

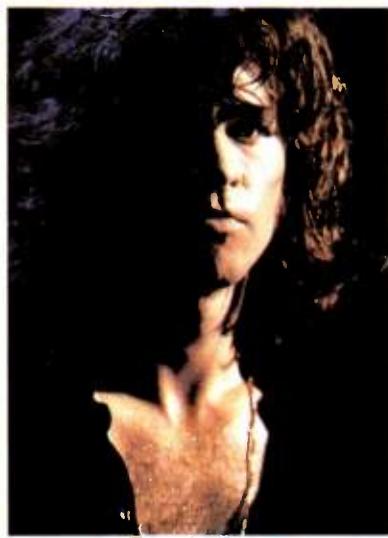
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MUSIC EXPRESS MAGAZINE

MARCH 1991 / VOLUME 18 / ISSUE 157 / \$2.25

*gloria  
estefan*

## INSIDE



**THE DOORS**  
Reinventing The Myth



**THE TRAGICALLY HIP**  
Live In Saskadelphia

★

**DAMN YANKEES**

★

**ROCK IN RIO**

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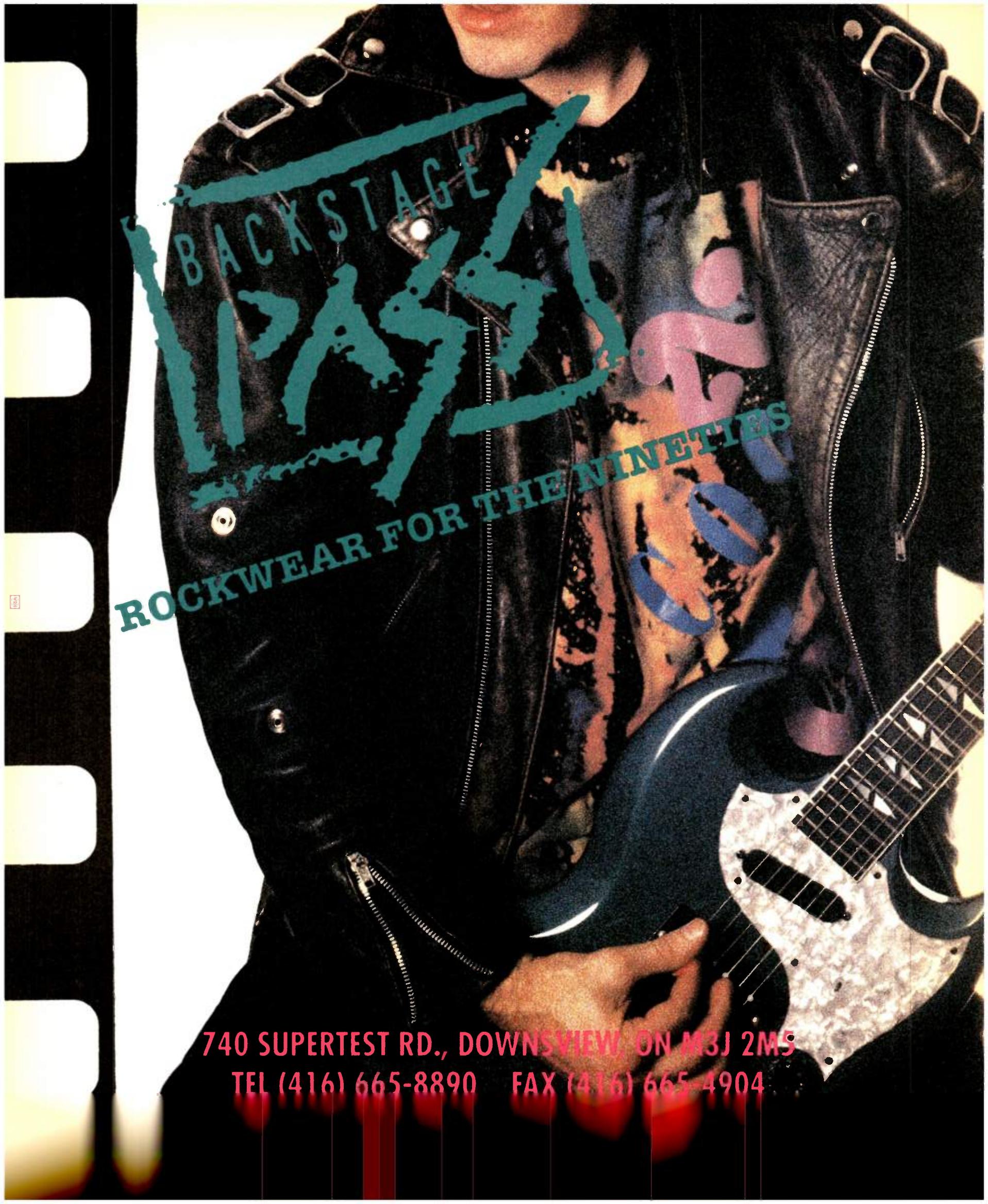
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COMIN' ATCHA LIVE/TRUCKIN'  
HEAVEN'S TRAIL (NO WAY OUT)  
THE WAY IT IS  
WE CAN WORK IT OUT  
GETTIN' BETTER  
PARADISE  
LODI  
MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER  
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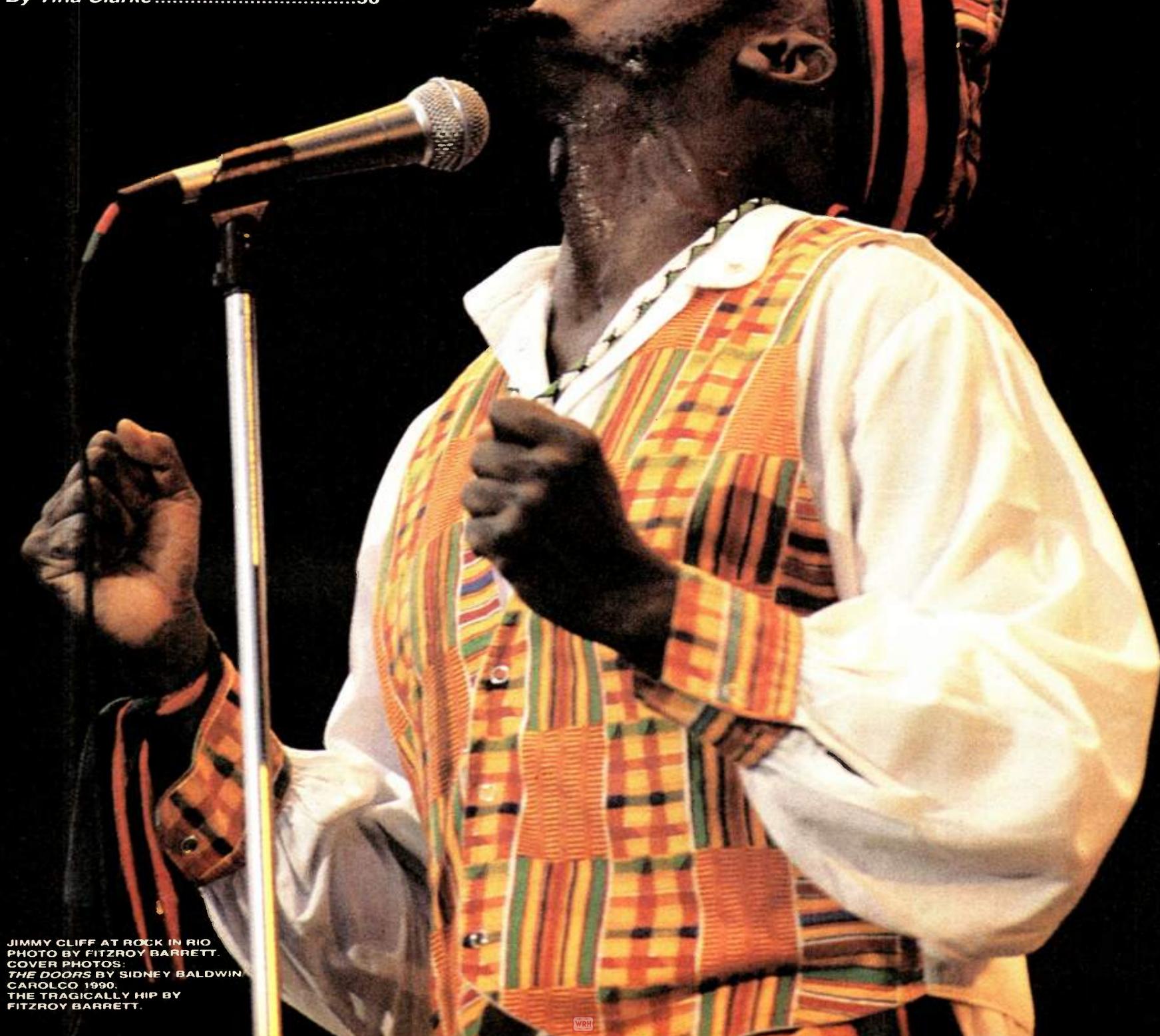
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JIMMY CLIFF AT ROCK IN RIO  
PHOTO BY FITZROY BARRETT.  
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CAROLCO 1990.  
THE TRAGICALLY HIP BY  
FITZROY BARRETT.

# express delivery

## Bootleg Dylan

In your January issue (M.E. 155) I noticed that listed in your writer's Top 10 CD reissues was Bob Dylan — *Royal Albert Hall 1966*. I have gone to all the music outlets in Winnipeg, and after having run it through their computers, no one has any information about this CD, or has even heard of it. I'm a Dylan collector and would like to purchase it, but they have told me that as far as they know it's nonexistent in Canada and the U.S. Could you please help me?

Maxine Hamonic  
Winnipeg, MN

*Editor's note: The release in question is a bootleg recording (TSP-CD-009) from Swingin' Pig, a European bootleg label. As Rick Clark, our CD Hotline columnist, says, "I don't normally advocate bootlegs, but the fact that this recording hasn't been released is a crime." Columbia Records is releasing a three-CD Dylan set late this month which will include some rare live performances, so you might try checking that out as well.*

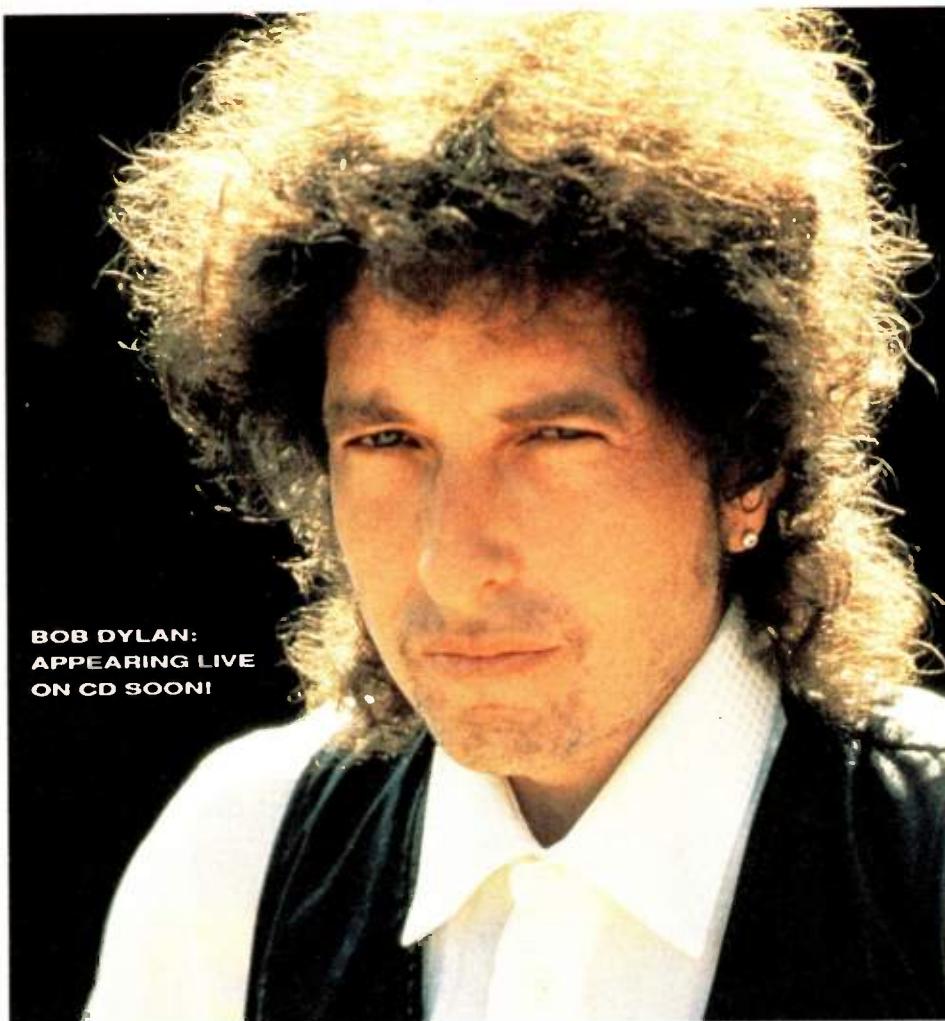
## The End Is Near!

It saddens me that lip-synch concerts are almost the accepted norm, that cover versions of songs are a must and that groups like 2 Live Crew use cheap tricks to sell their records. Yet artists who actually sing and write original material are for the most part ignored.

Also, will Led Zeppelin ever stop pretending that they invented rock 'n' roll? Their sound is not as original as they might have us believe — just listen to "Helter Skelter" and "Yer Blues" from the Beatles' *White Album*. At least John Lennon gave credit to his roots.

I am sure that when "Do The Bartman" can come in at No. 1 on the charts we are nearing the demise of rock.

Regan Flint  
Toronto, ON



## The Evils Of Censorship

Tina Clarke's article on censorship in music (M.E. 155) was well-written, timely and made its point well. I'm really glad you decided to make censorship the focus of your year-end issue, because I think it was the issue of 1990, and a very disturbing trend not just for musicians but for visual artists and writers as well.

I also think that getting a representative from the PMRC was a good idea. It's kind of scary that she seemed so reasonable, when everybody points the finger at the PMRC as evil censors. But it was good to point out that the anti-freeedom of expression forces are not as united as they seem, and that some who are in favor of labels think Jack Thompson and Jesse Helms are lunatics.

Alison Preston  
Cincinnati, OH

## No, You Don't

After two decades of being a diehard Styx fan, Keith Sharp's review of their new album, *Edge Of The Century*, was a genuine pleasure. I've been practically holding my breath ever since they went on hiatus (now I know how people felt when the Beatles broke up) in the early '80s, and their new effort was well worth waiting for.

Laura King  
Houston, TX

## The Voice Of Anger

I'm afraid I must disagree with Bill Reynolds' review of Graham Parker's latest album (M.E. 156), particularly his main point that a voice as angry as Parker's has to have a band behind it, not just an acoustic guitar.

One of the most appealing things about Graham Parker's music is that angry, scratchy voice mixed with the almost sweet tunes he plays on the guitar. I think it works really well. Why does he "have" to rock out? To me, there's more power and raw anger in it when he doesn't.

James Herford  
London, ON

## Vinylphiles Unite

In response to the letter in your January issue (M.E. 155) regarding the vinyl availability of *Knebworth: The Album*: Yes, it is available on record! I bought it at a Music World store in Chicago last September. I am also a vinyl collector, and I was shocked to find it in the various artists bin.

Sharon Kalinoski  
Riverside, IL

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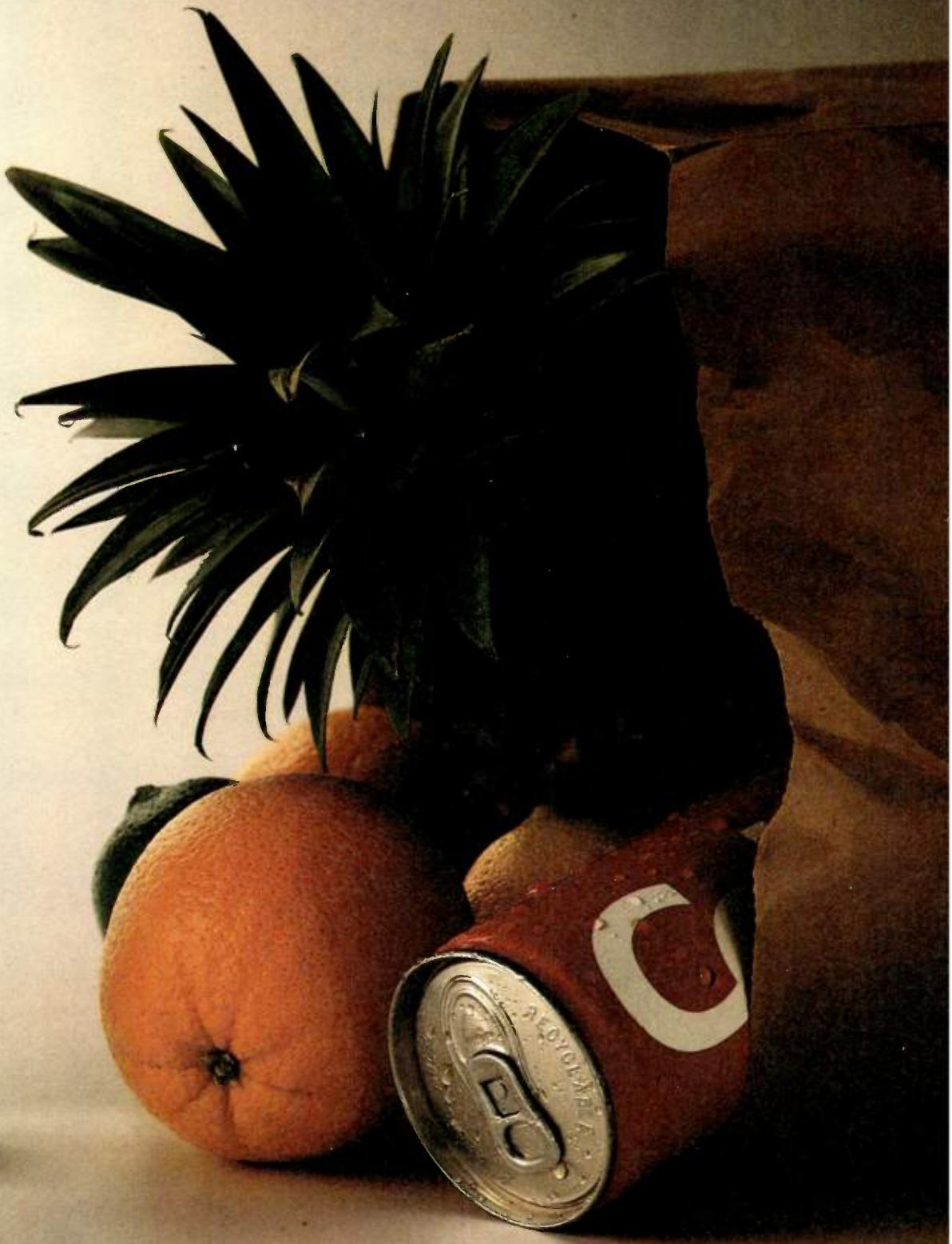
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gloria



estefan

exactly one year ago Gloria Estefan was on the road, finishing the first leg of a sold-out world tour to promote her multi-platinum album *Cuts Both Ways*. She was basking in her greatest popularity ever as an entertainer, having spent 15 years creating a catchy synthesis of Hispanic music and rock 'n' roll that has been embraced by millions of fans throughout the globe.

But on the afternoon of March 20, 1990, fate intervened on a snowy stretch of highway near Scranton, Pennsylvania. While she was napping on a couch in her tour bus en route to a gig in Syracuse, New York, the bus was suddenly struck from behind by a speeding semi. In a split second Estefan was thrown to the floor, breaking her back, and was faced with her greatest personal fear: that she might be an invalid for the rest of her life.

Amazingly, though, in the year since the accident Estefan has not only overcome her injuries and the excruciating pain of physical therapy required for a complete recovery, but she has also recorded a new album, *Into The Light*, and is even embarking on another world tour, which begins this month in Miami.

While it may seem miraculous to have achieved so much in such a short time, Estefan says that it was her only choice.

"I think it's just that I had a very difficult beginning in life, and it really set my priorities right from day one — I've carried that with me, it's destiny," Estefan says about her extraordinary resilience. "Ever since I was a baby, we've been through very difficult situations. First with the Cuba thing — my father was away, he was a political prisoner for three years, and my mother was alone. I was the thing she clung to."

"And then when he got ill [after being poisoned by Agent Orange during a tour of duty in Vietnam], I was 10 years old and had to take on a lot of responsibilities, like taking care of my younger sister, because my mother had to go out and work. I had to care for my father. It shows you what life is really about, and it gave me a lot of strength. In those situations you either become bitter or you learn from them, and I definitely used them as a learning experience."

Those grim early encounters with reality also served to deepen Estefan's appreciation of what she had. "That's why I've been able to look at life from a different point of view and have always been very thankful for all the good things that have happened," she says. "I think maybe it helped that I'd gone through that just to get me through this, because I can see how people would have a tough time dealing with it."

"The world of an entertainer is very unreal, especially the world of very successful entertainers. It's as though the world revolves around you, because that's all you do. It's not just your job, it's your life, your lifestyle; and if you don't know the facts about fame and about what things in life really mean, you can get screwed up badly. I can see how that happens, it's very easy for that to happen. I'm glad that I had a very strong beginning. I always tried to make

*In the year since a highway accident threw her health and career into jeopardy, Gloria Estefan has not only managed to overcome her injuries, but also to record a new album, *Into The Light*, and even contemplate another tour. Estefan credits her speedy recovery to having her priorities in order, as well as the support of her fans and the Miami Sound Machine, the "weirdest little band" that has struck gold with its synthesis of pop and Latin rhythms.*

By Tina Clarke

## ON HER FEET

the best of situations and move on, because what else are you going to do?"

Estefan has more than made the best of her most recent crisis. On *Into The Light*, her songs seem more focused, more serious than in the past, displaying a kind of awareness attained only through life's toughest lessons. An artistic leap from the smooth, romantic tone of *Cuts Both Ways*, *Into The Light* suggests that some heavy-duty soul searching has been going on. And while there's plenty of optimism on the recording, there's also a rawness, both lyrically and musically.

"It's been an introspective year, and I think some of that comes through in the music. We're maturing, we're growing. You go through experiences; unfortunately, when we do it in the public eye we're a little more naked," she remarks matter of factly. "The things I've written about have always been pretty much things that I'm going through emotionally or situations around me."

"I do feel it is an optimistic record, and I wanted it to be positive, but I think some of the things that I've gone through this past year have definitely become part of the music," she says. "It's hard to divorce yourself from that."

The personal challenges that consumed Estefan for the most of the past year may have sped up the process a bit, but she points out that Miami Sound Machine's music has been evolving from the start.

"Some of those changes had already started to happen, with 'Oye Mi Canto' on the last record, and I had started writing 'Nayib's Song (I Am Here For You)' right after [*Cuts Both Ways*]," she says. "I actually finished it when I came back after the accident, in a much more positive way. Like 'Seal Our Fate' — there were things that I always thought about but I never injected them into the music because it wasn't right for the point that we were at."

"This was definitely a good point — not just lyrically but musically, even with the guys in the band. We had grown together more with each production because we'd been on the road a lot, and we'd learned a lot about each other. And fortunately we've grown a lot in the same direction. We feel the same way about the music, and that's a wonderful collaboration to have."

"I respect them very much — and my husband, Emilio, who is really the one who's most responsible for our sound. It's been his musical idea from the beginning," she adds. "He's been very supportive, and has pushed me a lot more into the forefront. Actually, he was the first one who talked me into writing songs. I used to write a lot of poetry and had never even thought of doing songs, because I loved other people's songs so much. He was really instrumental in that, too."

As a child, the former Gloria Fajardo found solace and joy in music, but was too introverted to acknowledge her own talent until Emilio Estefan came along. "I was very shy," she recalls. "I didn't see myself as I saw other people. When I'd see other performers, I would never envision myself being able to do that, because it was always a very personal thing. I would sing to myself for three hours in my room, play my guitar — it was very much an emotional catharsis for me."

"I've always been a perfectionist. When I do things I like to do them right, and I'd see people doing them right and never think I could ever do that. So it was a very slow and painful process for me, to the point where I realized that if I just let go and enjoyed myself and reacted as music makes me feel, then I'd become more comfortable. But it was a long process."

Gloria's family wasn't especially keen on her pursuing a career in music, either. "They were not encouraging — except for my Grandma, who was convinced I was going to be an entertainer. Not my parents, even though I come from a very musical family," she notes. "In my father's family, he was the least musical of them all. He had two brothers that wrote poetry and sang, and he has an uncle who was a classical violinist and one who's a salsa flutist who had a very popular salsa band in Cuba and in New York."

Estefan's mother had won an international contest as a child to dub all of Shirley Temple's movies into Spanish, but her strict father forbade it and her mother never realized her own dream. Instead she nourished Gloria's, surrounding her with music throughout her childhood.

"She says the only way she could get a diaper on me, for me to sit still, was to sing to me," Estefan

recollects lovingly. "I'd sit there and melt and stare at her and just relax completely. Music was a big part of my household; it was being played all the time. The records my mother played, believe it or not, were Johnny Mathis and very ballad-oriented

accordion, which was the main instrument then. He had a drummer, a conga player, one violin that also doubled as a keyboard because he played a lot of charanga, which is what you use the violin for. It's one of the fast Latin rhythms, kind of like between salsa and cha cha. Everyone was having such a great time and this guy turned around and played 'Do The Hustle' and other disco songs on the accordion, and I thought, 'This is a man after my own heart, he is definitely brave.' That alone made me want to join the band."

During a break Emilio bumped into Gloria, to whom he had been introduced once before. Remembering that she was a singer, he invited her to join the band for a few numbers. "The only thing we both knew were these two old Cuban standards that everyone and their mother knew," she says. "I

knew them because I used to do songs for my grandmother and my mom on the guitar, and it turned out so well that Emilio asked me to join the band. It was a big thrill, because I was in school and I loved music, and I thought, my God, how fun, to go to parties and get paid for it!"

"I was having such a great time. That was my first real introduction to Latin music. I had to learn how to sing the salsa songs, and they learned ballads. And when we started writing original tunes we started experimenting — we'd say, 'Hey, wait, this rhythm goes really well with this song, even though this is basically pop.' And we started really combining them. That's where our sound came from."

But it took years for Miami Sound Machine's infectious combination of pop and Latin rhythms to find an audience beyond the Hispanic community. In fact, the group had already released seven albums for the Spanish label CBS Discos before recording 1985's *Primitive Love*, their English-language breakthrough.

"Actually, the first three albums we did were completely bilingual," Estefan remembers, "but we're talking 1976 — it was a little premature for that to be a viable thing for us to do. At that time, my writing was mostly in Spanish, because we were recording in Spanish and I was approaching music from that point of view — although privately I would write things in English. Then 'Dr. Beat' [the group's first English single] gave us an opportunity. At that point our career in Latin America was at a peak, we had pretty much reached the fame that we had wanted, and we said, 'OK, now's the time to turn our energy to getting back to the U.S.'"

Ironically, the band's first bona fide English hit, "Conga," was completely Latin in origin, a song inspired by a medley of traditional Cuban congas they often performed.

"What's even funnier is that we became famous for this Cuban medley which is like 50 or 60 years old, which they used to play at street parties. The conga is what the samba is in Rio; it's a street party. It always turned into a free-for-all at the end of the

night; it was just so much fun, and people would love it. I remember saying to Emilio one day, 'Damn it, the day that we don't have to play congas anymore is the day we make it.' It's kind of funny that the song that became our biggest hit, really our signature tune worldwide, was based on that entire thing. It's a song I love to play; it's just funny how it came out."

Although she's now recording mostly in English, Estefan likes to include some Spanish tracks on each of her albums. "Sometimes ideas come into my head in Spanish and I work on them that way, because it's the natural inspiration," she explains. "And even when I do rewrites I don't translate; I completely rewrite the song from a new perspective. You can't translate it; it just doesn't work. It's a different thought process, and I always used to get upset when I'd hear translations. You have to be able to approach it from a different perspective."

Miami Sound Machine's music has consistently offered pop music from a fresh point of view, something that makes Estefan especially proud. "I think that our greatest achievement is the fact that we were able to bring a different sound to a place that pretty much didn't play that kind of music and didn't experience it on a mass scale," she says. "Sure, you have New York, L.A., Chicago and places where there are pockets of Hispanics, and that music was heard on radio stations, but on Hispanic stations. I think that the ability to cross over — not just in the U.S. but in Asia and Europe, everywhere you'd least expect Latin music to flourish — was definitely one of our biggest accomplishments."

While Estefan's popularity certainly helped North Americans get cozy with more exotic sounds, she prefers to think of music as a simple, primal force. "I think music doesn't really need to be categorized — you either like it or you don't," she remarks. "You don't need to understand it, you don't have to know what it is or where it came from. It either reaches you or it doesn't."

A particularly rewarding aspect of Miami Sound Machine's cross-cultural approach is that the group never lost its original audience, even when it found mainstream success. "It's very easy when you embark on a new adventure career for people to think, 'Oh no, they're going to abandon us,'" Estefan says. "It was wonderful that we were able to do it with the most Latin sound we've done, because then we were able to bring our fans right with us."

Estefan counts those fans among the most important reasons for her incredibly speedy recovery from the accident last year — she received more than 30,000 postcards and letters while she was convalescing — and also as an important source of inspiration for the songs on *Into The Light*.

"This overwhelming support that I got from everyone — I think that's a big part of this whole collection of songs," she says. "It was a wonderful feeling, something I'll carry with me my entire life, and it's something I'll always be grateful for. I want people to see how important they were to me, and I tried to make that come through in the music."

"We are all vulnerable, every second of our lives. That's why I've always enjoyed things so much, and everything was such a joy to me. Doing this record was even more therapeutic than a lot of the physical things I did, because you get lost in it. It's just a great thing to have in your life. It's always been there for me, and it helped me to pull through on this too."

me



*"This guy played  
'Do The Hustle' on the  
accordion, and I thought  
'This is a man after  
my own heart.'"*

things. She was not into Latin music, or she didn't listen to it really; that was the kind of thing that you danced to."

By the time she met Emilio at a friend's wedding in 1975, Estefan had already made up her mind about what she wanted to be: a psychologist. "I was so interested in the whole human psyche," she says. "I still have a theory that psychology students go in there looking for self-help. I know that was the case for me, and I'd look at some of my professors and think, 'Definitely,'" she laughs. "It's a great and interesting science that helps a lot of people, and I got into it because I thought I could help people — till I realized I couldn't have divorced myself emotionally from it enough. I get too emotionally involved, and I couldn't have helped people that way 'cause I would have been depressed all the time. I'm glad I've stayed with music."

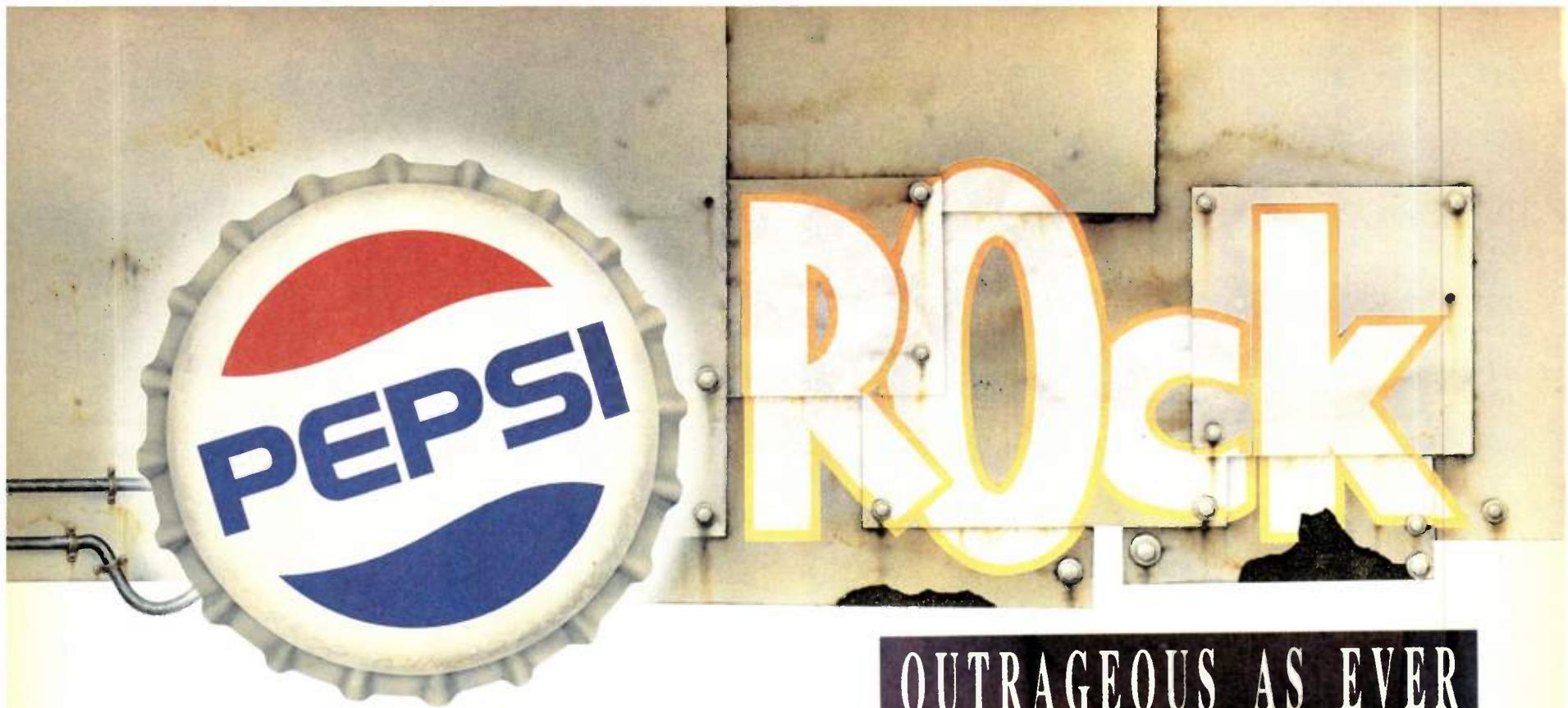
Estefan admittedly places a lot of faith in the unknown. For her, a person who believes that things always happen for a reason, the way she wound up fronting Miami Sound Machine or marrying her first love was more than a matter of chance.

"The first day I ever heard them play was at a wedding of a friend of mine which my mom dragged me to — I didn't even want to go. Talk about destiny!" she recalls with a wry laugh. "The band was then called Miami Latin Boys, and they did only Latin music. They didn't have a singer, so they didn't do any ballads; they did salsa music. And they had something — Emilio had charisma. "It was the weirdest little band. Emilio played the

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## Creating Tracks

In light of recent events concerning the musical authenticity of records by groups like Milli Vanilli and Black Box, when a dance record goes to No. 1 — especially one created by a stellar pair of producers like **David Cole** and **Robert Clivilles** — it automatically raises questions.

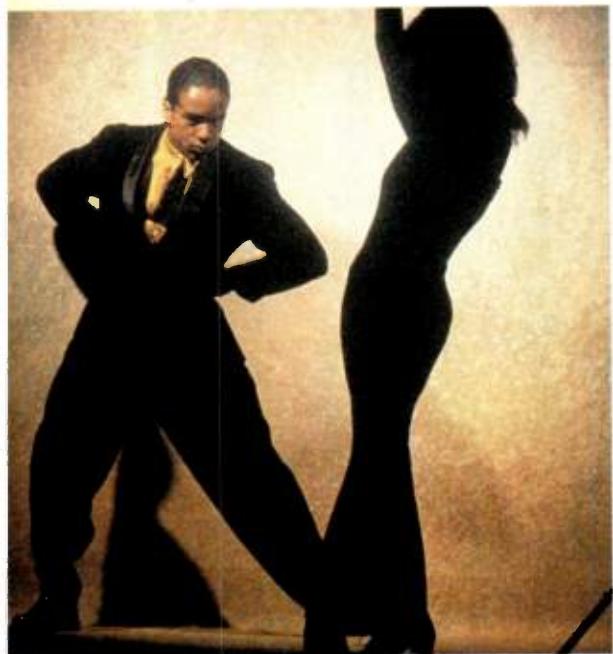
But for rapper **Freedom Williams**, who fronts Cole and Clivilles' **C&C Music Factory**, scoring a No. 1 single with "Gonna Make You Sweat (Everybody Dance Now)" is worth a truckload of detractors.

"You take flak for whatever you do; it's a part of life," he says. "I'm content. I don't really worry about the flak. Any problems I have regarding my career are my own responsibility. As long as I'm featured or **Zelma Davis** is featured, C&C Music Factory is as good as that. Robert and David can make great records and they will continue — we hope to all continue. Somebody may look at it differently and say you're just the front, but it's relative, like when Phil Collins was with Genesis or Tina Turner was with Ike."

Williams was an assistant engineer in a New York recording studio when he first encountered Cole and Clivilles two years ago. "I was working in the studio where they were doing sessions, and we became good friends," Williams re-

calls. "They asked me to cowrite a song with them and write the rap with them for the first single they had with *Seduction*."

Recognizing the aspiring rapper's skill, Cole and Clivilles invited Williams to be in C&C. "Somebody is always trying to say something. I don't think that's my main objective. It's just to try to create tracks," he says about his style. "First I like to create rhythm tracks before I create raps, because they give the rap a vibe. A statement is relative to the music. If a song dictates a vibe about talking about South Africa, when you hear the 'Make You Sweat' rhythm track you don't think of South Africa, you think of dance, so it's that kind of thing. I think rap music right now is the most powerful form of music that we have."



## OUTRAGEOUS AS EVER



"There was a moment," a soft-spoken **Brian May** says, "when we owned America, when *The Game* [1980] was out and we had No. 1 hits with 'Crazy Little Thing Called Love' and 'Another One Bites The Dust.' We were up to about 4 million [sales] with that album and I think we thought we cracked it and that was it forever. After that it got more difficult for various reasons."

After problems with their former record company, radio programmers, the press and political activists (the group performed what many considered an ill-considered 1984 concert in South Africa), the group's stock took a tumble for several years, but as May now says, "We just carried on doing the same thing with the confidence that eventually it would come back in this country."

With the release of *Innuendo*, Queen's 18th album, and the impending reissue of the entire re-mastered Queen oeuvre over the course of the next year by Disney-owned Hollywood Records, it looks as though May, **Roger Taylor**, **John Deacon** and the inestimable **Freddie Mercury** are back with a vengeance. Launched at a lavish party on the Queen Mary with a fanfare of circus clowns, jugglers, fire-eaters and a mammoth pyrotechnic display, *Innuendo* recalls their heyday as one of the most outrageous bands in the world.

Tour plans remain undecided because, according to May, Freddie's reluctant. "He's conscious that he might become a caricature of what he was before. We've all gotten older — we're not going to run around as much as we used to." But apparently Freddie has felt this way once before — before their 1989 swing through South America, Europe and England, which ended up being one of the most highly attended, critically acclaimed tours in history!

**Perry Stern**

IT'S GOT  
WHAT IT  
TAKES.

## NEW VALUES

After a two-year break from recording, **Rick Astley** is back with a new album, a new haircut and a new attitude. Once a product of the Svengali-like British producers Stock, Aitken and Waterman, Astley first crooned his way to the top of the charts in 1987 with bouncy dance tracks like "Whenever You Need Somebody" and "Together Forever."

But the followup to his double-platinum debut *Whenever You Need Somebody* proved disappointing, and the 25-year-old singer decided it was time for a change. "It was too easy an option to stick with Stock, Aitken, Waterman and collect Rolls Royces for the rest of my life," he reflects. "I didn't want to do that — I wanted to do something else. I think there has to be some change, a bit of moving forward, so I said, 'Let's put a stop to this; put a hold on everything and assess the situation.' There was even a point where I wouldn't have been all that bothered if I never made another record. It would have been a big blow to me, but there is no point carrying on, doing the same thing," he adds. "It either had to change or stop — one or the other."

A couple of years of wrangling ensued before Astley was finally contractually free to pursue his own more ballad-oriented muse. Hence the title of his new release, *Free*.

Astley cowrote several of the album's songs with Level 42's Mark King and Climie Fisher's Rob Fisher, while The Art of Noise's Ann Dudley did much of *Free*'s musical arranging. Ironically, Michael McDonald, to whom Astley's lush baritone is often compared, also contributed a tune, "In The Name Of Love."

"Like McDonald, I've been very influenced by black singers, but personally I don't think I'm in his league," Astley says respectfully. "He's got a few years on me, and he's very good at what he does. Maybe in a few years I could reach that kind of height. I think it comes from experience, a voice like that. You don't just wake up with it one morning — you have to work at it."



## War Nerves

It seems that the war in the Persian Gulf and the possibility of acts of terrorism have already had a serious effect on the music industry, with many artists cancelling or postponing concert and promotional tours of Europe originally scheduled for the coming months.

**Cinderella** and **Slaughter** are among the acts that cut short European sojourns. **Vanilla Ice**, **Gang Starr**, **Ray Charles** and **Albert Collins** recently cancelled appearances at MIDEM, the international music conference held annually in Cannes, France, and traditionally one of the industry's most important conclaves.

Among those cancelling or postponing European concert dates are **Great White**, **Winger**, **En Vogue** and **L.L. Cool J**, while **Susanna Hoffs**, **R.E.M.**, **Harry Connick Jr.** and **MC Hammer** have postponed promotional swings on the Continent.

**Robert Cray** and **Iggy Pop** are currently overseas completing tours that were already in progress when the war began, while **Bryan Adams**, **Bob Dylan**, **David Lee Roth**, **Whitney Houston** and **Sting** are expected to carry on as previously scheduled.

It's also been rumored that due to the crisis in the Middle East, the long-awaited **Dire Straits** reunion album and concert tour have been postponed till the fall. In the meantime, the world waits and hopes for a peaceful end to the conflict.

## Postcards From The Edge?

early childhood Pam experienced the harsh glare of the public eye. Now, at 32, Tillis has earned her own stripes as one of Nashville's most respected young songwriters. And with the recent release of her emotionally charged album *Put Yourself In My Place*, she's poised to gain the ears of a lot of folk outside the country community.

"What I feel cheated out of is a more normal background," she admits. "My slant on the business and music and everything is in some ways really neat, but in some ways I long to have had a period of anonymity. I grew up in a fishbowl, and I long to have developed far away, woodshedded for years, then hit Nashville. I grew up in front of everybody, and painfully so."

As "a depressed kid," Tillis found comfort in music. "I would walk along outside and make up these mournful, wistful melodies," she recalls. "I could make myself cry, and I enjoyed it. I was getting those feelings out through singing. I'd make up these melodies and feel better."

When she was an adolescent, Pam found a more destructive outlet for her feelings. "I wasted a lot of time partying and carrying on all the ways a person does — bad relationships, drinking," she says. "I made it through, and I'm glad I found other ways to deal with things."

On her new album, in ragged, turbulent songs like "Melancholy Child" and "Draggin' My Chains," Tillis reveals a life lived out of balance. "I feel like my songs are different because of that, and I don't try to make up a past existence," she says. "I just have to deal with the one I got."

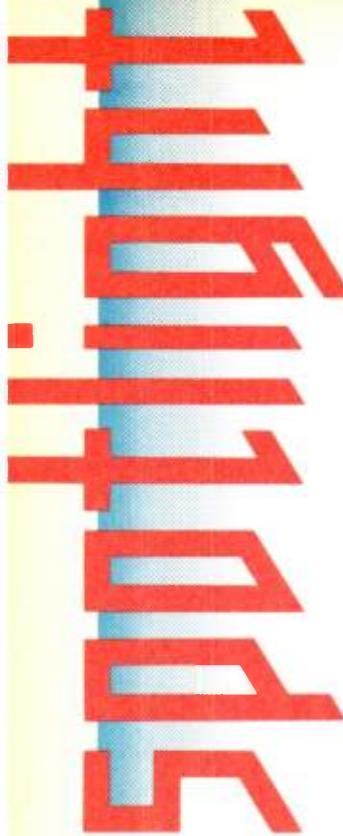
"I hope that I have enough angst to last me through the next record," Tillis adds with a laugh. "I'm a much happier person than I used to be."

"I feel like the Carrie Fisher of Nashville sometimes," singer **Pam Tillis** sighs. "I use my humor to diffuse all of the wackiness in this. In my more benevolent moments I think there are worse curses in life than having a famous father!"



**COMPILED BY TINA CLARKE**

Left: Hal Small ; Top: Melanie Nissen\*



Charles Brown grandly opens the door to his hotel suite clad only in a black silk kimono, worn leather sandals, a grey tweed beret set at almost too jaunty an angle for nine in the morning and the 100-watt grin that rarely leaves his face. "It's something I learned long ago," he shrugs. "They told me, 'Don't just sit there, show those teeth — smile!' So I did." And after a career that never had quite as many highs as it did lows, the 68-year-old Brown still has plenty to smile about.

Only two weeks earlier he opened a brief residency at the posh Cinegrill at the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood to tumultuous applause and rave reviews. Time simply had not eroded the enchanting marriage of boogie, blues and jazz that brought Brown and his piano hits as far back as the classic "Driftin' Blues" (with Jonny Moore and The Three Blazers) in 1948. It was a style of languid, eloquent playing that was the earliest incarnation of "The California Sound," a name later usurped in the '60s by The Beach Boys and in the '70s by The Eagles and their ilk. It was also referred to as Club Blues, because the music was often played in elegant lounges and hotel bars rather than the dancehalls and booze cans that generally housed the blues.

Brown remembers the evolution of his style

## CHARLES BROWN

### California Club Blues

by Perry Stern

as picking up pop tunes and playing them in a blues fashion. "It was a new sound," he recalls, "because it had more of a story ["Driftin' Blues" portrayed the lonely desperation of returning World War II veterans] and it was getting away from the low-type risque blues where people sang songs like 'Big Leg Mama Keep Your Dress Down Low.'" A hearty laugh follows the song's brief rendition.

Brown has also been acknowledged for inspiring the stylings of Little Richard, Fats Domino and Ray Charles. The latter two (along with Ruth Brown, The Clovers and Etta James) launched their careers opening for Brown in the '50s. When Brown missed a gig to visit his ailing grandfather in 1957, he became so efficiently blackballed that by the mid-'80s he had given up playing and was helping out a friend by cleaning houses. Every now and again, however, his songs would be covered by the new generation of rock stars, including two seasonal hits ("Merry Christmas Baby," covered by Bruce Springsteen, and "I'll Be Home For Christmas,"

by The Eagles). Down but not out, Brown has since been honored with a lifetime achievement award from The Rhythm and Blues Foundation.

In the Cinegrill audience opening night were such luminaries as Elvis Costello, Don Was, John Mayall, Bonnie Raitt, Willie Dixon, Ruth Brown, Al Kooper and Johnny Rivers, all paying rapt attention to Brown and his four-piece band. Raitt in particular was a welcome guest that night. Brown called her his "evening angel," because she has played the largest role in bringing him back into the spotlight.

After catching a Brown set in Los Angeles last year, Raitt invited the veteran to open on her summer tour. Calling him the finest living piano player, Raitt would later say, "Hearing him play on that tour was like watching Picasso paint."

Now Brown has a new album of classic material, called *All My Life*, on Rounder Records. Guesting on the LP are Ruth Brown and long-time admirer Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack. In the liner notes legendary producer Jerry Wexler (Ray Charles, Bob Dylan) refers to "the sweetness of his disposition, the mellowness of his soul and his musical intelligence," all of which are amply evident on the album. You don't have to be in the presence of Charles Brown's winning smile to bask in its warmth.



# GANG STARR

## Street Intellect

by Perry Stern

With song titles like "Street Ministry," "As I Read My S-A" and "Form Of Intellect," it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that Gang Starr is not the tough-talking, crime-glorying, New School rap act that its name implies. But there's no hectoring, lecturing or verbal wrist-slapping on *Step In The Arena*, the first major label release from The G.U.R.U. and D.J. Premiere. The beats and rhymes are as heavy as anything coming out of the streets these days, but the message hits somewhat closer to home.

"Basically, Gang Starr represents message-oriented music," The G.U.R.U. states from the back of a white stretch limo that slowly cruises the mean streets of North Hollywood. "It's a combination of street intellect and our philosophical and spiritual backgrounds. It's not like we're gonna go out and say, 'Hey, don't do that, be a nice person.' We're gonna say it in their own language. It's sort of a mission." He admits the songs are message oriented, "but we don't shove it down your throat."

Though G.U.R.U. (it stands for Gifted Unlimited Rhymes Universal, if you hadn't already guessed) was born in Boston, he spent a lot of time growing up on Premiere's violent home turf, Brooklyn. Both broke away from the stereotypical downward spiral by pursuing a higher education. G.U.R.U. graduated with a degree in business administration from Morehouse College in Atlanta, and Premiere ran a record store while studying at Prairie View A&M in Houston. The two teamed up several years ago at the urging of their former indie label (for which they recorded the critically acclaimed LP *No More Mr. Nice Guy*). Now they want to put their schooling to use by integrating their philosophy of life into their songs.

Even a cursory listen to *Step In The Arena* reveals some-

thing unique yet familiar about the album's sound. Unlike most rap acts these days, with their dancers, live musicians, prerecorded tapes and lip-synching, Gang Starr is a throwback to the origins of rap — G.U.R.U. does all the singing, and Premiere scratches all the music on his three turntables. Classic R&B and jazz are the DJ's main sources for samples, a fact which helped attract the attention of Spike Lee and Branford Marsalis while they were putting together the soundtrack for *Mo' Better Blues*. Gang Starr provided the film's name-checking closing song, "Jazz Thing."

But going back to rap's roots doesn't mean the decade-old style has run out of steam. "People thought rap was gonna die out because they thought it was limited," Premiere says, "but I see it as what the artist makes of it. There's always gonna be something to reach for that's a little different. We use R&B and jazz, but Run-D.M.C. came out doin' old rock 'n' roll with hard beats to it. Plus, rap is so inconsistent. It can change tomorrow."

"Just Ice said, 'Hip hop's not the same no more,'" the mixer continues. "People aren't using turntables — they're getting all technical with these machines and taking away the *history* of it. Look at Spanish people. They keep their culture. Even if they kick slang with me out in the street, as soon as they get home with their family they



speak Spanish. That's the same way with rap: Keep the culture there. Even though it may broaden and times may change, you still gotta have that thing to grip on to. Rap made the turntable an instrument."

Some would argue that the crossover success of acts like Vanilla Ice and a rapping Bart Simpson are diluting the cultural significance of rap, and that the harsh language of artists like 2 Live Crew and N.W.A. are turning listeners against the genre. But G.U.R.U. disagrees. "Rap is the voice of urban America. To me, the more variety, the more people have to choose from. If people want to chose [2 Live Crew] and buy it, fine. It's makin' a bigger name for rap. But I'm into skills. Skills and funky beats."



# ASHLEY CLEVELAND

## Roadhouse Choirmarm

by David Sprague

Some people, it seems, still subscribe to the philosophy that states you can judge a person by the company he or she keeps. If you find yourself nodding, prepare for a case of whiplash, courtesy of Ashley Cleveland. The Nashville (via San Francisco) singer/songwriter has a thank-you list on *Big Town* that wends its way from The Mighty Sleazebags over to the Christ Community Church, with quite a few pitstops along the way — proving that, if anything, she's got plenty of range.

"That might be a first," she says with a hearty laugh. "The Mighty Sleazebags are my band, and they are *very* sleazy...in their playing. As individuals, they're all very nice young men. It's all just semantics, but I'm sure someone will be really irritated by that. Then again, that's not my problem."

That attitude is bountifully evident on *Big Town*. Though it's the first time Ashley's struck out on her own (she's contributed vocals to discs by John Hiatt, Jo-El Sonnier and Emmylou Harris, among others), she's hardly played it safe. From the album's opening strains — a snippet of Andrae Crouch's gospel classic "Soon and Very Soon" which leads into Ashley's own, richly textured hymn "Big Town" — it's clear that she's a woman of no little faith. She's just as likely, though, to apply her throaty, soulful growl to more *earthy* material, like the techno-blues stomp "Up From The Ether" and the hilarious, Randy Newman-esque "I'll Call You." In other words, if you must tuck Ashley Cleveland into a pigeonhole, be sure to label it Roadhouse Biker Fundamentalist Choirmarm.

"I became a believer in Christ when I was a teenager," she says, "so the spiritual side tends to permeate a lot of what I do. I don't feel compelled to pur-

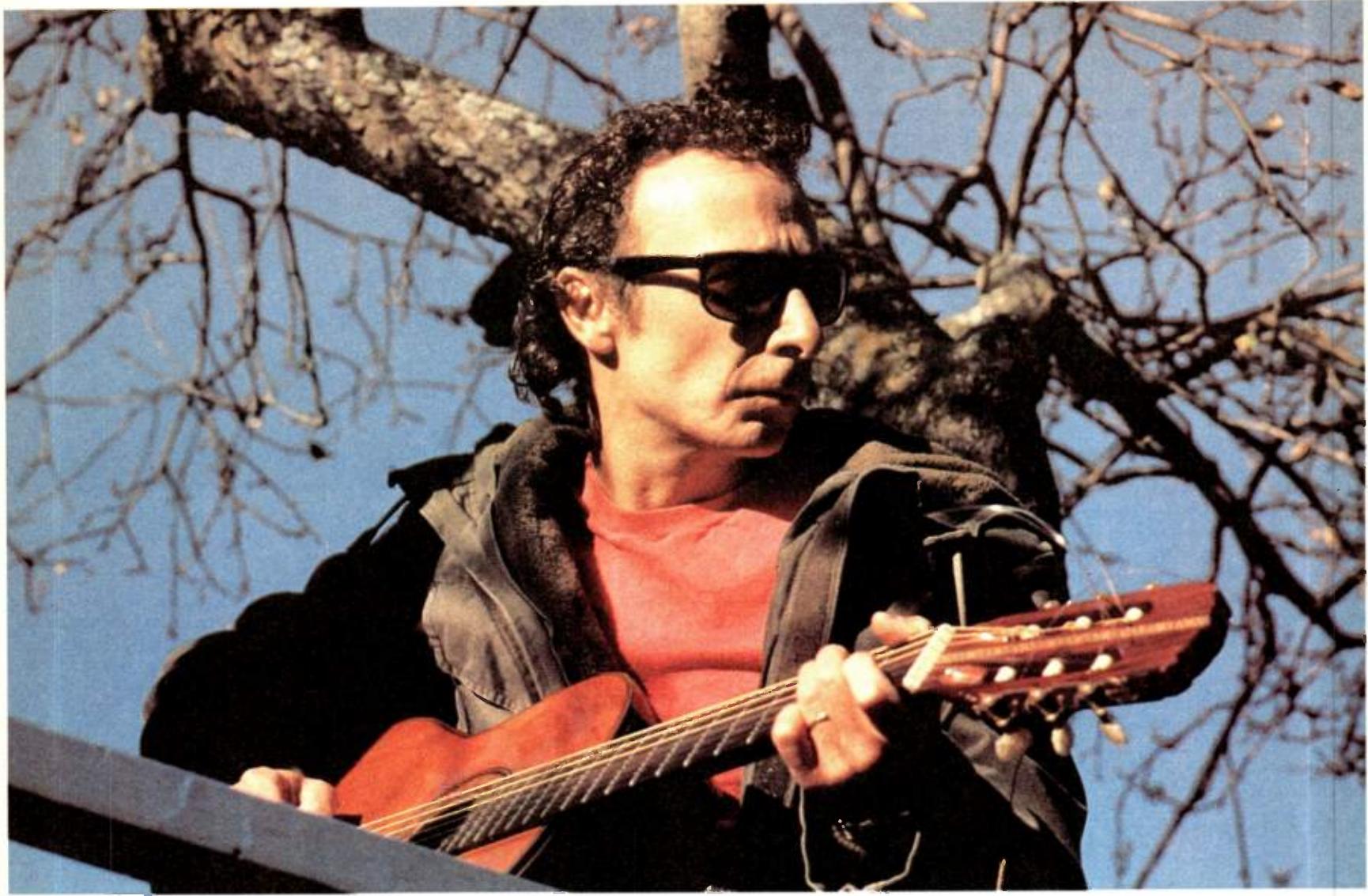
sue only gospel, because I think God is alive and well in all aspects of life. But in the industry, when an artist approaches things from a

number of angles, people get very nervous. Atlantic has been more than generous, though. They've given me a very wide berth, which I need; I feel that if I need to milk it down to where it's palatable to everyone, I'm not doing anything significant, I'm just writing jingles."

Having moved (with her daughter, for whom she wrote *Big Town*'s gorgeous "Rebecca") from the Bay Area back to her native Tennessee, Ashley trod the standard path — workshops, showcases and the like — and bypassed most of the standard roadblocks. Though she fell into step with neither Nashville's entrenched, slick 'n' showbizzy camp nor the advancing neo-billy traditionalists, Cleveland's striking voice and intensely personal songs earned her respect from both. The peer support, she reckons, kept her afloat both emotionally and financially.

"Gradually, people began to use me as a backup singer, first on demos, then on records," she explains. "That's something I really enjoy doing. It's a totally different craft — plus you get to rub elbows with all kinds of artists."

Quite a number of those artists have returned the favor by guesting on *Big Town* — John Hiatt, Pam Tilis, even Tommy Tutone. And it was quite a scheduling effort as well, considering that all the basic tracks were done in two four-day stretches; Ashley, in fact, did her parts entirely live. "There's something about being in a room with everybody wailing," she enthuses. "That energy just communicates itself; I wouldn't work any other way."



## GRAHAM PARKER

A Grown Man  
by Mary Dickie

In the late '70s, Graham Parker was one of the bright lights of the pub rock scene in England, bringing an angry punk delivery and biting lyrics together with Dylanesque acoustic rock, to which he frequently added touches of R&B and reggae. Albums like *Howling Wind*, *Heat Treatment* and *Squeezing Out Sparks* gained him critical accolades and a small but solid following, but over the next few years, when peers like Elvis Costello became more widely successful, Parker got bogged down in problems with his record company and seemed to run out of steam creatively, always trying new approaches and producers but never duplicating the power of his first two albums.

Then, a decade after his early successes, he put out *The Mona Lisa's Sister*, which he produced himself, and went out on a very successful solo acoustic tour. It seemed as though he had recovered his footing. And now there's *Struck By Lightning*, a very strong album that features Parker's trademark scratchy voice and sharp lyrics, but reflects a very different perspective. Parker has settled in rural upstate New York, has a child, and, as his new song "A Brand New Book" points out, is writing about different things now that he's a "grown man."

"The statements in that song are kind of a knock against all these poseurs with long hair and satin underwear leaping around, singing about chicks," he says. "I think it's phony, most of it. And I guess different things have come out in these songs. 'Strong Winds' is very much about my daughter growing up. Every year they grow further away from you — they're sort of projected out into the world. So it's about that inevitable loss."

"It's gratifying to find that I can write about stuff like that without being maudlin or anything. Because for years the idea has been that rock 'n' roll is about juvenile things, and that hasn't turned out to be the case at all. If you've got long-term talent, what you write about is going to change and evolve. It's no good sitting around and thinking, 'Why can't I write what I used to write when I was 25?' It's over, you know. 'A Brand New Book' represents that idea."

"The Kid With The Butterfly Net" has a similar parental theme. "On the surface it's a jolly song, related to an image of my daughter," he explains. "But it's to do with being an adult — what we missed and what we lose. It's another loss song, really."

Parker's songwriting has always been distinguished by his anger — now that he's relatively happy, how does he maintain that bite in his songs? "I can write socio-political songs really easily; they're pretty easy to write," he says. "There's one I wrote recently called 'Museum Of Stupidity' that's a pretty decent number. But it didn't really fit the LP — it's not really what I want to say on this one. There's still some pissed-off stuff, but in a different way."

"Being pissed off is a good fuel, there's no doubt about it. But it's going to be different. It's not like when I first started — that anger was generated by seeing the British suburbs, the way people thought and acted and reacted, which seemed to be controlled by the media and soap operas and stuff. But I'm not singing about that anymore; it's not my situation."

"I write most of my songs in a barn now. Looking out the window, you see mountains and stuff. It's not like working in the city, where you tend to go out on the street to get something and go back and do a bit of writing or playing, and it gives things a different edge. Here there's nobody out there — there's just sort of deer and things

walking around. So I think that might have given the album a direction."

Perhaps the rural setting, or maybe just being in America, has also brought out the country touches in Parker's work. *Struck By Lightning*'s songs are embellished by things like autoharp, violin, dobro and accordion (played by The Band's Garth Hudson), although his plans are for another stripped-down solo tour, as well as a stint opening for Bob Dylan in Europe.

"There was a bit of country early on, on *Howling Wind* — the use of the instruments was more earthy than it was later on, when it was more electric," he says. "But yes, some of the melodies on this album sort of relate to those kinds of melodic things that were on my earlier records. I think where I'm working has given the album a rustic feel."

After going from critics' darling to critics' disappointment and struggling through his conflicts with record companies, does Parker now feel he's over the worst of it, or at least less affected by it?

"Yeah, I just feel like I'm doing my job, so I don't resent doing this," he says. "I used to, to a certain extent — I thought it was a terrible weight to carry around. I used to think, 'Why can't I just be a bass player, standing on the side, just playing someone else's song?' Because writing is full of crisis. It's always an anxiety-ridden thing, wondering if you're going to come up with the goods. But at the same time I'm writing more than I have in years."

"And things have opened up for me stylistically. Since *Mona Lisa* I've explored things a bit further, 'cause it's always amazing to me, the limited number of chords that we have. That's part of the crisis of writing — 'G, C, D, here we go again.' But somehow I just play around with it and try new angles and come up with stuff. It's a mystery to me."

It's 24 hours before David Ashmore is scheduled to fly out of New York, hoping to land safely in his native Britain — hoping being the operative word, because it is also 22 hours before missiles begin raining down over the Middle East. Not too surprisingly, world events bring the Hollow Men's leader around to one of his pet topics: the eventual, if not imminent, destruction of the species.

"As much as I hate the thought of war," Ashmore says, "I thought it was inevitable from the beginning. We just seem to be headed towards destroying ourselves in any number of ways, so if this does turn out to be the Big One, we'll have brought it on ourselves."

Ashmore delivers this prognosis not with apocalyptic urgency, but with an air of bemused resignation — an air that circulates freely through the heady grooves of the Leeds-based quintet's first international album, *Cresta*. The disc, which sees subtle dance rhythms poured into the formerly wide-open spaces of the band's wispy psychedelia, is in some ways a departure from their previous LP releases, *Tales From The Riverbank* and *The Man Who Would Be King*.

In other, more fundamental terms, The Hollow Men remain much as they were five years back, when Ashmore and guitarist Choque met on a cross-town bus and — as good art-rockers are wont to do — discussed their ideas about what made a really

## THE HOLLOW MEN

We Get Goths!  
by David Sprague

great record sleeve. Then they decided that recording some music together would be bully.

"It was always a studio project," Ashmore insists. "It was just the two of us, and we never wanted to — and never did — play live." That didn't come until much later, actually. Right after the Hollow Men's second album became a casualty of their indie label's crash, the band (by then expanded to the current five-piece lineup) braved the stage for the first time, touring with The Wonder Stuff. "Our first gig was in front of 2,000 people," Ashmore says. "We were terrified. And completely sober, but for some reason we've always been tagged as drug music, so that's all any of the reviewers talked about."

That might have something to do with Ashmore's penchant for penning broadly paganistic, trippy lyrics. And it might have something to do with his love for Pink Floyd founder/cult legend Syd Barrett (he even went so far as to write a song, "Barefoot Parade," about the guy, using his sampled voice at the tune's end). It might even be less subtle — like *Cresta's* cover, which appears to be constructed of tabs of acid.

"Oh, yeah, those are acid tabs," confirms Ashmore. "You can buy those exact designs in England. You can buy oranges, you can buy Gorbachevs. We were told not to use Pink Panther or Superman, though — so we replaced them with the statue from the British court buildings, to signify the lawyers who stopped us."

And though *Cresta* reflects the band's interest in acid-house culture ("but not the music"), it's more a document of a band with an uncanny knack for melding wildly diverse elements — like "November Comes," which osterizes wah-wah guitar, breathy Mamas & Papas-like harmonies and a sample from the Human League's indie debut "Being Boiled" (previously best remembered as the only song ever to use the word sericulture) into a cohesive, instantly memorable whole. There's ample evidence that the Hollow Men will be unsheathing many-edged pop swords well after the Stone Roses are reduced to beery reminiscences of their 15 minutes.

"The music scene in England is so factioned, but we get all sorts of strange people," Ashmore laughs. "We get goths, and I wonder, 'What the fuck do they see in us?' I think it's down to the fact that we write songs first. If they turn out to be danceable, that's fine. But you can strip everything away — all the production, everything but an acoustic guitar — and still have a song."



"We never wanted things to sound bad and garagey," guitarist Jay Blumenfield confesses about the sublimely low budget, highly anarchic, obnoxious pop Too Much Joy has perfected. "They just did because... we were bad."

If he sounds ever so slightly defensive, it's because on their new album, *Cereal Killers*, the Scarsdale, New York, quartet has a more polished, more professional production than was found on either of their earlier releases, *Green Eggs & Crack* and *Son Of Sam I Am*.

Like many followers of the alternative music scene, Blumenfield remembers how he felt when bands like R.E.M. and The Replacements signed to major labels and cleaned up their once defiantly low-rent sounds—betrayed. "Now that I'm on the other side of it," he reconsiders, "it's different than I thought. It's not as though you're trying to be more accessible or get a bigger audience. We wanted to sound like this even when we made our first demo tape. But we couldn't because we didn't have any money and didn't know what we were doing. The more budgets go up and the more we learn how to turn the right knobs in the studio, the closer to that original concept we'll sound."

Not that *Cereal Killers* is a conceptual departure from the sophomore silliness that brought you "Making Fun Of Bums" (a "bad karma thing to do"), "My Past Lives" ("this life's not the best life, but at

## TOO MUCH JOY

Turning  
The Right Knobs  
by Perry Stern

least I'm not you") and the L.L. Cool J cover "That's A Lie." The new album contains songs about how girls only like "Longhaired Guys From England," a comment on the fist-in-the-air mentality of metal fans called "Nothing On My Mind" and the obscurely tagged "Susquehanna Hat Company." (The song, about a particularly annoying woman, takes its title from a famous Abbott and Costello routine that had Bud going berserk every time the Susquehanna Hat Company was mentioned.) What separates *Cereal Killers* from its predecessors is that fact that the harmonies are no longer strained, the instruments are adequately tuned and the words—the essential element to all Too Much Joy excursions—are easily audible. "We don't take ourselves seriously," Blumenfield says, "but we take that fact seriously."

Another matter Too Much Joy did take seriously was last summer's arrest of the rap group 2 Live Crew for performing an obscene show in Florida. Within weeks Too Much Joy opened a gig at the same venue with six songs from the Crew's *Nasty As They Wanna Be* album, and Blumenfield, singer Tim Quirk

and bassist Sandy Smallens were summarily hauled off to jail for the night. Drummer Tommy Vinton, who didn't sing anyway, avoided arrest so as not to endanger his day job—ironically, he's a South Bronx policeman when he's not on the road (Blumenfield adds, "Also, his dad's in the FBI, and he wouldn't have liked it too much").

The stunt wasn't so much a gesture of support for the gutter-rap of 2 Live Crew as it was a spit in the face of Florida's establishment. Blumenfield says, "We wanted to show how the actual people of Florida felt. We thought there were some psychos in power and we wanted to show them up."

On January 17 Too Much Joy did exactly that. After a one-and-a-half-day hearing a jury took all of 13 minutes to acquit the band. "What took the longest," one juror was quoted as saying, "was that a couple of people had to go to the bathroom and we had to wait for them. We knew the verdict immediately."

"We sincerely believe in the power of music," Blumenfield announces, "but we also realize it's kinda funny to actually believe in that. And that's at the heart of our existence. I think rock 'n' roll can be a positive thing, and you can feel less alienated by listening to a band like us. I'm not saying that what we're doing is so important, but it means something to us and hopefully it'll mean something for other people. If not we'll keep playing for ourselves."



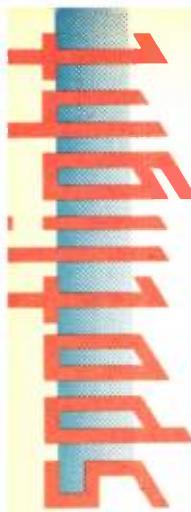
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Susanna Hoffs, former lead singer of The Bangles, has just learned that the local video station has aired a Bangles clip in honor of her birthday. Realizing that she is to appear live on the same station momentarily to promote her solo album *When You're A Boy*, she worries that she may be asked to reveal just what birthday she is celebrating. This comes as a surprise for two reasons: first, the trepidation is not in keeping with the rather forward and fearless attitude she displays onstage; and second, she obviously needn't worry about age lines just yet.

"Actually, I tend to be very shy," she explains. "I think the forward side of me just comes through more in the music. Music gives you a chance to come out of your shell. I think most musicians have felt very shy or unpopular in a lot of ways, and so they put all of their energies and emotions into the music, and it's a real outlet."

Susanna "comes out of her shell" under the covers this time, for the video for her debut solo single, "My Side Of The Bed," in which she disappoints her fans by appearing in bed with a young Adonis. Says Susanna: "There was something very candid about the scenes with the guy and me, so the director wanted to use those just to offset my performing and dancing around the room.

"The song is so sensual, and the idea behind it walks a fine line between overtly sexual and the deeper meaning of love being about comforting," she says. "The punch line is, 'We all need to be comforted, and you can get yours on my side of the bed.' When I did the video, I let go and it got to be a little sexier in tone, so we had to balance that out."

About the end of The Bangles' nine-year career, Susanna says, "There was a lot of tension at the end, which is basically the result of having four lead vocalists." With the able assistance of friends like Robin Lane (from The Chartbusters) and Julianna Hatfield, Susanna still sounds at ease in recreating the vocal magic of the '60s bands that remain her greatest source of pleasure. This leads to a chat about Lesley Gore, who recently said that music from the '70s and '80s

## SUSANNA HOFFS

### When You're Solo

by Roman Mitz

would not be remembered as well, because people aimed at technical perfection and forgot about melody.

"I think that's very true," Susanna agrees. "Nowadays when you're in the studio there are so many variables. Before, I always had the other girls to fall back on, because everybody always had an idea. Now the weight is on me, and my biggest goal was to capture the spontaneity I had in making the demos. A lot of times the technical side of things can get in the way of the performance, even though it's supposed to be setting a stage so that you can do the ultimate performance. I think there is a lack of melodic 'song' music on the radio; it's a very dance-oriented marketplace."

Susanna is a little concerned about where the melodic songs from *When You're A Boy* will fall in that narrow radio spectrum. She is inspired by performers such as Sinead O'Connor, whose "gut-wrenching" "Nothing Compares 2 U" carved its own niche on the radio dial. Of course that song was composed by Prince, who also provided The Bangles with their breakthrough hit, "Manic Monday."

"Prince liked The Bangles very much, and it was just a case of him ringing us up and offering it to us," she explains. "We always had a lot of success with our cover songs."

Susanna's choice cover this time out is "Boys Keep Swinging," a track from David Bowie's *Lodger* album. The song's killer chorus provides the title for Susanna's album, and allows her to camp it up a bit and break the serious tone of the rest of the album. On the other hand, her cover of Cyndi Lauper's "Unconditional Love" is probably the album's most intimate and touching moment.

"I think Cyndi's version took a more commercial approach, whereas I felt that it would be best served by doing it with a feeling like The Beatles' 'Here, There And Everywhere' had," she says. "Cyndi's version had this rich keyboard, and I wondered how to duplicate that symphonic arrangement on guitar. My guitarist, Rusty Anderson, started playing what he thought were the same kind of intervals, and it sounded like a Hendrix ballad to me. I thought, 'This is great, this is a very sweet song,' but I wanted it to have a little rock feel, if possible. And suddenly it sounded like a Hendrix treatment, and I was in heaven!"



## DRIVIN' N' CRYIN'

Flyin' High  
by Kerry Doole

It seemed appropriate to talk to Drivin' N' Cryin' bassist Tim Nielsen the same day the Gulf ultimatum expired. This Atlanta rock 'n' roll band has been drawn into the fray via the title song of their new album, *Fly Me Courageous*, which sports the lyrics "Mother America is brandishing her weapons, to keep you safe and warm, by threats and misconceptions."

"I think [singer/songwriter] Kevn [Kinney] wrote those words as we began sending troops there," explains Tim. "Some people will misinterpret the song, but that's OK. They can ask us about it, and we can tell them to look at the words a little closer."

Not that Drivin' N' Cryin' should need controversy to sell the fine albums they make, though. *Fly Me Courageous* is their fourth outing since Kevn and Tim formed the band in 1985 (guitarist Buren Fowler and drummer Jeff Sullivan round out the lineup), and it's their most straight-ahead rock 'n' roll effort to date. Earlier albums like *Mystery Road* and *Whisper Tames The Lion* were, as Tim admits, "too eclectic for the American public."

"Our local and Southern regional following was never a problem," he says. "I've never had a kid there come up after a show and say 'How can you play both country and hard rock?' They're used to it, but the average Joe who listens to AOR radio doesn't know what to think."

To help streamline their sound, Drivin' N' Cryin' hired veteran producer/engineer Geoff Workman (The Cars, Queen, Motley Crue). "He was really easy to get along with," says Tim. "He'd go out drinking with us and keep us laughing, then he'd be back the next day with a whip!"

The band's earlier eclecticism is now likely to surface on solo projects. Last year, Kevn Kinney released *MacDougal Blues*, a folk-oriented record produced by fan Pete Buck of R.E.M. "That was a smart thing for us, because it meant we could then make a record more focused to hard rock radio," asserts Tim, whose own sideshow has him playing around Atlanta with Georgia Satellite Rick Richards in One-Eyed Jacks.

Down South, Drivin' N' Cryin' are legitimate headliners, but they're eager to win new converts elsewhere. As Tim says, "We want to get on a major tour where you can reach as many people in one night as you can in two weeks of doing clubs, and you can cram all your powerful stuff into those 40 minutes."

Acknowledging that former friends amongst the cool college set "have moved onto hipper bands," Nielsen sets his sights on "the other America. Not the MTV/CD crowd, but the people that just listen to the radio and buy tapes for their cars."



# TANITA TIKARAM

## In Search Of Spontaneity by Bill Reynolds

Tanita Tikaram is every record company's dream project. Just 21 years old, the precocious London-based singer/guitarist's young female Van Morrison style has netted two direct hits already. And with the release of her new album, *Everybody's Angel*, she is attempting three in a row: Tikaram, whose precious poetry is memorable enough to capture the hearts and ears of Europeans, is testing the North American market after recording in Bearsville, New York, near Woodstock.

*Everybody's Angel* is a good bet to expand Tikaram's audience. The warm, spacious sound on the record was accomplished by eliminating synthesizers, limiting the keyboard sounds to the Hammond organ and the piano and placing Helen O'Hara's violin prominently in the mix.

Still, Tikaram's husky voice tends to offer a false sense of security, even as it complements the lush arrangements. She never gets out of second gear to express real emotion, and when the music emulates Van on quaaludes, Tanita's world weariness — she acts like she's 21 going on 55 — can be off-putting if you're not in the mood.

Tikaram doesn't know what to make of the wisdom-beyond-her-years talk. "I never really thought about the music in terms of how old I am, only in terms of what the songs demand," she says. "When we did the first album, we just stumbled onto the sound we have. But it's also the way we record. We tend to layer things, and then surround everything with the voice."

Born of Malaysian and Fijian parents, Tikaram grew up as an army brat. Her father was stationed in Germany, so her childhood memories are filled with the American R&B and pop that was available on the radio there. She relocated to England at age 13, and was armed with a satchel of songs only four years later.

Her music career began in earnest around March of

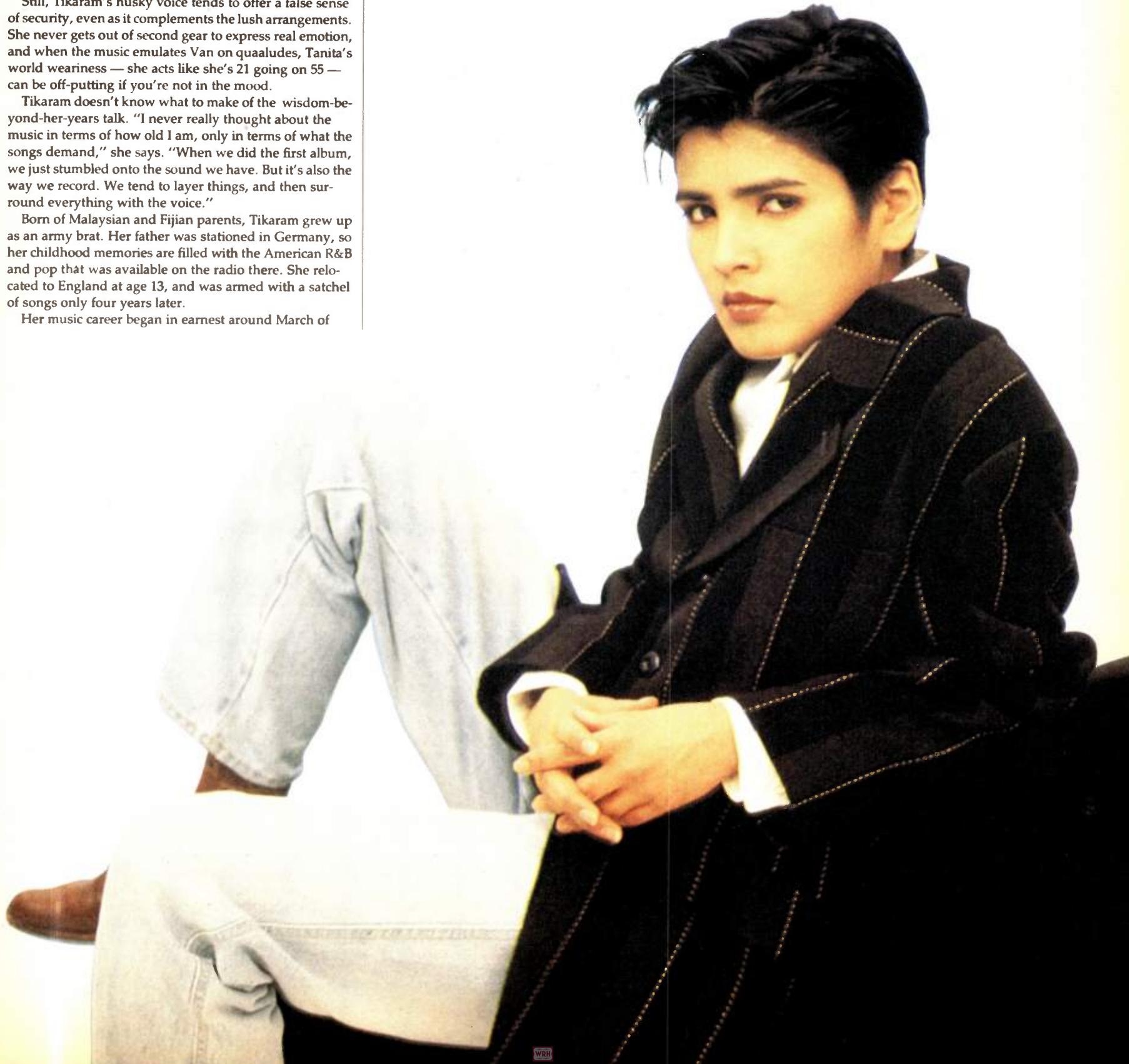
1988. She hadn't been gigging long when she was spotted by Paul Charles, former manager of Van the Man, and her support gig apprenticeship lasted eight months before she released *Ancient Heart* in late '88. It was an instant success in Britain and on the Continent, and a year later her sophomore effort, *The Sweet Keeper*, followed its predecessor into the upper reaches of the British charts.

Tikaram's producers, Peter van Hook and Rod Argent, have been with her since day one, honing her schmaltzy charms into a palatable pop/R&B concoction. Van Hook's claim to fame is Stackridge, a popular English band of the early '70s that never dented the American charts, but Argent is another story: the perpetrator of one of rock's original keyboard sounds, he was organist on The Zombies' hits "She's Not There," "Tell Her No" and "Time Of The Season," and later scored a major hit, the stolid but catchy "Hold Your Head Up," and one minor nugget, "God Gave Rock 'N' Roll To You," with his own eponymously named

band. Argent is a friend of Charles, who invited him to listen to demos made by his 18-year-old sensation. As Tikaram says, "I went to the studio to see if I could work with them, and we recorded about three songs for *Ancient Heart* very quickly. We've been working together ever since."

*Everybody's Angel* was recorded immediately following Tikaram's last world tour. Her band was primed from the roadwork, so the recording lasted only two weeks. This time, she says, her aim was to take advantage of spontaneity. "I wanted the album to be done quickly," she says, "because sometimes when people don't quite know what they're doing it creates a bit of excitement in the playing."

Tikaram also took more control of the sound this time around, but she says that's not a move towards outgrowing her colleagues. "I had this desire for the soul sound I was brought up on," she explains, "but I don't know the history of how people did that. So the working relationship I have is quite important to me."





## BLUE RODEO

**Rolling The Dice**  
by Kerry Doole

It seems ironically apt that the recent Hollywood debut of Toronto roots-rockers Blue Rodeo should have been in a movie entitled *Postcards from The Edge*.

You see, "the edge" was the group's home address over the past year via a combination of circumstances that would have sent most bands hurtling into the abyss. The high hopes held for 1989's *Diamond Mine* album weren't realized outside Canada (where it unearthed platinum plus sales), their original drummer quit, they faced a skirmish with the law, and the group's manager had to quit because of ill health.

That's all behind Blue Rodeo now, though, as they face 1991 with renewed vigor and confidence. "This is an exciting time that feels like a new beginning," claims singer/songwriter Greg Keelor. "We have a

new record, new management [American heavyweight Danny Goldberg], and a new label in the States [East/West]."

Already scoring rave reviews and strong sales in Canada, the new album, *Casino* (their third), is the group's best yet. Thanks to producer Pete Anderson (Michelle Shocked, Dwight Yoakam), Blue Rodeo's occasionally sprawlily eclectic sound has been reined in for what is a very compact, coherent record.

"Pete's a very concise arranger," explains Jim Cuddy, the band's other singer/songwriter. "It'd have been impossible to do a record like *Diamond Mine* with him. In fact, we asked Pete if he even knew that album. 'I couldn't get through it,' he said! He never belabors things. On *Casino*, we set out to find a single sound that would apply to different songs. We wanted to make a tight record, not a noodlin' loose ends record."

Cuddy and Keelor are justifiably proud of their vocal work on *Casino*. "There's a lot of dual singing there, and that was quite thrilling," stresses Jim.

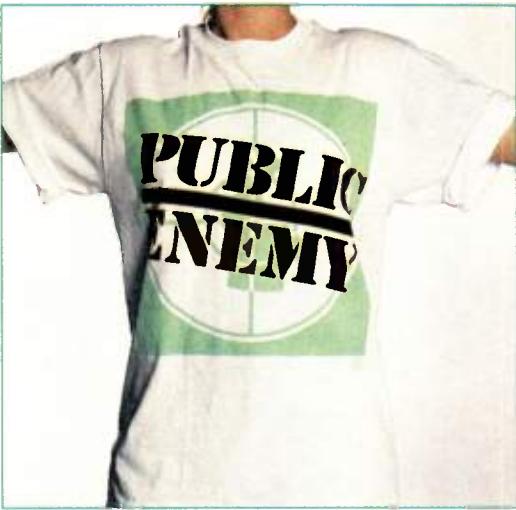
"The two vocals on 'What Am I Doing Here' [the lead-off single] are like a little reward for singing together for 15 years. Not many people can sing like that together, because they haven't taken the time to understand each other's vocal inflections."

If the dice roll the way this band deserves, *Casino* will be the record to rope Blue Rodeo a wider American audience. They already have a couple of influential fans in Meryl Streep and film director Mike Nichols, who recruited the group to back Meryl in a key scene in the acclaimed *Postcards From The Edge*.

"That's not something that happens every day," reminisces Keelor. "When you're involved in a band, you have certain fantasies of what you may do. 'Maybe Leonard Cohen will phone asking us to play on his next record!' Some of those have come true, like playing with The Band, but it was a real curveball to get a call saying Mike Nichols and Meryl Streep want you in a film!"

"And it was a kick to see the movie and see my big mug right behind Meryl's shoulders!"

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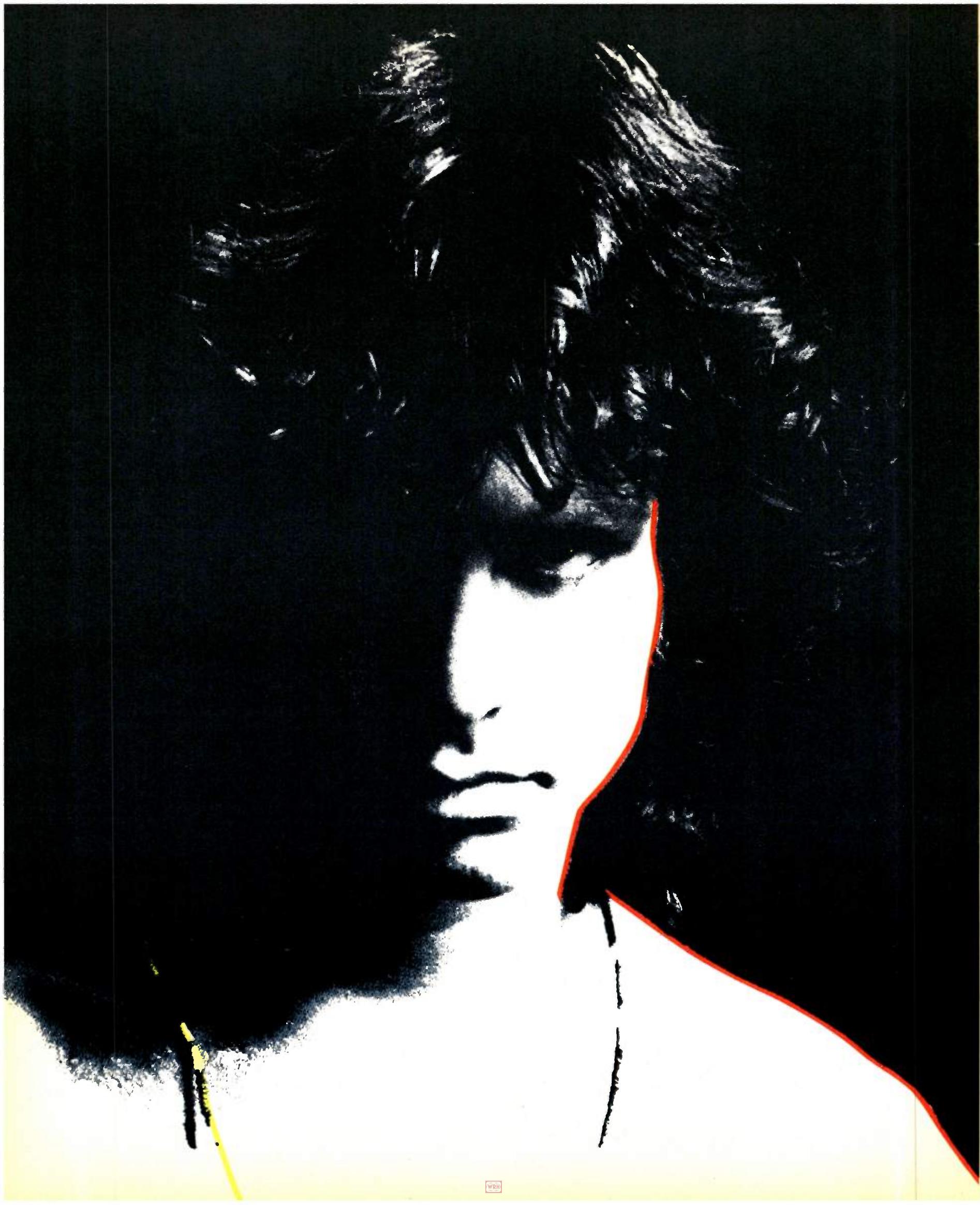
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**Director Oliver Stone says that Jim Morrison wasn't built to last, but his mythology certainly was: although he's been dead for 20 years now, the legend of the Lizard King lives on musically, socially and fantastically, at least in the mind of Stone, who's long-awaited movie *The Doors* presents Morrison as a hero on a mythological quest to find himself through drugs, sex and poetry.**

# MYTHOMANIA

**I**f Jim Morrison were alive today, would he be just another aging rocker with literary pretensions, perhaps embarking on a psychedelic reunion tour with the rest of The Doors and The Grateful Dead? Or would he be a half-mad recluse writing poetry and attracting the odd disciple to his one-room shack? Or, worse, would he sit in brain-fried semi-seclusion while his offspring formed their own Top 40 band?

We'll probably never know, because unless the "Jim lives" theorists are correct, Morrison died on July 3, 1971, of heart failure possibly resulting from an overdose. He was 27 years old, and though they now deny it, his group, The Doors, was all but finished — Jim had taken an indefinite hiatus from the band in order to move to Paris and concentrate on his poetry.

But in the wake of his death Morrison left behind a series of myths that endure rather persistently to this day — the rock 'n' roll rebel, the sensitive poet, the sexual athlete, the Lizard King — and a body of work that has influenced scores of musicians, some of whom weren't even born when their hero was buried and his Paris gravestone covered with its first layer of graffiti. Now, as the 20th anniversary of his death approaches, a whole industry based on the Morrison mythology is moving into gear: books, compilations, documentaries and, most eagerly awaited of all, a biopic directed by Oliver Stone.

A movie version of Morrison's life has been in the works for more than a decade, with stars from John Travolta to Jason Donovan coveting the lead role and a string of script-writers, directors and producers slated for involvement at different times. Now the movie has finally been completed, with longtime Doors fan Stone once again exorcising his Vietnam ghosts through film.

During the filming '60s casualties in Los Angeles were pinching themselves as areas of the city were transformed into their former incarnations. Veterans of the Sunset Strip scene did a double-take when the Whiskey-A-Go-Go, where The Doors once played as an in-house band, was restored to its Day-Glo glory after a decade of black paint and chrome fixtures. A lucky few even made it inside to see the Lizard King roll around onstage again. Meanwhile, the T-shirt stalls that usually clutter the Venice Beach boardwalk disappeared and were replaced by quaint bookstores and outdoor cafes, so convincingly real that residents of the area walked into them, only to be thrown out by laughing security guards.

Out in the Mojave Desert, the movie world's attention to detail didn't wash quite as well. In one cave that supposedly served as a backdrop for one of Morrison's legendary acid trips, ancient Indian paintings were treated to a touch-up job. Unfortunately, some poor sap made the mistake of his career and applied the wrong brand of paint — the kind that won't wash off. The desecration of the cave, a holy place for the Indians who lived in the Mojave Desert, caused an uproar.

But back in L.A. the tension between illusion and reality has finally snapped. It's 1967 again, and Jim Morrison is all over town. After being stuck in traffic behind trailer upon trailer carrying The Doors' logo, I eventually found myself with director Oliver Stone, watching a drunk and disorderly Morrison recording "Touch Me." Except it's not Morrison singing, it's actor Val Kilmer, doing a more than passable impersonation for the cameras.

"I see Jim very much as the hero who succeeded in life," says Stone during a break in the shooting. "The conventional way would be to see this movie as the rise and fall of a

BY SINDRE KARTVEDT



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rock star; I have chosen not to see it that way. I think that he got better as he got older. His work matured, even if there is no question that he abused himself and died for that reason. The albums *American Prayer* [actually released after Morrison's death] and *LA Woman* contained some of the best work he ever did, and I think in a sense he died for his poetry. He wore himself out, looking for himself."

And Stone, himself no stranger to chemical soul searching, is not afraid to tackle the dangers of glorifying that aspect of Morrison's character. "Death and life are interwoven," he says. "Jim knew it, because he lived on the edge. He was saying that in order to have a greater life, you have to have a strong awareness of death. It is the people who live without the acknowledgement of death who are in danger of destroying themselves spiritually. Jim lived on the edge between life and death; he straddled the fence, and his balls hurt."

important people in his life. Especially the women."

Meg Ryan plays Morrison's common-law wife, Pamela Courson, and of all the people involved in Stone's \$40-million movie, she seems to be the one most affected by the story's dark undertones. Maybe it's because she has the most substantial female role in any of Stone's films to date — or maybe it's because her character suffered the saddest fate in the backsweep of Jim Morrison's downfall.

"Pamela came to L.A. to find herself — and found Jim Morrison instead," says Ryan. "She got on what I think was the wrong ride, and the tough part is that she was such a willing victim. She kinda thought of him as a poet, and I think he loved her for that. He liked who he was in her eyes. She was home to him, even after all the other women."

"Immersing myself in what's sometimes a very ugly world isn't easy," she adds. "It's hard to shake that off. Some things stick in your mind; certain images from this movie you won't be able to forget easily. Pamela was the one who found him, and she spent the weekend after he died stoned out of her mind, listening to his records." Pamela herself died of a heroin overdose three years later.

"It's a very extreme film; a story about fame and excess, about people who acquire a very specific audience, people who really watch them and reflect them," Ryan says. She also raises one of the questions the movie will have to answer: whether or not creativity gives you a license to search and destroy — a license, as it were, to kill.

"Sadly, I think people have taken that privilege," she says. "I don't think it's deserved. But people take it. It's an interesting story to me, and it raises personal issues as well. Who gives a college course on how to deal with fame? It's a wild ride, man, a wild ride! You meet some of the wildest, wackiest, weirdest, most fun people — and at the same time there's some really dark forces at work."

This is the stuff of Oliver Stone's dreams: terror, fear and pity. "I see Jim as a hero," says the director, smiling, "a hero who sought to live out a mythological quest to find himself. He was always looking. He was never satisfied with anything — with success, with just one woman. He always wanted to go further — in his music, in his sexual life, in his chemical life, in his drinking life. He's a man who made a lot of money and never had a dime on him. Material things didn't matter to him. He had a poet's view of life."



VAL KILMER AS JIM MORRISON: A MORE THAN PASSABLE IMPERSONATION.

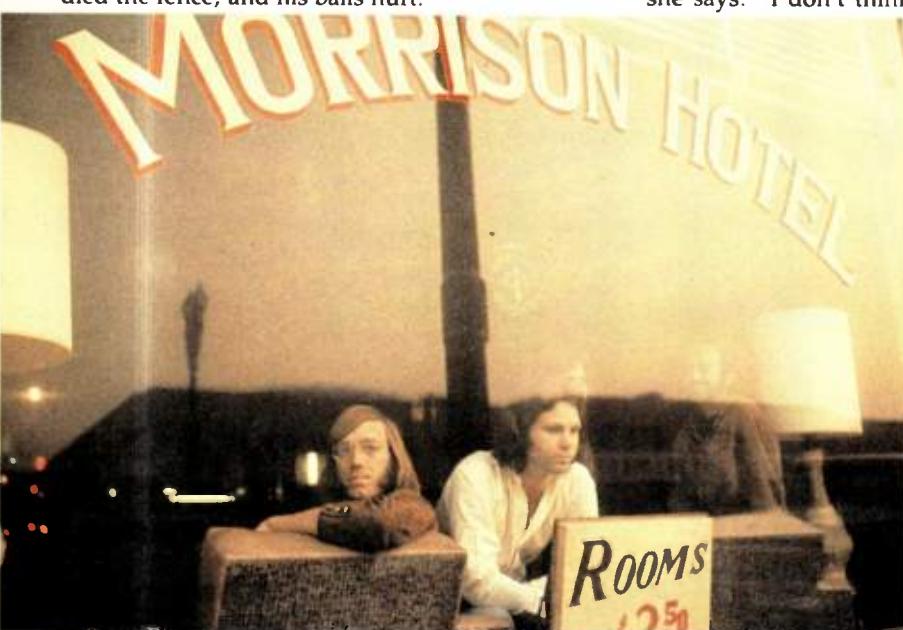
"I was in Vietnam when I first heard him, and his songs addressed me very directly. They were about love and death, very basic things. There was no frivolity, unlike a lot of the early rock music or lyrics. He was very primal. He was the first white man of my generation to really tune into the sensual aspect of being physical. Sensuality had disappeared in the '50s; except maybe for Elvis, you didn't see much of it. And after Jim's death, to be destructive became an attitude, as opposed to what Jim did — playing out a mythic drama where he was really wrestling his own death. He was fighting for his life. He walked out on stage, and it wasn't a performance. Mick Jagger does a performance, and a really good one, too, but with Jim you got the sense that any night could be his last concert. He wasn't built to last."

Standing in a perfectly recreated '60s recording studio, Stone, the supposed Last Angry Man in Hollywood, is smiling. A happy, approachable Oliver Stone is a new phenomenon indeed — he is not a man who's known for his relaxed attitude on set, and the actors in *Platoon* in particular were pushed to the limit. But this film is different.

"It's fun," says Kevin Dillon, a veteran of earlier Stone wars who is playing Doors drummer John Densmore in the current film. "I guess this one's easier for him to do than the others were. It's not so political or personal for him — or maybe he's getting ready to snap..."

"No, it's just that the pressure is off him now," says Frank Whaley, the standout in Stone's last box office hit, *Born On The Fourth Of July*, who plays The Doors' mild-mannered guitarist Robbie Krieger, who wrote some of their biggest hits, including "Light My Fire." "After two Oscars, he doesn't have to prove himself anymore."

"They tell me he's a little more relaxed on this one than on his earlier ones," says Kyle MacLachlan, best known as Agent Cooper in David Lynch's TV phenomenon *Twin Peaks*, and now a dead ringer for



THE ORIGINAL DOORS: THE MYTHOLOGY INDUSTRY MOVES INTO GEAR.

"Jim had a very eventful life in 27 years, so the question is what you leave out. He's like a Joseph Conrad character, like Lord Jim or Nostromo or Kurtz. You don't really know who he is. Everybody I talk to has a different version of Jim's life. I talked to about 30 or 40 people who knew him pretty well, and they all thought that they were one of the most

Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek. "I don't really want to imagine what they were like, but I know it's not an intense thing for him to do, like *Platoon* was. And I think he enjoys moving away from 'Oliver Stone movies' into something else. It's a joy to work for him; as a director he's intense, but respectful. He treats his actors like equals, and if he asks you a question it's because he wants an answer, not because he's testing you."

The reason Oliver Stone is smiling so much is because he has landed the job he always wanted: having the last word on Jim Morrison. "I never thought



KILMER: "HE CHOSE TO LOOK FOR THE SPIRITUAL THROUGH THE PHYSICAL."

it would be me," he says. "I heard about this project in the late '70s, and as a screenwriter it was my biggest dream. But nobody made the movie, which was good for me: if I had directed it in 1979 it wouldn't have had a chance.

"There was the parents' estate, his father's estate, The Doors' estate — and they were all fighting. But they just exhausted themselves after all those years, and I was in the right place at the right time, so they all settled on me to direct it.

"But I know there are going to be problems on this. At the end of the day, they're all going to attack me," he sighs. "They all signed waivers, but that's not going to stop them."

Stone shrugs and smiles again. He prefers to have his back against the wall; he thrives on conflicts and risks. His track record suggests a near genius ability at casting, and *The Doors* boasts cameos from people like Billy Idol, Crispin Glover and a multitude of '60s celebrities.

In what could be the most crucial casting move, Stone settled on Val Kilmer to take on one of the most sought-after male lead roles in years. "I saw Val in *Willow*, and I said, 'This is Jim Morrison,'" he

says. "But nobody could get the movie made at that time, and the question now was whether Val was too old for the part. We went all over town, looked at rock stars and actors, but Val just had it from day one. He understood Jim Morrison. He's as intelligent as Jim was, he has a sense of humor and irony, and he's one hell of a singer. I think this is it for him. If he's going to make it, it's going to be with this picture."

Kilmer greets visitors to his trailer dressed in a black shirt and black leather pants. With his flowing dark curls, outstanding cheekbones and the gold belt Morrison favored, the resemblance to his character is more than uncanny — it's creepy. So are the reports that have flourished on the L.A. gossip circuit — that Kilmer is going overboard, he thinks he is Jim Morrison, he has it written into his contract that everybody has to address him a Jim. The truth is, however, that he has no apparent difficulties in responding to Val.

"All my friends were concerned for me when I got the part," he admits. "For me it's been exactly the opposite — I've never been healthier, and I'm much more religious than I was when I started doing this. I get to act out all the horrors and pressures of fame, and some of the things that I worry about in my own life are purged.

"Morrison was really out there," he continues. "He chose to look for the spiritual through the physical, like Rimbaud and Kerouac. He really believed that line of Blake's: 'The path of excess leads to the tower of wisdom,' something like that. Those were his heroes, and you can look at it like they had a defeatist attitude or were grotesquely self-indulgent, or that it enabled them to have the art. But personally I don't believe that — I don't believe you have to be all that indulgent.

"It's a question that you can't answer for somebody else, you know. You see art that's created by people who are killing themselves making it, and I always wonder how it would turn out if they weren't doing that. Their justification for doing it is that it's for this thing, this painting or whatever. I always wonder if it couldn't be more without all that.

"Part of Jim Morrison's problem was that he was just doing what everybody else did at the time, and it killed him. I think if he'd lived now, he'd live differently. I think he even said that in one of his last interviews — that if he'd had to do it all over again, he wouldn't have. Even if he was able to create this myth out of his own life.



BACK TO THE '60S: VETERANS WERE PINCHING THEMSELVES.

"I think he had absolutely no discipline," Kilmer adds. "He came from a military family — his father rose quite high in the navy — so he was as undisciplined as he could be. It was a very clear choice that he made. He took hundreds and hundreds of acid trips, and real strong stock enabled him to do it. It's a high, like driving racing cars, or flying airplanes. You wake up thinking, 'I didn't die today.' So you go running for it, chasing that feeling of being alive, the sensation.

And in the end, after six years of trying, he got what he wanted — he wanted to kill himself, and he did." **ME**



KILMER WITH MEG RYAN: "ALL MY FRIENDS WERE CONCERNED FOR ME."

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# SOUND CHECK

## SPECIAL GENERATION

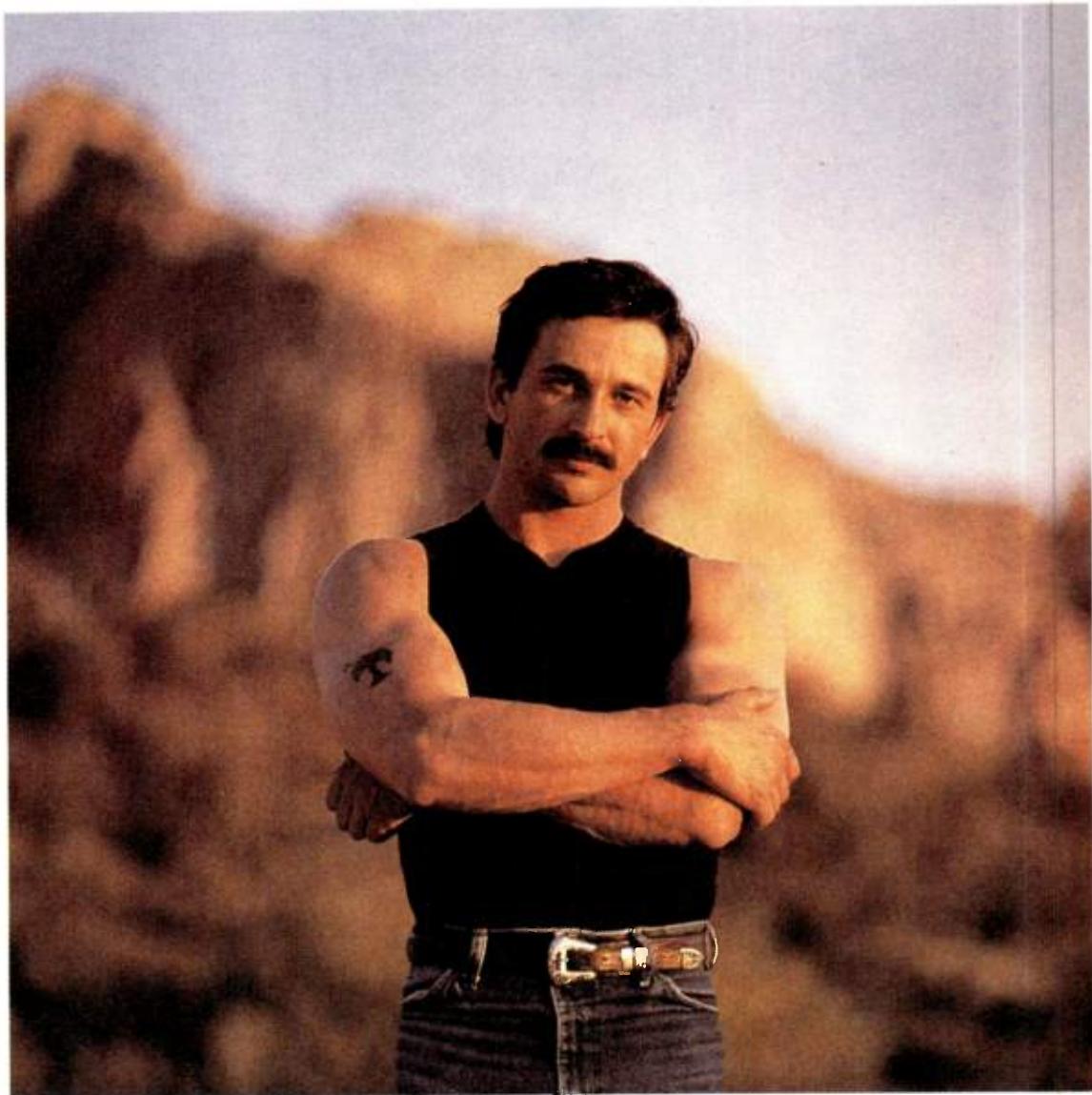
Although *Take It To The Floor* is the first release for the song and dance quintet Special Generation, their distinctive harmonies and dramatic vocal arrangements should already be familiar to almost everybody. As guest stars on MC Hammer's multi-million-selling album and sold-out tour, Charles, Maurice, Maquet, Chip and Ken (all natives of St. Petersburg, Florida) have already introduced themselves to America. *Take It* is the first album on Hammer's Bust It records, and it highlights the fact that all five singers have a bass to falsetto range that enables them to trade lead vocals repeatedly throughout their songs.

## ► AARON TIPPIN

Traditional values and a return to roots have been the prevailing trends among Johnny-come-lately country stars of late, but 32-year-old Aaron Tippin comes by his devotion to hillbilly and honky-tonk music honestly. Born among South Carolina's Appalachian Mountains, Tippin had his pilot's license at 15 and was flying commercial aircraft throughout the South by the time he was 20. Initially he was performing in bluegrass and country bands as a sideline, but when the bottom fell out of the aviation business (and his marriage ended in divorce), Tippin moved to Nashville and became a house songwriter for Acuff-Rose Publishing. After four years of honing his craft Tippin makes his recording debut with *You've Got To Stand For Something*. As *Billboard* magazine states: "Tippin's vocals are authentic country pushed to the extreme."

## JOHN SERRIE

Many people might reach for the stars, but composer John Serrie lives among them. For more than a dozen years he's written music for the world's leading planetariums (in collaboration with such stars as Charlton Heston, Vincent Price and Leonard Nimoy) with his evocative, inspiring, exotic and romantic instrumental music. More recently Serrie's gotten a little more down to earth by recording albums of his seamless compositions that personalize his often epic work. Serrie's first LP, *And The Stars Go With You*, was a classic journey across the universe. The next, *Flightpath*, captured the essence of high speed aerial manoeuvres, gliding and deep space travel. Now, with *Tingri*, Serrie has touched down altogether, applying his skills with melody and effects to construct a romantic fantasy world beyond time and space.



## SUSAN J. PAUL

While many performers' careers end up in the trash can, Susan J. Paul can claim hers began there. One day her father was returning home from his job in Long Beach, California's shipyards when he spotted a discarded, broken guitar in a garbage bin. Assuming one of his six children might want to pick up the instrument, he salvaged the axe. Susan, as you might have guessed, was the lucky one. Almost 10 years later, Susan J. Paul presents her debut album as a singer/songwriter. *Human Factor* offers all the warmth, compassion and romance its name implies and features guest artists Michael Ruff (Ricki Lee Jones, David Sanborn) on keyboards, James Harrah (Madonna, Jane Child) on guitar and background vocalist Olivia Foster (Diana Ross, Teddy Pendergrass).

## FIREHOUSE

It's rare in the highly competitive world of rock 'n' roll that one band should give another a helping hand on the way up, but Firehouse's vocalist C.J. Snare and guitarist Bill Leverty have benefited from the support and commitment of two major acts — Slaughter and Bon Jovi. Back in September '88 the pair, along with drummer Michael Foster and bassist Perry Richardson, recorded a 10-song demo with Mark Slaughter and Dana Sturm at the helm. Back then they were called White Heat. The demo so impressed Jon Bon Jovi that he invited the boys on the road with him to observe first hand the world they aspired to. "We didn't get signed directly because of Jon Bon Jovi," Foster offers, "but it was Jon who really lit the fire under our butts." The heat must have gotten pretty intense because pretty soon the band changed its name to Firehouse (also the name of their debut album) and inked a major deal with Epic.

## ANOTHER BAD CREATION

As if the New Edition stable of artists isn't already busy enough, N.E. and Bell Biv DeVoe stalwart Michael Bivins is now fostering the career of a newer, younger edition of his two groups — Another Bad Creation. Comprising five singer/dancers ranging in age from seven to 12 (Lil' Dave, Marc, Red, Chris and Ro-Ro) and their one-man posse, 11-year-old General "G.A." Austin, A.B.C. promises to deliver the same kind of streetwise funk and R&B smoothness that is the hallmark of everything that comes from the N.E./BBD creative wellspring. Bivins stumbled over the group last year when they were in L.A. making demos and immediately recognized their talent. On record they're hard, but onstage they're just plain bad!

**DRIVIN'N'CRYIN'**

Although *Fly Me Courageous* is Drivin'N'Cryin's fourth album, it's the first one written and recorded with the band's current lineup. Guitarist/vocalist Kevn Kinney and bassist Tim Nielsen were founding members of the Atlanta-based band in 1985 and recorded *Scarred But Smarter*. A switch in drummers found Jeff Sullivan rounding out the trio in time to record *Whisper Tames The Lion* in '88. Though he played on *Mystery Road* the following year, the songs written on that set predated guitarist Buren Fowler's admission into the fold. On *Fly Me Courageous* the full impact of one of the tightest, hardest-rocking live bands around is at last fully realized.

**BERNIE WORRELL**

All it should take is a little name dropping to hip you to one of the most influential, innovative and illustrious keyboardists of the rock era. A child prodigy who performed his first concert at the age of four and played Mozart concertos with the Washington Symphony Orchestra at 10, Worrell was a founding member of the legendary outfit Parliament-Funkadelic and has played with everyone from The Rolling Stones and The Pretenders to Talking Heads and Fela Kuti. Guest stars on Worrell's latest solo release, *Funk Of Ages*, include Herbie Hancock, Sly & Robbie and three generations of guitar godheads — Keith Richards, Chris Spedding and Vernon Reid.

**BLUE RODEO**

For years Blue Rodeo has been lauded as Canada's best band, and with the release of *Casino*, the group hopes to become winners at the crap shoot that is American rock. With the unusual hook of two talented singer-songwriter/guitarists (lifelong friends Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor) at its core, Blue Rodeo offers an unpredictable blend of passionate rock with subtle Band-like shadings of '60s-era pop, jazz (primarily through the inspired noodling of keyboardist Bobby Wiseman) and country. Their two previous LPs, *Outskirts* and *Diamond Mine*, were both double-platinum hits in the Great White North and garnered ecstatic critical praise south of the 49th parallel. *Casino*, with Pete Anderson (Dwight Yoakam, Michelle Shocked) at the helm, is bound to be their breakthrough release in the U.S.

**► STEELHEART**

As its name implies, there is a human, emotional core to the hard-edged, metal that Steelheart purveys. Though it's taken this Connecticut-based five-piece machine years to finally sign a recording contract — an all too familiar situation in the hard rock world — Steelheart managed to maintain a sense of freshness and spontaneity on their otherwise tight-as-a-drum self-titled debut album. With Mike "The Kid" Matijevic on vocals, Chris Risola and Frank DiCostanzo on guitars, bassist Jimmy Ward and drummer John Fowler, the music on *Steelheart* soars from the pummeling thunder of "Gimme Gimme" and "Eileen" to the passionate ballad "Never Let You Go."



**THE SAMPLES** Using the exotic flavoring of reggae rhythms to spice up their compelling pop melodies, The Samples' music is most often and accurately compared to the work of The Police and Sting. A strong sense of social/environmental responsibility colors the music on the Colorado-based quintet's eponymous debut album, which includes a mournful ode to slaughtered elephants, "African Ivory," and an impassioned response to deadly offshore oil spills called "Close To The Fires." But there's humor and romance on *The Samples* as well. As singer/guitarist Sean Kelly says, "When people start to tag us as singing about certain subjects or sounding a certain way, they'll be surprised that we don't. If this album were pie, it would represent just one slice."

**▲ MARCIA BALL, LOU ANN BARTON AND ANGELA STREHLI**

Known about Austin, Texas, as "the girls," Marcia Ball, Lou Ann Barton and Angela Strehli have released nine albums among them, but *Dreams Come True* is the first LP they've recorded together. All three women have established careers and varied styles, but five years ago, when they first joined forces with songwriter/bassist Sarah Brown to cut two tracks, they planted the seed that has only just blossomed. As Brown says, "I don't think there's a woman in the world who hasn't had a little fantasy about being in a girl group." What's different about these girls' dreams is, of course, they come true.





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# exposed

## REGIONAL REPORTS

### CANADA

We try and run an upbeat, gloom-free column here, but these recessionary times are now being reflected in an alarming rash of club closings across the country.

Out in St. John's, Newfoundland, the popular Bar None shut up shop, while Toronto lost three large music clubs: Grace-land, Entex and The Diamond, in the space of a month. The Diamond will be especially missed, as it had long been the city's premiere showcase venue for international and top Canadian acts. Personal thanks and best wishes to Pat, Randy, and Sharon. Picking up the slack with some impressive bookings are Superstars and newcomer The Opera House.

There's certainly been no shrinkage in the local talent pool, however. Celebrating record releases on the same wintry night recently were transplanted Anglo duo The Book-room and roots-rocker Jack De Keyzer. The former's *Fame And Fortune* is melodic pop, while *Hard Working Man* is an apt title for singer/guitarist De Keyzer, a long-undervalued talent.

Out now on Intrepid and worthy of attention are *Melville*, the latest from the Rheostatics, and a re-sequenced *Spin*, the acclaimed recent outing from *Cottage Industry*. The same dynamic label has just released the debut album from singer/performance artist Mervyn Cadell. Her innovative style has won friends on the Queen Street scene over the past couple of years, and a New Music Seminar performance proved she is ready for prime time.

Hottest Toronto club show of the month was Blue Rodeo's "surprise" gig at their favorite haunt, The Horseshoe, for which U.S. label types were flown in. Seen mingling

with the weasels at the bar was David Lee Roth, but most of us were more enthralled by the band than the antics of an aging lounge lizard. Word filtering in from the West pegged the Rodeo shows there as sold-out triumphs.

News from the camp of The Pursuit Of

Happiness, Canada's coolest pop band, is that Moe and the gang have been displaying their wares for interested U.S. record execs. One excited, admittedly biased Canadian label rep claims that of eight new TPOH songs he's heard, six are of "I'm An Adult Now" quality. Can't wait to check

out the validity of that claim.

Indie Notes: Getting good airplay for their faithful remake of the classic "Warm Leatherette" is Toronto electro-ensemble **Prayer Tower**. **Beam 103** is a T.O. studio/label co-operative that has just released an impressive CD compilation, *Writings On The Wall*. The 12 acts featured cover the gamut from reggae to industrial. *Inside And Out* is the promising debut tape from Toronto rockers **The Damn Band**.

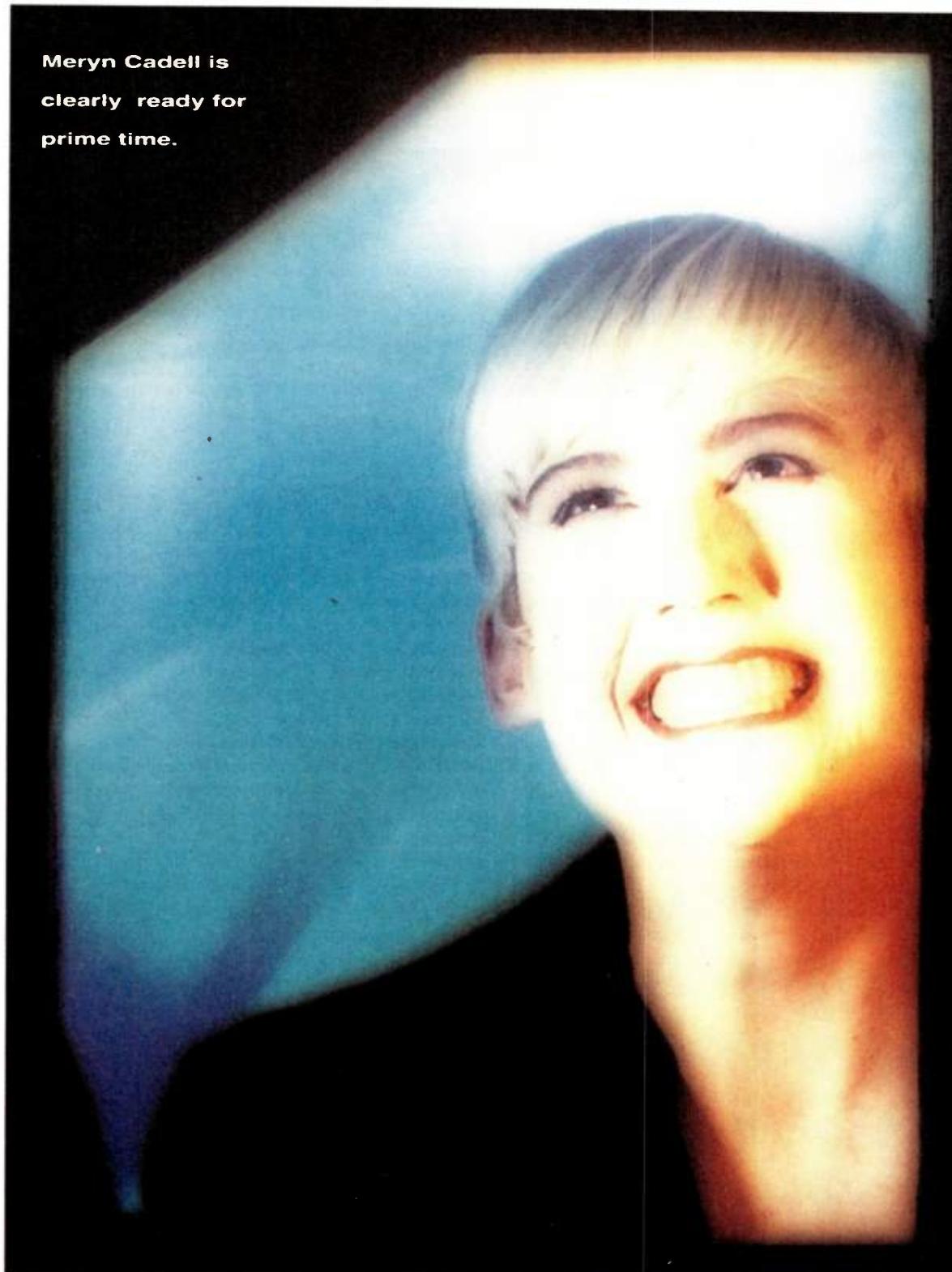
Vancouver noise merchants **Numb** have their second full album, *Christmeister*, out now on Onslot Music. It has already gained a degree of infamy in Europe, where it was released on New Rose. New vocalist **Blair Dobson** came up with a great quote about what **Numb** means to him: "It's a way of getting out this angst I feel from being stepped on and a vehement hate for my ex-wife!"

Some talented newcomers are making a splash in local folk and jazz circles. **Arlene Bishop** has a residency at the Cabana (often in tandem with **Jittery** partner **Blair Packham**), singer/songwriter **Kyp Harness** recently finished a tape with **Bobby Wiseman**, and composer/musician **Daniel Janke** is getting good reviews for his *Big Dance* album, featuring his work on the kora, an African string instrument.

Finally, sad news this past month came with the death (heart attack, at 48) of rock 'n' roll pianist **Stan Szelest**. Although he was a Buffalo native, Stan became a fixture on the Canadian scene via stints with **Ronnie Hawkins** and **Levon Helm**, among others. He played on, and is seen in the video for, the Northern Pikes hit, "She Ain't Pretty."

**Kerry Doole**

Mervyn Cadell is  
clearly ready for  
prime time.



# exposed

REGIONAL REPORTS

## LOS ANGELES

The local music cognoscenti were out in full force at the Club Lingerie for the appearance of Mr. Bungle, the Northern California funk-punk progressive ensemble fronted by Faith No More lead vocalist Mike Patton. The conceptual outfit is in the tradition of theatrical Bay Area lunatics like The Tubes. Patton came onstage wearing a "Leatherface" mask, while the rest of the group wore a variety of wacky costumes and essayed a cartoon-like melange of ska, carnival music and riffs.

Bungle started off covering the theme from the old TV show *Welcome Back Kotter*, both in English and Spanish, but the set's highlight was a note-perfect medley of Elton John's "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me," Queen's "We Are The Champions" and Mötley Crüe's "Home Sweet Home." Slash Records, home of Patton's other band, had just inked the group, but that didn't deter a bevy of other A&R ears from sniffing it out for themselves.

The China Club continues to draw a who's who of superstar talent to its Thursday night jams. Onetime Herman's Hermit Peter Noone took the stage for versions of "Mrs. Brown You've Got A Lovely Daughter" and "I'm Henry VIII, I Am," as well as some classics such as The Who's "My

Generation" and Manfred Mann's "Do Wah Diddy," while the following week, Billy Idol played an impromptu 35-minute set with house band The Mighty Hornets before being joined by Stray Cat pals Brian Setzer and Slim Jim Phantom, as well as Tin Machine's Tony Sales.

Original Byrds vocalist and songwriter Gene Clark, who founded the band as a duo with Roger McGuinn, told *Music Express* that he was delighted at the group's recent induction into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame.

Fellow Byrds David Crosby, Michael Clarke and Chris Hillman hadn't been on one stage together for 18 years, and Gene viewed the current acclaim as an opportunity to finally put their stormy past behind them. "It's silly for us to have any kind of animosity after a glorious event like this," he said. As for why he left the group in the first place, Clark admits there were hard feelings because he wrote most of the songs, including "I'll Feel A Whole Lot Better" and "Eight Miles High," on which he shared credit with McGuinn and Crosby. "I don't think the guys realized what that meant in terms of record sales," he says. "When the checks started coming in and I was head and shoulders above the rest, it

didn't sit very well with them."

Clark has "12 unreleased albums in the can" and is currently working with Texane lead singer Carla Olsen on another duet LP. He's flattered to hear how much current groups have been influenced by The Byrds' sound. As for how he's survived all these years, Clark says, "That's life. You can't let it eat you up. I've seen people destroy themselves. I just do the music I do. I still have a strong following in Europe." And of course those publishing royalties don't hurt.

Seminal New York new wave band Television might be re-forming. Guitarists Tom Verlaine and Richard Lloyd, along with bassist Fred Smith and drummer Billy Ficca, have played together informally. The group was one of the original CBGB's bands, a contemporary of The Ramones, Patti Smith, Talking Heads and Blondie.

Speaking of reunions, L.A. punk rockers X got together for end-

of-the-year shows at the Palladium and Ventura Theater, with exs John Doe and Exene Cervenka essaying those classic harmonies once again.

Virgin ruler Richard Branson took off on a 6,200-mile hot air balloon flight across the Pacific, from Japan to the West Coast of the U.S., on the eve of the Persian Gulf War, trying to break the trans-Atlantic record he set three years ago. Meanwhile, Michael Jackson cancelled his own planned 10-day expedition to the African nations of Gabon, Tanzania and the Ivory Coast because of the conflict.

**Roy Trakin**



**Tom Verlaine: the return of Television?**

## NEW YORK

For all those who attended the sixth annual Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame induction dinner at the Waldorf Astoria, this year's event will always hold a special significance. Like those who will forever remember where they were when they heard that President Kennedy was shot, anyone at the dinner will recall it as the night the U.S. started bombing Iraq.

The pre-dinner cocktail hour had barely begun when news swept the ballroom that the war had begun. Needless to say, it set a sombre tone for what is frequently the most festive occasion on the New York rock 'n' roll calendar.

Rhythm and blues and soul music took centre stage this year, with LaVern Baker, John Lee Hooker, The Impressions, Wilson Pickett, Jimmy Reed and Ike And

Tina Turner all honored. Surprisingly, The Byrds were the only straight rock 'n' roll act to be inducted, heralding the late-'60s folk rock/psychedelic sound that will likely dominate for the next few years.

As usual, the audience was star-studded, with Bruce Springsteen, Sting, ZZ Top, Bonnie Raitt, Tracy Chapman, Lou Reed, Peter Wolf, Bobby Brown, Robert Cray, Jackson Browne, Don Henley, Chaka Khan, John Fogerty and New Kids On The Block among the attendees.

ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons was happy to point out that he "once played with Jimmy Reed for about a month," while bandmate Dusty Hill summed up Reed's lasting contributions by saying, "He characterized the complexities of rock 'n' roll: one melody, one beat." Robert Cray was enthusiastic in

talking about Howlin' Wolf, who received an award for his "early influence" on the development of rock. "Howlin' Wolf was one of the main men who made the big fusion between the country blues and the straight-ahead blues," Cray said. "I learned a lot from him. No rules, which meant no rhyming. It's important for a man to get out what he's talking about without worrying about rhyming."

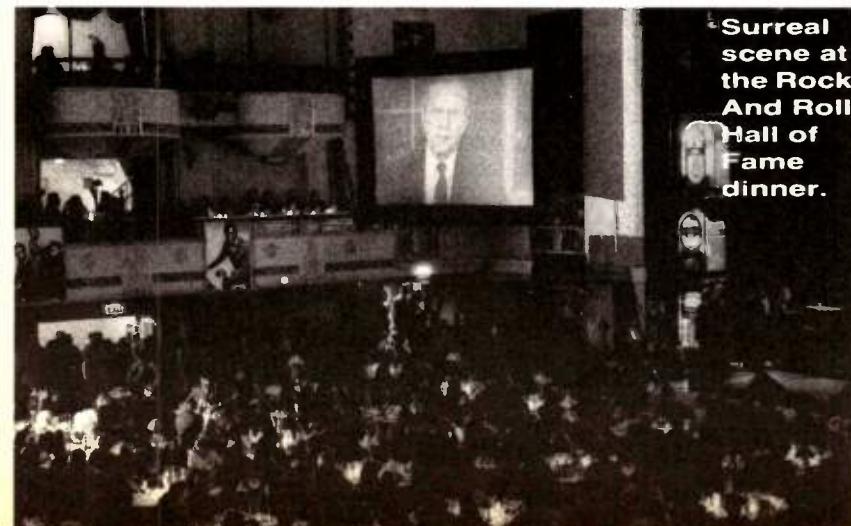
Both Bobby Brown and Chaka Khan appeared to have ascribed to the Madonna school of public speaking, offering remarks that were less than knowledgeable about their respective honorees, Wilson Pickett and LaVern Baker. Brown, who said, "It's an honor to be here inducting anybody — I'm so young," was more articulate about his own forthcoming album, produced by Teddy Riley and L.A. And Babyface, which is due sometime in mid-year.

David Crosby, who was wheelchair-bound for most of the evening — he's still recovering from a motorcycle accident that happened several months ago — seemed genuinely excited that his first group, The Byrds, was being honored. "It's nice to be involved with people that I grew up with and worshipped," he said. "It surprises me now how much of an impact we had. We took some good, different elements and put them together, but I don't think we knew we were doing that at the time."

Phil Spector gave a hilarious account of working with no-show honorees Ike And Tina Turner — Ike's still in jail, and Tina sent her regrets a month in advance — while Bonnie Raitt offered what was perhaps the most eloquent induction speech in the Hall's short history for her friend and mentor John Lee Hooker. Quincy Jones honored the late producer and Atlantic Records co-founder Nesuhi Ertegun with what amounted to the most ramshackle presentation of the night. During his 20-minute ramble, Jones seemed to name or attempt to name every jazz artist who ever recorded for the label. That prompted Don Henley, who inducted The Byrds and who followed Jones, to remark, "As Dexter Gordon said in *Round Midnight*, I'll have whatever he had."

The all-star jam was more focused and musically satisfying than those of previous years. The Byrds reunited for a particularly poignant rendition of "Turn Turn Turn," with a little help from Jackson Browne and Don Henley, while John Fogerty and Bruce Springsteen traded vocals on a lively version of Wilson Pickett's "Mustang Sally." Fogerty and Chaka Khan performed Fogerty's own "Proud Mary" in the style of Ike and Tina, and Raitt and Hooker proved that the blues are alive and well with a heartfelt "I'm In The Mood."

**Tina Clarke**



The war in the Gulf has already had a dramatic effect on rock 'n' roll in Britain. We're not talking of scared Yankees too chicken to climb into an airplane at present (we can live with the cancellation of Donny Osmond's London concert, believe me!), but the insidious censorship of artist names and song titles deemed "likely to cause offence" during the current crisis.

The British Broadcasting Corporation — which controls nationwide Radio 1 and the vital weekly TV chart show *Top Of The Pops* — has listed over 50 songs in this category. Some of them are ludicrous choices, like Elton John's "Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting," "Something In The Air Tonight" by Phil Collins and even The Bangles' "Walk Like An Egyptian"! Perhaps more understandable choices are "Killing An Arab" by The Cure and "Rock The Casbah" by The Clash.

Other acts have decided to change their names in order to avoid potential controversy — for instance, hip hop artist **Bomb The Bass** has now dropped that name (under which he's already scored several hit records) and his latest single is credited to his real name, **Tim Simenon**. And Queen has re-edited the video for its No. 1 single "Innuendo" to cut out several scenes taken from World War II footage. Perhaps the most ridiculous aspect of this over-sensitive act by the BBC is that one of John Lennon's classic tracks is also on the "temporarily banned" list. Its title? "Give Peace A Chance."

One act that claims to have suffered from radio censorship in a different form is leading metal outfit **Iron Maiden**, whose "Bring Your Daughter To The Slaughter" single vaulted straight to No. 1 in the charts immediately after Christmas, becoming the first ever heavy metal No. 1 single. In a brilliant marketing coup, the band released the single in several different formats (thus enticing fans to buy copies of each format) to coincide with Maiden's U.K. tour with **Anthrax**.

However, even when it was at No. 1, "Bring Your Daughter..." (taken from the recent film *Nightmare On Elm Street 5*) received virtually no radio play at all. Was this because radio stations have been scared off

by the Judas Priest trial, in which that band was accused of hiding Satanic messages on its album? "Nobody puts messages on their records," insists Maiden vocalist Bruce Dickinson. "It's impossible to do it with compact discs anyway. The only thing I know about backwards masking is that if you play your records backwards, you fuck up your stylus!"

Few visiting American hard rock bands have been as well received as **Cinderella**, maybe because their hard-edged songs owe more than a little to early **Rolling Stones**. At their Hammersmith Odeon show, for instance, they finished with their own "Tumbling Dice" soundalike, "Shelter Me," and then encored with a tough 'n' dirty version of "Brown Sugar."

Seen dancing the night away to a brief set by **Electronic** at Manchester's The Ha- cienda were members of **New Order**, **In- spiral Carpets**, **A Certain Ratio**, **Revenge**, **Swing Out Sister** and, of course, **Happy Mondays**. Speaking of which, singer **Shaun Ryder** was voted 'Man Of The Year' by **Penthouse**, and then posed naked for the mag with three topless models.

And speaking of unlikely pairings, how about **Keren Woodward** of **Bananarama** and former **Wham!** star (but solo flop) **Andrew Ridgely**, recently seen about town generally acting as lovers do?

The big gathering of 1991 so far has been The Great British Music Weekend at Wembley, featuring The Cure, Happy Mondays, **Billy Bragg** and **Ozzy Osbourne** as

well as **Wolfsbane**, **Ride**, **Northside**, **Jesus Jones** and **Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine** (a duo, in case you were wondering). Designed to promote the forthcoming Brits awards, the three-night event seemed like a desperate attempt to introduce an element of the new and adventurous to a tired old format. Notable by their absence were superstars such as **Elton John**, **Eric Clapton** and **Phil Collins**, who will undoubtedly win awards anyway.

Finally, where do they get these names from? The latest new bands playing the London club scene include the exotically named **Working With Tomatoes**, **Fishmonkeyman**, **Smirking Hyenas**, **Brooklyn Dogs** and **Wibbly Wobbly World**. **Johnny Waller/S.I.N.**

**The BBC has banned everything from "Give Peace A Chance" to — believe it or not — The Bangles' "Walk Like An Egyptian."**



L I S T E N T O



Photo by John Loper

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8 ATLANTA • THE OMNI  
9 ORLANDO • ORLANDO ARENA  
11 MIAMI • MIAMI ARENA  
12 TAMPA • THE SUNDOME  
14 ALBANY • ALBANY CIVIC CENTER  
15 JACKSONVILLE • CIVIC COLISEUM  
16 SAVANNAH • CIVIC CENTER  
17 GREENVILLE • MEMORIAL COLISEUM  
19 COLUMBIA • CAROLINA COLISEUM  
20 JOHNSON CITY • FREEDOM HALL  
2 CHATTANOOGA • UTC ARENA  
23 GREENSBORO • GREENSBORO COLISEUM  
24 CHARLOTTE • CHARLOTTE COLISEUM  
26 ROANOKE • ROANOKE CIVIC CENTER  
27 RICHMOND • RICHMOND COLISEUM  
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31 FAIRFAX • PATRIOT CENTER



PATTY LOVELESS

**PATTY LOVELESS**  
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9 BRISTOL • VIKING HALL  
10 RICHMOND • RICHMOND COLISEUM  
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21 FT.MYERS • LEE CIVIC CENTER  
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23 ORLANDO • ORANGE CO. CIVIC CTR.  
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MAR.1 COLUMBIA • HEARNES CENTER  
2 ST.LOUIS • ST.LOUIS ARENA  
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5 OKLAHOMA CITY • MYRIAD CENTER ARENA  
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17 JACKSONVILLE • MEMORIAL COLISEUM  
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23 BIRMINGHAM • BIRM.JEFFERSON COLISEUM  
24 LAFAYETTE • CAJUNDOME  
26 BLOOMINGTON • MET CENTER ARENA  
28 MURFREESBORO • CHARLES MURPHEY CENTER  
29 CHAPEL HILL • DEAN SMITH CENTER  
30 CINCINNATI • RIVERFRONT COLISEUM  
31 ATLANTA • THE OMNI

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3 ST.PAUL • WORLD THEATRE  
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16 ANNAPOLIS • MARYLAND HALL  
17-19 RICHMOND • CARPENTER CENTER  
22-23 LAS VEGAS • SANDS HOTEL

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MAR.16 RENO • RENO JAZZ FESTIVAL  
17 SACRAMENTO • HOLIDAY INN  
21 PASADENA • AMBASSADOR AUDITORIUM  
22 SAN FRANCISCO • SLIM'S  
24 CAMBRIDGE • CHARLES HOTEL  
25 NASHVILLE • LANGFORD AUDITORIUM  
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31 GREENSBORO • GREENSBORO COLISEUM

**DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES**  
MAR.1 DETROIT • FOX THEATRE  
2 EVANSVILLE • CARSON CENTER  
3 COLUMBUS • PALACE THEATRE  
8 CHICAGO • RIVIERA THEATRE  
11 MILWAUKEE • RIVERSIDE THEATRE  
12 MINNEAPOLIS • ORPHEUM THEATRE  
14 AMES • TBA

Left: Beth Gwynn/Retna ; Centre:Anjelica Chaplin ; Right: Fin Costello/Retna



BON JOVI



15 ST.LOUIS • AMERICAN THEATRE  
16 KANSAS CITY • MEMORIAL HALL  
19 PORTLAND • ARLENE SCHNITZER AUD.  
20 SEATTLE • PARAMOUNT THEATRE  
22 SAN FRANCISCO • THE WARFIELD  
25-27 LOS ANGELES • WILTERN THEATRE

**HIGHWAY 101**  
MAR.8 DAYTON • HARA ARENA  
10 RICHMOND • RICHMOND COLISEUM  
20 ORLANDO • CHURCH ST. STATION  
21 SMYRNA • THE BUCKBOARD  
24 ST.PETERSBURG • BAYFRONT AREA  
29 AUSTIN • LIVESTOCK AREA

**NELSON**  
MAR.1 PEORIA • CIVIC CENTER  
THEATRE  
2 INDIANAPOLIS • MURAT THEATRE  
3 CLEVELAND • PALACE THEATRE  
5 KALAMAZOO • STATE THEATRE  
6 ROYAL OAK • ROYAL OAK MUSIC TH.  
8 PITTSBURGH • SYRIA MOSQUE  
9 NEW YORK • BEACON THEATRE  
10 WASHINGTON • LISNER  
AUDITORIUM  
11 ERIE • WARNER THEATRE  
14 NEW HAVEN • PALACE THEATRE  
15 BOSTON • CITI  
16 PHILADELPHIA • TOWER THEATRE  
17 WILKES-BARRE • FM KIRBY  
CENTER  
20-21 ATLANTA • CENTER STAGE  
22 ORLANDO • TUPPERWARE AUD.  
23 SUNRISE • SUNRISE MUSIC  
THEATRE



BELL BIV DEVOE

24 TAMPA • PER. ARTS CTR.  
26 PELHAM • OAK MTN. THEATRE  
27 NEW ORLEANS • SAENGER THEATRE  
28 HOUSTON • TOWER THEATRE  
29 DALLAS • DALLAS CONVENTION CENTER  
30 OKLAHOMA CITY • CIVIC CENTER

**COLIN JAMES**  
MAR.6 WINNIPEG • WALKER THEATRE  
7 BRANDON • MANITOBA ROOM  
8 REGINA • CENTER OF THE ARTS  
9 SASKATOON • CENTENNIAL AUD.  
11 LETHBRIDGE • LETHBRIDGE  
COLLEGE  
12 RED DEER • RED DEER COLLEGE  
14 FT. MCMURRAY • KEYANO THEATRE  
15-16 EDMONTON • UNIVERSITY OF  
ALBERTA  
17 CALGARY • JACK SINGER HALL  
20 VICTORIA • ROYAL THEATRE  
22-23 VANCOUVER • COMMODORE  
28 NANAIMO • CIVIC ARENA

**BAD CO. / DAMN YANKEES**  
MAR.1 RAPID CITY • RUSHMORE  
PLAZA  
3 BISMARCK • BISMARCK CIVIC CENTER  
5 BILLINGS • METRO PARK AREA  
7 SALT LAKE CITY • EXHIBITION HALL  
9 EUGENE • HULT CENTER  
11 CHENEY • EASTERN WASH. UNIV.  
12 SEATTLE • SEATTLE CTR. COLISEUM  
13 MEDFORD • EXPO CENTER  
14 PORTLAND • MEMORIAL COLISEUM  
15 VANCOUVER • PNE COLISEUM  
17 FAIRBANKS • CARLSON ARENA

18 ANCHORAGE • SULLIVAN ARENA  
20 WHEELING • CIVIC CENTER  
21 JOHNSTOWN • WAR MEMORIAL ARENA  
22 ERIE • ERIE CIVIC CENTER  
23 WILKES-BARRE • KINGSTON ARMORY



BAD CO.

24 AKRON • RHODES ARENA  
25 SYRACUSE • WAR MEMORIAL ARENA  
26 BUFFALO • MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM  
28 PORTLAND • CIVIC CENTER  
29 SPRINGFIELD • CIVIC CENTER



Was it live?



# ROCK 'N' ROCK



During the course of the nine-day Rock In Rio mega-festival, a gaggle of major rock stars overcame their fear of flying to descend upon the unsuspecting city of Rio, where they were seen stripping in front of fans, picking fights with each other, dodging naked Brazilians, covering TV commercial jingles, movie themes and '60s classics, hang gliding, visiting strip clubs, partying till sunrise and generally leaving chaos in their wake.

■ By Jeffrey Jolson-Colburn



"It feels like a modern Woodstock," Billy Idol said backstage at the recent Rock In Rio II festival, while Faith No More lead singer Mike Patton claimed he felt "like a god and an ant at the same time" after performing before 125,000 fans.



Like most artists at the exhaustive nine-day event, Patton was playing to the largest audience he had ever played to. A grand total of about 800,000 people turned out over the course of the mega-fest in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to see some of the world's top acts, including George Michael, Guns N'Roses, Prince, INXS, New Kids On The Block, Billy Idol, Run-D.M.C., Faith No More, Judas Priest, Deee-Lite, Lisa Stansfield,

a-Ha, Santana, Debbie Gibson, Joe Cocker, Megadeth, Queen-syche and more.

Over the course of the festival, a wild time was had by virtually all. George Michael practically shaved his head, Axl Rose stripped before 100,000 fans, Faith No More jumped off cliffs in hang gliders, Prince made his mark on the local club scene, Run-D.M.C. shot a video with the natives, New Kid Donnie Wahlberg almost got into a fist fight with one of Billy Idol's band members (who was wearing a

"New Kids Suck" T-shirt, a response to Donnie's "Drugs Suck" and "War Sucks" ones) and most

days everybody partied until the sun came up.



Certainly, Rio during the festival was a fan's paradise. Just by walking around the city's famous tourist attractions, it was possible to run into stars left and right. You might see George Michael lying out by the pool at the Copacabana Palace, Axl



Rose arguing with a concierge, Billy Idol at a sidewalk cafe, Megadeth buying sandals, Run-D.M.C. shooting a video atop the famous lookout point Sugarloaf Mountain and the New Kids visiting strip clubs and buying souvenirs from the beachfront stands.



It was not all fun and games, however. Artists and attendees alike became concerned after two terrorist bombs which police said were Gulf war-related went off in the Rio area, at a church and a synagogue. As well, four people died at the Maracana Stadium concert site over the course of Rock in Rio — one fan was crushed in a turnstile, one was stabbed, one was shot and one policeman shot another officer.



# RIO

## BABYLON

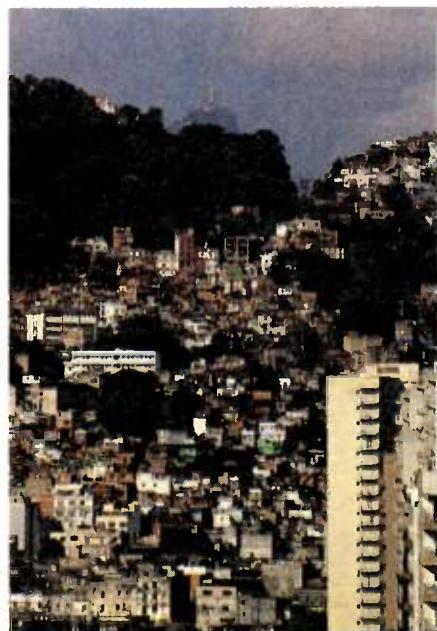
Inevitably, there were numerous unforeseeable snags in the event's operation. Robert Plant cancelled his appearance because of laryngitis, Happy

Mondays reportedly lost their gear and Snap could not play because some members got stuck in Spain after an engine on their airplane gave out. The four-ton rolling stage broke the first day, and additional set-up time for each band often dragged the day's festivities on as late as 4 a.m. On top of it all, concerns about international travel were on everyone's mind.

But the show must go on, and artists by and large put the problems aside and gave it their best. Both Prince and Guns N'Roses introduced numerous new songs and band members during their sets. Prince trotted out a whole new image — he is now a power-funk rocker with rap overtones. And he has added an emotional "Nothing Compares 2 U" to his playlist.

George Michael, who sported a decidedly different image himself, featuring an ultra-short "butch cut," played mostly cover songs by artists like David Bowie, Soul II Soul and Motown greats. However, on the festival's final night he reunited with his old mates from Wham!, including Andrew Ridgely and Deon Estus, and performed some of the band's best-known hits.

During their set, Run-D.M.C.



performed their breakthrough Aerosmith hit "Walk This Way" with New Kids On The Block, of all people. Meanwhile, Deee-Lite's Lady Miss Kier was every bit as quirky and eclectic as her videos make her out to be. Guns N'Roses guitarist Slash performed the theme from *The Godfather*; Faith No More did the theme song from the Nestle's Crunch commercials and Billy Idol — who appears in Oliver Stone's new movie *The Doors* — covered classics by that band.



Perhaps the festival's most curiously memorable moment, however, came at the end of Guns N'Roses' final performance. About five minutes after the show was over, lead singer Axl Rose, living up to the band's bad-boy rep, came running out on stage wearing only a smile and a jock strap. He started kicking soccer and beach balls into the midst of the startled audience, which had already started to leave the stadium. Since security wasn't expecting the band to return to the stage, a man managed to



jump onstage and rush Rose.

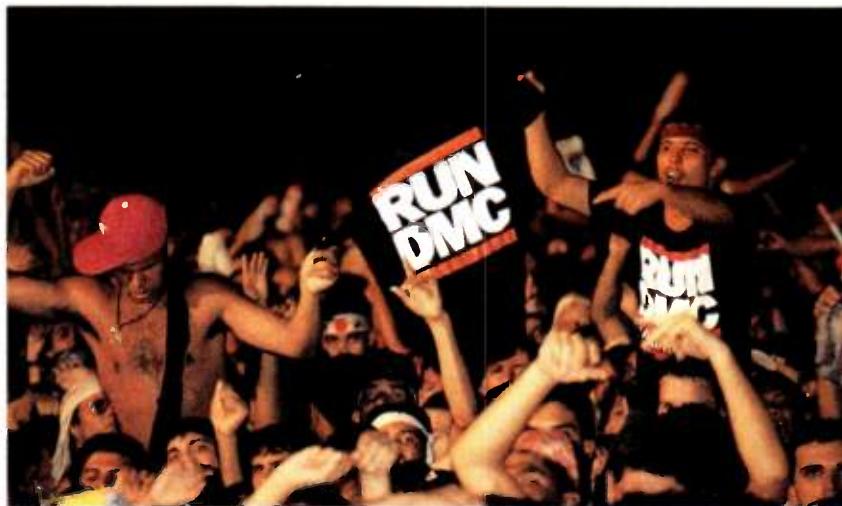
Surprised bodyguards tried to catch the shirtless man, but because he was so sweaty from Rio's 90-degree heat and humidity, he eluded their grasp like a greased pig. When they finally tackled him, he managed to get away by lit-

erally jumping out of his shorts. The result was a nearly naked Rose being chased around by a naked Brazilian, the latter becoming increasingly — and visibly — aroused by his hijinks in front of 100,000 or so fans. In the midst of it all, Rose continued to kick beach balls into the crowd as he ran about.

Slash, Duff and the other band members then came onstage with some additional security, the man was subdued and the action ended. But, like the Rock In Rio festival itself, the scene will remain a surreal footnote in rock history.

While that particular footage will undoubtedly need some editing, the entire slate of legitimate performances was taped by Radio Vision International, which says that specials taken from the show will eventually reach 500 million people around the world,

with MTV possessing the American rights. Stay tuned. **mc**



# I'M ALL SHOOK UP.

I can't believe it. I just can't believe it.  
I always thought he wasn't even a remote possibility.  
And he caught me so off guard.  
I said the stupidest things!  
I was just concentrating on not dropping dead  
right then and there.  
I just kept thinking no way, no way...  
Friday night and I, like, pretended  
I had to think about it — as if I had forty other things  
I'd rather do. Can you believe it?  
He said it's taken him weeks to get up the nerve.  
Those eyes...what a doll.



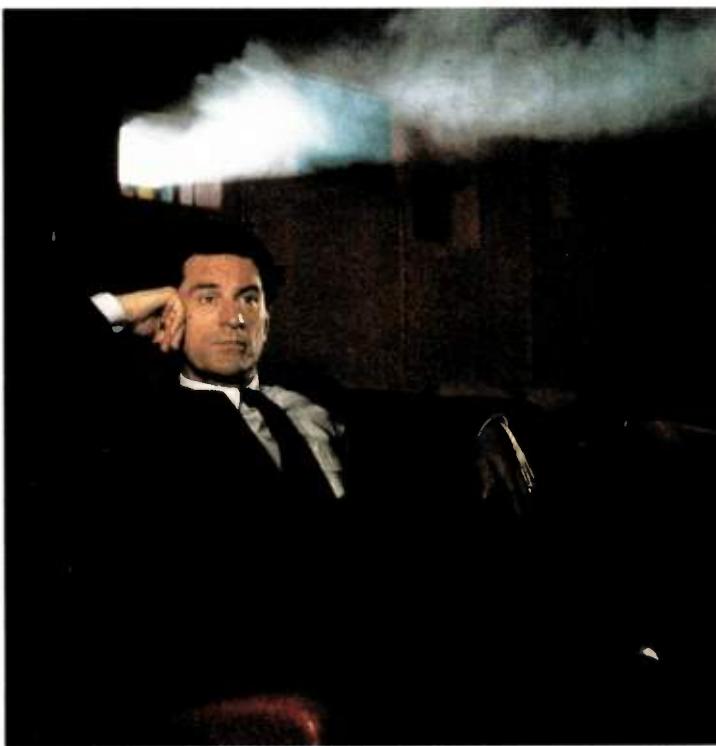
FOR FRESH BREATH  
**BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.**

BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

# DID YOU KNOW?

## Guilty By Suspicion.



With Oscar season bearing down upon us, it's a good time to check out a new crop of movies and potential contenders for the '92 Awards. Or, in the case of *Spartacus*, a previous winner. This 1960 epic won four statuettes in its original release, and it is about to be re-released, complete with restored footage censored from the original. Check this for a heavyweight cast: Laurence Olivier, Kirk Douglas, Charles Laughton, Jean Simmons, and Tony Curtis. Directed by Stanley (2001) Kubrick. ▶ Less prestigious but likely to be a hit is *Career Opportunities*, yet another comedy written and produced by John Hughes (does this man clone himself?). This stars Frank Whaley as a hyper 21-year-old store custodian locked in the premises with a gorgeous girl (Jennifer Connnelly). ▶ One of the most anticipated sequels of the year is due shortly. *F/X 2* sees both stars of the superbly suspenseful original, Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy, return. They're lured out of retirement to help Brown's girlfriend hunt down a potential killer. ▶ Cyndi Lauper's film career has just had bad *Vibes* to date, but she hopes for better with the zany comedy

## Off And Running.

Along with co-star David Keith, Cyndi frolics through both the Everglades and the streets of New York in this one. ▶ South American drug czars are now staple characters of Hollywood suspense dramas. In *Toy Soldiers*, the son of a U.S.-held drug lord seeks to spring him by kidnapping some elite prep school students. Cast includes Lou Gossett Jr., Sean Astin, and Wil Wheaton, and it's directed by Daniel Petrie Jr. (*Beverly Hills Cop*). ▶ The real-life team of Bruce Willis and Demi Moore headline *Mortal Thoughts*, a suspense drama in which two married women find themselves in a web of intrigue surrounding the murder of one of their husbands. Directed by Alan Rudolph. ▶ The ubiquitous Gene Hackman next appears in *Class Action*, a courtroom drama that sees him clash with fellow lawyer and daughter Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio. Michael Apted directs. ▶ Two of the brightest young male stars around, John Cusack and James Spader, team in *True Colors*, described as "a story of friendship and betrayal that looks at the ethics and values of the generation that came of age in the 1980s." Via such films as *Steel Magnolias* and *The Turning Point*, director Herbert Ross has specialized in such themes. ▶ Fans of karate-based thrillers (chop-socky flicks) can look forward to *The Perfect Weapon*, which marks the starring debut of Jeff Speakman, himself a fourth-degree black belt. ▶ *Oscar* is a mob-themed comedy starring Sylvester Stallone as a Mafia big-wig pledging to go straight. Also stars Don Ameche, Tim Curry and Yvonne De Carlo. Directed by John Landis. ▶ *One Good Cop* should perhaps be subtitled *Three Little Ladies And One Man*, for it sees a detective, played by Michael Keaton, forced to adopt the three young daughters of his partner. ▶ Powerful drama is promised in *Guilty By Suspicion*. Set during the Hollywood blacklist era of the '50s, it stars Robert De Niro, Annette Bening, and George Wendt.

Kerry Doole



**F/X 2.**

Top: Jane O'Neil/Hollywood Pictures ; Left: Warner Bros. ; Bottom: Orion Pictures

BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

Dentyne

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BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

Dentyne



Robert Townsend with Tressa Thomas: in search of a Great Movie.

## THE FIVE HEARTBEATS

By Iain Blair

"What inspired *The Five Heartbeats*? My love of music and singing groups, plain and simple."

Robert Townsend, the actor, comedian, director and writer who first burst onto the scene in 1987 with his highly successful film debut, *Hollywood Shuffle*, is sitting in his Hollywood office talking about the genesis of his new film. Released this month by 20th Century Fox, *The Five Heartbeats* is an affectionate and witty look at the music business as seen through the eyes of five talented young African-American men who are determined to become successful despite the obstacles facing them, including their inexperience, petty jealousies and rivalries.

Starring Townsend himself, Leon (best known for his performance in Madonna's "Like A Prayer") and Diahann Carroll alongside an otherwise largely unknown cast, *The Five Heartbeats* starts off in the '60s and covers the life and times of the group through three decades marked by both success and tragedy.

"When I began writing it, it just naturally started in the '60s," reports the Chicago-born director. "I grew up on singing groups like The Temptations, The Four Tops and The Dells, and I'm still fascinated with the music of that period. I also love all that choreography, which is why we brought in Michael Peters, who did "Thriller" and "Beat It." The whole idea really appealed to the entertainer in me, because I love to sing and dance and act and be dramatic, and this gave me an opportunity to do all that."

BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

"The funny thing is that when I started researching that period, I realized that I'd never stopped listening to all that great music," Townsend continues. "I'm into singing, and I hate a lot of music now because they just don't sing anymore, and it's a shame. The lyrics were much more romantic back then, and more visual."

According to Townsend, "Music videos have destroyed music on that level, because you don't use your imagination anymore. When I used to listen to songs as a kid, we didn't have videos, so I had to imagine everything. Now kids are so visual, and they're given all the images, and they don't just sing. So part of the reason I wanted to do the movie was to dedicate it to all those great singers. Look at where music's got to now — Milli Vanilli. Man, that could never have happened in the '60s!"

To research the film, Townsend went on the road with the legendary soul group The Dells for a couple of months. "They were in town performing at the Wilton Theatre here, and they still sounded the same on old hits like 'Oh What A Night' — they sounded great," he recalls. "So I went backstage and asked if they'd mind me hanging out with them.

"I explained about the movie and that I wanted to get into the five guys and



Eli Reed/Twentieth Century Fox

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# BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

# BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

## BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

## BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

## Dentyne

learn the frustrations of being in a singing group, and they made me very welcome," he continues. "I travelled on the bus with them and hung out backstage, and really got a sense of what it's like. The reason I wanted them was because they're one of the few original groups that is still together, with the original guys. They've been singing together since the mid-'50s."

Hardly surprisingly, Townsend heard some "great stories" about the music business along the way. "A lot of things in the movie are based on their experiences, such as having the album cover changed without their knowledge, and the singer being hung out of a 10th-storey window and beaten up for asking about royalties — that's a true story."

It's been three years since *Hollywood Shuffle* became a surprise hit. Why has it taken Townsend so long to complete his followup? "I think it's because *The Five Heartbeats* started to take on a life of its own," he comments. "Originally, I wanted to write a movie about the rise of a '60s soul group, and do another comedy. But after spending time with The Dells, I realized that it was turning into something else, and then I wanted to tell a good story, and it took time to get it right. I wanted three-dimensional characters, and I spent a lot of time working on them after I met The Dells. So it's been like film school and it's also been *In Search Of A Great Movie*. I didn't want to do just any old movie. I wanted something special, and I also wanted to use some great unknown talent."

Townsend says he went out of his way to unearth relative newcomers, combing talent agencies from coast to coast. "I cast very differently from anybody else," he stresses. "For a start, nobody reads for me. I just meet with actors, look in their eyes and tell who's got it. Everybody I cast had something special. I knew I wanted Michael Wright to play Eddie, the tragic lead singer, because I'd seen his work. Tico Wells came in to meet me and I knew right away he was Choirboy. Harry Lennix, who plays Dresser, is actually a schoolteacher in Chicago, and when he started talking about his job and his values, I knew immediately that he was right for the part."

"As for Leon, who plays my brother, I'd seen him in Madonna's video. He's always playing tough bad boys, and he had this twinkle in his eye when I asked him if he'd ever done comedy, and that's how that happened. So for me it's a matter of trusting my instincts. Obviously the studio would prefer it if I cast recognizable names, but I believe in casting the right people for the roles, not just names. For instance, the villain of the piece, Big Red, is played by Hawthorne James, and I wrote the part especially for him after seeing him onstage doing *Macbeth*."

Townsend himself plays the group's serious and gentle songwriter, Donald "Duck" Matthews. "There's quite a lot of me in Duck," he admits, "although I don't think I'm as naive. But creatively I

fight like Duck fights. I love my work and I fought to cast all those actors. For many of them it was their first film, and I believe in the underdog."

Townsend also fought to make sure that the soundtrack, which is being released on Virgin Records, stayed true to his vision. "I knew in my

come down, and that was tough when I had to carry on directing the next scene."

The other major challenge of the shoot was hair, reveals Townsend. "Man, you have no idea how all the changing hairstyles affected the schedule, and going from processed hair in the '60s to Afros in the

'70s was a huge challenge," he says, only half-jokingly. "We had to shoot the last scene first, because of having to shave off our beards and mustaches, and when I see the film I really applaud the hair and makeup."

With a budget of approximately \$10 million, *The Five Heartbeats* represents a big step up for the director, who partially financed his first film with credit cards, his own as well as borrowed ones. "*Hollywood Shuffle* only cost about \$100,000, so when it made \$10 million everyone was amazed," he notes. "Now, the stakes are much higher, and ironically, the choices are much harder."

"The success of *Hollywood Shuffle* opened a lot of doors, but because I consider myself an artist, I didn't go in a lot of those doors," he explains. "It was like they'd open and I'd go, 'Do I really wanna do this? Or that? Or that?' So you'd have all these options, and when I really looked hard, none of it excited me. I've never been one to just do something for the money. So in terms of the projects I was offered, I wasn't happy. That's why I took my time before coming out with *The Five Heartbeats*."

In the meantime, Townsend appeared as an actor in *The Mighty Quinn* with Denzel Washington, and hosted four HBO specials which included short films that he directed and starred in. He was also hired by Eddie Murphy to direct his smash concert film, *Raw*.

"That was a lot of fun, though I didn't really have a lot to do," he recalls. "We filmed for two days, and I just set up the cameras and let it roll. Eddie wrote all the material, and did everything else. I just captured the performance."

Despite the emergence of young black performers and filmmakers such as Spike Lee, Murphy, Washington and himself over the past few years, Townsend reports, "It's still pretty tough for blacks to break into Hollywood. I mean, Eddie's been around for a long time now, and Spike's done quite a lot, so there's probably only 10 young black guys doing anything. If we were all in a plane crash together, that'd be it!"

"On the other hand, I don't find as much resistance to new ideas as there was before. But you still have to push for what you believe in. Like *The Five Heartbeats*. I don't think there's been a film like it, portraying a real slice of life of five black musicians where you get to laugh and cry and get great music. Black actors aren't usually given roles like that, and that's why I didn't want it to be just comedy, because we're always given comedy roles. I wanted to show my dramatic side as well. Hopefully, I succeeded."



The Five Heartbeats: from processed hair to Afros.

head how all the songs should sound," he reports. "We approached various songwriters and producers, and I just told them I wanted songs that sounded a certain way, with certain types of lyrics, and they'd send me all these demos and then I'd pick what I wanted."

The Dells, The Time's Jesse Johnson, George Duke, Patti LaBelle and After 7 have all contributed to the soundtrack, which Townsend describes as "exactly what I wanted to hear with this movie."

He also says that being the film's writer, director, coproducer and star definitely has its advantages. "Obviously if you've written it, you also know what you want when you direct a scene," he explains. "I have the eye of a casting director, and actors are my passion, so being the producer also lets me decide who's going to be in the movie. And as director I have more control, so if the budget's getting tight, I can decide what scene is most important and what has to be cut."

But Townsend the actor admits that Townsend the director found it "quite difficult" to make the move from comedy to drama. "I wanted to make a film that has it all, as real life does — the laughter, the tears, the regrets, the joy," he says. "But I found that when it got to the real emotional scenes for me as an actor, I kind of disappeared as a director. The comedy stuff is easy for me, but I found I couldn't just walk away from the emotional scenes and snap out of them easily. It'd take me an hour to

Eli Reed/Twentieth Century Fox

# BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

## Dentyne

# BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

King of Country





# Country Communiqué

Willie Nelson's latest release, *Born For Trouble*, couldn't have been more prophetic. The Internal Revenue Service has seized Nelson's recording studio in Austin and 21 other properties in six states, with plans to auction the same off in order to cover the \$16.7 million the singer owes in back taxes. However, Willie hopes to avoid that by going another route and recording an album called *The IRS Tapes*. If the album sells well, he could pay off his debt, so here's hoping everyone will think about how much Willie helped out the American farmer through his Farm Aid fundraisers and pitch in.

As if things weren't bad enough for Willie, the members of the pop group The Highwaymen filed suit against the country Highwaymen (Willie, Waylon Jennings, Kris Kristofferson and Johnny Cash) over the use of the name. Fortunately, Waylon came up with an out by having the popster Highwaymen open one of the country Highwaymen's shows, giving the former their biggest payday in years.

Hailing from the East Texas town of Jacksonville, Neal McCoy grew up listening to a wide range of styles, from country and gospel to jazz and rock. He was plucked from the honky-tonk circuit to open shows for Charley Pride, and now he has an album of his own, entitled *At This Moment*. With blues, cajun and western swing flavoring various tracks, McCoy really does heat things up as he proclaims on the first single, "If I Built You A Fire."

Buffalo native Ray Kennedy's first release, *What A Way To Go*, is literally a one-man show. A quintuple threat, Kennedy served as vocalist, musician (he played virtually every instrument on the album), songwriter, producer and engineer on the album. The hurtin' "Doin' Life Without You" appears destined for chart success.

While a lot of new careers are being launched in Nashville, several established performers currently find themselves between labels. The biggest of these names is the legendary George Jones, who has just ended his 18-year relationship with Epic Records.

Other notables looking to land a new recording deal include Dan Seals, Moe Bandy, John Anderson and The Girls Next Door. The latter two acts have still been very busy touring, as The Girls Next Door recently finished a two-week stint in Las Vegas, while Anderson returned home from

a tour of Germany and is now working his way through the Midwest.

One of the first bands to bring country and rock audiences together, Commander Cody And His Lost Planet Airmen, is back in business after a long absence. While the group is probably best remembered for its novelty hit "Hot Rod Lincoln," the recently released *Too Much Fun — The Best Of Commander Cody* showcases some of the brilliant honky-tonk ballads, boogie-woogie rave-ups and fuel-injected truckin' songs that appeared over the course of the original band's seven albums. That group split up in 1976 with the departure of gonzo lead singer Billy C. Farlow, and Commander Cody carried on with a new band that included Nicolette Larson.

Things began to look bleak when second singer Bill Kirchen also left, but now Billy C. is back in the fold, and the Airmen are flying high again with four founding members. While their sound is a little harder, songs like "One Of Those Nights" and "River City's Jumpin'" still occupy the ozone layer of country; just don't look for any more truckin' songs.

"In 1971 the diesels and stuff were romantic, you know," Cody explains. "But the truck drivers just burned themselves out, and that's not the image I started out with. As far as country goes, these guys allegedly bring back the old style, but... I don't know. I don't like it any more than I did when we started out. We were always reactionary to the current 'in' stuff, and I guess it just sort of stayed that way."

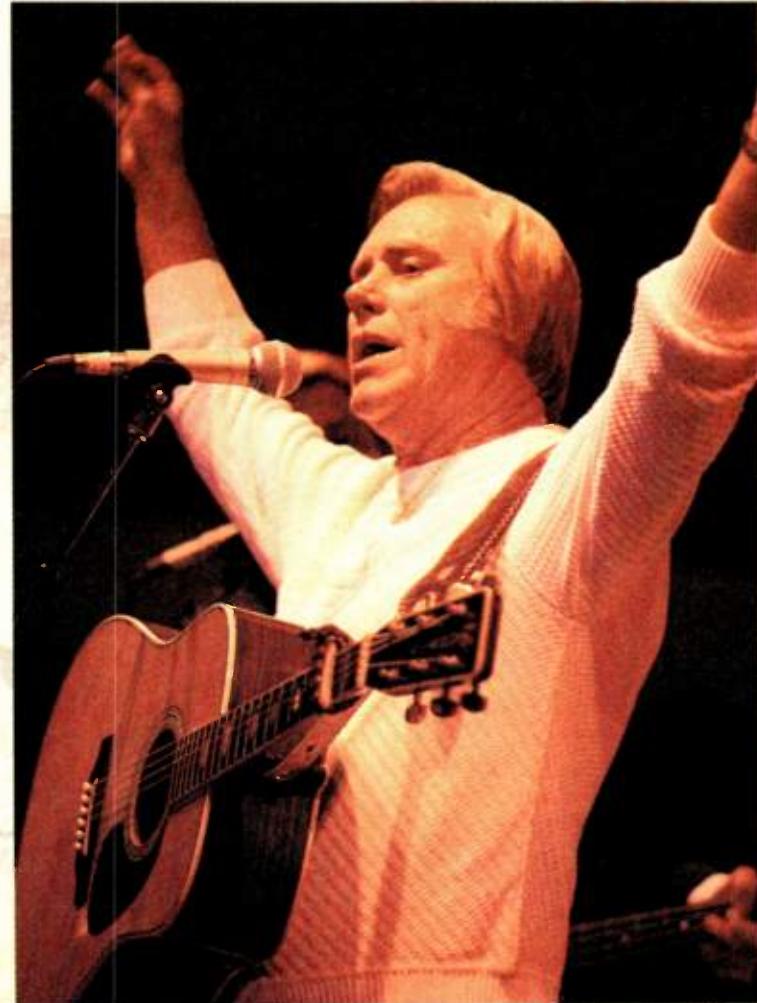
A lot of musicians respect the fact that the Airmen go against the grain, as the group helped stretch country music's boundaries. What Cody isn't as widely recognized for is the fact that he's a man of the arts as well. The wild and crazy

image associated with his band masks the fact that he's a scholar and an accomplished painter, having done a couple of the group's album covers.

"Painting is really my first love," he says. "I've got a show right now in Mendocino County, and what's really encouraging is that your average person can actually afford to buy a painting."

Their current tour brings the Airmen full circle, back to the clubs where they originated. Cody, looking remarkably fit and too young to have been on the road for close to 20 years, reflects, "I like playing smaller venues, because we avoid too much attention and too many people hanging out. We've been through all of that."

**Roman Mitz**



GEORGE JONES: LOOKING FOR A LABEL.

Beth Gwinn/Retna

WRH

Grand Canyon Lodge Bright Angel Point

# Looking Inward

"I think some people are going, 'What the hell are you talking about?' and not really getting it."

Rosanne Cash is describing how some of her fans are reacting to her latest critically acclaimed but rather uncommercial album, *Interiors*. You see, Rosanne is probably best recognized for her country-pop offerings, which began in 1979 with her duet with Bobby Bare on "No Memories Hangin' Round." Her success continued over the course of five albums, culminating in *King's Record Shop*, a recording with an unprecedented number of No. 1 singles (four), including her cover of her dad Johnny's "Tennessee Flat Top Box."

*Interiors* certainly breaks the mold of Cash's previous releases — in a big way. The album is by far the most personal one she has made, and every song deals with the challenge of her inner struggles and the passages of life and love. But while a casual listen suggests bleak images and desperation, there is an underlying message of hope and salvation, and Cash herself appears to have derived a lot of positive momentum through her revelations. In fact, in conversation, Rosanne does not come across as a brooding artist, but rather as a very personable woman with an engaging sense of humor.

"I don't know," she sighs when she's asked if she could ever make a return to her more accessible material. "I said to someone jokingly, 'Damn it, after this is done I'm just going to do a tour of 'Brown Sugar' and 'Satisfaction,' I just can't take it anymore!'

"All I know is that having successful singles could not figure into *Interiors*. For what I wanted to accomplish with this record, I had to let go of any notions of what it was going to do commercially."

The album's leadoff track, "On The Inside," sets the tone for the entire album. The song describes how a relationship can go through "tears and debris," but the suffering leads to a strengthening through self-realization. "Absolutely," she agrees. "The line 'stealed by fire and sealed by the pain' is the essence of what that song is about. In retrospect, I say, 'How do you go through these

ROSANNE CASH:  
AN ORGANIC SENSE  
OF SELF-ESTEEM.



things and survive?' The fact is that the human spirit is pretty indomitable, and anything that doesn't kill you makes you stronger. I think that to acquire a certain kind of richness of spirit, it requires that kind of digging and uncovering, and what you end up with is more colors on your palette."

Rosanne uses dark and light imagery as well as recurring symbols, such as mirrors, to paint her portraits of non-communication and emotional growing pains. The element of anguish arises on more than one occasion, and it seems that the singer abides by the age-old sentiment that the biggest fear in life is fear itself. She feels that if you view fear as "a sign post or an exit door," you can walk through it, overcome it and gain wisdom.

While Cash's discourses on fear being the origin of most neuroses may be lost on a few, she feels that most people are really listening to the album, and gaining insights. "I believe people are reacting more strongly to this record than anything

I've done," she says. "It's like the end of 12 years of apprenticeship, in which I learned and developed skills. It's also like the beginning of what I want to do with my life as an artist."

Since Rosanne has obviously lived through all of these dark feelings in order to write about them so starkly, one wonders about her own relationships, particularly with her husband, singer-songwriter Rodney Crowell. Does the therapeutic songwriting process expose a raw nerve in their relationship?

"Actually, it's not therapeutic in that I don't know that I get things out of my system as much as just kind of process them," she explains.

"It's cathartic more than therapeutic; in a way, it's like leaving messages to myself. It's like the subconscious has something to impart that the conscious doesn't always receive until maybe months later."

"With regard to Rodney, to depersonalize it a little bit, I think that relationships are the best mirrors of who we are. If you're in an intimate relationship, you're going to see everything played out on that man's face; it's the nature of intimacy and commitment. That part's universal; Rodney doesn't take these songs and hurt himself with them, if you know what I mean. He just thought the album was a beautiful piece of work."

In addition to its self-revelatory nature, *Interiors* reinforces Cash's stance against the traditionally subservient role of women in country music. The song "Real Woman" is on the surface the album's most accessible cut, but it actually synthesizes the tangle of emotions that have been played out, and defiantly brings them to a higher level.

"At the end of that song the character is committed to herself — she's not willing to give up her power," Rosanne says. "You see, women have suffered for a few thousand years in a kind of cultural oppression. I just find that a lot of women in my generation are looking around and deciding

what's real about that; what belongs to men and what belongs to us, and how we have given things to men that we didn't need to give. It's just a long process of reclaiming, redefining and getting back to that feminine wisdom and power we've always had, but were taught to deny."

While Rosanne is a strong spokesperson with respect to redefining the role of women in society, her personal accomplishments make an equally strong statement for the cause. Besides her flourishing musical career, she is in the process of writing her first book, a part-fiction, part-nonfiction work that she says is "definitely not as dark as *Interior*." In addition, she can now be considered

an artist in the visual sense, as she has had two showings of her paintings. "I've just got too many things going on," she laughs, attributing her "million projects" to the fact that she is a Gemini. Nevertheless, Rosanne is an accomplished artist in every sense, which leads to perhaps her biggest struggle in life — the problem of "fame being a substitute for friends," as she so bluntly recounts in the song "I Want A Cure."

"I really struggle with that whole notion of celebrity notoriety," she says. "I get really hostile to the whole idea of it. It's like morphine; you can become addicted to the extent that the chief source of your own self-esteem is how other peo-

ple see you, or what kind of reviews you receive, or whether it was a sell-out show, instead of going within and finding an organic sense of self-esteem. It's been the source of a lot of confusion and a lot of thoughts to me, and I just think it's a little dangerous."

So dangerous, in fact, that Rosanne is trying to pack up Rodney and their four kids (all girls), and move out of star-struck Nashville. "We went and looked at houses in Boulder that I really liked, but it gets really cold out there," she laughs, then turns serious. "The music business is insidious; I'd love to get away from it."

**Roman Mitz**

## Answered Prayers

The first surprise Garth Brooks springs on the unsuspecting journalist is to phone, unannounced, just to introduce himself and arrange a mutually convenient time for a later interview. No, this fast-rising young country artist isn't too cheap to hire his own publicist. He just likes to retain a personal touch, based on his own experiences as a novice newshound (Garth graduated from journalism school with an advertising major).

"That helped me understand what the media goes through," he explains. "I've noticed in many interviews that the writer will say, 'Your people have treated us so well. We're not used to that.' Well, I had to do that intern stuff, and I know press people are treated like shit a lot of times."

Such a commendable (and rare) approach may help explain some of the warm and welcoming notices Brooks gets from the press, but there is far more to this 28-year-old Oklahoman singer/songwriter than media savvy.

Right now, Garth Brooks' star isn't just ascending — it's positively incandescent. At interview time, his latest single, "Unanswered Prayers," topped the country charts, while his second album, *No Fences*, was neck and neck with rival Clint Black's at the top of those charts. Even more significantly, *No Fences* was in the *Billboard* Pop Top 20, already racking up more than two million units sold. That marks Brooks as a genuine pop phenomenon, not just another country crooner in a big hat.

An extensive interview with Garth did nothing to dispel that positive first impression. Here's a

man whose commitment to God, family and country runs deep and true, a commitment that is providing reliable insulation against the moral and physical temptations offered by such a lightning-fast ride to the top of the music business.

In country music terms, Brooks is still a youngster, but surprisingly, he expresses gratitude that his first attempts at Nashville's brass ring ended in abject failure.

Back in 1985, he made his first foray into Music City and lasted a grand total of 23 hours. "I was pretty much turned off by it, as I didn't care for it being a business," he says. "The problem is, musicians are people who live by their hearts, even in business. They don't want the town that represents country music to them being a business town; they feel it should be a town flown by heartstrings, like they've lived their lives."

"Now I realize and understand that for anything to grow and proceed, it has to be a business. It has to be run very sharply."

If he'd been an instant success then, Garth believes, "I'd have blown everything I had. I wasn't married at the time, and, to tell the truth, I don't know if I'd have gone ahead and gotten married."

When he returned to Nashville in 1987, things moved quickly for Brooks. After impressing some fellow songwriters, he signed a publishing deal, linked up with the management team of Pam Lewis and Bob Doyle, and then inked with Capitol Records.

His self-titled debut album, released in 1989, began winning friends in the right places, and it spawned hit singles like "Much Too Young To

Feel This Damn Old," "If Tomorrow Never Comes" and "The Dance." The latter ballad, an elegant reflection on the magical mystery tour that is life, served notice that Brooks possessed serious crossover potential as a singer.

"That is probably the biggest song I tried to get rid of," admits Garth with a chuckle. "I didn't think it was country enough for me, but [producer] Allen Reynolds held to his guns. Once I heard it on tape, I fell in love with it. I told Allen it should be the first, second, and third single off the album!"

The musical variety found on Garth's debut is continued on *No Fences*, which has already spawned chart-toppers in the boisterous "Friends In Low Places" and another reflective ballad, "Unanswered Prayers." Brooks' voice may lack some of the spine-tingling country purity of, say, Randy Travis', but its amiable adaptability makes it a potent weapon.

"We're not trying to stretch the bounds of country music; we're trying to stretch our bounds within country music," he explains. "That variety is what we're trying to achieve."

To explain the sober, meditative "The Dance" and "Unanswered Prayers," Garth says, "I hate thinking God has given me a gift of three minutes in front of a world to say something, and I toss it away. I'd like to say something that counts, that may give people a reason for listening. At the same time, if you're serious every waking minute of your life, you'll find people will stop listening to you, so we try and set those statements with songs like [the rowdy] 'Friends' and 'Two Of A



Kind, Working On A Full House."

Garth has written some of his own most memorable material, but he candidly admits to current major writer's block. "I guess I blame it on not being mature enough to do them both [singing and songwriting], but my writing has totally stopped," he admits. "'Unanswered Prayers' was the last thing I've written, and that was 16 months ago. I don't mean this egotistically, but you look back at stuff like 'Prayers' and 'If Tomorrow Never Comes,' and you wonder how you could ever write that. To tell you the truth, I'm a little scared. I'm not sure, if there was any talent to begin with, whether it'll come back."

Given the frenetic schedule of life at the top (Brooks has been known to sign autographs until 4 a.m.), it's unsurprising that songwriting has been forced into the backseat. And the pace isn't about to flag.

"You have to fight for what you can get every waking minute you're alive," he says. "The competition level in country music is so high; things are very unstable. Right now, I can only think of two people set in stone in country music that are young enough to enjoy it: George Strait and Reba McEntire."

Garth's chief rival right now is Clint Black, and the similarities in their careers are, in Garth's words, "shocking." They were born three days apart, their debut albums began their long battle on the charts (over 90 weeks now) in the same week, and both acknowledge folkie singer-songwriters like James Taylor as a big influence.

"When I sat down and talked to Clint, I was astonished at how much we had in common," Garth says. "I'd love to see our names mentioned in rivalry for the next 20 years, as that would mean we'd both be in this business for as long as we wanted!"

Garth Brooks is becoming noted for his energetic, entertaining performance style, one that apparently comes naturally. "The stage is my playground, man. Music does something to me that I guess nothing else in my life could ever take the place of. I love my wife, I love my life, but when I'm playing music there's a joy, an innocence, that makes me just so damn happy to be doing what I do for a living. That spills over, and I guess I show that to people. I hope I never have to face losing that joy. The only problem I ever want to face is, 'Aren't you a bit too old to be doing this anymore?' I just thank God that the one thing I'm doing is the one thing I love to do."

It sure beats being a nightclub bouncer, one of Garth's previous occupations. That stint did, however, have well-publicized, positive repercussions. In one of those real-life stories that sound



GARTH BROOKS: POSITIVELY INCANDESCENT.

just like a country song ("Love At First Fight"?), Garth met his future wife Sandy at the club. It seems he had to help her remove her fist from the wall — her punch at another woman had missed!

To Garth, "the only single drawback" to fame is that "You don't get to spend one-billionth as much time with your wife or family back in Oklahoma as you'd like to. I don't think it's the 'heart-throb' thing Sandy has trouble with, but rather that I'm a different person to her because I can't devote as much time as I used to."

As well as his happy marriage, Garth acknowledges the power of the press as something that "keeps you straight in your personal life. Not meaning this egotistically, but anything you do out of line will be reported; it'll get out."

"That has a good side; I get way too much credit when things go well. Once we were going through Oklahoma when Jim, our bus driver, spotted a lady whose car had broken down. He pulled over and changed her tire. A wire service story a few days later said I was driving the bus, changed the tire, and drove off. I was actually asleep the whole time!"

You can bet your boots that if Garth had been driving, he'd have done the same good deed.

Here's a budding superstar who is more interested in owning a boy's ranch than a Malibu mansion — "It'd be for children who had been abused or for kids accused of crimes and now being rehabilitated, trying to find a good road to get back into the stream of things," he says.

And if Uncle Sam comes knocking in these perilous times, he'll answer the call. Talking the day after the Gulf bombs started falling, Garth pledged, "I'm still hellbent on getting over there one way or another; whether it's playing music for the troops or serving my part as a U.S. citizen."

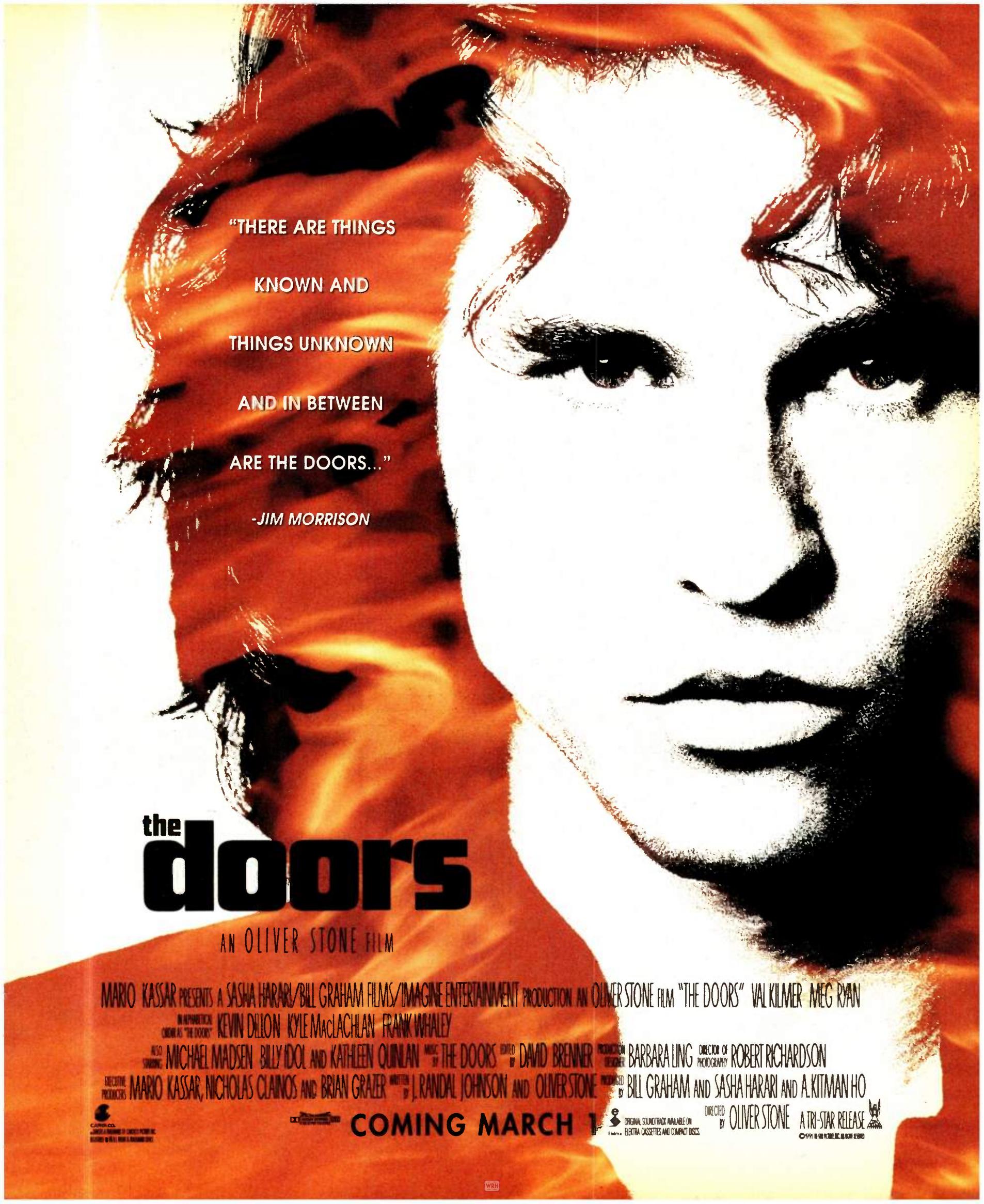
By the time you read this, Brooks may well have added a Grammy or two to his trophy case, but even that won't have had the impact of his greatest honor to date — his recent induction as the youngest member of country music's hallowed institution, The Grand Ole Opry.

"That is the honor of honors," Garth explains proudly. "Whether my career is hot or not, I will always try to uphold what they stand for."

Peer respect. Platinum-selling records. Does all this success ever seem just a little unreal?

"To tell you the truth, I try not to pinch myself just in case it is all a dream!"

**Kerry Doole**



"THERE ARE THINGS  
KNOWN AND  
THINGS UNKNOWN  
AND IN BETWEEN  
ARE THE DOORS..."

-JIM MORRISON

# the **doors**

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STARRING MICHAEL MADSEN BILLY IDOL AND KATHLEEN QUINLAN AS THE DOORS EDITED BY DAVID BRENNER PRODUCTION DESIGNER BARBARA LING DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT RICHARDSON

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The Tragically Hip take their new album, *Road Apples*, and their brand of "swampy, bluesy" guitar-driven rock 'n' roll to Europe, where they're greeted by enthusiastic Hamburgers, gregarious Scotsmen, expatriate Canadians, televised NHL games, speeding Wartburgs, plastic-wrapped chunks of the Berlin Wall, comely autograph hunters, mystery foodstuffs and an ever-increasing band of Hipophiles....

— By Tim Powis —

# THE TRANSATLANTIC SASKADELPHIA BLUES

"Hello there, people of Hamburg!" says Gord Downie, singer of The Tragically Hip, the five-man band of rock 'n' roll up 'n' comers from Kingston, Ontario, Canada. "We're the Von Trapp family and we're here to entertain you!"

The Hip have just taken the stage of Logo, a small, comfortable club a couple of blocks from Hamburg's grand old train station. According to the Hip's itinerary, Logo has a capacity of 350 people — and well it might,

if every square inch of standing room were occupied and a few dozen people packed themselves into each washroom.

Even by Logo standards, though, tonight's audience isn't big — say 50 people, max. But that doesn't come as a rude awakening. The Hip have never been to Europe as a band before. Their first full-length album, 1989's *Up To Here*, has been sketchily available on the Continent for a mere six months, and then only after a Dutch employee

of WEA (which distributes the Hip's label, MCA, in Europe), in Downie's words, "singlehandedly pushed and cajoled" to get it released.

But, as they say in showbiz circles, what tonight's crowd lacks in numbers it makes up for in enthusiasm. During the hour-long set, divided roughly 50-50 between older material and songs from the band's new album, *Road Apples*, The Remarkably Consistent Hip betray nary a sign of holding back the goods. They actually dish them out fast and thick, with drummer Johnny Fay and bassist Gord Sinclair laying down a turbocharged bottom for dual-guitar threat of guitarists Rob Baker and Paul Langlois.

Downie, for his part, is intent on keeping the *Sound Of Music* theme alive: midway through "New Orleans Is Sinking," he chants an impromptu verse of "So Long, Farewell" — you know, that ditty the Von Trapp brats oh-so-cutely sang to their father's dinner guests before scampering off to bed. For its well-earned encore, the band plays "Long Time Running," a plaintive ballad from *Road Apples*.

I'd hooked up with The Hip the night before, in Berlin. My assignment: to take in the final three gigs (Berlin, Hamburg, London) of their three-week Euro-tour and ask some probing questions about the new album (an advance copy of which I've been provided with under strict orders to play it for no one, including next of kin). The band has already played Copenhagen, Geneva, Ghent (Belgium) and several urban centres in Holland and Germany, and the Hipsters agree that things have gone well — for the most part, that is.

"The only really bad gig was Frankfurt," Downie later allows. "We were playing on someone else's bill. We went on first, and they were obviously the more popular band — and the crowd they attracted was not what you'd call, uh, *open-minded*. So we just played our set and got off. But it's not like we

club.

"It turned out to be a blessing," says Downie, who refers to this as the band's "Treaty Tour," in light of the fact that pivotal European peace agreements were signed in both Utrecht and Ghent. "Utrecht is a very cool town."

So's Berlin in its own lugubrious, post-Iron Curtain way. The hotel is two blocks from the famous bombed-out church on Berlin's main drag, Kurfürstendamm. After checking in I stroll to the Brandenburg Gate. Scattered around the foot of that imposing monument, which not long ago lay just beyond reach on the east side of the Wall, dozens of vendors flog Cold War mementoes: Russian army helmets, T-shirts commemorating the collapse of German communism, minute chunks of the Wall sealed in pocket-sized, zip-lock plastic bags. A couple of hundred yards to the north, I spot for the first time a standing vestige of the Wall — a fairly long stretch running parallel to the shoreline of the River Spree atop an embankment. A long-haired entrepreneur on a ladder is hacking away at the obsolete barrier with a hammer and chisel. I wander south to Potsdamer Platz (the site of Roger Waters' extravagant production of *The Wall*), where a red-and-white-striped circus tent is set up in a rubble-strewn field of mud. Nearby is another intact section of wall, covered with graffiti and protected from souvenir hunters by a wooden barricade. At the risk of sounding hokey, the whole scene is a bit surreal — so surreal, in fact, that instead of heading back toward the hotel I wind up deep in the recesses of Berlin's Kreuzberg district, a full 180 degrees off course.

After finding the hotel, I catch a cab to tonight's venue, Ecstasy. The driver is none-too-pleased when I hand him a 100-Deutschmark bill, and follows me into Ecstasy's box-office, where a none-too-pleased ticket-seller grudgingly consents to break the C-note after deducting the admission price. I

pass into a narrow bar-room and catch my first European glimpse of The Tragically Hip: through a pair of glass doors guarded by a big fella in a Slayer T-shirt, I can see them doing their sound-check in a second room.

"We're the Tragically Hip and we hail from Canada," Gord Downie informs the Berliners that night. "It's part of the lost Commonwealth." (Gord has a way with introductions.) The 11-song set is a real pressure-cooker — The Hip's tightly wound music seems to strain the walls of the small, seatless room — and Mark

Vreeken's mix is immaculate.

Downie doesn't jump around much, but he really is a commanding performer. For the most part he stoops over the microphone, his eyes scrunch shut as he sings in a medium-pitched, slightly warbly voice. He sweats harder than James Brown. During Rob Baker's bluesy solo in the new song, "Fight," Downie engages his mike-stand in a slow-motion boxing match — ducking, jabbing and feinting, making his inanimate opponent reel dizzily but

never managing to knock it down.

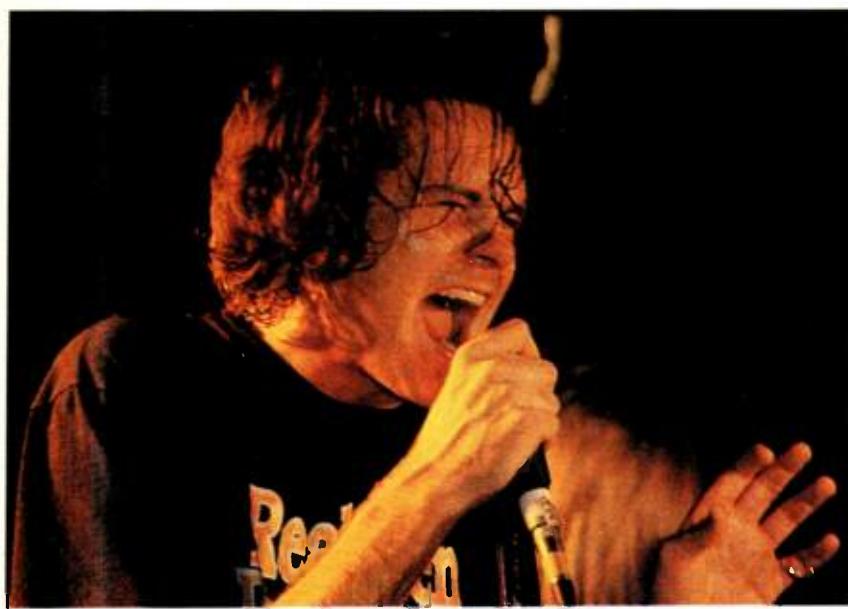
At set's end, we retire upstairs to the dressing room to shoot the breeze and hoist a few *braus*. (I can't resist this opportunity to show off one-fifth of my German vocabulary.) An English band called Rose of Avalanche plays the second set downstairs. The club serves us dinner: steak smothered with enough peppercorns to burn a hole through a stainless-steel robo-gut. Gord Downie likens eating European tour-food to having dinner in a ski lodge every night. He mentions, as well, that somebody once described The Hip as "a thinking-man's Georgia Satellites." ("I guess that means we're a stupid man's R.E.M.," he concludes with a snicker.)

Around 10:00 the next morning, the two Gords, Johnny, Paul (today's designated driver) and I leave for Hamburg in the band's rented VW Passat. (Rob is riding in the van with Dave and Mark.) The road to Hamburg, of course, takes us through what used to be East Germany. Looming over every highway exit is an unmanned, 150-foot-tall watchtower, and the woods along the side of the road look as though they've been thinned out, perhaps to discourage the cloak-and-dagger set from trying to gather state secrets among the trees. For the first leg of the four-hour trip about half the vehicles on the road are drab-colored, East German sub-compacts called Wartburgs; now that Germany is reunited, the government has declared the automotive eyesores unroadworthy and imposed a deadline beyond which Wartburgs will be *verboten* on public thoroughfares. Inspired by the Teutonic surroundings, Johnny entertains us with his Milli Vanilli impression: "Frank Farian, that maniac! He voodn't eeven let us sing!"

After the Hamburg show, almost everyone in attendance sifts through the tiny, graffiti-festooned dressing room to pay respects to the band: a Canadian kid recently back from Morocco, some local leather-clad rock dudes, a rep from WEA's Hamburg office. Hanging out the longest are a pair of comely black-haired girls — one from Welland, Ont., the other a German. Just before they leave, the German girl solicits autographs. When she passes the pen and paper my way, I feel honor-bound to point out that I'm not a member of the band. She insists that I sign anyway, so what the heck.

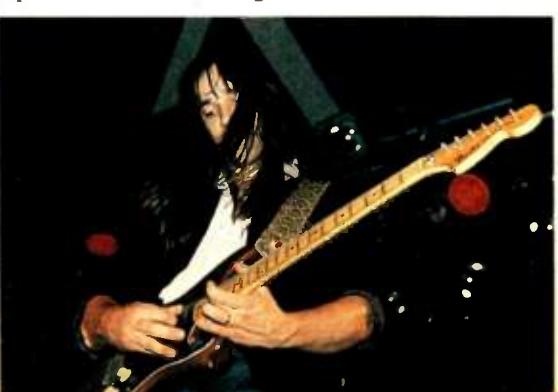
Paul, Rob, the Gords and I walk back to the Sphinx, our humble but impeccably maintained pension, situated on a pedestrian mall in Hamburg's shopping district. (Johnny decides to take a walk on the wild side of Hamburg, the infamous Reeperbahn.) The Sphinx has a lounge with a TV and a fridge full of beer, so we avail ourselves of both, finding a week-old hockey game (Rangers vs. Islanders) on the tube. There's nothing in the world that makes a Canadian man feel so cosmopolitan as watching NHL hockey with the play-by-play in German. Johnny comes back from the Reeperbahn, impressed but hardly overwhelmed, to share the experience.

At the ungodly hour of six that morning we all get up to make the 8:50 flight to London. En route to



haven't done that a million times."

The other disappointment was Bremen, where the gig fell through altogether. "We'd driven a long way from Copenhagen and deposited ourselves in the hotel," recounts Johnny Fay. "Dave [Powell, the Hip's tour manager] and Mark [Vreeken, their sound man] went down to the club and found out they'd never heard of us." So the band immediately set off for Utrecht, Holland, where they had a couple of days off before their gig at that city's Tivoli



HIPSTERS PAUL LANGLOIS,  
GORD DOWNE, GORD SINCLAIR,  
JOHNNY FAY (BEHIND), ROB BAKER.

the airport someone puts on a tape that The Hip often use as a pre-gig audience galvanizer: Midnight Oil's "U.S. Forces," Iggy's "Cold Metal," Jimi Hendrix's "Freedom," Van Halen's "Jamie's Crying," something by the Red Hot Chili Peppers — not a bad way to start the day. On the flight, Lufthansa serves us scones with clotted cream and some weird-looking organic paste that resembles finely ground head cheese. Gord Sinclair, seated beside me reading a Stephen King book, decides to let me be the guinea pig where the mystery foodstuff is concerned. Man oh man, life on the road sure gets scary sometimes.

Two hours later we're at our London hotel, right across from Hyde Park. Before we all disperse to our respective rooms to catch up on sleep, the band members agree to meet in my room later to confabulate for the record. At the appointed hour they all show up, except Rob. Nevertheless, we proceed. The obvious opening question is what the high point of the tour has been.

"It's hard to say," replies Downie. "We felt *really* good after our gig in Amsterdam. It was a packed house and there were probably 10 or 15 Canadians in the front row. That surprised the shit out of us." About 600 people turned up in Amsterdam, he says. Gord Sinclair hastens to add that all the Dutch shows were well attended.

After some discussion about the intricate workings of the international record industry, the talk turns, appropriately enough, to the new album. At this point it's tentatively titled *Saskadelphia*, a composite name that succinctly sums up the where-the-hell-are-we-now feeling that comes with an overdose of touring. (When The Hip return from Europe, after much haggling with management and MCA, they retitle it *Road Apples*, Kingston patois for frozen horse-droppings.)

The album was recorded over five weeks at a mansion in the French quarter of New Orleans. Don Smith, who produced *Up To Here* in Memphis, was at the helm once again. The Hip like to record in out-of-the-way places because it distances them from home-turf distractions — and also because they like out-of-the-way places.

"It was really cool," says Sinclair. "We basically went down for the first week and rehearsed and ironed all the bugs out. Then we just got at it and recorded." The band's working method was much the same as on *Up To Here*, he says, although this time instead of recording everything more or less live in the studio, some tunes were built from the bottom up. "Johnny and I knew all our parts, so we could work pretty fast," boasts Gord. He casts a look of mock distaste at Paul: "We didn't wanna wait around for these guitar players."

I comment that this album has a somewhat different feel to it. As I fish around in my head for the right adjectives, Downie anticipates what I might come up with.

"Swampy!...Bluesy!" he suggests, his voice



tinged with sarcasm. Yeah, well, something like that. Certainly a little more riff-driven, with longer solos... "Having A Rave-Up With The Tragically Hip," shall we say?

"That's a carry-over from the live thing," Sinclair explains. "Songs like 'Fight' or 'Bring It On Back' we'd already been playing live and kinda jamming on. When we came to record them, we didn't know what we were gonna do — shorten here, cut out a verse there? But Robby was kickin' off fairly decent solos so we just decided to leave 'em all in. There's plenty of room for soloing, for sure..."

"And self-indulgence," adds the other Gord.

Recalling that when The Hip recorded *Up To Here* Rob had to ground himself with a spoon in his boot to get rid of an amp buzz, I inquire whether there were any similar snags during the more recent sessions.

"Well, we did it in a house," says Johnny, "so sometimes we'd have to do a track over again because a motorcycle would go by. It wasn't a studio with triple-pane glass."

"There were no iso-booths or anything," continues Downie. "It was

just amazing. It's a huge house, like 27,000 square feet with 14-foot-high ceilings. The mixing board and control room were in this front-vestibule kind of area, and we were across the way in the pool room. Paul's amp was under a set of stairs..."

Paul is slumped on a corner of the bed, not quite asleep but looking thoroughly exhausted and letting his mates do the talking. That won't do, so I direct a question right at him. How do he and Robby (who's just phoned to say he'll be right up, though he never quite makes it) work out their respective guitar parts?

"Most of the time we *don't* work things out," he says. "We just play whatever the tune needs, and if it isn't working then we know we have to sit down

and work something out. But that's pretty rare."

The Hipsters express their fervent desire to play Australia and their aversion to opening for bigger-name acts (although if Neil Young called, they might make an exception). The interview winds down, since the band has to leave for the legendary Marquee club to do the soundcheck for tonight's gig, the final date of the Treaty Tour.

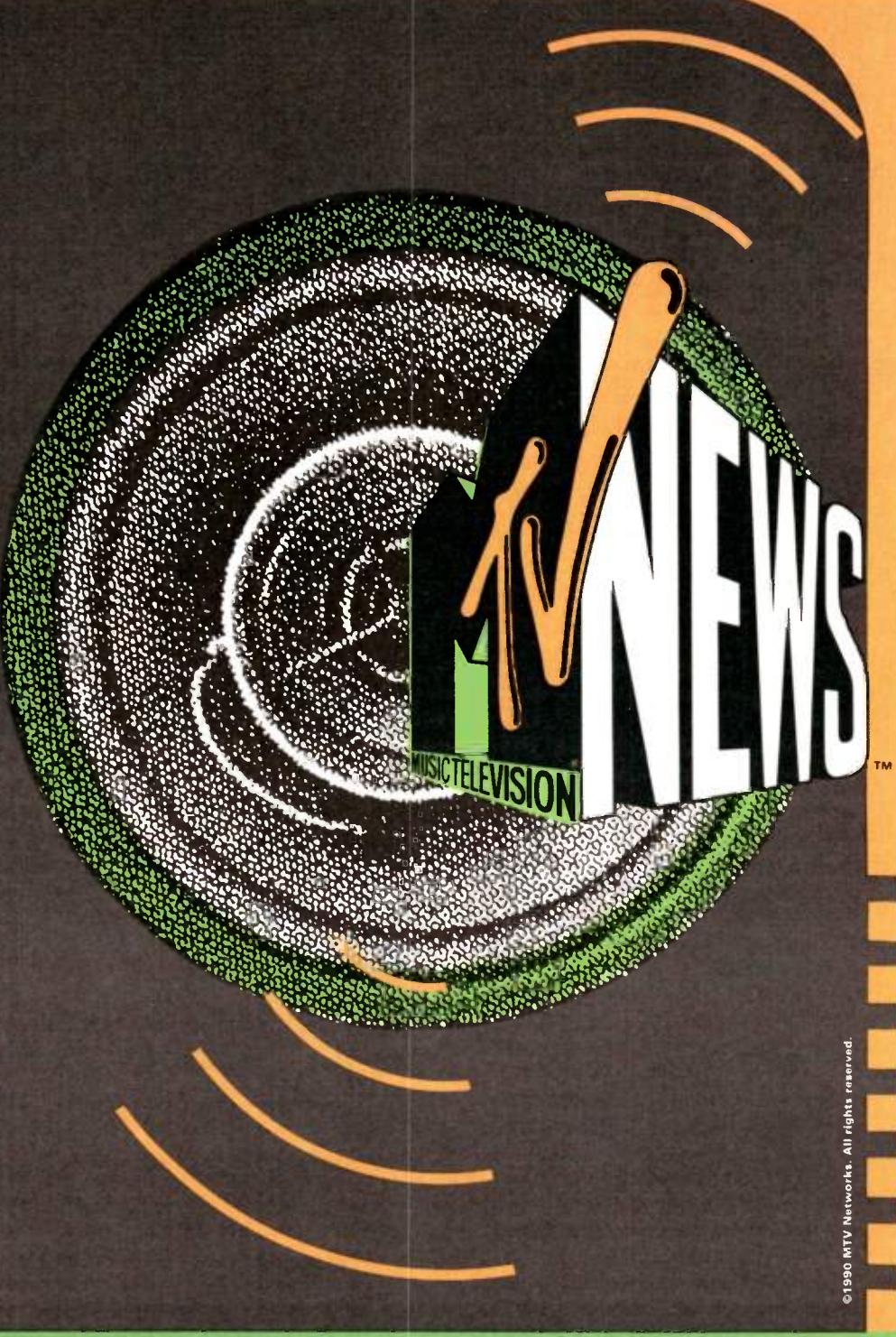
The Marquee show is an unqualified triumph. For one thing, the club, which is far bigger than Ecstasy or Logo, is jam-packed with a few hundred Hipophiles. For another, the band delivers the best of the three shows I see. A dense cluster of young fans catches boogie fever in front of the stage; further back, older fans sway blissfully back and forth, some of them mouthing the words to the songs. For one of their encores, The Hip do a locomotivating version of Johnny Burnette's (by way of The Yardbirds) "Train Kept A-Rollin'."

The dressing room is teeming afterwards. Many expatriate Canadians drop by, some of whom The Hip know from their days at Queen's University, in Kingston. Allan Gregg, the globetrotting pollster who co-manages the band, is here. The lads from Juke, tonight's opening band, burst in from their own dressing room now and then. Juke are a gregarious bunch of Scotsmen. (Before the show they proudly inform me that they're from the town where Johnny Walker distills his whisky.) At random intervals, the singer jumps up, throws his arms around Dave Powell's neck and exclaims: "DEEV, YER A GRRREEET GUY!"

The next day is our last across the pond. Accordingly, the afternoon is set aside for interviews with the local press. In the morning, Rob and I take a cab to the Tate Gallery for some brow-raising visual stimulation. (Rob studied art history and knows his Pre-Raphaelite painters — the Tate's specialty — inside out.) Later on, The Hip's London agent, Nigel, takes us to a Chinese restaurant in Soho. We catch last call at a pub near Covent Garden and head back to the hotel bar for a series of nightcaps — a final Bacchanalian rite before The Hip return to their neck of the lost commonwealth, there to await the coming of *Road Apples*. But, as Gord Downie rightly contends, The Hip's "trump card" is their live show, and it won't be long before they go running back to *Saskadelphia*. me

## "MOST OF THE TIME WE DON'T WORK THINGS OUT — WE JUST PLAY WHATEVER THE TUNE NEEDS."

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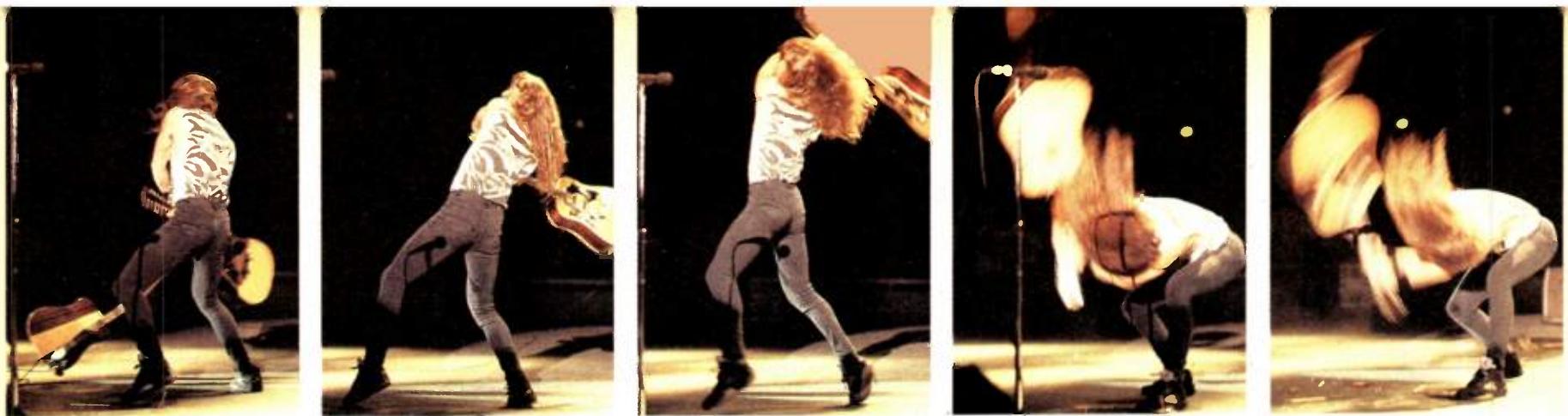
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# THE GONZO BOYS' CLUB

"I don't know whether I can handle the next 60 days," laughs Jack Blades after only five minutes of rapid-fire banter with his Damn Yankees cohorts Ted Nugent, Tommy Shaw and Michael Cartellone. The group is squeezed together on a small couch in their tour manager's hotel room in Lexington, Kentucky, a couple of hours before their first concert appearance together in over a month. It's also the first time they've seen each other since New Year's Eve in Detroit, when they performed at Nugent's annual musical firestorm, The Whiplash Bash.

Tonight's show marks the start of the third leg of the tour which began last July and will likely continue until the group goes into the studio sometime in the fall, to record a followup to their double-platinum debut *Damn Yankees*.

Normally you'd expect a band to be a little tense before an opening night. Both Shaw, who lives in New York, and Nugent, who flew in from his home in rural Michigan — affectionately known as "Ted's World" — had arrived only an hour earlier. Blades and Cartellone had come in late the night before. Soundcheck is scheduled for five, so you'd think maybe they'd be a wee bit nervous, a tad preoccupied about whether they'll have enough time to get the kinks out. But if these guys are suffering any kind of pre-show anxiety, you'd need a divining rod to detect it.

Indeed, the band exhibits a jocular ease and informality; the casual confidence of a well-worn pair of very expensive shoes — in Nugent's case, make that army boots. You know exactly where they're from, and you can put odds on where they've been. A natural bond exists between them, as evident in person as it is on record — in fact, more so. They interact like high-ranking members of an exclusive boys' club, one that requires lots of scout training, has strings of secret passwords, exacts heavy dues and sports very, very peculiar rules of order. And in a way they are — although Damn Yankees is barely

**Damn Yankees are not exactly rock 'n' roll rocket scientists; they're an American Band playing what they call "big-business garage rock" to a rapidly growing audience.**  
**At the onset of another leg of touring, the Yanks sat down to explain themselves.**

**By Tina Clarke**

two years old, Shaw, Nugent and Blades can each draw on 20 odd years of rock 'n' roll experience.

During the '70s and early '80s Shaw was in Styx, crooning some of their biggest hits, including "Blue Collar Man" and "Renegade." Blades sang with Night Ranger, one of the first hard rock bands to become an MTV staple with anthemic tunes like "Rockin' America." And Nugent, the original Motor City Madman, has performed and recorded relentlessly since the mid-'60s, garnering a reputation for outrageous stage antics and excruciatingly loud guitar — not to forget the fact that he practically invented that heavy metal standard, rhythmic

hair swinging. And as for newcomer Michael Cartellone, who drummed for Shaw on and off during his post-Styx solo outings, he feels like one helluva lucky guy.

But looks can be deceptive. If a savvy team of lawyers had drawn up a blueprint for this band, it couldn't have seemed more commercially viable. Take one cute, pale blond vocalist/guitarist from a successful melodic '70s hard rock band and another cute sandy-haired vocalist/bass player from a popular '80s melodic hard rock band — whose voices happen to blend like silk — add the long-reigning monarch of gonzo heavy metal guitar playing and a young drummer who regularly leaves drum kits in a pile of dust just to give the music a kick, and voila — Damn Yankees!

Except the group didn't get together that way. They are very careful, in fact, to point out that there were no lawyers involved, just some old friendships and some damn good timing — Night Ranger broke up just when Nugent and Shaw, who had already been noodling around in a studio for a couple of months back in early 1989, were ready to get serious. The true test, of course, is in concert, where the group explodes with so much bristling energy and genuine chemistry that they could wipe the floor with a roomful of heavy metal hair bands.

It's no surprise that the most capricious of music industry barometers — the general public — embraced the "horseshoe foursome" and their music to the tune of two million albums — and counting. In fact, at Christmastime Damn Yankees were outselling Madonna. So much for theories.

While Cartellone prepares to leave for the venue to fiddle around with his drums, Shaw and Blades settle in, ready for a barrage of questions. Nugent is the last to show up, as always, dressed in camouflage and fur. Evidently during earlier legs of their tour he had a habit of arriving seconds before showtime after his days off, with some sort of dead critter

tucked into his bag. Along with rock 'n' roll, the wacky guitarist's other lifelong passion is hunting, so much so that he now publishes his own bimonthly magazine, *Ted Nugent's World Bowhunters*. One is led to believe that he also must have been an especially fidgety child. Joining the others on the couch, Nugent immediately starts pulling a variety of small tools from his pockets and begins adjusting the mike stand in front of him.

"They must have loved you at the airport," Blades squeals. "Here comes the tool man, let him through. He has a DEA hat on, so he must be OK. He's like a junkie, just doing, just itching. Let Ted work on it for a while."

While Nugent continues to tweak screws, the group ponders how their relationships have evolved over the past year on the road. "As far as I'm concerned, it's gotten nothing but better," Blades says. "I mean, you can't help it. First of all, this thing clicked from the very beginning, but after doing 150 shows, it's amazing. I mean, I know when to duck when Ted comes, you know, flying across the stage, and when Tommy swings around."

"Not according to the video I've seen," Nugent adds.

"When I get close to the microphone and sing with Jack, he always stomps on it," Shaw notes. "And gets me in the teeth with the mike, and we know never..."

"Never to go towards Ted's mike," Blades cautions emphatically. "Because it's so loud on that side of the stage that we can't hear anything anyway."

"It's like a big, throbbing stump of spittle and hair on my side of the stage," Nugent adds knowingly. "On this tour we're doing something new. We're putting barbed wire around my side of the stage."

"Ted's been known to fire off Scud missiles," Blades points out.

"For years, man, I had a Scud missile," Nugent admits.

"I remember you firing off a Scud missile in the dressing room one time," Shaw recalls. "Scared the hell out of me, but those had no military significance, no military value whatsoever."

The Damn Yankees' music, with its anthemic hooks and straight-from-the-hip lyrics, has gained legions of fans from coast to coast. It's about as raw as arena rock can get. Cartellone calls it "big business garage rock." "We're never going to be polished or slick," he says. "It's just a bunch of guys having fun. We're always screwing around on stage. Somebody's always doing something funny. It's a great interactive show with the crowd, because they can see how much fun we're having."

In this era of heavily choreographed performances where artists often concentrate more on a cue for a backing track than they do on the audience, Damn Yankees' approach is refreshing. What you see is what you get — each night is different. They're not rock 'n' roll rocket scientists; they're not going to add a new genre to the world of music. Damn Yankees' range may be relatively narrow, but they can drop kick anyone within those lines.

"The focus of The Damn Yankees hasn't changed

since the beginning," Nugent states. "The beginning was so uninhibited that I think we all wanted to safeguard that uninhibitedness by ignoring it. And by ignoring the structure of what we do, all we're doing is accumulating time and playability together."

"The reason this band exists is because the three of us were sick and tired of people around us trying to analyze what we should do," Blades concurs. "So we said, 'Wait a minute, enough of everything. How about we just do what's inside of our hearts

up in their bunkers. It's great.'

"I would call us some heavy patriots," he adds.

"That's why we call ourselves the Damn Yankees, because we play American rock 'n' roll," Nugent exclaims. "We have a really patriotic attitude, not only in our normal lifestyles, but when we're playing our music as well."

Their normal lives are about as far removed from rock 'n' roll as could be imagined. While Nugent has always been fiercely anti-drugs and alcohol throughout his career, both Blades and Shaw have only recently adopted that lifestyle. They all have families; Nugent even has some teenagers on the home front. "When I'm not rocking, I'm not rocking," he says without a hint of embarrassment.

For Shaw, the success of Damn Yankees comes with some irony. His former band Styx reformed after several years of hesitation, just around the time the Yanks were beginning to really bond. And Styx is also currently enjoying a Top 20 hit with their single "Show Me The Way."

"I tried for a couple of years to mend the fences that remained unmended for five years or so, but we were never able to get in the same room together," Shaw recalls about his days in Styx. "Even though personally we all made up and everything, some of the ways of doing things never really changed. The thing I like about Damn Yankees is that we don't meet in attorneys' offices."

"And by the time those guys were ready to start working together again, we were well into it — it was our first day in the recording studio. And even though at that time Styx might have been more of a sure thing, this was more of a sure thing as far as my heart was concerned, and what I wanted to do and what I could see myself doing for a long time."

Later, alone after the show, Nugent is more blunt about the reason why Shaw is more content working in this particular outfit. "I went, 'Man, Styx ain't putting this guy's semi-Caucasian rhythm to use very often. This guy's got soul,'" he says. "At the risk of talking behind people's backs, I'll just go out on a limb here, just tell you what I think. I think Ted Nugent's the best thing that ever happened to those guys. They wanted to be shit kickers, and they couldn't be in their bands. And I don't know where else they could have got the license. I am the license to go wild."

True enough. Nugent's hectic spirit and go-for-the-gut attitude may give the band its bite, but Shaw and Blades' wonderful harmonies and down-to-earth stance definitely act as the group's anchor. In Damn Yankees, the whole far exceeds the sum of its parts.

"It's sheer luck," Nugent admits. "Nobody could have explained it to all the participating parties that this is why it's gonna work. We got together, we jammed and felt the excitement. And we pursued it, and here we are. It's an uncontrollable force. We're lucky that we got it, and we haven't even started. The songs on this next record — it's gonna be gruesome. Skirts are gonna get way shorter when it comes out."



## "I am the license to go wild."

and do what we know how to do best? And then we'll let the American public decide whether they like it or not. And of course America has really embraced the Damn Yankees' music, which is really fortunate, but I mean that's the key to this whole thing, and that's what we will keep doing. It's about music, it's about rock 'n' roll, it's about playing, and it's about singing, and it's about having a good time."

"And short skirts," adds Nugent mischievously.

One place where Damn Yankees are rapidly gaining fans is the Persian Gulf, where many soldiers have embraced the song "Damn Yankees" as a battle cry.

"I've been getting bunches of letters from different members of the troops over there," Nugent says. "And I tell you, when I stay up late at night and read those letters and some of the sentiment that these guys are conveying... They're saying that when they go to the front lines, they put on 'Damn Yankees' and play it as they're approaching the Kuwaiti border. You've got to love that."

"We sent about 200 tapes to them, and hats," Blades adds proudly. "We have pictures back of the guys wearing Damn Yankees stuff, and our posters

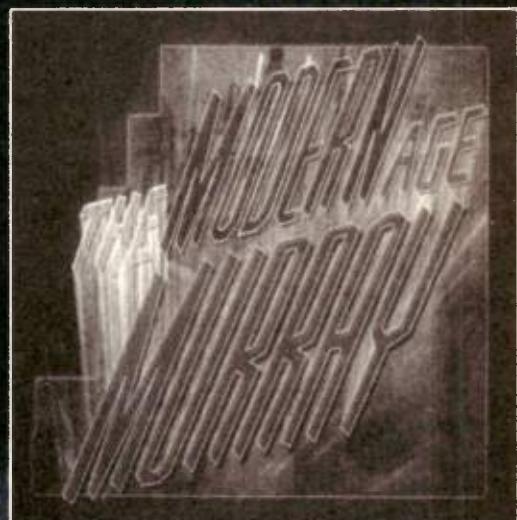
# MURRAY McLAUCHLAN THE MODERN AGE

"This song is a conversation between a native North American child and mother. The child makes observations about the world and the mother tries to deal with these observations as best as she can.

The child is questioning the frightening changes taking place in the world and the mother has only comfort to give, not answers."

**THE MODERN AGE** is Murray McLauchlan's 17th lp, but in spirit and content, it could be his second or third. Re-united with co-producer Ken Friesen (**Hard Rock Town, On The Boulevard**), **THE MODERN AGE** is a celebration of the lean rock-acoustic prowess that established Murray as one of our most renowned musical voices. It's a work of many rewards, one of which is Murray playing all the guitars himself as part of a four-piece band he developed playing various little places in a low-key manner over the last year, letting the character of his new songs grow to a gritty, seasoned maturity.

A lot of us grew up with Murray's songs, and in an age of style over content, there will always be room for craftsmanship and quality.



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# BACKBeat

NEWS AND REVIEWS OF MUSIC, FILM AND VIDEO

## NEW RELEASES

### HAVANA 3 A.M.

#### *Havana 3 A.M.* I.R.S.

From the very first sounds of screeching car brakes, followed by crisply pounding drums and wonderful twanging guitar, it's very hard to resist the retro charms of *Havana 3 A.M.*, couched as they are in some of the slim-

plest, strongest rock 'n' roll songs that have emerged in a while. The band was started by former Clash bassist Paul Simonon and fellow Brit Nigel Dixon, but their stroke of genius was the addition of Texan guitarist Gary Myrick. The result is American blues travelling from the southern U.S. to England and back again, with a couple of pitstops in Jamaica and Havana, or maybe New Mexico. The influences are clear as day, but that doesn't make this music obvious or cliched in the least. Simonon's love of reggae was

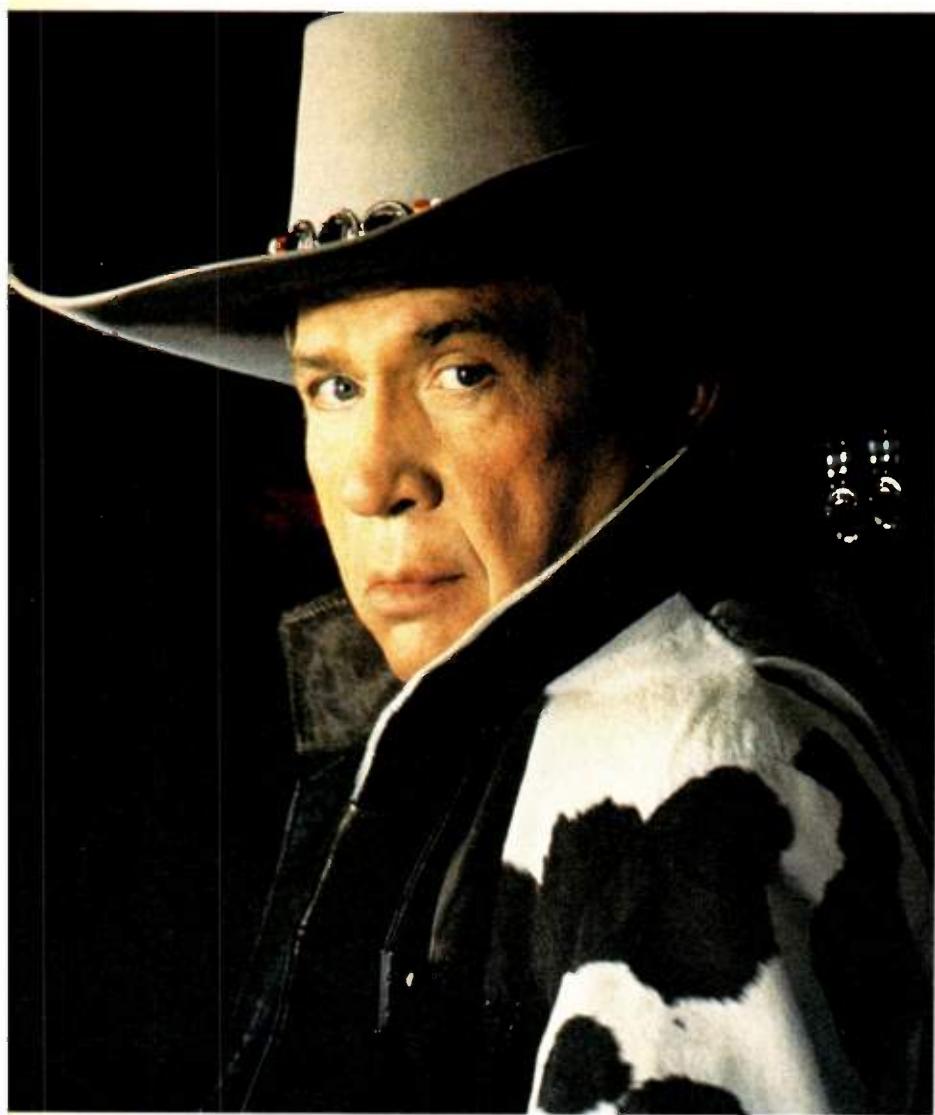
evident during his time with The Clash, but here Myrick's Ventures-style surf guitar slides, screeches, twangs and glides its way around the rock, Latin and reggae rhythms to make the whole thing hang together. Lyrically, the album leans toward traditional romantic fantasies of fast cars and motorcycles, sunsets and señoritas. "Joyride" ("Burn that fuel! Speed that motion! Joyride that car!") could be an undiscovered '60s classic, if it weren't for the heavy punk guitar, while "The Hardest Game" could be a lost Clash song.

"Blue Motorcycle Eyes" features an almost Hendrixian blues treatment, and elsewhere cheesy Latin horns and bits of gunfire and Spanish dialogue are mixed in as well. In a way this is a very solid heir to The Clash; in another way it's its own unique hybrid.

*Mary Dickie \*\*\*\*1/2*

***** Indispensable
**** Consistently Strong
*** Good But Flawed
** For Fans Only
* Play At Own Risk





BUCK OWENS: IN AND OUT OF LOVE.

## NEW RELEASES

### DREAM ACADEMY

#### A Different Kind Of Weather Reprise

Anglo trio Dream Academy first surfaced back in 1985 with a catchy hit single, "Life In A Northern Town," and a self-titled album heavy on precious psychedelia. This is just their third record, but writing and recording this kind of overblown, pretentious material is clearly time-consuming. Former Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour is back on board as co-producer (he also plays some guitar), and the core trio of Nick Laird-Clowes, Kate St. John and Gilbert Gabriel is supported by the obligatory drum and keyboard programmers. The result is the sort of multi-layered extravagant sonic mush dished up by the likes of Tears For Fears and Art Of Noise, and this is married to Laird-Clowe's wispy voice and banal pseudo-romantic lyrics. Yes, we get "sheets of rain," "trains pulling out" and the predictable environmental message song, "Forest Fire" —

"a hole above our heads letting the sunshine in." As if in recognition of their deficiencies as songwriters, Dream Academy cover two songs by real songwriters, John Lennon and Tim Hardin. Is it coincidence that they are both dead and so unable to object to the D.A. treatment? Certainly, Lennon's "Love" is cruelly violated via the addition of a dance track and wailing vocal chants; this version earns the unenviable distinction of being even more unlistenable than the remake of "Give Peace A Chance." Given the world situation, its pacifist lyrics may make it a hit, but let's hope this *Different Kind Of Weather* blows away with nary a trace.

*Kerry Doole \**

### AMBITIOUS LOVERS

#### Lust Elektra

For a guy with no technical command of the guitar, Arto Lindsay has had an impressive career. He first throttled his untuned Danelectro in the late '70s with No-Wavers D.N.A. and served concurrently as the Lounge Lizards' original guitarist. Since then he's consort with the Golden Palominos and Bill Frisell, among others. *Lust* is the third album by the Ambitious Lovers, Lindsay's partnership with keyboard genius Peter Scherer and a vehicle for his longstanding fascination with Brazilian music. (It's more than dilettantism; Lindsay grew up in Brazil and annotated David Byrne's Brazilian-pop compilation *Beleza Tropical*.) The Lovers' early work was an engaging hodge-podge of percussive experiments and more accessible stuff, but on *Lust* — with a guest cast including guitarists Marc Ribot (Tom Waits, Lounge Lizards) and Nile Rodgers (Chic), jazz-funk bassist Melvin Gibbs and Brazilian veterans Caetano Veloso and Nana Vasconcelos — everything is nicely integrated. The title cut slips effortlessly from funky, riff-driven verses into moonlight-on-Rio choruses, both punctuated by Lindsay's tactful guitar screeches. There are covers of two Brazilian tunes: a digital updating of Jorge Ben's Afro-inflected "Umbabarauma" and a poignant rendition of the ballad "E Preciso Perdoar," sung by Arto with only Scherer's piano for accompaniment. The brightest gems are "Make It Easy," an upbeat disco-skronk workout which should be a dancefloor smash (as "Let's Be Adult" and "Love Overlap" from the earlier albums should have been) and

"More Light," a low-key nocturne about sexual anxiety (I think) with a backward-masked piano solo and a luscious chorus that makes Sergio Mendes and Brazil '66 safe at last for hip people.

*Tim Powis \*\*\*\**

### BUCK OWENS

#### Kickin' In Capitol/Curb

Buck Owens' *Kickin' In* is a 10-song album — or, more specifically, it's a 10-love-song album. Half of the numbers are written by Owens himself, and the other half are penned by others, not including one collaboration (Buck with Dennis Knutson). Although this allows a number of perspectives on the nature of the four-letter word, the ones that ring most true are Owens' own. Somehow, he can get away with corny lyrics like "She was fire, she was ice/She was naughty, she was nice... She was silver, she was gold/She ran hot, she ran cold" to describe a hit and run love affair on "Did Anybody Get The License Number?" You wince, but you wince with him, not at him. He's in love, he's out of love, and it must be spring, because the sap's flowing fast. "You & Me & Love" presents a Garden of Eden fantasy filled out with the wonderfully Nashville voice of Lisa Silver, who helps out elsewhere, not only on background vocals, but also on fiddle and violin. The sad, slow "Never, Never Land" threatens menacingly with overorchestration, but never manages to cross that line. *Kickin' In* is pure country distilled by a onetime truck driver — a good ole boy making some good ole music.

*Steve Marshall \*\*\*\**

### DREAM ACADEMY: MULTI-LAYERED EXTRAVAGANT SONIC MUSH.



# McGUINN'S SOARING WITH HIS ACCLAIMED RETURN



## ROGER McGUINN

McGUINN



BACK FROM RIO

### BACK FROM RIO

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- ROLLING STONE SYNDICATED REVIEWS

Tom Petty appears courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. Elvis Costello appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc. Michael Penn appears courtesy of RCA Records. Chris Hillman appears courtesy of Curb Records.

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BUSTIN' FUNKINESS  
TO MATERIAL.

## NEW RELEASES

### THE KNACK

#### Serious Fun Charisma

Like some old warhouse returning from an extended busman's holiday, Doug Fieger has reincarnated The Knack and produced the same good-time pop rock sound that spiralled "My Sharona" to the top of the charts in 1979. With original guitarist Berton Averre and bassist Prescott Niles also in tow (new drummer is Billy Ward), and Don Was handling the production, *Serious Fun* lives up to its title with a selection of hook-driven songs and infectious melodies. Fieger and Averre attack their task with relish, dishing out driving guitar lines and simple but effective lyrics that make for perfect Top 40 radio fodder. The lead single, "Rocket O' Love," "Let's Get Lost," "Shine" and the title track are especially catchy. There's nothing pretentious here, just simple, solid power pop stripped to the basics. The Knack even work the rhythm line for "My Sharona" into "Rocket O' Love" to kickstart people's memories. Indications are that

they'll lose that "one-hit wonder" tag, with *Serious Fun* showing the possibility of doing some serious chart damage.

Keith Sharp \*\*\*

### MATERIAL

#### The Third Power Axiom/Island

At first listen, this album sounds a bit lightweight, kinda laid-back to the extreme. But then you realize that's because the bass is so incredibly huge that it actually dwarfs the drums. Interesting concept, too, because this album is a selective history of cutting edge black innovative music since the '60s, blended together into a well-integrated collage that includes Sly Dunbar, Robbie Shakespeare, The Jungle Brothers, Shabba Ranks, Herbie Hancock, Henry Threadgill, Jalil of The Last Poets, and the cream of P-Funk (Bootsy Collins, Bernie Worrell, Garry Shider, Gary "Mudbone" Cooper, Michael Hampton and the Horny Horns). These super-heavy cats create an incredible palette of flavors that combine to make *The Third Power*, which is a separate entity that exists only as a result of a

brilliant vision of producer Bill Laswell. Bootsy singing Hendrix' "Power Of Soul," the P-Funk cats reunited for a chilling remake of Funkadelic's classic "Cosmic Slop," The Jungle Brothers rapping about "Playing With Fire" with help from Bootsy and Mudbone, a James Brown-type workout with The Horny Horns — each song here is a classic both on paper and on wax. And the best part is that it kicks so hard and smooth. It's impossible to describe how deep this album is, on levels from booty-bustin' funkiness to the serenely sublime, but suffice it to say that it's one of the most important albums of the year.

Peter Wetherbee \*\*\*\*\*

### THE THROBS

#### The Language Of Thieves & Vagabonds Geffen

Just when American hard rock seemed to be held hostage by shaggy-haired poodle poseurs from L.A. and a legion of Aerosmith and Guns N'Roses clones, along comes this breath of fresh air. This New York-based quartet (which includes a Canadian and a Swede) may have the hair, make-up and clothes of a standard glam band, but their sound is a wonderful mongrel hybrid of some of the best '70s and '80s punk and hard rock — Alice Cooper, Hanoi Rocks, Lords Of The New Church. Rather than just sticking to a contrived formula, The Throbs play

with a loose passion that stresses spirit over sterile sonic perfection. The production team of Bob Ezrin and Dick Wagner proves an inspired choice for this debut album, as Ezrin combines the trash esthetic of the work he did with Alice Cooper with the extravagantly over-the-top sound (keyboards, female backing vocals, even a 15-piece orchestra on "Dreamin'") he got from another client, Pink Floyd. When he links these two strains on a ballad like "Ocean Of Love," the result is far more entertaining than all those nauseatingly wimpy, bic-flicking "power-rock" ballads out there. Singer Sweetheart (shame about the sappy nickname) has a pleasantly versatile rather than rafter-rattling set of pipes, but it shines on the stand-out cut here, "Only Way Out." In a just world, this will be every bit as big a hit as "Sweet Child O' Mine." Nearly six minutes long, it has an epic feel, a catchy chorus and great arrangements. Elsewhere, The Throbs' influences are sometimes too easily apparent. "Ecstacy" is straight out of the Hanoi Rocks catalog, while "Underground" worships at the altar of The Lords Of The New Church. But what the hell. Steal from these guys and at least the odds favor a fun, loose rock 'n' roll party. Start Throbbin'!

K.D. \*\*\*\*

### ROGER McGUINN

#### Back From Rio

Arista

If timing is everything, then Roger McGuinn has picked the perfect moment to release his first solo album since *Cardiff Rose*. The Byrds are back in focus, having been inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame and achieving critical success with their highly acclaimed box set release. And McGuinn himself seems to have revitalized his creative juices in order to produce an album that's as appropriate to the '90s as his 12-string Rickenbacker guitar was to the mid-'60s. And to some degree he's succeeded, although *Back From Rio* seems to have been recorded with a safety belt attached around his midriff. Maybe it's a case of too many cooks, but the collective talents of Tom Petty, Elvis Costello, Michael Penn, Dave Stewart and Byrds David Crosby and Chris Hillman tend to clutter up the arrangements as much as they add to them. You get the feeling that McGuinn would have been much better off left to his own devices. That's not the case in all instances, though. Petty merges wonderfully into the production of "King Of The Hill," and song contributions from Costello ("You Bowed Down") and Jules Shear ("If We Never Meet Again") fit it with the record's general flow. Still, for the most part, it seems as though McGuinn is not prepared to take a chance for fear of hurting The Byrds' currently positive ambience. For what it is, *Back From Rio* is certainly recommendable, but McGuinn is capable of so much more.

K.S. \*\*\*

### THE FIXX

#### Ink Impact

As the old saw goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And if you completed the thought with, "If you can't fix it, throw it away," that would just about tell the whole story of The Fixx. Since scoring hits ("Saved By Zero" and "One Thing Leads To Another") off their second album, *Shuttered Room* (1983), the band has fiddled and diddled and whittled away at themselves trying desperately to recapture the formula for success. Over the years they've turned up the keyboards and turned down the guitars, cranked up the guitar and cranked it down again; all to little avail. Their songs flounder from giddy, pathetic attempts at rocking out to ill-considered, poorly executed stabs at emotional balladry. On *Ink* the fact of The Fixx's inability to replicate what can now only be recognized as the fluke it was is finally, unavoidably evident. The Fixx was always broke — now they're bankrupt.

Perry Stern \*

## NEW RELEASES

### AARON TIPPIN

You've Got To Stand For Something

RCA

It's a pleasure to note that the best young traditional country singer to emerge in the last six months does not, in fact, wear a hat. Aaron Tippin does, however, sport a tattoo and pecs that testify to serious gym hours, and his pedigree (rural South Carolina, working in a mill) as a potential honky-tonk hero is impeccable. He first made his mark as a songwriter (Mark Collie's hit "Something With A Ring To It"), which comes as a surprise, given the gut-wrenching integrity of his own voice. Aaron's acknowledged musical influences are the likes of Lefty Frizzell, Hank Williams and Ernest Tubb, and he does 'em all proud here. The high-pitched vocal style is especially redolent of Hank, and while that may keep Tippin from crossing over as much as some of his peers do, it's sure to endear him to fans of genuine hillbilly country. The title song has garnered plenty of attention as a patriotic anthem for days of war, but it's actually one of the lesser tracks here. Tippin co-wrote all the songs, and many are potential country classics, like the cryin' in your beer ditty "Many, Many, Many Beers Ago" ("just how long she's been gone, I can't say I really know, But it's been many, many, many beers ago"). The familiar themes of lost love, guilt and haunting memories dominate the material, as you can tell from song titles like "She Made A Memory Out Of Me" and "The Man That Came Between Us (Was Me)." Tippin comes up with some

nifty lines and conceits that keep clichés at bay, and this debut album is enhanced by the crisp playing of ace Nashville sessionmen like Lorrie London, Mark O'Connor and Emory Gordy Jr, who also produces. The only real flaw here is the record's miserly length — just nine songs and 26 minutes on the cassette. But *You've Got To Stand For Something* certainly heralds the arrival of a man to watch.

K.D. \*\*\*\*

### JONI MITCHELL

*Night Ride Home*

Geffen

Like her similarly single-minded countryman Neil Young, Joni Mitchell has long eschewed the twisted turns of musical trends and charted her own course over the years. Unlike Young, she's followed the same path for the last 15 years, incorporating a subtle fusion of jazz/rock into her literate (sometimes verbose) folk/pop songscapes. Since her collaboration with two late great bassists, Charles Mingus and Jaco Pastorius, in the late '70s, Mitchell's music has been dominated by intricate percussive rhythms and sexy, sinewy bass lines. She makes no departure on *Night Ride Home*. And since marrying bassist Larry Klein in '82 there has been disappointingly little variation from her devotion to sometimes jazz-, sometimes blues-shaded, deeply poetic meanderings. Mitchell's words are still alarmingly vulnerable and self-revelatory ("I am not some stone commission/Like some statue in a park/I am flesh and blood and vision") but her music has become undemanding and predictable.

P.S. \*\*1/2



JONI MITCHELL: STILL THE SAME PATH, BUT IT'S HER PATH.

### MALCOLM McLAREN PRESENTS THE WORLD FAMOUS SUPREME TEAM SHOW

*Round The Outside! Round The Outside!*

Virgin

Throughout his long and unfailingly notorious career, Malcolm McLaren has made a name for himself by discovering, molding and "presenting" bands, manipulating (brilliantly, it must be said) the music industry's publicity machines and taking most of the credit for any success himself. That's not to say he isn't responsible for exposing some great bands and great musicians to the public, though. And on his "own" albums, he has often juxtaposed numerous styles of music in previously unheard-of ways. *Duck Rock*, for instance, was a close to brilliant concoction of rap, reggae, rock and African influences (long before *Graceland*, too), although the actual performers were

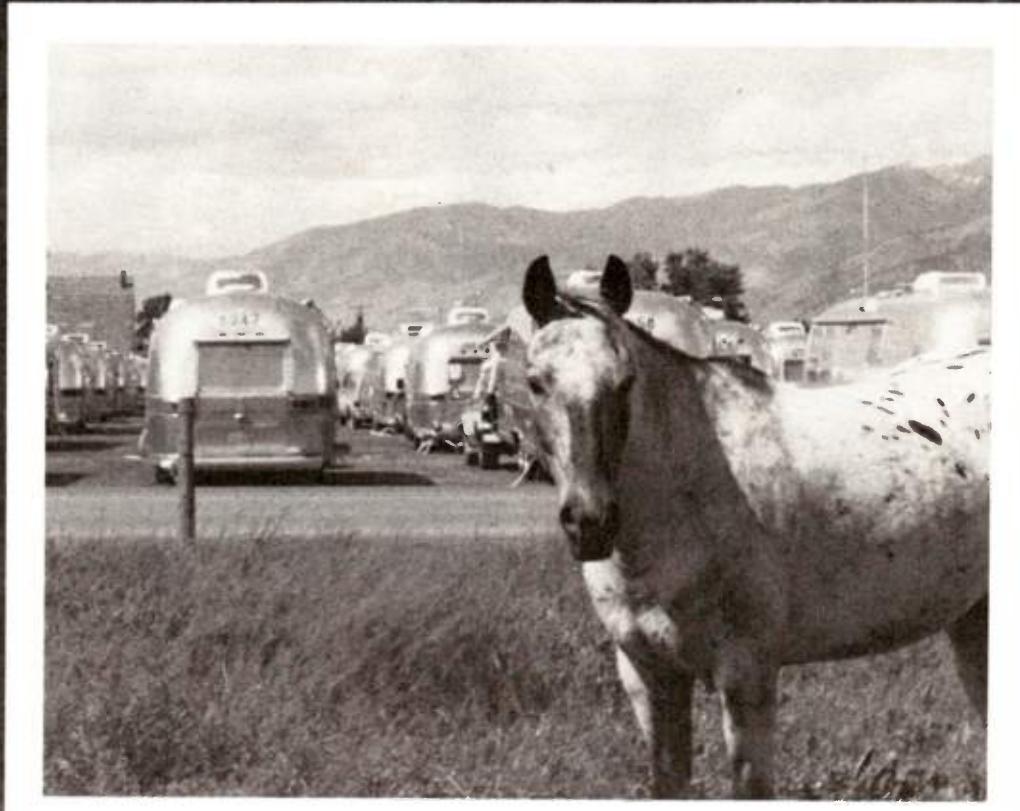
shamelessly uncredited. *Fans* added opera to the mix, although somewhat less successfully. It seems, however, that for *Round The Outside! Round The Outside!* he's run out of ideas — it's basically a rehash of *Duck Rock* with the addition of a weak Shakespearean theme. He even reprises "Buffalo Gals," as well as lifting bits and pieces from elsewhere on that album and placing them in a different context here. At least he gives credit to the performers this time, though, who include Grandmaster Caz, DJ Aladdin, Dominique, MC Hamlet and Mona Lisa Young, singing the opera bites. "II Be Or Not II Be" is a decent rap performance by MC Hamlet that takes off from that particular speech from *Hamlet* (although McLaren, perhaps unwilling to state the obvious, doesn't credit him, either). Elsewhere, "Romeo And Juliet" sports a sample of The Pointer Sisters' "Fire," and "Un Coche De Agua Negra" includes a cleverly used sample of Aretha's "Spanish Harlem." But in spite of several good songs, this album is on the thin side musically, lyrically and thematically.

M.D. \*\*1/2

THE WORLD FAMOUS SUPREME TEAM SHOW: AT LEAST MALCOLM CREDITS THEM THIS TIME.



# THE TRAGICALLY HIP



1991 MCA RECORDS, INC.

## ROAD APPLES

The New Album Features "Three Pistols," Anticipates The Band's Spring Tour  
And Defies Description On MCA Compact Discs, HiQ Cassettes And Records.

MCA

## NEW RELEASES

### DAVID LEE ROTH

*A Little Ain't Enough*  
Warner Bros.

Diamond Dave is the essence of rock 'n' roll, because rock is all about attitude, and he has it in buckets. It's the hair, the look, the implied naughtiness, the sleazy videos, the cliched quotes in the rock mags. David Lee Roth is larger than life because real life isn't about being a rock star. It's about paying off mortgage payments, working 9 to 5 or getting shot at in a Gulf war. Dave is big because to many he provides escapism not reflected by most one-dimensional rock stars. As a matter of fact, Roth is one of the few contemporary performers who actually know what the word "star" actually means. It means not necessarily being a great singer (which he isn't) or being a great lyricist (which he isn't either). It's having so much attitude that this one strength totally overrides the obvious flaws. When he bursts into "Oh I say mama, living ain't a luxury" in the lead-off title track, you almost have to laugh at his chutzpah. It's Dave's tongue-in-cheek attitude that makes this release so much more appetizing than his last outing, *Skyscraper*, which got lost in its own seriousness. Helped along by Vancouver producer Bob Rock and a strong support cast of sidewinders, Roth sticks to his basic rock swagger, with "Hammerhead Shark," "40 Below" and "Shoot It" delivering the blood and guts. He plays around a little with some off-beat cuts like "Sensible Shoes" and the smoky "Tell The Truth," but he keeps these diversions to a minimum. Van Halen fans may still shed a silent tear for what may have been, but Dave's having too much fun to get lost in nostalgia. This is Roth circa 1991, and he's obviously loving every minute of it.

K.S. \*\*\*\*

### TAD

*8-Way Santa*  
**Sub Pop**

Broken homes, CB radios, truck-stop tarts, reckless driving, bourbon and beer — these are a few of Tad's favorite things. Hailing from *Twin Peaks* country, along with many of the other sludge-thumpers on Seattle's Sub Pop label, this foursome — led by a massive man-mountain of a singer-guitarist named Tad Doyle — has a serious fixation with the trappings of White Trashdom. But Tad don't bother trying to glamorize that life. In "Jack Pepsi," Doyle spins a yarn about drinkin' 'n' drivin' with his buddy in a 4 X 4, crashing through the ice on a frozen lake and

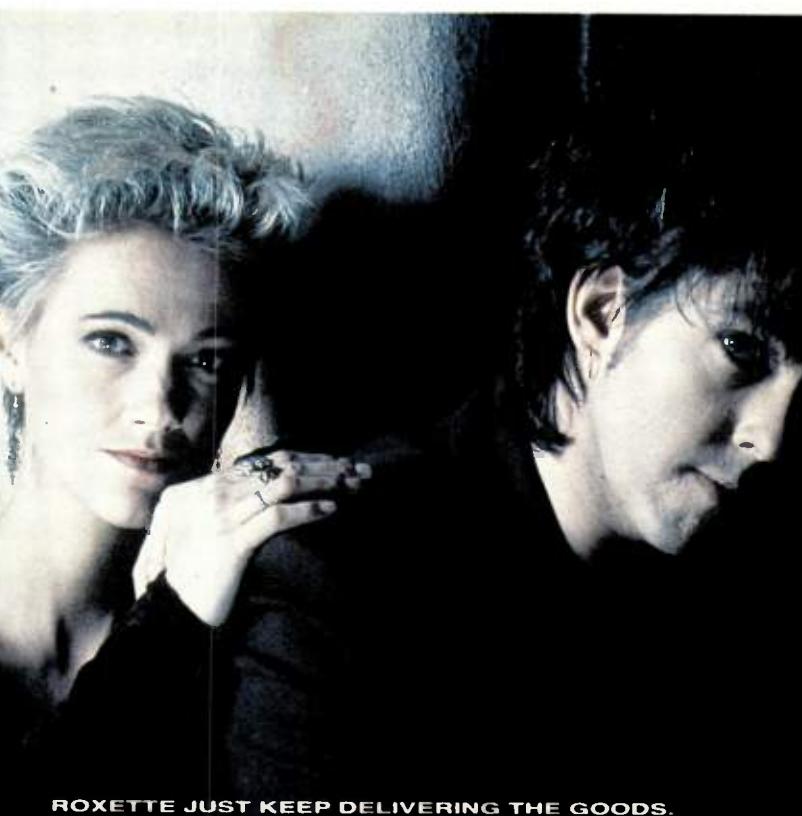
"freakin' out" as the water pours in. (End of yarn.) In "Trash Truck," he poses the philosophical question: "Where does my garbage go when it is dead?" (Have you checked the dump, Tad?) "Crane's Cafe," which begins with an Ian Astbury-ish "Yeah-yuh!", is a tale of cozy domesticity: "My wife don't know where I'm at/My daughter blew her brains out/My shadow scares the cat." *8-Way Santa*'s slow-burning oil-drum fires are stoked by monolithic, minor-key pulverizer riffs — think of what Black Sabbath would've sounded like if they grew up in a trailer camp in the shadow of Mt. St. Helens and listened to too many *Killdozer* records. All told, these amoral, dead-end spuds administer an effectively bleak antidote to Johnny Mellencougar's Forgotten-American romanticism.

T.P. \*\*\*

### DEVINE AND STATTION

*The Prince Of Wales*  
**Rockville**

Alison Statton gained fame in certain circles for perfecting post-emotional cool pop in the late '70s as the singer for Young Marble Giants. Ian Devine, unlike the late movie star, never gained notice for wearing women's clothing on the silver screen — in fact, his pugilistic background makes it unlikely that he's even done so in private. In any case, the pair would seem to hail from exceedingly disparate lands. Their common ground, however, is particularly fruitful. While everything cool is cool again, this pair flashes obvious intimacy with its whys and wherefores, as well as its techniques. Statton was pulling the cocoon of languor around herself when latecomers like *Everything But The Girl*'s Tracey Thorn were still perfecting the pogo, and even nestled in Devine's comparatively lush orchestrations, she's still the focus. At their best (notably the platonically lustful "Under The Weather" and "Like A Blind Man," where Devine joins in with flat, homey harmonies), they marry minimalism and floridity to startling effect. Hired hand (and ex-Tuxedomoon mastermind) Blaine Reninger helps matters with his thankfully ennui-free string arrangements. Most likely to draw attention to the band, though, is their DNA-in-reverse condensation of New Order's "Bizarre Love Triangle." In this negative-image rendition (with just acoustic guitar and Statton's cry-



ROXETTE JUST KEEP DELIVERING THE GOODS.

talline pipes), they prove the unthinkable — that the unwieldy pop hit is a damn fine folk tune! The regal title is appropriate to be sure, but behind the finery you'll find a host of surprises.

David Sprague \*\*\*\*

### ROXETTE

*Joyride*  
**EMI**

If their North American debut release, *Look Sharp*, had spawned just one single, it would have been easy to write Roxette off as one-hit wonders; another power-pop duet with Swedish accents for an exotic marketing slant. Yet after the initial breakthrough of "The Look," Per Gessle and Marie Fredriksson kept on delivering the goods. "Dressed For Success" and "Dangerous" kept fueling sales past the five million mark, and Fredriksson further displayed her vocal prowess with the powerful "It Must Have Been Love," a major hit on the *Pretty Woman* soundtrack release. Now, in response to the supposed sophomore jinx, Roxette has released a follow-up that's even more energetic and wide-ranged than their debut. The title track is a can't-miss rock romp with all the hooks and inflections of "The Look," only this time sharpened to a fine edge. Then there's "Spending My Time," which gives Fredriksson ample opportunity to showcase her melodic vocal prowess, and "Fading Like A Flower," which contains all the properties of a power-pop ballad — slick yet unpretentious. Add to this a zesty rework of "Soul Deep" and a

number of other highly palatable offerings, and you've got a duo whose talents are obviously world class. A joy-ride worth taking.

K.S. \*\*\*\*

### GREAT WHITE

*Hooked*  
**Capitol**

Here we go again. Cover graphics with naked woman being terrorized by shark — another juvenile play on words by a band who's outlook on rock is pretty juvenile. Great White topped the charts last time out by vandalizing a classic Ian Hunter song ("Once Bitten Twice Shy"). It may have brought them into the spotlight, but only the most hardened fans will give them credit for originality. With a lead singer (Jack Russell) who tries so hard to sound like Robert Plant without actually turning into *Kingdom Come*, and a support cast prepared to blast away at rudimentary hooks in the name of rock 'n' roll, Great White are at best bombastic. The lead-off track, "Call It Rock N' Roll," is as basic as it gets, with little to set the group apart from the pack — little originality, little in the way of a production hook and nothing special in the arrangements. *Hooked* only gets interesting when Russell cranks up the Zep factor and goes for a bluesy feel to "Cold Hearted Lovin'" and the more restrained "Heartbreaker." It remains to be seen, though, if anything here emerges with the power of "Once Bitten." The pickings here are pretty slim.

K.S. \*\*1/2

## IN PRINT

By Bill Reynolds

Let's examine the pulse rate of the Jimi Hendrix industry. Twenty years after the guitarist's death on September 18, 1970, the book division is as alive and well as Hendrix himself is

It's tempting to balk at the reverent fawning, but Hendrix was no ordinary superstar. In five years, from his discovery in New York in '66 to his untimely death in '70, he defined the modern electric guitar. But deification is risky at best, and nowadays some of his progeny (like Eddie Van Halen, Steve Vai and Eric Johnson) embody the emo-

onward.

The appendix of record releases is exhausting to wade through. For example, it's handy to know which bootlegs provide the undoctored versions of the songs bastardized by slimy producer Alan Douglas on that nefarious pair of posthumously released albums, *Crash Landing* and *Midnight Lightning*. But

rock stars like Steve Winwood, Eric Burdon, John Mayall, the Soft Machine and The Who — a bonus for dedicated Anglophiles.

Mitchell reminisces with the disposition of an imp, and his good humor carries the stories. He isn't a whiner like Redding, who has dwelt bitterly on lost revenue, and he's fairly candid about

his level of musicianship. He admits that his percussive counterpoints to Hendrix's guitar explorations were often overdone, but he says it was partially because Chandler demanded the recordings be finished as quickly as possible.

In contrast to Shapiro and Glebbeek, Mitchell says Hendrix's stint at his Woodstock retreat in 1969 was not productive, and certainly not any great herald of things to come. He calls the band that played the Woodstock festival, which included Larry Lee on guitar and Billy Cox on bass as well as a couple of conga players, "probably the only band I'd ever been involved with that simply did not improve."

The two books find common ground in bucking the recent trend of knocking '60s lifestyles. The women bedded, the drugs consumed and the aberrant personality traits, all multiplied during extended periods of road work, are seen as shelters from the boredom rather than immaturity out of control. Hendrix,

all too tellingly, is quoted as saying, "What I don't like about being on the road is that you only remember each town by the broads. Like the blond broad with the mole — she's from Frisco. Things like that." And Mitchell concurs: "I've been asked many times if the debauchery didn't become boring. The answer is no — most entertaining."

An antidote to the pervasive dim view of that decade's shortsighted idealism, perhaps? Or a simple continuation of the myth by those with the most to gain from it? The answer is not to be found in these two books, both of which are worthwhile purchases only for a true Hendrix fan. Murray's paperback, on the other hand, is essential reading for anyone who wants a historical perspective on Hendrix's importance to music, a task justifiably requested a full generation down the line.



JIMI HENDRIX: DEIFICATION IS RISKY, BUT HE WAS NO ORDINARY SUPERSTAR.

dead and buried.

The most cogent analysis of the guitar genius' work, Charles Shaar Murray's *Crosstown Traffic*, was published just over one year ago, and it remains very useful for understanding Hendrix's vast influence over pop since the '60s. Murray's book is also a good deal cheaper than two more recent hardcovers.

*Electric Gypsy*, by Harry Shapiro and Caesar Glebbeek (William Heinemann Ltd.), is easily the most comprehensive Hendrix biography yet attempted. It's a weighty tome, designed for fanatics. Authors Shapiro and Glebbeek interviewed hundreds of people, but the omissions are glaring: Chas Chandler, the ex-Animals bass player turned Hendrix manager; Billy Cox, Hendrix's army buddy and bass player after Noel Redding left the Experience; and Eddie Kramer, Hendrix's recording engineer.

tionally bereft, technically precise, soulless style of latterday guitar players.

*Electric Gypsy* provides oodles of factual detail to back its main claim, that Hendrix's confused upbringing — the result of a wayward mother — caused him to value freedom at all costs. That isn't a terribly earth-shattering thesis — he sang about his version of individuality from the word go, i.e., "Stone Free," the b-side of "Hey Joe," his first British single.

In other words, don't expect either an in-depth study or an Albert Goldman-style sabotage job. The sympathetic text runs 500 pages, followed by 200 more of minutiae, including a Hendrix family tree dating back to 1824 and his Cherokee ancestry. There's an equipment appendix as well, listing all the guitars, amps and devices Hendrix used, from his 1957 \$89 Supro Ozark

generally the authors bludgeon the reader in listing every known alternate take, overdub and erased instruction from the engineer.

The bloated exegesis on Hendrix's classic albums is not illuminating, whereas the pre-Experience history is informative. When the authors attempt a sociology of the hippie scene, they fail to be insightful. After all, they're Jimi freaks, not impartial observers, and they often resort to a kind of cutesy Hendrix-speak, which negates real criticism.

*Electric Gypsy* may be falsely definitive, but *Inside The Experience*, by Experience drummer Mitch Mitchell (Harmony Books), makes no attempt at providing the final word. A collection of interviews with journalist John Platt is wrapped around colour photos, some of which are seen often, others not. There are Hendrix poses with various

**METALLION**

By Eianne Halbersberg

**• Good Old Rock 'N' Roll**

Making waves in New York are **The Throbs**, with their long-awaited debut, *The Language Of Thieves and Vagabonds*. Vocalist **Sweetheart**, guitarist **Roger Ericson**, drummer **Ronnie Magri** and bassist **Danny Nordahl** were receiving press long before they signed a record deal, and a lot of that, says Toronto native Sweetheart, was due to self-promotion.

Prior to Sweetheart's joining the band, the three others had worked together, split and recircled their wagons. Sweetheart, a veteran of the Toronto club circuit, says he came to New York because he was fed up with playing covers. "I met the guys," he says, "and they were looking for a singer. I went home, sold my stuff, came back, it clicked, and here we are two years later with a great record."

When asked to explain the band's appeal, Sweetheart says, "It's real rock 'n' roll. My roots go back to the old stuff — doo-wop, great back-up vocals. I grew up on that, then got into punk, filtered through that and came back to rock 'n' roll. Today's bands all sound the same; my idea was to bring back good old rock 'n' roll, basic, raw, take it or leave it. Instead of complicated readings off a page, we wanted to go back to the feeling."

**• Trimming And Chiselling**

**Kane Roberts** is probably best known as the Charles Atlas-sized guitarist who played accomplice to Alice Cooper touring around the world. His first solo album was all but ignored, despite some great tunes, but with the DGC effort *Saints And Sinners*, Roberts is bound to garner attention as a singer/songwriter and musician. His melodic side is more prominent this time around, and while it would be easy to pin that to contributions from Desmond Child, who produced the record, Roberts says that was not his only motivation in bringing the hit-maker into the project.

"I met Desmond while we were doing Alice's last record," he explains. "I've really liked the stuff he's done. I admit that he is a prestigious, dominating figure in rock 'n' roll, and that everything he worked on has been a hit. I was excited about working with him, but if I had listened to everyone telling me to write with Desmond for that reason, I would have ended up with garbage — if that had been the only thing driving me. These songs were written before we got together, and he helped trim off the fat."

Speaking of trimming, Roberts has chiselled his own frame down a good

50 pounds, and in a case of role reversal, he admits that at one time he did run into stereotyping as a result of his frame — the concept of all brawn and no brain. But, he says, "I was never that concerned with it. Playing with someone as image-conscious as Alice, who's very theatrical, it happens that his outstanding music is often hidden by what goes on onstage. That happened to me as well. I never got into this for critical acclaim, but my ability was overlooked in a lot of ways. I knew it would happen, but most of my re-



SAIGON KICK

views were really good. As far as the critics go, they just do what they do: write their opinions down on paper, have them printed and get paid for it!"

**Metal Notes:** **Dead On** are currently in the studio with new vocalist Carl Fazzitta, who sang on and off with the band in rehearsals and jams for the past two years. He is the younger brother of guitarist Tony Fazzitta, and spent the last two years in **Darkside**, a Long Island club band he says played "cosmic thrash." Also in the studio: **Death Angel**, **Vio-lence**, **Vain** with Davy Vain and Jeff Hendrickson producing, **Tuff** with Howard Benson producing for a pre-summer release, **Venus Beads**, **Anacrusis** and **Immolation**, whose *Dawn Of Possession* is due this summer. Recently released: **Tyketto**'s *Don't Come Easy*, **Sepultura**'s *Arise*, **Roxxi**'s self-titled, **Tattoo**'s *Live Out Loud*, **Heathen**'s *Victims Of Deception*, **Treponem Pal**'s *Aggravation*, **Salgon Kick**'s self-titled, **Badlands**' *Voodoo Highway*, **Mindfunk**'s self-titled, **Heads Up**'s as-yet-untitled five-song EP and the second album from **Tangler**, also untitled at press-time. Touring: **Scorpions/Trixter**, **Bulletboys/Cinderella/Lynch Mob**, **Nelson/House Of Lords**, **AC/DC/King's X**, **Iron Maiden/Anthrax**, **Testament/Slayer**, **Victory**, **Tad**, **Waxing Poetics**, **Barracuda** and **Precious Metal**.

# Super Stars

## BO KNOWS SUPERSTARS



### SO DO:

COLIN JAMES	KARYN WHITE
THE B-52'S	LATOYA JACKSON
SAM KINISON	WAYLON JENNINGS
CANDI	UB40
JEFF HEALEY	KOOL & THE GANG
ALANNAH MYLES	JOHN LEE HOOKER
HENRY LEE SUMMER	THE NEVILLE BROTHERS
RICKY SKAGGS	DAVID FOSTER
JERRY SEINFELD	LEE GREENWOOD
GLASS TIGER	DAVID WILCOX
BILLY BRAGG	BARNEY BENTALL
THE PROCLAIMERS	HONEYMOON SUITE
YOUNG MC	WILSON PICKETT
M.C. HAMMER	FROZEN GHOST
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CD  
HOTLINE

By Rick Clark

Good news: Atlantic Records is finally releasing its **Mott The Hoople** catalogue on compact disc.

Originally a Herefordshire, England, band named Silence, Mott got signed to Island Records by A&R man Guy Stevens, who suggested that they change their name to Mott The Hoople (inspired by a Willard Manus novel) and dump their lead singer, **Stan Tippens**, in search of a stronger identity. Tippens was made road manager (he later worked for The Pretenders), and **Ian Hunter** was brought in to sing and play piano. He was advised to wear shades as part of the band's image enhancement, and it's something that has stuck with him throughout his career. Stevens, in turn, became the band's manager and producer.

With their self-titled 1969 debut, Mott came onto the scene with a ballsy, hard-rock variation of Bob Dylan's *Blonde On Blonde* sound. Sporting a famous M.C. Escher cover, *Mott The Hoople* included some great originals, particularly Hunter's "Backsliding Fearlessly" and **Mick Ralphs'** classic "Rock And Roll Queen," but it also showcased powerful versions of some unusual but hip song covers. Sonny Bono's "Laugh At Me" and Doug Sahm's "At The Crossroads" are wonderful, and The Kinks' "You Really Got Me" gets a high-octane instrumental treatment.

Except for some tedious sections of "Half Moon Bay" (still a fine listen), *Mott The Hoople* holds up as one of the band's best releases. In spite of the noise the album made in critical circles, however, it peaked at only 185 on the U.S. charts.

Mott's second release, *Mad Shadows*, opened promisingly with "Thunderbuck Ram," but except for "Walkin' With A Mountain," the album was a major step backwards, and it was further undermined by its murky production. The next album, *Wildlife*, was even weaker. Its attempts at country and folky flavors diluted the band's strengths.

Much as I hate to say it, the self-produced *Wildlife* makes me think of Spinal Tap's constant half-baked stylistic changes. There are a couple of tracks that almost redeem the album, reminding the listener of what Mott was capable of doing. One of those was a good live version of Little Richard's "Keep A'Knockin'," which was to be part of an intended live album.

With 1972's *Brain Capers*, Mott the Hoople rebounded with one of the great lost hard rock albums of the decade. Released with practically no fanfare whatsoever, *Brain Capers* sank without a trace, like the previous two albums.

Certainly in the decade that produced Styx, Journey and other prefab AOR "rock" concoctions, *Brain Capers* — from the audaciously titled opener, "Death May Be Your Santa Claus," to the closing "The Wheel Of The Quivering Meat Conception" — convincingly drew a line in the sand, revealing most

finest pieces of writing to date. Later, Ralphs parlayed the song into a Bad Company standard when he left Mott to form that band.

"All The Young Dudes" became Mott's first hit, peaking at 37 in 1972. Bowie had first offered the band "Suffragette City," but Mott wanted "Drive

**Allen** split the group because of the band's lack of interest in his material. (Shortly thereafter, Allen formed Cheeks with future Pretenders James Honeyman-Scott and Martin Chambers. They played through 1976, but never recorded.) Mick Ralphs, upset at Allen's departure as well as the band's failure to record one of his songs intended for *Mott* ("Can't Get Enough"), left as well, forming Bad Company with the lead singer from Free, Paul Rogers. Of course, "Can't Get Enough" became a worldwide hit for Bad Company in 1974.

Hunter recruited **Luther Grosvenor** of Spooky Tooth, who used the sobriquet of **Ariel Bender**, and the band went on to put out *The Hoople*, a spotty effort at best. A subsequent concert album, *Live*, from the band's May, 1974, gigs at the Uris Theater in New York, went on to become Mott's highest-charting album stateside. In spite of the numbers and the momentary addition of former Bowie guitarist **Mick Ronson** as a replacement for the departed Grosvenor, though, the band's best days were well behind them.

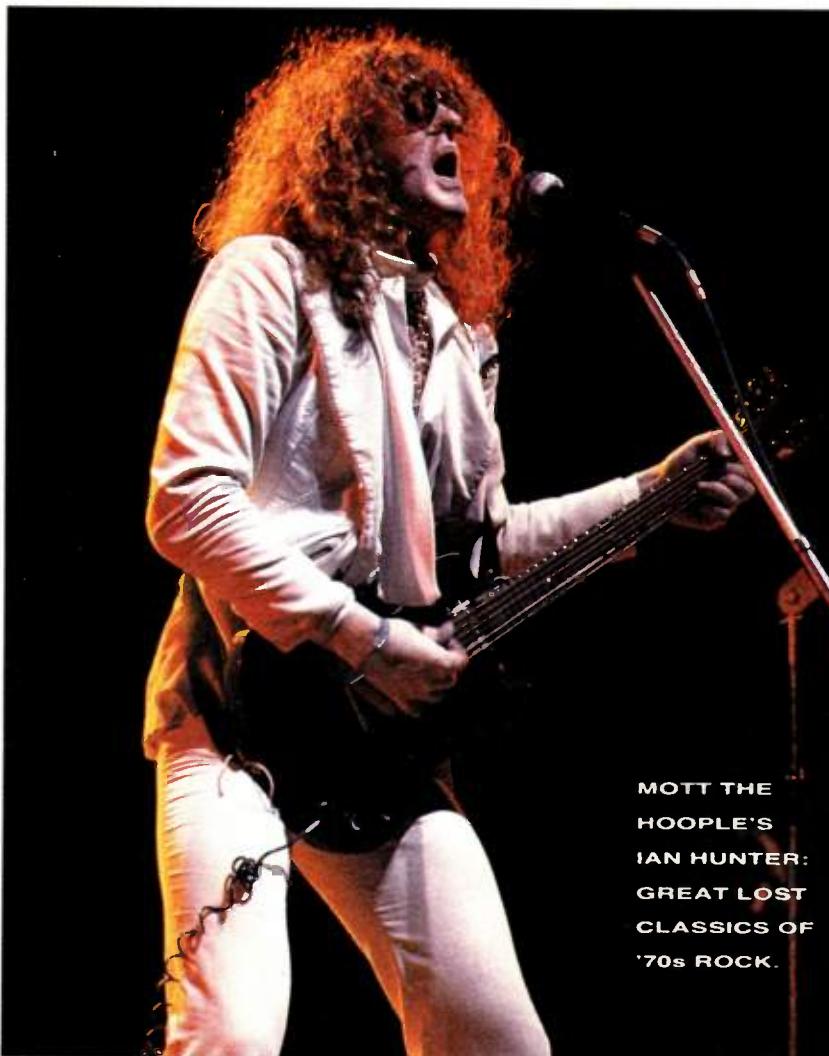
Hunter left Mott, with Ronson in tow, to pursue a periodically successful solo career. Barry Manilow, of all people, had a 1979 Top 10 pop hit with Hunter's ballad "Ships." That year Hunter also charted with "Just Another Night," from *You're Never Alone With A Schizophrenic*.

Meanwhile, the remaining members (**Pete "Overend" Watts**, **Dale "Buffin" Griffin**) attempted to carry on, releasing the marginal *Drive On* and *Shouting And Pointing*. CBS wrapped things up with *Greatest Hits* in 1976.

Of the four Atlantic CD releases, *Mott The Hoople* and *Brain Capers* sound the best. In fact, they rival the sound of good mint import vinyl versions. The CBS discs, particularly *Mott*, sound somewhat muddy, but are passable.

Fans of import CD releases should check out *The Best Of Mott The Hoople — Walkin' With A Mountain*, an 18-song anthology on Island that includes four songs that were only available on the rare vinyl *Two Miles From Heaven* import. The remastering on this collection is very good, giving the overall sound a vibrant quality.

More obsessive fans of Mott's earlier work should check out the Oh Boy Records (no relation to John Prine's Oh Boy label) release *Long Red*. It features a live soundboard mix of the band in Sweden in 1971, and a concert recording of them on Broadway in 1974. The earlier tracks include "Long Red" (a Mountain song), "Thunderbuck Ram," "Walkin' With A Mountain," "Keep A'Knockin'" and "Laugh At Me," while "Roll Away The Stone" and "All The Way From Memphis" are among the later sides. The recording quality is respectable for a live bootleg from this period, and it's much better than many of Oh Boy's other releases.



MOTT THE  
HOOPLES  
IAN HUNTER:  
GREAT LOST  
CLASSICS OF  
'70s ROCK.

everything else out there calling itself rock to be a fraud. Some of that was probably due to the return of Guy Stevens as producer.

Among the album's highlights are versions of Dion's "Your Own Backyard," The Youngbloods' "Darkness Darkness" and Ian Hunter's powerful "The Journey," "The Moon Upstairs," "Sweet Angeline" and the abovementioned "Death...."

Just as the group was about to pack it in because of their amazing lack of public acceptance, **David Bowie** came into the picture. And with the recording of a few cannily conceived songs, containing strong gay allusions (Bowie's "All The Young Dudes" and Mott's own "One Of The Boys" and "Sucker"), Mott went from potential has-beens to avatars of the glam rock movement. CBS snatched them up and released the Bowie-produced *All The Young Dudes*, which contained a version of Lou Reed's "Sweet Jane" and Mick Ralphs' "Ready For Love," one of his

In Saturday," a song Bowie wanted to keep for himself. Fortunately, they settled on "Dudes," and before you could say the words "image makeover," Mott was camping it up, teetering around the stage in makeup and cartoonish platform shoes.

The next album, the self-produced *Mott*, showed that the band had grown to the point of not needing an outside producer. Regarded by many people as their finest album, *Mott* was a loosely conceived concept album about the ups and downs of rock 'n' roll success. It contained two British hits, "All The Way From Memphis" and "Honolulu Boogie." Other highlights were "Ballad of Mott The Hoople," "Whizz Kid," "Violence" and "Drivin' Sister."

In 1974 Hunter published *Diary Of A Rock 'N' Roll Star*, a chronicle of the band's American tour in support of *Mott* that was determined to strip away everything glamorous about rock stardom.

Around that time keyboardist **Verden**

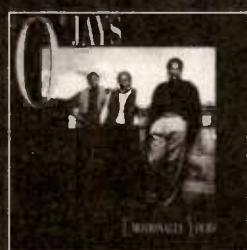
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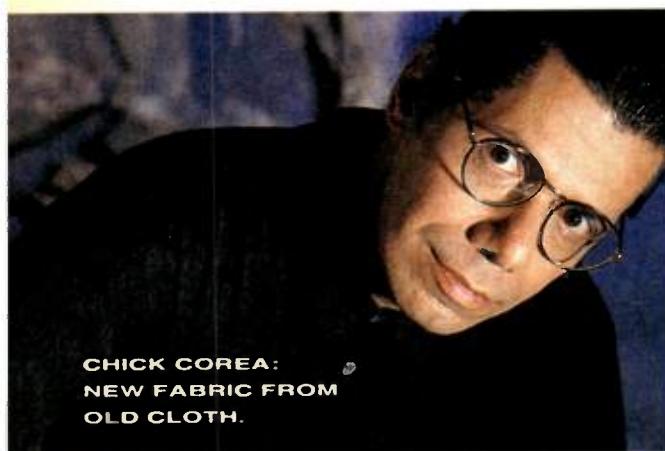
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VIDEO



CHICK COREA:  
NEW FABRIC FROM  
OLD CLOTH.

## JAZZ STREAMS

By Rob Reid

Many a great jazz performance is launched from the bandstand. For this month's overview, we now go live to New York's famed Village Vanguard, the site for J.J. Johnson's dynamo release, *Quinterry*, on Antilles Records.

Johnson, a veteran bopper, began a sabbatical from the club scene in 1970 to compose for Hollywood. Not with a bang but with the blast of a fireworks finale, Johnson returned to regular gigging in 1987, and with almost a year under his belt recorded this quintet date. Just a few moments into the disc, it's clear that everyone was really on for this one. The opener, "When The Saints Go Marching In," doesn't march — it gallops. Johnson wisely balances the fired-up barrage of "Saints," "Why Indianapolis — Why Not Indianapolis" and the title track with mid-tempo material including Wayne's Shorter's "Neftiti."

The arrangements all pay off, and Johnson's command of the trombone needs no gimmickry to get his message across. As well, his like-minded band members — tenor saxophonist Ralph Moore, pianist Stanley Cowell, drummer Victor Lewis and bassist Rufus Reid — all rise above and beyond the call.

If Johnson was away in Hollywoodland for a while, **Chick Corea** might as well have been too, based on the disappointing quality of his releases over the past few years. His **Elektric Band** discharged a lot of adrenalin, but little else, and even his **Akoustic Band** debut of last year sounded like a trio with a taxi meter ticking away outside the studio.

But not so with *Alive*, the new release from the **Akoustic Band** on GRP. There's still plenty of steam to go around, but now Corea and cohorts give some thought to where to go with it. Recorded live in '90 in a mobile studio, *Alive* presents Corea back at the top of his game, weaving new fabric out of old cloth. Standards like "On Green Dolphin Street" are no longer just

songs, but rather adventures high on drama and suspense, with Corea the composer/arranger brimming with inspiration.

For repertoire, Corea also taps Duke Ellington ("Sophisticated Lady," "U.M.M.G."), Monk ("Round Midnight" and a raucous "Hackensack") and a pair from his own pen ("Humpty Dumpty," "Morning Sprite").

John Pattitucci continues his transformation into one of the finer young bassists with a major gig, and only drummer Dave Weckl is still trying to figure out his role in the transition from fusion muscleman to a zen master of mainstream.

Not surprisingly, a new label, Night Records, bases its concept on the live experience. Joel Dorn, a former producer for Atlantic Records, has unearthed a number of live club performances. Besides pianist **Les McCann's** *Les Is More*, this first batch of never-before releases includes saxophonists **Cannonball Adderley** (*Radio Nights*), **Rahsaan Roland Kirk** (*The Man Who Cried Fire*) and **Eddie Harris** (*A Tale Of Two Cities*).

When performances are offered in their entirety, the sense of being there is very convincing. Perhaps mercifully for the listener, material went under the editor's knife. Yet the fade-ups and outs also detract, particularly in the case of the Kirk recording.

The late Kirk was an amazing multi-instrumentalist who never felt he received his due (and he tells you so in no uncertain terms). *The Man Who Cried Fire* tries to get in all of Kirk's facets. The excerpts work as audio documentary, but the music cries to be heard. The best of the batch (with less editing, less talk, more music) is the Adderley blowing session, a soulful, goodtime foray of the kind you don't hear from today's young neo-boppers and neo-classicists — which may change.

At New York's Sweet Basil club, the **Manhattan Jazz Quintet** recently had the crowd undulating the old backbone to Horace Silver's "Song For My Father" and Lee Morgan's "The Side-winder." Soul jazz, with its earthy R&B and funk roots, may be ripe for rediscovering.

While it wasn't recorded in a live setting, one current duo performance on Columbia Records still offers a kind of intimacy and presence to which the listener is privy. **Ross Traut and Steve Rodby's** *A Duo Life*, their second album together, capitalizes on individual musicianship and the remarkable rapport that continues to grow between

the electric guitarist and his bass-playing companion. Their excellent choice of pop and jazz covers and original material forms the basis of an appealing soundscape — one in which nuances, textures and lyricism are paramount.

## SOUL FUNK-TION

By Otis Winthorpe

"Blackout" by **Mr. Fiddler** is a hilarious and musically deep jam that is a funky wolf in new jack sheep's clothing. **Amp Fiddler**, George Clinton's main keyboardist of choice in the past five years, has released this single as a preview of his new album on Elektra Records, and the singing is totally Clinton-style, from the drawling lyrics — which descend chromatically a la **Teddy Riley** — through the crazy pseudo-bebop scatting and chorus vocal chants. And it just might get over on radio!

The new jack camouflage belies the nasty synthesizer squirting licks and wah-wah guitar stuff that's lurking underneath, and this is the most "commercially" viable piece of funk that Otis has heard in a while — let's see some promotion on this!

At presstime, Otis heard that **Bootsy's Rubber Band** and **Bernie Worrell's** band were rehearsing to go on the road with **Deee-Lite**! Apparently, the heavy funk cats are going to back up the DJ/vocal trio, and legendary **Funkadelic** guitarist **Eddie Hazel** is also involved with Deee-Lite. This is very interesting news indeed: if it works out, a major step will have been taken over the bridge that separates the true funk bands of the '70s and the studio-only entities that dominate R&B/dance today. Whatever the funk it comes out like, don't miss this in your town!

Speaking of **Bernie Worrell**, look for his 12" remixes of "B.W. Jam" by **Goh Hotoda**, who has done a lot of mixes for Madonna with Shep Pettibone, among others. "B.W. Jam" is on Invasion Records, although Worrell's album, *Funk Of Ages*, is on Gramavision.

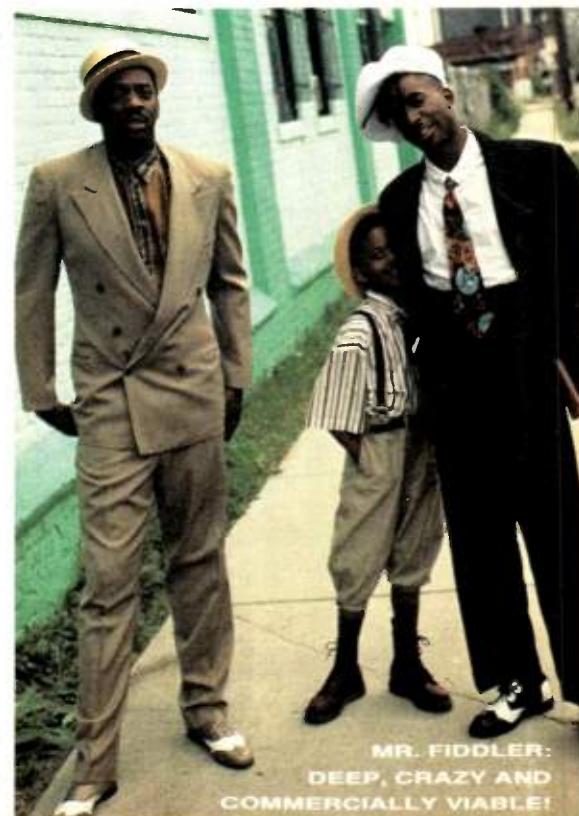
Other inside information Otis is excited to hear is that **24-7 Spyz** have broken up and reformed as two new entities. 24-7 Spyz now consist of heart and soul bassist Rick Skatore and guitarist Jimi Hazel, with

new drummer Ben Orick (formerly of **False Prophets**, among others), and singer Jeff Broadnax, formerly of **Funk Junkies**. Skatore reports that the band is kickin' with this new lineup, and that they have matured from the hardcore side of things into more groove-oriented rock-funk stuff on such new jams as "Break The Chains" and "I'm Not Going."

Meanwhile, the crazy genius that is **Peter Fluid**, former lead singer of **24-7 Spyz**, has now formed the **Fluid Foundation** to keep his vision alive. Keep your ears peeled for new stuff from both groups!

**Mica Paris'** new album, *Contribution*, is a joy. Her silky, rich voice is so sexy — and the grooves are so sweet and funky — that it looks as though this woman is going to be in for the long haul. These Brits really got it going on these days, this being the latest in a line that includes **Soul II Soul**, **Caron Wheeler**, **Lisa Stansfield** and a bunch of others, combining the best of hip-hop production moves, live playing and no-joke soul singing in thoroughly cool sounds. Every jam on *Contribution* is dope and funky.

And finally, on the crazy left-field tip, Otis is gonna drop some praise on **New Kids On The Block**, or **NKOTB**, as they go by these days. It's admittedly a perverse pleasure to be so politically incorrect amidst the massive media backlash, and they may not be as cool as **Bell Biv Devoe**, but they are a lot hipper than the obnoxiously ubiquitous **Vanilla Ice**, because they know where they came from. Hey, they're straight-up **B-Boys**, and they, producer Maurice Starr and manager Dick Scott get Otis' vote. Peace.



MR. FIDDLER:  
DEEP, CRAZY AND  
COMMERCIALY VIABLE!

## CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Live Performance

### ROBERT PLANT

Town And Country Club

London

After the originally scheduled dates were postponed due to the former Zeppelin singer's laryngitis, this eagerly anticipated three-night club gig found Robert Plant in top form, able to hit the high notes of his range with surprising ease. The set list, which fluctuated nightly, featured material from Plant's five solo albums, along with unexpected Zeppelin selections like "Nobody's Fault But Mine" and "No Quarter." In a relaxed and playful mood, Plant peppered his stage chats with local references, and during the encore he wore a ripped Jimmy Page sweatshirt, gently dampening hopes for the rumored Zeppelin reunion. He was highly energetic, frenetically dancing in circles and surrounded by musicians who looked about half his age. Fond as he is of singing on top of his own wailing echo, Plant's voice still sounded credible and urgent, unlike the endless succession of imitators castratos who continue to ape his style two decades after the fact. But what made Zeppelin's best records great wasn't how the songs were sung or written, but how they were played — and the merely adequate, clichéd hard rock musicianship of Doug Boyle and Chris Blackwell sounded comparatively pathetic in comparison to the thunderous power generated by Page and John Bonham. The fact that dozens of bar bands can more closely approximate Zeppelin's blues-based power groove seems beside the point, though; the thrill of hearing "Misty Mountain Hop" or "Ramble On" sung by the original in an acoustically ideal and intimate setting was undeniable.

David Hazan

### PAUL SIMON

Great Western Forum

Inglewood, CA

It may have been a test, but I'm not sure who passed and who failed. It was almost as though Paul Simon, no slouch when it comes to intellectualizing the musical process, was challenging the sold-out audience to recognize where his best music lies, and where it merely strives to entertain on the most undemanding level. After two hours and two dozen songs I left the Forum angry — at myself, for sitting through what was at best a perfunctory performance by an outstanding (and large, with 16 musicians) band, at Simon for his detachment and his manipulation of

the crowd, and at the audience for its sheep-like acceptance of Simon's game. Almost all of his latest album, *The Rhythm Of The Saints*, was performed, as was most of his previous release, the megahit *Graceland*. But the often elaborate arrangements required by those African- and South American-styled songs were poorly served by Simon's habit of wandering about the stage and his lackadaisical vocal delivery. All the new material received the same treatment: a note-perfect reworking of the album track with extended instrumental passages dumped in the middle. There was even an unnecessary (surely Simon wasn't tuckered out after strumming his way through 11 songs) and long new-agey instrumental break led by hornman Michael Brecker. The biggest insult came with the weakest song. "You Can Call Me Al" may have been a hit single, but it's not the best song on *Graceland*, let alone the best Simon has ever written, and neither was it the best that had been performed up to then. You wouldn't know it from the Forum

crowd, though. As soon as the bright stage lights were turned on the crowd they stood and cheered, as soon the chorus came up everyone sang along, and when Chevy Chase joined Simon briefly at centrestage (reprising his video appearance), the crowd went entirely over the top. Maybe Simon felt that his best work was being overlooked for the fluffiest crap and wanted to highlight the inequity with a sarcastic statement. If so, at least one audience member heard it loud and clear.

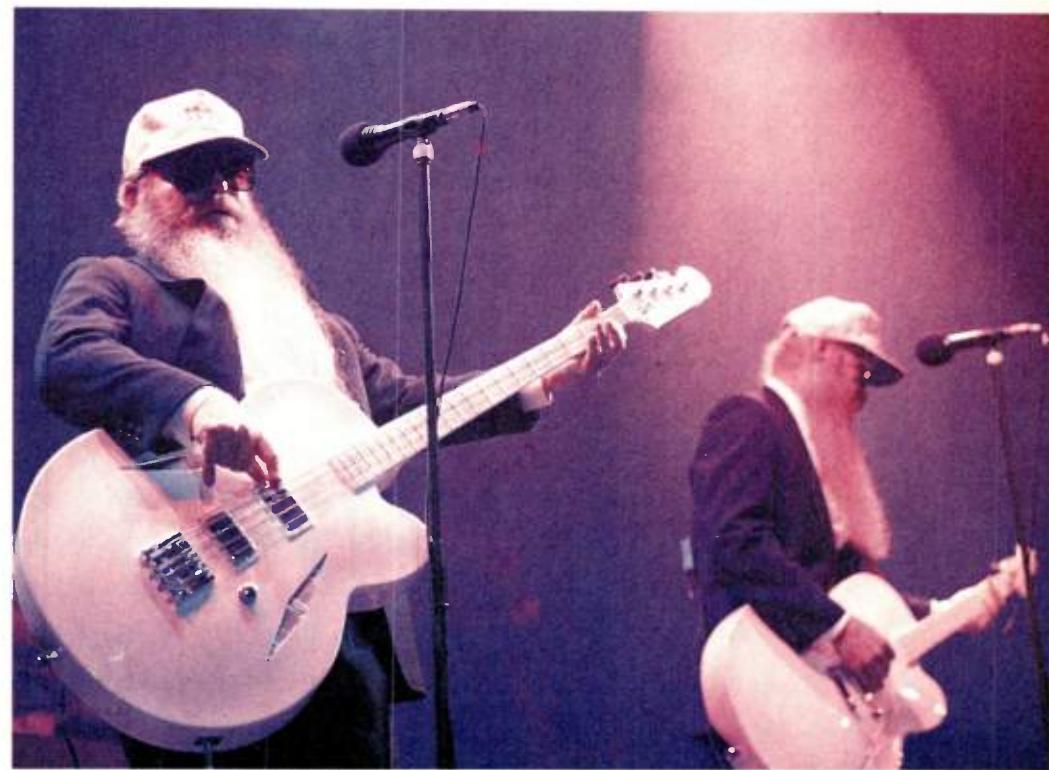
Perry Stern

### ZZ TOP/THE BLACK CROWES

Madison Square Garden  
New York

By performing on a stage that resembles a junkyard and playing songs from their latest album, *Recycler*, ZZ Top is making a comment about the disposability of their music. But it's only a knowing wink and nod, because they're not going to let a heavy-handed statement get in the way of a good time. The band may boast of roots in the rural blues, but their concerts can be out-

landish extravaganzas — on one tour, they carted around live cattle and tumbleweeds. Unfortunately, their current stage production enslaves the band to precise choreography; they also use backing tapes, and though Billy Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Beard have better songs, at times their show veered dishearteningly close to the sterility of a dance-pop concert. The band's recent albums have used drum



ZZ TOP: SUITABLY COARSE AND DIRTY RHYTHMS.

machines and synthesizers, giving their music a rigidity that they can't exorcise, even in concert. Older material like "La Grange" and "Tush" still had swing, but newer songs like "Sleeping Bag" and "Lovethang" were prime examples of the band playing within a robotic groove, rather than defining the groove themselves. On most songs, Gibbons' rhythm lines were suitably coarse and dirty, and his bluesy solos were expressive, rarely overstepping their bounds. The band managed to work in most of their video props, too, including the fuzzy guitars. Openers The Black Crowes have been written off in some circles as revisionist, just another band milking the ragged glory of the Stones and Faces. Singer Chris Robinson does preen and bob like Mick and twirl his mike stand like Rod — but he makes it work. He even made a joke about his pants falling down, undoubtedly in tribute, since Jagger said the same thing on the same stage in 1969. The Crowes played their hits, but had trouble matching the tossed-off feel of their record. You may call them derivative, but no other band is currently playing this music so well; certainly the Stones don't rewrite 'em like this anymore.

Allan Wood

### HAWKWIND

The Diamond

Toronto, ON

If in 1968 the Grateful Dead had gone on the space shuttle (and I don't mean The Challenger), left Earth and spent the last 20 odd years battling the forces of chaos across the universe, they would have landed as Hawkwind.

And land is what Hawkwind did at the Diamond Club, where they performed a blistering show of the best acid rock since overproduction killed the genre sometime in the early '70s. Having at least 32 albums to choose from, the band managed to perform a reasonable selection of their work, beginning with a 15-minute version of "Angels Of Death," and finishing about 90 minutes later with "Reefer Madness." Longtime member Dave Brock kept the show moving with his mix of lead guitar and synthesizer. The connections between each songs made the eight or so numbers seem like one long sonic attack, filled with smoke and a lot of flashing lights. Bass player Alec Davies thumped along and droned the band's galactic lyrics to a mesmerized audience. Even the costume-changing dancer could drone up a storm. This was only Hawkwind's second appearance in Toronto since 1972, and it being such a success, maybe they will come back soon. They should also bring some of the other acts that they play with at their free festivals in Britain and Europe. In fact, why not bring the festivals to North America, so we can all join in on the spirit of the age?

David Kelly

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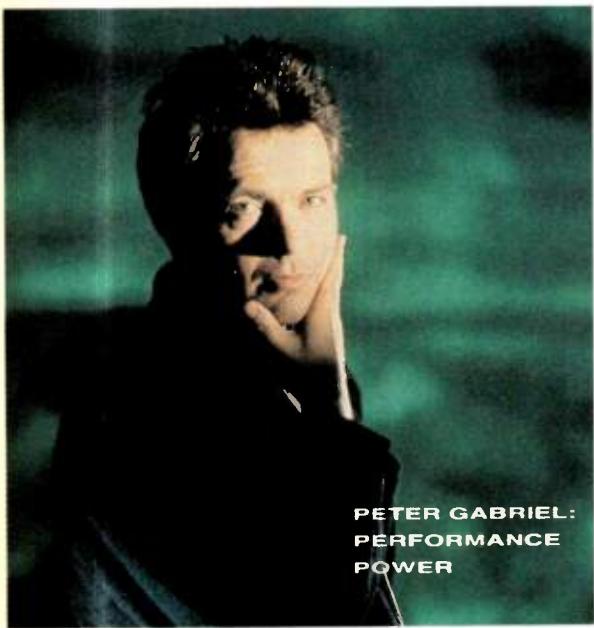
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PETER GABRIEL:  
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## LOOK HEAR

By Kerry Doole

It's been a comparatively quiet period for new music homevideo offerings, with the most prestigious new title due on the market being **Peter Gabriel's POV**. This 85-minute concert video captures the full performance power of an artist who has arguably used theatrical elements to better effect than anyone else in contemporary rock, dating back to his pioneering work as front-man for **Genesis**.

**POV** won't pay much attention to the days of '70s progressive rock, however, but will concentrate on Gabriel's illustrious solo career. Favorite songs like "Sledgehammer," "Shock The Monkey," "Solsbury Hill," "Biko" and "Lay Your Hands On Me" (acted out literally) are all included. The concert setting of the historic Acropolis in Greece only adds to the dramatic power, and the presence of film director **Martin Scorsese** as executive producer is another guarantee of quality. It was, of course, Scorsese who helmed *The Last Waltz*, still one of the best long-form music videos ever made.

Mixed in with the concert and backstage footage is film of Gabriel on a visit to Senegal, homeland of his collaborator, singer **Youssou N'Dour**. Their joint rendition of "In Your Eyes" is one of the many highlights of the tape. Scheduled for an early March release on Virgin, the video carries a suggested list of \$19.98 U.S.

Fans of Gabriel's earlier work can check out *A History Of Genesis*, a 90-minute video documentary just out on PolyGram Music Video. This wide-ranging look at Genesis includes rare footage from the days when Gabriel was their lead singer, as well as more recent clips featuring **Phil Collins** as leader of the band (bland?).

As well as being one of the most in-

novative modern bluesmen, **Robert Cray** is one of the most photogenic, so the video medium has treated him well. *The Robert Cray Collection* features never before seen interview material plus a selection of his best-loved songs. The hour-long tape has a recommended list of \$19.95 U.S.

In honor of the 10th anniversary of **Bob Marley**'s death, PMV is offering three video titles showcasing the revered reggae superstar. *Legend* and *Live* have previously been released, but are now repackaged and re-

priced. Joining them is *The Bob Marley Story, Caribbean Nights*, a 100-minute tape out at \$19.95 list.

Classical music buffs can look forward to two new titles featuring contemporary greats **Vladimir Horowitz** (*Horowitz In Vienna*) and **Leonard Bernstein** (*Beethoven Symphonies 3 & 7*). Each runs around 90 minutes; \$24.95 list.

Finally from PMV comes *Crash & Burn Rock!*, a wacky concept item sure to appeal to the headbanging set. This features quick cuts from '30s and '40s cartoons and B horror movies set to the brain-warping music of the likes of **Cinderella, Anthrax, L.A. Guns, Zodiac Mindwarp** and **Yngwie Malmsteen**. 30 manic minutes for \$14.95 U.S. list.

A well-established favorite amongst heavy metal fans is the *Hard N' Heavy* series. Out now is *Volume 11*, a special, expanded (two hours) edition of this video magazine. Features here take us to England for the kick-off of the current **Iron Maiden** world tour, and to New Orleans for Cinderella's record release party. **The Scorpions** are tracked down in the studio, **Polson** in their tour bus, and there are features on **Steve Vai, Slaughter, Manitoba's Wild Kingdom, Masters Of Reality, Lita Ford and Ian Hunter & Mick Ronson**. Newly signed acts **Reverend** and **World War 111** are profiled, **Led Zeppelin** furnish a "golden oldie" and **Billy Idol** is this issue's Trick or Treat guest. Available at \$19.95 list.

Their recent hit single "Joey" brought **Concrete Blonde** some well-deserved recognition, and Blonde lovers, old and new, can celebrate with a new 45-minute video collection, *Dec. 16, 1986-Sept. 17, 1990*. The 14 songs featured include faves like "Still In Hollywood," "Caroline" and, naturally, "Joey."

Also out on IRS is *Standards*, a greatest-hits video retrospective of Welsh rockers **The Alarm**. Clips include "Sold Me Down The River," "The Stand" and "Rescue Me."

## MONITOR

By Perry Stern

"What did you call it? *Pee-owed?*" Jeff Pinkus asks while barely stifling his laughter. "I've always called it *Plaffa-fla!*" However you say it (the record company suggests the former pronunciation), *Ploughed* is the latest album by **The Butthole Surfers**, one of the last leading-edge avant-garde bands in America. Always provocative, aggressive and unpredictable, the B-holes, guitar-driven psycho-rock hoists its freak flag high while prodding the soft underbelly of society's ills.

Together since 1981, the Austin, Texas-based hardcore art band currently consists of guitarist Gibby Haynes (who handles most of the vocals), guitarist Paul Leary, bassist Pinkus and drummer King Koffy. Their music, a cacophony of screaming guitars and wailing sampled sound effects as a foundation for often garbled, disjointed lyrics, is as enlightening as it can be dumbfounding.

Although the group regularly plays with a backdrop of surgical films (most recently footage of a penis reconstruction operation) and traffic school shock videos running behind them, Haynes doesn't see the group as going in for shock tactics. "We're actually going for a 'Wow' effect," he says. "That kind of thing goes on in life. It's like, 'Why show car wreck films at your show?' I bet every kid who got the shit scared out of him was really careful when he got in his car after the show! I read in a magazine that Edie Brickell went to see one of our shows and sold her Volkswagen the next day!"

As a sort of in-joke for fans, one of the group's more violent songs, "Something She Said To Me," from their first album, has been reworked into a parody of a seemingly light-hearted Jesus and Mary Chain song called, simply, "Something" — a bouncy pop melody concealing the violent, black heart of the song's narrator.

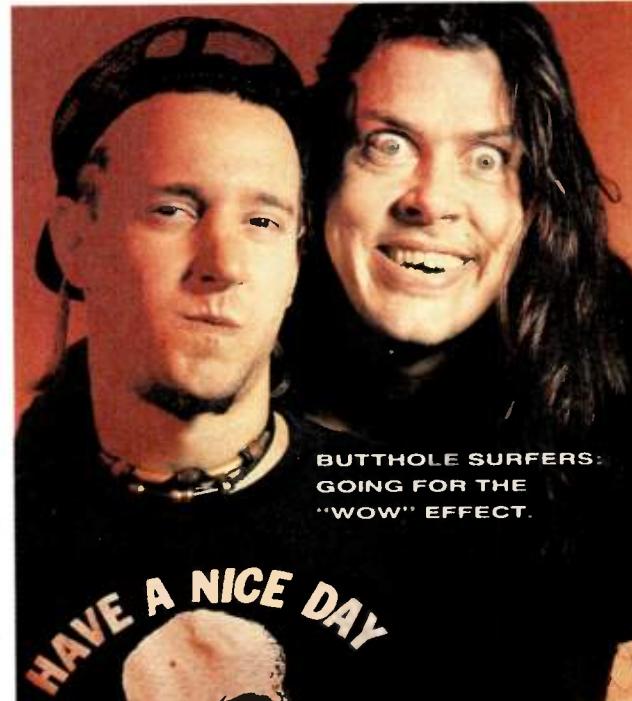
"It's the kind of thing that goes on in this world," Haynes repeats, adding that the song is hardly a defense of the protagonist's actions. "We're more like a reaction to those kinds of things — and you can't help but react."

But the Butholes aren't reacting to a current trend on the music scene. Unlike groups that were regularly mentioned in the same breath, like The Pixies and Sonic Youth, Haynes and Co. have remained aloof from the rush to join a major label. Appearing on U.K.-

based Rough Trade records, the band only recently released their first seven-inch single — a timely re-working of the Donovan classic "Hurdy Gurdy Man." (It topped the U.K. indie charts last fall.) Elements of trendy acid-house grooves appear on that song, but nowhere else on the album. It wasn't the first time the group has recorded a cover version; in fact, they did an exceptional version of The Guess Who's "American Woman" several years ago, but it was hardly a ploy to increase album sales, according to Haynes.

"I'm more or less into the performing, writing and recording end of it rather than the marketing," he says of the decision to release "Hurdy Gurdy Man" as a single. "I don't know nothin' 'bout birthin' no records," he protests. But Haynes is not blind to the shifting trends in the industry. While refusing to compromise the B-holes' sound, Haynes and Pinkus, as **The Jackofficers**, have just released an LP of heavy dance beats called *Digital Dump* (produced by Leary). And the main difference between The Butthole Surfers and The Jackofficers? According to Pinkus (who's still laughing): "Less mistakes."

New Music News: While Manchester's **808 State** have made their reputation on instrumental dance tracks,



BUTTHOLE SURFERS:  
GOING FOR THE  
"WOW" EFFECT.

Bjork from **The Sugarcubes** and Barney Sumner from **New Order** have recorded vocals for the group's next LP... **The B-52's** Kate Pierson will provide backing vocals for several tracks on the new **R.E.M.** album, due this month... Critically acclaimed Brit combo **E.M.F.**, whose import single "Unbelievable" has been a major success on alternative charts, has been signed domestically by **EMI**... Po-mo tour of the year: **Ride** and **Lush**, coming soon to a theatre near you!

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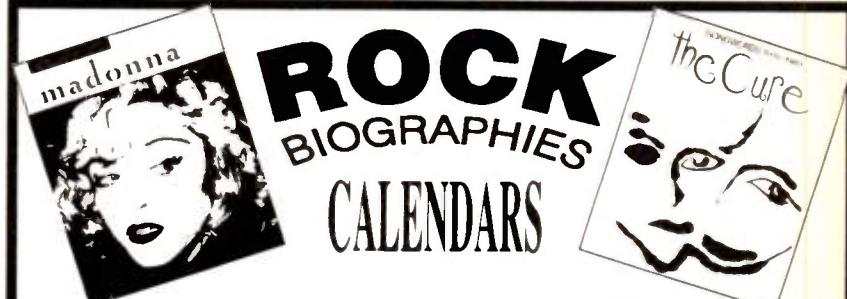
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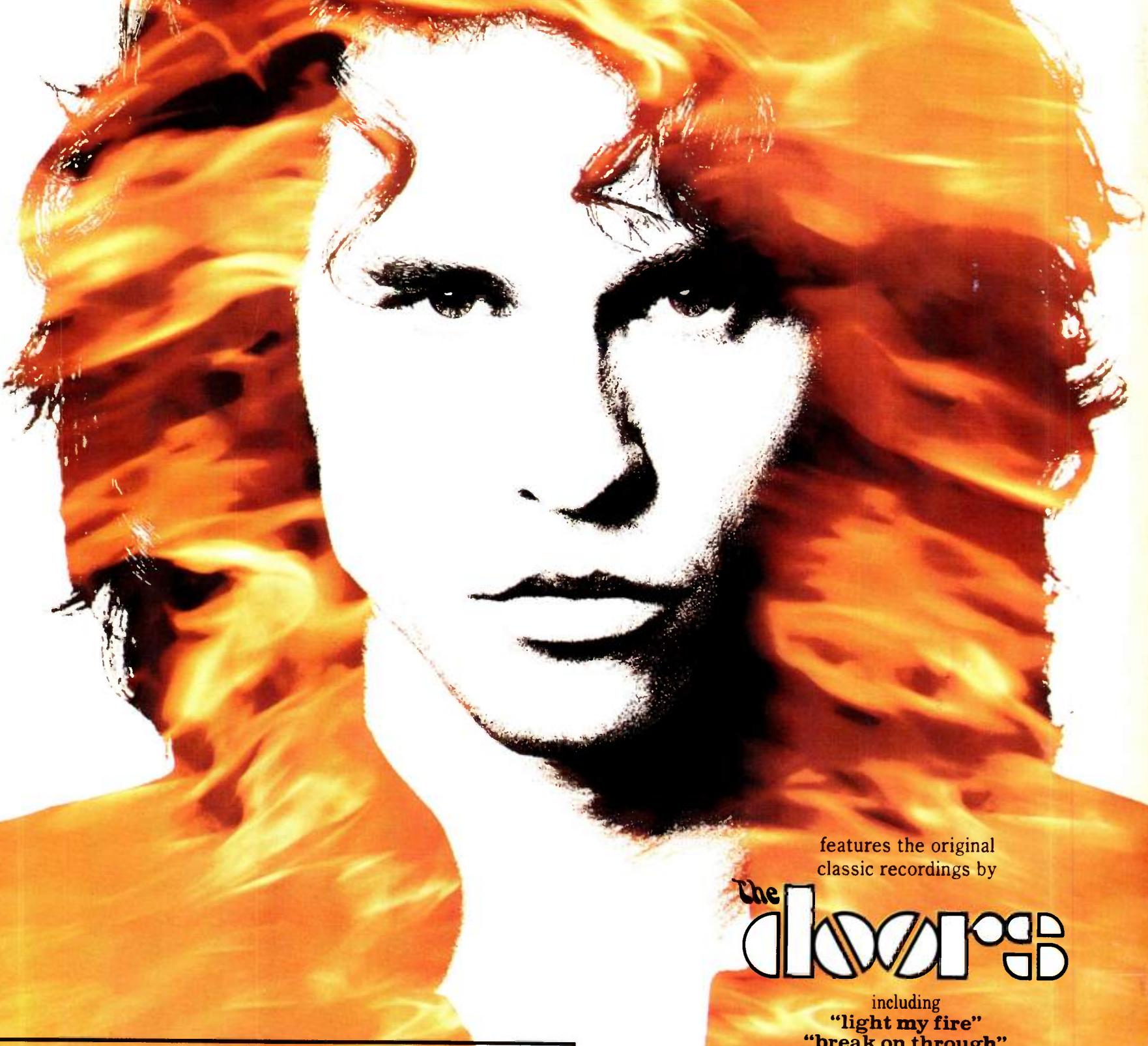
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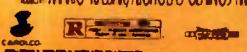
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