

The Kinks, p. 48

MARCH 1990

# MUSICIAN

## IT BEATS BEING A BEATLE

*George  
Harrison,  
King  
of the*

*Wi*

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ISSUE NO. 137



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TONY IOMMI

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## **GUITAR SPEAK II** is the

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**GUITAR SPEAK** (released October 1988) is the inaugural release in the No Speak line of guitar collections. It contains new instrumental tracks from the likes of Steve Howe, Alvin Lee, Robby Krieger, Phil Manzanera, Ronnie Montrose and more, and it set the standard for guitar virtuosity in the instrumental vein.

**NIGHT OF THE GUITAR** (released May 1989) is a double album set of live guitar pyrotechnics recorded in London. It is a result of a series of sold-out European dates which featured many of the players from the Guitar Speak record, including Steve Howe, Alvin Lee, Randy California, Robby Krieger and more.

**Wishbone Ash**  
Nouveau Calls  
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**Jimmy "Z"**  
Anytime Anyplace  
(IRS-49238)

**William Orbit**  
Strange Cargo  
(IRS-49098)

**Various Artists**  
Music Too Good For Words, Two  
(IRS-39099)

**Various Artists**  
Music Too Good For Words, Two  
(IRS-39192)





```
Edit/Chord[1]/Note
F#: Note=JJJJ
```

The U-20 can store 8 chord "sets," each consisting of a different chord assigned to each pitch in the octave.

```
I-R3: Electric Set U:0
C#3: I-128 So:C#3 Mu:Off
```

If you're considering composing, consider this: The U-20 can store four different drum and percussion arrangements, each with its own key assignment, level, panning and tuning.

```
Edit/Sound/Effect/Chorus
Out=Pre Rev Level=17
```

Each of the 64 sound patches can have its own reverb and chorus parameters, with each part being assignable to just reverb, just chorus, or both.

```
Edit/Timbre[1]/Tone
Tone = 03-018 BARAFON 4
```

While any of the 128 preset tones can be assigned to any of the 128 timbre locations, more exotic instruments can be accessed via U-Series ROM cards.

```
Edit/Sound/Part4/Output
Asgn=Rev Lvl=127 Pan=3
```

Each of the six parts can have its own effects on/off, level, and pan setting.

```
Edit/Sound/Part2/Timbre
Timbre=B35:JP8.Brass
```

Any internal timbre can be assigned to one of six parts. This keyboard, by the way, is multi-timbral with a 30-voice polyphony, making it ideal for live performances.

```
Rx|01|02|03|04|05|06|10
I-88 #064 : Worlds Apart
```

Since the U-20 will simultaneously receive on up to six MIDI channels plus a rhythm channel, you can create entire arrangements with an external sequencer, and split or layer up to six sounds on the keyboard.

```
Edit/Timbre[5]/Pitch
Bender Range=7-36 2
```

Each of the 128 user-definable timbres has its own flat and sharp bender range, making things like "whammy bar" solos as easy as the proverbial flick of a wrist.

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# INSIDE MUSICIAN

A Billboard Publication

No. 137 • March 1990

## Features

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By Mark Rowland

Two decades later, George is the one still having hits. As he gets ready to reassemble the Traveling Wilburys, Harrison explains why it's better to be back in a band. With additional commentary from Jeff Lynne, Tom Petty and Paul McCartney.

### 38 Abdullah Ibrahim

By Karen Bennett

As Dollar Brand he married South African spirit to new-wave jazz. Now he's a village elder—in Greenwich Village. A rare audience with a musical legend and philosopher king.

### 48 The Kinks

By George Kalogerakis

On tour with the band that never quits (for long). The Davies Brothers arrive in Germany as Kommunist Kinks fans pour through the Wall! Photos by Ray! An autumn almanac.

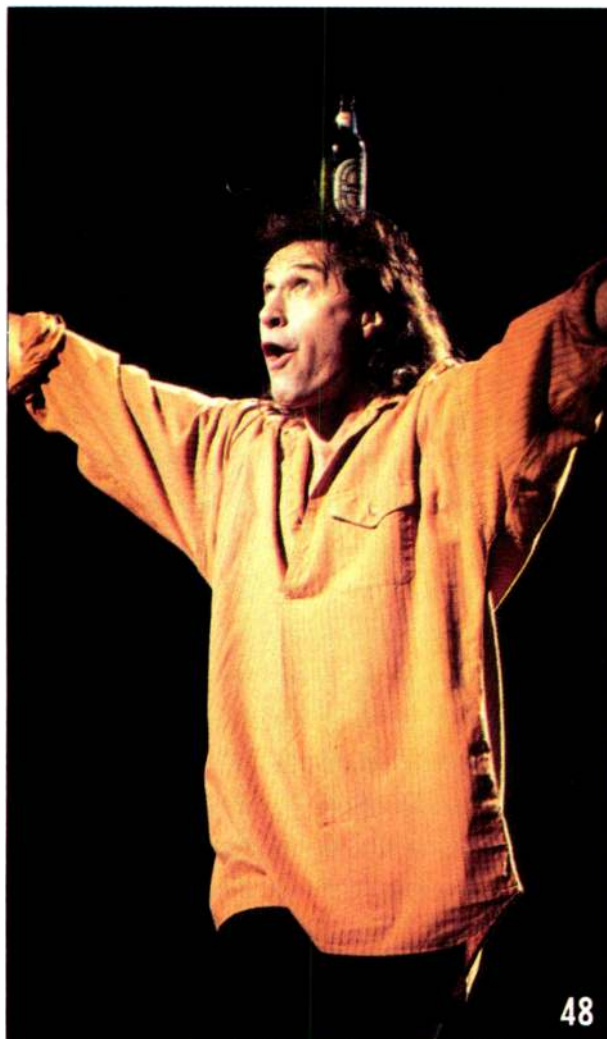
### 45 When I Paint My Masterpiece

Illustrations by  
David Cowles

Sparing no expense, *Musician* commissions the twentieth century's finest painters to design album covers for our greatest rock stars.

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By Katherine Dieckmann

### Jim Hall 21

Everybody knows who the swinging guitarist is, but few have figured out what he's about.

By Jefferson Graham

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By Daniel Gewertz

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Okay, enough about putting art ahead of money: Where do musicians go when they get sick of starving? A special section on pop's strange Valhalla, where music is made to order, the whole world hears it and the checks roll in.

By Jock Baird, Jon Young & Alan di Perna

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Cover photograph: Max Aguilera-Hellweg/Onyx; Contents (clockwise from top): Steve Jennings/LGI; Pat Blashill; Illustration: David Cowles



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ADVERTISING MANAGER

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SALES/PROMOTION

HYACINTH AMERO  
ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER

FINELLA TAORMINA • LORI MAGGIORE  
ADMINISTRATION

BILL FLANAGAN  
EDITOR

JOCK BAIRD  
SENIOR EDITOR

SCOTT ISLER  
SENIOR EDITOR

MARK ROWLAND  
(213) 275-7040  
PACIFIC EDITOR

ALAN DI PERNA  
MUSIC PROJECTS EDITOR

KEITH POWERS  
PRODUCTION EDITOR

J.D. CONSIDINE • TED DROZDOWSKI  
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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

MAC RANDALL  
PROOFREADER

JUNE HAYES  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

PATRICK MITCHELL  
ART DIRECTOR

CLAIRE MACMASTER  
PRODUCTION MANAGER

LISA PUCCIO  
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

RUTH MAASSEN • SHEILA TAPLIN  
TYPOGRAPHY

FINELLA TAORMINA  
PHOTO ASSOCIATE

HANS TEENSMAN/IMPRESS  
DESIGN CONSULTANT

MAIN OFFICE/PRODUCTION/RETAIL SALES

53 COMMERCIAL ST.  
GLOUCESTER, MA 01930  
(508) 281-3110

NEW YORK ADVERTISING/EDITORIAL

MUSICIAN, 1515 BROADWAY, 39TH FL.,  
NEW YORK, NY 10036 (212) 536-5208

JIMMY HALL  
CIRCULATION MANAGER

THOMAS KRAEMER  
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

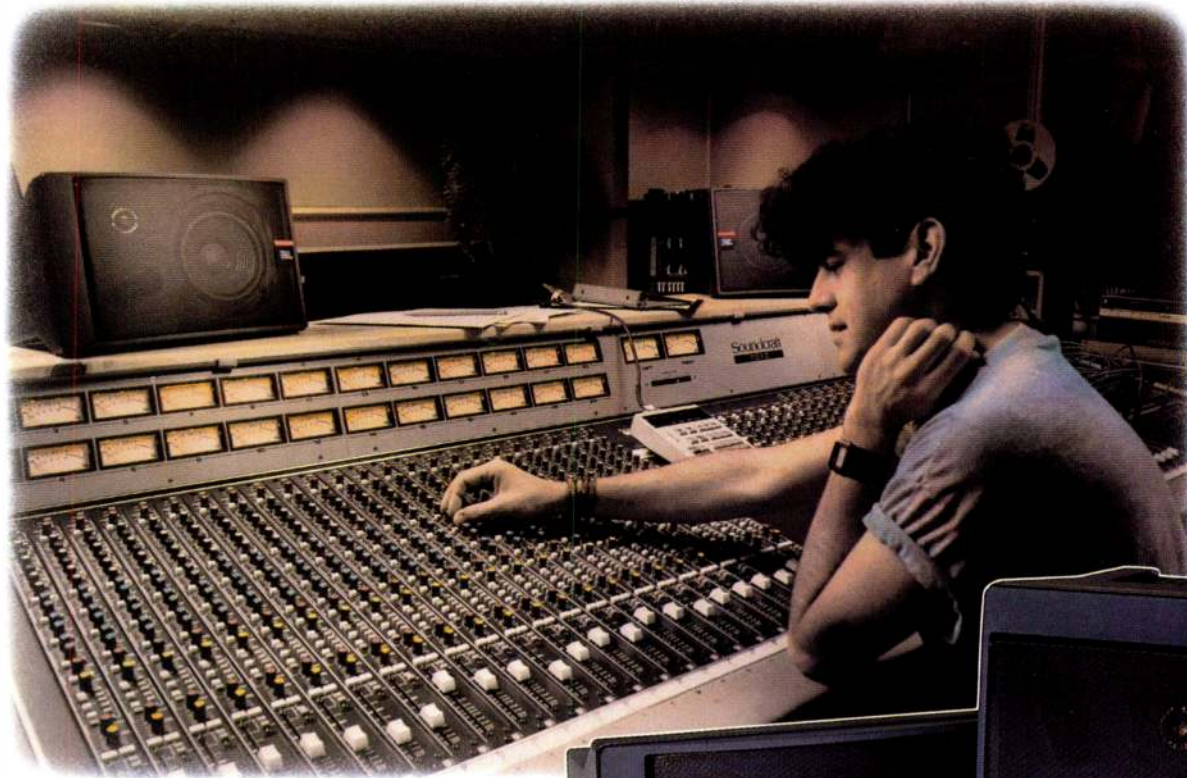
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MUSICIAN (USPS 451-910) is published monthly by Amordian Press, Inc., 53 Commercial St., Gloucester, MA 01930 (508) 281-3110. Amordian Press, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Billboard Publications, Inc., One Lator Place, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. Billboard Publications, Inc. is a subsidiary of AMI/Red Publications, Inc. MUSICIAN is a trademark of Amordian Press, Inc. © 1990 by MUSICIAN, all rights reserved. Second class postage paid at Gloucester, MA 01930 and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: \$7 per year; \$12 for two years; \$40 for three years. Canada and elsewhere, add \$12 per year, U.S. funds only. Subscription address: MUSICIAN, Box 1923 Marlon, OH 43305. Send address changes to above address. Call 1-800-347-6969 for subscription in the cont. US and 614-282-3322 elsewhere. Current and back issues are available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Billboard Publications, Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer: Gerald S. Hobbs; Executive Vice President: Samuel S. Holdsworth; Senior Vice President: Ann Lator; Vice President: John B. Halsebrook; Paul Curran, Martin R. Neely; Rosalita Lovett; Lee Zhitin.

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# LETTERS

## Dead Reckoning

IT IS REFRESHING to see the Grateful Dead (Dec. '89) having lots of success, which is something they strongly deserve. Here's to an excellent article by Peter Watrous; it showed me a side of the Dead I hadn't known before (besides the music). Thank you and long live the Dead!

**Bob Fausner**  
Franklin Square, NY

I GOT A KICK out of Jerry Garcia's comment in the recent interview, "I haven't got that much obeisance lately." He doesn't consider hordes of bewitched youths laden with tie-dyes and sporting T-shirts with blow-up likenesses of his bearded face to be a form of obeisance? Is this Jerry's way of showing that humility is one of his strongest qualities, or is he due for a trip to the optician?

**Betsy Carr**  
Philadelphia, PA

## Stevie Rave On

I HEARD Stevie Ray Vaughan for the first time just last year. The way he plays blew me away and motivated me to resume guitar lessons. So I was elated to read the in-depth interview (Dec. '89). Larry Coryell was perfect for the job. He asked the questions I wish I knew to ask when I met Stevie after a concert in August. I could feel the easy-flowing communication taking place between them. The whole interview was great! Thank you!

**Pattie Anderson**  
Long Beach, CA

## Bo Knows Diddley

THANKS FOR Larry Coryell's insightful and fun interview with Stevie Ray Vaughan. Coryell is obviously one of the many Vaughan admirers. His inclusion of the anecdote of Stevie's confusing him with Larry Carlton reveals an artist whose ego is secure in his own admirable achievements and wins him several character points in my book!

I'm sure Coryell meant no disrespect for Bo Diddley, a true genius whose legacy even Vaughan need never defend. But it's nice to know he's willing to, anyway!

**Roger Kirkpatrick**  
Abilene, TX

WHEN LARRY what's-his-name departs this world, perhaps the word will go out that there's one less good guitar player around. And hopefully no one will black his name by eulogizing him as "an entertainer."

When Bo Diddley finally sends up his spirit after surviving a lifetime of racism and theft, with his genius, drive and warmth intact, he'll be looking down at a planet with almost no corner untouched by his gifts.

**Christopher Cassels**  
Middletown, CT

## Awesome Aussie

THANKS FOR a great article on Paul Kelly (Dec. '89). Bill Flanagan covers Paul's career with his usual wit. Here's hoping that a Ron Nevison or somebody *doesn't* come along and ruin Kelly's thoroughly original and engaging music.

**John Kiel**  
Indianapolis, IN

## CD or Not CD?

WITH YOUR recent "10 Compact Discs We'd Like to See . . ." (*Faces*, Dec. '89) as a provocation, I have once again attempted to listen to *Circus Maximus* all the way through. And I have once again come to the conclusion that "Wind" is a miracle

of a song, but the rest of the album is barely worth the vinyl it was pressed into—kind of like the way the song "White Bird" stands in relation to *It's a Beautiful Day*. Maybe if the two songs could be released as a CD single . . .

**Mark Madonna**  
Hoboken, NJ

## Misplaced Letter

DUE TO A production snafu, Alvin "Red" Tyler is incorrectly identified as Alvin "Rod" Tyler in my story on Allen Toussaint (Dec. '89). Red Tyler is still active and well in New Orleans, frequently gigging with vocalist Germaine Bazzle and recording for Rounder Records.

**Ted Drozdowski**  
Boston, MA

## Two Steps Back

I FIND YOUR layout department appalling. Being a journalist myself, I can understand continuing a story from page 69 to 102. But from 102 back to 69 (Dec. '89)?! Get real, *Musician*! No one should have to go on a wild goose chase just to enjoy a good story or magazine.

**Tom Smith**  
Woodruff, SC

## Dictators Rule

ADOLF HITLER next to Alice Cooper (*Backside*, Dec. '89)?! That's like comparing Josef Stalin to Guns N' Roses. Guns N' Roses rules, Metallica rules, Mötley Crüe rules and *Musician* sucks big time. Just because some heavy metal artists have tattoos doesn't mean you have to stereotype like that. Go fondle your own genitalia and leave heavy metal alone!

**James Houlahan**  
Concord, MA

## Oedipus Wrecked

I LOVED YOUR '80s-in-a-nutshell issue (Nov. '89)—that's probably where they belong—but I do have

one quibble: Bill Flanagan remarked that "When Doves Cry" by Prince showed that "his familiar lyrical loopiness took on an added edge ('Maybe I'm just like my mother, she's never satisfied')." Well, perhaps Prince won't sound so strange to Bill if he considers that the line *actually* says, "Maybe *you're* just like my mother, she's never satisfied." Does it make more sense now, Bill? "Loopy," indeed.

**Joe Clark**  
Toronto, Canada

## J.D. Unmasked!

I'VE BEEN a subscriber to *Musician* a good long time and will continue to champion the magazine as one of the last bastions of intelligent writing in a world of ever-increasing musical triviality—but J.D. Considine is a glaring pockmark on an otherwise sterling effort.

The question is: Is there anything that this guy (or gal) actually likes? Not begrudgingly likes, or it's-okay-but-I-wouldn't-buy-a-copy likes, but really and truly "discovery of your first Beatles record" *likes*?

J.D., who done you so wrong that you feel this way? Who ripped your soul so deep that you just can't enjoy anything in life? Perhaps the answer lies in the name. I've come to the conclusion that perhaps there is no J.D. Considine. The column is being ghostwritten by Andy Rooney.

**Kate Turney**  
Newport News, VA

## 'Twas the Season

*Just to make you envious: Robin Muir of Westport, KY gave Greg Denby of Columbus, OH a gift subscription to Musician and both won our 1989 Holiday Raffle. Muir and Denby each received a Sony portable CD player and CD library. Thanks to everyone who participated.*

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# FACES

## THE BLUE NILE

### Completely committed

**W**E LOST our privacy." That's the explanation Paul Buchanan, Blue Nile's singer/lyricist, gives when asked why it took the Scottish trio five years to record *Hats*, the

mostly by word of mouth from critics and musicians. (Rickie Lee Jones is a big fan.) The enigmatically titled *Hats* is just as evocative, occupying the rarefied air somewhere between Ol' Blue Eyes and Eno's *Another Green World*. Buoyed by elegant, meticulously constructed tracks, Buchanan's wistful crooning and probing lyrics answer the musical



followup to their debut LP, *A Walk Across the Rooftops*.

It seems *Rooftops'* modest success—50,000 copies each in the UK and U.S.—took the unassuming band by surprise. Not having a manager as a buffer distracted them from their subtle, sublime music. To top it off, they were kept out of their studio for a year while another band ran over deadline, fended off record-company pressure to finish the album and endured several of what bassist Robert Bell calls "life attacks." "The actual recording didn't take very long," Bell says. "It took us a long time *not* to make the record."

*Rooftops* won a small but intensely devoted following in the States,

question, "What is this thing called love?" without sinking to schlock.

"We wanted it to be an album where a couple could close the door and just sit and listen to it," says keyboardist Paul Joseph Moore. "It was like, 'Can we be brave and tough enough to do a tender thing and just hand it over to people with as little fuss as possible?'"

A more earnest group you'd never want to meet. As Buchanan says, "It's too easy to be regarded as a difficult British band by the Americans, and a difficult Scottish band by the Londoners. And neither of those are true. The truth is that we are three men, and we are completely committed to what we are doing."

—Michael Azerrad

Photograph: (top) David Roth; Grooming: Jeanne Townsend for Celestine Cloutier, LA

## QUEEN LATIFAH

### Righteous rapping

**Q**UEEN LATIFAH (Dana Owens) doesn't look like a rapper. Or at least what you'd think a rapper should look like. Her shoes are tied and she's dressed casually in black, yet with a certain elegance. No rejects from the Mr. T gold collection. (She is vehemently opposed to the metal, most of which comes from South Africa.) She's not wearing any trendy leather jacket. You might even say that the soft-spoken 19-year-old, whose *All Hail the Queen* is both a critical and financial success, is downright, uh, regal.

"I don't wanna come off like a kid," she smiles. "I want people to understand that I'm a woman." Understanding is what Latifah is

here to preach—that and a message that she stresses is "positive."

"As much fun as it would be to curse 50 million times on a record, that's not me. Young women respect me, and I respect them. I'm proud of them; we all uplift each other."

Not that Latifah is too noble to make it funky. Her record is a wild and soulful collection of rap/

house/reggae fusion, and she shares the mike with fellow renegades De La Soul and KRS-One. She hasn't been dubbed the Aretha of rap for nothing. But in an industry where female rappers usually argue over some guy's crotch, Latifah's Afro-centric lyrics and fashion sense are a breath of fresh air. She has "kept true" to those things she finds to be self-evident, and is fiercely protective of the beat that made her.

"Rap is exploding. It is gonna broaden, it's going into R&B and rock, but I feel that you have got to keep loyal to rap. We need to keep our hardcore posses. There still has to be people to make strictly hip-hop. We speak to people, we talk in rhyme, I'm a rapper, that's where home is at. You can't stray too far from home. We can't lose our home base."

—Amy Linden



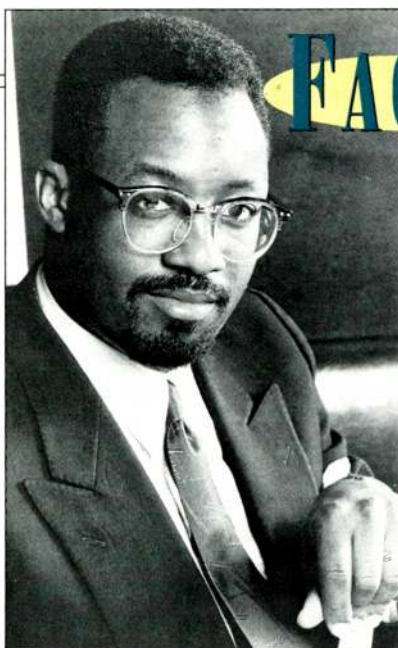
## CARL ALLEN

### Taking a beating

**I**'M NOT CONTENT unless I'm swingin'." That's the credo drummer Carl Allen has adopted, and he repeats it with religious fervor; even his telephone answering machine exhorts listeners to "keep swingin'." As a

member of the Freddie Hubbard Quintet, Jackie McLean Quartet and George Coleman Quartet, Allen is inextricably bound to swing.

Although he began "beating on all the furniture in the house" until his parents bought him a toy drum at age three, Allen entertained fan-



tasies of becoming a tenor sax player during his youth. That got scratched when he learned that the program at his Milwaukee school required aspiring saxmen to learn clarinet first. "My two oldest brothers had carved out this family reputation for being tough. If you played clarinet,

you might get chased home. My brothers said, 'We're not gonna have this.'"

Allen, who is all of 28, played his first jazz gig at age 16 with Sonny Stitt and Red Holloway. On Mel Lewis' recommendation Allen moved east and attended New Jersey's William Paterson College. During his junior year there he met Hubbard. The following year he became Hubbard's drummer, and later his road manager. Four years ago he hooked up with Coleman, and shortly thereafter got a call from McLean. "Those three, out of all the people I've played with, are the most challenging because of their level of intensity. When I get on the bandstand with them I feel like Mike Tyson's oppo-

nent: You get beat up so much, but you learn so much."

Allen, who has recorded nine albums as a sideman, and has performed with artists as diverse as Art Farmer and Larry Coryell, is now stepping onto the bandstand with his own Carl Allen Quintet. Their debut album, *Dream Boat*, is a felicitous mix of five standards and five originals. "I wanted to have a group sound. I didn't want it to sound like a 'drummer's record,'" Allen says. An East Coast tour and two more albums are on the band's agenda after *Dream Boat* is launched. It's a gorgeous maiden voyage—and it swings. — Karen Bennett

## CAETANO VELOSO

### Stranger no more

**B**RAZIL'S CAETANO VELOSO is now the world's Caetano Veloso. He traces his evolution: "I don't consider myself a real musician, but I got caught by music. I began by loving bossa nova and the music of João Gilberto, who is still my supreme master. Afterward I began to understand the power of mass music, mass media and the international pop scene. Now my music comes from that." It doesn't matter that his exquisite lyrics are in Portuguese.

However, those lyrics are so important—employing quick Fellini-like changes in direction, bits of concrete poetry, a reminder of Lennon McCartney, or Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa—that his music would almost seem an afterthought.

Wrong.

The music—soothingly languid,

even romantic, or aggressively driving, even brash—is equally complex, supporting the lyrics perfectly. It's music that comes from here, there, everywhere: Brazilian folk, Portuguese fado, samba, Beatles, bossa nova, rap, West Africa . . .

Veloso was ignoring cultural borders long before the current ethnopop vogue. Now his most recent journey with a foreign muse is in U.S. record stores.

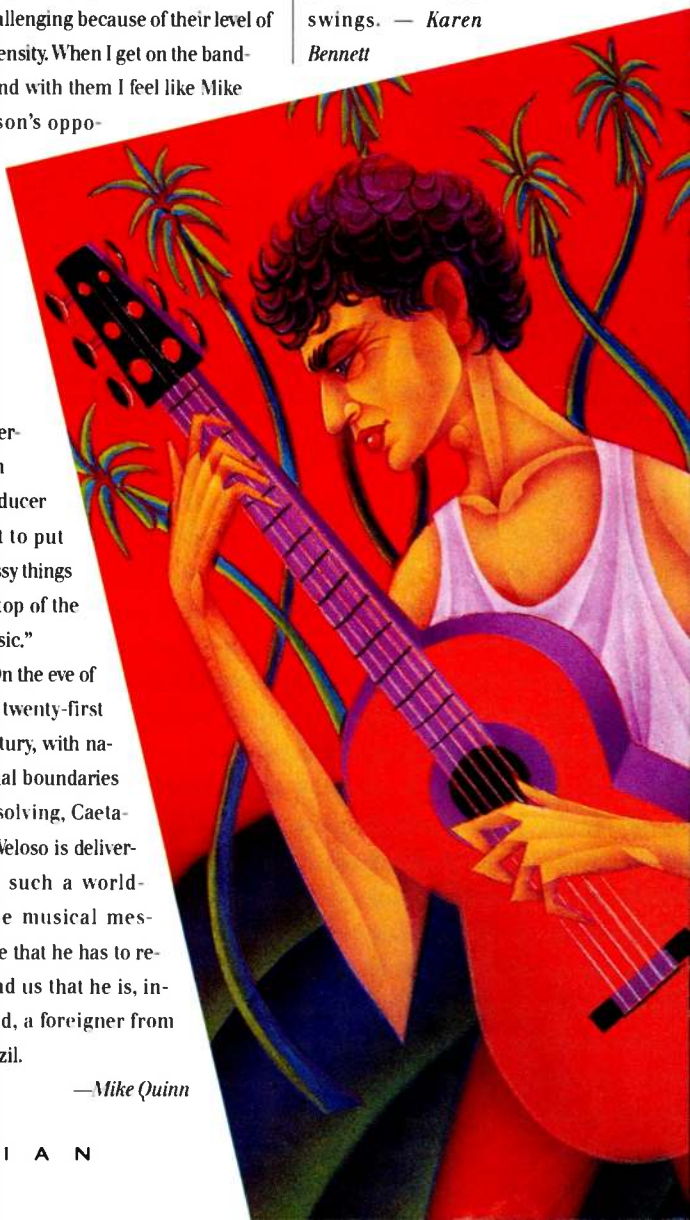
*Estrangeiro* ("Foreigner"), recorded primarily in New York, takes its edge from the Naked City. But the album's primary energy source is Veloso as heard through the ears of the record's producers, Soho mainstays Arto Lindsay and Peter Scherer, aka the Ambitious Lovers.

Veloso explains: "Arto and I have a complicated relationship since he grew up in Brazil and was influenced a lot by my music and my early records. You can feel that in *Estrangeiro*. It is so different than a Brazilian artist employing

an American producer just to put glossy things on top of the music."

On the eve of the twenty-first century, with national boundaries dissolving, Caetano Veloso is delivering such a worldwide musical message that he has to remind us that he is, indeed, a foreigner from Brazil.

—Mike Quinn





## PENNSYLVANIA VS. MUSIC

**T**HE CHILLING specter of music censorship refuses to go away. On December 12 Pennsylvania's state House of Representatives passed a bill requiring fluorescent yellow warning labels on CDs, cassettes and LPs whose lyrics "explicitly describe, advocate, or encourage suicide, incest, bestiality, sadomasochism, rape, or involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, or which advocate or encourage murder, ethnic intimidation, the use of illegal drugs, or the excessive or illegal use of alcohol." How many of your favorite songs fill the bill?

Criminal penalties would apply to anyone selling the above goods without a label, which must be under the shrink-wrap and denote the proper (or improper) category (or categories) being sung about. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Ron Gamble, has quoted from the Who's "You Better You Bet" and not one but two Elton John songs in seeking support for the legislation. The Pennsylvania Senate is now reviewing the bill. To quote reformer Wendell Phillips, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

—Scott Isler

## MAURA O'CONNELL Working with scales

**I**DIDN'T WANT TO BE a professional singer. It seemed like a silly way of life," confesses Maura O'Connell, vocalist extraordinaire. "I

for friends and neighbors on weekends. When members of the traditional band De Danaan caught her act and made a tempting job offer, she faced a quandary.

"I'd always rejected traditional Irish music. With so many others doing it, I figured, why should I?"

third LP.

Describing that style is tricky. Despite her Nashville base, O'Connell feels closer to folk than country, though she'd really prefer to be seen as "just a singer," adaptable to all sorts of material. (She doesn't write.) Observing that "great songs defy



was going to take over the family fish shop."

Happily, the fates decreed otherwise, sending the Irish lass on a trail that led to Nashville and the sessions for *Helpless Heart*. Featuring songs by the likes of Paul Brady, Nanci Griffith and Karla Bonoff, this striking LP uses top pickers like Jerry Douglas and New Grass Revival to embellish some of the sweetest singing this side of heaven.

The transformation from fishmonger to artiste began a decade ago in County Clare on the west coast of Ireland, where O'Connell performed

O'Connell recalls. "I was more influenced by contemporary people like Bonnie Raitt and Emmylou Harris." However, the prospect of seeing America for the first time proved irresistible, and O'Connell soon found herself on a six-week tour of the States.

"I never really joined the group," she insists. "It was always just one more tour, one more record." After two years with De Danaan, O'Connell embarked on a solo career, dabbling in new-wave pop and soul music before arriving at the style showcased on *Helpless Heart*, her

categorization," O'Connell believes her career has benefited recently from the renewed interest in singers and songs sparked by Suzanne Vega, John Hiatt et al.

Whatever the future brings, O'Connell doesn't have a master plan. "I've always gone with the flow. I always said if I didn't like the way things were happening, I'd go back to Ireland and sell fish."

And when did she stop saying that? "I haven't stopped yet," O'Connell laughs. "I still say, 'One more year, then maybe I'll give it up.'"

—Jon Young

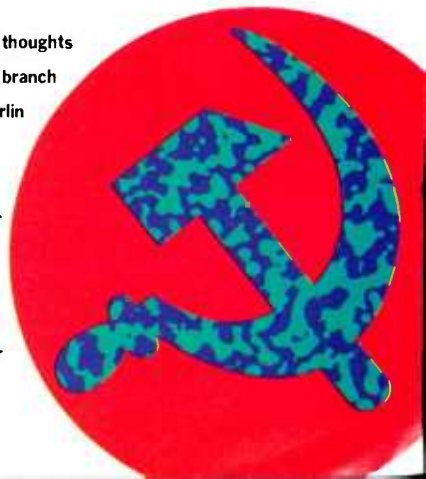
## MTV'S PARTY MUSIC: DA OR NYET?

**H**AS GLASNOST gone too far? Even the most openminded liberals may have second thoughts about MTV pushing through the formerly Iron Curtain. Recently the MTV Europe branch has been providing 24-hour feeds to Yugoslavia and Hungary via cable, and East Berlin hotels only (sorry, comrades) via satellite.

Now how about the Big Boy, the mighty USSR itself? The mind reels, but officials of MTV and the Soviet broadcaster Gosteleradio have been meeting about providing "a few programs," according to an MTV source, to the rockin' Russkis. The deal hinges on an exchange: They get three MTV shows—one from the U.S., two from Europe—and we get to see Soviet personality Dmitri Mamatov host a program. You guess who'll be better off.

—Scott Isler

Illustration: Merritt Dekle  
Photograph: (top right) Jim McGuire





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who see themselves as a cottage industry rather than a pop product. Typically their interest in synthesizers is for reasons more home ec. than aesthetic. "Ever since we started out, people wanted us to hire men to play the instruments, so we could just stand up there and smile and sing," explains Terre. "It used to be that you'd have to bring someone in to play a string harmony. Now you can hear it in your head, and just lay it down."

Mind you, the Roches are hardly into throbbing disco beats or lush sweeps of sound. Instead, *Speak* is full of stripped-

down and gently percolating rhythms, like the one that introduces the album's title track, with its straightforward pledge, "The time has come/For me to speak." The plink-plink synth line spells out "no nonsense" just as clearly as the lyrics do.

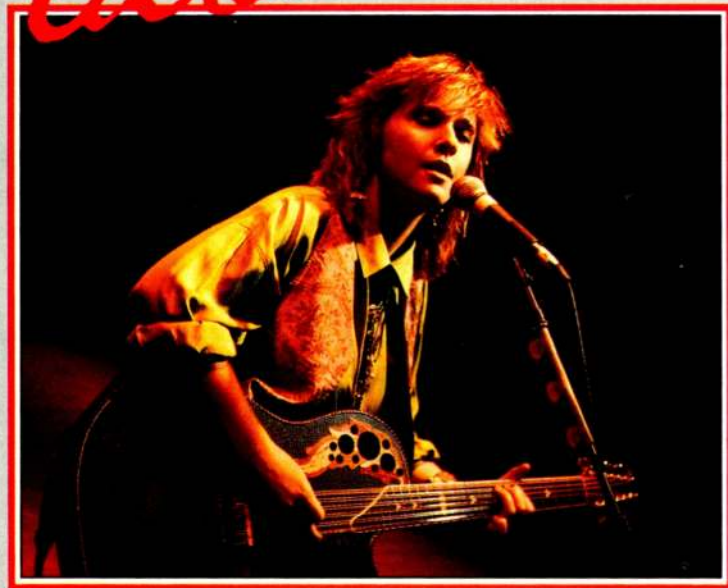
Released three-and-a-half years after their last of four albums for Warner Bros., *Speak* is remarkably of-a-piece; it has an evenness sometimes missing from the erratic post-debut records, *Nurds*, *Keep On Doing* and *Another World*. *Speak* was recorded more or less like the live shows the Roches

perform regularly to a loyal following all over the country. "We just went into the studio and set up the show and performed it, then went back and added and changed things," explains Terre. Immediacy aside, the remarkable thing about *Speak* is how grown-up it feels, from its burnished cover (a dramatic shift from *Another World*, where the three brightly-clad sisters leapt out of a psychedelic fish tank) to the songs, which revolve around the desire for sincerity and the failings of romantic love. (Though no Roches effort is without its bald ironies and way-out moments. Take a cacophonous little ditty called "The Anti-Sex Backlash of the 80's.")

The sisters agree that the tenor of their songwriting has changed, in part with the more sober spirit of the times, in part because they're all in their mid-to-late-30s now. Maggie and Terre describe with some amusement serving as presenters at this year's College Music Journalism Awards, and standing at the podium with two members of Camper van Beethoven, who told them glowingly, "Oh, I loved your first record when I was nine." Songs like Maggie's "The Married Men" (from *The Roches*), full of wry wisdom about infidelity, no longer come so easily. Love's vagaries are treated with a darker eye, as in "Nocturne," also by Maggie, which paints a sad scenario of an estranged couple. The gloom is offset by some deceptively tender "tra-la-la" background vocals, a hallmark of the Roches' ability to balance seemingly contradictory moods—which Terre attributes to their Irish [cont'd on page 24]

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## ROCHE TRAPS

**M**AGGIE started out playing an antique Martin guitar given to her by Paul Simon "but everybody yelled at me about touring with something so fragile" so she started leaving it home. These days she plays a Guild Songbird. Her hardware includes an Ensoniq SQ-80 synthesizer, a MIDI bass, a Roland TR-707 drum machine and a Yamaha DX100. TERRE's gone through various acoustic guitars and now plays a Stratocaster with Boss effects pedals onstage (occasionally accompanied by the requisite rock god moves). SUZZY plays a Takamine guitar onstage, has a Martin and a Fender and also owns an Ensoniq keyboard, though she "wouldn't be caught dead" playing it live. "I leave the operation of the heavy machinery to Maggie."



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**S**ONNY ROLLINS calls him “the greatest guitarist in jazz.” Pat Metheny credits him with inspiring his decision to play guitar. Vibist and composer Gary Burton says he has redefined the way the guitar is used, with an approach that “focuses on melody, rather than rhythmic or percussive qualities of the instrument.”

Yes, Jim Hall is the guitarists' guitarist. He's a quiet musician known for his melodic, tasteful, lyrical approach to jazz; intellectually sublime, if not exactly mellow. Hall compares it to jogging. “Guitar playing is very important to me physically,” he says. “It really keeps me in shape.”

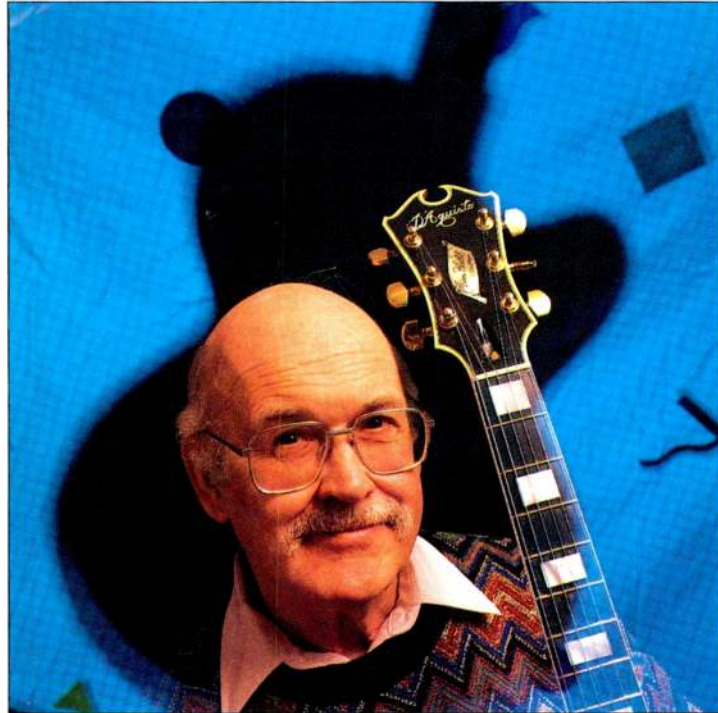
It's not hard to see why. Since he began recording in 1955, Hall has worked in some of jazz's most challenging chamber ensembles: the ground-breaking Chico Hamilton Quintet (drums, guitar, cello, reeds and bass), the Jimmy Giuffre Three (guitar, clarinet, sax and bass) and the Sonny Rollins Quartet. He also cut two legendary piano/guitar duet LPs with Bill Evans.

For all that, he isn't as well-known as Wes Montgomery or Joe Pass, in part because Hall, 59, has not been the best marketer of himself over the last four decades. He has chosen to record primarily for small labels in small group combinations, refusing to alter his music for the more commercial sounds of any moment. Often praised for his methodically constructed solos, he picks his words as carefully as his notes. Sharing a booth at a small Los Angeles Mexican restaurant after a gig recently, he appears soft-spoken, even shy. He's happy to talk about his work, though, of which he holds a surprisingly low opinion. He's a professional guitarist, he'll concede, but no speed demon. There are many, he insists, who play better.

“The guitar is really hard for me,” he says. “I have to stay after it. I'm more of a composer and an organizer. I don't even think of myself as a guitar player.”

Hall was born in Buffalo and raised in New York and Ohio. He was introduced to music by his mother, who played piano, a violin-playing grandfather and an uncle who played the guitar. By 13 he was playing around Cleveland with a group whose clarinet player turned Hall on to Benny Good-

man's recording of “Solo Flight” featuring electric guitar pioneer Charlie Christian—along with Django Reinhardt Hall's biggest influence. He entered the Cleveland Institute of Music to become a music teacher, but halfway through his first semester “I knew I had to try being a guitarist, or else it would



◆ “I don't even think of myself as a guitar player.” ◆  
trouble me the rest of my life.”

Moving to Los Angeles after graduation, he soon made his rep as one of the leading proponents of the West Coast “cool” school. In a bebop environment where jazz guitar had been used primarily as a swing rhythm instrument, Hall was playing jazz counterpoint melodies with a bowed cellist.

Hall also looked radically different from his peers. Here was the lone white guy in the Sonny Rollins Quartet, the dude with the nearly bald head and banker's horn-rim glasses. Hall was never a square, he insists, but rather a rebel. “I always resisted looking or talking hip. My own way of rebelling was with a martini and tux. It just seemed the proper way to behave.” (Indeed, when hippies started cutting off their hair in the '70s, Hall grew what hair he had left long, along with a large handlebar moustache.)

Instead of the drugs favored by friends like Bill Evans, Hall opted for booze, spending much of the '60s drunk. He decided to dry out by taking a job in the Merv Griffin TV show band, which kept him off the road and away from temptation. But he calls the period a “disaster” musically, and eventually quit, a

# The Quiet Man of Jazz Guitar

*Jim Hall lets his axe do the talking*

BY

*Jefferson Graham*

sober man, breaking ground in New York with his guitar/bass duo with Ron Carter.

The Carter duo was hard work, he says, but nothing compared to the Jimmy Giuffre Three: Hall on guitar, Ralph Pena on bass and the leader on clarinet or sax. "Duos and trios take the most incredible amount of concentration. They just wear you out physically. Jimmy's idea was to have three linear instruments improvise collectively. He believed it didn't make any difference whether or not the group had bass or drums. He said the instruments should be able to keep time

themselves. It was damn hard, yet it was one of the most enlarging experiences I've had."

Giuffre and Hall would harmonize on the melody while Pena provided the rhythm with a walking bass line. At one point in the song, Hall might take the melody all by himself, playing rhythmically, asking the listener to imagine bass and drums backing him up. By this time he'd begun paying close attention to piano players, and set out to play piano-styled guitar, developing his signature approach.

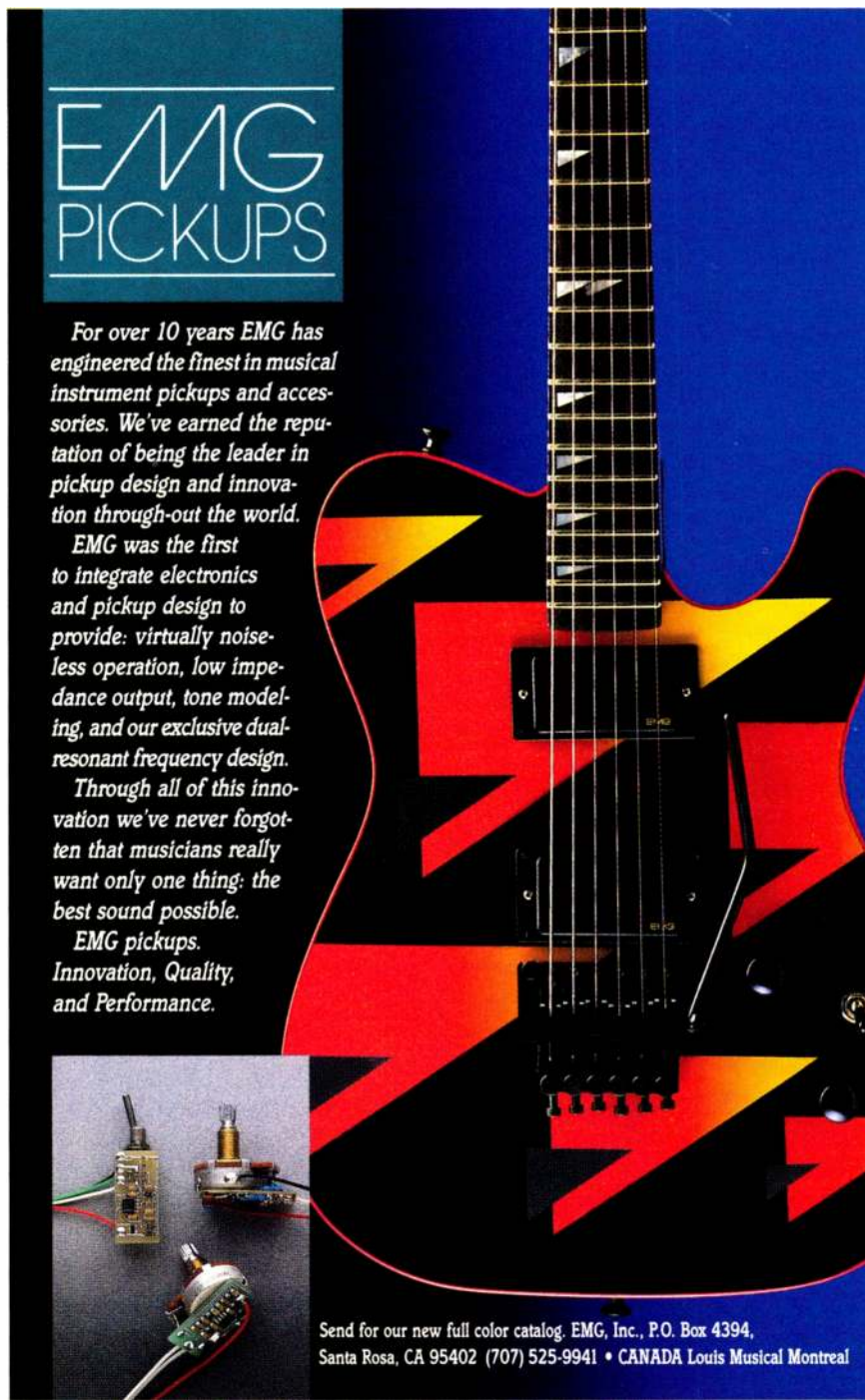
The next step was working with Bill Evans.

The pianist had suggested making a duo album, a novel idea at the time. "It sounded like fun," recalls Hall. "I didn't realize at the time, of course, that we would be making jazz history."

They recorded two sessions in New York City, resulting in *Undercurrent*, five standards and one Hall original: slow, melodic, classically-styled counterpoint jazz, New Age before there was such a thing. Each player would trade off playing single-note melodies; during Evans' solos Hall would strum the guitar in acoustic style rhythm, something that had rarely been done in a jazz context. Hall and Evans became soulmates forever intertwined.

"More people talk to me about that album than anything I ever recorded," Hall muses. "I know it was the same way with Bill. He told me just before he died that his concentration and awareness of texture was incredible."

With a few exceptions, Hall spent most of the 1970s and '80s playing in guitar/bass duos and guitar-bass-drum trios. It was a combination that in Hall's hands demanded concentration from players and listeners. The pairing of Hall's medium-range single notes and chordal progressions with the bass produced a very soft, low-pitched sound. Last year Hall finally put another quartet together—out of sheer boredom, he says. Their recent Concord album *All Across the City* (named after a 1966 Hall composition) often finds the group in a contemporary Pat Metheny-like groove, without sounding as overtly commercial as, say, Stanley Jordan. A varied set of bebop, ballads, blues, bossa nova and even a free-form jazz number, it's his best outing since 1975's *Concierto*, where his guitar was complemented by the warm sounds of Paul Desmond's sax and Chet Baker's trumpet.



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## SOUNDS OF SILENCE

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Not surprisingly, Hall expresses no feeling for rock 'n' roll ("I still don't care for Jimi Hendrix. I don't get it"). He loves Metheny but reserves his strongest praise for Bill Frisell, an electronic guitar whiz known for his experimental sonic approaches: "He proved to me that even difficult music could reach out." He finds Jordan's two-handed guitar work "amazing" but adds, "I wish he would do some more advanced material. With that technique he has the potential to do some really interesting music."

Hall believes he hears music differently

from other jazz guitarists of his generation, like Tal Farlow or Joe Pass. "Tal will hear a bebop line. I hear it more like [saxophonists] Ben Webster or Paul Gonsalves, a whole phrase on one or two strings." His pianistic style also suggests the tonalities of Gonsalves or early Miles. "They had a big, beautiful sound, and they were in and out of chords, not afraid to try new things. They also took a careful, minimalist approach to playing."

Jim D'Aquisto built a custom hollow-body electric guitar for Hall, one patterned after

the Gibson ES-175, but with a longer neck. Playing live, Hall loves to turn down the volume virtually all the way during bass solos and strum away. He prefers this approach to acoustic, saying his way gets rid of the picking, plucking and strumming sounds the acoustic naturally picks up.

A tortured perfectionist, he cringes when listening to most of his older albums. The only one he can stand is his first as a leader, 1957's *Jazz Guitar*, and that on the grounds that the statutes of limitations have expired, so he can be forgiven his mistakes. Still he'll admit reluctantly that he is now at his creative peak, "with a more complete, pianistic approach to guitar playing."

Hall practices only to prepare for an upcoming gig or recording session. He teaches guitar at the Parsons School of Art and Design in New York City, where he lives with his wife Jane, a psychoanalyst. At home he won't listen to jazz, preferring silence or occasionally classical music.

Overall, though, he's happy with the state of the guitar. "The level of guitar playing is way up from when I started out." His only beef is volume. "A lot of groups play too loud. I don't understand all the noise. It's like the arms race, very self-defeating. If you start loud you have nowhere to go but up." **M**

## ROCHES

[cont'd from page 18] heritage of "making fun of pain."

"That's a very brave song," says Suzzy of "Nocturne." "I think Maggie has a particular talent for talking about things that are really harsh and being very fair." "A lot of the time the things you need to write about are those devastating truths," says Maggie, quietly. "That's often what you need to relieve yourself of." There's a pause, then Terre breaks the silence. "Wasn't it Lionel Richie who said that when he sits down to write a love song, he just figures out what people ideally want to hear? Like, 'You are the most beautiful gorgeous everything to me?'" Suzzy counters, "Maggie's writing about situations so difficult most people wouldn't even admit that they exist. I don't hear a lot of that these days." Maggie blushes slightly and looks up from the table, where she's been training her eyes: "At least not from Lionel Richie." **M**

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# ART





Shawn Colvin's

# SOLO SOUL

"I'M SURE IT MAKES some people nervous to see me get onstage all by myself," says Shawn Colvin about the current solo tour promoting her Columbia album debut, *Steady On*. "I really love being able to show people who enjoyed the record that I can play the songs without a band. It's a great surprise for them. And I feel pretty competent." ■ *Steady On* is far from a solo effort: Fifteen musicians, from her longtime cohort, songwriting partner and guitarist/producer John Leventhal, to Bruce Hornsby, Suzanne Vega and T-Bone Wolk make contributions. Yet it was her solo show that fixed attention on the balladeer. And even when surrounded by a band sound, it is the spirit of solitude that sticks to Colvin's music. Colvin may be a perfect romantic for the '90s: a woman who sings endlessly of hurt but is working actively for salvation. ■ "It's a weird time. There's a lot of negative things weighing people down," she says. "I'm 33 years old. I've never been married. And it's strange: That's not the future I was raised for. It's not what my parents did. And I'm certainly not the only woman in this situation." ■ Onstage, Colvin often kids about how diligently her songs mine the troubled side of love. "It's more inspiring to write about things that are dark. I like the paradox of





**Shawn Colvin photographed at the Cottonwood Cafe in Greenwich Village, New York City by Rex Miller, January 1990.**

things that seem good and are also painful. Melancholy attracts me, a sadness in every happiness. I guess when I'm happy, I just don't write as much. I'm afraid I live in a very small world, and I write about what moves me." ■ Colvin's guitar work can be just as individual. Her finger-picking patterns, while melodic, are also forcefully rhythmic. "Hearing really aggressive guitarists like Richard Thompson and Paul Brady was helpful," she explains. "I feel like I'm a good percussive player, with a strong right hand. When you think of a powerful acoustic guitarist, you think of a strong strummer. But I'm a percussive picker, hitting the strings and the body of the guitar hard. I like grooves." Her old acoustic Martin D-28, a real folkie favorite, lasted her for 15 years, from her professional beginnings in Carbondale, Illinois to 1989. She is now breaking in a Taylor guitar, Grand Concert model. She uses D'Addario light-gauge strings. ■ Colvin acknowledges the debt she owes Suzanne Vega, a friend from the Greenwich Village folk scene. Colvin sang backup on "Luka" and on Vega's European tour. "It was a rite of passage for me. I'd never been to Europe before, and it inspired me. I felt like a kid who'd been sent to summer camp for the first time. And being around Suzanne made me more committed as a musician. Her success allowed me to believe a bit more that anything is possible. ■ As a singer/songwriter, you are very aware of the many people wanting success, and the fact that there's room for just a few to make it. That's just the odds. It can be depressing. But I am doing what I want to be doing. I love what I do so much. And I know that no matter how much money I make or I don't make, I'll still eventually end up back in my room writing another song." — Daniel Gewertz



MUSICIAN

# The Quiet Wi

*Twenty years  
after the Beatles ended,  
George Harrison  
is the one  
having hits.  
Solo,  
and with his  
new supergroup.*

*By Mark Rowland*



# ibury

IT HAPPENED JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, THOUGH THE MOMENT ALREADY FEELS APOCRYPHAL. FRANK SINATRA WAS PERFORMING ON A TV SPECIAL, PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE BEST POP SONGWRITERS OF OUR TIME. IN HIS ESTIMATION, NOW FRANK HAS NEVER BEEN A BIG FAN OF ROCK 'N' ROLL, WHICH HE ONCE DESCRIBED AS "THE MOST BRUTAL, UGLY, DEGENERATE, VICIOUS FORM OF EXPRES-

SION IT HAS BEEN MY DISPLEASURE TO HEAR"; SO IT WAS QUITE AN EAR-OPENER ON THIS NIGHT TO HEAR HIM LAVISHING PRAISE ON THE SONGWRITING TEAM OF JOHN LENNON AND PAUL MCCARTNEY. SINATRA SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SALUTE THEM BY SINGING ONE OF THE MANY FINE SONGS FROM THEIR CATALOG. THE ORCHESTRA STRUCK UP THE MELODY AND FRANK BEGAN TO CROON: "SOMETHING IN THE WAY SHE MOVES . . ."

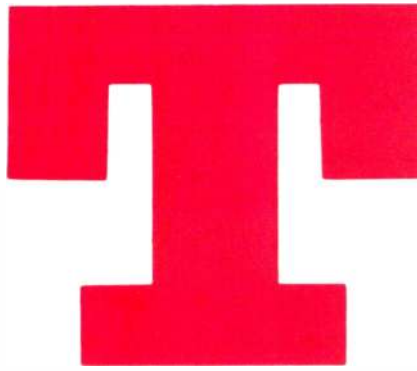
THE LESSON WAS TWO-FOLD. ON THE ONE HAND, SINATRA'S BENEDICTION WAS FINAL, IRREVOCABLE PROOF THAT THE MUSIC OF THE BEATLES HAD JOINED GERSHWIN AND COLE PORTER IN THE PANTHEON OF POP CLASSICS. AS FOR GEORGE HARRISON, WHO HAD ACTUALLY COMPOSED "SOMETHING," SINATRA'S GLITCH PRETTY MUCH, UH, WELL . . .

"SUMMED ME UP?" HARRISON LAUGHS GOOD-NATUREDLY. "YEAH. [REMEMBER I MET MICHAEL JACKSON YEARS AGO, AT THE BBC IN LONDON. THE DISC JOCKEY MENTIONED 'SOMETHING,' AND HE TURNED AROUND: 'DID YOU WRITE THAT?' NOW HE'S PROBABLY LOOKING THROUGH THE CATALOG GOING, 'WHERE IS THAT SONG—I THOUGHT I BOUGHT IT!'" GEORGE LAUGHS AGAIN LIGHTLY AT THE THOUGHT.

P H O T O G R A P H B Y M A X A G U I L E R A H E L L W E G







## The Wilburys was like the Rutles: The first

"Well," he says, "I was the quiet one."

IT WAS 20 YEARS ago today, more or less, that George and a couple of cohorts named Paul and Ringo (John wasn't around) laid down the tracks to "I Me Mine," the last recording by

the Beatles. As a band and phenomenon the Fab Four did just about everything right, including quitting while the quitting was good. All that was left for the four individuals who once comprised the group was to live the rest of their lives in the public eye and figure out a way to make it seem like more than a postscript.

And you know it don't come easy. Having spent most of the '70s acting out his therapies in public, John finally found a measure of serenity and was promptly martyred. Paul, the melodic genius, put out a ton of hits and more junk than Journey. The happy-go-lucky Ringo ended up in detox. Only George, the least at ease with his stardom—"I've never felt that comfortable with people looking at me, the kind of stuff that goes with it"—has carried on with real dignity, which says as much for his character as his talent.

Of course you can't tell him that; part of Harrison's charm is his self-deprecating humor and lack of pretense. Sitting on a couch in one of the more nondescript offices of Warner Bros. Records, he's wearing a T-shirt, jeans and a light jacket. The familiar mop top is in place, and he's clean-shaven, which makes him look younger than a guy with 30 years in the biz, though as Harrison genially points out, "I've been trying to retire for 20."

He's only half kidding. A graph charting his career since 1970 would look like a suspension bridge with two peaks: one right after the Beatles broke up, with *All Things Must Pass* and the benefit concerts for Bangladesh, and the second right now, with *Cloud Nine* and his role putting together the Traveling Wilburys. In between there have been some good tunes and some records best forgotten, as indeed they have been. Sensing creative burnout, George sensibly took a five-year hiatus from making records during the '80s, in which time Handmade Films, his movie production partnership with Denis O'Brien, turned out such gems as *Mona Lisa* and *Withnail and I* (and yes, *Shanghai Surprise*).

Through it all he's maintained a moderately jaundiced view of his place in the music biz. A new song, "Cockamamie Business," underscores the point, recounting Harrison's ups and downs with the Beatles with a kind of rueful good cheer. "Didn't want to be a star," he sings at one point, "wanted just to play guitar."

"Actually I should have made it 'sitar,'" George cracks.

"I know I'm supposed to be a guitar player," he goes on more seriously, "but I don't really feel like one. I'm not someone like, say, Eric Clapton. We can talk about him 'cause he's my friend and I know about him, he'll just plug in his guitar, listen to the tune and blow on it and be of a certain standard immediately. I have to figure out what I'm gonna do and maybe even learn a part. I'm just not that fluent with it."

That opinion is open to debate. Co-Wilbury Jeff Lynne calls George "a great guitar player. When he strikes up on the slide there's nobody better; his precision, his vibrato is perfect. But he always plays it down."

"I'm not playing it down," George counters. "I'm just not playing it up! I think Keith [Richards] is one of the best rock 'n' roll *rhythm* guitar players. I don't think he's very good at lead. But this is what I feel about myself too: What we do is make records, and the records have some good guitar parts on them. I like Keith enormously, I think he's great, but he's not Albert or B.B. King. Anyway, the main thing about him is that he has the confidence," George smiles. "So even if it's not perfect he doesn't care."



With buddy Eric Clapton: He's good enough to play on "While My Guitar Gently Weeps"—but not the Wilburys.

But isn't there a virtue in concise, structured solos? Isn't that what was sacrificed when guitar heroes came into vogue?

"Well, I'm certainly not a guitar hero," George avers.

Maybe not, but Eric Clapton's solos on *Cloud Nine* owe more to the style of *Beatles '65* than Cream.

"Oh, exactly. But I've never been one to force myself on everything, I like to have input from other people. If I have a song that calls for a kind of Eric Clapton guitar part, I daresay I could practice for

an hour or so and do a part decent enough for the record. But all I'm doing is denying myself the opportunity of having Eric around and hanging out with him for a bit.

"I'm not trying to be the best guitar player. I don't really care about it. To me, you can get the greatest guitar player in the world and in my eyes he's still nothing compared to the musicians I really admire, the Ravi Shankars of the world. I've got a record in my bag now of a 12-year-old Indian guy playing electric mandolin who will blow away those guys in the heavy-metal bands, no question about it. It doesn't impress me to hear some guy play this noisy fast shit. I'd rather hear Robert Johnson or Ry Cooder or Segovia. Those are the guitar players I like. But you know I like everything basically—except noisy headbanging shit." He laughs. "And drum computers and DX7s and reverb!"

"So I'm not impressed by all these guitar players. I could have become an adequate player. I could learn how to play like B.B. King; he plays the same lick all his life! He plays it very well. But it's not my goal to play this lick that everybody else can play anyway. You can't be everything in life. I'm just thankful that I'm here. And whatever I do, why, that's it."

In his unobtrusive way, Harrison does quite a lot. "He has so many



## album took 20 minutes, the second album took even longer.”

ideas,” says Jeff Lynne, who co-produced *Cloud Nine*. “Maybe in a half an hour late at night he’ll have a hundred and you’ll have to write them all down. Partly the thing you’re working on but then other projects as well.”

It was one such light bulb that launched the Traveling Wilburys. During the making of *Cloud Nine* he and Lynne had imagined putting together a band of their favorite musicians. After the record was finished, Harrison discovered that radio markets in England and Germany wouldn’t accept a single unless it was accompanied by an extended mix of the track or a non-album B-side. He nixed the idea of an extended mix (“I did that once before and it was like a pig’s nose”), but he didn’t have any extra tracks in the can either.

“So I thought, ‘I’ll just write a song tomorrow.’ I was having dinner with Roy Orbison and Jeff [who was producing tracks for Orbison’s album], and Roy said, ‘Can I come?’ We couldn’t find a studio at the time so we went over to Dylan’s house to do it and he happened to be in.” Tom Petty, who was also working on a record with Lynne, was invited over to complete the quintet and within a day Harrison had his song: “Handle with Care.”

“Then the record company said, ‘Oh, we can’t put that out, it’s too good!’” Harrison recalls. “So I thought, ‘Well, we’ll just have to do another nine songs and make an album.’ We got everyone to agree and did the other nine the same way, writing them like we had to be done by tomorrow.”

The other songs came together as naturally as they sound: five guys sitting around in a circle with acoustic guitars. Someone would come up with a chord sequence, another would contribute lyrics or a bridge. “We usually went by group decision,” Tom Petty recalls. “We were pretty honest with each other. In recording or writing, when somebody gets the right part, everybody knows. The lucky thing is that it was all real talented people around—and good people, you know, no negativity, nobody wanting to be more famous than anybody. It was fun.”

In nine days they’d written all the songs. “It was like the Rutles,” George says. “The first album took 20 minutes, the second album took even longer.”

Talking about the Wilburys lights Harrison up; he’s as much a fan of the other members as their peer. Particularly Dylan, whose songs Harrison has covered (“If Not for You”), co-written (“I’d Have You Anytime”) or modeled his own after (“Long Long Long” has the same changes as “Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands”).

“I’ve had the same list of favorites for years,” he says, “from Little Richard and Larry Williams to Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran, Carl Perkins. And then 1963—Bob Dylan. I think his voice is great, I love that sort of madness. And as a person he’s somebody who—well, as he said, ‘Time will tell who has fell and who’s been left behind.’ Bob is still out there and whether you like him or not he’s Bob. I’ve always listened to his music. I’m thankful there’s people like that.”

He looks up at a framed photo of the Wilburys hanging on the office

wall, the same rumpled likeness that adorns the front of the record. “I love that picture,” he says. “I realized there was only going to be this one day the five of us would be together so I got a guy to take some pictures. It was really quick and they weren’t that good. But we blew it up, made it all dirty, threw it on the floor, stepped on it a bit and ripped it up,” George observes drily. “And it became much better.”

You might think the Wilburys myth satisfies some longing for the one experience George missed as a Beatle—a bunch of friends playing music for fun, unencumbered by the trappings of success.

“In a way,” he concedes. “But more than that it was that thing that went on in the late ’60s and ’70s, the big craze of supergroups and superjams and everything was super duper. Just getting some famous people together doesn’t guarantee success. More often than not it’s just a clash of personalities and a big ego detour.”

**With Hall of Fame mate Ringo Starr:** “So I thought we should play it down. Rather than the record company’s natural choice: Look what we’ve got! It took a while to give them the idea of ‘Let’s lighten up a bit.’ And *when* we do another Wilbury album,” he declares, making his

intentions clear, “it’s gonna be just as much fun—otherwise I’m not doing it.”

Is there any desire to add more Wilburys?

“Well, you go back to the Beatles, there were so many fifth Beatles, about 500 I think. What I saw as the Wilburys was an attitude, basically. I see loads of people out there who have what I call The Wilbury Attitude. Somebody wrote in a paper things like, ‘Little Richard is a Wilbury. Madonna wouldn’t be a Wilbury but Cyndi

Lauper would be.’ It was quite funny. I could make a list now with 20 people who would be wonderful in the Wilburys but the thing is, the way it happened it happened on its own.

“You can’t replace Roy Orbison. Now Roy just happened to be there like we were there and it was right. Brilliant. It’s not every day you form a group with all these legends. That’s not to say there aren’t other Wilburys floating around out there. But the four of us need to talk, really, and then keep an openness about it. The more you try to conceive what it will be. . . .

“But we could have the Wilbury B-team,” he says, brightening at the thought. “Like *We Are the World*—we could have *We Are the Wilburys!* I’d love to do that. Maybe it won’t even be the Wilburys, maybe it will be . . . the Trundling Wheelbarrows. Or the Smegmas: Betty, Doris, Gladys and Cyril Smegma. Volume 7.”

You mean several records are already out of print?

“I think so. And what about the bootlegs? The Silver Wilburys, have you heard of them?” George flashes a flinty look. “Some people have got a nerve.”

Though a second Wilburys disc can’t match the original’s surprise, “I think the songs can be just as spontaneous,” he decides. “We can make it with the same vibe and atmosphere. But there is gonna be an



# W

element where people are already primed for it. I mean, I remember

the second Beatles single that ever came out. And *New Musical Express* wrote, 'Below Par Beatles.'

"Now maybe they'll say this one is better," George shrugs. "But that's not the point. It's to keep on going and lighten up a bit. Everybody is so serious."

There was a time when fans might have directed that last admonition at George himself. He was always the least scrutable Beatle, the only one whose personality seemed in some way constricted by the dynamics of the band. The first song he wrote was "Don't Bother Me," "and that pretty much summed up my state of mind at the time," he admits.

"John and Paul were really getting into writing songs. I took a look at them and thought, 'Well, I'll get in on this game. I'm gonna try that.' But having them as the other writers in the group, it was very difficult," he notes with considerable understatement. "So I tended to just write on my own for years and years, because I didn't know how to communicate like that with somebody else. And it was very difficult to write songs that would be good enough for the albums."

As a consequence, Harrison's relatively small output with the Beatles—about 20 songs—are mostly gems. In any other '60s group, a guy who wrote "If I Needed Someone," "Taxman," "You Like Me Too Much," "While My Guitar Gently Weeps," "Here Comes the Sun," "Something Without You" would have been hailed as a pop savant; within the Beatles Harrison might as well have been playing Graham Greene's *The Third Man*. And as the Lennon-McCartney copyright was more or less sacrosanct, Harrison's contributions to their songs were never credited.

"I had my one or two songs occasionally, but really I was more involved than that," he says. "I know now, writing with friends, that when you're all sitting around and a song comes out, you have to think carefully about assigning how many percent each person gets. 'Cause there's nothing worse than being involved in a situation where you think, 'Wasn't I there?'"

"A lot of Lennon-McCartney songs had other people involved, whether it's lyrics or structures or circumstance. A good example is 'I

*e could have a Wilbury B-team.*

Feel Fine.' I'll tell you exactly how that came about: We were crossing Scotland in the back of an Austin Princess, singing 'Matchbox' in three-part harmony. And it turned into 'I Feel Fine.' The guitar part was from Bobby Parker's 'Watch Your Step,' just a bastardized version. I was there for the whole of its creation—but it's still a Lennon-McCartney."

"Tell me about it!" Paul McCartney smiles when told of George's comment. "I wrote 'Yesterday' singlehanded and not only do I share it—now with Yoko—but the Lennon name comes before mine." Paul concedes the point about "I Feel Fine" but suggests that "if you were to get picky about all that stuff there's a million woes and a million reasons to sing the blues. In actual fact we just decided to split it down the middle. Me and John were the writers, unless George came up with something. Anybody who threw half a line in, it just really didn't count."

All you need is love, indeed. What finally seemed to catalyze Harrison's emergence as a distinct voice in the band was the Beatles 1966 trip to India. For John it was another whistlestop on the endless road to self-discovery; for George it was sustenance. He studied Indian music and the sitar ("really sort of a wobbly guitar"), an obvious influence on what later became his signature sound on slide. More importantly, perhaps, the coupling of Indian music with Buddhist philosophy helped provide a framework for Harrison's spiritual and social consciousness.

"I could see how risky it was to make a song like 'My Sweet Lord,'" George observes. "People think you're trying to be like Billy Graham. At the same time, though, everybody's talking about love and peace and happiness,

and where do you find that? You've got to find it by getting inside yourself and contacting . . ."

Your spiritual source?

"Yeah. I think the experiences we had in those years—plus certain substances people put in our coffee—sped up the growth process. If I hadn't been in a band it might have taken much longer. But in the '60s we'd all sit around smoking stuff and thinking great ideas. And after a few years I thought, 'Wait a minute, nobody's doing anything!'"

One thing Harrison did, of course, was organize the 1971 benefit concerts for Bangladesh, an unprecedented event that has since become the inspirational model for large-scale charity benefits by the rock music community.

Harrison was drawn into the project, he recalls, through his friendship with Ravi Shankar. "To me [the starvation] was something happening in the newspapers. To him, a Bengali, it was intolerable. He was going to do the show, I was just going to introduce him. But then [I decided to] plug it into the Beatles concept, particularly John Lennon's idea that you might as well make a film and a record and get some money going. Regardless of what people say, it did take a long time but it raised \$11 million. Of course that doesn't seem like much these days," George notes.



**The most exclusive men's club in the world: The Traveling Wilburys' co-op board rejects another nominee.**



## Like 'We Are the World,' it could be 'We Are the Wilburys.'"

There's also been a strong political thread throughout Harrison's music, from the recent "Cockamamie Business" back to the White Album's "Piggies." "That was social comment, and it's still the same today. Especially now, with glasnost, and communism going away, they've got to have a good reason not to give that money to the poor, or redirect it into helping the planet become safe and unpolluted." He mentions his involvement in a British environmental movement "similar to what Meryl Streep's doing in America, Parents for Safe Food. The poison is everywhere, on your potatoes, tomatoes—not to mention the air we breathe. The basic problem is that the agrochemical industries have a stranglehold on the government. They're all in cahoots." George laughs sharply. "They're probably all Freemasons as well."

"What we need is an honest army that goes around busting those guys, because they're the ones ruining this planet. But then what you find is that the people causing the most environmental damage are the industrialists. And the Dow Jones people. Buy buy buy! Sell sell sell! This madness that Reagan and Thatcher created, this idea that everyone is much better off now, everyone is more in debt, there's more concrete, we've sacrificed the planet for the motor car . . . that's why I can't practice the guitar anymore," George sighs. "I'm so crazed by what they've done to our planet."

Though he's more comfortable with his privacy, Harrison isn't shy about using his celebrity to promote progressive causes. "If you've got a platform to speak from, you should speak," he says flatly. "But it's always musicians and film people who are doing the work government is really supposed to be doing. They collect taxes to take care of everybody, and instead they're off playing their little games with missiles. And the same people who call this the devil's music are the ones complaining, 'Who do these people think they are?' It's like you can't win. But it also shows there are a lot of good people out there. And most of them are musicians!"

Of course musicians aren't immune from internecine warfare either, as Harrison knows well. A few days earlier, he and his fellow Fabs finally resolved their 20-year lawsuit with Capitol, EMI and each other. The long and winding settlement constrains the principals involved from talking about the details of the suit to the press. "You know why we can't," Harrison deadpans. "The settlement was about 10 feet thick. I don't think anybody but the lawyers has read it."

"It's a good feeling to be done with it," he admits, visibly relaxing as he speaks. "It's like your life is all these little knots you're trying to undo before it's too late. And this is another, incredibly big knot that has now just gone away. The funny thing is, most of the people who were involved with the reason that lawsuit came about aren't even in the companies anymore. So the people at Capitol and EMI had to take on the karma of their predecessors, and I'm sure that now they're relieved too."

So this also ends the lawsuits among the Beatles themselves?

"Oh yeah, because everything was hinging on everything else. It gets rid of that too. But it doesn't wash away the politics of it. Some of the original causes can't go away in my mind. Because there's certain things that never should have happened in the first place."

Meaning what?

"Meaning, if I stab you in the back and you happen to get to the hospital and don't die, it may mean that you might still not like me. Or you may not want to see me, in case I did it again."

Oh. So what kind of a relationship do you and Paul have these days?

"We don't have a relationship." Long pause. "I think of him as a good friend really, but a friend I don't have that much in common with anymore. You know, you meet people in your life, or you're remarried and then you're divorced. You wish the other person well, but life has taken you to other places. To friendlier climes."

Shankar: The Does that mean you won't be going to his show?

good news is, we'll "You mean because I happen to be in L.A. while he's playing here? No. I don't want to go to his show because . . . I've heard all them tunes anyway. And

do a big concert for Bangladesh. Bad news—you secondly, I was not in town when Ringo did his

can't be a Wilbury. show. I would have loved to have seen that, and I

don't want Ringo to think that I'm not supporting him and I'm supporting Paul. I do wish him well," George sighs. "There's always a place in my heart for Paul . . . and Linda . . . and Hamish Stuart, I like Hamish. But you know . . . don't look back."

Ironically, while George is saying this, across town at the Forum Paul McCartney is holding a press conference during which he expresses the desire to write songs with George and reunite with George and Ringo. The next day

the Warners office is inundated with inquiries about Harrison's reaction to Paul's proposal for what is inevitably dubbed a Beatles reunion. Harrison releases a one-sentence reply: "There will be no Beatles reunion so long as John Lennon remains dead."

On a happier note, he confirms that the resolution of the lawsuit clears a path for official release of previously unissued Beatles rough tracks and demos. "We've got the real versions of the ones that have been bootlegged, and we've got plans to put all that out. And the BBC has a lot of tapes. I just realized that I've got a really good bootleg tape, demos we made at my house on an Ampex four-track during the White Album. Mainly there's different versions of stuff, and stuff that people know of as bootlegs from our club days."

"Let's face it," he declares, "the Beatles catalog will go on forever with Capitol and EMI; now it's easier for us to deal with that. They still own the masters, but at least with our relationship with them, they'll come out in a way where everyone is happy. We used to take such care about the running order and which tracks were on it and how many. But after our original contract expired there'd be all this weird stuff coming out. Occasionally they'd send you a copy and say here's your new album."

Mo Ostin, Warner Bros. president, enters the room to say hello.









## AN AUDIENCE WITH

# Abdullah Ibrahim

OTHER MUSICIANS had described Abdullah Ibrahim as difficult, imperious, moody. “He wants to control things, and he has the right to, but . . .” said one, letting his tone imply the rest. “I love his music but he’s kinda strange,” said another. One just sighed in awe of his talent. “Too demanding,” another complained.

None of which is likely to deter Ibrahim. As he explains, “In traditional African society, there is music that you will never hear. You can be living in the community and be listening, but you will never hear this music until the heart is ready for it. And then these ones [from whom the music originates] will reveal themselves. I’m beginning to understand it

now—if you want to find a teacher, go find the one that they talk the worst about! When I went back to South Africa, I saw all the ones the people say are cuckoo in the head—me too! These are the people who gather around to trance-dance in the spiritual practices.”

### THE ELDER SPEAKS OF TRANCE-DANCING

Abdullah Ibrahim was born Adolphus Johannes Brand in 1934 in Capetown, South Africa. His childhood nickname “Dollar” stuck. It is under the name Dollar Brand that many of his albums were released. The diverse influences that comprise Ibrahim’s distinctive musical voice blend township jazz rhythms, South African “mirabi,” church hymns, ragtime, blues, Ellington’s capacious swing

so they can go directly at where the energy is locked. That formula. So it *sounds* simple, you see? Like with Monk. When they say that Monk's stuff is childish, you know, Monk is playing like a kid . . . [laughs] When I first met Monk, I introduced myself, told him I was from South Africa, and I said, "Thank you very much for all the inspiration." And he took me aside and said, "You know, you're the first piano player to tell me that?"

When Monk's improvising he sometimes plays a scale, just a scale, as a solo. When I listened to it, it was so profound because I knew what was happening inside, harmonically and rhythmically. But for people who didn't know what it was, it sounded like he was playing scales.

**MUSICIAN:** Like he was practicing.

**IBRAHIM:** Exactly. [laughter] The problem is that you have to find the musicians who are also capable of understanding that formula. Playing solo piano, I have no problem. But here and there, you find musicians who are able to handle it.

**MUSICIAN:** Was there ever a point at which the simple things that you heard, that you were inclined to perform, became convoluted?

**IBRAHIM:** People tell me, this thing sounds simple and this one sounds intricate. For us it never makes any difference. The things that

seem to be intricate to other people, to us it's simple.

There's a stereotype of what African art is, what African music is. Because it's viewed through the eyes, basically, of tourists. What is really the heart of our culture is never understood. And it's always that imperialistic view that we are simplistic folks, so when you listen to the music . . . "Ah, it's simple." Why don't you try to play it?

If you look at most so-called European music, I mean 7000 years ago, there was nothing in Europe. In Africa we had universities. If you listen to the kora from Senegal, in Africa you go sit on the beach and listen to these people all night. What you hear in there are Bach fugues! English traditional airs. 6/8 time. People will come and say,

"You know the waltz was born in Vienna." This is not true! About 70 percent of the music in Africa is in waltz time! Because waltz time is the rhythm of the heart.

**MUSICIAN:** This struck me last week, when I heard Steve Turre playing conch shells. For most people, this is a novelty. But in the Caribbean people play conch

shells all the time.

**IBRAHIM:** Yeah. It's the transmitting of information and knowledge. There was this man who collected birds, he was known as the man who collects exotic birds. [Abdullah lowers his voice to a whisper.] And he kept them in cages. One day he found a beautiful [cont'd on page 94]

## DOLLAR'S BRANDS

**A**T HOME, ABDULLAH keeps a Yamaha acoustic piano, but in concert he calls for a Steinway grand. His soprano sax is a Selmer Mark VI with a Dukof mouthpiece; his flute an Erbach. He also has a bamboo flute and a traditional West African djimbe drum, a one-head instrument hand-made in Mali/Guinea, which Abdullah says provides a full range of sound. Abdullah uses Beyer microphones; no amplifiers.

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*Musician guide to fine artists* BY *David Cowles*





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(Previous page) Madonna by Willem de Kooning





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# GIVE ME LIFE

Travels with the Kinks





# ON THE ROAD

(a long way from home)



ON OF MY FAVORITE bands," promoter Mike Scheller is saying backstage at Offenbach, Germany's Stadthalle theater, a few minutes before the fourth show of a brief, typically last-minute Kinks tour. "But always you have to approach with the sense of humor. Ray gives short notice. After 25 years, you don't try to change this attitude. The Kinks are the Kinks."

Tonight in West Germany, both the band and the crowd are good but not great. The set is a characteristic mix of old ("Apeman," "Dead End Street") and new ("How Do I Get Close," "Loony Balloon"), expected ("Come Dancing") and unexpected ("I'm Not Like Everybody Else"). Ray Davies, wearing a fringed jacket and clutching a bottle of beer, gets a decent singalong going on "Low Budget," but when he goes into a funny Vegas-style rap, the audience merely looks expectant. "You don't understand a word I'm saying, do you," he concludes, and cuts the routine short.

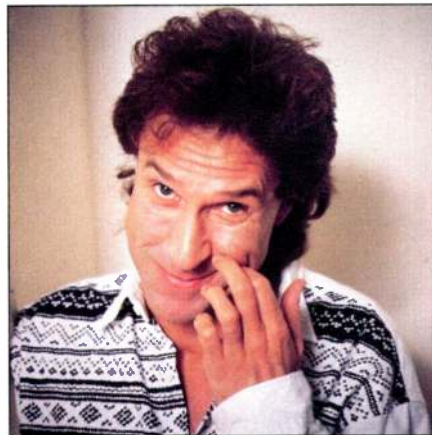
After they finish "Lola," just 70 minutes into the show, the Kinks leave the stage abruptly and the house lights go on. Something is amiss. Confusion backstage, while out front the crowd chants loudly for more: "zugabe, zugabe, zugabe." After five minutes the Kinks return—crisis averted!—and launch into a generous encore, beginning beautifully with "Days" and ending with a

crunching "You Really Got Me."

A relieved Scheller drags on a cigarette in the wings.

"I don't *know* what happened," he shouts above the din. "I asked Ray, 'Would it kill you if you do some more?' And he said, 'No, it would not kill me.'"

An hour or so later, Ray Davies, as reserved offstage as he is animated on, sits in a wood-paneled hotel bar, holding on his lap a small plate containing a halved lemon. While a one-man Frank Sinatra/Nelson Riddle Orchestra



◆ "How can I leave if I don't know where I'm going?" ◆

recreates "Witchcraft" and "New York, New York," the members of the band and their small entourage drift in quietly. From such innocent beginnings can spring astronomical bar bills: Before the night is through, the Kinks' party, totaling about 15, will stand accused of the consumption of exactly 200 beers, a figure that's not only laughably high but

suspiciously round. For now, though, all is calm and credible.

Ray explains that there was a problem with the stage, that he tripped up several times in the first five minutes and it unnerved him. "If I can't move around, I can't perform," he says. "I never knew that about myself. Now I've discovered it." He laughs. His real concern, he adds, was for the show's two dancers, who risked breaking ankles.

It's the week before Christmas. Elsewhere, the Rolling Stones are concluding their \$100 million reunion

BY GEORGE KALOGERAKIS

tour in the House of Trump, and the Who are undoubtedly appreciating the beneficial effects twenty-fifth anniversaries can have on a band's holiday shopping. The Kinks, no strangers to hit records and sold-out arenas during a quarter-century commendably free of hyped-up reunions and anniversary gimmickry, are tooling through Germany primarily by car—six unglamorous dates in mid-sized halls to support a new album, *UK Jive*. And they are evidently enjoying themselves, none more than their droll, affable leader, who has already celebrated one of the concerts by staying up till six in the morning drinking beer.

The lemon is for his throat, but it remains untouched in the plate on his lap for over an hour. He accepts a draft, declines a cigarette (“Are you kidding?”), and the discussion bounces from Panama to Romania to where Ray should go when the tour ends to his recipe for writing while jet-lagged. He claims to have come up with some very interesting lyrics that way. “Drink a lot,” he advises, “and try not to get too much sleep.”

A gentleman, he interrupts himself to offer his lemon to a German-speaking woman at his table. “Would you . . . um . . . like to have some?” Ray says, grinning and sounding like a man in a dirty raincoat. She demurs, but the plate will be politely offered to her again at regular intervals.

Scheller, the promoter, walks into the bar, says a few hellos and calls out in (perhaps) mock exasperation: “Ray, *what* are you going to do with this tour, eh?”

“Stick it up my ass,” cackles Ray. “What do you expect me to do?”

Scheller leans down and hugs him.

Beers continue to arrive, and Ray's travel plans again come under discussion. He's not sure whether to spend Christmas—just a few days away—in London, or New York, or Ireland. Or—here's an idea—he could go to Berlin by car, if getting a hotel room doesn't prove problematic. Ah, but then what about all those interviews scheduled in Hamburg, after the last show? Maybe he should stay in Hamburg longer than planned to accommodate even more interviews.

“Fine,” says one of the tour staff. “In that case you can leave from—”

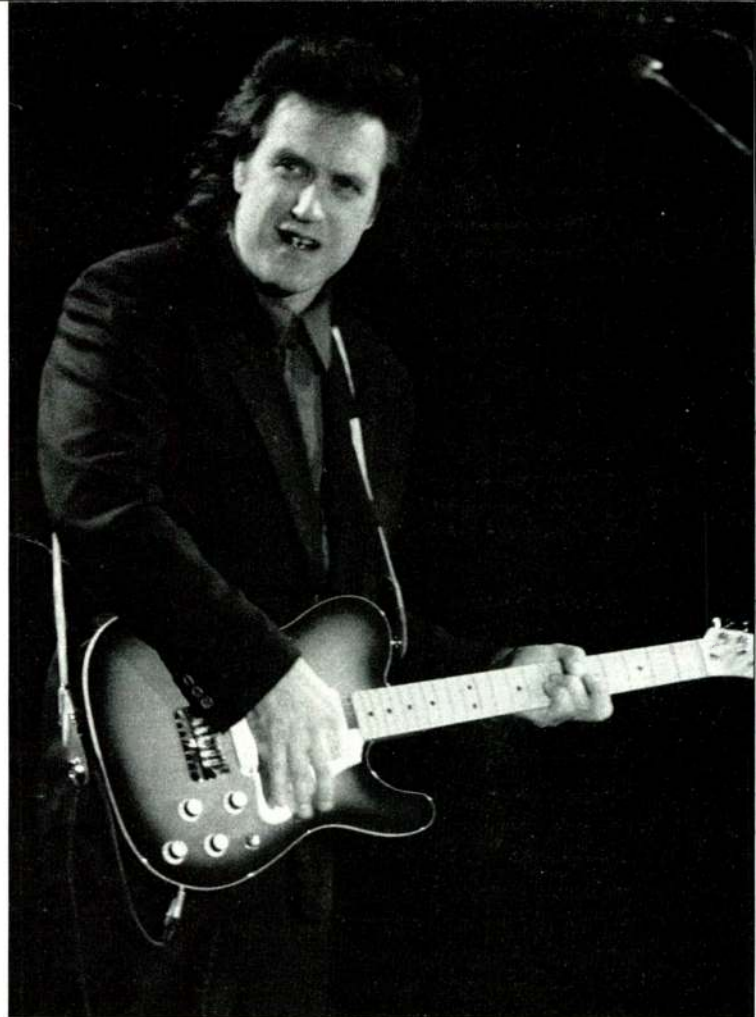
“But I can't *leave*,” Ray says, sensibly, “if I don't know where I'm going.”

As the beer total leaps and bounds silently toward the magic number 200, Ray bows out of the heroic communal effort. There is one final attempt to share his lemon: “Are you *sure* you wouldn't like some?” “*Nein*.” Ray stands to leave. Passing behind Scheller, he claps him on the shoulder. “Friends?” he asks. The promoter beams. Still balancing the lemon on the plate, Ray drifts out of the bar.

With the Kinks, *always you have to approach with the sense of humor*

WHATEVER THE OPPOSITE of “synergy” is, that's what the Kinks have always thrived on. Last autumn, with *UK Jive* completed but still unreleased, the band, with nothing to promote, hit the road for a six-week American tour, amid the usual rumors that Ray and Dave Davies were again not getting along. After a wonderfully raucous—and yes, last-minute—final show at the Beacon Theater in New York City, the Kinks scattered. With the curious logic that seems to surround the band's affairs, the tour's end meant that the new album could be safely released; *UK Jive*, a musically diverse collection of songs, was in the stores within two weeks of the Beacon show's final

**Dave Davies brings the spirit of Father Christmas to Frankfurt, December 1989.**



chorus of “Twist and Shout.” At the same time, it was announced that the Kinks had been voted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame. Talk about momentum: album finally available, single on the radio, band headed for the Hall of Fame!

The Kinks made the most of all this by remaining out of sight for the rest of October, November and half of December.

It's true that at one time keeping the Kinks off the road might have been considered a shrewd tactical move. Their concerts from the late '60s to the mid-'70s were loose, casual affairs, riveting in their own special way but not necessarily guaranteed to make non-believers want to buy the records. “Good ideas there, yeah, good ideas,” Ray says now of his bow-tied vaudevillian phase. “But I was a bit mad when I was doing it.”

Some insist the band's reputation during those years was unfairly exaggerated. “Everyone used to say they were sloppy and drunk,” says one insider. “They *were* sloppy, but they weren't drunk.” Well . . . all right. In any event, today's live Kinks are no liability whatsoever to today's studio Kinks. For a long time now the band has been a different kind of tight. The rhythm section of Jim Rodford, in his twelfth year as bass player, and drummer Bob Henrit, who replaced founding member Mick Avory in 1985, is solid as can be. Avory, incidentally, now looks after the band's Konk Studios outside London and “tiddles around on the drums at weekends, playing in jazz bands and things,” according to Ray. (Avory also recently took a golfing holiday in Bangkok where, claims an amused Ray, he contracted something contagious and unpleasant: “I *told* him not to sit on the lavatory seats.”) New keyboard player Mark Haley completes the quintet, and two professional dancers—Patricia Crosbie and Robin James—perform in the show's few choreographed



numbers. Crosby is also Mrs. Ray Davies.

One of the only drawbacks in recruiting talented new musicians is that the Kinks' carefully thought-out set can't accommodate as much spontaneity as it once did. "It's very frustrating," says Ray. "Whenever we get a new member in the band we can't play some of the older stuff that we could just do off the top of our heads." But Ray is still capable of launching into practically anything, which has led Dave Davies to instruct the other Kinks: *If you're not sure you know the song, don't play anything.*

Of course, in addition to some obvious early hits, certain more obscure gems are rehearsed and presented properly. "Apeman" is a "settling-in number," according to Ray. "Village Green Preservation Society" is the title cut of an album Ray would like to dip into a bit more. ("There's a very good spirit to it. It wasn't till we started doing it live that I realized how good it was.") "Days" was a recent hit in England for Kirsty MacColl—Ray calls her rendition "very nice, very human"—and is the latest example of the Kinks' reappropriating a song that's been successful for someone else. (When the Pretenders put out "Stop Your Sobbing," it began turning up in the Kinks' set; when the Jam recorded "I David Watts," Kinks audiences were singing "fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa" in short order. There's a whole generation of casual concert-goers that thinks "You Really Got Me" is a Van Halen tribute.)

The exquisite "Waterloo Sunset" turns up every other tour or so, if fans are lucky. It got an especially moving reading at the Beacon in October, and a week later Ray remembered the song over salad, ravioli and Pellegrino water at an Italian restaurant on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

"I must admit, I don't get attached," he said. "I try to detach myself a bit. But when I sang that the other night I got quite emotional about it. It was almost like it was all in slow motion and I couldn't finish it. I guess emotions are built up by what you think, and what you think *other* people think. Everybody's got their own image of what happens in that song. So maybe I was just picking up on all that from the audience. It's one of those things where at certain moments in plays—or any live theater—moments you can't walk out on. You have to stay to the end of that moment."

It was a spectacular, cloudless autumn afternoon in New York, the kind where even the litter looks great. Ray was dressed in a gray polo shirt, faded jeans, white socks, black shoes . . . and a well-worn raincoat. "My clothes may be old," he noted, "but they're *very* expensive." Dressing the part of a rock star is a problem for him. "I turn up and I look like an art student," he lamented. "I sometimes get embarrassed because this is the way I look. And not just my face, but the way I dress. It's just that it's so difficult to move around like I do and look cool at the same time." And he does move around. He tried living in Ireland for a few months but the solitude got to him. "I'm not very social," he said, "but I like being around crowds." He therefore likes New York.

It happened that the Stones were filling Shea Stadium that chilly week. "Poor dears, they'll get rheumatism," was Ray's unconvincing expression of concern. Of course, they go back a long way. "When we were *the* new band," remembered Ray, "and we had three number ones within six months in England, the Stones had been out for like 18 months and they'd won an NME best new band award the previous year. And we were gonna win it, 'cause there was nobody else in sight. And we got the runners-up! The Rolling Stones won it two years running—best *new* band." He laughed. "That's politics."

Did he ever feel the Kinks get less attention than they deserve?

"You know, I think about Thelonious Monk when I get down." Ray had recently been to see the Monk documentary film *Straight, No Chaser*. "I think, yeah, I could easily feel like that. But then, Thelonious is in his own space—he's got his own world around him. I think the Kinks have got that. I just take it all with a pinch of salt. It's when people get upset for *me* that I worry about it. Like really ardent fans, saying, 'You should be doing this.' I think we're in our own space, and we'll be judged accordingly. I don't think people have really appreciated or valued our work yet. 'Cause maybe the work cycle hasn't completed itself. It's only when you get to the point where you can't do any more that people actually can reappraise it."

Not that the Kinks have reached that point. As he'd recently told the rabid Beacon crowd, "If you're wondering why we're still here, it's because you are."

"VAT TIME DO YOU play tonight, please?"

"Nine. Maybe 9:05."

"Ve vill see you zen."

Cornered in a hotel bar near Frankfurt, Bob Henrit, although a relatively new Kink, has been signing rare album covers for a string of polite, well-dressed, middle-aged fans. "I've never even *seen* this before," he says every few seconds. Because Henrit replaced the popular Avory, some Kinks fans were slow warming to him. It was easy to pick them out during the band introductions on Henrit's first tour as a Kink: His name would be announced and, as most of the audience applauded, these purists would assume dour, vaguely disapproving expressions, arms folded on chests in a marked manner. But that was years ago.

"No. Sign on ze front, please."

Henrit recognizes many of the hardcore fans. Of a fellow who has compiled an exhaustive, book-length Kinks chronology, he says, in awe, "As far as I can see, he's devoted his whole life to this."

In the hotel lobby, the faithful have just detected Jim Rodford and are now plying *him* with album covers.

"Jim, excuse me. Is possible?"

Is. Rodford signs, and signs and signs.

The Kinks have always been available to their fans. Dave Davies says he's particularly amazed by the ones in America, some of whom he describes, fondly, as "crazy" and "misfits." And he feels that's appropriate: "If we weren't called the Kinks, we'd be called the Misfits."

## **Ray Davies' Songwriting Tips:**

***"Drink a lot," he advises. "And try not to get too much sleep."***

As for Ray, he believes he knows who he's playing to, even though the Kinks' audience cuts across a few generations. "I think I know who they are, they think they know who I am," he observes. "It's really diverse. Sometimes it's a bit of a time warp. What takes me completely off guard is when—where was it? Pittsburgh?—we had a 17-year-old fan come up after the show and ask why we didn't play 'Johnny Thunder' or something. I don't know when that was released,



After 25 years, rock's legends enjoy the poshest accommodations. one to bring the offender into his makeshift office for a chat. Ray Davies, about to dig into his hot, catered, post-soundcheck meal, looks up in alarm. "You're being *summoned*? Remember, you're in *Nuremberg*," he calls out in warning. A compromise is reached whereby Ray takes over as official photographer. He immediately picks up the camera and starts wheeling around, his eye pressed to the viewfinder. After rejecting a few possible subjects—a wall, a steam pipe, a ceiling bulb, his wife—he settles on an aerial view of his meal and snaps the shutter.

The day of the Nuremberg show had not begun well for Ray. He'd been awakened by loudly screaming Japanese—not fellow hotel guests, but participants in a lozenge-company-sponsored shouting contest in Japan, which CNN covered. Ray watches CNN a lot anyway, and during this dramatic pre-Christmas week everyone in and around the Kinks is eager for the latest word on Panama or Eastern Europe. When news comes that the Brandenburg Gate will be opened the next day, Ray is happy but, typically, puts it in perspective: "It's sad, all these people finding out what they've been missing."

The day hadn't gotten much better by the time the Kinks' caravan of Mercedes-Benzenes arrived at the concert hall in a suburb of Nuremberg. The weather continued wet and dreary. Several people were feeling increasingly fluish. And the sight of the Jurahalle did not lift any spirits. It was small—capacity 2,200, no seating—and narrow. Worse, the backstage facilities were a tad spartan, what with the stars' lavatory being portable and situated just *outside* the

Photographs: George Kalogerakis

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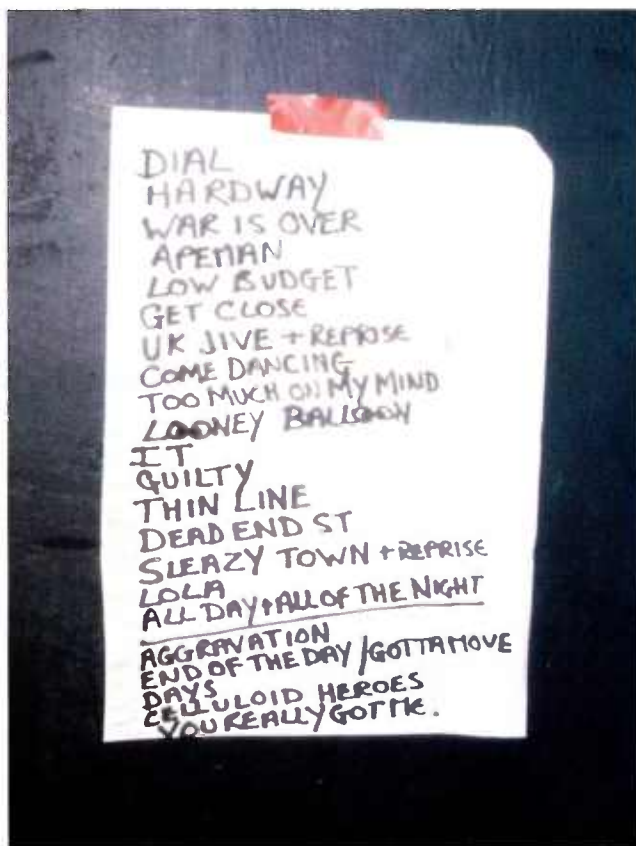


building in the parking lot. (That would change: The loo was hastily pushed up against an open door, which at least meant you no longer had to leave the building.) Surveying the hall, Ray didn't seem upset in the least. "It's a crappy gig," he said philosophically.

Of course, it turned out to be a first-rate one.

The soundcheck went well. The Kinks, apparently feeling nostalgic, ran through Buddy Holly's "That'll Be the Day," Duane Eddy's "Ramrod," Don Gibson's "Sea of Heartbreak" and their own "Too Much on My Mind." None of the songs would end up being performed that night, but no matter: The Kinks were loose, having fun.

A few hours later, the Jurahalle is packed. Young men and women line up for beer and "steak-simmel"—meat and onions on a bun—before the music starts. When the Kinks come on, the crowd roars—and the set list goes out the window from the very first number, "The Hard Way." "Till the End of the Day" is suddenly next, followed by the prescient "War Is Over" ("It's time for all the soldiers to go home"), "Apeman" and—with Ray hanging onto his acoustic guitar and dedicating the next number to "all the people who've never seen the Kinks before"—the timeless "Sunny Afternoon." Dave's "Living on a Thin Line" gets a great response. During "Come Dancing" the audience is swaying, clapping, singing along, and Ray looks happy. It's not that the band's playing is astonishingly better than usual, but this audience is especially spirited—and so, as a result, is the Kinks' front man. "Days" is an encore again, sung sweetly by Ray, hands in his trouser pockets, with Dave's **A coldhearted papa, Ray has abandoned set lists the world over.**



good. I like the Melody Maker, but it's too light for rock 'n' roll, the sound doesn't really cut it. I think Fender is a good guitar." Ray's microphone, since before you were born, has been a Shure SMS with a windscreen. The other Kinks sing through Shure SM58s.

DAVE DAVIES plays three Fender Telecaster Elites (two are sunburst, one is black). His strings are GHS Boomer Ultra Lights (.008) and his picks are medium-weight Gibson Jazz Teardrops. Hey, guess what? Dave has two Peavey Mace amps behind his stacks, facing upstage, and masked with black cloth. The secret of Dave's dirty sound. Guitar master Dave Bowen says Dave further uses two Gallien-Krueger 250 RL stereo power amps and four Gallien-Krueger 4x2 stereo cabinets. Dave uses the outer speakers in the cabinet for stereo separation. His only effect is the chorus which is an integral part of the 250 RL. Oh dear, Ray's coming back with a few words about amps: "I don't like these new stereo amps. What are they called? I believe Marshalls are good rock 'n' roll amps. For the last 10 years I've used Marshalls."

JIM RODFORD plays either a Lotus bass with GHS strings or a Fender Mustang Custom with medium Rotosounds. He plays through Trace Elliot preamps, cabinets and RMS500 power amps. "Uncle" BOB HENRIT plays black Pearl MX series drums. His rack toms are 12", 13" and 14"; his floor toms are 16" and 18", and a 24" bass drum. They are attached to Pearl's Jeff Porcaro drum rack. His cymbals are all Zildjian; he has a Simmons pad and Simmons digital ClapTrap.

Between MARK HALEY and his fans is a two-tier keyboard stand with a Korg M1 on top and a Korg SG10 (sampling grand piano) beneath it. To his left is a three-tier stand holding a Roland D-50, atop a Korg BX3, atop a Korg DW8000. The D-50 and DW8000 are MIDI-linked, too. The BX3 runs into a Boss stereo

volume pedal, into a Dynacord Leslie speaker simulator, into the mixer. All that sonic grace runs in stereo into a Studiomaster 12-2C 12-channel mixer. Also along the trail is another Boss stereo volume pedal, until the signal reaches heaven—those Recording Studio Design 800B stereo power amps. From there the delighted sound visits JBL studio monitors with 15" speakers and 2311 model horns.

PATRICK FARRELL, four years into his tenure as the Kinks' live mix engineer, has found that "a straight-ahead approach is the best—there are no whistles and bells with this band. The stage monitors provide eight discrete mixes around the stage. The band's sound is tuned around these 'pockets' of mixes and kept at a surprisingly low volume. This allows me to achieve a full house mix without the stage sound interfering."

We snuck off to look at the Kinks' outboard gear and found one Lexicon on the snares, toms and some vocals and another for Dave's guitar; a Yamaha SPX for reverb on Ray's vocal; a Yamaha KEV-S for reverb on the background vocals, a Roland 3000 for Ray's vocals, and . . . uh-oh—here comes Ray again, still talking: "I might try a Fender amp. I always swore against Fenders, 'cause I thought they were wimpy, but I might try one with my Victory. I used Vox for years. You know, I'm one of those people, I'll pick up a guitar and an amplifier and I'll adapt to the way it sounds. That's the way I work. I don't have a definitive sound that I want. I let Dave worry about that, 'cause he gets all those silly sounds. One thing I am adamant about is that he have that little Peavey onstage, behind his set, 'cause he's got all these . . . graphic things, you know, equalizers and I don't think it sounds very good. So I make him put a Peavey behind and we mike it up and out front it has a hard edge."

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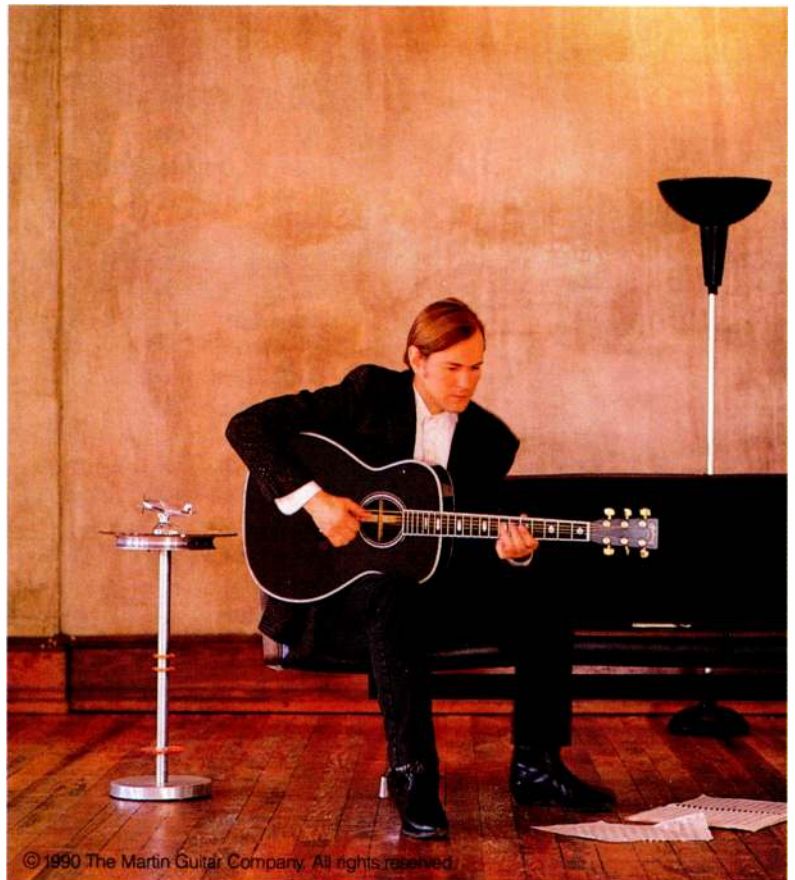
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# Young Guns



**Danny Gill**  
of Hurricane Alice

Photo: Annamaria Di Santa



**Larry Mitchell**

Photo: Chip Simons



**Blues Saraceno**

Photo: Robb Viscisky



**Johnny F., Brad Lang  
& Willie Hines** of Jet Red

Photo: Ray Olson



**Donny Roberts** of  
Webb Wilder & the Beatnecks

Photo: Randal Giles



**Steve Kimock**

Photo: Bob Cohn



**Richie Kotzen**

Photo: Robin Vuoride

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HERE'S A FUNNY BIT OF ADVICE ABOUT the ad business," David Buskin offers. "It's from *The Manticore*, by this Canadian writer, Robertson Davies. At one point someone says something like, 'You never do your best work when you give it 100 percent. When you give it 90 percent, you generally do your best work.' And sometimes I feel that's what happens here. Your heart's not necessarily in a song which is a paean to soap, so you're giving about 90 percent, but that extra 10 percent may just be anxiety."

"It has to do with being relaxed," nods his partner

# Chevys, Chunkies & Cheerios

Robin Batteau. "Once you start winning, you get more relaxed and I think you get better. Although once in a while when you get *crazed* you can do good things too. Like *crazed*, under pressure, it's got to be done in an hour and a half, but it has to be *great*."

"You've got to let go," Susan Hamilton adds. "I've got a theory: You can't succeed in this business if you take yourself too seriously. Because the minute you do, you clench and you don't come up with good stuff. We run this company on laughing, on fun. We have a good time. We're a bunch of offbeat intellectuals. We're likely to wander off into a discussion of the theory of relativity or Renaissance painting or whatever—in the midst of making absolutely stupid, filthy jokes!"

And in the midst of getting absolutely smart, filthy rich. Because running at that 90 percent of their creative capacity, Hamilton, Buskin & Batteau have been kicking Madison Avenue butt. The one-year-old HB&B is now conceded by most commercial music handicappers to be one of the hottest—if not *the* hottest—jingle houses in the business. Tucked away in an unassuming East 49th Street Manhattan townhouse, HB&B churns out the songs that America really hums, melodic rock tributes to Chevys, Chunkies, Cheerios and Burger King towns. "It's art for sale, and make no bones about it," as Batteau puts it. "You've got to do it fast, you've got to do it good and you've got to do it in a box—30 or 60 seconds." But it's also pretty catchy pop music. Change a word or two and many of HB&B's recent "hits" could slide right over to Contemporary Hit Radio—which to Susan Hamilton is just the point:

"There used to be such a *gap* between records and music for commercials. Jingles used to be pale, watered-down derivatives of hit records. Now commercials are as innovative, and the onus is gone. I

mean, celebrity talent—the most amazing people are doing jingles!

"The thing that used to make people good in the jingle business was flexibility, being able to be a chameleon, to be able to sing like this or that, the studied musicianship. All of the qualities that used to be prized so highly in the jingle business were qualities that I almost think would *keep* people from being stars. Because the uniqueness of someone's voice used to hurt them. People like Carly Simon, Barry Manilow, Melissa Manchester or Herbie Hancock, who have all passed through this door, were all people who weren't suited to the old jingle business."

"It was a smaller group," affirms David Buskin. "A smaller group of professionals who quietly, off behind the curtain, would do 90 percent of the work. Now the talent pool is enormous. It's everybody who can sing and play, no matter how unknown or famous they are. They're always looking for new voices."

It's in this new anything-goes ad environment, where you'll find sampled percussion feasts, razor-sharp dance grooves, buzz-saw guitar and even rap, that Hamilton, Buskin & Batteau have achieved a kind of stardom. Hamilton has been in it the longest; Phi Beta Kappa, Fulbright scholar and concert piano prodigy, she joined a jingle house 20 years ago and, using her penchant for production, rose to become a partner in a major jingle house, HEA Productions.

Around 1983 she met David Buskin, a pianist/singer/guitarist who had made a solid career for himself as a songwriter, solo artist (on Epic) and sideman (Peter, Paul & Mary, Tom Rush) with a strong bent for the folk idiom. Since 1979 Buskin had been working in a partnership with violinist/mandolinist/guitarist Robin Batteau, himself a veteran of a number of fine New England projects, including Pierce Arrow, where they first met. As Buskin & Batteau they did five albums, but by 1981 Buskin was tasting failure:

"I was feeling like, 'Here I am, I'm almost 40. I'm broke. My life isn't working out; I'm divorced again.' And luckily for me I knew some people who were singing jingles and asked them how I could get into it. They were kind enough to help me out and one thing led to another. Everybody said, 'Be a singer,' and then I started writing 'cause I wanted to sing more. And then I met Susan and she asked me to come and work for her."

Buskin's breakthrough was on the '84 fall NBC ("Just Watch Us Now") campaign, and he's done every

HAMILTON,  
BUSKIN & BATTEAU  
DO IT FAST,  
DO IT GOOD AND  
DO IT IN A BOX  
BY JOCK BAIRD







*Photograph: Karen Kuehn*

MUSICIAN

*March 1990 • 65*

World Radio History

NBC theme ever since. But after striking gold with that one, he failed to sell another jingle for months. "Finally I asked Susan, 'What's wrong?' And she said, 'You think you have to write a special way to do jingles, but that's not true. Just write the best song you can about the subject at hand. Don't write *down*, don't try to make it a jingle.' And you know, you hear that a lot, but sometimes the simplest lessons are very hard to learn. You suddenly realize what you're doing and what you should be doing. To me, that advice still resonates. You *don't* have to write a special way. Write the best song you can about the subject at hand, bringing to bear all the musical knowledge that you have. Even if it's a supermarket."

Taking that advice, Buskin went on to pen (and often sing) such biggies as "All Aboard America" (Amtrak), "We Deliver, We Deliver" (U.S. Postal Service) and "This Is a Burger King Town." Meanwhile he also convinced B&B recording partner Batteau to try his hand at the jingle business and Batteau caught on across town at Joey Levine's Crushing Enterprises. One afternoon in 1986, Batteau was down to a tight deadline on a Chevrolet account, and in five minutes penned "The Heartbeat of America," arguably the most effective jingle of the decade. With all the house arrangers busy, Batteau (who didn't own a TV at the time) got together with fellow Crushing staffer Jeff Southworth on guitar and several vocalists and cut a rough demo of the song on his Tascam 38 eight-track. Actually, it was a *very* rough demo.

"There were mistakes on it," Batteau laughs. "Most jingles up until then were perfect. Every note was crafted perfectly. But that piece . . . there were things that were out of tune, things that were out of time. But the whole *feel* of the thing was great. You don't have to have every piece."

Unfortunately, when it came time to recut the song as a full studio production number, the feel was gone. No problem. The demo became the commercial, and the commercial made Batteau, the principal singer, rich in residuals.

Batteau went on to do numerous "pool-outs" or remakes of the jingle as well as other spots for McDonald's, Cadillac ("Cadillac Style") and one of his personal faves, "The Unsinkable Taste of Cheerios." Finally, in the same jingle-world realignment that

## HOW THE AD BIZ WORKS

### ALL ABOUT FIDOS, CATTLE CALLS & STEAL-OMATICS

**T**HE MAKER of a product or the provider of a service, the **CLIENT**, directly engages an **ADVERTISING AGENCY** to do a **TV SPOT**. The ad agency then formulates a **CONCEPT** for the commercial and then, with the advice of their own in-house music specialists, will hire a music product house to write, arrange and produce the music. Sometimes the agency already has the job; sometimes it's commissioning music just to bid on a big account. In the second case, sometimes two or more ad agencies will even hire the same music house to pitch the account.

Two types of music are used in TV ads: **JINGLES**, that is, vocal songs, and **UNDERScores**, which are instrumental underpinnings to film and narration. Almost all houses do both types of work, but tend to specialize in one or the other. Companies which make music for the former are still called **JINGLE HOUSES** and look to the pop record market for sounds and styles. Companies which tend toward underscoring prefer to be known as **SOUND DESIGNERS** and take their craft and moonlighting projects from the feature film and TV world. (It's not considered polite to refer to a sound design house as a jingle house.)

On a campaign based around a jingle, the music is produced first. An ad agency will typically shop the same campaign to two or three music houses at a time, winner take all. For big accounts, as many as 25 paid demos will be solicited; these are called **WITCH HUNTS** or **CATTLE CALLS**. It's virtually standard practice for the house to produce a **DEMO** in its own 24-track studio, usually in the form of a two-minute **PRESENTATION** version. While demos are considered to be preliminary versions, many so-called "final demos" or **FIDOS** are recorded in 24-track so they can be used as a final master if need be. Win or lose, a major jingle house is generally paid a flat fee to produce this demo, between \$1000 and \$1500.

The ad agency may take the music and make up a dummy spot cut out of generic shots from a director's reel, known as a **STEAL-OMATIC**. The agency then chooses the winning music, gets the manufacturer's approval and then modifies it and cuts it down to 30- and 60-second final versions. These are recut in full-scale production (usually at the house studio), often played by the same session mega-talent that plays the big record dates. Between production costs and a **CREATIVE FEE** for the jingle house, the average

national TV spot pays around \$25,000. Then there are performance fees from the appropriate unions for the writers, musicians, and especially the singers.

The job market for underscores pays less but offers more work opportunities. Ad agencies in need of sound design work don't usually run big competitions, which means much underscoring skips over the demo stage. Since the music is there to support the voice-over and images, an underscore is usually done after the film; this is known as a **POST-SCORE**. For very rhythmic, "cutty" scores, however, the music will be made first as a **PRE-SCORE** and then the film is assembled around the hit points.

Every TV market runs local advertising, so you can theoretically live anywhere and do commercials. But when it comes to national ad work, it's pretty much L.A., Chicago and especially New York. Though by no means a monopoly, eight music houses are generally conceded to be the top breadwinners of the national ad arena. They are, in no particular order, **JONATHAN ELIAS**, **HB&B**, **Jon Silbermann's JSM**, **Joey Levine's CRUSHING ENTERPRISES**, **Rich LOOK & CO.**, **Jake Holmes' 4/4**, **MUSIC ANIMALS** and **KILLER MUSIC**. Each house has a core of senior writers and usually a



◆ One for all . . . : the group-chanting staff of Jonathan Elias ◆

full staff of producers, engineers, arrangers and musicians. Staff size ranges from 10 to 27 in the Big Eight, with significantly more people on call.

—Jock Baird



involved Susan Hamilton's other top writer, Jake Holmes, leaving to start his own house in late 1988, Robin Batteau was offered a full partnership in the new HB&B conglomerate and Buskin & Batteau were officially allowed to write ads together as well as albums.

Which is fine with Buskin. Although each half of B&B writes alone, one half works faster than the other: "Robin likes to write fast," explains Buskin. "They haven't even finished giving him the specs and he's got a couple of ideas written up. I don't like to work that way. I like to take it home and let it percolate, let my unconscious mind work on it a little. But unfortunately there's usually no time for that."

"Everybody wants it in two days. That's one of our biggest fights with our clients: 'Please come to us sooner. It's better for everybody.' But they, just like everybody else, are deadline driven. It's just like college and high school—you do the paper the night before. It doesn't matter how many millions of dollars are at stake."

The interview is interrupted for a deadline which won't wait. Buskin is pitching a major account with a jingle he's worked up with two other writers, one of whom is ex-Cyndi Lauper guitarist John McCoury. The problem at hand is that although the potential client likes the two-minute presentation reel, they're having trouble cutting this down to 30 seconds. It's a common problem; like big band hits, a lot of famous jingles have great opening verses no one's ever heard.

The ad agency's not sure what's wrong, but they've told Hamilton it's "too Broadway." Now Buskin sits down at the acoustic piano and explains to the new arrivals the several proposed options to simplify the track. Hamilton proposes removing a modulation, felt by some to be the source of the "Broadway" comment. The two writers prefer to keep the modulation in, and Buskin works through several compromise solutions. Left to the musicians alone, it seems the decision might never be made, but Hamilton keeps pressing firmly for a resolution. A watered-down version of the modulation survives—for now. As everyone scurries off to make the studio amendments, HB&B resume the conversation. Divining the wishes of the client must be a tough part of the job, huh? How specific are they?

"It varies," Buskin says. "They may have every single element except the music, and all we have to do is write a tune and we can't change a word without their permission.

And the other end of the spectrum is they just have the germ of an idea, and we have to figure out everything else. It's hard when they want something that's in its soul conventional—but they don't want product information. You have *no* idea what to give them!"

"Repeat clients you get to know a little bit," adds Batteau. "When they say 'We want something different,' you know they mean it. And other times. . . ."

"We had one client that said, 'We don't want a jingle; write us a *song*. We want it to be like 'Coke Is It.'" I love that! But also

sometimes they'll ask you for something that's totally inappropriate for the product, and you *know* it ain't gonna go! Then you've got to figure out a way to write them something that won't make them say, 'But we asked you for X and you gave us Y.'"

Can they know better than the client what is needed? "You gotta be careful of that feeling," cautions Buskin, "but sometimes you do."

"Sometimes, yeah," adds Hamilton. "Always," laughs Batteau.

"We don't work well with [cont'd on page 78]"

**G H S**

# STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN & GHS STRINGS

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**E**VER LONGED TO BE A PEPPER? OR smiled at the antics of Zack the Legomaniac? Or considered going “Skippy-dippin’”? Blame Jake Holmes, one of the top jingle writers on the advertising scene today. The man behind insidiously catchy ditties for everything from deodorant (“Raise your hand if you’re Sure”) to the military (“Be all that you can be . . .”), this New York-based composer has probably authored more “hits” than Elton John, in the pro-

cess becoming the only jingle writer ever elected to the Songwriter’s Hall of Fame.

Dr. Pepper and Chevrolet, Holmes soon found himself a hot property instead of a failure. If he could write a hit for Dr. Pepper, why couldn’t Holmes do the same for Clive Davis? “That’s a good question,” he

# Be All That You Can Be

cess becoming the only jingle writer ever elected to the Songwriter’s Hall of Fame.

The graying, fortysomething tunesmith didn’t grow up wanting to be the king of tunes that drive folks crazy, of course. As a Long Island teen, John Greer Holmes, Jr. grooved to the sounds of West Coast bebop and early rock ‘n’ roll while waiting for direction from the muse. “I couldn’t get into being a serious musician,” the low-key Holmes recalls. “I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do—I just had to be a star.”

By the early ‘60s, with the folk boom in full swing, he was singing and strumming guitar in a folk-comedy duo called Allan & Greer, which shared management with the Serendipity Singers. “We did very well at the time. Then they drafted me.”

Following his discharge, Holmes resurfaced in another humor-minded music group, Jim, Jake & Joan, the Joan being Rivers. “She couldn’t carry a tune, so we had trouble,” he laughs. “But we played the club circuit and ended up total enemies because we’d been put together by our manager.”

Holmes finally started to hit his stride as a solo artist. One of the early singer/songwriters, he cut two albums for Tower Records, then two more for Polydor. Although Jimmy Page “borrowed” his “Dazed and Confused” for the first Led Zeppelin album, Holmes had his own taste of success in 1970 when “So Close” became a minor hit single.

It turned out to be the worst twist of fate imaginable. Expecting a future Top 10 star, Clive Davis lured Holmes to Columbia with more money. But when his label debut (*How Much Time*) flopped, Holmes found himself out in the cold.

Pop’s loss was advertising’s gain. Starting with an anti-drug spot, followed by work for

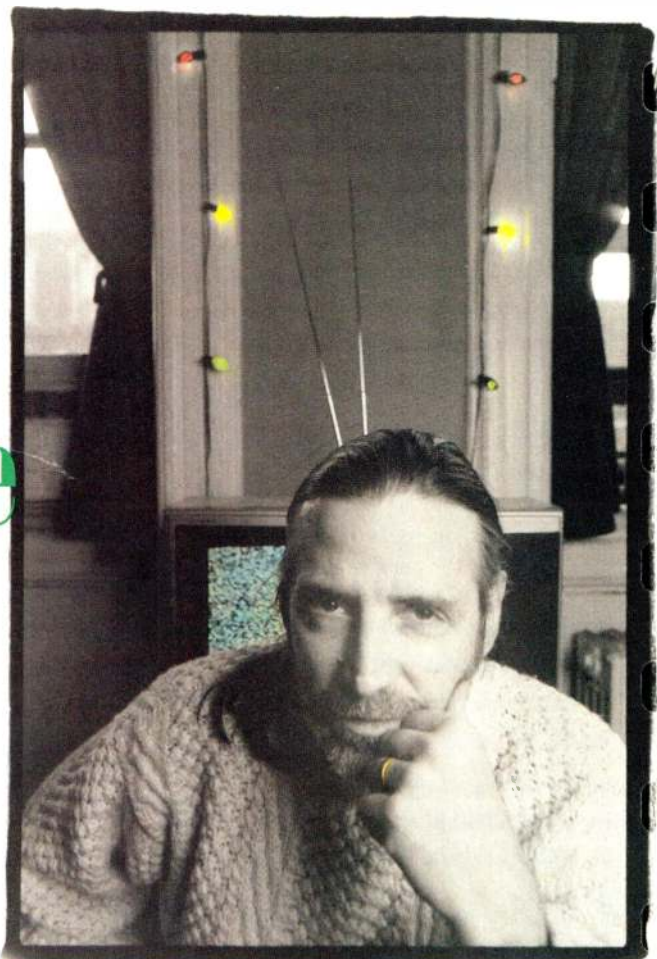
says slowly. “Maybe because I took commercials less seriously. I looked upon them as a way to make money while my career was on hold.”

At any rate, Holmes’ knack for snappy words—he considers himself a lyricist first—and memorable melodies turned a last resort into a lucrative occupation. First with the jingle house HEA Productions, and now as a partner in his own company, Four/Four Productions, Holmes has worked steadily for nearly 20 years as a musical short-order cook, devising tunes at the behest of ad agencies and their clients.

Although the goal remains the same, he says the methods have changed. “It used to be you’d have a meeting at the piano, like on Tin Pan Alley. There’d be comments on the spot, you’d fight and yell, and then go into the studio. Nowadays competition is a lot more fierce. Because of machines, you have to do a full demo.

“The business has gotten a lot harder, a lot leaner. Everybody’s running a lot more scared.”

Which, he might have added, can make a proven writer like Holmes pretty valuable. Laughing, he recalls composing different songs for two agencies competing for the same Pro Keds account. It’s perfectly kosher, Holmes has-



**JAKE HOLMES  
FINDS UNSERIOUS  
STARDOM  
BY JON YOUNG**

tens to add. “There’s no conflict of interest in the jingle business for writers. Besides, you have to put money down on all the numbers if you want to win.” He got the job, by the way.

“If things are going good, you end up working real hard, at the expense of everything else you want to do. We call it the ‘velvet trap.’ But I’ve always kept up the other side of my music,” explains Holmes. Indeed, over the years he’s compiled an impressive resume. Before his recording career wound down, Holmes collaborated with veteran Bob Gaudio on two projects, contributing lyrics to the 1969 Four Seasons LP *Genuine Imitation Life Gazette* (“Their Sgt. Pepper”) and the 1970 Frank Sinatra album *Watertown* (“We almost killed his career”). Since then, he’s composed for a number of stage productions, including the off-Broadway musical *Sidewalkin’*, and worked with Harry Belafonte on his *Paradise in Gazankula* LP.

“I’ve been thinking with the part of my brain that does commercials so long that I’ve had to go back and write in a different way to get into what really matters to me. It’s the difference between painting a portrait and doing whatever you do art [cont’d on page 97]



## Jingle Land

**N**EAR THE TOP OF ALMOST everyone's list of the best commercial music houses is JSM, the four-year-old company of Jon Silbermann. Having first entered the ad business in 1972, the South African native is one of the few people to prosper in both old and new ad climates. His one constant rule of thumb? "Try and be original and different all the time," Silbermann says. JSM's work divides evenly between jingles and underscores. JSM's hit jingles include pitches for Polaroid Im-pulse, Apple Cinnamon Cheerios, Clearasil and Sealtest, but it was their underscore for Goodyear, a percussive romp set to a comedic, silent-movie spot, that's been most imitated. Silbermann feels the success of that innovative score says a lot about expectations:

"The thing I like about the business and the kind of clients we attract is that you *attract* what you *deserve*. Some agencies will want a house to reproduce what they did for McDonald's or Pepsi, or some Top 40 song,

but other agencies really want fresh, different stuff all the time. It wasn't us putting pressure on Goodyear; they came to us with the idea of doing something different. So you really do attract the clients you deserve. That old myth that there are a lot of people running scared out there is not necessarily true."

What's the biggest mistake people writing ad music make? "Trying to second-guess what someone wants, instead of following your own instincts," Silbermann replies. "If you're really with the program for any assignment, you realize you're trying to do something that has a broader vision than just the music. You should never start second-guessing it by saying, 'Well, that's too this or too that for this project,' or 'They may not like it.' My honest feeling is that if we come up with a super piece of music, it'll go. There are times when we realize something we've done is too aggressive, or they weren't comfortable with it, but usually it's the good piece of music that wins."

What if Silbermann felt the lyrics or slogan was flawed? "If you don't like what they gave you, come up with something better. But if you demo an idea, stay in touch with the agency. Sometimes they may really like what

you suggest, but you have to give them time to get to their people."

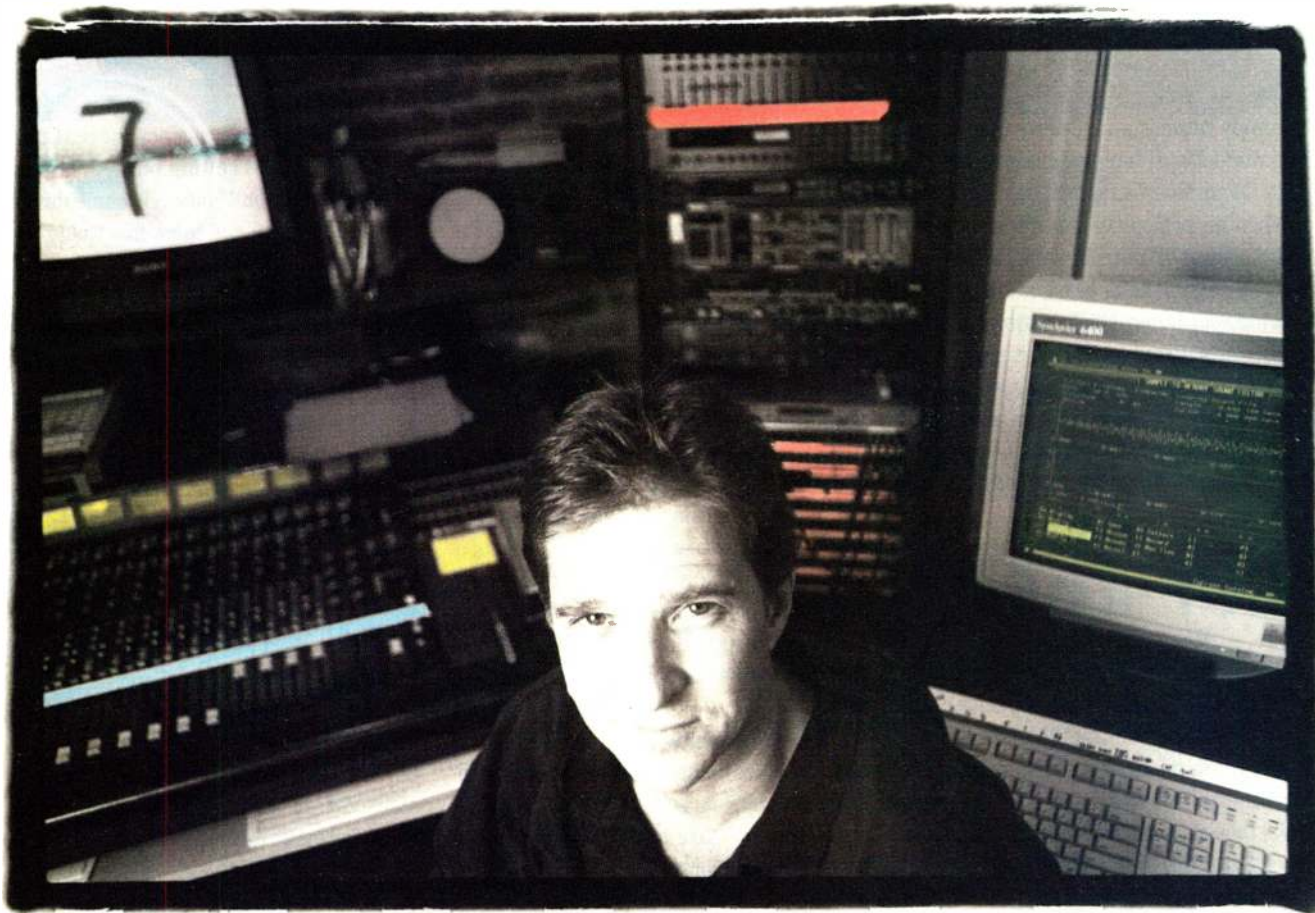
An old maxim about jingle writing is to avoid minor keys, but like most pre-1985 rules, Silbermann thinks "that's totally nonsense. That might be someone's jaundiced view, and you probably wouldn't write a Cheerios commercial in a minor key. But there are plenty of things that work in minor that feel great."

For a guy who's been in the business so long, Silbermann seems unnaturally idealistic. What keeps him excited? "Well, everyone's using other sources and using all kinds of influences. Years ago everyone was writing the same piece, sung by Group Seventy-type singers, all sounding alike. There was no push to do anything different. But now that's all

# The Big Underscore

there is—for me."

So this really is the Golden Age of Ad Music? "Definitely!"—Jock Baird



**M**AYBE YOU'RE STARTING TO GUESS that rock stardom is not in your future. Maybe it's time to get a little paycheck from all those years in the trenches and drop into the lucrative world of jingles and underscores. Can't be too hard, right? Whip off a few in your spare time, very simple, very melodic, very memorable, huh?

Wrong, Doublemint breath. You've just committed the first DON'T of ad music writing: Don't condescend, also expressed as DON'T write down. Virtually every one of the experts we spoke to stressed repeatedly that jingle writing uses all the same rules as good pop writing, and that good underscores are no different from good soundtracks.

"The 'jingle song' is not so anymore," says Steve Tubin, an arranger/producer for Look & Co. "You're dealing mostly now with very intense scoring stuff, very new-age or high-energy percussive drum scores, and you're dealing with recording-sounding songs. The ad agency producers and writers are all younger people, so they don't want the old stuff. You will occasionally hear one, like the Doublemint twins, but that stuff makes me want to puke!"

"Like this thing we did for Oldsmobile: 'This Is Not Your Father's Oldsmobile.' Sure, it's a jingle but it's also a driving, high-energy rock 'n' roll track. As opposed to a jingle jingle. Nobody wants that anymore."

That doesn't mean modern jingle-writing doesn't have rules. According to Tubin, "You've got to give 'em something they'll remember. A hook is a hook, as they say, so you want melodic content to be somewhat memorable. Things in minor keys are not. You hear very few hit commercials that are in minor keys because it sounds negative to clients. And that's true in pop—if you can write an uptempo major-key thing, you've really got something happening. So jingles have to be memorable, uptempo and not hostile."

### DO get used to rejection.

An average music house is likely to sell five percent of the demos it makes. Very successful houses get from 10 percent to 25 percent

of the jobs they bid for. And during a hot streak, a house can get up to a 50 percent success rate. Overall, that's a lot of unused ideas, many of which are recycled and live to fight another campaign. But most of them wind up on the cutting room floor. Composers and musicians who can't take criticism and remain flexible are better off in some other music endeavor.

### DON'T go it alone.

Plenty of small production companies can get in on an ad competition, but it takes years to establish strong relationships with the major agencies. If your skills are already in good shape, you can advance farther faster by joining the staff of an established music house, especially one of the Big Eight (see page 64). "No house writer is broke; everybody shares in the profits," reveals journeyman engineer Mike Golub. "The success of one directly affects the success of all of them. It's not like one guy wins a campaign and everyone else loses. Everyone in the house will benefit 'cause chances are they'll sing and play on it, which means residuals. And that's the prize."

The atmosphere in many music houses is also an important part of a staff job. "We do have a good time at what we do," admits

# of Making Music for Commercials

Mike Moscovitz of Jonathan Elias. "It's a fun atmosphere. If we need group chanting for a track, everybody stops doing what they're doing and all run into the studio and start chanting, screaming and shouting. Our ideas for commercials can come from anyone from receptionists all the way up to the top. It's very collaborative down here."

### DO be well compensated.

The commercial music world is a pay-as-you-go world. Nobody will ask you to work for peanuts, as long as you get the job done. "In the record business, it's always like a dues-paying game," explains Golub. "But in jingles, it's dues-collecting. You do the work and you're paid well."

The Golden Fleece of jingle work is singing. Of all

## Jingle Land

the unions involved in the production process, the Screen Actor's Guild, which represents the singers, is by far the strongest and gets

the largest performance royalty per viewing. If the ad runs more than 13 weeks, the performers can also get residuals, depending on the kind of deal they made up front. Unlike regular radio programming, jingle performance royalties are not paid by BMI or ASCAP. The publishing is bought outright, and many ad agencies will have publishing arms. Still, everything is negotiable, and most major houses get some form of residual for extended campaigns. Often it's the unglamorous so-called "P&G" (for Proctor & Gamble) ads that are shown extensively on daytime TV that pay a house's bills rather than a shorter-term but better publicized fast food or soft drink campaign.

### DO everything you can to understand what the agency really wants.

"I think there's a fear to convey too specifically what they want," says Crushing's Joey Levine. "They're talking about something that's never been done, so they have no way to tell you what they want. They have a vague way of relating things: 'Something like this, something like that...'"

It often helps to find out who's really the boss. It isn't unusual to be confronted with a whole roomful of agency "crea-

tives" (they're the ones with sketch pads and marking pens) and "suits" (the agency's executive branch). These people will all be full of ideas about the music—usually mutually contradictory ones. The composer's mission is to find out which of these characters will be giving the final okay.

"It's especially hard when you're working with somebody for the first time," Al Capps, a writer for Killer Music, admits. "You don't know who is really in charge. Or if what they're telling you is what they really want."

And they'll say the *darnedest* things. "My favorite direction," recalls Jonathan Merrill, also a composer at Killer Music, "was when somebody said he wanted 'a hymn with triple-time electronic drums.' Whatever that meant. The project ended up being canceled, probably be-

BY JOCK BAIRD



cause the concept was so weak to begin with."

### DON'T work with a bad concept.

"You can't write a good piece of music around a bad concept," says Josef Lubinsky of Music Animals, composer of renowned jingles for Gatorade, Levi's 501 Blues and Wheaties ("what the big boys eat"). "If your idea to sell champagne is 'I Can't Get No Satisfaction,' I'd have a tough time making that work. Say you're selling potato chips and someone says, 'Feel the power, feel the crunch, feel the momentous occasion of the potato chip!' It doesn't make any sense even if someone wants you to write a jingle around it. If you get bad lines to begin with, you aren't going to be able to pull it off."

### DON'T screw around.

"It's not a scary,

to screw around. You have directors getting \$5000 a day, celebrities, big bucks involved. And our house has 27 people to support. It's a pretty serious profession."

### DON'T let the sell overwhelm the music.

"Remember the main idea of a commercial is to sell a product," says Mike Golub. "And the copywriters at the agencies are the people who have to sell the stuff, so they're going to put in as many words as possible. Lots of times you're up against overly verbose copy, and you have to ask the agency to cut some words out. And no matter how hard you work making the music sound good, generally it'll be mixed as loud as the sell. The words are everything. I come from a place where the music works around the

### DO connect emotionally.

"What makes a great jingle is the same thing that makes a great song," explains Josef Lubinsky. "You unlock what people are looking for. You want to make it stand out, and the thing that you'll remember most are the feelings. You remember your first kiss and you probably still remember the bully in your high school. You remember because the bully is an abhorrent emotional memory and, of course, the first kiss is a beautiful memory, and we remember the things that are emotional. That's why we remember, 'I'd like to teach the world to sing.'"

### DON'T hesitate to use subliminal means.

One of your jobs is to select the correct musical ingredients to subliminally target the commercial to the appropriate audience demographic. If it's a youth-targeted product, go big on the sampled drums and flourishes. If it's an older "demo," say for the Postal Service or some luxury car, use more conventional arranging techniques to induce feelings of reliability or tradition (and DO always use brass in any Army spot).

"In a way, we're interpreters," says Robin Batteau of HB&B. "We speak a language here which is between the audience and the product. We can put it into musical syntax that communicates without your necessarily hearing what the words are. It's associative kind of language, a communication that doesn't have to be denoted."

Batteau layered his famed "Heartbeat of America" jingle with all sorts of subliminal sonic cues. "I thought it had a lot to do with the current car-buying generation, which is my generation, and the beginnings of rock 'n' roll. The '58 Chevy was a kind of rock 'n' roll touchstone, Elvis Presley and all those characters. So in the production of the piece we reinvented rock 'n' roll in 60 seconds, starting with a little folk, then country, then bring in some Motown, some urban blues, so that by the time you hear 'Chevrolet' you've heard where rock 'n' roll came from."

### DO borrow but don't steal.

"Sometimes the agency really wants a particular song or artist that for one reason or another they can't have," says Batteau. "And they can't come to us and say, 'Rip this guy off!' You just can't do that. But if that's what



big-brother kind of thing, but everybody takes everything seriously," Moscovitz observes. "Commercials cost at least \$500,000 a pop, and you don't have time

it, supports it and lifts it. They're working together. But oftentimes in jingles and commercials, whoever is doing the sell, be it the person singing or the voice-over, will dominate. And I always try and fight that; it's part of what makes a bad commercial."



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Los Angeles, California 90040-3647  
213 685-5141



employed, healthy, happy, spending money, then a certain thing is achieved.

"There are, of course, social issues. I do a lot of video post work and one time I walked in to do a job and it was for Ronald Reagan, whose campaign was run by a lot of gay TV producers. I was horrified! I had to take applause from one section of a Reagan speech and move it so that at the end of something that he said, where there had actually been no reaction, I had to create the illusion of tremendous applause. It was a

total manipulation and a total lie, and I had two choices. I could either walk off the job—refuse to do it—or do it. Rarely in my life have I felt lousier and more compromised morally, yet at the same time I have a family. What was I supposed to do? So I did it and gave the money to his opponent. But I still feel bad about that. That's the kind of thing that you're going to come up against. There are certain moral choices. Suppose you get to do a campaign for the army? What if next time it's the American Nazi Party?"

## DO CONSIDER UNDERScores.

**T**HE BIG BREADWINNERS in ad music are jingles, but "most of the market out there is underscore work," advises Mike Moscovitz, head of production for the music house of Jonathan Elias. Up to 80 percent of Elias' business involves underscores, including spots for Jovan, Coke, Pepsi, Perrier and BMW ("The Ultimate Tanning Machine"). For Moscovitz, "a good underscore should set up an atmosphere and a mood. It's almost like they present a little meal to you on a plate, and by looking at the colors or tasting little pieces, you get a feeling or a sense of attachment to it."

For Moscovitz, the first rule of underscoring is to remember the music has a purpose: "It always has to work with what's happening visually and with the voice-over. It's a piece of communication: You're there to support a story or provide a mood."

It's all part of developing a bond between advertiser and audience. "You have to use a little drama in an underscore," Moscovitz says, "no matter what the product is, whether it's for crayons or cars or public service, like CARE or the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. The idea is not that everyone has to walk away all smiley and happy-faced."

One of the more creative scores to come out of Elias was a campaign for Michelob Dry where a primitive atmosphere was requested. "Instead of using horns we brought in this guy who plays conch shells," Moscovitz reports. "And for percussion we brought in this guy who had these Japanese metal sculptures he started rubbing and banging on, making all these sounds. We also used water bottles filled at different levels for percussion. We have three Synclaviers here, but we're finding that the human element is much more important than techno sounds."

The biggest problems in the ad music business involve painting by numbers: "Some commercials are so blatantly marketed, where you can see nothing but the research and the demographics involved. Or you get people coming in and asking for the flavor of the month: 'I want "thirtysomething."' Boring. Stupid. It was real big a while ago to rip off the soundtrack to *The Mission*."

Moscovitz feels the biggest mistake of all is to underestimate the media intelligence of those millions of viewers out there: "They've been watching films and TV all their lives. They watch more than they read. You don't have to spell things out to the average viewer anymore, and you don't want to insult or alienate them. They do get it. And they bring a lot to the interpretation. Without them, the ad business wouldn't exist."

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**L A N D E D**

The revolutionary Stealth Keyboard Stand from Ultimate Support Systems is high tech, high touch and high style. In fact, the only thing low about this sleek new stand is its price.

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Now NRI puts you at the heart of the most exciting application of digital technology to date! With NRI's new at-home training in **Electronic Music Technology**, you get hands-on experience with the equipment that's revolutionizing the music industry—Atari ST Series computer with built-in MIDI ports, Casio CZ101 digital synthesizer with advanced MIDI capabilities, and ingenious MIDI software that links computer keyboard to synthesizer keyboard—all yours to train with and keep.

This year, over \$1.5 billion worth of digital electronic music instruments—keyboards, guitars, drum machines, and related equipment—will be sold in the U.S. alone. Who's buying this new-tech equipment? Not just progressive musicians and professional recording technicians, but also thousands of people who have never touched a musical instrument before. And there's good reason why.

Something called MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) has suddenly transformed musical instruments into the ultimate computer peripherals . . . and opened up a whole new world of opportunity for the person who knows how to use, program, and service this extraordinary new digital equipment.

Now NRI's breakthrough Electronic Music Technology course puts you at the forefront of this booming new technology with exclusive hands-on training built around a MIDI-equipped computer, MIDI synthesizer, and MIDI software you keep.

## Dynamic New Technology Opens Up New Career Opportunities for You

The opportunities are unlimited for the person who's trained to take advantage of today's electronic music phenomenon. Now you can prepare for a high-paying career as a studio technician,

sound engineer, recording engineer, or road technician . . . even start your own new-age business providing one-stop sales and service for musicians, technicians, and general consumers alike. Or simply unleash your own musical creativity with the breakthrough training and equipment only NRI gives you.

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The Atari ST Series computer included in your course becomes the heart of your own computer-controlled music center. With its tremendous power, superior graphics capabilities, and built-in MIDI interface, the 16/32-bit Atari ST has almost overnight become the computer of choice for today's most knowledgeable electronic musicians.

The Casio CZ101 digital synthesizer, also included in your training, is the perfect complement to your Atari ST. The polyphonic, multitimbral CZ101—which stores up to 32 voices internally—"communicates" with your ST computer through MIDI, bringing life to virtually any sound you can imagine.

Plus, you get ingeniously designed MIDI software that opens up amazing new creative and technical possibilities. . . you actually build your own 4-input audio mixer/amplifier. . . and you test the electronic circuits at the core of today's new-tech equipment with the hand-held digital multimeter included in your course.

## No previous experience necessary—in electronics or music!

No matter what your background, NRI gives you the skills you need

to take advantage of today's opportunities in electronic music technology.

With your experienced NRI instructor always available to help, you master the basics of electronic theory step by step, gaining the full understanding of electronics that's now so essential for technicians and musicians alike. You move on to analyze sound generation techniques, digital logic, microprocessor fundamentals, and sampling and recording techniques . . . ultimately getting first-hand experience with today's explosive new technology as you explore MIDI, waveshaping, patching, sequencing, mixing, special effects, and much more.

Plus, even if you've never been involved with music before, NRI gives you enough basic training in music theory and musical notation to appreciate the creative potential and far-reaching applications of today's electronic music equipment.

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For all the details about NRI's innovative new training, send the coupon today. You'll receive a complete catalog describing NRI's Electronic Music Technology course plus NRI courses in other high-tech, in-demand electronics fields.

If the coupon is missing, write to NRI School of Electronics, McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center, 4401 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008.

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## HB & B

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[cont'd from page 65] people who just want to hear the boot heels click every time they give an order," Buskin smiles. "It just doesn't work out."

But the challenges posed by using celebrities in commercials can be daunting, even for such willful pros. "The book is coming out at some point, when I retire," Hamilton declares. "The Chuck Berry story, the Marvin Gaye story, the Michael Jackson story. . ."

"Susan worked with Michael when he was

using his real lips," Batteau offers.

"The Ike & Tina story, the Leontyne Price story. Every time you think you've seen it all. . . That's why I still tense up over celebrity talent because I know that no matter if I think I've been through *every* disaster you can think of, there's always a new one."

"Sometimes the best pros have the best routines," explains Batteau. "It's like little games in the studio."

"Generally it's not a music problem," Hamilton adds. "It's very, very rare you'll get a star in the studio and say, 'I can't figure out

why he or she is a star.' Generally, once you get down to doing what's made them famous, almost always you say, 'Jeez, now I understand why you're a star.'"

Hamilton's tensing up again. In one phone conversation during the interview, Hamilton declares she's in "Diet Coke Hell," referring to a new, ultra-secret Diet Coke campaign using Elton John and Paula Abdul that'll debut on the Superbowl. Apparently each of their solo jingles went great, but a third duet version has problems. A fire a day. . .

David Buskin has had a less rocky experience with celebrity talent, including a recent radio campaign for Burger King that consisted of writing 10 separate jingles based on the theme "Sometimes You Just Got to Break the Rules" and customizing them to be performed by celebrities like Tone-Lōc, Jody Watley, Paul Shaffer, John Lee Hooker, Mel Tormé, Take 6 and the Neville Brothers. It's a remarkably effective song cycle that further breaks down the barriers between the record and jingle world: "What you'd hope for is that for the first 15 or 20 seconds, or maybe for the whole spot, they won't know it's an ad," explains Buskin. "That's what's changed in the jingle business. Nobody cared about that 10 years ago. Of *course* it was an ad. It was supposed to be an ad." Buskin notes with pride that the Take 6 spot in particular gets a lot of requests, annoying station programmers who obviously can't play it for free. It's his favorite as well:

"I sang them the first line, which was, 'The rule says, you need a band to make music.' And they put in the ad lib, 'That's what they think.' And that. . ." Buskin shakes his head in amazement. "They spent 13 hours straight doing that one 60-second vocal. I'm not talking about the way Robin and I like to work, maybe 45 minutes to the hour and then let's read the sports section. We don't have too many rehearsals without sports on. Uh, we don't want to cloud our thing. But these Take 6 guys were not kidding around. It was an education of what it takes to be in the Olympics, and I wish they could all be like that."

Buskin adds that his big goal for 1990 is to write a jingle for Leonard Cohen to sing. A headache commercial, suggests Batteau.

With or without celebrities, the inducement of some kind of genuine emotion is the goal of a great spot, even if it requires tactics as manipulative as any Manilow lift. Buskin makes no bones about tugging on the heartstrings on his track for a [cont'd on page 95]

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# THE NUMBERS ARE IN. . .

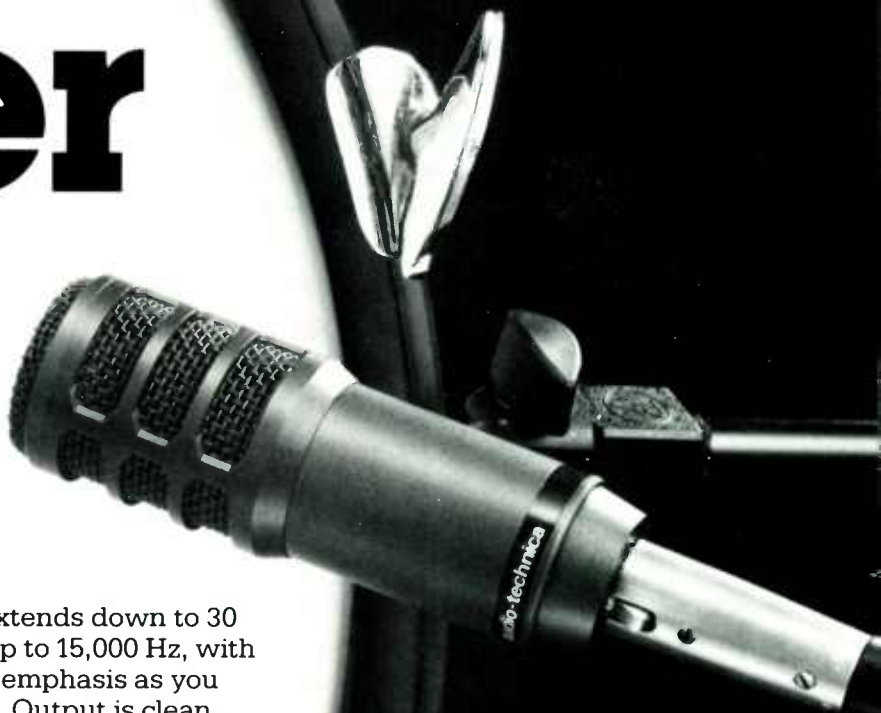
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Introducing the new ATM25  
High-SPL Dynamic Microphone

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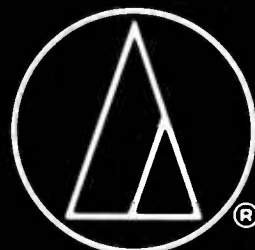
Now, a microphone that sounds better, the closer it gets to the toughest instruments. With full dynamics, no splatter, and response that captures the entire spectrum! Proof? Put the ATM25 in a kick drum, down the bell of a horn, or inside a piano. Then listen critically.

Instead of just a dull thud, you'll hear *all* the power and rich harmonics of the kick drum, even the crisp "thwack" of the beater. Horns sound clean and full, and the piano is full-bodied yet accurate. Even DJs are using the ATM25 when they want to sound up-close and very personal.

The tight hypercardioid pattern of the ATM25 assures excellent isolation to keep leak-through at a minimum. The pattern is also very uniform with frequency, giving you superb control to focus on just the sound you want.

Response extends down to 30 Hz and on up to 15,000 Hz, with added bass emphasis as you move closer. Output is clean, even at very high SPLs, although you'll likely need plenty of in-line attenuation ahead of your electronics to handle the wide dynamic range of the ATM25.

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# Destroy Your Happy Lives

## Music with a Human Face

*The Mekons Rock 'n' Roll*  
(Twin Tone/A&M)

**G**REIL MARCUS once critiqued a well-known guitarist by observing that he “can play anything, and communicate nothing.” The Mekons, an ever-changing Brit aggregate that knows all about the meaning of emotion and the emotion of meaning, can play nothing and communicate everything. Aging punks with a decidedly leftist outlook, they’re humanists first, musicians second. On *Fear and Whiskey* and *The Edge of the World*, two key records of the ’80s, the band tramped through the alienation and self-doubt of modern living with a grisly, existential ennui. Needing help to stay afloat musically, they’d latched onto the “simple” structures of American C&W, a form more than a little familiar with alienation itself.

*The Mekons Rock 'n' Roll* lets you know those

C&W days are over. Harkening to punk’s rough-and-tumble immediacy, it hits harder than any of the band’s other records: drums pounding, electric guitar *grrongging* through barre chords, fiddle red-lining in the mix, vocals yelped in the vernacular of disdain. It also narrows their focus; it’s a treatise, at once a full assault on and celebration of its subject matter. Yes, rock ‘n’ roll is our worst enemy, another product like cocaine and 1-900 numbers, hawked by cigar-chomping thugs, stolen from Africa centuries ago; a con. But, they also suggest, if you focus your microscope on the right spot, rock ‘n’ roll can still be the most liberating and irresistible of contemporary forces.

“Destroy your safe and happy lives before it is too late” is their opening salutation. Guitarist/singer Jon Langford compounds meaning like other



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The big easy

TRAGICALLY HIP

UP TO HERE

Bad name, bad attitude

LINK WRAY

RUMBLE MAN

BORN TO BE WILD

An old rocker with a future



# EXPLORE THE WORLD



**AL MacDOWELL TIME PEACE**  
(Gramavision 79450)

Fifteen years as the bassist with Ornettes Coleman's Prime Time, and backed by a hot group of seasoned players (including Ornette), AL MacDOWELL debuts with his first solo work. Combining memorable melodic hooks, and a terrific mix of charged solos, this colorful and spirited collection showcases the best in contemporary jazz composition, arrangement and production.



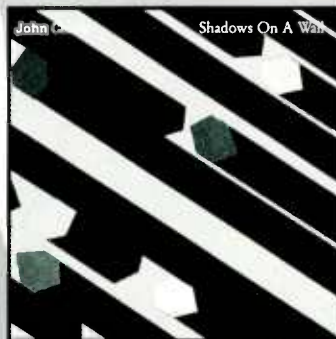
**ARDITTI STRING QUARTET ARDITTI**  
(Gramavision 79440)

The world's premier promoters of 20th century classical music and its composers. "Arditti" features Beethoven's Grosse Fugue Op. 133, and the music of Conlon Nancarrow, and Iannis Xenakis among others. John Cage - "I don't think there is any string quartet that can approach the Arditti."



**ABDULLAH IBRAHIM MINDIF**  
(Enja 79601)

This stunning original soundtrack to the highly acclaimed French film "Chocolat" features melodic jazz improvisations and joyful folk melodies that will appeal to jazz and world music fans alike.



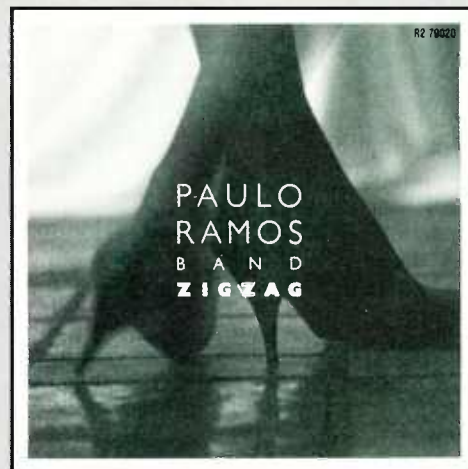
**JOHN CARTER SHADOWS ON A WALL**  
(Gramavision 79422)

The final title in the monumental five part opus: Roots and Folklore: Episodes in the Development of American Folk Music. This six time winner of downbeat magazine's critics' poll for "Best Clannetist" explores further the African-American experience and in the process takes us, musically, to places hitherto untraveled.



**BLACK UHURU NOW**  
(Mesa 79021)

The long-awaited return of the original BLACK UHURU featuring founding members: Don Carlos, Duckie Simpson, and Garth Dennis. "Now" finds this internationally acclaimed, Grammy-winning reggae group in top form, with all of their magic and spirit intact. BLACK UHURU's biting socio/political lyrics and uplifting dance rhythms ring true on this crucial new title for MESA Records.



**PAULO RAMOS BAND ZIGZAG**  
(Mesa 79020)

Upbeat tempos, soulful arrangements, romantic lyrics, and danceable rhythms make this a must for all Brazilian, jazz, and pop fans, and propels the PAULO RAMOS BAND to the top of a growing list of exciting new Brazilian artists.



MESA

people blink their eyes. Singer Tom Greenhalgh's voice can summarize Mekon attitude in a phrase; his saliva is the ink that fills Raymond Pettibone's pen. Even the ballads on the record are raucous. With an insidious irony, the band has made a record to be danced with and fretted over.

For the Mekons, history is a road dotted with signposts of indictment, from Ollie North "down in the subway dealing drugs and guns" to the inflated anthems of U2 ("We don't want the glamour the pomp and the drums, the Dublin Messiah scattering crumbs"). The band observes its distance from the mainstream ("This song promotes homosexuality/It's in a pretended family relationship with the others on this record and on the charts and on the jukebox and on the radio"). They've seen how the industry works; it makes them laugh and cry. But after more than a decade of experience (their first release, a retort to the Clash's "White Riot," came out in '78), the Mekons seem comfortable with their role—or notion—of permanent outsiders. Though this record is their most polished effort, it's still scraggly enough to secure that status. With a longstanding revolving-door policy—Mekons come and go, you just might know one yourself—they're like some final outpost of trust, where you say what you mean, where ego is still suborned to clanky camaraderie. Where, if you get cold, you can "throw a rock 'n' roll song on the fire" and learn to live on your own.—Jim Macnie



## Gipsy Kings

*Mosaique*  
(Elektra Musician)

**M**OSAIQUE DOESN'T have either the novelty value of the Gipsy Kings' debut or a track as instantly accessible as "Bamboleo," but this extended musical family knows how to mine its roots. Lush acoustic guitars, the hyper-romantic crooning of leader Nicolas Reyes and the group's affinity for classic schlock like "My Way"

might make the Kings' appeal seem campy to some; a closer listen unveils as many layers and textures as you'd find in a Persian rug. There's a jazz-like complexity in the Django Reinhardt flourishes of *Mosaique*'s title track as well as a Wes Montgomery playfulness in the picking of "Liberte" (which also evokes a relaxed Larry Coryell). The plaintive vocal of "Serana" points up the missing link between the cries of the muezzin in the mosque and the *davening* of the cantor in the synagogue. Elsewhere, elements of Northern Africa's rai and the Brazil-by-way-of-France "lambada" dance beat add to the Kings' global stretch.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about the Gipsy Kings is the way they've broken through to a pop audience without necessarily abandoning their traditional sound. Oh sure, producer Claude Martinez has widened the appeal with a few synths here and there, and the band covers that hoary Italian chestnut "Volaré"—but then so did Alex Chilton on his last album. In the Gipsy Kings' case, world popularity doesn't mean lowest common denominator; it's more like speaking a language everyone can understand. In fact, I don't think it's too much of a stretch to call the Kings the Ramones of flamenco, with cascading, overlapping, shimmering acoustic guitars replacing stacks of Marshalls. And a sound that harkens to the dawn of civilization.—Roy Trakin



## Phil Collins

... *But Seriously*  
(Atlantic)

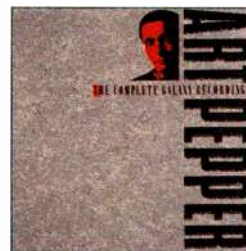
**P**HIL COLLINS is a good bloke by all accounts, but unfortunately this, his fourth solo LP, is a colossal yawn. Designed for the cushy interior of an air-conditioned BMW, ... *But Seriously* is the sort of law-abiding, reassuringly familiar music you hear in restaurants where the food, decor and audio components are in perfect, bland harmony. Bathed in the warm glow of liberal politics and the sadder-but-wiser

ruminations of a sensitive veteran of a string of botched love affairs, it is stylish pulp that asks nothing of the listener; bearing all the earmarks of music, it turns out on close inspection to be free of anything resembling an idea or a point of view. It's an empty box expensively gift-wrapped.

A master of the sort of slickly-produced bombast signifying big emotions typical of movie soundtracks (where he's previously scored big), Collins has the sound of mainstream America down pat. He claims one of his intentions with this disc was to fashion a new combination of rock and soul; however, Phil is not a funky guy. His music is too grandiose to get down and groove, though it is working-class in its relentless accessibility. You don't have to think too hard to get this record: featuring songs about the homeless, Northern Ireland, South Africa and racial tension (increasingly, music making is evolving into a form of community service), and, of course, four relationship songs, Collins addresses au courant themes, his take on them painfully predictable. A pleasant enough singer (he sounds like a cross between James Taylor and Glenn Tilbrook), Collins' central weakness is his writing. His lyrics are so inconsequential that they tremble under the weight of their bloated arrangements.

Still he's a very popular guy, and pals David Crosby, Steve Winwood, Eric Clapton and Stephen Bishop all turn up to do guest bits here. I wonder if any of them asked themselves, What's at stake with these songs? Phil summarizes . . . *But Seriously* as "me doing what I do now." Somehow, that's not enough.

—Kristine McKenna



## Art Pepper

*The Complete Galaxy Recordings*  
(Galaxy)

**A**LTO SAXOPHONIST Art Pepper was like some cornball Hollywood idea of a jazz musician—white, a junkie, a con, a character, a post-WWII West Coast speci-



# Wish YOU had Perfect Pitch?

Here's David L. Burge with your first Lesson:

## HOW PERFECT PITCH WORKS\*

Hearing tones is similar to the way we see colors:

In the field of SIGHT:

We enjoy various **COLORS**

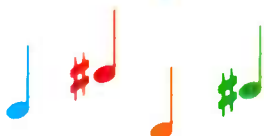


Together they can create  
a pattern:



In the field of SOUND:

Musical pitches  
have **COLOR SOUNDS**



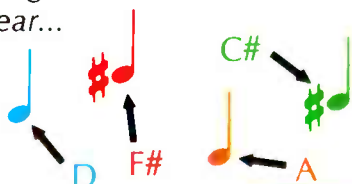
Together they can  
create a **CHORD**:



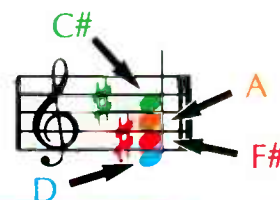
**PERFECT PITCH** is the *experience* of these **COLOR SOUNDS**.

When you can recognize the color sounds in music, you can then  
*identify tones by ear...*

...one at a time



...or together in a chord



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R27

men with dangerous good looks and, natch, a genius; another brilliant edge city pretty boy. Listen to his famous '50s sides and it's the old puzzle Bird epitomized: How can this guy be such a strung-out mess and then do *this*? Create something which radiates clarity, beauty, precision, mastery? The music was triumphant, the player was dying a slow death.

Later, much later, when Pepper was no longer a young sharpie, the music tended to show some of the scars, reflect more of the darkside brain fever that went into his autobiography *Straight Life*—partly because he had been inspired by Ornette and Coltrane to expand the canvas to include these less discrete colors, partly because, not having died, it had to come out. And later is where this Galaxy boxed set comes from, a mammoth 16-CD collection of Pepper's last four years of recording, 1978–1982.

This set could be some kind of weird Hollywood scenario too, an absurdly neat narrative of the legendary artist pulling into port for one last dazzling display. Beginning with the two excellent studio sessions that solidified his comeback after the drug years (and hard time in San Quentin), we then have a long stretch from two Tokyo concerts (our conquering hero in jazz's second home—the Japanese are so hip they applaud on a song's opening chord); another instant classic in the studio (with pianist Tommy Flanagan); a long-hoped-for strings session; a few more hours in performance, before a more modest audience, closer to home; and finally the two hours—plus of mostly low-key duets with pianist George Cables, a fittingly bittersweet interlude before the final fade (dead at 56).

Though it focuses on a short period of time, the sheer magnitude of the box guarantees that all of Pepper's various personas get ample exposure: the virtuosic bopper, easily tossing out ideas faster than thought; the “pretty” player, never maudlin but with an old-fashioned heart, sadness tugging at his desire to soar; and the scarred vet, as when he's pushing “Everything Happens to Me” past sentimentality—pinching his pure tone, letting notes go slack, emitting a shocking low bleat, immediately repeating it (as if to say, “Yes! I meant it!”), rubbing up against the far side of tonality; doing whatever it takes to tell the tale. Like so many of the solos here—like Pepper's life itself—it turns out to be a hell of a story.

—Richard C. Walls



## Miriam Makeba

*Welela*

(Mercury/Urban Africa)

WITH MUSIC that is Pan-African and ultimately global in scope and heart, Miriam Makeba embraces the traditional and pop musics of South Africa as well as jazz and Latin sounds. Her autobiographical 1988 LP, *Sangoma*, delved deep into her musical roots, stripping away instrumentation for the most part to reveal her passionate voice as it poured forth the truths of her ancestral spirit world. On *Welela* she pursues a more “modern” course without abandoning those primal soul forces.

There are no raucous *mbaqanga* (township jive) stomps like those thrown down by the Mahotella Queens or Boyoyo Boys, but the flavor of the townships permeates many of *Welela*'s tracks. The acoustic sparkle of Keith Mathela's jive guitar is joined by a characteristic straight-time kick-drum thump on “Amampondo,” as Makeba's percussively phrased wails, harmonies and hiccups outline a tale of warriors on their way to battle. “Djiu de Galinha” is a Latin-textured song about an island in Guinea Bissau, a former Portuguese colony that once had despicable political prisons. Along with “A Luta Continua,” a dedication to the still-struggling people of Mozambique, these cuts demonstrate that Makeba's humanitarian concerns stretch beyond the borders of the apartheid state that cast her out.

A couple of selections reach into the songstress' musical past. She remakes “Pata Pata” (“Touch Touch”), her smash hit from the late '60s, putting a fresh sheen on that groundbreaking Afropop gem. “Soweto Blues,” a tune ex-husband Hugh Masekela cowrote, has been a Makeba concert standard for years. Its searingly righteous lyrics about the children's uprising in Soweto in June 1976 (not 1966 as the liner notes erroneously state) cut to the bone. Musically, the blend of *mbaqanga* guitar, funky bass and multi-grooved percussion provides a solid platform

for Makeba's bluesy talk-sung intonations.

Throughout the album, Makeba's phrasing and timbre have a certain weariness tempered by a confidence in ultimate triumph. The title track expresses children's longing for a mother, long away from home. One hopes the offspring of South Africa may soon have their wish fulfilled, when Mama Africa returns, head held high, to the country she has been exiled from for more than 30 years.—Tom Cheyney



## Crazy Horse

*Left for Dead*

(Heyday)

SO ONE OF THE BEST rockin' rhythm sections in the world, once again left to fend for itself while Neil Young searches for his inner Neilness, says enough is enough and hires a pair of ringers to willfully dupe the sound that made them great. So bassman Billy Talbot and drummer Ralph Molina bring aboard former Rain Parade guitarist Matt Piucci and singer/songwriter Sonny Mone and proceed to churn out the same rust-free, raging slab of high-harmonic guitar screech that Boss Neil pioneered. So Piucci has Young's guitar tone down cold, and Mone's whine, at least once or twice, could be Young bellowing about orange juice on *Time Fades Away*.

So what.

There's too much about *Left for Dead* that seems fake, borrowed, self-referential and untrue. Take “World of Love,” which not only borrows some riffs from Young's “My My, Hey Hey” but features Mone squawking actual Crosby, Stills & Nashisms like “Once there was a rose in a fistful glove” and “Do you remember 1969/Tin soldiers and Nixon held the line.” Or “Mountain Man,” in which Mone moans, “He'll never be an opera star/He's a Mountain Man.” My question: What the hell is this “opera star” stuff, and didn't Neil Young already deal with it on *Re-ac-tor*? In all, there's three good tracks on this album, and two of them—“In the Middle”



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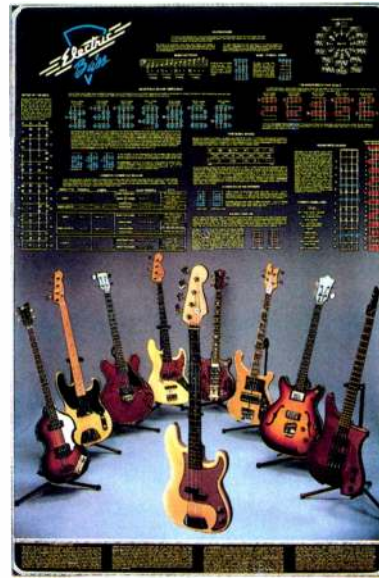
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and "You and I"—were co-written by Billy Talbot. Which ought to tell somebody something.

What happens when a bandleader hangs his band out to dry? Ask Nils Lofgren, no longer E-Streeting it and out looking for a record deal. Ask Crazy Horse, whose best record ever—their first—featured Lofgren guesting on guitar. Then ask Neil Young, before the Pavarotti tribute—you know it's coming—keeps his band out of work for another decade.—Dave DiMartino



## Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown

*Standing My Ground*  
(Alligator)

**A** MASTERFUL GUITARIST and dextrous fiddler—to name just two of his many axes—Gatemouth Brown is equally at home playing low-down blues, country breakdowns, urbane big-band jazz or Cajun music and zydeco. Such eclectic finesse, which reflects his Texas-Louisiana roots, has made Brown an icon among fellow musicians. But after five decades on the road, he has yet to really hit big, and *Standing My Ground* is not likely to change that.

Despite Brown's ethnic authenticity, his playing is often cold, detached, short on soul. Impeccable timing can't replace emotions, and much of this album suffers from just such clinical professionalism. *Standing My Ground's* best groove is on "She Walks Right In," where Brown plays the drums with sloppy enthusiasm, exciting his band, singing with spirit and cutting loose on a sizzling (though overdubbed) guitar solo. He adds some fine piano work to the jazz jam "Never Unpack Your Suitcase," and a haunting fiddle solo to the blues ballad "What Am I Living For." But "Louisiana Zydeco" is a trite, lifeless throwaway which wastes a guest appearance by accordion hotshot Terrance Simien. The self-descriptive "Cool Jazz" grooves at times, but lacks focus.

At age 68, Brown's awesome chops and

precise attack are undiminished. Many players would give their eyeteeth to play half so well. But while *Standing My Ground* is well crafted and imaginatively arranged—a fine band, innovative horn charts, several hot soloists—it still comes up short. What's missing is the sense of a consistently interested, involved personality.

—Ben Sandmel



## The Tragically Hip

*Up to Here*  
(MCA)

**T**HAT THE TRAGICALLY HIP have one of the dopest names in the annals of rock shouldn't put listeners off from their first full-length album. This Canadian quintet's music, while clearly in the developmental stage, is animated by the imp of the perverse. Few young bands play with such black-hearted fervor.

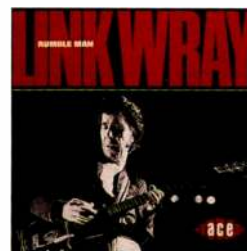
The least interesting thing about the Hipsters may be the straight-ahead bag they work out of; the two guitar-bass-drum lineup makes capable but not overwhelming Stones-based rock 'n' roll. But a listen to singer Gordon Downie's wobbling quaver of a voice and a glance at the lyric sheet prove that something unusual is going on here, for the songs on *Up to Here* feature the bleakest, angriest, most unforgiving writing to be heard on a mainstream rock album in recent memory.

Some of the tunes suffer from peculiarly gnarled syntax, but when the numbers work, they do so with true vengeance. The bluesy, near-apocalyptic dread of "New Orleans is Sinking" and the quickly sketched narrative of an escaped murderer's return home in "38 Years Old" display a collective eye for queasy, appalling detail and a deep sympathy for the damned among us.

This is slightly sick and disquieting stuff crafted for uneasy listening—sort of like vintage Warren Zevon minus the dire humor. The Tragically Hip might not be for everyone, but *Up to Here*, half-formed as it,

has a scary edge to it that might excite auditors with a taste for the dark side.

—Chris Morris



## Link Wray

*Rumble Man*  
(Ace)  
*Born to Be Wild; Live in the USA 1987*  
(Line)

**W**HILE PETE TOWNSHEND struggles interminably with the concept of an aging rock 'n' roller, his idol Link Wray merely embodies it and goes on his way. In the 1950s Wray came to attention with uniquely savage guitar-based instrumentals. He's never really changed, letting pop-music fashion catch up with him, bypass him and then circle back out of curiosity. If he'll never be more than a rock 'n' roll footnote, Wray's at least determined to be a loud one.

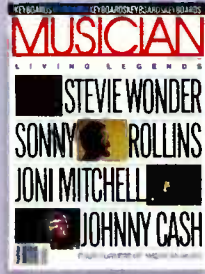
Last year he released two albums on different labels, neither of them American. The British *Rumble Man* is a sterling example of what Wray's all about. Backed by uncredited bass (himself) and drums, and with virtually no guitar overdubs, the guitarist roars through like a visitor from the fourth dimension, causing almost as much damage. The opening "Draggin'" tosses together surf, hot-rod and juvenile-delinquency undertones in a typical space/time warp—and, like a lotta Link, it's still just a 12-bar. Other tracks offer sonically beefed-up rewrites of earlier Wray cataclysms and avant-r'n'r wanderings (e.g. the distended title cut). His pleasant tenor voice on four of the album's 11 selections emphasizes Wray's country roots—especially on the soulful if unconvincing "cheating" lament, "Honey, I Swear Somebody Lied."

Two of *Rumble Man's* four vocals are on songs associated with prime (1960 or earlier) Elvis Presley. Wray's Elvis Jones is foregrounded on *Born to Be Wild; Live in the USA 1987*. Over half the tunes here are the King's—he sang 'em, at least—chosen with a connoisseur's touch [cont'd on page 97]





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effortlessly Martin Fry's soulful, dramatic tenor recasts the house sound as pure pop. Amazing what a little salesmanship can do.

## Ruth Brown

*Miss Rhythm* (Atlantic)

**I**F ONLY FOR the hits—"Mama He Treats Your Daughter Mean," "Mambo Baby" and "This Little Girl's Gone Rockin'"—this 40-song anthology would be more than worth the price. But where *Miss Rhythm* surprises is in tracing Brown's development from jazz singer to R&B star, an evolution so natural that it's almost impossible to pinpoint where she finally crossed over. A remarkable collection.

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# JAZZ

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By Jim Macnie

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## Jerry Gonzalez

*Rumba Para Monk* (Sunnyside)

**W**HOW WOULD A thought it, a whole set of Monk Latin style? Who woulda thought it might produce something this smart and not something polite and Latinesque? From the gorgeous, muted trumpet of the opening "Monk's Mood" through the relaxed, easy gait of "Nutty" (done to a montuno rhythm) and the wild "Jackie-ing," the album radiates thoughtfulness. To varying degrees the arrangements, played by Steve Berrios on drums, Andy Gonzalez on bass, Carter Jefferson on saxophone and Larry Willis on piano, abstract Monk's melodies. Besides Gonzalez, who's a tragically underrated trumpeter, the soloists are more than just fine; Jefferson spills out pitch-clever solos, bending notes and moving in and out of tune, while Willis, harmonically rich and unpredictable, relishes the florid. Some sessions are blessed with relaxation, where every tune manages to be precise and perfect: This is one.

## Charles Brown

*Sail On Blues* (Jukebox L.I.)  
*Let's Have a Ball* (Route 66)

**B**BROWN WAS a monster hit-maker—40 records on the charts, half of them in the Top 20—during the decade after the war. A Nat King Cole for a poorer, black audience, Brown was a smooth one, mixing silk and blues. A lazy singer, he was nicely imprecise, slurring and slobbering in melancholic self-pity over everything he could find. It's a bit formulaic, but what a great formula, and even though these two albums have too much slow material, a lot of it is wonderful. *Sail On*, the earlier and better of the two albums, has the guitarist Johnny Moore who

brought together down-home blues ideas, Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt into a mix that B.B. King studied hard for his early style. (Sunshine Music, 508 Colorado Ave., Stuart, FL 34994)

## Various Artists

*Freedom Principle/Acid Jazz and Other Illicit Grooves* (Verve)

**I**'LL ADMIT an ideological predisposition towards the idea of acid jazz, fueled by a nostalgic feeling that jazz—a smart self-conscious music made by musicians for an audience—could again be wed to dance music—a smart self-conscious music now made by producers for an audience—in some sort of populist, virtuosic art form. Usually the equation breaks down, but the acid jazz movement, at least as represented here, breaks down fast. The rage in England for a nanosecond, acid jazz tried to merge elements of house and jazz; it sucks. The reason: House is pure technology. Technology, as much as musicians don't want to hear about it, is an art form that requires knowledge. Not doing it right blows the surface texture, and surface is the meat of the matter. Also the English guys—Jason Rebello, Steve Williamson, James Taylor and more—can't solo at all. I'm still waiting for that glorious sound, where a record or samples generate a tough hip-hop beat, floating the musings of real jazz musicians. This isn't it.

## Cecil Brooks

*The Collective* (Muse)

**I**T DOESN'T take a second to hear the imagination spurring on these musicians. The first three tunes, unexceptional structurally, are as exciting as any music released this year, with brilliant straight-ahead playing by the saxophonists Greg Osby and Gary Thomas. The first tune, a hard blowing number, has Osby's floating and darting alto and soprano saxophone paired off against Thomas' serpentine tenor. The second, "We'll Be Together Again," a ballad by Carl Fischer, proves exactly how great Osby is as a ballad player, the best of his generation. And "Ace Boy," a St. Thomas sound-alike, is thrilling, a real exhibition of young musicians taking the jazz vernacular and reinventing it in their own fashion. Brooks is kind of an impatient drummer, a bit noisy and cymbal-prone, but the band as a whole—including Geri Allen on piano and Lonnie Plaxico on bass—doesn't fool around.

## Rod Williams

*Hanging in the Balance* (Muse)

**L**IKE MUCH MUSIC being made by younger musicians on the jazz scene, Williams' debut album is acutely detailed, with stop-and-start arrangements and unpredictable playing within the tightly defined limits of the tunes; there's rarely a predictable moment of straight-ahead

swinging. Williams, who is also Cassandra Wilson's pianist, uses Tani Tabbal on drums, Kevin Harris on bass, Graham Haynes on trumpet and the producer, Marty Ehrlich, on saxophones. Ostinatos introduce melancholic melodies with mid-1960s Blue Note feels to them, along with nicely oblique turns and twists. The leader is a clever, unobtrusive player, who has to be listened to more than once. Which isn't bad advice for the album: It's a slow burn, getting from A to B in a moody way.

## Johnny Shines/Robert Lockwood

*Johnny Shines/Robert Lockwood*  
(Flyright)

**S**HINES IS ONE of the Delta's most African-sounding singers, with a quivering, pleading voice that zooms up and down, landing occasionally between piano notes. His 10 tracks on the album, recorded in the early 1950s, are as good as he got, which is close to as good as anybody got. Backed by just a bass and occasionally another guitar, he mines Robert Johnson territory—he was pals with the man—and there's an immense dignity to his singing and playing. Shines was politically articulate and had a literate sensibility, so his tunes often were richer than most blues. This is blues for listening, not for dancing, hardcore tales sung with a high tenor that can rattle windows with its passion. (Down Home Music, 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530)

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# CLASS

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## Esa-Pekka Salonen Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra

*Nielsen: Symphony No. 2,  
"Four Temperaments";  
Pan & Syrinx, Op. 49: Aladdin Suite*  
(CBS Masterworks)

**S**ALONEN REMAINS EVERY bit the showman here, infusing his Nielsen with such fiery energy that the final *allegro sanguineo* movement in his reading of the "Four Temperaments" seems almost anticlimactic. Those looking for more balance in their "Temperaments" would do well to opt for Paavo Berglund's recording on RCA, but it would be hard to imagine a more appropriate "Aladdin Suite" than Salonen's panoramic, exquisitely detailed interpretation.—*J.D. Considine*

## Leonard Bernstein Christa Ludwig, New York Philharmonic

*Mahler: Symphony No. 3* (DG)

**T**HAT BERNSTEIN nearly drowns the listener in sonic opulence seems remarkable, even given the unusual riches of this score. This is Mahler to wallow in, to get drunk off of, a magnifi-



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to-be-so scratchiness in their music. That means vocally the ugly notes stay, which sounds great. It also gives the minimalistic but not scrawny "Turkey in the Straw" some kind of newfound resonance. Although there's not a speck of cross-over yen here, when the phone calls go out for the next Farm Aid, it would be nice to see the Fire Squad on the contact sheet.—*Jim Macnie*

## IBRAHIM

[cont'd from page 42] African bird, and people came from all around to see it, and of course all the other birds. One day the man decided


to go to Africa, so he said to this bird, "I'm going to Africa, maybe I can see your people." The bird said, "The best thing you can do is let me out of this cage." The man said, "I can't, I'm sorry." So the bird said, "You go see my people."

When he got there, the relatives came, and said, "Hey, here's somebody who's seen our relative, how is he?" And the keeper said, "He's fine." They asked, "What's he doing?" The man said, "I've got him locked in the cage." At that moment, one of the birds fell out of the tree to the ground, dead. The man

was taken aback, it shocked him. So he went back home, and the bird said, "Listen, did you see my people?" And the man said, "Yeah, but you know, it's a very strange thing. When I told them you were locked in a cage, one of them dropped to the ground, dead." And at that moment that bird also fell dead, in the cage. And the man, it turned him around, he was shocked, so he opened the door to check on the bird and [Abdullah slaps his hand] the bird gets up and flies off! [laughter] And the bird says, "Thank you, thank you for the message." [laughter] **MUSICIAN:** *If that were an Italian folk tale, when the bird fell out of the tree dead, the bird at home in the cage would also die. There would be no happy ending!*

**IBRAHIM:** But this is precisely what the idea is. These stories that have been handed down, they're formulas to unlock. You have 20 people sitting there, right? And you tell a story, and you would know exactly what story to tell. Now this story, you couldn't tell to another group of students, because they would just sit there and there would be no reaction. Others it would take like . . . *aaahh*, that's what happened. Because the teacher would not say, "The bird said, 'Thank you for the message.'" The story would end where the bird flew off, and the teacher would sit and look and wait for the reaction. Now the reaction of each individual to the story, not just this particular story but any story the teacher would tell, would show what was their development. That's your examination. That's why we have story-telling. It's testing, testing your reaction, and of course, how the Italian person would react to that is part of the global village. The story, in some form or another, is told all over the world.

**MUSICIAN:** *Do you still have family in Capetown?*

**IBRAHIM:** Yes, all our families are there, we are the only ones here, just Sathima and myself, and the two children. We've been in exile for 14 years. There are invitations now from the Mass Democratic Movement in the country for us to come home. In fact, they are busy organizing now for us to go. And hopefully . . . this is a lesson, you see, a lesson. The African National Congress liberated the whole of Africa. All of Africa's been liberated now, we are last. And this music they say has international, political overtones; it's not even a political overtone, it's not even an overtone! It's the sound of the heart. This is what the tone is: the sound of the heart and the sound of aspiration. 

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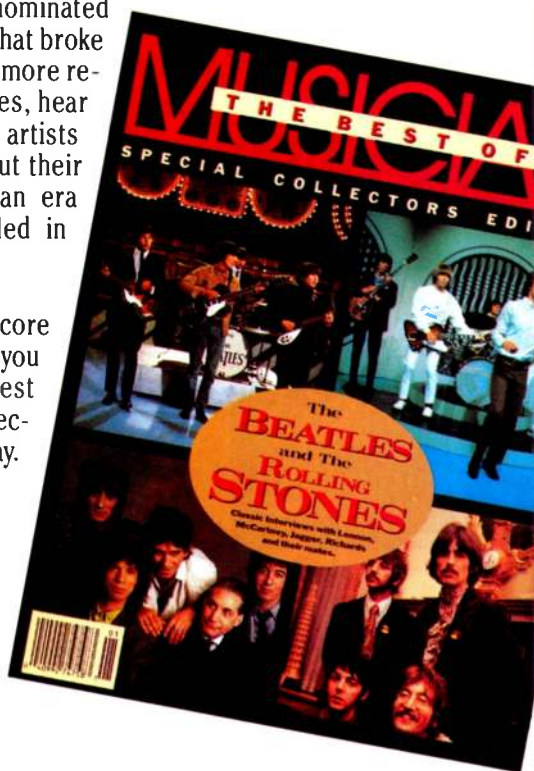
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## HB & B

[cont'd from page 78] recent AT&T commercial based on the whales trapped under the ice in Alaska. Hey, it works. "That's exactly the point," Buskin nods. "I mean, I watched that film and I was fairly inured to it, because I'd worked so much on it. But when you see the whales coming through the ice and you hear Michael Bolton singing, 'We broke through the ice, we heard the call,' call it what you will, it creates that tingle. That's what our job is. That's what any artist does.

"I know when I'm writing a song—not a jingle—and there's a moment when I'm overcome with emotion because of what I'm writing about or what I'm thinking about, I know I'm on the right track. Conversely, if I write the whole song and never have that feeling, I always feel like something must be missing. I must have missed it somehow."

"Whereas when you write a jingle," Batteau concludes, "if after finishing the jingle you feel like you have to go to the bathroom, you've got it!"

Buskin frowns. "I think it should feel like you've gone to the bathroom."

But isn't it true that the goal of a commercial is not to create great music, but to create a hunger that only the product can fill? Especially sexual hunger. "Buy this car, get this girl," Batteau nods. "Act now, get two."

"We balance our careers with jingles on one hand and more personal things on the other," Buskin replies. "Whatever we may do for whatever corporation entities, we do a lot of other stuff, too. There's a lot wrong with the message in a lot of ads—from my personal point of view. My job as a professional is to do the best music I can for whoever wants to pay me, but that doesn't mean that as consumer I might find a lot I don't like about it, even if it's an ad I did the music to. I may not like the product or the way they choose to sell it. But I'm also an adult. I don't have to believe it. I don't even have to watch or listen to it. That's the thing about the on/off button on televisions. Turn it off! Don't buy the product! All these goddamn censors. . . ."

In fact, Buskin & Batteau, the record biz version, is not slacking off. The duo is working up a new album and gigged last month at the Bottom Line. They've also been heavily involved in benefit work, including a ton of shows for Harry Chapin's World Hunger Year project. And one of their big projects is lobbying for an unusual bill in Congress that would allow taxpayers to give some of their

tax refund directly to hunger and homeless charities (the H.E.A.R.T. Bill). "The idea is that it's well known that as high as 70 or 80 cents on the dollar that's collected by a charity goes to the collection of the money," explains Buskin, "so the available money from each dollar is low. The beauty and simplicity in this idea is that the government has already collected this money, even if it isn't theirs. So the available money for the purpose it's supposed to be put toward is much greater."

What a campaign they could write for that. Does belief in the product you're selling help you write better? "No," says Buskin flatly. "Remember that movie, *The Gig*, where a high school band tries to have a reunion show? There's a very poignant moment where they're going to have to hire professionals for this singer coming in. And Cleavon Little is the one professional in this band, because the original bass player is sick. And one of the other old musicians wants very much to be in the band with the pros. He wants and wants and wants to do it, but he's just not good enough. And the guy's furious. Finally Cleavon Little just turns to him and says, 'Hey man, it's not a religion. Devotion is not enough.' [cont'd on next page]

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## HB&B

[cont'd from previous page] "A great line. And it really sums it up. The fairness principle doesn't operate when it comes to music. There are people who want more than anything else to be singers or songwriters or even, God forbid, be jingle writers! We've got enough competition. But, you know, it just ain't in the genes. Just like we want things, maybe. For years I wanted to be some sort of rock 'n' roll singer, and I just didn't have the voice for it. Nor the hair. I can get the hair." ☺

## HOLMES

[cont'd from page 66] for. Your own parameters are very different from somebody else's." Constantly soaking up influences, Holmes says he's been drawing inspiration from all sorts of third-world music, including rai and South African, as well as (believe it or not) rap. "I love Ice-T. He's got the best rhymes. And Robbie Robertson opened my eyes to something more Faulkneresque when he did 'Crazy River,' almost a folk rap or a country rap. That's what I'm trying to find now as a writer."

Expanding extracurricular activities doesn't mean goodbye to jingles, however. Noting the need to stay one step ahead of the pack, Holmes says he's incorporating third-world strains into his commercials, including a new song for Pepsi.

"If you go into the jingle business, think of it as just one part of the musical whole. Get the widest range of education you can. Jingle writers have to be very adaptable. Billy Joel would be a great jingle writer because he can do anything. Paul McCartney would be a major jingle writer, and so would Elton John and Bernie Taupin."

He grins: "But I wouldn't want to compete with those guys, that's for sure."

Chances are they wouldn't want to compete with Jake Holmes, either.

## LEVINE

[cont'd from page 68] be thinking about three projects, but with a record it's one thing for quite a while."

Levine laughs at how often outsiders underestimate the ad business. "It seems so easy to a lot of musicians that they oversimplify. But once they start to write they find it's not so easy. I remember I was once out on the West Coast with a giant movie-score guy. And he said, 'Gee, I can't imagine a guy as big as you has to compete to do this stuff. It's

ridiculous!' Later that night, just as we were going home, I got a call to do a Ford spot, so I said to the guy, 'Why don't you take a shot at writing this spot? It'll be fun.' He says, 'Nah, I don't think so.'

"Next day I get a call from his wife, and she says, 'Joey, you gotta tell him the job's been canceled. He's going absolutely insane! He's written all night, he's written 40 and is screaming, 'How do I know I've written the right one? Which one's too simple or too complex?'" Tell him the job's been called off! So I called him and told him it fell through and sure enough he says, 'Ah, I'm glad you called, but I never even took a shot at it.'"

—Jock Baird

## HARRISON

[cont'd from page 36] "We'd been close and distant. The fact that he was living in New York meant I never saw him for a long time. The autumn of '78 I went up to the Dakota, I think that was the last time. But he'd send postcards—like the Rutles," George chuckles. "So when I'm in England, I can still think of John in New York. I never saw him anyway, he could still be there for all I know. You know what I mean? They can kill the man, but they can't kill the spirit. They can't kill what he meant to you." ☺

## LINK WRAY

[cont'd from page 86] ("King Creole," "Anyway You Want Me," etc.). The album's one original Wray vocal, "It's Only Words," has a Ramones-like riff, and the Steppenwolf title tune flies off a cliff—and somehow gets back on—during an extended chaotic guitar solo. (Again, the valiant bassist and drummer go unlisted.)

What's really stunning about this German release, however, is its recording quality. You won't believe that a compact disc could sound this miserable—exactly like a cheap cassette recording from the middle of the audience, in fact. When Wray's wife (who co-produced *Born to Be Wild* with her husband) handed in the tapes, the anonymous liner notes declare, "we were sort of shocked"—a rare example of both honesty and understatement in that medium.

There's something fitting, though, about Link Wray bending the sound marvel of the '80s to his own grungy purpose. He's no more intimidated by technology than he is by musical trends, which is what makes Wray an American original. Jeez, he's even older than Elvis. Or is he?—Scott Isler

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# BACKSIDE

**S**O YOU THOUGHT you could escape 1989 without seeing a *Musician* year-end review, eh? You thought our decade wrap-up in the November issue was punishment enough? Well, guess again. We weren't about to let such a juicy year as 1989 escape our clutches. But even we have a sense of mercy. Since anyone who survived last year deserves some compassion, we've narrowed our year-end survey to one compact page of notable quotes, written and oral, that might have escaped your attention during the last twelvemonth.

"The first thing that came into my mind wasn't the legal aspect, but the destruction of a wonderful piece of music we had made. I was upset as an artist."—*Ex-Turtle Mark Volman, on the use of 12 seconds (or three, depending whose lawyer you ask) of the Turtles' "You Showed Me" on De La Soul's album*

"Can you hear us, assholes?"—*P. Fluid, singer, 24-7 Spyz, to an audience of record store managers at National Record Mart's annual convention*

"Judged objectively, a good many of my columns over the past six months have sucked."—*Ed Ward, The Austin Chronicle*

"When Robert [Fripp] decided he was tired of [King Crimson], he broke it up, but he didn't tell us. I heard about it through an article in *Musician* magazine."—*Adrian Belew*

"I saw [the Replacements] on the cover of *Musician* magazine with the headline 'The Last Great Band of the '80s'.... Yeah, right. I never heard of these guys, but I guess you're an artist if you're on the cover of *Musician* magazine."—*Jon Bon Jovi*

"Madonna has adopted a level of controversy as her art. So viewed in that context, it's acceptable."—*Abbey Konowitch, senior VP of music and talent at MTV, on the channel's decision to program Madonna's "Express Yourself" video clip*



and Freddie Redd—who all recorded for Blue Note."—*Parke Puterbaugh, Stereo Review*

## TREND-SPOTTING

In 1989 crowds gasped when Jackson Browne took off his guitar and went over to the piano. Through the '80s all the singer/songwriters who had made the piano number a standard part of their sets in the '70s—Browne, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Neil Young—stuck to their guitars all night. Now the decade is over, and sensitive ivory-tickling is back!

## SATISFACTION

"It's not a charity. This is business."—*Mick Jagger, on the Rolling Stones' "Steel Wheels" tour*

When *Amusement Business* magazine compiled the year's top concert grosses (running from late November 1988 to a year hence), guess who came in first? And second? And in eight of the top 10 slots? Okay, you've already looked at the list, but you knew anyway. Call 'em rock 'n' roll dinosaurs if you want; the Stones are smirking all the way to the Swiss banks.—*Scott Isler*

# 1989

## The Year in Rock

### CRITICAL CONSENSUS SUBDIVISION

"... the celebrated hard-boppers from the Blue Note label of the '50s: Freddie Redd, Hank Mobley, Sonny Clark, and Kenny Dorham."—*Jeff Levenson, Billboard*

"... four obscure jazzmen of the Fifties—Kenny Dorham, Hank Mobley, Sonny Clark,

### TOP 10 CONCERTS OF 1989

1. The Rolling Stones ..... \$9,166,937  
*Los Angeles, Oct. 18, 19, 21, 22*
2. The Rolling Stones ..... \$7,871,842  
*New York, Oct. 25, 26, 28, 29*
3. The Who ..... \$5,243,672  
*East Rutherford, NJ, June 29, 30; July 2, 3*
4. The Rolling Stones ..... \$4,648,338  
*Foxboro, MA, Sept. 29; Oct. 1, 3*
5. The Rolling Stones ..... \$3,735,610  
*New York, Oct. 10, 11*
6. Neil Diamond ..... \$3,498,000  
*Inglewood, CA, June 28-30; July 2, 5-10*
7. The Rolling Stones ..... \$3,410,886  
*Dallas, TX, Nov. 10, 11*
8. The Rolling Stones .... (US) \$3,368,752  
*Toronto, Canada, Sept. 3, 4*
9. The Rolling Stones ..... \$3,347,518  
*Oakland, CA, Nov. 4, 5*
10. The Rolling Stones ..... \$3,181,143  
*Philadelphia, Aug. 31; Sept. 1*





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The versatile GSP-21 from DigiTech is the last word in guitar signal processors.

It's the only one that gives you a choice of 21 different effects.

And you can play up to ten of those effects at the same time using the full function foot controller included with the unit.

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The GSP-21 is the only processor that comes with a full function, random access foot controller. Which lets you switch effects without leaving your position or taking your hands off the instrument.

Menu of Effects		
Pitch detune	Slap back	Comb filter
Compression	Digital mixer	Noise gate
Metal distortion	Chorus	Limiter
Tube distortion	Lg/sm room reverb	Speaker simulator
Over-drive distortion	Gated reverb	Graphic EQ
Stereo delay	Reverse reverb	Parametric EQ
Ping-pong delay	Ultimate reverb	Stereo imaging and more
Multi-tap delay	Flanging	
The Foot Controller		
Random program access	Large VFD display	Effects bypass
Instant patch access	2-mode operation	LED indicators
Specifications		
128 memory slots	Stereo outputs	Dynamic MIDI operation
20-bit VLSI processor	Fully programmable	90 db S/N ratio
20 Hz-18 kHz bandwidth	MIDI mapping	

The controller is designed with individual LED indicators and a large, readable VFD display. It allows total access to all programs, patches and parameters.

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