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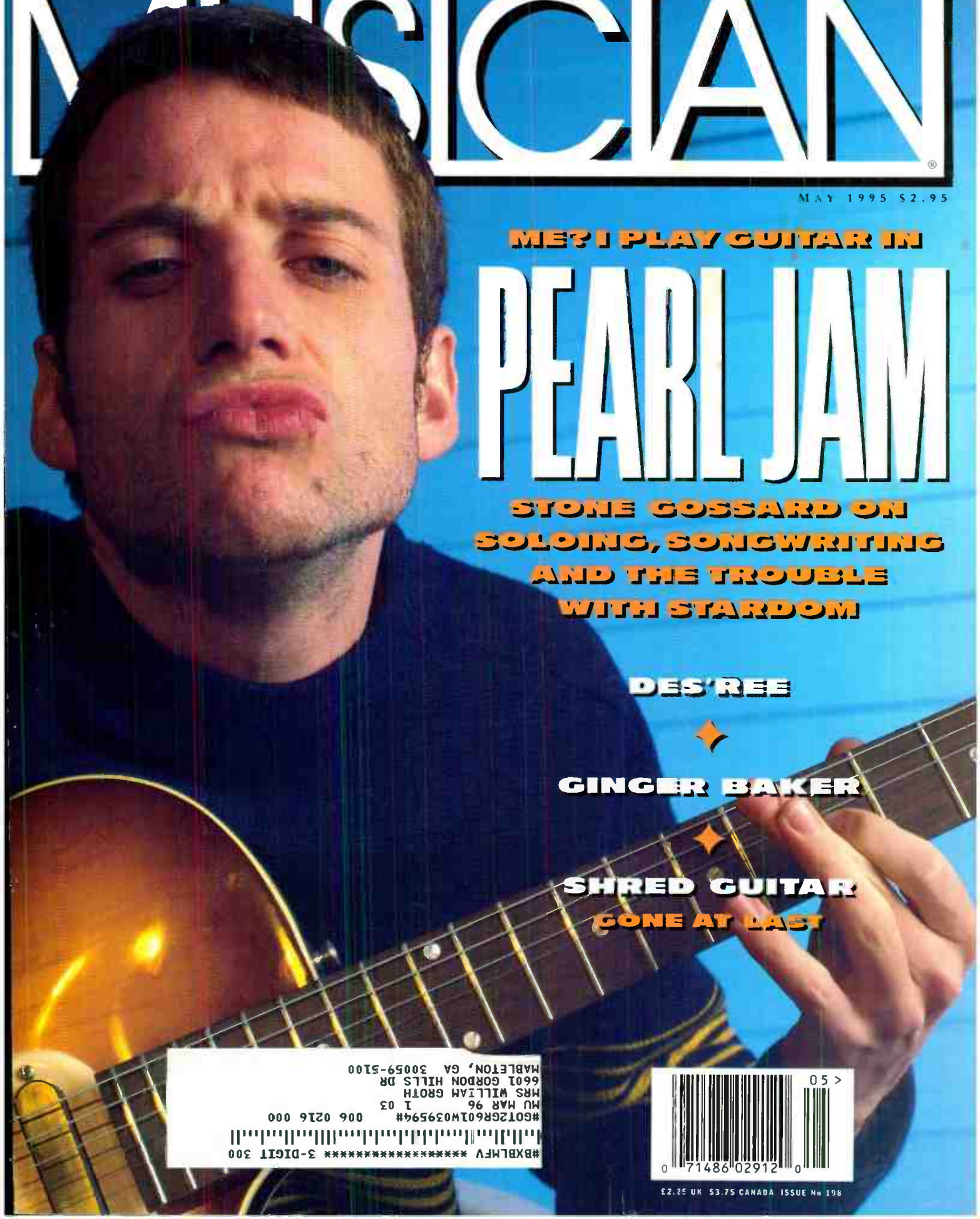
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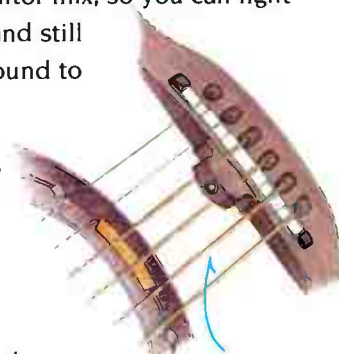
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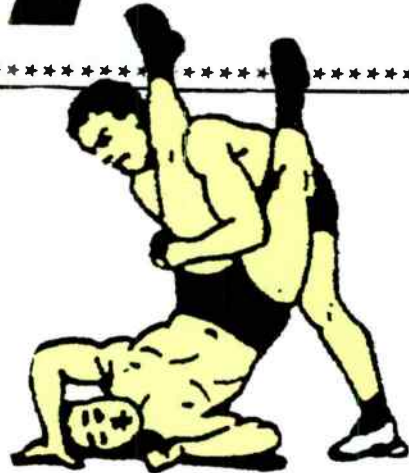
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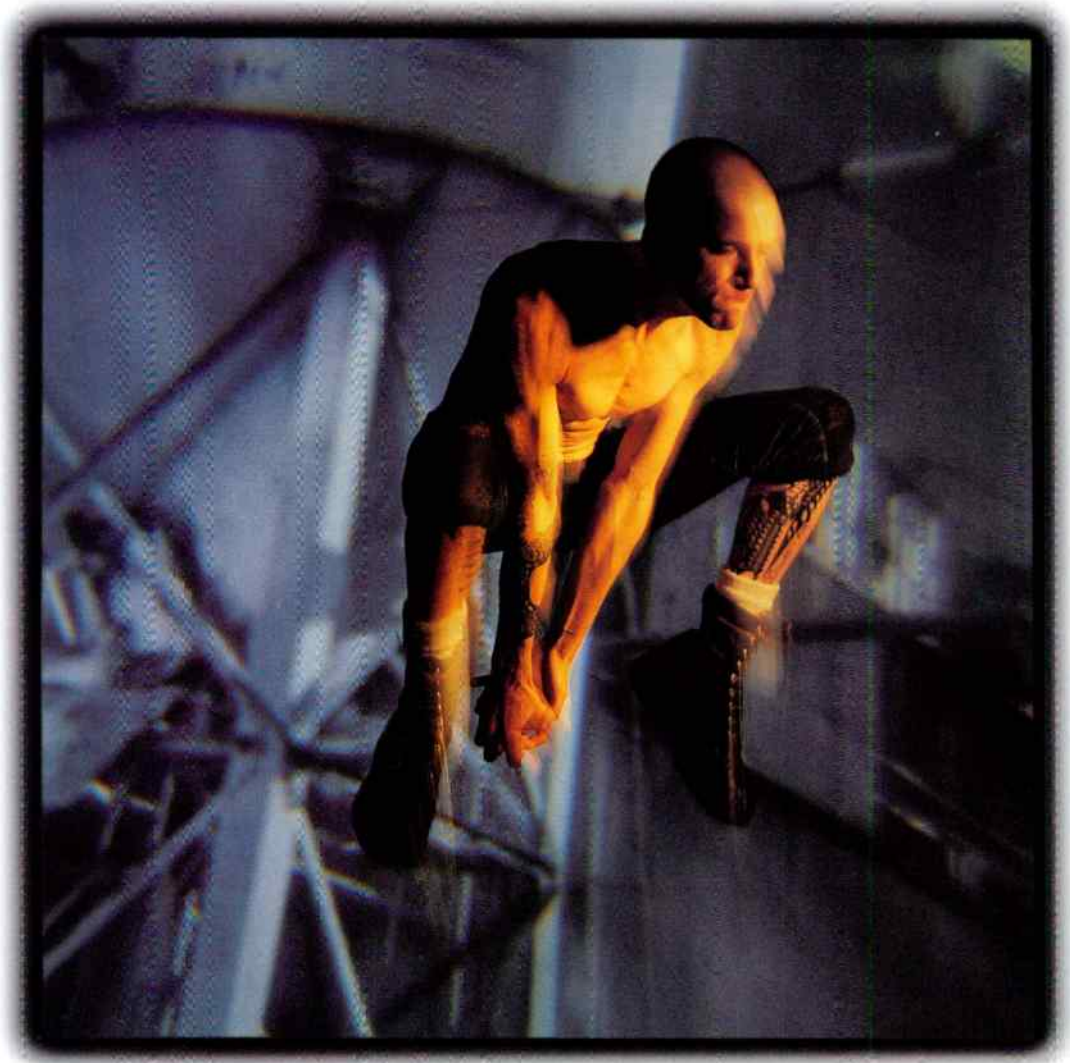
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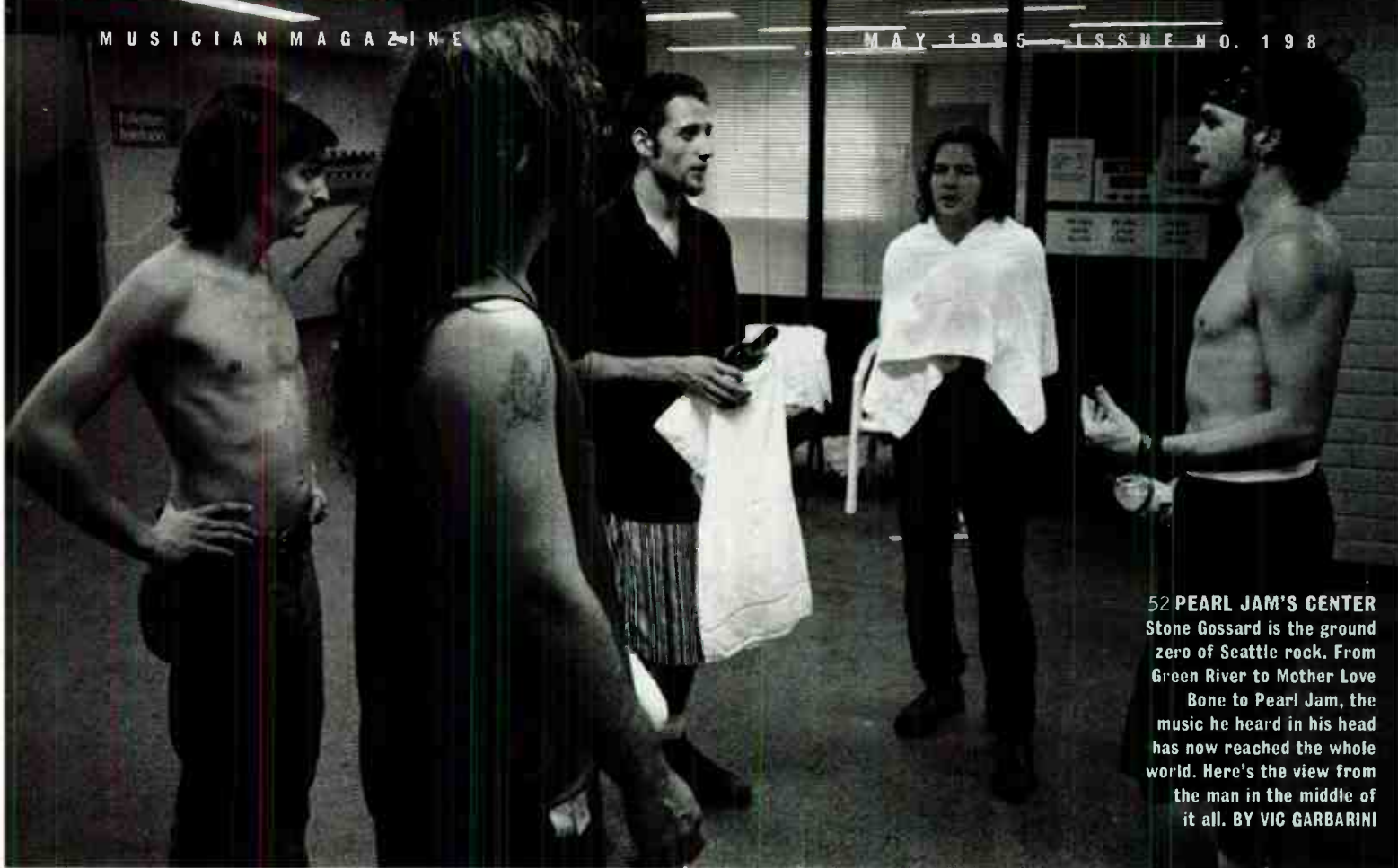
World Radio History



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THE "ROCK"TION

A bathroom sink from John Lennon's Dakota apartment fetched only \$450 out of an expected \$3000, but Guernsey's "40 Years of Rock & Roll" auction in NYC nonetheless attracted vast sums of capital for rock ephemera. Six stereo copies of Vee-Jay's *Introducing the Beatles* changed hands for \$28,000, while Elvis Presley's high school library card sold for \$650. Along with a shattered and blood-stained guitar once belonging to Kurt Cobain (\$20,000), other items for sale included:

■ assorted **Elvis four-track** acetates, including "**Crying in the Chapel**," and



ILLUSTRATION BY MARK TODD

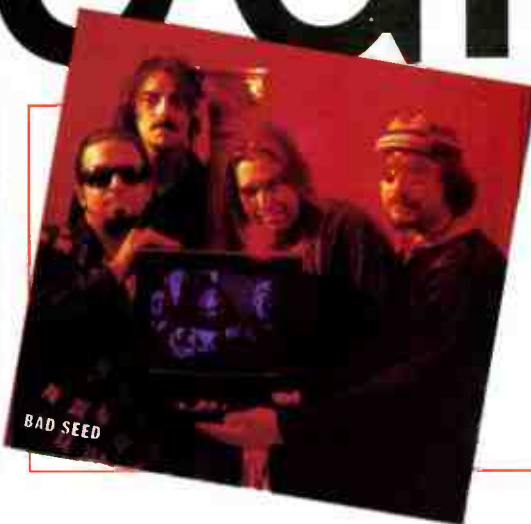
EXPERT WITNESS



ROUGH M

a complete set of laminates from one of the **King's '70s tours** emblazoned with the fabled "**TCB/TLC**" logo.

- a platinum record for **Van Halen I** awarded to "**Michael Van Halen**"
- **Jerry Lee Lewis's '62-'67** passport
- autographed sheet music of **Les Paul and Mary Ford's "How High the Moon"**
- **Isaac Hayes' huge velvet cape**, bearing his glowering likeness (\$2000).—R.K.



RECENT SIGNINGS

Spain L.A.-based "sad rock" band fronted by Josh Haden, son of Charlie (Restless)

Emilio Tejano (or Tex-Mex) music man from San Antonio (Liberty)

AZ Brooklyn rapper who cameoed on Nas album (EMI/Chrysalis)

Bad Seed Thrash veterans from the suburbs of NYC (RockWorld/Sony)

The Secret Life of Booking Agents

by Matthew Sweet

I AM IN rehearsals with my band this month getting ready to tour throughout North America in support of my third album, *100% Fun*. I am actually looking forward to embarking on a tour, in part because it is exciting to have a new album's worth of material to play live but also because I have a good

working relationship with my booking agent. Touring can be both creatively rewarding and financially successful when everything is set up right; it can be a very unpleasant experience when the tour is poorly planned.

It is easy to explain what a *good* agent does by giving examples of problems a *careless* agent gets you into on the road. Here are a few low points in my early touring experiences:

- a) booking a big venue in a small college town during spring break when everyone is at the beach (a guaranteed dead night);
- b) arriving in Minneapolis and learning from the local paper that two bands you have never heard of are on the bill with you;

c) booking a show in Vancouver in January right after a Salt Lake City gig when the band is traveling in a van with a trailer with no chains or snow tires (the drive is impossible);

d) booking a heavy metal club in the wrong part of town when the band has played the appropriate alternative club successfully in the past (beer bottles will fly);

e) catering serves meat stew when the rider calls for vegetarian meals;

f) the itinerary indicates an 11:00 show time but the club owner holds it until 1:30 a.m. to sell more beer.

Frank Riley at Monterey Peninsula Artists began booking me when *Girlfriend* was re-

leased in 1991. Since I was based in New York, I started like most alternative bands in the area do—in a van driving up and down the eastern United States playing venues like Chestnut Cabaret (Philadelphia), TT the Bears (Cambridge), the 9:30 Club (D.C.), CBGB's (N.Y.C.), Toad's Place (New Haven), the 40 Watt Club (Athens), the Point (Atlanta) and the Cabaret Metro (Chicago). If 300 people showed up to see us and we made \$300, we were very happy.

Fortunately, *Girlfriend* began getting a lot of radio airplay and the record started to sell. As a result, more people were interested in seeing us play live and they were familiar with my music. My manager Russell Carter and Frank worked out a strategy to book me as an opening act in big venues and then to double back into markets as a headline act. In most cities we went from small clubs to big clubs and then theaters. The game plan has always been to keep ticket prices down and to book venues that we feel confident we can sell out by the night of the show.

An agent should be good at keeping career goals in mind while at the same time focusing on all the details of the tour. In the end, it is not only what you do, but what your agent does for you that makes the difference between a great night and a nightmare.

IX



DYLAN AND DIAMOND SHARE UP THE STATUS QUO

The hegemony of ASCAP and BMI, the two music rights collection agencies that dominate pop song publishing, was shaken in January when Bob Dylan and Neil Diamond announced that they were moving their mighty catalogs from ASCAP to SESAC, a performing rights organization that has been around for 64 years, most of it spent gathering dust. The sudden aggressiveness of SESAC owes to its being purchased by a group of go-getters that includes former SBK architect Stephen Swid. Dylan and Diamond both have huge and lucrative catalogs (who else but Dylan gets songs covered by U2, Guns N' Roses, Bruce Springsteen and Neil Young? Who else but Diamond gets songs covered by Urge Overkill and UB40?). Their defection makes SESAC a third player in a field where some songwriters feel no love for the other two.—B.F.





QUESTIONABLE TALENT

In a recent issue of the British journal *The Psychologist*, several eminent researchers dispute the notion that musical ability is an inborn "talent" rather than a capacity that can be developed by anyone, according to *MUSICA Research Notes* published by the Music and Science Information Computer Archive (MSICA). Supporting evidence includes widespread musical skills in non-Western societies, lack of childhood indicators of adult success in music and the consistently large amount of practice necessary to become proficient on an instrument. Furthermore, the researchers believe that attributions of natural talent are unduly discouraging to those who don't receive them. This inhibits people from making music who might otherwise enjoy it and make positive cultural contributions.—T.G.

ILLUSTRATION BY MELINDA BECK

EXPERT WITNESS

Retailing Albums Beyond Record Stores

by Dan Storper

ONE DAY in 1991 I walked into one of my Putumayo clothing stores in New York City and found myself listening to three intense hard rock songs. Like many retailers, I'd always felt that music was an important part of creating a successful shopping environ-

ment. My instinct was that folk and world music would be more appropriate in stores like ours, which sell international clothing and accessories to women.

I began to search for music which would make me, and hopefully my employees and customers, feel good. It wasn't an easy process. Subscribing to magazines like *Dirty Linen* and England's *Folk Roots* and asking for opinions from world and folk music fans gradually introduced me to some great music. But I was spending thousands of dollars in the process.

The research paid off when my first few compilation retail tapes transformed the environment in the stores. All of a sudden our salespeople found themselves enjoying work more and customers seemed to bop around the shop.

and cafes. The positives working for us were 1) most retailers know how important music is in creating a positive shopping environment (but usually can't be bothered to deal with it), and 2) the ones who play



ILLUSTRATION BY RICK SEALOCK

good music are always asked about the music they play. We offered a chance for them to receive free music to play in their stores and earn money by selling CDs.

Many retailers will help local musicians by either playing or selling their music. Don't underestimate the value of a shop playing your tape. If it's music which creates a positive feeling, it is likely to turn a customer on. If the retailer won't sell the music, you might consider leaving a copy and letting the store know who is selling your music in the area. Who knows? That customer bopping around the store might even be the head of an A&R division.

As a member of Businesses for Social Responsibility, I had gotten to know Richard Foos, the president of Rhino Records, and told him of my experiences. I suggested a collaboration with Rhino whereby we'd choose the music, develop the packaging and liner notes and Rhino would license and manufacture the CDs. We'd split the sales by having Rhino sell to record retail and Putumayo sell to the alternative market.

That market now includes 1200 gift, book, clothing stores

UNCLE JOHN'S PAD

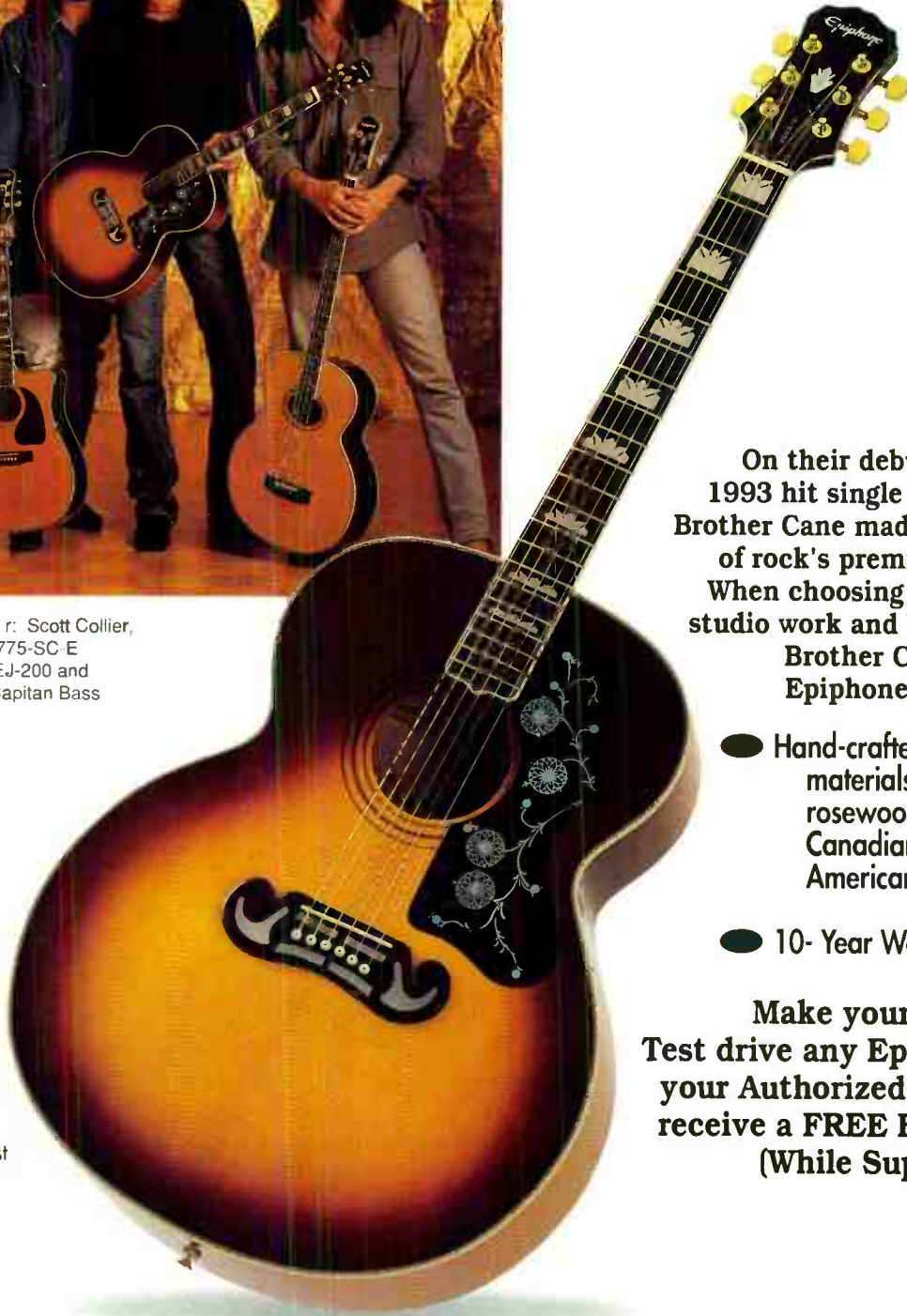
Jerry Garcia's reputation as a renaissance man continues to grow. First came Hillary Clinton's admission that she had purchased several of Garcia's original-design ties to spice up her husband's wardrobe. Now the Beverly Prescott Hotel in Los Angeles has opened the second "J. Garcia Suite," a hotel room appointed with curtains, bedspreads and framed illustrations by the former art school student and current éminence grise of the Grateful Dead. Rates are \$300 a night—a bit pricey—but San Francisco's Triton Hotel, which debuted the first J. Garcia Suite, reports that it's the most popular room in the place.—B.F.

The Mark of a Great Guitarist.



Brother Cane, l to r: Scott Collier,
Roman Glick / PR-775-SC-E
Damon Johnson / EJ-200 and
Glenn Maxey / El Capitan Bass

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BUSH "A vignette is a good thing," concludes Bush singer Gavin Rossdale, "because I like slices. Sometimes the big picture is boring."

The big picture for Rossdale's band is overwhelming rather than boring, thanks to an accessible, thoughtful yet cool vignette-filled album, *Sixteen Stone*. Its late-1994 release, on Trauma/Interscope, features a dozen cuts, led by the infectious "Everything Zen," which has the aura of an edgier, smarter, livelier Psychedelic Furs.

The English quartet, rounded out by guitarist Nigel Pulsford, bassist Dave Parsons and drummer Robin Goodridge, formed nearly three years ago with minor aspirations. "I didn't think about success like you do when you're young and want to jump on the road and screw loads of girls," ruminates Rossdale. "I became a musician late, at 18 or 19. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I always felt a bit, you know, like any person feels...different," he explains.

Actually, Rossdale is a bit different. He segues from Allen Ginsberg imitations to discussing the writing of Arthur Miller to dead-on Barry Manilow impersonations. He uses the adjective "brilliant" to describe everything from witnessing Nirvana at the L.A. Roxy to his beloved Puli dog, Winston. And he uses it, awestruck, to describe his quiet elation over Bush's sudden stateside radio success, which has left the 27-year-old singer/songwriter seemingly embarrassed: "There's much more 'me' than ever before in the world." —K.T.

THE CRUEL SEA It was no surprise when the Cruel Sea dashed across town after a New York gig last year to catch Booker T & the MGs. Before acquiring the services of singer Tex Perkins, the Australian group was an all-instrumental unit heavily influenced by the MGs, the Meters and Lee Perry.

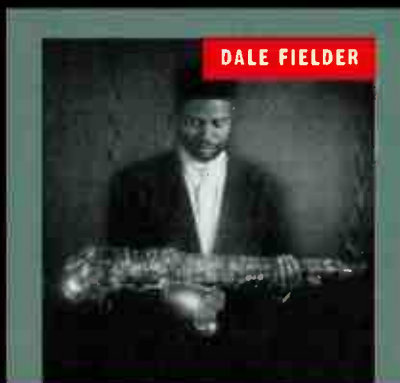
"I was reluctant to join at first," Perkins recalls, "because I really liked the fact that they were an instrumental group. I didn't want to be the one to ruin that purity."

But Perkins did sign on in 1990, and over the course of an EP and two albums the Cruel Sea has developed a unique blend of soulful grooves, sprung world beat rhythms, Stones-like aggression and punky attitude. To everyone's surprise

Down Under, the fivesome swept the major categories at last year's Aria Awards, the Oz equivalent of the Grammys, with its '93 set *The Honeymoon Is Over*. That album has since become the Sea's U.S. bow, on A&M; a new set is scheduled for late summer here.

While Perkins and his mates are delighted by the large audiences now flocking to their music, they are less happy about the concurrent embrace of the Australian media.

"All the horrible little ways they can try to turn you into rock stars—that's what the whole system tries to do," Perkins says. "Because there aren't a whole lot of rock stars here. Once they think they see one, they go crazy—'Oh, we got one!'" —C.M.



DALE FIELDER Decisions, decisions. For saxophonist Dale Fielder, the choice between alto and tenor came down to opportunity, necessity and economic reality.

"In my high school years I played tenor on R&B gigs with some of the bands on the Stax Records circuit," Fielder says, "but when I played jazz or a legit gig I would always use the alto sax."

An encounter with the legendary bebopper Sonny Stitt convinced Fielder he didn't

have to choose between his two loves, and since getting an endorsement deal with Yamaha and procuring a tenor last year, his playing has come together quite nicely, thank you. His latest CD, *Know Thyself*, on his Clarion Jazz label (6245 Bristol Pkwy., Suite 215, Culver City, CA 90230), showcases his writing and features such names

to watch for as Greg Kurstin (piano) and Ocie Davis, III (drums). Fielder has developed a strong L.A. following through his long-running weekend gig at Fifth Street Dick's Coffee House, ground zero of the young South Central jazz scene.

"When it comes to writing, above everything would be Wayne Shorter," Fielder says. "Elmo Hope was also a big influence. And Geri Allen—we're like brother and sister and shared an apartment in New York for four years. So I had an opportunity to observe how a real composer works." —A.G.



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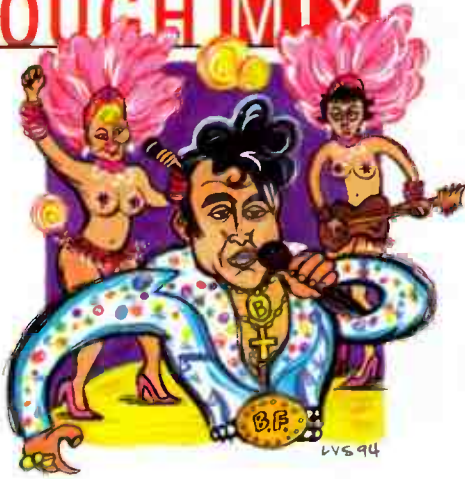
"GRADE: A. One of the product wonders of the pro audio world, the MicroSeries 1202 mic/line mixer is priced so ridiculously low that audiophiles can make good use of it for home recording projects. I tried it with a CD player via the tape inputs and found its sound as clean as that of some audiophile stereo preamps costing twice the price." *Audio Magazine*

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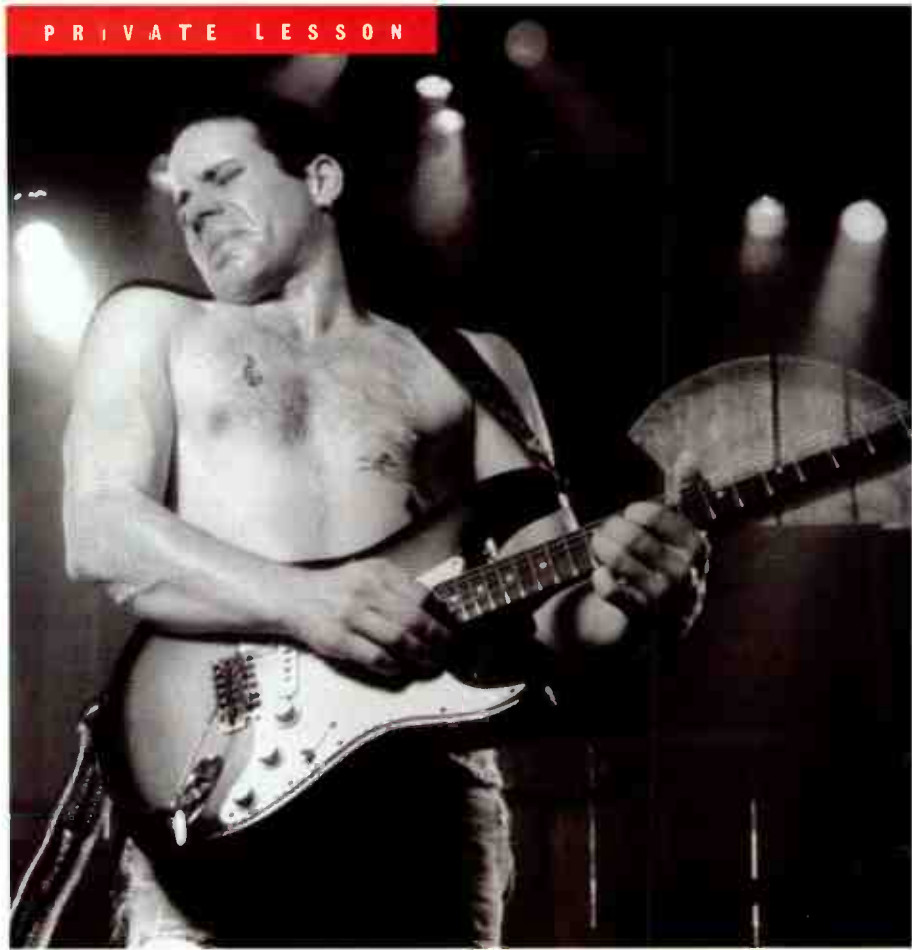
ROUGH MIX



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This month's Rough Mix was written by Bill Flanagan, Dan Forte, Andrew Gilbert, Ted Greenwald, Rob Kemp, Chris Morris and Katherine Turman.



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CHRIS DUARTE

At 31, Chris Duarte has already been through several evolutions, both musical and personal—from free jazz to blues-rock, from heroin addiction to a touring schedule that would exhaust an athlete. “All it is is being a musician,” he says. “I want to explore every avenue of music I can. I hear something, and I want to go that way. It’s not just a trendy thing; it’s phases in my life. I want to explore incian music, bop, rock, and I want to take blues another way.”

Disguised as a Double Troublesome trio steamer, Duarte’s Silverstone debut *Texas Sugar-Strat Magik* subtly succeeds in moving the blues forward and sideways, expanding rather than merely aping the legacies of Jimmie and Stevie Ray Vaughan. “I finally discovered real blues in Austin,” the native Texan asserts, “as opposed to San Antonio blues like AC-DC doing ‘I’ve Got the Jack.’ When Jimmie speaks it hits right to my core as much as Trane—whereas someone like Yngwie

Malmsteen ain’t sayin’ nothin’ to me. And Stevie probably hit me even more.”

On the minor-key “Shilo,” dedicated to both Vaughans, Duarte demonstrates his take on the sort of right-hand blur Stevie would display on “Dirty Pool.” “I’m moving around the Bm chord,” he explains (Ex. 1), “moving the upper tensions around while keeping the 1, 3 and 5 the same. I think I have a little more technical knowledge of how the chord moves around. I’m thinking of a melody on top; Stevie would mainly just think of chords (Ex. 2).” To keep his heavy-gauge strings from breaking during bends, Duarte—like Stevie Ray Vaughan—tunes all six strings down a half step.—D.F.

Ex. 1 NOTE: Tune down a semitone (Low to high: E- A- D- G- B- E-)

Ex. 1 Bm

TAB 7 10 9 10 7 9 10 9 7 10 9 10 12 12 14 17 16 14

Ex. 2

Ex. 2 Bm

TAB 7 9 7 10 9 7 7 7 7 7 10 12 12 10 9 7

Billy Taylor

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AT A TIME WHEN British pop is struggling to make inroads into the American charts, the stateside success of a South London girl named Des'ree is fairly remarkable. More remarkable still is the fact that her Top 10 single "You Gotta Be"—"it's almost like it's an anthem now," she says—was released in June of last year.

The perseverance of 550 Music/Epic in working the record is a reflection of the label's belief in its upbeat message and in the delivery of that message by a 25-year-old who won't conform to the expectations placed on black female singers. Even so, the fact that "You Gotta Be" has risen to the top with little support from black radio is a strange state of affairs.

"She's a black singer, *very* black," says Ashley Ingram, who co-wrote and co-produced "You Gotta Be." "But she's talking about issues where women

that I can't be a whole, accepted person."

I tell her there must be people out there who are buying her records *and* Mary J. Blige's.

"That's my whole argument," she replies. "Are they saying the ordinary man in the street doesn't have the ears to enjoy Beethoven *and* Miles Davis *and* SWV in their collection all at the same time?"

When Des'ree talks she sounds like the schoolgirl she must have been ten years ago: a precocious and slightly impatient young woman encouraged to work hard by her Guyanese mother, given to few vices and possessed of an inner strength she chooses to call "spiritual." It's not difficult to picture her, attractive though she is, staying indoors to work on her five A-level courses while her friends frittered away their time on boys. She exudes the peculiar sexlessness of the gospel singer.

Witting the unexpected note

should be stronger and have more respect for themselves—for their identity, their race, their culture—and some people don't want to hear that."

Sitting in her London publicist's office just hours before leaving for Africa on "the first proper holiday I've had in two years," Des'ree reflects on the predicament of being deemed "not black enough for black radio."

"It's very disconcerting, and I'm very angry about it," she says. "How dare people assume I'm a one-dimensional figure! I'm a black female artist, but I shouldn't have to follow any particular fashion or trend in order to be acceptable."

It's not even as if Des'ree sounds particularly haughty about this. But it remains crucial to her that her music, on one level at least, is perceived as black. "I've always wanted to keep the spirit of my parents' history alive, because I feel that black people, wherever they are, experience some kind of oppression or repression in themselves. I won't allow that to hold me down or make me feel

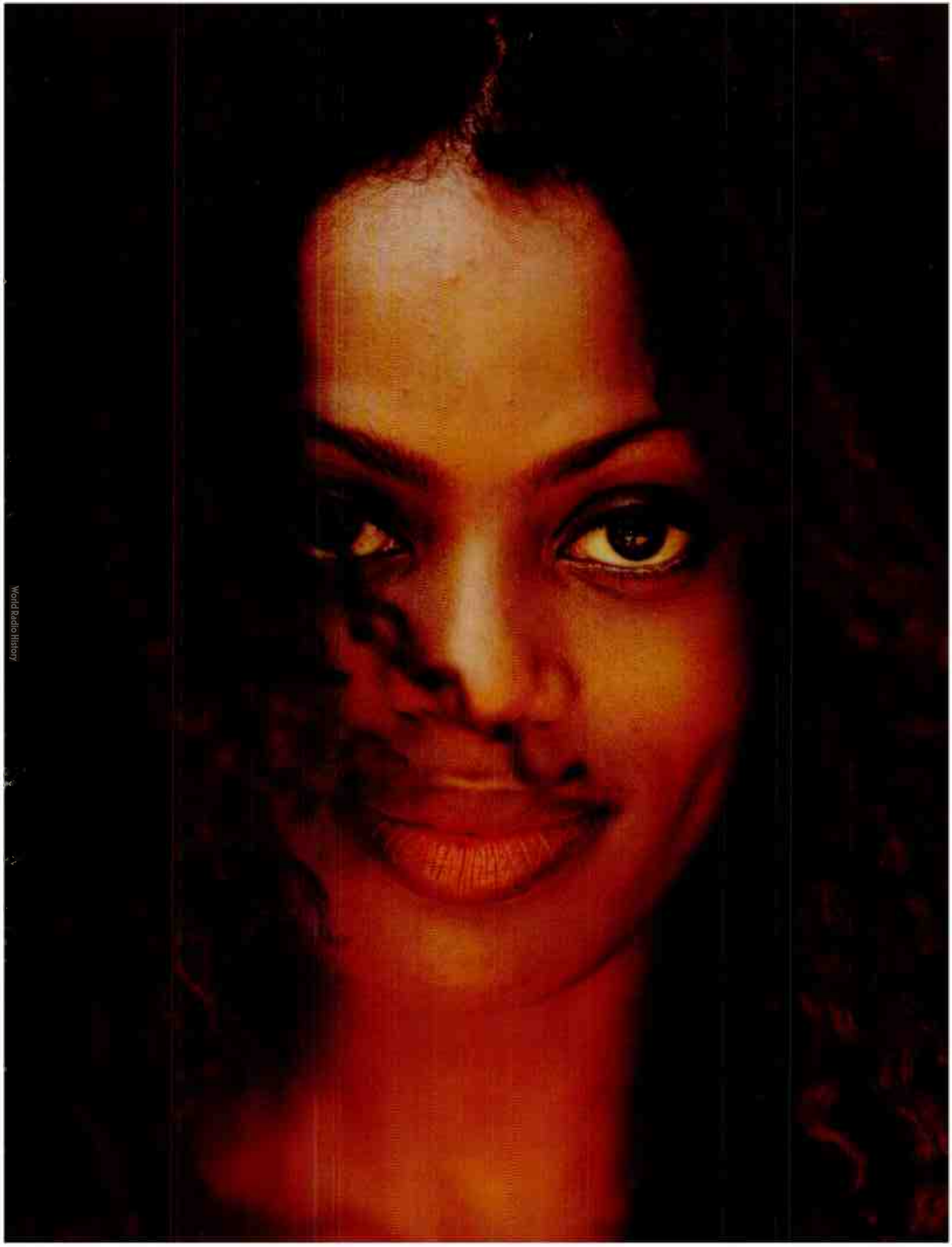
"I suppose my sister and I were quite hard-working," she concedes. "It wasn't as though that was all you did and there was nothing else, but it was a priority, and once you had that covered then you could afford to enjoy everything else."

Among the things Des'ree enjoyed doing after she'd finished her homework was listening to the music of Stevie Wonder and Bob Marley. "I didn't listen to much music, but I listened to them *all* the time. It's funny that I listened to those two male artists very early on. Then I started listening to Donny Hathaway, Sam Cooke, Gil Scott-Heron and Joan Armatrading. My dad was a big jazz fan, so I had some very strong jazz influences. That was what got me interested in the personality of music—the character of an instrumental piece. I used to sing over jazz records, and just as a saxophone would go to a note that I didn't expect, so vocally I wanted to go to the unexpected note."

In the '80s there were thousands of South London teenagers who could have told you the same story. Some watched



by
Dorothy Koss





It amazes me

**that you can
walk away from
a club even more
of a stranger
than when you
walked in."**

For a while it looked as though *I Ain't Movin'*, the follow-up album released last spring, would go the same way as *Mind Adventures*. But in America, the promotion department of 550/Epic refused to let "You Gotta Be" die. "This is a song that a lot of people felt was very special and were very passionate about," 550 president Polly Anthony told *Billboard*. Thanks in great part to the exposure of the song's video on VH1, as well as to a seven-week tour with fellow Brit Seal, the single began its impressive chart ascent in November.

"The Seal tour was very important," says Des'ree, who is about to start her own U.S. club tour. "Every show we did, the record

the growth of a homegrown soul scene while nurturing themselves on a similar diet of American heroes. They monitored the progress of acts such as Linx, Junior Giscombe and Light of the World, and wondered whether maybe they had a chance of making it themselves. One of the Brit Soul acts who made it very big indeed was Imagination, a trio featuring dreadlocked bassist Ashley Ingram.

Imagination's moment was long gone when Ingram walked into CBS's London offices in 1991 to see A&R man Lincoln Elias. (Elias a protégé of Muff Winwood) had already helped to take Brit Soul one vital stage further with his signings of Terence Trent D'Arby and Roachford—both of whom Des'ree has since worked with—and was at that moment in a state of great excitement over the demo tape Des'ree had brought in.

"Lincoln told me he was thinking of signing this girl," remembers Ingram, "and he played me this very rough demo of the song that later became 'Feel So High.' It's not often that a singer can present a demo tape and expect the powers-that-be to acknowledge the full wonders, but on a creative level she shone. She leapt out of the cassette."

Ingram badgered Elias to give him a chance with Des'ree, and was rewarded with the chance to work with her on "Feel So High." When the record was first played on British radio, its stripped-down authority was immediately startling: Completely free of reverb or any discernible effects, it sounded like a young Anita Baker perched on your shoulder and singing directly into your ear.

"The treatment of 'Feel So High' was very clear," says Ingram. "It was, don't fancy this up. Get it out there, get it pure, get it raw, and let people make their minds up. So it was a very simple, almost invisible production. See, Dezzie has this ability whereby if you put too much around her, her body rejects it."

It's worth recalling the degree to which soul music had been discredited in Britain by 1992. Tired of the vacant over-emoting of so many vocal gymnasts, the public had had enough of soul's glossy implorings and were turning toward the harder edge of rap and techno. Perhaps it wasn't altogether surprising that Des'ree's debut album *Mind Adventures* (1992) failed to repeat the success of its soft, trippy hit single.

seemed to sell a bit more. People were maybe aware of me through VH1, but then they actually got a taste of my music when I showcased about seven songs in 35 minutes. The reaction to performing is very infectious and can become quite addictive. Also, I was able to see more of America. I made an effort to go out and look at places of significance, because otherwise you can just be stuck in your hotel room watching CNN."

Asked if the message of "You Gotta Be" could lead people to perceive her as a kind of role model in America, she says she hopes the song will have some healing effect. "I've had my own share of difficulties, I haven't just sailed through life, but I've noticed that ever since I was a child I was always the one that stood slightly away and was never afraid to be on my own. But it's hard to tell people they can turn their lives around, because I don't want to approach it in that way. You have to be careful not to just be didactic."

How much room is there in the American pop market for this spiritual, soulful black music?

"It's hard, because there isn't that much instant gratification in my music. People don't really want to talk about things of a spiritual nature. We've become so advanced in the technological field that everything we once relied on—dreams, songs, stories—has gone. We've become so hard and so hostile and insular. It always amazes me that you can go to a club and walk away even more of a stranger than when you walked in."

"If Des'ree stays true to what she believes," says Ashley Ingram, "she will have no problems. She's at a level now where she's going to see a lot of change. So many artists seem to lose the plot after the first or second album, but I don't think that'll happen to Des'ree. Like she says, she ain't movin'."

FUTURE VOICES



On the road, DES'REE uses a Shure Beta-58 mike, and in the studio a Neumann U87. At home, her synthesizer setup includes a Korg M1 and 01/W, a Roland U220, Rhodes MK-80 and Korg X-3, reproduced through JBL speakers.

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once ginger more rises to the top baker





IT'S EASY TO SPOT THE STABLES WHERE GINGER BAKER KEEPS HIS HORSES IN THE RANCH country east of Denver, all rolling horizons except where the craggy Rockies shadow the western rims. It's a big white barn with freshly painted blue and green stripes across the doors to the paddocks, an iridescent

the country gentleman

splash against a palette of earth tones. It's easy to spot Ginger too, his limber, rail-

thin frame purposefully striding through the barn in a flannel shirt, jeans and calf boots, attending to the morning chores. There's a whip to the air, but he doesn't seem to notice as he offers a brisk, friendly greeting, says he'll be along shortly and commences to pitch hay into a cart. A moment later he's jumping into a tractor cab and pulling the load off to a corner of his spread.

His house is a modest two-story affair, with comfortable couches in the living room, no sign of a musical career anywhere and a nice view off the back porch. After the chores are done, and Ginger has carefully steeped a pot of tea—"this is how you drink tea, my boy," he enthuses, pouring out a cup—he stands on the landing and watches his horses grazing contentedly below. He can't play them at the moment, having recently separated his

by mark rowland

The impression was I was only in it for the money. And I was. But that doesn't mean I'm not a good musician.

left shoulder in a polo match, and missing the sport seems to pain him far more than the injury itself. "I can ride," he says, "but I can't play, and it can't do the shoulder much good to ride either." He points with his good arm. "That mare looks pretty good, don't she?" he says with pride. "Twenty-two years old this January. Bit me more times than I can count."

Ginger Baker will be 56 years old this summer. He has a gaunt, ruddy face that can seem as unapproachably grave as a monument; then he'll burst into laughter, and turn into a kid. His once red mane is generously flecked with gray, and his beard is a short rough stubble. It's a look that suggests an English garden, not wild but not exactly domesticated; the look of a practical man with an untamed spirit. Once upon a time he put together a legendary rock trio in England, built a world-class recording studio in Nigeria, tended olive groves in Italy. Now he's in Colorado, caring for his brood of nine horses, playing polo and making music when the muse beckons and the money is right, not necessarily in that order.

"I'm a professional musician," he says laconically. "I play the drums, people give me money. And I'm a polo player. I need to earn money. It's an expensive sport to play.

"I really can't do many things," he goes on. "I'm a good driver—brought the first Range Rover in Nigeria, you know. Riding a bicycle—I was a club junior champion when I was 15. Playing the drums, music in general—and polo. But that's about the limit. Oh—and building."

Uh, actually that seems like a pretty good range.

"It's not bad," he agrees. "But things like organizing—I'm the most untidy person in the world. You see my tools down in the barn? There's a big pile in one corner of the feed room. I envy people who've got them all locked up in racks and in place. And I'm the worst businessman in the world. I just trust people. Someone comes



up, looks me in the eye and says, 'This is this, and we need so much to do it,' and if I've got the money, I'd say, 'Okay.' Ninety-eight percent of the time it's goodbye money. I'm real easy to con. That's a big fault."

But didn't you handle the business end when you formed Cream?

"Yeah, I used to do all the accounts. I used to do every gig, knew exactly how much we earned, and it's all written down in a book. I did that through Blind Faith too. I was married, got a kid—I had to pay the rent. Music was my job. But there again, you see I'd gotten a lot of what you could only call disrespect from people I really loved, because I suppose the impression was I was only *in* it for the money. And I was. But it doesn't mean to say I'm not a good musician. I knew I was a bloody good musician, and if I was, then in my opinion I should earn bloody good money!"

Point made, he sighs and sips his tea reflectively. "Now I know how to earn money. It's keepin' it in me pocket that's my problem."



The Ginger Baker Trio at Ocean Way studio in Hollywood, March 1994: Baker at left, Charlie Haden and Bill Frisell.

He speaks with the rueful tone of a survivor who's absorbed many of life's lessons the hard way, but without real bitterness or regret. Maybe, like a character in a Camus novel, he's learned to live without the burdens of hope. Or maybe he's just happy that his rollercoaster life seems to have found a pleasant plateau. Because after years of rock superstardom with Cream and Blind Faith, followed by more than a decade's worth of

impoverished junkiedom, Ginger Baker has slowly but surely embarked on a remarkable artistic renaissance.

First came a series of fine albums in the late '80s produced by Bill Laswell—"he got me back into *wanting* to play"—to remind listeners of Baker's distinctive style, thundering and spacious, a meld of African rhythms and jazz accents propelled with the directness of a heartbeat. Then came a critically acclaimed though otherwise overlooked record with Masters of Reality, the alternative-before-alternative-was-hip *Sunrise on the Sufferbus*, that simply died for lack of marketing savvy.

Next up was the 1993 induction of Cream into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, a ceremony which featured the band's first performance in 25 years: dead-on takes of "Sunshine of Your Love," "Born Under



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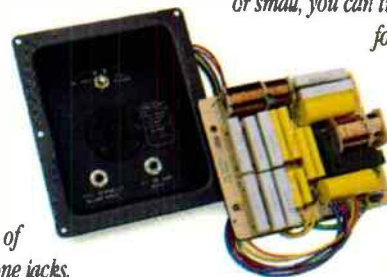
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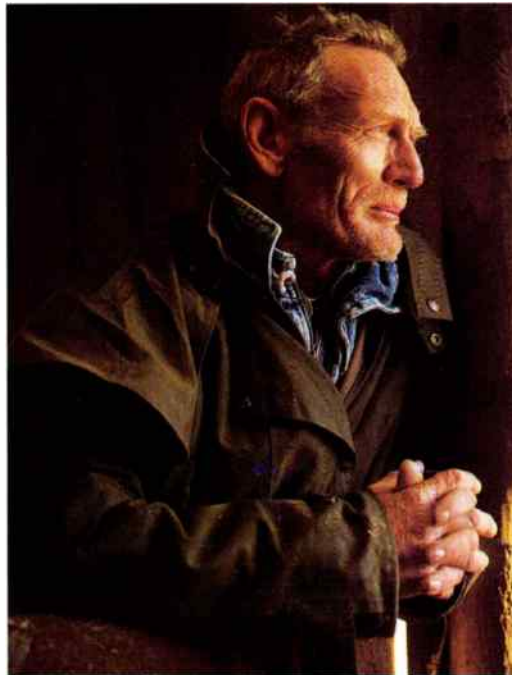
I think Eric didn't want to play with me after a while 'cause I used to lift him into unknown territory.

a Bad Sign" and "Crossroads" that left that tuxedoed crowd of industry execs and pop superstars gasping. 1994 brought two more trio projects, including a mediocre album with Jack Bruce and Gary Moore (BBM's *Around the Next Dream*) that sold well but begged unflattering comparisons as Cream-lite.

Far more to Baker's liking is *Going Back Home* by the Ginger Baker Trio, an instrumental outing on Atlantic Records with jazz virtuosos Charlie Haden and Bill Frisell. Upon its release last fall, the CD promptly vaulted into the *Billboard* Jazz Top Ten; by year's end it was showing up on several critics' Ten Best lists as well. Produced by *Musician* contributing editor Chip Stern, it's the first record in many years to showcase Baker's talents as a composer of subversively infectious melodies, and to position the drummer the way he sees himself, as a jazz musician who happens to be a rock legend—not the other way round.

"I wasn't sure it was going to work," Baker admits of the recording sessions, which took place over five days in Los Angeles. "Chip came up with the idea and I said, get it together and I'll do it. I wasn't concerned about it: I thought it was either *not* going to happen in a big way, or it was going to be amazing. And it was amazing. I had never played with Bill, and on his tunes I said to him, isn't what I'm playing too busy and annoying you or something? And he said, no, man, play it! I don't think he ever had drum tracks like that before, especially 'Where We Go,' that 12/8 thing. And it was cool, you know. Because playing with some other people"—he laughs—"it's 'Man, can you play straight on this?' And you go, okay, boom-dah, boom-boom-dah, boom-dah, boom-boom-dah..."

He lets his voice trail off in resignation. "If it's just the same rhythm all the time, it's very boring. I love to create something new every time. We're jazz players. What we were playing on that album, to me,



is straightforward, normal jazz. We were, like, doing a gig."

What was especially fulfilling, Baker adds, was getting Haden's and Frisell's support for his own compositions, such as the pretty madrigal-sounding "I Lu Kron."

"That was something that had been going through my head for years," he explains. "But I'd be sitting in the studio with Jack Bruce playing and I'd get this 'Oh, man, get off the piano.' I'm sure Jack heard me play those tunes a hundred times. With Bill and Charlie, I played it once and Charlie said, 'Man, that sounds great, let's do it.' That's the difference—there's no ego thing. It's not 'You're the drummer, you can't write music'—which is a load of crap. I am a complete musician. I was doing big-band arrangements in 1961."

If Ginger's comments toward Jack Bruce suggest a long and complicated relationship with his most famous rhythm-mate, well, that's what it is. Baker's memory is understandably spotty in some respects, but when it comes to past slights he's the elephant who never forgets.

"This is my biggest problem, you see," he observes. "If I speak the truth, people don't like it. I touch nerves. It's very unfortunate. It doesn't make you friends."

"Working with Jack is, you know, not always easy," he says, not without affection. "He tends to pull the pop star thing. But I'm a bit more patient than I was in the past. I don't get angry anymore. I just laugh and let it go."

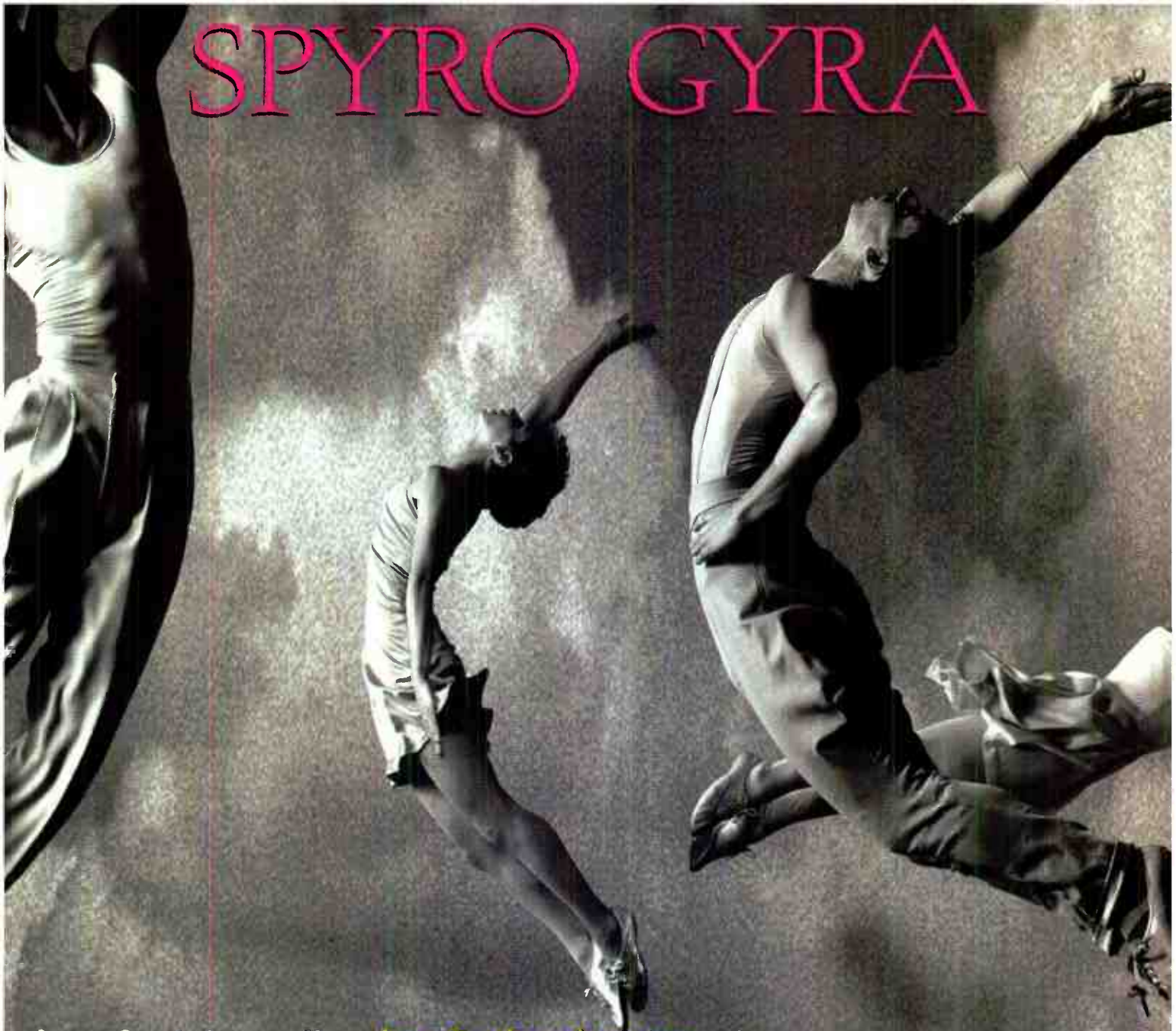
'Twasn't always so. One story surrounding the birth of Cream is that when Eric Clapton showed up at that band's first rehearsal, he discovered his new mates in the throes of a fistfight. In fact, Baker and Bruce had been playing—and quarreling—together for years, key figures in an early-'60s British jazz scene who'd been raised on bebop

BAKER'S RECIPE

GINGER BAKER plays Ludwig Drums and Zildjian cymbals, and he's not shy about explaining why. "I wouldn't use anything else," he declares. "The secret is in the shell. What bothers me is that the drum [kit] is an American invention, and people buy these Asian [made] facsimiles. It's my opinion from practical experience that the only people who can make drums that sound like drums are Americans! Yamaha makes very fine flutes, very fine pianos and they make drum kits that *look* fantastic. And their fittings are quite good. But the shells don't work.

They've obviously taken the American drums and analyzed them to bits. But it's the way the shells are put together by hand that gives them their resonance. I only wish more drummers would stand by American companies, because I can foresee a situation where drums will only be made in Japan and Germany. I believe their success has to do with economic and business techniques. Unfortunately, you Americans started this sort of thing by destroying the British aircraft industry in the same way. Now the only people who can reverse the situation are the drummers themselves."

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still illuminated by the praise. "That night we went back to his flat and he played me all these African records, loads of them. He'd say, 'Okay, what's the beat?' And I'd go, 'One-two-three, one-two-three.' 'No, no, no! It's here—one-two-three-four.' I'd go, 'Holy shit!' It was like the door opened and the sun came in. After that, I'd always wanted to see Africa, to see where this drum thing is coming from."

Following Blind Faith, he put together Ginger Baker's Air Force, a big-band fling that brought together various musicians he'd

played with over the years—Stevie Winwood, Graham Bond, Chris Wood—that was so well received the group stuck together in varied incarnations for two albums and a tour, after which Baker and Air Force percussionist Remi Kabaka traveled to Nigeria. "The day I arrived, Remi's mother died and I got to go to the funeral, which was a pretty incredible experience. The funeral was Saturday morning, the party started that afternoon and it went on to Sunday afternoon. This is a place about a hundred-odd miles northwest of Lagos. The drummers played, and they

had me crying on several occasions. It was just unbelievable. I was the only white person there. And I played with them, and people came up and put money on my head, which they do to all their drummers, but they treated me like..." Baker's eyes begin to well up and his voice cracks at the memory.

Like you belonged there?

"It was pretty amazing," he says. "At the same time it was weird, because as this was going on, I meet Remi's family and he comes up: 'Man, we've got to build a studio, right here in Nigeria!' Which we did. And it was a good fucking studio."

Good enough to record albums like Paul McCartney's *Band on the Run*, among others. But as Baker often observes, finance was never his long suit. Eventually the place went broke, Baker returned to England, ran into substantial tax problems and became very seriously strung out on heroin. Finally, he moved to Italy to get away from it all. He built a home there from an 800-year-old ruin in a town where no one else spoke English, and took work tending a neighbor's olive groves. He lived there for nearly a decade, slowly got straight and fell in love with the beauty of the place; he says he hated to leave. But while he was in Nigeria, he'd developed another, more exhilarating addiction—to polo playing—and rural Italy just wasn't much good for that. "Besides," he says drily, "I'd had a few unfortunate experiences with Italian women."

So after some European jazz gigs helped revive his music career, he took his two horses and moved to California. He married again, and, thanks to monies from a recent settlement with PolyGram regarding Cream's back royalties, bought this spread in Colorado. Things are definitely looking up.

"I've been here, what, six years now?" he asks rhetorically. "And I'm still straight—I've thrown the crutch away. A lot of people, it takes them all the way down, and they never come up. It took me pretty fucking low down, especially that period between 1977 and 1981. There was one whole year in Italy when my kit was in the barn and I never touched it. I did about three gigs in the two previous years. It took me two years to get fucked up and another 18 years to get unfucked up—and I was trying all the time. I kept coming off and going back and coming off and going back; it was horrific. I mean, most of the people I knew in my last period in England have since got AIDS from using the same syringes. Some of them were pretty poor people—and some of them weren't."

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World Radio History

"But polo was the answer. I'd first got straight in Nigeria, with polo and hanging around horses. It was the perfect substitute. And in Italy I thought, shit, now I'm straight, I can handle the States. That's why I came back here. I knew I'd done it." He allows himself a small, proud smile. "So, I'm quite happy to have got this far. I'm quite surprised as well."

Well, at this point you certainly deserve your success.

Baker shrugs. "I'm not sure anybody deserves anything."

The last few years have at least afforded a measure of vindication. *Going Back Home*, besides bringing his career full circle, has helped cement his reputation as a master percussionist and even provide a plausible future as a jazzman, which is what Baker says he's wanted all along. And Cream's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, a no-brainer if ever there was one, helped heal some long-simmering wounds for a trio whose artistic virtues sparked surprising controversy in its time. Baker still chafes over an old article in *Rolling Stone*—"I forget the name of the writer, may he rot in hell"—whose dismissal of Eric Clapton's "long boring solos" helped hasten the band's breakup. "At that time Eric thought that magazine was the most happening in the world, and to be put down that way, I know it had a devastating effect on him."

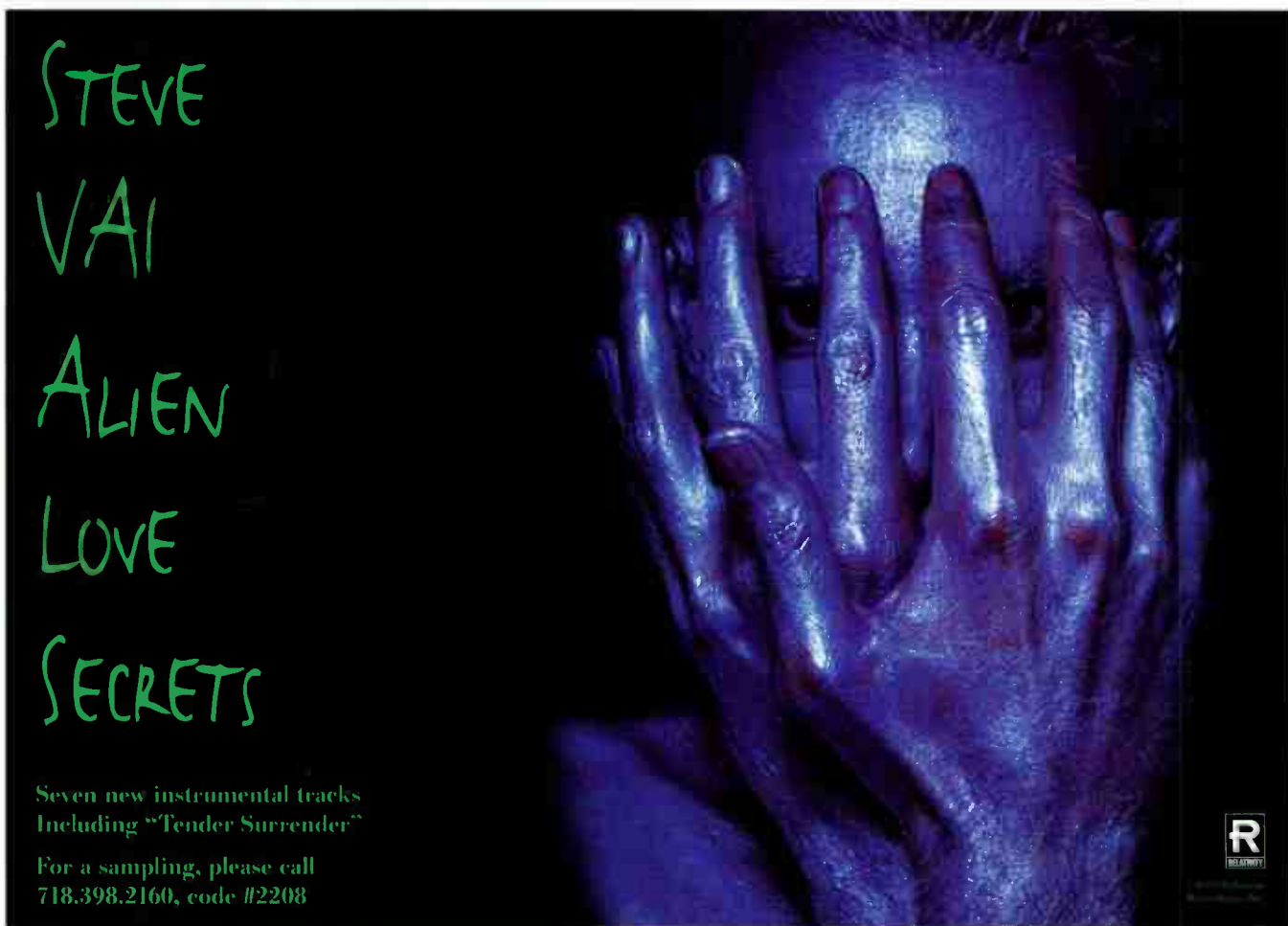
Of all the legendary rock groups that have embarked on well-publicized "reunions" in recent years, certainly Cream's would have been the most musically enticing—go ahead, name another '60s band whose members all remain creatively vital today. Maybe that's one reason it had never happened. But the day before the Hall of Fame

bash, Baker, Bruce and Clapton found themselves alone together for the first time in 25 years. "The rehearsals were absolute magic," Baker recalls happily. "It was like we hadn't played together for a week. The next night, you know, you're sitting at a table for eight hours listening to these dopey diatribes, and listening to Ahmet Ertegun tell everyone how *he* formed Cream." Ginger snorts. "Ahmet's dream, you know. So that gig wasn't as relaxed as the rehearsals. But it was still okay. Because it was such a joy to play with them."

Can he imagine a more permanent reunion? "Absolutely no chance," he responds quickly. "We did it, and to do it again, I don't think it's a good idea. There was a time when I wanted to," he admits. "But the reason is that I was broke. You're offered 14 million bucks to do a gig...is that the reason to do it?" Baker lets the thought hang in the air, then shakes his head slowly. "Not really. Not really."

He drifts back to the porch, and the view of his horses. "I had 11 years out of the game, from 1978 until I came back to the States. At one point I'd had 40 horses I was keeping, but after I went totally broke I just kept the two young ones—I couldn't sell them because they were too green. Those two I've still got. During that 11 years I rode them every day, and neither of them are easy horses. One of them can buck like crazy and the other one's a runaway. Now I can ride anything," he grins. "I've got a reputation: I play the horses nobody can play. And I play 'em good. You see, with an easy horse, you've got all the time in the world to work out your shot, get everything right. You've got a difficult horse, you don't got time—you've just got to do it."


"You see, horses, they've got a very small brain, but they'll read



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your mind," he goes on, warming to his subject. "And I've got this thing with them. Horses trust me. Charmagne was really ill-treated, scared shitless of everybody—you couldn't stroke her head. I can do anything now with that horse. I guess I'm an animal lover," he admits. "Same with my dogs, I get attached to them, I really do. A lot of people in polo have no feeling for horses at all. Some of the best players in the world give horse whippings. I mean, you will get guys who will kill a horse to win a game, because it's their livelihood. They just go out and buy another horse. For me, no game is worth killing a horse for. I feel that if you give a horse a hundred percent, it will give you a hundred percent back. And they do.

"That old mare over there," he motions happily, "the one I've had the longest, she can be the most difficult thing in the world. But a few weeks ago, we were playing a big tournament—and she'd been an absolute cow the week before. I said to her, 'Now Chrissie, this one's important.' And she played like a dream."

You relate to music and horses in similar ways?

"Well, it's timing. But then timing is everything, really. I like to have fun when I play polo and I like to have fun when I play drums. But I don't need to practice drums anymore. I sit down and it's 'yeah man'—I can play what I want to play and I still soar. What's frustrating about polo is that you need to play every day to keep improving, to really fly. And I'm getting old, you know. It's got to be done soon if it's going to be done at all."

So how do you compose, get ideas? Do you ever listen to the radio? "I don't listen to music very much at all," he laughs. "Especially

the radio. Because they'll play something good and then follow it by something absolutely banal and then something even more banal and then do something good. I can't handle that at all.

"I listen to the music that's in my head. When I'm mucking up the stalls—that's how 'I Lu Kron' came about. Mucking up the stalls and feeling happy. Liking to do it, enjoying it. Keeping the horse's house clean, you know? So I listen to my own music. Because I'm very selfish and egotistical, I suppose. I like feeling like when I'm around my horses, especially playing polo. I mean, that *is* music to me. It's life music. And when it can be played properly, it's magic."

And the interplay between the players is like the interplay between musicians?

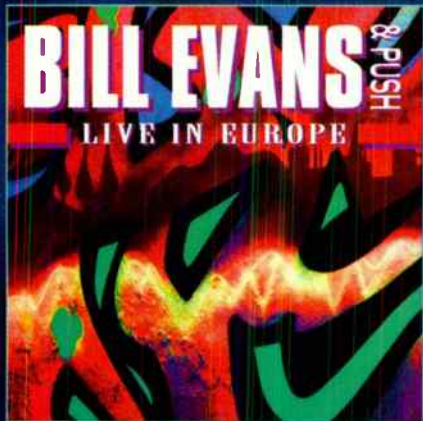
"It's something that can only be put like: 'There is a God, because there's a gift that you've got.' When you meet other musicians, you realize you're not the only one with it. All over the world, right? This sort of almost select group, if you like, musicians. And polo is the same thing. There's even less polo players than there are musicians. It's a brotherhood, like the Musicians Union—except some of *them* shouldn't be there. I mean, there's some guys who practice and practice and their technique is...and yet, they don't have real time. When time starts happening, they don't know what's going on."

And what of the drums themselves? Can they lead you into unexpected dimensions? Can they take on a personality of their own, like the horses?

Baker rubs his beard a moment. "Well," he says evenly, "I suppose it depends whose hands are on them."

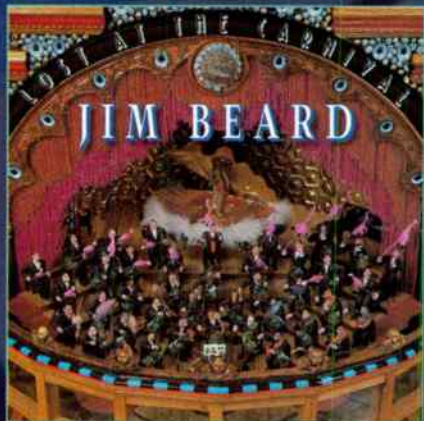


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Trilok Gurtu's new release Believe is his most powerful yet to date. Born into a highly musical family in Bangalore his mother Shobha Gurtu is one of India's most beloved singers. Trilok began applying his Indian classical techniques to jazz and rock in a teen. He eventually expatriated himself to Germany and developed the singular style which now brings the jazz world to its feet. Formerly associated with Oregon, John McLaughlin and a veteran of countless radio appearances, Gurtu has gone on to

produce a series of excellent solo releases utilizing such challenging sidemen as Jan Garbarek, Nima Youssefzadeh, Pat Metheny and Joe Zawinul. With his 4th venture as bandleader, Trilok strips down to the Crazy Saints quartet and delivers a masterful mix of jazz finesse, rock blast and authentic world vision. The authority and unique style showcased on this latest work will inspire you. The concert will convert you. *Blues*

DAVID TORN

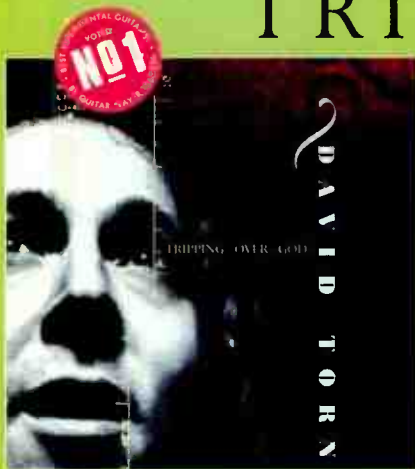
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recording and touring-during which he literally recovered from brain surgery-his return via Polytown was met with universal acclaim. With cohorts Mick Karn and Terry Bozzio, Torn toured North America, thrilling audiences with joyfully applied chaos and intelligence. Tripping Over God is all Torn, every screaming nuance, each pesky loop. Listeners are advised to watch their step. "He can take a single note and make it careen from a scream to a sigh that will leave you devastated"-CD Review

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WHO KILLED THE HAIR BANDS?

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BY ALAN DI PERNA



IN JANUARY OF 1992, SINGER VINCE NEIL APPEARED ON the cover of this magazine, lighting a cigar with a thousand-dollar bill. His band, Motley Crue, had just signed a \$25-million four-album deal with Elektra. Their latest album, *Dr. Feelgood*, had sold quintuple platinum and their high-tech extravaganza live shows were packing stadiums all over the world. Slender, golden-haired and grinning, Neil looked almost a dead ringer for his sexy blonde wife, Sharise.

Cut to November of 1994. Vince Neil, now a solo artist, is appearing at the Electric Ballroom, a rock 'n' roll bar in Phoenix, Arizona. He's playing to a primarily working-class audience of maybe 800 or 900 people. Two women with bad cases of secretarial spread get up on their chairs and scream as Neil hits the stage. The singer has put on a few pounds himself. Sporting a slight gut and the first traces of a double chin, he's starting to resemble Ozzy. He could do with a shave. But his band rocks hard and his voice sounds much the same as always. The first row of punters pressed against the stage salute him with raised fists or the first-finger-and-pinkie "devil" sign. Neil grasps their outstretched hands as if clutching a lifeline.

What a difference two years

can make. But this is no isolated hard-luck story. Neil's tumble from the stadiums to the roadhouses pretty much encapsulates what has happened to all the bands who play what some call "hair metal," "metal lite" or, more kindly, "melodic hard rock"—that heavily produced, fastidiously stylized hard rock subgenre that came to the fore in the mid-'80s. Former spandex titans like Warrant, Winger, Trixter and Slaughter have all suffered drastically reduced record sales. Neil is actually one of the lucky ones. After being ousted from Motley Crue, he was able to go over to Warners, Elektra's sister label, and cut an \$18-million, five-album deal. After all, that's only seven million less than what Motley got.

"Yeah, but it's all mine," jokes the singer, who is in the process of suing his former bandmates for his cut of the money they got from Elektra. Neil's heavy metal colleagues Poison and Cinderella have also been lucky enough to hang on to their major-label deals despite disappointing recent sales. Only Bon Jovi seem to have escaped the "hair band" stigma and held their place

high on the charts, while lesser lights of the spandex universe—acts like Ratt, White Lion, Steel Heart, Spread Eagle, Faster Pussycat and Bang Tango—have long since packed up their pointy guitars and called it a day. Two of the guys from Britny Fox are playing in a cover band now.

Musical styles come and go. What's amazing is how rapidly and thoroughly the hair bands fell from grace. To find a parallel

**NO POPULAR
MUSICAL STYLE
HAS EVER
VANISHED AS
QUICKLY
AS THE SPANDEX
ROCK OF WARRANT,
TRIXTER, WINGER,
ETC. WHERE DID
THEY GO?**

you'd probably have to go all the way back to the decline of '50s pop idols like Fabian and Bobby Rydell. Was there any advance warning? Warrant singer Jani Lane says he saw the writing on the wall. Literally. He recalls two meetings with Columbia Records president Don Ienner, spaced about one year apart. One meeting was to discuss marketing for Warrant's 1991 album *Cherry Pie*, which sold 2.5 million. The second was to discuss marketing for the followup, *Dog Eat Dog*, which barely limped to gold (500,000 copies).

"The first time," says Lane, "I walked into the office and I remember seeing this gigantic poster of our album cover on the wall above the secretary's desk. I thought, 'Wow, I guess we're gonna get a push on this one.' But when it came time to discuss promoting *Dog Eat Dog*, I'll never forget walking into Don Ienner's office seeing this huge poster of Alice in Chains' *Dirt* over his secretary's desk. And I thought, 'Hello Seattle... goodbye Warrant.'"

Shortly thereafter, Warrant found themselves in the midst of a bad-luck streak worthy of Def Leppard or Spinal Tap. The band's manager died, Lane's marriage broke up, the band was dropped from Columbia and ended up being sued by its own merchandising company. Several members, Lane included, ended up declaring bankruptcy. The band split up, but then re-formed with a few different members. Like Vince Neil and other one-time stadium headliners, Warrant are back to playing clubs. Their new album will be on a small indie label.

Who killed the hair bands? Everybody knows the short answer: grunge. But were there any accomplices? Did the major labels abandon the spandex rockers too quickly? Did MTV? Radio? The kids? Or is it possible that hair metal died of natural causes and grunge was just in the right place at the right time?

When did hair begin to fall, anyway? Z Rock Network program director Pat Dawsey feels that 1992 was the genre's black year. Dawsey's network includes some 20 rock stations in markets like Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Spokane and West Palm Beach. These days, Z Rock plays a mixture of grunge and classic hard rock: Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and STP meet Led Zep, Aerosmith and AC/DC. But in the '80s, Dawsey was programming the Motleys, Poisons and Cinderellas of the world quite heavily. He stopped, he says, partially because of an "auditorium test" that Z Rock conducted in '92:

"That's where you get a few hundred listeners, put them together in a room, play them songs and have them grade the songs," Dawsey explains. "We tested in the neighborhood of 500 to 1000 songs that were in our format or loosely related to it—everything from the Rolling Stones to Slayer. There are three categories in this kind of research:

How recognizable is the song? How popular is the song? And how burned out is your audience on hearing the song? And for a number of those so-called 'hair bands' the response was: 'I know who they are, I'm tired of hearing them, and I don't like them anymore.' I talked to a number of my colleagues in a number of different cities who had done the same kind of testing, with much the same result. I remember a guy in Baltimore saying, 'I had to drop half my library!' I had to do the same thing myself. We went from being a radio station playing 900 titles to one playing 450 titles.

"In the mid-to-late 1980s, our format catered to a lot of that [hair band] music, and we shared a lot of success along with those bands. In some cases, I developed personal friendships with people in those bands. But when you're trying to program for music consumers and listeners you've got to be able to reflect their tastes directly."

In Dawsey's view, it was overexposure, more than anything else, that led to the uncannily rapid eclipse of these bands. Certain aspects of the genre—including the insidious "power ballad" and the bands' video-friendly teen appeal—helped make hair metal ubiquitous. "With any of those bands," says Dawsey, "when they were successful, their records would be played on AOR, CHR and Top 40. You would see them on MTV and hear them on movie soundtracks. You'd have them coming through your town on tour three or four times a year. They would even be on the breakaway spot for football games. Of course people burned out on them. When it really comes down to it, I think the hair bands were just a victim of their own success."

But it wasn't only the bands that were hurt by rapidly changing musical tastes in the early '90s. The record labels had invested substantially in hair bands from the mid-'80s right through the first years of this decade. So what happens when you're a record label and you've got a contract with a band doing a style that abruptly goes out of fashion?

"You either continue or you cut your losses," Ron Oberman answers. Oberman is the A&R man who signed Warrant to Columbia, before moving over to MCA as executive VP of A&R. Like many of the majors, MCA basically decided to cut their losses on acts such as Trixter, Steel Heart and Spread Eagle. "And we had to take a [financial] hit on some of them," Oberman adds. "Meaning that in certain cases, with a lot of contracts, you can't just say, 'Okay, we don't want you anymore, and you don't get anything out of this.' We had to make settlements of various sorts, depending on the artists' contract. But I would rather take that kind of hit financially. Because in the end it's going to be a lot less than if we were to continue and



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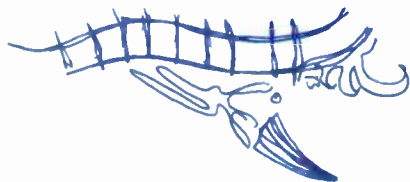
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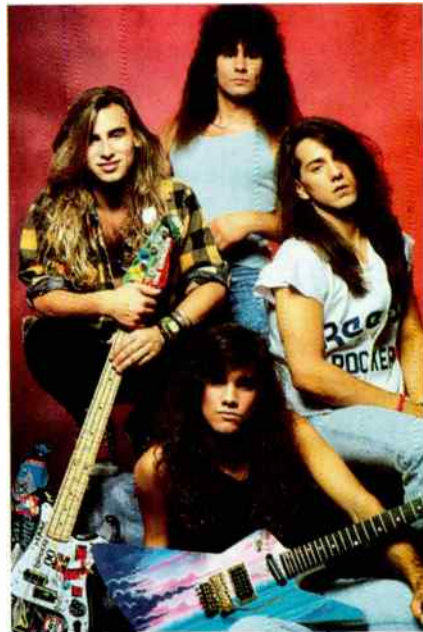
Within the hard rock community, there are those who disagree—who feel that the labels gave up too quickly on some of these acts. It has been suggested that the labels should have stuck with the artists they’d signed, seeing them through what many hair rockers would like to believe is only a temporary bad patch. But Warrant’s Jani Lane dismisses that kind of thinking as simplistic.

“I don’t have any animosity toward Columbia,” he says. “I really don’t know what would have happened if we had gotten more money for support [on *Dog Eat Dog*]. I’m not sure if that would have helped sales or not. I don’t know if that would have been throwing good money after bad on their part. Because I don’t think people wanted to hear that kind of music at that time. You can’t force-feed them.”

A more likely place to lay the blame is on the labels’ age-old tendency toward indiscriminate oversigning at the start of any musical trend. If they had to dump too many hair bands in the ’90s, it’s only because they signed too many in the ’80s. It’s a vicious cycle that many observers see happening all over again with grunge. If word hits the street that the labels are signing “anything in poodle haircuts,” nine out of ten struggling musicians will run out and get poodle haircuts. Lane admits that that was the thinking behind Warrant’s glam image.

“We were encouraged by the fact that that’s what everyone was doing. And it was a very big part of why we got signed. You know how it works. As soon as one band breaks, the labels all go into that area and sign all the other bands that are doing a similar thing. In our case, there were quite a few bands doing a similar thing in the mid-’80s—lookwise, anyway, although with different musical styles. So we did it. I admit it. But we’re not doing it now. And I’m not going to say I regret doing it. It was fun when we were doing it. And people were digging it. Times change and so do your clothes. Big deal.”

Then there’s MTV’s role to consider. The music channel certainly nurtured the hair metal genre in the mid-’80s, and was a key factor in its widespread success. In MTV’s earliest days, it had relied heavily on visual-minded pop acts such as Madonna, Michael Jackson, Culture Club, et al. This was fine for the urban sophists. But the advent of a visually oriented hard rock genre allowed the music channel to



EDDIE MALKIN/RETNA

“A LOT OF THE
KIDS I MET ON THE
ROAD WITH
TRIXTER ARE INTO
SOUNDGARDEN
NOW, BECAUSE
THAT’S WHAT
MTV SPOONFEEDS
THEM.”

reach out in a big way to the great American heartland—where heavy metal has always reigned supreme and probably always will. But beyond that, by putting a new, highly stylized spin on ’70s metal formulas, the hair bands were able to expand on metal’s traditionally male demographic. It’s no secret that bands like Winger, Warrant, Poison and Cinderella found their biggest audience among adolescent girls, not to mention some of their bun-obsessed moms. The kind of cute, air-brushed, nonthreatening sexuality these groups projected made them the Monkees of the ’80s. A guitarist in a multi-platinum hair band once confessed to me that his own father called him “Bambi with a penis.”

Like the Monkees, the hair bands were perfect for the television screen. But as the ’90s got under way, MTV seemed to join the record companies in dropping these hard-rocking lookers like so many hot potatoes.

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World Radio History

You'll hear that spontaneity, but I hope to spend more time arranging material and trying to get everybody involved in the songwriting process.

MUSICIAN: *Were there songs that you felt captured that balance between structure and spontaneity that compare with your best work?*

GOSSARD: "Tremor Christ" seemed to write itself. It was just a riff-and-a-half, basically. On a muggy, beautiful New Orleans afternoon we came into a very cool studio and it poured out. That and "Nothingman," which Jeff wrote, were recorded a day apart. They were very spontaneous, but with a simple yet indescribably beautiful vibe to them.

MUSICIAN: *Having founded the band and written most of the first album by yourself, why was it necessary to share songwriting? "Even Flow," "Alive" and "Black" were pretty incredible compositions.*

GOSSARD: If it had remained always my band, my natural tendency would have been to get more complex and arrange things more and more. That wouldn't necessarily be good for Eddie, or anyone else in the band. Of course, I enjoy being self-indulgent. [laughs] And I look forward to the time when I can become more indulgent with my songwriting. But this band is a family, and it's a process that we have to grow with together.

MUSICIAN: *Eddie is an emotionally intense person who had a difficult family life. Does the Pearl Jam family have to accommodate that? Some people believe he calls all the shots now.*

GOSSARD: It's a combination of things. There's no getting around the fact that Eddie is the man. As far as emotional and spiritual energy goes,



Loosegroove ground zero: Stone's home studio

the leader of this band was the most gradual, slow and respectful process that I've ever been involved in. That's not to say Eddie's never done anything malicious. But he never grabbed power for power's sake. His position was gained only because he has that energy, and that's naturally where he ended up. I struggle with my ego every day, all day long. There's no break from that. Every day there's some sort of revelation about how I'm misinterpreting something because I'm thinking of myself as the center of the universe. Once you realize everybody in your band has that problem, it becomes easier.


MUSICIAN: *You've spoken of how you admired Mike's fluidity as a player, and wanted to emulate that, while letting him in on the songwriting process. And you have been doing more leads...*

GOSSARD: There's been a lot of role reversal going on in the band. The roles people have been playing for a long time will always be there, but everybody's willing to try on different outfits. I think Mike will be trying on the outfit of a songwriter as much as anyone. But he can always still break into a blazing fast lead. It's going to be a different band. In any

he is the leader of this band. But Eddie does not make all the decisions; Eddie can listen to reason; Eddie can be swayed or talked in or out of certain things. Eddie allows other people to lead in this band and to have certain roles that are very fundamental to the decision-making process.

Eddie is a natural leader. Jeff and I have been very much in control of previous bands we've worked in. But the way Eddie grew into being

SPINNING LOOSEGROOVES



THE ARTISTS on the Loosegroove label "are all people I've had relationships with," Gossard explains. "So it's definitely as much because I really like and trust the people that I'm working with as the music that's moved me—although that's equally important. I've watched other people be successful because they're going with their guts, you know?" We asked Stone for capsule reviews of some current and upcoming label releases:

Critters Buggin': "An amazing group. It's Matt Chamberlain, who we played with before, and Brad Houser—they both used to play with Edie

Brickell, but they've done a lot of drugs since then and really expanded their frame of reference. They have their own trippy samplers and tape loops running and it's all instrumental, or a lot of it is, but amazing songs too. It's full-on rhythm-oriented power freak-out rock."

Prose and Concepts: "It's a Seattle rap band whose demo I heard two years ago and got to know them as people and really respected their family. They're an interracial rap band so they're faced with, you know, some pretty heavy-duty outside forces, and I'm down with them. Very talented."



Malfunkshun: "It's an eight-year-old tribute to Andy Wood that's gonna be a

real treat for anyone who was into Mother Love Bone or wanted to know some of the early Seattle inspirational figures, 'cause Andy Wood left an impact on the city and everyone that ever heard his music, I think. Charming and funny and funky and heavy. They do a cover version of 'Wang Dang Sweet Poon Tang' by the Nuge!"

On Devilhead: "Brian and Kevin Wood, who are Andy Wood's brothers; John McBain, John Waterman and Luke Kimble are also in the band. It's a real rock band, and they will wear their rock on their sleeve, but they're groovy—they have a great rhythm section."

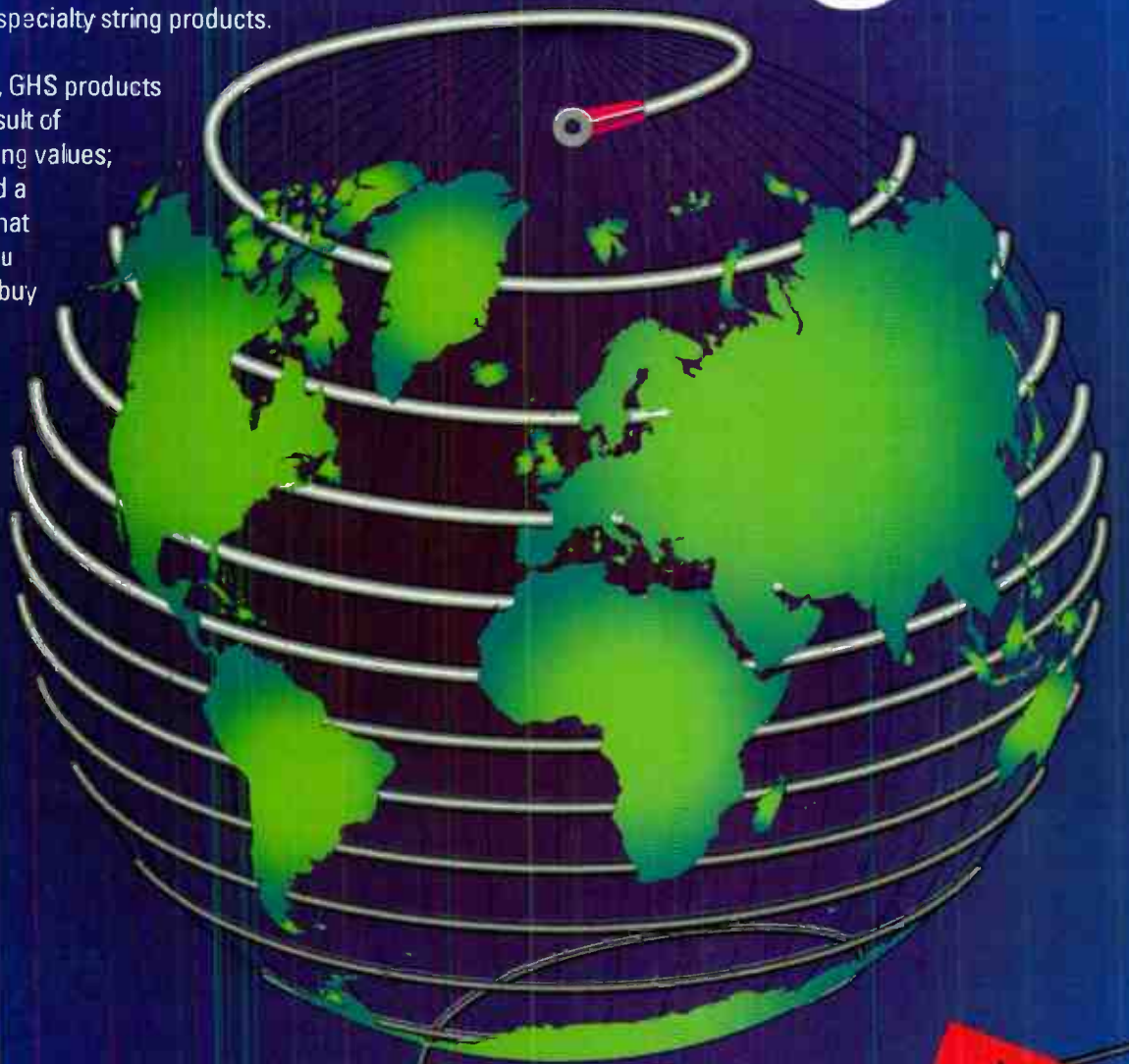


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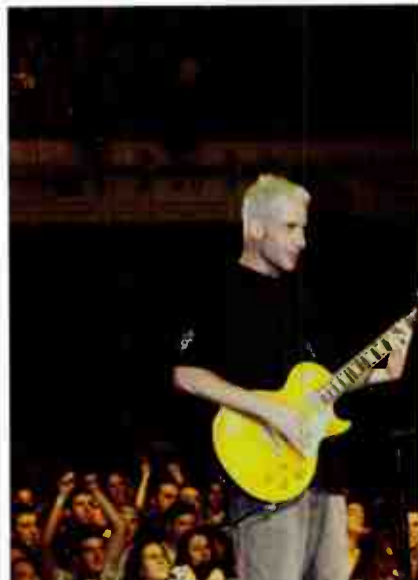
given song there's plenty of opportunities for structure, for improvisation, for both left brain and right brain thinking on the part of everybody. I think that's what we're finally all beginning to understand. Or maybe it's just that I'm finally beginning to understand that. Or maybe I'm just *imagining* that I understand it. [laughs] The point is, it's about balance, and how no one individual can see the whole picture. We need each other's perspectives.

MUSICIAN: *You once told me that this was more than a band to you—it was an experiment in faith.*

GOSSARD: I think I was on my Gaia kick that week. No, I do think that's a valid comment. Call it holistic or holographic thinking, it's been quite effective imagining the world's problems are all right in front of you on a smaller scale with your band. You deal with those relationships, and that's where real major change begins.

MUSICIAN: *So your family's problems get repeated in your band, and in the world. The microcosm in the macrocosm?*

GOSSARD: Right, those relationships with your parents and family are the hardest to figure out, and the same patterns get carried



Moore Theater free show, February '95

into a band situation. In Pearl Jam, the cliffs are very high and the chasms very deep. You have to face your own neuroses and problems through your band members. And everything that pisses you off about somebody in your band or your family is something inside yourself that you haven't dealt with. Every time we've realized, okay, we've fucked up about this or that, we've learned to find that space where the group is more important than any individual problem. And we've grown from it.

MUSICIAN: *Let's get specific. Mike has been very open about how he's kicked his alcohol habit. How did the band handle that?*

GOSSARD: Mike's a pretty awful drunk. Not that he got malicious or mean openly to people, but he would get out of control consistently. It was a difficult situation where you could find yourself blaming Mike for a lot of your own frustrations with the band when he was fucked up or couldn't come to practice. And we're used to loving Mike and knowing how much fun and how talented he is. I got upset that he might throw away a great opportunity to be in a cool band and work it out. He decided to go into treatment and everyone was thrilled. How could you not be? Here was Mike taking responsibility for himself and his own happiness, going to a new level. He's a treat to be around. He's just as raw and fuckin' crazy as he ever was, but he's not drinking. And we're there for him in the long term. We love Mike and nothing's gonna change our feelings about wanting him to be in the band.

MUSICIAN: *Many artists start vanity labels. But Loosegroove seems to be more about the community ideals you mentioned.*

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GOSSARD: Yeah, the template for the label has been Sub-Pop and people like Rick Rubin that you sense have been inspired to put out the music they love, and watch them become successful. And I hope I can share what I've learned about the business with my friends, and avoid some mistakes. Like one way of helping a first-time band is having my own studio where we can charge what we want to and keep the prices down. It'll just be studio maintenance, basically. If the studio can just stay in the black, that's fine.

MUSICIAN: *You improve your guitar technique by playing drums with R&B and rap records.*

GOSSARD: Yeah, particularly the first TLC record. LA and Babyface keep doing great stuff, and the new OutKast record is amazing. The focus of my playing is the groove, and every time I find a new rhythm, I find I can write a bunch of new songs. Learning how to dance, or drum, or to swing my body in a new way is the fundamental way I find a new riff. Because when you learn to swing your body in a new way, you begin to swing with your instrument differently, and it affects where you drop notes in a phrase. That riff dance changes, as you feel drawn to let one note come in a millisecond later, and another drag.

MUSICIAN: *So it's a new chapter in the old story of the intellectual white boy trying to*

get in touch with his emotions through African-American music?

GOSSARD: That's it. Because a lot of the emotional issues they address are very much things I've been deprived of, growing up in a very left-brain hierarchical culture. What's appealing about any dance music or rhythm and blues is that it includes that right-brain freedom of dance, movement and intuition.

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of dancing, what's the band's main problems with Ticketmaster, and where does it all stand now?*

GOSSARD: Basically, they're the largest ticket

distribution company, and they set up contracts with venues. It's a very cozy relationship between the building owners, and promoters and Ticketmaster.

MUSICIAN: *Are they the only kids on the block, like the old Bell Telephone?*

GOSSARD: That's what we contend and hope the Justice Department will find. Because there's no real competition for them in terms of how difficult it is to start one of these companies now that Ticketmaster has got a grip on the business. Testifying before Congress about it was a very surreal experience.



STONE AGE TOOLS

STONE GOSSARD's guitar of choice varies between a classic '54 Les Paul gold top with PAF humbucking pickups, and a considerably less classic Epiphone: "It's got an f-hole with a little hollow body and a single pickup, like a student model. I don't even know what the model is, but it's funky and it's got a good sound." He also plays a Hamer Duo-Tone acoustic/electric combination: "I'm not even sure they're on the market. They made one for me a long time ago. It's got a piezo pickup in the bridge and two humbucking pickups. It's got a toggle switch so that I can play acoustic, you know, hearing acoustic coming out through the monitors. Then if I put the volume pedal down, it plays electric too, so it really is two very distinct sounds."

Gossard employs GHS strings—"light for the Epiphone"—and cranks them through Fender Deluxe amps and Matchless heads. His effects include a DOD EQ pedal for distortion, along with a delay reverb pedal and a distortion box.

MUSICIAN: *Why is the service charge issue so contentious?*

GOSSARD: Say we, Pearl Jam, want to sell our tickets for \$18, which is a relatively low price today. So Ticketmaster says, well, Christ, if they want to sell their tickets for \$18 and we know they're going to sell out, let's tack on a \$5 service charge. And there's no standard service charge, they can tack on whatever they feel. They can go low for a family event like a circus or much higher for an Eagles show. One of the issues we're hoping to get the government to act on is to say, "You can't

have a service charge that's more than ten percent of the actual ticket price," or something so you'd know where you were standing. We're a band that's willing to compromise to make things right for both parties. But in [Ticketmaster CEO] Fred Rosen's case, he's not really willing to do that in a way that makes us feel comfortable in terms of knowing he's not screwing us.

MUSICIAN: *R.E.M.'s lawyer testified with you, but felt they had to go with Ticketmaster in order to tour, it seems. And Green Day lowered their prices, but I don't believe it*

involved the service charge issue significantly. Do you understand their situations?

GOSSARD: Sure, it's not weird for us. We picked this fight, and we're going to see it through. How everyone else does their business is their own thing. Green Day and R.E.M. probably got better deals due to the fact that Fred's taken a lot of heat these days and wants to make people happy. So I'd like to think that it's having a ripple effect. And I think it's admirable that Green Day wants to charge a low ticket price.

MUSICIAN: *Another group you've had an ambivalent relationship with was Nirvana. How did the loss of Kurt Cobain affect you all?*

GOSSARD: [long pause] It was tough... because all the things Kurt Cobain said we were guilty of, we were—on some level. Kurt had us pegged in a lot of ways.


MUSICIAN: *In what sense?*

GOSSARD: Somebody from the outside can sometimes see the ugliness in our situation more clearly. He saw us in a way that was accurate to him. I can only say that I don't want...I don't think that I'm exclusively what he, at one point, claimed we were! Which was everything bad about rock music in terms of the music not coming first. Jeff and I have been very driven about wanting to be successful—sometimes at the expense of a lot of people's feelings—without even realizing it. Our wanting to get things done has ruffled a lot of feathers and stepped on a few toes. We're still learning how to live life and be true to ourselves and to our spiritual natures, and we've learned a lot of lessons. I feel bad that Kurt's not still writing songs, because he was brilliant and that guy could emotionally twang my heart strings. Every song that he wrote spoke to me.

MUSICIAN: *You're recording now with Neil Young, and have cited him and the Grateful Dead as role models for how to deal with your musical careers. What's the main problem these great bands you guys admired ran into that you've tried to learn from?*

GOSSARD: To stay together and work it out. And that there's going to be someone who is gonna knock you right on your ass if you're not working it out. I feel like the band finally is a family right now, and that we're in it for the long haul, and that there's nothing we can't work out in terms of being able to play music together. The bottom line is that when we all plug in, Eddie can make us dance and play like little molecules bouncing off the wall. And, for whatever reason, we can make him feel like singing. ♪

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A FLOOD OF NEW GEAR FOR

NAMM

TO ANYONE WATCHING THE WEATHER it was an impressive sight: Storm systems were lined up one after another across the Pacific, all heading straight toward the California coast. For weeks newscasts had been showing footage of homeowners canoeing to their front doors and automobiles stranded on impassable freeways. The rain continued, but the waters had begun to recede by late January, when all roads led to the winter convention of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) in Anaheim.

Driving rain and lashing palm fronds seemed an apt metaphor for the show itself. Indeed, the market for musical instruments has been wracked by an endless series of storms at least since the tumultuous arrival of MIDI in the mid-'80s. First computers, then custom DSP chips, then drastic price

reductions, digital tape, retro, unplugged and multimedia have challenged not only musicians but manufacturers and instrument dealers to master new techniques, new sounds and new buzzwords. If it looks as though there's a lull for the moment, rest assured that the gales will be howling again before long.

But challenges spur growth, as the ever-expanding NAMM show demonstrates. Winter NAMM '95 drew 978 exhibitors and 48,000 attendees from 87 countries, filling five cavernous halls, an indoor sports arena and the passageways between. Exhibitors like to maintain a consistent location from year to year, so tracing a path from Hall A to Hall E is like drilling through sedimentary rock: brass, winds and marching band accoutrements yield to guitars and amps, then keyboards, digital processors and computer-based music systems. The outer layer represents a nexus of present and future: This was the second year for the WaveRider brain-wave-to-MIDI converter, the first for indigenous Australians offering hand-carved didgeridoos.

If you're selling musical instruments, music itself is your most potent pitch—for which a truly amazing array of talent was assembled. One obvious high point was Bonnie Raitt's benefit concert for Boys and Girls Clubs of America, organized by Fender. Ticket sales and an auction of Fender axes signed by the likes of Eric Clapton, Bob [cont'd on page 74]

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DON LEWIS



GITARS

JUST HOW DEAD IS BIG-HAIR METAL shred? Consider this: At this year's winter NAMM show, it was actually possible to get near the Ibanez booth. And the old *widdly-widdly-woo* that once filled the Convention Center has been all but totally eclipsed by a kind of a jazzy, snazzy "chuckin'." Unfortunately, this is every bit as obnoxious as shredding.

The retro craze, still going strong, is sure to outlast both. The old Vox Phantom, Teardrop and even the Mandoguitar are back again, thanks to a Portland, Oregon company called Phantom Guitar Works. These instruments have just the right jangle, but \$1000 is pretty steep for a Vox, which always enjoyed the cachet of being the '60s' great cheesy guitar. Gretsch reissued their classic Silver Jet in eye-dazzling sparkle finishes and re-named it the Sparkle Jet (\$1750). And there were lots of great new retro amp entries like the tweedy, 90-watt Electroplex Rocket 90 (combo \$1895, head \$1495, 4x12 cabinet \$695, 2x12 cabinet \$495)—an intriguing side project from Yamaha's pro audio wiz Don Morris.

Although retro still rules, it seems to have entered something of a late, decadent phase. One of the guitar hits of the show was a masterpiece of high-camp nostalgia: Tone King

Amplifiers, looking like furniture from your wild Uncle Mort's bachelor pad, all two-tone Naugahyde and tapered "robot torso" lines. The brand-new, 40-watt Continental (\$2449) even sports spindly wooden legs right from some Philco TV set. But the real surprise is that these swap-meet-chic numbers actually sound great, with all-tube circuitry, an edgy, lucid tone and velvety tremolo.

Decadent retro is a sure sign that yesterday's retro is starting to

get a bit, um, old. Gear designers are becoming fidgety. In guitars, the result is designs that blend retro curves with sharp '80s-style angles. Examples abounded—mostly ill-advised, but some good ones too. Chandler's 555 (\$699 to \$749) is based on

the Rickenbacker 325: slotted machine head, double cutaway, triple pickup. The bridge and overall silhouette, though, are utterly contemporary. The present-day emphasis is even stronger in the Chandler Metro models (\$569 to \$749), which

feature Strato-Tele bodies, some in blue sparkle, with angular headstocks. Peavey, too, gave tradition a twist with the upgraded Detonator JX (now with a two-octave fretboard, \$419) and Impact Firenza AX (in alder or swamp ash, \$729).

Then again, NAMM had plenty to offer from manufactur-



ers who have steered clear of trends—shred, retro or otherwise. Yamaha put nothing but the best (Warmoth bodies, Wilkinson bridges and so on) into the U.S.-built single-cutaway Pacifica USA 1 and double-cutaway Pacifica USA 2 (\$1495 each), and expanded the Pacifica range with entry-level and midline models. Gibson put a more highly flamed maple top on their new Les Paul Standard Plus (\$2995).

Paul Reed Smith celebrated their first decade with a gorgeous 10th Anniversary model (\$6600), a masterpiece in maple, mahogany, mother-of-pearl and etched gold. Only 100 will be produced. They also reissued one of the models that put them on the map: the Carlos Santana (\$6000). Santana himself was on hand to accept one as a gift and speak a few words about peace, love and harmony. In fact, it was a very good show for artist models. Fender's new Bonnie Raitt Stratocaster (\$1499) is every bit as sassy and poised as the lady herself, and the Eric Clapton signature acoustic from Martin combines the two vintage instruments Slowhand played during his "Unplugged" appearance.

In high-tech, Roland's VG-8 V-Guitar (\$2695) was the obvious high point. The unit derives six separate signals from any axe equipped with a Roland GK-2A pickup (not included)—which means harmonics, bends, pulloffs and other standard techniques are fair game—and applies them to what computer mavens call a "physical model." The VG-8 contains a model of a generic electric guitar (and a few other instruments), with a choice of virtual body woods and [cont'd on page 74]



Above left: NAMM security; right: (L to R) Kimmy Morgan, Don Bailey, Max and Wynema Cardey of 7th Sanbar with 7th String pressure-sensitive volume controller.

Jim "Boongar" Edwards of Boongar Arts & Crafts Pty. Ltd. from Australia demos one of the lower-tech instruments at the NAMM show—a didgeridoo.

IF ANY SOUND COULD RISE ABOVE THE constant clamor of the winter NAMM show, it would be the voices of musicians demanding "More! More!" and "Less! Less!" More, as in more performance. Less, as in less expensive. Judging from the new products on the show floor, makers of PA gear are getting the message loud and clear.

Most major PA manufacturers have offered sound equipment aimed at working bands in the past, usually with mixed results. This year's affordable systems, though, tend to be based on high-tech designs adapted from monster touring rigs. They're priced for serious players rather than dilettantes, but in terms of performance they blow away their predecessors.

Electro-Voice blasted the crowd with an outstanding flyable speaker package, System 200 (unpowered \$3136, powered \$3990). Drawing on their MT touring line, System 200 provides a closely matched set of components: the Sx200 mid-high (\$850), Sb120a subwoofer (unpowered \$600, powered \$1050) and Xp200 controller (\$400).

Wisely moving their pro audio display to a quiet room at the Anaheim Hilton, Yamaha epitomized the trend with their Darth Vaderesque Waveforce speaker line (\$549-\$999). Waveforce incorporates a rounded waveguide instead of a conventional square horn, designed to reduce coloration in the high end as well as distortion and uneven response. A good match for Waveforce is the new P series of amps (\$599-\$899) and a nifty compact mixer, the MM 1402 (\$449). It boasts 14 inputs: six mono and four stereo.

The folks at JBL were practically dancing with glee over their EON series, which presents a serious challenge to comparable systems. The futuristic, molded components—available separately or as a complete PA package—are designed from the ground up for plug-and-play operation and roadie-free handling. The EON PowerSystem (\$2177) includes a pair of powered 15" two-way cabinets that sit either flat or tilted (\$749, \$599 unpowered), a streamlined ten-channel mixer (\$679), two mikes and all of the necessary cables. Bucking the trend toward trickle-down engineering, JBL expects EON concepts to trickle up to higher-end products.

Eastern Acoustic Works (EAW), long known for top-shelf PA speakers, introduced its first products targeted at working bands with the LA line. Meanwhile Ramsa's T212

(\$720) and T215 (\$770) cabinets and Yorkville's powerful but compact 1x12 100W (\$499) powered wedge offer higher-end performance at a surprisingly low price.

Amp specialists are also paying more attention to the little guy. QSC, known for challenging rivals with lots of bang for the buck, showed off their Powerlight amps (\$1298-\$1998)—their entry into the lightweight amp arena dominated by Carver and Stewart. These amps aren't exactly cheap, but they do save you the cost of roadies. Crown spotlighted PowerBase III (\$1375) and midline PowerTech III (\$1690), each representing a step up from the II versions with better specs and better prices. Crest Audio debuted the mid-to-high-end CA series (\$790-\$2390), promising the same specs as their upmarket Professional touring line.

With new products from Shure, Sennheiser and AKG, microphones weren't left out of the trickle-down phenomenon. A good example is the Vocal Artist wireless system (\$440-\$560) from Shure, a low-cost adaptation of their pricier L-4 series.

The undisputed king of new-product introductions was Peavey. In sound reinforcement alone they debuted three power amps, seven mixers, six speaker cabinets, two mike stands and a speaker stand. One standout is the RSM 2462 mixer, featuring direct outs

for each of eight mono and eight stereo inputs.

Peavey has built a booming business by making gear that just about anyone can afford. But competition in that area is growing ever more fierce as companies get hungry for a broader share of the market and start packing their bottom-of-the-line boxes with tweeky technology. Today, high tech is trickling down to working players. Tomorrow it may well reach garage bands. ☺



LIVE SOUND

► Deep Pockets

t.o. electronic 6032 remote control for their 1128 graphic EQ\$14,790

► Best Bargains

Aphex 107 Tubessence stereo mike preamp\$595

LIVE SOUND

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

COLD AND FADES. THESE TWO WORDS epitomized NAMM's drum sector this winter: Around every corner lay familiar models equipped with gold-plated hoops or finishes that fade from one color to another—or both.

Unfortunately, the impact of any one of them was negligible



since so many companies were doing the same thing.

Still there was news, especially about companies changing hands. The most dramatic event took place only hours before the show opened when Gibson snatched distribution of Slingerland drums from H.S.S. (owner of Sonor and distributor of Sabian). It was such an unexpected development that Gibson reps were seen lugging Slingerland kits from the H.S.S. enclave.

Evidently the maneuver worked to Gibson's advantage; the Slingerland display was mobbed throughout the show. Amid the hoopla Gibson managed to unveil the new Slingerland Studio King series of drum sets, including the Gregg Bissonette eight-piece double-bass set (\$6051). All Studio King models feature American-made maple ply shells fitted with Slingerland Streamline low-mass lugs, die-

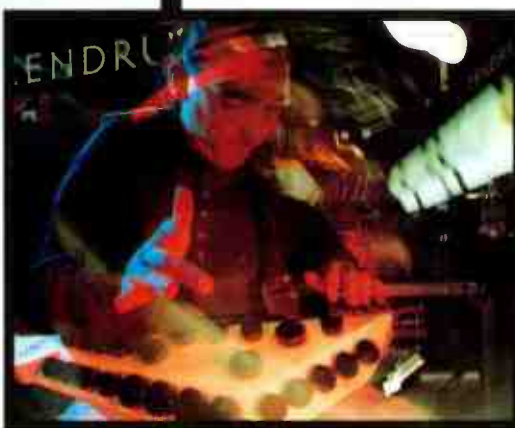
cast hoops, drum-key tunable bass drum tension rods, ball-and-socket tom arms and R.I.M.S. drum mounts.

Winter NAMM '95 also marked the rebirth of a legend. After changing hands and brand names a number of times since its '70s heyday, the Fibes Drum Company has been resurrected by Tommy Robertson of Tommy's Drum Shop in Austin, Texas. The company's booth consisted only of a banner, a round table and six director's chairs. Robertson explained that, since acquiring the company, there hasn't been time to build any drums. He promises summer delivery of the classic SFT 690 fiberglass-shell snare, an exact replication of the 5½"×14" ten-lug snare used by Buddy Rich.

Although the staging wasn't quite as dramatic, Premier also announced a surprise change of ownership. Only a couple of years ago Yamaha sold Premier to the company's CEO, Tony Doughty. Now Doughty has sold his interest to Verity, an English electronics company. Premier's new items include an unnamed mid-line lacquer-finish set with birch/mahogany shells and low-mass lugs. Although retail prices weren't available, the company expects to charge under \$2000 for a five-piece kit with a wood snare drum and hardware.

Premier also displayed a prototype free-floating PPS snare drum that allows the player to tune both top and bottom heads from the upper counter-hoop. Other interesting snare drums include Nobel & Cooley's 10 Year Anniversary model, Yamaha's signature models for David Garibaldi (\$800) and Peter Erskine (10" \$480, 12" \$510), and Ocheltree's range of snare drums made of seamless carbon steel (\$1025–\$1245) or bell bronze (\$1275–\$1342) milled to a thickness of ⅛".

As usual, the cymbal companies arrived with new designs in tow. Sabian introduced the HH Duo ride (\$267), an interesting hand-hammered hybrid. The outer half is lathed for a softer, wide-spreading stick sound; the inner half is unlathed for a dryer, more severe stick sound. Paiste added a few new cymbals to their existing lines, including the Silk crash/ride (\$290) in their Sound Formula range. Not to be confused with a flat ride, the Silk has an unusual flat-top bell that produces a soft, controlled wash. It comes [cont'd on page 76]



DRUMS

► Deep Pockets

Taos 16-piece kit, all handmade Native American drums with rawhide heads.....\$12,000

► Best Bargains

Regal Grips drum stick sheath.....\$5.35
Evans Bass Drum Patch\$9.95

Above left: Kevin Gagnon plays the Roland TD-SK Drum System at the Roland booth; right: Walfredo Reyes, Jr. demos the Zendrum.

BY ANDY DOERSCHUK

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KEYBOARDS

NO LONGER IS PHYSICAL MODELING SYNTHESIS the wave of the future—it's the wave of the present. Responding to last year's ground breakers, the Yamaha VL1 keyboard and Korg Wave-Drum, Roland unveiled the VG-8 "virtual guitar" (see p. 64). Fed by a special pickup that can be fitted to any guitar, the VG-8's computerized model of an electric guitar enables players to switch among various guitars, amps, even tunings at the touch of a footswitch.

Keyboard players weren't left out of the fun. In a hotel suite apart from the convention floor Korg showed their Open Architecture Synthesis System, or OASYS. Like the Yamaha VL1, OASYS models a variety of acoustic instruments with spectacular realism. But it does so without requiring breath control and with up to 112, not two, voices of polyphony. Moreover Korg's modeling concept embraces the gamut of earlier synthesis methods: analog, FM, additive, vector, sample playback etc. In fact, they can be mixed and matched in any combination

by assembling software "function blocks." That kind of power may not agree with most players' budgets; the price remains unannounced. Meanwhile Yamaha reduced the price of their modeling technology by 60 percent, debuting the rackmount VL1m (\$2995) and VL7 keyboard (\$2995)—identical with the VL1 but slimmed from two voices to one, which hampers bagpipe simulations but not much else. ddrum displayed the Nord Lead (keyboard \$2750, rack-mount \$2350), a four-voice analog-style synthesizer that models an analog oscillator for true pulse-width modulation and more realistic low-frequen-

KEYBOARDS

▶ Deep Pockets

- E-mu Emulator IV sampler\$5995
- Yamaha P300 digital piano\$3995
- Korg OASYS open-architecture synthesizerprice TBA

▶ Best Bargains

- MIDI Solutions Quadra Thru 1x4 active MIDI thru box\$59
- Yamaha MU5 tone generator/MIDI interface\$299
- Roland MS-1 sampler\$595

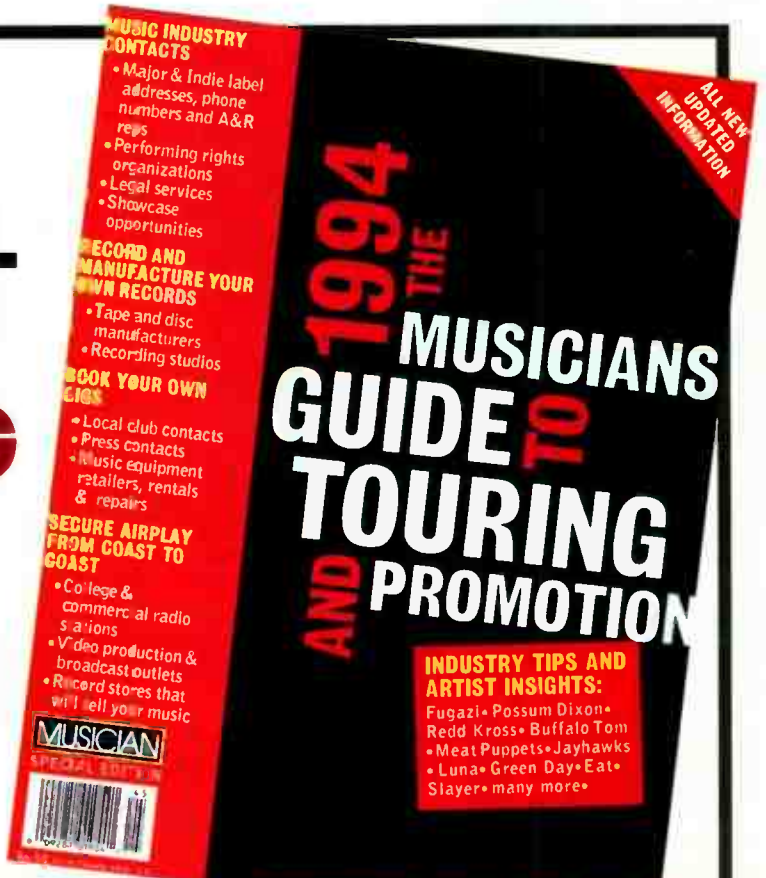
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cy response than the usual wavetable technology.

Despite such aggressive pricing, physical modeling remains expensive compared with sampling, the cost of which has suddenly fallen through the floor. E-mu is asking \$1495 for their ESI-32, essentially an Emulator III with 32 voices, up to 32 megs of RAM, Akai format compatibility, and optional SCSI and S/PDIF. Concurrently Akai slashed prices on their samplers (which now read E-mu, Roland and Akai disks) to pit their S2800 directly against the ESI-32. Roland offered the no-frills MS-1 (\$595) with up to three minutes of 16-bit, 44.1kHz sampling and four-voice polyphony. Both Roland and Akai revamped their DJ samplers, the Roland JS-30 (\$1695) and the Akai Remix 16, better to meet the real-world needs of



dance, rap and R&B musicians.

The most impressive bit of re-vamping is Alesis' QuadraSynth Plus Piano (\$1699), which adds eight megs of ROM-based stereo piano samples, new factory patches and extra effects. Total onboard ROM out of the box: 24 megs! The rack version, the S4 Plus (\$1099), now comes with 20 megs. Other new sample-playback units include Peavey's Spectrum Organ module (\$399), E-mu's Classic Keys (\$795), Roland's FP-1 88-key digital piano (\$1995) with optional stand/speaker unit (\$395), and Yamaha's P300 digital piano (\$3995), which is nearly identical to the \$10,000 P500.

Last year the QuadraSynth's 64-voice polyphony set a standard now matched by the powerful Roland XP-50 workstation (\$1895), compact Korg X5DR tone module/MIDI interface (\$850) and versatile Yamaha MU80 (\$895). [cont'd on page 74]

Caught up in the feel of things, Yamaha's Tony Escueta explains the mysteries of the Yamaha VL7 Virtual Acoustic synth to an appreciative audience.

BY TED GREENWALD

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clam and let the cabinet itself bring out the

FLOOD OF NEW GEAR

[cont'd from page 63] Dylan and Jeff Beck brought in \$80,000.

Elsewhere Washburn hosted Nuno Bettencourt, Dimebag Darrell and Craig Chaquico; Hoshino brought Bill Bruford, Kenny Aronoff and Simon Phillips; Community presented Kansas. Maynard Ferguson raised the roof courtesy of Leblanc and Zildjian while lesser known big bands played all night in Cerwin-Vega's outdoor tent. Fishman showcased the startling acoustic guitar techniques of Bill White Acre, Preston Reed and Harvey Reid. *Keyboard* celebrated its 20th anniversary with an all-star cast that included Joe Zawinul, Billy Childs, Bruce Hornsby and a dozen others. *Musician's* own annual bash, sponsored by Shure and Eastern Acoustic Works, was headlined by the incomparable Allan Holdsworth with support from L.A.'s Raging Honkies and John Christ of Danzig.

All told, it was an amazing four days. Look for the fallout in stores, stages, studios and the pages of *Musician* as the storms rage on. (Prices are included wherever possible in the following pages. If you don't see one, it was unannounced at press time.)—T.G.

GUITARS

[cont'd from page 64] styles, pickup types, configurations and placements, even string tunings, that affect the sound accordingly. By moving icons in the display window, you can position a virtual microphone near or far from a virtual speaker cabinet. And, sure enough, it sounded true blue as product specialist Ike Ueno tore into Jeff Beck's "Diamond Dust" in the Roland demo room. More convincing still was the experience of playing it, which actually *felt* like playing a guitar—an attribute not generally associated with guitar-controlled synths.

Some guitarists will always prefer the not-so-virtual clout of big amp stacks, and there were some great new ones. Hughes & Kettner weighed in with their new flagship bruiser, the Tri-Amp head (\$2299): three separate amps (as opposed to channels), 13 tubes, stylish transparent face plate and great tone. Having aced the bass and acoustic amp markets, Trace Elliot turned their attention to guitar amps. At the top of their extensive Guitar Works line is the Trident 100-watt head (\$2499) and 50-watt combo (\$2899), all-tube power machines sporting high-end features, three discrete channels and huge tone.

But who's got that much to spend on a guitar

amp? Marshall must have had the same thought in advance given their relatively affordable all-tube combo, the JCM 30 (\$799). No frills or trendy tweed; just a solid 30-watt amp that compares favorably with similar combos that have sprung up since the Vox AC30 was reissued two years ago. Peavey offered their own solution to the tone/affordability equation, the new Transtube series. Ranging from the 15W Rage 158 (\$99) to the 200 W Special 212S (\$549), these solid-state amps boast remarkable warmth and overall muscle.

And then there's the post-Parker Fly syndrome, which has become widespread as

GUITARS

▶ **Deep Pockets**
PRS Guitar Of The Month One-of-a-kind custom guitar, to be auctioned monthly highest bid
Yamaha Naruse one-of-a-kind acoustic guitar\$13,995
Fender D'Aquisto Elite hollowbody electric guitar\$6699

▶ **Best Bargains**
Gigmaster PickStrap wrist-band pick holder\$7.95
TriStrap high-stability guitar strap\$29-\$89
Peavey Rage 158 15-Watt combo...\$99

more manufacturers attempt to build electric guitars capable of sounding like an acoustic. Take the Blair Mutant Twin double-neck. One neck bears an acoustic bridge and piezo, the other an electric bridge and magnetic pickups. If having two necks seems cumbersome, how about one neck that rotates to present either electric-style strings, pickup and bridge or acoustic-style? That's the Roberts Roto-Neck, available in models with two, three or four playing surfaces. Then there were stomp boxes like the Rockman Acoustic Guitar Pedal (\$149) and the Acoustic from ART (\$239). Once upon a time you stomped on a box to make your guitar sound nasty, but these boxes can make any electric produce ringing, full-bodied electro-acoustic tones.

Given the popularity of "unplugged" music in the post-shred era, designers are paying attention to acoustic pickups and amps. Ovation's 1995 Collector's Edition (\$1899) includes something called the OptiMax pickup system, which combines a piezo with a tiny condenser mike mounted near the bridge (but not coupled to it) and outside of the body for greater clarity and less feedback. A new company called Jarrod Lee Amplification (JLA)

showed a very impressive acoustic guitar amp, the Hooker Acoustic (\$2250). A compact box with a clear, concise, natural sound, it would be a fine match for new acoustic models from Fender, Yamaha, Takamine or Alvarez-Yairi.

JLA was one of numerous companies to be found in the secluded basement hall, farther afield than the Beavis and Butt-Head contingent dared to venture. There the seasoned NAMMster could stroll unmolested amid a glittery wonderland of guitar gear—from the bizarre to the truly innovative—offered by a host of start-ups and upstarts. The last time this kind of plucky entrepreneurship could be seen was during the height of the mid-'80s MIDI boom. But there's a fresh tide coming, and guitars seem to be the focus. With the twin evils of economic recession and hair metal on the decline, the guitar horizon looks bright indeed. ☛

KEYBOARDS

[cont'd from page 68] The latter not only weds a tone module and MIDI interface—an increasingly common configuration in the dawning age of mass-market multimedia—but also includes inputs that make it useful as a multieffect box. Kurzweil doubled the acclaimed K2000's voice count, refining the user interface along the way, in the 48-voice K2500 (76 keys) and K2500X (88 keys), monster workstations that revive the long-forgotten ribbon controller. (We were privileged to witness Patrick Moraz test-driving a K2500X as Keith Emerson sipped a glass of wine a few booths away.) But E-mu posed a new upper limit with their new flagship Emulator IV (\$5995), a power user's delight with 128 voices. The EIV holds up to 128 megs of RAM (including up to 16 megs of nonvolatile "flash RAM") and comes with digital I/O, eight balanced outs and a port enabling a standard ASCII keyboard to control the user interface.

The EIV's ASCII port is part of a broader phenomenon quite visible at the show: innovative user interfaces. For instance, Yamaha excluded patch editing functions from their 32-voice W5 and W7 workstations in order to minimize ROM and keep their prices to \$1995 and \$2495 respectively—but since most power users own computers, visual editing software is available free of charge. More surprising, the EIV, Yamaha MU80, Korg OASYS and Roland VG-8 all feature icon-driven menu displays. Such developments are a necessary step toward enabling musicians to harness the expressive power of technologies like physical modeling—and whatever comes next. ☛



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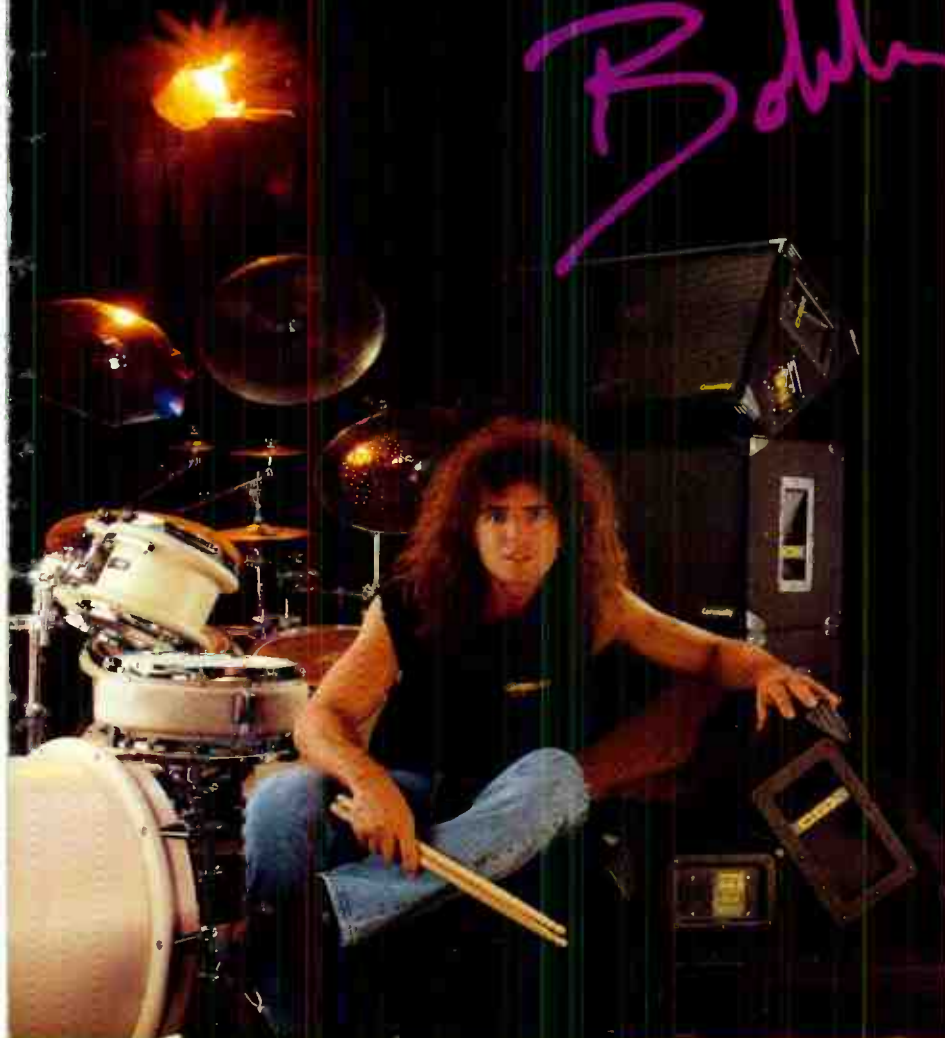


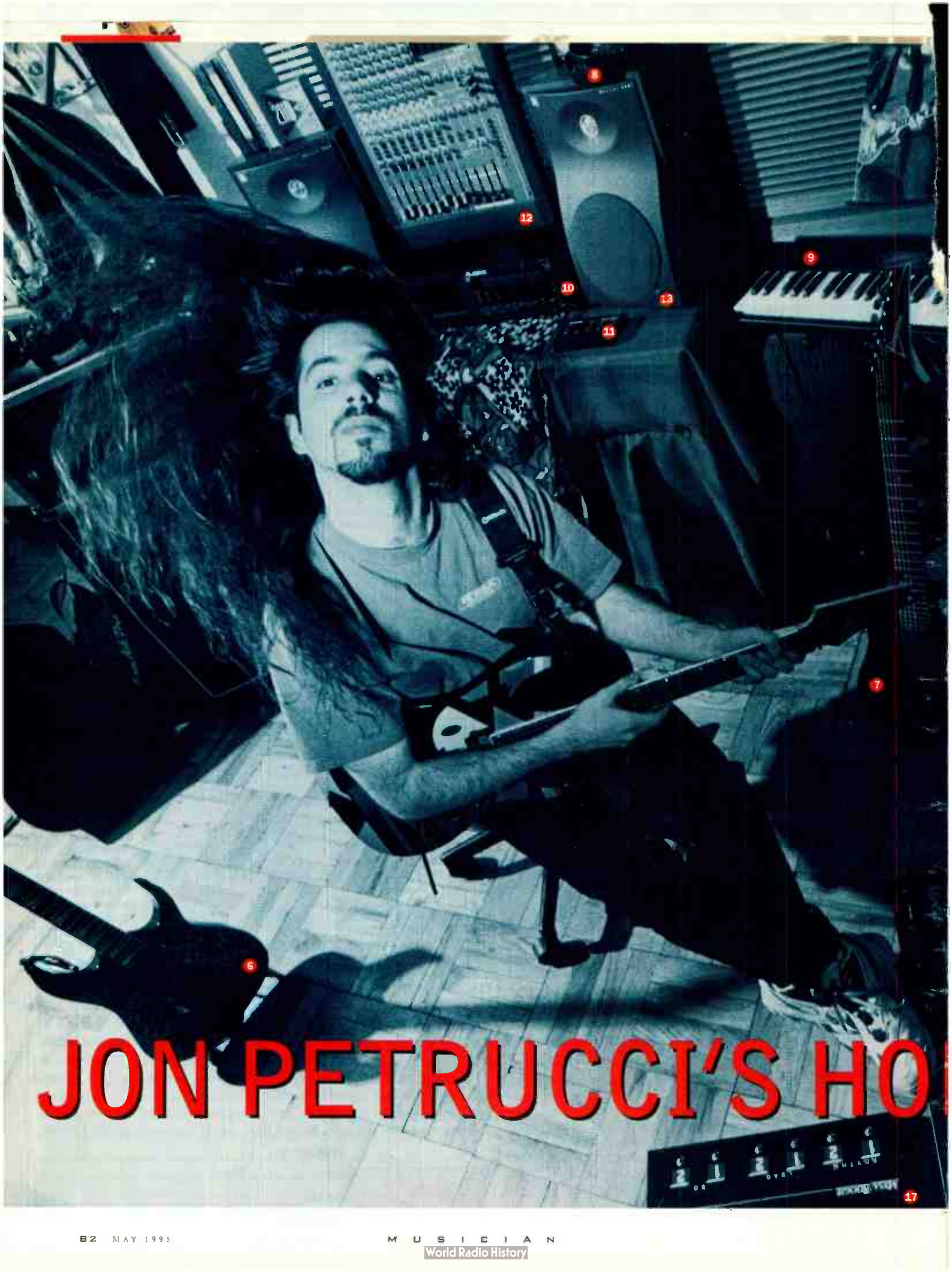
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JON PETRUCCI'S HOME



WHAT ARE the minimum requirements for a home studio? Ask John Petrucci, guitarist for progressive-rock wunderkinds Dream Theater. Tucked into a corner of his New Jersey apartment, Petrucci's rig couldn't be simpler: a **Yamaha MT100II** cassette multitracker **1** and **MS101** powered monitors **2**, **Yamaha QY20** sequencer with sounds built in **3**, **Boss Dr. Rhythm** drum machine **4**, **Zoom 2002** guitar processor **5** and any of several custom **Ibanez** guitars **6**. (He has a custom 7-string, but still enjoys his standard **Universe 7**.)

That's all Petrucci needed to compose his share of Dream Theater's East-West release *Awake*, a kaleidoscopic mix of the Dregs, Rush and Yes filtered through latter-day metal. The whole studio takes up only a few square feet of desk space, plus it travels well, allowing Petrucci to compose virtually anywhere.

"I write totally on the go," he says. "I can plug headphones"—**Audio-Technica ATH-909s 8**—"into the Zoom and practice, and it gets great guitar sounds into the four-track without a mike or amp. I use the sequencer all by itself when I'm doing guitar clinics. I can write on an airplane with it. It's like a little musician's laptop.

"When I'm doing something that I want to show the band," he continues, "I usually get more involved. I use the drum machine and put real guitar on it," adding parts with a **Korg X5** synth **9** and mixing to a **JVC TD-W805** cassette deck.

Bassist John Myung, drummer Mike Portnoy and front man James LaBrie also contribute bits and pieces. Then the band hammers them together, recording demos as they go. "For this record," Petrucci says, "we rented a rehearsal studio in Manhattan for three months and did our demos there, straight to an **Alesis ADAT 10**" with **LRC** remote **11**. "It sounds amazing." They raided their concert racks for effects, mixing through a **Tascam M-1508 12** and **JBL 4208** monitors **13**.

During those sessions, Petrucci miked a **Mesa Dual Rectifier** head **14** and **Boogie 1x12** cabinet **15** "because it's really simple." For more serious recording and live work he uses a **Mesa/Boogie TriAxis** tube preamp and **Stereo Simul-Class 2:Ninety** power amp. He controls an **Alesis QuadraVerb**, **Lexicon Vortex** and assorted other gear via **Mesa/Boogie Abacus 16** and **FU-2 17** footswitches.

Petrucci's no-frills studio enables him to capture inspiration whenever it strikes with a minimum of distraction. But there are times when even stripped-down is too elaborate, when ideas are so fragile that to render them in sound would shatter their continuity and coherence. At those times, Petrucci says, the best capture medium is pencil and paper. "That's the simplest home studio," he observes. "A piece of manuscript paper."

BY TED GREENWALD

PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTINE LARSEN

HOME STUDIO

REVIEWS

cryptic tales and honeyed melodies, the music swings from solemn confessionals to humorous contempt while spinning a memorable collection of storybook vignettes. Like the late Danny O'Keefe ("Goodtime Charlie's Got the Blues"), McLennan knows how to make sadness sting. Far from his homeland, recording with a group of strangers, he unleashes an instantly engaging torrent of misty-eyed recollections and ill-fated scenarios.

On "What Went Wrong," McLennan revels in a spurned lover's litany of scorn delivered in perfect Dylanesque cadence ("JFK, LBJ, got to learn to tango in the USA"); pulls out finger-plucked nuggets of dark beauty on "Open Invitation" and "All Her Songs"; offers a perfect pop hit with "Put You Down" and eventually wipes the tear from his eye, galloping off into a bluegrass sunset on "Don't You Cry for Me No More."

Many songwriters have endeavored to inte-

grate the legacy of Dylan and the Byrds into a unique vision, but few with results this pleasurable. McLennan's former group, the Go Betweens, produced a catalog of gems, and his first two solo outings, *Watershed* and *Fireboy*, were strong efforts, but *Horsebreaker Star* is that rare find that makes a music critic's job a breeze.

—Ken Micallef

M PEOPLE

Bizarre Fruit

(EPIC)

THE BEST DANCE MUSIC CAN OFFER IS ultimately a fantasy. Whether you fancy yourself a boa-feathered disco queen or some in-demand gigolo, out in clubland everybody is a star. Relentless beats and hard-driving rhythms are intended to push your pelvic buttons and propel you on the dancefloor. The humdrum, routine and problematic melt away, and mantralike lyrics clear the mind. The dancefloor, not the stage, is the focus, a sea of fluid bodies shaking reality out of its limbs.

The latest contender in clubland, the U.K.'s M People, has all the necessary ingredients. Their U.S. debut *Elegant Slumming* spelled out its fantasy—street kids dreaming of the high life, turning their blue-collar lives into extravagant dramas. Fueled by the hearty larynx of Heather Small and the soulful, inventive production of house veteran Mike Pickering, M People celebrate the self-determined—if not self-possessed—spirit. And after conquering the European charts and winning both the U.K.'s Mercury Music Prize and a BRIT Award, M People showed that aiming high is sometimes its greatest reward.

The group's new album, *Bizarre Fruit*, a puzzling reference to the Billie Holiday classic "Strange Fruit," further cements that dream, by being a bit more world-wise without sinking into world-weariness. Whereas *Slumming* had Small lustfully diving into love head-first ("How Can I Love You More?," "One Night in Heaven"), *Bizarre Fruit* shows her once-bitten, twice-shy. She backs out of bad relationships ("Padlock," "Walk Away"), resolves to ask for what she wants ("Precious Pearl," "Sight for Sore Eyes"), endeavors to find "real love" ("Open Up Your Heart"), all the while being the ultimate '90s romantic—a tough girl who doesn't settle for less.

Like C+C Music Factory and Blackbox, consummate mixman Pickering, 37, is no longer

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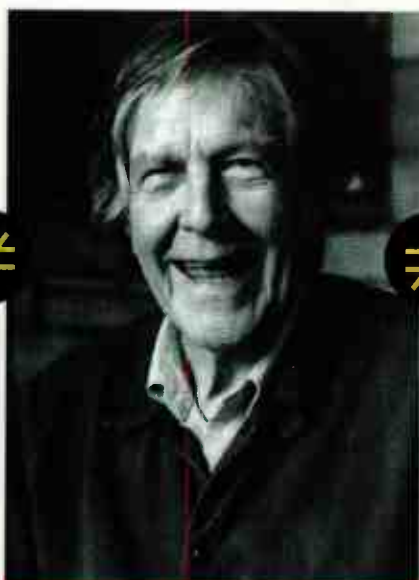
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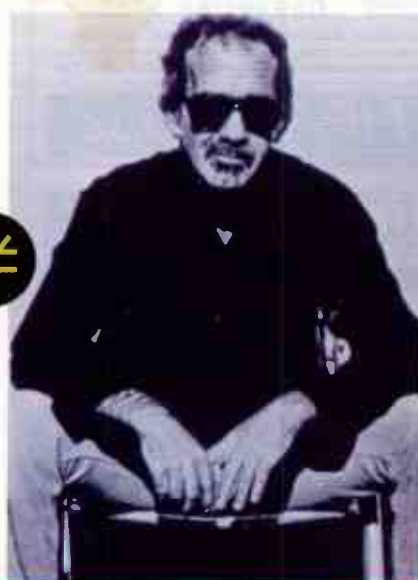
NOMENCULTURE



JOHN CALE



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J.J. CALE

There used to be a band called the Schemers—ordinary Americans like you and me—whose four members were named Emerson Torey, Mark Cutler, Rene Blaise and Jimmy Berger. Every other band around was jealous of them, because they all were blessed from birth with such cool rock star names. It seemed like they were born to be on record sleeves.

Some time back in the '60s, just after Ringo Starr and just before Art Garfunkel, it became a sign of Hollywood jiveness for a musician to change his name (except to become a Muslim or a punk). Look at poor David Blue, who switched back to David Cohen and then to Blue again and then to Cohen and...it was awful.

Maybe if they'd come along ten years earlier Bruce Springsteen would have been Bruce Byron and Luther Vandross Luther Power. But arriving after the revolutions of the '60s, such glamorizing was out of the question. Ask Joan Armatrading.

After a while the only way to get a great rock 'n' roll name was to be born with one. How important was it to establishing the Band's gothic American image that they had names like Levon, Garth and Jaime? No Montys or Maurices up on cripple creek!

Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young were blessed with short family names. It's hard to imagine a Lipschitz singing "Wooden Ships." You can't christen a child Merle Haggard and expect him to end up anything other than a rough-hewn C&W legend. And how about that flashy Neil Diamond? Such a show-bizzy handle that it took years to establish that he hadn't made it up.

Would the obsessively sacrilegious Madonna have wound up so crucifixed if her parents had baptized her Mabel? Certainly when Mr. Nelson named his baby boy Prince (apparently to the chagrin of Mrs. Nelson) he was making sure his son would never blend into the crowd as firmly as the daddy of the boy named Sue.

A singer called Mick Jagger could never have been as cuddly as other pop stars of the early '60s—his diabolical image was written on his birth certificate. But how sad that his bass player adopted the stage name Bill Wyman; his real name, Bill Perks, was far more impressive. Think how sublime it would have been if the World's Greatest Rock 'n' Roll band had a rhythm section called Watts and Perks. Sparks will fly, indeed!

Of course, some musicians have lived lives in opposition to the dictates of their

names. Was there ever a more mellow picker than the fiercely labeled Richie Furey? Or a cooler cat than Keith Sweat? Or a whiter singer than Clint Black? A blacker singer than Barry White?

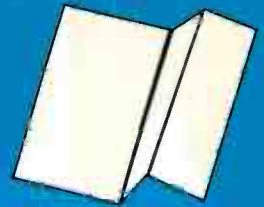
There's also been the curse of having the same name as another entertainer. Remember the other soul singer named Michael Jackson? He had to give up. How about R&B star James "J.T." Taylor, who must have spent his whole career hearing "Fire and Rain" fans demand their money back. Two fathers of punk rock were named Fred Smith. Two guitar players in top British bands of the late '70s were named Mick Jones, though they shared not a single fan, and David Jones of the King Bees had to change his name to Bowie to get away from the requests for "Valerie." Hard as it is for us to imagine, when Jerry Lee Lewis debuted some people showed up expecting the Nutty Professor.

Which brings up the scariest sub-genre of all: rock critics with the same names as famous musicians! Think of the mix-ups that plagued the careers of the journalists Robert Palmer, Paul Williams, Bill Graham, Bill Wyman, Steve Perry, Robert Smith, Robert Gordon and Steve Morse! On the other hand, they always got their calls returned...

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