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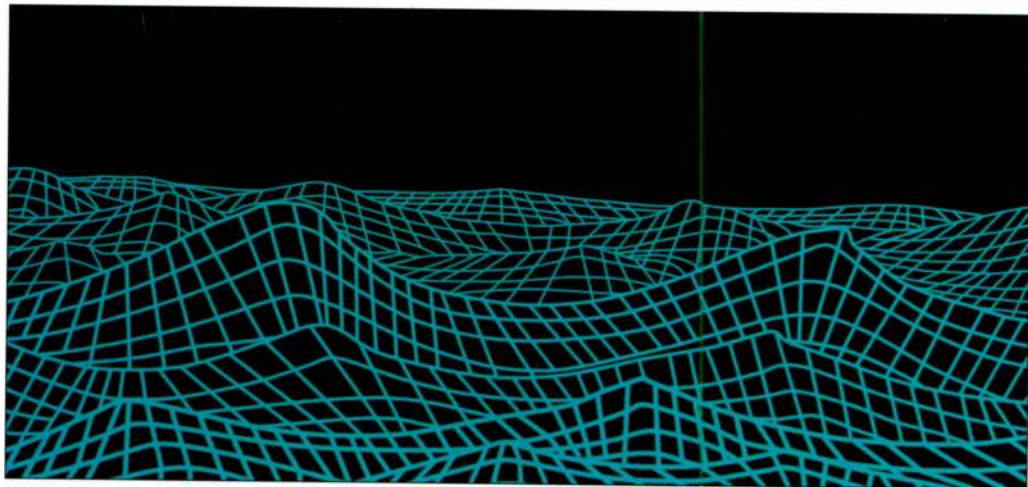
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Ringo Starr

You're 50. That's a line a lot of rockers never made it across.

Yeah, I feel I'm one of the lucky ones. After the damage I'd done to myself over all those years I could have gone any day and I didn't. God must have a purpose for me.

You've just released a live album of last year's tour by your All-Starr Band. Why did you include no Beatles songs?

You can only put so much on a CD. We all felt it flowed better this way. We don't have to do the Beatles stuff. "Photograph" is as exciting to me as doing a Beatles song. "It Don't Come Easy" was a thrill for me. "The No-No Song" means so much more to me now than it did then. I never really understood it before. We were in the box singing it and I said to [songwriter] Hoyt Axton, "What are you talking about? 'Tired of waking up on the floor,' 'Can't find the door?'" In those days we were a little crazy. These days we're only a little crazy.

Will the All-Starr Band continue?

No, that was the All-Starrs that was. The next All-Starrs are going to be different. I've been asked to do a tour next summer. It's probably going to be the same places, so I'm going to change the format a bit. I'm going to London next week to finalize details of the tour. Then I'll finalize the band. I'd like to get the band together by January and make a record so when we go out next summer we have something to promote. In the '80s I wasn't doing very much at all. Just getting deranged. That ended for me in '88. Then I finally sat down and wondered what to do with my life. I wondered what I am. It was like a light went on. "Oh. I play drums. I need people to play with." Then Dave Fishoff came over and said, "Do you want to tour?" My life has sort of fallen into place right now. It's just so great. George has the Wilburys. It's sort of the same format but he's got four strong writers. Mine is just pure entertainment.

I heard Levon Helm and Rick Danko got right back into the rock-star life, ordering every item on the room service menu.

That's right. I believe Levon's still paying off his room service bill. [laughter]

Listen, we're just old rockers at heart. Give us a Cadillac and a one-bedroom suite and we're in paradise.

Now that all the lawsuits are settled, the Beatles are finally planning to release some of the tapes that have been bootlegged?



Yeah, the latest on that is, we all feel the same but now we have to get down and do it. We're talking about it, we're listening to what people have—like the BBC. Personally I would like to put out all the bootlegs, all the outtakes that we didn't want out but are out. Beatles bootlegs by us! We always felt

that what came out is what we wanted out. That was the musician in us. We weren't really interested in the avid fan who wants *anything*. I think we're moving more along those lines now, because some of the "Take 2"s would really be interesting.

We've even gone so far—and I can't see it ever happening—to say, maybe an odd new mix. [laughs] We'll do the rap mix! What we need to do now is get the whole rundown of what there is. We then will decide. 'Cause we're all getting a bit pally again.

Paul and Yoko have taken shots at each other recently, over the Northern Songs rights and using Beatles songs in commercials and so on. Do you close your ears to that stuff?

Well, you can't close your ears, but I have to allow them to have their own little battles. Yoko's a friend of mine and Paul's a friend of mine. I'm closer to Paul because we have a lot more years together and we have a lot more music under our belts. But we all have these rows and the sooner that everyone grows up and works it out, the better. 'Cause it's too late now for this dogshit. Someone should roll the dice for the last time and lock up the game board.

The Beatles records actually get more interesting as time goes by.

Yeah. That was because of freedom. When we were touring we had such a short time to make a record, but it was great grounding for us. I still get a bit pissed off when groups say, "Oh, I only had three months to do the album." We had 12 hours. Twelve hours! And that was it. Then we went *into* the studio, so we could really take time to

find out what the song was about, find out where it was going, where you needed the lifts and the lows. We would do a track and scrub it all if it just didn't work. We had that freedom. And I feel that freedom shows in the records, cause the records are, to this day, holding up. You took time for the record.

Now I feel a lot of albums are made getting ready for the show they're gonna do. And so many acts out there now are *miming*, because they're doing so much dancing. They can't dance, breathe and sing at the same time. [laughter] I think that's a bit of a sham. Live is live and that's what I expect.

The managers of those acts claim the kids don't mind.

I think the kids *do* mind and I think we're finally getting some feedback that people don't want to pay \$25.00 to see a mime! Personally, I don't think it should be allowed. I'm a musician. I play. And this is what you get.

—Bill Flanagan

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PHOTO-LEE LOCKE

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LETTERS



Vai-Able

THERE ARE PLAYERS and there are musicians. Steve Vai (Sept. '90) plays with such passion and feeling it's extraordinary. Anyone who can bring tears to my eyes is a true musician in my book.

Cindy Hazlett
Pittsburgh, PA

STEVE VAI, MAN I tell ya, with every mag I catch you in, you're definitely on track. More amazing is that mags even catch it! As for you, Steve—God, we love your music. When I read about your fasting for "For the Love of God," um-mmm-my you crazy boy—reaching out beyond those limitations. Well, keep listening to that heart and these angels will guide—even at your age!

Tim McGraw
Denver, CO

STEVE VAI IS *overexposed*. If I don't see another story on him for the next three years it will be too soon.

Had it up to here,

Dale Brooks
Tallahassee, FL

AS CERTIFIED, card-carrying "Steve Vai Cult Types," my two daughters and I would like to thank you for the great feature article on our favorite artist. I must take exception to the senior Mr. Vai's comment that David Coverdale was making a "star" out

of Steve and Steve was "lucky" to be with Whitesnake. Don't get me wrong—I like Whitesnake, I like Mr. Coverdale. However... Steve Vai has been a star in his own right for some time now. Each time I listen to either *Flex-Able* or *Passion and Warfare*, I discover something that I never heard before.

The Greening Ladies
(Jane, Lisa and Kim)
Shreveport, LA

I CAN'T POSSIBLY understand why Matt Resnicoff refers to Whitesnake as pop-metal and doubts that they could be great musicians. But of course if you can relate the words "Musician" and "Technotronic" then I wouldn't doubt you would print another article reflecting opinions like Resnicoff's about Whitesnake.

Eduardo López
Puerto Rico

Vai-Yng for Attention

NO PAIN NO GAIN, eh, Steve? I am so sick of reading about Steve Vai's masochistic spiritualism. I find it much more pretentious than the opinions of Yngwie Malmsteen, who at least doesn't try to cloak his ambitions in some superstitious mumbo jumbo. I wonder if all those homeless folks on the street feel "lighter and cleaner" after their third day without food? And no amount of starvation is going to make Steve Vai the "greatest rock guitarist of his generation." But Matt Resnicoff sure has been sucked into the SV media hype. Give me a break.

Sharon Bouse
Monticello, FL

PLEASE INFORM Matt Resnicoff that the role of an interviewer is to ask incisive questions, not to belabor dubious assertions ("Growth as an artist involves constant dissatisfaction with oneself") or to

insult his subjects ("Yngwie's old hat...," John McLaughlin's "contributions are in the past..."). Resnicoff seems fortunate that he was awkwardly prodding two guitarists as opposed to a couple of boxers.

Frank Schraner
Birmingham, MI

I WAS REALLY looking forward to a good interview between *two* very gifted guitar players, Malmsteen and McLaughlin. What I read was more like Matt Resnicoff's dislike of Malmsteen. I should have realized that after I read the intro! It was obvious Resnicoff was out for blood!

M.K. White
Lexington, KY

I WONDER WHY Matt Resnicoff had to interject his own personal feelings into the Malmsteen/McLaughlin interview. I'm referring to his comment about Yngwie: "It's not much of a struggle to dislike him anyway." This is completely uncalled for.

Connie Holland
Alexandria, VA

YOUR SEPTEMBER ISSUE was great except for the typo on the cover! Shouldn't it read, "Mahavishnu and Yngwie versus Motor Mouth?"

Billy Five
Somewhere in California

I FOUND MATT RESNICOFF'S relentless baiting of both McLaughlin and Malmsteen to be extremely objectionable. When it got to the point that both Malmsteen and McLaughlin were defending *each other* against the interviewer, I bailed out.

Carlo Addonizio
Tampa, FL

Vicarious

THANK YOU FOR the beautiful article on the Church (Sept. '90). If the band's reticence to talk about what

Steve Kilbey called "banalities" was prompted by a desire for personal privacy rather than what seems to be a desire to be taken for *what* they are rather than *who* they are, I'd be more understanding, I think. But, really, they need to maybe lighten up a little. The Church have already made a mark on us *without* personal details, but true Church fans are starved for articles about the band and we share our snatches of information as though they were airy bits likely to evaporate.

Edna Cantrall
Salem, OR

IT TOOK A WHOLE article for the Church to explain that they don't like talking about their music, and I couldn't agree more. Some things are beyond analysis and their music (as well as most good music) is one of them. The Church is for listening to, not thinking about.

Maria Schonert
St. Louis, MO

Vice Versa

WHEN COMPARING *Green* to *Murmur* Michael Stipe (Sept. '90) said: "We realized the value of subtlety." Then later he said that *Green* was conceived to be "simple and direct." This is a contradiction of ideas and makes no sense. In my opinion, *Green* is the *least* subtle of R.E.M.'s albums. *Green* was a terrible disappointment precisely because it *lacked* subtlety! I agree with Stipe when he says that he despises the kind of thinking that says every record has to be vastly better than its predecessor. I don't want R.E.M. to make another *Murmur*, I just hope that they grow and learn from the terrible mistake they made with *Green*.

John F. Russell
Red Bank, NJ

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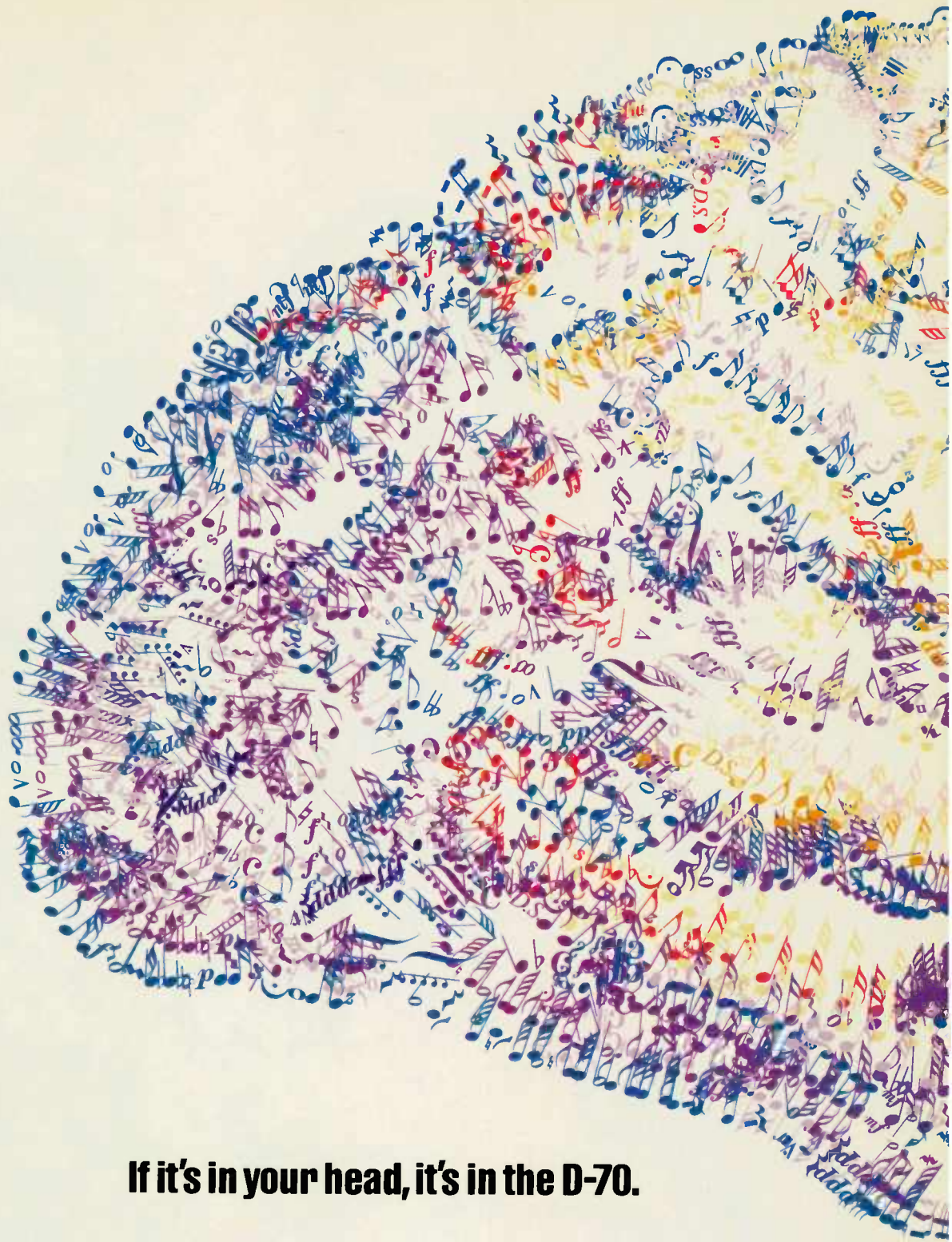
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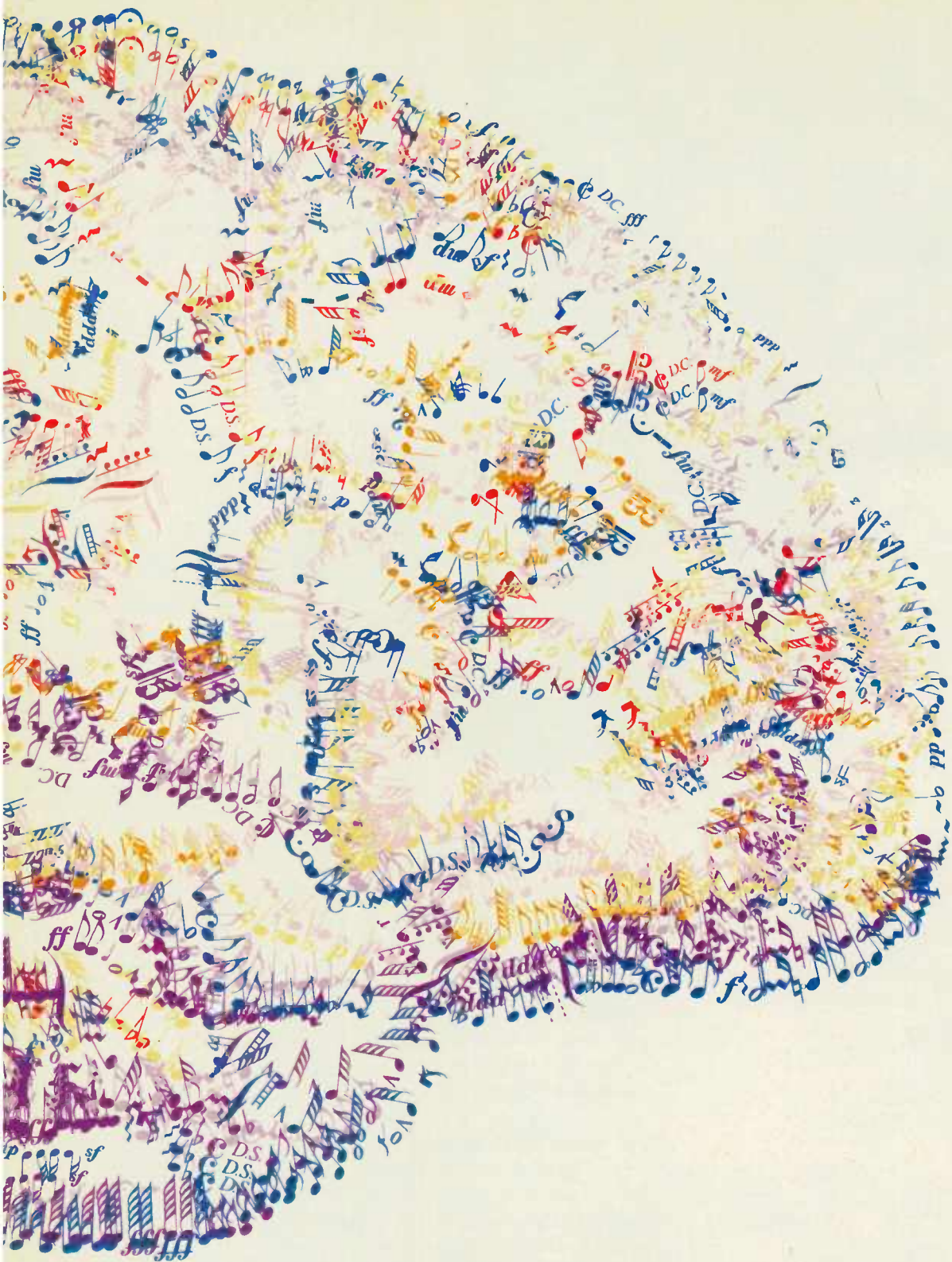
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DID YOU KNOW THAT SAMPLING WAS PSYCHEDELIC? Maybe you would if you took a cue from Deee-Lite's "sampledelic" approach to making dance music.

Explains Lady Miss Keir, "When you take a note and sample it, that's psychedelic because it's time-tripping. It's mixing the past and the present to make the future. If you believe Carl Jung, and that every moment is important, then sampling is really powerful, and very psychedelic."

Time-tripping aside, though, the real focus of Deee-Lite's music isn't sampling but songwriting. After all, explains Super DJ Dmitry—who, with Jungle DJ Towa Towa, provides the instrumental end of the Deee-Lite sound—it's not what you sample, it's how you use it. "We're all writers, and that's really important," he says. "Tracks are really good too, but to us, that's only part of it. We're really song-oriented."

—J.D. CONSIDINE

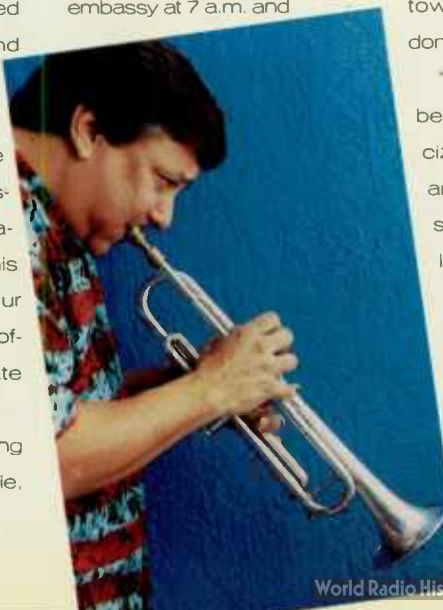


ARTURO SANDOVAL: ADIOS, FIDEL

FOR MORE THAN A decade, Cuban trumpeter Arturo Sandoval melded U.S. jazz and Afro-Cuban rhythms—in the name of The State. Fidel Castro's bureaucracy booked his concerts on four continents and kept the profits. Sandoval earned a state salary and food stipend.

Until last July. While touring in Rome with Dizzy Gillespie,

whom Sandoval calls his "spiritual father," the trumpeter rushed into the American embassy at 7 a.m. and



requested asylum. At the same time, his wife and 14-year-old son were heading toward the embassy in London.

"One of the reasons I left is because I wanted to depoliticize myself. In Cuba you're an instrument of the state," says Sandoval, who now lives in Miami, where he has formed a new five-man backup band of local players.

Sandoval's digging the capitalist groove. He's fielding offers from

labels, has made the talk show rounds and has laid down tracks with Cuban sax man Paquito D'Rivera, who defected in 1980 (the two founded the cutting-edge Cuban jazz group Irakere in 1975 with pianist Chucho Valdes).

"The steps I make have to be firm," Sandoval says. "I can't invert frivolous projects. I have to start with the new band and see what I hear. I'm in no great hurry. These things can't be rushed."

—JUAN CARLOS COTO

Photograph: (top) Simon Fowler; Antonio Olmos/Miami Herald



BRENDA RUSSELL

WRITTEN ON THE WIND

TO THE DISMAY OF some and to the joy of others," Brenda Russell says, "I just happen to be a mixture of pop, R&B, jazz and all the different types of music I've listened to my whole life. I'm not easily labeled. Radio stations might say, 'Well, she's a black artist but she doesn't fit our format.' But I wouldn't change a thing."

Against formatting odds, Russell's sophisticated torch tune "Piano in the Dark," from 1988's *Get Here*, shot up the charts, reviving her on-again-off-again solo career. *Kiss Me with the Wind* is a strong follow-up.

But who is this Russell who shot out of the dark? Pop scholars will know, in a duo with her now-estranged husband Brian Russell, Brenda cut two albums for Elton

John's Rocket label in the mid-'70s. After the couple split, Brenda went solo, scoring a hit with "So Good So Right."

In the early '80s, Earth, Wind & Fire, Chaka Khan, Donna Summer and Joe Cocker all took notice of her distinctive songcraft. Still, Russell was never a neo-Tin Pan Alley song factory. "If you try too hard and force something, it's not going to flow. The ones that stick are those that hit me like the wind. I'm sitting in the window and literally the wind brushes across my face and I get the idea for the song."

Belated acclaim has its benefits. "I probably wouldn't have handled it too well if it had happened earlier. I'm an adult now. I never want to *not* be a kid, but I'm a little more sensible about things now and not as much of a pushover as I was in the earlier days."

—JOSEF WOODARD

Pato Banton

UNIVERSALITY WITHOUT COMPROMISE



MODERN REGGAE IS JUST GHETTO MUSIC," SAYS PATO Banton, recalling the '70s heyday when the world discovered Bob Marley and reggae was more esteemed. "Marley had a mission that wasn't limited to Jamaica or any ghetto. His message was universal."

Banton aspires to that universality for his own message of spiritual consciousness and political conscience. His methods: rapid-fire, frequently hilarious spoken-DJ lyrics and music that blends hip-hop, rap and R&B into a reggae mix. His latest album *Wize Up* shows that the Briton is one DJ who can really sing. "I started as a singer," he says, "but to get into the music world I had to present myself as a DJ or an MC. Record companies want to classify you."

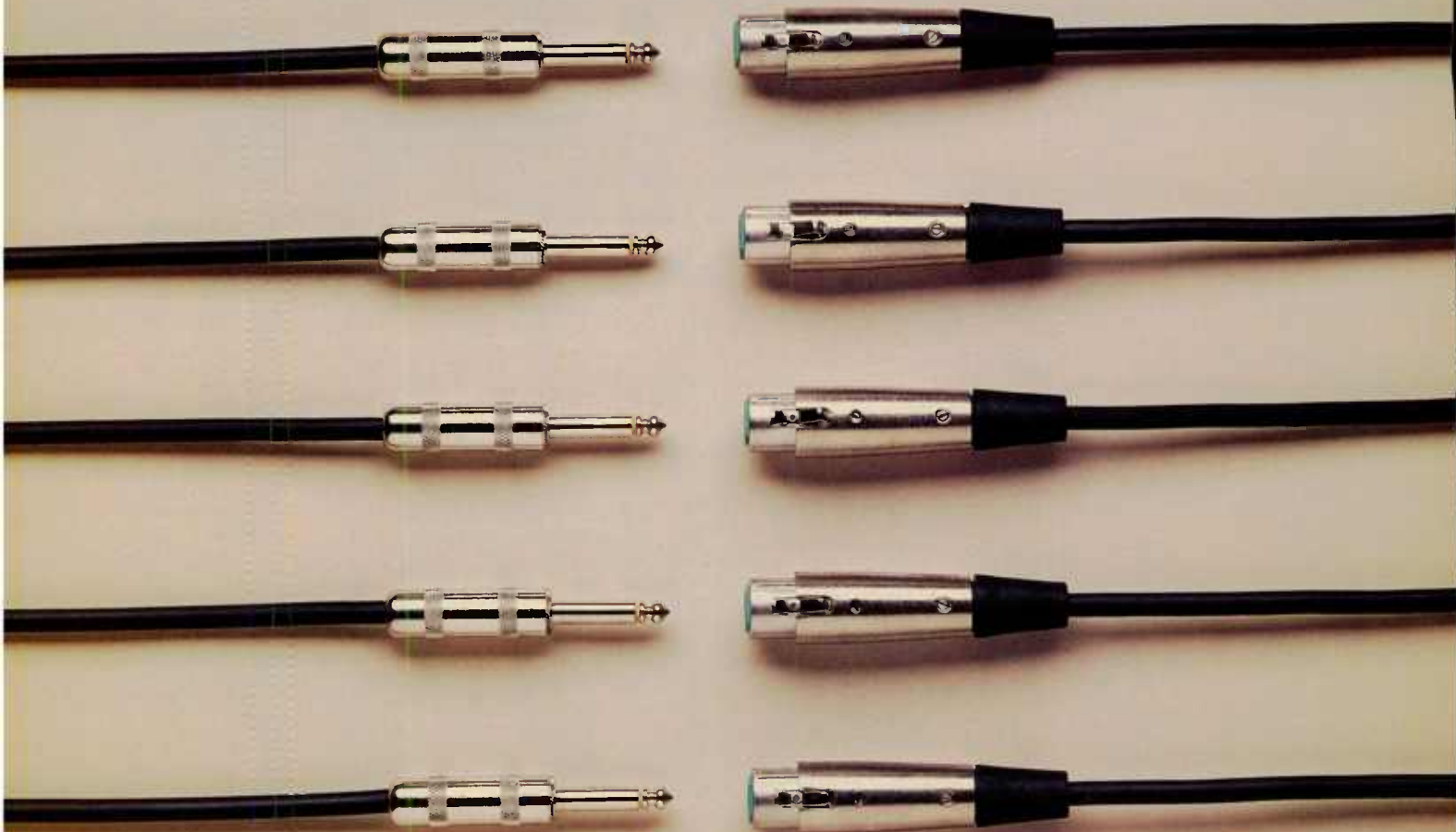
Pato (born Patrick Murray) came up in the mid-'80s as part of the U.K.'s Saxon Posse, a traveling sound system that served as a launch pad for Maxi Priest, Tippa Trie and Smiley Culture. Duets with the Beat and UB40 brought Pato widespread recognition. *Wize Up* is a plea for humanity in a world menaced by holocaust, greed and racism. The first single is a version of the Police's "Spirits in the Material World" recorded at the urging of I.R.S. label chief Miles Copeland.

"I was against it for six months," says Banton, "but in the end, I gave it a try and it came out cool. Of course I got the opportunity to put my own rap in it. I'm willing to bend my approach to the times. The key is not to compromise the message."

—Alan di Perna



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THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

Top 100 Albums

The first number indicates the position of the album this month, the second its position last month

1 • 1	M.C. Hammer <i>Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em</i> Capitol
2 • 2	Wilson Phillips <i>Wilson Phillips</i> SBK
3 • 24	Jon Bon Jovi <i>Blaze of Glory/Young Guns II</i> Mercury
4 • 4	Mariah Carey <i>Mariah Carey</i> Columbia
5 • 7	Bell Biv DeVoe <i>Poison</i> MCA
6 • 3	Poison <i>Flesh and Blood</i> Enigma
7 • 86	Prince <i>Graffiti Bridge</i> Paisley Park
8 • 5	Anita Baker <i>Compositions</i> Elektra
9 • 11	Michael Bolton <i>Soul Provider</i> Columbia
10 • 8	Keith Sweat <i>I'll Give All My Love to You</i> Vintertainment
11 • 6	New Kids on the Block <i>Step by Step</i> Columbia
12 • 13	Depeche Mode <i>Violator</i> Sire
13 • 14	Faith No More <i>The Real Thing</i> Slash
14 • 16	Phil Collins <i>...But Seriously</i> Atlantic
15 • 9	Soundtrack <i>Pretty Woman</i> EMI
16 • 76	Soundtrack <i>Ghost Narese Sarabande</i>
17 • 12	Johnny Gill <i>Johnny Gill</i> Motown
18 • 27	Nelson <i>After the Rain</i> DGC
19 • 22	Slaughter <i>Stick It to Ya</i> Chrysalis
20 • 99	Jane's Addiction <i>Ritual de lo Habitual</i> Warner Bros.
21 • 15	Winger <i>In the Heart of the Young</i> Atlantic
22 • —	Living Colour <i>Time's Up</i> Epic
23 • —	Ratt <i>Detonator</i> Atlantic

24 • 26	Janet Jackson <i>Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation</i> A&M
25 • —	Anthrax <i>Persistence of Time</i> Megaforce
26 • 19	Aerosmith <i>Pump</i> Geffen
27 • —	N.W.A. <i>100 Miles and Runnin'</i> Ruthless
28 • —	Queensryche <i>Empire</i> EMI
29 • 10	Madonna <i>I'm Breathless</i> Sire
30 • 18	Sinead O'Connor <i>I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got</i> Ensign
31 • 23	Billy Idol <i>Charmed Life</i> Chrysalis
32 • 21	Luke Featuring the 2 Live Crew <i>Banned in the U.S.A.</i> Luke
33 • 28	Mötley Crüe <i>Dr. Feelgood</i> Elektra
34 • 32	Snap <i>World Power</i> Arista
35 • 25	En Vogue <i>Born to Sing</i> Atlantic
36 • 17	Heart <i>Brigade</i> Capitol
37 • 53	Boogie Down Productions <i>Eduainment</i> Jive
38 • 20	The Time <i>Pandemonium</i> Paisley Park
39 • 34	Harry Connick, Jr. <i>We Are in Love</i> Columbia
40 • —	The Righteous Brothers <i>The Righteous Brothers Greatest Hits</i> Nerve
41 • 29	Bruce Hornsby & the Range <i>A Night on the Town</i> RCA
42 • 37	Don Henley <i>The End of the Innocence</i> Geffen
43 • 30	Paula Abdul <i>Shut Up and Dance</i> Virgin
44 • —	George Michael <i>Listen without Prejudice Vol. 1</i> Columbia
45 • —	Stryper <i>Against the Law</i> Enigma
46 • 38	Lisa Stansfield <i>Affection</i> Arista
47 • 35	Jeff Healey Band <i>Hell to Pay</i> Arista
48 • —	Garth Brooks <i>No Fences</i> Capitol

49 • 36	Taylor Dayne <i>Can't Fight Fate</i> Arista
50 • 48	Garth Brooks <i>Garth Brooks</i> Capitol
51 • 41	Bad Company <i>Holy Water</i> Atco
52 • 56	Concrete Blonde <i>Bloodletting</i> A.R.S.
53 • —	Warrant <i>Cherry Pie</i> Columbia
54 • 46	After 7 <i>After 7</i> Virgin
55 • 44	Van Morrison <i>The Best of Van Morrison</i> Mercury
56 • 42	Bonnie Raitt <i>Nick of Time</i> Capitol
57 • —	Soundtrack <i>Pump Up the Volume</i> MCA
58 • 40	Digital Underground <i>Sex Packets</i> Tommy Boy
59 • 31	Soundtrack <i>Days of Thunder</i> DGC
60 • 58	The Black Crowes <i>Shake Your Money Maker</i> Def American
61 • 80	Maxi Priest <i>Bonafide</i> Charisma
62 • 45	The Lightning Seeds <i>CloudcuckooLand</i> MCA
63 • —	Duran Duran <i>Liberty</i> Capitol
64 • 54	Tony! Toni! Tone! <i>The Revival</i> Wing
65 • —	Branford Marsalis Quartet/ T. Blanchard <i>Music from "Mo' Better Blues"</i> Columbia
66 • —	Black Box <i>Dreamland</i> RCA
67 • 52	Clint Black <i>Killin' Time</i> RCA
68 • 43	The Sundays <i>Reading, Writing and Arithmetic</i> DGC
69 • 39	Ice Cube <i>AmeriKka's Most Wanted</i> Priority
70 • 47	Damn Yankees <i>Damn Yankees</i> Warner Bros.
71 • —	Don Dokken <i>Up from the Ashes</i> Geffen
72 • —	Keith Whitley <i>Greatest Hits</i> RCA
73 • 33	Steve Vai <i>Passion and Warfare</i> Relativity
74 • 91	Neville Brothers <i>Brother's Keeper</i> A&M
75 • 64	Vixen <i>Hee H Up</i> EMI
76 • —	Too Short <i>Short Dog's in the House</i> Jive
77 • —	Roger Waters <i>The Wall—Live in Berlin</i> Mercury
78 • 61	New Kids on the Block <i>Hangin' Tough</i> Columbia
79 • —	Reba McEntire <i>Rumor Has It</i> MCA
80 • —	Rush <i>Chronicles</i> Mercury
81 • —	Neil Young & Crazy Horse <i>Ragged Glory</i> Reprise
82 • 72	Bob Marley & the Wailers <i>Legend</i> Tuff Gong
83 • 51	Public Enemy <i>Fear of a Black Planet</i> Def Jam
84 • —	Pixies <i>Bossanova</i> 4 A.D.

85 • 70	Eric Clapton <i>Journeyman</i> Duck
86 • 49	The 2 Live Crew <i>As Nasty as They Wanna Be</i> Luke
87 • —	Soundtrack <i>Twin Peaks</i> Warner Bros.
88 • —	Bob Dylan <i>Under the Red Sky</i> Columbia
89 • 60	The Kentucky Headhunters <i>Pickin' on Nashville</i> Mercury
90 • 68	New Kids on the Block <i>New Kids on the Block</i> Columbia
91 • 50	Cheap Trick <i>Busted</i> Epic
92 • 63	Paula Abdul <i>Forever Your Girl</i> Virgin
93 • 65	Bonnie Raitt <i>The Bonnie Raitt Collection</i> Warner Bros.
94 • —	Extreme <i>Extreme II Pornograffiti</i> A&M
95 • 57	Allman Brothers Band <i>Seven Turns</i> Epic
96 • 97	Whispers <i>More of the Night</i> Capitol
97 • —	Vanilla Ice <i>To the Extreme</i> SBK
98 • 66	John Hiatt <i>Stolen Moments</i> A&M
99 • 75	Billy Joel <i>Storm Front</i> Columbia
100 • —	Dino <i>Singin' to the Sun</i> Island

The Musician album chart is produced by the Billboard chart department for Musician, and reflects the combined points for all album reports gathered by the Billboard computers in the month of September. The record company chart is based on the top 200 albums. The concert chart is based on Amusement Business Box Score reports for September 1990. All charts are copyright 1990 by BPI Incorporated.

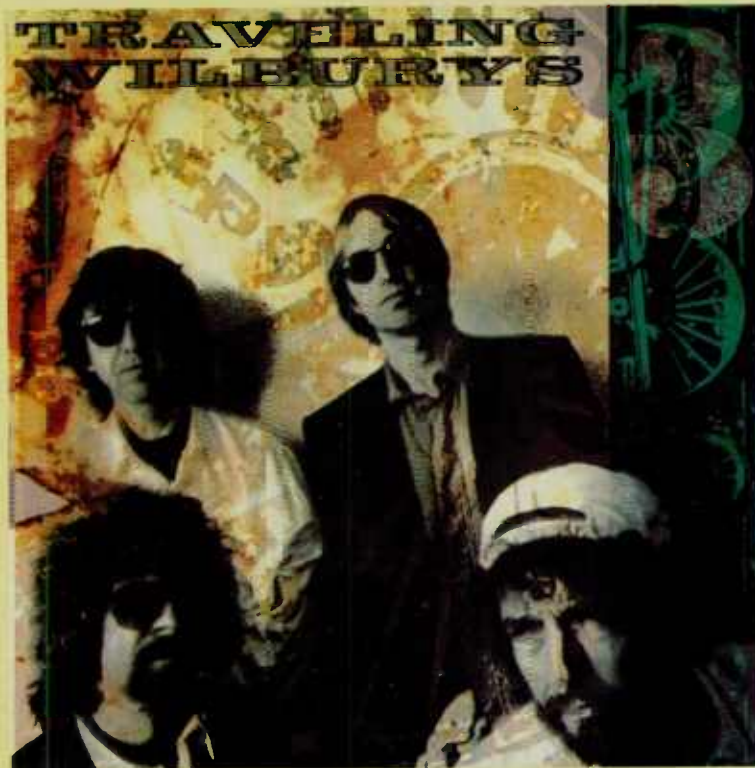
Top Labels

1	Columbia
2	Capitol
3	Atlantic
4	MCA
5	Arista
6	Mercury
7	Elektra
8	Warner Bros.
9	Epic
10	EMI
11	Sire
12	RCA
13	Virgin
14	Paisley Park
15	Geffen
16	DGC
17	Enigma
18	Chrysalis
19	SBK
20	A&M
21	Slash

Top Concert Grosses

1	Grateful Dead <i>Madison Square Garden, New York, NY</i> September 14-16 & 18-20	\$2,368,825
2	New Kids on the Block, Rick Wes, Perfect Gentlemen <i>Oakland-Alameda County Stadium, Oakland, CA</i> September 8	\$1,356,675
3	New Kids on the Block, Rick Wes, Perfect Gentlemen <i>Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, CA</i> September 14	\$1,276,825
4	Phil Collins <i>Shoreline Amphitheatre, Mountain View, CA</i> September 17-19	\$1,246,222
5	Grateful Dead <i>The Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA</i> September 10-12	\$1,109,133
6	New Kids on the Block, Rick Wes, Perfect Gentlemen <i>The Kingdome, Seattle, WA</i> September 6	\$1,015,300
7	New Kids on the Block, Rick Wes, Perfect Gentlemen <i>British Columbia Place Stadium, Vancouver, BC</i> September 5	\$859,733
8	Phil Collins <i>Starplex Amphitheatre, State Fair of Texas, Dallas, TX</i> September 8-9	\$758,585
9	Billy Joel: Benefit for Various Charities <i>Jones Beach Theatre, Hantagh, NY</i> September 4-5	\$735,770
10	Grateful Dead <i>Richfield Coliseum, Richfield, OH</i> September 7-8	\$717,140

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DONALD FAGEN: HOME AT LAST



DONALD FAGEN TAKES THE STAGE TO RIOTOUS applause, with a hunched gait and palms fanning at his sides as if to say, "Yeah, okay, let's not get too carried away here." On his cue a big, bluesy band starts in riffing on "Madison Time." Fagen takes his seat at the piano and digs into it, fingers now arched properly over the keys, back straight, feet alternately pounding the two and four. Everyone here knows Fagen's a star, though tonight he comes off more like a Jewish Ed Sullivan as he announces each number and solicits huzzahs for the soloists. *This is good soul*, he wants us to know, *good for the soul*.

No one can deny the appeal of these "various, miscellaneous things" Fagen's New York Rock & Soul Revue is pulling from every corner of the R&B attic, from "You Got Me Hummin'" to "Knock on Wood," but what's really got the crowd salivating is this emcee. Few performers could draw this many fans out to a school auditorium at the ends of the earth on a blindfog summer night in Southampton, Long Island. Fewer still could make a rinky-dink high school upright piano sound like Bill Evans, or raise such rigid goosebumps with the first note from any one of his own Steely Dan tunes. Whenever he leans into the mike, a bunch of fat photographers clamor beneath his corner of the high school stage like doting

parents at a senior play. Airtight and burning, the band pumps out more soul classics, wrapping Sam & Dave and Luther Ingram around select Dan oldies that bring the place to a rumble. "What a night," he shouts, twisting on his bench briefly to face the auditorium. "I can't handle it, it's so exciting. Woo wee."

Donald Fagen is completely and utterly serious, both about the cultural weight of this soul music and about how the public fondness deepened by his own long absence from performing may help the work draw some long-deprived attention. The spontaneous joy of the Rock & Soul Revue seems at odds with the methods that characterized Steely Dan, the vanguard studio band who over-dubbed to the point of literally wearing the oxide particles off the tape. In the chaotic early '70s Fagen and Walter Becker leapt through a window of musical possibilities, one Fagen acknowledges has long since shrunk and would today probably slam shut on the fingers of a band with similar intentions. But that's not why he's been quiet since the release of his one post-Steely Dan solo album, *The Nightfly*, in 1982. "Once you're in,

you're in," he explains. "You may not get played as much, but at least you have a chance. The reason I didn't do anything was just that Walter and I broke up—we noticed the thing got really stale and there were various personal problems—so I started working alone, and I had to definitely reassess what I was doing. I noticed the stuff I was writing sounded kind of repetitious, and I think I really had to evolve in some way before I did something major like another album."

Today, though, Fagen is finally ready to go back to work. He's recording a new album (with Walter Becker helping out) and his shows with the Rock & Soul Revue find the reluctant performer playing regular concerts for the first time since 1974. A few months earlier, at a Manhattan show celebrating the songs of Bert Berns and Jerry Ragavoy, Donald played it mostly in the shadows, noodling on a strap-on keyboard and looking uncomfortable as he conducted a powerhouse band through standards like "Time is on My Side" and "Piece of my Heart," while the audience yelped for "Bodhisattva" and "Any Major Dude Will Tell You." By the time the show resurfaced in Southampton, Fagen was serving up lustrous renditions of "Pretzel Logic" and "Chain Lightning," honking on a melodica and introducing himself goodnaturedly as Stevie Dan.

BACK IN MANHATTAN A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER Fagen's quietly touching up three solo tracks recently completed with Becker as acting producer. That doesn't mean it's a Steely Dan project—Fagen is the sole composer—but he is willing to feature Becker's playing on the record if the chemistry is there when the two resume working later

this fall. They used to operate in tandem, with Donald tossing out a song's germ and Walter making refinements. Recently, it was Becker who started the fire under Fagen to get working at his own music again. "I was having a lot of trouble getting started psy-

Steely Dan singer
records with
Walter Becker
By Matt Resnicoff



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chologically," Donald says. "I knew I was ready, but I felt I needed to talk to somebody about it. Getting a producer is kind of silly because I could really produce it myself. The only person I'd consider to do that is Walter, because I don't have to explain anything to him. He knows exactly what I'm doing."

Fagen grew up on Symphony Sid and late-night jazz radio, but his drifting allegiance locked into jazz when rock and R&B started turning white. "You started hearing a lot of cover records," he says, "white copies, white rock 'n' roll records and

Frankie Avalon, and they stopped playing a lot of the black music for a couple of years there, and I lost interest in it." A couple of older cousins introduced him to jazz. His first record was Chuck Berry's "Reelin' and Rockin,'" but his first loves were Sonny Rollins and Miles. "It was very fashionable at the time for high school and college kids, going to the Newport Jazz Festival and that kind of thing. For some it was a social thing—probably for the majority. My cousins told me what radio stations to listen to, I heard some of their records, and I was

knocked out. My sister started taking piano lessons, and I started learning how to play off these records. I became a real jazz snob; I lost interest in all rock 'n' roll and started developing an anti-social personality."

When public tastes veered from bebop in the mid-'60s, neither Fagen nor collegemate Walter Becker took it lightly. Disdain for the mainstream figured strongly in their collaborations, if not lyrically, then certainly in the splendid dryness and character with which they reworked existing musical forms as a duo—the hippie era's own Berns and Ragavoy, writing sardonic pot-smoked pop that stalked a wide territory. "When Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie became the primary mode of jazz," explains Fagen, "most people lost interest because it was no longer dance music like it was in the swing era."

It wasn't that the *music* fell off its tracks, as Becker and Fagen told it in "Parker's Band," boppers like Diz and Bird really made the future dance. "I think the reason jazz was the least socially acceptable music for a while was a lot of white players started to water down bop and play something more like 'parlor bop,' like Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, what would be called the West Coast sound. A lot of that was very good music, but that's the reason it became acceptable: They were white people, so college kids could relate to it."

Fagen and Becker's student fascination with jazz began a twisted, omnivorous musical journey. Becker was a glib singer and Bleecker Street guitarist trained in blues by Spirit's Randy California, Donald a reticent Monk-derived pianist with a sideline in Charley Patton. Strange how things change: Fagen became the singer, Becker the primary bassist for Steely Dan, and as composers they created their own mad alchemy. "I guess when we started out, popular music was really in chaos," Fagen laughs. "Because we came from a jazz background but liked blues, it was natural to try to play jazz on the instruments that blues was being played on. So there was something very funny about it; it was like, what does jazz sound like on this monstrous instrument? And after a while it was like, well, what does reggae sound like when you use sophisticated jazz chords? Aside from sounding good, it was also very funny. We didn't want to be a comedy group, but we got a lot of laughs combining these different genres."

So, after years of retentive sophistication, how did Fagen find himself back at soul and

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R&B? Why the New York Rock & Soul Revue?

"Walter and I always liked soul music a lot in its era," Fagen says. "I think this was just a reaction to hearing a lot of dance music that was so boring and stiff sounding. Ragavoy and Berns had songs and a sound that I always liked. Their music had such a personality and was really interesting; people might know Leiber and Stoller or King and Goffin from those Brill Building days, but not many people are familiar with Berns and Ragavoy. So here was this huge body of work that could be reinterpreted without losing its basic spirit, which actually comes from the church and gospel music."

Though he admits that it's probably not in his character to tour on his own, Fagen seems to find sufficient refuge in the revue format to commit to some additional soul shows with singers Patti Austin, longtime associate Mike McDonald and Phoebe Snow. It's even reconditioned him in the details of expressive stage behavior, a long-forgotten enterprise.

"I'd been looking around for a solo instrument I could play where I could be mobile," he says, "so for a while I was playing one of these keyboards you strap around your neck. It was all right. I wanted something that sounded more natural. And I don't like the tuning of synthesizers, either. All the records you hear now are out of tune because the synthesizers don't really tune up: They don't have stretch tuning like a piano, so the top end is flat and the bottom end is sharp, and it really annoys me. I've talked to synthesizer companies about this for years. Now people are used to it, so the way they perceive music is completely different from the way they did a few years ago.

"I'm not asking for *that* much!" Fagen continues, laughing. "I like to use real drummers, and instruments that can tune. I use technology a lot, but you have to make sure that the machine isn't running you. I got fooled by that for a few years: You do a

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sequence on a machine, it'll sound good for about two days and you'll think you've really got something, but then you'll start noticing all these little things that are wrong with it. You try some delays on it and it *still* doesn't come exactly where you want, and when you finally get it where you want it sounds too stiff anyway. That's a big drag. It's not worth it."

He reflects on the years Steely Dan sweated away in pursuit of the perfect, pristine sound. "I used to be a workaholic, you know. But now I don't only write music. I have an


actual social life of some kind, and a family life, and have more fun. So in a way, I wish that I could be more prolific, but there's really not that much I can do about it. It's like, if I don't feel I am writing something for some *reason*, I just can't put out records. I'm in a position of great luxury in that I could make a good enough living from royalties. But it has its disadvantages; if I had been forced economically I would have made records of some kind, but who knows?" Another cousin, this one a movie producer at work on *Bright Lights, Big City*, cajoled Donald to score the

picture. "It was very enlightening working for somebody else, bound by the limitations of a film score. I'm really glad I did it, because even though the movie didn't turn out well, it reminded me of how lucky I was to be able to do what I do without limitations."

So in as leisurely a manner as sanity will allow, Donald is preparing to enter Becker's Hawaii studio in the fall to finish his record. Until then he'll be making rounds in the City, taking in jazz in the clubs and soaking up all that New York soul. The revue may materialize a few more times before the year is out. "There is a kind of built-in problem," Fagen says, "people wanting to just hear a lot of the old Steely Dan songs, and I have been doing some, but it's not fair to come and ask for a different show than what's been advertised. I think everyone loved one show we did at the Beacon Theater; it had a great spirit to it. There were a few Steely Dan fanatics in the back yelling for songs, but other than that, everyone loved the idea. Phoebe and Patti and Mike were great. I love having Phoebe, because if the show isn't going well, all you have to do is bring her out and that's it. She's a dynamo. With those performers it becomes a different thing, because they're all so strong that people really get into it."

At the Southampton gig without all the guest vocalists, the band Curious George sounded incredible on the Steely Dan material, particularly *Aja*'s epic "Home at Last." Fagen ordered slight alterations in the horn charts and vocal phrasing to make the song's stage debut more accommodating for his voice and the band's prodigious solos. Most lyrics remained recognizable, including the line "...still I remain tied to the mast," but what he sang sounded eerily like "...tied to the past."

"It is interesting to see what I can do with some of the old things," he admits, "because I'm not the kind of player who likes to go up and just play the old records. I just can't do it; it's too boring for me. It has to have something new to it." The irony is classic Fagen: After all, he's performing a revue of songs old enough to vote.

"I guess some people think that I owe it to fans to do Steely Dan songs," he says. The phrase "my fans" doesn't exactly roll off his tongue. "What I really owe them is to be honest about what I want to do and to show some evolution. And occasionally take some of the old things and rework them. But as far as owing somebody a nostalgia show, I don't feel that that's my responsibility." 

FUN EXCITEMENT AND TRAVEL

10

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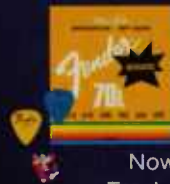
Produced by: Nick Launay, Colin Fairley, Roger Hechirian, T-Bone Burnett, Declan MacManus, Geoff Emerick, The Imposters, Langer & Winstanley

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THE LEGENDARY ETTA JONES

JAZZ SINGER ETTA JONES HAS A VOICE LISTENERS can identify blindfolded. It's the sound of remembrance: the hard-won distillation of nearly five decades of making music with big bluesy swing bands and small jazz combos. It's a voice whose individuality is unlikely to be matched today by our sound-alike

songstresses. Jones is a product of the brilliant club life of '40s black America, a vanished milieu in which musicians had time to develop without being pressured to copy the latest hits. Recalling the stages of her progress, Jones can detail the instrumentation of groups with whom she appeared 40 or 45 years ago and she can name the clubs in which they played. This is a litany of jazz shrines and a reminder that the music depends as much on the interplay between the players and the audience and on the atmosphere of the room as it does on the players' skills or the songs the band picks.

Jones was 15 in the summer of '44, when she sang in the amateur show at the Apollo. Backstage afterward, she auditioned for and got a job singing with the big blues band of Buddy Johnson, who was on the Apollo bill that night—his vocalist sister, Ella, was on maternity leave. Johnson's 19-man band played jump blues or R&B, which was not then differentiated from the blues. The band-leader's music was noted for creative melodic work within the blues form, and "they loved him down throughout the South," says the singer. She remembers that the musicians were very protective of her and gave her the best bed on Johnson's tour bus.

The jazz bands led by Buddy Johnson, Lucky Millinder, Tiny Bradshaw and their peers were not as well known as those of Basie, Billy Eckstine, Jimmy Lunceford or the Duke. These second-level bands played to the black-only auditoriums and dance halls that constituted an alternate entertainment circuit at the time. There were so many clubs and so heavy was the demand for jazz and dance music that a talented

beginner could get a gig with a respected working band and learn on the job. Those touring bands functioned as repertory com-

Jazz singer evokes the golden era

By Celestine Ware

panies for a couple of generations of players. In the days before music got saturation exposure via the media, black musicians didn't have to have a hit to survive, and once they did have a hit they could live for years off that one record, working the clubs.

When Ella Johnson returned to work a year later, Etta Jones began working one-

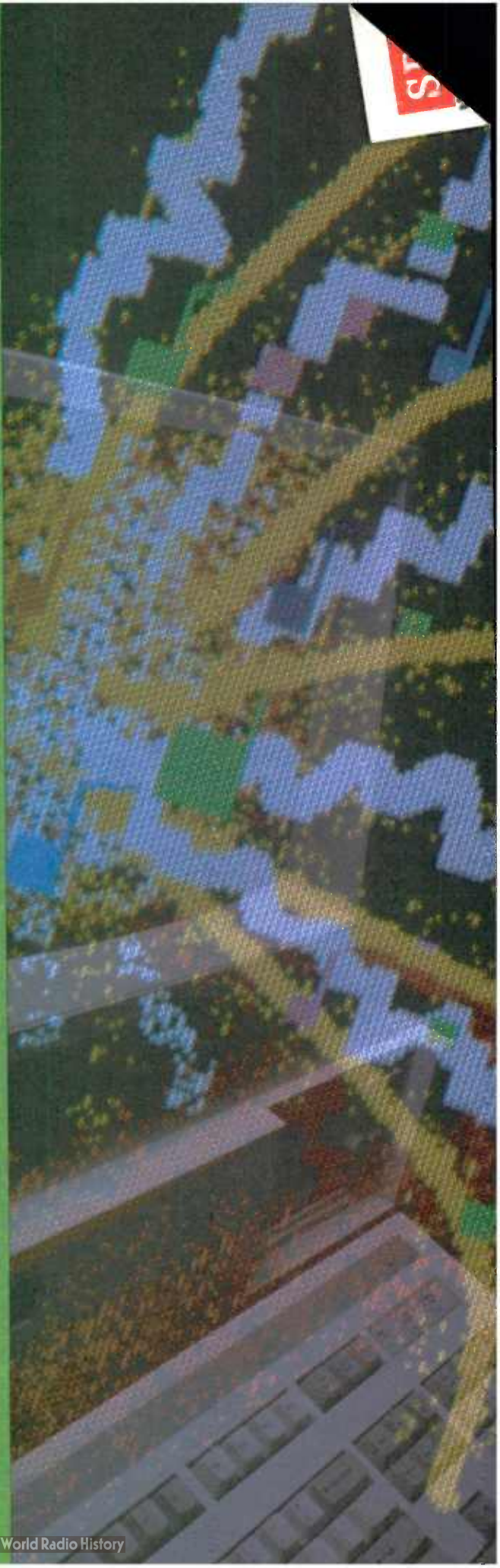
night stands and she also sang and brushed a tom-tom for the Harlemaires, a four-part harmony vocal group. "Musicians kept me working, which was especially important when I was a teenager and didn't know how you found jobs. They'd tell me, 'So-and-so needs somebody' or 'Call this band,'" she says. The busy teenager got some work in Manhattan nightspots, worked with J.C. Heard's sextet and then joined the seminal Earl Hines sextet of 1949 to '52 (Art Blakey, Bennie Green, Jonah Jones, Tommy Potter, Aaron Sachs).

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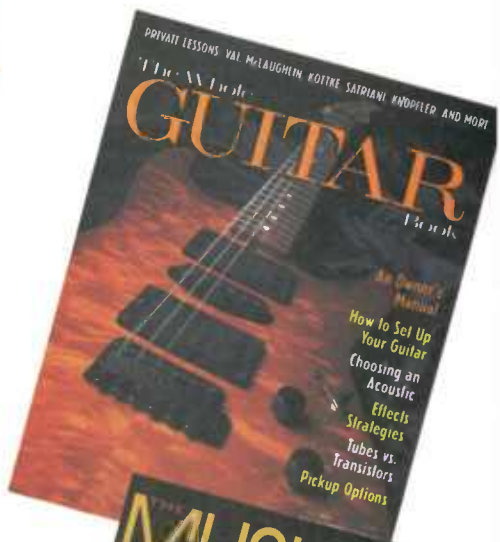
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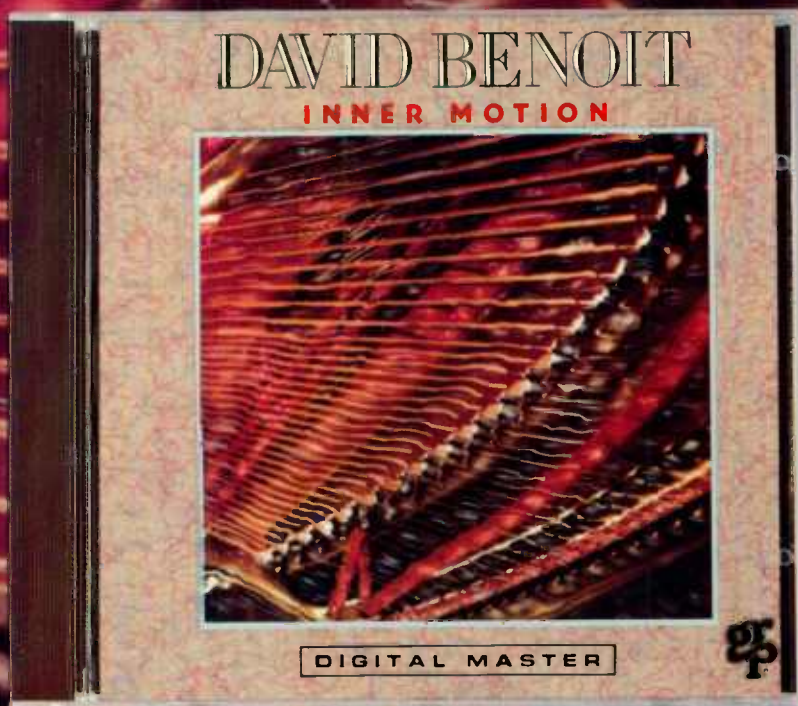
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Miss Jones is known first began to take form before the audiences of the '40s black ghettos—a culture truly separate and distinct from mainstream America's, a culture that prized creative expression through music as well as a highly developed personal style in dress and speech. "I never took music lessons," says Miss Jones, "but I was very fortunate because I worked with excellent musicians. I used to listen to the horns—the way they played on some of my songs. The instrumentalists who influenced me the most were Gene Ammons and Bennie

Green; I worked with both of them. And sometimes I like to sing a Sonny Stitt ending"—she sings a Stitt-like phrase. "I worked with him at the Club Baron."

The singers who most influenced her were Lady Day and Thelma Carpenter. "Billie Holiday was the epitome of grace, and her command of the stage was absolute. She moved nothing. She controlled the audience with just her facial expressions and the emotions she projected. Billie changed singing around—her phrasing, her beat, the subtlety!" Her other influence, Thelma Car-

penyer, worked with Count Basie and later as a torch singer ("That's My Desire" was a big hit). Miss Carpenter's quick tempi and vibrato impressed Jones.

When asked how her singing has changed, Jones immediately comments that her voice used to be lighter, then she adds, "On my first record, I did everything straight as an arrow [just like Ella Johnson's songlines]. As a beginner, you're scared that if you go out, you'll never be able to get back. But I don't ever want to sing so you can't hear the melody, because that's what attracted you to the song.

"I like the standards," she asserts. "My favorite composer is Sammy Cahn. Songs used to have four bars, then four bars and then a channel, which gave you a chance to breathe. Today songwriters don't give you space between the lines to breathe. When I was coming up, you weren't supposed to hear the breath—you took the breath deep in your stomach. Now it's considered sexy to hear it." Jones doesn't listen to pop or rock, which she calls "the other music."

Her reverence for jazz and blues, the popular music of her generation, may have contributed to the rugged times Jones had from '52 to '60, when she often sang only on weekends. A 10-year struggle to record a tune that she liked resulted in her triumphant first session under her own name, *Don't Go to Strangers*. The album and song of that title changed her career and her life. After 16 years, she became an overnight success, but Jones found stardom almost more difficult than the hard times, when she had once worked stuffing record sleeves. "Going from \$50 a week to \$750—you can't imagine! I can't stand too much attention. It nearly drove me nuts."

But Jones survived in the business all those years partly because live music was still an integral part of the black community, and there were clubs in every neighborhood. In the '50s, black people were still going out to hear music the way we now seek out the hot new restaurant.

Jones' soft-voiced reminiscences evoke that long-gone nurturing club life. "I have a picture of myself with Monk, Miles Davis, Max Roach and Mingus at Tony's in Brooklyn. Everybody played there. We loved that little club!" Of course Tony's and most of those neighborhood venues are now defunct.

Since 1968 Jones has been weaving seamless interchanges with bandleader/tenor saxophonist Houston [cont'd on page 32]

Robin Holcomb

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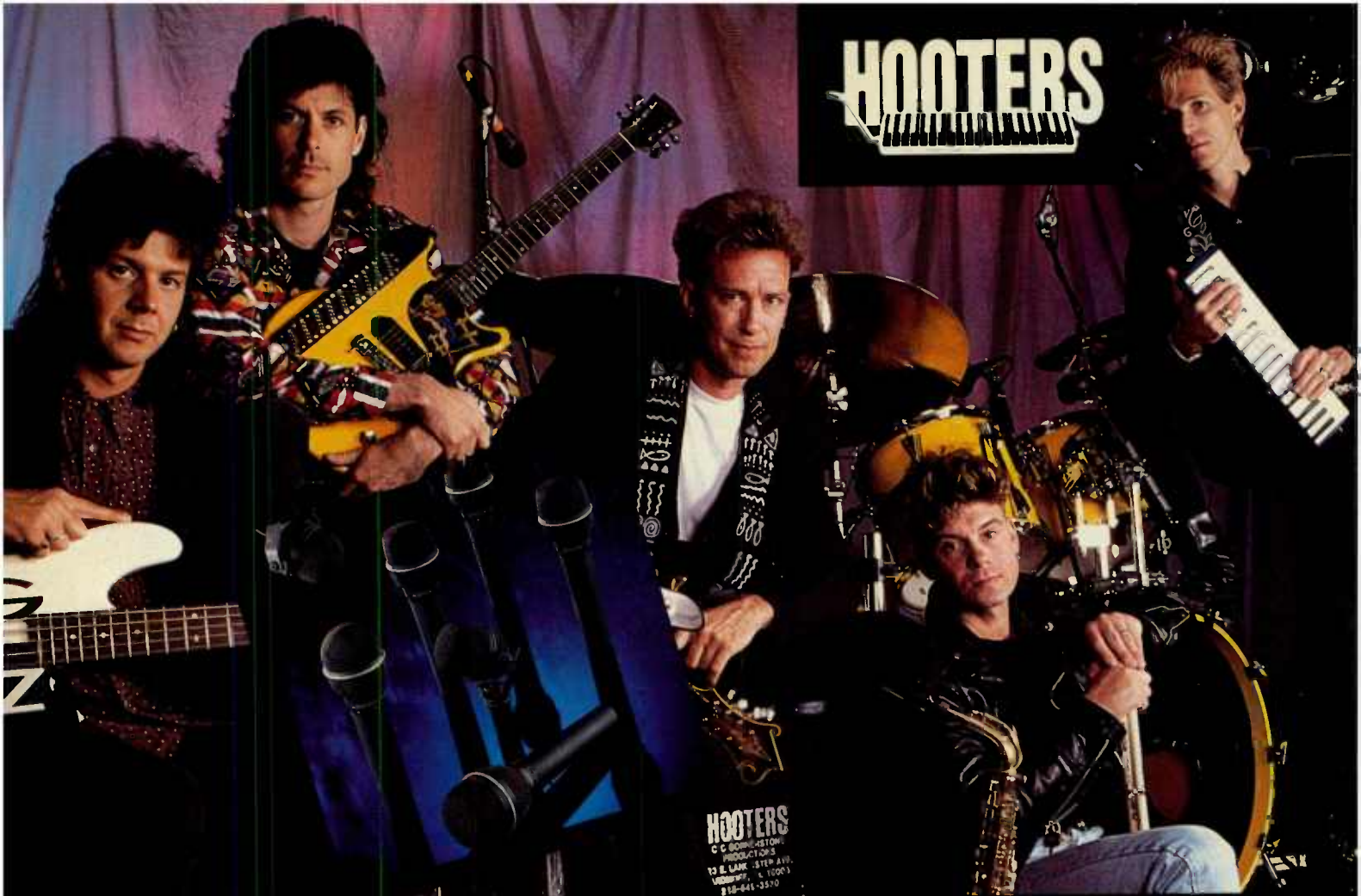
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URBAN DANCE SQUAD SMOKES

"I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT THIS IS A MONSTROUS pact," guitarist Tres Manos says of life in Urban Dance Squad. "A pact with the devil. But as long as you have a pragmatic attitude and you know that in this constellation you are able to do a musical thing that you really want to do, why bother too much about the edgy things and the tension?"

Tension is a word that pops up a lot in talking with the members of Urban Dance Squad. Their music offers no middle ground, no safe place to be. Urban Dance Squad is neither urban nor dance. Rather, it's a sonic mugging, a blast of noise blowtorched together from a combination of screeching

heavy metal and savage rap. You might love it. You could easily hate it. But you *won't* be indifferent.

That suits rapper Patrick "Rudeboy" Remington just fine. "I like to create tension," he says. "I think that's the most interesting part of making music."

Urban Dance Squad hails from Holland. Besides Rudeboy and Tres, their lineup includes Silly Sil (bass), DNA (turntables and special effects) and Magic Stick (drums and percussion). UDS was formed in 1987

for what was supposedly a one-shot deal, a quick set at a local festival. Tres remembers the day he got his invite. "I said, 'There's one condition I have: We're gonna blaze. I just wanna *blast*.'"

**Rock and rap
struck by lightning
By Leonard Pitts, Jr.**

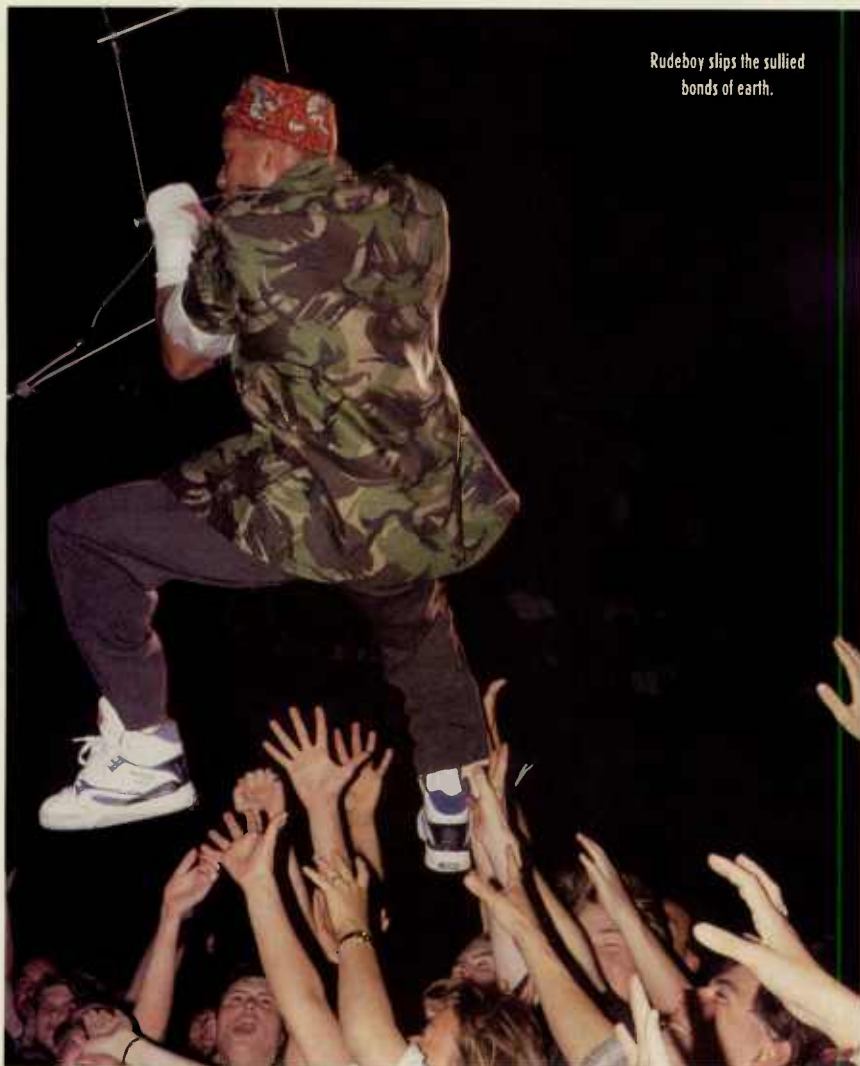
Blast they did. And after the gig they found themselves quite impressed by what they had together. "To me," says Tres, "it was the

mixture of the regular rock lineup, like bass, drums and guitar, and then this hip-hop connection with the scratching, the turntables and the rapping. DNA was able to get these weird scratches and fragments of music. In the past I tried to do that by spinning a tape, but that was Stone Age when you compare it to the flexibility of scratching." Eager to put their sound down on record, they financed a self-titled independent album that was eventually picked up by Arista.

You could insert a pretty corny essay at this point about how, in uniting two dissimilar, even antagonistic musical camps, UDS makes a poignant statement about the need to bring different cultures together on common ground. Only problem with that thesis is, it's untrue. The members of UDS insist that any larger message you read in their rap/rock fusion is largely the product of your own imagination. As Tres Manos puts it, "There isn't so much deliberate in the things we do. I think it's just the chemistry of these five characters that gets this special tension socially and musically."

Tension. There's that word again. And after a while, it doesn't take a genius to realize that that's not just a fancy way of describing their musical outlook. It's also a very real description of band life. It's their love for music, not their love for each other, that keeps this unstable rap/rock combination together. Indeed, Tres Manos readily agrees that UDS is a "marriage of convenience." And what was that he said about a pact with the devil?

No one will be too specific, but the devil



Rudeboy slips the sullied bonds of earth.



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in this case is evidently Rudeboy. It takes about two seconds to figure out why. Just call him...different. A hyperactive fast talker, unfettered by the bonds of reality.

Creating tension, he says, "is just a reflection of my character. I don't know why, I just happen to be that way."

Pressed for specifics, he says, "I have my own background, I have my own feelings and point of view about life. Sometimes, it's hard to handle when you're working with me. I might do the wrong thing. I did that a couple of months ago, but the brothers were

helping me out."

So is he saying that he went off on his bandmates without reason? "Basically on the whole world, on this organization. We kind of split up for four hours."

And then?

"The Upper Spirit threw lightning," he says, his voice drop-dead serious. "I ain't telling nonsense here, you understand. It was *true*. I looked out the window and I saw the lightning strike. And the other brothers saw the same thing and then I realized that it wasn't our time and I didn't have the right

as an individual to make decisions for a whole bunch of people."

Let's make sure we've got this straight here. Is he saying that, after feuding with and breaking up the band, he saw a lightning bolt and decided that God was pissed at him for what he had done? God is a UDS fan?

"Uh-huh."

Oh-kay.

Hey, you don't argue with a member of God's Band. You just turn to his bandmate, express your sympathy and ask, what's the key to getting along with this guy? Tres says, "For me, the key is that time will show the wiser. Rudeboy is very dynamic, has a lot of energy, has a lot of power. He's very willful and he knows what he wants and sometimes there are these clashes."

For Tres, those clashes seem to be a price he's willing to pay to make music that amazes him. "We're just doing what's quite natural for us," he says. "We jam and there's no deliberate thing in it. We never had the intention to come up with something new. It was just the magic chemistry of these four instruments and the turntables." M

JONES

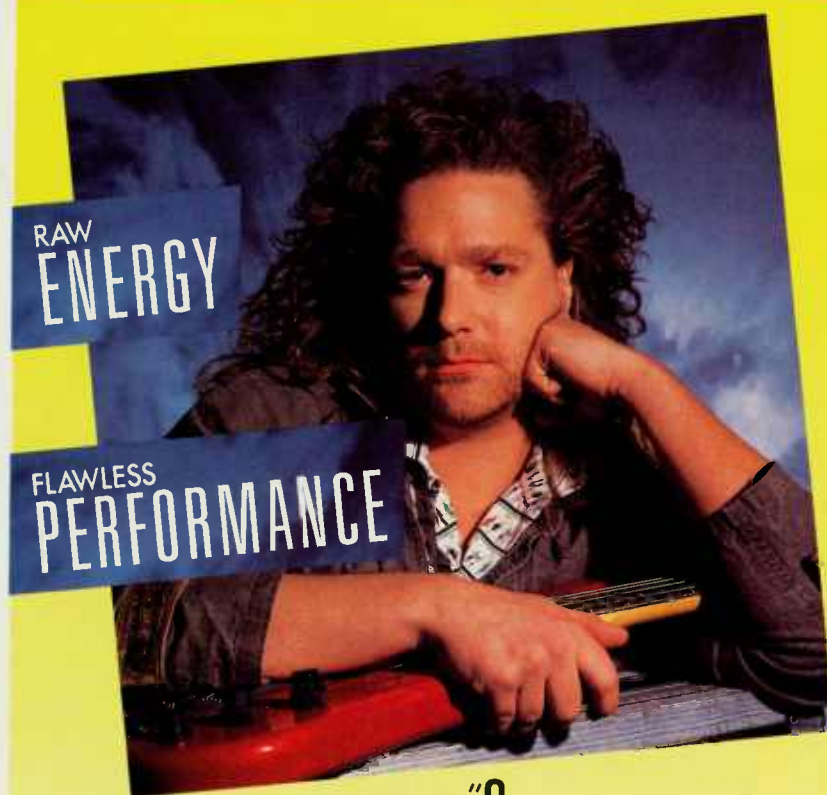
[cont'd from page 28] Person, whose big, warm tone is often compared with Ben Webster's and Gene Ammons'. One of the fine things about hearing Jones and Person perform is the way they "talk" to each other. She will sing a line that he will echo and comment on, revealing what the listener missed the first time. "He knows exactly what I'm going to do," she says. "He knows if I'm in trouble; he'll give me the note. He leaves me room."

It's said that recordings don't do justice to her voice, but Jones got a Grammy nomination for *Save Your Love for Me* in 1981.

Jones has shaped a life for herself in which she works in congenial company—Person is her record producer and her manager—and, while they tour the U.S.A. and Europe, the duo and the Person band play brunch every Saturday at New York City's Blue Note and are to be found regularly at the major jazz clubs in New Jersey: Trumpet's in Montclair and Struggle's in Edgewater.

Jones, whose new album, *Sugar*, is just out, says she likes her present situation at Muse because "Joe Fields lets us do whatever we want. I appreciate that because I've sung so many songs in my career that I didn't want to do." M

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T r i p p i n g O n A S c h o o l N i g h t

THE PIXIES ASPIRE TO THE PIXIES ARE *HUGE* IN PARIS, AND maybe that figures. Back home in America, this quartet is nothing less than the quintessential college cult band of its era—like R.E.M. was in the mid-'80s, or Steely Dan in the mid-'70s—but in Europe it's a different story. Over there, the Pixies are pop stars: They get recognized on the street, interviewed on television, endlessly reviewed and analyzed in the press. Their book of clippings from West Germany alone is equal to a mid-sized American city's phone book. In merry and mercurial old England, the Pixies have been heralded as rock's future for three albums running now—that must set some sort of record.

A more self-conscious band might start to believe the hype, but the Pixies remain humble. Or maybe they have more important things to worry about—like, ah, *staying in tune*.

"Look, I've got to tell you the truth," says guitarist Joey Santiago, pulling me aside about five minutes after I boarded the band's tour bus in Grenoble, France. "We're really not good enough musicians to be in this magazine!" Well, the Pixies do have their clumsy moments. Later that night, a well-received set disintegrates into chaos after Joey is handed the wrong guitar. But they've got something else, too: enough old-fashioned rock 'n' roll spirit to overcome mere technical limitations, often when you least expect it. Klutziness is this band's bane—and its saving grace.

"We're fumbling," admits singer Charles Thompson, "just trying and struggling to do this band thing. It's not like we've played in lots of bands before this, or even lots of cover bands. It's not like we know what the fuck

Photography by Andy Earl





Charles Thompson, Joey Santiago, Kim Deal & David Lovering, August 1990.

we're doing! We're not selectively presenting facets of our talents; this is everything we know how to do. I wouldn't mind being in a one-dimensional band—you know, a good one like the Ramones—but the Pixies are a little more vague than that.”

VAGUE AIN'T THE WORD. THOMPSON'S LYRICS CAN BE MADDENINGLY oblique, pointlessly cryptic or just plain silly, like his now-discarded “Black Francis” pseudonym. Yeah, so let the Brit critics figure out which Greek myths inspired the songs on *Bossanova*. Charlie Thompson may not be a great singer—even by college rock's froggy standard—but he sounds like the best psycho-rock screamer to come along since Alice Cooper. And that comes in handy, because the Pixies kick up a glorious din—especially when they're on.

Thompson and Joey Santiago gouge away at power chords, while bassist Kim Deal and drummer David Lovering negotiate the big beat with more success than most underground rhythm sections. The Pixies keep it short and semi-sweet; like a slower-but-smarter Ramones, they plow through one surreal little ditty after another, exuding a pervasive (and perverse) charm but steering well clear of cute.

Undoubtedly, there's something tortured and poetic about the Pixies that appeals to all those black-clad French and Belgian gloom-boppers. But I'll spare you the Jerry Lewis jokes, since the group sees their exalted European status in purely economic terms. They don't sound anything like Grand Funk, but the Pixies are truly an American band.

“We have to come over here,” says Charles. “Even a total fringe band can make money from playing a bigger circuit. It works out really good for us, because we can make all these separate little piles of money in different places. It's like insurance; we can try and break in America now, but if we don't, I don't care. All our eggs aren't in the same basket. Yeah, that's the next step: Swiss bank accounts!”

He's joking, of course—and anybody who'd accuse the Pixies of selling out their alternative credibility misses the point. They may be from Boston, but this band never bought into the college rock scheme in the first place—though they continue to profit from it.

For all their cheery anarchism, the Pixies seem determined to outgrow their cult status and become as well known at home as they are in Europe. That's why I'm hanging out with Charlie Thompson at a Grenoble street cafe rather than interviewing him in a record company conference room. In between the espresso gulps, baguette chomps and goggle-eyed stares at the damn Alps down the street, our conversation kept returning to the States. Typical Yanks, I guess.

“College rock does exist, if only because there really is a college circuit in America,” suggests Thompson. “When the government

sunk a lot of money into higher education after World War II, every town ended up with a university—maybe not a great university, but one with a radio station. Though we try to slink away from this, we can't deny it. The Pixies get played to death on college radio in the States, that's our bread and butter. We thrive on it.

“College rock is great for enthusiasts and hobbyists: weekend bands, basement rockers who still want to put out their records and do short tours every once in a while. But on the other hand, college rock is listed in AOR tip sheets like the *Gavin Report* now: There's nothing underground about it at all. It just sells fewer units. Nothing's radical anymore.

“I wish there were some sort of underground,” Charlie continues, “but who would give a shit? It's definitely *sub-*, and usually involves drinking and drugs. I freak out when people start talking about music being suppressed. That's just ridiculous. You get what you get. Nobody deserves success. People sign the contracts they sign, or they can print up records out of their basements if they want. Now I'm not saying there isn't manipulation in the industry—it's a well-oiled machine—but Tone-Loc didn't sell millions of copies because somebody decided he should.”

Here's how Thompson sums up the Pixies' comfortable mix of shambling amateurism and shameless ambition: “We'll aspire to any level we can.” That attitude is what sets the Pixies apart from the precious bohemianism and willful obscurity of most so-called college rock bands. Apart, but not *too* distant. “We aspire to making good records 'cause ultimately we're fans of good records,” says Thompson. “Whatever that means! That Velvet Underground catalog must still do all right for Lou Reed,

sale-wise. We don't want to end up in the cut-out bins; we'd rather sell a devoted one million than a throwaway five million.”

Though the Pixies were formed in Boston, they've since dispersed: Charles moved to Los Angeles with his girlfriend last year, while Kim Deal returned to her home town of Dayton, Ohio. International success, even when you're a total fringe act, is not without its perks. “We see each other seven days a week for nine months out of the year while we're touring,” says Kim, “so living in different cities is healthy.” David Lovering is the only band member who managed a college diploma (in electrical engineering, no less!), but the college rock tag fits the Pixies—if only because eventual dropouts Charlie and Joey developed their tag-team rhythm guitar style over a semester's worth of dorm-room jams. Perhaps Kim's prior musical experience is indicative of where the group is coming from, though.

“When I was in high school,” she begins, “my twin sister and I sang in a disco band in a place called Piqua, Ohio, at a bar called Moe's Lounge. ‘Working at the Car Wash, Car Wash.’ Kinda like a

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Holiday Inn band, with keyboards. We did 'Feelings,' 'Disco Inferno' and some Doobie Brothers songs. At that time my sister and I liked heavy metal, so we did this just because we could sing. The guys in the band were older and they'd dress us up. Well, they wouldn't dress us but we wore similar outfits. We clapped in time to the beat! It wasn't so bad. We did acid. Actually, we hated disco at the time, but we would do acid and people would buy us sloe gin fizzes. We were 17, and it was like staying up on a school night."

Listening to the Pixies' postmodern power-pop is a lot like tripping on a school night: As warped and distorted as their sound can get, you never quite lose touch with reality. Musically, the Pixies are reminiscent of Cheap Trick in their heyday. Underneath all the cartoon weirdness, they're wholesome.

Kim Deal is a real live wire; her warm spark is contagious, but after a while you get the idea that Dayton, Ohio probably needs those nine months to recover. Her vocal eruptions and joie de vivre add something essential to the Pixies' chemistry, balancing out Charles' understated, drinking-it-all-in demeanor and occasionally bringing him back down to earth. He's the leader but these troops weren't born to follow. "Well, I was always pushy and dominant," says Charles, reflecting on the band's relationship. "Over time I've gotten better at being pushy and dominant, but they've gotten better at dealing with it—they work around it."

One way Kim Deal worked around it was by forming another band—the Breeders, with guitarist pal Tanya Donnelly of Throwing Muses. Kim wrote most

of the songs for the Breeders' debut album *Pod*, which made a splash on both sides of the Atlantic. Kim abruptly dismisses her side project as just that—a side project. "I knew it was immensely uncool," she says, genuinely embarrassed. "But we liked it, and we're gonna do another one!" Why in the world is that so uncool?

"Ooooooh," cries Kim. "I hate it when bands branch out and do solo projects. I hate it: *hate it!* I like nice little one-dimensional rock bands, completely one-dimensional!"

But what a dimension!

"Really, the most influential band on me was the Cars," reflects Charles. "And I didn't even know it! I don't own the Cars' albums, but remember how their first hit singles had that muffled guitar riff? Dun-dun-dun-dun...all of a sudden it was okay to muffle your hands on the strings and just pluck some stupid riff. I learned how to do that and it was like, 'Oh my God, I sound like the Cars!' You can't imagine how many Ric Ocasek impersonations I wrote when I was 16!"

In that sense, the Pixies are the true progeny of late-'70s punk and new wave. Rather than enshrine the musical spontaneity of

that era in a vinyl tomb, they're carrying the do-it-yourself trash-rock aesthetic forward into the digital age. "I wasn't one of those guys who learned scales," Charles admits without much regret, "so it was natural for Joey and I to get into stuff like surf music, 'cause the guitar playing is completely simple and direct, not really flashy. We don't have anything against Eddie Van Halen, but the virtuoso approach wouldn't really fit our tunes."

The spectre of Dick Dale—King of the Surf Guitar and leader of the Fender-toting Del-Tones in the early '60s—haunts the Pixies' latest album. By no means a direct tribute to the twangy, vibrato-laden surf sound, *Bossanova* somehow emits a similar sunburned buzz through all its feedback and fuzz-drenched strumming. Given

the right amount of sand and beer, you could probably dance to it! And how many other albums on the college rock charts can make that claim?

"We just got into surf music during the last couple years," says Charles. In fact, he grew up in suburban Los Angeles and Dick Dale's probably old enough to be his father. "I saw Dick Dale play in Long Beach a couple of months ago and he was rockin'—and loud! He wasn't nostalgic about surf music, so we shouldn't be either. 'Cause we could try and sound just like him easy enough. We want to forge it, capture the spirit and keep it going. We'll do more, but you won't ever see an all-surf—or an all-reggae—album coming from the Pixies."

Though Charles thought twice about getting Dick Dale to open for the Pixies in America

this fall—"I woulda felt terrible if he didn't get the reception he deserves"—he did resurrect the X-rated rapper Blowfly for a couple of supporting slots in New York and Los Angeles. "He didn't know who we were, but his manager came back with the cash sum required and said he'd do it; I guess that means he's still around." Released more than 10 years ago, "Blowfly's Rap" is where Luke Skywalker must've copped his whole shtick—and Blowfly's filthy rhymes and outrageous come-ons make 2 Live Crew sound tame in comparison. As unlikely a choice as Blowfly might seem for the Pixies (let alone their fans), rest assured that this isn't some sort of freedom-of-speech publicity ploy.

"Well, we're not going to bring Blowfly to Kansas," allows Charles, "but all this talk about censorship is puzzling. European journalists keep asking me all about censorship in the United States, and I'm going, like: 'Censorship? Come on!' I don't know much about it, but if the guy who owns K-Mart wants to put stickers on my records, I really don't give a shit. If 2 Live Crew is putting out records with references to cutting off women's breasts or something, what am I supposed to say about it? I got nothin'

STRING UP THE PIXIES

CHARLES THOMPSON plays Fender Telecasters. His favorite is a modern, Japanese-made model—"so it's not a true Tele"—but he also has a vintage 1968 Telecaster and a Fender Mustang from the '60s. On tour, he puts his Telecasters through two Marshall JCM 800 Lead Series amps, and a Vox AC40.

KIM DEAL plays a Fender Precision Bass and a Music Man Stingray. For the Pixies' current tour she just got a Trace Elliot amp "but it's the new series and I don't know what the number is or if there even is a number on there. I have four 10" speakers on top, and the bottom I think is a 15". In addition to that I really am a sucker for Peavey Combo 300s: They're punchier, and I like that percussive sound."

DAVID LOVERING plays a five-piece Pro Prestige Custom kit; "white, I only play white kits." He has three snares: a wooden Tama and two metal Bradys. "I have to say that I use Zildjian now, but I also have Sabian and Paiste cymbals." It's all held together by a Pearl cage that Kim refers to as "David's Neil Peart drum cage."

JOEY SANTIAGO is a strict Les Paul man. He favors a 1960 reissue Gibson gold-top Les Paul, but he also has a Gibson ES-335 that he uses in the studio for a cleaner sound. He also owns an old Fender VI six-string bass that the Pixies use in the studio. Onstage, Joey is using a Pearce GR-8 amplifier on this tour. "It's a small company from Buffalo that our manager turned me on to," he says. "The amp has a pointed, drilling sound that I like: kinda like a Peavey but more sophisticated."

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ROAMING

A highland fling, a Rare interview ♣ Examining Mike Scott's head, heart & rump

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WATERBOYS

WALES CONJURES UP IMAGES OF BARREN ROCK AND WINDSWEPT HEATHS, A LANDSCAPE WORTHY OF Dylan Thomas's biting beautiful poems. But like most romantic notions, this one's made to be broken. Cardiff, the nation's capital, is a depressing seaside town dominated by cemented-over street malls and fast food chains. The Waterboys have just played a gig in the suitably dismal St. David's Hall (or Nenadd Dewi Sant, as it's known by its Welsh appellation). Like something out of a Kubrick nightmare, the venue is white, antiseptic and filled with apathetic locals slumped in their seats, a few mechanical fist-raisers and a smattering of 20-year-olds leaping about up front.

The Waterboys play effusively despite the lackluster vibe. They also sound remarkably smooth, given that their recent shows were slagged for sloppiness in the British press, and a three-piece horn section has arrived just that afternoon and is spending time between numbers putting the final touches on arrangements backstage. It's late September, and the band has



just begun a tour that will cross Europe and the United States this fall. But with a contrariness that's utterly in keeping with the Waterboys' regular flouting of audience expectation, their show is dominated by rave-up rock 'n' roll and bears only an occasional resemblance to the becalmed album, *Room to Roam*, it is ostensibly meant to promote.

The rattle-taggle assembly of accordion, flute, bouzouki and tin whistle players who toured with the band in 1988–89 to accompany their brilliant, Celtic-infused *Fisherman's Blues* is nowhere to be seen. Instead, audiences are greeted by a stripped-down, four-piece lineup and a brand new drummer. The revamped show boasts a slightly schizophrenic combination of booming, anthemic songs from the first three Waterboys albums and quiet reworkings of numbers from the last two, with electric mandolin, piano and now horns filling in for the traditional instruments. These alterations are dominating a late-night conversation with Waterboys singer/songwriter and resident enigma Mike Scott—who has just

broken a four-year silence with the press—when two of his bandmates bust through the door in a state of tipsy ebullience.

"You look like a bunch of rogues," Scott says fondly to Anthony (Anto) Thistlethwaite, the Waterboys' longstanding saxophonist and sundry musician, and trumpet player Roddy Lorimer. Lorimer's sat in with the band off and on since their second album, *A Pagan Place*, and his return today has prompted much hearty embracing and bad joke-telling. The men giggle and hurl themselves into cushy chairs as Scott pops another tall-boy can of Guinness Stout, nearly spritzing the large percussive disc that resembles an outsized tambourine leaning beside him—his bodhrán, the sole vestige on this tour of his fascination with Irish music.

As Thistlethwaite meanders out into the lobby where other members of the Waterboys entourage are hanging, Scott and Lorimer begin reminiscing about former lineups, specifically about the national identities comprising the band. Considering the countless personnel shifts since the Waterboys' brooding, eponymous debut in 1985, this line of conversation could last well into the wee hours—but Scott and Lorimer have a specific question in mind. Both men are Scottish, although since Mike Scott relocated from London to Dublin five years ago, his inflections have become notably Irish. (In the song "Islandman" on *Roam*, Scott declares, "England is the spine . . . London sprawls across my rump. . . Scotland is my dreaming head. . . Ireland is my heart," a sentiment that's sloganeering enough to pop up on the tour T-shirt.) Thistlethwaite is English, bassist Trevor Hutchinson is from Northern Ireland and former John Hiatt drummer Kenneth Blevins, who replaced the recently—and contentiously—departed Noel Bridgeman, is from Louisiana. With the addition of Lorimer's two horn players, the number of Englishmen suddenly outweighs the Scots.

"I've got it!" Lorimer says brightly. "Let's sack Anto!" Scott throws back his head and the duo share a good howl.

The question of "sacking" his band members is one that plagues Scott, now more than ever. The chief Waterboy has a reputation for being dictatorial, mercurial and elusive—the latter only enhanced by his moratorium on interviews and refusal to make music videos. First were the widely reported differences between Scott and former bandmate Karl Wallinger, who left the Waterboys in late 1985 to start World Party, now a band arguably more visible than Scott's. "World Party" is also the title of a song on *Fisherman's Blues*, which led to speculation that the tune was directed at Wallinger (in fact Karl co-wrote the song). But Scott stresses that "World Party" was written before Wallinger split, and was inspired not by personality conflicts but by the hubbub surrounding Live Aid.

Scott is nothing if not gracious on the subject of his erstwhile bandmate, whom he calls a "very melodic tunesmith and a great

musician." But it's clear that where Wallinger opted for the showier pop road, Scott took the more reserved, rootsy one (and got to Ireland before ye, to push the metaphor). Yet Scott's pursuit of traditional music isn't exactly purist, even on the seemingly more-Celtic-than-thou *Room to Roam*. The record is a collagistic assembly of ballads, rearranged traditional songs, carnivalistic bits and jazzy asides, with one college radio-ready rocker ("A Life of Sundays"), which nonetheless devolves into a wonderfully unwieldy guitar frenzy. Unlike *Fisherman's Blues*, which has the feel of a bunch of musicians jamming furiously in a small room, *Room to Roam* sounds meticulously conceived, the deliberate naiveté of some of the songs twisted and made complex through production flourishes.

In fact, Scott brought an outside producer, Nashville's Barry Beckett (best known for Dylan's *Slow Train Coming*) to Spiddal House in Galway, Ireland, where both *Blues* and *Roam* were recorded. "I felt my role as producer on *Fisherman's Blues* had

strained my relationship with the others," Scott explains, "and I just wanted to be a member of the band for a while." Rather than recreate a live situation for *Roam*, Beckett tended to separate the players from one another and overdub their solos individually. The result is a beautiful but oddly hermetic roots record. The methodical nature of the sessions is amply evident in an instrumental called "Natural Bridge Blues," where an American voice proclaims, "Let's have some fun now. Once it starts it feels so good. F-U-N," while toy horns bleat



Trevor Hutchinson, Ken Blevins, Mike Scott and Anto Thistlethwaite loom over the landscape.

and balloons pop, disrupting the sense of an honest-to-God heehaw. Compare this canned interjection to the buried sound of Scott hollering for the feverish collision of fiddle, mandolin and guitar to come to a close on the unsparing "We Will Not Be Lovers" from *Blues*, and you have some idea of the chasm between the two records.

The other major shift is the noticeable constriction of fiddler Steve Wickham. While his wildly experimental, sawing rhythms and aching melodies dominated many of the songs on *Blues*, Wickham's role on *Roam* is far more limited. Scott explains this by saying, "We had four or five musicians on *Fisherman's Blues* and on *Room to Roam* we had seven. So everybody had one-seventh of the space." More convincingly, he adds that "Steve tends to be a dark musician with his fiddle. The other musicians on this record tended to be light musicians." Scott smiles. "Oh God, I'm going to get very esoteric here." He pauses and shakes his head. "But I mean in the flavor of the sound that they make, not in any good or bad sense. *Room to Roam* wound up having a certain lightness or softness to it that didn't have as much to do with Steve's playing." Despite some somber moments, *Room to Roam* is emphatically a happy record, no doubt reflecting certain changes in Scott's life: He

married this past June, enjoys a settled life in Dublin and has seemed to follow his mandate on "Life of Sundays" to "sharpen your sense of wonder."

Whether or not Wickham's melancholy playing jibed with the predominantly upbeat *Room*, he quit the band abruptly last August. Shortly thereafter came the departure (some say dismissal) of the other members of Scott's traditionalist lineup, accordionist Sharon Shannon and flutist Colin Blakey. Scott is not averse to talking about these changes. In fact, for such a notoriously recessive personality, he isn't particularly averse to talking in general—though he is quick to bristle if he thinks someone's putting words in his mouth. But the subject of Wickham, who has disappeared back into the Irish regional scene since leaving the Waterboys, clearly pains him.

"My reading of the situation," Scott says with a sigh, "is that Steve preferred to play traditional music, and it was clear that we were moving back—rockwards." He cracks a small smile. "And that's not for him, y'know. But as far as I was concerned, when Steve left, that was the end of that band. That was the end of the sort of folk explorations we'd been doing." He shifts in his chair. "I'm trying to get out of saying that a few people were fired. Nobody was really fired, do ya know what I mean? That doesn't really represent the truth. But when Steve left, the bottom completely fell out of the band and the game was up. He was the first guy to really bring me to Irish music. I learned to play Irish music so that I could play with him. The man's a complete genius..."

Scott trails off and toys with his beer can. "But I think what I realized through all of this is that I'm actually more of a rock musician than a folk musician—well, maybe not, maybe not." He looks perplexed. "I don't know for certain. But I really love playing rock 'n' roll, electric guitar. I was denying myself that pleasure for three or four years by only playing acoustic. And I was relying on all the various musicians around me, many of them folk musicians, to take up all the solos and create the textures in the sound. I have to work a lot harder now. Because with the last band, we'd be doing instrumentals—a lot of the ones we worked out live turned up on *Room to Roam*—and I'd be able to go off to the side and just be the piano

player for a few minutes."

The extreme act of giving up a beloved instrument (or "denying myself the pleasure," as Scott puts it) is fairly revelatory of the major metamorphosis the singer/songwriter went through in the mid-1980s. With the move to Ireland, Scott shed his persona as a

pallid poet-boy hiding in alienated introspection behind his dark shades, and metamorphosed into a scruffy, communal, cap-and-vested lad. Today, he seems at once more sincere and more playful than in his previous self-serious incarnation: On the cover of *Room to Roam*, he's grinning and throwing his arm to the sky, seated beside his bandmates on an amusement park ride. It's a dramatic contrast to earlier Waterboys albums, which foregrounded moody, blown-up black-and-white portraits of Scott's pretty face.

Scott, who's 31, came of musical age in the late 1970s. He was, he says, "terribly impressionable and heavily influenced by Patti Smith and Television and the Clash," which helps explain the rail-thin, washed-out demeanor of his early days. "Before that I was completely mad for Bob Dylan and the Beatles—well, I still am." This fact is obvious enough both in Scott's propensity for sub-Dylan rants (such as *This Is the Sea's* "Be My Enemy") and in some of the Beatlesque recording tricks he used on *Room*, which included backwards guitars and manipulated vocals. The ethereal background sighs on the haunting "Bigger Picture" were, he says, "completely nicked from the techniques used on *Sgt. Pepper's*, where you slow down the tape and sing along, then put it back up to normal speed and your voice comes out all echoey and breathy."

Scott spent his adolescence putting together proto-punk bands in Scotland and obsessively writing songs, both on the electric guitar, which he first picked up when he was 10, and on a piano he begged off a friend of his mother's who had it "stowed in his garage gathering dust." He confesses that "my left hand still plays one finger and the right plays three," then demonstrates on a

nearby hard surface how his piano parts are often "doggie paddles" or "percussive, if you even want to call it that." By 1980 he was putting out singles with his then-band, Another Pretty Face, on his own indie label, Chicken Jazz, including a maudlin little B-side for piano and sax called "Goodbye 1970's." Scott raises a brow



"I'd made my living out of singing, yet I couldn't stand up in a pub and sing a simple song. So I had to leave behind being a rock musician, the mystery and the lights."



at the mention of this relic and comments, "Oh yeah...brutal."

It wasn't until he formed the Waterboys in the early 1980s that Scott's interests congealed into an effective blend of full-scale guitars and horns, cynical, literate lyrics and disaffected vocals (which in retrospect sound startlingly brogue-free). The epic fusion of elements reached its apotheosis in 1985 with *This Is the Sea*, which spawned the frequently bandied-about appellation "The Big Music." Scott is quick to dispel the notion that he coined this term purposefully. "Y'know, I never once called it that, though there's a song with that title on the album. But that song's not about music at all, it's about something else. And any idiot can figure out what if they've half a brain."

Scott shoots his interlocutor a look, then continues. "Other people put that label 'big music' on those first albums, because they're full of wide-screen songs with a prominent brass section and multiple, layered guitars and pianos. It is grand. But there was a lot of music with that sort of scope in the first half of the 1980s," he adds. "Not

just us, but U2 and Echo and the Bunnymen as well. Everyone was making records using these amazing reverbs and huge drum

sounds. But I got as far as I wanted to go with that with the *This Is the Sea* album, and then I felt it had been done."

Coinciding with this musical turning point was Scott's general dissatisfaction with the duties of being a rock 'n' roll icon. "I'd been doing so many interviews, especially around 1984-85, and I began to discover that it was infringing on my time and energy. We'd be out on tour and I'd be doing four interviews a day, and it just wasn't healthy for me. At the same time, I was beginning to discover Ireland. I was learning a whole lot of new things, and I'd find myself talk-

ing before I even knew what I was talking about. So I needed a few years just to cool out and get myself together and absorb what I was seeing and hearing.

"I never really had a personal life before I went to Ireland," he goes on. "I did when I was growing up, and all that, but the years I

THIS IS THE MIDDLE C

MIKE SCOTT's electric guitar is a Gibson The Paul, "a variation on the Les Paul made around 1978 or 1979 that has a natural wood finish." Acoustically, he alternates between a Yamaha six-string and a Takamine. His piano is a Yamaha ZB-70. Though he previously bought them in the west of Ireland, his bodhrán is from Scotland, and is played with a wooden beater, but "you don't have to hit it very hard to get the right sound." The multifaceted ANTHONY THISTLETHWAITE has three Selmer saxophones (two tenors, one baritone). His guitar is a 1957 Gibson 330, his organ a Hammond B-3. He also plays a Chris Ekersol solidbody electric mandolin which he got second-hand in London five years ago. TREVOR HUTCHINSON's electric bass is an Alembic, though he occasionally plays an upright bass that was originally used in Army bands over a hundred years ago. "It's got tons of cracks in it. It's gorgeous but fairly crude." New-comer KENNETH BLEVINS plays Drum Workshop drums and hardware with two Solid Percussion snare drums, Sabian cymbals and Vic Firth drumsticks.

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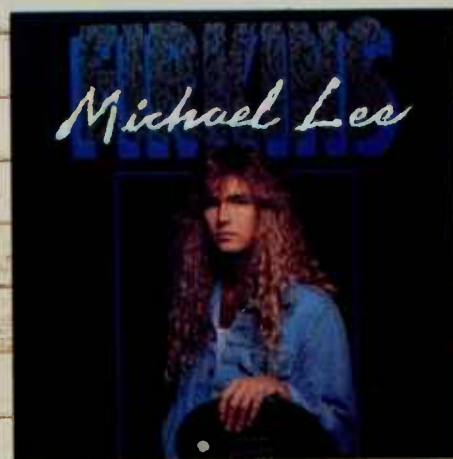
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spent in London, the early years of the Waterboys, were all about dealing with record companies and studios and touring and press. I really wanted to experience life without trying to define or explain it."

So Scott relocated to Ireland and was indoctrinated into the regional music scene. He befriended Vinnie Kilduff, a traditional piper and whistler, who took him around to pubs and sessions. Scott says he thinks he was spared being subjected to skepticism as a rock-'n'-roller discovering his roots thanks to Kilduff's vote of confidence, though he adds, "Irish musicians tend to be very enlightened and open, very giving. Anybody's welcome, by and large." He laughs. "But there's always a few exceptions here and there, don't ya know."

For him the real revelation was entering a community where music was "a living culture," an intrinsic part of daily life. "Ireland is a place where in every family someone can play an instrument or has a voice. And I felt, here I've made my living out of singing, I should be able to sing anywhere, and yet I couldn't bring myself to stand up in a pub and sing a simple song." Scott's brow furrows. "Whereas I could go out on a stage and sing in front of 4000 people. And that was wrong. So I had to leave behind the idea that I'm a rock musician—the mystery and the lights. All the stuff I'd grown used to."

This declaration resonates the following night when the Waterboys play Southampton, England—yet another port town lost to franchised commerce—and thunder through versions of 1985's

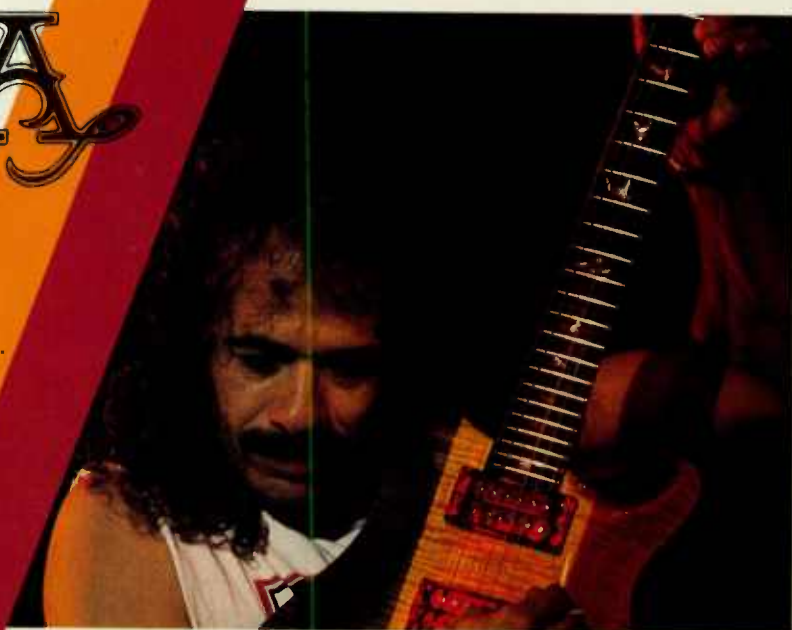
clip-clopping quasi-hit "Whole of the Moon" and the ferocious "Medicine Bow." Tonight the hall is far more inviting, and the audience more plugged-in and appreciative: They jig along to "When Will We Be Married?" and slam their bodies around to the harder songs. Though Scott frequently retreats behind the piano or acoustic guitar for the subdued numbers, the concert feels more high-intensity than anything else. Scott says he realizes the show is full of contradictions—some of them wrought from having to rework songs that were initially performed in very different styles—but he doesn't really see why that should bother anyone. And he certainly doesn't care what "the commentators and critics" have to say about it.

"A lot of the finest innovations in music have been the ones that confused the categories," Scott muses later that night. "Like when Elvis first came out, what was he, was he country, was he a rock-'n'-roller? Was his music the blues, or gospel? What the hell was it? But he was all those things in various proportions." Realizing he might sound pompous, he adds, "I don't mean to compare the Waterboys to Elvis, by any stretch of the imagination. But the truth is that it isn't all that simple." Scott reflects a moment. "Well it is, really, but it's multifaceted at the same time."

So there's nothing strange about returning to the guise of rock god, wielding an electric guitar under a gigantic, blaring spotlight—albeit with a stubbly face and a big fisherman's cap on? "Well, the only god I go by is the great god Pan," Scott says with a mischievous smile. "And he's a flute player, don't ya know." M

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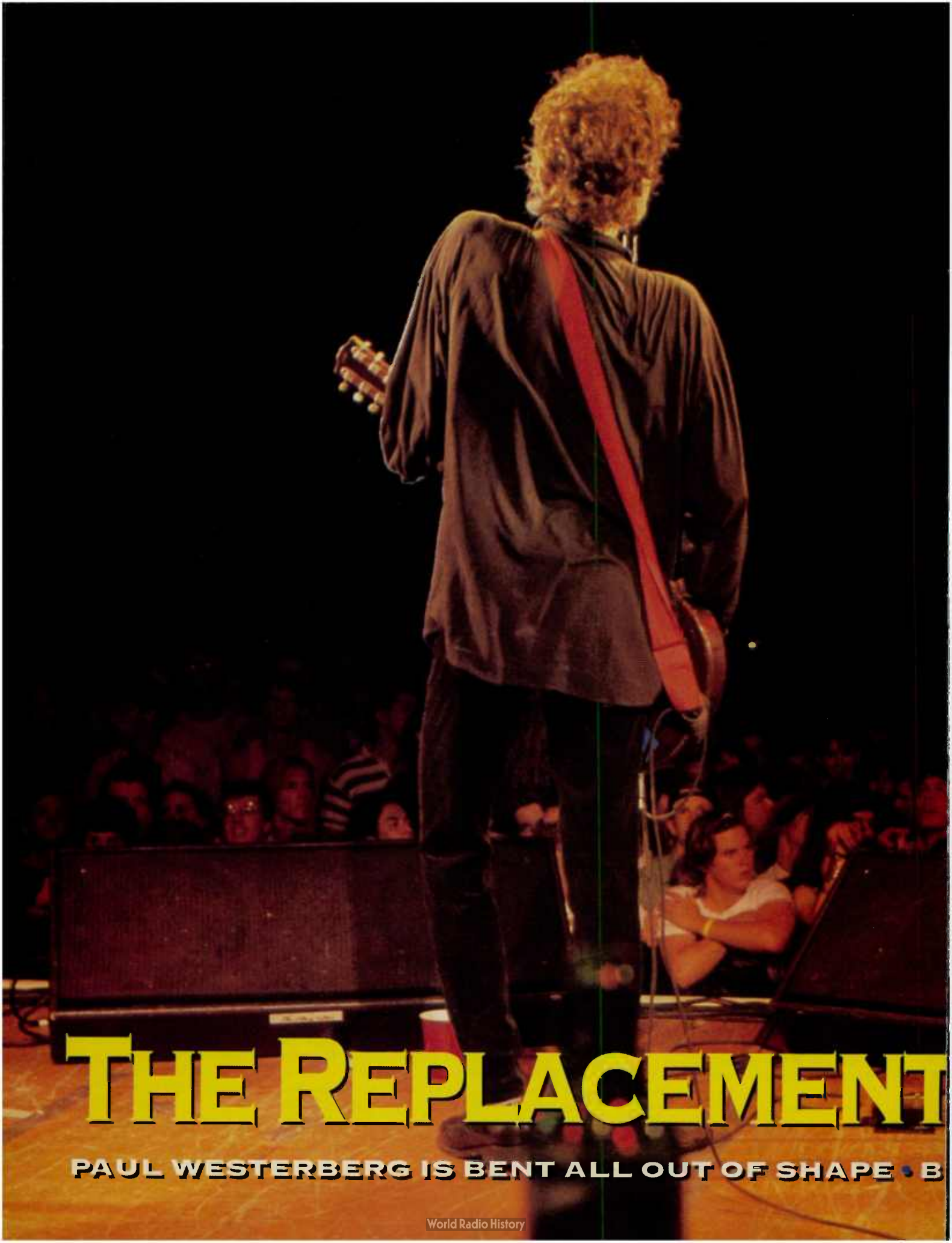
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THE REPLACEMENT

PAUL WESTERBERG IS BENT ALL OUT OF SHAPE • B



THE REPLACEMENTS HAVE DONE IT AGAIN. ANOTHER TERRIFIC collection of songs and another rash of coast-to-coast gossip that America's favorite underdogs are on their last legs. Singer/songwriter Paul Westerberg was ready to make a solo album this time, but Warner Records—whose faith in the 'Mats finally began to pay off with radio play for their last album, *Don't Tell a Soul*—pushed Paul to make another Replacements LP. So Paul went in with producer Scott Litt and supplemented the Replacements' lineup with guest musicians such as Benmont Tench on keyboards, Steve Berlin on sax and John Cale on viola. Now that's not so provocative—those are all instruments the 'Mats don't play. Paul also played most of the guitar—which left Slim Dunlap with less to do, but that's not such a big deal because Slim only joined the band one album ago and, heck, Paul played *all* the guitars on 1987's *Pleased to Meet Me*. Paul also played a lot of the bass himself, which left Tommy Stinson with less to do, but Tommy's always been pretty supportive of Paul's *auteurism* and, shucks, 'Mats albums have often had a "Paul plays all the instruments" track. The real rumbles have come over Paul's use of Michael Blair, Charley Drayton and Mauro Majellan—three drummers. The 'Mats do have a drummer, Chris Mars, who spent most of the *All Shook Down* sessions on the bench.

Talking to Paul at home in Minneapolis in early October, he seems as unsure as anyone about the future of the Replacements. *All Shook Down* is introspective, largely acoustic, the kind of music made just before dawn, when the show is five hours over and the post-gig party has shrunk down to three or four heartfelt, half-asleep hangers-on. Listen to the song titles: "Bent Out of Shape," "Sadly Beautiful," "My Little Problem," "Torture," "The Last," "Nobody," "Someone Take the Wheel." All the optimism of a suicide note.

"The word 'acoustic' scares people," Westerberg warns. "In my mind 'One Wink' and 'Nobody' rock harder than 'We'll Inherit the Earth,' with its 10 sheets of reverb and compressed electric guitar. It's a very rock 'n' roll record, it's just that there's not a lot of electric rhythm guitar on it. It's almost like Eddie Cochran—'Summertime Blues' didn't even have electric guitar on it. What we are is risk takers, we're daring. It amazes me how people will come up and say," Westerberg affects a mopey voice, "'The Replacements are not like they used to be.' They still want damn *Stink*. The whole point was, we changed right off the bat. We had acoustic songs on the first record! And I think it's up to us to keep changing. We're not any Bowie-esque chameleons here, but to dabble in different styles is kind of the mark of the band."

And to write great songs is the mark of Paul Westerberg. His melodies take unexpected detours, he hits his chords on unexpected beats, and his lyrics have rhymes you can never anticipate and a sense of revealing detail that would do Chuck Berry proud. Listen to how he opens "One Wink at a Time": "The magazine she flips through is the special double issue. Smells like perfume. She leaves it on the plane. Baggage claim is this way so watch her walk down that way, in a hurry to put an end to this day. She's got the devil in her eyes. Only one way to exorcise him. One wink at a time. A mail-order ring wrapped tight around a Singapore sling that night. Think to yourself it needs some more rum. Use me to lean against. You try to hail an ambulance. Try sticking out your tongue."

Now there are no rules for this stuff, but a song like that is truer to life—and harder to write—than all the well-intentioned lyrics about nuclear disarmament, ozone protection and health food at 10 ecology millies.

'S' LITTLE PROBLEM

BY BILL FLANAGAN • PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT MATHEU

MUSICIAN: *Did you have records you wanted this album to sound like in mind when you started?*

WESTERBERG: I did. I brought a reference tape that we didn't listen to at all that had Todd Rundgren on it. [laughs] Roger Troutman was going to come in there. You can hear I wanted the real stark Rod Stewart thing on songs like "Nobody." I wanted that very dry, two-acoustic-guitar-driven thing with just a big snare and none of this silly drum roll nonsense.

MUSICIAN: *Yeah, like "Every Picture Tells a Story"—though your album really feels like Never a Dull Moment.*

WESTERBERG: That was the first album I ever bought. I've always been shootin' for that one. But you can't do it these days unless you have control over the engineers, because they're always turning that reverb knob on when you're not looking. That shit was dry, that's what makes it sound so cool.

MUSICIAN: *"Sadly Beautiful" would be great for a woman to sing.*

WESTERBERG: It would be. In fact, it was supposed to be for Marianne Faithfull. Someone said Marianne needed a song, so of course like a schmuck I went and wrote one and gave it to some A&R guy who bootlegged the thing all over the place. What sums her up in one phrase? That's what came to mind for me. But coming from a female standpoint allowed me to get [mincing voice] "ultrasensitive." It allowed me to do things that might be harder to write as a man. But I don't know if Marianne ever even heard it. Probably not.

MUSICIAN: *"Achin' to Be" was another song about a woman that sounded like it was really about you. Do you sometimes switch genders so you can get away with being more personal or emotional?*

WESTERBERG: Uhh, yeah. I can't really analyze it but I guess there is something like that going on there. I'm not comfortable with first-person narration and it is easier for me to say what's on my mind by using a character. And it's generally a woman. [laughs] I don't know what that says about me. I do have my problems.

MUSICIAN: *You turn around at the end and say, "You left me sadly beautiful"—I don't know if you would have been able to be that direct four years ago.*

WESTERBERG: Probably not. I'm always looking for that. I don't want to get too obvious, where it's almost like the O. Henry ending to every one of my songs where I twist it around. But "Achin' to Be" had that, "Merry Go Round" has that. The last sentence or the last phrase of the song is exactly what I meant, and you don't even have to listen to the rest of it—it's just a lead-up to the end. Lennon always did that well.

MUSICIAN: *You whisper the song "All Shook Down." It has that demo feeling of "Don't want to wake up the wife but I gotta get this on tape before I forget it."*

WESTERBERG: If you listen closely you can hear papers turning. I was laying on the floor, just reading a bunch of junk that I had scribbled in a notebook. There would be a whole bunch of crud

and then there would be a line like "Off with their heads, on with my pants" and I'd go, "Aha! I'll use that one." On "All Shook Down" everything else had been crossed out and these were the phrases that weren't used, plus a few I threw in. You can hear me turning the page, you can actually hear the roadie walk in the room as I'm singing it, you can hear the door opening. I cut that at 11 in the morning with just the engineer. Litt wasn't there. I think he was

trying to sell his condo or something. The cat was away on that one. Scott was not into that song. I was hesitant to do it, but Slim told me to. I thought it would be a good time to do it. It was one of those mornings before my eyes were quite opened and I thought, "Let's see if I can get myself singing in my sleep."

My home demo was very similar to that, with the whispered thing. I'd been touring for so long and shouting every night. I hadn't lost my voice but I'd just grown tired of making a physical effort. I was thinking, "Boy, it would be nice to have a song I could sit down on my butt and sing when I'm 60."

Writing these songs, for the first time I didn't think, "Who can play on these songs and who can't?" and "How am I going to pull this off live?" I was taking a real attitude of "The band is over. I don't care what happens. I'm just gonna write some songs." I was even thinking, "If this never comes to be maybe I can give these songs to someone else." And that really freed me. Even though I knew in the back of my mind, "Yeah, we'll make a record," and "Yeah, we'll probably hit the road." Hence me kind of chickening out

and putting on, like, "My Little Problem," thinking, "Well, that'll go over big onstage." But it allowed me to write good songs and not worry about, "Does this fit the Replacements image?"

MUSICIAN: *Does the band exist today?*

WESTERBERG: Well, uh, as we speak...no. But if there was a gig to play and we showed up, yes. We don't run around anymore as the band and we don't think as one brain and "What are we doing, boys?" There is a band called the Replacements, but that doesn't mean Slim can't go play with someone else or Tommy can't make a demo on his own. I mean, technically the band has never broken up. No one was fired, nobody quit. I'd just like to get to this level where when we're not playing together we have this feeling of freedom, of "I'm a musician, I'm a writer, I can do whatever I want." That's the feeling I had making this thing. Without that it would have been very stifling and I don't know what we would have come up with.

It's cliché, but when you get to 10 years there's just no way we can keep banging out records together and doing everything as a foursome without somebody getting creatively stifled. I certainly know Chris and Tommy are, and I obviously am or else I wouldn't have done this without including them on a lot of things.

MUSICIAN: *From the outside it seems like Chris is not as versatile a*



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COMPLETELY.
BUT THIS THING
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drummer as the kinds of songs you're writing now require.

WESTERBERG: Yeah, exactly. Chris is the perfect drummer for the Replacements circa 1985. And it's 1990. There are those songs I know Chris can smoke on, and then there's other things that, honestly, he doesn't have a clue. That's why on the credits for this album you see four drummers. I mean, we didn't bring in any guitar players. Chris is a great guy, but he doesn't practice, he doesn't rehearse. I don't rehearse playing guitar or singing, but I'm constantly writing so I feel at least that I'm doing what I do all the time. He won't pick up his drumsticks until two days before a tour. We do miss having a funkier drummer on certain things.

MUSICIAN: *Could you see a day when you and Tommy are the only two permanent Replacements with changing sidemen? Could you go out with different guys?*

WESTERBERG: Yes. In fact, it would be easier to do with other guys, to be quite blunt about it. And that raises the whole thing of, "Are we still a band?" We always prided ourselves on "We go out and interpret what we just recorded," like we're covering our own material. That is a possibility. When it gets down to that, though, it almost gets down to Tommy's worth. 'Cause I don't want to slowly fire the

band until it's just me. I could never see myself replacing Chris and carrying on with Slim and Tommy. It opens a whole new can of worms. Maybe it's just time for me to move on completely. But this thing runs deep and dark. It's not so easy. It always feels like giving up. I still would like this band to be successful. But I won't go down with the ship. I've come to that realization. I guess this was the first

try to make things better, by maybe hurting a few feelings. But Tommy wants to sing and write and be his own creative thing, which I think is good. I just don't know how ready he is. It would be great if everybody could go out and do their own thing and play with whoever—and whoever flew, good luck, and whoever didn't, we'll see you back at the bar. But we know the answer to that one: I think I have the best

chance, unfortunately. And it's tough for me to put that to them: "You guys make your records, I'll make mine." Well, that isn't quite fair.

MUSICIAN: *But you would not go out with Tommy and Slim and without Chris.*

WESTERBERG: Yeah, because frankly, Slim is no better than Chris and Tommy's no better than Slim. Together when we click is what works. But the individual playing could easily be replaced. I mean,

TREATMENT BOUND SOUNDS

I bought a Guild 12-string acoustic that was on most of the songs. The title for your piece could be 'Paul Bought an Acoustic': You can hear it all over the album. I played dulcimer on a few things, I played a Roland on 'Merry Go Round.' I've got a red Les Paul Junior which is my main rockin' ax, and I played a black Rickenbacker on some of the quieter stuff. Some kid in Pennsylvania gave it to me. I broke my guitar and he ran across the street and gave me his. Really nice of him. For amps I used Marshalls, mainly. I played a Melody Maker through a Soldano on 'My Little Problem' for that biting '90s tone."



shit, get somebody to play rhythm guitar for me as long as we're at it! If the drummer steps up a notch it's going to be obvious me and Tommy play a lousy-ass rhythm. [laughs] We've kept Chris around for that many years not to expose us! I'm glad you brought it up. No one else has the guts. You want to manage the band?

MUSICIAN: All right. I'll come in and say, "Boys, Paul has something to tell you" and then I'll leave. "Someone Take the Wheel" is about being sick of being the boss, sick of making the decisions?

WESTERBERG: That's it. That was the closest idea behind it. The other two being the band thing and then there's a slight political reference. But it's about the fighting and "Who's in control?" and "What's going on here?" Somebody with a clear head please steer us in the right direction.

MUSICIAN: This album feels like the summation of a lot of subjects you've written about before.

WESTERBERG: It does. I started thinking, "I don't know if this is going to be a band record or not, I don't know if this is going to be the last record." I approached it like it was going to be the last. So I tried to include every element that was the band, from loud rockers to deathly quiet stuff. And I tried to write the songs more succinctly and stuff. I'm not breaking any new ground here lyrically.

MUSICIAN: "Merry Go Round" seems to take off from that one line from Tim: "Income tax deduction, what a hell of a function."

WESTERBERG: It started there. Actually it's a rewrite of "Achin' to Be." I figured, "Well, they didn't push that one. I'll just change the key and try it again."

MUSICIAN: You did a B-side called "Date to Church" with Tom. Waits a couple of years ago. How'd you hook up with him?

WESTERBERG: He showed up. We'd always been fans and a friend of a friend said, "Tom wants to come down and meet the band." We rolled tape and Tommy and Waits and I sat around until four in the morning doing songs together. It was the three drunkest men on the planet Earth. There's some hilarious stuff. I've hopefully got the only tape. If this one gets out I'll know who to kill.

MUSICIAN: Waits said some nice stuff about the Replacements in Musician a few years ago.

WESTERBERG: Yeah. He compared us to mosquitoes or something.

MUSICIAN: I meant when he said the Replacements were one of the few bands with a sense of mystery.

WESTERBERG: That's true: Are we a band or are we not a band? Are we shit or are we good?

MUSICIAN: Did you know that Joe Henry's new album includes a song that sounds like Tom Waits called "Date for Church"?

WESTERBERG: Did he bring that to your attention?

MUSICIAN: No.

WESTERBERG: Because he sent me a letter way back—this was at the height of my mental confusion—and I didn't know what he meant. I think what he was doing in a very polite way was to say, "You stole my song, buddy." But I took it the other way; I thought he was saying, "I have a 'Date for Church,' too, so no hard feelings."

MUSICIAN: But his only came out last week.

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WESTERBERG: Yeah, but I think we had met out in L.A. way back then. It was one of those nights. I think he might have told me of one of his titles and I hate to tell you, Joe, but I probably wasn't even listening. He assumed I was drinking in every word he was telling me and I probably was looking at someone across the room. I didn't steal it. If I did do it unconsciously...I haven't heard Joe's version but he's a nice guy. I hope there's no hard feelings.

MUSICIAN: *Have you considered moving out of Minneapolis?*

WESTERBERG: I'm getting that question so much lately. I don't know what the hell is going on. More than ever in my life the thought has occurred to me, but also more than ever I realize that this is my home. If I wasn't in a band or popular I would like to live here. I like the weather. I'm not exactly revered around here; some people can be a little condescending, and I don't see that I'm going to make any more friends if I kick everybody out of the band. But I'm not going to worry about that. I can't see living in L.A. New York, possibly, but I'm too chicken.

MUSICIAN: *In "They're Blind" you wrote about being scrutinized by people who don't even know you. Do you resent being well-known?*

WESTERBERG: Being in the 'Mats for so long and *wallowing* in the Replacements attitude had grown as stale as anything. Along with the performances. That attitude that "Success is bad" was a holdover from the punk era. We had literally brainwashed ourselves into thinking that. I've come to grips with the fact that you can't have success without fame. You could probably get famous without being successful; I don't know if you could do it the other way around, but that's always been our intention—to get the music across to people and make people happy without being huge stars. I guess there's a way to be popular but to be cool. You have to look to people like John Hiatt, maybe Dylan, Tom Petty certainly. They really handle it well. If we ever got to that level I hope that we could do it like that. I mean, we let it go to our heads back when it wasn't there to go. When we started we assumed we were stars simply because we were playing onstage. We've kind of been through that, so I don't fear it as much as I did a couple of years ago.

MUSICIAN: *Every Replacements album has sold twice as many as the one before it. Is the record company worried that All Shook Down's not commercial enough?*

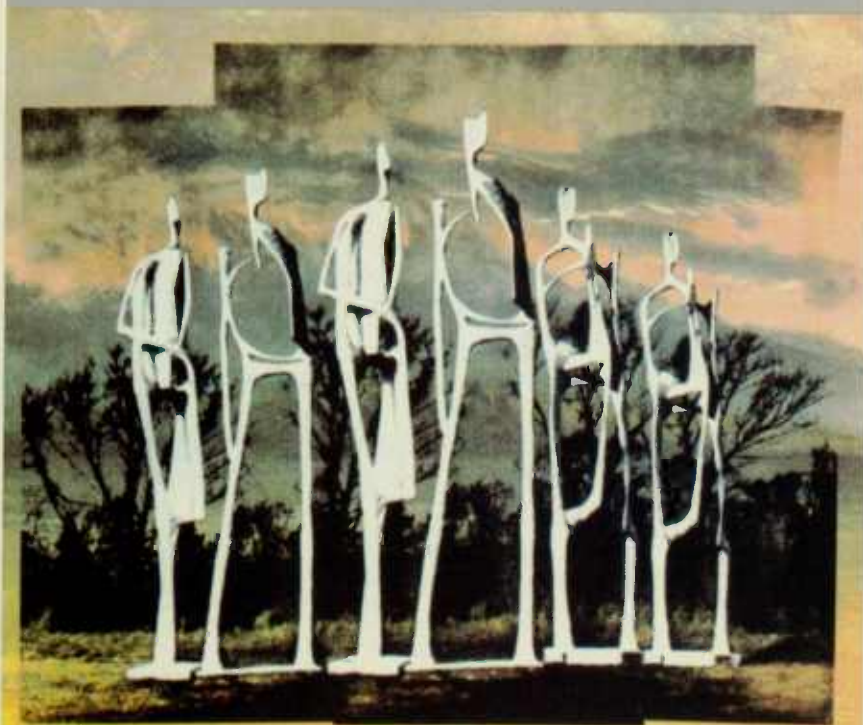
WESTERBERG: No. To me they don't say much. They say, "You're lookin' good!" [laughs] "You look well, Paul." "I think radio's going to have a problem with this one but don't worry, babe." I can sense what they're going through 'cause they don't have a track to go after. Even "I'll Be You" was more accessible than "Merry Go Round." I understood from the beginning that there was no surefire single to get us on the radio, and I didn't bend to make one that way and have it fail. Had there been a song tailor-made for radio, I would have done it, but I just didn't have one. I think it's gonna sell more than the last one, but if it doesn't I'm prepared. I don't have any great expectations.

MUSICIAN: *You've written many songs about alcohol, but "The Last" actually seems to use love as a metaphor for drinking.*

WESTERBERG: It's a drunken man writing about love, who doesn't know love from drinking. He doesn't know his head from his ass. He doesn't know his life from his death. When you drink to excess your problems over-intensify. You can't dif- [cont'd on page 74]

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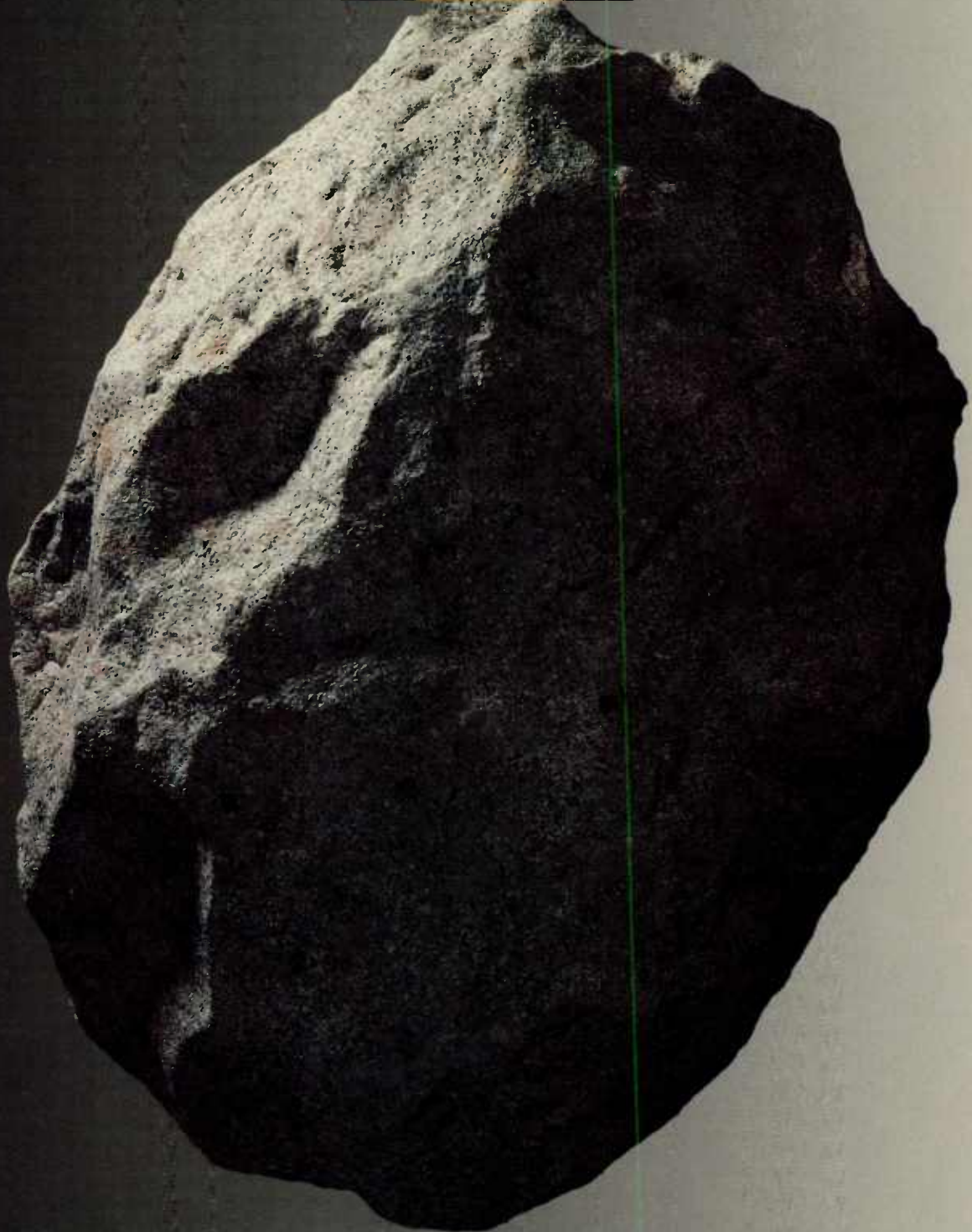
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As Serious As You Can Get.

The house where Slash lives is nestled into the side of a hill that overlooks Laurel Canyon. There's little to glean from the narrow roads up there, which fork and wander like so many twisted tynes, beyond their view of anonymous garages and security cameras, and the sweet rustle of eucalyptus trees. There's money in the canyon, of course, but it's warm and woodsy too. It was a groovy popstar/hippie enclave back when Joni Mitchell sang about the ladies; since then, canyon culture has died the sad, slow death of appreciating real estate. But there are still places where you can feel the vibe. ¶ You might not figure Slash's house to be

A c c e s s
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S l a s h

coiled around each other, snoozing. It's a surprisingly homey scene. Slash points out Clyde, the anaconda he's had for eight years: "Snakes aren't really supposed to have any kind of personality," he admits, "but Clyde bites everyone else but me, so that tells me something.

He bit my last girlfriend," he adds dryly. "That told me something too. ¶ I have had a couple of poisonous snakes in my time, but one of the rattlers got out once and scared the whole family. I had visions of one of these B horror movies! And one time me and Izzy caught a five-foot Pacific rattler, without any tools—that was a real experience. I wanted to take him

A p p e t i t e f o r

R e c o n s t r u c t i o n

among them. But there you are, in a living room of tapestries and antiques, with French doors opening to a stone-walled terrace and a full moon silhouette of surrounding hills. There's even a portrait sketch of Joni on one wall (old friend of the family, he explains) by Slash's dad, graphic artist Tony Hudson. Many little kittens scurry about; the dogs, a pair of Rottweilers, are off at obedience school. Artistic representations of lizards and dinosaurs abound. And around the corner, in what was once a Jacuzzi room, live the snakes. ¶ "When I was a kid, I always had animals around," Slash recalls. "And I always had this thing for snakes. I used to go to the Renaissance Faire every day out here and catch frogs, lizards, snakes...I'd put them all in a huge tank. The lizards would eat the snake eggs, the snake would eat the frogs, or whatever. It was really fascinating. I got to learn about the whole cycle of life."

¶ Several of the snakes, mostly non-poisonous pythons and boas, are

home, but at the time I was living in the same room with Axl and two anacondas—so," he shrugs fatalistically, "I let him go." ¶ Slash began collecting in earnest after buying this house about a year ago; before that, he admits, he was pretty much "Mr. Hotel Room." Now he talks about getting a bigger house, in part to give the snakes more room. ¶ "It took me a long time to adjust to this place," he says. "Before this, I had an apartment which I got solely because it looked like a hotel room. I've always been sort of a night person. ¶ And I never drove. Now I have two cars in the garage that I never drive either," he laughs. "A 'vette and a Porsche. They're solely for investment purposes. I mean, I got this house 'cause I needed an investment. Which is the most depressing thought," he muses. "You're buying all this stuff just to sell it when you need to. All the investments

I've made are to save my ass when I fuck up." ¶ Not far from here Slash grew up, or at least came of age. He

**BY MARK
ROWLAND**



was born Saul Hudson in England 25 years ago; his father British and white, his mother American and black. When he was about 11 the family—which by now included a younger brother, Ash—moved to Los Angeles. Both parents were connected to the music industry by their work; as a result, Slash grew up relatively sophisticated to the ways of the biz. He knew David Geffen when the boss of his current label was a partner in Geffen-Roberts. He witnessed his share of “egomaniacal prima donna bullshit,” as he puts it, and artists with drug problems. At the same time, he says, “some of these people were really magical in their way.”

He experienced “total freedom” as a kid. He recalls his mom—“a real happy-go-lucky, San Francisco hippie”—and her best friend cruising around the cliffs near Big Sur in a VW, stoned on pot, while Slash sat in the back and absorbed the rush. “It was the time of ‘free love,’ and there was no saying no,” he remembers. “It’s one of the

first guitar. She was very patient and supportive, especially because she’d come from a rich black family where, at the time, soul music was considered in bad taste and she wasn’t even allowed to listen to it. So when I’d crank up ‘Black Dog’ she’d get really upset—she’d been raised to hate stuff like that. And of course, being the punk that I was, I’d crank it up even higher.”

As a rocker, his instincts were classic—Stones, Zeppelin, Aerosmith. And eventually, as Keith found his Mick, Slash hooked up with Axl Rose. The parallel here has less to do with music—in fact, Slash credits Mick Taylor, once the Stones’ “other” guitarist, as his biggest influence—than with complementary personalities: the charismatic, mercurial singer and the gentlemanly outlaw guitarist. But there are equally significant dynamics between Slash and fellow Guns N’ Roses guitarist Izzy Stradlin (as influenced by Keith Richards as Slash was by Taylor); with bassist Duff McKagan,

A s amazing

*as it seems in this drug-free exercise and health age,
there’s a bunch of us who are still clinging fast
to the late ‘60s and ‘70s.”*

things that’s made me comfortable with myself as a person and at the same time has probably made me...not necessarily the way I should be, in certain areas,” he says. “But my parents were always supportive and I love them for it.”

He liked watching life on the streets of Hollywood: “I was home-based but always somewhere else.” For a while he was a rowdy kid, in trouble a lot, racing bikes with a bike gang. Then he met drummer Steve Adler, “and we ditched seventh grade together.” They walked around Hollywood a lot, discussing their dreams. One day they ended up at Steve’s house. There sat a guitar and an amp. Steve put on some Kiss records, “who I always hated,” Slash avers. “But he turned the amp all the way up and we’d hit—anything! That sound was so powerful, so intense, we decided to put a band together. I quit riding my bike and started playing guitar.”

While no technical whiz, Slash can be a galvanizing player, with a sure sense for melody and dramatic solos over a tough, R&B-inflected feel. Like Eddie Van Halen, Vernon Reid and not a whole lot of other contemporary metalists, he rocks and he swings. He still doesn’t consider himself a “natural.” But while learning his instrument, he points out, “I was never intimidated, I wasn’t scared. I just did it diligently every day. So even if it wasn’t any good, there was no boundary. When I look back on it, I used to practice and practice, hours and hours...but I always enjoyed it. I don’t have a history of going through hell to learn how to play.

“I didn’t really know how to start; I was looking in a book playing scales and didn’t know where I was going ‘cause that didn’t sound anything like ‘Cat Scratch Fever,’ you know? But my grandmother used to play piano, and she got me my

a drinking buddy and no-nonsense musician; and with childhood friend Adler.

In retrospect, of course, it’s easy to analyze what made Guns N’ Roses special among the endless wave of L.A. hard-rock hopefuls—the mix of out-of-control personalities and single-minded group devotion; their willingness to go against the grain of Hollywood glam-rock with a sound that evoked the often disturbing truths of their lives; talent, vision, luck. “But when we first started out, everybody wanted to hate us,” Slash says. “We’d fight promoters tooth and nail just to get a gig. Once we played, people would get really into it. I think they’d be impressed by the fact that we’d just get up there and play.”

Offstage, the stories surrounding Guns N’ Roses have become legend. Most concern one sort of debauchery or another, and to be fair, most of them are true. Between gigs they existed in a succession of seedy apartments, always broke but with a floating retinue of girls and hangers-on, drug dealers and cops. “For years I was living out of a duffel bag, and I was happy,” Slash says. Though by now he’s resigned to that aspect of the band’s reputation (“people love dirt and if you die, that’s really great too”), what hurts is the presumption among casual fans that Guns N’ Roses’ success was somehow contrived.

“We thought we’d made a record that might do as well as, say, Motorhead,” Slash recalls. “It was totally uncommercial. It took a year for it to even get on the charts! No one wanted to know about it. Even today, when I hear ‘Civil War’ on the radio, it’s like left field to me. Everybody else seems to be doing something completely different, pushing the nice pop single.”

Photography by Aaron Rapoport



'Sweet Child o' Mine' turned into a huge hit and now it makes me sick! I mean, I like it, but I hate what it represents. We started out as a hardcore band and we toured our fucking asses off. Next thing you know we've turned into pop stars. And now certain people are ripping us off—I won't mention any names—like we started this 'scene,' you know? And for us it was all so personal and heartfelt."

Appetite for Destruction sold about 10 million copies. In the summer of '88 Guns N' Roses went on tour with their heroes, Aerosmith; by summer's end they'd become the bigger draw. In the cocoon that is more or less life on the road, however, the guys in the band were only dimly aware how much their lives were changing. The crowds were bigger, the hotels were nicer, security was tighter. But they were still opening for another band, moving from one gig to the next, playing hard and partying harder. In other

machine and you don't even pick up the phone."

As many who meet him will testify, Slash can be funny, disarmingly honest, just plain likable. But behind the breezy personality there's a more fragile character, one who likes to drink, even in the best of circumstances, as a way of "loosening up" during social situations. For a self-described musical "workaholic," sitting around with no band and not much to do was far from the best: "As pathetic as this may sound," he admits, "my personal life and existence has nothing to do with anything beyond the band and being a player. I'm very single-minded. All I do is music, or else I do something—entirely different."

In that regard, of course, Slash has much in common with his bandmates. In the summer of '89, the group had reassembled in Chicago to work on a new album, but for weeks the sessions hob-

O n "One in a Million":

"Everyone on the black side of my family was like, 'What is your problem? You could have stopped it.'

Axl and I don't stop each other from doing things. Axl is a naive white boy from Indiana, was brought up in a totally Caucasian society, and it was his way of saying how scared he was."

words, they were doing what they'd been doing for five years. Then the '88 tour ended, and the members of Guns N' Roses, newly rich and famous, exhausted but triumphant, were free to go home and enjoy the rest of their lives.

That's when the real trouble began.

"OUR REALITY IS THAT WE CAME FROM

nowhere—or maybe even a subzero level," Slash says, "being on the road, doing that every day—and having no other life. And there is a pace to that, which is kind of exciting. Then all of a sudden, bam! That life comes to a screaming halt. You don't have your crew guys, the maid doesn't come in, you're laying in bed waiting for the gig to happen...and it's not gonna happen.

"But there was no other life for us to come back to. We'd never had any other life. And now we were all separated—we had our own little places, which had never happened before. I remember a point where I was just sitting in bed bored and uninterested in anything. You hear one of the guys in your band on the answering



bled along miserably. Depressed, Slash and Duff began drinking heavily, consuming up to a half-gallon of vodka daily. "I'd wake up with the shakes so badly, detoxing just from waking up." Steve and Izzy found their own forms of intoxication. Only the notorious Axl, ironically, was relatively straight ("He's never let himself go off the deep end," Slash remarks), though not necessarily

any more productive. Fed up, Slash scribbled a goodbye note and flew back to L.A. He and Axl didn't speak for a long time after that.

In October, the band finally got back together for a local gig, if that's what you'd call preceding the Rolling Stones for four nights at the Los Angeles Coliseum. By this time, however, Slash was further out there, shooting heroin and speedballs. "Before and after the gig I'd have my dealer meet me," he recalls. "I'd built a place in the hotel room to hide my shit. Axl was tripping out on the whole thing but as far as I was concerned I was fine—at least the gig was happening and I was playing."

On opening night, Axl made a thinly veiled speech about certain

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people who were killing themselves and their band. "I almost walked off the stage," Slash remembers. "Being in that frame of mind, it was like, fuck you, you dick! But he was also a little intimidated by the gig, I think. He always pulls that kind of avoidance." Nonetheless Slash promised to clean up. To that end he went to a golf resort in Arizona. "Of course I took 10 grams of coke with me," he notes wryly. "I'd be telling the limo driver to stop at a restaurant to get me a silverware set and he'd come back with a knife and a fork. I'd be like, 'No, the complete set...'"

The quantity of coke he was doing had begun to incite hallucinations, and one day in the hotel room he imagined a knock on the door and men with guns. "I flipped out," he says simply. He destroyed the glass in his shower room, attacked a maid, ran outside bloodied and naked. With a little help from his friends, he avoided going to jail. Now he figures he's luckier than that. "I really should be dead by now. That's how bad it was."

"I guess I always felt I was indestructible," he says. "And that if I died, I didn't care about that either. I'd OD'd lots of times, would wake up and go, 'What happened?' But finally, the people close to me made me realize..."

His voice trails off for a moment. "I spent Christmas and Thanksgiving that year with my girlfriend at the time, who was very family-oriented. She'd stuck with me through this whole thing and I feel the worst for her, 'cause I put her through a lot. But anyway, I spent time with her family and they were really wonderful people. My regular life started to come back and I realized that I was somebody

who still had ambitions.

"Luckily enough, some trigger I'm not even aware of seems to have kept me from killing myself. And now I'm really happy, really sparked. I'd be missing all this, had I kicked the bucket. So," he smiles engagingly. "Here we are."

THIS IS A GOOD TIME FOR SLASH. HE'S PUTTING IN 10-12-HOUR DAYS, SIX days a week, on the new Guns N' Roses album. He's also probably the only guitarist around who's recently put in studio time with Bob Dylan and Michael Jackson. The studio date with Dylan turned out to be less than propitious, however; Slash only appeared on one cut, during which Dylan told him to strum an acoustic like Django Reinhardt, and later erased his guitar solo. "Upon meeting him I thought he was an Eskimo," Slash says. "It was the middle of summer and he was wearing gloves and one of those big surfer sweaters with a thing over his head. An interesting experience," he decides, diplomatically.

Slash has played on three songs for the upcoming Michael Jackson album, which is still in progress, but has yet to meet the star. He seems a little torn between worrying that he might be asked to do "the Eddie Van Halen thing" and worrying that he might not be. "It's at once the most sterile and creative process I've been involved in. Everything is pieced together from samples; you use the same drum beat and chords then later add things to make it different in some places. Which is so different from what we do. Michael hires out the studio for like 10 years and shows up once a month. I'll

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probably never meet him..." He shakes his head and smiles. "It's sort of weird."

Slash has also been playing with Iggy Pop and Lenny Kravitz, who are a little more up his alley. Slash had flown the Iggy to L.A. to perform at a local benefit he was playing, where they "blew doors" on an old Stooges song. He and Duff reciprocated by appearing on four tracks on Iggy's *Brick by Brick* LP, Slash even picking up a co-writing credit for revamping "My Baby Wants to Rock and Roll." As for Kravitz, "my girlfriend and I were just head over heels in love with his album. When I met him I told him, 'You're so great, we fuck to your record all the time!' He was probably a little shocked," Slash laughs, "but he's a really good guy. I put a solo on one of his new songs, which is the most out of tune first-take dry guitar solo—but he really digs it. He's really raw, one of the most soulful people."

Slash says his home listening, while heavy on rock, also encompasses Erik Satie and Joni Mitchell, even classical music. "If there is a certain mood to it, a certain melody that really hits your heart, I can listen to anything," he says, sounding for a moment like Tony Bennett. "My thing is really R&B. But even when it's sort of over-aggressive, it has to have a blues foundation and not be some weirded-out pyrotechnical stuff. I think people get sick of hearing totally 'amazing' musicians all the time. You hear it and they are amazing and then you go get a cup of coffee and forget about it."

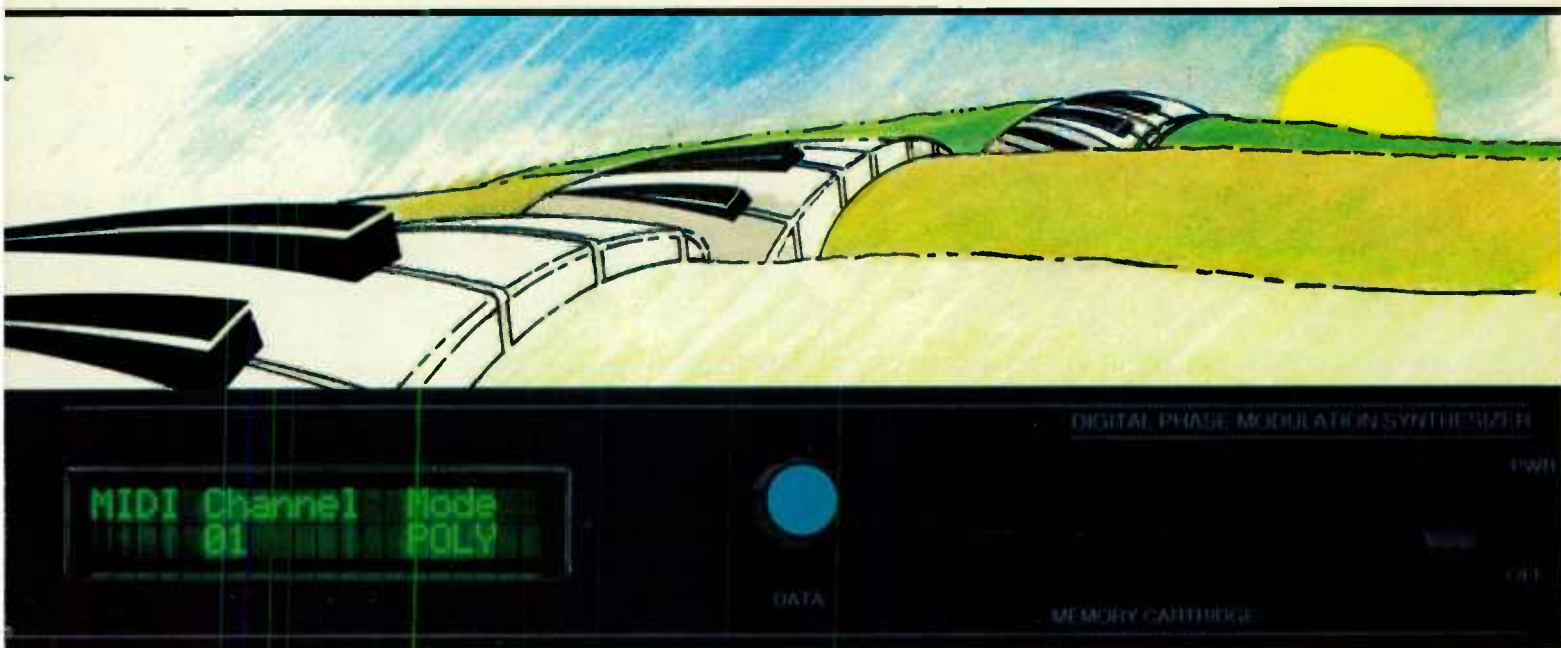
"Times and attitudes change," he goes on, "but I think there's a vein in popular music that's always significant, an emotional vein

that everyone shares. People are cold a lot of the time, or trying to be, trying to hide the fact that feelings really do affect the way you live. You try to put it back on your job, or whatever, just getting on with your life. But there's always a need for release, to get that out—which is what rock 'n' roll is about. So that part will always be there. You try to be as honest as possible and if you're lucky you have the vehicle to put it out there for the public."

In that respect, Slash figures, Guns N' Roses was lucky: "We were the ones who got signed. I do believe we're a good band—though we may suck more often than not," he cracks. "But I know there are others out there who are just as good or have the same feelings and are struggling."

"I think we're a pretty decent mirror for what kids and young adults go through, if you're not brought up in a totally stiff atmosphere. For people who have spent time on the street or have family problems, alcohol problems, we've voiced some opinions about what we were going through. And some of the reason we did so well is that a lot of kids related to that. Of course their parents might have freaked—it's that 'our generation' kind of thing—but it's what we went through. And now, what we have to say is a little different."

The Guns N' Roses album-in-progress, again produced by Mike Clink, is tentatively scheduled for release early in 1991. In the past three weeks, Slash says, he's put on nearly all the guitar parts for the record's 30-plus tunes. While many of the new songs have a familiar ring—"there's a lot of songs about, you know, drugs and sex"—Slash claims the overall feel is at times more romantic.



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"Which is something I believe in strongly, surprisingly enough."

To underscore the point, he puts on a rough mix of "November Rain," a very melodic mid-tempo ballad with a beautifully contoured vocal from Axl and a long, elegant guitar coda many teenage boys will have memorized six months from now. "We call it the 'Layla' song," he admits.

Some of the other songs on the record will be familiar to Guns N' Roses followers, like "Civil War" and a cover of the U.K. Subs' "Down on the Farm," both of which the

band performed at Farm Aid last spring. There are tunes exhumed and refurbished from the band's early days like "Ain't Goin' Down" and the not-terribly-romantic "Back Off, Bitch"; there's even a metallic cover of Paul McCartney's "Live and Let Die." Slash plays a banjo to introduce one track; Izzy plays sitar on another. Musically, "no two scenarios are the same," Slash contends. "We all wrote together and individually. So the range of material is pretty wild.

"Left on our own, I'm sure everyone would make very different albums. I write

AMPS N' AXES

WHEN SLASH WAS 13, he owned a poster of Steve Tyler and Joe Perry, the latter holding a tobacco sunburst '59 Les Paul: "That was the coolest looking guitar," he says, still savoring the memory. Through a curious turn of events, the guitar turned up years later for sale while Guns N' Roses was touring Japan, and Slash quickly snatched it up. It joins a growing retinue of Les Pauls, including two he's had on the road "since the beginning," a '60 model and the handmade '59 copy he played exclusively on *Appetite for Destruction*.

For the second Guns N' Roses record, Slash has expanded his palette considerably. Striving for a "different tone" on every song, he's employed all of the aforementioned axes, as well as a '58 and yet another '59 Les Paul, an early '60s Strat and two Music Man "Strat-type" guitars, one with humbucking pickups and the other with single coils. He also uses a Travis Bean, a '58 Flying V and a classic '56 Les Paul gold-top.

As you might figure by now, the guy has a thing for Les Pauls. "I even have an early-'70s black Les Paul custom," he adds. "I could never use it live 'cause the sound is too thin, but it sounds great on the record."

Acoustically, there's a couple of "great" Guild 12-string acoustics and a Gibson six-string. Not to mention a dobro "with a hula dancer on the back and palm trees—wood carved." On all of the above Slash uses Dunlop picks and Ernie Ball strings.

The sound gets pumped through a Marshall half stack with a Roland JC-120. There's a couple of wah-wah pedals, a voicebox and, occasionally, an echo added through the boards. "But it's really a basic setup," he points out. "You can hear how raw it sounds. You'd be surprised at the variety of sounds you can get from an amp, a guitar and a cabinet."

When recording with Guns N' Roses, Slash says, he ends up laying down all the guitar tracks by himself. "I hate headphones with a passion," he explains, "which is why it sometimes takes us longer to do our records—'cause when we do basics I consider them dummy tracks. I play completely different with headphones, I hate it. So after we lay down the track I take all my crap off and play my guitar parts in the control booth with huge monitors. I just blast everything out.

"Mike Clink has to wear earplugs when I do that," Slash smiles. "But I need the ambience."

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songs that are maybe a little more intricate than what Izzy wants to play—there's one on the record. 'Coma,' that's about 10 minutes long and 300 chord changes. But if the melody doesn't catch you at first it's hard to develop an interest in anyone else learning it. We all have different ideas, but there's no hierarchy. We still have to do everything as a band."

The band, however, no longer includes drummer Steven Adler. The forced departure of his childhood buddy from Guns N' Roses is the one topic of conversation Slash appears pained to discuss. The problem, he says, was not so much Adler's drug use per se, as his refusal to clean up after it became apparent that he could no longer play very well. Once rehearsals began for the new record, "his chops were all over the place," Slash says. "And he was lying to us on a daily basis. I was trying to talk some sense into him but it never happened. He wouldn't listen to anybody—none of us will! And Axl and Duff had had it.

"As amazing as it seems in this 'drug-free' exercise and health age, there's a bunch of us who are still clinging fast to the late '60s and '70s," he observes. "But Steve never grew up to the fact that it's not all just sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. To him it was a big fantasy and we took care of him. And now he's on his own."

Do you keep in touch with him?

"I did keep in touch. I'd pop into his house every now and then to see how he was doing. I stuck with him, as you'd do for a loved one. And then he started getting on my case, saying, 'I've heard you guys are all on heroin and what's the difference, blah blah blah...' And finally I couldn't talk to him anymore. I'd take him out to dinner and it would turn into this huge fight, to the point where I couldn't take it. So now I don't see him anymore. I call his doctor and I think about him a lot. And I worry. 'Cause it's a scary thing. And he was my best friend for a long time."

Replacing a member of "the family" had been heretofore inconceivable, and for a while no one was sure how to go about it: "I mean, we couldn't place an ad in the paper." They tried the usual route, people they knew, but no one really worked out. Then Slash went to see the Cult, and came away thinking that their drummer, Matt Sorum, had "the best groove I'd heard. So we got together, and he fit in with us from day one."

You can hear the difference; from blues-

funk riffs like "Bad Apples" to the anthemic "November Rain," the newly recorded tunes are anchored in rock-solid tempos. "Yeah, we finally have a rhythm section," Slash figures. "In the past, Steve used to watch my feet for meter, and I always rush things in certain places—not on purpose," he admits. "So a lot of our tempos would be all over the place. We just got used to that. A couple of times we had a drummer fill in for Steve on the road, and in the middle of 'Welcome to the Jungle' I'd realize I'm four bars ahead of the drummer. So, now I'm learning to play

with an actual musician."

Part of the reason there will be so many tracks on this record, Slash says, is that, given their stormy history, no one is too sure just how long Guns N' Roses will last. But another is acknowledging that they just might last, and that time—and success—changes everything: "It's all material we would never have gotten off our chest if we didn't do it now.

"You learn from experience. We were very arrogant and in many ways an ignorant band, that just thought we could do every-

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thing our way. And we try to hold on to that. I mean, there's still no formula for us. But then you see how people love to drag out dirty laundry, they expect you to come onstage and throw up or something. Which has nothing to do with music and everything to do with attitude. But of course, attitude has a lot to do with music. Personally, I don't want to piss off anyone. But we'll probably always be controversial," he shrugs. "Life goes on."

Still, Slash says, he's torn at times between the allure of rock 'n' roll as an

instrument of danger, and what the effect of that danger can be. He's still troubled over a metalfest in England two years ago during which several people were trampled to death while Guns N' Roses performed, unaware of the catastrophe.

"It's way different looking at it from the end I'm on now," he says. "I remember going to see Aerosmith and Van Halen in the '70s in those huge festivals, and it was just insanity! You're sitting behind some 200-pound muscular blond guy who smells like a 12-pack fistfucking the air in every direc-

tion—and the shorter you are, the less you can breathe, you know? It gets a little weird and chaotic. But that's the fun, too.

"We brought back that whole element of danger, along with a few other bands—which was severely lacking. I like that energy. But then you have to stop the show for people to settle down, or else the casualty tent is filled with all these injuries. So now I have to change my music, so people don't get killed?"

"It seems to me that maybe our audience is getting a little more civilized," he adds hopefully. "I've noticed that they can sit back and actually listen to what's going on, as opposed to ranting and raving the whole show." Just to be sure, though, the next Guns N' Roses tour will include several slower numbers, "where everyone can chill out for a minute."

Slash also found his conscience racked over the release of Guns N' Roses' "One in a Million," an Axl Rose-penned narrative with references to "niggers" and "faggots" that, despite Rose's assertions to the contrary, black people and gays could understandably regard as hateful and insulting. On the one hand, Slash says, "I knew where Axl was coming from." On the other—well, he is half-black himself.

"Everybody on the black side of my family was like, 'What is your problem?'" Slash recalls. "My old girlfriend said, 'You could have stopped it.' What am I supposed to say? Axl and I don't stop each other from doing things. Hopefully, if something is really bad, you stop it yourself."

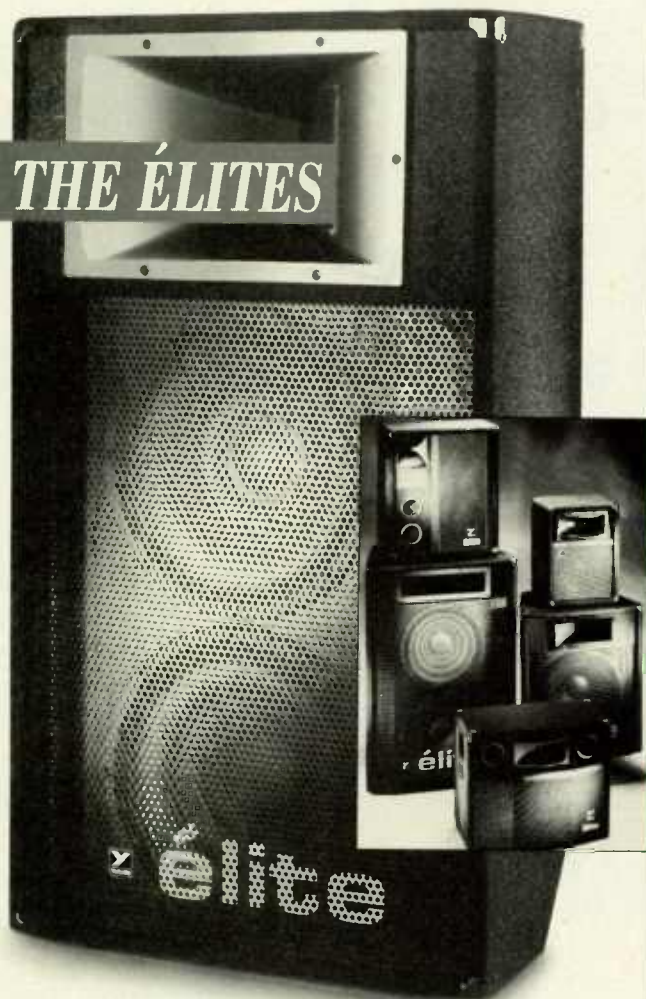
"It was something he really wanted to put out to explain his story, which is what the song is about. Axl is a naive white boy from Indiana who came to Hollywood, was brought up in a totally Caucasian society, and it was his way of saying how scared he was and this and that. Maybe somewhere in there he does harbor some sort of [bigoted] feelings because of the way he was brought up. At the same time, it wasn't malicious.

"I can't sit here with a clear conscience and say, 'It's okay that it came out.' I don't condone it. But it happened, and now Axl is being condemned for it, and he takes it really personally. All I can say, really, is that it's a lesson learned."

In a way, Slash suggests, lessons learned are what the last couple of years have really been about. "A little perspective doesn't hurt," he says. "I just turned 25, and something went off in my head. When I started

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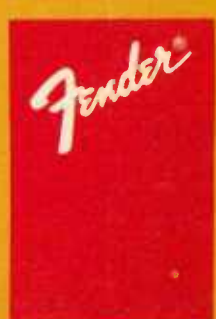
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this I was 19, and at that age there's nothing to stop you, so far as you can see. And then as you get older—not to say I'm old now—but you do change a little and see things differently. It's pretty natural. Some people are a little luckier than others as far as living through it. 'Cause there are extremes. When you're 22 and on the road with access to excess—well, you can get in trouble.”

These days, he feels relatively stable, at least in Slash terms. He says he hasn't used any hard drugs since he weaned himself nearly a year ago. He has a steady girlfriend,

with whom he recently celebrated their eight-month anniversary. At one point he even allows that one day he'd like to have a child. A daughter, that is: “I don't need another one of me.”

Asked about his chances of wiggling out again, he allows that it's always a day-to-day proposition. “But at this point it's not something I'm worrying about. Even though I didn't go through any counseling, I think I understand where it all stemmed from and how it could happen again. If it did happen it would have to be a different reason. To go

from nowhere to here was such a huge mind trip; now that it's happened and we've managed to keep it together, I don't think we'll go through that kind of shock again.”

Last year, when Slash was riding that rollercoaster, Joe Perry and Steve Tyler would call him up from time to time, just to see how things were. “That was really nice—and weird too. 'Cause I used to have posters of those guys.

“Now I listen to the new Aerosmith record and it's got some of the greatest grooves—but the whole ‘raunch 'n' roll' thing is gone. And I'm sure that'll happen to us at some point. We're not always gonna be the brash teenage hardcore band because we won't always be brash and teenaged. Of course kids hate hearing that, 'cause it reminds them that they're gonna get older some day too.

“I look back sometimes at the things I've done, and I see that what gets me off is working real hard towards something, to reach a goal. So that's what I'm doing now. Just to finish this record and then we'll go on tour. And I think we can go out and concentrate on the music; we'll be a lot tighter band on tour this time, and better musicians. I know I have a lot more patience. I want to spend a lot of time concentrating on my playing...”

Slash suddenly catches himself and laughs. “But then when we go out there, we'll all go fucking crazy. And those plans'll go right out the window.”

WESTERBERG

[cont'd from page 58] ferentiate between love or a relationship and a hangover. It's all sort of one. Hopefully that will change.

MUSICIAN: *Are you still drinking?*

WESTERBERG: Non-alcoholic beer. I've been doing that for quite a while now. Since the record was completely done. I love to do things backwards, go out on a tour and kill myself, write and record, and then I hit a brick wall. I've been waking up for years looking in the mirror and thinking, “I've got to put the bottle down.” One day I looked in the mirror and said, “If I was the bottle I'd put *me* down.” It was very evident that I had run my course. I can't promise and I can't say what the future holds, but I would like to do it sober. We could have a cup of coffee next time.

MUSICIAN: *Well, good luck, Paul. I hope this record goes through the roof.*

WESTERBERG: Or the window.

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CARLOS SANTANA: FINDING MELODY IN RHYTHM

Quick pick tricks
and global licks

By Alan di Perna

WHAT IF JIMI HENDRIX HAD joined Santana 'round about 1970? Don't laugh; it *could* have happened. "The last time I talked to Jimi Hendrix was in the bathroom at the Berkeley Community Center," Carlos Santana recalls. The meeting took place after Hendrix had disbanded the Experience and had begun thinking about a new, Afro-jazz context for his playing. "He was talking about a new direction. Our band was getting more and more popular. And I think he saw that, what-

ever we were looking for, he could fit in it. We were listening to Eddie Harris, Horace Silver, Albert Collins, Mongo Santamaria... so it wasn't just the chitlin' circuit. Dig it. I think he was able to see that in our band because of the rhythm. Jimi used congas at Woodstock too. He was getting into Gil Evans and Sun Ra. He was hungry for the same thing we're all hungry for: multiplicity, but still retaining your individuality."

Which is actually a pretty good description of the path Carlos Santana's career has taken. He can hold his own and hang on to his identity playing alongside guitarists as

diverse as John McLaughlin or—on his new album, *Spirits Dancing in the Flesh*—Vernon Reid. He embraced American blues without letting go of his Mexican heritage.

Santana was incorporating Latino rhythms into rock before David Byrne started shaving. He recently finished recording with African kora master Mory Kante and plans to cut some sides with Salif Keita. Noodling on his custom Paul Reed Smith axe, Carlos just smiles and says he's like water: able to take the shape of any container he finds himself in.

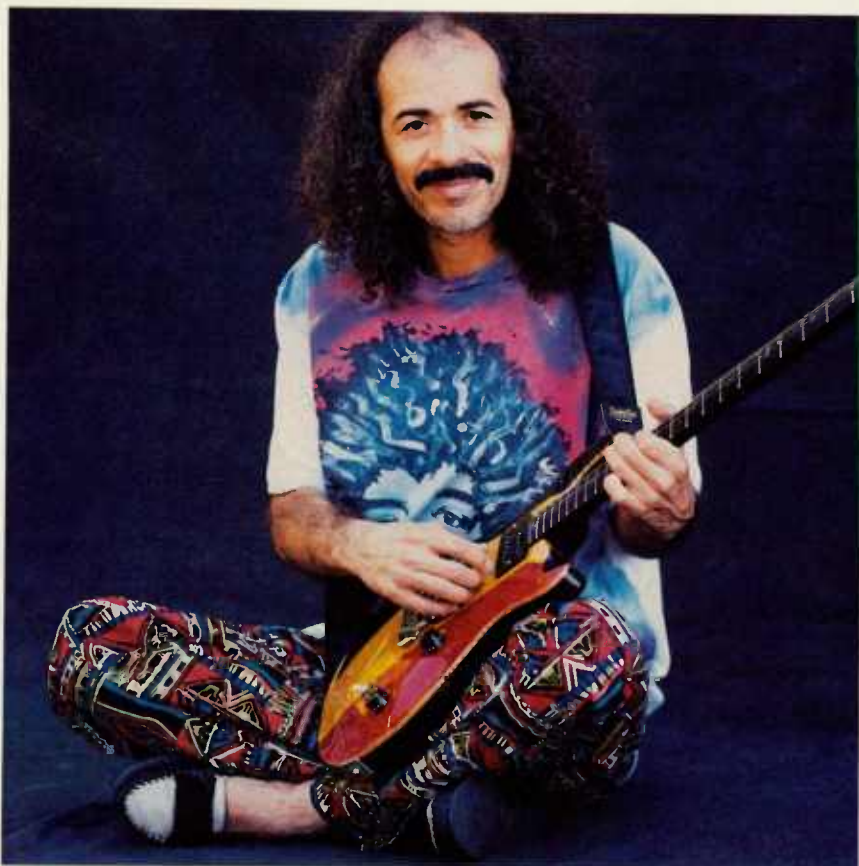
"But water can put a hole through rock, eventually. The ideal for me is to be able to go to Kingston, Jamaica or Brazil or the south side of Chicago and not get stabbed because you're playing the wrong stuff. I'm not bound to any techniques. In fact, I don't think I even have a technique. Or an image."

No image, maybe. But no technique? Give us a break. What about the flamelike double picking that's such an integral part of so many Santana solos? Where many guitarists will work up to a double-picked passage somewhere in the middle or end of a solo, Santana is fond of blazing right in, usually on the second interval, with a fluid burst of sixteenth notes. But isn't it hard getting instantly up to speed coming from zero mph?

"To the layman it may seem like I'm coming through the back door. Like, 'Man, you came in with the punch line. Where you gonna go from here?' But sometimes that's okay. Like you can say, 'Famine, starvation, destruction; password: Reaganism.' Or you can do it the other way around and say Reaganism first."


Interestingly, even Santana's most supple guitar work is executed using a large, heavy, triangular pick. "I started out playing with small picks and a Strat, but that felt really uncomfortable for me. It was easy for me to go to Les Pauls and the big picks. I wanted to get a bigger sound. For the first part of the '60s, I only did downpicking like B.B. King. But when I started buying Charlie Christian records, I noticed that you had to go up and down to get more notes into a phrase. You can do it like flamencos do it, which is something like when a violin player does a pizzicato. Then there's another way, the Wes Montgomery approach, where you use your thumb."

Ask Carlos about his left-hand technique and he reaches for another of his frequent, colorful similes: "My left hand is like a tongue. It can speak Spanish, African,



French, Japanese..." But the blues has always been Santana's lingua franca. He can sneak a blues lick into decidedly non-blues settings and make it sound perfectly appropriate. Just listen to *Spirits'* two jazz ballads, "Full Moon" and "Goodness and Mercy."

"What fascinates me is a combination of Tupelo, Mississippi and India," is how Carlos approaches scales and modes. "First you have this." He plays a figure based on a major triad, with a major seventh and octave. "You have Spanish in there," he adds, arranging the same notes into a bullfight trumpet call. "And basically the American contribution to that is this." He plays a blues riff with minor thirds and sevenths and a flatted fifth. "But that other one, it has like Spanish, Moroccan, Chinese..." He plays the same major figures as before, but adds a chromatic ending, thus incorporating the blues notes he'd played earlier.

Santana's global eclecticism struck a sympathetic chord in Vernon Reid during the sessions for *Spirits Dancing in the Flesh*. Together, they cut quite a bit of material that didn't appear on the album and are planning to tour together next year. "I guess the label thought he was going to bring the single to the record. But Vernon came in and went straight for *Caravansari* [Santana's jazz-influenced album from 1972]. It was easy for us to complement each other. Like Vernon said, we both grew up listening to Dionne Warwick a lot. And Aretha. You can put all kinds of chords around a vocal. You can buy all kinds of books to learn all the options. But don't forget the melody. That's always what's most important." 

SPIRITUAL MATERIALS

CARLOS SANTANA owns and plays several custom Paul Reed Smith guitars. He prefers old Gibson humbucking pickups. For amplification he uses "99 percent Boogie and one percent Marshall" and favors the original Mark I MESA/Boogie over latter-day Boogies with more complex tone controls. "I keep going back to that amp. Once you start pulling knobs, it changes the tone. You get something very different. I call it the beer commercial sound. Very generic."

To help keep things real, Carlos also uses an old tape Echoplex unit and a Morley wah-wah pedal. Strings are D'Addario XL110s, .010-.046 gauge.



WHEN DRUMMER MEETS DRUM MACHINE

Andy Newmark on adding live drums to recorded tracks

By Rick Mattingly

WHEN A BUNCH OF MUSICIANS are playing together," Andy Newmark says, "there is a certain energy among them that carries the music along. But when you have a drum machine involved, you often feel that your personal energy is being interfered with. There is this *thing* that has authority over you. So the challenge for a drummer is to sound as if you are leading the way."

Increasingly over the years Andy Newmark has found himself in situations where

an artist and producer desire the energy of a live drummer but there is already a drum machine part that they want Andy to play along with. He's found various ways to deal with it.

"A track will often be built around a drum machine first," Newmark explains, "and I come in at the very end. In that case, most of my concentration is on the other musicians on the tape and I'm listening to the machine only insofar as to notice if I'm getting away from it. But that's not usually a problem because if the other musicians have cut their parts with the machine, they



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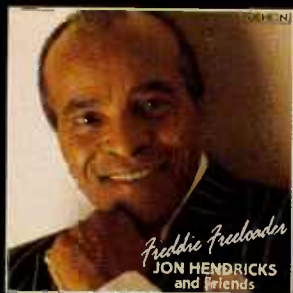


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are probably locked in with it. If I lock in with them, I'll be with the machine as well.

"The other situation," Andy continues, "is if they are bringing me in early on in the process, and there's not a lot of music on the tape yet—maybe just a rough keyboard or guitar and a scratch vocal. In that case the job is to simply lock in with the machine.

I don't play ahead or behind, because I might be assuming something that is not safe to assume. It's all relative anyway: If the other players come in and play on top a little bit, then my part will suddenly sound laid-back, and if they lay back, then I'll be on top. If I'm the first one on the track, my job is to be spot-on with the click or the machine."

Newmark contends that this is not a question of feel. "It's a technical thing," he says, "and it's just a matter of practice. The best way to develop it is to sit in a quiet room with a metronome and a practice pad. If you are not exactly with the click, you will hear a flam between the pad and the metronome. The idea is to be so locked in that the metronome disappears. And that's all it is in the studio: playing the drums and making the machine or click invisible. It's then up to the other players to put more of an attitude onto the tape."

Newmark points out that locking in with a click does not necessarily make a performance sound stiff. "I think what makes it feel labored," he says, "is when the drummer realizes that he is getting slightly ahead or behind the machine, and then he compensates to get back with it. If it were just four humans playing together, everyone would have sped up or slowed down together and it would have felt natural. It's bringing it back to the click that's unnatural. So if you're spot-on, there's really no reason it should feel rigid."

Andy acknowledges, however, that there are things a good drummer contributes to the feel. "Dynamics are a large part of it," he says. "We rarely play every note with the exact same intensity. If you were to hit

every note on the hi-hat with the same intensity, it would sound like a Rhythm Ace.

"Another thing is that within the quarter-note pulse, there can be a certain amount of swing with the lead hand on the hi-hat or cymbal that can give the sensation of pushing and pulling. That also helps achieve a

non-mechanical feeling."

Newmark first encountered the Rhythm Ace in the studio in 1973, when he recorded the *Fresh* album with Sly & the Family Stone. In those days, the Ace was the drum machine, and although it had no programming capabilities, it had a selection of about a dozen rhythms such as swing, mambo and cha-cha.

"It was initially kind of a bring-

down," Andy says. "I loved playing with that band onstage, and I had been looking forward to recording with them. But when I got there, it was just me, Sly, an engineer and the Rhythm Ace."

But Newmark found that he actually enjoyed the process. "Those things were actually fun to play with. It was all percussion sounds, like cowbells, bongos, congas, claves and maracas, so I didn't feel like anyone was messing with my drum part. It was like playing with a Latin percussion section. There were a lot of dynamics in those grooves, so they actually felt great.

"The other thing," Newmark adds, "is that I was doing complete performances. In those days, they didn't tear things apart the way they do today, where they want you to first play snare and bass drum only, then put on the hi-hat, then do the fills, then add the cymbals, and you can punch in and out wherever you want to. On *Fresh*, I was playing the track down from beginning to end."

On the other end of the spectrum is the work Newmark has done over the past few years with Roxy Music and Bryan Ferry. Whereas Sly brought Andy in first, Ferry brings him in at the end. "What always

THE GROOVE KIT

ANDY NEWMARK plays a four-piece Yamaha Tour Custom drumkit, with a 24" bass drum, a 12" rack tom, a 16" floor tom and a 5½x14 wood snare. "Most of the time," Newmark says, "I'm just playing snare drum, bass drum and hi-hat. Those are what carry the groove. So I've never had a need or desire for a lot of toms. Besides, having a bunch of toms around you can lead to trouble. You're sitting there playing this beat, but you're looking at all of these toms. The first thing you know, you're thinking, 'Fuck the groove. I paid a lot of money for all of these drums. I'm going to hit them,' and you start doing fills all over the place." Newmark uses Zildjian cymbals: a 20" ride, two 18" crashes and 14" hi-hats. All of the drums are fitted with Remo Ambassador heads.

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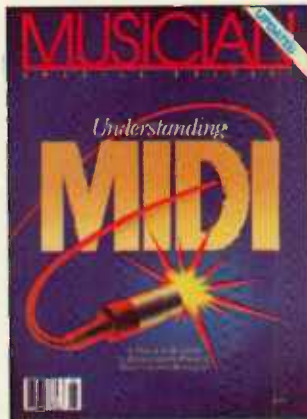
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throws me with Bryan is that he programs all this percussion on drum machines, and it's really complex, avant-garde-sounding stuff. So I'll listen to it and think I'm supposed to play something complex on the drums. But 95 percent of the time, what is really needed is just a basic drum beat, which then puts all of that weird percussion into context.

"Bryan's percussion may dictate a certain part of the beat, which is not necessary

for me to duplicate on the drumkit. So I can then displace a couple of beats here and there and come up with a somewhat unconventional pattern. It's not something I do off the top of my head. It only comes about after having played the tune five or six times very straight. Then, after coming to a real understanding of the tune and the role the machine parts are playing, my drum part evolves to what you hear on the record." M



PRACTICING WITH "TRUE HEARING"

Young jazz pianist Mulgrew Miller tests his preconceptions

By Tom Moon

IT TAKES MULGREW MILLER JUST ONE sentence to sum up the state of current jazz improvisation: "An over-abundance of knowledge, and an under-abundance of insight."

At 35, Miller—the jazz pianist known for terrifically terse trio records and heady contributions to Tony Williams' quintet—is one of the few artists riding the cusp between the music's young lions and seasoned veterans. Until recently, he considered himself part of the cult of the bebop lick. Like many players, he took those once-spontaneous units of bebop conversation to be gospel truths. He perfected them, built an impressive technique around them. He had the knowledge, in abundance.

Now, at a time when the jazz market rewards such conservative scholarship, Miller is moving against the tide, purging the licks from his playing in an attempt to transform this knowledge into insight. His goal: to develop intuition so strong it will guide him away from shopworn phrases and toward melodies that come from his personal experience. He calls this pursuit "true hearing," and sitting in his quiet Easton, Pennsylvania home, he outlines the steps along this rather metaphysical path with dry humor and a self-effacing demeanor. He doesn't practice much, doesn't use a metronome, doesn't teach, doesn't feel comfortable dispensing advice. But he considers

true hearing a "revelation," and his voice becomes animated as he talks about it.

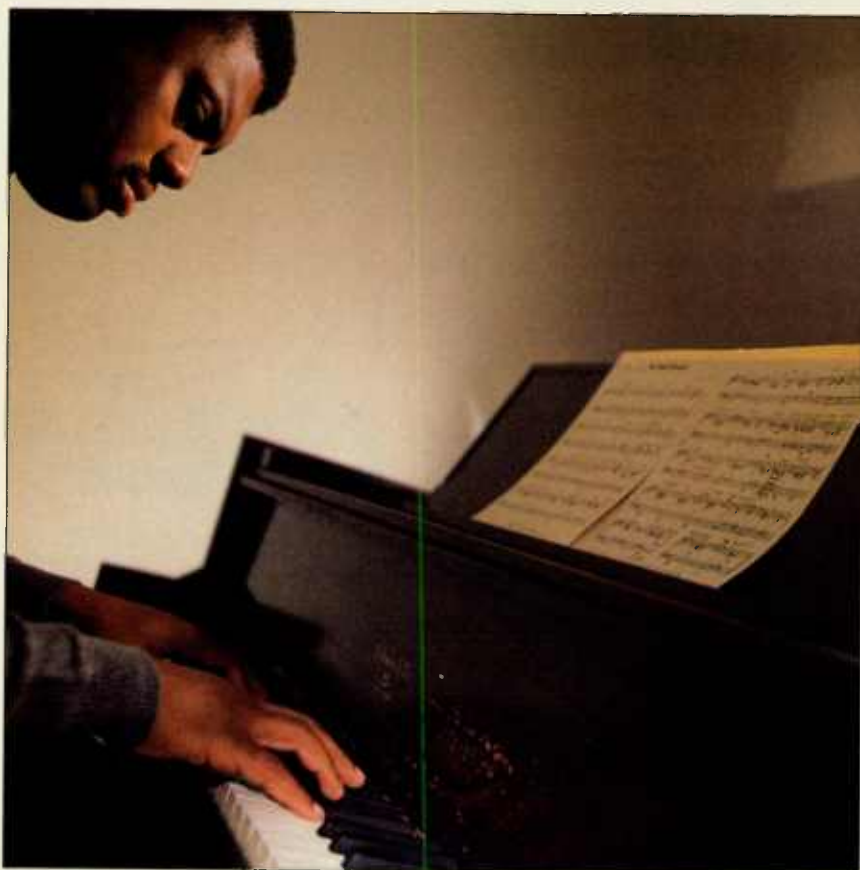
"The way piano—and really all the instruments of jazz—have been played for the last 30 years or so, it's been with a lot of

notes. The younger players tend to play everything fast. We lose touch with what is basic. Which means that what is being played has very little emotional weight. On top of that, people are spending too much time copying from the records, and recreating records note for note is not what it's about. I've never done that. We're so oriented to accepting someone else's authority—if you get up and play what Bird played, it's a good day—that we never get to the point where we're making music. It's not possible to learn on the bandstand anymore."

In order to escape predictable licks, Miller believes, your ears must be able to hear alternatives. This is not a skill one develops simply by sitting in ear training class.

"It's one thing to hear what Bird did and copy it, but it's quite another to hear it and understand it. I'm not talking about theoretical knowledge as much as insight...it's like practicing tunes in all the keys. That has its place—it familiarizes with the changes and how they feel, but that doesn't mean you can *hear* them. If you play 'Lush Life' in D flat and I say play it in G flat, does that mean you can hear it without knowing the notes, without thinking of every chord change?"

Miller contends that this type of insight allows the improviser to react to chord



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sequences (and, indeed, every other musical possibility) on an instinctual level—without calling on the conscious mind. To practice this, Miller sits at the piano and forces himself to play tunes without thinking of chord names or sequences. By deliberately bypassing the harmonic identifications, he says, he has begun to discover a more rewarding, intuitive level of melody.

“Everything that is involved with knowledge gets in the way of hearing,” he says, explaining that nomenclature like chord symbols—or even an encyclopedic command of possible scales—can obstruct musical flow. “When a person is really hearing, a transformation takes place in the thought process. It’s a strange thing, but everybody who has been playing this music for a while knows it. It’s like you’ve been unleashed. It’s a nice place—you want to get there more often.”

The way to do *that*, according to Miller, is to understand rhythm. “You play one note of melody, that’s rhythm. The rhythm is the parent of everything else, so it’s important to have that, and to be able to project it in everything you play.” To work on rhythm, Miller concentrates on slow tempos. Control of his ideas, and of the placement of each individual note, is the goal.

“I’ve been working on just playing eighth notes, forcing myself to be articulate without getting into sixteenths. Playing everything so that the feeling counts. That’s what Art Blakey used to say—nothing matters except the feeling. I’ll think of different players: the way Wynton Kelly would play eighth notes and try to get that going. Then Herbie, or McCoy—McCoy plays so far up on the beat with his single lines, it’s like he’s in tenth gear already.”

With its careening block chords and buoyant, dancing single-note lines, Miller’s trio concept is certainly influenced by Tyner. But the new *From Day to Day*, which features bassist Robert Hurst and drummer Peter Washington, moves in other directions as well, brushing against Bill Evans’ tightly-woven ideal of trio interplay, hinting at the plain-spoken bebop of Phineas Newborn, flirting with the occasional orchestral flourishes that are Ahmad Jamal’s trademark.

Such a simple reduction doesn’t do Miller justice: He is one of the few pianists whose every phrase galvanizes a rhythm section. You get the sense that even the most expressive drummers listen carefully when they play with Mulgrew Miller: Williams, who has worked with the pianist since 1985, says

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Miller “plays music with more feeling and spirituality than anyone I know.”

Miller says Williams has helped him to develop an identity as a leader. “I learned from playing in his group what I want my groups to sound like. I want to cover a wide range of colors and textures; if you look at the pianists who have become really famous, the Oscar Petersons and people like that, they’ve all done it.”

Part of Miller’s magic lies in the way he accompanies other soloists. In this role, too, he tries to embrace the whole spectrum of the instrument. “I see a relationship between the way the pianist comps and the way the big band used to play riffs. That’s where comping really originated. So where a big band will go from loud to soft, or from dense chorus to unison in a single beat, the comping can do that, too. I try to make the accompaniment sound good to me independent of what else is going on.”

He knows this is easier said than done. “The piano is a strange instrument. You can’t scream through it like you can a saxophone or a trumpet. It’s a little further removed from you emotionally and dynamically. What often happens is that pianists will play within what I would consider a restrained area, not exploring the extremes. I’m working on getting big contrasts, and transmitting all that emotion and all those dynamics through the arms and hands.”

Not surprisingly, Miller doesn’t often dwell on that kind of esoterica when he gets the chance to practice. “If I have 20 minutes to practice, I try to get down to the bare essentials of technique. I’ll work on independence, and make up exercises that are similar to the Hanon studies, and practice crossing the thumbs under. I’m playing catch-up in a lot of ways, because I didn’t have conservatory training. Certain little details like crossing the thumbs under to play scales—you can’t master a fluid scale without that technique. So I’ll work on that.”

And, of course, he’ll spend a few minutes on his own brand of ear development—honing his instincts so that each solo becomes a forum for his own melodic personality, not just a glib recital of handed-down licks. “I no longer forgive myself for not hearing what Herbie Hancock hears. I’m mad at myself because I didn’t think of those lines. I force myself to come up with new melodic material. Because I don’t think it’s mystical, and I don’t think Herbie and those guys should have a monopoly on this thing.”



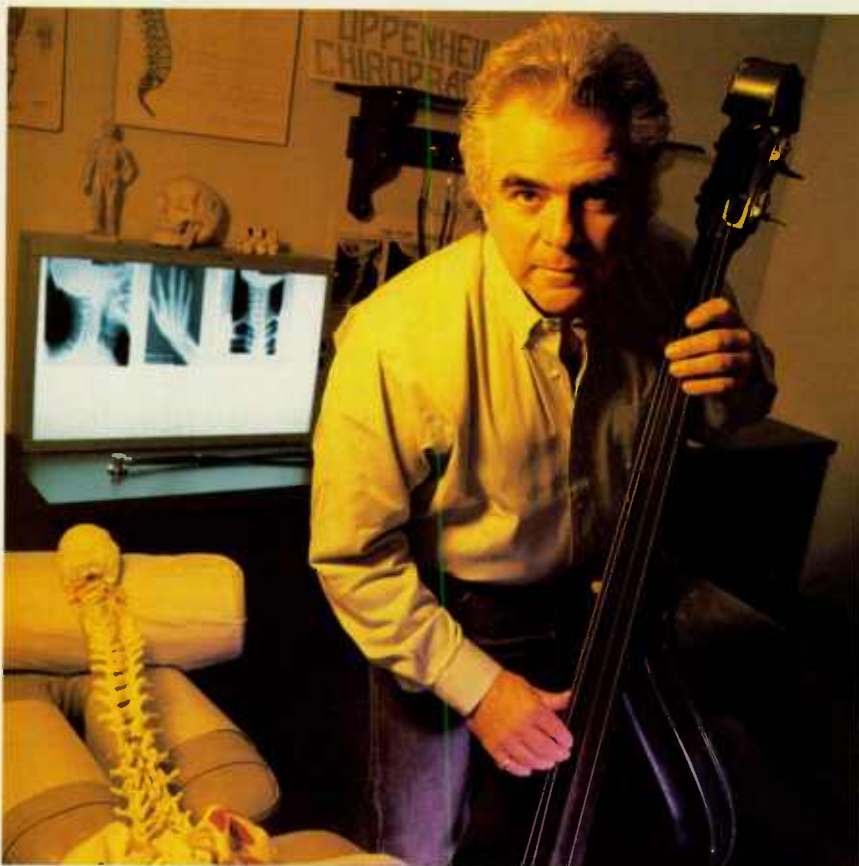
SOME ADVICE FROM THE ROCK DOCTOR

John Ciambotti—bassist and chiropractor

By Peter Cronin

THE GIG VERSUS THE DAY JOB. FOR most musicians, balancing the two becomes a central dilemma in their lives. How can I keep playing music and still afford to eat? After 25 up and down years in the music business, Dr. John Ciambotti has finally found a way to pull it off. This forty-something bassist-turned-chiropractor turned bassist-chiropractor squeezes two successful careers into one L.A. lifestyle, and manages to handle himself, and his bass, with the good-humored, easy-chair cool of a man on a long vacation.

“There’s a sensitivity to being a doctor that I think translates well from that of being a musician,” Ciambotti says, “and the standup bass *is* shaped just like a woman’s body, so naturally I’ve been fondling basses for years.” When he’s not fondling his instrument for the likes of Elvis Costello, Lucinda Williams or, most recently, Carlene Carter, Ciambotti is cracking the backs of the rich and famous at North Hollywood’s prestigious Oppenheim Chiropractic Clinic. “It’s a real showbizzy practice, but it’s very anonymous,” he says. “At this point we’re seeing about 100–150 people a day—we are just smokin’!”



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In keeping with his job in the real world, Ciambotti believes that support is the key to his musical approach, and that having mega-chops is secondary to knowing when *not* to play. "I like holes," he says, "and I've always emulated guys like Bob Marley's bassist, 'Family Man' Barrett, because he left a *ton* of holes. He was never in a hurry."

Ciambotti started slapping his standup in the early '60s for bluegrass bands around his native Hollywood, eventually going electric in '67 with the band Clover, whose alumni over the next 11 years would in-

clude guitarist John McFee (Doobie Brothers, Southern Pacific) and a young singer/harmonica player named Huey Lewis. As kings of the local Marin County scene, the seminal country-rockers seemed poised for success, but with two poorly selling albums to their bad credit and a rebellious temperament, Clover was soon off their record label and back in the bars six nights a week.

That's when help arrived in the form of a request. "We did a gig at the Palomino, and this guy in the audience is callin' out for tunes we hadn't played in years," Ciambotti

recalls. "I just told him, 'I don't remember that shit,' and the voice says, 'Well, I do,' and I said, 'Fine, you come up here and play it.'" To the band's amazement the tourist did just that—playing bass and singing obscure Clover songs. He introduced himself—Nick Lowe. London's pub-rockers were Clover's biggest fans, and Lowe had come down to the club to see if these guys were *the* Clover. They were. "At that point we signed a management contract with Jake Riviera and moved lock, stock and girlfriends to some mansion near London," says Ciambotti.

Clover spent the next few years recording two self-conscious albums and serving as house band for Riviera's newborn Stiff Records, who had just signed on Elvis Costello. "The weirdest guy walks into our rehearsal hall carrying a can of tomato soup and a lemon," recalls Ciambotti. "Then he started singing and hit us right between the eyes—every song was better than the last."

Out of those sessions came *My Aim Is True*, Costello's Nick Lowe-produced debut. While that record was lifting off, the band that provided the music was burning out and breaking up. "When we finally came back from England we were in debt up to our eyeballs from pure bad management," he says. Tired of seeing managers make all the money, Ciambotti became one for a while, handling the career of Lowe's wife Carlene Carter, among others. But the music biz is the music biz and after a few years he'd had enough. "I hit 40, went through a classic midlife crisis, and just soured on the whole thing," he says. "I had flamed right out and needed to go on to something else."

Ciambotti hit chiropractic college with characteristic enthusiasm and has been adjusting bodies, including a surprising number of players, ever since. "I have what I call my musician's rate," he says, "and it's very cheap so I get practically every musician in town walkin' through my door." Dr.

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DOCTOR'S BAG


IN ADDITION to his sexy standup bass, Dr. Ciambotti plays a '70s Fender Precision through a "little Polytone amp" for the smaller gigs, and a Gallien-Krueger 400 series for the bigger ones. He uses La Bella strings ("big fat ones"), but he doesn't buy many. "I keep 'em on forever. Duck Dunn taught me that. The ones I have now have been on there for four years and they're not quite ready."

Ciambotti can speak from experience, having worn a bulky bass guitar for all those years. "In bass players and guitarists you get a left-arm syndrome," he explains. "A heavy guitar with a strap going over the left shoulder will eventually compromise a bundle of nerves called the brachial plexus—causing numbness, tingling, carpal tunnel syndrome, wrist, elbow and shoulder problems—it's a real can of worms.

"I tell my patients to use the widest and sturdiest strap they can find," he says. "That serves to displace a lot of the weight and prevent a lot of problems."

With his practice established, Ciambotti found himself drawn by night back to the clubs (always with a pocket full of business cards) whenever old friends came to town. "I'd always go down and catch Elvis, or Nick or Carlene," he says. "Then a friend of mine dragged me out to see Lucinda Williams and I knew the minute I heard her that I wanted to get involved." Ciambotti was soon juggling appointments and heading into the studio to play on Williams' debut album. Once again he'd managed to quietly put his signature on the bottom line of one of the year's best records, a trick he recently repeated on Carlene Carter's excellent comeback LP, *I Fell in Love*.

"I'm a singer's bass player," he says, "and working with two strong, independent women like Lucinda and Carlene is the joy of my life." Ciambotti could just as easily be describing his daughter Gia, who's currently doing her dad proud, singing with former Go-Go Charlotte Caffey in the Graces. "I try to be dispassionate about it because I'm her father," he says, "but Gia is one of the most amazing singers I've ever heard—like a Levon Helm-style voice in a woman."

In Ciambotti's book, an appointment for a session can mean two entirely different things, so he has to look carefully to determine which musicians he's working with and which he's working on. "I'm going to be treating the Highwaymen after their show tonight," he says, "and I recently did Elvis and his entire band a couple of nights in a row." As L.A.'s backstage chiropractor, Ciambotti may have difficulty remembering whether he's at his gig or his *real* job, but these days he has a much easier time balancing the books. "I'm a doctor now, and I make a lot of money," he says. "I don't *have* to do music, which makes it a blast, because I can pick and choose the projects that I want to do. Luckily people keep callin' me up." 



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WHAT IT COSTS TO MAKE AN ALBUM

Stars burn money while others
never recoup

By Tom Moon

ASK A PRODUCER HOW MUCH IT costs to make a record and you're likely to get stand-up comedy: You want it with or without mistakes? High-end outboard gear? Special guests? Perhaps a musty garage sound? With wood or concrete floors?

Ask an A&R specialist, and you get the language of business: Advances, recoupable monies, contingency fees, profit thresholds.

Ask an artist, and the answer is always the same: too much money, and not enough time.

Years since multitracking made it possible for musicians to hole up in studios for entire seasons laboring over one eight-bar chorus, there's still nothing standard about making a record. Every artist and producer encounters variables on every project. Studio costs. Duration of recording (often directly linked to studio costs). Tape expense. Travel and logistics. Even mastering differs from album to album, depending on the fussiness of those involved.

The largest single item in any recording budget—studio costs—can vary dramatically, depending on things like favored-client

rate scales (under which a busy producer can get his favorite room, the one Joe Public pays \$225/hour for, at the family rate of \$175) and whether the session is block-booked for a healthy chunk of time. Even the incidental costs vary, and this makes comparing the cost of one record against another akin to evaluating the creases on that rare Honus Wagner baseball card. Budgets do eventually boil down to real numbers, but almost everyone interviewed for this story cautioned that their figures were estimates, and could be miles away from the bottom line.

This being the music business, penny-wise accountants plan for every contingency. There are 10 percent overage funds built into most major-label contracts to cover little control-room emergencies. There are incentives designed to encourage hits; a successful debut means an artist can look forward to a bit more money the second time around. There's a flip side, too: Should costs get out of hand, labels usually have ways to guard against *Heaven's Gate*-sized failures. These are the records even the accountants are embarrassed to put out.

"I'm quite sure every major label has their share of these things they've had to shelve," says Don Grierson, Epic's senior VP for A&R, recalling one such act. A well-established regional rock band was signed to Epic and began work on its debut. The initial deal was for a modest advance, but soon things careened out of control. The band had "personality clashes" with its first producer. And its second. Then there were internal squabbles. "We had finally put about \$300,000 into the record, which is a lot for an unknown band," Grierson recalled. "And it was not well received within the company. We didn't ever get to the point of pressing records.

"Even if you don't get crazy, the costs after you've got the project in hand are formidable. Just to get it into the pipeline—to do mailings, promotion, all that—costs money."

Grierson and his peers also deal with the superstar end of the spectrum, where money is, quite literally, no object. No pre-production here: The artist will, of course, write in the studio, which might be on a sunny Caribbean island or someplace else far from home. Add up those hotel costs! *Ka-ching!* Figure in transportation! *Ka-ching!* For these artists, the labels are more than happy to function as banks—expensive



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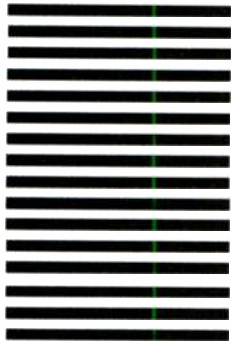
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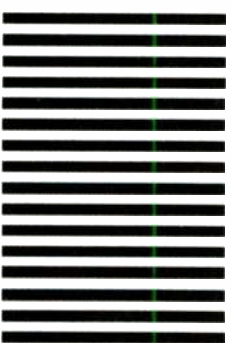
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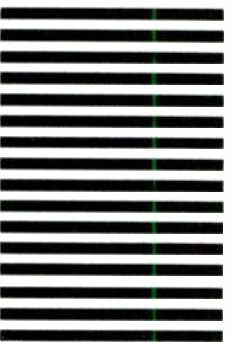
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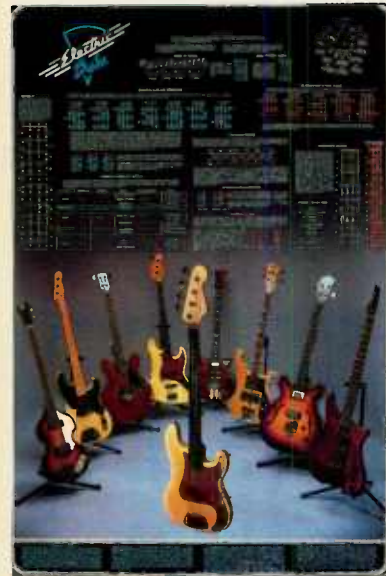
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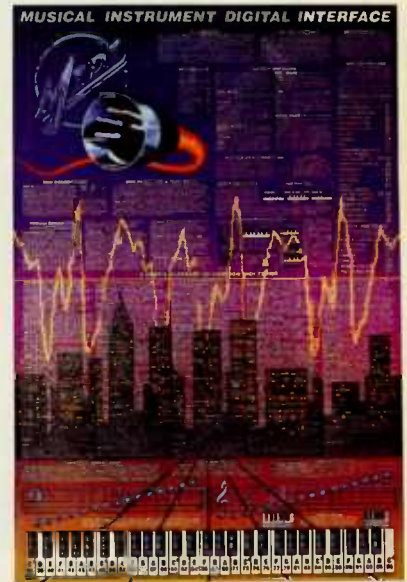


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flukes, your sales options are limited." It's always been that way, he says, recalling that he paid Wes Montgomery the bare minimum leader's pay—double the union scale paid to sidemen—for his Riverside titles.

"The jazz labels we all revere could not have survived in today's economy," Keepnews says. "Before multitracking there was no mix time. Records were done in one day. You were dealing with musicians who had a lot of playing experience. I would use the same rhythm section on a number of different records, because they were accustomed to working with each other and could work more efficiently."

Blue Note Records has taken this conservative approach one step further: It now lets its Japanese affiliate label underwrite the recording of some artists (including drummer Ralph Peterson) and pays a licensing fee to distribute the records in the U.S. The cost: usually under \$5000, for artwork and mastering. The payoff comes not only in records sold, but in priceless exposure for developing artists—and prestige for the label.

Keepnews and others believe there is musical motivation for working quickly in the recording studio: When the sessions have a definite end, moments of true inspiration will likely wind up on tape rather than during the engineer's coffee break.

Even among artists who operate with blank record company checks, this kind of efficiency is becoming cool. "I hate this religious feeling in studios," says INXS lead singer Michael Hutchence. "where you've got to spend days getting the drum sounds. The passion's got to be there first. There should be crap all over the tracks."

Froom concurs: "Richard Thompson will put the whole band down live. He wants the tape rolling. If he's using any strange instruments, we'll put those in later on, but the basic vibe of the song goes on the tape right away."

Not surprisingly, that's the way Froom, who is currently producing Elvis Costello's followup to *Spike*, likes to work. "You hear about piecing vocal tracks together syllable by syllable, and you wonder, 'Why?' You get into this attitude where you keep chasing things because the studio is paid for and it has to be perfect. But the question you have to ask is, 'Do we think that the best records are being made today, since all this care and time are being put into them?' I don't think so. There's a point where the perspective on performance is lost." M

PERFORMANCE OF THE MONTH

LITTLE RICHARD COMES HOME

By Robert Gordon

LITTLE RICHARD PENNIMAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS ENERGY. BUT WHAT stood out at his Macon, Georgia homecoming performance in late September was his spontaneity. Whatever possessed him in 1955 to throw together nonsense words like "Wop bop a loo bop a lop bam boom" has continued thriving right alongside his power and stamina.

"I work strictly on impulse," the self-proclaimed Quasar of rock 'n' roll said after the show. "I don't use a set list, so the band never knows what I'm going to do, they don't know what I'm going to sing, or what key I'm going to play in. They've got to have a good ear. That's the key that unlocks the door, if you got a door for the key to fit."

Bandleader and guitarist Travis Wammack explained how the band keeps up. "I have everybody more or less watch me," he said. "He does certain little things or he gets me to hit him with a certain chord right before he does the song, and from that I pretty much know basically what he's fixing to do."

Wammack gleans many of his hints from Richard's stage patter, which has become a large part of the show. Though he only got around to playing 10 songs—nine of them classic oldies—in the nearly two hours he performed, the show never dragged. For the 20 minutes that preceded his first song, "Lucille," he kept the audience attentive to a history lesson on popular music. He called on individual band members to accompany him or demonstrate a particular type of sound while he romped through a variety of piano styles, stating both his own roots and his own diversity. After reaching back to barrelhouse blues, his 57-year-old fingers danced through boogie-woogie and even bumped some funk, reminding the audience of styles he has influenced. At other times, his conversation from the stage resembled nothing so much as an interplanetary stream-of-consciousness ramble.

Another history lesson was heard in the difference between Penniman's piano and Wammack's guitar. A product of the musical generation that followed Little Richard, Wammack's crunching style captured the excitement of feedback and electric leads from the era of his mid-'60s hit "Scratchy." The differences in their approaches gave the old songs vigor.

"Richard knows that when he goes out on that stage with us, he can do anything he wants to, and we're going to be right there on top of it," says Wammack. "It lets him try things he probably wouldn't do if he didn't have the confidence in the band."

"I can sing 'Tutti-Frutti' 25 times and each time it is different," says the architect of rock 'n' roll, who sang it a second time in Macon for the benefit of the TV cameras. "My thing is I work on the spontaneous situation. When you get a set pattern it becomes boring." M

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JUST SAY MO

Digital storage comes out of the closet at AES

By Alan di Perna

STORAGE SPACE HAS BECOME A PRETTY viable commodity in modern life. Closets and airplane luggage compartments are things we generally take for granted...until they run out of room. While it's hardly a glamour purchase, people will pay good money for a little extra stowage. The audio world is no exception. Digital storage of audio data was the major buzz at this year's AES (Audio Engineering Society) Convention in Los Angeles.

At the top of the list was Magneto Optical (MO) disk storage: That's the stuff that has

tech types snapping to attention and saluting so hard they're knocking themselves unconscious. Essentially, MO is a way of storing monster wads of digital audio (about 650 megabytes' worth) on an optical disk rather than a conventional computer hard disk. Unlike hard disks, MOs can be removed from their drives, so you can pop in new disks or bring your disk over to someone else's system. Up until recently, though, MO has mainly been an offline storage medium, i.e., access times have generally been considered too slow to let you record and play back directly to and from the disk.

But now Akai has come up with a device that *can* read from an MO disk in real time. In slightly plainer English, the Akai DD1000 is a dual stereo recorder. Which essentially means you get four tracks of digital audio, with 26 minutes of recording time on each side of each MO disk at a sampling rate of 48 kHz. There are lots of facilities for editing tracks—which has always been a big advantage of digital storage. And you can lock the DD1000 up to SMPTE and make specific segments of audio play back at specific times, cue list style.

Also quite cool is Akai's new S1100 sampler. It outdoes its predecessor, the ever-popular S1000, on several counts. The big difference is that the S1100's got a built-in, 50-program digital effects processor and a built-in mixer for routing effects to voices with a degree of control that Hermann Goering would have admired. Better still, you can plug external devices into the onboard effects and use the S1100 as a regular old digital effects box. (I was wondering when synths and samplers with built-in effects were going to start letting you do that.) And with the mixer, of course, you can process both internal and external sounds through the effects processor. Akai says that version 2.0 of the S1100 will also let you hook up a magneto optical disk drive and do direct-to-disk recording.

This year's AES also had piles of new digital audio workstations (DAWs) based on that creaking, ancient, venerable old hard disk technology. Traditionally, DAWs have been the domain of companies like New England Digital and Waveframe who cater to video postproduction houses, professional recording studios and other high rollers. But now a number of funky old musical instrument manufacturers are getting into the act. Korg exhibited a prototype of their forthcoming digital audio workstation. It has eight tracks of digital audio recording with extensive editing, an eight-channel, fully automated mixer and a 16-track MIDI sequencer. There's little else you could want—except the \$30,000 you'll need to buy the thing, of course.

Yes, these puppies *are* expensive. Fortunately, Roland introduced a hard disk recording system that, so far, is the price leader in what promises to be a virulent outbreak of DAW Wars. It's called the DM-80, and the four-track version goes for

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\$8495. The eight-track version will sell for around \$1200. The system is the product of a joint Japanese/American design effort that includes tech vets Chris Meyer and Tom Oberheim on the U.S. side. It's got extensive track editing, a built-in



The Panasonic SV-3700 breaks the pro DAT price barrier.

mixer that can be automated via any external MIDI sequencer, AES/EBU digital inputs and outputs and sync facilities that include SMPTE, MTC and MIDI Clocks. In short, it's one DAW that seems designed for MIDI musicians rather than television pinheads. The basic system comes with a built-in 100-megabyte hard disk, which gives you around 18 minutes of recording time at 44.1 kHz. If that seems alarmingly brief, don't panic. The editing facilities let you repeat segments—like verses and choruses—as

hard disk drive or...yes...a magneto optical disk drive.

R-DAT was another hot digital storage medium at AES. Reason? The powers that administer pro audio have gotten together on a standard SMPTE timecode format for R-DAT. It's called the IEC format. Consequently, Sony, Otari and other companies announced brand-new DAT machines equipped with the new timecode standard. The downside is that these machines do come a bit dearly—about \$6000 for the Otari

often as you like and wherever you like, which helps conserve that precious audio closet space. But if you just gotta have more storage, you can hook up an external

and \$4500 for a stripped version of Sony's cheapest new DAT, the PCM-7010.

But wait a minute. Does the average musician really need SMPTE on a DAT recorder? Not really. Not if said musician wants to use an R-DAT as a mixdown machine in a home studio. Or to make stereo field recordings to transfer to a sampler. In both cases there's no need to synchronize the DAT to anything else. Credit for being the first to figure this out goes to Panasonic, who introduced an R-DAT *without* SMPTE capabilities that will sell for a mere \$1599 list. The new arrival is called the SV-3700 and it's a fully pro device, with AES/EBU ins and outs and a jog wheel for scrubbing tracks to find an exact location within a song. 44.1 or 48 kHz sampling frequencies are front-panel-selectable. Now *this* is more like it.

In other digital developments, Peavey has a new box, the DPM VE, that lets you sample sounds, then edit and store them in Peavey's DPM 3 synth, which has been upgraded to a new 2.0 operating system. And Yamaha trotted out [cont'd on page 113]

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The Waterboys

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
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World Radio History

Chrysalis. 

RECORDINGS



Those Lovable Wilburys

Bert and Ernie
Fill in
for Lefty

Traveling Wilburys—Vol. 3
(Wilbury)

THEY SAY YOUR PERSPECTIVE changes when you've got a kid, and since little Mikey hit the one-year mark at our house, I've been listening to music for a whole new batch of reasons. Every morning at eight, Mikey goes nuts when he hears the opening theme of "Sesame Street," which, as a music-lovin' dad, makes me happy as a clam. His grandmother just bought him one of those kiddie cassette players for his birthday, so now I'm starting to make him tapes. I just played him an advance of the new Raffi, which is all about the environment, and I'm not sure he liked it that



much—too hard to understand and all.

But I know he's going to love the Wilburys.

"Look out your window," Dylan sings, "The grass ain't green/It's kind of yellow/ See what I mean?/Look up your chimney/ The sky ain't blue/It's kind of yellow/You know it's true." Then the rest of the guys come in for the chorus: "It's so hard to figure what it's all about/When your outside's in (inside out)/And your downside's up (upside down)/Yeah, your upside's right (right-side-up)/Yeah, don't it make you want to twist and shout when you're inside out?"

Sure, I'll tell Mikey that "ain't" ain't in the dictionary and all that, but you think he's not going to have a ball dancing around the house pointing up and down, dealing with colors and things that are hard to figure out? He's going to *dig* it! When it's exercise time, we'll fast forward to the "Wilbury Twist." That's where Tom Petty starts things off with that dance instruction line, "Put your hand on your head/Put your foot in the air/Then you hop around the room/In your underwear." You *know* Mikey's going to be in stitches!

Plus, it's pretty hard for kids to remember names sometimes. That's one reason they like "Sesame Street": Who can forget Big Bird, Elmo and Cookie Monster? So I bet Mike'll especially like the Wilburys' names—Muddy, Boo, Clayton and Spike are a heck of a lot easier to keep track of than Tom, Bob, Jeff and George. But I'll have to be careful when I play him the first Wilburys record—it'll be a royal bummer explaining how Charlie T. Jr., Otis, Nelson and Lucky Wilbury went away and may come back, but Lefty never will.

I think Mikey's going to like the second Wilburys album a lot more than the first one, though. It's more fun, and pretty easy to understand. Like on "Where Were You Last Night," the guys start out singing, "Where were you last night," then, next verse, "Where were you last week," and finally, "Where were you last year." I figure if Mikey's a stickler for detail—and you should see how he stacks up CDs around the house!—he'll probably want to know why they didn't ask, "Where were you last month," and I'll just ask him to give me a word that rhymes with "month" to shut him up. But he'll like that sequential thing.

Maybe one day Mikey'll ask me what I

think of the record, and heck, I'll just tell him I think Muddy, Boo, Clayton and Spike singing together these days is a heck of a lot more fun than Tom, Bob, Jeff and George singing apart; that Boo's "If You Belonged to Me" is better than anything on his *Under the Red Sky* album, even "Wiggle Wiggle"; and that "I guess by now you've got the gist/ Everybody's crazy about the Wilbury Twist" is one of the coolest rhymes in rock 'n' roll. Then we'll go outside, play a little basketball and put on the storm windows or something.—Dave DiMartino



L.L. Cool J

Mama Said Knock You Out
(Def Jam/Columbia)

DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK/I'VE BEEN HERE for years," barks L.L. Cool J in the title track of his latest epic, but everybody knows he's running out of time. With the rap scene turning out fearless new hotshots almost daily, L.L.'s got to top 1989's mild *Walking with a Panther* or surrender the mike to folks better at seizing the moment. You don't need dinosaurs when the likes of Queen Latifah, Ice-T and even lite rapper Young MC are pushing the music onwards and upwards.

Well, don't bury him, 'cause he's not dead yet. Though L.L. hasn't exactly gotten relevant, *Mama Said Knock You Out* renews the man's credentials, thanks to a healthy ego and silver tongue. Despite invocations of the funk and input from ace producer Marley Marl, the beats take a back seat to L.L.'s familiar persona, combining equal parts love god and killer MC. On the creamy "Around the Way Girl" he's tender, murmuring sweet nothings in the vein of his cute 1987 hit "I Need Love"; sleazier interludes like "Mr. Good Bar" retain a trashy charm, at least compared to what the competition's laying down lately. Showcasing the ruthless rapper, the playful "Eat 'em Up L. Chill" and frantic "Murdergram (Live at

Rapmania)" support the bragging with fierce good humor. For someone so predictable, he's surprisingly fun.

Elsewhere, he finds the courage to step out of character. After all the escapist chatter, L.L. ponders the state of the world in the somber closing track "The Power of God," assuming the voice of his real self, plain ol' Todd. And "Cheesy Rat Blues" furnishes the album's hilarious high point, with our hero whining to a comically lethargic tempo. Portraying a hip-hop flop reduced to washing windshields and stealing steaks, L.L. captures the flip side of his cartoon superdude image, conceding his own fallibility. Whether this constitutes a breakthrough or just an amusing fluke, the spirit and wit of *Mama Said Knock You Out* puts L.L. Cool J back in the rap race.—Jon Young



Van Morrison

Enlightenment
(PolyGram)

IM NOT OBJECTIVE GOING INTO THIS ALBUM. AS far as I'm concerned Van Morrison has only a handful of equals and no betters. You don't want to get stuck next to me on a bus talking about *Veedan Fleece*. So I'm in a funny position here, because friends of mine who enjoy Van Morrison more casually than I do think this is his best album in years. They're overjoyed he came out of the mystic long enough to do some short upbeat songs, with drums, that sound like his old hits. I like that stuff, too—but since I also liked all those long ethereal songs about nature and dead poets and the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I'm not quite as ready as my pals to pop the corks over this album. It's fun to hear Van getting loose and playing rock 'n' roll again, but it's done more with the *what-the-heck* attitude of *Wavelength* than in the whole-hearted spirit of "Domino" or "Gloria."

"Real Real Gone," for example, is an upbeat soul rocker in the classic "Wild

Night" style. But the horn line's so simple that it suggests creative nonchalance on Van's part. As if he said, "You want a pop hit? I can write one in my sleep. Here. Now hand me down my big boots and let me go back into the woods." On the coda of that song Van invokes Sam Cooke on the radio, Wilson Pickett in the midnight hour, Solomon Burke and James Brown. On another track he sings of "the viaducts of my dreams" running through "the Avalon sunset." It's like the closing theme from "The Van Morrison Story." Or the Cliff Notes.

A lot of the album's casual good humor may be due to Morrison's relaxed rapport with his current band, which includes organist/singer/'60s pop star Georgie Fame. Van's past bands have usually appeared scared of him onstage, but this crew always seems to be having a great time. ("Tore Down à la Rimbaud." Van sang at one show, "and I wish my *breakfast* would come"—then he looked at Georgie and they both cracked up.) A more complex pleasure comes in one of the album's best tracks, "Enlightenment." It's a light, mid-tempo tune that finds Van examining a conflict between his intellectual, philosophical side and his love of nature and this world. "Enlightenment says the world is nothing but a dream, everything's an illusion and nothing is real... enlightenment don't know what it is." Van touched on this dichotomy a few years ago, in "Ivory Tower," but here he seems to have reached a genuine self-knowledge: "I'm in the here and now meditating. Still I'm suffering, but that's my problem." That kind of honest insight may not ever make the Top 40, but it's Van pushing into new territory, which is what keeps the hardcore fan coming back.

"The Days Before Rock 'n' Roll" is completely wild. Once again Morrison is peeling off layers of his experience to get back to the pure sensations of childhood and again he summons the image of his old radio pulling in new gods with strange new names—Elvis, Fats, Sonny, Muddy and the Killer. Van sings of a lost childhood friend, of setting goldfish free, of trying to get Ray Charles to come in on his wavelength—but all this is set against a bizarre spoken litany by a voice that sounds like a cross between "The Goon Show," a Beckett play and a Norwegian learning English from a radio instruction manual. "The Days Before Rock 'n' Roll" is bittersweet and funny. But what's best about it is that it sounds like nothing Van Morrison has done before.—Bill Flanagan



Carl Stalling

The Carl Stalling Project: Music from Warner Bros. Cartoons 1936-1958
(Warner Bros.)

MOST PEOPLE HAVE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD of the late Carl W. Stalling, but they've undoubtedly heard his music. As the chief composer for cartoons at Warner Bros., Stalling created memorable scores for the likes of Bugs Bunny, Road Runner, Pepe Le Pew, Porky Pig and Speedy Gonzalez. Collaborating with impressionist Mel Blanc and special effects engineer Treg Brown, Stalling put together soundtracks that reflected the toons' surreal, kaleidoscopic action, stringing together original snippets of orchestration with several bars of, say, Mendelssohn (to depict the inscrutable "Mynah Bird"), or some now-obscure Tin Pan Alley kitsch, probably from the Warners publishing catalog (for a Bugs-in-drag scene). As evidenced by this compilation, producer Hal Willner's assertion that Stalling was to directors Fritz Freling and Chuck Jones as Nino Rota was to Fellini makes a lot of sense.

Willner, who has masterminded tribute albums to Rota as well as to Thelonious Monk, Kurt Weill and Walt Disney, is a long-time fan of Stalling's scores. Along with executive producer Greg Ford, he's painstakingly unearthed pristine takes of various soundtracks without dialogue. Heard in this light, Stalling must be considered among the first truly post-modern composers, while his crazy-quilt pastiches can now be appreciated on a whole new psychedelic plane.

The key to Stalling's conceptual genius lay in the fact that every note in his scores is in the service of an accompanying visual—he actually wrote to storyboards—which allowed the music to take unexpected twists and self-parodic turns. Like a cutting-edge hip-hop DJ, Stalling put his samples through a funhouse mirror. High and low culture were cut and pasted together on the same

page, reappearing in various forms so that the repetition bred familiarity—precisely the way great animation works. A tribute to Stalling's "loony tunes" and "merrie melodies" is that, even without visuals, they're kinetic enough to evoke vivid images.

Stalling never really got his due as an artist when he was alive. Even some of his colleagues who should have known better disparaged what he was doing as "musical Mickey Mousing," but this collection gives him the last laugh. Willner and company have promised several more volumes of this stuff, so move over, Spike Jones, Frank Zappa and Edgard Varèse. Because th-th-th-th-th-th-a-t's not all, folks...—Roy Trakin



N.W.A.

100 Miles and Runnin'
(Ruthless/Priority)

RECORDING GROUPS CAN'T ASK FOR BETTER publicity than that occasionally doled out free of charge by our public officials. Hardcore hip-hoppers N.W.A. hit the jackpot last year: An FBI assistant director sent the group's record company a chilling (not chillin') note on Justice Department stationery concerning an N.W.A. song he hadn't heard. By comparison, the controversy surrounding Public Enemy's purported anti-Semitism looks like a tea-time debate among New York intellectuals.

Like Public Enemy, though, N.W.A. has funneled the uproar back into its art. *100 Miles and Runnin'* is self-reflexive almost to the exclusion of anything else. Besides the FBI flap, the EP treats the departure of member Ice Cube, disses N.W.A. wannabes and plugs an imminent album. If it weren't so powerful musically, it would seem criminal to pay money for such an extended advertisement.

One reason it isn't is N.W.A.'s quantum leap in production. The sometimes sparse arrangements on the debut *Straight Outta Compton* album have evolved into thick

polyphonic mixes—not as noisy as Public Enemy's barrages, but just as effective in conveying tension. The title cut employs a droning rhythm track and panting tape loop to underscore the protagonists' flight. As with all five compositions, it also features an opening aural collage suggesting these guys could have made a living in radio drama had they been born 50 years earlier.

In case you thought N.W.A. was contrite, "Sa Prize (Part 2)" reprises the infamous "—Tha Police" with a vengeance. In case you thought oral sex was played out as a song topic, "Just Don't Bite It" takes the theme into the realm of a cartoon mini-series. And in case you thought the group had no sense of humor, "100 Miles and Runnin'" depicts N.W.A.'s pals at the FBI getting the drop on them.

Their detractors seem to believe N.W.A. indeed has no sense of humor. These are the same self-styled "art critics" who show no understanding of how art functions. May the First Amendment protect N.W.A.—and anyone else who dares to exercise their constitutional rights—from these un-American zealots—tha brain police.—Scott Isler



The Posies

Dear 23
(JGC)

THE POSIES' POP IS OF THE MID-'60S BRITISH variety, the Beatles filtered through the Hollies. Singers and guitarists Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow write dense, marvelous songs, and the Posies play them with strength and care. The tunes on *Dear 23*, the Seattle quartet's major-label debut, all crackle with tight harmonies, sweet guitar-drum combinations and ambitious lyrics.

Producer Jon Leckie, who also shepherded XTC's less serene investigations into '60s pop forms, keeps the group on track; at the same time he gives them room to stretch their confines. Auer and Stringfellow love the juxtapositions of their music—voices

merging and wandering, electric and acoustic guitars playing off each other—and their infectious enthusiasm puts their music a level above merely derivative. The lyrics occasionally overreach: Lines like "you fit your mind into smaller and smaller jars" (from "You Avoid Parties") and "volumes of photographs held in your Eisenhower hands" (from "Mrs. Green") indicate that the pair has a ways to go before their distanced lyrics are as consistently felt as their music.

But all the words on *Dear 23* grow from ideas, and the occasional verbal stumbles come from a group intent on finding original lyrics to place atop their fully-formed arrangements. Listen closely and the edges of the Posies' abundant harmonies grow harder and harder.—Jimmy Guterman



Keith Whitley

Keith Whitley's Greatest Hits
(RCA)

WHEN KEITH WHITLEY DIED SUDDENLY last year, of alcohol poisoning, his Kentucky roots and home-grown baritone were in full flower, and his records were bounding up the charts. Country music loves a martyr, and Whitley was barely in the ground before the hype began. The Country Music Association made him the first post-mortem nominee for their Horizon Award (most promising artist), and in the 1990 CMA video of the year (Garth Brooks' "The Dance"). Whitley is put on a pedestal alongside JFK, Martin Luther King and the shuttle disaster victims.

One problem with this kind of deification is that it obscures the music, and in Whitley's case that's a shame. Although his songs were generated by the usual Nashville-song-factory writers, he effortlessly transcends the material, rescuing even a trite number like "Miami, My Amy." And when he gets his voice into a classic country weeper like "Don't Close Your Eyes," Whitley is one of the few singers (George Jones

comes to mind) who can twist one syllable into a sweeping four-note glissando and just about tear your heart out.

This "greatest hits" collection is a mostly solid cross-section of Whitley's best stuff, from the light Texas bounce of "It Ain't Nothing" to the keep-your-head-up resolve of "I'm No Stranger to the Rain." Unfortunately, the album closes with "Tell Lorrie I Love Her," a home demo Whitley recorded for his wife, country crooner Lorrie Morgan, on the occasion of their wedding. It sure ain't one of his greatest hits, and its inclusion here smacks of more dead-guy exploitation.

Whitley made a lot of fine music in his lifetime. His early years playing and recording with childhood pal Ricky Skaggs and bluegrass legend Ralph Stanley schooled him well for his assault on Music City, providing his music with a depth lacking in many of the newer country singers. The production may be standard Nashville-slick, some of the material a little weak. But Keith Whitley was living proof that it's the singer, not the song.—Peter Cronin



Exene Cervenka

Running Scared
(Rhino)

LIKE LAST YEAR'S *OLD WIVES TALES*, *Running Scared* finds Exene chasing musical styles—from folk to pop to country—in a mad dash for balance. But in its diversity, it too often falls apart. For one thing, the constant sound-shuffling from track to track resembles those godawful budget-line "greatest hits." More importantly, Exene has a more limited range than she or producer Tony Gilkyson want to admit.

Set her up with an acoustic guitar and she soars. Both "Clinic" and "It Fell" prove that Exene is just perfect with ballads, able to convey sorrow and sincerity without lapsing into sentimentality. She sings, "If you lose your mind, don't worry/'Cause there's

something I can do/Come on down to my clinic/I'll find the right one for you," and, like a good and easy anesthetic, her voice puts you on a cloud. But all too quickly you come down, shocked into reality by something annoyingly inappropriate like the funk exercise "Real Estate," where Exene plays a talk/rap momma while her band pretends to be the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Even weirder and more disconcerting is "Just Another Perfect Day," where the band overpowers her by letting loose, albeit without X's kinetic energy. Exene is left to yell, something that might have worked 10 years ago, but now, if you'll pardon the reference, "reminds us of what we are not now."

Speaking of the past, her C&W duet with John Doe, "Missing Nature," echoes the Knitters (X's country offshoot) in sound and her last solo record in theme: "Stop the world, I wanna get back on/Even if it's almost gone." Neither reference is surprising, as country music, far more than rock, thrives by echoing its traditions. What you're left with, however, are two halves of a record that don't really congeal into a

whole. And while Exene once seemed like the voice of the future, these days she sounds far more at home with a sound from the past.—Rob O'Connor



Various Artists

*Where the Pyramid Meets the Eye:
A Tribute to Roky Erickson*
(Sire)

MOST STUDENTS OF ROCK HISTORY KNOW Roky Erickson as a minor footnote, a purveyor of '60s Texas psychedelia. He scored one minor hit, "You're Gonna Miss Me," with his band the 13th

Floor Elevators, then a run-in with the law derailed him for life. Busted for pot in 1968, he pled insanity to avoid going to jail and spent the next four years in a hospital for the criminally insane. Erickson always had a somewhat tenuous grip on reality and by the time he got out of the bughouse he'd been pretty much pushed over the edge.

In light of this sad bio, what a surprise it is to discover that this Erickson tribute is not only the rockiest record of the year, but the most brilliantly written one as well. Put together by Bill Bentley and featuring 22 tracks by 22 artists—among them ZZ Top, R.E.M., the Jesus and Mary Chain, the Butthole Surfers and Doug Sahm—this record is a shining testament to the breadth of Erickson's talent. From the sweetly lyrical "I Had to Tell You" (given a gorgeous reading by Poi Dog Pondering) to the deliciously ghoulish "Burn the Flames" (an absolutely mesmerizing vocal from Thin White Rope's Guy Kyser), this record is one discovery after the next. Southern Pacific offers a dose of dirty swamp boogie with "It's a Cold Night for Alligators" (a track that sounds like vin- [cont'd on page 111])

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SHORT TAKES

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THE CURE *Mixed Up* [Elektra]

Remix albums are generally little more than cheap make-overs—add a few beats here, pump the bass there—but this one verges on reinvention. It isn't just that Smith and company have stripped the songs to their essence; the best of these rearrangements, like the hook-withholding version of "The Walk," almost force the listener to rethink the song. Best of all, the added tension in the instrumental tracks only emphasizes the urgency of Smith's vocals.

INXS *X* [Atlantic]

Never ones to waste time on the obvious, INXS instead emphasize subtleties: vocal nuance, instrumental finesse, sly shifts in dynamics and deep, deep grooves. Though it's the overt touches—the swinging 6/8 pulse to "By My Side," or the giddy, harmonica-driven momentum of "Suicide Blonde"—that pull you in, it's the subtle stuff that keeps you listening.

BREATHE *Peace of Mind* [A&M]

Imagine Wham! without the brains, and you've got Andrew Ridgeley. Imagine Wham! without the soul, and you've got this piffle.

THE WATERBOYS *Room to Roam* [Chrysalis]

Mike Scott's retreat to roots may not be a particularly original move (what he attempts here isn't all that different from what Planxty, the Bothy Band or Silly Wizard were doing a decade ago), but it's inspired nonetheless. Not only is he more at home with his Celtic groove than pretenders like the Pogues, but he writes songs that stay within tradition even as they expand upon it. And he does a killer version of "The Raggle Taggle Gypsy."

QUEENSRYCHE *Empire* [EMI]

Like Rush, these guys balance fusion-sharp chops with art-rock ambition, a combination that often leads them dangerously close to pomposity. Two things keep them from toppling over the edge: first, a fondness for metal-oid power moves (screaming guitars, heroic vocals and the like), and second, unabashedly tuneful songs. Taken together, they make *Empire* a delightful surprise.

MANGO GROOVE *Mango Groove* [Atco]

Though hyped as a sort of Madonna-meets-the-Mahotella Queens, what this South African pop outfit actually delivers is rather more modest—an upbeat, pop-savvy rehash of older mbaqanga and recent dance pop. And though it may not be as politically correct as Johnny Clegg, it's a hell of a lot more listenable.

PREFAB SPROUT *Jordan: The Comeback* [Epic]

"Comeback" is the operative word here, as Paddy McAloon and the Sprouts reunite with producer Thomas Dolby for the band's most likeable album since *Two Wheels Good*. What credit Dolby deserves for this return to form is hard to say. But it's worth noting that the improvement here isn't just in production values, but in the writing, which is sharper, more focused and richly evocative.

MICHAEL HEDGES *Taproot* [Windham Hill]

That Michael Hedges is an acoustic guitar monster ain't exactly news, but the difference between *Taproot* and its predecessors is like the difference between Godzilla on video and in the flesh. Hedges can do more with a simple strum than most guys could manage with a whole solo, and that attention to texture and detail makes this "autobiographical myth told in music" utterly gripping.

RINGO STARR

Ringo Starr and His All-Starr Band [Rykodisc]
No Beatle songs, and the sidemen only get one solo spot apiece; otherwise this is every bit the players' paradise the tour was. You'll miss the visuals, since it's much more fun watching Ringo sing "The No-No Song" than hearing

him, and the audience sound can be intrusive. But beyond that, Starr still comes across as the most low-key and likeable Beatle, and you know that don't come easy.

VARIOUS ARTISTS *A Carnival of Cuban Music* [Rounder] *Cuban Dance Party* [Rounder]

Although produced in conjunction with the TV special "Routes of Rhythm with Harry Belafonte," the actual sound of these two collections seems too casual to be the stuff of documentaries. Volume One, *Carnival*, sticks close to street bands and small-time conjuntos, giving it the feel of a Cuban-style *Black Orpheus*. But *Dance Party* is everything it promised, as Irakere, Los Van Van and others deliver a groove that's as raw and fiery as cane-field rum.

THE GETO BOYS *The Geto Boys* [Def American]

Dirty words do not a dangerous album make, and despite all the pre-release hubbub, there's little in "Gangster of Love" or "Mind of a Lunatic" that hasn't already been done on the page or on the screen. In fact, without the censorship rap to generate publicity, it's doubtful anyone would ever have paid attention to the Geto Boys' two-bit cussing and lame-assed beats. God, I love America...

WIRE TRAIN *Wire Train* [MCA]

Guitar pop is the alternative scene's old reliable—it's honest, unpretentious and never goes out of style. Unfortunately, it never gets very exciting either, which is why sturdy-yet-unspectacular recordings like this one sometimes slip by unnoticed. Don't let it; writing this unassumingly solid deserves to be heard.

JESUS JONES *Liquidizer* [SBK]

Imagine Big Audio Dynamite with half the swing and twice the attitude, and that's Jesus Jones. Not only do these techno-savvy young Britons believe that the digital sampler is about to replace the Marshall stack, the sound they spin ought to convince most listeners. Though we may never see the day when anybody plays air sampler...

—J.D. Considine

MUSICIANS AGAINST CENSORSHIP

SOUND OFF!

THE FIRST AMENDMENT to the United States Constitution entitles every American citizen freedom of speech. In recent years this nation has withstood some of the most divisive social and political debate in its history—race battled against race in the civil rights struggle, father was often pitted against son in the Vietnam war protest, and, wife sometimes spoke against husband during the height of the women's right struggle. Yet, today we find many elected officials and opinions leaders wasting the public's time on the dangers of music lyrics. Give me a break.

You can drive down the streets of any major American city and see prostitutes soliciting and a surprising number of outstanding community members slipping into the local Pussy Cat lounge. So now all of a sudden I'm a threat to the national security because I write a few songs that might offend the people in Peoria. I haven't been to Peoria, but I bet you dollars to donuts they got a Pussy Cat lounge.

Am I suffering from paranoia or is there a double standard when it comes to rap music? Or maybe this is the Salem witch hunt and I have been labeled the heal warlock. On second thought, I bet there is a Pussy Cat lounge in Salem, Massachusetts also.

Thankfully, the founding fathers, who were racist to the core (Thurgood Marshall's words) did not give the government the power to restrict expression because of its content, subject matter or message.

However, as it often happens in our country, there is now a new breed of sheriffs running amok. This select few right-wing individuals have appointed themselves the judge and jury for what's right and wrong. But, if you look closely at these individuals it's obvious that we are not from the same part of town and what they consider entertainment is different from what I think is entertaining.



I find it disingenuous how during interviews these thought cops neglect to point out that I have CLEAN versions of all my records suitable for minors and that I sticker all of my adult material.

I own and operate the largest independent recording company around today and Luke Records has a reputation of helping the Miami community when others have turned their backs.

Luke Records has donated money to the AIDS Foundation as well as organized charity basketball games and set up numerous scholarship funds for underprivileged children. My company is also concerned with world issues like the plight of the homeless and the illiteracy problem. And a majority of the artists signed to the record label have given proceeds for their singles to homeless organizations, literacy programs, etc.

Why is it that the media only focuses on what they consider my negative side, but never the positive. I guess what Don Henley said holds true the media only wants my "dirty laundry."

The entire music industry and not just rap music need to stand together and sing, "We are not going to take censoring our material lying down or twiddling our thumbs." As a collective musical voice, R&B, classical, pop, heavy metal, Latin, etc., we need to unite.

Johnny can't read, dope runs rampant in our streets, Detroit can't sell cars, unemployment at an all time high, and the country gets bent out of shape about young people expressing their youth.

Luther Campbell
President/Owner, Luke Records
Member of 2 Live Crew

MUSICIAN

Where the Players Do the Talking
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JAZZ

MARK BINGHAM
I Passed for Human [Dog Gone]

He records Boozoo Chavis, orchestrates Weill, hangs with Willner. Just like any pay-attention '90s guy, he's got a lot going on in his brain. However, the first record under his name—laden with an all-star cast—is focused to the max. Though it covers mucho ground, there's no eclectic side going on: the singing Southerner really comes off as a Little Feat fan who cares more about "Kiss It Off" than "Old Folks Boogie." And when he does bend to the funk, he's sharp enough to take the spotlight off his formalism by getting Stampfel, Ginsberg and other brothers of the heart to explain what they'd "like"—lost comic books, mantras and Malcolm Forbes' toy boat collection. With friends like that, it's no wonder Bingham hears "Giant Steps" as the Jetsons' theme. (Box 1742, Athens, GA 30605)—*Jim Macnie*

KIP HANRAHAN
Tenderness [AmericanClave]

The subtitle is "Song Cycle (at least 46 different folk songs from inside the city)," and that's half of the story: Sometimes these folk songs, and elements of folk music, exist as part of an inescapable urban miasma rather than in their own separate museum space. This glinting, dramatic, pan-American music, which demands to be heard in one extensive sitting, is like running through the streets of Manhattan at hyperspeed. Starting with the faultless, incessant clacking of a salsa percussion section from Harlem, Hanrahan touches on languid fretless basslines you'd hear in a Brazilian supper club, grabs Don Pullen's blurry two-fisted piano lyricism and Meters guitarist Leo Nocentelli's precise blues-tinged rhythms, then stuffs that into a beatbox-free subway car and appropriates '40s Latin dance bands, torch singing (Carmen Lundy's smoke-ringed voice is particularly effective) and violin (both charanga-style and Broadway-musical variety). The magic doesn't just come from the often unresolved stylistic conflicts or the image-rich lyrics (check "half of sex is..." for some frank, unpolitic musing on the carnal), but from the total absence of "fusion" affectation. This is an unselfconsciously powerful, important achievement that plays like a grand, expensive love letter to the city from Hanrahan, who, thankfully, is more a romantic than a musicologist. (215 E. 11th St., Suite 3-D, New York, NY 10005)

—*Tom Moon*

PAULINE OLIVEROS,
STUART DEMPSTER AND
PANAIOTIS
Deep Listening [New Albion]

Talk about a sense of musical mission: Oliveros and Dempster descended into a 14-foot-deep cistern in Washington state, armed with accordion and trombone, respectively (plus didjeridu, occasional voices and "found metal

pieces"). They wallowed around in the cavernous acoustics of this old tank, improvising on given modes, and explored the cistern's effect on overtones sans digital delay or other devices. Our knowledge of these odd circumstances lends an almost dadaistic edge to the listening experience. Other musicians have "played the space": David Hykes and the Harmonic Choir have done wonders flinging sound around the lofty ceiling of St. John's in New York; Dempster himself floated trombone tunes in a cathedral for the New Albion album *In the Great Abbey of Clement VI*. But on *Deep Listening*, the reverberant water-tank musings are mystical despite the hall. The end result—all plaintive drones and washes—becomes an eerily engrossing brand of ambient music, and further proof of the mesmeric New Albion aesthetic. (584 Castro, #515, San Francisco, CA 94114)—*Josef Woodard*

BUNK JOHNSON

The King of the Blues [American Music]

Whether or not he was king, trumpeter Johnson was unquestionably a master—of the plaintive phrase, of the inflected pitch and of the famous dark tone. This hour-long CD is the first in what devotees pray is a comprehensive reissue of the American Music catalog. Bunk and his band, including Jim Robinson's buttress trombone and pirouetting clarinetist George Lewis, spearheaded the 1940s revival of traditional New Orleans jazz. These recordings remain a polyphonic delight. (1206 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70116)—*Scott Slater*



BOOKS

CROSTOWN TRAFFIC: JIMI HENDRIX AND THE POST-WAR ROCK 'N' ROLL REVOLUTION

Charles Shaar Murray
[St. Martin's Press]

Few rock books can be hailed for their excess of ideas, which makes Murray's analytical tome all the more special and important. The veteran *New Musical Express* writer uses Hendrix's career as a jumping-off point for a broad treatise on the development of rock 'n' roll. He ties the guitarist to the sweep of rock, jazz, blues and R&B tradition; along the way, he offers insights about a host of topics—sexism and misogyny in rock, racism and racially divided audiences, studio and stage technology and their impact on the music itself, the vapidness of '80s radio, the iconography of heavy metal—that are as caustic and authoritative as any that have seen print in the annals of rockcrit. As a piece of theoretical criticism, *Crosstown Traffic* is as bold as love.—*Chris Morris*

ONE HIT WONDERS

Wayne Jancik
[Billboard Books]

Thumbnail sketches of every artist/band who placed but one single in the Top 40 of the *Billboard* pop charts, this reference collection adds up to a rock 'n' roll history at

least as wacky and in tune with the spirit of the music as those which celebrate more enduring icons. Anyway, thanks to the unpredictability of chart action, there are plenty of star turns here, from Carl Perkins' "Blue Suede Shoes" (#1, 1956) to Jimi Hendrix's "All Along the Watchtower" (#20, 1968) to Randy Newman's "Short People" (#2, 1978). Of course, the real delights are the few hundred other short histories included, meticulously researched by Jancik and fleshed out with a generous supply of period photos. Maybe a few trivia buffs knew the Castaways were only 15 when they recorded "Liar Liar" (#12, 1965), but who knew they've been together ever since, trying for hit number two?—*Mark Rowland*

12 DAYS ON THE ROAD:
THE SEX PISTOLS AND AMERICA
Noel E. Monk and Jimmy Guterman
[Morrow]

When Sid Vicious, Johnny Rotten, Steve Jones and Paul Cook arrived at JFK on January 3, 1978, they were one of the most vital bands to set foot on American soil. Twelve days later, after a chaotic Southern tour, they had dissolved in bitterness and disillusion. This book covers those critical 12 days hour by hour in unprecedented detail, mainly as seen through the eyes of Monk, the tour's manager. Though it's not a model of great prose, and the authors' insistence on using the present tense at all times can be confusing, *12 Days* has the satisfying feel of hard fact, backed by extensive documentation and dozens of interviews. It also doesn't make the mistake of taking the subject too seriously. Pistols enthusiasts will obviously want it, but anyone interested in bizarre cultural phenomena should take a look.

—*Mac Randall*



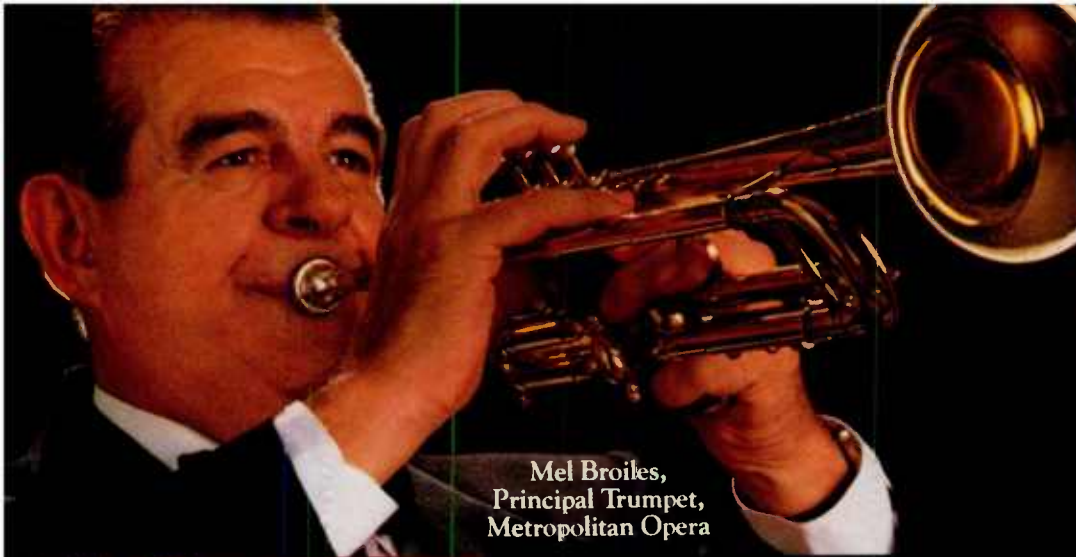
INDIES

24-7 SPYZ

Gumbo Millennium
[In Effect Records]

An outward-looking record that mixes world music, punk-metal, They Might Be Giants, Martin Luther King, yes, the environment itself, and silly (but they work) New York 1990 hippie fashions that maybe Soundgarden's Chris Cornell might wear in an especially wound-up gig. The Spyz are black headbangers who challenge expectations, prejudice and the age of rap-rap-rap. Public Enemy, these guys have a thing or two they sound like they wanna tell you! (Though they'd probably remind themselves it's the decade of love and count to 10 first.) Yet I will never love this album because it strikes me as a boy's album; moshing, guitar worship and a sexist "Culo Posse" about girls' butts could be okay if they hadn't missed their chance to make "Don't Break My Heart" sound like the breakup song that it is. Check into King's X first: Their "Summerland" really dissolves these tired old stereotypes.

—*Jill Blaudinelli*



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Dimensional Depth Perception

[Carlyle]

The Pepsi Cola-driven metal equivalent of a "Pump Up the Jam," *Dimensional Depth Perception* is the record you wish every hater of this genre would listen to. Unfortunately, its noise will probably scare many folks away just as Technotronic scares away others because it's so commercial. These future candidates for pinup-boy hell are teenagers themselves, ambitious and imaginative enough to have achieved *Headbangers Ball*-ready production on an indie label, and keep hitting too close for comfort to their own personal dilemmas whenever they try to sound like Voivod and Death Angel. F.U.C.T.E.D. should make it in the biz—they're more fun than turtles that grow in a jar, nun finger puppets and the entire Archie McPhee catalog! (Box 150708, Nashville, TN 37215)—*Jill Blardinelli*

STRUNZ AND FARAH

Primal Magic [Mesa]

The presence of two nylon-string nirvana-seekers like Jorge Strunz and Ardeshir Farah in one group is a near embarrassment of riches. As if each player's virtuosity—fired by keen melodic inventiveness, harmonic sensitivity and careening finger speed—weren't enough, their crisp duets are underpinned by a multi-ethnic, groove-conscious rhythm section. The result is a musical landscape redolent with tropical colors and rolling with flamenco thunderclaps. Not content to let themselves get too vampish, the lush, tuneful interplay of Costa Rican-born Strunz and Iranian-bred Farah on "Tierra Veroe" reveals a song sense not enslaved by the shallowness of nonstop fret-flash pyrotechnics. (Box 5510, Glendale, CA 91502)—*Tom Cheyney*



VIDEO

R. E. M.

Tourfilm [Warner Bros.]

Maybe concert videos spook you, but this film of R.E.M.'s *Green* tour is topnotch. Concentrating on recent material (no sense interfering with the *R.E.M. Succumbs* anthology), *Tourfilm* manages a tricky balance—it brings the viewer into the middle of the band while preserving R.E.M.'s mystery. The moodiness seems to grow naturally out of the music; it's not the sort of phony *film noir* that passes for gothic on MTV. There is a beautiful slowed-down version of "The One I Love," a rearranged and improved "Pop Song 89" and a killing, hellfire performance of "Turn You Inside Out" that should be released as a single. After an hour the fast song/slow song rhythm gets predictable ("I Remember California" should have been cut to speed things toward the finale) but even without the pictures, *Tourfilm* is a great live album of a band at its height.

—*Bill Flanagan*



REISSUES

PARLIAMENT

Motor-Booty Affair [Mercury/PolyGram]

P-Funk leader George Clinton would never chide ya for enthusiasm, spontaneity or even inspired silliness—the P-Funk message (like that of their admirers Cameo) is always to be yourself. On *Motor-Booty Affair*, a disco "concept" record first released in 1978, there's a loose plot of likable characters who alternately tease and draw out a certain Sir Nose De-Void of Funk, who claims he's too cool to dance, swim or sweat. Halfway through the record, Sir Nose gives in, equates dancing to funk with sex if you listen closely, and who knows, maybe he's the fellow now doing the humpy hump on yer MTV?—*Jill Blardinelli*

HANK SNOW

I'm Movin' On and Other Great Country Hits [RCA]

This 20-song anthology captures Snow and his Rainbow Ranch Boys in their glory years from '49 to '54. With its bluesy melodies, brisk rhythms, occasional electric guitars and titles like "The Rhumba Roggie," Snow's sound is a fine example of "almost-rockabilly" (i.e., it still has fiddles). Never a wildman though, Snow was equally at home with the straight country of "I Don't Hurt Anymore" and sentimental narratives like "My Mother." An impressive testimony to an influential and enduring artist, *I'm Movin' On...* also serves as a great musical portrait of the white South about 10 minutes before Elvis arrived.—*Thomas Anderson*

ROBERT WYATT

Rock Bottom

Ruth Is Stranger Than Richard

[Virgin UK/Caroline]

The term "cult following" seems to have been specially designed for albums like these; only in Wyatt's case, the cult should be larger. These mid-'70s recordings were the first Wyatt made after the drunken three-story fall that ended his drumming days forever. Though the instrumental sections lack the intensity of his earlier work with the Soft Machine, Wyatt's wit and beautiful, quintessentially English voice are more than enough to hold one's interest. Remastering is serviceable, but Virgin forgot the personnel info (guests include Brian Eno, Mike Oldfield and Fred Frith).—*Mac Randall*

ALICE COLTRANE

Journey in Satchidananda [MCA/Impulse]

This sumptuous 1970 recording is bathed in the kind of earnest, modal spirituality that marks much of acoustic jazz in the era before the final triumph of fusion. What this music lacks in harmonic depth it makes up for in lyric feeling, particularly Pharoah Sanders' incredibly tender soprano saxophone and the orgasmic sweep of Alice Coltrane's harp. The floor-rocking resonance of the bass ostinatos (courtesy of Cecil McBee and Charlie Haden), coupled with the atmospheric overlay of tam-

boura and percussion (especially on the title tune), suggests that this digital reissue is a likely antecedent for John McLaughlin's better-known *My Goal's Beyond*; while Mrs. Coltrane's rolling, bluesy phrasing on "Stopover Bombay" and "Something about John Coltrane" hints at how far she might have come as a piano stylist had she remained on that path.—*Chip Stern*

RICHARD HELL

& THE VOIDOIDS

Blank Generation [Sire/Warner Bros.]

One of the most rousing, underrated rock recordings to emerge from the CBGB's scene of the late 1970s, *Blank Generation* is a new-wave classic. Equal parts Jim Morrison, Iggy Pop and Lou Reed, Hell was a progenitor of the scene as co-founder of Television with Tom Verlaine. His quirky blend of punk rock rhythms and traditional blues roots (their cover of Creedence's "Walking on the Water") gave his twisted tales of relationships in extremis (like "Love Comes in Spurts" and "Betrayal Takes Two") and erotic nihilism ("New Pleasure") a cubist edge all their own. That and the fact that Ivan Julian was a pumpin' rhythm guitarist, Marc Bell (now Marky Ramone) sand-blasted rock backbeats with brisk urgency, and Robert Quine's polytonal sonic grenades marked him as the most original electric guitarist to pass through the new wave.—*Chip Stern*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Le Grun Mamou: A Cajun Music Anthology;

The Historic Victor Bluebird Sessions, 1928-1941

[Country Music Foundation]

You'll have to cross at least five decades and the barrier of French lyrics to appreciate this vintage material, but it's well worth the cultural leap. Many of the genre's most important pioneers are present, including Nathan Abshire, Amadee Ardoin and Dennis McGee; the varied program includes both Cajun music proper and fascinating hybrids with blues, western swing and rural string-band music. It was all meant for dancing, and still sounds fresh today. As with all CMF projects, the liner notes are thorough and informative.—*Ben Sandmel*

MIGHTY DIAMONDS

Go Seek Your Rights [Caroline]

The stirring sound of the harmony trio was one of the central means of expression during reggae's soulful '70s. This remastered CD package, one of the first batch of Virgin Front Line reissues, pulls together some of the Diamonds' best early work, including their seminal *Right Time* album. Donald "Tabby" Shaw's pure, plaintive tenor blends with potent sweetness with fellow vocalists Fitzroy "Bunny" Simpson and Lloyd "Judge" Ferguson. But the bulk of the cuts are anything but saccharine love songs: "Why Me Black Brother Why" decries black-on-black violence, while "Them Never Love Poor Marcus" reflects the memory of Marcus Garvey, an early prophet of Afrocentricity. These kinds of lyrical statements are still timely, a sure indicator of the Diamonds' classic work. (114 W. 26th St., New York, NY 10001)—*Tom Cheyney*

DAVID BOWIE

Pin Ups [Rykodisc]

Sort of Ziggy and the Spiders' last hurrah, this '73 collection of British Invasion covers turned out to be Bowie's

most high-spirited album for a long time to come. Mick Ronson blasts some of his best guitar work ever, while Bowie croons and wails his way through nuggets like "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere," "Friday on My Mind" and a wonderfully demented "See Emily Play." Added bonus is a previously unreleased Stones-ish version of Springsteen's "Growin' Up" with future Stone Ron Wood on lead guitar (see, Bowie really was a visionary—just like *Circus* magazine always said). And it all sounds a lot better on CD than it did on eight-track.—*Thomas Anderson*

VARIOUS GEEZERS

Nipper's Greatest Hits: The 30's Volume 1 [RCA]

On the plus side, this 20-track CD offers a more adventurous selection (from a more adventurous decade, perhaps) than RCA's equivalent '40s anthology; if Mae West sneering "My Old Flame"—with Duke Ellington's 1934 band wasted behind her—had been a "greatest hit," Nipper would never have outlived puppyhood. On the minus side, the cursory booklet notes are full of mis- and disinformation, and the sound is mostly filtered to the texture of mashed potatoes. Other sonic additives include tape hiss and rechanneled stereo; was anyone awake when this was mastered? On the plus side, it is a midline release.—*Scrat Isler*

HOWLIN' WOLF

Change My Way [MCA]

The first time I heard Howlin' Wolf I was—like everybody else—amazed by the guy's incredible vocal cords. Once I got as accustomed as anyone does to that voice, I started admiring Hubert Sumlin's spidery guitar work. With this reissue of Chess tracks circa '58 to '66, I find myself focusing on Sammy Lay's dynamic drumming—rolling like a trolley car through Willie Dixon's "Just Like I Treat You" or threatening to blow the roof off the joint on "Love Me Darlin'." Needless to say, Wolf and Sumlin sound pretty great too. Less ragged than his Memphis recordings or early Chess sides, *Change My Way* shows Wolf at his most "arranged," but still as untamed as ever.

—*Thomas Anderson*



CLASSICS

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Mozart: *Requiem D. 626*; Verdi: *Messa da Requiem* [EMI] This double-CD reissue opens with a smart-sounding 1972 recording of Mozart's Requiem. He started it, thanks to a mysterious commission he didn't welcome, then completed a couple of operas and a clarinet concerto before he returned to it, dying before he finished; his wife had Süßmayer write the rest. This is conductor Daniel Barenboim's weighty and logical, though somewhat puffed-up account, with the English Chamber Orchestra and the John Alldis Choir; baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and mezzo-soprano Janet Baker are big-time international vets. Sir John Barbirolli's 1970 efficient dream of the Verdi, though—done with the New

Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, plus unfailingly musical and direct soloing from singers Montserrat Caballé, Fiorenza Cossotto, Jon Vickers and Ruggero Raimondi—is unforgettable, a model of how an enormous work can jump to life as organically as an ace three-minute tune. Of course, Verdi's long cry of loss (and hope) is in minor keys: He wrote it for his fellow countryman Alessandro Manzoni, recouping some music he'd earlier composed for a planned mass for another great Italian, Rossini. In his notes, Jean-François Labis uncovers a tremendous reason, beyond their standings as quintessential requiems from successive centuries, for presenting the two compositions together: that although Mozart's came out of detachment, and Verdi's sprang from towering grief, they've both moved listeners for years. They'll continue to, and at EMI's \$20 offering, this set is a deal.—*Jim Hunter*

RECORDINGS

[cont'd from page 105] tage Creedence), Primal Scream contributes the wildly cosmic "Slip Inside This House," and Chris Thomas turns in a groovy metaphysical pep talk, "Postures (Leave Your Body Behind)."

The variety in rhythm, melody and language at Erickson's command is dazzling; however, what makes this record such a beautiful thing is the philosophy that courses through every song. Erickson's music is freighted with the free-wheeling spirit of experimentation that defined the '60s, and his songs evoke that brief blip in time when it was believed that if we all busted our minds wide open, flowers and rainbows would pour forth. We know now that some ugly things also emerged as part of that collective purge, and Erickson's vaguely creepy music alludes to that as well; his songs seem poised at that glorious moment before the fall, when the wave of the '60s was roaring and wild and about to come crashing down.—*Kristine McKenna*

Eddie Brickell & New Bohemians

Ghost of a Dog
(Geffen)

WHILE HER INSISTENCE ON BEING colorful wears thin, you have to admire Eddie Brickell's nerve. No second-album hesitation for this platinum artist: On *Ghost of a Dog*, the tireless Texan plunges headlong into the storms of love, pursuing fulfillment with copious zest. Sometimes eloquent and sometimes just crazed, Brickell cries out for an editor. But at least there's stuff worth editing.

Mostly she's got them ol' kozmic blues again, mama, and though the New Bohemians' folk-tinged rock lacks sizzle, Brickell's sweet singing yields enough emotion for an army of romantics. In fact, the moments that cut deepest come when she really blows her cool. The shimmering "He Said" begins softly, then erupts into the anguished observation, "It's hard to love/It's hard not to love." Brickell tries to ignore her heart in the elegant "Strings of Love," only to exclaim, "I want to take it further/I want to take it on forever," a sentiment all passion junkies can appreciate. When she surrenders to the spirit, nobody captures the intoxicating pain of



obsession better.

Sometimes, alas, Brickell seems too impressed with herself. "Carmelito" tells a precious Tex-Mex tall tale, and the plodding "10,000 Angels" bogs down in pretentious notions of faith and damnation. In fairness, it's tricky being a pop philosopher, constantly grasping at ultimates. Even the supposedly slight title song has a greater purpose, reflecting on the persistence of memory.

On a smaller scale, Brickell paints striking images, especially in the tender "Times Like These" and "Me by the Sea," a wistful soliloquy on needing a hand to hold. And what of the New Bohemians? Ready, willing and clearly able (note slammin' drummer Matt Chamberlain), they're allowed few chances to blast, despite a vocabulary that includes everything from roadhouse boogie ("Mama Help Me") to brooding psychedelia ("Forgiveness"). Of course, it'd be hard to squeeze more personality into *Ghost of a Dog*. Eddie Brickell's covered that angle just fine, thanks.

—*Jon Young*

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DEVELOPMENTS

[cont'd from page 98] their new DMC1000 digital mixing console. It's a beauty, with eight channels, eight busses and built-in effects processing—all fully automatable and, of course, fully digital, with just about every kind of digital interface port on the thing that you ever read about. A perfect companion for some of those digital recording devices we mentioned above, not to mention Yamaha's own DRU8 digital eight-track which made its AES debut last year.

But enough with the digital already. At AES both Tascam and Fostex introduced one-inch 24-track analog recorders with the new Dolby S noise reduction system. Tascam's MSR-24 is now available in an S version, as well as in its old dbx Type 1 incarnation. And Fostex's new G-24S is a Dolby S machine with built-in SMPTE/MIDI synchronization capabilities. Also lurking around the Tascam booth were some new mixing consoles for the humble-of-purse recordist. Both are eight-buss boards with four aux sends and MIDI ports for automating mutes. There's a 16-channel version, the M2516, for just under three grand, and a 24-channel model, the M2524, for a shade less than four Gs.

So while a lot of the new digital technology is still up there in price heaven, conventional analog gear is becoming more and more of a bargain. Don't worry though, prices on DAWs and other digital gear will inevitably come down to earth. Which means it's wise to start boning up on this stuff right now. **M**

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Goatee Rock had its offshoots and sub-genres, too. The Association were a softer, extremely romantic and flair-bolted variation on Goatism. They aspired to become Goatee intellectuals with "Along Comes Mary," but were eclipsed by the collegiate pipe-smoking sound of Circus Maximus ("The wind is...MY LOVE?"). The harder edge of Goatee Rock was brushed by Vanilla Fudge (who were really bigger than the genre) and the Rascals (who were really better than the genre). Rare Earth crossed the thin line between Goatee Rock and Blue-Eyed Soul (the true Goatee Rocker never made it over that line).

Rock history is written by the victors, and so the bands we remember as having been biggest in the late '60s—the Beatles, the

Stones, Hendrix, Dylan—are those that continued to win airplay and record sales after the '60s ended. But while those who were not there will never believe it, the truth is that in the teenage consciousness of 1967, the Buckingham were a lot bigger than the Who. So it's fitting that we take just one short page and one brief moment to shed one tiny tear for the forgotten ones, the lost boys, the heroes of Goatee Rock.



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