

# Shep Pettibone Attracts Star Clientele

## Remixer Breathes New Life Into Hits

BY BILL COLEMAN

NEW YORK Who have Madonna, George Michael, Janet Jackson, and David Bowie called to have their hits remixed? Shep Pettibone, that's who. With a decade in the music business and some 500 remixes to his credit, the 28-year-old New Yorker's skills are constantly in demand.

The multiformat popularity of dance music and its acceptance at radio have made Pettibone's alternate versions and lengths of current hit songs a welcome necessity, he says. "I attempt to achieve the best-possible marriage of a 12-inch that's danceable, easy to mix, and, at the same time, suitable for consumers to play at home," says Pettibone, who believes in creating depth and dynamics in his mixes, which he describes as having a "clean sound."

What most may not realize, however, is that in most cases Pettibone is not only remixing a record, he is reproducing or adding additional production to the original tracks. "Sometimes the only existing track that will remain on the tape will be the vocals," he says. Incorporating new drum patterns, bass lines, or

additional instruments are not uncommon in a remix.

When a dramatic change is made in original material, its producer's vision may differ from Pettibone's. But, he says, "Most producers enjoy what I do. Both Steve Bray and Narada Michael Walden have expressed to me how much they enjoy listening to the songs that they have produced made different. They have asked me to work exclusively on their records, which I find to be a nice compliment, coming from two producers I respect and admire."

In a field where, at the moment, only a handful of remixer get projects of name artists, Pettibone says he doesn't "think that record companies are taking chances on new people to do remixes as they were at one time." Some may recall Pettibone's early start at New York's FM urban stations WKTU, WBLS, and later WRKS, where he was

commissioned to remix current-hit selections especially for them. With WRKS in 1981, a select number of Pettibone's "mastermixes" were compiled into the albums "98.7 Kiss Mastermix Collection" Vols. 1 & 2.

Pettibone is offered between six and 10 projects a week. However, during the past year, he has had to cut his schedule from handling three or four remixes a week to two and occasionally only one. "It was getting to the point where I was working 20 hours a day and sleeping four," he says.

In terms of selecting material to work on, Pettibone says, "I try to choose records that are interesting and that are going to keep my interest level up. So I don't accept everything, and I basically just pick the ones I know I'll have a good time doing."

Pettibone's manager, Jane Brin-  
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**New Man.** Mick Jagger, right, made a surprise on-stage appearance with Relativity Records artist Joe Satriani during a recent show at New York's Bottom Line club. No official word, but guitarist Satriani is reportedly set to play in Jagger's band on his upcoming Japanese solo dates. (Photo: Chuck Pulin)

## W. Alexander Agency Closes Doors In Chicago

CHICAGO The local office of Willard Alexander Inc., the last major talent agency to maintain a Chicago presence, shut its doors Jan. 15 after 35 years of business. According to agent Andy Kaufman of Willard Alexander's home office in New York, where the company was founded 45 years ago, reason for the closure was logistical rather than financial.

"The Chicago office was making money," says Kaufman. "The problem was that we no longer wanted the New York and Chicago agents [who split up the bookings of Willard Alexander's sizable roster of big band acts] to be a thousand miles apart. We needed to coordinate the activities of the big band department."

"We were extremely profitable," says Bob Birk, who with fellow agent and office chief Bill Monot primarily booked bands out of the Chicago office. A third agent, Larry Musich, was laid off a short time ago, Birk says.

Willard Alexander's 50 exclusive acts include the Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Count Basie, and Nelson Riddle orchestras. Additionally, the agency books such contemporary artists Alice Cooper and Motorhead, and at one time booked the Beastie Boys. The company, which also represents 50 nonexclusive acts, handles contemporary bookings from its New York and Los Angeles offices.

Birk and Monot, who were of-  
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## U.K.'s Johnny Hates Jazz: A U.S. Love Story?

**HOT STUFF:** Be on the lookout for "Turn Back The Clock," the highly auspicious Virgin debut album from new British trio **Johnny Hates Jazz**, which recently rocketed to No. 1 on the U.K. charts. The album is not being released here until the beginning of March, but The Beat has acquired an import-compact-disk copy and can't stop playing the damn thing!

The 10-track album boasts an abundance of *very* commercial cuts—excellent Brit pop fare. Highlights include "Shattered Dreams," "I Don't Want To Be A Hero," and the destined-to-be-a-huge-smash ballad "Turn Back The Clock."

The Johnny Hates Jazz lineup comprises vocalist **Clark Datchler** and instrumentalists **Mike Nocito** and **Calvin Hayes**, who produced the album. The group is represented by **Tears For Fears'** manager, **Paul King**.

According to Virgin promo chief **Phil Quartararo**, who is ultraenthusiastic about the project, the first U.S. single from the Johnny Hates Jazz album will be "Shattered Dreams," due out Feb. 29.

**HEAVY DUTY:** It was nice to hear Geffen a&r chief **John David Kalodner** raving about an act on another label—PolyGram heavy rockers **Kingdom Come**—in last week's column. Meanwhile, Kalodner also looks to have a potential winner on his hands with **Blue Murder**, the new band formed by former **Thin Lizzy** and **Whitesnake** guitarist **John Sykes**.

Sykes, who co-wrote much of the material and supplied excellent lead breaks on the top-selling "Whitesnake" album, is unquestionably one of the hottest guitar players to have emerged on the scene in recent years. For his new outfit, he has enlisted veteran rock drummer **Carmine Appice**

and bassist **Tony Franklin**, formerly of the **Firm**.

As the search continues for the right lead vocalist, **Blue Murder** has started work on its Geffen debut album in Vancouver, British Columbia, with **Bob Rock** at the production helm. Don't be surprised if this project turns out to be another winner from Kalodner.

**SHORT TAKES I:** The late **John Lennon** is the subject of a movie documentary, "Imagine: John Lennon," scheduled to hit the big screen this summer. The Warner Bros. film is produced, directed, and co-written by **Andrew Solt**, who had access to more than 200 hours of footage, stills, and unpublished music from Lennon and **Yoko Ono's** personal collection . . . MCA exec **Larry Solters** wasn't kidding when he said **Tiffany** would be touring English shopping malls. Word from across the Atlantic is that the teen sensation recently made three hugely successful appearances at malls in London, Newcastle, and Birmingham . . . **Debbie Harry** is reportedly recording a new album with veteran producer **Mike Chapman**, with whom she collaborated back in her **Blondie** days . . . **Billy Idol's** "Vital Idol" album is the first package of dance remixes to be certified platinum . . . New British band the **Cross**, featuring **Queen** drummer/vocalist **Roger Taylor**, has just released its Virgin debut album, "Shove It," in the U.K. The group will be supporting the album with a series of British club and college dates starting Feb. 20.

**SONGS REMAIN:** **Robert Plant** will definitely be playing **Led Zepelin** material when he hits the road in support of his upcoming Atlantic album, "Now And Zen." During his first two solo tours,

the vocalist was adamant that he would not sing any of the old tunes, but now he says, "It's time to eat some of my words."

During a recent low-key British club date with his new band, **Plant** performed **Zeppelin** nuggets like "Rock & Roll," "The Lemon Song," and "Trampled Underfoot."

Additionally, **Plant** has drawn from his past—in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion—by sampling a number of **Zeppelin** riffs on "Tall Cool One," a track from his new album. As he told one Brit reporter, "Zeppelin samples have been used quite frequently in the last two or three years. I just think that if **Rick Rubin** can do it rather poorly and quite obviously



and seriously, by the sound of it, like some American jackdaw, then I might as well do it myself."

According to **Plant**, **Jimmy Page** initially had no idea that **Plant** was sampling some of his classic guitar riffs. What was **Page's** reaction when he found out? "He just raised an eyebrow and looked quizzically at me," says **Plant**.

At press time, **Plant** was gearing up for a warm-up date on Feb. 3 at London's legendary **Marquee** club, where he appeared almost two years ago with a band called the **New Yardbirds**. The ex-Zepelin front man is set to kick off a monthlong U.K. tour March 16 in Newport, Wales.

Incidentally, **Plant** appears to be on something of a health kick these days. He quit smoking six months ago and has been on the

wagon since Jan. 1.

Also, **Plant's** new U.S. single, "Heaven Knows," definitely warrants two thumbs up.

**MOVIE SCORE:** **Elvis Costello** has written music for the soundtrack to the film "The Courier," which stars his wife, ex-Pogues bassist **Cait O'Riordan**. **Costello**, working under his real name, **Declan MacManus**, delivered a selection of instrumental pieces.

In addition to **Costello's** contribution, the soundtrack—due out Monday (8) in the U.K.—features the U2 song "Walk To The Water" (previously available only as the B side of "With Or Without You") and cuts by young Irish bands **Something Happens!**, **Aslan**, and **Cry Before Dawn**.

"The Courier," set in Dublin's drug underworld, opens in London on Feb. 19. No word as yet on when the movie or the soundtrack will emerge in the U.S.

**SHORT TAKES II:** Still can't stop playing **Joni Mitchell's** "My Secret Place," her wonderful duet with **Peter Gabriel**, the leadoff cut from her upcoming Geffen album . . . **Chuck Berry** is off to Britain to promote his autobiography and to play a couple of live dates. He'll be appearing at London's **Hammersmith Odeon** on Friday (12) and at **Glasgow Apollo** on Saturday (13). Coinciding with the trip is the opening of the **Berry** movie "Hail! Hail! Rock 'N' Roll" in Brit movie houses . . . **Ex-Frankie Goes To Hollywood** lead singer **Holly Johnson** has been appearing in the **London High Court**, trying to free himself from a **ZTT Records**-requested injunction that has been preventing him from working. Meanwhile, **Johnson** has been preparing material for a solo album, which he hopes to record later this year.