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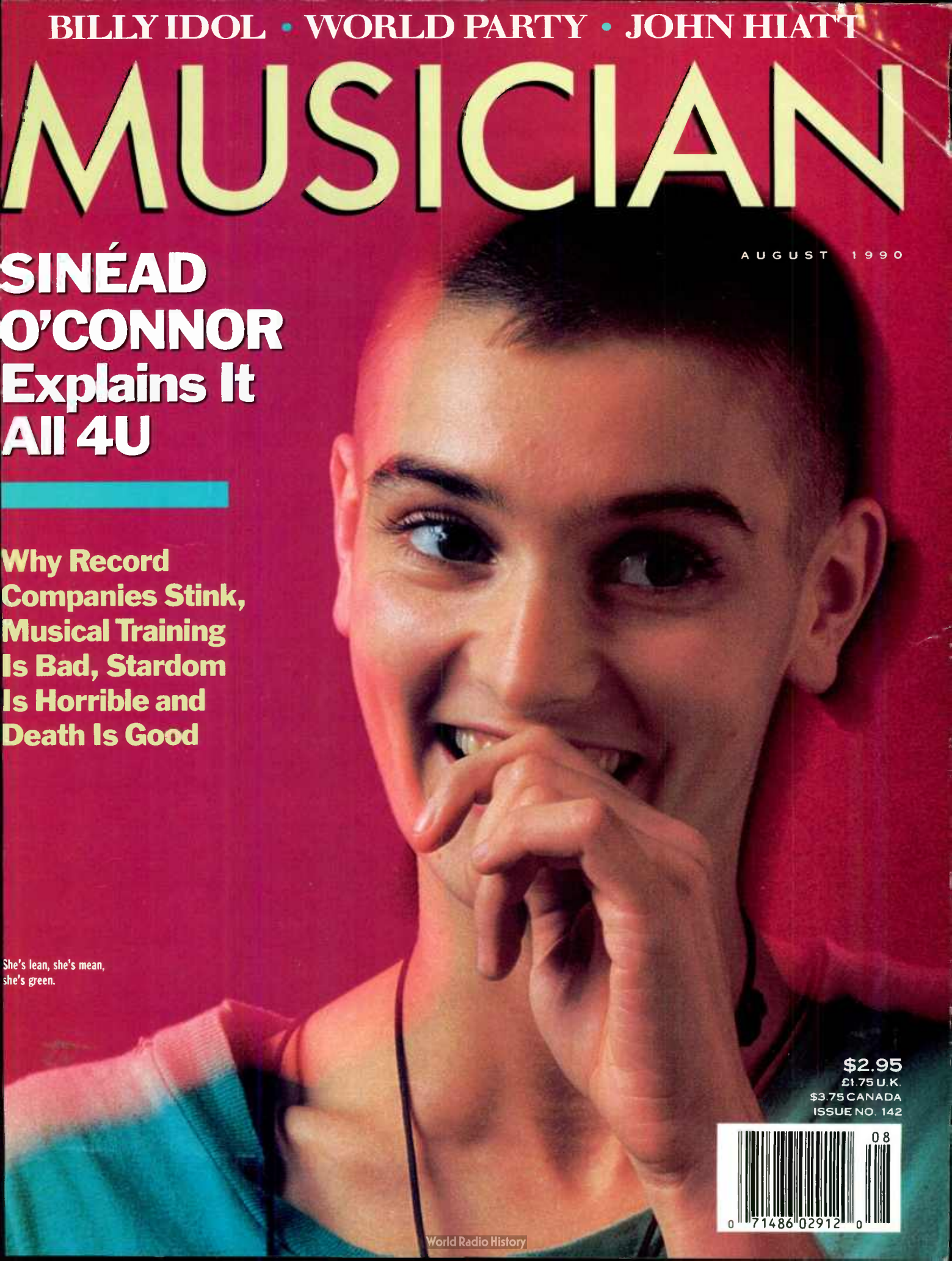
MUSICIAN

AUGUST 1990

SINÉAD O'CONNOR Explains It All 4U

Why Record Companies Stink, Musical Training Is Bad, Stardom Is Horrible and Death Is Good



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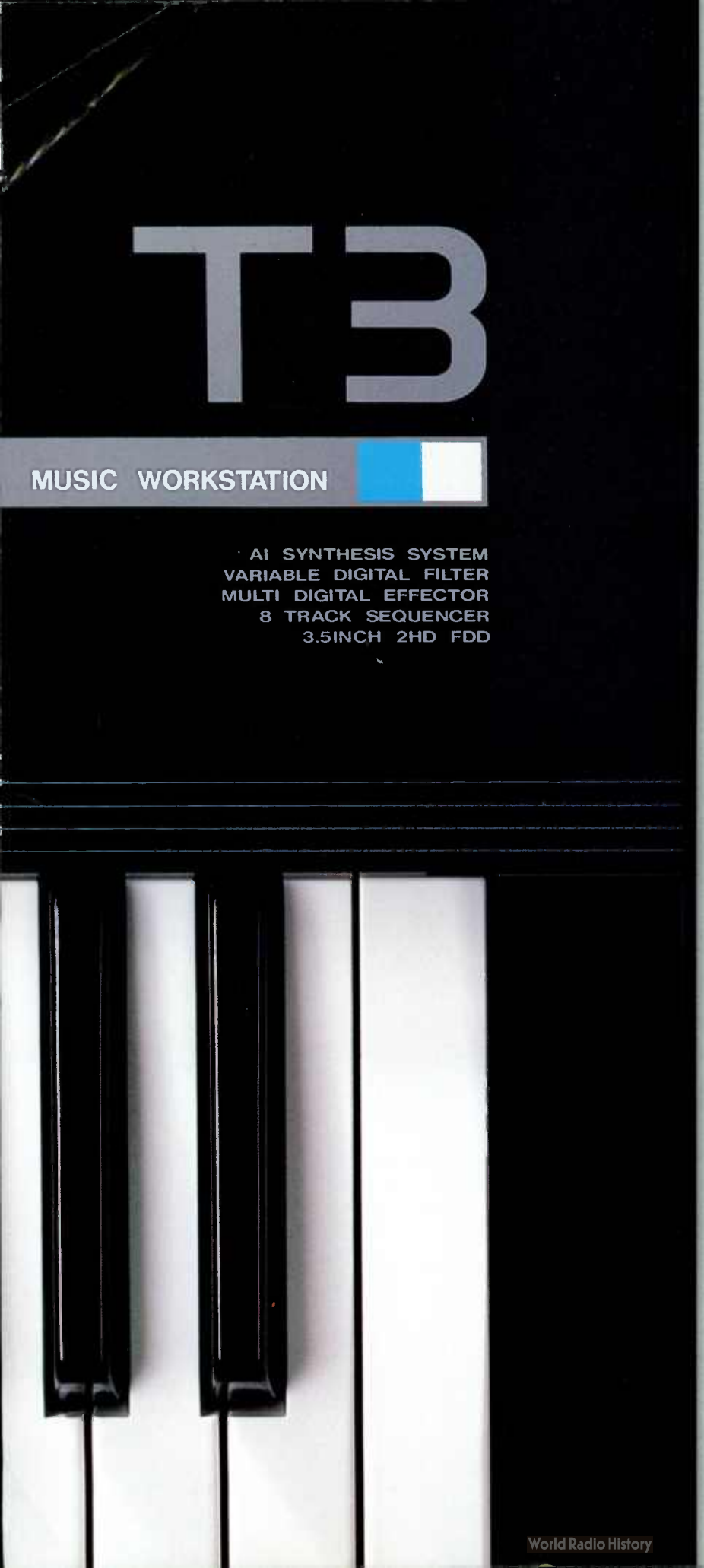

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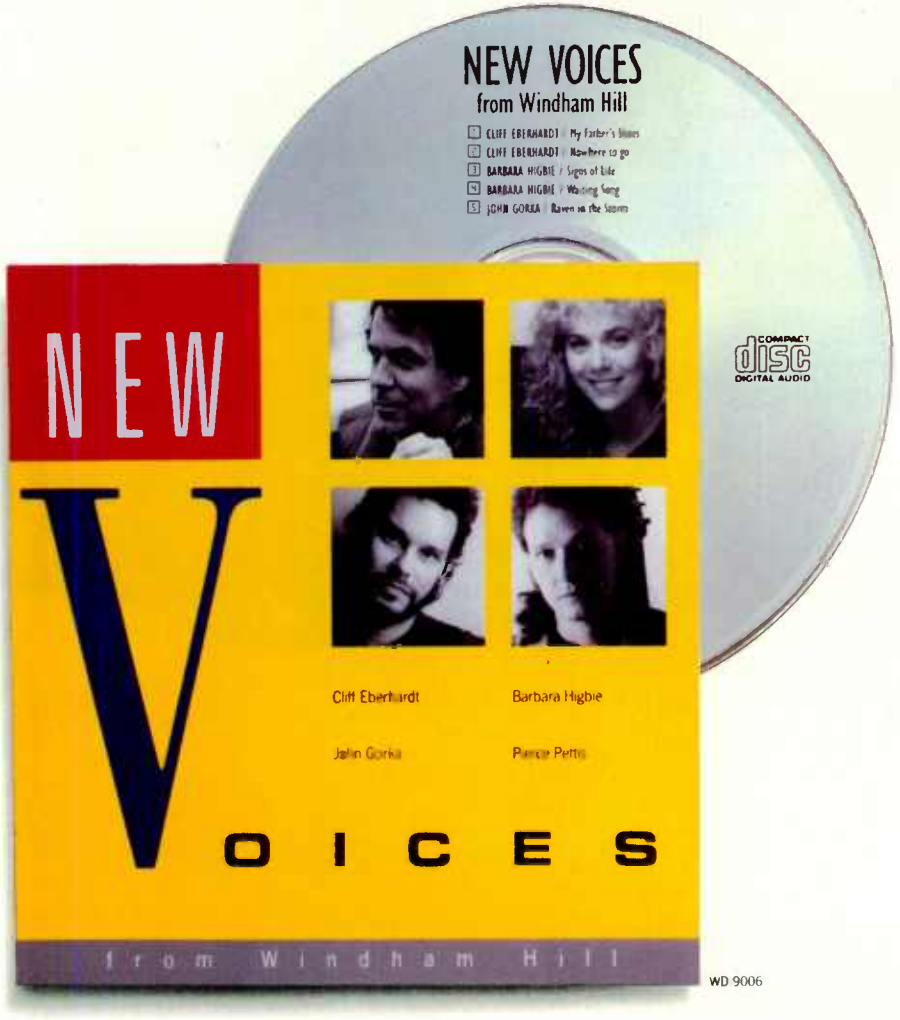

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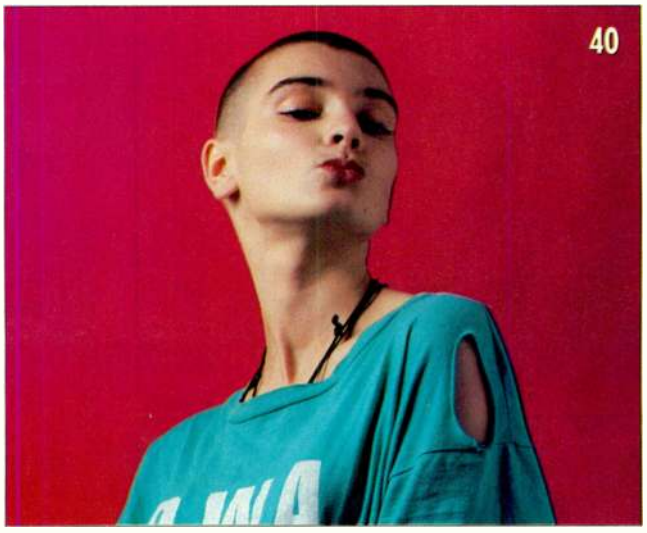

Musician • August 1990

A Billboard Publication

Working Musician

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Cover photograph of Sinéad O'Connor by Christine Alicino, Berkeley, California, June 1990. Photographs this page: (from left) Mark Tucker; Christine Alicino; The Douglas Brothers/Onyx.

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World Radio History

Billy Idol

I know you're still in rehab [note: Idol's left leg was severely injured in a motorcycle accident several months ago]. But with Charmed Life *flying up the charts, do you have plans to tour?*

We will go on tour this year, I've made up my mind, even if I'm on crutches or a wheelchair or dragging this leg behind me. Hopefully I'll be fit enough to put on a full performance. I think with the type of scrutiny we're getting with this album that people will still be interested, even if it's, "Let's go see Idol, the old gimp. Let's see him drag that leg around!" [*laughs*] If I'm in any sort of pain I'll have a "painometer" on the side of the stage. You'll see it go up as I get more and more wild and at the end they'll have to bring on a team of doctors to sedate me. So, yeah, I'm definitely planning to tour. There's too many girls out there anyway.

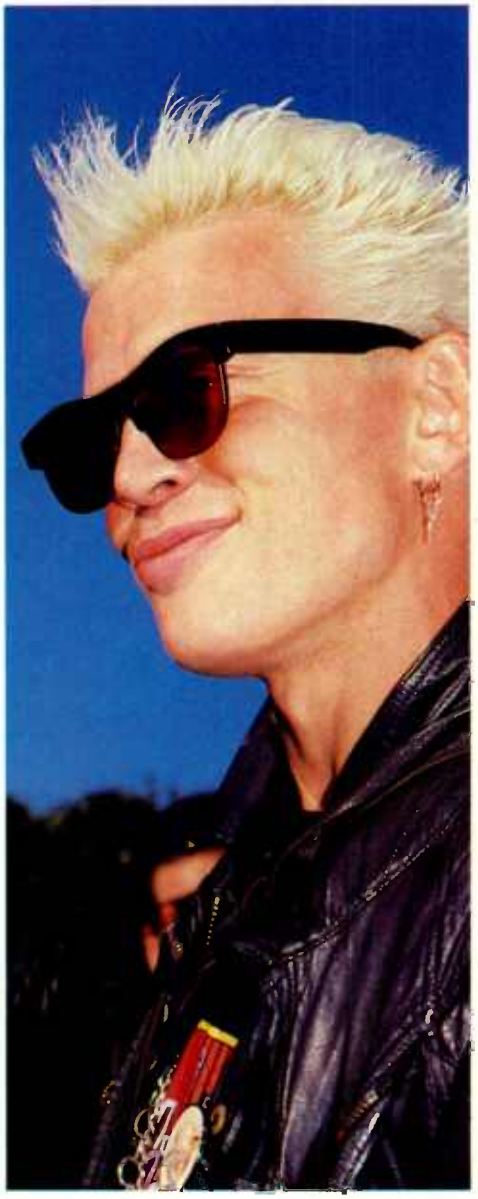
"WHATEVER YOU'RE AFTER, WHETHER IT'S DRUGS OR MONEY OR LOVE, THOSE THINGS CAN TURN AROUND AND BITE YOU."

Has your longevity as a pop star surprised you?

Yeah, and everyone else as well [*laughs*]. One of the reasons I called it *Charmed Life* is that I'm sure a lot of people are scratching their heads thinking, "That guy was never supposed to get past his first appearance on 'Top of the Pops'!" But that was the great thing about punk; it was supposed to be self-destructive, so the idea of "No Future" was kind of right. When Generation X ended and I came to America I didn't know what was going to happen; all you could do was gather your wits about you, hold on to what you loved and believed in and go for it. That's the magical side of *Charmed Life*, that I still have a musical direction of my own and great people to help me achieve it. [Producer] Keith Forsey was one of the first people who helped cement the fact that I was going to have a musical future. We just never knew what it was going to be.

When I first came to America the record company was trying to get me to brush me hair down and be either David Cassidy or Rick Springfield. They'd be showing me that picture of him with the dog, you know? And I was thinking, "Uh, I don't think I really want to be Rick Springfield." It frightened me to death, that idea.

For a while after that no one would play my records because I had spiky hair on the cover of "Mony Mony." So we put out "Hot in the City" without my picture on it, and that got to number 18 on the American charts; we put out "White Wedding" with my picture again and they wouldn't play it! Then MTV came along and kind of saved me, 'cause we were among the first people making videos, it kind of gave me an airwave. It's all been bit by bit, you know; I was never sitting around thinking, "My future's assured." It's been more like chewing my way up. So I have surprised myself. But it's been really exciting and I don't see that excitement disappearing.



Charmed Life *seems more reflective than your other records, more autobiographical on tunes like "Prodigal Blues."*

Well, that was one of the reasons I really wanted to be a musician, to play guitar and dig at my own emotions, things like that. But it wasn't a conscious intent. Just the time I took to make this album—it's been four years since *Whiplash Smile*—meant that I did have time to reflect, rather than being in the maelstrom, so to speak. Even putting a new group together meant that you kind of had to think about the past so you could look at it a little bit. So doing that, moving to L.A., meeting new people, you start thinking about the other pasts you've had, you know? And watching my son being born, you see it's not just your life anymore, you're nurturing someone else's—it gives you more reflective thoughts. You dwell more on your life because you're creating one.

He's almost two now. He really loves *Batman*. The other day he was telling me "fuck you" as well [*laughs*]. Uh-oh.

A lot of the new songs really crackle, and at the same time there's a fascination with death.

That's the thing about rock 'n' roll, that you're always faced with the void. I thought if I ever did a video for "Trouble with the Sweet Stuff," it would just be me digging my own grave—and in the end getting into the box. Of course everyone wants to think that the song is about drugs, and it can be . . . But any minute life can swoop over you, whatever you're after, whether it's drugs or money or love, these things can turn around and bite you. So really the song is about being in love with life, and passion, but how overindulging one way or another will be your downfall. That's the trouble with life, it leads you on. You need that passion to want to stay alive, but your desires are going to lead you into some kind of destruction.—**Mark Rowland**

Photograph: Arroyo/Retna

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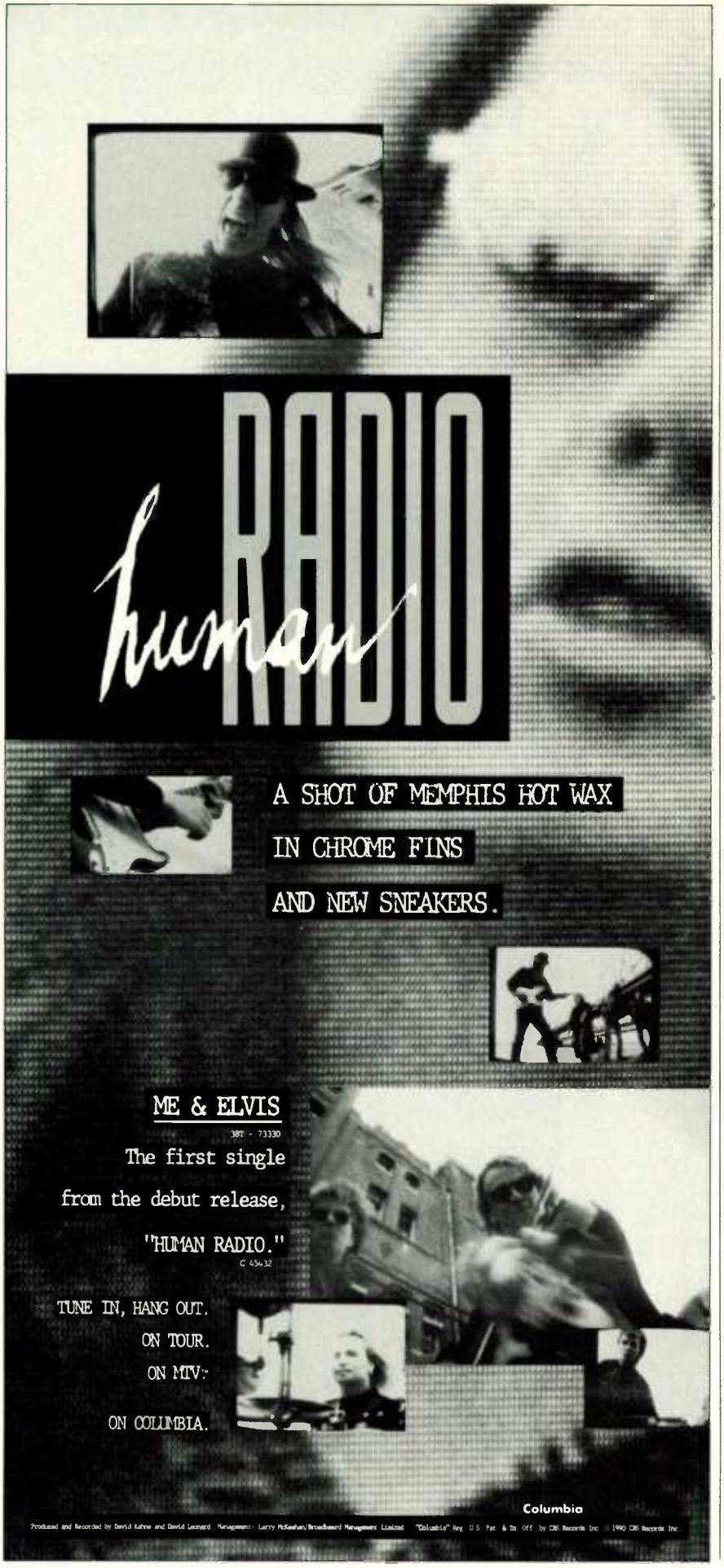

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LETTERS

McFeedback

MANY THANKS for the excellent feature on Paul McCartney (May '90). And that cover photo—I think I'll frame it!

Carol Angell
New Orleans, LA

BILL FLANAGAN SHOULD be commended for his extensive article on Paul McCartney. Words can't express the thrill of seeing McCartney in concert again. He has seen and done it all, but yet comes out and gives it his all.

Bob Hart
Louisville, KY

IT'S SO REFRESHING to read a respectful and lengthy article on a man who has contributed so much to rock music.

Carolyn Patton
Birmingham, AL

AS A BIG Costello fan, I really enjoyed getting his perspective on the McCartney-MacManus collaboration. I've always thought that Costello and Lennon would have made an interesting team: Their mutual love of word games could have produced some thought-provoking results. I'm sorry it never happened.

Rozanne Stevens
Naperville, IL

ONLY *MUSICIAN* has the honesty to portray Paul honestly and fairly. Yoko has sympathy on her side, hence Paul is often cast as the villain in the Beatles story.

Beyond this, *Musician* asks probing questions that reach beyond those asked over the last 25 years. How else would we learn what guitars the Beatles played and why? Who else dares (or is even smart enough) to ask about what goes on behind a given song? Keep up the good work.

Steve Iverson
Atlanta, GA

I AM IN complete agreement with Paul McCartney that turning Beatles songs into commercials "endanger[s] the integrity of the songs" and is "real cheesy." Still, I kinda liked "Live and Let Die" and "My Brave Face" before they were jingles for Visa.

Steven Bender
New York, NY

Better Mate Than Never

THE RECORDING by Charlie Rich of "Feel Like Going Home" (*Front Man*, May '90) was a demo of the song, the tape of which was given by Rich to your own Peter Guralnick, whose book it was named after. By the way, I would imagine Mark Knopfler actually said that he was given it by a "mate" (English for friend) rather than a "maid."

Martin Colyer
London, England

Cecil & Ahmad Show

DEEPEST THANKS to Cecil Taylor and Ahmad Jamal for their music and presence (May '90). The three-way conversation, apart from its reductive title, was enthralling.

Amey Miller
Chapel Hill, NC

Murphy's Worth

SO MANY FAMOUS musicians today exploit the effect they have on their fans. They gloatingly exhibit their nihilism in videos, interviews and every other facet of their decadent lifestyles. I was impressed with Peter Murphy's down-to-earth description of the ethics involved with musical fame. He understood Bauhaus had a strong hold on fans who worshipped the band's talent and artistic flair. Music like Murphy's and Love & Rockets' overshadows the shallow flash and glitter of music accepted by the mainstream. Thank you for dedicating your space to one of alternative music's most intelligent and creative performers.

Beth Johnston
Charlotte, NC

Numbers Freak

THANKS FOR PUBLISHING the album charts. I hope you will continue to do so. I haven't been able to keep up with the charts since a local radio station pulled *Billboard*'s Top 40 singles countdown off the air.

Craig Krauss
Winterset, IA

Kevn Heavn

IT'S GREAT to see such a good singer/songwriter like Kevn Kinney get appreciated. *Macdougal Blues* (May '90) is a simple approach to such simple music. I'm glad to know that both he and Peter Buck approached the album in such a manner that would allow them to opt for a fresh sound. Mess-ups and such have become underrated in the current "CD" mindset: "Everything has got to be perfect!" I hope more musicians acquire the guts to record a real record the way Kinney did.

Todd Prusin
Atlanta, GA

Rumor Has It

I'VE HEARD RUMORS that the singer Stevie Nicks of the band Fleetwood Mac has had supernatural visions, and that she sang about them in the song titled "Dreams" which appeared on the 1977 album called *Rumours*.

I'm not talking about hallucinations, I'm talking about the supernatural spiritual experience of visions.

I've also heard rumors that the visions Stevie Nicks has had were visions of a prophet of God, and that she met this prophet in 1985. I've heard rumors that there is a Spirit dwelling within this prophet, and this Spirit claims to hold the keys of hell and death!

The rumors I've heard say this prophet of God brought Stevie Nicks to salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9), and then he cast two evil spirits out of her! (Mark 16:17) I've heard that the names of the two evil spirits were RHIANNON and SARA.

I've heard rumors that when Stevie Nicks had these visions, she was (in the words of Daniel) "... astonished at the vision ..." (Dan. 8:27).

Stevie Nicks sang that she keeps her visions to herself, but it doesn't hurt to try and ask questions about her visions, does it?

How many visions has Stevie Nicks had in her life? When was the first time she saw a vision? When was the last time she saw a vision? What or whom were they visions of?

I've heard rumors that Stevie Nicks thinks she is a witch, but I saw an interview with her on TV a few years ago where she denied that she was a witch. If Stevie Nicks had supernatural visions and she is not a witch, what is she? A prophetess? (I'm reminded of Numbers 12:6 or Joel 2:28 or Acts 2:17.)

Are any of these rumors true?

Darvin Olson
Williston, ND

We've heard rumors that if you throw a bucket of water at Stevie she melts. But we don't believe it.

Eraata

San Francisco Chronicle *critic Joshua Kosman's name was misspelled in the Kronos Quartet article in our May issue.*

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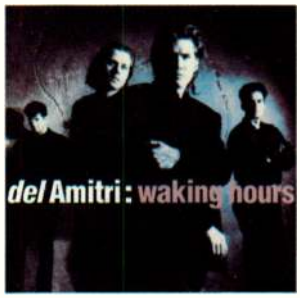
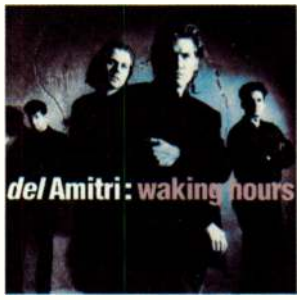


Cool.



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del Amitri waking hours

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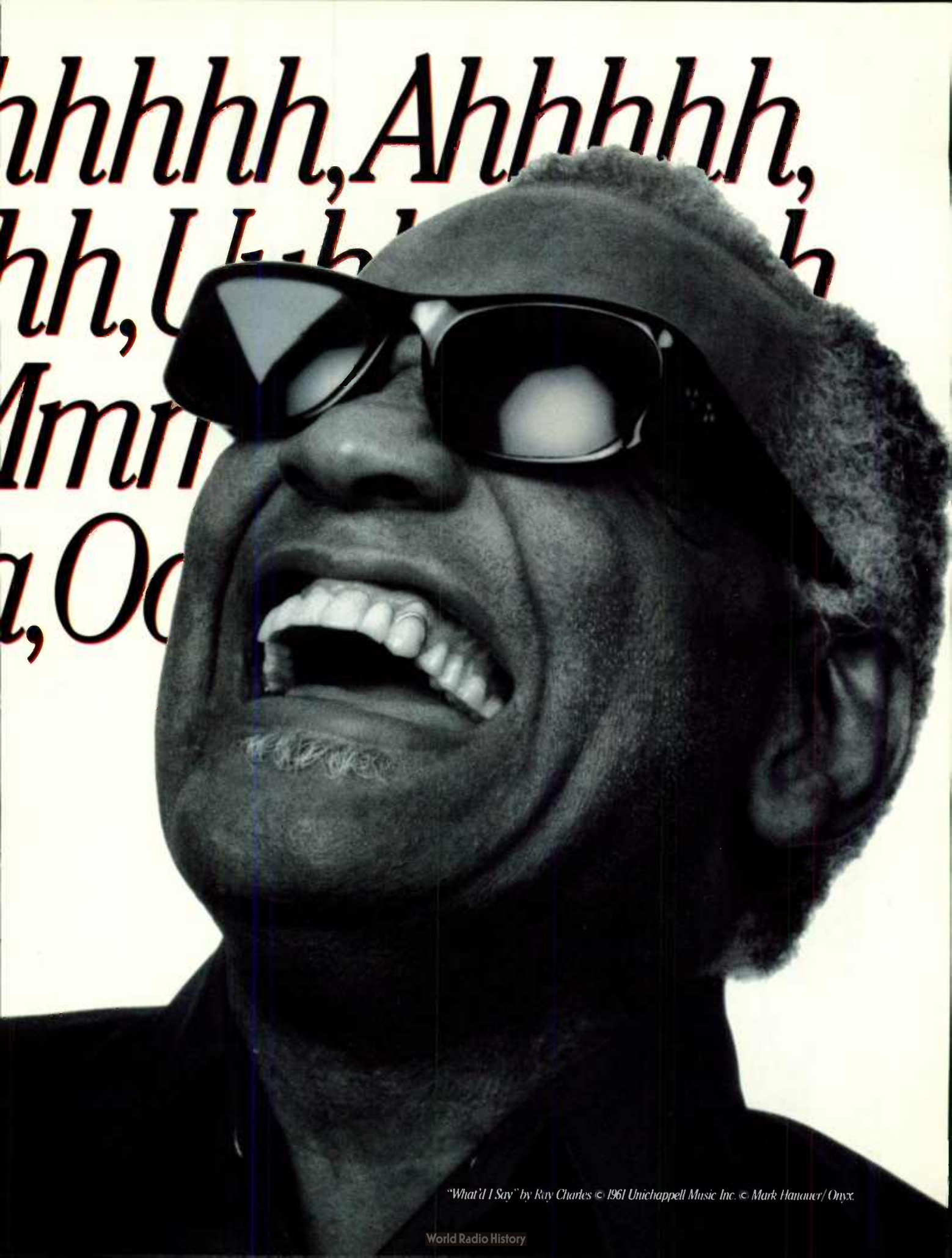

"What'd I Say" by Ray Charles © 1961 Unichappell Music Inc. © Mark Hanauer/Onyx.

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Attitude

Etta James — 'STICKIN TO MY GUNS' PRODUCED BY BARRY BECKETT ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION BY ETTA JAMES

One of the most influential blues/rock 'n' roll singers of all time, Etta James is armed with some of the most powerful R&B plated bullets you've ever heard, on her new album, 'Stickin' To My Guns'. "This is the American Culture, it's the blues," says Etta. "I just wanted to bring it up to the present." She puts the old with the new, and stays timeless and true.

Blues

John Mayall — 'A SENSE OF PLACE' PRODUCED BY R.S. FIELD

'The Godfather of British Blues', John Mayall is here to please his loyal following of die hard fans and introduce his familiar name to a growing appreciative audience. 'A Sense Of Place' features his heartfelt vocals, boogie-based piano, soulful harmonica, and most of all, his impeccable taste.

Creole

Buckwheat Zydeco — 'WHERE THERE'S SMOKE THERE'S FIRE' PRODUCED BY DAVID HIDALGO EXECUTIVE PRODUCER TED FOX

Blues, rock 'n' roll, Creole -- forget the categories. On 'Where There's Smoke There's Fire', Buckwheat Zydeco rocks their roots like never before. Smokin' as always, Stanley 'Buckwheat' Dural and his band capture all the soulful energy necessary for a floor shakin', foot stompin' good time.

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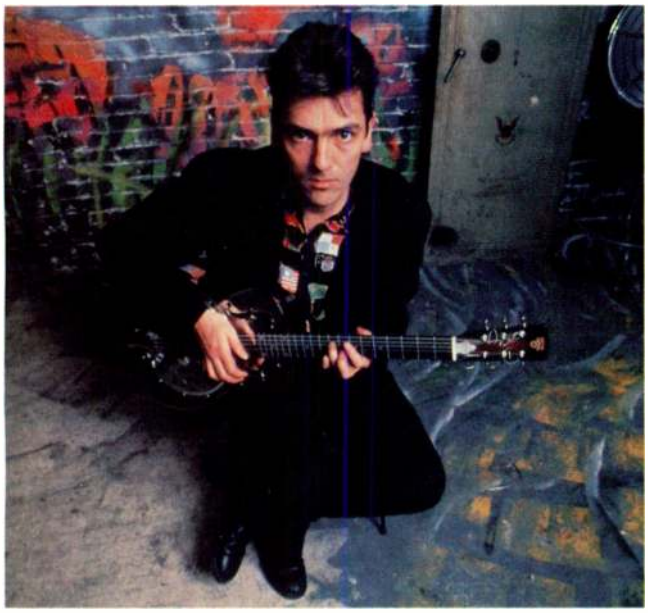

ROBYN HITCHCOCK

Eye and I

"IT'S A PRUNING process," says Robyn Hitchcock, reflecting on *Eye*. "Sometimes you need to cut everything back, snip a few limbs and let 'em bleed for a while, until new ones grow." After a string of electric works with his group the Egyptians, Hitchcock's gone back to basics on an album spotlighting voice and acoustic guitar. Hitchcock took the no-frills route in 1984 with *I Often Dream of Trains*. Now, however, he's coming off two relatively accessible albums that were given a heavy push by A&M, making the less commercial *Eye* seem like an act of rebellion.

"This probably was a reaction to doing so much promotion," he admits, sighing. "All I remember about *Queen Elvis*, in particular, was promoting it." Anyway, Hitchcock adds, "I didn't want to have to satisfy a committee to get this out, meaning not just the band, but the record company, friends and advisers. The more people you want to reach, the more people you consult. But I was mainly trying to reach myself this time."

Longtime cult fans won't object, because *Eye* contains the surreal wit and sardonic melancholy of his strongest work. While noting "it's about as honest as I can get," Hitchcock dismisses suggestions he's baring his soul, despite a superficial resemblance to John Lennon's stark *Plastic Ono Band*. "I can't get anger out that way. There's a lot of feelings I can't get out. They're blocked. My gift is for storytelling, creating pictures very fast out of nowhere and dispelling them again," a talent best appreciated in a simple setting, he feels. "With my music, the more things you put on, the more of a formalized absurdity—a choreographed joke—it becomes. If you put it down with just guitar, it comes across more naturally."

Hitchcock laughs. "My songs aren't as silly as some people make out. They're not as profound as others make out. They're just stories."—*Jon Young*

DAVID MINUS DAVID

Boomtown's echo, delayed

"I'M EITHER a perfectionist or extremely confused," says David Baerwald of the four-year gap between the acclaimed 1986 David + David *Boomtown* album he did with David Ricketts and his brand-new solo effort, *Bedtime Stories*.

Unfortunately, the two Davids couldn't get it together when it came time to make the follow-up to *Boomtown*. After coming off tour, Ricketts planned to help Toni Childs get started on her debut for three weeks, a time period which stretched into two years. Meanwhile, Baerwald's record company wouldn't let him put out a project he was working on together with producer Davitt Sigerson to try to record, it fell flat. "The music was just too stilted," says Baerwald. "Plus, I was pissed off about being forced to sit around and wait for him."

These days, in the midst of rehearsing a new band for an upcoming tour, Baerwald is more philosophical about the time off. "For the first time in my life, I had time to think about what I thought. I was a young 26 when that stuff was happening with David. The prospects of fame and sudden wealth were a bit more than I was ready to face. I turned into a bit of a prick."

Now he's turned his bile towards such topics as subway sniper Bernhard Goetz ("Sirens in the City"), Vietnam veterans ("Stranger") and

with ex-Doors producer Paul Rothschild and an all-star cast which included Billy Payne, David Lindley, Richie Hayward, J.D. Souther and Jackson Browne.

"I couldn't work with David because he was busy and I couldn't work without him because I wasn't allowed to," he sighs.

When the twosome finally got the sham of democracy ("Liberty Lies"). In the latter, he skewers the ex-wife of his former roommate, Sean Penn, with a line about Madonna fiddling with herself as America burns.

"It's kind of a cheap shot, but I thought it was funny," confesses Dave. "It's important to crack yourself up with this stuff."—*Roy Trakin*

Photograph: (top) Greg Allen/Retna

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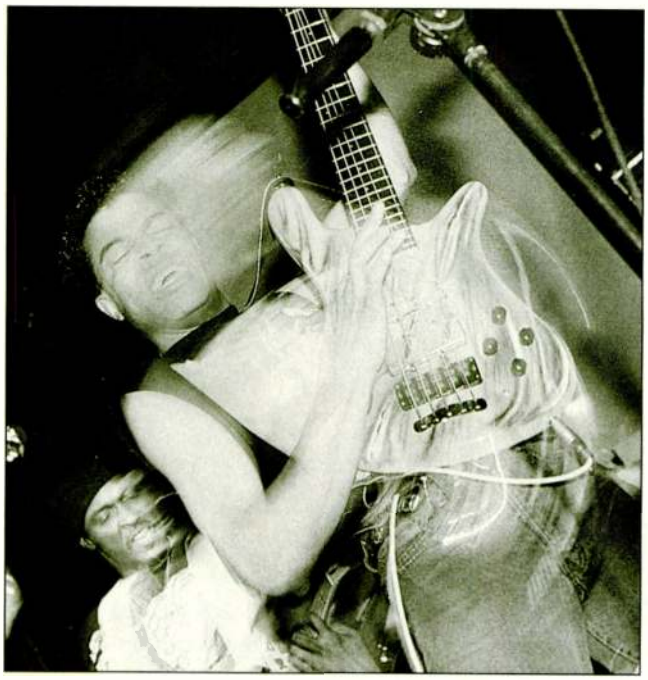
TACKHEAD

Funk with a twist



BEFORE, IF YOU could smack gum in key, we'd mike your mouth up and process that," says Tackhead bassist Doug Wimbish, talking about the early days of the band. "We were into sheets of sound, like a dog barking backwards. Or if you had a light switch with a good sound, we'd use that for a hi-hat."

But now, with their second album, *Friendly as a Hand Grenade*, "Tackhead is into the next phase," says Wimbish. "Which is to mix hints of the past with elements of the present and a suggestion of the future. At a very, very bargain price."

Dismantling musical norms is standard Tackhead procedure. Ten years ago, Wimbish, guitarist Skip McDonald and drummer Keith LeBlanc were the studio rhythm section for the rap label Sugar Hill Records; meanwhile, mix master Adrian Sherwood (who "plays" a mixing board like a DJ plays a turntable) was in his native Britain, producing and remixing reggae, funk and pop. The four of them first hooked up in 1983; vocalist Bernard Fowler (N.Y.C. Peech Boys, Herbie Hancock, the Rolling Stones) joined last year. Together, they create a dense dance-music amalgam, with layer on layer of instruments, beats, found sounds and vocals, lyrics that comment acidly on social and political issues. As Wimbish says, "First we try to create a beat that's kicking. Get 'em on the dance floor and *then* you can talk to 'em."

The result is a band whose rhythms are in the pocket and whose collective mind is further out, higher up and deeper still. In other words, your disco music with a twist.

—Suzanne McElfresh

BAN THE BOX

CD packaging is garbage, says coalition

IRRITATED BY those ecologically wasteful 6 x 12-inch CD "longboxes"? So are the Grateful Dead, R.E.M., 10,000 Maniacs, Kris Kristofferson, I.R.S. Records, Rounder Records, Rykodisc and other record-industry people. They've formed BAN THE BOX, a coalition dedicated to getting the longboxes out of record stores by mid-1991. According to BAN THE BOX, the U.S. is the only country that still packages CDs in longboxes. The group has developed several alternatives, from reusable 6 x 12-inch plastic frames to jewel-box flip systems.

Says Natalie Merchant of 10,000 Maniacs, "There is an inherent contradiction in speaking out against the destruction of our environment while being part of an industry guilty of excess and waste. Eliminating the 6 x 12 box is a small gesture but a way for the recording industry to begin reforming its production and marketing techniques."

Anyone interested in learning more about BAN THE BOX and its goals may write or call BAN THE BOX, 12 East 41st Street, Suite 1600, New York, NY 10017, telephone (212) 684-2550.

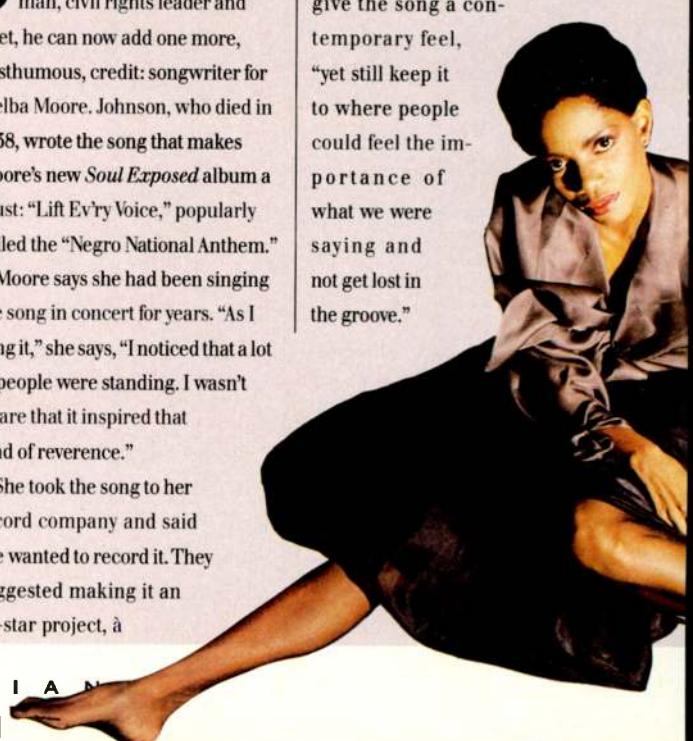
MELBA MOORE

Star-studded banner

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON is one of those forgotten footnotes in American history. A U.S. statesman, civil rights leader and poet, he can now add one more, posthumous, credit: songwriter for Melba Moore. Johnson, who died in 1938, wrote the song that makes Moore's new *Soul Exposed* album a must: "Lift Ev'ry Voice," popularly called the "Negro National Anthem."

Moore says she had been singing the song in concert for years. "As I sang it," she says, "I noticed that a lot of people were standing. I wasn't aware that it inspired that kind of reverence."

She took the song to her record company and said she wanted to record it. They suggested making it an all-star project, à la "We Are the World." Enter BeBe Winans, one half of a hit gospel duo in which he sings with his sister, CeCe. He tossed aside the stately, elegant traditional melody and built a flowing, jazzy arrangement around the lyrics. Winans wanted to give the song a contemporary feel, "yet still keep it to where people could feel the importance of what we were saying and not get lost in the groove."



World Radio History

LIP-SYNC LAWS PROPOSED

Is it live! Or is it . . .

MORE AND MORE pop artists—Milli Vanilli, New Kids on the Block, Janet Jackson and others—are reportedly using prerecorded music in concert, and the trend's now drawn its first legislative responses. This spring, state legislators in New York and New Jersey proposed bills that would require lip-synched concerts to be advertised as such. The New Jersey legislation applies only to lead vocals; failure to notify the public would result in fines for both promoters and ticket agents. The New York bill would require disclosure of *all* pre-recorded music. No dates have yet been set for hearings on the bills.

TOM WAITS

Frito-Lay copped his croak

WHEN TOM WAITS heard the radio ad for a spicy new brand of corn chips, he blanched and headed straight to the Bar.

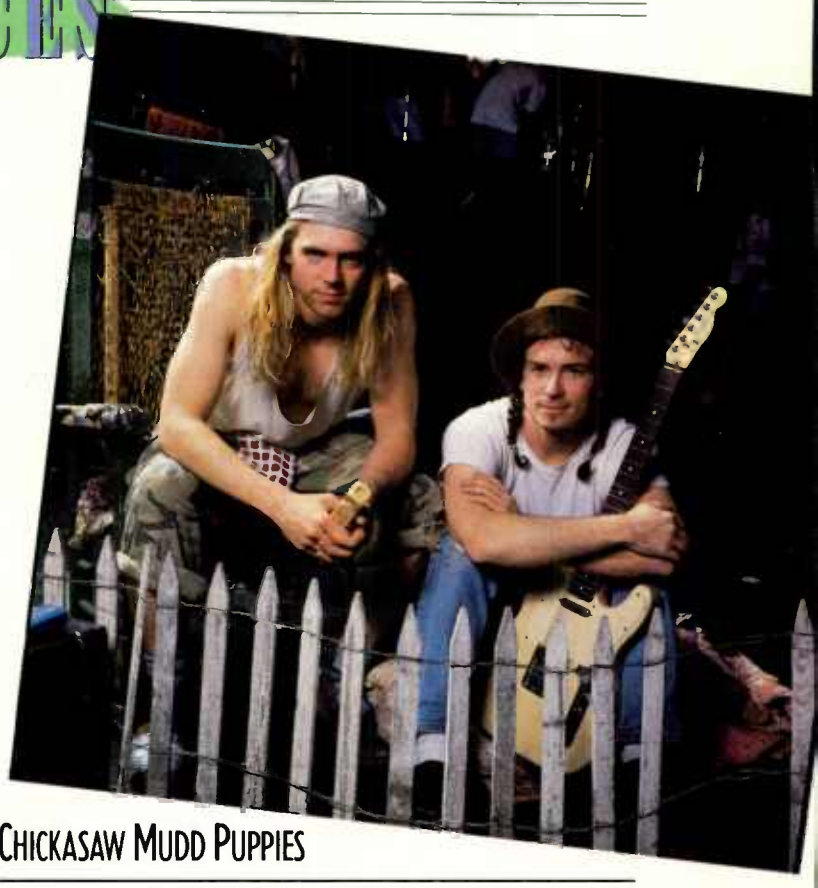
Charging that Frito-Lay Inc. had done a knockoff of his song "Step Right Up," complete with a quirk-for-quirk imitation of his gravelly voice, Waits filed suit in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. The move proved lucrative, to the tune of a $2.475-million jury judgment.

"Now by law I have what I always felt I have—a distinctive voice," said an effusive Waits after the May ruling that the corn chip giant and its ad agency had unlawfully appropriated his voice. Jurors ruled that the Texas chipmaker had damaged Waits' reputation by hiring an impersonator to record the spot.

Waits' case was the first trial in

which a popular singer has won punitive damages for having his reputation hurt by an advertising mimic. Last year, Bette Midler opened the door for such judgments when she was awarded $400,000 in compensatory damages from the Ford Motor Co. for having used her backup singer to imitate her voice on "Do You Want to Dance."

—Paul Feldman



CHICKASAW MUDD PUPPIES

Front-porch rockers from Georgia

BEN REYNOLDS and Brant Slay—University of Georgia Art School dropouts—hover between being junkyard collectors and roots-rock goofballs. Founding members of the Chickasaw Mudd Puppies, guitarist Reynolds and harp player Slay combine genres with the naive ingenuity of the folk artist fashioning work from found objects. The Mudd Puppies embrace a tradition that encompasses the brittle, hyper string-band music of Gid Tanner & the Skillet Lickers, the jagged lope of Skip James' barrelhouse piano, the pained yodel of Hank Williams and the roadhouse crunch of Slim Harpo. And they do it with a sense of mystery and discovery, in performances that seem to careen headlong into the abyss.

Slay, a sculptor from Columbus, Georgia, got a sack of harmonicas from R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe, who encouraged him to learn how to play. "Until we were halfway into what we were doing," says Slay, "I was just making noise to Ben's guitar." Reynolds, a photographer from Waynesboro, Georgia, had studied bass in high school and guitar with Maxwell Tyson, a former sideman with Howlin' Wolf. "I got so frustrated that I quit playing until three years ago," Reynolds says. "I'll never be a great guitar player, but hopefully my enthusiasm makes up for my lack of skill."

With the release of their Stipe-produced EP *White Dirt* and a forthcoming project produced by Stipe and Willie Dixon, the Mudd Puppies bring their front-porch music to the world. They even bring the front porch, in the form of a white picket fence, a washboard and Slay's rocking chair. As Slay jokes, they didn't want to abandon the comforts of their living room.—*Don Palmer*

Then Winans and his engineer loaded up the master tape and took it on tour with them. And any time they happened to catch another major recording star in the same city, they hustled into whatever local studio was handy to add vocals. The end result is a moving, swaying collage of voices and styles: Stevie Wonder growling and slurring, Dionne Warwick carefully phrasing, Take 6 swooping in harmony, Melba soaring like "Air" Jordan, and more.

BeBe says the song "enlightened" him. And Melba says she just feels as if she's won a round in her battle to make music that reflects "the strong hope and love and fire and force and strength we have [as black people] that has been untapped."

—Leonard Pitts, Jr.

Photographs: (opposite top) Jayne Houghton/S.I.N.; (near left) Lynn Goldsmith/LGI; (this page top) Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve; (bottom) Tom Sheehan/LFI

World Radio History

THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

Top 100 Albums

The first number indicates the position of the album this month, the second its position last month.

1 • 1	**Sinéad O'Connor**	*I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got*/Ensign
2 • 6	**M.C. Hammer**	*Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em*/Capitol
3 • 34	**Heart**	*Brigade*/Capitol
4 • 2	**Janet Jackson**	*Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation*/A&M
5 • 4	**Michael Bolton**	*Soul Provider*/Columbia
6 • 29	**Soundtrack**	*Pretty Woman*/EMI
7 • 3	**Bonnie Raitt**	*Nick of Time*/Capitol
8 • 19	**Bell Biv Devoe**	*Poison*/MCA
9 • 9	**Depeche Mode**	*Violator*/Sire
10 • 65	**Public Enemy**	*Fear of a Black Planet*/Def Jam
11 • 5	**Paula Abdul**	*Forever Your Girl*/Virgin
12 • 12	**Lisa Stansfield**	*Affection*/Arista
13 • 10	**Phil Collins**	*. . . But Seriously*/Atlantic
14 • 8	**Aerosmith**	*Pump*/Geffen
15 • 18	**Don Henley**	*The End of the Innocence*/Geffen
16 • 64	**Soundtrack**	*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*/SBK
17 • 26	**Slaughter**	*Stick It to Ya*/Chrysalis
18 • 14	**Robert Plant**	*Manic Nirvana*/Es Paranza
19 • 78	**Fleetwood Mac**	*Behind the Mask*/Warner Bros.
20 • 70	**Wilson Phillips**	*Wilson Phillips*/SBK
21 • 24	**Rod Stewart**	*Downtown Train/Selections from Storyteller*/Warner Bros.
22 • —	**Johnny Gill**	*Johnny Gill*/Motown
23 • 7	**Alannah Myles**	*Alannah Myles*/Atlantic
24 • 13	**The B-52's**	*Cosmic Thing*/Reprise
25 • 41	**Digital Underground**	*Sex Packets*/Tommy Boy
26 • 11	**Technotronic**	*Pump Up the Jam—The Album*/SBK
27 • 23	**Basia**	*London Warsaw New York*/Epic
28 • 17	**Babyface**	*Tender Lover*/Solar
29 • 15	**Linda Ronstadt (Fea. A. Neville)**	*Cry Like a Rainstorm, Howl Like the Wind*/Elektra
30 • 32	**New Kids on the Block**	*Hangin' Tough*/Columbia
31 • 22	**Mötley Crüe**	*Dr. Feelgood*/Elektra
32 • 49	**Damn Yankees**	*Damn Yankees*/Warner Bros.
33 • 21	**Midnight Oil**	*Blue Sky Mining*/Columbia
34 • 20	**Milli Vanilli**	*Girl You Know It's True*/Arista
35 • 96	**Clint Black**	*Killin' Time*/RCA
36 • 27	**Eric Clapton**	*Journeyman*/Duck
37 • 33	**Taylor Dayne**	*Can't Fight Fate*/Arista
38 • 16	**Quincy Jones**	*Back on the Block*/Qwest
39 • 47	**David Bowie**	*Changesbowie*/Ryko
40 • —	**Billy Idol**	*Charmed Life*/Chrysalis
41 • 25	**Billy Joel**	*Storm Front*/Columbia
42 • —	**En Vogue**	*Born to Sing*/Atlantic
43 • 31	**Kenny G**	*Live*/Arista
44 • 30	**Gloria Estefan**	*Cuts Both Ways*/Epic
45 • 66	**The Kentucky Headhunters**	*Pickin' On Nashville*/Mercury
46 • —	**Little Feat**	*Representing the Mambo*/Warner Bros.
47 • 68	**Carly Simon**	*My Romance*/Arista
48 • 42	**Salt-N-Pepa**	*Black's Magic*/Next Plateau
49 • 35	**Young M.C.**	*Stone Cold Rhymin'*/Delicious Vinyl
50 • 87	**Andrew Dice Clay**	*The Day the Laughter Died*/Def American
51 • 62	**After 7**	*After 7*/Virgin
52 • 67	**Faster Pussycat**	*Wake Me When It's Over*/Elektra
53 • 38	**Tommy Page**	*Paintings in My Mind*/Sire
54 • —	**Suzanne Vega**	*Days of Open Hand*/A&M
55 • 59	**New Kids on the Block**	*New Kids on the Block*/Columbia
56 • 36	**Michael Penn**	*March*/RCA
57 • 28	**Tom Petty**	*Full Moon Fever*/MCA
58 • 37	**Roxette**	*Look Sharp!*/EMI
59 • 46	**Soundtrack**	*Beaches*/Atlantic
60 • 44	**Cher**	*Heart of Stone*/Geffen
61 • —	**Paula Abdul**	*Shut Up and Dance*/Virgin
62 • 45	**Cowboy Junkies**	*The Caution Horses*/RCA
63 • 86	**Howard Hewett**	*Howard Hewett*/Elektra
64 • 39	**Michel'le**	*Michel'le*/Ruthless
65 • 75	**Soundtrack**	*The Little Mermaid*/Walt Disney
66 • 72	**Adam Ant**	*Manners & Physique*/MCA
67 • 40	**Luther Vandross**	*The Best of Luther Vandross: The Best of Love*/Epic
68 • —	**Linear**	*Linear*/Atlantic
69 • 32	**Peter Murphy**	*Deep*/Beggars Banquet
70 • —	**Najee**	*Tokyo Blue*/EMI
71 • 50	**Jane Child**	*Jane Child*/Warner Bros.
72 • 73	**The Church**	*Gold Afternoon Fix*/Arista
73 • 55	**The 2 Live Crew**	*As Nasty As They Wanna Be*/Skywalker
74 • 58	**Elton John**	*Sleeping with the Past*/MCA
75 • 54	**The Notting Hillbillies**	*Missing . . . Presumed Having a Good Time*/Warner Bros.
76 • —	**L.A. Guns**	*Cocked & Loaded*/Vertigo
77 • 95	**Travis Tritt**	*Country Club*/Warner Bros.
78 • —	**The Black Crowes**	*Shake Your Money Maker*/Def American
79 • 57	**Whitesnake**	*Slip of the Tongue*/Geffen
80 • 48	**Skid Row**	*Skid Row*/Atlantic
81 • 53	**Soul II Soul**	*Keep On Movin'*/Virgin
82 • 60	**Bobby Brown**	*Dance! . . . Ya Know It!*/MCA
83 • 92	**Alan Jackson**	*Here in the Real World*/Arista
84 • 93	**Above the Law**	*Livin' Like Hustlers*/Ruthless
85 • 61	**The Smithereens**	*Smithereens 11*/Enigma
86 • 51	**Richard Marx**	*Repeat Offender*/EMI
87 • 69	**Tesla**	*The Great Radio Controversy*/Geffen
88 • —	**Kathy Mattea**	*Willow in the Wind*/Mercury
89 • 52	**Seduction**	*Nothing Matters Without Love*/Vendetta
90 • —	**Sweet Sensation**	*Love Child*/Atco
91 • 76	**Troop**	*Attitude*/Atlantic
92 • 88	**Calloway**	*All the Way*/Solar
93 • —	**Tony! Toni! Tone!**	*The Revival*/Wing
94 • 74	**Joe Satriani**	*Flying in a Blue Dream*/Relativity
95 • 77	**Regina Belle**	*Stay with Me*/Columbia
96 • —	**Ricky Van Shelton**	*R I S I I I*/Columbia
97 • 56	**Kaoma**	*World Beat*/Epic
98 • —	**A Tribe Called Quest**	*People's Instinctive Travels & the Paths of Rhythm*/Jive
99 • 63	**Kid 'N Play**	*Kid 'N Play's Fun House*/Select
100 • —	**Original London Cast**	*Phantom of the Opera Highlights*/Polydor

The Musician *album chart is produced by the* Billboard *chart department for* Musician, *and reflects the combined points for all album reports gathered by the* Billboard *computers in the month of May. The record company chart is based on the top 200 albums. The concert chart is based on* Amusement Business *Box Score reports for May 1990. All charts are copyright 1990 by BPI Incorporated.*

Top Concert Grosses

1	**Madonna, Technotronic** *Los Angeles Sports Arena, Los Angeles*/May 11-13 & 15-16	$2,242,110
2	**Madonna, Technotronic** *Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, Oakland, CA*/May 18-20	$1,278,245
3	**Grateful Dead** *California State Univ., Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA*/May 5-6	$1,230,000
4	**Madonna, Technotronic** *The Summit, Houston, TX*/May 4-5	$881,245
5	**Anita Baker, Perri** *Radio City Music Hall, New York, NY*/May 22-26	$774,515
6	**Diana Ross, A.J. Jamal** *Westbury Music Fair, Westbury, NY*/May 22-27	$715,804
7	**Janet Jackson, Chuckii Booker** *ARCO Arena, Sacramento, CA*/May 4-5	$703,637
8	**Aerosmith, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts** *The Omni, Atlanta, GA*/May 5-6	$572,445
9	**Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme, Phyllis Diller** *Westbury Music Fair, Westbury, NY*/May 9-12 & 16-19	$551,931
10	**Whitesnake, Bad English, Giant** *Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre, Laguna Hills, CA*/May 11-12	$437,513

Top Labels

1	Columbia
2	Capitol
3	Atlantic
4	Arista
5	Warner Bros.
6	Geffen
7	MCA
8	SBK
9	Virgin
10	Elektra
11	EMI
12	Epic
13	A&M
14	Sire
15	RCA
16	Ensign
17	Chrysalis
18	Def Jam
19	Mercury
20	Reprise

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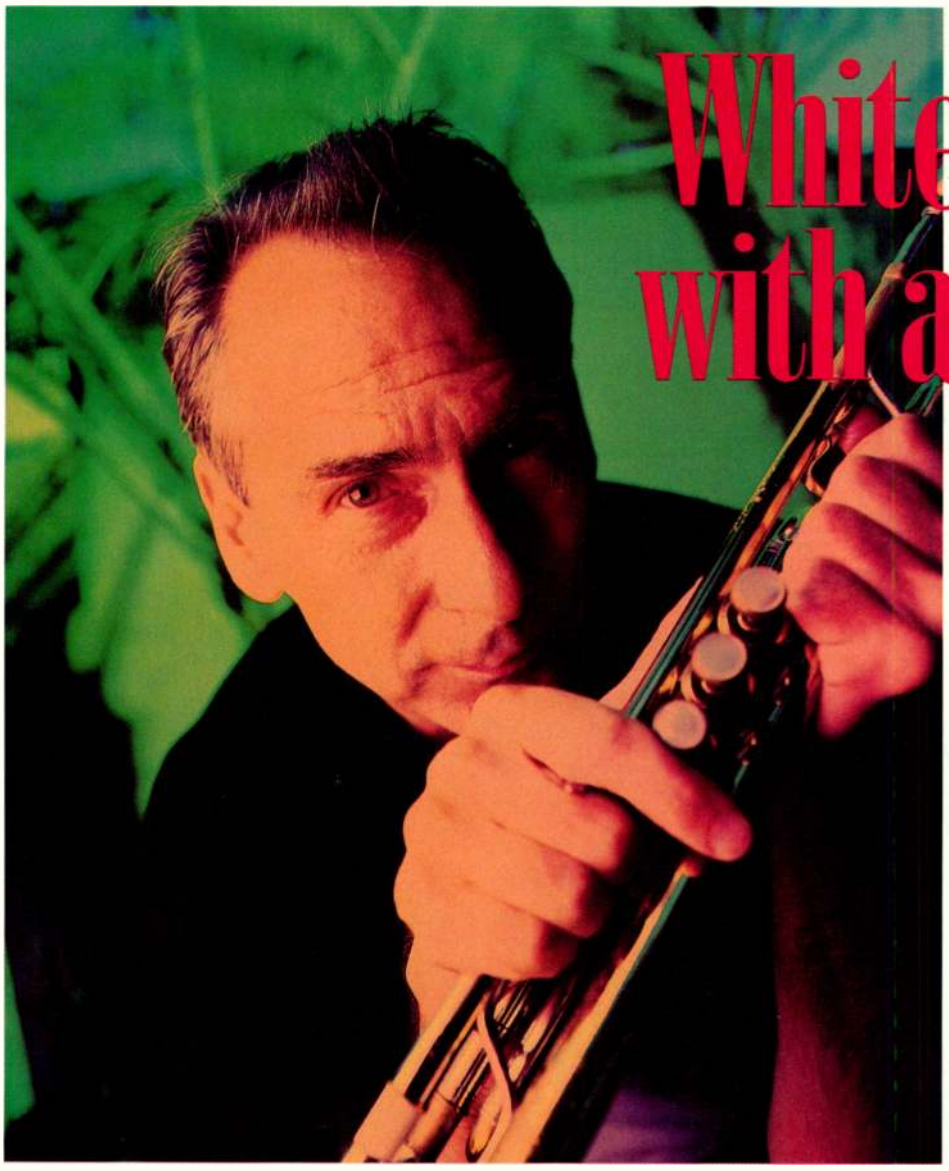


White Man with a Horn

PLAYER'S PLAYERS

Third-World urban: Jon Hassell's possible musics

BY

Josef Woodard

JON HASSELL'S MUSIC pierces straight to the heart of those urbanites who sense a primal pulse but can't quite get a finger on it. His thickly basted trumpet textures dart and hover over open-ended vamps, as echoes of Third World music and '70s-era Miles Davis converge. Rhythms of vaguely funk pedigrees take off like rogue subway trains to exotic locales: Next Stop, Ghanaian Village.

City: Works of Fiction is Hassell's debut for Brian Eno's Opal label, and the tenth record of his career. At once high-tech and earthy, ethereal and a bit edgy, this is oddly meditative music, equally appealing to hip-hop and experimental-ambient music fans. Typically, Hassell feels an allegiance to both camps.

"I've been thinking urban lately," explains the 53-year-old composer, sitting in an office at Warner Bros. records. "There's a story of a guru who's up in the mountain meditating in a cave. He comes down to the marketplace, somebody bumps him and he's immediately angry. You can't stay up in the cave all the time."

Not that he ever has; Hassell's "fourth world" musical instincts have led him to India, Malaysia and Africa, among other places. But after grooving on Keith Levene's "Malcolm X" and Public Enemy's *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, he figured, "Why not look in my own backyard?

"[Rap is] very close to the African griot tradition," he notes, "the storytelling aspect of it, gossip mixed with ancestral info, the sacred and the profane in one bundle. It picks up the shards of the culture around you. If you're in the forest, it's stone and wood, and skin stretched across wood. In the Bed-Stuy forest, it's patches of James Brown and Grandmaster Flash and Chic. It's a mosaic-type construction. And I've actually been doing things like that for 10 years."

You can look it up. A piece on Hassell's 1980 album *Possible Musics*, for instance, was constructed from a tape loop of Miles Davis. 1981's seductive *Dream Theory in Malaya* combined swirling, Indonesian-like patterns and enigmatic loops from the pre-sampling era. *Aka-Darbari-Java* (1983) utilized a Fairlight I to meld African drumming, a Les Baxter arrangement for Yma Sumac and Pygmy voices.

Hassell's resume is equally esoteric. Memphis-born, Eastman School of Music–bred, he studied with Karlheinz Stockhausen and made his record debut on Terry Riley's *In C* in 1968—generally considered a blueprint for the minimalist movement. Hassell also performed in La Monte Young's *House*, a four-hour just-intonational epic—"'tuning up to time,' we used to call it." From that experience he emerged with *Solid State*, a sound sculpture piece presented in art museums and galleries. But the classical avant-garde didn't suit him.

Photograph: Chris Carroll

World Radio History

In Less Than Two Hours, 50,000 People Will Be Listening

For Will Calhoun and Living Colour, opening for the Rolling Stones meant at least 50,000 people every night. This would be a tall order for some new bands. But Living Colour is not just some new band. Living Colour's success is based upon their music which seems to transcend musical boundaries and has elevated their debut disc to multi-platinum status. Obviously there is something unique and special about these guys. Their reputation for diligence, schooled musicianship, professional attitude, non ego manner, and brilliant writing, are the foundation for their position. Will Calhoun fits this description in every way. You don't simply assume stature, it is a long time in the making. Much like the drum set he plays, CZX Custom by Pearl. Both , in fact, compliment each other perfectly : years of hard work with a designed goal of perfection. Living Colour, Will Calhoun, and Pearl's CZX Custom... the sound of success.

Photos by Lissa Wales

Pearl
The best reason to play drums.

World Radio History

"When I ran into [master singer] Pandit Pran Nath—thanks to Terry and La Monte—I began to learn about Indian music," he recalls. "And I started to question why art music was stiff and usually required white musicians with glasses playing with music stands onstage. There seemed to be a split—nighttime music and daytime music. Basically, I was trying to bring the dance-kinetic side out and give it equal time to the intellectual side."

On his 1977 album *Vernal Equinox*, Hassell's trumpet sound was altered, camouflaged behind various effects, a tone that has since become his signature. "One reason is that electronics are what's happening," he says simply. "For another, trumpet is a lonely instrument, so if I can use electronics to get two other guys to play with me, or allow it to be a chordal instrument, terrific." He laughs drily.

"I've always been on the alert for things which I thought countered the dichotomies of composer versus performer and sensual versus spiritual," says Hassell. "Miles Davis' *On the Corner* is one of those things in which I felt it all came together. It was unfair that he didn't have the same respect from the art world and intellectual community as Philip Glass, let's say. I say that to call attention to the fact that between American cultural life and European cultural life—though it's getting better—there's a very strong split between being able to call something high art and just fun. I think fun should always be a part of high art."

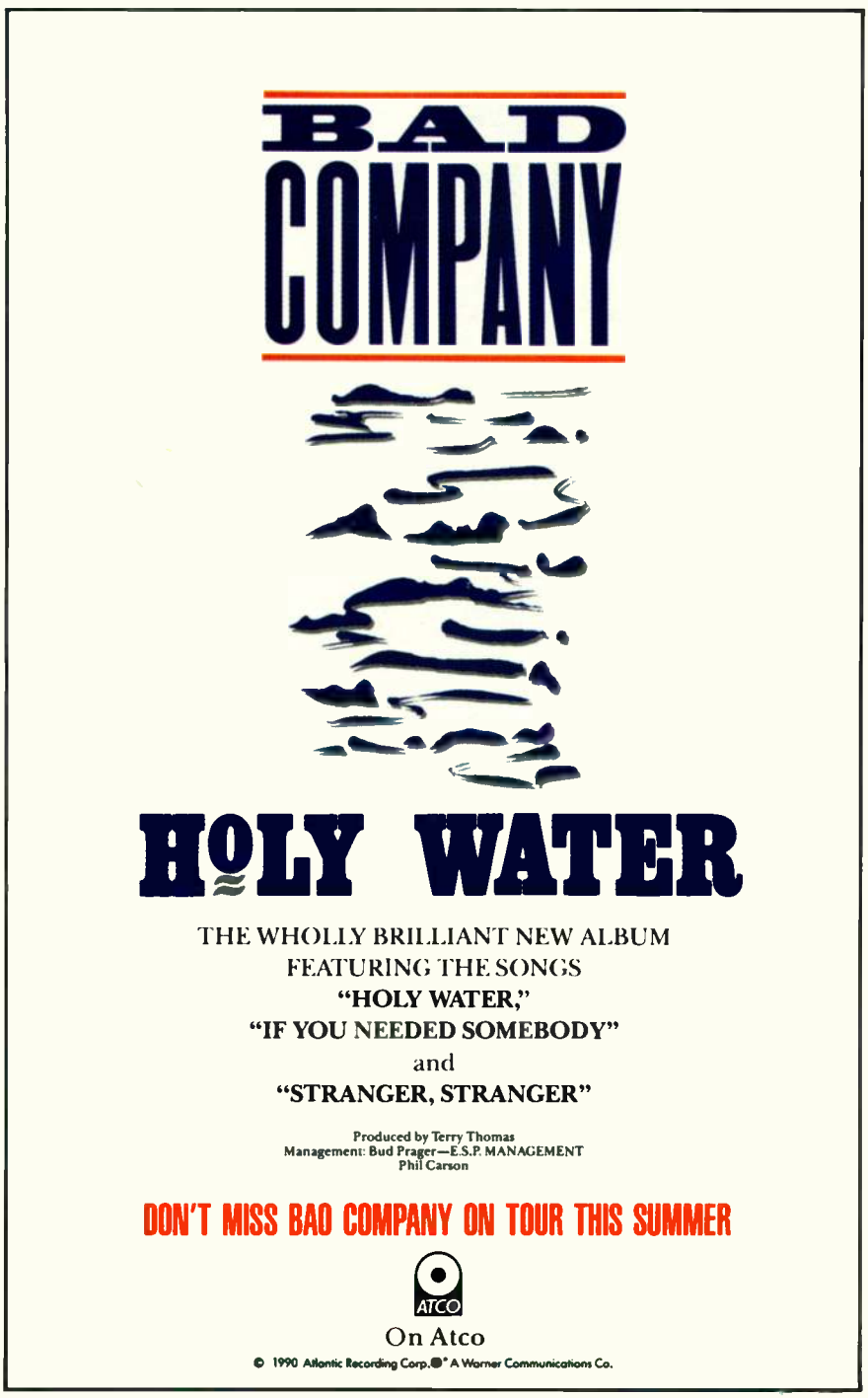
As a result, Hassell finds himself positioned somewhere between jazz, world music and New Music of his own devising. "I don't consider myself to be just an offshoot of one of Miles' limbs. If you think of Western music as being a vertical, harmonic music, then Indian raga is the ultimately horizontal music, where the art is in drawing the beautiful curve and making as many arabesques as you can. After I started thinking in those terms, I began paralleling myself with a harmonizer. When you add a fourth or a fifth and you're playing a raga, you automatically extend the harmonic vocabulary, going one more step up in the cycle of fifths. I'm getting strange, interesting combinations because I'm not approaching harmony from the standpoint of having a hand stretching out on a keyboard. I think of what I do as being diagonal, rather than horizontal or vertical."

But will *City* sell to a nation of millions? More than past works, the album does stand a fair chance of expanding Hassell's formidable cult status. And, fringe character though he might seem, Hassell is fairly savvy about the business of musical culture.

"There's a saying, 'When a pickpocket sees a saint, all he sees are his pockets,'" Hassell observes. "Basically, all [record companies] are looking for is pockets. And I'm trying to make as much of a compromise as I can—I'm trying to give them pockets." Because? "I have this addiction to foolish luxuries like food and shelter."

Hassell may have found a home at Opal, the specialty label run by Eno under the Warner Bros. corporate umbrella. "To whatever extent [Eno's] name buys entrée, I think it's always well-used in terms of trying to make a wedge into the monolithic pop establishment." The pair first worked together on Hassell's *Possible Musics* and he senses in Eno a kindred spirit: "He was always trying to escape his white-bread upbringing."

Hassell's solo discography suggests a similarly logical evolution of variations on a theme. And, like Eno, he's also found time to collaborate with pop artists [*contd on page 97*]



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POP STARS

Paying Attention to the Moment

The Chills' major-label debut brings manners to rock 'n' roll

BY

Jim Macnie

Chill Factor: Stephenson, Phillipps, Harwood and Todd

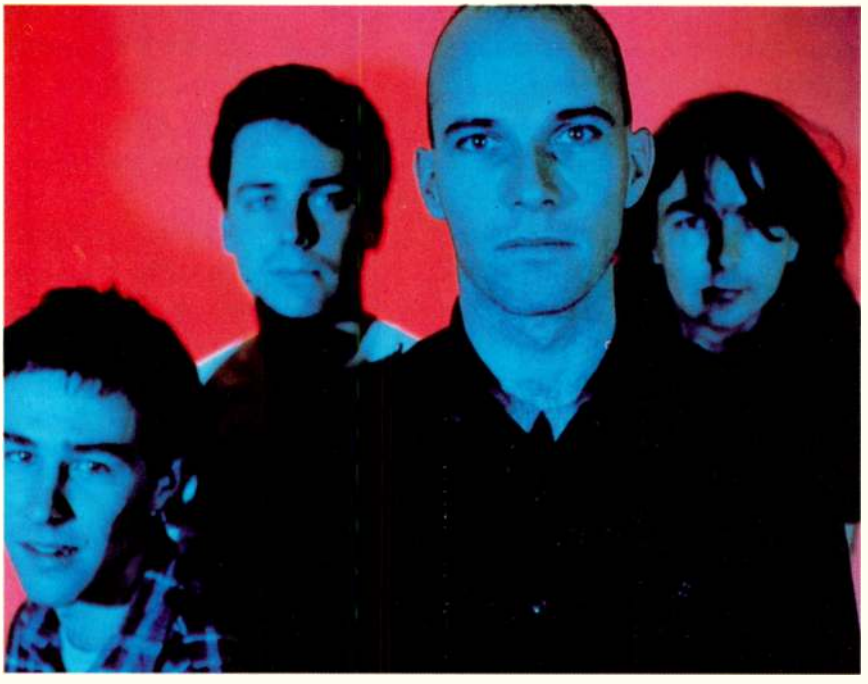
BACKSTAGE AT A Rhode Island gig, Chills boss Martin Phillipps looks like he's studying for a test: furrowed brow, winces galore. In fact he's putting together a set list. A minute later he's onstage rocking out, but in a very measured way: furrowed brow, winces galore. Throughout the captivating performance—a study in set dynamics—the New Zealand band pulls irregular moves. They play a ballad, but it's not slow. They start to gallop, but pull back the reins when true frenzy looms. What they're doing is paying attention to the moment, something many indie bands neglect, and respecting order, something many indie bands disregard on purpose. After a particularly agitated tune that mixes the sounds of *Bringing It All Back Home* and *Singles Going Steady*, Phillipps bends to refresh himself with a hit of Budweiser. Here's the final clue: He sips—no guzzling allowed. The Chills are mannered.

"Where I come from, the whole professional thing is kind of frowned upon," says the 26-year-old Phillipps over nachos and root beer the next afternoon in Boston. "People who still abide by the punk mentality see it as a sell-out. Getting up onstage and having tuned up properly is even suspect. I guess they respect spontaneity above all, and that isn't right for me. I work meticulously on my material; we look at all of it very closely. Our forte is figuring out the best way to play a song, and it's worked out for us: Our performances are much better these days."

So are their records. The indie life is referenced because that's where the Chills have spent their decade-long career—knocking about on small labels, working to refine their sound. But on *Submarine Bells*, their first major-label outing for Slash/Warners, the burrs have been sanded away. And rather than having the awkward one-foot-in/one-foot-out feeling that other groups do when they leap to the majors, the Chills seem right at home. Phillipps' songs long for clear, taut production and Gary Smith, who has helped usher a few smart indie ensembles to the majors, brings a newfound articulation to them. Nothing grandiose, though Phillipps' somewhat verbose tunes offer lush, woozy landscapes, but with a little extra weight that previous efforts have lacked. It makes Phillipps' brand of pop—mysterious, hook-happy, exacting—more easily understood.

"We've finally done something that's not dated," says Phillipps with a sigh. "This is the first record to show where we are really at. For the longest time I thought that I wouldn't have anything to show for my work. But if I get hit by a train tomorrow, *Submarine Bells* will be quite a fair depiction of what it was all about. The range of material has been a bit of a problem for us in the past—the way we change sounds from track to track. Other records lacked a link between the songs, but this sounds like a full-fledged album."

And at heart, the Chills sound like full-



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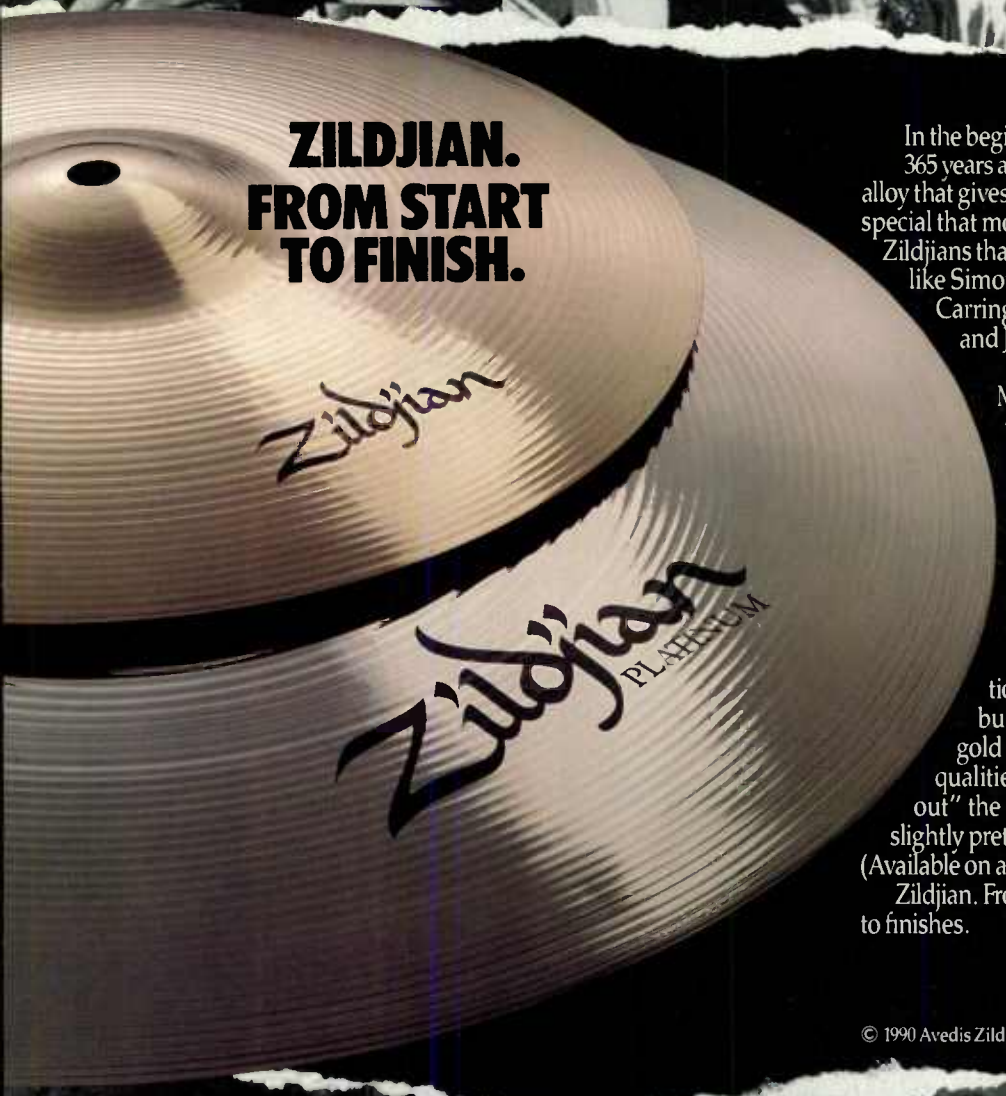

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fledged classicists. Phillipps, who had led the group through an ever-changing maze of lineups (11, 12?), is more than a bit of a pop music fan. The most excited moment in our conversation came when he found out *Pet Sounds* was about to be rereleased. And his familiarity with oddball rock 'n' roll past helps him respect his own band's present. The Chills grant a song the right to choose its mode of propulsion: They might float a bit, jangle for a while, or power-strum their points across. Perhaps all it takes to flesh out the right emotion is a Farfisa and acoustic 12-string. Like the songs on *The Village Green Preservation Society*, the tracks on *Submarine Bells* are compact miniatures with personalities of their own.

"I don't mind that comparison at all," Phillipps allows, "because once I've achieved what I want from a song, I never try to repeat it." *Submarine Bells* encompasses several different attitudes. Though it cruises along playfully, "Tied Up in Chain" speaks of the debilitating mistakes that get passed on from generation to generation—a no-way-out opus. Yet three minutes later Phillipps is positively jubilant: "The Oncoming Day" renders the perpetual gloom irrelevant. "No way will I give in!" he exclaims in a voice that suggests a well-tempered Morrissey.

"I like to confuse people, show them some options," explains Phillipps. "Pop is so formularized these days. But possibilities still exist, especially in the sounds used. I'd love to see pop being the folk music of the time, music that can make people really feel something about their lives."

Phillipps is adroit at depicting the yearning over broken partnerships. Older songs like "Pink Dust" and "I Love My Leather Jacket" speak about friends and lovers who have died. But Phillipps points out that a recent *Village Voice* article painting him an eloquent gloom-monger is off-target. "I do tackle dark topics but I believe it's done in a realistic way which ultimately makes it a positive experience. Taking something distressing and rising above it."

A situation that's long distressed the singer is the loss of band members. The original Chills got together in 1980, and it's been an uphill struggle ever since. "People ask that with all these lineup changes, why I just didn't go solo. But I'm deeply into the rock 'n' roll aesthetic, and it's not something I could achieve on my own. I do retain ultimate control over the way the music sounds, but I'm not a fascist bullyboy. I love being part of the group."

ICE BOXES

PILLIPPS' ACOUSTIC 12-string was made by Peter Madill, "a superb New Zealand craftsman who apparently designed the Vox Teardrop." He also plays a '69 Telecaster (Thinline) with a single-coil pickup "because of the warmth it provides. A guitar for me is just a means to an end. I'm a sloppy player." He plays through a MESA/Boogie preamp with a Marshall bottom, and steps on a Yamaha FX500 effects unit. Bassist JUSTIN HARWOOD uses a Fender Jazz Bass, putting it through a Gallien-Krueger 800 RB and Dynacoustic bottom. Keyboardist ANDREW TODD uses a Farfisa DIP 400 ("there's not too many of them around") beefed up with an Alesis QuadraVerb. A Ludwig L 400 snare is at the center of JIMMY STEPHENSON's Yamaha trap set, made up of all sizes of Paistes—14" hi-hat, 16", 18" and 20" crashes, 20" power ride—as well as a 12" and 14" rack tom, a 16" floor tom, and a 20" kick drum.

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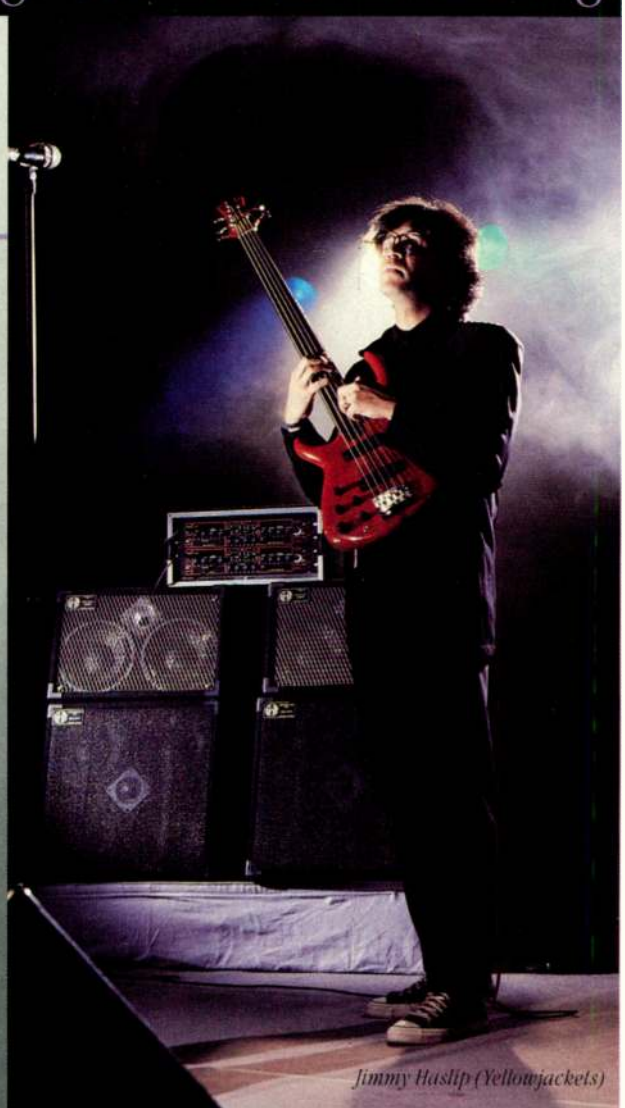

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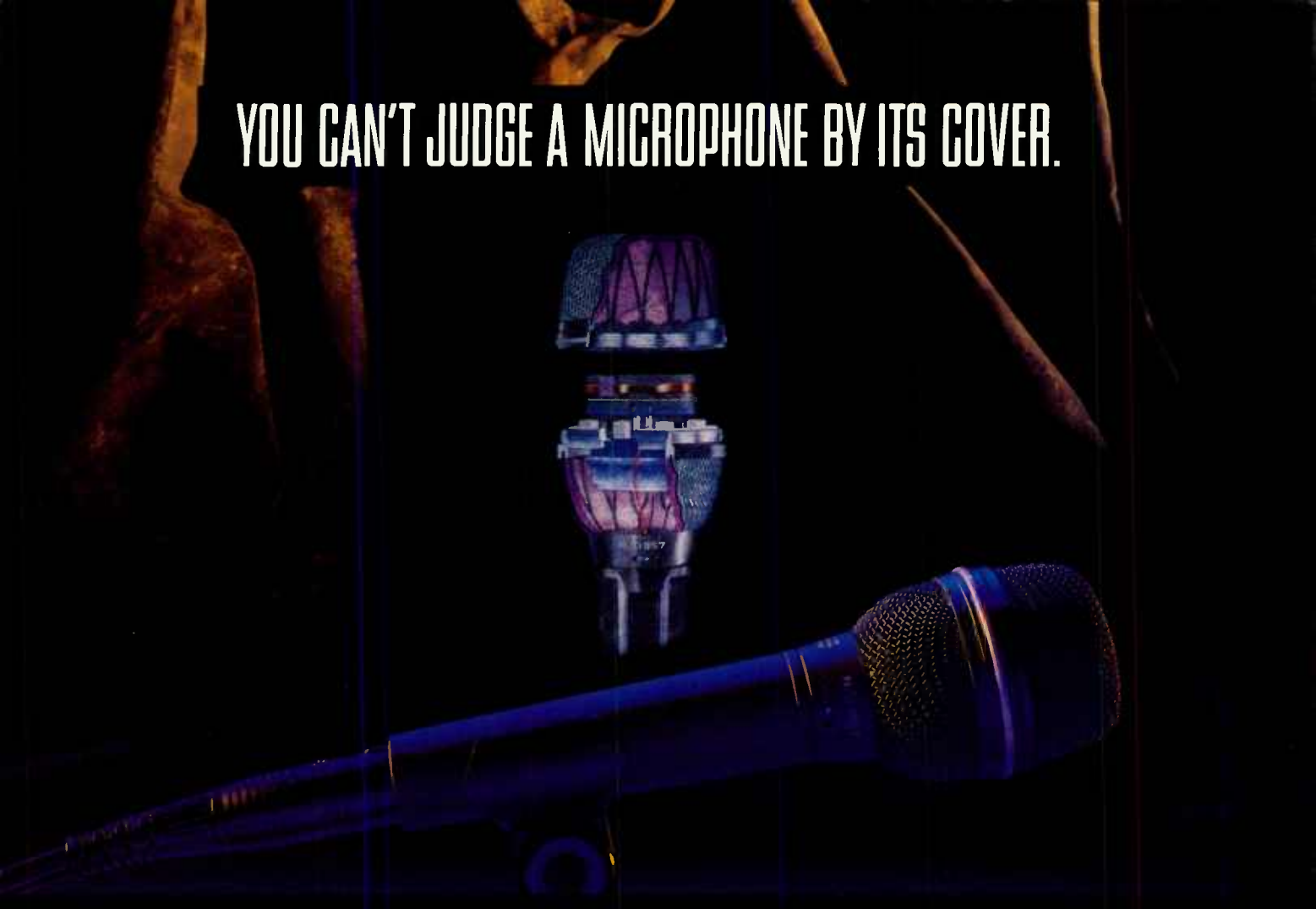

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JOHN HIATT'S Real Fine Life

By Mark Rowland

IT'S A FALSE SPRING DAY IN INDIANAPOLIS, SUNNY WITH A BITTER WIND. MID-MORNING TRAFFIC IS BRISK AROUND THE HOOSIERDOME, WHERE FARM AID IV IS JUST GETTING STARTED, BUT A FEW BLOCKS AWAY THE STREETS ARE NEARLY DESERTED. JOHN HIATT GREW UP AROUND HERE, ON THE NORTH SIDE OF TOWN. "I LIKED GROWING UP HERE, BUT I HAVEN'T REALLY BEEN BACK THAT OFTEN," HE ADMITS. "A LOT OF MY MEMORIES ARE HANGING OUT IN PARKS, TIE-DYED BLUE JEANS, RIDING AROUND WITH FRIENDS IN THE BACKS OF HEARSES . . ." HE STRIDES UP THE STEPS OF A PLAZA WHOSE CENTERPIECE IS A TOWERING WAR MEMORIAL. "WE USED TO TRY TO CLIMB UP ON THIS THING," HE RECALLS. CIRCLING THE PLAZA, HE DUCKS INTO AN OLDER BUILDING TO EXAMINE THE INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE, THEN ENTERS A SMALL CHURCH. SITTING IN A BACK PEW, WE'RE ALONE EXCEPT FOR SOMEONE PRACTICING THE PIPE ORGAN, THOUGH THE SOUND IS SO RESONANT IT SEEMS TO FILL THE PLACE. "WE DIDN'T GO TO THIS CHURCH, WE WERE CATHOLIC. MY FATHER WAS A CONVERT," HE LAUGHS, "AND YOU KNOW, THAT'S THE WORST KIND. HAD TO GO EVERY SUNDAY. WE'D BE SITTING THERE, AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SERVICE HE'D FALL ASLEEP. I'D WAKE HIM UP AND THEN HE'D NUDGE *ME*—'DON'T BE FALLING ASLEEP NOW, JOHN.'" IN A FEW HOURS JOHN HIATT WILL BE PERFORMING AT FARM AID. SO WILL EARL THOMAS CONLEY, WHOSE VERSION OF HIATT'S "BRING BACK YOUR LOVE TO ME" IS RAPIDLY ASCENDING THE COUNTRY CHARTS. SO WILL IGGY POP, WHOSE FORTHCOMING ALBUM FEATURES A HIATT SONG SLATED TO BE ITS FIRST SINGLE. SO WILL BONNIE RAITT, WHOSE COVER AND VIDEO OF HIATT'S "THING CALLED LOVE" LAST YEAR SET INTO MOTION A KIND OF BONNIEMANIA, THE RESULT BEING A NUMBER ONE ALBUM AND THREE GRAMMY AWARDS. SO THINGS COULD BE WORSE. THINGS HAVE BEEN WORSE. "IT'S WILD," HE SAYS. "I'M TICKLED, I'M REALLY ENJOYING IT. I'VE BEEN THINKING HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO COME BACK TO THIS PLACE AND NOT BE DOING IT ON A WING AND A PRAYER. OF COURSE YOU KIND OF HOPE THAT YOU COULD BE FEELING BAD AND THEY'D STILL TAKE YOU IN," HE MUSES. "BUT IT'S NICE WHEN YOU CAN COME HOME WITH A LITTLE WIND IN YOUR SAILS." *STOLEN MOMENTS* IS JOHN HIATT'S TENTH SOLO ALBUM, ALL ON MAJOR LABELS, SINCE HE BEGAN RECORDING IN 1974. THAT'S A LOT OF YEARS AND A LOT OF RECORDS TO STAY AS ANONYMOUS WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS HE'S SO FAR MANAGED. MUSICIANS ARE ANOTHER STORY. AMONG HIS PEERS JOHN HIATT IS A STAR. GLYN JOHNS, WHO PRODUCED HIS LAST TWO RECORDS, CALLS HIM "THE BEST LYRIC WRITER I'VE EVER WORKED WITH." JOHNS, YOU MAY RECALL, HAS ALSO WORKED WITH THE CLASH, JOAN ARMATRADING, THE EAGLES, THE WHO, THE ROLLING STONES, THE BEATLES. "HE'S A HERO FOR ME," SAYS BONNIE RAITT. "THERE'S A FIRE IN HIM THAT HASN'T BEEN BANKED BY ANY CHANGES IN LIFESTYLE, A VISION THAT'S NEVER EVENLY PLANED OUT. HE'S BRUTALLY HONEST BUT WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR, AND AN OUTLOOK THAT I THINK APPRECIATES ISSUES THAT ADULTS HAVE TO FACE." LEAVE IT TO IGGY POP TO DRILL TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER. "HE'S A GREAT CRAFTSMAN," THE

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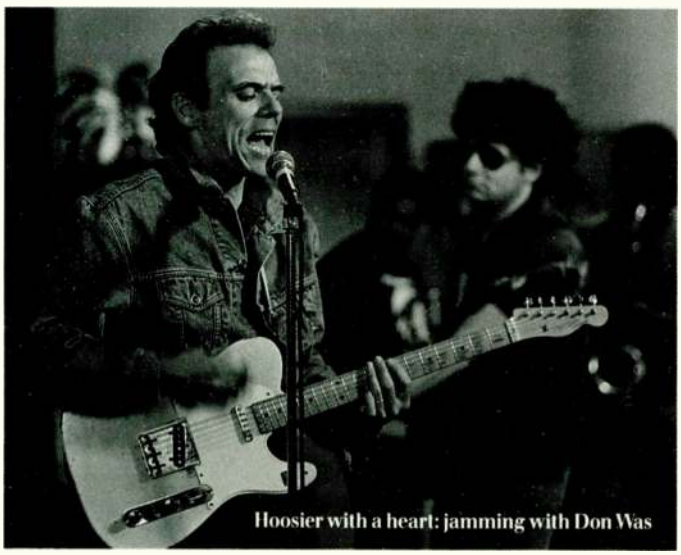
Iggster observes. "But if there's no sickness in a song it's not worth singing about. His songs are thoughtful and there's also something about them that's fucked up."

Hiatt has a way of embracing such contradictions. (Told of Iggy's remarks, he laughs heartily and accepts the compliment: "Thank you, Mr. Pop. I'm gonna go with that.") He's a songwriter weaned on rock 'n' roll who made his niche in Nashville. Though he's never had a hit, his songs have been sung by artists as diverse as Bob Dylan and Three Dog Night, Elvis Costello and Conway Twitty, Iggy Pop and Rick Nelson. While most rock and rollers start by writing passionately about themselves and eventually learn songcraft, Hiatt's pretty much gone the opposite route. He's always had the craft, but his most recent records—*Bring the Family*, *Slow Turning* and *Stolen Moments*—comprise his most personal, emotionally committed music and performances.

For all that, he's a regular guy. Plumbers give more attitude. Tall and angular, with a shock of dark hair that suggests rockabilly roots, he could act like a star. Instead he'll show up onstage, as he did at a



Hoosier with a heart: jamming with Don Was

Farm Aid warmup gig, wearing the sort of button-down sweater last seen on Ward Cleaver. The performances aren't driven by artifice.

Offstage he laughs easily and exhibits a dry, self-deprecating wit. While not entirely unwary, the offhand frankness and lack of sentimentality you hear in his songs comes through in conversation, whether he's discussing the worthiness of American cars (the only kind he'll buy) or the details of his past, which include alcohol addiction and the suicide of his second wife.

As his recent albums indicate, he's in a much better groove these days; happily married (he met his wife, Nancy, in AA) and living in Nashville with their three kids—one each from respective previous relationships and young Georgia Rae, whose arrival Hiatt celebrated with such infectious joy on *Slow Turning*.

Listening to that album and especially to *Stolen Moments*, you get the sense of someone who has emerged from a tunnel into daylight. As he moves further away from the tunnel his perspective changes, but he keeps looking back at the dark, as if that's the constant that keeps the rest of his life in focus.

"I don't want to forget," Hiatt says. "I don't want to keep focusing on the dark past, but you have to—for me anyway—because it would be so easy to go back to that. It's like, I quit smoking three years ago, but I can ill afford to be that sort of smug non-smoker. I'm much more comfortable and it's much closer to reality to maintain the attitude, 'I'm just a Marlboro away.'

"Really, the biggest change in my life is just the reversal from trying to harm yourself, consciously or otherwise, to deciding, 'Well, that's stupid—I'm gonna start trying to take care of myself.' That's been the big change for me in the last five or six years. Trying to stay 'in solution,' so to speak, rather than hanging out with the problem all the time."

Hiatt describes just such an epiphany on "Back of My Mind," a song from the new album. Set to a rolling melodic gait, the narrator recalls feeling ensnared by his thoughts since childhood. Looking for an escape or an answer, he sings, "I took me a job and I took me a wife and I took to a bottle of wine/And it did not take long before all I had left/Was this junk in the back of my mind." At a moment when all seems lost, he realizes that "the light I'd been hoping to see" was inside himself like everything else, and he seizes control of his destiny.

"Getting sober was the start of it," Hiatt says, speaking of himself. "That's sort of what made my life possible to this point. Because I was on a pretty downward spiral. We all have periods in our lives where we get into trouble in one form or the other."

"Stolen Moments" is kind of a companion song to "Back of My Mind," and brings the story up to date. "These days the only bar I ever see," Hiatt croons drolly, "has got lettuce and tomatoes." And later, in the chorus: "Don't you know we're living in stolen moments/You steal enough it feels like we're stopping time/These days are gold . . ."

"Well, I feel real good about where I am personally and with the family life," Hiatt observes. "I've never really been a party to that before. It's invigorating and exciting to me to have a houseful of that kind of energy. My gosh, I feel like, as a family and as individuals, we can just do anything if we want."

Still it's unusual to hear confessional pop songwriting these days that's infused with such positivism.

"Well, at the risk of becoming the Leo Buscaglia of rock 'n' roll," Hiatt cracks, "which I really don't want to become, I have made an effort to do that. Not so much a conscious effort, but the material collectively seems to point to accentuating the positive. It's that old saying my mom used to lay on me all the time: 'John, if you can't say anything nice don't say anything.'" He smiles. "She said that in the same breath as: 'John, nobody likes a smartass.'

"I've also been real interested in just letting the song come out, even if it's moon June spoon, you know? If that's the way I feel, it's okay. Of course the idea is that you rescue the cliché from being one by injecting it with some feeling—which is not something you can sit down and think about doing.

"I don't have the problem I used to have of getting mentally caught up in the craft so much. I still can, but more and more I've been enjoying the opportunity to sort of go with it. Part of that has come with getting a little bit of acceptance and encouragement in the public eye, to be able to feel, 'Oh, people like what I do.' It's freed me up. My attitude these days is, if you write a bad song what are they gonna do, throw you in songwriter jail?

"But I guess I'm also driven to do this stuff. I have been since I was a kid."

HIATT WROTE HIS first song at the age of 11—"I'd just picked up the guitar, and as soon as I had two or three chords together I was off and running." The sixth child of seven, it became what he considered his

Photograph: Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

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only means to communicate to the world at large. "Or at least the best I could come up with. Other guys would be figuring out Hendrix records, I'd be writing tunes."

Childhood wasn't exactly picturebook. Hiatt's father died when John was 11; his oldest brother had passed away two years before that. In another new song, the eerily atmospheric "Seven Little Indians," Hiatt describes how his father would entertain their brood with stories in the family's living room on Central Avenue in Indianapolis. "And although everything worked out for the better in all of his stories," Hiatt explains in the course of the song, "in that old brick house it always felt like something was movin' in for the kill."

"He was a small businessman, a salesman. All my brothers were salesmen, I'm a salesman for that matter," Hiatt points out. "'Seven Little Indians' reverts back to him in a big way—he actually did go to Alaska and bring back mukluks. He was the real storyteller in the family. I'd like to think if I have a gift for that . . .

"At the same time he's a real mystery to me. I don't really know that much about him. And so here I am a father and trying to suss it out a day at a time, and it came to me a couple of years ago that I kind of need help. And all of the sudden it was, 'Dad! Where the hell are ya?!'" Hiatt laughs. "Since then it's been kind of a search for some 'Daditude.' I find myself instructing my 12-year-old in codes of behavior and I catch myself thinking, 'John, you're barely 12 yourself—who are you trying to fool?'" He shakes his head. "Adolescence is not a pretty sight on a 37-year-old man.

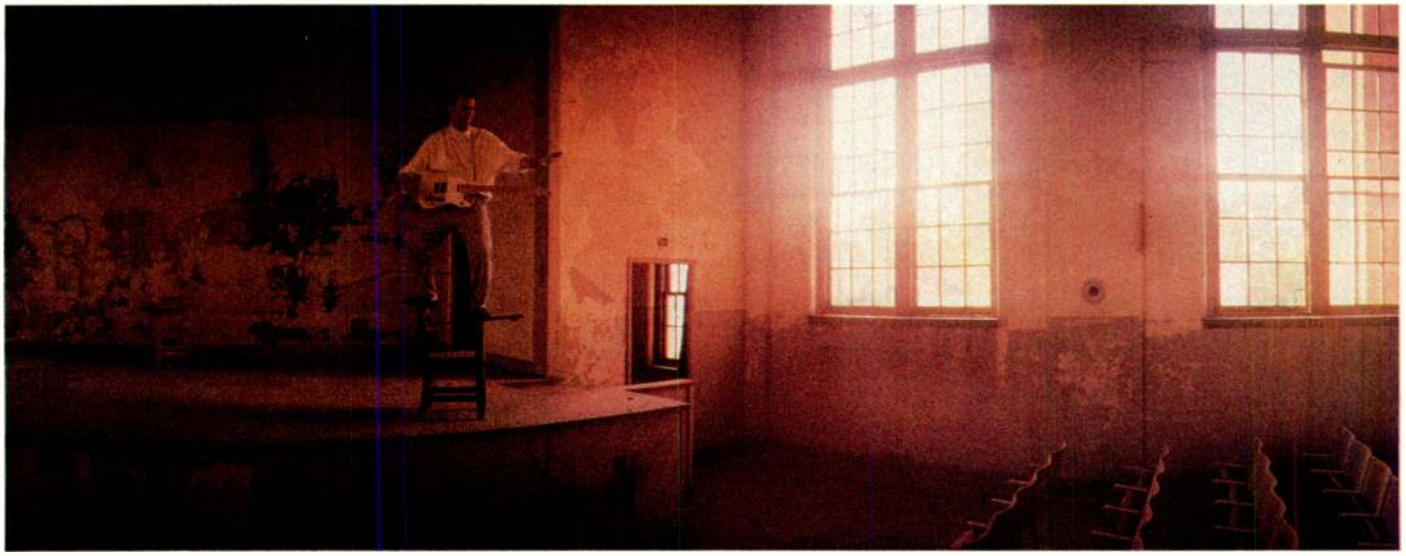
"There are things you need when you are that age, prepubescence and into adolescence, and through no fault of anyone's they just weren't there for us. I was kind of wingin' it. I'm sure there's plenty of kids going through that as we speak, from deaths and divorce and everything else. That's the way it goes. I have no complaints. I wouldn't change a thing now, I really wouldn't. Because it would mean I'd have to go back, and I don't want to go back."

Unhappy, overweight, Hiatt eventually dropped out of high school. By then he'd found a kind of niche playing rock 'n' roll with a similarly minded band of outsiders. Procol Harum and the Band were big influences; in his early teens Hiatt played in groups that scoured the Top 40 for their set lists, which in the mid-'60s meant the Rascals and Mitch Ryder.

Eventually Hiatt discovered Dylan—"by the time you're 15 or 16 you're Mr. Sensitive," he notes drily—and turned into a folkie, "hooking up with people that read books and talked about that stuff—things that I imagined never took place in my family. I was in love with this one girl who was a big Donovan fan. Madly in love for the first time and beyond being pals she wouldn't have anything to do with me. Aw, it just killed me," he confesses. "Donovan, what could I possibly do to be more Donovan-like? Anything! But I could never get that little vibrato down . . ."

It's true that Hiatt's Memphis soul stew of a voice, with a high end that can curl into an Appalachian yodel and a bottom that sounds like it's been driven on by a pickup, could not be less Donovan-like. As a singer he credits Marvin Gaye, Richard Manuel and *Another Side of Bob Dylan* as influences. "But the human voice is so special, I'm still just learning about it."

Hiatt moved to Nashville when he was 18. He took an $11 a week room and began writing songs for a nearby publishing company. "Those were wonderful times for me," he says. "I was 18, writing and getting paid for it. My drinking worked for me back then, it was good fuel even. So I was having a ball. Of course I was too much of a knucklehead to actually sit down with anybody and learn something outright. But you were rubbing elbows with the likes of Curley Putnam, who wrote 'Green Green Grass of Home,' and Harlan Howard, the Crutchfields, all these great country songwriters. So I think something rubbed off, hopefully. Something about the structure or the economy."



In fact, Hiatt was knocking out his share of winners, for Conway Twitty among others. He stayed five years and then moved to California—"I wanted to be a rock 'n' roll star, I guess." It wasn't to be, not by a long shot, though he found plenty of admirers among other musicians. He was a songwriter's songwriter, whose "She Loves the Jerk" was sung by Rodney Crowell, "The Usual" by Bob Dylan, "She Don't Love Nobody" by Nick Lowe.

For a while, Hiatt tried to ape "this cranky young man thing" that seemed to work so well for new wavers like Elvis Costello (with whom Hiatt has been misleadingly compared). The LP *Slugline* (1979) was probably "my most self-conscious attempt to be a particular style of artist," Hiatt admits. But by 1983's *Riding with the King* (half of which was produced by Lowe), he'd found his musical groove. At the same time, his personal life was falling apart.

"I had just come off a six-month period of self-enforced sobriety," Hiatt explains, "and during that period I'd had this huge burst of

Photograph: Mark Tucker

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writing, some of which—'Riding with the King,' 'I Don't Even Try,' 'She Loves the Jerk'—remains some of my favorite stuff. I was starting to let my more natural tendencies pop out, the rhythm and blues thing was much stronger, for example." But when it came time to actually make the record, "I was back in the throes of drinkin' and druggin'. I don't know how the hell the album happened. It came out in spite of me, 'cause I was wacked out. I was riding with the King, I'll tell you, pal." He laughs, a little grimly. "I really was. And it was a long way down."

The end of the fall coincided with the suicide of Hiatt's wife, Isabella. "That was the bottom. It was the end. It was the point at which something had to give. It could have been me, I guess, I don't know. But I couldn't go on like that."

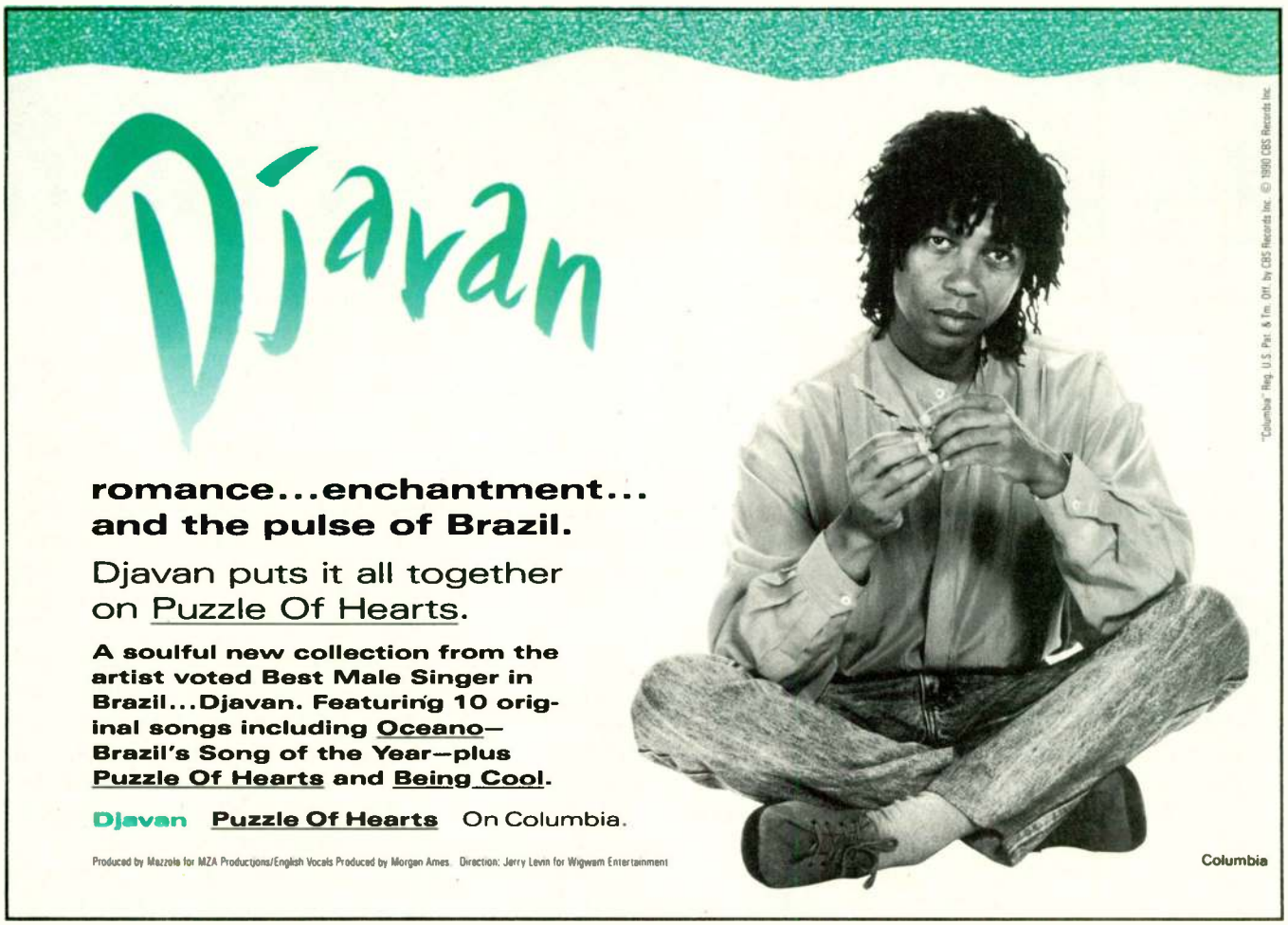
He joined Alcoholics Anonymous and has been on the wagon ever since. He also moved back to Nashville with his young daughter, Lillian. *Warming Up to the Ice Age* (1985), which is dedicated to her, was another kind of homecoming, produced by old Nashville pal Norbert Puttnam and digging deeper into Hiatt's loamy R&B roots. It was also a transitional record that signalled, at least in retrospect, the more personal approach to songwriting that's since become a signature. No hits though, despite a warm duet with Elvis Costello (on the Spinners' "Living a Little, Laughing a Little"), and Geffen dropped him from the label.

Hiatt's story might have ended there as well. But Andrew Lauder of England's Denon Records swiftly offered him another recording deal, no questions asked. "He said, 'Sing in the shower, we'll put it out,'" Hiatt recalled. *Bring the Family* (1987) was cut in four days and sounded more or less amazing, the kind of loose-but-tight ensemble playing that only the best musicians (or at least the best-humored musicians) ever manage, and in the service of outstanding songs—the greasy "Memphis in the Meantime," the elegiac "Lipstick Sunset" and of course "Thing Called Love." A&M heard the tapes, bought the rights and Hiatt was back in bizness.

Slow Turning, released the following year, got off to a rocky start. First Hiatt tried to duplicate the spontaneity of *Bring the Family* with a group of L.A. musicians that included David Lindley and X's John Doe. "We were trying to recreate an accident," he observes. "Part of what made *Bring the Family* work was that we didn't know why we were doing it. You just can't make those kind of records every day." The sessions were abandoned; Hiatt decided to try again with his own band, the Goners. "I wanted them to have something invested in the album, so that I wasn't just going out with some sidemen."

By this time the label was getting antsy for a new release. "We had to do it in about three weeks. Which for me was a lot of time," he notes wryly, "having just done a record in four days." Glyn Johns was brought in as producer, and the sessions recorded in Nashville. The Goners played great, and the album may well contain Hiatt's best collection of songs on one record. But the overall sound somehow muffles the effect, like a photograph that's been airbrushed.

Meanwhile, Hiatt's stock was soaring. He wrote "The Way We Make a Broken Heart," a number one country hit for Rosanne Cash, and "Angel Eyes," a success for Jeff Healey. And when Bonnie Raitt's



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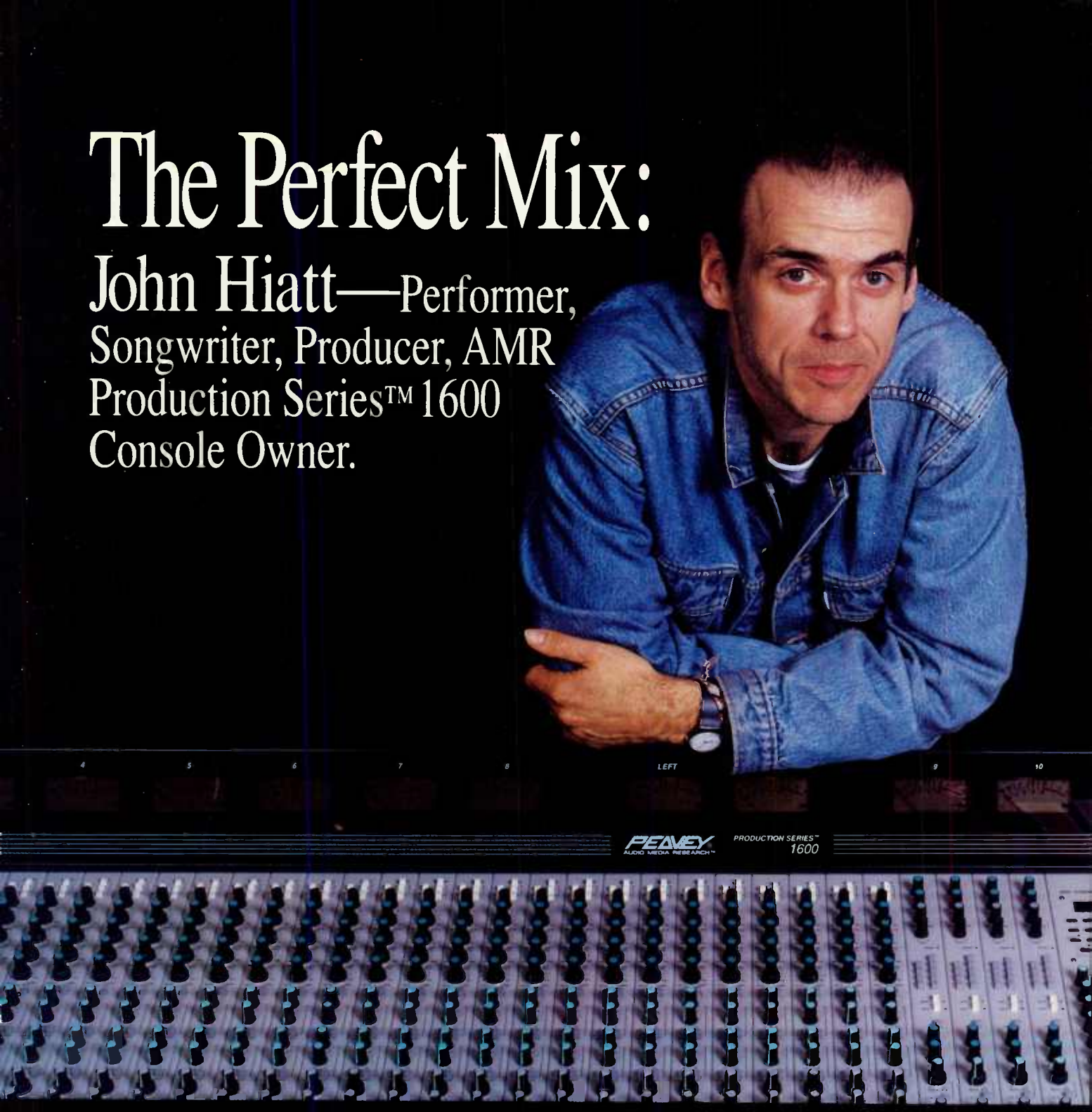

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record took off, it suggested that there was a bigger market for a certain kind of R&B-inflected pop than MTV-minded execs previously wished to acknowledge. Hiatt not only emblemized that sound, he wrote the song that was breaking her album. He seemed to be reaching his peak as a songwriter; at the same time a commercial window of opportunity was opening unexpectedly.

"I think everyone believes very strongly that [Hiatt] hasn't had the success he deserves," Glyn Johns says, "and from an A&R man's point of view, that means using a commercial producer who's chucking out hit records by the dozens. Which is perfectly understandable." On the other hand, he notes, "John Hiatts don't walk into your life very often. So I wasn't about to let him walk out—not without a fight.

"In the end, I took it upon myself to go see him. I'd never done anything like that before in my life, but I thought, 'Well, if you want it that badly. . .'" He visited Hiatt in Nashville—"basically, I landed on him," he laughs. "And told him exactly why I wanted to make the record and how I wanted to make it. And it turned out he agreed."

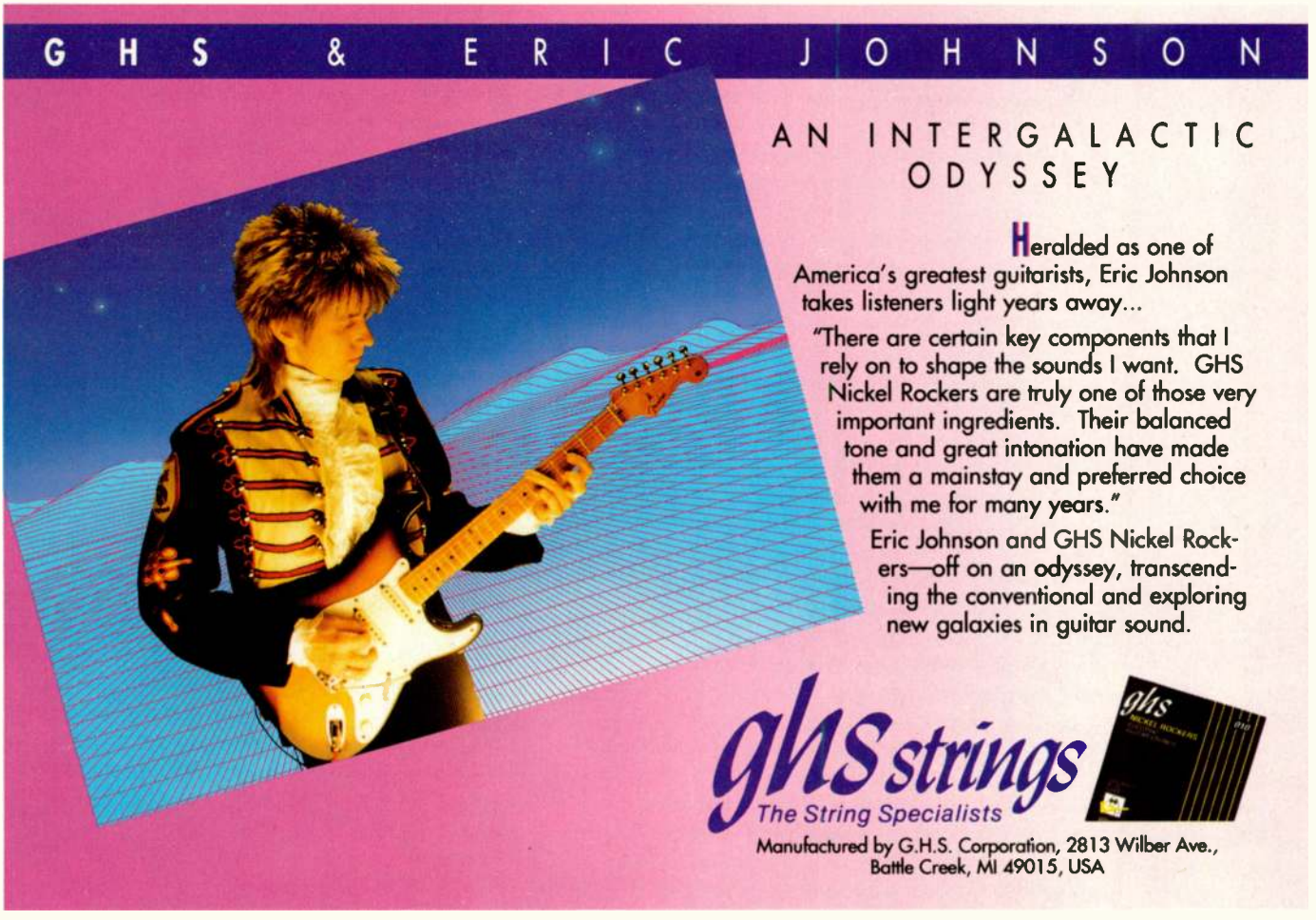
Hiatt and Johns wanted to try varied combinations of musicians, new sounds, even different studios. "Having seen the live show, I felt that he was possibly being limited by the band, in the way he was writing even," Johns suggests. "If you're writing for a rhythm section that has an identifiable groove—though the Goners are more varied than they give themselves credit for—it's natural to slip into that. So his writing might not progress in diverse enough ways. I'd been given a very limited brief to make *Slow Turning* and I'd done the job—and now I wanted an opportunity to make a record my way."

"I've never seen a guy want to do a record more than him!" Hiatt chortles at the memory. "Really, he sold me, is about what it came down to. His enthusiasm was so wild. Plus, he was talking about the same stuff I was thinking about. I met with four or five other producers. But what Glyn brings to anybody's table is formidable to begin with, and it was an irresistible package."

Hiatt was determined not to make another record in his home town: "I don't know why it's so difficult to make a rock 'n' roll record in Nashville, but it really is." They ultimately settled on Ocean Way studios in Los Angeles, a few blocks from A&M—in part to settle what Johns believes were qualms by the record company about himself as producer—and flew players in to record. The musicians on the album run the gamut from Hiatt's old Nashville pal Mack Gayden to Little Feat's keyboardist Billy Payne and Richie Hayward to Glyn's son Ethan Johns, the latter brought aboard at Hiatt's suggestion, not Glyn's.

"We called him the Youth Factor," Hiatt says. "We were hoping to brush up the old dogs a little bit. When Glyn came to Nashville, he'd brought some tapes of Ethan's demos and it just blew my mind. The kid's like 20 years old and plays all the instruments himself, great songs, great singing. I mean, the guy should be made to wear weights or something, it's too much talent. And it was wonderful to watch Glyn and his son be involved in a project together. It was a neat thing for me to be a part of."

No doubt that generosity of spirit is part of what makes *Stolen Moments* Hiatt's warmest, most assured record to date. It kicks off one



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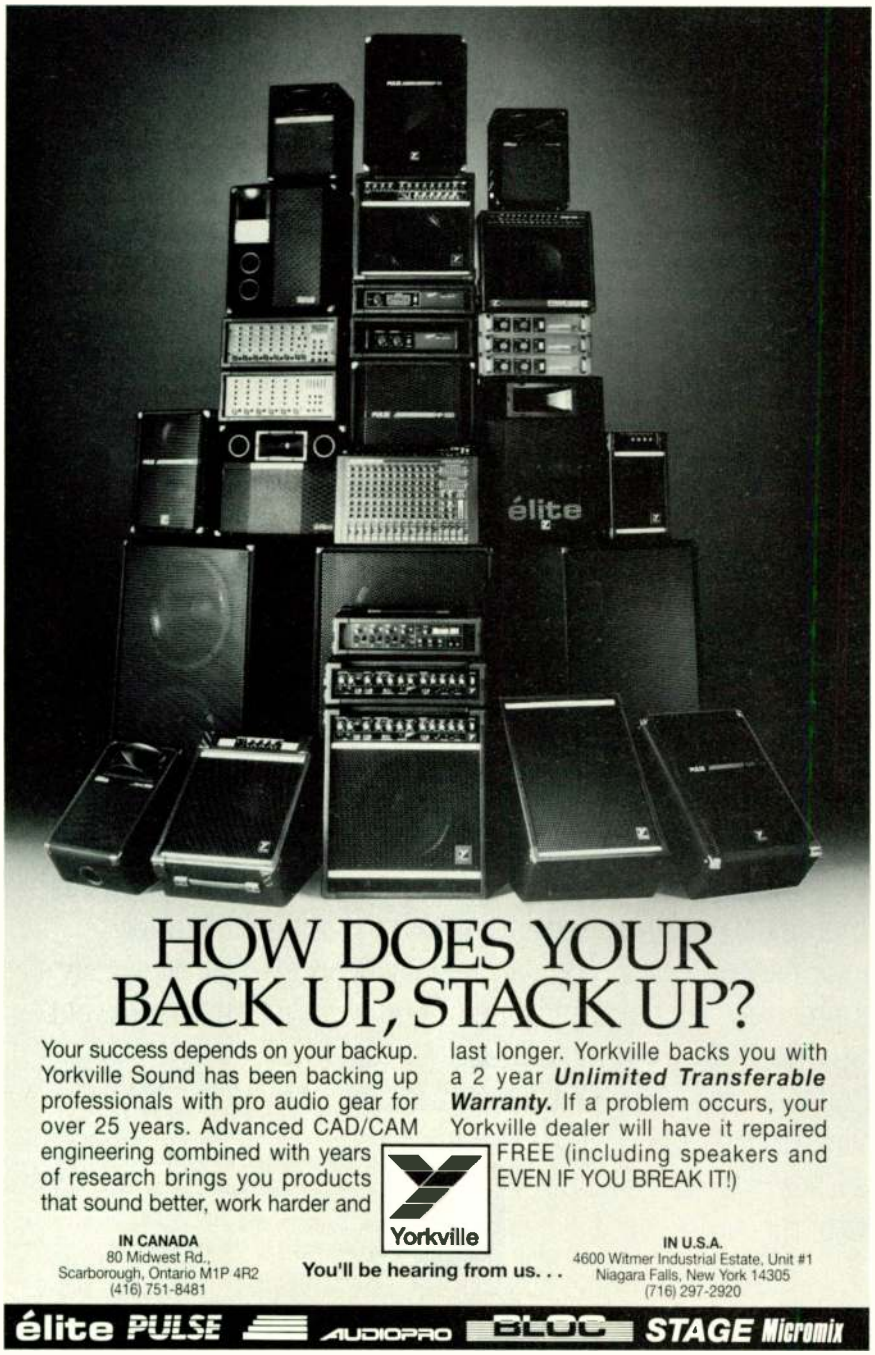
side with "Real Fine Love," a valentine to Hiatt's wife ("it sets the tone—we're not gonna be whining and moaning a lot on this platter") and closes with "Bring Back Your Love," a more rueful love letter perfumed with Philly soul ambience. There's straight autobiography ("Back of My Mind," "Seven Little Indians") intermingled with dream images ("Through Your Hands"), touches of folk-era Dylan ("30 Years of Tears") and a tribute to roadhouse rock 'n' rollers ("Rock Back Billy"). The songs feel like rooms in a house that grow more comfortable with repeated visits. And while the troubled, obsessive nature of a few Hiatt narratives suggests enough personal screwiness to pass Iggy Pop's litmus test, the effect is disarming, as if to say we're all friends here. Besides, who isn't fucked up?

"I'm genuinely grateful for my obsessive behavior," Hiatt declares. "At points in my life it was my only tool for survival. I really believe that, that if music hadn't come along and absorbed me, I might be dead today.

"Now I have a different relationship with music. It's hard to explain; things change, you don't have the same perceptions. But I think I can better serve music today. I'm more willing to go where it wants to go. I've got enough faith or trust to go along for the ride. I mean, I am still obsessive," he admits. "But now it doesn't have to consume me. It's a more integral part of who I am."



HIATT IS HANGING OUT in the green room at the Hoosierdome, drinking a glass of water and absently strumming a road-weary Telecaster. He'll be going onstage in a few minutes. There are about a dozen others in the room, mostly musicians, including the members of Crosby, Stills & Nash. After a few moments Steve Stills sidles over to chat. He compliments Hiatt on his music. Gracious reply. "See you've got your guitar ready," Stills says. "Yeah, it's a Telecaster," Hiatt says, "but I guess you know that." "No," Stills replies, "we're not going on for another hour." He walks away, leaving those in attendance time to contemplate the relationship of rock 'n' roll to ear damage.

Graham Nash comes by to tell Hiatt how much he loves his writing. Soon after that David Crosby appears, ironically the most gregarious and alert-seeming of the three. "Put 'er there!" he says, shaking Hiatt's hand. They talk a bit, Crosby leaves, then returns. "I hear you went through AA," he says. Hiatt says that yeah, he did. Crosby grins and sticks out his hand again. "Put 'er there!"

With 75 acts on one bill, Farm Aid IV is an impressive compendium of contemporary country and white pop music, though few musicians here share Hiatt's sturdy connections to both scenes. He's only approached occasionally by fans as he wanders around the back of the arena. But when he takes the stage and is introduced by Dick Clark as "Indiana's own John Hiatt" there's a friendly roar from the crowd. His backing ensemble is the swinging Was (Not Was) band, with Kenny Aronoff sitting in on drums. The group cuts through "Paper Thin" with a rock 'n' roll groove the Stones could admire, then switches gears for "Through Your Hands," bathing its fragile melody in a haunting, Blue Note horn arrangement. In two quick strokes Hiatt has shown his hometown fans how deeply he's attached to his traditions, and how little he's tied down by them.

Hiatt returns to the stage later that evening to sing with Bonnie Raitt on "Thing Called Love." She thanks him publicly for "all the help I got this year." After their duet, he lingers backstage for a few minutes, min-

World Radio History

gling with some of the other stars who've shown up to do their bit for a good cause—Bonnie, Jackson Browne, Don Henley, Bruce Hornsby, John Mellencamp, etc. He looks at once natural and awkward in this setting. Unlike them, he's still an invisible star, and you wonder if he'd be very happy if a dose of fame came along and stuck to him for good.

In the song "Through Your Hands," which is drawn from a dream by his wife, Hiatt sang: "Yeah we scheme about the future/And we dream about the past/When just a simple reaching out/Might build a bridge that lasts/And you ask/What am I not doing/She says/Your voice cannot command/In time you will move mountains/And it will come through your hands."

"That's very literal," he explains later. "Words were spoken to her to that effect. That changes will come, and you can't assess your size on a map. It's not up to you, so don't worry about it. Stop spinnin' your wheels, babe."

It sounds like a philosophy Hiatt has come to abide by. "Well, I try to," he says, "having spent the better part of my life on my butt on a barstool, proselytizing and imagining how things were supposed to be. Then it occurred to me that you're not in the game when you're doing that." He laughs. "You're on the sidelines. And I want to be a player, you know? I want to go up to the big show."

THE HIATT STUFF

I HAVE AN OLD Gibson LG2 acoustic that was made in 1947, I think. There's a picture of Elvis from some movie that's been made into a life-sized poster; he's got a black short-waist coat and black pants, and he's holding this very guitar. Got a great sound, loud for a little guitar. My main electric is a '57 Telecaster that was given to me by Nick Lowe about five years ago, thank you very much. I use D'Addario strings, with a heavy bottom (about .056) and a light top (.011). I also have a couple of Strats of no particular vintage, a Peavey bass for my demo stuff, some Peavey amps, a Stereo 12 chorus amp. My main stage amp is an old Fender Pro Reverb and I just bought an old tan Bandmaster. But I was in heaven on the amp selection for this record. Jack Puig, our engineer, brought in a pair of Vox AC30s in beautiful condition and an old Gibson Stereo Vibrato that we used on 'Through Your Hands.' I guess we like the old stuff best. I also used a Vox wah-wah, on 'Bring Back Your Love.'"

Home studio: "Peavey, bless their hearts, let me use one of their new boards that they're remaking in conjunction with AMR, a 32-input 16-channel board, studio quality, and wonderfully user-friendly for knucklehead savants like myself. I have a Fostex 16-track half-inch which sounds great too, I don't see why you can't make records on that, in fact I may yet. I have some of Lexicon's less expensive delays, their PL and P5, Peavey power amps and monitors and a Mississippi Marshall.

"I have a Roland 300 piano which sounds good, and I just bought this U220 sound module; we're going digital. It's got great organ sounds in it. We trigger and we program (I don't know how to program actually, but it's fun). And a Roland R8 drum machine. This is the guy, you know, who didn't even put his stuff on tape up to three years ago. I'd sing into a ghetto blaster and that would be the demo. So I'm slow to come to this stuff, but I'm willing to let technology work for me, instead of the other way around. For a songwriter it comes in very handy. See, getting my ideas across to other folks is not really my long suit. But put me in a room and wire me up to this stuff and I'm in heaven."

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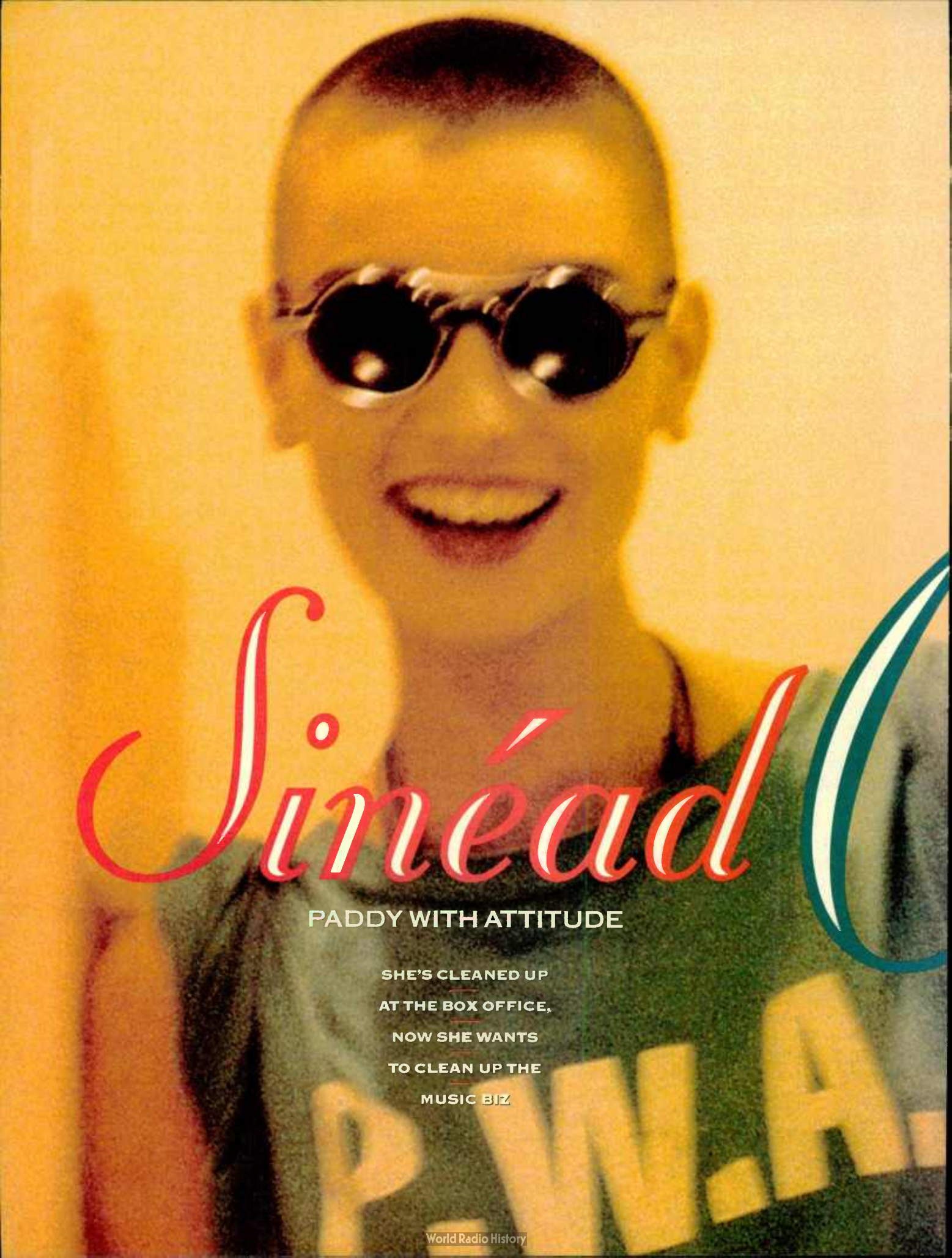

Sinéad O'

PADDY WITH ATTITUDE

SHE'S CLEANED UP AT THE BOX OFFICE, NOW SHE WANTS TO CLEAN UP THE MUSIC BIZ

World Radio History

O'Connor

SINÉAD O'CONNOR DOESN'T WANT TO BE DESCRIBED AS BEING ANY BETTER OR MORE TALENTED OR MORE SPECIAL THAN ANYONE ELSE. SHE SAYS SHE'S ORDINARY, AND THAT THE MEDIA'S INSISTENCE ON DECLARING HER SOMETHING MORE IS WRONG. WELL, YOU MIGHT NOT AGREE, BUT YOU ARE A GUEST IN HER DRESSING ROOM, SO YOU PLAY BY HER RULES. SINÉAD O'CONNOR IS ORDINARY. BUT SINÉAD O'CONNOR'S GIFT? WELL, THAT'S QUITE EXTRAORDINARY. HER GIFT IS A REMARKABLE THING.

TONIGHT SINÉAD IS DISPLAYING HER GIFT TO A RAPT AUDIENCE AT L.A.'S WILTERN THEATRE. SHE APPEARS OUT OF A MIST, A LUMINOUS FIGURE IN CROSSED SPOTLIGHTS. WITH HER LONG NECK, BIG DARK EYES, THIN FRAME AND HUGE, FLICKING HANDS SHE LOOKS, FOR JUST AN INSTANT, AS UNEARTHLY AS THE ALIEN AT THE END OF *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*. THEN SHE STARTS TO SING "FEEL SO DIFFERENT" AND SHE IS THE ESSENCE OF HUMANITY. MOST GOOD MUSICIANS WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO CREATE A SPELL LIKE THIS OVER THE COURSE

By Bill Flanagan

World Radio History

of a whole evening. Sinéad disperses it with the second song, "The Emperor's New Clothes." She's earthy, rocking, dancing across the stage with her guitar. In just those two songs you are reminded of the Who, Prince, Springsteen and Peter Gabriel. But when you try to fix the associations you realize that the only thing they share is that those were other concerts that gave you this same kind of unexpected kick and uplift. No doubt everyone in the audience is being reminded of different favorite concerts of their own.

See, here's the rare thing about Sinéad's gift: It seems to pour through her. Lots of concerts are impressive for how hard the artist has practiced, how clever he is, how much sheer work is on display. But it's rare to find music so pure and strong that even the musician seems to be standing back and marveling at its manifestation.

Not to get too oh-wow about this.

A quick briefing before we go back and meet Sinéad: Her first album, *The Lion and the Cobra*, was released in late 1987 and inched its way to the edge of the American Top 30 in the spring of 1988. This accomplishment surprised many people, not least Sinéad's U.S. record company, whose top dogs had predicted the album was too weird for mainstream America. Sinéad's lack of rapport with her label became public in a *Musician* cover story that spring.

In early 1990 Sinéad, now 23, delivered her second album to the label, who told her it was too introspective, too personal. The songs reflected the tumult in her life; Sinéad had not only gotten famous since her last album, but she went through a painful split with her manager and boyfriend. She followed that with her marriage to drummer John Reynolds, the father of her two-year-old son. The whole series of emotional upheavals was reflected in the music of *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got*. Sinéad told the record company they were wrong, the album was fine. They released it grudgingly. But Sinéad was right, it's a great album. And the public recognized it at once. The first single, "Nothing Compares 2U," shot to number one all over the world. The album followed. Tonight, June 1st, *I Do Not Want* . . . has been the number one album in the United States for six weeks. It has sold millions of copies and it's not slowing down.

Sinéad, a Dubliner relocated to London, speaks softly and smiles often. She has gotten this far by telling the truth as she sees it and not worrying about what other people think. She's not going to stop now.

MUSICIAN: *By the end of this year you'll be financially secure. Is there any chance you'll walk away from all this, won't do it anymore?*

O'CONNOR: There is a huge chance that I would, yeah. [*Smiles*] But there's a huge chance I'll get run over by a bus tomorrow. I never make plans about anything. My life has been very active. It seems to be very spur of the moment. So I just go with it. Somebody could walk in here now and suggest something that would change the entire thing. So I never plan. I can fairly much live my life apart from my work as I want to live it. That's a great thing. It's a shame that people in general spend their lives trudging to the office every day in order to make money. People waste their lives in order to feed themselves. I'm very lucky that I'm getting to do what I want to do. Tomorrow morning I may want to do something completely different. I expect I'll always throw the odd album out, though.

> MUSIC, AND ALL ART, IS ABOUT THE PASSING OF INFORMATION, THE EXPRESSION OF HUMAN FEELING AND THE REFLECTION OF GOD."

MUSICIAN: *Your show is the least* ironic *presentation I've seen in a long time. There's no detachment. In the first two or three numbers you present the range of what a person is—soul, strength, sensitivity. Then sexuality. You grab and stroke yourself during "I Want Your Hands on Me"—and yet it's still real direct and honest. When most performers, from Mick Jagger to Madonna, demonstrate sexuality, it's with a little wink or a bit of camp. Not you.*

O'CONNOR: I think other people who do it do it in everything they do. Whereas I don't do that much of it. I only do it for a split second. But Mick Jagger and Madonna are *based* on sexuality. Which is great and very lovely.

MUSICIAN: *The audience really responds to your honesty.*

O'CONNOR: I suppose they feel that it could be them. It's not somebody removed or above them, it's somebody exactly the same as them. If I have any intention at all it's of pointing out to people that the whole star thing is bullshit, that we're all just people, exactly the same as anybody else.

MUSICIAN: *Except you have a gift a lot of people don't have.*

O'CONNOR: Yeah, but a lot of people have gifts that I don't have. I do what I do because I'm not conscious of it. And for that reason I never read press or reviews. Because if I become conscious of my mannerisms or the things that I do, it'll be affected rather than natural.

MUSICIAN: *When your first album came out Nigel Grainge, the president of your British label, told* Musician *that you'd written that record over two years and with very little pressure, and he wondered if you'd be able to write a follow-up. A lot of people were watching closely to see how you'd handle the sophomore jinx.*

O'CONNOR: I was frightened, yeah, but not because of anything some record company person would say, because I'm invariably unconcerned with opinions of people who know nothing about me. But from my own point of view, yeah, I was a bit freaked out about whether I'd be able to do it. I was wondering what I was going to do, if I was going to starve. The album was actually written in a very short period of time. Up until last October I hadn't really written anything, I didn't know if there was going to be an album or not. And then it happened very suddenly and spontaneously.

MUSICIAN: *And when you presented these songs to the rec-*

Photography by Christine Alicino

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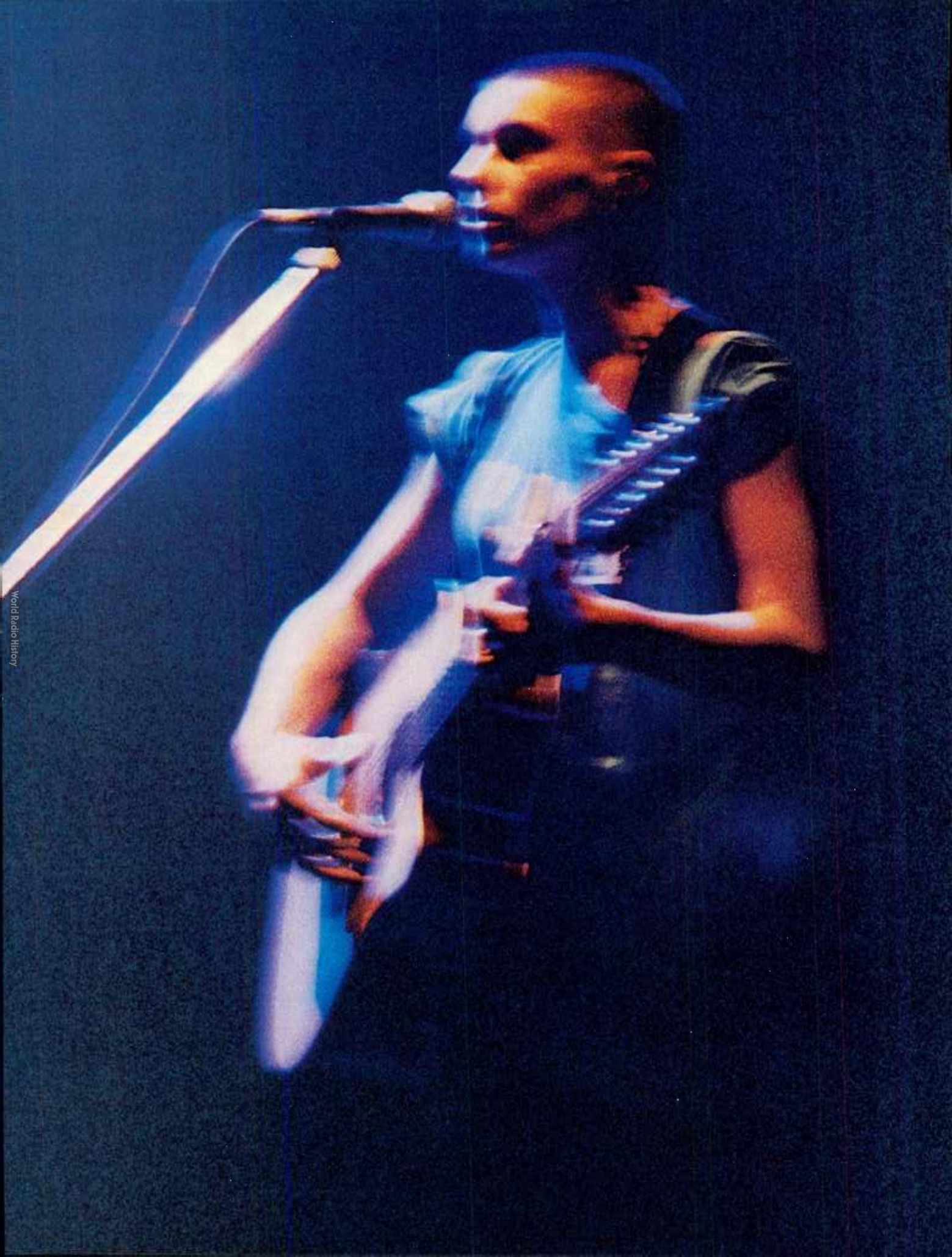

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ord company they told you they were "too personal"?

O'CONNOR: Uh-huh. The record company said to me that if I put the album out it would probably be a complete flop, that it would be like the Terence Trent D'Arby album—people wouldn't understand it and it wouldn't be a success and it would sit in the warehouse. But that's what they said about the first album as well. But now of course they say, "We love it, it's great!"

MUSICIAN: *Did you know that you had done something great?*

O'CONNOR: Yeah, I did. I knew that I had achieved a hundred percent of what I wanted to achieve. And I knew that they were wrong, and I told them at the time that they were wrong. They'd be the first to admit it. I said, "That's why people like me, that's what I do, that's what I am. People are not looking for commercial crap off me, they can get that wherever they want it."

MUSICIAN: *You've had this great success opening your veins in public. What sort of demands does that put on you?*

O'CONNOR: It puts enormous demands on me. I have no problem with opening up my veins in order to create, in order to write songs. What I find very difficult to deal with is the peripheral things, the whole commercial success, the whole *fame* aspect of it. People hassling me, following me. None of it has anything to do with me as a person or an artist, it's got nothing to do with what any of the songs are about. It's no pain for me to summon up everything that the songs are about and perform them. That's what I do. It's like putting on my clothes. What hurts me and makes me very upset is people not treating me as an ordinary person. Everybody, even people who are close to me. I have no identity as anything other than *Sinéad O'Connor*, even with people that are very, very close to me. It's like [*waves desperately*] "Hi! I'm still here!"

And the bullshit! The hypocrisy! People who before the album came out were going on about how it would flop and what crap it was are now *delighted* with themselves. People who never spoke to me are now my best friends. Cousins I haven't seen for years are phoning up. It's just rubbish.

MUSICIAN: *That's what drives celebrities to build walls.*

O'CONNOR: Well, I refuse to allow it to do that. I have constantly asked people, pleaded with people not to treat me like that. I'm not a rock star, there's no such thing as a fucking rock star, it's bullshit. I'm just the same as them. If they continue to treat me like that I will stop doing it. I will not do this for a living anymore unless people stop treating me as anything other than an ordinary person. I don't want to be followed around shops, I don't wanted to be followed into cafes, I don't want people staring at me when I'm trying to eat my dinner or going to the supermarket.

None of it has anything to do with you as an artist, or as a person, or what the songs are about. The media are responsible for the fact that we are not looked on as being ordinary people, because we're spoken about as if we're extraordinary. But we're *not*. A radio station in San Diego two days ago held a competition for people to run around hotels trying to find out where I was staying! I'm not an animal! What do they think I'm going to do? I'm just going to freak out. It's scary. Why should I be treated like that just because I wrote a song? And really, I seriously mean it: If people don't stop treating me like that I'm not going to make any more records. Because it's not what I'm making records for; it's the thing that damages me most.

I don't want to be abusive to people and it's important that I say that as well. I'm very, very flattered that people like me. That's great. And if I'm doing something to help them, brilliant—life is a wonderful thing. But it's just too much. So I'm going to try to appeal directly to people. There's no reason for me to build a wall or go out in wigs or anything else. If I can't do it as a real person, there's no point.

"IF PEOPLE DON'T STOP TREATING ME LIKE A ROCK STAR I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE ANY MORE RECORDS."

MUSICIAN: *"Black Boys on Mopeds" is a powerful song about racial injustice in England. I was really struck by the lines: "I've said this before now, you said I was childish and you'll say it now." People react real cynically to pop music that tries to be serious or take on social issues. I think for you to look that attitude in the eye in your song makes it harder for cynics to just brush it off. You disarm them.*

O'CONNOR: I knew that as soon as I said anything like that in a song I would be attacked for it. And in England, of course, I was. That was the song that everybody slagged off as naive, childish, immature. Precisely what I said. See, people are incapable of seeing things from an emotional point of view. They're taught to see from a political point of view and, really, that's wrong. They're incapable of understanding the feelings of a mother when something like that happens. They're saying how immature it is for me to say I want to run off. But they don't have children. Largely they are men, and usually they are very cynical.

People get stupid, they can't see things in metaphor. I compared Margaret Thatcher to the [Chinese leaders in] Beijing. They take everything so literally, their brains don't work properly. But, you see, the song isn't for them. It's for people who do understand. That's one of the songs that every single audience goes completely apeshit over.

MUSICIAN: *Your songs have the passion of motherhood in them, a fierceness: "You held the baby while I wrecked the bedroom," "You know how a pregnancy can change you," "And of course I'm like a wild horse but there's no other way I could be."*

O'CONNOR: That one's more describing my own character than being connected with children. It's more explaining why I'm impulsive now and then, or maybe a bit mad. Kids in any shape or form affect you, they make you aware.

MUSICIAN: *The mother in "Three Babies" comes back in "Black Boys on Mopeds."*

O'CONNOR: It could be me. There but for the grace of God. There's a market in London called Smithfield where restaurant people buy

World Radio History

all their goodies. There are women down there at five o'clock in the morning in the freezing cold in the winter with their children, rooting around in boxes trying to find stuff that was thrown out.

MUSICIAN: *Like many of the most important rock musicians, your mother died when you were a teenager. Do you think that when she died you felt freed?*

O'CONNOR: I think I did, yeah. I wasn't sorry that she was dead. I was sorry that she'd had such a shitty life. See, I understand death, it doesn't flip me out. Seeing her body freaked me out, though. It was just weird that there was nothing *in* there. But yeah, there was a certain sense of freedom. Absolutely. I think every child wishes at some point that their parents will die. Because they think they could have as much ice cream as they liked or stay up late. I'm sure lots of parents occasionally wish they didn't have their children. For a split second it'll float through your head and then be gone. It's like when you're standing in a train station and you wonder what would happen if you jumped.

MUSICIAN: *The lovers die in "Jackie," the girl dies in "I Am Stretched on Your Grave," in concert you're doing Mary Black's "Anarchie Gordon." It's dangerous for people to fall in love in your songs . . .*

O'CONNOR: [*Laughs*] They all end up dead!

MUSICIAN: *But you never get corny or campy, even with ghost songs. For the time you're singing the song you really believe it.*

O'CONNOR: Oh yeah, absolutely. That's the thing about Irish songs. You can't have anything but respect for them and I insist that the audience have respect for them as well by being quiet. 'Cause they are very, very heavy. They're in a class of their own. I wouldn't do it unless it was a song that really affected me, like "Anarchie Gordon." It's hard for me to not cry every time I sing it. And that's why I do it, because to me that song, the atmosphere and feelings in it, sum up precisely what music and all art is about: the passing of information, the expression of human feeling and the reflection of God.

MUSICIAN: *In those Irish songs, if you do evil you die—and if you resist evil and maintain your virtue, you still die.*

O'CONNOR: How you live your life depends purely on what you think is going to happen to you after you die. I believe very much that this isn't what it's all about, that there's far more going on afterwards, and I can't wait to get there! [*Laughs*] I've got a long list of questions. To even say "I believe" sounds a little like I'm convincing myself. It's just a simple matter of fact to me, as much as putting my socks on in the morning.

MUSICIAN: *Have you always felt that way?*

O'CONNOR: Always. Since I was a very young child. It's perfectly obvious. I don't know how anyone thinks otherwise. It's completely ludicrous to me that anyone would think this is all there is and live their life accordingly. It's why the world's so greedy and why people are obsessive and mad and only concerned with money and fame. Because they aspire to the things that we have made important rather than the things that God has told us are reality. If we all believed there was something happening afterwards we'd treat each other with far more respect. People wouldn't be hungry. The world is in the mess it's in because people have no sense of spirituality. They think that Earth is the most important planet and white people are the most important people. And they believe when they die they're just going to rot. But they're not.

MUSICIAN: *What a joke on them.*

O'CONNOR: Well, yeah, precisely. It's a subject that an interview can't really be conducted with me without discussing. Frankly, if anybody doesn't like it, tough. I realize that a lot of people don't. A lot of people think, "Bullshit." Fuck them, y'know. They're the ones that are mad. We're sane.

MUSICIAN: *Do you belong to a church?*

O'CONNOR: No, I don't. I believe in churches as places of worship, but I don't believe in organized orthodox religion.

MUSICIAN: *That reminds me of the line in "Three Babies": "Though I tried, I blasphemed and denied, I know they will be returned to me." It's not like a prayer said in church, it's like a prayer said when the airplane's going through a thunderstorm.*

O'CONNOR: It isn't even praying, it's matter-of-fact knowledge. It's like I know I'm going to be onstage at 9:15. That's what praying is, it's knowledge. Even the words "faith" and "belief" imply that it's something you don't *know.* But to me I just know. There isn't even a word to describe it, it just is. And also, we're all gonna die one day. Yeah? The idea of dying is scary, simply because of how you die, but being dead doesn't scare me. I can't wait! [*Laughs*] I don't mean [*puts on morbid voice*] "I can't wait to die." I mean it's gonna be brilliant. What a laugh! I'm suddenly going to know everything that I don't know now that confuses me or makes me wonder. I'm suddenly going to see it all clearly and it's going to be amazing.

MUSICIAN: *Are there any songs that you won't put out because they're too private or personal?*

O'CONNOR: No. 'Cause they're not. If I put out "The Last Day of Our Acquaintance" . . . I've never put a song out that isn't personal.

MUSICIAN: *You've added a new verse to that song in concert: "You were no liferaft to me/I drowned in pain and misery/You did nothing to stop me/Now drown in your own self-pity." You don't worry about hurting someone's feelings?*

O'CONNOR: No, because I'm expressing my own feelings. It isn't a concern to me whether I upset other people by doing it. I might have an argument with one of my friends and then be perfectly all

Photograph: Paul Robicheau

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right, but I will express how I felt.

MUSICIAN: *So there's no self-censorship at all?*

O'CONNOR: Absolutely not. I dropped "You Cause as Much Sorrow" because I don't really believe it anymore: It's very bitter and I just didn't enjoy singing it. It expressed very negative thoughts about somebody that I now feel extremely positive about.

MUSICIAN: *On your first tour in '88 you introduced a song called "The Value of Ignorance" which was sexually charged.*

O'CONNOR: Well, it wasn't, you see, it wasn't. That's why I stopped doing it—because people can't listen to the words "arse" or "fuck" without thinking it's to do with sex, that I'm trying to be raunchy or sexy. That was a song about how the sexual experience for women is extremely different than it is for men and that a lot of the time women's reasons for having sex are very different. A man can just have sex with a woman because she's beautiful, they don't have to love her or like her. Whereas women, most of the time, have to be fairly much in love with somebody. The song was about how that is in itself a form of sexual abuse—the fact that a woman is giving herself and a man is just sticking his knob into her. There aren't nice words to use to describe it. It's funny, everyone uses bad language, yet they all jump at it. It embarrasses them. Any sort of sexual word, like "masturbation," embarrasses people and makes them feel uncomfortable. It does me, I feel uncomfortable.

The world is full of cowards. You see cowards a lot when you're doing something that's honest, because you remind people of their own dishonesty.

MUSICIAN: *Your father told* Rolling Stone, *"Sinéad's not a naive composer." You went to music school?*

O'CONNOR: Yeah, but my father doesn't realize that I hardly went to any of the lessons. I know the very basics. I know what note is what on the piano, I know how to use my voice correctly. I'm not naive, but I'm not educated. Lessons are like religion: Any sort of rules and regulations will stop you rather than enhance you. They'll hold you back rather than push you forward. I remember doing music theory when I was young. I learned how to read music and subsequently forgot and I'm very glad. I was told that I couldn't put certain notes after certain notes because "Beethoven had never done it." Music reading is based on what everyone has done in the past, it's not based on trying anything new.

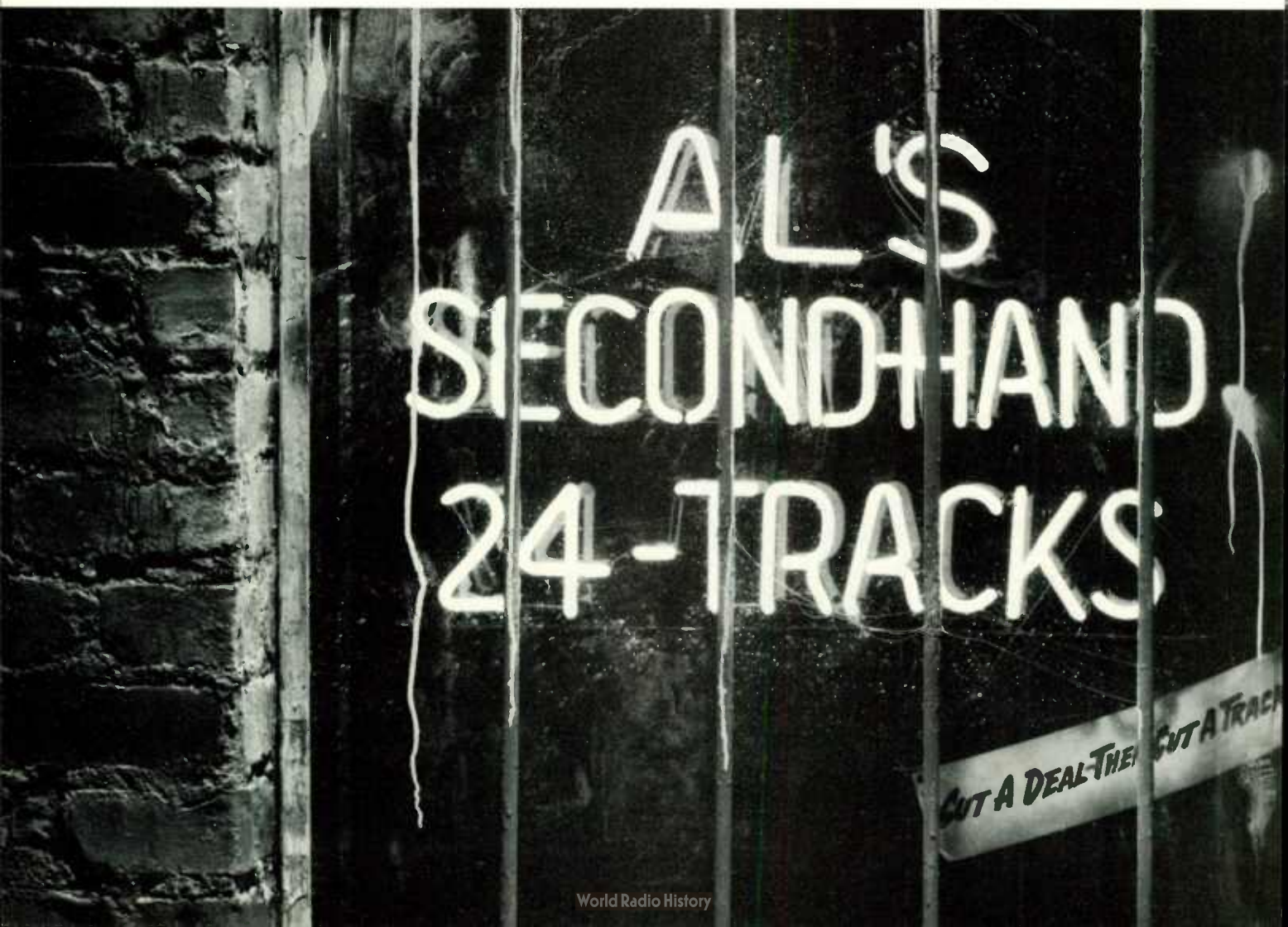
Texture is probably the most important aspect of my songwriting. I'm trying to achieve texture. I sound like a lunatic, but I know other writers think of it the same way. The way that you see music and songs is in shapes and textures and colors. You don't see them in terms of the words or the music. You see the shape of it, the texture of it, the color of it. The guitar with the keyboard, the notes each one plays, goes to weave the fabric. It's like making a carpet.

MUSICIAN: *Do you usually write on the guitar? Piano?*

O'CONNOR: I used to do it on the guitar but now I generally *think* it. A lot of this album was just thought.

MUSICIAN: *You're lucky you have such a great voice, 'cause it allows your imagination . . .*

O'CONNOR: Yeah, you feel like you can do anything.



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MUSICIAN: *Whereas people with more limited voices . . .*

O'CONNOR: Singing is purely psychological.

MUSICIAN: *Easy for you to say.*

O'CONNOR: No! It is! If I feel tense then I sing tense, if I feel relaxed and flowing that's how I sing. That's why singers get massages all the time. How you feel physically and mentally is how you will sing. If you think you can reach a note, you can do it. If you imagine it in your head, you will do it. You train your own voice, you exercise your voice. As anyone's legs are capable of running.

MUSICIAN: *You also have a physical instrument, though.*

O'CONNOR: Everyone has a physical instrument. Take 10 ballet dancers, every one of them is capable of lifting her leg eight feet up in the air. It's down to whether they exercise it, use it, believe they can do it and not worry about it. You must not think about it.

MUSICIAN: *So you compose in your head first and then chase the songs down with an instrument.*

O'CONNOR: That's why a lot of people say that I'm very difficult to work with in the studio. I know exactly what I want it to be like. I'm very, very insistent in the studio, to the point of being rude, about what I want. I don't want an opinion from anybody about it. I'm not wondering what to do. It's finished in here [*taps forehead*] already. I just have to communicate it. And it's a great sense of euphoria to hold in your hand what was in your head. To actually be able to show someone your thoughts. Because words aren't enough to describe what you're trying to say.

On the albums, I like to play as much as I can possibly play myself, even if it takes me hours. I find it very hard to communicate what I want musicians to do, because they speak a completely different language. It's easier for me to do it myself.

MUSICIAN: *So when you finish, it's what you imagined it to be.*

O'CONNOR: And its importance should not be measured by record sales or chart positions. I know that's easy to say when you're number one in America, but that doesn't mean anything. It's great, but it's not why anyone should be doing it. And those who are doing it for that reason should fuck off. Unfortunately that's why most people do it, why radio stations and commercial record companies exist. But none of that has anything to do with the actual art of self-expression, which is what we're all supposed to be doing.

Serious changes need to be made. I would change how record companies treat artists. I am treated very well by my record company because I have never allowed them to treat me badly, but record

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companies continually try to change artists. They tell them to grow their hair, cut their hair, dress a certain way, not to say bad words at the show because the president of the record company is there. And meanwhile, while they're in L.A. recording the bloody album, they're not allowed to phone their families in Dublin, they're not allowed to phone their girlfriend who's just had their twins. They're just abused, treated like shit, packaged and turned into products in order for those people who work at record companies to make a whole lot of money and buy a big house in Antigua. Meanwhile the musicians are paid nothing, they're not even allowed to make a phone call.

I was pregnant when I was recording the first album and we were given 60 quid a day for food. There were six of us, so we had 10 pounds each to feed ourselves. And every week the record company would forget to send it over and I would have to phone them up and there would be some dispute about it. And it was my money anyway! Anyway, after a few hours of hassling the money was sent around by bike. But they had docked three pounds off for the bike! Meanwhile they're all living in these posh houses that bands are paying for! We are paying their mortgages with the fact that we live the kind of lives we lead and write about what we write about. The whole thing is very unfairly distributed. We are treated as if the record company is doing us some sort of big favor when in fact it's the other way around. Music and musicians would exist without record companies. Record companies would not exist without us.

Out of the seven pounds people spend on a record, I will make about 50 pence. The record company will get the rest. When I signed I was given seven points out of a hundred for what I do. Meanwhile the record company will go on about how the album won't sell and they don't like it and they're not behind it. But they are the ones who benefit from it.

Artists do not make money from CDs! We make money from cassettes and vinyl. And nobody buys vinyl anymore. But from CDs we earn some perfunctory amount of money—a penny or something. Because nobody thought CDs would ever do anything, there are all these clauses in contracts saying the record companies make the money. And most of my records are sold on CD. It's incredibly unfair, but record companies won't budge, they won't change it.

Apart from the financial thing, I've seen occasions here when the support band [Hugh Harris] is doing their soundcheck and a woman from the record company tells them she doesn't like the way the guitar sounds or something. What's it got to do with her? They have absolutely no right to comment artistically. It's not their place and it's not their job. My record company is very understanding of this and they agree with me. The record company has no right to suggest anything to any artist. Their job is to sell the record that they are given. They continually try to get you to do re-mixes. Fuck off. They obviously can't do their job properly or they wouldn't ask you.

And they won't let you go! If you say to them, "Fuck off, I'm not doing that," they won't drop you and let you go somewhere else. They're bastards, they're complete bastards. They make three, four or five times the money out of an artist that the artist does. It's not an issue of money but of "What's the story here? Who wrote the songs?" It's not their place to think about anything artistic, it's not their job. It's as if some complete

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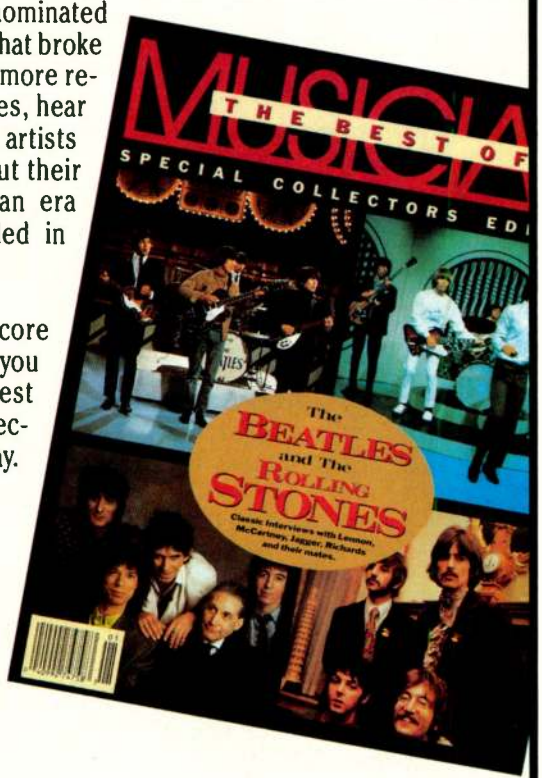

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stranger came in here and said, "I've got this great idea!" Well, fucking keep it to yourself.

The art department has no business being at your photo session, the record company has no business being in a studio when you're recording. They have no business commenting on how it sounds either live or on record. They are salespeople. And they need to be reminded of that. It's the truth and nobody has the guts to say it. What is going on here? I should earn at least 70 or 80 percent of what my ability to sing and write a song earns. Why should some bloke sitting in his office all day make more out of it than the artist? Why should some president make a whole lot of money out of the experiences, the pain, that artists go through in order to create songs?

If you slog for a week to write a story properly, you are the one who should get paid for doing that. Why should somebody that owns the magazine get paid more than you for the work you have done?

MUSICIAN: *They would say, "Because I own the printing press." Or in your case, "Because I own the record-pressing plant."*

O'CONNOR: Okay, then get 50 percent each. But record companies are making 90 percent, sometimes 93 percent. That's un, un, unfair.

MUSICIAN: *Then the challenge becomes to be like Charlie Chaplin and the other movie stars who got together and formed United Artists. There have been occasions in history when powerful artists got together and said, "We're going to control the means of production." Can you imagine doing that?*

O'CONNOR: Yes, I would very much like to do that. I would like my own record company. I don't need to earn a living out of somebody else, I'm not a parasite. But I'd like to have a record company that would sign people and put records out and treat artists with respect and make enough money to keep the record company going but to *pay people what they earn.*

Acknowledge that I'm the one who did it, by myself without any support from any of those people on either album. Now I've got it and that's great, but I did it by myself.

MUSICIAN: *You must be glad Mike Bone's no longer president of Chrysalis.*

O'CONNOR: I have no problem with Mike Bone. He's a very nice man, they're all very nice.

MUSICIAN: *It seemed like the American record company dragged their feet on your stuff, even after the success of the first album proved that this wasn't some obscurity.*

O'CONNOR: Yeah, because they had decided. There were certain things they did that I disliked which I talked about in *Musician*. They were very annoyed about that interview. They didn't like it, they were very pissed off about it, and they decided that was that. They weren't interested anymore. But that really doesn't matter. They're gone and the people who are there now are very understanding of me, very respectful. And I can actually relate to them on a normal human level. They're not fuckin' robots, which is great. And I can say all this about record companies without them taking it personally.

You can do what you feel without having to pander to all the crap that people give you, be it record companies, friends, family or even fans. You don't have to change yourself. You don't have to do what the company tells you; you don't have to grow your hair or put nice fucking lettering on your album's cover. You don't have to put your initials instead of your name: Depeche Mode is now DM, Fine Young Cannibals is FYC. [*cont'd on page 97*]

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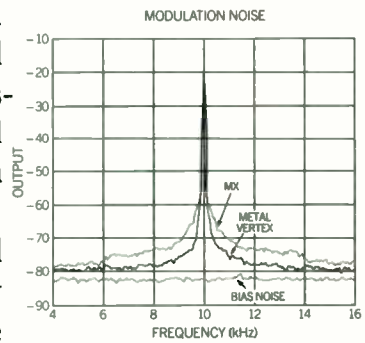

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The Boys on the Bus

Dave Edmunds hits the road with Graham Parker, Steve Cropper, Kim Wilson and Dion.

BY SCOTT ISLER

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A DAVE EDMUNDS FAN TO REALIZE THAT MUSICIANS HAVE CHECKED INTO NEW HAVEN'S COLONY INN. ALTHOUGH THE 30-PERSON DAVE EDMUNDS' ROCK & ROLL REVUE ENTOURAGE IS NOWHERE ABOUT, THEIR DUFFEL BAGS AND ALUMINUM CASES LITTER THE LOBBY. THE LUGGAGE OWNERS HAVE JUST ARRIVED FROM WASHINGTON, D.C., THE SECOND STOP OF A 25-DATE CROSS-COUNTRY TOUR, AND ARE REVIVING THEMSELVES IN THEIR ROOMS.

"WHO'S THE BAND?" THE YOUNG AFRICAN-AMERICAN BELLHOP ASKS AS WE SHARE A SLOW ELEVATOR RIDE. "DAVE EDMUNDS," I REPLY. THE BELLHOP'S BLANK EXPRESSION FORCES ME TO ADD QUICKLY, "A BRITISH GUITARIST AND SINGER." I DON'T GO INTO MORE DETAIL BECAUSE HE OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T CARE AND YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT EDMUNDS IS A UNIQUE MULTI-TALENT: A DEMON SIX-STRINGER AND KEENING VOCALIST IN DEMAND AS MUCH FOR HIS RECORD-PRODUCTION ABILITIES AS FOR HIS OWN MUSICAL TALENTS.

BUT THE BELLHOP DOESN'T KNOW WHO HE IS. "AND

Photography by Steven R. Nickerson

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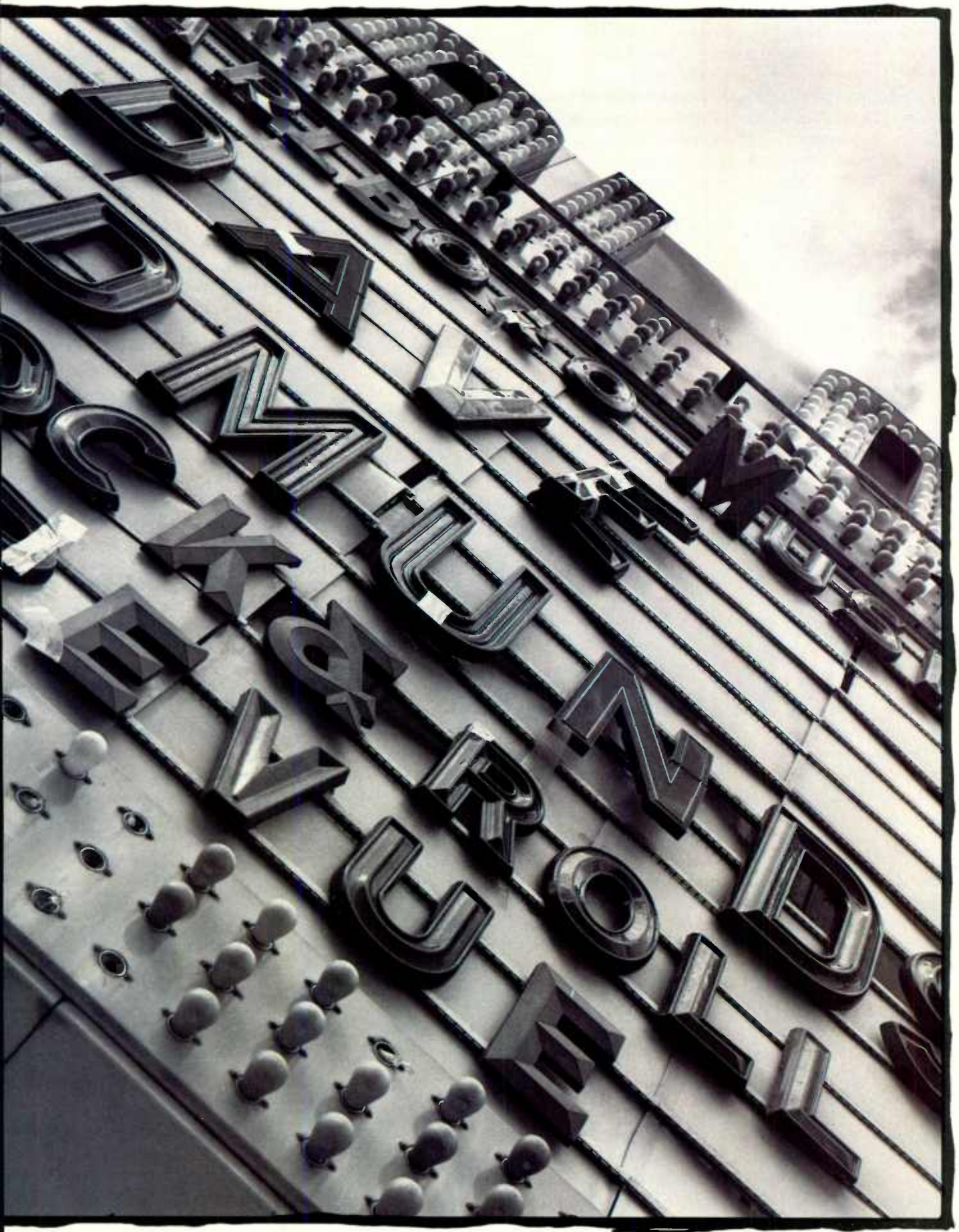

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Dion," I continue, mentally moving down the Revue's eclectic roster. Maybe his parents have a copy of "Runaround Sue" or "The Wanderer." No luck. "And Graham Parker, an English singer and songwriter." I *know* he won't react to that one.

Finally, "And Kim Wilson of the Fabulous Thunderbirds." I haven't finished the sentence when the bellhop's eyes open wide and he flashes a huge smile: "*Really*??" He probably won't buy a ticket for tonight's show just to see opening act Wilson. His reaction, though, validates the wisdom of one premise of Edmunds' Rock & Roll Revue: expanding the audience.

The music business is notorious for casting off rejects. People were ripped off, especia

Edmunds has been going for well over 20 years. He exploded out of Wales in the late '60s as one-third of Love Sculpture, whose gimmick—revved-up transcriptions of classical-music themes—established Edmunds as a formidable guitarist. He didn't hit the jackpot, however, until after Love Sculpture split up and Edmunds recorded a version of Smiley Lewis' "I Hear You Knocking." The stompy single became an international hit, entered the U.S. Top 5 and reportedly sold over three million copies worldwide.

That was in 1970. Since then Edmunds has recorded a lot and toured even more. His appearances and albums maintain a steadfast cult, and with good reason: Like a British-accented John Fogerty, Edmunds carries the torch for the genuine rock 'n' roll spirit while avoiding the dead zone of note-perfect revivalism.

Edmunds and friend: no pensions

Depending on who's talking, the Revue is the brainchild of either Edmunds or his management. "Dave hasn't been on the road in a while," says Bridget Nolan of Metropolitan Entertainment, Edmunds' management company. "We were trying to figure out a way to broaden the support of a traditional Dave Edmunds tour, where he would play the same small places—broaden the audience and broaden the scope of the show itself."

"It was my idea, I suppose, to get some numbers around me," Edmunds says. "There's safety in numbers, you know." He's nursing a beer in the Colony Inn's lounge. Past Edmunds interviews have tended to be only slightly more revealing than Congressional testimony by Ollie North. But with his new label affiliation he must have been taken to the dungeon room of Capitol Tower and had thumb-screws applied. Today, at least, he talks freely, volubly and humorously.

In the '80s Edmunds' once-hectic touring eased up as his calendar swelled with production assignments. Similarly, his own album releases—around which his touring revolved—tapered off: *Closer to the Flame*, his Capitol debut, is his first studio effort in over five years. His last U.S. tour was three years ago. The tour before that, Edmunds came down with a vocal-cord infection. The tour before *that*, he reportedly suffered internal hemorrhaging.

"That was *hilarious*," Edmunds now says—not the first adjective that comes to my mind. "It wasn't funny at the time. I like putting these things straight 'cause sometimes people think I'm this frail thing that gets ill all the time, and it's not the case.

Rip van Wilson emerges.

"I went back home after an American tour, went to the pub and drank three pints of beer a bit quickly. When I went home I vomited, just threw it up again. I felt fine otherwise. Then I went to bed and woke up at four in the morning feeling absolutely horrendous. I went to the toilet and brought up about a half-gallon of blood! I'm *not* exaggerating. What had happened was when I vomited the first time my esophagus split; there's a one-in-a-million chance of it happening. It was just draining blood into my stomach. It required no medication; it just heals by itself. It sounded a lot more dramatic than it actually was."

In his late 40s, Edmunds is small but decidedly not frail—certainly not judging from his cigarette and alcohol consumption. Still, one benefit of a Revue was that "I don't have to actually stay onstage singing for an hour-and-a-half." So this time out, Edmunds—whom we've established, remember, is no sissy—shares the spotlight with three other singers all capable of headlining their own shows. The resulting lineup is a mixed bag with few common musical threads apart from Dave Edmunds. He produced Dion's 1989 *Yo Frankie* album and the Fabulous Thunderbirds' commercial breakthrough, *Tuff Enuff*. He's recorded a couple of Graham Parker songs on his own albums. Then there's guitarist Steve Cropper, cornerstone of the Mar-Keys and Booker T. and the M.G.'s in the '60s, Stax Records arranger and house musician, co-writer of "Knock on Wood," "In the Midnight Hour," "Dock of the Bay"—perhaps you've heard one. Add keyboards and rhythm, the four-piece Miami Horns (who accompanied Bruce

Nice guys having a great time—really

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Springsteen on his "Tunnel of Love Express" tour), roadies, tour managers and the other unsung heroes of rolling rock shows, and you've got a tight, not-so-little community.

Before the New Haven show, a fire department official is wandering amiably about backstage. "I was in a band," he confesses. "It's tough, life on the road." He stops examining cable when one of the tour members walks by. "Dion, I'm a big fan of yours," he smiles, extending a hand.

Dion Di Mucci is, whether or not the oldest participant in Edmunds' Rock & Roll Revue, certainly the most experienced. He's the only one with a performer's memories of the 1950s shows that inspired this one. "We'd go onstage," he says backstage, cradling a water bottle, "and say, 'Where are the lights? Where's the switch? There it is. Turn on the light.' That was the 'lights.' You didn't have monitors, the equipment you have now. You had a big band onstage to sound big. When I went out with Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens we had just a schoolbus. We didn't even have a Greyhound, forget converted."

ly in the early days."

Dion and Edmunds: Hands Across America?

That evening the Revue flexes its collective muscle to a small but lively audience. After the opening instrumental, "Last Night"—a tribute to Cropper—a natty Kim Wilson lights into "Wrap It Up" and then a half-dozen tunes showcasing his songwriting with the Thunderbirds.

Since the Thunderbirds are on hiatus, Wilson saw the Revue as a good opportunity to get his own name out. "We were kinda layin' low until we had a record out," he says the next day on the tour bus. "People really don't know who I am, just as the singer from the Thunderbirds. And it just sounded like a lot of fun, basically." Dion walks in, interrupting: "Don't believe a word he says. He's got great taste in clothes, though."

Wilson's set ends with a climactic "Nervous Fella." Before the audience can catch its breath he's offstage, replaced by Graham Parker, and the adrenaline keeps surging. Parker could be the oddest of the Revue's odd partners. Dion, a rock 'n' roll vet, and roots-rocker Wilson have obvious affinities with Edmunds. Parker's connection is more tenuous. His music is considerably trickier, in both structure and sentiment, than that of his Revue mates.

"It sounded like a good—well, challenge," Parker says of the tour. "I'm usually a bit of a stick-in-the-mud. I don't jam with people, I don't put myself about." He liked the idea of working with a horn section and being able to "watch a free show every night from the sidelines! I didn't plan on touring for myself."

Which is strange if only because Parker is the only Revue headliner besides Edmunds with a recent album to promote. But then Parker's contrariness shouldn't surprise, coming from a man who calls his production company Strange Career Moves, Inc. "An ordinary club tour was just not gonna do anything for the album to me, whereas this might be a creative move because there are gonna be people who haven't seen me before and don't care about me—they came to see Kim Wilson, or Dion—and they might hear 'Soultime' and say, 'Jesus, this is good.'"

Or they might say something else. Parker is aware he's the odd man out in the Revue's lineup. "Hopefully the show needs somebody who's a little bit off to the left with their material. Maybe I'm wrong, I don't know. There might be people out there every night saying, 'What the hell is *that* guy doing? He's got nothing to do with this.'"

That reaction might also account for the well-documented (in these pages, at least) vicissitudes of Parker's career. His current U.S. label, RCA, is his fifth. "These labels go up and down," Parker says. But he seems content with his present affiliation. RCA "just let me do two LPs the way I want. Earlier in the '80s record companies didn't want artists like me to just write songs. It was like, get the producers in and co-writing and stuff—any desperate measure to fit in with the mainstream. RCA prefers *The Mona Lisa's Sister* [Parker's RCA debut] to *Human Soul* because it's *less* produced—they don't want me to attempt commercialism! [RCA Records president] Bob Buziak is telling me *Human Soul*'s not what people want from me. Well, hard fuckin' luck. I don't want to get stuck in this stripped-down nonsense. It's just one LP. The whole business is weird!"

Parker's powerful persona goes a long way towards putting over his music—and in New Haven a good portion of the audience is clearly familiar with the songs. Since he used brass on *Human Soul*, the Miami Horns fit right in; during the ska-tinged "Soultime," trombonist Richie "La Bamba" Rosenberg hurls himself to the front to play a manic solo with the abandon of a whirling dervish.

Dion, who follows Parker, opens his set with two songs from *Yo Frankie* before settling into more crowd-pleasing oldies like "Ruby Baby" and of course "Runaround Sue"—in New Haven the audience, unprompted, sings the intro—and "The Wanderer." Dion takes chances with "The Wanderer"'s phrasing, coming off more like a jazz singer than a 30-year rock veteran.

"When I sing 'The Wanderer,' I sing a song," he says afterward. "In my head it's not an old song. I don't like that Sha Na Na mentality. I stayed away from singing those records for a long time because of the way they were presented. But this show reminds me of the days when I was doing concerts with Chuck Berry and Little Richard; everybody did three songs, and we'd get together at the end and do a finale. There's a lot of—I think they call it 'bonding.' You get real close."

"Thirty-nine songs!"

In the tradition, the last song of

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Anyone here play "Whipping Post"?

Dion's set finds Edmunds and Parker joining him for the touching elegy "Abraham, Martin and John." Accompanied only by Dion's acoustic and Gavin Povey on synthesizer, each singer takes a verse while they sing the chorus in three-part harmony. The effect is . . . real close.

But after allowing the audience to soak up the message, Edmunds gets the show cranked up again with his own set. He opens with the Nick Lowe–penned "I Knew the Bride (When She Used to Rock 'n' Roll)." Rockpile used to tear through the tune like they tore through everything else: as if the first musician to finish the song won. Edmunds now takes a swinging but decidedly more relaxed tempo.

Cropper and Dion: Ever heard of these songs?

Rockpile is the group in Edmunds' past journalists refuse to let him forget. The band broke up amid reports of colossal differences between the frontline of Lowe and Edmunds—perhaps more talent than one unit could stand. Edmunds now attributes Rockpile's demise more to bad business practices than personality clashes. And if proof were needed of a Lowe/Edmunds rapprochement, one need look no further than Lowe's new album, *Party of One*—produced by Dave Edmunds. Just like the good old days, it came out virtually simultaneously with Edmunds' *Closer to the Flame*.

The public has been brainwashed by MTV and classic-rock radio. Classic to them is

"Purely coincidence!" Edmunds laughs, "although I produced both of them." Astute observers noticed, however, that Lowe's previous album contained one Edmunds-produced cut. Lowe had asked him to rerecord that track, Edmunds says, and liked the result enough to ask him to produce *Party of One*—"the best move he ever made!" Edmunds says modestly.

"It's about time he realized which side his bread is buttered," he laughs again. "In the four years I was with Rockpile, it *cost* money, we never earned any. Me and Nick were funding it all.

"He's a solo creature," Edmunds sums up Lowe. "He's not meant to be in a band. Now I can wish him luck and mean it!"

Edmunds' live set naturally highlights *Closer to the Flame* material. Over three years ago he was talking about this album, stating it was partly done and would be finished that summer. Of 1987.

"I'd been meaning to do *Closer to the Flame* for a long time," Edmunds says. "But I'd been producing, working in the studio all the time, *and* changing labels. When we finally did get the new deal in place, I started recording. Then I did Nick's album, then Dion's album, a Stray Cats album, and a few other projects here and there. Eventually it got done."

The piecemeal construction, though, "actually's not a bad way of doing it. In the past I've always rushed my own albums. That's something we learned in Rockpile—not a career move, just a bit of fun. But I wanted to do it properly. I found, listening to some of my own albums, that I'd go, 'Oh dear, I could've done a lot better if I'd just been a little more responsible and cared as much about my own records as my production for other people's.'"

Edmunds saves a rocking new tune called "King of Love" for the last number in his set, then returns for a trio of encores. Parker and Dion join him in singing Parker's "Crawling from the Wreckage." Immediately after the show, the Miami Horns look like *they've* crawled from the wreckage.

"Thir-ty-nine songs!" trumpeter Alan Chesnowitz exhales slowly while mopping the sweat off his face. At least during Springsteen's mammoth *Tunnel of Love* shows the horns didn't have to be under the lights blowing all the time. In Dave Edmunds' Rock & Roll Revue, just like the good old days, only the singer changes while the band remains the same. "The first show we did," Chesnowitz recalls, "we came offstage and we couldn't talk!"

The next morning tour members drift down to the hotel lobby to catch the two buses to Boston. Parker, drummer Terry Williams and bassist Phil Chen are early enough to grab breakfast. Parker complains about what he feels has been insufficient concert promotion, names not printed large enough on posters, etc. "We don't seem to be selling these places," Parker says later, "which is kind of worrying.

"I think the public are just fucking totally stupid, to be honest. They've been brainwashed by MTV and classic-rock radio. If there is something classic it's Steve Cropper's guitar style. But that isn't classic to them; it's long-haired guys with high-pitched voices.

"Our audiences are really enthusiastic but there's no young people. I suppose I can't blame 'em. Maybe this show doesn't have that 'alternative' connotation. Imagery's the most important thing in pop music, unfortunately."

Parker squeezing out sparks

Now anyone who reads Graham Parker interviews on a regular basis might think this guy does nothing but mouth off all the time. Parker, reluctantly, would agree. "I can talk to somebody for an hour," he says of the press, "and for 10 minutes of that time they might draw a gripe. And that becomes the whole article because it's more interesting than what a nice guy I am and what a great time I'm having. A lot of the time I'm grateful to be able to do what

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I do. And sometimes you make a great record and it attracts the usual amount of customers and it's like, what are you doing it for?

"It's like 'Mercury Poisoning,'" Parker says, referring to his infamous ode to a former record label, "a bit of fun and it's one of the flashbulbs of my career, this throwaway song. It's a piece of junk. The lyrics are just much too obvious for my style of writing," he complains—oops! Look, can we journalists help it? The guy loves to bitch. But Parker's really a nice guy and is having a great time. Really.

The bus up to Boston is hardly a model of rockstar decadence. Kim Wilson, who spares no energy onstage, disappears for his customary daytime hibernation; tourmates have taken to calling him Rip van Wilson. Steve Cropper checks a newspaper to see how his stocks are doing. Dion talks about his family:

"I asked my youngest daughter"—a Jesus and Mary Chain fan—"if she knew who Paul McCartney is. She said, 'Sure, he's the guy in the Michael Jackson video.'" (This must be the generation after the generation that said, "You mean he was in a band before Wings?")

"I'm touring more now because my kids are grown," Dion says. "They don't even know I'm gone." His oldest daughter teaches; "she's the one who comes home and says [of his youngest], 'How could you let her shave her head?!' I say, 'Well, you're doing what *you* want.'"

Edmunds is the star of this show, of course, but *everyone* is in awe of Steve Cropper. The genial, distinguished-looking guitarist was modest enough about his abilities that he almost turned down the invite from Edmunds' manager John Scher.

"I said, 'I don't know if I'm your guy,'" Cropper relates. "'I'm not really a rock 'n' roll guitar player.' Then he mentioned working with Graham Parker. I didn't know who Graham was. Dave said, 'You can handle it. Just be you.'" Now Cropper thanks Scher and Edmunds "for talking me into it, 'cause I was really trying to slip out of it."

Boston had promised to break the string of undersold houses the Revue's been playing, but ticket sales are under two-thirds capacity.

long-haired guys with high-pitched voices."

"I can't believe it," an usher comments, but the show goes on with its customary SRO intensity. During Kim Wilson's set tenor saxophonist Mario Cruz plays a plaintive 16 bars that has Dion running out and asking, "Who just took that awesome solo?" Parker appears off to the side, arms folded, bobbing up and down in time to the music. Later, Parker himself gets a rousing welcome; Boston is GP turf. For a second encore, Cropper steps up to the mike to sing his "Dock of the Bay."

The next morning Dion remarks on another way time has changed life on the road. "In the old days we used to get on a bus and talk about broads for two hours. Now it's like, 'You don't use butter? No oil?' I'm on the no-smoking bus," he laughs.

A week later, the promised land: New York. The Big Apple looks even shinier after a very discouraging turnout in Norfolk, Virginia. One of the tour buses made the long trip overnight. The other pulls up to the hotel at four p.m. (Bossman Edmunds, pulling rank, flew in.) A smiling Graham Parker shuffles into the lobby exclaiming, "And as they stepped off the aeroplane, keys were handed to them!" Then he disappears to his room, where he undoubtedly collapses.

Dion, meanwhile, was last seen agonizing about his set list. Now he's resigned to the status quo; the tour is moving too fast for the band to learn new numbers. "These are the songs," he says philosophically of his lineup. "Fuck it. I'll do 'em." The last thing he should worry about is the reaction of a hometown crowd.

Cropper, Parker, Edmunds: "The whole business is weird!"

There's been some on-the-road tinkering with the show. Edmunds has split his set, playing four songs following the opening "Last Night," the rest at the end. He's replaced one of his *Flame* songs with "From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come)," a crowd-pleaser Bruce Springsteen gave him.

At the end of his first mini-set Edmunds gives an enthusiastic thumbs-up to the band. Then Wilson comes out, gratefully exclaiming, "It's so nice to see all these faces here!" The feeling is mutual.

Edmunds says of the music business, "It's pretty notorious for casting off rejects and not renowned for job security. The fact that I'm still touring and I've always had a good record deal with a major company—that's fine! It's a great business if it's working for you. When it goes wrong it's horrific. People I know have been ripped off. I'm sure it's still happening. I never had any of that," he says half-wondrously.

Kim Wilson prepares to expand the audience.

"When I read *Billboard*, magazines like that, it *scares* me. They take it so *seriously*! This is just music, that's all. They've got this corporate approach. I don't understand it."

Had he ever considered dropping music? "All the time! It used to worry me. It's only when you meet other people who are successful in the business, and you find out they've got just the same insecurities—everyone's got it—that you feel more comfortable. I can't think of anything else that I want to do!"

So who's arguing?

[cont'd on next page]

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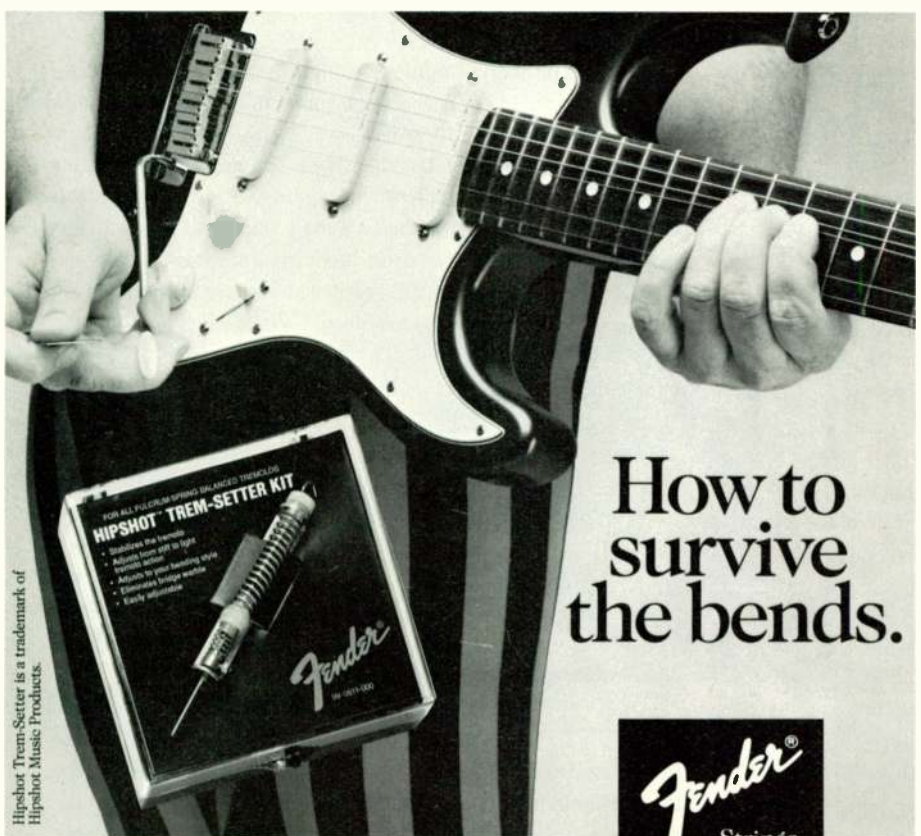

CLOSER TO THE NAMES

DAVE EDMUNDS alternates between a stock reissue (Japanese) Fender Telecaster and a 1957 Gibson ES-335 "dot." His strings are D'Addarios, .009 to .042. This time out Edmunds modified his guitar signal with a DOD reverb unit, an MXR Distortion Plus and a Schaller tremolo pedal. His amp was a tweed Fender Tremolux through a 100-watt Soldano and then a Marshall 4 × 12 cabinet. Edmunds also used a Nady wireless, and likes Fender medium tortoise Tradition picks.

GRAHAM PARKER got *his* Fender Telecaster from Seymour Duncan, strung it with Ernie Ball heavy-gauge (.010 to .047) and plugged into two Roland JC-120s. His acoustic is a Guild with Martin pickups and D'Addarios. DION used this too but mainly kept to his own stock early-'70s Tele. And speaking of Telecasters, STEVE CROPPER's was actually a prototype Peavey Signature series—"a real piece of work," the longtime Fenderman admits. He also took his favorite Tele that he used in the Blues Brothers band. Strings were Ernie Ball Slinkys (.009 to .030), amp a new Fender "The Twin."

KIM WILSON blew one of 13 Hohner Marine Band harmonicas into an Astatic BLJT 30P mike and two 1961 white Fender Twins with no reverb. Keyboardist GAVIN POVEY tickled an old Korg CX-3, a Roland RD-1000 piano and a Roland S-50 sampler. PHIL CHEN's bass was a new Fender copy (by J. Black) of his 1961 Jazz, with Rotosound Jazz Swing strings. He used two SWR SM-400 bass amps and two SWR Goliath speaker cabinets. Drummer TERRY WILLIAMS, a Remo endorser, played an Encore series kit consisting of an 8" snare; 12", 14" and 16" toms; and a 22" bass drum with a Camco pedal. Fellow drummer DAVE CHARLES played an identical kit but with one tom less. Paiste cymbals included 18" and 19" crashes in the 2002 series; 16" and 18"crashes from the Reflector series; and Williams' own 303 crash ride. His "British" sticks were Promuco prime hickory.

Last but not least, the Miami Horns. ALAN CHESNOWITZ's trumpet was a Yamaha 537S big-bore, with a Jerome Callet custom mouthpiece. RICHIE "LA BAMBA" ROSENBERG wielded a King 3-V trombone. Saxophonist MARIO CRUZ played a Selmer Super Action 80 with an Otto Link 9 mouthpiece. And EDDIE "KINGFISH" MANION handled a Selmer Mark VI baritone with Meyer 10 mouthpiece and Conn 10M tenor with a 10S Dukoff mouthpiece.

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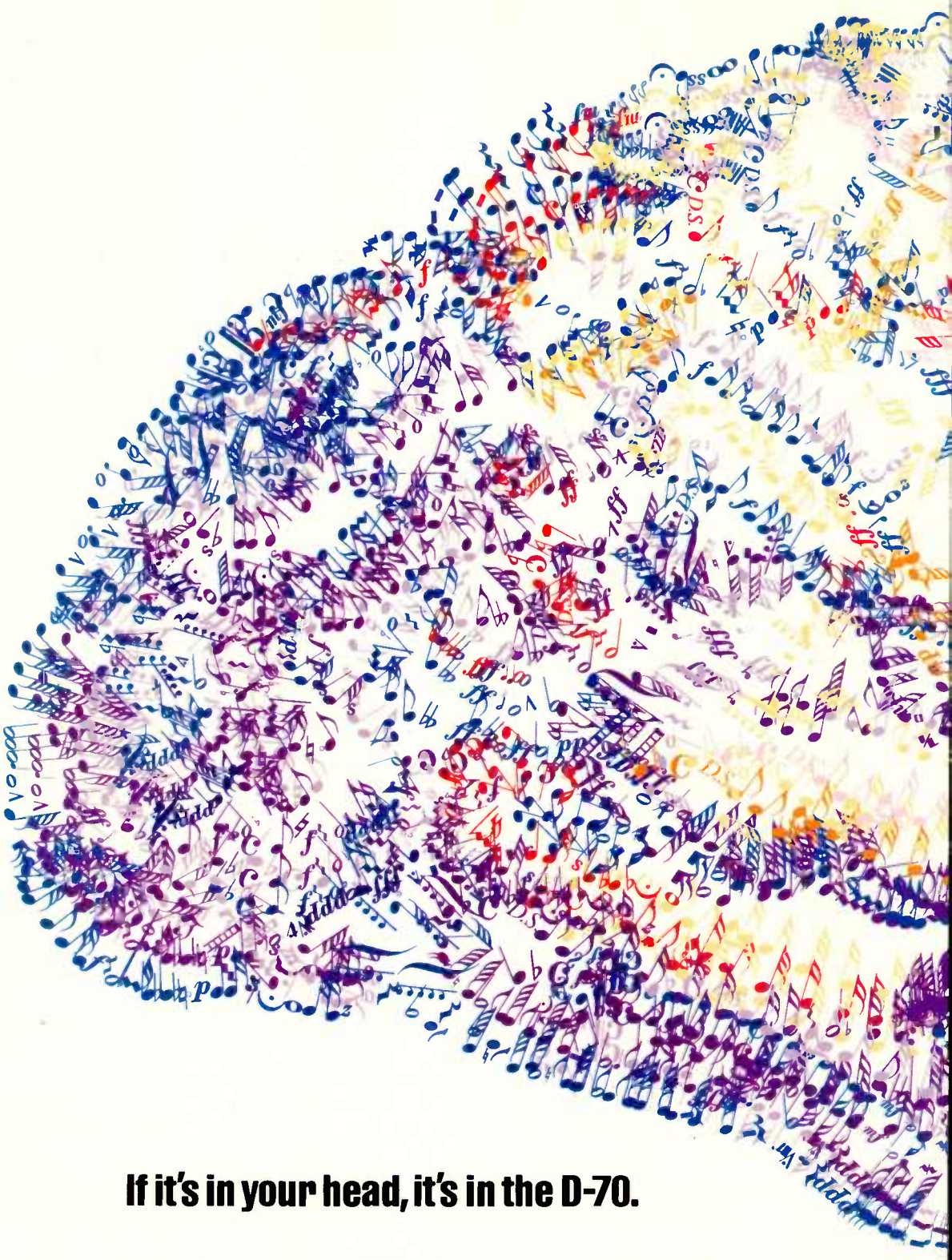

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World Party

Karl Wallinger: The Man with the Band in His Head — By Jon Pareles — *Photos by The Douglas Bros.*

Welcome to Seaview Studios, a windowless, unkempt rehearsal space—turned—recording studio in a former warehouse on one of London's seedier fringes. The place looks like a frat-house parlor with a control room attached. A fishnet with a few crabs hanging in it decorates one wall—maybe that's the sea view—while a knife has been thrown, about head-high, into a door. There are maps, a rubber plant, an angel statue over a doorway, an exercise bicycle, a mannequin's hand, a toy drum kit, an American Indian dummy and other sundry memorabilia in between setups of keyboards, guitars, drums and bass. Ancient cigarette smoke lingers in the air. Here, for the past three years, Karl Wallinger has been busy making World Party's second album, *Goodbye Jumbo*. During all-night recording binges, he'd catch a few Zs curled up on the drum riser. He got home at least a few times; he now has two children, Louie, three, and Nancy, one. "Louie's learned to talk and have an intelligent conversation in the time I've knocked 12 songs together," Wallinger says. "I guess people used to do it a bit quicker."

He made most of the album on his own, but some of his occasional co-conspirators—keyboardist Guy Chambers, guitarist Jeff Trott, drummer Chris Whitten—have joined him to make World Party a full-fledged band for a United States tour in August. They've been rehearsing at Seaview, so the room is full of instruments and cases—including vintage axes like a violin-shaped Hofner bass, known since the 1960s as a Beatle bass, with a sticker from a Liverpool music shop. Wallinger, 32, bespectacled and bushy-eyebrowed, leads me into the control room and slips a cassette into a DAT player. He praises the machine's indexing capability: "I've been notorious for inviting the record company up here, saying, 'I'll play it for you if I can find it,' and not being able to find it. Now I just punch in Mix 3 or something, and there it is." He pushes buttons, slides some faders on the console, and out comes a recording he's proud of: a painstaking, note-for-note remake of the Beatles' "Happiness Is a Warm Gun," John Lennon's cryptic mini-suite. Then another remake: the Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations." Wallinger listens intently, pointing out the compressor effects on the Beatles' drums and the buzz-bomb bass in "Good Vibrations." "I knew, one day when I was 10 years old, that I would someday have to do that, to really know these songs," Wallinger says. "Learning these, really

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learning these, is like deciphering old parchments. There are things here that just aren't done anymore."

Not if Wallinger can help it. Before World Party, he was on a typical 1980s track, playing keyboards (he studied classical piano), collaborating on songs and co-producing the earnestly poetic Waterboys, the mainly Scottish band led by Mike Scott. But he left in 1985, got his own record deal and made *Private Revolution*, the first World Party album, in a home studio, mostly with a drum machine and his own guitar. It decried the state of the world in Dylanesque terms; nonetheless, carried by the single "Ship of Fools," it made its way into the Top 40.

Goodbye Jumbo greets the 1990s with a more cheerful plunge into the sonics of the 1960s—tube amps, uncalibrated distortion, unsequenced drums, loose ends and rough edges. In some ways, the album is like a super session that never happened, bringing together the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, Van Morrison, Bob Dylan, the Band, Buffalo Springfield, Sly Stone, the Byrds, the Beach Boys and, through the magic of anachronism, Prince. Amid classic and classic-sounding riffs, Wallinger sings about rainbows and love and God, about broken romances and upward mobility, about cynicism and hope and sweet soul dreams, with environmental fears turning up like a bad conscience: "We can really put the world to right/Or sit and watch the end," he sings.

The songs are whimsical and sullen, sometimes both at once (like "Ain't Gonna Come Till I'm Ready"), and at their best they manage to finesse the contradiction at the center of Wallinger's music. Here he is, adult, intelligent, down-to-earth, with a wife and two kids, and not a hint of hippie in his demeanor. He shudders when I mention Lenny Kravitz, the twentysomething neo-flower child, and he describes Kravitz's songs as "my worst fucking nightmare. I would hope that if I did that, someone would tap me on the shoulder and say, 'Ah, the lyrics? Aren't they a bit embarrassing?'"

At the same time, give or take a synthesizer and a Prince beat, his music ignores just about everything that arrived after about 1973—all the layers of prefabrication and slickness—and many songs profess a kind of cockeyed optimism that's long out of season.

"I don't think we are a nostalgia act," Wallinger says, mulling the notion over. "There's a nostalgic reference to it, but hopefully we won't be perceived as such. It's like flying close to the sun, but I don't think the wings have melted. I'm just scooping out things that I wanted to do as opposed to trying to recreate something I never experienced.

"I'm not really a retrospective kind of person. I have read the word 'hippie' in interviews, but it doesn't really bother me because I don't feel like one. There are too many things that actually did happen back then, despite people that want to dismiss the '60s as a load of old hippies going bonkers. There are too many things that are real and negate that attitude, and if you don't realize what they are, then I don't want to have to point out what's going on in Eastern Europe."

On *Private Revolution*, Wallinger poured out mostly bleak imagery about the state of the world. *Goodbye Jumbo*, despite its occasional misgivings, takes its cue from songs like "Making Love (to the World)" and "All Come True." "The World Party observatory has been gathering dust," Wallinger says. "The whole world has just gone nuts in the last two years—Europe's changed, China's had all that shit happen—and the last thing anybody needs is some wiseguy musician wandering around going, 'We want a revolution.' It seems very pompous. The best thing you could do is sit down and play a 48-minute version of 'Good Vibrations'—that would be the best tonic.

"What happened to me was that I became

PARTY FAVORS

KARL WALLINGER plays a Gibson Les Paul and a Fender Stratocaster with EMG pickups, through a Fender Champ amp. He also plays Hofner basses.

JEFFREY TROTT uses a vintage Gretsch 7660 Nashville guitar with a cherry red finish—"the best guitar in the world, like Neil Young used in Buffalo Springfield"—along with Rickenbacker 12-strings and an early-1960s Fender Concert amp. He uses Boss effects, including a T-Wah, Super Overdrive, Distortion and Digital Delay; he also uses a vintage Fuzz Face fuzztone.

GUY CHAMBERS and Wallinger share keyboards, which include Akai S-900 and S-9000 samplers, "loads" of Mirages and a Yamaha Conservatoire 400 baby grand. **CHRIS WHITTEN** plays Tama drums and Paiste cymbals.

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much more concerned with investigating what I think of as pure pop—things like 'Good Vibrations' or 'Hey Jude' or 'I Am the Walrus' or 'Waterloo Sunset,' rather than getting mystical. I wanted to find some way of being good at what I do and getting all that together with, um, earning a living."

For his pure-pop investigations, Wallinger decided to use his advance from Chrysalis Records to finance an extended experiment. Instead of demoing songs, then heading for an expensive, established studio for a limited time, he rented a rehearsal space for "a few hundred quid a month," installed a 24-track console and made himself at home.

"The main thing was to get this feeling of open-endedness," Wallinger says. "It's complete dreamland. There were times when I didn't see daylight for months on end. I was just letting myself go. We went through so many deadlines, they just gave up in the end. Then we all got fed up at the same time and decided, this has got to get finished, and it did. One reason was probably that the record company were getting itchy feet, and they were saying things like, 'Maybe you should try working with an engineer,' which was like, 'You've got to stop experimenting, send in the grown-ups.'"

For three years, Wallinger and various cohorts tried every notion that came to mind—not, like Tom Scholz of Boston, perfecting one album's worth of intensely multitracked songs, but learning, hands-on, how the music he loved was made. "There's lots and lots and lots and lots of tapes," he says. "There are 62 reels of two-inch tape, about 70 hours of jamming."

Wallinger was virtually a one-man studio band for *Private Revolution*, and that's how he started off with *Goodbye Jumbo*. "I've got a nice little band in my head," he says. "I know they're all there, and they're quite happy to wait for me to get off the road to do some more work, because they're all coming with me.

"There's definitely this bass-player guy, and there's this guitarist who thinks he's pretty cool and rootsy and sometimes he's quite good and sometimes he's crap. There's this piano player who comes in and doesn't say much, but he's got a nice touch. Don't ask him to play anything real complicated, but he'll vibe you along quite nicely. There's this drummer who's got a hangup about being Ringo Starr, but without the precision, which makes him kind of endearing but probably not usable on the next McCartney album. It's nice in one way and probably quite worrying in another way, psychiatrically. I don't really know who I'm going to end up as."

Eventually, the songs on *Goodbye Jumbo* began to emerge. Jeff Trott, a California-born guitarist who had jammed with the Waterboys, dropped by to listen and stayed to join World Party. "It's like Karl compiled everything that he's wanted to do over the last 10 years and he's doing it all," Trott says. "He's like a library of songs, and he can play just about anything, any Beach Boys or Beatles song, anything by Sly Stone. And his own songs have the structure of classic pop. They're good songs, and they just pull everything in. I feel like Karl is driving this big train, and I'm a passenger—I just climb into my seat and go."

With collaborators, Wallinger did further pop research. "There are tapes that we just blew on, those nights when we sacked out here, just me and a guitarist, and we played all night long, making things up. And there's times when we've had a sort of six-piece band, all sort of blasting away with an engineer in there—Joe Blaney, who did

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Lovesexy and Keith Richards' album.

"Some things came along in one night and were mixed and finished," Wallinger says. "'And I Fell Back Alone'—there's only one mix of that, and that was it, a hole in one. It brought down my handicap. 'Thankyou World' was like 7½ minutes long and was nothing like what it is now. But the song that wriggled the most was 'When the Rainbow Comes.' It was the first to come along in the musical way and almost the last to be mixed, and it was the one that had the most laser surgery. I think there's something in the region of 200 mixes of that song."

With 70 hours of tape in the can, Wallinger has quite a few leftovers. "There are songs that started off and changed, songs blown straight onto stereo without being on multitrack, stuff with a whole band. There's loads of copies of things—mainly Beatles, for some unknown reason. I mean, if you think of something, they've done it.

"I've got quite a few bootlegs of Beatles sessions—*Abbey Road*, the double white—the basic kind of collection, a kind of mild Beatle-itis. There were times when I'd been listening to them so much, I'd wake up and think, 'Whoa, I've got to be at Abbey Road' and then I'd realize, 'Wait, it's 1990, you don't have to rehearse "Octopus's Garden" today.' But I know how hard they worked on it, and that it wasn't all done by mirrors and it wasn't amazing immediately for them. It gives you hope to think that there was a real point to working that hard."

One thing Wallinger didn't work to get was a contemporary sound. For one thing, he likes stereo, and on *Goodbye Jumbo* he's not afraid to make an asymmetrical mix. "Will people ever make stereo records again, or will it just be a mono signal through a stereoized delay line or reverb?" he says. "They're all worried because in clubs, if you're standing next to one speaker, you'll get no vocal. Fuck it—if you're not enjoying that side of it, it shouldn't be there. You should be able to enjoy them separately, together, whatever. The thing about the Beatles' double white is you'll hear a clanking great hi-hat going in one side, and often that's all you hear. You don't hear the fucking bass drum.

"What's all this bass drum shit now? I get passionate about this, because it makes me not want to listen to music, and that's a serious situation. I hate bass drums going all through a song that's not a dance record. It would sound better if they recorded people without trying to tart it up.

"Everything's so clouded in boxes that have loads of zeros on the price tag, and that's what you hear. I hate this horrible lonely feeling you get when you feel sorry for the music, when you just want to hear somebody playing. So he made a mistake? So what! I just love hearing the sound of someone's finger on a string, that's the important thing. What's so wrong with being a human? Why do you have to be this detached superproduct?

"You see so many bands now that get up onstage, and they've rehearsed all these arrangements, with the moves. They play really loud but you can't hear shit. You hear this guitar with an awful effect on it that sounds like somebody wirebrushing a piece of chromium, and this bullet drum sound like somebody's firing a light bazooka at you, and a bass sound with no [*cont'd on page 90*]

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THE ODD COUPLE OF EPIC'S A&R

Don Grierson and Michael Caplan are revamping CBS's other label

By Jock Baird

"THE A&R DEPARTMENT is the pressure point for a record label, because it's the source of the music," says Don Grierson, who directs the Artists & Repertoire effort at Epic Records. "And everything else in this whole company depends upon the music—that's all we're here for. If it isn't good or doesn't sell, the whole company's in trouble. So our responsibilities are pretty intense. But if you get too serious you'll *never* be successful.

"The amazing thing to me," he continues, "is that all an A&R person is really here for is to offer an opinion. You listen to something, see an act, and say, 'I *think* . . .' 'I think this is a hit song or act, I think it's worthy of signing.' It's just opinion. You've got to be right enough, percentage-wise, to be successful, of course. Then you get to keep your job."

Don Grierson's job involves saying "no" more than "yes." Perhaps that's why he's known in the business as a conservative, even though he has steadily signed alternative bands. "I think the role is that of devil's advocate. If you say 'okay' to everything, you're going to have a roster that's out of control. The promotional and marketing people simply can't handle them all.

"People have this glorified view of A&R, hanging out at a few clubs and signing a band. It's much more complex. You've also got to make the right album and then bring it into the system, make sure that others in the company understand *why* that act was signed, and what your belief in that act was."

Grierson's office at CBS's Manhattan headquarters reinforces his image as a guy who manages major assets. On the walls are platinum albums from Michael Jackson, Cheap Trick, Bad English and Tina Turner. It also reinforces his rep as a "song guy." Stacked in front of him are cassettes of unrecorded songs from a host of publishers, writers and pluggers. "Very few A&R people have as many songs in their office," Grierson admits. "I have my A-stack, my B-stack. I talk to writers and publishers every day of my life. I believe in the singer *and* the song. I look for great singers, unique stylists. Hopefully they'll have great songs, but if they don't and it's appropriate, I can sometimes help bring one to a person. Tomorrow one of these songs may be appropriate for somebody I just don't have today. Or it could wind up on a soundtrack. You never know where a great song is going to fit."

Take, for example, Cheap Trick's comeback hit, "The Flame." "I brought it to the band, and they *hated* it," Grierson laughs. "But they did it and it became a number one song. I signed Heart when I was at Capitol, when they were having a problem in the marketplace. But I believed in Ann Wilson's voice, and the band as an entity. My feeling was that they needed some material and a fresher production approach." Grierson matched them with a young writer/keyboardist named Peter Wolf and Heart again hit platinum. The moral? "If you have an artist you truly believe in," states Grierson, "and find the other part, a great song, you're going to reach the public."

Australian-born and raised, Grierson became a DJ on a small bush-town station in 1959. He took a radio promotion position with Capitol in 1966. By the '70s Grierson's duties expanded. He helped A&R incoming British EMI-owned product for the U.S. market; two of his smarter pick-ups were Pilot ("It's Magic") and the Little River Band. When EMI/America was created in 1978, Grierson was made head of A&R. In 1982 he moved over to Capitol as chief of A&R; among

• Hank Caldwell, Don Grierson and Michael Caplan sitting around waiting for your demo •

Photograph: Jonnie Miles

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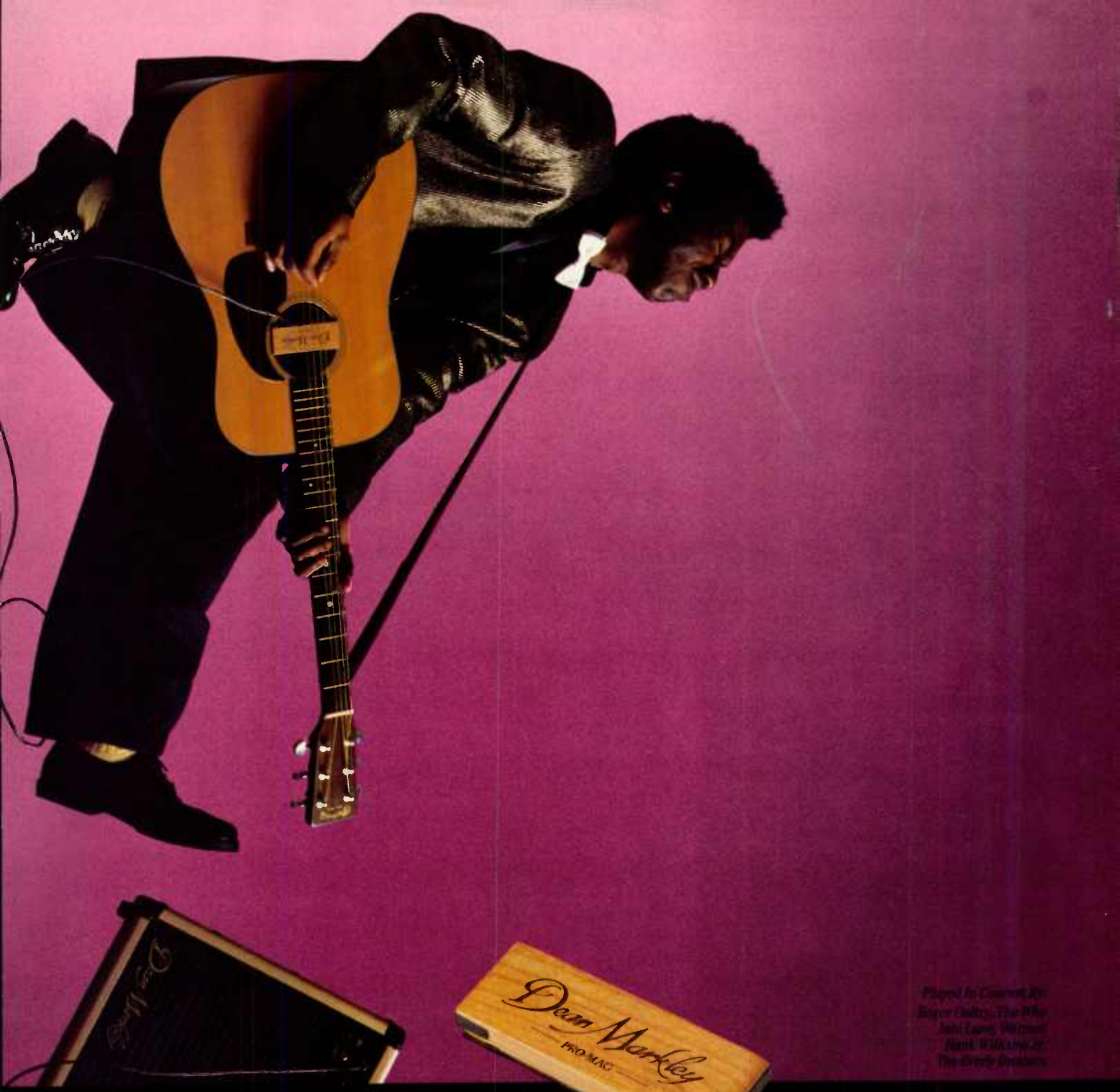

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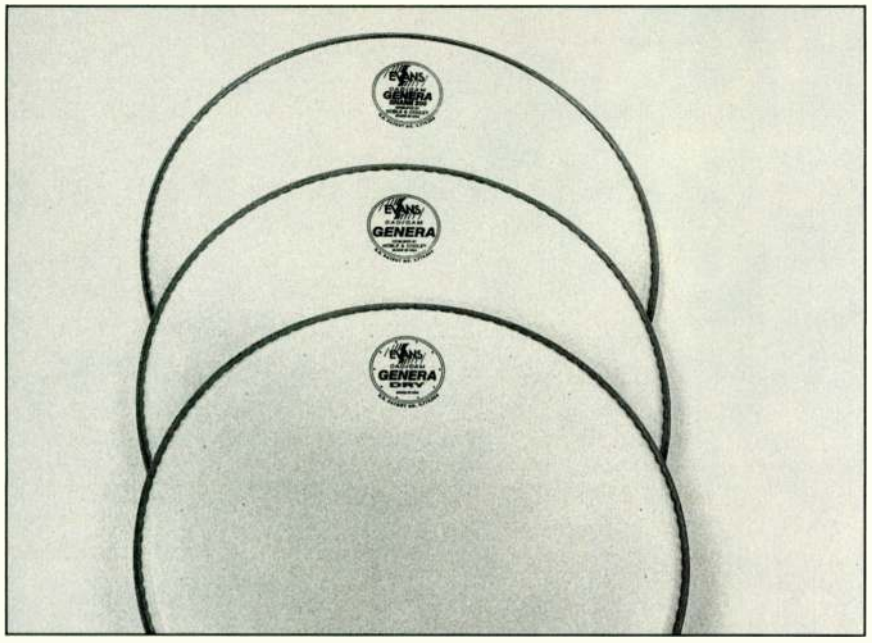

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his Capitol acquisitions were Heart, Tina Turner, Freddie Jackson, Meli'sa Morgan, Joe Cocker, Megadeth and W.A.S.P.

In 1987 Grierson was recruited by then-CBS prez Al Teller to come over to Epic. Grierson suggests diplomatically that the need was great. "The Epic roster was not what CBS's second label should have been. The challenge was to get it into balance and have success in different areas. You *must* develop. A hit act only comes in with an album every two or three years. We can't rely on Michael Jackson. To us, he's got to be the cream, a bonus. But you've got to build and grow underneath all that and hopefully build a nice canopy of artists that can give you big profits. Then their volume gives you that extra money to build for the future. And that's how record companies exist."

Grierson wound up keeping only two members of the existing Epic A&R staff, one of whom had only just come over from Epic promotion. Michael Caplan, a self-styled "Jewish Prince" who dropped out of law school to pursue a career in record retailing, was recruited by CBS in 1981 to do radio promotion and rose to the position of associate director of AOR promo for Epic in 1984. Just prior to Grierson's arrival, Caplan was offered an A&R job and jumped at it.

As soon as Grierson took over, Caplan pressed him to sign an "amazing" band he had seen at CBGB: Living Colour. When Mick Jagger produced Living Colour's demos, the bidding became competitive, but Grierson finally gave his blessing. Living Colour went on to become the surprise smash of the late '80s and won Caplan a vice presidency after only three years in A&R.

Caplan has been prolific, doing as many as 10 albums a year. Among his favorite Epic signings are the Radiators, the Godfathers, Nuclear Valdez and O-Positive. He's also had some successes with Michel Camilo and Jon Faddis (recently numbers one and two on the *Billboard* jazz chart) and rock icons Jack Bruce and Dickey Betts. What does he look for in scouting talent? "I once got in trouble for saying the future of rock 'n' roll was bands that made my dick hard," shrugs Caplan. "The point is that it really boils down to a gut thing. It's not a science. Every A&R guy's favorite thing to say these days is 'I'm very song-oriented,' but nobody agrees on what's a great song."

Caplan has an unusual method for listening to the large number of demo tapes he gets: He has his secretary remove all photos

World Radio History

and literature, including the name of the person who referred it, and listens blind. He advises against spending big on a demo: "It's silly to spend a lot of money on 32-track digital demos. Four-track's fine, live is fine. I signed the Radiators off a mono board tape. Don't try to fool us with the form vs. content thing—we do this for a living. Putting reverb on a bad song won't make me like it.

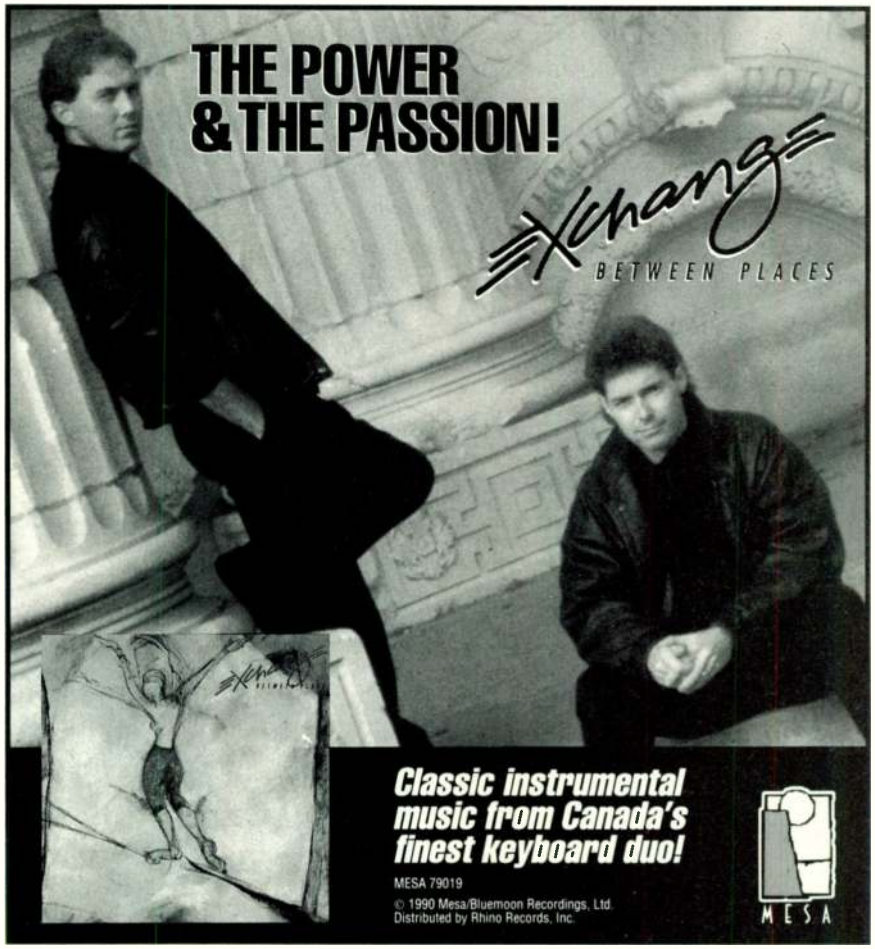
"Melody is the lowest common denominator for me. That's why you won't find me working in thrash." But usually it just comes down to finding someone who "makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up." And yes, he does keep radio formats in mind—sort of. "Certainly there are those square-peg-in-the-round-hole things. But I prefer it when the peg doesn't want to go in that easily. It's got to be *shoved* a little bit."

But Caplan's not infallible—he passed on Tesla (then called City Kids) and a singer named Leslie who went on to stardom as Taylor Dayne. After all, a lot of the A&R game is imagining what's not there: "Very seldom do you find an act that's got all the pieces in place," nods Don Grierson. "Usually it's in some embryonic stage." Sometimes so embryonic it requires further growth in the lab, which is when Caplan and Grierson turn to development deals. Usually a few months in length, the deal involves the label supporting

WHO'S WHO IN EPIC A&R

DON GRIERSON and Michael Caplan are the heavyweights (and only VPs) of Epic A&R, but five senior staffers pick up plenty of slack. Also in NYC is director of A&R Bob Feineigle, whose strength is the metal/hard rock arena and who also coordinates domestic use of CBS overseas product. Associate director Mark Gartenberg just joined the NY staff, from CBS/U.K. Epic A&R has a close working relationship with Solar Records, into which was folded the existing Epic black department. Solar chief Hank Caldwell feels it's the most cooperative arrangement he's ever had with a pop department and points to recent crossover hits by top black artists like Luther Vandross, Calloway and Babyface.

Meanwhile, out in L.A., Grierson has senior director of A&R Kenny Kommissar, who came over from Atlantic. Also in L.A. is Roger "Snake" Klein, who signed the Indigo Girls. Director of A&R, West Coast, Bob Pfeiffer also works the L.A. beat. A former NY musician, Pfeiffer recruited Alice Cooper.



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the act while it rehearses and writes. Caplan is careful to differentiate these from straight demo deals, noting that in a development deal there's more of a dialogue between A&R person and act. So far, Caplan has signed the "developed" act on most of his deals, and finds himself advising them financially as well: "I become like an in-house manager. I'm behind enemy lines, a spy, in a sense."

Grierson and Caplan shy away from choreographed attempts to start a bidding war among labels. "I don't like it when people say, 'Okay, throw money at me,'" grouses Caplan. "One act told me, 'Come down, and bring your *checkbook*.' I hate that. In the old days, a manager was judged by how much he could get a record company to spend. Forget what they spent it *on*. I try to get across to bands that it's like a MasterCard, and your credit limit is $3,000, which is all you can afford. Then MasterCard calls and says, 'Good news, we've increased your credit to $10,000!' You go out and spend it. But you've still got to pay the money back. It's a banking concept, and we're in partnership with the artist. It's always best for a new band to stay as lean and mean as possible."

Evaluating the success of the first album is another underrated facet of A&R. "When we sign an act, we really don't expect that first album to blow anybody out," Grierson explains. "The key is to make some serious headway in credibility and sales. You can hype yourself to death in this business, put out trade ads that make yourself look great, but if you don't see something *real* happening, some response, then you've got to rethink what you've got."

It comes down to making the hard decisions, and that's why Grierson's conservatism comes in handy. "You *better* be conservative when you're in Grierson's gig," says Caplan. "There were a couple of occasions where he's shot me down on things that, in retrospect, he was right on."

"Well, *someone's* got to be the bad guy sometimes," shrugs Grierson. "And sometimes I let them *use* me as the bad guy—if they want to soften their criticisms. The key is to have enough of an open mind to let your staff do what they do best. This business is based on passion, and if an A&R person on my staff has true passion for an act, under most circumstances you've got to let that person go with that. If you don't, why hire them?"

So if a staffer came in and wouldn't take no for an answer, Grierson [*cont'd on page 97*]

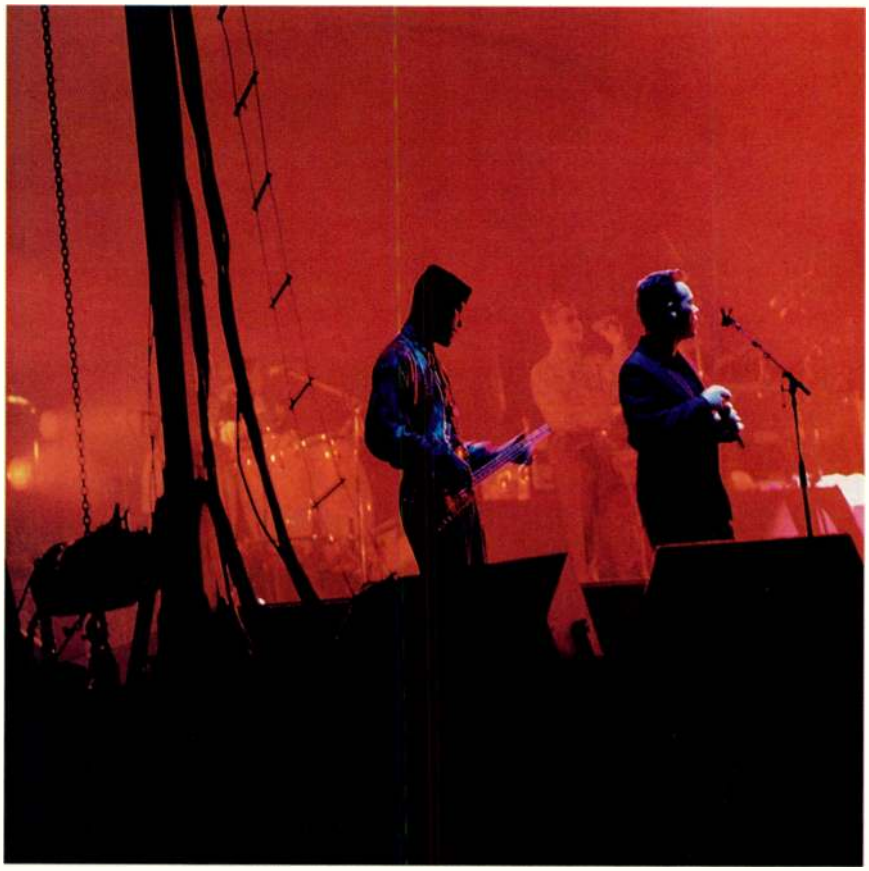
Reggae Rules from a Rock-Steady Stylist

UB40 bassist Earl Falconer explains his reggae technique

By Alan di Perna

EARL FALCONER'S BASS echoes inside the empty Universal Amphitheater several hours before one of UB40's L.A. shows. Alone on the empty stage, he looks a little lost: a wiry guy in a pair of baggy, multicolored surfer's shorts. He's not alone long, though. One by one, the other members of UB40 wander onto the stage and fall into place around Earl's pulsing, resonant bass line. He's playing Bob Dylan's "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" in a reggae style. The band is rehearsing for a special guest appearance by Robert Palmer during their show. There's a chance that UB40 and Palmer will do the old Dylan tune together on Palmer's new album as well.

Who'd have thought Dylan, Robert Palmer and UB40 would go so well together? But then, UB40 seems to thrive on unexpected combinations. They got their biggest U.S. hit by covering Neil Diamond's "Red Red Wine." They teamed up with Chrissie Hynde to record Sonny & Cher's "I Got You Babe." UB40's own compositions are also hybrids: equal parts pop and reggae. And Earl Falconer's bass playing is the strong-but-elastic glue that holds the whole thing together.



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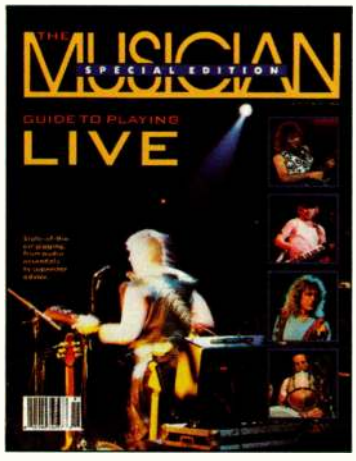

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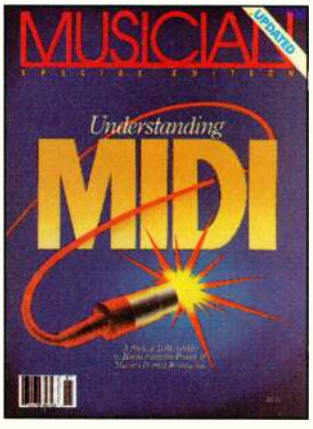

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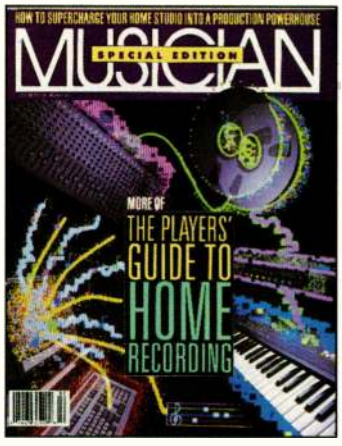

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Falconer is one of the many excellent British reggae players who emerged during the '80s. Earl cites Robbie Shakespeare, Flabba Holt and Leroy Sibbles as his biggest early influences, but adds that "in UB40, we're always looking ahead, to the new beats coming out of Jamaica. The beat changes every year. It's all electronic drums now, with the snare playing rolls."

Asked what rock bassists invariably do wrong when they try to play reggae, Earl starts to laugh. "The problem is usually timing," he replies. "Instead of being smack on the beat, you have to drop back a little in reggae. You can be a little lazy, so that the groove is rigid but fluid too."

More basic is the question of counting a measure of reggae. "It's 4/4, just like rock," Falconer points out. "Only it's reversed; the emphasis is on the upbeat instead of the downbeat. It's like one, two, three, *baff*—with the 'baff' being the snare. A lot of times, you want the bass pattern to leave a hole for the snare. You can do that by following the bass drum, which is what I do a lot—have the lowest note of the bassline hit on the bass drum for extra punch."

Falconer picks up his bass to illustrate some strategies for introducing variety into reggae bass patterns. "You can jump up or down an octave to emphasize one important note," he advises. "You can speed up or even echo things. Like on our song 'Just Another Girl': The main riff is this: [he plays a root-and-fifth pattern modulating from an E flat tonic down to D flat]. But before we go into the bridge, I go like this: [he plays the final measure of the pattern in double time, alternating between D flat and A flat, imitating a dub-style echo effect]. You just dance between those two notes. Little things like that really make the song groove.

"I play very fast on a lot of songs. That's why I use light-gauge strings [Rotosound Starfires .045–.105]—so I can get the speed I want. I play an old Steinberger, which I've been using for about five years now. I only use the bass [neck] pickup. The treble [bridge] pickup is usually off. And I put a piece of felt right here [between the bridge and the bridge pickup] to dampen the bass a bit. Without that felt, the Steinberger would sustain forever."

Damping is vital for many of the terse, staccato bass lines Falconer tends to play. While he relies heavily on his fore and middle fingers for picking, he'll often switch to his thumb, which enables him to use the

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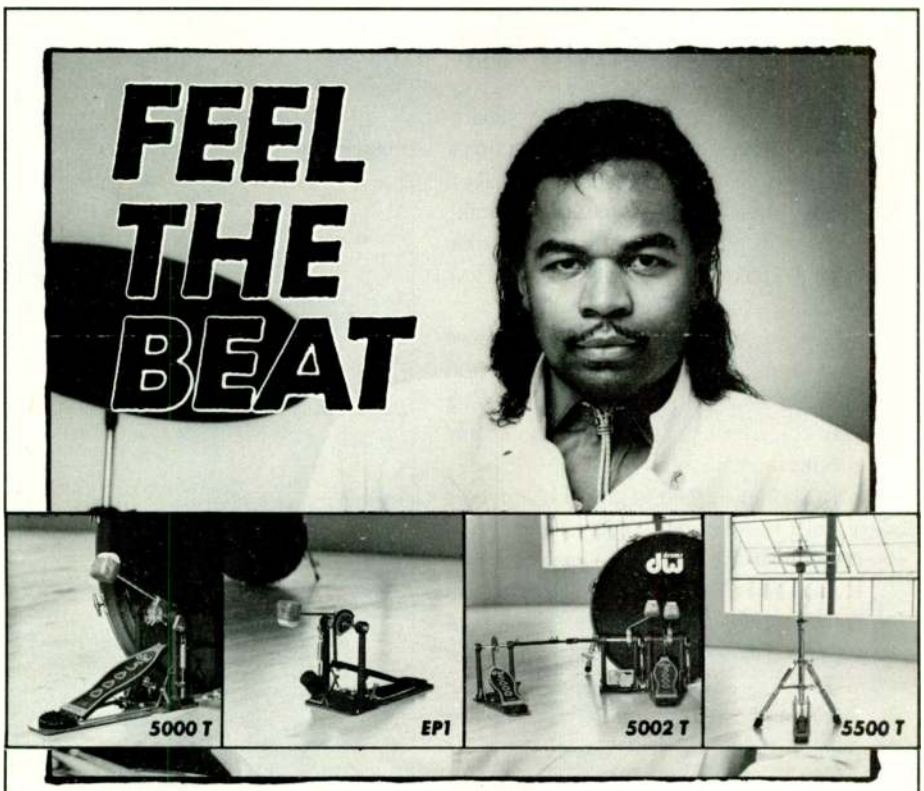

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heel of his hand for extra damping. Tonally, Earl prefers to let most of those crucial reggae lows emanate from his instrument rather than his amp.

"I put a lot of mid on the graphic EQ on my amplifier," he elaborates. "And a little bit of treble. Not too much bass though, because you're getting bass off the guitar and from the P.A. So you have to tune your amp to the room. I use only one speaker: a big, 18-inch Cerwin Vega. It throws the sound about 30 feet, which is a good range for onstage."

Given the years he's put into perfecting his craft, does it bother Falconer that synth bass has all but completely eclipsed bass guitar in modern dancehall reggae?

"Not at all. I've played synth bass myself on previous albums. I'm not real precious about the bass guitar, although I think there'll always be a place for it. I'm more interested in what the whole sounds like. That's what matters most." Ⓜ

A Piano Lesson with Bill Payne

Little Feat's keyboard whiz boogies his duples away

By Jon Pareles

"FINGERING IS everything," Bill Payne says. "When you're in the midst of a sea of inspiration or in the mud of blankness, fingering takes you in and out of it. It's like being an actor—you don't want to stumble over your words."

Seated at the piano, Little Feat's keyboardist/songwriter/co-producer plays a quick run, a chromatic sprinkle that sounds like a random splash. It's not—he plays it again, same notes, and again, and by the third time it glints with clarity, something he might toss in during a solo excursion.

"A good deal of our new record is more accessible, what you might call normal stuff," he says. "But if Little Feat has nothing else going for us, it's the ability to do any fucking thing we want."

Payne has agreed to give this amateur pianist some hands-on keyboard tips, a close-up on the fingers that power the Feat. His playing reflects his nine years of classical training—wrists high, fingers curved—and ears like a supersponge; in a 45-minute chat he mentions Stravinsky, Professor Longhair, Keith Richards, Duane Allman, Little Richard, Herbie Hancock, Donald Fagen, Dr. John, Charlie Parker, Ray Charles, Van Dyke Parks and Nat King Cole. For practice lately, Payne has been playing Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier and his Goldberg Variations along with some sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti.

Payne willingly shows me some of his favorite maneuvers. One used in "Let It Roll" is bouncing octaves between hands, in steady eighth-notes that turn into high-powered syncopation (credit: Ray Charles). Another is a maneuver somewhere between stride piano and arpeggiation, starting a chord with a right-hand octave on the downbeat, then filling in thirds in the middle on the next eighth-note, and nailing it down with the left-hand root on the offbeat (credit: Professor Longhair). For a rhythm that, he says, "pushes and pulls," he moves between the feeling of triplets and ordinary duple time.

Payne also dissects "Representing the Mambo," the title song from the new Feat album. In a reverse of the band's usual procedure, the lyrics were written first, then the music, which meanders along with the story. A vamp launches some truly odd tangents: jazzy augmented chords after the first verse, an elongated second verse, a touch of glistening Chopin chords, an instrumental passage with high black-key clusters and low, resonant major chords, and a final stretch whose complications boil down to chords built on fourths in the right hand, hopping around, above downward chromatic motion in the left.

"When you play, listen to what you're doing," he says. "If you have to record yourself to do it, do that. But if you listen, you know when something sounds musical." Ⓜ

Photograph: Rex Miller

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THE TECHNOLOGY THAT PERFORMS

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Big News from the Land of Os and 1s

New chips, more blips, faster bytes and hardware mights

By Alan di Perna

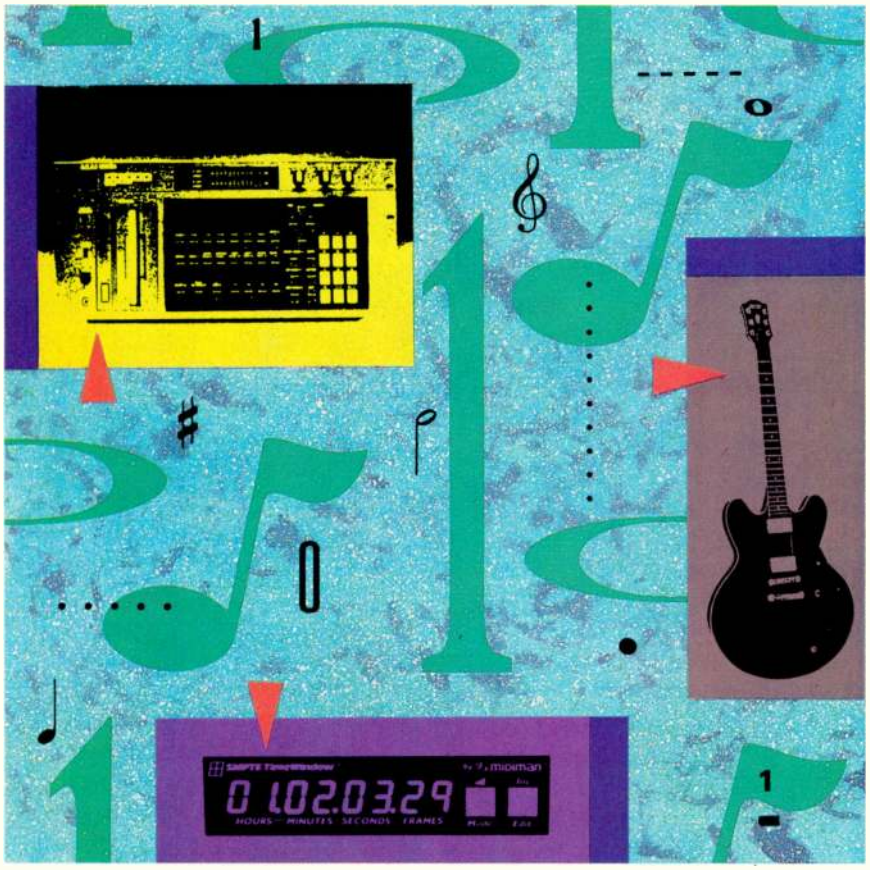
MEMORIZE THIS number: 68030. Got it? Among those who buzz over such things, these five digits are hotter than one of them there sexy girl phone numbers, more full of promise than one of those Ed McMahon sweepstakes numbers that come in the mail. For this is the number of the new Motorola chip that powers the rising generation of supercharged personal computers. The 68030 is taking over from that wimpy old 68000 chip (yuk, blech, ptooey!) that was in the last wave of wonder machines like the original Mac and the Atari ST.

Apple has already started introducing personal computers based on the 68030 and its buddy the 68020. But the newest machine to sport its very own 68030 is Commodore's Amiga 3000. What's all this Silicon Valley twaddle mean to real musicians? That the 3000 can process data really really fast, which means it can drive more synths, drum machines etc. without sweating, straining or making you stare at those wristwatch or busy-bee icons for untoward amounts of time. Clock speed is either 16 or 25 MHz—depending on which model you pop for. How fast is that? Well, the Atari ST, heretofore considered one of the fastest guns around, is just 8 MHz. Okay, the 3000's fast, but how about memory? Two MBytes of internal RAM come standard, expandable to a sweet 16 MBytes. A new operating system called Amiga DOS 2.0 also sets the 3000 apart from its predecessors, the Amiga 2000 and 500.

Like all Amigas, the new 3000's got true multitasking capability. This means it can run multiple programs simultaneously. Despite the advantages of multitasking, the Amiga lost the last round of computer popularity wars to the Mac, ST and IBM PC. But now that developments like LAN (Local Area Networks) are making computer music rigs bigger and more complex, all that multitasking and speed may win the day. The price won't hurt either. The 16 MHz version with a 40 MByte hard drive goes for $3,299. You move up to 25 MHz for $3,999. The deluxo 25 MHz/100 MByte hard drive goes for $4,499.

If you read these pages with any regularity, you know how we're always rattling on about digital interfaces. How they're the gateway to the all-digital virtual home studio. Well, it's happening. Lexicon's new digital effects system, the model 300, comes with AES/EBU and EIAJ digital inputs and outputs on XLR, RCA and optical connectors. It looks like a honey of an effects processor too, with a built-in time-code reader for changing effects via SMPTE cues, plus Lexicon's own Dynamic MIDI system for real-time control of all effects parameters. And what effects! Reverb and ambience algorithms, EQ, a special mastering algorithm, stereo pitch-shift and delay effects—all primo quality thanks to 64-times oversampling, delta sigma A/D converters and eight-times oversampling D/A converters.

Yep, things are sure popping in the land of 0s and 1s. Akai says its new direct-to-disk, stereo digital recording system will be out later this year. It'll be called the DD1000. What makes *this* system so special is that it'll throw that pristine 44.1 or 48 kHz audio down to a re-writable optical disk, an erasable, reusable digital recording format! And the DD1000 will give you editing capabilities like no R-DAT tape machine can—including punch-in on individual channels and all kinds of



(Clockwise from top left): The Akai DD1000 records digital audio in stereo on a rewritable optical disk; Hohner's new HEG-35 is built along classic lines; time code flies when you're having fun, but you can keep track of it with the SMPTE time window.

Illustration: Bob Hambly

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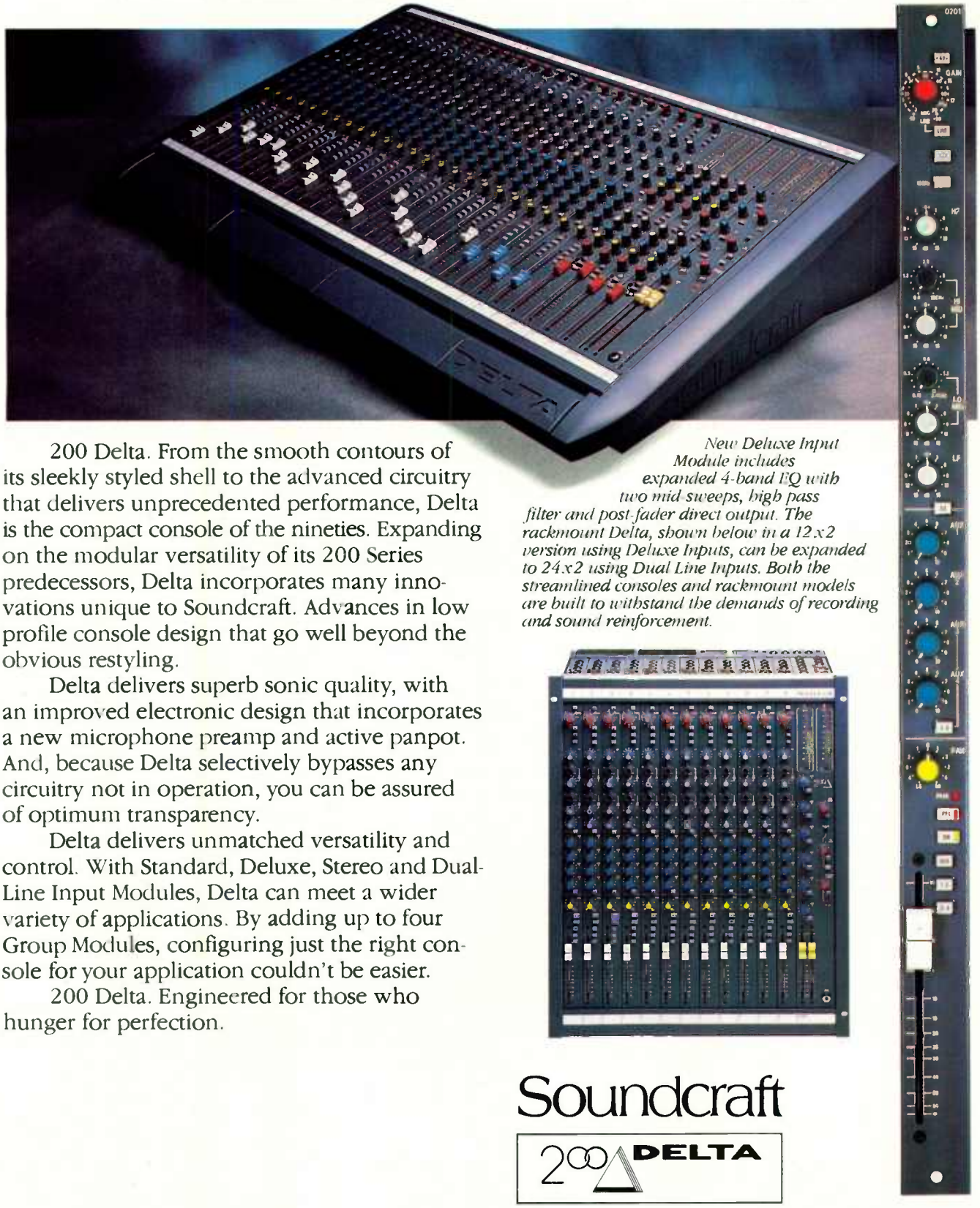

200 Delta. From the smooth contours of its sleekly styled shell to the advanced circuitry that delivers unprecedented performance, Delta is the compact console of the nineties. Expanding on the modular versatility of its 200 Series predecessors, Delta incorporates many innovations unique to Soundcraft. Advances in low profile console design that go well beyond the obvious restyling.

Delta delivers superb sonic quality, with an improved electronic design that incorporates a new microphone preamp and active panpot. And, because Delta selectively bypasses any circuitry not in operation, you can be assured of optimum transparency.

Delta delivers unmatched versatility and control. With Standard, Deluxe, Stereo and Dual-Line Input Modules, Delta can meet a wider variety of applications. By adding up to four Group Modules, configuring just the right console for your application couldn't be easier.

200 Delta. Engineered for those who hunger for perfection.

New Deluxe Input Module includes expanded 4-band EQ with two mid-sweeps, high pass filter and post-fader direct output. The rackmount Delta, shown below in a 12x2 version using Deluxe Inputs, can be expanded to 24x2 using Dual Line Inputs. Both the streamlined consoles and rackmount models are built to withstand the demands of recording and sound reinforcement.

Soundcraft

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splicing and crossfading. You can get 25 minutes of audio on each side of each rewritable optical disk. Or you can hook up an external drive via SCSI for 50 minutes nonstop digital recording bliss.

Digidesign's new Deck system makes a full-fledged, four-track digital portastudio out of any Mac II equipped with Digidesign's Audiomedia or SoundTools hard disk recording systems. SoundTools is Digidesign's high-end ($3285) system for turning the Mac II into a digital stereo recording device. Audiomedia is a more affordable ($995) gimmick for doing the same thing. You take either system and add the $349 Deck software package, and you've got *four* 16-bit, 44.1 kHz digital audio tracks instead of two. And the Deck system includes automated mixing, digital EQ and effects, which pretty much makes it a complete four-track recording environment.

Kudos as well for Digidesign's new MacProteus. It's actually an E-mu Proteus module shrunk onto a card that pops into the Mac II. Four megs and 192 ROM-based sounds for $895. Just plug in a keyboard and wail. And this brings us to **Opcode**, Digidesign's software-producing neighbor. They've got a new stripped-down version of their respected Vision sequencer. Logically enough, it's called EZ Vision: a 16-track software sequencer with essentially the same graphic environment as regular Vision and many of the same editing functions. You don't get the fancy Vision stuff like SMPTE sync capability and the full-blown Vision event list, but for $149, who's complaining? Why's EZ Vision here in the same paragraph as MacProteus, though? Because the two systems will be sold in a bundled package for $995. Not the savings of a lifetime, but hey, 50 bucks is 50 bucks.

Two new budget-minded products from **Midiman**: One is a $300 time-code box called SMPTE Time Window. It does everything the costly pro units do: reads, writes and regenerates SMPTE in all formats. You can do offsets, get your paws on the user bits and store eight "hit points" in memory. If you need to lock up two tape machines or do any other job involving time code, this looks like a winner. So does Midiman's MiniMIXER: an eight-channel mixer, pocket-sized, for 100 bucks . . . need we say more?

FAST PRODUCT: And now we come to the action-packed home stretch, where we run down all the gear that's fit to print but doesn't fit in with the month's main topic. You think the vintage reissue craze is strictly a guitar phenomenon? Think again. **Slingerland** is reissuing their history-making Radio King snare, manufactured to the original specs and in both five-inch and six-inch depths. Not to be outdone, **Pearl** has a new 3x13-inch soprano piccolo snare, available with brass and maple shells. Brass—hand-hammered to boot—is also the material that'll be used in the latest version of Pearl's Custom Classic snare.

Taking advantage of the current vogue for old hollowbody guitars, **Hohner** is bringing out a faithful-looking, affordable copy of the Gibson 335. It's called the HEG-13 and can be had in the classic burgundy-red sunburst and natural maple finishes. Hohner is also introducing a quintessentially heavy metal guitar called the ST-Lynx. It's got a locking KBS tremolo by Steinberger and pickups by

CONGRATULATIONS!

HATS OFF TO THIS FINAL ROUND of Best Unsigned Band semi-finalists, and good luck to all the bands who will be embarking on the final round of judging. B.U.B. winners will be announced next month. Thanks to the 7000 musicians who made our decisions so difficult. Continued success with your music.

5-0—Cambridge, MA
Aardvarks—Athens, GA
Adrian's Childhood—Seattle, WA
Allied Nation—Santa Rosa, CA
Ant Farm—Brighton, MA
Beat Surrender—Waltham, MA
Black Light—New York, NY
Blind Burning—Topanga, CA
Blue Violets—El Centro, CA
Bob Rasero–Noel Elia—Katonah, NY
Bone Shakers—Virginia Beach, VA
Border Patrol—Boston, MA
Cadillac Jack—Lawrenceburg, IN
Captive Heart—Chicago, IL
Cecilia Smith—Boston, MA
Crungehouse—Hyattsville, MD
Dan Collette—New York, NY
Daria—Philadelphia, PA
Deveree—Chicago, IL
Dimitri—Canterbury, N.B., Canada
Dreamwich—Topeka, KS
EYZ—Huntington Beach, CA
First Light—Cleveland, OH
Fox—Sacramento, CA
Frankly Scarlet—Dallas, TX
Gerald Bair—Seaford, NY
Goober & the Peas—Royal Oak, MI
Goober Says Hey—Murfreesboro, TN
Hearts & Minds—Austin, TX
Impulse Ride—Aiken, SC
Is This Bob—Allston, MA
Jason & the Argonauts—Stamford, CT
John E. Nordstrom II—Bellevue, WA
John Grant—Baltimore, MD
Johnny Quest—Raleigh, NC
Justin Sallaway—Cambridge, MA
Ken Stanley—Southgate, MI
Kromatics—San Francisco, CA
Lava & the Hot Rocks—Hollywood, CA
Lisa Brown—Cambridge, MA
Marc Denaro—Sea Cliff, NY
Mathews Brother—New York, NY
Mustang Lightning—Aurora, CO
MX-67—Lindenhurst, NY
Naked Truth—Dallas, TX
Nathan Crow & the Wedding Band—Sepulveda, CA
Not Shakespeare—Blacksburg, VA
Ocean Ave.—East Meadow, NY
One Horse Blue—Vancouver, B.C., Canada
Peter Stuart—Chicago, IL
Pillar of Fire—Grand Rapids, MI
Pseudo Sanctuary—Louisville, TX
Psychoboy—Baltimore, MD
Raisin Bran—Waldorf, MD
Red Van Go—Playa Del Rey, CA
Sensational Blazin' Bluegrass Katz—Glasgow, Scotland
September Reign—Northboro, MA
Smokin' Dave & the Premo Dopes—Knoxville, TN
Spang-A-Lang—Santa Cruz, CA
Stained Mecca—Florence, AL
Stone Soldier—Canoga Park, CA
Terry C. Tario—Twin Falls, ID
The Black River Snakes—S. Acton, MA
The Bloodhounds—Boston, MA
The Buskers—Santa Ana, CA
The Drastic Steps—Dallas, TX
The Lawrence Lebo Quintet—Santa Monica, CA
The Lost Band—Austin, TX
The Lumins—Woodland Hills, CA
The Monsignors—Brookline, MA
The Moving Stares—Winter Park, FL
The Mysteries—Berkeley, CA
The Reprieve—S. Boston, MA
The Tremors—Austin, TX
Tim Gadban—W. St. Paul, MN
Triple Threat—Stoneham, MA
Two Backyards—Weston, MA
Ultra Blue—Brookline, MA
Usual Suspects—Chula Vista, CA
Vector—Nashville, TN
Vex—Long Beach, CA
Voo Doo Dolls—Portland, OR
Will McKenna—Savannah, GA
World's End—Braintree, MA
Young Ghost—Riverside, CA
Yum, Yum, Yuk—Costa Mesa, CA
Zing Went the Strings—Hampton, NH

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Over-drive distortion	*Gated reverb*	*Graphic EQ*
Stereo delay	*Reverse reverb*	*Parametric EQ*
Ping-pong delay	*Ultimate reverb*	*Stereo imaging*
Multi-tap delay	*Flanging*	*and more*
The Foot Controller		
Random program access	*Large VFD display*	*Effects bypass*
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The controller is designed with individual LED indicators and a large, readable VFD display. It allows total access to all programs, patches and parameters.

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EMG. And now a final word for you singers: Have you decided you just can't live another day without a headset mike all your own? Beyer's got a great one: the HM 560. It has a first-rate ribbon mike mounted on a highly adjustable mini boom that looks something like a tone arm from an expensive turntable. Beyer's new headset may not be as exciting as a push-up bra, but it's probably more comfortable to wear. Ⓜ

Korg A3 Effects Processor

As newer models of digital multi-effects rush to stack as many as 12 simultaneous effects into their units, the quality vs. quantity issue is flaring anew. That's why it's worth looking at the Korg A3, a year-old multi-effects unit that does a couple of things *quite* well. For one thing, it sounds warm and full, especially its modulating delays. It's also exceptionally programmable and uses real knobs instead of those insect-brain parameter buttons. And you can easily enable and disable individual effects within one MIDI program, so if you want to just kill the fuzz you don't have to switch to a new program. So even though the A3 runs only six effects at one time and is up in the $1200 range, it's a prime contender.

The A3 uses 20 different "chains" to hook up an assortment of 41 variations, everything from wahs, exciters and speaker simulations to stereo delays and early-reflection reverbs. There is a pitch-shift, but it's only a half-step one. Two voltage-control pedal inputs in the back allow you to use two non-MIDI pedals to get at various parameters (including volume) in real time—which is handy because it doesn't read MIDI-continuous controller info. The EQ thoughtfully includes a Q control. The four distortion/overdrive options sound more than credible, and once you start fooling with all the panning options you'll never go back to mono again.

By having seven knobs on the front panel, the A3 lets you edit all the parameters of an effect at once instead of awkwardly stepping through each one. And the knobs also can be pushed to take an effect out of the chain while programming, so you can solo the effect you're working up and then click the others back in when it's right. The Korg FC6 pedal performs this task on the floor, so you can instantly kill any effect onstage without resorting to MIDI. Guitarists who feel digital effects sound too chilly will find the A3 just what the doctor ordered.—**Jock Baird**

PERFORMANCE OF THE MONTH

DISCIPLES OF FESS

Prof. Longhair tribute, Tipitina's, New Orleans

By Tom Moon

A DAY AFTER the Professor Longhair Foundation's solo piano night at Tipitina's, during the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, Ellis Marsalis put the event in perspective: "There were probably five or six versions of [Longhair's] 'Big Chief,' and every one was worth hearing."

It was never the same song twice. The players involved—Marsalis, Amasa Miller, Kenny Bill Stinson, Willie Tee, Allen Toussaint, John Magnie, Jon Cleary, Sonny Leland, Eddie Bo—were there to raise money for the Foundation's Longhair Square park, and to acknowledge their debt to Henry Roeland Byrd, who died in 1980. Known as Professor Longhair, Byrd is considered the father of New Orleans piano, and has become something of a deity among local musicians and at Tipitina's, the club he considered home. In the process of paying up, these musicians uncovered something just as exciting as the piano runs Fess delivered with such sly aplomb: Proof that his idiosyncratic style is still vital, still capable of inspiring diverse interpretations.


EDDIE BO

The multiple treatments of "Big Chief" and "Tipitina" weren't slavish schoolboy imitations; they reflected Byrd's soul-above-all approach and stretched his ribald sound into places he hadn't ventured. Marsalis followed an enchanting rubato meditation on the standard "My Romance" with an original blues that employed a broken, Longhair-like two-handed pattern miles away from Marsalis's usual jazz reserve. Willie Tee used Debussy-esque flourishes to connect Fess's "Go to the Mardi Gras" with an energetic "Big Chief" that flirted with a number of tempos in a deliberately unsettling game of theme-and-variations.

Tee, probably the best-kept secret in New Orleans, performed as though downloading his musical philosophy onto a computer disc; his set was an exhaustive stream of ideas: song segments as well as cogent, well-executed free improvisations. Toussaint sought a more romantic spot, and managed to turn the dim sentiment of "Play Something Sweet" into a cause célèbre. Eddie Bo began his early-'60s hits "Tell It Like It Is" (a medium-tempo shout, not the Aaron Neville ballad) and "Every Dog Got His Day" as if attempting an historical re-creation. He immediately shifted into an improvisatory mindset—adding verses, creating singalongs, playing shout choruses that channelled the spirit of the room through his fingers.

Magnie, whose solo talents are somewhat subdued in the Subdudes, brought the evening's gospel undertone into the open with an original, "Spirit," that found him playing Longhair's Saturday night riffs with the zeal of a Sunday morning believer. Recalling the event later, Magnie confessed he was nervous. "I had to follow Toussaint. I don't feel pressure about most gigs, but that one, with all those great players in one room—I was scared shitless."

Everybody who touched that piano played as though they caught a bit of that tension. It's probably haunted. Ⓜ

Photograph: Pat Kaufchick

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SOUND OFF!

MUSICIANS AGAINST CENSORSHIP

"YOU ARE GATHERED HERE this morning to burn my finest papers, you are in this room at this very hour to tell me that there is something ugly, vile and vulgar about me somewhere, somehow, someway. I excuse your ignorance. I can think only of one way to fight you back; the entire race of men is fighting you back in the same way. By just standing to one side and laughing at your sad condition of paralysis and death."—Woody Guthrie

1990—The year of the complacent American? . . . perhaps.

Surely, unless we stir ourselves, the '90s shall be remembered as the decade of the "thought police," the small but powerful minority that would like to decide which music and ideas are "acceptable or objectionable."

Presently, there is a movement to place warning stickers on recorded music and to restrict the sale of stickered music to minors. As of June 1990, at least 18 state legislatures have active or pending legislation which prohibits the sale of unstickered music (deemed to have objectionable lyrics). Some of the bills also restrict the display of recordings and prohibits minors from attending concerts where "offensive lyrics" may be heard. Missouri, Arizona, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island have each passed legislation and several states have legislation pending.

I grew up wondering if other children felt the same feelings as me as the sap of sexual awareness rose and filled my secret mind. People rarely talked about sex and when they did it was usually to provoke guilt by hinting at something or the other. Now that I'm older it's not much different except that the themes have changed: isolation; loneliness; inability to relate to this world all bent over with dishonesty, ignorance and disillusionment. America is suffering a hangover from years of periodic censorship of various mediums. From 1934 to 1966, motion pictures followed a form of censorship called the "Hayes Code." It called itself a "standard of good taste." Under this code films could not portray "illegal drug trafficking, excessive and lustful kissing, inference to sex perversion, or marriage between black and white people." As a result, young minds grew up thinking none of this existed. They were lied to. Censorship will inevitably clog the barrel of a loaded gun and the gun will backfire: Hide breasts and people want to see them; threaten to close down the Mapplethorpe exhibit and the line to see it will extend around the block.

Freedom of speech is a constitutionally guaranteed freedom. So is listening. If these basic rights are to remain intact, musicians, fans and all concerned Americans must unite to confront this tide of censorship. Check your city and state's legislation for bills concerning censorship—they sneak bills like these under the midnight fence so be alert!

John Nelson & Frank Orrall
poi dog pondering

MUSICIAN
Where the Players Do the Talking

He Knew the Score

The Toscanini Collection

■

Verdi: Aida
Beethoven: Symphony No. 9
(RCA Victor Gold Seal/BMG Classics Video)
Verdi: Aida/Falstaff/Requiem, Te Deum, Others
Brahms: Four Symphonies
Beethoven: Nine Symphonies
(RCA Victor Gold Seal)

BORN IN Parma, Italy in 1867, Arturo Toscanini straddled the nineteenth and twentieth centuries both in terms of art and technology, and is famous not only for his unparalleled musical vision and spiritual gravity, but for being one of the first great conductors to emerge in the modern recording age. Thanks to the sponsorship of corporate mandarin David Sarnoff, Toscanini brought the music of the concert hall home to millions of listeners as musical director of the prestigious NBC Symphony Orchestra from

Illustration Karen Blitt

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1937–1954, during the fledgling days of commercial radio and television broadcasting.

An autocratic, charismatic man, Toscanini's incendiary blend of artistic arrogance and humility was supercharged in the service of the music. He set the highest possible performance standards, which is why his legendary deep heat massages and rehearsal outbursts are the stuff of legend, unmatched for fervor and intensity by any twentieth-century orchestra leader, save perhaps Buddy Rich.

Like Mr. Rich, he had the goods to back it up. Here was a formidable talent who committed over 600 orchestral works to memory. Who as a youthful conductor at La Scala undertook the world premieres of Puccini's *Pagliacci* and *La Bohème*; could consult with old man Verdi about matters of interpretation and await new works from Brahms; who was hailed as *the* great interpreter of Richard Wagner's operas by the composer's family; who was at one time or another the principal conductor of La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic and the NBC Symphony Orchestra. You get the idea?

Nor was Toscanini a conductor in the flamboyant tradition of a Stokowski or a Bernstein, where the conductor is the star focus. During rehearsals, as archival footage demonstrates, the maestro's podium demeanor could be furiously agitated, as he italicized every passage for all it was worth; in concert, his gestures became pointed and compact, as he strained to bring alive the image of the music in his mind's ear. Certainly the videocassette/laserdiscs in this initial release bespeak his Olympian control of all elements. Taken from old kinescopes, and recorded in NBC's infamous Studio 8H (whose sonic elegance has been compared to that of airplane hangars and high-school gymnasiums), the concert reading of *Aida* is a rather static experience without the elaborate staging and lighting that make a full-fledged operatic production such total theater. However, the video of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 focuses in on Toscanini the conductor, and you can see the music seething out of those raven's eyes, eyes that follow you around the room—eyes that made each musician feel as if the old man was staring into his soul. You can see the music coming alive in his face as a song, and witness the physical and emotional price the old man paid for his concentration. And when you realize that this 81-year-old firebrand is the only one up there without a single sheet of music, it's simply overwhelming.

As good as *Aida* is, to a casual opera fan like myself, the *Falstaff* orchestrations feel more compelling, and the performance has much more of an edge to it—although the *Te Deum* set of shorter pieces is what I return to the most. The boxed Verdi set demonstrates how the maestro's lasting reputation as a symphonic conductor was animated by his youthful experiences in the operatic tradition. Toscanini's sense of dramatic and lyric proportion parallels the broad emotional range of Beethoven and Brahms, and makes these boxed sets of Carnegie Hall symphonic recordings from the autumn of his life absolutely definitive. His brisk signature tempos italicize Beethoven's rhythmic momentum and allow his sweeping thematic lines to wash over the listener unbroken, like a tidal wave of affirmation. The silvery sound of his strings, the roiling thunder of his brass and percussion accents and his extraordinary feel for textures are such that his symphonies sound like concertos for individual orchestral soloists and sections—every detail *sings*. Thus he is able to balance Brahms' romantic sweep and classical rigor, bringing out all of that composer's elusive harmonic tendrils and contrapuntal interplay so that even the dense harmonies and rhythmic changes of the C Minor Symphony—lumpy gravy in lesser hands—are as transparent as a string quartet.

Why invest in digitally remastered analog recordings from the early '50s when DDD recordings of these works abound? First, because tape noise notwithstanding, the sound is sumptuous. More importantly, because Toscanini's interpretations simply swing more; are more lyrical, in the sense of singer and song; are more organic from first note to last; and present a vigorous, unified conception of this as living, breathing music. And if you *don't* already own any of these works, the Toscanini Collection will get you off on your good foot.—Chip Stern

Anita Baker

Compositions
(Elektra Entertainment)

FOUR YEARS AGO, Anita Baker quietly stormed the pop music charts with *Rapture*, a reclamation of jazz-soul balladry driven by acoustic resonances and Baker's forthright voice. Slightly overrated, *Rapture* still announced the arrival of a singer and a songwriter whose allegiances to the past seemed like a personal necessity rather than a sales gambit, as Baker interpreted outsized tunes like "Sweet Love" and "You Bring Me Joy" with the control and heart of a gospel singer. The songs and settings of *Giving You the Best That I've Got*, Baker's 1988 follow-up, weren't as intense, or even well chosen. But they encouraged

Baker, who never needs to worry about sounding slight, to lay back in the manner of funkier *Rapture* gems such as "Same Old Love" and "Watch Your Step." The LP shot to number one on the *Billboard* charts.

On *Compositions*, Baker and guitarist/producer Michael Powell balance the force of *Rapture* with the ease of *Giving You the Best That I've Got*. With Baker having co-written seven of the new recording's nine songs—and with the incomparable Greg Phillinganes playing vivid keyboards and generous piano on all of them—*Compositions* is her finest album, transcending her signature pop style for jazzier turns, as though no relevant difference exists between them.

In poised yet earthy mid-tempo dialogues like "Talk to Me" and "Perfect Love Affair," Baker and Powell have reached the point where there's nothing less than perfect coherence in their execution—and plenty of fire in the details. On "Whatever It Takes," a sensuous groove, the guts of Baker's vocal ("I mean this/I really mean this") and the depth of Phillinganes' upper-bass chord accents in "No One to Blame" combine for a definitive Anita Baker sound.

Though the boundaries of that could be changing. Both "More Than You Know" and "Fairy Tales" suggest that Baker won't be stranded in pop-soul mastery. To hear her roll her voice over the sandy, quasi-Brazilian cadences of "More Than You Know," where she duets with the roaming guitar of Earl Klugh, is to hear an artist whose reach can't exceed her grasp.

"Fairy Tales" is even better—light on its feet, in a brilliant pop-jazz arrangement that Phillinganes brings home time and again,

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and effortlessly dramatic, with its broken promises of dragon-slayers and uninterrupted happiness. As Baker realizes that there's "no royal kiss" to save her, her delivery turns disappointment into a kind of strength. Allowed to testify and jam for close to eight minutes, "Fairy Tales" is the tour de force ending of an album that's pretty damn close to being one itself.—James Hunter

Sonic Youth

Goo
(DGC)

ALTERNATIVISTAS who fretted that New York's reigning noisemeisters Sonic Youth might denature their music for the masses on their major-label debut really needn't have worried. The Youth weigh in with mighty globs of strangely tuned crunch on *Goo*, a knotty piece of work that's unlikely to challenge their icon, Madonna, at the top of the charts. If anything, the band's first big-time stand may be even *less* accessible than *Daydream Nation*, their two-LP indie swan song.

The quartet's nattering, battering attack, hinging on the oddly harmonized distortions of Thurston Moore's and Lee Renaldo's guitars, is often marshaled here on tunes offering a skewed take on their favorite subject, rock culture. "Tunic (Song for Karen)" is a kind of sick, updated "Rock and Roll Heaven" in which Karen Carpenter bids adieu to earthly things. "Cool Thing" mashes down the misogyny of rap and commercial rock 'n' roll. "My Friend Goo" is a slap at the bland disinterest of punk scenesters.

The remainder of the disc takes inspiration from sources ranging from the New Testament ("Mary Christ," about a dream date with Jesus' mom) to the *Weekly World News* ("Disappearer," concerning a UFO sighting on the Bowery). Although the song formats veer toward the conventional on tracks like "Dirty Boots" (a professed ZZ Top homage), other numbers gong heavily; in particular, the extended coda to the incomprehensible "Mote" and the buzzing minute-long "Scooter and Jinx" harken to the thrashings of such early Youth opuses as *Confusion Is Sex* and *Kill Yr Idols*.

Left-field loyalists can take cheer at the clangorously confrontational style of *Goo*, while newcomers who aren't nonplussed by the album's grim Raymond Pettibon cover art might find their brains pleasantly jostled. Sonic Youth's geetar stilettos remain keenly honed.—Chris Morris

Burning Spear

Mek We Dweet
(Mango)

BEFORE MOST OF today's Afrocentric rappers were out of diapers, Winston Rodney was chanting down those who have oppressed his people, while praising the Mother Continent and her far-flung children. His *nom de guerre*—Burning Spear—was taken from Kenyan freedom fighter and nation-builder Jomo Kenyatta. After three uneven albums with Slash (including last year's rousing *Live in Paris* double-shot), the veteran Jamaican singer has returned to Mango, where he waxed such seminal '70s reggae works as *Marcus Garvey*. As it happens, *Mek We Dweet* finds The Man from the Hills also coming "home" to several themes—African roots, planetary unity and the legacy of black consciousness prophet Marcus Garvey—that have characterized his recording career.

Spear is a man of few words. But his mesmerizing attention to vocal nuance, rhythm and phrasing imbues simple lyrics with profound weight. When he intones "she has no food to eat, this African woman," his pleas elicit more sympathy and respect than a cutout bin full of "We Are the World" leftovers. While distortion-filled power chords drop around him and traps-shaman and longtime colleague Nelson Miller digs the groove on "Civilization," Spear repeats each line twice in an ostinato blast at racism and a

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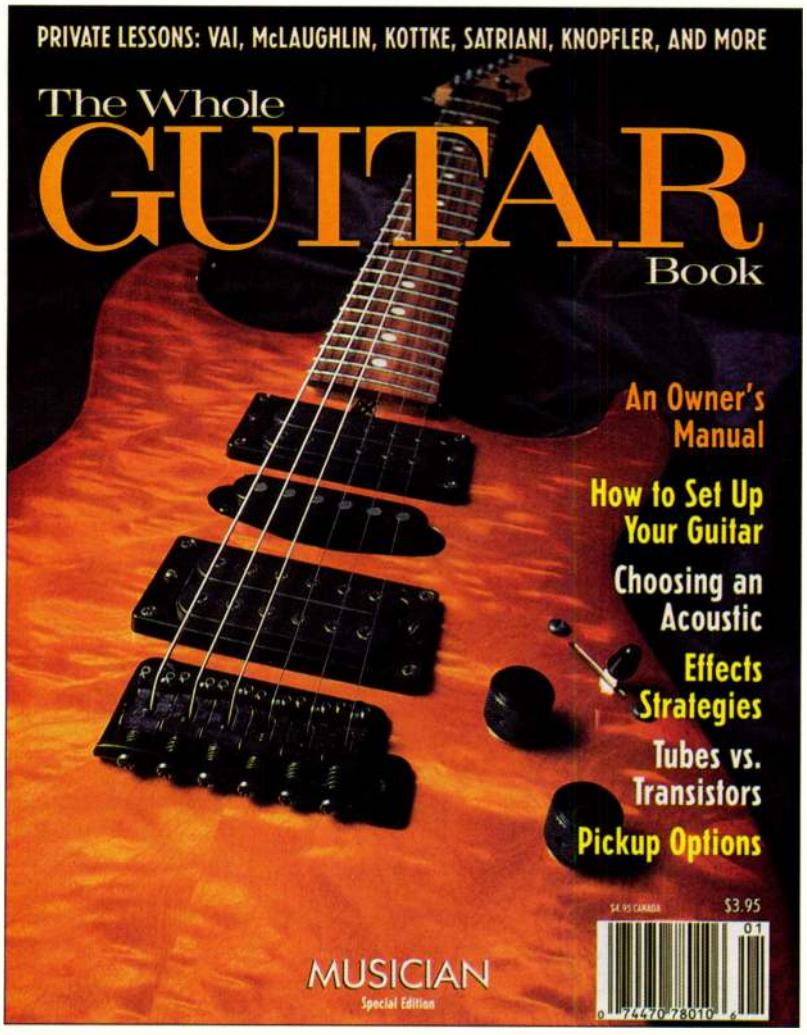

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nod to the unifying solace of reggae. Then he launches into "Garvey," quoting his famous subject: "Up you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will."

The latest version of the Burning Band, horns blazing and rhythms securely in the pocket, provides the hypnotic edge that has garnered them kudos as one of reggae's hardest-rockin' units. But it is Rodney's world view and uncanny declamatory style that make *Mek We Dweet* his strongest studio album in years. As Spear reminds us in "My Roots": "I always remember the road I travel."—Tom Cheyney

The Mandala Octet

The Notion of Obstacle
(Volition)

THE MANDALA OCTET is a miniature big band, three reeds, two brass and rhythm section, the horns arranged to project a deceiving fullness of sound. John Leaman, the group's leader, composer and arranger, is also its bassist: At one point during this four-song set the careful voicings come to a halt and auteur Leaman, miked for maximum portentousness, steps forward to reveal a rather languid romanticism, spiked by a sharp dramatic sense. It's a

sensibility reflected in the melancholy shadings of the arrangements, the shifting moods of the compositions and the ironic use of gesture.

It's a format that begs comparison to Mingus, and the differences make it worth hearing. Where Mingus was most often fiercely direct, fueled by anger and love and ideas of betrayal, Leaman is more a cool modernist, a '90s man. Hokey jazz/rock sections aren't happy-go-lucky rave-ups, but driven respites that lead into solos which then devolve into shrieking freeblow incoherence; an up "Latin" interlude comes and goes, almost energetic enough to obscure the quotation marks; Leaman's solo bass fantasia (on "The Eyes of an Altruist") segues into a hip lounge jazz moment, the pianist working in a *très* sophisticated passing reference to "The Boy Next Door," an aside within an aside. It's a method whose intentions are most readily grasped on the explicitly programmatic cut, "Thought Criminal"; the first part may sound initially banal, a miscalculated use of cliché, but you're just being set up for the denouement—Winston Smith in the torture chamber, the rat cage attached to his face.

All this is helped by soloists who never seem at a loss for an appropriate comment—notably baritone saxophonist Charlie Kohlhaus, who goes quite mad on "Altruist," and trumpeter Tom Duprey, whose solo on the title cut is both earthy and troubled, neatly encapsulating the project's mixture of jazz aggressiveness and a more distracted modern outlook. Uneasy fun, then, a solid *fin de siècle* romp. (NMDS, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)—Richard C. Walls

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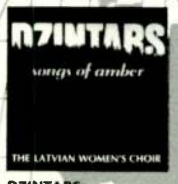

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Bruce Hornsby and the Range

A Night on the Town
(RCA)

YOU KNOW BRUCE HORNSBY well, even if you've never pondered the man's music. His most soulful vocals resonate with the masculine angst of Don Henley; at his most facile, Hornsby displays the chirpy charm of Huey Lewis. When Bruce and the Range cook, they create rousing gospel-fired grooves in the tradition of good ol' Leon Russell. While he's easy on the ears, don't sell Hornsby short: *A Night on the Town* boasts truly inspired moments, where the closely observed details of ordinary life and stomping, rootsy rock collide with a bang.

Good stuff occupies about half of Hornsby's third album. Shaped by dramatic arrangements and beefy choruses, the title track and "Fire on the Cross" portray redneck excesses in all their creepy glory. Hornsby refrains from easy moralizing, knowing the plain ugly facts possess ample sting. Anyway, Wayne Shorter's angry sax condemns the Klan activities in "Fire" more eloquently than an editorial could. "Across the River" and "Stander on the Mountain" depict quieter desperation, namely, the struggle to reconcile callow dreams and adult disappointments. Hornsby's empathy for his characters is at the heart of this album, though the slick sonics can undermine the effect.

In fact, for nearly every compelling stroke, there's an overwrought or glib gesture. Shawn Colvin duets with Hornsby on "Lost Soul," a teary tale of a "confused and sad" man that's more patronizing than perceptive. "Barren Ground" hoists the green banner in a saga of ecological ruin, but its clichés have the zing of a public service ad.

Too bad Don Gehman, who co-produced with Hornsby, didn't inject more of the rural rasp he brought to John Mellencamp's records. Cameos by Bela Fleck, Jerry Garcia and Charlie Haden notwithstanding, *A Night on the Town* is too smooth to consistently support the star's passions. For sure, extra oomph would've made "Another Day" and "These Arms of Mine" (not Otis Redding's song) better than funky throwaways. But that's the miracle of the CD era: Punch a few buttons, throw away the lesser parts—and you've still got a killer Bruce Hornsby EP.

—Jon Young

Manitoba's Wild Kingdom

. . . And You?
(MCA)

AS CO-LEADERS of the Dictators, singer Handsome Dick Manitoba and composer/bassist Andy Shernoff were the first guys to figure out just how much professional wrestling and rock 'n' roll, in their mutual reliance on the grand gesture, had in common. Though they had many rabid fans, myself among them, the Dictators never quite clicked with the general public. Their first album, the pre-punk classic *Go Girl Crazy*, had too many laughs for the legions of sanctimonious guitar worshippers who bought records in the mid- to late-'70s. Their subsequent efforts foundered on the shoals of compromise between commerciality and their satiric vision.

After a long vacation from each other, Manitoba and Shernoff had the mutual intuition that the market may have caught up to them and reunited to form Manitoba's Wild Kingdom. I rate MWK's first album as the best recording either of them has been associated with, and it's my favorite metal album of the year so far. After many listenings that went way beyond my professional obligation, I have figured out exactly why it's cool:

1) It is highly masculine without being stupid; 2) it is hilarious and full of mockery without being cruel or self-deprecating; 3) it has massive edge, yet makes only passing reportorial reference to the usual decadence; 4) it has extremely high energy without invoking Satan; 5) it has extremely positive energy without invoking Jesus; 6) it has great riffs, whether at the moderately fast AC/DC tempo on side one, or at the very fast Metallica tempo on side two; 7) it endorses lust with a minimum of both euphemism and sexism; and 8) they brought back another ex-Dictator, Ross the Boss, to play his ferocious guitar. If they don't make it this time, I'm going to law school.

—Charles M. Young

WORLD PARTY

[*cont'd from page 67*] bass in it. Bass—I don't think you should even hear bass. Then the guitar doesn't need an earsplitting treble to cut through, and the drums are quiet, and the keyboards are there, as background." He catches himself ranting, and laughs. "Can we achieve it?"

Wallinger made sure his album sounds human. Connoisseurs of string noise will hear plenty, and Wallinger allowed other imperfections as well. "Vocal tracks always tend to start off with the sound of a lighter, since to relax and do a vocal I light up a cigarette," he said. "And since I did them in the control room, I wouldn't be surprised if there's several phones ringing on various tracks—if anyone does hear a Trimfone it's highly likely that it's really there and it's not yours ringing. As tracks die out, too, there's all these funny things as various levels of different days die away. It's like a sound-effects tape, some of them on purpose and some just by accident. There's some water at the end of 'Love Street,' and I had never necessarily wanted it, but at the end of the song my hand went on a note and there was water there, so, why not?"

Even with the last notes of "Good Vibrations" fading out, and the day's rehearsals over, Wallinger seems reluctant to leave the studio; he looks longingly back at the racks of cassettes, the strewn instruments. "One night, or maybe it was morning, a taxi driver came to take me home," he says. "The driver said, 'You guys seem to be going 24 hours a day—how long do you think you're going to be working like this?' And I said, 'For the rest of my life. And longer if I'm lucky.'" Ⓜ

HOME VIDEO TIP

COMEDY WRITER EDDIE GORODETSKY SAYS THAT TO ENJOY DENNIS QUAID'S PERFORMANCE IN *GREAT BALLS OF FIRE*, IMAGINE HE'S BASED HIS JERRY LEE LEWIS ON WALT DISNEY'S GOOFY.

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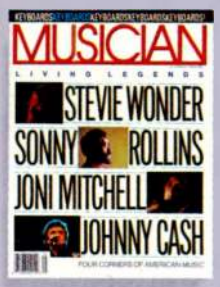

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SHORT TAKES

SO MUCH MUSIC, SO LITTLE TIME

JAZZ

By Chip Stern

Marcus Roberts

Deep in the Shed (BMG/Novus)

DEEPLY FELT, refined arrangements from one of the most original young jazz pianists to emerge in the past decade. Roberts evinces a virtuoso's restraint in his coolly voiced, taciturn solos and cubist accompaniments (dig the laid-back intensity of "Spiritual Awakening" and the offbeat blues of "Mysterious Interlude"). But it's the tonal colors he elicits from his New Orleans–styled front line that'll bring you back again and again, such as the gumbo variations of the title tune and the heated backward buzzsaw of his tribute to trumpet wiz "E. Dankworth" (né W. Marsalis), with its echoes of Monk's "Four in One." A lot of fans have been wondering when the current generation of young lions will begin to outgrow its influences. Well, school's out.

Marty Ehrlich

The Traveller's Tale (Enja)

THIS GIFTED reed player might be counted among the most formidable of the young lions if he hadn't already been out there for a decade. Ehrlich is a graceful, lyrical virtuoso on both saxophone and clarinet, with the sweet intonation of a "legitimate player," so to speak, but the swing of his line and the controlled tension of his writing belong to a post-modernist. At times the high-wire interplay in Ehrlich's pianoless quartet (featuring reedman Stan Strickland, bassist Lindsey Horner and drummer Bobby Previte) echoes such worthy antecedents as Dave Holland's *Conference of the Birds* and the Candid Mingus Quartets—all cunning and invention with nary a cliché in sight. Their controlled frenzy and singing intensity also suggest that today's emerging new traditionalists needn't exclude the free-form work of late Coltrane, early Ornette, Sam Rivers, Julius Hemphill and the AACM from a celestial canon of "true" jazz.

John Scofield

Time on My Hands (Blue Note)

FOR THE LAST several years, this masterful stylist has been fronting instrumental funk bands with an overlay of jazz improvisation, but on this, his Blue Note debut, Scofield projects a powerful portrait of the electric guitarist as a modern jazzman. He not only shows a winning way with a ballad, but that he's fully capable of transcending his own hard-fought stylistic clichés, so fresh are his melodic inventions. The seismic groove of Charlie Haden and Jack DeJohnette fits Sco and tenor master Joe Lovano to a T, and as with the other recordings in this month's bumper crop, echoes of Monk ("Since You Asked"), Mingus ("Stranger to the Light") and Ornette ("Farmacology") predominate. Their influence on Scofield the composer is a revelation—that and the way it's all processed through his deep Chicago blues sensibility. Which is what gives it that accessible, contemporary feel, but with a more sardonic urban edge than, say, someone like Pat Metheny. Easily Scofield's best recording.

Mel Lewis Sextet

The Lost Art (Musicmaster)

The Mel Lewis Orchestra

The Definitive Thad Jones (Musicmaster)

SINCE MEL LEWIS' DEATH, some drummers have stepped forward to claim, if not his legacy, his benediction as literal successors to the drum throne. Yeah, right, as if anyone could appropriate so singular a sense of swing as that of Mel Lewis. He was a one-off, in that it wasn't so much what he played within the band, as how he heard the band and imposed a sense of form. Through sheer force of will, Mel made musicians play at his tempos and with his dynamics, without getting in their way—he let the music breathe and glow. Listen to the title tune (his showcase on the Sextet date) and the way he calmly shades layers of brush textures into a purely melodic statement without any heavy-handed technical fanfares: It's as if he'd figured out how to affix Miles Davis' Harmon mute to a drum kit. The Sextet date validates his traditional instincts within a modern small-group setting, and italicizes pianist Kenny Werner's superb inside-out instincts (as on the jumping "Old Ranger"). The big-band date stands as a testimonial to Mel's powers of rhythmic orchestration and interpretation on charts by Thad Jones—a fitting tribute to the last of the great big bands.

Kenny Burrell Quartet

Guiding Spirit (Contemporary)

WITH HIS RAREFIED touch and keen harmonic sensibility, guitarist Kenny Burrell bestrides the stylistic chasm between pianistic chord-melody players and funkybutt hardboppers. I haven't been a big fan of Burrell's recent three-guitar groupings because they tended to strand his improvisational charms in a Sargasso Sea of clichés. But with a new rhythm section and vibist Jay Hoggard acting as his melodic foil, this ensemble puts Burrell's pungent blue guitar lines and subtle voicings in sharp, clear relief. *Guiding Spirit* pays tribute to Burrell's great influences, and as with the aforementioned Scofield set, they're not necessarily guitarists. Particularly welcome are his turquoise interpretations of Ellington—in heat and at rest—and boisterous readings of Coltrane's "Moment's Notice" and Monk's "In Walked Bud."

John Mayall's Bluesbreakers

A Sense of Place (Island)

WITH HIS BLOW-TORCHED reedy vocals, greasy keyboards and airy harmonica, John Mayall's signature sound has aged nicely over three decades. With his veteran band (in existence since 1983), *A Sense of Place* makes it clear that while synths and sampling are here to stay, electric guitars are still the human voice in the machine. What makes *A Sense of Place* work is not so much the songs (standard Mayall raps), but the sure touch of the new Bluesbreakers, who show how an authentic post-war blues sound (along all the whistle stops from Chicago to New Orleans) continues to evolve in the face of every change in fashion. That and the understated acoustic quality of some of these arrangements make for a more intimate, deeply felt set than followers of this blustery genre have come to expect.

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ROCK

By J.D. Considine

Marti Jones

Any Kind of Lie (RCA)

GIVEN THE LOW-KEY charm of her previous efforts, the semi-slick sound Jones assumes here seems jarring, like suddenly seeing the neighborhood tomboy decked out in an evening gown. Yet it's not the incongruity that amazes, but how well the change suits her. Her material is solid—whether as deadpan and witty as "Cliche" or as deliciously insinuating as the title tune, it's all catchy and well-crafted—the arrangements are ear-grabbingly clever and her singing is flat-out terrific. Definitely a *Lie* worth repeating.

World Party

Goodbye Jumbo (Chrysalis)

TO CALL Karl Wallinger a studio wizard may be accurate, but it also misses the point. What makes World Party so inviting isn't the casual virtuosity of these self-productions, but that Wallinger's recordings keep the emphasis squarely on the songs. That's why World Party sounds like a band no matter how many people are playing, from the slinky psychedelia of the solo "Thank You World" to the Stones-style groove of the full-band "Way Down Now."

New Kids on the Block

Step by Step (Columbia)

CHILD ABUSE.

Snap

World Power (Arista)

THESE WEST GERMAN club chameleons offer a little bit of this, a little bit of that—hip-house on "Believe the Hype," Afro-funk on "Cult of Snap," jazzy Brit-soul on "Ooops Up." But this anyway-you-like-it approach doesn't leave Snap with much in the way of musical identity; for all the throbbing insistence of a club classic like "The Power," it's the bassline that matters, not the band.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo

Two Worlds, One Heart (Warner Bros.)

MATCHING BLACK MAMBAZO with Ray Phiri again for a bit of "Township Jive" is a good way to recapture that *Graceland* groove, and pairing the choir with Marvin Winans (for "Leaning on the Everlasting Arm") is sheer genius. But George Clinton? P.E. samples? Zulu rap? There is such a thing as too eclectic.

The Pursuit of Happiness

One-Sided Story (Chrysalis)

MOE BERG IS STILL an adult, but there's more to this band than his ability to write love songs for grown-ups. Because his witty, incisive observations hit home faster when powered by the band's guitar-driven arrangements, TPOH seems a hard-rock dream band—intelligent, insightful and not sexist in the least.

Sidewinders

Auntie Ramos' Pool Hall (Mammoth/RCA)

SOME SOUTHWESTERN BANDS are most at home with the boogie blues, while others take the new music underground as their territory. The Sidewinders claim turf on both sides; guitarist Rich Hopkins may take more cues from Peter Buck and Bob Mould than Billy Gibbons or Stevie Ray Vaughan, but he plays with an equivalent amount of juke-joint grit. Which is why songs like "Sara's Not Sober" or "If I Can't Have You" kick the way they do.

Steve Vai

Passion and Warfare (Relativity)

SOME PEOPLE THINK heavy metal is really stupid music, so Steve Vai decided to prove them wrong. Hence *Passion and Warfare*, an album's worth of jaw-dropping virtuosity proving that Vai can do virtually anything . . . except rock. Sign this guy up for a course in Remedial Angus Young!

O-Positive

Toy Boat Toy Boat Toy Boat (Epic)

SURE, DAVID HERLIHY can sound awfully like Michael Stipe at times, and Peter Walsh's layered, detail-conscious production tends toward the same textures Mitch Easter and Don Dixon pulled out of *Murmur*. But O-Positive is more than just another re-R.E.M.; from the shattered-glass intensity of "Kamikaze Dove" to the chunky synth-funk of "International," these young Bostonians prove they have something to say, and their own way of saying it.

The Jeff Healey Band

Hell to Pay (Arista)

NOW THAT HEALEY no longer seems compelled to prove himself as a soloist, he lets us hear what he can really do—light up a song. For the most part, he rips through these bluesy rockers like a roman candle through the night sky, leaving a trail of incandescent sparks in his wake. And though his reading of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" shows class, it's the Clapton-esque roar of "I Can't Get My Hands on You" that really shows his roots.

Buckwheat Zydeco

Where There's Smoke There's Fire (Island)

EVER SINCE Clifton Chenier, zydeco has been a mish-mash of musical styles, but Stanley Dural has always taken that a little further than most. Here, he adds a splash of country (a wonderful "Hey, Good Lookin'" with Dwight Yoakam), a hint of norteño spice and the usual assortment of well-chosen covers, including an inspired version of "Beast of Burden." An irresistible album.

The 4 of Us

Songs for the Tempted (Columbia)

THOUGH THE SOUND these 4 generate seems conventional enough—a cheery acoustic groove for "Mary," a bit of boogie on "I Just Can't Get Enough," a dab of white funk for "Drag My Bad Name Down"—the songs are definitely a cut above the norm. Finally, an Irish band more interested in being itself than being the next U2!

BOOKS

The Legendary Joe Meek

John Repsch (Woodford House)

MEEK WAS A BRITISH Phil Spector: a strong-willed independent record producer who seemed more interested in sound than flesh-and-blood musicians. But the comparison is invidious. Meek preceded Spector; contributed shockingly few hits to the pop charts considering his furious schedule (the biggest were the Tornados' "Telstar," which he also wrote, and the Honeycombs' "Have I the Right"); and took his own life and someone else's while still in his 30s. This painstakingly researched biography is obviously a labor of love, but author Repsch doesn't hesitate to depict Meek as vindictive, vituperative and a raving paranoid. The straightforward narrative lets the melodramatic details of a checkered career speak for themselves. It's quite a story. (110 Chertsey Court, Clifford Ave., London SW14 7DX, England)

—*Scott Isler*

Samba

Alma Guillermoprieto (Alfred A. Knopf)

FOR THE DWELLERS of the *favelas* (shantytowns) that sprawl over the hillsides overlooking Rio de Janeiro, *samba* and Carnival offer a serious alternative to the oppressive grind of daily existence. This Mexican-born journalist joined one of the longest-running and deepest-rooted samba schools—Mangueira—and moved to the slum of the same name. Not a school in the usual sense, these community organizations coordinate

World Radio History

the massive (300-plus) *bateria* of percussionists who provide the essential 2/4 rhythm at the heart of samba, wing after wing of marching singer/dancers and their costumes, and vast parade floats. The author captures the preparations for the 1988 Carnival parade and the lives of the school members with an attention to detail that brings *samba* traditions and the difficulties of the mainly black *favelados* into sharp focus. As one woman says near the end of the book: "No one can easily explain to the outside world why we are willing to sacrifice so much for Carnival. But we are." Guillermoprieto provides one of the best descriptions yet of an urban culture where music and dance are inextricably linked to the cycles of life and death.—*Tom Cheyney*

Ricky Nelson: Idol for a Generation

Joel Selvin (Contemporary Books)

CAN THERE BE a sadder success story than Rick's? He spent the first half of his life literally growing up in public on his parents' TV sitcom, the second half as a rock 'n' roll has-been on endless, aimless tours. By the end of Joel Selvin's well-researched and ambivalent biography, Nelson's death—at 45 in a fire on his run-down tour plane—comes as tragic relief. If Selvin never seems to get beyond his subject's calm exterior, the horrifying assumption is that, with Rick Nelson, that's all there was.—*Scott Isler*

INDIE

The Jody Grind

One Man's Trash Is Another Man's Treasure (DB)

THREE COOL CATS and a slick chick (on the Southern side) chanteusing their way through standards like "Mood Indigo" and "The Peter Gunn Theme" (with lyrics?) as well as original Grinders like "Death of Zorba" and the torchy "Blue and Far." Spare, Brecht/Weill-like arrangements—jazzy guitar, upright bass, snare—frame singer Kelly Hogan Murray's gorgeous alto, as it takes on everything from Appalachian modalities to Broadway schmaltz. Think of a point halfway between the Cowboy Junkies and the B-52's and you'll be in the neighborhood. Very impressive record.—*Thomas Anderson*

Ottmar Liebert

Nouveau Flamenco (Higher Octave)

THIS IS WHAT new age music would sound like if it was any good. The liner notes claim that Liebert, a classically trained flamenco guitarist, exemplifies a sound that's been brewing in Santa Fe, melding the passion and melodicism of gypsy folk traditions with "contemporary" accoutrements like bass and keyboards. But if there's one other guitarist in Santa Fe who merges these currents as naturally as Liebert does on the swinging "Barcelona Nights," the eerily evocative "Heart Still/Beating" or almost any other track here, I'll be pleasantly stunned. The guy has a ringing guitar tone and a way of playing that combines rigorous technique with light, effortless musicality. Like the Gipsy Kings, this is innovative pop that hasn't forgotten its heart or its home. (8033 Sunset Blvd., #41, Los Angeles, CA 90046)

—*Mark Rowland*

All

Trailblazer (Cruz)

POP SONGFORMS and pure punk energy lock horns on this whipsaw live set, recorded at CBGB's last summer. All, which grew out of the ashes of SoCal's Descendents, views the road as its natural habitat (the album takes its name from a brand of portable toilet), and the club date caught herein captures the sweetly cranked-up fervor that has become the quartet's hallmark. Vocalist Scott Reynolds' work is rawer here than on All's more polished yet still febrile studio records (*Allroy's Revenge* may be the place for the uninitiated to begin), but the explosive tunefulness of numbers like "Fool," "Skin Deep" and "She's My Ex" combines the songwriting assets of the Buzzcocks and early Black Flag. To cop another title, most of this stuff is just "perfect."

—*Chris Morris*

REISSUE

Carl Perkins

The Classic Carl Perkins (Bear Family/Germany)

OFTEN, ALL ONE gets out of seeing rockabilly pioneer Carl Perkins perform is the conviction that he must be one of the nicest men in the world. Perhaps, but his whiplash guitar work and concentrated, trustworthy songs are a reminder that Perkins is more complicated than that. The ultimate proof is this 134-song set (spread over five sonically impressive CDs and covered with magnificent packaging) from the reissue masters at Bear Family Records. *The Classic Carl Perkins* includes all of Perkins' legendary Sun recordings, the inevitable hits "Blue Suede Shoes" and "Matchbox," as well as a host of wonderful lesser-known tunes like the country weeper "Let the Jukebox Keep On Playing" and the fiery stomper "Put Your Cat Clothes On." It also documents the bulk of Perkins' first—and most fruitful—association with Columbia, which yielded hits like "Jive after Five" and "Pink Pedal Pushers."

But the real surprises here are 13 exhilarating cuts recorded for Decca in 1963 and 1964, among them unquenched rockers "Big Bad Blues" and "Mama of My Song," forever putting to rest the lie that Perkins was a spent force when he left Sam Phillips' Sun tutelage. Carl Perkins *is* a nice man, to be sure, but at his best—and this set is his best—he's also one of the most convincing rock 'n' roll and country and western performers of all time. (Down Home Records, 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94531 or Roundup, Box 154, N. Cambridge, MA 02140)—*Jimmy Guterman*

Flamin' Groovies

Flamingo (Big Beat)
Teenage Head (Big Beat)

AT THE TURN of the '70s, before they became terminal Britbeat revivalists, the Flamin' Groovies were a heavy-rock ('n' roll) outfit with a healthy sense of self-parody. Big Beat has fleshed out *Flamingo* and *Teenage Head* with all the songs first issued on *Still Shakin'*, a 1976 retrospective, and even uncovered a few previously unreleased gems from the same period. Now, as then, timeless bashing. And excellent notes. (48-50 Steele Road, London NW10 7AS, England)—*Scott Isler*

Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band

Shiny Beast (Bat Chain Puller) (Enigma Retro/Straight)

ENIGMA CONTINUES its line of thoughtful reissues with an avant-psycho masterpiece. In the mid-'70s Beefheart recorded an album called *Bat Chain Puller*, but for some reason Warners rejected it; some of that material was re-recorded and showed up on *Shiny Beast* in '78. What the original album was like will probably never be known, but this one stands among the Captain's best. Every tune kicks cerebrum (and sometimes other body parts), but "Harry Irene" and the demolition blues of "Bat Chain Puller" are pure genius. Also worthy of note are the warped Magic Band arrangements (stacked time signatures all the way), Bruce Lambourne Fowler's manic trombone and the most satanic whistling you'll ever hear.—*Mac Randall*

The Beach Boys

Pet Sounds (Capitol)

SO IT MAY BE the greatest rock 'n' roll album *ever made* and you're bothering to read a review of it? Let's just say that the CD transfer is immaculate, the three extra tracks interesting (especially "Trombone Dixie") but non-essential, and the music the closest to heaven we'll get this lifetime. Pet sounds? Mono or not, when your dog hears the bass kick in on "That's Not Me," you'll have three wet woofers on your hands.

—*Dave DiMartino*

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World Radio History

HASSELL

[cont'd from page 24] —Talking Heads, Daniel Lanois, Peter Gabriel, David Sylvian and Lloyd Cole, among others. Current plans include a solo album of unadorned trumpet. "I think it would be nice to step out from behind the Wizard of Oz curtain for once and show people what's actually going on before the electronic eye shadow is added.

"There's Quincy Jones on the wall," he says, pointing to a huge poster for *Back on the Block*. "I think his new record is the Sistine Chapel of rock music. He put everybody together and made associations. In fact, he made the griot-rap association in his notes. Bebop hip-hop, he calls it. That's the kind of thing one needs to do, to look beyond the superficial differences and find the common thread." Ⓜ

EPIC A&R

[cont'd from page 72] would sign the act? "Absolutely," he replies. "You must." A few hours later, Michael Caplan boldly asserts that if he were to go to his boss, stand on his desk and *demand* an act be signed, he believes Grierson would relent. He's told that Grierson said exactly the same thing. "He *did*?" asks a genuinely surprised Caplan. "Don really said I could sign anything I want?" His amazement is quickly suppressed. "Good," he nods. "That's good to know." Ⓜ

O'CONNOR

[cont'd from page 49] **MUSICIAN:** *That's a marketing thing, to get a logo for T-shirts.*

O'CONNOR: Yeah, you don't have to get involved in marketing, it's rubbish.

MUSICIAN: *When you became pregnant during the first album the British record company wanted you to have an abortion.*

O'CONNOR: That's another example of how artists are treated. Men artists are treated abominably, but women artists are treated badly as women as well as artists. At the same time I was pregnant Karl Wallinger's girlfriend was pregnant and nobody said to him he couldn't have his baby.

MUSICIAN: *If the artists did form a label and offered a 50 percent royalty, the other labels would eventually have to follow, because they would be competing for artists.*

O'CONNOR: It's funny, I've had this conversation with John Sykes, the new president of Chrysalis, and as far as I'm concerned Chrysalis can be that record company. If they really understand what I'm saying they will automatically change and become what we're talking about: one record company that treats artists fairly and respectfully. And their artists will have respect and admiration for them because of it. John Sykes is the managing director of the company. What he says goes.

MUSICIAN: *See, John Sykes still has to report to the owners of Chrysalis. I suspect that if John Sykes woke up tomorrow and said, "I'm going to change this whole profit structure so that it fairly reflects the artists' contributions," John Sykes would be out of a job by Friday.*

O'CONNOR: Why? Am I out of a job?

MUSICIAN: *You're generating tons of money for them.*

O'CONNOR: Why would they want to fire somebody that the artists respected?

MUSICIAN: *The owners would have to feel that the artists were really united behind the president. You'd have to convince them there was no alternative. I think if you convince John Sykes, you will still need a cannon to convince* his *bosses.*

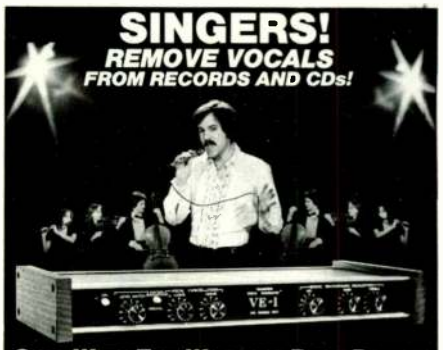
O'CONNOR: What better cannon could he have than an album that stays at number one for weeks without any of the usual compromises being made? I haven't allowed the usual crap to happen, to show them it doesn't need to be done. And now they see it, and now they understand. I firmly believe that they will be the first record company that has ever treated people with respect, because I have not ever allowed them to treat me with disrespect. Artists have to start standing up for themselves. Artists are afraid. Artists are chicken. They should tell the record company to fuck themselves. They'll get dropped. So what? There's always a better deal to be had somewhere else. If you just believe that it's there, it is there.

The reason people have power over others is because people allow them to get away with it. Everyone's afraid. We should be more concerned with what's bloody right! You'll be *spiritually* better, and that's what counts when you're lying on your deathbed. We're all going to die someday. Let's educate ourselves now so when we get there we understand what's going on.

MUSICIAN: *You seem to have worked pretty hard to help people get a fix on you.*

O'CONNOR: No, I work very hard to get a fix on myself. I'm never doing it for the audience or anybody else. If they get something from it too, that's brilliant. But I'm doing this for my own education. Ⓜ

MISCELLANEOUS



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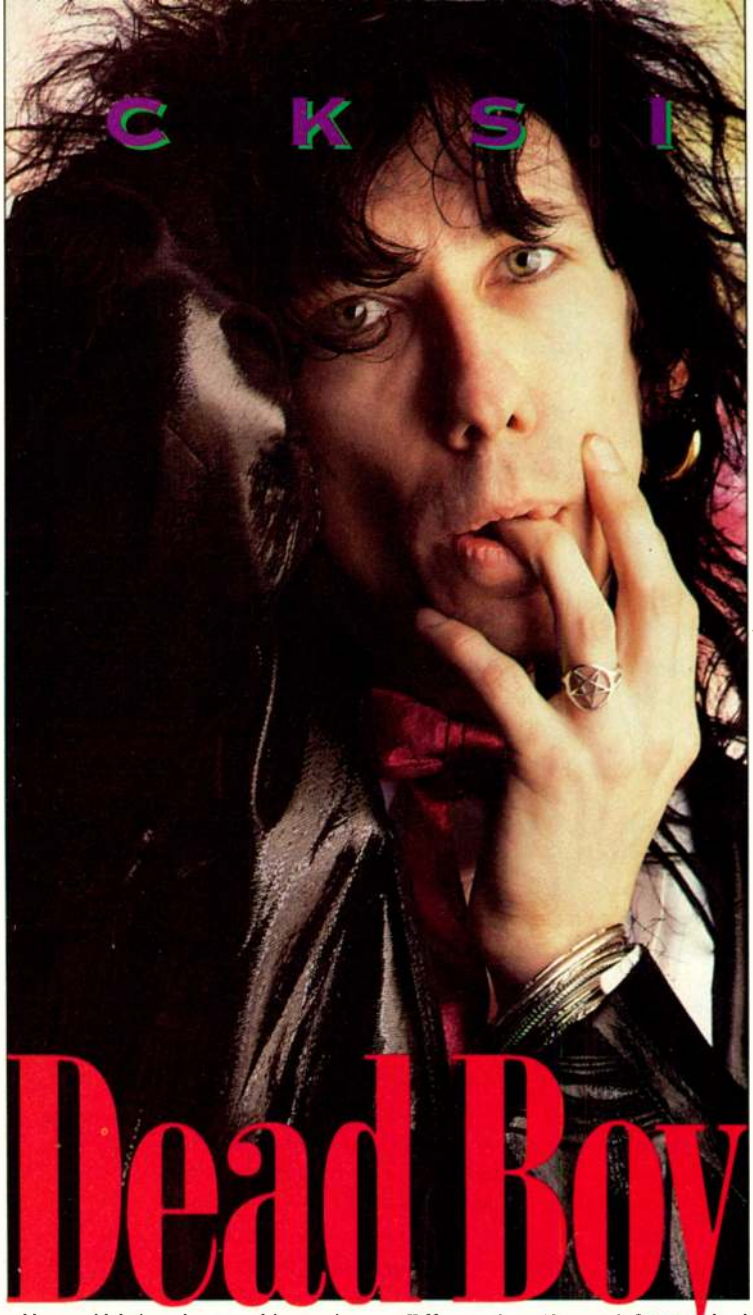

Dead Boy

STIV BATORS DIED SUNDAY, JUNE 3 in Paris. Meeting his girlfriend Caroline Warren as she came out of a store the previous day, he told her he had just been hit by a car. He refused medical attention and the two returned home. That night Caroline noticed he was having difficulty breathing in his sleep. She called an ambulance but by the time it arrived around three a.m., he had expired from internal bleeding and a blood clot close to the heart.

Named after his steelworker father Steve Bator, Bators left an extensive recorded legacy including three albums by the Dead Boys, at least one solo album, one with the Wanderers and four with the Lords of the New Church. Black vinyl, however, never fully captured his astounding energy. In many ways he was the best front man I ever saw, and I wouldn't trade the 30 or 40 times I heard the Dead Boys at CBGB for any other rock 'n' roll experience. If he wasn't the last true rock star, he was one of the most colorful warriors in that rare tribe of artists who forged their values before the Reagan era and refused to change as greed and fear infected the world around them. He wanted to be a legend more than he wanted to be rich, and he would do just about anything to give you a memory to take home from the show.

Around 42 when he died (he was known to lie about his age), Stiv grew up an only child and always craved being the center of attention, of which there just wasn't enough in Youngstown, Ohio. He made an impact on the New York punk scene even before he got here. On the Ramones' first trip to Ohio, they were driving down the freeway when a car full of screaming kids pulled alongside. Suddenly the driver, stark naked, crawled out the window and somersaulted from the hood onto the roof where he stood as they sped along at 70 m.p.h. "Car surfing," Stiv called it. The Ramones were neither the first nor the last to see it.

Rounding up four other Catholic school rejects—Cheetah Chrome, Jimmy Zero, Johnny Blitz and Jeff Magnum—Stiv founded the Dead Boys, who played their first show under the name Frankenstein on Halloween in 1975. Within months Stiv goaded them into coming to New York. In April of 1977, they opened for the Damned at CBGB in the first show by an English punk band in America. Displaying a raw aggression unseen since Iggy rolled in broken glass, the Dead Boys blew the Damned off the stage.

The Dead Boys' first album, *Young, Loud and Snotty*, is one of my favorite albums of all time. Thoroughly obnoxious, full of snarling guitar riffs, it descended from the Stooges, rivaled the Sex Pistols and foreshadowed Guns N' Roses. In the age of Fleetwood Mac, radio programmers shunned it like the plague they feared punk rock would be. Stiv tried to make people notice by sheer willpower. Some nights he would swing the microphone stand around in his teeth. He would stick his head in the bass drum. He would drop trou. He would pull his bubblegum out of his mouth like a yo-yo, drag it on the floor and chew it again. He would fight with members of the audience. One night I saw him crack his head open on the side of an amplifier and go into convulsions. They carried him out on a stretcher but he came back in an hour with a head full of stitches and sang the second set. If there was a pipe over the stage, he would throw the microphone over it, wrap one end of the cord around his neck and pull on the other until he was hanging himself in mid-air.

"One night at the Hot Club in Philadelphia, we were playing to a good audience and it came time for Stiv to hang himself during 'Son of Sam,'" recalled Jimmy Zero. "The audience grabbed him and started pulling on him, spinning him around while the cord was around his neck. He gave me this look like, 'I'm *really* being hanged!' We had to kick a bunch of kids in the face to get them off. He was about 10 seconds from getting killed, because they loved him."

When Stiv sang, "I wanna be a dead boy/I'll die for you if you want me to," he meant it. And the rest of us felt more alive for it. The last time I saw him perform with the Lords, he climbed up the speaker towers and hung upside down from the balcony, his feet held by a bunch of rowdy kids. I was never quite so thrilled that my thrill was vicarious.

Offstage, I knew Stiv as a generous and unpretentious friend when he wasn't playing some grotesque practical joke. "If there's an ice machine in heaven," said Cheetah Chrome, "Stiv is pissing in it."

A few years ago, I got drunk with Stiv in a London pub. His face was ashen and he kept nodding off. I asked if he was all right and he said the doctors had told him he had 10 percent liver function. He seemed to want it that way, seemed to consider poisoning himself part of his legend, even though he was spending an enormous amount of time sleeping. This past year he'd been working with various punk-rock veterans in hopes of starting a new band, the Whores of Babylon. In January Dee Dee Ramone went to Paris to collaborate on some songs. "He was getting his health together, but he'd been writing these sweet folksongs," said Dee Dee. "I wanted to play punk rock where you have to be tougher than the kids. We'd play for hours. His eyes would roll back and he'd chant, 'Hate! Hate! Die, motherfucker!' Finally he told me, 'You're right, Dee Dee. Music should be three chords and a grudge.' Then he wrote 'Helter Skelter' on the mirror with a lipstick."—Charles M. Young

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