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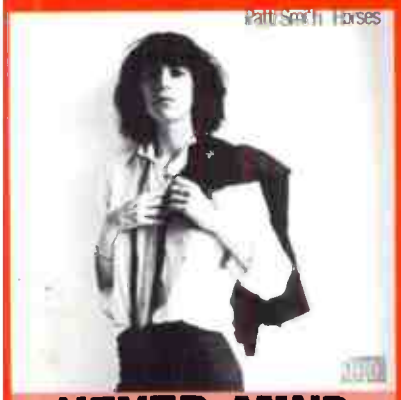

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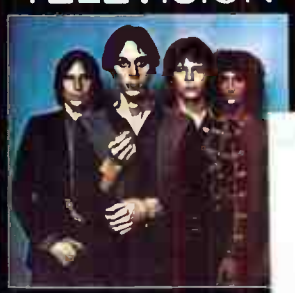

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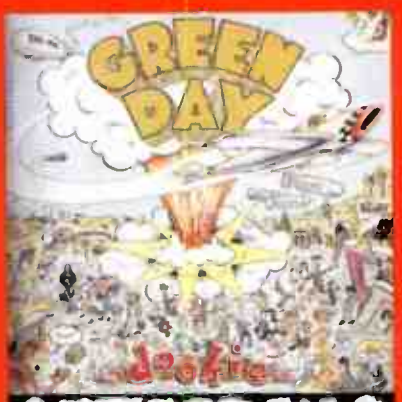

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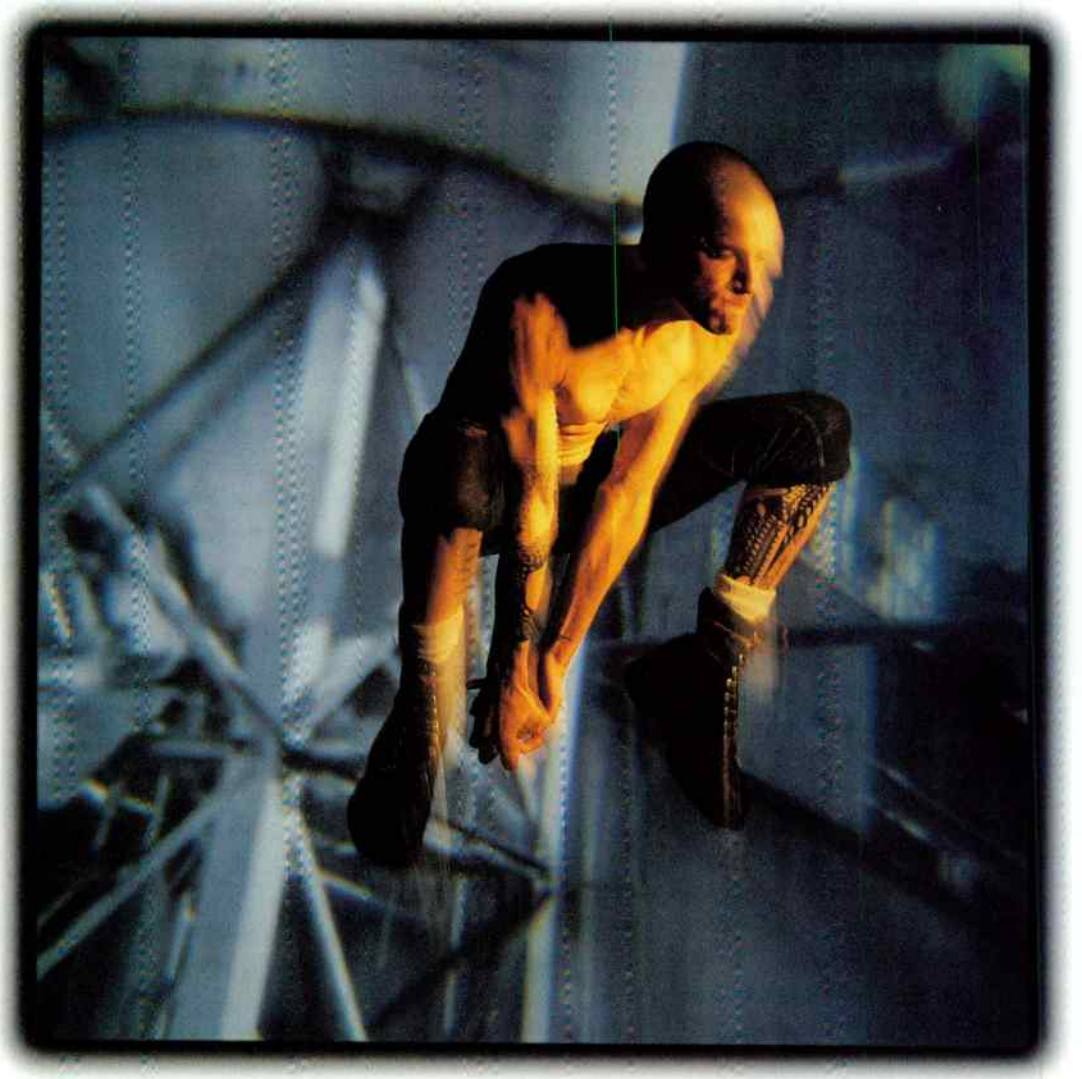

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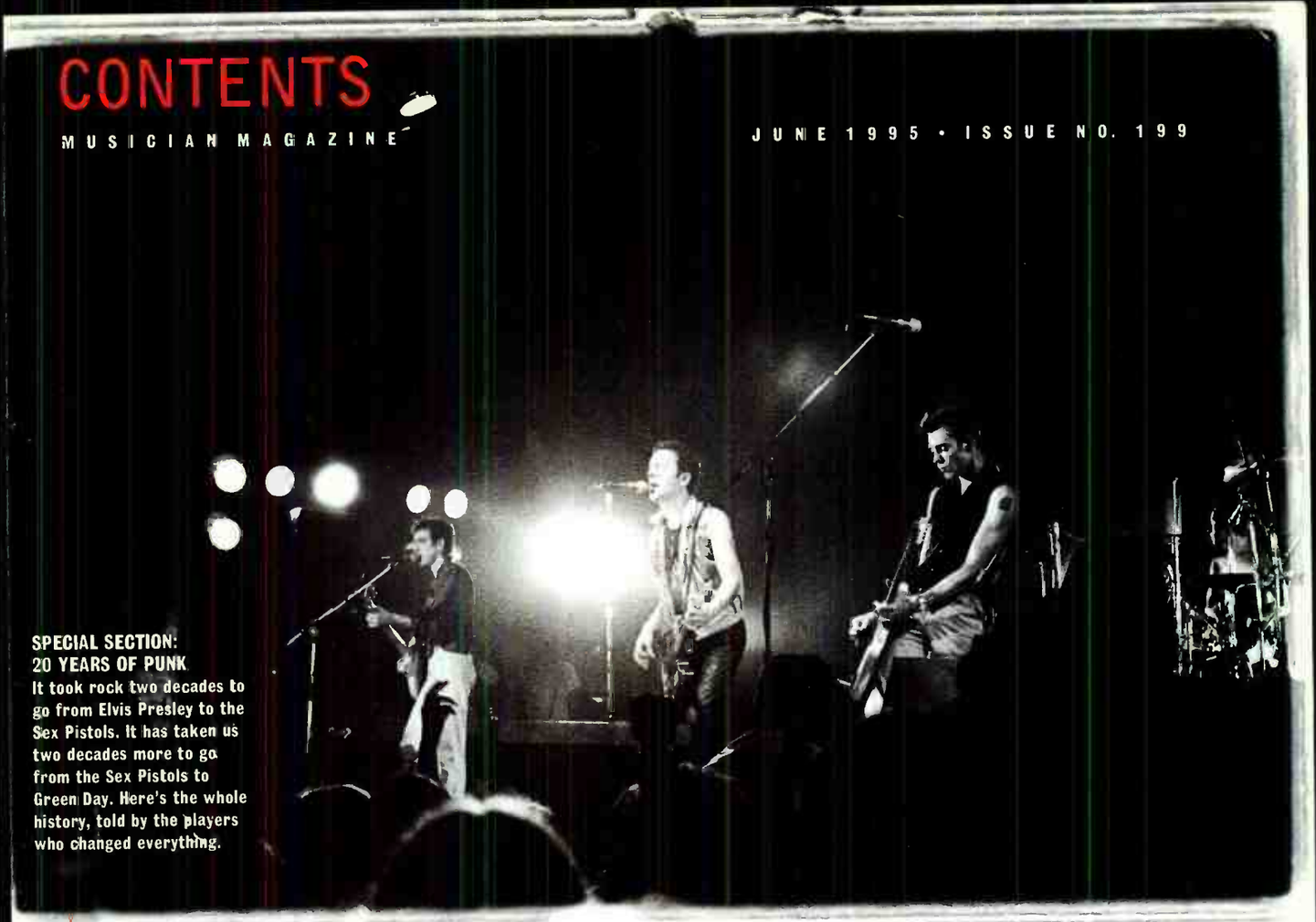

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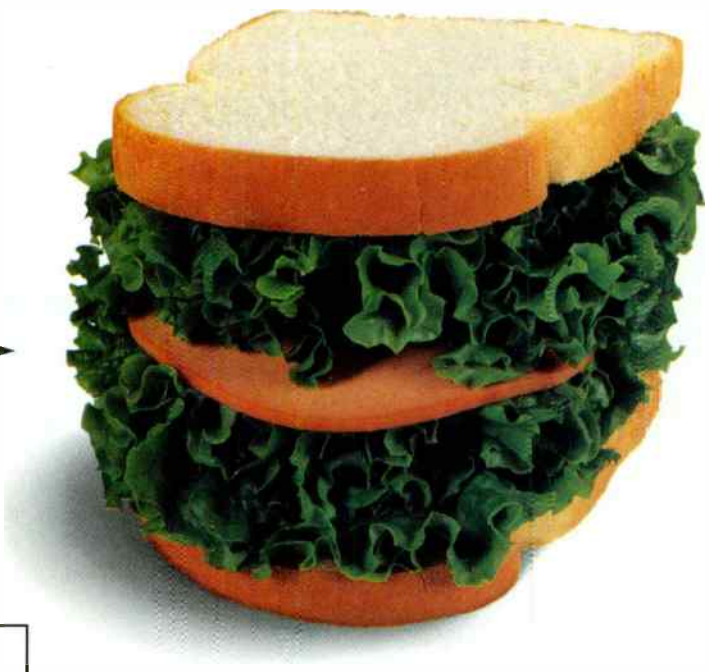

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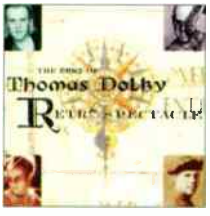

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Eye On You • Love Is The Hero • Don't Say You Love Me • Don't Let Me Go • She Goes Down • Tied Up • Facts of Life • (L.O.V.E.) Four Letter Word

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JOE STRUMMER

Some people have very specific definitions of punk, while for others it can include anyone from, say, the Police to Joan Jett. I'm curious where you would draw that line.

I don't know if you can specifically define anything like that. I saw the Police in a pub in Putney one summer evening. Gene October's group Chelsea was playing, and supporting them was these three guys with blond hair. I remember that Sting maybe had a black circle around one eye. This was what he looked like this one summer evening in Putney. Skrewdriver were also on the bill, the fascist skinhead band. And Sting was in there giving his all to a room with 15 people in it on some forgotten night. So he's got as much right to be punk as anybody else, really. I don't like saying, "You're punk and you're not." There was a record out over here called "Ça Plane pour Moi" by Plastic Bertrand, right? And I guarantee you if I had it to play for you right now, you'd go, "Right, that is rockin'!" Now, if you were to say to any sort of purist punk, "This is a good punk record," they'd get completely enraged. But Plastic Bertrand, whoever he was, compressed into that three minutes a bloody good record that will get any comatose person toe-tapping, you know what I mean? [*laughs*] By purist rules, it's not allowed to even mention Plastic Bertrand. Yet, this record was probably a lot better than a lot of so-called punk records.

"I don't like saying, 'You're punk and you're not.'"

Some people are too intensely into this question. It's missing the point. It's like when wise old hippies in long-hair times used to say, "Don't forget, hair ain't where it's at." You, the reader, are punk. You must be. Or some part of you is punk enough to want to know about punk, or else you wouldn't be reading this magazine. Or, okay, you're stuck in a dentist's waiting room and someone else has got the *New Yorker*. In that case, give this mag to the grandma sitting next to you.

There's a punk revival in America, with groups like Green Day and Offspring.

Well, Green Day are good!

Billie Joe has your 1978 stance, guitar and vocal style down to a "T."

Okay. But first of all, he's born with that body shape, okay? And perhaps the skull shape. There's nothing you can do about the fact that it's similar to my physical being. Maybe he's seen a few Clash videos. It doesn't bother me at all. When Green Day comes out of my radio, let me tell you, it sounds a lot better than the rest of the shit coming out of it.

Was there a rivalry between the Clash and the Sex Pistols?

Well, in the beginning there wasn't. And then it all changed almost overnight, and—I have to say this—I think it was when the Pistols realized that we were *good*. To be fair to them, Malcolm was holding them under this "the less you play, the bigger you get"-type of riff, so they weren't being allowed to play, okay? Let's set this thing up properly. So there they were—and they were good, there's no question at all that they could really do it, in front of your face, there on the stage. And now they're in a situation where they're not being allowed to play, and suddenly this group that was under them somewhere is coming up around the bend a little too fast. I think that's when they felt, "Right, let's take these guys out." And that's where it all got shitty. But, having said that, we weren't any better ourselves.

Nowadays, I put on a Buzzcocks record and I love it, but the first time we put on a concert together with the Pistols and the Buzzcocks, it was like rival football gangs. I remember looking over and seeing them sitting there, and we were like these guys from London, and we were going [*sneers*], "Oh, look at those guys from Manchester..." We didn't have any solidarity, either!

Was the crowd in factions, as well?

No, the crowd aren't that stupid, are they! They were happy 'cause they were getting three great blasts of music. At the time, I couldn't allow that other people were doing good things. Now, I can listen happily to a host of punk records that came out then and appreciate that they were good. But then, I was just too blinkered—my mind-set prevented me from hearing that these other records were good.

The press is speculating that the Clash will reunite to headline Lollapalooza.

Well, the thing is, everyone in the group remembers that it was *only* good with Topper [Headon], y'know? So, I think whether or not he'll be able to do it with us is the real dictating factor. It's funny, our kids have all become mates—they're about the same age and hang out a lot—so me, Mick and Paul also tend to hang out a fair bit these days. But even if it does ever happen—it's not ready to happen right now.

DEV SHERLOCK

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA CHEUSE

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MUSICIAN (USPS 431-910) is published monthly by BPI COMMUNICATIONS, INC., 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

Second-class postage paid at NEW YORK, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSICIAN, PO BOX 1923, MARION, OH 43305. Subscriptions are $19.97 per year, $34.97 for two years, $52.97 for three years. Canada and foreign add $12 per year, U.S. funds only. Subscription orders can be sent to MUSICIAN, PO BOX 1923, MARION, OH 43305. For subscriber services and information call 1-800-745-8922 in the continental U.S. and 614-382-3322 elsewhere. Current and back issues are available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Chairman & CEO Gerald S. Hobbs, President Arthur F. Kingsbury, Executive Vice Presidents John B. Babcock Jr., Robert J. Dowling, Martin R. Feely, Howard Lander, Senior Vice Presidents Georgina Challis, Paul Curran, Ann Haire, Rosalee Lovett, Vice President Glenn Heffernan. All titles, logos, trademarks, service marks, copyrights and other intellectual property rights are used under license from VNU Business Press Syndication International BV. Attention Retailers: To carry *Musician* in your store, call Eastern News Distributors Customer Service at 1-800-221-3148, or write: *Musician* Dealer Dept., c/o Eastern News Distributors, 2020 Superior St., Sandusky, OH 44870.

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LETTERS

THEN AND NOW

After reading "If I Knew Then What I Know Now" (Apr. '95), I'm staying at home and making cassettes for my friends.

Tim Considine, The Derelicks
Indianapolis, IN

In the "If I Knew" issue what Billy Joel and Jim Kerr said was simply great. That advice was priceless, but the cool part is that it was only $2.95. Keep them coming, baby.

Rick Hamilton, Hamilton Management
Detroit, MI

WE GET LETTERS

In response to James White's letter (Apr. '95) regarding Joni Mitchell: James obviously has no idea what he is talking about. First off, Joni Mitchell has been a top five–played record at the AAA format since its release. We also recently did a national live broadcast at over 100 radio stations and received lots of press. This is one of Joni's best-selling records in many years and we are very proud of the success she is having. As far as the video goes, Joni made a great video of "How Do You Stop" which has been submitted to MTV and VH1, and hopefully they will understand how important Joni is and how much their audience wants to see her.

Nancy Stein
Los Angeles, CA

To Brett Wakefield (*Letters*, Mar. '95): *Please* tell me when the fact that someone's shirt was tucked in or not had any bearing on their music. *Please* realize that the so-called "alternative" genre actually includes hundreds of bands who play many different types of music. It's a convenient (yet ultimately meaningless) term used for music that's hard to fit into any other category. Okay?

Che Arthur
Tuscaloosa, AL

The April '95 *Musician* provided much to the reader from the readers. On the Letters page Mr. Tesvich spoke on the high-tech world that promises to bring a more suitable world to independent wannabes like myself. Mr. Poole points out we should really be in it for the art (à la Joni). I take no pleasure in being uncommercial, marketable or bankable—so I'll keep my day job, for as Mr. Chandler analyzed, I am a lost cause. I am over 40, rarely can afford a CD release, and don't enjoy performance (which is obvious if you are one of the two people that have caught my act). The three fellow readers have given me much to think about. Thanks, *Musician*, for printing letters that count.

Dale B. Drakeford
Bronx, NY

Dear editors and all who participated in the production of your recent piece "If I Knew Then"—thank you! And congratulations on the best damn article I have read in any music magazine. I found more usable advice there than I have from any one source, other than my producer (but he's dead now, so that kind of blows). I would also like to thank all the artists for taking the time to help out musicians like myself, and for honestly stating what they felt, even when it came to the screwings they got from the record companies. (And to think I thought the record companies were supposed to look out for me, like a father.)

Most especially I wanted to thank you for placing a full-page ad on page 27, so that I did not lose access to any valuable advice when I cut out Henry Rollins' words of wisdom. I highlighted his spot and taped it to my wall where I would see it every time I thought of screwing around instead of practicing.

Dusty White
Stuck somewhere in L.A.

END OF STEREO?

Every time I encounter some sensationalistic headline ("The End of Stereo," Apr. '95) heralding the arrival of a format to render all others obsolete, I can't help but giggle.

People respond to *music*. It's high time the music industry swallowed their collective pride and admitted that the average consumer doesn't give a rat's ass about kilohertz or gigabytes. The method by which a consumer chooses one recorded format over the other is eerily similar to the way one chooses premium gasoline over regular. What else, short of satanic intervention, could account for the Methuselah-like endurance of that audiophile scourge, the cassette?

My heart sinks whenever a friend asks for a copy of my latest recording, only to produce some thrice-recorded-on, generic, normal-bias cassette (long divorced from its Norelco box, of course!) on which to dub it. "Dude...if there's some stuff at the beginning of that, just record over it. It's cool."

Ward White
Stamford, CT

THE LEGEND GROWS

To whomever wrote the "Backside" in the April '95 issue: I am a 13-year-old musician with a broad variety of music interests (ranging from Frank Zappa and the Beatles to Jawbox and Jale). A few weeks ago I was snooping through my father's vinyl and I found two Bee Gees records (*Bee Gees First* and *Horizontal*). There was a song off *Bee Gees First* that should've been included in your article. It's called "New York Mining Disaster 1941" with the lyrics "Have you seen my wife Mr. Jones?/Do you know what it's like on the outside?/Don't go talking too loud, you'll cause a landslide/Mr. Jones." Why it wasn't included is a mystery to me.

John Pioli

ERRATA

Due to production errors, two photographs were incorrectly captioned in our May issue. On pages 72–73 the gentleman playing bass and demo-ing Hughes & Kettner speakers is session player Joe Berger, not Marc Spector of JBL. On pages 78–79 a description of the Akai DR8 hard disk recorder mistakenly accompanies a photo of the Korg X5DR 64-voice GM-compatible tone module.

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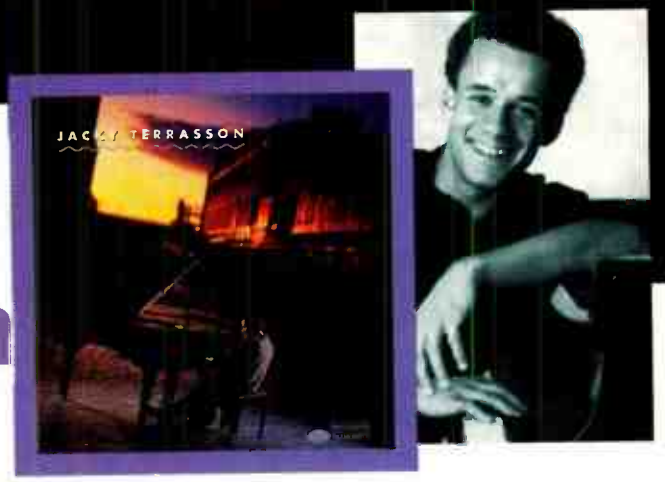

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Jacky Terrasson

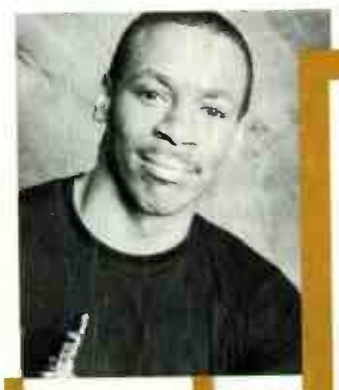
(29351)

Gonzalo Rubalcaba

(30490)

Gonzalo goes bebop and nearly melts his piano. On this tribute to Dizzy Gillespie, the Cuban-born virtuoso is joined by **Ron Carter** and **Julio Barretto** on drums. A real scorcher.

(30132)



Kevin Eubanks

The guitarist for the Tonight Show displays the depth of his amazing talent on his third recording for Blue Note. ***Spiritalk 2*** features his band of **Kent Jordan** on alto flute, brother **Robin Eubanks** on trombone, **Dave Holland** on bass, **Marvin "Smitty" Smith** on drums and others.

Joe Lovano and Gunther Schuller

Saxophonist **Joe Lovano** meets the legendary composer and arranger **Gunther Schuller** in this brand new recording of Schuller originals and arrangements of music by Monk, Mingus, Ellington and others. A landmark jazz recording.

(29269)

L to R: Boyd Tinsley, Stefan Lessard, LeRoy Moore, Dave Matthews, Carter Beauford

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN FALLS

DUBLIN CALLING

Atlantic Records is distributing a new label called Celtic Heartbeat which will release a range of Irish new age, folk and world music rarely heard outside Hibernia. Heading up the operation are some of the biggest bigshots in Dublin—U2 manager Paul McGuinness, Principle Management vet Barbara Galavan and Clannad manager David Kavanaugh. "This music has an energy which I don't hear in Windham Hill or Narada material," McGuinness says, "which is blanc. This has a lot more musical integrity. The chart makers put Clannad in 'World Music' and Enya in 'New Age.' We should be trying to be in all these charts." Celtic Heartbeat will be open to submissions from Irish musicians living anywhere, but Galavan warns that they are only interested in licensing recordings that are well-produced. Send recordings to Celtic Heartbeat c/o Jason Flom at Atlantic Records, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019.–*B.F.*

EXPERT WITNESS

Building an Audience from the Grassroots

by Dave Matthews

I THINK THE word "grassroots" implies natural. And if nothing else, that's the feeling that has surrounded our success with the Dave Matthews Band. That's not to say that it's been easy. I've never worked so hard for anything in life. When one climbs a mountain, the focus is on each step.

When we started out—first in Carter Beauford's basement, then in mine—there was no plan, no single vision, no clear style in mind. There was only a desire to play. Everyone had other gigs and, however modest, everyone was making a living. Even in the beginning we felt this band had something special and it became everyone's main focus.

Rather than following the standard path of getting a record deal we focused on building a fan base and playing to as many people as possible. We chose fraternities and parties prior to worrying about clubs because we would have a guaranteed audience and we'd know how much money we would make. We focused on different regions of the country at different times. Communication across college campuses worked well within the Southeast and Northeast. It was a much easier transition to the clubs after playing the fraternities.

Another good method for us was playing resort towns (i.e. Nags Head, North Carolina or Nantucket). We wound up playing to people from all over the country and they would in turn spread the word to their respective hometowns. Colorado was also a great market—it's like playing a national resort. From the beginning we have had an open taping policy that allows our fans to share our music with their friends. Bootleg tapes of our music preceded our recordings and spread the early and continued word.

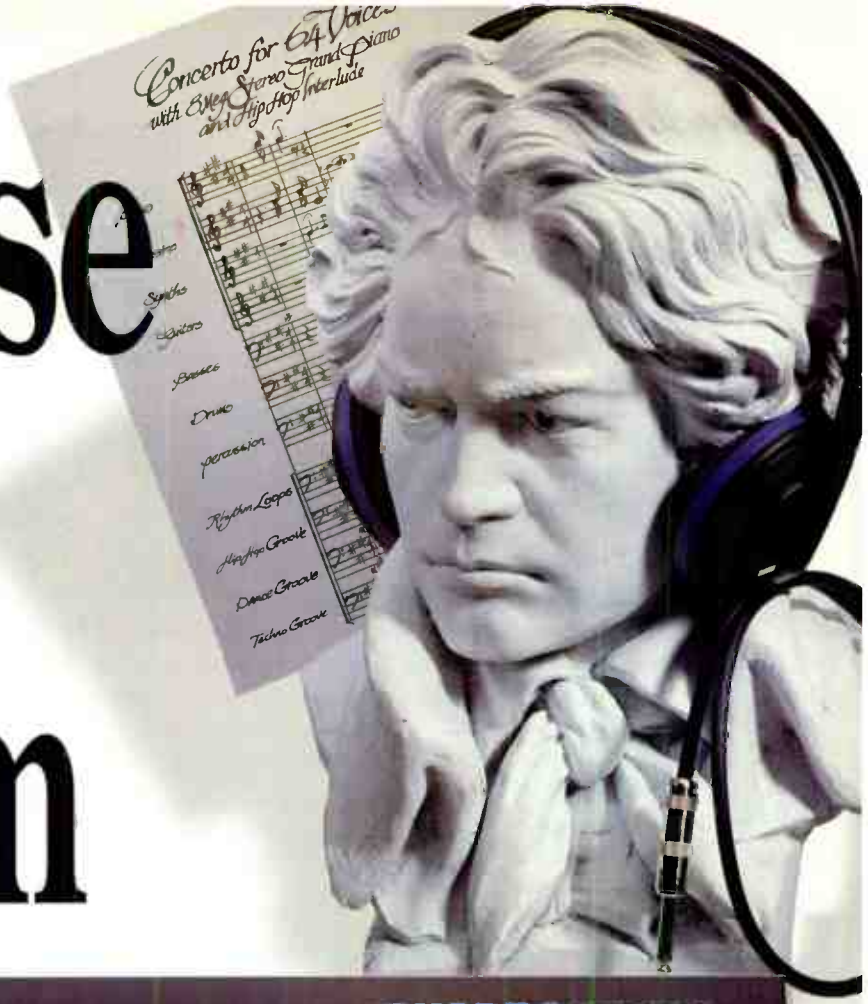
Our managers, Coran Capshaw and Ross Hoffman, helped us organize our growing touring business. We started a small touring company and a small corporation to control our spending and savings.

More people became involved as we grew. Our soundman, Jeff Thomas, has been with us from early on—as is the case with most of our crew. We all share a faith in the music. From the musicians to the crew to the management there is a common belief in what we do.

The strength in our business is based on a shared commitment by everyone to succeed as best we can. With that homegrown ideal in mind we addressed the question of T-shirts and merchandise and decided to keep that "in-house" as well. All of that has become another creative outlet and source of revenue.

Our audience grew [*cont'd on page 18*]

Compose Record Perform



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TALENT

TOWA TEI Lately, Towa Tei has been in such demand as a DJ and producer in Japan that he's hardly had enough time to make any good mix tapes. That is, until his friend Ryuichi Sakamoto asked him to record an album for his new Japanese label, GUT. "For me, this album is kinda like a mix tape," offers Towa. "So, for now, I've just been giving my friends copies of this."

In creating his loungey solo debut *Future Listening*, Towa took the same keen ear for melody and sampling that he brought to Deee-Lite (from whom he is on temporary hiatus) and combined it with everything from techno to bossa nova beats. Says Towa, "I've kinda come back to my roots as a music-lover, not just a *dance* music-lover."


KAZWARI TAJIMA
TOWA TEI

Guests on the album include Sakamoto, English toaster MC Kinky and singer Maki Nomiya from Japanese faves Pizzicato Five. And the majority of this hi-tech recording was done using the elaborate studio he set up in his small Manhattan apartment. "Techno, to me, isn't as much a kind of music as it is a way of making music," he says. Pointing to the bathroom, he adds, "Even the vocals—we did 'em right in there."–*D.S.*


GAIL O'HARA
THE 6THS

THE BOTTLEROCKETS Bottlerockets singer and musical director Brian Henneman claims that the band neither reads the *Village Voice* nor watches CNN, despite their songs' sometimes political themes. "But we have our road manager read to us occasionally," he says. Nonetheless, the Festus, Missouri–based band's new record, *The Brooklyn Side*, drawls with down-home charm and protests of Newt's welfare views and Rush Limbaugh's entertainer-styled anger.


BOTTLEROCKETS

"1000 Dollar Car"'s punkish take on Lynyrd Skynyrd is a hilarious social critique of poverty and spending told through the eyes of a guy who buys a junky car. "Welfare Music," which refers to Limbaugh, in contrast, isn't at all funny, and neither is "What More Can I Do"'s tale of wife-beating, nor is the lonely guy with no wife, kids or life in "Sunday Sports."

Henneman can be romantic as well as serious: He sends his steady woman Janet flowers from the road, noting that "you can always make time for that." Unfortunately, the beautiful, wide-eyed "Pot of Gold" was written prior to meeting his current flame. "The fact that that song had been written about my ex instead of Janet is my biggest regret."–*J.B.*

JOAN OSBORNE There's kismet in the air during a New York chat with Joan Osborne; the cafe's sound system segues the Stones' "You Gotta Move" into Joni's "People's Parties." It's a linkage that the expressive vocalist manages to convincingly distill on her major-label debut. The sizzling *Relish* teems with raw blues heard from a singer/songwriter's perspective, sung with a verve that aspires to profundity.

"The subject matter has to have meaning and resonance for me," says the 32-year-old. "Blues is absolutely strong enough to take chances with, so I feel that I should follow my instincts to experiment."


AL PEREIRA
JOAN OSBORNE

Osborne concocts narratives laden with unexpected turns and vivid specifics. One song delves into the stormy mind of a sighted Ray Charles, another imagines domestic disarray in a Florida trailer park.

The persuasion is in the delivery, but the formalities of proper singing aren't sweated over. "It can actually be harder to have a lot of technique," says the woman whose next project is a gospel disc. "Too many choices can overwhelm you."–*J.M.*

THE 6THS "Listening to Enya makes me have to pee," confides Stephin Merritt, songwriter/guitarist for the 6ths. "But it's just the production—all that sibilance."

The 6ths' debut *Wasps' Nests*, on the other hand, might get tagged "lo-fi," but it's the sweetest-sounding lo-fi record you'll hear this year. Merritt has paired 16 marvelous pop songs with 16 different singers. The guest list includes members of Luna, Helium, Sebadoh, Yo La Tengo, Heavenly, Superchunk, the Bats and Young Marble Giants, as well as Merritt himself and Mitch Easter, all selected by the band's other half, drummer/manager Claudia Gonson.

"Almost everyone I like as a songwriter has someone else singing their lyrics," says Merritt. "The problem now is we're already running out of indie-rock vocalists, so we might have to branch out next time."–*D.S.*

REASONS TO CHOOSE THE MACKIE 8•BUS-PT 2

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MIDI Automation system. It's receiving rave reviews from seasoned pros who are used to working with "big console" automation systems.

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2 $795 (MB•24) and $895 (MB•32) suggested retail. Definitely higher in Canada.
3 $2,995 suggested retail. MB•E meter bridge $695 suggested retail. Positively higher in Canada.

D +4dBu operation throughout.

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And, for those of you who still own –10dBV gear, our 8•Bus console tape outputs and returns can be switched to accept this semi-pro/hobbyist standard.

4 Mention in this ad denotes usage only, not official endorsement by the artists or production companies listed.

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ROUGH MIX

from a local bar and fraternity crowd into a solid fan base anchored in the Southeast. With some help from Blues Traveler, Widespread Panic, the Samples, Big Head Todd and the Monsters, and Phish, audiences started growing in the North and West.

At about the same time, the industry started peering down from their ivory tower. Dinners started being arranged (and paid for!), gifts were appearing backstage, and more and more execs were asking, "How did you get to this point without an album?" We played.

We decided to release a live album, *Remember Two Things*, on our own label, Bama Rags. With the following we had gained it would have been stupid for us to sign away freedom and money to a larger record company. Having sold over 150,000 copies of our first release and another 25,000 copies of our second release *Recently* (a five-song EP available only at live shows or mail order) we feel very good about our decision. Those two releases are still supporting us very well.

With our own solid foundation, we released our first "major"-label CD, *Under the Table and Dreaming*. I think the control we have over our careers is a result of our grassroots footing. In an industry that doesn't know their teeth from a smile or music from money you need more than a "deal."

This month's Rough Mix was written by Jill Blardinelli, Nathan Brackett, Bill Flanagan, Ted Greenwald, Jim Macnie, Mac Randall and Dev Sherlock.

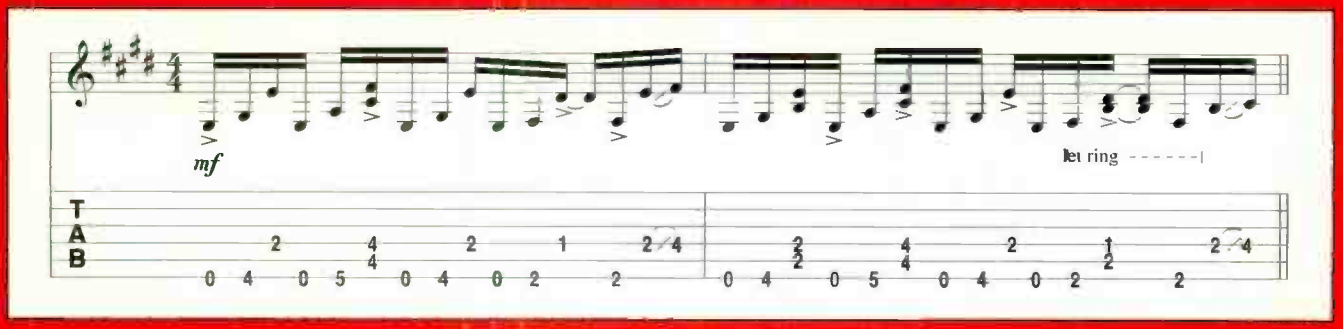
REISIG & TAYLOR

PRIVATE LESSON

LEO KOTTKE

"Rhythm's something a lot of guitarists neglect," Leo Kottke says, "but it's crucial. And you can play with it in so many ways, break it up, turn it around." For over 25 years Kottke has been advancing his own distinctive sense of rhythm, both on 6- and 12-string acoustic guitar. Steering away from Merle Travis–style picking (where the thumb holds down a bassline and the other fingers handle melody or chords), Kottke takes a more varied approach, using thumb and fingers equally to create crisply accented counterrhythms. The result sounds less like one part superimposed over another than two parts constantly jockeying for position.

This example, taken from "Peg Leg" on Kottke's latest album *Peculiaroso* (Private Music), demonstrates this trademark method with a syncopated line that's more than a little ragtimey. But, as Kottke points out, "It's not really ragtime, because ragtime guitar assigns certain roles to certain fingers. Whenever I see any kind of set pattern like that developing, I stop it: Lead with the thumb instead of the index finger, add or drop a beat. I'm always looking for surprise. If I play something and don't quite know what I did, that's good."—*M.R.*



NOTATION BY CHARYLU ROBERTS

SID VICIOUS (SEX PISTOLS): A SMIRK IS AS GOOD AS A WINK TO AN ARCHETYPAL SLACKER

EBET ROBERTS

Offspring, look at how profoundly rock music itself was changed by Nirvana. You could make a good case that the long fuse lit at CBGB's finally set off in the 1990s the explosion we all expected 20 years ago.

The first taste the outside world got of what was to come was *Horses* in 1975. Patti Smith was the first of the CB's acts signed, and when she opened her mouth on the first track of her first record and said, "Jesus died for somebody's sins but not mine," it was as if the roof had opened up and the future of rock 'n' roll was suddenly wide open. At once anarchic and almost spiritually charismatic onstage, Smith in concert promised the epiphanies of the prophet. Among the kids hanging on her sermons were Michael Stipe and Peter Buck in Georgia, Paul Hewson and Dave Evans in Dublin. She gave them all the idea.

Television released their single "Little Johnny Jewel" in '75, and in early '76 there followed *The Ramones*. Nobody was sure if it was a comedy album or a manifesto. It turned out to be both and neither; the Ramones seriously believed that rock 'n' roll should be fun, and if their idea of fun relied on images from comic books and trashy movies, well, whoever said rock was supposed to be about Jesus Christ Superstar and Quadrophenia?

I got my ears pinned back by the Ramones in early '76 when I suggested that they owed something to the New York Dolls. They let me know in no uncertain terms that the Dolls' music was based in blues, like every other post–Rolling Stones rock group. The Ramones were rooted in Top 40 pop from the days before blues snuck in. That was one big difference between punk and the music that came before; punk was the whitest rock 'n' roll anybody had ever heard. As it grew up it began drawing from soul, disco, reggae and other African styles, but in its early days punk rock was the sound of white suburban kids who had never seen the delta and did not aspire to pretend they had.

Still, punk rock had more of a sense of history than many revisionists care to admit. Patti Smith and the Ramones traded in images—street toughs in black leather—that had obvious precedents in early rock 'n' roll. The next two bands to go from CBGB's to the major labels, Talking Heads and Television, seemed to go out of their way to contradict the whole visual idea of what a rock group was supposed to be. Here were brainy groups named after TV terms with long-necked scarecrows for frontmen, straining to sing songs that had nothing to do with Brown Sugar, Ramblin' Men, Foot Stompin' Music or any of the other clichés of the day. Once you got used to their tinny vocabularies you could spot Talking Heads' love for R&B and Television's reimagining of the role of the guitar solo. But at first it all sounded like music from Mars.

Let's state now what was not so obvious then: Punk rock was not initially as much a rebellion as a counter-revolution. The first punks were not a new generation, as the rappers of the '80s would be, but the underbelly of the '60s generation who remembered the glory of their youth and wanted to reclaim rock from Pink Floyd, the Doobie Brothers, the Moody Blues—whoever they felt had blown it.

At the time it was portrayed—by both sides—as a generational divide, but most of the original punks were no more than a few years younger than the old guard they were challenging. What they were was unhappy with the status quo, and convinced that they

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Artist interviews by Dev Sherlock, Tom Lanham, Jim Macnie, Grant Alden and Bill Flanagan

TOM VERLAINE

Tom Verlaine was the leader of Television, the first of the CBGB's bands. The group consisted of Verlaine and Richard Lloyd on guitars, Billy Ficca on drums and, after Richard Hell left to form the Voidoids, Fred Smith on bass. Television's first single, "Little Johnny Jewel," was released in 1975.

IN LATE 1973 I was with a friend of mine who played ragtime piano, Alan Ostlund, walking on the Bowery. We were saying, "It's really hard these days to find a place to play," because all the clubs had record companies half paying for their ads. He said, "What's that place?" "CBGB's." So we went in. It was the middle of the afternoon and Hilly Kristal was there. I said, "Do you ever have bands here?" He said, "Well, maybe. Why don't you come by and audition on Sunday?"

He sort of liked us. Hilly doesn't talk much. He just said, "You can play Sunday nights," or something. We would xerox some notices and hang them around town. Hilly said, "You'll have to buy your own ads," but he let us play there one or two nights a week. At that time the club had, I think, Irish folk music and it was a biker bar a couple of nights a week as well.

The Ramones showed up within a month of Television's first shows there. I guess they were another band looking for a place to play. And likewise the band that became Blondie, the Stilettoes. Patti Smith at the time was playing cabaret-type gigs, little places. She played Cafe Wha? once. She was playing without a drummer, but I think she had a drummer by the time she played CB's, in '74.

The audiences were small for the first year. Most people didn't know the club was there, except for other musicians and their girlfriends and their friends and a few writers. Actually maybe quite a few writers—who just wanted a cheap place to hang out and hear something. But I wouldn't say it was recognized as anything distinctive. I didn't really hang out there. The only time I would see the other bands is when they would share the bill with us. I probably saw two Ramones sets in '74 and a couple of Stilettoes. I watched the Stilettoes because I liked Fred [Smith]'s bass playing. When the Stilettoes broke up I immediately asked Fred to join us. In fact, Patti Smith actually knew where he worked so she went and asked Fred if he wanted to join Television. She was our liaison.

Our link to England was Malcolm McLaren. It was '74 or possibly very early '75. He wanted to take us to England, get us a record deal, the whole thing. At the time he was managing the New York Dolls, who had this campy, glamour look. We had a ripped-up look. Our clothes were not sewn up because we didn't know how to sew, and all McLaren talked about was OUR LOOK. It was very much like, "Just play and I'll do everything else—you'll have a record out in six months, I guarantee it will be top ten." Richard Hell actually liked this idea quite a bit. I couldn't stand Malcolm and didn't trust him. Neither did Richard Lloyd, so we said forget this. Strangely, within nine months the Sex Pistols surfaced, with Richard Hell's hairdo and kind of Television torn shirts. Then we found out this guy Malcolm was managing them and we thought this was really peculiar.

In 1974 Brian Eno produced a Television demo. We *thought* it was a demo. Then I was talking to the A&R guy at Island Records and he said, "Well, we've got half the record done." I said, "What record?" He said, "You know, this thing you did with Eno." Nobody in the band liked the sound of that tape, we just thought it was horrible. So I said, "Well, we'd love to do a record but we'd like to work with somebody else." That was the end of that. So we could have done an album and had it out in '74.

Then Sire offered us a deal. Sire offered everybody a deal. The Ramones took it and later Talking Heads took it. We didn't like it, so we said we'd wait a while. Although we figured we'd get a couple of amplifiers out of it, it really wasn't worth it. If you wanted a record out quick it was a good deal. If you wanted to get something for all your work it wasn't so good.

I think there were two waves of bands at CBGB's. The first bunch was ourselves, the Ramones, Blondie and Patti Smith. The dividing line that begins the second wave is Talking Heads. That's when people from out of town came in with bands. Beginning with Talking Heads there were bands that had seen what was going on at CBGB's and not necessarily imitated it, but then did something different on their own. Or maybe they were somewhat excited by the *expressionism* of the bands there. I know David Byrne had come down on the train from Rhode Island a couple of times. Somebody said to me, "You know the guy that used to sit over there?" I said no. He said, "Well, he's in this band [*cont'd on page 42*]

TELEVISION: BILLY FICCA, RICHARD LLOYD, TOM VERLAINE, FRED SMITH

PAUL WELLER

As leader of the Jam, Paul Weller forced British punk to acknowledge a debt to the spirit of earlier rock 'n' roll—in his case the Who and Small Faces. The Jam demonstrated that melody and energy were not incompatible.

WHEN I WAS 18 years old, I just wanted to be banged on the head. But you require other things when you get older—I don't know if sophistication is the right word, but depth maybe. The punk thing was perfect for a teen, a complete rush. As a kid I tried to sing like Otis Redding, which is not only absurd but impossible. You realize after a while that to sing soulfully you have to be yourself, lose the self-consciousness. That's what it's about. But the backbeat of the punk stuff didn't leave much room for real singing, just the shouting that took place. I find more space to maneuver my voice in my newest stuff.

I don't often listen to the old records. It's like looking at old photos at your folks' house. "What was I doing with that hair style, or those clothes?" "That's what I was trying to do at the time?" I tend to dislike a lot of things I've done. I'm more involved in whatever I'm doing at the time. There are moments, however, when I listen to the music and see how far I've come. [*cont'd on page 49*]

ier musicians could walk through. The center of smart punk business was Stiff Records, an indie label started by Dave Robinson and Jake Riviera that would be the model for independent record companies for years to come. Robinson managed Graham Parker, whose terrific music was hung between the receding pier of pub rock and the departing boat of punk. Parker had been produced by Nick Lowe, who peeled off half his former band, Brinsley Schwarz, to form Parker's backup, the Rumour. Lowe had a million tricks up his sleeve—he made wonderful records for Stiff while also touring with Dave Edmunds in the group called Rockpile.

But Stiff's and Lowe's greatest accomplishment was to discover and produce Elvis Costello, a 21-year-old fan of Dylan, the Band and Randy Newman who saw in punk (1) a fun chance to wail out his own rage and neurosis and (2) a way into the music business that had resisted him. Costello was not the only smart guy to dumb down a little in order to pass as a punk, but he might be the only one who made great punk rock while doing so. Stiff also gave the world the Damned—perhaps the worst punk group of all, which made them to some people's minds the best—and Ian Dury, who Johnny Rotten credits with being the first to sing rock in a British accent, thus liberating all U.K. punk that followed and drawing a line between the phoneys and the new kids. Stiff was also home to such long-gone nobles as Tenpole Tudor, Wreckless Eric and Lene Lovich. All once Impending Legends, all now returned to dust.

Those were the days!

BY 1980 PUNK AND NEW WAVE scenes were shaking the roof beams in major cities from Europe to the Pacific Ocean. Blondie, Talking Heads, the Pretenders, the Patti Smith Group and the Clash were

TALKING HEADS: JERRY HARRISON, DAVID BYRNE, CHRIS FRANTZ AND TINA WEYMOUTH

RICHARD CREAMER/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES

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all getting radio play and selling lots of records. Then the strangest thing happened—in a very short time they all broke up.

You can theorize all night about why it happened. Joe Strummer, whose conflicts over the compromises of stardom caused the Clash to shake apart at the moment when they seemed set to take over the world, told *Musician*, "I dropped it on the floor and broke it." Then he added, "We made it, but in another way. We made it in the culture. Our place in the culture will probably be even-steven with a lot of people who fill stadiums."

There's no doubt about that at all. Without the first punks, the ones who came before the dress code and admissions policy were perfected, without Patti Smith, the Ramones, the Sex Pistols, Talking Heads, the Jam, Television, the Clash, Blondie, Elvis Costello and all the Stiffs, losers, misfits, and one-hit wonders who slinked in behind them, our stadiums, airwaves and record stores today would be filled with something much worse than whatever we've got.

If they hadn't blown off the roof 20 years ago, we couldn't see the stars tonight.

II. LEFT OF THE DIAL

PUNK ROCK WENT underground, truly underground, to begin the '80s. That is the development from which all subsequent developments stem. It belonged underground because it stank of death. No normal person wanted to look at it. Certainly no normal person wanted to buy it, and the entertainment conglomerates, out of pure capitalist necessity, dropped everything with a snotty connotation and concentrated on bands like Loverboy and Quarterflash.

The ghosts of Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungeon hung in the air over a few thousand desperately insecure kids from London to New York to Los Angeles to Tokyo to Sydney, and the only way they could pick each other out of a crowd was to dress up like a corpse: black wardrobe, black eye makeup and white skin that had never seen the sun. Most high schools had no punks. Outside of Southern California, no high school had more than three or four punks. Parents and guidance counselors warned about these walking cadavers and made them take batteries of psychological tests which pegged these pioneers as highly intelligent, highly creative, socially backward and crippled with learning disorders like hyperactivity, dyslexia and an unquenchable thirst for high-stimulus experience. They tended to self-medicate with powerful drugs. They hated each other almost as much as they hated the outside world, and they constantly accused each other of being poseurs, trendies or conformists. Nonconformity was highly valued, but how could you tell if somebody else was a sincere punk unless he con-

PAUL WESTERBERG

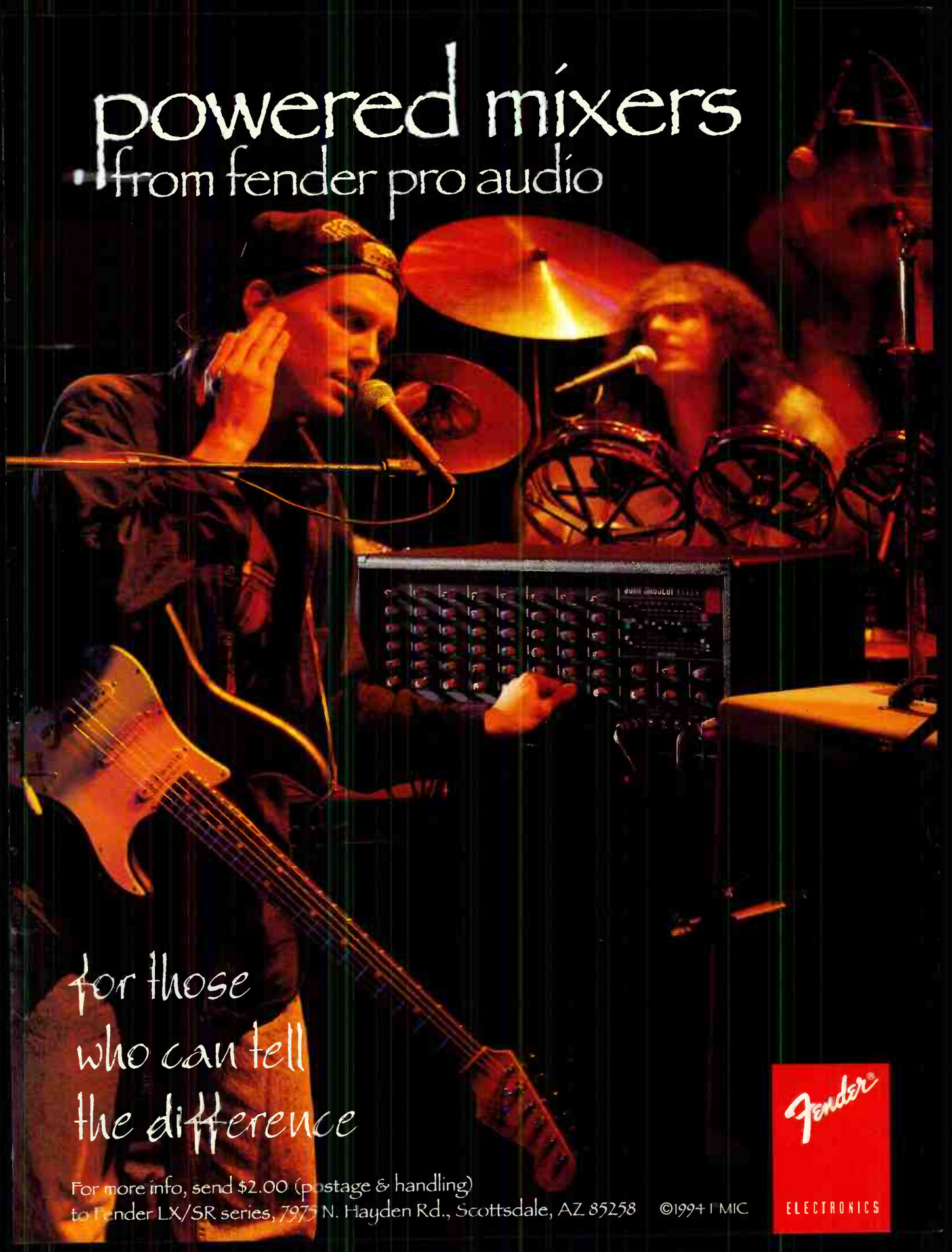
Westerberg's Replacements were, along with Husker Du, at the vanguard of the Minneapolis scene that carried punk's torch through the dark days of the 1980s. In the middle of that decade Westerberg struck a note of pessimism. "I don't think Husker Du will be the next big thing," he said at the moment when everyone else thought they would be. "I think Husker Du will be the band that clears the way for the next big thing."

Westerberg was right: Husker Du laid the path for the Pixies who laid the path for Nirvana.

WHEN WE MADE our first record, *Sorry Ma*, the producer wasn't smiling at all. He slapped the Ramones record on, A/B'd them, played them at the same time and turned around and said, "Well, it's louder than theirs!" That was his only comment. We were ecstatic.

THE MATS: SLIM DUNLAP, TOMMY STINSON, PAUL WESTERBERG, CHRIS MARS

BOB GRUEN/STARFILE



MIKE WATT

In the early '80s, shortly after the birth of the West Coast punk scene, the Minutemen came ambling out of San Pedro in Southern California. They were school chums D. Boon on guitar, Mike Watt on bass and drummer George Hurley. They recorded for SST, the indie label owned by Black Flag guitarist Greg Ginn and, at the time, home to Husker Du and the Meat Puppets. These bands personified the DIY aesthetic, recording on minimal budgets and making their mark via vigorous touring. The Minutement came to a sudden halt on Christmas Eve, 1985, when D. Boon died in a car accident.

PUNK, FOR ME, was this utopia in my head. There was Meat Puppets, Husker Du, Black Flag and us, the Minutemen, and we were all on SST. We all had just bass, drums and guitar, but we all had a different way of doing it. We thought that was one of our obligations. But with hardcore I think it was more social and less of a musical thing. These guys going out with girls for the first time and going to their first gig, having parties at their parents' houses. It wasn't like a Bohemia, or just freaks spazzing out, like what we were doing.

THE MINUTEMEN: O. BOON, GEORGE HURLEY, MIKE WATT

Hardcore came from punk. Punk was more older people—ex-glitter people, college students, art people—not a lot of musicians. It was more of an urban thing: Hollywood, New York, San Francisco. When it went out to the suburbs, they all looked up to Black Flag more than they did to the Damned or the Clash. When Greg Ginn started touring, Black Flag was *the* punk rock show for a lot of towns in America for a long time, because there were no *scenes*. [*cont'd on page 49*]

formed to some sort of offensive dress code? That was one contradiction that threatened to tear the subculture apart. If the only way you could prove you weren't a poseur was to die of a heroin overdose, like Darby Crash of the Germs, who would be left to carry the banner? That was another contradiction.

Punk went so thoroughly underground that by 1985 an English journalist named Dave Rimmer could publish a book called *Like Punk Never Happened: Culture Club and the New Pop*, about a generation of stars who had "come of age during punk, absorbed its methods, learnt its lessons, but ditched its ideals." He was referring to Boy George, Spandau Ballet, Wham!, Duran Duran and Adam Ant. Ah, history—so depressing most of the time, so exhilarating when it manages to sweep genuine crud into its dustbin.

There were lots of bands—almost wholly ignored in mainstream media—who looked at the Sex Pistols and saw something more inspiring than Halloween dress-up, the romance of self-destruction or careerism. Perhaps the Pistols' most surprising accomplishment was adding the word "anarchy" to the vocabulary of the average teenager. To most punks, the word meant what it always means when used in a daily newspaper: "chaos." But for others it led to the discovery of a rich and little-known tradition of left libertarianism that provided an alternative to the dismal dichotomy of capitalism/communism. In England, Crass, an anarchical commune as much as a band, traveled around the country staging concerts that combined punk chants with ferocious and obscene denunciations of Margaret Thatcher. Discharge combined spectacularly spiked hairdos with a staunch anti-war, anti-nuke stance. Their machine-gun guitar playing—as fast as the Ramones but far more ominous—contributed to the development of hardcore. Despite little presence and little distribution in the United States, both bands were idolized here by anarchist punks who proudly painted "CRASS" and "DISCHARGE" on their black leather jackets.

In America, the biggest anarchist punk band was the Dead Kennedys. They had the advantage of a perfect name, promising blasphemy and danger without actually specifying their politics. As a result they drew a lot of Republican frat boys who interpreted the moshpit (unseen outside of punk shows until the late '80s) as an opportunity to hit people, and who didn't quite get the songs. When I started going to DK shows in 1982, a significant portion of the audience did not understand that the song "Kill the Poor" was ironic. The Dead Kennedy's singer, Jello Biafra, vented his frustration in songs like "Nazi Punks Fuck Off," and to this day he regularly expresses similar sentiments. By the mid-'80s, the DKs could draw 10–15,000 kids in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and several thousand in most of the major urban centers around the United States.

Personally speaking, the DKs gave me one of my fondest rock 'n' roll memories when they performed in the parking lot outside the Republican Convention in Dallas in 1984. It was the night that Nancy Reagan addressed the delegates, and the Dead Kennedys hit their

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Michael Manring shocked the bass world in 1994 with his daring release, Thonk. This record helped him win the "Bassist of the Year" honors in Bass Player Magazine's Readers' Poll. A longtime fan of Lexicon processors, Manring has recently begun to experiment with JamMan and Vortex, taking his solo bass flights into hyperspace. A new album is due in 1995.

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Leni Stern is widely regarded as one of the finest composers on the scene today. Her pristine guitar sound has been called "remarkable" and "fluid" by Musician Magazine. A new solo album, "Words", is due in mid-1995.

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EBET ROBERTS

HENRY ROLLINS (BLACK FLAG): HARDCORE'S FIRST MESSIAH ON A BAD HAIR DAY

semi-trailer stage just as the delegates were streaming out the exits at the end of the evening. Biafra led the motley throng of dissenters in a chant of "Fuck off and die!," a breath of remarkably fresh air amidst the miasma of near-fascism.

So a lot of people understood exactly what the DKs were about. And some didn't. And some just wanted to slam dance, skank and stage dive. This was a development that also came out of California, where skateboarders started going to punk shows in search of greater thrills. Skate punks have no fear of falling, and quickly expanded Sid Vicious' "pogo" dance into the moshpit—now so de rigueur on MTV, then completely ignored on MTV.

In the wake of the DKs came Millions of Dead Cops, DOA, the False Prophets, Nausea, Missing Foundation and many others who in varying degrees subscribed to an anti-corporate, anti-hierarchy, anti-vivisectionist, anti-war agenda. Minor Threat, which later evolved into Fugazi, popularized the "straight edge" movement, a reaction against the rampant problem of addiction. Black Flag, with the brilliant guitarist Greg Ginn and vocalist Henry Rollins, became the center of the hardcore movement, which brought virtuosity and even more speed to punk. The Bad Brains combined hardcore with reggae and apocalyptic Rasta politics. Agnostic Front, Murphy's Law and Carnivore, to name a few, reacted against the "peace punk" agenda with a more nihilistic world view that attracted a nascent skinhead element. The peace punks tended to be middle class with some college education, while the skinheads tended to be working class and anti-intellectual.

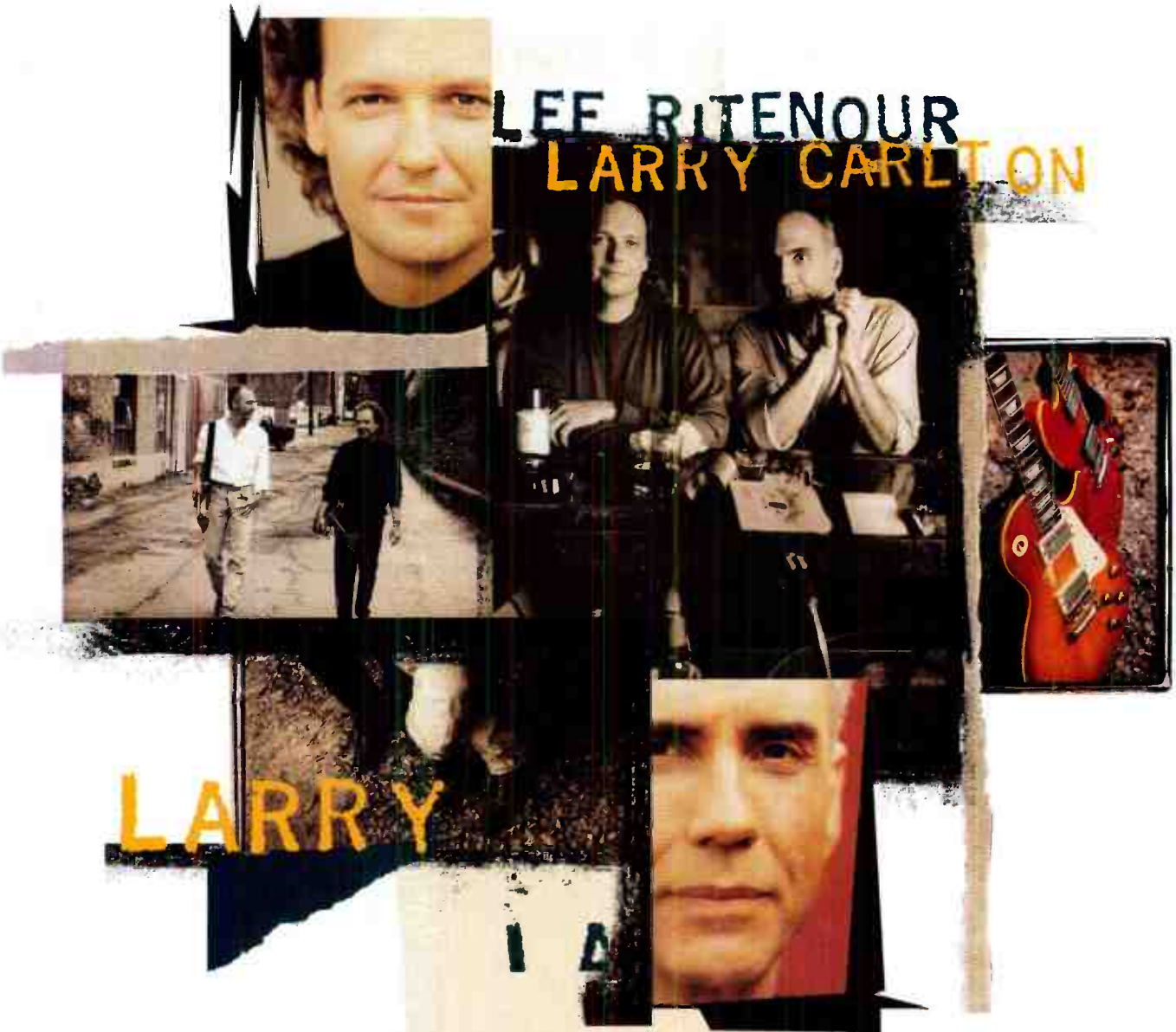
What all punks had in common was a hatred of heavy metal. Indeed, metalheads and punks used to beat the crap out of each other at concerts. The only band they could agree was cool was Motorhead, progenitors of death metal.

Punk also gave birth to the 'zine movement. Since the normal media did not cover punk, and since it was never on the radio, punks had to communicate directly with each other at sympathetic clubs, or through small, mostly photocopied magazines where issues and band quality were vehemently debated. The best of these—*Maximum Rock & Roll* and *Flipside*—still

KRISTIN HERSH

The Boston punk clubs of the late '70s were full of great bands—Nervous Eaters, the Neighborhoods, Human Sexual Response—who never broke through nationally. But the vitality of the scene itself, nurtured by local press, radio and venues, made it in the '80s a breeding place for a second wave that included the Lemonheads, the Blake Babies, the Pixies and Kristin Hersh's Throwing Muses. Those last two groups shared management, gigs and a link to the British label 4AD. The Muses and Pixies have spun off, in the '90s, Belly, the Breeders and Frank Black.

I MISSED PUNK when it first hit. By the time I was listening to the bands I loved it was kind of a given. The Minutemen, Violent Femmes, X, Meat Puppets, Volcano Suns all kind of came from punk. I'm really thankful for it. We were allowed to do anything because of it. I didn't hear Patti Smith until we were making *House Tornado*. I put *Horses* and another one of her records on a tape and I walked to the studio every day—which was a three-and-a-half-hour walk. So I must have listened to it hundreds of times. I really fell in love with it. Other than that, it was a little bit like history for us to listen to a Sex Pistols record. The Clash are still the only band besides X who knew how to work politics into music.



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BILLIE JOE

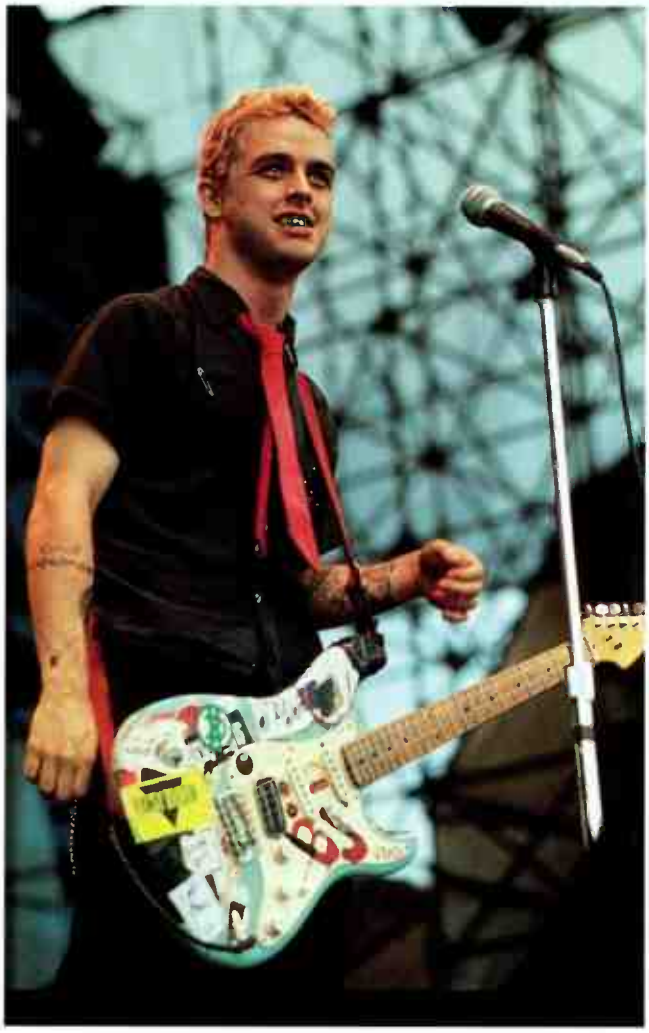
Green Day's Billy Joe is at the center of the new punk scene that has exploded from Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, California and become a national success.

I THINK PUNK HAS always been around, and everyone has their own interpretation of it. It's been there all the time. Early punk was about art and fashion, really, because everyone who was a punk in England was in art school. I read an early interview with Dee Dee Ramone where he said he wished the Ramones had more of a glamorous appeal too, instead of playing in jeans and leather jackets. But it was definitely about fashion, until the Clash brought out the political side.

I wouldn't necessarily say I had a direction or anything. I just knew I wanted to write songs. It wasn't any kind of cosmic force or anything like that. It was just a matter of having a guitar around and wanting to play it all the time. I've had the same guitar since I was 11. The media just grabbed ahold of it and is eating it up. Wynona Ryder puts out a movie called *Reality Bites*, Beck puts out that song "Loser," Kurt Cobain blows his face off, River Phoenix croaks from an OD in front of a club in Hollywood. I think it's a sign of the times to be way more self-destructive, way more apathetic. Someone said my songwriting was like cheap home therapy, but I don't know, it's more like a journal. I just like to write and there are people I like to write about, places too. I've written about 100 songs.

I think Telegraph has just become this cultural mecca for punk rockers, because most of 'em who are on the Avenue aren't even from here. They're from Arizona, Minneapolis, New York, Florida—they just came on out and ended up squatting in houses in Berkeley. It's the climate, and the scene itself—Gilman Street (an all-ages punk club) and *Maximum Rock and Roll*.

I lived in this warehouse and we had this basketball court set up. Half the house would be up on LSD, another part of the house would be up reading, and another part of the house would just be drinking all night. Then it was "Alright, everybody! Three o'clock in the morning *basketball!* Everybody *go!*" And we wouldn't really get to choosing teams—we'd just start throwing it all over the place until something got broken.



EBET ROBERTS

GREEN DAY'S BILLIE JOE SURVEYS PUNK'S KINGDOM

thrive and are important reading for anyone who wants to set his own playlist.

By the end of the decade, Nirvana and Pearl Jam and Soundgarden and the whole "grunge" thing began to explode. The revolution was even televised, bringing punk angst to millions of young people now so alienated that they could identify. But I think the original punks, having lived it, will have a better set of memories.

III. ALL THE PRETTY SONGS

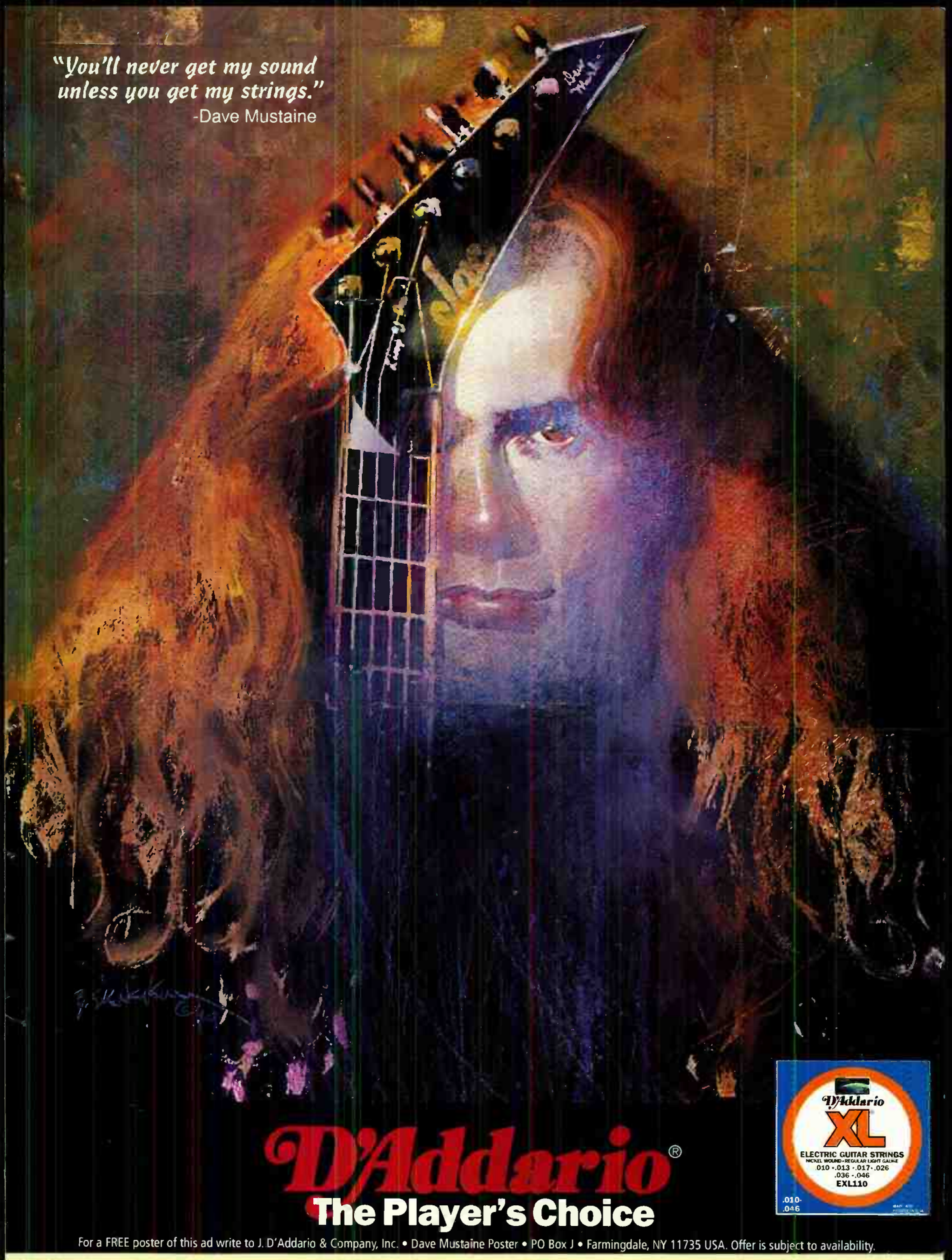
No future had a future, after all. Punk became a full-fledged commodity—the only act by which one may truly attain status in the United States—on or about November 15, 1991, when Nirvana's *Nevermind* sold its 500,000th copy, five weeks after release. In that instant punk rock—the loud, hard, ugly music of freaks and geeks—went from cottage industry to corporate asset.

The revolution made heavy rotation on MTV. And, as has been said in Seattle so often as to become a mantra: Money changes everything.

The notion of punk rock came to encompass both an ethical ideal (do it yourself) and a musical style (fast guitars, indifferently played). Which inevitably leads to long, tiresome arguments about what is and isn't real punk. But how could a music and culture built on nihilism, composed of outcasts, zealously guarded by an elite as fervent and doctrinaire as any Maoist revolutionary, how could *punk rock* of all things settle so abruptly into the heart of mainstream culture?

Some of it can be blamed on college radio, where a generation of young music industry professionals cut their teeth spinning obscure punk rock singles. As Mudhoney's Steve Turner noted, "All the people who did college radio through the '80s are now working for major labels." Take KCMU in Seattle, whose former DJs include Elektra vice president Faith Henschel, Sub Pop co-owner Jonathan Poneman, Soundgarden guitarist Kim Thayil and Sony regional A&R rep Damon Stewart.

Some of it has to do with the genre itself, which by the late '80s had



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KRIST NOVOSELIC

The co-founder, with Kurt Cobain, of Nirvana, Novoselic is devoting much of his energy to political activism and anti-censorship initiatives.

UNK ROCK HAS ALWAYS had different schools of thought, from the whole English narcissistic perspective, Washington, D.C. straight-edge hardcore, to the radical politics of the Berkeley scene. I cut my teeth politically on radical Bay Area political punk bands like Flipper, MDC and Black Flag.

In Seattle, fans of early-'80s punk rock started their own bands, which began to emerge in the late '80s, groups like Soundgarden, Green River, Melvins. But even in the Seattle scene in '88 or '89 nobody was really barking politically on a pure punk rock soapbox. Seattle punk was more about who you were and how you lived.

Being in a successful punk rock band allowed me to tour from Northern Europe to South America. They have generous welfare systems in Northern Europe, because they're not world cops. In the Third World, where they can't afford welfare, there is cruel poverty. The United States is the richest country in the world, and we should be willing to spend some of our tax money to make sure that people don't have to live in shanty towns.

I came up with the idea for JAMPAC [Joint Artists and Music Promotions Political Action Committee] right after the November elections. In 1994 Kurt Cobain died and Newt Gingrich came to power. The religious right has an active, well-organized grassroots network, and they make a lot of financial contributions to political campaigns. I figured that was the heart of American politics: campaign contributions and developing relationships with representatives. JAMPAC has received contri- [*cont'd on page 51*]

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PUNK INC.

ERIC BOEHLERT

NO LONGER RELEGATED to the back bins of record stores, cramped stages at local dives or overnight college radio, punk (at least pop punk) is suddenly big money. And while early supporters may cry sell-out, some headstrong bands are staying true to their punk roots by hanging onto populist ideals and applying them to the multiplatinum world they now inhabit.

For the first time in punk's 20-year history, the gears of the record industry are actually churning in its favor. When Offspring's single "Come Out and Play" was picked up last year by KROQ in Los Angeles, arguably the most influential alternative station in the land, all the old radio rules—indie-label artists don't get commercial airplay, rowdy noisemakers are broadcast only after dark—were thrown out. A new generation of emboldened programmers welcomed the punk sound. By last summer, exposure gave way to saturation. Ten months after its debut, "Come Out and Play" had been spun over 40,000 times on commercial radio (including Top 40), or roughly 35,000 times more than all Replacements singles combined. As of March 1995, Offspring's album *Smash* had sold over three million copies.

Massive exposure from radio and MTV forced punk players into the world of mainstream touring. But instead of taking the traditional route, acts like Offspring, Rancid, Green Day—all with hands-on experience putting out underground singles, selling T-shirts and booking shows themselves—staked out their own territory. Their guidelines consist of keeping ticket prices low and, by demanding general-admission seating over reserved, remaining accessible to fans.

Late last year when Green Day made the jump from clubs to hockey arenas (complete with general-admission floors), they actually cut ticket prices below $10 and turned one of the industry's oldest touring commandments—charge what the market will bear—on its head. By hiring a road crew of just three and keeping stage production to a minimum, the band managed to low-ball even the Ice Capades in terms of ticket prices. Ticketmaster—perhaps looking for some good P.R. after the Pearl Jam wars—charged dirt-cheap service fees: a buck and change per stub.

Thanks to lower guarantees—dollars promised by a promoter, regardless of turnout—Offspring also offers bargain-basement shows. Plus, merchandizing rates are negotiated down on a venue-by-venue basis to keep Offspring T-shirts affordable at $15. (Venues pocket a percentage of all concert merchandize sold on-site; hence the inflated $30 T-shirts hawked at most superstar concerts.)

Top-draw punk bands could easily pocket more cash by boosting prices across the board. But it all comes back to [cont'd on page 42]

Among the values important to Cobain was a commitment to feminism. There was a softness about the rage he voiced that did not invite linebacker moshing, but something more inclusive. A friend from the Olympia scene, Kathleen Hanna, became a central figure in the Riot Grrrl movement. Indeed, stages finally filled with female musicians—Bikini Kill, Hole, L7, 7 Year Bitch, Babes in Toyland, the Muffs and dozens more. Combating even more directly the testosterone overload of punk, a subgenre of "queercore" emerged, including Team Dresch, Tribe-8 and Pansy Division.

In the end grunge was just a catchy way to market punk rock. But without Mark Arm's assorted bands—Mr. Epp and the Calculations, Green River (fellow alumni now fill out Pearl Jam and Love Battery) and, principally, Mudhoney—there would have been little to market.

Arm's snarling vocals and swaggering irony best captured the spirit of the moment. "Touch Me, I'm Sick," he boasted in the summer of '88—still the perfect love song for the AIDS era—and everything after is history. "I feel really proud inside," Arm admitted a year and a half later. "I get this sort of beaming, gloating feeling that 'hey, hey, hey, this is better than everything else.'" The British press ate it up.

"If *Superfuzz Bigmuff* [Mudhoney's first EP] hadn't been on the European charts for a year," Sub Pop's Jon Poneman says, "and Mudhoney hadn't been a big sensation, who knows what would have happened to Nirvana?"

What happened to Mudhoney wasn't quite so overwhelming. "Try opening for Pearl Jam in Boston Garden while they're the hugest band on the face of the earth," Mark laughs. "We're playing as the people are filing in, and there's one girl with a Green River T-shirt standing up. Everyone else is sitting down."

Still, Mudhoney did leave Sub Pop for Warner Bros., three of the quartet have married, and all now own houses—largely on the strength of contributions to the *Singles* and *Judgment Day* soundtracks.

"I'm proud of my baby," Mark laughs. "Who would have thought this whole thing would ever have been foisted upon the entire world? As silly as it can be, it's great. I'd rather see my friends on MTV than 99 percent of what you see on MTV."

The door has stayed open so long even old-school punks are finally getting paid. Henry Rollins has become a cottage industry: punk star, model, poet, publisher. Even venerable Bad Religion are headed toward a gold record with *Stranger Than Fiction*.

But Fugazi have remained truest to their school. "I think Fugazi walk a good line between punk rock and capitalism," Sub Pop's Bernstein says. "They're making money, they don't have day jobs, they're taking money from whoever the hell will give it to them. But they're not taking more than they deserve. They charge enough for the show to enable that show to occur, and to cover their time performing it. And they charge enough for their records to enable Dischord to continue operating, but not a lot more than that. Every punk rock indie label has the same or close to the same list price as a major label, and Dischord showed that to be a scam. CDs are cheaper to make than albums, there's no reason for them to be so expensive."

SOME BANDS will live up to that example as long as they play. Others will sell out at the first opportunity. That's just human nature and human nature does not change according to what style of music you like. But it is impressive to see how a thousand tiny

moments and little decisions—from Tom Verlaine walking into a bar on the Bowery and asking to play, to John Lydon walking into a clothing shop on King's Road—sent out ripples that over two decades built into this big wave.

A few young musicians didn't like the way rock 'n' roll was going and decided to do something different on their own. They got up to sing for themselves and it turned out there were a lot of people like them who wanted to hear it. And those people sang along until the line between the audience and the musicians almost disappeared. From now on, every time the gulf between the players and the listeners gets too wide, we'll have punk rock to remind us what to do about it.

VERLAINE

[*cont'd from page 23*] now, Talking Heads."

We didn't actually play in England until 1977, after we had a record out. We were able to go over there and play theatres right away. The audience was great, the shows were sold out. Everybody had been hearing of us for a couple of years. The whole time I was in London in '77 I saw maybe 20 punks, and most of them were hanging out at the Kings Road clothes shops on Saturday afternoon. The English press had to create a phenomenon all the time and there wasn't any real phenomenon. There *were* suddenly a zillion little bands playing Ramones-style music with an angrier vocal. By 1978 there must have been 50 bands on little labels in England doing really uptempo barre-chords Ramones-type stuff. Even the first Clash record. Most of them were gone by 1980.

I think Television was more of an influence on the bands who came out of Liverpool. Echo and the Bunnymen, Teardrop Explodes. We never did a gig in Liverpool but we seemed to be real popular there and most of the bands who came out of there in the early '80s seemed to mention Television.

The only time I think about any of this is if somebody asks me, and then I'm usually too fed up to answer. For the musicians I don't think CB's was anything extraordinary, it was just the place that we played. The good thing was that you could do anything you wanted. If you wanted to play for half an hour one night, no one really complained. If you played an hour and ten minutes the second set, that was okay, too. And we were able to stick one of our girlfriends at the door and get the money. In those days to make 40 bucks apiece was really terrific. Even that didn't happen until maybe a year went by.

Maybe if there's anything important about it it's that the bands that played at CBGB's at the time perhaps shared a dislike for '70s bands, which may have included—besides bands like the Eagles and the BeeGees—even the New York Dolls and that glamour rock crap. I think the big absence at CB's was blues rock and country rock, which were the big genres at the time, along with disco. The audience that developed for these bands were people who were sick of that.

PUNK BIZ

[*cont'd from page 40*] the "Cringe Factor," says Offspring manager Jim Guerinot. When charging fans, "What makes you cringe?" he asks. "Whatever it is, we never want to get into that zone."

Perhaps punk's most defiant stand came when both Offspring and Rancid refused lucrative major-label offers and stuck with Hollywood-based indie label Epitaph.

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signing seemed all but certain. After all, as the pitch goes, how could an indie produce enough records, secure crucial retail space and schmooze important programmers all across the country? To the amazement of many, neither Offspring nor Epitaph were interested in penning a deal. Instead they took advantage of radio and retail's new openness to punk and redefined what a rock indie could accomplish.

Label-mates Rancid were also wined and dined, with Sony, Warner Bros., Capitol and Interscope all queuing up outside the band's door. Madonna courted the band personally on behalf of her Maverick label. In late 1994 the band all but signed on Epic's dotted line. After second thoughts, though, Rancid called the deal off and returned to the indie fold.

MCLAREN

[*cont'd from page 24*] and maybe occasionally pouring more water on its wine—it may not taste as strong today as it did back then. But people flower from it, get inspired by it. Without it I don't think you would have had Nirvana or grunge or, to some extent, even the attitudes within rap music.

My first witness of punk's influence was in New York, walking down 129th Street in Harlem. I saw a big, fat black man walking across the road wearing a bright yellow T-shirt that had on it the words "Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols." I thought, "My God, what is that guy doing?" His name was Afrika Bambaataa, and he led me to a party that night in a waste ground in the middle of some fired-out condominium building that was an extraordinary affair with guys holding torches and people bouncing up and down on their head, and a whole bunch of kids scratching up Gary Numan, Diana Ross and James Brown, hurtling abuse over the top at 99 mph. I thought, "This is extremely ecological. I like it—very do-it-yourself, very amateur." All the things that punk rock was about. It wasn't called rap yet, and I simply saw it as black punk music. I loved it so much I brought the whole team down to support a little group I was managing called Bow Wow Wow. That was back in 1980, I think. It certainly stopped me from managing Bow Wow Wow, and I though, "Fucking hell, I'm going to go make a record my bloody self." And I made "Buffalo Gals," which evidently inspired a lot of people including the illustrious Herbie Hancock and the professional Quincy Jones. Very effective.

When punk rock first came together I didn't think I was doing anything unusual. I thought I was doing rock 'n' roll: taking young kids off the street who weren't dressed up with the latest velvets from Granny Takes a Trip, weren't playing in stadiums, didn't have houses in the country, didn't have ten blonde girls on each arm, weren't in the news and didn't have the money to go and see these guys even if they wanted to. Basically they were simply intent on starting something that gave them reason to exist. It sent out shock waves because the world of the '70s was extremely professional. There was a kind of desolation, because the '60s culture had suddenly manifested itself into people looking rich and fat. The poetry seemed to be going out of it, and the industry were building castles and fortresses, and they'd taken all the balls off the sidewalk. That was something I felt strongly about, not to say that I was anything other than a rock 'n' roll fan, busy selling various artifacts on the Kings Road in London. This new generation was searching to find, and maybe destroy, the key people of

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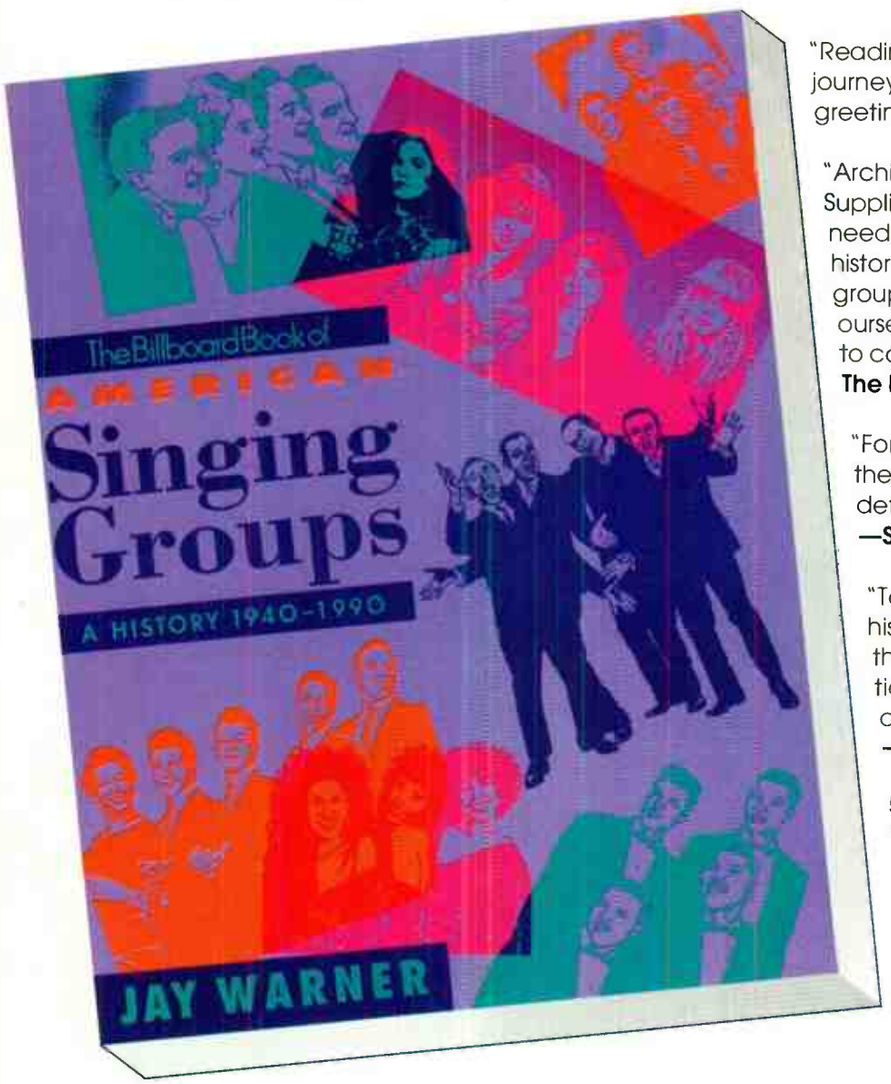

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the culture that they really were...not jealous of so much, but rather angry at. The politics of boredom was still being debated. And that politic of boredom found its voice in my store, with these guys forever thieving me, and I sort of turned that around and suddenly found a place where they could be suitably trained to announce this anger by climbing onto stages and not giving a damn whether they could or couldn't play, whether or not they were stars, whether or not they made popular music. I gave them confidence, a support machinery.

I don't think you have to be a musician to be a rock 'n' roller. That's an incredible myth that people seem to parade around town; it gives credence to all these guys who call themselves A&R executives. It's one big hoot really. Rock 'n' roll is a point of view. The old blues guys had a reason to exist as devil boys, rocking around the South; instead of working in the local car shop, they played music. They were totally irresponsible, low-class urchins, no-gooders. And let's face it, those people were really responsible for what happened in the world of rock 'n' roll. They engendered a spirit, an expression of a generation. The punks culled the feeling, the angst, of that music, and related it to their own politic of boredom in western society, the consumer paradise. I basically thought that this is what it should be.

The rock 'n' roll industry turned it into something else, which is called product. And product has never had anything to do with rock 'n' roll. Often the case is that artists live unhappy lives due to the record industry. Not cool. Artists must be protected; they are people who help propel your life toward a genuine change, a soulful change. Cultural change. The punk revival today is probably due to the fact that someone somewhere, some kid, instead of putting the pillow over his head at night, woke up and discovered under the floorboards a piece of ideology that stood out like a fucking ruby in a field of tin. And that's what the Sex Pistols were about, and that's what groups from Nirvana to Green Day have been inspired by.

I'm thrilled when I hear Green Day, because I feel my job was well done. I do not fucking chuckle, I'm not a fucking cynic. I think my job was well done. I don't think what I did was magnificent, at the end of the day I would have loved to have done even more scandalous things, broken the bank, so to speak. The swindle was there, I just wish it was a hell of a lot bigger. We just didn't get that far because they have bigger artillery than we do. But deep dents were made.And the biggest dents were made in the spirit. We put the spirit back.

JONES

[*cont'd from page 25*] always felt that a lot of those groups just sort of left you as they found you: You'd go to the concert and wouldn't feel any more inspired than before—they just took you and they fleeced you...there wasn't any thinking involved—it wasn't challenging in any way. And so much of the new music was. All these groups—we'd just been waiting for an opportunity like this for years.

The main group in London punk was the Sex Pistols—they were really off and running. And there was us. That's when all the groups started. We all kinda had our own thing. The Clash were a bit more positive, I guess, even in those times. And maybe a bit more musical—we actually *progressed*! I guess the Clash were just careful not to paint ourselves into a corner.

It seemed to me that it was us and the Sex

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Pistols and we were all getting along at first. We played our first gig with the Sex Pistols. And then we started happening and sort of fell out with them. The Jam were playing, too, in '76. We toured together for a while. And then we sort of fell out with them.

With the Pistols, things started gettin' weird there for a time because we were all gettin' known, and I guess it was just rivalry—we were all young guys. I don't remember anything specific, but I think when we were on tour the Jam said something in the press about voting Tory and we fell out over that.

There were a few colleges that we managed to play—we played the Royal College of Art. And we had the Roxy Club, which lasted a total of 100 days. Before that, everybody used to go to this place Louise's. It was a lesbian place where everyone would go to hang out.

The 100 Club was kind of a trad jazz club, really. And the guy who ran it started holding "punk" nights. It got more crowded as it started getting into the papers and stuff. But there were a few other places. One gig was at Huntington Green, a cinema. It was the Sex Pistols, us and Subway Sect. And we did a similar one in Halston at the Roxy, another cinema. They had kung-fu movies, and after the kung-fu movies got out, we'd set up our equipment and play—us, the Buzzcocks and the Slits.

We did some demos with Guy Stevens that didn't work out. I thought we were going to end up signing to, like, *Polymer* or something. But then Bernie [Rhodes, manager] phoned up one morning to say we were going over to CBS and we're signing. And the Polymer executive could be heard chucking himself off the top of the Polymer building. We signed the deal that day around lunchtime. Then Bernie went off to bank the check, and the band all went out to see *The Battle of Midway* in Leicester Square. That's how we celebrated—we sat there at the movies.

Joe and I went to America first. It was very exciting. We went over in 1978—we were making *Give 'Em Enough Rope*. We went to San Francisco first, then met the others in New York after a few weeks.

We actually went to Jamaica before we went to the States. Strummer and I must have been the first punks they'd ever seen in Jamaica—we had our zippers and our leather jackets and all that—they must've thought we were Martians! They were just sort of *dumbfounded*. We were looking for Lee Perry, but we didn't manage to find him. When we came back, Bernie said, "Look, go to Jamaica and write the next album." So we went and did it and came back with "Safe European Home."

You see, there wasn't enough good punk records around. So, to supplement it, we filled it out with a lot of reggae records. Don Letts was one of the big DJs at the time and he was playing reggae music. It was like punk's chosen "other music."

In New York we checked out CBGB. And Max's Kansas City was still happening at that time, as well. It was interesting for me, coming from London, because of all the New York guys I was into growing up. I sort of knew about all those places in a mythological sense. What was interesting about the "Radio Clash" period was that hip-hop and rap was starting, and we were playing in Bond's and we had Grandmaster Flash and Kurtis Blow playing with us. Futura 2000 did banners for us. That whole thing was starting then, and we happened to be there, so a lot of the influence rubbed off on us. I think rap was America's punk.

We're talking 20 years here—and remember, we agreed earlier that there was a big gap in there, where all the record companies

managed to take back control. When it first started, they didn't know what was going on—everybody tried to sign a punk band. But later on it sort of dissipated and got mutated into "new wave." The record companies slowly regained control of what was going on and once they did that, they managed to set the pace for, like, the next ten years. And it was very straight—it's much straighter *now*, even. They have such a strong hold on everything. Luckily we do have some great bands coming out, though. I really like Oasis. I really like their "Don't give a toss" attitude. It's a lot like the Happy Mondays, but it's also a lot like the punk thing.

Here in the U.K. the legacy of punk is incredible. You get talk show hosts who were punks, a lot of our top comedians, filmmakers, writers, artists used to be punks—all the guys come from that time, that punk era. That's kind of incredible to me.

If you're just getting it now, that's good too. Whenever you get it is good—it doesn't matter. Fifteen years later is better than never. Say you're a young guy looking at Green Day, and you're getting the same thing that people before you got from watching the Clash. Or what *I* got from watching other bands before us. It doesn't matter because *when* you get it, THAT'S THE TIME.

WELLER

[*cont'd from page 26*] It's not as if I look at punk rock as my golden time—this is my golden time. The Jam have had offers to get back together, but I'm not interested. I guess if I was down to my last buck, maybe I would. I'd like to think that I wouldn't do it. It wasn't an enjoyable time for me.

The Jam made opinion music, but never was it as simple as "this all sucks," like the Pistols were saying. The whole nihilism thing of punk meant nothing to me. There are aspects to the grunge thing that are that way too, and I don't like it. Everyone knows the world is fucked up. Let's try to make it better. Even if you're writing about bleak moments, you can frame it in a positive way.

WATT

[*cont'd from page 30*] Now that little folk thing has turned into the popular music for the kids. It's weird, because I always thought it was misfit music for bozos. But it's the regular music now if you're younger. How old are the Green Day guys, like 21, 22?

With these guys today, this is how you *belong*. That's the difference. We didn't have a centralized hipness outlet like MTV. Touring in those days was way different. What was neat about it was all the towns had different kinds of punk rock. Sort of like how news anchor men used to be different in every town. Now when you tour, it's the same guy with the same voice no matter what town you're in. And I think that's kinda what's happened with punk.

In Hollywood in the '70s, the Dils were the only punk band with a van. These guys never thought about touring, or getting it around—they just wanted to rule Hollywood or something! But Greg had this other idea. He wanted to put his record out, nobody would do it, so SST was like his ham radio thing. He just put 'em out on his own and started touring, which for him was the means to get it out. Then we started touring around. It built a scene that these guys today are kinda following.

I met Greg before Black Flag—at a Germs show. The Germs were a big band to him. But there was kind of an exclusive scene: You could come to the shows, but they didn't want you to play. Then Darby Crash finally

went down to Orange County and turned all those kids on to it. The first gig there was at the Fleetwood in Hermosa Beach with Black Flag. And that's where Flag started putting on the gigs, cutting Hollywood out of the picture. Then when Flag would do a Hollywood gig, it would turn into riots. There was a big problem with police. The police really had a thing for Black Flag. They thought SST was a heroin front. I had to go to court four times. When we'd drive the records to the stores to drop them off, the cops thought we were making shipments. When Darby died they had us under surveillance. Flag had a big tour and I was going to mind the store, and here comes the whole Torrance Police Department! They searched us—we had nothing to do with *anything*. They had this whole delusion that the Minutemen were a violent SST band, so we couldn't play the Whiskey or the Roxy. Eventually, Fear got us into the Whiskey and X got us into the Roxy. It was hilarious.

All of our tours made money! Even the first Minutemen tour. 'Cause we ran it for the long haul—do another tour, do another tour. The records and videos were just flyers to get people to the gigs. The gigs were *everything*. The gigs to us were the bottom line, that's why we got the band together. We did a record every six months in the Minutemen to get people to the gigs. I know in the big leagues they do tours to promote records, but we made records to promote the touring.

The worst thing for the little labels was that indie distribution was really bad. Very political. You'd get stuck in the import bin—yeah, imported from Lawndale!—it was real bullshit.

The Minutemen recorded in order, so we didn't have to waste money on editing! We only recorded midnight to 8:00—down time. All on used tape. You bet it was necessity. It wasn't the luxury of a *philosophy*. But we did do ideology things: The Minutemen never used tuners 'cause D. Boon said it was bourgeois—I agreed at that time, too. So when we were playing live gigs and the strings would stretch out, we'd be a step and a half down. When we were kids, we thought that whether you liked your strings tight or loose was a personal thing. We didn't know it had something to do with a note. So we never made sure our A was to the other guy's A—you could imagine what it sounded like. D. Boon wouldn't even use a fuzz box. So when we recorded it was kinda the same. I mean, I paid for *Double Nickels on the Dime*—45 songs—$1100.

Mixed it in one night! Recorded over four days! *What Makes a Man Start Fires* was recorded in one day, overdubs over two days, mixed in one day. Studios cost money.

The old school of punk where I came from had to take on the old school of the studio. It was total mafia mentality, extortion. That's why we had to get Spot [producer/engineer] and record on our own. Record for these rock 'n' roll assholes? They were *dicks!* And every punk band that got signed in the early '80s had to go through it. They made you rent all the equipment, the old vintage stuff. And then use it on mix-down, too! It was like using a device to go to 3 and then use a device to go back to 3! It's *retarded!* They just had something going with the rental guy or something. Really gross. Old school. And I'm a reformed kind of guy.

I think the way I learned 14 years ago is a really good way, and I wanna stick with that. Like, in the old days when we toured, you always brought the newer band with you to open up. I brought Screaming Trees, Black Flag brought the Minutemen, Sonic Youth brought Firehose on their first tour.

In those days there were a lot fewer of us. The '70s, after the hippie thing, was a lame old time in a lot of ways. It just forced what we did to come about. I don't think if things were real creative and happening that punk would have come. If you look at Red Krayola in the '60s, Iggy, Captain Beefheart—there were parts that were already going toward it. *Trout Mask Replica*'s very punk in a lot of ways. Just 'cause the times didn't jive—that's circumstance. That's why I don't want to rank the Green Day guys just 'cause they're new, because they can't pick what time they're born in. On the other hand, you know in the Woodstock movie where Sha Na Na comes walking out?

NOVOSELIC

[*cont'd from page 38*] butions from Pearl Jam, we've got commitments from a few other Seattle bands, and we're getting support from the major labels.

We intend to start a grassroots network across the United States to work against the same kind of censorship laws the Washington Music Industry Coalition (WMIC) was founded to fight. There are music censorship bills in Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Montana and Louisiana, and we want to find people who are involved in those music communities and share WMIC's experience with them. The PAC can also help facilitate their financial needs. Locally, we're targeting Seattle City Council elections in June. We want to project some issues that we feel are important to our constituency, and we want to work with Rock the Vote to mobilize that constituency for the June election, which is traditionally a low-turnout election.

The Christian Coalition has a constituency that comes out en masse at voting time. Well, we have a constituency, too, we have this rock 'n' roll constituency, and all we have to do is vote.

There's a Nirvana song called "Heart-Shaped Box," in which one of the lines is "Broken hymen of your highness." In that song, the word "hymen" is used as a metaphor. In the context of these censorship bills, if you were to discuss the hymen as a normal, natural part of the female anatomy with a teenager, you would technically be breaking the law. The Republicans tout themselves as the party of personal responsibility, and that's fine. But the bottom line is, there are too many irresponsible people and you need regulations to make sure that there is less potential for abuse.

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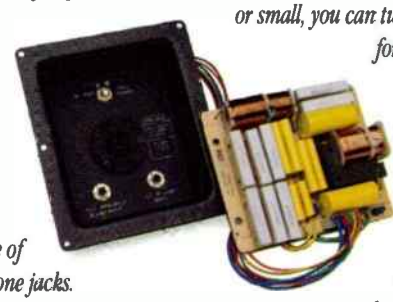

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STEVE ALBINI

post punk PRODUCTION

BY TED GREENWALD

I SPENT MY FORMATIVE YEARS OBSESSED with punk rock," Steve Albini says. "And the bands that I've been in have all been punk influenced. But for my own entertainment I don't care what it is—as long as it's exceptional."

Albini, advocate for the rock 'n' roll rank and file and tireless critic of the record industry's tendency toward assembly-line art, is one of the most controversial characters in contemporary music. His take-no-prisoners approach to both the techniques and politics of record-making have made as many enemies as fans. Best known for recording Nirvana's *In Utero* and P.J. Harvey's *Rid of Me*, Albini is quick to point out that he has worked on close to 1000 projects, the vast majority of them independent productions, and that to define him by his rare major-label releases is to misunderstand—in fact, to grossly underestimate—his work. We cornered Albini for a discussion of the nuts and bolts of record making in the world punk built.

MUSICIAN: *Who tops your list of favorite producers?*

ALBINI: I have very little use for producers. The people that I respect tend to be musicians, people who create stuff rather than manipulate it or work behind the scenes.

MUSICIAN: *Who's at the bottom of your list? What producers do you feel have been—*

ALBINI: Destructive? I'd say that the contemporary production style is about as unflattering to a rock band as it is possible to be. The sound of contemporary rock records, especially those made with big budgets, is so homogeneous. You hear exactly the same mix balance, the same dynamic, the same production techniques brought to bear on every single band. The whole thing seems to be geared toward a sound that won't change whether it's being heard through a television as MTV plays a video, through a Walkman as someone rides the subway, through a car radio or overheard through a window as you walk down the street. People are trying to make records that sound exactly alike so that a consumer doesn't need to make a choice about which one to buy.

MUSICIAN: *Some of the records you've been associated with, for instance* Surfer Rosa *by the Pixies, feature extreme, sudden dynamic shifts within a song.*

ALBINI: Those sorts of things are the responsibility of the band. If, on records made by other engineers, you don't hear that sort of dynamic, it's not because the band wasn't trying to do that. It's because those sorts of things have been ironed out by the professionals hired to do that job. I'm not uncomfortable hearing things with a wide dynamic range. A lot of engineers are. They go, "That might get lost on the radio! Better bring that quiet part up, better make that loud part quiet." If I should be credited with anything, it's keeping my hands off.

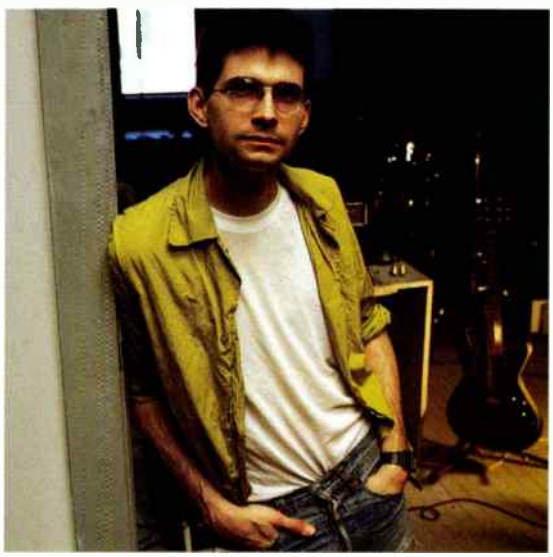
MUSICIAN: *You must tread a line, though, between satis-*

fying your own aesthetic and being true to the band's identity.

ALBINI: No. They're paying me. They're in charge. My entire production philosophy has always been to let the band call the shots. My job is principally a technical one. If the band wants the drums or the guitar to sound a certain way, it's my job to make it happen. In 99 percent of the jobs that I do, I'm paid directly by the band. The overwhelming majority of my work is for very small bands that don't have any support network behind them.

MUSICIAN: *Does the mainstream scenario, in which the producer is paid by the record company, create a conflict of interest?*

ALBINI: It's not a pretty picture. You've got a guy who is bleeding the artist for his income. That's going to depend on the commercial success of the record, and the commercial success of the record largely depends on how enthusiastic the record company administrators are about it. So his obligation is not to make the band happy, but to make sure the record company people remain supportive and push the record so that he will make more money. That's not the way I do things.



MUSICIAN: *You're never credited as producer. Is that by your own request?*

ALBINI: Well, I make it clear to everyone that I prefer not to be mentioned on their records. For smaller bands, I think it works to their disadvantage to associate me with their records. There's a chance that the discussion will focus on me rather than them. For larger bands, giving me credit for the way the record came out is misleading—that's the band you're hearing on the record, not me. If anyone can be credited with producing the records I work on, it's the bands themselves. There's an overriding perspective of me that I'm one man against the industry, an iconoclastic irritant in the music industry. I just see myself as a realist. The bands know their music infinitely better than I do. They're much more qualified to make qualitative decisions about their record than I am.

MUSICIAN: *New technology has diminished the record industry's stranglehold on recording by making it much less expensive. A band's options are far more varied today than ever before.*

ALBINI: That's one of the few things that I can applaud about the proliferation of cheap recording technology. People are getting some recording experience at a very early stage in their careers. They come into the studio with a pretty concrete perspective on what they want to sound like. That makes making records with bands today a much more cooperative process than it was ten years ago, when studios were mysterious buildings that people went into as rock bands and came out as broken men with a cassette tape that bore no relation to them. Nowadays almost every rehearsal space has a multitrack setup where bands can make recordings and experiment with production techniques.

MUSICIAN: *What advice would you offer a band interested in making a demo under those circumstances?*

ALBINI: Read everything available. That's how I learned almost all of my early technical understanding of recording—by going to the library. A lot of people don't bother with that because they think that if they can just get their hands on the equipment, they'll understand it soon enough. While you may learn enough that way to make sound appear at the speakers, you'll never understand what you're doing, and you'll never grow and improve. So I recommend that people get some sort of technical foundation. Then experiment like mad. Do everything possible to your equipment and to yourself, and record it all, and then listen to it critically. That way you build a vocabulary and a palette of techniques that you'll be able to apply either in shabby home-recording environments or high-tech studio environments.

MUSICIAN: *A lot of those people are going to record their tracks on a digital eight-track tape deck and mix to DAT. Do you think the "modular digital multitrack revolution" has been a healthy development?*

ALBINI: The cheap digital systems are good for what they are. They're sort of the rich man's Portastudio. There's nothing wrong with using them in that capacity. But using them as a substitute for professional equipment is a bad development because people are being misled about the quality and permanence of that medium. There are people who have built commercial studios around these things, and that, I think, is fraudulent. They're a pain in the ass to work with, and if you're familiar with professional equipment, the sound quality just doesn't compare.

MUSICIAN: *But isn't it the best option for people who can't afford top-notch analog equipment?*

ALBINI: Like I said, if it's considered purely a sketch pad for working out ideas, then it's fine. There's no reason you can't do your sketches on toilet paper if you're going to do your painting on leaded linen.

MUSICIAN: *Clearly a lot of records are made using these tools.*

ALBINI: Sure, and some of them are okay. But it's a mistake to assume that that's the best use of this equipment. In ten years' time, when these master tapes have deteriorated to the point that they're useless, their documentary value will be nothing. That's what music recording should be, writing history.

MUSICIAN: *Digital tapes degrade more quickly than analog?*

ALBINI: All magnetic tape deteriorates over time. The destructiveness of that deterioration is proportionate to how densely the information is written on the tape. These modular digital multitracks and DAT machines write the information on the tape very, very densely—and you know how reliable videocassette mechanisms are for handling tape, which is what all of these formats are based on. Digital tapes that suffer deterioration from use, dust, deforming of the tape or magnetic problems due to improper storage, misalignment in the shell, or whatever become unplayable. Fifty-year-old analog tapes sound fine except for slightly attenuated treble or slightly more background noise. When digital tapes degrade to the degree that there isn't enough good data for the error-correction and error-concealment circuitry built into them to play back anything that sounds like music, you get nothing at all. You have a master tape that is irretrievably destroyed as an inescapable consequence of the engineering standard brought to bear on the medium. I've had many, many tapes become unplayable after a short period of time.

MUSICIAN: *So when Phil Ramone records a Gloria Estefan record on a bunch of digital eight-track decks—*

ALBINI: We can thank our lucky stars that that record won't be around

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL CORRIGAN

in 20 years. I didn't say it was necessarily a bad thing.

MUSICIAN: *Rumor has it that you also hate compression.*

ALBINI: It's every hack engineer's best friend.

MUSICIAN: *There must be a proper use for it.*

ALBINI: Oh, sure. It was invented to control the recording levels of actors in films because optical film recording had such a narrow dynamic range. They needed engineers to modulate the level of the dialogue to keep it within that very narrow dynamic range. Compression was invented to handle that automatically so they could avoid having to pay people to do it. Not surprisingly, the best use of compression is to control the dynamic range of a vocalist, which can be quite wide—from a whisper to a scream, as the cliché goes. You want to keep the soft and the loud parts equally discernible through the din of the accompanying music. It can be done subtly or crudely. I prefer that it be done subtly. There are other case-specific uses for compression, but what I've seen develop over the last few years is wholesale squashing of everything. As much as anything else, that's due to digital recording. Digital recordings have an absolute peak level beyond which you can't go without causing gross distortion. As you record things quieter and quieter on the digital media—generally I'm talking about mixing to DAT—the resolution of the recording decreases. For every couple of decibels quieter the recording goes, you lose another bit of resolution in the digital word. Again, this is an unavoidable function of the design of the medium. When you get down to a fairly quiet level of, say, –12dB, you have very crude resolution indeed, maybe eight bits of data. That's about the resolution you'd get in a digital answering machine or one of those pocket memo devices. Engineers recognize this problem and compress the daylights out of everything so that everything is recorded in those last two or three decibels of headroom. Unfortunately, by playing to the weaknesses of the medium they have completely skewed the aesthetic of the bands involved.

MUSICIAN: *Don't you find that some groups actually want you to manipulate their sound?*

ALBINI: Occasionally people suggest that I'm supposed to be responsible for the way their record sounds. But I clear that up pretty quickly.

MUSICIAN: *Well, you're selecting microphones at least.*

ALBINI: That's the lion's share of my job.

MUSICIAN: *Have you developed a stock battery of techniques that tend to work most of the time?*

ALBINI: I don't think I've ever used exactly the same miking arrangement on two bands. But there are things that I've learned. Certain microphones complement certain sounds. For example, you might have a guitar amplifier with a very thin sound, where the thinness is not fundamental to the style of the music. If the guitar player would prefer that his sound be a little heavier, you can select a microphone with a large proximity effect, like a ribbon mike or other bi-directional mike placed very close to the speaker cone, to emphasize the lower register including the fundamental tones. If a guitar sound has extreme distortion with a lot of articulated detail in the treble, or the character of the distortion varies a great deal from note to note and that's a basic aspect of the group's sound, you need to use a microphone that can capture that detail accurately, such as a measurement-caliber condenser mike or a high-definition ribbon mike at a mid-field distance. Because the distortion character is going to be very extreme, you can assume that the fact that it's a distorted guitar will make it through the microphone; what you need to concentrate on is preserving the peculiarities of the sound. Another example: A lot of bands are tuning their instruments very low these days, and that's generating really low fundamentals. The lowest frequency produced by a bass guitar tuned down to D is roughly 32 cycles per second. So putting a microphone on the bass cabinet that begins to roll off at 50 cycles, like most dynamic mikes do, would be a mistake—unless your reading of the bass sound is that it is too boomy in those lower fundamentals to be audible in the mix. The hack technique is to use the same microphone in all situations so that you hear the same interpretation of a sound every time, and then make adjustments from there. My technique is to be as familiar as I can with the vocabulary of the band so that I can select pieces and techniques that flatter that band's style and sound.

MUSICIAN: *How would you suggest that a band evaluate an engineer?*

ALBINI: If you don't feel confident to go into the studio and make your own recording, then you need a technically trained engineer. The most important thing is finding someone who's sympathetic. Don't [*cont'd on page 79*]

FAST FORWARD

SONY SBM-1 A/D CONVERTER

In mastering studios, Sony's Super Bit Mapping technology is used to optimize the translation of 20-bit sources to 16-bit media such as CDs, improving resolution and preserving delicate sonic details. The SBM-1 ($549) provides home recordists with similar capability. Used as a 20-bit front end for DAT, sampling or CD-R, the unit accepts mike- or line-level inputs, connects via optical or coaxial digital ports and samples at 48kHz, 44.1kHz or 32kHz. It can operate for two hours on four AA batteries. ◆ Sony, 1 Sony Dr., Park Ridge, NJ 07656; voice (800) 222-7669.

KURZWEIL K2500

The 76-key K2500 and 88-key K2500X (prices TBA) from Kurzweil combine the K2000's ultra-flexible sampling and synthesis architecture with performance features from the PC88 master keyboard, including eight assignable sliders. Boasting 48-voice polyphony, up to 128 megs of RAM and up to 28 megs of ROM, the new models sport a two-in/eight-out digital audio interface (Alesis- and Tascam-compatible). ◆ Kurzweil, 1336 Alondra Blvd., Cerritos, CA 90701; voice (310) 926-3200, fax (310) 404-0748.

ESP HORIZON CLASSIC GUITAR

Celebrating 20 years of custom guitar building, ESP offers a limited. numbered edition of 20 black Horizon Classic guitars ($4995). The semi-hollow body is made of mahogany with double cutaways, arched top and glued-on mahogany neck. The ebony fingerboard is adorned with mother-of-pearl inlays and binding. Electronics include two Seymour Duncan Seth Lover humbuckers plus a Mike Christian piezo built into the Tune-o-matic bridge; a pan pot adjusts the blend between mag and piezo tones. ◆ ESP, 7561 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90046; voice (213) 969-0877, fax (213) 969-9335.

ART MDM-8L EIGHT-CHANNEL LIMITER

The popularity of digital eight-track tape decks has created a niche for products that enhance their performance. One way is to compress signals at the deck's inputs, making it possible to keep overall signal levels high without distorting. The MDM-8L from ART ($599) packs eight compressor/limiters into a single-space rack-mount case, providing balanced connectors, input and output level controls and bypass switch for each channel. Channels can be linked in any combination. ◆ ART, 215 Tremont St., Rochester, NY 14608; voice (716) 436-2720, fax (716) 436-3942.

OPCODE STUDIO VISION 3.0

Opcode's pioneering MIDI/audio sequencer now weds MIDI and digital audio so closely that they're virtually indistinguishable. Studio Vision Pro 3.0 for the Mac (price TBA) maps audio to MIDI and vice-versa in domains such as pitch (MIDI note number), duration (note-on and note-off time), volume (controller 7) and brightness (velocity). For instance, a vocal track can be translated into MIDI data, the data edited, and then transformed back into a vocal track complete with edits. Other new capabilities include DSP plug-ins and customizable onscreen mixing panels. ◆ Opcode, 3950 Fabian Way, Ste. 100, Palo Alto, CA 94303; voice (415) 856-3333, fax (415) 856-3332.

FAST FORWARD

ELECTRONICS FOR THE ACOUSTIC BOOM

Acoustic guitarists finally get their due with processors designed for easy setup and great sound.

BY E.D. MENASCHÉ

WHAT MIDI was to the '80s, acoustic guitar amplification may be to the early '90s: a breaker of musical barriers and a way of getting your music to bigger audiences. Just take a look around. Coffee houses are flourishing, providing an outlet for troubadours and pickers who previously couldn't find a gig. At the same time even the hardest rock bands are layering acoustic guitars into their wall of grunge. If the ongoing tide of acoustic guitar amps has made it more practical, a new wave of preamp/processors makes wiring up your acoustic nearly irresistible.

Trace Acoustic's TAG-1 Graphic EQ

Outboard preamp/processors make it easy to plug into whatever situation you encounter, especially in live environments where your best bet is to feed the sound person a fully shaped and conditioned signal. The fact that a growing number of these devices target acoustic players has the potential to revolutionize the "open mike" experience, formerly a rat's nest of unpredictable variables. Equally important, a preamp/processor that slides right into your gig bag supports the traditional modus operandi of the wandering minstrel.

Trace Acoustic's TAP-1 Preamp

In the noble tradition of the self-contained, plug-and-play stomp box, Trace Acoustic offers three battery-powered units: the TAG-1 graphic EQ, TAP-1 preamp/DI and TAC-1 compressor ($229 each). These units, useful individually and quite formidable as a system, cover familiar stomp-box territory, but they're thoughtfully designed and include a number of interesting twists. All three provide input and output level controls and LED signal indicators, and share the unusual trait of requiring 18 volts of power (via two 9v batteries or an optional power supply). The extra juice is said to increase headroom.

Split-band compression—that is, splitting the signal into higher and lower frequency bands and compressing them separately—is particularly effective with acoustic guitars, minimizing the unnatural "pumping" associated with broad-band compression. The TAC-1 accomplishes this in a remarkably compact and user-friendly package. An EQ balance control lets you mix the relative levels of the low and high bands, which helps for reining in boominess without squashing the response of the high strings. You can bypass either the high-band compression or the entire effect via footswitch.

Trace Acoustic's TAC-1 Dual Compressor

Graphic EQ is another tone-shaping and problem-solving staple of the "plugged" acoustic guitarist. The TAG-1 combines a wide-ranging seven-band graphic with either of two switchable preset EQ curves. Preset curve 1 boosts low and high frequencies and cuts mid-range. (This is the curve found in Trace Acoustic amplifiers and in the TAP-1.) Curve 2 is similar but less drastic. Footswitches control your choice of graphic and/or preset curve—especially helpful if you need to switch guitars in mid-set.

The ultra-practical TAP-1 functions as a preamp, direct box and basic EQ with two-band boost/cut and a switchable EQ curve plus a notch filter for battling feedback (–18dB from 60Hz to 300Hz). Conveniently there are two outputs: A quarter-inch jack follows the output level control, handy for connecting directly to an amp or effect, and a balanced XLR output suitable for a stage or studio mixer. The XLR bypasses the output level control, so if you're sending it to the sound person while feeding a stage amp from the quarter-inch jack, you can adjust your own level without affecting the house mix.

Korg's G2 Acoustic Guitar Processor

Feeding a piezo pickup to any combination of the Trace units—especially the compressor and preamp—yields startlingly natural acoustic tone and response. Add a little high-quality reverb and you can almost forget [*cont'd on page 65*]

Rane's AP 13 Acoustic Instrument Preamplifier

"THE LAST TIME I FELT THIS MUCH POWER, I WAS PLAYING AN ELECTRIC."

— CRAIG CHAQUICO

CRAIG CHAQUICO'S SOLO ALBUM, ACOUSTIC PLANET IS AVAILABLE ON HIGHER OCTAVE RECORDS.
PHOTO: RANDY HOFFMAN, 1995 WASHBURN OUTER LIMITS CONCERT EVENT

"When you feed a totally clean acoustic guitar sound with stereo delays and chorusing through a big PA with thousands of watts, it's like seeing God. It's like sitting in a cathedral listening to a big, rich pipe organ."

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BOTTOM OVER THE TOP

The trend in bass amps is toward extreme power and brutally efficient designs.

BY TOM MULHERN

BASS AMPS, pioneered less than a half-century ago by Leo Fender and Ampeg's Everett Hull, were originally conceived merely to make the bass loud enough to be heard over louder acoustic instruments. Like cell division gone crazy, the evolution of the bass amp in the past several years has shifted into overdrive, spewing forth mega-sized, ultra-efficient models that deliver hundreds—even thousands—of watts.

Vintage promo for the Ampeg SVT, a '60s icon of loud

What's driving the change? Ritchie Fliegler of Marshall echoes the explanation offered by many a manufacturer, player and aficionado: "Bassists don't play the same way they used to."

Indeed they don't. The onslaught of slap-and-snap funk, Seattle distorto-grunge, five- and six-string jazz soloing, plus the extensive use of chords, harmonics and the like have been reason enough for new amps. Using a hard pick to pummel the strings or violently slapping them in a funky frenzy sends a very hot signal—sometimes a couple of volts, as opposed to the fractions of a volt generated by less aggressive playing—to the amp's input stage. It takes extra juice to respond to that kind of assault.

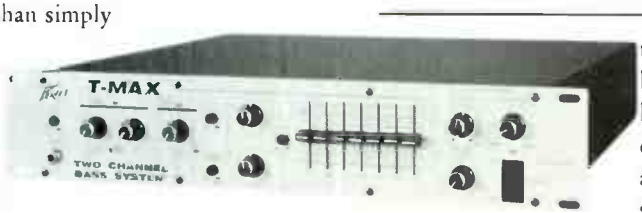
The evolution of the bass itself has played a role as well. Unlike the days when practically every bassist alive used a Fender, today there's a galaxy of basses ranging from vintage instruments to high-tech axes from Conklin, Pedulla, Zon, Peavey and others. Onboard active electronics, a wider frequency range (low B strings, high C and F strings), the demand for ultra-high fidelity, and the use of digital effects are contributing factors. To deal with this expanded range of input signals, amp designers often include a preamp gain control. And, as often as not, the player abuses it to goose more grunt out of the amp.

Refrigerator-sized bass rigs have littered stages for almost three decades. Some of the classic howitzers of the '60s included Acoustic's 360, Sunn's 2000S and Coliseum, and Ampeg's SVT. All weighed in with at least 200 watts and were certainly intended to do more than simply keep the bass' volume on a par with that of a clarinet. But compared with today's amps, they weren't nearly as loud.

A multitude of recent bass amps include beefy, high-fidelity power amp circuitry—sometimes using big, old-style tubes, but more often solid-state MOSFET electronics capable of previously unheard-of wattages. Gallien-Krueger makes the 500-watt-per-channel 2000RB ($1699) that produces 1000 watts bridged to mono. Marshall's Dynamic Bass System 7400 ($1799) pumps out 400 watts and uses a secondary power supply to create 4000-watt peaks. Numerous late-model amps produce 300 watts or more of pure, clean firepower, including Peavey's T-Max ($729), Fender's Rumble Bass ($1999), SWR's SM-900 ($1799), Ampeg's SVT II ($2000), Krossroad's K500 ($795), Trace Elliot's V-Type ($1799) and a host of others. Unlike the questionable wattage claims of 20 years ago—usually calculated by marketing departments—current power ratings tend to be *conservative*.

Fender's Rumble Bass stack

The extra power is only enhanced by the limiters now built into many amps. Without a limiter, if you slap a note with the volume up, you run the risk of exceeding the amp's headroom and distorting. But turning down also reduces the volume of non-slapped notes, making them too quiet. A limiter keeps the preamp gain from exceeding a certain threshold, making it possible to keep the overall volume high and the sound distortion-free whether notes are slapped or not.



Peavey's T-Max head

Speakers have also evolved to keep up with the increasing wattages and broad-based inputs. Simple paper-coned speakers have given way to sturdier technologies. For example, cabinets from Hartke and Bullfrog use aluminum-cone speakers to withstand snaps and slaps without ripping themselves apart. Other manufacturers impregnate paper cones with

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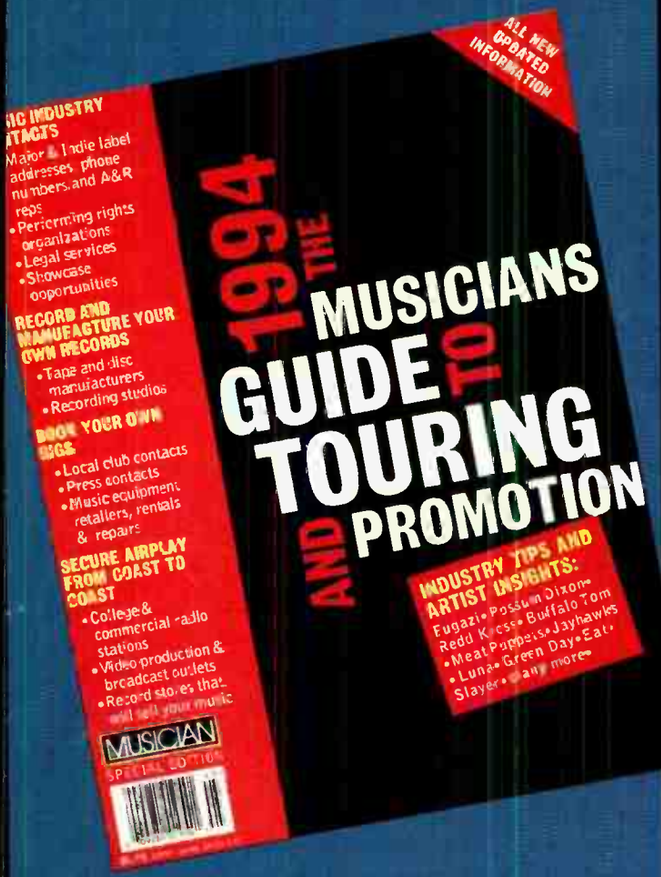

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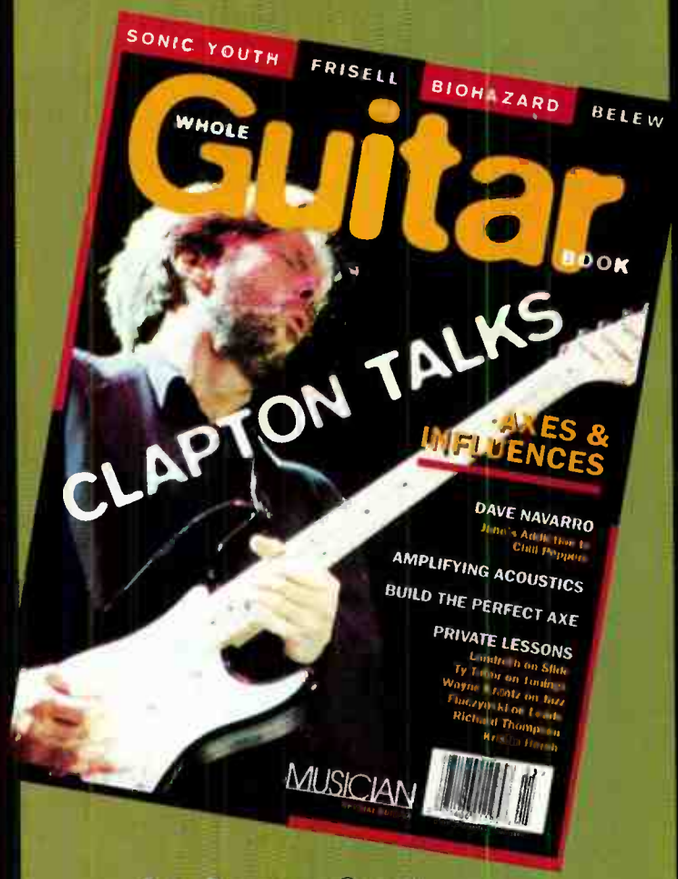

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DTGBC5-2

Kevlar—the same synthetic employed in bulletproof vests—in order to fortify their power-handling capabilities. Not only are they able to withstand punishing power, they're extremely efficient, too, making bass systems louder still.

Big rigs tend to make big sounds, but these days you don't need a massive stack to get head crushing volume. Only ten years ago it was uncommon to see a bass combo amp with more than 100 watts. Now you can choose from SWR's 320-watt Silverado ($1299), Warwick's 300-watt C3048 XT ($1999) and Fender's 300-watt BXR 300C ($759). Small enough to toss into the back seat of most cars, these monsters pack a hair-raising wallop that makes them as viable onstage as in the rehearsal room.

Do bass players really need so much power? "Need" probably isn't the right word; most bassists *yearn* to feel that rumbling bottom. According to Tony Moscal of Ampeg, Van Halen bassist Michael Anthony shares the stage with 13 SVT heads and an equal number of 8×10 speaker cabinets—that's 3900 watts directed primarily toward his own gratification. "Sure, it isn't necessary for the audience," Moscal admits, "because the P.A. delivers the whole mix at huge levels. But Michael says he plays differently when he can really feel it."

There's no denying the excitement that comes from being blasted by hundreds of decibels, an adrenaline rush to which musicians quickly become addicted. And, of course, it's necessary to keep up with the guitarist or keyboardist across the stage. SWR's Steve Rabe explains the "arms race" that is at least partially responsible for bigger, brawnier bass gear: "As guitarists have used more overdriven sounds with heavy distortion, bass amps have had to become louder. To keep up with equal volume you need three or four times as much power."

Whether it's healthy, or even sensible, to use hundreds or thousands of watts seems to be a non-issue among manufacturers and players alike. It's like driving a Ferrari: It's built to go 200 miles per hour, but the speed limit is 55. What you do with the headroom is your business. And in a musical environment often propelled by youth, testosterone and sweat—and one in which bass amp sales are higher than ever—no one is about to say it's time to turn the volume down.

◆ **Ampeg** c/o St. Louis Music, 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63133; voice (314) 727-4512, fax (314) 727-8929. ◆ **Fender**, 7975 N. Hayden Rd., Suite C-100, Scottsdale, AZ 85258; voice (602) 596-9690, fax (602) 596-1386. ◆ **Gallien-Krueger**, 2240 Paragon Dr., San Jose, CA 95131-1306; voice (408) 441-7970, fax (408) 441-8085. ◆ **Krossroad**, 707 N. Highland, Chanute, KS 66720; voice (316) 431-6625, fax (316) 431-2041. ◆ **Marshall** c/o Korg, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590; voice (516) 333-9100, fax (516) 333-9108. ◆ **Peavey**, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301; voice (601) 483-5365, fax (601) 486-1172. ◆ **SWR**, 12823 Foothill Blvd., Unit B, Sylmar, CA 91342; voice (818) 898-3355, fax (818) 898-3365. ◆ **Trace Elliot** c/o Kaman, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002; voice, (203) 243-7941, fax (203) 243-7102. ◆ **Warwick**, 5427 Hollister Ave., Santa Barbara, CA 93111-2345; voice (805) 964-9610, fax (805) 964-9749.

[*cont'd from page 60*] that you're plugged in. With all of the control this trio provides, you can do as much damage as good if you're not careful. Over-boosting the highs will magnify any hiss from an active pickup, for instance. But for flexibility and easy operation in a super-portable rig, the Trace units stand out.

Many plugged-in acoustic players prefer the combination of a microphone and a piezo pickup. Even in studio situations, where top-quality mikes can be applied in a controlled environment, acoustic/electrics such as Ovation's often sound more natural when a large part of the sound comes from the onboard piezo.

The single-rackspace Rane AP 13 ($549) lends itself to this approach. It offers two inputs optimized for microphone pickups such as the AKG C407, Countryman Isomax II and Sony ECM-55. However, the inputs are suited to just about any source including mag pickups and outboard preamps; switchable phantom power is available for driving condenser mikes.

The AP 13's feature set obviates the need for a fancy mixer. Each input has its own LED overload indicator, gain, phase inversion, low-frequency filter (adjustable between 15Hz and 250Hz), seven-band graphic EQ, and panning. With so many features, front-panel real estate is at a premium, so perhaps it's not surprising—though it is odd—that both inputs must be connected via a single quarter-inch TRS (tip-ring-sleeve) jack. You'll need to buy or build an adapter for whatever two sources you use.

Input/output options are equally extensive. There's a stereo effect loop (intended for chorus, delay, reverb and the like), a pair of inserts (for compressors) and a pair of auxiliary inputs intended for an external stereo source such as a drum machine or DAT player. An XLR output sends a balanced mike-level signal, while a TRS output delivers a balanced line-level signal; both can be used simultaneously. For silent practice there's a headphone jack and mute switch.

Clean-sounding and flexible, the AP 13 makes an excellent front end for a mid-sized to large rig. In a three-space rack you might carry this unit, a top-drawer multieffect and a compressor (such as Rane's own split-band DC-24), feeding a stereo or mono signal directly to the house. If your gigging schedule and wallet warrant such a serious, portable system, the AP 13 is well worth considering.

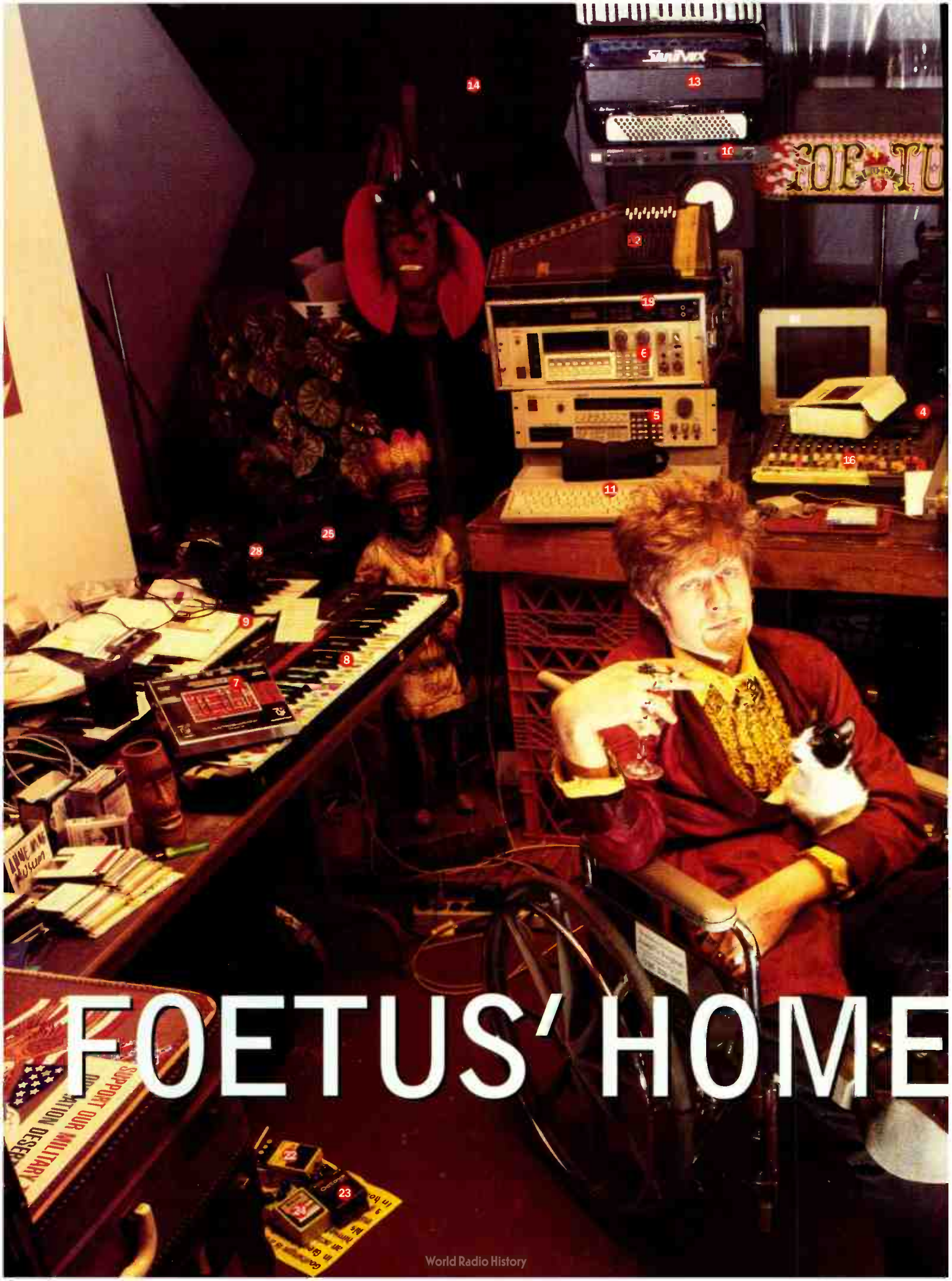
If this sounds appealing but you aren't the tweaky type, check out the Korg G2 ($425), a programmable stereo multieffect pedal. Effects include limiting, EQ, exciter, 12-string simulation, chorus, delay and reverb. Also onboard: a notch filter to conquer feedback and a highly visible chromatic tuner, plus a volume pedal hookup and a headphone jack. Power is supplied by a 9v wall wart.

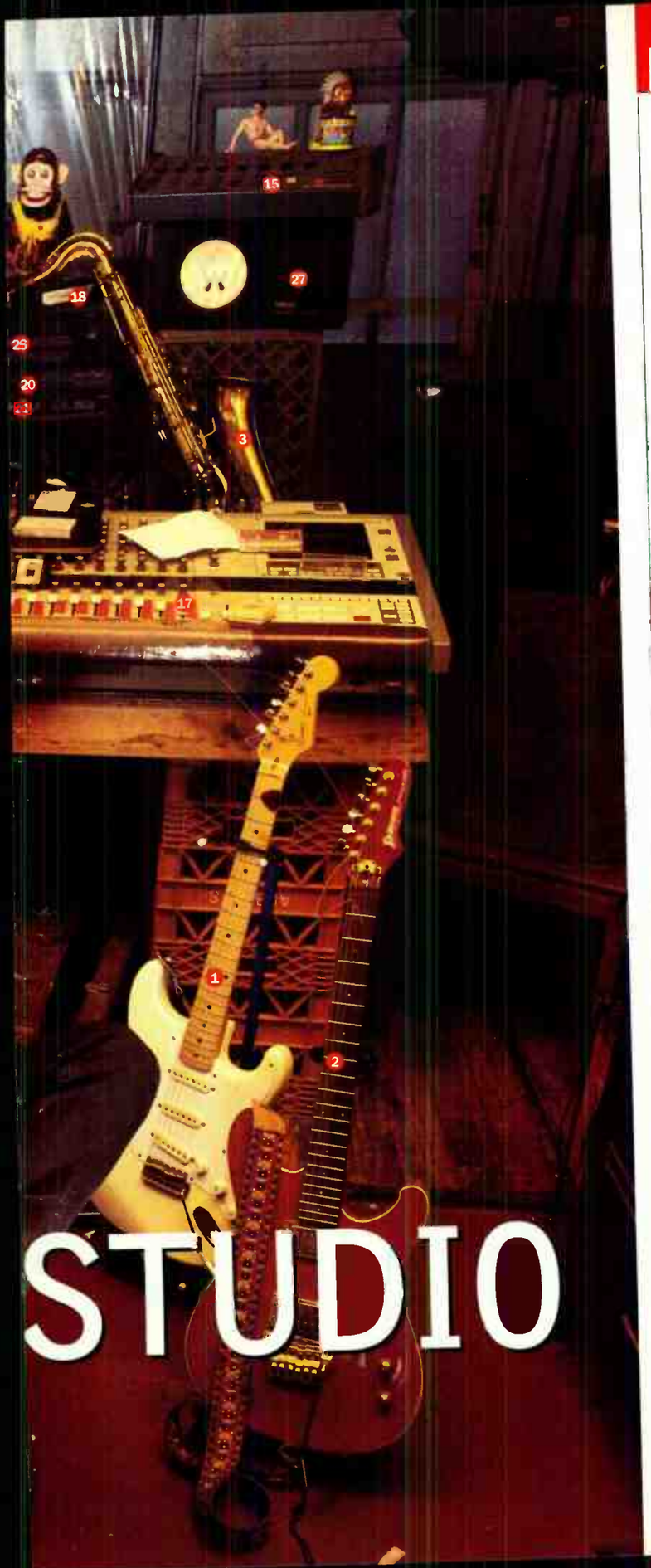
In addition to compactness, the G2's strength is ease of operation. Nine programmable presets are grouped into three banks, accessible via footswitch. (Colored LEDs tell you which bank/effect is active—less functional than an alphanumeric display, but less expensive and it gets the job done.) Editing this unit's sound is not a fine art; functions that would normally be distributed among several knobs are boiled down into one. For instance, rotating the "mod/time" knob takes you on a journey through three effects starting with chorus (modulation depth increases as you turn), modulated delay (again, depth increases) and slap-back delay (delay level increases). If that seems primitive, it has advantages for those who want to make general changes quickly—exactly the type of user this box should appeal to.

The G2 excels at processed sounds rather than natural acoustic tones. The 12-string simulation, for example, is great for cutting through a dense rock mix. The reverb is adequate, though it sounds somewhat metallic compared with higher-priced processors. All told, an economical and utilitarian unit.

Clearly manufacturers have plugged into the fact that the current acoustic boom is more than an MTV-driven fad. In fact, it is—and long has been—a major undercurrent in contemporary music. The expanding array of high-quality, sensibly designed acoustic support products is long overdue, and bound to bolster acoustic performance among musicians of all stripes.

◆ **Korg**, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590; voice (516) 333-9100, fax (516) 333-9108. ◆ **Rane**, 10802 47th Ave. W., Mukilteo, WA 98275-5098; voice (206) 355-6000, fax (206) 347-7757. ◆ **Trace Elliot** c/o Kaman, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002; voice, (203) 243-7941, fax (203) 243-7102.





STUDIO

FAST FORWARD

"MY LOFT is my greatest work of art," says Jim Thirlwell, a.k.a. Foetus, referring to the kitsch palace he has fashioned on the Brooklyn side of New York's Manhattan Bridge, across the street from a bleak cemetery of public housing projects. "It reflects my aesthetics and my life—especially one aspect that I'm not too proud of: the fact that it's totally filthy."

Pleasantly cluttered would be a more apt description, one that also fits the Australian industrial-rock producer's schedule. Having most recently finished his umpteenth LP plus a new EP, titled *Gash* and *Null* respectively, Foetus was in between a Times Square album-cover photo shoot and remixing a stray Pop Will Eat Itself single when we ventured into his home studio. This is where he does all of his pre-production work and even the occasional album.

"I hate people assuming that all my music is samples," he complains, pointing out that he is conversant in jazz and classical music as well as layers of crunching guitars. "I play guitar (a **Fender Squire** 1 and **Ibanez Roadstar II** 2), drums, violin and horn (namely a **Dearman** alto sax 3). Whatever I need, I learn. Sampling is just another piece in the jigsaw." Nevertheless, the heart of his rig is a trio of samplers that are fed by a **Sony DiscMan** 4 or a **Shure SM-57** mike: an **Akai S900** 5 and **S1000** 6 plus an **Electro-Harmonix Super Replay** 7—one of the first-ever sampling devices. Other sounds are generated by **Kawai K1** 8, **Roland JX-3P** 9 and **E-mu Proteus** 10 synths—sequenced using an **Atari 1040ST** computer 11 running **Steinberg Creator** software—as well as an autoharp 12 and a **SanoVox** accordion 13. He uses the large hollow wooden "X" 14—left over from a Lydia Lunch performance—for drum sounds, and he keeps his **Oberheim DX** drum machine 15 around for old times' sake.

Foetus submixes the instruments through a **Tascam M-208** eight-channel mixer 16 on their way to an **Akai 1214** 12-track tape deck 17 and **Casio DA-2** DAT 18. Effects are supplied by a **Yamaha SPX900** 19 and **SPX90** 20 and a **DigiTech Time Machine 7.6** delay 21, and by a batch of ancient stomp boxes: **Boss Turbo Overdrive** 22 ("I lean on it a lot," he says, "sometimes for drums or vocals"), **Boss Octave** 23, **ProCo Rat, Ibanez Sonic Distortion** 24, **Crybaby Super Wah** 25 and **Vox Super Phase**. He dubs his DAT mixes to a **Denon DM M10 HR** cassette 26 from which a **Ramsa WP-9055** power amp pumps them through **Yamaha NS-10M** monitors 27 or **AKG K141-2** headphones 28.

"I heard a quote once, 'a studio grows until it dies,'" Thirlwell says philosophically. As he tries to live up to that dictum, his studio constantly vacillates between one condition and the other: "I blow things up all the time."

BY NATHAN BRACKETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH CULTICE

C.J. CHENIER AND THE Red Hot LOUISIANA BAND

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Crimson Rex Redux

KING CRIMSON
Thrak
(VIRGIN)

THEY'RE BACK, CREEPING AND BOUNDING AND thrashing and insinuating, with that special endearing quality all their own. King Crimson is one of those bands with a seemingly renewable life force, having spanned over a quarter of a century thus far in various line-ups. While it's been a decade since Robert Fripp and gang have been officially active, their return comes as no real surprise. What is surprising is the new lean, mean machine of a band, a symmetrical sextet that includes Fripp and Adrian Belew on guitar, stick player Trey Gunn, bassist Tony Levin and drummers Bill Bruford and Pat Mastelotto. It's a big, happy, ornery family.

Where once they sang of "cyclothymic moods" and traversed other abstruse terrain, on the tellingly bluntly titled album *Thrak* they come out swinging, with pummeling toms and dogmatically dirty guitars. And so it goes, with one-syllable and/or one-word titles like "Dinosaur," "People," "Sex" and variations on "Vroom." At once primal and cerebral, this is brainiac rock for those with strange urgings at other points in the body. "Vroom," for instance, is all guttural riffing based on the idea of simultaneously ascending and descending chromatic chord progressions, but headbangers need use their heads for nothing more than, well, banging.

The fact is, King Crimson, in this post-'80s incarnation, is a heady hoot, for much the same reasons that it's a rickety vehicle. Somewhere in the gulf between Fripp and Belew and the other players from either side of the Atlantic, a magical friction is created. Friction, in this case, produces heat. To indulge the workable stereotype, Fripp brings his sit-down British deliberateness and broad intellectual palette to the party, while the all-American Belew goes more for the goofy notes and tones, and isn't afraid to unleash his pop wits.

Belew's lovable art-pop flair arrives with "Dinosaur" ("I'm a dinosaur/Somebody is digging my bones"), which may refer both to life as middle-aged rock stars and paleontology. "People" has an angular, Police-y feel, while the John Lennon–esque "Sex" issues its cynical pragmatist's mock-mantra. "Sex, sleep, eat, drink, dream," before plunging into a turbulent pool of anarchic thrashing (thrakking?). Which is not to say that pop songs are the meat of *Thrak*'s matter. It's primarily an instrumental affair.

Thrak is full of prickly textures, clench-fisted chords delivered with Glenn Branca–esque intensity, and tough attitudes more than prissy prog-rock notions. It's an expressionistic sonic landscape made by a guitar-based band, in which the drummers up the metric ante with fool-the-ear tactics—neatly meshed polyrhythms and oddly placed snare hits making the time signatures sound odder than they really are.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EBET ROBERTS

from Patton's other group Mr. Bungle, was tapped to be Martin's workmanlike replacement on *King for a Day*, but unfortunately he's all too often relegated to boilerplating Big Jim's trademark Captain Crunch chords. As if this weren't enough, some of the songs on *King for a Day* are simply bad, especially the first two ("Get Out" and "Ricochet") and the last two ("The Last to Know" and "Just a Man"). Then again, the ten songs in between offer plenty of highlights for the faithful (the hyper-performance thrash of "Cuckoo for Caca," "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies" and "What a Day"), as well as enough surprising sentiment to lasso a few new cynics (the obscene big-band funk metal of "Star A.D.," the wonderful piano ballad "Take This Bottle" and evil Eaglesy Cali-rock of "Caralho Voador"). For their sake I hope the album gets a second chance and wind if the kids don't take to the first single, "Digging the Grace," a seemingly simultaneous parody of both themselves and Nirvana. Most likely no one'll get it, but they should be used to that by now.

—Bob Mack

SHABBA RANKS

A Mi Shabba

(EPIC)

IT'S BEEN FOUR YEARS SINCE INTERNATIONAL star Shabba Ranks released his breakthrough album *As Raw as Ever*, which opened the gates to the tough U.S. market for Jamaican dancehall artists. Though he's been doing his thing ever since, inscribing his throaty holler on numerous seven-inch singles back home, the only other releases he's dropped stateside are *Rough & Ready* Vols. 1 and 2 and *Extra Naked*, both of which include previously released tracks. Now, with competition close on his heels and an audience more accustomed to dancehall, all eyes and ears are trained on *A Mi Shabba*.

From the jump, you can tell a fresh wind is blowing in for Ranks, as singer Mykal Rose of Black Uhuru lends his sweet harmonies to a cover of the Uhuru roots classic "Shine Eye Gal." Shabba also reworks the Heptones popular "Fatty Fatty" to nice effect, using a hip-hop beat and the legendary Leroy Sibbles singing lead. One of the first yardies to dabble in hip-hop, Shabba continues to reach out to the rap audience with streetwise jams like "Original Woman," which borrows from Jeru the Damaja's "Come Clean," and "Rough Life," which uses the smooth horn riff from Redman's "Tonight's the Night."

On the latter, Shabba says, "I live for the street and I die for the street," but that doesn't mean he's forgotten about the ladies. "Let's Get It On" is some straight-up R&B for the after-hours scene—you knew Shabba wasn't going to let you get away without some good loving. Also, dancehall diva Patra teams up with Mr. Loverman on "Ice Cream Love." Shabba knows what the people want, and by bringing a little something for everyone, he does not disappoint. —S.H. Fernando Jr.

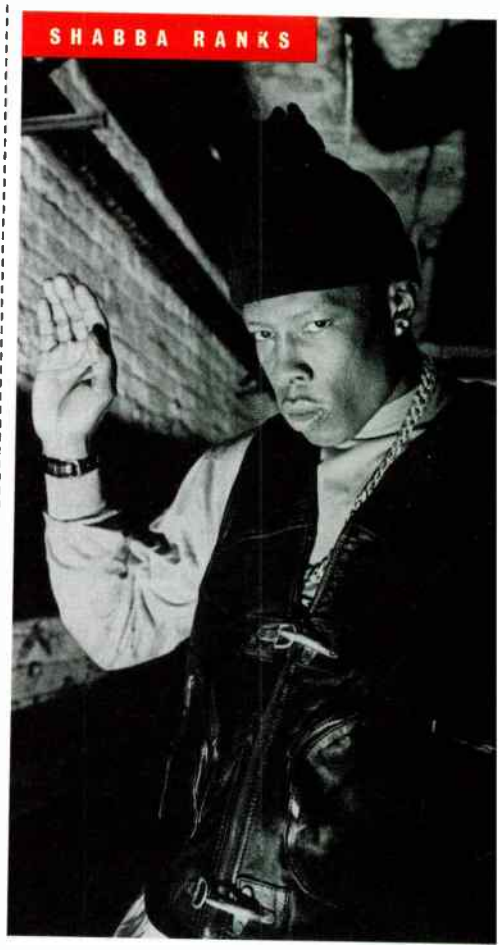
COLIN BELL

ELASTICA

Elastica

(DGC)

ELASTICA HAS BUZZ APLENTY TO live up to, having teased seekers of perfect pop, pure punk and ripping rock 'n' roll with some notably potent singles and EPs. Fortunately, the British quartet's self-titled debut (which includes most of the previously released stuff) fully delivers on their early promise. With just the right mix of smile and snarl, Elastica unleashes 16 frighteningly catchy tunes in just over 40 minutes. Vocalist/guitarist Justine Frischmann, who founded the group after a stint as a guitarist with the London Suede, is a versatile writer whose songs are as melodic as they are direct, explosive as they are concise. Whether she's expressing warm-bedded apathy ("Waking Up") or cold-eyed lust ("Hold Me Now"), Elastica's mix of sly songcraft and dazzling slop is an energizing wonder to behold.



On bristling winners like "Line Up," "Smile" and "See That Animal" (the latter featuring lyrics by Brett Anderson), Frischmann and guitarist Donna Matthews create thick swirls of propulsive sound, and then blend their voices to set candied harmonies atop the excitement. Annie Holland wields the meanest-sounding bass since J.J. Burnel, and drummer Justin Welch, mostly given to tasteful walloping, can create some phenomenally large beats when he needs to ("S.O.F.T.").

The band has range—"Indian Song" is an ashram-rocker and "Blue" begins gently with the purtiest of intros—but mostly what Elastica offers is perfectly punked-up pop-rock. They keep the tunes short and sharp. They keep the guitars cranked and the vocals sweet. And what they've ended up with is a record that's smart, fierce, alluring and entirely satisfying. —Chuck Crisafulli

THE JAYHAWKS

Tomorrow the Green Grass

(AMERICAN RECORDINGS)

SOME 20 YEARS AGO THE JAYHAWKS' MARK Olson and Gary Louris would've been two

Southern California songwriters struggling to get a record deal or perhaps have their country-rock songs covered by Linda Ronstadt or Valerie Carter. As it is, these Minnesotans arrive in an unusual age, a time when many Americans would rather look backwards than ahead. But when nostalgia is handled this eloquently and with such craft it's welcome.

Sporting Everlyish harmonies, gorgeous melodies and a sure command of that early-'70s SoCal sound (stinging guitars, flatly recorded drums, billowing strings), the Jayhawks closely resemble the Flying Burrito Brothers or early Poco with a soulful dab of Tracy Nelson's Mother Earth. With spooky expertise, they reclaim the country influence on rock that was so prevalent then somehow got washed away into the slickness of modern Nashville.

When they hit their stride the quartet is masterful, pumping out a heartbreaking ballad on "Two Hearts" (an oddball chorus of "iee, iee, iee, I'm lonely" works like a charm), a galloping-horse tempo of a hit with "I'd Run Away," or extracting a joyous, shake-the-shit-off-your-boots rocker on "Real Light." These songs contain moments of reflection and intimate sing-along hooks, just the kind of stuff that pervaded early FM "alternative" radio of yesteryear. And even when the Jayhawks turn plaintively maudlin ("See Him on the Streets") or way overshoot their mark ("Ten Little Kids"), their quirky taste saves them, surfacing in a sprightly cover of Mark Farner's old dud, "Bad Time."

As to the meaning of *Tomorrow the Green Grass*, who knows? Why bother with thoughts of tomorrow when yesterday is this sumptuous.

—Ken Micallef

MORPHINE

Yes

(RYKODISC)

IT'S EASY TO DEVELOP A BLEAK OUTLOOK as the millennium's drapes are drawn, and Morphine understands the way modern anxiety can become treacherous. "Swim for the shore just as fast as you're able/Swim like a motherfucker," urges singer Mark Sandman on "Sharks Patrol These Waters." He delivers the line emphatically enough to convince you a great white's already got our collective balls. It's evocative as hell; the band has become adept at depicting the menace it somewhat romanticizes. Maybe that's why one of their shadowy tunes recently closed an episode of TV's "Homicide."

ET CETERA

ROBYN HITCHCOCK & THE EGYPTIANS

Fegmania!

ROBYN HITCHCOCK

Eye

FRANK ZAPPA

Civilization Phaze III

SMALL FACTORY

For If You Cannot Fly

SON OF SLAM

Trailer Parks, Politics and God

It's evocative as hell; the band has become adept at depicting the menace it somewhat romanticizes. Maybe that's why one of their shadowy tunes recently closed an episode of TV's "Homicide."

The Boston trio's third disc amplifies their trenchcoat take on rock 'n' roll, a take that has chiseled a place for itself even though it's threaded with anachronisms and prone to contradiction. Morphine makes music to lurk by—check how sinister "Whisper" is—but it loves to honk the hell out of itself when cures for pain don't do their job. At its best—and piercing moments line *Yes*'s dank hallways—the band bridges the emotional gap between John Lee Hooker's moaning stealth and Last Exit's frenzied abstraction.

Theater helps convince. Now that the oddity of the sax-bass-drum construct is three discs old, it's down to Sandman to signify the discrete vibe of Morphine's cool tension. On "The Jury," he elicits Kafkaesque declamation. "Free Love" finds him spouting carnal growls and pillow talk, a Nick Cave who came through Sugarboy Crawford instead of Patti Smith. When Dana Colley's baritone goes momentarily apeshit, the singer's emotional lingo is italicized.

Early on, I hoped some wiseass DJ would segue the Bonzo Dog Band's "Big Shot" into a Morphine tune. The trio's stylistic clichés would crumble, their limitations would loom. But the hard-boiled tinge of noir's heyday has become fairly appropriate for the times, and *Yes*'s resonance comes from the way it not only emphasizes, but revels in, the sexy side of modern dread.

—Jim Macnie

ALBERTO TOLOT

THE MUFFS

Blonder and Blonder

(REPRISE)

ALL

Pummel

(INTERSCOPE)

IF THE COMMERCIAL SUCCESS OF Green Day and the Offspring seems like a positive development now, just wait. Soon, every clueless band with an attitude will land a deal, as even more clueless record labels rush to join the punk-pop party. But before the stampede gets really embarrassing, the Muffs and All have paid sufficient dues to merit more respectful consideration. Both crank out entertaining noise, even though neither crafts consistently strong songs.

Fronted by Pandoras alumna Kim Shattuck, the Muffs take a sentimental journey to the late '70s, with soaring, tangy anthems guaranteed to send old-timers to their Buzzcocks 45s. In classic singles-artist fashion, she employs enough interesting moves for a killer two minutes; stretched over 14 tracks, the tricks wear thin. Shattuck punctuates her bratty, androgynous vocals with a petulant howl that's initially thrilling, but becomes a bad habit when used repeatedly, regardless of context. And don't even try to distinguish one careening epic from another, 'cause monochrome textures are the point. Hey, it worked for the Ramones.

Thanks to plenty of energy and a genuine affection for the classics, *Blonder and Blonder* seems more benign than crass. Next time, Shattuck should take a cue from the rougher, less predictable "Red Eyed Troll," which proves there's more than one way to say, "I'm okay, you suck."

Dating back to '78 (in their incarnation as the Descendants), All enter the major-label pipeline for the first time brandishing serious commercial potential. A handful of ratty throwaways, including the ugly "Stalker" and "On Foot," a hilarious saga of a worn-out car, preserve a punkier vibe, but crossover dreams set the agenda on *Pummel*.

Just as Soul Asylum and Bad Religion modified their strengths to enhance mass appeal, these frisky lads uncork irresistible, high-octane tunes like "Million Bucks" and "Breakin' Up," wrapping old-fashioned love ditties in an exhilarating racket. Singer Chad Price walks the line between cornball sentimentality and cool-jerk posturing with husky, impassioned testifyin'. Only on slower tunes such as "Broken," where self-pity erupts, does the strategy backfire. But don't be surprised if All have the last laugh, one way or another: With a tasteful arrangement, "Long Distance" could be the next Boys II Men smash.

—Jon Young

ARCHERS OF LOAF

Vee Vee

(ALIAS)

THE ARCHERS OF LOAF ARE A TWO GUITARS-BASS-DRUMS outfit from that noted college rock haven, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I saw them play a club in Boston last fall, and was struck by the charisma of their bassist, Matt Gentling. Throughout the show, he and his ridiculously low-slung instrument hurtled around the stage, struggling for supremacy. How long was it before the bass sailed through the air? Surprisingly, not until the second song of the set. Gentling also came to the mike to offer inane patter at a speed that suggested severe caffeine addiction. Examples: "Thanks for coming out on the Sabbath to listen to the Devil's music," "Drink more beer! It'll sound better," and my personal favorite, "I'm gonna keep saying shit all night."

Amusing as these antics were, they diverted attention from the music. That didn't seem a problem at the time, because the music sounded like generic alternageek. But now, after hearing the Archers' second full-length album, I wish I'd listened harder. *Vee Vee* may not be perfect, but it's loaded with attractive ideas, especially on the guitaristic front. Plectrists Eric Johnson and Eric Bachman (who also contributes raw-throated vocals) have a Sonic Youth–like affection for the sound of two guitars out of tune with each other. They're also skilled at twisting noises—feedback, fret buzz, behind-the-nut picking—into undeniable hooks. Clean in the center but fuzzy around the edges, Johnson's and Bachman's guitars make an inspired match for mid-tempo dirges like "Floating Friends" and "Let the Loser Melt," which resound with strange majesty.

The Archers are at their most effective on such slow-burning numbers, but they also handle the aggressive "Harnessed in Slums" and the biting pop of "Death in the Park" with aplomb. If you like witty cultural statements, check out "Greatest of All Time," which describes the trial and execution of "the frontman of the world's worst rock 'n' roll band." Toward the end, Bachman sings, "The underground is overcrowded." True enough. But on the basis of *Vee Vee*, it's safe to assume the Archers of Loaf won't be contributing to that overcrowding for long. There's space for them upstairs.

—Mac Randall

TODD SNIDER

Songs for the Daily Planet

(MCA/MARGARITAVILLE)

DESPITE THE HOMOGENIZING INFLUENCE of country radio, Nashville remains a mecca for the lyrically obtuse, obscure and talented. So while Todd Snider could have drifted a bit further north from his Oregonian origins and wound up making this record in Seattle, it's just as well he did it in Nashville, where they know how to mix vocals to make them intelligible.

Snider's freshman outing offers a traditional

the usual cast of grifters and road jockeys. The musical styles flit from barroom country to SoCal period rock, but remain close to the median, mandolins and distorted slide guitars side by side in an approach well defined by Hiatt and Mellencamp.

Snider's lyrical cleverness constantly flirts with his ability to take an idea and develop it. "That Was Me" and "I Spoke as a Child" are intimate, pithy self-examinations. But when he takes on larger themes, the Generation X proclivity to refer to the previous generation for both culpability and context manifests itself. "My Generation" opens with a take on the Who's song of that name and quickly launches into a two-stepper that alternately indicts and

SHORT TAKES

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

TRICKY
Maxinquaye

MOST DANCE MUSIC is about momentum, but Tricky puts its emphasis on depth. It's not just "bottom end," though there's plenty of bass rumbling through these subterranean grooves, but the music's depth of field—the way the vocals, samples and keyboard parts arrange themselves into layers of foreground and background. As much as it owes much to the Bomb Squad's work with Public Enemy, the net effect is more like ambient music than P.E.'s in-your-face attack, as Tricky loves to play with the kind of sound we rarely hear: tape hiss, ringing phones, other people's conversation. Maybe that's why the best tracks here aren't so enveloping and otherworldly, as with the musical discomfort of "Suffocated Love," the ominous thump of "Overcome in 60 Seconds," or the chilly passion of their cover of "Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos."

TRACI LORDS
1000 Fires

LORDS ISN'T REALLY a singer—she just make out on CD. And to tell the truth, she acts about as well here as she does on "Melrose Place."

LINDA RONSTADT
Feels Like Home

A HOMECOMING in more ways than one, this album returns Ronstadt to the SoCal country rock that built her reputation. Admittedly, the topography has changed with time—there's as much synth as pedal steel, and more lush contours than rough edges—but the spirit is unaltered. So not only does she star through her bluegrass recast of Tom Petty's "The Waiting" and the trio-harmony take on Neil Young's "After the Gold Rush," but she pulls real beauty from the nostalgic sentiment of "Love's Return."

JAMIROQUAI
Return of the Space Cowboy

Sounded as if it fell out of the same time-warp as the new Brady Bunch, Jamiroquai sounds like the bastard spawn of Stevie Wonder and Mandrill with its vintage keyboards, jazzy harmonies and fondness for rambling, jam-oriented arrangements. Viewed from the lyric sheet, it all seems pretty silly, particularly given singer Jay Kay's fondness for mystical muck. But coming out of the speakers, it makes a lot of sense, in part due to the ultra-vitality of the rhythm section, but mostly because of the way the band's sense of free play never compromises the music's melodic integrity.

MARK O'CONNOR
The Fiddle Concerto

BECAUSE THERE hasn't really been much in the way of country/classical crossover since Copland's *Rodeo*, the notion of Nashville's reigning MVP writing symphonic music seems more than a little unlikely. But O'Connor's concerto is neither artistic indulgence nor novelty number; not only does he approach the piece's thematic development with admirable vigor and a solid, nineteenth-century sense of harmonic logic, but his fiddling seems equally at home with both flash and bluegrass. Add in the spirited "Quartet for Violin, Viola, Cello and Doublebass," and O'Connor may have you thinking that he's an even better writer than player.

102	4/87	Robert Cray, Los Lobos, Simply Red
104	6/87	Springsteen, The Blasters, Keith Jarrett
112	2/88	McCartney, Stanley Clarke, Buster Poindexter
113	3/88	Robert Plant, INXS, Wynton Marsalis
115	5/88	Stevie Wonder, Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash
116	6/88	Sinead O'Connor, Neil Young, Tracy Chapman
118	8/88	Pink Floyd, New Order, Smithereens
119	9/88	ZZ Top, Carlos Santana/Wayne Shorter, Vernon Reid
120	10/88	Keith Richards, Crowded House, Depeche Mode
121	11/88	Prince, Steve Winwood, Randy Newman
122	12/88	Guns N' Roses, Midnight Oil, Glyn Johns
123	1/89	Year in Music '88, Metallica, Jack Bruce, Fishbone
125	3/89	Elvis Costello, Jeff Healey, Sonic Youth
126	4/89	Lou Reed, John Cale, Joe Satriani
128	6/89	Peter Gabriel, Charles Mingus, Husker Du
129	7/89	The Who, The Cure, Ziggy Marley
131	9/89	Jeff Beck, Laura Nyro, Billy Sheehan
133	11/89	The '80s, Daniel Lanois, Syd Straw
135	1/90	Aerosmith, NRBQ, Richard Thompson
137	3/90	George Harrison, The Kinks, Abdullah Ibrahim
138	4/90	Tom Petty, Lenny Kravitz, Rush, The Silos
139	5/90	Paul McCartney, Cecil Taylor, Kronos Quartet
140	6/90	Robert Plant, Suzanne Vega, Soul II Soul, Drums
143	9/90	Steve Vai, Michael Stipe, Malmsteen/McLaughlin
144	10/90	INXS, Neville Bros., Lou Reed/Vaclav Havel
146	12/90	Slash, Replacements, Waterboys, Pixies
147	1/91	Robert Johnson, Bruce Hornsby, Soul Asylum
148	2/91	Pink Floyd, Neil Young, Art Blakey, Black Crowes
149	3/91	Jerry Garcia/Elvis Costello, NWA, Pink Floyd
150	4/91	R.E.M., Top Managers' Roundtable, AC/DC
151	5/91	Eddie Van Halen, Fishbone, Byrds, Chris Isaak
152	6/91	Stevie Ray Vaughan, Morrissey, Drum Special
153	7/91	Bonnie Raitt, Tim Buckley, Sonny Rollins
154	8/91	15th Anniversary Issue, Sting, Stevie Wonder
155	9/91	Paul McCartney, Axl Rose, David Bowie
156	10/91	Dire Straits, Jesus Jones, McCartney Part 2
157	11/91	Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, Primus, Eddy/Fogerty
158	12/91	Miles Davis, Robbie Robertson, Massive Attack
159	1/92	Megadeath, Nirvana, Earl Palmer
160	2/92	Fear of Rap, Eric Clapton
162	4/92	Def Leppard, k.d. lang, Live
163	5/92	Drugs, Booze & Creativity, Lyle Lovett, Mikes
164	6/92	Guns N' Roses, Metallica, Genesis
165	7/92	Led Zeppelin, Faith No More, T-Bone Burnett/Sam Phillips
166	8/92	David Gilmour, Robert Wyatt/Bill Nelson
167	9/92	U2, Big Guitar Special, George Harrison
168	10/92	Playing with Elvis Presley, Producer's Special
170	12/92	Roger Waters, Prince, Bob Weir
171	1/93	Best of '92: Extreme, Chili Peppers, Bobby Brown, Tom Waits
172	2/93	100 Greatest Guitarists, Paul Simon, Robben Ford
173	3/93	Mick Jagger, Hothouse Flowers, Annie Lennox
174	4/93	Neil Young/Peter Buck, Henry Rollins, Sting
175	5/93	World Party, Stevie Ray Vaughan, PJ Harvey
176	6/93	Speech/Curtis Mayfield, Soul Asylum, Chris Isaak
177	7/93	Pete Townshend, Getting Signed, Primus
178	8/93	Guitar Special, Steve Vai, Bono, Waterboys
179	9/93	Steely Dan, Belly/Breeders, Daniel Lanois
180	10/93	Nirvana, Jeff Beck, Depeche Mode, Verve
181	11/93	Pearl Jam, Counting Crows, Liz Phair, Producer's Special
182	12/93	End of the Music Business, Lemonheads, The Band
183	1/94	Flea, Bill Graham, Max Roach
184	2/94	Zappa, Jeff Buckley, Slash, DAT
185	3/94	Nine Inch Nails, Elvis Costello, Kate Bush
186	4/94	Lyle Lovett, Soundgarden, AAA Radio, Afghan Whigs
187	5/94	Counting Crows, Rickie Lee Jones/Leo Kottke, Bjork
188	6/94	Decline of English Rock, James, Perry Farrell
189	7/94	Jazz Special, Branford Marsalis, Smashing Pumpkins
SP1		Best of the Beatles and Rolling Stones

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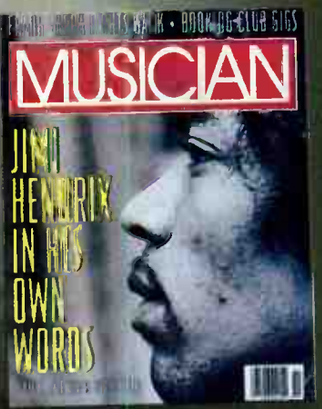

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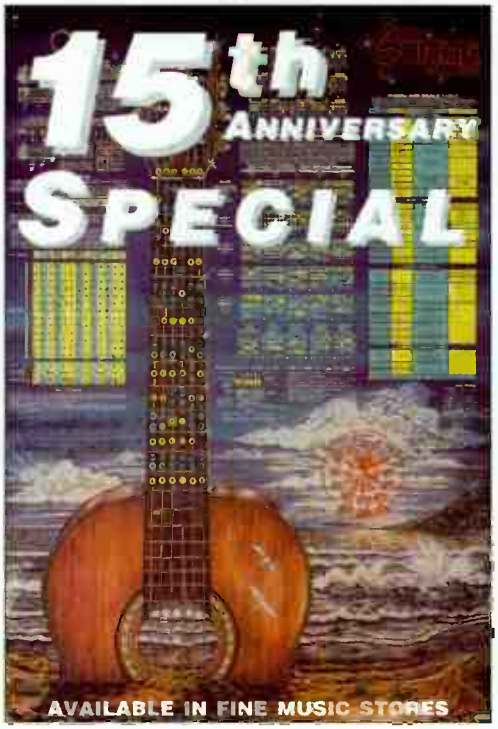

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both culpability and context manifests itself. "My Generation" opens with a take on the Who's song of that name and quickly launches into a two-stepper that alternately indicts and absolves Snider's cohorts for "...living off Dad as long as you can and blending in with the crowd/My generation should be proud." The rhymes are clever, fast and almost furious, as though Snider himself isn't sure of his stand. Similarly, "This Land Is Our Land" couches its observations on "landfills, diet pills and...oil spills" in a cultural carrying bag fashioned by Woody Guthrie.

"Alright Guy" is probably Snider's best synthesis of the clever and the intimate, and also contains the use of the word "dick" as a personal pronoun, one of several scatalogical references that seem incongruous on a Nashville record. Particularly one co-produced by Tony Brown, arguably Nashville's most influential producer. It is Brown's imprimatur on Snider's record that might get it the notice it deserves among the clutter of first records pouring out of Music City. Which actually might not be a good thing: Snider could use some time to get the generational angst out of his system. —Dan Daley

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ALBINI

[*cont'd from page 55*] look for a yes man. Find someone who truly understands the kind of music you play, who has been to your gigs, who has the same musical background, who understands your taste, so you can use the same vocabulary you would use with the rest of your bandmates, like, "We really want that Godflesh guitar sound here." If you can't use your normal vocabulary with your engineer, then he is going to misunderstand what you're trying to tell him. Find an engineer that you can communicate with comfortably, and then familiarize yourself with recordings that he has made, and talk to the bands that played on them. Ask them, did you enjoy the experience? Is he a nice guy? Was he willing to do what you wanted? Did he seem to know what he was doing? Most bands don't do enough homework when it comes time to make a recording. Really, what they're doing is carving what little history they're going to have. I think it's a very serious endeavor.

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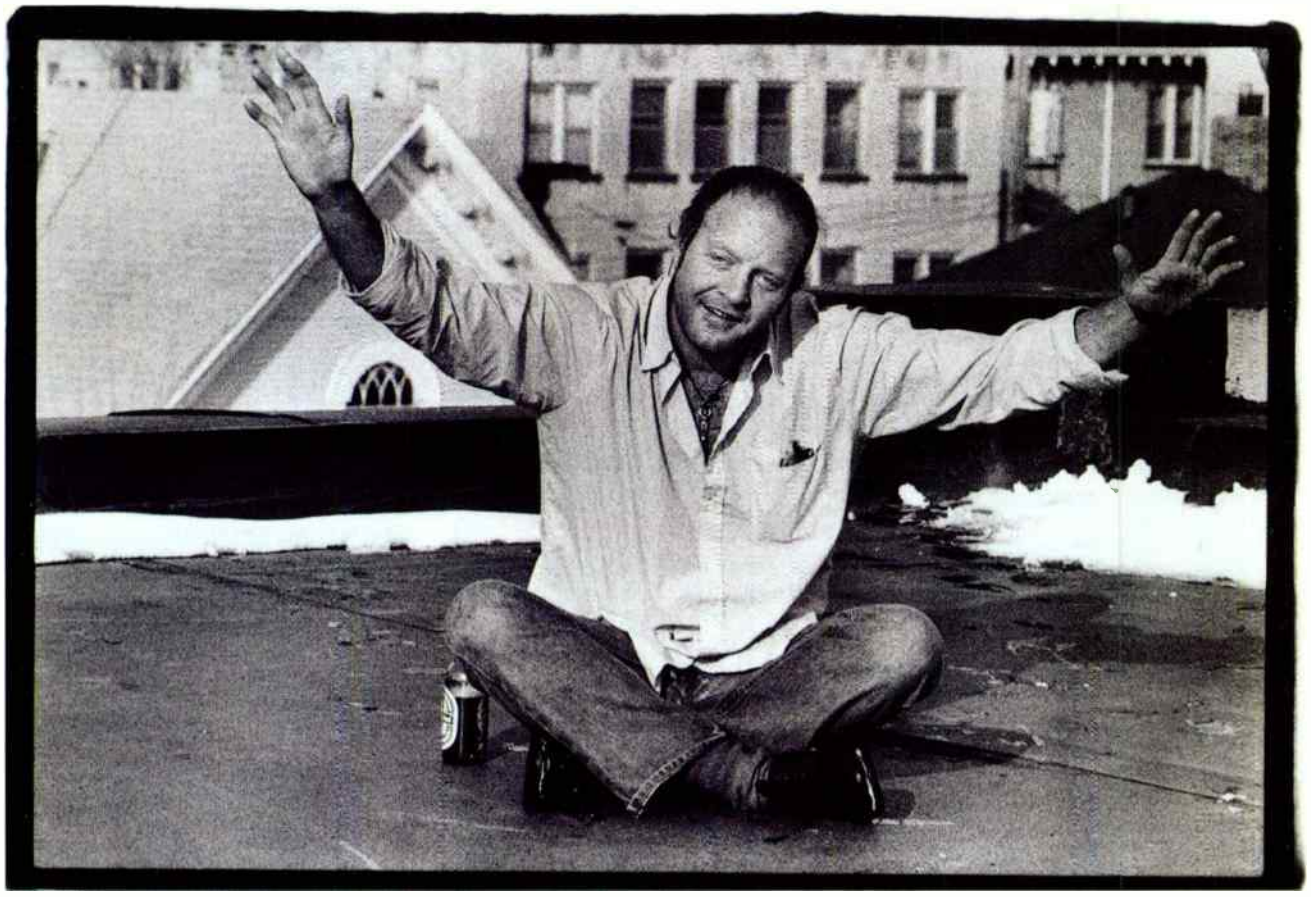

BOB STINSON, ROCK 'N' ROLL GHOST

According to the medical examiner's report, it was almost impossible to say what killed Bob Stinson. In addition to some unnamed "substance" presumably injected with the syringe found near his body on February 18, the former Replacements guitarist's death was complicated by "chemical dependency with acute and chronic alcoholism, hepatic cirrhosis, intravenous narcotism with recent opiate use, and bipolar affective disorder." A coroner's aide put it more plainly. Even though Stinson was only 35, he simply "wore his body out."

After Stinson—whose manic fusions of art rock, heavy metal and disposable '70s pop helped define the Replacements' sound over the course of five records—was fired by Paul Westerberg at the behest of their label in 1986, he spent his remaining years playing in bands that never got off the ground and cadging drinks and drugs in local bars. Apart from the occasional cooking or dishwashing job, his sole income was the modest check he received for Replacements royalties twice a year. He was married after leaving the band, had a son and got divorced; from then on, he mostly lived with family and friends, moving "from couch to couch," in the words of one, as circumstances dictated.

He remained a demi-legend on the local circuit, where he was still revered as the wild man-child of years before. No one knew quite to make of him. "He didn't have much education," said Paul Westerberg after Stinson's death, "but he would say things sometimes that were utterly poetic. He wasn't dumb, you would think he was at times, and then he'd come up with something that was just brilliant." At his funeral, a succession of friends told stories about his sense of humor and his remarkable generosity. But for every friend who cared about him, there were a dozen fans and strangers who would pay for the privilege of watching him get messed up. And Bob took full advantage of it.

During his last years Stinson's drinking and drugging helped to obscure severe mental illness. A year ago, he was diagnosed with bipolar depression, and friends say he was prone to flights of delusion. Those close to Stinson say he wanted to clean up, but add that he never managed to stay dry long enough for his medication to take effect.

In the weeks before his death he was living with a girlfriend, but his behavior eventually frightened her so much that she decided to move out. Shortly after she told him, he overdosed on sleeping pills and was taken to the hospital. Following his release, he soon landed back in custody after an episode in which he held a knife to his chest and threatened to kill himself; again, to the amazement of friends, he was quickly released. A day or so later, he was arrested for domestic assault. After being arraigned on Valentine's Day, he was released for the last time. He called a friend the night before he died. "I talked to him a little while about courage and getting his act together," she told a reporter. "But I think that maybe he went out for a walk or went up to the Uptown [Bar]. He probably just ran into someone who...you know. He just had to be the old Bob."

Stinson wrote his own best epitaph. In 1992 he called a musician he was writing songs with to say he had a new one that he needed help finishing. He brought in a single verse:

I'd usually sit around
And drink up all my dreams
Then ask for yours
I go to bed
But not to sleep
I'm just one of those things
Life can't keep

STEVE PERRY

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN CORRIGAN

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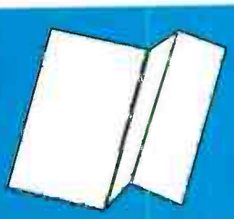

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