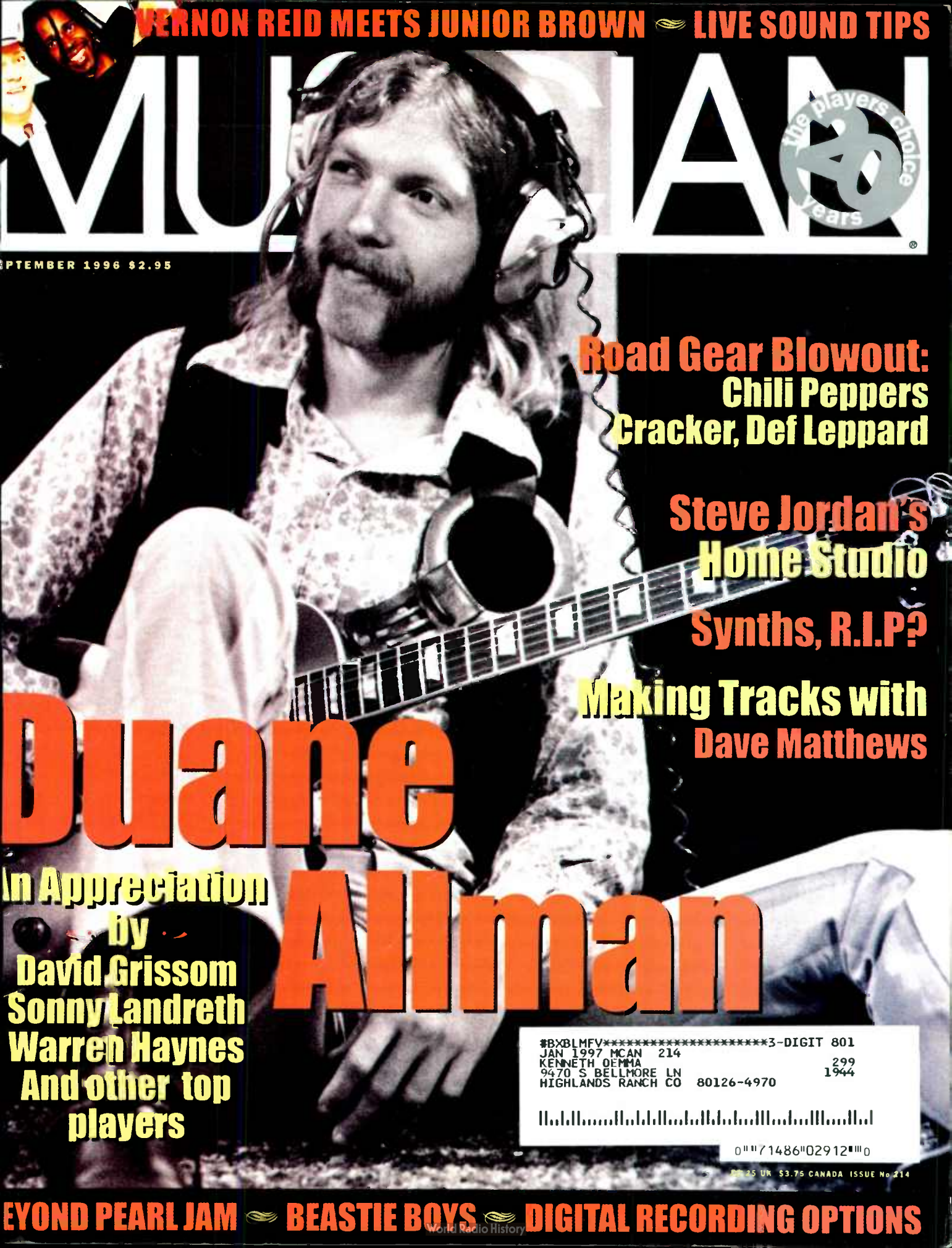


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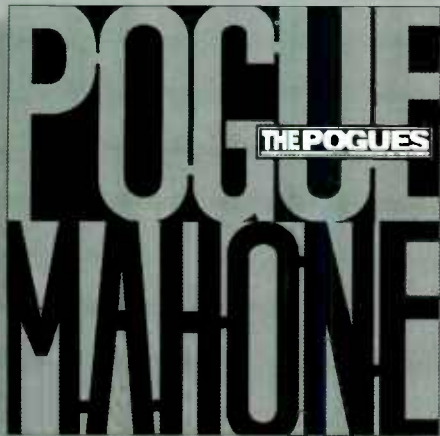
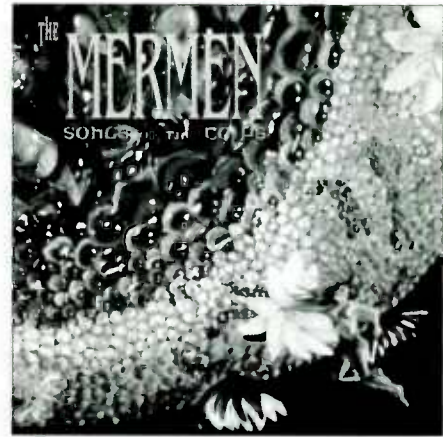
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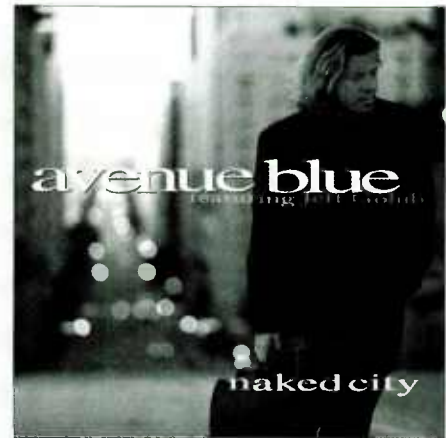
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Three Fish (L to R): Robbi Robb, Richard Stuverud, Jeff Ament

Eddie Vedder recently worked with the Sufi singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, and now you're in Istanbul promoting your Three Fish solo project, based on the mystic poems of the Sufi saint Rumi. Is there a connection, or are you just trying to escape Ticketmaster?

I did give Eddie a book of Rumi's poems when we roomed together during our first tour. We were listening to a lot of the stuff Peter Gabriel was putting out on Real World, like Nusrat and the Burundi drummers. Being on the road in a rock band context, I think we were searching for something else. Robbi Robb of Tribe After Tribe and I had some intense conversations over the last few years, and one night in the studio he asked me if there was a particular Rumi poem that affected me. I showed him the story of the Three Fish, and he started reading it out loud. I strummed this riff on acoustic guitar and later we realized we'd begun to improvise something that was

Jeff Ament

"We weren't put on this earth to be politicians."

musically legitimate. I think Rumi was saying that in order to communicate you have to open your heart, become vulnerable, and move beyond the fear and darkness. Three Fish sprang from that kind of intimacy.

Many Sufis I've met in Turkey over the years believed that some of that consciousness enters our own culture through rock and jazz. Have you felt that onstage with Pearl Jam?

Yeah, and it's weird. You look around and not only are your arms and legs flailing around, but your band members and the audience are swirling in this insane energy. But at the core of it, in the very center of yourself, you suddenly come into this incredible place of calmness and peace. That energy even stays after the gig—sometimes you have the most incredible dreams.

You're about to release a new Pearl Jam album. You've been battling Ticketmaster, refusing to make videos, struggling against all the starmaker machinery. Has the internal wear and tear been worth it?

There's been a few moments when I didn't know if it was worth it, in terms of our friendships. I do think we got a bit sidetracked, but they were legitimate things to be sidetracked with. I don't know how we're going to deal with the ticketing thing, but we're definitely going to tour. The tension and negativity isn't coming from any one of us—it's coming from around us. Everybody has opened up to each other, probably more than any time since the first record.

What's the most important thing you

want to carry over from your solo project to Pearl Jam?

The strength and confidence Robbi gave me by telling me when I'd played something that touched him. I'm having conversations with the band now about how I don't care about outside adulation, I need you guys to tell me when I play or do something that affects you, that I'm a legitimate force in your life. We're in a much more relaxed place where we realize we weren't put on this earth to be politicians or judges. Fighting Ticketmaster, and even to an extent touring, is a secondary thing. Getting into a room and making music is what we need to feel comfortable with.—**Vic Garbarini**

Lance Mercer

sideman

Technically, you're not a sideman working for Deep Purple; you're a full-fledged member. But there must have been something session-like about coming in to replace Ritchie Blackmore.

Actually, I had no problem at all with that. The ice was really broken before I got there, by the fact that they had already toured with Joe Satriani on guitar.

Still, this seems like a strange gig for you.

Not at all. The one reason I ended up with them is that we just fit together. I mean, I loved the sound of that heavy distorted organ playing those triplet lines with the guitar, like at the end of "Child in Time." But when my manager told me they were looking for a guitarist, the first thing I

But Paice and I were jamming as the other guys came in. We started working on this idea I had, and by the end of the day we had recorded the version of the song you hear on the record. You can hear on the guitar parts where I went for some harmonics and didn't quite get them, but it was still a cool vibe, and anyway I'm very much into using first takes 'cause they have some kind of magical good luck.

Did you change your usual rig for the

"I just fit together naturally with Deep Purple."

Steve Morse

said was, "Are they going to try to make me look a certain way?" [laughs]

Many of Purple's songs bear the strong imprint of a Blackmore solo. How do you approach those songs—do you follow his lines or do something completely fresh?

A little bit of both. The "Highway Star" solo is one of my favorites: I play the fast parts exactly like Ritchie recorded them, although we play it a bit faster than the record. There's enough thrown in there so people know that someone else is playing, but out of respect for the solo I'll try to get the main themes across before messing with them. The very end of my solo in "Smoke on the Water" is exactly the same as Ritchie's, with that little pentatonic minor thing at the end, but before that there's quite a long section where we're jamming over [drummer] Ian Paice's Bayou march.

How long did it take to get into their style?

Everything was pretty quick. Some of the things on the album [*Purpendicular*] are even demo takes. For the first song we did, "Sometimes I Feel Like Screaming," we actually came in to record a different tune.

Purple gigs?

Actually, I did. The fact that I'm playing with an organ with a Leslie in a non-instrumental context made me think that a more traditional electric guitar sound would be best. Normally I use a little more midrange than most people, but the band had a Peavey 5150 head, which has an abundance of low end, midrange, and high end. Having more low and high end in the sound gave me more of a typical '90s sound and saved me from just having a honky midrange sound with Jon Lord's midrange organ.

What's it like playing within Jon's rock-oriented open voicings, as opposed to the jazzier changes you've dealt with in the Dixie Dregs and the Steve Morse Band?

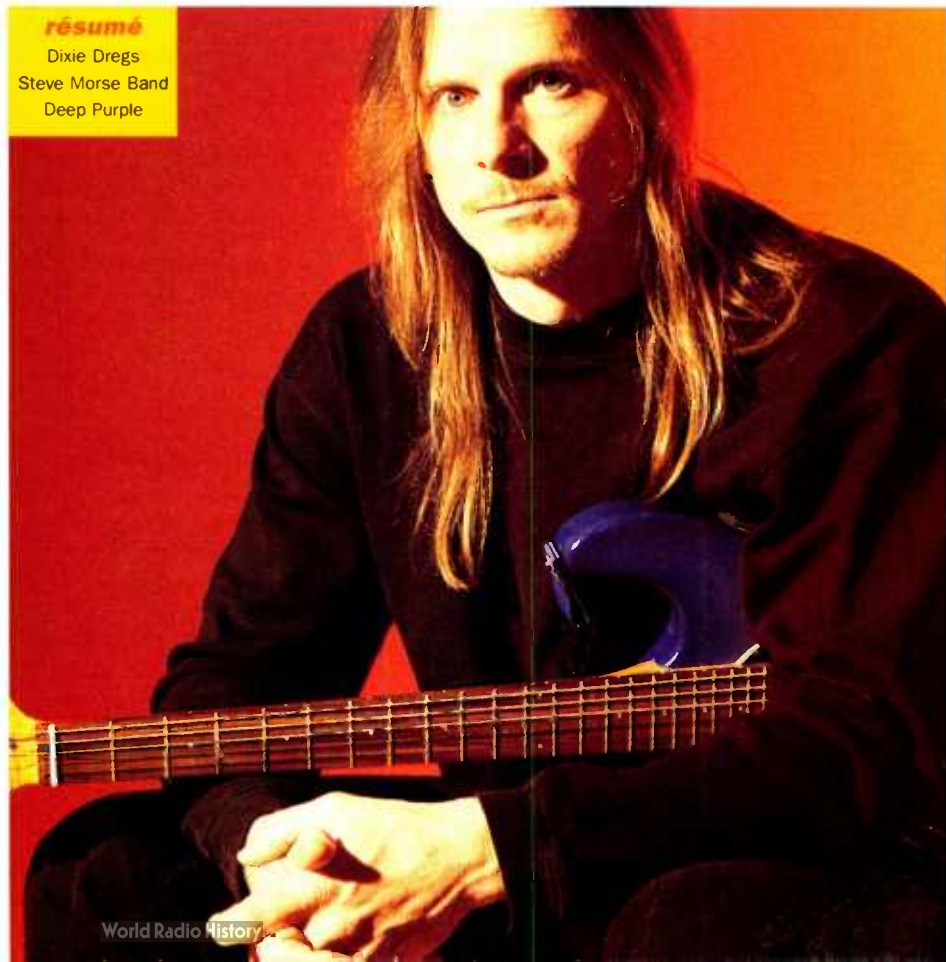
I love those open voicings; that's just how I love to hear the keyboard. That's one of the best things about playing in this band. Not only is it easy to play with the guys backing me up—there's plenty of guitar solos [laughs]. There's really no excuses for not liking the gig.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Jay Blakesberg

résumé

Dixie Dregs
Steve Morse Band
Deep Purple



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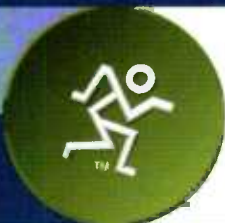


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letters

gene simmons

The article on Gene Simmons [Aug. '96] is phenomenal. Obviously you can tell that he's a teacher and a very bright individual. If you could do more interviews with people who have brains like that, the younger generation would be in much better shape.

dana walsh
brutality

[*Brutality, Walsh's band, records for the German label Nuclear Blast.*]

britmania

Your article on the new British invasion was a jagged little pill to swallow, with terms like "timeless rock riffs" and "angry young man lyrics." Give me a fookin' break you guys! If Oasis is the harbinger of the new Britpop, then, brothers and sisters, we are in for a musical dry spell. Yeah, "Wonderwall" is a catchy tune, but it's also bloody mundane. After listening to (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory*? the first word that pops into my head is "banality." Sorry, blokes, I've heard it all before. Neither am I impressed with Liam Gallagher's three-note vocal range. It's bad enough that we have to put up with Hootie and the Borefish without subjecting ourselves to refried Brits. (Nice interview, though, with Georgie Harrison.)

david rauh
cincinnati, OH

The main article to tie your Britpop issue together is a reprint of a George Harrison interview from your sister publication *Billboard*. Not only does that type of laziness reflect poorly on *Musician*, it leads me to believe that Robert L. Doerschuk doesn't care so much about his readers as he does getting the magazine out the door and into production as quickly and easily as possible.

tony perry
cat@juno.com

Oasis is a lot like the TV show *Friends*: They took the best parts of what everyone before them had done, clumped it together, sold out, shoved it in our faces until it came out our ears and called themselves the best. Were I Paul McCartney, I would kick some British ass.

almée garten
jullan, CA

Obviously Mac Randall has never actually sat

down and listened to an Oasis album. If he had, he would know that their songs aren't "immediately accessible" ditties. "Columbia" and "Morning Glory" are excellent examples of how complex their music can be. We Oasis fans are oh so sorry that Liam Gallagher doesn't prance around onstage in baby tees, climbing up on speakers and stomping on the band's instruments, as does Damon Albarn. If that's what it takes for a band to be perceived as hard-working, then I suggest that every musician trash the next venue they play-hey, at least they'll have Mac in their corner.

Thank you so much for the issue on up-and-coming British bands (July '96). It seems too often that most American mags focus solely on already established British bands like Elastica and Oasis. Some of the bands you covered may be considered quirky by our standards but are definitely worth looking into as a relief from the norms of American radio standards. As a response to the idea of the British being more interested in the fashion sense of bands rather than the music: Look a little bit deeper and sometimes you'll be rewarded with one of the best things you've never heard.

roberta mckay
seffner, FL

jennifer mcdonald
groves, TX

What is wrong with Damon Albarn's neck? In all three photos (cover, page 22, and page 30) his head is cocked quite far to the right. Perhaps he could use a good chiropractor.

james vander berg
eastpointe, MI

no moore

Today someone brought to my attention your Sideman interview with a drummer by the name of Cheron Moore (June '96), who says, "In L.A. you don't need talent. It's who you know and how you hang out." What a load of crap! The top cats in L.A.—J. R. Robinson, Simon Phillips, Jim Keltner, Ricky Lawsen, Harvey Mason, Herman Mathews, Kenny Aronoff, Denny Fongheiser—are the guys you should be interviewing about playing and what is truly important to making it in the music business. You should also spend a bit more time researching the background of those you interview. The next thing Moore will claim is that he played on some of the Beatles' original songs.

joe hibbs

bensalem, PA

I've been making music for 31 years, with 15 years on the blues circuit. Being a bandleader, I've been through a lot of musicians, Cheron Moore being one. Please check this musician's references more closely: Just because he sat in one night doesn't give him the right to include that artist on his résumé.

I know Albert Collins. I've played with him many times. I know his management. I don't think they remember a Cheron Moore. I know James Cotton; one of my tunes is on his album *Mr. Superharp Himself*. The guys in his band for the past ten years are my homies. Again, no Cheron Moore.

When he worked for me, Cheron was of average ability. When I discovered he couldn't do a decent blues shuffle, I taught him a Chicago shuffle myself. And I'm a guitar player! In fact, less than two hours before I was to cross into Canada for the second half of a six-week tour, he quit without notice because my road manager "insulted" him by saying I was a better drummer than he is.

osee charles anderson
pocatello, ID

[We spoke with Cheron Moore, who encouraged us not to print these letters, declined to offer a response in print, and suggested that we write a full-length feature on him as the best means to clarify questions related to his résumé.]

faerie tales

I was enraged by the three Tori Amos-bashing letters in your July '96 Letters column. This so-called "K-Mart Kate Bush" is in reality a healer, an open heart, a talented musician, songwriter, poet, and singer, a comfort, and most importantly, a faerie friend. Not only that: Three out of three of her albums have gone platinum. *Boys for Pele* debuted at number two on the *Billboard* charts. My heart goes out to those of you who don't see the magic of Tori Amos. I hope someday you can. But if you can't appreciate her beauty, both inside and out, you are more dense than the deepest phathom [sic] of the deepest ocean. Have a nice day.

a.b.
california

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Spacehog: (left) Richard Steel, Royston Langdon; (right) Antony Langdon, Tony Cragg

LEE HERSHIRO

was for me, just to consume a bit of space on the old airwaves in a good way. It's not taking the piss at all; it's a completely positive song.

The idea of putting in the sound of an English telephone ringing and being engaged came later. I thought of it as a metaphor for asking questions and not getting an answer. That sound was sampled off a Penguin Cafe Orchestra album with an Akai 2800; the track's called "Telephone and Rubber Band." I had to time-stretch the ringing to fit the song's tempo and change it into the different keys. It was pretty easy to get it to ring in E, but the A was quite tricky. I've always loved messing around with samplers. There's a lot of samples on the album [*Resident Alien* (Sire)], some of which are just samples of ourselves, but I can't disclose them all—I'd probably get sued. I'll tell you one: Don McLean. The others you'll have to work out for yourself.—Mac Randall

Spacehog's Royston Langdon

How I Wrote "In the Meantime"

When I write a song for a band, as opposed to just recording a demo for myself, I try to arrange the song around the band, always keeping it within as simple a format as possible. It's a limited palette playing in a band, after all: You've got drums, a couple of guitars, a bass, and a voice, and there you are. Creativity-wise, you can do whatever you like, but you've got a much broader scale to work with in writing the song than you've got translating it to a band situation, unless you can have an Egyptian orchestra playing as well.

"In the Meantime" was one of those tunes that had been floating around in my head for quite some time, but I never actually did anything about it; I just let it stay there. Eventually I got it

down. Both the tune and the words for the chorus came together, but the verses were something different—they were more Hendrix-y. The guitar riff on the chorus came out of my head very early on; to me, it's just part of the tune. It's all the same thing. Everyone says, "Oh, that's very David Bowie and Mick Ronson," but at the time, that didn't seem relevant. The bassline was part of the original tune as well, and the important thing was to fit the vocal line to the bassline, instead of the other way around, which is the normal way.

For the words, I thought, if I could possibly write a catchy pop hit, what kind of message would I want to get across? And the answer was, let's get out a really positive message, for no reason other than you can. That's all it

ro

In the June '96 issue we looked at the two major ways to go in your project studio: digital or analog tape, and hard disk recording. This time we'll look at the two major subgroups within hard disk recording: personal computer-based systems and stand-alone hard disk recorders.

Most personal computer systems are desktop Mac or Windows-oriented. There is a trend, already well under way on the Macintosh side, of software products that use the onboard 16-bit audio and motherboard-provided audio interfaces for pretty sophisticated multitrack recording and mixing with no additional hardware. The next generation of

JOHN HERSEY

At The Tibetan Freedom Concert

by Adam Yauch (a.k.a. MCA)

Adam Yauch is a member of the Beastie Boys and a co-founder of the non-profit Milarepa Fund, organizers of the Tibetan Freedom Concert in San Francisco last June.

Bands get approached by different organizations all the time. You get so bombarded with requests to do things that you just don't have the time to look them all over and still make your music.

This idea of doing a concert to raise awareness about Tibet had been around for a while. Because the Tibetans' struggle is a non-violent one, the main way that change is going to come about is by having more people aware of the situation with Tibet and of the human rights abuses within China.

So a concert was a logical approach.

We basically invited a bunch of bands that we love, but we also wanted to diversify the bill. For example, I've seen Hugh Masekela perform before and he's just incredible, so I thought it would be great to have all these young people who've probably never seen him before experience that—his vibe is just so positive and so powerful that it felt really relevant to the event.

Our corporations are doing a huge amount of business with China because they get cheap labor, so it's important to realize that every time we spend money, we're basically voting for or against human rights. If you buy a pair of jeans that were made in China, there's a good chance they could've been made by forced labor, child labor, or prison labor, by somebody who was exercising their right to free speech by saying, "Tibet should be



Yauch and friends.

free," or "China should be a democracy," and ended up in jail.

We're also trying to become more aware of our own involvements. We're currently doing internal audits on the Beastie Boys to figure out where the corporations that we're involved with are investing and what they're doing—like with Capitol, who is tied to EMI, or our lawyers and accountants, who are tied in with other corporations. We hope that others will start doing the same.—**Dev Sherlock**

ugh mix

Macs (and probably some PCs) are expected to provide even better audio and video interfaces, such as FireWire (IEEE 1394) and S/PDIF.

Currently, nothing can match the ease of editing, processing and mixing on a computer monitor. But if you don't need as much control, then one of the stand-alone hard disk systems might be for you. At the most basic level are recorders like the Akai DR series or the E-mu Darwin, which pretty much substitute for a stand-alone tape machine. They sound great and there's no rewind time. These recorders offer more



sophisticated cut-and-paste editing and track bouncing than any tape-based machines. Some even have mixing capabilities and big screen add-ons, blurring the line with PC systems. They may not have the

power of a computer-based system, but for recording music they might be all you need. Just add a mixing board and some outboard gear and you're in business. Newer variants on the stand-alones such as the Fostex

DMT-8 add an integrated mixer, while the Roland VS-880 adds a mixer, effects, and a larger, more sophisticated editing LCD screen. That still might not be as finely focused as a computer-based system, but if you want to pick up your whole digital studio and carry it under your arm, you can't beat it.

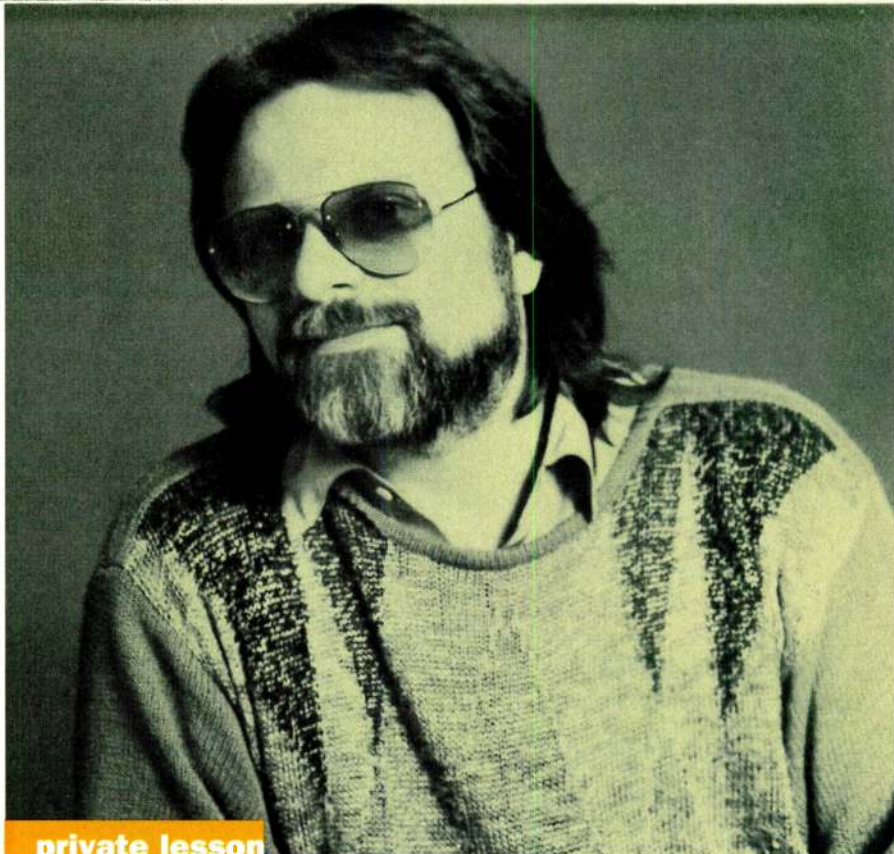
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Larry Fast has worked

extensively with Peter Gabriel and other top artists, and composed for movies and television. Visit Larry at <http://www.eclipse.net/~synergy> or send questions c/o Musician.

A Polychordal Primer

by **Richie Beirach**



private lesson

For the emerging jazz pianist—for any musician—a knowledge of polychords is highly recommended. Polychords are combinations of two or more tonalities stacked on top of each other. The best way I can think of showing how they work is to put them into the context of a piece and invite you to play through them with me.

First let's try a few experiments with polytonal chords. If you're at a keyboard, play a low C pedal bass octave in the left hand. Over this, with your right hand, play all 12 major triads, one at a time. You'll find that each triad has its own characteristic sound in relation to the C pedal tone. If

you're playing guitar, try the same exercise over an open low E string. The same kind of thinking can be applied to other chord movement over a pedal note. Try moving through a sequence of minor, augmented, and diminished

triads; the pedal will have a different harmonic function in relation to each triad, resulting in a new color. Some combinations will sound better than others; as to which ones work and which don't, that's for your ears to decide.

Let's apply what we've just played to a short ballad of mine, "Johnny B," which you can hear on my recent trio album *Trust* (Evidence). The song is notated here: Play it quite slowly, but in smooth, even time. Listen to the top triad, then the bottom one, separately. Then put them together. To improvise, after the eight-bar statement of the melody, play over the changes. Create your solo simply, in the upper triad to bring out the true sound of a polychord, the beautiful dissonant yet consonant clash of two tonalities vibrating.

The coda can be played as a short intro. For a dramatic effect, play it quietly, like a hymn. Enjoy!

Ballade

E1/B E1/B E1/B E1/E Alm(maj7) B9/F A/E1

To Coda Alm7/C (or B/C)

Coda Freely

B E B E9 B B/b1 Alm B/G1

1. E A/F G1/B

2. E F Am9 E F Bsus E F Alm(maj7)1131 E1

Improvise on chords or B ped.

rit.

"Johnny B" by Richie Beirach. (c) 1984 Beirach Music/BMI. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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World Radio History

new signings



In Ryan Downe's home studio his main demo axe—a Korg 03R—sits on a low table. To one side, mounted on the wall, is an array of Orthodox icons, austere studies of saints in muted tones and shadows. Opposite, a handful of candles, each etched with a seductive Vargas image, stands erect as a choir in anticipatory arousal.

The profane and the sacred, circling around the heartbeat of music, is a metaphor for this young artist's method. On his debut album, *The Hypocrite*, Downe offers songs of unapologetic intimacy, songs of musical depth and

blunt expression. "I wanted to hurt you so bad," he sings, "I wish I could kill you. Don't you dare laugh at my pain."

Maybe it's not John Donne, but who can't relate to this kind of anger? What puts Downe on the podium is the music behind his message. He writes tightly,

RYAN DOWNE

DEBUT ALBUM: THE HYPOCRITE

LABEL: ROCKET/ISLAND

RELEASE DATE: JUNE 4

with strong hooks and roller-coaster melodies; his voice, capable of slipping from a smooth croon to the edge of hysteria, handles each pivot and plunge with ease. And, as a player, he isn't afraid to experiment, going so far as to lay down a unison vocal part to a guitar line in "Vegas" by blowing and singing into the pickup on his Les Paul to get what he calls "that little Arabian effect."

Clearly the guy is good. He's also a '90s kind of artist, a do-it-yourselfer who put *The Hypocrite* together with Steinberg/Jones Cubase on a Tascam eight-track, then turned his collaborator

Tom Pitt

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new signings

Bob Marlette loose to cut drum tracks and dump the results onto his Alesis ADAT. Yet there's a throwback element to him as well, something in the arena-filling size of his sound and the craft of his writing, that harks back to a different school—that of Bowie in his glam phase, or Elton John at the height of his powers.

So how does someone like this get discovered? With help from Elton John, of course.

But first, back up a few years, to Downe's spell as a history major at San

Francisco State. Bitten by the songwriting bug, he leaves for L.A. and begins chasing a dream through local clubs and showcases. On one of these jobs he's heard by a friend of John Reid, a music biz veteran whose ties to Elton John stretch back to 1971. Reid sends someone down to catch Downe a few weeks later; impressed, the emissary offers him a management deal on the spot.

At this point the story gets interesting: Unlike practically any other unknown performer being offered a deal

with Reid, Downe turns it down.

"I told him, 'I don't really think I'm ready for a record deal,'" he remembers. "Then they said, 'Well, there are lots of other ways we can continue. For instance, we can take you to England.' So I packed my bags and went."

The plan was not to rush into a record deal but to accept Reid's offer to nurture his talent by setting him up with musicians, facilities, and time to develop his studio chops in the friendly creative climate Reid knew in the U.K. Clearly the

talent

bluetones Ask singer and chief lyricist Mark Morriss what direction his band's music is taking and he answers: "You just go where the wind blows you." So far the wind has blown these four Brits to some very kind places, including opening slots for Supergrass and Oasis, a sold-out headlining tour of their own throughout the U.K., a hit single ("Slight Return" hit the number two slot on *Melody Maker's* Top 30 U.K. singles chart) and a major label deal with Polydor. While their sound fits comfortably in the Britpop vein, that wasn't conscious. "We've been doing our own thing

for the past five years," Morriss says. "When everyone starts doin' it, it gets a bit boring."

While their debut album *Expecting to Fly* (A&M, due out July 30) has seen its share of the limelight overseas, the band isn't rushing to hit the States anytime soon. "We haven't any major desire to get to America more than Bangkok or Japan," Morriss says. "We're lookin' forward to breakin' anywhere. All in good time, really."—**David Farinella**

ashley macisaac From step dancing at five to picking up the fiddle at nine, Nova Scotia native Ashley MacIsaac has always sought the center of attention. His wild, wooly ways with a bow and six strings have won notice from the likes of Philip Glass, Allen Ginsberg, and David Byrne. Says the 21-year-old MacIsaac, "Everyone has latched onto the fact that I'm a Cape Breton boy playing fiddle music who has now gone completely mad."

For some, his rebellious yet respectful style recalls that of the iconoclastic British violinist *cum* Hendrix fan Nigel Kennedy. "The very first time I saw Nigel Kennedy was at the Royal Variety Performance four or five years ago on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation]," he recalls. "I remember that he had a fishing hat with ties on it, a crazy-looking beard, combat pants—just a freak! And the Queen is up there clapping her hands." Admits the bearded,



ashley macisaac

bleached-blond MacIsaac, already famous for wearing kilts with army boots, "I think I probably took a lot from just seeing him that one time."

But unlike Kennedy, MacIsaac won't be playing "Purple Haze" on the fiddle anytime soon. Instead, his debut album, *Hi™ How Are You Today?* (A&M) finds him building a mosaic of sleepy hip-hop beats, thrash workouts, samples, loops, and string quartets around traditional Celtic melodies. The album took two-and-a-half years, several studios, and two producers to make, but the results have already generated at least one hit single and video in Canada, where it was released last fall.

To keep him from being pigeonholed by a category-obsessed American public, no singles are planned for U.S. release. But MacIsaac is raising his Stateside profile this summer. As opening act at large venues for the Chieftains, he is proving what Canadian audiences already know about him: "I like to really play my whole arse off."—**Chris Smets**



bluetones

new signings

work paid off: Shortly after Downe's arrival came the intro to Elton Himself, whose advice and support helped guide him along the home stretch of his demo.

Yet even having a superstar in your corner doesn't cut it if the demos aren't killer. Which is why, Downe admits, "nobody responded to them. I remember being very, very up on them right after I had finished, but a week later I had this thought that I myself wouldn't go see this artist because there was nothing worth taking too seriously here."

It was this dissatisfaction that made Downe decide to move back to L.A. and work even harder on getting his studio chops together. Meeting Bob Marlette turned out to be the final step in crystalizing the style that drives *The Hypocrite*.

The moral to the story is that patience can be even more important than oppor-

tunity. "That's the number one reason I've gotten where I am," he insists. "And it's not just in music. Patience is a quality that's dying faster every day. But in the sense of music, you've got to be patient. Let's say somebody from England had responded to those demos: I don't know if I would have had the will power to say, 'Well, I don't know.' If I had gotten a record deal and released that material, it would have been a very big mistake, because those demos didn't represent what I am about, and that would have lessened my chance of longevity."

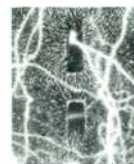
It also helps to connect with a label where the boss is himself an artist. As the first signing on Rocket, Downe benefited from the sense of support and—again—patience that Elton John has made a part of the corporate culture. During one critical period, Downe found

himself low on energy; work on his demos trickled to a halt for reasons he couldn't then understand. "He was feeling run-down, with no energy to even get out bed," says Rocket A&R exec Todd Interland. "Kind of an Epstein-Barr thing. Shortly thereafter he was diagnosed with a thyroid disorder. I reassured him that however long it took him to recuperate, we wouldn't go away; we would still be here."

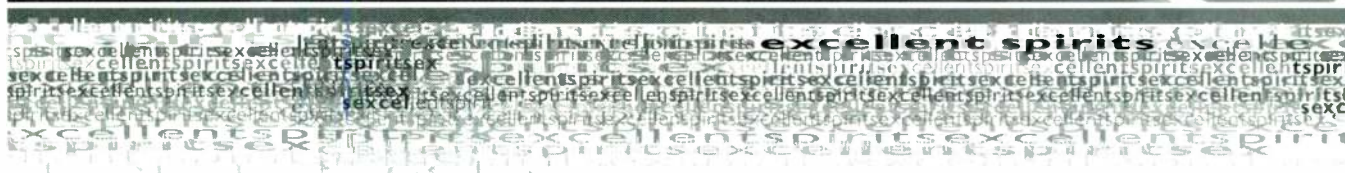
And so they are now. Downe was putting a band together and psyching up for the tour when we last spoke. "The album is theatrical because I intended it to be theatrical," he smiles. "And I'm kind of a ham. So I'm not afraid about pulling it off live. Because I know I can."

The time for patience is past. Look out: Downe is on his way.

—Robert L. Doerschuk



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THE GUITAR LEGACY OF DUANE ALLMAN

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, ON OCTOBER 29, 1971, Duane Allman, slide guitarist nonpareil and charismatic leader of the Allman Brothers, died in a tragic motorcycle accident near his home in Macon, Georgia. He collided with the back of a flatbed truck carrying steel rods for bridge construction. There were no skid marks. He was impaled by the steel rods in three or four places. He took one through the heart, one through the center of his body and yet remained alive for six hours. He was just three weeks short of his 25th birthday.

With Duane's passing, less than a year after the death of Jimi Hendrix, the music world mourned the loss of yet another brilliant, intuitive player whose contribution and impact during his relatively short time on the planet was staggering. Only a handful of musicians in rock's history have ever communicated with such intense passion and

BY BILL MILKOWSKI — PHOTOGRAPH MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES

directness on their instrument or with such a distinctive voice. And few have had such a profound and lasting influence on generations of aspiring players.

"His sound was instantly recognizable to me," says the Subdudes' resident slide guitar ace Tommy Malone, who grew up copping Duane licks off records down in rural Edgard, Louisiana. "What was so cool about him was you could take all of those licks he was playing on a big loud rig—obviously a Gibson Les Paul through a Marshall amp—and easily adapt them to acoustic guitar."

Those who witnessed the original lineup of the Allman Brothers in concert won't soon forget the feeling of all that exhilarating energy surging outward from the stage as Duane and Dickie Betts swapped hot licks. The sight of those two rail-thin, blue-jeaned blond Southern brothers—bare-chested, long hair blowing in the breeze, eyes closed, lost up in something they can't put into words—is forever embedded in their memories. And the piercing sound of Duane's slide work, an extension of his personality just as the tenor sax was a pure extension of John Coltrane's spirit, still rings in their ears.

Growing up in the late '60s and early '70s, particularly in the South, necessarily meant encountering "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed," "Midnight Rider," "Statesboro Blues," and "Whipping Post." At the heart of this quintessentially American music is Howard Duane Allman, born on November 20, 1946 in Nashville, TN. Younger brother Gregg came along a year later, and in 1958 their mother Geraldine, recently widowed,

Contributors: *Bill Milkowski is author of Jaco: The Extraordinary and Tragic Life of Jaco Pastorius (Miller Freeman).*



"HIS TONE CUTS STRAIGHT THROUGH TO YOUR SOUL." —Warren Haynes

moved the two brothers to Daytona Beach, Florida. While on a visit to their grandmother's in Nashville during the summer of '59, the brothers saw their first rock 'n' roll show at the Nashville Auditorium.

In 1960, Duane bought his first Harley Davidson motorcycle while brother Gregg bought an acoustic guitar. It wasn't long before Duane would swap a bunch of motorcycle parts for his own first guitar and begin learning from local Daytona guitarist Jim Shepley, who was four years older than Duane and well schooled in the blues licks of Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker, and Lightnin' Hopkins. By 1961, while attending Sea Breeze High in

Daytona, the brothers were playing guitars in local bands at YMCA dances, trading off lead and rhythm functions on Chuck Berry tunes and hits by Hank Ballard and the Midnighters. In 1962, after forming the Escorts, Duane convinced younger brother Gregg to switch from guitar to Vox organ and become the band's lead singer. After Gregg graduated from high school in 1965 (Duane had dropped out after completing the ninth grade), the brothers formed the Allman Joys and went out on the road for the first time, performing blues classics like "Spoonful" and "Crossroads" as well as pop hits of the day like the Yardbirds' "Shapes Of Things."

The Allman Joys broke up in early 1967. (Some demo material that they'd recorded at Bradley's Barn in Nashville was eventually released on Buddy Killen's Dial label as *Early Allman*.) After relocating to Los Angeles, they regrouped as the Hour Glass and quickly released two records on Liberty—1967's *Hour Glass* and 1968's *Power Of Love*—that blended their Southern blues and R&B roots with the

prevailing psychedelia of the day. It was during this stint on the West Coast that Duane started to play slide. Specifically, Taj Mahal's recording of Blind Willie McTell's "Statesboro Blues," featuring Jesse Ed Davis on slide guitar and Ry Cooder on rhythm guitar, inspired Duane to pick up his first glass Coricidin bottle and slide across the frets.

After the Hour Glass broke up in late 1968, Gregg remained in Los Angeles while Duane returned to Florida, where he began jamming with bassist Berry Oakley and the band he was playing in at the time, the Second Coming. The regular guitarist in that band was Dickie Betts. It was on these informal jams that Duane

Michael Ochs

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and Dickie began exploring the distinctive twin leads that would become such an identifiable part of the Allman Brothers sound.

In November of 1968, while staying in Berry Oakley's Jacksonville pad, Duane was summoned by producer Rick Hall to come to Muscle Shoals, Alabama to participate in a Wilson Pickett session which resulted in a brilliant rendition of the Beatles' "Hey Jude." Duane so

impressed both Hall and Pickett that he was instantly invited to finish recording the rest of the album. It was Pickett who gave Duane the nickname "Skyman." As he put it, "He's always up, man. He's always happy-go-lucky, everything's beautiful, he's having a good time."

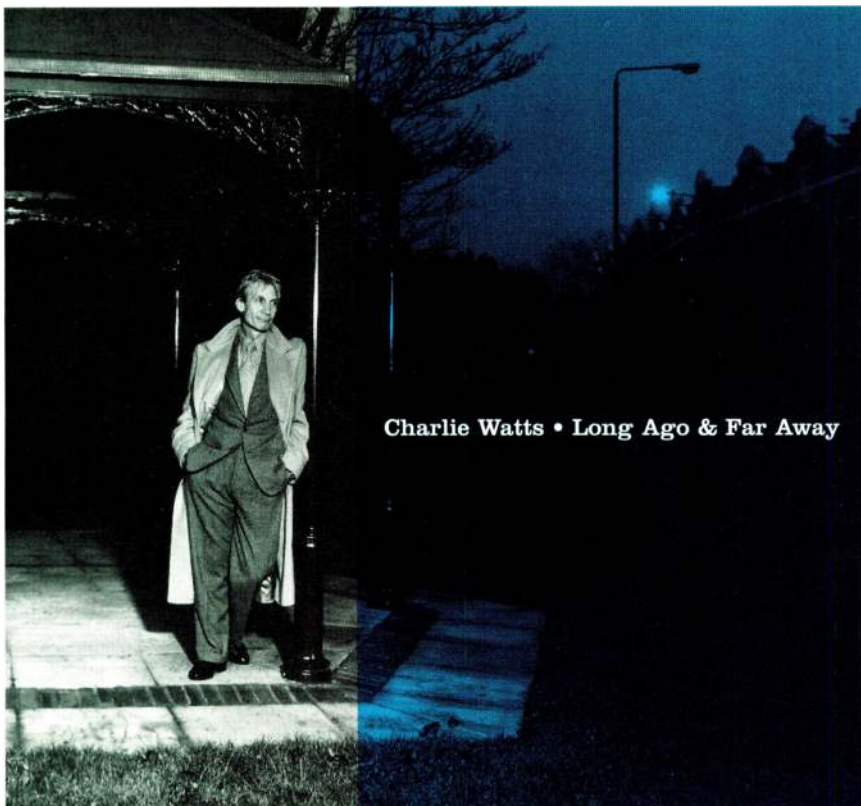
When word of Duane's searing blues prowess reached Jerry Wexler, producer and Atlantic Records VP, a string of session work was lined up for Duane. He

went on to make significant, soulful contributions between 1969 and late 1971 to a variety of rock, blues, and R&B sessions for Atlantic Records, including Aretha's *Soul 69*, King Curtis' *Instant Groove*, John Hammond's *Southern Fried*, Clarence Carter's *The Dynamic Clarence Carter*, Delaney & Bonnie's *To Bonnie From Delaney*, Boz Scaggs' self-titled debut, and half a dozen others. While some developing players at the time were wiped out by Duane's supercharged slide work with the Allman Brothers, others were more taken by the finesse he demonstrated on these Atlantic sessions.

"They haven't really used anybody since that time on a lot of different records playing slide guitar," says slide monster David Tronzo. "That was the era when they used players who had signature sounds as guests on other people's records. They don't really do that anymore. I can still remember the sound he got on Herbie Mann's *Push Push*—Les Paul goldtop on the front pickup, really purring through a Fender amp. It was a very different sound than the rawer tones he got playing Les Pauls with overdriven SG pickups through a Marshall amp, which was his standard setup with the Brothers."

In September of '69, the Allman Brothers went to New York to record their self-titled debut album. Duane makes typically searing slide statements on "Dreams," a modal precursor to "Whipping Post," and on the loose jamming vehicle "Don't Want You No More," a precursor to Betts' "Elizabeth Reed." A killer rendition of Muddy Waters' "Trouble No More" from that initial Allman Brothers outing stands as a prime example of Duane's powerful approach to slide guitar.

"To my ears," Tronzo says, "Duane sounded like he had so much he wanted to put through the instrument, but the slide only lets you put through a certain amount; it restricts you. So there's this force that comes across in his playing because he was really pushing it out. Whereas you get a guy like Tampa Red or Blind Willie Johnson or even Lowell George—for all the differences in their styles, they sound like they're taking



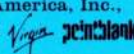
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If there is a cooler segue than the Allman Brothers' "Don't Want You No More" into "It's Not My Cross to Bear," I haven't heard it. This is the prototype that inspired Billy Gibbons to weld "Jesus Just Left Chicago" to "Waitin' For The Bus" a few years later.

The opening solo shown here is a masterpiece of soul, power, and grace. There are no wasted notes, no noodling—just raw emotion. With the exception of bar 7, Duane uses a blues/pentatonic variation: 1,2, flat 3, (3), 4, 5, 6, flat 7. You could break this solo up into a few different scales, but I imagine Duane just thought of it as "Blues in B." The notes that really change the mood are the flat 3/3 and the 6/flat 7.

Duane was a master of building tension and "aggressive" notes in the scale. By emphasizing the flat 3 and flat

ESSENTIAL DUANE: "IT'S NOT MY CROSS TO BEAR"

7 he creates an intense, dark mood. At the same time, he creates even more tension by bending "around" the actual notes. By bending slightly sharp (the D in bar 2) or slightly flat (the F# in bar 5), he plays around the scale much like a horn player or vocalist.

In bar 7, he bends up a minor 3rd to

A#, then quickly falls back to the G, implying the harmonic minor color as the IV chord changes from major to minor. This passage has a very vocal quality to it, like something B.B. King would do with his falsetto.

By bending all the way into the D# in bar 9, Duane releases all the tension created in the previous 8 bars. By prefacing this note with G# instead of G, he creates a sweeter-sounding passage.

Other trademarks of Duane's are the rakes (literally rake your pick/fingers across the adjacent strings) in bars 7 and 12, the sweet, perfectly controlled vibrato, and that amazing tone. This is as good as it gets.—**David Grissom**

Contributors: David Grissom is a guitar player who has worked with Joe Ely, John Mellencamp, Storyville, Robben Ford, Chris Isaak, Ringo Star, and John Mayall.

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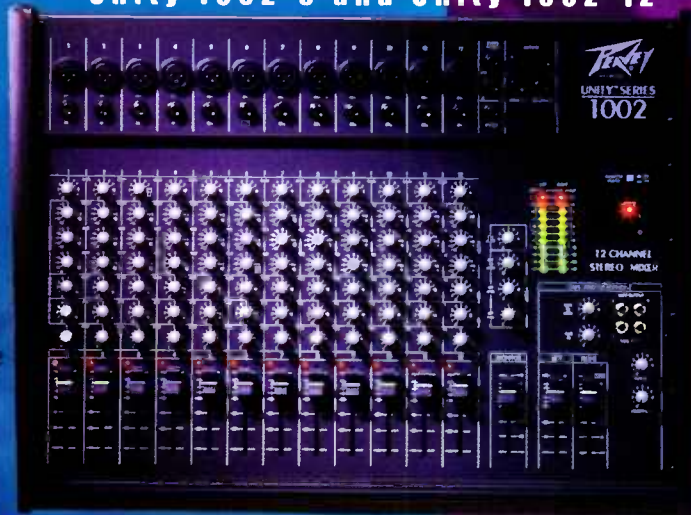
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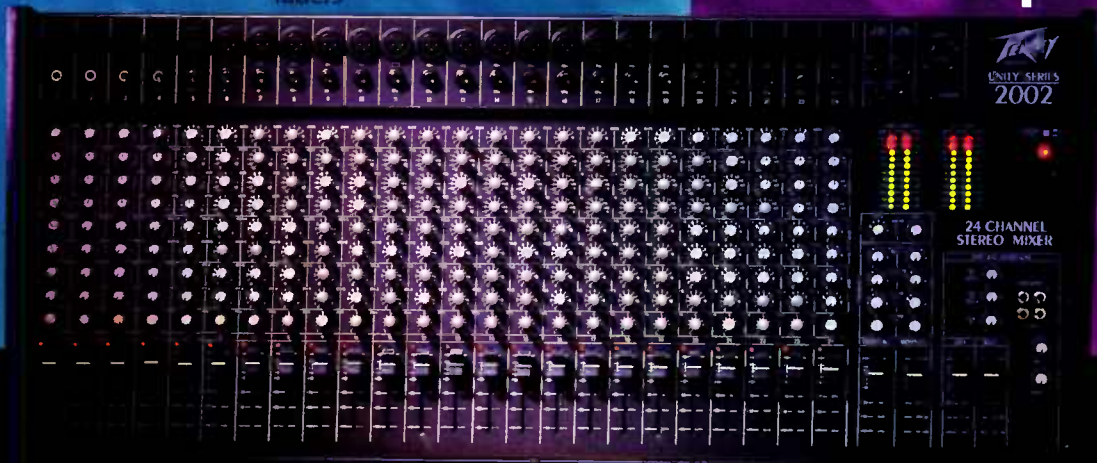
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their time, like they kind of know what phrases they're gonna play. It's sounds much more relaxed and laid-back. Duane, on the other hand, sounds like somebody who's hurtling through space."

Warren Haynes, resident slide guitarist in the current Allman Brothers lineup and leader of the audacious power trio Gov't Mule, concurs. "What grabbed me about Duane's playing was the whole picture—his tone, his touch, what he chose to play, the way he made it sound like a harmonica. All of that was just so vital, it cuts straight through to your soul."

Tom Dowd produced three Allman Brothers albums: *Idlewild South*, *At Fillmore East*, and *Eat A Peach*. Dowd once described *Fillmore* as "the first rock-jazz album," due to the considerable amount of stretching and daring improvisation done by guitarists Duane and Dickie in that live setting. Dowd also produced another rock milestone, *Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs* by Derek and the Dominoes. That 1970 classic paired Duane with the reigning guitar god of the day, Eric Clapton. Duane's Gibson Les Paul was quite distinctive from Eric's brighter, thinner-sounding Fender Stratocaster, and his slide playing added a splash of color on

tunes like "Anyday," "Why Does Love Got To Be So Sad," and the epic "Layla."

Duane's swan song with the Brothers was *Eat A Peach*, only half-finished at the time of his death. In a two-year period from late '69 to the fall of '71, the Allman Brothers had played 500 dates across the country, bringing their sound to the multitudes and inducing more than a few aspiring guitarists to take up the bottleneck.

"Just from listening to Duane on record, I knew he played with his fingers," recalls Nashville sessioneer Lee Roy Parnell. "It's the skin, you know? If you have a pick in your right hand and glass or metal in your left hand, it totally isolates you from the instrument. So I took a tip from Duane and threw away my pick early on. Plus, there's this natural dampening effect that occurs when you use fingers that you don't have when you've got a pick. And Duane was really who I learned that from."

Warren Haynes is quick to point out another important aspect of playing with fingers as opposed to using a pick. "Duane used the fingers that he wasn't using to mute out the other strings so you didn't hear all the unwanted noise. To me, playing that kind of slide guitar, that's a necessity. You can't sit with a flat pick and play that kind of stuff without it

sounding like shit."

But Duane Allman never sounded less than inspired, whether in the studio, before throngs of cheering fans, or just casually sitting around his hotel room with a dobro or acoustic guitar in hand. As Atlantic Records executive Jerry Wexler once said, "Some of Duane's best playing was on my front porch with Delaney Bramlett."

Duane's influence was towering. He was one of those incredibly forceful, magnetic players whose voice on his instrument was so strong that it threatened to overpower and smother an aspiring player's own voice. As Lee Roy Parnell recalls, "I had to put the Allman Brothers' records away when I was about 25 years old. I put 'em under the bed and didn't listen to 'em consciously again for another 10 years because I had to find my own voice. As long as I was listening to Dickie and Duane, all I wanted to do was emulate them."

Duane lived hard and played hard, always searching for that magical moment when the band became a vehicle for something greater than the sum of its parts. "That was his thing," says Parnell. "When the band was right he'd walk off the stage and say, 'We were hittin' the note.' That's what he lived for. He was a musician with a capital M, a vagabond

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man with a vagabond heart and a love for getting it right.”

“He was soulful like a motherfucker,” says Tronzo. “But it was white soul. I mean, he didn’t try to *not* be white, you know? He just was who he was. He was truly devoted to great, soulful guitar playing.”

And to hittin’ the note.

WARREN HAYNES

Slide guitarist, current member of the

Allman Brothers band and leader of the power trio Gov’t Mule.

The weird thing about me joining the Brothers was, I didn’t want to all of a sudden have to sound more like Duane. To listen to me play outside the Allman Brothers, you can hear Duane’s influence, but mixed in with a hundred other guitar players. It does come out more strongly in my slide playing, because there have been hundreds of great guitar players but only a handful of really

great slide players, so your slide influences are a lot more obvious. But I was a little concerned that I would have to sound more like Duane to be in the band and it would confuse people even more as to what I really sounded like. So it was good for me that as soon as I joined the band, they were like, ‘We want you to play like you!’ Now every night I make the decision on how much of Duane’s influence to insert into the music. And I would be crazy to just go against the grain and not let it show through, because he was such a huge part of that band sound.”

LEE ROY PARNELL

Slide guitar virtuoso, top country session-man in Nashville and Arista recording artist.

If we want to pinpoint Duane’s playing, you’d have to say he plays more like Little Walter plays harp than like Elmore James plays slide. Listen to ‘One Way Out’ [from *Eat A Peach*]. That’s dead-on Little Walter. Little Walter was voodoo, man, and Duane knew it.

“A common misconception among slide players is that Duane played on the bass pickup, but he rarely ever did. He played on the treble pickup, turned his amp up and backed off the treble knob on his guitar. That’s where you’re gonna get all that sustain and tone. And Duane could sting you with that setup. Playing on the bass pickup doesn’t have the same bite; it rounds off the note. There are times, like on ‘Dreams,’ that he’s probably playing on the bass pickup. But ‘Statesboro Blues,’ ‘Done Somebody Wrong’ and all of *At Fillmore East*, that’s all treble pickup.”

DAVE TRONZO

Slide guitarist, former member of the Lounge Lizards and the John Hiatt band, currently a member of Spanish Fly and leader of the Tronzo Trio.

As much as I loved and was affected by Jeff Beck or Jimi Hendrix, I didn’t really relate to them personally. I mean, I’m not gonna look at a Hendrix record and go, ‘I’m gonna be that!’ First of all he’s black, second of all the clothes, third of all the drugs, the crazy shit. But Duane Allman struck me like he was a whiskey-drinking cracker, and I could definitely relate to that. I could relate



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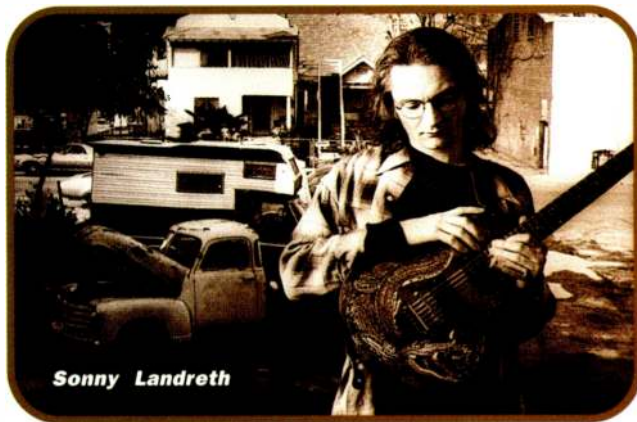
to the way he dressed—it was just '60s hippie white guy. I could relate to the way he looked, the way he sounded, just the whole idea of it. There was a real strong connection for me there. And it just seemed like before I knew it, he was gone.

“Man, when I heard about his death, that shit killed me! I felt like I lost a brother. I was devastated. I remember the night it happened I went to this dance. I had been really crazy about this girl. . . I mean, I’m probably like 13 years old and I was so sad the day I heard this news I couldn’t even deal with the girl. I was at the dance but I couldn’t deal with anybody there. I mean, it was profound. I’ve only felt that a few times in my life. At the time I had no way to express it to anybody, but I remember that the feeling I was left with really carried me for a long time. After I heard that Duane had died I said to myself, ‘I’m going to become a great slide player. I’m going to do this as best as I can do it.’ It really was like a devotional thing. I have a feeling that’s how *he* was, just from things that I heard. It’s obvious. You can hear it in his sound.”

SONNY LANDRETH

Slide guitarist, former member of the Clifton Chenier and John Hiatt bands, currently a Liberty recording artist.

I remember at the time that *Layla* came out my friends and I saw that picture of Duane on the inside with the fire-bird peacock shirt and we all said, ‘Man, what a cool shirt!’ Fast forward all these years later: A friend of mine who used to be really close to the Allmans ended up with the shirt. So she gave me a part of it, and I’ve kept it. It’s like my mojo. And every time I look at this shirt I



reflect back to that night I saw him play in Lafayette. It reminds me of the magic that inspired me and compelled me to do what I’m doing now. We took a snapshot of that shirt for my first CD, *Outward Bound*. That is what’s on the cover.”

ARLEN ROTH

Guitarist, author of the 1974 best-seller Slide Guitar (Oak Publications) and founder of the instructional video company Hot Licks.

When I was doing the soundtrack to the movie *Crossroads* with Ry Cooder, we always had that argument about big glass slides versus what I like, which is brass slides. But Duane used those Coricidin bottles. It had a certain kind of tone, and also those bottles didn’t have a heck of a lot of sustain to them. So he relied a lot on volume. If you notice, he’s always playing at break-neck volume with a quick decay to the note. That’s because he was using glass and not very good quality glass.

“He also played flat a lot. Some of it I think was intentional. For slide, the pitch is up to you because you’re not pressing on the fret. Duane had a tendency to kind of whip that slide, and because he was using something that was bigger than his finger, he was sometimes a little flat.

“Any proper slide guitar should be played in open tuning. Duane would use an open G tuning. You can replicate the kind of things Duane did in E tuning but in G tuning you can get more brightness. Your same licks are basically moved one string higher, so you’re playing on the G string what you were playing on the D string, which gives more of a bite to it. When I heard Duane play I immediately zeroed in on the fact that it was



either G tuning or straight tuning. Normal tuning is very close to G tuning because you have that open G chord, the open D, G and B strings. So you get a lot of the same licks in both styles.”

RONNIE EARL

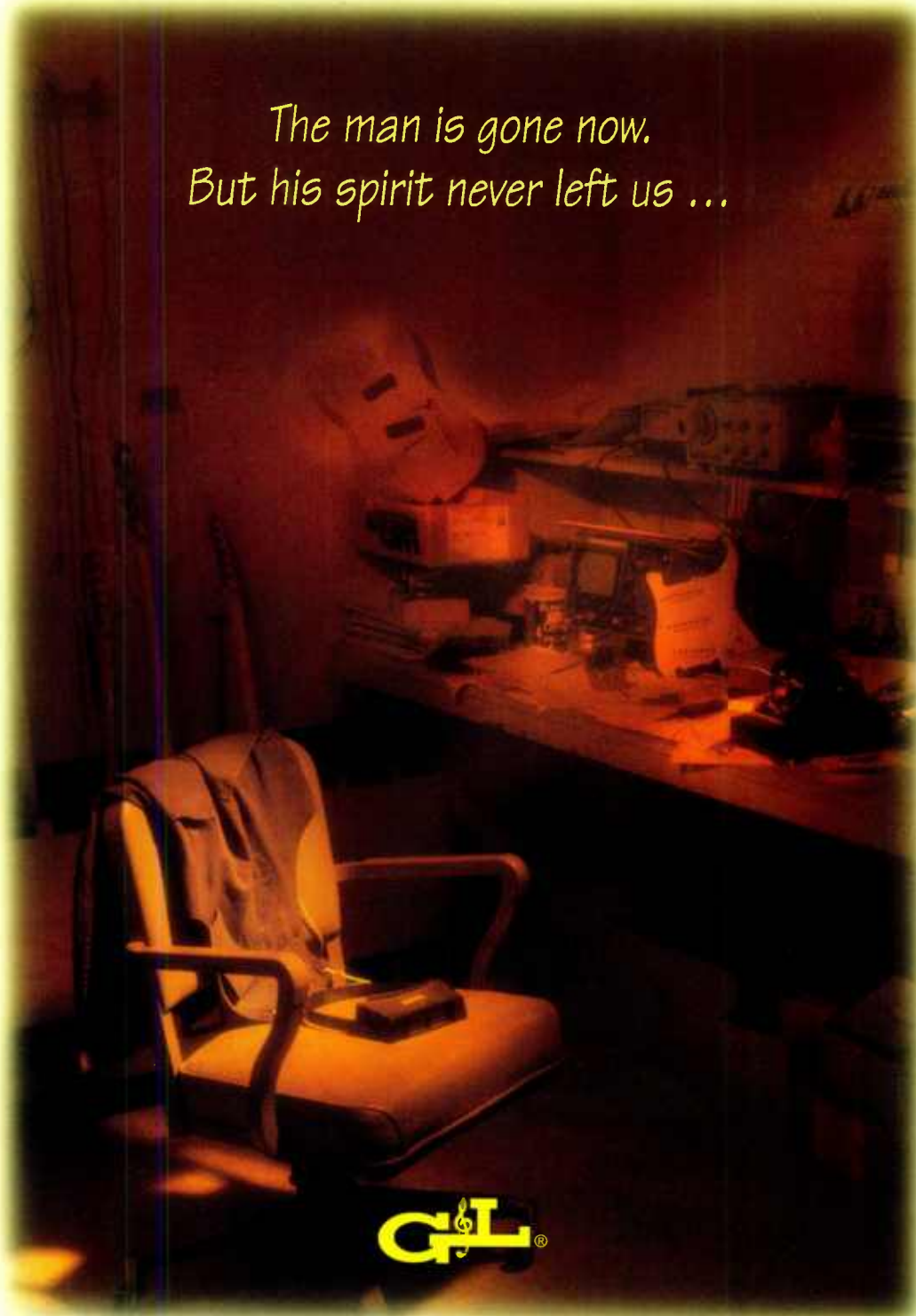
Blues guitar virtuoso, formerly a member of Roomful Of Blues, currently a Bullseye Blues recording artist.

I never got to see Duane, but he remains one of my favorites. His tune ‘Little Martha’ is probably my favorite song in the world—that pretty little two-minute song at the end of *Eat A Peach*.

“Duane’s playing just makes me really happy. I’m a Yankee but I can appreciate the Southernness of it. His slide guitar on ‘Statesboro Blues’ or even on the first album. . . it kind of shook me up. And he invented that. I know he went to see Jesse Ed Davis and that the first Taj Mahal album influenced him, but he came up with his own thing. Plus, his non-slide playing is great.

“You know, the other night I sat in with the Allman Brothers in Memphis, and I was standing in Duane’s spot, next to his brother. And I was getting the chills. And it’s funny because some people have said to me, ‘I didn’t know you were interested in the Allman Brothers.’ But really, I was into them before I was introduced to Magic Sam or Earl Hooker. Then I had to go on my path and learn the blues from the old guys but all the while still enjoying the Allman Brothers blues—just a different color of the rainbow, right? Like Hendrix, Santana, Duane Allman. . . different colors of the rainbow. All very beautiful.”

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by Matt Resnicoff

Why Albert King Hated Jimi Hendrix & Other revelations:

Vernon Reid

photos by
Michael Halsband

"WE GOT THE CURE FOR CAN-
cer right here," Junior Brown shouts as
he and his new friend Vernon Reid
plink away on unamplified electric gui-
tars. They've discovered a common
sweet spot in their souls—a radio is
blaring B.B. King as they both play
along, attempting to out-grimace one
another. "Yeah, *that's* it," Vernon nods
as Junior gets down quietly. "We're
happening," Junior laughs, "but we're
the only ones who know!"

Ah yes, the private bravado of the
blues. It's so private right now that
Junior won't even plug in, even when
someone brings out an amp. He's not
timid, just courteously withdrawn;
"Each thing in its time," his manner

Meets Junior Brown

seems to say. Junior is every bit the con- tender to cast the new long shadow in country music—"country" being an indicator for *this* country, which leaves room for blues and rock—and his recordings like *Guit With It*, *Junior High* and the raging new trucker's tone poem *Semi-Crazy* (MCG/Curb) find him writing compassionately about indig- ence and homelessness and waxing dis- armingly droll about whatever's left. Junior is pulling together not just lots of

styles of American music, but the means to the music as well: His Guit-Steel is a half-Telecaster, half-steel guitar that he designed just to have all those sounds at hand simultaneously. Through it, his music takes on the edge of hard blues and the sighing whine of gratitude for a reformed life, of happily distant memo- ries of hard living.

Vernon's *Mistaken Identity* (Epic), the first recording under his name alone, comes after a protracted period of dread

over the creative demise of his longtime band Living Colour. Since the break- up, Reid has been performing around Manhattan with Masque, an intense col- lective that wound up at the core of a solo album filled with emotional and spiritual high points—no doubt coaxed by co-producer Teo Macero, the colos- us of collage behind Miles Davis' great records—and notable as much for its articulation of Reid's many cultural interests as for the funky, slinky, humor- ously organic way those interests are addressed. And although in Junior's presence he claims to be a slouch at steel guitar (an instrument he played with jazz drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson), Vernon the guitar player hits it hard all over *Mistaken Identity*, offering some of his most impressive improvising yet.

The day they met, Vernon watched Junior get out of his car and noticed how his handlers took no less care with a tiny road case than with the huge trunk con- taining his precious Guit-Steel. The smaller hardshell container sat on the couch next to Vernon all morning; it contained Junior's cowboy hat, which Junior felt compelled to bring along, but not to wear. When it came time to be photographed, amid swinging dread- locks, out it came—the one idiomatic concession between them.

Vernon: I caught a set of yours in Austin at the...

Junior: Continental Club? That's where I play when I'm there.

Vernon: Yeah, it was wonderful.

Junior: Oh, thanks. I missed you at the Jimi Hendrix thing in Seattle. I heard you were there, but I had to leave.

Vernon: Yeah, it was so funny, so weird and disorganized.

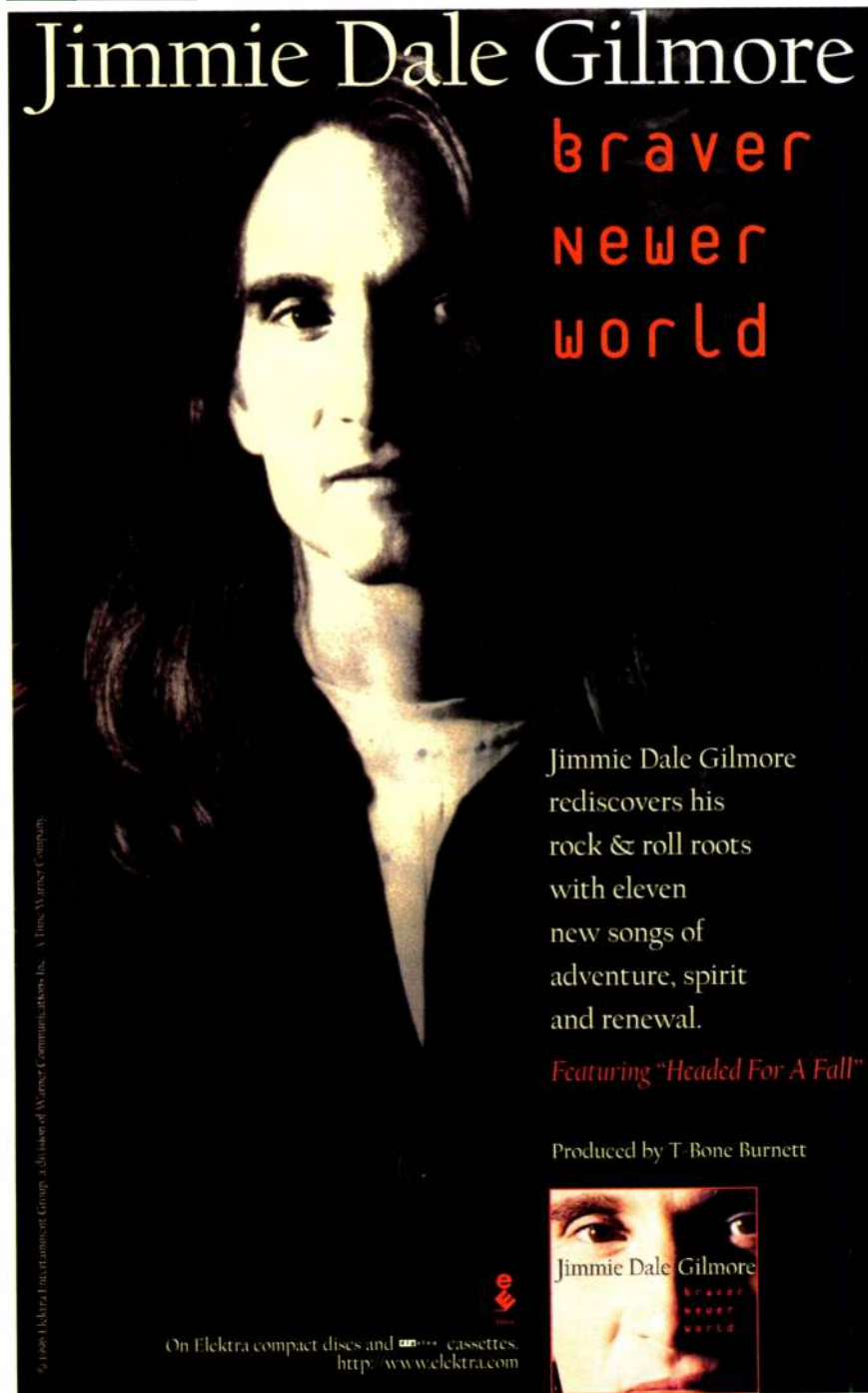
Junior: Too many people trying to show off.

Vernon: My tech told me that there were a bunch of guys behind their amps that all had cans of lighter fluid.

Junior: They all wanted to light up! "Me next!" [laughs] Yeah, I left before all that.

Vernon: [Pearl Jam's] Mike McCready burned his guitar. It got a little silly.

Junior: Been done, been done. What time

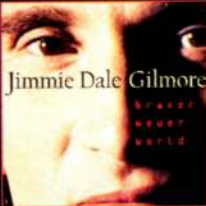


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did you play up there, late?

Vernon: Yeah, I sang "Crosstown Traffic" middle of the show. At that point the show was kinda out of control.

Junior: It didn't start off like that [laughs]. They got Al Hendrix up there in this big crown and put this robe on him, and it just wasn't right. It was like, "Oh, you're our king because you were the King's dad," and it was undignified.

Were they celebrating that he finally won back the rights to his son's material?

Vernon: That was great.

Junior: I don't think that's what they meant by that.

Vernon: I was really happy for the family, but it's funny; Hendrix just pulls out the best and the worst in people. And there's a thing that happens with guitar players where they're like "I'm the next," it's like the Hendrix Sweepstakes. [laughter] I was never interested in that. The thing Hendrix taught me is, be yourself. There's never gonna be another Hendrix. Those conditions don't exist.

Junior: They do the same thing with Elvis. Way out of control.

Vernon: But what Elvis did was vital and dangerous and then...there are videos of the last concerts he did, and it's terrifying. It's like, they hand him the guitar and he kinda strums in front of the guitar, not even playing it, and they hand him roses and he goes to the lip of the stage and he hands out roses. It's like a trained dancing bear—frightening.

I wonder what Hendrix would be up to in today's music, or if it would be substantially different because of his presence.

Vernon: I'd like to think the best. The fact is he was bored near the end. He just wanted to be free. He was in R&B bands all his life, so he just got his little four or eight bars. Little Richard kicked him out of a band because he was too flash, and all of that that was in him was bottled up. When he finally got free, he didn't let anything contain his imagination, and that's the genius of it. There are certainly other players with the potential, but the question is, "Would they have allowed themselves to just go wherever?" His music is the only music that doesn't sound dated, the feelings, the emotions...

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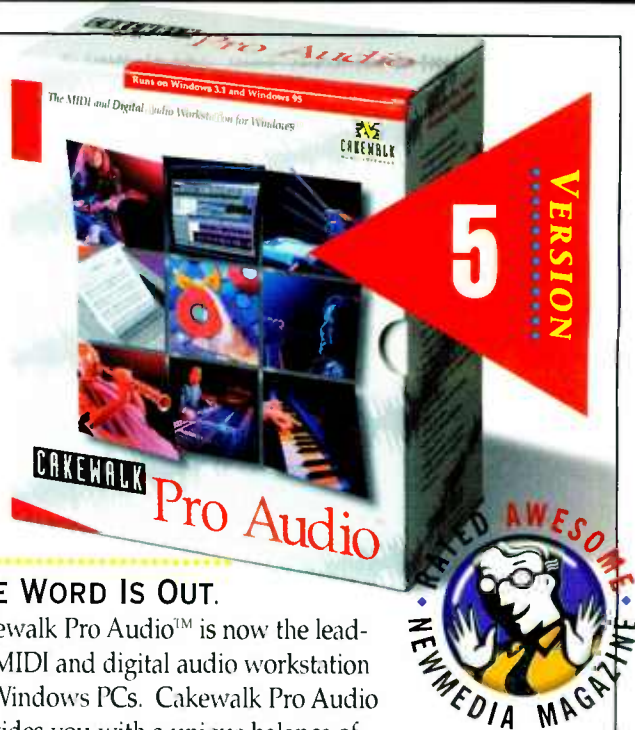
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Junior: Right. Even the recording techniques, totally up to date. You sit down and listen to it and go, "Wow, that could be 24-track," but it's not. It's *four*.

Vernon: But we'll never know. Like, Clapton *did* live, and he went different places. Jeff Beck didn't die; he has done pretty interesting, great things too.

Junior: Yeah, but none of them was ever as good as Jimi, so we don't know. They were all behind him. I hope I'm not making anybody mad, but that's just

how I look at it. He's just a better player, a better writer. Better singer. *Better*. So there's no tellin' what he'd be doin' now, if anything. I think he'd be like all or nothing. I think he'd be totally involved or he'd be a hermit and give up music. That's how he was.

You met Hendrix.

Junior: I just met him one time at a concert as a fan, in the backstage area. That was his last tour. He wasn't happy, I could tell, but he was real nice to me, real down

to earth. Albuquerque. Right before he died.

Vernon: You played a Hendrix song during your set. Do you do "Foxey Lady" or "Purple Haze"?

Junior: I mighta done something out of it, a lick. I do a lot of them in "Sugarfoot Rag."

Vernon: I gotta tell you, "My Wife Thinks You're Dead" has gotta be the best title. I love that.

Junior: Thank you. I had the title before I wrote the song, thought it was really funny.

Vernon: And the story's crazy: "Look here now, I done gone down the straight and narrow path, don't you come showin' up now. Good to see you honey, but..."

Junior: "...leave. Leave *now*. Leave a few minutes ago." [laughter]

Vernon: Did you start playing both instruments at the same time, or did you play the steel a bit later?

Junior: No, guitar first.

Vernon: So you had the doubleneck built. Do you just have one?

Junior: I got two now. I liked both things and I didn't want to have to unplug one and plug into the other one and all that.

Vernon: I used to play very bad lap steel. I have a Fender, and I would stand it in front of me, and I'd have to reach over...

Junior: That's what I did. You're just banging one into the other.

Vernon: And it starts to move around and your leg starts gettin' wobbly.

Junior: Yeah, so I said, Why do this? Make it one. And then of course, it makes it easier to sing while all that's going on.

You really seem to be integrating your use of the two instruments.

Junior: Yeah, in the studio you can put a steel wherever you want it, guitar wherever you want it. It's onstage I was a victim, play the whole song on one or the other. Now I can switch.

Vernon: So where do you keep the bar?

Junior: In a felt-lined hole on top. The felt's kind of worn out but it still holds it in there. [laughs]

Vernon: It's pretty seamless, you moving from one to the other.

Junior: Sometimes when you're in a hurry you have to grab an open string, and hopefully that string'll be one you want [laughs] depending on the song, or how

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much space you have.

Vernon: No, you push it; you do things that go...

Junior: ...too far. [laughs]

Vernon: No, it's great, because a lot of guitar players don't risk anything, and when you're doing those muted triplets on the steel and the tempo's up and you're *right up on it*, it's like, "Wow."

Junior: I appreciate that, thanks.

Growing up, did either of you envision what actually became of you in terms of the status of your craft, and how it's been accepted?

Vernon: Well, I knew I wouldn't be able to help being *me*. Before I played I had different ideas from my peer group; I listened to a wider range of music. It was like knowing I would go to that place they weren't gonna go. The big battle was accepting that. When players influenced me, it was like, "This person sounds like himself," not, "How can I sound like this person?" But it comes at a cost. You're not always the most popular kid in class. [Junior laughs] Junior knows what I'm talking about.

Junior: Yeah, it just all gets you there eventually. Like Vernon said, the more of yourself you put in, the better, the more you can cut the umbilical cord and use those influences to develop your own thing and not lean on them. To get there, though, you have to imitate a little bit. You still call on those things but you try to do it in your own way, and the more you can do that, the more you grow.

Your tone is more aggressive than most country players like Albert Lee or Ray Flacke, and your sensibility's more twisted. What did you woodsbed?

Junior: Everything. I get bored easy, so I just dart around to different styles. I went to Hawaii and played Hawaiian for a while. Playing Hawaiian and playing on the Grand Ole Opry are completely different, but yet, you can connect 'em somehow if it's all part of your musical experience, which in my case it is. That and the jazz and blues, everything I'm interested in.

So you've both got the islands in your blood—Vernon's got the Caribbean.

Vernon: Yeah, my parents are from Montserrat, so I grew up with reggae, calypso, James Brown, Herman's Hermits. I

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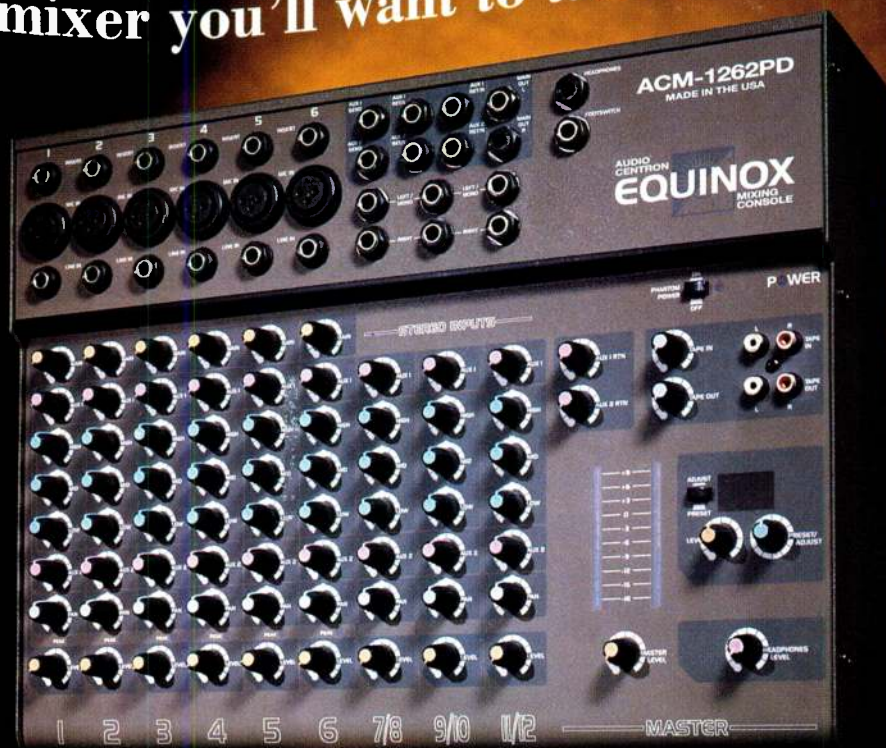
The guitar Vernon's holding in the pictures is a MIDI controller built by Harvey Starr, but his techie interests are usually in the service of true vintage tone. "The newest advance is computer models of amps and instruments, like the Roland VG-8. They're working on a technology that can emulate certain-era tones." There's a bit of VG-8 on his new *Mistaken Identity*, but most of the guitars went through tube amps like a Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier, a Blue Angel or a Matchless. His Hamer guitars use EMG or Tom Anderson pickups and D'Addario strings, .011 through .059. "I had a guitar that would always go out of tune and the guy setting it up said, 'Heavier strings will make it stay in tune, and it'll sound better because there will be more metal moving over the polepieces.' Now it's hard for me to play lights. I have a Steinberger and they don't make Steinberger strings in .011s, so the lightest I ever go is .010."

remember hearing "Black Dog."

Junior: [laughs] All right. Where'd you grow up?

Vernon: Brooklyn. Crown Heights, and *all dem kinda ting, man*. And then also B.B. King—it's funny, on *Semi-Crazy* there's

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one solo you take on Telecaster where I hear this Albert Collins thing, but it's not a Collins lick, it's this *feeling* that you just kind of move through.

Junior: All right. *[laughs]*

Vernon: 'Cause Albert's got that cold-hearted phrasing. What song is that, with the overdrive?

"*I Hung it Up*"?

Vernon: Yeah, that's it. That's cool.

Junior: That one didn't quite come out the way I wanted it to. I do that better live

than in the studio for some reason.

Vernon: My favorite song is "Parole Board."

Junior: *[laughs loudly]* Oooh, you talkin' some serious cryin'-in-the-beer stuff there, I'm tellin' you.

Vernon: I got a song on my record called "Saint Cobain." Kurt Cobain's suicide shook me because I was in this thing where I was wondering what I was gonna do with Living Colour. It made me unhappy just to *think* about the

band; everywhere I turned in my heart there was no way to work it out, and the morning Kurt did that I was like, uh-oh *[chuckles]*, like you gotta do something definitive to change the situation. "Parole Board" is like facing up to that feeling. I've never been suicidal, but to go to that place... Americans for the most part don't want to be depressed, they wanna act like that's not a factor; when you ask them how they're doin' they say, "Well, I'm alright."

Junior: Yeah.

Vernon: And really, people that ask don't want to hear the real answer. There's a tradition in country and western, and certainly in blues too, like "Hellhound on My Trail," that just turns around and looks at that.

But it's also notable how it's laced in Junior's music with wry irony. Maybe someone like Robert Johnson is too stark or devastating for most listeners.

Vernon: Well, the humor makes it even deeper, because there is something absurd about this life—we don't have it long.

Junior: There's humor in the blues, too. That's why the back and forth between being depressed and being funny—that's what country is in a lot of ways. All the emotions.

Vernon: I dug that. Because it wasn't this macho thing. It's like, you see the parole board once a year, *[laughter]* just like Christmas.

Junior: That's all you got! Yeah, that's sad. *Where does that song come from?*

Junior: Just puttin' myself in the place of a guy who had given up like that, that's all. Not that I ever spent any time in jail. One night was enough, *[laughs]* taught me. When I was a kid I got thrown in for drinking or something—never wanted to be there again.

Vernon: I hear when you hear that door close...

Junior: That was a bad feeling I'll never forget. "I don't need to get out right now, but I may soon." You know? "And if I *do* need to get out, I won't be *able* to."

Do you surround yourself with people who inspire you to bring these things into your writing, or do you remember a glimmer of something that happened to

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you and turn it into a song sketch?

Junior: That's more like it. I get the title first a lot of times. The title suggests a story and I'll go with that.

Vernon: I have a title I think can be cool. I don't know what it's gonna be: "God Doesn't Play Dice With the Cosmos But He Plays a Mean Game of Pool."

So musical ideas lie around and then when a title comes you start working it together?

Junior: Yeah. It can go the other way. You can come at it from an instrumental, jamming standpoint and then you write the lyrics around that, so it depends on the song. But there's a clash goin' on. The *other* half of me wants to just jam and then write the lyrics around that, so it's one or the other.

Vernon: Like, my record's mainly pushed by instrumental melodies, and a lot of times I'd have to put the song together and live with it, and then go, "What is this about?"

Is the steel a completely different ball of wax for you now?

Junior: Well, it is and it isn't. It used to be. You talk to a lot of guitar players that play steel, or steel players who play lead guitar, they'll tell you the same thing: You play one all night and the next day you can't play the other because you're out of practice. Or if you play one *half* a night, you can't play the other half on the other one very easily. But since I developed that instrument where I'm playing it on every song, switch back and forth, it's become one thing in my mind.

Vernon: Do you have a volume pedal for your swells?

Junior: Yeah, the pedal's basically to keep it one volume, like if I need a little extra zoot I'll have it, but mostly to keep it steady, because that's how steel is—it dies out and then as it decays you have to bring it back to give it more volume. That's why they use it, whereas the guitar is more percussive, and sustain is not the main thing unless you're using it with the amp.

Vernon: Is the steel in standard tuning?

Junior: Pretty much. It's a C13, and I got the bottom string a little different. It would be [low to high] Bb, C, E, G, C, and a G on top. I may have missed one,

but that's basically it.

Is it tough to play well when you're touring hard and don't get enough rest?

Vernon: You work it out. The way we used to tour, we used to get there early enough to do the soundcheck. It's more an emotional thing, because every day is Saturday night on a tour. I've never got onstage and was out of it; something just happens. Playing with Living Colour, everybody's so up, that would wake you up.

Junior: Reminds me of this fiddle player I know, Danny Levin. We had just come back from Europe, where you're completely messed up from the plane, your body clock don't know what time it is, you've jetlagged three or four times in the last three or four days, completely exhausted. Then this guy got up and did an *Austin City Limits* show with Joe Maphis. He says, "C'mon, let's go over there," and I'm sayin', "Are you gonna be able to *do* this? What are you runnin' on?" and he says, "I'm just runnin' on adrenaline or somethin'." He knew he had to do it, he psyched himself up and went and played great, and the guy hadn't slept in days and neither had I, so I knew how tired he was. He wasn't on drugs or anything. Every time I feel I can't play, I go back to that feeling, making yourself excited about it. If you can't look forward to it, it's much harder to do when you haven't had sleep or food. Out on the road, things go wrong. It's the desire to do it, that's all.

Vernon: Sleep deprivation is wild; you start thinking weird stuff, like "Yeah, I'm gonna write a song, run around the block, fix the carburetor." The times I've been awake for 24 hours I start thinking wild things, and it's clearly not within my grasp to do them, but it's hubris: "I don't *need* sleep!"

You tape Letterman later, then do a show tonight.

Junior: Oh, yeah. It's a full day for me.

So is it everything you want or thought it to be?

Junior: Yeah. Trying to keep the writing going as long as I can. Playing's no problem, singing every night, but you never know what you're gonna write or if you're gonna write, [laughs] you either get songs or you don't. A lot of these

guys do it by formula, but I don't. There's nothing *wrong* with that because it gets a lot of product out, but I haven't been writing songs that long. Started in the '70s, but the early '80s is when I got serious about it. Hopefully I'll write more good ones, but there's no guarantee.

Vernon: You can discipline yourself to do it, but you can't make it happen, because if someone could, they'd do it all the time.

Junior: There's no controlling songwriting; you take what you get from the Lord.

Funny, because most musicians feel that composition is the realm of control and improvising is a crapshoot every time out.

Junior: Oh, it is, but you can *control* it better; you can set out, plan it and follow it through. You can't plan a song.

Vernon: It's interesting—I find the whole thing is up for grabs. There's certain things you can control in terms of guitar playing, but a lot of times I find that the desire to do a thing is the very thing that stands in the way of doing it; like, I really want to go out and blow everybody's

"Hawaiï and the Grand ole Opry are completely different, but you can connect 'em somehow."

mind.

Junior: Yeah, and then you get...I get nervous. You try too hard.

Vernon: And then you're just not doing it. I was with a certain musician playing a multi-night stand, and one night, the muse showed up and everything he did was amazing and the audience was on their feet. The next night the same song came up and he started to play, and I *felt* him actually trying to make that happen, wanting the people to...and it didn't



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work at all, because last night was last night, and it's hard to accept that tonight could be better, the same or not happen at all; even if it's the same people, *they're different*. That's it, the degree to which letting go of control is the way to where you want to go.

Are you both Albert King fans? I think he's the high holy god, and I bear a lot of him in the music, especially Junior's.

Junior: I like Albert the best.

"Guit Steel Blues"? That's got ornery Albert shit all over it.

Vernon: There are Albert King stories that'll curl your hair!

Junior: [chuckles] People didn't like him much; that's why they didn't make a big deal out of it when he died, he made so many people mad, you know? I never met him. When I got the *Live Wire/Blues Power* album, live at the Fillmore or whatever, that thing knocked me right down, man. I said, "This is it right here." And then I started seeing where Jimi had gotten most of what he does—not all of it, *most* of it. I made that connection and then 15 years later, here comes Stevie Ray Vaughan getting mileage out of it, but I had been aware of it way before most people. One string—what he could do with one B string, just *all* the way up. One string.

Vernon: Yeah. He *hated* Hendrix too.

Junior: He did? [laughs loudly]

Vernon: You think I'm joking. Albert did not like him: "That ain't no blues. I don't know what that boy *thinks* he's doing." Man, there's a story I heard from a trumpet player that worked with Albert. Now, Albert was famous for his pipe. The other thing Albert used to carry was a pearl-handle .45. [Junior laughs] Mean, killin' machine. Apparently, Albert would just pay cats when he felt like. You didn't have a regular pay schedule, and if you pissed him off, you'd go for a couple of weeks and not see any pay. So Albert didn't pay this one guy for three weeks, so the cat's gettin' hot, you know, and every night he's doin' the set, not saying nothing and he knows the other cats are gettin' paid. So this cat decides he's gonna go toe-to-toe with Albert King, [Junior laughs] so he walks up to him and says, "You son of a gun"—I'm paraphrasing—"Where's my money?"

And the cat says, "You wanna know about your money, huh?" Now, Albert has hands the size of a ham. So he says, "I got your money right here," and he *slaps* him and shoots his gun off at the same time with the other hand. The guy thought he was shot. [Junior cracks up] So the cat fell on the ground and curled up in a ball and he's cryin', feelin' himself because he knows he's dead for sure, right? And Albert said, "Don't you ever...I'll pay you when it's time."

Junior: Ooooooooooooo!

Vernon: And everybody jumped because everybody thought the cat had shot him. Basically, there was a hole in the ceiling. *I hear Junior does that to his band.*

Junior: There you go!

Vernon: These cats are so rough, in a way, a lot of the greats of the blues, jazz, country/western music...

Junior: ...they came up out of the rough world, the rough times.

"The desire to do a thing is the very thing that stands in the way of doing it."

Vernon: But in their *music*, you hear all...it's almost like getting in touch with the feminine side. Their sensitivity showed up in the fact that the cats became *musicians*, you know?

Did either of you ever think twice about becoming a musician?

Junior: I didn't. I just always wanted to play and sing.

Vernon: Do you remember your first concert?

Junior: My dad took me to a couple of classical things when I was a little kid. I saw Duke Ellington. I didn't go to many concerts.

Vernon: I saw Parliament/Funkadelic at the Garden. Rare Earth, War and Parlia-

ment. Cats wearing diapers. *Cosmic Slop* was out, '73, '74.

When I saw them do Funketelechy, I was the only white guy in the whole Garden.

Vernon: Really? Well, that's the history of rock and roll, like all those rock and roll bands that were never considered as such—War, Mandrill, Automatic Man, Edward Birdsong, Mother's Finest, the Isleys. All those bands were, say, rock and soul bands. But because it wasn't written about...I mean, there was radio for it at that time, but for the most part it wasn't critically assessed, it *still* hasn't been...

I imagine these bands didn't play around where Junior grew up.

Junior: I grew up all over, so I was exposed to a lot of different things.

Vernon: Did you grow up an army kid?

Junior: No, my dad just changed jobs a few times and moved around. He liked classical music; he played piano.

Was he encouraging?

Junior: Yeah, in a way. In another way he wasn't. He didn't like the electric guitar. When I was a kid, there weren't that many electric guitars around, and that made it harder to borrow stuff. Then when I finally did buy my own, it was such a thrill just to *own* something like that, it was forbidden. It was more of a thrill. Because I knew there wasn't nothing wrong with it.

What was it?

Junior: The first one I ever got? I think I had a J-45 with a pickup stuck on. I got a Danelectro Silvertone before that.

I wonder why there are many white bluesmen but no black country artists.

Junior: Gatemouth Brown. He played country guitar.

Some, but he was more of a blues-jazz guy.

Junior: Yeah, but he loves country music. He's played a lot of it.

Vernon: My favorite was Hank Williams. There was a period in the '70s when my father was totally into country and western because he spent a bunch of time in Oklahoma. That's where they train air-traffic controllers. I also used to like Ray Benson, Asleep at the Wheel.

Didn't you play with them?

Junior: No, I just filled in a few times for

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another steel player. In Austin I did side-man stuff, you're talking like 25 years, on both steel and guitar, depending on what was needed. Just night after night, band after band, club after club, state after state, after a while the law of averages'll get you through, if nothing else, 'cause by that time you learned so much. *What was the hardest gig?*

Junior: Probably some of the jazz things, if I didn't know some of those complicated structures; you can only fake it so far

on that stuff.

Vernon: Do you know [pedal steel legend] Speedy West?

Junior: Yeah, I know Speedy. Real sweet guy. Out there. *[laughs]*

Vernon: Next rocket straight to Mars!

Junior: We got together over near where he lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I've never played with him. He had a stroke a few years ago and gave up playing. He's talking good and everything, but I think he's had a hard time with his hand. He wears

a glove; I think it gets cold, circulation or something.

Is that a little flight case for your hat, to avoid damage in shipment?

Junior: *[laughs]* Yeah. I don't ship it, I carry it around so I don't have to wear it all the time.

So country-music status doesn't obligate you to wear it wherever you go?

Junior: I would hope not.

Vernon: Do you have someone who makes your hats?

Junior: Naw, I just buy 'em and tell 'em how to shape 'em.

Vernon's life has changed a bit; did you have a band in New York, Masque?

Vernon: That's the core of the record; there's other things that happen for four or five cuts. There was a little problem with clearing the name because apparently somebody has it, so it was weird. My attorney did a title search and said, "Don't call it a Masque record." I had a lot of experience with that whole thing because of what went on with the TV show *In Living Color*.

There was a problem even though you didn't spell it the same way?

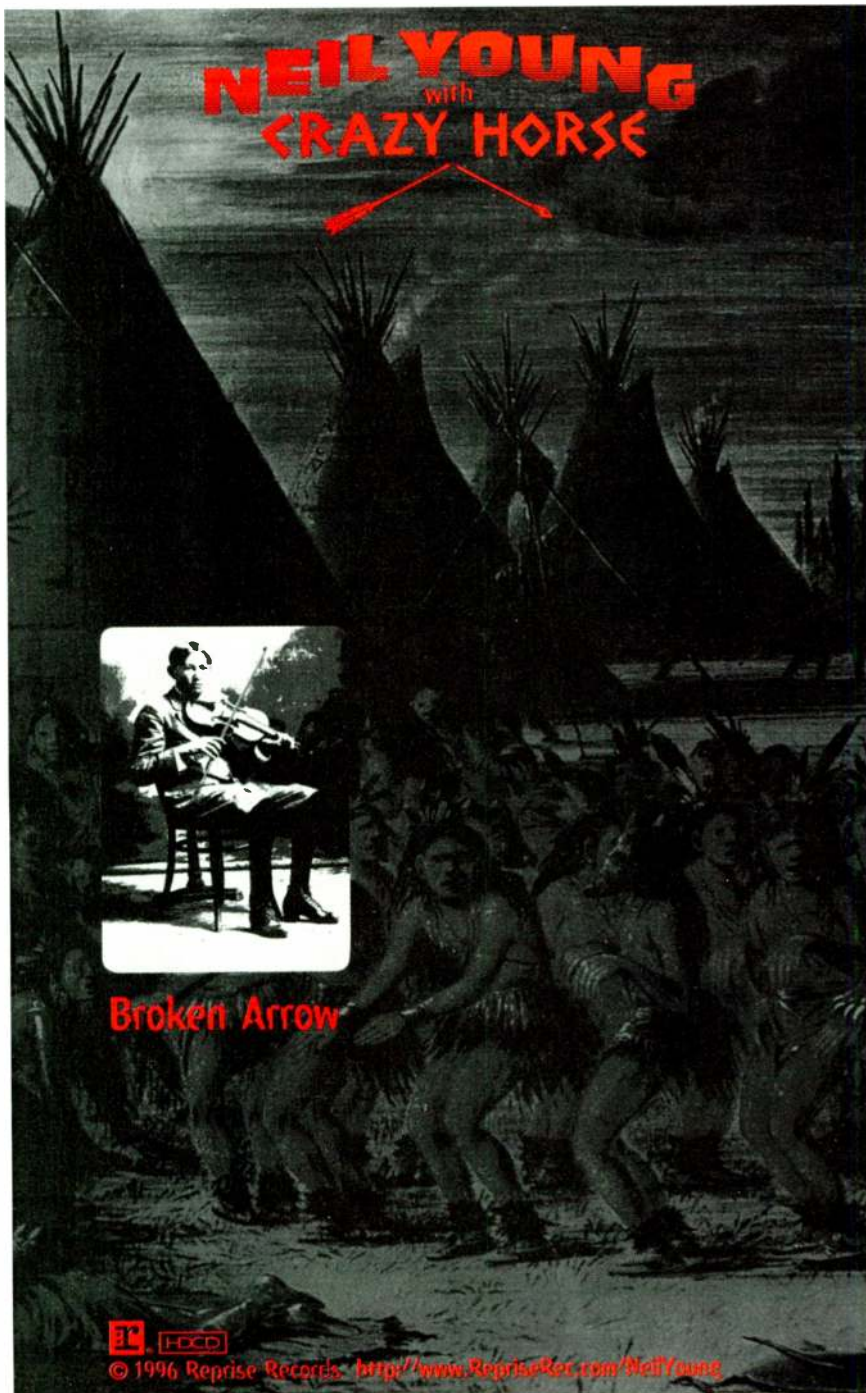
Vernon: Oh yeah, it was wack. The whole thing is whether or not a court decides there's an infringement, and we settled.

Is it a different vibe going from a big band to a solo gig with fewer commercial pressures?

Vernon: Well, the way I figure it, this record's about me connecting to music, and the record's not out yet, so I don't know if it's less commercial.

Well, you seem decidedly in the frame of mind that it's not a priority.

Vernon: Oh, you always take the same risks. Plenty of people get into radio-friendly this and that and the record comes out and nothing happens. In hindsight, *Living Colour* was commercially viable, but when that first record came out, "Cult of Personality" was the first song and for six months, nothing happened. The thing that connects this record to that record is that I didn't worry. I was just happy, just did it. I have been thinking about the abstract way the public pays attention to instrumental songs; there are quite a few Number Ones. It's possible. I don't think anyone could listen to [Weather Report's]



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World Radio History

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Instrumental success is a very tricky thing.

Vernon: All popular music is. When those songs came out, the public was no less

"Letting go of control is the way to where you want to go."

enamored with vocal music. "Feels So Good" by Chuck Mangione—I heard it on the radio, the next thing, it's Number One in the country. I'm not predicting that will happen [with my music], but the possibility led me to say, it's not in my control. And I have pretty good support at the label, because I've been talking in terms of the possibilities, so I made the record I wanted to make without going, "Man, I gotta get another singer." The main thing was to do honest music that reflects where I'm at emotionally.

Junior, how come it took you so long to come out as a solo artist? Was it the concern about committing to an identity and facing public opinion?

Junior: Mostly the money. Starting a band costs money, and you almost have to have a day job while you're starting. With other bands I could always work and not worry about the details, but starting your own band you have to book your own job, buy a P.A., all those things.

But did you always have in your mind a concept of the Junior Brown experience?

Junior: Not until I started writing the songs. I didn't think I could do it until then. Then I started thinking if nothing

else, I could get a publishing deal, you know? But before that I hadn't thought about it; I just wasn't focused in my twenties and early thirties. I started watching people I knew who were working in bands with me, who had these publishing deals where they didn't have to do nothing but just write. So I started figuring out that was the angle [laughs]. So I'd just write, and it turns out my style is a little different from whatever the normal style is, but it expressed what I wanted to express for the most part, so I managed to get a few albums' worth of stuff. Hopefully I'll write a few more, but like I was saying, there's no guarantee.

Vernon: Your writing's really unsentimental. The time country and western music wears on me is when I feel it being cloying. I just turn off to all that button-pushing, happy-ending stuff. I don't like the way most songs are written about love, like "love is flowery and beautiful" and all that. Love is an amoral emotion, like a force of nature. It doesn't matter if you're married, or it's not proper, it just comes in and that's it.

Do you ever have to catch yourself writing clichés?

Junior: Oh, as you write you've constantly got your monitors on. "Is this gonna sound the way I meant it? Did it roll off the tongue? Does it rhyme well enough? Does it have to rhyme?"

Which do you consider your most well-crafted tunes?

Vernon: "My Wife Thinks You're Dead!"

Junior: That's probably one of the better ones, yeah. That was one of the *easiest* ones to write. I wrote that in 15 minutes. "Still Life With Rose" is pretty good, 'cause it has the wordplay. I like "Semi-Crazy," I think that's good.

Vernon: Who's the truck driver you're talkin' to?

Junior: That's Red Simpson. He wrote "The Highway Patrol," my first single.

Vernon: How tongue-in-cheek is that song?

Junior: I don't know how *he* intended it to be; it's in the ears of the beholder, I guess.

Were you always confident about your singing voice? I'd guess that somewhere around puberty you realized you had a

career, right?

Junior: No, there was a lot I didn't like about it at first. As I've gotten older it's gotten better. I think anybody that listens to themselves sing for the first few times over a tape recorder gets that jolt, like, "Hey, that don't sound like that in here." So I'm gonna make some changes, that's all. It had to do with singing more from my chest and stomach, the pelvis, the diaphragm, and less from the nose and throat.

Vernon: One of the cuts on the new record has some weird guitar effects.

Junior: Oh, the backwards stuff, turning the tape backwards! Country music, right? [laughs]

It's cool that you don't feel confined because it's "country music."

Junior: Well, it's not really a country record; it's just a Junior Brown record. It's got a little of everything, based on country. If I feel like doing something I do it, that's all. There's barriers on most country albums. I have a reverence for what a good country song should have in it—I have a sensitivity to that—but I'm not bound by other people's rules. If it sounds good, I'll throw it in there, like the backwards thing. It could have ruined another song very easily.

Ever gotten too extreme for your audience?

Junior: Naw, because I'm careful when I produce the albums. The point at which you go, "Oh, I've gone too far" happens during the writing, so it never really gets out to where, "Oops, I made a mistake." You put your safeguards in long before that.

Vernon: Now, you just made me laugh, because I'm tryin' to picture you writing, like [feigns lifting pen and looking at paper] "Ohhhhh, no."

Junior: "Don't wanna put *that* in there. 'Ran home, drank a beer and kicked the dog.' Let's take that out—we got animal lovers out there. You wrecked a pickup truck—that's okay, we'll leave that." [laughs]

Vernon: One day, Junior Brown, you gonna make a record where you leave all that stuff in! "I kicked the dog, I shot the cat..."

Junior: [Grinning viciously] "I kicked the dog and I'm proud of it!"

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Check out John's latest release, "Walk On."



by julian colbeck

SOUND REIN FOR CEMENT FOR THE MUSICIAN

I can hear it, I can hear it," yelled the guitarist, exasperated by the engineer who was not transferring his hard-wrought sound into the monitor. "Well, what do you want me to do, then? Come down and mike your fuckin' ears up?" shot back the voice from behind the house mixing board. ■

'Twas ever thus: Musician versus Sound Guy. Sound people exist to louse up musicians' sound, restrict their movements, deafen with occasional blasts of feedback, blind with science. Musicians exist to trash equipment, misunderstand every scientific principle deduced since Pythagoras, be moody, deaf, and uncooperative. And the apotheosis of this intriguing but regrettably symbiotic relationship is the live gig, where, to sprinkle more spice into the conflict, there are the pressures of time, money, and a waiting audience. ■ With all this potential for disaster,

the least you can do is make sure your gear doesn't give you problems as well. And here's where the manufacturers of sound reinforcement products are only too happy to step in. The term "sound reinforcement" is a catch-all term for equipment used to "pass on" sound generated by musician and instrument. There are zillions of components and micro links in this chain but for the purpose of this article we'll stick to the three basics: mixers, amplifiers, and speakers, all geared for the cramped but cozy stages of small clubs, "function" gigs, and college bars—*i.e.*, the real world (at least for most of us). Note: Sound reinforcement is such a burgeoning business that in the interest of manageability we've found it necessary to leave out a few companies that are generally well-regarded (Fender, Tascam, and Community, to name three). Therefore, look upon our humble offering as a rough guide, not an absolutely comprehensive mega-list.

A MARRIAGE OF INCONVENIENCE?

illustration by melinda beck

MIXERS

For small club work, you may have to mix yourself from the side of the stage, following the set-it-and-forget-it approach. But what console to choose? While the basic design and cost of amps and speakers have stayed relatively steady in recent years, a revolution has shaken up the world of mixing boards. Let's start our discussion with the two principal revolutionaries: Soundcraft's entry-level wing Spirit, and Mackie (and keep in mind that powered mixers—*i.e.*, mixers with built-in amplifiers—always make an ergonomically sound choice).

In Spirit's slimline but sturdy Folio range emerging bloodied but still working), the eight-channel standard Folio SI (\$899) or the rackmount, 10-channel Folio Rac Pac (\$1099) are strong candidates. Both units can accept additional inputs via stereo returns; each features three-band EQ (with sweepable midrange) and high pass filters. The four-bus Rac Pac, with its six auxiliary sends, has more flexibility if you need to combine project studio recording with live performances. Spirit also has a series of so-called Live desks (from \$1299) that come in a range of frame sizes encompassing eight- to 24-channel models. Unlike the Folio models, the Live boards include balanced lines (helps to reduce hums), mike inputs on all channels and Spirit's pro-quality Ultramic Plus mike preamps. On the powered mixer side, Spirit offers the Powerstation (\$1599). In addition to eight mono and two stereo input channels with Folio-style three-band EQ, the Powerstation gives you more than 250 watts per side of amplification, plus built-in digital reverb and delay effects from Lexicon.

Mackie's audio quality is unquestioned, but the controls on its world-beating 1202 mike/line mixer seem a little too cramped for live use. However, the recently revamped 1202-VLZ (\$429), with three-band EQ, switchable high pass filter, PFL/solo/mute on every channel, and 60dB of gain in its four mike channels, now has the more spacious look of a Spirit. Elsewhere in the Mackie line, the six-channel CR-1604 (\$1099), released several years ago but

Mackie's 1202-VLZ: unquestioned audio quality, now with more space.

still going strong, remains hard to beat with its multiplicity of aux sends, quality three-band EQ, balanced mike inputs, and handy rotating rear panel for either tabletop or rackmount applications. For \$100 more, the CR-1604 comes in VLZ (very low impedance) form too. In addition to the low-impedance circuitry, the new model is now a true four-bus design, helpful for live broadcast or recording situations.

Elsewhere in the mixing domain, Peavey's Unity Series 1000 mixers come in eight- and 12-channel versions (\$400-\$500), and even a rackmount form, the Unity 1002-8R/M (\$799.99). With their low-impedance, low-noise mike preamps, three-band EQ, phantom power, and monitor and effects sends, the Unity Series offers features more commonly found on boards that sell for almost twice the price. In March '96 Peavey also released the XRD 680 powered mixer (\$769.99), a chunky unit offering eight channels with both balanced and unbalanced inputs, three bands of EQ per channel plus a master nine-band graphic, dual 300-watt amplification and a built-in digital effects.

Another contender comes from SoundTech, whose powered MetroMix eight-channel M860SB (\$1249.90) is housed in a Tolex-clad steel chassis. It's flexible, in that you can switch amplification from a two-channel P.A. configuration to main + monitor. There's 2x300 watts of power available, with the mixer section offering three-band per channel EQ. SoundTech's compact AL5 (\$999) and AL5 Jr (\$599) systems are also well worth checking out, as is Yorkville's AP-1220 (\$2899). With 1200 watts of power under a deceptively small hood, this 20-channel powered mixer could be ideal for even mid-size venues.

Yamaha's new EMX 3500 powered mixer looks tempting in both 12- (\$1999) and 16-channel (\$2199) versions. Both models have XLR or jack inputs, channel



inserts, three-band EQ with parametric mod range, and two effects sends—an impressive list for a unit also housing a 2x350-watt power amp.

From Audio Centron, the Equinox series offers a built-in 99-preset semi-programmable digital effects processor on its ACM1262D (\$625) and powered ACM1262PD (\$985) models. These are both developments of the plain ACM1262 (\$400), released in 1995, and come in the same 24-input (six balanced XLR), three-band EQ, eight-mono-plus-two-stereo-channel format. The third and latest board in the series, the ACM1262P (\$800), boasts a 2x150-watt power amp but no digital effects processing. Audio Centron designed the effects processor itself, electing not to buy in technology *à la* Spirit/Lexicon.

The names of Ross and Phonic may lack the gloss of Yamaha, Soundcraft, or Mackie, but both companies offer a wide range of keenly priced standard and powered mixers. The Ross RCS1402 14-channel rackmount desk (\$599) offers a potential 18 inputs, six of them balanced mike inputs, along with four stereo inputs, and two aux sends and three-band EQ per channel. With its rotary gain controls and rackmount design, the 1402 would make a good onstage mixer—with knobs less prone to getting shoved up or, worse, down than sliders—if you're on a tight budget. Ross also specializes in powered mixers, offering the unusually specified seven-input (mike or line) PC7250 (\$730) complete with 250 watts, and the PC8400 (\$1250), which scrambles to eight channels and

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Check out the Yorkville PA pictured above. The Audiopro 20 channel stereo mixer has 1200 Watts of power, graphic EQ's, digital effects and speaker processing all built right in, so you can leave the loaded rack case behind. The Pulse PW sub-woofer contains its own 600W power amp, crossover and internal processor. The Pulse 283 3-way cabinets and Pulse 12M 12" 2-way monitors complete the system with clear, smooth mids and highs.

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can pump out 200 watts per side in stereo, along with the delights of built-in spring reverb. Again, good for the penny-pincher. So too Phonic; their desks may not have the sheen of a Spirit, but the cheery eight-channel MM122 runs at a handsome \$349, and the 12-channel balanced- and unbalanced-input PMC802B can be purchased for just \$599.

By their very nature, smaller venues don't give you much room on or off-stage, which tends to bump up the accident ratio. For this reason, avoid lightweight mixers that can be elbowed off a stand, and watch out for knobs that protrude too far.

AMPLIFIERS

Even people with no knowledge of the music industry can figure out what a mixer does: sliders move up and down and instruments get louder or softer. Cheap mixers generally look and feel cheap; bigger mixers can handle more instruments. There's a physical logic to it. Amplifiers, on the other hand, are the great mystery of our time: faceless black boxes lying on the floor or in racks and dotted with the odd LED and volume knob. But comb the pages of any music/audio magazine and you'll find endless pages of waffle from amp manufacturers extolling this or that implausibly labeled feature or scientific principle, with specifications to die for. What to do? Buy the biggest and best-quality amp you can afford, and don't skimp. Amplification is sound's lifeblood. Homemade speakers can perform perfectly adequately, and a small mixer can do a good job, but a cheap amp can make music sound like it's spewing from a loud transistor radio.

Over the past quarter century, QSC has gained an almost matchless reputation for performance. Its recently revamped USA Series begins with the 400 (\$650), a stereo 125-watt unit with a passive cooling system. For more hard-drivin' performance, move up

to the fan-cooled USA 900 (\$785), which delivers 270 watts stereo. Top of the USA range is the 1310 (\$1125), also fan-cooled, and delivering 400 watts stereo. QSC's slimline Powerlite range offers a lot more power at a price that's beyond most small club budgets, but the MX series, ranging from the 170-watt stereo MX 700 (\$625) to the 825-watt dual mono MX 3000a (\$2195), packs sophisticated input options and quality construction for a reasonable price. All these amps are notoriously well-made and deliver bags of power.

Crest Audio's amp line rivals QSC's in quality and durability. Most of their products go beyond the budget and power needs of small club bands, but their CA series (ranging from \$790 for the CA2 to \$2390 for the CA12) is worth considering. It was the last-minute substitution of a Crest power amp on a keyboard rig that convinced me of the startling difference good amplification can make: The Crest made my keyboards sound like they'd been spring-cleaned.

Another proven performer, Carver's pm Series of power amps, ranges from the pm700 (\$895), which offers a reasonable 225 watts per channel in stereo, to the pm1400 (\$1350), which can deliver some 475 watts per side and which, with its stereo or bridged/dual mono options, can be adapted to suit a variety of amplification needs. Carver recently licensed its technology to Phoenix Gold Internat-

ional, who will produce the pm range for at least the next five years.

No fear of such siphoning off from Peavey, I suspect; amplification lies at the very heart of their business. Peavey was one of the first amp manufacturers to patent its own anti-clipping circuitry—Distortion Detection Technique (DDT). Even their dedicated monitor amp, the Power Pak 300 Monitor (\$299), comes with DDT, in addition to the nine-band graphic and adjustable low-cut filter. Meanwhile, the CS range of P.A. amps starts off with the CS400 (\$699), a 200-watts-per-channel stereo amp that can be used in 400-watt bridged mono mode, with fan cooling, DDT, and both XLR and dual phone jack inputs. The CS range currently climbs all the way up to the massive new CS 3000G (\$2199.99), via the CS800 (\$799), CS1000 (\$999), and CS1200 (\$1399).

More applicable to monitoring than P.A. work, Peavey's MAQ Series amps (profiled in *Musician's* Apr. '96 Editor's Pick) are interesting because of their built-in graphic equalizers. The MAQ 300 (\$649) offers two channels of 150 watts, and the MAQ 600 (\$899) boasts two channels of 300 watts. Both units come armed with DDT and bristling with 15-band "Feedback Locating System" graphic equalizers.

Although Alesis is still better known for effects processors and studio-oriented equipment, their Matica range of power amps (Matica 500: \$629, Matica 900: \$799) are cost-effective solutions if you need equipment to combine studio and live duties.

Feedback and monitors go together like corn dogs and mustard. Those familiar whistles and howls have as much to do with speaker placement as with EQ or level; in smaller venues, speaker placement can be almost as important as the



The QSC USA Series of amplifiers: notoriously well-made, bags of power.



Moving up the single-enclosure scale, Peavey has the carpet-covered SP-4Ti (\$799), incorporating two Black Widow 15" speakers plus 22T horn/driver, and the more compact SP-5Ti (\$399), sporting a single Scorpion 15" woofer plus CH-3 horn. They're also about to introduce the portable but high-spec Impulse series. The injection-molded Impulse 200 (\$449) features a 1x12 Black Widow speaker plus horn, with 300 watts of continuous power handling, while the Impulse 200P (\$679), a bi-amped self-powered version (150 watts to the woofer, 100 watts to the horn), incorporates both balanced line and mike inputs.

Speaker miniaturization began years

ago with Bose, whose reputation stemmed from building horn-sized enclosures capable of delivering almost full-range cabinet results. At an extremely compact 32x14x16, the Bose 502 BP Acoustimass Bass Enclosure (\$1600) operates in the 55-150Hz frequency range and can handle 450-1200 watts of continuous power at 8 ohms. The Bose 402 loudspeakers (\$600) contain 4x4 1/2" Bose D-22A high-sensitivity drivers, and can be used alone or in a bi-amped system with the 502. Meanwhile, the all-in-one-design Bose 802 Series II speakers (\$1000) contain eight of the 4 1/2" full-range drivers mounted in symmetrical vertical pairs on Bose's Articulated Array baffle in order to deliver crisp high and impressive-for-the-size low frequencies.

Electro-Voice's SX200 cabinet doesn't weigh much but packs a punch.

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Portable, too, though at much more of a bargain basement level, are the speaker enclosures designed by Ross to complement its range of powered mixers mentioned above. Take for example the RZ122 (\$275), a carpeted 22kg enclosure housing one 12" speaker and molded horn. Its simple circular ports and twin rear-panel jack connectors offer an uncomplicated sound—and an uncomplicated solution for those of limited means.

JBL is a name usually associated with high quality and high price, but the JBL Eon series might just squeak through the budget meetings, ranging from just \$599

for the 10" two-way powered speaker to \$899 for the 15" PowerSUB to \$749 for the 2-way 15" powered speaker. Even a complete Eon system, comprising a pair of powered speakers, a physically tiny 10-channel mixer, mikes, and bales, runs at a fairly generous \$2177. Also in the affordable JBL class are the TR Series enclosures, ranging from \$499 for the TR125 single 15" model to \$699 for the TR225 dual system and \$549 for the single 15" plus horn.

The Celestion Road Series follows a path similar to that of Peavey's Impulse series. Appreciably chunkier than the Impulse, the Road Series is still remarkably light, thanks to its double-skin polycore construction. Three full-range models are available: the R1220 (\$669), the R1520 (\$799), and the sub-woofer R1542 (\$949). Electro-Voice also offers portable, injection-molded enclosures in its SX range. The SX200 full-range polypropylene cabinet (\$878) weighs just 25kg but houses a 1x12 woofer and sophisticated driver/horn. EV's T Series (ranging from approximately \$900 to \$1600) is a more traditional ply construction, built to suit the more rigorously touring band, but with state-of-the-art overload protection systems and highly specified trapezoidal enclosures. And Yorkville is still doing well with the now ten-year-old Élite range, as well as introducing some intriguing new power speaker options, such as the Pulse PW sub-woofer (\$999), which contains a 600-watt power amp.

If speaker placement is a critical factor, so is the person setting up and running the rig. In a small club, this person could quite likely be you. But if you're still in the market for a sound tech, we suggest you go and hear a gig your prospect is mixing. Talk to people who have worked with him/her before. And trust the ones who listen more than they talk.

Above all, whether you are hiring a live sound engineer, buying audio equipment, trying to get a decent monitor sound, or working on a good balance out front in a room shaped like a tunnel, remember this simple sentence: There are no easy answers. If you can keep those five words in mind at all times, then you are a long way towards understanding sound reinforcement.

speakers themselves. That's why the Zippers, the top L.A. rock/variety band whose gigs span state fairs, corporate conventions, and lounges, built their own enclosures, which can be stacked high enough to throw sound over people's heads in a smallish room and also can fit inside a standard-sized van. They've worked extremely well for 15 years.

SPEAKERS

The biggest current trend in sound reinforcement gear is toward miniaturization. However, the biggest current trend in music is toward greater amounts, and quality, of bass. This can be a problem when you're choosing speakers, for in that category of equipment, power and size do go hand in hand. Even so, if you can run to a bi-amped system (i.e., incorporating two amplifiers, each driving a specific frequency range/speaker), you'll get more than adequate results. Peavey claims that if two of their SP-2Ti enclosures (two-way ported cabinet with one 15" speaker and one radial horn, \$499) are bi-amped, they'll outperform four SP-2Tis running full-range (with one amp having to cover all frequencies).

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World Radio History

what the racks that rock: what six bands players play use to stage that monster sound.

red hot chili peppers

On the last leg of the most recent Red Hot Chili Peppers tour the band made a pitstop to record "Love Rollercoaster" for the *Beavis and Butt-head* movie. Although the studio was booked for two days, the band took just two hours to rip through the tune and every tech on the scene was thrown for a loop. "We were done," says guitarist Dave Navarro with a shrug of his shoulders. "I waited for another hour, because I thought they were kidding," laughs Dave Lee, Navarro's tech. The episode exemplifies the way the Chilis work, both in the studio and onstage.

Brian Doyle, who handles tech duties for Flea, says that the bass sound he gets is purely Flea's doing. "It's just him, the way he plays and the way he holds the bass when he plays. Watch his hands, if you can." Rather than jumping from effect to effect, bass to bass, Flea changes tones by changing where his hands are located on the bass and by changing his attack.

Likewise for drummer Chad Smith, according to front-of-house magician



L-R: Flea and Anthony Kiedis

Jay Blakesberg

Red Hot Chili Peppers

Anthony Kiedis. *Microphones:* Audix OM-7. *Flea.* *Basses:* Four Music Man basses (one silver sparkle and three black), one Tobias black bass. *Amps:* Three Gallien-Krueger 800RBs. *Cabinets:* Mesa/Boogie—two dual 10", two dual 15" per side. *Strings:* GHS Boomers, medium gauge. *Pedals:* Boss Auto Wah and Bass Overdrive. **Dave Navarro.** *Guitars:* Fender Strat, Parker Fly, Fernandes Tele-style and Strat-style models, Paul

Reed Smith. *Amps:* Marshall JCM 900. *Cabinets:* four Marshall 4x12s and a Mesa/Boogie 4x12. *Effects:* Dunlop Jimi Hendrix wah pedal, Roger Mayer Octavia, Boss DE-3 delays, Super Chorus, Phaser, Turbo Distortion, and Noise Suppressor. *Strings:* Dean Markley. **Chad Smith.** *Drums:* Pearl Kit, Ludwig snare. *Cymbals:* Sabian—14" hi-hats, 6" and 8" cymbal discs, 18" medium crash, 10" splash, 21" ride, 17" and 20" crashes, 14" mini chinese. *Heads:* Remo Ambassadors. *Sticks:* Vater.

Dave Rat. "It's all straightforward generic sounds, right off the drums," he says. The only thing that Rat adds from his position, as well as your typical vocal reverb and delay, is a couple of pops from a sub-harmonic synthesizer which

drops Flea's lowest notes an octave on the songs "One Big Mob" and "Deep Kick."

Even Dave Navarro, who bleeds melody and edge at the same time, doesn't run an effects-o-rama. About the only

special trick he's put together is the amp setup, which is split between a clean channel and a dirty channel. "That way he can switch between a real clean tone for certain songs and then just hit a button for a real overdriven sound," says Lee, who Navarro calls one of the greatest guitar techs he's worked with.

The effects Dave does use are all on a pedalboard so he can goof around with them during a show; they're mainly Boss pedals, simple to replace and easy to use. (Side note: "MIDI is shitty," agree Navarro and Lee.) "Also," says Navarro, "when I was a kid learning how to play, those were the things I bought. When I was 12 or 13 years old I had Boss pedals and I liked 'em." So there.

— David Farinella

october project

Imagine the joy soundman Geoff Keehn must experience when the four vocalists in October Project step up to the microphone during a soundcheck. Keep in mind that these aren't just four vocalists taking turns at the lead mike; these are four vocalists who share singing duties for every song, interweaving complex harmony parts, each of which has to be heard clearly. Too bad they've got those pesky instruments in their hands too.

"The vocals are the main thrust of what has to come across for me," Keehn comments. "They have to sit on a bed of warmth and richness." The way Keehn builds that bed is by using four different types of effects, including a vocal reverb, a percussion reverb (for depth), a multieffects processor (to create a sense of space in the stereo spectrum), and a mono delay (set to 1,130 milliseconds for the song "Hero").

From their first small club tours to their opening slots last year with Sarah McLachlan and Crash Test Dummies, October Project has learned one vital lesson: In order to put on the best show, they need to hear one another. So with



October Project vocalist Mary Rahl

Tony Nelson

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October Project

Although the touring version of October Project can include up to eight people, the band's core is: **David Sabatino**. *Guitars:* Fender Strat, Martin HD-35, Yamaha APZ-10. *Effects:* Boss ME-10, Rocktron Midi-Mate, Dunlop Crybaby, Alesis Midiverb III, Rock-

tron Intelliflex, Rockman Octopus MIDI Switch, Rockman Octopus Remote Loop. *Amps:* Pendulum HZ-1 SE preamp, Marshall JMP-1. *Strings:* D'Addario. **Emil Adler**. *Keyboards:* Yamaha KX88, E-mu Proformance Plus, Roland JV-1080. **Marina Belica**. *Keyboards:* Roland A-30. *Vocal mikes:* Shure SM58s.

the help of Keehn and band members/gearheads David Sabatino (electric and acoustic guitars and vocals) and Emil

Adler (keyboards and vocals), the group designed a full custom monitor rig, which they haul to every gig. "From my

position onstage," Sabatino explains, "the problem is that we have a lot of different rhythms and internal harmonies going on, and we have to hear them all. The few times we went without our monitors, it was a total nightmare; we were in a compromised situation. From a musician's standpoint it makes the experience less than desirable. Other bands would probably just bag it. But because we have the knowledge, we just won't settle." —**David Farinella**

cracker

If James Brown is still the hardest working man in show business, then David Helberg is his Valium-addled stepson. As the soundman for Cracker's current romp around the world, Helberg may have the easiest job in the entertainment industry—he doesn't deal with compression, uses minimal effects, and adds nary a speck of EQ to the band's sound. When asked why it sounds so good, he responds, "I have a good band." And when pressed for specifics, he says with a classic New York combination of humor and contempt, "It's just making everything on stage louder. It's so simple that people overlook it."

Of course, it's not quite as easy as that; Helberg does have some things to do while he's behind the board, but nothing too dramatic. Luckily he's working with a band that relies on musicianship, not a bevy of effects. The only thing they've brought along from their most recent studio days are some Mellotron samples that keyboardist Kenny Margolis plays and a Peavey Valveverb that singer and guitarist David Lowery uses.

Guitarist Johnny Hickman's rig con-



Left: Johnny Hickman and David Lowery

Jay Blakesberg

tains only four effects pedals, including the ever-ambiguous Dimension C pedal from Boss. "I use it all the time," he says laughing. "I don't know what it does. Instead of a wheel, it's got four buttons and you can go one to four, depending on how much Dimension C you want to use. It's kind of a horrible purply pink color and I've never seen another one of 'em."

Picking up on the theme, Lowery

says, "Johnny is the most low-tech guitarist I've known. If he has an effect, it has to be in those boxes and they have to have lights on them so he can see when they're on."

To which Hickman adds, "They're the ones that guys play till they can afford something better, I just don't change 'em." Hey, whatever works.

—**David Farinella**

Cracker

David Lowery. *Guitars:* Charvel Surf-caster, Ibanez Telmax, Ibanez acoustic. *Effects:* Peavey Valveverb. *Amp:* Sovtek Mig-50, Matchless S/C-30. *Cabinet:* Marshall 4x12. *Strings:* D'Addario. **Johnny Hickman**. *Guitars:* 1969 Gibson Les Paul Standard with a Kahler tremolo unit, Gibson

Les Paul 1960 Classic, Fender EC Stratocaster. *Effects:* Boss CS-2 compressor, Boss DM-2 delay, MXR Microamp Overdrive, Boss DC-2 Dimension C, Boss AW-2 Auto Wah, Boss BCB-6 Pedal Board. *Amp:* Matchless Superchief 120, Fender Twin Reverb. *Cabinet:* Marshall slant 4x12. *Strings:* D'Addario. **Bob Rupe**. *Basses:* Fender Precision, Gibson SG. *Amp:*

Ampeg SVT II Pro. *Cabinet:* Ampeg SVT 8x10. *Strings:* Rotosound roundwounds. **Johnny Hott**. *Drums:* Pearl kit with a Ludwig snare. *Cymbals:* Sabian. *Sticks:* Zildjian 5B nylon tip. **Kenny Margolis**. *Keyboards:* Korg M1 and Roland RD-500 for piano sounds. *Rack Units:* E-mu Vintage Keys Plus, Voce V3 organ module. *Vocal microphones:* Shure SM58s.

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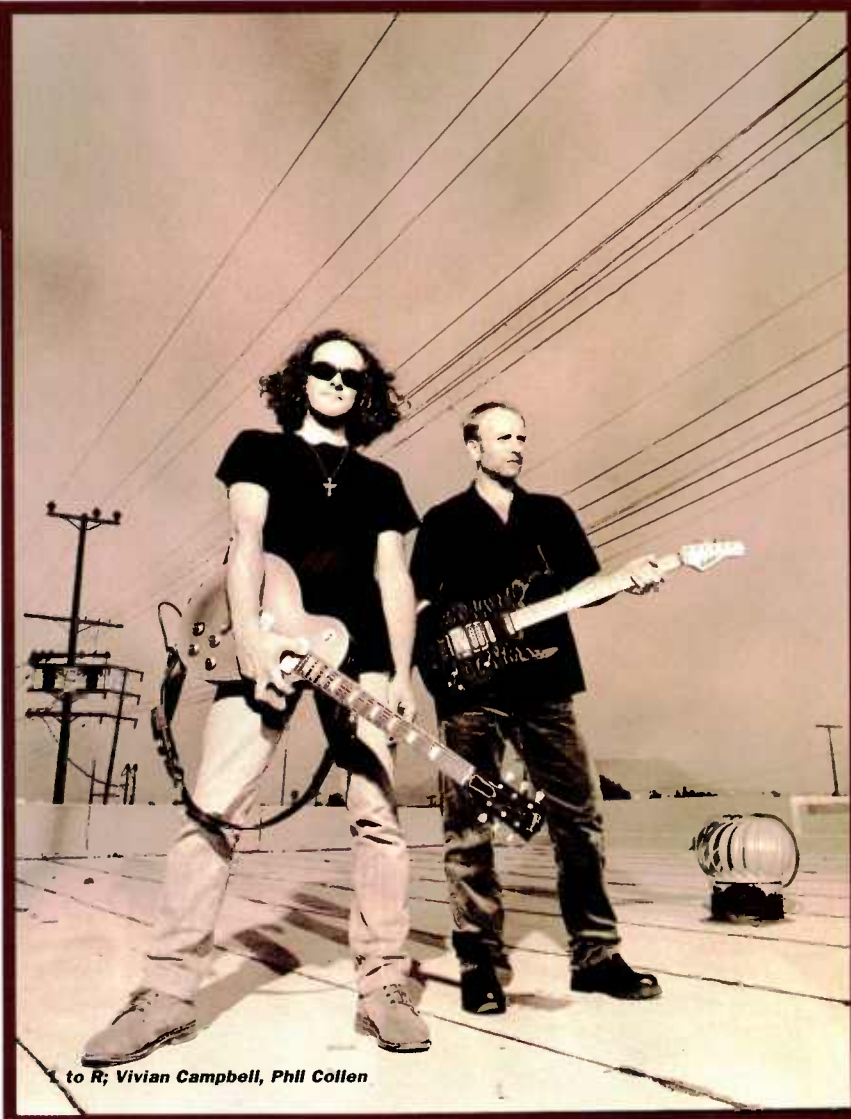
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def leppard

Shocking it may be, but when Def Leppard—erstwhile kings of pop-metal confection—take to the stage for their 1996 world tour, they'll be pouring very little sugar on their arena-sized sound. Touring behind monster albums like 1987's *Hysteria* and 1992's *Adrenalize*, the band prided itself on digitally rendered polish and precision. But behind this year's looser, groovier *Slang*—their first album of new material in four years—the fellows are taking a much more casual approach. "In the past, we worried a bit too much about making the live performance sound like the record," explains guitarist Phil Collen. "And now we don't give a fuck. On our last tour we played in the round, everything was mechanical, and we realized the band was secondary to the production. We wanted to turn that around."

For Collen and co-guitarist Vivian Campbell, turning around meant getting away from the solid-state sound and digital presets of old in favor of raw Les Paul-to-Marshall power, with the barest minimum of effects underfoot. "It's a change I think we had to make," says Collen, "because guitar playing in the '80s got to be like an Olympic competitive sport. It was ridiculous."

The stripped-back approach was a bit more of a challenge for drummer Rick Allen, who's been drumming with one



L to R; Vivian Campbell, Phil Collen

Ross Halfin

arm since a 1984 accident. Allen previously relied heavily on sequencers and electronic drums to generate a full sound, but this time out the heart of his kit is acoustic. Electronics will only be used to fill in the sound, with Allen's left foot

adding snare, bass, tom, or percussion sounds via three pedals triggering various samples of his own kit. "I enjoy the physical pleasure of playing drums," says Allen. "Pads never excited me too much, and it's not very fun to play along with

Def Leppard

Phil Collen. *Guitars:* '59 Gibson Les Paul Reissue, Les Paul 40th Anniversary Edition, Jackson/Charvel Phil Collen model, Guild 12-string acoustic. *Amps:* Marshall SLX 100 watt head, Marshall 9200 power amp. *Cabinet:* Marshall 4x12s. *Strings:* GHS .012-.052. *Effects:* t.c. electronic delay, Sony digital chorus unit. **Vivian Campbell.** *Guitars:* '59 Gibson Les Paul Reissue, '78 Les Paul Custom, two Tom Anderson Classics—one

with fixed bridge, one with floating whammy bar. Gibson J-200, Martin D-28. *Amps:* Marshall SLX 100 head, Matchless Club 35, Marshall 9200 power amp. *Cabinet:* Marshall 4x12s. *Strings:* GHS .012-.052. *Effects:* Eventide H3000 Ultra-Harmonizer, Sony D-77 for delay, Yamaha D-1500 for delay. *Picks:* Dunlop Tortex. **Joe Elliott.** *Guitars:* Gibson Les Paul Custom, Gibson 175 acoustic. *Amps:* Marshall SLX 100 watt head, Marshall 9200 power amp. *Cabinet:* Marshall 4x12s. *Strings:* GHS. **Rick Savage.**

Basses: Hamer 5-strings. *Amps:* Trace Elliot system, BGW power amps. *Strings:* GHS. Uses Dunlop picks. **Rick Allen.** *Drums:* DW acoustic bass drum and floor tom, Alesis D-4 for snare sounds. *Cymbals:* 2 med. crash, one ride, 3 fixed hi-hats, one foot-controlled hi-hat—all Zildjian. *Electronics:* 2 Hart Dynamics Acupads, 3 DW EPF pedals run through an Aphex Impulse, which triggers samples in an Akai S3000. Crash cymbals, snare drum, and fixed hi hats mounted on custom rack.

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World Radio History

clicks. I've been missing the primal vibe."

That's what the Leppards are all about this time out, adds Collen. "We're not going to worry about gear, or even arrangements so much. People at shows don't hear what guitar you're using, what

equipment is on—they may not even really hear the song. They're just soaking up vibe. We want to give them less precision and much more vibe."

If any unwanted precision does creep back into the sound by way of wheedly-

deedly guitar solos or painfully high vocalizing, Collen says the band has some ephemeral gear that will set them straight. "We've got these special warning bells that go off," he laughs—"80s alert!!"

—**Chuck Crisafulli**

tears for fears

The opening minute of *Raoul and the Kings of Spain* outlines the challenge facing Roland Orzabal as he began preparing for the current Tears For Fears tour: Dynamics span the gamut from bone-rattling peaks to mellow and meditative. Synth pads buffet guitars that jangle full-blast and etch delicate fills. Orzabal's vocals ring true through carefully crafted effects. And all of it is clear as crystal.

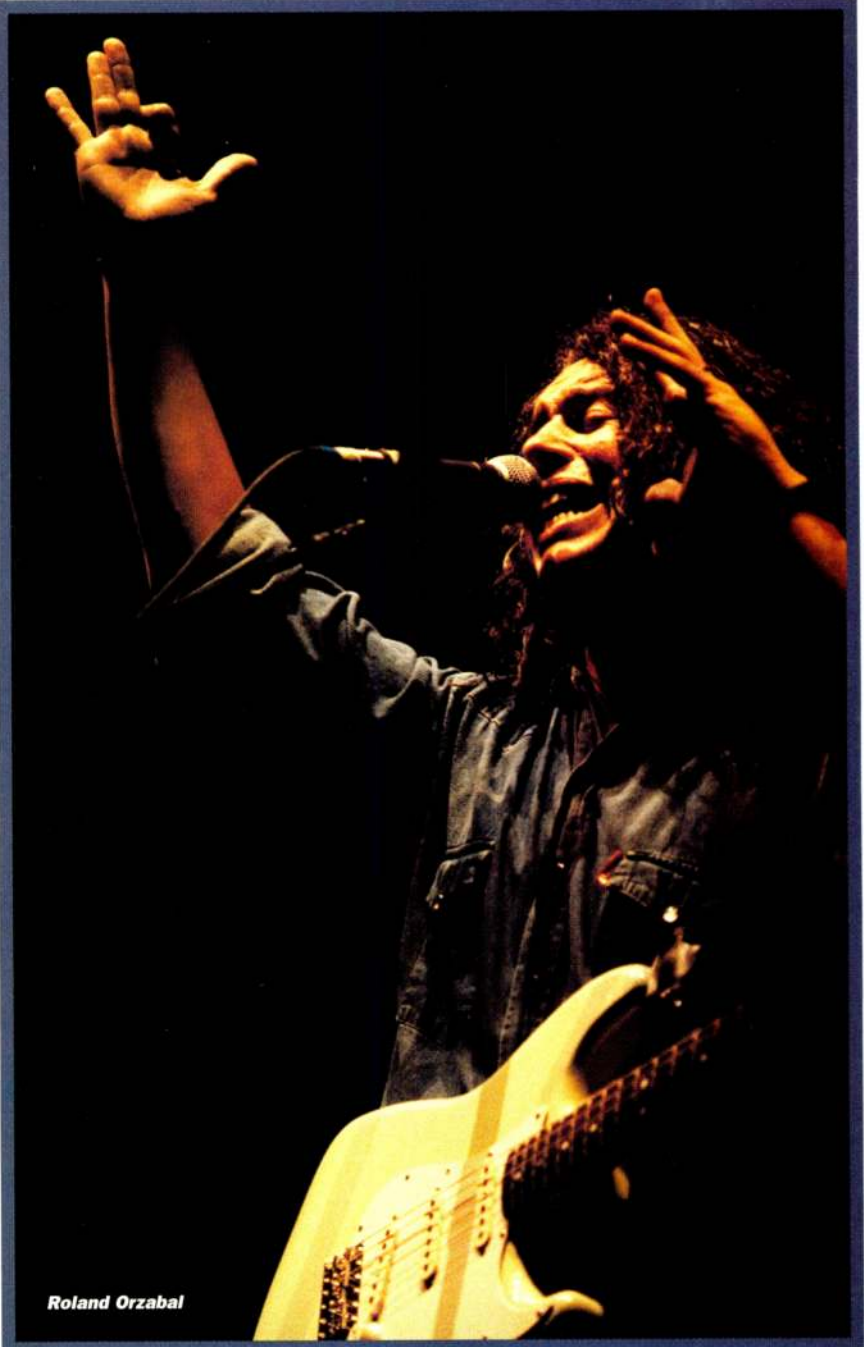
Yet the band doesn't go to anal extremes to replicate their album onstage. "There isn't a lot of missing information live," Orzabal says. "We're running sequences in a lot of the sound, so there is the occasional orchestra chiming in. Our drummer, Brian MacLeod, is so brilliant at playing to clicks that we really have a band feel, yet nothing is left to the imagination; everything you hear on the album comes flying back at you."

If any one effect stands out, it's the processing on Orzabal's singing. "We use a [Yamaha] SPX1000 on a couple of numbers to duplicate my voice a fifth above and a fourth below," he points out. "There are about three tracks where you hear that effect quite strongly on the album; it sounds like backup vocals. That's quite a nice effect."

The most significant addition to the band's stage rig is the Roland VG-8 that Orzabal picked up after finishing *Raoul*. "I got one immediately after they came out, because I've always been a reluctant rock and roll guitarist. I was used to twiddling knobs on synthesizers; that's what I did when I got into making records. So the idea that you're playing something that's quite fake appeals to

me. That's how I see the VG-8: It's not really a guitar; it's another instrument, with its own talent. It's been quite inspirational; I've started to write things around some of the sounds, especially the

detuned ones. But I use it live because I use so many different guitars on the album and I can't stand changing guitars live. This way I can do it all on one instrument." —**Robert L. Doerschuk**



Roland Orzabal

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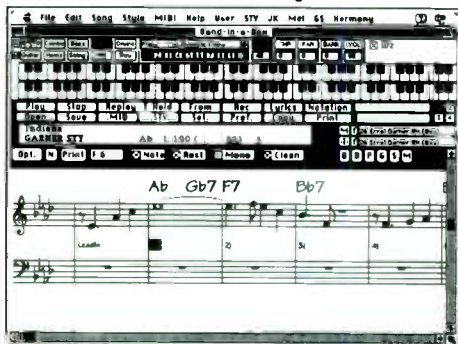
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Tears for Fears

Roland Orzabal. *Guitar:* Fender Stratocaster U.S. Standard (cherry red), customized by Carlie Chandler in England w/ Roland GK-2A synth drivers; Jeff Beck Stratocaster, customized w/ GK-2A synth drivers. *Strings:* Ernie Ball Regular Slinky, .010-.046. *Samplers:* Roland S750 w/ external 500Mb hard drives; Akai S900 w/ triggers. *Synths & Amplification:* two Roland VG-8 guitar synths, both used in stereo, w/ Boss LS-2 line selector customized to handle stereo inputs & outputs to a Marshall Valvestate 8008 preamp to a Mesa/Boogie Rectifier 4x12 4FB cabinet. *Microphone:* Electro-Voice 257B. *Sequencer:* C-Lab 170 PowerBook Creator in Mac LCIII. *Miscellaneous:* Alesis data disk for MIDI files; two AI-Smart custom eight-channel mixer/DI boxes. **Jeffrey Trott.** *Guitars:* Gibson Les Paul (1971); Rickenbacker 12-string 360 ('63); Rickenbacker six-string 360 ('94); Fender Stratocaster. *Strings:* GHS Boomers (.010-.052). *Amplification:* vintage Vox AC30 w/ Tech

21 SansAmp preamp; depending on size of show, supplemented w/ Mesa/Boogie Rectifier 4"x12". *Effects:* Ernie Ball volume pedal; Electro-Harmonix Hot Tubes distortion; Hendrix Crybaby wah; Boss compressor, tremolo pan, digital delay & power supply. *Slide:* thick glass bottleneck. **Alan Griffiths.** *Guitars:* American Standard Stratocaster fitted for left hand w/ Gold Lace Sensor pickups; Gretsch Duo Jet G6128T w/ Bigsby tremolo; Ibanez RS135 Roadstar (tuned to Eb for "Elemental"). *Strings:* GHS Boomers, .010-.046. *Picks:* Dunlop Sharp Tortex. *Effects:* Dunlop Crybaby wah-wah pedal & Roger Mayer Voodoo vibe pedal switched by Boss LS-2 line selector; custom pedal rack, w/ Boss CS-2 compressor, Ibanez TS-9 Tube Screamer, Electro-Harmonix Big Muff via Boss GE-7 graphic EQ, ProCo RAT2 via Boss GE-7 graphic EQ, Chandler Tube Driver & Boss Chorus CE-2; all pedal loops MIDI controlled by Ground Comb footswitch/board & GCX Expander switching unit through Ernie Ball volume pedal. *MIDI Effects:* Rocktron Voodoo Valve pre-

amp; Marshall JMP1 preamp; Roland GP-100 preamp; Zoom 9050S; Boss ME-10; Korg DTR1 tuner. *Amplification:* Fender "Blues de Ville" 60-watt combo; Hiwatt 100-watt AP-100 into Marshall 4"x12" cabinet w/ 75-watt Celestion speakers. **David Sutton.** *Basses:* Yamaha TRB five-string; Musicman Stingray fretless. *Strings:* various, medium to heavy gauge. *Amplification:* Gallien-Krueger 800RB 400-watt solid state bass head; Hartke 410 XL 4x10, 240-watt cabinet; Hartke 115 XL 1x15, 180-watt cabinet. **Jebin Bruni.** *Keyboards:* Korg Wavestation; Roland A-80 & D-70; Hammond B-3 w/ Leslie 145/147. *Rackmount modules:* Roland S-770 & S-760 samplers w/ internal hard drives; Korg M1R & X1R; Yamaha TG77. **Brian MacLeod.** *Drums:* Walnut Gretsch kit, w/ 16"x16" floor tom, three mounted toms (10"x12", 12"x13", 13"x16"), 22"x16" kick; Noble & Cooley 14"x3 1/2" brass piccolo snare. *Heads:* Remo Ambassador. *Triggers:* MidiKAT on snare & kick for "Hout." *Sticks:* Vic Firth SB wood tip.

David Van Tieghem

Not too long ago, percussionists knew their place, which was either in the back row of the orchestra or behind the rest of the band on a dance gig. But since 1977 David Van Tieghem has been nudging his way forward, both through solo concerts and work with Steve Reich, Laurie Anderson, Brian Eno, Pink Floyd, Talking Heads, Ryuichi Sakamoto and other forward-looking artists.

Clearly, modern music technology opened possibilities for Van Tieghem. "The biggest change for me is that I've experimented with the PowerBook and with Opcode's Max," he reports. "With Max I can store sequences in the computer and trigger them from my MalletKat or my Wavestation keyboard. That way, it doesn't matter which pads or keys I hit;



David Van Tieghem

the notes are still right, and I can focus on movement and feeling. That confuses audiences a little bit, because they might hear low notes as I play at the top end of the keyboard."

Van Tieghem's innovations often preceded M.I. developments. In 1984, for example, before the sampling wave hit,

he was collecting found sounds on cassette and mixing them into tracks on his first solo album, *These Things Happen*. And several years ago, he was doing music with Radio Shack infrared electric eyes. "I'd dance in the space, triggering samples. No matter how much I tried to demonstrate that I was breaking the

David Van Tieghem

Computer System & Software: Macintosh Quadra 950; Digidesign Pro Tools digital audio recording system; Digidesign SampleCell II, Turbosynth SC, & Sound Designer II; Mark of the Unicorn Digital Performer & UniSyn; Opcode Studio Vision Pro, Galaxy Plus Editors & Max; Steinberg Cubase Audio & Time Bandit; Emagic Logic Audio; Jupiter Systems Infinity; Arboretum Systems Hyperprism; Coda MusicProse, Dr. T's UpBeat, M & Jam Factory. **Synthesizers/Sound Modules:** Yamaha VL1-m, TG77, & TX802; Roland JD-990, JV-880, R-8M, U-220, D-550 & MSE-1; E-mu Morpheus, Proteus/1 XR, Proteus/2 XR, Proteus/3 XR, Procussion & Vintage Keys Plus; Korg Wavestation EX, Wavestation SR, M1REX, 01/W & Symphony; Simmons Silicon Mallet custom-

made percussion sound module. **Digital Recorders & Samplers:** Alesis ADAT; Sony TCD-7 DAT Walkman w/digital I/O; Akai S1000HD. **MIDI Controllers & Interfaces:** Zendrum; Walkabout; DrumKat 3.0 w/six pads & two electronic pedals; MalletKat four-octave percussion controller; Oberheim Cyclone MIDI arpeggiator; Lexicon MRC 4.0; Opcode Studio 5LX; two Mark of the Unicorn MIDI Time Pieces. **Sound Processors:** Lexicon Jam Man & LXP-5, Ensoniq DP/4, Digitech VHM5 Vocalist & IPS-33B Super Harmony Machine, Roland VP-70, two Aphex 651 Expressors, Hughes AK-100 Sound Retrieval System, BBE 422A Sonic Maximizer, two Valley People Dyna-Mite compressors. **Microphones:** Crown SASS-P Stereo PZM; AKG 4144EB condenser; Shure SM58. **Mixers & Monitors:** Soundtracs Solo Midi 32-channel con-

sole w/MIDI muting; Alesis 1622; two Roland M-120 line mixers; JVC SK-303 speakers; Sony MDR-V600 headphones. **Video & Sync Equipment:** Sony KV-20XBR Trinitron stereo TV/video monitor; two Sony SLV-696HF & RCA VR620HF VHS stereo videocassette recorders; J.L. Cooper DataSync for ADAT. **Percussion:** Musser Brentwood four-octave rosewood marimba; Ludwig stainless steel drumkit w/Zildjian cymbals; Manny's 1A sticks; Musser medium yarn mallets; ashtrays, wrenches, old mailbox, auto exhaust pipe, Chinese & Balinese gongs, wind-up toys, music boxes, colored fluorescent light tubing, corrugated plastic tubing, scrap metal, pots, pans, stones, balloons, wine bottles, baby rattles, beachball filled w/ BBs, battery-operated drumming animals, amplified tennis racket, log drums, waterfoam, plastic bubble wrap, etc.

beam, half the audience thought I was just dancing to a tape. Since they didn't see the beam, they thought I was just really in sync with this tape."

Yet old-fashioned drums—and a pile of acoustic oddities—remain the heart of Van Tieghem's art. "It just happens that

some toys have interesting sounds," he insists. "Lots of times, because they're funky or not in tune, they're even more interesting than modern instruments.

One of my favorite things, in fact, was a cheap old Woolworth's tambourine, whose head was so loose that when you

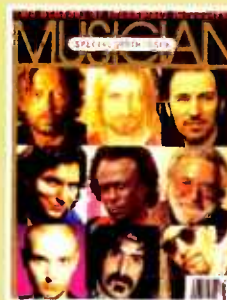
held it up to a microphone it sounded like a huge bass drum. The problem was that it fell apart, so I don't have one anymore."

Time for an upgrade, Woolworth's? We'll be looking for Tambourine 2.0 at NAMM. —**Robert L. Doerschuk**

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1 zon sonus VIII

If you're in the market for an eight-string bass, Zon will be happy to help you out with the Sonus VIII (\$2495). The two-piece ash body and 34" scale, bolt-on composite neck are sleek, while the two custom-wound, multi-coil pickups and active electronics are slick. Most important: separate locking saddles for all eight strings, ensuring precise intonation. Go ahead, be John Entwistle. • **Zon, 2688-D Middlefield Rd., Redwood City, CA 94063; voice (415) 366-3516, fax (415) 366-9996.**

2 IQS SAW plus software

Innovative Quality Software's SAW (Software Audio Workshop) Plus for Windows proves once and for all—if anyone still had a doubt—that the PC can perform complex digital audio editing and mixing quickly and efficiently. SAW Plus (\$599) lets you record and edit 16 tracks of 16-bit-resolution audio directly to hard disk, while also providing live sample rate conversion and automatic live blending of different file formats (mono, stereo, 8-bit, 16-bit, etc.). The 3-D graphics are nifty, and Version 2.2 adds nine levels of undo, always welcomed by us sloppy musician types. • **Innovative Quality Software, 4680 S. Eastern Ave., Suite D, Las Vegas, NV 89119; voice (702) 435-9077, fax (702) 435-9106.**

3 DW side snare

So you're addicted to piccolo snare sounds, but you don't want to give up your regular snare when you're gigging? Drum Workshop may have the answer to your dilemma with the Side Snare. It's 6"x10", it's ultra-high, and it's designed to be conveniently positioned anywhere around the kit. The Side Snare's available in three different finishes with a choice of chrome, brass or black hardware; prices range from \$570 to \$715 depending on finish. • **Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Cir., Oxnard, CA 93030; voice (805) 485-6999, fax (805) 485-1334.**



st forward

4 gretsch 1955 nashville

The 1955 Gretsch Nashville holds a distinguished place in rock 'n' roll history, for it was Eddie Cochran's guitar of choice. No surprise, then, that a '55 Nashville reissue (\$6500) is one of the first entrants in Gretsch's Custom U.S.A. series. A 16" solid carved maple top, finished with hand-rubbed lacquer, is the immediate draw, but the flamed maple on the headstock and that nifty thin black line on the back of the neck are way cool too. • **Gretsch, P.O. Box 2468, Savannah, GA 31402; voice (912) 748-1101, fax (912) 748-1106.**

5 rane mojo series

Affordability and efficiency were foremost in the minds of Rane when they developed the five products that kick off their new Mojo line. Contents: the MH 4 four-channel headphone amplifier (\$299), MX 22 stereo two-way crossover (\$299), MX 23 stereo three-way crossover (\$399), MQ 302 stereo 1/3-octave graphic EQ (\$399) and the MC 22 stereo compressor (\$299). Each unit, taking up merely a single rack space, is available separately (though they do look lovely all together in that rack, don't they?). • **Rane, 10802 47th Ave. West, Mukilteo, WA 98275-5098; voice (206) 355-6000, fax (206) 347-7757.**

6 spirit folio notepad

It looks small—well, actually it is small—but that just makes Spirit's Folio Notepad mixer (\$249.95) all the more impressive. Thanks in part to its top-quality mike preamps, the Notepad delivers ace audio, both live and in the studio. The rundown: ten inputs as standard, four mike and two stereo inputs, two-band EQ, post-fade aux send, dedicated stereo effects return, global +48V phantom power, and switchable RIAA preamps for turntables (remember them?). • **Spirit by Soundcraft, 11820 Kemper Rd., Auburn, CA 95603; voice (916) 888-0488, fax (916) 888-0480.**

New Frontiers in Expandability

by howard massey

Here's my recipe for building the successful synthesizer of the '90s: Start with a base of tried-and-true proven technology, stir in a healthy dose of innovation, and add expansion options as seasoning to taste. Our Editor's Pick this month—Korg's Trinity Workstation—meets all these criteria, and then some. In some ways, it's like the Transformer of the synth world—pop in a board here, it becomes two synths in one, pop in a board there, it becomes a hard disk recorder.

With its sleek, brushed silver casing and oversized backlit LCD display, the Trinity certainly looks like something out of the starship Enterprise—but it's what's beneath the surface that counts. This futuristic packaging is not just cosmetic—it really is a reflection of the instrument's forward-thinking design. The Trinity builds on Korg's past successes with instruments such as the O1/W and M1, but it also has the ability to fulfill the needs of just about every level of keyboardist, from the gigging musician who just requires good basic sounds and an onboard sequencer to the professional recording musician who's got to have every bell and whistle in the book.

At its heart, the Trinity is a wavetable synthesizer, like most of the other synths currently on the market. These instruments use sampled waveforms as their

basic building blocks, which are then combined and processed in various ways to produce complex sounds. As with most other synths, if you press Trinity's edit button, you'll find a bunch of filters, envelope generators, and LFOs (Low Frequency Oscillators), as well as onboard signal processors (such as reverbs, delays, flangers, phasers, etc.), all doing their thing in order to deliver the sound you hear. But within this established domain, the Trinity adds a number of twists, such as an unusually large number of 48kHz 16-bit ROM waves to pick from (375 instrument multisamples, plus another 258 drum samples which can be organized into 12 custom drum kits), dual multimode filters for each oscillator (enabling very fine filtering), a highly flexible modulation system, and allowance for up to five different effects to be applied. If you're into editing and creating your own programs, the Trinity clearly provides a wealth of powerful options.

And if you're into really huge sounds, up to eight individual programs can be layered together in "combi" mode—or up to 16 when using the onboard sequencer. Both modes also enable multitimbral use, since each program can be set to respond to a different MIDI channel. The 16-track sequencer can store up to 20 songs and up to 100 patterns (to a maximum of

80,000 MIDI events), and can play back standard MIDI files stored on a DOS-formatted disk (loaded from Trinity's built-in floppy disk drive). Though the sequencers built into keyboards are usually bare-bones, this one offers a number of advanced features typically found only in computer-based MIDI sequencers.

Much of the innovation in the Trinity is literally surface-deep, since the large LCD display that dominates the front panel is actually a touchscreen—you select parameters simply by touching them! This is faster and much more intuitive than using buttons to move a cursor around a screen. Most importantly, this technology, in conjunction with the sheer size of the display, has enabled Korg's design engineers to create a graphic user interface for the Trinity that incorporates many of the features provided by Mac and Windows computers. You'll find all sorts of familiar

Korg's Trinity



amenities here, such as radio buttons, pop-up windows, scroll bars, dialog boxes—even onscreen QWERTY keyboards that simplify the process of naming things, a tedious chore in many other synths. In addition, large graphics enable you to view envelope shapes and effects processor routings, concepts that can be difficult to visualize just by looking at a



screen full of numbers. It is the graphic interface above all that makes working with the Trinity extremely easy, almost as if you had a computer with patch editor software permanently connected.

There's innovation beneath the surface, too. Most modern synths provide two onboard effects processors for the addition of reverb and the like (though these are often stereo, so you can sometimes squeeze four discrete effects out of the system with judicious routing). The Trinity enables up to three mono or stereo "insert" effects to be applied simultaneously to a sound (four if you're using a drum kit), *in addition* to two stereo "master" effects. When layering sounds together in combi or sequencer mode, multiple voices can share the same insert effects. These insert effects include compressors, limiters, gates, amp simulators, resonators, excitors, and ring modulators,

of a piano sound board and sympathetic string vibrations), "talking modulator" (which allows you to sweep through formants, creating a voice box effect *à la Frampton Comes Alive*), and "decimator" (which allows you to reduce the sampling rate on the fly, thus adding a unique kind of grunge to the signal—perfect, I suppose, for that elusive yet mythical Seattle techno sound).

The Trinity also provides an abundance of features for the performing musician. These include a performance editor that allows you to make changes to a few critical voice parameters on the fly without having to hit the edit button. And there are plenty of ways to add expression to your performance: In addition to three pedal inputs (two of which are assignable), there's a ribbon controller, a four-axis joystick with integrated center-sprung pitch bender, and two programmable switches that can be used for a variety of functions,

These devices provide a flat strip of plastic which outputs a continuous control signal as you move your finger along it. On today's synths, this control signal is a stream of MIDI commands which can be used to bend pitch, change filter settings, or alter pretty much any aspect of the sound in real time. This allows ribbon controller or joystick movements to be recorded into the Trinity's onboard sequencer or transmitted to any connected outboard MIDI device. As an added bonus, the Trinity's ribbon controller is both position and pressure-sensitive.

The Trinity is touted as being a "workstation," and there's probably no word in the synth world that's been more abused. A workstation is pretty much any instrument that provides both a sequencer and a bunch of sounds for the sequencer to play. But the Trinity takes this concept to new heights by virtue of its large number of expansion options.

▼ *The Trinity puts hard disk recording in the players' hands.*

fulfill the needs of



just about every level of keyboardist.

as well as the more usual variety of equalizers, flangers, phasers, Leslie simulators, choruses, reverbs, and MIDI-controllable delays. There are also several truly esoteric insert effects, such as "piano body damper" (which simulates the resonance

including "locking" the current position of the ribbon controller or joysticks. Ribbon controllers, which were fairly common on many early pre-MIDI synthesizers, are starting to make a (most welcome, in my opinion) comeback.

First of all, for an extra \$500 (list price), the basic 61-key Trinity (list price: \$3599) can be retrofitted with an expansion board that actually adds Korg's monophonic Prophecy solo synthesizer (minus the arpeggia- [cont'd on page 94]

Synthesizers, R.I.P.?

Industry leaders reflect on the state of the keyboard revolution.

by Connor Freff Cochran

Depending on who you talk to, those sounds coming from the synthesizer industry are either the growling of a feisty tiger or the mumblings of a terminal patient on maximum life support. If you're a synth *player*, of course, these are great days: Thirty years of rapidly advancing tech have brought the instrument to a point that nobody could have imagined back when the journey began. But to at least some synth makers, the killer axe of the '80s is stagnating, squeezed by the very same technological and economic forces that helped make it a success.

One of the people holding that opinion is Hartley Peavey, CEO of Peavey Electronics. "The whole state of affairs is reminiscent of what happened with organs. Years ago, electrical organs were fairly simple devices; people could just sit down and play them. But as competition hotted up, all the engineers tried to outdo each other, as opposed to satisfying the customer. The same thing is happening with synthesizers. The keyboard business has become very much the same as the computer business, where there's no longer any real difference between products. Unless there's a win-win-win situation, where the customer, the dealer, and the manufacturer all come out ahead, we aren't going to have those quantum leaps in performance. If anybody in there loses, that three-legged stool won't stand up."

The synth business has always been volatile. Voyetra Technologies found it impossible to keep up; that's why they stopped building their Voyetra 8, arguably the finest analog synth ever, and found a niche in multimedia. Not surprisingly,

their president, Carmine Bonnano, shares Peavey's guarded assessment of the synthesizer's future: "Synths will evolve out of the current marketplace. If you look at the history of hardware, what tends to be done in a separate box is what can't be done efficiently in a PC. The worthwhile synths now are the ones where there isn't enough horsepower in a PC to do the job. Real high-quality wavetable synthesis, extremely high-quality sampling—those are still the domain of dedicated hardware. But more and more horsepower is going under the hood of PCs. Down the road, everything except for the most high-tech stuff will be rolled into the PC; after that, it will be a software game."

Are the synth's days really numbered? Not at all, say some, as long as the public's needs are not forgotten. "The synthesizer is far from dead," says Roland president Dennis Houlihan. "There are more first-time buyers than ever before. They want certain sounds and they want to get to them easily, with a minimum of control issues." Jerry Kovarsky, marketing director for Ensoniq, agrees: "Our opportunity now is not in making another quantum leap but in figuring out how to *hide* all the technology. Then people will feel that they can stop chasing technology and get back to their music."

Jim Mack, Alesis' director of marketing, learned this lesson while pushing their entry instrument, the Quadrasynth. "We approached the keyboard market as if it were purely spec-driven, so we came out with the original Quadrasynth, the first key-

board to have 64 voices, with 76 keys and all these sounds—spec numbers that blew our competition away. Only we had our specs thrown back in our face. People weren't buying. Why? You can't discount the fact that the *feel* of the keyboard is just as important as the sound. We were naïve, thinking that since we had so much success in making drum machines and drum sounds that it would just translate into making a full palette of keyboard sounds. But it didn't. In the current run of products, though—the Quadrasynth Plus Piano, the S4 module, the QS6 keyboard, and the QS8 master controller—we went after this 'musical' aspect, and the sounds are a strong point as well."

How are synths faring in the



How to Sound **PUNK**

Pedal suggestions from **DOD and Ibanez**

Punk rock's seminal guitarists didn't use effects; they just turned their amps up to 10. Unfortunately you can't do that in most situations, especially not if you're 15 and trying to figure out the changes to "When I Come Around" without getting dismembered by your parents. Which is where DOD's FX76 Punkifier and Ibanez's Soundtank SP5 Slam Punk pedals come in. Both offer an appropriate mix of melody and chainsaw, control names like "anarchy" and "menace," and enough gain to get a rage-ridden roar from a barely cracked-on Fender Super Reverb.

The Punkifier (\$119.95) has two distinct distortions, one like a late-'70s Boss Overdrive and one like a Big Muff Pi fuzzbox. With the "punk"

(overdrive) control all the way left, it's as close to '70s Stones or AC/DC as it is to the Sex Pistols. (Contrary to common belief, punk rock rhythm guitar doesn't need overkill distortion; the secret is to play hard enough for your intensity to overdrive the amp.) Mixing in a little fuzz yields a harsher sound, like the Ramones' first album or early Black Flag; more fuzz puts you in grungier Stooges/Mudhoney land, slightly prone to strange breathing effects. It also recorded well direct into a 4-track through a cabinet simulator.

The Slam Punk is closer to the thrasher tones of '80s hardcore, with a heavy power-chord sound like Mötörhead's "Killed By Death." Even with the treble ("spike") turned most of the way up, it's still bassy. It's plastic, and its controls are a little rickety, but at \$69.95 list, even the crustiest Berkeley street punk might be able to raise enough spare change.—**Steven Wishnia**

traditional M.I. market? "It actually seems like we have more competitors than ever," says Korg president Mike Kovins, "what with Technics coming into the market. Yes, things have flattened out somewhat from the '80s. We've got to work a little harder to get more consumers. Fortunately, even though prices are going down, and people expect bigger and bigger retail discounts, the costs of technology are coming down also."

Steve Johannessen, Kurzweil's director of artist relations, agrees that things are in flux. But he is absolutely clear on one thing: Keyboard synths aren't going away. "Dedicated hardware is still a more viable alternative than software-based synths that would go into computers," he insists. "Plus, there is a case to be made for real playing. The performing artist doesn't want to sit onstage with a computer and a keyboard, and it is performers that drive the synth market."

Johannessen's views are undoubtedly colored by the reasonably strong sales racked up by the K2000, K2500, PC88,

MicroPiano, and other Kurzweil pianos. But elsewhere the perspective isn't so sanguine. Consider Yamaha. This company led the synthesizer pack through the '80s, but these days their direction in the American market is anything but clear. Avery Burdette, product manager for digital musical instruments, believes this has more to do with market saturation and American culture than with Yamaha itself.

"Everything [in the States] is focused around sample-playback technology workstations," he says, "and the belief that more is better—more voices, more ROM, more channels, more tracks, more polyphony. But in Europe, live music is much more alive and well than it is here. They have tremendous opportunities for people to go out and play as single acts in beer joints, pubs, community halls and such. It has led to an industry: the one-man band who takes some sort of keyboard to a gig and plays all the parts, either live or live against sequenced tracks. There's a lot of areas that can and will be addressed with different kinds of hardware."

For my money, it's far too early to declare the synth era closed. Hartley Peavey's organ metaphor assumes that synth buyers, as a group, aren't changing. This is clearly not true: They've evolved along with their instruments. Catalog sales and the used gear market are booming because keyboardists don't need as much support as they used to, from dealers or anyone else. The days when musicians were panicked by technology are long gone. They've become more discriminating and are making their priorities clear: "Give us musical firepower and we'll love you. Give us musical firepower with a lame interface or some other flaw, and we'll stay away in droves."

Contributors: Connor Freff Cochran is a musician, writer, and former juggler.



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fast forward

LISTENING TO THE boisterous swamp-boogie rock and roll that comes out of Steve Jordan's and producer Niko Bolas' Notech Studio, one feels lost in a time warp where Muscle Shoals and Motown have suddenly landed in Manhattan. Jordan's spacious loft is a dream of contemporary art deco styling and old-time quality. At one end, a '50s Grundig console stereo sits among fuzzy '40s furniture, while across the room a large curved wall replicates Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Guggenheim Museum. Scattered around the space are old record players and vintage amps.

Steve Jordan made his name as a '70s studio drummer (everyone from Spyro Gyra to the Blues Brothers to the first and best Letterman band), but soon his Al Jackson-meets-Ringo groove was in demand with Keith Richards and Booker T. Nowadays, Jordan collaborates with folks such as Dave Pirner, Kim Wilson, David Sanborn, and Richards (cowriting *Talk Is Cheap* and *Main Offender*) while producing such artists as Tom Jones and his own, still unnamed group. Jordan's original, rumbling R&B tumbles out of Notech in primal bursts, like *Sticky Fingers* Stones jamming in a New Orleans church.

"I'm not supposed to be able to make music like you just heard in here," says the rebel Jordan, after playing a couple tracks. "You're supposed to have a big two-inch analog machine with a bunch of old people playing it and a big budget for them. There's got to be some risk factor and you have to wait till Jupiter aligns with Mars. *This* is about taking power away from the companies. Totally. When the music's all over the Internet there ain't going to be no companies."

Jordan eschews most things digital; his motto is "No automation, no doctoring." That's one factor determining Notech's warm, powerful sound; the oddly shaped loft space ("the curved walls cut the standing waves and

BY KEN MICALLEF

MI
MUSICIANS INSTITUTE

HOME STUDIO PRESENTED BY
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Steve Jor

an's home studio



name here tkikikik

make the sound warmer”) is another.

“After making records through the ‘80s,” explains Jordan, “when the idea was to spend as much money as possible, everyone using 48 tracks, 96 tracks—it was horrible. I never want to use more than one machine again. I don’t have time to save every breath on a vocal. I just want to get back to making real music.”

Jordan’s jukebox begins with a 1963 oyster-finish Ludwig four-piece kit ●, plus a selection of old Zildjian and Paiste cymbals. Drum microphones include a Shure SM57 ● overhead and Neumann U67s ● on the kick, mounted tom and below the floor tom, while a Telefunken 251 ● handles most vocals (“We only use tube and ribbon mikes unless it’s the Shure dynamic or the new Beyer”).

If buddies Danny Kortchmar or Pino Palladino aren’t around, Jordan handles guitar and bass duties. A 1965 Fender Coronado ● is the main axe, accompanied by a mid-’60s Rickenbacker 360 ●, a ’52 Fender Esquire, ’64

Fender Musicmaster, ’63 Danelectro bass, Zorko electric upright bass (prototype for Ampeg baby bass) and Zorko B18 amp miked with an AKG C12.

Using a Marshall mini stack head ● (“It makes a blood-curdling sound”), Jordan treats his guitars with a variety of effects. His Kay tremolo ●, Vox Crybaby ● and Maestro Fuzztone ● run through additional amps like a Fender Vibroking, Magnatone High Fidelity Custom 480, Kay, and Rickenbacker (none pictured). When hankering for a nasty, gnarly organ sound, Jordan plays his Farfisa Combo compact organ ●, the exact one used on Don Henley’s “Dirty Laundry.”

With its nine channels and three big control knobs, the studio’s glowing tube goliath, a 1962 Universal movie mixing board ● gives Jordan’s music a huge soundstage. “This is an all-tube board [refurbished by home studio guru Tay Hoyle], the tubes are behind me there on the wall. The warmth of the sound

comes from that. It doesn’t sound like digital. The board gives the sound dimensions, it captures the whole thing. It’s not just stereo, it’s left, center and right. It has a main gain and two ways of adjusting the gain that change the overall sound.”

Powered by a Crown DC300 amp (given to Jordan by Neil Young during the *Landing on Water* sessions—not pictured), and accompanied by a mid-’60s Neve remote broadcast board ● for various vocal uses, the whole shebang then runs into an Alesis BRC ●.

The recording process continues at two Alesis eight-track ADATs ●. For echo Jordan pulls in a Scully quarter-inch mono reel-to-reel. “I use the Scully for mono slap echo. It’s the sound on those old Chess records. Any type of reverb here is plate or coil reverb, but never digital.”

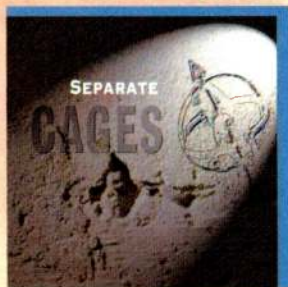
Mixdown occurs at a Panasonic SV-3700 DAT deck ●, with the sound running through various effects, including a Behringer Composer MDX 2000 limiter/compressor ●, a rack with eight API EQs ● and a pair of original Motown EQs ● “They were a big part of the Motown sound, with a tone no other equalizer has. When the old Motown studios closed I was able to buy a couple of them. They’re worth every penny. They look plain, but you open them up... you have to be from NASA to know what’s in there.”

A Mackie 32+8 board ● handles playback only, while a pair of Yamaha NS-10M monitors ● (or JBL 4311s) deals with Jordan’s penchant for cranking the volume. Before his cars are totally fried, he puts on either Sony MDR CD1000 ● or MDR 7506 ● headphones.

A Vox portable amp ●, Hazelton Brothers grand piano ● and a common Tascam 202WR cassette deck ● round out Jordan’s studio. And if you get him mad, perhaps by playing some digital mix with sequencers and drum samples, Jordan might strap on his Wilson Pro Series boxing gloves ● and crown you one.

“Some people just don’t know how to play,” says Jordan. “Part of the process I love is to actually play the music. There’s no sampler that can do what you heard. You can’t sample that, you can’t sequence that. I love the dinosaur aspect I find myself in right now.”

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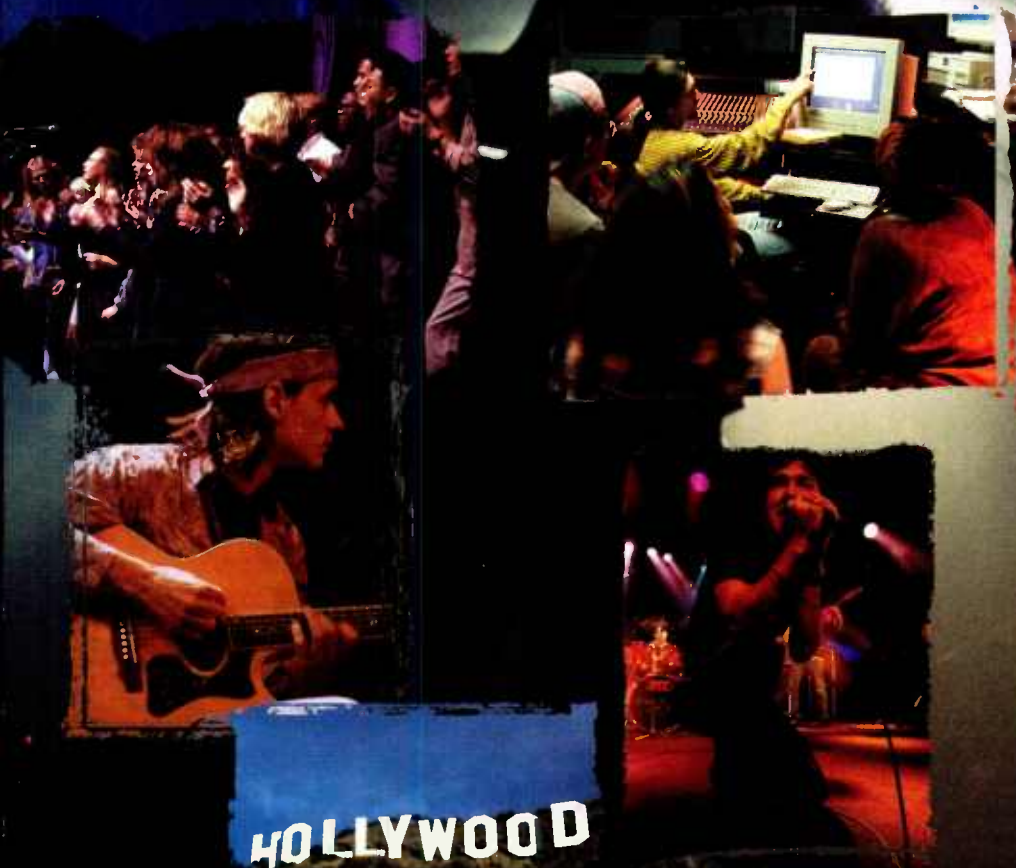
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records

Fathers and Sons

Kenny Garrett

Pursuance—The Music Of John Coltrane
(Warner Bros.)

Miles Davis

Live Around The World
(Warner Bros.)

Alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett seems to recognize, as do few players of his generation, that tradition is a continuum of ideas and parallel realities; it represents an invitation to build on the past, not dwell in it. Which is why, throughout his blistering solo spots on Miles Davis' curtain call, *Live Around The World*, and on his own *Pursuance—The Music Of John Coltrane*, he always comes across as his own man.

But then, so did Miles—right to the end. It's clear from the 1988-1991 vintage of *Live Around The World* that Davis was evolving a fresh ensemble style, couched in the raiments of contemporary rhythm and electronic technology, but firmly rooted in 40 years of melodic and harmonic wisdom. Miles' salty choruses on "New Blues" and his lyrical open horn on "Mr. Pastorius"/"Amandla" point to the continued vitality of his conception, while on the latter, the group's shifting percussive canvas, bittersweet overlay of synth harmonies and polyphonic call and response suggest a scaled-down big band. For "Human Nature," Davis transforms har-

monies into nocturnal ruminations, while Garrett creates a gripping rhythmic testimony out of short melodic fragments. "Intruder," "Wrinkle," and "Tutu" bear witness to Davis' singular vision of funk, while his balladry on "Time After Time" is a poignant display of autumnal ability, as Doc Cheatham puts it, to beautify weakly articulated notes, work them into painterly phrases, and make you love them.

Pursuance is largely a reappraisal of John Coltrane's middle period, from the Atlantics through the sweet modernism of Impulse! recordings such as *Crescent* and *A Love Supreme*. Garrett's keening, bulbous alto tone recalls the preaching sound of R&B and gospel horn players, and his acute sense of rhythm allows him to suggest the lyric core of Trane's cathartic, convulsive phrasing without getting caught up in an endless maze of notes.

It all could easily have dissolved into a string of well-intentioned neo-con tributes if not for Garrett's sure sense of self, a solid Brian Blades-Rodney Whitaker rhythm team, and some of the finest Pat Metheny playing in recent memory. Metheny's spirited interplay with Garrett on the title tune really ups the emotional stakes as a prelude to the benediction of "Alabama," Trane's epic lament for four little girls killed in a Birmingham church bombing. Closing out, Garrett and Metheny (on guitar synth) feed off of each other's phrases on a simmering "Latifa." It's final proof that if you approach Coltrane's music with the same sense of individuality he brought to it, his spirit can nurture and guide, and not overwhelm. —Chip Stern

Beck
Odelay
(Geffen)

An endearing quality of Beck's *Mellow Gold* was that this eclectically sampled, Dylan-infused, country-blues album was recorded while the then-"loser" was still homeless. Four years later, many would've expected Beck to forgo his lowlife roots and do a proper recording. But not only has Beck topped his debut, the scrappy loner has returned to the "suicide shack" to do it. Why fix it if it ain't broke?

With the sampler running hot over various guitars, *Odelay* is a jumble of '70s records snatches sculpted over phat-footed hip-hop beats and swinging "Funky Drummer" loops. What sounds like Zappa, Jobim, and the Emotions surfaces, though some samples were reportedly quashed when Geffen couldn't secure clearance. Sampling aside, *Odelay* is intoxicating, proving Beck to be one of the era's more inventive songwriters.

His observations are as catchy as his new songs. "Novacane" tells a trucker's tale with noise-rock fervor, while "The New Pollution" kicks it over a breakbeat and Muzak saxophone. Even the Peter Sounds school appears on "Jackass," an atmospheric rumination on the slacker ethic Beck popularized. *Odelay* is largely upbeat, even punk, but occasionally Beck reveals a sad soul under his clown's mask, as on the Beeheartish "Derelict" and the mournful "Ramshackle."

While Noel Gallagher relives '60s pop and the Sheryl Crow-Joan Osborne clique check their '70s folk cred, Beck reinvents it in his "stale shoes"—and knocks our socks off. —**Ken Micallef**

Neil Young with Crazy Horse
Broken Arrow
(Reprise)

Charming, loopy, slightly dark-hued, and exhibiting pronounced symptoms of musical schizophrenia, Neil Young's latest is a warm return to various forms and formats. After the streamlined dynaflow of Pearl Jam on the heavily-muscled *Mirror Ball*, the reappearance of Crazy Horse is especially welcome; throwing bolts and a trail of rusty nails, the venerable band's swaybacked chug-a-lug is perfectly in synch with its leader's footloose style.

Most of the songs on *Broken Arrow*: (which, by the way, does *not* include a cover of the Young-penned Buffalo Springfield number) concern traveling without destinations, so it's fitting that the record ranges all over

the map stylistically. Kicking off with three lengthy tracks that feature mountains of lyrical guitar-jam, the album moves along with three country-flecked hoe-downs, exiting with a curious solo performance and a cover of a Jimmy Reed tune that sounds like it was recorded from the floor of a crowded nightclub. Young is, as he proclaims in one song, "changing highways in heavy traffic," but it's a surprisingly comfy ride.

All three of the hard rockers are engrossing, with "Loose Change" a standout that sports a hammering, almost raga-like solo and a wonderful singalong chorus: "Loose change in my pocket, future in my hand/Too many distractions for me to understand."



Among the shorter tracks, "Changing Highways" and "Scattered" shine. But the rambling solo number "Music Arcade," at once consoling and sinister, will puzzle as many listeners as it delights. The album winds out with "Baby What You Want Me to Do," strangely recorded at a Princeton-By-The-Sea club to emphasize the competition between Crazy Horse's shuffling performance and the crowd's inebriated chatter.

Young is at his most mercurial on *Broken Arrow*: alternately serving blazing guitar-whack and introspective lope. A couple of the songs here describe a comet painting the evening sky; the music reminds us that Young's artistic path is as unpredictable as that heavenly body's arc. —**Chris Morris**

Sebadoh
Harmacy
(Sub Pop)

Refining the brooding legacy of Lou Reed and R.E.M. into pure shimmering neurosis, Lou Barlow's Sebadoh may sometimes epitomize the indie scene at its most one-dimensional, but *Harmacy* proves that a good melody conquers all. However cloying the mind games—early on, Barlow worries about complicating the complications—his confident

tunesmithing belies the hesitant introspection.

Appropriately, Barlow specializes in the existential dread brought on by relationships. "On Fire" examines the hazards of honesty, noting it's safer to lie, a sentiment echoed by the jaunty kiss-off ditty "Ocean." Naturally, this lack of openness makes it harder to sustain connections, accelerating the downward spiral, etc. It's all too sad, except that Barlow's tunes have the luminous warmth of a lullaby. See the lilting "Perfect Way" or the wistful "Nothing Like You" for details.

Jason Loewenstein actually grabs a larger share of the writing credits, and his tracks provide a breather from Barlow's lamentations. Rowdier interludes like the thrashing "Love to Fight" and "Crystal Gypsy" find the boys imitating tough guys in entertaining, if not entirely convincing, fashion. But it's Barlow's eight tunes that provide the dramatic weight. "Willing to Wait" couldn't be more old-fashioned: When he sighs, "I'm still in love with you and I only wanna be with you," there's no irony, just a gifted troubadour in fine form.

Some folks on the commercial fringes seem ambivalent about mainstream attention. Maybe Barlow's recent left-field chart success with Folk Implosion will permit him to overcome such hangups and choose a savvy producer to help showcase the songs next time (without losing integrity, of course). In the meantime, *Harmacy* contains too much good stuff to be left to a narrow cult.

—**Jon Young**

Joi
The Ameba Cleansing Syndrome
(EMI)

Two years ago, Joi's debut effort, *The Pendulum Vibe*, a wildly eclectic mix of R&B, funk, and rock, sent a clear signal that she was an artist to watch. Her latest, produced by the Organized Noise team, is more streamlined, but also satisfying. Though there's plenty of funk, jazz, and blues, it's the rock that really stands out: "Dandelion Dust" floats in a Doors-like haze, coming across like an updated '60s acid trip.

With a flexible voice, Joi jumps from genre to genre as if she owns each one. She reveals her softer side on songs like "So Tired," but really excels on darker, more cynical material. On "Hurts Sometimes," she wails, in a style inflected with jazz and blues, about the anguish of abuse, conveying the conflicting feelings of someone who loves and hates her mate. But she's all sexy sass on her down-and-dirty invitation to her lover to escort her through his "Dirty Mind."

The real hard-rock gem is "Move On," which

chuck's cuts

by charles m young

Patti Smith*Gone Again*
(Arista)

I thought Patti the Rock Star often behaved like a precious, egomaniacal twit. Which made it difficult to get jazzed about Patti the Poet. But talent often comes in annoying packages. She could always sing and emote and attract smart musicians who understood how to maximize her strengths. Which remains true. Informed by the deaths of her husband, brother, and Kurt Cobain, *Gone Again* marks a mournful return, as opposed to the triumphantly blasphemous resurrection of *Easter*. Patti the Sadder and Occasionally Wiser. Those seeking inspiration in visionary poetry, in fervent recitation, in guitars that churn and chime, will still find it here. And I still find her interviews annoying.

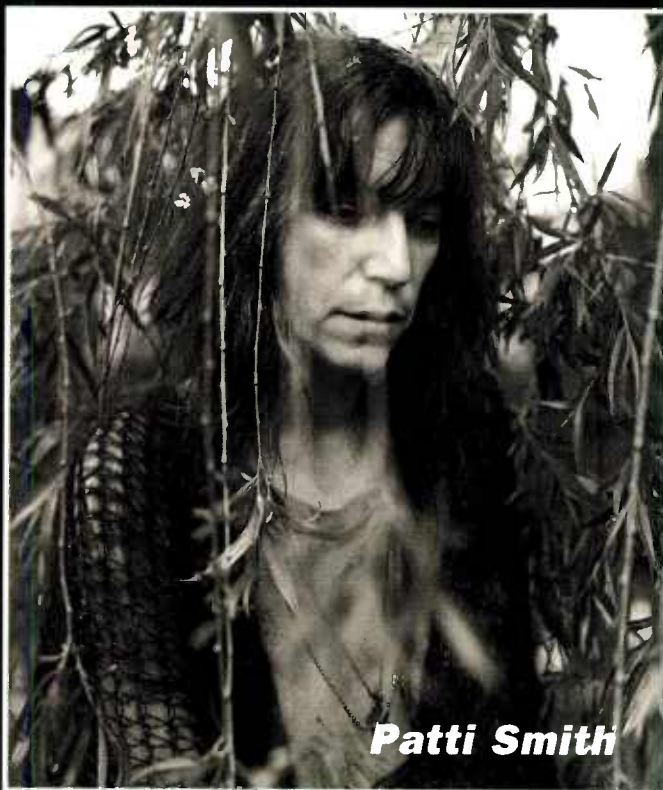
Eric Johnson*Venus Isle*
(Capitol)

More a creature of the guitar biz than the record biz, Johnson seems like a nice guy who favors crescendos of shimmer in his chorused tones, which will appeal to those who think punk and grunge were a big mistake and someday history will validate FM radio of the late seventies and early eighties. For all the nimbleness of finger and effect, his melodies don't quite add up. His lyrics do, though: Johnson likes his sentiment raw and New Age.

Gillette*Shake Your Money Maker*
(SOS/Zoo/BMG)

Nothing I've seen in the Bible says you can't be pious and indignant about premature ejaculation at the same time, so I guess there's no logical contradiction between "2 Minute Brother" and Gillette's profuse thanks to the Lord in the credits. And any residue of cognitive dissonance gets lost in the relentlessly catchy synth riffs, which will indeed get your money maker shaking. Vocalist on 20 Fingers' "Short Dick Man," the funniest novelty single of last year, Gillette brings brass, sass and sex to the usually anonymous

techno/dance/rave format. Whatever the hell you call it, it needs a Ronnie Spector, and Gillette could be her Puerto Rican cousin.

Humble Pie*In Concert*
(King Biscuit Flower Hour)**Patti Smith**

Humble Pie probably has the highest raucous quotient of anyone in '70s hard rock and are here captured at their most raucous, at Winterland in 1973 when Peter Frampton was out and Clem Clempson in on lead guitar. So even if they cover some of the same material as *Rockin' the Fillmore*, the arrangements are more brutal. You need another version of "I Don't Need No Doctor" anyway. Steve Marriott's exquisite yearning-to-be-black stage patter—make that yowling—is alone worth the price.

The Smears*Like Hell*
(Headhunter/Cargo)

I want to marry the Smears. All three of them. Their contempt for history and high school make me feel warm inside, as only punk rock can heat my internal organs. Punk rock? Thirteen songs

in 27 minutes, memorable tunes sung out of tune, furious bashing of instruments, no finesse, and they're funny. The female Descendents. The less dissonant Frightwig. The non-sociopathic Courtney Love. I can see my unborn children in their eyes.

Various Artists*Jall Kunda:**Griot Music of West Africa and Beyond*
(Ellipsis Arts)

Oral historians in West Africa, griots often accompany their song recitations with a kora, an instrument that is played like a harp and looks like the offspring of a guitar and a giant beach ball. The result is sort of like Steve Reich transposed to an exotic scale; trancy in its repetition, but urgent in its pulse, as the storyteller doesn't want you to sink completely into an alpha state. Guitarists, drummers and singers who are bored stealing from the usual sources could find some inspirations here, while everyone else can groove out. Co-produced by Bill Laswell and Foday Musa Suso, a Gambian kora virtuoso.

Don Walser*Texas Top Hand*
(Watermelon)

When Walser dies, God will insist on yodeling lessons. Texas swing at its most charming since the

Playboys.

John Fahey/Peter Lang/Leo Kottke
(Takoma)

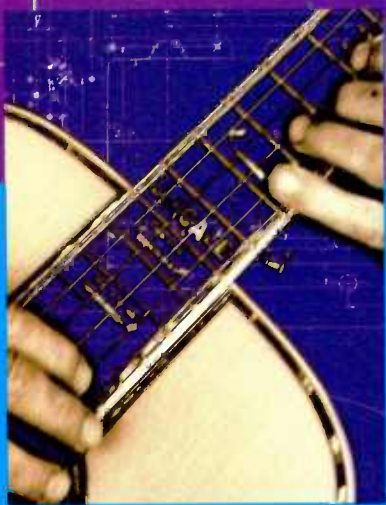
Fantasy is reissuing the Takoma catalogue, and worshippers of the steel-string acoustic guitar will everywhere rejoice. Fahey, the progenitor, and Kottke and Lang, the more-or-less prodigal sons, are here captured at the peak of their powers, both of finger and of composition. Opens with Kottke's amazing version of "Cripple Creek," which cuts the one on *Mud Lark* because he doesn't mess it up with other musicians. Closes with the best version of Fahey's signature tune "In Christ There Is No East Or West." In between there's plenty of resonatingly good stuff, too. Recorded in 1974, several years before New Age guitar started screwing everything up.

"On the opening 'Death In The Wilderness'... he rages about the abuse of the environment, accompanied by the staccato surges of crash drums and snakey coiling guitars that recall King Sunny Ade's juju sound. Compile the year and this track would be a contender."

Q MAGAZINE

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builds to a stirring finale, powered by muscular riffs and funky bass lines. Joi heads off in yet another direction on "I Believe," which has a surging retro feel; the horn lines recall early Blood, Sweat and Tears. Joi's tantalizing vocals aside, the album's biggest treat might be the robust organ lines pulsing through many of the tracks. With a band this strong, and a singer this ambitious, *The Ameba Cleansing Syndrome* suggests the music can go just about anywhere.—**Dennis Hunt**

Amy X Neuburg & Men

Utochma
(Razor)

Though little known outside of San Francisco, Neuburg makes music whose dizzy mix of complexity, accessibility, and intensity are matched by few. For frame of reference, begin with Frank Zappa: Neuburg shares his fondness for percussive ostinati (the multiple marimbas of "Delirium"), and a willingness to

segue from polyrhythmic snarls to straight-ahead riffing. She can bait a tune on the kind of hook that sinks and settles: "Into That Hole," with its synth peeps and drones, waterfaling guitars, and hypnotic whispered vocals, is a Cocteau Twins flashback, while the album's opening cut, "Chinatown," is a 9/8 tangle, with rhythms twining and loosening around dissonant guitars that blare like car horns in a traffic jam. On the title track, Amy rocks the rafters with a weird mix of Celtic pipe music, Nigerian pop, and film noir. Laurie Anderson would be proud.

But Neuburg's art is too diverse to be derivative. She has that rare gift of using sound and lyric to create a real sense of place. A techno-poppish tune, "Get That Camera Out of Here," stops suddenly, leaving a single synth tone hanging in the air; from this foundation Neuburg builds the next cut, "Fish," which seems to begin as the musings of a drowning victim. "That must be a police car 'cuz there's that sound/So I try to pull

Ping-Pong and Wood Blocks: The Making of Dave Matthews' *Crash*

By the time you read this, the Dave Matthews Band should be roaming the country yet again on the 1996 H.O.R.D.E. tour. Contrary to popular belief, though, Matthews and his cohorts don't spend every day on the road. They occasionally make albums too. And sometimes they're involved in something that's even more important—table tennis.

Such was the case last November, when the band was tracking for their latest album, *Crash* (RCA), at Bearsville Studios in upstate New York. Right in the middle of the converted barn where the tunes were cut, just a few feet away from the recording console, stood the studio's most indispensable piece of gear, a Ping-Pong table. While one member of the band worked on perfecting his tracks, producer Steve Lillywhite would challenge the others to one round of paddling after another. These contests, although seemingly endless to the outside observer, served an important purpose: taking the edge off the boredom of recording.

Along with the games and several improvised jams, sixteen songs were recorded, four of which were cut from the final album.

During the sessions, Matthews and Lillywhite rarely made suggestions to the

other bandmembers about their parts. As Matthews put it, "Everyone makes his own bricks, and then it's up to us to make a wall out of them." Thus left to his own devices one day near the sessions' end, Carter Beauford overdubbed percussion onto "#41," first congas, then wood block, then timbales. The wood block track was greeted with hearty non-enthusiasm by both frontman and producer; the latter mock rode a horse as Beauford played. Yet, remaining true to their method, they indulged the drummer's whims. And when all the tracks were done, you had to admit there was something there.

"That's hip-hop, isn't it?" Lillywhite asked Beauford as they listened to the playback. "Yeah," Carter replied. "It's hip-hop reggae rock 'n' roll." Lillywhite smiled. "Kind of sums up the Dave Matthews Band in one song," he said with a chuckle.—**Mac Randall**



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records

over but there's no ground," she sings over open space and chords that float like seaweed in the tides. Chaos and noise follow, but at the end we're left with a couple of wispy chords, an in-your-head guitar buzz, a water drip, and an affirmation that "I died laughing."

All this may seem a little pretentious, but Neuburg pulls it off with virtuosic aplomb. The Men—guitarist and stick player Herb Heinz, percussionist Joel Davel, and keyboardist Tim Root—ace her arrangements with humor and discipline, while Amy darts from synth to

drums and lays down vocals which betray a theatrical sensibility. Now and then the band erupts in spasmodic improvisations called "Man Jams," which seem to function as catharses for those who find Neuburg's charts too confining. But the music works best when she holds the reins and challenges the listener to hang on.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Willy DeVille

Loup Garou

(Discovery)

For two decades Willy DeVille has sung his backstreet soul/blues/doo-wop hybrid with the poise of a matador, the passion of a pulpit-pounding preacher, and the primal urgency of a revved-up motorcycle gangster. Naturally, such raw-nerve emotion meant that he could only find a decent following in Europe. But with *Loup Garou*, the prodigal son returns to prove he's still leader of the pack. Steeped in the smoky accordion tradition of DeVille's latest hometown, New Orleans, this is subtle in nuance but staggering in scope; it connects the dots between all of the artist's sacrosanct influences, often within the framework of a single song.

DeVille kens the importance of a composer like the late Doc Pomus (brought out of retirement for the historic *Le Chat Bleu* album), and he imbues his own material with similar pop flair. Here he pens a duet for exteen diva Brenda Lee—the mandolin-and-orchestra "You'll Never Know"—then manages the tricky task of singing the hell out of it while never once eclipsing his star partner. The result is a breathtaking, anachronistic ballad that might've been the #1 convertible makeout song from 1962. DeVille follows the Pomus schematic down a couple of tambourine-punctuated paths ("Heart Of a Fool," "No Such Pain As Love"), then veers down ethnic sidestreets for the mariachi-themed "Still (I Love You Still)" and the sinister Creole crawl of the title track. "Runnin' Through the Jungle" combines Cajun, mariachi, and vintage Drifters. All of it is on the money, performed from the heart, and as intoxicating as one of those fabled Hurricane cocktails you're not supposed to drink much if you value your wallet.

Longstanding fans will find much to ogle. In "When You're Away From Me," DeVille's husky, tobacco-scratched croon slithers into every nook and cranny of the finger-popping groove. And he gets downright Delta nasty—via tinny old bullet microphone—in the thumping "White Trash Girl." Ironically, the one time *Loup Garou* falls a wolf-hair short is when DeVille tries on someone else's shoes for size, in this case, the Chambers Brothers' "Time Has Come Today." For a writer who's so damn cool, it's a tepid step down to bother with such obvious covers.—Tom Lanham

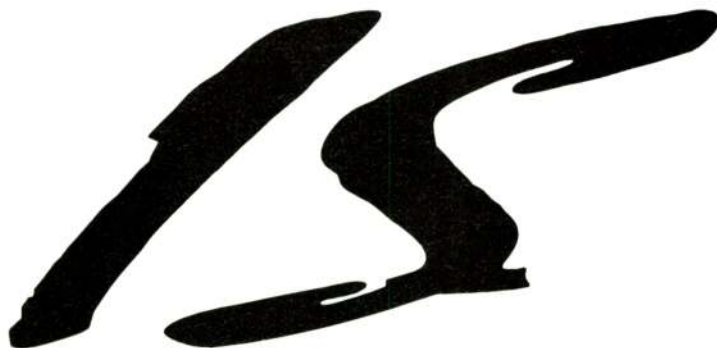
Electronic

Raise the Pressure

(Warner Bros.)

If you regard Manchester, England as the center of the modern rock universe, you must have been excited when Electronic put out its first album in 1991. Here, after all, were two of that town's greatest scions—the Smiths' Johnny Marr and New Order's Bernard Sumner—banding together. Too bad, then, that Electronic turned out to be such an unequal pairing, offering much more Sumnerian dancefloor fodder than Marrish guitar grooves. Still, the union was promising (and commercially successful) enough to warrant a sequel. And so, after only five years, comes *Raise the Pressure*, which promises—at least at first—to even the balance.

The album's opener, "Forbidden City," is absolutely radiant. Sun-kissed acoustic guitars create a sense of spaciousness behind Sumner's laconic singing. The lyrics tell of a fellow who's in a bad relationship but the



"Refreshing and Original" - Music Connection

"Cutting and Aggressive" - BAM Magazine

"They're Dramatic, Passionate Rock Alternative. Different!" - RIP Magazine



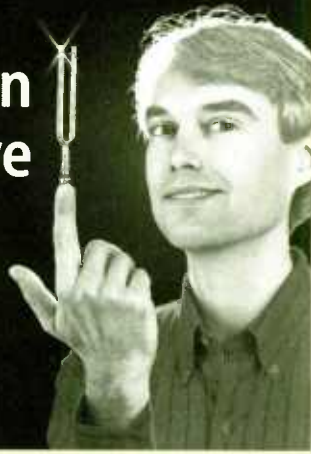
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"They **LAUGHED** when I said they could have **Perfect Pitch**

...until I showed them the secret!"



The TRUE STORY by David L. Burge

IT ALL STARTED in ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry.

I would slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda didn't practice anywhere near that amount. But somehow she always seemed to have an edge which made her the star performer of our school. It was frustrating.

What does she have that I don't? I would wonder.

Linda's best friend, Sheryl, sensed my growing competition. One day she bragged on and on about Linda, adding more fuel to my fire. "You could never be as good as Linda," she taunted me. "Linda's got Perfect Pitch."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked.

Sheryl gloated over a few of Linda's uncanny musical abilities: how she could name any tone or chord—just by ear; how she could sing any pitch she wanted—from mere memory; and how she could even play songs after only listening to them on the radio!

My heart sank. Her fantastic EAR is the key to her success I thought. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But later I doubted Sheryl's story. How could anyone possibly know F# or Bb just by listening? An ear like that would give someone a mastery of the entire musical language!

It bothered me. Did Linda really have Perfect Pitch? I finally got up the nerve and point-blank asked Linda if the rumors were true.

"Yes," she nodded to me aloofly. But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "Can I test you sometime?"

"OK," she replied cheerfully.

I couldn't wait to call her bluff...

My plan was ingeniously simple: I picked a moment when Linda least suspected it. Then I boldly challenged her to name tones for me—by ear.

I made sure she had not been playing any music. I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made certain other classmates could not help her. I set everything up so I could expose Linda's Perfect Pitch claims as a ridiculous joke.

Nervously I plotted my testing strategy. Linda appeared serene.

With silent apprehension I selected a tone to play. (She'll never guess F#!)

I had barely touched the key. "F#," she said.

I was astonished.

I quickly played another tone. She didn't even stop to think. Instantly she announced the correct pitch.

Frantically, I played more and more tones, here and there on the keyboard, but each time she would somehow know the pitch—without effort. She was SO amazing—she could identify tones as easily as colors!

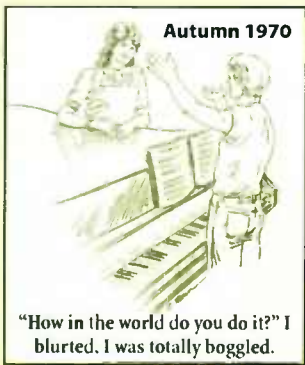
"Sing an Fb," I demanded, determined to mess her up.

With barely a pause she sang the proper pitch. I had her sing tone after tone. But as I checked her on the keyboard, I found that she sang each note perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "How in the world do you do it?" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed. And to my dismay, that was all I could get out of her!

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me hard. My head was dizzy with disbelief, yet from that moment on I knew Perfect Pitch is real.



I couldn't figure it out...

"How does she DO it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why doesn't everyone know musical tones by ear?

Then it dawned on me that most musicians can't tell C from C#, or A major from F major—like artists who brush painting after painting without ever knowing green from turquoise. It all seemed so odd and contradictory. I found myself even more mystified than before.

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it myself. I would sweet-talk my three brothers and two sisters into playing tones for me, then guess each pitch by ear. My many attempts were dismal failures.

So I tried playing the tones over and over in order to memorize them. I tried to feel the "highness" or "lowness" of each pitch. I tried day after day to learn and absorb those elusive tones. But nothing worked. I simply could not recognize the pitches by ear.

After weeks in vain, I finally gave up. Linda's gift was indeed extraordinary. But for me, it was out of reach.

Then it happened...

It was like a miracle. A twist of fate. Like finding the lost Holy Grail.

Once I had stopped straining my ear, I started to listen NATURALLY. Then the incredible secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not visual colors, but colors of pitch, colors of sound. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever "let go"—and listened—to discover these subtle differences within the musical tones.

Soon I too could recognize the tones by ear! It was simple. I could hear how F# sounds one way, while Bb has a different pitch color sound—sort of like "listening" to red and blue!

The realization hit me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven and Mozart could mentally envision their masterpieces—and name tones, chords and keys all by ear—by tuning in to these subtle "pitch colors" within the tones.

It was almost childish—I felt sure that anyone could unlock their own Perfect Pitch by learning this simple secret of "color hearing."

Excitedly I told my best friend Ann (a flutist) that she could have Perfect Pitch too. She laughed at me.

"You have to be born with Perfect Pitch," she asserted.

"You just don't understand how easy Perfect Pitch is," I explained.

I showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she too could hear the pitch colors. From this discovery, it wasn't long before Ann had also acquired Perfect Pitch! We became instant school celebrities. Classmates loved to test our abilities, leaving everyone awed and amazed by the power of our virtuoso ears.

Way back then I did not know the impact I would have when years later I explained my discovery to college music professors. I was surprised that many of them laughed at me at first. You may have guessed it—they told me, "One must be born with Perfect Pitch." Yet once I revealed the simple secret to Perfect Pitch—and they heard for themselves—you'd be surprised at how fast they would change their tune!

As I continued my own music studies, my Perfect Pitch ear allowed me to progress far faster than I ever thought possible. I even skipped over two required college courses. Perfect Pitch made everything much easier—performing, composing, arranging, sight-reading, transposing, improvising—and it enhanced my enjoyment of music as well! I learned that music is definitely a HEARING art.

And as for Linda?

Oh yes—time eventually found me at the end of my senior year of high school, with my final chance to outdo Linda. Our local university sponsored a music festival each spring. I went all out for it. Guess what? I scored an A+ in the most advanced performance category. Linda only got an A.

Sweet victory was music to my ears—mine at last!

THESE DAYS, thousands of musicians and two university studies have already proven my Perfect Pitch method. Now I'd like to show YOU how to experience your own Perfect Pitch!

I hope you won't laugh as you picture yourself with various Perfect Pitch skills—like naming tones and chords by ear with laser-like accuracy! I think you will be surprised at just how simple Perfect Pitch really is—and how very valuable.

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melody is pure cotton candy; Marr's feedback-laced solo is a surprise but fits in perfectly. "For You" is more guitar-driven pop, slashing and propulsive. The contrast between Marr's coolly aggressive playing and Sumner's plain yet droll voice is engrossing.

Nothing else here matches the brilliance of those first two songs, although the clever change from D major to D minor in the chorus of "Out of My League" comes close. The proceedings quickly become more Sumner-centric. Insistent drum machines, glossy synths,

and female backing vocals (courtesy of Primal Scream's Denise Johnson) pop up on "Dark Angel" and reappear often thereafter. There's certainly nothing wrong with Sumner's pop sensibilities. "Until the End of Time," "Freefall," and "How Long" all percolate nicely and feature pleasant melodies. But heard together in one sitting, they take on an air of one-dimensionality, with a sound that's—what else can one say?—very '80s. Of course, lots of people enjoyed the '80s. If you did, you'll like this album.—**Mac Randall**

Pete Droge Find A Door (American)

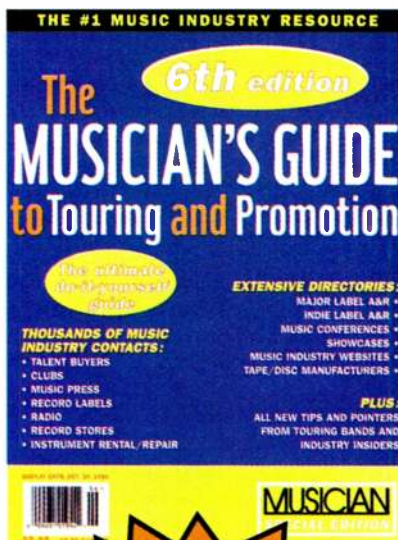
Fueled by the success of his last album, *Necktie Second*, which led to an opening slot on Tom Petty's *Wildflowers* tour, Pete Droge got on a songwriting roll that generated 32 songs for this album, eleven of which made the final cut. Fleshed out by Pearl Jam producer Brendan O'Brien via Byrdsy electric guitars, Hammond B-3, sturdy harmonies, some slippery slide guitar solos, and Droge's drawling vocals, it's a record of appealing, well-crafted songs that benefits a lot from a seamless sequence, even achieving a kind of musical momentum as it progresses. The result may not be especially ambitious or original, but you could do worse than crank it in your car on a long summer's drive.

Droge mines a couple of classic pop song themes here—good love and bad love. "Wolfgang" is a jovial declaration of fidelity, while "Doesn't I Have To Be That Way" traces a romance gone wrong. "Sooner Than Later" is a prayer for love to return, with a sweetly melod-

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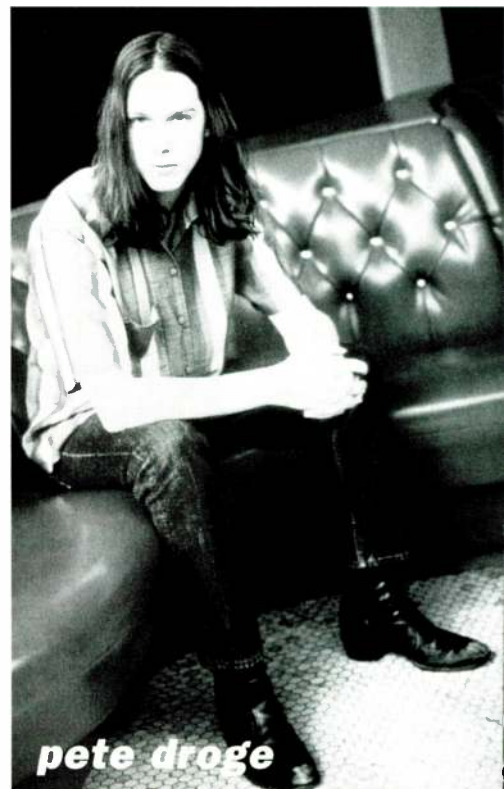
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ic chorus that emphasizes Droge's songcraft—he's not afraid to sound pretty when necessary. He's also quick to contrast that tendency with old-fashioned rock and roll—"Brakeman" floats on an emphatic groove, exuberant Everly Brothers-like harmonies, and a lyric that Johnny Cash could sink his teeth into, while "Out With You" melds a chorus that would have worked for Peter Noone in 1964 with decidedly contemporary verses. Ultimately, treading that delicate balance between sophistication and simplicity is what makes Droge's music tick.—**Paul Zollo**

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE'S 1996 BEST UNSIGNED BAND COMPETITION

SEMI-FINALISTS

ROUND 6

This is the last round of semi-finalists in Musician's 1996 Best Unsigned Band Competition (in case you've missed an issue, all semi-finalists are also notified by mail). Semi-finalists from all 6 rounds will now be narrowed down to a final round, to be judged by our all-star panel (Stone Gossard, Pat Metheny, Juliana Hatfield, Steve Winwood, Adrian Belew, Jimmy Jam, Matthew Sweet). They will select twelve winners to appear on Musician's Best Unsigned Bands CD and receive editorial coverage in Musician Magazine. Top placing bands will also receive a selection of gear from JBL Professional, makers of the EON portable PA system.

We'd like to thank everyone who entered—we heard a lot of great music this time. Watch for winners to be announced in the next issue. In the meantime, let's hear it for our last round of deserving semi-finalists.

10th And Ash, AZ
2 People, NY
3 Bean Soup, WA
3 Finger Brown, CA
35 Russia, CA
3 Ib Universe, MI
Aeon Dream, CA
Albion Cross, PA
All That, NV
Angelic Host, NY
Anthero, MA
Arawak Jah, WI
Arlene Bishop, CAN
Athaeneum, NC
Baby's Nickel Bag, VT
Barely Pink, FL
Bee Charmers, MA
Bernice, CA
Bev Jester, NE
Big Creek, OH
Big Bad Freakies, OH
Billy Sunshine, CA
Bitter Dolores, PA
Blue Face, TX
Blue Junction, DE
Bob & Robin Orfant, NH
Bobby Bogner and the Distractions, CA
Boud Deun, VA
Box Set, CA
Bright Black, MI
Brother Mustard, NY
Bruce Sherman Band, NY
C-Toe, NY
Caedmons's Call, TX
Carnival Whig, WV
Ceili Rain, TN
Charles Attic, TN
Cheryl K Warner, MI
Cimarron, MS
Cindy Rickmond, NY
Colombe, NJ
Crackerjack Tattoo, CA
Crash Basket, FL
Cylinder, CA
Dark Star, OH
Daughter Julie, SD
Dave King and Da' Jamok, NY
Dots Will Echo, NJ
Dove, WI
DT's, MI

Element, FL
Emory Swank, PA
Felix Findlay, USVI
Fiddleworms, AL
Five O'Clock Shadows, MA
Frampton Brothers, PA
Francisco Caraballo, RI
Freddiw And The Mybellines, MA
Frosty, CAN
Gough Van Gough, DC
Great Train Robbery, MD
Gregory Scott Reeves, CA
Grunwald, NY
Haymaker, OR
Hill Tigay, CA
Hum Machine, WI
Hydro, TX
Ichabod Slipp, PA
In June, OR
Inner Soul, NJ
Insania, IL
Intl Request, NC
Ishkabibble, OH
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Jeff Creamer, NC
Jeff Denny Band, NY
Jericho, CA
John Schrader, NY
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Jury, PA
Kate O'Connor & Falcon, MA
Ken Rhodes Trio, NC
Keyed, CA
Khronic Break, CA
Kitchens And Bathrooms, TN
Knivel, MD
Kyf Brewer Band, PA
Ladybeard, WI
Lance Stevens, MN
Little Al Thomas & the Crazy House Band, IL
Lowell Hopper, APO
Lunar Merchant, MD
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Media, CA
Merrills, GA
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Mudslide, NV
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One Alternative, PA
Peel, UK
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Poets Of Heresy, OH
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Purge, FL
Quill, OR
Reaction, IL
Reno's Whorehouse, NJ
Republican Hippie, FL
Revolverina, MN
Riccardo Perotti & Los Miserables, FL
Rippopotamus, MA
Robbie Gennet Band, FL
Robert Burton & The Strange, CAN
Rufus T. Firefly, TN
Sacked Out Sherry, NY
Say Uncle!, NJ
Scarab, NY
Shabazz 3, TX
Shades of Ultra Blue, MA
Shari Weisman, CO
Sidecar Jones, NY
Silica Gel, MI
Simple Simon, IL
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Smart Brown Handbag, CA
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Solid Ground, CA
Somebody's Sister, MA
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Spinning Jennies, CA
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Stately Wayne Manor, NY
Stellar Pop Combo, CA
Sugarcoma, MA
Superfag, NY
Suzy Saxon & The Anglos, VA
Swingset Police, WI
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Ten Past Ten, IN
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The Trolls, PA
The Vic Morrows, MA
The Watch Society, IL
The Webstirs, IL
The Wind Syndicate, CA
Thought Junkie, MA
Threscher, MA
Trailer Park, MA
Treatments, NJ
Troll For Trout, MI
Unity, CA
Unless, RI
V Kemp Jones Band, GA
Vena Cava, OK
Venus Sparkplug, MD
Virgin Mary RR, PA
Weeds Of Saturn, CA
WFO, VA
Without Ruth, TN
Woo Woo Stick, IL
Zenbishops, MN
Wormboy Loves Noodle, ME



editor's pick

[cont'd from page 77] tor). The Prophecy (which has a list price of \$1250) is itself a hot new instrument that uses physical modeling technology (essentially, very high-speed digital signal processing) to create classic analog synth sounds as well as a variety of extremely realistic acoustic instrument sounds. There are also three models of the Trinity that come with the Prophecy board already installed—the 61-key Trinity Plus (list price: \$3999), the 76-key Trinity Pro (list price: \$4799) and the Trinity Pro X, which has 88 weighted keys (list price: \$5999). Not cheap, but the best rarely is.

Knockouts on the rear panel of the Trinity testify as to additional expansion options that are expected to be available

soon. The most exciting of these is the HD Option (list price: \$660), which will allow Trinity to be used as the engine of a hard disk recorder. This adds a SCSI port (for the connection of devices such as hard drives and CD-ROM drives), two analog-to-digital (A/D) inputs, and an S/PDIF digital input/output for DAT backup and direct recording of digital signal. In addition, an Alesis Digital output (list price: \$150) will enable Trinity's audio tracks to be ported directly to an ADAT via its "light pipe" digital interface. We're told that the HD Option will enable two channels of simultaneous recording and four channels of playback, all automatically synchronized to the internal sequencer. Audio tracks will be able to be routed internally to Trinity's master effects (though not to insert effects) for signal processing in the digital domain. A flash ROM option (list price: \$650 for eight megabytes) completes the picture, allowing user samples to be used as wavetable sound sources to create new sounds. These samples can be input via the SCSI port or loaded from Trinity's floppy disk drive, which can read DOS AIFF files or Akai samples.

Of course, none of these technical details would be worth squat if the Trinity didn't sound good—and it does. The 256 factory programs provide you with every basic tool (clean, crisp pianos, wailing guitars, funky basses, lush strings, punchy brass, and absolutely killer drums, including some of the best brush drums and orchestral percussion I've ever heard), and also give you an arsenal of unique synth effects. If you've got the Prophecy card installed, a third bank of 64 sounds add the best of that instrument's factory sounds. The flash ROM option adds two more banks of 128 sounds, and, of course, the onboard disk drive (which can store program and combi data as well as sequences and setup data—all in the same file/folder hierarchy used by Mac and Windows computers) lets you save and load an unlimited number of sounds.

In fairness, there are a few things about the Trinity which bother me a little. For one thing, the total polyphony of the unit is 32 notes, which really isn't enough when you consider that the use of dual-oscillator voices halve that and the layering of sounds in combi or sequencer mode reduces polyphony further still. Another niggle is the slight delay in screen redrawing—typically less than a second and having no effect on sound generation or timing, but nonetheless reminiscent of the bad old days of under-powered computers as opposed to the crisp performance we've become accustomed to in today's digital devices. Last but not least, even though there are four discrete output jacks, individual programs cannot be routed to the two secondary jacks except via some convoluted master effects routings. It should be a much easier process to extract individual outputs, and I'd hope to see this addressed in future software revisions. (Happily, the Trinity operating system can be updated from floppy disk, in contrast to many other synths, which require new chips to be installed.)

Overall, however, the Trinity is a real winner. With its basic yet informative training video and from four to six well-written though dense owners manuals (the number depends upon the installed options), you'll be up and running in no time, thanks in large part to the well-thought out graphic user interface. The Trinity is a highly recommended instrument that can easily serve as the centerpiece of any live performance or recording rig.

Special thanks to Mike Kovins and Jack Hotop at Korg for their assistance.

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products index

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able in Mysterious Black, Earth-Tone Brown, and World-Wearry Salt & Pepper.

● **Tease Me Tina.** Life-size inflatable Tina wears extremely tight clothing over her polyethylene curves. Undulates to music (requires 12 D batteries) while blue eyes seductively stare and lips pout. Upon being touched, administers powerful ego-bruising electric shock and deflates. Great party gag and training device for the newly married or convert-

ed. Remember, kids, technology is our friend. After all, look what the cordless mike has done for the world of professional 'rasslin'.—**Rev. Billy C. Wirtz**

Rich Borge

It's time once again for everybody's favorite high-tech flea market: the summer NAMM show. Time for a militia of merchandisers

to convince you that last year's almost-paid-off, state-of-the-art gear is, alas, this year's CP-70. Hey, don't get me wrong: I love dropping five grand on a keyboard that gives the definitive "Tubular Bells" sound. But there are a few other products I'd like to see as well:

● **Scenhausen Mike-So-Fresh.** Tired of stepping up to the house mike and being hit with that lingering bouquet of stale beer and last night's pizza? This handy recyclable disc slips under the head of the mike to eliminate odors and trap stray food particles. Available in

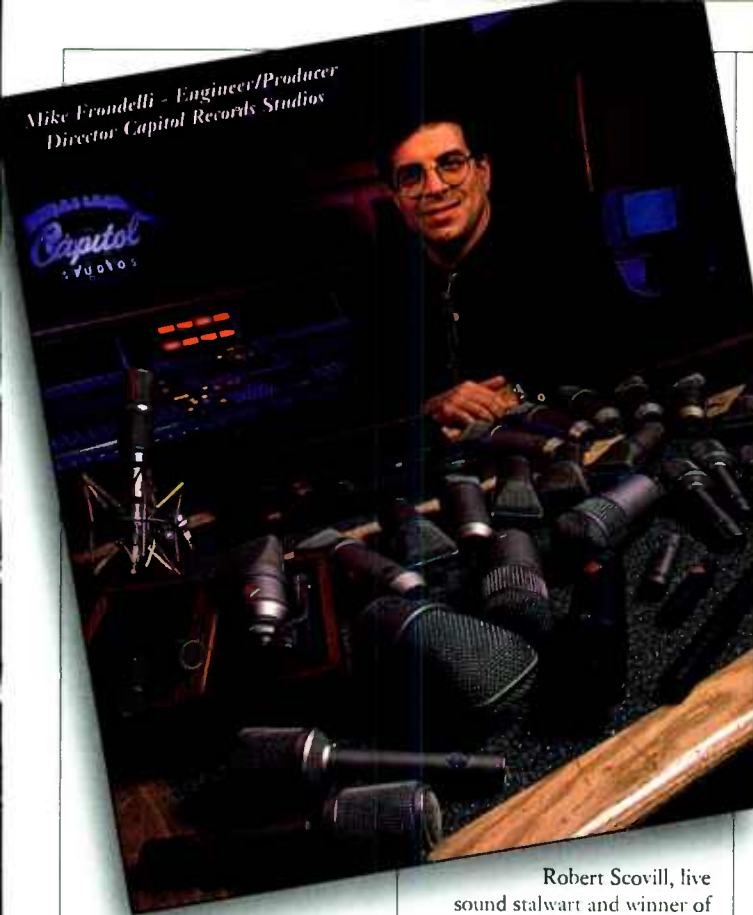
In the Sweet Buy-and-Buy

Scabreeze, Mountain Waterfall, and \$29.95-Motel-Almost-Pine scents.

● **Scenhausen Skidden Mask IV.** Eliminates, once and for all, health and fashion doubts regarding your road crew. Small adhesive strips attach to underwear and socks. By third day of wear, strip glows bright vegetation-green, reminding wearer it's time to change.

● **Sleep-Eze Motel Security System.** Attractive, laminated, hanging Do Not Disturb sign. Contains motion sensor

Mike Frondelli - Engineer/Producer
Director Capitol Records Studios



TWO PROS WHO KNOW GREAT SOUND.

TWO MICS THAT MAKE THEM VERY HAPPY.

Mike Frondelli, Director of Capitol Records Studios, has a connoisseur's mic locker, including more than 50 Neumann mics dating back to the 1940's. Newest in the collection? The mic Mike calls "the working man's Neumann," the TLM 193. Because it sounds so good in so many applications, Frondelli recommends the TLM 193 as "the one mic to have" for Capitol acts setting up project studios.

The TLM 193 is a stripped down, cardioid-only version of our famous TLM 170. It provides oodles of headroom, has virtually no self-noise, and can immediately give your project studio that professional sound (particularly on vocals) that you've been missing. (By the way, the TLM 193 has become our biggest seller.) It carries a retail price of less than \$1500.



TLM 193

Robert Scovill, live sound stalwart and winner of three TEC awards for Live Sound Excellence, knows a great microphone when he hears one. He has toured as the front-of-house mixer with bands like Rush, Def Leppard and most recently

Tom Petty.

"I am using the new KM 184 both out on tour and at MusiCanvas." (Robert's studio in Scottsdale.)

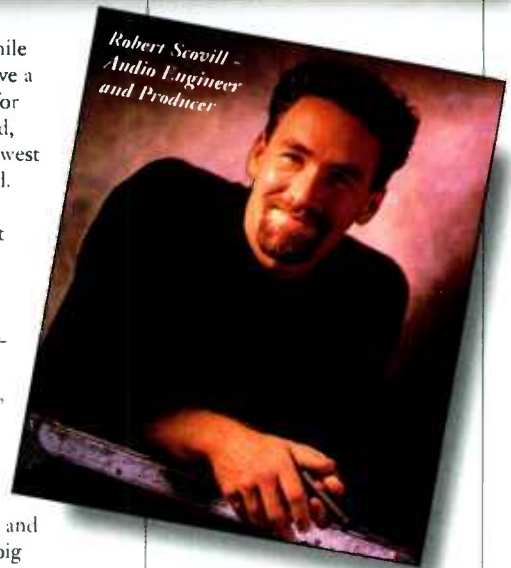
"The KM 184 carries all of the Neumann signatures, and I have had great success on a wide variety of sources, from the subtleties of violin to the extremes of distorted guitar."

The KM 184 is perfect for instruments of all kinds, and excels at overhead drum miking and capturing the elusive acoustic guitar. For professional quality at less than \$700 each, a stereo pair of KM 184s can easily be a part of ANY studio.

Let's face it. While Neumann mics have a stellar reputation for rich, opulent sound, they are not the lowest priced mics around. Why? Because we have to ensure that our microphones satisfy even the most demanding engineers in hyper-critical recording environments. But, we *have* found a way to take a few of the bells and whistles off a couple of our mics and still give you that big (HUGE) studio sound on a project studio budget.

The bottom line is this: before you go dropping big cash on outboard gear trying to make your studio sound good, consider the most important part of the signal path, your microphones. The only way to get great sound *out* of your studio is to *capture* great sound. And no other microphone captures sound as well as Neumann . . . not even close.

Robert Scovill -
Audio Engineer
and Producer



KM 184



Neumann USA

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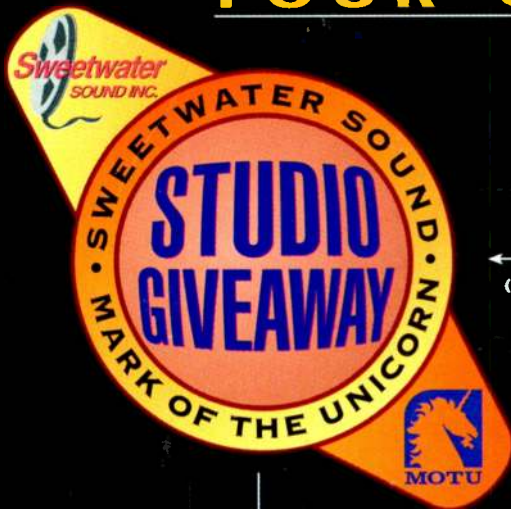
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