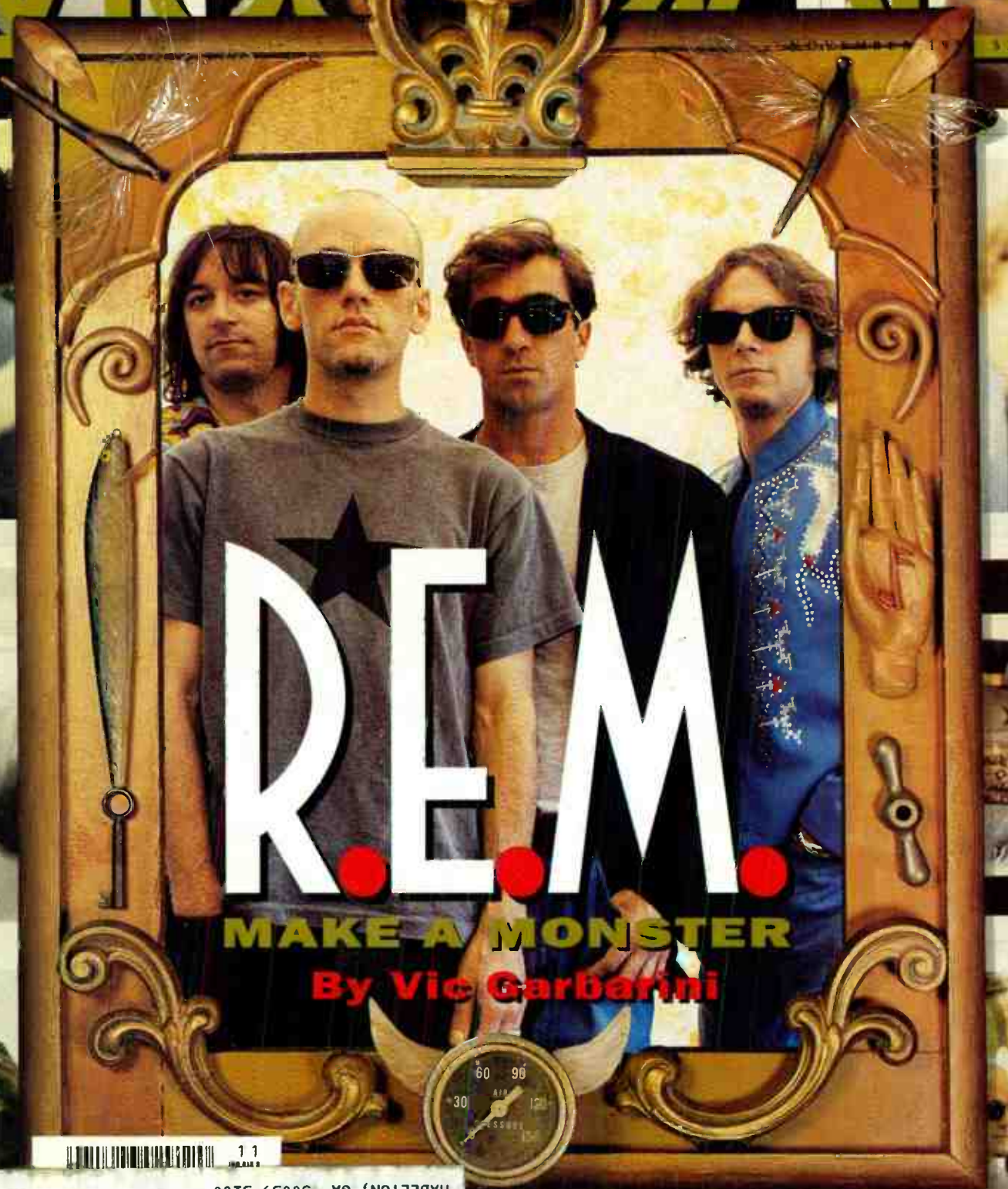


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World Radio History

You recently released an album of soundtrack music from the TBS series, "The Native Americans." What prompted your involvement with this project?

My mother was a Mohawk and my introduction to music as a child was at the Six Nations Indian Reservation. All my cousins and uncles played a mandolin or sang or played drum, and that was the first time I saw music being made up close—I could hear the breathing and the fingers moving on the strings. I thought, this gives me shivers—how do I get in on this?

What did you learn about yourself on this project?

That I'm one of the most fortunate musicians on the planet because I get to do whatever I want to. I can do this kind of record, or music for *Raging Bull*, or music with Eric Clapton [the two are presently writing and considering recording together], or a solo album—I get to do it all, and don't have to play this pop game everybody else has to play.

What's the most one can hope for in life?

To learn from the past. People say the '60s were a wash, but my experience in the '60s was tremendously valuable to me. A war was stopped and we learned that powerful political figures can be taken down by young voices. Unfortunately, the young voices that came later had nothing left to say. When your leaders are being assassinated and there's a war going on, you've got a lot to work with. Now people are at Woodstock asking themselves what are we here for? The mud? Are we supposed to get stoned? What are we doing?

So you think young people today have less opportunity to be heroic because the enemy isn't as clearly defined?

Yeah, I do. There's so much anger and frustration in many young musicians today, and it's aimed at nothing—it's aimed at themselves. You can hear it in their voices. You hear "I could hurt myself—all my friends know that," and it's very obvious in their music. What are they hungry for? For something to happen.

How does the music you made with the Band sound to you now?

In the healthy periods we had some amazing moments, and we shuffled the deck and opened up a whole new path for a lot of other people. I feel very proud of the work we did, as well as the work we did with Bob Dylan—which was booed around the world at the time. We didn't change a note and the world came around. That was nice too.

How has your relationship with music changed?

The idea of being in front of millions of screaming people doesn't appeal to me now and there was a time when it did. I remember playing Watkins Glen, which was the biggest concert in the history of the world—there were 650,000 people. We were playing on the highest stage I've ever been on in my life and kids were clinging to the edge of it. Bill Graham kept going over

"When your leaders are being assassinated, you've got a lot to work with."



ROBBIE ROBERTSON

and stepping on their fingers—you'd hear them scream as they fell back into the crowd. I said, "Bill, don't do that when we're playing," and he said, "Robbie, you can't smother them with love all the time." At that point I realized the summer of love was over. I'd played thousands of shows, and I thought there's nothing left for me here other than more money and adulation. *The Last Waltz* is about the danger of life on the road and knowing when it's about to lead to a kind of insanity. I could sense people were gonna start dying around me, or it was gonna be me dying, so I got off the bus.

Most people assume you're estranged from the other members of the Band; are you?

I have no bitterness, I have no walls up and I have the same phone number. I talk with Rick and Garth, and I talked with Levon a while back on the phone. I have tremendous respect for those guys' musicality, but something told me it was time to not do that anymore. I haven't read Levon's book but I'm told it's very bitter. I'd hate to be carrying around that anger and feel sorry for him that he has to feel that way. I started to read the other Band book [*Across the Great Divide*, by Barney Hoskyns], but there were so many inaccuracies! This guy is guessing about what went on in a room and he wasn't there. I read 30 pages and put it down.

Do you ever miss performing?

Here and there I do it. Do I miss going on the road on a bus? No. I was 16 years old when I started playing with Ronnie Hawkins, and watching those Burma Shave signs go by I thought, I'm just now starting to breathe. But no, I don't miss it now.

But isn't it true that a band that plays together regularly gets to places musically that can't be gotten to any other way?

I've been to that place. I'm there already, believe me. It's like riding a bicycle—once you get there, you remember how. That's my theory.

KRISTINE MCKENNA

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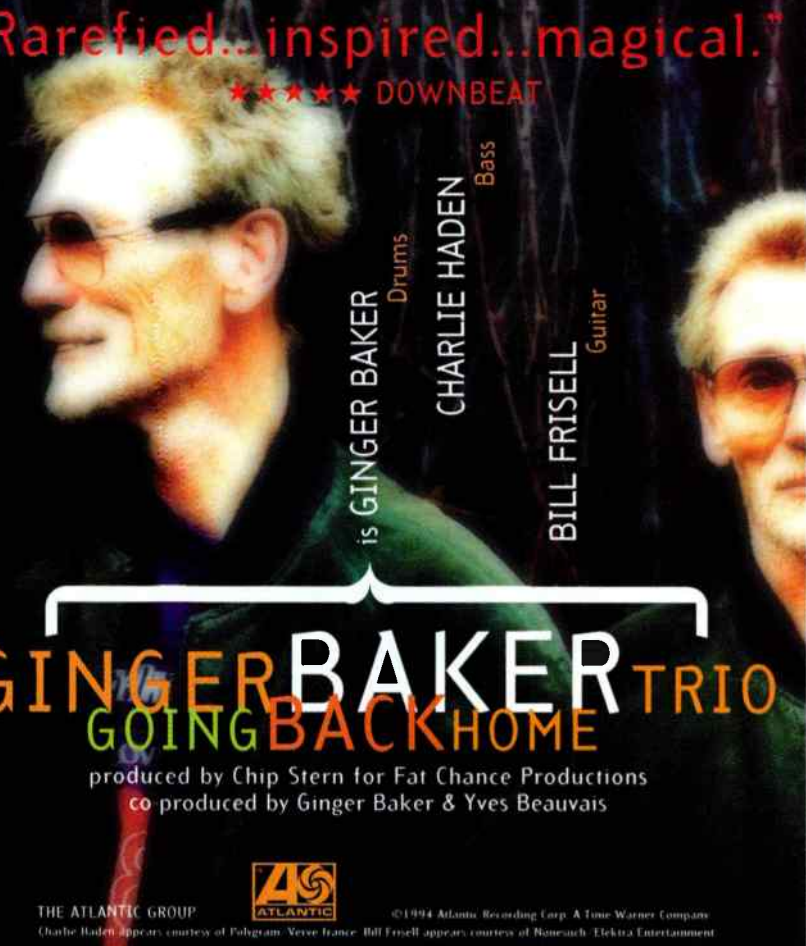
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LETTERS

BODY SLAM

I have been a subscriber to your magazine for nearly 15 years and have looked forward to its arrival every month with anticipation. But that all ended when I came across the picture of Ice-T with his Bozo mate sticking a gun down his throat. Why would a music magazine such as yours print a picture like this? Cancel my subscription immediately.

Jesse Samsel

Hey, Body Count! The only shit I ever shoved in your face was the hard-earned money I laid down for your discs. Could you, Springsteen and Phil Collins just go back to your mansions and leave us alone? But before you go, could you throw my \$30 worth of shit back in my face? Yeah, I didn't think so.

Dave Farrell
Ephrata, PA

I've never listened to Ice-T's music because I agree with what he says, but because *he* believes what he says. When Ice-T writes what he knows, the honesty of his convictions comes through on the recording. And when that honesty is conveyed to people who relate to the imagery in his recordings, Ice-T's popularity base grows. Ice-T becomes a public figure. No doubt Ice-T is smart enough to realize controversy sells, and that if child killers and wife beaters are still controversial subjects to be tucked away from those wanting to live in ignorance, well, he's not the first who has used such topics to cash in.

Maybe there are other people out there like me who aren't huge Ice-T fans, but who accept him as a necessary counterbalance to rhetoric flung with equal force from rightists Robertson and Limbaugh. Ice-T surely recognizes us as an audience too. But despite his insistence in interviews that we have to understand how much hatred *he* feels in order to change conditions and alleviate his hatred, maybe it is enough just to know that his type of hatred persists. At least he is capable of change—the anti-homosexual bias in his lyrics has disappeared. Cross your fingers that Ice will read Billy Altman's review and see past the comparison to Nazi hate and realize "Necessary Evil" is not "an appropriate response."

Craig Krauss

BURNING GREEN

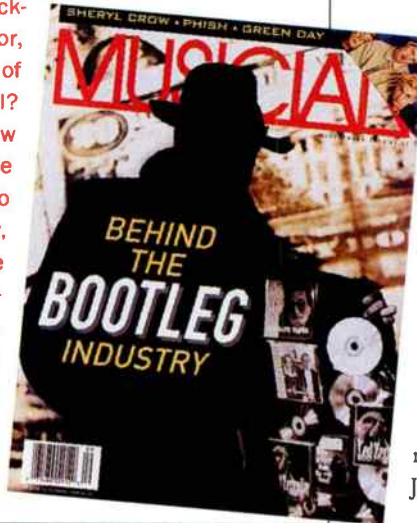
What bugs me about Green Day is that it seems like they just go out of their way to rip off the Clash. There's a fine line between influence and imitation, and these guys crossed it a long time ago. Listening to their album, one gets the feeling that nobody has had an original idea since 1977. It's depressing.

Charlie O'Lanahan

Green Day in *Musician* (Sept. '94)? Isn't that an oxymoron? Why is it that thousands of truly talented people struggle to pay their bills and are

I am an avid bootleg collector and thoroughly enjoy the product and the adventure of the hunt. How is the average Hendrix fan supposed to expand the Hendrix catalog when all that's available (at least through the '80s and early '90s) were constant repackages of existing material or, more recently, poor remixes of previously bootlegged material? What about the lack of new Zeppelin material? If the record industry wants to fight the bootleg industry, then they should release these tracks (live cuts, alternate takes and unreleased cuts) as strictly historical documents. Bootleggers! Roll your tapes!

Jose Sosa
Burbank, CA



thankful to be working *at all* while three spoiled, lazy potheads get sycophantic treatment and product endorsements? As someone who is paying his bills by playing music and working the occasional "day job" when necessary (without having to smoke pot to cope), I find your article to be a slap in the face to myself and others who can play more than three chords and have to deal daily with idiots who shout out drunken requests as we "pay our dues."

Matt Scharfglass
New York, NY

MORE BOOTS

My most recent bootleg purchase (among more than 60 bootlegs I brought back from London) is a four-CD set of Neil Young concert recordings titled *Rock N'Roll Cowboy* on the Italian label Great Dane. Why did I buy it? Because Neil would rather jerk his fans around with endless

(broken) promises of a boxed set of vault material, and with endless postponements of CD reissues. Young's disdain of nostalgia is artistically healthy, but burying perfectly good songs and recordings is simply stupid.

Mr. Phil Cohen
Bay Harbor, FL

B.U.B. WINNERS

Musician is pleased to announce the winners of our latest Best Unsigned Band Competition: Karen Savoca (Syracuse, NY); Zen Cowboys (Los Angeles, CA); Patsy Foster Band (Philadelphia, PA); Monica Pasqual & the Planet Ranch (Berkeley, CA); Speed of Sound (San Diego, CA); Jimmy Wilgus & the People (New York, NY); Alex Ballard & Sugarfoot (Milwaukee, WI); L.J.S. (Charleston, SC); Bitoto (San Diego, CA); Ken Siegert (Somerville, MA); (tie) Theodore & Rebic (New York, NY) and Ted 302 (Pleasanton, CA).

ERATA

Although I was thrilled to see an article on bass special effects units in the August issue, any credibility the author had was dissolved in the second sentence. Every real bass player knows James Jamerson played a Precision!

R.M. Mottola
Newtonville, MA

First, many thanks for the inclusion in your "On-Line Services" article (Aug. '94). One correction: Crescendo's address is P.O. Box 5208, Laurel, MD 20726. If anyone wrote me and I did not respond, please have them send their material again. Your readers can also reach me at (800) 372-7230 (voice) and (410) 792-7792 (fax).

Roger Wood
Crescendo
Laurel, MD

Due to a production error, Dwight Yoakam's name was spelled wrong on the October cover.

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David (Rudy) Trubitt
Electronic Musician, March, 1994



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Joe Gore, Guitar Player,
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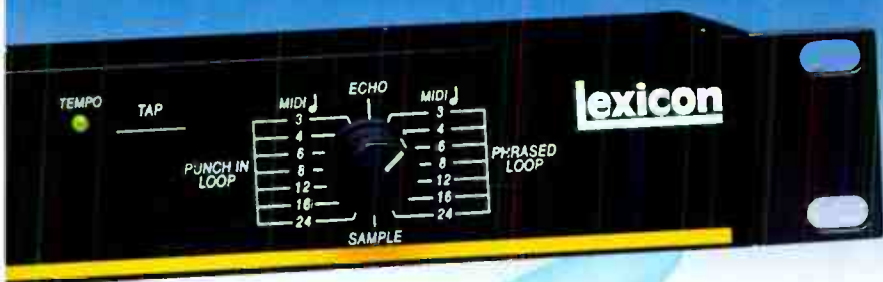
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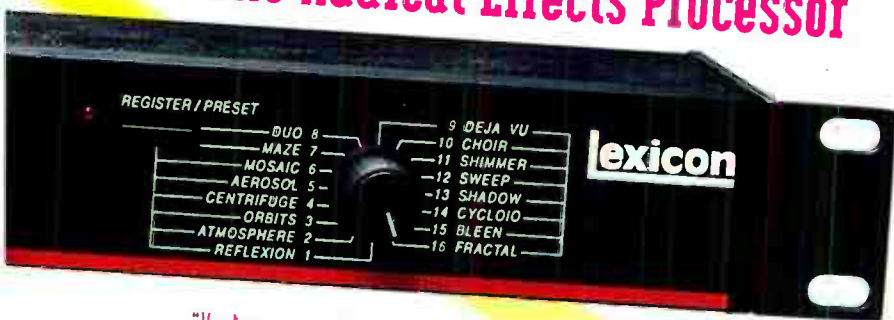
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Joe Gore, Guitar Player, March, 1994



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Bob Ross, Recording Magazine, September, 1994

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ILLUSTRATION BY RANDY PALMER

Kevin Martin (Candlebox)
Sold shoes

Lowen & Navario Singing waiters

Jim Ellison (Material Issue)
Dug roads

Les Claypool (Primus)
Worked in a tire shop

Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails)
Janitor

Eddie Vedder (Pearl Jam)
Pumped gas

Ozzy Osbourne Tuned car horns
Lindsey Buckingham Tele-
marketer

ILLUSTRATION BY JAY LINGCOLN

The A&R Challenge: Listen to Your Heart

by Bud Scoppa

AS A RECORD reviewer in the '70s and '80s, I got no greater kick than discovering an exceptional album, figuring out what made it great and telling the world about it. When I became an A&R rep for Zoo Entertainment, I assumed I could apply the same processes

to the task of building a roster. But it soon became obvious that I couldn't sign everything that appealed to me; deciding what made sense to sign was a lot more difficult than deciding what albums to write about.

It's daunting coming to grips with the concept that signing an act can mean an expenditure of \$250,000 or more, between the costs of making an album and marketing it. You get used to that. What's harder is being on the receiving end of a pitch from a manager, attorney or the artist him/herself. Having to say no often tends to harden you. Or try to listen to something in the office, with the phone ringing, several recording projects to stay on top of and a bunch more demo

tapes to get through. I can't imagine an environment less conducive to being truly receptive. Once all this sinks into your consciousness, you can hardly hear a tape or see a band play without immediately wondering, how is my label gonna market this act? If these concerns kick in too quickly, they can hinder the experience of hearing the music in the first place.

After the Super Bowl, then-Dallas coach Jimmy Johnson said his big revelation in scouting talent was learning to draft with his head rather than his heart. I'd learned a similar lesson with my first signing, the reunited Procol Harum, whom I'd raved about in print two decades earlier. As good as I felt the album, *The Prodigal Stranger*, to be, I'd grossly overestimated the band's

ROUGH

I NEED A COVER

When is a hit not a hit? John Mellencamp and Me'Shell NdegéOcello's duet on "Wild Night" was packaged as a cassette single at the irresistible price of 49¢. Result #1: Mellencamp's first top-five single in many years. Result #2: Despite that hit and rave reviews for his live show, Mellencamp's new album *Naked* is barely hanging inside the Top 40—his worst showing in many years. The Winners: NdegéOcello, whose exposure has made her name increasingly pronounceable, and Van Morrison, raking in publishing royalties for his 20-year-old classic.





core audience and album rock radio's willingness to get the album exposed. On the baby band level, I'd selected an impressive Vancouver-based rock group called the Odds, expecting my former colleagues in the rock press to share my enthusiasm. Two albums later, the Odds' success has been confined to Canada. If I couldn't get to first base with artists I knew to be superior, how was I to do my job?

These were the issues I was struggling with one midsummer afternoon in 1991 as I hit an enormous traffic jam heading south on the San Diego Freeway. Realizing I wasn't going anywhere for a while, I decided to settle in with some music. I reached for the cassette on the seat beside me: The spine read "Matthew Sweet: *Nothing Lasts.*"

Fellow Zoo A&R rep Scott Byron had sent me the tape several months earlier, and now it made me a believer. Sweet had made the record for A&M, and it was available for a modest price. But according to our research, his previous album, *Earth*, had sold a measly 7000 units. Why should we pick up an album by an artist with no base, an album A&M (and every other label) had already passed on?

So I'd given up the battle. But listening to the tape again from start to finish in freeway gridlock [cont'd on page 20]

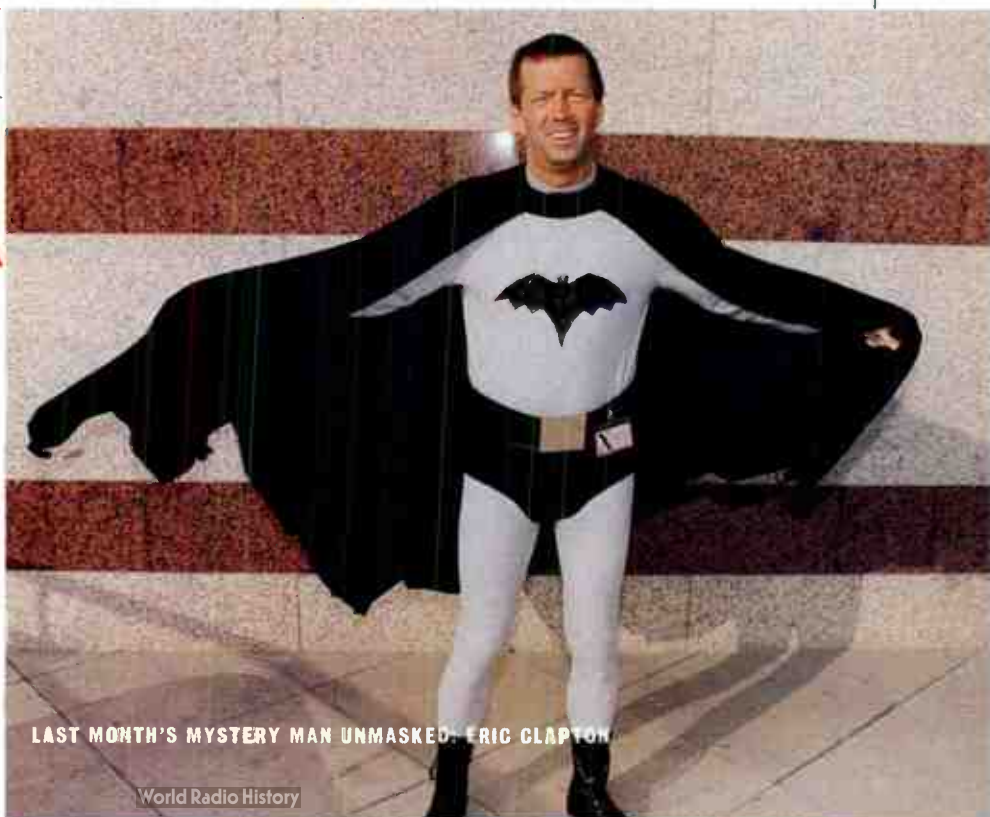
PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC TUCKER

MIX

SHARPLE/ERIC PICTURES

POWER TOOLS

A Federal Tax Court ruled recently that musical instruments—violin bows in this particular case—are tools of a trade rather than works of art, and are thus eligible for a depreciation deduction. Two violinists for the New York Philharmonic were under investigation by the IRS until the Court stepped in.

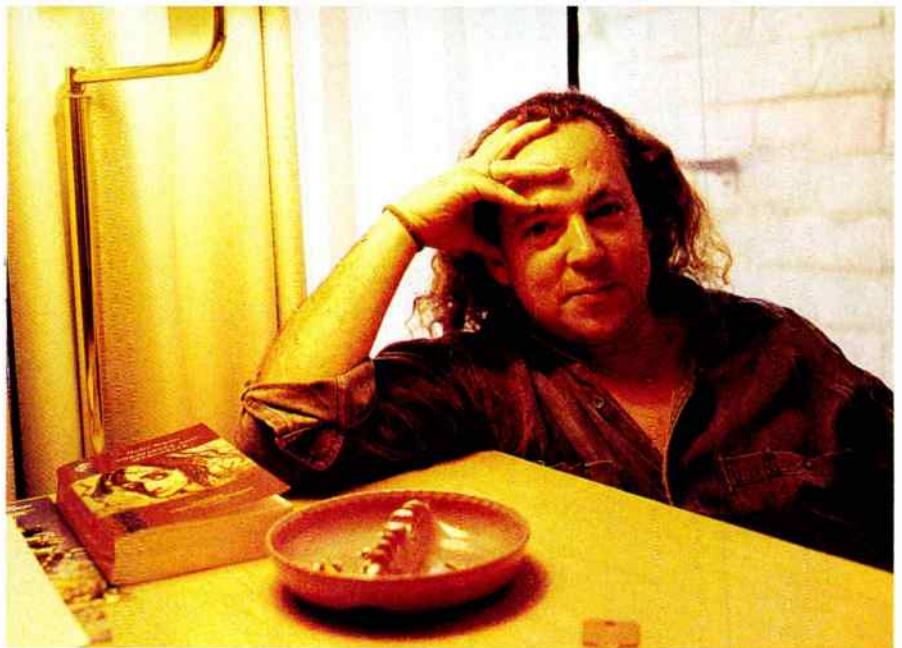


LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY MAN UNMASKED: ERIC CLAPTON

TIGHTEN UP

A London company called Cerberus offers online music distribution via the Internet with a twist: Their data compression/decompression scheme makes downloading nearly ten times faster. Cerberus' music files are compressed before transmission; on the other end, proprietary software decompresses the files in real time as they play back through a PC-based sound card. The company claims to deliver a five-minute song in only 12 minutes while maintaining audio quality indistinguishable from that of a CD.

EXPERT WITNESS



PHOTOGRAPH BY TERRY DOYLE

TALKIN' MACINTOSH BLUES

Reps for both Bob Dylan and Apple Computer have confirmed that the singer filed suit against the computer firm in late August for commercially misappropriating his name. How? By allegedly dubbing a new software package "Dylan"—and by going so far as to attempt to patent it. "I don't think any artist can afford to allow the dilution of their name or the good will they built up in that name," commented Dylan attorney Joseph A. Yanny at the time of the suit's filing. Deceased Welsh poet Dylan Thomas (1914–53), on the other hand, had nothing to say whatsoever.

ILLUSTRATION BY RICK SEALOCK



Tips for Guerrilla Musicians

by David Torn

1. ABSORB ALL the media-generated "information" you can. **2.** Ignore all the media-generated "information" you've absorbed. **3.** Live a goddamn life, and show it. **4.** Hone your craft, relentlessly. However, a hiatus from practicing is probably called for when your inner voice nags that you're

becoming a music player instead of a musician. There's a difference: A music player's goal is mastery of the craft of *executing* idiomatically correct notes and beats; a musician's goal is to breathe his/her perceptions right *through* them.

5) Do not avoid, bypass or obliterate your musical idiosyncrasies; these oddities are likely the keys to your most personal expressions. Amplify them. Distort them. Delay them. Turn up the reverb.

6) Grow your own musical idiom. Feed it with the preexisting idioms that you love most. Play from it, regardless of the context in which you're working.

7) Do your damndest to skate your psyche neatly around—or, squarely and smack dab into—folks who listen exclusively to this or that "kind of music." If your music happens to fall even nominally within the confines of "their kind" of music, they may not take kindly to having their comfortable notions challenged. (On the other hand, they might just wanna lionize you as the new Godmother of Soul.)

8) Are you primarily seeking Fame? Do the musical community a favor and become a Hollywood celebrity instead. If Glory is number one on your priority list, why not simply martyr yourself for a religion? Should your deepest

desires revolve around the acquisition of Power, seek your just rewards via a career in politics. Is Big Money what you're after? Well, you could engage in *any* of the aforementioned pursuits.

Granted, these goodies are possible side effects of a life in music. But, as primary goals, they're ticks primed to suck the blood from your creative body. So sit down, order your priorities and define the word "success" for yourself.

9) Subscribe only to myths of your own devising. Don't let the Myth of the Luminous Rock God guide you or divest you of a potentially life-long love affair with music. Faced with a choice between making a living and keeping my dignity intact, I'd opt for the latter. That way my love for music would remain unsullied, and I wouldn't lose myself as a bit player in someone else's myth.

10) Forget the "music industry" whenever you can. It's a whole goddamn *planetload* of frightened mothers out there.

11) Remember your first magical immersion in music? Revel in that human animal innocence, and bring *that* to the gig.

12) Listen.

Guitarist David Torn's latest release is *Polytown* on CMP Records.

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each of the 64 voices, the S4 provides three LFOs, three envelope generators, a tracking generator, and many more tools to personalize your patches. Also, the onboard Alesis effects give you the opportunity to create a CD-quality mix from a single rack-space unit. All in all, you can't find more useful, hard-working sounds.

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GUIDED BY VOICES "It's the biggest, hardest decision I've had to make," confesses 36-year-old Robert Pollard. As the guiding light behind Dayton, Ohio's unlikely lo-fi buzz band of the year Guided by Voices, Pollard is trying to choose which label to sign with. Not only does the band's thirty-something age range defy the rules of alternative rockdom, but their charmingly sloppy first- or second-take, four-track-or-less approach ("We've used all four tracks before and it's sounded too slick," says Pollard) is hardly the stuff of major-label signings. But with an uncanny ear for hooks and melody, they pull it off.

"I think that just comes with being older and growing up in the '60s, back when melody was *melody*. Kinks, Yardbirds, Herman's Hermits, I love all that stuff," enthuses Pollard. These, along with a hundred other reference points from '70s glam to early-'80s post-punk, are in evidence on their latest release, *Bee Thousand*, and their past catalog of mostly self-released records.

With their major-label debut in the can (and again recorded in the basement), fans need only worry about the *next* record, to be produced by Kim Deal (of their hometown drinking buddies, the Breeders).

"We're thinking about disappointing people and going into a real studio," reveals Pollard. But, he reassures, "we'll do it in the same manner as we have in the basement."

WINSTON WALLS Fifty-seven-year-old jazz organist Winston Walls makes his recording debut *Boss of the B-3* on Schoolkids Records, a live battle royale with the legendary Jack McDuff. Listening to him kick out the jams with world-class panache, bopping and weaving with an offhanded virtuosity one moment, breathing new life into those old showboating funk organ clichés the next—and managing to wipe the floor with fellow organ master and longtime pal McDuff in the pro-

cess—the obvious question is what took him so long to make a record?

"Oh, I just never cared about recording," he says. "I just like to go somewhere, play a gig, have some fun... I could have recorded in the '60s but I wasn't interested. I was satisfied on the circuit and playing in church, you know. CBS approached me in the '70s but I wasn't interested then either. I'm *still* not interested, really," he laughs. He should be. Anyone who can bring fresh voice to the old Hammond organ combo thing—and soulfully croak a few tasty ballads as well—deserves a wider audience. "But you know," he confides, "I'm a much better player than what you hear on the record." Really? "Yeah, well, I held back a lot...giving McDuff his space. You know how it is..."

ALLOY ORCHESTRA Their itineraries are exotic, hopping from Telluride to Pordenone, Italy, to Slovenia and Bombay, yet they're always the "support act." And they mount shows with heavy metal junk—truck springs, bedpans, horseshoes, a mono tape deck that feeds back on itself—not found at your average headbangers ball.

They're Boston's Alloy Orchestra, and they make *New Music for Silent Films*, the name of their debut CD for Accurate Records. Prodded by a movie exhibitor to create a new score for Fritz Lang's refurbished

classic *Metropolis*, the keys-and-percussion trio formed in 1992. Keyboardist Caleb Sampson and Concussion Ensemble drummers Ken Winokur and Terry Donohue have since composed soundtracks replete with rolling thunder effects, melodic lulls and an organic immediacy for six more silent flicks, including *The Lost World* (the first

dinosaur photoplay) and the 1902 sci-fi short *Trip to the Moon*. "We see it as a collaboration with the directors," Sampson says. "It's not like a rock show where our egos are onstage."



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ROUGH MIX



NEW SIGNINGS

Jerry Lee Lewis A whole lot of shakin' going on...and on... (Sire)

Paul Kelly Aussie song-writing whiz returns from Down Under (Vanguard)

Southern Culture on the Skids There's trash rock in them thaar hills (Geffen)

Vocal Sampling A capella salsa from Cuba (Sire)

Foetus England's nasty little ultrasound (Columbia)

© 1993 D.K. THOMPSON

[cont'd from page 15] gave me the opportunity to *really* hear it, without distraction, and I realized that this was an *amazing* album. It was the kind of record that could put a new, artist-oriented label like Zoo on the map, if only we could get people to discover it for themselves.

Why hadn't I fought harder? The answer was suddenly apparent: I hadn't allowed myself to fully experience the album in the first place, and all the baggage I was carrying around was affecting my ability to make a valid judgment. If I'd been truly receptive to the music's multileveled appeal—and to my instincts—I simply wouldn't have been willing to take no for an answer. How ironic that the people who are paid so well for their sensibilities so often wind up making decisions without giving themselves the opportunity to use those sensibilities effectively. I had to get stuck on the freeway with a record I *thought* I'd heard to figure that out. Duh.

The album came out that October, retitled *Girlfriend*. The press was astounding, the album got considerable in-store play, and thanks in part to a small army of alternative promotion people has gone on to sell nearly 450,000 units domestically. It's still selling.

In the end, all an A&R person—or a rock critic—can depend on is the capacity to be affected by something and to formulate and express an opinion based on that experience. If your circuits are jammed and you don't give yourself a chance to let the music get through to you in the first place, you're less than useless. You're toast.

Erstwhile rockcrit Bud Scoppa is Zoo's VP of A&R.

This month's Rough Mix was written by Dave DiMartino, Ted Greenwald, Tristram Lozaw, Ken Micallef, Mark Rowland, Chris Rubin, Dev Sherlock, and Richard C. Walls.

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ADRIAN SHERWOOD

Long before the onslaught of techno, producer Adrian Sherwood helped establish the concept of "mixer" as band member, working with Tackhead and Ministry. Sherwood now produces dub-heavy material for his own London-based label, On-U Sound, but he recorded his first dub album on an overworked four-track.

"When you're working with a four-track you're quite limited, but you can take care of that in the mixing process," he says. One approach is to send the track through a speaker placed at the end of a hallway with a mike at the opposite end. "This will give the impression of the whole band suddenly playing inside a big auditorium when you bring it up on the mixing desk."

Sherwood also offers advice for spicing up cheesy-sounding electronic drums. "Say you've recorded in your front room with a cheap little drum machine—you could amplify it through a pair of headphones, completely overloading them. When you mike the phones—this also works with vocals—you get a [distorted, industrial-sounding] Mark Stewart-type effect," he suggests.

"There's a lot of things I've always fancied trying, but never have. Why not run the drum track through a wah-wah and a delay, then try moving the wah up and down in time with the hi-hat—that would make a great sound! Ha, then phase the whole thing to tape!" he laughs. "That's an option, isn't it?"

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BY PETER WATROUS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSEF ASTOR

The Adventures of Bootsy Collins

In 1979 Bootsy Collins, starguitarist and musical architect for James Brown and for George Clinton's P-Funk, quit playing music. He put down the star bass, put away the star glasses, unplugged the phone and went fishing. He'd simply had too much fun.

"With George, we had all the groupies in the world, and anything you could think of would go on. It was heaven. It would be happening all the way to the gig, it would be happening at the gig, and the only time it wasn't happening was when we were onstage. That was splendid. Great ain't enough. It was splendid."

The drugs weren't so bad, either.

"One night we was playing, I think it was in Evansville, Indiana. Was it Indiana? It was Evansville something. And these chicks had brought us some purple haze, and all of us did it, everybody but my brother Catfish, 'cause he was an alcoholic. Everybody was gone. I don't even remember what happened on the show, but I remember at the end me and the drummer was playing so much stuff, I saw his body sitting there straight up and his hand whirling around his body, and we were jamming! Then I see George, he walks out on the stage and pulls up this sheet he's wearing and he's totally nude, and it's like 'Yah!!!! We rule! We rule!'



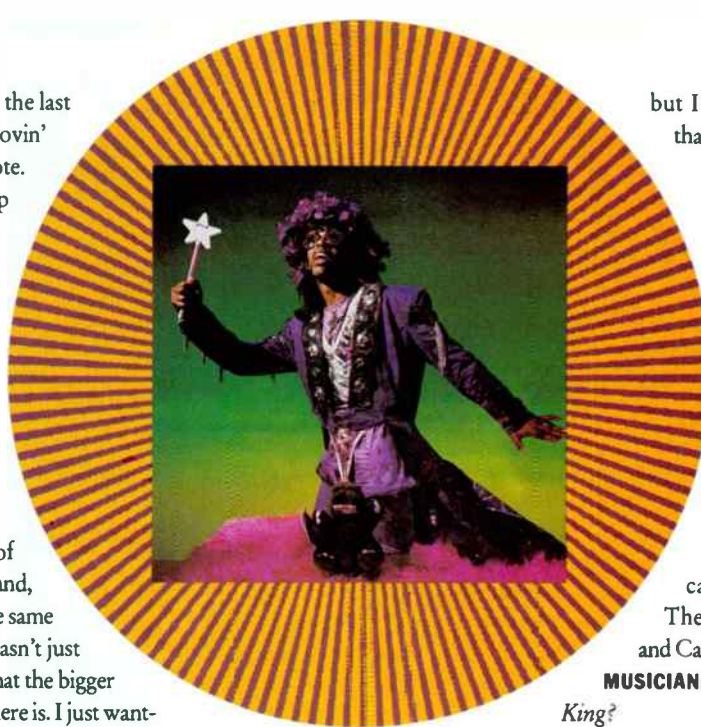
Then we're getting ready to end the last song, and we're groovin' and groovin' and we're jamming on the last note. Next thing you know, we look up and nobody's in the place. Everybody had left. Security, audience, police, everybody. Except the groupies."

What could possibly go wrong?

"Well, in the middle of 1978, it was beginning to start being too much. We were doing too many albums, with Parlet, Parliament, Funkadelic, the Brides of Funkenstein, Bootsy's Rubber Band, and trying to be on the road at the same time. I just got tired, because it wasn't just gigging anymore. I never knew that the bigger you get the more responsibility there is. I just wanted to get onstage and play and make people have fun.

"So I quit. And I didn't care what happened after that. I was through with being Bootsy. It was about survival. I was feeling like if I didn't stop I was going to do something stupid. So I went home, fished a little bit, went huntin'. I stopped using coke and just tried to clean the old lifestyle up."

But Bootsy is back. Indeed, in an age of sampling, '70s-o-philia, reissues and funk mania, Bootsy never really left. Certainly it's no accident that Deee-Lite, whose nose for style is as big as the Ritz, pulled Bootsy into their orbit, using him on their tour and in their videos. *Back in the Day: The Best of Bootsy*, a reissue of his strongest material for Warner Bros., has just been released, along with *Blasters of the Universe*, a new double album of hard funk for Rykodisc. He's also on seemingly hundreds of recent Bill Laswell-produced CDs,



but I'd put my ear to the door, and that's the way I picked it up."

MUSICIAN: *How'd you settle on the bass as your instrument?*

COLLINS: I wanted to play with my brother and he played bass. The band was playing at a club one night and the guitar player couldn't make it. So I said, "Here's your guitar player, right here." I was 13, I only knew two songs, and you can only play that so many times, I don't care how drunk the people are. The band couldn't take it anymore and Catfish and I swapped instruments.

MUSICIAN: *What sessions did you make for King?*

COLLINS: I played on dates by Bill Doggett, Hank Ballard, Arthur Prysock and a lot more. To be at King was great. We had the opportunity of meeting James Brown's band and James Brown too! It was heaven just to hang around. We tried to be over there every day, even when we didn't have a session, just hang around in case something came up.

MUSICIAN: *Who were you listening to at the time?*

COLLINS: James Jamerson. You know, Motown. Everything he did was so magical you can never play it exactly like him. And we were listening to James Brown. Around there he was baddest and the tightest. Copying James was pretty much how the band I was playing in at the time, the Pacemakers, began to get a reputation.

MUSICIAN: *What kind of gigs would you be making?*

COLLINS: We played in serious dumps, smoke-filled, everybody

"George had a half moon shaved into his head and he looked crazy."

including projects like *Illumination* and *Hallucination Engine*. The starchild is all over the place.

"Laswell reassured me of who I was really," explains Collins, who arrives for this interview wearing '70s stacked shoes, star glasses, a star earring, a gold and black doo-rag and a huge cowboy hat. Some gray sprinkles his beard. "I started off being a musician and that's the thing I had been trying to get back to. Playing with all these different people, just being a musician, got me back in sync. I loved it."

Bootsy Collins, 43, grew up in Cincinnati. Home of King Records, which recorded James Brown, along with all sorts of rhythm and blues, blues and country artists, it's a city that draws on Appalachia, and a black population, for its music. A child prodigy, Bootsy was making gigs for King at age 14.

"There was a lot of music around," he recalls. "Lots of clubs to play in, not fantastic clubs, but just places where bands could get to go and play. You got a chance to develop your craft. We used to play for gas money and wine.

"I was the kid brother—'Out of the way, boy, you bother me.' So I was always trying to learn, always watching Catfish and his band rehearsing at our house. They'd pull the shades down and lock me out,

drunk and lying on the tables. We were playing stuff that was on the radio, then as we got more confident we did original stuff. But first we were doing Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, Archie Bell and the Drells.

MUSICIAN: *Was it fun?*

COLLINS: It was lots of fun, and at that time it was like the best thing that could possibly happen to somebody. We never looked at it as if this was going to be our future, we just took it a day at a time. And you know, the more we did it, the more we got hooked, and the more we couldn't get away from it. So it kind of became a part of us.

MUSICIAN: *Tell me about hooking up with James Brown.*

COLLINS: It was pretty much from just hanging around over at King Records. James' band would come in the side door where everybody parked at. And James' office was in the front of the place. So we never knew when he came in; we thought we'd never meet him anyway. Our main thing was the band, trying to get information from them and how it feels to be with James. And we finally got a chance to meet Fred Wesley and Maceo Parker and Bobby Byrd.

We was playing a club called the Live Wire and Bobby Byrd called and he said they needed a band to play *tonight*, and James wants you all to come on down. "Okay, so what do you want us to do?" "Well,



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I'm on the way there, in the jet, and we're going to pick you all up and then we're going to hit tonight." And I'm saying okay, but I'm thinking how in the heck are we going to play tonight? I told the guys and they said, "Yeah, yeah, right, right." Nobody believed it.

But then he actually showed up to pick us up, straight from there to Columbus, Georgia. I mean, we were wearing what we had on, all we had was guitars. And once we got there, the crowd is kind of angry because James was supposed to be onstage and here comes the band in the front door and they're like "Damn them mothers, come on, you all, come on! Come on! Come on!" And we're like "God, we ain't have nothing to do with this."

We'd walked right into a mess we didn't know was going on. So we moved on to the dressing room and it was like "Okay, Byrd, what the heck is going on?" Then he explained to us that the band had got upset about James not paying them, that kind of shit. We was happy to be there but the band were like our heroes and we were saying, "My God, we going to walk in on them," and we start feeling like we're crossing the strike line. We really love these cats. We can't do this. And at the same time we want to play with James.

So James called us in the room and he said, "Guys, fellas, I'm glad you're here. We're going on tonight, we're going to tear this thing to death. How much do you all want?" And we looked at each other and it's like, how much do we want? "I thought we had to pay *you*." He said, "Okay, you all go out and talk about it real quick because we got

MUSICIAN: *How about the music? What was good about the music?*

COLLINS: I think it was the simplicity of it. The rhythms of things, the way he would cut things off, the hits with the drums, the bass guitar, horns at the same time. He was just a perfectionist at what he was doing.

MUSICIAN: *Did he do the arranging?*

COLLINS: Fred Wesley would pretty much do the horn arrangement. The rhythm, we would have to figure out his body language because he would hum stuff, and we'd say, "Oh yeah, like this, dodododo, yeah, that's it, that's it." We were the interpreters of what he was trying to say. He kind of respected us in that area too, because we were young and he was trying to get the young sound. So he gave us even more freedom.

MUSICIAN: *Was there a generation gap in the band between you all and him?*

COLLINS: Definitely. At that time I think he was like 37, 38. I was 16.

MUSICIAN: *Didn't that eventually lead to some problems?*

COLLINS: Definitely. Because *bands* were coming up to the front of the stage, the hippie thang had came in. So here we are with James Brown, loving it but at the same time wanting to get out and be freaky. And the more we went to places like Europe, the more we felt confined. They had this clothes style, hot pants, and chicks were wearing the chains and no bras, and it was like oh! We could take that onstage back in the States and it'd be brand new. That's pretty much where we got the idea of the clothes.

MUSICIAN: *But James wasn't into this, right?*

"The band would send me in to ask James for more money 'cause I was a kid."

to go on." So we went out of the room. All we was making was five or six dollars apiece, and he's talking about getting paid, we didn't have no idea. So we went back and said, "Okay, how about \$200 a week?"

He started laughing, and said, "Son, I'll pay y'all \$400 a week." And when he said that it was like *whoa!* Man, we ain't never seen no \$400 a week, we didn't even heard of \$400 a week. So it was like, "We're on." We hit the stage and he just said, "Whatever I call out, when I drop my hand, just hit the song." And as soon as he dropped his hand we was on it. Because we knew all the songs.

MUSICIAN: *Tell me what was good about working with James.*

COLLINS: The discipline and the order. It was like being in the army. Report to duty. I'm ready. And I liked that, because I think that's probably what I missed by not having a father. It did a lot of things for me, that I didn't have a clue of then. But I know now.

MUSICIAN: *Did it help you with business?*

COLLINS: A lot of times he would have business talks with different people on the airplane, and he would say, "Come on, sit down, check this out," and I'd just sit in on it. I didn't know what the heck was going on, I just knew this mug is on it. So he just wanted me to see, I guess. I didn't know what I was learning.

COLLINS: Oh, no. He was definitely precision and suits. I mean a uniform, which was great for what it was.

MUSICIAN: *So what would you all talk about behind his back?*

COLLINS: What we're going to do when we get a chance to be our own band. We knew we was going to leave, we just didn't know when. A movement was coming on for bands to be up front and be colorful and everybody to be singing, so that helped. Sly Stone, Chicago, Blood Sweat and Tears, all these groups were coming up. We were tight, we knew the formula, we could take this concept, take those clothes and our sound and go out here and freak people out. So we started getting ideas.

MUSICIAN: *How did you all get out of it?*

COLLINS: It was a few things that happened like over in Africa. The band would always want to send me to ask for more money, I guess maybe because I was a kid and didn't know no better. One time we was invited to dinner by the president of Zambia, and the band said, "Okay, Boots, it's time, go on there and tell him!" So I gets up from the table—we're getting ready to eat dinner—and whisper in his ear, "The fellas have been talking about we need a raise." He rolled his eyes, that's what he did. And what else he did that was deep, he said, "Uh! Wait a minute, come here, son." He brought me over there to the president and said, "Repeat what you just said." So I did it and he said, "Okay, son, we'll talk about this later." So we went on with the dinner but he was highly upset.

Then I had to ask for the money at the Copacabana here in New York because the first week we was going to get half pay. We started hearing how many trunkloads of money James was making, so everybody got together and said, "Boots, you got to go do it, man." No problem. Right in there, laid the bone. He said, "It ain't going to work this time, son. It ain't going to work this time." So that was the gig. James had to cancel and we went back to Cincinnati. We were through. Because we had to stand up for what we had said.

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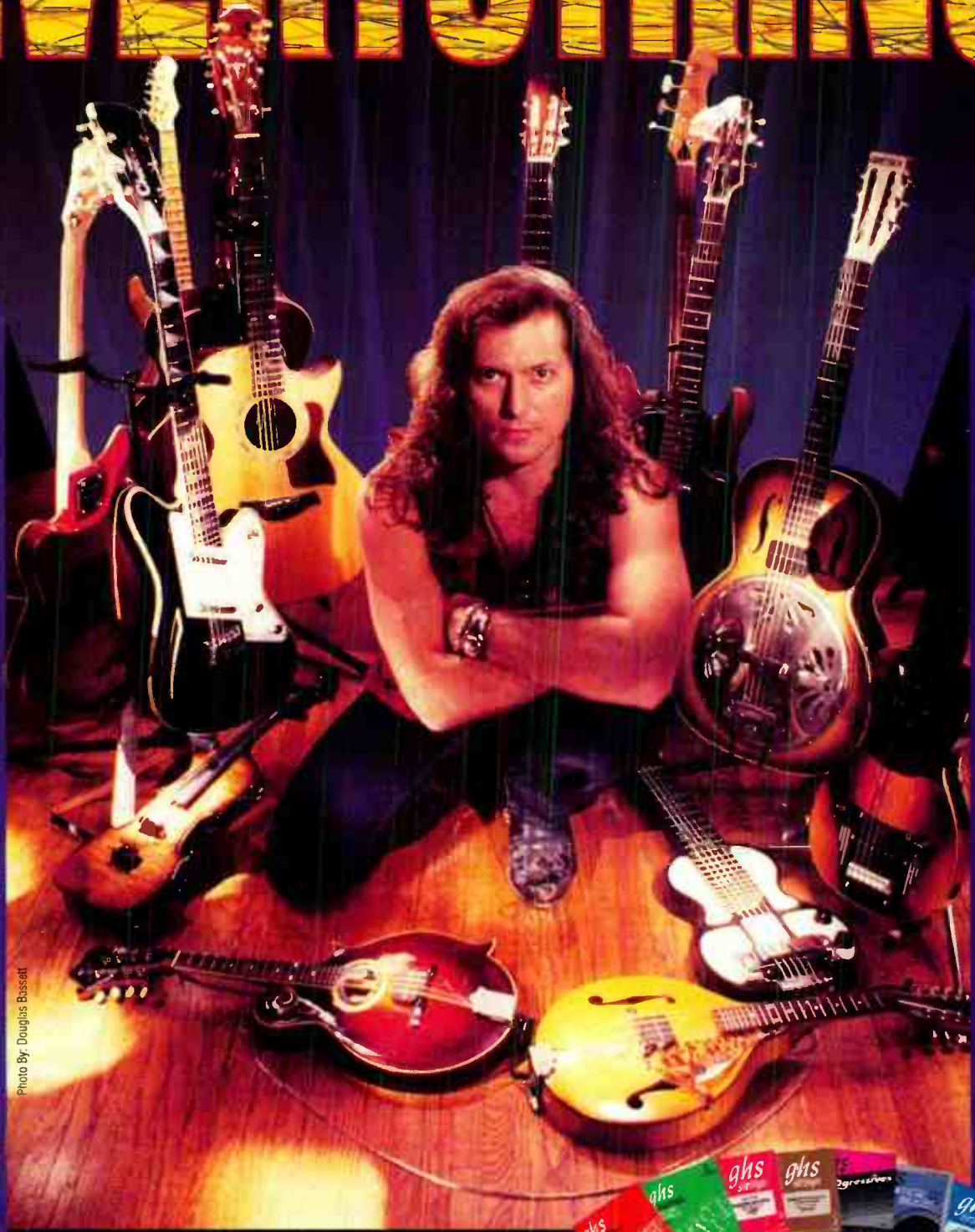


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MUSICIAN: *What did that feel like?*

COLLINS: It felt terrible. And once we got to Cincinnati we kind of realized, "What do we do next?" Two days have passed, no gig, no more wine money. We all had about four or five Lincoln Continentals, I had one with the pink vinyl top. Oh we were fly, man. We was trying to figure out how to pay for them suckers.

MUSICIAN: *What name were you using for a band?*

COLLINS: House Guests, formerly the JB's. We went to Tennessee, Georgia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, all

around. Then we start thinking about going to Detroit for a recording career. We revved up the rides, headed out to Motown, knowing we going to get this record deal, you know. No problem. We walk into Motown and we looking crazy—I mean because it's those hippie days. As soon as we walk in the door at Motown they got all these cameras up so they can check you out. We walk in and they say, "All right, what do y'all want? Who are y'all?" "Oh, we're the House Guests and we want to see anybody about a record deal and we're trying"—and the next thing I know security

comes out, and they say, "Sorry, fellas"—they kind of help us along—"sorry, fellas, but if you all don't get out of here we're going to escort you out the door." God, we never knew Motown would be nothing like that.

Then we started looking for a gig, and the next thing I know we ran into this club called the Love Club, and they had lots of bands playing and the band that would win would be the house band and could make money. So we went on and after we came off, nobody else wanted to go on. Club owner hired us—we had a gig. Then we ran into Mahlia Franklin, who was a singer, and she had knew George Clinton because George was dating her sister. So she was raving about, man, you all got the same vibe as Funkadelic, and we had been hearing about Funkadelic but we had never actually seen 'em. She said, "Come on, I'll introduce you to George." I said, "Great," and we went over there. George was sitting over in the corner on the floor in his guru style. He had his sheet on and he had a half moon shaved into his head and he looked crazy as I don't know what, and as soon as I seen him it was like, yeah, love at first bite. This is going to be it. This boy is gone.

MUSICIAN: *So then what happened after that?*

COLLINS: We gigged with George.

MUSICIAN: *But what did he do with Funkadelic?*

COLLINS: They just kind of dispersed. Everybody was kind of beat up. Bernie Worrell was probably the only one who wasn't really drugged out. Between the road, the business and the heroin.

I think I had a chance because I came from the school with James Brown, and I got a chance to get the tightness of it—I had a chance to see both sides. The cats that were there with George never had a chance to see both sides so they was always loose and always gone. I went through my thing too but I think in the end I had something to kind of hold on to to snap me out of it.

MUSICIAN: *What sort of a boss was George?*

COLLINS: He was more like a referee. We got a chance to be ourselves. We just wanted to be onstage and dance from one side of the stage to the other and not be constricted. Get out of the way, boy, you bother me I'm comin' across. Look out. You can go offstage, you can act the fool, you can stand back there by the drummer, any way you want. The stage is my party and I can fry if I want to. So it was all fun.

MUSICIAN: *Before you hooked up with George, had you been using rock in the music?*

COLLINS: Listening to Jimi Hendrix did it,

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'cause he had become pretty big when we started. Black Sabbath, and the acid kind of thing because that's what was happening, we kind of grew up on that.

MUSICIAN: *What was life on the road like in the early years?*

COLLINS: It was like an underground cult going on. The way we really got started, some people invited us to do a showcase for a bunch of college promoters. So we all get together for a serious talk 'cause this means our gigs for the rest of the year, maybe the year after that. So we sit down and everybody

kinda says, "Okay, George, only thing we can't do is pull your sheet up and do the nude thing, let everybody see your nub. We cannot do that, George. Okay?" "Aw," he says, "no problem. I'll never do that again." "You sure, George?" "I'm positive, you know?"

So showtime comes, they call us out and everything's great, we jammin', everybody's like yeah! We gettin' the gig. Then here comes my pal George, right? He runs off across the stage off to one side—this is the last song—he runs across the floor and nobody pays him no attention. Next he's standing up in the middle

of the audience out there, he done got on a chair and lifted off his sheet and is showing his nub to everybody. After the gig, everybody was saying, "George, how could you? How could you do this to us?" And really it worked against us for the first month. But after that, they were calling us all the time, and we got bigger dates. It *worked*. A little later we were playing stadiums.

MUSICIAN: *What was it like to quit playing?*

COLLINS: After about a couple of years, I wanted to start trying to record again. I didn't want to have nothing to do with the road though. Because I couldn't handle it. But I figured I could handle the recording end, because I love that part of it. And that's what I started doing. Fortunately I ran into Bill Laswell.

MUSICIAN: *But you toured with Deee-Lite; how was that?*

COLLINS: I loved it. That was the first thing that showed me that, okay, you can be accepted as going out this way too. I was scared about the fans not liking me for going out and doing this kind of music. But after I got out there, I started seeing a whole other audience, and some of them knew me and some of them didn't. Then some of the metal people started coming to the gigs with the long hair just to see me. I was like, wow, this is neat.

MUSICIAN: *Both the Laswell records and hip-hop are sort of introducing you to people who are a lot younger.*

COLLINS: Yeah. We get all ages now. Teen-agers, 20s, 30s, black and white. It's a real good mixture. In this last run for Bootsy's New Rubber Band we did in the West Coast, there were lines around the places. It was really deep. So it's a whole new energy going on.

MUSICIAN: *You still like playing?*

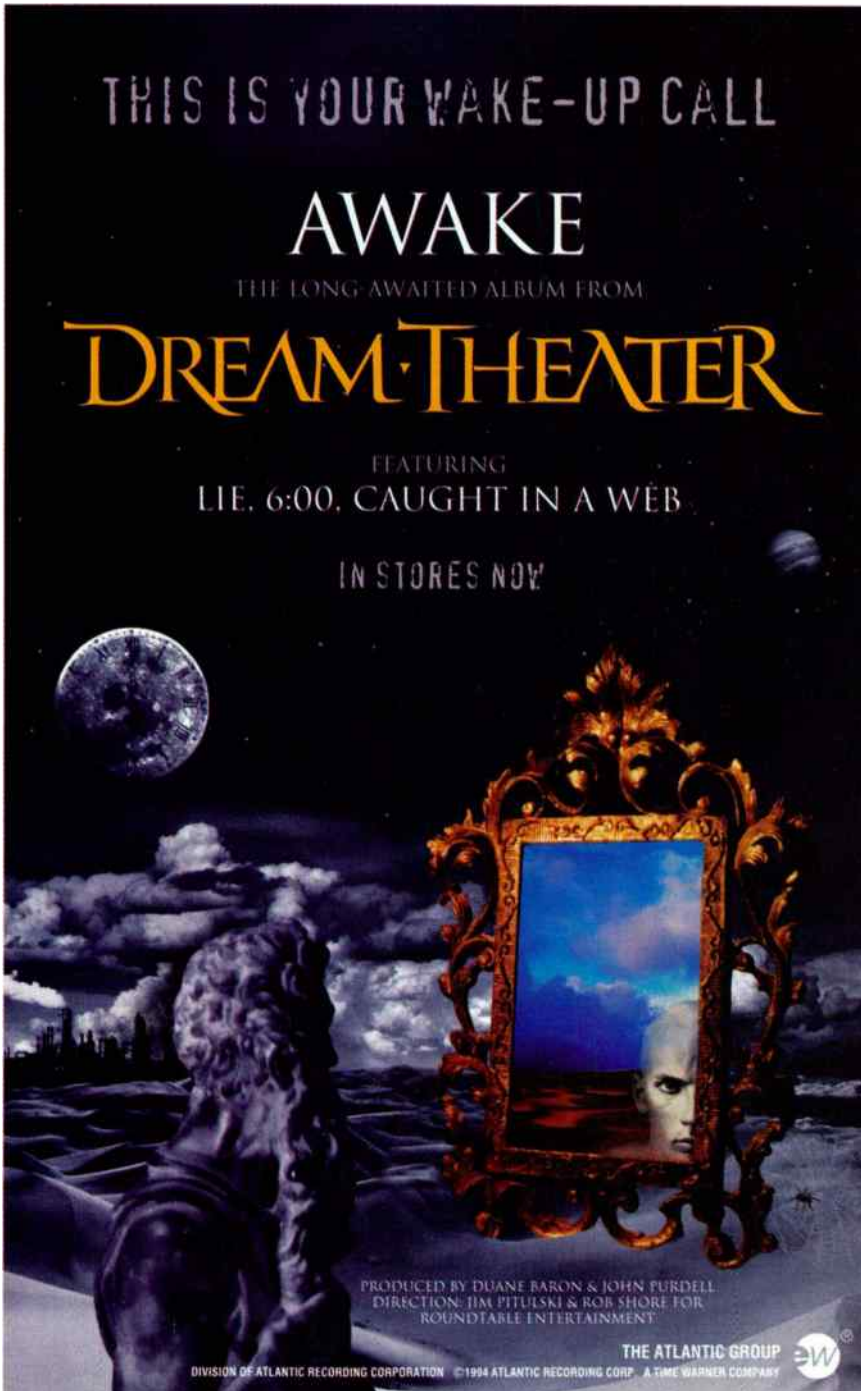
COLLINS: Oh yeah. I sample myself now. Kind of got the Bootzilla rehab studio setup for that, you know. It's like I sampled myself playing guitar, the drums. I mean I mean they sampled us anyway, why not sample yourself?

MUSICIAN: *Could you imagine doing anything else besides playing?*

COLLINS: Yeah, I could imagine being in this scene, just being around the creativity of kids doing their thang. Like songs, music, dance, video, all that kind of stuff. I want to be in there with that.

MUSICIAN: *So there's a lot of stuff to do.*

COLLINS: Oh there's looooads of stuff left to do. Loads of people that I want to play with. New music is going to evolve, and that's what it's all about—new sounds, new ways of looking at it. And that's what life's all about. But you know, to me a bologna sandwich is cool.





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you for the experience of being in Pat Martino's presence. Over the phone he has one of those octave-down, quiet-storm kind of mojo voices, with a basso profundo quality that makes you think he's around six-eight, sleeps in a bunk bed, gargles with Pine Sol and employs a custom anvil case to transport his testicles. ★ The reality is quite different. He is not exactly frail, but slightly built, rail-thin à la Abe Lincoln, with beautiful Michelangelan hands and soft, black-crow eyes that radiate mystery and dimly remembered hurts. While he can speak in a straight-



ILLUSTRATION BY PATRICK BLAGHWEEL

BY CHIP STERN

forward manner, more often than not he'll jump around in an elliptical, mystical style that suggests Buckminster Fuller, Ornette Coleman...or one of his own airborne solo flights.

On first impression he reminds me of Travis, the tormented misfit from Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas*, who emerged from a desert of forgetfulness to reclaim his past and reconstruct a legacy for his loved ones. Pat Martino has also emerged from a glen of forgetfulness, the residual effect of brain surgery. But where Travis was consumed by passion for one he longed to possess, Martino is consumed by music, pursuing the ineffable with a monastic fervor that seems oddly out of place in the late twentieth century—let alone in the neat blocks of row houses that comprise his South Philly neighborhood.

You see, young Pat Azzara had left Philadelphia at 15 to go out on the chitlin circuit, leaving home in the back of organist Charlie Earland's black hearse. "There was no room for me," he recalls, "so I laid on top of a Leslie cabinet and plucked on a ukulele all the way to Buffalo." Known on the street as "The Kid," he eventually became part of an extended family within the Harlem community, sharing the life, lore, food, family, women and gamesmanship. In the process he was afforded a rare perception of day-to-day sharing and survival, enriching his music with life experiences few of today's young players will ever know.

"That whole '60s scene was demolished," Pat shrugs wistfully between sips of wine, as his tone becomes more distant, his connections more oblique. "Still, I'd rather not promote the idea that it was any better than it is now. Survival is the only thing that's

PAT MARTINO'S



consistent. Survival of the fittest, no matter what the conditions might be.” And survive he did. In fact, by the time Pat Azzara returned to Philly in his early 20s, he’d taken his father’s stage name and become Pat Martino—among the greatest musicians in the history of jazz guitar.

Pat smiles mischievously. “Guitar? Guit-feathers! As a young man I had great expectations. Johnny Smith, Wes Montgomery and Jimi Hendrix were my archangels. Then I reached the point where I realized that they experienced ordeals just like everyone else. So you’re good as a child, the so-called leader of your generation, a formidably gifted individual amongst others in your field of endeavor. You get no reward for that,” he laughs. “Instead, you get tarred and get feathered. It’s like, ‘What have you done for me lately?’ The greatest thing that I’ve achieved in life is tomorrow morning. To awake to the sunshine. To feel neutral to all that has happened. To have no expectations.”

No expectations. There was a time, not so long ago, when the world of Pat Martino seemed as limitless as his talent. For a new generation of guitarists, he was a wonder of nature, the Dizzy Gillespie of modern guitar. Here at last was a guitarist with the velocity, endurance and imagination to match the whirlwind flights of modern jazz giants such as John Coltrane and Clifford Brown. Many fine guitarists preceded him. But from his sideman days with Willis “Gatortail” Jackson, Don Patterson and Sonny Stitt, through his first recordings as a leader, it was clear that Martino was in a class by himself.

He knew all the hippest voicings, and his chord substitutions were thoroughly modern and logical. He could pivot off any note in mid-flight and resolve into tense, flowing melodic passages of epic duration, extending his lines into infinity with flowing syncopations, supple octaves and offbeat chordal accents. His tone was a velvety shade of sapphire blue, each note cleanly picked and clearly articulated—all on a guitar with

RHYTHM & HUES

ee I DIDN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING

prohibitively high action and heavy strings, giving his amplified sound a dusky acoustic quality. Rhythmically, he could routinely double and triple up at tempos that would make most pickers plotz, motoring along with that Harley Davidson of a right hand, perhaps the most driving attack since Django's.

No less a master than George Benson delights in telling of his first encounter with the slight young guitarist on Phil Fallo's compelling video biography *Open Road*: "You know, I was feeling pretty good about myself when I was 19 years old, and I'd come to New York, and everyone was raving about me as a player. They would say, 'Yeah, I heard about you. You that new guitar player that played with Jack McDuff. They say you a bad cat.' I was feeling good, thinking I had conquered New York, and I walked into Small's Paradise and saw this young kid on the guitar, thinking, 'Oh, what's he going to do. I should get up there and show him how to play.' And all of a sudden they came to a break in



the music, and this guitar *leaped* out of nowhere playing some of the most incredible lines I had ever heard! It had everything in it, great tone, great articulation, and the whole crowd—and it was a black audience—they went crazy. I said to myself, 'If this is a sample of what New York is like, I'm getting out of here.'"

Martino laughs long and hard. "The organ trio was *the* bar group, and it still is, to me. That was the group that would get people off their seats and dancing on top of the bar—if you were good enough. I grew up within that generation, and I miss it. Don Patterson was, in my opinion, the greatest B-3 player there ever was, and I played with *everybody*: Jimmy Smith, Groove Holmes, Jimmy McGriff. 'Duck' was the chief—the baddest of the bad, but also the most fucked-up in terms of life itself. I miss Don Patterson so much, no one will ever know.

"Those were great years. We used to play at Basie's on 135rd and Seventh, and the place would be packed. Kenny Burrell used to sit in, although after the first time he brought his own guitar, because it disturbed him to play my guitar, and he put it down in a hurry. Then we'd go to Small's Paradise and different clubs uptown to jam with people like Grant Green. Finally I made enough money to live for six weeks at the President Hotel on 48th between 9th and Broadway. I went to the corner and bought a little record player, and had just enough left to purchase subway tokens and one album to listen to in private—Elliott Carter's *Variations for Orchestra*.

"I took the AA to 116th and began walking to 135th—because there was a riot going on, and the subways were under siege. And I strolled to the gig with my ES-175, and no one bothered me, I had so many friends. I think after my operation, that was the biggest loss—all the memories I had of living in this community. I would stop at one house and eat some greens, and make it up to the gig eventually. By the third set, Les Paul would be there. Then, kaboom, I'd take Les by to introduce him to a really great

guitar player, otherwise known as Wes Montgomery. And Wes would say, 'Wow, man, that's my idol. I never thought I'd have a chance to meet this man.' And I'd say, 'Listen, guys, I got to get back, 'cause Gatortail'll kill me if I'm not on time.' Then on the way back I'd walk by Small's Paradise where Malcolm X was talking shit," he laughs. "Great days, man. All gone."

All gone? Perhaps. But as James Joyce suggested in "The Dead," the departed walk among us, never more than a shadow's breath away. The spirit of Pat's father, Carmen Azzara, is resonant throughout this house. The push and pull of their psyches seems quite real to me. With each recollection, Pat struggles to define that which is *my* will, *my* path, *my* delight. Running through these changes, the guitar remains less an end than a means—a prism of perception, a symbol of freedom.

"I was born on August 25, 1944. Curiosity drew me to the guitar. I

NOT EVEN WHO MY MOM WAS.”

remember crawling through my parents' bedroom when I was around two years old, looking for my father's guitar under the bed—a big beautiful Epiphone arch top. I opened the case and began strumming it, playing with the low E string and observing the rainbow that came from the string's vibrations. Lacking calluses, I cut my hand. I didn't experience pain, but color, perception, an expansion of imagination. I became immersed in imagination and my own blood, and began painting away at the floorboards. My parents got very excited: This was something I was never to do again. For me, the injury was not the cut, but the backlash. Praise and blame are neutral in context, but the end result was an interruption of the creative process: Rules and regulations were enforced, and I didn't get to deal with the guitar again for another decade.”

While the sight of their little boy's blood must have upset his parents, in a sense, Pat's Italian/Arabic father was playing his trump card. First he hid the guitar to make his child look for it; then he gave it a forbidden aura, until Pat begged his pop to play it. I know I can do it. Okay, but don't you *ever* put it down. “He was a smart guy, alright. He'd play guitar around the house, strumming and singing, and would tell me, ‘No, this isn't for you. You're one of the kids. Go out and play baseball with them. They're going to think you're a nobody. Go out and play—and you better play good.’ He really put me through the childhood syndrome.

“In a sense he used me to be a professional guitarist, because that's what *he* wanted to be. As a youngster he took a couple of lessons from Salvatore Massaro, who was better known as Eddie Lang. So that's part of my legacy, too—all in the same flow. But my dad couldn't afford to be involved in the outside world as a player, because he had to take care of his own survival. There were 11 brothers and sisters in my dad's family. When he was eight years old, his father said go out and get a job. He worked in a tailor's shop, wasn't a musician at all. But he made sure I didn't have to succumb to that kind of existence.”

When he finally convinced his father he could be a guitarist, Carmen Azzara backed him all the way, with a gold top Les Paul and a stereo Gibson amp. Six months later, Carmen began schlepping his little Amadeus to all the local joints to hear the top jazz guitarists and show him off. “When I finally picked up the instrument, I'd already worked out a lot of things in my mind, and knew what I had to do in terms of muscle development to build up my hands to execute what I wanted to hear.

“And the first thing I attempted to do was pull the wool over my pop's eyes. He took me to a guitar teacher, name of John Hall, who gave me all these books to learn how to read. No magic at all—nothing but rules and regulations. I had no interest in acceding to this stranger's demands. My pop would come home from work, sit down on the sofa, read his newspaper and have me play what I was practicing. I'd stand there instead and play as many notes as I could with my eyes on the page. There and then I learned how to improvise, without

even knowing the process. My father was under the impression that I had the lesson down pat,” he laughs.

“I never had a good teacher. I had Dennis Sandole, but I studied *him*, not what was he selling. Van Gogh and other great painters were represented on his walls, and he had a piano in his studio—that was interesting. But I had no interest in sight singing or modes—*nothing* but the heart. I was possessed with practicing, and copied jazz solos off of records by ear, because I had near perfect pitch, and a near photographic memory. And while I never really had a teacher, I always had someone to place my back against the wall, for survival alone. If you can't do this, you ain't worth shit! Ergo, sure, I *can* do that. I can do ten times as much as that—try this. Boom.

“My primary inspirations were Johnny Smith and Wes Montgomery. Smitty was the ultimate musician in terms of academics. He seemed to me, as a child, to understand everything about music. Wes was the opposite—Wes had enormous passion. Let me put it to you this way: Smitty was *step time* and Wes was *real time*. Between them they gave me a total view of the possibilities on the guitar.”

At the time, Pat was known around Philly as singer Rickie Tino. “This was at the very beginning of the whole Dick Clark era of rock 'n' roll. Bobby Rittoreli was my drummer—later known as Bobby Rydell. Frankie Avaloni played trumpet. We'd sit in as the band behind Ernie Evans, who became better known as Chubby Checker. Jerry Blavat was my manager in those years—the geetar with the heater. He once had me climb down off a helicopter with my guitar, into a schoolyard full of teenagers rompin' and a bompin'.

But he was inexorably drawn to Afro-American music. “I met Wes at the age of 12, with mom and dad. They took me to a place called Pep's in Philly to see the Montgomery Brothers. And I was absolutely shocked when Wes came over to the bar where we were sitting. Shocked because, you see, my father was an alcoholic, and to sit at the bar required so much endurance for him. When Wes walked over, my dad said let me buy you a drink, and Wes said just a glass of orange juice please—and that floored me. It was like, he was everything for me at that age. We were romantically melted into the kindness and graciousness of this wonderful, humble giant.”

He dropped out of school in the tenth grade to go on the road, and within two weeks he was invited to join Lloyd Price's revue. “It was a dream come true. I wanted to begin to live my own life, but also to please my pop. Perhaps I left high school and shot out to Harlem to get away from him. I was being used as a puppet, for his dreams. I don't know what to say... I'm thankful for what he did. My parents experienced marital problems from the get go, so I guess all of this acted as some sort of trigger, in terms of my commitment to whatever I set out to do, even at an early age.”

He remained with Lloyd Price, off and on, for five years. “It was an unbelievable education: an 18-piece jazz band. Onzie Matthews and Slide Hampton wrote charts. Stanley and Tommy Turrentine were in it. Charlie Persip was playing drums. We'd play for an hour before

Lloyd came on—then it became an R&B band for 30 minutes. It didn't matter that I couldn't read, because I could pick it all up, lines and chords. It was nothing but ears, and my ears were super-sensitive—a fast way in.

“Talk about racial hassles. We were out on the road in the early '60s, on our way to Mississippi in a 1949 bus, when there was a flat. As small as I was, I rolled it to the gas station to get it fixed. Want to stop for food? I'd take a list and get everything—43 hamburgers, please. So I learned a lot about people, the real way. To be honest with you, the most difficult thing for me was to come back into white culture; you have no idea how difficult that's always been. My insights into music were formed in a different kind of way. It's not like you can go to Berklee or G.I.T. and learn this. You can learn how theoretically, but that has nothing to do with its sources.”

Word got out about this gifted young guitarist, and eventually he felt compelled to learn how to read and write—to better communicate with guitarists who sought his guidance. But Martino's solo recording career began on an inauspicious note. “When I was burning out Harlem as a teen, Vanguard Records signed me to a \$500 contract to get me off the street—they'd already invested in Larry Coryell. I recorded a killer album with Ron Carter, Tony Williams and Tommy Flanagan. Great fucking album—but Vanguard never released it.”

Instead, Pat Martino began his recording career for Prestige. *El Hombre*, *Strings!* and *East!* are all first-rate efforts, but the guitarist was beginning to chafe at the grits-and-gravy conventions of funky jazz and hard bop. With *Baiyina* (*The Clear Evidence*), Martino spread his wings as an improviser and composer, drawing upon Indian and Arabic modalities, odd time signatures and unique chordal colorations to create an innovative, non-Western harmonic palette for guitar. The creative birthing of *Baiyina* seemed to energize him. Mar-



tino followed with some ferocious hard bop on *Desperado* (featuring a memorable uptempo jaunt on “Oleo”). His breakthrough recordings for Muse—including *Footprints* (an out-of-print tribute to Wes), *Live!*, *Consciousness* and *Exit*—redefined the harmonic, melodic and rhythmic parameters of modern jazz guitar. In the late '70s, Bob Krasnow signed him to Warner Bros., leading to *Joyous Lake*, a polymetric, synthesizer-inflected quest far removed from boppish triumphs of the past, which has yet to be released on CD.

But a series of troubling mood swings were overtaking this gentle man, signaling a deep emotional withdrawal. The psychological changes were symptomatic of undiagnosed physical traumas, and when headaches progressed to seizures, he underwent a CAT scan in 1980, which revealed a massive brain tumor. Pat Martino had two days to live. Returning home to Philadelphia, he underwent a pair of complex operations, and when he awoke, his creative prism had faded to white. All gone.

“No, it wasn't gone,” Pat corrects me. “Creativity is love, and I was surrounded by love when I awakened...dropped cold, empty, neutral, cleansed...naked. I'd lost a good deal of memory. I didn't remember anything. I didn't remember who my mom was. I didn't know who I was, you know. It was three years before things really began to come back.

“I think more than anything, it was a social recovery. I didn't remember any of my friends. Each of them kept touching upon the idea that I was a guitarist. I'd see the guitar in this house, but I had no relationship to it. I wanted social interaction, to come out of my seclusion. I was recovering in isolation. The only ones to fill that gap were Mom and Dad, but they were dissipating at that point, and by 1983, they started to really slide down. That stimulated my need for interaction

with other people, to focus upon the main topic of discussion in my presence, which was always music. Suddenly, yeah, I wanted to participate, and that caused me to get back into it.

“I had no muscle memory of the instrument. None whatsoever. I think the one thing that did remain constant for me was the magic of the number 12. If I went to the corner to buy some eggs, I bought a dozen eggs. If I went to church, they referred to the 12 apostles of Christianity. The four seasons were based upon 12 months. No matter what, there was always a 12 involved. I found that very interesting coming in from blank. The 12 frets before you got to the octave. In everything there was the number 12.”

Like the chromatic scale.

“The chromatic scale is extremely Western, which is a reminder that the guitar is not Western at all—it's an Asian instrument. The piano is governed by Bach's system of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and being tempered, is strictly Western. The guitar is a *hexagram*. The guitar

TRIBUTE

FIRST SAW PAT at the Bottom Line, and he just blew me away—I was spellbound. People used to give me a hard time as a banjo player, and tell me you shouldn't play all of your notes—you should bend some and slur some. And I said, well, Pat Martino doesn't. He very rarely did anything but play the note, and yet it was so rhythmic, and so commanding, and so wonderful, it gave me a vision of how the banjo could play that music. I always wanted to play those challenging melodies and his improvisations just took me out. He had a way of playing up on the front edge of the beat that was very intense: a straight eights kind of feel against the swing beat that made the whole thing...locomote. It was like being a rhythm player as a soloist, which is very much what banjo playing is about—holding a grip on the rhythm in your right hand. I've been rediscovering Pat Martino's music regularly for a long time. At times I'll put on *Live!* and it just restarts my engines again, and I'm able to play more like that for a little while.

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has 64 hexagrams. Six lines. The greatest example of that is the Book of Changes, the *I Ching*. It's five thousand years old, and in the entire Book of Changes, there are six lines full, and six broken, and everything in between. Those six lines are six strings, and that's the secret of every possible string group on the guitar. Perhaps that's why guitar players speak of *playing the changes*.

"The guitar itself is divided into four and three. The difference between the *Well-Tempered Clavier* and the guitar is that the *Well-Tempered Clavier* is ruled by basic arith-

metic. Seven white keys, five black keys— $7 + 5 = 12$. By the same logic, the guitar is ruled by multiplication— $3 \times 4 = 12$, and $4 \times 3 = 12$. Three refers to the augmented, four to the diminished. *Basically that is the secret of the machine.*

"This is something very basic and logical. It's how I taught myself to play—it made sense to me. This gave me access to every key center of every dominant seventh chord. Once you've mastered the dominant seventh as far as bebop, hard bop, fusion and other jazz forms are concerned—major seventh

chords, minor seventh chords and all the alterations included—then you're free with regards to a repertoire of forms that coalesce, that give you fluidity and dexterity up and down the neck. That's why it's important to have all the key centers together, so that the entire fingerboard becomes one topic. Then you'll find the guitar itself reduced to logic: logic that has nothing to do with well-tempered rules and regulations or the major scale. It has nothing to do with the pentatonic intervals, even though the black keys are guitaristic to the max, especially in the rock idiom. *The guitar is ruled and governed by the augmented and diminished chords—no more, no less.*

"Let me show you how simple it is. Play a diminished chord on the 4-3-2-1 string group on the second fret. You'll play three diminished chords in a row before you get to its second inversion, which is a mirror-image of it fingering-wise. These are the two things on the guitar that are totally automatic. You don't change your fingers when you go through all the augmented and diminished inversions. Simply move your hand, holding the same fingers down, in the same position—automatic inversion.

"The augmented chord has three notes in it. They invert themselves every major third—every four frets. The diminished chord has four notes in it. They invert themselves every minor third—every three frets. And every three of them give you all 12 keys, automatically, which is a *long* story. Nevertheless, this is the foundation of the guitar.

"Now you have four notes in any diminished chord, and three in any augmented, but it has no single name—these are your *parental* forms. Play that diminished chord for me at the second fret. You can call it an E diminished, a B \flat diminished, a D \flat diminished or a G diminished—all the same chord. Every chord that ever was will emerge out of these two parental forms. If I lower the D \flat to a C in our diminished chord, we now have a C7. If I lower the E to an E \flat , E \flat 7; if I lower the B \flat to an A, A7; and if I lower the G to a G \flat , G \flat 7. So there you have four inversions of the seventh chord within this one parental form—therefore, four keys: E \flat , A, C, G \flat . Therefore, three diminished chords in a row will give you 12 keys—the fourth one is the second inversion of the first. It divides the entire fingerboard of the guitar into four divisions, 12 keys in each, 48 altogether—*like the four seasons*. But of course, keep in mind that this is only one string group: 4-3-2-1.

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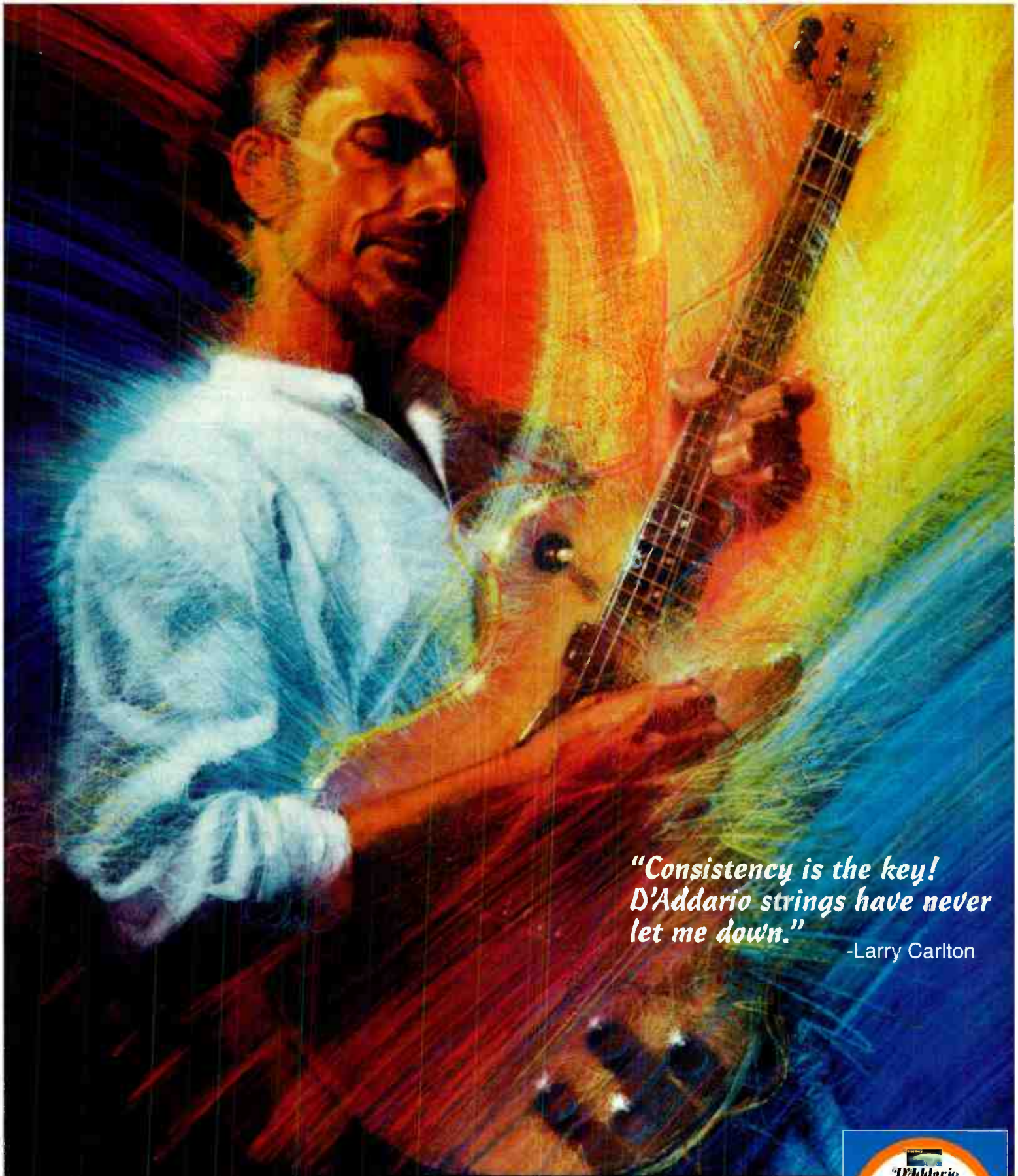
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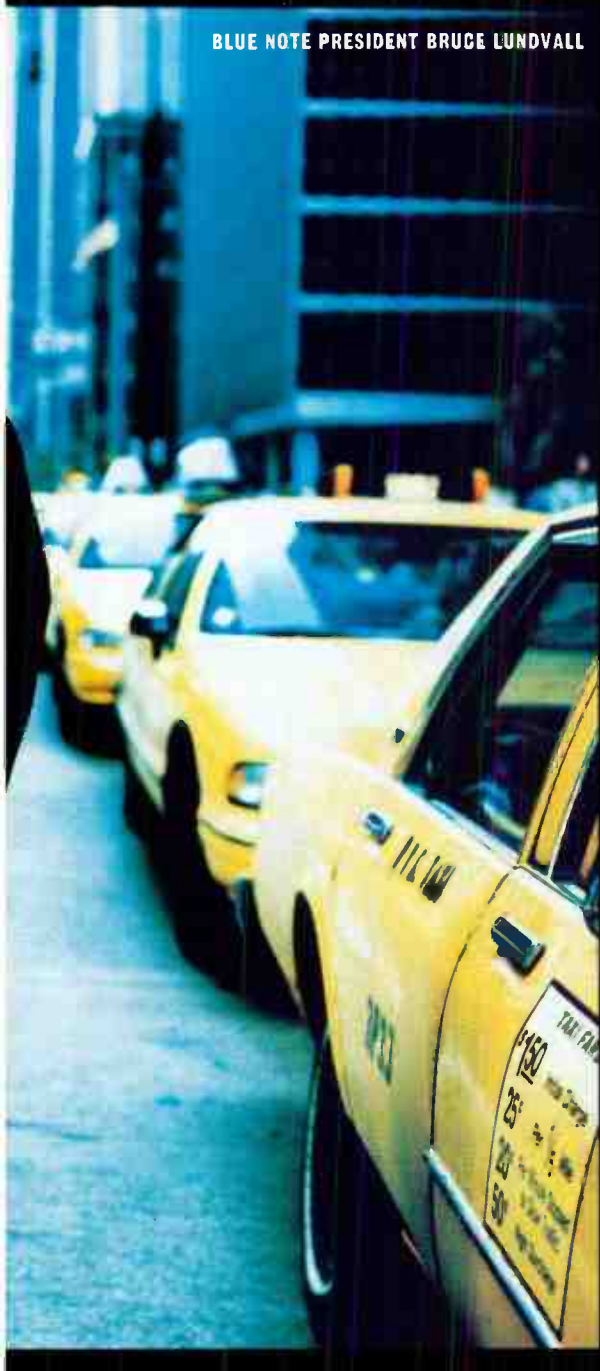
IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS WAY. Remember the young lions? Christopher Hollyday, Joey DeFrancesco and their peers? Those well-scrubbed youngsters who followed the lead of Wynton Marsalis and were celebrated in the press as the architects of a neo-traditional jazz future? They dressed sharply, played bebop or something recognizably similar and name-dropped all the right legends. Like Marsalis, they exuded youthful righteousness, and looked, for all the world, as if their careers would unfold with similar certitude. ★ Now, Christopher Hollyday is in his third semester as an undergraduate at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Dismissed by RCA after four albums, he's without a contract, a footnote to the history books. ★ Joey DeFrancesco has been dropped by Columbia and currently records on the independent label Muse. And

B Y T O M M O O N



JAZZ BE BIG

BLUE NOTE PRESIDENT BRUCE LUNDVALL



COMES BIZ!

after four critically well-received titles on Verve, the Harper Brothers—once the darlings of the neo-traditional pack—have broken up, with drummer Winard Harper planning a solo release for this fall.

So much for all that rhetoric about patient, step-by-step artist development. Trumpeted as the jazz innovators of tomorrow, these players and others are the dazzling discards—young lions who somehow got lost.

What went wrong? For Hollyday, who attends Berklee on a scholarship, it boiled down to simple economics: When his letters to other labels went unanswered, he was confronted with the prospect of becoming obsolete at age 24. “If you don’t have a record contract you basically can’t tour in the United States,” he says. “I figured I could sit in my room and practice the same stuff and take whatever gigs came along, or I could go to school and study composition and arranging and be exposed to new things.”

The young lions might have jump-started a sputtering jalopy, but now it’s cruising along just fine, with or without them. An invalid ten years ago, jazz has hit a powerful stride. It is at the heart of million-dollar advertising campaigns for automobiles and perfumes. It’s a new or renewed area of interest for Epic, Motown, Warner Brothers, Atlantic and other major labels. It is the music most respected (read: sampled) by the hip-hop nation, and the catalyst for a raft of interesting musical hybrids. It is used in an increasing number of feature films, with scores composed by the likes of Mark Isham and Terence Blanchard. If Wynton Marsalis’ turbulent reign as artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center is any indication, it may be the next cultural battleground.

And from a commercial vantage, it is no longer assumed to be a young person’s game. “When we saw Joe Henderson selling records, that was a major, major thing,” explains guitarist John Scofield, 42, of Henderson’s first Verve release *Lush Life*, the Grammy-winning

collection of Billy Strayhorn music that has sold over 100,000 records. “Before that, it was just the young players getting the juice. If Joe can do it, maybe that just means great music can do it.”

Well, gee, what a concept. No fancy gimmicks? No teenage hotshots? No frothy spreads in the *New York Times Magazine*? How positively radical: After years of signing any young thing in a suit, the major labels have grown discriminating. They don’t just want technical brilliance from their artists. They’ve discovered, thousands of promotional dollars later, that there’s little serious interest in ten-year-old piano-playing prodigies after all.



Call this the post-young lions era. Thank the kids for those half-baked history lessons from the bandstand, and prepare for more change: Led by increasingly disciplined major labels, jazz is reacting to a new, though not necessarily less restrictive, musical climate, a new set of market conditions and—they’re betting—an expanding audience. As usual, it’s a one-step-forward, two-steps-back thing: More new jazz is being issued than ever before, but with the demise of KJAZ in San Francisco, there’s not one commercial jazz station left in the U.S. to play it. There are more musicians on the road, but they compete for spots in fewer clubs and performance spaces.

“We are seeing the jazz business at a crossroads,” says Kevin Gore, a marketing and promotions executive at

Columbia. "There are a number of us who believe that we'll either continue at the same audience level and market to a very defined niche, or we'll collectively blow it up. All the elements are there. The next year or so will tell."

THE SONG IS YOU

Hoo-boy. It's been quite some time since a jazz record executive sounded so chipper. What happened? How did this once-marginalized music begin to flourish?

Many observers begin by tipping the hat to Wynton Marsalis, not so much for his musical contribution, but for his work as a jazz advocate. "He speaks for the music," says Bruce Lundvall, president of Blue Note Records. "And we haven't seen someone like that in a long time. He's a figurehead in terms of the culture, and it's difficult to overstate his importance. What's happening now definitely stems back to him."

Beginning in the early '80s, Marsalis did what dozens of critics couldn't: He established the cultural relevance of the jazz canon, notably the work of Duke Ellington, and communicated a sense of responsibility toward the music. Not just anybody flapping their fingers could call themselves a jazz musician with Marsalis around. Though he could be doctrinaire, his message and those \$1000 designer suits somehow penetrated the consciousness of mainstream America. His idea of jazz in many cases became the national consensus.

Marsalis' rise coincided with the compact disc boom. After years of sagging sales, labels began catering to avid collectors of jazz, who repurchased their beloved classics in digital form, and for a lot more money. Catalog development became a jazz-industry buzzword. Even second-tier artists have been given the retrospective treatment, partially because from a business standpoint, it's almost a can't-lose proposition: There are no recording costs, artwork and remastering and other preparation can be a minimal expenditure, and the artists (or late artists' estates) are happy to cooperate. Lundvall estimates that at least 50 percent of Blue Note's business comes from the catalog. Indeed, reissue programs help cover the expenses for new artists while they build *their* catalog. "When you sign a Jacky Terrasson or even a Joe Henderson, you have a number of almost-guaranteed go-arounds with these artists," says Lundvall. "If we lose money the first time around, we can be in profit the second. You're building a catalog all the time if you're signing the right artists. The stuff I signed in the '70s at Columbia has been the subject of major reissue programs over there."

For Chuck Mitchell, v.p. and general manager of Verve Records, the young lions helped to "focus the awareness of a lot of buyers, old and especially young. Musically speaking, a lot of stuff got worked out in public, but it did have an overall positive impact. It reasserted basic musical values that needed to be reasserted."

But while most everyone agrees on such values, there's much discord over the way they are expressed. When, for example, should a younger artist become a leader? A few short years ago, any sizzling newcomer with good management could write his own ticket on a major label. Now, executives, managers and artists themselves are

thinking more about long-term development. "It does nobody any good to push someone out there who happens to be a hot name on the scene," says Robin Burgess, who manages Terence Blanchard and Kenny Garrett. "Much better to let those artists develop in a number of situations first. You get more mature records that way."

Then there's the issue of tradition versus original work. Richard Seidel, Verve v.p. of A&R, insists that the present is simply not an innovative era for jazz, and therefore current recordings should reflect more traditional values. "Customers can buy every classic recording that's ever been made," he points out. "You have to make something today that will hold its own and be memorable." Thirty-five years ago, he says, labels could afford to gather a group together and turn them loose in the studio. "Mainstream jazz was in a state of constant innovation and people were writing great material on the spur of the moment. We can't afford that luxury. The quality of songwriting isn't what it was, and one key to making great records is great material."

That may be true, but for record companies it's a self-serving argument. Guitarist Kevin Eubanks, who records for Blue Note, contends that the plethora of "standards" records coming out



CYRUS CHESTNUT

today are not only motivated by bottom-line thinking, they remove creative control from the musicians involved. "The pressure is from the labels and the media that you're not a quote-unquote young lion unless you're doing standards. You have to question this whole generation of musicians who are pursuing tradition as a future, because that philosophy makes the musicians interchangeable. To have to pursue sounding like Wes Montgomery just to bring attention to myself as a deserving guitarist is an unacceptable position."

The labels want standards because they're easier to sell, Eubanks believes, and because they don't run the risk of missing what little airplay is available to jazz artists. But compositional work is vital to musicians: "You write your own music, that leads into publishing, which leads into new money, which means your decisions can be based on other things besides just how much the gig is paying. Every



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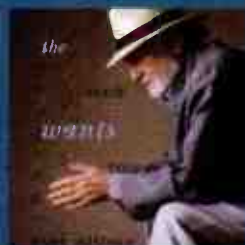


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second of every day, somebody is getting paid for their songs—if you don't write the songs, you don't get the money."

A similar ploy is the seemingly ubiquitous "tribute album"—recordings built around a particular concept or artist. Verve led the way by resurrecting Joe Henderson's career via the music of Billy Strayhorn and Miles Davis. This year featured tribute albums to Billie Holiday by Abbey Lincoln, Terence Blanchard and Etta James. Columbia is planning a big push for the new record by pianist Marcus Roberts—playing the music of George Gershwin. Nice work if you can get it, and you're a record executive.

Some artists and labels find such restrictions chafing, if not insulting. Pianist Cyrus Chestnut recalls that when he was talking with various labels about his debut project, one executive handed him a list of songs. "I was actually given a list of tunes and told that this was what I needed to do," he says. "I couldn't believe it—it's got to be up to the artist to stand firm for what they believe in."

Epic v.p. of A&R Michael Caplan agrees. "With the records we're doing on Epicure, I'm rebelling a little bit against the theme mentality," says Caplan, whose initial signings include pianist Dave Kikoski and saxophonist Craig Handy. "The records that are coming out now are a little gimmicky."

"It's suffocating the music," concurs Tom Evered, v.p. of marketing for Blue Note. "I think there's a growing resentment of the overconceptualizing of jazz records. Where would we be now if that philosophy was in place when Ornette Coleman was at Atlantic Records in the '60s?"

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

Bruce Lundvall and his peers have a ritual at the annual Thelonious Monk Institute-sponsored jazz composition finals, which focus on a different instrument each year. As the field narrows, the executives get cagier, acting less like businessmen and more like pro scouts swarming a potential draft pick.

"I remember last year sitting there watching the finals," Lundvall recalls. "When they announced the winner, I looked over at Richard Seidel from Verve and Matt Pierson from Warner Brothers and said, 'Now the real competition begins.'"

Lundvall, had had a few meetings with winning pianist Jacky Terrasson, who is 29, and knew that the pianist felt good about Blue Note. But now there were other sharks in the pool, and money was being thrown around, big money. Lundvall had seen it happen with Joshua Redman, and has since expressed regret over not staying in the war over the celebrated tenor saxophonist. He didn't want a repeat.

"We paid a bit of a premium," Lundvall acknowledges, regarding the Terrasson deal. "It was high by mainstream jazz standards, but it

wasn't crazy, it wasn't one of those things where you overpay. We did a three-album deal, and over time, which is how you have to look at these things, it's a safe deal." Lundvall says bidding wars have become an inevitable part of the business, a byproduct of increased jazz-record activity and an indication of the relative health of the music. "In most cases, the company that paid the price will end up making a profit or breaking even—after you factor in international sales and things like that."

When the jazz guys talk numbers, their break-even point is a fraction of the average pop record's sales. Because recording costs are usually much lower, a mainstream jazz title is successful if it sells 25,000 or 30,000 units, and is considered a smash-hit phenomenon if it breaks the 100,000 barrier. Still, the executives don't throw much money around: Contracts are for two or three albums at a time (in pop, contracts can run to six or seven albums), and advances often don't clear \$50,000—which makes them better, certainly, than what leaders made in the 1960s, but hardly career-making sums. As Blue Note's Evered says, "Very few jazz people get rich off of record sales."

Very few artists, anyway: For the labels, jazz has become an area of responsible risk. An investment of \$50,000 buys a solid finished product, and another \$10–20,000 represents substantial marketing support in a field with a limited number of radio promotion targets and advertising opportunities. Figuring from a list price of \$16.98, a jazz record that sells 30,000 copies—which most executives agree is a realistic figure—will gross \$500,000. Profits are only a slice of that pie, but if a label believes it can sell a title for years, the initial investment can pay off handsomely. Add in one or two left-field hits such as US3's "Cantaloup"—at over 800,000 units sold in the U.S., it's the biggest seller in Blue Note history—and it's clear the business is more flush financially than it's been in years.

But is a blowing session that cost \$10,000 to produce automatically inferior to a lavishly produced \$80,000 studio opus? Joe Fields, president of the feisty independent Muse Records, compares what the majors put out versus his low-budget titles. His conclusion: The labels are crazy. "You look at the way they spend money and you have to wonder, how do they do it? Kenny Garrett, they spent quite a bit on him, and he hasn't really happened. You'll sell 10,000, maybe 15,000 pieces and you've spent something like \$75,000—what kind of logic is that? They keep doing this, but one day they're gonna wake up and not like the results, and the whole deck of cards will come down."

The emphasis on hotly pursued individual artists can create other imbalances. Like any business, a label is likely to pour more money into its more expensive talent, via marketing, publicity pressure and promotion. That's bound to cause resentment from label-mates who surmise, along with manager Robin Burgess, that there's only so much room in the pool. "Jazz is a genre that can only stom-



CHRISTOPHER HOLLYDAY

ach one persona at a time," he says. "They can only bestow the title of 'young jazz musician' on one person per year. That ends up obscuring the talents of a whole bunch of other people."

In this new, higher-stakes environment, of course, with more labels in the mix and a greater array of consumer choices, the real challenge is reaching that audience—any audience. Blue Note, Columbia and Verve each issue around 25 new titles a year, and though the labels have grown more efficient at marketing those titles, they're still vying for roughly the same dollars and same market share of five years ago. The difference is that now Joe CD Buyer can choose from three or four new piano trio or saxophonist offerings in any given season. (To say nothing of Kenny G clones and smooth-talking "jazz" crooners.)

Not surprisingly, there's disagreement about which demographic groups constitute the true jazz audience: Is it the older purists, the quiet-storm yuppies or the kids whose curiosity has been piqued by jazz hip-hop-pers such as US3?

"When we started to investigate the jazz marketplace, they told us, 'You can't sell adult music,'" says Steve McKeever, v.p. of A&R at Motown Records and the driving force behind Mo'Jazz. "But we asked kids from Harvard Business School to do a demographic study, and what came back was the graying of America, how much older the average age was and would continue to be. What surprised us was how those people were still active with music, still listening and purchasing."

Other labels don't dispute those demographics, but believe that jazz will enjoy its sales bump from the other end of the spectrum: the youth market. "We're seeing a younger, more active audience," Bruce Lundvall reports, "and they want more than just US3. They're curious." Ed Gerrard, who manages Cassandra Wilson, agrees. "The number of young people who show up to Cassandra's shows is truly amazing. I don't know if they're better educated or just more open, but they're there and they are receptive. They look at jazz as 'alternative.'" Hey, can you say "Tony Bennett"?

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incredibly successful, so we tried it with Casandra,” Gerrard says. “Rather than wasting our money on typical promotions, we sent probably 500 copies of the record to restaurants. You’d have people asking what they were hearing, pretty soon word of mouth spread, and there was the beginnings of a successful record.”


Columbia’s Gore figures that the future market for jazz will come from outside the current fan base, and thinks he’s found a way to grow one. Last summer, at a series of mostly free jazz festivals, Columbia sponsored afternoon segments of programming, and handed out sampler cassettes of the featured artists. “We did seven or eight of them this year, we gave away 10,000 tapes in Chicago alone. And we saw sales spikes in each of those cities after the events. People are still intimidated by jazz—they need to be introduced to it in a nonthreatening way.”

Other nonthreatening points of entry: soundtracks, scores and even videos. Historically ignored by the boob tube, jazz may soon find a home in the increasingly narrow-cast world of cable. Black Entertainment Television’s proposed BET on Jazz station, which was to have aired this fall, has been delayed due to slow commitments by local company subscribers. But Jeff Lee, an executive v.p. at BET, remains upbeat: “There’s been nothing but excitement for it. When they survey people about various proposed channels, BET on Jazz has consistently ranked within the top ten. Not only are we getting the stereotypical upscale viewer, but if it’s done correctly, there’s a young audience that’s interested too. That doesn’t mean we’re gonna play all of one kind of jazz or another. But we want to create a conduit through which all types of jazz can flow.”

ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE

As jazz becomes more broadly defined and aggressively marketed, consumers may find their options shrinking. It’s the paradox of big business. Even in increasingly massive retail stores, the jazz bins are already cluttered with more pop-jazz crossover than with Charlie Parker. The chain-operated stores don’t go deep into the catalog and are increasingly reluctant to stock what they perceive to be marginal titles from the affiliated import labels like JMT and DIW, while often ignoring independent labels altogether. Says Fields: “Everything has gone to giantism. I used to have 25 distributors on

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San Francisco	March 10-12	Nashville	May 5-7	Chicago	} Dates to be announced
Seattle	March 17-19	New York	May 12-14	San Diego	
Philadelphia	March 24-26	St. Louis	May 19-21	Minneapolis	
Los Angeles	March 31-April 2	Washington, D.C.	June 2-4	Dallas	
Houston	April 7-9	Boston	June 9-11	Denver	
Miami	April 21-23	Detroit	June 16-18	New Orleans	
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my list, and now I'm down to seven or eight huge outfits. The chains don't take a broad-spectrum look at jazz, and that means it's tough for an independent, you have less clout getting space in the stores."

Motown's McKeever believes jazz sales will jump as alternative delivery systems—audio on demand at home, via fiber optic cable—become a reality, whenever *that* happens. "Record stores are designed for the very young buyer. I'm sure it's an uncomfortable experience for a Barry Manilow fan, or even a Clifford Brown fan, in some stores. As soon as that buyer finds a more comfortable way to buy records, that will be reflected in sales."

Back when the jazz audience seemed limited and the record companies were less inclined to develop it, label heads squabbled over tiny increments of market share. Now, with the participation of more major labels and the music's corresponding higher profile, the executives are figuring it's in their better interests to work together for the mutually beneficial purpose of growing jazz's share of the marketplace. So they've developed a coalition. Modeled on the Country Music Association and involving representatives from each major label, this nascent organization met for the first time this fall to address issues of concern to the jazz industry. Agenda items include better representation on the Grammy telecast, a Jazz Hall of Fame, nationwide education programs—all moves that can help expand awareness of jazz, and, of course, sell records.

This spirit of cooperation, claims Matt Pierson, a jazz A&R man and staff producer at Warner Brothers Records, is an inevitable outgrowth of the music and its newfound momentum: "It's not just about the success of Joe Henderson, or the end of the young lions era. It's the sum total of all these things. You've got listeners tired of candy-ass New AC, sick of the direction rock was heading, and reaching out for something that moves them. I think it's the beginning of a trend toward real music, but it's not any one thing. It's the way these artists are marketed; it's growing awareness of the masters; it's the fact that these artists are being true to themselves. It's the breakthrough of Tony Bennett, which I think says a lot about jazz. It's all building, and it's all part of a continuum that defies point-by-point analysis."

Well, that *sounds* like a good thing. Or as John Scofield puts it, rather more succinctly: "Hey, anybody who gets famous playing good music is gonna help me." 

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JAZZ

OUR INTREPID CRITICS PICK THEIR FAVORITE JAZZ RECORDINGS RELEASED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

GINGER BAKER TRIO *Going Back Home* (Atlantic)

Bill Frisell was heard in many flattering settings this past year, but none more unlikely than this trio, which set his guitar atmospheric against the surprisingly supple rhythm of ex-Cream drummer Ginger Baker. Prodded by Baker, whose command of drum sonority was pretty advanced in the '60s and has deepened considerably since, Frisell locates the stored-up rage of his inner child, and together with bassist Charlie Haden, thrashes through Ornette's "Ramblin'," Baker's chantlike "I Lu Kron" and Haden's roiling "In the Moment," making every solo sound like the last word in a bitter argument. (T.M.)

JOEY BARON *RAIsed Pleasure Dot* (New World)

It would be easy for the resourceful drummer's oddball trio—trombone, tenor, traps—to break down, to be better in concept than in reality. That's why its achievements are stunning. This doozy makes it two in a row for Baron, who loves raucousness as much as he does refinement. He exploits the trio's peculiarities, but doesn't dismiss it as a novelty. (J.M.)

BLACK/NOTE *Jungle Music* (Columbia)

This L.A.-based quintet/sextet started as a bass/trumpet team and grew. Here they brim with energy and ideas—the 11 tracks are all originals. The ensemble playing is tight, the band swings and the bassist (Mark Shelby, who started the group) has a strong groove and *knows* how to play the bottom. Go 'head! (K.B.)

ED BLACKWELL PROJECT "What It Is?" and "What It Be Like?" (Enja)

The late, great New Orleans-born Blackwell played the whole history of the drums



BY KAREN BENNETT, ANDREW GILBERT, JIM MAGNIE AND TOM MOON

on his trap set, and he's the star of these two discs, though cornetist Graham Haynes and alto saxophonist/flutist Carlos Ward are consistently engaging interlocutors and bassist Mark Helias provides a big, fat bottom. (A.G.)

ABRAHAM BURTON *Closest to the Sun* (Enja)

The ex-Wailer (as in Art Taylor's) is a burner, always veering his horn into the zone where exclamation is king. The eruptions can be ornate, as they are in Jackie McLean's "Minor March," or simply frenzied, like the dust-raising gallop through "Corrida de Toros." Had it abandoned about 15 minutes of froth, it would have been a perfect quartet record. (J.M.)

ROY CAMPBELL *La Tierra del Fuego* (Delmark)

On his second album as a leader, trumpeter Roy Campbell continues to develop his synthesis of folk musics (mostly Spanish) and early-'60s jazz innovators (mostly Booker Little). Campbell wrote six of the album's seven tunes, displaying a gift for writing as mature as his playing. (A.G.)

JAMES CARTER *J.C. on the Set* (DIW/Columbia)

The young reedman's domestic debut is crammed with thrills and spills, like Evel Knievel rocketing over the Snake River or Earl Bostic playing Trane. It's all about lyricism and swing and the race to the boiling point of a tune. When Carter raises hell, everybody within earshot perks up. You don't know anybody who won't dig this quartet date. (J.M.)

CYRUS CHESTNUT *Revelation* (Atlantic Jazz)

So what if he grandstands a little. Pianist Chestnut and his two worthy young compatriots, Chris Thomas on bass and Clarence Penn on drums, set the bible of swing on the music stand and keep it open through 11 dynamically charged cuts. It's a "what you

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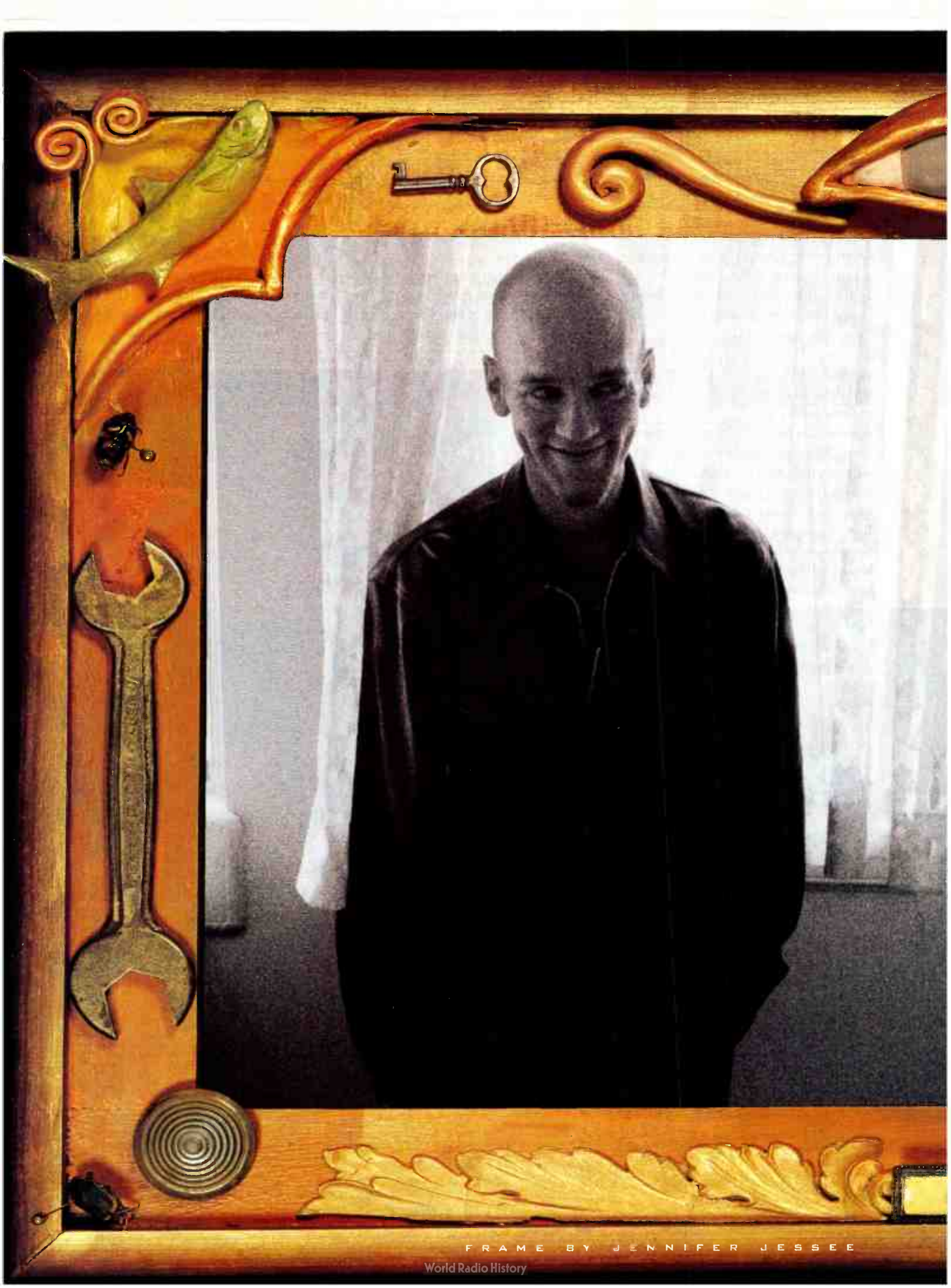
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BY VIC GARBARINI



"YOU CAN BE CYNICAL AND STILL GROOVE AT THE SAME TIME."

MUSICIAN: *That's like pushing the river. Liz Phair told me recently that men try to control their emotions, instead of listening to them.*

STIPE: Sure. Personally, I feel like my subconscious and unconscious dreams are there, and they'll rise to the surface if there's something significant I should know in my waking state. I was talking to a friend recently about some tragic things, loss of friends, etc., and he suddenly said, "I don't want to flatten my experience anymore." And that really impacted me at the time. In terms of my emotions I feel really strongly now that if I feel like crying, I'm going to cry, and I'm not going to be embarrassed about it.

MUSICIAN: *Musically, even when you slam them out, those bright, folk-based chords are a positive counterpoint to the lyrics on "Kenneth" and a lot of the songs on Monster. You guys have a certain confidence and hope, and if it's not in the lyrics it's sometimes in the music. The point is the combination of music and words gives a fuller and more real-life emotional palette. Whereas a lot of '90s bands use ominous intervals, like tritones, that keep the music stuck in the darker end of the emotional spectrum.*

BUCK: When you get four guys in a room just really blasting out loud music, which was our aim on this album, there's a certain type of energy that gets pushed along into the music that might be directly at odds with the lyrics. Yeah, a lot of new bands like to use things like E to F as a riff, and then F to C#, which gives that real stark kind of Black Sabbath meets Kiss by way of old bluesmen feel. And that telegraphs the message, Deep Heavy Subject. In "Kenneth" or "Man on the Moon," A and G and Bm aren't "heavy" chords. Every songwriter uses those kinds of blocks. I've always tried to recontextualize the Em chord, that whole folksong tradition that is part of our toolbox. I just got this record from the '50s and every song is about murder and death, and yet musically they're all kind of jolly. When you use those chords, it tends to undercut what goes on lyrically if you're singing about obsession or weirdness, which a lot of this record is. On the last record I played some feedback and discordant stuff on "Sweetness Follows" to give it an edge, or it could have been a bit sappy. I like to play the wrong notes consciously, and undercut things a bit, but only when everybody agrees the song needs it. *Automatic* was about passage and loss, but it's a positive record. I think Michael approaches the lyrics with the sense that the negatives don't have to be negatives. I mean, death is inevitable. But we're a bit older, we've gone through a lot of stuff and we're not going to do a "life is a drag" record because it's the only thing we've got to say.

MUSICIAN: *Do you ever think a song is just so nonlinear that people won't even pick up the vibe—we better go back and be more explicit?*

BUCK: John Ford once said that people like a message a lot better if they find it for themselves. I always took that to mean you don't have to beat them over the head with it. When we did "Flowers of Guatemala" on *Life's Rich Pageant* I remember having a conversation with Michael about whether we needed to say in the third or fourth verse something like "Where have all the flowers gone, the flowers are on graves," and we didn't think it was really necessary. I think people figured that out—all they had to do was look at what was happening in Central America in 1986. At least they understood it was a kind of elegiac song. I do like to think our songs aren't being misunderstood.

Specifically, there's emotional truth and "real" truth. The latter is the truth of what happens every day when the sun comes up. But there's emotional truth too, and music is a great way to pass that along. People from other countries tell us that they get something out of our music that's more specific than just "It's got a nice tune and I can dance to it," without understanding the words.

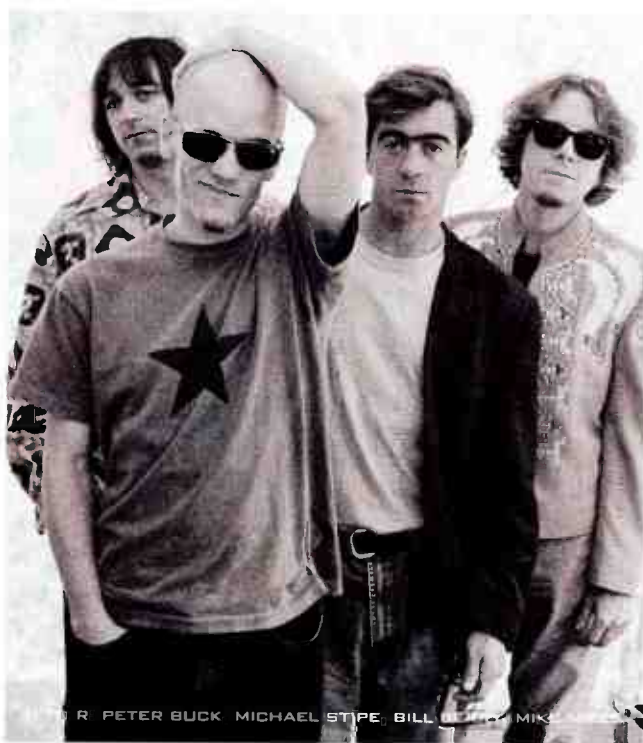
MUSICIAN: *Many of the bands who look up to you as alternative role models were literally born into a world of disillusionment, both personally and socially.*

MILLS: Yeah, they didn't even have a Nixon to bounce off.

MUSICIAN: *They see and feel their own problems acutely in their early 20s, yet they haven't had many validating experiences that prove to them that there's some*

real resolution beyond their pains and confusion. Did you address that with Kurt Cobain?

STIPE: Yeah, it does seem that everything has sped up. Emotionally they're still experimenting, trying to figure things out, yet in terms of input they're ten years ahead, as you say, and those two things clash. I feel much more in line with them than I do with many of my contemporaries. I just started a long time before they did. And the main thing is I've had the experience to be able to say, It's going to pass. It's going to be okay. Don't eat yourself alive, don't let it get to you. This is not an important thing. As a band, Nirvana was going to tour with R.E.M. next year. They'd been asking us over the course of the last two years, "Please go on tour so we can tour with you." And then they got to the size where it would be a dual headlining thing. It was pretty much a done deal, and then Kurt died. More specific to his death, I knew what was going on after Rome. I had been talking to him at home up until his death, up until he disappeared. And so his death in some ways was not as much of a shock to us as to everyone else. We knew he had been missing for seven days, and we knew a



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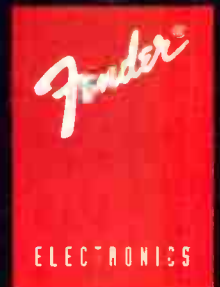


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HEAR, HEAR: NEW GEAR AT MIDYEAR

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And you gotta buy, buy, buy*

—“Sell, Sell, Sell” © 1994 by Al McCree

DURING ONE of several early-morning seminars sponsored by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) at their summer show in Nashville, speaker/showman Al McCree sang these words of encouragement to instrument retailers buffeted by the gusting winds of economic downturn and incipient recovery. Indeed, optimism was in the stale convention-hall air. Although the July show is always considerably smaller than January’s convention in Anaheim, California, this year attendance was up 30 percent; a mezzanine was opened to soak up the overflow of exhibitors touting everything from saxophones to software to guitar-shaped toilet seats.

Whereas the Anaheim show is a roiling morass of metal licks and big hair, the Nashville convention floor rang with the sweet sounds of country and bluegrass. The booths were modest, more like storefronts than the multilevel complexes that dominate the winter show. After hours, conventioners enjoyed outdoor riverfront performances by Fleetwood Mac and Kiss sponsored by Gibson, Shure and NAMM itself. But the more characteristic events were the Top Guitarists Night held by Godin, Rane and Homespun Tapes (featuring fingerstyle monsters Martin Simpson, Phil Keaggy, Happy Traum, Charles David Alexander and others) and Washburn’s Monster Bash featuring Nashville sons Bone Pony and harmonica hall of famer Charlie McCoy. And, happily, there was a surfeit of stand-out products for players of all persuasions.

Equipment explosion at the summer convention of the National Association of Music Merchants

BY TED GREENWALD

ELECTRIC GUITARS & AMPS

One of the electric guitar’s possible futures was on display at Samick. It’s a guitar-shaped game controller, the Virtual Guitar from Ahead, Inc. (price TBA), that enables you to strum rhythms to prerecorded music and offers slick video feedback—a dude in a skewed baseball cap, in fact, who whines that you’re messing up his band when you make a mistake. A more worthy application of cutting-edge technology came from Gibson, which unveiled its on-line storefront on CompuServe. Product information will be available there, of course, but also cool stuff like interactive guitar lessons.

While Brian Moore and Paul Reed Smith were showing not-for-sale axes featuring intricate inlays—the latter a contender for next year’s PRS 10th anniversary model—there were new guitars galore in all price ranges. Epiphone rolled out a number of beautiful instruments, led by the feedback-resistant Chet Atkins semihollowbody in several models (\$749–\$849). The gorgeous Emperor (\$929) and Howard



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more) power. The new Peavey Classic 4000 tube head (\$1499) puts out 400W. Marshall's 7400 series (\$1199-\$1799) doubles that. Gallien-Krueger showcased the 2000RB head and +10+ cabinet, a 1000W system. Meanwhile, Trace Elliot offers the AH1200SM (\$1795), which boasts 2400W into 4 Ohms! The extra juice is not for loudness but for tone, while the additional headroom affords improved definition and transient response.

As for effects, the new options are decidedly eclectic. ART offers a bass multipedal, the BCC Bass Command Center (\$399). There's also a bass-optimized version of Tech 21's SansAmp, the Bass Driver DI (\$225), and of DigiTech's Whammy, the Bass Whammy (\$299). In a way, DOD's FX32 Meat Box (\$109) may be the ultimate bass pedal: It adds a subharmonic one octave lower than the input.

DRUMS

While the rest of the world is occupied with building a better fuzzbox, manufacturers working the drum market are on an innovative roll. Korg's cutting-edge WDI Wave-Drum (\$2500; see p. 73), announced last January, was given its first public showing. It fully lived up to the hype. Not only did it play a range of sounds from realistic congas to natural-sounding fantasy percussion, it actually responded as though it were an acoustic instrument.

A new company called Zendrum is taking the opposite approach, designing an instrument that suits the technology rather than inventing technology that matches real drums. Their Z-1 (\$1350) is a wedge-shaped maple board studded with 24 velocity-sensitive trigger pads. Meanwhile, Roland continues to update the conventional drum kit with the entry-level TD-5K system (\$1795), a complete electronic set that boasts a response time of 3ms.

KEYBOARDS & AMPS

Based on a new custom chip, Roland's JV-1080 synth module (\$1695) looks like a powerhouse: 64 voices, 16 multitimbral parts, three pairs of stereo outs, General MIDI mode. But the real selling point is that it accommodates up to four expansion boards (\$450 each), each with eight megs of sampled sounds. That's a total ROM capacity of 32 megs! Their latest expansion board is the SR-

JV80-05 World, packed with exotic ethnic sounds.

The JV-1080 serves to illustrate that, in the midyear crop of keys, refinement wins out over innovation. Kurzweil pumped more power into the K2000 with a OS update, Version 3 (\$20-\$150, depending on your hardware configuration), which adds a 32-track sequencer, file management functions and other enhancements, and packed new sounds into the expanded PC88-MX master keyboard (\$2750). The PC88-MX has new competition in Oberheim's Eclipse (\$2150), an 88-key weighted controller with a basic complement of sounds. Oberheim also introduced the OB-3 organ module featuring actual drawbars and Leslie simulation.

Korg upgraded their X3 workstation with four outputs and a two-meg piano sound to produce the 73-key X2 (\$2100), at the same time slimming it down into the 61-key X5 (\$1099). Also, Korg's *i* series now includes the *i*4S (\$2800), capable of automatically harmonizing a right-hand melody based on chords played by the left hand. The S-4 from Alesis (\$999) is a QuadraSynth in a rack-mount case with all-new factory sounds and additional effect configurations.

Also, there were two new keyboard amps, from Fender and Yorkville. Fender's KXR 100 (\$499) is a 100-Watt combo with three channels, including an XLR input. The beefier Yorkville 300K (\$1149) offers five channels with 150W/channel stereo and also includes an XLR jack.

SOFTWARE

You can put all those synths to use with MOTU's Freestyle for the Mac (\$199). Designed primarily for songwriting, Freestyle simplifies creating, arranging, and recording over patterns, making it possible to build a composition interactively as the music plays and easing the transitions between pattern-oriented and linear compositional approaches. Freestyle will be bundled with all Korg keyboards until January 1995.

Steinberg's MusicStation sequencer/notator for IBM/Windows (\$199) also incorporates forward-looking features, including auto-accompaniment with user-definable styles. WavePlayer (\$49), also from Steinberg, enables a MIDI keyboard to trigger samples directly from a PC's hard disk, turning the computer/soundboard combination

into a full-fledged sampler; in conjunction with MusicStation, it enables digital audio to be played in sync with sequences. Jump! Software, which acquired the ConcertWare sequencing/notation program from Great Wave, introduced an updated Mac version (\$159) and announced a version for IBM/Windows (\$159).

At the Fender exhibit, Lyrrus showed off the latest version of the G-Vox guitar instruction system. A new IBM/Windows driver called Bridge (\$499 with hardware, \$129 without) allows you to use your guitar as a MIDI controller/input device for Midisoft's Recording Session, Howling Dog's Power Chords and for other compatible sequencers.

Most unusual software concept: The MIDI Renderer from DiAcoustics (\$69). Give the Renderer a MIDI file and it delivers an audio file suitable for playback on most IBM sound cards—presumably orchestrating and mixing your masterpiece in the process. This might be useful to multimedia developers and, as DiAcoustics suggests, those with cheesy-sounding synthesizers in their sound cards.

PROCESSORS

Increasingly, effects boxes are dedicated to a single function, and they're doing it better than they did when their microprocessors were computing seven other effects at the same time. Yamaha's D5000 delay (\$1499) is a prime example, delivering high-end sound (20-bit, 50kHz) at a midline price.

Other new delay boxes introduced at the show include the ART DXR (\$279) and DXR Elite (MIDI-controlled, \$349). Roland took the 3D capabilities out of their SRV330 reverb to offer the RV-70 (\$499). Zoom and ART are nipping at their heels with the budget-priced Zoom Studio 1202 (\$249) and ART RXR (\$279) and RXR Elite (MIDI-controlled, \$349). Compressors were also plentiful at the show, represented by models from ART, dbx, Behringer and Audio Logic.

All of which doesn't mean that multi-effects are a dead issue. Alesis delivered a one-two punch with the QuadraVerb 2 (eight simultaneous effects plus digital I/O, \$799) and Midiverb 4 (four simultaneous effects, \$399). Also, ART introduced the FXR (preset, \$249) and FXR Elite (programmable, \$329), which provide four

simultaneous effects through two independent channels.

SOUND REINFORCEMENT & RECORDING

The mixer wars that flared in the wake of digital eight-track decks from Alesis, Tascam and Fostex have abated, but mixers continue to roll off the assembly lines boasting ever more bang for the buck. Yamaha's ProMix 01, an all-digital eight-channel mixer for live applications that lists for \$1995, leads the pack.

Wouldn't it be nice to program levels and EQ for each club you play in town and simply recall the settings you need each time you play there? Fender's year-old Pro Audio division rolled out the MX-5200 (\$2999), a general-purpose console featuring 32 inputs, six aux sends and four buses. An automation retrofit is on the way. Soundcraft introduced two recording mixers, the Spirit Studio LC (\$2999-\$5999) and small Spirit Folio Lite (\$369).

To get signals into these consoles, there are new mikes from Audio-Technica, Sennheiser and Azden. Azden also introduced a nifty wireless transmitter, the 31XT (\$405), that plugs into the XLR jack on any balanced microphone. And for getting them back out, there are power amps from Yamaha (the P series, \$429-\$2899) and Alesis (their first foray into sound reinforcement, the Matica 500, \$549, and Matica 900, \$699). New stage speakers were shown by Celestion, Yorkville, Community and E-V—among the standouts were Celestion's CR151X (\$459) and CR181X (\$649) powered subwoofers, with crossovers and amps built in—while studio monitors were debuted by Yamaha and SoundTech.

NAMM's twice-yearly superabundance of cool stuff is, by now, par for the course. But that shouldn't obscure the amazing industriousness and creativity of those who design and manufacture musical equipment—their ongoing success in addressing the changing needs of musicians and delivering greater value for money, not to mention their willingness to take a chance on untested ideas. Of course, musicians will choose whether to stand by a beloved axe or trade it in for the newest whiz-bang model (or go for broke by owning both). But it is precisely through such choices that new music is made, new styles emerge, and new sounds are heard.



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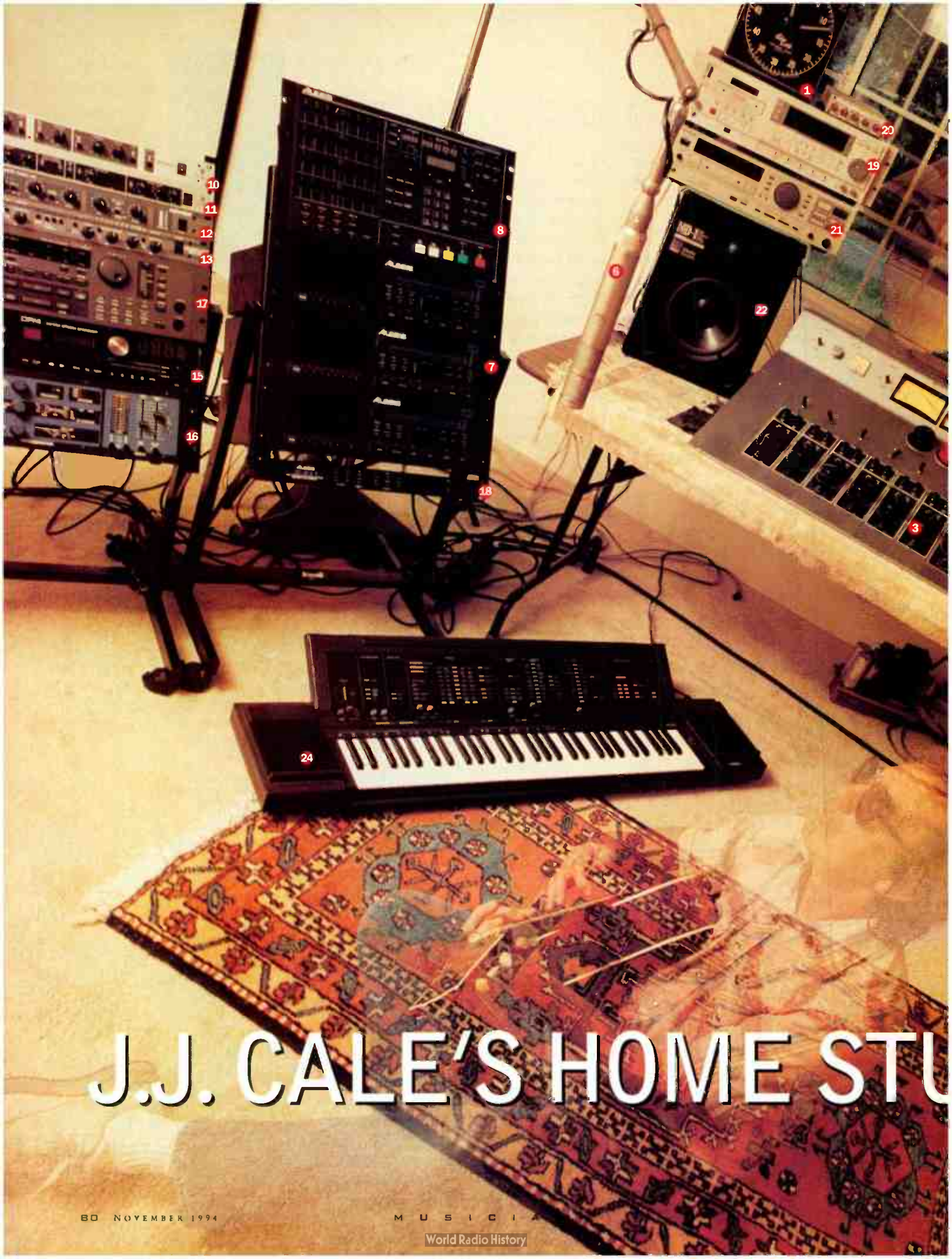
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J.J. CALE'S HOME STUDIO

TULSA-BORN J.J. Cale, who penned the oft-covered songs "After Midnight," "Cocaine" and "Call Me the Breeze" more than two decades ago, epitomizes cool. So does his studio, where half the tunes from his new album *Closer to You* were recorded. Note the **Gralab Universal Timer** 1, which may be outmoded but looks fab, as does the illuminated "recording" sign 2, a replica of RCA's old-time model built by Cale's consulting engineer Paul McManus.

But most of the relics in Cale's southern California digs aren't just for show. Take the **Universal Audio 610** mixer 3, a faderless 1962 model. "The nice thing about it," Cale observes, "is that it gives you that bad sort of distorted sound." He also uses a **Neve 8x2** board 4. Note also the **Shure 520 Dispatcher** microphone 5, the "Green Bullet" that, according to Cale, "harmonica players would kill you for at one time." He uses a hanging **AKG C-24** tube mike from 1965 6 "for ambience, or just to plug directly into DAT, since it's stereo."

Cale controls three **Alesis ADATs** 7 via an **Alesis BRC** remote 8. He also has a **Tascam DA-88** digital eight-track 9 for recording on the road. "It will record for over an hour," he explains. "The Alesis will only record for 40 minutes." Hapless sounds run through an assortment of signal processors, including **Behringer SNR 202** noise reduction 10 and **Ultra-fex EX3000** multiband enhancer 11, **Aphex Dominator II 723** 12 and **Compellor 320** 13 compressor/limiters as well as a **Teletronix LA-2A** 14, an **Ensoniq DP/4** multiprocessor 15 and a **Lexicon 200** reverb 16.

Cale does his editing on an **Akai DR4d** hard-disk recorder 17 (an **Alesis AI-1** digital interface 18 ports audio from the ADATs). "Once you learn how to use it," he comments, "boy—you can edit a whole lot faster than with a razor blade on analog tape." Final mixes are recorded to two DAT decks—a **Fostex D-10** 19 (which supports an **Apogee AD500** analog-to-digital converter 20) and a **Panasonic SV-3700** 21—and play back through **Meyer Sound HD-1** monitors 22.

Assorted oddities round out the collection, such as a **Linn LM-1** drum machine 23. Keyboard sounds come from a **Yamaha PortaTone** 24 and **Kurzweil 1000PX Plus** module 25. As for the **Ursa Major Space Station SST-282** 26, "we put that up there as a joke," he grins. "It gives you an ungodly weird sound—it sounds like the '60s or something."

Sixty-five guitars occupy the premises, Cale admits. Among his favorites: a pickup-equipped **Martin**, a collectible 1960 **Gibson Les Paul 335** and a **Casio PG360** guitar synth. And then there's the 1929 **Gibson** acoustic he couldn't resist electrifying. Holding it to his face, he offers a sly smile. "Now don't that smell like Grandma's old clothing?"

BY DAVE DIMARTINO

PHOTOGRAPH BY SUSAN WERNER

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Flattery Gets You Nowhere

IF EVERY MAJOR POP ARTIST DIED THIS minute in a plane crash, the record store grunts who stick tribute CDs in the Various Artists racks wouldn't know the difference—and if they did, they might be happy there'd be fewer musicians around paying tribute in the first place. Want a good time? 1) Print up some official-looking stationery embossed with the name of a fake charity 2) Send out a form letter to the managers of some of the more conspicuous bands who show up on these things, and 3) Ask if their artist would like to appear on a special tribute to (blank). See how low some groups will sink. Bachman-Turner Overdrive? *Sure thing!* Redbone? *You bet!* Foghat? *The Godhead themselves!*

What makes most tribute albums useless, of course, is that by definition most should be heard precisely once. After that, astute consumers will theoretically hightail it back to the record store to pick up the complete works of the original artist and thus enjoy the Real Thing forever after. And that's nothing to laugh at: If every R.E.M. fan in the world picked up *I'm*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

No Prima Donna: The Songs of Van Morrison
(POLYDOR)

If I Were a Carpenter
(A&M)

Melody Fair
(EGGBERT)

Your Fan, Atlantic Records' 1991 tribute to Leonard Cohen, he would be rich and new Cohen initiates even richer.

One therefore has to hand it to Van Morrison, at this point the only artist (with the possible exception of James Brown) cool enough to produce a tribute album to his own sweet self. Unfortunately, because he did, it's nothing special: Irish singer Brian Kennedy, who pranced around onstage on Vanno's last tour, shows up here twice (once even with Morrison's daughter); professional Morrison imitators Hothouse Flowers boldly imitate Morrison; and, worst of all, the song selection is uninspired and pre-

dictable. Only exception: Marianne Faithfull covering "Madame George," which hints at what might've happened if Morrison hadn't participated and his fascinating Bang Records catalog had been tapped.

Most interesting in the world of trendy tributedom is the simple question *who's left?* Now that Nick Drake, the Byrds, Jimi Hendrix, Curtis Mayfield, the Rolling Stones, Captain Beefheart, Neil Young, the Velvet Underground, Gram Parsons, Syd Barrett and Brian Wilson (among too many others) have been taken, what's the alternative? There are two, actually. First, predictably moronic corporate moneymakers—the Eagles redone by country artists and, soon, Led Zeppelin featuring the Stone Temple Pilots and the Beatles sung by (get this) country artists. The second option? Tributes to uncool artists. Thus, one supposes, this tribute to the Carpenters—who in fact have been much enjoyed by cool people since their 1970 A&M debut, people very likely cooler than the spotty alternative talents (Babes in Toyland, 4 Non Blondes and the

NEW INTROS FOR OLD ROCK SONGS

A LOT OF readers write in to ask us why Frank Sinatra's just had the best-selling album of his career, how come Tony Bennett's the hottest act on MTV, and why Barbra Streisand's concert tour is outgrossing Lollapalooza. We conducted a scientific study and discovered that those older artists are offering the fans something that virtually none of the rock 'n' roll generation do—a *whole extra section in every song*. You see, while rock, blues and country musicians rush to the point for fear of losing the audience's attention, singers of classic pop songs always ease in with a little Broadway introduction—a verse that sets the mood and serves as a smooth segue from conversational patter to full swinging singing. Think of the opening of any classic Tin Pan Alley song from "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" ("The loveliness of Paris seems somehow sad and gray...") to "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" ("You know Dasher and Dancer and Donner and Blitzen...") and you'll understand what we mean. Yet in rock 'n' roll only the Beatles ("To lead a better life, I need my love to be here...") and Roy Orbison dabbled in this crowd-pleasing tradition. Rather than see our generation's sounds fall from favor for want of so simple a device, we took it upon ourselves to craft introductory verses for famous rock songs. No, don't thank us—just make sure the cover bands send us a small kickback.

▶ LED ZEPPELIN

Some women are swimmin' in diamonds and rubies
They think a Ming ring is the height of great beauty
There are girls who think pearls give them reason
to gloat
And will not go outside
Without gems on their throat
But... *there's... a lady who knows*
All that glitters is gold
And she's buying a stairway to heaven...

▶ SEX PISTOLS

Take care of our leaders
Keep them healthy, we hope
Please protect our president, premier and pope
And Lord, if you hear,
In this jubilee year

There's one special monarch we hold extra dear

Oh... God save the Queen
She ain't no human bein'...

▶ ROLLING STONES

In an African village proud but so poor
A girl of great beauty, elan and allure
Wandered out to pick berries one day
And a cold-hearted slaver stole her away
Oooooohhhhhh
Gold coast slave ship bound for cotton fields
Sold in the market down in New Orleans...

▶ BOB DYLAN

She used to be at the top of the tree
A boarding school gal with a high pedigree
But that snobby broad took a fall

Now she's working a register
Down at the mall

Oh, Once upon a time you dressed so fine
Threw the bums a dime in your prime, didn't you?

▶ THE WHO

Save your Parcheesi
It's simply too easy
Ping-pong's for pansies
That stuff makes me queasy
I don't want to go bowling, with ten-pin or duck
Casino's no contest
It's won by dumb luck
I want a game that demands concentration
That calls for steel nerves and hand-eye coordination
Ever since I was a young boy
I've played the silver ball



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT MENCHIN



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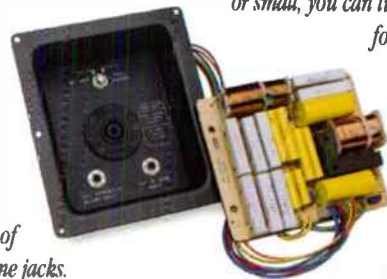
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