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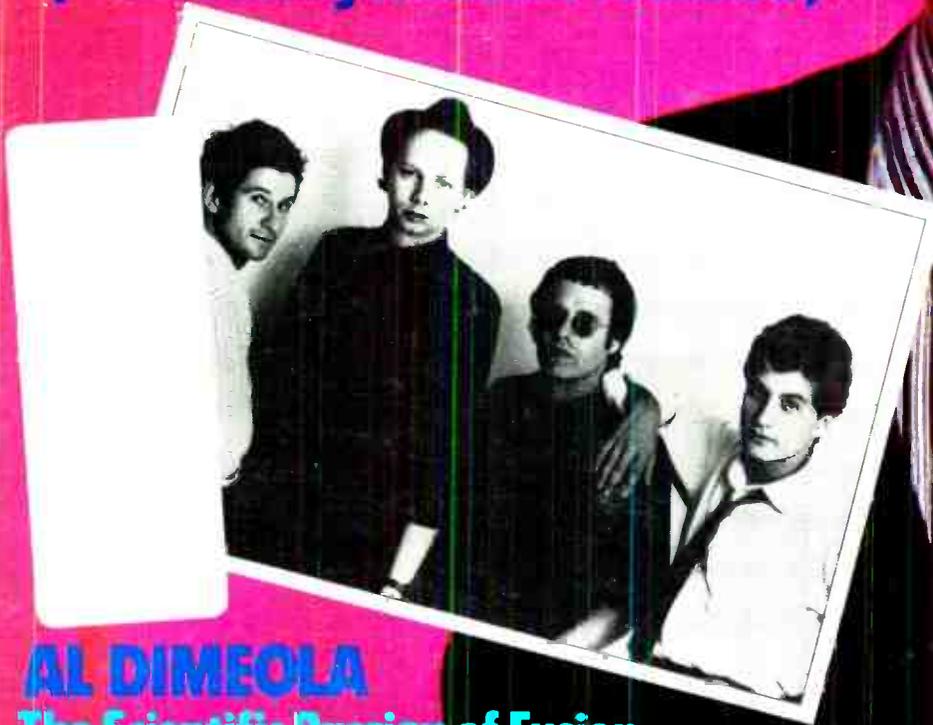
# INTERNATIONAL Musician

AND RECORDING WORLD

USPS 331-630

APR. '80  
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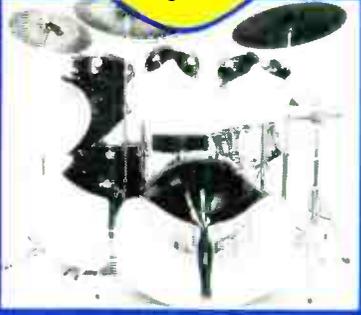
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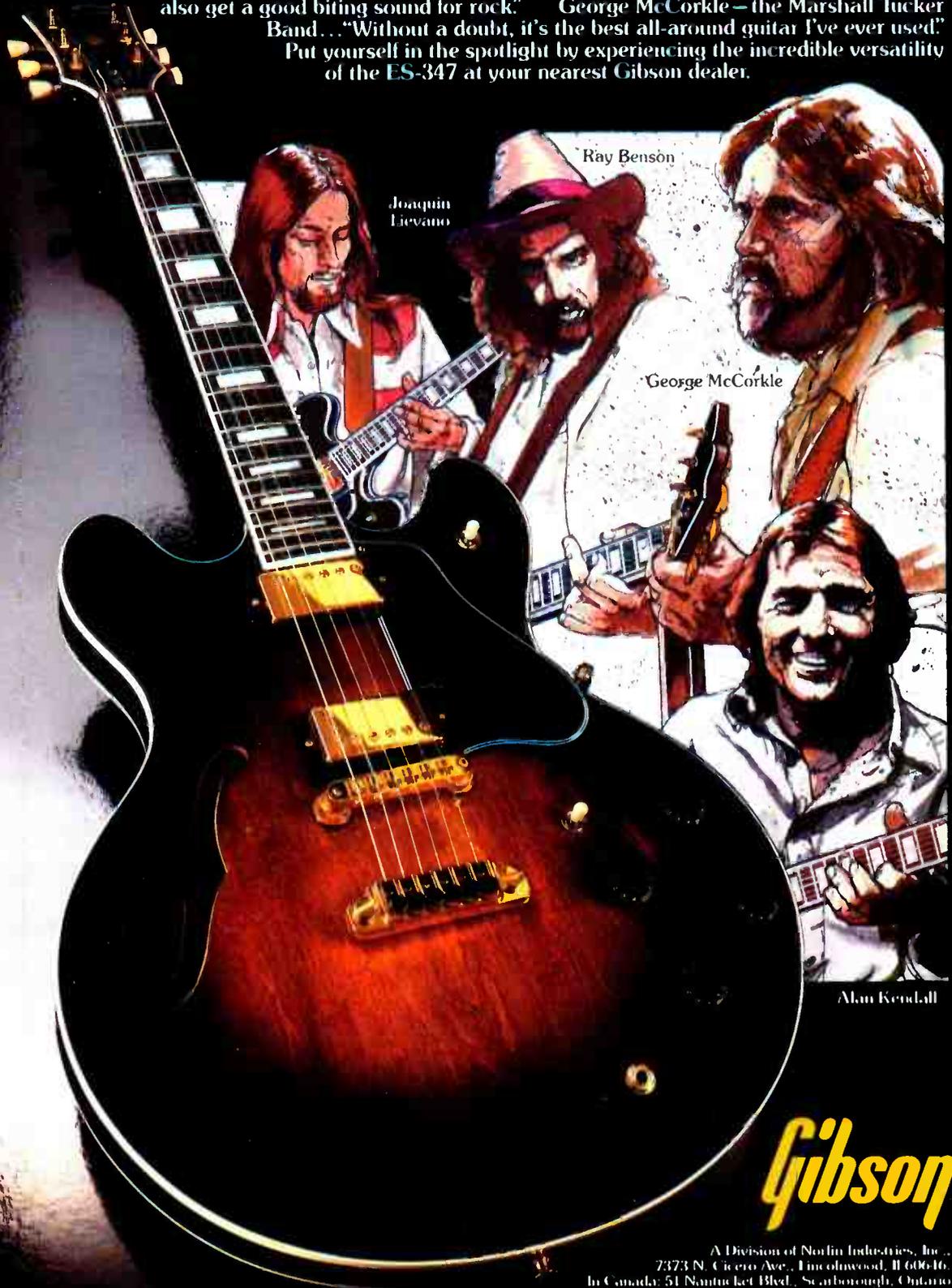
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We have never been ones to sit around and watch others progress. Instead, we prefer to be the leaders. And in our field, that is how many regard us. So we apply our energy to expansion . . . growth in every phase of the development of our products.

Our mixers are expandable. *Studiomaster* was first with the add-on module concept in affordable professional grade mixers. Whether you select our 12X2b or 16X4 units, neither will ever limit your group or studio to its original capacity. By our four-channel-at-a-time expander modules, a 12X2 can become a 24X2 in minutes. A 16X4 will change into a 20X4 almost immediately, and without the hassle of dangling cables that can cause shorting or transporting difficulty.

Our features are expanding. As pioneers in the more-feature-per-dollar area, *Studiomaster* was the first to offer 5 way equalization on an affordable mixer. We still are. Our 16X4 mixer was the first studio quality desk that allowed the operator to have a separate stage (or studio) mix for the performers while still sending an independent, unaffected mix to the tape recorder. No competition yet. And now, our mixers come with direct in/out channel patching as standard equipment, just one example of our expanded features.

Our product line is expanding. *Studiomaster* now has a 16X8

mixing console designed for 8 track studios and live performance. We offer the professional touring band the most affordable 20X8 monitor mixer available. And we now manufacture three and five way stereo crossovers which solve the complex speaker system problems of large concert arenas. We even make the coolest running, smoothest sounding 225 watt/channel amplifier around, too. Did we say we're expanding?

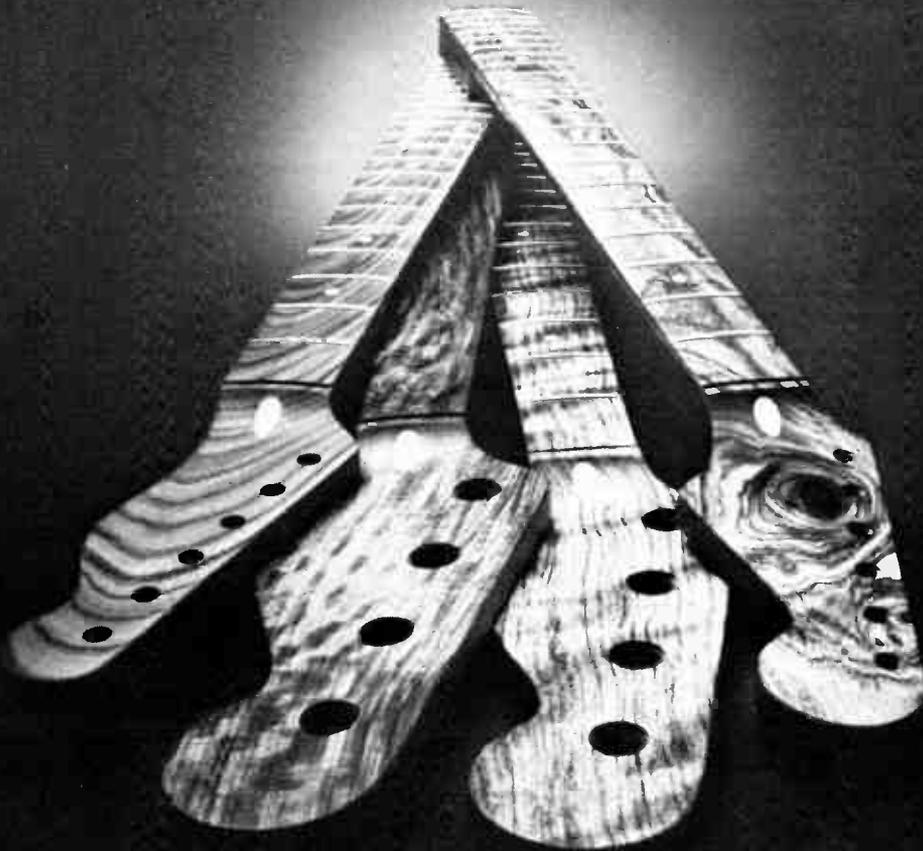
The only thing that really hasn't kept pace with our other phases of expansion is our price tag. It has escalated only a fraction in two years . . . and that only to justify the extras we offer. So we are still the most affordable 16X4 mixer that money can buy in our performance category.

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For more information about Studiomaster products, please write to Craig Bullington, National Sales Manager, Studiomaster, Box 55, Atwood, California, 92601.

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From left to right: Studiomaster's Paul Dobson, winner Diana Wilson, Studiomaster's Ray Haynes and IM & RW President Richard Desmond.

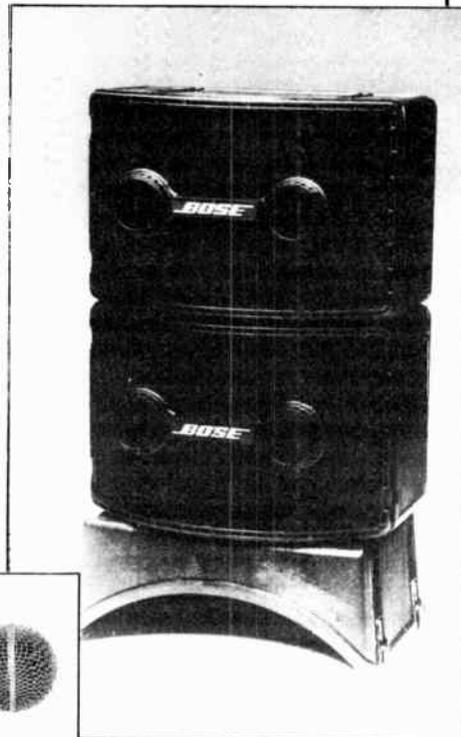
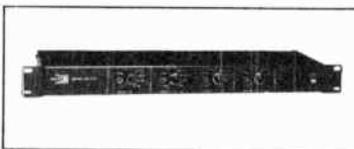
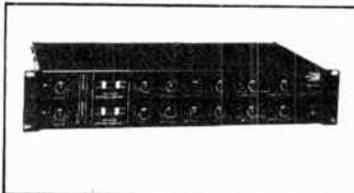
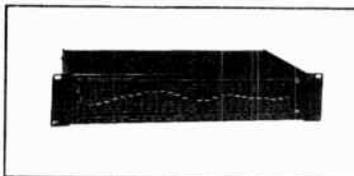
## IM & RW'S \$9000 T.A. WINNER

**D**iana Wilson of Santa Barbara, California was the lucky winner who had to explain some familiar technical phrases and abbreviations. Undoubtedly, her intense study of guitar, bass and drums were of considerable help in achieving this victory over all other entries. Presently, Diana is forming a band and will be able to take full advantage of the system she won.

At the recent NAMM Show in Los Angeles Paul Dobson of Studiomaster was on hand to award the prize which included a Studiomaster 12/2 mixing console. The \$9000 system was quite a

valuable prize both financially and artistically. The system also includes: two pairs of Bose 802 speakers; a Biamp system complete with two EQ/270A graphic equalizers, quad limiter and a FR/240 stereo reverb unit. The microphones were four high quality Shure units. To ensure smooth operation, Sano connectors and a stage box were also included.

Not surprisingly, Diana was delighted. "I never imagined I'd win the contest. Now it's become a definite reality that I'll be able to form a band." Diana enthused. "Winning this PA system has made all the difference for my future musical plans."



Part of the prize

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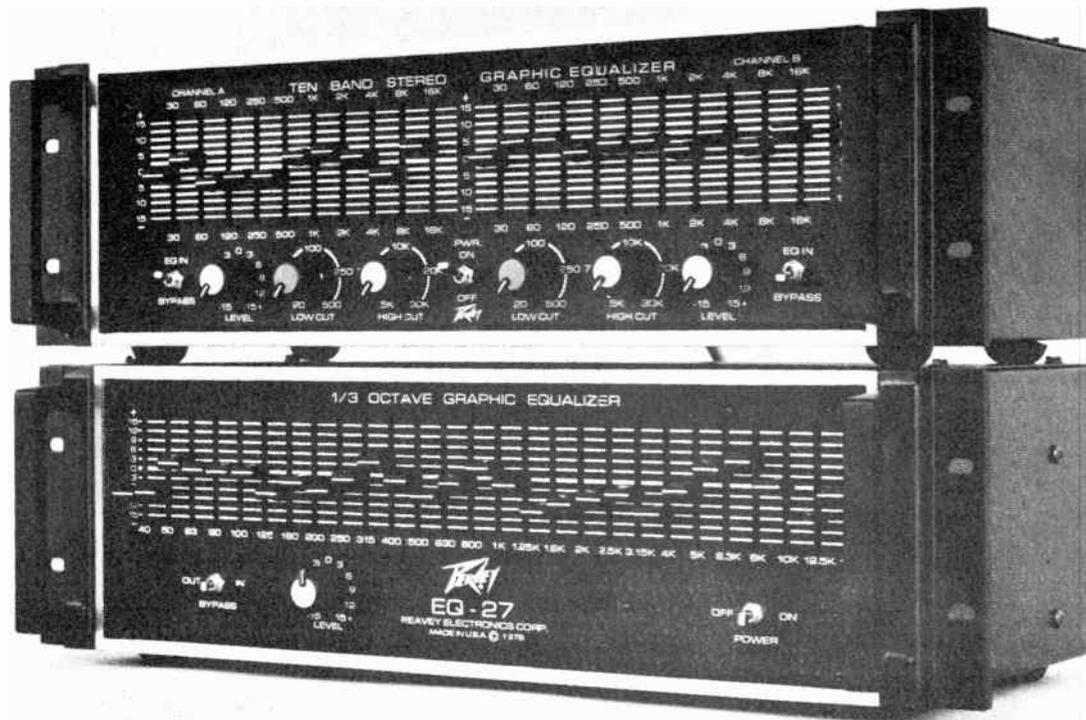
The EQ-27 features 27 bands at one-third octave centers throughout the audio range and is fully compatible with the most professional real time analyzers.

Each system's input circuitry can be matched to a wide range of signal levels thanks to special gain/attenuator level controls. Balanced and unbalanced outputs are equipped on each unit with protection for any accidental overvoltage or short circuit situation that may occur.

Because of a high level transformer balanced output circuitry, the Stereo Graphic and EQ-27 have the capability of providing greater than +16 dBm into 600 ohms making them excellent as high quality line amplifiers.

The Peavey Stereo Graphic and EQ-27 are technically two of the finest equalizers available today. Exceptional performance and compatibility with a wide range of signal and impedance levels make these units an unmatched professional value.

## PEAVEY STEREO GRAPHIC & EQ-27 price/performance no other graphics can equal.



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Complete specifications and descriptions of the Stereo Graphic and EQ-27 are available upon request

by writing our Literature and Promotional Department, Peavey Electronics; 711 A Street; Meridian, Miss. 39301.



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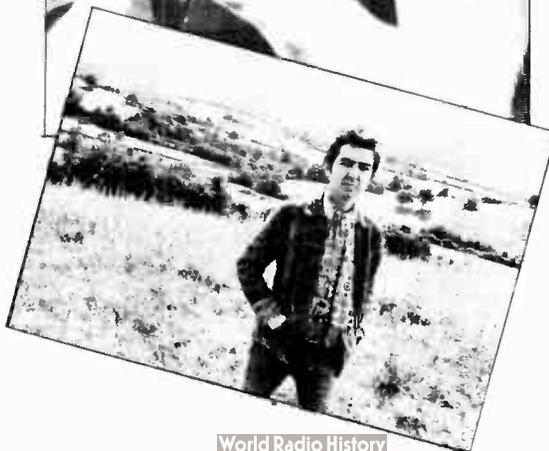
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# Letters

## Turning Professional

I'm 14 years old and love your magazine. I also love music and especially enjoy the drum articles in your magazine.

I've been playing drums for 2½ years and have been with two semi-professional rock bands. The members of each band told me my drumming technique is very complicated and that they've never experienced a drummer quite like me. I'm proud of myself.

My question is, must I be able to read music in order to become a professional? How do I determine if I'm professional? And, is reading just for session players or for jobbing drummers? Please help me?

Away from my problems my major influences are Lenny White, Carmine Appice, Carl Palmer, John Bonham, Gene Krupa, Louie Bellson and several others. I use Slingerland drums because I like the big "boom" sound on the toms (Spitfire snare also).

Ricky Cruz  
Chicago, Ill

*There are many professional drummers who can't read a note; there are just as many who can. You certainly don't have to be able to read to become professional, but it is something that should be taken into serious consideration. Reading can widen your scope of music and force you into a new realization about your instrument. Those musicians that get the most work in the studio invariably read music. But it's not an ironclad rule. There is a lot of work for musicians that has nothing to do with bands (Broadway, TV, etc.). So, to give yourself the optimum chance of working as a professional musician, we suggest you learn how to read. As to determining if you're a professional, don't worry about, you'll know when it happens.*

## Drum Tuning Problems

I bought one of your recent issues and I found a letter concerning a ringing problem in a drum set. I have a different problem with my kit and I hope you can help me solve it. I have a Pearl 5-piece kit with an 8 × 12 and 9 × 13 tom toms, a 16 × 16 floor tom, Ludwig 14" snare with a 14 × 22 bass drum. They are all wood-drums except the snare. My problem is turning my small tom tom. It has to be tuned so low to sound right that it sounds like paper when I hit it. Therefore I have to tune the other drums extra-low to sound right. I use Ludwig rocker heads on all of the. The set is only about nine months old and I want to get a better sound. It is a two-headed set but I don't use the bottom heads. I hope you can help me

out. Thanks for your help.

George "Stix" Sandler  
Perry, GA

*Bob Henrit replies: Here is my way of tuning which I will lay on you. All my drums have four quarter turns on each tension screw (from finger tight). This means that all the head tensions are roughly the same but, since the drums are all different sizes the extra diameter of each takes care of the different tones. A highly tuned drum always cuts through better than a low tuned one — check it out next time you're at a gig. You say you play yours single headed, so if you want more decay from them simply unscrew one of the tension screws a little (having made sure it is evenly tuned at each position by tapping and listening). This will definitely help but otherwise consider investing in some slightly thinner center-spot type heads and follows the same procedure.*



The Paul

## The Ramones Begin A Century

It was a pleasure to read the Lester Bangs interview with the Ramones in your January 1980 issue because of the writer's marvelously fresh slant on the humor, joy and energy which these musicians bring to and draw from their music. Their belief in honesty and diligence as the best sources of inspiration shows them to be artists of admirable character and integrity. The fact that they have maintained their original purity and simplicity affirms the strength and truth of their ideals. Thanks Lester, for bringing all this forth, and

thanks, Ramones, for hangin' in there.

Curtis Fields  
Brooklyn NY

## Pickguards

I am an avid reader of *International Musician & Recording World*, and even though I don't have a subscription to your magazine, I buy them as often as I can. I have a problem, and your professional advice would be greatly appreciated.

I own a Gibson "The Paul" and I was considering putting a pickguard on it. I've only had it a short time and already I noticed scratches on it where the pickguard should be.

I was considering installing a pickguard and I was wondering a few things, for instance:

- (1) Should I put a pickguard on at all?
- (2) Is the shape I have okay?
- (3) What material should I use and where should I get it?
- (4) How should I fasten it to the guitar, etc.

Thank you for a truly wonderful magazine and I hope you can spare some of your valuable time to help me.

David Byrd

*Stephen Delft replies: "The Paul" has a satin finish which may show pick marks rather badly. Replying to your questions in order: 1) no reason why not 2) the shape looks OK 3) materials about 1/8 of an inch; cellulose acetate, ABS, the softer grade of engraving bakelite, black resin impregnated fabric board, or brass sheet about 1/16th. 4) tiny screws (try Schecter) or double sided tape if you are not yet sure about it.*

**Steve Berkowitz, the subject for last issue's road manager profile, has since become manager of the Cars based at Lookout Management in Los Angeles.**

## MAGIC OF GROVER WASHINGTON

References to CTI going bankrupt were inaccurate. The company actually filed for a Chapter 11 on December 7, 1978 and, according to Creed Taylor, the company is now coming out of Chapter 11 and back to business as usual. ED.

# NEW! MORLEY Bigfoot power amplifier has a big mouth

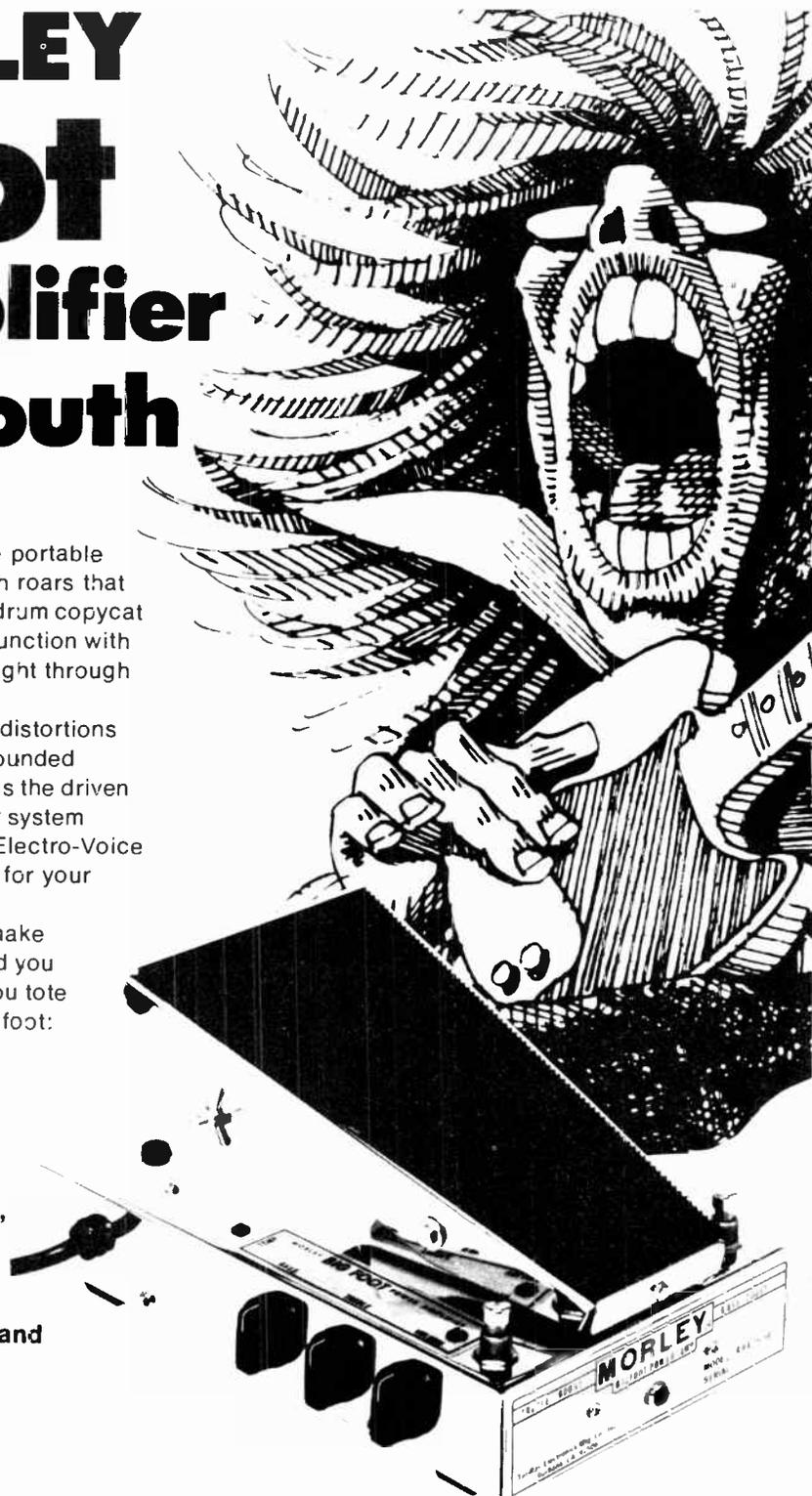
(It's a Volume pedal too!)

This amazingly unique 8 pound, multi-purpose portable amplifier-volume pedal shouts with David-Goliath roars that slam the amplifier industry out of a decade of doldrum copycat products. You use Bigfoot as a solo amp, in conjunction with and to master control other remote amps, or straight through as a volume pedal.

It pays off fast, loud and clear with sounds and distortions that range from the savage, snarling fury of a wounded jungle cat to a sound as clean and pristine pure as the driven snow. Use it with your own choice of any speaker system of 4 ohms or more. A neat option is a choice of Electro-Voice or Eminence speakers or of an empty enclosure for your own speaker.

Quality performance, power, and packaging make Bigfoot ideal for studio sessions and live gigs and you tote it into a club or outdoor arena as easily as you tote your cigarettes. Here's more that's new with Bigfoot:

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# Kramer in concert...



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Guitar player with The Jacksons

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# On Drums: Bob Henrit



The nicest thing about being a drummer is that we don't have to be sitting at our instrument to practice. We can work out ideas in the car or at work, anywhere we like — even in bed if we can find the time! Of course, it's important to work-out on the set but the noise can be a disadvantage unless we *really* want to annoy the neighbors. Of course, we could also have something in our system we would like to be rid of!

There are many tutor-books available by drummers much more able to teach the rudiments than I am, so, I suggest you use the book I hope you already own, and apply my ideas to the drum set via your tutor. If you don't have a text-book, Carmine Appice's is very good — and heavy. I have an old one by Sam Ullano called "Rudibops" written in 1959 which contains more rock & roll than many modern ones.

At the start I feel it's important to learn something interesting and stimulating to play; that will give the player satisfaction and be a jumping-board to something more difficult and demanding. Some time ago a friend of mine decided to take up the piano. Almost the first thing he was taught was John Lennon's "Imagine", a not too difficult song that my friend liked very much. As soon as that was mastered he moved on to more complex scales, chords and fingerings. Now when he gets bored with his scales and things, he can go back to playing "Imagine" and re-awaken his interest and enjoyment.

Of course, it's a little more difficult to apply this particular concept to drums since we don't as a rule lay tunes on them but we can play rhythms. So, I'll show you some of mine and when you get fed up with your formal rudiments and exercises you can play around with these and maybe reactivate your taste-buds.

Here's another way of playing a paradiddle. You play all of the right-hand beats on

the hi hat and the left-hands on the snare-drum. Be sure to accent the two off-beats — the bass drum can double the first three right-hand beats. (By the way, for this pattern play two complete paradiddles to each bar). When you get proficient you can miss out the first left-hand beat and third right hand beat, doubling the bass drum with the remaining two left-hand hi hat beats. Try to make all the other beats on the snare drum less heavy than the actual *off beats*. It's all very well being able to play the rudiments but the problem can be adapting them to your every-day playing. You have to sit down and figure out how to apply them to general playing as opposed to just filling in, etc. The paradiddle thing I have shown you is just one example — I'm sure you can find others for yourself. Try playing a normal rock feel and instead of striking all eight beats on the cymbal or hi hat, bring the stick back to the snare drum for 2, 4, 6 and 8. This leaves us playing "fours" on the cymbal, it's very effective. This works pretty well for "shuffle" rhythms too. It leaves a lot of room to play funky grace notes with your right hand. I have often found that while playing hi hat if I wanted to "lift" the feel say for the middle eight of a song, the only alternative was to move to the cymbal. This often meant that the tightness was lost. What I do now is stay on the hi hat playing eight notes but playing them doubled-handed in unison, bringing the right hand over for the off-beat.

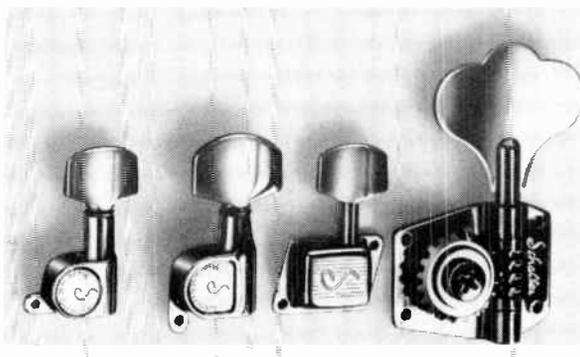
Next month practice problems on a larger kit.

**Bob Henrit**

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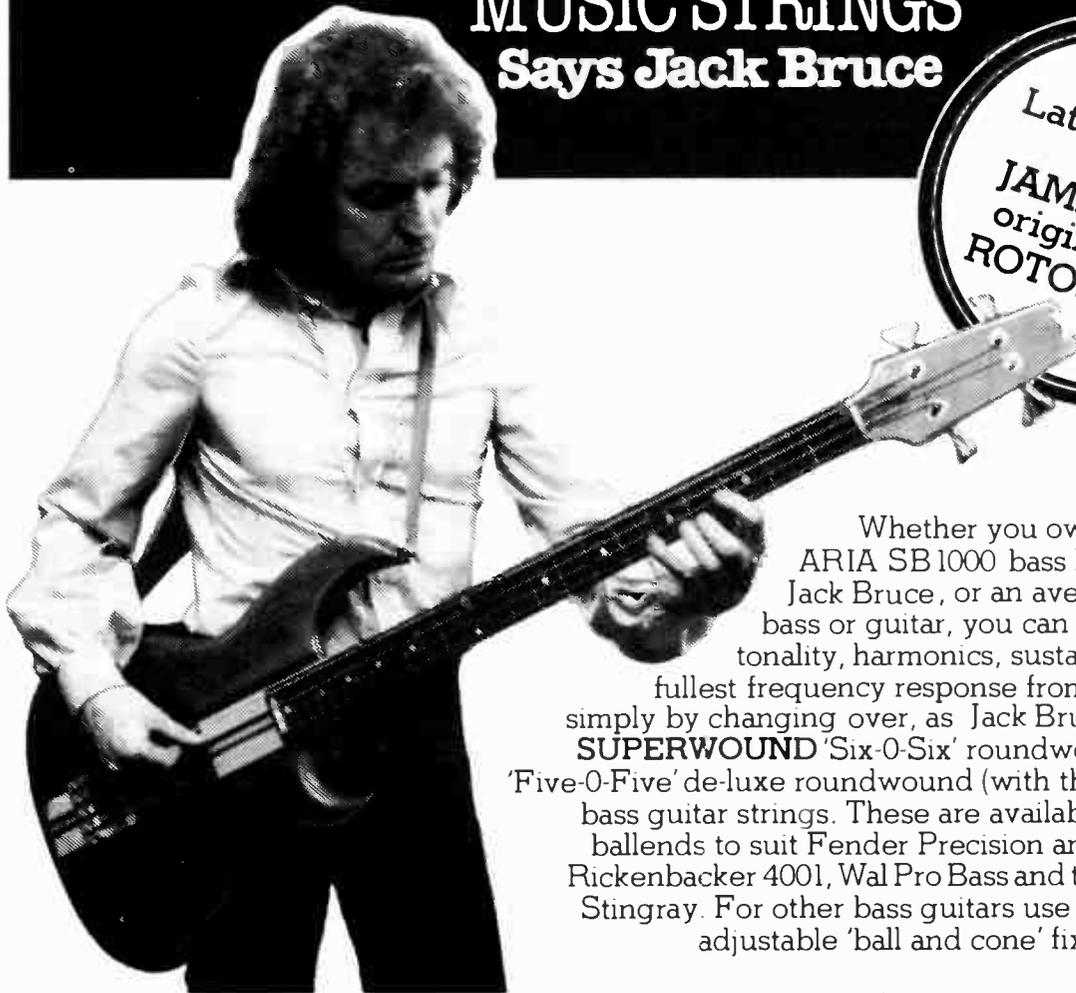
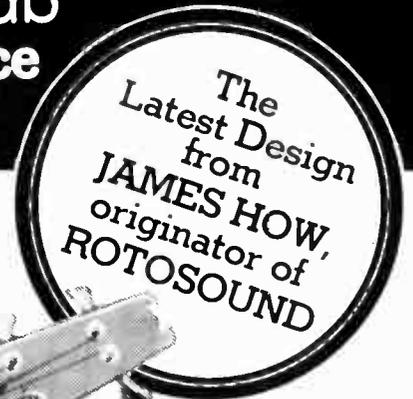


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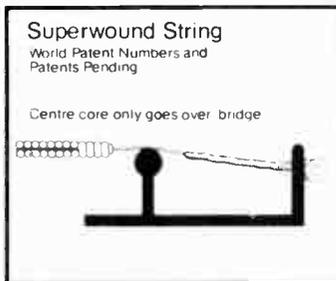
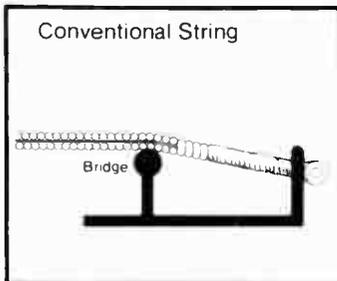
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## On Bass:

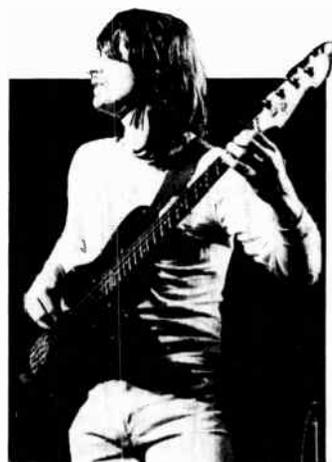
### Jeff Berlin

Some of you have noticed last month that part of my article was missing. So, to correct a printing oversight, we have repeated the entire column at the end of this month's contribution.

Originally, this was going to be a follow-up article on rhythm but something has come up that has disturbed me enough to postpone it. Instead I'm going to discuss a particular form of study that has become quite trendy for electric bassists. I've received quite a few letters from students who have chosen this line of study and are not entirely sure about it. Basically, I'm talking about electric bassists studying with upright bass players because they think there is no other alternative.

Anybody who takes the first step to some kind of formal training is to be commended. You will definitely benefit from all of the hours spent behind closed doors and in front of the music stand. But a good electric bass teacher is as hard to find these days as a virgin on her wedding night. Since you want to know the fundamentals of the instrument you logically search out bass teachers, including those that teach acoustic. It's not a bad step. These guys explain to you many of the fundamentals of bass playing. However (there's always a catch), don't forget that many upright teachers teach acoustic bass and play acoustic bass because they truly do not respect or support the validity of our instrument. The general consensus of these guys is that the electric bass is a "toy" or that "it's not the real thing." And these are the same guys who play the electric bass in the pit on Broadway, or in the rhythm section behind Jerry Lewis or on a weekend gig at Vito's Boom Boom Room.

Upright players will obviously show you fingering positions that they use. Are they mad? We, of course, use each finger on each fret space, while the acoustic player joins the second and third finger to play one note. One person wrote and



complained that his teacher instructed him to avoid using the fourth finger as much as he could. Another said his teacher found no reason to go above the 12th fret. Jeez, it's like letting a vet perform open-heart surgery.

Upright books may be OK for simple beginning reading, but books such as the F. Simandl and Edouard Nanny methods are strictly arco exercises (bowing on the upright). If you want a good electric bass book try Carol Kave's books. Although they lend themselves towards ticks more than overall bass exercises, at least they were written by an electric bass player for electric bass players. Also, as I mentioned before, try trombone books and trombone pieces. The best one I know of is "Chord Studies for Trombone" by Joe Viola and Phil Wilson (Berklee Press). If you can't find a good bass teacher, I recommend a guitar teacher to help you with bass concepts. At least they won't tell you to ignore the fourth finger (unless they studied under Django Rheinhardt).

To be fair, I should praise the fine upright teachers who also teach electric bass such as Richard Appieman at Berkley (Chairman of the bass department) and Rick Laird, of Mahavishnu fame, who also teaches in New York City. Clyde Lombardi, from the Bronx, plays swinging upright, and teaches swinging electric. The caliber of these men, unfortunately, is far too rare. Good luck readers with

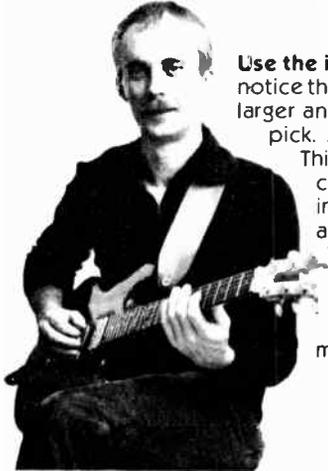
*Continued on page 144*

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**On Synth:**  
*Mike Moran*



I well remember being called up one day to do a session for a producer with a reputation for great extravagance. The occasion (going back to the start of my days as a session musician) was highlighted, according to aforementioned producer, by the presence of a synthesizer which I was expected to work wonders on and stun the general public. We all take synthesizers pretty much for granted these days, and with a choice of specification size and cost to suit, it would do us all good to remember that not too long ago to produce the sort of sounds we now do on a mini-moog or odyssey needed a roomful of equipment. It was some nine or ten years ago that I trotted into the studio, only to be confronted by a monster which threatened to stop my career in its tracks. The "monster" turned out to be a series III Moog which to the uninitiated, could be considered the father of profusion of equipment today. The moog dwarfed everything in sight and consisted of several very large boxes each with batteries of knobs, switches, jack plug sockets, lights etc. The boxes were linked together with huge double ended jack-plugs and the whole monstrous complexity of the thing was compounded by the appearance of words printed on the front which sounded as though they belonged on a flight-deck rather than a musical instrument.

Progress has been incredibly swift development was keenly sought after only five years ago. Now it is a standard part of the keyboard players armory. It strikes me that a keyboard player new to synthesizers will still initially be confused by the terminology so I will attempt to define some of the terms common to most synthesizers.

- 1 **Oscillator:** (VCO) generates tone.
- 2 **Filter:** (VCF) changes tone color.
- 3 **Amplifier:** (VCA) controls volume.
- 4 **Envelope Generator:** or ADSR controls A (attack) D

(decay) S (sustain) R (release).

- 5 **Frequency:** pitch
- 6 **Timbre:** tone color.
- 7 **Audio Range:** is the range of pitches that your ear can hear.
- 8 **Harmonics:** harmonics are overtones and the more brilliance the sound will have.
- 9 **Hertz (Hz):** it means "cycles per second" and the human ear can hear pitches between 20 and 20,000 Hz or to put it another way 20Hz to 20 kilohertz (KHz).
- 10 **Highpass Filter:** (HPF) this changes timbre by cutting off low harmonics and passing high ones.
- 11 **Lowpass Filter:** (VCF) this changes timbre by cutting off high harmonics and passing low ones.
- 12 **Noise:** not as one may thing description of our first attempts to get a sound but a random signal that sounds like a hiss or like the wing blowing. Noise usually categorized two ways as white or pink — try both and assess the difference yourself.
- 13 **Phase:** the relationship of one waveform to another — in phase both waveforms have the same shape, out of phase the waveforms have conflicting patterns.
- 14 **Phase-Synchronization:** using one oscillator to control the phase of another oscillator of different pitch.
- 15 **Pitch Bend:** self-descriptive really, but means controlling the frequency of a note (i.e. with a lever or pitch-wheel) while the note is being played.
- 16 **Portamento:** an unbroken slide between notes.

Continued on page 145

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# On Sax:

## Alan Holmes

Last month we were examining the relationships between the tip openings of the soprano, alto, tenor and baritone to simplify as far as possible the effects of switching rapidly from one to the other. Starting with the baritone, a Lawton mouthpiece of between 6\* 105 thousandths and 7\* 115 thousandths will give enough resonance to the lower notes while keeping the cubic feet of air per minute requirement limits which will not interrupt the flow of the music and enable the baritone to play the same length phrases as the other saxes even in its lower range.

Next is tenor. You have a choice of keeping it close to the baritone or moving nearer to the alto, a sensible range between 6\* 95 thousandths to 8\* 110 thousandth. Adaptability is the name of this doubling game. Considering the whole range, you will find that you can adapt to play a narrower mouthpiece than you would use considering each sax individually. Many people do use large tip openings but the object of this exercise is to try and match up the four saxes. Many players are making playing harder than necessary by blowing a wider lay than they need.

When I interviewed Wilton Felder of the Crusaders, he said he used to blow a 130 Larsen but switched to 105 because that was painful. I played a 130 for six years and found my playing improved once I switched down to a 100.

To play well you should be able to play effortlessly without straining to pump air through the horn, as the tension produced by straining to blow, also stiffens the fingers.

Not only are you unable to play for long enough between taking breaths, your fingers are slowed up too, so you can't play with a really fast technique.

If you consider the harmonics of the tenor to be part of the standard range, then the upper limit of 8, 110 using medium reeds, becomes necessary if you are going to spend a lot of time playing harmonics. They then



become a controlled and useful part of the standard range without suffering from jaw ache. So 6\* 95 thousandths is going to be closer to the alto and 7\* 105 thousandths is going to be closer to the baritone. The length of reed being left to vibrate by the "lay" and the shape of the interior will do much to vary the resistance of the mouthpiece. A Lawton 7\* B or BB model can blow as easily as other makers 6\* so the final decision is governed by the type of sound you want to hear yourself making.

At this point it's worth noting that the widest lay that Selmer make for tenor, an "H", is only equivalent to 7\*. Maybe they know something about sax-soprano without feeling too close, yet not being so open that it leaves too large a gap to the soprano.

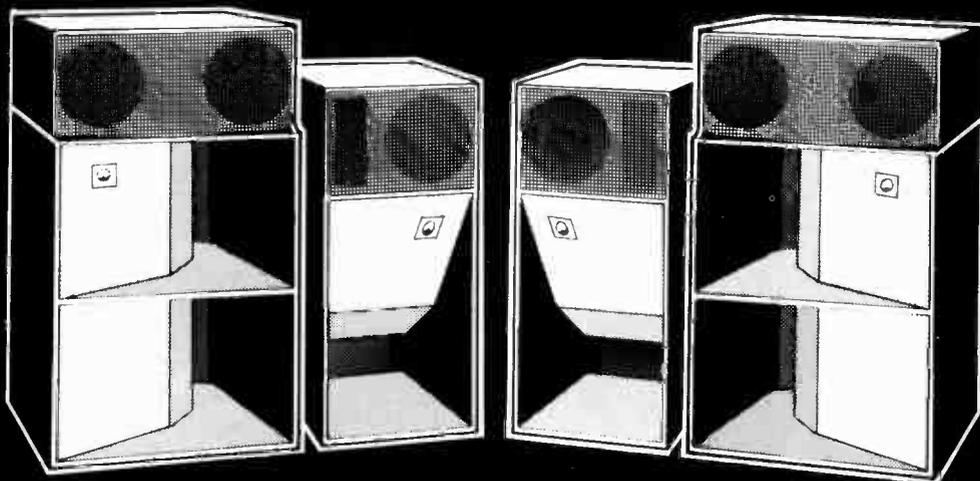
Around 80 thousandths, 6\* for alto, seems to be an effective compromise. Yet up to 90 ophones that has escaped the attention of the wide lay players.

After the tenor, the next smallest is the alto. Choice of tip opening for alto should aim to slot between the tenor and

*Continued on page 144*

*Alan Holmes is a top session reedman who plays soprano, alto and tenor saxes, and just about every wind instrument. He played on the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper album and for four years was a member of the Kinks. He now leads his own jazz-rock group.*

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# Grace Notes

J.C. Costa

For this month's "Quik-Check," the new Hondo II Pro (model No H-1100) from the International Music Corporation (1300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth TX 76102). One of the numerous "Stratocaster-style" guitars (this is not *just* a Strat copy guitar) on the market today, this ultra-reasonably priced instrument (\$429.95 list in Eastern U.S.) has taken me somewhat by surprise due to its excellent playability, intonation and sound. One of a series of 14 models roughly intended for the beginning amateur and developing semi-pro market, the Hondo II (model tested has a *maple* fingerboard) is easier to play and keep in tune than just about any Fender guitar I've ever owned — a not *that* extensive collection that once included a '53 Telecaster, a '68 Strat and a '70 Telecaster.

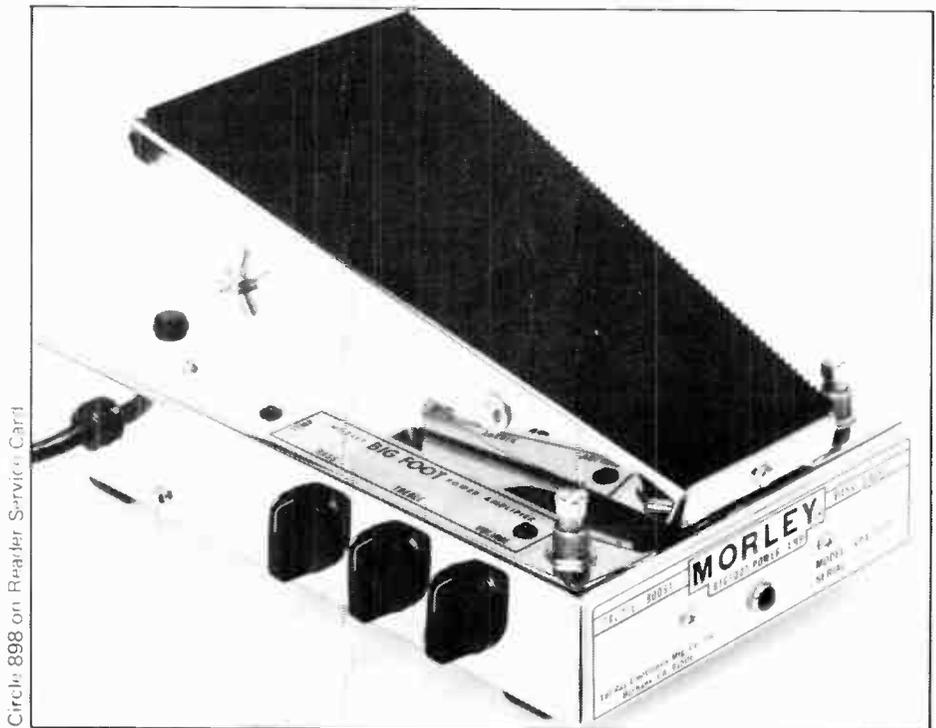
I can't absolutely confirm this, but one of the main reasons for the accessibility (a term not always applicable to Fender instruments) of the maple fingerboard seems to be the fact that they have finished off the surface with a lighter, more satin-ey lacquer instead of that thick Fender finish which admittedly makes for long wear but often causes the player's fingers to get hung up on the fingerboard when they're wet from perspiration. In fact, one of the main reasons older Fender guitars are such a prized commodity — besides tradition, design and a well deserved rep as *the* rock & roll guitar — is the fact that much of this finish has been worn away by hours of sweat, grunge and tears, and the fingerboard is consequently a lot more sensitive to the touch and easier to play. The Hondo, as well as several other recent Japanese/Korean Fender-style guitars, has bypassed this particular aging phenomenon by making a fingerboard that nearly approximates the feel of a broken-in Fender. The machines and bridge on the Hondo II look, at first glance, like cheapish knock-offs but they also work surprisingly well, making for a guitar that stays in tune — even when you brutalize the vibrato bar.

The general standard of workmanship and materials is not extraordinary but more than adequate for a guitar in this price range. This model, made of highly figured ash with a maple neck, has a conventional Fender-style sunburst with a discrete all-black pickup assembly. The pickups are a mite better than standard

Strat pickups — the wiring is fair and, considering the aggravated hum tendencies of single coil pickups, the shielding could be better. But to quality yet again, even playing this guitar through a noisy, old Fender "Champ" amp produced no unusually pronounced hums or buzzes. And the five position pickup toggle switch helps the player to come up with some very interesting aural textures — especially the mid-position between middle and bass pickup. Just one small complaint. The fact that you have to

that weighs in at a mere eight lbs. This unusual combo of volume pedal *and* power amplifier can be used as a solo amp, in conjunction with and to the master control of other remote amps, or simply straight through as a Morley volume pedal. The "Bigfoot" can also be used with any speaker system of 4 ohms or more, with the choice of either Electro Voice or Eminence speakers or empty enclosures for the speaker of the user's choice.

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remove the neck from the body to make angle adjustments is just a wee bit preposterous.

So the bottom line is simply that the Hondo II is an excellent (surprisingly so) value for the money — not only as a "starter" guitar because of its unusually good playability, but also as a relatively inexpensive second or third guitar for the Gibson-style player (like yours truly) who need that special metallic bite for rhythm playing.

The Morley company has come up with an interesting new wrinkle on the pedal concept with their new "Bigfoot," a multi-purpose portable pedal amplifier

continuous output of 50 watts of square wave, impact power; overload indicator lamp; Photoelectric volume pedal which controls the volume of the amplifier; silent circuit AC on/off switching; a line output jack of the amplifier; silent circuit AC on/off switching; a line output jack for driving external amplifiers and direct recording; volume, treble and bass controls plus treble and bass boost foot switches; tube type sound, clean sound, soft distortion and hard fuzz capability; short circuit protection and two types of inverse feedback. All of this at a very respectable list price of 110 bucks.

A New Wave Aside: Several issues ago  
*continued on page 126*

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# Performance

Ellen Foley  
The Venue, London  
February 22 1980

Ellen Foley ended up in London for the finale of her month publicized European tour. She's already made the rounds doing the usual assortment of press interviews several months before, charming largely male reporters with her reputed sexy tease and sensual looks. Consequently, there was much excitement surrounding her live debut. Both London shows were sold out although one suspected that the audience contained at least half of the music business.

When she bounced onstage pouting ever so slightly, the first three rows comprised mostly men, mouths agape at her slinky apparel. Wearing skintight black pants disguised as tights, a satin red top and a gaudy purple satin jacket, she sang in a voice reminiscent of Bonnie Tyler with more guts. The band pumped out pedestrian energy, playing each number with barely any emotion. No one in the crowd reacted much save for those three rows of gaping men.

Ellen Foley onstage is not that much different than Ellen Foley on record. I'd expected her to better a promising debut album but on this occasion she was nothing but disappointing, predictable, cliched and tedious. By the third number she'd taken off the slinky purple jacket and draped it over her shoulder as if she was posing for the cover of *Vogue*. The third number was, perhaps, the best. The Stones wonderful "Stupid Girl" is a great song for a female singer to cover and lends itself well to sexual interpretation. Foley sang it with a lot of power, more power than conviction and the band played better than average. Halfway through the drummer seemed to wake up. What ruined the rock & roll momentum was Foley's ridiculously trite theatrical antics. During the chorus, she picked up a hand mirror, staring at herself and throwing silver rays out to the audience. Perhaps, she was just checking her roots which were very noticeable.

Unfortunately, the evening was downhill from there. Her onstage patter borders on the inane. One could easily mistake here appearance and general charisma as a rather bad imitation of Bette Midler's over the top performance in "The Rose". This was made embarrassingly clear when Ms. Foley burst into a semi-dialogue during a song where she ranted and raved in an overtly dramatic voice all about some guy who never came back from Vietnam. No one needs to employ such mundane tactics to



elicit a reaction from the audience. Rather than being dramatic, entertaining or effective, it was rather pathetic.

Although the band tried in vain to pump out adrenalin, the energy was lacking in abundance. On her album, *Nightout*, Ian Hunter and Mick Ronson played an important role both in production and playing. They were sadly missed from this live performance. Rather than being a night out to remember, it was very much a night out to forget.

Ellen Foley represents everything wrong with rock & roll. She's perfect fettle for the advertising men, merchandising men and the giant publicity machine of Columbia. She knows all the tricks almost as if she's read the official handbook on

"how to perform theatrically for fame and money." The lady has a fine voice and without her annoyingly coy stage persona and with a better band, Ellen Foley could become something better than average.

Her effect on London is best summed up by one of the country's most respected and eccentric disc jockey's. A fellow DJ had attended the performance. She told the crowd of an upcoming appearance she'd prerecorded on a TV show. The next morning the DJ told his co-worker that Foley gave him and his TV show a name check during the performance. Upon hearing this the DJ casually said, "Ellen Foley--who's he?"

Barbara Charone



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# Performance



## One Step Beyond

**Madness**  
**Empire Theatre, Liverpool.**  
**February 22 1980**

After six weeks touring Europe, Madness returned to England the week that 'My Girl' slipped off the No.1 singles spot. With the 'One Step Beyond' album also riding high, there was a large, pent-up British demand that had to be satisfied.

Like the Specials, reportedly causing quite a stir in the US, Madness take as their foundation Jamaican ska and reggae music of the 1960s, a source both more light-hearted and rhythmically closer to rock than most recent reggae. Their name comes from the title of a Prince Buster song and 'The Prince' was a plea to the legendary Jamaican star to return from obscurity. When this was a hit, Madness were snapped up by Stiff Records and quickly consolidated with Buster's 'One Step Beyond', a storming, sax-driven instrumental. A trip to New York was well-received, then it was off to Europe.

If the second of their homecoming gigs was anything to go by, the band received the proverbial hero's welcome. Unfortunately, whether they were overawed at this reception or simply drained by hard work, Madness' performance left much to be desired.

Anxious not to be restricted by their hits, 'Beyond' opens proceedings in lackluster style, Lee Thompson's sax falling ominously to achieve its normal

full, fruity sound. 'My Girl' soon follows, faring similarly: the wry, believable tale of a guy whose girlfriend takes offence when he chooses to watch TV on his own hinges on Mike Barson's infectious piano figure, so it doesn't help that his keyboards are barely audible throughout the set.

As Thompson and Barson are usually Madness' strongest assets, it's as well that Chris Foreman (guitar) and Mark Bedford (bass) perform with plenty of attack. The former is particularly impressive on 'Mistakes', a new song performed better than most of the established set, but a general disjointedness is glaringly apparent.

Through their numerous TV appearances, Madness are probably known to the wider public as much for their antics as for their music. Chas Smash, friend of the band and co-writer of one song on the album, is a permanent feature onstage, acting as a kind of official cheerleader as well as dancing perpetually and contributing the odd backing vocal. With his pork-pie hat, thick-framed plastic shades and natty footwork, Chas is a natural focal point and takes some of the pressure off lead singer Graham "Suggs" McPherson.

This is just as well, as Suggs is a highly self-conscious performer, whether talking or attempting to move with the general mayhem. Also, while his voice carries the listener on catchy, buoyant numbers like 'In The Middle Of The Night' (the story of a clandestine lingerie thief) and the

semi-autobiographical 'Rockin' In A-Flat', the trickier rhythms of 'The Prince' find him lacking in depth. Lee's gruffer style lacks nothing in character. Yet, possibly breathless from rushing about the stage, he makes a poor job of his own excellent 'Razor Blade Alley'.

As usually happens with any current favourite, none of this prevented Madness from going down quite well. Perhaps they normally manage to combine all the fooling around with tight, lively playing and this was just tour fatigue. Nevertheless, their looseness on this occasion — characterized by Woody Woodgate's shaky drums — tempts me to draw comparisons with Rod Stewart and the Faces. As longtime fans will recall, what began as good-natured, free wheeling spontaneity gradually degenerated into plain indiscipline, until their audience's growing exasperation induced Stewart to ditch a bunch of highly-talented musicians for a band of adaptable but boring professionals.

It would be a pity if Madness followed a similar path, as they are all able players who album stands up very well to repeated listenings. There are several impressive songs from a wide variety of sources within band and entourage, many of them telling a good story with wit and style.

On this showing, however, first-timers could be excused for dismissing Madness as a novelty band. If they're not to prove a classic case of 'too much too soon', a radical rethink is very much in order.

**Harry George**

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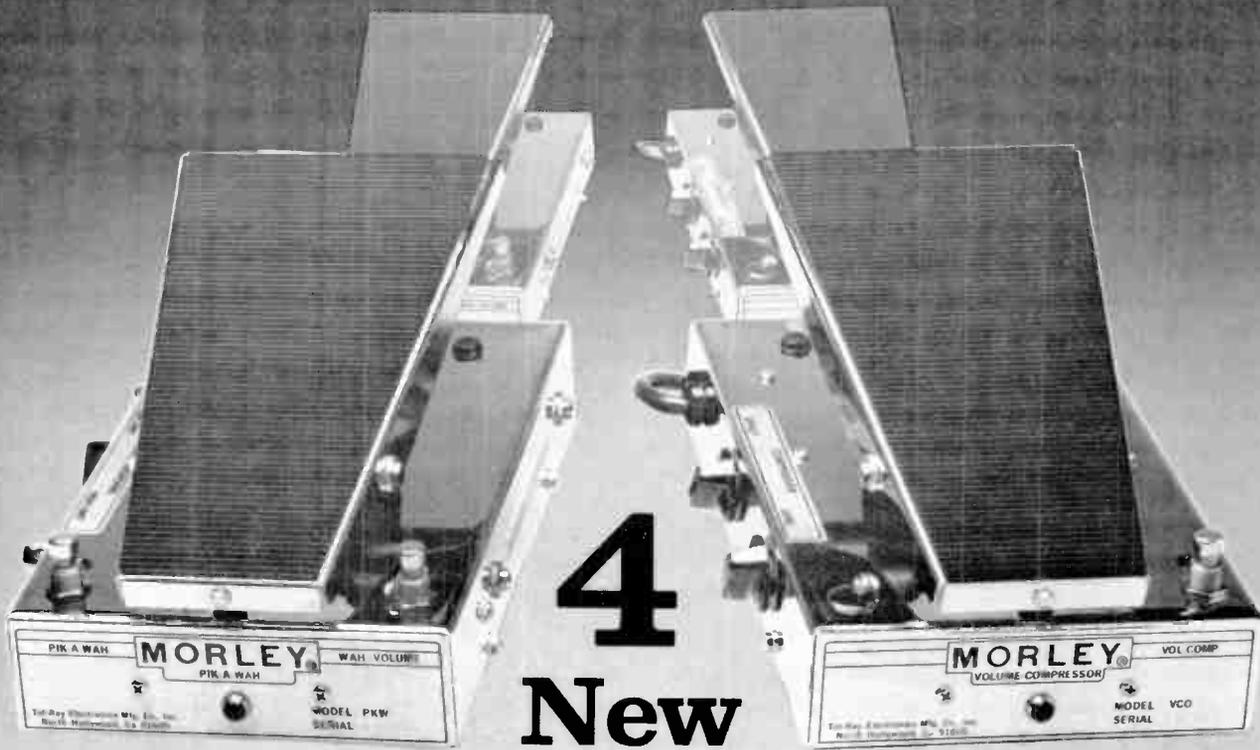


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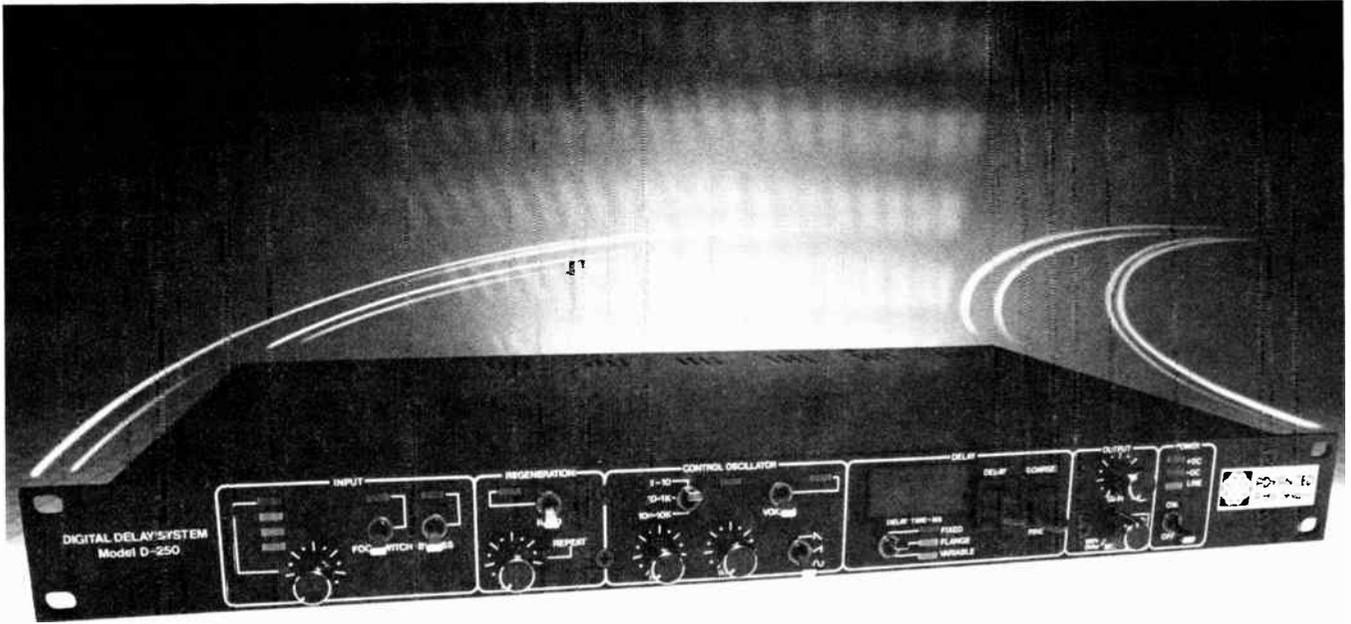
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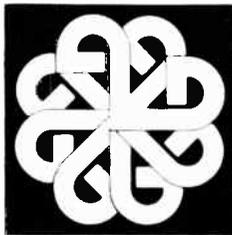
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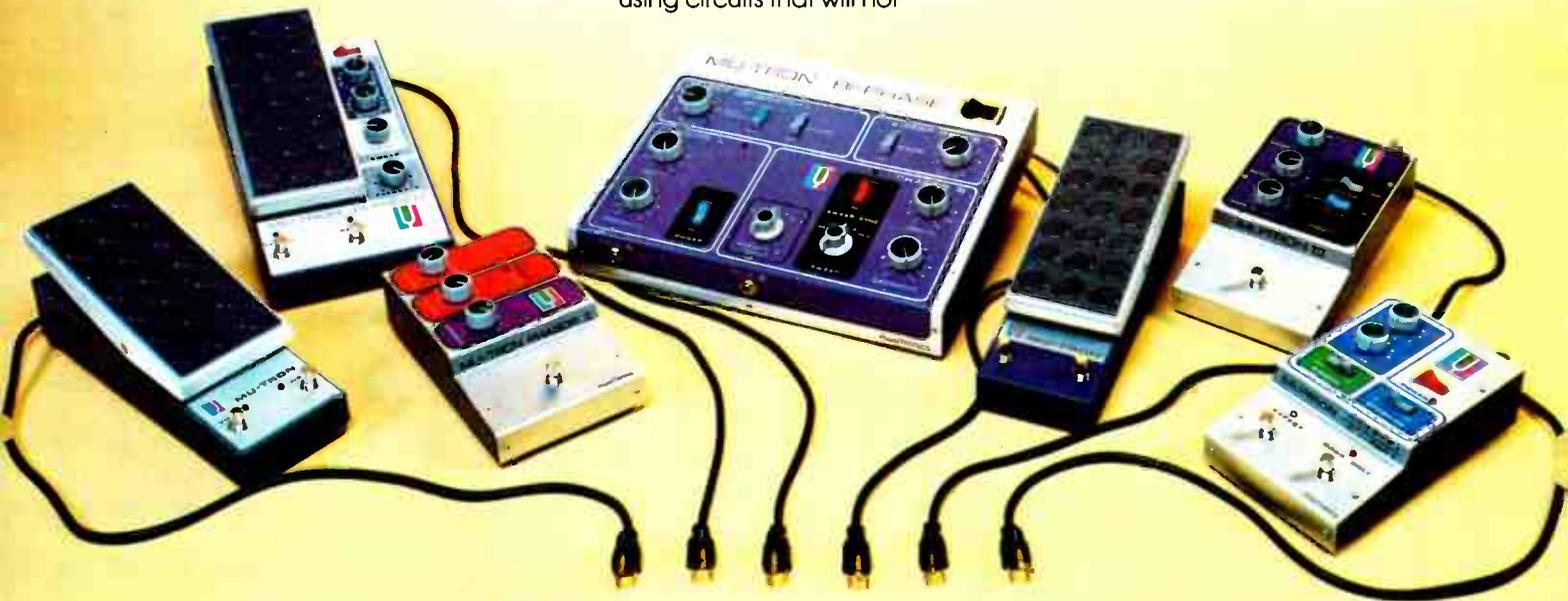
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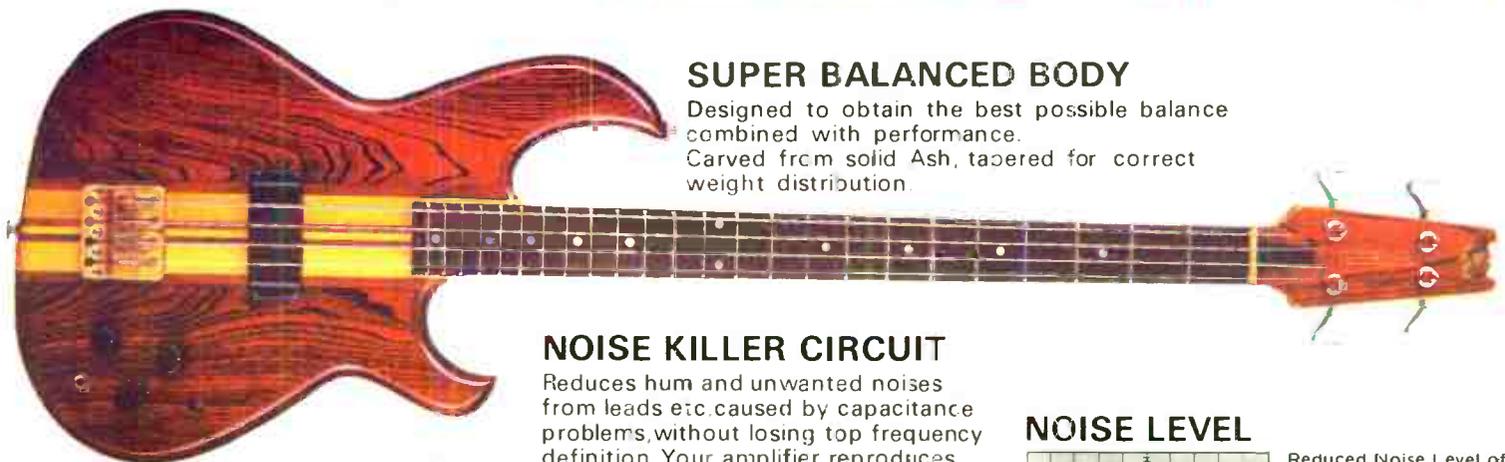
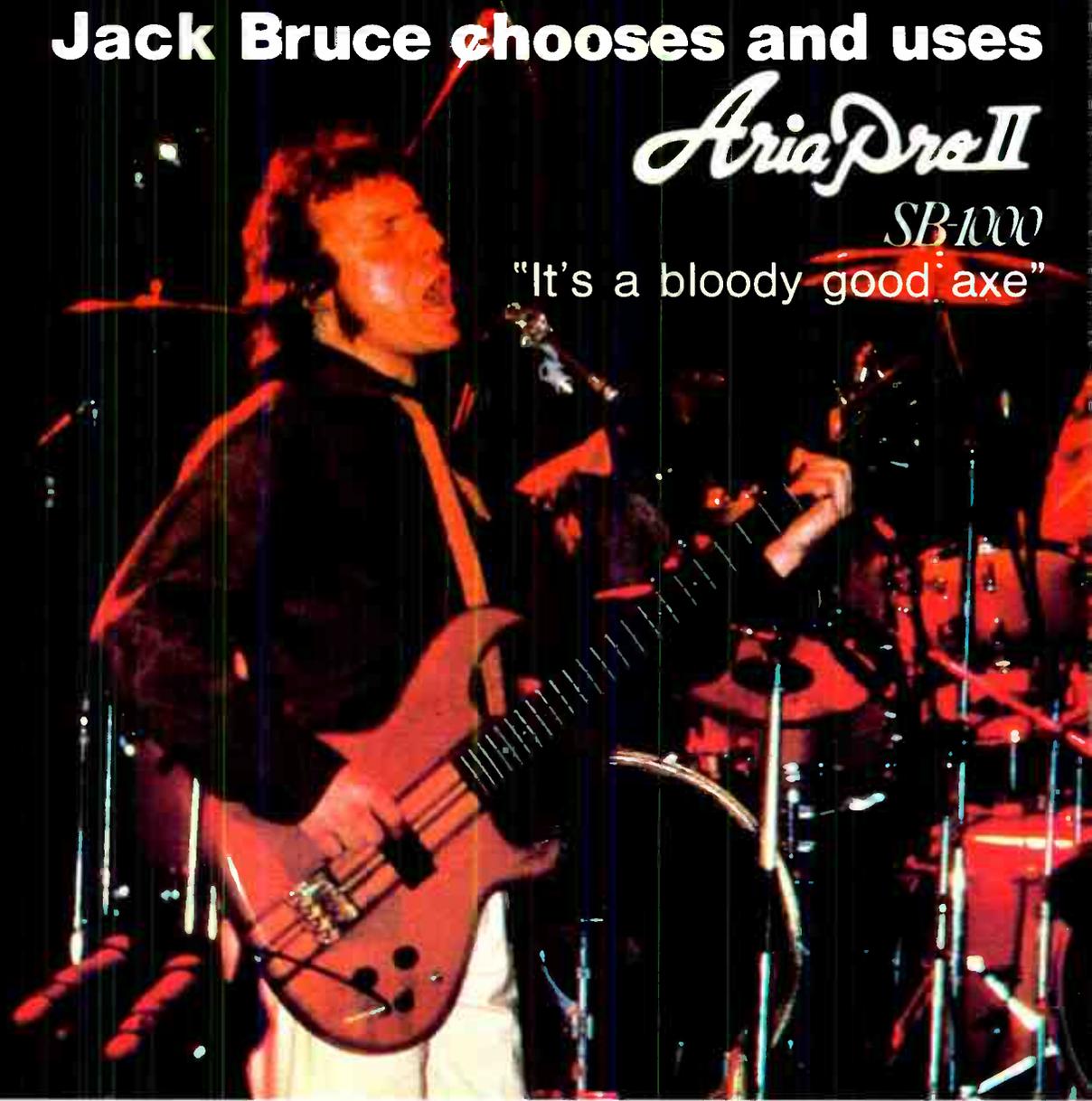
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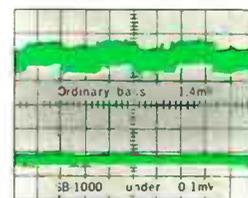
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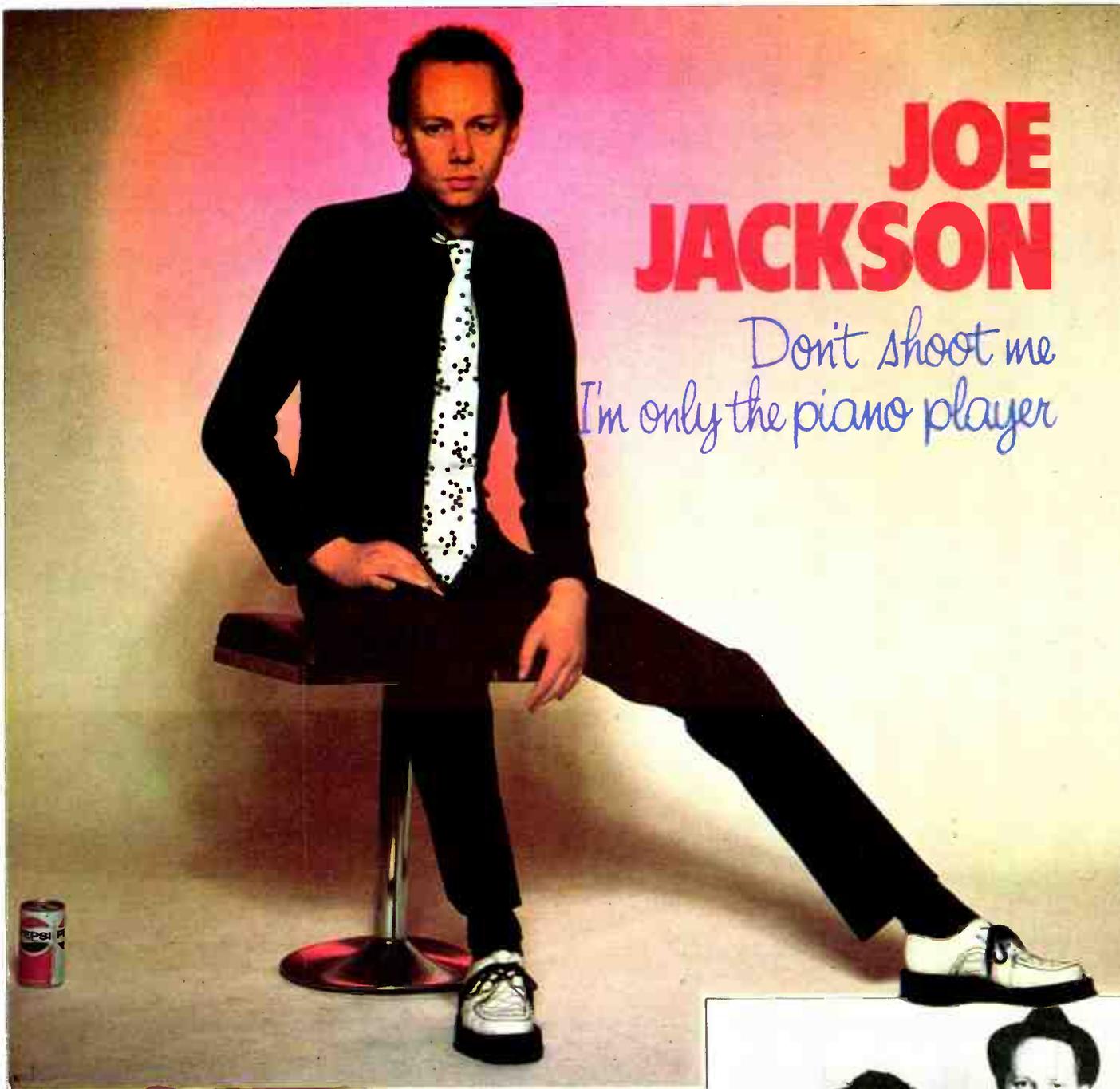
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## All Dressed Up and Nowhere To Go

### The Scientific Passion of Al DiMeola

By Jean-Charles Costa

Somehow it just had to happen. Decibel-weary veterans of the Sixties' guitar obsession greeted Al DiMeola's sudden emergence onto the Seventies fusion scene not so much with awed surprise as with a sense of pre-cognition. After all, for those of us who really cared about where the electric guitar was *going*, DiMeola's surgically precise "jazz" technique pumped through a hot Les Paul/Marshall rock & roll set-up seemed inevitable. Even more inevitable by virtue of the fact that instrumental fusion groups like Return To Forever and Weather Report were riding the crest of a new audience who demanded *more* from their favorite players.

No more re-cycled blues-based clichés of temporarily revived Hendrix/Clapton clones, thank you very much. This new element to the jazz fusion audience, spawned from heavy-metal with a voracious appetite for new guitar "licks & tricks," created an instant demand for modern musician hybrids who intuitively understood the nuances of electric guitar timbre *and* had mastered all of the melodic and harmonic possibilities of the instrument. DiMeola, spotted by RTF founder Chick Corea early on in his dynamically expanding career, was one of the first guitarists, especially since he played "cleaner" and a bit more conventionally than John McLaughlin while retaining the dazzling speed, to fill the gap.

And with the fertile delta of talent represented by RTF's Corea, Stanley Clarke and Lenny White, DiMeola had the perfect combination of compositional intelligence — largely due to Chick's influence, one which still hangs heavy over DiMeola to this day — and white hot instrumental pyrotechnics to legitimize his metronomically perfect style. The music was new and exciting, the changes fresh and inventive and the sheer excitement generated at live RTF gigs by harnessing that much instrumental talent through "big" rock sound systems was undeniable.

Having firmly established himself with a respectable world-wide cult of fellow guitarists during his tenure with the band, DiMeola seemed to have the rosier commercial future after the traumatic break-up of RTF. His first two solo releases, *Land of the Midnight Sun* (Columbia PC 34074) and *Elegant Gypsy* (Columbia PC 34461), sold extremely well for instrumental "jazz" albums while live audiences, largely made up of the aforementioned young male guitar freaks,



eagerly gobbled up repeated demonstrations of his admittedly prodigious technique.

But this is 1980 and "hot" fusion instrumental music is definitely no longer at the top of everyone's hit parade — as if it ever was. Bands like Bruford and Brand X more than hold their own on small club tours but the collective consciousness of the record biz — either because it wants to or because it's the trendy thing to do — is focused on whatever wave bands where the short three minute song with a minimum of instrumental (ie. guitar) show-boating is the rule of thumb.

And a large part of that guitar-maniac audience has reverted to younger heavy-metal guitar slingers like Eddie Van Halen or Michael Schenker. So, here's Mr. DiMeola with severe management problems that keep him off the road for two years, a surfeit of cops that just *may* be lost on a dwindling audience, a record company who he claims is more interested in promoting new wave bands and, to top it all off, a new double studio LP — *Hotel Splendido* — that could well determine the ultimate limits of his status as a solo artist.

Because of all these things, Al has been somewhat reclusive of late — and the album is definitely *behind* its scheduled release date (hopefully, it will be out by the time this hits the stands). Possibly, DiMeola is a victim of the dreaded "Steve Stills" syndrome, an almost psychotic obsession with mixing and re-mixing and re-recording your album which leads to stuporously long sessions in the studio that could easily qualify for the Guinness Book of World Records. It's always hard for an artist to "let go" of his latest creation, but this double album project is turning into a *major* deal.

Taking some time out from some overdubbing session at CBS' functional and unassuming recording studios on New York's West 52nd St., DiMeola sat at the opposite end of a conference table in a

starkly lit recreation room and quietly and methodically expounded on the current status of *Hotel Splendido*.

"We're finishing up the overdubs so we should be mixing real soon. This is a double record — a double *studio* album, one of the only one's Columbia's ever released."

Did he have a surfeit of material that dictated a double LP set?

"There are a few reasons why I wanted to do that, one of which was that I wanted to expand a bit more with the playing. I wanted to be able to *open up* a bit more with the electric and acoustic music. Especially acoustic, since on my last few records I only had one acoustic piece where I could *play*.

"On this album, there are three acoustic pieces and there's a *lot* of playing. One piece has a string quartet on it with a 25 piece boy's choir — it's incredible. Chick Corea contributed one of the acoustic tunes, which is called "Isfahan," and that also has a string quartet. It's a beautiful piece, he says it's the best tune he's ever written, a masterpiece. I would call it a mini-guitar concerto, it runs about 11 minutes. I wrote a tango duet with Chick and myself playing and I also play a guitar duet where I play both parts and on that piece there's some of my best playing to date.

"So these pieces would take up almost the whole side of a record and I felt that on a single album release it would be *balanced* because it was half acoustic and half electric, but . . . it's risky doing that since my audience is largely rock or progressive-rock oriented. You have to give a good amount of both, with a little more emphasis on the electric side. It also gave me time to experiment and get into vocals a bit which I dabbled with, but I don't know if I'll include them on the album. And the electric music turned out to be the most energetic and experimental that I've ever gotten into. So, doing a double album gave me the time to get to that *next level*.

Sensing an imminent flood-tide of further justifications and wanting to hit that next level in our mutual discussion, I inquired about the specifics of DiMeola's newly "opened-up" electric guitar style.

"I use different guitar sounds all over the record. If I'm playing what I call "power" guitar, then I use my Les Paul and it's that certain sound that I get (fast, metallic-cold, clean staccato attack with palming technique interspersed J-CC). If I want a lighter sound I have a few different guitars I can go to.

"I was over in Japan last July and Yamaha gave me two models (SG-2000), two electrics. And I used them on a couple of pieces on the album. They were very nice for *softer* playing, but they (Yamaha) swore that the sustain setting on that guitar was a better sound than the DiMarzio pickup sound on the Les Paul and I did the comparison test in the studio. And I don't know if I really gave it enough time to properly evaluate it, but right off it sounded — when listening back to the Yamaha — 'Nasal-like.' It gives you an incorrect illusion when you listen to *in the room*. In the room it sounds very good, it's a very even sustain which doesn't break up at all. But when you listen back to it, it sounds nasal and I don't know why that is but I have to experiment more with it to see. So I used the Les Paul (Sunburst '58 w/DiMarzios) for the 'power' playing when I wanted to achieve a lot of sustain. For *thickness*, that's the guitar, still! So the Yamaha people will probably be shocked to hear that I used their guitar for *soft* playing, because it's not that type of guitar, ya know?"

Recently, DiMeola has been pictured as a leading endorser of Fylde acoustic guitars, an interesting new addition from the north of England. I asked him for some off-the-cuff, "unofficial" comments about why he was drawn to this particular flat top guitar.

"I like its sustain qualities, the richness, the even-ness — it's a very crystal-like sustain, the highs are incredible. A harp-like sound. Plus the craftsmanship is immaculate. Very different from the Ovation — it's not the type of guitar where I'd want to attempt playing anything too fast, it's not set up for playing intricate lines. It's for coloration, for chordal playing and slow melodies where phrasing is important."

What makes the Ovation acoustic particularly suited for single note playing?

"It's set up in a way that makes it very comfortable to play, and I like playing in every register of the guitar and if I play anything that's technically difficult or that requires a great amount of speed in every register — for that type of playing, the Ovation is best. Even this guitar duet that we did was done with Ovations, melody and improvisation on one side and the chord playing on the other. The type of chordal playing which requires a great amount of strength, *intense* chordal playing."

Specifically, what models did he use?

"I had one custom built for me which

Reprinted from MELODY MAKER  
July 29, 1978. Published in England.

**A**ny sort of merchandise has its equivalent of the Rolls-Royce, the state-of-the-art model designed and built with quality, not economics in mind.

If the best components cost ten times more than the average ones, it doesn't matter — there will always be more than enough people who want the best and can afford to get it.

Indeed, the one characteristic that all the best quality goods share is that they are in short supply. Mass production produces the most, but it has never produced the best.

By universal consent, the Rolls-Royce of the amp world is the MESA/Boogie, a valve (tube) amp made by designer Randall Smith and his wife in a minute factory in the coastal mountains of California. But trying to actually buy one of these very expensive amps is like trying to buy beer-making kits in Jeddah.

Theoretically, they have been available for several years, but up until recently it was a case of flying over to California, or ordering one and waiting several months. MESA/Boogie amps were talked about but seldom heard, and although the situation has not improved to any great extent, it is now possible to buy them from Chappells in London, as well as a few other outlets.

## Beware

But before you rush there with Access card in hand, beware. The top models will add four figures to your overdraft. Chappells were wary of quoting an exact price, but the £1,000-plus price tag is enough to make most people stay at home and dream.

Why, then, are they so sought after? And why are so few available?

The second question is the one with the easy answer. Each amp is made by Smith, tested by Smith, and shipped by Smith. As far as any box of electronics can be handmade, these are, and on a scare to ensure that "quality control" means what it says.

Smith has not arranged a distribution network in Britain or anywhere else because there would be little point, and he demands that each amp is paid for before shipping — not something to recommend it to British retailers or individuals, despite the money-back guarantee.

Ed Jones of Chappells finds them as much a problem as anything else.

"It would be much easier for me not to sell them at all. They're beautiful amps; probably the best in the world, but I get tired of telling everybody about the problems in getting hold of them. Most of the ones that we do get go to Europe, where they're about a third as expensive again."

The first question has a variety of answers. Boogie amps have become renowned for their combination of small size and high power, their versatility and sustain. One of the great masters of sustain, Carlos Santana, uses Boogie amps and has said that there is nothing like them on the market.

His musical partner and friend, John McLaughlin, has also said it's the best guitar amp in the world giving almost indefinite sustain even at low volume levels. This is achieved, according to Randall Smith, through the use of a pre-amp circuit that uses more stages of amplification and tone-shaping than any other amp.

Volume controls between these stages determine the amount of signal strength and the tonal quality, and then pass them on to the next stage where they are amplified again. A guitar plugged into the first input, or the first stage, enables the player to achieve the sustain and overdrive that impressed McLaughlin.

The power of the amps can be a hazard, though, in inexperienced hands. With an amp that measures only 19½ x 10¼ x 10¼, 100 watts RMS is a surprising amount of power, and if a guitarist is pushing it to the limit, the output will be way over 200 watts, according to Randall Smith.

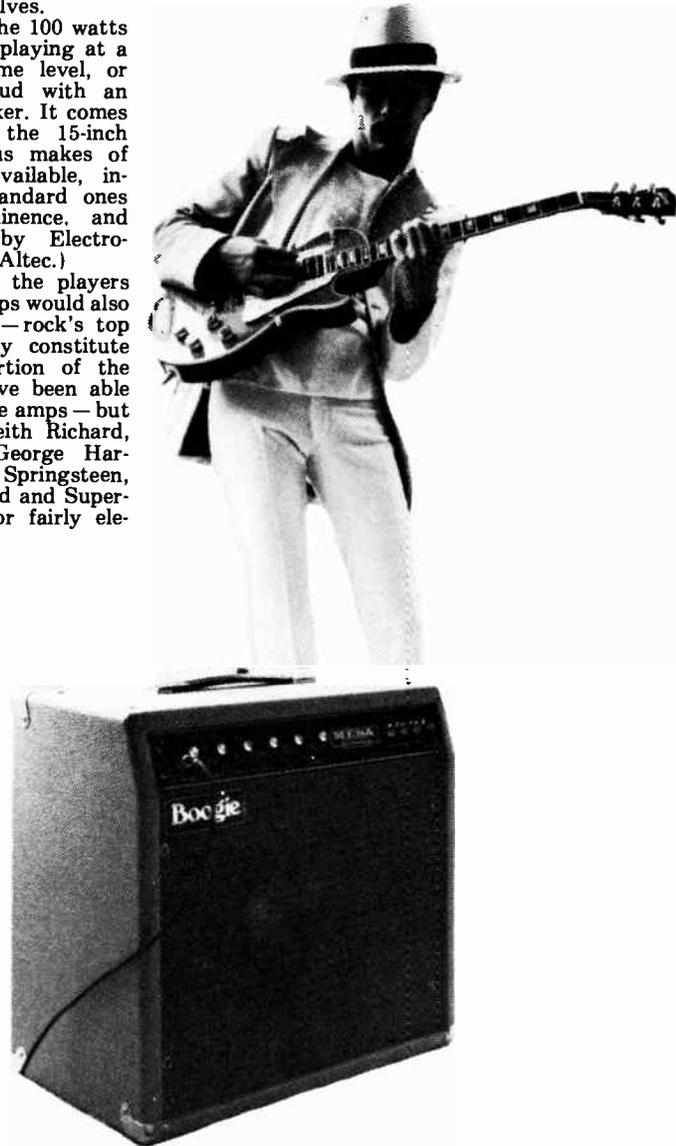
## Apart

If this is done with just the one 12-inch speaker in the combo, it can easily blow it apart, so an optional extra is supplied that, at the flick of a switch, cuts out two of the output valves.

This leaves the 100 watts for very clean playing at a moderate volume level, or for playing loud with an extension speaker. It comes supplied with the 15-inch combo. (Various makes of speaker are available, including the standard ones made by Eminence, and special ones by Electro-Voice, JBL and Altec.)

To name all the players who use the amps would also take up pages — rock's top names probably constitute a large proportion of the people who have been able to afford Boogie amps — but Bob Dylan, Keith Richard, Pink Floyd, George Harrison, Bruce Springsteen, Pete Townshend and Supertramp make for fairly elevated company.

# Why Santana likes to Boogie



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# All Dressed Up and Nowhere To Go

## The Scientific Passion of Al DiMeola

has the largest 'deep bowl' they've ever made, for more brilliance and more bottom. But on that particular piece (Duet), I think I used the Ovation 'Legend' model."

DiMeola's extensive acoustic guitar collection is rounded out by a Conde Amanos classical guitar, a Fylde mandocello (larger and tuned an octave lower than regular mandolin) and a Fylde 12 string. And even though he is playing a lot more acoustic guitar on *Splendido*, he regrets the fact that he can't play as much acoustic material touring the U.S. as opposed to touring in Europe.

"I don't like touring when I'm *constricted*. When I have to open for another band, it's ridiculous. You normally don't have enough time to do an acoustic set — the changeover to acoustic and back to electric is a whole *number*. So, unless it's *my* show, it's impossible to do. I would like to do at least three acoustic pieces a set and that's what we did when we toured Europe."

On most of his solo recorded work, DiMeola is backed by a rotating crop of "creme de la creme" players that includes Anthony Jackson, Mingo Lewis and Steve Gadd. Was he sticking with this "Band" on *Hotel Splendido*?

"That's like THE band I've been using on record. This time I wanted to do it a little differently, because of Steve and Anthony's schedules being as heavy as they are, it's hard to get them to rehearse. On *Elegant Gypsy* and *Casino* (Columbia JC 35277) we had *no* rehearsals. I went in with the charts and they just read them. And that never gave me a chance to sit back and *listen* to anything and make changes.

"On this one, I used my touring band for the record and we had quite a bit of rehearsing and I got to change things, I got to orchestrate it differently, and that's why I feel the production level on this album represents a step up in terms of excitement. We went into the studio knowing the music as opposed to going in and learning it, and then playing it the same day, so it's a whole other ball game. But I did use Anthony on three pieces."

What is the current touring/studio lineup?

"The band that plays on the record is Robbie Gonzales on drums. Tim Landers on bass, Felipe Saisse on keyboards and marimba and Eddie Colon on percussion. Mingo will be coming in to do conga and bongo overdubs. Chick Corea plays on several tunes — acoustic

piano — and Jan Hammer also plays some synthesizer."

Knowing DiMeola's almost fanatical zeal for perfection, these players are probably excellent, but I was curious as to whether or not shouldering the burden of both group leadership and writing all of the material without talented feedback from people like Corea, Clarke and White was getting to him a bit?

"Hm . . . How can I put this without . . . ? Yes, it's very, *very* hard. It's

the hardest thing I've ever confronted while doing solo albums; getting that level of perfection and that amount of maturity and experience from players that don't have it yet. I'll be honest with you; for what I do, there are only a handful of people that are up in that category and I was trying to get the players that I have to 'get up to' that level and it's very difficult.

"I put Anthony and Steve up in that



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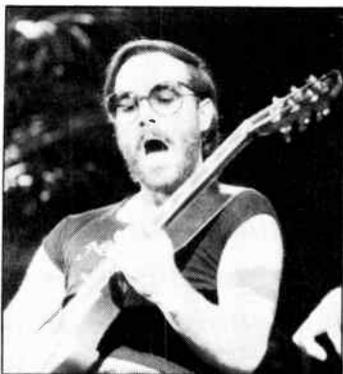


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## All Dressed Up and Nowhere To Go

The Scientific Passion of Al DiMeola

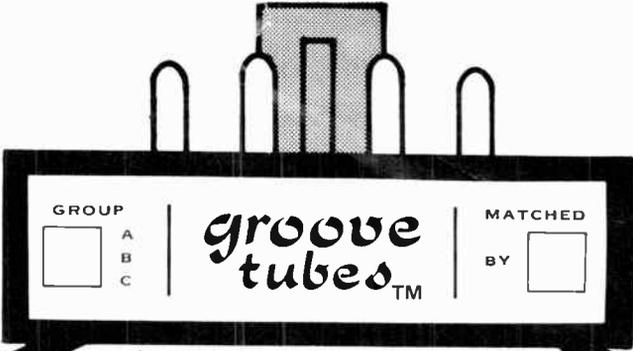


category with people like Stanley and Lenny, Jan Hammer and Billy Cobham. And there's some other people, but not many. For what I do, I've always liked the rhythm section of Anthony Jackson and Steve Gadd (who wouldn't?) — that's an incredible rhythm section. There's only one rhythm section like that in the whole world and Lenny and Stanley have their own sound too, and *that* was incredible. But to find a keyboard player like Chick or Jan is almost impossible. There's a big gap and it's frustrating. Especially Chick, as a keyboard player — and as a composer — is a legend in my eyes. It's very hard to get that. That's why it takes more time, more patience and it looks as though its *my* project because I'm the one who's shining there.

DiMeola misses this kind of interchange enough to want to eventually reform RTF on a temporary basis. Specifically, because he never thought the band made a truly *great* record. But mainly because he knows that bouncing his talent off other talents of that proportion can do nothing but help his music. In the meantime, *Hotel Splendido* awaited his renewed attention and, before plunging back into the murky confines of the control room, DiMeola left me with some fairly provocative thoughts about his own prodigious technical ability on the guitar.

"Again, to be quite honest with you, I don't know how much further it can go. I want it to keep going, I'm not saying that 'I'm the *best* there is,' but I know it's the fastest you can ever play. On the guitar duet I did for the album, I had to keep asking the engineer whether he was speeding up the tape. And it's not a conscious intention to play that way, it's more like you get the inspiration while you're playing. And it doesn't mean that you *have* to do that, but there's so much excitement just on that one piece.

"Everybody's gone away from the RTF route. Just *burning*. They don't want to burn anymore. Burning is an art. If you can get 'up there' with an instrument while you're really getting off, then the audience gets off too."



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### (THE INSIDE STORY)

#### TUBES ROLL 'n ROCK

It started soon after TV, and just before "dual headlights". Musicians discovered something new with a sound all its own — *Rock'n Roll*. Just who, when, and where, no one seems to agree. But we do agree on the "how". At a minimum it took drums, a bass, and, of course, the electric guitar and amp . . . a tube amp. Almost twenty-five years later it still takes those same basics to Rock'n Roll. The music has evolved, but the "sound" is much the same . . . and players still love tube amps. Despite millions spent to "convert" them to transistors, the overwhelming choice of musicians is tubes. Why? If you listen, you'll *hear* the difference. If you play, then you can *feel* it. Tubes have the "sound" and the "touch". Many transistor amp companies have given up and now offer tube amps (or soon will). So it would seem that the tube amps' future is at last secure. **Wrong, it's looking worse than ever, and here's why.** Tube amps need tubes. The "tube sound" comes from tubes, not a Brand Name, and that's the big problem. Tube quality is at an all time low, and the reason is obvious. The few remaining tube makers today sell a lot more transistors and simply don't care about tubes. As a result, less and less is spent each year on re-tooling. Without tight tooling, consistency is impossible. Sound hopeless? It was. Now there's a company in California who does care, and they've got the problem solved.

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Musicians in California have been buying GROOVE TUBES from a few hip pro shops, but it will take 12 to 18 months before GROOVE TUBES can provide general distribution. ASPEN & ASSOCIATES has obtained a supply of GROOVE TUBES and will be offering them for sale direct to you starting in November. The matched sets currently available are for Fender amps using two or four output tubes, and they will work nicely in amps with similar circuits (most amps). The GROOVE TUBES pre-amp set (six to a set) also fit those amps, and in addition, allow for various tonal options depending on placement (directions included). GROOVE TUBES are packed and shipped inside crushproof plastic pipe containers, and can be mailed at no cost or shipped UPS Blue Label for an additional charge of \$5 per set (recommended).

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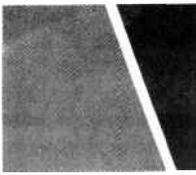
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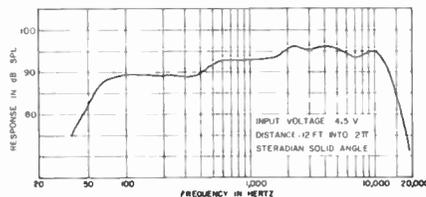
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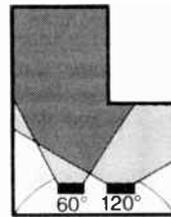


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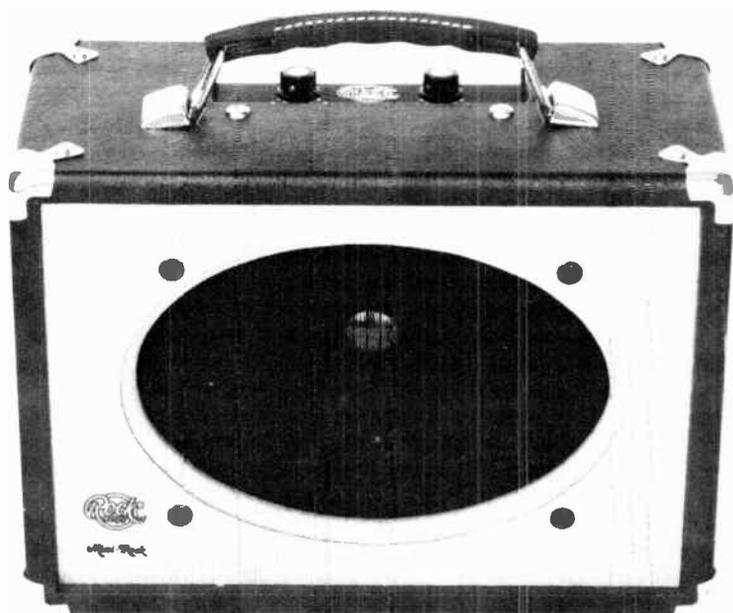
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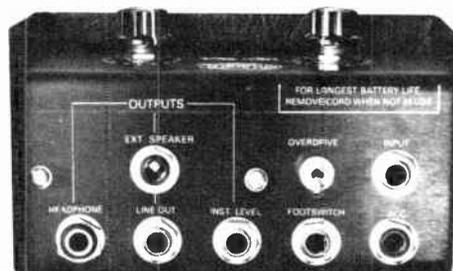
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# Guitarcheck

## ARIA Electric RS 850 \$875

The RS 850 is one of a series of two solid guitars and two basses featuring the latest bit of musical technology from Aria — “Revolutionary Sound.” I am not sure which bit of the sound is revolutionary. The 850 has some fancy internal electronics. Each pickup has an “active” low-pass tone control of which both the turnover frequency and the “Q” factor can be altered to

provide a great variety of different sounds. The other guitar, RS 750, and the two basses appear to have similar styling but less complex electronics.

The RS 850 seems to owe some part of its design principles to the pioneering work of the Alembic company. For a reasonably-priced guitar, this cannot be a bad starting point. Alembic were putting complex

electronics into guitars when some Japanese companies were still learning how to make a reasonably straight guitar neck. I would not suggest for one minute that this guitar was a copy of an Alembic instrument. The body and head shape are quite different. The better-known Japanese brand-names have progressed beyond “copies.” (at least where their export markets are concerned). However, the general influence is fairly clear. If both companies have truly arrived at the same idea independently, I would consider it an astonishing coincidence.

Although this guitar appears to have three single-coil pickups in the usual arrangement, the center pickup is permanently in circuit and the three-way pickup switch can select, *in addition*, pickups 1, or 3, or 1 plus 3.

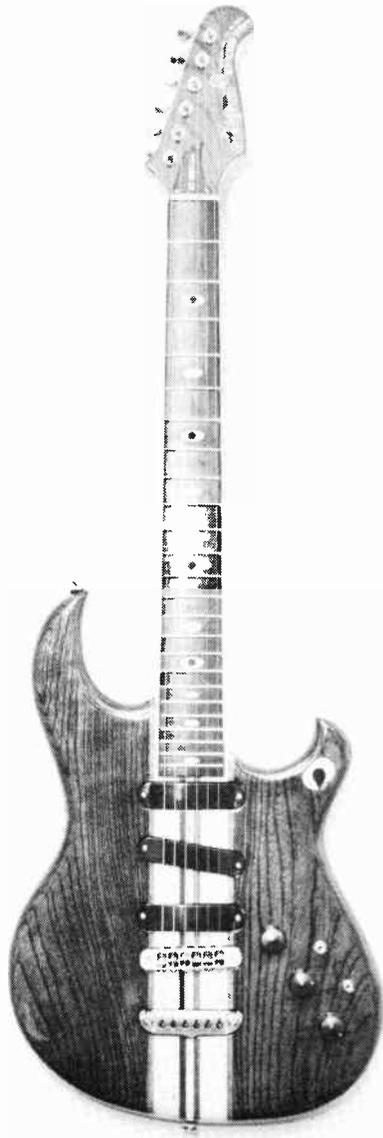
A single-coil pickup is, by its nature, more sensitive than a twin-coil “humbucker” to surrounding hum fields and other electrical interference. However, as well as cancelling out the hum, a twin coil pickup also cancels out some of the harmonics from the vibrating string. It also usually has a more complex magnetic structure than a single-coil pickup, and a greater internal inductance. This all begins to sound rather difficult.

The end result is that generally speaking, humbucking pickups collect less unwanted hum and noise, but they don't have the clarity and sparkle of a good single-coil pickup. Many players prefer the brighter sound of single-coil pickups and usually must accept certain problems with unwanted electrical noises. Alembic's solution was to use a separate pickup coil, which would receive more or less the same interference signals as the guitar's normal pickups. This

“interference” signal was then subtracted from the guitar's usual “music plus interference” signal, leaving something fairly close to a clean signal, of music *only*, without the hum, buzz and crackle.

That is a very simplified description, but I think it is enough to explain what a third pickup is doing in the middle of this Aria guitar. With a little careful juggling of coil directions and magnet polarity, it is possible to arrange for the center pickup to add a little more to the music signal, while still cancelling out the hum. How much the center pickup contributes to the music signal is a matter of individual taste and may be adjusted by raising or lowering the middle pickup relative to the other two. I believe that on Alembic guitars it is kept well away from the strings: this would suggest that on an Alembic, the center coil contributes very little to the final music signal. On the Aria, the center pickup is adjustable and provides something for a discontented guitarist to play with, while searching for the perfect sound. As the tone controls and relative pickup heights provide more than three variables, the variety of possible subtle shades of sound is almost unlimited. As a general guide, I would suggest that you will hear brighter and thinner sounds with the center pickup well away from the strings, and fatter sounds with the center pickup at about the same distance from the strings as the other two pickups. Not satisfied with this reversed-phased, electronic version of “Find the Lady,” the RS 850 also has separate, variable Q, active filters on each of the two main pickups.

So far in the description, you may have been interested in how the guitar functions under that impressive brass lid at the back,



but very little is required from you, the player. So far, it is all done for you. You don't need to know what the middle pickup does. So long as the guitar pleases you and makes the sounds you want, it doesn't matter if it is filled with equal proportions of syrup and old shoe-leather. (I did once see an experimental reverb unit built around a plastic drainpipe filled with industrial hand-cleaning jelly. To everyone's astonishment, it worked.) However, the *tone filters* on each pickup have such a wide effect, that they need to be adjusted with some understanding and a fairly light touch. Both filters seem to be the same, or very similar, so it will be sufficient if I describe only the tone controls around the bridge pickup.

The bridge pickup is selected by turning the small knob, on the treble-side cutaway, fully anti-clockwise. If you are lucky, the pointer on the knob should then point roughly toward the bridge pickup. On our review sample, this knob was a bit loose and would point in a variety of directions — in spite of having *two* fixing screws. Although this kind of miniature rotary switch is likely to give less trouble than the usual three-way selector switch, and is probably more gutsy than the alternative miniature selector switches, I find the switch on this guitar difficult to use, while holding a pick at the same time. I also find it difficult to see, and remember, which way the knob is pointing. I could probably adapt fairly quickly to the idea of a *rotary* pickup switch rather than a lever-switch, but I think the use of a rotary selector switch makes the choice of a suitable knob for it much more critical. I don't think the present knob is the best choice, but I must admit that I could not easily find a better one, readily available. I

offer as a suggestion, this lever-knob, which I have drawn in slightly exaggerated form to make the principle clear.

The tone control for the treble pickup consists of a rotary knob and a three-way Q switch which work in combination. At each of the three switch positions, the rotary knob gives a brighter sound when turned clockwise and a more bassy or more middley sound when

One attempt at providing guitars with a distinctive but changeable sound character is the use of variable Q tone filters.

This is where the three-way switches became important. In the left-hand switch position, the tone knob appears to work like an ordinary guitar tone control.

When the switch is in the middle position, the tone knob appears to vary the brightness of

**“This guitar looks good, feels good, and it would be worth serious consideration even without its active filter tone controls.”**

turned anti-clockwise. This is roughly the same effect that you would find on any electric guitar. However, you may have noticed that some electric guitars have individual and characteristic “voikings.” It is often difficult or impossible to use one instrument to duplicate the sound of another, whatever tone settings and pickup combinations are used. I think the popularity of certain guitar and amplifier combinations depends, in part, on the distinctive character of the sound produced. Unfortunately, instruments and equipment combinations which have a very definite and individual sound coloration tend also to be less versatile because of this. To put it another way, you may love your XYZ-Junior and 1950's White Lightnin' amp for playing Southern Baptist hymns, as you watch the sun rise, but they are not going to do much for your latest disco single.

the sound, while at the same time giving a bit of emphasis to different parts of the sound between the mid-range and the upper string harmonics.

There is also a right-hand switch position. This provides the most dramatic sound changes as you turn the tone control knob. The best description I can find, is that it sounds like a tone control and a wah-pedal, linked together and operated by the same knob. The filter is probably covering a narrower range of notes, but emphasizing this narrower range more strongly than before. It is this high-Q filter setting which produces the strange synthesizer-like sounds from an Alembic bass.

I would make one fairly serious criticism of this guitar: it applies equally to some recently produced instruments of other makes. These guitars rely absolutely on batteries to power their internal electronics, and

have no by-pass arrangements in case the batteries are allowed to run down. If the batteries are dead, then so is the guitar!

Of course, one does not expect the piece of equipment to perform as usual without batteries, but I feel that it should be able to function in some more limited way to cope with emergencies. In fairness to Aria, I will repeat that this difficulty applies to other makes of guitars as well, and that in most cases, an electronic repairman could fit a by-pass switch inside the battery compartment without too much trouble or expense. If just one pickup can be connected directly to the jack socket, it will usually be enough to get you out of trouble. So much for the electronics, but for around \$750, one expects rather more than three pickups and a couple of variable filters. Ignoring the electronic features, what is it like as a guitar?

First of all, I am inclined to mention that “all which glistens” is not necessarily gold — or in this case, is not necessarily brass either. The RS 850 has a nice looking and very well designed bridge and tailpiece in a lacquered, satin-brass finish. Now these components are well made, and neatly finished and probably rather better in some important respects than other similar looking units, on other guitars. However, neither bridge nor tailpiece is actually made from brass. They seem to be made from the same sort of die-casting alloy which is used for the better grades of gold-plated and chrome plated Japanese guitar fittings. Brass is at the moment a popular color for guitar fittings, and this guitar is dressed in the latest fashion. Brass plating, like gold plating on most guitar fittings, will probably begin to deteriorate when the lacquer

# Guitarcheck

film wears through, but if you catch it before the base metal becomes corroded, most die-cast components can be re-plated and re-lacquered, by specialist electroplating firms. I have never met a plater who was actually enthusiastic about replating on zinc alloy, but some companies will accept such work, generally at the owner's risk.

Although the RS series guitars all have 24 frets on the fingerboard, they do not have the neck-heavy unbalanced feel of many two-octave guitars. The neck runs straight through the center of the body and there is practically no heel at the back of the neck by the body joint. The neck is blended into the back of the body shape giving really excellent access to all the highest frets. Nothing interferes with the movement of your hand up the fingerboard, until your thumb or fingers hit the sides of the cutaways, by that stage, your third finger is comfortably over the 24th fret. The transition from neck to body is strong, pleasant to look at and convenient for the player, and the deep, double cutaway design, more like a bass than a guitar, makes the instrument surprisingly easy to handle.

No obvious neck and/or body resonances appear until the open string G and the F below, on the D string. I am very surprised that there appear to be no significant resonances above this point. The top strings have a smooth and pleasing kind of sustain/decay envelope over the entire range from G-sharp on the third string to high E on the top string, at the 24th fret. This is an unusually good performance for any electric guitar and I would consider it a good instrument, (if perhaps rather expensive) even without the electronic tricks.

The neck feels a little wider

than usual across the fingerboard and therefore also slightly more "rectangular", (rather than round or pointed,) at the back. It is, therefore, not the slimmest neck I have reviewed in the last few years. However, the slight additional width does make life easier for those people who are not blessed with narrow fingertips. We are only concerned here with perhaps one millimeter extra in width and a very subtle change in shape at the back of the neck. In no way does it feel clumsy, or difficult to handle, but it does feel very slightly wider, and the strings seem to be spaced a little further apart. Neck shaping is quite a subtle business, and actual measurements may not in this case tell the whole story. Like many people, I have fairly broad fingertips. I prefer to play instruments, either with very narrow fingerboards, and the strings so close together that I can consistently cover two strings with one fingertip, or alternatively, instruments like this Aria with sufficiently wide string spacing that I can easily fret one string without touching the adjacent strings.

Many otherwise pleasant guitars fall between these two categories. While I am happy to review them on behalf of people with long, slim fingers, I would not wish to own any of them. Fat-fingered guitarists of the world unite, and go and try a RS 850. If you don't need the filters (or the fairly high price) there is a similar guitar in the catalogue, with almost standard electronics, called RS 750. This appears to have the same neck and fingerboard.

The fingerboard is described in the catalogue as ebony. On our sample, it is black and dark brown, with faint gold stripes. There is quite a lot of this sort of ebony about; not all ebony is black. Usually people put black



paint or dye on the figured ebony, which I think is a pity, because it looks attractive in its own right. It also looks more appropriate with the colors of this guitar than a uniform dead black surface. All credit to the makers for omitting the black paint job. This is a nice fingerboard the color is real and it is not going to come off on your fingers after a few weeks.

The frets are wide, rounded and fairly high. I like them, but if you are heavy-handed, play a lot of chords and like *very* light strings, you might prefer to have the frets reduced in height by about a quarter and then re-shaped to the same rounded profile. Average players using average light or slinky strings would probably be happy with the frets as they are. Fairly high, polished frets and a hard, polished fingerboard make string bending almost effortless.

The fingerboard inlays are imitation pearl plastic and not very convincing. I do not mind plastic inlays on electric guitars, but I have seen better examples of plastic pearl. It is perfectly adequate for position markers but it does not look as carefully judged as the rest of the guitar. I also notice that except for the addition of four round black

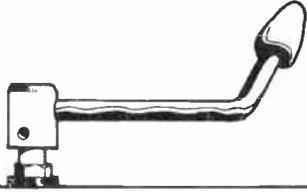
dots, this inlay pattern is remarkably similar to the fingerboard of one particular Alembic guitar. (For example, see page 4 of the 78/79 Japan electronic musical instruments catalogue center.)

The neck and the center section of the body are made from a five-piece maple and walnut laminate. At the body end, there are two more thick walnut layers and then the main outer "wings" of the body. This main part of the body is probably ash wood and is tinted to a middle brown color to contrast with the blond neck and center body section. I believe the same guitar is also available in a completely blond finish and also in "Japan Brown."

The overall finish of wood and lacquer is very good. The masking at the edge of the tinted sections is not quite perfect and one side of the cutaway is slightly lumpy where it joins the neck, but neither of these is particularly important.

The head outline is approximately in the same style as Fender instruments with all the machine heads on the bass side. Because of the close spacing of the machines on Fender guitars, it was found necessary to cut away part of the screw lugs on adjacent machine heads leaving just half a screw hole on each. When butted together, adjacent machine heads would make up one complete screw hole and would share one fixing screw. I find it fascinating that the Japanese machiness on this Aria have reproduced the general styling of the Kluson machines, including the problem that they are really too large for this kind of head. The screw lugs on adjacent machines are cut short leaving only half a screw hole on each lug!

I once found a tiny mold-



makers' mark on the plastic coil bobbin of a pickup. About a year later, I found an apparently identical tiny mark on the bobbin of a Japanese pickup. In each case, the tiny mark was only visible *after* the pickup had been taken apart. I have been assured, by several perfectly straight faces, that the Japanese component is actually a copy of the American one. It makes you wonder.

### Conclusion

This a pleasing and well balanced guitar (in more than one sense), which has effectively dealt with plagiaristic difficulties by borrowing design influences from several different guitars.

The result should have been a disaster, but it is nothing like it. It looks good, feels good and it would be worth serious consideration even without its active filter tone controls. I find the pickup selector inconvenient: you may not agree. The tone and volume knobs do have small silver position marker dots (which is an improvement over most of the featureless metal guitar knobs), but engraved numbers around the edge would be more useful. I do not like guitars which are absolutely dependent on internal batteries. If that is the way the wind is blowing (and it may well be so), I shall continue to go against it. Incidentally, the very similar RS

75C guitar and the 650 and 550 basses do not appear to rely on batteries.

The RS guitars and basses are Aria's latest new instruments. The two guitars and two basses share similar design ideas. Judging by this review guitar, I would expect them to be a popular and successful addition to the Aria range. I am still trying to work out how they can make a 24 fret guitar balance so well: The theory is easy enough, but not many companies have actually managed to do it.

I can understand Aria's wish that their new guitar should be easily recognized, but I would prefer a smaller and more sensitive logo on the head.

*Instrument Aria RS 850 Serial No. 109071.*

*Scale length 650 mm*

*String spacing at bridge 50 mm*

*Fingerboard width at nut 44 mm*

*String spacing at nut 36 mm*

*Depth of neck at fret 1 20 mm*

*Depth at fret 12 23 mm*

*Depth at fret 15 24 mm*

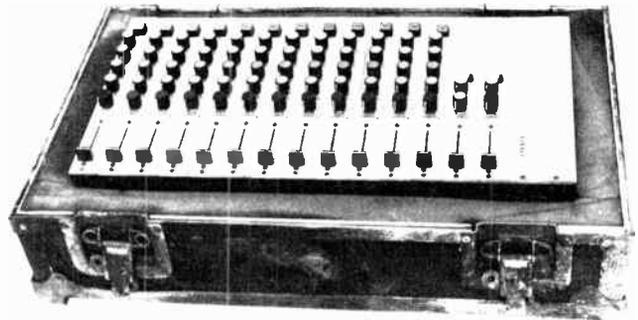
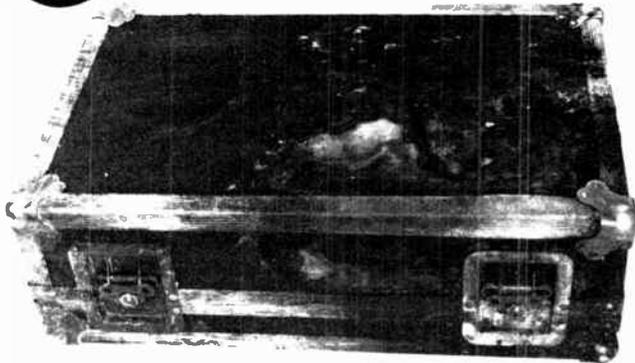
*Action as supplied 0.8 mm treble // 1.7 mm bass.*

*Lowest recommended action under our standard conditions 0.9 mm treble // 2.0 mm bass.*

*24 frets on fingerboard. Body joins at fret 21 on treble side. No effective heel — back of neck blended into body. This sort of low action would indicate that the frets have been finished with care.*

**Stephen Delft**

## CALZONE... WHEN "STANDARD" ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH!



As we were cruising the Indiana toll road on our way to Washington from a White House gig in Seattle, a tow truck caught us and flagged us down. Smoke was billowing from the back of our truck. As we opened the cargo door, flames welled out at us. A trucker who had stopped to help, yelled, "Get back, the gas tanks are gonna blow!" We moved back and stood helplessly watching all our equipment burn. It took 20 minutes for the fire department to get there. The heat was so intense that our aluminum ladder completely melted. We were certain all our equipment was destroyed. Later as we were clearing out some of the charred remains, we discovered the blackened CALZONE case containing the mixing board. The case was in one piece and the board looked okay inside the case, so we took it out and tried it. It worked! Thank God for CALZONE.

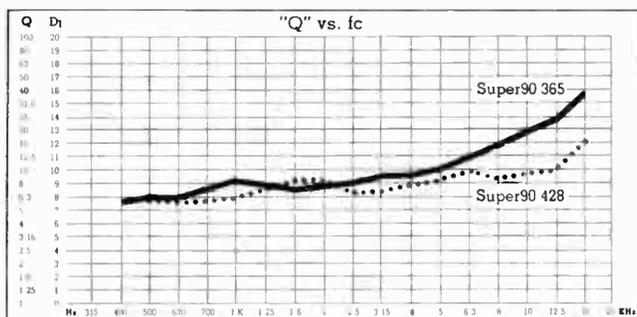
*George Spalding, Events, Inc., Washington, DC*

Events, Inc., is a Washington based technical support group specializing in government conferences, media events, and corporate conventions. catalog write: **CALZONE CASE CO., P.O. Box 862, Norwalk, Connecticut 06856 or call (203) 853-7907.**

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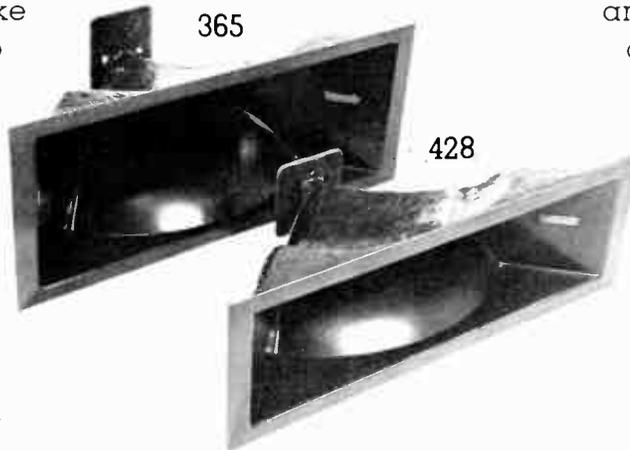
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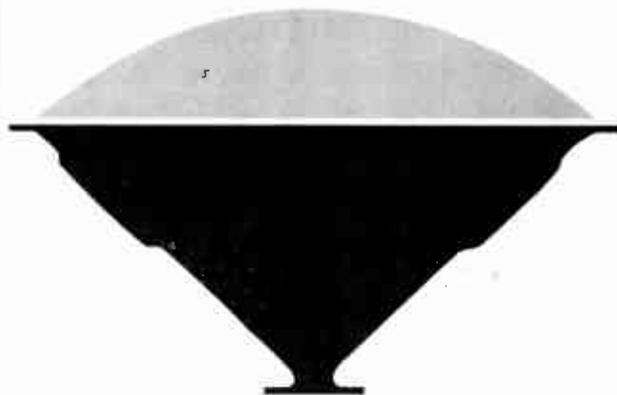
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# Guitarcheck

## Takamine No. F312S \$279.50

If you are looking for a sensitive steel-string acoustic, you can't buy much for \$280 these days. You may be lucky and find a good secondhand instrument which has nothing serious wrong with it. On the other hand, you may buy something which has never been quite right from the start. It is difficult for a beginner to sort out the good secondhand instruments from the troublesome ones. Good shops do check and adjust their secondhand instruments, but this takes skill and time, and careful refurbished instruments cannot then be sold for rock-bottom prices.

Among new steel string guitars, around \$280 or less, there is some choice of instruments: some models offer better value than others and even individual samples of the same model can vary considerably in tone and playability. Reasonable nylon-string guitars are probably easier to find. If you specifically want a steel-string "folk guitar" within this price limit, you would be well advised to find a music shop which has a reputation for straightforward dealing and good customer service before and after the sale. This may be your local music shop — ask your friends which shops have treated them well and fairly, and then go and look for yourself. On the other hand, your local shop(s), while being a shining example of fair and honest trading, may specialize in electric guitars and amps, or pianos, or woodwind, and you may need to travel further to find what you want.

Even under the best circumstances, you can't expect to find much of a choice. I was recently in Ivor Mairants' basement while taking photographs of another guitar, and noticed this Takamine hanging on the wall

for sale. I happen to like small steel-string guitars; I asked to play it and was surprised at the figure on the price tag. There seem to be a few other guitarists around who share my taste in guitars and I thought you might like to know about this one.

The Takamine F312S is a small-bodied steel string acoustic, roughly based on one of the medium sized Martin instruments. It has a fingerboard width of 48mm or 1 7/8 inches, midway between classical guitar width and the usual steel string jumbo width. Many people find this size of fingerboard convenient, but both classical guitars and steel string jumbos tend to keep each to their own "standard" dimensions. You may find it interesting that many handmade guitars are ordered with fingerboards of medium width.

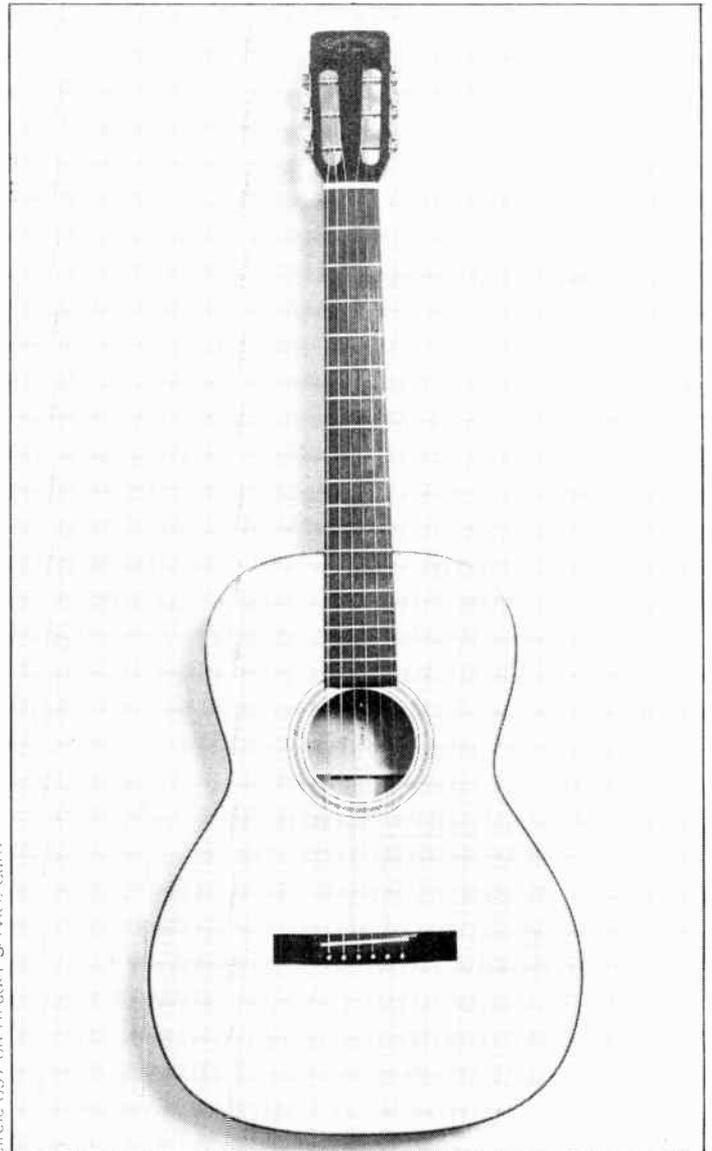
This guitar has a well shaped but fairly chunky neck. I would prefer it a little less deep, but it is quite manageable for the price. I am not inclined to argue about it. The bridge and fingerboard are rosewood and smoothly finished. The frets are of medium width and height and also smoothly finished. The ends are filed quite "square" at the ends, but the sharp edges have been removed, even on the fret ends over the front of the body. This is an important point on a guitar which will probably be played with fingers as well as with a plectrum. Sharp fret ends on the bass side, by the soundhole, can easily take a chip out of a carefully grown thumbnail.

This sample was nicely adjusted at the nut and at the bridge. I would probably lower the action a little further at the bridge end, but this is a matter of personal preference. The action is acceptable as it stands and some players would

definitely prefer it like this. There was a slight creak from the top string when tuning it, so I poked some pencil lead into the nut groove and now it tunes without creaking. The other strings seemed to work well without any further attention.

The machine heads are like the usual Japanese middle price three-on-a-plate models, but with narrow metal string rollers

appropriate for metal strings. Although this type of machine must be produced quite cheaply, they look pleasant, and all six work very smoothly. It may be that there are different qualities of gears available, fitted to rather similar base plates. I have seen other machine heads which look very like these, but which do not work as well.



Circle 897 on Reader Service Card

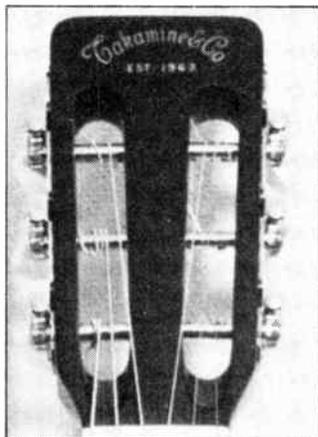
# Guitarcheck

The neck and body are made of mahogany or a similar wood and finished in a satin brown lacquer. The sides and back are presumably of laminated construction, but the soundboard is from solid spruce (not laminated) and has a fairly thin, clear lacquer finish. This is just less than a high gloss surface and looks right for this kind of guitar. The inside seems to be made as neatly as the outside on this sample and it was certainly not specially selected for review. Other samples may be as good, better or worse, but this one came straight off the wall at random.

This is not a jumbo guitar. It has a fairly small body and it is obviously not going to boom deeply if you play it hard. It does have a very pleasing and fluid treble range (astonishing for the price), and is well balanced overall, for intricate folk guitar fingerstyles and odd bits from Edition Schott 3694, "Lieder und Tanze auf die Lauten". If you are used to larger steel string guitars, you may be surprised to find that the body joins the neck at the 12th fret, not the 14th. This is entirely correct for this kind of small guitar: they have longer bodies and shorter necks, and if you change the design around, it does not sound as good.

## Conclusion

This is a charming little guitar which is far better than I would expect to find for its modest price. It is good for playing complicated fingerpicking bits, and it will make quite a lot of noise if you must play it at full volume. It has almost no decoration. This keeps the price down and it is no loss. Most Martin guitars have very little decoration, and other Japanese guitars of this kind, have too much decoration *and* in quite the wrong style. It is simple, it



sounds good, it offers an alternative medium width of fingerboard and it fits into a reasonable price range where rising prices have left something of a gap.

Stephen Delft

**INSTRUMENT:** Takamine F3125 S  
**Serial Number:** 79040985

Scale length	635mm
String spacing at bridge	59mm
Fingerboard width at nut	48mm
String spacing at nut	41mm
Depth of neck at fret 1	24.5mm
Depth of neck at fret 8	26mm
Action as supplied	2.2mm treble/3.2mm bass
Lowest recommended action under our standard conditions	1.8mm treble/3mm bass

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crisply pops and the bass drum punches as if they were heavily compressed.

Two unique features are the Accent control, which gives an added realism to the program tracks, and the Variation control, which produces 11 different drum fills that can be programmed to play at desired intervals.

In addition to all of the other features, the CR-78 Compu-Rhythm contains a micro-computer that allows you to program your own (or Louie's) drum

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The Compu-Rhythms will find a lot of places in your music—from writing music to laying down click tracks for multi-track recording. They can even provide trigger outputs for external control of synthesizers or digital sequencers.

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World Radio History

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Our M series for example with the recently developed M-36 and the original M-38 is specifically designed to reduce overtones detected when dreadnought guitars are played through sophisticated sound systems or in recording studios. With a wider and shallower body than traditional acoustic guitars, the M series produces increased treble response and improved tonal balance.

In our HD-35 we have borrowed characteristics from our "Herringbone" D-28 which was originally offered between 1931 and 1946 and reintroduced in 1976. The HD-35 provides a balanced response with a brilliance that is generated when a dreadnought body is combined with a top featuring scalloped braces.

So, as we examine these models we ask ourselves . . . "What's not new from Martin?" Our ability to draw from nearly 150 years experience of creating acoustic guitars in an environment that demands attention to detail and quality hand craftsmanship—**that's what's not new!**  
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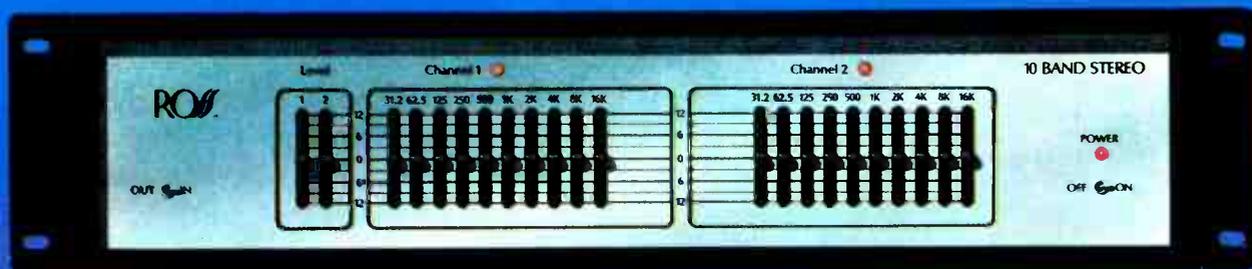
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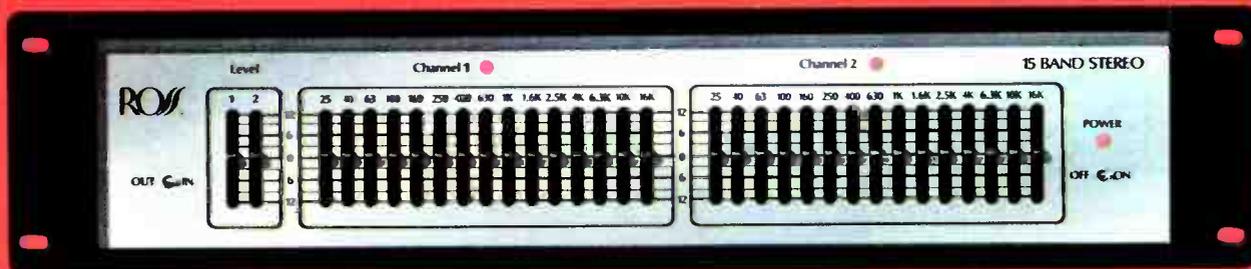
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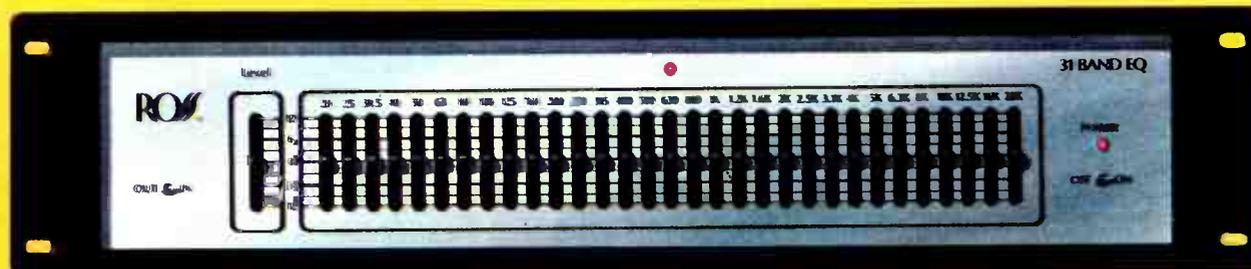
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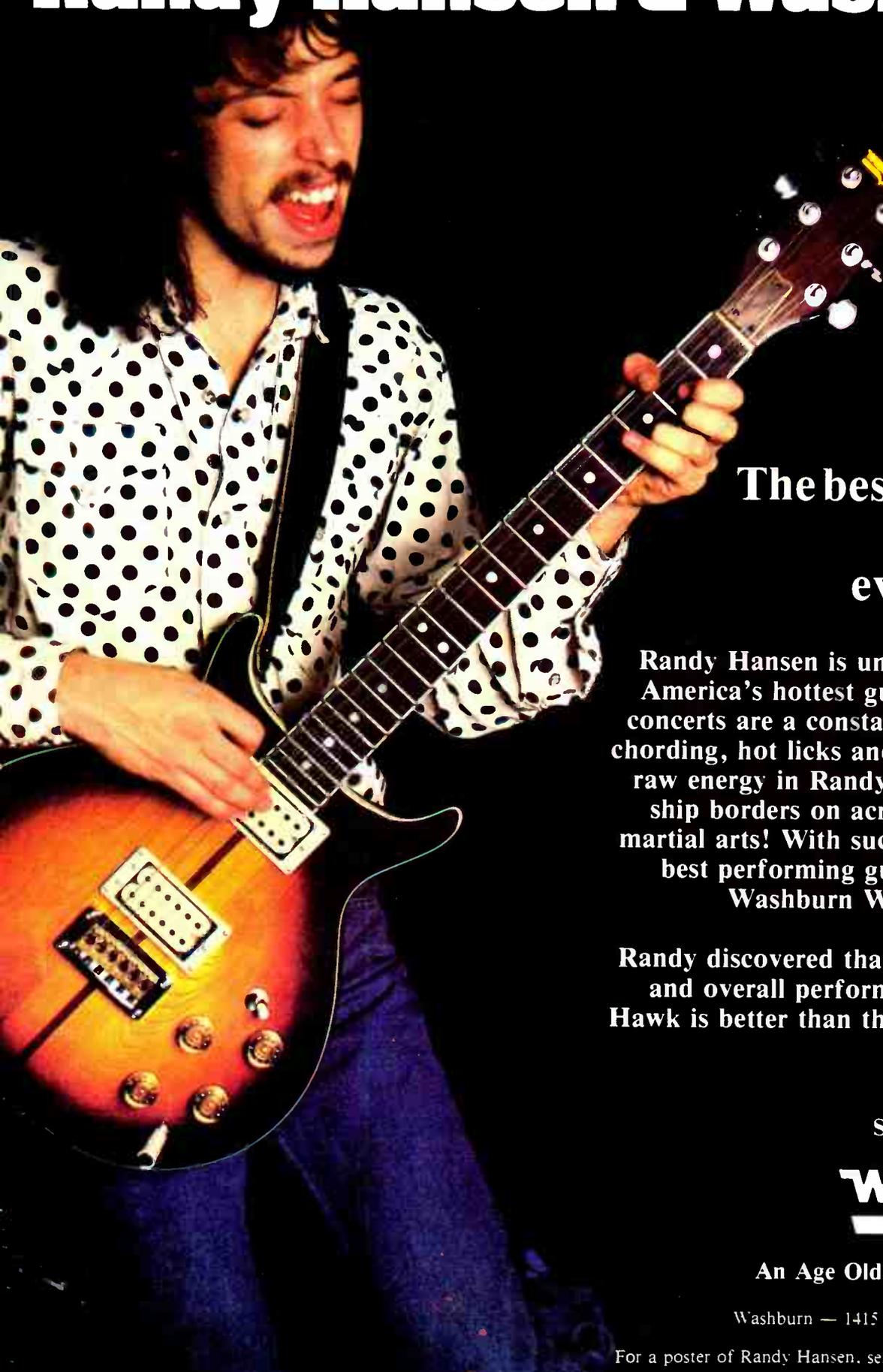


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World Radio History

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**CS-40M.** Duophonic, programmable and highly portable describes this top model in the new line. It has four VCO's, two VCF's and two VCA's plus a Ring Modulator, an Attack Decay EG for the LFO and Ring Modulator, and a unison mode which converts the unit to mono operation by doubling up the VCO's for richer sound. The keyboard has 44 keys.

The CS-40M can store and recall, at the push of a button, up to 20 sounds that you've created, even after the power is shut off. Interface with a tape recorder requires just two patch cords.

**CS-20M.** Up to 8 voices can be stored and recalled in this model. The CS-20M has two VCO's, an LFO, a noise generator, a mixer (for the VCO's and the noise), a 3-way VCF and a VCA. It is a monophonic instrument with a 37-note keyboard.

Both models have keyboard trigger in/out jacks and control voltage in/out jacks for convenient use with a sequencer. Rear panel jacks are provided for ON-OFF foot switching of Sustain and Portamento Glissando effects, and for continuously variable control of the volume.

**CS-15.** This compact, very affordable synthesizer has two VCO's, two VCF's, two VCA's, two EG's and one LFO. One-touch knobs and switches free you from complicated patch work. Sawtooth wave, square wave, white noise, and triangle wave give unique tonal characteristics.

MODEL	KEYS	VCO	VCF	EG	NOTES	DIGITAL MEMORIES
CS-5	37	1	1	1	1	N A
CS-15	37	2	2	2	1	N A
CS-20M	37	2	1	2	1	8
CS-40M	44	4	2	2	2	20



**CS-5.** This is our most compact monophonic synthesizer. It has 37 keys, but with the 6-setting Feet selector switch, the instrument's range is extended to a full 8 octaves. A Sample and Hold circuit allows you to automatically play a continuous random pattern. There are many other features that make this model's very affordable price even more attractive.

Write Yamaha, Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622 for more complete information on the full line. Or better yet, visit your Yamaha dealer for a demonstration of the synthesizers that take both your creative desires and your budget considerations seriously.

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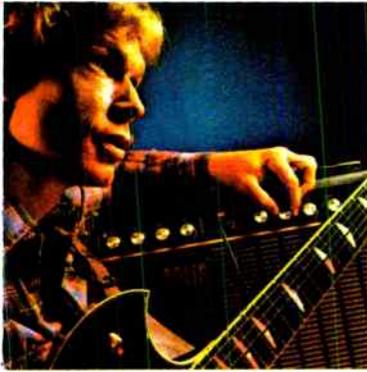
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There's also A/B channel switching, "Pull Fat" for boosted midrange, "Pull Bright" for treble boost, channel B Master Volume (which allows you to overdrive the unique FET preamp for a realistic tube amp sound), and 100 watts RMS driving two 12" speakers. The other four models offer the same features in various power ratings and speaker configurations.

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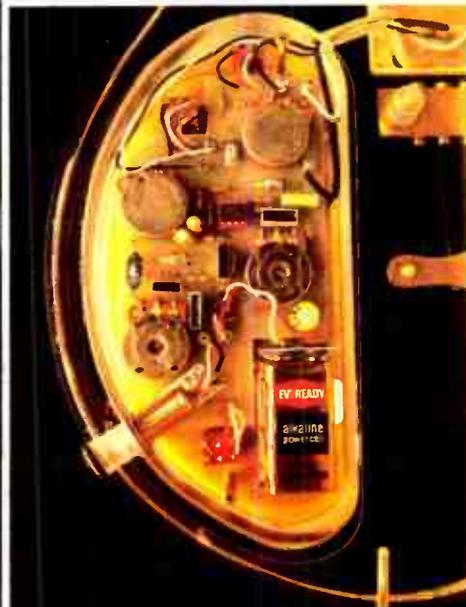
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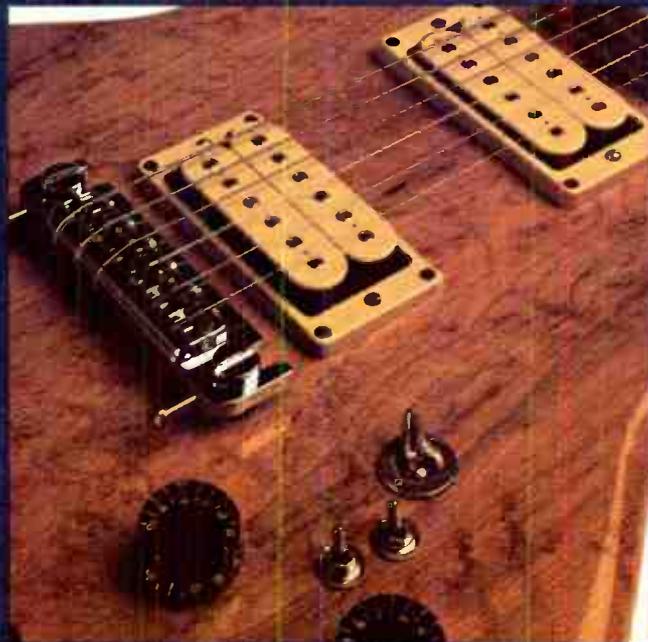
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# WE CARE WHAT YOU THINK.

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That approach has made our Beta Series amplifiers one of the most successful product groups we've ever developed. Models with and without reverb offer dual channel operation with tremendous performance versatility.

A great dual channel amp requires two things. First, a control system for selecting the channel to be used so you can have the option of switching from one channel to the other without disturbing the preset volume and tone settings, or hear cross-channel noise.

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# Synthcheck

## The Oberheim OB-X 4 Voice Synthesizer \$4,595.00

Digital synthesizers have been around for a number of years and there are many different ways to employ digital technology in keyboard instruments. Computers are now being used to interface with analog circuitry to remember patches. This approach to using digital technology is, perhaps, the most popular right now, with the Oberheim modular 4 voice, the OB-1 monophonic, and the Sequential Circuits Prophet 5 as examples. Given this (and the fact that with the Prophet 5, demand last year far exceeded supply) it was a logical step for Oberheim to bring out the OB-X.

The OB-X I looked at was a 4 voice polyphonic. It is available as 4, 6 or 8 voice and comes pre-programmed with 32 different sounds. These can be changed, altered, relocated or re-recorded directly onto cassette tape thereby eliminating the need for an interface device.

The cassette interface allows programs contained in the memory to be stored externally on an audio cassette. All that you require is a cassette recorder with a good frequency response and a pair of mini-jack connecting cables.

Contained inside OB-X on the printed circuit board which holds microprocessor and memories, is a switch which,

when set properly, prevents a user from "writing" into the program memory, thus allowing one to prevent the accidental erasure of a program. Pre-programmed sounds can be modified or changed completely by bringing into use the manual or the edit mode. Programs in either manual or edit mode may be saved by "writing" them into the memory.

The output volume of OB-X can be adjusted with the volume control in the upper left hand corner. This will simultaneously control both the stereo and mono outputs. The master tune control allows OB-X to be fine-tuned to other instruments and when the control is set in the "dead zone" near the top center, the instrument is tuned to A440.

Each voice is assigned two oscillators and two full ADSR generators. The back of the instrument has five foot control inputs for volume, filter, vibrato, sustain and program advance. A small criticism here for the fact that there is no variable output from the oscillators: they can only be selected at either half or full volume.

I did not find the pitch and modulation lever arrangement to my own personal taste. I prefer the control wheel type *a la* Moog or Prophet 5. The OB-X



levers I find a little visually unattractive and they do not look or feel particularly gutsy.

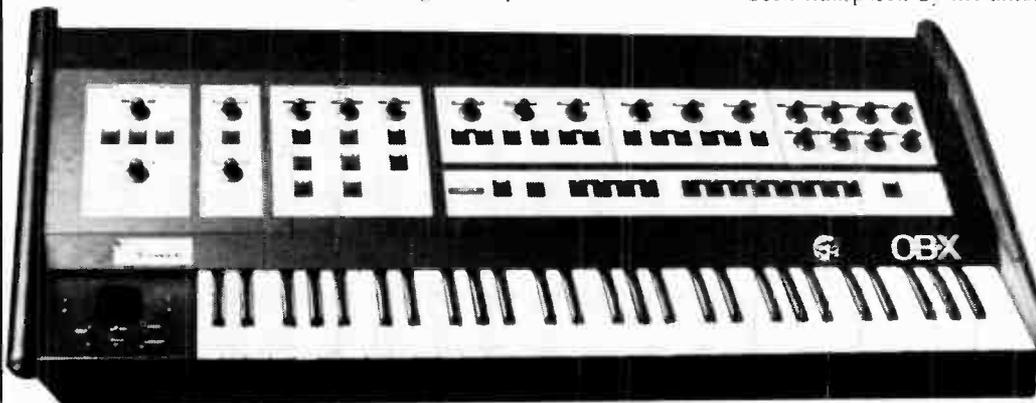
Despite one or two minor moans, OB-X is a versatile, competitive keyboard instrument. It possesses the familiar big Oberheim sound, it is quick and easy to operate and in its 4, 6 or 8 voice option is the only likely challenger to the immaculate Prophet 5.

Other OB-X features include polyphonic glide, sample and hold plus something they call the "unison chord feature." Using the hold and reset switches together produces this effect. By selecting a desired chord and using "hold," you then press the reset switch and the held chord will cease sounding until a note on the keyboard is played. When this is done, the chord you previously held will then sound, having been transposed by the amount

that the played note is above the lowest on the keyboard. The keyboard is five octaves and dimensions for the interested are — width 41", depth 22", height 7" and weight approximately 40lbs.

Mike Moran

*Mike Moran is one of Britain's busiest keyboard players. He's scored several films including "The Greek Tycoon" and "The Bitch". Recently he's played on albums by Kate Bush, Cliff Richard, Gladys Knight and the Four Tops. He's toured with Leo Sayer, Maggie Bell and Ian Gillan.*



# Soundcheck

## Sunn Alpha 112PR Combo Amp.

\$389



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Sunn produce an extensive range of products which include several different ranges of amplifiers and combination speaker-amplifiers. The amplifier that every bass player dreams about is the Coliseum bass producing a massive 320 WRMS. In the same range is the concert lead, concert bass and an all-valve amplifier, the model T.

There are two ranges that Sunn call self-contained amplifiers (i.e. combos). These are the Alpha and the popular Beta series. The Beta series are all 100 watt transistorized amplifiers and are available as both combination amplifiers/speakers and amplifier tops while the Alpha series are only available as combos.

The unit on test today is the alpha 112 PR 50 watt reverb combination amplifier/speaker.

### Construction

The overall construction of this unit is slightly different from that of conventional combos and so deserves a more detailed explanation. The combo is in two parts — a loudspeaker box and a chassis. This is not different in itself except that the chassis is shaped like an inverted "U" and fits over the top of the enclosure so forming the top of the cabinet. The loudspeaker box is completely sealed and has side pieces extending vertically in order to support the chassis on top. The single 12" loudspeaker box is completely sealed and has side pieces extending vertically in order to support the chassis on top. The single 12" loudspeaker is bolted in from the front and is protected by a fine plastic mesh stretched on a frame bolted onto the front

panel. To finish off, two side pieces complete with protective edging strip are bolted onto the cabinet. These side pieces protrude all round and offer protection for the operational controls and also act as feet.

### Electronics

The chassis itself comprises of all the electronics save the spring reverb unit which is mounted in foam rubber in the space formed between the top of the cabinet and the chassis. All the components are mounted on a single printed circuit board and in addition, a single mains transformer prewired for 240 volts operation mounted directly onto the chassis. The power amplifier and transistors are also on the one p.c. board and are mounted on an aluminum angle which provides some mechanical support for the board. Additional support is provided

by the front panel controls which are also mounted directly onto the board.

These top panel controls are from left to right drive, bass, mid boost, mid center frequency, treble, level (volume) and reverb. An illuminated red neon rocker switch is provided for mains on/off. The back panel has provision for a reverb on/off switch (foot) jack and a useful extra accessory in/out. No loudspeaker output is provided but instead a headphone jack socket which is next to a captive mains lead.

In general the construction of both the cabinet and the chassis is of a very high standard as one would expect. Although the printed circuit board is well laid out I was a little concerned to see in several places odd capacitors and resistors added in as an after-thought. Certainly with the chassis and side panels bolted together the combo is reasonably light and very sturdy.

### Operation

Sunn place particular emphasis on C-MOS technology to obtain what they call the "tube" sound. The claim that this makes it much easier to obtain both clean sounds and overdrive sustain. In fact, Sunn have for some time claimed to build into their amplifiers the "tube" sound using F.E.T.'s (Field Effect Transistors). Initially on switching on, I was a little disappointed with the sound especially when the first thing that I did was to crack up the drive control to see what the overdrive sustain was like. It is very difficult to equate a very quiet sustain sound with a valve amplifier running flat out. So when turned up this amplifier started to sound a lot nicer. The amount of overdrive available at low volume levels even with a guitar such as a Strat, is extremely good. It was just that it didn't sound to me like a valve sound. All of the

tone controls act after the distortion stage. The only way to tone correct before the distortion is by selecting the brite (bass cut) or normal inputs by adjusting the guitar tone controls. It seemed to me that perhaps just a little more bass cut would have improved the sound no end.

A nice touch is that the drive control only provides overload distortion near the top end of its travel and then all of a sudden. It does allow easy selection of a basic clean sound without too much fiddling with the controls. Turning up the level (volume) transforms the lean sound into a very convincing valve distortion. In fact, by keeping the drive control turned down and altering the level control, this amp behaves more like a 50 watt valve amp than a solid state one.

Pushing up both drive and level control, a quite remarkable input sensitivity of 1/2mV provides as much sustain at high power as you would ever want.

Both bass and treble controls have a very useful range (over 50dB) but more important the frequencies at which they operate have been chosen well to suit the electric guitar (in particular the bass control which acts at a higher frequency than on many other guitar amplifiers). Both mid boost and

center frequency controls are provided to allow more control over the guitar sound. In particular it is possible to accentuate the characteristic sound of a guitar simply by fine tuning of the center frequency adjustment.

When all tone controls are turned down to the minimum position, there is no output. Personally, I prefer the more usual type of tone controls that allow you to start with a basic sound and then modify it.

On the negative side, I did not like the control knobs. They looked a little cheap and plastic although they appeared to be quite sturdy. I was also a little worried that the protection afforded by the side panels would not be enough to stop the odd control from being damaged easily, especially when subjected to normal on the road conditions.

What perhaps was more worrying, was the ease with which it was most possible to push the plastic mesh (speaker grill) in and touch the loudspeaker cone. It would be all too easy to accidentally damage the loudspeaker with a careless kick.

On this sample there did not seem to be very much reverb level even when turned up full. The reverb sound seemed fine but it was difficult to really judge it properly because of lack of level.

#### Conclusions

In general, the reaction to this amp by musicians was favorable. Apart from one or two reservations, the amp performed extremely well.

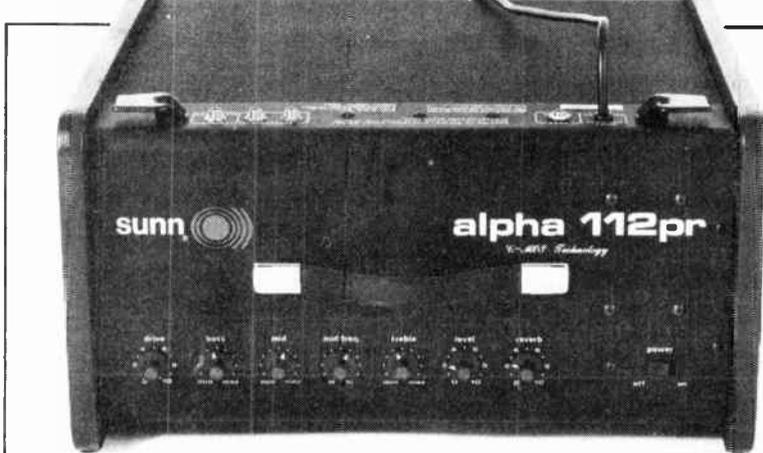
When used in the "live gig" situation, its high level "tube" sustain was remarkable. In fact, in this respect it has few rivals. With 50 watts of output into a single 12" loudspeaker, the amp was loud but not overpowering so it probably would be better suited for studio or non-heavy rock situations. However, there

is always the Beta range.

At a price of \$389, it represents good value for money.

**Dave Mann**

*Dave Mann gained an honors degree in Electronic Engineering at Southampton University in 1972. Since then he has been working in Television and Sound Studios with more recent involvement in the design of guitar amplifiers. He is also a member of a regular playing band.*



# EffectsCheck

## DBJ EC-301 EFFECTS PEDAL

Writing about this unit in IMRW/USA's New Products column a few issues ago, I was initially impressed by the fact that the EC-301 console was the first "state-of-the-art" re-think of distortion to come down the pike in quite a while. Now that I've tested the unit under a variety of playing circumstances, it's safe to say that the EC-301 is not only the best distortion unit I've ever heard (A-B'd in our New York offices with a Mesa-Boogie amplifier, the respective distortion modes were virtually indistinguishable), it's a *whole lot more*.

The EC-301 Effects Console (DBJ Laboratories Inc. c/o Sound Applications Ltd, 342 Lexington Ave., Mt. Kisco, NY 10549) features an arsenal of built-in goodies that includes: Four operational modes VCA volume circuitry, Wide band wah, Integrated circuit distortion, LED function indicators, Electronic signal switching, Built-in line driver, Volume boost, as regulated AC power supply and a heavy-duty steel chassis. And all of these features are built into the EC-301 with a *reason*, not just as gimmicky afterthoughts.

The basic controls consists of a pedal, four Allen Bradley pots for the respective functions and two footswitches for kicking the unit into either the "distortion" or "wah" mode. The pedal, which features an unusually smooth linear taper due to a simulated logarithmic curve and VCA circuitry, simultaneously controls Volume and Wah functions in tandem with Distortion in a variety of interrelated functions.

The four pots are marked "Depth," "Blend," "Level," and "System Gain." "Depth" controls the amount or type of distortion you get when that function is operative, from a "soft tube" sound at the lower settings up to a total harmonic

distortion setting around "8." The distortion sound, which can be controlled by the pedal if the player wants to get stuff like "violining" effects, rich and almost supernaturally full and textured. All of the particular textures implicit in your guitar sound are faithfully, rendered without that tacky, hollow sounding and static-y buzz so common with most commercial distortion devices. The distortion is *so* fat and ballsey that it's hard to pin down in words, but if you've ever listened to the sounds Allan Holdsworth or Mick Taylor get with their guitars, that should give you a reasonably accurate approximation of what you'll get with this unit (PS: these guys, to the best of my knowledge, don't use the EC-301 unit, I'm just using them as obvious examples of the better distortion sound).

The "Blend" control determines the proportion of the original guitar signal to the distorted signal. The manufacturers recommend rolling this control fully clockwise, then backing it off until you reach the desired blend of the two. The "Level" control allows the player to pre-set the distortion output level in relation to the overall or "clean" guitar signal volume — obviously, higher, lower or at the same level, depending on what you want to play and how. The "System Gain" control is used to determine the desired output level when wah and distortion functions are combined.

The straight Volume function is activated when the unit is turned on, and then is controlled by the pedal. The afore-mentioned VCA volume circuitry makes for "clean, noise-free" operation and, because the DBJ folks have routed the output signal through an additional stage

controlled by the pedal, they have intelligently eliminated possible noise resulting from a worn out potentiometer. Because of the way the volume circuitry is set up in this unit, most of the "action" takes place in the upper part of the pedal travel. Again, except for the SHO-BUD pedal which is actually designed for use with a pedal steel, this is the most effective volume pedal I have yet to come across.

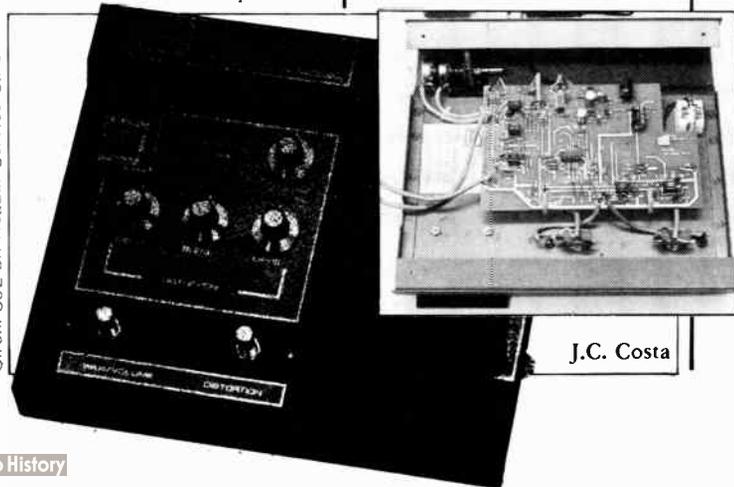
Since the Wah function is activated by an independent footswitch and *not* the pedal, the user can preset a particular tonal configuration and then switch in the wah without altering the pedal position. The Wah function also features a smooth linear taper from bass to treble without the objectionable "snap" so often encountered on these types of units. And of course, you can use the Wah function with the original signal for "clean" Wah or combine it with distortion to get that Robin Trower/Frankie Marino "clone" Hendrix sound we all love so much.

Also, by setting the distortion depth to zero, the blend control to maximum and the level control to the desired boost level, you can get a "Volume boost" capability if you need that. All of this is packaged into a sturdy steel chassis console finished in matte black with chrome control knobs. LED function indicators are provided

adjacent to the Distortion and Wah footswitches to remind you what functions are actively engaged and the electronic signal switching (a first for this type of unit) makes for *noiseless* switching — no more ear-splitting "pops" as the unit is engaged! And all of the previously mentioned functions can be used in varying combinations at different settings for new and *different* aural textures. Essentially, the EC-301 is a custom-made pedal board — the kind your favorite guitar players have custom made for BIG bucks — at a very reasonable price.

In parting, I'll simply add that any phasing, flanging or echo effects that you might want to use in tandem with this unit should be placed *after* the EC-301 in the effects chain. This allows for maximum effectiveness given the particular characteristics of both types of units. My only minor quibble stems from the fact that the setting numbers on the silver control knobs are fairly hard to read without getting up close, but that's far from a major drawback. A legitimately *new* technological innovation that delivers every single thing that is promised, the EC-301 augers particularly well for the DBJ company, especially in light of the fact that they are currently developing an amplifier with the EC-301 effects built-in plus a host of other innovations.

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J.C. Costa

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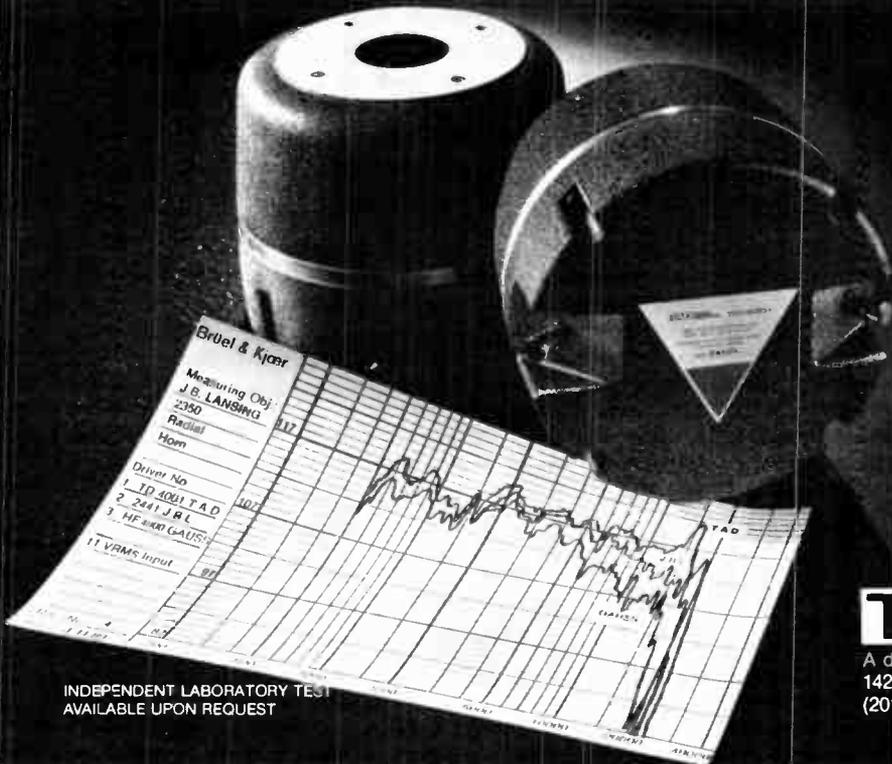
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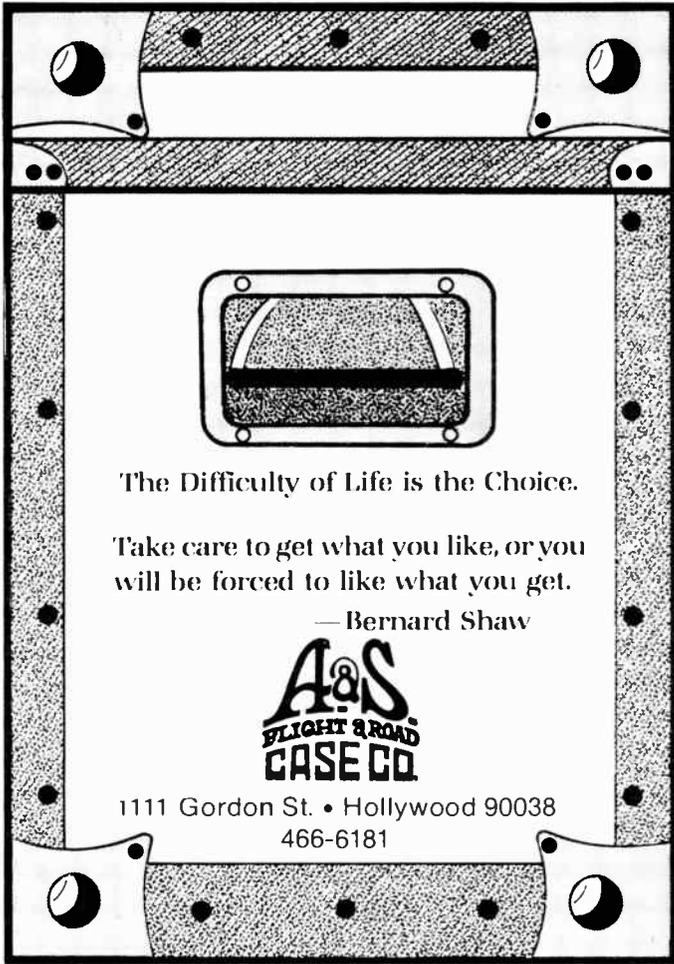
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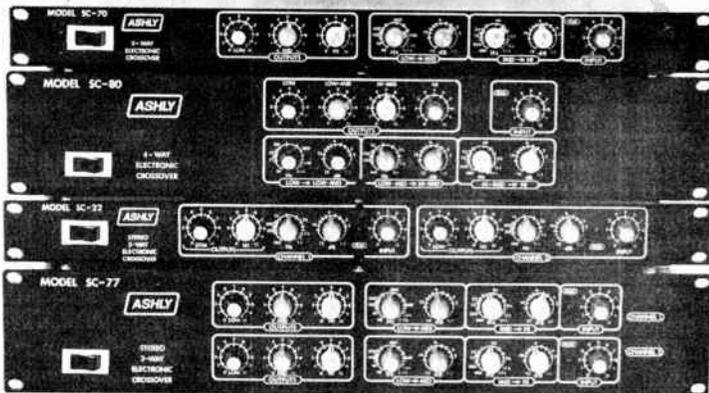
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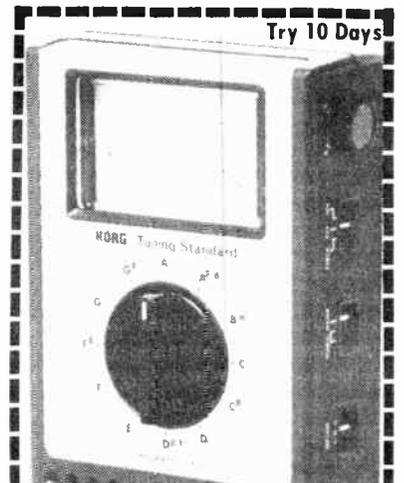
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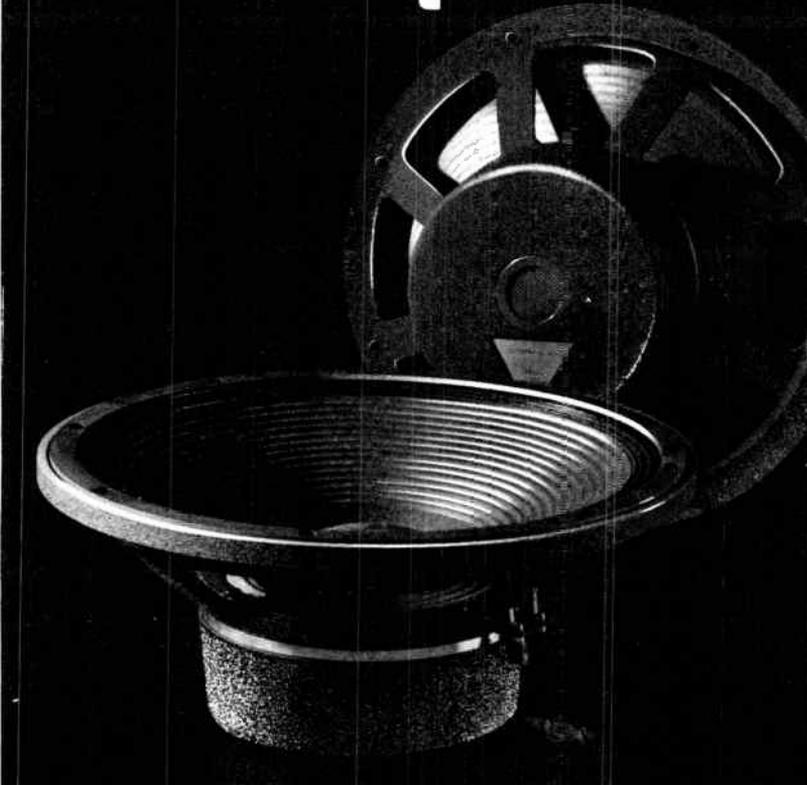
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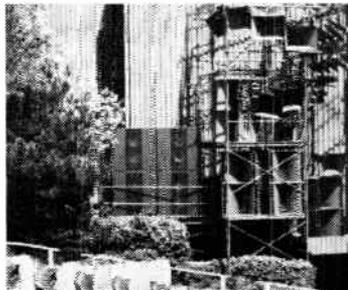
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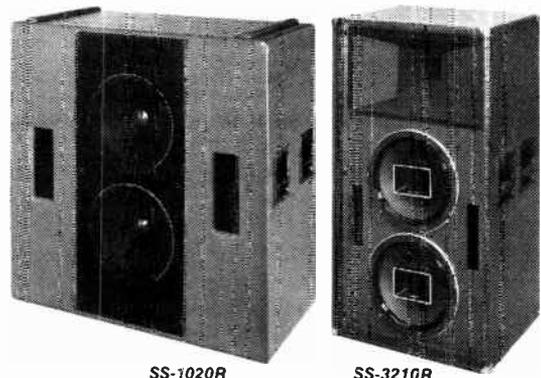
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“**K**ushty Rye” in fact says it all, as well as being a fine song from Ronnie Lane’s first album in several years. In the Traveller’s language it means good gentleman, one not of their blood but who is, nevertheless, all right. In the music business you hear much the same kind of thing said of Ronnie Lane. Not that he ranks at the top of the hierarchy for his bass or guitar technique, but that he’s great to work with. He’s inspired and created some of what was best and most wholesome in rock, both alone and with The Faces. Finally, he’s one of the most straightforward and unaffected musicians around.

Today, he’s wearing a whimsical smile on his face and a badge reading “Rock Against Journalism” on his lapel. He says, he’s surprised that this meeting was arranged. “I don’t consider myself a very good musician funnily enough. When I heard you were coming, I said: ‘What does he want to talk to me for? I only know three chords’.”

Yet nobody can deny he’s got a lot of mileage out of those chords.

“Musical roots? Well, I suppose the stuff me Dad used to listen to. What I heard when I was a kid — Fats Domino, Fats Waller and so on. I was about 13 when I started playing. It was basically just rock & roll, we didn’t have very good taste in those days, just a bunch of kids messing around with guitars. It ended up more and more rock & roll though we did have leanings towards blues and soul. But when I was a kid, I just wanted to be a star.

“I started off as a guitarist. I learned to play the guitar first: but there wasn’t anybody down the East End of London at that time — not that was any good — who wanted to play the bass. Everyone wanted to play lead guitar, drums or be the singer. So I decided I’d play the bass, after being influenced by Booker T and the MG’s — that kind of simple and very positive stuff. So I took up the bass and, that influence stayed. I’ve always liked Booker T. They’re probably my biggest influence.”

Booker T and MG’s had roots, being a very useful bunch of session musicians on the R&B scene. What Ronnie borrows is not so much the style as the approach; a reliable and interesting backing rather than instrumental pyrotechnics. The music fits into the song or the act, rather

than the song existing as a vehicle for displays of virtuosity.

“I don’t think of myself as a musician, or even a songwriter really. I think of myself as a showman. I never practiced to become a virtuoso — It’s not often you get someone who’s a brilliant musician and a good showman too. They’re usually one or the other. Well, I’m the other.”

Hence the avoidance of labels and musical pigeon-holes. Slim Chance folk-rock? “Well, they were just a good-time band. All the bands I’ll ever have will be a good time. I’m an entertainer. I’m not really interested in hammering people with how clever it is or examining the ‘Intricacies Of Life Itself’.” He imitates the pompous tones in which one might discuss those intricacies. He’s a fair mimick.

“I’m just here to entertain and let people forget for an hour or so.”

Going back over his career, he often talks from the point of view of the showman, looking at the Faces, for example, in terms of their stage act. They started off very lively.

“What happened on stage was never planned. It was very spontaneous in the beginning. Then it got a bit routine.”

Inevitably?

“There was a lot of money around and people weren’t so hungry. It happens to every band in the end; like some of these new wave ones. They come out saying we won’t do this, and you won’t catch us doing that, but they’ll do it.”

He doesn’t say this cynically, just with a confidence born of understanding how the music industry works. Ronnie has more claim to being an idealist than most. Witness, (the ironically named) Passing Show, the tent show he set up “mainly just to break new ground” when he left the Faces.

I wondered how it worked?

He grins. “I’ll tell you a bit about how it didn’t work — and maybe a bit about how it was supposed to work.

“In England there’s not many places to play. You can more or less play England in about fourteen days, unless you do universities but universities ain’t always the best crowd to play to. I thought it would be a good idea to put a show on in a big top where you built the stage yourself and the sound was always constant. You could also take it and put it up wherever you wanted to. Well, I thought it was a brilliant idea.”

It was an elaborate show?

“Naw — it was just a party really. But it encountered so many problems. We never got a chance to really get the show how it should be or even begin to get where it could have gone.”

He sounds more wistful than disillusioned, talking about it today. As a musician, as an entertainer, he still believes in the potential.

“I’d like to try it again because it’s a good idea. It’s a hell of a gamble to take. I’d certainly go about it in a completely different way. There’s so many different things you have to take into account. The costs of crew and transport, buying and repairing the tent, fire precautions and toilets and so on. When you start all you’ve got is the tip of the iceberg. And advertising — that was somewhere where I went wrong. I might try it again one day. If anyone knows how to do it best in this business it’s me. I’m the only one who’s ever tried. A lot of people have talked about it but no-one’s ever put their money where their mouth is.”

Since leaving the Faces, Ronnie Lane has been associated with a number of projects. He’s formed Slim Chance and The Passing Show, and has also run a mobile studio built “to try out some of my own ideas without



## Ronnie Lane

You can't keep a Small Face down

spending a fortune on studio time." It was one of the first mobiles but Ronnie did not bother continually to update the equipment. "Now it's not in competition with anybody. Besides, I've just sold it to the Who."

He's tried producing too. He mentions some protégés of his, an African band called Akido. It "wasn't very good because I couldn't keep the fellas together. The playing was great at rehearsal, but the following Thursday I was sitting in the studio waiting. In walks the leader with a totally different bunch of fellas who started rehearsing a whole lot of new numbers. I couldn't cope with that. I always thought that I was laid back but they have a totally different culture."

Finally, Ronnie has fulfilled a long-standing dream by spending two years in retirement, at least semi-retirement, as a farmer. It's not been unproductive. Ronnie felt the time was right for a test, or rather a rest from the music industry.

"I'd always wanted to do it, and now I've done it for two years and it's been good. The punk thing was happening with the record companies dragging kids in off the streets. What I did was get out while that was happening, lie low for a couple of years until all the dust settled, and then decide to make a comeback. And

here I am!"

Here, too, is a fine album that should be ready for spring release.

"The album (we're still arguing about the title) has been made over the last two years. It's varied, a bit of this and a bit of the other. Nobody really produced it. Sometimes I'd go into the other room and put my producer's hat on for a while, but mostly it produced itself. I'll probably give the tapes to a professional producer to finish off. The lads used to just come up for a weekend. If I had any songs, we'd do some recording. The studio was actually a barn. We had to edit out the farmyard sounds. Record companies don't like them."

The policy in making the album, and in forming the present band, was to get away from the limitations (entertainment-wise) of conventional rock.

"If you listen to someone like the Police or even Dire Straits; after a while they're very good, they have a nice, clean style of playing. After you've listened to it for a time, it all begins to sound the same. There's a limit to what you can do when you have just guitars, bass and drums."

In Ronnie's estimation the answer to that limitation is not found in using synthesizers or effects. He considers it very unlikely that he will be seen on stage in the company of a synthesizer or anything

greatly resembling one.

"What I think you have to do is bring in plenty of instruments, plenty of different instruments. I like to work with people who play several instruments each, so you can always do something more, always find something different."

Much of Lane's music revolves around unique rock & roll instruments like the unorthodox accordion.

"The accordion is a very volatile instrument. The accordion is versatile. I listen to Cajun music a lot and they use accordion to play rock & roll. I was influenced by them although we were doing it before we heard them. We developed the same thing independently. We'll use that on the album, and, mandolin and violin, that sort of thing. Have you ever heard violin and saxophone played in a section together? It's great! I have one or two ideas like that."

In a way he's discovering folk-rock from the rock end instead of from the folk end — a point that is made with due deference to the fact that Ronnie himself would probably reject all these categorizations. Nonetheless, the album promises to be interesting.

Given present fashions, you might expect Ronnie Lane to fit in with the mod revival. But if his past fits such a role, his general attitudes do not. It is apparent that the new modism plays little part in his life.

"To begin with," he states, "I suppose I never was really a mod. Until the Small Faces really got going. I couldn't afford to be. Who can afford to buy a new suit every ten weeks because the fashions change? I was paying for a guitar at the time. We used to follow those fashions, within our means."

With the modern movement paying tribute to grass roots institutions like the Faces, one wonders if a band with such special characteristics will materialize.

"I don't think so because, they're going back to what we were doing, they copy us. If they really wanted to do it properly, they'd have to go back and copy the people we were copying; Fats Waller and so on. You see what I mean? The strain has got weaker."

His prognosis for the future is not a great deal better than his assessment of mod musical chances. He sees, a situation where ideas are being replaced by technology. He does not see the emergence of more bands along similar lines to his own. He would like to, but thinks the trends are against it. Meanwhile, the new Ronnie Lane Band is getting ready for the stage. And Ronnie Lane couldn't be happier.

Paul Ashford



## Linda Ronstadt

### *Mad Love (Asylum)*

*There are some things you can't cover up with lipstick and powder  
Thought I heard you mention my name,  
can't you talk any louder?*

— Elvis Costello (from "Girls Talk")

There are more popular misconceptions about the talent of Linda Ronstadt than there are home truths. That's why including a version of Costello's "Girls Talk" is so appropriate. *Mad Love* paints the most impressive portrait of Ronstadt since she first shot to stardom. The album is a *major* improvement on her last several records which unfortunately tended to follow a pattern established with *Heart Like A Wheel*.

For the last five years Ronstadt has populated the airwaves with one continual hit after another. But during the last several years a disturbing lack of conviction began creeping into her voice. Although she always sang technically perfect notes, there was an absence of emotion. And emotion is what makes a singer great.

On *Mad Love*, Linda Ronstadt exposes herself on vinyl for the first time since the days she posed for album covers sitting near cow dung. It's not a question of getting back to the roots as much as it's a case of letting go. *This* time around Peter Asher's production and the back-up musicians are all in total sympathy with *her* rather than the other way round. The voice has been mixed up loud, thankfully, the musical accompaniment kept refreshingly sparse so that the lead instrument is her voice. And what a voice! If anyone ever doubted that Ronstadt is one of the truly greatest female singers of all time, this album erases those doubts.

Ronstadt gives her finest vocal performance on each track here, stuffing them with so much sensitivity, aggression and soul that the listener is left emotionally drained. For that reason alone, *Mad Love* is the best album the lady has ever recorded.

Ronstadt has not played it safe this time around. She has recorded three songs written by young LA guitarist Mark Goldenberg. The title track, one of his three songs, is hard driving rock & roll like she's never sung before, utilizing a divine sense of phrasing. "Cost Of Love" is



equally sparse, frenetic and extremely danceable. The way she twists and turns words, squeezing maximum potential out of every syllable, is superb.

The basic band has been stripped down so that too many instruments don't get in the way of her voice. The guitar work is particularly impressive throughout the album and the sound is absolutely excellent; crisp and clean. Dan Dugmore and Mark Goldenberg supply most of the guitar leads and rhythms and their work is consistently excellent. The rhythm section throughout the album is drummer Russ Kunkel and bassist Bob Glaub. They don't sound like they're playing "just another session." Rather the players put as much of themselves into the songs as does Ronstadt. Bill Payne contributes some fine keyboards while Nicolette Larson and Rosemary Butler lend some evocative harmony support.

The choice of songs is impeccable, driving Ronstadt on towards previously unexplored heights. There's an energy and excitement running throughout this album which is contagious. Of the three Costello songs, all are stand out classics. Costello himself tends to bury his lyrics when he sings, so it's a nice change to

actually *hear* the words especially when the phrasing is so inventive. "Party Girl" is so painful it hurts while "Talking In The Dark" is an upbeat romantic treat. One album highlight is "Girls Talk" where Ronstadt easily outdoes both Costello and Edmunds' previous versions. She sings the song like it *belongs* to her. It should.

Another departure is the single, "How Do I Make You," which is a sexy, sensual tease backed by skintight rock & roll. Previously her singles have tended to be more orthodox covers like the Hollies "I Can't Let Go" which is included here. Also painfully beautiful is the classic soul song "Hurt So Bad."

Linda Ronstadt deserves an awful lot of credit and respect for making an album like *Mad Love*. She's broken away from an established successful formula and succeeded brilliantly. This is an inspired rather than calculated album. Which just goes to show, you can't judge a book by looking at it's cover.

Barbara Charone  
Produced by Peter Asher. Recorded by  
Val Garay at Record One, Los Angeles.  
Mixed to the 3M digital mastering  
system.

## Madness

### *One Step Beyond (Sire)*

One of the leading proponents of the Ska (Bluebeat, Rocksteady) revival in England, Madness is more rock-based and is not as scrupulously roots-ey as the Specials or Selecter, but they are a lot of fun and great to dance to. And the latter is a key element in helping this kind of music find a broader popularity in the US than its slower moving, more militant antecedent, reggae. Everyone in the band affects a latter day Rudeboy (Jamaican punk)/Skinhead style visually, with lots of terrific nick names like Mike "Monsieur Barse" Barson (keyboards and the unacknowledged leader), Chris "Chrissy Boy" Foreman (guitars), Graham McPherson as "Suggs" (lead vocals) and Lee "Kix" Thompson (tenor, baritone sax, vocals).

Unlike reggae, this music percolates along at pulse-quickening tempos with spare but highly effective instrumental interraction, another "New Wave" trademark. Highlights include the title track, "My Girl," "Madness," and "The Prince," a spirited homage to Prince Buster, the man who started the Ska movement and who wrote the song that gave this band their name. There is a persistent feeling that this music grows out of a well-developed musico-cultural community in North London, and the rousing cheer ("Chipmunks Are Go" — don't ask *me* what it means) at the end of the record only reaffirms Madness' seemingly boundless energy and potential.

J.C.C.

*A Clanger/Alan Winstanley Production*

## Robin Trower

### *Victim Of The Fury (Chrysalis)*

Trower continues to refine his post-Procol Harum Stratocaster style on this one, with a lot more emphasis on warmer, bass textures and subtle vibrato with a few new overtone squeals thrown in for good measure. Unfortunately, as with a lot of Trower's recent stuff, the material which provides the background for his guitar pyrotechnics is adequate but colorless. As

I've already stated before for another publication, this guy is for guitar freaks only.

J.C.C.

*Co-produced by Robin Trower and Geoff Emerick. Engineered by Geoff Emerick.*

## Earthquake

### *Two Years In A Padded Cell (Beserkley/Elektra)*

This Berkely, California hard rock band, the most *conventional* unit on the Beserkley label, cut a stunning live album years ago — *Rockin' The World* (Beserkley BZ-0045) — that featured incandescent cover versions of tunes like "Route 66," "Friday On My Mind," the Small Faces' "Tin Soldier" and Jeff Lynne's "Ma Ma Ma Belle." This watermark LP combined legitimately hip material with smoking lead guitar interchanges in a rough-hewn recording that made the listener wish Earthquake was playing down at his or her local bar. Since then, they've tried on numerous occasions to recapture the elemental magic from that LP, with mostly negative results. Sad to say, *Two Years In A Padded Cell* does little to change that: the material is flat, the lyrics cretinous and the playing, good as it is,

can't make up for lack of creative inspiration. Hey guys, maybe it's time for another live LP with sublime covers.

J.C.C.

*No information.*

## Slave

### *Just A Touch Of Love (Cotillion SD 5217)*

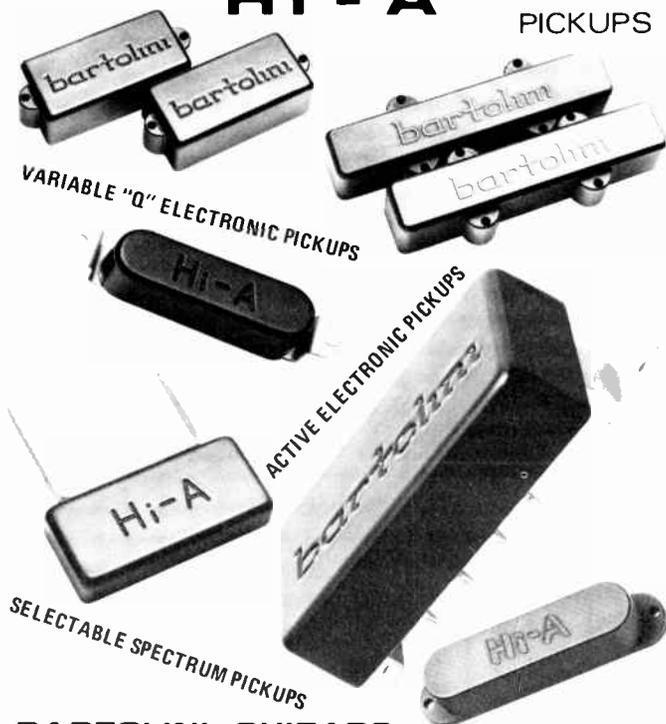
A decent funk band with built-in danceability, Slave would not normally be reviewed here if it wasn't for the stunning differences between the two sides, which illustrates just how important the engineer/producer can be on a project like this. Side one, engineered and produced by Jimmy Douglass at Atlantic Recording Studios, has a lightness and coherence that immediately sets it apart from Side two, produced and engineered by the whole group and seemingly everyone else within a five mile radius of the small New Jersey studio where it was recorded. This second side sounds like it was produced by Committee — murky, indecisive, gimmicky and ultimately *blando*. Which just goes to prove the old axiom: If you think you should produce yourself, guess again turkey.

J.C.C.



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# Albums

## Elvis Costello

### *Get Happy!!* (Columbia)

"I don't intend to be around to witness my own decline." Elvis Costello's manifesto of two years ago was partly theatrical, but was also born out by his frenzied performances and the manic tone of his songs.

Rock music does not yet have tradition of sustained creativity like black music. A poor or lightweight album by a James Brown or Smokey Robinson is regarded as a lapse rather than the end of a career. Costello's music — not to mention the man himself — certainly needed to generally ease up. That is what *Get Happy!!* more or less represents.

Immersed in Sixties soul records, this album is still hardly light-hearted. Delayed because of legal difficulties following the British demise of Radar Records, extra interest was aroused by the news that it would have 20 tracks and some 50 minutes of music. It's soon clear that the songs' brevity reflects no slightness of content.

The lyrics are as dense and self-conscious as ever, toying with familiar phrases ("Love For Tender"), making cryptic statements, ("It means much more than it might") and generally skirting desperation. For much of the time the listener must make do with tantalizing snatches as Elvis' voice, formerly clear and audible above the excellent Attractions, is now half-buried in the overall sound.

Sometimes this works well, but "I Can't Stand Up For Falling Down" — an old Sam & Dave B-side — definitely suffers. The verses pale beside an oddly memorable chorus. Signs of the singer's Tamla/Stax crash course are small but telling: a title like "Beaten To The Punch", the central role of Bruce Thomas' magnificent bass playing on songs like "King Horse" and "Time Is Tight".

Generally this influence emerges less in style than in attitude. The playing is economical in the extreme, with not a solo in sight. Steve Naive contents himself with basic organ fills and the occasional buoyant piano phrase. Costello's habitually devastating guitar is unobtrusive, whether clean and simple on "Opportunity" or low-register on "Secondary Modern".

A greater warmth and abandon in the

singing is another side-effect, more relevant than before. To hear Costello soar up the vocal scale is as delightful as it is unexpected. His repeated lament on the fade of "Motel Matches" has the spirit of vintage Van Morrison. On a more contemporary note, the brisk lope of "Human Touch" is reminiscent of his production work on the *Specials* album.

*Get Happy!!* is stuffed with reminders that this is not Elvis Costello's *Nashville Skyline* or *Self Portrait*. For example, the almost casually innovative "B Movie" brilliantly merges a disco bass line with tricky drum patterns and sharp guitar punctuation.

Costello seems incapable of trying less than his hardest, but *Get Happy!!* sounds less agonizing than usual.

**Harry George**

*Produced by Nick Lowe. Mixed by Roger Bechirian. Recorded in Holland.*

## Ramones

### *End Of The Century* (Sire)

The Ramones continue to evolve within what once seemed to be a fairly rigid stylistic approach. On *End Of The*

*Century*, they bring their one-of-a-kind Forest Hills "wall-of-sound" into Hollywood's legendary Gold Star studios to work with the fabled creator of that genre, the ubiquitous Phil Spector. And the results, for the most part, are quite good — especially on the brilliant re-make of Spector's "Baby I Love You" (if you thought Phil had burned out creatively, check out the subtle genius of his string arrangement on this track) and the totally *re-done* version of "Rock & Roll High School."

Basically, Spector has given the Ramones' blitzkrieg a bigger, more spacious sound with more differentiation in the instrumental textures *without* taking away any of their punch. Johnny R. tries a few tentative leads *a la* Mick Jones. Joey is crooning better than ever, Marky R. and Dee Dee are knit tight in that all important rhythm section *and* the lyrics actually deal with "real-life" phenomena like Love, Life On The Road and as a Ramone Life in the subterranean caverns of downtown NYC! This is the LP that moves the Ramones beyond a hard-core following of glue-sniffers and brat-beaters.

**J.C.C.**

*Produced by Phil Spector. Engineered by Boris Meinart and Larry Levine.*



# THE INEVITABLE RETURN OF

by David Lawrenson

If Jack Bruce had been around in the Middle Ages he would undoubtedly have been a wandering minstrel in the Highlands of his native Scotland. Singing for his supper (and accompanying beverage) would have suited Jack quite well. As it is, he has had to settle for the Twentieth Century equivalent — rock & roll.

There is definitely something of the wandering minstrel in Bruce. During his 20 years in the rock business he has covered just about every aspect from superstar rock musician to get-away-from-it-all recluse. Yet the name of Jack Bruce still retains a bit of magic and a whiff of expectancy.

1979 was a good year for Jack. It could be said that he "re-emerged," although he would probably maintain that he has never been away. The highlight of the year was undoubtedly Jack's teaming up with John McLaughlin, Billy Cobham and Stu Goldberg for a series of European concerts. Following this, in true renegade fashion, he ended up playing a series of bar and club gigs with Rocket 88, a play-for-fun blues outfit which included Charlie Watts, Ian Stewart and Alexis Korner, among others.

Soon America will see another side of Jack Bruce because he is embarking on a tour with a new band. And what a *band!* Billy Cobham on drums, David Sancious on keyboards and Clem Clempson on guitar.

"Oh, my new reggae band?" he laughs. "It sounds good. I've got a manager now, and he had the idea that I should re-emerge in America. The European thing with McLaughlin was successful, but there wasn't really much scope for me in that line up, it was John's band and rightly so.

"Anyway, my manager thought I should put a band together to do a little American tour. I thought it would be difficult having to scratch around for musicians." That turned out to be the least of his problems. David Sancious had indicated that he wanted to work with Jack. When Billy Cobham found out that he was putting a band together, he was most upset that Jack hadn't approached him first, so Billy was in.

For a guitarist, the bass man chose ex-Colosseum and Humble Pie man Clem Clempson. Jack had worked with Clem on Cozy Powell's album, *Over The Top*, and liked his light, lyrical guitar lines. "It's

become a reggae band," Jack explains, "because Billy was born in Panama, his mother's from Barbados and he loves reggae but has never had the chance to play it.

"There was one song we did with McLaughlin, where a bit in the middle went into reggae and it was really good. Billy really understands where the beat should be in reggae, because it's very complicated. I think it's a very exciting development. It's the first new thing rhythmically to happen in a long time because you're turning the beat around.

"When I say a reggae band I'm being a bit facetious, but I hope it will have that kind of feel. I've been a bit gloomy for the last 10 years. I feel cheerful now."

Those last 10 years spanning the Seventies proved to be a period of ups and downs for Jack. The era started well: two critically acclaimed solo albums and a stint with Tony Williams' Lifetime, a phenomenal band who were ahead of their time and paved the way for the Mahavishnu Orchestra and countless other rock influenced jazz bands.

Jack later went to the other extreme, teaming up with Leslie West and Corky Laing in a power trio that didn't exactly set the world ablaze. Later he worked with Carla Bley and Mick Taylor before dropping out of the limelight for some time.

Still you can't keep a good bass man down. He renewed an old acquaintance with John McLaughlin for his *Guitar Player* album, and was subsequently recruited to John's touring band. "I like being involved with different things, I like playing different styles of music," said Jack. "I would get very bored just playing in one band for ever. I would like to have a regular band where we could go off and do our own projects."

Jack's resurgence has coincided with his conversion to a new bass. For much of his career, particularly with Cream when he proved that bass players weren't just people who had mastered guitar properly, the Bruce bass has been a Gibson. Not any more.

"I played Gibsons and then spent a long time not being happy with anything. I was trying Music Man, fretless basses and I couldn't get anything that I was really happy with. Then I just happened to find an Aria. I went into a music shop and there it was. I like it and so I bought it.

Since then I've had the company build a fretless, ebony one for me.

"I really love it, and I think it's the best value bass around for the money. It's not an Alembic but then I think they're clumsy. The only thing I think that approaches the Aria is the BC Rich, but they're a lot of money. The ones I play are about \$825, and that means you don't have to be a millionaire to buy one. I think an Alembic's about \$2,350 to \$2,500 over here."

Jack uses the fretless for stage work, but prefers the fretted instrument for recording to get a really hard rock & roll sound. Rotosound strings are an integral part of his sound. For amplification he utilizes a Gallien-Krueger transistor, made in California, with a Cerwin Vega and a Marshall. The combination gives him the cleanness, the balance and the edge he likes.

Of all electric instruments, the bass is probably the hardest on which to establish a personal sound — a feel yes, but not a sound. Jack Bruce was one of the first electric bassists to establish a distinctive sound, a hard, trebly tone which really cut through.

"I think that the way I get my sound is that I play too hard. I use three fingers and a thumb instead of a pick. I think it's all down to playing a little too hard, so the distortion is actually coming from my fingers. It doesn't matter what amp I play through, it always sounds the same.

"I think engineers have gone crazy trying to get a non-Jack Bruce bass sound out of me, but it can't be done. Now when I record and take the Aria and just DI it. I don't even use an amp, it's not necessary."

Over the years he has been playing bass, both equipment and technique has improved, not to mention the host of new players who have turned the four stringed instrument into a specialist art.

"I'm really glad that over the last few years some really good bass players have emerged. There was a period when there was nobody really saying anything on the instrument. You obviously absorb new influences in your playing, you're bound to.

"For instance, I play fretless which I should have done years ago, but I never really thought about it. I think the technique that I had, the older technique, was bending the strings a lot more and bass players don't usually bend strings.

# JACK BRUCE



"I used to use very light strings and bend a lot, playing it like a guitar. Now I think I've been influenced by these new bass players. The bass sound has also improved so much that you can't just go on stage with a 100 watt Marshall stack and plonk. People want to hear a good bass sound. But as far as any musical influences go I still listen to Mingus."

**H**and in hand with the distinctive Bruce bass sound comes his distinctive vocals. Remember those soaring vocals on "White Room" and "Spoonful"? Well, Jack exercises his tonsils for one number with the John McLaughlin band, and proved that the old magic was there. In fact, he's convinced that his voice is getting better.

He only really began singing with Cream. "I never thought of myself as a singer. But *someone* had to sing. It was either Eric or me, and often with Eric gone I had to sing. So I didn't really think I could sing until somebody said, 'You know you've really got the most distinctive voice; you should sing,' so I did."

Thoughts of an American sojourn conjure up memories of the days when you could pick up superb old guitars in pawn shops for next to nothing. Not an avid guitar collector, Jack has managed to acquire some excellent instruments over the years.

"It used to be good fun in American pawn shops, especially the mid-West or Alabama. They always kept the best stuff in the back and would finally bring it out. You'd say, 'how much' standing there all poor and scruffy and they'd say \$100. So eventually you buy it, get into your Cadillac and the guy's going, 'oh no!'"

"The funniest story is of Jeff Beck actually going on American tours without a guitar. Apparently every time they played, the roadie had to go to the local music shop and borrow one. I think John McLaughlin finally gave him one."

Although a man who's done just about everything in the music world, there was a definite twinkle in Jack's eye at the prospect of the up and coming tour with his new band. He has written a whole range of new material for this venture, and will be featuring material by all the individual members as well as some personal oldies.

"I think we might spend some time in the States," Jack says enthusiastically. "That country has got so depressed it needs me!"

# A GUITARIST'S GUITARIST

Amos Garrett by Scott Kutina

Watching Amos Garrett amble on stage for the first time, you would hardly expect the tall, scholarly person with the relaxed attitude of a mild-mannered English professor on a sabbatical to be one of the most original and sought after sidemen and session guitarists in America today.

Dressed in his customary well-worn hound's tooth, sport jacket, old felt hat, jeans and sweater, he wanders onto the stage with the bemused air of someone who's about to deliver a lecture on Yeats or Swinburne. And in a way he is, because when Amos picks up one of his 1945 000-21 Martin Herringbones, or his prototype Ibanez Artist solid-body and runs through a few bars, you can immediately hear that one of the reasons Maria Muldaur's *Midnight At The Oasis* was a million seller was due to this man's golden touch.

Garrett's distinctive use of slides, vibrato and bends, along with his own particular sense of phrasing and timing, has

made him a guitarist's guitarist. Formerly a native of Toronto, Amos now makes his home in Pt. Richmond, a small northern California community seated between the Berkeley Hills and San Francisco Bay; a town known for its huge Standard Oil refinery and a healthy blues scene.

From this small town, Garrett balances his active commitments as part of a semi-acoustic touring duo with long-time friend and partner, Geoff Muldaur, formerly with Jim Kweskin's Jug Band and Paul Butterfield's Better Days, and his other life as a sideman and sessionist.

As a session player, Amos has recorded with Ian and Sylvia, Anne Murray, Eric Andersen, John Herald, Eric von Schmidt, Emmy Lou Harris, Todd Rundgren, Bonnie Raitt, Geoff and Maria (Geoff's first wife) Muldaur, Paul Butterfield, Elvin Bishop, and many others.

As a sideman, he toured with Ian and Sylvia's Great Speckled Bird, Paul Butterfield's Better Days, Maria Muldaur's band and, most recently, Elvin Bishop's band. Off the road, he is the featured guitarist with the Rogers and Bergin Band, a progressive blues unit fronted by blues harpist Dave Bergin, and guitarist Roy Rogers

(no, not the Roy Rogers). Garrett's deft use of chords and phrasing can be traced back to his youth, when he began piano lessons at seven,

studying at the Royal Conservatory of Toronto, as well as trombone lessons which he undertook later on. The fact that his father was a professional jazz drummer and violinist during the 1920's probably helped things along.

As a result of his father's career, Garrett was exposed at a very early age to such jazz greats as Bix Beiderbecke, Eddie Lang and Carl Kress. He also met a number of players whenever his father would take him to the various jazz clubs around Toronto. Although he was raised in Toronto and Montreal, Garrett's formal and informal education took place in the United States.

While attending prep school and college in the U.S., he began to absorb the myriad guitar styles and influences reflected in his unique style of playing today; from the rockabilly techniques of Scotty Moore and James Burton to the rhythm & blues and modern jazz stylings of T. Bone Walker and Wes Montgomery. Along the way he also picked up the folk blues of such greats as Leadbelly, Josh White and Big Bill Broonzy.

Garrett was playing regularly with a band in Toronto called the Dirty Shames in 1968, when Ian Tyson approached him to play in a band that he was forming called The Great Speckled Bird. A prototype of all of the progressive country bands that now proliferate the music scene, the Speckled Bird featured Amos on guitar and Buddy Cage, currently with the New Riders of the Purple Sage, on pedal steel.

During a stopover in Boston with the Bird, Amos met Geoff and Maria Muldaur, and a lasting friendship was formed. Shortly after, the bird made its' last flight

The first thing you notice are the eyes. They penetrate like x-ray vision, seeing *right* through you. More menacing than piercing, they resemble something out of *Village of the Damned*. But Joe Jackson isn't an alien. Still you wouldn't want to meet him alone in a dark alley. Physically he'd win no prizefights. Rather he's got that silent strength that spells confidence.

The second thing you notice are the feet, protruding from trousers which are inevitably too short. Because of their prominence, there's no escaping the eyes. When Joe Jackson looks down at you from his six foot, gawky frame, those eyes tell you a lot about the man. Sometimes, they simply say "leave me alone." Like his song "Don't Wanna Be Like That," Joe Jackson is most definitely his own man.

"I don't have a membership card in my pocket that says I belong to a) punk, b) new wave or c) mod." Joe Jackson spits out caustically. "I'm an individual. It's incredulous. They call me the acceptable face of punk.

"I had some real bozo at a press conference in San Francisco that said 'What do you think about your music being a diluted version of Elvis Costello?'. I nearly hit the guy. I really shouted at him. And he said, 'I seem to make you angry'. I told him I was 100 percent undiluted Joe Jackson. And if he didn't like it, he could fuck it."

He's a bit cagey about the past and doesn't particularly want to go back in time to childhood violin days which eventually won him a coveted place at the Royal Academy of Music. He joined a band in native Portsmouth called Arms and Legs before leaving the womb for London. Joe Jackson is the type of man who prefers charting his own destiny.

"My parents always thought I was crazy," he says stretching his spindly legs. "I'm sure most people thought I was

crazy. Only recently with success have they been able to see what I was trying to do. I was always pretty much by myself. Eventually I came to the realization that I was going to have to do things myself. That's why I worked to get money to pay for my demos. I wanted to be independent.

"When I relied on people things always went wrong. Only when I decided to do it myself and not compromise did things go right. That's the attitude I came into the business with and I still maintain. I simply wanted the control."

Taking charge of his own future, Joe Jackson went to work at a Portsmouth Playboy Club, playing piano to patrons more concerned with nubile bunnies. He didn't like the drunks, didn't like the atmosphere but realized that in order to succeed one has to put up with a certain amount of aggravation.

"You have to keep trying little bit by bit to build up confidence," he says looking at the floor. "It took me a long time to have the confidence to go in and record *Look Sharp*."

Jackson has a refreshingly unpretentious vision of the music business and his own success, always keeping it in perspective. When asked if he had the confidence to work the Playboy Club in order to finance some demo tapes, Joe Jackson states. Then he laughs. "There's a certain amount of desperation. If I didn't make music I don't know what I'd do. I'm not good at anything else."

He's been writing songs for as long as he can remember. Today his main love is reggae, a fact becoming increasingly prominent on each album as rhythms move to the front. Childhood musical tastes were fairly predictable; he liked the Beatles, the Stones, the Kinks, the Who, the Searchers and the Merseybeats.

"The best was what I was into. I suppose I liked R&B but I didn't know what it was about. Afterall, I was only 11."

Despite an erratic "child prodigy" adolescence, Jackson fed himself a musical background not entirely divorced from the average kid. Although his tastes were mainstream, they formed the bulk of his unique and original ideas.

"My musical roots are the same as anyone who lived in Britain and now is in their twenties. People say we have an R&B sound. I don't see it as R&B. I don't know what my style is. I don't want to have a style. It's the content that's important not the style."

Because Jackson stubbornly placed content above all else, he realized the importance of quality songs. Once he journeyed up to London, Joe Jackson literally took his precious demos around to record com-

panies, agents and various show biz entrepreneurs. Doors were shut in his face and that old cliché "don't call us, we'll call you" was often echoed.

Undaunted, Jackson remained determined. He'd made the demos with three musicians who were *more* than merely capable. From his old band Arms and Legs came bassist Graham Maby. Drummer Dave Houghton arrived from the same Portsmouth clique. Londoner Gary Sanford supplied the missing part of the puzzle.

Suddenly luck turned. Jackson met John Telfer who was to become his manager. Within a short space of time a recording contract was signed with A&M records for a five year deal, renewable every year. The four of them went into the studio to record *Look Sharp* before ever playing live. Considering the album's immediate, energetic sound, it is somewhat unbelievable.

David Kershenbaum was hired as producer. Previously he'd worked with Cat Stevens, Richie Havens, Elkie Brooks and Gallagher & Lyle. To say he was overwhelmed with the Joe Jackson Band is an understatement.

"David had never done anything like us before. He's the only producer I can work with because he'll say 'ok if you want that sound this is the only way to do it.' So it comes out sounding how I want, a lot of the times a little better. He adds that final professional touch.

"To a large extent I'm the producer because I know how the songs should sound. Basically, I go in and say what I want it to sound like right down to the amount of echo on my voice. Dave has a thousand times more studio experience than me. And he's got better ears."

Although Jackson plays piano and harmonium, surprisingly he doesn't write on

I write most of the songs in my head. If the ideas are any good, I'll remember them.

the instrument. "I write most of them in my head. I will sit down at the piano and bash an idea about but I don't write the words down. If the ideas are any good, I'll remember them."

In fact, his ideas are what makes Joe



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# JOE JACKSON

*I have an obsession with the present. And I don't want to know about the future.*

Jackson such a major talent. Realizing that credibility rises or falls on the strength of the material, Jackson takes songwriting very seriously.

"I write about things I feel. More often I write about things that make me angry, frustrated or bad. A lot of my songs are satirical because it's much better than saying 'this is great' or 'this is a load of crap.' I'd hate my songs to be one dimensional. I want to come across as a human being. If I'm angry, the song is angry."

Coming from anyone else, that statement would sound like an insincere load of rubbish. But when Joe Jackson says something you listen. If you doubt the words, just look at the eyes.

Joe Jackson writes songs that encourage people to rise above their situation in life, to cope with Eighties paranoia, pressure and responsibility. He's not an untouchable rock star. He's human and it's that vestige of reality stuffed in the songs which make them so convincing.

"I don't want anyone to follow me. I'm not trying to preach. I'm lucky, I got out," he says of his workingclass background. "I have a talent. I have music. Everyone has to find their own way of rising above all the everyday shit that grinds you down. Like the song 'Friday'; it is possible to say you don't have to become a zombie. You can make an effort. I had to work hard too."

The fact that Joe Jackson is a keen admirer of writer Raymond Chandler is evident in many of his songs which chronicle relationships. "Geraldine And John," "Kinda Kute," "Happy Loving Couples" or "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" are about real characters, almost mini-movies.

"The important thing is that the songs have to be good. They should be convincing. And they should come from real life. A song like "Geraldine and John" is pretty straightforward. I have a sense of humor and so should my songs. It's difficult to put humor in songs. My sense of humor is the irony of things. It's like Woody Allen's sense of humor. You have to laugh otherwise it would be too painful to think about. It's like comedy and tragedy are different sides of the same coin."

"It's Different For Girls" is a perfect example of Joe Jackson's Woody Allen persona. "That song is sad, desperate and humorous. It's about going out on a millionth date. It's like 'oh no not *again*.' I'm just trying to say how ridiculous all those teen romance clichés are. I'm trying to write about things that are real, not fantasy."

"I hate all those heavy metal lyrics. Songs about flaming charriots flying through the cosmic skies make me sick,"

he laughs. "I'm more concerned writing about how things are rather than how I think they should be. I'm not trying to change the world."

America, however, changed the future for Joe Jackson. He'd been to the States once when A&M first signed him. Shortly afterwards, the Joe Jackson Band toured America. In the middle of the tour the single "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" and its album *Look Sharp*, unbelievably pole vaulted into the Top Ten. Joe Jackson was a star. He, at least of all, couldn't believe it.

"It was always supposed to be the Joe Jackson Band right from the start," says this humble 25 year old. "It's silly to say 'tonight Joe Jackson.' One person can't do it. We're not trying to project a group image or the image of a soloist."

"It *is* a band," he says adamantly. "Not a totally cooperative band but at the same time it's not a superstar and his band. I'm not a dictator. I need a regular band. If anyone gets to the point where they feel they don't have enough freedom in the band, they'll have to leave."

Aside from the fact that Joe Jackson writes original songs verging on the brilliant, his band is equally superb. They play as a unit, all in total sympathy with both the material and themselves. An extra bonus, of course, is that Jackson is a "performer," so exciting it's like watching someone go through a catharsis onstage. Yet offstage he is deceptively quiet.

"Performing came naturally in that it is what I do. And it's natural to try and do it better. I have to be myself onstage. I can't hide behind a persona. People have criticized me for being friendly to the audience. Why not? Hell, they're on *our* side. Just because I don't insult the audience, people say I don't have enough anger or intensity."

Onstage Joe Jackson is magic. He is alternatively vulnerable, aggressive, passionate, sensitive and always an amazing singer. Offstage he is one of the most intense people I've met. One who takes their art seriously. One who will be around for a long time.

Despite massive success in both America and Britain, Jackson refuses to play large halls, preferring comfortable auditoriums where the acoustics are good. "I went to see Blue Oyster Cult in an arena in America. It was unbearable. It had nothing to do with rock & roll."

While Blue Oyster Cult might have little to do with musical aesthetics, Joe's second album, *I'm The Man*, defines the art form. Recorded in 10 days and co-produced by Joe and Kershenbaum, it is a tremendous progression from the first. Much of the difference can be attributed to the

fact that the band played much of the material live before recording.

"Playing live is absolutely vital. Everyone compared the second album to the first. I think *I'm The Man* is less poppy and less superficial. Some people don't like this because it's not poppy and now they think we're rat shit. It puts you in a strange situation when you're first album is so successful."

"I'm pleased with success but if your next album isn't as successful people think you're a failure which is ridiculous. Success has its good and bad points. Anyone who thinks success is the answer to happiness is wrong. Now people say they'd change places with me. That's very naive. It's hard work."

One thing Jackson dreads most is becoming predictable. He's recently put Jimmy Cliff's "The Harder They Come" into his show as well as an excellent reggae influenced song "Pretty Boy."

"If you're successful and repeat a formula you're as good as dead. You've gotta keep changing. You gotta keep trying. If you stop, you may as well give up." Jackson says in despair. "What I don't want to do is pigeon-hole myself."

Shortly Joe Jackson will begin recording his third album in a career that's only two years old. He says it will be a bit "reggae-fied" with a gleam in his eyes that promises good things. Anyone who thinks white reggae begins and ends with the Police better think twice.

"I don't have a very good memory," Joe Jackson says sheepishly. "I'm reluctant to talk about what I did 10 years ago because I don't remember. I have an obsession with the present. And I don't want to know about the future." ■

# and the band wore Blue Shirts



## Dave Houghton

### Drums

Dave Houghton grew up in Portsmouth, playing occasionally with Joe and club bands that toured European army bases. He never met guitarist Sanford until they laid down their initial demos. He likes Steely Dan, jazz, reggae and punk.

Not surprisingly, Houghton immediately liked Jackson's material. But he was married and had a family to support. At one time he gave up drumming "because there was no money in it" but quickly adds "then Joe came along."

"It was Joe's idea to make it the Joe Jackson Band which is nice," Dave says. "Joe had always thought of us as a band. When he originally signed the deal it was easier for A&M to push him. But now he

wants to call it a *band*. We always knew we'd stay together."

To say the band were surprised how quickly everything gelled artistically, personally and commercially is an understatement. "It's ridiculous. I still find it hard to adjust. Obviously you get used to it after awhile."

He uses a Premier kit for his own use and now endorses Tama. Although the rhythm section features prominently in the band sound, there are no ego conflicts. "Why be jealous? It's Joe's album. He wrote and arranged the entire first album."

Doing the demos over a six month period, Joe didn't let the band linger

under any false illusions. "If I get a deal together," he informed them. "we're a band. Graham and I are both married and needed security. I was on holiday and got a letter from Joe saying 'it's all go' so I just quite my job."

Stints in previous bands inspired Dave more to drink than play but that situation quickly changed. "Previous tours were not on similar scales. We'd never toured in that category or with those pressures."

The entire band thrive on the road, striving for a live recorded sound. "Overdubbing bores me to tears. I prefer something to grab me straight away."

When the band insist every show is treated with equal respect, as if they're out to prove themselves continually to virginal audiences, they are sincere. They equally respect themselves and the audience.

"Everything means a lot because there's so much we're aiming for. It's no dictatorship. We're not financially suffering," he laughs. "We've got more energy now. I came from a very laid back background so to play frenetic music was totally different. Now I find it hard to lay back."

Part of their success lies behind the fact that Joe, Dave and Graham have known each other nine years. "When we put ideas forward, little bits that might fit in, they're not discarded. People think Joe isn't easy to get along with but he is. Although he is very demanding."

According to Dave Houghton, the future looks secure. "I know what Joe's writing ability is like. He's got so many influences. The stuff he's played us for the third album is great. And it's different."



## Gary Sanford

### Lead

"I was a Londoner," Sanford grins. But he soon got drafted into the Portsmouth crowd. Playing in a band called John Doe, he met a friend of Joe's at art college. Eventually, Joe played with them and still later asked Gary to join the band.

Gary's history is, perhaps, the most interesting. He is one of the most exquisite guitarists to come along since the Jeff Beck/Mick Taylor/Eric Clapton blues boom. At 16 he joined a "sorta Irish country and western band" backing an accordion. On a Sunday morning, Gary turned up for his audition in a black velvet suit. Needless to say, he stood out like the proverbial sore thumb.

Truth being stranger than fiction, that band slowly progressed into a "kinda rock & roll band." The accordion player was the first to leave. Various sundry people came and went before the advent of punk. The band broke up. On the brink of signing a record deal, record companies weren't signing anything melodic.

"Alvin Lee was the first guitarist who set me off. My motivation was a clip from the *Woodstock* film. The energy was dynamic. That was my initiation."

There followed a heavy appreciation of Jimi Hendrix. "Alvin Lee got a bit boring. He always played the same thing. Hendrix remained a hero. After that I didn't have any influences."

The energy of punk inspired Sanford, a fact apparent both on stage and record. Rhythm became increasingly important. "The guitar became a percussion thing for me as opposed to a lead instrument."

He was a natural for the Joe Jackson Band where the bass is pushed full

throttle. "We must have had a rapport because we'd only played together three times without doing any gigs until we made the album. It was instant."

Jackson was the catalyst. "Being a piano player, Joe already has the arrangement when he plays us the song. The guitar part would basically be what he played on piano. Immediately there wasn't much I could do to it. Later we'd expand the initial arrangement."

"We've always had as much say as we wanted. It's pointless to change an arrangement if it's good. We've got as much space and freedom as we want or need."

Gary depends on his 1963 Strat which is the first major guitar he bought. He's had it since he was 17. "I've done loads of things to it. I've taken all the pick-ups off, changed it all round. I've never moved the neck position pick-up because I've been totally happy with it."

"Eventually I needed a spare guitar. I had a Les Paul but, unfortunately, I broke it," he laughs. "It kept cutting out on me on stage. Eventually I got so annoyed that I threw it offstage. For once, the roadie wasn't there to catch it. I threw it about 10 feet in the air. As soon as it left my hands, I regretted it. I knew it was gone. But the way it landed was spectacular."

Now he's got a Gibson RD custom. Despite its versatility he still prefers the Strat. "With the strat I've perfected a sound that I've wanted for years."

Sanford and Jackson run on parallel ideas. Gary has been writing for some time now and the possibilities of doing a "solo" album are strong. Needless to say, he too is a reggae fanatic.

"I'm happy with the way things are. I'm the type of guy who does what he wants. If I didn't like the music or got frustrated, I'd quit. Nothing is *that* important. I'd rather be happy with myself and my playing rather than do something just for the money or the prestige."

## Graham Maby

### Bass

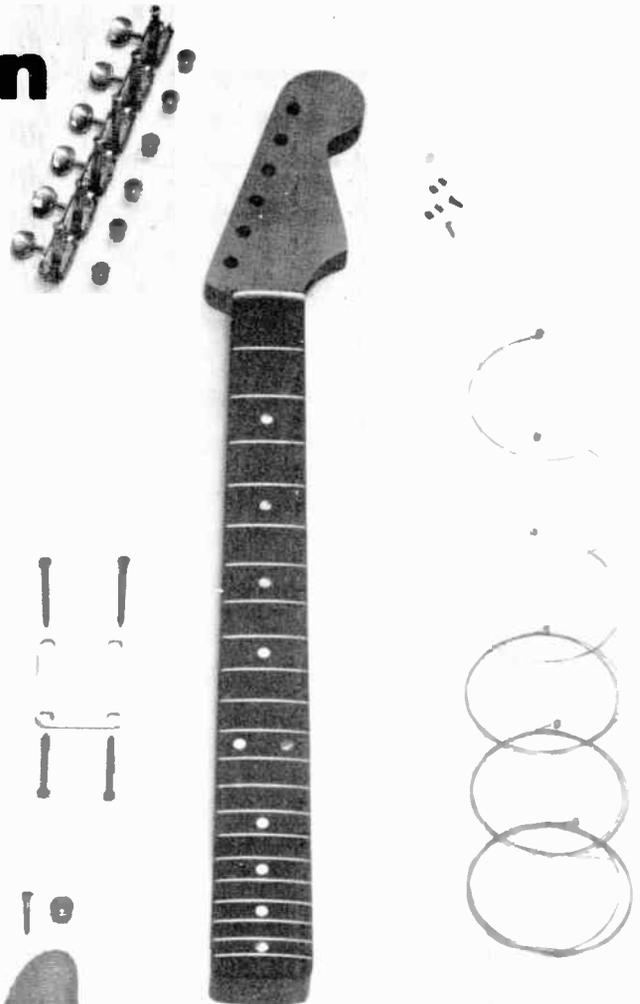
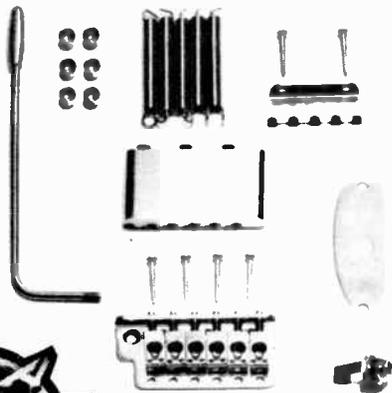
To Joe Jackson's way of thinking, bass is the most important instrument in the group. "It's worked out that the bass is dominant. When we did the demos, Joe



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said he wanted a three-piece where the bass was more a lead instrument than the guitar. It's worked out fine. Joe's idea of what he wanted the band to sound like was compatible with the way everybody was."

A veteran of numerous bands, Graham stopped counting just how many after reaching the teens. Graham has known Joe better than the others as they were both in Arms and Legs.

"I always envisioned Joe having his own band. There were two writers in our band and they didn't go in *quite* the same direction."

Every member of the band stresses the unity and freedom. "Joe's always been pushing it as a band. That's because he's shy and he'd rather put the blame on other people," Graham laughs. "But it *is* a band. Joe lays down the skeleton of a song and gives us freedom to move. If he doesn't like something you're playing, he'll tell you. But at least we've got freedom."

Graham had to make a decision to gamble with Joe as he too is domesticated. "You don't turn down a chance like *that*."

Graham first became aware of the existence of bass guitar because of the Beatles. "I used to like Paul McCartney. He was the first person who turned me on to bass. I didn't even know what a bass guitar was until then.

"I'm not a technically gifted player," Graham admits. "But spontaneity is more important than getting it dead right."

Like everyone else, Graham was stunned at the rapid rate of success the band en-

joyed. "I was overwhelmed. When it starts to happen, you're in a continual state of surprise. It never stops. You never stop being amazed at what's going on."

Graham Maby uses an Ibanez bass and a Fender Precision.

One cannot dispute the fact that Joe Jackson is a major talent, unfortunately overshadowed by the hype attributed to more marketable artists. One major ingredient of his success is the band. Each member excels at what they do. And they enjoy it. ■

After all is said and done, Gary Sanford sums up the situation best. "We'd all spent time on bands doing everything we could to make them work. Then *suddenly* it happened. Before, I was in a band for four years trying to make it big. Within a month of joining Joe, we had a recording contract and a tour. In the past, a year has been such a *long* time struggling. This year has gone by like lightning."

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and Amos moved to Woodstock, N.Y., where Geoff and Maria were living. They eventually formed a group and recorded two albums for Reprise which were released under Geoff and Maria's names.

Entitled *Pottery Pie* and *Sweet Potatoes*, both albums are showcases for Garrett's impeccable guitar stylings. It was eventually this aggregation of Woodstock residents that produced Paul Butterfield's *Better Days*; unfortunately, this band only lasted for two years and two albums, after which Amos and Geoff temporarily parted ways.

During a *Better Day's* recording date in Los Angeles, Maria Muldaur contacted Garrett and asked him to do a session with her for a forthcoming solo album. The session ended with Amos getting a steady job with Maria's touring band for three years — the same session that produced the gold-selling "Midnight at The Oasis" and firmly established Amos as one of rock's premier session guitarists.

1977 brought about a reunion for Amos and Geoff and a subsequent three years of heavy touring, including two Japanese tours and an album on Flying Fish Records entitled *Geoff Muldaur and Amos Garrett*. In between all of this, Amos has also found time to work on *Hos Heaven*, Elvin Bishop's last album for Capricorn Records, tour with Bishop for several months and still continue with his customarily heavy load of session work.

Garrett's popularity as a session player was a direct result of his classic solo on "Midnight at The Oasis," but it also left an unfortunate impression that is hard to kill. "The 'Midnight' solo is sort of like my calling card," Amos mourns. "It's the dead-center essence of my style, but it's almost hurt my career more than it's helped me. It's starting to slack off now, but for the first two years after that record came out, I always got session calls where someone asked me to duplicate that solo."

Amos's approach to his studio work is fairly loose, but not sloppy. He sight reads, but normally works from either chord charts or ear and intuition. He doesn't like to limit himself to just playing lead lines and fills. "I've done sessions where I've played nothing but rhythm guitar. As a matter of fact, I once recorded an album for a French group that was Top Ten in Europe, where I played all of the guitar parts on all of the tracks, including the overdubbed leads."

When queried about how he developed

his distinctive playing style he replied, "I don't know how I arrived at this style. I guess I originally learned to bend a note from listening to Chuck Berry or one of those guys that I listened to in my teens.

"I liked some of the more modern pedal steel playing that was going on in the mid-Sixties, where they were bending more than one note at a time, and I'd never really heard anyone doing that on a straight, electric guitar before. Oh, Chuck Berry would do it, a little bit, in one particular shape; sort of a broken 'A' chord in the same fret, on the second and third strings. But no one else to speak of.

"So I just started sort of messing things around. Pushing strings in different directions and changing my strings around to see if I could bend two and three strings simultaneously and have them come in, in tune, as well as going from one interval up to another interval and have them arrive in tune there also.

"But with country playing, it was sort of a dead end, so I soon discovered that it sounded a lot better with blues and rock & roll. God, I couldn't even come close to doing what a pedal steel could do. But the essence of my style doesn't have so much to do with bent strings, as it does with phrasing and timing. A lot of it is feeling and the way that I lag notes, like triplets."

Some of his favorite solos, and those which best exemplify his style are on "Georgia (On My Mind)," from the *Pottery Pie* album, "Lazy Bones," from the *Sweet Potatoes* album, "Gee Baby, Ain't I Good to You," from *Geoff Muldaur Is Having A Wonderful Time* (Reprise), "River's Invitation," and "Chopin Prelude," both of which are on the *Geoff and Amos* album, and, of course, "Midnight at The Oasis."

Garrett is not a guitar collector; the axes that he owns are strictly *functional*, but are nevertheless exceeding fine instruments. He has a custom-made Ibanez Artist solid-body (a pre-production prototype), a vintage Fender Telecaster that he's owned for many years and two 1945 000-21 Martin Herringbone acoustic guitars, both of which are equipped with Barcus-Berry "Hot Dot" pickups.

Amos strings his Martins with Martin "Marquis" light gauge strings, and his Ibanez and Fender guitars with either Ernie Ball or Fender strings. The gauges on the Ibanez run from light to heavy, .009, .011, .017, .030, .040, and .050. His Telecaster is strung with .009, .011, .016, .026, .036, and .046, light to heavy. Garrett claims his reason for choosing these particular gauge strings lies within the

tonal relationship of the strings and the notes when he uses his multiple bending techniques, especially with the lighter gauges. He uses the heavier gauge strings more for their actual tone than anything else.

Garrett's amplification system consists of a 100 watt Howard Dumble amplifier equipped with one 12" Altec speaker. One of about 40 and a first of its kind, the amp was made for him by Howard Dumble of Santa Cruz, Ca., who has also made amps for such people as Jackson Browne, David Lindley and Graham Nash. Amos uses his at home, in the studio, or whenever he has a road crew to move it around for him. He claims that he has developed a new set of muscles from moving its 125 lbs. around.

The Dumble has a master volume, with treble, midrange and bass controls, an expander with hi and lo controls for EQ, a reverb unit, a vibrato unit, a preamp and an extension speaker for use in large rooms. Unfortunately, Garrett's Magnatone Vibrato unit is not functioning at the moment because it is missing four varistors. In fact, Amos would be exceedingly happy if any reader of this magazine who happens to have an old Magnatone M-10A Vibrato Unit lying around someplace would send him the power head, in care of this magazine, so that he can bring his amp back up to full working order.

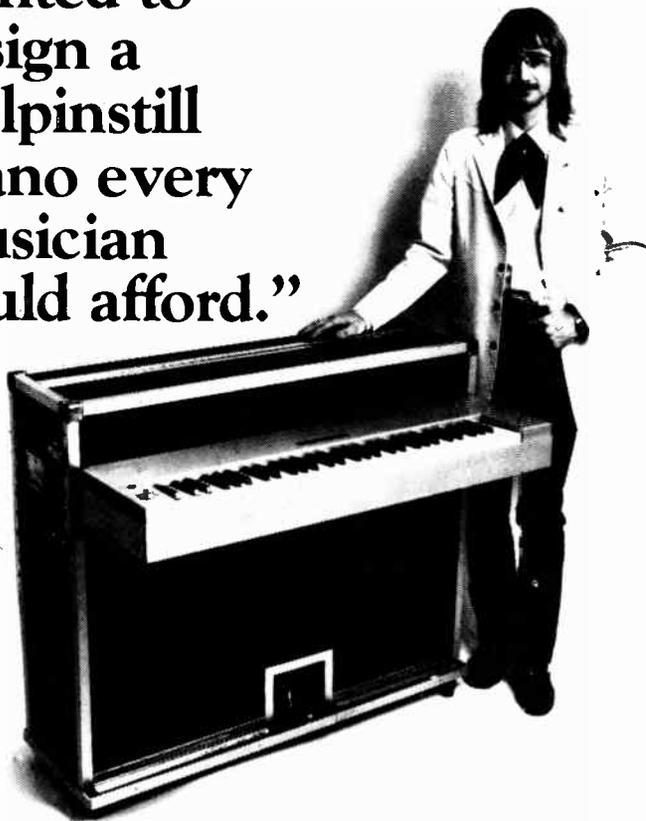
Amos also uses a Roland Cube 40 amp (40 watts) when he's on the road. "It's small and light, and can fit under the seat of an airplane. I can also run it straight into the P.A. system, which I can't do with my Dumble."

Garrett varies the settings on his guitars and amplifier controls according to each room's acoustic peculiarities, miking his amp through the P.A. system. His effects are kept to a minimum and, currently, his only effect is an A/DA flanging unit.

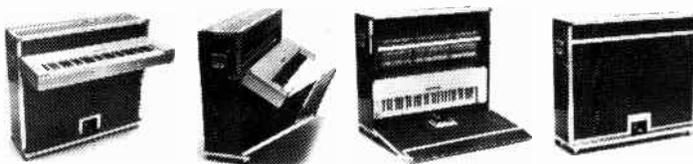
Garrett recently completed his first solo album for Flying Fish Records, *Go Cat. Go.*, a hard-rocking, rhythm & blues-soaked album of "Progressive-Period Rock," filled with obscure pieces from the mid to late-Fifties. He has also finished an instructional tape for Happy Traum's "Homespun Tapes" which details that distinct playing style of his.

And, of course, there are still those many session calls that he receives, so you can be sure that you will be hearing that fresh, individualistic sound and style instantly recognizable as "Amos Garrett" on many more albums in the years to come.

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# On the Road

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### Ashford Model 1-1490R Radial Horn

Suitable for use at 800 Hz and above, Ashford Audio's Model 1-1490R is small enough to be considered ideal for use as the high frequency portion of a speaker system, especially when used for keyboards or other such instruments. It also performs well in in-house permanent installations, portable sound reinforcement or PA applications. The Model 1-1490R also features a nominal throat diameter of 1" (25mm) and will accept the dual stud 3" (76mm) centers standard Altec driver mounting or the 3 bolt JBL mounting pattern.



Circle 737 on Reader Service Card



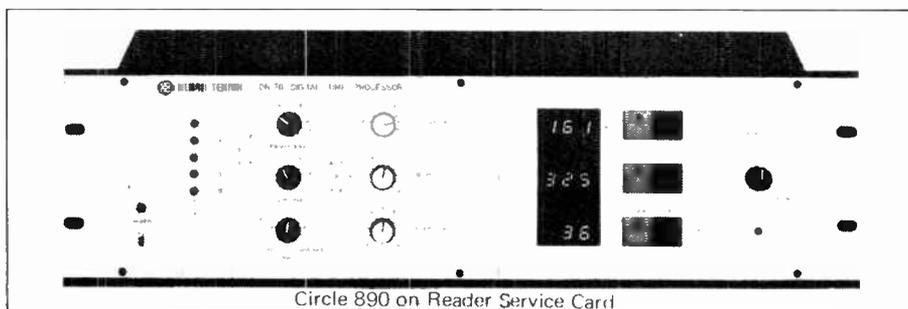
### SONEX Acoustical Control Foam

Based on the anechoic wedge principle, SONEX acoustical control foam has already found a wide application in the recording and broadcasting industry — SONEX has even been installed in a number of discotheques.

SONEX is a lightweight foam that can be hung on or attached to walls and ceilings — most users attach the 4 b 4 ft SONEX panels directly to the walls with mastic or staples. The architecturally shaped surface of SONEX "does an

outstanding job of absorbing sound, creating a flat, non-reflective chamber around the studio". All of this helps reduce or even eliminate slap echoes and standing waves and performance has been rated as "uniformly flat".

SONEX itself is an open-cell foam with inherent sound-absorbent characteristics while the design of the patented, sculptured surface acts as an anechoic wedge to scatter and deflect the sound. SONEX is available in blue, charcoal, brown and yellow with thicknesses of 2, 3 or 4 inches in the standard 4 x 4 ft panels.



Circle 890 on Reader Service Card

### DN70 Digital Time Processor

New from Klark-Teknik is the DN70 Digital Time Processor which features digital readout in milliseconds of time delay of each output, three maximum delay options (163ms/326ms/652ms), in-house designed analog-to-digital converter for superior distortion and noise performance, Mains fail-safe, mixing and

regeneration controls on front panel and a high clocking speed of 50kHz. In addition, this sophisticated unit offers perpetual memory of delay settings for permanent or semi-permanent installations, a lockout switch to prevent tampering or accidental re-setting of delay times and High technology semiconductor memory — the 652 option uses 28 x 16K bit Random Access Memories.

# On the Road

## QUEEN

**Hall:** *Birmingham National Exhibition Center*

**Hire Company:** *Clair Brothers Audio, Lititz, PA, USA*

This was without doubt the most exciting concert we have covered in this series — but then, I must admit that Queen are very much my type of music, and if you add to that the incredible Clair Brothers sound system which I have not previously had the opportunity of studying, it will be appreciated that this particular consignment was very much my "cup of tea."

The National Exhibition Center has five large exhibition halls, and rock concerts tend to be staged in halls that are not being used for exhibition. The Queen gig was staged in Hall 1, which, although it is the smallest hall on the site, nevertheless provided standing room for about 15,000 wildly enthusiastic fans who, despite the jostling and frequently poor sight lines, remained good natured throughout the one hour 45 minute concert. Queen gave an electrifying performance with no support band!

Another problem was the difficult acoustic conditions that are bound to exist in a large concrete and steel "barn" which is really what these exhibition halls amount to, and despite the absorption provided by the huge audience, and the fact that some of the acoustic panels designed for the seated arena had been transferred to Hall 1 and flown overhead, there was still considerable reverberation in evidence, especially at low frequencies. Surprisingly perhaps, this did not seriously detract from the enjoyment of the music and did not seem anywhere near as bad as my recollections of the Stones' concerts a few years ago in London.

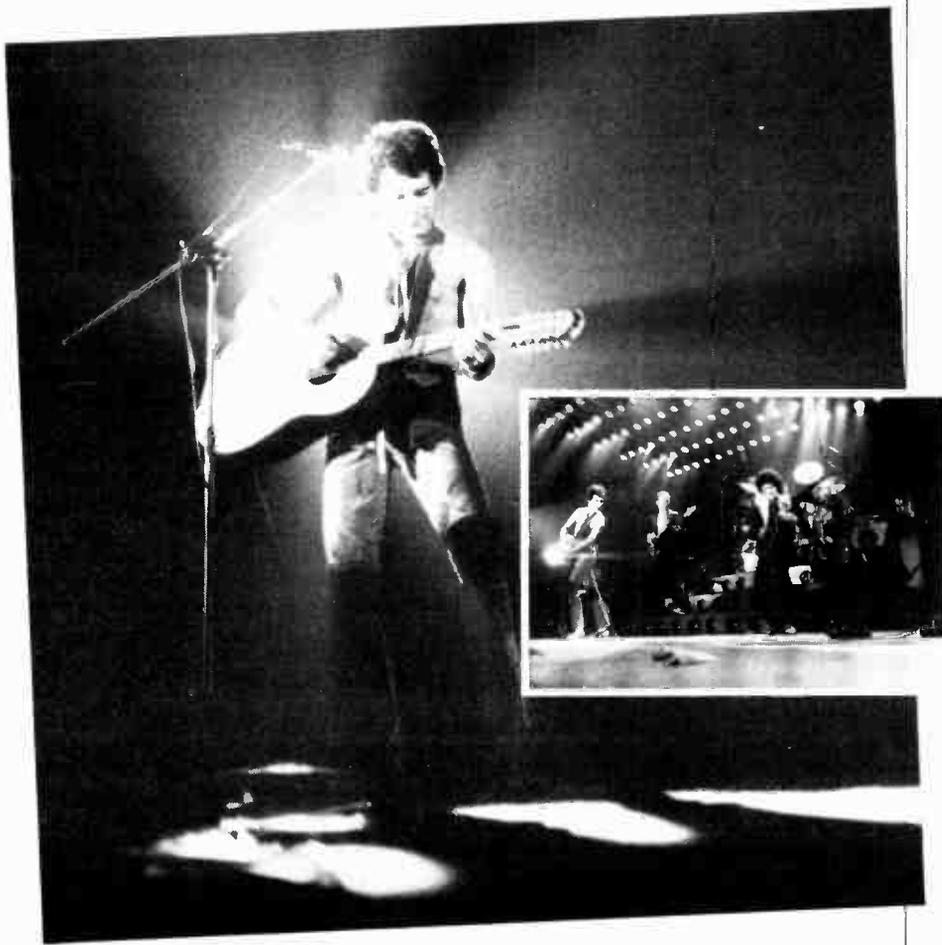
The Clair Bros PA is a total concept, custom built sound system of incredible flexibility and is brilliantly engineered. It was flown over from the States, under the watchful eye (and ear) of Mike Wolf for the Moody Blues and Queen autumn tours and was due back immediately after the last Queen gig. The loudspeaker system is built up using the Clair Bros' S4 full range cabinet. This is a massive box, about five feet square and about two feet deep and is fitted with two JBL K151 18" bass drivers, four JBL K110 10" drivers as

lower mids, two JBL 2440 compression drivers each coupled to the horn section only of a 2395 acoustic lens assembly and two JBL 2402 ring radiators to handle the HF.

Crossover is passive between the 2440's and the bullets, and three-way active between the 18's, 10's and 2440's, the three inputs being brought out to a heavy duty multiway connector at the back of each cabinet. The K151 bass drivers and the K110 mid-range are all working as direct radiators — i.e. they are not horn loaded, and are arranged in vertical lines as shown in my sketch. On each side of the stage were 12 of these cabinets, three of which were standing one cabinet high by

three wide on the side of the stage to provide coverage of the forward part of the hall, and nine were flown in a three by three square formation in the roof angled down onto the audience. The rigging of these nine cabinets was exceptionally neat and tidy and the whole loudspeaker bank created a most impressive and highly professional visual aspect. However, there is more to it than just rigging and visual impact.

When large numbers of cone loudspeakers are arranged in a vertical array, a special dispersion characteristic is developed by the inter-action between sounds coming from the various drive units in the line, whereby dispersion is



# On the Road

the horizontal plane is widened while vertical dispersion is compressed thereby producing a radiation pattern not unlike that of a radial horn, but, if the drive units are large enough and the column length long enough the effect will work right down to low frequencies. This is exactly what is happening with the Clair rig. The complete flown array as assembled, boils down to six columns of six 18-inch bass drivers and six columns of 12, 10-inch midrange drivers, each with a column length of about five meters, which according to my calculations, will provide line source dispersion, as the effect is known, from about 1.2kHz down to about 80Hz between the two types of column.

It is altogether a brilliantly conceived system and is so designed that the cabinets can be rigged in any desired formation, either stacked or flown, and can also be used as side fill monitors. From a rigging viewpoint, it took Clair engineer Mike Wolf, working with just two roadies, exactly 15 minutes to pull down, completely dismantle and stow in the truck, one complete nine cabinet flown array.

All the power amps are Phase Linear 700B Mk II's and these were all located in racks on stage — the feeds to the flown loudspeaker arrays being by means of multi-way cables which were literally as thick as a fire hose. One such cable fed each array with the end of the cable made into individual tails which plugged directly into each cabinet. There were a total of 224 Phase-Linear 700B's, which means that the total input power available to the loudspeaker system could be anything up to 33,600 watts depending on how the amps were loaded.

Moving now to the input end of the system, this was equally impressive as far as engineering is concerned. The main mixing console was Clair Bros' own 32-channel six-group stereo desk, which, apart from having an outstanding technical specification and offering many advanced equalization, monitoring and routing facilities, is built into a collapsible aluminium frame so that when erected it is completely free standing on its own

base. When folded up for transit, it is smaller than many conventional 32-channel desks. It is of a most ingenious design. Superbly engineered, and is erected or folded up in a matter of seconds. For me, many of the controls looked rather small and somewhat cramped, but John Morris, Queen's soundman did not seem to find any difficulty in coping.

Alongside the desk was a large double bay rack of auxiliary equipment and this again was of exemplary engineering quality. In fact, the desk and auxiliary rack together would provide better facilities than many professional studios and is in fact often used for live recording purposes. I did not get the opportunity to list all the equipment fitted to the rack, but included was a Lexicon 224 digital reverb unit (not in use at the NEC due to the already excessive natural reverberation of the hall), an Eventide digital delay, a Lexicon digital delay used as a phaser etc, White Instruments 31-band room equalizers with a White real time spectrum analyzer, DBX limiters and a host of other goodies. The only equipment not in the rack were two Revox B77 tape recorders, one of which was used to provide the multi-tracked vocals for the middle part of "Bohemian Rhapsody".

The foldback system comprised a Midas 24 into eight monitor desk driving Clair Bros S4 cabinets used as side fills and a variety of floor monitors containing JBL components via SAE 2600 power amps and Klark Teknik graphics. Brian May, of course, was playing through his legendary stack of Vox AC30 combos and the exact way in which he used these is interesting.

Firstly, they are not actually stacked on top of each other — if they were — as anyone familiar with the AC30 will know, there would be no access to the control panel of the bottom two amps. Instead these are stood on a specially made tiered stand so that each amp is stepped back from the one below it. Although there are nine amps in the stack, structured three high by three wide, only three of these are actually in use at any one time. The output from Brian's guitar is split three



ways. One of these feeds one AC30 via a special custom pre-amp unit and a Fox phase pedal. The second split feeds another AC30 via an Echoplex echo unit while the third split feeds a third AC30 via two more Echoplex units. The remaining six AC30's make up two spare amps for each AC30 that is in use and these are wired and running ready for immediate use. John Deacon was playing two Fender Precisions, one fretless, through a Klark Teknik DN27 graphic equalizer and four Acoustic 400 watt amps into three Sunn 2x15 cabs and two Sunn 4x12 cabs. Freddie Mercury's grand piano was fitted with a Helpinstil piano pick-up feeding a specially built Clair Bros mixer and another Klark Teknik DN27 graphic and this was reproduced on stage by two Clair Bros special monitor cabinets fitted with JBL 2215 15" drivers and 2440 compression drivers behind horns driven by Turner B302 power amps. Roger Taylor played a large Ludwig kit which included two tympani, Syndrums and a five foot gong.

After the excitement of the start, things settled down somewhat as Queen presented a most exciting concert. Off came Freddie Mercury's jacket and shirt after the first two or three numbers as more and more energy seemed to be put into the act and the volume crept up. "Bohemian Rhapsody" was brilliantly performed with the aid of the Revox B77 tape machine and the synchronization between the band and the tape was superb. For the most part, the sound



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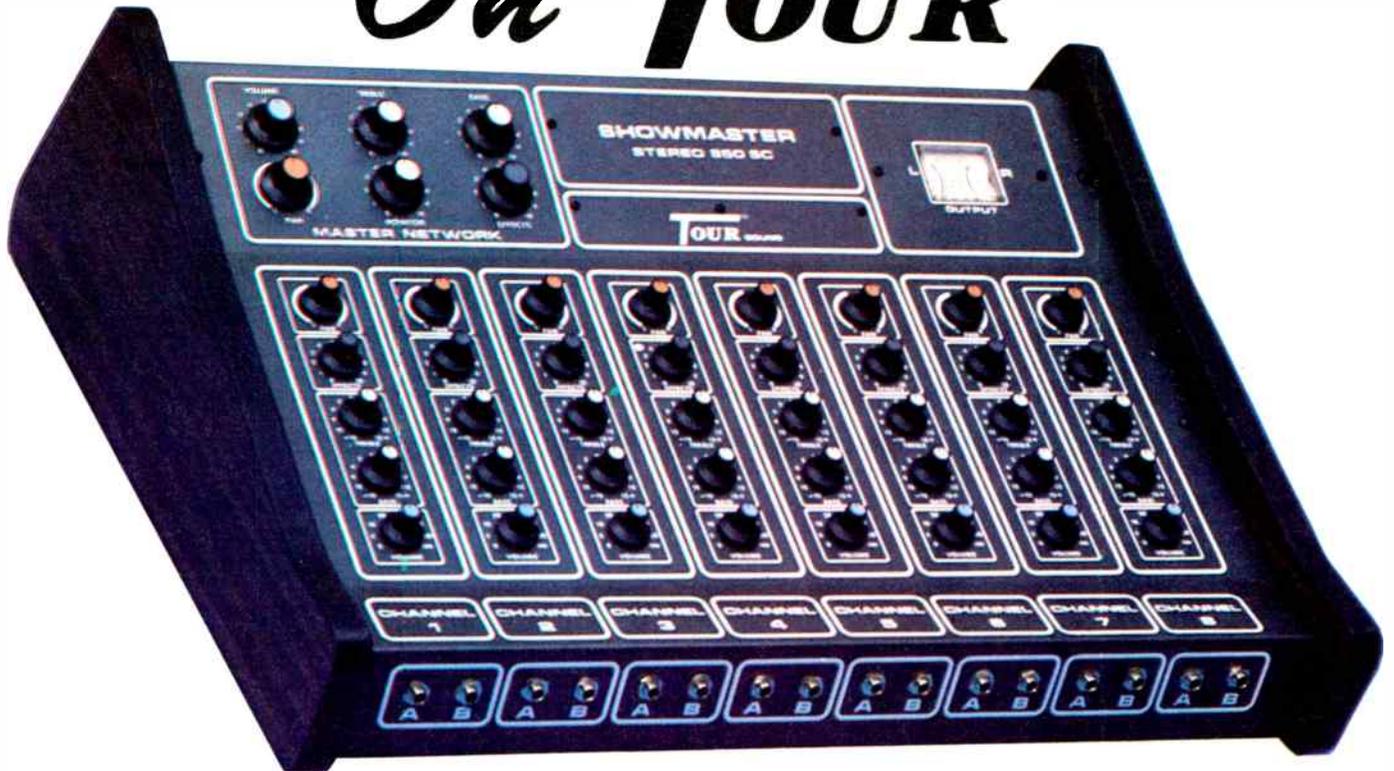
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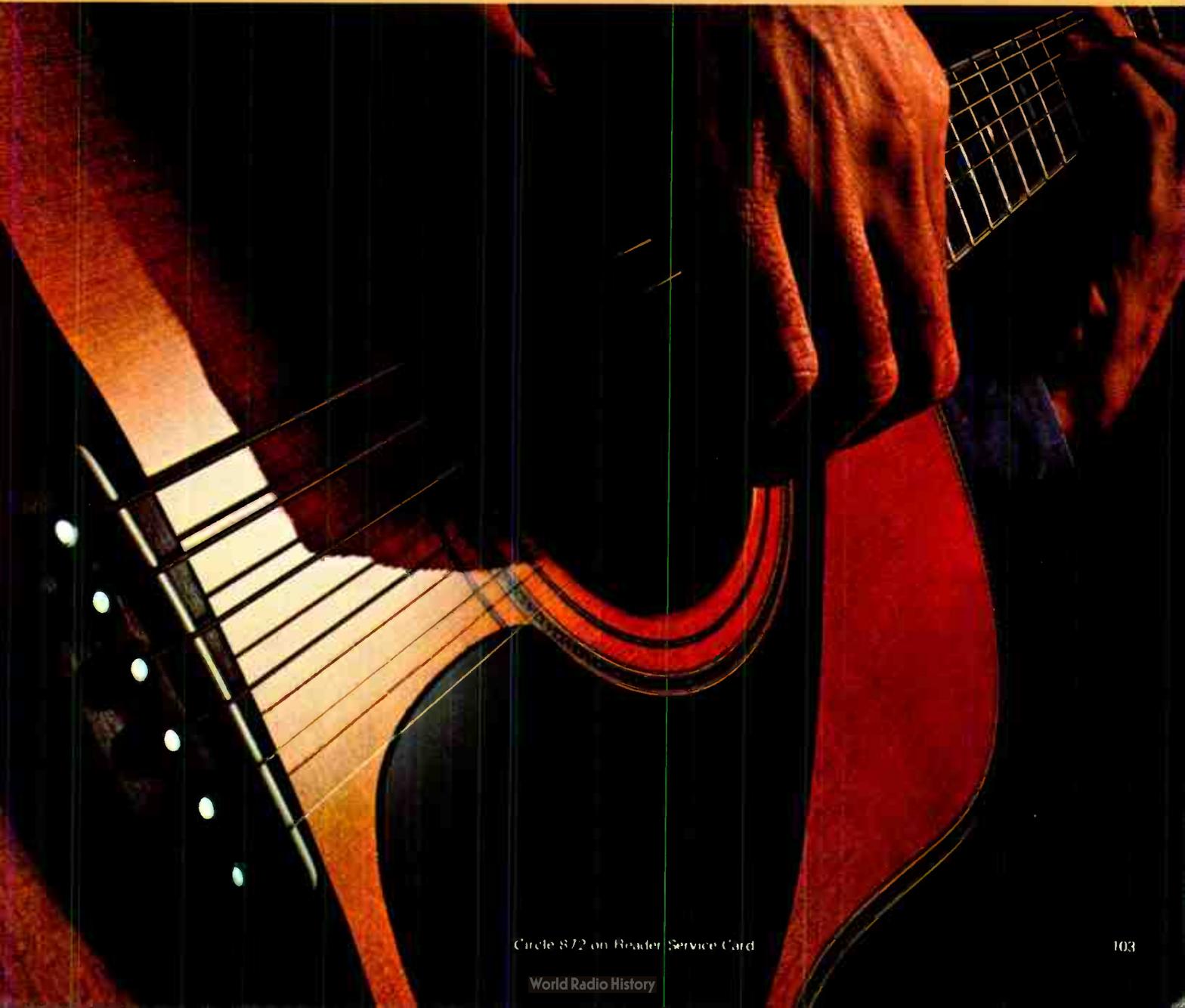
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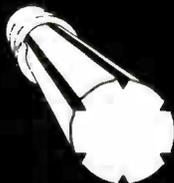
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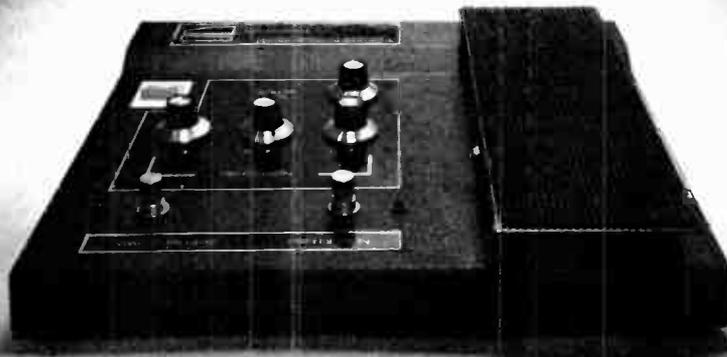
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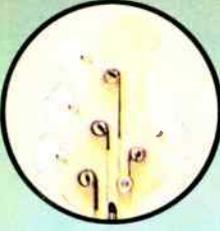


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## Part 14: Shaping the fingerboard

In the course of the next few paragraphs I shall refer to fingerboards as being both curved and straight. Perhaps I should clarify this. Both aspects are relevant to a good instrument which will accept a low action setting without producing fret buzz when you try to "bend" the strings. Firstly, the fingerboard should be nearly straight when viewed along the same direction as the strings. The word "nearly" avoids a lot of argument about whether the ideal neck should or should not have a minute amount of curvature, for optimum playing conditions. Opinions about this differ; I prefer straight fingerboards on electric guitars, but as I set up the final adjustment by feel, rather than with a straight-edge, I may not even be quite correct about this statement. In any case, if the neck has no adjustable truss rod, it will usually pull forward a little under string tension, and you will have little choice in the matter. If it has an adjustable rod, you can experiment with different neck settings after the instrument is complete. In either case, I strongly suggest that you plane the fingerboard as straight as you can at this stage — and you will need to use a straight-edge for this.

So for all practical purposes, at this stage the fingerboard should be straight along its length. It may, however, be either straight or cambered across its *width* according to your preferences. If it is cambered too much, you will find that "bent" strings will touch nearby frets and lose their sustain unless you can tolerate a fairly high action. Some players don't much bend strings, and some who do like a fairly high action anyway. If you want a low action and the possibility of bending strings halfway across the

fingerboard, you must accept a fingerboard which is practically flat across its width.

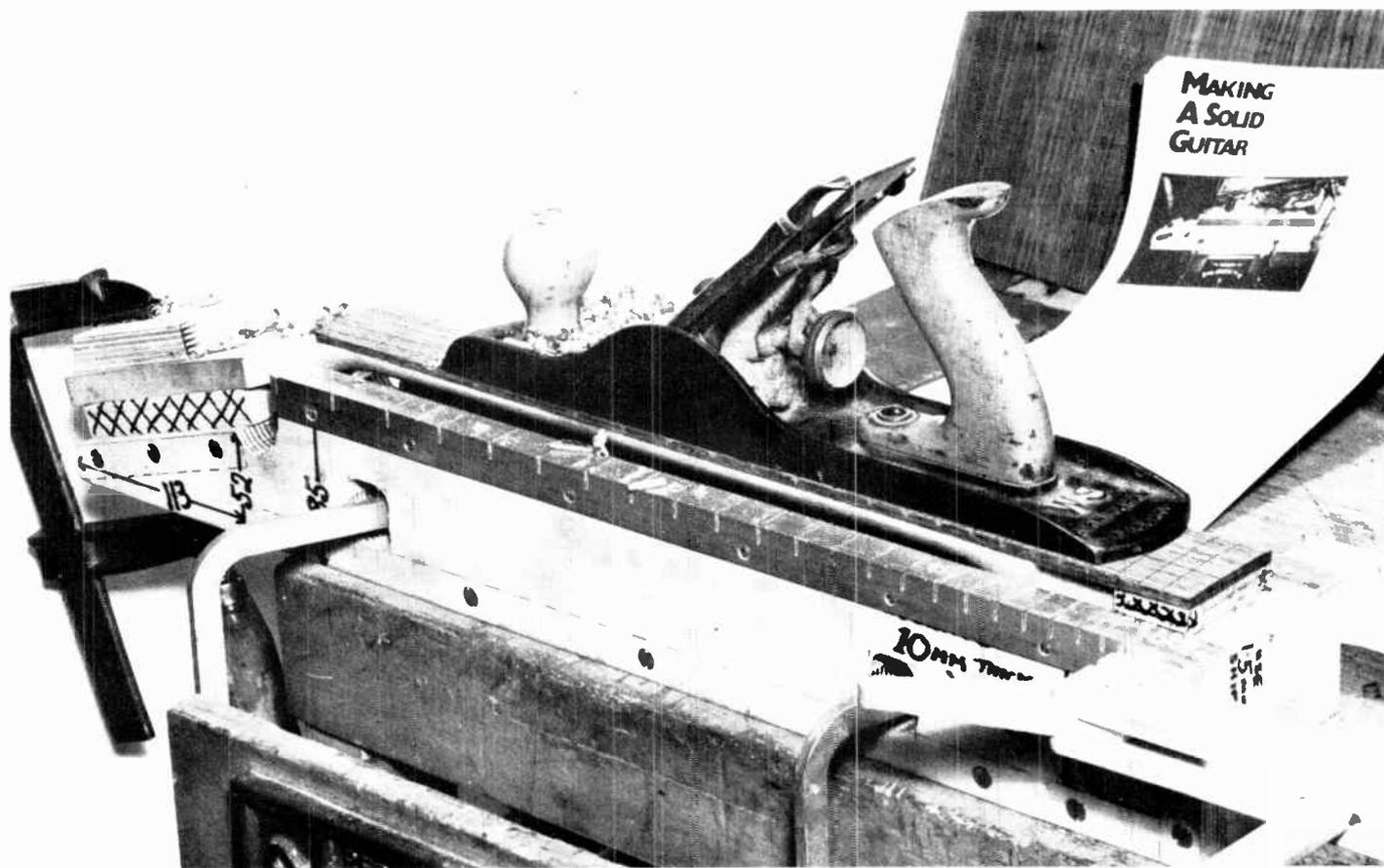
I had one Travis Bean guitar for review some time ago and its fingerboard was more or less flat. The company didn't exactly say it was flat. They just implied that on their guitars, you wouldn't have any trouble with "bent" strings catching on adjacent frets. Of course they were quite correct. I suspect quite a few guitarists find Travis Bean fingerboards perfectly acceptable, but if *told* that they had no camber would probably find the same fingerboards uncomfortable. Obviously, in any guitar, if the frets are not level with each other, or if the neck is warped or if the action is too low, you may get string buzzes, with or without string bending. I am assuming, for the moment, that the neck, fingerboard and frets are perfect. For any given action, the amount of string bending possible, while preserving a cleanly sustaining note, is finally limited by the amount (and shape) of camber on the fingerboard. I have never seen this point mentioned in print before, but it seems to be one of the immutable laws of guitar design.

You will notice that I have slipped in a small reference to the *shape* of the camber. I generally shape my fingerboards by feel and I know that the shape I produce is not a section of a circle. I also know that the shape does not remain the same in all parts of the fingerboard. At this stage, things become rather complicated. I would suggest that a reasonable compromise would be to put a simple curve on the fingerboard, using a template cut from part of a 400mm *radius* circle. The same template will serve for any part of the fingerboard

and the result will work well. Classical guitars usually have flat fingerboards. If you have no difficulty playing classical guitar, you may prefer to make your electric guitar fingerboard practically flat. Use a template cut on a 800mm radius instead. If you like very cambered fingerboards, use a 300mm radius, but it may require a slightly higher action if you want to play solos.

Once you have a fretting jig as described in last month's article, you can also use it to make the job of planing the fingerboard much easier. You will need three shims of 17 or 18mm plywood. (If this material is not available, you can, of course, use any hardwood, planed to this thickness.) You will need one piece 75mm by 120mm to go under the head, and two pieces 35mm by 8mm to go each side of the neck tenon. The neck must be clamped in the jig just as firmly as when cutting the frets, but because of the shims, the top of the fingerboard will project above the top of the jig as shown in Photo 1. I have marked the shims with thick crossed lines so you can see where they fit.

The head shim is clamped down between the head and the head-shelf on the jig. There should be *no* significant downward pressure on the shims by the neck tenon: they are only spacers, to help in setting the neck and fingerboard straight in the jig. Any down-pressure on these shims would tend to loosen the end of the fingerboard. As with the re-fretting process, the neck tenon is actually held only by the sideways grip of the jig when clamped as shown. If the joint end of the neck lies above the shims when the head end is clamped down, or if the ends of the finger-



board are pressed down hard onto the end shims, your *head* shim is probably slightly tapered. Try turning it round, or make another one. If the gap is small, you could make another pair of small shims to fit, but, however you solve the problem, the neck must *not* be made to fit the jig under stress. This can easily happen un-noticed, if you clamp up the tenon end of the neck before the head end.

Ideally, you should have a plane, similar to the one in the photograph and the following advice assumes that you have one, or can borrow one. However, the job can be done with coarse industrial abrasive paper (or a piece cut from an unused abrasive belt) glued to a *straight* piece of hardwood about 50mm square, and a little longer than the fingerboard. Keep the abrasive free from clogging, with a brush and a spare rubber shoe-heel, and when it no longer cuts with light pressure change it at once. Cow gum is a suitable rubber adhesive, and you will need 40 or 60 grit for rough shaping. Follow with 80 and then 120.

Check constantly with a straight-edge as described below for planning the fingerboard.

If you have a plane, it should be kept constantly sharp, and the blade edge, blade setting and cap-iron setting, should be checked *each time* after sharpening, on a piece of planed hardwood, before you start again on the fingerboard. First, plane the fingerboard flat both ways using a straight-edge along, across and diagonally, corner to corner. The plane must be sharp enough to cut with little downwards pressure beyond its own weight. If you have to press downward, the resulting surface may be smooth, but it probably won't be flat.

You may find it helpful to make a little block from about 20mm softwood which just wedges across the inside of the jig, and just touches the underside of the neck around the middle of its length. It will reduce the tendency for the neck to sag under the weight of planing or sanding, but it should only just *touch* the neck. Don't attempt any sort of compen-

sating stresses while working on necks: the end result is usually worse rather than better. Even so, a long plane is no guarantee of straight work, and you should continually check your work with a straight-edge. If you are planing ebony, the blade will lose its edge after five or six strokes, and will need re-sharpening even though it may still appear to cut.

When the fingerboard is flat both ways, mark off a 10mm band along each edge with a pale-colored drawing pencil. Lime green or white are probably best. Draw a faint scribble, or cross-hatching, over each band, so that you can see where you are removing wood with the plane. Plane each band down at a slight angle, so that the edges of the fingerboard are reduced by about 0.5mm. This is not very much, and requires a finely set plane, which may not at first appear to be removing *anything* from the corner. Try the plane first on the piece of smooth-planed hardwood recommended earlier, and adjust it to take off fine shavings. Use the same setting for the fingerboard, and patiently



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work the plane at roughly the right angle, in long even strokes until you begin to see some of the scribbled marks disappearing. This will guide you with the exact angle at which to hold the plane. Replace the scribbles as you go.

When you have bevelled each edge of the fingerboard, check with the camber template which you have chosen, and make smaller bevels by planing *part* of the corners left by the first bevels. Check again, and plane off part of the corners left by the second lot of bevels. This is a standard way of approximating a curved surface with a plane. Because the neck and fingerboard are tapered in width, it will be very difficult to finish the curve more closely than this with a plane. However, I would in any case suggest that you finish the shaping with a template, a straight-edge and a hard sanding block about half the length of the fingerboard and about two thirds of the width at the nut end. Use something like 120 grit industrial paper such as "open-coat" Garnet or Aloxite. Replace the abrasive paper when it begins to clog and cannot be cleaned with a brush and a rubber shoe heel.

Because the fingerboard is now cambered, you cannot check it casually with a straight-edge. You must pencil in the exact lines of the strings each time, and place the straight-edge along these lines. In any other direction the straight-edge will give misleading readings.

If you have fretwire by now, measure the depth of the tang which is to be fitted into the fret slots. Mark the fretting saw with tape, or with quick-dry engineers' blue marking ink and a scribe, to indicate a cutting depth 0.5 to 1mm deeper than the greatest depth of the fret-wire tang. While the neck is clamped in the jig, *on its raising shims*, deepen the slots all the way across, to the marked line on the saw. Do not try to do this using the saw-guide slots in the jig. Unless lined up again precisely (which is unlikely) you will probably make the slots wider as well as deeper, and the

frets will not hold in place. Use soap on the saw while cutting, and make sure the jig is clamped firmly to the bench. (If you do not yet have fretwire, this job should be done sometime before the neck is glued on to the body, and preferably before the edges of the fingerboard are finally shaped.)

This is the stage at which I put inlays or dots in the front of the fingerboard and make and fit the head-facing. (Dots in the *edge* of the fingerboard are fitted when the neck and fingerboard are almost completely finished off). David Russel Young's book, "The Steelstring Guitar, Construction and Repair" gives good advice on pearl inlay work. Before finalizing the shape of the head and the positions for the machine-heads, make a drawing of your intended design, full size, include nut and strings, and check that strings 2, 3, 4 and 5, clear adjacent machine heads when they are carrying at least one layer of string. The thickness of the bottom strings, warped around the rollers can make the difference between touching and clearance. This is not just a cosmetic point. Strings touching adjacent machines can produce "sympathetic" buzzes. Also, no string should make too steep an angle sideways as it leaves the nut. Ten degrees is about the limit for reliable working.

Within these limits, I shall leave you to design and fit your own choice of decoration. Try not to lose the shape of the fingerboard, while filing the inlays level. You can reduce the risk of this by filing them nearly to size and shape, while set in a recess in a false fingerboard made to the same shape as the real one out of any hard wood. Then cut the fingerboard recesses carefully until the curved top of the inlay can just be felt above the level of the fingerboard all round. Leave the final finishing of the inlays until next month.

If you are going to use a head facing, and you have cut the head to the smaller dimension on the plan, the facing will be about 2mm thick. This

is thick enough to be inlaid in the same way as the fingerboard and fitted to the head when complete and satisfactory. Trim it nearly to size before gluing on with a pair of thick wooden packing blocks, one of which should be trimmed to fit the slight curve on the back of the head. Don't worry about the middle, but you will need strong clamps all around the edge of the packing blocks as the glue will cause the edges of the head, and particularly the facing, to curl apart. Put masking tape on the head to protect it from glue runs, and put two layers of strong paper over the packing blocks before assembly.

When the head is dry, remove the clamps and blocks and allow it at least another week to dry properly at room temperature, before you try to finish it to size.

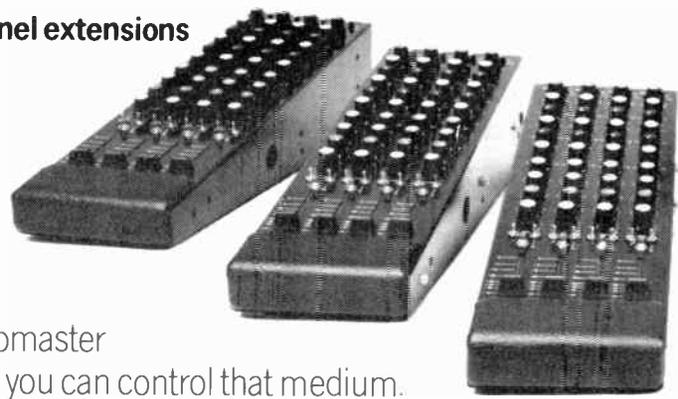
While waiting, you can finish the neck to exact size and shape with sanding blocks and sharp scrapers, paying constant attention to the position of the truss rod inside the neck. Don't try for a super-slim neck first (or even second) time. By the time you have this right, the head will probably be dry enough for the same treatment.

Try not to let the sanding distort the shape of the body joint, or round over the edges which are to fit against the body. If in doubt, leave this end until later when the neck and body will be glued together.

Remember, it is the neck which should be near to the exact size, and the body is still a little oversize around the joint, to allow for trimming after assembly, so don't make the end of the neck any smaller than it is shown on the plans. Leave the end corners and edges sharp and square. This means you must use abrasive paper on appropriately shaped blocks, not over your fingers. ■

*Stephen Delft is a maker and repairer of guitars and other instruments, and a member of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology. He is also a more than capable performer on the guitar.*

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# Understanding Synthesizers

PART 13

By Tony Horsman

This is the second of two articles about sequencers. Last month, I introduced the sequencer as a device used primarily to produce preset patterns of notes, the sequencer's output controlling the frequency of the VCO. This month I'll describe some additional features of sequencers, illustrating how a sequencer can be used in conjunction with the keyboard module in a number of different ways which do not necessarily involve the VCO.

## Remote Control of Sequences

Fig. 1 shows the front panel of a sequencer, including the row of knobs at the top which determine the sequencer's control voltage output during each step, and the various knobs and switches which control the clock, for example the rate control which determines the duration of each step. To produce an automatic sequence, the "mode" and "end step" are first selected then the "start" button is pressed. In single-cycle mode, the sequencer halts the first time it moves on top the selected "end step"; in the repeat mode, the sequencer goes through an endless series of cycles until "stop" is pressed, each cycle ending on the selected "end-step."

For reasons which will become clear later, it is often convenient to be able to start, step and stop the sequencer by remote control rather than by pushing the buttons. Designers therefore provide external inputs, shown in Fig. 1, which in effect allow the "start," "step" and "stop" buttons to be pushed electronically. For example, as described in more detail below, if the keyboard gate pulse is connected to the "external start" input, the sequencer will start running when any key is depressed. Alternatively, if the sample-and-hold module's clock (see Part 11) is connected into the "external step" input, for every sample taken by that module, the sequencer will advance one step.

## Keyboard-Triggered Effects

Although it may be far from obvious, all the various features of sequencers which I have described, originally evolved because they help the player to exploit the enormous potential which synthesizers have to offer. Many useful effects can be produced by making the keyboard gate

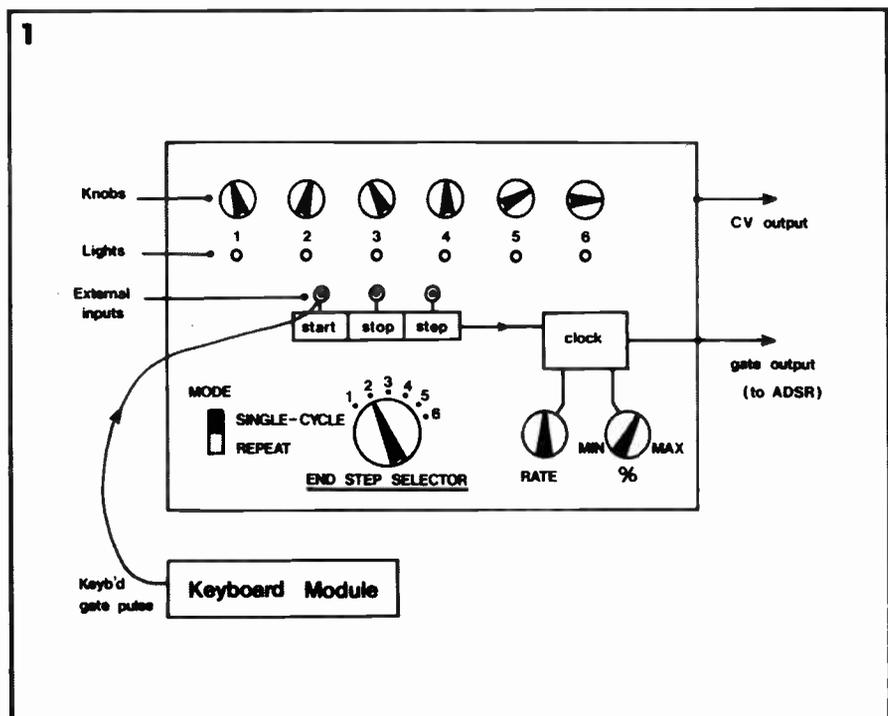
pulse start the sequencer *in single cycle mode* (see Fig. 1). In this situation, the sequencer is very much under the control of the player, in contrast to the free-running repeat code of operation.

Let's suppose that bottom C has been tapped on the keyboard and that the first four sequencer knobs have been adjusted so that the VCO produces D, C, E and G, the end step selector being set to "4". Every time bottom C is struck, the VCO will produce these four notes, their duration being determined by the clock rate control, as illustrated in Fig. 2. Every time a new note is played on the keyboard, the sequence will change pitch, the shift being equal to the interval between bottom C and the new note. Using this approach every note (or, with a switch in the "external start" lead, selected notes) played on the keyboard can produce an arpeggio, a chromatic run, octave jumps, or indeed any desired pitch sequence.

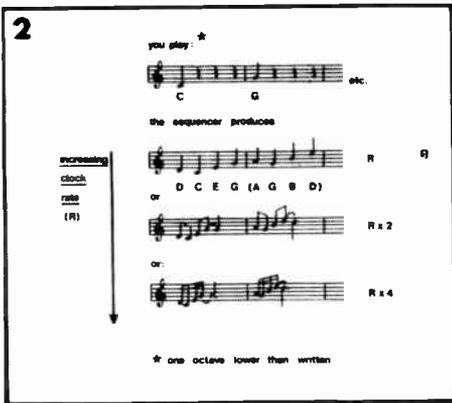
If the clock rate is very high, the individual notes in the sequence tend to become lost and only the final note (determined by the setting of the knob corresponding to the selected "end step") is

heard. If only two or three steps are used, and the corresponding knobs are set to produce a descending pitch sequence covering a wide range (say two to three octaves), "attack transients" can be simulated. Every note produced by the synthesizer is then actually preceded by a very fast sequence of descending notes which introduce an entirely new dimension into the perceived tone quality. (This is an application of sequencers which is not well known and is certainly worth exploring.)

When the keyboard gate pulse is connected to the sequencer's external *step* input, the sequencer advances one step for every key depression (assuming that each key is released before the next one is pressed). If, for example, the sequencer's control voltage is fed to a VCF, each note in a phrase played on the keyboard will then have its own sound quality. This approach can be used in many forms to add variety to synthesized sounds, the changes caused by the sequencer occurring in coincidence with other events produced by the keyboard.



Front panel of a sequencer with six stages. For the production of automatic sequences, an internal clock is included which can be started and stopped either manually (using the push buttons) or by remote control (via the external inputs). With the external connection shown here, the sequencer will start when any key is pressed down.

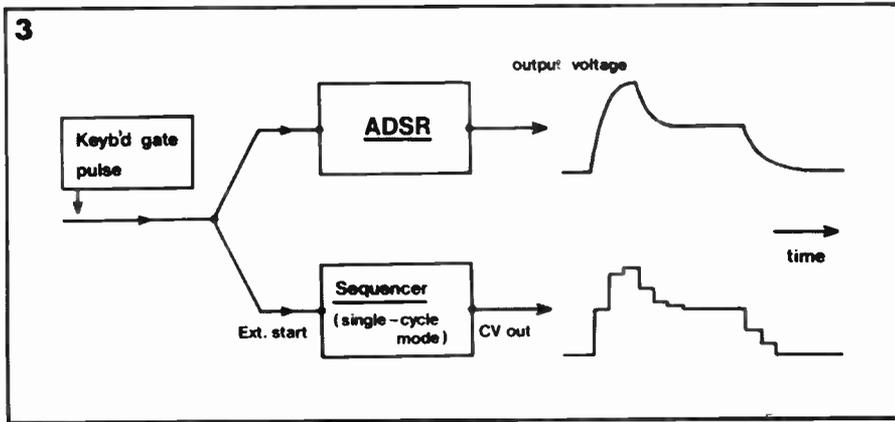


**New Waveforms**

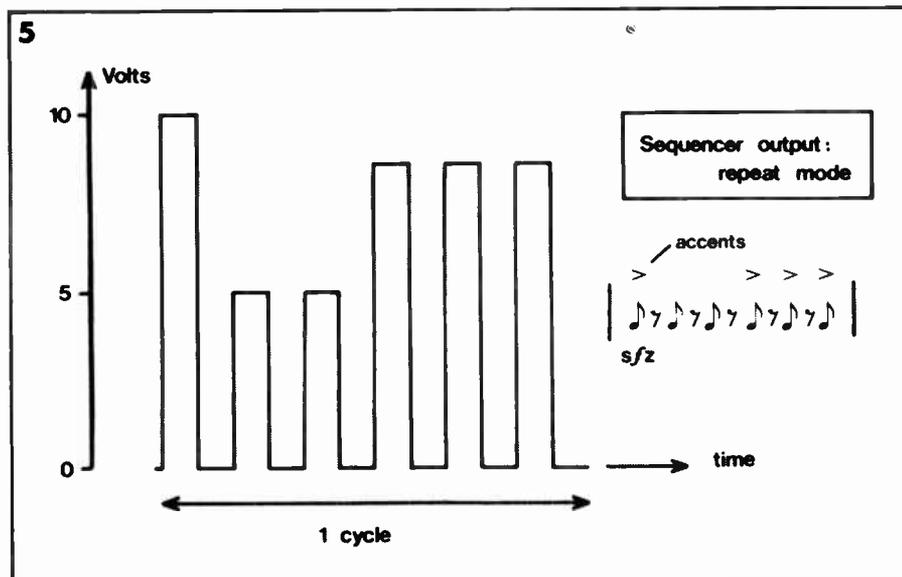
The keyboard gate pulse is most commonly used to trigger the ADSR module, which in turn controls the VCA. Each note played on the keyboard gate pulse is used to start the sequencer in single-cycle mode in the way already described above. It is possible to substitute the sequencer's output for the ADSR waveform.

Fig 3 illustrates the correspondence between the ADSR module and the se-

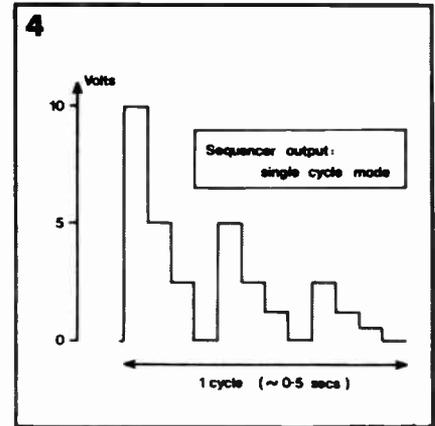
*Effect of varying the clock rate on a keyboard – triggered sequence. Notice that pressing different notes on the keyboard alters the overall pitch of the sequence. (The sequencer is operating in single-cycle mode with the end step selector set to "4".)*



*A sequencer can be used in the same way as the ADSR module to generate a particular waveform coincident with each key depression. Note however that although the sequencer cycle starts when the key is depressed due to the external start connection, the sequencer's output (unlike the ADSR waveform) is not dependent on the key release.*



*A sequencer-generated repetitive waveform which could be used to superimpose rhythmic patterns on audio signals passing through the VCF and/or VCA.*



*A complex waveform generated by a 12-stage sequencer operating in single-cycle mode which will produce echo effects when used as the control voltage for a VCA.*

quencer, the sequencer's knobs and clock rate having been adjusted to produce a waveform very much like the typical ADSR waveform. The sequencer's output must have steps in it, but this waveform, can perfectly control a VCA or VCF.

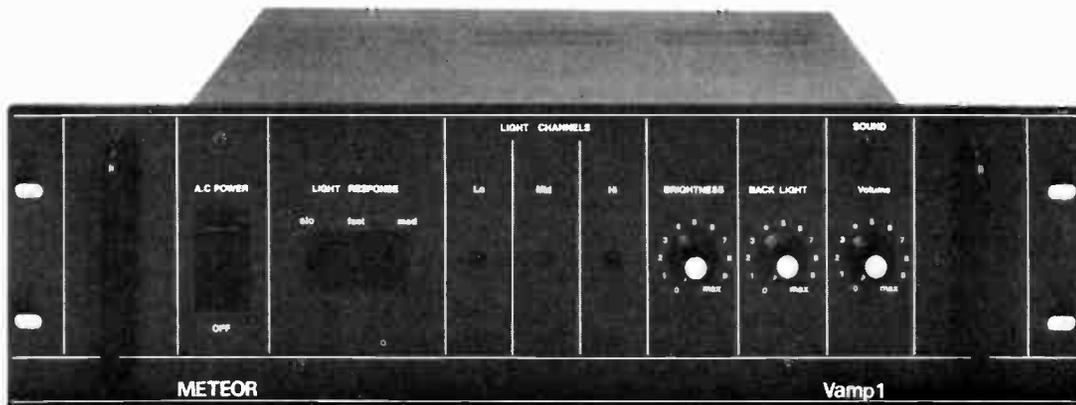
The advantage of the sequencer lies in its ability to produce a far greater variety of waveforms than the ADSR module. Must one example of a complex sequencer waveform which can be used to produce an echo effect is shown in Fig. 4. (If you try this, add plenty of reverberation; notice too that the sequencer responds only to the key depression and not the release.)

When the sequencer is switched to repeat mode, it effectively becomes an LFO with an infinitely variable waveform. (One sequencer cycle is equivalent to one cycle of oscillation.) To produce vibrato using a sequencer would of course be ridiculous, but it is possible. However, a low frequency waveform of the kind shown in Fig. 5 (frequency approximately 0.5 Hz) fed to the VCF or VCA would have a far from trivial effect, superimposing a rhythmic pattern on whatever audio signal might be passing through those modules.

**Parallel and Series Outputs**

The sequencer's control voltage output can be fed to any number of voltage-controlled modules for example, both the VCO and VCF. But the modules will then be receiving the *same voltage* at any one time. It is often a great advantage if the sequencer can supply two or more independent outputs at the same time so that, for example, the frequency of a VCO

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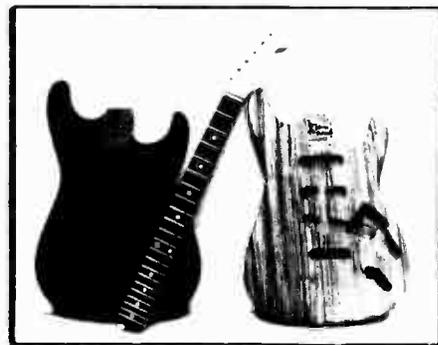
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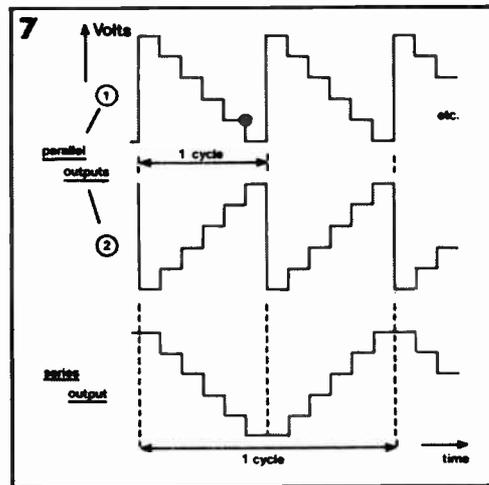


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and the cut-off frequency of a VCF can be controlled separately.

Fig. 6 shows part of the front panel of a "two-channel" sequencer, with the other controls, which are not shown, remaining essentially unchanged (as in the bottom half of Fig. 1). Each stage of this sequencer has two knobs, the sequencer providing two control voltage outputs (ignore the "series output" for the moment). When light 1 is on, the upper knob determines the voltage at output 1, and the lower knob the voltage at output 2. These two outputs are called "parallel outputs" and can be used to control any two voltage-controlled modules independently. The two voltages of course, both change at the



Parallel and series control voltage outputs produced by the sequencer shown in Fig. 6 operating in repeat mode.

same time when the sequencer advances to the next step.

To make maximum use of the sequencer's controls, another output called the "series output" is also provided in any sequencer with parallel outputs. At the series output, the sequences of voltages set by the top knobs is followed by the voltages set by their bottom knobs (i.e. two sequences occur in series). This will become clearer if you look at Fig. 7, which shows all three outputs when the sequencer is operating in repeat mode. Notice that the cycle length at the series is twice the cycle length at the parallel outputs.

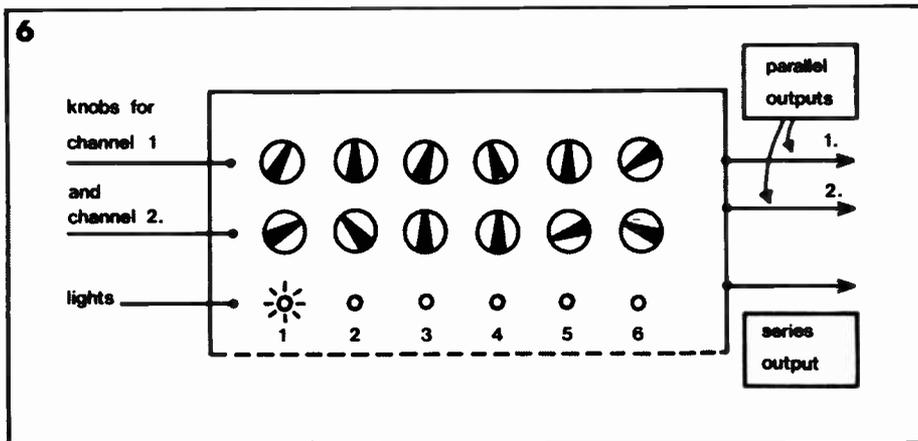
### Two-Part Harmony

A sequencer with parallel outputs can be used to produce short passages in two-part harmony if each control voltage output is fed to a VCO. In order to shift the pitch of the sequence from the keyboard, both VCOs must receive the keyboard voltage as shown in Fig. 8. (If variable note values are required, the manual step button must be used unless a separate means of controlling the clock rate can be devised.)

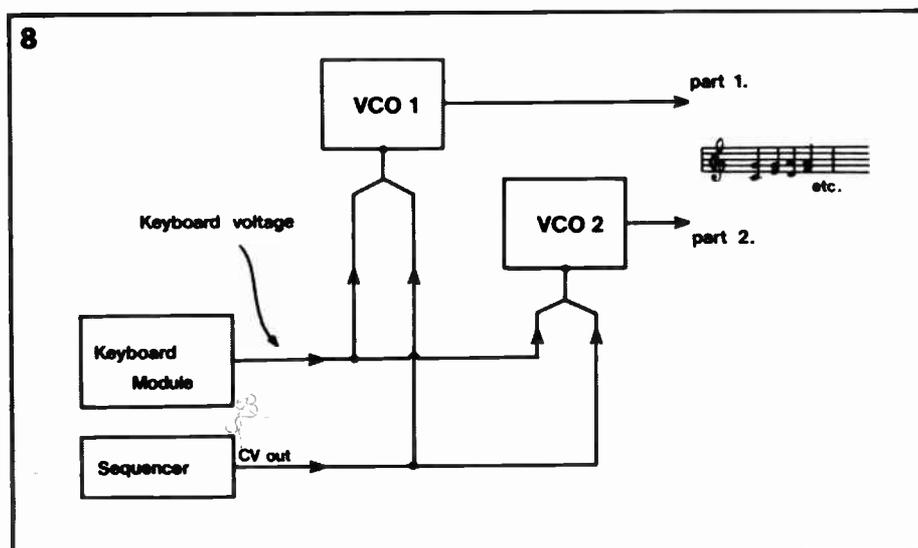
### Rhythm Patterns

As I mentioned in Part 12, although the clock rate can be set manually, it can also usually be varied by an externally applied voltage. If one of the sequencer's parallel outputs is used to control the clock, then the duration of each step can be independently adjusted. A sequence generated using the other parallel output can then have any required rhythm pattern within the limitations of the sequencer. In practice, the ability to generate gate pulse patterns in a preset rhythm is extremely useful. For example, allowing sustained chords from a string machine (connected into the VCF's external input) to be chopped up into the most exotic rhythms, many of which would be technically impossible to play without the sequencer's help.

In this series I have covered a lot of ground, from the basic physics of sound, through all the individual synthesizer modules, to the sequencer which is, perhaps, the most sophisticated single unit to be found in most synthesizer systems. Next month, to round off the current series, I will be writing about computer-controlled synthesizers which probably represent the ultimate step in the application of electronic technology to sound synthesis.



Part of the front panel of a two-channel sequencer. The sequencer has three outputs: two parallel, and one series. Using the parallel outputs, two voltage-controlled modules can be independently controlled at the same time. The series output is used to produce longer sequences, up to 12 steps long in this case.



A sequencer's parallel outputs can be used to produce passages in two-part harmony.

## New York and Los Angeles

New York's Electric Lady Studios has been hosting for **Lou Reed**, hard at work on his new Arista LP, and the inimitable **Rolling Stones** who are dropping by periodically to finish the mixes on the numerous tracks recorded in Paris. Electric Lady is also providing the facilities for Sterling, a new A&M group, to record its debut LP.

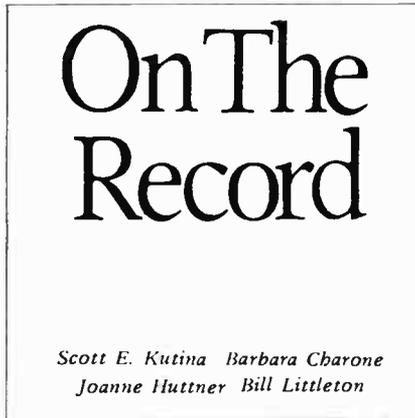
Chelsea Sound has been relatively quiet except for Columbia's **Laughing Dogs** who are finishing up their second LP for the label. **Mass Production** (mixing) and **Laurie & The Sighs** (mastering) at Atlantic Recording Studios, while over at Sound Ideas Studios, **Ted Curson**, **Sea Breeze** **The Tommy Flanagan Trio**, **David Liebman & Mike Mainieri** and **Evelyn "Champagne" King** have all been in putting down hot tracks on wax.

Record Plant Studios' Remote Recording Unit has been out and around, capturing live performances by groups like **Stuff** (live at Mikell's), **Bob James** (live LP for Tappan Zee Records), **Zubin Mehta** and the **N.Y. Philharmonic** (for Lincoln Center Media Development) and **Johnny Paycheck** (Live at the Lone Star Cafe).

At Blue Rock Studio — **Ray Davies** hard at work on several Kinks projects, **Brian Eno** and **Robert Fripp** making tracks for EG Records, and the legendary **dB's** featuring **Chris Stamey** and **Peter Holsapple** working on a new LP for a new label, **Alan Betrock's Snake Records**. **Glady Knight** is working with co-producers **Nick Ashford** and **Valerie Simpson** on a new LP for Columbia Records at Sigma Sound Studios, alongside artists like **Love Committee**, **Patryce Banks**, and the **Alberici sisters**.

The **Average White Band** has been working with producer **David Foster** at Sunset Sound. Also in at Sunset are **Bernie Taupin**, **Rita Coolidge** with producer **David Anderle**, **Cher** with producer **James Newton Howard** and **The Motels** with producer **John Carter**. Capitol Recording Studios has been hosting artists like **Chuck Nelson**, **Donna Washington**, **Glen Campbell** and **The Shirts**.

Currently recording at Cherokee Sound are **Alice Cooper** with **Roy Thomas Baker** at the helm, **Amy Holland** with **Michael McDonald** and **Patrick Henderson** producing, **Gary Moore** (formerly of Thin Lizzy), **Boz Scaggs** (final mixes on his long



awaited LP) and **LaRue** with **Jai Winding** producing.

Laying tracks at Westlake Audio: **Miguel Bosc** for CBS International, **Taste Of Honey** produced by **George Duke**, **D.J. Rogers**, **Chuch Mangione** and a new band named **Kid Rock**. At Larabee Sound are **Edwin Starr** mixing with **Michael Stewart**, **Shalimar**, **5 Special**, **John Stewart** and **The Kessel Brothers**.

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stuff at Gold Star with **David Briggs** (?) producing. At A&M Recording Studios, label boss **Herb Alpert**, **The Carpenters**, **Johnny Mathis** (new LP for Columbia) and **Jack Jones** (LP Polydor) — and they said "Easy Listening" was dead! Hollywood surfing legend **Jan Berry** (sans Dean) is recording at Filmways/Wally Heider. Also **Dancer** and **Rory Gallagher**. At Rusk Sound, **Dancin' Machine** recording a new LP for Casablanca as well as 13 yr. old **Stacy Lattisaw** (Atlantic Records) with producer **Narada Michael Walden**.

**Ambrosia** is putting the finishing touches on their upcoming Warner Bros. LP at Mama Jo's Recording Studio in North Hollywood.

Down in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, The Muscle Shoals Sound Studios have been exceedingly active. **Jimmy Johnson** has completed sides on "Crash" **Craddock LP** for Capitol, **Ron Haffkine** is producing **Helen Reddy** (Capitol), **Barry Beckett** has completed an album with new artist **Beth Nielsen** for Capitol and **Eddie Hinton** has cut some sides with the **Nighthawks**. At Fame Recording, **Tammy Wynette** has been recording with producer **Billy Sherrill**; **the Hagers**, **Lacy Dalton** and **Bill Haley** have also been in for sessions.

At Miami's Criteria Recording, **Julie Iglesias** with producer **Ramone Arcusa** (CBS International) and **The Mix** produced by **Felix Pappalardi**. Further north in Fort Lauderdale at Triad Recording Studios (where part of **Neil Young's** biggie **Rust Never Sleeps** was recorded) **Jeff Santiago** is producing a new group called **Hot Ash**. Even further North in Atlanta Georgia, **Apegee Recording Studios** is hosting **The Outlaws** (live LP), **Hamilton Bohannon** is producing new artists **Liz Lands** for Polydor and **Mike Greene** and **Skip Lane** are finishing the mixdown on the new **Larry G. Hudson LP**.

At Ardent Recordings Inc. in Memphis, Tennessee — **Point Blank** working on their new album, **Kwick** finishing up their debut effort for UA, **The Cramps** working on a "Punk" album for Illegal Records, **Denise LaSalle** recording a new LP for MCA Records, the incredible new "micro-wave" band, **The Photons** the **Bar-Kays** (mastering) and **Jack Holder**, formerly with **Black Oak Ark**.

Philadelphia's Sigma Sound Studios hosting **Gato Barbieri** (A&M), **Stephanie Mills** (a TV profile for Westing house Broadcasting) and **Melba Moore**.

## San Francisco

Around the Bay Area activity has been brisk with Different Fur Studios opening after extensive remodeling and modernization. Run by master synthesist Patrick Gleeson, it is the first studio in Northern California to offer a digital recording system. Huey Louis and the American Express are the first to make use of the facilities and 9th Generation and Fantasy artist Sylvester will follow suit. . . . The first new, major recording studio in the area has been opened by Fantasy Records and will be the company's fourth studio and the first which will be open to general use (outside of the label). Currently at work in the Fantasy facilities are Mark Sostin and percussionist Idris Muhammed. . . . The Automat conducted tours of its studios recently in conjunction with the San Francisco chapter of the National Academy of Recording arts and Sciences--all tour fees were donated to the Academy. Meanwhile, Journey, Con-Funk-Shun and the Tazmanian Devils have all been finishing projects at the Automat. . . . Amos Garrett, working on a solo album for Flying Fish Records, has been in the Bear West Studio. . . . Over at John Altman Studios Roy (Flamin' Groovies) Loney and his Phantom Movers have been completing their disc for Solid Smoke Records. . . . Heavy metal guitar ace Sammy Hagar has been ensconced at Wally Heider's/Filmways getting a little help on the co-production and engineer side from Tom Scholz (Boston). Also at Heider's are the Greg Kihn Band, Tommy Johnson and band, featuring Greg Douglass. . . . Holly Hansen is working on a solo backed by Jorge Santana's band, The Unit out at Tres Virgos Studio. . . . While out at Hun Sound the rehearsal studios are in full use hosting Maria Muldaur, Van Morrison, Attitudes and Jorge Santana. . . . At Sonoma Sound Recorders, Donald Kinsky, formerly with Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and Albert King, is working on an album with his band the Chosen Ones, Bob Flurie, Hoodoo Rhythm Devil's guitarist, is also in workin' on a solo project. . . . Reading like a list of credits from an insane asylum, The Ghosts, the Payne Brothers, the Mutants and the Blitz are all putting together projects at Tewksbury Studios. . . . At 1750 Arch Street Studios, the David Grisman Quarter is putting together a new album

and Tim Wehr is recording an acoustic album for Klaledoscope Records.

## Nashville

Film and television sound track work continues to grow in its slice of studio time in Nashville. The already-legendary *Electric Horseman* track with Willie Nelson was cut at Richey house, as was the newer *Urban Cowboy* soundtrack and music featuring Rock Killough, Hank Cochran, and Janie Fricks for a film to be called *Ruckus*. . . . The Statler Brothers were scheduled at press time to record some film music for Universal at Sound Stage. . . . James Brown has done a TV track at Sound Shop. . . . Other studio activity includes Jerry Reed recording a Jim Croce tribute album and Don Tweedy producing a John Davidson session at Young'un Sound. . . . the Tennesseans, Garland, the Bay Street Band and the Boys' Band recording at Superior. . . . Mel Tillis and Sonny Curtis doing sessions at Sound Stage for Elektra. . . .

Woodland Sound Studio was the recent environ for an album preview party hosted by Warner Brothers for Gail Davies, who arranged and produced her own album as well as writing everything except a song apiece from Paul Craft and Boudleaux Bryant. Other music coming from Woodland of late has been a single by Wayne Newton produced by Tom Collins for Airies II, an album by Lee Hazelwood produced by Ron Chancy for MCA and an album by Billy "Crash" Cradock produced by Dale Morris for Capitol. Incidentally, the entire Woodland complex--including Ernie's Record Mart, Nashboro Records and Excellorec Publishing in addition to the studio itself--was recently purchased by American Variety international for Los Angeles, although no changes in personnel or procedure have occurred. . . .

Sound Shop has been busy. Eddy Arnold, Ronnie McDowell, Bill Anderson, Louise Mandrell, Riverrock, Razy Bailey, Jim Chestnut and Homeward Angel have been in along with the James Brown sessions. . . . At Richey House, in addition to the soundtrack work, Jack Greene's forthcoming album has emanated (produced and engineered by Jack Gilmar). Robert John Jones produced an album on Steets (with Mark Shirman engineering), and various

sessions have been done on Terry Stafford, German artist Tommy Berg, Sandra Steele and Glen Stetson of the Diamonds.

## London

Eric Clapton recording new album with producer Glyn Johns at unknown studio. . . . Joan Jett still working on material at Rampart. . . . Steve Gibbons mixing a new album. . . . Orleans mixing their new album *Wind* at Trident. . . . eclectic new wave band the Only Ones recording at Island. . . . Roxy Music continue to leisurely record follow-up. . . . former Ace man Paul Carrack recording at Island. . . . Island mobile recorded the Clash in London. . . . Ramones working on backing tracks while touring. . . . former 10cc'ers Lol Creme and Kevin Godley working on new material. . . . the remains of Mott The Hoople mixing an album. . . . John Lodge recording at Marquee Studios.



Eric Clapton

## Tom Werman - From Ted Nugent to Cheap Trick



THE PRODUCERS

**T**om Werman is serious about his work, but it's also his love. "Rock & roll is my passion," he states. The producer of Cheap Trick, Ted Nugent, Blue Oyster Cult and other hard-working, hard-rocking bands was turned onto rock music at an early age. Werman was so inspired by it that he took up guitar and by the time he hit high school, he was gigging with a folk group.

After a brief stint in the advertising business, he decided to do what he wanted to do instead. The enterprising music fanatic wrote a letter to Clive Davis, then head of Columbia Records. Columbia was impressed and offered him a job.

Werman recalls, "They put me in Epic. I told them, 'I don't care what you pay me and I really don't want to be in product management. I really like music. I can work in the creative end.'"

His principle job for six years at Epic was signing new talent for the label. For the last three and a half years, Werman has been producing records at the incredible rate of five per year. He's ready for a much-needed vacation.

Werman, however, does not produce just anybody. He looks for two intangibles in his acts. "The acts I sign represent an

extreme approach toward whatever they're doing. They have to be unique in what they do and how they do it. If they're doing something common, they have to do it obviously better than anybody else.

"Ted Nugent represents a total extreme. Cheap Trick is also unique. Molly Hatchet is not. Their music is not as unique, perhaps, as some other bands' because it's southern style. It's obviously southern, but it did represent what I considered to be a perfect combination between southern boogie and rock & roll. *And*, they fell into the category of doing it better than anybody else I had seen live."

Werman claims to have a lot of freedom when it comes to signing acts for the company. "I signed Molly Hatchet without anybody in the company seeing them. I was the only person who saw them or heard their music until the album was finished. Even then, I don't think that the company really understood what was going on there."

When he goes into a studio with budding new artists, he usually brings his own engineer, Gary Ladinsky. "Your engineer's as important as your spouse. I spend more time with my engineer than I do with my wife."

He feels that the major ingredient for

successful collaboration with an engineer is patience. Tom elaborates, "I don't plan everything out. I like to get the basic tracks arranged and rehearsed, but after that it's a crap shoot and it develops in the studio. This makes for lots of changes and demands flexibility from the engineer."

"I look for ideas from Gary. I'll ask him a hundred times a day, 'what do you think about this, what do you think about that?' Your engineer is so important. Some producers who are their own engineers don't care that much about who engineers their record because they're responsible for the sound, but we really have developed a very potent approach now, I think, to making records. We work together to suss out the situation and the more records we make, the more we learn. I'm really looking forward to the next few albums because we've been through some difficult situations together."

Werman feels that the most important thing he did to prepare for producing was editing. "I used to edit tons of singles for Epic. It's surprising how many producers can't edit well. I would do impossible edits on eight or nine minute cuts; bring it down to 3:30 and make it sound perfect by cutting out all the fat and retaining all the prime meat. That's what they

# RECORDING WORLD

expected me to do anyway. I did the best I could. It was very good in developing a linear memory. A sequential memory is really important in arranging songs.

"That's all the practice I had. That and the experience of working for a record company and seeing what made it and what didn't on a radio level."

Werman does not make records for consumers. "I really do make records for myself. Otherwise it would be intolerable to be in the studio that long with music that I didn't like."

When he's getting ready to produce an act, he likes to have a live cassette tape of the artist's material. After listening to the tape, he writes down the way he thinks the songs should be. "I explain it to the group, we discuss it and we settle on a consolidated, more potent version. Sometimes I'll take the bridge and make it three, or take a chorus out, or shorten it, or whatever. Then we will see if it works live. We'll practice it and work on dynamics until it flows and it feels good to them. That's as far as you go. I don't even think about lyrics other than knowing what the song is about. Then we go into the studio.

"Some people have expressed surprise at the fact that pre-production does not last a month, but I can't. You can't rehearse songs and arrange them for more than three or four days."

Sometimes all the pre-planning in the world doesn't do any good. "I was supposed to do Eddie Money's first album and the *day* that he was to fly from San Francisco to Los Angeles. I was drafted by Epic; snatched back from Columbia to do Cheap Trick because Jack Douglas wasn't available. I had a week to prepare for that.

"It's *very*, very irritating. It's frustrating as hell because if you have to record 48 hours after you've heard the material, you really haven't had a chance to live with it at all. So, the first few songs you do are hastily arranged to say the least. Then you have to do a lot of changing later and it gets messy."

All of Werman's acts write their own material, yet arguments are rare. "If they really want to do a song that I'm not keen on, then I let them do it and I trust and assume that by the time it's near completion, they will hear that it's weaker than the rest of the songs that we've chosen. That's why it's always good to

record two or three extra tracks if you have the time. The ones that are weak surface quite obviously."

With the artist usually deciding on the time of day recording will take place, Werman must adapt his schedule. His ideal time to record is from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, but he states, "rock & roll is not a daytime animal. The best things usually happen between 11:00 pm and 1:00 am.

"That's when I think about 50 percent of the day's work gets done. Sometimes you just hit it at around 11:00. You catch fire. That's when I feel best. That's when the case of wine I had at dinner kicks in hard," he laughs.

"I get pretty excited around that time and it usually catches and people say, 'boy, he's really into it. Let's do it now.' It's very important for the producer to let the group know if he's getting off because otherwise they just won't put out."

Werman feels the most important part of the studio production involves monitors. "The monitors are the most important thing to me. Yet even those are not so important because I mix my records on Auratones. I prefer not even to listen to the monitors in the studio because it's not important. Everybody's going to hear that record for the first time in their car or at home on the radio. Consequently, 50,000 watts of compression changes the whole picture. I'd rather hear the record I'm making come out of the three-inch speaker. If it sounds good there, it's going to sound good on the radio and that's what counts.

Is there a definitive Tom Werman sound? "God, I hope not! There are certain things that I like to do that I have to be careful of doing. Things such as sixteenth notes on a synthesizer, insistent rhythmic lines; very much like what Townshend would do. I used to be seriously influenced, but now I'm fairly influenced by early- to mid-life Who material.

"I'm at the point now where I'm aware of what I'm doing when I fall back on something I did on another album. I have to be careful to treat each band or each act as a separate entity. Just because they may be similar, you really shouldn't use the same tricks. "Producers should not be heard. They should just serve the song. That's it. If you can hear a producer in three or four different albums by different

groups, then he is not doing his job correctly."

Werman would like to delve into other areas of music. "I am definitely interested in expanding, not just to get away from hard rock. Rock & roll is my passion. That's what turns me on most regularly. But, there are other things that I am a real sucker for. I would really love to work with somebody like Gerry Rafferty whom I think is brilliant as an arranger, producer, musician and writer. His stuff leaves me weak in the knees. Really. People are always surprised because they think, 'well gee, that's like soft rock.' But it isn't. To me music is an emotional experience that makes me react heavily."

There have been some comments to the effect that Werman puts subliminal messages on his records. He denies this vehemently. "There are things that I leave in songs, but I don't try to sneak anything in. You can hear Tom Petersson laugh at the beginning of 'I Know What I Want' on *Dream Police*. He laughed and we kept it. I didn't say, 'hey, I want you to laugh here.'

"I love adlibs. I'll keep adlibs if they're good. The only things I put in that were even a little subtle were those laughs.

"There is one of those that Ted did, he insisted on doing. It's on *Double Live Gonzo*. Nobody ever hears it unless I point it out. I do like to sprinkle little things in there that make it more interesting. If you expect somebody to pay \$6 or \$7 for a record, you try to make it spicy and you try to give them something more than 10 songs separated by five seconds."

Werman is looking forward to having some time off from producing. "Right now I have no project lined up. This is the first time in three years that I haven't known what my next project is. I really would like to take a few weeks and forget about the studio. During those few weeks I'm sure something will come up. There are five or six things that are under consideration by me or for me by other people. I'd rather make three or four records a year instead of five and make them better."

With his track record, better could be hard to accomplish.

Susan Alexander

# How can we say that our MXD-5 is the best analog delay for your needs?

Who do you think you are . . . a musician, a PA engineer, a home recordist? What do you play . . . guitar, keyboards, a console? Are you a vocalist? We designed the MXD-5 to be the best value in analog delays for the majority of professional musical applications. The MXD-5's versatility and performance are unequalled in its price range. But whether or not you think it's the best depends on who you are and what you need from a delay device.

## What do we mean by 'a majority of professional music applications'?

The MXD-5 is versatile. It will provide echo from the entire gamut of instruments and mics. With the MXD-5 individual channels for high and low level input signals make it possible to achieve a proper interface which is so important for sonic performance. We know that in order for any signal processor to work without distorting new material or adding unwanted noise there must be a correct matching of levels.

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Once again, the answer to this question depends on who you are. You may never need more than 100 ms. of delay time. The MXD-5 offers from 20 to 200 ms. of delay at an astonishing frequency range. It was developed to provide a wide range of delay times, which are practical, while the quality of the audio signal remains extremely clean. This means a remarkably quiet product with a relatively wide frequency range at all delay settings. We feel that this is a very important factor to consider.

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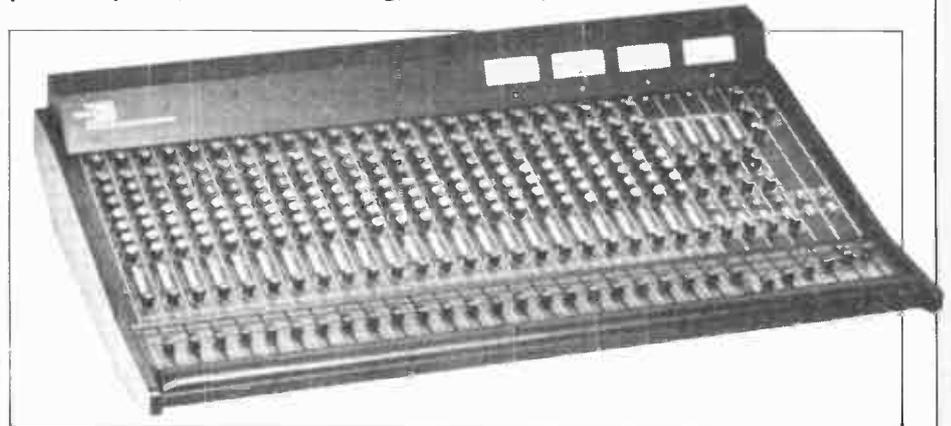
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## Recording for the 80's: Editing (1)

*Edit (dictionary definition): 3. To prepare a film, tape or recording for presentation by cutting, rearranging, etc. To delete.*

*(recording studio definition): To use and re-use the best licks while getting rid of the lame ones.*

Even as far back as wire recordings, there were those who practiced the pursuit of perfection in editing. One of the first editors to emerge in this field was named Joel Tall. He used to edit wire recordings by first knotting and tying the ends to be joined and then melting them together with the lit end of a cigarette. A bit barbaric perhaps, but as wire evolved into magnetic tape, Tall worked on perfecting a very respectable editing system which in turn gave birth to the splicing block. This device can now be found mounted to most tape machines, or at least within easy reach, in any studio that calls itself professional.

Even though Tall has made the tape cutting process easy with the EDIT all Block<sup>®</sup>, it's still a very delicate art. Even today, at the dawn of the Eighties, I hear tell you can still find classical engineers who use scissors to make their edits. I claim to be pretty good at this stuff, but even I find that a bit ridiculous. True, by overlapping the edit ends and cutting them on a very narrow angle (15°-40°) you do get a cleaner, less noticeable transition, but with today's complex music, the time involved, and the built-in indecision ("Let's try a different part") of today's producers, this process can be very impractical. Besides, with digital editing, you've got to be highly proficient within the existing technology in order to catch up to future advances.

How to actually edit in itself could easily take up several issues of this magazine, so I'll only relay what was originally shown to me.

First you find the spot at which the edit will start, preferably somewhere where there is a sound gap, like a downbeat. I prefer using backbeats because I've found that the margin of error decreases on a less obvious beat, figure or phrase. Gently rock the tape (one hand on each reel) back and forth until you either hear the beginning of the beat

and/or see it visually on your VU/Pk meter. Stop rocking it, hold the tape taut against the playback head and mark it at the zenith of the head. Assuming everything on the right hand reel is to be kept, proceed (Play/FF) past the unwanted portion of tape until you reach your desired entrance spot. Stop and repeat the "rocking/marking" procedure mentioned above. Then place the tape in the editing block and, if you can place both marks (one over top of the other) while simultaneously lining them up at the miter (joint) on the block and cut both points with the same swipe, please do it, it makes for much tighter edits. Next, disregard the unwanted portion and join the remaining "two" ends with adhesive splicing tape. Rethread the tape machine, rewind it to a few bars before the edit, push PLAY, cross your fingers and listen.

There is a quicker way to edit the tape. Measure off the distance from the middle of the playback head to the right hand side of the head assembly cover. Using the 45° miter slot on the block as the PB (playback) head point, make a mark on the block equal to this distance.

You do sacrifice *something*, and by grabbing the tape with your fingers and/or fingernails, the tape can get either greasy or crimped on the edge where your nail grasps it. Both crinkles and grease will cause dropouts and, consequently, audibility on both sides of the edit. This is fine if you're doing a lot of quick test edits on rough takes.

With seven years of editorial proficiency, I gave up shortcutting a few years ago while mixing with Foreigner. I joined two parts of a mix together and the edit was right but Mick Jones insisted — and rightfully so — that the dropouts around the edits were totally unacceptable. After spending four hours re-mixing/editing, re-mixing/editing etc. . . . to create eight bars that matched to make up for 1½ crinkled beats, I decided a mark in time saves much grief.

Tape editing with the use of the splicing block is a very simple process. You are often forced to make cuts in a passage which is flooded with echo, EFX or every single instrument in the world, and the gap becomes very difficult, if not

impossible, to hear. The proper way to deal with this is to go to the nearest clean gap, mark it, and measure a precise distance back to the required spot. You then go to the next "in spot," and if they are identical or similar passages, you go to the clean gap, mark it, and then use the pre-measure on the first piece to cut both pieces simultaneously.

This method should have to be employed only on extremely difficult edits.

Marking and cutting errors are easily made on the open gap as well, and this can be due to tape slippage as well as momentary mental incompetence. This is why I prefer to mark and cut, keeping The Dooley Adage "Better Late Than Sorry". This theory maintains that you're better off when you end up with too much tape. You can rectify the error immediately by whittling bits of tape away until it's right.

As with any endeavor, practice makes perfect. There is a lot of music available to practice on, but using ordinary declamatory speech as the program is probably the most beneficial.

When I started out in the studio I was "the kid in tape duplication." I soon found myself editing a 60 minute recitation album He recited this section of prose five different times and I had to painstakingly edit together the best words and phrases to make one album.

Tape editing is important. Practice can be invaluable in preparing yourself for *any* experience in the studio.

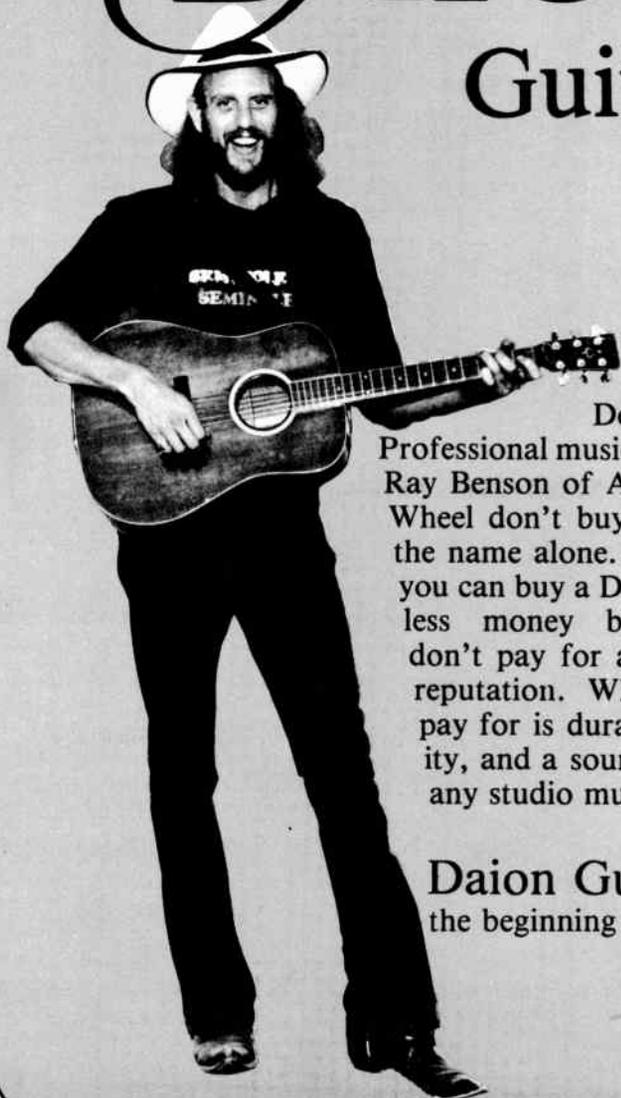
Rarely does any procedure in the studio occur exactly like in the textbook. A simple edit can end up being a major project. You'll be standing there, holding micro-millimeter wide bits of tape, waiting for commands.

Now that you've butchered the tape beyond recognition, you have to restore it to its original state. When it's mastered and on disc, you might forget where the "alleged" edit was. Save those bits and pieces, because now that we've covered the "hows" of editing, we'll be moving on to the "whys" and "whens" of editing in the second installment of this piece.

**Jimmy Douglass**

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World Radio History

## Grace Notes

continued from page 19

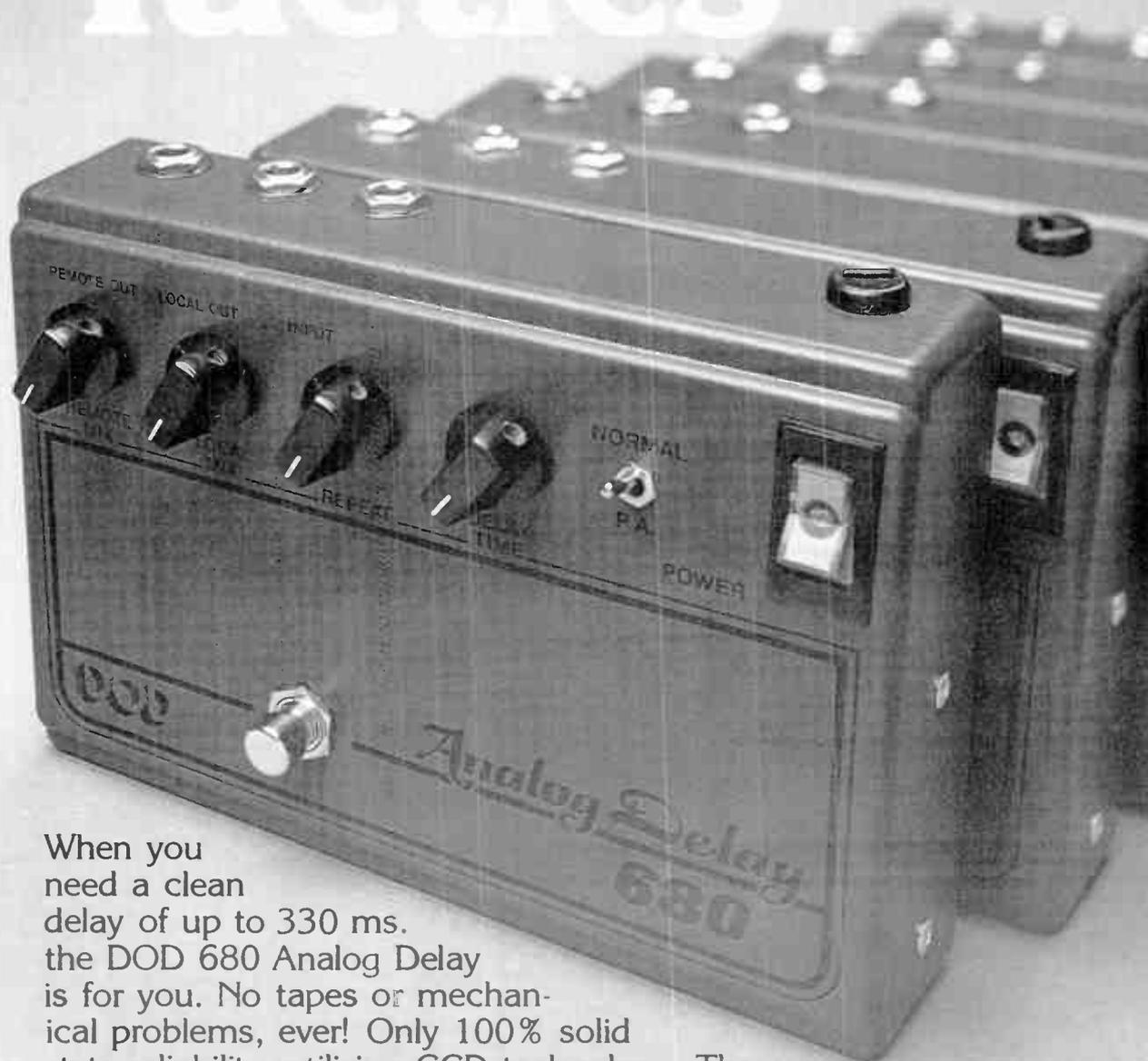
we featured a rather unusual — for this type of magazine — piece on The Ramones by Lester Bangs. Besides re-examining basic musical issues such as technical proficiency vs. "real spirit" from a totally different point of view, the piece represented a culmination of the attitude that IMRW has always had vis a vis "punk" or "new wave" or "whatever" bands.

First of all, and this is admittedly *me* talking, not the overall editorial department, we have always attempted to treat new bands like The Clash and The Police as if they were essentially just new rock & roll bands (which they are) without any special cultural (or trendy) pressures attached as to whether or not we *should* or *shouldn't* cover bands of this kind. For those of you who are too developed or progressive musically to get into this kind of music, so be it. No one said you *had* to love it. But for those of you (and this applies to both reader and manufacturer) who object to our coverage of these bands simply because they are too raw, primitive or musically illiterate, I've gotta say that you're really missing the point. Not just the point about the function of technique that Bangs so brilliantly illustrated in his introduction, but the more basic point that a return to the principal values of rock & roll — rough edges, good punchy songs with lots of hooks and a stripped-down instrumental approach, i.e. the guitar as a complement to the song as opposed to a distraction — is only good for everyone involved in the business of making and consuming music.

Not just to strip away a lot of the studio cosmetics that have largely been developed to flesh out the sagging approach and material of Sixties idols which, in most cases is running pretty thin, but also as a reaffirmation of everything rock & roll was supposed to be about. Hey. Who said rock & roll was born to eventually be shoehorned into an Adult/Contemporary or MOR FM radio format? A music that the whole family can share? Nuts. Parents were never supposed to like rock & roll; and if these kinds of bands get kids into the garages where they can hammer out their adolescent frustrations by playing with the sledgehammer intensity and volume (rough edges and all) that is their unique birthright as young Americans, then this New whatever movement will have succeeded far beyond everyone's highest expectations.

By Jean-Charles Costa

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World Radio History

# On Bass: Continued from page 13

## Jeff Berlin

the great teacher hunt. If you find a great electric bass teacher please write me and include his address and phone number.

\*\*\*\*\*

For the last several articles, I've made some strong comments about bass players, stating that most of them cannot read or write well and generally have a hard time playing accompanying bass parts in a musical fashion. I've discussed the importance of soloing, and have written several musical examples to explain how it is possible to be melodic and fluid when soloing and comping. However, I'm guilty of emphasizing soloing too much. While soloing broadens your concept of musical back-up bass playing, it may direct you too far into the "Million Notes an Hour School of Music". I've never seen it fail. We all wish to experience that euphoric sensation of successfully soloing our brains out. It's something akin to the "thrill of victory". But it's really hard to shift back into the simple and exciting world of rhythm bass playing. This is the point of this article. Simple, powerful bass playing is unbelievable in its execution.

A tight rhythm section would work and earn money for years because *everyone* understands rhythm. Music in 4/4 is universally accepted. Every lawyer, dishwasher, taxi driver and cop can hum the melody to "Midnight Hour". Every housewife and truck-driver knows "I Left My Heart in San Francisco". But why? What is the common denominator between musician and non-musician alike. It is, in a nutshell, diatonic harmony and melody, and simple rhythm in some divisional meter of 4 1/4 or 4/4, for example. That's why bass players who emphasize the bottom in their sound, and accentuate the strong beat in each bar will work forever (or until Greek music gets into the Top 10). Rhythm is the guts of music.

Listen to Tower of Power. They are the tightest band in the land, especially when Francis Rocco Prestin played bass for them. Like their tunes or not, that group has the greatest horn section and has the greatest drummer in funk music, David Garibaldi. Every bass player into R&B bass should try to play with him. He and Prestin were the Kings of Soul in the Seventies. Listen to older records by the Tower. Also listen to anything that Jams Jamerson (who did most of the Motown things) played on. Listen to reggae. That music is nothing but rhythm. Listen to Ike and Tina Turner, James Brown, Aretha Franklin. If you can find "Spanish Harlem" by Aretha, you must listen to the bass on that cut. I heard that tune 10 or more years ago, and I'm still impressed with the bass on it. Dig Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding. Also check out Salsa bass playing. They mix that bass up loud and clear. Buy some Ray Barretto when he did nothing but Salsa and imagine how good it would be to play bass for him. Buy Miles Davis' "Jack Johnson" album and listen to Michael Henderson, and Billy Cobham and John McLaughlin all play like they're the house band at the Apollo. The list goes on.

You've seen me put down rock and you've seen me tell you *not* to listen to the top bass players of the day. My reasons are that rock is an art form that does not lend itself toward substantial usage of the bass, and by listening exclusively to today's top players, you hear only the result of what these guys practiced and listened to but you will not have heard it or practiced it yourself. You must use the bass in the manner in which it was conceived, to supply bottom and complementing rhythm. However, and this is important, you can do it your way. You can create your own patterns and assign good notes to them, and everyone in the Free World will

credit you with the invention. Remember, there are more famous bass players who have little technique than players with heavy chops. But, these guys have used what technical facility they have and made their own indelible stamp in music. That's your next assignment. Check out a couple of the guys I mentioned earlier and observe simplicity and strength on the bass. If you have any questions, please write me *c/o International Musician & Recording World, 1500 Broadway, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10036*, and I'll try to answer your questions in the column. Please contain your questions to just bass queries.

■

# On Sax: Continued from page 17

## Alan Holmes

thousandths, 7"; will not be too hard to blow for the tenorist. The larger tip opening can give an almost tenor-like thickness to the bottom register of the alto which is not in character for the instrument. It is possible to use a tenor mouthpiece on an alto. Yet it doesn't sound like an alto anymore, so try not to fall into the trap of losing the characteristic tone of the alto by making it too thick. While a No. 3 reed seems to suit a tenor mouthpiece of around 6" to 7", for some reason on the alto 2 1/2 seems to work better on the same 6" to 7" sizes. It also works on the baritone too although this could probably explain the emphasis on the lower range.

If you are thinking of changing your alto or haven't yet got one then I can recommend the new Yamaha YAS62 alto. It was visually distinguished by a metal aux. F key, and was designed in

conjunction with Eugene Rousseu, the author of a high note book and a teacher and clinician. It is a remarkable responsive instrument with a computer assisted tuning design which puts it in front in this department.

Ergonomically designed keys which really fall under the fingers and strap construction like a Selmer, sound very stuffy and out of tune by comparison. I had one on a long-term test and couldn't part with it and am hoping that the new YAS62 soprano with aux. isn't as good as people are saying so that I don't have to buy one. They also have a new tenor coming out soon and if it is anything like the alto there are going to be a lot of players wanting to take in their Selmer tenors as well as their altos.

Next month: Soprano and conclusions.

■

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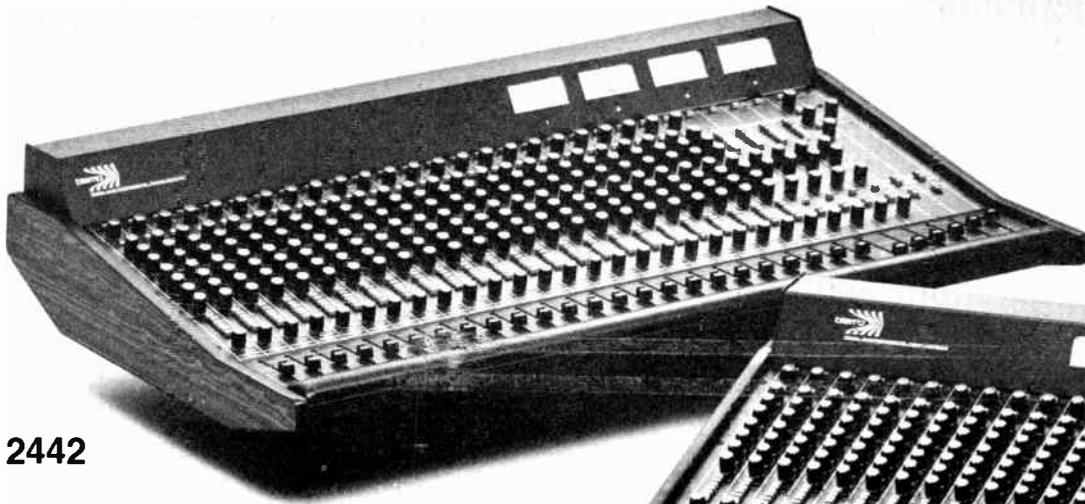
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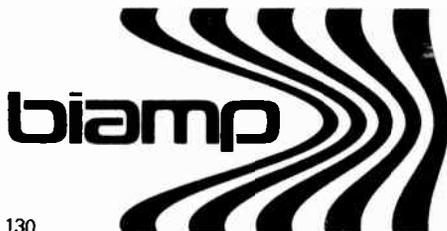
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