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MUSICIAN

SEPTEMBER 1995 \$2.95

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How Record
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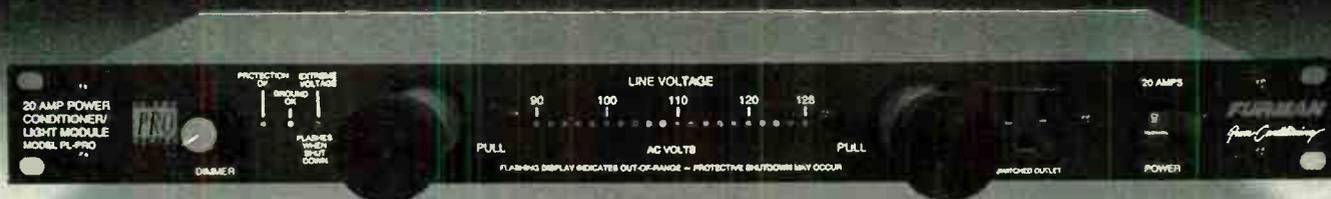


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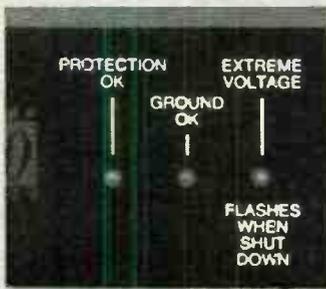
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Start playing around and you'll find that 3,100 phrases suddenly turn into a whole lot more. No one knows how many phrases are actually possible with the QY300.

You can also re-harmonize phrases and patterns in realtime according to any chords you play. This feature lets you instantly come

up with ideas for chord progressions or even entire songs. It's like inspiration on call.

Powerful Sequencer

Once you're happy with your phrases, put them all together with the QY300's extensive 16-track sequencer. There's plenty of room to lay down all your parts and arrange them just so. Then add music using the QY300's built-in mini-keyboard or an external MIDI keyboard. (The QY300 is entirely General MIDI and Standard MIDI File compatible.)

Eight pattern tracks, a chord track and a tempo track allow you to further fine tune your composition and give it a human feel. No one needs to know it started in a machine.

The QY300 also uses a mixer-type interface so you can mix your tracks with precision. Pan, add reverb and adjust track volume and tuning with the ultimate control of a digital mixer.

All The Sounds Are On Board

Because it's General MIDI, you could run your sequences on external tone generators. But one of the beauties of the QY300 is that you don't have to.

The QY300 includes 128 exceptional voices and eight drum kits created with acclaimed Yamaha AWM technology. So you could even use the QY300 as a stand-alone tone generator. It features 28 note polyphony and 24-part multi-timbrality (in song mode). It also includes a digital signal processor for applying realistic reverb and echo effects.

Follow Along Easily

If you're worried about the interface, don't. This is supposed to be fun, remember. The QY300 has a huge LCD screen that shows you everything you need to see in one glance. So whether you're in the studio, on the stage or in your own back yard, you know exactly what's happening.

And the screens aren't just big. They're helpful. The QY300 will lead you along and give you access to all the information you need as you need it.

Everything Has Its Place

No other product allows you to do nearly as much as the Yamaha QY300. In one place you have a complete music production tool, a backing band and an unlimited source of inspiration. It's so fun and easy to make great music with the QY300, you may even feel a little bit guilty about it. Nah.

Introducing the "Laptop" Version

The QY300 is small enough to take to any gig. But if you're looking for the ultimate in convenience, you'll also want the exciting new Yamaha QY22. It's a completely portable, battery powered General MIDI tone generator that gives you the same general capabilities as the QY300 in a smaller package. It's like a video game for musicians. And it's just as fun.



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FRONTMAN

You've been the subject of two recent tribute records, Mama's Hungry Eyes and Tulare Dust. What was your reaction to hearing them?

Tulare Dust surprised me. I didn't know about it until after we'd gone through the acceptance of this *Hungry Eyes* thing, which was great, you know, I was overwhelmed by *that*. But somehow the songwriters' tribute, coming from the other side of the country, having to do with different songs, and with people who chose to make their own approach rather than try to do it my way, there were some things in there that made me maybe a little more emotionally appreciative of it all.

And I discovered an artist on this tape I'd never heard before—Iris Dement—who knocked me out. I gotta say this, I didn't come 58 years to have a girl knock me out as a singer. [laughs] Girl singers are not my favorite thing in the world. But boy is she great! She's like a female Jimmy Rodgers or Lefty Frizzell or something.

You're making a record now?

We're closing in on an album that's been in the making for two, three years. It's got a little truck driver theme in it. The road life that we live is so close to that of a truck driver, which makes it easy for me to adapt.

"A Bar In Bakersfield" sound-like your dream of what could have been if you led a regular life. I get the feeling you wonder about that guy sometimes.

I know that guy. His name's Red Simpson. He probably could have been a major player in this business, but he didn't seem to want to. We never understood it. But he's smarter than we thought he was. He's lived like a millionaire for thirty years and never been worth a dime.

You decided to learn the fiddle in the middle of your career. Was that confidence, nerve or blind faith?

Well, a lot of people start out on an instrument—most people in fact—and they don't have any mark on the wall that they intend to arrive at. I knew where I wanted to go. I wanted to play the fiddle just exactly like Bob Wills did. Because I wanted that sort of fiddle in my band and I couldn't find anybody in America who could do that. So I thought, by god, I'm gonna do that and I've got seven years and here I go! I slept with it, day and night. It's amazing that I had a band and a wife, or a friend even. There's nothing more irritating than a guy trying to play fiddle.

The band seems to have provided one area of stability in your life—you've been playing with Norm Hamlet, Biff Adam, Bonnie Owens and Jimmy Belken for decades.

It's kind of like a family, and it's moving along in its last successful, top-drawer days. Which we don't know how long will last. The older guys of this crew are just enjoying this cause we know it's gotta be close to being over. I want to go like Tiny Moore did—just as I step up to the mike.

How do you literally compose a song?

There are diagrams and methods and theories that I've tried to make myself aware of. But I believe in help from the other side. I get messages

"I want to go like Tiny Moore did—just as I step up to the mike."

MERLE HAGGARD



sometimes, I believe, in the form of music. They just kind of come through me and I'm as turned on with the message as people are that I'm sings to. I don't really understand where they come from.

Then you sit with a guitar to flesh it out?

Oh no, it usually comes all at once, in a matter of 15 or 20 minutes. I'll have two or three people in the same room writing it, trying to get it before I forget it. I don't even understand what I'm saying sometimes—like Edgar Cayce. I'm asleep half the time when things start to happen. I've written some really good songs that wound up being recorded as I was headed to the stage being introduced!

Have the reasons you write, perform and sing changed over the years?

My reasons now have nothing to do with the ones I used when I was starting. I started because I wanted to keep from being on the wrong end of a pick or a shovel. I didn't have a good education. I needed to have a specialty. And it worked. And I took it for granted and mistreated it and farted it off and did all kinds of things wrong for my career—over the years I've had three or four great careers—and now I'm having to try harder because I'm older and what used to come easy now comes hard—or vice-versa, depending on what you're talking about. [laughs] Now I'm trying to stay alive. There's no reason for Merle Haggard to be alive if he doesn't sing and doesn't write. And I'm healthy. The Lord must be approving of me at this point.

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LETTERS

STONE TEMPLE

Thanks for featuring Stone Gossard (May '95). It's about time someone realized what a musical genius he is. Figures it would be you.

*Leslie Greathouse
Niagara Falls, NY*

Until I saw (sexy) Stone Gossard on the cover, I never bothered to pick up your magazine. But this time I did and I enjoyed the interview that Vic Garbarini did. I also read "Who Killed The Hair Bands?" by Alan di Perna. I always wondered whatever happened to those bands...

*Vanessa
Colorado Springs, CO*

Stone Gossard is my biggest inspiration and I'm glad he's getting the coverage he deserves. Saying that, I'd like to correct something in your piece. Green River's debut album wasn't released on Sub Pop: Their first EP, *Come On Down*, was released on Homestead a year before *Dry as a Bone* was released on Sub Pop.

*B.E. Kellogg
Fairfax Station, VA*

I'm glad to finally see an article about Stone Gossard and not you know who. Viva Stoney.

Steve Seighman

ON THE OTHER HAND

While I admire Steve Albini's attitudes, he obviously has some learning to do on some technical matters:

1) In the real world, "every hack engineer's best friend," compression, allows mass-marketed recordings to sound reasonably good on a wide range of playback machinery, from pro-level monitors to clock radios. (Anyway, "the quiet parts" of compressed music still sound quiet—ever hear of psychoacoustics?)

2) What the hell is this about digital tapes becoming "useless" in ten years? Steve, if you've really lost "many, many tapes," you're doing something very wrong.

Snobs like Steve Albini are sure at odds with Kurt Cobain's vision of music for kind, *unpretentious* people. How'd these two ever end up working together?

No name in Texas

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

One friend of mine claims that Charlie Watts is an all but useless drummer who has the timing of a '72 Nova with a tank full of sugar. The other friend swears up and down that Watts is a living (compared to Keith, I guess anyone is living) metronome with absolutely infallible rhythm. I need some kind of tie breaker here.

*an unconvinced non-drummer
Jeremy Sale*

HOOT THERE IT IS

I've been a loyal reader for about three or four years now. One of my favorite departments in the

In your May '95 interview with Stone Gossard, you incorrectly stated that the free show at the Moore Theatre was titled "The Piss Bucket Boys." It actually read "Piss Bottle Men." Thanks.

*Love,
Adam Prince*



magazine is the section on home studios, as I am currently putting mine together. I've just recently gotten home from a tour with Toad the Wet Sprocket, where I learned that the band is doing a lot of recording at lead singer and guitar player Glenn Phillips' home studio. I'd love to see a piece on Glenn's studio. I feel that Toad is one of the better American bands, and we had a blast on tour with them.

*Mark Bryan
guitarist, Hootie and the Blowfish
Columbia, SC*

EXPERTS

I applaud Mick Jones for his remarks in "Expert Witness" (June '95). After all it's the artist who wrote the song and makes the money for the record companies. By the way Mick love the new Foreigner album!

EVILWIND2@aol.com

PASS THE SALT AGAIN

Hello Willie Wonka of Chicago. You accuse Bill Wyman of not writing anything nasty

about Veruca Salt, right? You accuse him of not being objective. Can you possibly understand that Wyman became "a major player in the Veruca buzz by plugging them week after week in print and on his talk show" because *he liked the band*? What's wrong with that may I ask?

*Derek Mok
Oakville, Ontario*

Veruca Salt = Wilson Phillips + teeth
P.J. Harvey = Hole + taste 'n' subtlety
Ginger Baker ≠ John Bonham
Any questions?

*Mutch and Richard Messum
(a cat and his
human)
Stratford, Ontario*

PUNK ISSUE

It's about time Tom Verlaine, Mike Watt and Malcolm McLaren got some press (June '95). However, nowhere do you mention Generation X, Billy Idol's band. Why are they significant? Because Green

Day cloned their sound and sold millions of records. And Hüsker Dü is given dysfunctionally brief mention, considering it is the true parent of all that is known as "grunge."

*T.J. Segrest
tsegrest1@ualixua.edu*

In Seattle checking out the grunge scene. I'm getting a bit confused with the distinction between punk, post-punk, punk-pop and can't fathom a punk revival at this stage. Let's get back to pre-punk. Back to basics blues and be-bop.

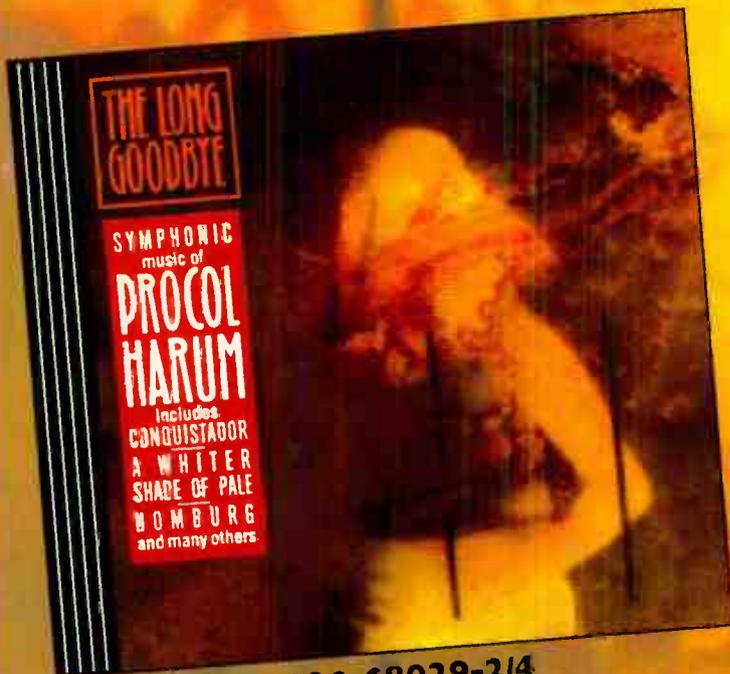
Funk

Billy Joe is way off when he says, "Early punk was about art and fashion, really, because everyone who was a punk was in art school." Gee, Billy Joe, did you ever hear of the Ramones? To say that early punk was about art and fashion makes early American punk seem superficial and trivial, which is definitely *not* the case! I know, because I was the only teenager into punk in my Queens high school which had over one thousand

[*con't on page 28*]

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DIGITAL TAPE REBATES—GET 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT

The Audio Home Recording Act, signed into law in 1992, requires manufacturers and importers of digital audio recorders and blank tapes to pay royalties to the U.S. Copyright Office, for the purpose of rebating record companies and artists for income supposedly "lost" due to home taping. This legislation, based on the questionable premise that home taping significantly depresses sales of CDs and tapes, was viewed by many at the time as a record industry grab for legal kickbacks by exploiting fears of foreign competition (e.g. Philips and Sony) in what was shaping up as the new frontier of audio technology. Ironically, DAT has yet to take off as promised or feared, so rebate royalties for 1994 barely cracked half-a-million dollars—chump change in an industry whose domestic income for the year exceeded \$12 billion. Still, the question remains—who gets the money?

Basically, anyone can petition the U.S. Copyright Office for a chunk of these royalties. The law requires litigation or arbitration to settle disputes—a formula pretty much guaranteed to transfer most of that money into the pockets of lawyers and arbiters. According to Executive Director Linda Bocchi of the Alliance of Artists and Recording Companies, a non-profit industry group that is in charge of hammering out a settlement among all claimants, the money—\$350 thousand in 1994—is parceled out on the basis of records sold, with about 60 percent to record companies and 40 percent to individual artists, but only among claimants. Musicians currently not affiliated with AARC are invited to contact the organization at (202) 775-0101. Also for the third year in a row, no settlement has been reached regarding royalties earmarked for the "Musical Works Fund." Those monies—\$175 thousand in 1994—remain with the U.S. Copyright Office.

EXPERT WITNESS

How We Wrote That Hit Song

by Mark Bryan, guitarist, *Hootie and the Blowfish*

SONI [DRUMMER JIM SONEFELD] is the original concept man behind "Hold My Hand." But the way we write our songs, everyone's involved, so I was in on it from Day One. Soni brought the guitar part over to my house one day, and we started jamming. And

I started figuring out that little lick that I do with the acoustic, and we thought "Hey, this is pretty catchy—we've got something going here!" So we brought it to Darius [Rucker; vocalist] and Dean [Felber; bassist], and Darius took off on it, just really started singing it, and then he came up with all those ad-libs on the chorus. Soni already had "I've got a hand for you" and the chorus part down, so we all put some harmonies in, and everyone wrote their own little parts—I wrote the lead guitar stuff. We were playing the song live for a while before we recorded it on our first [concert-sold] tape; it was also on our third

CD, because it was a really popular number for us in concert. Then for "Cracked Rear View," [producer] Don Gehman edited a little bit to fit radio more, to fit a single slot, and he just knocked the arrangement down; we ended up liking it better after he was done, although we still do it live the old way. So although "Hold My Hand" has gone through a couple of different arrangements, it's still one of the first songs we ever wrote together.

But for any given song, I have an entirely different story. "Let Her Cry" was Darius' song that he brought in—he just had the acoustic and the lyrics and we put all

ROUGH

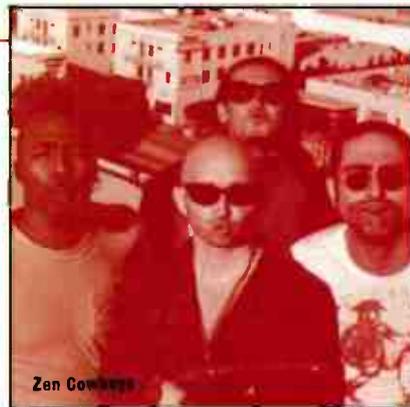
RECENT SIGNINGS

Zen Cowboys Musician Best Unsigned Band contest winners disqualify themselves for next year. (Moonshine)

Tab Two German acid jazzers hit the States. (Virgin)

Neal Casal Jersey-born, L.A.-based singer/songwriter. (Zoo)

Ash Crunching guitars and funny song titles. (Reprise)

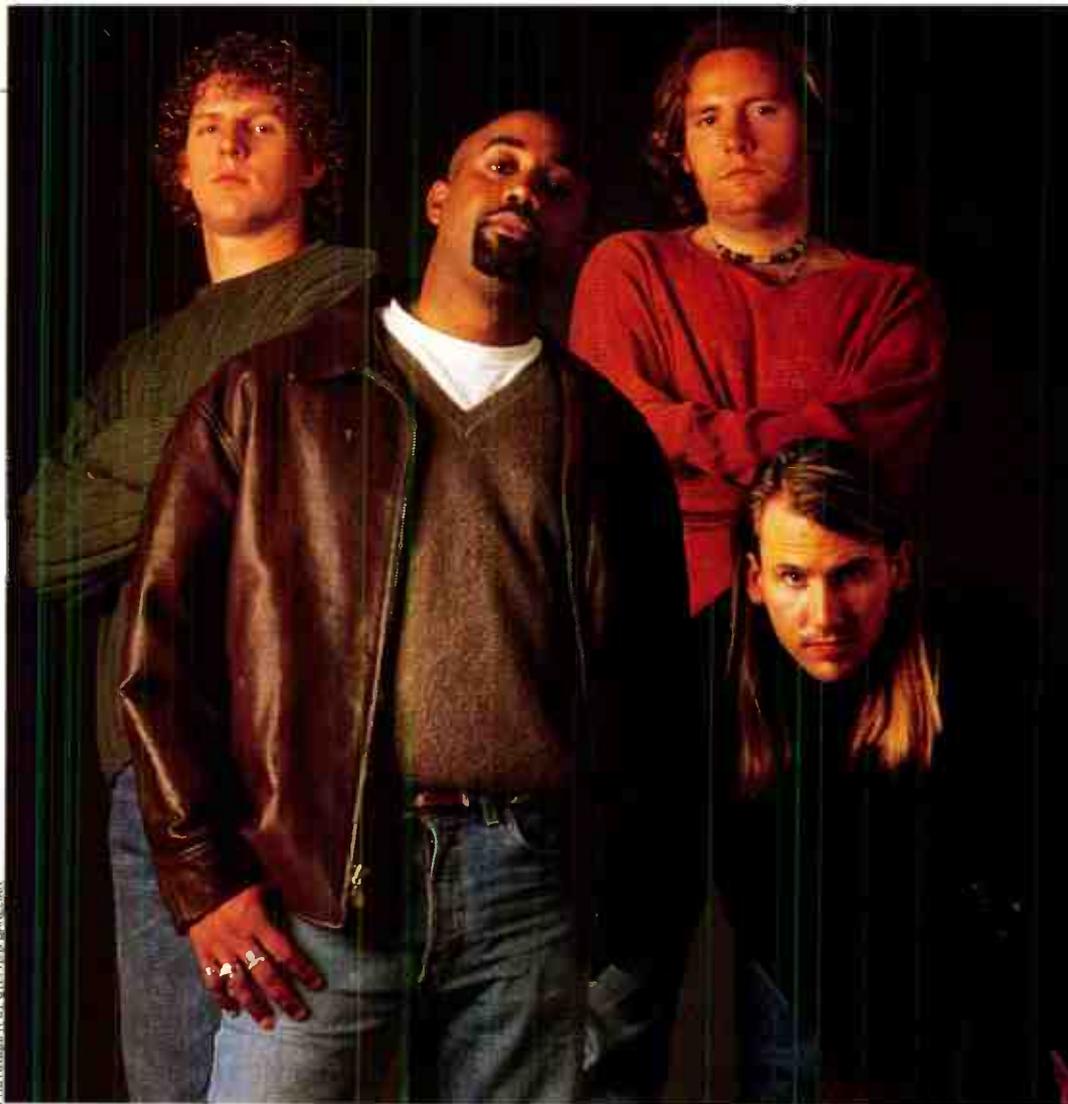


the rest of the music behind it. And the tambourines you always hear—well, we like to add that little rhythmic touch in the chorus sometimes just to keep it hoppin'. It fills it in nicely, and we've been doing that for a long time, ever since our first producer tried tambourine and we really liked the sound of it. We all play a little piano too, so we write that way, with that in mind, that you can add parts later. We had a Hammond organ player come in and play all that stuff. But with any song we write, we keep an open mind about instrumentation. It just so happens that organ is a good one that fits our style.

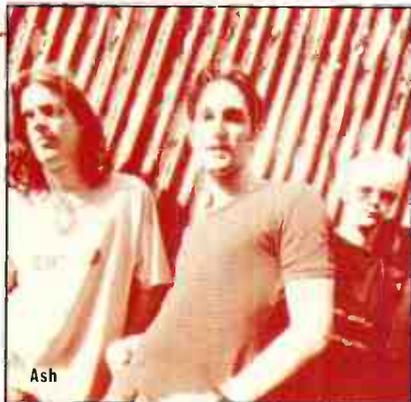
But you keep adding to a song until you feel like it's done, and there is a point where you don't want to go any further. Maybe you'll try an idea and you'll say "Ahh, that's too much—we've pretty much got it where we want it." It's kind of a feel thing between the band and the producer. When you tapped all your ideas and everyone feels like it's done, then you stop. But you have to try and experiment for a good bit at least, just to see what you come up with.

At press time, *Cracked Rear View* had spent 4 weeks at Number One on the Billboard album charts.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN DANIELIAN



MIX



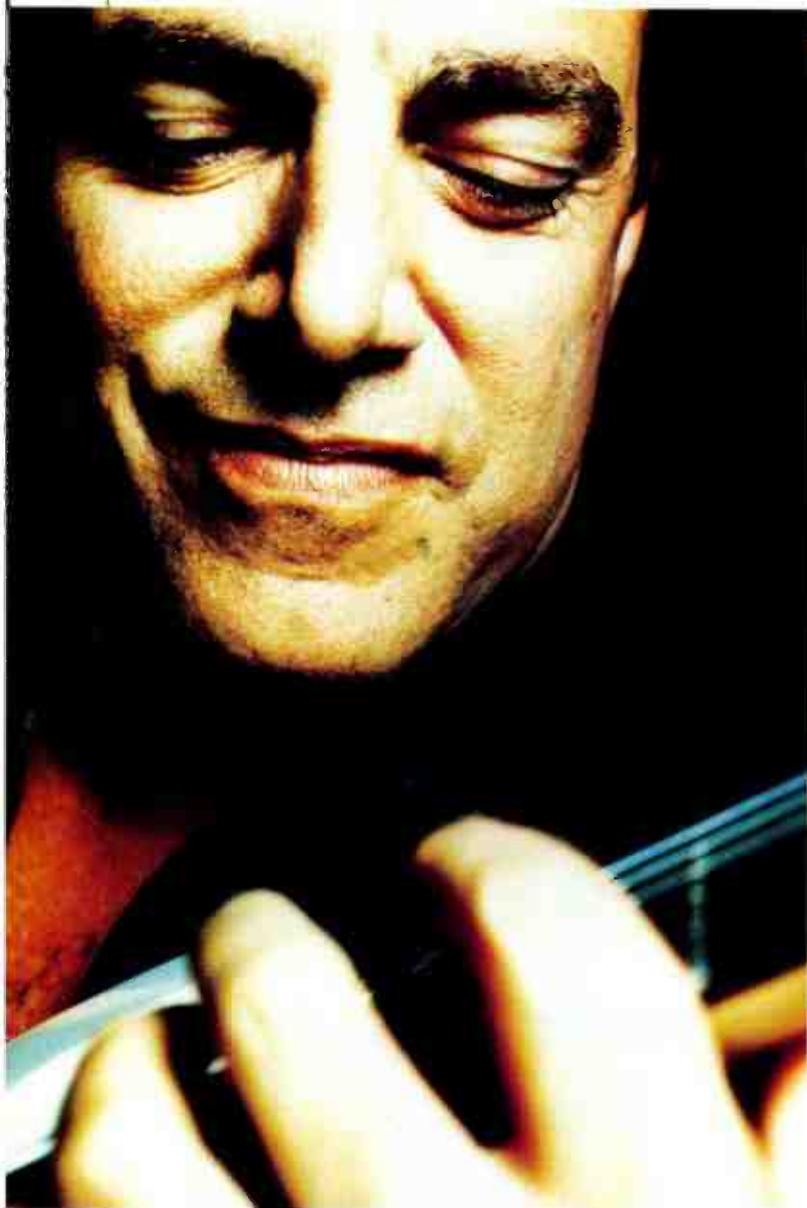
Ash

GENERATION ENDLESS

Now that members of the '60s generation are inching inexorably toward their sixties, you'd think their influence as pop music consumers would start to wane. Guess again. RIAA stats for 1994 show that record buyers over age 45 purchased 16.1 percent of all records last year, up from 11.8 percent five years ago. In the next few years that percentage will almost certainly rise. Martha Quinn, call your agent.

Other stats of note: CDs now account for 58 percent of all sales, up from 31 percent in 1990. For cassettes, the figures are nearly the reverse; 54 percent in 1990, 32 percent last year. Record store sales have declined from 69 percent of the market to 53 percent, while "other stores" have picked up the slack. Musical genres have held steady, with "rock" leading the way at 35 percent, but overall record industry revenue has nearly doubled since 1990, from \$7.5 billion sales to more than \$12 billion.

ROUGH MIX



PHOTOGRAPH BY MITCH TOBIAS

NEAL SCHON

Neal Schon's playing musical chairs these days. He's touring with Abraxas (early Santana minus Carlos), working on a Journey reunion, and launching his instrumental career with *Beyond the Thunder* (Higher Octave), on which he cools his heels to the pleasant tune of mid-tempo, quasi-jazz grooves.

So it's no surprise that Schon's guitar playing has been a mixed bag. He blends piercing long notes—articulated with the stinging bluesy bends of Albert King—with irregularly-patterned scalar flurries that are reminiscent of another early hero of his, John McLaughlin.

Although noted for his high speed fretboard chase scenes, melody is never far away. "I think it's from listening to singers," he says. "I was strictly a blues player early on, and I used to listen to Aretha Franklin's records to cop her phrasing. It wasn't necessarily the notes. It was: *where* did she hit this note?"

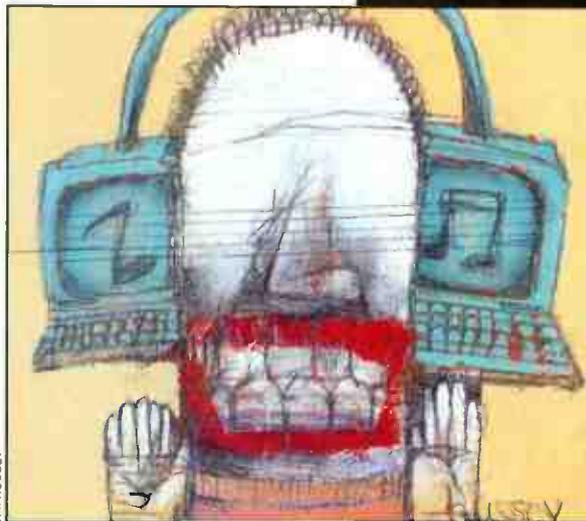
"As for technique and dexterity, the most I ever worked on it was when I was watching TV in my folks' bedroom as a teenager. I'd sit down on the floor with a Les Paul and let my fingers fly while I was watching TV, not paying any attention to it. It was a cool thing to do, because now I hardly ever look at the guitar. When I'm playing the best, I'm not looking at the guitar and wondering 'am I hitting a wrong note or a right note?' I've got my eyes closed or not paying attention at all, and it's just coming out.

"My warm-up exercise before I play is not to play," he laughs. "I play a lot. I don't practice. I've never practiced scales. I find it boring. I don't know all my scales, and I don't want to know them."—J.W.

STAR SEARCH

Celebrated producer Daniel Lanois has accepted an A&R consultancy at Capitol Records and is accepting submissions. Contact c/o Capitol Records, 1750 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA 90028.

This month's Rough Mix contributors include Nathan Brackett, Cheo H. Coker, Ted Greenwald, Ken Micallef, Mark Rowland, Mark Weingarten and Josef Woodard.



TIM HUSSEY

WILL IT FIT UNDER YOUR PILLOW?

Radio HK, hyping itself as the first 24 hour Internet-only radio station, began operations in

February, offering fidelity its owners claim is "just below AM broadcast quality" to any PC user with a 14.4 bps modem, a phone line and a connection to World Wide Web (<http://www.hkweb.com/radio>). The catch: only about 100 people can listen at one time. Currently, several radio stations rebroadcast their live signals into the Internet, and other Internet-only stations are in the works.

In the meantime, Radio HK has finessed the question of paying for international performance licenses by hammering out deals directly from the holders of those rights.

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TALENT



DANNY CLINCH

JENNIFER TRYNIN

JENNIFER TRYNIN

"I really don't think *all* relationships are doomed to failure," says Jennifer Trynin. Not that you would know it from listening to this Boston native's debut album, *Cockamamie*. The bleak emotional landscape that Trynin unflinchingly explores on songs like "Too Bad You're Such A Loser" and "Knock Me Down" makes Bergman's *Scenes From A Marriage* look like a madcap romp. But *Cockamamie* is hardly an exercise in Reznor-ian misanthropy;

Trynin's shimmering, ebullient melodies and jagged-edge hooks make this a world-class pop album. Just don't expect Trynin to trot out the usual pop avatars (Big Star, The Beatles) as seminal influences—she really has none.

"I'm not a big music fan," says the 31-year-old. "Music definitely influences me, but I don't like to listen to it too much. The only record I've ever owned is *Cockamamie*."

Trynin recorded *Cockamamie* on her own Squint label while running a desktop publishing business, then almost immediately found herself in the middle of a major-label feeding frenzy. "I'm not exactly sure how that happened," says a still-bemused Trynin. She eventually settled on Warner Brothers, who agreed to release the album exactly as it appeared on Trynin's homemade imprint. Despite all this attention, Trynin maintains a healthy perspective about her entry into the big leagues: "It's great to have a bidding war over your record, but let's fact it—it's not *that* good!" —M.W.

CHAVEZ

Unlike most New York neo-noise bands who depend on hardcore or punk for sustenance, Chavez finds a new wrinkle in that brooding blueprint, creating caustic artsy-rock with squealing, stretched guitars, loose-limbed drum-



ming and edgy rhythmic counterpoint. The distinctive Chavez clamor began as two bored guitarists searching for a sound. "For months Clay [Tarver] and I would clang on one riff for two

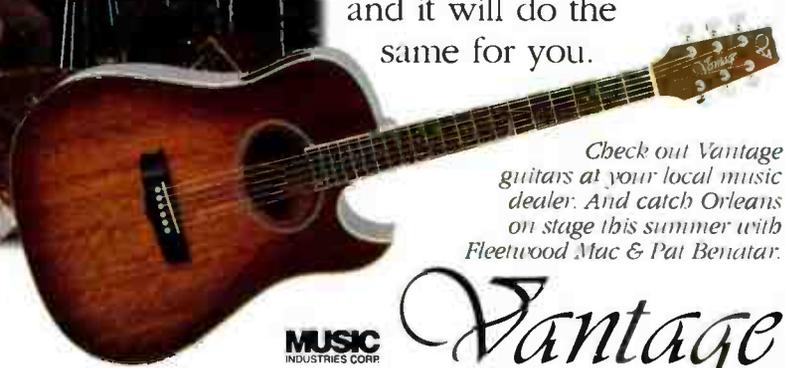
A classic band. A classic guitar.



Pictured above (left to right): Larry Hoppen with his VS-35CEQ guitar; John Hall with his VS-35CEQ guitar; Lance Hoppen with the VB-40CE bass guitar

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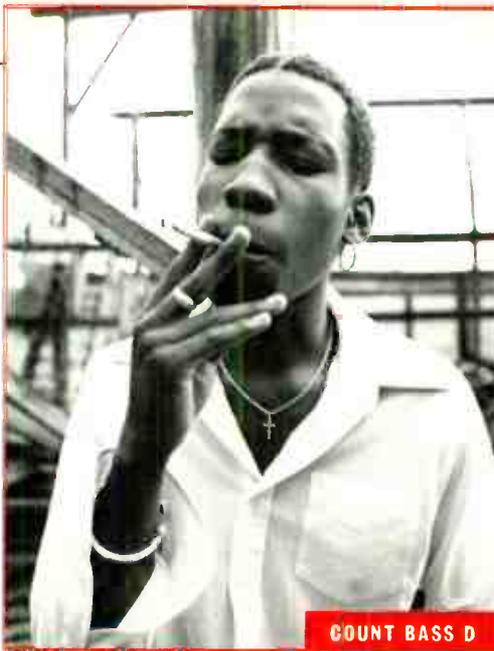
hours, trying to find something to play," says guitarist/vocalist Matty Sweeney. "And since absolutely no one was interested in playing with us, we knew we could do whatever we felt like."

Ex-members of Bullet LaVolta, Skunk and Wider, Chavez made *Gone Glimmering* surprisingly short (33:03), but full of passionate songs that never suffer for all their staggered, syncopated complexity. "Both of us changed our playing to fit the other's way of not playing guitar," says Sweeney. "Our music may sound tough, but it's simple, actually. It just depends on what the bass and drums are doing, where everything fits."

"The rests are the hard thing in this band," says drummer James Lo. "When the guitars stop, it gets difficult. I have to fight my natural tendencies."

"I always thought that if a band was around more than four years it became a museum piece," Lo goes on. "It would have all the aspects of music without the freedom to surprise. I'm not sure if even I believe that anymore."

Tempered by years on the noise scene and working experience in the industry, Chavez stands fit to withstand the ensuing hype, at least for the next four years. "Having seen the downside of it all, we didn't want to work with anyone we knew



COUNT BASS D

from the past, we wanted to earn it," Sweeney observes. "Our satisfaction comes from playing to people who really like our music, not because they're friends of the manager." —K.M.

COUNT BASS D

Nashville based Count Bass D is rapper/instrumentalist who understands that spontaneity takes place in the present tense. His self-produced debut *Pre-Life Cri-*

sis contains everything from gospel to bluesy '70s funk influences backing up his often hilarious tongue-in-cheek rhymes about life in "Cashville," television and a chance meeting with the object of his desire, TLC lead rapper T-Boz. Having played all of the instruments himself, "live" to the Count means playing all the way through a song, not, as some rap-producers believe, sampling a musician playing like and chopping it up later.

[con't on page 66]

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charlie hunter trio

bing, bing, bing!

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World Radio History



ROCK

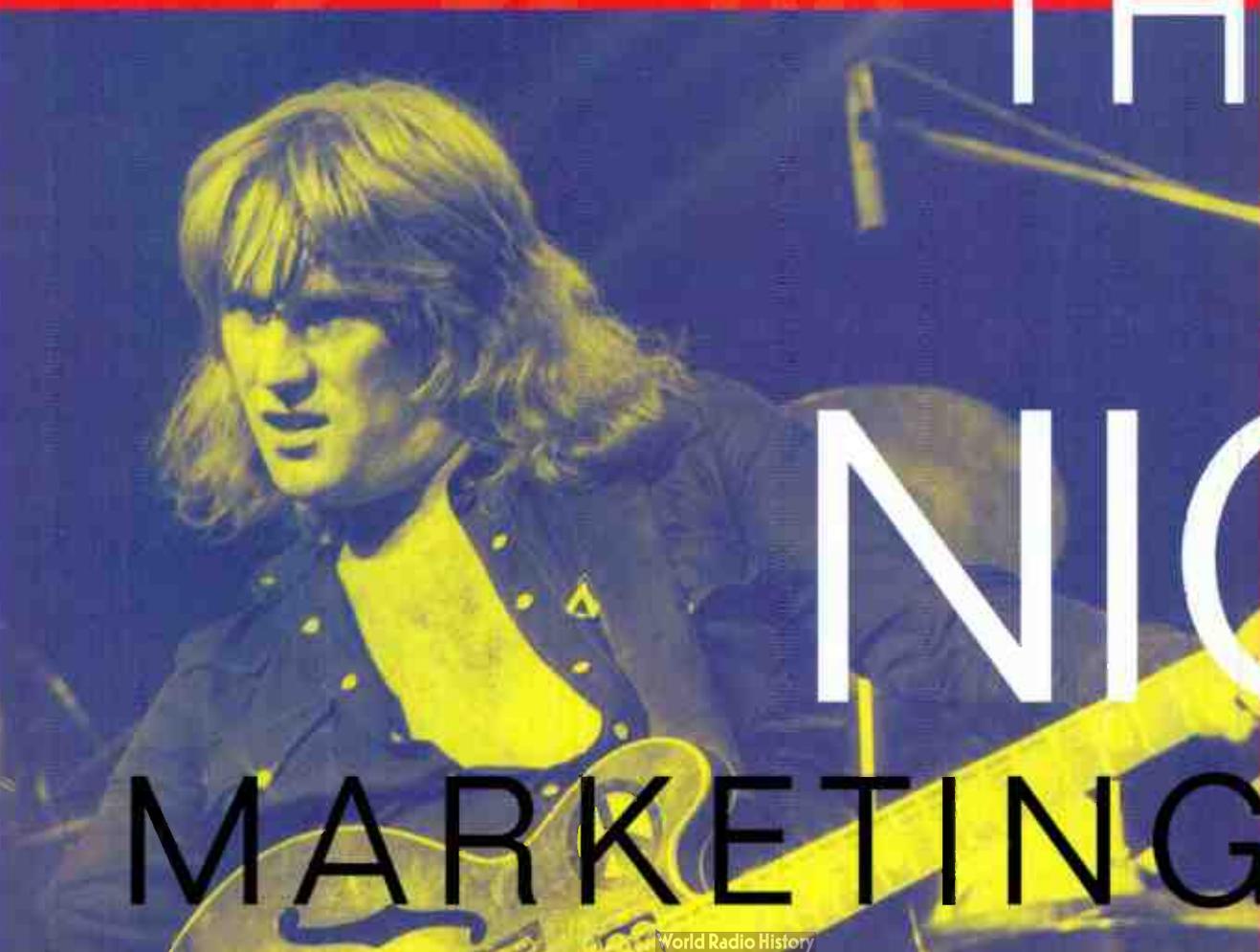
GU

DON'T DIE -

I HEAR YOU ROCKIN'

THEY

DI



NIC

MARKETING

Lee, whose albums with Ten Years After lodged in the Top 40 of the U.S. album charts at the group's peak, is content to sell what an

we're all fried out," says Blodwyn Pig founder Mick Abrahams, who has been battling the music biz wars since he split Jethro Tull rather



the

LAW Contract

giveth, the

taketh away

How record
companies
subvert Federal
copyright
law at the expense of
artists

By **Peter Jaegerman**
illustration by
Eric White



MOST SONGWRITERS AND COMPOSERS are aware that record companies pay fees, specifically known as mechanical royalties, to copyright owners for the right to manufacture copies of their songs in the form of CDs, tapes and the like. But many music professionals are unaware that record contracts routinely include provisions that can effectively relieve the labels of this responsibility—and, if artists aren't careful about the agreements they make, can even force them to become further indebted to their record company with each record sold.

Before going further, it should be noted that copyright law differentiates between a recording and the song recorded (which is known as the "underlying work"). In the following discussion, the phrase "copyright owner"—which may be a work's author or publisher or, indeed, anyone who has purchased the right to reproduce it—refers to the owner of the copyright for the underlying work, not for any particular recording of it.

It is also helpful to bear in mind the distinction between three types of royalties: mechanical royalties, or licensing fees paid for the right to manufacture a reproduction of a copyrighted work; performance royalties, fees paid for the right to reproduce the work in public performance or broadcast; and artist royalties, a percentage of the market price of a recorded performance that is credited to the performer. This article deals with mechanical royalties only.

Piano Rolls

THE STORY STARTS WITH THE PLAYER PIANO and the earliest music playback machines. In enacting the original United States Copyright Act of 1909, Congress established that music publishers—owners of the copyright to a composi-

belongs with the very people who lose the most: the artists and composers. Even if they understand the effect of royalty-reduction policies, many artists, managers and attorneys consider them a minor element of the recording contract as a whole—certainly nothing worth jeopardizing a negotiation over.

What's At Stake?

IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT POLICIES that reduce mechanical royalty payments to songwriters have changed the popular music

industry in fundamental ways. From the music publisher's perspective, they have transformed a relatively simple licensing and compensation system into a tremendous administrative burden. Under the structure created by Congress 85 years ago, calculation of compulsory mechanical royalties was easy. Under typical controlled-compositions clauses today, it is usually impossible to calculate royalties for a given album until its contents have been determined.

The expense involved in monitoring compliance with these complex agreements is dif-

ficult to justify. And, for many publishers, the risk of doing business has become unacceptable. With no assurance that mechanical royalties will be forthcoming, publishers are hesitant to offer advances to composers whose works may be affected.

Instead of continuing to build their catalogues, these publishers have withdrawn from the market for new talent. With fewer active publishers in the game, aspiring songwriters have fewer places to shop their material. As the financial incentives disappear, this promising source of fresh musical blood dwindles.

Is There a Solution?

IF THE STATUTORY MECHANICAL royalty rate, originally intended to guarantee a minimum payment to the owner of a song, has become merely a benchmark to be reduced through negotiation, then the original system has ceased to function, at least within the domain of contemporary popular music. Some observers recommend that compulsory licensing be replaced by the European system of industry-negotiated royalties pegged to higher rates for full-price product, giving the record labels lower costs for budget product or extra-length albums. Certainly this is an improvement over the inflexible American system.

But many music publishers are opposed to ending compulsory licensing and statutory royalty rates. They fear that the overwhelming power of U.S. record companies would enable them to reduce mechanical royalty rates even further. Instead, they suggest that the statutory rates be enforced, ensuring both that copyrighted compositions are available to be recorded and that copyright owners are compensated fairly. Incredibly, the legality of the record companies' strategies to contain mechanical royalty payments has never been tested in court.

Some in the music publishing community speculate that under the Clinton administration, with its awareness of intellectual property issues, the Justice Department may be more interested in examining the effect of these policies on publishers, composers and recording artists. The bottom line is that the royalty-reduction measures routinely exercised by record companies are destroying the economic value of music copyrights. Ultimately, this limits the freedom of artists to determine the direction of their careers.



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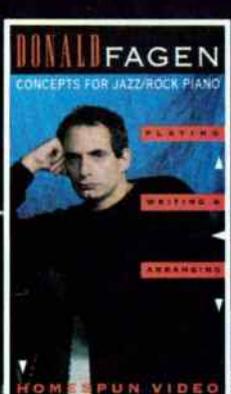
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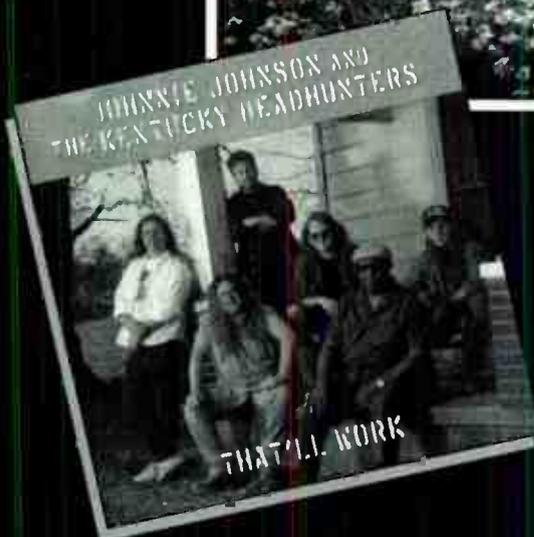
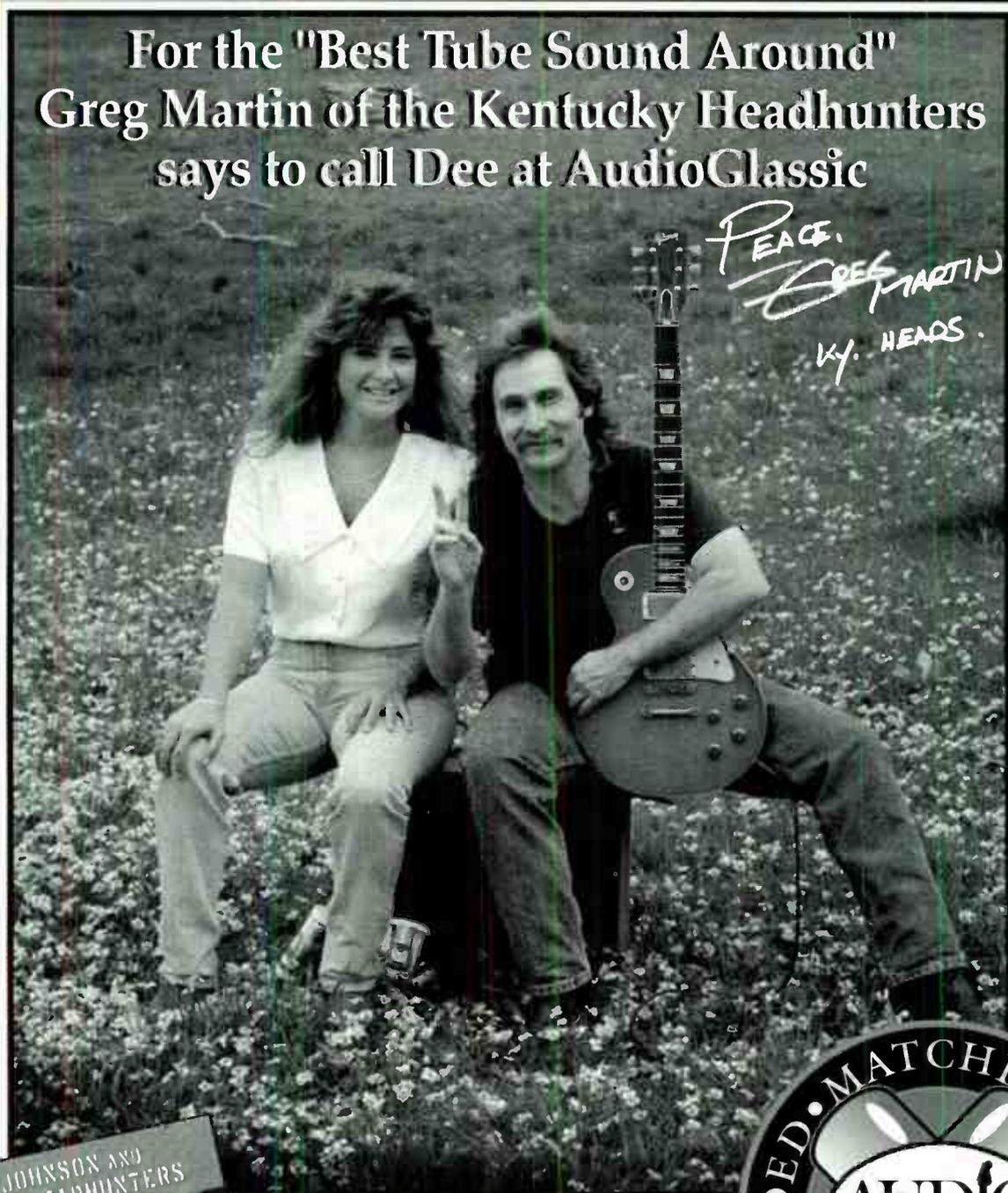
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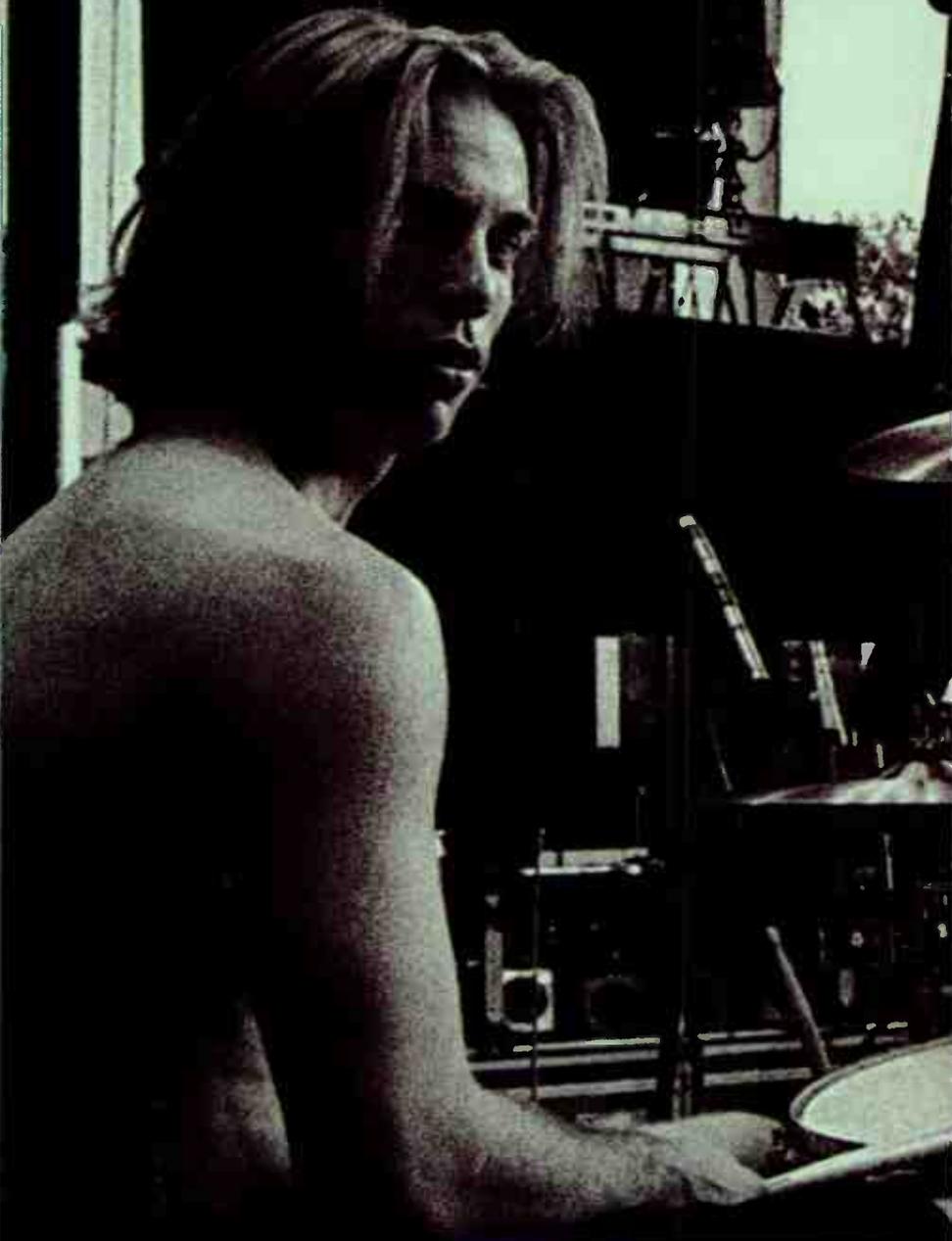
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OASIS

IN ENGLAND, THEY HAVE THIS TERM "LAD."

"It doesn't mean anything," says Liam Gallagher, singer of Oasis, a Manchester-based punk/pop fivesome that at this writing has registered a few tremors on the Rock Richter Scale, just enough to tantalize Anglophiles here and music tabloidists there. "It just means being a lad."

"Being a lad," agrees Paul "Bonehead" Arthurs, rhythm guitarist of Oasis.

"Here we are," says Liam, gesturing to Bonehead and drummer Tony McCarroll in his Vancouver hotel room. "A bunch of lads."

Well, the word doesn't exist as a slang term in the United States. It has subcultural connotations known only to those in the subculture.

"No, don't get deep," warns Bonehead. "Just five lads in a band. It's about being a lad."

"Not faking it," says Liam.

Were the Beatles lads?

"Oh yeah," says Liam.

"The Stones, they were lads," says Bonehead, who in about a year will be known as Asymmetrically Bald Head.

"Blur are not lads," says Liam, referring to the English neo-art rockers, who sound equally descended from the Kinks and A Flock of Seagulls. "Pearl Jam are not lads. Stone Temple Pilots are not fucking lads. The Who were lads. The Sex Pistols were lads. Suede are not lads. Are you starting to get the drift now? Frankie Goes to Hollywood were not lads."

So it's a matter of authenticity?

"Yeah," says Bonehead. "We're authentic."

How about Nirvana?

"Kurt Cobain was," says Liam. "I don't know about the bass player or the drummer. Actually Cobain was a bit of a silly lad."

The Oasis sound is even more basic than Nirvana.

"That's what it's all about, isn't it?" says Tony McCarroll. "It's real. That's what every band is, every real band. Techno is bullshit. Synthesized bollocks."

Synthesizers are for non-lads.

"Now you've got it," says Tony. [*As of press time, McCarroll had left the band and been replaced by drummer Alan White.*]

"You can't get deep about this," says Liam. "We're lads. Aretha Franklin is a woman, and Morrissey is not a lad. When you're writing this, you listen back to what I just said, and you write it down. I go through all them people, and that's how people will read it. If they understand it, they understand it. And if they don't, they don't. Now, next question."

The Oasis sound is most immediately identified by Liam's vocals. He sneers. And he doesn't do anything else. Doesn't move onstage, doesn't write songs, doesn't interpret songs, doesn't sing. He sneers *everything*. A one-note piano he is, but it's a good note. Nobody has sneered better since Johnny Rotten, and before him, nobody sneered better since John Lennon. Liam is often compared to both. A more complete analogy might be: If John Lennon was the Babe Ruth of sneers, and Johnny Rotten was the Roger Maris of sneers, then Liam Gallagher is a rookie who hit 41 home runs with a .207 batting average and 36 errors at third base. Try sitting in a diner and hearing the Oasis semi-hit "Live Forever" come on the radio at background volume. Liam's sneer amazingly cuts through all the clink and clatter and conversation. It's just a miracle, like a home run over the roof at Tiger Stadium. Anyone with the slightest love for what the English did with rock 'n' roll from the Beatles

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG ○ PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAY BLAKESBERG

IN A FOUR



Clockwise from front left: Noel Gallagher, Liam Gallagher, Paul McGuigan, Bonehead, Tony McCarroll

OASIS

World Radio History

through the Police, and haven't remotely done since, just has to root for Liam Gallagher to develop some additional moves and avoid that trip back to the minor leagues.

"Well, I don't want to sing, if you know what I mean," says Liam. "I don't want 'AHHHeeeAHHHeeeAH.' I don't want none of that shite. I just want to growl."

When John Lennon used to sneer...

"He could sneer melodically."

Is it by design that Liam also sneers melodically, or is it that Lennon and Liam come from Liverpool and Manchester, respectively, and have similarly thick accents?

"Well, it goes back to being a lad, doesn't it? I'm a lad, John Lennon was a lad, and Suede isn't."

Almost every article about Oasis notes that no new English band has broken big in the United States for over a decade. Is that due to a lack of lads in current English bands?

"Phil Collins is probably big here," says Liam.

Phil Collins isn't a lad, is he?

"No, he's not," says Bonehead. "Now you understand."

"That's what I'm trying to say," says Liam. "He's not a lad, but he's big. So it will be nice if we can come here and by being lads, be fucking big."

"Lads," Bonehead nods. "It's what America needs."

R.E.M. aren't lads, right?

"Not even close," Liam sneers.

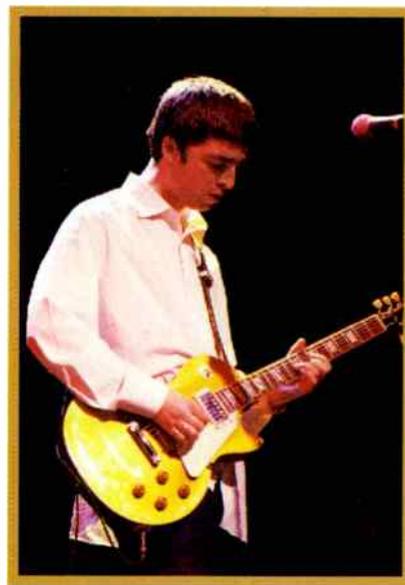
Lads. Young men of English working-class origin. Unlike most Americans of working-class origin, who believe themselves middle class, they know they are working class. But that's as far as class consciousness goes in these days of a Labor Party trying to sell out as thoroughly as Democrats in the U.S. Sentenced to an education sys-

tem which give it an incredible bounce if you want to dance. It has to be the best big club in North America, the sort of place that would have been torn down years ago in New York for an office building. And it's full of Canadians, a people that has survived by not offending the colossus next door, so they tend to be friendly and polite.

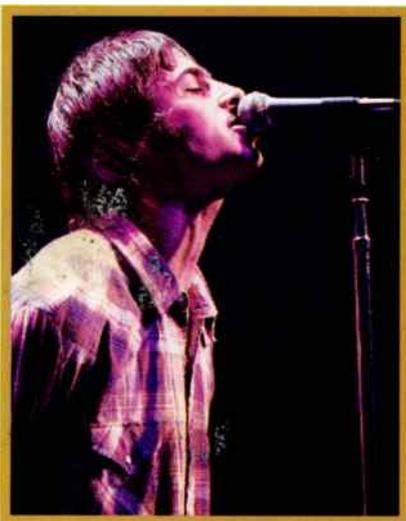
"Let's show them how much noise we can make in Vancouver!" a local radio DJ exhorts over the PA. "Let's welcome Epic recording artists Oasis!"

Oasis takes the stage. Liam grabs the microphone. "I don't know what that was about," he sneers at the DJ.

A promising start. Nothing like a punky lad throwing a tantrum to compel your attention. But those are the only words Liam speaks all night, stage patter apparently falling outside the canon of lad-approved behavior. Moving one's feet in any way also fails to make the canon. To be fair, it must be said that Liam occasionally walks back to the drum risers to drink a beer, and the guitarists sometimes walk back to their amps to tune up. Prancing about, however, is clearly for



"I'M MORE INTERESTED IN DRUGS AND ROCK 'N' ROLL THAN IN NAKED WOMEN."



tem designed to teach obedience or to humiliate, lads escape as quickly as possible (age 16) with a distrust of abstract thought, which, after all, has been used to screw them and their ancestors for several centuries. Faced with the prospect of digging holes or the dole, the more creative and ambitious lads can escape by becoming soccer hooligans, alco-

holics or rock stars. And that's what lads dream about: not so much money as escape.

In Vancouver, the five lads of Oasis are booked to play their songs of escape at the Commodore Ballroom, a huge club built in 1929 with glittering chandeliers, great sight lines, plenty of tables and chairs if you want to sit, and a wooden dance floor constructed on old tires

non-lads like Michael Stipe. On the incredible bouncing dance floor, the crowd seems to want to pogo and mosh, and in every third song they sort of pogo and mosh. Then they stop, perhaps inhibited by the staid visuals.

Oasis plays ten of the eleven songs on their album *Definitely Maybe*, omitting the acoustic "Married with Children," and closing with a not-on-the-album cover of "I Am the Walrus." It is good basic rock 'n' roll, and there is never enough good basic rock 'n' roll in the world. Liam sneers as the Marshalls roar over a solid backbeat, and that's the whole of it.

Comparisons with the Sex Pistols and Beatles perhaps overreach. The Ramones crossed with Steve Miller seems more apt—the Ramones for their fundamentalism, and Miller for the Poppy plagiarism. You can tell Noel Gallagher is the lead guitarist because he gets two amp stacks while Bonehead and bassist Paul McGuigan get just one apiece. Noel teases the crowd several times by playing the riff to "Cigarettes and Alcohol" between songs, and then starting some other song. Although he's just noodling unconsciously, it feels like a cruel trick, because the riff is so blatantly taken from T. Rex's "Get It On (Bang a Gong)," one of the greatest rock 'n' roll dance numbers of all time. The crowd wants that riff, and then they get something else. It's almost anticlimactic when Oasis finally does play "Cigarettes and Alcohol."

David Byrne. Many Stories.



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World Radio History

Standing up the local radio contest winners and record store people, Oasis doesn't show at the meet 'n' greet backstage afterwards. Among these standupees is Steve McDonald, a trainman for the CP Rail. He rides trains back and forth from Calgary to Field, British Columbia, and listens to the radio all day long. His buddy won a contest on Mix 1060, and they got a free trip to Vancouver for the show.

"You be sure to print that Mix 1060 kicks ass," says McDonald, his face red and the rest of his large self swaying slightly from copious consumption of suds. "They treated us like gold."

You think Oasis is going to make it?

McDonald furrows his brow. "It's great. It's tight. But..."

But?

"I've heard a lot of bands like them. I could be wrong, and they could be a hit with a big push. But they just aren't that original. It's been a long time since anyone from England changed anything. I don't know. It's good music. Good enough to fit in with the Seattle

sound, but it isn't Seattle."

This is so. Oasis is not Seattle, home of many non-lad bands. And it's hard to imagine Oasis connecting with the Pearl Jam non-lad demographic. A college student seeking confirmation of his identity crisis through the mysticism and indirection of Eddie Vedder just isn't going to find a lot to engage his middle-class imagination in the concrete, linear craving for escape in Oasis, unless maybe the economy collapses. Of course, Steve Miller didn't sell millions of records to that crowd, either.

THE MEMBERS of Oasis grew up within a few miles of each other. They went to schools that played each other in soccer, and marinated their friendship in the pubs as they got older. Bonehead made the first move toward recruiting a band.

"I told him I can't do anything," recalls Paul "Guigsy" McGuigan. "And he said, 'Why don't you sing?' And I said, 'No, I can't sing,'

BREAKING AMERICA



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK AN English band in the States these days? And just what exactly is Oasis willing to do that so many of England's previous Next Big Things—the Wonder Stuff, Happy Mondays, Blur, Suede, to name a few—weren't?

"Work," says Epic president Richard Griffiths, a British expatriate.

"Tour," shrugs David Massey, another English transplant and Epic VP of A&R whose signings include U.K. acts Oasis, Des'ree and Echobelly.

Explains Griffiths, "Most British bands arrive here prepared to do very little, and what work they've done hasn't been in the best frame of mind. The success of the Cranberries is no coincidence—they were willing to do a lot of work, and it's paid off."

"Oasis's commitment to tour early on—as a *real* rock 'n' roll band—enabled us, as a company, to let it grow naturally and not hype them," explains Massey. "We were able to grow them the way you build a band in America, over the course of four to five months. And this includes playing the *heartland*—not just five East Coast dates and two West Coast dates."

"U.K. bands think they can just come and do a dozen shows—they don't take the American audience seriously," agrees Boy Troy, music director at Boston alternative station WFNX. "I will say that Oasis has done their homework. They came, they stuck around, they made themselves familiar—that's important."

For Oasis's manager Marcus Russell, who previously visited the U.S. with The The and Electronic, patience in that area has been key: "Our goal is just to get *established*. In order to achieve that, you've got to devote a certain slice of each year to being in the American market. Oasis is working to achieve that in the old-fashioned sense, like a '60s or '70s rock 'n' roll band."

"If you look at Soundscan, sales jumped in every city they've

played—*every city*," observes Massey. "MTV only came in recently, we've gone to pop radio *now*, but we didn't initially—just college, alternative and some rock stations. We owe all this to the tour. There's just nothing as effective as the proof. This way people see that they're a real rock 'n' roll band. And it's helped for the press to be able to come and see that, too. Oasis realizes they have to earn America's acceptance."

"America is a big country and the traveling is *much* more arduous than anyone from Britain could ever imagine at first. So we've tried not to overwhelm them with huge amounts of in-stores *and* radio *and* soundcheck *and* enormous journeys."

"Why rush?" asks Russell. "We know we've got a great second album coming, Noel Gallagher's a prolific songwriter—there's no need to panic."

The manager admits that those virtues wouldn't mean much without Epic's active support: "If a label has no commitment, especially with a foreign band—if they don't give tour support, set up co-op advertising or do station interviews—there's *nothing* that can help that band. If a U.S. band doesn't get tour support, at least they're still *here*—they know what to do, they know what key markets to hit. U.K. bands are at the mercy of their labels."

Bob Waugh, assistant PD at WHFS in Washington, D.C./Baltimore, is rotating Oasis heavily. "I don't know that Epic or any other label's determination to break a band will do it," he says. "A lot of great songs come along, and sometimes the tiebreaker for us will be the label's commitment, but, ultimately, our audience decides. A year ago Epic tried to tell us that October Projekt were going to happen with or without our help."

Still, Oasis is determined. "So many of the bands they admire deeply happened here," says Massey. "The Beatles, the Stones—America was incredibly important for them. It's the ultimate challenge, and Oasis wants it badly. I am so happy about that—it makes my job easier." DEV SHERLOCK

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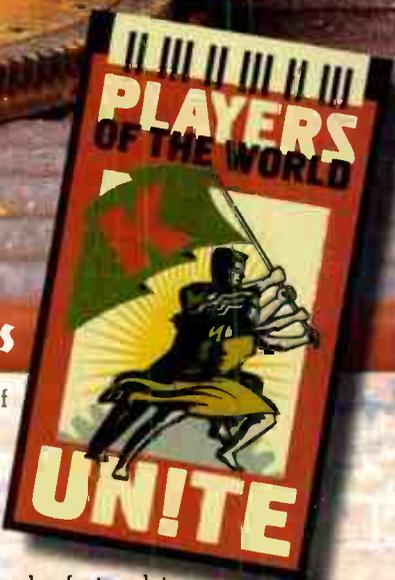
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And he said, 'Then play bass, 'cause you only have to play the top string if you want.' So I said okay."

The bass is the easiest instrument to play adequately.

"Definitely. So that was the start. So for a couple weeks, me and Bonehead sat in me mum's house and worked out a few things. Mostly we tried to think of people who played the drums, and Tony was the only one we knew, so he was the drummer. Then Liam said, 'I wanna be the singer.'"

After six months of rehearsal, the four of them had three songs and felt themselves ready for their first gig. They played a local pub and Liam invited his older brother. Noel had been a guitar tech for Inspiral Carpets for four years, had been writing songs on his own since childhood with no outlet. He announced that if they wanted to be the best band in the world, he would join and write songs for them. The rehearsal schedule immediately escalated to four nights a week, eventually hitting every night of the week.

"All our friends would say, 'Let's get drunk, let's chase some women, let's take some drugs.' We'd say, 'No, no, we have to practice.' They all thought we were mott for quite a while."

Mott? Like Mott the Hoople?

"No, mott. M-a-d. They thought we were crazy."

Their dedication paid off in late 1992 when they played their first gig outside Manchester. They just showed up one night at a pub in Glasgow, unscheduled, and demanded to play. On the basis of that show, they were offered a record contract a few days later, and by April they were big on the British charts.

"It was a pretty fast rise, and I'm sure it'll be a pretty fast fall, too. But that's life: gravity."

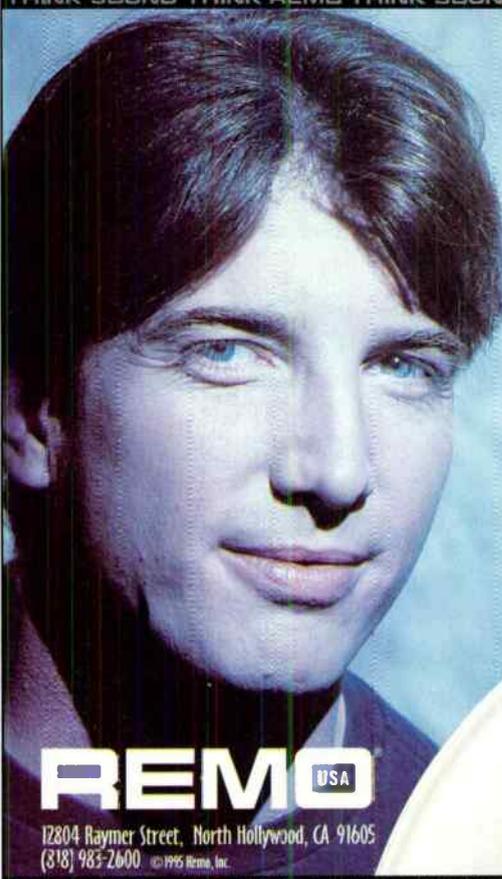
You must be in shock.

"We've been so busy the last 14 months that I haven't had time to think about it. We did 315 gigs, toured Europe four times, done nine tours of England, been to Japan, been to the United States three times. Although we enjoy having a drink, obviously, and we enjoy things that most men enjoy, we're not real nightclubby. It's not something that's taken us over."

A high percentage of the coolest bands consist of people who grew up together.

"It's a lot easier to trust someone when you grow up together," says Guigsy. "Being in a band on the road in a bus, I think the hardest thing is staying friends. It's just diffi-

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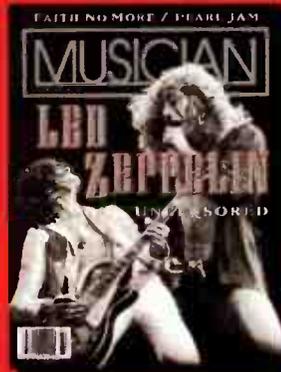
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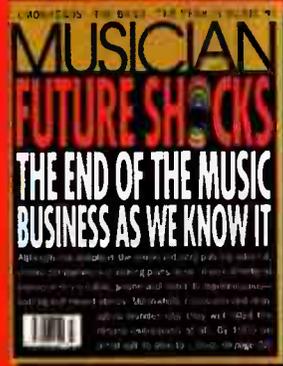
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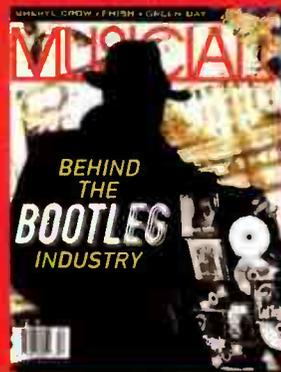
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cult, like in a family. 'Cause that's what it is, it's a family. You have to understand the person, and you have to make allowances sometimes, and sometimes they have to make allowances for you."

In Portland the following night, they play the Roseland Theater, a dark hole of a club that manages to exude punk romance without actually smelling bad. The show itself, however, stinks. Not moving, the crowd stares at Oasis, who stare back, not moving. After about six songs, Liam backs off the microphone and starts yelling at his brother. For a brief moment, hope arises that some Kinks-style brotherly fisticuffs will erupt, but it turns out Liam has just lost his voice and can sneer no more. Noel then sings "Cigarettes and Alcohol" in his decidedly non-sneering voice, then explains the show is over and walks off.

"Bullshit! Bullshit!" screams this middle-aged, record-biz-looking guy.

But what do you really think of Oasis?

"They did a shitty short set, that's what I think of them," says the guy. "It reminded me of a Small Faces concert when they were so drunk they didn't care if they fell off the stage."

They weren't that drunk.

"Okay, how's this?" the guy sneers. "They were a very loud version of the Bay City Rollers."

"I KNEW how to change strings, how to tune a guitar, and change a fuse or a plug, and that's about it, really," says Noel Gallagher, reminiscing about his four years as a guitar tech for Inspiral Carpets. Where younger brother Liam fidgets grandly, always appearing on the verge of running away or jumping on you, Noel fidgets small, constantly touching things around the back room of the tour bus with his fingers and shifting in his seat. "When I speak to real guitar technicians, they go on and on about stuff, and I haven't got a clue, mate. Not a clue. I just lied when I got the job."

You didn't like Inspiral Carpets much?

"No, they didn't treat us well at all, and I didn't like the music. They had a couple of good tunes, but they didn't have any spirit. They were just going through the motions for the money. And then, well, I'd be looking at them and thinking, 'Fucking hell, if they can get away with it, I can.' So I started me own band."

In four years with them, you didn't get found out once for not knowing anything

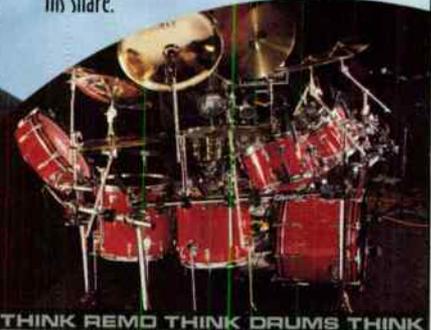
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else, I didn't intend it. But if it does sound like somebody else, fine. Ninety-nine percent of the time, it's only the publishers who

A **Yamaha DMP7** and three **Yamaha DMP9-16** digital mixers accept outputs from the modules, routed via a **Märç** patch bay 20. "The mixers are all cascaded digitally, internally," he explains, "so you can use all 16 channels for modules and keyboards. You don't need to sacrifice two channels." The mixers' internal effects are augmented by a **Tube-Tech MP 1A** mike preamp, **Focusrite Dual Equalizer**, **Summit Audio TLA-100A** tube compressor and a selection of **Sony** processors. Sakamoto uses **Yamaha FMC1** and **Alesis AI-1** 24 format converters to pipe the mixer's outputs to four **Ale-**

sis ADATs 22, and to a **Panasonic SV-3700** DAT deck 23, so that signals remain in the digital domain as much as possible.

For such careful signal-routing, Sakamoto's monitor setup is surprisingly spartan: a pair of **Yamaha NS-10s** and tiny **Tannoy speakers** 24, amplified by a **Carver GM-1090**. "The NS-10s are a universal standard, so I have to use them," he says, "but I like the Tannoys better. I don't want to have big speakers like professional studios have. This is a residential building. Also, ordinary people don't have big speakers. To create music that people will listen to, I decided to

use consumer-level speakers."

While he's scoring to picture, he plays video tapes on a **Sony SVO-160** VHS deck and watches a **Sony Trinitron** monitor.

Scoring or making records, this facility enables Sakamoto to get as far as large-scale overdubs—strings, brass, group vocals—before it's necessary to move to a pro studio. "In some cases I can just move the ADAT rack; then I transfer my sounds to the pro studio's 48-track, overdub and mix. Otherwise I need to move *everything*. It's too much. On the other hand, there's not enough room for a big board here."

"I'm thinking which way I should go: Upgrade to Pro Tools III, which can record 16 tracks, add more ADATs, or give up on mixing here. I haven't decided yet." Another possibility is ISDN, a high-speed digital telephone line. "Then, if another studio has an ISDN connection," he explains, "I can transport all of the audio signals from here to there directly."

ISDN is the cutting edge of record production, but Sakamoto retains a fondness for older technology. The studio includes a rack of vintage synthesizers (retrofitted for MIDI, of course): a **Yamaha DX7II FD**, **ARP Odyssey** and **Quadra**, **Sequential Prophet-5**, **Roland JD-800** and **Roland Jupiter-8**—all axes that he owned years ago and sold to make way for newer models. But he has come to regret it, and over the past two years has rebuilt his collection. "The thing I like most is the ring modulator on the Odyssey. It's hard to find this function today."

"In general, I like more natural sounds, even from synthesizers," he continues. "One of the sounds I like most is a combination of sine waves with the pitch modulated by white noise. It sounds like a cloud or mist." Sampling, too, is a favorite creative stimulant. "Sometimes I'm watching a movie and some sound—one word, a noise, whatever—strikes me, and I sample it and loop it. Sometimes one sample can trigger me to write melodies or chords."

Even in the international arena of contemporary music, Sakamoto is a rare bird: a successful musician who straddles media, styles and cultures. "I'm not a typical Japanese composer or arranger," he suggests. "They use written music so much; the players too. The first time I came to New York 15 years ago I was surprised. Nobody here used written music. Then I changed my idea. Without it, the musicians need to use their ears. I think that's a better way."

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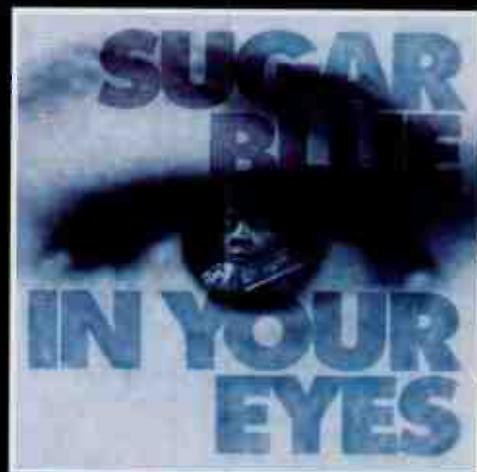


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Jammin' With Neil

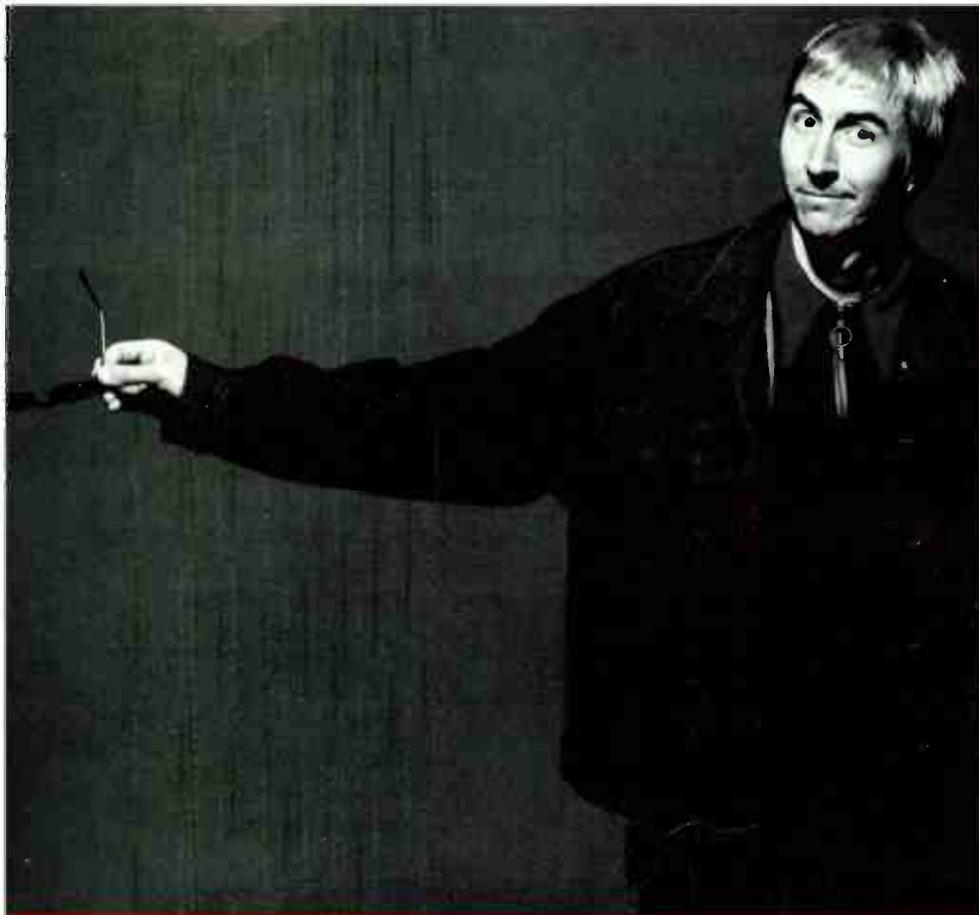
NEIL YOUNG IS A MODERN MAN, WHICH IS TO SAY, he's aware of his disconnections. In an era when past and future pass each other at warp speed, all of us—even pop stars—wrestle with the need to discover new frontiers without severing emotional roots. Without the first, you petrify, without the second you risk losing your humanity. For Young, the frontiers are the musical canvases he paints his pictures on, which change dramatically with nearly every record he makes. The roots are the themes which course through each—of love vs. hatred, vitality vs. passivity, compassion vs. judgment. By constantly jogging himself into new modes of expression, he's managed to mature as a musical craftsman without losing touch with how he really feels—which is all that makes expression matter.

Mirror Ball, much anticipated as a collaboration with Pearl Jam, remains very much a Neil Young record, which is not to discount the band's impact. Their sound here invites comparison to Crazy Horse, obviously, but where the Horse's power grew out of their raggedness and slack understatement, Pearl Jam's power comes directly from power—they're a taut, lively band. You

NEIL YOUNG
Mirror Ball
(REPRISE)

really sense the contrast on "I'm The Ocean," as Jeff Ament's bass lines counter the melody while Jack Irons shoves the beat forward instead of lagging behind. At the same time, Young alchemizes their sound by layering in an acoustically plucked guitar, and producer Brendan O'Brien's saloon piano. The result is a kind of impressionistic time-travel to match the song's imagery, which veers from the real violence of 19th century frontier life to vicarious chills filtered through contemporary TV screens.

Part of what makes *Mirror Ball* so moving is that sense of being unstuck in time, not so much musically—though the combination of Pearl Jam's uncompromised attack with Young's folk melodicism and plaintive tenor suggests the spanning of generations—but by Young's vision. Unlike many an aging rocker, his journeys through the past are less concerned with literal than emotional truths, and he tends to mingle the joyful with the sinister, whether setting the scene in the Middle Ages ("Song X," featuring a dark, dungeon-like chorus) or with hippies cavorting "Downtown," as a leering doorman surveys their collective bliss. By the time the band roils to a climax on "Throw Your



HOW PRIMUS FILLED THEIR PUNCHBOWL

"WHEN I LOOK at the records, even though I'm so close to them, they seem pretty consistent to Primus," says Les Claypool. "They don't change radically, but they do evolve." So what step up the evolutionary ladder did the band take with *Tales from the Punchbowl*? "Well, when we went to do this record, we didn't really have any material written," Claypool admits. We got together, rehearsed a couple times, and let a DAT tape play. I spit out a bunch of ideas and Herb (drummer Tim "Herb" Alexander) had a couple of ideas, and we just jammed. There'd be these tapes of 20-minute jams on a couple of different ideas, moods, or whatever."

Once the band had their raw material, they went into Claypool's new studio to shape them into songs. "Which basically meant me and Herb sitting there and jamming on them, me coming up with a sort of vocal structure, and then laying them down," he says, adding that guitarist Larry Lalonde generally added his parts after the drums and bass were recorded. "It was a situation where Herb and I basically had to sit there and listen to each other through headphones. There wasn't a bunch of big boomy amps or loud cymbals in a room, things were crystal clear. We were playing with each other through headphones, with a very nice mix. It was comfortable."

Making things more comfortable was that the studio was in Claypool's house. "I moved to the country recently, and we picked away at it," he says. "Larry and I combined our equipment, Herb donated a couple mikes, and we borrowed a couple of old U-87s and strung them around the room. Just kind of tinkered with it until we found the sounds that we liked, then started laying things down."

That casual attitude, says Claypool, "helped us in the creative process as well as in the production process. Being able to get tones that we liked without worrying about getting home in time to see a movie, or paying some engineer X amount of dollars, worked well for us." Among the more interesting tones is the tuba-like sound Claypool gets out of his bass for "De Anza Jig." Hearing it, you'd swear it was the tone that inspired the bassline; "not so," says Claypool.

"The tone tends to come about in the mixing process. I mean, you get your tone as you're laying down your track, but you fine-tune it and find its frequency range and the space where it fits into a group of instruments while you're mixing. That's how we leaned toward that midrange-y sound that's giving us that tuba attack. But I wrote the part on my upright, playing it acoustically."

—J.D. Considine
World Radio History

Hatred Down," you're at once elevated by its anthemic chorus and astonished at its weight. As the best Neil Young songs keep reminding us, in an age of disconnections the simplest truths matter most. —Mark Rowland

MICHAEL JACKSON

HIStory Past, Present and Future Book 1
(EPIC)

THE SCANDAL THAT BROUGHT MICHAEL JACKSON's career to a stand-still in 1993 has had a curiously liberating effect on his music. It's as if being the subject of such a public spectacle freed him—perhaps forced him—to take more chances. And so he has on most of the 15 new songs on this double-CD, giving new meaning to the adage, "what doesn't kill you will make you stronger." With the help of such collaborators as Dallas Austin and Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Jackson incorporates tougher musical textures and deliberately "blacker" vocal inflections. This most guarded of pop stars is also more open about expressing negative emotions. This is a breakthrough for Jackson, who, in the past, generally expressed anger only in broad, cartoonish situations ("Beat It" and "Bad") or when he was portraying a character (the man wrongly accused of fathering a child in "Billie Jean").

Here, the anger is real. Jackson is out to even the score with the media and with police and prosecutors who investigated allegations of child molestation against him. (Jackson settled the civil case out of court in January 1994; the criminal case was subsequently dropped.) He



MICHAEL JACKSON

What Are You Listening to Lately?



ROY AYERS

1. Toni Braxton—*Toni Braxton*
2. Miles Davis—*'Round About Midnight*
3. Mary J. Blige—*My Life*
4. anything by John Coltraine
5. Omar—*For Pleasure*

MALCOLM MCLAREN

1. Serge Gainsbourg
2. Massive Attack—*Protection*
3. Portishead—*Dummy*
4. Henry Mancini
5. Duke Jordan—*Les Liaisons Dangereuse* soundtrack



JEFF HEALEY

1. Red Hot Chili Peppers—*Bloodsugarsexxmagik*
2. Naveed—*Our Lady Peace*
3. Amanda Marshall—*Amanda Marshall*
4. Lilith—*Lilith*
5. The New Animals



attacks the media in "Tabloid Junkie" and "the whole system" in "Scream" (the first single, a duet with sister Janet), but he reserves his greatest wrath for a district attorney who dogged him in the chilling "D.S."—which ends with a single gunshot. Jackson is also more pointed about political and racial issues, moving from the safe generalities of "Man In The Mirror" and "Black or White" (with its characteristic line, "I'm not going to spend my life being a color") to more controversial stances. "They Don't Care About Us," which Jackson wrote and produced, suggests that the white power structure doesn't really care about African-Americans. Unfortunately, he undermines his point about racism by lapsing into anti-Semitism with the phrases "Jew me" and "kike me." The album also demonstrates the conflicts that make Jackson such a complicated person and multi-dimensional musician. The angry adult is on view here, and so is the eternally vulnerable child (on the cloying and self-pitying "Childhood"). We hear the aggressive rocker (on a too-faithful cover of John Lennon's "Come Together") and the smooth crooner (a sugary version of the Charles Chaplin standard "Smile"). Jackson is at his most compelling when he brings the two personalities together. On "Money," which he wrote and produced, he spits out a bitter verse about greed and then breaks into a winsome and lilting chorus becoming McCartney to his own Lennon.

A few tracks offer a glimpse into Jackson's personal hell of 1993-94. In "Stranger In

Moscow," Jackson writes about his "swift and sudden fall from grace" and refers to that bleak period as an "Armageddon of the brain." It's a hypnotic look at abandonment. But the challenge remains to bring this new sense of openness and frankness to subjects other than Michael Jackson. As good as "Tabloid Junkie" is, it's also redundant—Jackson zinged the media on each of his last two albums—and more than a little hypocritical. If Jackson really wants to get off the 11 p.m. news, he ought to alert his army of publicists.

The other disk here features 15 of Jackson's greatest hits from 1979 to 1992, most of which were produced by the estimable Quincy Jones. The songs are generally well chosen, though "Off The Wall" and "Smooth Criminal" would have been better than the sappy "Heal The World" and the generic "I Just Can't Stop Loving You." Heard in one place, these recordings prove that, for all his eccentricities and egomania, Jackson is one of the most creative and assured record makers of the modern pop era. No scandal can take that away from him.

—Paul Grein

AIMEE MANN

I'm With Stupid

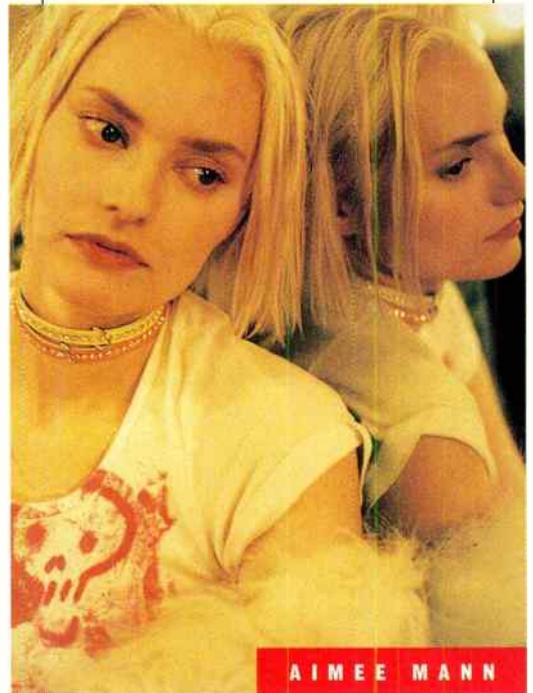
(REPRISE)

TOO OFTEN, GUITAR POP EMPHASIZES ONLY THE shallowest aspects of songwriting, substituting cleverness for intelligence, hooks for resonance, irony for depth. It has become a

genre so obsessed with form that it's almost a waste of time to look beneath the surface of the music, since there's so rarely anything there.

Maybe that's why *I'm With Stupid* seems so stunning. Sure, it's well crafted—from the bittersweet refrain of "Amateur" to the effervescent cadences of "That's Just What You Are," Mann manipulates melody and harmony as well as anyone in the business. But she doesn't stop there. Where other songwriters use wordplay to conceal their emotional wounds, her lyrics cut to the heart of the issue. She's not above metaphor (it may take several listenings before you get the central pun in "Superball"), but as "Amateur" and "Ray" make plain, she'd rather sift through her emotional wreckage than tuck it under a blanket of clever language.

Still, you probably wouldn't notice her depth if Mann's music weren't so polished. Though her best songs have the grace and ingenuity of the *Revolver*-era Beatles, they never sound like throwbacks. From the funky rhythms chugging beneath "Long Shot" to the production effects that animate "Frankenstein," the album has a thoroughly modern



AIMEE MANN

sound and feel. No, it doesn't hurt that Mann has first-rate help, with Chris Difford, Glenn Tilbrook, Juliana Hatfield and Bernard Butler joining producer Jon Brion in the studio. But apart from "Sugarcoated," where the guitar lines clearly bear Butler's signature, the guests are mostly walk-ons; Mann is this album's true star. Her performances here will leave listeners clamoring for an encore. —J.D. Considine

FOO FIGHTERS

Foo Fighters

(ROSWELL/CAPITOL)

AMONG THE MORONICALLY SICK JOKES THAT made the rounds after Kurt Cobain's suicide were a few that snickered at how futureless the other members of Nirvana had suddenly become. In the case of drummer Dave Grohl, this assessment ignored that the grace and power of Grohl's playing was a tremendous part of what made Nirvana exciting. Now, with the release of the debut album from his new band Foo Fighters, it has become abundantly clear that Grohl's talents stretch far beyond the drumstool.

In fact, Grohl is off the drumstool—he's handling a guitar, vocals, and the songwriting for the band. Pat Smear, an ex-Germ who was part of the final Nirvana lineup, is co-guitarist, while bassist Nate Mendel and drummer William Goldsmith make up the rhythm section. Together, these Foo Fighters provide a remarkably energizing rush—an album full of smart, crafty, kick-ass music.

The estimable Cobain may have influenced Grohl's songwriting, but on *Foo Fighters* one can hear how much Grohl's musicianship guided Nirvana's sound—the album is packed with simple, forceful melodies, precise harmonies, and inventive arrangements. Grohl's lyrics are often mysteriously oblique, but those that are decipherable give his songs an edge and a sense of humor (“This Is a Call” is a rousing paean to ritalin and fingernails). “X-Static” fits soothing harmonies over a roiling rhythm track, while “Watershed” and “Weenie Beenie” pump along with Albini-sized outrage. “Big Me” has an easy, country-pop feel, and “For All the Cows” swings along like a closing-time croon from some strange dairy/lounge, before its choruses build to a frenzy.

Perhaps there's some post-Nirvana commentary from Grohl in powerful, personal songs like “I'll Stick Around” or “Alone & Easy Target,” but the most remarkable thing about his music is how convincingly it succeeds on its terms. Though the record can hit with the satisfying blast of *Nevermind* or *In Utero*, Foo Fighters aren't some sad and curious postscript to the Nirvana story—their sound and energy are fresh. Whether or not Grohl keeps them together for the long run, the drummer has proven himself a heavyweight. His music is intelligent, exuberant, and definitely capable of the knock-out punch.

—Chuck Crisafulli

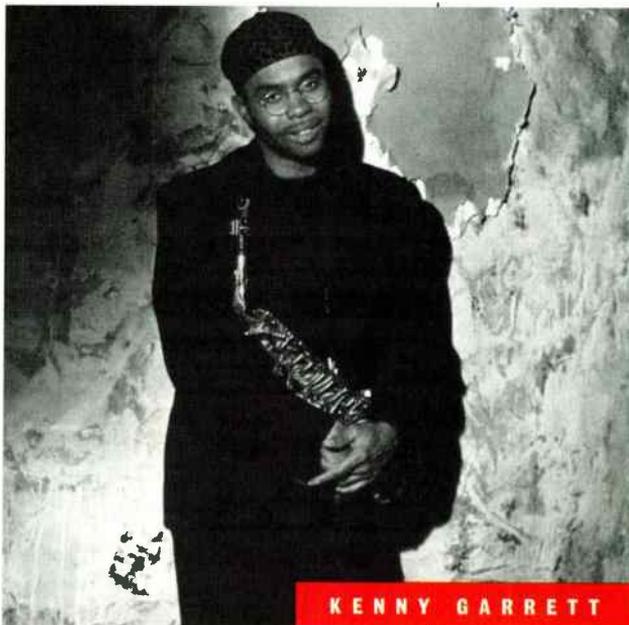
KENNY GARRETT

Trilogy

(WARNER BROS.)

KENNY GARRETT IS AMONG THE MOST FERVENT, committed young voices to emerge on the alto saxophone over the past 20 years. As a creative improviser and solo voice, he ranks right up there with those originals seeking to extend on the alto saxophone's proud history in the post-Coltrane era, and his playing also compares favorably with the classic work of older masters as well.

But then, Garrett is already a youthful veteran with a distinguished pedigree in the Duke Ellington Orchestra, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and



Miles Davis' final working groups. Garrett's last Warner Bros. release, *Black Hope*, presented him in varied programmatic settings, from heady jazz-funk to hard-bopping blues, but *Trilogy* exposes him as never before in a revealing trio setting with the swinging young drummer Brian Blades and bassist Kiyoshi Kitagawa.

From Sonny Rollins on “Freedom Suite” through John Coltrane on “Chasin' The Trane,” the trio format forces the enterprising saxophonist to create all the harmonic and melodic tension by himself. But with his tart throaty tone, cutting attack, bluesy melodic contours and harmonic fluidity, Garrett is more than able to sustain interest. On “Delfeayo's Dilemma,” “Pressing The Issue” and “What Is This Thing Called Love?” he rises to the challenge of thorny chord changes and breakneck tempos with tremendous rhythmic intensity and lyric wit.

But Garrett is also a convincing ballad player, as his tender reading of “A Time For Love” and

his little soft-shoe through “In Your Own Sweet Way” demonstrate. And although Garrett's tone at time suggests the brawny alto work of Julius Hemphill and Jackie McLean, his main influences seem to be testifying tenor men such as John Coltrane and Wayne Shorter, whom he honors with a driving “Giant Steps” and a sanctified “Wayne's Thang.” Still, he always maintains his sense of individuality, which makes him a standout in an era of technosnore copycats.

—Chip Stern

CATHERINE WHEEL

Happy Days

(MERCURY)

LIKE A JOURNEY THAT begins in a Volkswagen Beetle and winds up behind the sturdy wheel of an 18-wheeled rig, ornate Brit-rockers Catherine Wheel have, in the space of three albums, transformed an initially sputtery sound into a juggernaut of unstoppable noise. You don't just listen to the group's deceptively-dubbed *Happy Days* disc; you get mowed down by it, then caught on its axle and dragged screaming for several blocks. The whole approach, a regal

English equivalent to American grunge, is pretty much the concept of one man, Catherine Wheel's mad-eyed monk of a visionary/vocalist, Rob Dickinson. He penned this set, co-produced it with the texturally-inclined Gil Norton, and it's his tortured, vaguely anti-social thoughts you hear blasting out of an already speaker-blowing mix. How anti-social? One song is entitled “Eat My Dust You Insensitive Fuck”—and that's a ballad.

Basically, Dickinson builds pop with shiny steel girders. “Heal,” “Shocking,” “Receive”—while guitars clank and spark like medieval swords, dark, graceful melodies slither unsuspected within the action; they're the kind of hooks that only reveal themselves after several listenings, but when they do, they bite with both fangs. Even “Judy Staring At The Sun,” a gorgeous Dickinson duet with Belly's Tanya Donnelly, doesn't play all its cards right away, despite some obvious Top-40 trappings of tam-



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ARTO LINDSAY TRIO

Aggregates 1-6

(KNITTING FACTORY WORKS)

THOSE WHO BELIEVE Ambitious Lovers brought out the best in Peter Scherer and Arto Lindsay might find each's latest outing deficient. Scherer's *Very Neon Pet* (Metro Blue) is all atmosphere and gauzy rhetoric, the exact opposite of the song shards that Arto links on this savage date. On *Aggregates*, Lindsay either jettisons or ruptures the pop appointments that made the Lovers palatable. With little investment in rhythmic sophistication, these fitful pieces, bolstered by the incisive abstractions of Mel Gibbs and Dougie Bowne, add up to a brutish jabberwocky that mauls the listener. The record's graphic of two pachyderms doing the wild thing is apt; the peaks here are made of mewling eruptions that titillate for a short time only. Bring back the pillow talk.—*Jim Macnie*

VINGENT HERRING

Don't Let It Go

(MUSICMASTERS)

HERRING'S LATEST OUTING as a leader is perhaps his best, especially in his choice of compositions. His title track, Cyrus Chestnut's "Into The Midnight" and "Big Bertha" by the late great Duke Pearson all bring to mind the sophisticated yet hummable melodicism of Benny Golson, who—just coincidentally—pens the liner notes here. Trumpeter Scott Wendholdt displays a cool, understated style, while Herring plays Trane to his Miles, blowing a storm without sacrificing intellectual rigor. And Herring's tone, round yet piercing, gets under your skin when it's not raising goosebumps. Check it out.—*Mark Rowland*

JOHN COLIANNI

At Maybeck

(CONCORD JAZZ)

THIS IS VOLUME 37 of what may be too much of a good thing—how many solo piano covers of "Tea for Two" and "Stardust" do we need anyway? But I've been listening to them all, and this volume is one of my faves. Could it be Colianni's relaxed melodic swing, bringing to mind the essence of K.C. jump blues and stride, even in the service of more "mod-

ern standards? Or that those standards also include such judicious choices as "It Never Entered My Mind" and "Don't Stop The Carnival"? Or that Colianni's inspired take on Kurt Cobain's "Heart Shaped Box," of all things, conveys the spare beauty of Cobain's compositional gift in a way Tori Amos hadn't imagined? Yes to all of the above.—*Mark Rowland*

OTIS SPANN

Down To Earth

(MCA)

NO ONE IN Muddy Waters' legendary original band was more urbane than pianist Otis Spann. If Little Walter was the mercurial genius and Jimmy Rogers the rock solid craftsman, Spann gave Muddy's Delta blues the sound of the city. His solo career was ill-fated—there were no classic singles and he died young—but as this reissue of his Bluesway output shows, he was a dynamic artist in his own right. The live set is a real gem—a 1966 session/party with Spann and Muddy blazing away. Highly recommended.—*Tom Anderson*

LEE MORGAN

Leeway

(BLUE NOTE)

Tribute To Lee Morgan

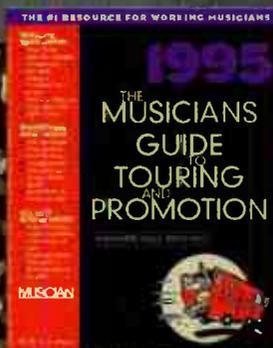
(NYC)

BLUE NOTE'S CONNOISSEUR series has unearthed another gem with this relatively obscure Lee Morgan date, aided by Jackie McLean, Bobby Timmons, Paul Chambers and Art Blakey. Two fine Calvin Massey compositions, including the aptly-titled "These Are Soulful Days," prove a fine frame for Morgan's expressive trumpet solos, and bookend two relaxed blowing blues, including Lee's own Blue Note tribute, "The Lion and the Wolff." That song is covered on *Tribute To Lee Morgan*, which collects his best songwriting from the funky "Sidewinder" to the gorgeous balled "Ceora." Both feature the soprano sax of Grover Washington, Jr., sitting in with another stellar quintet—Eddie Henderson, Joe Lovano, Cedar Walton, Peter Washington and the peerless Billy Higgins. (NYC Records, 800-266-4692).—*Mark Rowland*

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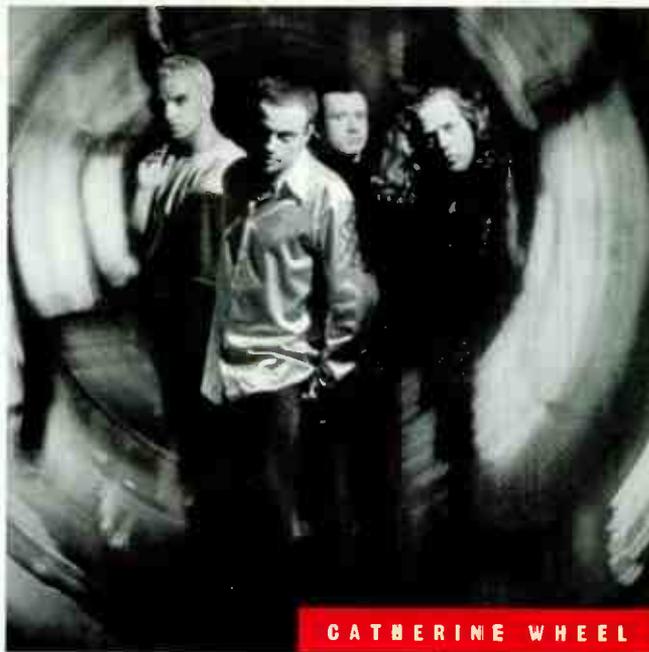
REVIEWS

bourine, chimey axework and a smiling 'Wah-ooh' chorus. Every spin through, the line "Judy's suffering tonight—she's suffering" begins feeling creepier and creepier, until Dickinson seems to be turning into that classic Merrie Melody cartoon, "The Cat That Hated People." He sounds potentially dangerous, and that—in song after song—works to Catherine Wheel's advantage.

Dickinson doesn't just lash out at society; stares in the mirror from time to time, equally dissatisfied. "I destroy myself, I know, I know, I know..." he mutters in "Receive," an otherwise exotic melding of Far East electric filigrees and extra-meaty riffs. But another chunk of tractor-trailer grind, "Empty Head," best summarizes Dickinson and the addicting Catherine Wheel shtick. "Of all the things a popular song can bring," the vocals wheeze, "A permanent picture of hope is what I hate the most..."

—Tom Lanham

MORIS TEPPER
Big Enough to Disappear
(CANDLE BONE)



CATHERINE WHEEL

ATENTION ALL LAZY A&R PEOPLE: ANYBODY who wants to "discover" a swell artist with a minimum of effort should check out Moris Tepper's debut album now. It's familiar in an appealing way, echoing sensitive yet manly men like John Mellencamp and Bruce Springsteen without resorting to imitation. For artier types, it's got a seriously zany streak, reflecting his stints as

guitarist for such celebrated mavericks as Captain Beefheart and Tom Waits, but avoids gratuitous weirdness. From either angle, this deceptively slick gem crackles with more wit and vitality than most of the well-financed product cluttering the racks today, capturing the contagious joy of an inventive soul at play. Tepper just needs a record label smart

enough to put out *Big Enough to Disappear* as is. The dude dazzles from the git-go. "Can't Stop Crying," the opening track, could pass for vintage Dylan, combining a flurry of tantalizing images, dramatic chords, and hoarse, overwrought vocals to depict emotions out of control. A champion of excess, Tepper routinely carries standard situations to tragicomic

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extremes. In the disarmingly straightforward ballad "Bankshot," a simple broken heart inspires high drama, while the woozy "Beside Me Once Again" enhances misty-eyed longing with the drunken Salvation Army strains of a tuba and cornet. Canny arrangements are Tupper's secret weapon. In addition to goofy horns, he spices the mix with marimbas, accordions, concertinas, banjos and the like, recalling the

chunky textures of the Band.

The romantic tunes are so genuinely poignant that his odder stuff seems truly warped by comparison. "The Stain," a demented hillbilly stomp, offers an unnerving brew of lust and anger; the frazzled "Then We'll Sail," one of two nautical tall tales, spotlights his knack for entertaining throw-away observations, as a luckless crewman

SHORT TAKES

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

BRUCE HORNSBY

Hot House

(FICSI)

AS HORNSBY IS a stronger stylist than tunesmith, some of these songs might seem a tad familiar, like the way "Walk in the Sun" echoes the bluesy cadences of "Rainbow's Cadillac." But the playing is the real focus here, and on that front: Hornsby is dazzling. It isn't just his pianistic prowess that dazzles (though the percussive power and rich, singing tone he gets in "Spider Fingers" is pretty damned impressive); what makes the music sizzle is the way he inspires the other players, leaving room in the jazzy "White Wheeled Limousine" for Bela Fleck and Pat Metheny to trade solos, and even giving Jerry Garcia a chance to stretch some on the surging, Doobie-ish "Cruise Control."

NATALIE MERCHANT

Tigerlily

(ELEKTRA)

BETWEEN THE LITERARY polish of her lyrics and the solemnity of her singing, Merchant's 10,000 Maniacs persona seemed dour, principled and a little cold around the edges. What a surprise, then, to hear this album open with the bluesy moan and funky groove of "San Andreas Fault." Her new playmates have a far greater stylistic range than the Maniacs, while Merchant conveys more passion and personality than in the past, adding anger and wit to confessionals like "Jealousy," and deep empathy to character studies like "Be-oved Wife."

VAN MORRISON

Days Like This

(POLYDOR)

THERE ARE MOMENTS here when Morrison's interplay with the band verges on the tele-

pathic, mixing jazz, blues and soul better than anyone in contemporary music. There are great songs, too; tunes like "Melancholia" and "No Religion" that address complex topics with clarity and wit. But there are also examples of self-indulgence so stunning (like the duets with his pitch-deficient daughter, Shana) that the moments of genius seem almost accidental.

ROD STEWART

A Spanner in the Works

(WARNER BROS.)

STEWART'S WRITING MAY have lost some of its edge, but his singing seems surer than ever, and that's what makes this his best album since *Every Picture Tells a Story*. Start with the heart-in-mouth intensity of "Downtown Lights," then move to the winsome grace of "Leave Virginia Alone" and the soulful enthusiasm of "Muddy, Sam and Otis." By the time you get to the no-breaks run through "Hang on St. Christopher," it's clear that this *Spanner* definitely works.

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

Batman Forever

(ATLANTIC)

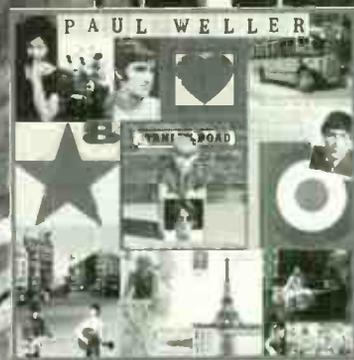
LIKE THE MOVIES themselves, big-budget soundtracks are more about packaging than content, tossing tracks together with more attention to Top-40 potential than how it all will sit on an album. But though *Batman Forever* bounces from Mazzy Star to Method Man to Offspring to Seal, it remains a remarkably unified piece of work, worth owning if only to hear how U2's T.Rex-y "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me" dissolves into the dark, swampy blues of P.J. Harvey's "One Time Too Many," which in turn sets up the sweet, guitar-based funk of Brandy's "Where Are You Now?"

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howls, "None of us is gentle/Because we live out on the sea." Even at his most melodramatic, Tepper never fails to rant with authority. Everything makes lovely sense in its own eccentric way.

Submit lucrative contracts to Moris Tepper at PO Box 371511, Reseda, CA 91337.

—Jon Young

DAVE THOMPSON

Little Dave and Big Love

(FAT POSSUM/CAPRICORN)

FAT POSSUM RECORDS, A SMALL LABEL IN OXFORD, Mississippi, is making the best blues records in America right now. The imprint has issued extraordinary albums by older talents like Junior Kimbrough, R.L. Burnside and the ineffable eccentric CeDell Davis. Now it has begun to put younger blues artists in the spotlight, such as Kimbrough's son David Malone. The lead guitarist on that set, Dave Thompson, boasts his own bow here, and like the company's previous albums, this one's a pip.

Thompson, a blues prodigy who first worked with jukester Booba Barnes while in his

early teens, is a guitarist whose style is literally slippery: He sprays WD-40 on his strings to keep them slick. His playing sports blazing high-end climaxes, and his messily affecting slide style betrays few stylistic precedents. His singing is blunt and natural, almost documentary in its directness. Overall, his work here is highly reminiscent of Son Seals' harshly compelling early recordings.

Little Dave and Big Love, like most of Fat Possum's other releases, was produced by former *New York Times* music critic and musician Robert Palmer. He cut the record in a one-day session that emphasized rawness and spontaneity. In the process, Palmer has managed to capture the essence of Thompson's gutsy, brooding music: Punchy funk numbers like "Standing Up On My Own" and somber slow-blues tracks like "I'm Having It So Hard" and "Ain't It a Shame" hit upside the head. Captured most adeptly is an undercurrent of barely suppressed violence in Thompson's sound, which is reflected lyrically in the blues *noir* of "After Hours Bar": "If you're looking for a good fight, go down there on a Saturday night."

If you're looking for one of the hottest guitar-slingers to come up the pike in a while, look no further than this doozy of a debut. Little Dave Thompson is looming large. —Chris Morris

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Fat Man And The Hard Blues

The first time I laid eyes on Julius Arthur Hemphill, he suggested to me some rarified composite of the young James Earl Jones and Burt Lancaster. There was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, and his sonorous, distinguished voice was punctuated by long, discrete pauses and a low musical undertone. When he flashed that hundred watt grin, he became a charming rascal who was no stranger to wine, women or song.

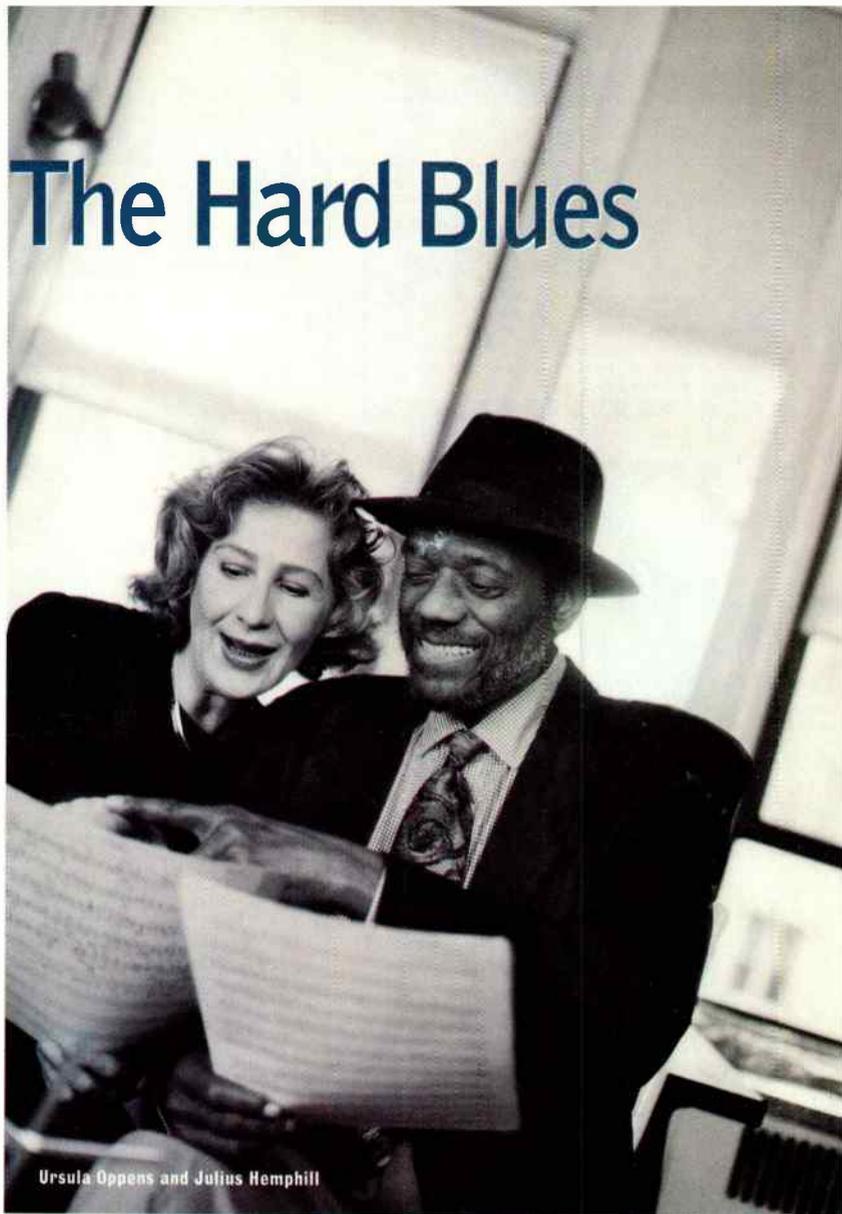
With his wit, innate disrespect for authority, and hearty contempt for conformity, Hemphill was an American original. He was a singular composer and improviser; one of the great unsung heroes of the blues, modern jazz and 20th century harmony; a godfather of today's multi-media matrix, who first explored the artistic possibilities of combining dance, theater, video, painting and music—while forging connections with the local community—as a founder of the visionary Black Artist Group in St. Louis, way back in 1968.

In 1972 he produced an historic session which yielded a pair of influential albums—*Dogon A.D.* and *Coon Bid'nness*—that fostered a mini-movement in jazz, just as fusion was turning sour. Compositions such as “Dogon A.D.” and “The Hard Blues” combined the danger and freedom of post-Coltrane jazz with the earthy, folksy mystery of old-time R&B and the delta blues (as epitomized by the cello work of long-time collaborator Abdul Wadud). Hemphill's alto solos were notable for their intellectual rigor, hair-raising emotional content and absence of clichés. His blow-torched timbre, desperate upper-register cries and stunning rhythmic displacements were deeply imbued in Bird and the blues.

But then, Julius always viewed his work as autobiographical, and in the Hot End of Fort Worth, the blues came roaring out of every window. “When I grew up, the blues was all around me, so I tended to take it for granted, and looked toward other sources. That's how I came to find out about Lee Konitz and Lennie Tristano and people like that—they were different. Besides, white people tend to romanticize the blues. Where I grew up, respectable people considered the blues lowdown, vulgar and common.”

Hemphill was best known for his work with the World Saxophone Quartet, which he helped found in 1976; his writing and arranging set the tone for the group's finest works. But Hemphill had more ambitious music in mind. He achieved it with the Julius Hemphill Sextet on the remarkable *Fat Man And The Hard Blues* and *Five Chord Stud*. And despite the indifference of his producers, the *Julius Hemphill Big Band* remains among the visionary orchestral records of the last 25 years, a polyphonic melange of reeds, woodwinds, brass, electric strings and percussion.

Never a choir boy, he once remarked of his life that “You pay your dollar, and you ride your ride.” Julius enjoyed a creative and loving relationship with the remarkable modern pianist Ursula Oppens, and a fruitful professional relationship with manager and adviser Cynthia Herbst. He led an excellent electric ensemble, the JAH Band, on several tours, composed an ambitious saxophone opera, *Long Tongues*, provided music for the Bill T. Jones Dance Company's production of “Last Supper At Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land,” and tour with his superb sextet, featuring the likes of Andrew White, Marty Ehrlich and James Carter.



Ursula Oppens and Julius Hemphill

But thanks to diabetes, his body finally gave out. First there was an amputation; then his kidneys failed and he went on dialysis; an operation for congestive heart condition was followed by anemia, a tumor on his liver and back spasms. My man Timex—take a lickin' but keep on tickin'. He accepted it all with courage, grace, and his customary sense of humor. I remember visiting him in the VA hospital in Manhattan, when he told me he'd lost his leg. My eyes began to well with tears, but Julius spoke calmly: “The doctors explained to me that they might be able to save my life when they amputated,” he said. “Not if...when. I'd run out of options—I didn't have a leg to stand on.” He made me laugh. Now that's a heart.

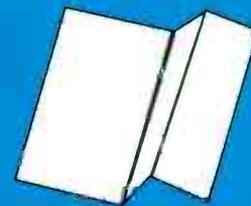
He was bedridden for two years, but in the last six months of his life he seemed to rally, because he started to think about music again, and that horny, sarcastic leer returned to his voice. In fact, a week and a half before he died, he played the Knitting Factory with his sextet, acting as a wry commentator in his wheelchair, and even chipped in with a few classic alto solos.

Walking west along 181st Street a few nights after he passed, I saw an amazing sight. There, below rooftop level, was this lofty crescent moon, like a matte painting across the Hudson, and I thought I saw Julius smiling down at me from behind a cloud with his distinctive cheshire grin. A wink and a nod from the beyond, chocolate and in technicolor.—Chip Stern

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