fundamentalism," he says with a pained look, "is a death wish. That type of thinking is incestuous, dangerous even. When things get that way, they start to regress, but deform. It's one of the negative manifestations of orthodoxy."

This makes sense coming from the man who once described one of his tunes as being "designed as a challenge, the way an air show should be. You don't want to see the planes do rehearsed stunts, you want to see them



take risks." Over the last few years, Threadgill's music has been getting riskier and riskier, dense with the maneuvers of an oddly configured medium-sized group: two tubas, two guitars, a French horn, reeds and trap set. *Carry the Day* amplifies the action, even as it simplifies the sound. If there's any such thing as measured mania, it's found a home; the record is as thick as any Public Enemy disc. On a stormy frolic like the new record's closing "Jenkins Boys, Again, Wish Somebody Die, It's Hot," the structure taps the brakes so that playing-wise the ensemble can veer as deep into the danger zone as it feels necessary. Like the commas that separate the individual notions in the title, Threadgill's score preserves the logic that might otherwise crumble into cacophony.

SOME OF THAT stability has to do with the knowing ear of Bill Laswell. He produced *Too Much Sugar for a Dime* and *Carry the Day* as well. A vet at making thick records boast a fierce eloquence, his insightful take on Threadgill's music nudges it into a heretofore unreachable zone of clarity. "Bill has definitely helped piece it together," Henry assures. "There's a bit more order to everything."

"I think recording-wise some people aren't versed in the sounds, extremes and dynamics that Henry is going for," explains Laswell at his Williamsburg studio. "This music needs to have a genuine impact. Clarity and separation must be there, but retaining the punch is just as crucial. Most rock stuff lacks a bottom or top—it's all midrange. Here, the low end has to be a real bottom, and we caught it. You hear phrasing the way it's phrased, not just notes thrown together. Henry's work takes conventional instruments and reverses their roles or mixes their characteristics. Maybe a horn plays something a string usually plays. It lets an instrument establish new areas.

"We did both records fairly slowly, so that there's not a lot of that overcooked feel. Sometimes people can get tired of playing, and you can hear that vibe on the tape. Anybody can tell it's not happening if they're focused, and honest. You roll the tape when you know exactly what the story is. Some have lost the ability to listen, because the brain is working too hard."

"The problem was that we used to go in and make these records in one day," explains Threadgill, "and that's a lot of pressure to be under, frankly. There's no consideration of the human element. When a brass player's chops get tired, they get tired. If you want to get the best out of people, you've got to take your time. This new record got a bit closer to the way it should be. It let us relax a bit more, figure things out while we were there."

One assumes that most of the music is sculpted and buffed before the tapes start rolling, but the bandleader assures that there's a seat-of-the-pants quality to almost any performance. "I've got an open-ended way of dealing with the group. If we've got our sights set on interpreting a piece one way, and we go in to record and it's not happening, well, it's time to change that initial point of view. Or choke someone," he laughs.

"Everything's actually shifting all the time, which is also true for a stage performance. Directions are established that aren't anticipated, and to be honest, I like it more that way. That's when music is really living."

The ability to deal with contingencies are what he brought to the usually fastidious realm of classical music back in the spring of '93. With Dennis Russell Davies conducting, the Brooklyn Academy of Music debuted Threadgill's *Mix for Orchestra*, an extended

work that featured Max Roach. The program never mentioned anything about jazz, citing Henry as a "seminal figure in the vanguard of contemporary instrumental music since the early 1970s." One gets the feeling that the "J" word is to Threadgill what garlic and crucifixes are to Dracula.

Davies recalls his collaboration with Threadgill: "It was unique because as Henry finished parts of the piece, he'd come in and go over the way it played out. He also did some improvising with the musicians in the style they were going to use. We were breaking new ground and we all wanted to know what we were getting into. Improvising doesn't mean just doing whatever the hell you want to. He had many cogent comments on their procedure. It was beneficial for both sides.

"What was ultimately memorable about the piece was the textures. A lot of avant-garde classical music starts out with certain givens, meaning the orchestra sounds best doing a certain thing. An example would be that most composers use the cellos, basses and the lower woodwinds like bassoons in a unison situation. Well, Henry wasn't particularly interested in that. The cellos had an independent line from the basses most of the way through. There was sort of an octave separation of the sound structure, which can actually be something beautiful, but surely isn't standard practice in orchestration. Following his own ear, following his own inclinations, he gave the orchestra a fresh approach."

Years ago, Threadgill had lamented that transcending the persona of a jazz player was almost impossible. Recent works with theater and dance—disciplines he's fascinated with—have been part of his global schedule for the past few years. Threadgill says it's still hard for some listeners, especially "in the States," to dissolve such designations. "If they say you're a donut," he frowns with a nod toward the dessert display, "then you're not a jelly roll or a bismarck, you're just a donut."

AT A GIG at New York's Knitting Factory Threadgill does a little conducting of his own. The sound of his six-piece group centers around the Hammond organ of his longtime associate Amina Myers. It is the kickoff week of the club's semi-posh new location and there is a buzz in the air. The band slips and slides a bit at first, but catches the groove as Myers' B-3 does the leader's bidding on a theatrical piece that, to paraphrase another Threadgill tune, drives the audience slow and crazy.

Myers' two-fisted approach follows Threadgill's coaxing; the body language of the boss helps conjure an aural scenario equivalent of Black Bart strapping Sweet Nell to the railroad tracks with a locomotive barreling down. The room doesn't breathe until the band, with Henry's horn at the helm, swoops in to save the day. It doesn't sound like any other music—jazz or otherwise. It doesn't even sound like any other Threadgill group—part church service, part veil dance.

"People aren't used to the breadth of instruments," he says, explaining the organ's effect. "Someone says we've got a jazz quartet coming in and their precepts are formed immediately. We got an organ, but we don't sound nothing like Jimmy McGriff, right? That's why I like playing to people who have never seen us before. When the Circus toured the heartland a couple years ago, most audiences hadn't a clue as to what we were about, yet they dug it."

The band at the Factory was rounded out by Ted Daniel on brass, Ed Cherry on guitar,

Reggie Nicholson on trap set and Wu Man on a Chinese stringed instrument called a pipa. Threadgill hasn't named the group yet, but a variation of it recorded part of last summer's iconoclastic *Song Out of My Trees*. When they performed the title track on the Knitting Factory stage, he was bouncing from toe to heel. With every splash of Nicholson's cymbals, Threadgill would laugh harder.

"The groups I build don't do shows," he states flatly. "We try to stay away from that. In other words I don't try to play something because it worked the night before. That's not me. I want it to unfold differently every time out."

Toward that goal he has zigzagged from ensemble to ensemble. It's not unusual for him to sustain two bands at once because of the bounty of tunes in his head. "I can feel when a band is coming to the end, man; it's putt, putt, putt. You can wait for the damn thing to stop on you, or you can get off. It's always better to pull over than have it shut down.

"And anyway, people deserve the variety. Life is full of it, so why shouldn't it be represented in music? All we've got is our imagination; that's the one thing they can't throw a net over."

He's just returned from Amsterdam, where he was a featured guest on a tour of the October Orchestra, a subset of the Instant Composer's Pool. Critic Kevin Whitehead took in all of the performances, and says that Threadgill's piece "The 100 Year Old Game" was a pinnacle. "It was the most memorable, and in many ways the simplest piece of the program," he recalls. "It was kind of an oompah tango with two themes working at once, and the audience really dug it. He rearranged little parts of it every night; Henry's real astute at knowing what will work and what won't."

Threadgill reports that the tour was cool, but he had a far more interesting time "out in the country."

"Have you ever been there?" he asks excitedly. "Man, they got some light in that sky. Strange shit. I was by myself, split from the band for a while. The whole sky's dark and the light is below the darkness. Light below darkness—the effect is incredible. It really stays with you."

Cartoons and beguiling bits of nature aren't the only inspirations in his life. "I never get ideas from music," he scoffs. "These days it's dance, film and medical research."

Whoa. Medical research?

"Yeah," he says like it happens every day, "right now I'm interested in prosthetics:

phantom pain and its other side, phantom joy. I'm kind of a synaptic, electrical thinker, and the way that info gets carried is appealing. I wonder if I can translate that into what I'm doing with music?"

Maybe that's how the guy "riding a legless horse" gets to "the fountain up ahead" in *Carry the Day*'s "Vivjanrondirkski." Now and again, Threadgill injects lyrics into his pieces. As he recites them at the table—"death tree standing tall, horseless body moves...send all the mirrors to the zoo"—they are as vivid as they are opaque.

While in New York he's trying to take in as much music as possible. He's pissed that he has to miss Marty Ehrlich's Dark Woods Ensemble ("Marty's on the right track; I'd like to see him"), but promises that a commitment to check out Roscoe Mitchell's local stop won't be broken. The evening before, he tried to decipher Robert Ashley's latest concoction. "Robert's doing some very difficult stuff. He's deep, but he's funny, too. At one point I almost had to run out of the theater, 'cause he made my sides split."

That mix of severity and elation is not unusual in Henry's work. Depth, he repeats two or three times during the conversation, is what's missing in music these days. Art of inconsequence is his enemy. "When I was eight years old my mother bought me *Treasure Island*. I never forgot a bit of it. These days I go to see a film or hear music and a day later there's nothing, a week later nothing and a year later nothing—no impression. It hasn't changed your diet, or made you like your girlfriend better or worse. Throwaway art ain't for me."

As he nudges the music in unforeseen directions, his expectations grow to meet his ever-galloping muse.

"You know Butch Morris? We were talking the other day about...well, I don't know if I should say...okay, tabloid music—that's the next phase for us. Short form with the full thrust. Can't say too much about it. Tabloid music."

Many would say that Threadgill has always accessed the full thrust. His music is never tentative. That wouldn't do for a guy determined to heave today into tomorrow.

"I don't want the music to come up and stop right in front of you," he concludes before getting back to his packing chores. "Getting a full hit isn't enough. I want it to go right through you, leave some of itself inside you and take some of you with it when it leaves."

Missing Jazz Records

By Tom Moon

DAVID MURRAY SOUNDS *like he has it all figured out. Where most jazz artists live one year to the next, handing in their annual project and hoping that someone at the label will treat it gingerly, the stocky tenorman, who has been called a visionary more than once, operates like a free agent. He records as often as necessary—about* four albums a year feels right, he says—then targets the results to labels in specific geographic areas. He does not need the major-label system; the global market more than covers his costs. He is not bothered by the marketing campaigns and the hoopla that are a fact of life for many in the business.

Of course there's the inevitable Faustian downside: He makes the music, yet he has no assurance it'll ever be available here. Right now, he's troubled because he's learned that *Picasso*—the most recent recording of Murray's octet, which has been hailed in Japan—will not be released in the U.S. And there's not much he can do about it.

"Somebody told me it won some awards in Japan, was named the number-three record of the year by *Swing Journal* [the Japanese music magazine]," Murray says with some amazement in his voice. "Now I don't care about fame—I'm already famous—but it does get to you when the stuff that people are responding to doesn't even appear in your own country."

Picasso was done for DIW, the Japanese specialty label with U.S. distribution through Columbia. The glitch: Columbia doesn't pick up everything DIW issues, and Murray has no say in the matter. Columbia takes what it wants, and the rest simply doesn't exist in the U.S. As Kazunori Sugiyama, the U.S. liaison for DIW, explains: "Schedule-wise, Columbia is really backed up. There are a number of titles they may not take."

It's impossible to estimate how much improvised music fails to reach record stores in the U.S., but the list of titles is growing, and so is the irony: The birthplace of jazz, the place that most of its noted practitioners call home, may no longer be the best place to shop for it. There are titles like *Picasso*, tied up in distribution agreements. Reissues that are only licensed in certain territories—including, until recently, huge chunks of the Miles Davis catalog. Products by well-known musicians recorded for small labels in Europe and Japan, and available to the American jazz audience only as imports, if at all.

For years, jazz musicians have relied on Europe and Japan for a good bit of their live-performance income. Increasingly, both young unknowns and top-shelf artists like Murray, Roy Haynes and others

are turning to Europe and Japan for recording opportunities. It might add up to a messy catalog—filled with titles recorded for a variety of small labels with little financial stability—but from the artist's perspective, at least the work is getting out there.

"I never let record companies get in the way of creativity," Murray asserts. "It's nice when companies give you freedom, but it's not essential. You can work around it. In Europe, they want the thing that's the furthest out you have. In Japan, they're a little more conservative. In America, they're stuck a little bit. So you find the right place for the project."

That "right place" may not be one of the huge multinational corporations, which seem stubbornly devoted to neotraditional post-bop and rely on licensing arrangements for the more adventurous realms of improvised music. Most label executives agree that demand for jazz has increased on a worldwide basis—at least half of the total sales of Joe Henderson's Verve albums have come from outside the U.S., while some artists sell two-thirds of their records elsewhere. As demand accelerates, new entrepreneurs, often driven by a genuine respect for the music as much as the business opportunity, find their way into the game, signing unproven talent and grabbing established names for one-off projects. For years before he was signed to Verve, Henderson's only recording activity was for independent European labels, on a project-by-project basis.

Many of those Henderson titles were simple live recordings—examples of what Patrick Rains of the French Dreyfus Jazz label calls "short-term" thinking. "Nobody approaches this music with a long-term view," he says. "That includes the artists. If somebody can make two or three records in the course of a year, he's got an income on what are really small advances. And whether this is the best thing for a career or not is never addressed."

Indeed, independent labels with independent distribution can be a mixed blessing. As one major-label A&R executive says: "It's great to get the music out there, but what about getting paid? Those labels are not always accountable." In addition, the retail business in the U.S. tends to punish the little guy, for whom a success can be sales of 5000–10,000 pieces rather than 100,000. "Nobody wants to take onesies and twosies," says Rains, noting that Dreyfus artists like Steve Grossman and Roy Haynes fit that description. "The distributors don't know what to do with records like this."

But smaller-scale operations can be more effective for improvising artists. Donald Elfman, jazz director for Koch International, which distributes the German independent Enja and other labels, says, "I worked at a major, I know what those guys do when they get a jazz record—they stick it in the back of the book and that's it. Here, it's a better situation for the musician. No one has massive expectations for a record, but the people are knowledgeable when they go out to sell."

Then there are independent labels who specialize in taking products made in one territory and reissuing them in another—Evidence, which also does its own recordings, is perhaps the most effective clearinghouse for the works of Japanese labels like King in the U.S. According to co-owner Jerry Gordon, Evidence works to secure international rights, or the world minus Japan rights, for many titles. "We look for pieces from artists who already have a reputation, their own section in record stores."

MANY NEW CDS ARE NEVER RELEASED IN THE U.S.

Most visible are independent labels affiliated with the various majors—DIW with Columbia, Somethin' Else/Toshiba with Blue Note, JMT with PolyGram. Such partnerships enable the majors to issue what they consider "riskier" music with less financial risk, and to test-market artists before signing them to U.S. contracts: Both Geri Allen and Joe Lovano were signed to Blue Note's Japanese label before landing their deals with Blue Note proper. JMT, which releases its titles first in Japan, has been home to some of the most provocative improvised music of the last decade, including drummer Paul Motian's acclaimed trio recordings with Lovano and Bill Frisell. As Columbia's Kevin Gore says, these licensing arrangements are "almost a free sneak preview of how things will do. You can get a sense of how a particular album will be received in the marketplace just by looking at how it did in Japan."

Having world-class artists like Murray (who has recorded for DIW) and others on the roster without having to spend the big bucks to keep them is what the big guys call a "win-win" situation. "We saw an opportunity to reach a certain segment of the audience we were not reaching before," Gore says of the DIW deal. "People who want artists who lean a little bit on the outside." Murray, naturally, sees it differently: "It always seems like the DIW stuff gets pushed out of the way whenever there's a Columbia artist. Sometimes it's like we don't exist."

As Murray has discovered, not everything gets grabbed. Chuck Mitchell, VP and general manager of Verve Records, says that though most of the artists are from the U.S., nearly half of Verve's projected 50 releases for 1995 will come from outside the roster of artists signed to Verve. While PolyGram in the U.S. has cherry-picked from the global offerings in the past, Mitchell says one goal for 1995 is to see that the important records from sources like JMT are released on a timely basis in the U.S. "We've been really behind on some things. I always try to keep in mind that it's not just our internal schedule; often if a record is delayed we're messing with an artist's livelihood. For many of these artists, the records are the way they can generate work, so we're try-ing to be sensitive to that."

One of the areas overseas labels have been most aggressive is the development of catalog titles. Where the U.S. companies offer single pieces—best-of collections—their foreign counterparts look to issue everything. The audience, in Japan particularly, demands it: For years, it's been possible to get Miles Davis' *Pangaea* via Sony Japan, which was only released stateside last year, as well as the complete seven-CD *Live at the Plugged Nickel*, a document of seven nights at the Chicago jazz club recorded in 1965, which was issued in its entirety this February.

Sometimes it's out of the hands of the company. Columbia's Gore says his label is embarking on a massive overhaul of the Davis catalog. "The delays had to do with getting clearances from the estate. Sometimes there are deals in place for one territory and not another. In Japan, the demands are a little bit different. But you will see Columbia addressing his musical legacy. We're going to make available records people have never heard before."

While upstart ventures create opportunities for artists, those opportunities may cancel each other out when there's too [*cont'd on page 64*]

SOUND IS COMING WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT

MULTICHANNEL

THE END OF STEREO

BY RON GOLDBERG

NO MATTER what their tastes or stylistic affiliations, musicians, technicians and listeners are bound together by two simple things: a left and right speaker. In a recording studio, living room or car, from the snazziest audiophile system to the lowliest boom box, amplified music is almost always recorded and played back in stereo. It's as basic as two ears.

▼ But while our ears don't change, technology and the applications for it do. Stereo is already over three decades old, quite a long run in the high-tech world of hi fi. Just as CDs edged out vinyl ten years ago, technologies developed for home entertainment and theater sound are pushing stereo slowly but surely into the boneyard. At this moment, the advent of the multichannel "surround" album appears to be inevitable. The technology is already here in a primitive form, and it's about to get better. Undeniably, it offers exciting possibilities. But fitting more than five channels of

ILLUSTRATION BY JORDIN ISIP

audio onto discs and tapes designed for only two doesn't come without a price. Unfortunately, the price of taking the next step beyond stereo is the sound quality of the music itself, by way of digital processing techniques that eliminate portions of the recorded signal.

LONG LIVE QUAD

The stereo LP itself was a spin-off from movie technology when it debuted in 1958. "Stereo" movies had arrived a few years earlier, but they used at least four channels: one for the rear effects (called the "surround" channel), one for the middle of the screen (the "center" channel) and the left and right with which we are now familiar. This was expensive technology, and for nearly 20 years it was limited to big-budget films and flagship theaters. But in the mid '70s, Dolby Laboratories developed an economical way for movies to be encoded and projected with four-channel audio. The system they created, introduced with *Star Wars* in 1977, was called Dolby Stereo.

The Dolby method embedded—the technical term is "matrixed"—two extra channels (center and surround) into a standard stereo-compatible signal. Actually, this was an evolution of the notoriously unsuccessful quadraphonic music systems of the '70s. Opinions vary regarding why quad failed to charm the ears of America's music lovers. The playback technology was primitive; mixdown engineers never made it sound like a big improvement; nobody seemed to want four big speakers in their listening room. Either way, it was an undeniably promising technology that died at the hands of the almighty consumer.

But Dolby Surround, the home video version of four-channel Dolby Stereo introduced in 1982, is catching on. Small satellite speakers, large subwoofers and audio-video receivers are in vogue. Prerecorded videos

MULTICHANNEL LIKE IT OR NOT SOUND IS COMING WHETHER YOU

are everywhere. And beside thousands of video titles, there are already hundreds of Dolby Surround–encoded classical CDs on the market.

HEARING THINGS

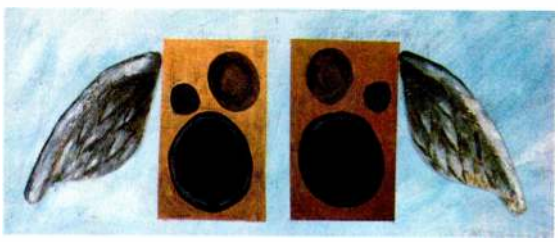
Because two channels are the norm for home music systems, a number of methods have been tried over the years to coax "three-dimensional" audio—meaning sound that appears to emanate from locations not directly between the left and right speakers—from only two speakers. Some have even caught on, albeit in limited ways.

Q-Sound, for example, a Canadian invention of the early '90s, may have found a niche as a sonic enhancement for multimedia computers and video games. Roland's RSS system, which uses a technique related to binaural recording (which boasts its own audiophile following) has made some inroads into recording studios, where it is applied as yet another digital effect. These systems, and others like them, use formulas derived from psychoacoustic research for manipulating phase, timing and EQ. All are essentially aural illusions, a sort of perceptual trickery that fools the ears into hearing things that aren't there.

Dolby's brand-new multichannel technology for the home market, Dolby AC3, also relies on psychoacoustics. Yet another offshoot of movie sound—this time a format known as Dolby Digital—AC3 is an impressive technical achievement. It provides five separate channels of full-bandwidth digital audio (unlike the older Dolby Surround formula, which deliberately chops off the extreme high and low frequencies from the surround channel). The new system also provides a sixth, low-frequency channel intended to feed a subwoofer. And so that consumers

THE PRICE FOR TAKING THE NEXT STEP MAY BE SOUND QUALITY ITSELF.

aren't burdened with the prospect of buying a playback machine just for the new format, AC3-encoded music —available on laserdiscs now, CDs eventually—plays back *in stereo* on existing stereo systems.



AC3 exploits psychoacoustics in a very different way than the other systems mentioned above. In order to squeeze six channels into the space previously allocated to two, AC3 employs data compression (or, more accurately, data reduction) to boil down the digital signal so that it requires less space on the disc. AC3's application of psychoacoustics arises from a data-reduction method called "perceptual coding." And that is a cause for concern.

THE BIG SQUEEZE

Perceptual coding works on the premise that you don't hear everything that's going on in a recording. For example, you can hear soft, low-level sounds when they're isolated. But if they occur simultaneously with louder sounds, the softer ones aren't audible (an effect known as masking). Furthermore, your ears aren't as sensitive to very high or very low frequencies as they are to midrange sounds, even if they occur at the same volume level.

Perceptual coding applies these principles to identify sound components that aren't likely to be heard. Musical information judged "unnecessary" is simply not recorded. This reduces the amount of data required to reproduce the music.

Consumers have already had two opportunities to pass judgment on data-reduced audio. Two years ago Philips introduced DCC, or digital compact cassette, a digital tape format based on a perceptual coding algorithm called PASC (Precision Adaptive Sub-band Coding). PASC reduces the data rate of your garden-variety CD, 1.4112 million bits per second (Mb/s) to 384 *thousand* bits per second (Kb/s)—a compression ratio of about 36:1. The other data-reduced format, Sony's MiniDisc, uses a coding system called ATRAC (Adaptive Transform Acoustic Coding). Sony hasn't revealed ATRAC's compression ratio, but a MiniDisc holds 72 minutes of two-channel audio on a disc only one-sixth the size of a CD.

HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH?

So far, the market has proven indifferent to both MD and DCC; it's not clear that either will survive. But among professional audio engineers and audiophile consumers—two communities that value sound quality more than convenience—the reaction to the first wave of coded music has been one of alarm. PASC and ATRAC effectively reproduce lead instruments and vocals, but what about the less obvious aspects of the sound? Nuances of texture, spectral interaction and ambience that make up the "character" of a recording may be too subtle to encode accurately. The fact is, perceptual coding is an inexact science. A number of sonic variables affect the resulting audio quality, and the results heard so far have ranged from very good to quite a bit less good.

How not good? Ask the owner of the last pair of ears in the creative process and the first pair in the manufacturing one—the mastering engineer. Doug Sax, a veteran L.A. mastering maestro who also runs the audiophile label Sheffield Labs, recently remastered eight Pink Floyd records for MiniDisc. Sax reports, "I've witnessed a desire to say that it's just as good as CD, that nobody can hear the difference. But that's absolutely untrue."

Of DCC, for which the data rate is comparable to that of Dolby AC3, Greg Calbi of Masterdisk asserts, "We were able to make a better-sounding analog cassette." Bob Ludwig, whom many regard as the world's top mastering professional, tried to use Dolby AC2 (a professional format similar to AC3) to transport music via phone lines from his Gateway Mastering studio in Maine. "For now," he observes, "the data compression makes a joke of the expensive 20-bit equipment we've invested in."

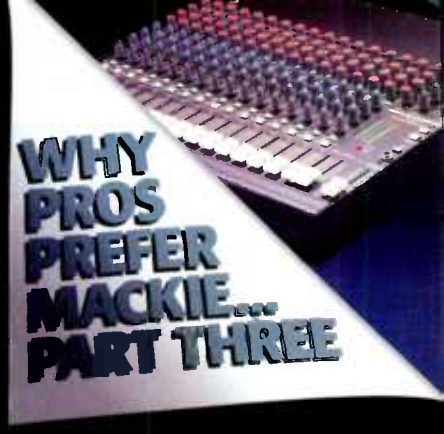
THE NEXT BIG THING

Given the company's track record, Dolby would seem capable of concocting a killer delivery medium for music. And, in some ways, that's what AC3 is. But it wasn't necessarily developed with music in mind. In fact, AC3's data rate was established not because it is optimal for sound reproduction, but because it fits within the bandwidth "left over" for audio by the upcoming high-definition television (HDTV) format. AC3 has been generally well received by mixdown engineers in the filmmaking community. But movie sound isn't the same as music. Movie soundtracks are collages of digital sam-

CHARLES THE MIXOLOGIST ROANE

D.C.'s hot urban contemporary station WPGC got its current #1 market standing by doing risky, innovative things. Like hiring Charles "The Mixologist" Roane & his trusty CR-1604. Roane's remix of "Whomp (There it is)" helped spur total sales of the single to over 6 million — making it the all time best selling rap record. Now record labels seek out The Mixologist for his "flava" and clean mixes.

Though he recently bought a Mackie 32•8 8•Bus console, Charles won't part with the CR-1604 that got him started. He calls it his "lucky mixer."



WHY PROS PREFER MACKIE... PART THREE

MACKIE REMIX MASTERS

BONZAI JIM CARUSO

Ever since he engineered five remixes on Madonna's smash "Erotica" album, Bonzai Jim Caruso's engineering career has been on fast forward. As he did on the Madonna sessions, he usually brings along his personal CR-1604 mixers.

The rest of Bonazi's resume speaks for itself: top-charted dance remixes for George Michael, Luther Vandross, Jon Secada, Gloria Estefan, The Basement Boyz, Natalie Cole, Class-X with Michelle Weeks and Jose Feliciano. All mixed on two Mackie CR-1604s.

Now let Bonazi speak: "I went through four other small mixers* before finding the Mackie. The others didn't even come close. The CR-1604 is the only mixer that can handle really huge drum sounds, monstrously fat bass and a ton of synths simultaneously."

Recently, while mixing Crystal (La-Da-Di La-Di-Da) Waters at the Basement Boyz' Baltimore studio, the SSL console didn't have enough inputs. So Bonzai rented a CR-1604 to help mix two cuts, "Ghetto Days" and "What I Need." The studio was so impressed with the Mackie CR-1604 that they immediately bought two!

Bonazi then used those two CR-1604s to mix Martha Wash's new remix album release "Leave A Lite On" — sans help from the SSL board.

MACKIE.

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*Although Bonzai specifically listed the other brands he'd tried and rejected, we don't mention direct competitors in our ads. If you want a hint, though, see who else is advertising compact mixers in this issue.

ples and analog Foley effects, dubbed dialogue and prerecorded music; the goal is to *produce* an event—not *reproduce* one, as is required in most musical recording.

Another difference is in the venue. People sit still for movies. Likewise, multichannel sound invites the listener to sit in a sweet spot where all channels can be heard in their proper relationship. But the music lover who sits in one place for the duration of a CD is the exception, not the rule.

At present, movies on laserdisc are the only media encoded for AC3. But, as noted above, it dovetails neatly with the coming HDTV standard. More important, it plays back transparently on stereo equipment, making it possible that you'll buy it long before you have a playback system. Keep in mind that data-reduced audio is a key technology for video delivered via the infotainment superhighway. If data-reduced multichannel sound becomes the standard for movies, TV and other services, whether delivered by cable, phone lines or satellite, how long before music follows suit?

NO GAIN, NO PAIN

Is the advantage of having more than two audio channels worth the possibility of compromised sound quality? It depends on who you ask. Numerous interests are at stake, and a fortune in potential sales. Manufacturers and retailers like the idea. After all, selling five speakers ought to generate more profit than selling two. Furthermore, AC3 will require new electronics: disc players, decoders and the like. The expectation is that consumers will get excited about sound again, as they did when stereo was new.

Pioneer USA, the primary force behind laserdisc, has already announced AC3 products due to hit the street by summer. According to senior VP Mike Fidler, Pioneer has high expectations for the format. "Ninety-nine percent of consumers are going to find it an exceptionally exciting format. It'll drive people to get even better equipment. Isn't that what CD has done?"

Ninety-nine percent of all consumers is certainly an attractive target. But AC3's detractors fear that those with discriminating ears who will be shortchanged in the rush to new formats. Jim Thiel, designer of the world-renowned loudspeakers that bear his name, wonders if his efforts will become superfluous. "I'm concerned that compromises will be made that are acceptable to most people, but not acceptable to some people," he says. Kathy Gornick, president of Thiel, concurs. "You can accept data compression if the audio signal isn't degraded," she adds. "But if the signal is degraded, then it's just a technical exercise. If it doesn't provide the performance, so what?"

WINDS OF FORMAT WARS

As if on cue, the perception of weakness in Dolby's bid has spawned competing systems. All are geared toward movies at the moment, but they're poised for home video and eventually music as well. The most visible so far comes from a company called DTS (Digital Theater Systems), whose wares were debuted with the release of *Jurassic Park* in 1993. Like Dolby AC3, the DTS system is a digital multichannel format. Among those who have been given an opportunity to hear it, the reaction to DTS has been favorable. According to Telarc engineer Mike Bishop, a veteran of surround-sound CD production, "We haven't heard the Dolby system here, but DTS is working remarkably well," he reports. "We feed it a 20-bit source tape, and what comes out sounds very close. For a six-channel discrete format, that's pretty remarkable."

But "better" technology is rarely the deciding factor in widespread consumer acceptance—just ask anyone who had to scrap their Beta VCR when VHS won the video wars. Whoever gets to the market first has a huge advantage. And Dolby is not only already on point—it has name recognition, a user base and a track record of market success. Dolby's technical director Roger Dressler is confident that AC3's alleged faults are largely overstated.

"We haven't heard from anyone who can hear the difference between the source and the decoder on movie material," Dressler asserts. "We know that AC3 isn't completely transparent, but what is? We've designed the system to take advantage of smarter encoding techniques as they become available."

USE IT OR LOSE IT

Undoubtedly, better techniques of all sorts will come along. And stereo CDs themselves may change. Development is under way for new technologies such as quadruple-density discs, which will hold four times as much data as today's CDs. Such a development might head off the rush toward data reduction. But it seems more likely that high-density CDs will evolve into super-fidelity CDs for a niche market, like the high-end CDs currently produced by Mobile Fidelity and Sony Mastersound. Meanwhile, mass-market consumer audio will be distributed via some new data-reduced, multichannel format.

Some audio professionals are champing at the bit to get started with AC3. Ken Kantor, VP of technology for International Jensen and designer/co-founder of NHT loudspeakers, thinks multichannel audio will spur better recordings and better playback equipment.

"With stereo," Kantor notes, "we're losing too much information in the process of capturing sound. You've got to get more of the original event. Multichannel is the logical next step. We're not going to do it with better electronics; the refinements there are too subtle. If I want my system to sound better at home, I need more channels."

According to *Stereo Review*'s executive editor Michael Riggs, "There are more creative possibilities. I can't believe that producers and artists wouldn't get excited about this. It's like going from mono to stereo."

Like the effectiveness of perceptual coding, it really comes down to the listener. And, of course, on the people who make the records. It's already hard work to come up with an hour's worth of material worthy of releasing on a CD. Surely it will be even harder to come up with something compelling enough to make a listener sit in one spot for an hour. No matter what the audio quality is like.

NUMEROUS INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE, AND A FORTUNE IN POTENTIAL SALES.

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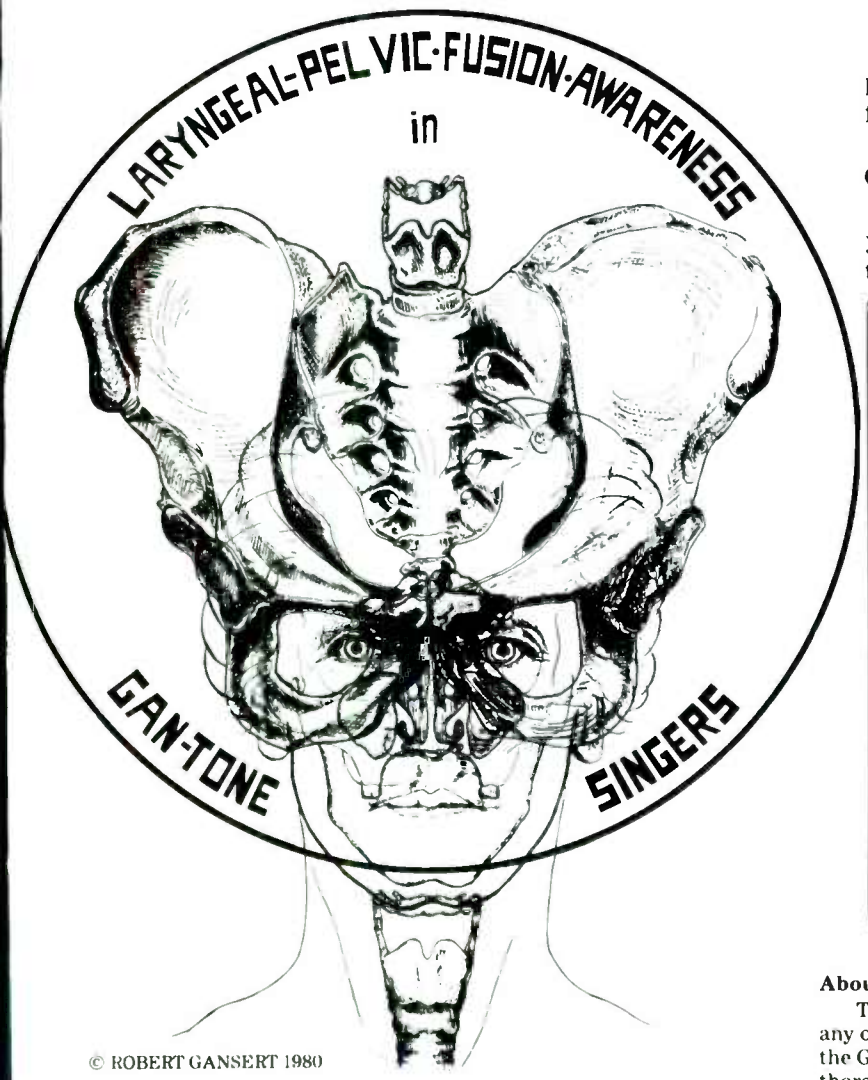

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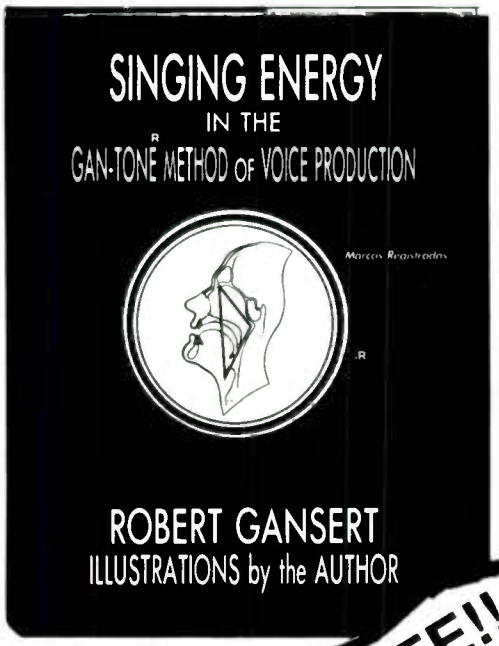

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TRACE ELLIOT TRAMP COMBOS

Trace Elliot's Tramp two-channel guitar combo ($699, pictured) hits a single 12" Celestion Vintage 30 with 40 Watts of solid-state power and a "gain mode" switch for rhythm and lead settings. The Supertramp ($799) doubles the Wattage, and the Supertramp Twin ($899) adds another Vintage 30. The Supertramp Twin Stereo Chorus ($1099) tops the line, with chorus and a pair of 40-Watt output stages for patching in stereo effects. ◆ Trace Elliot c/o Kaman, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002; voice (203) 243-7941, fax (203) 243-7102.

GODIN MULTIAC GUITAR

Carved from solid mahogany and topped with bookmatched spruce, the Multiac from Godin (from $1595) reportedly delivers exceptional amplified acoustic tone with minimal feedback. Neck width and string spacing conform to classical standards, but with a slightly longer scale. An individual gold-plated sensor is included for each string. The instrument is optimized for accurate MIDI tracking with Roland's GR-1 synth interface, for which a multipin jack is built in. ◆ Godin, 4240 Seré St., St-Laurent, Québec, Canada H4T 1A6; voice (514) 343-5560.

LEXICON PCM 80 PROCESSOR

Incorporating Lexicon's latest DSP chip in tandem with a general-purpose Motorola audio processor, the PCM 80 ($2500) picks up where the classic PCM 70 left off. Along with high-quality reverb, delay and spatial effects, the unit includes a "dy-

RD

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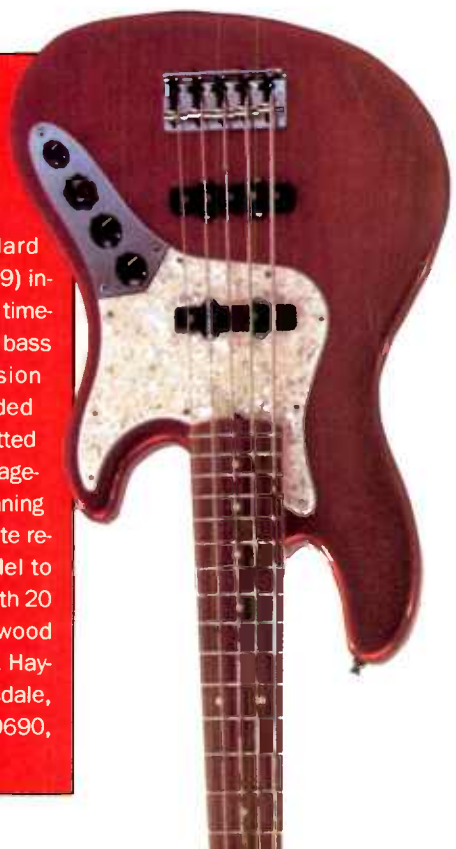
namic patching matrix" that maps any of 143 external control sources (MIDI and otherwise) to any effect parameter. Memory is expandable, and both digital and balanced analog outputs are included. ◆ Lexicon, 100 Beaver St., Waltham, MA 02154-8425; voice (617) 891-0340, fax (617) 891-0340.

FENDER AMERICAN STANDARD BASSES

Fender's American Standard series of basses (from $959) integrates new technology into time-tested designs. The new Jazz bass (pictured here) and Precision bass (available in left-handed and fretless variations) are fitted with vintage pickups and vintage-style bridges with strings running through the body. Two graphite reinforcement bars run parallel to the truss rods. Fretboards, with 20 frets, are available in rosewood or maple. ◆ Fender, 7975 N. Hayden Rd., Suite C-100, Scottsdale, AZ 85258; voice (602) 596-9690, fax (602) 596-1386.



CLOSE-UP LISTENING

Affordable monitor speakers just right for a home studio are plentiful—if you know what to look for.

◆

BY BILL THRELKELD

PEOPLE TEND to regard monitors for their home studios as though they all sounded alike. Yet a quick trip to a pro audio store proves otherwise. Actually, your choice of studio monitors is critical: The sound you hear is only as good as the speakers that reproduce it.

Most monitors are either two-way or three-way designs, meaning that they incorporate either two or three speakers. A two-way system includes a woofer for low frequencies and a tweeter for highs, while a three-way system adds a midrange speaker. A crossover determines the frequency range to be passed along to each. Most two-way systems incorporate either a 5", 6" or 6.5" woofer and 1" tweeter. In three-way cabinets, the woofer may be as large as 15".

For home studio owners who face severe constraints of space, wattage and financial means, two-way systems are a good choice. Two-way designs are also common in pro studios, where they are used to provide comparison with larger and smaller monitors that are also on hand. (Whereas larger monitors tend to be mounted some distance from the mixing console, smaller systems are placed within a few feet of the engineer's head, earning them the title "near-field" monitors. But in technical contexts, near-field refers to a distance of only two inches, so a better phrase might be "close-range.") The upshot is an abundance of pro-quality two-way monitors, many costing well under $700 per pair.

Studio monitors are intended to establish a neutral sonic space in which a mix can be analyzed and evaluated. This distinguishes them from speakers sold for home entertainment, which are intentionally designed to color the sound to enhance the listening experience. Minimum coloration is desirable for mixing because you want the most accurate possible impression of the mixes you commit to tape.

Home entertainment speakers have another drawback: ear fatigue. This is the natural response of your ears to the hard work of listening intently for hours on end, which results in a decreased ability to hear clearly, or discriminate among components of the sound. Some ear fatigue is inevitable in studio work, but it is exacerbated by the higher distortion and noise characteristics associated with the coloration that consumer speakers tend to impart.

Speaking of ear fatigue, Yamaha's NS10Ms ($478) have become the industry standard for close-range monitoring, despite a super-bright high end that is anything but easy on the ears. NS10Ms, which offer frequency response between 60Hz and 20kHz (±2dB), are enormously popular and can be found in just about any pro studio. This gives them special value if you tend to move your projects from home to other facilities for overdubbing or mixing, or if pro engineers work in your studio. But if you decide to go with NS10Ms, make sure you also have another monitor system to switch to now and then.

The Monitor One from Alesis ($399) is designed to compete with the NS10M and shares the latter's 6.5" woofer and 1" tweeter. However, the Monitor One's high end is a little less harsh, and its low end punchier. Boasting frequency response of 45Hz to 18kHz (±3dB), these speakers are a good value and well worth checking out.

A unique shape sets apart JBL's 4200 series, including the 4206 (6.5" woofer, $430) and 4208 (8" woofer, $564). In a close-range situation, the pot-bellied cabinet causes sounds from the woofer and tweeter to reach the listener's ears at precisely the same moment. The result is distinctly audible: Of the monitors discussed in this article, we found 4206s to sound the most neutral. NS10M fans might find it dull and lifeless, but purists will appreciate the 4206's relative accuracy. The 4206 delivers a frequency response of 65Hz to 20kHz [*cont'd on page 64*]

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAIN PILON

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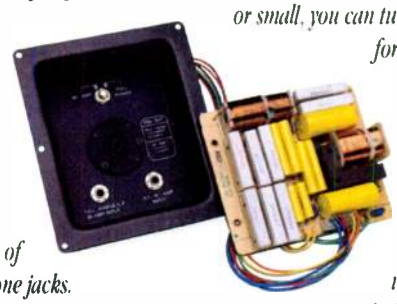

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DISTORTED BASS

They're not for every musical situation, but there are times only a buzzsaw will do.

◆

BY STEVE WISHNIA

I'VE BEEN looking for the perfect distorted bass sound for years, seeking the same thrills guitarists get from the sensuous chainsaw roar of a well-cranked Marshall. But the dozen-odd guitar effects I've tried are either too muddy or too thin. (ProCo's Rat and DOD's Classic Fuzz work best, with shredding presence and more low end than most.)

DOD's new Bass Grunge pedal ($129) comes close. Very, very close. The key, says designer Jason Lamb, is the inclusion of a mix control to balance dry and distorted signals. This allows you to compensate for the low-frequency rolloff inherent in the distorted tone, adding back as much of the fundamental tone as you need. The result is a full mix of depth, buzz and melody.

But this is a full-on distortion box, not a tube-style overdrive (usually a milder effect). Its distortion is a cusp-of-the-'70s tone, halfway between psychedelic fuzz and metal netherworld. The octave/tritone/descending chromatic crunch-dirge riff from "Black Sabbath" sounds utterly perfect. For more contemporary forms of sonic uncleanliness, think of Mudhoney's "Touch Me I'm Sick" or Hole's "Teenage Whore."

There are a few minor glitches, at least on the prototype I played. The distortion doesn't really kick in until the mix control is at about 11 o'clock. Turning up the treble helps it cut better, but fuzzes out the sound and tends to emphasize finger noises and the like. But on balance, the Bass Grunge is a wondrous new addition to the bass-noise palette.

The Bass Grunge's closest competition in the stomp-box field comes from Tube Works' Blue Tube, a $165 pedal with three-band EQ and a 12AX7 tube. This is more a "tube sound" effect than a distortion box. It retains the low end reasonably well, but sounds too harsh with full-on overdrive. (I turned the bass and drive controls up to 10 and got a sound resembling the world's biggest lawnmower advancing in slow motion, which was actually kind of cool.)

The Blue Tube works best for giving solid-state amps a thicker, dirtier, '60s acid-blues tone. Imagine a Bassman or B-15 straining ever so slightly under the sound of Jack Bruce's Gibson EB-3 on "Crossroads," or Sam Andrew (or was it Peter Albin?) playing "Ball and Chain." It's also available in a rack-mount unit.

For a more upscale distortion experience, there's the Interstellar Overdrive from SWR ($749), a three-tube rack-mount preamp. This puts out the fullest bass I've ever heard from a distortion device, a rich overdrive leavened with psychedelic fuzz. It's better suited for grittifying your sound than for full metal overkill, though. With the drive control on 7, it's a subtle effect that blends well with distorted guitars; but on 10, the highs become harsh and tinny unless you play soft and slow.

The Interstellar Overdrive delivers its most impressive pleasures as a preamp, especially when you put the tone controls to work. Pump the bass to 10 and you get a sound as mountainous as Jack Casady's two-story stack of speakers—and the notes are still clear. (In fact, the Hot Tuna bassist had a hand in developing the unit.) Crank the treble, and you get a sound sharp and fast enough to garrote a mafioso clubowner at 10 paces. I wouldn't recommend using it unless you have the high-tech gear to match (at the very least an amp with an external-preamp input, such as the SWR SM-900 I used). But if I had $2500 to spend on a rack-mount system, I'd definitely spring for this one.

Of course, several bass multieffect units include distortion (see *Musician*, August 1994). Peavey's Bass Fex can easily be programmed for a metallic Rat-type tone. ART's NightBass has some good overdrive sounds.

Some general advice for bass-distortion users: Tube amps sound better, even with solid-state

ILLUSTRATION BY WARREN GEBERT

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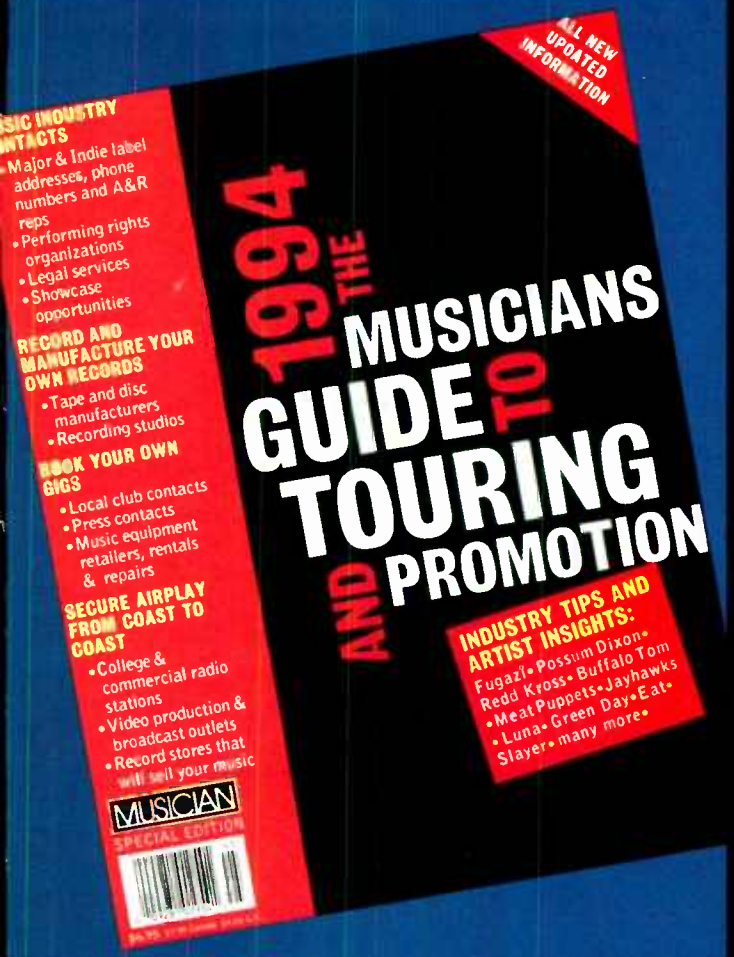

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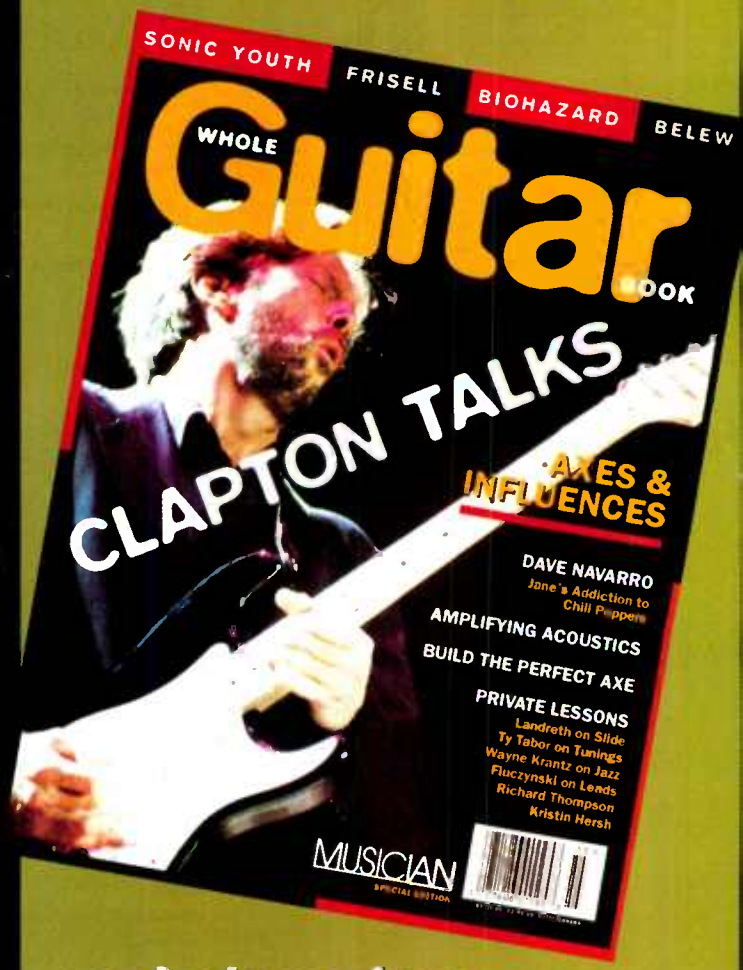

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devices. But it's the speaker, not the amp, that's the crucial component in the bass sound chain. There is a thin line between musical noise and annoying noise; the indifferently maintained speakers at a certain New York rehearsal studio made even the Interstellar Overdrive sound bad.

Yes, bass distortion is an esoteric effect, not useful in every setting. But would you tear into a Ministryesque wall of sound with the same dulcet tones you'd use for a Quiet Storm ballad?

◆ **DOD Bass Grunge ($129)** DOD, 8760 Sandy Parkway, Sandy, UT 84070; voice (800) 999-9363, fax (801) 566-7005. ◆ **Tube Works Blue Tube ($165)** Tube Works, 8201 E. Pacific Pl. #606, Denver, CO 80231; voice (800) 326-0269, fax (303) 750-2162. ◆ **SWR Interstellar Overdrive ($749)** SWR Engineering, 12823 Foothill Blvd., Unit F, Sylmar, CA 91342; voice (818) 898-3355.

STUDIO MONITORS

[*cont'd from page 60*] (±2dB), the 4208 60Hz to 20kHz (±2dB).

Those who take their audio a little stronger will appreciate the punchy character of the KRK 6000 ($775), well suited for heavy music. While higher-end KRK models have enjoyed a sterling reputation among pros for many years, this is the company's first venture into a price range attractive to home studio owners. Fitted with a 6" woofer and 1" tweeter, the 6000 delivers an impressive in-your-face quality and a frequency response between 65Hz and 15kHz (±3dB). Also, be on the lookout for the new KRoK ($449), designed specifically for the home studio market.

Another esoteric company with high visibility among pros is Tannoy, which offers several low-cost models. The compact, punchy PBM 5 ($350) features a 5" woofer and frequency response of 64Hz to 20kHz (±3dB); the PBM 6.5 ($450) has a 6.5" woofer and adds 10Hz to the low-end response. Both deliver a full-bodied sound and smooth frequency response that rivals that of the KRKs, with a pure, well-defined character.

Peavey has worked hard to move into the pro market, and their PRM26i ($599) performs admirably. The PRMs offer a solid general-purpose character that lends itself to a range of musical styles. If you deal with a variety of sounds from solo strings to distorted guitars, you'll find them effective. Frequency response is 68Hz to 20kHz.

Of the models included here, the Alesis Monitor One impressed me most overall, combining great sound with a great price. However, your needs, tastes and price requirements are bound to vary from mine, which is why a bit of comparison shopping at your local pro audio outlet is a must. It's best to compare speakers using a very familiar recording, preferably one of your own productions that you have already heard on several systems. Go with the speakers that sound truest, rather than the ones with the most gut-punching bass or crackling highs. Your ears will thank you for it, and your recordings will sound better.

◆ **Alesis**, 3630 Holdrege Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90016; voice (800) 5-ALESIS, fax (310) 836-9192. ◆ **JBL**, 8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, CA 91329; voice (818) 997-3514, fax (818) 787-0788. ◆ **KRK**, 16462 Gothard St., Unit D, Huntington Beach, CA 92647; voice (714) 841-1600, fax (714) 375-6496. ◆ **Peavey**, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301; voice (601) 483-5365, fax (601) 486-1172. ◆ **Tannoy**, 300 Gage Ave., Unit 1, Kitchner, ON N2M 2C8, Canada. ◆ **Yamaha**, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622-6600; voice (714) 522-9011, fax (714) 522-9832.

JAZZ IN JAPAN

[*cont'd from page 51*] much by a single artist in the stores. "With so many things coming from one artist each year, you run the risk of confusing the consumer," says Verve's Mitchell.

David Murray has an answer for that. Until he can set up his own label, he's selling his wares—the recordings he's made for various labels over the past few years—through his fan club. "I'm buying boxes of everything I can, because what I do have out there, I'm proud of. There are a couple of bad ones, but most still stand up. And more than half of them are out of print. So I'm gonna do mail-order."

Don't laugh. A number of people—including Graham Lawson of CMP Records—think that's the future. "Every time we put something out, we're asking retailers for a tiny proportion of their store," Lawson says. "Now more of them are geared toward mass sales, so everything that appeals to a specific market will find it difficult to exist in retail in the future. In ten years, it'll all evolve to mail order."

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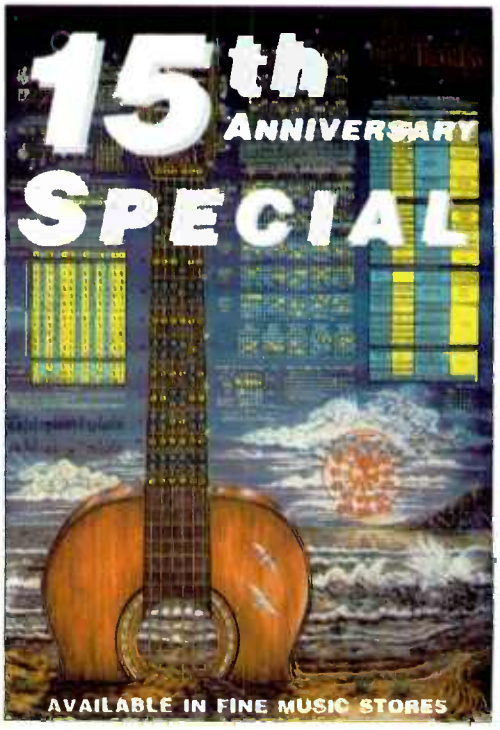

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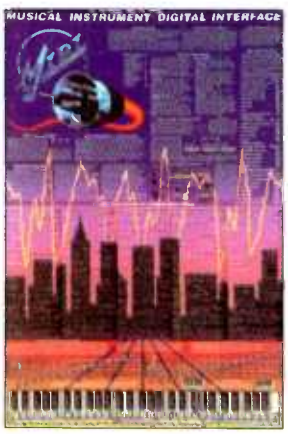

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JAN HAMMER'S HO

FAST FORWARD

"I DON'T want it to look like I'm using 17 computers at once," Jan Hammer quips, switching on his new **Macintosh Quadra 650** and **Sony Multiscan 17** monitor ❶. True, not all of the computers in his studio are currently in use—one ❷ controls an out-of-date **Fairlight II**, another ❸ automates the **Sound Workship Series 34** console ❹ and his **Mac IIx** ❺ now belongs to the kids—but Hammer's workshop in rural upstate New York includes more gadgetry than many pro facilities.

The Czech-born keyboardist has always made electronics sing, whether trading incendiary Minimoog licks with John McLaughlin, Jeff Beck or Neal Schon during the '70s, scoring "Miami Vice" during the '80s or concocting film scores and solo records. For the latest, *Drive* (Miramar), he teamed up again with Beck, shipping his jazz-tinged instrumentals to and from London on 24-track reels recorded on an **Otari MTR-90**.

"I gave him a reference mix of my MIDI tracks," Hammer explains. "He overdubbed guitar on most of the tracks. Then I transferred everything into Macintosh and assembled his performances." Using **Opcode Vision** software for sequencing and **Digidesign ProTools** for Beck's tracks (as well as sax solos by Michael Brecker and Hammer's own drumming, miked in an adjacent room) provided more flexibility than traditional multitracking. "I could move things around if I changed the form," he says. "You're not stuck with it like you are with tape. It's wonderful." He monitors through **Yamaha NS10Ms** ❻ and **JBL 4333s** ❼ powered by a **Yamaha P2100** amp, and mixes to a **Panasonic SV-3700** DAT deck.

The core of the system, tied to the Mac via **Opcode Studio 3** and **Studio 5** ❽ MIDI interfaces and a **JL Cooper Synapse** MIDI switcher ❾, is a collection of Kurzweil and Korg modules: **Kurzweil K2000** ❿, **Micro Piano, 1000PX, 1000GX, 1000SX, 1000HX**; and **Korg 01R/W** ⓫, **Wavestation A/D** ⓬ and **X3R** ⓭. These are augmented by a **Roland D-550** ⓮, **MKS-20** ⓯ and **MT-32** ⓰; **E-mu ProCussion** ⓱ and **Proteus/3** ⓲; **Kawai K1m** ⓳ and **K3m**; and an **Oberheim Xpander** ⓴. A **Korg Wavestation EX** ㉑ and **01/W** ㉒ serve as controllers, with help from an **Oberheim Cyclone** arpeggiator ㉓. An **NEC MultiSpin 3X** CD-ROM drive ㉔ feeds sounds to the K2000. Vintage instruments include a **Fairlight III** whose 16 outputs are submixed through a **Hill Multimix** ㉕.

All of which leaves out innumerable processors, including a **Rane SM82** line mixer ㉖, **Ibanez SDR 1000** reverb ㉗ and the **ART Power Plant** that makes Hammer's lead lines scream. But screaming lead lines and the gear used to play them, he points out, are only as valuable as the underlying ideas. "Technique is not so important," he states. "If you need a complex part you can always create it with the sequencer. The ideas are more important."

BY TED GREENWALD

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC ASNIN

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On the Button

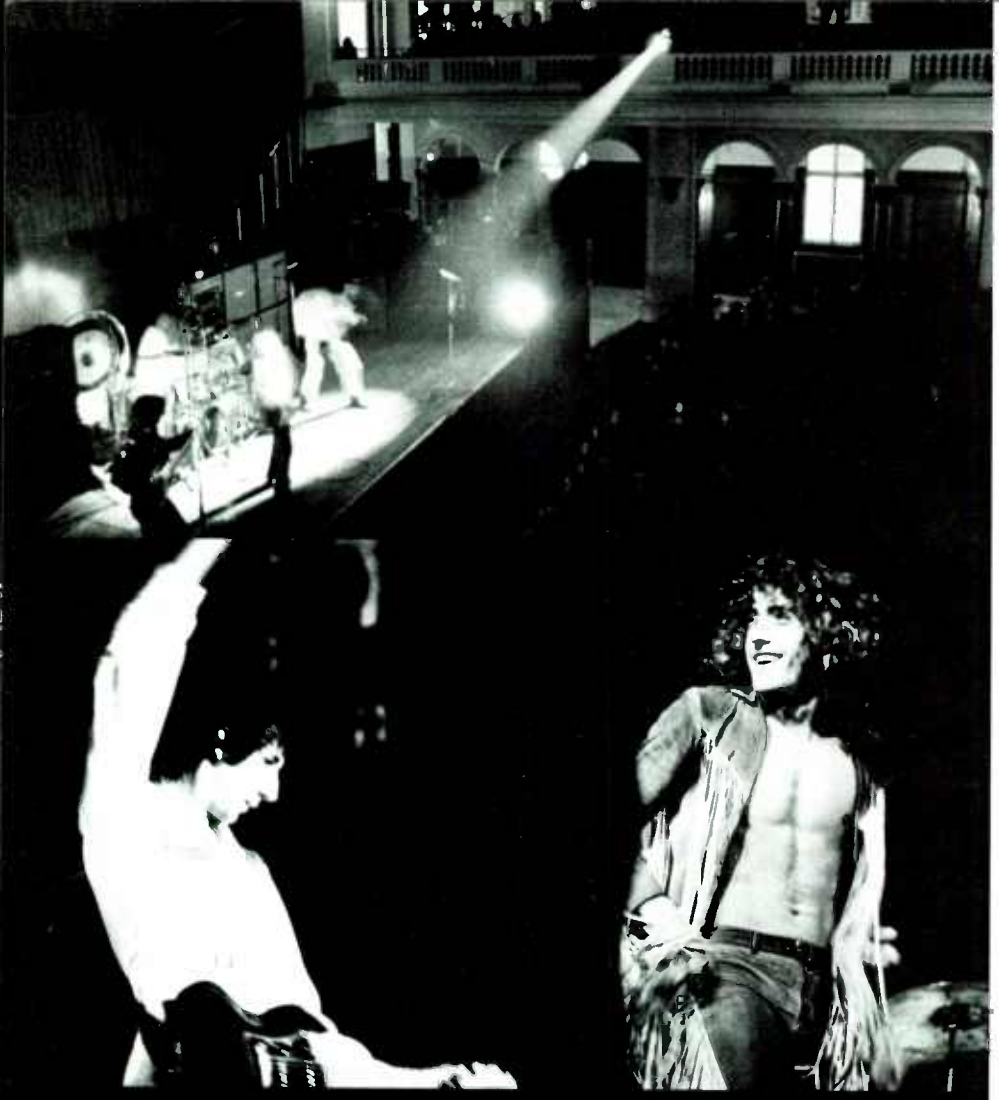
BELLY
King
(SIRE/REPRISE)

"SILVERFISH"—A DECOROUS WALTZ ADORNING *King*, the sophomore disc from Tanya Donelly's brainy band, Belly—follows a pop pattern so simple it could be charted on a graph. Beginning with a tissue of acoustic guitar strumming, it builds into a cymbal-crashing crescendo of a chorus, replete with operatic choral swells; it sounds like a sure-fire Top 40 hit. But that's about as obvious as this astute album gets. Donelly pens songs like a good magician performs tricks, palming her pretty hooks, letting the suspense mount, then releasing them with a dove-flap flourish. The rest of *King* is a stunning exercise in oblique strategy that grows more impressive and delightful with each successive listen.

Some of the arrangements here are positively jaw-dropping. How did Donelly decide to spike her somber ballad "Red" (the tale of a boy kidnapped in a spaceship) with a chihuahua-hyper bridge of repeated yelping? The first time you hear her and bassist Gail Greenwood singing, "Red! Red! Red!," It sounds like "Whoot! Whoot! Whoot!" and grates on your nerves. A couple of spins later, it makes perfect sense. "Seal My Fate" opens with tropical tom-toms and Donelly's breathy little-girl-lost melody line, then suddenly shifts into vibrato-fueled overload on the chorus, and Belly, no longer lazing on a beach somewhere, becomes a fine-tuned power-pop instrument. And while Donelly may play the waif at the microphone, she doesn't go in for any Barbie-doll, woman-as-victim semantics. "Baby I can't take it/I'd like to see you naked," she purrs on the title track, chanting the word "naked" until it's dripping with lust and as forceful as a demand.

King isn't a record for green-haired "alternative rock" dabblers. This is serious, smartly-fashioned music, meant to be appreciated and, ultimately, thought about with a certain modicum of intelligence. Throughout "The Bees," Donelly warns potential sycophants to "Beware of me/If your heart is not on my side/You're not on my side anymore." Enhanced by the crystalline production of the legendary Glyn Johns, the message is remarkably clear—this lady is nobody's Cosmo cover girl, nobody's A&R-crafted phenomenon. Cross her and she'll slap you down. —Tom Lanham

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH CULTICE/OUTLINE



BRINGING LIVE AT LEEDS BACK TO LIFE

WHILE JON ASTLEY and Chris Charlesworth were doing archive research for the Who boxed set *Thirty Years of Maximum R&B*, they had a meeting with the band to determine how to address the reissue of other titles in the Who catalog. "We wanted to make it a little more value for money on certain albums," says Astley. "So we said, 'Well, why don't we get out the multitracks of *Live at Leeds*?' I'd already transferred them to digital to remix the three tracks on the boxed set. I said, 'I think, with a lot more care and a three- or four-week spell in the studio, I could remix the whole show.' They got very excited about that idea."

They aren't the only ones. Clocking in at 79 minutes, and featuring 14 songs to the original's six, the new *Live at Leeds* offers a considerable expansion over the original—enough to make many listeners completely reconsider the album.

Even at 79 minutes Astley had to cut material. "We lost most of *Tommy* except 'Amazing Journey,' which runs into 'Sparks,' which I felt was far superior to the Woodstock one on the boxed set."

Apart from length, listeners may notice that the music seems a little smoother. "I managed to get rid of a lot of the clicks, and mend some of the peculiar edits that Pete did originally," says Astley. "There's actually a two-bar section that plays backwards, just before the bass comes in on 'Magic Bus.' I think Pete did it out of exasperation, because the intro was over-length, and he wanted to cut a couple minutes but he couldn't get an edit to work. So in exasperation he just tore this two-bar piece out, and put it in back-to-front, and said, 'There! Live with that!'"

On the whole, Astley tried to respect the spirit of Townshend's original edits. "I copied what he had done, except for one or two places," he says. "Like at the end of 'My Generation,' there's some lovely pickup-switching feedback guitar which wasn't on the original record. And the solo in 'Young Man Blues' is slightly longer than the original. He cut out 16; I only cut out eight, where he fell off the edge of the fretboard." **—J.D. Considine**

MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD

Friday Afternoon in the Universe

(GRAMAVISION)

A B3 GROWS IN MANHATTAN: KNITTING Factory regulars Medeski, Martin & Wood have taken the hoary realm of organ trio jazz and are reinventing it from scratch. Expelling humor, free jazz bursts and romantic washes of melodicism from an array of keyboards (including Wurlitzer piano and Clavinet), John Medeski is not so much the group's leader as its barometer, the perfect reflexive response to Billy Martin's Africa-meets–New Orleans' funk drumming and the sprightly patterns of acoustic bassist Chris Wood. At a time when most jazz musicians scat across the globe picking up work with whomever offers the best money, MM&W are a real band (they even vacation together)—and they sound like it. Theirs are the quick improvs and spontaneous inventions that can occur when musicians with highly developed styles meet in the same space, same groove, same mind.

And groove they do. Where 1993's *It's a Jungle in Here* was groove-heavy, *Afternoon* is quick-footed and lithe. The evocative melodies soar close, at times, to the simple charm of Nino Rota (as in the beautiful "Last Chance to Dance Trance (Perhaps)"). Russian folk melodies, acid hip-hop and twentieth-century classical, the chase scene to an Italian spy flick, even some early Allman Brothers–inspired fatback corrugate the most creative rhythmic jamming this side of Herbie Hancock's Headhunters.

MM&W's music provides a familiar sense of melody and immediacy that appeals to folks to wouldn't know acid jazz from Ferlin Husky.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTYN GALLINA JONES

MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD

HOUSE PARTY

What Are You Listening to Lately?

TEDDY RILEY

1. Craig Mack—Project: Funk Da World
2. Blackstreet—Blackstreet
3. Big Bubba—(advance tape)
4. Brandy—Brandy
5. Hezekiah Walker—(advance tape)

SCARFACE

1. A Tribe Called Quest—People's Instinctive Travels
2. Counting Crows—August & Everything After
3. Pink Floyd—The Division Bell
4. Kiss—Destroyer
5. (tie) Andreas Vollenweider, Method Man—Tical

MIKE RUTHERFORD

1. Sting—Greatest Hits
2. Hootie & the Blowfish—Cracked Rear View
3. The Beatles—Beatles for Sale
4. Roachford—Roachford
5. Prince—The Hits

Friday Afternoon in the Universe is a very welcome next step in the evolution of music.

—Ken Micallef

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE

Gettin' to It

(VERVE)

VARIETY, PLAYFULNESS, STELLAR MUSICIANSHIP and the leader's fearless affinity with the bass make *Gettin' to It*, Christian McBride's Verve debut, a rousing experience. The 22-year-old McBride, a Philadelphia native whose virtuosity has propelled him into jazz's upper echelon, never forgets his roots: The title cut is a tribute to his hero, James Brown, and if you think jazz and funk are incompatible, tune in and get contrite.

The lineup on this album reads like a who's who of young lions—Cyrus Chestnut, Lewis Nash, Roy Hargrove, Joshua Redman—and elder statesmen. There is a historic bass trio track featuring Ray Brown and Milt Hinton along with McBride. Pianist Chestnut enhances every mood visited on this album, and drummer Nash treats the listener to a panoply of colors—check out his style on "King Freddie of Hubbard" and his tasty brushwork on "Too Close for Comfort."

McBride wrote six tunes for the date; the opener "In a Hurry" and the title cut both feature the sextet (with Steve Turre) and they are outstanding tracks. "The Shade of the Cedar Tree," with its repetitive lines, is unexceptional and too long. Hargrove's flugelhorn sounds lovely on "Sitting on a Cloud," but the composition lags. The standard "Stars Fell on Alabama" is done in trio with the bass leading throughout, and although McBride does everything right, the cut bears the onerous hallmark of requisite material for a bassist's album. "Night Train" is McBride's selection for his back-of-tricks routine: He bows, plucks, slaps and taps the strings *col legno*. "I simply wanted it to sound as low-down, gritty, nasty and funky as possible," writes McBride in his liner notes, adding, "I hope you don't think it sounds too shabby."

The *only* thing on this album that sounds shabby to me—and I am aware that some bass players actually seek this effect—is an E-string that slaps the board and vibrates so much that at times it sounds as if it's about to fall off the damn bass. But this album's few flaws are magnified by the brilliant backdrop against which they are set, and *Gettin' to It* is an exuberant excursion that truly captures the character and breadth of Christian McBride's remarkable talent.

—Karen Bennett

JACKY TERRASSON

Jacky Terrasson

(BLUE NOTE)

STEPHEN SCOTT TRIO

Renaissance

(VERVE)

AS FAR AS PIANO TRIOS GO, AN OLD cliché still resonates: You can run, but you can't hide. Whether jumping into florid expressionism or lurking in the shadows of seclusion, the trio is one of jazz's most revealing forums. With varying results, new threesomes by Jacky Terrasson and Stephen Scott put their chops and ideas front and center.

Terrasson, a veteran of bandstands run by Betty Carter and Art Taylor, has been scrutinized and exalted since he won the 1993 Thelonious Monk Piano Competition. Steady gigging around N.Y.C. substantiated the acclaim, and his first domestic disc proves that he also knows how to make a captivating album. With bassist Ugonna Okegwo and drummer Leon Parker on his side, the pianist's addiction to invention is sated at every turn—and it's a hungry jones. Built on standards—from "Bye Bye Blackbird" to "Time After Time"—the record brims with improvs which continually recast the themes that sired them. The band's steady shifts—quick tempo variances, skips from minor to major keys, prolonged silences—help ambush the expected and flaunt the logic on which these tunes are built. At his most articulate, Terrasson moves with Bud Powell's exhibitionism, and it's enthralling.

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE

PHOTOGRAPH BY DENNIS KEELEY

On his past two records—both quite strong—Scott also displayed a demonstrative nature. *Renaissance*, his first full-length trio outing, is a bit more demure, concentrating on nuance. Like Terrasson, he's adept at reharmonizing melodies, whether it's the head to "Just Friends" or the tail end of "Tenderly." But as the six standards and

four movements of his "Renaissance Suite" play out, a humdrum tone overtakes the record. More pronounced dynamics, which Scott is capable of, are needed to sustain a charged atmosphere, though the concord of his ensemble—Clarence Penn plays drums and Michael Bowie is on bass—remains formidable.

Renaissance is strewn with reflexive, authoritative passages, as well as savvy strategies. It's clever to play "Solitude" against the type suggested by its title, and Scott's virtuosity is always on display. Like Terrasson, the deeper he burrows into a tune, the more visible he becomes. —**Jim Macnie**

MASSIVE ATTACK

Protection

(VIRGIN)

IT'S THE SAME OLD SONG. NEW BAND makes a splash, then fumbles the second try. Massive Attack's '91 debut *Blue Lines* wasn't the stunning dance/hip-hop synthesis its authors intended, but boasted enough zing to excuse the undernourished grooves that plague much British funk. Though hardly a disaster, *Protection* finds core members 3-D, Mushroom and Daddy G consumed by a different kind of funk, battling a case of the blahs. Sticking to the rotating vocalist format minus the services of *Blue Lines* star Shara Nelson, Massive displays classic symptoms of excess thinking, with endless studio fussing muting the impact of their already slight tunes.

The structure of the album suggests pointless attention to form. A track featuring Everything But The Girl's Tracey Thorn leads off, followed by rapper Tricky, Nelson successor Nicolette, an atmospheric (i.e., slushy) instrumental and reggae crooner Horace Andy. Then the sequence repeats, without apparent reason. Probably no running order would flatter the somber Tricky, who's Guru without the grit, or Nicolette, whose airy sweetness makes her a natural for commercial jingles. Andy fares better on the gently pulsing "Spying Glass," a rueful account of a rastaman's trials, although his no-frills reading of the dated Doors standard "Light My Fire" just seems odd.

But here's a happy surprise: Tracey Thorn's self-conscious brooding, potentially the stuff of overkill, dovetails beautifully with Massive's subdued vibe. "Better Things" bids sour adieu to a lover as Thorn seethes, "Save your line about needin' to be free/All that's bullshit baby, you just want rid of me," while the mesmerizing eight-minute title track offers a stunning expression of compassion. Playing off a funereal melody that's alternately tender and ominous, she murmurs, "I'll stand in front of you/Take the force of the blow." Everyone should have such an ally.

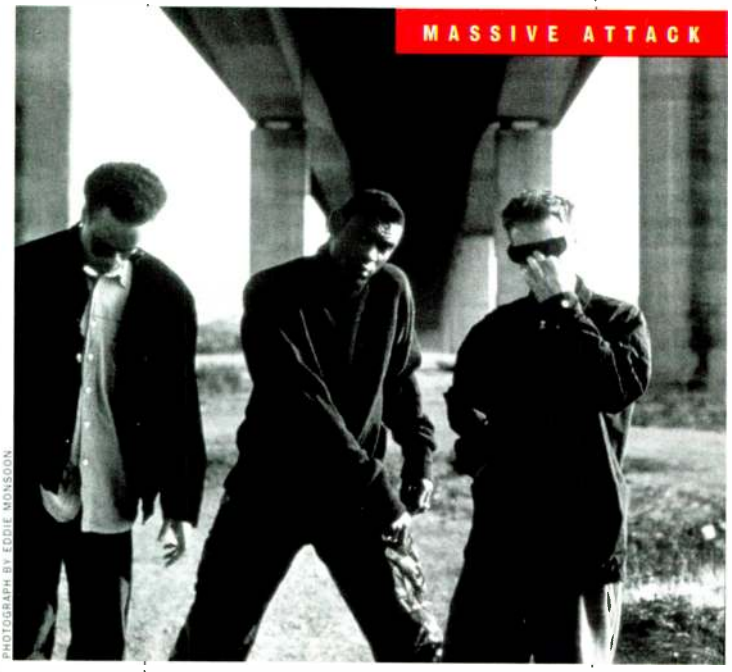
Brilliance amidst half-baked filler, Thorn's haunting performances should prompt Massive Attack to find a compatible voice for full-time service, instead of perpetuating this unsatisfying musical roulette. Too bad she's already got a gig. —**Jon Young**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

New Orleans: The Living Legends

(RIVERSIDE/ORIGINAL JAZZ CLASSICS)

IN JANUARY 1961 A YOUNG RIVERSIDE Records staffer named Chris Albertson, his engineers and some portable taping equipment left New York for New Orleans on a mission to find and record the aging practitioners of classic jazz, an endangered species. Albertson wrote emphatically at the time, "There remain only 27 living musicians still able to play in the true New Orleans tradition."



PHOTOGRAPH BY EDDIE MONSOON

Whether or not his head-count was accurate, Albertson's trip was a musical success. One week of recording in a warmly resonant hall yielded enough material for ten and a half (filled out to 12 with contemporaneous recordings by Herb Friedwald) albums. Issued under the rubric *New Orleans: The Living Legends*, the discs inspired at least one major label to do an immediate followup. Far from being New Orleans jazz's last hurrah, Riverside's series was the opening salvo to a frenzied decade of recording activity.

A few years ago Fantasy, Inc.—Riverside's current catalog owner—tantalizingly released one album from this series on CD. They've since reissued five more, followed more recently by the remaining four. (CD "bonus tracks" draw from the two-LP sampler that launched the series.) Despite overlapping personnel, the first five reissues are far from homogeneous.

"Sweet Emma" Barrett and Her Dixieland Boys come closest to how many people expect this music to sound. The tunes are (maybe too) familiar, though a first-class front line—including trumpeter Percy Humphrey and gutbucket trombonist Jim Robinson—raises the proceedings above the straw-boater level. **Percy Humphrey**'s own Crescent City Joy Makers tackle less "commercial" material and feature the sometimes unearthly clarinet wail of Albert Burbank. **Kid Thomas** and His Algiers Stompers are the virtual Sex Pistols of the bunch, with the leader's slashing trumpet work, Samuel Penn's unpredictable drum explosions and tempi redolent more of the mosh pit than the dance hall.

Trumpeter/violinist **Peter Bocage** appears with two different bands on his CD, both displaying a gentler approach. The ragtime numbers hail from *The Red Backed Books of Standard Rags*, long before Gunther Schuller re-popularized the arrangements and **The Sting** turned "The Entertainer" into supermarket Muzak. Last and far from least, the **Louis Cottrell** Trio CD is a delightful anomaly: just clarinet, acoustic guitar and string bass. This effortlessly swinging music is pure-bred New Orleans and yet defies category. If you still think of the style as "Dixieland," check out Cottrell first—and don't miss the rest. —**Scott Isler**

SIMON BONNEY

Everyman

(MUTE)

NOBODY FALLS IN LOVE WITH THE MYTHology of America like a foreigner does; for proof of that look no further than this, the sec-

ond solo LP from Australian Simon Bonney. A masterpiece of brokenhearted white trash poetry that combines elements of Jimmy Webb, Sam Shepherd, Marty Robbins and Johnny Cash, *Everyman* creates an archetypal portrait of a haunted American loner, perpetually on the road, looking for he knows not what, dreaming of home and the woman who lives there. Think of songs like "Wichita Lineman" or "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence" and you'll have an idea of where Bonney's coming from.

It's not surprising that Bonney, who relocated to L.A. in 1992, wrote many of these country songs as a result of a road trip he took through the American Midwest; the bittersweet sense of exile that surfaces with travel colors this song cycle. Replete with the sound of a rumbling train that links one song to the next, and high, lonesome strings that perfume the whole record, *Everyman* is kitsch of the highest order. British producer Gareth Jones has done a remarkable job of reprising a very particular kind of American record. From the chiming guitars that serve as the opening salvo of the anthemic "Don't Walk Away from Love" to a wonderfully odd interpretation of the Fred Rose classic "Blue Eyes Cryin' in the Rain" using just strings and piano, to the straightahead cover of Danny O'Keefe's jukebox classic of 1972, "Good Time Charlie's Got the Blues," Bonney and Jones never strike a false note.

SIMON BONNEY

Debuting in 1984 as the leader of now defunct post-punk outfit Crime & the City Solution, Bonney's 33 now, but he writes much older. The agitated hunger and fury of youth that drove his earlier work has burned away, and softened into a mood of wistful regret, grace and gratitude. "I wasn't a very good teenager and always wanted to be old—it seemed like a more comfortable age," Bonney has said. It is a point of view that's brought his talents into full bloom.

—Kristine McKenna

THE ROOTS

Do You Want More?!!!??!

(GEFFEN)

BEFORE EAST COAST RAP GOT ITS THUNder stolen by the L.A. low-rider set, Philadelphia was once the Second City of hip-hop, spawning acts as varied as proto-gangsta Schooly D. and the ready-for-prime-time DJ

SHORT TAKES

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

MOBY

Everything Is Wrong

RATHER THAN let his rave-scene rep define his musical identity, Moby uses it as a touchstone that helps put his more experimental efforts in perspective. That makes it easier to see the relationship between the distorted guitar and sledgehammer pulse of the thrash-rocker "Bring Back My Happiness" and the dirty electronics and relentless pulse of the techno tune "All That I Need Is to Be Loved." It also leads to unexpected insights, as when the arpeggiated synths in the jungle-spiked "Feeling So Real" recall the quieter keyboards of the Glassian "God Moving Over the Face of the Waters." Factor in the rich harmonies of "Let's Go Free" and the lush textures of "Into the Blue," and Moby seems less a rave star than a genius who just happens to make dance music.

JOHN PAUL II

The Rosary with the Pope

Possibly the lamest rapping I've ever heard...

GARTH BROOKS

The Hits

A TALENT savvy enough to play to every chunk of country's new constituency, Brooks proves his mettle here by moving from the Western clichés of "Rodeo" to the rote honky-tonk of "Friends in Low Places," and from the folkie introspection of "That Summer" to the pop sheen of "Shameless," with a sessionman's confidence and lack of conscience. But forget about any deeper significance. The distance between the social uplift of "We Shall Be Free" and the kneejerk reactionism of "American Honky-Tonk Bar Association" suggests that, while Brooks does believe in equality and justice, he believes in selling records more.

MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE

Higher Learning

WHILE IT'S easy to admire the stylistic range presented here, going from the spooky introspection of Tori Amos' "Losing My Religion" to the aural aggression of OutKast's "Phobia" isn't the easiest of segues. Still, the high quality of these selections—particularly the Brand New Heavies' smooth, soulful "Higher Learning/Time for Change," Me'Shell NdegeOcello's fiery "Soul Searchin' (I Wanna Know If It's Mine)" and Liz Phair's artful, anxious "Don't Have Time"—make the rough edges worth enduring.

FUN-DA-MENTAL

Seize the Time

ALTHOUGH usually places such a premium on its message that the music becomes an almost secondary consideration, not here, however. Even though this Brit-rap combine has packed their album with instructive, inflammatory news clips and messages, these soundbites actually add to the album's sonic impact, from the swirl of voices that power the title tune to the stereo rapping that closes "Mr. Bubbleman." Even better, Fun-Da-Mental's post–Public Enemy groove folds the rhythmic momentum of revolutionary hip-hop into an inventive Anglo-Indian musical vocabulary that's as audacious as it is accessible. Well worth seeing.

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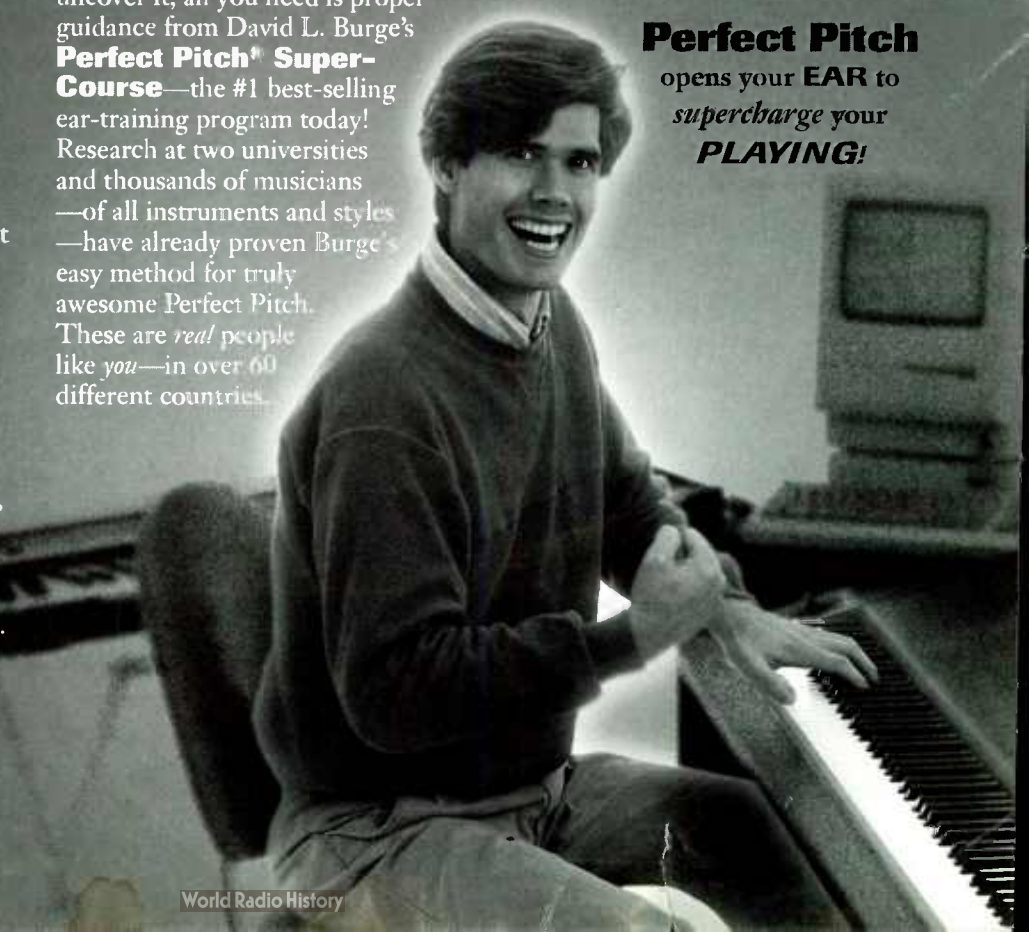

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ET CETERA

JOHN MAYALL
Blues Breakers with Eric Clapton
MOBILE FIDELITY

THE NATURAL companion record and career bookend to *From the Cradle*, now sonically enriched for listeners to soak in the vibes of one of the great white blues bands ever. On a range of classics from the likes of Willie Dixon, Mose Allison and Ray Charles, along with a few fine Mayall originals, Clapton blazes with a maturity beyond his years, and his tone pierces and rumbles with a freedom he's rarely evoked since. (And thanks to MFSL's Ultra Gain system, with considerably more presence than the original vinyl offered.) More to the point, keyboardist Mayall, drummer Hughie Flint and bassist John McVie provide a cushion for Clapton's solos to really swing. Just shows how even the greats can be elevated by the right rhythm section. Cream reunion, anyone?

—*Mark Rowland*

CAL TJADER
Soul Sauce
VERVE

WILLIE BOBO
Spanish Grease/Uno Dos Tres 1.2.3
VERVE

THESE EARLY-'60s sessions could be packaged together as a "roots of Santana" series, and not just because Bobo's *Spanish Grease* contains two of Carlos's signature riffs, or that the Tjader disc features Santana's favorite percussionist Armando Peraza. In any event, these are strikingly different representations of the West Coast Latin jazz movement. Bobo's is a compilation of two albums that ranges from standards like "I Remember Clifford" to pop tunes like "It's Not Unusual" and "Michelle" that can best be appreciated as oddities. Tjader's *Soul Sauce* is not only more tasteful, it's tastier, with the leader's vibes solos arranged over a percussive quartet on tunes like "Afro-Blue" and Peraza's "Maramoor Mambo." Was Tjader the epitome of cool jazz or the godfather of lounge? Either way, he rules.

—*Mark Rowland*

LLOYD PRICE
Greatest Hits
MCA

IT'S ODD how some of the original rock 'n' rollers are elevated into myth while others get mentally filed away as nostalgia. If Price seems among the latter, one should consider how influential "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" and "Stagger Lee" have been, or recall John Lennon's loving remake of "Just Because," or compare "Personality" to any of Sam Cooke's hits and see if it's found lacking. Here you get 18 tracks' worth of this seminal New Orleans pop, including the above classics and the legendary "Bandstand Version" of "Stagger Lee," where Stagger and Billy face girl problems but walk away pals. Definitely recommended.—*Thomas Anderson*

MOODY BLUES
Time Traveller
POLYDOR

I KNOW you won't believe this, but once upon a time the Moody Blues were pretty good. The orchestra stuff, unlistenable today, was inventive for its time, and albums like *The Dream* (recently reissued in all its sonic glory by Mobile Fidelity) and especially *To Our Children's Children's Children*—well represented by seven tracks here—coherent melody, musicianship and properly "moody" atmospherics into a compelling style of '60s pop classicism. Unfortunately, the downward spiral began soon thereafter, rendering the last three discs of this five-CD chronicle virtually worthless. My advice: Wait for the single-CD reissues.—*Mark Rowland*

BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO
Five Card Stud
ROUNDER

TRYING TO show he's awake on all suits, Buckwheat Zydeco plays country, gospel and soul here in addition to his main squeeze, zydeco. BZ wins all hands with the "wavy" (Buckwheat once said, "Cajun music is played straight, zydeco is played wavy") two-against-three beat of "Make It Easy on Yourself," the crunching cross-rhythms of the Creole-language "Baby Doll" and the irresistibly romping "I.R.S.," which evokes Little Richard in his heyday. "Trust Me," a righteous soul anthem dealt from the deck of Joe Tex, holds against the games of love, and BZ deals it straight, with the stinging beauty of the instrumental "Secret of Love." The yearning tones and subtle nuances of his accordion make BZ king of hearts on "Secret," but he misplays with the lifeless Willie Nelson duet, and insincere Booker T. riffs (no funk, no feeling) make "Bayou Girl" a mere discard. *Five Card Stud*'s a full house, but dealing from BZ's strengths would have made it a royal flush.

—*Celestine Ware*

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Thur. April 6th •Registration at the Radisson Hotel
•"Music Cares/Lifebeat" Crossroads Golf Classic
•Industry Welcoming Party at Graceland
•Band Kick-off party at the New Daisy Theatre
•Showcases in the clubs of Beale St. and Downtown
Fri. April 7th•Registration at the Radisson Hotel
•Industry Brunch • Panels and Workshops
•"Unplugged" Shows at CATS Records
•Sun Studio Reception
•Showcases in the clubs of Beale St. and Downtown
•Sat. April 8th •Registration • Peavey Clinics
•Panels and Workshops • Circus Circus Casino Party
•"Unplugged" Shows at CATS Records
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REVIEWS

Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince. Partly thanks to Schooly, who toured with a ska group behind him in 1987, Philly also owns a mini-tradition of live hip-hop bands, which today includes the Goats and G. Love and Special Sauce.

And the Roots, whose debut *Do You Want More?!!!??!*—a mixture of samples and real-time prowess—puts them at the front of the pack. *More* combines all the spare stylishness of a Tribe Called Quest album with the fluid power of a loose funk band having fun. Importantly, the group's musical core—keyboard, bass and drums—is truly hip-hop informed, armed with grooves spacious enough for the rhymers to play in. And unlike too many pretenders fronting live rap bands, Malik B. and Black Thought of the Roots are the kind of MCs whose tongue-tripping rhymes and varied phrasings are an attraction in and of themselves.

On "Datscat" the band rides jazzy, minor-key bursts as the rappers explore the connections between scat and rap. "Lazy Afternoon" features a sly chorus over a liquid, perfectly sleepy beat. The live showcase "Essay Whuman?" offers a taste of a Roots gig, as well as a chance for the band to stretch out. Throughout, the group throws whatever sounds are available into the pot, from human beatbox wheezes to the occasional scratch to an array of original loops—without, incidentally, a full-time DJ. It adds up to the most successful marriage of rhymers and players since Doug Wimbish & Co. played on the early Sugar Hill cuts. Strong roots indeed. —Nathan Brackett

THE LONDON SUEDE

dog man star

(COLUMBIA)

IT TAKES A LOT OF BALLS FOR A BALLYhooed young band to open its traditionally jinxed sophomore album with a swaggering exercise in self-aggrandizement called "Introducing the Band." Said cajones had better be cast iron for the track to blatantly steal the sound and fury of one of your teen idols, in this case David Bowie at his sequined Ziggy Stardust–era hammiest. So Brett Anderson—fey frontman for the London Suede (né Suede; a stateside Suede recently claimed copyright infringement)—must clank when he walks, because his mimicry of the Thin White Duke's historic showmanship borders on gushing apotheosis. In song after song on the group's new *dog man star*, the cocky singer lyrically sneers at showbiz success while his vocal persona practically begs for said fame with every exaggerated and/or lifted nuance. But—outside of Pulp and a handful of lesser-known acts—there's no other band around today that works so hard at playing the sensitive foppish dandy, even down to the rubbery Mick Ronson guitar riffs of guitarist Bernard Butler (who quit as the record was nearing completion). This works to Anderson's advantage.

Make no mistake. The London Suede is Anderson's group, Anderson's vision. "Just give me, give me, give me the power/And I'll make them believe," he hiccup/bleats through velvet orchestration on "The Power," and his Machiavellian strategy is obvious. Listen to this rake long enough, and you're swept into his slipstream. Initially déjà vu compositions such as the jagged "Heroine," the gentle but death-obsessed "Daddy's Speeding" and a flighty acoustic-based ballad to weekend romance, "The Wild Ones" ("On you my tattoo will be bleeding/And the name will stay," Anderson calms a lover as he's heading out the door) start sounding strangely memorable. The fat muddy mixes begin to unfold, revealing a grander pop-sensible design, and the London Suede suddenly appears to have true staying power, à la Bowie himself. Anderson may not be through assimilating his influences just yet, but that big clanking noise he makes is already enough to get him noticed. —Tom Lanham

GILBY CLARKE

[*cont'd from page 15*] and there is no manual for success. If anyone thinks that making it—or becoming successful with your art—is the end-all experience, you will be heartbroken when you get to where you're heading. The ride to the top is so rough that most people won't recognize themselves by the time they get there.

The music business requires a very special talent; it's not something you can learn in school or buy a prescription for. It takes years of dedication or luck. Talent does take some precedence in the music business. You need it to prolong a career—the public will see through the less talented eventually. This may sound clichéd, but music is written from the heart and performed from the heart and if your heart is in it it should not matter if you're playing in front of ten people, 500 people or 80,000 people. So if you're playing a show and 500 people are drinking and having a good time and enjoying your music—or the Rolling Stones' music—that's what it's all about. You may dream of playing Madison Square Garden someday, but someone playing the Garden may be dreaming of the intimacy of that club in Vancouver. So remember, be careful what you wish for, you may just get it—and you may not remember *how*.

MATT JOHNSON

[*cont'd from page 16*] through the great singer/songwriters and record an EP. I then got tangled up in Hank Williams' work completely and found that I couldn't cut his entire body of work down to just four tracks. It was a time-consuming yet fascinating process watching his songs select themselves. "Lovesick Blues" and "Lost Highway," two of his best-known hits, were out straight away by virtue of the fact that he didn't write them. Other well-known tunes, such as "Kaw-Liga" and "Jambalaya" were out because I found them a bit twee. Others like "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" just didn't suit my voice, and the Residents did such a wild rendition of "Hey, Good Lookin'" that I decided not to even try to top that. I loved the title of "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive," but I didn't much care for the rest of the lyrics, so out that went. All of that left me digging deeper and deeper into his catalog to find songs that I felt would be more suitable to be "*The The*–ized." Though I did include "Your Cheatin' Heart," "I Saw the Light," "There's a Tear in My Beer" and "Honky Tonkin'," it was almost as if a lot of his lesser-known songs were crying out to be heard. "Weary Blues from Waitin'," "I Can't Escape from You," "Six More Miles," "My Heart Would Know," "I Can't Get You Off My Mind" among others were all songs which I felt stood shoulder-to-shoulder with his best-known hits.

Admittedly, I probably erred on the darker side of Hank, but I always felt that most of the covers people had done in the past tended to sentimentalize songs which were originally passionate, raw and blue.

Like Buddy Holly, James Dean, Kurt Cobain and other members of that illustrious and tragic group who are united by youth in death, it's hard to know what would have happened to Hank had he lived, or maybe it is if one looks at Elvis Presley, Marlon Brando and Bob Dylan to see evidence of time taming even the fiercest talent. Maybe he would've been blown away by the coming storm of rock 'n' roll as many of his contemporaries were. In many ways death has been kinder to Hank than life ever was, instantly bestowing legendary status upon him. In spite of all the biographies, stories, myths and lies about him, still the best way to get to the truth about Hank Williams is to listen to his music and read his words.

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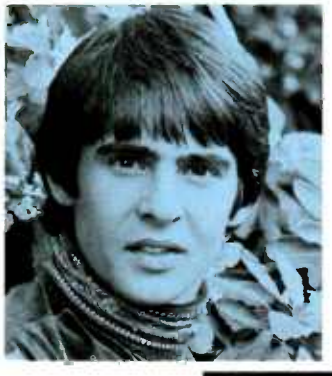
MR. JONES— A SQUARE'S LIFE

When future archeologists are trying to piece together the rock era from the scratched 45s and faded album covers of our time, they may come to the conclusion that the catalyst for the entire rock 'n' roll canon was a fellow named Jones, whose ups and downs mirrored the culture that spawned him.

When first glimpsed in the 1950s in the Coasters' "Along Came Jones" the very qualities for which Mr. Jones would later be mocked—his steadfastness, earnestness and virtue—were praised. No matter what went wrong it was all okay when "slow walking, slow talking" Jones showed up. The 1960s, however, saw Jones and his conservative values blasted from their heights. In "Ballad of a Thin Man" (everyone knew who the title referred to—the chorus of the 1950s song celebrated "long lean lanky Jones") Bob Dylan sneered with contempt at the square who didn't understand what the cool people were up to. "You know something is happening but you don't know what it is," Dylan snarled, "do you, Mister Jones?"



Who do you think then stepped in to kick Jones when he was down? The Beatles themselves. In "Yer Blues" John Lennon screamed, "Feel so suicidal, just like Dylan's Mr. Jones!"

If the rebellious '60s were a bad time for Jones, the hedonistic '70s were even worse. In Billy Paul's smash "Me and Mrs. Jones" the world found out—though the poor cuckold did not—that Jones' wife was cheating on him. "We both know it's wrong," her new lover sighed, but made clear they had no intention of stopping their infidelities.

Poor Mr. Jones tried to get with it. He began *dressing* like his tormentor but it did no good. In 1972's "Garden Party" Rick Nelson sang, "Over in the corner, much to my surprise, Mr. Jones hid in Dylan's shoes wearing his disguise."

Clearly Jones had fallen about as low as a once-proud man could go. In the punk days he was even spit on by the Psychedelic Furs, who sang, in *their* "Mr. Jones," "Here's another 9 o'clock and here's another day/Wonder how the weather is and what the people say/Mr. Jones is all of you who live inside a plan."

The Reagan era saw an upturn for conservatives generally and Mr. Jones was no exception. He had stuck to his out-fashioned values through the dark times of the '60s and '70s and was now being rewarded with some trickle-down prosperity. "Mr. Jones, he's doing fine," the Talking Heads sang in the 1980s. "It's a big day for Mr. Jones! He is not so square. Mr. Jones will stick around. He's everybody's friend!"

In the 1990s Mr. Jones, older and wiser, had regained some sort of equilibrium; if he lacked the youthful confidence he had displayed in the '50s, neither was he the loser of the '60s and '70s. When last spotted he was out for a night on the town with Counting Crows, bar-hopping and trying to pick up girls. "I want to be Bob Dylan," the singer tells him and it's no surprise that Mr. Jones, who suffered such derision at Dylan's hands, disagrees.

"Mr. Jones wishes he were someone just a little more funky," Counting Crows tell us. Well no kidding. We've known that for years.

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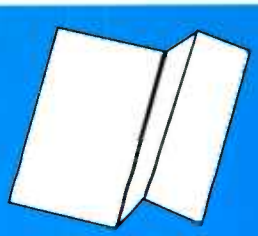

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