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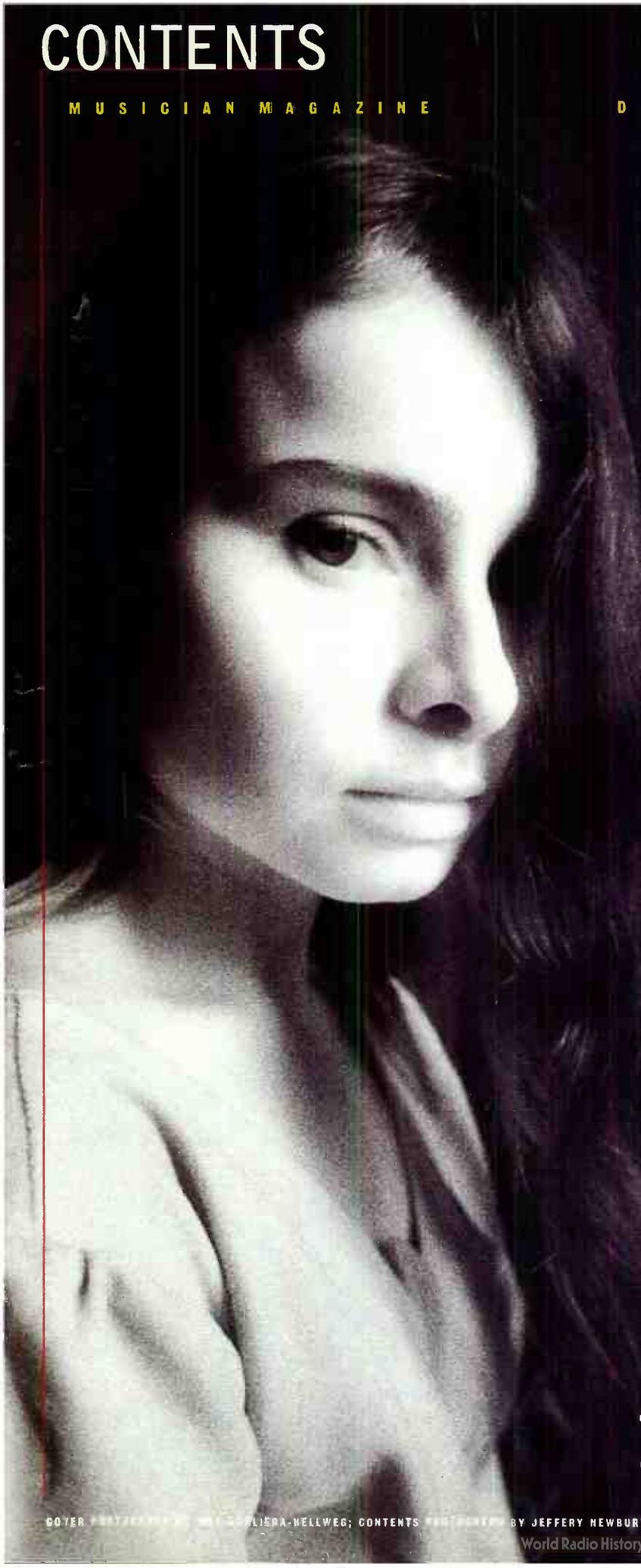
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Wildflowers *has the sort of ease you got on your other solo album, Full Moon Fever. The album in between—into the Great Wide Open—felt a little constricted, as if you were trying to force Jeff Lynne's production and the Heartbreakers into the same place.*

It was very much like that and those songs probably didn't get their due. It was a logical step to me. Jeff made *Full Moon Fever* and I wanted to see how that style could apply to the Heartbreakers. And truthfully, they're not that kind of band. I like those songs more than I like those recordings.

*This time you and Mike Campbell hooked up with Rick Rubin.*

Mike and I alone won't *do* anything. We'll sit around talking, we'll quit at five o'clock. We need some authority figure. Jeff Lynne was busy with some personal problems, a divorce, and I thought it would be good to try something new. Mike had met Rick and suggested he'd be good to work with. All I knew by him was a Chili Peppers single that I loved, so I called him up and we got talking. He came over with a bag of CDs. Rick's got the broadest musical taste of anyone I ever met. He has no boundaries. I never did hire him—he just kept coming over! Rick kept pushing me to write more songs. I'd make demos at home on my ADAT and bring them into the studio. I'm not sold on digital but I love these ADATs. The sound is pretty warm and you can take a demo from home into the studio and add to it without losing what's good about it.

*The new recording technology actually makes it easier to accurately capture tube amps and other vintage sounds.*

Yeah, as long as you're using a mike and it's not just plugged into a keyboard program. Rick made a rule that we wouldn't use any samples or synthesizers or computers on this record. If we wanted strings we brought in a string section. We used all kinds of old instruments—mellotrons.

*You could spend your whole budget trying to get a Mellotron in tune.*

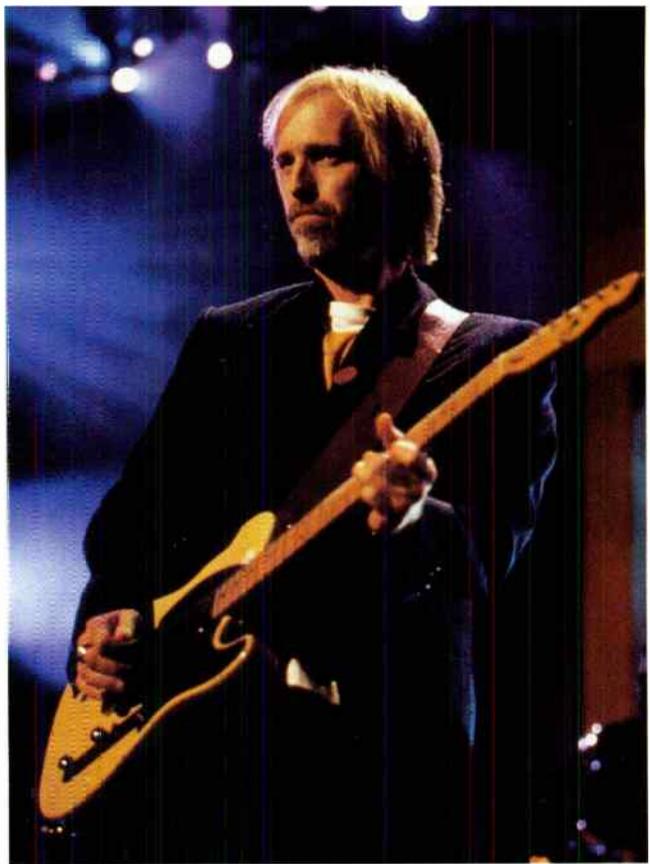
I think you just have to accept that: "It's a Mellotron, it's *supposed* to be out of tune." We worked on this for two years. We finished 25 songs, recorded and mixed. It was a lot of work. I had always planned it as a double album, but when I was hit with the reality of how much that would cost I got cold feet. So we cut it in half. [Laughs] It was tough. I had one sort of psychedelic song with Carl Wilson and Ringo that I loved, but it didn't fit. I guess I've got my next album done, too.

*Cutting the album in half must have given you a chance to shape it, though. It's a very seductive record—one song flows into another very naturally—but in fact there are all kinds of subtle little left turns. Songs with folk or country roots will go into a Beatles bridge or, in the case of "Only a Broken Heart," a little Ray Davies section.*

Right, I tried to pick songs and sequence the album so that whatever you expected to happen next would never happen. There was one song called "Girl on LSD" that I had to take off because it was like a limerick, it had seven or eight verses that all did the same thing. We played it this weekend at the Bridge benefit and it went over better than anything else we did! I thought, "Oh no, I left the most popular song off the album." But as soon as you hear one or two verses you know how the whole song is going to go and I didn't want that on this record.

*"Crawling Back to You" is much more powerful for being restrained than if you'd blasted through it like a Damn the Torpedoes rocker.*

**"I never did hire Rick Rubin—he would just keep coming over."**



## TOM PETTY

Yeah, we had to unlearn that song to get it. There is a straight rock 'n' roll version on tape. Then Rick said, "Look, just go in and jam, play it any way you want"—and the version on the album is the version we got. It's recorded live, the first time we ever played it that way.

*"Wildflowers" sounds like it's been around for a thousand years.*

That's the only song that ever came to me complete in one spurt. It was first thing in the morning, I just plugged in the guitar and played it, made up the lyrics as I went. I kept listening back to it trying to figure out if I stole it from somewhere! I wish they'd all come like that.

*The first single is "You Don't Know How It Feels." Do you expect any flak over having a chorus that goes, "Let's roll another joint"?*

I don't want to be seen as some advocate for dope. It just seemed like something the character in that song would say. They let us sing it on "Letterman." I imagine they'll bleep it on MTV. I don't know how radio will treat it. They run beer ads all night.

*"It's Good to Be King" is a funny tune—isn't that line from a movie?*

It's from a Mel Brooks film. George Harrison says it all the time. In a joking way, I should add.

*That character seems like he might be okay until he says that if he were king he'd have "a nice little queen who can't run away."*

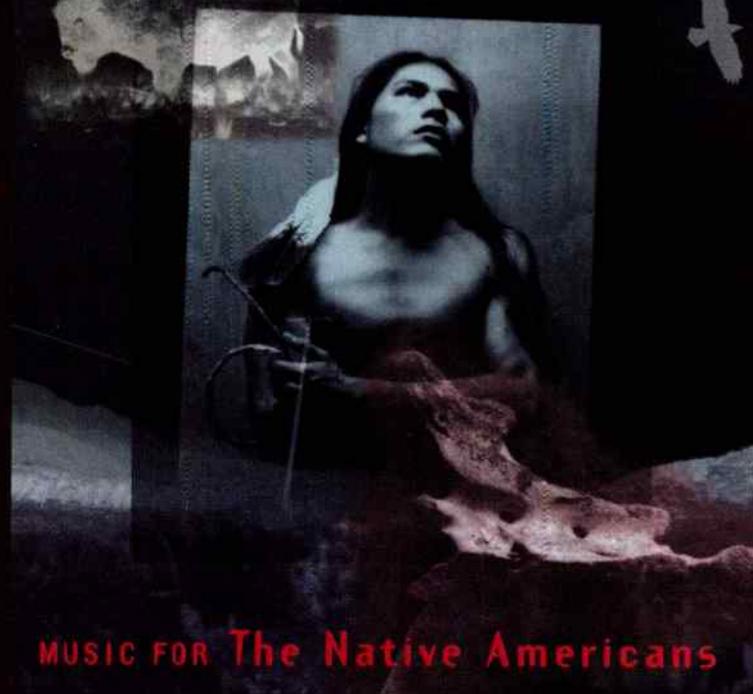
I was kind of thinking of Princess Di.

*When you arrived in L.A. you had a job ghostwriting for Leon Russell. It's been 20 years, Tom—want to tell us which of Leon's songs are yours?*

I'd have to see the albums to remember. The way it worked was, I would write a song called "Satisfy Yourself." Leon would rewrite it as "I Wanna Satisfy You" and I'd get *no* credit. [Laughs] I wrote a song called "Lost in Your Eyes" and he then wrote "Rainbow in Your Eyes" which was very similar. But I could never feel bad about Leon—it was a great learning experience.

BILL FLANAGAN

# Robbie Robertson & the Red Road Ensemble



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"Mesmerizing" - Entertainment Weekly



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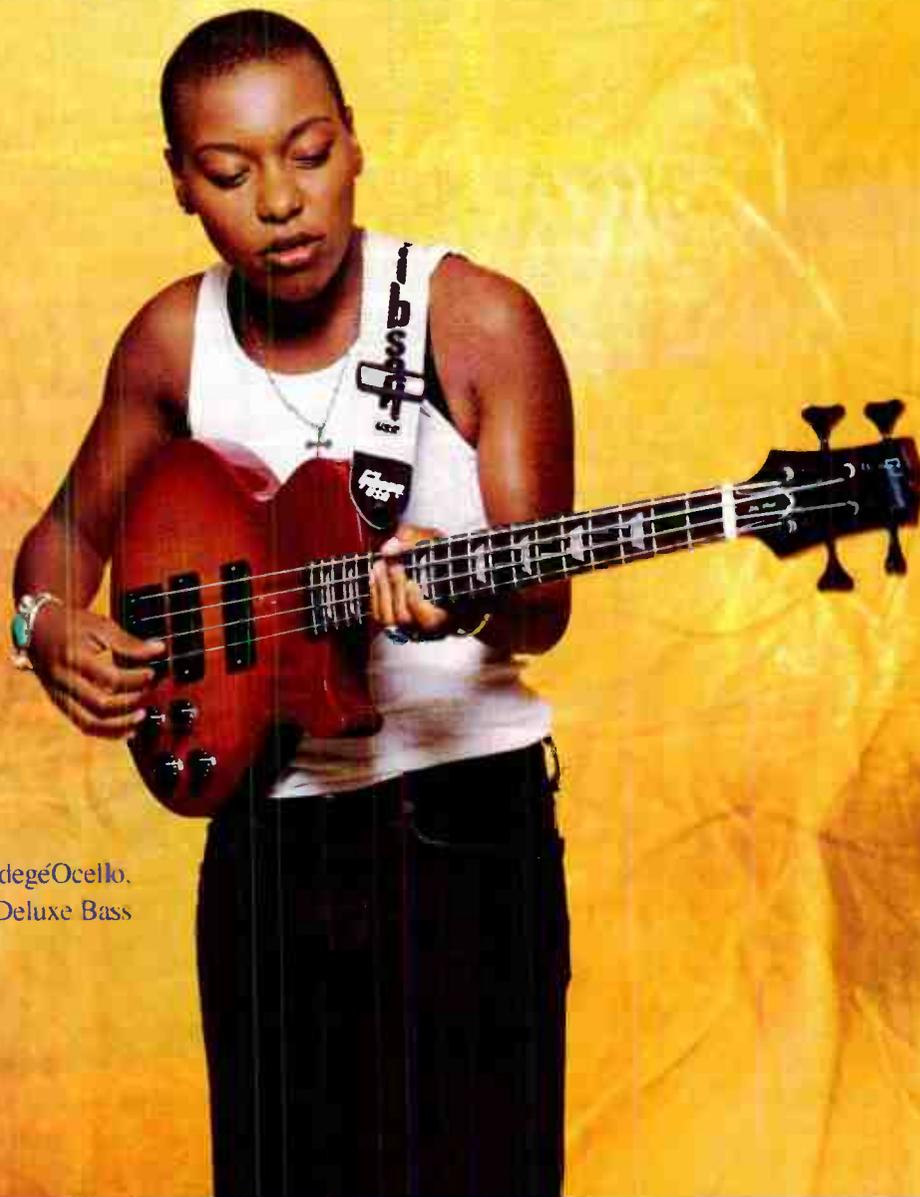
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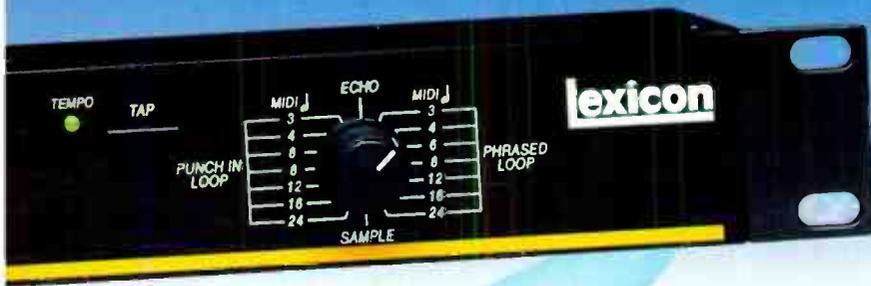
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**DANNY GATTON (1945–1994)**

He could tune his guitar to the buzz of a club's fluorescent lights or, in a pinch, use a pay phone's dial tone, but he preferred to just hear a song in his head—"Mystery Train" (which is in E) or "Honky Tonk" (in F)—and tune to that. Rival Roy Buchanan used to call D.C. clubs and listen to Gatton play set after set over the phone. A bootleg tape of Gatton playing with rockabilly revivalist Robert Gordon was passed from guitarist to guitarist, earning the hushed-tone nickname "The Humbler." In 1989 Danny got fired from his weekly jazz gig at Gallagher's in D.C. because he was drawing *too many* people; seems waitresses couldn't navigate the crowd to sell enough drinks.

By the time Danny Gatton released 1978's *Redneck Jazz*, he was already an underground legend. He could and would run the gamut from bluegrass to bebop, from blues to country, often in the course of a single song. He could play with impeccable taste and intimate understanding of all genres, but preferred to hotrod at blinding speed. The man who some touted as the best electric guitarist said, "Once you reach the top of the tree, there's a lot of leaves up there." On October 4, Gatton died of a self-inflicted gun shot. He was 49.

ROBERT MITTLA

# How I Wrote Those Songs

by Ed Roland of *Collective Soul*

**M**OST OF THE TIME when I'm writing a song, the melody comes really quick, and the whole song comes real quick. For lyrics, I'll blurt something out—usually in the chorus or something—and get an idea of what I'll do later. Like I did with "Shine." Music comes

real simple to me—not simple, but it's very easy for me. Lyrics take a little time.

I had the beginning of "Shine" since 1987. I originally wrote the bridge on an open A string, with the melodies playing the root of the chord. That had been floating around for years, but I'd never used it. I sat down and wrote the other end of it one night at my parents' house. My brother Dean had come in, and he had the guitar tuned down to the Seattle tuning—you know, the low D. So I just started playing the dah-dah-dah-dah part, and it went right into that chorus. Then I blurted out, "Heaven let your light shine down."

I tried a couple of different versions of the beginning of the song. I had about 10 different types of rhythmic melodies I put in the key of D, and they seemed to work out really well. So what I decided to do

was play the melody that I sing on the verse. The guitar lick is actually the melody of the verse—then the voice comes in and sings it.

When I think about writing it, I remember thinking, "Wow, that's pretty blah." Because it's just one line, and what hook has "Whoo-oooh-aah" in it, you know? I really didn't think the chorus was that hooky of a thing. So that's why I put in that other part of the guitar thing, and that's one reason why I put the "Yeah" thing in there. For some reason I thought it was a weak chorus. But the

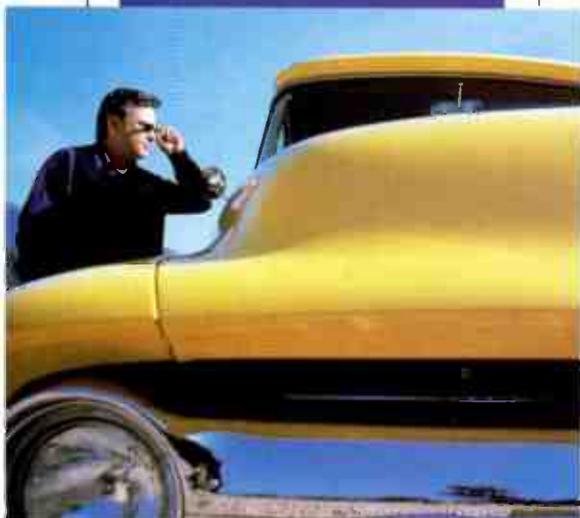


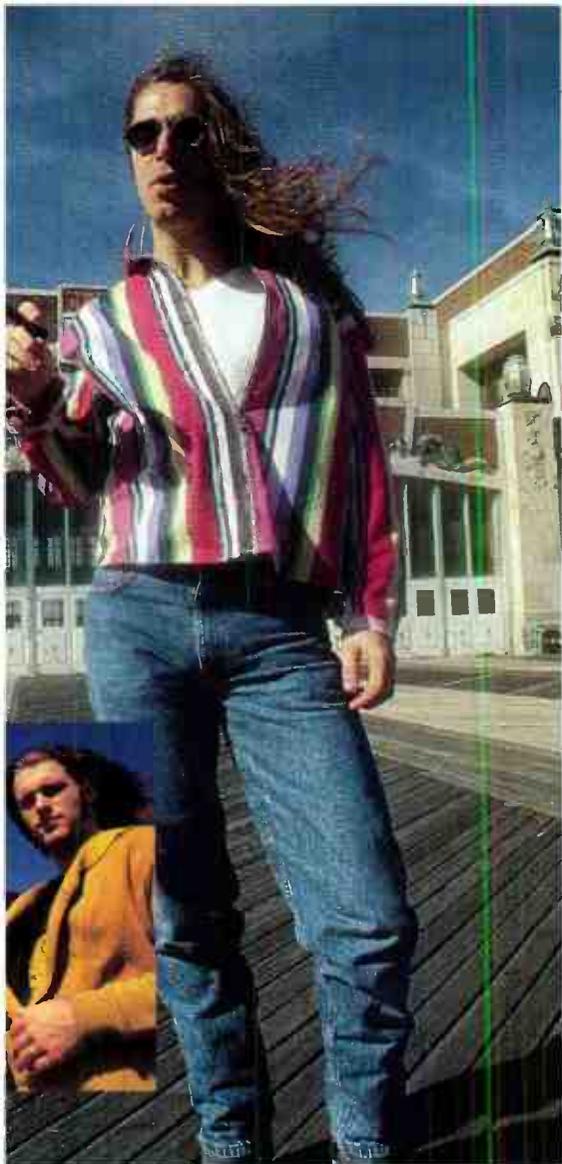
# ROUGH

**CHARTBUSTERS**

*Billboard's* current special issue celebrating that magazine's 100th anniversary includes several lists of "all-time" chart hits. The results are fascinating, if a little strange. The top ten pop albums from 1956 to 1994 include five movie soundtracks and the original-cast recording of *My Fair Lady*. The top 15 jazz albums include three LPs by that legendary jazzman Isaac Hayes. But our favorite revelation occurs on the R&B charts. At number two is Bobby Lewis's "Tossin' and Turnin'" from 1958, at number one is 1994's "Bump 'N Grind," by R. Kelly. Was the last 40 years of cultural evolution ever "charted" so succinctly?

World Radio History





ANDY OBERINE/ANGLES

song's done okay so far.

"Breathe" was actually the last song I wrote for the album, and it came out really quick, too. I was at my friend Matt Serletic's studio in Miami; he helped co-produce that song. We were sitting around talking about how cool it would be to write a song that stayed in the same chord the whole time. Bruce Springsteen had done it with "Born in the U.S.A."—I remember, it was in E, and it stayed on that chord E the whole time.

I was just sitting there goofing off with my guitar in E, and I came up with that melody. And it was another one of those licks that I actually played on an open A string; it was done in A, originally. I was just trying to create a song in one chord, and I did mostly stay in it, until the bridge—I had to get out of E at some point. And the lyrics are pretty simple, they came pretty easy. We recorded that one just as quickly as I wrote it.

We just kind of had fun with it. I sat there, wrote, had the structure of it and said, "Let's just put it down." We got two takes of everything. I ran the vocals twice, put in the guitars twice, and I did the solo on the first take. That was the whole basis for writing that song, and recording it also—to keep it as open and simple as possible.

## NATIVE WAVE

Call it the Native American Wave. Suddenly, major labels have discovered the popular music of American Indian performers.

Consider the case of Kashtin, who reached a national audience via television's "Northern Exposure." Not only are they indigenous Canadians, they don't even sing in English, preferring their native tongue Innu. The title track of their new Sony TriStar album, *Akua Tuta*, also appears on Capitol's release *Music for the Native Americans* featuring Robbie Robertson and the Red Road Ensemble.

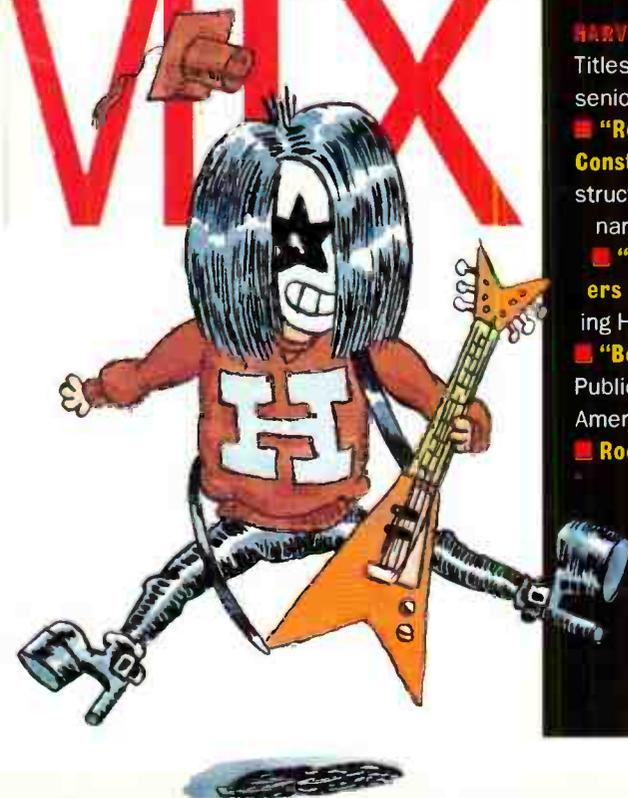
Meanwhile, Native American Bill Miller, fresh from a



tour opening for Tori Amos, is due to release his second Warner Bros. album. Warner Western has signed flutist Robert Mirabal. Rock groups Brother Sun and Beaver Chief appear on Columbia's forthcoming benefit album for imprisoned Native American activist Leonard Peltier. SongCatchers, a multicultural group that includes six Native Americans, has a deal with A&M.

"World music is the new alternative music," says Paul DeGooyer of Sony TriStar. "Peter Gabriel can tour with WOMAD, which is even bigger than Lollapalooza. Record companies are realizing that they can make money."

# WATX



## HARVARD ROCK THESES

Titles from the university archives' senior honors thesis collection:

- **"Rock 'n' Roll and the Construction of Reality:** Anti-structure, Charisma, and the Dominance of Metaphor"
- **"Music-Makers and the Makers of Meaning:** The Case of Talking Heads"
- **"Beats, Ideology, and Technology:** Public Enemy, Hip Hop, and Black American Cultural Resistance"
- **Rock Music, 1964-1970:** The Limitations of Youth Protest as Cultural Revolution"
- **Broken Images:** The Creation of Meaning in British Punk Subculture and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

## Credit Is Not Negotiable

by Michael Masley

**T**HE ORIGINAL SONG *you wrote and performed for the Geronimo soundtrack...has already had national exposure extending beyond the motion picture itself, and has been featured on CBS's broadcast of the 1994 Winter Olympics, on NBC's "Entertainment Tonight," and in an HBO special...*

LYGIA FERRAGALLO



material received composition credit (with the attendant potential for royalties)—everyone except me.

I doubt Ry Cooder had anything to do with this. But as for Sony, well, a multibillion-dollar conglomerate is not fueled by the milk of human kindness. Perhaps my vulnerability—as the only “unsigned” musician involved—was too obvious to ignore.

As luck would have it, my music turned up in national TV broadcasts, giving me an incentive and the credibility to stake my claim. Attorneys Owen J. Sloane and Anthony Kornarens wrested a decent out-of-court settlement from Sony. Securing publishing credit and damages was no picnic. But the really hard part was The Letter quoted above, certifying my contribution and its value to the finished product.

Small wonder the corporate ego would rather eat roadkill than crow: Sony's initial claim included the customary “all rights in and to the Work, including, without limitation, the copyrights therein and throughout the universe...”

To gain access to an audience, artists make compromises that few executives would ask of anyone in the usual labor-for-wages domain. The upshot is that fair compensation must be measured in credit as well as dollars. Recognition is not a mere vanity issue. It is part and parcel of payment.

To ensure creative survival, sometimes a musician is called on to play the role of warrior. To paraphrase Geronimo himself: “Why let the suits have it *all* their way?”

Michael Masley's CD *Mystery Repeats Itself* is available from P.O. Box 5232, Berkeley, CA 94705, (510) 548-1241.

These words were signed in April '94 by Robert E. Holmes, executive v.p. of Sony Pictures Music Group, after lengthy wrangling between my attorneys and theirs. A year earlier Ry Cooder, stuck for inspiration while scoring *Geronimo*, plucked a cassette at random from his Tomb of the Unsolicited Tape—my cassette. What he heard happened to be just what he needed, and soon I was driving from Berkeley, where I've made a “career” of playing in the streets, to L.A. to play cymbalom and flute on the *Geronimo* sessions.

What happened next ain't exactly clear, except that, when the film's soundtrack was issued, everyone who contributed

### PASSPORT POLICE

Ever wonder why your favorite foreign bands rarely tour the U.S.? Here's one reason: In 1990, the Immigration and Naturalization Service tightened restrictions on the work visas required for touring musicians. One big problem: an inane stipulation that an artist must have established “distinguished preeminence” in his field was left to interpretation by immigration officials.

As a result, according to some agents and musicians, new bands are finding it increasingly difficult to establish and document their “preeminence,” while well-known artists outside the mainstream have to run a precarious gauntlet of red tape for each U.S. tour.

“We promote 2000 concerts a year in almost every industrialized country in the globe,” said Scott Southard, codirector of Boston's International Music Network. “And in terms of musical tours, the U.S. is the most restrictive and difficult for immigration procedures in the world.”

“The actual procedure may have gotten easier,” he added. “But the selection process—in particular the amount of documentation required to establish preeminence—has gotten more difficult.”

INM has brought the critically acclaimed Bulgarian Women's Choir to the U.S. six or seven times. While Southard noted that permits have gotten successively easier to obtain, he also speculated that, if the group was now applying for the first time, it would likely not be granted visas.

Andrew Hunter, manager of Scottish new traditionalists Wolfstone, echoed the frustrations of a number of agents, managers and musicians. “It's a Catch-22. You have to provide signed contracts with your application. But you can't really commit to a tour unless you're sure you are going to get your visas.”

*This month's Rough Mix was compiled by Dave DiMartino, Dan Forte, Ted Greenwald, Michael Lipton, Tristram Lozaw, Ken Micallef, Jill O'Brien, Mac Randall and Mark Rowland.*

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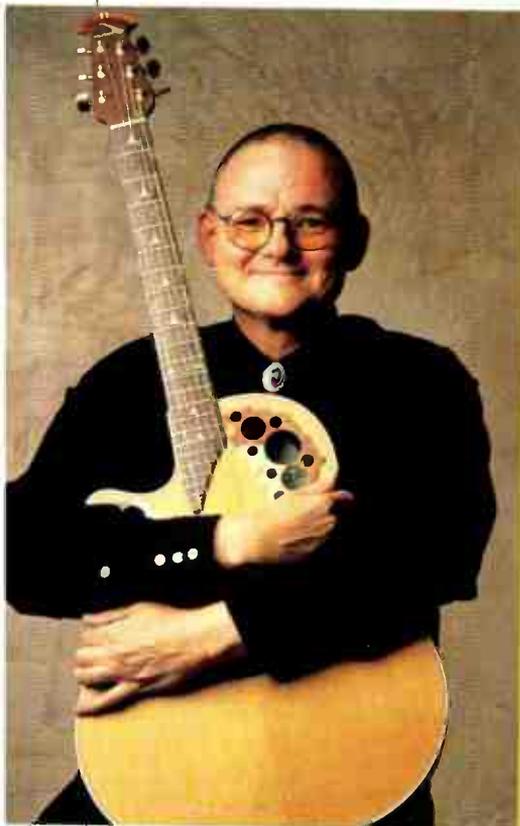
# ROUGH MIX

## PRIVATE LESSON

### ADRIAN LEGG

On his latest album *High Strung Tall Tales* (Relativity), Adrian Legg's always tasty playing is at the forefront. The album's centerpiece, "High Strung Suite," features chops-busting picking patterns, all achieved with a combination of thumb and the first two fingers (no picks). "Basically they're banjo rolls," he says. "The minute you apply banjo techniques to guitar, you break away from the traditional idea that the thumb is the bass; it becomes just another note."

Legg's thumb appears to break out of the pattern with independent lines, but he claims this is "an illusion. I don't believe the thumb can be independent. I wouldn't advise anyone to learn a piece by first dividing it into bassline and chords or melody. Learn it together as a whole. Establish a count, and play everything that happens on every beat. Think of music in terms of vertical slices, complete patterns where the whole hand is involved, rather than parallel lines. You can't do two things separately, but you can do one complex thing."





#### A GREAT DAY IN HARLEM

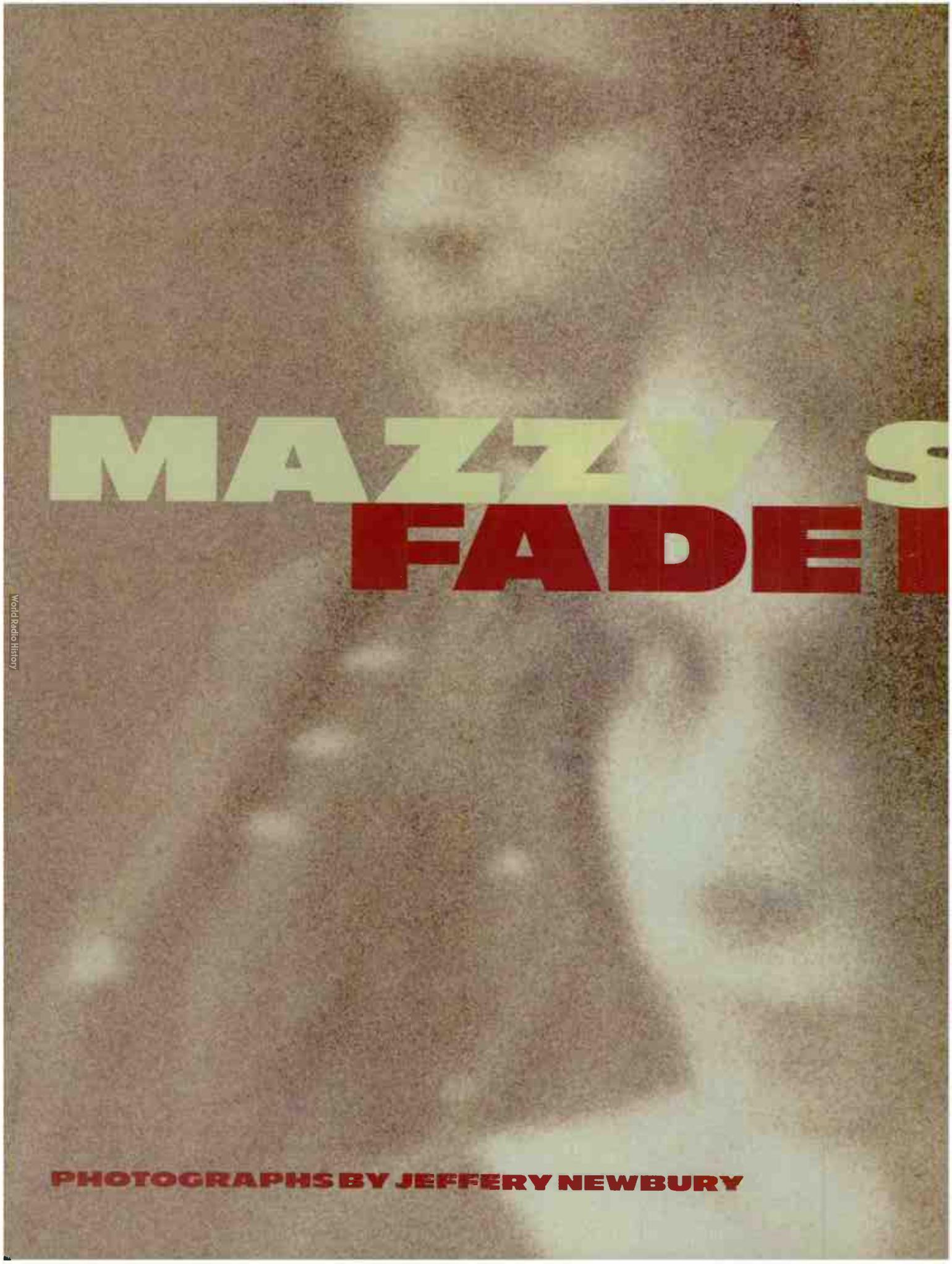
This classic 1958 photograph by Art Kane brought together an amazing group of jazz musicians spanning six decades of its history, from Lester Young to Thelonious Monk to Sonny Rollins. Now *A Great Day in Harlem*, an award-winning documentary by Jean Bach, brings that photograph to life, using interviews, photographs, home-movie footage and, of course, music, to chart the personal and musicianly roads which led to this day. Bach did some traveling herself to track down interviews with jazz greats like Horace Silver, Dizzy Gillespie and Art Blakey. "It took me years to catch up to Art," Bach recalls with dry humor. "I was always one woman too late."

A radio producer and lifelong fan of the music, Bach says her agenda was "to get a story told," which she does by letting the musicians talk about each other. Many of these legends have since passed away—"that's the bittersweet part"—but the music lives on. So does Bach's film; she is plotting a CD-ROM edition that can incorporate scenes cut from the 60-minute movie. "Call it *Son of a Great Day*," she laughs.

What they mean when they say,  
"Rock'n Roll will never die."

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**MAZZY'S  
FADE**

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFERY NEWBURY**

# TAR INTO VIEW BY DAVE DIMARTINO

SCANT FIFTY FEET FROM SAN FRANCISCO'S LANDMARK City Lights bookstore sits Vesuvio, a combination bar and coffeehouse. From it, immediately prior to my entering, a familiar figure emerges. He is Paul Kattner, once of local sensations Jefferson Airplane, now of the better-known group Just a Guy Leaving a Bar. Who cares? After all, once inside I will await the entrance of Mazzy Star, a popular combo led by David Roback, whose onetime group Rain Parade helped usher in the so-called "Paisley Underground" of early-'80s L.A. rock. Translation: They played psychedelic music. You know, like "She Has Funny Cars." No, wait. Wrong band.

Inside Vesuvio, I wait frustrated for over an hour, contemplating the "difficult interview" ahead. For I have been told by many that Mazzy Star are precisely that. By the person who wrote the bio for their first album ("Absolutely the worst interview I ever did"). By a writer who'd once spoken to them ("absolutely hellish") and would call me the next day to see how "it" went. Even by their publicist, who, in theory, actually gets paid to say so.

But I have done my share of difficult interviews. And now I have waited in a San Francisco bar and, in longhand, written over 75 questions that even in the worst-case scenario—i.e. "yes," "no," and the intriguing "I dunno"—should yield one hell of an informative inter-

view. And I have sat at a table, upstairs at Vesuvio, with a bearded David Roback and a very beautiful Hope Sandoval, and had conversation.

Like, what did David Roback think of the album *Rain Parade* made after his departure?

"I never thought about it."

Did Roback find it odd that a former Rain Parade partner would later make an album with Crazy Horse?

"I never heard that."

Pregnant pause.

Background music, courtesy of the Vesuvio public address system: James Brown, "I Feel Good."

But no, this is not another interview horror story, and Mazzy Star are as cooperative as they can possibly be, given the peculiar circumstances of our quiet conversation—in a crowded, noisy bar—and the even stranger turn of events in this, their fourth year together. For this is the year Mazzy Star are happening, biz-wise. They're happening because MTV has taken to them, because "Tale into You," the opening track on *So Tonight That I Might See*, is a hit a year after their same album was released, and mostly, it seems, because nearly any thing can be a hit these days if it sounds like something new.

"I wouldn't have expected it," says Roback of Mazzy Star's sudden pop-chart emergence. "I don't really see how we fit into the contemporary music scene." Still, when he and Sandoval left the States earlier this year for London—where they lived, recorded, played and hung out for five months— their second album seemed to have come and gone. Now it's back. "I think it's kind of funny," says he.

A hellish interview? No, not really. But sitting at Vesuvio, when

THE R.E.M. INTERVIEW PART 2

# BANG

WITHOUT BLAME

"WHEN MICHAEL CAME UP WITH THE LYRICS TO 'Losing My Religion,' I thought that was a pretty evocative title," says Peter Buck over lunch in an Athens, Georgia health food restaurant. "But when he claimed it was an old Southern saying that meant 'at wit's end' or 'at the end of your rope,' I had my doubts. I figured it was just another Michael-ism." ■ A few months later Buck was visiting New Orleans. A friend introduced the guitarist to his 80-year-old grandmother as "the guy that has that song about 'Losing My Religion.'" Buck summons up his best *Driving Miss Daisy* accent. "She says to me, 'Young man, I hadn't heard someone say that since I was a little girl back in the '20s and '30s. It meant,

BY VIC GARBARINI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID JENSEN





JULY 1994

R.E.M.

Lord, I'm just at my wit's end."

Buck chuckles and shrugs. "Score one for Michael. I was sure he made that up himself."

It's oddly reassuring to find that, not only is a lot of what we think *we* know about R.E.M. wrong, but even the band members are often clueless. But they're interconnected on such a profound level that it all converges somehow. Which isn't as odd as it seems. When was the last time you thought about what your arms and legs were doing while you were driving?

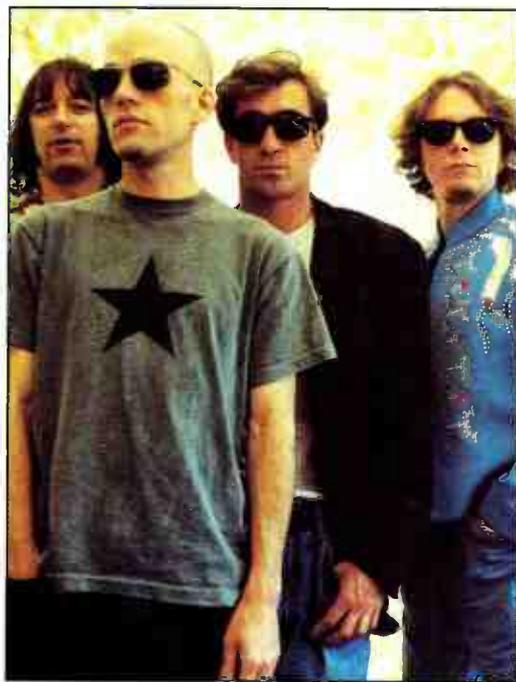
"We played each other's instruments so much on the last few albums it's all become a blur," Mike Mills reveals. "On the demo for 'Everybody Hurts' I played the drums and Peter played the bass. I'd swear it was Bill who played the bass part on the final track, but everybody in the band tells me I did it. I can't even remember writing it. Probably because I was working so hard on getting that electric piano part. There's something devilishly hard about trying to play an electric piano in time on a song that slow." He chuckles. "I still think Bill played the bass, though. I'm getting like that guy in *Sleeper*."

Gentle and urbane, Mills is driving me around Athens, waving to friends and talking about how the town has helped ground the band over the years. "It's hard to come back from New York or L.A. and act like a big shit when you keep running into people you had to scrounge a few bucks off to do your laundry," he points out. He nods toward two women standing idly on the corner. Old friends? "Pretty sure they're hookers, actually."

If Athens didn't exist, R.E.M. would have had to invent it. The small college town tucked in the Georgia mountains seamlessly blends magnolia and brick antebellum quaintness with East Village/Left Bank weirdness. One could easily imagine Andy Griffith and Andy Warhol high-fiving each other as they glide down Jackson Street towards the legendary 40 Watt Club.

But listening to "King of Comedy" on R.E.M.'s scrappy new album, you get a sense of how lucky Michael Stipe has been to have this place for a refuge. "It totally sucks when you realize that people don't have any concept of what you really do," he says. "They just know you as a celebrity, and that's pathetic. It's another self you carry around, and it's not necessarily a club that I would recommend anyone wanting to join."

"To be a celebrity now, all you have to do is be in a car wreck," he continues. "You're right up there with O.J.'s lawyer and who—Tonya Harding's bodyguard? Are these people that you *really* want to be associated with?"



To paraphrase an old Dylan song, you tend to love these guys not just for what they are, but for what they're not. Their lack of rockstar attitude or affectation approaches the miraculous. An industry vet who met them at a recent Warner's party for *Monster* was stunned. "My God," he babbled over the phone. "They're exactly like *real* people!"

Yeah, only more so. And listening to them talk about creating music is a lot like watching those old film clips of collapsing buildings played in reverse. Welcome to part deux.

**MUSICIAN:** Okay, class. As a band, R.E.M. are introverted alternative megastars, while U2 are your extrovert counterparts. You're both undergoing major changes, but they're much more self-conscious about discovering, say, irony—which is ironic in itself. Discuss.

**BUCK:** Well, they're consciously about making big statements. They waved the flag and want to stand for something. They went for the higher

ground. So for them to break out of that, they have to do it just as strongly. They can't do it by just staying home and wearing black T-shirts and doing just fuck-all, like I did. Their nature is to do it in public. They built that platform for themselves, so it has to be a total, huge leap. And of course it's self-conscious. They're a self-conscious band.

**BERRY:** We have one more letter in our name. [laughter] I really like them. I was listening to "One" the other day and that's got to be one of the greatest songs of the last ten years. They're friends of ours, but I don't really think there's a whole lot in common between us. They don't mind having a personality-driven band. They've scaled this Olympus, and there's nothing wrong with that. They've apparently wanted that since they were 17. I was talking to Larry [Mullen] about it, and I guess the difference is that they want to be the biggest and the best band in the world. We just want to be the best band in the world.

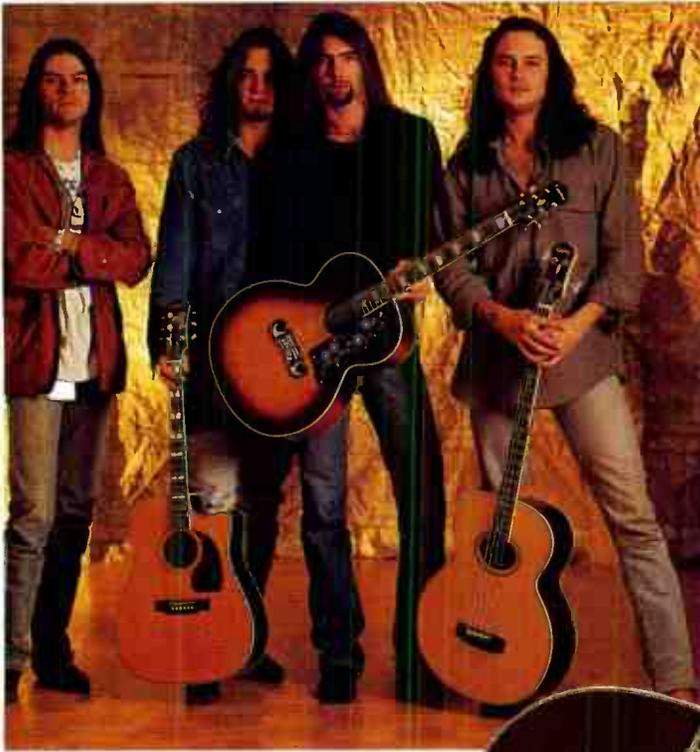
**MUSICIAN:** Mike, you and Michael played "One" at an awards show last year with the U2 rhythm section. How did it feel?

**MILLS:** Honestly? I was up there strumming an acoustic thinking, "I hope Bono and Edge aren't pissed at us for doing this song with their guys." [laughs] But I understand what they've been doing. They felt things had gotten too histrionic and heartfelt. So they stood in front of the crowd and took their old piece of paper, tore it in half and threw it in the air. For us, it was more internal on *Monster*—that need to rock again without resorting to the usual clichés, skipping the overdubs.

**MUSICIAN:** Speaking of "One," *Monster* is crawling with ambivalent love songs. Alternative music mostly shied away from the subject until you guys did "The One I Love" and "Losing My Religion," songs that captured the often contradictory layers of love and betrayal, affection and jealousy that occur in real life.

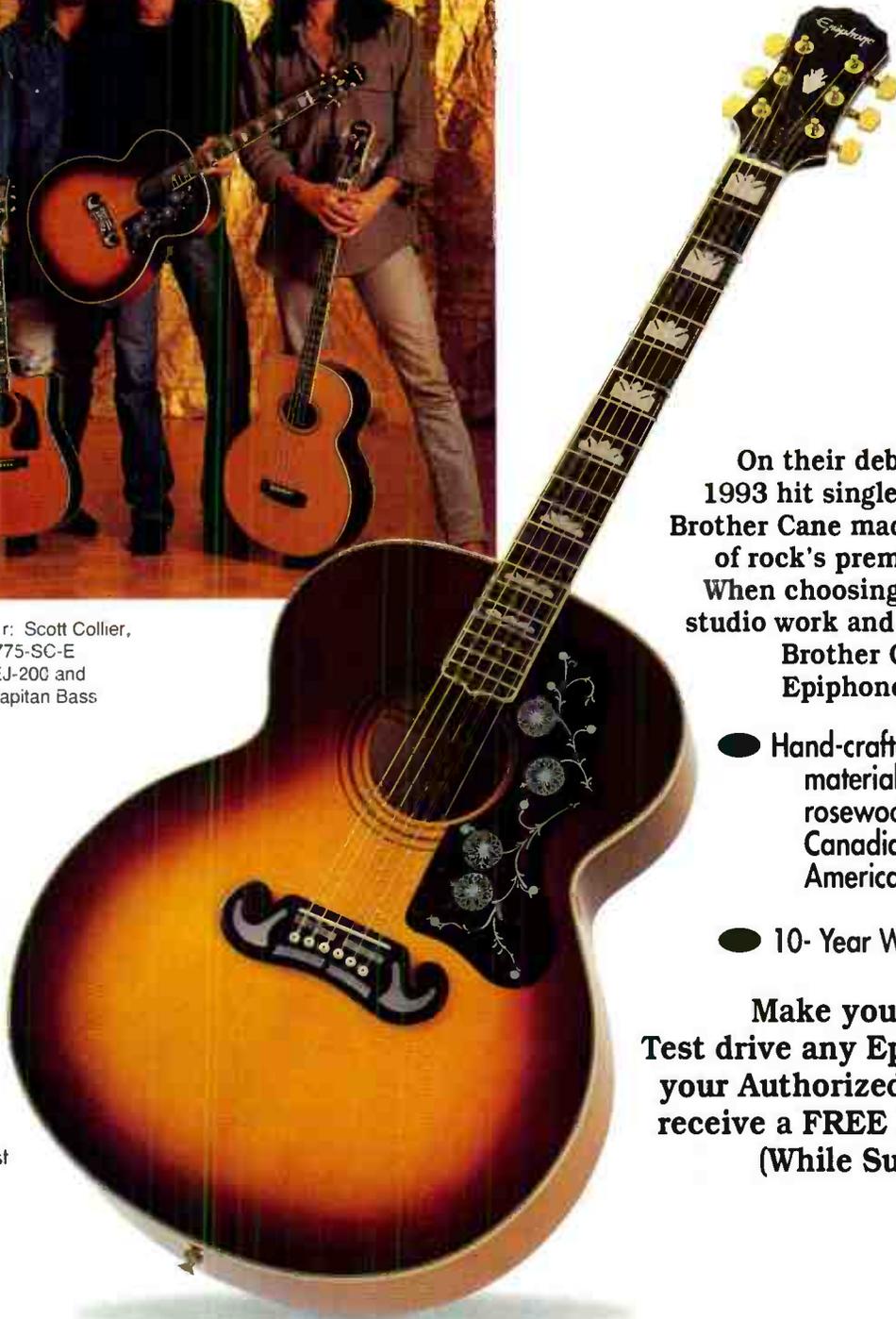
**STIPE:** Don't forget obsession. I mean, "Losing My Religion" is nothing if it's not a rewrite of "Every Breath You Take." I thought that was an amazing pop single, and lyrically really incredible. I didn't

# The Mark of a Great Guitarist.



Brother Cane, l to r: Scott Collier,  
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# GUIDED BY VOICINGS

A GUITAR LESSON WITH PETER BUCK

**O**n a late autumn afternoon, Peter Buck is tuning his Martin acoustic in R.E.M.'s tiny rehearsal space in the basement of their offices on a shady Athens, Georgia street. "I could write 'Driver 8' three times a record, and we try to stay away from that," he muses. "But I love the E minor chord. I could use it till the day I die. And if there's a way to recontextualize it and push it in a different direction, that's fine.

On "Losing My Religion," Buck came up with the original riff on mandolin. "The verse chords are very simple, first position Am to Em [see Fig. 4]. I love that progression and I've used it a lot. That's a real secret of the trade, folks. The Beatles did it, Elvis Costello does it and we do it. Going from Cm to Gm just isn't the same. You need those open strings for that drone."

**Fig. 1** N.C. (Em) Dsus<sup>2</sup> Em Em<sup>7</sup> Em

**Fig. 2**

"'The One I Love' originally had kind of an Appalachian folk feel," he points out. He fingerpicks an early version, which sounds somewhat like the Stones' "Play with Fire" crossed with "East Virginia." "Eventually I isolated the main riff on an electric guitar through a Marshall amp, really distorted. Then I finger an open D chord, leaving the high E string open [Dsus<sup>2</sup>]. Although I'm not a blues player, I think of the next bit as a kind of T-Bone Walker thing. But instead of bending from the D note up to the E, I slide up with my ring finger. So from the beginning, it looks like this [see Fig. 1]. I then come back and make the Em chord an Em<sup>7</sup> and pick around it. I usually prefer to write a bridge instead of a solo, but here I took the original fingerpicked section and transformed it into a single-line solo, mostly on the third through fifth frets [see Fig. 2]. The chorus is essentially first-position G, D and C chord shapes [see Fig. 3]."

Buck enlisted Peter Holsapple to play acoustic guitar live with the track while Buck played mandolin. "Later I overdubbed myself delicately picking the chords that Peter Holsapple was strumming." Buck plays the opening figure on guitar while fingering the Dsus<sup>2</sup> chord we used in the last song and continues through the pattern something like Fig. 5. During the verses, hammer on the Am and Em chords freely, then complete the verse with first position Dm and G chords.

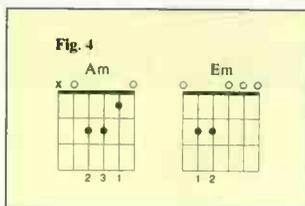
"The bridge of a song is supposed to widen it either emotionally, lyrically or rhythmically," continues Buck.

"This song was finished, so rather than come up with a bridge that wasn't going to tell you anything, we needed an instrumental hook. I

**Fig. 3**

didn't want a solo; a Fleetwood Mac type of break-down seemed a nice idea. So I did this little riff on the mandolin while Michael hummed over it and re-did one of the vocal lines. It was a nice way to get into the third verse, which finishes the song, without throwing a curve into the lyric process."

The simplest way to play Buck's mandolin break on guitar is to begin on the B string (see Fig. 6). Make sure you also hit the open high E string each time, and when you finish on the G string. Notice that you're playing in the same E pentatonic box as the previous song's solo.



rough transition, a total change of perception." Buck believes Stipe's lyrics fit his musical intentions like a glove. "In the verses, Michael's lyrics are a gentle, lilt-ing plea, and in the tougher chorus it resolves with a kind of complaint, which seems really appropriate."

The song is based on the chord shapes in Fig. 7. During the verses, Peter plays the Am and Em "demolished" [Am (add<sup>9</sup>) and Em<sup>7</sup>], striking the chords once and filtering them through an outboard digital delay. (If you don't have one, you can fake it by upstroking the chords with gently decreasing pressure.) The entire chorus is played by barring and sliding the A<sup>5</sup>. Peter

On "Bang and Blame," the current video and single from *Monster*, Buck updates his folksy approach by using sophisticated chord voices in the Police-like verse, slamming Nirvana-style chorus and ringing bridge. The chords are complex yet simple to play. Remember that Buck and the rest of R.E.M. tend to write the music before Michael Stipe comes up with lyrics or melody. "Sometimes he'll have a set of lyrics that fit over a piece of music, which happened on 'I Took Your Name.' Usually he'll move around lyrical ideas and melodies to fit the contours of the music. My idea for a melody was a little more stark during the verses for 'Bang and Blame.' But he came up with something that was just so lilt-ing. I was delighted but surprised, because he wasn't writing things that were so obviously pretty on this record. But it really made sense."

The haunting, echoing verse features Buck's old standby, the alternating Am and Em, dressed up in new clothes. "Yeah, I did manage to get it in there, I can't help it," he chuckles. "But I play that progression up around the fifth fret in a weird set of voicings I call Am and Em *demolished*. You still have those resonating high E and B drone strings that add overtones that aren't in the normal chord."

Buck's intention was to create a stark emotional contrast between the verse and chorus. "The verses had a floating, 'day at the beach' feeling. Without knowing what the lyrics would be, I knew I wanted the chorus to be a very

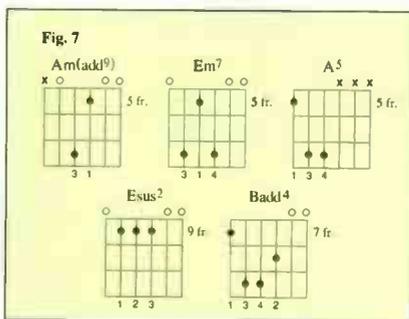


Fig. 6

plays it like an incomplete A barre chord, leaving out the third. This lends the chord an emotional ambivalence that sets up the "complai-ntive" chorus. "If you play the modal version of the chord like this, it doesn't say whether it's major or minor. Your ear sort of hears it as a major, but that's not quite what you're playing," Buck says.

For the chorus, he begins with the A<sup>5</sup> shape at the fifth fret, slides it up to the eighth, back down to the fifth, and down to the third. Then back up to the fifth, then to the eighth, where he finishes by sliding down to the seventh fret and finally to the sixth before returning to the verse. "You're not really supposed to do chromatic, half-step walk-downs in pop songs," explains Buck. "But because it's a kind of wooden-headed way to resolve, I gave Michael the choice to do a wooden-headed 'complai-ntive' chorus part."

Peter's bridge chords are Esus<sup>2</sup> and Badd<sup>4</sup>. Alternate them three times, giving each a full measure, then slide the Badd<sup>4</sup> down two frets to the fifth fret A position. Then return to the verse. During the bridge, Buck plays distortion. "I love distortion, because it's so musical and nontechnical." Remember to play the open high E and B strings throughout all verse and bridge chords. Have fun.

**"I DON'T SEPARATE THE REAL FROM THE UNREAL."**

write love songs for years because as a teenager I'd hear songs on the radio about love and I felt betrayed—like someone was playing a joke on me, this isn't about me at all. So when I joined the band, love songs were the last thing I wanted to write. When I finally came around to things like "The One I Love," I think I wrote in a way that's much more real. I don't think it's a generational thing, that older people can't enter into a relationship without recognizing that ambivalence. It might be brought out more by younger people.

**MUSICIAN:** Like Sting, you were very conflicted and disturbed after you wrote that song. There's fire imagery all over Document, especially in the chorus of "The One I Love." Why that symbolism?



**STIPE:** I really don't analyze the songs. For about five or ten minutes after I write them, I know what they're about in a literal sense. But then it's gone, and the song belongs to everybody. It was years ago; I haven't really thought about it.

**MUSICIAN:** Then don't think about it. Tell me what you felt.

**STIPE:** What did I feel? Well, we wrote it on the road... wait a second...it was just a feeling of complete anger and frustration coming out. Originally, I wasn't saying any word at all. I was just...screaming. The whole chorus was me screaming, and then that developed into the word "fire" when it became time to put it down on tape. But if you're looking at the R.E.M. catalog, the ultimate ambivalent anthem has to be "It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)." I mean, come on. Just look at the title.

**MUSICIAN:** We were talking before about how "I Don't Sleep, I Dream" on Monster is partly about the creative and dream states being similar, and how reality and memory combine to create some

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new hybrid. Now, one explanation of that song was that Michael had a dream where everybody had the initials LB. But Peter says it was about a real party when you first came to New York. How did these strands come together?

**STIPE:** It was a profoundly stupid dream where I was invited to a party and I looked around the room and I was the only person whose initials were not LB. I wasn't particularly ostracized, but it struck me in the dream as being kind of funny. Now what deep recess of my brain has this list of people famous or otherwise whose names begin with LB? That makes me a walking phone book. It's really weird.

**MUSICIAN:** But wasn't Lester Bangs at the party, cursing people out?

**STIPE:** Yeah, but Leonard Bernstein, Lenny Bruce and Lyndon Baines Johnson weren't there. I don't remember feeling nervous. I did feel hungry. There really was cheesecake and jellybeans, and we devoured them. It was profoundly stupid and yet kind of beautiful how all that meshed together. It says something about the process of memory. For me, that song is almost an anthem of complete late-twentieth-century overdrive—cyclone-mind-fuck.

**BUCK:** Well, I remember that trip really well. I'd never been north of D.C., and there were four of us packed into this van, and we knew less than nothing about New York. My father had been there in '46 when he got out of the Marines and he told me that Times Square was a pretty cool place. It sounded like some kind of Jack Kerouac—amusement arcade—automat kind of thing. Hey, let's check that out! So we pulled up on a Friday night at about 11:30 p.m. in Times Square and I looked out of the van and said, "Uh, I think I want to go home right now. This is really weird." And it was an intimidating trip in a lot of ways. We thought we could find a hotel room for \$25 like anywhere else in America. We ran out of money on the third day, so we lived in the van and decided, okay, we just won't eat. Pylon, our friends from Athens, were playing. They invited us to this party that Karen Moline was throwing for them. People like Joe King Carrasco and Lester Bangs were there. So of course we immediately raided the fridge, and she had nothing—just some old cake and jellybeans. I'm like, What kind of a fucking rich-person party is this? We want food! They took care of us, though. We were the four beatniks from Georgia who were living in the van.

So, you might ask, what was the deal with these five guys who looked vaguely like country rabbis, who could play the bejesus out of practically every instrument that exists, who could write exquisite lyrics and melodies at once robust and delicate, and could then sing songs like these backwood angels?



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Excerpted from the liner notes written by former Rolling Stone editor, Chris Flippo

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# FROM SURFING



CLUSTERED AROUND THE DESK IN THE FRONT ROOM OF DECK

Records in late August 1961 were over-eager Al Jardine, his smile as wide as a Studebaker grille; blond, charismatic Dennis Wilson; tan and child-faced Carl Wilson; cocky/edgy Michael Love. The tallest member of the delegation spoke first, his treble tone and near-exaggerated courtliness eliciting grins from Dorinda Morgan and her

husband Hite, whose tiny Guild Music publishing/studio cottage on Melrose Avenue had once been the setting for his fruitless first demo session.

"Mrs. Morgan," began the 19-year-old leader, "you don't remember me. I am Brian Wilson, Murry Wilson's son." Brian was correct, she didn't. After recounting his earlier, unsuccessful stab at "Chapel of Love" (not the later Dixie Cups hit), he hastily explained he'd recently left college after one semester to concentrate on songwriting.

When the group ran through their cleverly arranged vocal repertoire, however, Mrs. Morgan expressed disappointment. Wasn't there something new around which they could build a song?

"All the kids listen to the surfing reports on the radio!" Dennis suddenly exclaimed, the assertion perplexing Morgan and rattling his associations. "It's new," said Dennis of the sport, backing up to face both the studio owner and his companions, "but it's bigger than *you*"—he sneered at his brothers—"might think!"

Seeing the intrigued looks on Hite's and Dorinda Morgan's faces, Dennis grew bolder. "Actually," he bragged, "Brian's already got a song called 'Surfin'. We could practice that for you!"

Brian froze at the statement, too stunned by the notion to endorse or denounce it. As Mike jotted a few terms down on a piece of paper, Den-

*The Beach  
Boys and the  
birth of the  
L.A.  
rock 'n' roll  
industry*

nis hurriedly described "The Stomp," the hip new dance his friends at the beach were doing, and noted that numerous bands were gaining hasty renown with surf singles.

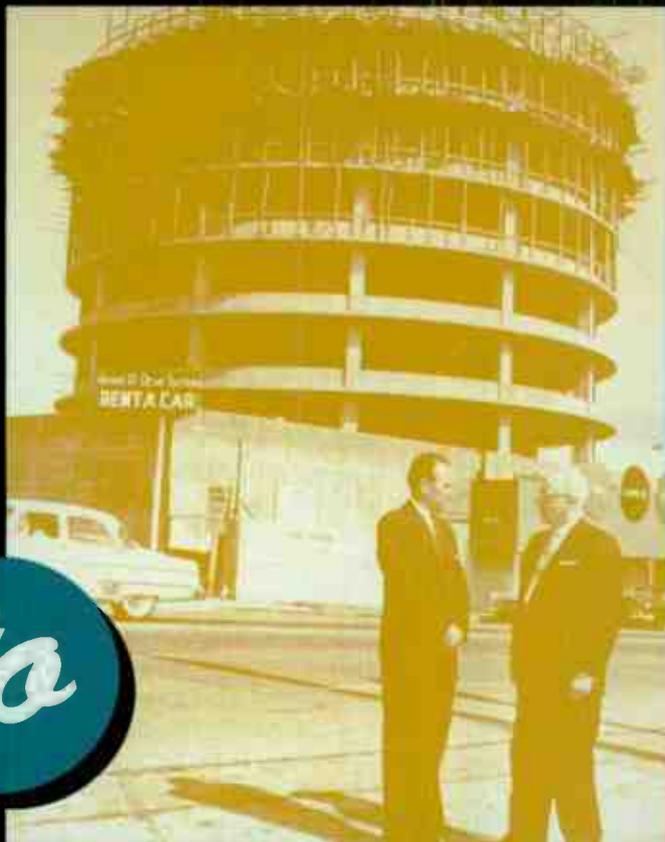
The avatar of surf rock 'n' roll was Dick Dale (a.k.a. Richard Monsour), a native of Beirut, Lebanon, who'd come to California in 1954 after growing up in Quincy, Massachusetts. Dale had a record shop opposite the Rendezvous Ballroom, repairing phonographs and giving guitar lessons on the side. His shop quickly filled up with surfboard-shouldering teens who bartered wave-riding tips for guitar pointers, and Dale was soon enticed into shuttering his shop each day until three p.m. to catch the swells at Huntington Beach, Dana Point or the Wedge in Newport.

Afternoons at the shop segued easily into Friday and Saturday night performances by Dale and his Del-Tones band at the Ren-

dezvous Ballroom, and his loyal following of fellow surfers began requesting more stark, rumblesome instrumentals akin to the Tune Rockers' "The Green Mosquito," or "Tequila" by L.A. combo the Champs. Dale obliged, adding heavy staccato picking to his Strat on vibrato vamps—calculated to evoke "the feeling of white water caving

*By Timothy White*

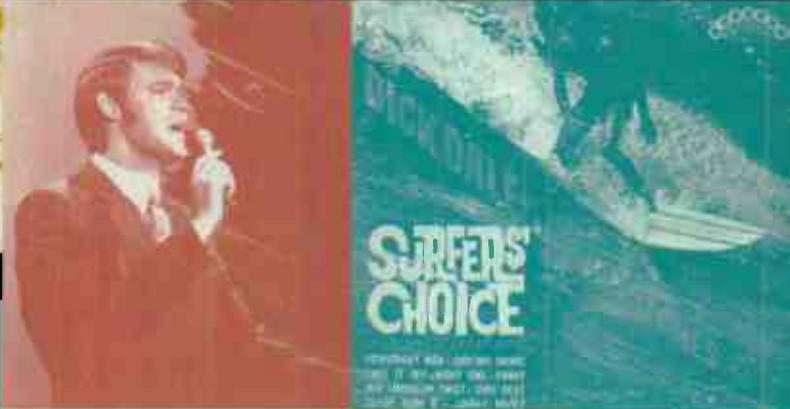
Label chief Glenn Wallichs (left) outside Capitol Records tower, 1955



Beach Boys c. 1963: Brian, Carl and David Lee Marks; (below) Glen Campbell, part-time Beach Boy

to

The Fab Four, Capitol Records' mighty distraction from the Beach Boys



(Above right) Dick Dale's pioneering 1962 LP; Foster's Freeze #18, inspiration for "Fun, Fun, Fun"



# PSYCHEDELIA

Adapted from the forthcoming book, *The Nearest Far-away Place: Brian Wilson, the Beach Boys and the Southern California Experience*, published by Henry Holt & Company, © 1994 by Timothy White

around your head in a tube ride”—that would evolve into crowd pleasers like “Surf Beat,” “Surfin’ Drums” and “Shake N’ Stomp.”

Brian Wilson and his Hawthorne High pals had driven to the Rendezvous Ballroom to investigate Dale’s tumultuous gigs, awed by the intensity of the kids. Dale’s heavier and louder numbers also drew the notice of Clarence Leo Fender, owner of the Fender Electric Instrument Co. in Fullerton, California.

The clean-living and good-natured Dale was a fitting role model for any Southern California teen. As a devotee of the Fender Stratocaster, he was also a perfect candidate to test Fender’s new Showman amp, which was intended for exactly the kind of high-volume rock ‘n’ roll punishment Dale was benignly inflicting on his “Shake N’ Stomp” fans.

Brian wanted to learn more about surfing lore, about songwriting and about pleasing the Morgans—and as rapidly as possible. Prior to the tryout at Guild Music/Stereo Masters, Brian had been down on surf music, deeming it a knockoff of the predictable Ventures. Dick Dale was a fantastic live act, Brian felt, but personally he wanted to aim higher with his own music, locating a new plateau midway between Gershwin and the grandest Four Freshmen material.

Yet the Morgans changed his mind. Something in the automatic enthusiasm this mature couple had expressed for Dennis’s ideas compelled him to reconsider the entire proposition. Plotting out the song with cousin Mike, Brian restructured the surf tune he’d fashioned for Hawthorne High teacher Fred Morgan’s music class, making it into a straightforward, boosterish anthem, embellished with references to morning surf reports, the Stomp and surf “knots” (friction-generated calcium deposits on surfers’ knees and insteps). For the vocal arrangement, he lifted the corny “bop” vocal exertions and “di-di-dip” rhythmic chants featured on Jan and Dean’s early singles.

Murry and Audree Wilson had planned to spend the Labor Day weekend in Mexico City. The boys would stay behind, adult neighbors agreeing to look in on them. Murry gave Brian nearly \$200 in cash, ordering it be reserved for emergencies, and goodbyes were exchanged.

The Wilsons’ parents were gone less than half a day when Al Jardine and Brian had hatched a plan to rent musical equipment for the weekend in order to properly polish their new version of “Surfin’.” The boys stayed up most of the next three days, playing endless variations of “Surfin’,” Brian sometimes taping the best takes on his Wolensak portable tape console.

By the time Audree and Murry came back from Mexico, the spell

of the home session and its accomplishments had so consumed the boys that their first impulse was to share it with the two parents. Thus, no one was prepared for Murry’s reaction when he saw the clutter of expensive instruments and the explanation of how they’d been obtained. He threw Brian against the living room wall for “disobedience,” shouting that the money had been “strictly for emergencies,” and insisting it be paid back “within one week!”

It was over an hour before Audree calmed her husband, soothed her boys and their friends, and urged them to play something on the instruments before—at Murry’s shrill insistence—they were returned to Wallichs’ Music City.

Out came “Surfin’,” and Murry got very quiet. As the last notes faded, he cleared his throat with the exaggerated cool of a would-be impresario and stated that the song, though hardly professional, should be recorded. Brian nodded but said nothing; as usual, he was way ahead of his dad. Their song was demoed in a three-track session by Hite Morgan on his Ampex 200 deck at Guild Music on September 15, 1961, a week after *Life* magazine had done a seven-page photo spread on surfin’ at Malibu Beach, headlined “THE MAD HAPPY SURFERS, A WAY OF LIFE ON THE WAVETOPS.”

Did Morgan like the sound? He looked up and answered that he intended to book formal studio time as soon as possible. On October 3, 1961, the Wilsons, Love and Jardine recorded 12 takes of “Surfin’” at the World-Pacific facilities in Hollywood.

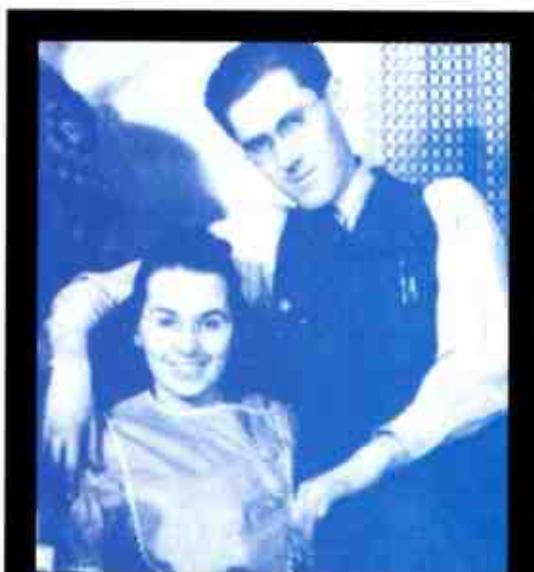
Brian, who had never surfed or thought to, heard the song pouring out of the radio in his ’57 Ford just after Christmas ’61 as he drove away from the Foster’s Freeze with his brothers and local guitarist David Lee Marks. “...Surfin’ is the only life, the only way for me...”

Struggling with his composure as his passengers began gagging on their refreshments, hollering to neighbors

and pounding on him in spasmodic glee, Brian stopped the Ford and swallowed hard. He felt like he was gonna be sick.

NOTHING WAS turning out as he planned.

The Wilsons were products of pioneer stock, descendants of Henry Wilson of New York State, the first Wilson born in America (circa 1803), whose parents migrated from the British Isles in the wake of American independence. Farmers, stonemasons and master plumbers who plunked pianos and banjos in their spare time, the Wilson clan would trek westward to Meigs County, Ohio and later Hutchinson, Kansas before being lured to Southern California by ads in *The Hutchinson News* for Sunkist oranges and the Santa Fe railway. Fol-



Newlyweds Murry and Audree Wilson, late 1930s

*Brian wasn't into surfing, didn't care about the sport, didn't know a thing about the sport*

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lowing a failed 1904 attempt at running a grape ranch outside Escondido, California, the Wilsons briefly returned to the Plains. The forebears of the brothers and cousins in Brian Wilson's band settled for good in the Los Angeles Basin in 1922. But their offspring shunned planting or pipefitting, putting their fiercest faith in music as an entree to the sunshine idyll once splashed across the pages of *The Hutchinson News*.

Brian always imagined he'd become a songsmith at the high end of the popular idiom. Now, as a result of the cocky outbursts of his brother, he was something called a Beach Boy. But Brian wasn't into the beach, didn't care about wave riding, didn't know a thing about it. He was scared, and the ocean *really* scared him. When his father insisted he at least try surfing to help the group's image, he wouldn't go out. Instead, Dennis told him stories and he made up songs.

Hite Morgan was hoping to assemble enough material for a full-length Beach Boys album on Candix, and was confident "Surfin' Safari," the second of four songs already recorded, could succeed "Surfin'" on the *Billboard* singles chart, where the latter tune was in the 90s and rising. "Surfin'" was in regular hourly rotation on KFWB (whose morning forecasts of surf conditions made it "The Surfer's Choice"), and rivals KRLA and KFI had followed suit to keep pace with an obvious pop craze. Meanwhile, Love and the Wilsons were asking friends of friends in the South Bay and the San Fernando Valley to phone each station during request times to boost "Surfin'"'s respective playlist rankings.

The song topped out at number two locally, but by March 24 "Surfin'" climbed to 75 in *Billboard's* Hot 100. Candix estimated unit sales at 50,000, but manufacturing demands for the release had pushed the feebly financed label into a grave cash-flow crunch. Hite Morgan stepped in, attempting to induce Herb Newnan's Era Records to assume Candix's obligations and distribution. Although the ink was hardly dry on Murry's March 29, 1962 contractual letter of intent with the Morgans, Murry interpreted Morgan's action as a breach of their understanding. And after several labels like Dot had rejected the Boys' demos, Murry told Hite Morgan the role he and Dorinda had played in the Boys' music was

done, notwithstanding the publishing rights the Morgans still retained for the band's studio output. Murry then proclaimed his intention to start the group's career all over again.

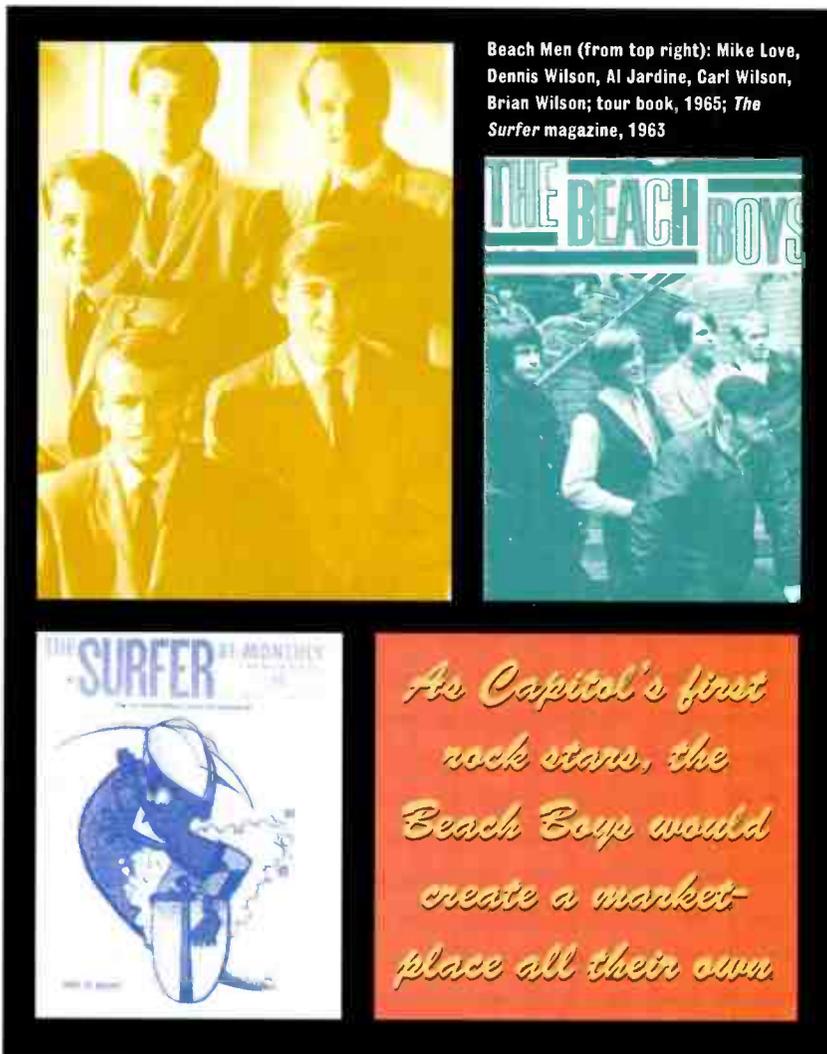
Believing he could get the Beach Boys a deal with one of the top L.A. record labels, Murry took the Beach Boys into United-Western Recorders on Sunset Boulevard in April 1962 to record a new demo for Capitol Records. Murry nervously added a spoken tagline to the four tracks, directly addressing the Capitol A&R man he'd targeted: "That was a sample of the Beach Boys, Nick... Venet."

When Murry met with Venet, he spent most of the meeting boring the A&R novice with overripe blarney about the wonder of his band's abilities. But the moment Venet heard the opening eight bars of "Surf and Safari" (as titled on Murry's tape box), he knew he was in the

presence of a hit. The other tracks had their strengths, and "409" was electrifying. Brian's friend and sometimes lyricist Gary Usher had insisted on recording revved engine noises and whooshing drive-by sound effects for the track, taping the automotive hubbub outside of the Wilsons' house by hooking Brian's Wolensak up to a 100-foot extension cord. Usher made four strident passes up and down West 119th Street in his Chevy, before the entire neighborhood's porch lights sprang on and sirens approached from the distance. The curbside taping session was swiftly halted, but the Beach Boys had the authentic din they needed to give the song a terrific aural hook.

Venet could scarcely wait to get Murry out of his office, minus the tape, so he could run and play it for his boss Voyle Gilmore. Murry wanted a \$300 advance per song master, a respectable fee for the period, and Venet had to prevail upon Gilmore's superior to get the check clearance. Venet also wanted the publishing, but Murry insisted everything had to go through his own Sea of Tunes company, newly created to "protect" his underage sons and their group.

Capitol issued "409" and "Surfin' Safari" on June 4, 1962 on the same 45 RPM single, the label's promotion people pushing "409" as the A-side because of its wider perceived appeal in the nonregional



Beach Men (from top right): Mike Love, Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine, Carl Wilson, Brian Wilson; tour book, 1965; *The Surfer* magazine, 1963

world of stock car racing. "Surfin' Safari" was the instant favorite, however, breaking first in Phoenix, Arizona and New York City, sites rarely included on the average surf expedition. The song debuted on the *Billboard* chart on August 11, and climbed to number 14 over the course of 17 weeks, while "409" stalled at number 76 after one week. Interestingly, once it vanished from current airplay surveys, "409" proved the more durable radio perennial.

The Beach Boys signed with Capitol Records on July 16, 1962, their contract covering an initial period of one year, while granting Capitol six additional consecutive option periods of one year each. In a rider attached to the contract, the Beach Boys agreed "to indemnify and hold Capitol harmless from any claims made and/or damages and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees) incurred and/or litigation brought by Hite Morgan."

With two major-label chart singles to their credit, it was time for the Beach Boys to begin fulfilling their contract with formal recording dates, and they entered the studios at the Capitol Tower in the autumn for sessions on August 8 and September 5-6, 1962.

Frank Sinatra, Nat "King" Cole and the Kingston Trio were presently the label's heaviest consistent hitters, and Judy Garland's 1961 *Judy at Carnegie Hall* album had lingered at number one nationally for 13 weeks, gaining Capitol four Grammy awards at the '62 ceremonies, including Album of the Year. But in 1962, Capitol cofounder Glenn Wallichs gave a keynote speech at the Miami Beach convention of the National Association of Recording Merchandizers in which he exhorted national rack jobbers (who stocked and maintained racks of just the top-charted albums and singles in syndicated, variety, drug, self-service food, supermarket, department, discount and specialty stores like his own Wallichs' Music City) to do more to assist in developing new artists and their long-term potential.

Wallichs might just as easily have confined his remarks to the Beach Boys, because as Capitol's first rock 'n' roll stars, they would create a marketplace and a milieu all their own, and spawn several lifestyle-related sub-genres of music. As Capitol launched the Beach Boys, so the Boys re-launched Capitol into a vast ocean of buoyant possibilities.

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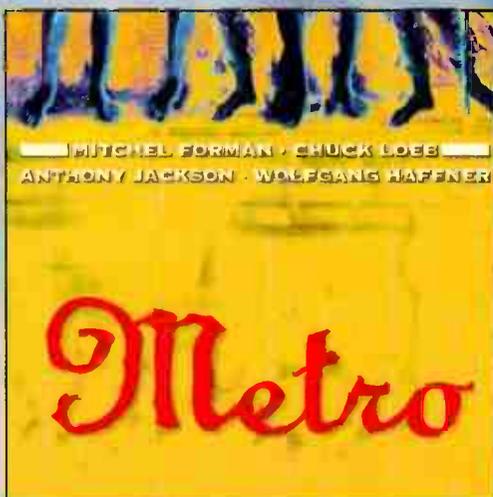
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recording studios in the impressive Capitol Tower building in Hollywood to mold their hits. Expected to emerge with masters suitable for an album to be titled *Surfin' Safari*, the Beach Boys entered the Tower's recording sanctum in the autumn of 1962. As *Surfin' Safari* neared completion, Brian felt the need to communicate creatively with other kindred artists outside his immediate sphere: people he could sing with, write with and also produce himself.

The man Brian perceived as the preeminent visionary was Phil Spector, the author of

"To Know Him, Is to Love Him." Receiving a guitar at 13 for his Bar Mitzvah, Spector was writing folk songs by 17. He started a short-lived combo called the Sleepwalkers with friends Bruce Johnston and Sandy Nelson. His next group, formed while he was still attending Fairfax High School, was the Teddy Bears.

IN THE exploding post-Elvis world of neighborhood rock 'n' roll, the garages of Southern California became the echoey rehearsal halls and makeshift recording studios

for a generation of pop hopefuls. At roughly the same moment the Teddy Bears were getting organized in Donna Kass's car barn, University High students Jan Berry, Dean Torrence and Arnie Ginsburg were in Berry's Bel Air garage taping a demo. When Arnie departed for the Navy and the newly christened duo of Jan and Dean signed to Dore Records, Fairfax High graduate Herb Alpert and his buddy Lou Adler were producer/songwriters for Dore, which had recently signed the Teddy Bears to its tiny teen roster.

In the back of his mind, Brian wanted to build up a body of production credits, but he also needed to establish working alliances beyond his bond with Gary Usher. So Brian reached out to the next acquaintances who might amplify his Muse: Jan Berry and Dean Torrence, aviation student/surf guitarist Dave Nowlen, Hawthorne High drummer Mark Groseclose and KFWB disc jockey Roger Christian.

Roger Christian was a native of Buffalo, New York and an avid hot rod buff who hitchhiked to Los Angeles in the summer of his fourteenth year in search of a vacation job that could help earn him the cash for a 1932 Ford coupe, i.e. a deuce coupe. Christian later found work in broadcasting, and he became a popular late-night DJ on KFWB. He was at his microphone one evening during his regular nine p.m. to midnight shift, illuminating listeners about the automotive subtleties of the 409 on which the Beach Boys had based their latest single, when the night switchboard received a call from Murry Wilson. Christian took the phone and listened as Murry praised his knowledge of car culture and inquired whether he'd ever written any songs on the subject. Christian said he had a whole diary of torsion-bar jottings and drag-strut stanzas, and Murry arranged for Brian and Roger to meet at the jock's earliest convenience. Soon Christian found himself spinning his own collaborative Beach Boys sensation ("Shut Down") for night owls tuned to KFWB.

Jan and Dean's initial professional intersection with the Beach Boys occurred at a teen hop run by a local promoter at a high school in one of the South Bay beach communities. They were the headliners on the bill the promoter had packaged. But the vocal duo lacked a steady band, so the Beach Boys were induced to rehearse a half-dozen songs with J&D and serve as their backing group. The Boys were jazzed to share the stage with the stars, who had charted nationally with 11 singles since 1958.

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Jan and Dean had just entered the *Billboard* charts with "Linda," previously a number one and number five hit in 1947 for, respectively, British bandleader Ray Noble with vocalist Buddy Clark and for Charlie Spivak & His Orchestra. The song was penned by songwriter Jack Lawrence in payment for legal fees by show business attorney Lee Eastman, its title in tribute to Eastman's five-year-old daughter. (Sixteen years later, when Jan and Dean re-recorded it, Linda Eastman was 21 and a former student at the University of Arizona, as well as a fan of the Beach Boys, whom she'd met when they roomed in the apartment next to hers while gigging at a U. of Ariz. fraternity house.)

With "Linda" headed toward *Billboard's* Top 30, Jan and Dean had elected to merge their hit single and Beach Boys-kindled interest in surf pop into a nominal concept album for Liberty called *Jan and Dean Take Linda Surfing*. Prevalent upon for more prospective songs, Brian sat down at the piano and sang several verses of "Surfin' U.S.A.," which Jan and Dean promptly requested permission to cover. Brian shyly declined, explaining it was already slated to be a Beach Boys single, but proffered a half-written ditty named "Two Girls for Every Boy." Jan loved the latter tune's latest working title, exclaiming, "We'll take it!"

With alterations, the song was finished and renamed "Surf City." Jan and Dean were heartened by the surf-pop credibility that Brian Wilson's name afforded them, ensuring their first number one hit in the summer of '63—but Capitol Records proved less enthusiastic. Capitol promo men instinctively phoned radio stations in anger when the single was first aired, assuming jocks had somehow gotten a test pressing of the newest Beach Boys release in advance of them. When they learned the harmony-rich beach anthem was a Jan and Dean release on Liberty in which Brian had played a pivotal role, there was blood on the walls.

Nick Venet tried to dissuade Brian from involvement with Jan and Dean and other non-Capitol artists, but such projects were the essence of Brian's Phil Spector-inspired vision of his career, so any restraints were unthinkable—as well as a legal quagmire due to the Beach Boys' ambiguous boilerplate contract. Although Murry detested Jan and Dean for absconding with Brian's stand-by hits, he threw his support behind his son, battling to keep Brian as independent of Venet's wiles and dictums as possible. Since

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Capitol found Murry an intolerable pest, he prevailed.

In his own milieu, on his own terms, Brian Wilson sought to subvert the system by which his deeply felt music was funneled to the outside world. Brian demanded total production authority on the third Beach Boys album. He wanted no staff A&R men vetoing songs, hiring sidemen and meddling with arrangements; no go-betweeners of any kind, except Western Studios chief engineer Chuck Britz, who would toil for *him*.

Capitol bristled. Murry was sent in to make his manic, overweening points on behalf of his boy wonder. And Brian won. For the first time in the history of rock 'n' roll, the artist himself had absolute studio authority over his album-length output.

The craze for surf songs and hot rod music escalated. Murry Wilson had succeeded in pushing out Brian's lyricist, Gary Usher, but Usher found work performing on and/or producing four Decca albums for the Surfaris that appeared between February '64 and February '65. Another Usher-directed act was the Hondells, fronted by the Kickstands' Richard Burns and supported by singer/bassist/guitarist Glen Campbell.

Others absorbed in the high-velocity car recording rage included a band from the Fontana/San Bernardino area, Jim Messina & His Jesters, Messina co-authoring most of the 1964 *The Dragsters* Audio Fidelity album with a transplanted Michigan singer/songwriter named Glenn Frey. Jan and Dean were deep into their own car song phase, their new single being "Dead Man's Curve," a Berry-Wilson-Christian song (on which Brian sang) named for a downhill turn on Sunset Boulevard beside UCLA where noted voice actor Mel "Bugs Bunny" Blanc had just suffered a near-fatal accident.

As 1964 unfolded, the effects of stress on everyone were flagrant.

Brian wasn't getting along with Murry. Murry wasn't getting along with Audree. Capitol wasn't getting along with Murry as the representative of the Beach Boys, who were having trouble getting along with Brian. And Brian knew Capitol could no longer get along financially without rock 'n' roll.

Capitol's annual gross income for 1961-63 was just shy of \$50 million, its reliance on the Beach Boys' sales volume taking some pressure off the label's other top sellers: the Kingston Trio, Nat "King" Cole and Al Martino. However, Sir Edward Lewis, head of Capitol's British EMI parent company,

was disgruntled with the sparse licensing and distribution his U.K. product could expect in the indispensable U.S. market. A case in point was the Beatles, a new group out of Liverpool with two albums, an EP and four singles presently ruling the British charts—yet Capitol had shown no interest in picking up its option on Beatles records for the States. Capitol surmised that surf and car music as exemplified by the Beach Boys was *the* most lucrative current route imaginable, with nothing likely to exceed it.

Capitol finally bowed to British corporate pressure on December 26, 1963 and issued a Beatles single of "I Want to Hold Your Hand"/"I Saw Her Standing There," earmarking \$50,000 for domestic promotion. Three days later, the U.S. label learned what it had been missing: A quarter of a million copies sold. By January 10, "Hand" was number one and the single's sales were over a million, with purchases in New York stores progressing at a rate of 10,000 units an hour.

*Meet the Beatles*, originally due in February, was promptly re-scheduled for January 20 release. The Beatles were booked for a two-week February U.S. publicity tour, and four thousand screaming fans and hundreds of press were waiting at New York's Kennedy Airport for Pan American Flight 101 on February 7 when the Clipper *Defiance* landed with the Beatles aboard in first class. Sitting in the aisle seat in front of Paul McCartney—ever in the optimum place at the optimum time—was Phil Spector.

Rattled by the overwhelming reception for the Fab Four, Brian had a meeting with Mike Love at which they shared their qualms and constructed a strategy to cope with the phenomenon. Brian wanted the Liverpool competition to hear Hawthorne's best Top 40 artillery while both bands were still on American turf, because the Beach Boys were due to depart for an Australian tour with the Surfariis and Roy Orbison. The day following the official release of *Shut Down Vol. 2*, the Boys were back in Western Studios to do a German rendition of "In My Room" in emulation of the covers for EMI-Deutschland's Odeon label that the Beatles had done of "I Want to Hold Your Hand" and "She Loves You." The Germans preferred the Beach Boys in English, and the Teutonic "In My Room" was not released.

More bothersome was the ad supplement Capitol designed for publication in national newspapers' Sunday magazine sections starting in April. Pictured below the headline

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were all four Beatles hoisting a sign that said: "HEAR THE BEATLES, THE BEACH BOYS AND THE KINGSTON TRIO—NOW!" Of the nine albums shown under the Beatles photo, there were *Meet the Beatles*, the Kingston Trio's *New Frontier*...but no Beach Boys product. Staped to the back page of the four-page Capitol insert was a free cardboard disc that contained the Beatles' "Roll Over Beethoven," the Boys' "Little Deuce Coupe" and the Kingston Trio's "When the Saints Go Marching in."

The Beach Boys were worth giving away, but not worth billing over the Beatles. Capitol's energies were shifting from the West Coast Yanks to the new blokes in town.

Brian lived alone in an apartment he didn't like to sleep in. He finally had financial and personal freedom but no sense of how to partake of them. And he couldn't bear to be by himself. His girlfriend Marilyn Rovell seemed the anchor for his listless emotions, the remedy for his formless fears. On December 7, 1964, Brian and Marilyn were married in a civil ceremony at the city courthouse in Los Angeles, and she moved into his Hollywood flat.

But Brian's behavior was erratic, his comings and goings unpredictable, his manner uncharacteristically aloof for a newlywed. He admitted smoking marijuana with musician friends and people connected with the talent agencies in town that handled rock 'n' roll bookings. Young and sheltered, Marilyn was distressed by these disclosures. They fought over his behavior, his disregard for her feelings, his lengthy disappearances and marked mood of detachment.

On December 23, Brian was bidding Marilyn goodbye at Los Angeles International Airport when, as he prepared to board a morning plane to Houston for a concert that night, he suddenly sensed she was gazing at Mike Love. Whether her scrutiny of him was mindless or meaningful, he wasn't sure. But he believed something was oddly askew, if not terribly wrong, and that Marilyn's affection for him might be straying. Agitated, feeling clammy, Brian turned away and caught the flight.

Five minutes outside of Los Angeles, the screaming started. And it wasn't for the Beatles.

The tall, dough-faced young man sitting in the forward section, whose manic stares before takeoff had since given way to white-knuckled catatonia, had suddenly begun crying and then making jagged, high-pitched yowls as he grabbed at his airline pillow. His

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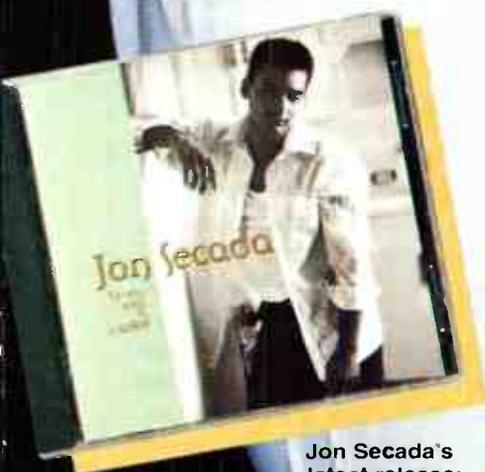
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BY J. D. CONSIDINE

# IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR



# TIMMY PAGE & ROBERT PLANT CONQUER THE WORLD... AGAIN



outrageous. It doesn't have any problem with itself, it just comes out and howls. Not in a bluesy way, not in a Staples Singers way, just in a kind of bang-bang-bang.

**PAGE:** It's dissonant, dangerous. The sound of really dangerous women, let me tell you.

**PLANT:** Yeah, they would be dangerous if you took 'em home. I said to Mustafa, "What are these people?" He said, "Ah, these are called the free people." They are Berbers from north of the Atlas, not far from Fez. But they've never succumbed to anybody who passed through, never the Arabs nor the

French nor anybody at all.

But they howled, and they were howling, I was singing, Jimmy was playing the guitar and the Gnawa were playing. We were doing all this, it was like a spontaneous, it was like three or four express trains crossing each other.

**PAGE:** Yeah. Rhythmically, everybody was doing these counter-rhythms. The whole train of it was wonderful.

**PLANT:** It's really out there, but it's not—I mean, you can't put it on a record, really, or whatever this format music follows these days.

**MUSICIAN:** So much of the Moroccan influence on your past recordings has been Berber music, I'm surprised there isn't any here. Had you expected to not have any Berber music on this?

**PLANT:** It was just the luck of the draw, to be perfectly frank. We just couldn't find enough Berbers. [laughs] I mean, if we go back there—

**PAGE:** We didn't have enough time to work with the Berbers, probably. We only had a short period of time there in which to come out with whatever. If we'd have worked with the women on their own, we might have come up with something. But as it was, we just didn't have time.

But there's always the possibility of the future.

**PLANT:** You must be aware, on Real World, there's a CD called *Passion Sources*—not the Peter Gabriel thing, but the one where there's Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and all that. I think track nine is a Berber wedding track. And if you listen to the drum intro on that, and that whole thing, that's where we're going next. Into that vibe, I think. 'Cause the drums—I think this whole thing about the drum and the chant and the sort of mantric, tribal thing, if we can make the most of that, it really brings out the best in us two as writers, instantly.

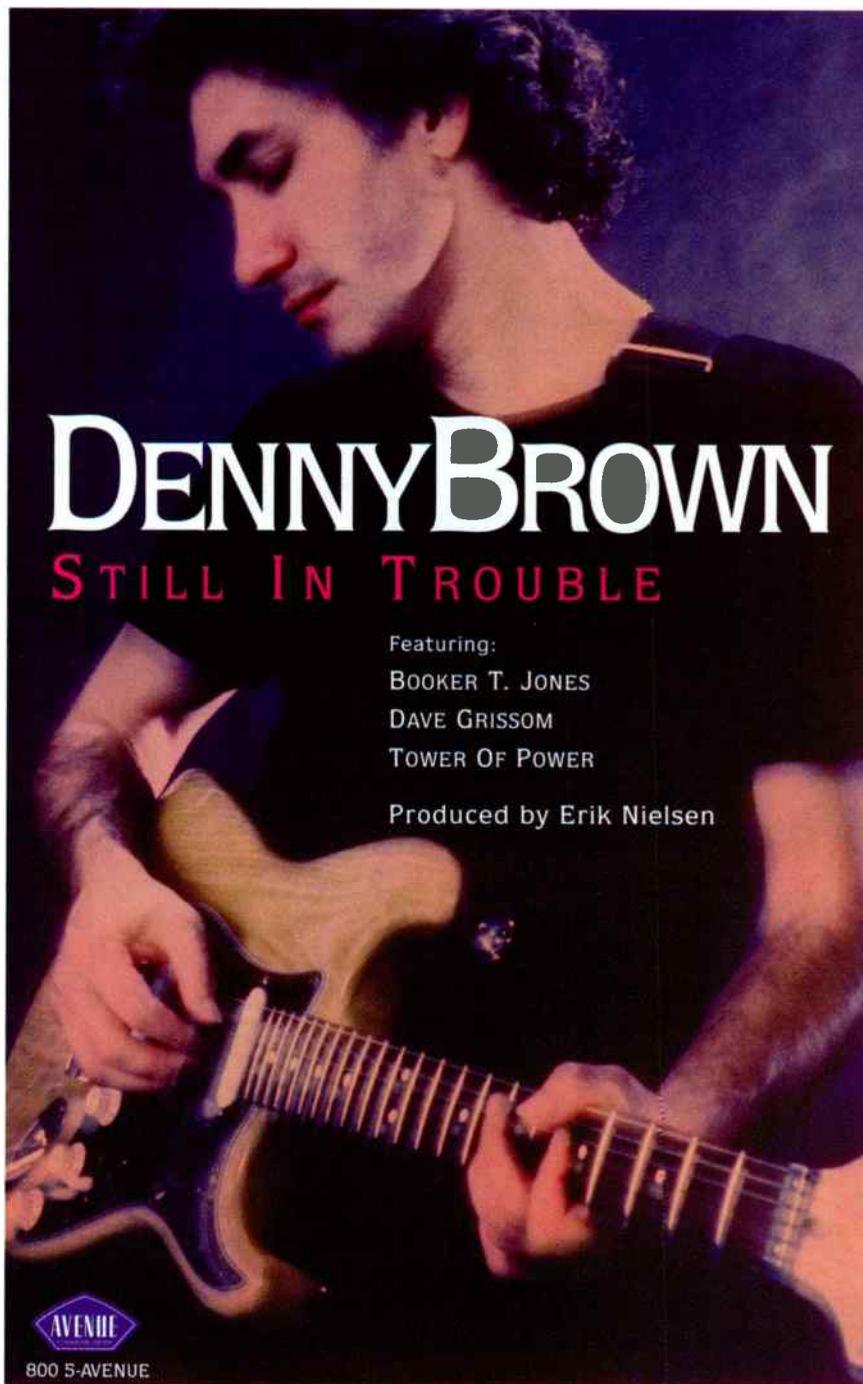
So the Berbers are holding their breath. Unwittingly. [laughs]

**MUSICIAN:** Apart from the Moroccan performances, there's quite a lot of Arabic influence in this music. On "Kashmir," I noticed that Robert does quite a nice Arabic turn during the introduction.

**PLANT:** I've been trying to make it a part of my style, where appropriate. The only thing is, I can't include it in a line of lyric yet, I can only use it as a kind of punctuation at the end of a line. I want to try and make it part of the melodic structure of a song, rather than just a sort of afterthought, like an "Ooh yeah" of a blues thing or a Ray Charles shout. Maybe I can do that.

**PAGE:** I remember when I saw you in Boston at the end of one of the numbers, I can't remember what it was, you did some of these great trills, you know, Arabic trills. I said, "That was great." He said, "Yeah, I've got a lot of that inside me."

**PLANT:** That's right, yeah. Nadjma, the Indian singer on this project, she rehearses, she practices. It's very serious, the Indian thing. It's far removed from the North African. But she practices against ragas and weaves so much of a voice into these amazing areas. And it's quite amazing that at this point in my singing time that I've got now so much ambi-



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ELECTRON

ADRIAN LEGG WON'T PLAY anything colored green. Right. Eric Johnson says different brands of batteries produce different sounds in his effects boxes. Sure. Michael Hill figures his sound improves by boiling guitar strings. Of course.

Skeptics may dismiss these tales as "guitar voodoo," to adapt a phrase from George Bush's guide to wit and wisdom.

# VERY

# SUPERSTITIOUS

that. Honestly, I don't think he can hear that well any more."

On the contrary, Johnson's tales suggest an unusually sensitive pair of ears. "I've put new on/off switches in amps, and they make the thing sound different," he says. "The volume knob on my '54 Strat stopped working, and I went through about seven before I found one that

But if you ask some of the world's best guitar players, you'll find plenty of believers—and they don't mind calling it voodoo either. A surprising number of players swear that their performances are often influenced by phenomena that simply can't be explained by everyday happenstance.

Some of these occurrences are mundane enough to be familiar to every musician—strange buzzes and hums that appear and disappear for no apparent reason. But others are so dramatically eerie that otherwise worldly guitarists have come to the same conclusion: Supernatural forces are affecting their equipment or their psyches, forces that inhabit the amorphous space where player and music meet. On one crucial point all the players interviewed for this article agree: If you can properly attune yourself to these forces, your tone, technique and attitude will benefit.

Come on now. Can guitar voodoo really exist? Granted, in this strange realm, separating science from fiction is not always easy. Take the aforementioned Eric Johnson, justly famous for the length of his chain of stomp boxes, who claims he's detected a variance in treble response between different brands of nine-volt batteries. "I first noticed it about five years ago when I was doing some experimenting with effects," he recalls. "The high end sounded slightly better with Duracells

**For  
guitarists,  
making  
music can  
be, uh,  
spiritual**

than with AG adapters or any other battery. It's a subtle change, and I don't think I would notice it unless I were playing. I can't hear it on a stereo system. I think the way that particular battery is constructed creates certain nuances in the way the voltage comes out of it."

Possible? British acoustic maven Adrian Legg says it is. "Standard non-alkaline batteries decay slowly, while an alkaline holds its charge till the last possible moment and then drops. Even when you buy them new, there's the matter of relative shelf-life and decay over time. You can hear a difference in voltage. I've been able to tell flat batteries in a parametric EQ. I don't see why that isn't reasonable." But Nicky Skopelitis, a session veteran who has worked with Public Image Ltd., Golden Palominos and Material, begs to differ. "I don't believe

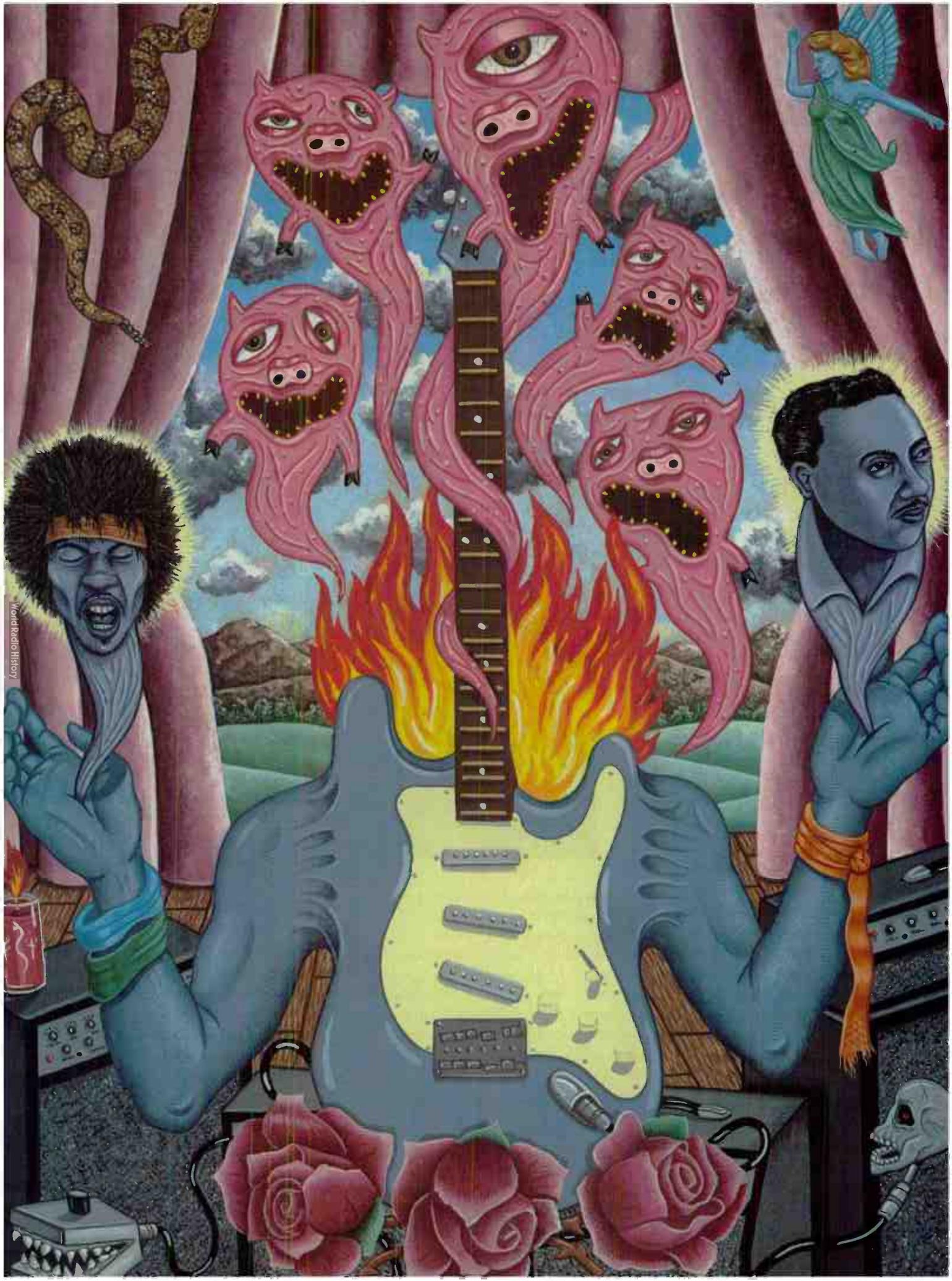
brought out the guitar's sweet spots the way I wanted. People contest me on this stuff, but it's true."

Perhaps Johnson has been hit hard by what Pat Metheny once called "option anxiety." Says Nicky Skopelitis, "Guitar players are notorious for getting involved in little traps of their own making. Blaming equipment is just a way to hide a player's insecurity."

But Johnson is hardly alone. "Once you've got your guitar set up the way you want, you should never adjust anything but the truss rod," claims Trey Anastasio of Phish. "Even there you can go too far. My main guitar was built by our sound man Paul, and when anybody else sets it up before a concert, it feels wrong and I get thrown off. Luckily, Paul's with us at every show."

Even when you don't change a thing, a guitar can sound drastically different from one day to the next. As Michael Hill notes, "You can be in the same room with the same gear, and one day there'll be a hum you never noticed before. You say, 'Where's this coming from?' and then when you try to find it, it's gone. Humidity, ground loops, radio waves—they all do something." Steve Kimock of San Francisco's Zero is no stranger to such electrical gremlins. "I've been in clubs where the cash register set off buzzes in the amp, and

BY MAC RANDALL ILLUSTRATION BY HUNGRY DOG STUDIOS



World Radio History

I've rehearsed in a place where the water pump would go on and my effects boxes would stop working. You can figure out what's causing the problem 99 percent of the time, but it's still a pain."

Occasionally, the pain can be life-threatening, as jazzman John Abercrombie recounts. "If you go to Europe, any electrical problems you face at home are at least tripled because of the voltage conversions you have to make," he explains. "I was playing in a duo with a friend in Prague, and at one point he went up to the mike to make an announcement. He started to scream, and I thought, 'This is a weird way to get attention.' Then I realized he was being electrocuted. I tried to pull the mike away from him, but I couldn't. He was stuck to it like a magnet. Finally I gave the stand a big tug, and he came off it with a sound that I can only describe as a small explosion. We never were able to figure out what went wrong, but touching the mike and the guitar strings at the same time obviously triggered something. He was okay, though he had to stay in the hospital overnight. His little finger was burned—on the inside."

For Adrian Legg, guitar strings inhabit a voodoo dimension all their own. "I talked to someone who worked for a string company once and asked, 'How do you design strings?' He said, 'We make a few. If they work out, we try and remember what we did. If they don't, we forget it.' How's that for empiricism?"

Many players say that dumping old strings in 212-degree water makes them sound like new. Blues Mob's Michael Hill says that boiling has worked for him only occasionally, "but my bassist swears by it. If my strings cost 40 bucks a set, maybe I would too." John Abercrombie prefers a method recommended to him by pal Ralph Towner: wiping a cloth soaked in scalding hot water over the strings. "It makes a horrible screeching noise, but it does brighten up the sound, particularly on the lower strings."

Colors also form their own voodoo subset. "I used to play a garish fire-engine-red guitar synthesizer, which I had a lot of problems with," Abercrombie says. "And now whenever I see a red guitar, my reaction is, 'It's going to sound cold.' I haven't been wrong yet."

Seattle-based fusioner Scott Lindenmuth also steers clear of the color red, but won't specify the reason: "It's just something I've never done." Adrian Legg shies away from anything green. "That's a superstition I picked up in the clubs in England. I honestly don't know why it developed, but I honor it because so many people believe it. When I play, I always have a milk crate next to me to put things on, and I've told people not to give me green ones. Sometimes there isn't anything but green. In that case, I usually put a cloth over it and hope for the best."

Other tales of equipment voodoo stretch the imagination. The late John Cipollina reportedly kept a nickel wedged between the springs of his Bigsby tremolo unit, for uncertain purpose. And Billy Gibbons exclusively uses another coin, the Mexican peso, as a pick; he once claimed it gave him an "international sound." But was he wearing a straight face at the time?

Apparently voodoo is also present wherever guitarists are preparing for a gig. Michael Hill tries to get in touch with his "feeling tones" before a show. He works on his hands with a pair of Baoding metal balls from China, and he swears by a short pre-gig nap: "You've got to be well-rested to be in touch with what you're playing." Surf-guitar king Dick Dale talks about his attempts to "lose the ego." He also fasts for regular periods. "I work out and keep as fit as I can. I've been doing karate for 30 years. I prepare for the stage like I'm going into battle. It's that intense." Once onstage, Dale likes to be near the edge, "where I can pick up the vibrations of the audience." Adrian Legg likes to sit right in the middle, usually about three feet from the edge.

The chair must be without wheels, and at a certain height: "I haven't measured it, but I can feel when it's wrong. I've had some nervous gigs when the chair's been too high."

Room acoustics are always a consideration, of course; any musician knows that every space has a unique sonic character. But sometimes bad-sounding rooms produce much stranger side effects. Adrian Legg: "I've been known to forget my own songs if the sound isn't how I expect it." Dick Dale: "When the sound isn't right, I get nervous, my mouth starts to taste like cotton, and I start breaking strings even more than usual."

Then there's the notion—surprisingly common—that each room has not only its own sound, but its own spirit. According to John Abercrombie, "If someone has been fighting recently near where you're playing, you can tell." The vibe is most obvious when it has been the site of past greatness. Michael Hill singles out New York's Knitting Factory as an example, while Trey Anastasio mentions Tipitina's in New Orleans: "Dr. John, the Neville Brothers—you can just *feel* their presence there."

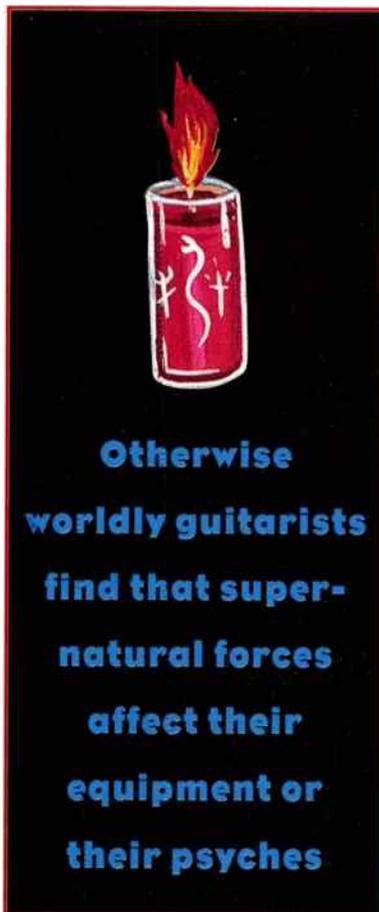
Even when you've prepared for a gig the best you can, things may not go right. Your playing is uninspired, your fingers feel stiff. What to do? Steve Kimock has a couple of solutions. "I carry about five completely different setups on the road, different guitars with

different scale lengths and necks in different tunings, different effects and amps. If one program isn't working right one night, I'll try another one. If things still don't work, I call my familiar. And by that, I don't mean I make a phone call—I open a psychic channel to him. He's a big animal that comes along and helps out.

"But I don't call him unless the problem is really serious."

When everything *does* go right, the effect can be overpowering and, yes, voodoo-like. Trey Anastasio marvels at what can happen in a concert situation. "I'm hearing the music in my ears," he reports, "and at the same time it's coming from my heart and shooting in this huge stream out of my chest and into the audience. At those moments, nothing else in life matters. You've just got to get out of the way and let it happen. The crew and the band both know that anything I say up to 20 minutes after the show should be disregarded because I'm feeling such a rush."

The late Danny Gatton described one particularly memorable encounter with the supernatural: "It was a gig in [cont'd on page 80]





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# COMPUTERIZE THAT AXE: NEW GUITAR SOFTWARE

**I**N THE competitive world of music software, few stones remain unturned. Nonetheless, guitarists represent an untapped market. Perhaps it's the technophobic side of their ongoing love affair with vintage gear—but, then again, even drummers have an easier time finding high-tech toys to call their own. More likely, it's the fact that guitarists haven't needed to buy a computer just to keep on top of the state of the art, as keyboard players and recording engineers have. But things are changing. Thanks to the efforts of a few small companies, six-string slingers may find that a computer is a welcome addition to their arsenal.

Obviously, you'll appeal to more guitarists if you level out the MIDI learning curve. The advent of General MIDI made this a viable proposition, and PG Music takes advantage of it to make Jazz Guitarist for Windows a breeze to run. This program is an enhanced music-minus-one machine, playing back sequenced GM arrangements to 60 jazz standards (including the guitar part). You can mute any part and control tempo, key and patch selection. As each piece plays, the screen displays notation and note positions via keyboard

and guitar-neck graphics. The quality of the arrangements is exceptional—particularly the guitar parts, which are surprisingly authentic (having been entered by a real guitarist playing a MIDI guitar). Priced at \$49, Jazz Guitarist is a useful practice tool and an excellent value.

If you're not quite proficient enough at jazz to play along with a simulated band, you might hone your skills using Six String Software's GuitarWorks (\$79) and SDG Soft's Scale Magic (\$89). Essentially, both are multimedia databases for IBM/DOS (compatible with Creative Labs SoundBlaster and Roland MPU-401).

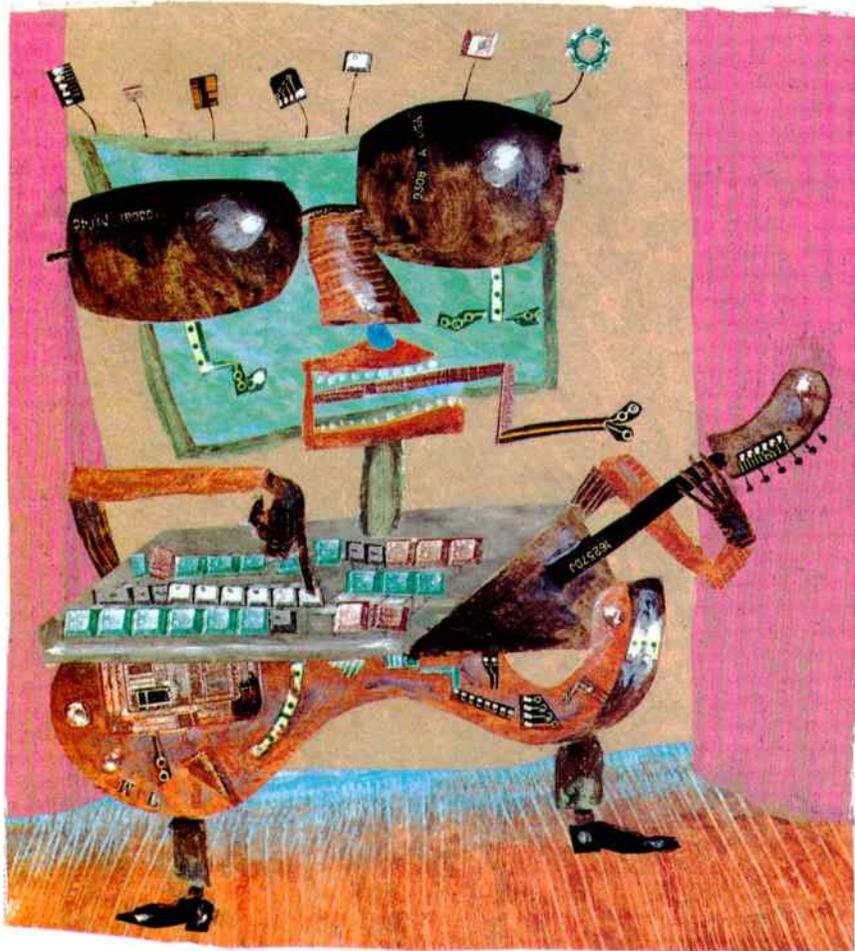
GuitarWorks has four major components: an interactive pitch pipe for tuning, a chord/interval identifier (you fill in a block diagram, GuitarWorks names the chord), a rudimentary sequencer, and a chord dictionary with 5300 entries representing 44 chord types. If you look up, say, G7, the screen displays block diagrams of several inversions of G7; when you click on a diagram, you can hear what it sounds like and see the fingering on a graphic guitar neck at the bottom of the screen. Using the recorder/editor, you can sequence chords and solo lines into patterns, edit them and play them back. (Six String also offers a 30-lesson disk called Scales & Riffs, a collection of sequenced guitar arrangements of Christmas songs, and a helpful book/disk combination entitled How to Play Guitar, \$15 each).

In addition to chords, Scale Magic displays, plays and prints out scales and arpeggios. Selecting from a series of menus, first you specify a chord type and inversion, which is displayed on a graphic guitar neck. Then the menu presents various scales and modes to use while soloing over the chord; when you select one, its notes and fingering are superimposed on the neck, color-coded for easy reading. Likewise, you can view superimposed notes and fingerings for the arpeggiated version of the chord; typing the left and right arrow keys enables you to view higher and lower portions of the fretboard. As with GuitarWorks, there's a "progression editor" with which you can sequence your own idiomatic guitar arrangements to play along with. Five add-on Style Modules (\$19 each, five for \$76) provide rudimentary backup so you can apply what you've learned.

If you're in a more creative frame of mind, you might want to turn to Howling Dog's Power Chords

**After years of chasing keyboard players, software companies are turning their attention to guitarists.**

BY J. ARIF VERNER



When amplifying an acoustic guitar, some players have one criterion—volume. For them, any pickup is fine. But if achieving great sound were as simple as slapping a pickup in a sound hole, we wouldn't have been

around for so long. At Fishman, we've always had one goal. To amplify, while maintaining natural acoustic sound. Take, for example, our industry-standard passive ceramic pickup, the AG-125. Or our Acoustic Matrix Hot, and Natural Pickups with their active, low-impedance design and unique sensing material for unmatched sensitivity.

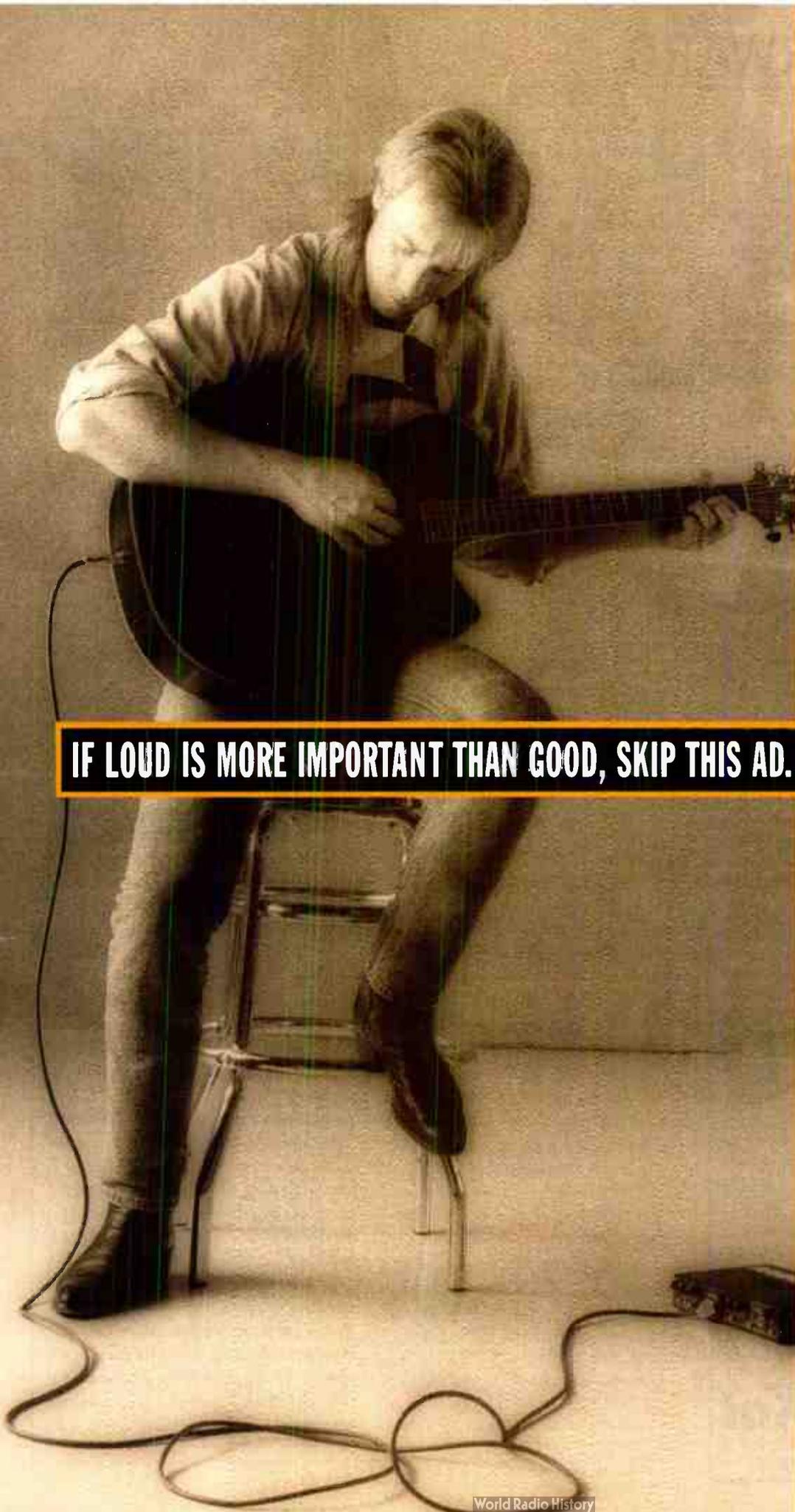
dynamic range and balanced response. Both are standard equipment on the world's finest guitars. Also no slouch: our portable Model G Pre-amp. Plus the equally convenient Pro EQ. Finally, there's our Acoustic and Pocket Blender® Series which offers true, clean



sound from a combination of pickup and mini-microphone. And there's more. If you care about sound quality, send \$2 for a color catalog to Fishman Transducers, 340-D Fordham Road, Wilmington, MA 01887. Then again, if all you care about is volume—skip it.

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TRANSDUCERS

**IF LOUD IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOOD, SKIP THIS AD.**



# ADVICE TO DRUMMERS: LET 'EM HANG

**O**VER THE past couple of years, most drum companies have introduced some type of "suspension" mounting system for tom-toms. The idea is to allow the drum shell to vibrate freely, thereby achieving maximum resonance and sustain. By suspending the drum, you eliminate penetrating hardware (metal tubes that extend into the drum shell and disrupt the flow of vibrations between top and bottom heads) as well as metal plates that bolt onto the shell's sides.

Although many of these systems are new, the idea isn't. PureCussion introduced RIMS (Resonance Isolation Mounting System) over a decade ago, and many prominent drummers swore by them. Some major drum companies swore *at* them. Their endorsers were asking for drums without mounting hardware and then fitting them with RIMS, a situation that wasn't likely to improve public perception of their own products. Eventually some manufacturers, including Drum Workshop, Noble & Cooley, Gretsch, Ludwig and Stingray, accom-

modated the preference for RIMS by offering them as standard equipment or as an option. Meanwhile, just about everyone else developed their own versions.

RIMS attach underneath a rack tom's top counterhoop by means of a semicircular steel band held in place by four of the drum's tension rods. There is also a RIMS mount for floor toms that encircles the bottom counterhoop, enabling the use of traditional floor-tom legs, and a full-circle model for rack mounting floor toms that attaches underneath the top counterhoop. RIMS mounts come in a variety of sizes to accommodate diameters from 6" to 18" and from four to ten lugs. For rack toms, prices range from \$70 to \$160. Floor tom mounts cost \$140.

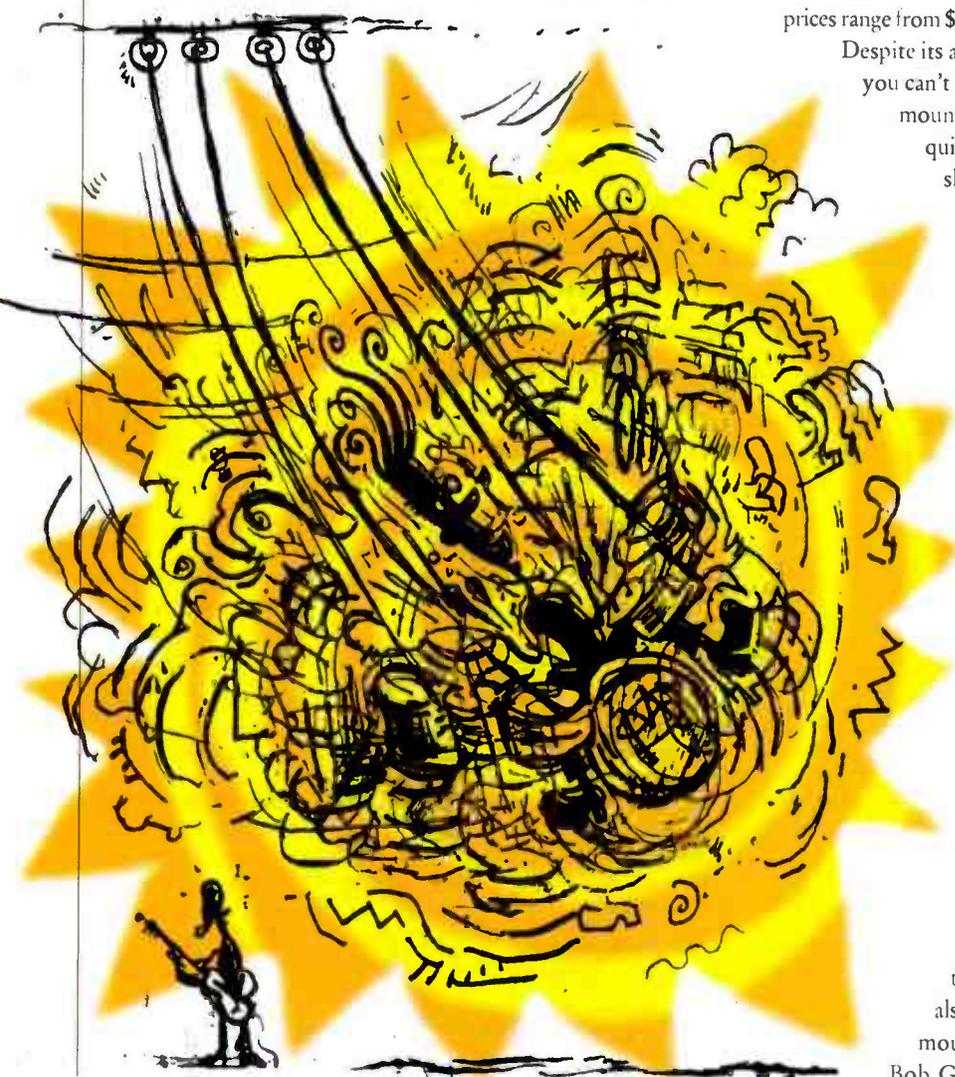
Despite its advantages, RIMS presents three problems. First, you can't change the top head without removing the RIMS mount. Second, the system allows the drums to wobble quite a bit. While toms need enough give to accept the shock of a strong blow, too much wobble can interfere with fast, intricate sticking patterns. Third, RIMS can make it difficult to mount toms close together. Some companies have addressed these problems while retaining the basic RIMS design. Others have come up with quite different approaches.

The Star-Cast system from Tama (prices TBA) is so similar to RIMS that Tama pays licensing fees to PureCussion. The difference is that Star-Cast attaches to a die-cast batter-head counterhoop with three extra "ears," providing a little more stability and eliminating pull on the tensioning screws. You still need to detach the mount before you can change heads, though. Star-Cast is standard equipment on Tama's new Starclassic kits, and can be retrofitted to any drum by replacing the top counterhoop. The system is available for drum diameters from 8" to 16".

Noble & Cooley uses an actual RIMS mount attached to the underside of the top lugs. This allows top heads to be changed without detaching the mount, and makes it possible to adjust the amount of wobble. To these ears, it also provides the greatest sustain of any suspension-mount drums on the market. According to designer Bob Gatzen, the secret is that the mounting system

**Suspension mounting systems allow drum shells to vibrate freely for better tone.**

BY RICK MATTINGLY



**PROVEN**  
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 Research info included with **FREE Lesson!**

# “They LAUGHED when I said they could have Perfect Pitch

...until I showed them the secret!”

## The TRUE STORY

by David L. Burge

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

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

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

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

“What's Perfect Pitch?” I asked.

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

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

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

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

“Yes,” she nodded to me aloofly.

But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, “Can I test you sometime?”

“OK,” she replied cheerfully.

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

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

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

Nervously I plotted my testing strategy. Linda appeared serene.

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

I had barely touched the key. “F#,” she said. I was astonished. I quickly played another tone. She didn't even stop to think. Instantly she announced the correct pitch.

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

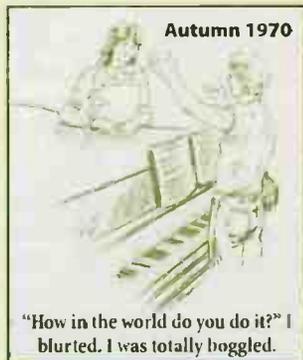
“Sing an Eb,” I demanded, determined to mess her up.

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

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

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

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



Autumn 1970

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

### I couldn't figure it out...

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Then it happened...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### And as for Linda?

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

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

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

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

I'll show you! Just call or write TODAY for your **FREE Perfect Pitch Lesson #1!**

For fastest delivery, call 24 hours:

**(515) 472-3100**

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**YES!** Please rush me my **FREE Perfect Pitch Lesson #1** (written) with no obligation. Show me how I can gain Perfect Pitch for myself—to uncover deeper levels of my own talent.

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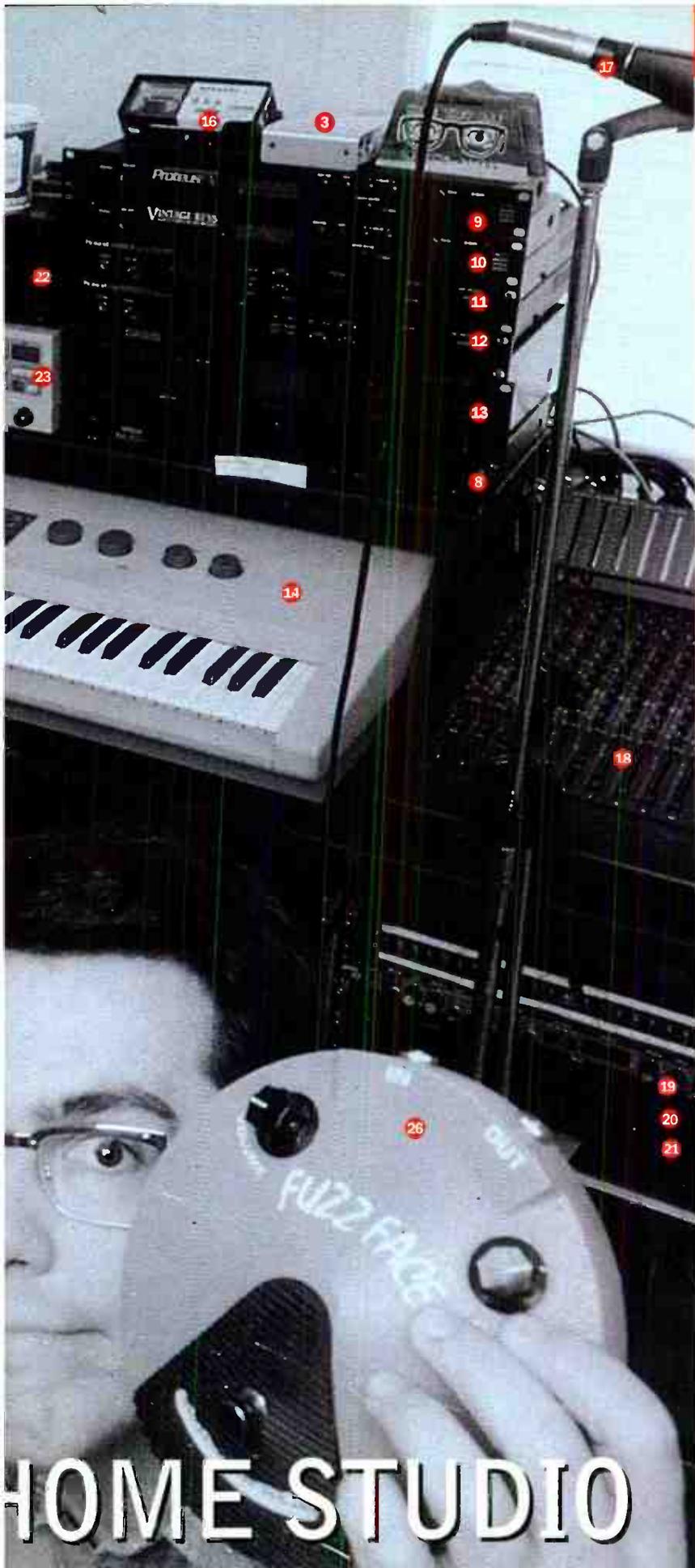
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# THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS'



## HOME STUDIO

"OUR HOME STUDIOS expanded a lot when we were making records with them, like *Apollo 18*," states John Flansburgh, half of the terminally twisted duo They Might Be Giants. "Home recording is really the origin of the band: We lived in the same building and started sharing equipment. We were a band that made tapes, rather than a band that played in their garage. We're a bedroom band."

Indeed, the studio assembled by the Giants' other half, John Linnell, crowds one wall of his bedroom in the rough-and-tumble Brooklyn enclave called Williamsburg. Here, and down the street at Flansburgh's, they concoct demos from which bassist Tony Maimone and drummer Brian Doherty, who joined for the new Elektra album *John Henry*, flesh out their parts.

The heart of Linnell's system is an **Apple Macintosh IIci** 1 running **MOTU's Performer** sequencer and **Mosaic** notator (for horn arrangements), connected to an **Opcode Studio Plus Two** MIDI interface 2 and **Timecode Machine** sync box 3. A **Cutting Edge** hard disk 4 alongside Linnell's **Music Mart** accordion 5 doubles as a pedestal for a **Bundy** bass clarinet 6—which is not to ignore his prized **Buescher** bass sax 7. A **Yamaha MJC8** 8 distributes MIDI to his **E-mu Proteus FX** 9 ("this is what I'm using live now") and **Vintage Keys** 10, **Roland R-8M** percussion module 11 and **U-220** 12, plus a **Casio VZ-10M** 13 bought in a closeout sale. "It's the end of the legendary CZ line," he laments. "It's got some weird, cheap sounds you can't get any other way." An **Akai S1000KB** sampler 14 also serves as a master MIDI keyboard. When he's in a picking mood, Linnell picks up a **Gibson SG** from the early '60s 15. A **Boss TU-12H** 16 helps keep it in tune.

The instruments, plus a **Sennheiser 421** mike 17, feed a **Tascam 688** eight-track cassette deck 18. "It has all these line inputs," Linnell points out. "I can mix all my sequenced tracks and still have seven tape tracks for bass clarinet." For effects, he uses a **Urei 7110** compressor/limiter, **Lexicon PCM42** delay 19, **Yamaha SPX90II** multieffect unit 20 and **Korg DRV-1000** reverb 21. He mixes to a **Sony TC-WR690** cassette deck 22 and **Panasonic SV-3700** DAT 23, amplified by a **Hafler PRO2400** 24 and **Design Acoustics PS-10** speakers 25.

Flansburgh (who considers his **Arbiter Fuzz Face** 26 "the ultimate fuzzbox") has a similar rig—only "much more difficult to operate." In fact, he hopes to go back to a more primitive setup. "I look back on having an open-reel four track," he muses, "where I could just plug my guitar into the front. The minute you get a patch bay—unless you really are an engineer—you can't work as efficiently. It seems efficient because it's much more versatile. But home recording isn't about versatility. It's about getting the idea down quick."

BY TED GREENWALD

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CARROLL

# Fall Under the Spell

**"Raucous,**

**sweaty**

Kenny Neal's

**barrelhouse blues...**

**HOODOO MOON,**

**explosive guitar...**

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# Munsters of Rock

**SLAYER**

*Divine Intervention*  
(AMERICAN)

**DANZIG**

*Danzig 4*  
(AMERICAN)

**MEGADETH**

*Youthanasia*  
(CAPITOL)

**I**F YOU'RE STARTING TO GET A LITTLE UNEASY about all those women-in-rock features, interviews, cover stories—starting to feel that the old imperatives are slipping away, that there's too many Nancys and not enough Sluggos holding down the fort these days—then this one's for you. Three new releases from certified heavy-hitting members of the hairy-chested he-man metal club proving that there's still one thing that white males can do better than any other peoples—and that's make big ballsy metal records.

Okay, enough unveiled sarcasm, let's start ripping into these clowns. I mean, take Slayer. Don't they ever get tired of the old buzzsaw routine? Does anybody over 15 really, honestly get off on this stuff? If it's meant to be a parody, they should have quit about five albums ago—no joke holds up under endless repetition. Similarly, if you want to look at it as a kind of avant-garde conceptual thing—music stripped down to essentials of sound and rhythm, tempo changes supplanting melody's function as structure signifier—yeah, well that's not exactly a long-haul idea either. And what's worse, the guys are starting to sound *confused*. Sure, we still get stuff like "Serenity in Murder" (title tells all) and "213," which has the unbeatable combo of murder, rape and cannibalism, but what's the deal with "Dittoheads"—the title refers to the self-absorption of those poor bastards who admire Rush Limbaugh—a song which decries the lack of tougher penalties for violent offenders, or "Circle of Relief," a plea for greater tolerance of other people's ideas, fer Chrissake? You're sending mixed signals, dudes.

Glenn Danzig of Danzig fame would never do that. Now this guy's focused. Unfortunately what he's focused on is making tastefully gloomy metal ("tastefully" in the sense of devising the kind of relatively low-keyed, thought-out guitar parts that could land you on the cover of *Musician*), while lyrically coming across as a combination of Jesus Christ and Dr. Kevorkian (is that redundant?)...he wants to save you, he wants to kill you, you know the drill. I'll give him points, though, for having an unpretentious approach to lyric writing, stylisti-



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC WHITE

# BACK SIDE

## THE MUSICIAN GUIDE TO BACKSTAGE PASSES



### AFTERSHOW ONLY

The rock 'n' roll equivalent of a kick-me sign. By the time they let you backstage not only is the band gone, so are the potato chips.

### GUEST

You're in with the radio station contest winners and Strawberry's clerks. If you're lucky you might be led in a herd of 30 goons clutching Instamatic cameras and autograph books to have a group photo taken with the drum roadie.

### V.I.P.

To you it means "Very Important Person." To the road crew it means "Visitor Is Pest." This credential will allow you to spend the whole concert in a small room at the back of the arena (or, if you're in a stadium, a sports bar far from the stage) eating pretzels and drinking complimentary Yoo-Hoo. Watch the look of pity on the management rep's face when you ask, "Is the band coming by later?"

### LOCAL CREW

The bad side is, you get paid minimum wage to stand with your arms folded and your back to the band, keeping kids off the stage while the bass causes your spine to spasm. The good side is, you can drag drunks under the stage and beat them up.

### MANAGEMENT GUEST

Well, now you're getting somewhere! With this pass you, some Canadian record execs with comb-overs and a handful of cadaverous bleached blonde women in fur coats will be escorted straight past the dressing rooms and into a nice yellow locker room deco-



rated for the night with two rented couches and a potted palm. You will be offered champagne in paper cups and an assortment of crackers. You will watch the show from the soundboard. You will never get near the band. You will pretend not to care.

### CREW

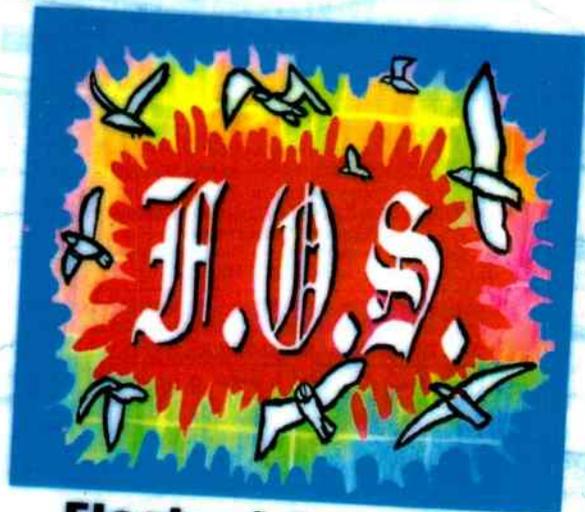
This lets you eat the cold stew in catering, run on and off-stage carrying heavy equipment and sweat up a too-short tour T-shirt that leaves two inches of your belly hanging out.

If you try to grab a slice of

turkey loaf from the band's untouched catering tray, however, you'll get your wrist broken.

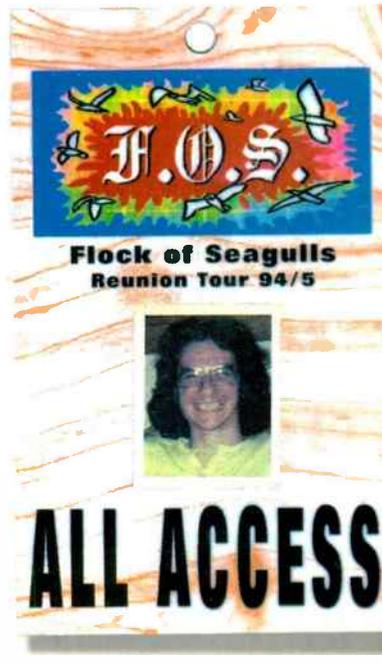
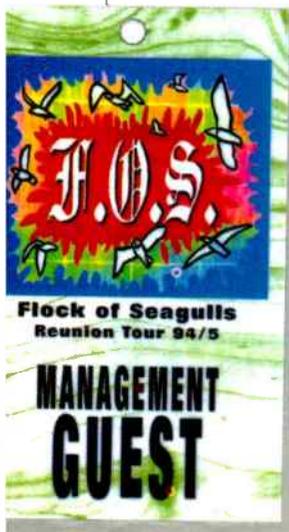
### ALL ACCESS

Don't get cocky. "All access" means you can stroll between the semi-trucks, inspect the buffet and hobnob with the opening act's road manager, but try and use it to walk in on the star's massage and you'll be quickly turned around and pointed back toward the onion dip.



**Flock of Seagulls  
Reunion Tour 94/5**

**V.I.P.**



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEFF CHRISTIANSEN



# SR SERIES II, THINK OF IT AS FREEDOM OF CHOICE.

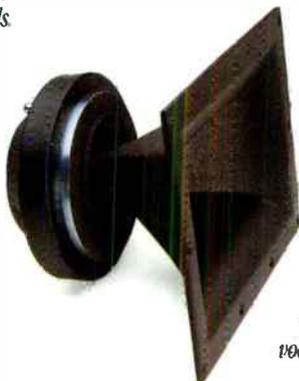
There's a little something for everyone in SR Series II™. From small combo vocal reinforcement to large club systems, from mobile DJ and recorded music reproduction to stage monitoring, front fills and main PA stacks in concert applications. SR Series II has evolved to be the first choice of musicians and sound engineers world wide. Here's what this evolution has produced.

## MORE MODELS

You have a greater number of configurations from which to choose. With more systems containing large format compression drivers plus a dual 18-inch subwoofer system, SR Series II is sure to have the loudspeaker systems to fit your needs.

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we have ever made, resulting in exceptional transient response, enhanced high frequency clarity and crisp, clear vocals.

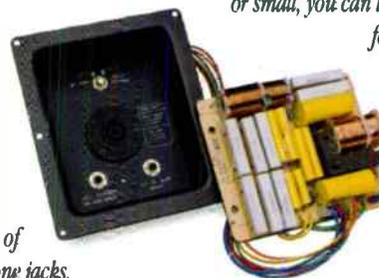
outstanding pattern control (90° X 50°) exhibits the lowest midband distortion we have ever achieved in large format systems. Equally important, the 2447J compression driver extends high frequency response well above 18 kHz, virtually eliminating the need for a separate tweeter.

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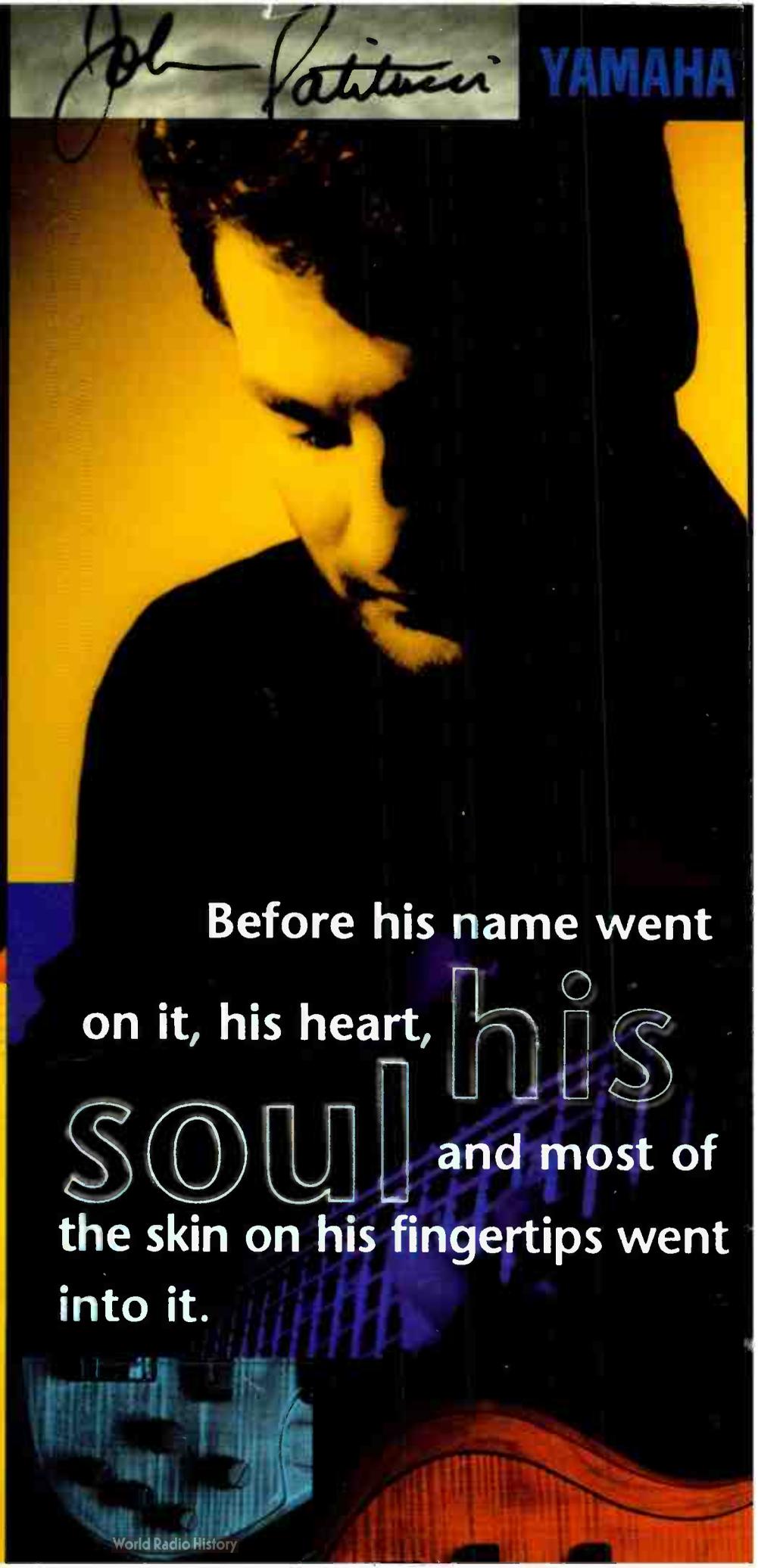
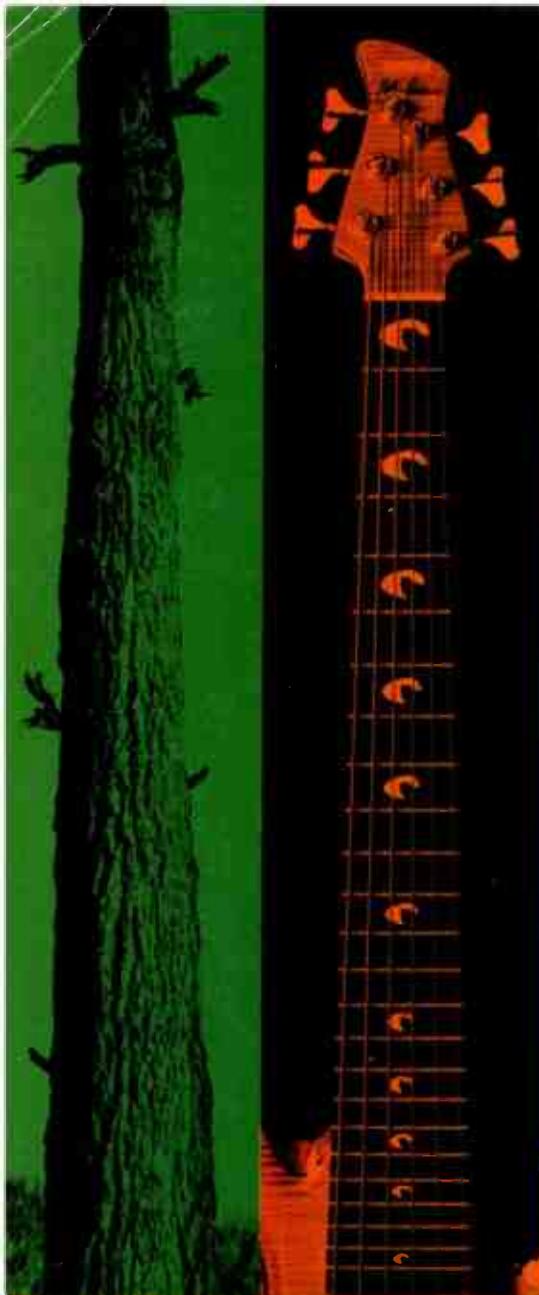
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below. Better yet, stop by your local JBL Professional dealer for a personal demonstration.



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Before his name went  
on it, his heart, **his**  
**SOUL** and most of  
the skin on his fingertips went  
into it.