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ISSUE No 149

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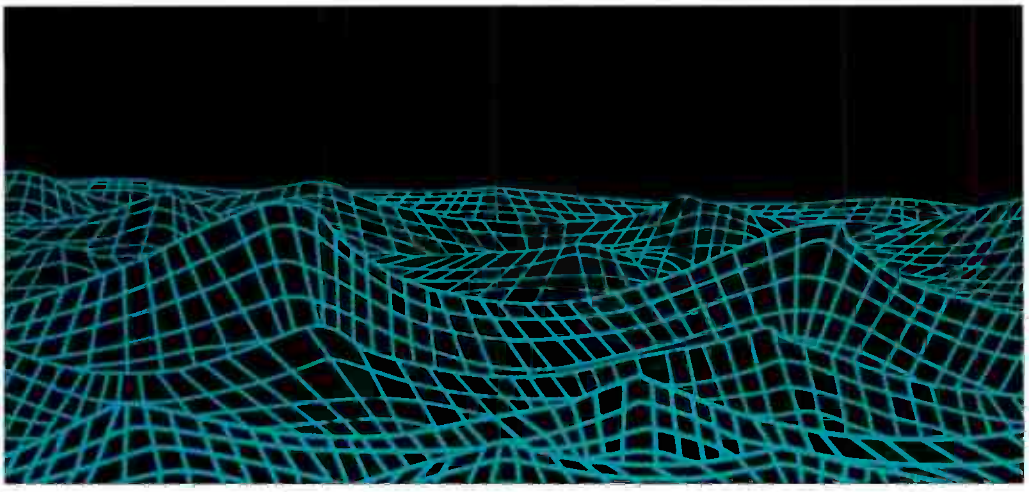

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COVER: *Jerry Garcia and Elvis Costello photographed in San Rafael, California by Leslie Flores.* ***This page:*** *(clockwise from left) Christopher Hartlove; Mick Rock; Larry Klein*

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"The most complete male vocalist to emerge out of the soul heritage since Otis Redding."

—VILLAGE VOICE

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FRONT WOMAN

Joni Mitchell

In "Real Good For Free," the star in a limousine confronted his roots in a street musician—these days, the guy in the limo can't even play!

Yeah, but that's nothing new. Everybody's so shocked at this Milli Vanilli thing—the second wave of rock 'n' roll was like that! That's why the Beatles seemed so fresh; they were the third. The pure first wave was Chuck Berry and Little Richard. The second wave was doo-wop, and New York got hold of it. Fabian, that's Milli Vanilli: They just groomed a pretty face who couldn't sing or play. That wave of superficiality was followed by the more earnest sound of the folk boom, like the Weavers, Kingston Trio, Dylan. Dylan kicked a lot of people into gear. I never thought to be critical of a pop lyric, because it wasn't poetry. After Dylan I thought, "You mean, you can put poetry to music? Great!"

That approach can get you into trouble.

I'm used to being a woman without a country, you know? All my life I've been that way. People don't like it when you switch camps. I've got paintings in Europe on exhibition, and one of the curators was nervous at first, because there's four different styles. Some of the people's written comments were funny: "Don't quit your night job." "Nice frames." But mostly they liked it. I guess it was brought on by the pop thing, but the woman who ran it said it was kind of a phenomenon; people would buy a poster and want to sit and *talk* about which paintings they liked, and why.

Success gives you freedom as a painter that you don't enjoy as a musician. When you put an ambitious experiment out as a record, you run the risk of people just not getting it.

"ANY TIME YOU SING YOU'RE ACTING—NO MATTER HOW MUCH OF YOUR LIFE YOU PUT IN."

Yeah, I had the blessing to record as I saw fit in spite of trends. I never was produced. I work with my husband now, but I always had the luxury of making my music when it wasn't in sync with its time. As it became less familiar, I ended up an outcast, from the jazz and rock communities. And I never really even fit into folk. I dressed too colorfully! [*laughs*]

On your new album Night Ride Home, *you rhapsodize a black boy in a Botticellian dream; it's as though you're resigned that the perfect lover is really just a flower child after all.*

You're thinking about what I'm thinking instead of what the song is saying. The people who will enjoy the record won't think about what *I meant*; they'll hold it up and it'll be like a mirror.

Any time a singer sings—any singer in the *world*—they're acting. And sometimes in the course of performance something strikes against the actor's life, and it becomes vital. But art is artifice no matter how much of your life you put in. When I sang "Cherokee Louise" I felt like I was nine. I had to punch in in one place and I couldn't get the feeling back; I was an adult pretending to be young. I went to hear the Joni Mitchell Project, this revue that does some of my songs. They called me up and I did "Cherokee Louise" a cappella, dancing to keep the groove. I'm coming up on the rape scene and I'm, like, highly mirthful. But it came off because people got feelings from it. Every time you sing it you don't relive it. An old song can die on you.

The point is, do *you* see yourself in it? Does the mirror show you screwing up, and perhaps set you on a course to changing that? Or do you see another person suffering like you did and it brings a *comfort* to your sorrow?

The mirror can be scary; some of your songs are quite tragic.

It's a tragic world we live in! Every second two species become extinct. People say, "We need a cure for cancer"; there is no cure. We are cancer. What man has done to this environment for economics. And what's happening now? The world is accelerating economically! Communism breaking down is no victory. That's what getting back to the garden means in "Woodstock": Some hippies tried it but fell into a rural decadence because there was no culture around it. The novelty wore off and they went back to the real world, which since its beginning has been set upon a course of destiny—man moving away from nature.

Pop music marketing plays into that commercial unification, especially radio; it puts artists like you in a precarious place.

And lot of critics are prejudiced against great musicians, who they call slick. Somebody said to me, "This sounds like Sting," because Wayne Shorter was on it. That's ignorance. And that's a rock journalist saying that. You talk about the more creative era I grew up in? When I was in my 20s, deejays had the freedom to play world music, folk, jazz, rock, all in the same show. That was an education and a thrill. Now we're in a decadent, commerce-dictated state. Those bits of music are available, but how does a young artist gain access to all of this wonderful knowledge that would make a richer, brighter talent? So rich and bright [*laughs*] that people wouldn't get it? —Matt Resnicoff

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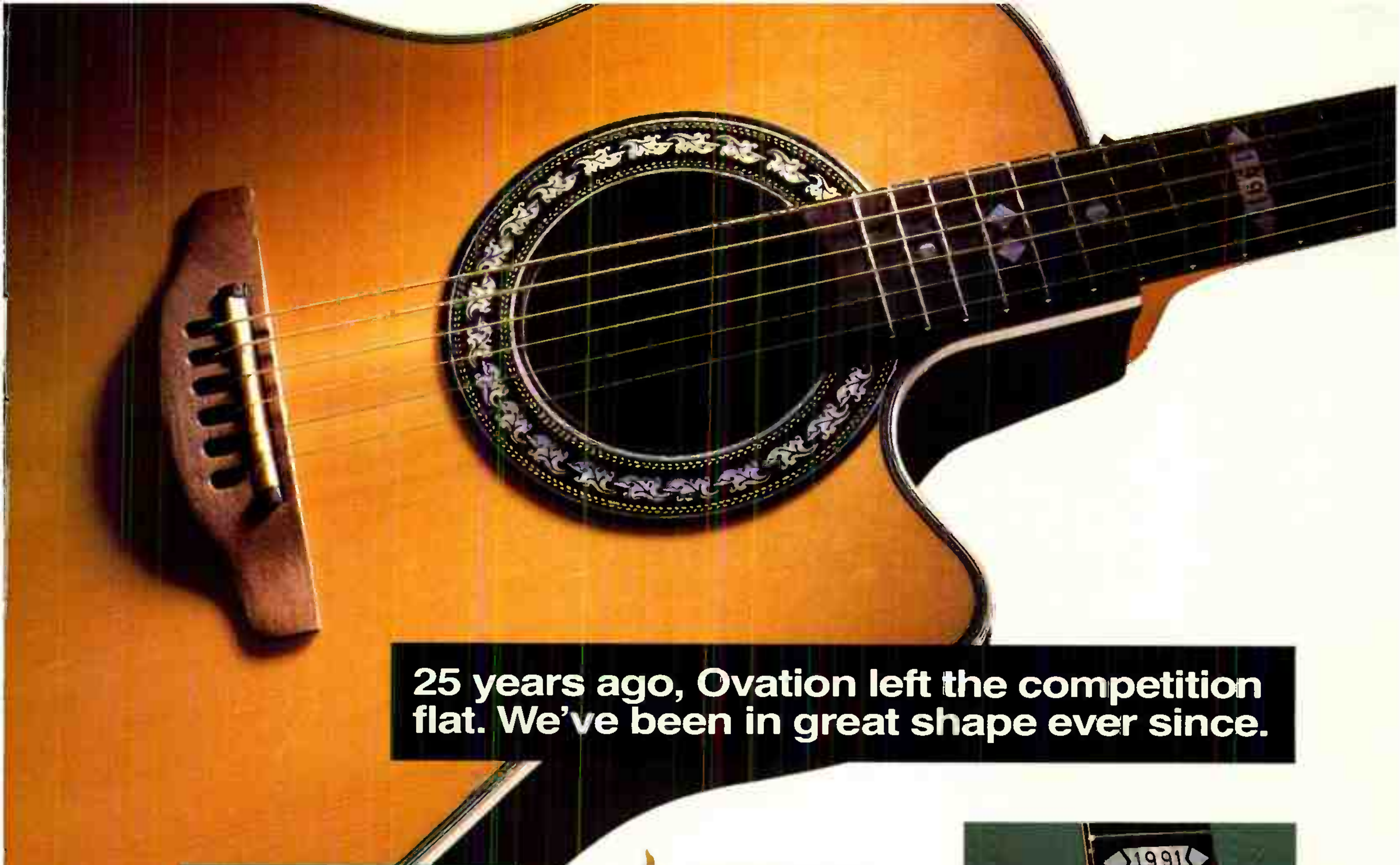

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LETTERS

Donald Fagen Talks! · Bianua at 50 · The Waterboys
MUSICIAN
CALL ME SLASH!
THE GUTS OF GUNS N' ROSES

Backslash

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND SLASH for his brutal honesty as the article (Dec. '90) was deeply moving, and sometimes shocking. At times yes, Slash does seem superhuman, but when you described his house as being "homey" and him getting his first guitar I couldn't help but smile.

Bridget "Hollywood" Ruth
Lewisville, NC

AS A BLACK (NOT SPEAKING FOR MY race only myself) I care about Axl being racist about as much as I care about the next New Kids on the Block record. And yes, I am a Guns N' Roses fan.

Celeste Allgood
Athens, GA

AS SOMEONE WHO IS ALSO HALF black, I find it hard to believe that Slash would even try to defend "One in a Million." Racism and homophobia have no place in society and no place in music. And just because Axl Rose doesn't think that he was being racist and homophobic doesn't mean that he wasn't. Axl probably doesn't think that he is a complete jackass either.

P.J. Bishop
New Haven, CT

IT SAYS *MUSICIAN* ON THE COVER, BUT maybe it should say *Racist Slugs*. Of course you couldn't put Carlos Santana on it. He's a spiritual, sensitive, conscious, influential artist. What the fuck do you see in Slash?

Bruce Chapin
New York, NY

Call My Agent

RE: MARK COLEMAN'S INTERview with the Pixies (Dec. '90). I am an overweight, enigmatic Bruce Willis–type college dropout who can scream, turn up my amps and write nonsense lyrics. I also have no idea what I'm doing playing rock music. Call my service, Mr. Coleman, and we can meet for a hypefest interview.

Blake Methena
The Fun Uncle
Toledo, OH

ProbleMatic

WHEN I FIRST SAW THE REPLACEments in 1984, I thought they were the worst band to ever step out of Minneapolis. In 1991, I am convinced that this is the best band in America. And no one can write a better song than Paul Westerberg. Color me impressed.

Jeff Arndt
Durham, NC

WHEN THE REPLACEMENTS WERE in the gutter all was relatively fine with Paul Westerberg. Now that they have a foot through the door of success Paul seems to think he got there alone. If Paul were to do a solo and fail, who would he have to blame?

Kristy Chmelarsky
Johnstown, PA

Martin Responds

IN YOUR INTERVIEW BETWEEN DAVE DiMartino and J.J. Cale (Nov. '90), J.J. says, "...and I knew the old American guitar firms were going.... At one time there was Gretsch, Gibson and Fender—they were the main guitars, not counting Epiphone or Guild or Harmony—but I was always a fan of that, like people are of old cars or whatever, so I got to buying some."

We at the Martin Guitar Company are particularly insulted by Mr. Cale's omission of our firm, whose guitar he so affectionately and ironically is strumming on the title page of the article. For J.J. Cale to lead your readership into believing that "all" the old firms have gone to ruin is simply not true. Ours, the oldest of all of them, remains in the pure form that it started, producing solid wood instruments of impeccable quality and integrity, and we felt compelled to correct his inaccuracy.

Dick Boak
C.F. Martin & Co.
Nazareth, PA

Don of Dan

I WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED TO READ Matt Resnicoff's article on the comeback of Donald Fagen. I have been starved for work by Fagen, and I was glad to hear that he's performing again.

Bill Colrus
Madison, CT

EVEN MORE MYSTERIOUS THAN DONald Fagen's decision not to release the recordings he's made during the past half decade is the total post–Steely Dan silence of Walter Becker. After 10 years, it's time for the first Walter Becker album. Otherwise, history will only remember Becker as an insignificant second banana.

Phil Cohen
Bay Harbor, FL

Old Goats

IT IS TRUE THAT IN THE MINDS OF many Johnson County, Kansas teenagers, the Buckinghams ("Goatee Rock," Dec. '90) were bigger than the Who. At least until they both played my high school! In 1967 the Who opened for the Buckinghams in Overland Park, Kansas. The Who played first, closing with "My Generation," destroying their equipment in the process. Then the headlining Buckinghams came out. "Susan" and "Don't You Care" just didn't measure up to "I Can See for Miles" and "Boris the Spider." People still give me the "oh sure" look when I speak of this event.

John J. Sullivan
Burbank, CA

I RECALL HEARING A BATTLE OF THE bands in 1967, where each band played their version of the Buckinghams' "Mercy Mercy Mercy." It was a gas! I eventually joined a band and grew a goatee of my own. Thanks for the enlightenment.

Dave Nuttycombe
Silver Spring, MD

GOATEE ROCK, EH? GEE, I WISH I'D known back in '67 that my high school rock band was squarely hitting the bullseye of an actual genruh! Thanks a lot for shining some light on this dark corner of rock anthropology. By the way, I'm an occasional Whole Wheat Horn with NRBQ and leader of the Jim Hoke Group in Nashville, where I intend to establish Afro-lachian World Grass Music (now *there's* a genre for someone).

Jim Hoke
Madison, TN

Erota

OOPS, MARC RIBOT (NOV. '90) DOES not play through a Yamaha amp. He uses a Fender Super Reverb. And he uses a RAT distortion pedal. And finally, Ribot doesn't employ a Yamaha FEX 50. He uses a Yamaha REX 50, and he stopped using an MXR fuzzbox distortion a long time ago.

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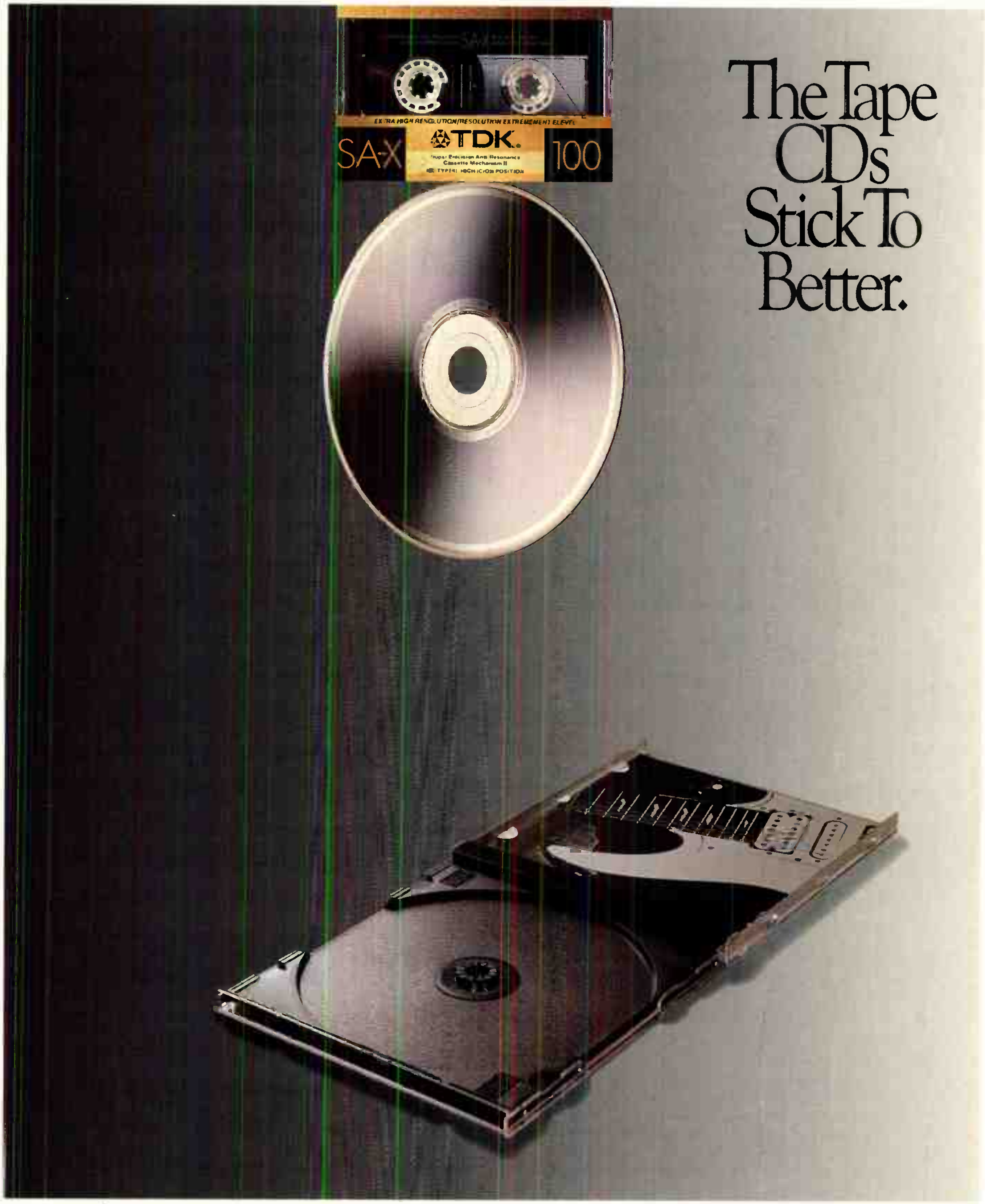
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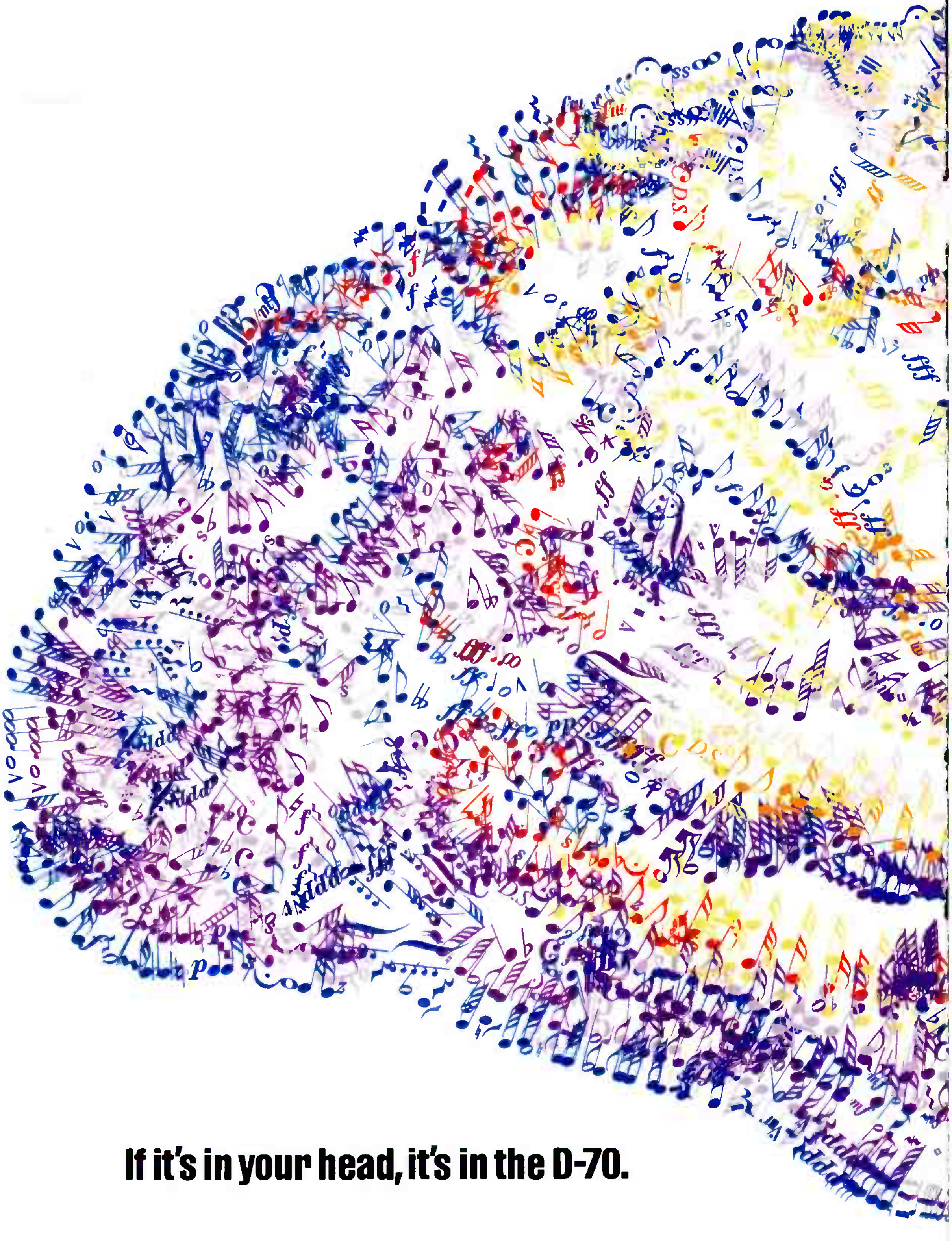

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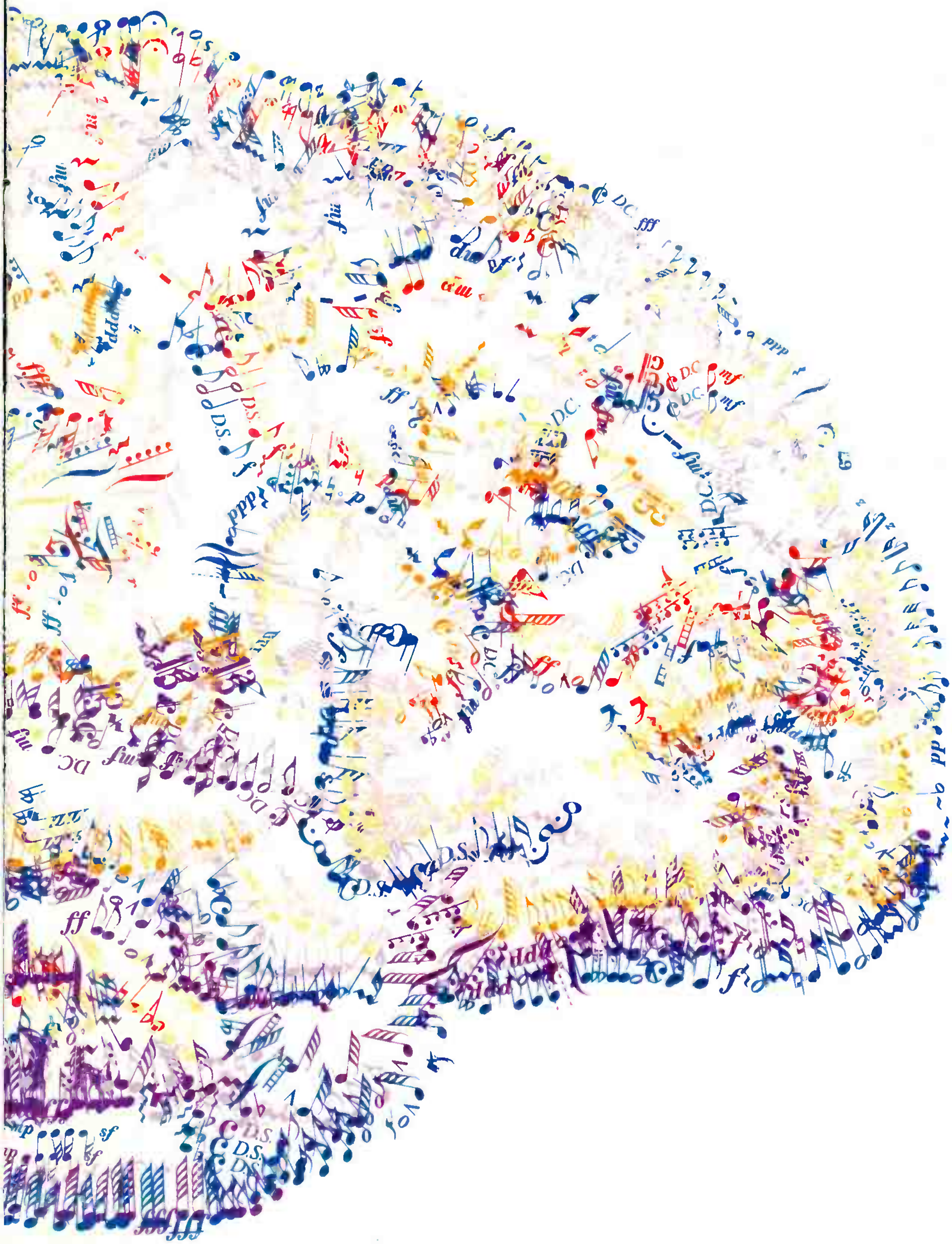

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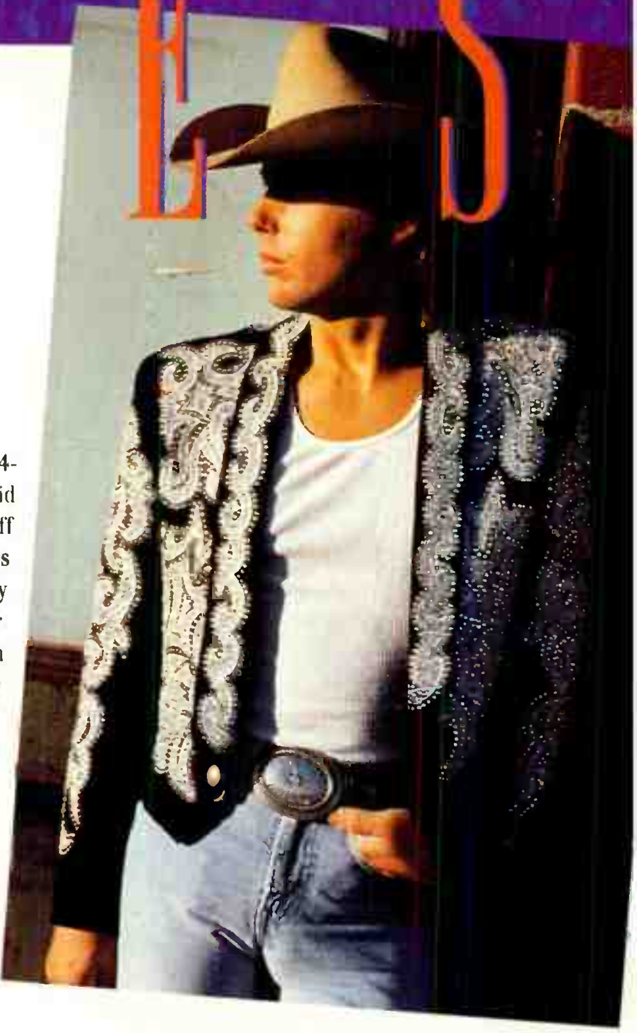


DWIGHT YOAKAM

ROGER & ME

NEITHER DWIGHT YOAKAM NOR ROGER MILLER had ever co-written a song when the 34-year-old country star sat down with the old King of the Road to give it a shot. "Roger said the reason he never collaborated was he always equated songwriting with a cat goin' off and having her kittens underneath the house. It's just something you do alone," says Yoakam, "but somehow we both fed into each other and it was a lot of fun." The song they wrote together, "It Only Hurts When I Cry" from Yoakam's new *If There Was a Way* album, stands right up next to the classic country shuffles Miller wrote for Ray Price in the late '50s, and Miller's Daffy Duck sense of fun serves to loosen up the occasionally humorless Yoakam.

With Nashville overflowing these days with the "new traditional" singers (or "hats") that flooded Music City in the wake of his success, Yoakam is more than happy to come down off the "older-is-better" soapbox. As a result, *If There Was a Way* swings a little looser and rocks a little harder than anything he's ever done. "Four or five years ago I was so much a zealot for what I had seen as an absence of pure country that before I knew it I was this spokesman for traditionalism," Yoakam says, "and that was not my intention ever. When I perform traditional country music it's out of a love and respect for that form. I'm not a prisoner to it."

PETER CRONIN

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOODS

THE NEIGHBORHOODS' steadfast faith in rock 'n' roll has sustained them for 12 years. "We basically love to play in front of people—we're total hams and there are nights when we think we're rock stars," says bassist Lee Harrington, "but I think there's something really noble about being a musician and the ability to lift people's spirits and all those things. I mean, it's not just bullshit." With their latest album, Hoodwinked (Emergo Records), the Neighborhoods have come close to capturing in the studio the energy that drives their live shows. Hoodwinked was produced by Aerosmith's Brad Whitford, who gave their bump-and-grind garage sound the clarity that eluded their earlier records. Shortly after the release of Hoodwinked, drummer Mike Quaglia was replaced by Carl Colletti (a move motivated by standard "artistic differences") and a second guitarist, Dan Batal, was enlisted. After more than 10 years as focal point of a power trio, frontman Dave Minehan says that sharing guitar duties is "still a reorienting process, because a lot of the songs have been already defined... which leaves me in the precarious position of trying not to play what I used to be playing. So I'm actually relearning my songs instead of him."

(l to r) Colletti, Batal, Minehan, Harrington

SANDY MASUO

Photographs: Victoria Pearson (top); John Soares

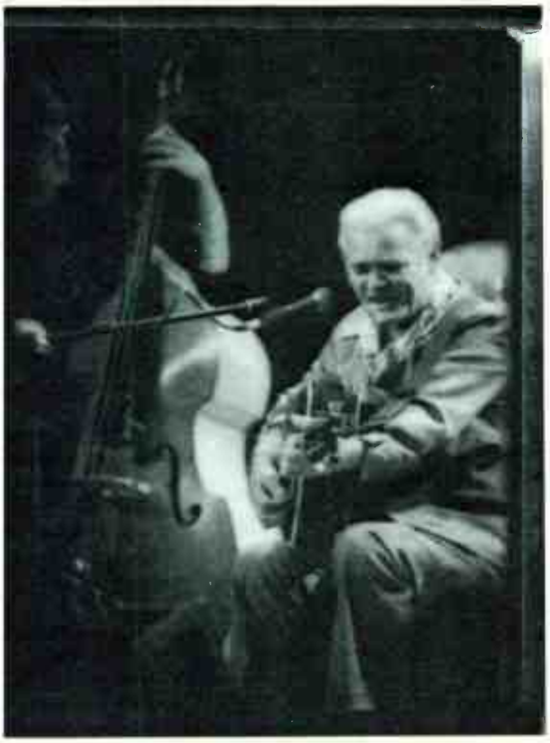
Charlie Feathers

SQUAWKS AGAIN

ROCKABILLY WAS THE BEGINNING of the end of music," says the genre's greatest innovator, Charlie Feathers, who has recently completed new recordings for Elektra/Nonesuch. "It's just got too much music about it, man, you can do anything you want to in it."

Present at Sun Studios from the very beginning, Feathers not only co-wrote Elvis' first major hit, "I Forgot to Remember to Forget," he was a major influence on all the early Memphis rockabilly artists. With a wild vocal style that ranged from deep growls to soft, babyish whispers and included everything in between, he showed there were no boundaries when it came to this new thang called rockabilly.

The recent sessions were produced by postmodern folk-rocker Ben Vaughn, a longtime fan, and recorded in Memphis at the Sam Phillips studio. The session band featured several other Sun originals, including guitarist Roland Janes, bassist Stan Kesler and J.M. Van Eaton on drums.



Rockabilly never died for Charlie Feathers, who continues experimenting within the genre. "No one expects an abstract thinker to come out of rockabilly, but that's exactly what Charlie is," says Vaughn. "He's so far into music, he's a genius like Sun Ra or Monk or Mingus. He is continually seeing more possibilities and a wider range and scope possible in the rockabilly medium."

The Feathers album is part of a series that will include Keith Richards producing Johnnie Johnson, Chuck Berry's piano player, and Terry Adams producing zydeco great Boozoo Chavis.

ROBERT GORDON

Bobby King & Terry Evans

ETERNAL SOUL

Evans (l) and King

"OTIS REDDING WASN'T a hell of a *singer*," says Bobby King. If that sounds like the kind of apostasy that can get you excommunicated from the Brotherhood of Soul, don't misunderstand him. King goes on: "But Otis knew how to interpret a song, and tell a story. He was a hell of a *deliverer*. It's not your voice that counts..." "it's the feeling," chimes in Terry Evans.

Evans and King know more than a little about delivering that feeling. Backup singers for Ry Cooder since the mid-'70s, they stepped out in 1988 with *Live and Let Live!*; produced by Cooder, the album popped like chicken grease out of a skillet of Southern-fried soul. The Deep South–born, gospel-bred partners' second, self-produced collaboration is the aptly titled *Rhythm, Blues, Soul & Grooves*.

Rhythm's gritty, Stax/Volt-style testifying may seem out of sync on the current pop planet, but King doesn't see it that way. "There's a lot of music out there that doesn't get the credit for being soul. Like country—country is soul. Any music that you believe and feel what you're doing, that's for real," he says. "And when there's nowhere else to go, people will always come back to the for real."

DAN DELUCA

Photographs: David Perry (top); John Soares (left)

MRS. SPRINGSTEEN'S BOY

This is how Bruce Springsteen introduced a new song at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles last November, touching on a subject few rock 'n' rollers—let alone rock critics—have dared approach.

Tonight I'm going to try something different. I wrote this song quite a while ago. I never really recorded it or put it out. It's a song about my mother. It's a funny thing because I had this song and I said, "Gee, in rock 'n' roll nobody sings about their mother. Why is that?" It's against all that macho posturing that you have to do and stuff.

So I said, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute." This was a real problem, so I wanted to figure it out. So I went to see this psychiatrist. This is a true story. I told him what the problem was. I said, "I have this song about my mother and I haven't sung it 'cause of all the macho posturing that I have to do."

He said he understood. He said, "You have to understand that all men are afraid of their mother. They say a boy's best friend is his mother, but *really* all men are afraid of their mothers." I had to pay for this, you can't get this for free.

So I said, "All men are afraid of their mothers. Yeah." That's why when a man and a woman get into an argument the woman's always going, "Do I act like your mother?," "I'm not your mother!," "Am I supposed to be your mother?"

And that's why the men are always going, "Stop mothering me!" "Ah, my mother used to do that!" That kind of thing. So, realizing the truth of this thing, I said, "Hey. Wait a minute. I'm man enough to sing about my mother."

I'm afraid, y'know, only a little bit. Which is why I'm talkin' so long. But I'm going to leap into the void and the great line of mother lovers: Richard Nixon, Elvis Presley, Merle Haggard and every country and western singer you ever knew.

Family Stand LINKS IN THE CHAIN

EXCUSE ME," says slightly gruff keyboardist/vocalist Peter Lord of the Family Stand. "I've got my James Brown voice from singing last night." The Family Stand's album Chain invites a rush of historic R&B associations, from Sly Stone to Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye to Rufus. As per the band name—a nod to Sly—this is a band attuned to the R&B of 20 years ago.

The Family Stand's hip-hop pulses and current technocratic synth work interact with the loopy melodicism of the '70s to create an R&B time warp.

"Music should get back to songs," says Lord, "and the '70s R&B scene was really about songs. A lot of people make great records now, but they don't know how to make songs. We try to make great records with great songs.

"If nothing else, we aspire to high ideals. It's as if people look down on musicians who want to have artistic integrity or want to do something creative—it's almost a dirty word. They think you're jerking off if you try to do something like that."

While mining a rich crossover audience with their hip-hop-funk-rock-gospel palette, the Family Stand still has to contend with music industry preconditioning when it comes to color lines. Has black music become more de-ghettoized in recent years? "Cultural apartheid still exists in America," Lord insists. "Certain people get a pass, so to speak—like some black people in South Africa—to go certain places. That's how it is with certain black pop artists: 'This person can get through. They're approved.'

"Rap is a crossover, but that's because of sales and money is the ultimate bottom line. As for things getting back to R&B, the whole popular music system in this century has been based on and built off of what African-American people have contributed to a large extent, from ragtime to jazz to R&B." And the Family Stand adds its share to the continuum. —JOSEF WOODARD

Photograph: Sheila Rock (left); Robert Matheu (right)

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	**Vanilla Ice**	*To the Extreme*/SBK
2 • 2	**M.C. Hammer**	*Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em* Capitol
3 • 27	**Madonna**	*The Immaculate Collection*/Sire
4 • 6	**Whitney Houston**	*I'm Your Baby Tonight*/Arista
5 • 3	**Mariah Carey**	*Mariah Carey*/Columbia
6 • 9	**Bette Midler**	*Some People's Lives*/Atlantic
7 • 4	**Paul Simon**	*Rhythm of the Saints* Warner Bros.
8 • 8	**Wilson Phillips**	*Wilson Phillips*/SBK
9 • 5	**AC/DC**	*The Razors Edge*/Atco
10 • 10	**George Michael**	*Listen without Prejudice Vol. 1* Columbia
11 • 20	**Phil Collins**	*Serious Hits...Live!*/Atlantic
12 • 11	**Traveling Wilburys**	*Vol. 3*/Wilbury
13 • 12	**Poison**	*Flesh and Blood*/Enigma
14 • 7	**ZZ Top**	*Recycler*/Warner Bros.
15 • 16	**Garth Brooks**	*No Fences*/Capitol
16 • 13	**Bell Biv DeVoe**	*Poison*/MCA
17 • 23	**Clint Black**	*Put Yourself in My Shoes*/RCA
18 • 28	**Janet Jackson**	*Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation*/A&M
19 • 18	**Warrant**	*Cherry Pie*/Columbia
20 • —	**The Simpsons**	*The Simpsons Sing the Blues* Geffen
21 • 21	**The Black Crowes**	*Shake Your Money Maker* Def American
22 • 44	**Guy**	*The Future*/Uptown
23 • 24	**Led Zeppelin**	*Led Zeppelin*/Atlantic
24 • 67	**Ralph Tresvant**	*Ralph Tresvant*/MCA
25 • 17	**Vaughan Brothers**	*Family Style*/Associated
26 • 79	**Cinderella**	*Heartbreak Station*/Mercury
27 • 87	**New Kids on the Block**	*No More Games/Remix Album* Columbia
28 • 19	**Soundtrack**	*Pretty Woman*/EMI
29 • 14	**The Cure**	*Mixed Up*/Elektra
30 • 15	**INXS**	*X*/Atlantic
31 • 22	**Jon Bon Jovi**	*Blaze of Glory/Young Guns II* Mercury
32 • 85	**Yanni**	*Reflections of Passion*/Private Music
33 • 31	**Steve Winwood**	*Refugees of the Heart*/Virgin
34 • 41	**Damn Yankees**	*Damn Yankees*/Warner Bros.
35 • 29	**Nelson**	*After the Rain*/DGC
36 • 39	**New Kids on the Block**	*Step by Step*/Columbia
37 • 25	**Deee-Lite**	*World Clique*/Elektra
38 • 56	**Tesla**	*Five Man Acoustical Jam*/Geffen
39 • 32	**Paul McCartney**	*Tripping the Live Fantastic* Capitol
40 • 63	**Various Artists**	*Red Hot & Blue*/Chrysalis
41 • 34	**Scorpions**	*Crazy World*/Mercury
42 • 48	**Candyman**	*Ain't No Shame in My Game*/Epic
43 • 90	**Barry Manilow**	*Because It's Christmas*/Arista
44 • —	**Julio Iglesias**	*Starry Night*/Columbia
45 • 26	**Queensryche**	*Empire*/EMI
46 • 64	**Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti**	*Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti in Concert*/London
47 • 40	**L.L. Cool J**	*Mama Said Knock You Out*/Def Jam
48 • 86	**Harry Connick, Jr.**	*We Are in Love*/Columbia
49 • 35	**Michael Bolton**	*Soul Provider*/Columbia
50 • 36	**Slaughter**	*Stick It to Ya*/Chrysalis
51 • 37	**Edie Brickell & New Bohemians**	*Ghost of a Dog*/Geffen
52 • 58	**UB40**	*Labour of Love II*/Virgin
53 • 51	**Tony! Toni! Tone!**	*The Revival*/Wing
54 • 69	**Debbie Gibson**	*Anything Is Possible*/Atlantic
55 • 62	**Trixter**	*Trixter*/Mechanic
56 • 33	**Too Short**	*Short Dog's in the House*/Jive
57 • 74	**New Kids on the Block**	*Merry Merry Christmas* Columbia
58 • 38	**Soundtrack**	*Ghost*/Varese Sarabande
59 • 57	**Depeche Mode**	*Violator*/Sire
60 • —	**Mannheim Steamroller**	*A Fresh Aire Christmas* American Gramaphone
61 • 30	**Al B. Sure!**	*Private Times...And the Whole 9!* Warner Bros.
62 • 73	**Jane's Addiction**	*Ritual de lo Habitual* Warner Bros.
63 • 42	**Soundtrack**	*Twin Peaks*/Warner Bros.
64 • 45	**Winger**	*In the Heart of the Young* Atlantic
65 • 55	**Randy Travis**	*Heroes & Friends*/Warner Bros.
66 • 52	**Keith Sweat**	*I'll Give All My Love to You* Vintertainment
67 • 84	**Stevie B**	*Love & Emotion*/LMR
68 • 43	**Pebbles**	*Always*/MCA
69 • 49	**Anita Baker**	*Compositions*/Elektra
70 • 71	**Heart**	*Brigade*/Capitol
71 • 70	**Carly Simon**	*Have You Seen Me Lately?*/Arista
72 • 75	**Van Morrison**	*Enlightenment*/Mercury
73 • 68	**Freddie Jackson**	*Do Me Again*/Capitol
74 • 65	**Daryl Hall John Oates**	*Change of Season*/Arista
75 • —	**Mannheim Steamroller**	*Mannheim Steamroller Christmas* American Gramaphone
76 • 80	**Garth Brooks**	*Garth Brooks*/Capitol
77 • —	**Various Artists**	*A Very Special Christmas*/A&M
78 • 66	**Johnny Gill**	*Johnny Gill*/Motown
79 • 94	**K.T. Oslin**	*Love in a Smalltown*/RCA
80 • 59	**Maxi Priest**	*Bonafide*/Charisma
81 • 54	**Megadeth**	*Rust in Peace*/Capitol
82 • 47	**Faith No More**	*The Real Thing*/Slash
83 • 92	**Reba McEntire**	*Rumor Has It*/MCA
84 • —	**Run-D.M.C.**	*Back from Hell*/Profile
85 • —	**Mannheim Steamroller**	*Fresh Aire 7*/American Gramaphone
86 • 50	**Judas Priest**	*Painkiller*/Columbia
87 • 72	**Phil Collins**	*...But Seriously*/Atlantic
88 • 98	**Elton John**	*To Be Continued...*/MCA
89 • 78	**Jimmy Buffett**	*Feeding Frenzy*/MCA
90 • —	**Peter Gabriel**	*Shaking the Tree—16 Golden Greats*/Geffen
91 • —	**Robert Palmer**	*Don't Explain*/EMI
92 • 81	**Indigo Girls**	*Nomads Indians Saints*/Epic
93 • —	**Don Henley**	*The End of the Innocence*/Geffen
94 • —	**Robert Johnson**	*The Complete Recordings*/Columbia
95 • 93	**Mötley Crüe**	*Dr. Feelgood*/Elektra
96 • 61	**Pet Shop Boys**	*Behavior*/EMI
97 • —	**The Outfield**	*Diamond Days*/MCA
98 • 46	**Big Daddy Kane**	*Taste of Chocolate*/Cold Chillin'
99 • —	**Various Artists**	*A Winter's Solstice III*/Windham Hill
100 • 60	**Lynch Mob**	*Wicked Sensation*/Elektra

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 December. The record company chart is based on the top 200 albums. The concert chart is based on* Amusement Business *Box Score reports for December 1990. All charts are copyright 1991 by BPI Incorporated.*

Top Concert Grosses

1	**New Kids on the Block, Perfect Gentlemen, Biscuit, Brenda K. Starr, George Lamond, Good Girls** *SkyDome, Toronto, Ontario*/December 8 & 13	**$2,433,467**
2	**Billy Joel** *Knickerbocker Arena, Albany, NY*/December 9 & 16–18	**$1,610,592**
3	**New Kids on the Block, Biscuit, Brenda K. Starr, George Lamond** *The Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA*/December 9–11	**$1,422,387**
4	**Frank Sinatra, Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme** *Meadowlands Arena, East Rutherford, NJ*/December 11–12	**$1,361,183**
5	**Grateful Dead** *McNichols Sports Arena, Denver, CO*/December 12–14	**$1,045,625**
6	**New Kids on the Block, Perfect Gentlemen, Biscuit, Brenda K. Starr, George Lamond, others** *Worcester Centrum, Worcester, MA*/December 14–16	**$1,009,425**
7	**Grateful Dead** *Compton Terrace, Phoenix, AZ*/December 8–9	**$839,584**
8	**Billy Joel** *Buffalo Memorial Auditorium, Buffalo, NY*/December 8 & 13	**$812,400**
9	**New Kids on the Block, Biscuit, Perfect Gentlemen, Brenda K. Starr, George Lamond, Good Girls** *Providence Civic Center, Providence, RI*/December 6–7	**$725,000**
10	**Billy Joel** *Hilton Coliseum, Iowa State University, Ames, IA*/December 1–2	**$690,313**

Top Labels

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

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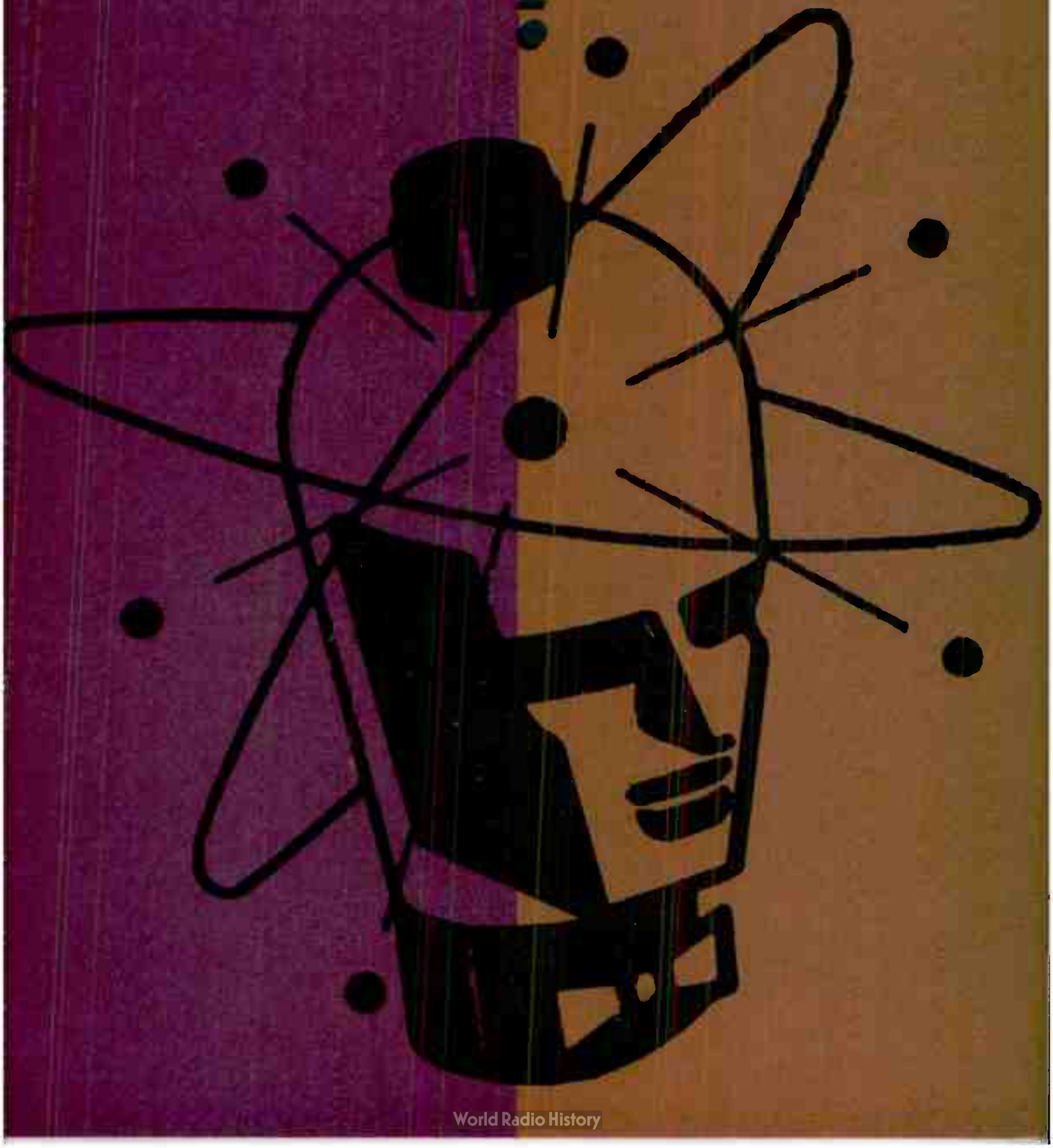

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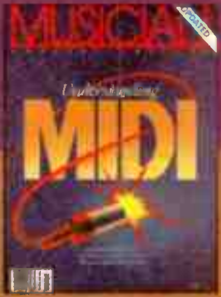

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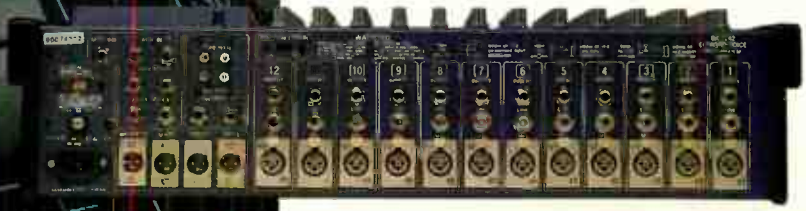

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World Radio History

BLUE RODEO MIXES IT UP

Divergent views make for a great pub band

By J.D. Considine

Blue Rodeo (standing l. to r.): Bob Wiseman, Mark French, Jim Cuddy, Greg Keelor and (sitting) Bazil Donovan

"IT WAS JUST SUPPOSED TO BE A WEEKEND BAR band," shrugs Jim Cuddy as he and the rest of Blue Rodeo sit, appropriately enough, in a Montreal bar on a Sunday night. "Very casual. That's all we did for a long time, just play weekends. And original songs."

"We wanted to be like that British pub scene in the late '70s," adds fellow frontman and Nick Lowe–lookalike Greg Keelor. "Like Brinsley Schwartz, where you did a whole pile of things in your own style. We just wanted to be able to play a lot, and have people still be interested."

Well, they got their wish, and then some. In the six years since Blue Rodeo bowed onto the Queen Street club scene in Toronto, the group has grown from pub band to national phenomenon. No longer a weekend proposition—these days, the band logs some 250 gigs per annum—Blue Rodeo has been named Canadian Band of the Year at the Juno Awards (Canada's Grammies) for two years running, and currently stands as one of the most dependable draws in Canadian music.

Yet for all that, the band and its new album, *Casino*, still sound very much like the pub rock outfit it started as. Shuffle through the songs and the closest you'll come to outright commerciality are the vibrant, Beatlesesque vocals adorning "'Till I Am Myself Again" or "Trust Yourself." Elsewhere, though, the sound is simple and foursquare, emphasizing traditional rock 'n' roll roots, standard '60s-style instrumentation and, perhaps most importantly, a loose-limbed interplay between the five musicians.

Ironically, Keelor says that the reason Blue Rodeo has managed to hold onto its sound even after making it to the big leagues is simply because nobody ever expected them to land a contract in the first place. "Back then, the only Canadian bands that got signed were heavy metal bands, and they were meant to be arena acts," he explains. "Alternative music acts just didn't get signed.

"So [the Queen Street scene] was born on the idea that nobody's going to get record contracts. And I think that's a great relief to a scene. They can do whatever they want, and they don't give a shit if there's record company people in the audience. It really doesn't make any difference. Those guys are not going to take them seriously anyway.

"The dimensions of that scene grew to the point that when record company people did come down, without having any particular affinity for the music, they understood that there were fairly large crowds. Then I suppose it got a little more serious. But still, a lot of those acts—Cowboy Junkies, Jeff Healey—got signed out of the States. There was a heavy Queen country sort of scene, which is the thing that has emerged the most."

Of course, the country aspects to this scene should always be taken with a grain of salt. Despite the C&W imagery suggested by band names like Blue Rodeo, Grievous Angel and Spirit of the West, few of these bands consider themselves anything but city slickers. "For Greg and I, it was all second and third generation country," says Cuddy. "We were hearing it from Burrito Brothers and Byrds, and then Ned Sublett.

"When we named the band, we thought it was going to be a very alternative scene," he adds. "There seemed to be a lot of people trying to make country cool again; punk guitarists were coming back, having learned how to play guitar a bit and were interested in Scotty Moore and James Burton licks."

"It is definitely post-acid country," concludes Keelor. "The thing I always like to think about is the nights when the Doors and the Burrito Brothers would be playing Whiskey A-Go Go and the Troubadour.

Photograph: Patrick Harbron

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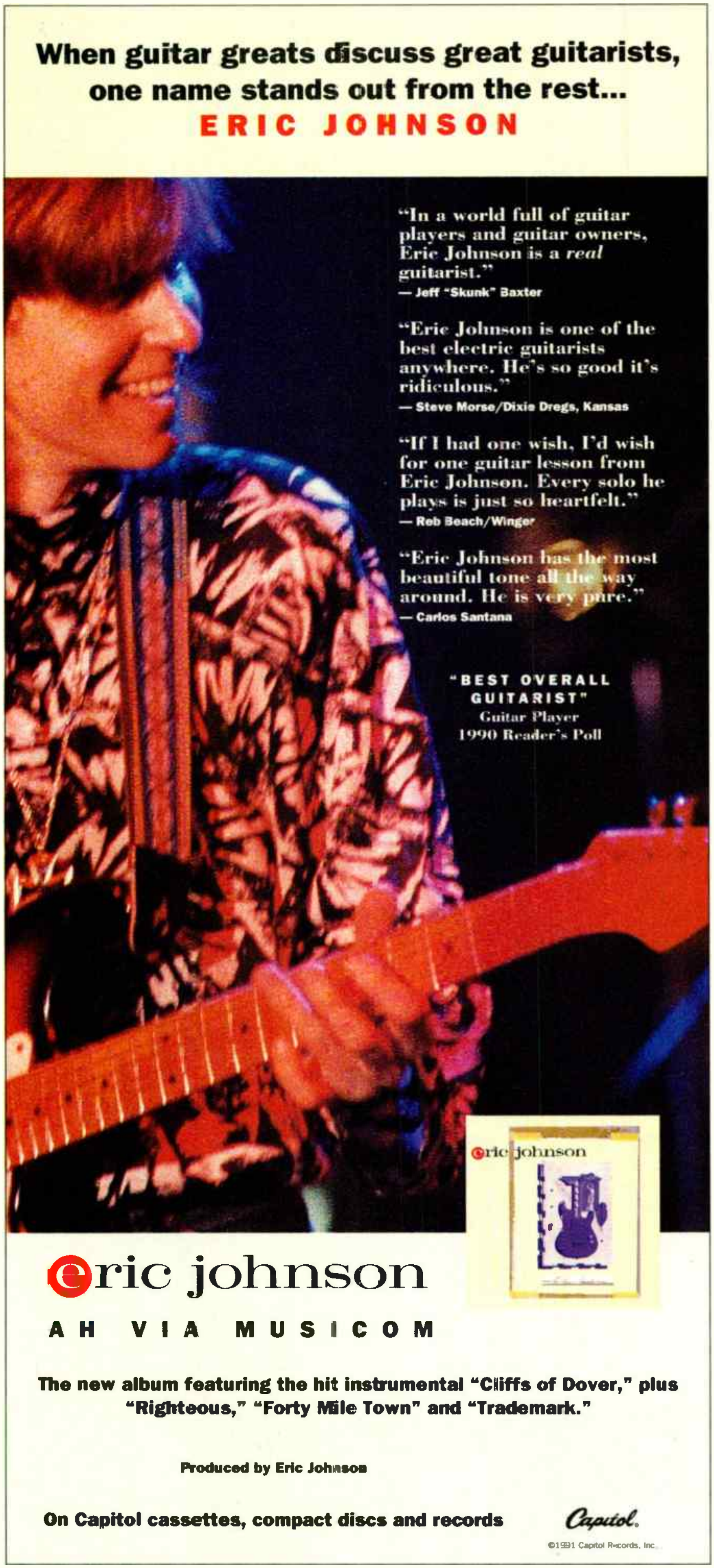

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We're somewhere in between that."

There's a lot of that vintage sound to *Casino*, although the band is never so overt as to seem retro or ironic about it. Part of it is purely a matter of sound—Keelor and Cuddy's Vox amps or Bob Wiseman's swirling B-3, the way producer Pete Anderson exploits the hardwood sound of L.A.'s Capitol Studios—but an equal amount has to be chalked up to sensibility. As Cuddy puts it, "The imprint of the pop music Greg and I listened to when we were kids is still as strong as when we started. A lot has to do with the Beatles. They used hybrids of all

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ASK **BOB WISEMAN** about his gear, and you might walk away thinking his favorite brand is Anykind. As in, "Anykind, it doesn't matter at all." Apart from a Korg CX3 organ, he'll play anything handy when it comes to harmonicas, accordions or MIDI piano. And he refuses to have his own sound reinforcement, relying instead on a standard P.A. monitor. "I hate the idea of encouraging people to think the equipment is the thing," he says. "I really like the idea of being interested in music instead."

"I dunno, I like to know what guitarists are using," counters **GREG KEELOR**. "It's interesting to me." Keelor has an interest in his '57 Gretsch 6120 Chet Atkins, '64 Gibson 335, reissue single-coil Les Paul goldtop and a couple early-'60s Teles, "one which I take on the road" (all strung with D'Addarios, .010 to .040s). His amps are "any combination" of Vox AC30 or Vox Buckingham AC50 with an Ernie Ball volume pedal. **JIM CUDDY** is a Fender man, playing a '55 Strat or a '57 Tele through a Vox AC 30 amp or a THD amp, "basically a Bassman copy." His effects are limited to a Boss volume pedal. **BAZIL DONOVAN** chooses between a '61 and '63 Precision bass, powered by an Acoustic head driving a Cerwin Vega cabinet. His strings are Dean Markley ground round wound or Rotosound. In the studio, Donovan used a Jim Demeter tube DI box.

When Drum Doctor **ROSS GARFIELD** set things up for **MARK FRENCH** in the studio, it was with Gretsch drums. On the road, however, French plays Canwood (as in Canadian wood) drums. "A very Canadian sound made with pure Canadian maple, made by a farmer in Saskatchewan." His cymbals are Zildjians, his hi-hats Paiste. He insists on DW pedals. His sticks are Vic Firth 28s.

kinds of styles: country, pop, psychedelia. And the two voices. The Beatles had so many patterns of different things you could do with vocals."

There are a couple senses in which Blue Rodeo can be said to have two voices. First, all of the material, apart from the odd instrumental by Wiseman, is written by either Cuddy or Keelor; second, many of those songs seem built around Cuddy and Keelor's uncanny ability to harmonize. You'd think the two collaborated as a matter of course, but, says, Keelor, "We don't ever really write together. We start a song—try to come up with a melody and a coherent lyric—on our own. Then we bring that to each other, and kind of operate as each other's editor. We just get involved in the song; try to sing together, create some background vocals. Then we bring it to the band, and it changes again. The band has a big hand in shaping how it ends up."

Particularly Wiseman, who is in many ways the band's odd man out; once asked whether Booker T. & the MG's were an influence, young Wiseman had to admit he'd never heard of them. On the other hand, he's totally plugged into the more esoteric side of the Toronto club scene, and has quite a reputation outside of the band as a new music entrepreneur.

"I'm more interested in improvisational music, spontaneous composition," he says. "It's interesting to improvise on the spot and have that frame of reference and technique to draw upon."

"When we first met Bobby," says Keelor, "I was staying at his house, and I'd hear him practice; it sounded like a Keith Jarrett/Cecil Taylor schizophrenic. Sometimes very consoling, and then all of a sudden just way off."

Much to Keelor's surprise, though, Wiseman had no trouble finding a place for himself in Blue Rodeo's songs. "I remember this time we were playing," says Keelor of an early jam with Wiseman, "and when it got to the solo, it just went into this other world. I was totally tripped out by it. And I never thought that the songs Jim and I were going through would ever get into that sphere."

Wiseman's keyboards—whether piano, accordion or, on much of *Casino*, the B-3—add an extra layer of interest to the songs. Keelor explains, "Three-minute songs turned into seven-minute things. We had never been able to stretch out. But with Bobby, we had a soloist." Not to mention an unmistakable sound.

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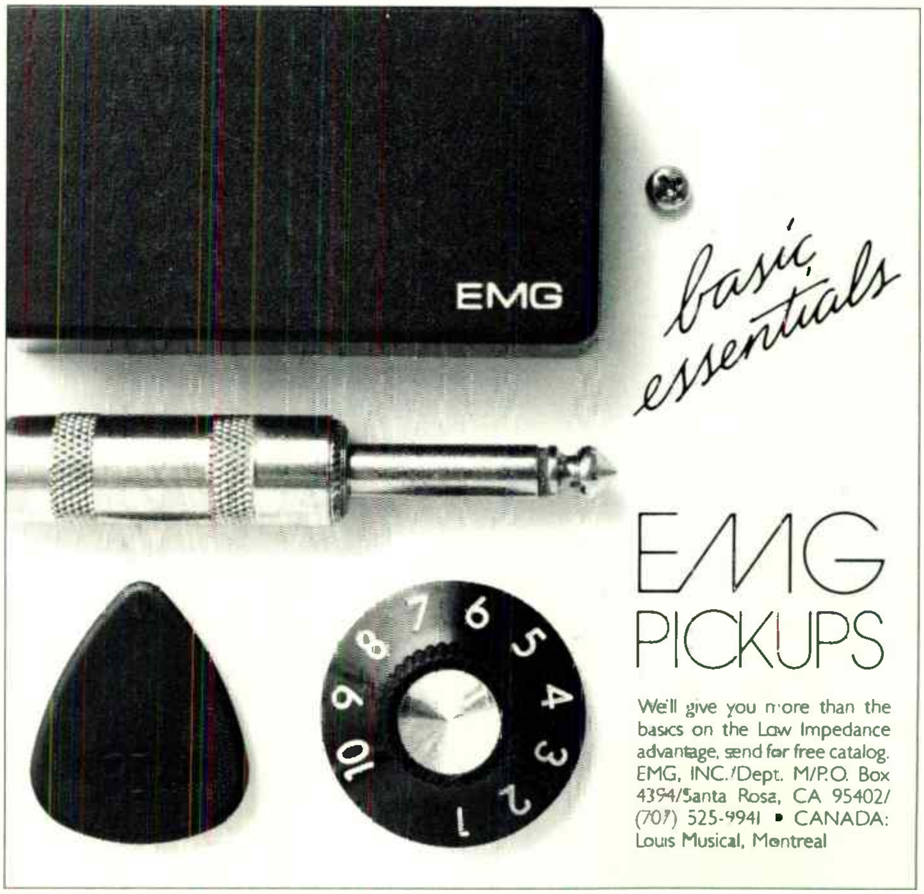

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PATRIARCH OF THE BLUES

Don't mistake Sunnyland Slim for Chicken Veridocious

By Ben Sandmel

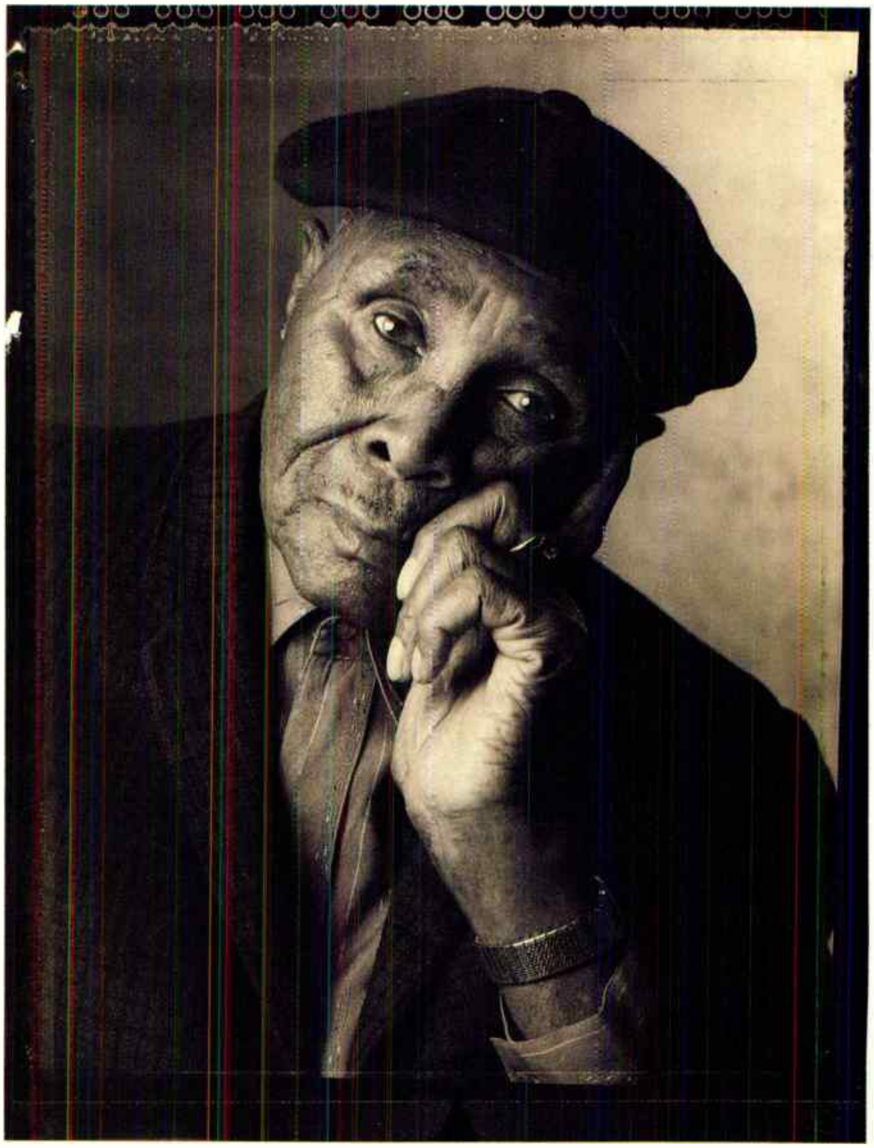
LAST YEAR, MCA RECORDS RELEASED A DEFINITIVE Muddy Waters anthology entitled *The Chess Box*. But amid the fanfare, there was little or no mention of an equally venerable Chicago bluesman who befriended young Muddy Waters, brought him to Philip and Leonard Chess in 1947 and launched Muddy's career by persuading the Chess brothers to sign him. That man is a two-fisted pianist and shouting singer known as Sunnyland Slim.

"You won't find anybody around here with my track record," Sunnyland says matter-of-factly. "I helped J.B. Lenoir get started, Muddy, Little Walter. I helped Howlin' Wolf out a whole lot, 'cause when he first got here he was *dumb*." Over the years, Sunnyland Slim has taken other musicians under his wing—including Matt "Guitar" Murphy and Jimmy Johnson—schooled them in Chicago blues and watched them graduate as successful bandleaders.

At 83 Sunnyland is still going strong: teaching his latest protégés, touring intrepidly despite advancing age and singing with such soulful, searing power that he barely needs a microphone. If celebrity status has largely eluded him, at least outside of blues circles, he doesn't seem bitter. Perhaps this career plateau is due to a sound that's a bit raw and old-fashioned for mass appeal; even his black contemporaries have trouble understanding Sunny's thick rural accent. But in the sound and fury of Chicago's bustling blues scene, Sunnyland Slim stands dead-center as the patriarch, guru and presiding elder statesman.

Sunnyland's stature is due both to his vast talent and because most of his celebrated peers have passed on—Howlin' Wolf (whose gruff voice he loves to impersonate), Muddy Waters, pianist Little Brother Montgomery, guitarists Big Bill Broonzy, J.B. Lenoir and J.B. Hutto, harmonica hotshots Big Walter Horton and Sonny Boy Williamson, drummers Fred Below and Odie Payne, Jr. All helped shape the classic '50s Chicago sound. But while that deceptively simple style is still revered, funk has become the dominant force in contemporary Chicago blues, and only a handful of people still play straight from the old school. To hear Sunnyland Slim do so, with unadorned vigor, is to take a step back in time. His approach and repertoire predate vintage Chicago, actually, going all the way back to the levee-camps and juke-joints of the Mississippi Delta, where he was born in 1907.

Sunnyland, whose real name is Albert Luandrew, ran away from home at age 12. Combining piano with farm work, cooking and laying track for the railroad (his massive, 6'5" presence still reflects such toil) Albert Luandrew drifted around the Delta. It was the railroads—that speeding Sunnyland train—that inspired his moniker: "Seems like I heard that old lonesome Sunnyland blow," he'd often sing.



Photograph: Mark Hauser

Slim's first break, of sorts, came in 1923. "I went up to Greenwood, Mississippi, and met Little Brother Montgomery. He was playing at the biggest sawmill camp I ever seen. I sung the blues to Little Brother and he got happy. He got up for some more whiskey, and I played 'Rollin' and Tumblin'—and everybody in that place was standin' up! You oughta seen that place!"

Sunnyland absorbed some of Little Brother's light yet funky touch, as he would later assimilate the urbane sound of Count Basie. His talent had limitations; the boogie-woogie repertoire of Pete Johnson and Albert Ammons, for instance, was beyond Sunnyland's left-hand capabilities. But his drive, solid playing and booming voice made him a natural crowd-pleaser.

Slim landed a gig with Ma Rainey, "Mother of the Blues," and went on to accompany then-popular recording artists like Barbecue Bob and Jim Jackson. He also rubbed shoulders with guitarists Robert Johnson, Blind Boy Fuller and Memphis Minnie and rollicking pianist Roosevelt Sykes. Eventually, fed up with the South's lack of opportunities, Slim moved to Chicago in 1942.

And there, essentially, he has been ever since. He's enjoyed some regional hits with original songs such as "She's Got a Thing Goin' On," "She's Got That Jive" and "Please Be Careful How You Vote" and recorded prolifically as both leader and sideman. He holds forth on Sunday nights at a small Chicago club known as B.L.U.E.S. In recent years his playing has faltered slightly, following an auto accident, but his voice remains hair-raising, moving from a hush to full-throated roars, wordless moans and falsetto whoops. Inevitably, after some especially slow, haunting blues tune, Sunny might startle the audience by suddenly erupting into a goofy "Woody Woodpecker" laugh. Sunny's old friends come to visit and sit in, while fans from Japan and Europe take pictures and collect autographs. It's like a beloved grandfather surrounded by his family.

Like many parental figures, though, Sunnyland Slim has a gruff side. I learned this only too well working as one of his pool of drummers between 1980 and '82. Unlike many bandleaders and club-owners on the snake-pit of a blues circuit, Sunnyland Slim always treats his musicians well. Road travel, however, was another matter. Sunnyland would elaborately tie up the seatbelts on his junker station wagon, so he wouldn't be annoyed by the safety buzzer. Nothing would irritate him more than my untying this tangled web—thus setting off the buzzer—to put the seatbelt on.

With Sunnyland driving, though, going unbuckled was unthinkable. He had no business behind the wheel, yet insisted on taking it. Recounting a fascinating anecdote, he'd also blithely merge onto the expressway without checking his lane. I had to anticipate his every move, and if disaster loomed I would softly say, "Easy, now." This restrained method always seemed to work—good thing, too, because any excitable reactions on my part would bring on the shouted rebuke of "Motherfucker, take your nerve pills!"

Nerve pills certainly sounded tempting after several hundred miles of this. Life on the bandstand—say, in a duo performance at Ann Arbor's Blind Pig—was a lot easier. After the gig, even if a free room was available, Sunny would insist on heading straight back. We'd reach Chicago just as the sun rose over Lake Michigan; he'd drop me off, help me carry my drums [cont'd on page 30]

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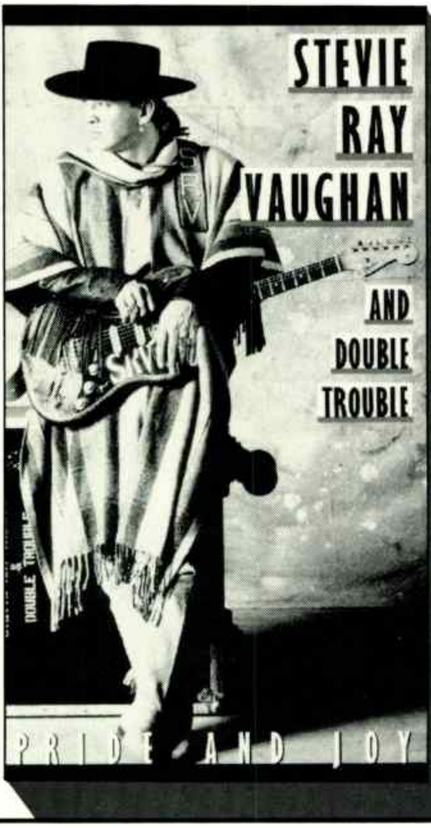

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TAKING CINDERELLA SERIOUSLY

Teen idols expand their ambitions

By Peter Cronin

THE VIDEO FOR "SHELTER ME," CINDERELLA'S latest single, is MTV-ready. Big budget, big hair, big drums, big boobs, big...but wait a minute—did I hear a Jew's harp? And is that guy playing a *dobro*? "Hey, I *like* country music," says singer/guitarist/songwriter Tom Keifer. "I like blues, gospel, funk, R&B and bang—you gotta put it all together and come up with something unique."

As Cinderella's guiding light, Keifer is fully aware that unique was not the first word that popped into the minds of critics who almost universally panned the band's first two releases, but if those same critics can get past the Spinal Tap trappings and down into the acoustic slam of *Heartbreak Station*, Cinderella's latest record, they'll hear a band in search of its roots, incorporating fully digested elements of all of the above. Heck, they might even get out of their easy chairs and turn it up to 11. Besides, Keifer is quick to point out, the 50 zillion fans who made Cinderella a multi-platinum, pop-metal success story *can't* be wrong. "I can pick up a snooty magazine and read a review written by one guy," says Keifer. "That's one person. Who cares? We're the ones that have to be happy with what we're playing."

On *Heartbreak Station*, Keifer is playing roughly equal parts dobro, mandolin, mandocello, lap steel, piano, electric and acoustic and one mean slide guitar. Keifer bypasses the "more mellow" style of Duane Allman, finding inspiration in the howling Texas abandon of Johnny Winter. "I always found his playing a little more fiery," he says. "He never repeats himself, and he's always on that treble pickup."

Keifer repeats himself many times over on the three-octave slab of slide that begins "The More Things Change," the new record's Zeppelin-esque opening cut. "I love that wall of Arabic scale stuff," he explains. "That's like six tracks of guitar." For the most part, however, *Heartbreak Station* avoids becoming a multi-layered techno-fest like the band's first two records. "Our first album *Night Songs* definitely used a lot of electronics and effects, which I personally didn't like," Keifer says, "but we didn't know anything. We were like babes in the woods."

Cinderella spent most of 1986, '87 and '88 touring in support of Bon Jovi, AC/DC, David Lee Roth and Judas Priest. At the end of their *Long Cold Winter* tour, a road-weary Keifer took advantage of his first real break and lost himself in his new 24-track home studio. "I could really experiment. I learned a lot about how to use things sparingly and what I wanted sonically," he explains. "As a result the new album is more about putting things in their space and letting the character of the instruments come through." Those hours in the home studio enabled Keifer to come to the *Heartbreak Station* sessions with fleshed-out demos; the band abandoned the usual method of laying down all the basic tracks and then adding individual parts. They recorded one song at a time and used studios in New York, Philadelphia and Louisiana to get the right feel for each track. "It helped to make each song different from the next, and I think that's what makes a great album," Keifer says. "On *Exile on Main Street* or *Physical Graffiti* you never know where you're going next."

Eagerness to grow as a band and increased studio savvy helped Cinderella strip away several layers of pretense, making the new record's title track sound less like one of Winger's power ballads and more like "Love in Vain": "The Stones' version," Keifer admits. "To me that was just a masterpiece, and 'Heartbreak Station' was inspired heavily by that song. We didn't double-track on that at all. It's just my acoustic guitar with [Cinderella guitarist] Jeff LaBar's acoustic and a piano. That's it." Well, not exactly. The song's ending cried out for a string section and, as fledgling rock stars, the band was able to call on one of their heroes, John Paul Jones, to arrange and conduct a 30-piece orchestra. Jones' touch invests a dramatic tension reminiscent of his former band. "One of the things that first caught my ear about Zeppelin was the surprise attack of stuff like 'Over the Hills and Far Away' and 'Rain Song,'" says Keifer. "That was what

[cont'd next page]

Fred Coury, Eric Brittingham, Tom Keifer & Jeff LaBar

Photograph: Neal Zlozower

CHRIS CAMOZZI
Guitarist with
Michael Bolton &
Mariah Carey

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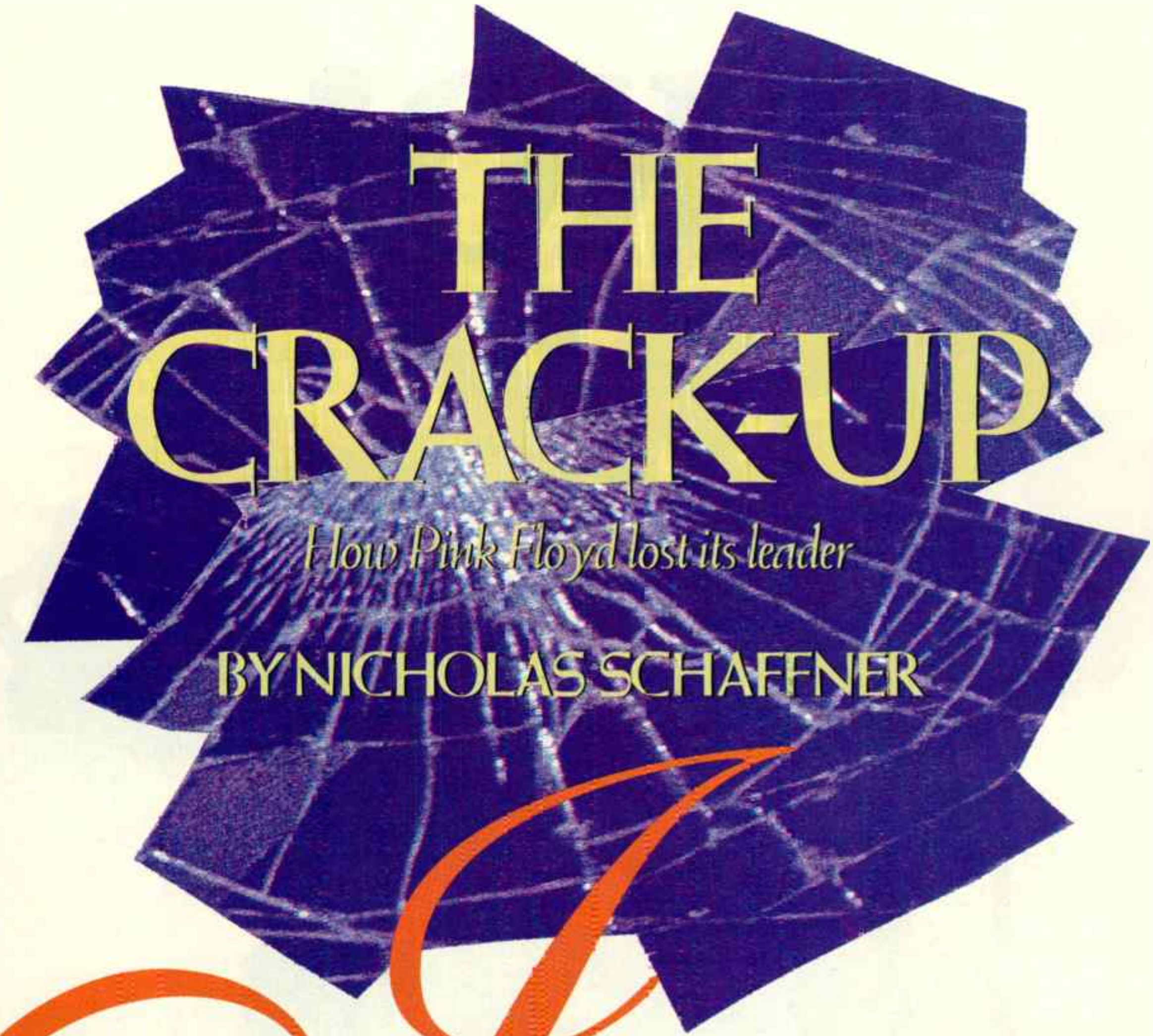

THE CRACK-UP

How Pink Floyd lost its leader

BY NICHOLAS SCHAFFNER

It was all so easy then," says Pink Floyd's then-manager Peter Jenner of Syd Barrett's artistic flowering and the Pink Floyd's initial success. "The question is why it then became so hard. Money? Fame? People coming up and asking Syd the meaning of life—and giving him loads of acid? I blame the acid, but I think it would have been something else if it hadn't been the acid." "Certainly acid had *something* to do with it," says Floyd keyboardist Rick Wright. "You don't know whether the acid

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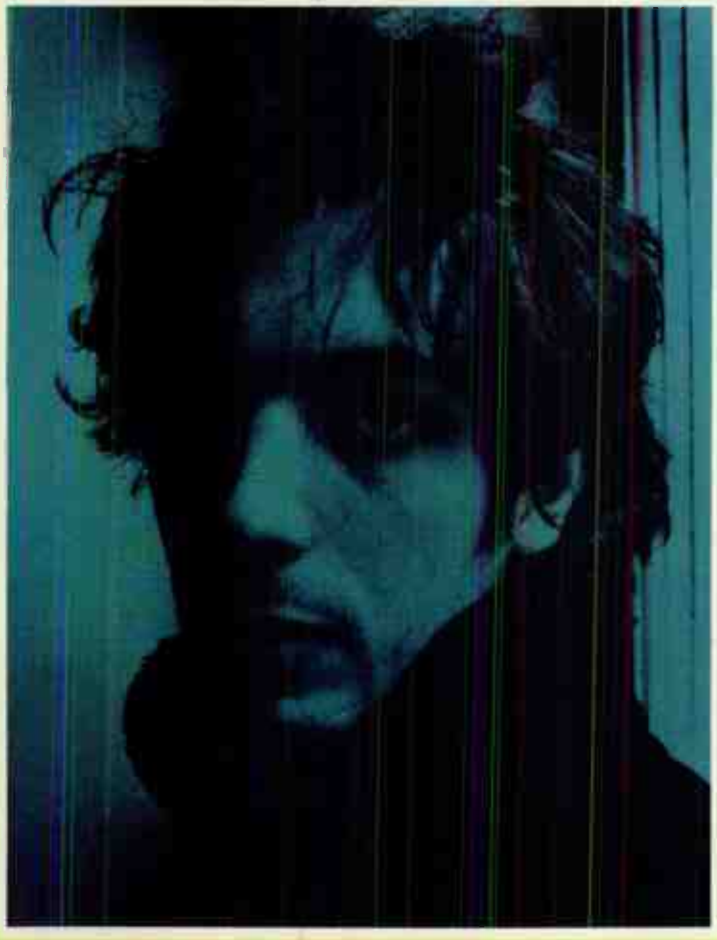
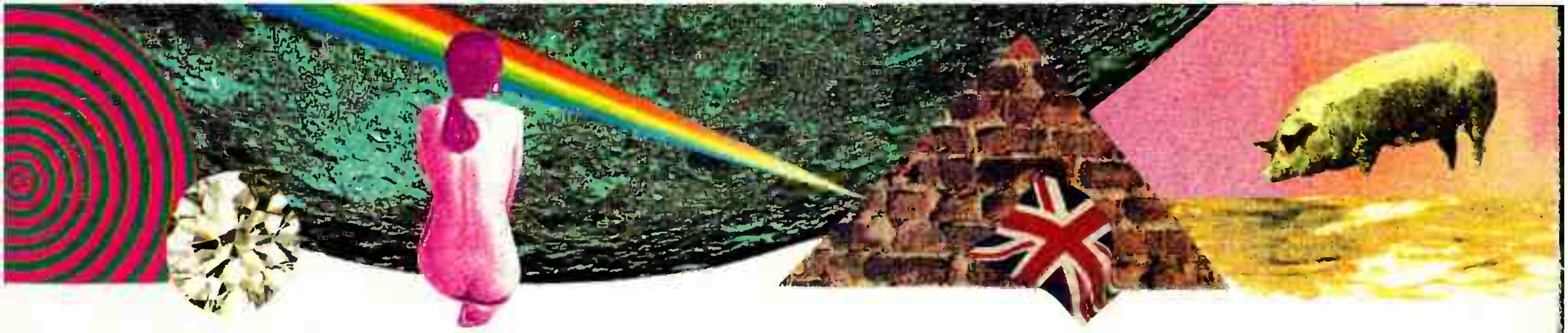




accelerated this process that was happening in his brain, or was the cause of it. I think Syd just got involved with people who were trying to turn him on. In the late '60s taking acid was a whole new world. He got caught up in it."

Barrett's move in mid-1967 to the most notorious "underground" address in South Kensington was stepping from the frying pan into the fire. One Cambridge friend remembers 101 Cromwell Road, already home to much of their old crowd, as "an extraordinary building full of extraordinary people—very talented and high-flying painters and musicians. It was heavily drug-oriented; international acid dealers would stop off there for three days."

Syd Barrett gave every indication of having been launched into a permanent LSD orbit. In early days, says light man Peter Wynne Willson, "we would take acid in very protected circumstances—with people we knew very well, in familiar surroundings. But Syd began taking it on his own—and getting well freaked-out."

In this he was now constantly (if unwittingly) aided and abetted by the likes of another new roommate named Scotty, characterized by Floyd underling John Marsh as "one of the original acid-in-the-reservoir, change-the-face-of-the-world acid missionaries—and a desperately twisted freak" to boot. According to Marsh, Syd's more earthbound visitors would decline all offers of refreshments at 101 Cromwell Road, including a glass of water—"unless you got it yourself from the tap, and even then be desperately worried, because Scotty was spiking everything."

Roger Waters, Rick Wright, Nick Mason and Syd just before the coup.

After Barrett, who adored cats, adopted one of Jenner's, it too was fed LSD. Yet Peter Jenner and John Marsh, like almost everyone around the band, continued to keep to themselves any misgivings about Syd's excesses. It was, after all, the Summer of Love, when nobody—least of all a manager of *Pink Floyd*, or a Mod kid privileged to help run their psychedelic lights—wished to be so *boring* as to suggest that the acidmania might be getting out of hand.

For his friend June Bolan, the alarm bells began to sound only when Syd kept his girlfriend Lindsay under lock and key for three days, occasionally shoving a ration of biscuits under the door. After June and another friend rescued the badly bruised and shaken prisoner, Barrett locked *himself* in the room and refused to show his face for another week.

And yet, June stresses, there was no overnight change. "He'd be all right for a couple of weeks, and then he'd be funny for a couple of days—and it would transpire that he was taking a lot of acid. He knew the volume of the acid he was taking. But then 'friends,' when he had a cup of tea, would drop one in and not tell him, so that halfway through a trip he'd be on another trip. And perhaps they'd do that a couple of times a day for two or three weeks. And that's when his hold on reality became very tenuous."

Syd's year-long acid trip began to go haywire just when the Floyd's career was shifting into overdrive. Some of his friends attribute part of Barrett's deterioration to the pressures of "pop stardom" and the attitudes of the rest of the Floyd; others maintain that the personality conflicts within the band, along with Syd's inability to handle his success, essentially arose from his own acid-fueled derangement.

Peter Jenner is the first to concede that the Floyd's professional life "suddenly stopped being fun. All these people were asking, 'What's the next single? We need another hit now.' And we were thinking, 'Blimey, what's a hit?' It was all becoming a *business*." And Syd, says photographer Mick Rock, "was a totally *pure* artist; he could not deal with the business."

Contributing to the pressure-cooker ambience was the relentless touring to which the Floyd were committed throughout the rest of 1967: over 80 shows from May to September alone. Some were what June Bolan calls "double-headers"—two gigs in one night.

The British provinces—apart from a few hip pockets in the north—tended to be ill-prepared for Barrett's 20-minute feedback soliloquies, lighting designer Wynne Willson's cosmic bubbles and the group's willful lack of danceable rhythms or traditional showmanship. Conspicuously absent from most sets, moreover, was the one tune—"See Emily Play"—that the punters were likely to have heard, or *want* to hear. Years later, Roger Waters quipped to a friend that the '67-model Floyd "earned the record for clearing ballrooms faster than any other band."

Sometimes, however, audiences expressed their displeasure more forcefully. At one Bedfordshire ballroom earlier in the year, Waters reminisced, "they were pouring pints of beer onto us from the balcony. That was most unpleasant, and very dangerous too." As close to home as the Feathers Club, in the London suburb of Ealing, a heckler armed with oversize pre-decimalization British pennies "made a bloody great cut in the middle of my forehead. I bled quite a lot. And I stood right in front of the stage to see if I could see him throw one. I was glowering in a real rage, and I was gonna leap out into the audience and get him. Happily there was one freak who turned up who liked us, so the audi-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMIE HOGAN

Photograph: Baron Wolman

ence spent the whole evening beating the shit out of *him*."

The Floyd, in Mason's words, "trudged around for a daily dose of broken bottle."

"When Syd was at the height of his powers—and when they had these pop hits, 'Emily' and 'Arnold Layne,'" Cream lyricist Pete Brown recalls, "the whole psychedelic thing was a very London-based phenomenon; it didn't spread for a long time. And they were putting them out on the road playing ballrooms—to audiences who'd only heard R&B bands and didn't know what the fuck was going on.

"And of course Syd was probably the last person in the world who could deal with [music business] structures. He was out there giving 100 percent and not getting very much back—except in London where people understood him. That was a big strain."

SYD sat *"absolutely ga-ga" in his dressing room, totally switched-off, rigid like a stone. His blank stare registered not a flicker of recognition. As the audience grew restless, the stage manager kept knocking urgently:* "Time to go, time to go!"

An ever-widening rift developed between Syd and at least two of his fellow Floyds. According to one insider, "Roger was always intensely ambitious. The others obviously liked the idea of being pop stars, but Roger was constantly trying to drive the group into more commercial situations—in the way of the press, in the way the gigs were structured, in the numbers they put out. Nick Mason went along with that.

"Rick was a much lower-key personality, very much more in tune with Syd in the early days. They played a lot together, worked a lot together. Basically they were the two smokers, and Roger and Nick were the two drinkers. There was a bit of a split. But Rick eventually swung towards the stronger personalities in the group."

Peter Jenner, on the other hand—his own differences with Waters notwithstanding—feels the bassist was motivated by a desire "to get the whole thing organized and make it more manageable." And he, at least, remembers Mason as the Floyd "who could always talk to everybody, the one who had nothing to prove. He deserves enormous credit for keeping the band together over the years."

June Bolan attributes some of the friction to Barrett—the charismatic singer and songwriter—having naturally been singled out for special attention. "It always happens: The singer in the band gets more pictures. He was also the most photogenic. Syd was the motivating force in the band, and that's basically, initially, who people wanted to see.

"I think it's indicative of 'fame'—it could be just one record, something like 'See Emily Play,' and your first 'Top of the Pops'—and then things change," she says. "Before, they were four people who'd grown up together, or gone to college together. It became separate camps of people: your smokers and dopers, and your drinkers."

Peter Wynne Willson remembers, "There was always a lot of pressure on Syd from Nick and Roger to conform to their picture of what a pop group should do—that they should always play the current single at a concert, and selected tracks from the album. And that just wasn't in Syd's reckoning at all. He was very much wanting to develop the music, because of that experimental altruistic feeling among like-minded people at that time. But Nick and Roger saw the possibility of big commercial success for the band.

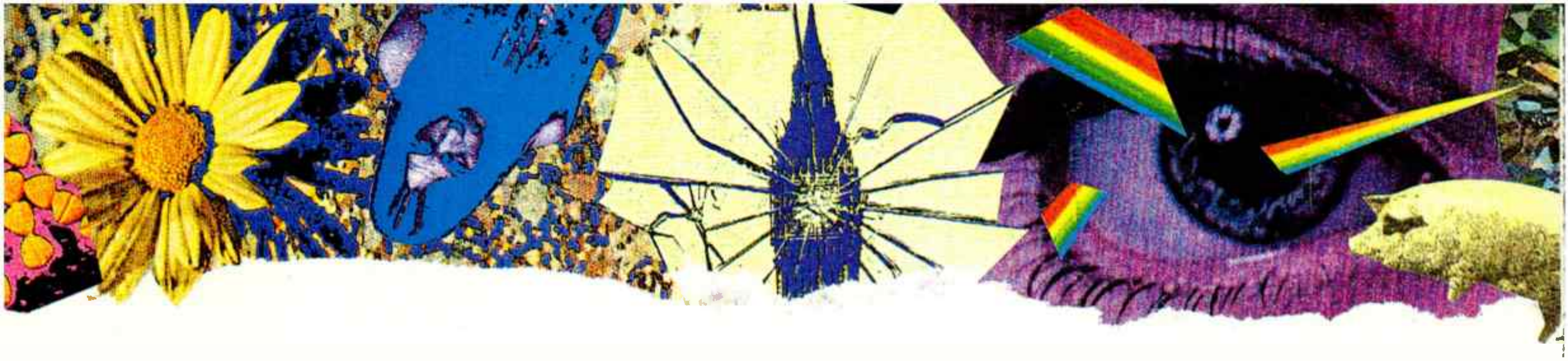
"They put a lot of pressure on me, too. Roger would often complain that he was not illuminated as a star. I specifically didn't illuminate any of them as 'rock stars' because I did the lighting to blend with the music rather than accentuate somebody as a personality."

"The Floyd tours," says Susie Wynne Willson, "were frantic and competitive, and they hassled each other. Roger had a very heavy way of playing, as if there had to be a 'winner.' They didn't have the same living attitudes: they only lived together because they were on tour together. They didn't even eat the same food. Syd, Pete and I were vegetarian and smoking vast quantities of dope. Everyone else was into drinking beer and eating big juicy steaks. We were in a completely different space, worlds apart."

As Barrett's behavior on the road turned increasingly erratic, the other Floyds took to needling him with a vengeance. During one trip, for instance, he was moved to buy himself not one but *12* sandwiches from a roadside stand. These he proceeded to cram into his mouth in rapid succession, oblivious to the mess accruing to his face and hands, while his bandmembers egged him on in a mounting chorus of sarcasm and contempt. Amazingly, he didn't get sick.

June Bolan affirms that "once Syd lost his grip, they were really wicked to him. With Syd behaving like a complete cretin, they would send him up on long car journeys where you're all stuck in one vehicle, and there's nowhere to go because you've got to end up at the gig.

"Perhaps had they been kinder, in those early days of his breakdown or cracking up or whatever you want to call it, he may not have been hit so hard by it all. But that is speculation. It may have happened anyway, in exactly the same way, or it may not have happened so badly—but I do feel that they were horrider to him than they need to have been."



On July 29, the Pink Floyd appeared at an Alexandra Palace extravaganza, second-billed only to Eric "San Francisco Nights" Burdon and his new set of psychedelic Animals. As the Floyd's big moment approached, June Bolan remembers, Barrett was nowhere to be seen. She finally located him in a dressing room, "absolutely gaga, just totally switched-off, sitting rigid like a stone."

"Syd!" she cried. "It's June! Look at me!" His blank stare registered not a flicker of recognition. As the milling audience grew restless, the stage manager kept knocking on the door with his increasingly urgent summons: *Time to go! Time to go!* "And we're trying to get Syd up," June recalls, "and get him together to go and play. He couldn't speak. He was absolutely catatonic. Roger and I hoofed him onto the stage, and en route put his guitar around his neck, and stood him in front of the vocal mike.

"That's when you have to give Roger credit for what he did: He actually got the other two together and made a sort of half-arsed version of a set. Peter and Andrew were frantic—they were pulling out their hair."

THE Floyd tours were frantic and competitive, and they hassled each other; Roger had a very heavy way of playing, as if there had to be a 'winner.'"

The two managers' relief when Syd at last let rip with his white Stratocaster proved short-lived; according to June, the discordant, yowling notes bore little connection to what the other three were playing, Mostly, Barrett "just stood there, tripping out of his mind."

The next issue of *Melody Maker* announced that "Syd Barrett is suffering from 'nervous exhaustion' and the group have withdrawn from all engagements booked for the month of August. As a result they have lost at least £4000 in work." In keeping with the band's newfound prominence, this report appeared on page one—under the banner headline PINK FLOYD FLAKE OUT!

By the summer of 1967, the conquest of America had begun to loom large in Jenner and King's plan. "The American tour was when Syd was beginning to get seriously eccentric," says Jenner. "That was when it became inarguable that it was a real problem."

In San Francisco, the Floyd played not only the Fillmore but a few dates at Winterland, where they opened for Big Brother and the Holding Company. Though disappointed that Big Brother and the other Haight-Ashbury bands proved to be so much less "extraordinary and mindblowing and trippy" than he anticipated, Waters—along with Mason—was initiated backstage by lead singer Janis Joplin into the joys of Southern Comfort.

"Syd was okay at Winterland—just," says Peter Wynne Willson, who accompanied the Floyd to the States. "But when we went on to Los Angeles to play at a little club, Syd became almost catatonic—partly because we weren't sleeping much. We were constantly being taken up by ravishing California girls who asked us our star signs and then plied us with everything you can think of. Very seductive for somebody from England, particularly in that sunshine."

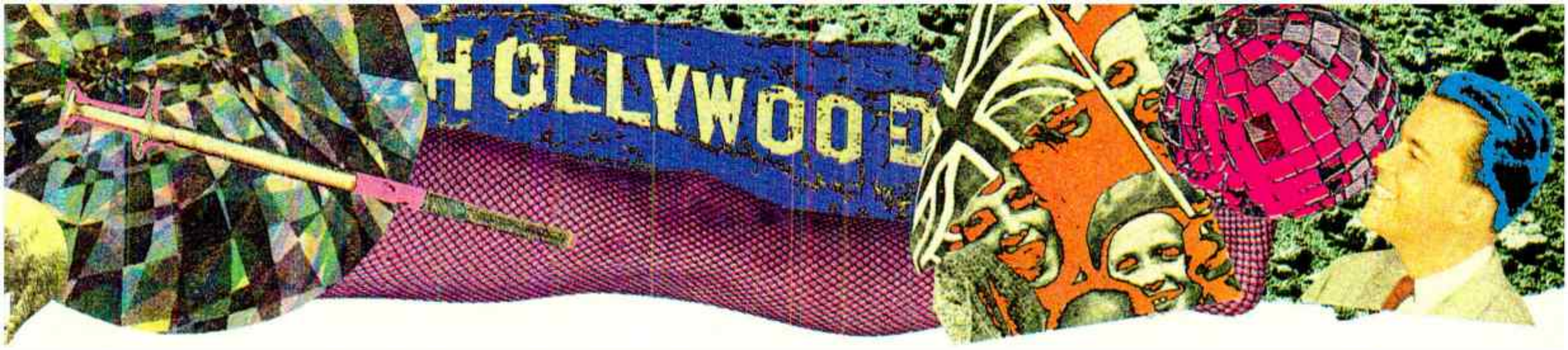
Any party atmosphere was dispelled after the Floyd took the Cheetah Club stage—where Syd stared blankly off into farthest space, his right hand dangling inertly by his side. When he failed to deliver any of his lyrics, Waters and Wright struggled to cover for his vocals. "It wasn't unnatural that Roger got very pissed off," says Wynne Willson. "I seem to remember that he was actually demanding that Syd be dismissed on the spot."

A decade later, Nick Mason spoke revealingly of his own emotional response to Syd: "It's easy now to look back on the past and try and give it some shape and some form. But at the time you're in a total state of confusion, muddling about because you're trying to be in this band and be successful and make it work—and *things aren't working out*. You don't really understand why, and you can't believe someone's deliberately trying to screw it up; and yet the other half of you is saying, 'This man's crazy—he's trying to destroy me!' *Destroy me*, you know—it gets very personal. You all get very worked up into a state of extreme rage.

"I mean, obviously there were some incredible moments of clarity, like the wonderful American tour, which will live forever. Syd detuning his guitar all the way through one number, striking the strings and detuning the guitar, which is—very modern," Mason laughs, "but very difficult for a band to follow or play with. Other occasions he more or less just ceased playing, and would stand there—leaving us to muddle along as best we could. At times like that you think, 'What we need is someone else—or at least some help!'"

Capitol Records, meanwhile, obliviously continued to lay on its brand of hospitality. After ushering the Floyd around Beverly Hills to gawk at the homes of the stars, an A&R man trumpeted, "Yes, and here we are, the center of it all—Hollywood and Vine!" At which the glassy-eyed Barrett momentarily seemed to snap out of his trance, gushing, "It's great to be in Las Vegas!"

Another eager host in Los Angeles was Alice Cooper, who invited Syd and the others to dinner with his own band. Guitarist Glen Buxton came away convinced that "Syd was definitely from Mars. All of a sudden I'd pick up the sugar and pass it to him," he recalls, "and he'd shake his head like, 'Yeah, thanks....' It's like telepathy, it really was. It was very weird. You would find yourself right in the middle of doing something, as you were passing the sugar or whatever, and think,



'Well, damn! I didn't hear anybody say anything.' That was the first time in my life I'd met anybody that could actually do that freely. And this guy did it all the time."

The nadir of the Floyd's stay in Tinseltown were their legendary televised encounters with Pat Boone and Dick Clark (on November 5 and 6, respectively), during which Syd mutely responded to Boone's fatuous questions with his most zombie-like stare—and then kept his lips sealed when it came time to mime "See Emily Play" on "American Bandstand." In the wake of these mortifying episodes the tour's promoter decided to cut his losses and put everyone on the next plane home.

"They all came back from the States with gonorrhea," recalls one of their female friends. "They were all frantically getting injections."

And yet, now that the starmaking machine had been activated, one could hardly switch it off, and so the Floyd went right back on the road as a supporting act on a Jimi Hendrix Experience package tour. At each gig, the headlining Hendrix was allotted exactly 40 minutes. The Move, who preceded him onstage, had just half an hour. And the Floyd were expected to sum up what *they* were all about in precisely *17* minutes! Which, from the standpoint of Waters and Mason, required that the band play a selection of tested favorites—and keep them as short and snappy as possible. Barrett willfully resisted his colleagues' attempt to exert a modicum of professionalism; they in turn became ever more intolerant of his idiosyncrasies.

WHAT DESTROYED SYD BARRETT? FRIENDS BLAME 1) DRUGS, 2) A FRAGILE PSYCHOLOGY, 3) FAME, 4) SEX, 5) MONEY, 6) PINK FLOYD AND 7) HAVING TOO MANY OPTIONS.

As the Hendrix tour wore on, Barrett appeared increasingly morose and depressed. Jimi Hendrix, unaware as almost everyone else of the underlying seriousness of Syd's condition, took to addressing him ironically as "laughing Syd Barrett." Hendrix had cause to smile; his star was exploding into worldwide renown, and his guitar pyrotechnics were rapturously received throughout the tour. "The girls were throwing themselves at him like there was no tomorrow," says Wynne Willson. "I remember two girls coming down from his room, absolutely shaking. One of them had had a severely physical time with him, and her friend took her off to the loo to try to repair the damage."

For Syd one of the compensations of pop stardom had always been the constant supply of nubile bodies thrown at his disposal; as with the drugs, he was hardly one to stint on his indulgence. Syd's friend Storm Thorgerson feels that this "wantonness with women" may have played a part in Barrett's breakdown, insofar as "being a good-looking and charismatic guy, and all the chicks liking it, doesn't necessarily do your sense of reality any good. Oftentimes it wears off, it's not the whole story. I think that was quite confusing for him—a bit of an overload, too. That was another catalyst."

A THIRD PINK FLOYD SINGLE—BARRETT'S "APPLES AND ORANGES," PAIRED with Rick Wright's vinyl debut as a composer, "Paint Box"—was released during the Jimi Hendrix tour.

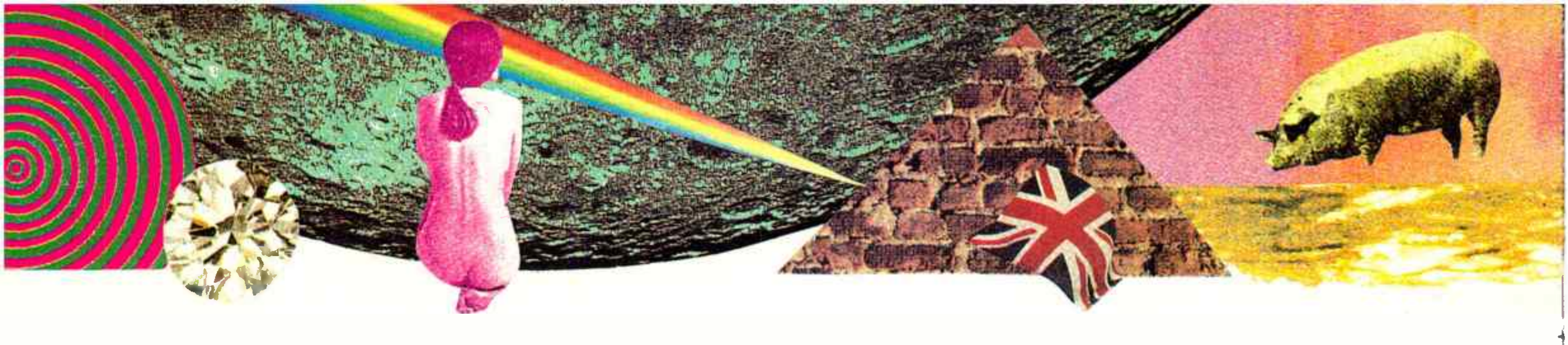
Unlike its two predecessors, however, the hurriedly recorded "Apples and Oranges" is not only bereft of Beatlesesque hooks, but glaringly out-of-tune—and with each manically sped-up verse set to completely different music, hardly the recipe for a pop smash. It made not the slightest impression on the British charts. Syd's own public reaction to his single's failure was "couldn't care less."

There were three more Barrett compositions in the Floyd pipeline—next to any of which "Apples and Oranges" sounded almost commercial. The one Syd reportedly favored for a single release was the shatteringly disjointed "Jug Band Blues"—whose middle section featured, at Barrett's insistence, a guest appearance by a Salvation Army sextet whom he instructed to "play what you want." Citing phrases like *I'm most obliged to you for making it clear that I'm not here, and I'm wondering who could be writing this song,* Jenner describes "Jug Band Blues" as "possibly the ultimate self-diagnosis on a state of schizophrenia."

"Jug Band" was at least to surface the following summer on the second Pink Floyd album—a distinction denied the similarly autobiographical "Scream Thy Last Scream (Old Woman with a Casket)" and "Vegetable Man." "Syd wrote 'Vegetable Man' in my house," Jenner recalls. "It was really uncanny. He sat there and just described himself, what he was wearing and doing at that time." *In yellow shoes I get the blues...blue velvet trousers make me feel Pink...in my paisley shirt I look a jerk.* "After he left the band, they all thought those songs were too intense. They couldn't handle them. They were like words from a psychiatrist's chair—an extraordinary document of a serious mental disturbance.

"I always thought they should be put out, so I let my copies be heard. I knew that Roger would never let them out, or Dave. They somehow felt they were a bit indecent, like putting out nude pictures of a famous actress; it just wasn't cricket. But I thought they were good songs and great pieces of art. They're disturbing, and not a lot of fun, but they're some of Syd's finest work—though God knows I wouldn't wish anyone to go through what he's gone through to get to those songs. They're like Van Gogh."

Photograph: Mick Rock



Van Gogh or no, Jenner and his partner were confronted with "an economic crisis developing in the band. The initial flood of money was drying up, and tax bills were beginning to loom on the horizon."

"At the end of the week," Roger Waters recalled, "we'd all go in to get our checks—and week by week people would start to go in earlier and earlier. They'd collect their check, dash 'round to their bank and have it expressed because there wasn't enough money to pay everybody—so whoever got their check first got their money. Checks were just bouncing all the time...."

A campaign for Barrett's ouster from the Floyd was now being openly waged, with Roger (in Jenner's words) "the leader of the Syd Must Go faction." One insider remembers Waters presenting "a whole list of complaints about Syd. Some of them seemed a bit petty; one was that Syd kept nicking Roger's cigarettes and never bought any of his own. Roger said that was the final straw."

MASON, DAVID GILMOUR, WATERS AND WRIGHT AFTER SYD WAS LOCKED IN THE CUPBOARD.

Storm Thorgerson, however, argues that "it's not very fruitful being hard on Roger and Nick and Rick, or them on themselves. My recollection is that they really didn't know how to handle it. You don't cut off your nose to spite your face—he was the songwriter. That's ascribing to Roger vast degrees of egocentricity which he later had, but I don't think he did then. It was a very difficult time for them. I know they were very reluctant because they met in my flat and were talking about how difficult Syd was, and we had a big conversation about what to do."

Peter Jenner recalls that he and King "fought like mad against Syd leaving the band. We went through a lot of grief trying to keep him in. But finally we had to agree it was just too much. They'd go onstage and wouldn't know what songs he'd play. He might do a solo which might go on for two minutes or five. He might just play the same song for 40 minutes—and the same note all the way through it. They'd just have to keep waffling away while he'd play the same note, *boing...boing...boing...*for ages and ages. As it became obvious that he was deeply disturbed, we had to accept that we couldn't reasonably expect the others to go on working with him as before."

Syd's old school chum David Gilmour, in the meantime, had endured his own series of rather more down-to-earth frustrations. Jokers Wild had had little trouble mustering gigs and appreciative audiences on the Continent as a cover band, with the songs of the Four Seasons making way for those of Jimi Hendrix. Come 1967, they even changed their name to the Flowers.

In London one night, after David attended a typically catastrophic Floyd performance, Nick Mason approached him with a vague proposition: "Keep it under your hat—but would you consider joining the band at some time in the future? Because we might need to get someone in...."

Barrett, however, had arrived at plans of his own for expanding the lineup—with, according to Waters, "two freaks that he'd met somewhere or other. One of them played the banjo and the other played the saxophone. We weren't into that at all, and it was obvious that the crunch had finally come."

Gilmour's call came at Christmastime. "They just said, 'Did I want to?' and I said, 'Yes,' and it was as simple as that." The initial inducement for Dave had less to do with new artistic horizons than with the prospect of "fame and the girls."

His rock 'n' roll acquaintances suspected something was afoot when Dave strode into a Cambridge music shop they frequented and grandly requested the new Fender Stratocaster that they had all coveted. Future Sex Pistols chronicler Lee Wood watched agog as Gilmour then produced a wad of banknotes totaling "a hundred and something pounds. They took this yellow Stratocaster off the wall and he bought it and said 'Cheerio' and walked out. We were all thinking, 'How did he get all that money?' About three days later in *Melody Maker* I read that Dave Gilmour had joined the Pink Floyd." (The Stratocaster was to remain Gilmour's guitar of choice throughout his career with the Floyd.)

Gilmour's addition was officially announced in January, 1968, alleging the Floyd's desire "to explore new instruments and add further experimental dimensions to its sound." One of Dave's first assignments was to pretend to play a guitar on an "Apples and Oranges" video—with Roger faking the recalcitrant Syd's vocal. Gilmour, says a friend, found such episodes "really spooky."

And how did Barrett react to finding his old mate in the spotlight with him? "It was fairly obvious," Gilmour recalled years later, "that I was brought in to take over from him, at least onstage, [but] it was impossible to gauge his feelings about it. I don't think Syd has opinions as such. He functions on a totally different plane of logic, and some people will claim, 'Well yeah, man, he's on a higher cosmic level'—but basically there's something drastically wrong.

"It wasn't just the drugs—we'd *both* done acid before the Floyd thing. It's just a mental foible which grew out of all proportion. I remember all sorts of strange things happening—at one point he was wearing lipstick, dressing in high heels and believing he had homosexual tendencies. We all felt he should have gone to see a psychiatrist, though someone in fact played an interview he did to R.D. Laing, and Laing claimed he was incurable."

Gilmour, for his part, brought to the Floyd a musicality as harmo-

Photograph: Photofest

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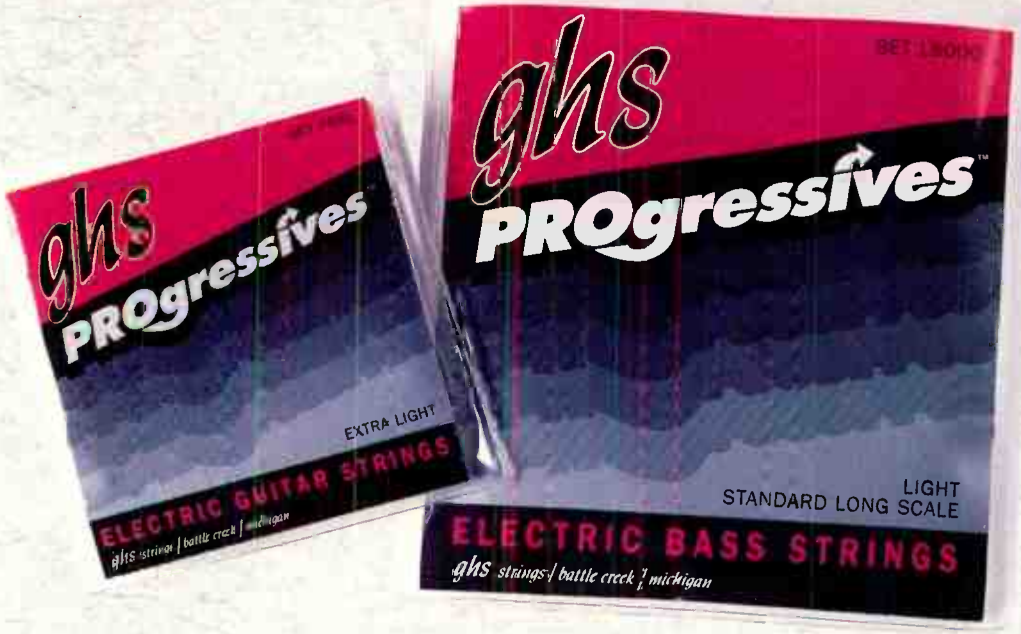
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nious and adaptable as his character. "He came into a very difficult situation," says Peter Jenner, "and he handled it very well. He was also a great guitarist—the best musician the Floyd ever had." In a conversation with superfan Andy Mabbett, the manager recalled, "Dave could do a great imitation of Syd Barrett. He was a technician in a way that none of the others were. He started off playing in a very simple Syd-y style, and through the years it's become his own."

The Floyd proceeded to play a handful of gigs as a five-piece—until the day that the others decided not to bother to fetch Barrett before a performance. "The idea," says Jenner, "was that Dave would be Syd's dep; he would cover for his eccentricities. And when that got to be not workable, Syd was just going to write, just to try to keep him involved, but in a way where the others could work and function." Accordingly, Barrett was left—in Gilmour's words—"to stay home and write wonderful songs, become the mystery Brian Wilson figure behind the group."

But Syd's new material turned out to be more than the band was willing or able to handle—especially the taunting "Have You Got It Yet?" with its ever-changing melody and chord progression. His bemused colleagues had simply had enough. In April the press was advised that Syd Barrett had "left" the Pink Floyd.

But, says Jenner, "Syd never really understood that, because he always thought of them as *his* band. He just drifted back to the Floyd always." Then again, in a figurative sense (e.g., *Dark Side of the Moon, Wish You Were Here* and *The Wall*), the Floyd would end up drifting inexorably back to Syd.

Syd moved into Storm Thorgerson's flat opposite the South Kensington underground station. The roster of resident Bohemians included Mick Rock (who romanticized Barrett during this period as "a doomed flying force"), Storm's fellow Royal College of Art student and Hipgnosis design partner Aubrey "Po" Powell and one Harry Dobson.

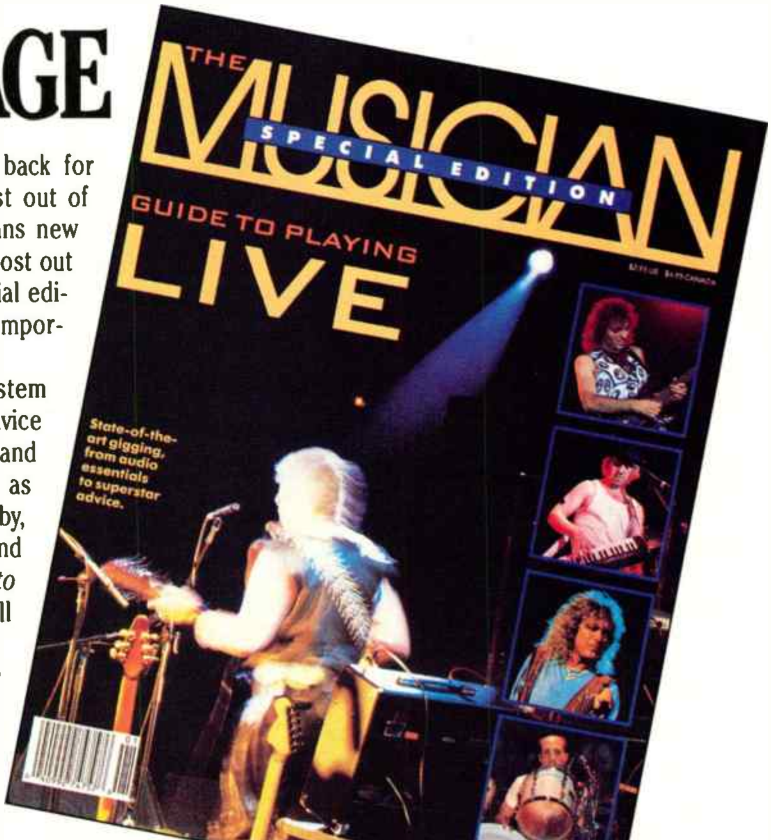
According to the writer Jonathan Meades, Barrett "was this rather weird, exotic and mildly famous creature...living in this flat with these people who to some extent were pimping off him both professionally and privately. I went there to see Harry and there was this terrible noise. It sounded like heating pipes shaking. I said, 'What's that?' and he sort of giggled and said, 'That's Syd having a bad trip. We put him in the linen cupboard.'"

Jonathon Green—then a staffer for *Rolling Stone*'s short-lived British edition—remembers being sent to interview Barrett. Green says, "I went into this big white room, and there was Syd, dressed all in white clothes. It was really very sad. Syd spent the whole time looking at the top corner of the room, saying, 'Hey man...hey...right.'

"Now look up there—can you see the people on the ceiling?" In the end, Green decided to scrap his article.

BY 1971 SYD WAS LIVING IN CAMBRIDGE WITH HIS MOTHER, WHERE AT ONE point Mrs. Barrett had him committed to a sanatorium for several months.

Like his own songs, Syd seemed alternately lucid and elliptical. He told Mick Rock he felt "full of dust and guitars," and, at 25, afraid of getting old. "I think young people should have fun, but I never have any." Yet he insisted he was "totally together," adding: "I'm nothing that you think I am anyway." Ⓜ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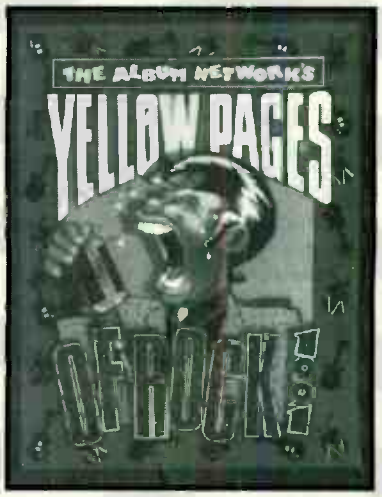

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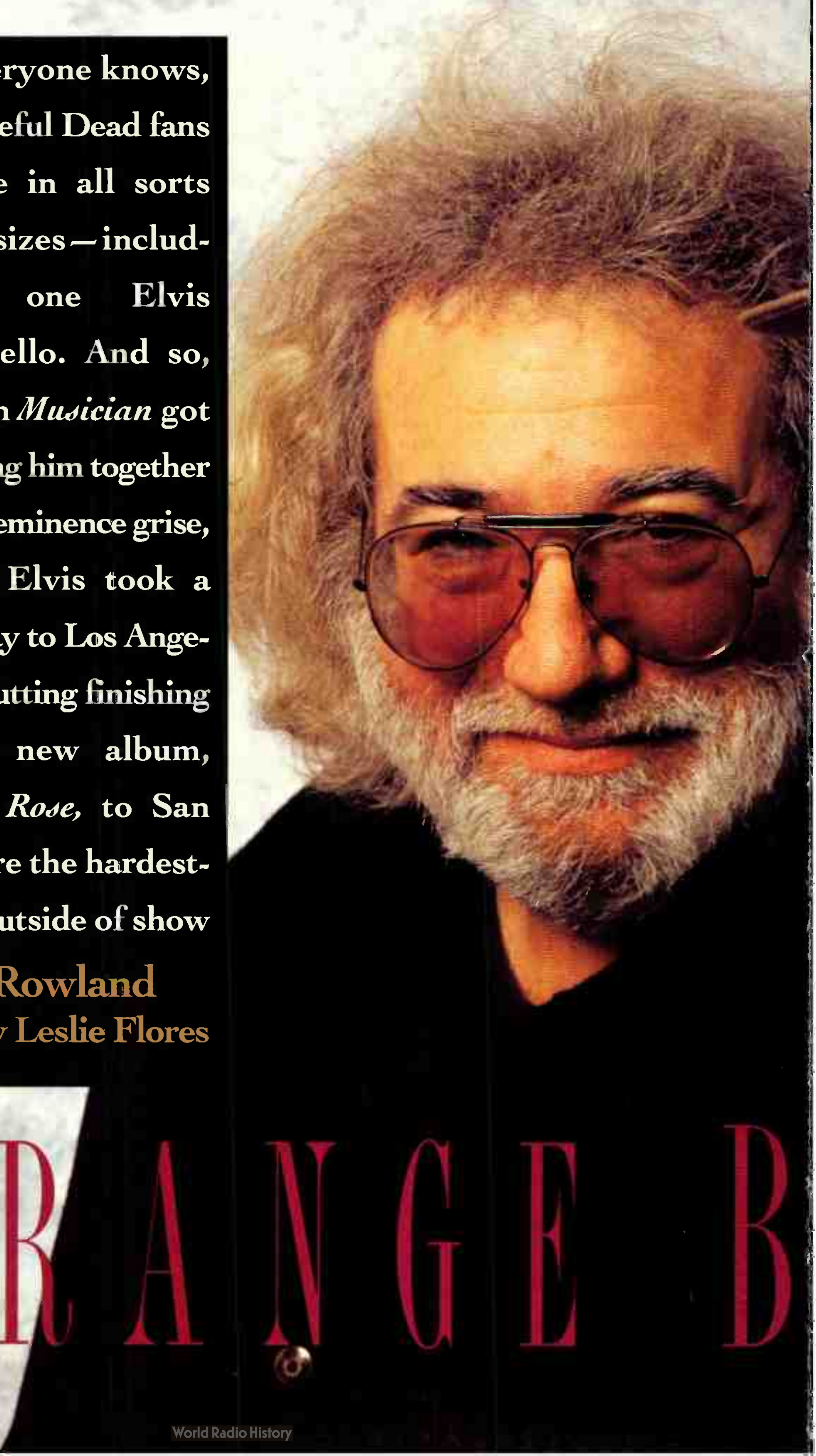
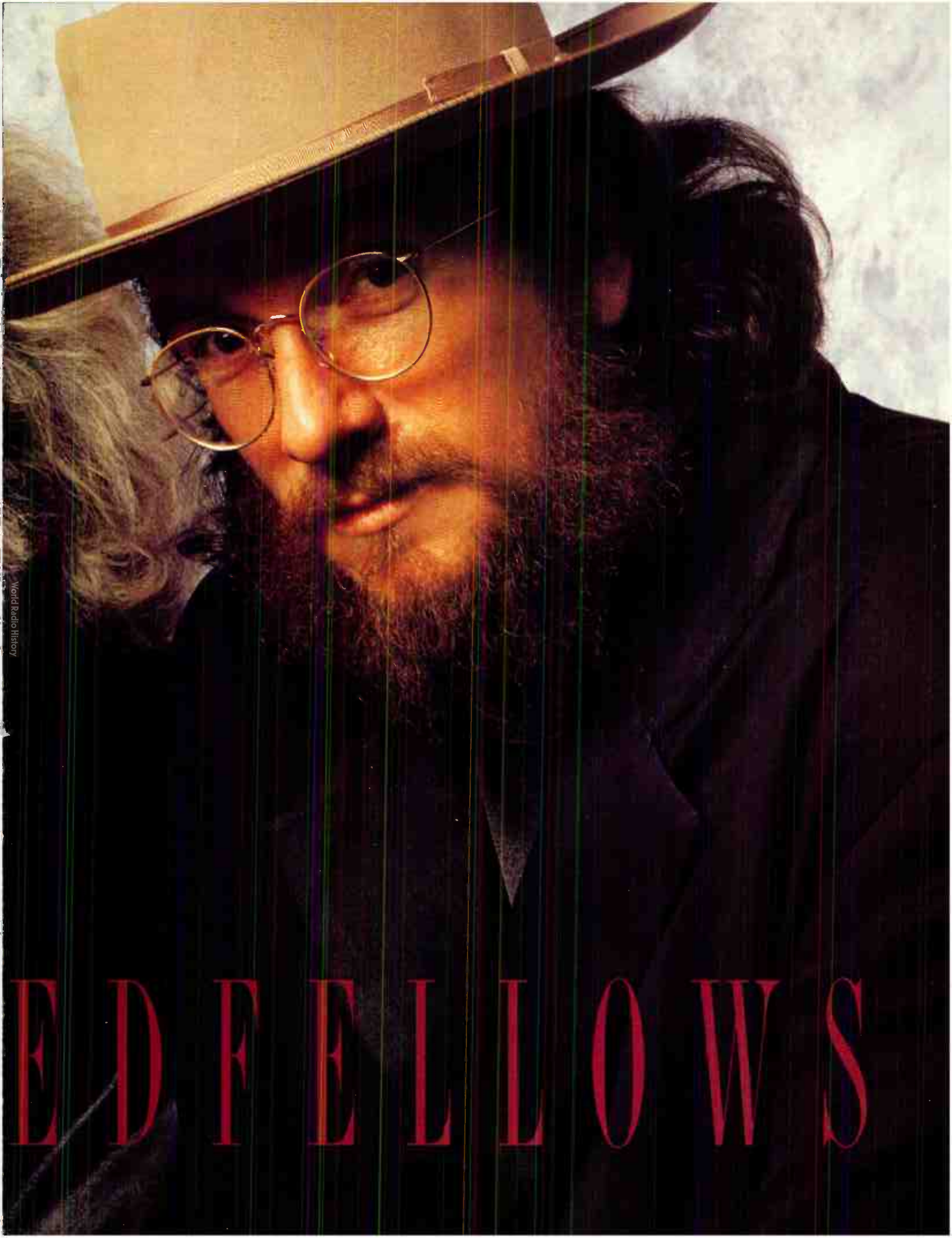


STRANGE B

As everyone knows, Grateful Dead fans come in all sorts and sizes—including one Elvis Costello. And so, when *Musician* got the idea of putting him together with the Dead's eminence grise, Jerry Garcia, Elvis took a detour on his way to Los Angeles, where he's putting finishing touches on a new album, *Mighty Like a Rose,* to San Francisco, where the hardest-working band outside of show

By Mark Rowland

Photography by Leslie Flores



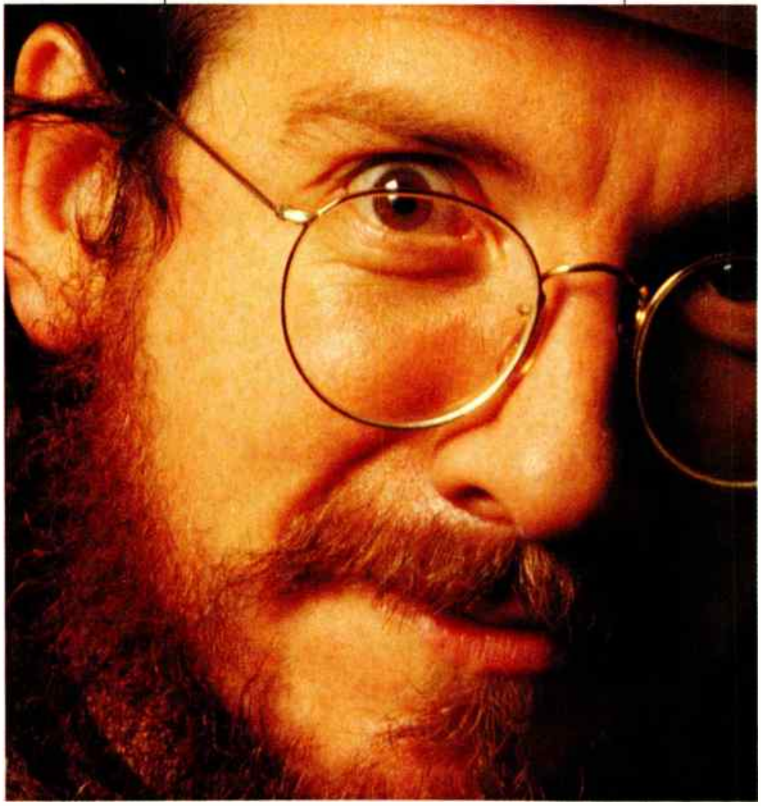
EDFELLOWS

show business had recently played their ritual New Year's Eve show. They met at the homey Dead office in nearby San Rafael, Elvis nursing some London jet lag and Jerry a slight cold. "So instead of hours and hours and hours," Dead publicist Dennis McNally prophesied, "you'll probably only talk for hours and hours." That was about right. Contrary to casual perception, Garcia and Costello have more than a little in common—voluble personalities, inquiring minds, Irish blood, handy wit and those shaggy beards, for starters, not to mention a way with a melody.

"My Dad gave me the first Grateful Dead album in about '68."

Perhaps that's why both musicians will be featured on upcoming albums as far-flung as Rob Wasserman's *Trios* and Hal Willner's tribute to Charles Mingus. Or why Costello's rendition of Garcia/Hunter's "Ship of Fools" is on *Deadicated*, a benefit LP for the Amazon rain forest comprising covers of Grateful Dead songs. Nor does it take too much of a stretch to imagine Garcia someday spinning out fine choruses behind "Brilliant Mistake" or some other Costello tune. It wouldn't even be the first time they've played together.

But we'll let them tell the stories. Grab a cup of coffee and pull up a chair.



ELVIS COSTELLO: Certainly a candidate for the world's greatest record store is Village Music, in Mill Valley. Every year John Goddard has a party for his friends and customers, and he always has a really good bill of people. So last year on the twenty-first anniversary, I did a show with Nick Lowe, and he invited James Burton and Jerry Scheff, who'd played with me on the road. I did my little set, Nick did his set and then it was a free-for-all; Charles Brown did a piece, and people were getting summoned to the stage. I was standing in the corridor when I suddenly heard, "Jerry Garcia to the stage!" And, emboldened by several margaritas, I decided to join him.

JERRY GARCIA: Not only that, but it was one of those situations where I had the choice of playing either Elvis' guitar, which is low and it's stiff, and the strings are quite wide as well, and all this confusing script, or of playing Burton's guitar, which is strung with spider webs. I mean it's the absolutely lightest you can string a guitar and still get a sound out of it. I'd take Burton's and play a note on it and it goes "spack." So I opted to play Elvis' guitar as the lesser of two evils. [*laughter*] And I vowed I would never go to another one of those shows without my own.

ELVIS: It was a whole Three Stooges routine—"Here, you take my guitar," "No, I'll take your guitar." Of course guitar players who can play usually don't refer to the fingerings [position markers] on the fretboard—but if there are fingerings, they can be bewildering. I think I had Burton's old Telecaster for half a song, and James had my old Martin acoustic—which wasn't cranked up so he couldn't solo—and Jerry's struggling with my guitar. But once everybody got settled we managed to struggle through a couple of Hank Williams songs. Like any sort of jam thing it inevitably came to degenerate toward lots of blues. But we managed a few songs with changes.

JERRY: A pretty high level of jam-sessionry really, considering what it was. Really fun. And Elvis' solo set was phenomenal, I thought. That's one of those things that I can't do at all, just playing the guitar and singing. You're so solid with that, you don't miss a band. I always feel like I'm missing a band.

ELVIS: I did start in folk clubs, but I never learned any technique. When I found it necessary to go out on the road solo, in 1984, I booked these shows, in North Carolina or somewhere, and I kind of rehearsed a set in the solitude of my own room. Then I was horrified to find there was 6000 people there [*Jerry laughs*]. And I'd never played solo since before I was a professional. It was sheer fear.

When I first went on the road as a professional, it was sketching in parts that had been played much more efficiently on the record by John McFee. I was trying to cover a lot of ground. You say you miss a band; I try to compensate for better or worse. I don't play an even stroke, it's all accents. Sometimes it works and sometimes it's a mess, depending on my state of mind.

JERRY: John Scher talked me into doing a solo show one time. He kept saying, "Come on, it'll be great, go on out there with an acoustic guitar." Finally I relented—I got weak. Two shows I had booked at Scher's little theater in Passaic, New Jersey. So I went there—and I was petrified. I had [bassist] John Kahn fly out on the next flight. Like, I'll do the next time, but I'm not going onstage again by myself. I'm a support musician, that's how I think of myself. It comes from being a banjo player really, which is where you fit into the rest of the music, you have a clearcut role. So I tend to define myself as that person. That's what I enjoy most, supporting somebody else.

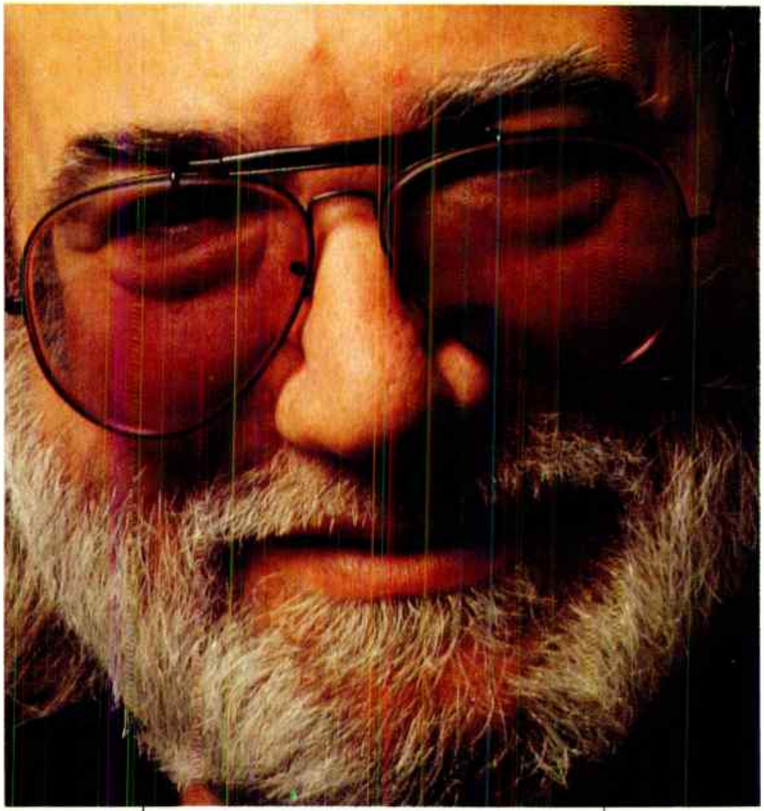
MUSICIAN: *Do you think your style as a player comes out of that* *bluegrass background?*

JERRY: Oh yeah, it comes from my fondness for a clearly spoken line, a clearly enunciated note.

MUSICIAN: *I think it will be a surprise to some readers to see you two together, because of the stereotype that comes with the territory, of who you are. To what extent does that stereotype have truth, and to what extent are you perhaps trapped by it?*

JERRY: I don't have very much reality on my stereotype, because I'm surrounded by it, you know what I mean? So I don't know what it includes. For example, is my stereotype famous for being musically very accepting or...?

ELVIS: It's the balance of the musical stuff and the cultural stuff. Seeing you in London, it wasn't just *the Grateful Dead comes to London.* It was *the Grateful Dead and all their friends.* And it wasn't actually like that when I first saw you there in the early '70s, probably just because it wasn't as easy to travel then as it is now. And also the following maybe has a bit more money.



JERRY: That's true, and it's much larger too. In those days our mystique sort of preceded us, more than people who had actually experienced shows.

ELVIS: The first time I ever saw Jerry's picture was on a record—it was the first album—that my dad gave to me. This would be about '68. My dad was a little older than I am now, he grew his hair and he got into the contemporary music. One day he brought over a stack of records that he thought I might want. There was your first record, *Surrealistic Pillow*, a Country Joe and the Fish record and a Marvin Gaye album. The kind of stuff that was big at my school was Tamla/Motown. So I played the Marvin Gaye record more than the others, then I'd put 'em aside and pull 'em out sometimes and puzzle over them....

> "I'm a support musician, that's my role. That's what I enjoy most."

Then I went up to live in Liverpool when I was 16. I think people in San Francisco maybe would bear this out, that if you have any big scene in a town, it sucks all the energy out and makes it almost impossible for anybody else to operate. Liverpool was like that, it was an absolute vacuum: The Beatles thing left everyone confused, they didn't want to hearken back to Merseybeat, so they were trying to grab pieces of what was going on, and there were all kinds of experimental groups. It didn't have any of its own identity. At school, far from everybody being into post-mod skinhead music, which was reggae and Tamla, everybody was into what was called "progressive rock." Progressive could cover anything from Joni Mitchell acoustic records to Deep Purple with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. And the real esoteric people were into West Coast bands. 'Cause it was mysterious, it was like collecting stamps or something. You have this message from the other side of the world and you have no way of verifying it. And I made almost this willful decision, maybe 'cause I'd had the record through the years: I went, "Right, I'll go further out now. Nobody will follow me to this one: the Grateful Dead." [*laughter*] You know, this music almost nobody can dig.

JERRY: The West Coast perception of English bands during the early Rolling Stones was also very cloudy. There was no real understanding of the complexities of English life, the nuances. For me, the most resonant thing was hearing the Rolling Stones play music that I'd grown up with, the Chess stuff. That was surprising because it was music that had already happened in my life, and then hearing it again, it was like, "Right, that would be fun to play." In the Grateful Dead's earliest version as a bar band the option was to play Beatles stuff or Rolling Stones and we always opted for whatever the Rolling Stones were doing—because we had a better understanding of where their music was coming from.

When I was a kid, rock 'n' roll was totally disreputable. I wanted to play rock 'n' roll but I wanted it to be respectable. I thought, gee, it'd be nice if rock 'n' roll had the acceptability that jazz has, that kind of cerebral appreciation. I loved the music, but not the stigma attached to it; nobody took it seriously until Ray Charles played the Newport Jazz Festival and rock 'n' roll started making these little appearances in the jazz world.

ELVIS: The image of the Grateful Dead that people had in England when you first came over was kind of like a biker band, kind of creepy. Musically more serious than Steppenwolf, but a similar image in terms of a relationship to a dark world. And the name now seems kind of a jovial thing, particularly since so many groups have adopted the skeleton logo and occult sort of images, without any spin on the humor of it, just copying it for crass reasons.

JERRY: Well, it is a very potent image. It's been with us all along. Things that have to do with death, I mean, it's one of the biggies.

[*laughter*] As long as death remains mysterious, it's going to remain powerful. That was one of the luckiest things that ever happened to us in a way, because the name has always prevented us from being absolutely acceptable in a Michael Jackson sense. We've never been entirely respectable. [*laughs*] Death is always death.

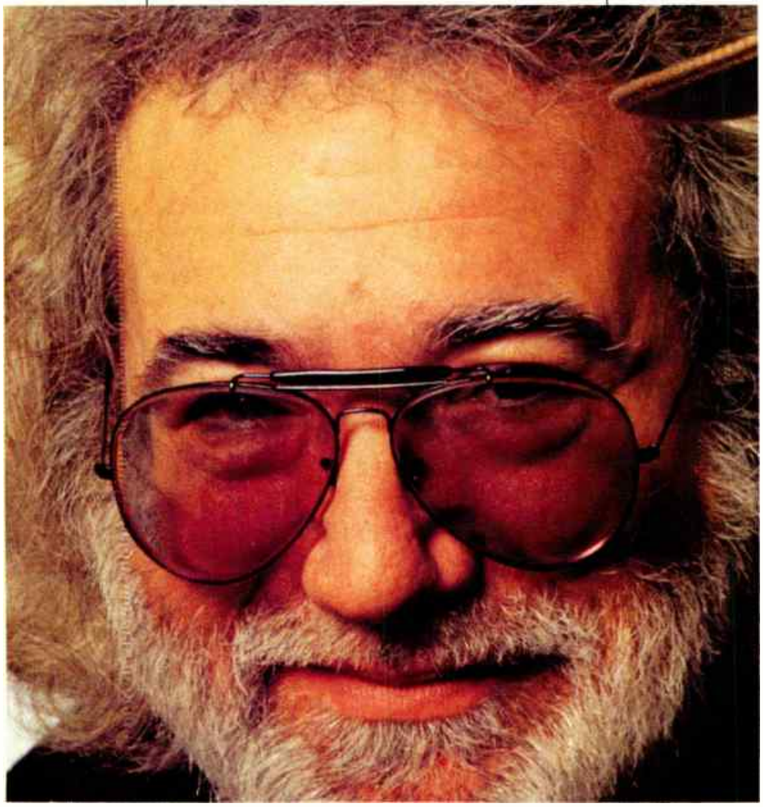
> "The name Grateful Dead has always prevented us from being absolutely acceptable in a Michael Jackson sense."

ELVIS: It should be pointed out that we're both sitting here dressed in grim reaper outfits.

JERRY: Discussing the niceties of soul-collecting.

MUSICIAN: *It's ironic that people now are trying to recapture the so-called "danger" of rock 'n' roll and—*

JERRY: We're still trying to transcend it. We're living in the shadow of that reputation and it still haunts us. Every couple of years a Grateful Dead bashing goes on in the newspapers. In this case they're working on the crowd more than the band. It's xenophobia, pure and simple; people fear what they don't understand. And when a bunch of people come to town, even if they're utterly harmless, just the appearance or the numbers alone is somehow frightening. So we're having to cope with that kind of unreasoning fear now, in townships all over the place. We're running out of places to play, quite frankly. We're heading toward an "over-success" kind of extinction.



But this is the problem with the whole music world, really: There are no options, nothing you grow into. You can get to the point where you're successful enough to play Vegas for the rest of your life. But that totally sucks. And the other option is that you get so popular the numbers insist that you play in huge stadiums—which also sucks. So apart from inventing your own way to continue working, you're stuck really, 'cause inertia will take you to one of those two places, and neither one of them is acceptable, as far as I'm concerned.

We're starting to deal with the possibility of having a permanent venue of some kind to play in, where you play for a season, instead of once a year. Three nights a week, say, or whatever you have the stomach for, and people will come and see you there. For the Grateful Dead it's starting to make sense to do something like that. One advantage would be knowing the room. So your performances can start at a fairly high level.

ELVIS: You played Broadway; we did that as well. But it's an expensive place. They are very small theaters and to make it pay, the ticket price has to be higher. Then you look out in the audience and you don't see your friends...

JERRY: Because they can't afford to be there. Being fair is always a problem. But I really think you can help alleviate some of that stress by communicating with the audience, by saying, "This is something I'm gonna try this one time, and the overhead of this theater requires that the ticket price go up because after all we're not making more money, we're in fact spending more money." I think it's helpful to address the audience. You have to consider them allies or else I don't know who the hell they are, you know?

ELVIS: One immediate similarity between us is that roulette wheel of material every night, whether it be the physical one I attempted to use on that tour or...

JERRY: More metaphorical.

ELVIS: You're hoping they'll enjoy something that you enjoy—maybe you bring some different musicians, or a new approach. With the Dead, on every occasion I've seen them over a number of years, you have no idea what songs you're going to play. And what's so beautiful about it is that the songs appear as if they had been planned.

In the late '60s, I saw the Fairport Convention—whose very name, I think, suggested they tried to model themselves after a West Coast band—almost coming to blows about which songs they were going to do next. Onstage at the Albert Hall. It was great.

JERRY: Well, if you're not entertained, you can't expect anybody else to be. The idea is to create challenges, I think. If you're lucky, the band does that. With the Grateful Dead it's impossible to predict what anybody is going to play—just hopeless. So if you expect to not have things go past you, you have to pay attention. Being required to pay attention in itself makes things dynamic; they keep changing. All you have to do is pay attention and you have to go with it. Otherwise you sound like you're disagreeing.

And that has its own fascination. Conflict, an angry show. You're pissed off, or some of the guys in the band are fighting, or one of the guys is having a terrible evening or whatever, all those things also have their own interest.

ELVIS: Ironically, when I first wanted to do "Ship of Fools" as a solo, a friend of mine gave me a tape; it was one of your first gigs after you were ill. And it had an anger about it I'd never heard. Whether or not it could have been the monitors or whether just that particular night it was a passionate performance...it was a different kind of singing.

I think one thing that's overlooked about the Dead is the strength of the songs. If it wasn't for all the cultural baggage that comes with the Grateful Dead, and maybe the name being in one way a defense and in another an alienating thing, and also if you were Norwegian or something, I think by now you'd be regarded as a sort of super jazz band. And on the other hand, if it wasn't for the improvisational aspects, you would have better credit for having written really good songs. Because they're not just platforms for improvisation. I think that's an element that, aside from Dead fans, is very overlooked.

I remember being very impressed on that tour in '72 by a body of songs that were never recorded in the studio, that were all on that live album, that are really terrific, and a kind of music that—nobody's ever put a name to it, but it's kind of electric ragtime.

JERRY: Yeah, that's pretty close.

ELVIS: Obviously a big thing in the perception of the Dead was *Workingman's Dead* and *American Beauty*, 'cause it was acoustic-based. But from that period on for maybe the next seven years, there's a body of songs which are kind of connected, I think. And then it changed again.

JERRY: You're right, they're definitely connected. Well, we had something in mind, actually, when we started. In fact it's so pragmatic it's almost silly. We spent so much money on our third album, *Aoxomoxoa*—we spent almost a year working on it and it was not that great of an album—that we had a huge deficit. So I was thinking, when we go to the studio next time, let's try a really close-to-the-bone approach, like the way they recorded country and western records—a few instruments, relatively simple and easy-to-perform songs. It was quite conscious, an effort to say, "Let's not spend a year, let's do it all in three weeks and get it the hell out of the way." And that way, if the record does at all well we will be able to pay off some of what we owe the record company. So that worked very well. And it was a chance to expose a side of us that we certainly hadn't exposed very much.

"At times I had ambitions to play guitar. But I didn't have the nerve for it."

ELVIS: And also, presumably, music that had always been in the background. You played banjo...

JERRY: Yeah. We're kind of on the far fringe of it, but we're part of that California Bakersfield school of country and western rock 'n' roll—Buck Owens, Merle Haggard. We used to go see those bands and think, "Gee, those guys are great." [Buck Owens' guitarist] Don Rich was one of my favorites, I learned a lot of stuff from him.

So we took kind of the Buck Owens approach on *Workingman's Dead*. Some of the songs in there are direct tributes to that style of music, although they're not real obvious.

ELVIS: You can see the connection between Haggard's "Working Man Blues" and "Cumberland Blues."

JERRY: Absolutely. I can elucidate it point by point, in fact, if you want to spend a million years studying it. I don't think anybody wants to get into it that far. But certainly there was a conscious decision. And then that, of course, led [Robert] Hunter and me into the gradual discovery process of crafting a song, putting a song together that is singable, that has the thing of being able to communicate at once at several levels, and that you can feel good about singing—that you can live with. For me that's real important, since I feel relatively limited as a performer, as an actor, where you can sing a song and be the person in it. I'm not that good at that.

Some songs wear well and some don't. You perform them a few times, their time is over, that's it. Others, the more you perform them the richer they get, the more resonant, until finally it doesn't matter what the words are about anymore. You carry so much emotional baggage along with them that you can't help but invest them with some life.

Country and western songs are so directly narrative, if you don't get the point the first time you play it, it's a failure.

ELVIS: It's funny, it's like a light went on when you said Don Rich. Because even in a very simple country-structured song, you're likely to begin a solo on a very unusual note. Which is a thing he would do. It would almost sound like he was playing in the wrong key.

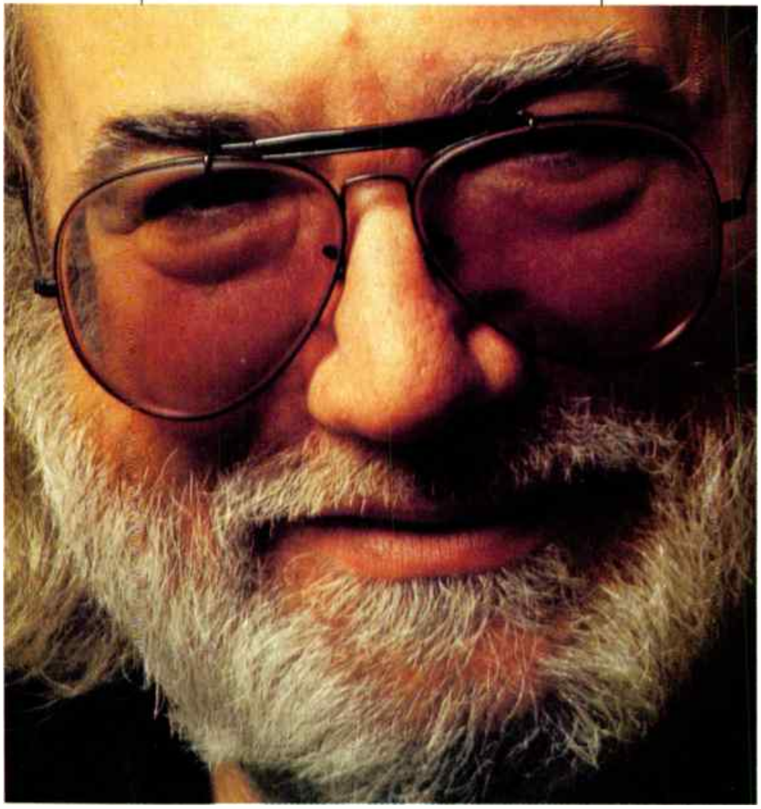
JERRY: I got that from him. Roy Nichols, he's another one. Both of them are important influences for me. I heard them both live lots of times. And Don Rich's attitude was always so cool. His fiddle playing was great too. He was one of those guys who just sounded good on anything he picked up.

ELVIS: The parallel thing that I always enjoyed about Jerry's soloing is that way he can appear to paint himself into a corner and then sort of wriggle out. Another one who does that is a guitar player who you don't hear much about—Amos Garrett.

JERRY: Amos! Oh yeah, he's an old buddy of mine.

ELVIS: Was that style of improvisation just a natural development for you?

> "We're running out of places to play, quite frankly. We're heading to an 'over-success' extinction."



JERRY: Well, I get my improvisational approach from Scotty Stoneman, the fiddle player, who is the guy who first set me on fire. Where I just stood there and don't even remember breathing. He played with the Stoneman family for years; he was just an incredible fiddler. He grew up in bars, and he was a total alcoholic wreck by the time I heard him, in his early 30s, playing with the Kentucky Colonels—who used to have Clarence White and Roland White.

So I went down to hear him the first time, at the Ash Grove in L.A. They did this medium-tempo fiddle tune, like "8th of January," and it's going along, and pretty soon Scotty starts taking these longer and longer phrases—10 bars, 14 bars, 17 bars—and the guys in the band are just watching him! They're barely playing, going ding-ding-ding, while he's burning. The place was transfixed. They played this tune for like 20 minutes, which is unheard of in bluegrass.

I'd never heard anything like it. I asked him later, "How do you do that?" And he said, "Man, I just play 'lonesome.'"

He probably died of drinking hair tonic; he was one of those guys. He grew up in bars and when you're 14 or 15 the first thing you do in bars is drink. So playing in those razor-totin' bluegrass bars and getting involved in that whole country and western soap opera life took him away and he died pretty early. But his playing on the records he appears on—mostly anonymously—is this incredible blaze. He's like the bluegrass Charlie Parker. They just recently released a live tape of the very show I was at, with the Kentucky Colonels. So you can get that. You can probably get it at John's store.

MUSICIAN: *Is that something you can work on, that improvisational approach?*

JERRY: Well, it's always been a part of my playing. But sure you can. The whole thing is that you have to not mind failing. There's all those times you have to paint yourself into a corner and not get out.

ELVIS: Before I became a solo folkie, which led to what I do professionally, I had a little band in the pub rock scene, and at times I had ambitions to play guitar. But I didn't have the nerve for it.

JERRY: You have to have a certain attitude, I think. To say, "I don't care if I blow it. If 80 percent is good and 20 percent sucks, hey." Of course, Elvis has his guitar working against him. [*laughter*]

But you know something? Having high action and heavy strings is the best way to get good tone and it's also the best way to keep the guitar in tune. And the situation you're in, where you're really anchoring the band, it works great.

MUSICIAN: *Do you have a work schedule to keep your creative juices flowing?*

JERRY: I do. There's a definite threshold for me. I like to leave no longer than a week between playings. Otherwise, my technique starts to slide to the point where it takes me three weeks to get it back up. If I lose three weeks it's really two months, in terms of getting back to normal. Then I also have plateaus of boredom, so I go out and buy books of clarinet studies, violin things. I transpose the ones that I can to guitar. I look for stuff to challenge me 'cause there's lots of music that I'm not good at. I pick something that I don't know much about and try working on it. It usually takes about a year for something like that to find its way into my playing. I can't force it.

The last spasm of stuff I did like that, I spent a lot of time listening to Art Tatum records. Not that I could play it on the guitar. But the way he was able to endlessly come up with new tonal settings for any melody is real fascinating to me. There's something about the way he approaches rhythmic stuff too that always surprises me and says to me: Difficult. [*laughs*] This is hard to do. I'll take some little part of a tune and say, "If I can work out just this much to my satisfaction...."

ELVIS: I don't have any comparable discipline to that, since I can't play and I can't read either. [*laughter*] But in the last couple of years I did a similar thing: Whereas I once would get obsessive about styles, I realized that there was no way I was ever gonna be Jerry Lee Lewis. You know that stylized authority he has? He'll play from levels of intensity from frenetic to completely maniacal, but it will

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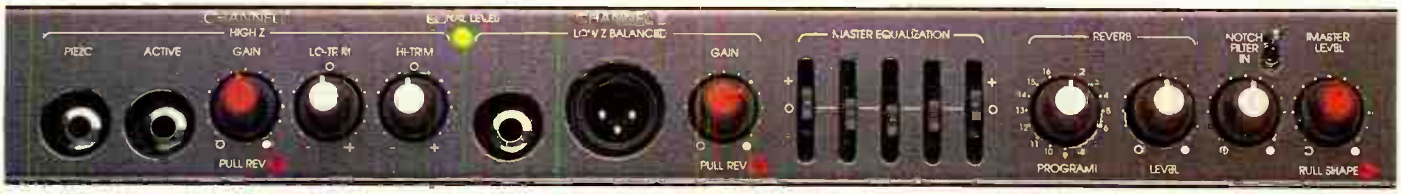
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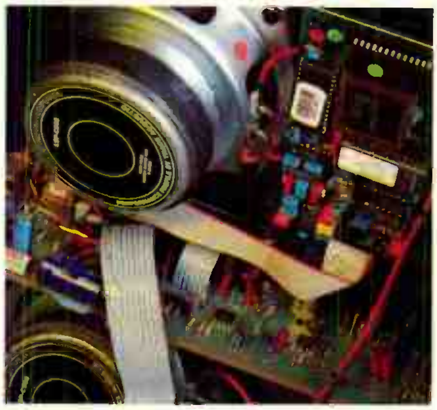

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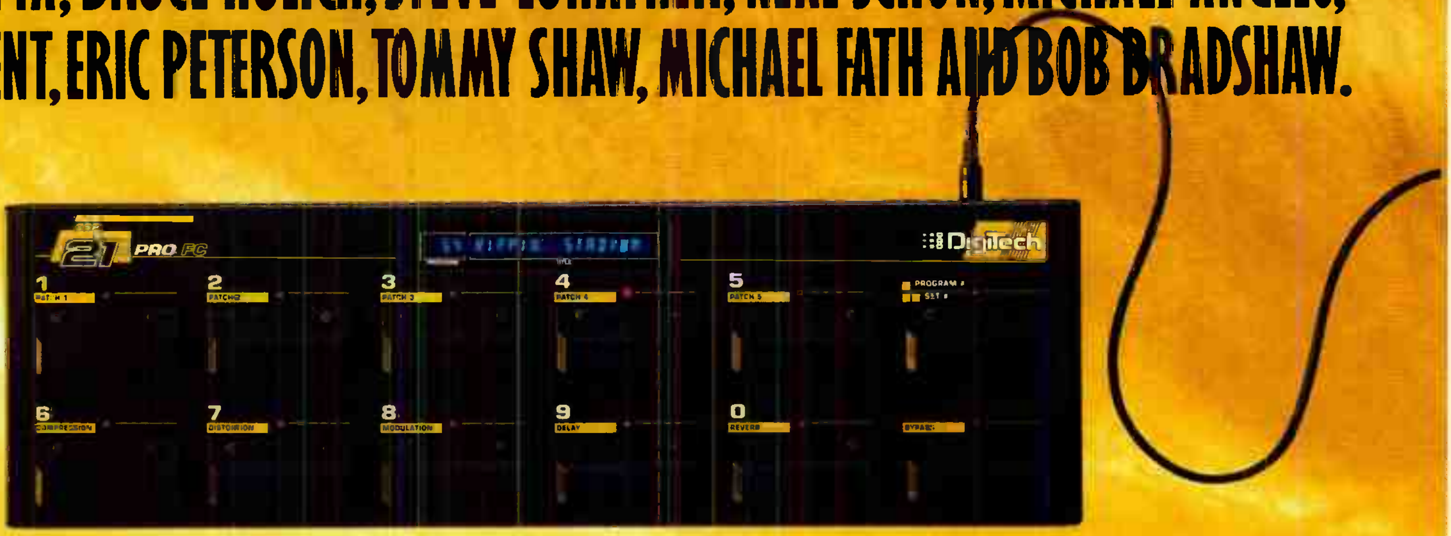
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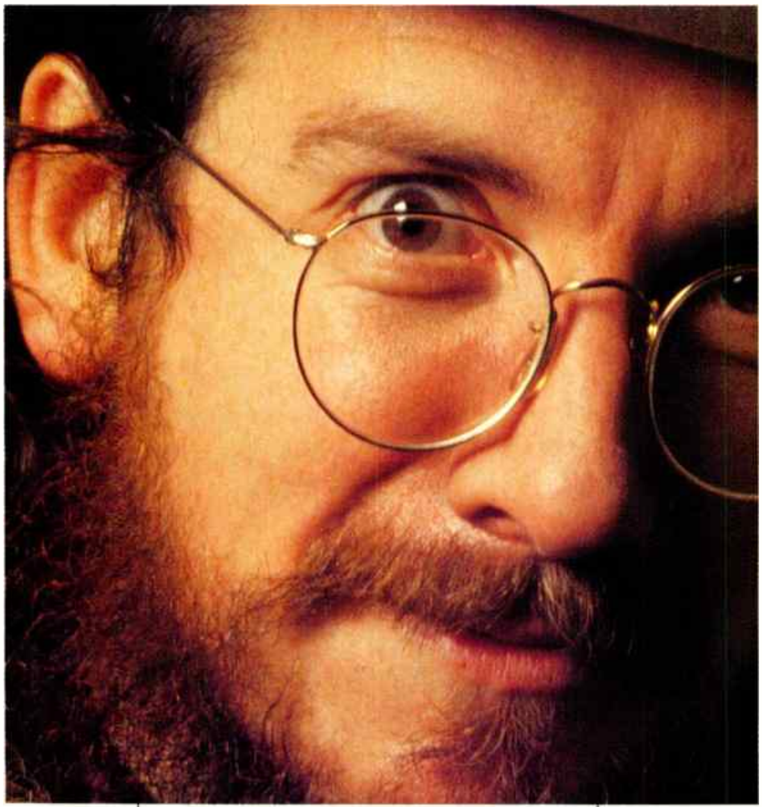
never change that authority. I don't have that: I basically steal from wherever I can. And create song structures. All I know how to do is write songs, really. I can't properly play an instrument in any expressive way.

JERRY: But your songs get more complex, or have more language to work with.

ELVIS: And you usually achieve that by the basic model we were talking about early on, like the decision to make the country record, just 'cause it was expedient. At a certain point, about 1984, I'd made two albums in succession which owed a lot of allegiance to contemporary pop sounds. I found that dissatisfying. So the next step was to go completely to blues, R&B and country models and write songs that were still mine. Once you get outside pop music, it gets more difficult for your songwriting to be effectively influenced without allowing your music to get incredibly obscure.



It's great to want to write a song like James Carr would sing, or Mel Tormé, no matter how short of it you might fall. But if you start to listen to Egyptian music or classical music, it's harder to see how the influence would be brought to bear. You become more aware of how music is structured, internally and also emotionally.

JERRY: That's right. Sometimes the effect is really indirect. I don't seek specific influences; I don't want to end up sounding like Art Tatum. But just observing somebody else's approach finds its way. My fantasy is, what's it like to be this guy? To sit down at the piano with this total mastery of the instrument, and play one intimidating possibility after another. Seamlessly, with Einsteinian super-logic, you know? It almost transcends music.

When the Gipsy Kings were touring, there was something about the way that guy stepped up and played his solos—yeah! So for the next couple of shows, I tried it—"I'm just gonna snap these babies off like that guy." And it worked for me. It had nothing to do with the music, it had only to do with the way the guy addressed the whole problem—how do you take your guitar and play a solo?

ELVIS: A few years after the *American Beauty/Workingman's Dead* period, there are certain ensemble pieces of playing which you can see repeated, but in a whole song structure-contained way; for instance, this strange sort of accented beat—it's not really reggae or calypso, starts with "China Cat Sunflower" but is most pronounced on something like "Scarlet Begonias." As if the chord is thrown right 'round the band with the same sensibility as a jazz band but inside a very tight song structure.

"I think one thing that's overlooked about the Dead is the strength of the songs."

JERRY: I don't know exactly where that comes from. Actually, I think it comes partly from my misperception of how English rock 'n' roll works. [*laughter*] If you made a big loop starting in New Orleans, and took in the Caribbean and came out somewhere north of North Carolina...

ELVIS: You would have that music. From about '70 to about '76, the bar scene, which preceded punk in London, was very influenced by bands like Little Feat, who worked using New Orleans riffs and then grafting the blues thing with a country sort of melody. Some of the Dead's music from that period has that same flavor.

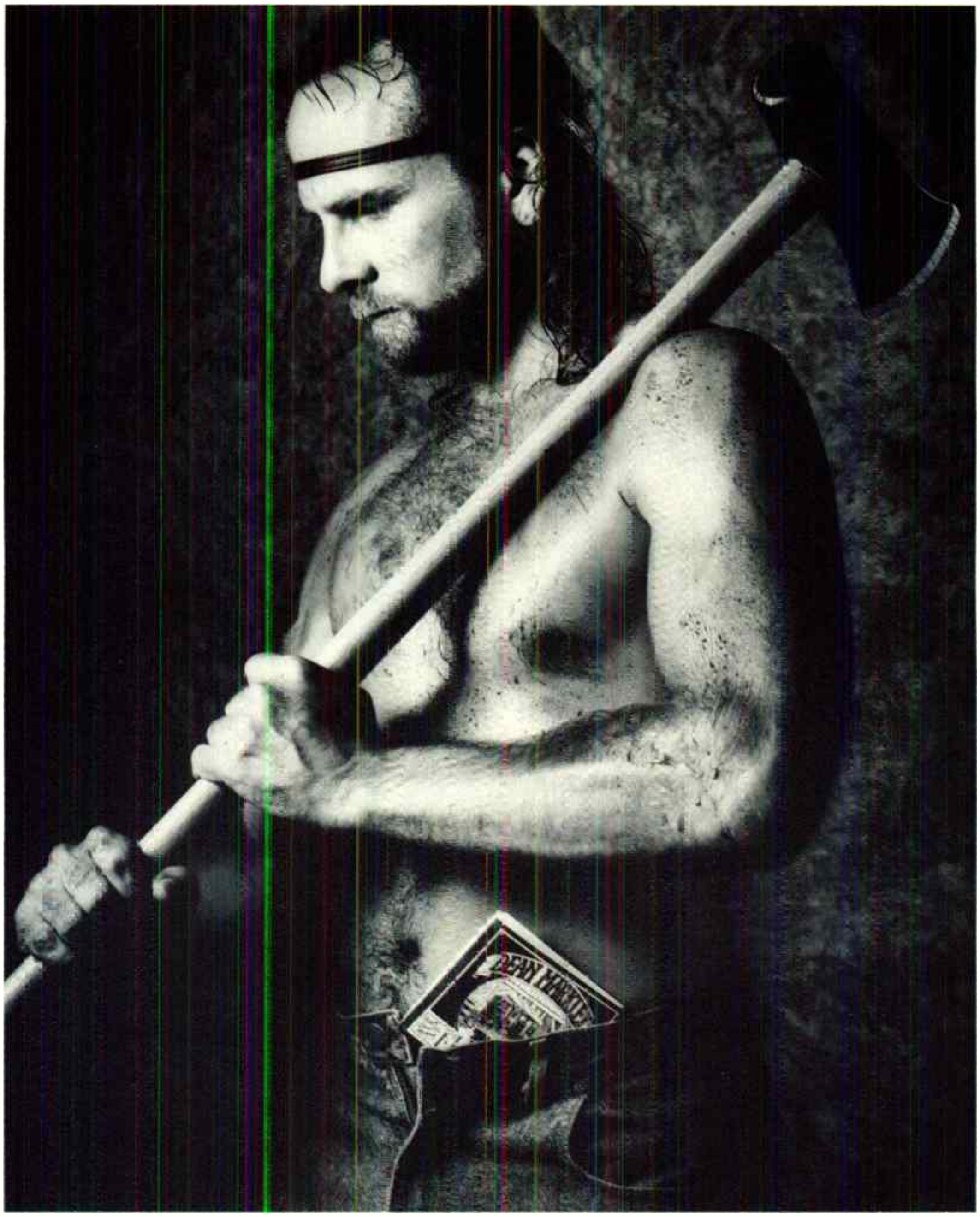
JERRY: At that time, in the early '70s, we were listening to the old Neville Brothers—the Meters—and also the early reggae stuff that was coming in. So that was in our ears. The interesting thing about that reggae stuff is that the Jamaican guys were trying to get that sleight-of-hand with modular instruments: from the Larry Graham bass thing and the little things Sly used to do on those records. So they copped that idea that way.

ELVIS: Plus the way the Meters played on Lee Dorsey records, that was a similar sort of blueprint.

JERRY: It's all been stolen back and forth at several different levels.

ELVIS: That was the time at which my first record came, and I put some voltage into it—not in terms of volume, but in terms of speed—which was a quite self-conscious attempt because I realized that the music that I liked was about to be stranded by the tide going out. The very band I had to play on it was a Marin County band, Clover. And they came to town at exactly the wrong moment for their careers; they were persuaded by my manager to come here and arrived just in time for their playing in tune to go right out of style. But it was possible, because of their ability to play anything, for me to say, "Okay, this is kind of like the feel of 'You Ain't Livin' Until You're Lovin',' but playing it like a bar band, pedal-steel first solo." I didn't even say that, this was decided spontaneously. The self-conscious element was not to pretend that I never liked that music—

THE GRIND



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World Radio History

'cause I couldn't do that, I liked it too much—but to make it not too polite.

MUSICIAN: *When you spoke earlier of aspiring to the respectability of jazz, did that in any way influence the group to move in an improvisational direction?*

JERRY: Not really. By then I'd forgotten I'd even had thoughts like that. I'm thinking about how I felt when I was 15. It was a very youthful point of view. By then I'd "gotten over" rock 'n' roll and was involved in bluegrass music, and seriously pushing in that direction—when all of a sudden the Beatles came along and all that and I went—"Oh, okay, sure."

ELVIS: When you're 15...I remember there was six months where I wouldn't buy a record that had an electric guitar on it. I thought I'd left that behind when I was 10. [*laughs*] There'd even be times where you'd sell records which you'd buy again a year later. 'Cause you'd completely change your mind.

It's possibly not going to happen like that anymore, simply because there isn't the variation. Everyone hears the same music all the time, the sources are so universal. Which is too bad really—there's no mysterious message.

JERRY: In the early days of rock 'n' roll, every record sounded real different: Starting around 1970 or so, things got really homogeneous. I remember a friend of mine saying there was no more country music, there was only suburban music. [*laughter*] Those cultural pockets of isolation don't exist anymore.

THE KNACKERED AND THE DEAD

JERRY GARCIA: Doug Irwin, who lives in Santa Rosa, has been making guitars for me since the early '70s. They're set up like Stratocasters, three pickups, single-coil, with a five-way knifeblade switch. I've invented a kind of effects coil: It goes out through the pickups and before the selector switch in a loop, one side of a stereo cord back up the other side, into the guitar and out after the volume pot. So it's a regulated signal in which all of the set-voltage input-sensitive devices are received full blast from the guitar. I leave the pickups wide open. They come back into the guitar and I control their volume by the output knob.

I use strings by Tommy Vincey, who builds the string-winding machine the other companies buy. He's out on Long Island. They have a small string company, and the strings are a combination of strings and nickel that have about 50 percent more efficiency than regular strings. They're very in tune—I never have to retune the bridge on the guitar, ever. They're that consistent.

I still use a 1964 Fender Twin Reverb amp that's been rebuilt about a million times. It goes into a McIntosh power amp and JBL speakers. That's it. I'm very straight-ahead.

ELVIS COSTELLO: The only thing different from the last time I spoke to *Musician* [Jazzmaster; mid-'60s Gretsch Country Club; '60s Rickenbacker and Telecaster electric guitars; Gibson Century; '30s Martin and Santa Cruz acoustics] is that different guitars go in and out of favor. The only modifications on my Jazzmasters from the day I bought them is the scroll work on the neck. I use two vintage MusicMan amps and Ernie Ball strings, pretty heavy-gauge. The only effects I use are the tremolo, I use a lot of that. It's the non-guitar player's friend. My main instrument at home has been the piano, a Bechstein baby grand which is way beyond my capabilities.

ELVIS: That's really true, though I'm nobody to talk because I learned music mostly through English bands who imitated American bands, or from American bands. Therefore I developed a sort of transatlantic style. But I appreciated the totally English rock 'n' roll sense of which there have only really been three—Ray Davies, Ian Dury and Johnny Rotten. Even Joe Strummer really could have been an American with a strange accent. Now everybody's from a certain neighborhood, in the Bronx. Even the people in Manchester.

JERRY: Now you hear the strains of South African music in your neighborhood.

ELVIS: I do feel that sometime in the last 18 months we've slipped into a Bizarro World, where Manchester is the center of the universe [*laughter*] and Donovan is a folk hero and Bob Dylan isn't any good anymore.

JERRY: It's a strange world.

ELVIS: And part of that might be that the only person who grosses more money in concert than the Grateful Dead is Frank Sinatra. On the other hand, it's a funny world where Frank can write a letter to the *L.A. Times* about George Michael, where Frank is actually hipper than this multi-million-selling pop star. I agree with him: George *is* on the top rung of a tall ladder called success, and he should loosen up and swing. I'm with Frank on this one. George could do with some swinging lessons.

JERRY: He sure could! Well, there is a certain thing [Sinatra] does with songs that anybody can learn from. I don't know what that thing is exactly, but he has a way of turning a song into his own. He can sing a ballad better than I can, that's for damn sure.

ELVIS: If you compare Sinatra's original stuff on Columbia to the later period on Capitol—I don't know whether he did this consciously or just in terms of aging naturally from a young man to a middle-aged man—but he lowered his range, or he chose to sing lower. He can still hit the high notes in the Capitol records, but he didn't choose to; he often put them in a lower, more conversational range. Which is why people from that time feel they know him intimately. It was like he was talking to them.

JERRY: The microphone produced that style of singing. Starting with Bing Crosby. The thing of being able to sing at a conversational level—"crooning"—so you didn't have to bellow from the back of the room. All those Nelson Riddle arrangements are designed to surround that middle range and plug in the holes. There's almost no accompaniment when he's actually singing.

ELVIS: I have a track on the new record where we're doing a lot of things with bells, and celeste, toy piano. Trying to record the vocal, I had real difficulty because the register of the song kind of went right between two voices where I go into a harsher range, and as I went up there was all this obnoxious high end. Then we used an old RCA mike—

JERRY: It takes the overtones out—

ELVIS: And suddenly you could hear it. You realize there's a lot of overtones in your voice you don't need.

JERRY: I've always had a problem with Sennheisers and the other German microphones, because they're designed for the Germanic percussives for the language, linguistically. So they're really heavy on the sibilants, on the crackling part of your speech. And if you have on earphones, the microphone makes you sing a certain way. So the thing is, the old ribbon microphones, if you can get them, will make you change the way you use your voice, and they make it so

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you don't lean so much on that gravelly shit.

ELVIS: But you can sing rock 'n' roll into those microphones, because they distort. They do the same thing as when you hear those Little Richard records: They seem to take up the whole room, because there's no high end at all.

JERRY: He definitely distorted with that voice.

ELVIS: There are people who attack a song so hard that the mike actually winces. I have a problem with a gap in my teeth. It's disgusting to talk about, but I spit on them. And that's the end of 'em. In the studio it's like: "He's coming again, lock up the good microphones!"

JERRY: Get the sponges.

MUSICIAN: *When you're writing songs do you think about how your voice will carry it over?*

JERRY: I wish I were that meticulous about it. I'm not. I always have to rewrite it into a more singable key for me. I write a lot on the piano, not on the guitar that much, and my transposing chops are not that great on the piano; I'll have all these in the key of C. I usually have to transpose. I view it as if I'm writing it for somebody to sing besides me.

ELVIS: Do you have ambitions for any of your songs to be done by other people? 'Cause once again the whole Grateful Dead "thing" is probably a barrier to that: You couldn't really imagine someone saying, "I've got a great idea, let's send Frank Sinatra a Grateful Dead song!" But I can see Tony Bennett doing "Stella Blue," you know?

JERRY: Oh, yeah, Tony Bennett could definitely do "Stella Blue." I bet he'd do a wonderful job of it. I think it's got the kind of imagery those guys are used to, you know, that smoky barroom [*sings*] "Set 'em up, Joe"...a little of that flavor that those guys can probably get behind.

ELVIS: Has there ever been a Grateful Dead show where you decide, well, tonight we're just not going to go anywhere? 'Cause obviously, there are people who come for the moment when they can lose themselves.

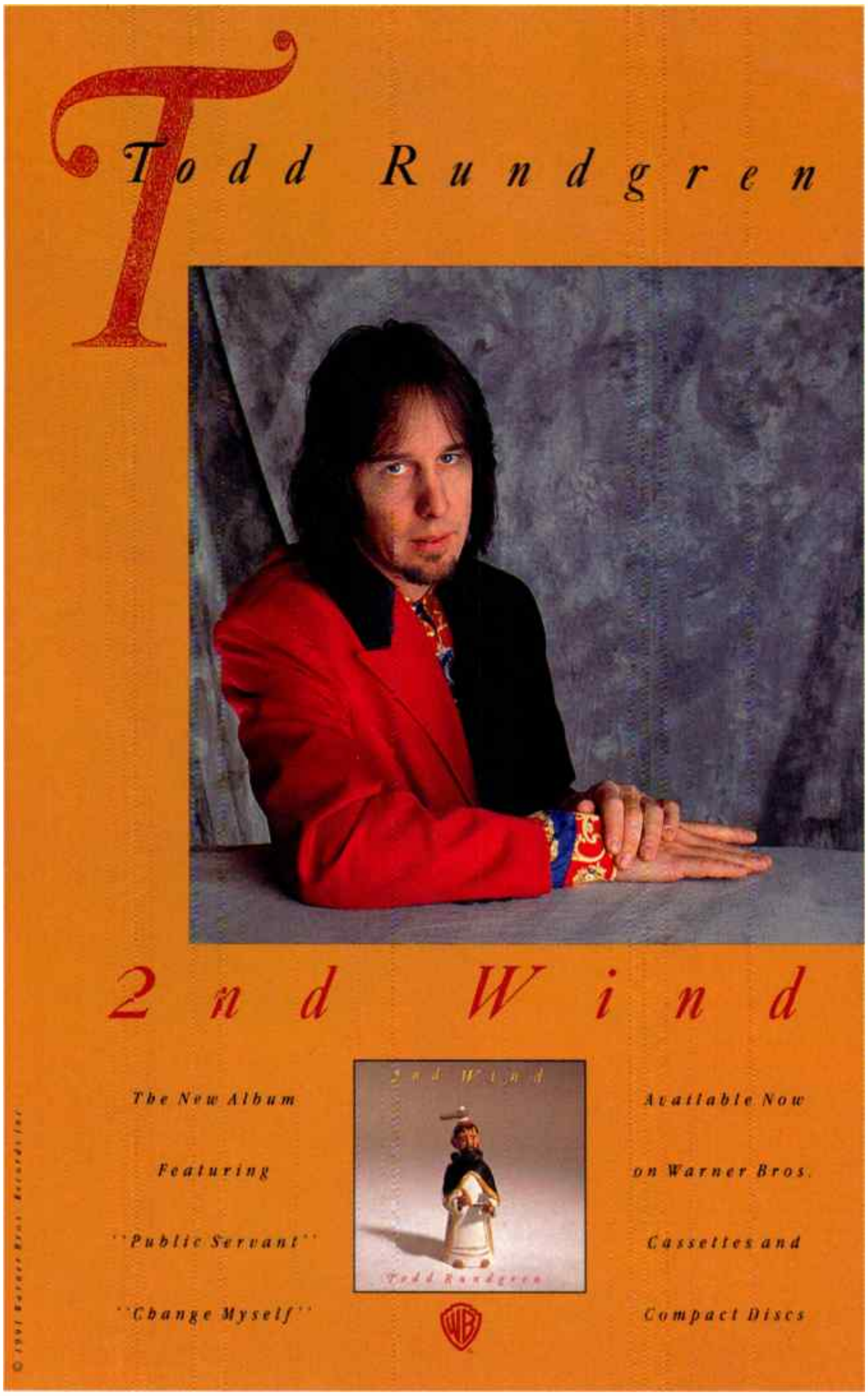
JERRY: Well, this is all part of a large misperception that goes on with the Grateful Dead. We think we are playing normal. [*laughter*] But we are constitutionally unable to do it. Departures for us are not necessarily departures. It all depends on your point of view. We basically don't have the rigor to do the other. We're not capable of it.

MUSICIAN: *The Dead have remained relatively consistent in terms of what they're about, but the culture has changed quite a bit since the late '60s.*

JERRY: Well, those people all have real, authentic lives. Their sense is as authentic as anybody else's. We've seen the cycle now several times. The people who were our fans in the '70s are now professionals. The kids who were in law school coming to our shows on weekends and getting crazy are now doctors and the heads of law schools. There are Deadheads all over society in every shape and size of experience.

MUSICIAN: *But in the late '60s you were a paradigm of the surrounding culture; now it's more of an aberration.*

JERRY: We didn't fit into that much better than anything else. We were part of the times, but certainly we didn't typify the experiences. We were more San Francisco while the rest of the world was following Berkeley, if you want to split hairs. We were not in that political reality that was so prominent in the late '60s and early '70s.



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ELVIS: Plus, that's the approved *Newsweek* version of the '60s. All the *National Lampoon* parodies of the alternative culture have come true—now you really can get *'60s Golden Protest Favorites*, a historical view which completely distorts that time. When you were 15 or 16 it was an enormously exciting time, and reading the magazines then you were really believing the sense that there was gonna be a revolution in '68, and then this moment of it "not happening." Now there's the "approved" version, which is that it was all some nice kind of outing people went through and then didn't so much wise up as start feeling sorry for themselves during the Carter administration, and then got embittered and self-serving during the Reagan administration. These historical vandals are changing history, putting spin control on it even before it's finished.

JERRY: We are still living out that history. Our original alternative decisions are still alternatives. We're still acting it out; in that sense our revolution never ended.

ELVIS: The *Newsweek* version is explaining real life to people who haven't got time to live it. What I find difficult to take seriously now is some groups we have in England who are pretending to be on drugs. That's a very strange thing. Perhaps they're aware that doing the same drugs that achieved a certain effect in 1967 won't achieve the same effect now, because circumstances are so different.

MUSICIAN: *Part of what makes the Dead meaningful to audiences is that it can still provide a different way of looking at the world. I think that's true with any great music. And I think that's been true with drugs as well.*

JERRY: I think some part of being human is to seek other levels of consciousness. It's human curiosity. If you watch kids play, they love to spin around in a circle until they get real dizzy, and then fall on the ground and laugh like hell. As soon as you know you can change your consciousness you want to do it as much as you possibly can. Because it's fun. And it's a human thing to want. I have no problem there. The only conflict is that there is somebody somewhere who finds that to be morally unsupportable. I don't know why. Of all the things to decide, "This is not a good thing to do," why changing consciousness? It's people who have such great fear of the unknown. Of what? More light? More information?

Life is inherently dangerous—everybody dies. I'm not trying to apologize for drugs, certainly. The biggest problem with drugs is that they're illegal, and you take on a lot of problems if you get busted. Back in the old days, LSD was not illegal. It wasn't a "drug." We could take LSD and apart from appearing to be really crazy, there was nothing that anybody could do to you. So it wasn't a paranoid kind of experience; you didn't worry for half of your trip if you were gonna get busted. Which is now a very real concern.

Getting high on a gig now is something I wouldn't do to myself. Mostly because I feel the sense of responsibility to people who paid for tickets to come to a show and deserve to hear me play as well as I can, unimpaired. As far as making things more difficult for myself, that's something I might want to do—but I don't want to do it professionally. I've already done that, and I think I've learned what there is to learn from it. But as far as the audience is concerned, the whole drug problem has been turned into such a cheap cause.

ELVIS: There are also [*cont'd on page 97*]

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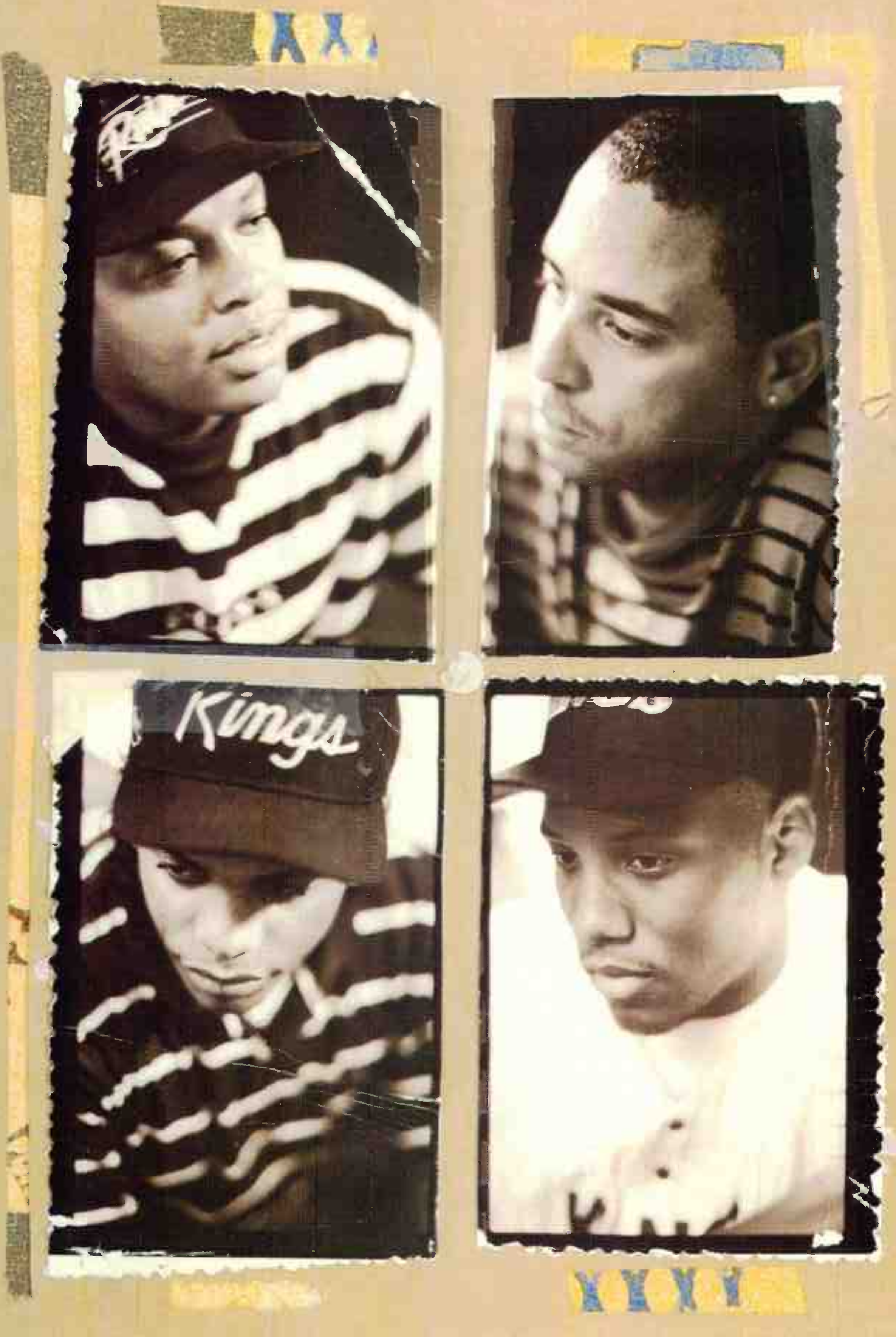

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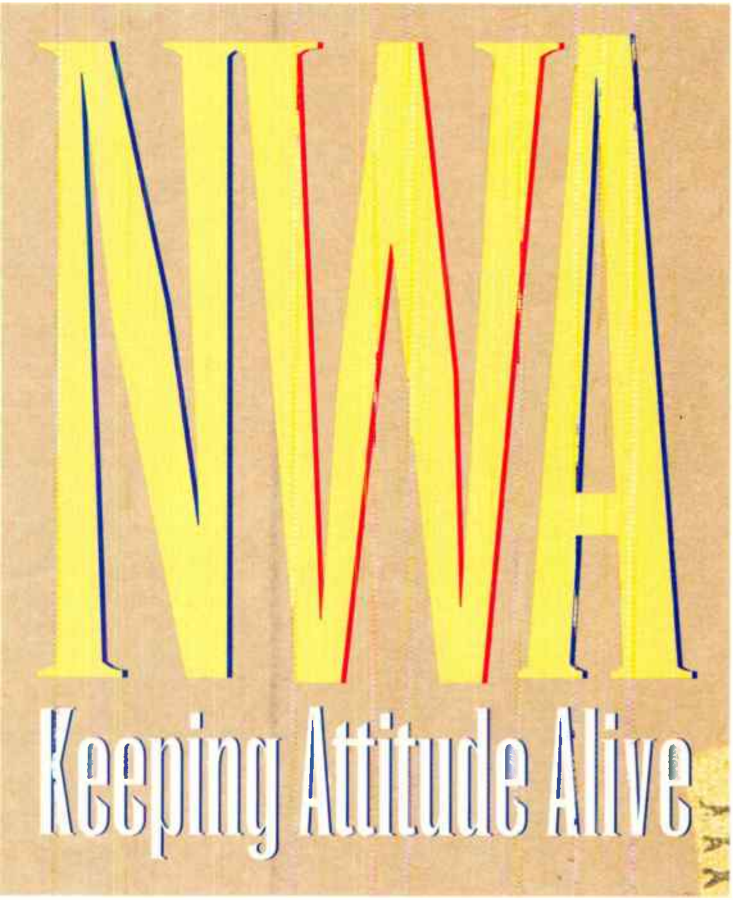


NWA

Keeping Attitude Alive

BY STEVE HOCHMAN

IT'S JUST A LITTLE HORSEPLAY BETWEEN FRIENDS—JOKING, LAUGHING, slapping. Nothing out of the boys-will-be-boys ordinary. Then the camera snaps, and so does the mood. Dr. Dre, a handsome, muscular young man, holds up his hand like Sean Penn facing the paparazzi. "Don't print that!" he barks at the photographer. "You caught me smiling." Can't have that. No smiles from N.W.A.

"As you know, we are the world's most dangerous group," explains Eazy-E, one of the rap group's four members. This is a bit hard to take. Sure, N.W.A.'s rap "Fuck tha Police" inspired one FBI agent—in the most celebrated federal action against a musical act since the Nixon administration interfered with John Lennon's green-card application—to send N.W.A.'s record company an admonitory letter for encouraging violence against law enforcement officials. And several police officers subsequently faxed each other lyrics of the song, boycotted moonlighting jobs on security forces at N.W.A. concerts in some cities and even detained the group after it performed the song in Detroit.

But these four guys hardly seem *dangerous*. Rude, blustery and foul-mouthed, yes. A threat to the American way of life? Well...had the FBI really been paying attention, it might have lauded the group for mastering that essential element of the American way of life: free enterprise. With Eazy-E handling the business and Dre masterminding the music, N.W.A. and Ruthless Records have become a commercial industry, churning out hit records and videos and attendant paraphernalia with impressive results. Besides N.W.A. and Eazy's solo efforts, the combine has been behind chart-toppers by singer Michel'le (Eazy's baby-voiced girlfriend), J.J. Fad, the D.O.C. and Above the Law, the latter carrying on the Compton "gangsta-rap" style of N.W.A.

N.W.A. (clockwise from top left): Dr. Dre, D.J. Yella, M.C. Ren and Easy-E.

"Makin' more money than they ever make/ Takin' more shit than they ever take," is how N.W.A. sums itself up in "Sa Prize (Part 2)," a song from the recent *100 Miles and Running* EP. Hardcore equals hard cash, and controversy and credibility are currency. So, no smiles allowed. Never let the public forget that they are Niggers With Attitude, the ones who put Compton on the map, the rappers the FBI tried to silence, the group the police messed with 'cause they'd messed with the police first.

"That ain't no act," insists M.C. Ren a few days later, dismissing the studio jocularity as "niggers just having fun talking. It's real, what we're saying. The shit is going on out there. We decide to do something crazy, it's gonna happen."

THE FBI BELIEVED THAT. AND FUELED IT.

"I didn't even see the letter," Dre says, shrugging off the episode with typically nonchalant bravado.

"It got a lot of people's attention," Eazy points out.

"Fuck them, too," says Dre.

"We included them in our next song," Eazy notes. "'Fuck the FBI and anyone else who disagrees.'"

M.C. Ren gets his opinion in: "If they can't stop us, who can? We threaten society. That's why they sent us the letter."

"It'll keep coming up," Eazy believes. "Long as people keep fucking with us, we'll keep fucking with them. We fucked with the police on a record, they fucked with us in a letter."

By doing so, the forces of authority proved N.W.A. right. The whole point of "Straight Outta Compton" and "Fuck tha Police" is that just being young and black can be a crime, reason to get hassled. And it's not just in Compton. D.J. Yella (Antoine Barraby), who is generally quieter than the others, recalls that in addition to Detroit, the group was hassled by cops at concerts in Columbus, Georgia and Toledo, Ohio. "Wasting our time," he says.

"There's nothing else happening in these hick towns, so they had to make some excitement," Ren figures. "It wasn't like they could throw us in prison. We got a couple citations, in Detroit and Cincinnati, and that was about it. I ain't worried about anything else unless the motherfuckers come to kill us or are tapping the phones. But I don't think we're that serious a threat to their ass."

N.W.A. has watched with semi-indifference as new controversies swirled around 2 Live Crew, the Geto Boys and other rappers who have dared to challenge authority or propriety. "We ain't part of that yet," Dre shrugs, at a mention of the legal campaign waged against 2 Live Crew by self-styled Florida crusader Jack Thompson. "We only know what we see on TV." And if Thompson does come after N.W.A.? Worse things could happen, Dre observes. After all, look what that letter did.

"The FBI sold us some records," he says.

FOR ALL THE BROUHAHA, *STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON* WAS NOT THE Left Coast answer to *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back.* Though an improvement over Eazy's solo predecessor "Eazy Duz It," N.W.A.'s debut record carried none of the *musique concrète* invention of Public Enemy's sonic bombs.

So what a surprise that N.W.A.'s latest work sounds at least as vital as its first. The surprise isn't so much musical—Dre's rapidly growing production prowess had become apparent on other projects—it's that their message still rings true, even though it's not new anymore. *100 Miles and Runnin'* and "Sa Prize (Part 2)" virtually recycle the themes of *Straight Outta Compton* and "Fuck tha Police," respectively, but with fresher, more vivid angles. Hey, maybe N.W.A. *can* live up to its own hype. If only they'd drop their guard long enough to let the public see there's more to them than scowls and sneers.

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO BLOW N.W.A.'S COVER, ASK REN WHAT'S THE best thing that's happened to him since the start of N.W.A.'s success.

"I had a little girl," beams the dangerous rapper's alter ego, Lorenzo Patterson. "August 12, 1989. It's cool. The best feeling in the world. Real cool."

The co-author of "Fuck tha Police" changes diapers?

"Yeah. I do all that. A father's gotta do all that. I'll always be around for my kid."

To snap Ren back into place, just suggest that he might make a good role model for Compton youth.

"We're not role models," says Ren, continuing a refrain the group established right off the bat. "A role model ain't nothing but a public tool. The public speaks through the role model. We ain't nobody's puppet. Our standing is to be entertainers. Fuck the community and all that shit. That's what I say: Fuck everybody."

> ICE CUBE:
> "AFTER I GET PAID, THEY CAN LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER."

Ask N.W.A. to talk about their backgrounds, and the details contrast somewhat with the urban horrors of their raps. Ren, for instance, comes from a strong family. "Pops owns his own little barber shop and works at Hughes Aircraft," he says with pride. "Mom kicks it out the house, a housewife."

So where does the rage come from? "The way I been treated, for 20 years," he says. "You don't know, man. I got so much shit to tell I'll never run out of stuff for making records. Getting harrassed by the police every day, from when I was little till I got big. Every day, same old shit. They ain't never gonna be nice to me, long as I'm black."

Parenthood (all of the crew except for Yella are daddies), along with added business responsibilities and life in the spotlight, has nonetheless changed the world of N.W.A. Eazy, the man behind the pursestrings of the N.W.A./Ruthless Records unit, used to come across as surly; these days his manner is considerate, reserved. Dre, the musical mastermind of the group, has grown to be one of rap's top producers, and Ren has become an ace lyricist/rapper.

This much is evident from the new EP and some of the work being done for N.W.A.'s follow-up album, *Niggaz 4 Life.* The beats are harder and more imaginative, the raps delivered *con mucho gusto.* Only the self-serving, defensive tone of the lyrics (and the pandering 2 Live Crew oral-sex-instruction knock-off, "Just Don't Bite It") prevent *100 Miles and Runnin'* from being a great leap forward for the rap world. It's clear that N.W.A. has survived one crisis far worse than any the FBI has yet devised: the departure of co-founder Ice Cube, generally credited with shaping the group's lyrical world-view and crafting its raps.

"Got rid of a weak link," says Dre of the defection. "He was our weakness," says Eazy. "To tell you the truth, he was acting like a little bitch. Him leaving only made us more powerful." Informed that Ice had recently been interviewed for this article, Ren stiffens. "If he tried to dis us," he says, "we're gonna fuck him up."

ICE CUBE WAS HARDLY dissing N.W.A. as he sat alone, sober and serious, in his manager's office in south central L.A. He spoke fondly of his old mates, noting that they even invited him to a pool party last summer. ("Yeah," says Eazy, "so we could drown his ass.")

"N.W.A.'s still a strong group without Ice Cube," he says, his tone a sharp contrast to the boys-club banter of his former partners. "But Ice Cube is not as strong with N.W.A. as he is by himself."

The reason Ice Cube left, he says, was simply a matter of money. "No reason to even lie about it. I felt that not only me, but M.C. Ren, was contributing a lot more than we was getting paid. He decided to stay. I had to do what I had to do. Ain't no hard feelings with the people that don't owe me nothin'. After I get paid they can live happily ever after."

Ren responds: "It wasn't like that at all. I was getting my credit and getting paid—a lot of money. They never tried to fuck me. Sometimes, man, people just want to be in the spotlight, and that's what he wanted to do, and he did it." Indeed he did. With the same flair for inflammatory hyperbole he'd shown with N.W.A., Ice Cube beat his ex-mates to the follow-up punch with the all-bravado album *AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted* (produced with the team behind Public Enemy) and a stage show that starts with our hero frying in the electric chair. But unlike his old pals, Ice says his sensationalist approach is fueled by more than a lust for lucre.

"The electric chair..." he says with a determined look, resembling a young Jesse Jackson. "The reason I did that is some people *would* like to see me in that position instead of doin' what I'm doin' now. 'Cause what I'm doin' is getting through to motherfuckers and letting them know, 'Yo! Shit's fucked up!' Somebody's gonna pay attention. Somebody's gonna try and change this shit. I might just be blowin' wind, but you never know. You never know."

Ice Cube, né Oshea Jackson, was always the philosopher behind N.W.A., shaping the sociopolitical core that underlies even the most outrageous of the group's raps. Condemned as inciting exploitation, defended as insightful representations of reality, *Straight Outta Compton* stands as a rap touchstone.

Outline

But Chuck D. and Public Enemy ride on a political agenda shaped by Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan; *Straight Outta Compton* rode only on rage. "I'm a nigger on the warpath, and when I'm done, there's gonna be a blood bath," promised "Fuck tha Police." That was meant to tick people off, and it did. It was meant to sell millions, and it did, all without benefit of radio or MTV (a video for the title songs was rejected, ostensibly for its violent content). Now that Ice Cube is working with Public Enemy, it's not surprising that there's more structure and craft to his messages. If he's still the documentarian he claims to be, there's more of a premeditated point to his raps, though without PE's separatist paranoia.

"I show white America about the black community, and I hold a mirror up to the black community," he says, "show them about themselves. I had a hat at my Los Angeles show. On top of the hat it had 'N-I-G-G-A.' Which is showing everybody what we're up against. No matter how much money I make, how much money the black lawyers make, the black doctors, sports stars and entertainers or motherfuckers picking up sanitation—the country looks at them in a certain way. Still niggers. So I ain't made it out of nothing. But it's up to us to put it together and say, 'Yo, we still niggers, but we got this.'

"What we're having is the Koreans taking over the black community—Koreans and Japanese—'cause we're sleeping on it," Ice Cube goes on. "They say, 'We can get together and get this,' and boom boom, there's money. The brothers, some just going for self. If they can't get it on their own they don't want it. Whereas the Koreans and even the whites go, 'Me and you, we can build.' I can't wait until a sky tower downtown is owned by a black man."

Maybe he'll be the one.

"Hopefully. I'm tryin'. I'm tryin'."

"IF SOMETHING ELSE PAID BETTER AND IN LUMP SUMS LIKE THIS—AND IT was legal—I'd be in it," Dre says. "Only other thing is real estate, and it's not fun like this." Legal? Is this a moral matter? Mm, not exactly. "Can't make money if you're locked up," Dre offers.

Eazy-E (his momma calls him Eric Wright) *is* in real estate. It's an improvement over the occupation that gave him the scratch to start Ruthless Records in the first place: drug dealing. "This is a safer business," he explains. "Don't have to worry about getting killed, I don't have to be around hazardous material."

Eazy's every bit the young businessman, in his new white luxury-model BMW. Ren, too, has invested in a little real estate, buying a house for himself and one for the mother of his child. Compton is now their *old* neighborhood. But if success has taken them to a new address, their raps are still about the oppression and poverty.

"I kick it in my neighborhood every day," Ren says. "I'm the same person. I just got a little money and fame. I don't think people change. People *around* them change. Once you get some money and fame everyone gets jealous and you gotta say, 'Fuck everybody.' That don't make you different.

"Everybody's lifestyle changes. Ours has gotten better. Our music ain't gonna change. If we start doing pop music, we lose our crowd."

"We're not gonna change," Eazy agrees.

"People always want us to change," says Ren. "Society."

"People who ain't buyin' our shit. So fuck 'em," adds Dre. "Don't matter. Don't see us worrying. We're still as hardcore as ever."

He wasn't smiling.

TEDDY RILEY COMES OUT SWINGING

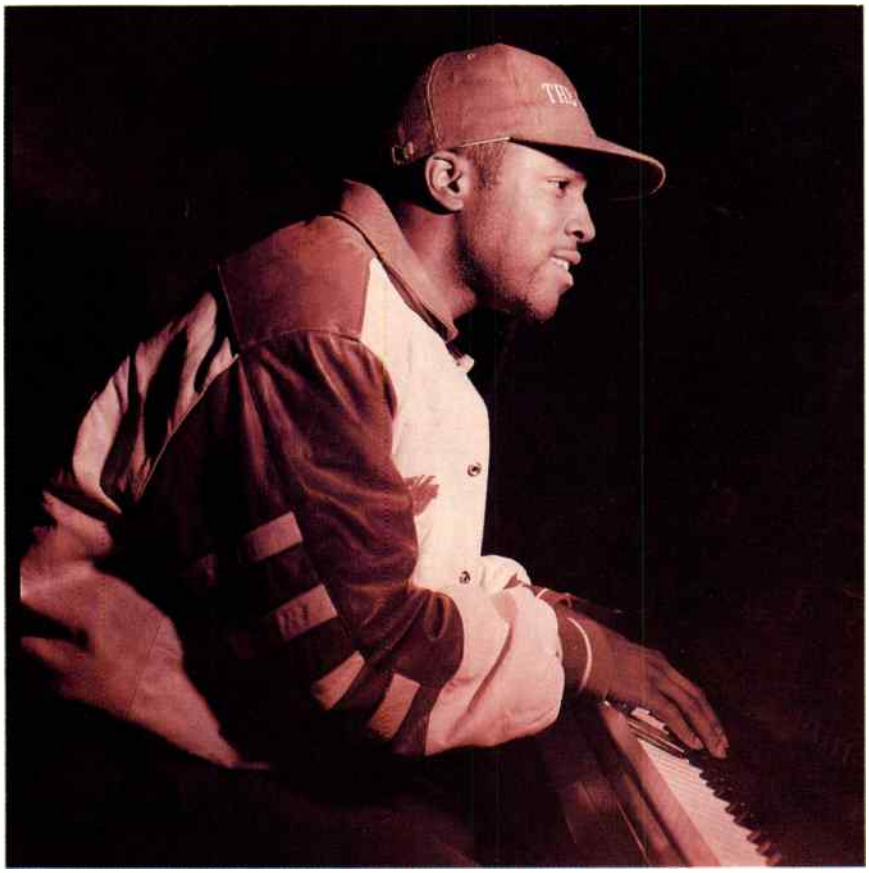
R&B's hottest producer takes "total control"

By Jock Baird

UH-OH. WE'RE STANDING AROUND a dark parking lot, waiting to get into a locked studio Teddy Riley is renting, and the burglar alarm on the mini-van we arrived in has suddenly gone berserk. Great. Now we can explain to the Virginia Beach police, nationally renowned for racial sensitivity, that no, we're *not* stealing this custom black Mazda MPV with the killer stereo. In fact, it belongs to this African-American in the red sweatsuit and Yankee jacket—he's the guy who wrote and produced monster groove tracks like "My Prerogative." Sure, kid, and I'm Hank Williams, Jr.

Riley pops out of his white Mercedes with an annoyed look and slowly walks over to the mini-van. As the minutes tick by, maybe 10, maybe more, Riley works on the shrieking machine in no apparent haste. He finally discovers the problem, and the black MPV ends its convulsions. Next problem?

"You gotta be a leader," one of the songs on Riley's band Guy's new album *The Future* advises, and Riley is unquestionably that. Hands-on commander of a large organization, including an MCA-affiliated record label (Uptown), Riley's the guy his people turn to when they run into something they can't handle. He has a knack for solving technological problems, and remains as unruffled by the pressure of hit record production as he does by a car burglar alarm. He's helped make stars of Kool Moe Dee, Keith Sweat, Doug E. Fresh, Heavy D, Al B. Sure! and Bobby Brown, as well as Guy, whose second album *The Future* is grooving briskly up the charts. Riley's leading-edge funk/rap has made him one of the most sought-after producers in R&B. But the climb, which began in Harlem's notorious St. Nicholas housing project, hasn't been easy.



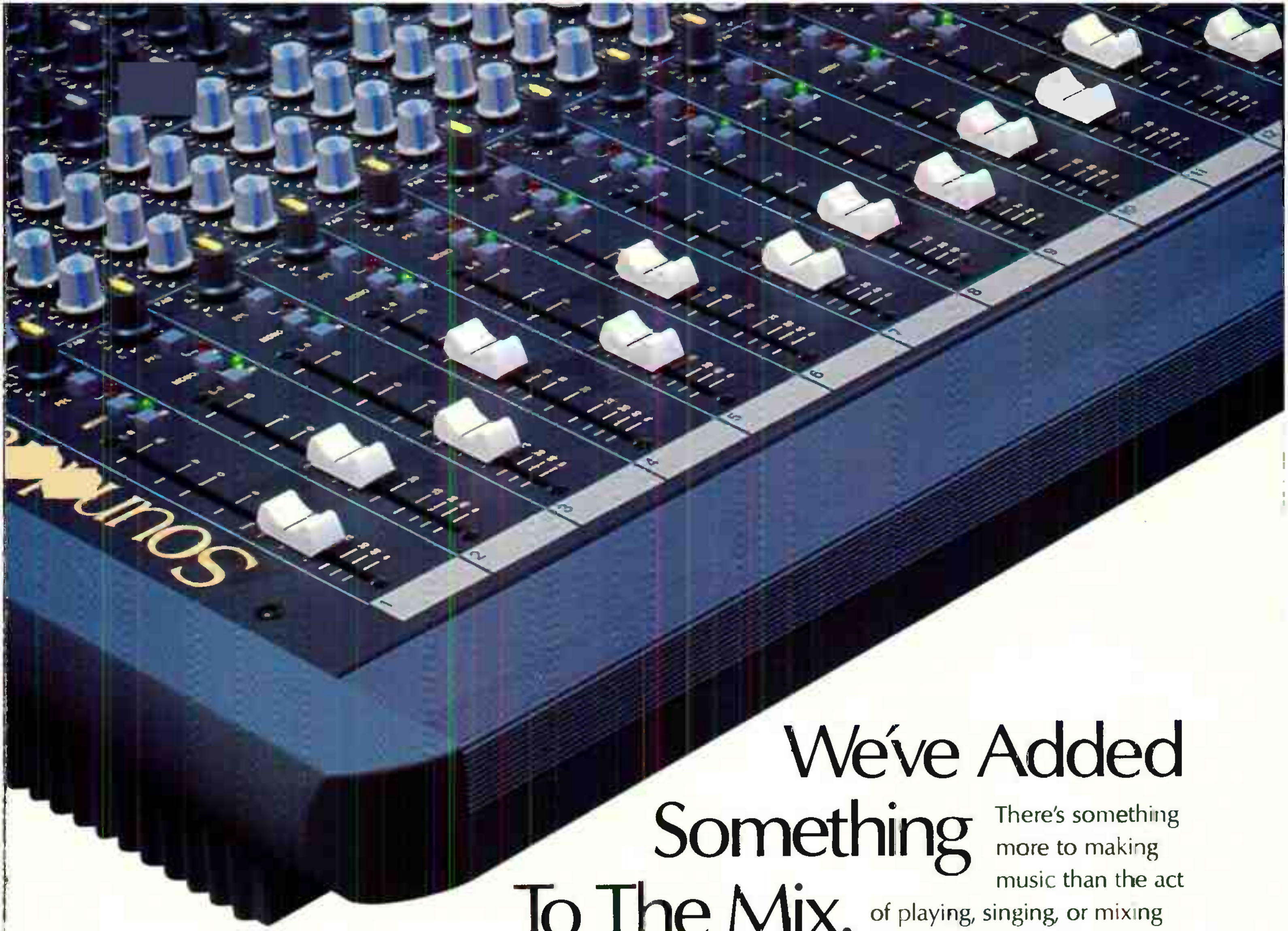
"When I did [Keith Sweat's] 'I Want Her' and [Johnny Kemp's] 'Just Got Paid,'" Riley says, "the industry was saying, 'That was *luck*—let's see you do it again.' And when I did it again with Guy, million-seller, they said, 'Well, that was your own group. Let's see you do it again.' I did one for Heavy D—'We Got Our Own Thing'—that took the album to platinum. 'My Prerogative'—double platinum. And then around January [1990] people said, 'Teddy Riley? He's over.' Then I did a remix for Jane Child and it was like, 'Oh man, Teddy Riley's back!'

Riley almost faded completely after a hit from his blind side—his manager, Gene Griffin. "I *thought* I was making a lot of money," Riley says tersely. He goes into chilling detail on the rap song "Total Control" from Guy's new album: When Riley and Griffin's production company GR went down in flames early in 1990, Riley lost uncounted wealth—he never received a nickel from "My Prerogative," for instance. He's reconstructed his affairs under manager Harvey Alston, in a way that gives him his coveted total control. But Riley's control of his fledgling Future Enterprises means an inclusive, open style he feels Griffin's old company lacked.

Riley is bringing a whole new group of producers and writers into his orbit, many of them part of his Harlem past. "Total Control" was partly written and delivered by Aqil (pronounced "A-kill") Davidson, who lived two floors up from Riley at the St. Nick. Davidson wound up starting a rap group with Teddy's brother Markell, and now at the ripe age of 17 is rapping on a platinum album. "I want people to appreciate the younger team that I have," Riley says. "I always listen to younger people, because the young are the strong, and only the strong shall survive."

Not all the young have survived. Riley's

Photograph: Christopher Hartlove



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younger brother Brandon Mitchell was recently murdered in New York. "It wasn't gang-related, not drug-related, it was just jealousy over a girl," Riley says quietly. "He was at the wrong place at the wrong time. He was going to see his girlfriend and ran into some guys who didn't like him, they got into a tussle and they shot him."

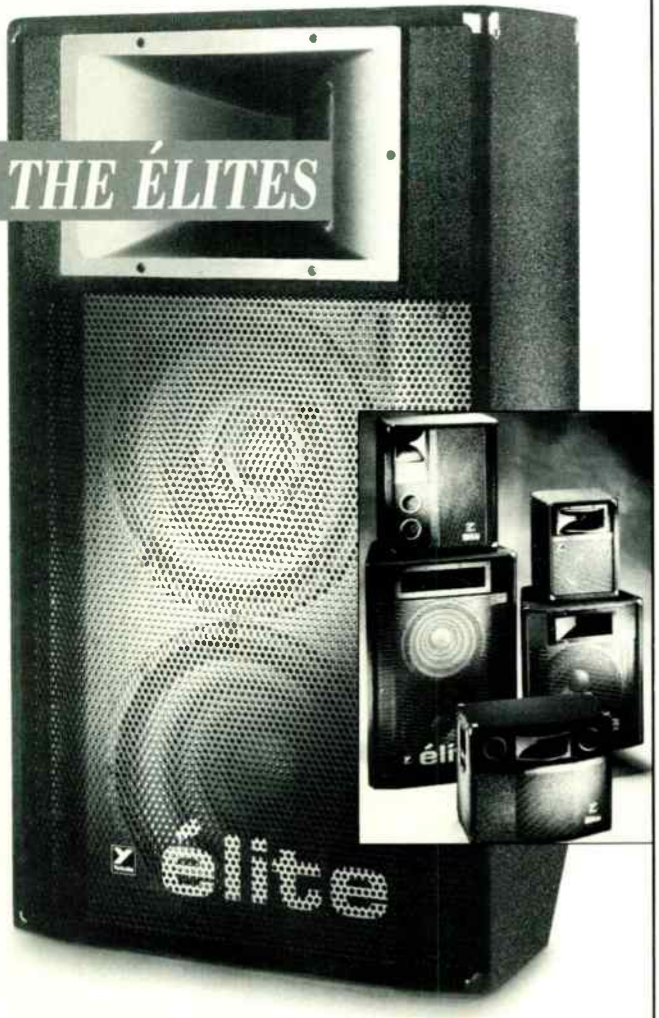
Riley called upon another young member of his team, Bernard Belle (Regina's brother), when he wanted to write about Brandon's death and the deaths of dozens of Riley's Harlem friends. Riley and Belle came up with "Long Gone," one of the most affecting songs on the new Guy album. Belle is now the musical director of Guy's touring band. But Riley's closest partner is still Aaron Hall, one of R&B's most spectacular singers. Hall's soaring, ethereal tenor strongly recalls Stevie Wonder and the Gap Band's Charlie Wilson, two of Hall's biggest influences. That's a constant in Riley's career—he aligns himself with tremendous singers and then works in the background.

"Yeah, that is a pattern for me. I would never go out as a solo artist, even though so many people tell me to. I'm a little afraid of getting out onstage by myself. I'm the shy one in the group. I made a commitment not to deal with groups that didn't have the potential to *sing*, that didn't have a voice like Aaron or James Ingram or Johnny Kemp."

Riley's voice is the earthy counterpoint to Hall's heavenly sweetness in Guy. "My style is more rappin' and more jumpity," Riley nods. "Aaron's more soulful. I grew up with rap—and my way of making it make sense is with good music, with actual singing behind it. It's not just saying, 'Bow to the beat, y'all.' This is about messages. We're not saying, 'Don't do drugs' or 'Don't kill nobody,' but we're saying that this world can be better if you don't. Like 'Long Gone,' we're not preaching. We're just saying where we want to be, away from all the troubles."

A musical prodigy, Riley took piano lessons at five but quit the next year: "A lot of the stuff the teacher was doing I already knew," Riley says. "I just wanted to play." His piano heroes became Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea. He also played a lot of guitar, influenced by Jimmy Reed, and learned trumpet, drums and sax. At age 12 he caught on with a local R&B band, Total Climax, and with young Riley perched on a telephone book behind his keyboards, the band played the club circuit, including the Lickety Split in Harlem and the Blue Note.

Riley says his career took off when his Uncle Willie bought a skating rink on 155th Street called the Rooftop, in which he built a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LIFE OF RILEY

TEDDY RILEY uses a vast amount of keyboard gear, partly because he has a rental/cartage business. He has Korg Wavestations, M1s, T3s, M1Rs and M3Rs, Yamaha TG77 modules, Roland D-50 and D-70 synths, S-770 samplers and R8M drum modules, E-mu Proteuses and SP-12s drum boxes, Akai S900, S1000 and even S1100 samplers, Ensoniq VFX synths and three J.L. Cooper MIDIfied MiniMoogs. The gear for the coming Guy tour includes dbx 166 compressors, Samson FM/VHF wireless units, Eventide Ultra-Harmonizers, Mackie mixers and Crown Macro-Tech amplifiers.

Riley's Future Enterprises is building a big 72-track facility in Virginia Beach, based around a new SSL with full automation. He's gone back to analog with a vengeance. "Digital's too futuristic for me," he says flatly.

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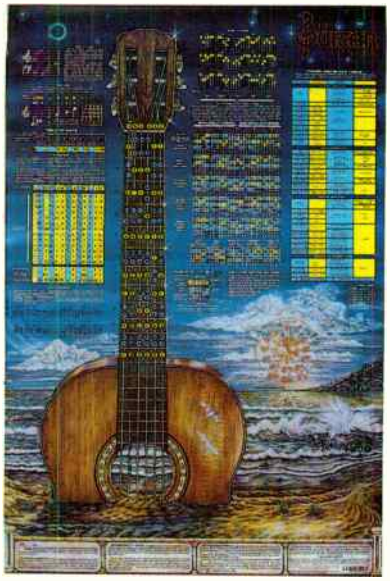

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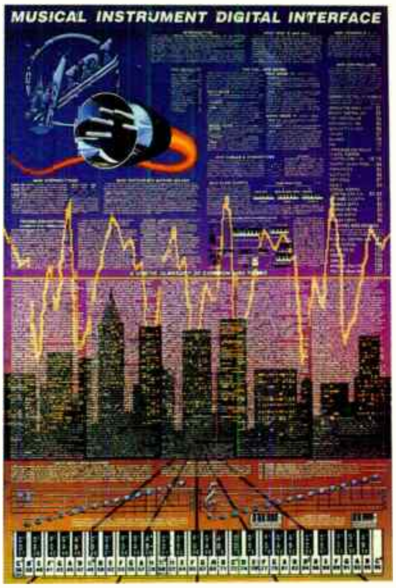

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recording studio. "The first project I did was Heavy D & the Boyz and Mr. Big Stuff. And I got into doing Kool Moe Dee, and *Rap's New Generation* by the Classical Two." He took electronic courses at the Manhattan School of Music and became a synth wiz. By 1986, at 20, he hooked up with Aaron Hall and Timmy Gatling; as Guy, they cut an album that went on to sell two-and-a-half million copies. Riley's production coups multiplied, and the phrase New Jack Swing was coined for him by an admiring *Village Voice* writer.

Riley plays virtually all the instruments on his recordings, but his tracks don't have the techy sterility of most modern dance music. "That's because I play all the keyboard parts live: I don't like to sequence. I usually sequence and then play them over live. Otherwise you don't get that feel." Riley does program his drums rather than play them live: "I like my stuff on time—dirty, but still on time. Onstage I use a live drummer." Riley samples his own kit and many others—he has a library of over 2000 percussion samples.

When a prospective client comes to him to do a song, what's his first step? "I have, in my files, like 40 different tracks, with no vocals. So we sit down and talk, get on a music vibe and listen to the tunes. They tell me what they like, and we just write to it. I've got to start writing more music, because I'm starting to run out of songs. It's been two years since I had my own studio at home where I could just roll out of bed and if I'm thinking of a song, I'm ready to go."

Riley's chordal and rhythmic sense is very strong, but in the single-line–melody department he admits he's still no Chick Corea. Couldn't he play a lot more on his records than he does? "Yeah, but I leave it for the remix, when I'll bring that stuff all the way out. But I don't think you should overdo a song. If you're getting tired of it, leave it alone and let it go out. Never over-process a song. It may burn."

The latest Guy album takes that advice one step further; the full version of *The Future* has 15 songs, not counting the remix of the first single, "Wanna Get With U" (that might be subtitled "My Prerogative '90") It's almost a double-album for the price of one. "It's sort of like giving the public what they need—more music. A lot of artists are taking the cheap way just to make a lot of money. See, my thing is, the money is not the issue. It's music that should be out there. Most people need love, most people need a better life. Most people need a future."

RIK EMMETT TAKES SOME BABY STEPS

Trio travails, tonal triumphs and a hot date with the pentatonic triplets

By Matt Resnicoff

WHEN RIK EMMETT'S BAND performed his new rock-shuffle "Drive Time" at the Toronto Music Awards, he pulled a move that tallied his entire career in the space of 12 bars. Right at the middle break the musicians dropped into the intricate head of Charlie Parker's "Donna Lee" and rode the song out to the sound of snapping necks. Emmett isn't really making a point of the incident, but it's there for the asking, and considering his history, it's worth asking.

There's no invocations of Bird on *Absolutely*, Rik's first solo album—not even in "Drive Time"—and there's also a conspicuous dearth of solo classical suites, jazz etudes or any of the other far-flung delights that sat so neatly on Triumph's hard rock records. Frankly, you've got to scour his album just to pick up Rik's thoughtful lead playing, which seems almost drastically understated for its placement alongside pop arrangements and keyboard-driven ballads. There are solo bop guitar pieces in the can back home in Toronto, yet he's still keeping the fun stuff in the clubs and off the record.

Photograph: Patrick Harbron

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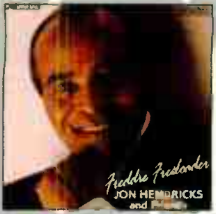

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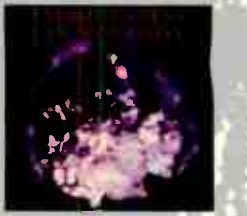

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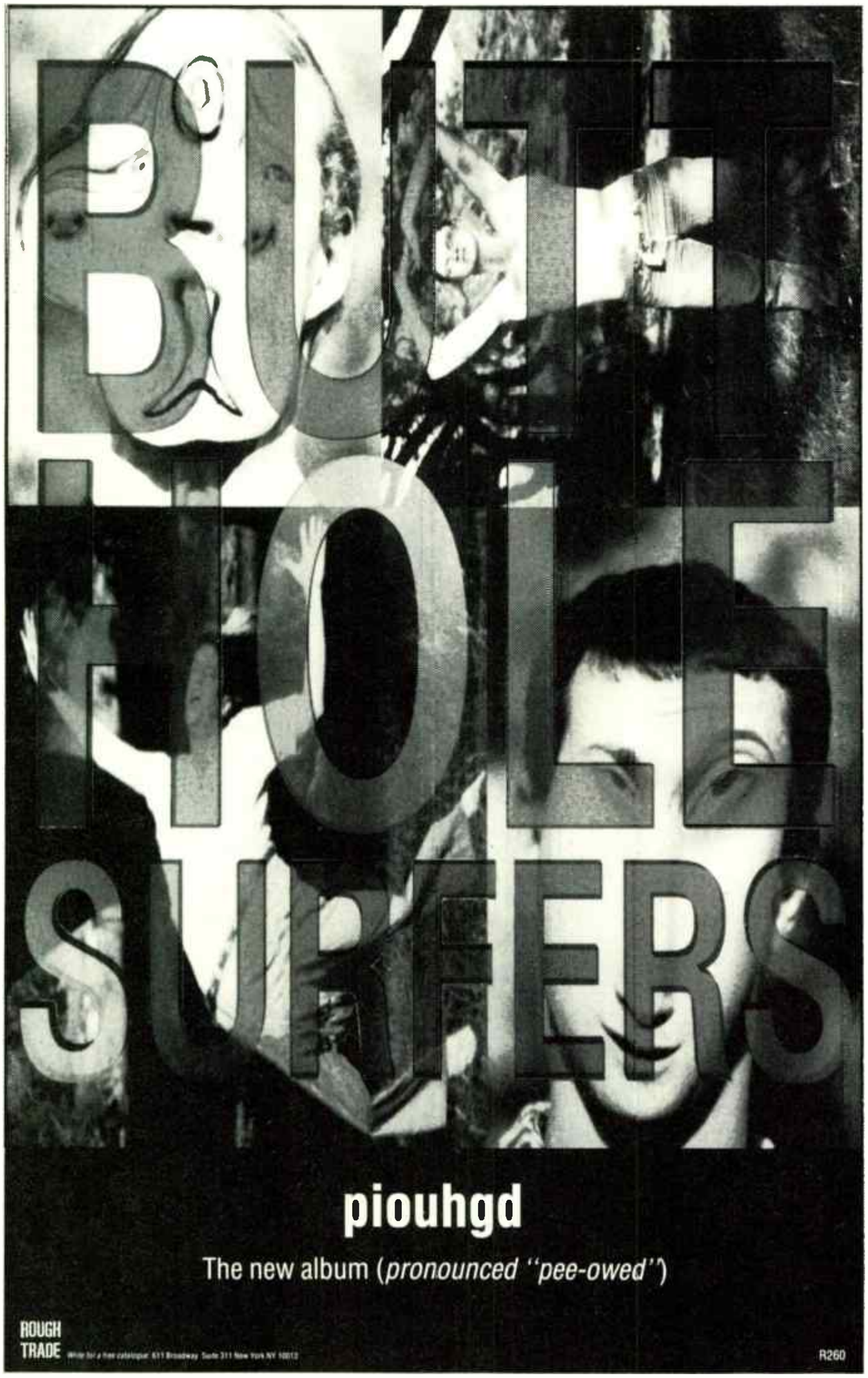
A flaccid market had a lot to do with it; so did his friendship with Steve Morse and empathy for the plight of the commercially unrewarded guitar hero. "Steve pointed out that my strengths were as a singer and a songwriter," Rik recalls of a conversation that began when Morse guested on Triumph's *Surveillance* in '87 and lasted through the band's breakup last year. Though Rik fronted the trio and was chiefly responsible for their sound, it wasn't until he left that those functions were made more apparent than he'd been allowed to realize.

"Because I often got spotlighted, my image developed into that of a hotshot player, but I was just trying to be conscientious; I loved different music and wanted to work them into song structures. Anyway, do I really want to make records to compete against Steve or Eric Johnson or Allan Holdsworth?" Some TV appearances with songwriting success Ian Thomas (brother of SCTV's Dave) confirmed Rik's resolve; he turned down Tommy Shaw's offer to join Damn Yankees, called in some favors and made *Absolutely* on his own nickel. The only record to beat it in its first week of radio adds was *Damn Yankees.*

The power trio was Rik's habitat, but his own band is a versatile six-piece that forces him to pick his spots carefully. He enjoyed working with Triumph's spare rhythm section except when it necessitated bastardizing guitar parts. "Live, the first thing you used to compensate was volume," he notes. "Next was energy: You'd play way more busy than on the record to cover space, and the rhythm section is supposed to pick up on that. In Rush, Geddy and Neil fill it out with such great busy stuff that it makes it pretty easy for Alex. Whereas in Hendrix' day the guitar was focal, and the presentation could become more show-business than musical; that was what Clapton found such a drag. So we'd write a song and it would break down into, 'Here are the rhythm parts I'm going to play while I'm singing,' and so on, and there might be modifications."

Some compromises could be accomplished equipmentally: the 12-string on a doubleneck for rhythm parts and then a quick switch to the 6- for solos. The quirks of amplification often required the imaginative—and abundant—use of power-fifth chords and flash pull-off fills. "With a six-piece I can go for really thick soupy things," Rik says, "or the perfect killer sustain lead sound, which you can't really afford in a three-piece—this is before you could get a million sounds at a click of a switch. A chord with a third in the bass like D/F# would be awful with tremendous distortion. D/A is



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ABSOLUTES

RIK EMMETT just dropped big bucks to refinish his classic Jan Akkerman Framus hollowbody. Meantime, he's enjoying Yamaha Pacificas, created by ace designer Rich Lasner; the guitars have a chamber for resonance. Rik's Steinberger doubleneck lets him cover 12-string duties, while an Esquire Tele and an old Strat provide vintage Fender warmth. Acoustics include a Gibson Chet Atkins; D'Addario nylons produce less squeak when sliding.

Emmett runs Rexx 1601 and 1602 amps through two Rexx open-back cabs. A third Rexx is run as a contrast to one Marshall for tube leads. Both Rik and his second guitarist have noticed a strange high-register whistle on the overdrive setting of their Roland GP 16 effects processors; must be that thin Canadian air.

about as heavy as you get. You could throw a flat 7 in every now and then."

Emmett had decisive yet relatively pedestrian support in Triumph drummer Gil Moore and bassist Mike Levine, which left his live lead playing in a harmonic lurch. He sometimes countered with pentatonic triplets: In A, the pattern can begin on the root and go to C, then D; the next group of three is C, D, E, then D, E, G, continuing through the scale. Apart from acting as a systematic bridge between fretboard positions, the pattern—which can be expanded into quadruplets and upward to appealing effect—creates more interest over generic accompaniment than a scale run at varying speeds.

"Triplets are one of the few things I can do fairly well," Emmett laughs (and quickly follows up with the one about the guy who made the salacious claim to have once dated the pentatonic triplets). "I prefer them to the idea of picking eighths or sixteenths and then turning them into thirty-second notes. I like the dotted-eighth, sixteenth thing in bebop where it's got a swing, a better rhythmic flow. It's easier to play quickly with some kind of rhythmic structure. On 'Drive Time,' it's over that shuffle feel, so it sits right in the pocket."

Rhythmic sensitivity and economy seem incongruous to a hard rock format, but it's solid counsel for some of the players who took part in guitar competitions Emmett judged recently. "They spent so much time worrying who's going to do the next 'Eruption,' but then a guy will get up there and have a good sense of rhythm—those are the winners." Rik's advice? "Listen to what kind of a rhythm player Jimi Hendrix was, because that's at the heart of his success. He had a great idea about song structures, and that made him a sensitive player in a three-piece, even with a fairly straight rhythm section."

Which is what Rik did for years in the big arenas with Triumph. Foundering in their weighted democracy—and often finding himself, senior musical partner, outvoted by Moore and Levine—provided a few object lessons in ethics, but never parlayed into the commercial trial-by-fire that would have allowed him an experimental solo debut. As litigation continues and his former bandmates plot inexplicably to continue without him, Rik is confidently keeping his ideas in reserve. Besides, what guitar player in his right nut *would* want to go into the bins against Metheny and Holdsworth?

"If I made a guitar record, I'd be all over

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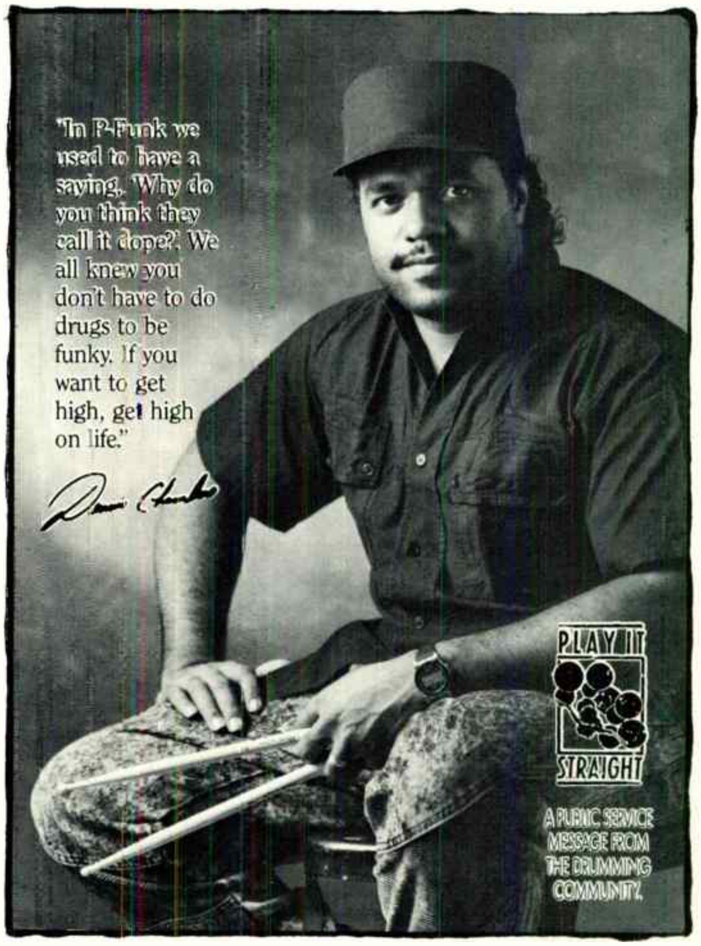

"In P-Funk we used to have a saying, 'Why do you think they call it dope?' We all knew you don't have to do drugs to be funky. If you want to get high, get high on life."

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the map stylistically," he explains, "and people might think I couldn't make up my mind. And that would be valid criticism! I'm not going to pretend to make a definitive statement right off the bat, because I don't want to go too far too fast. A side of me loves Donald Fagen's writing, where you use a lot of sharp nines and 13th chords, but I wanted to *start* a process instead of saying, 'This is the culmination.' And I know what it's like to play a song with a 13th chord and have an A&R guy say, 'Hey this is jazz!'

"There are frustrations, but I'm welcoming any opportunity I get to play. If I was on my way *down*, I might feel differently. The whole process of shopping the record, finding a band and starting over—it's helped me be patient and humble. All the dues I've already paid once, I'll have to pay all over again. Hopefully," he laughs with no conspicuous dearth of irony, "this will be the last time I have to do it." Ⓜ

LEWIS NASH NAILS THE SESSION

Getting jazz drumming onto tape: a new star explains how

By Tony Scherman

AFTER A FOUR-YEAR STINT WITH Betty Carter, 18 months with Branford Marsalis, concert tours with Sonny Rollins. Art Farmer and Tommy Flanagan, and a stack of three dozen albums with Flanagan, Don Pullen, Clark Terry, Ron Carter and lots of others, Lewis Nash has emerged as one of the best young drummers in jazz. Though he's just released his first album as a leader, *Rhythm Is My Business*, the biggest part of Nash's business is as a hired gun, a freelancer who can be counted on to swing a small jazz group with fire and subtlety. He tours constantly, but more and more of his calls are for recording sessions, and at 32 he's a grizzled studio hand. How does a master craftsman tackle the job of playing drums in a jazz session?

"Nowadays," says Nash, "in order to get the best sound separation, everyone's in booths and we depend on headphones. That is a big difference—the biggest, really—from live playing. I'm dealing with the same challenges as live: interacting with the soloist, hooking up with the bass player. But getting the same *immediacy* as onstage can be really difficult.

"A lot of what happens in jazz requires physical closeness: just being able to hear the natural sounds immediately, without having to depend on an electronic signal. And making eye contact, not having a wall in the way. In the studio, you just don't feel physically close to the other players. Plus, the *sound* is different: You don't hear that way onstage, right up in your ears like that. A lot of people don't like headphones, don't use them, but if you're in an enclosed booth, you almost have no choice.

"What I'll do is use one headphone and take the other off, or halfway off. In one ear I hear the headphone mix, in the other, myself: the natural sound of the drums. I really wish I could take the phones off completely."

For a jazz player in the studio for the first time, "the main thing is to get the sound in the headphones as comfortable as possible, so you're not thinking about the fact that you're isolated. After that, just try to play the way you always do—don't let being in the studio dictate how you play. In this music, everything depends on how you react. If you've got a sound-quality problem—say the bass is too tinny—or a balance problem, it just throws off your whole thing. You can't relax and play music. So get the headphone mix straight with the engineer right away."

Get your recorded sound straight, too—don't blindly trust the engineer. "Are the drums too far down in the mix? Too far upfront? This isn't pop, where the drums are mixed way upfront. Usually we'll play one song, then everyone'll go into the control room to listen while the engineer fine-tunes. The key is to get all the instruments balanced as close to life as possible. After that,

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what goes to tape is pretty much the final product. Especially if you're going direct to two-track, where there's no room for multitrack mixing."

Sonic matters in hand, you can get down to playing. "Every bandleader's got different things that make him feel comfortable, his own little things he might ask. So with that in mind, I spend a lot of time working not just on chopbuilders and rudiments—though I do those too—but on *musicality*."

Sounds great, but how do you practice musicality? For Nash it's a matter of a hands-on, take-it-apart ransacking of jazz drumming history. "I'll put on a big band record and ask, 'How did Sonny Payne, how did Sam Woodyard, shade, or kick, or do this particular thing here?' 'Why did Chick Webb set up this horn riff with that particular fill? Or play a complicated fill here and nothing but a bass-drum bomb there?' 'The trumpet player's using a mute and the drummer's switched to that cymbal—why?' What I'm listening for are color, shading and dynamics: Those are the things that make music sound great, and that free you up to offer a completely different lick with maybe just a slight difference in touch.

"Recording, you need to be able to get to whatever it is the leader wants, and fairly quickly. You need to have enough knowledge so that if you try something and they say, 'No, let's try something else,' you can *give* them something else." You need to be able to translate *vague requests into specific licks*. "Suppose a leader says, 'I want this piece to have a funky feel, but not two and four. And I don't want it busy...'" Lewis laughs: "People ask all kinds of stuff. For that one, I might do something like this"—and he sits down at the drums to play a spare, rolling, very funky New Orleans-ish 4/4.

While he doesn't have to be as malleable as a pop or jingle drum-

[cont'd on page 75]

NASHVILLE

RIGHT NOW I use a Gretsch rosewood set with a 14"x18" bass drum; I've got a 14"x20" for a bigger sound. I use a single 8"x12" mounted tom; for variation I'll ad a 9"x13" tom. My floor tom is 14"x14"." He hasn't found a snare he likes better than his 10-year-old Milestone, though he's got a "really nice-sounding" Pearl and a 1940s Leedy. His cymbals are Zildjians: 14" hi-hat, two 20" rides and one 16" crash.

THE LADY PLAYS A VAMP

Keyboard wizard Patrice Rushen unravels jazz improvisation

By Alan di Perna

MY SOLOS ARE AN EXTENSION of the composition I'm playing," observes Patrice Rushen, looking up from the keyboard towers that crowd her home studio. "It's my chance to say, 'If I had written this piece, what would I do now?' Not to imply that I'm going to *add* something to Duke Ellington. A solo is me saying, 'This piece makes me feel like this.' So the problem becomes, 'What can I play that illustrates how I'm feeling about this piece right now?' I say 'right now' because the solo is going to be different each time."

True soloing isn't about memorizing a bunch of hot licks and whipping them out on demand. It's an act of spontaneous creation—something Rushen excels at. You can hear it on *The Meeting*, the debut from a semi-regular group Rushen has convened with bassist Alphonso Johnson, drummer Ndugu Chancler and reedman Ernie Watts. Rushen has also had pop hits—as a singer, instrumentalist and composer/arranger—and scored several films and TV shows. It all gives her a well-rounded perspective on the demanding-yet-liberating nature of jazz improvisation.

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Patrice fires up her master keyboard as I mumble excuses about being a rock 'n' roll caveman when it comes to matters pianistic. She pats my arm forgivingly. "The left hand can be much more versatile than a lot of keyboardists make it; most people just hold down each chord and start playing over them." I cringe guiltily as she does a convincing imitation of how rock pianists approach jazz solos. "There's no need to spell out every chord," she continues. "The ear will pick up the harmony and the chords will be implied by what your right hand is playing."

Rushen switches to a more spare left-hand feel, while continuing with her right hand much the same as before. The music instantly becomes effortless and buoyant. "Free up your left hand," she notes, "and there's nothing to stop it from grabbing part of the melody if it has to—particularly if you're playing at a super fast tempo. I have little hands, so my left hand is always doing something: either helping cover a melody or providing some kind of rhythmic reinforcement or even, yes, holding down a chord. My left hand's role constantly changes."

Left-hand chording can also aid and abet melodic deviations. "I think of my hands as being connected," Rushen says. She improvises over Fmin7 and Bflat7. Though she's playing in F minor, she builds a riff that climaxes in an F#: "I want that F# in there for some melodic tension," she explains, "so my left hand doesn't have to stay on this Bflat7 anymore. The F# is just a passing tone, but I really want you to *get* this F#. If I'm gonna go out, I might as well do it strong. So I'm going to wait until that note comes and then I'm going to reinforce it by playing...this." She augments the fifth in the Bflat7 chord so that it too is now stating the F#. "It's best to wait to play the chord until you play the actual note in the melody," she adds. "No need to give away the surprise beforehand."

Turnabout is also fair play: Melodic deviations can *follow* chord substitutions, as we discover in analyzing Patrice's solo on "Groove Now and Then," from *The Meeting*. The solo unfolds over a pattern of just a few chords. "The first is an Fmaj7 with a flat five in the right hand over a G bass," Rushen explains. "Then it's G6/A, then Aflat9 with a sharp five, followed by a Dmin7, only I've left out the fifth in the right hand. And then there are two passing chords, F7/G and Eflat/F, before it resolves to E flat."

The solo starts out with a strong melodic line supported by spare, strategic comping. But about eight bars in she plays an Aflat maj7flat 5 and a G flat maj7flat5 in place of the previously named passing chords. These substitutions are stated as sharp punctuations, with related melody lines trailing off each. "I'm not sure why I chose

RUSHEN'S RACK

PATRICE RUSHEN prefers Yamaha grand pianos, but her touring rig is driven by three master keyboards: a Yamaha KX88, a DX7 II FD and a KX5 remote connected to a Gabatte wireless MIDI system. Tone modules include a Yamaha TX816 and TG77, a Kurzweil 1000PX and a Roland S-550. There's a Yamaha QX1 sequencer and RX5 drum machine in there, too. Effects are a Yamaha REV7, an SPX90 and a Scholz Rockman, which helps Patrice coax convincing guitar tones from her DX7. The whole thing gets blended through two Yamaha MV802 mixers, pumped through a Yamaha P2100 power amp and served up on a pair of ElectroVoice S515 speakers.

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those chords," she laughs. "But I was leading to the resolution of the phrase: that E-flat pedal point. I do that a lot. My melodic interest is in getting to the end point of the phrase, and as long as I'm not playing with another chordal instrument, I'm not interested in the transitional chords that may be on the page. And in this case, Al is covering the tonic notes, the G and F, on bass."

But a few bars in, Rushen's miles away from the song's original key. I'm curious about the parallel fifths she's playing, but she's more absorbed in what Johnson is doing. "He's *way* off the paper now! He *led* me out there. It's almost like we're saying, 'Okay, how you gonna get back from *here*?'"

Drummer Chancler joins the fun and the piece's time signature goes south, too. But somehow, everyone lands in the right place as the solo ends. And *that*, says Rushen, is the true essence of jazz improvisation. "It's where you can say, 'I know where I am in this, and I trust you know where you are.' We're all in the same place, although we're interpreting differently just where that place is. Does that make any sense?"

Re-listening to the solo in the car on my way home, I decide it does. Ⓜ

NASH

[from page 72] mer—"in this music, people want you to sound like you"—Nash does need to adapt. "Say I know that a certain piano player tends to rush. What I'll do is play fills that hold it back." He plays a swinging dotted-quarter-note pattern on his ride cymbal but hits the snare hard on one and four: "See how that sits it right down? Whereas if you play eighth-note upbeats with someone who rushes, it's going to rush him even more."

An adept reader, Nash is given drum notation about half the time; otherwise, he works from a lead sheet or with no music at all. At the other extreme, he's sometimes asked to sight-read right to tape—for instance, on Ron Carter's score for the TV movie "A Gathering of Old Men." "Sight-reading doesn't scare me. It can actually be fun"—an adrenalin rush where you're simultaneously reading, playing and hearing the piece emerge.

"I could probably do half my sessions without any reading. But for that other half, it's crucial. I can get to the studio knowing that whatever they put in front of me, I can play. People come in with tunes whose form isn't 32 bars of 8-8-8-8; it's 13 bars of this, then a bar of 2/4, then a bar of 7/4.... If you can't read, there's no way you can just sit down and play that." For non-reading drummers with a terror of notation, Nash knows only one cure: "Find yourself a good teacher—especially if you want to use it for work."

The most rehearsal Nash remembers getting for an album is two four-hour sessions; for most jazz recordings, "one four-hour rehearsal should be enough." Actual cutting rarely takes more than one six-hour day—"two at the most, and two or three complete takes per song is more than enough." What happens when the leader's still not happy after three takes? "Then," says Lewis, "there is nonverbal communication."

Despite its brevity, or because of it, the jazz session can be exhausting: "You can't really relax, you're always conscious of time. I probably have more fun playing live. But I bet that if jazz record budgets were big, like pop budgets, recording *would* be more fun. You wouldn't have to worry about getting this done *right now*. If we had a week...wow, I've never had that.

"But we've gotten so used to doing it this way, if we had a whole week we probably wouldn't know what to do with it!" Ⓜ

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TO WALK OR NOT TO WALK

Michael Formanek, jazz bass' gloved one, plays everything but the obvious

By Kevin Whitehead

PIANIST FRED HERSCH IS PLAYING at a Greenwich Village club, Visiones, with drummer Jeff Hirschfield and bassist Michael Formanek. They remind you of Bill Evans' trios, but more for their telepathic interplay than pristine harmony. Hersch and company play with the time more than Evans did in 1960—it's like what Mingus called "rotary perception." ("Imagine a circle surrounding each beat. Each guy can play his notes anywhere in that circle and it gives him a feeling he has more space...but the original feeling for the beat hasn't changed.") Sometimes no one's keeping time, but they keep swinging—this is a tight little band.

Evans' trio was one of the places the bass stood up for itself (Scott LaFaro, Gary Peacock, Eddie Gomez), and Formanek enjoys his freedoms. But he doesn't take Gomez-style mandolin solos, high and fast in the thumb position. He doesn't avoid playing above the octave on his G, but he doesn't live up there. The one time he solos in the cello range—on Ornette's "Lonely Woman"—he bats out near-unisons on adjacent strings, in a rhythmic pattern echoing African thumb pianos. For Hersch's raggy "Nostalgia," he plucks broken chords in oompah time; he plays slap-style lines without slapping, 'cause the effect alone is enough. (He also does it with a glove on his right hand, but we'll get to that.) On Alec Wilder's bossa "Moon and Sand" he repeats root-and-fifth figures that freeze each chord in isolation, instead of walking a line that threads chords together. In the course of the set, he does pretty much everything you'll see a jazz bassist do *except* walk; he doesn't thump out a straight 4/4 once.

"The trick to not walking is to keep the feel going anyway," Formanek says. "I'm happy to walk if it's right for the music—you have to do it just to hang in there with Freddie Hubbard or George Coleman. But usually I approach walking in different ways—choosing weird notes, or giving it almost an 8/8 boogaloo feel, shifting accents into different places."

The 33-year-old bassist—who first recorded at 16 with pianist Bishop Norman Williams and came to New York in '78—is making a career out of pursuing the unobvious. He's had productive (though unrecorded) stints walking with Hubbard and tenorist Coleman, but he might turn up as part of a woolly Ray Anderson group at the Vanguard, whacking away in guitarist James Emery's roughhouse Iliad Quartet, backing neo-cabaret singer Nora York, anchoring German composer Daniel Schnyder's fiendish serial/cool charts. "He writes a lot of stuff with very fast, non-tonally related patterns, like two-and-a-half octave jumps in triplets. But composers will tell me something's unplayable before I'll tell them that." California's Mingus is Formanek's inspiration there—his vision of the long fingerboard as a continuum you can leap around like a keyboard player.

Formanek's own '90 album had one of those polyglot bands well-traveled bassists and drummers often assemble: Hirschfield, violinist Mark Feldman, Greg Osby on alto and soprano and guitarist Wayne Krantz. *Wide Open Spaces* may be the only good disc in years occasionally reminiscent of fusion (Feldman saws Jean-Luc Ponty licks). But Formanek's grappling with watts without giving up jazz solos is straight out of Gil Evans. (The bassist mentions Bob Moses' Gil-ly *When Elephants Dream of Music* as a favorite record he's on, not for his own playing but for its billowy expansiveness.)

Wide Open Spaces is a blowing date, but

Photograph: Chris Carroll

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One of my favorite things in life is kicking back with the latest issue of MUSICIAN Magazine and devouring every page. Once I pick it up, I can't put it down until I'm finished.

—Jim Keltner
The Traveling Wilburys

the cuts are short—15 in 55 minutes. They're multiple variations on a few basic themes, elaborations on root ideas. It's like a film score, Formanek says, not least because the arrangement of the fragments is crucial to the result. (He and keyboardist Mark Puricelli have been scoring student films, trying to break into that biz.) But the way he slides the themes in among the variations recalls the way multireedist/composer Anthony Braxton sneaks heads into the middle of solos.

"I'd been compiling sketches for months, but basically I wrote the music in three weeks. If you write in a short amount of time, the materials will sound unified." Yeah, but off-center at the same time—it's like a story you hear several times but never get completely straight.

Formanek's playing for other leaders involves recomposition too. "I'll look at a piece a lot of different ways, not go for what's obvious. I might create motion when tunes are static—imply a cycle of changes if there's not enough going on—or make it static if it feels too busy: play common tones or a pedal point if the changes are more abstract. I won't do it every time, but I like to know what my options are."

One aspect of his style is straight down the center: his tone. Even in the upper register, his sound is bassy, round and warm. "I have a fairly quick attack, and don't like notes that decay forever. That interferes with my articulation. In ballad playing especially, you have to [*cont'd on page 97*]

WAYS OF THE HAND

MICHAEL FORMANEK's bass is a turn-of-the-century $3/4$-size flatback from Czechoslovakia, maker unknown. "Basically it's a mass-produced model, but it has a strong personality, very even and dark for such a small instrument." Strings: Dr. Thomastic Spirocore, standard type, orchestra tuning. His pickup is a Schertler from Switzerland. "I'm really happy with it; I use it for all live work and in conjunction with different miking techniques for recording—I like a Schoeps omnidirectional capsule wrapped in foam and stuck in the bridge, and another Schoeps or Neumann KM-8S above the f-holes." Amp: SWR Baby Blue, with additional speakers when needed. His While-U-Sleep Beauty Gloves are by the George Glove Company of Englewood, New Jersey.

GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HYPE THEMSELVES

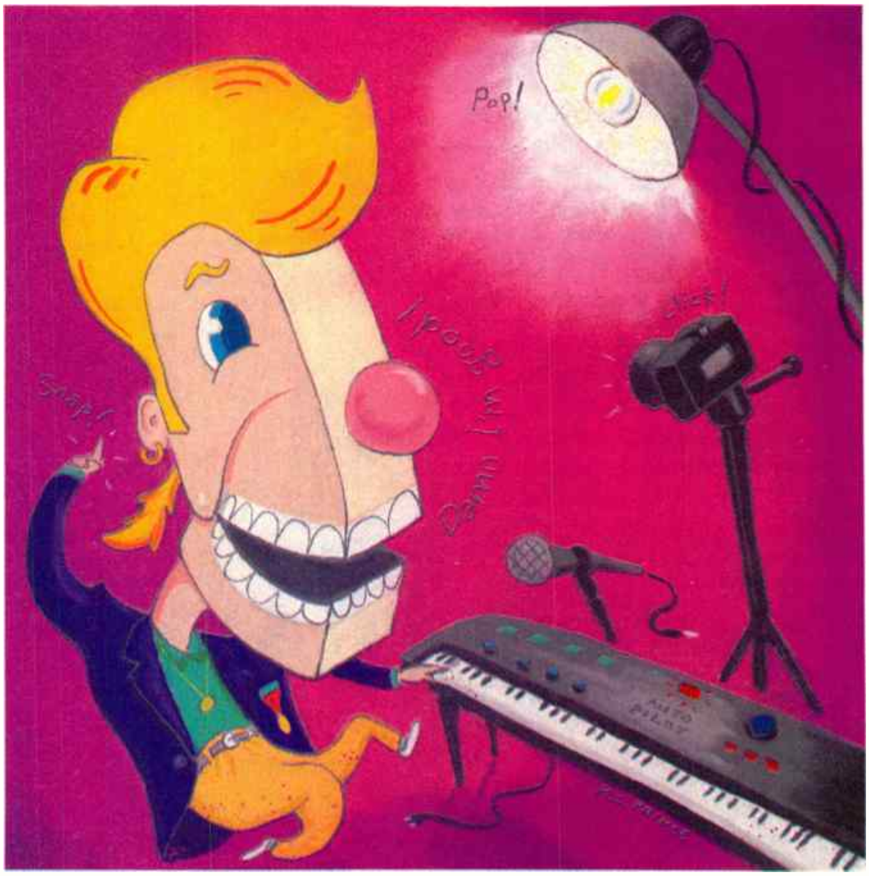
Never mind the music, build that press kit

By Rob Tannenbaum

FOR YEARS, MUSICIANS CAME TO NEW York and plotted a simple career trajectory: Write songs, rehearse, play clubs, make a demo tape and send it to record companies. Continue to write, rehearse, play and send tapes until the cycle leads to either a record contract or financial and spiritual collapse.

That trajectory is as obsolete as vinyl. Musicians are too busy at the health club to write songs, their clothes don't leave them any money to rent rehearsal space, and clubs don't book local bands. Here's the new trajectory: Buy a sampler, befriend a fashion photographer and send your glossies to editors so you can be featured in magazines. Build your own hype, and wait for the record companies to approach you. Then, maybe, play a concert.

"Do you have an angle for your story?" Phoebe Legere asks suddenly, only minutes into an introductory phone call. "What other musicians are you talking to? Have you seen my press clippings?" The next day, a messenger delivers a dazzling folder: three dozen articles, many of which picture the classically trained nightclub singer and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heptainstrumentalist in initial or secondary stages of undress. (The package includes only a glimpse of her guitar-humping, multi-page *Playboy* pictorial. This modesty is so unexpected it's almost touching.)

How is it possible for Legere, who hasn't recorded anything longer than an EP, to attract so much publicity? The answer is apparent in her cautious questions. For a generation of young musicians, media exposure is a career tool. In a field with a low success rate, unsigned bands realize the value of expanding the traditional view of a musician's job to include networking as well as songwriting. Self-promotion is as much a necessity as changing guitar strings.

These ideas, some 20 years old in England, are finally becoming common in America. "I'm not the same/I have no shame," Madonna sang in "Burning Up," and as the most successful performer of the '80s, her brazen embrace of undisguised ambition became widely imitated. For musicians raised on MTV and "Entertainment Tonight," getting press is as instinctual as using a remote control.

Bands want magazine exposure—if not in an article, then in an ad. Phoebe Legere posed for Amaretto liqueur, and famed nipple enthusiast Bruce Weber photographed Gutterboy singer Dito Montiel for Gianni Versace. The product is incidental; the musicians are advertising their savvy, their star potential, in a time when corporate endorsements are a gauge of success. Without press, Montiel admits, Gutterboy would not have a deal with DGC Records. "Most bands get signed through connections. Some of the best bands I know aren't even signed, and a lot of junk is."

Musicians can still get by on mere talent. But beauty turns talent into a luxury. The Niagaras (*YM*, *InFashion*, *Sassy*) are a handsome quintet who dress like Harry Connick, Jr. and sound like Oingo Boingo with extra guitars. Frank Whaley, their drummer, is also an actor who has appeared in *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Field of Dreams* and *The Doors*, and his brother Robert Whaley, a singer, and bassist Paul Himmelein are also actors. After several record labels scouted the Niagaras but didn't sign them, the band financed an independent album from Frank's Hollywood bankroll. "We decided to create our own hype," Robert says.

"A lot of bands think that a record company guy's gonna walk in the club and somehow *find* them," Himmelein says, amazed. "It doesn't happen like that." The Niagaras pursue editors and record executives relentlessly, persisting despite rejection. The band formed at Albany State University, meeting in theater and music classes. Which courses proved more valuable? "Oh, theater class, all the way," says Robert. "We learned nothing in music class at all. Our training as actors comes in handy. We know it's all bullshit, and whatever you can do to get somebody's attention, do it."

If you're not pretty enough for the glossies, a small investment in props can secure MTV coverage. GWAR, a sort of Spinal Tap for *Mad* magazine fans, pander to MTV's lust for intense visual information with headpiece-to-codpiece costumes, pee-joke pseudonyms and blood-spurting onstage executions. These hard-rock clods were featured on "MTV

[cont'd on page 91]

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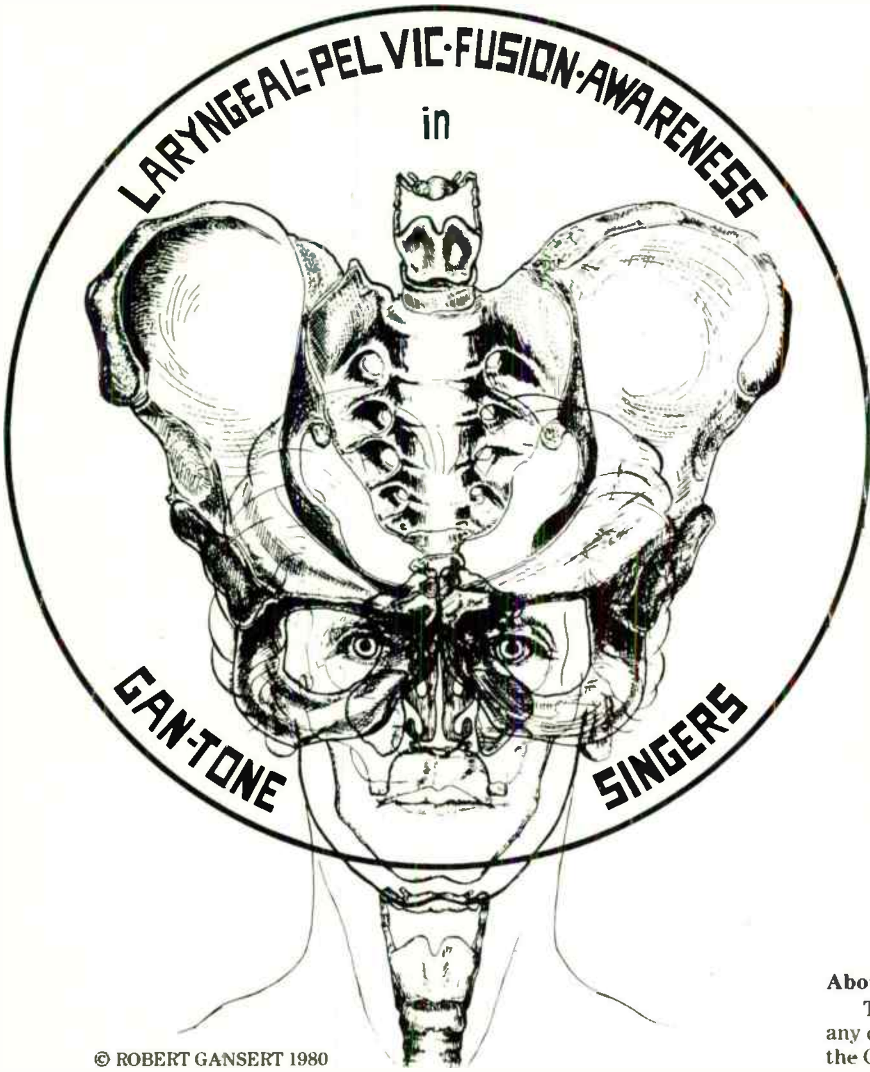

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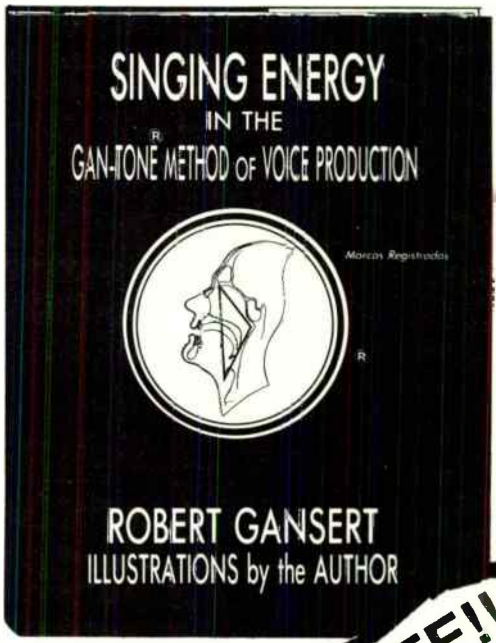
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THE QUEST FOR PURE TONE

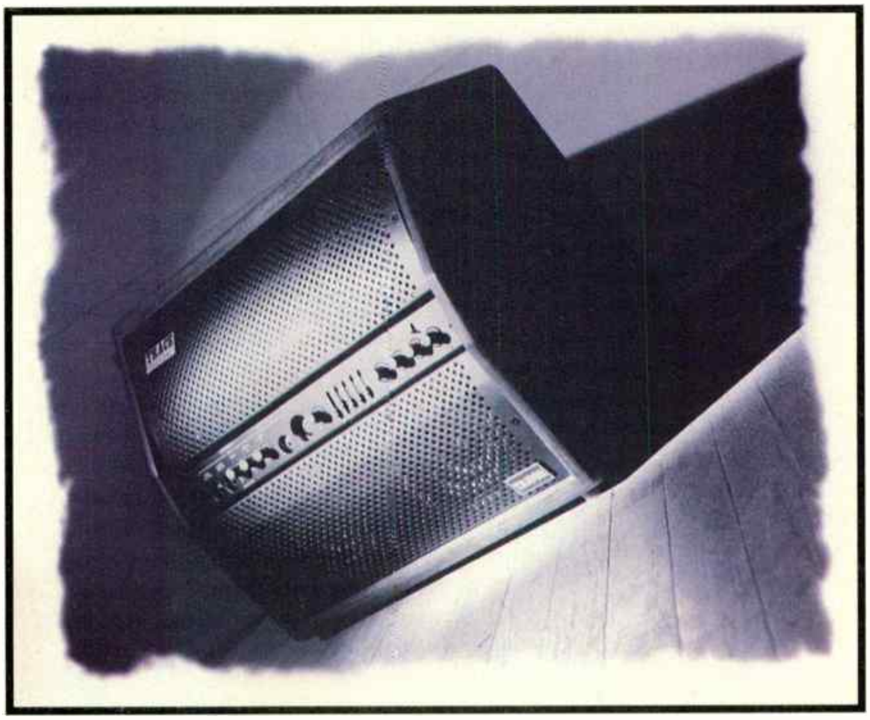
Acoustic guitar amps and other mythical beasts

By Alan di Perna

IS AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR STILL ACOUSTIC once it's been amplified? Only if it was hewn from a tree that made no noise when it fell because nobody was in the forest to hear it. Philosophical abstractions aside, the sad truth is that many acoustic guitars get *badly* amplified. Acoustic players—especially in bands—often wind up putting their instruments through electric guitar amps, which distort when you turn 'em up past five and do a whole slew of other things that make even the finest acoustic sound like a crummy pawnshop Tele copy.

So I was heartened when Trace Elliot's specially designed acoustic guitar amp, the TA100R, showed up on my doorstep. I was also a bit skeptical because Trace Elliot is a renowned maker of bass amps. But this 100-watt amp was designed for acoustic guitar from the ground up, starting with four five-inch speakers arrayed on a semi-circular front grille—two pointing slightly upward and two slightly downward for ideal dispersion. (There's also a larger 8x5, stereo 100-watt-per-side version, the TA200S.) Yeah, but can these puny five-inchers put out any bass? Silly question to ask about a Trace Elliot. The TA100R admirably reproduces the warm lower end of an acoustic guitar's timbre. The high end's nothing to sneeze at either, and the whole frequency spectrum can be shaped with the amp's five-band EQ. The bands are set at very useful frequencies for acoustic: 100, 330, 1k, 3.5k and 10k Hz.

But we *are* getting ahead of ourselves. The Trace Acoustic is a two-channel amp. There's a high-impedance channel with two inputs: one for piezo and regular passive pickups, the other for instruments with active electronics. The second channel is balanced low-impedance, with XLR and quarter-inch jacks. Both channels are always "on" so you can, say, plug an acoustic guitar with a pickup into the "Hi Z" channel while also miking the guitar, and plugging the mike into the "Lo Z" channel. Each channel has its own gain control, but don't expect to get much distortion. That's the whole point of the thing: It's a super-clean amp for acoustic guitars, although it can also produce some excellent clean electric guitar tones. And I found that I could coax out a *little* warm distortion by plugging an axe with some really hot pickups into the "piezo" input. Who could resist?



Trace Elliot's acoustic guitar amp, the TA100R: 4 speakers, 5-band EQ, 100 watts

Both channels share the unit's five-band EQ, though the "Hi Z" channel also has its own bass and treble controls, and both channels share a "Shape" control which kicks in a preset EQ curve that seems to make just about any guitar sound better. A notch filter lets you zero in on troublesome feedback frequencies and cut them out. There's also a rear-panel switch that puts one of the speakers out-of-phase with the others. The general result was a cancellation of the biting high frequencies, which makes for a more—pardon the term—"mellow" tone. Quite simply, the Trace Acoustic suffers from an overabundance of tone controls.

Both channels also share the Trace Acoustic's onboard Alesis digital reverb circuit (all models but the TA100, that is). Included are 16 non-editable effect programs, most quite musical: a delay and 15 reverbs with varying decay times and pre-delays—arranged, alas, in no apparent order. And for patching in more signal-processing gear, there's an effects loop on the rear panel. Said panel also provides two XLR D.I. outs: pre EQ and post EQ. In all, Trace's engineers have foreseen every eventuality; the TA100's design is as complete as its tone is pure.

Speaking of sweet guitar tones, Chandler has a new mini-humbucker that's a replica of the 1963 Gibson Firebird pickup. Scientific types will note that it's got an Alnico V bar magnet, puts out 7.5k ohms and goes by the catchy name of the GH9620. Six-string historians will appreciate the authentic nickel-plated mounting ring. The pickups can be

Photography: Susan Goines

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"They laughed when I said they could have Perfect Pitch...until I showed them the secret!"

A true story by David L. Burge

We were in ninth grade when I first heard that Linda had "Perfect Pitch."

I was told she had the amazing ability to name any pitch *by ear!* They said she could do many things with her Perfect Pitch—like play any song after only hearing it on the radio!

I doubted it. How could she know F# or B♭ just by *hearing* it? An ear like that would open up unlimited possibilities for any musician.

It bothered me. Did she *really* have Perfect Pitch?

"Yes," she told me in an aloof sort of way.

Perfect Pitch was just too good to be true. I rudely asked her, "Can I test you sometime?"

"OK," she said cheerfully.

Now I was going to make her eat her words...

I carefully picked a time when Linda least suspected. Then I challenged her to name tones for me—*by ear.*

I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made sure other classmates could not help her. I made sure everything was set just right so I could expose her claim as a ridiculous joke.

Nervously, I plotted my testing strategy. Linda appeared serene. With silent apprehension I played a tone: F#. (She'll *never* guess F#!)

I barely touched the tone. "F#," she said.

I was astonished.

I quickly played another tone. She didn't even stop to think. *Instantly* she announced the correct pitch. I played more and more tones here and there on the keyboard, and each time she knew the pitch—without effort. She was SO amazing—she could identify tones as easily as colors!

"Sing an E♭," I demanded, determined to mess her up. Quickly she sang the proper pitch. I asked for more tones (trying hard to make them increasingly difficult), but still she sang every one perfectly on pitch.

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

"I don't know," she replied. And that was about as much as I could get out of her!

The reality of Perfect Pitch hit me hard. My head was dizzy with disbelief, yet I now knew that Perfect Pitch was real.

I couldn't figure it out...

"How does she do it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't *everyone* identify tones by ear?

It dawned on me that most musicians go their *entire lives* without knowing C from C#, or A major from F major. That's like an artist who paints picture after picture without knowing green from orange. It seemed odd and contradictory.

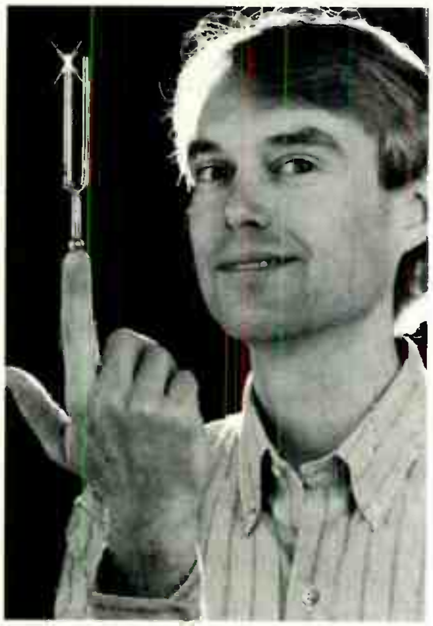
I found myself even more mystified than before I had tested her.

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

You can be sure I tried it myself. I would sweet-talk my brothers and sisters into playing tones for me, then try to determine each pitch just by ear. Almost every attempt failed miserably.

I tried day after day to learn the tones. I tried playing them over and over in order to memorize them. I tried to visualize the location of each pitch. But nothing worked. I simply could not recognize the tones by ear. It was hopeless.

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



Then came the realization...

It was like a miracle. And it happened all because I had stopped *trying* so hard. I had stopped *straining* my ear. I had started to listen NATURALLY. Then the incredible secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not *visual* colors—but colors of *pitch*. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever really "let go" enough to hear these subtle differences in the tones.

Now I could name pitches by ear! It was simple. An **F#** sounded one way—a B♭ had a distinctly different sound. It was as easy as naming red or blue!

The realization struck me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven and Mozart could mentally hear music on a page—and identify tones, chords, and keys at will—*by listening for these pitch colors*. It's that simple!

I became convinced that *any* musician could have Perfect Pitch just by knowing this simple secret of "color hearing."

When I told my friend Ann that she could have Perfect Pitch, she laughed. "You have to be *born* with Perfect Pitch," she asserted.

"You don't understand what Perfect Pitch *is*," I explained. "It's easy!"

I showed her the secret pitch colors and she heard them *immediately*. Soon she too could name any tone and sing any pitch requested. We became instant celebrities. Everyone was amazed.

Perfect Pitch allowed me to progress faster than I ever thought possible. I completely skipped over required college courses. Perfect Pitch made *everything* easier—performing, composing, arranging, transposing, improvising—and it skyrocketed my enjoyment as well. Music is definitely a *hearing* art.

Of course, "old school" type music professors were highly skeptical when I started teaching Perfect Pitch years later. Most would laugh at the mere *suggestion* that anyone could have Perfect Pitch. But when I showed them how to hear the pitch colors *themselves*, they changed their tune!

Now there's *more* proof...

I'm pleased that thousands of musicians have already used my Perfect Pitch method with incredible success. Independent research at a leading university has also proved that my "Color Hearing" method really does work (please call our studio for free info). Now I'd like to show YOU how to develop *your own* Perfect Pitch!

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Think of the possibilities that Perfect Pitch can open for you musically. And imagine the look on your friends' faces when YOU can name tones and chords with laser-like precision!

Don't laugh! At least not until you've heard the simple secret for *yourself!*

Research reference: *An experimental investigation of the effectiveness of training on absolute pitch in adult musicians,* M. A. Rush (1989). The Ohio State University.

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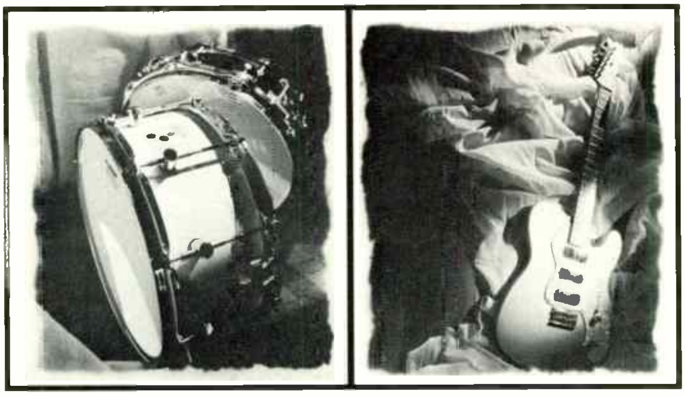


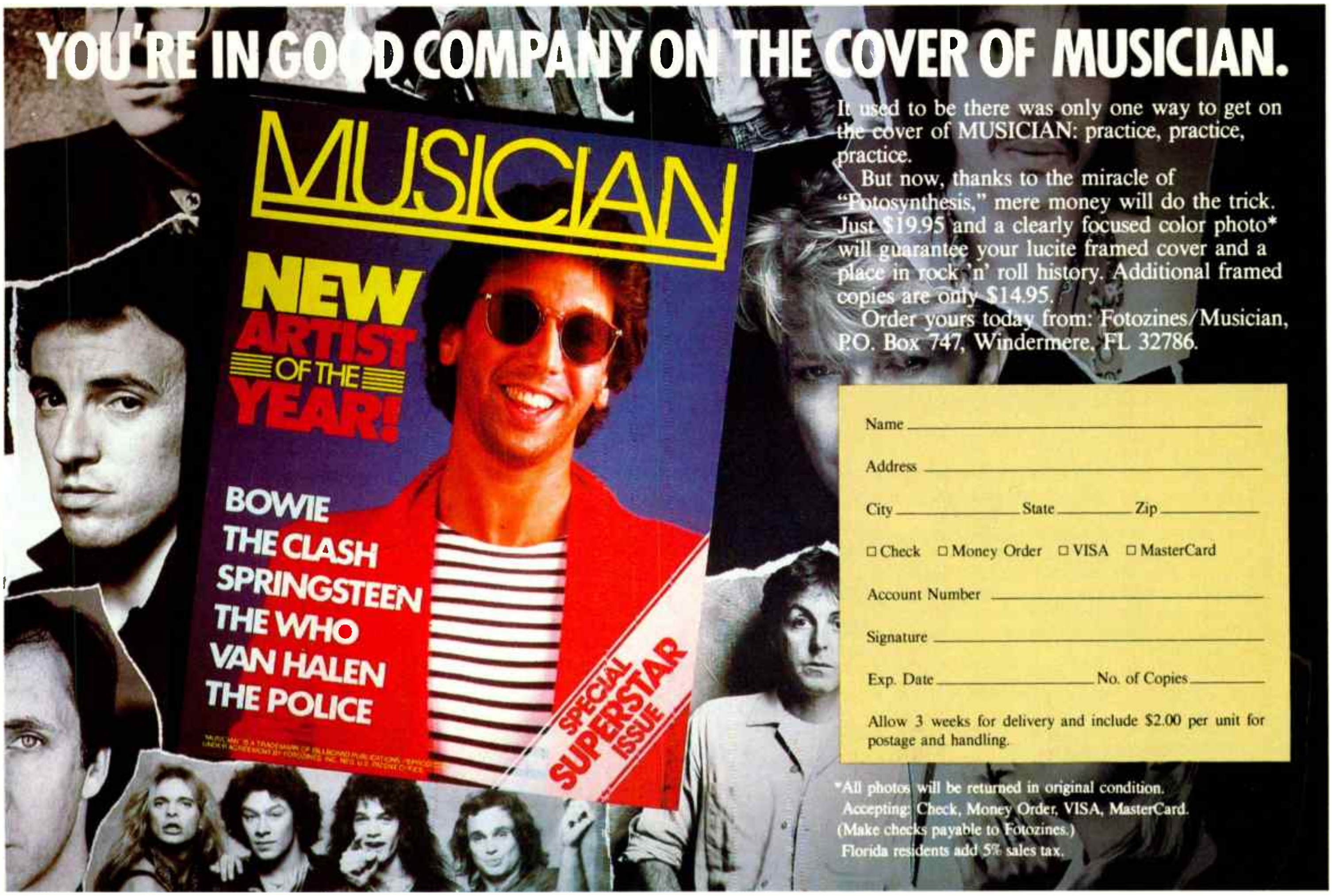
Left: Sonor's new Force 3000 snare (foreground) and LD 400 piccolo; right: Chandler electric with their new GH9620 mini-humbucker pickups

Successful Spinoff Department: The new Sonor Force 3000 drumkit is an upmarket followup to last year's popular Force 2000 kit. Snare and toms are nine-ply cross-laminated birch, and kick drums are 11-ply birch. The company has also added two new wooden piccolo models, a nine-ply maple HiLite model called the Exclusive EHD 400, and a 12-ply birch entry called the SonorLite LD 400. Both are 4x14 10-lug propositions with 24-strand ferro-manganese wire snares. The third new Sonor snare is a soprano, the HiLite HD 512: a 5x12 nine-ply maple number with eight chrome tubular lugs. Slotted between $550 and $670, they're pretty affordable as designer snares go.

Meanwhile, PureCussion—the celebrated "rim kings"—have entered the drum rack market. Nothing fancy, just solid-but-lightweight, affordable support. The main rack sports a 40" crossbar with three ¾" and three ⅞" clamps, all for $225. For an extra $142, you get a 36" side extension with two more ¾" and two more ⅞" clamps.

Finally, how low can the price of MIDI synchronization sink? I'm almost afraid to ask Midiman, that maker of ultra-inexpensive sync boxes. Their latest is called the SmartSync, which goes for a mere $119.95. Yes, you can now sync your MIDI sequencer to your multitrack tape machine for roughly the same amount of dough it takes to buy a cheezy fuzztone. And syncing up used to cost so much! Okay, so SmartSync isn't a SMPTE device. The code it uses is Smart Song Position Pointer, or Smart FSK, which means you can still fast-wind your tape to any point, hit play and all your sequencer "virtual" tracks will kick right in. No need to sit through the whole tune from the beginning each time. The unit has a MIDI Merge function, so you can record data into your sequencer while it's reading sync code without having to buy a bunch of extra MIDI boxes. And it can "jam sync," which means you can work with dodgy, amateurishly printed code and still lock up to tape.

"Developments" returns next month with a report on the NAMM Show.



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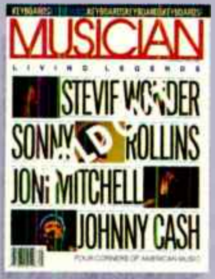
Ronald Shannon Jackson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SOUND OFF!

MUSICIANS AGAINST CENSORSHIP

It would be easy to use this opportunity to take a smart-ass swipe at Tipper Gore, the PMRC and their ilk. But that's easy and smarmy and I hate people who feel they have the moral high ground and know everything. Which is my problem with the Tipster and her pro-censorship comrades.

On the surface, she's no different than a thousand other people with lots of opinions and a lot of spare time on their hands—much like a deranged street person wandering around screaming about Armageddon. Again on the surface who could be against the PMRC and like-minded groups. They're (supposedly) just concerned parents afraid of what is influencing their children. If all they were doing was monitoring what their kids are listening to and alerting other parents to music of "questionable lyrical content," all they would be guilty of is exercising their democratic rights like any other consumer group. As we have seen this is clearly not the case and one must always be on the lookout for the hidden agenda of pressure groups. They are part of a desire both the "left" and the "right" to have the state care for the nation's children and punish their enemies.

Well, what about the retailers and record companies. They may have been a bit soft-bonered about this issue, but, most people don't want to get into a fight with their state or provincial legislature, or worse, get slapped with an obscenity charge...especially when it's not them personally that's said "fuck." More importantly their bottom line is financial, not moral—if they don't make money, they're out of business, so boycotts and irate consumers hit them where they smell funny.

So, the real villains in my mind are the elected officials, guardians of our rights and freedoms. Talk is cheap but when politicians use the force of the state to dictate what people can listen to, impede the creative process of the artist, sticker, censor or manipulate the legal sale of his product, that's when things stop being fun. Also, (correct me if I'm wrong) most of the anti-censorship gang seem to be conservatives, Republicans and all sorts of folks who hold the free enterprise system dear. I can only wonder why they don't see the contradiction between "laissez-faire" and this blatant invasion into the market. And is it too obvious to point out that prohibition increases the value and desirability of that which is prohibited? If it becomes difficult to sell records that are stickered you can bet those sort of records won't be released and artists will be coerced into following "moral guidelines" set up arbitrarily by some committee of bureaucrats. Finally, the biggest problem with labeling is that the process fails to consider the context in which the objectionable words or references are made.

I must reiterate that I don't know everything, but like most North Americans I have some instincts about what is right and wrong. Fortunately, my band hasn't been stickered or censored, but I fear what is to come. So come on you guys, keep your hands off my mind and body. Listen to what you want, teach your children the same and try to influence your friends. Just let the rest of us make up our own minds.

MOE BERG
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

MUSICIAN

Where the Players Do the Talking™

"Sad, Sad Music." "It Only Hurts When I Cry" brings back memories of Cash's Tennessee Three, with its strong bassline, and "Send a Message to My Heart," a duet with Patty Loveless, ought to inspire future collaborations between the two.

There *are* danceable tunes on the record, notably "Turn It On, Turn It Up, Turn Me Loose" and "I Don't Need It Done" (neither written by Yoakam). But the hard-edged rock sound he's flirted with in the past (e.g., a scorching cover of the Blasters' "Long Black Cadillac") is nowhere in evidence.

Perhaps the best cut is the menacing "Dangerous Man," written and convincingly delivered by Yoakam. As usual, he's surrounded by crack musicians who seem to know just what the singer is after.

In sum, Yoakam's vocals are better than ever and he seems to have found a comfortable groove in his songwriting. Maybe too comfortable.

—Ray Waddell

LONDON
CARRERAS DOMINGO PAVAROTTI
in concert
MEHTA

Carreras, Domingo, Pavarotti

■

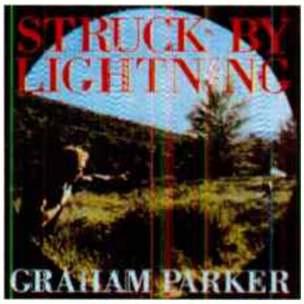
In Concert
(London)

THIS CONCERT FROM THE BATHS OF CARACALLA in Rome last July has turned out to be a classical-world blockbuster. The proudest collection of romantic old-world arias and songs, performed with Olympian confidence and skill, it may become the genre's most commercially successful offering in history. It's not hard to hear why: With conductor Zubin Mehta's customary briskness emphasizing raging violins, pithy horns, soothing woodwinds and particular rhythms as broadly as good sense and taste will permit, the whopping immediacy of these three tenors is heightened by the large orchestra, never obscured.

As the *In Concert* video makes clear, José Carreras, Plácido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti aren't fussy stars caught up in professional jealousy; they're like the Traveling Wilburys in white ties. The comparison isn't that far-fetched, not only because it's a solid bet that the late Roy Orbison heard and liked Caruso singing "Core 'ngrato," which Carreras does with his fierce feeling: Many of these romanzas and arias are practically athletic folk melodies by now.

For his part, Domingo—in Lehár's flowing "Dein ist mein ganzes Herz" and Puccini's "E lucevan le stelle," for example—comes across as the essence of a gracious, generous approach to song, especially in the closing medley of stuff like "Maria" and "La Vie en rose" (but also "Memory"). And Pavarotti—with his ease, his gorgeous fluidity, his quasi-mystical manner—and his trademark handkerchief—brings down the house with his "Nessun dorma." *"Vincerò! Vincerò!"* he exalts, and the stakes sound like the world's most pressing as long as the CD plays. It's that kind of record.

—James Hunter



Graham Parker

■

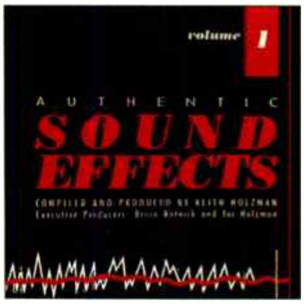
Struck by Lightning
(RCA)

GRAHAM PARKER KNOWS HOW TO SUM UP AN album in a line every critic will quote. The line here is: "The words come out/Not twist and shout/'Cause that's not what a grown man writes about." No more kid stuff. *Struck by Lightning* begins the long-delayed second act in Parker's public life. It is, unexpectedly, his best album since *Squeezing Out Sparks*. The warm, acoustic-guitar-based production follows the simplified style of *The Mona Lisa's Sister*, but this is a better, less conflicted album.

In the '70s Parker was a great angry young man but he spent the '80s trying to stay mad as he got older. Finally he just sounded crabby. Parker had apparently found happiness in America as a husband and father, and when he wrote an unironic love song—like the buoyant "Jolie Jolie"—he sounded great. But most of the time Parker still sang about being peeved, and it increasingly came across as forced.

So what a delight to find Parker casting himself in the likable role of a world-weary British cynic confronted with the big joys (and small aggravations) of raising a family in suburbia. Yes, Parker is still a sourpuss, but here he's a self-deprecating sourpuss who moans about taking care of the stray dog his kids dragged home in a way that lets you know how delighted he is with the whole unlikely situation. Parker's domesticated rocker is not like John Hiatt's (who clings to family as a refuge from death and despair) or Pete Townshend's (who rages against the walls he's built around himself). Parker's persona on this album is like David Niven in *Please Don't Eat the Daisies* or Cary Grant in *Mister Blandings Builds His Dream House*. He's the sardonic man of the world who can't believe he's living a life of PTA meetings and butterfly hunts but who, beneath the sarcastic patter, comes to love the whole shebang. Is rock 'n' roll broad enough to accommodate a vision this subtle? If not, tough luck. That's not the kind of thing a grown man worries about.

—Bill Flanagan



Various Objects

■

Authentic Sound Effects Vol. 1–3
(Elektra)

IT'S EASY TO DERIDE ELEKTRA'S THREE CDS OF sound effects, compiled and produced by Keith Holzman, as ill-formed musique concrète. Those who do, however, are missing the big picture. After a brisk, attention-getting overture—"bottle sequence," "bottle drop" and "knife sharpening"—Volume One presents a virtual Symphonia Domestica of morning sounds: "kitchen timer," "bacon on griddle," "toilet flush," "electric shaver," "shower sequence." After a secondary, less-developed theme of carpet sweeper and vacuum cleaner, the work moves on to its great phase of workplace sounds and a subtle transition from heavy physical labor to clerical work. Enthusiasts of the BBC Sound Effects Library will no doubt disparage the lack of tone colors found in the BBC's "whetstone" and "forklift moving pallets." Yet Elektra brings a snappy American touch to its "electric hand drill" and "electric screw drive," both recorded in forward and reverse. Volume one rounds out its triptych with suitably perorative construction sounds ("pile driver," "jack hammer," "steam shovels").

Volume Two celebrates transportation with sequences for solo Porsche 912, '72 Ford custom, Checker cab, Harley and Vespa. The work climaxes with "707 takeoff" and "SR 71 fly-by," followed by the haunting "police helicopter search," "steam train pass" and "sunrise at the duck pond #2 with peacocks." Volume Three further pursues motivic chiaroscuro, contrasting the pastoral ("cows mooing," "chicken coop") with the urban ("air raid—all clear," "expectant crowd noise"). A pointillistic sequence of breaking glass marks the entrance of high-frequency themes ("static," "tuning short wave radio," "Morse code transmission"). After a summary "body falling downstairs," the entire work ends with the reassuring "heartbeats."

This précis does little justice to *Authentic Sound*

Effects' gorgeous mosaic. Anyone disappointed, for example, with Valley Recording's "barking dog" on that company's *Sound FX—The Library* will welcome Elektra's more robust and aggressive "dog barking." While Elektra's "squeaky door opens and closes" may not have a patch on Pierre Henry's "Variations for a Door and a Sigh," can Henry boast of the psychological thickening possible with the addition of "squeaky water pump"? *Mais non.*

The *BBC Sound Effects Library* remains the Ring cycle of the genre; it was issued in this country on over 50 LPs. The three *Authentic Sound Effects* CDs, condensed and revised from Elektra's own 13-LP collection, are a much more graspable aesthetic experience. With most of the 301 selections lasting a handful of seconds each, *Authentic Sound Effects* has successfully updated sonata form for the MTV generation. Now just wait for the concert tour.

—**Scott Isler**

James Cotton/Junior Wells Carey Bell/Billy Branch

Harp Attack!
(Alligator)

BLUES SUPERSESSIONS AREN'T NEW TO CHICAGO-based independent Alligator: In 1983, the label put together Albert Collins, Johnny Copeland and Robert Cray for the guitar cutting contest *Showdown!* That album was an artistic and commercial success (and a Grammy winner to boot). This sequel of sorts is an in-the-studio version of the harmonica blow-downs you hear in a blues tavern on a midweek night, and it's about as relaxed and enjoyable as the real thang.

Absent the late Little Walter, Sonny Boy and Big Walter, this is about the strongest harp front four you'll ever find. James Cotton, a student of Sonny Boy Williamson himself, made distinguished solo sides for Sun in the '50s and cut eloquent solos with Muddy Waters' band on Chess; he has also shined on innumerable solo albums. Junior Wells, who gained renown in the late '60s with the instant classic *Hoodoo Man Blues* on Delmark, is known to blues lovers for his sometimes messy, often powerful collaborations with guitarist Buddy Guy. Carey Bell, another veteran of the Waters band, blew side-by-side with Big Walter Horton on the latter's Alligator debut, and gave up no ground. Billy Branch, at 37 the youngest player here, was the star of Alligator's anthologies *Living Chicago Blues* and *The New Bluebloods*, and is a respected Windy City session man.

HARP ATTACK!
JAMES COTTON
JUNIOR WELLS
CAREY BELL
BILLY BRANCH

Backed by a solid band that includes Lucky Peterson on piano and Johnny B. Gayden on bass, the harpsters turn in a warm, relaxed performance. No heads are cut; soulful interplay is the name of the game here. A number of classics by Little Walter and Sonny Boy are turned handily, but the choicest ensemble cut may be a swinging cover of Z.Z. Hill's "Down Home Blues."

Perhaps predictably, two solo stints leave the deepest impression. Cotton stretches out, with impressive vocal and instrumental results, on the nine-minute "Black Night," while Wells gives a typically showy reading of his own "Somebody Changed the Lock." The ebullient Branch also takes a shot at stealing the show with a good-humored tune about his junior status among the assembled players, "New Kid on the Block."

Stated simply, if you've got a harp jones, this is where it's at.

—**Chris Morris**

HYPING YOUR BAND

[cont'd from page 80] News" even before their Metal Blade album *Scumdogs of the Universe* was released. In the segment, one bandmember admonishes another who waved a sword at an off-camera interviewer:

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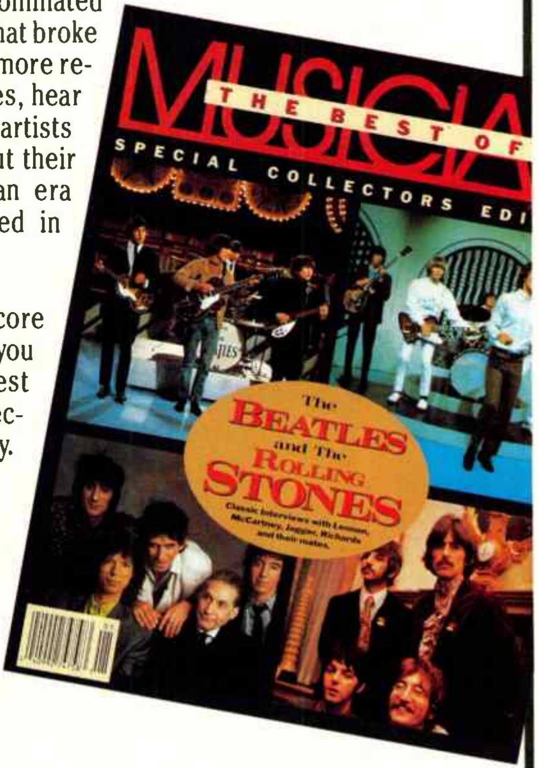
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The BEATLES and The ROLLING STONES
Classic interviews with Lennon, McCartney, Jagger, Richards and their mates.

"Don't kill him yet, we need the publicity."

"The rules have changed," says Fenton Bailey of the Pop Tarts (*Village Voice, Melody Maker, Sassy*), an electronic dance-music duo often compared to the Pet Shop Boys. "There is an art to getting press, and it was part of being an independent band and working hard," adds Randy Barbato. "We hand-delivered records, we called, and if there was no response, we would hand-deliver another record. We did tons of legwork."

Only seconds into our phone call, Bailey and Barbato disappear for a private huddle. "Just having a little conference here," Bailey explains. "This story, is it basically a take-the-piss story?" Assured that the piece is more analysis than vendetta, they continue with the interview. "Even if the article makes us look foolish, that's sort of the idea," Bailey chuckles.

The Pop Tarts' guidelines for getting signed flout convention. The A&R execs who scout talent for the labels, Bailey says, "are lazy, incompetent, and don't even like music. Sending them demo tapes is a complete waste of time, in terms of getting a record contract. Playing live gigs is also a waste of time. It was only when we decided to stop sending demo tapes and stop playing gigs that we got a deal."

Their most productive strategy, they say, was to release an indie record, then bid for press attention. "Warhol really wrote the book on postmodern culture," says Bailey, who writes a column for *Paper* where he celebrates the latest advances in cultural artifice. "But in the music industry, people resist these ideas all the time. There is this hallowed notion of the 'authenticity of rock 'n' roll.' Dance music has been rejected because it doesn't adhere to the rebel yell of rock. That's all over with, that's ancient. A lot of major acts like U2 pretend they're not in it to make money or sell records. What on earth are you doing in pop music, hiding yourself away, not trying to get any press? What is the point of having a pop band if you don't want hit records?"

Before they signed a worldwide contract with London Records, the Pop Tarts insisted they be allowed to write their own press releases. Is there anything they wouldn't do to get press? "We wouldn't give blow jobs," says Barbato. "Not any*more*."

He laughs as he says this. Humiliation is a small price to pay for good hype. The Pop Tarts are still working hard. Ⓜ

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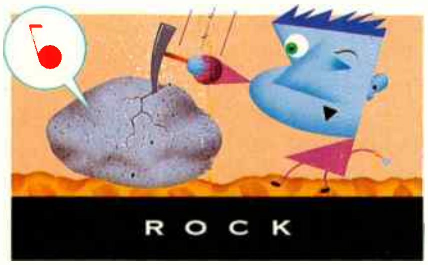
SHORT TAKES



BY J. D. CONSIDINE

JONI MITCHELL

Night Ride Home [Geffen]

Tune for tune, it's her most listenable album in a decade, and no wonder—not only does Mitchell pursue melodic content with characteristic single-mindedness, but the production rarely lets anything else in the way, keeping the instrumental clutter to an absolute minimum. It helps if you ignore the lyrics (Yeats' "The Second Coming" needed neither a new title nor a rewrite), but even if you don't, there's enough meaning in the sound of Mitchell's lithe, fluid vocals to make any wordplay seem unnecessary.

DANNY GATTON

88 Elmira St. [Elektra]

A muso's muso, Gatton isn't interesting for what he plays—a grab bag of rockabilly, barroom blues, '60s surf guitar and the odd jazz lick—so much as the way he plays it. Meaning there's little on this album that you haven't heard done a million times before, and nothing you've heard done better.

WILL TO POWER

Journey Home [Epic]

Trip to avoid.

ICE CUBE

Kill at Will [Priority]

Now that Ice Cube is sick of shootings and seeing his pals end up as "Dead Homiez," the bitter humor of these raps is declared a sign of maturity. Which it might be, though 'Cube keeps enough of his gangsta sensibility to make sure his anti-violence message still has its share of 9 mm bang-bang (or are those just bonus beats?). Yeah, crime doesn't pay—but violent entertainment sure does.

C+C MUSIC FACTORY

Gonna Make You Sweat [Columbia]

Robert Clivilles and David Cole don't compose songs, they construct them, piecing together from samples, studio performances and anything else that seems handy. While that often leaves the listener with a bad case of "where have I heard that hook before?," the music's familiarity is part of its charm, helping these singles slip past the cerebellum and work directly on the booty.

DANIEL ASH

Coming Down [RCA/Beggars Banquet]

Cue up "Coming Down Fast," and Ash's sound is all muscle and grunge; cut to "Day Tripper," and he gives us a lounge singer's idea of hip; roll on to "Me and My Shadow," and he's channeling Rudy Vallee on his Casio. All of which no doubt makes a nice break from his usual grind with Love and Rockets. But next time, couldn't Ash just take a vacation like everybody else?

DRIVIN' N' CRYIN'

Fly Me Courageous [Island]

As much as this crew likes to crank up its guitars, there's rarely anything heavy about the band's sound; from punchy rockers like the title tune to boogie workouts like "Chain Reaction," the emphasis is less on crunch than swing. Kevn Kinney's lyrics are often as evocative as they are affecting, but it's that sense of groove that really makes these songs mean something.

UTE LEMPER

Crimes of the Heart [Columbia]

More than just another pretty voice, Lemper is an interpreter par excellence, blessed with control, sublime diction and an unerring feel for narrative. That much was plain two years ago with *Ute Lemper Sings Kurt Weill*; here, she tackles modern pop, from Smokey Robinson's "A Man and a Woman" to Janis Ian's "Ruby," with equally spectacular results. A singer not to be missed.

BRAND NUBIAN

One for All [Elektra]

Slick, smart and idiosyncratic, the sound Brand Nubian lays down is as radically innovative as anything since De La Soul hit the scene. It isn't just that "Slow Down" turns Edie Brickell's "What I Am" into what they are, or even the way "Ragtime" manages to make its beats swing like a band; the big surprise is the way Brand Nubian makes positive rap seem just as tough as the gangsta stuff.

DARDEN SMITH

Trouble No More [Columbia]

A tough guy to categorize, Smith is too good a singer to be ranked as just a songwriter, too insistent a melodicist to be considered just a storyteller and too pop-savvy to be stuck in Nashville. He's also too good to ignore, so even if the jivey "Frankie & Sue" or the upbeat "Ashes to Ashes" never make it onto anybody else's hit parade, they at least deserve a shot at yours.

SANTIAGO JIMENEZ, JR.

El Gato Negro [Rounder]

Science may not have isolated the accordion-virtuoso gene yet, but you don't have to be another Mendel to figure the Jimenez clan hit the jackpot on that one. Santiago Jr. is particularly blessed with an ear for the blues—not the sweet, soulful kind zydeco players go for, but the jarring, angular norteño variety—which makes his waltzes and rancheras riveting.

BY CHIP STERN

KENNY GARRETT

African Exchange Student [Atlantic]

It's a sad commentary on neo-conservative jazz hype that when major media like *Time* and the *New York Times* take note of today's prodigious young jazz talent, the name of alto virtuoso Kenny Garrett is not first among equals. His work on *African Exchange Student*—and as Miles Davis' saxophonic foil—is distinguished both by depth and heat of expression and the blessed absence of academic clichés. If only he looked like his dog died, wore imported thousand-dollar suits, had a big, wavy

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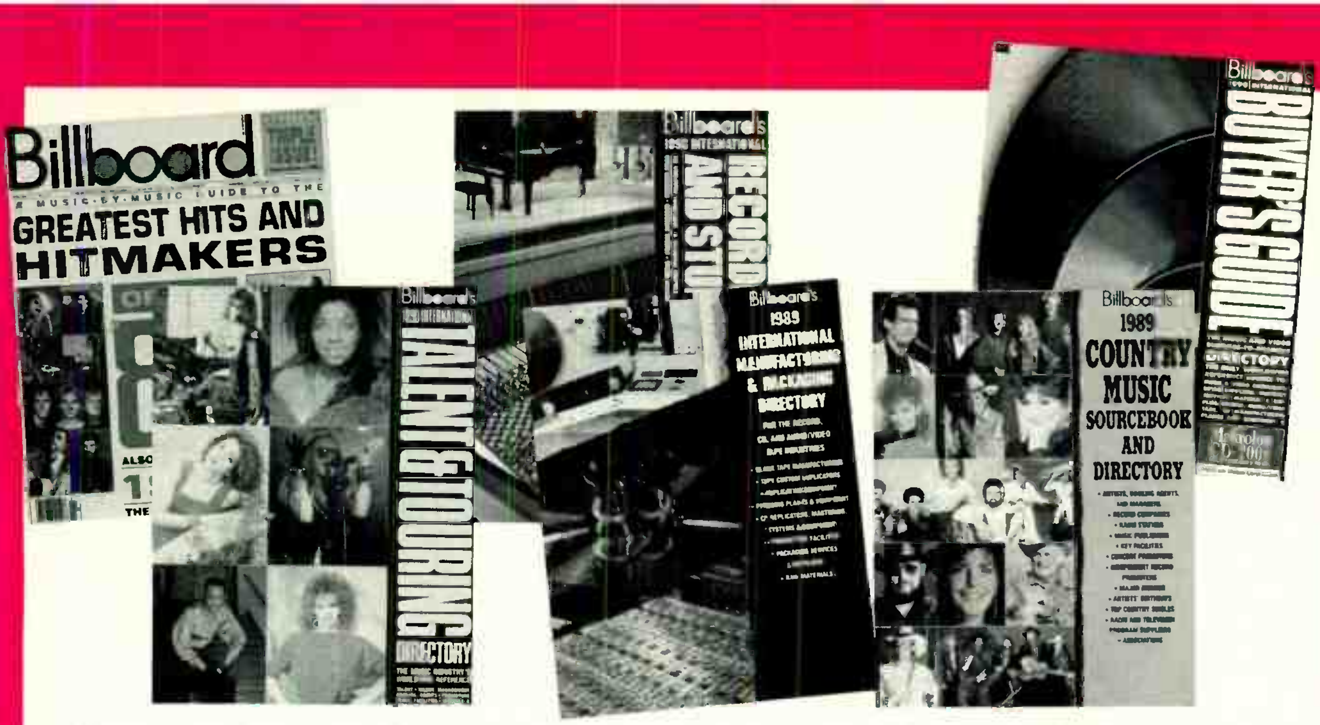

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head of hair or took the time to trash all his elders.... Whatever the case, after a mediocre contemporary jazz debut for Atlantic, someone had the good sense to give Garrett some freedom; as a result *African Exchange Student* is a remarkably lush, powerful modern jazz vision, distinguished by Garrett's piquant tone and tasteful arranging. The title tune demonstrates his gift for creating tension within a rhythmic vamp, Herbie Hancock's "One Finger Snap" is an expansive post-bop workout, and a series of arrangements with Ron Carter and Elvin Jones show how far he's come in distilling the tradition into a personal form of expression. A real breakthrough.

KEITH JARRETT

Paris Concert [ECM]

Jarrett's notion of solo improvisation has blossomed considerably in the years since *Facing You*, the Köln set and *The Sun Bear Concerts* (now available on CD). As a fan of the funkified free-form mix that distinguished Jarrett's formative work, I was always a bit bemused by a sense of how much noodling was going on during those solo sets. As this gorgeous live recording from 1988 demonstrates, there was some purpose to it after all. In place of meandering modalities are a rich blend of harmonies, drawing from both classical and jazz sources, animated by a keen lyric sensibility and a touch that is alternatingly impressionistic or vigorous by turns. The long improvisation that dominates most of this recording is like a guided tour of piano history, and with a graceful reading of the blues for a coda, *Paris Concert* shapes up as the pianist's most satisfying solo set in years.

B.B. KING

The Best of B.B. King, Volumes 1 & 2 [Ace]

It's amazing how dumbstruck contemporary listeners are by real classic blues performances when they get a chance to hear them, and how quickly they'll reach for their wallets. Fortunately for blues pilgrims, Rounder imports several excellent British labels under the Charly umbrella specializing in classic jazz and blues. Among several extraordinary B.B. King compilations, the 40 songs on these two discs comprise the cream of B.B. King's trendsetting work. One is struck by the variety of inflections B.B. elicited from his big-body Gibsons, from a silky, basted-in-butter cry to a fierce, overdriven holler, and every vocal performance has a lived-in feeling. From jump blues like "You Upsets Me Baby" and confessionals like "Sweet Sixteen," to deep ballads like "You Done Lost Your Good Thing Now" and "Three O'Clock in the Morning," the Ace B.B. Kings hold their own with the Mosaic T-Bone Walker, the Chess Muddy Waters and the Columbia Robert Johnsons. Classy.

JACKIE MCLEAN

New Soil [Blue Note]

Among the classic Blue Note reissues to see the light of day in recent years, the altoist's *New Soil* sums up everything that was great about this label. There's the clear, dynamic recording quality of Herr Van Gelder's studios, and a stunning mixture of post-modernism and hard blues in the choice of repertoire—a McLean trademark to say the least. What makes *New Soil* such a standout is the presence of trumpeter Donald Byrd, who plays at something approaching his peak of intensity; the alternatingly funky/boppish commentaries by the late great pianist Walter Davis, Jr., who also contributes several standout tunes (including the whimsical "Greasy," which evokes the upbeat imagery of Louis Jordan and '60s rock 'n' roll, à la Elvis P.); and the rhythm section of Paul Chambers and Pete LaRoca, who turn "Minor Apprehension" into one of the great equestrian romps in jazz history (with a justly famous drum solo by LaRoca that sounds like a cross between Baby Dodds and Edgard Varèse). Needless to say, Dr. Jackie burns throughout. A definitive performance.

MACEO PARKER

Roots Revisited [Verve Digital]

Let us return again to those golden days of yesteryear, when the lines between jazz, blues and funk were not so etched in stone. *Roots Revisited* is one of the most upbeat, swingin' jazz sessions of the past year, focusing as it does on both the after-hours and sanctified aspects of the blues. Standards like "People Get Ready" and "Over the Rainbow" are given a taut, bumptious reading; "Children's World" is a moody instrumental reprise of "It's a Man's World," while Jay McShann's "Jumpin' the Blues" pops and bops with bluesy abandon. The presence of Don Pullen on organ and Bootsy Collins on bass is reason enough to journey down memory lane. The way they groove out together on "Better Get Hit in Your Soul" shows how close the works of hard boppers like Charles Mingus, Horace Silver, Cannonball Adderley and the Jazz Crusaders really were to people like Ray Charles and James Brown. Big fun, Jim.

THE FLAMING LIPS

In a Priest Driven Ambulance [Restless]

Compelled by a profoundly obsessive Christ fixation, the Flaming Lips create a splendid din that alternates between raging power grunge stomping impudently through the pretty flower beds of '60s pop, and disquieting acoustic ballads that drift by at an off-kilter gait, bowing reverently to Mick Jagger and Lou Reed as they pass. Captivating, strange.—*Sandy Masuo*

JOE PASS

Summer Nights [Pablo]

In 1963, Pass recorded *For Django*, in honor of his first influence, the virtuoso gypsy jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt. On *Summer Nights*, he returns with the same tasteful quartet—bassist Jim Hughart, drummer Colin Bailey and a second guitarist, John Pisano—to pay homage again. Pass is known for his astonishing technique, for the runs, nimble and precise, we hear on "Them There Eyes," and for the harmonic aplomb so evident on the Reinhardt composition "Douce Ambience." But Pass is also a bebopper: When, on "I Got Rhythm" and the Reinhardt tune "Belleville," he quotes the clarinet solo from "High Society," he's imitating Charlie Parker and not making a recondite reference to New Orleans jazz. Bright, warm and cheerfully accomplished.—*Michael Ullman*

ANTHONY BRAXTON

...If My Memory Serves Me Right [East Wind CD]

Recorded live in Antwerp in 1987, the inventive, serious-minded saxophonist genially engages in a mild-mannered conversation with the bowed bass of Mark Dresser on "Improvisation Alpha," and—for a few minutes—swings in four-four on "...If My Memory Serves Me Right." The angular theme of the latter piece, stated in rapid unison by pianist David Rosenboom and Braxton, seems to energize the loosely structured improvisations that follow. David Rosenboom's Cecil Taylor–ish playing—lighter and less obsessive than the master's—and the melodic drumming of Gerry Hemingway help make these performances compelling, less intimidating and less intense than most Braxton on record. (Bellaphon Int. Imports, D-6000 Frankfort, [Main] Mainzer Landstr. 87, Germany)—*Michael Ullman*

3 MUSTAPHAS 3

Soup of the Century [Rykodisc]

Either an ethnomusicologist's nightmare or a planet rocker's wet dream, 3 Mustaphas 3 are the grand wazoos of pancultural wallop. Based in the U.K. but hailing from the imaginary Balkan region of Szegerely, the Mustaphas' third domestic album is the musical equivalent of mulligan stew. "Brother" Daoudi wigs out like a Bulgarian Benny Goodman on "Golden Clarinet," while Hindi lyrics sucker-punch the polka-mad Tex-Mex accordionist on "This City Is Very Exciting!" Somewhere in the mythic heartland of the global groove resides the zany brilliance of the Mustaphas. (Pickering Wharf Bldg., C-3G, Salem, MA 01970)—*Tom Cheyney*

ZAIKO LANGA LANGA

Zaiko Langa Langa F.D. [Celluloid]

Groovin' and sweatin' to Zaiko Langa Langa in Kinshasa, Zaire, in 1979 marked a turning point in my musical tastes as well as my life. Their relentlessly raucous triple-guitar attack, rat-a-tat-tat snare, rough-hewn four-part vocals and rambunctiously spontaneous dancing set them apart from the scene's more staid elder musicians. Despite Zaiko's seminal role in the history of African pop since the early '70s, their albums were, until now, only to be found in well-stocked import bins. The Celluloid release is the band's first U.S. release, and the disc's four lengthy tracks find the non-veteran group slicker but not edgeless. Slipping through a variety of tempos, from seductive rhumbas to fiery *sebens*, Zaiko has added synth and Simmons drums to the dense guitar/vocal/percussion core. The tweaking finger-slide lead-guitar figures and near-argumentative singing midway through "Dela" beckon all to boogie, heavy on the pelvic action, Zairean style. (330 Hudson, New York, NY 10013)

—*Tom Cheyney*

PHEEROAN AKLAFF

Sonogram [MuWorks]

The usual rundown on artists like akLaff is that the critics love them, but they don't sell two dozen records; *Sonogram* probably won't change that. It's worth a try, though, especially when musicians of this caliber are involved. akLaff's drumming is both kickin' and melodic, while Sonny Sharrock contributes his usual mind-melting bursts of machine-gun guitar, balanced by the almost conversational tone of Carlos Ward's alto and the more abstract tenor of John Stubblefield. Pick of the lot is "Serious," whose head section finds the three lead instruments sustaining close harmonies while akLaff and bassist Kenny Davis get gonzo underneath. Two drum solos in a row may be a bit much for some, but it would be a mistake to not check these guys out.

—Mac Randall

BLAKE BABIES

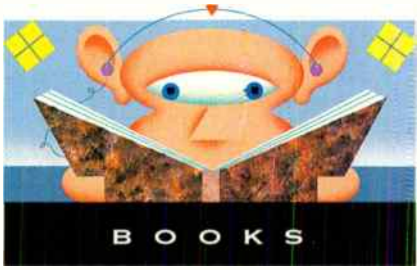
Sunburn [Mammoth]

On their second release, the Blake Babies again demonstrate their mastery of the intelligent, slightly punky pop song. At first the tunes might seem a bit more conventional than last year's *Earwig*, but that's because the emphasis is less on novelty and more on songwriting craft. The lyrics, mainly about that old standby, relationships, are much deeper this time around, and head BB Juliana Hatfield's singing has gained authority; melodicism is as important as ever. The result is 12 songs with hooks that grab, hold on for three or four minutes and let go only when their job's done. If people still cared about singles, the deceptively friendly "Look Away" would be a sure candidate for mainstream airwaves. No sophomore slump here.*—Mac Randall*

CHAINSAW KITTENS

Violent Religion [Mammoth]

Here's an interesting one for you psychology buffs out there—a band whose lyrical obsessions with boyfriends and girlfriends invariably careen into tales of insanity, death and hellfire. In the opener, no sooner does the singer assure the girl that she has a boyfriend, than he goes into a banshee wail of "I am the bloodstorm!" From there to the melancholy denouement of "She's Gone Mad," it's all built on a bedrock of *Fun House* guitars and littered with audio verité snippets from movies, classic rock albums, etc., for additional weirdness. The result is like a morality play starring Kim Fowley, live in Sodom and Gomorrah.*—Thomas Anderson*



I AM THE BLUES: THE WILLIE DIXON STORY

Willie Dixon with Don Snowden

[Da Capo Press]

I Am the Blues is the admirably detailed autobiography of songwriter and record producer Willie Dixon, whose compositions ("Seventh Son," "Little Red Rooster," "Spoonful," "Hoochie Coochie Man," "I Just Want to Make Love to You") helped launch the modern Chicago blues style. It shows his work behind the scenes, playing bass, arranging, and supervising recording sessions. Dixon wrote Muddy Waters' biggest hits, talked Howlin' Wolf into recording his "Wang Dang Doodle"—it seemed too country to Wolf—and convinced Chuck Berry to find an original melody for his then-unrecorded "Maybellene."

Dixon tells of his boyhood in Vicksburg, where his mother taught him the Bible backwards and forwards—much of his best imagery comes from the Bible—and where he was immersed in African-American folklore. He describes his early performing career, when he was singing Mills Brothers–like arrangements with "The Big Three" and jamming the blues in black neighborhoods with Muddy Waters. He clarifies the inner workings of the "family business," Chess Records, that helped define the modern blues. "The blues," Dixon argues convincingly, "are the roots and the other musics are the fruits."*—Michael Ullman*

DRUMMING AT THE EDGE OF MAGIC

Mickey Hart with Jay Stevens

[Harper Collins]

Seeking to go beyond mere technique, to explore the forgotten magical side of the rhythmist's craft, Hart seeks out the place where dance induces trance and the deep groove carries one along close to "the Edge." His book is a product of more than 10 years of research and adventure: Part rock star autobiography, part ethnomusicological text, part compendium of myth and the mystic, *Edge* bounces between wide-eyed first-person banter and near-academic elucidation and speculation. With text integrated attractively with nearly a hundred photos and drawings, the drummer's journey draws the reader in, allowing one to tag along on his rhythm quest.

—Tom Cheyney

SPIKE LEE

Mo' Better Blues

[MCA/Universal Home Video]

Spike Lee's film about a talented young jazz trumpeter shook up movie conventions—and moviegoers—by portraying unpleasant truths about serious musicians: A great player is usually self-centered; bandmates bicker and conspire; inspiration depends on hours of dull, hard practice; devotion is given to music at the expense of personal relationships; even a superior musician's career may be over by the time he's 30. Not the usual Hollywood depiction of the jazzman as noble savage. There are moments of startling resonance: A nightclub fails and "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" plays in the abandoned room, a black musician is glimpsed bowing to Mecca, the second movement of *A Love Supreme* accompanies a montage of images of the family love that replaces music in a player's heart. Why does all this add up to a great movie about the player's life? If you gotta ask you'll never know.*—Bill Flanagan*

VARIOUS ARTISTES

Monster Rock 'n' Roll Show [DCC Compact Classics]

Ghoulish rock songs are always in season. Two of the better-known oldies here are also on Rhino's *Elvira Presents Haunted Hits*. This CD throws in a dozen campy radio spots for horror films as between-track filler. Even better, it includes a vintage Buchanan & Goodman "cut-in" novelty and two doo-wop singles that deserved reissuing regardless of theme. Now what about Bob McFadden's "The Mummy" or "Frankie and Igor at a Rock and Roll Party"? Or John Zacherle's "Dinner with Drac"? Or... (8300 Tampa Ave., Northridge, CA 91324)*—Scott Isler*

MERLE TRAVIS

The Best of Merle Travis [Rhino]

His fluid, idiosyncratic picking style is surely enough to place Travis high in the C&W pantheon (showed Chet the way, after all), but only someone concerned with tablature and such would herald his instrumental prowess over his persona as a hot-shit bandleader. This collection of tracks from the late '40s lives up to its title, and in turn should be viewed as a cornerstone of C&W. Though it houses pop protests ("Sixteen Tons," "No Vacancy") and folkie protests ("Dark as a Dungeon"), it's the nonstop pleasure of hearing Travis lock his always-inventive wordplay into bouncy swing beats that makes this disc a must-have. His girlfriends are functional (he can hide behind one when the landlord's on his tail) and alluring (another put the oh in Ohio and the sin in Cincinnati). Travis finally settles for one that's "so round, so firm, so fully packed." Such double entendre has influenced C&Wers as trad-conscious as Ricky Skaggs and far afield as the Mekons. It's another reason to study his playing techniques some other time; for now just bask in this manna from Earth.*—Jim Macnie*

DERRICK HARRIOTT

Riding the Musical Chariot [Heartbeat]

Maybe it's a stretch to compare Jamaican vocalist/producer Harriott to Allen Toussaint, but this overview, well-rounded and enlightening, suggests that there's a parallel course between the two renaissance men. During the mid-'60s the Kingston musical scene was adept at appropriating American pop, but producers like Harriott made sure that the island versions held their own. The Inkspots' "Do I Worry" has a singular, ominous feel, while instrumentals like "Alfred Hitchcock" remind you that uncluttered funk is the longest-lasting funk. Everything that Harriott touched became well-groomed, yet there's nothing prissy about his work. Like Toussaint's pithy fonk, it creates its own environment, but doesn't put on airs.*—Jim Macnie*

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SHORT TAKES

[cont'd from page 95] two more fine anthologies have been released—one by corporate giant CBS, the other by small, family-owned La Louisianne. The diverse La Lou package includes western-swing-tinged tunes by Alex Broussard and Rufus Thibodeaux; eloquent songs of heartbreak by the great lyricist Lawrence Walker, set in poignant waltz-time; early works by rocker Zachary Richard, then a pioneering Cajun cultural activist; raw, ethnic material by accordionist Ambrose Thibodeaux; country-Cajun corn from Jimmy C. Newman and Eddy Raven; a churning, funky waltz by fiddler Michael Doucet, of Beausoleil. The most striking performance, though, is Aldus Roger's killer rendition of "One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer." Given La Louisianne's rich history, the lack of liner notes and personnel listings is unfortunate.

The richly annotated CBS set has two distinct sections. Amedee Breaux, Cleoma Breaux and Joe Falcon work in a rich ethnic vein; it's great, groundbreaking stuff, but a bit esoteric for uninitiated listeners. The Alley Boys of Abbeville, by contrast, play deft, irresistible Cajun/western swing that will have you dancing right quick. (711 Stevenson Street, Lafayette, LA 70501)—*Ben Sandmel*

JAMES BROWN

Messing with the Blues [PolyGram]

Now ain't this a groove: nearly two hours of vintage Godfather, taking a sentimental journey through the music of the men who inspired him. Ranging from loose after-hours jams to big-band production numbers, Brown reveals the compulsive creativity that marked his prime, deftly reworking the classics without losing their original intent. Among the baddest are a loose-jointed "Honky-Tonk" from '72, Billy Ward's ghoulish "The Bells" from '60 and a plaintive reading of Little Willie John's "Talk to Me, Talk to Me" from '68. And boy could his guys play!—*Jon Young*

JOHN FAHEY

The Yellow Princess [Vanguard]

Whether or not this is the best of acoustic guitarist Fahey's many, many albums, it's certainly one of the most playable. Besides an immaculate distillation of his fingerpicking and compositional prowess, *The Yellow Princess* has early (1968) examples of Fahey working with other musicians and *musique concrète* yet. Enjoyable all the way through, and—typically for Vanguard—sounding excellent on CD transfer.—*Scott Isler*

CARL PERKINS

Jive After Five: The Best of Carl Perkins (1958–1978) [Rhino]

Sure, you've been blue-suede-shoed to death. All the more reason to check out what Carly was capable of after his all-too-well documented mid-'50s recordings. More than mere revisionism, *Jive After Five* proves what fans knew all along: Perkins' talent didn't stop at the doorway to Sun Records. From some rollicking Columbia sides through his mature country work in the '70s, this compilation adds considerable dimension to someone who was never a one-hit wonder.—*Scott Isler*

BONZO DOG BAND

The Best of the Bonzo Dog Band [Rhino]

The Bonzos (flourished late 1960s) were indescribable: '20s camp filtered through Pop Art pothead/British art school sensibility filtered through—aah, what's the use. They *were* hysterical, though, and this is as best a "best of" as any. If any of your favorite tracks are missing, take comfort that at least there's nothing here from the band's reunion album. But hey, Rhino: not one picture of the Bonzo dog?—*Scott Isler*

BILLIE AND DEDE PIERCE

Vocal Blues and Cornet in the Classic Tradition

[Riverside/Original Blues Classics]

This late husband-and-wife team usually joined forces with other New Orleans traditionalists. Yet they were rarely captured as effectively as on this 1961 date, accompanied only by a drummer. Billie's singing and piano playing is strong and functional; DeDe's lower-register cornet is a model of buoyancy. The album is the first CD reissue from Riverside's wonderful *New Orleans: The Living Legends* series. Few of those legends are living now—all the more reason for current catalog owner Fantasy to reissue the rest.—*Scott Isler*

IAN & SYLVIA

Four Strong Winds [Vanguard]

Northern Journey [Vanguard]

You want folkies? Here's the real thing, and they're even Canadians yet. The two early-'60s releases are simply produced, with minimal backing and voices well to the fore. As they should be: Ian Tyson and Sylvia Fricker's singing is equally effective on its own or harmonizing traditional music from various American ethnic groups. Not that their precious few original tunes aren't memorable; Tyson wrote *Four Strong Winds'* title track and "Some Day Soon," Fricker "You Were on My Mind." The latter two are on the slightly more chauvinistic *Northern Journey*. As midline reissues, both albums are worth snapping up.—*Scott Isler*

FORMANEK

[cont'd from page 78] keep the note from swelling too much." While he likes Charlie Haden enough to cop a lick or two from him playing Ornette's "Sphinx" on Hersch's *Heartsongs*—he doesn't want his notes to peal like church bells. "After I've struck a note, I might bring up my left hand slightly to make it decay faster. I control the amount of sound at any given time, especially if I'm trying to play very quick phrases."

Which brings us to his secret weapon: Mickey Mouse–style white cotton gloves, on the right hand to muffle attack or the left to deaden the sound. For a full Tommy Potter bebop sound without gut strings half an inch above the fingerboard, he recommends gloves on both hands, plucking upward slightly from under the strings with the right.

Cautionary quote about odd strategies: "I'll play the most clichéd shit in the world if it feels right." Ⓜ

ELVIS/JERRY

[cont'd from page 57] bands taking very serious cocktails and all kinds of stimulants, and it's not the same thing as doing it to reach some pleasantly changed state of mind, which might have been seen as a possibility 25 years ago. Now it's the opposite—it's a blotting out.

MUSICIAN: *But because that channel just doesn't work anymore or because it's being legally repressed, music's place becomes that much more important.*

JERRY: Part of music's primary function has always been to get people to celebrate or to produce changes of consciousness. That's what music is about. It changes your mood; it produces the heroic background music for your own life. Ⓜ

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The Year In Rock 1990

RAPPERS WERE ARRESTED FOR THEIR LYRICS, RECORD store owners were arrested for selling records, self-aggrandizing nuts got TV time by attacking pop music, record companies caved in to the pressure to label controversial releases and stores agreed to not carry anything with a label.

The bestseller *Hit Men* exposed corruption in the record business and in radio, aiding in the overthrow of CBS chief Walter Yetnikoff.

The small record labels were eaten by the big ones and the big ones were eaten by multinational corporations. How many major record companies were still U.S.-owned on January 1, 1991? One.

Chuck Berry was arrested on a number of charges, including allegations that he had made secret video tapes of underage girls using the ladies room of a restaurant he owns (a "Sweet Little Sixteen" video, perhaps?). He later cut a deal to have the charges dropped in exchange for his dropping a lawsuit against the cops for their illegal tactics in busting him. Screw-ups by prosecutors also caused a mistrial in the case against indie promo king Joe Isgro, and helped the 2 Live Crew jury decide to quit.

Bill Wyman published his history of the Rolling Stones, writing that *Beggars Banquet* was recorded in L.A. in 1972. Mick Jagger converted to Hinduism for the duration of his wedding ceremony (quick, Jerry—check the Hindu nuptial laws) and Ronnie Wood—the Andy Capp of rock 'n' roll—got in a car wreck, found himself unhurt, climbed out onto the street and was promptly run over.

That's the kind of year it was.

Eddie Haskell Award for Sincerity: To both Arista Records and the Grammys for their shocked reaction to the revelation that Milli Vanilli didn't sing on their album.

Rock Critic of the Year: Frank Sinatra

No, not for threatening Sinead, not for planning to record with New Kids, but for his swinging putdown of George "It's so tough to be famous" Michael in the L.A. Times letters section. Here's some of what the Chairman had to say: "Come on, George. Loosen up. Swing, man. Dust off those gossamer wings and fly yourself to the moon of your choice and be grateful to carry the baggage we've all had to carry since those lean nights of sleeping on buses and helping the driver unload the instruments. And no more of that talk about 'the tragedy of fame.' The tragedy of fame is when no one shows up and you're singing to the cleaning lady in some empty joint that hasn't seen a paying customer since Saint Swithin's day. And you're nowhere near that; you're top dog on the top rung of a tall ladder called Stardom, which in Latin means thanks-to-the-fans-who-were-there-when-it-was-lonely."

Eldridge Cleaver Emperor's New Clothes Awards: To the rock magazines who went after fashion ads by pushing musicians to pose wearing the advertiser's clothes.

Don't Shoot Me I'm Only the Piano Player Award: To the Grateful Dead, who have now seen all three of their keyboard players die. Think twice, Bruce Hornsby.

The Ono Award: Tiffany's romance with New Kid on the Block Jordan Knight caused problems at NKOTB HQ. Jordan, however, put his love for Tiffany ahead of the feelings of his group.

Wayne Newton Award for Old-Fashioned Values in the Face of Peer Pressure: Harry Connick, Jr.

Spinal Tap Award: *The Wall* live in Berlin.

The Annual Madonna's Done It Again Award: To Madonna, for the controversy around the "Justify My Love" video.

The ~~Dave Stewart~~ Jeff Lynne Strike While the Iron's Hot Award: Don Was

Good News for Rap: Rap held the Number-One spot on the album charts for most of the year.

Bad News for Rap: It was M.C. Hammer and Vanilla Ice.

Artist of the Year: Sinéad O'Connor

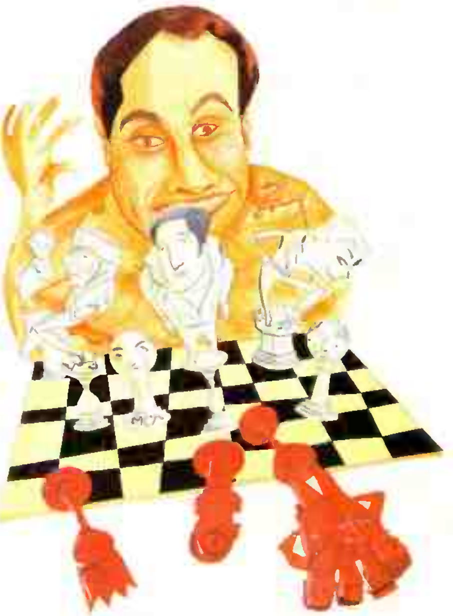
She made a great album, she played great concerts and her single "Nothing Compares 2U" was the song of the year. But she didn't make headlines for that. Sinéad made headlines for: 1) refusing to appear on TV with Andrew Dice Clay; 2) having a romance with her opening act; 3) not wanting the national anthem played before her concert; 4) getting harassed by a grocery clerk; 5) putting on a wig to attend a demonstration against herself; 6) having Frank Sinatra threaten to kick her in the ass; 7) replying that it wouldn't be the first time Sinatra threatened to hit a woman; 8) feuding with Prince.

Keep swinging, Sinéad. The '90s are yours.

Predictions: 1991

- Lots of co-headliner and package tours.
- Some video company will begin signing musicians to exclusive contracts, just as record companies do. The musicians will get paid for making videos, instead of having to pay for them. The record companies will be able to put promotion money back into tour support, and the video companies will have big stars under exclusive contract.
- More and more rappers will tour with live backing bands.
- All-vinyl record stores will spread and small labels will license from big labels the vinyl rights to albums.

PAY NO ATTENTION TO THAT MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN AWARD:



David Geffen, Player of the Year

Illustration: Russell O. Jones; photographs: London Features

south by southwest

SXSW 91

music and media conference

THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE BMI

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REVIEWS

"SXSW tripled its enrollment to 2,400 musicians, music business professionals and media representatives from its humble beginnings in 1987. It's now regarded by many observers as one of the best music showcases in the country... and first in providing an all-around good time for its registrants." — *Chicago Tribune*

"Decidedly non-corporate, SXSW... is devoted to alternative and independent music of all stripes — from blue grass to rap: any style that is largely ignored by the corporate media." — *Los Angeles Times*

"The big shots get a chance to hear more new, undiscovered music than they can anywhere else in the United States in a given week, while all those undiscovered musicians and their managers, producers, publicists, and other wannabees can learn about the business of music up close and showcase their work in front of those same big shots." — *Texas Monthly*

"As music conferences go, SXSW... is refreshingly kicked-back and well-organized. The SXSW staff busted their butts keeping 200 attendees bopping smoothly." — *Boston Phoenix*

"Each incarnation of SXSW seems to outgun the previous one, and in a nutshell, I think it's because the coordinators of this particular event cling stubbornly to the belief that rock 'n roll should be fun. Sure, sleep was for wimps, the Bullshit Quotient was flirting with red line and 6th street was a dangerous gridlock, but who cares? Somewhere along the line the lightbulb clicked on: I've come to love SXSW because it celebrates music — not the music industry." — *Dallas Observer*

"Scattered throughout the ID tags are some familiar, even legendary names. Everywhere you look, there's a star, a demi-star or a behind-the-scenes legend mingling with the hopeful and the unsigned." — *Denver's Westword*

"Over four nights in more than 20 of the city's club and concert halls, talent scouts and fans could sample everything from rap to folk, played by eager bands from Brooklyn to Denver." — *Washington Post*

"Perhaps the real reason the Austin Chronicle sponsors SXSW is to pay for the beer and barbecue served at the Sunday softball tournament." — *Houston's Public News*

"Some observers were agape: even the critics danced." — *Newsday*

Prices, Hotels, Airlines

March 1 Last day for $135 registration rate. From March 2 - 24, the rate is $175.

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