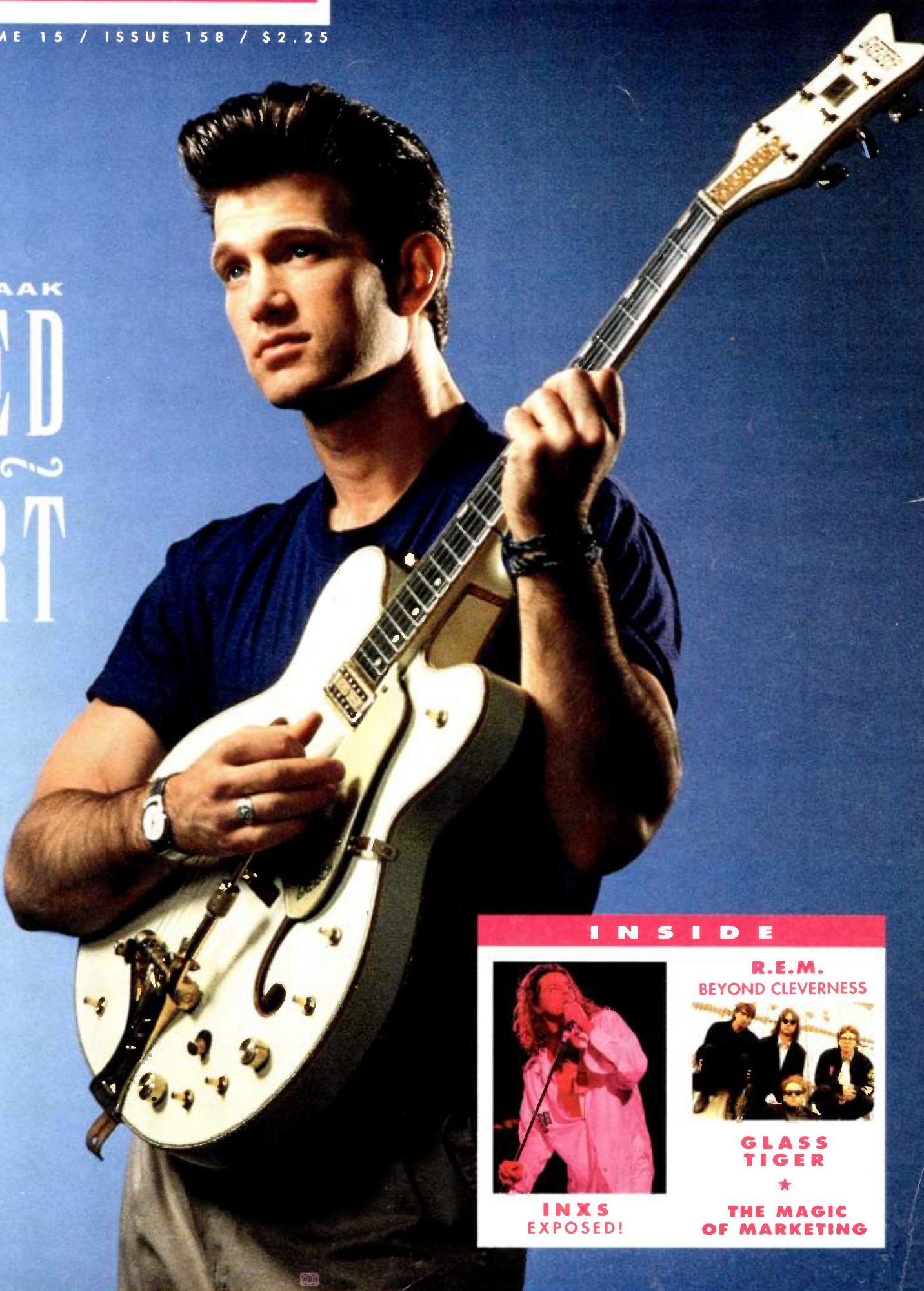


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MUSIC EXPRESS MAGAZINE

APRIL 1991 / VOLUME 15 / ISSUE 158 / \$2.25

CHRIS ISAAK WICKED AT HEART



COMPLIMENTS OF

SOUND WAREHOUSE

INSIDE



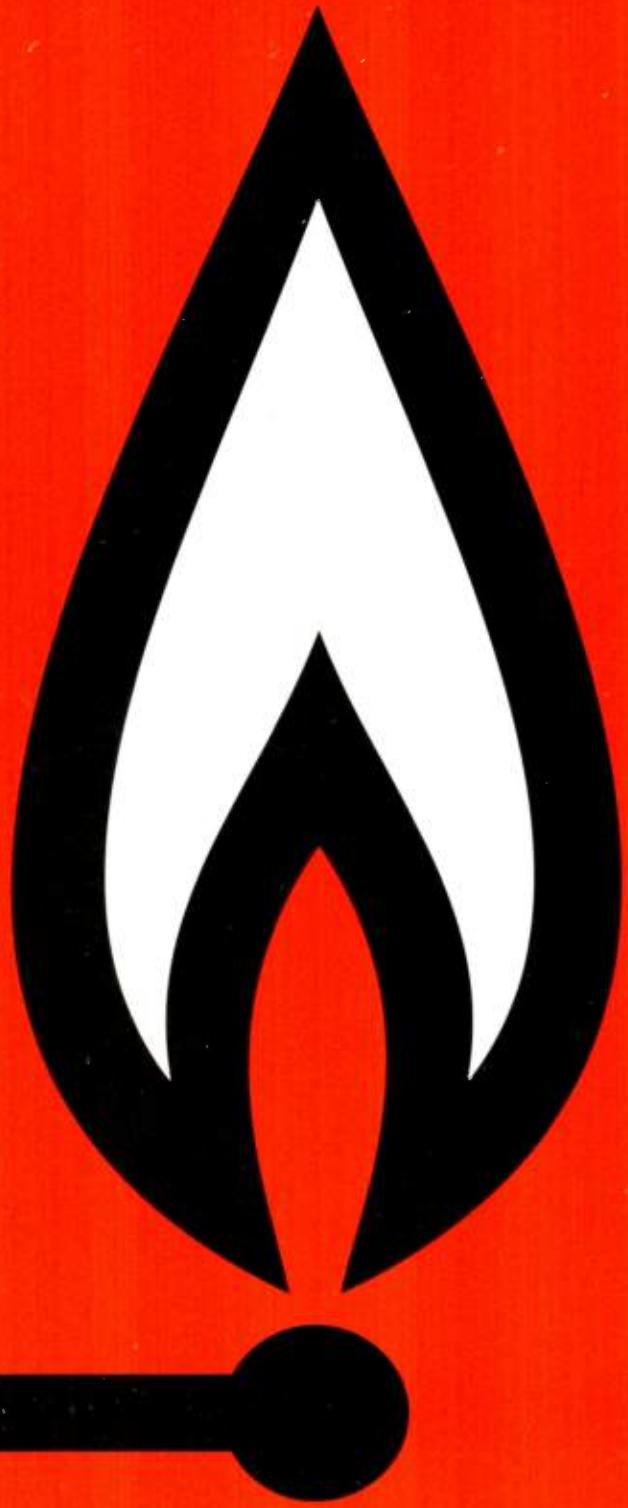
INXS
EXPOSED!



R.E.M.
BEYOND CLEVERNESS

GLASS
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THE MAGIC
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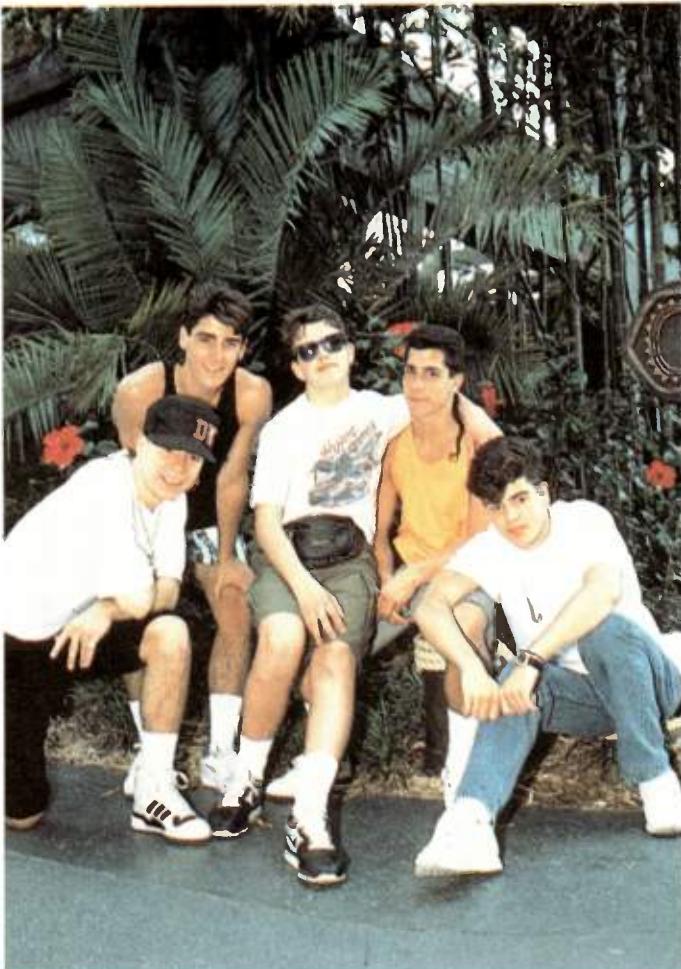
I would like to congratulate you for your excellent article, "The Video Devolution," by Perry Stern (M.E. 156), which was very interesting and insightful.

In the past 10 years, since music videos began, the

led me to ask why they thought they had to use Fab and Rob instead of the real singers. The answer is obvious — because they looked better.

When that kind of thinking comes into play to that extent, that's when the

If it weren't for video, would we even have bands like New Kids On The Block?



music industry has been turned upside down. Popular music has simply become too visual, and image has become all-important for success. Acts like New Kids On The Block, Linear, Tiffany, Debbie Gibson and Kylie Minogue have found success based solely on their appearance and image, thanks to music video channels.

The damage that video has inflicted on the music industry became especially evident at the dawn of the Milli Vanilli scandal. That

music industry revolves too much around what pleases the eye. It is clear that videos have done more harm than good, and that video has "killed the radio star." That is why I commend George Michael and the actions he is taking against the medium.

Your article was excellent, but it did have one flaw. James Ingram did have a video for "I Don't Have The Heart" — I know, because I saw it.

Dimetre Alexiou
Thornhill, ON

Let The Kids Try It!

I read your video article with interest, but I think one point might have been discussed further. What I'm referring to is the fact that there is so much money out there for video,

is going to start looking for different kinds of entertainment than watching haircut bands trying to look moody in their lofts, or metal bands finding spandex-clad models sitting on top of their sports cars.

Joe Kittson
New York, NY

Enopop Rules

I was more than delighted to see your interview with Brian Eno (M.E. 156). It's a real pleasure to read about someone who's intelligent and articulate, and who's actually given some thought to what he puts out, as well as to music in general, instead of the usual "we're in it to please our fans" and "we're a real rock 'n' roll band" crap.

I must admit I am a little disappointed that Eno doesn't want to use lyrics with his music; I think he should perhaps look for a songwriting partner with a gift for words rather than dismissing altogether the idea of putting words together with music. Maybe what he needs is a less cerebral partner; there must be legions of people out there who would love to sing along to Enomusic.

Christine Lypchik
Cleveland, OH

Queen Is For Real

I'm glad that you've been giving some well-deserved support and recognition to the new Queen release. It's about time someone did! The *Innuendo* album is a musical work of art, and deserves to be a major hit. It's time for us to stop giving so much attention to Vanilla "The Thief" Ice and get back to listening to and supporting real musicians like Queen.

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Western Star

YOU MIGHT EXPECT CULT HERO TURNED MAJOR STAR CHRIS ISAAK TO BE AS MELANCHOLY AS HIS MUSIC IS, OR TO HAVE HAD HIS HEAD TURNED BY SUDDEN SUCCESS. BUT THINK AGAIN. THOUGH "WICKED GAME" IS ABOUT AS MOODY AS A SONG CAN GET, ISAAK'S ACHINGLY ROMANTIC MUSIC IS BALANCED BY HIS REFRESHINGLY WICKED SENSE OF HUMOR, AND HIS ORBISON-INFLUENCED VOCAL PROWESS BY AN EQUALY REFRESHING SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE ABOUT FAME AND FORTUNE. **BY KERRY DOOLE**

When a cult hero turns into a major craze, people tend to start losing their heads. There may be definite signs of stress in the Chris Isaak camp these days (after major runarounds, our interview finally was scheduled for midnight one night), but Isaak himself comes across as thoroughly personable, the calm eye in the middle of the publicity hurricane.

"To me and the band, the whole thing has been a party," he says of his surreal trip into the light fantastic. After three albums and years of small-time touring, Isaak has suddenly become the flavor of the moment, scaling the peaks of the pop charts with both his album, *Heart Shaped World*, and his ubiquitous single, "Wicked Game," which struck a nerve with the public long after it was initially released.

"We've been playing in bars and small clubs for a long, long time, and all of a sudden we're going into places that have 5,000 to 7,000 people," he says. "The guy running the place says, 'Where do you want your sidefills [extra stage monitors]?' We're going, 'We've got sidefills?' 'We've all got our own monitors?' We're used to having to find the one monitor of three that works, then huddling around that when we play!"

So who is this hip cat with a fresh musical and visual take on '50s cool and a smash single that has oozed out of virtually every stop on your radio dial for months now?

To some, Chris Isaak has been a star ever since his 1985 debut, *Silvertone*, introduced the young Californian's achingly romantic sound to the world. But he seemed cruelly destined to remain a largely ignored hero. Sure, he could slay them on *The Tonight Show*, score a hit in France (but what do Jerry Lewis lovers

know?) and hear his atmospheric music haunting soap operas, TV movies and David Lynch's bizarre excursions, as well as being covered by the likes of k.d. lang ("Western Star"), but Isaak and his faithful band Silvertone remained out of the limelight, treading the boards on the (primarily) West Coast club circuit. He estimates that he and the band have done 3,000 shows. "We always played, because we had to pay the rent," he explains.

When his third strong album in a row, *Heart Shaped World*, came out in 1989, receiving the standard critical raves yet scarcely nudging the *Billboard* Top 200 chart, you might think they'd have begun sharpening the axe over at his label, Warner Brothers.

But serendipity finally shone on the crooner, and it was avant-garde alchemist David Lynch who held the spotlight. A longtime Isaak admirer (he used two songs off *Silvertone* in *Blue Velvet*), Lynch chose "Wicked Game" as the key tune for his *Wild At Heart* soundtrack, and directed a riveting video for the song. Some influential radio programmers then began playing "Wicked Game," and it slowly picked up steam.

Very few songs have an appeal wide enough for both Modern Rock and Adult Contemporary playlists, but "Wicked Game" is one of them. "My label phoned and said, 'Do you realize you're on this plus this and this?'" Isaak says. "I'm going, 'That's good, right?' I was like a dog. I didn't know what they were saying, but I could tell from the tone of voice it was good! I didn't imagine radio would be crazy enough to play it, it's so weird."

Did he ever feel doomed to cult figure status? "I always worked hard; I never had any intention of giv-



ing up," he reflects. "No matter how confident you are, I don't think you ever know if you'll make it. But I liked it even when I wasn't 'making it' — I thought I'd made it five years ago when I was in a band and had a record!"

To the uninitiated, it may seem that Chris is surfing on the crest of the Lynch wave, but that doesn't bother him. "I like David, and he was gutsy for putting 'Wicked Game' out," he says. "That helped the record get back out there, so I owe him thanks."

Isaak clearly feels an artistic affinity with Mr. *Twin Peaks*. "There are both very romantic and very dark sides in David's work," he points out. "My music is, many times, the opposite of what he is doing. In *Wild At Heart*, he'll take my melodic, romantic music and put it underneath a scene like a car crash or a semi-rape. He's using my music to counter his visuals. I thought it worked; I enjoyed watching it. Call me an art lover or a highbrow critic, but anything that has got Laura Dern scantily clad, I'll watch!"

As for the left-field success of "Wicked Game," Chris accepts it unequivocally. "I guess I'd worry if it was different from everything on my record," he allows, "but it's not a novelty song; it's not 'The Banana Boat Song'!"

Indeed. Anyone seduced by its charms should run, not walk, and buy all three Isaak albums. A voice as lonely as a distant train whistle on a foggy night, melancholy lyrics, spare, spine-tingling guitar, an echoing production reminiscent of the early Sun sound — these trademarks have remained constant in his catalogue.

Though he's been linked to the Bay area scene, Chris' background isn't exactly 'Frisco bohemian. He was born and raised in working-class Stockton; it was an experience he likens to "growing up in Mayberry." Escape at 20 found him on the boxing team at the University of Tokyo, but he soon sensed that professional pugilism wasn't a smart career option.

"It's a real tough racket," he says about boxing. "I'd spar against guys who were almost braindead. Some were nice guys, but they'd stutter — a sign of brain damage. I'd go, 'I don't want to have to have someone explain *Family Feud* to me!'"

Once back in the U.S., Isaak set out as a soloist on the coffee house trail, then assembled his Silvertone trio, comprising guitarist James Calvin Wilsey, drummer Kenney Johnson and bassist Rowland Sallee. He then linked up with producer Erik Jacobsen (The Lovin' Spoonful, Tim Hardin), who now doubles as his manager. His insistence on keeping the same producer and band helps to explain the consistency of Isaak's music. His inspirations throughout, as he's quick to acknowledge, have been country and western and early rock 'n' roll, with a touch of classic crooners thrown in for good measure.

"I appreciate you using the word 'acknowledge' instead of 'rip-off,'" comments Chris, referring to the Sun influence. "Yes, I went to the Sun studio recently. I was really impressed, but if I stood in that room and sang at that mike, it wouldn't make me Elvis Presley. I won't sound that good. I just thought of all those guys — Carl Perkins, Elvis, Roy Orbison — coming there as kids, and just making up rock 'n' roll in the middle of some hot little town when the rest of the country was all Perry Como. Amazing!"

Chris is also enthusiastic about Norman Petty's studio in Clovis, New Mexico, the birthplace of early classics from Orbison and Buddy Holly. "It's not like

they made it into a museum or a shrine — more like they hadn't bothered to move anything," he recalls. "Petty's wife showed me a photo of when Buddy was in there, and it showed these '50s drapes. I looked on the wall and the same drapes were there."

"It's strange to think that all those people should be alive — Buddy, Elvis, Roy, Ritchie Valens, Gene Vincent, Eddie Cochran. They wouldn't be that old. If there was a novel about it, it'd be *Somebody Is Telling Us Something*."

Of the aforementioned pioneers, Orbison is the most apparent influence on both Isaak's vocal style and his love-lorn lyrics, but his ego is held refreshingly in check. As he told one interviewer, "For me to copy Roy Orbison is like telling a 10-year-old, 'If you want to steal the Washington Monument, go ahead, put it in your pocket.' Personally, he was just a very, very nice man. When he met me I had no hits; there was nothing in it for him. When you feel that nobody wants your songs, for someone like Roy to say 'Come over and play your songs at my house' makes you feel you must be doing something right." Other peers were equally supportive; John Fogerty, for example, reportedly interrupted his meeting at Warners to insist that the label do more to push Isaak's music.

Even Madonna's a fan, but maybe she's just trying to tap the secret of Chris' subtly erotic music. Indeed, his albums are favored foreplay for many a midnight merger, and Isaak says he enjoys that image. "I like the idea of people making love to my music," he says. "It's kind of peaceful; I don't think there's anything violent there."

His music, his brooding good looks and his steamy videos are combining to project Chris as the thinking woman's lust object, and the new Herb Ritts-directed video version of "Wicked Game," in which he cavorts on a Hawaiian beach with a gorgeous naked girl, is certainly making pulses race. Tough gig, right? "Sure was!" he jokes. "We'd get a shot done and I'd say, 'I really think we could do a little better with this!'"

The moody, melancholy protagonist in his songs is just part of the Chris Isaak story. In performance and in interviews he exhibits a quick, appealingly sharp sense of humor, and he attributes that seeming contradiction to his family.

"They're pretty serious people, yet really sarcastic, and they make a lot of jokes," he says. "You have to balance it out. If you stay serious, people consider you a pill. They won't invite you to parties, you won't have any fun, you won't get to go on dates! I always do the songs seriously, but between songs? Well, you're in a nightclub with a bunch of people, so the main thing seems to be to have fun. Do you expect me to be all dressed in black, wiping away tears between songs? Some people may like that, but it isn't me."

The titles of Isaak's evocative soundscapes (like "Blue Hotel," "Funeral In The Rain," "Blue Spanish Sky") mirror their genesis. "I'll have a picture of an event, a place, a time — the feel of a place, the weather," he explains. "I need to have that in my head, then I play with them in my mind, and suddenly I'm singing about it. You can't just sit down to think these things out; it's not like homework."

With mood, not explicit meaning, the key to his songs, Chris avoids providing lyric sheets for his records. "I've always felt music doesn't necessarily make good poetry," he says. "The lyrics to some of

the coolest Beatles songs are ridiculous — 'I'll always be true, please love me do.' If someone gave me those I'd think, 'God, what a really bad songwriter,' but with the melody it has meaning, it's real."

Expect Isaak's music to become omnipresent in film and TV scores shortly. It's already been used on *Days Of Our Lives*, which went over in a big way with his grandmother. "I never watch soaps, but I heard about it when she phoned," he explains. "Now I'd been on *Johnny Carson* and toured Europe, but she'd never said a word. Then she called and said, 'I heard your song on my soap. Congratulations!' I guess I'd arrived."

Chris Isaak the actor has also arrived, via cameos in two Jonathan Demme movies, *Married To The Mob* and *Silence Of The Lambs*, as well as Bruce Weber's *Let's Get Lost*. Earlier, he had declined roles in *Blue Velvet* and *Something Wild* (both psychopathic heavies), but he now calls those decisions "a combination of my music and being stupid. I'd think, 'I can't do this, I've booked a gig and I've never missed a gig.' Someone should have hit me hard and said, 'He's a great director. What are you doing?'

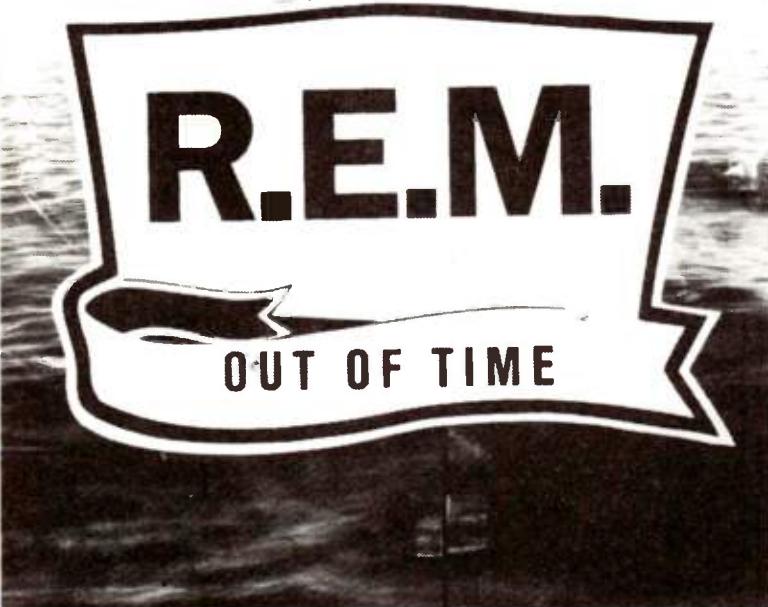
"I'm interested in film now because I've met interesting people and I find it fun," he adds. "I don't know anyone who'd turn down a job where they say, 'I want you to be in a movie, wear these clothes, and pretend to do this.'" Hollywood may have to be patient, though. After his current intensive touring is over, Isaak is expected to record a new album which has already largely been written and arranged.

Chris has the dubious distinction of being named one of 1990's most beautiful people by *People* magazine, and he's done fashion spreads for *Esquire* and *Elle*. But don't dismiss him as a fashion plate masquerading as a rock 'n' roller. His image, reminiscent of '50s cool cats like James Dean, Montgomery Clift and trumpeter Chet Baker (with whom he recorded), still seems as spontaneous and uncontrived as the man himself. Take his photo session with fashion photographer turned filmmaker Bruce Weber, the results of which grace his self-titled second album.

"I was at home in Stockton and this guy phoned and said, 'Hi, this is Bruce Weber, and I'd like to take some photographs.' I said, 'Who are you?' My basic feeling was 'I don't want to do this. I don't know who you are, I'd have to drive someplace, there's good TV on, and my mom is cooking dinner.' But he was a nice guy, so I talked to him. Then I remembered seeing a coffee-table photography book at Warners. I don't buy those kind of books, they're 100 bucks! But I thought they were great pictures. So I said, 'Do you have a book out with pictures of guys swimming, and it's big with blue tinting?' He said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'Sure, you can take pictures.'"

The experience of his years in clubland will help keep Chris Isaak sane amid the craziness of serious fame. "Playing clubs teaches you a good lesson," he points out. "You see what it means to be in show-business. Basically, if you don't like to pick up your amp, haul it down to the gig, play the show and haul your amp out, then you shouldn't be in showbiz."

It comes as a mild shock to learn that Isaak is no lounge lizard on the prowl on his rare nights off. "I don't go out to clubs and bars much, because I don't drink," he says. "I actually get kind of nervous in them — I don't know what to do. That's funny, I know. Other people get nervous onstage, I get nervous offstage!" **ME**

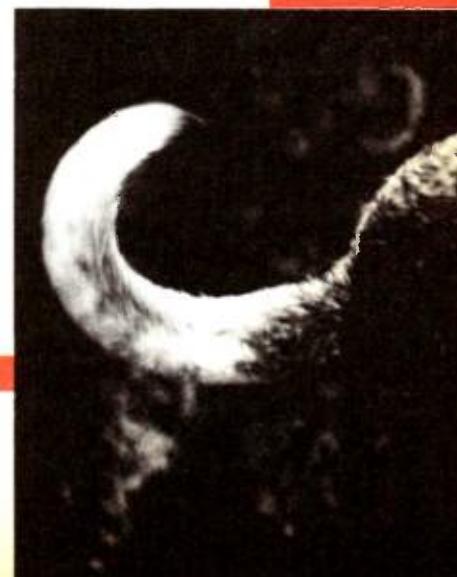


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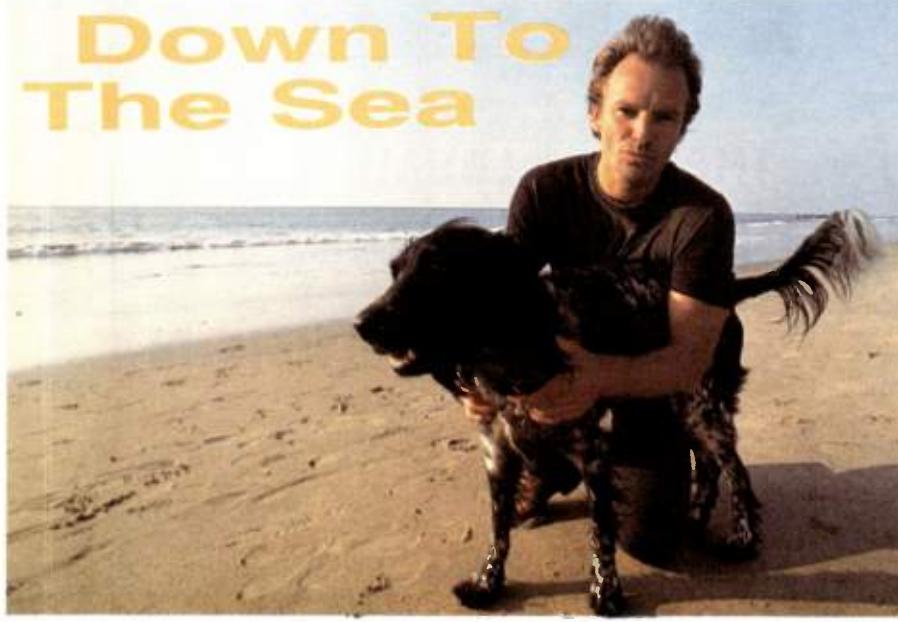


WRH





With its emphasis on the themes of death, loss and regret, *The Soul Cages* represents something of a change of pace for Sting after the vague lyrical meanderings of his previous two albums. But as he explains, following the death of his father, as well as two friends, he found himself completely unable to write lyrics, and it wasn't until he hit upon an image from his childhood that his writer's block ended.



"I'm not one of those people who can write songs with one part of the brain while I'm thinking about something else," he says. "I can't write moon and June if something traumatic is going on."

"I think modern people treat death in an almost offhand way — we almost pretend it doesn't happen," he continues. "It's an enormous concept — that we leave the planet and don't exist anymore — and we need more satisfactory explanations or rituals than we have at present. We're almost childlike in the way we deal with it — it's not somehow real, until it is."

"The fact is that if you suppress these feelings, they come and bite you in the leg. You're punished in some way, and I was punished by not being able to do my job. I couldn't write because I hadn't gone through the right process when my father died. Finishing this record was almost like I'd gone through some sort of ritual that satisfied those dark gods."

In songs like "Island Of Souls" and "The Wild Wild Sea," Sting explores complicated feelings about father-son relationships using recurring images of ghostly ships, rivers and the sea. "The whole album in a sense is about ghosts of the past — unless you give them air, they're always going to be haunting you," he explains. "[Island Of Souls] is about my childhood, about ships as symbols not only of industry but also of death, and the sea as a symbol of the unconscious."

The album's title song continues that theme. As Sting explains, "The Soul Cages is an old British folk tale about how the souls of the dead are kept under the sea by an old fisherman, and in order to free them you have to go under the sea and drink with him. If you drink him under the table the souls go free; if he drinks you under the table he keeps you forever. I think it's saying that to understand death you have to die a little bit yourself. It might say something about drink too, but I'm not willing to go into that!"

Taming Humans

"I've been a vegetarian for 10 years, and I've been an animal lover all my life," singer k.d. lang explains. That sentiment is shared by all the artists who contributed songs to *Tame Yourself*, the recently released benefit album for People For The Ethical Treatment Of Animals (PETA).

Since PETA's inception 11 years ago, it has steadily gained support from rock artists. The organization seeks to establish and defend the rights of all animals, operating under the principle that "animals are not ours to eat, wear or experiment on."

Last year lang became the subject of controversy when she appeared in a commercial for PETA called "Meat Stinks." It angered cattle ranchers in many places, including her native Alberta. "I didn't mean to offend anyone's lifestyle," she says. "I just wanted to bring up awareness and offer alternatives."

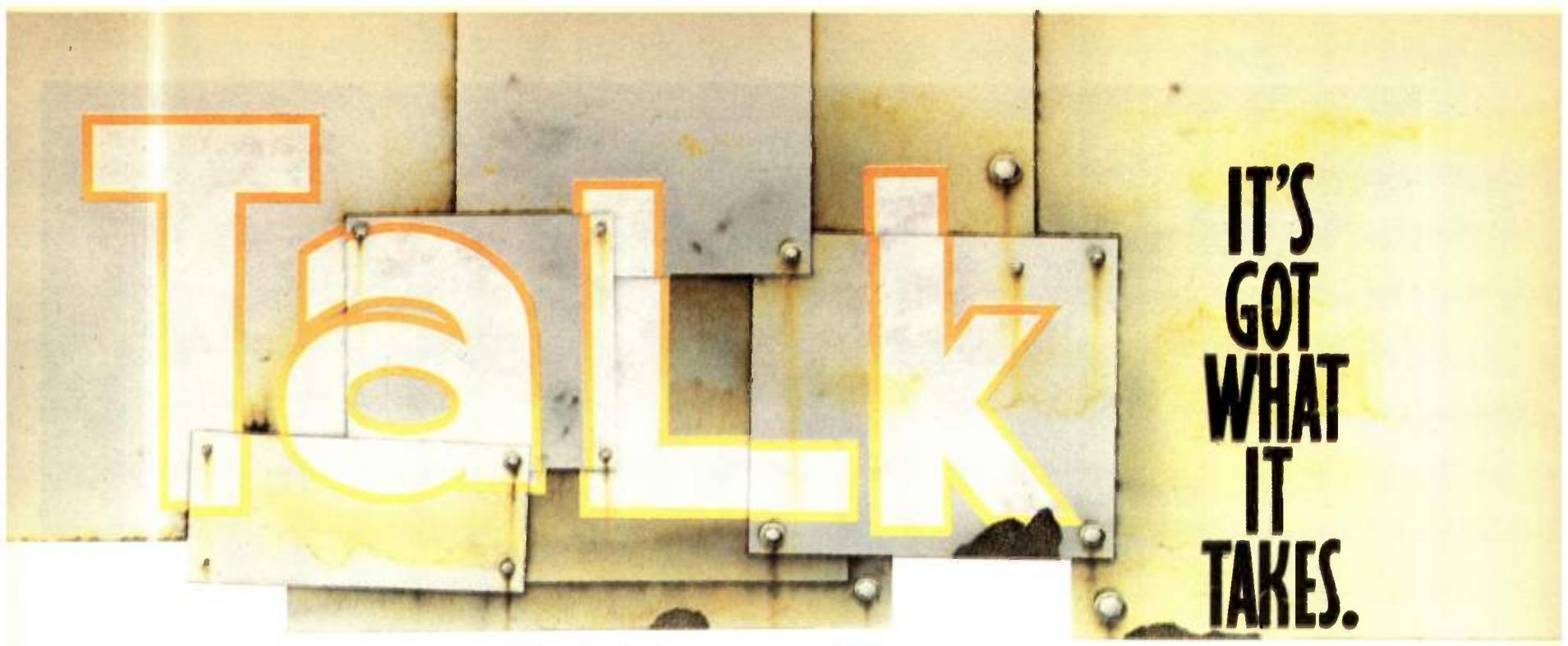
On *Tame Yourself*, lang sweetly croons "Damned Old Dog," a song unlikely to provoke antagonism. In fact, animal love is the theme for all the album's songs. Among the highlights are the haunting "I'll Give You My Skin," performed by R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe and The Indigo Girls, and The Pretenders' "Born With A Purpose." Belinda Carlisle, Jane Wiedlin, The B-52's, Erasure, Lene Lovich, Raw Youth, Nina Hagen, Fetchin' Bones, Exene Cervenka, River Phoenix' Aleka's Attic, The Goosebumps and Howard Jones also offer a spin on the subject.

While they may be peddling PETA's message softly on record, over half the artists were on hand for the album's launch party at New York's Hard Rock Cafe — which in a big break from its usual menu offered a vegetarian buffet.

So far, PETA's campaign to increase public awareness about animal rights has been effective, with several cosmetics companies curtailing the use of animals in product testing — in fact, *Tame Yourself* was funded by John Paul Mitchell Systems, which calls itself "the first major hair care products never tested on animals" — and both the fur and the meat industries experiencing a steady decline.

Fred Schneider of The B-52's sums up the hoped for effect of *Tame Yourself* simply. "They say music hath the charm to soothe the savage beast," he says. "Let's hope it works on people, too."





The Days Of Day-Glo



Whether you experienced psychedelia when it first appeared or have been swept up by its giddy day-glo revival, the era's fantastic images are as persuasive today as they were 25 years ago. Assuming you've already stocked up on vintage Pucci prints, Landlubber bellbottoms and fringed vests, as well as records by The Stone Roses, Lush and Ride, the next step may be to decorate your home in an appropriately far-out manner.

The art of the late '60s (like almost everything else) was defined by rock music, and posters created to advertise concerts at the Fillmore or a release by The Grateful Dead remain among its most enduring images. Since originals by artists such as **Stanley Mouse**, **Rick Griffin** and **Alton Kelly** are in limited supply, only a handful of stores offer a truly great assortment. While New York has **Psychedelic Solution** and The Postemat and San Francisco has **Art Rock**, Toronto's **The Incredible Record Store** and **Gallery** houses one of the widest selections.

Incredible owner **Jonathon Lipsin**, who admits with reluctance to being "a child of the '60s," left Canada in 1968 to join Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin's Underground Press Syndicate. Moving to California, he worked as a clothing designer and a gardener for The Grateful Dead, and "began acquiring things. I always had an eye for picking up things along the way," including an original Woodstock poster and two unused tickets.

Lipsin offers a collection of over 400 posters, ranging from \$100 to more than \$1,000, among other memorabilia. He also has a wide assortment of rare Vancouver psychedelic art, which Lipsin notes "rivalled that of San Francisco." Not surprisingly, one of his most loyal customers is **The Cult's Ian Astbury**, who's partial to Ann Arbor artist **Gary Grimshaw's** work.

Even though Lipsin's business is booming, true to his counterculture roots, he's genuinely excited by the psychedelic revival's potential. "There's a spirit missing today that we had then," he says. "I like to see that encouraged."

Enjoying The Process

"After 10 years in the business, you start to find the things that matter," **Sheena Easton** reflects. "Enjoying the process is far more important than the result. If you finish a project and put it out, it can be a huge success or a total failure, and if you haven't enjoyed the process, then you'd be left with nothing if it's a failure. Since you can't ensure success, you'd better be damn sure you enjoy what you're doing!"

Easton, who can be seen posing provocatively in Jack LaLanne commercials when she's not recording or touring, has made a career of doing what she loves. *What Comes Naturally*, her eighth domestically released album, smoulders with the sinuous charm and catchy rhythms that have become the Scottish singer's trademark. "I don't allow trends to affect my way of working," she says. "I've followed my own path rather than worry about what's popular."

Although Patti LaBelle and Prince have recorded her songs, Easton has always shied away from including her compositions on her recordings. On this album, however, she fearlessly performed several songs she co-wrote, including "Half A Heart," "The Next Time" and "First Touch Of Love."

"I'm really hard on my own stuff; I think every artist is," she says. "You have to be your own strongest critic, because it would be embarrassing to put out something you felt was good but was really horrible. But I can actually hold my head up with these ones and say they hang in there with the others."

While most artists would give anything for a chance to work with Prince — Easton has collaborated with him several times — her sights are now set elsewhere. "I would give my left arm to work with Luther Vandross, in any shape or form," she gushes. "I'd love him to produce me or write a song for me, or sing. I'd love to do backup vocals on his own album. I think he's phenomenal!"

"I'd love to do a Stevie Wonder song sometime," she adds. "I'd like to work with Sting. Our stuff is nothing alike, but I get excited in the studio with another artist. There's a real chemistry and energy from someone else's creativity."



COMPILED BY TINA CLARKE



The Sex Of The Song?

In 1979, when **The Knack** released "My Sharona," their jet-propelled debut, the world was in the throes of dance fever. After three years, three albums and a couple more hit singles, the group disbanded. A decade later the world is once again in the grips of dance fever, and **The Knack** is back with a new album, *Serious Fun*, which sounds incredibly like the Knack you remember.

"We are what we are," says vocalist **Doug Fieger**. "We can't sound any different, and we never tried to. It's one of our strengths."

The band hadn't played together for over five years when Fieger was approached by an ailing friend to reform the group for a benefit concert in late 1986. "It sounded so good, and the response was so positive, **Berton [Averre]** and I started writing songs together again," Fieger recalls.

After several years of writing, recording and playing live, Fieger, Averre, bassist **Prescott Niles** and new drummer **Billy Ward** were ready to make an album. Fieger, who grew up in Detroit, found the perfect producer in fellow Motor City expatriate **Don Was**, whom he's known since elementary school. Fieger has contributed vocals or a song to every **Was (Not Was)** LP, so "it was thrilling for Don to work on our stuff," Fieger says.

Was helped The Knack — who never do more than three takes for any track — rediscover their knack for creating appealing pop. "He made us conscious of the sex of the song," Fieger says. "The feel of the song, so that it has a sensuality, a sexuality; it moves you on that level. In the past we played full speed ahead and just powered through everything and didn't take a lot of time to get it to feel right. He made sure every song had that appeal. It was the most important thing for him."



Is Quite Smirnoff.

SMIRNOFF



Nothing Else

DANIEL ASH

Sympathy For The Prince Of Darkness

By Tina Clarke

Dissonant, funky chords and old-fashioned melodies abound on Daniel Ash's first solo album, *Coming Down*. As Love And Rockets' guitarist and lead singer, Ash has been responsible for many of that band's darkly romantic musical outings, including their 1989 hit "So Alive."

On his own, while the group is on hiatus, his eerie, sensual vision takes flight in breathless songs like "Sweet Little Liar" and "Candy Darling," an ode to the late Warhol "superstar," as well as covers of 20th-century standards such as "Me And My Shadow" and the almost inaudible version of "Blue Moon" that opens the album.

"It sounded over-sentimental, almost wimpy," Ash recalls about recording the Rodgers and Hart classic. "Kevin [Haskings, the Love and Rockets drummer who assisted Ash on *Coming Down*] said I sounded like Donny Osmond on it, so that was the end of it," he laughs. "So they made it sound like I was singing in the bath."

The incredibly low volume of "Blue Moon" followed by the loud blast of "Coming Down Fast" serves as a reminder that both looks and sounds can be deceiving; beneath his spiky-haired, dour super-goth demeanor, Ash is a joker at heart. "People put the record on and ['Blue Moon'] is only coming out of one speaker, and it's really low, so they whack up the bass, whack up the treble and the volume, and suddenly, 'Bang!'" he says. "It's nice to make somebody jump because they think it's going to be one of those subliminal, Brian Eno-esque type albums.

"It was going to be like that at one stage, when I thought the whole thing was finished," he admits, almost as an afterthought. "It was all soft and slow, and I thought, 'This is getting boring,' so I had to put a couple of uptempo numbers in."

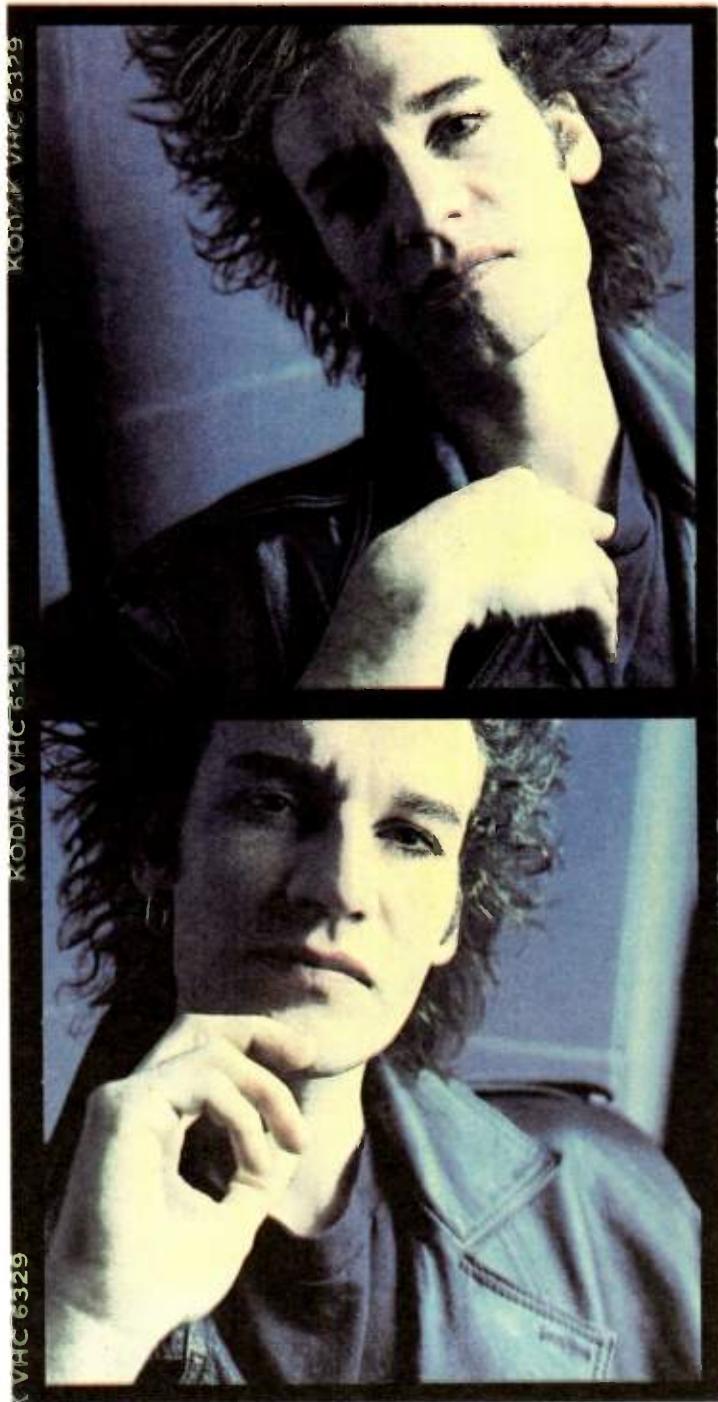
Coming Down has been a work in progress for nearly two years, going through several changes before Ash

settled on the final concept of originals and covers. "The idea was to do an album of cover versions, because after going on that last [Love And Rockets] tour I was completely dry," he says. "I had no inspiration to write new things, and with Love And Rockets, a lot of the stuff can be very introspective and analytical, and I was sick to death of that. So I thought, 'I'll just have some fun and do cover versions, do a whole album of them, and that will give me something to do until I can start writing again.' But after a few months I was basically bored with that idea and managed to get some songs together, simple songs."

Stripping away artifice and simplifying his music has been a challenge for Ash, who aims to create uncomplicated music—"as effective as those early rock 'n' roll records," he says. "I really think the intellect can get in the way of art. Art should be very spontaneous—it's a soul thing. If it's too studied, it's bullshit to me. All the best stuff just comes out, it flows, it has nothing to do with hard work. When you're not self-conscious, when the intellect is not working—that's what I try to get. I have problems with it because I do tend to overanalyze every damn thing!"

While his music has always been moody, Ash insists that he's not really as preoccupied with what lurks in the shadows as it might seem. "I actually don't like macabre things," he says. "To me there is a big difference between being macabre and having a romantic image of darkness. All I deal with is romantic imagery, midnight blue, the whole concept of the vampire film. The idea of the Prince of Darkness is so beautiful."

What Ash is concerned with is making music that will strike a chord in others. "I think it's important to make music people can relate to," he explains. "It's a pure form of sympathy, good music. When you put a record on and think, 'That's how I feel,' you feel good because you realize you're not on your own."



“

I really think the intellect can get in the way of art. Art should be spontaneous—it's a soul thing.

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RHYTHM TRIBE

Under A Latin Sun

By Perry Stern

Miami Sound Machine may have opened the door and last year's success of Latino rappers Mellow Man Ace and

backbeats and romantic flourishes of Puerto Rico's guitar-based *Jibaro* music. The group's name comes from



“
A tribe is very
unto itself. We've
always been outside
of the norm.
”

Kid Frost may have widened the crack, but San Francisco-born Thomas Guzman-Sanchez thinks his band, Rhythm Tribe, is the first act to truly breach the gap between traditional Latin music and the funk/R&B mainstream.

“Mellow Man Ace? Let's be honest, the only thing Latin about him is he speaks a little Spanish. And Kid Frost? Same thing. Gerardo? Shameful! The only thing Latin about that guy is his first name.”

On *Sol Moderno*, the debut release for Rhythm Tribe (guitarist Guzman-Sanchez, his bassist brother Paul, keyboardist Marla Rebert and drummer Stephen Mead), the propulsive, funky grooves are rooted in the complex

the frustration and isolation Guzman-Sanchez felt over the five years he's worked towards landing a recording contract. “A tribe is very unto itself,” he explains. “We've always been outside of the norm.”

Though they're from the L.A. area, the Guzman-Sanchez clan was raised in the San Fernando Valley in what Thomas calls “our own little world that never meshed with the Hollywood set, the Strip bands. Our type of music didn't fit into anyone's format.”

The son and grandson of acclaimed Puerto Rican guitarists, Thomas was a prodigy, forming his first band in third grade and performing at classical recitals before his 10th birthday. Taught by

his father to take pride in his heritage, he punctuated the funk music he loved with Latin inflections, and soon dance became an important element as well. For a short time music was put on the backburner while Thomas, Paul and two others formed the dance troupe Chain Reaction, which made an appearance in the cult classic film *Xanadu* in 1980. The brothers also worked together or separately in videos for Rod Stewart, the Pointer Sisters, Toto and in Michael Jackson's *Thriller*.

Citing classical virtuoso Andre Segovia rather than Jimi Hendrix as his main influence, Thomas ultimately concluded that the only music he could honestly make had to reflect his own roots rather than the changing fads of the day. He also felt compelled to draw his father, Rafael, who had put aside his musical dream to raise his family, into his nascent “tribe.”

“Five years ago I knew all of [my father's] music, but he didn't know mine,” Thomas says. “I wanted to share it with him.” Ultimately the two did record several tracks that appear on *Sol Moderno*, a fact poignantly punctuated by the inclusion of a phone message left by father for son that introduces the song “You'll Be There.” Shortly after leaving the message Rafael suffered a heart attack behind the wheel of his car and died. The song is about their last day together. The elder Guzman-Sanchez's remarkable playing can be heard on the songs “Forever Mine” and “Is Anybody There?”

Disdaining established record labels (which wanted to eradicate the Latin element in the music), Thomas was successfully distributing the album himself until Lou Maglia, founder of the new Zoo Entertainment label, heard the album and saw the video for “Gotta See Your Eyes” (written and produced by Guzman-Sanchez). The clip is a slick, entertaining introduction to the band that features a live performance that displays the members' highly developed dancing skills.

The album's title, *Sol Moderno*, is meant to represent a whole new genre with Rhythm Tribe as its chief purveyor. Thomas describes it as a complex play on words. Besides recognizing the modern soul and R&B elements in the music, the word “sol” (“sun” in Spanish) is also meant to honor the memory of his father. It serves as yet another reminder that, for Thomas, “this whole music came about from me just wanting to play with my dad.”

ENIGMA +



CRASH TEST DUMMIES

Smashing Barriers

By Kerry Doole

There's nothing brain-dead about off-beat Canadian roots-rockers the Crash Test Dummies. From unlikely origins as the goofy house band at a Winnipeg coffee house just three years

like Alice Cooper done folk style — TV themes, Roches songs, a grab-bag of country and everything else. We were so eclectic, we were almost directionless, so that name seemed to relate to

quite by accident. It wasn't like 'Hey, we're determined young people. We'll go out and get a record deal this way.' It's all been a happy coincidence."

The choice of Steve Berlin (Los Lobos) as producer continued the band's lucky streak. "He's a very likeable fellow, easy to work with," praises Roberts. "His attitude is that he wants to enhance what already exists. It's not like he heard the tape and said 'Well, if I just change this, it'll be fine.'"

On *Ghosts*, Crash Test Dummies' folk/country sound is occasionally spiced with a dash of Celtic, but Roberts resists any easy tag. "I don't want to come across as a pompous artist who claims he is totally original. Everyone has influences, but we do draw from a disparate variety of influences that, I hope, add up to something hard to describe verbally."

The Roches (for their harmonies) and Lyle Lovett (his bluesy melodies) are given approving namechecks, but Brad's distinctive booming bass baritone vocals and idiosyncratic lyrics (the first single, "Superman's Song," is a melancholy look at the lifestyle of The Man Of Steel!) signal the arrival of a bright new voice.

Credit his academic background (a Masters in English literature) for Roberts' fresh approach. "The aesthetic when I write lyrics is similar to the one I developed in judging literature," he says, "the avoidance at all cost of clichés, sentimentality and obviousness."

Brad Roberts is already pledging something totally different for the second Dummies outing. "I'm not worried about being stuck in a rut. There'll be much less emphasis on acoustic and traditional influences. We'll introduce much more technology. I'm looking at sampling and synthesized vocal and choral sounds, and it'll be glossier sounding!"



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We draw from a disparate variety of influences that, I hope, add up to something hard to describe verbally.

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ago, they now find themselves, allegedly to their surprise, as serious performers in the pop circus.

Their debut album, *The Ghosts That Haunt Me*, has just been released internationally on BMG/Arista, and it's already pinning listeners back in their seats via its infectious melodicism, left-field lyrics and assured musicianship. Principal singer/songwriter Brad Roberts explains that the quintet's slightly misleading yet memorable moniker dates back to their bohemian beginnings.

"As the house band at this small cafe /after hours bar, The Blue Note, we'd do zany, out of the way cover tunes —

everything we did."

As Roberts began writing original material for Crash Test Dummies, their focus broadened. "Initially we just thought it'd be fun to play some folk festivals outside Manitoba; that was our biggest aspiration," he explains. "We went into a friend's 16-track studio, made a demo tape and sent it off to the festivals."

The warm response this generated accelerated when the Dummies played an industry conference in Winnipeg in spring '89. "Much to our surprise, when these A & R types went back to their homes, they all began calling us," Roberts says. "Everything has been

EMF

Cherubic Youngsters With Mischief On Their Minds

By Kevin Murphy

At times you might be forgiven for thinking that Manchester was the only musically active volcano in Britain. So when the West Country erupted to the sound of EMF and their debut single, "Unbelievable," last year, the shock waves spread quickly throughout the U.K. as the group trashed its way onto the charts and into the affections of a nation being spooned Putrids On the Block.

Now, as "Unbelievable" is let loose on this side of the Atlantic, the band has the harder task of convincing Americans to forsake their own candy-coated contrivances in favor of five cherubic youngsters with baseball caps on their heads and mischief on their minds.

EMF shop at the same musical supermarket as fellow Brit groups Jesus Jones and Pop Will Eat Itself, but unlike some of their counterparts, EMF's trolley has a fresh lick of paint and isn't quite as loaded up with cynicism and rhetoric.

Formed some 18 months ago, EMF (which includes James on vocals, Mark on drums, Derry on keyboards, Ian on guitar and Zac on bass, augmented by DJ Milf) was signed by EMI after only a handful of gigs in and around the Forest Of Dean area, where its members grew up. The band's first provocative move was their choice of name, although they deny it.

"Everybody thinks it stands for Ecstasy Motherfucker," explains Derry in his broad West Country accent, "but it doesn't. We're just stringing people along. We never do things to shock; we're just taking the piss." Perhaps the fact that the B-side is called "EMF" and boasts the chorus, "E: ecstasy! M: motherfucker motherfucker! F: from us to you!" might have something to do with the confusion.

What EMF does stand for, however, is the return of adrenalin-fuelled pop. Their live shows are notoriously rauous, with Derry playing a human tornado while the other band members leap around the stage in surfing shorts with wicked grins on their faces. They've even done a gig in a laser-lit cave, though their beginnings were a trifle more subdued.

"This booking came up at this club," explains Mark, a self-confessed Phil Collins fan who possesses a disturbing but unmistakable resemblance to Sinead O'Connor. "So we had two months to form a band and come up with some songs. At the first practice we didn't even have a singer—he was off having a driving lesson."

"Before that, me, Zac and James had this one rehearsal in Afghan coats," laughs Derry.

"I turned up and there was heavy metal playing full blast," recalls Mark in an incredulous tone. "It was early on a Sunday morning. I climbed through the living room window to find Derry dressed in an Afghan, Zac in these ridiculous shorts and some strange kid in the corner of the room. We didn't even know who he was—he just walked into the room and stood there."

"That was our legendary Afghan coat phase," boasts Derry.

And after they had added Ian to the lineup, once they had managed to have him removed from twee guitar janglers Apple Mosaic for the sake of his credibility, the EMF monster was complete.

With their pretty-boy looks and pop sensibilities, entwined with Ian's more vitriolic guitar outbursts, EMF have often been dismissed by skeptics as pubescent pin-up fodder. But as they're eager to point out, they possess a darker side.

"The teeny fans will flip the next single, 'I Believe,' and hear the Foetus mix and wonder what's going on," says Ian, referring to their collaboration with Foetus Inc.'s Jim Thirlwell, better known for his somewhat less accessible work with The The's Matt Johnson and Lydia Lunch.

Littered among the praise that's been heaped upon them recently was a comment from The Pet Shop Boys' Neil Tennant, lauding them as the new Sex Pistols. "I quite enjoy that," enthuses Zac.

"It's good in a way," adds Derry, "'cause they breathed freshness and energy into the music scene when it needed it. And they didn't give a fuck. And we don't."



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We're just stringing
people along.

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CHAGALL GUEVARA

Wonderfully Peculiar

By Rick Clark

We wanted to create a wonderfully peculiar sound," states Dave Perkins, Chagall Guevara's lead guitarist/vocalist. Judging from the sound of the band's self-titled debut, they've achieved that result, with an exceptional batch of smartly rendered lyrics set to music that is simultaneously sophisticated and raw.

The genesis of Chagall Guevara took place in Los Angeles — peculiarly enough, in the Christian rock market. Perkins and Lynn Nichols (guitar, vocals) had come together to realize a solo effort for lead singer Steve Taylor, called *I Predict 1990*. Over the course of the project, the three realized that they would never find satisfaction working within the strictures of that marketplace.

"We felt there had to be a way to use this mechanism to break through to the other side, to the real world," explains Perkins. "I think we all found a great amount of frustration. There were very definite boundaries that, for one reason or another, were reluctant to be pushed."

They began to work together in earnest, and to cut living expenses they transplanted themselves to Nashville. "We wanted to start from ground zero and avoid building on the past, so we looked for a city we could afford to live in, and not have to make artistic decisions based on having to meet exorbitant rent," recalls Perkins. "We also needed a scene that we could grow naturally out of. We really acted the underdog, playing cheesy bars in Nashville and around the south."

"Around the second gig we got a record label offer," continues guitarist Nichols, "which kind of took us by surprise, because we were just woodshedding these songs in front of people. That sort of accelerated things, and a buzz started to go around."

Matt Wallace (The Replacements,

Faith No More) was chosen to co-produce with the band, and in the spirit of creating something "wonderfully peculiar," the album was done without any of the digital reverbs or samples

"There are bands that can be a little bit too polemic for their own good," Taylor says. "You can easily cross the line from creating art into dispensing propaganda. One of the ways to dif-



used on most contemporary albums. Only natural room sounds were used.

"We had worked meticulously on putting the songs together, and we wanted to find a different path into the recording process," adds Perkins. "We didn't necessarily have the colors painted in, but we knew the record would never be generic-sounding."

Chagall Guevara plays guitar-heavy rock with a predisposition toward dissonance, which makes it a perfect complement to the venom and dark humor of Taylor's provocative railings, which focus on locating shreds of hope in the face of human madness.

fuse that is to keep a little bit of humor in the music."

Of the songs on *Chagall Guevara*, perhaps the strongest are "The Rub Of Love," a boy's story about a self-centred dad who dumps the family, remarries and has another boy, and "Violent Blue," in which the protagonist laments how cynicism and self-interest have sapped an old friend of ideals, causing him to trade "his peace sign for a finger."

"Even in our dark songs, we set out to keep an optimistic slant on it all," concludes Perkins, "and I think that hope is evident in our presentation."

66

You can easily cross the line from creating art into dispensing propaganda.

99



while Welsh drummer Travis Williams is the comparative novice in this seasoned, motley crew.

It is fun playing spot the influences on Havana 3 A.M.'s self-titled album, but they invest an entertaining vitality into their hybrid of Latin, rock 'n' roll and reggae sounds. Simonon insists that if he was threatened at gunpoint to come up with a catch-all tag for their music, "I'd just say, 'Shoot me!' Each song is like an atmosphere on its own. A song like 'Living In This Town' starts off with a Latin intro, goes into a sort of reggae verse, then a rock-calypso chorus. In some ways, our music is like sampling, but for real."

You could view Havana 3 A.M.'s music as a continuation of The Clash's experimentalism. "I just apply myself the same way I did with The Clash," explains Paul. "Back then, playing reggae was natural for me. I grew up in an area where that's all anyone around me would listen to. I picked up on Latin music in The Clash when I got this collection of music on a tape entitled, funny enough, *Havana 3 A.M.*"

Fans of The Clash will be disappointed to hear that reunion hopes are slim. "I have absolutely no interest in that whatsoever," says Paul. "As far as I'm concerned, the book is closed, and a new book has just opened."

Maybe it'll just be a short story, for both Simonon and Myrick easily envisage a life outside music. "We might just decide to give all this up and design a new motorbike or grow mushrooms," jokes Paul.

The dynamic duo are also anxious to distance themselves from celebrity dandies who merely dabble in oils and hogs. "To me and Gary, painting is a really serious subject," Simonon says. "Most art I've seen by people in groups, like Ronnie Wood, is complete rubbish!"

"As for bikes, I'm sort of fed up with Harleys now," he says. "I want to get a Brown Superior, an old British bike."

"I do have an old Harley, but I'm a lone rider," adds Gary. "I don't like to ride with a bunch of guys who just got their motorcycles brand new out of the shop yesterday!"

HAVANA 3.A.M. Easelly Riders By Kerry Doole

Listening to the cool self-titled debut from Havana 3.A.M., you'd swear it was a shared passion for Eddie Cochran and Ennio Morricone that first united these two Anglos, a Welshman and a Texan. Not so. The rubber of motorcycle and the oil of a painter's palette actually provided the glue that first bonded these cosmopolitan rock 'n' rollers.

Bassist/singer Paul Simonon (yep, the sexy one from The Clash) picks up the tale. "Back in London, I used to hang out and ride motorcycles with [vocalist] Nigel [Dixon]," he says. "We made a single together, then thought we should get a group together. We went over to El Paso, Texas, because I wanted to pursue my interest in painting there. We stayed about two months, riding old motorcycles in and out of the border towns, then worked

our way up to L.A.

"I met up with an old friend, Steve Jones [the former Sex Pistol], and he took me to see Gary [Myrick, Havana 3.A.M.'s guitarist/singer] doing a solo show. We didn't even talk about music for quite a while; just rode around L.A., having fun and having beers!"

Once the trio found they could write songs together, things became a little more serious, and Havana 3.A.M. was born. "From the beginning, I felt the strongest element was that we were a songwriting team," explains Myrick. "We'd never played together, but we knew we could write some good songs, and also knew each other's abilities as musicians."

Texan Myrick had long been a recording artist (as Gary Myrick And The Figures) and Dixon had fronted '70s English rockabilly cats Whirlwind,

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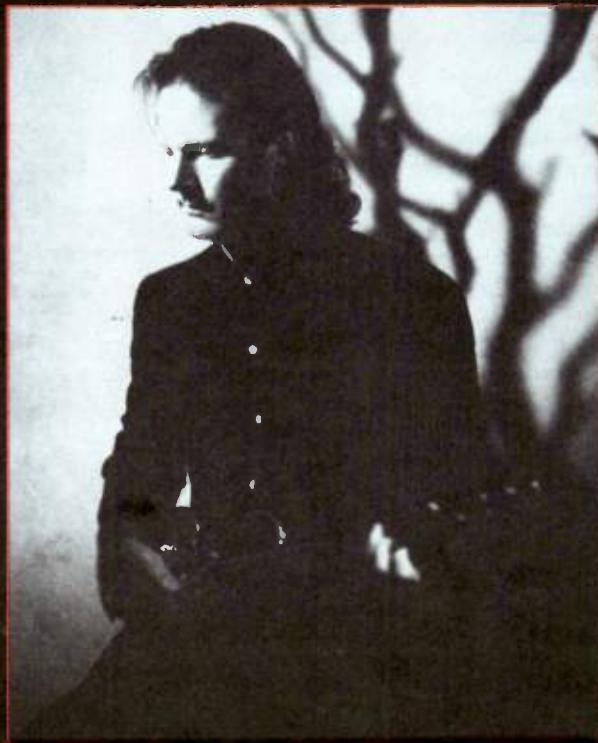
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CLIFF RICHARD

No Respect

By Keith Sharp

“From A Distance” (the other side of the Atlantic, to be exact) you can hear Cliff Richard muttering loudly to himself. Bette Midler topped the U.S. charts with Julie Gold’s Grammy-winning song, but to England’s enduring pop icon it represents another lost opportunity.

Richard had released the track as the signature tune from his double live *From A Distance (The Event)* album, but although he chalked up great success around the world with it, he was beaten to the punch by the Divine Miss M when it came to cashing in his U.S. chips.

An artist who ranks with the best in terms of record sales, the boyish 51-year-old Richard has been consistently shut out of the U.S. market. His albums haven’t even been released in North America, and Richard, by his own admission, has lost heart with the U.S. industry. “It’s strange that I can pull 140,000 people for a two-night concert at [London’s] Wembley Stadium, yet my U.S. label won’t even release my records,” he says. “It can be very frustrating when I know I have a lot of fans over here.”

A performer of almost legendary status in the U.K., Europe and the Far East, Richard was initially written off as an Elvis lookalike in the late ‘50s and ‘60s. He finally cracked the U.S. charts in 1976 when “Devil Woman” sold a million copies, and used co-hosting appearances with Olivia Newton-John on the *Solid Gold* TV series to successfully promote other hits like “Dreamin’” and “We Don’t Talk Anymore.”

Still, despite high-tech concert shows and a constant series of domestic hits (99 in all), Richard has still not seen that success transfer over to the States. “It’s a catch-22 situation, really,” Cliff says. “I could come over and play theatre shows for two or three thousand people, but what’s the point of that when I’ve just performed two concerts for 72,000 each night? I can’t possibly deliver the same performance.”

The concerts in question permitted Richard to execute a nightly three-hour retrospective of his 30-year career, beginning with a salute to the ‘50s and



‘60s, and following with a medley of his greatest hits from the past 20 years. “We staged the show like a Broadway performance, with big production numbers and major set changes,” he says. “It’s something I’ve wanted to do for years.”

Richard’s status received a boost last year with his appearance at the Knebworth Festival (along with the likes of Pink Floyd, Paul McCartney, Elton John and Robert Plant), but even that prestigious occasion had its drawback. Most critics questioned whether Richard fit in with such an elite crowd, an observation that makes him bristle.

“Hey, listen,” he says. “I’ve sold more records than Michael Jackson, The Rolling Stones and Madonna put together. How many artists could sell

out two nights at Wembley? Do I get respect from this industry? Probably not. But in the long run that’s not what really counts. It’s the people who buy my records and concert tickets that count, and it’s a matter of record that my *Private Collection* album sold seven million copies in the U.K., and my last two studio releases [*Always Guaranteed* and *Sincerely*] have been my best-ever sellers.”

Richard feels that his squeaky-clean image and religious beliefs have conspired against him, but he wouldn’t have it any other way. “People think that to be a legitimate rock star you have to be a drug addict who smashes up hotel rooms and gets headlines in the newspapers. To me that’s not a rock star — that’s a naughty boy!”

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I can pull 140,000 people for a two-night concert, yet my U.S. label won’t even release my records.

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QUEEN

Under Pressure

By Perry Stern

After 20 years and 18 albums, Queen appears to be on the verge of an unprecedented resurgence in the U.S. Already very much a part of the nation's subconscious (what sporting event isn't punctuated by the stomping thump-thump-THUMP of "We Will Rock You"?), reports from the Persian Gulf claim that "Another One Bites The Dust" and "We Are The Champions" are among the GIs' most requested songs. The fact that one of the most enduring (and some might add inexplicable) hits of the recent past, Vanilla Ice's "Ice Ice Baby," appropriated a Queen riff was but another uncalculated instance of subliminal advertising for the group's return.

Relaxing over tea and a fruit pie in one of Los Angeles' toniest hotels, guitarist Brian May crosses his legs and thinks expansively about his group's recent past and their appropriately titled new LP, *Innuendo*. Citing "various reasons" including "misconnections" with their former record company and radio programmers, May says that Queen, one of the biggest bands of the '70s, fell on hard times (in the U.S.) in the '80s.

"It's not like you should panic about things like that," May says laconically as he dangles an anachronistic white clog on the end of his foot. "One day you can be hot and the next you'll be cold and nobody can really figure out why." But even as the band looked as though it was sinking into seeming oblivion stateside, they were still garnering international acclaim and sales, culminating in a triumphant, hugely successful South American/European tour in 1989.

One of the many factors contributing to the band's lower profile during the last decade has been an ongoing unpleasant battle with the UK's tabloid press, "a horrendous power," according to May. He felt their wrath personally when they covered his divorce several years ago. "It could have been done fairly gracefully," he says of the proceedings, "but because of the press everyone got very bitter." The events threw May into what he calls a "severe depression."

"I'm all right now, but for a couple of years I definitely wasn't all right," he says. "I got in a hole I couldn't get

out of. I think I lost a year of my life just being in..." he pauses to laugh softly, "...total despair. Nothing to do with the music, though. In fact, the music was the part that really got me through it."

Now Queen's notoriously flamboyant singer, Freddie Mercury, has come under the jaundiced glare of the cannibal press. Rumors of Mercury's ill health have circulated, fueled by his steadfast refusal to refute them. May describes him as "very reserved in private — his outrageousness is onstage and that's where he gets his rocks off. He's quite reclusive these days and is more concerned with his cats and garden than talking to [the press]." In fact, one of the songs on *Innuendo*, "Delilah," is about one of Mercury's feline friends.

"They give Freddie a terrible time and unfortunately it's no use trying to fight with them, because if you come back with a reply it's exactly what they want," May says ruefully. "The only thing you can do is sit there and take it."

But even though Queen may have been temporarily dethroned in the U.S., the surprising intervention of an alleged motocross champion had the names Mercury, May, (Roger) Taylor and (John) Deacon back at the top of the pop charts. It only took a little prodding before the 1981 Queen/David Bowie collaboration "Under Pressure" was acknowledged as the basis for Vanilla Ice's smash hit "Ice Ice Baby."

May first heard the song when it was played for him by the president of Queen's UK fan club. Having heard the distinctive bassline repeatedly, May responded at the time by saying, "That's all right. No one's going to hear this, it's boring." "Well, actually," he was told, "I think it's No. 1 in America." Before long Hollywood Records, the band's new label, called in the lawyers.

In the end, May is philosophical about it all. "The guy has done a good bit of advertising for us and it hasn't done us any harm," he shrugs. But a little finger wagging does seem in order, so he adds, "It was a little naughty to do it without asking. That's the thing."



“

Freddie's more concerned with his cats and garden than talking to the press.

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X-RATED!

From their home away from home at New York's baroque Plaza Hotel, INXS break their silence to reveal that their latest album, *X*, does not sound like their last one, that Tim Farriss has powerful psychic powers, that Kirk Pengilly has kept a tell-all diary since 1976, and that Michael Hutchence goes through \$600 Yamamoto shirts at an alarming rate, almost lost a delicate part of his anatomy and knows how it feels to be a woman — among other things...

BY TINA CLARKE

INXS has a peculiar problem: it seems the group is invisible in North America, unless they are physically here to prove they exist. It doesn't matter that their most recent album, *X*, was released last fall, or that it's sold over a million copies, or even that their new single, "Bitter Tears," is actually the third song released from it. Maybe some listeners are taking "Disappear," the second single from *X*, a bit too literally, but for some strange reason the band doesn't seem to materialize in the public's mind unless they offer proof — which they finally did by commencing a U.S. concert tour in February.

"In America it's as though the record was just released," muses guitarist Tim Farriss. "I don't know how to put it, but shit happens when the band is here and doesn't seem to when it's not. It's one of those things."

Throughout their 14-year career, INXS have always toured. Year after year they have religiously hauled themselves around the world, spending as much as 18 months on the road at a time. For what must have seemed an eternity to them — in fact, for 10 years — this Australian band's live following far exceeded its record sales.

That changed with the 1987 release of *Kick*, which found its way into the eager hands of almost eight million people worldwide. Despite *Kick*'s overwhelming success, however, by the time INXS released *X* last October, the band found itself back at the starting line all over again.

"We have an interesting position here," singer Mi-

chael Hutchence explains. "I always call us one of the biggest, most unknown bands in the world, because we are. We haven't moved to New York or L.A. We haven't gone to the Betty Ford Clinic or been caught up in the paparazzi or had relationships with starlets and all that sort of thing, and most bands in our position have. Whether it's bullshit or not, it hasn't been written into our lives."

Geography, substance abuse and outrageous romance aside (we're politely not counting Michael's relationship with Aussie pop icon Kylie Minogue), since INXS has set down in North America their celebrity and record sales have been on the rise. Part of that is due to all that touring, but the group had



strained its mental and physical limits on their 1987-88 world tour, an exhaustive and exhausting outing that nearly crippled drummer Jon Farriss and left Hutchence speechless. So this time around they decided to take it a little easier, and consequently they've spent more than three weeks headquartered at New York's baroque-repro landmark Plaza Hotel. Each day the band flies to its gig on a chartered 14-seat plane, returning to New York late each night.

"This is the most civilized tour of my entire life," Tim Farriss exclaims. "I mean I've got underpants and socks in drawers, which is unbelievable. I've got a home, even though it's the Plaza. The last tour was really tiring, but this is great. In fact, we're fairly fresh, considering we've been on the road for over seven months now. I think it was having all that time off. It's all a matter of pacing yourself."

INXS gave themselves a year-long reprieve after the *Kick/Calling All Nations* tour and before they started working on *X*. It may have been relaxing, but the long break from each other also left them a bit disoriented when they finally entered the studio in 1990 to record the new album.

"The time off was interesting, really," saxophonist Kirk Pengilly recalls, "because normally someone is listening to a new type of music or a particular type of music, and we're all around it and we sort of listen to it. But we had a situation where everyone went off and listened to different things. When we got back together, it was extremely diverse."

"Michael and Jon had been getting heavily into house music, and Andrew [Farriss] was going through another sort of Bob Dylan stage. But it's never really been a problem — everyone sort of puts in influences as it goes along, and we try to meet in

"I always call us one of the biggest, most unknown bands in the world."

the boundaries of what everyone's been listening to."

Detente was achieved by exploring the band's soulful roots — the R&B music they all listened to as children in the '60s, which explains why an INXS-penned song like "Faith In Each Other" sounds disconcertingly like an Isley Brothers cover.

"It was actually going to be *more* traditional; we sort of upped it a bit," Hutchence says enthusiastically, curling up on a couch in a Plaza suite that has enough gold leaf to require round the clock security. "We would have freaked people out. It was actually going to sound like Muddy Waters meets the Isleys."

Instead, *X* is dense, rich in styles and melodies. But as the followup to the straight-ahead rock assault of *Kick*, *X* got kicked by fans who thought it wasn't enough like its predecessor and by critics who deemed it *too* similar, dubbing it *Kick 2*. "When a record comes along and forms a part of people's lives, which *Kick* obviously did, people form an emotional attachment," Hutchence hypothesizes. "They

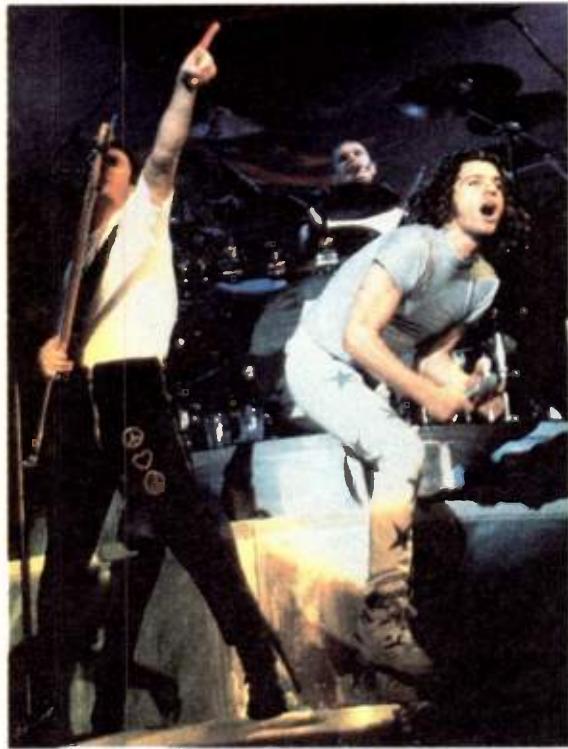
want the same girlfriend or boyfriend. It's like you — you're not the same, you're different, you've changed. It's a bit like that, but you've got to be able to say that's OK, and let things go.

"The sensibility of this record is very different from *Kick* — it just is, it's a different pop sensibility," he continues. "Lyrically it's not as obvious; it's a more subtle record. It's a growing thing, and the next record, God knows. I think the next record is going to be the heaviest record we've ever made."

"It wouldn't surprise me if our next album becomes a lot rawer, probably a lot more rock 'n' roll, which seems to be the cycle we take," Pengilly predicts. "We seem to do an album that's sort of musical, like *The Swing*, then *Listen Like Thieves*, which was a lot more rock 'n' roll, and then *Kick* was a bit of an exception to the switching thing. We keep going through stages, doing something perhaps a little more musical and then stepping back to roots again. I have a feeling that the next album will be a lot harder and a bit more rock 'n' roll."

According to Farriss, INXS' next album will be a live set. "We're making a live album," he says definitively. "But we're going to be making a really different live album. It's going to have other things on it besides live recordings. We might use the band actually live in the studio on one song, make it different, rather than just applause, another song and applause."

"It's finally time, we figured. We've been thinking a lot about what kind of live album we want to make. We don't want to make an ordinary old live album; we want to make something unique. We want to get some songs on acoustic guitars in toilets backstage, that kind of thing."



"People really treat you like meat, and it's hard to comprehend until that happens."

After the estimated 3,000 performances the band has logged since 1977, a live album does seem appropriate, especially if it captures that *je ne sais quoi* of an INXS concert, that element that keeps fans hungry for more.

While no member of INXS would contest the fact that Hutchence accounts for much of the band's provocative live appeal — charming, smart and witty in private, on stage he can have an explosive effect — from time to time even he's surprised by the audience's response.

"It's a big problem for me at times, because I don't really relate to the effect that someone can have, and the box that I can be put into, because I don't really want to be just this two-dimensional person, and I'm not," he says. "It's a weird thing to comprehend at times. It's me being on stage and the music starting and this is what happens, and I don't even want to intellectualize it all; I want to keep it as primitive as possible."

Evidently not too primal, though. "The other night some girl just about got my cock out of my pants," he admits incredulously. "When I was down in front of the stage. Unbelievable — they planned it! There

was a girl holding an arm on each side and one in the middle that just went Whooom, and unbuttoned my fly and everything, in seconds!"

"Please, can we have a little spotlight down here?" he points, laughing. "No, please, a little more light, thank-you." Luckily, [a roadie] was behind me and pulled me out. People lose their minds, but you have to give them the benefit of the doubt. It was pretty funny. It had never happened to me before; I guess it happens to other people in bands. I was pretty happy with it for a while. The technique was pretty good, actually.

"I have this philosophy about it, but it works both ways. Sometimes it's too much, because they can't believe it, and then on the other side you get people who treat you like meat. In a way, I really understand what it's like to be a woman walking down the road and being hit on. This sounds kind of weird, but I really do. It makes you really understand that, because people do really treat you like meat, and it's hard to really comprehend until that happens. But I'm not trying to sing my own praises."

An overzealous fan can be frightening, especially when the prospective souvenir is one of such a personal nature. "That's what I thought!" Hutchence says. "They'll just cut it off and put it in their back pocket and ask you to sign it later. Will you sign this, please?" he says with a slanderously funny American accent. "Sure — ah, love and kisses, best wishes, maybe you'll have more luck with it, it will serve you well, glad to be obliged."

"It could be worse," he adds. "It could be dangerous, really dangerous out there. Sometimes people have that *look*, and they look at you the whole show and all you can think is at any moment it's going to be BANG! You never know." Most of the time Hutchence ends up sacrificing only a shirt sleeve, but at \$600 a pop — and considering he's gone through several — those diaphanous Yohji Yamamoto creations he wears on stage can seem awfully precious to the average mortal.

With so much attention always directed toward Hutchence, one might easily expect the rest of the band to be wildly jealous. Instead, they're remarkably pragmatic about the situation.

"We'd always pushed ourselves as a band, but I guess when we came to *Kick* [their sixth album], we'd been slogging it out so long here in the States that we said, 'OK, whatever it takes, so to speak, without selling out,'" Pengilly explains. "Obviously the media and even Atlantic Records to a certain extent had always wanted to push Michael out, because it's always easier to focus on one person than six, so we kind of said, 'OK, if people want to talk to Michael alone, fine.' Throughout that Michael was fighting to keep it as a band. We kind of let it go during *Kick* to see if it would make a difference, and I don't know if it did or not, but from the inside it didn't really alter what was going on."

Hutchence quickly seconds that emotion, stating that the group's biggest achievement has been simply staying together all these years. "I think it's success that we've done all this and lasted," he says. "And it's brilliant, whether or not we've sold lots of

records. I've been in this band for 14 years — that's half my life!"

The key to INXS' ability to roll so well with the punches is the fact that this is their life. They've been playing together since high school, and although only three of them are actually brothers, all six band members interact as though they are part of the same family.

"On each different album everyone's roles switch around," Pengilly notes. "It's a good thing about the band — we keep evolving, keep changing, it just keeps it interesting."

"The friendships throughout the band switch around and change too," he adds. "Everyone always goes through different periods of hanging out with each other, or combinations. It's good. If you get sick of one guy, you can go to another one; there are so many of us."

Pengilly's friendship with Tim Farriss dates back 20 years, when Farriss began a series of tortuous pranks with Pengilly cast as the fall guy. Not surprisingly, Farriss is still at it.

"Kirk is so gullible, he's unreal," Farriss devilishly reveals. "You can tell him anything and he'll believe you. We used to sit next to each other in math class. I remember one time the blind that you pull down to cover the window was down, and I spent the entire lesson being really careful, trying to get the cord between his head and his glasses without him noticing, which is really hard to do," he gleefully recalls. "I finally got it in the knot, and then I yanked the blind and it went up to the top of the window with his glasses going cha cha cha cha against the window. The teacher said, 'Whose glasses are they?' and Kirk said, 'They're mine,' so he got sent to the headmaster's office. We're still always getting back at each other for all kinds of things."

Hutchence agrees. "They still have the same relationship," he says. "Tim antagonizes Kirk and Kirk gets flustered back and forth. But Tim's a real sweetheart, a great wit. He's very important to this band as far as thinking goes. He's one of those people who construct futures in his mind and make them happen. I never realized it until recently, but someone will say something and he'll say, 'Yeah, of course, I made that happen, I just thought it.' It's a very powerful thing."

But while Farriss is the acknowledged prankster in the group, in years to come Pengilly may yet have the last laugh, having carefully recorded INXS' excesses for as long as they've been together.

"Kirk's kept a diary since 1976," Farriss admits. "Every day he writes in it. I never could have that sort of discipline."

"He's extremely methodical," Hutchence concurs. "Almost psychotically methodical, I'd call it. Quiet and vicious, neat in murder, too. He'd put plastic sheets out first, he wouldn't want any mess. I'm sure we have secret 'slip fifty' plans, so Kirk will keep the diary fair, keep it clean."

"I hope it's in a safe somewhere," Farriss adds, sounding oddly worried.

Andy Warhol's friends must have felt the same way. **me**

GLASS TIGER



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SOUND CHECK



▲ DIVINYLS

The dynamic duo of Christina Amphlett and Mark McEntee have been working together in their native Australia as the Divinyls for more than 10 years now. Their latest, eponymously titled album is their fifth and features the smash, worldwide hit "I Touch Myself." Alongside the impeccable musicianship of top session men Charlie Drayton, Benmont Tench and Randy Jackson, *Divinyls* is a showcase for Amphlett's highly charged, unabashedly sexual vocals and McEntee's raging, expressive guitar.

BILLY JOE WALKER JR.

Almost everything about Billy Joe Walker Jr. screams country: his name, his homes in Nashville and in the mountains of East Tennessee, his session work as a guitarist for Kenny Rogers, Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings and that other great "junior," Hank Williams, as well as his success as a songwriter (a No. 1 country hit with "I Wanna Dance With You" by Eddie Rabbitt). But as a solo recording artist it's jazz-oriented instrumental music that Walker turns to. His fluid, evocative playing has already spawned three acclaimed albums, including two New Age No. 1 singles from the third. A self-taught prodigy who had his own 30-minute radio show when he was but nine years old, Walker relies on nature, particularly the view from his Tennessee treehouse, for much of his inspiration. His fourth album, *The Walk* (the artist's nickname), is his first for Geffen Records.

PHIL PERRY

After more than 20 years in the background of the music business, R&B vocalist Phil Perry has finally gotten his chance to bask in the spotlight. From his doo-wop days in the late '60s and throughout the '70s as one of the Montclairs (he became lead singer when he was still in junior high), through his work as one of the most in-demand background vocalists in the '80s (working with everyone from Al Jarreau and Patti La Belle to Barbra Streisand and Mister Mister), Perry has sung in almost every style imaginable. On his debut release, *The Heart Of The Man*, most of those styles come into play on songs written by (among others) Richard Marx and Aretha Franklin. "Through the years of singing background vocals for other people," Perry says, "I felt like an offensive lineman feels in football: You make the holes for the glory boys, but you never get credit. Now I've got the ball!"

BETH NIELSON CHAPMAN

As a songwriter Beth Nielson Chapman has penned hits for Willie Nelson, Tanya Tucker and Lorrie Morgan, but on *Beth Nielson Chapman*, her first album since 1979's *Hearing It First*, there's strong evidence that she kept her best material for herself. Born in Texas but raised all over the U.S. and in Germany as part of an Air Force family, Beth made a habit of saving all her writing from an early age. "I've never thrown anything away," she says. "In fact, the first verse of a song called 'Live Goes On' from the album was derived from a little poem I'd written when I was eight. It fit right in." Another song, "Child Again," had been fermenting in Chapman's imagination for almost six years. Hardly an impatient worker, Chapman proves that good things come to those who wait.

TARA KEMP

That Tara Kemp began taking piano, voice and acting lessons before she reached a double-digit age is evident in the classical elements she imbues her emotional, sensuous R&B music with. "I'm very eclectic in my tastes," Kemp explains. "I like to draw upon what's good about the past and what's exciting in the present. The music is very current, but there's a melodic element to it that most street music doesn't have." Along with the production/songwriting team of Tuhin Roy and Jake Smith, Kemp has put together a self-titled debut album that will establish her as a major writing and singing talent for the '90s.

MIKE REID

Bo may know Diddley about music, but there is one former pro athlete out there with two Grammys and a Songwriter Of The Year award to his credit. Mike Reid was Rookie Of The Year for the Cincinnati Bengals in 1971 and was All-Pro in '72 and '73, but by 1975 he had emptied his locker and applied himself to a full-time career in country music. In 1980 he moved his family to Nashville and became a staff songwriter, eventually teaming up with Ronnie Milsap for a series of hits including the Grammy winners "Stranger In My House" and "Lost In The Fifties." Other artists who have covered his songs include Willie Nelson ("There You Are") and The Judds ("Born To Be Blue"). Now Reid is finally putting out his own debut album with a title that buries his football past with a baseball metaphor: *Turning For Home*.



▲ WAYNE TOUPS & ZYDECAJUN

There are as many musical styles at work on Wayne Toups & Zydecajun's newest album, *Fish Out Of Water*, as there are flavors bubbling up out of a cauldron of steamy gumbo. The key ingredients are Louisiana-based zydeco and Cajun music with healthy helpings of southern rock, R&B and soul stirred in for good measure. Jokingly referred to as the "Bayou Bruce Springsteen" and "Le Boss," Toups leads bassist Mark Miller, keyboardist Rick Lagneux, guitarist Freddie Pate and drummer Mike Burch through a rave-up of foot-stomping, full-tilt goodtime music.

MICA PARIS

Mica (pronounced Meesha) Paris was only 18 years old when she signed her first record deal in 1987. The excitement generated by her aptly titled debut album, *So Good* (a Top 5 hit in her native England), in '89 attracted a phalanx of stars who lined up like starstruck stage door johnnies to work with Mica on her second LP. Fittingly called *Contribution*, the album features a song written especially for Mica by Prince called "If I Love U 2Nite," a rap by Rakim on the title track, some very chic guitar work from Nile Rodgers and a song written and produced by dancemeister Mantronix. But the real star of the album is Mica's powerful, moving voice, the instrument that won her the accolade of Britain's "Number One Soul Singer."

LINDA EDER

Linda Eder may not be a familiar name, but her face and voice will ring bells for millions. Originally a jazz-based singer, Linda shot to fame in 1988 as *Star Search*'s record-breaking grand prize winner after 12 straight victories as Best Female Vocalist. Her acclaim (and voice) won her a specially written part in Frank Wildhorn's production of *Jekyll & Hyde* (which Eder will star in on Broadway later this year). An album of the show's highlights was one of last year's most popular theatrical albums. Now, with Wildhorn writing the album's 11 tracks, Linda is set to launch her solo recording career. *Linda Eder* includes "A Little Bit Of Heaven," featuring sax great Stanley Turrentine, and "Someone Like You," the hit single from *Jekyll & Hyde*.

LONDONBEAT

Where do you look to see what happens when a widely acclaimed vocal group teams up with a wildly creative multi-instrumentalist? Listen to Londonbeat and you'll find the answer, *In The Blood*. American-born George Chandler and Jimmy Helms, along with Trinidadian Jimmy Chambers, were, individually and as a group, among the most popular background vocalists in the British recording industry but were ready to strike out on their own. Willy M, an Englishman with several bands and recording projects on both sides of the pond to his credit, was looking for some singers to team up with. Several years ago the foursome teamed up and were quickly signed to Eurythmic Dave Stewart's label, Anxious Records. After a successful debut album in the U.K. (*Speak*), their followup effort, *In The Blood*, has finally been released internationally.

DANIEL ASH

Love & Rockets' singer/guitarist Daniel Ash has never been one to lie back and let his success roll over him like a cool summer breeze. "You have to be uptight," he says. "I think in any art form it's the case. If you're content, what's going to come out is usually soft and bland. You need strong emotion, whether it's fiery or depressed, an extreme state of mind." To keep himself challenged during a brief hiatus from L&R two years ago, Ash started working on an album of cover versions. As time flew by the project evolved into a mixture of golden oldies and recent Ash compositions that range from doo-wop to modern goth. Ash played almost all of the music himself with Love & Rockets cohort Kevin Haskins coming in to help on drums and keyboards. The remaining covers on *Coming Down* include the standards "Me And My Shadow" and "Blue Moon" and The Beatles' "Day Tripper."



◀ MATERIAL ISSUE

Steeped in the dynamic power pop of Windy City natives Cheap Trick and the Shoes, Material Issue hopes to revolutionize rock with an *International Pop Overthrow*. Together since 1985, singer/guitarist Jim Ellison, drummer Mike Zelenko and bassist Ted Ansani honed their talents by playing live at any opportunity — from the drop of a hat to the opening of an envelope. After five years of playing their enthusiastic, romantic 60's-ish fare, they've finally committed their music to vinyl (tape and CD, too) for the whole world to hear. From the first single, "Valerie Loves Me," through the closing track "Li'l Christine," Material Issue displays a remarkable facility for expressing youthful angst and romance with an infectious pop backdrop.

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BRITS AWARDS • VAN MORRISON & TOM JONES...

No matter how well it's organized and presented—and this year was the slickest, smoothest show yet—the Brits Awards ceremony just can't avoid controversy. Sure, there will always be complaints about certain winners and shoulda-been winners (best British newcomer, for instance, was won by **Betty Boo**), but organizer Jonathan King courted disaster by inviting some of the brashest, most opinionated artists in the world and then instructing them to behave like good little children.

Despite having been told not to mention the Gulf War or other "political" topics, Lisa Stansfield accepted her award as best British female artist and announced, "It's very nice to win an award, but the nicest thing for me would be for the war to end." Meanwhile, EMF mouthed obscenities as they mimed to their hit "Unbelievable," and **Jimmy Somerville** appeared onstage wearing a gay rights slogan across his T-shirt.

But the biggest outcry was reserved not for outrageous behavior by an artist but for appalling treatment of an award winner by the organizers themselves, when they delivered a deliberate insult to best international female artist **Sinead O'Connor**. Having announced that she was unable to accept the award in person because she was on tour in America, rather than showing a video clip of her (as had been the case with best international act INXS, whose vocalist **Michael Hutchence** also picked up an award for best international male artist), they showed, "as a tribute," a clip of fellow nominee **Whitney Houston** singing the U.S. national anthem at the recent Superbowl. It was an obvious reference to O'Connor's refusal to allow the anthem to be played at her own American shows.

King later claimed that his action was intended as "a joke," and insisted that "Sinead takes herself much too seriously." The artist herself, who has already announced that she feels awards ceremonies reward commercial rather than artistic achievement and was therefore boycotting both the Brits and the Grammys, later commented, "I thought it was great because it proved what I'd been saying to be the truth—that this industry is inherently greedy and malicious." Other winners included **MC Hammer** (best international newcomer), **George Michael** (best British

ish album), **The Cure** (best British group), **Depeche Mode** (best British single) and **Elton John** (best British male artist).

While the majority of the industry's executives and hangers-on were enjoying the Brits at the Dominion Theatre, independent record and distribution company Rough Trade was fighting to stave off bankruptcy. The company has built up huge debts and now owes tens of thousands of pounds to its member labels such as 4AD, Mute and Fire, thus delaying new albums by artists like **The KLF**, **Spacemen 3** and **The Butthole Surfers**. At presstime a rescue package seemed to have been arranged, causing many bands and labels to sigh with relief. Bill Gilliam of Alternative Tentacles commented, "It will be the blackest day for indie bands if Rough Trade goes down. They've breathed more life into the business than anyone else."

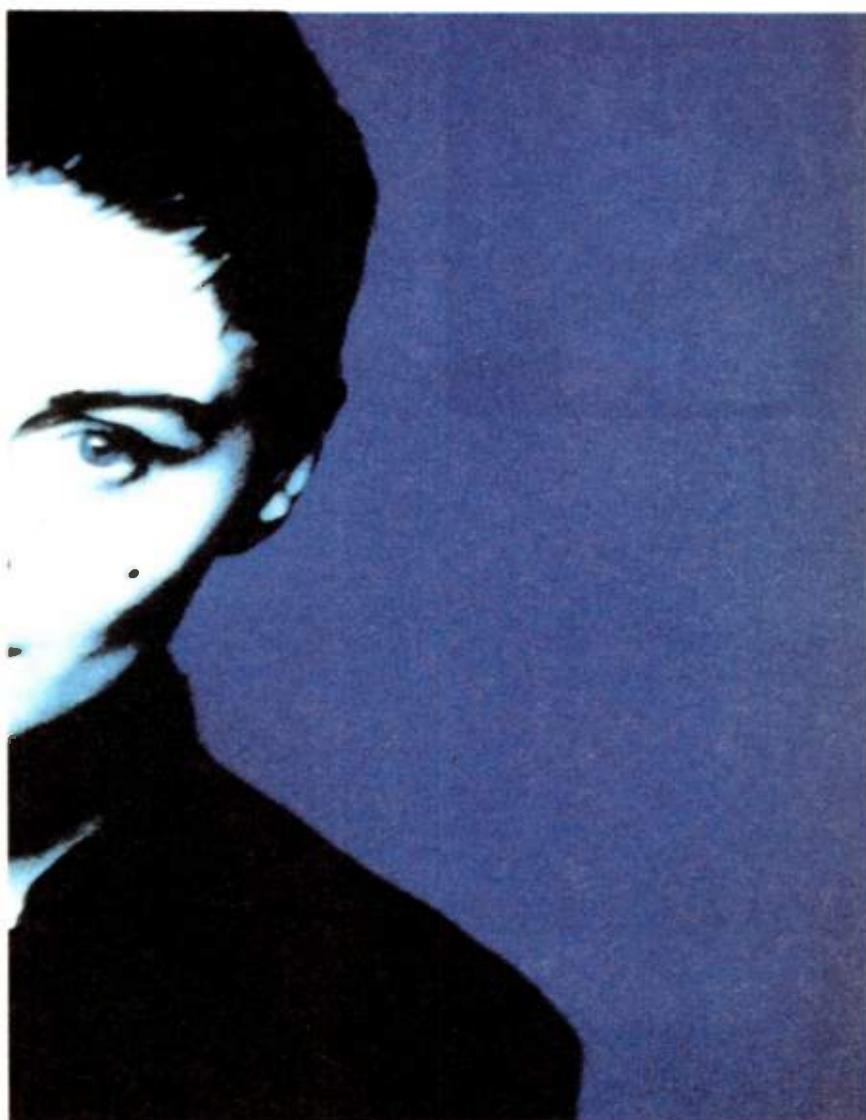
Currently working together are those Celtic soul brothers **Van Morrison** and hip-swivelling **Tom Jones**, whose Las Vegas crooning career was resurrected when he covered the Prince classic "Kiss." The pair have already recorded four Morrison compositions for Jones' new album.

The KLF, recently at No. 1 in the singles charts with "3 A.M. Eternal," have been arrested for defacing a poster advertising newspaper coverage of the Gulf War. Spotted replacing the first two letters of Gulf with a K to read KLF, the duo of **Bill Drummond** and **Jimmy Cauty** were held by the police overnight but then released with just a warning.

The British debut of **Julee Cruise**, best known for her work with *Twin Peaks*' **David Lynch**, left the critics divided. While some described her show as awesome, another commented that when the TV show finishes, Cruise will evaporate with it.

Finally, the way to score guaranteed chart success in Britain now seems to be to ensure that your song is used as the soundtrack to a TV advertisement. Following the recent revival of **Steve Miller**'s career with "The Joker" being used in a jeans ad, the same trick is now working for **The Clash**'s "Should I Stay Or Should I Go." Meanwhile, the **Free** classic from 1971, "All Right Now," is back in the Top 10, courtesy of a chewing gum ad.

Johnny Waller/S.I.N.



Brit winner Lisa Stansfield says her award is nice, but peace would be nicer.



Julee Cruise's London debut left the critics divided.



Saxophonist Jane Bunnett looks like the brightest star on the Canadian jazz scene.

MADAME ALANNAH • DREAM WARRIORS • SELF-DEFENCE • STOMPIN' TOM...

It's always pleasing to see Canadian acts doing well internationally, but some artists make better ambassadors than others.

"Alannah rocks Grammys," shrieked the headlines here after Ms Myles won for Best Female Rock Vocal Performance, overlooking the fact that she wasn't even part of the televised show. Her support of Sinead O'Connor there involved a claim that "I'm probably the only woman on earth who really understands where Sinead is coming from." Right. And Sinead sings "Black Velvet" in the shower.

The far more likeable Dream Warriors continue to win friends in England. Their *And Now The Legacy Begins* album is shaping up as a smash, and they've supported the Canadian hip-hop scene by taking comrades HDV and Krush & Skad over with them. Canadian tardiness in embracing this innovative duo is regrettable.

Canada's tradition of superior singer/songwriters continues, and some of our best folk-oriented artists tour as a

package Stateside in April. Ferron, Connie Kaldor, Stephen Fearing, and James Keelaghan are those involved. Kaldor recently did well on a month-long European tour.

One B.C. band making waves is The Hightops, a spirited pop/roots combo. Paul Hyde is currently recording them. Vancouver-based Onslot is following up Numb with offerings from 24 Gone and Brilliant Orange. Both will get a U.S. release before Canada.

Back in Toronto, two local faves are uniting on a cool project. Change Of Heart and Shadowy Men On A Shady Planet will share sides on a four-song EP, each covering The Diodes' punk classic, "Tired Of Waking Up Tired." Skasters King Apparatus topped the chart of Toronto's CFNY with their single "Made For TV." This augurs well for an impending tour that'll include California.

The brightest new star on the Canadian jazz firmament is undoubtedly T.O. saxophonist Jane Bunnett. Denon has just released a new album,

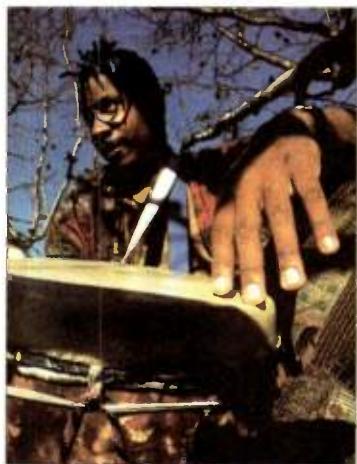
Jane Bunnett Quintet — *Live At Sweet Basil* (a top N.Y. jazz club). A recent hometown show featured jazz greats Charlie Haden, Don Pullen and Dewey Redman.

Young Toronto rap band Self-Defense are polishing off their debut LP. It's been preceded by a single and video, "The New Mania," inspired by a videogame. Best-kept secret in clubland here is Cajun restaurant Zydeco, which features such fine players as Gene Taylor (The Blasters) and Colin Linden in intimate surroundings.

The most welcome comeback story of 1990 was that of national treasure Stompin' Tom Connors. The country legend played coast to coast in the year's biggest tour, and now he's back with a new album, *The Stompin' Tom Phenomenon*. This follows the pattern of the last record, *Fiddle And Song*, even down to another tribute song to a fellow Canadian, this time Rita MacNeil. Both performers were big winners at the recent East Coast Music Awards.

Kerry Doole

L o s A n g e l e s



Opening act Vinx completely captivated the crowd at Sting's show.

BRIAN WILSON • STING • RHINO'S REAL MUSIC REVUE • THE YA-HOOS ...

While Wilson Phillips entertained a star-studded crowd at the American Music Awards crosstown, daddy Brian Wilson was making a rare public appearance at the China Club in Hollywood. The legendary Beach Boy has been stepping out more and more in recent weeks, having sat in with surf guitar maestro Dick Dale a few days earlier at a club called Trancas in Malibu. He also performed an intimate set at an AIDS benefit in San Francisco with longtime admirer cartoonist Garry Trudeau, who eulogized the *Pet Sounds* album in a memorable *Doonesbury* strip last year.

Nervously sitting behind a Rhodes and backed by a band that included Rob Wasserman and Don Was on bass, along with Jeff "Skunk" Baxter on guitar, Wilson warbled his way through a poignant, sometimes hard to listen to 45-minute, 11-song set that included such Beach Boy classics as "Surfer Girl," "Sloop John B.," "California Girls" and "In My Room," as well as the brand-new "Spirit Of Rock 'N' Roll," a tune from his upcoming solo album, slated for release later this summer. The LP includes a rap medley using samples of old Beach Boy tunes and a duet with Bob Dylan (!). While

his once majestic falsetto wavered in and out of tune, Wilson seemed to get increasingly comfortable in front of the crowd — which included such admirers as Chubby Checker and Jon Bon Jovi. And best of all, the Doctor (shrink to the stars Eugene Landy) was nowhere in the house, the strongest sign yet that Brian might finally be back. Word is he's planning to tour this spring.

Der Stingle, or simply Sting to his friends, brought his critically acclaimed *Soul Cages* show to the Wiltern Theater, a two-hour-plus performance that more than lived up to the promise of his best-selling album. Sting introduced the newest signing to his Pangaea label, opening act Vinx, whom he discovered at a small club singing and accompanying himself on African drums. Vinx completely captivated the crowd, but it was Gordie Sumner's night all the way, with a set that included his version of Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Rain" and a slew of strategically placed Police songs. Afterward, the record label hosted a platinum presentation party at the Atlas Restaurant next door that was a paparazzi's delight, with such star power as Bruce Springsteen and Patti Scialfa, Don

Henley, Joni Mitchell and husband Larry Klein, actors Jeff and dad Lloyd Bridges, Michael Keaton, ex-Police mate Stewart Copeland and the mother of Sting's children, Trudi Styler.

Hippie ice cream magnates Ben & Jerry are sponsoring Rhino Records' "Real Music Revue" tour, featuring label artists Exene Cervenka, Steve Wynn and Clive Gregson and Christine Collister. "Rock The Vote" will also be participating in the jaunt, with information booths about voter registration to be set up at each venue. The tour begins this month.

Former KISS drummer Peter Criss resurfaced to refute a tabloid article which claimed that he was a homeless alcoholic living on the Santa Monica Pier. The individual in question turned out to be an impostor. Ex-Aerosmith guitarist Jimmy Crespo has been wowing club audiences with local outfit The Ya-Hoos. Mick Fleetwood opened a new blues club called, appropriately enough, Fleetwood's. Opening night featured a Bo Diddley jam and such celebs as Bobby Brown, John Lee Hooker, Christine and John McVie, Rod Stewart, Brian Wilson and Wilson Phillips, which is where we came in...

Roy Trakin

STING

The Soul Cages

The eagerly awaited
new release from one of
contemporary music's
most important creators.

Produced by

Hugh Padgham & Sting.

Manu Katché - Drums

Kenny Kirkland - Keyboards

Dominic Miller - Guitars

Branford Marsalis - Saxophone

Kathryn Tickell - Northumbrian Pipes

Paola Pizzarelli - Oboe

David Sancious - Keyboards

Ray Cooper, Vinny, Bill Summers,

Munyungo Jackson, Skip Burney

and Tony Vacca - Percussion

Sting - Vocals, Bass,

Synclavier, Mandolin

Branford Marsalis appears
courtesy of Columbia Records

Vinny appears
courtesy of Pangaea Records

"And all this time the river flowed

Endlessly like a silent tear

And all this time the river flowed

Father, if Jesus exists

Then how come he never lived here.*

Sting *The Soul Cages*

available on compact disc, cassette and vinyl.





LOUNGE LIZARDS • GRAMMY DIRT • JUDYBATS...

The Grammy Awards returned to New York for the first time since 1988, and with them came a week-long flurry of gala parties and dinners honoring the nominees.

The pre-telecast Grammys provided some of the evening's funnier moments, including the presentation of best alternative music performance to an absent Sinead O'Connor, an honor she had already refused to receive; Stanley Jordan giving a stupefyingly nimble performance of "Stairway To Heaven" simultaneously on two electric guitars; Sun Records founder Sam Phillips, who was presented with a Trustees Award, explaining the simplicity of his early recordings by saying, "Most of the things I recorded were because I couldn't handle too many pods"; and octogenarian producer Milt Gabler, who also received the Trustees honor, casually remarking that the late jazz chanteuse Billie Holiday was "quite a gal."

Backstage during the broadcast, Suzanne Vega explained the genesis of D.N.A.'s hit rap mix of her song "Tom's Diner," saying that D.N.A. had bootlegged the song, and that she had the choice of either suing them or releasing the track herself, big winner Mariah Carey announced that she'd just co-written a new song with Carole King, whom she's been listening to "since [she] was a baby," and Sinead O'Connor made a surprise appearance on Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid's T-shirt.

The big fun of the evening began when the telecast ended and each of the major record labels hosted parties in some of the toniest locations in town. MCA's fete at the Four Seasons was the night's best. Debbie Harry, a newly bearded Paul Simon, Donald Trump and Marla Maples, Bobby Brown, Kitty Wells, B.B. King, Lyle Lovett, Chuck D, Paul Young, Rod Stewart, Joe Perry, Steven Tyler, Joan Rivers and several hundred others enjoyed this tres chic bash. A few blocks away at the recently restored Rainbow Room, Sony Music hosted a crushing affair, with so many guests it was hard to move. Bob Dylan and his mother, Jack Nicholson and Diana Ross were sequestered in the only VIP area encountered all night. Mingling with the hoi polloi were Living Colour's Muzz Skillings, Christopher Reeve and August Darnell, who managed to sneak

into the VIP area eventually. And for the WEA party at Roseland, Sting and Trudy Styler, Phil Collins, Bette Midler, Quincy Jones, Ric Ocasek, Paulina Porizkova, Chaka Khan, Don Henley, Mick Jones, INXS' Jon Farriss, Don Was, Christopher Ward, Alannah Myles, Paul Simon (also at the Sony bash) and a late-arriving yet spritely Jack Nicholson mingled.

Was is putting the final touches on *Bonnie Raitt's* followup to *Nick Of Time*, expected to be wrapped before her April 24th wedding. He's then scheduled to begin work on *Paula Abdul's* next album, while his brother David is producing *Rickie Lee Jones'* next one.

The next night the Washington, D.C.-based Rhythm And Blues Foundation held its second annual Pioneer Awards ceremony. The hilariously acerbic duo of Raitt and Ruth Brown hosted the presentation, which honored Albert King, Curtis Mayfield, Sam Moore, Doc Pomus, Maxine Brown, The Spaniels, Jimmy McCracklin, Al Hibbler, Ray Charles, Patrice Johnson, Mickey Leland and The Five Keys. Phil Collins and Don Henley assisted in the presentations, while Patti Austin, Elvis Costello and Judy Collins were among the couple of hundred invited onlookers.

John Lurie recently took up residence with the latest incarnation of The Lounge Lizards at the Knitting Factory for a week-long engagement. In the past the group has included such luminaries as Arto Lindsay, Anton Fier, Marc Ribot, Evan Lurie and Dougie Bowne; it now features vibraphonist Bryan Carrott, multi-talented guitarist Michele Navazio and rock 'n' roll cellist Jane Scarpantoni, who gave Bob Mould's *Workbook* its elegiac urgency. The group performed material from all the Lizards' albums, proving Lurie's "fake-jazz" compositions have not only longevity, but immediacy too.

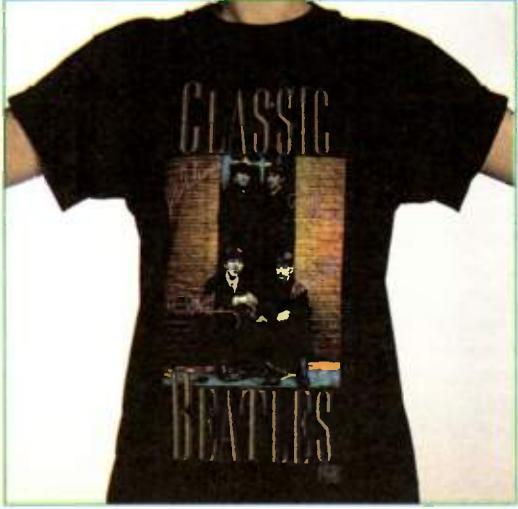
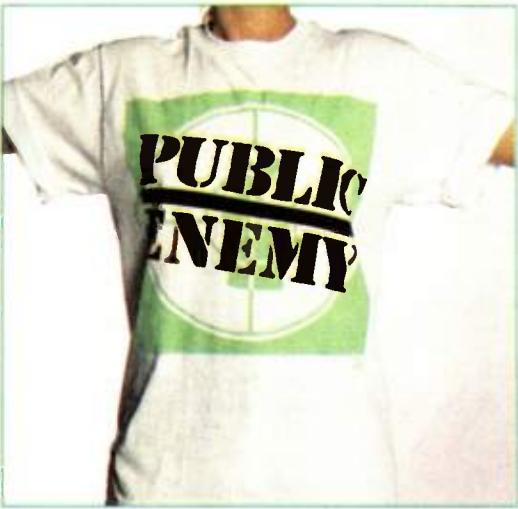
New kids on the block to watch: The Judybats, from Knoxville, Tennessee, have such a refreshingly retro sound, it's hard to place what era they're from. Recently on tour with June Tabor and the Oyster Band, the Judybats perform a curious hybrid of sweetly melodic psychedelia and zippy pop, and their cover of Roky Erickson's "She Lives (In A Time Of Her Own)" is a killer.

Tina Clarke



R&B Foundation award winners Albert King (above) and Sam Moore (below) were feted by host Bonnie Raitt and guest Elvis Costello.

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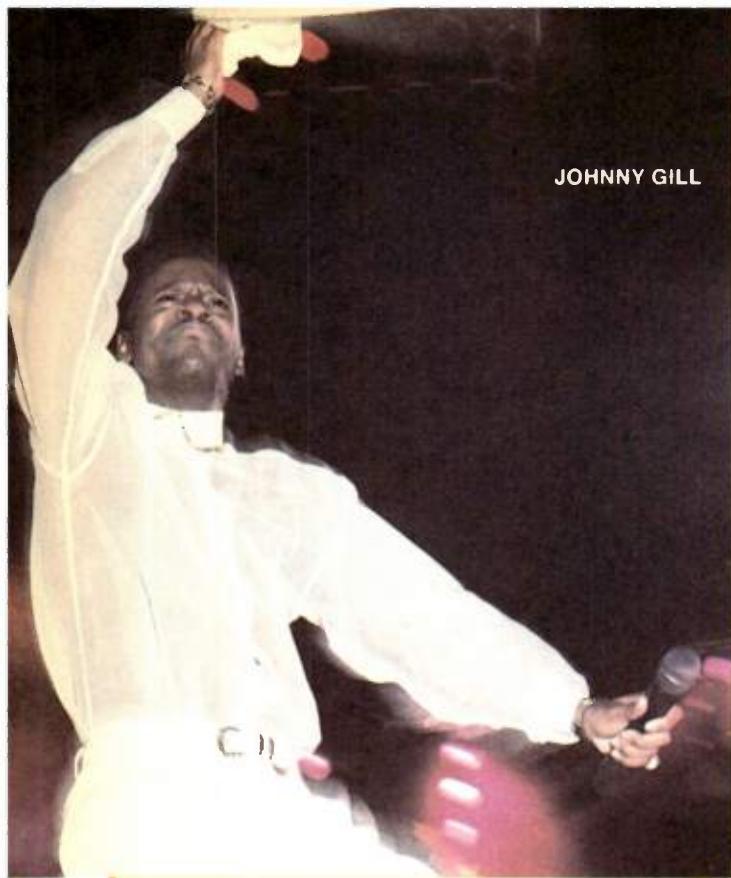
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- 24 QUEBEC CITY • QUEBEC COLISEE ARENA
- 26 SUDBURY • SUDBURY ARENA
- 27 LONDON • LONDON GARDENS
- 28 KALAMAZOO • WINGS STADIUM
- 30 EVANSVILLE • ROBERT'S STADIUM

CONWAY TWITTY

- APR.2 WINNIPEG • CENTENNIAL HALL
- 5 RAPID CITY • RUSHMORE PLAZA
- 6 SIOUX FALLS • SIOUX FALLS ARENA
- 7 ROCKFORD • ROCKFORD METROCENTER
- 18 ERIE • ERIE CIVIC CENTER
- 19 ROCHESTER • WAR MEMORIAL AUD.
- 20 BETHLEHEM • STABLER ARENA
- 26 ROCKFORD • ROCKFORD METROCENTER
- 27 KNOXVILLE • THOMPSON-BOLING ARENA
- 28 RALEIGH • CIVIC CENTER

EDIE BRICKELL & THE NEW BOHEMIANS

- APR.1 CINCINNATI • BOGART'S
- 2 CLEVELAND • TBA
- 4 ROYAL OAK • ROYAL OAK MUSIC TH.
- 6 CHICAGO • RIVIERA THEATRE
- 7 MILWAUKEE • RIVERSIDE THEATRE
- 9 MINNEAPOLIS • TBA
- 12 DENVER • PARAMOUNT THEATRE
- 14 SALT LAKE CITY • TBA
- 15 SANTA CRUZ • CIVIC AUDITORIUM
- 17 BERKELEY • TBA
- 18 SANTA ROSA • LUTHER BURBANK CTR.
- 20 LOS ANGELES • TBA
- 21 SAN DIEGO • SPRECKLES

INXS

- APR.2 OAKLAND • OAKLAND COLISEUM
- 3 SACRAMENTO • ARCO ARENA
- 5 PHOENIX • VET. MEM. COLISEUM
- 6 PASADENA • ROSE BOWL

MARcia BALL

- APR. 6 MOBILE • THE LUMBERYARD
- 7 JACKSON • ZOO BLUES
- 13 HOUSTON • PRIVATE FUNCTION
- 18 HOUSTON • PARTY ON THE PLAZA
- 20 AUSTIN • LA ZONA ROSA
- 26 NEW ORLEANS • MAPLE LEAF
- 27 NEW ORLEANS • MUDDY WATERS
- 28 NEW ORLEANS • JIMMY'S CLUB



GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS

- APR.1 E.RUTHERFORD • MEADOWLANDS ARENA
- 2 ALFRED • ALFRED UNIV.
- 4 WILKES-BARRE • F.M. KIRBY CENTER
- 5 FAIRFAX • PATRIOT CENTER
- 6 PHILADELPHIA • THE SPECTRUM
- 9 POUGHKEEPSIE • MID HUDSON CIVIC CENTER
- 11 BETHLEHEM • STABLER ARENA
- 13 PITTSBURGH • SYRIA MOSQUE

BELL BIV DEVOE, JOHNNY GILL, KEITH SWEAT

- APR.1 ATLANTA • THE OMNI
- 3 WORCESTER • THE CENTRUM
- 4 PHILADELPHIA • THE SPECTRUM
- 5 DETROIT • JOE LOUIS ARENA
- 6 LANDOVER • CAPITOL CENTER
- 7 CHAPEL HILL • DEAN SMITH CTR.
- 8 NEW YORK • MADISON SQ. GARDEN

BOP (HARVEY)

- 3 CINCINNATI • RIPLEY'S
- 4 BUFFALO • THE MARQUEE
- 6 TORONTO • EL MOCAMBO
- 9 E.LANSING • MICHIGAN ST. UNIV.
- 10 ANN ARBOR • THE NECTARINE
- 12 KALAMAZOO • STATE THEATRE
- 13 CHICAGO • CUBBY BEAR

BRANFORD MARSALIS

- APR.2-7 NEW YORK • VILLAGE VANGUARD
- 13 BALTIMORE • MORGAN ST. UNIV.
- 17-19 JACKSONVILLE • FLORIDA THEATRE
- 20 AUBURN • OUTDOOR PAVILLION

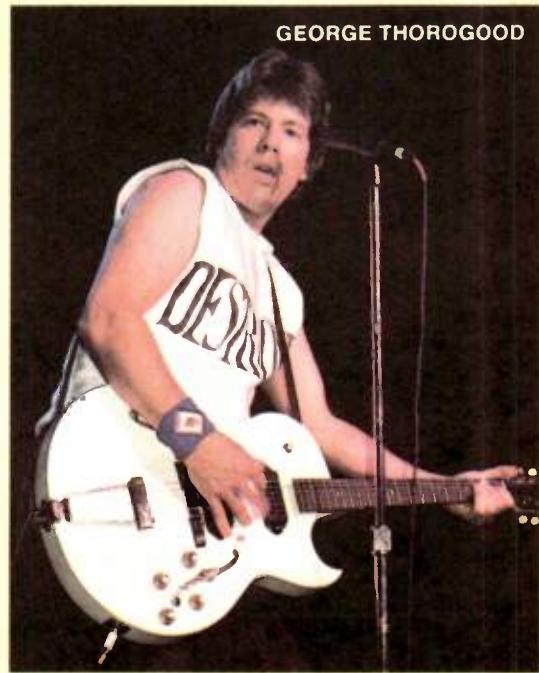
CINDERELLA (WITH LYNCH MOB)

- APR.2 BUFFALO • MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
- 3 SYRACUSE • WAR MEMORIAL ARENA
- 5 ROCHESTER • WAR MEMORIAL ARENA
- 6 EAST RUTHERFORD • MEADOWLANDS ARENA
- 7 BINGHAMPTON • BROOME CO. ARENA
- 9 ALBANY • KNICKERBOCKER ARENA
- 10 HARTFORD • CIVIC CENTER

- 21 SANDUSKY • STATE THEATRE
- 25 PARSIPPANY • ASPEN HOTEL
- 26 WILKES-BARRE • F.M. KIRBY CENTER
- 27 PIGEON FORGE • DOLLYWOOD
- 28 SUFFERN • LAFAYETTE THEATRE

RICKY VAN SHELTON (WITH PATTY LOVELESS)

- APR.5 ODESSA • ECTOR CO. COLISEUM
- 6 ABILENE • TAYLOR CO. EXPO CENTER
- 7 AMARILLO • CIVIC CENTER
- 11 ROCHESTER • MAYO CIVIC CENTER
- 12 ROCKFORD • METRO CENTER
- 13 BATTLE CREEK • KELLOGG CENTER
- 14 EVANSVILLE • ROBERT'S STADIUM
- 18 DALLAS • COWBOY'S
- 19 LAFAYETTE • THE CAJUNDOME
- 20 JACKSON • MISSISSIPPI COLISEUM
- 21 BILOXI • MISS. COAST COLISEUM
- 26 LEXINGTON • RUPP ARENA
- 27 FAIRFAX • PATRIOT CENTER
- 28 HERSHEY • HERSHEY PARK AREA



GEORGE THOROGOOD

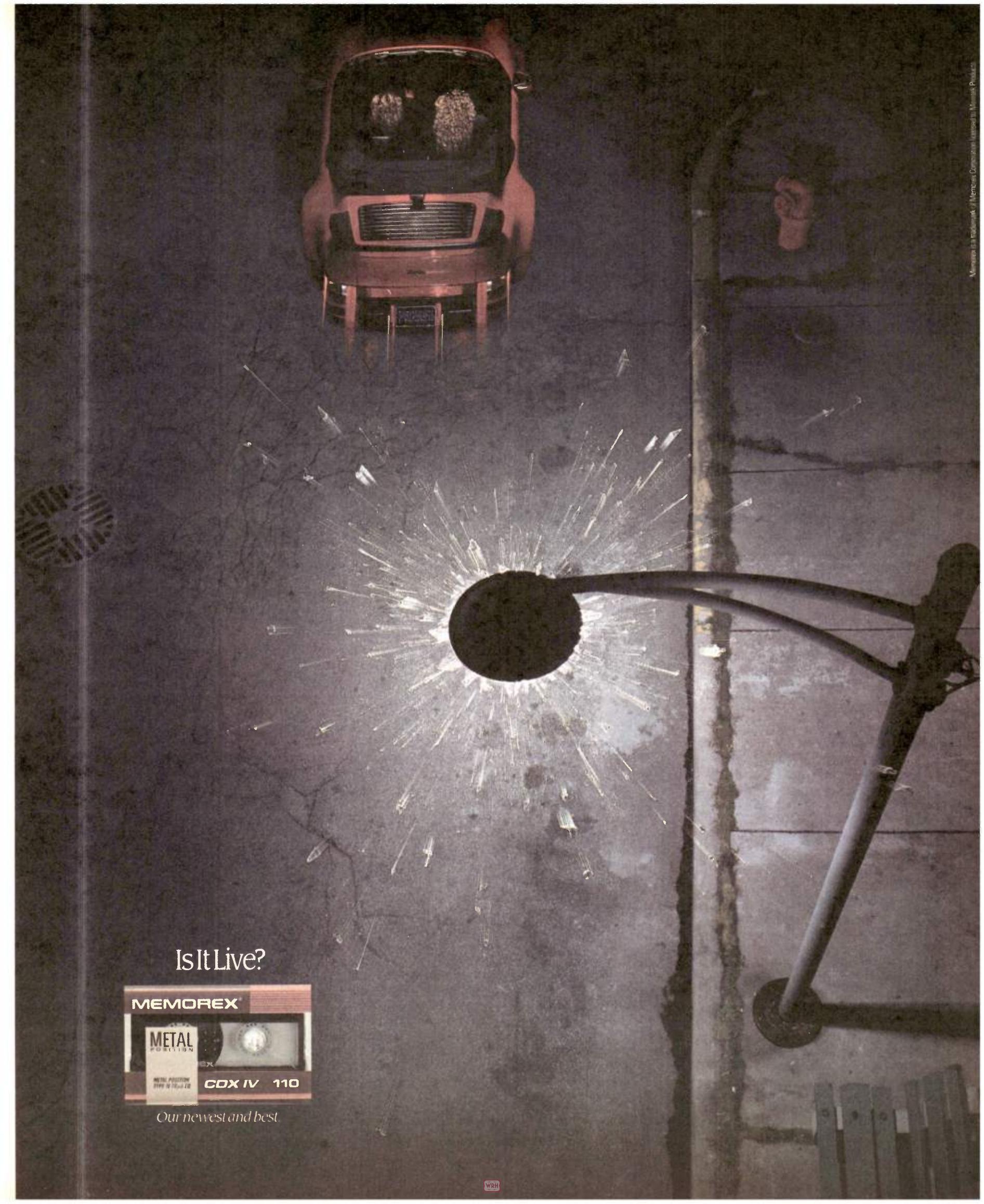
PAUL SIMON

- APR.2 TORONTO • TORONTO SKYDOME
- 4 OTTAWA • OTTAWA CIVIC CENTER
- 6 MONTREAL • MONTREAL FORUM
- 8 HALIFAX • METRO CENTER
- 11 ROCHESTER • WAR MEM. ARENA
- 12 BUFFALO • MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
- 14 CINCINNATI • SHOEMAKER ARENA
- 16 NOTRE DAME • JOYCE CENTER

ROGER MCGUINN

- APR.3 ATLANTA • VARIETY PLAYHOUSE
- 4 RALEIGH • RIALTO THEATRE
- 5 RICHMOND • FLOOD ZONE
- 6 COLLEGE PARK • UNIV. OF MARYLAND
- 9 PHILADELPHIA • THEATRE OF LIVING ARTS
- 10 NEW HAVEN • TOAD'S PLACE
- 12 BOSTON • BERKLEE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
- 13 NEW YORK • THE RITZ
- 14 TARRYTOWN • TARRYTOWN MUSIC HALL
- 17 CLEVELAND • EMPIRE
- 18 ANN ARBOR • MICHIGAN THEATRE
- 19 CHICAGO • VIC THEATRE
- 20 MILWAUKEE • SHANK HALL
- 21 MINNEAPOLIS • GUTHRIE THEATRE
- 22 MADISON • BARRYMORE THEATRE
- 25 BOULDER • BOULDER THEATRE

Top: Ken Settle ; Right: George DeSota/LFI ; Bottom: David Roth



Is It Live?



Our newest and best.



With new management, a new record label and a new, more aggressive attitude — not to mention the added bonus of vocal contributions from Rod Stewart —

KEEPING

Glass Tiger's Alan Frew calls it that magic moment, the point in time where a career's objective is frozen into one distinct image — for him, the sight of his idol, Rod Stewart, singing one of his band's songs.

Stewart's vocal contributions on "My Town," a track from the Tiger's latest release, *Simple Mission*, came about partly because Glass Tiger is now managed by Stewart's U.S. management team of Arnold Stiefel and Randy Phillips, partly because of Frew's and Stewart's mutual love of Scottish soccer and partly because the song itself is reminiscent of vintage Stewart singalongs like "Sailing."

Sitting around a conference table at Capitol Canada's Toronto headquarters, lead vocalist Frew and keyboardist Sam Reid express concern that critics may accuse them of riding on Stewart's coattails in recording the track, but they insist it was Rod The

Mod who offered his distinctive vocals.

"Since he's my idol, I was happy just to get to know him personally, have a few pints and talk about soccer," Frew explains. "But Paul Rafferty, who sings backup vocals on the album, told Rod we had this great Scottish song that was perfect for him. So he turns to me and says, 'So when are you going to invite me to sing on it?'

"So we were in [Hollywood's] A&M Studios with Rod, Sam's working the console and I'm walking Rod through the lyrics. We get to this one point where I look at Sam through the window and it was like the realization hit us both at the same time. Here was the voice that sang 'Maggie May,' 'Gasoline Alley' and all those great songs, singing one of our songs! It's the kind of magic money can't buy."

Frew and Reid are hopeful that "My Town" (the debut single), "Animal Heart" and the rest of *Simple Mission* will put Glass Tiger's international career back on track.

Though they were Grammy award nominees for "Don't Forget Me When I'm Gone" off their debut album, *Thin Red Line*, the Tigers suffered a sophomore jinx when the follow up, *Diamond Sun*, failed to live up to expectations in the States — despite going triple platinum in their native Canada.

The departure of recalcitrant drummer Michael Hansen, new U.S. management and a new U.S. label have restored their collective spirits, however, and producer Tom Werman's high-energy direction has fine-tuned the Tiger's pop stylings to a more aggressive edge. During the sessions, Werman (whose credits include Poison, Cheap Trick and Ted Nugent) took Frew aside and said, "You don't even know why I'm here, do you?"

"At the time I said no," Frew relates, "because Sam

[Reid] and Eddie [Delena] were doing so much work. But you can't deny his mark is there. He keeps things simple, to the point and very direct. He got us to sound like we did 10 years ago when we were playing local bars, covering The Scorpions and Def Leppard. When I heard the final production, I called him in L.A. and simply said, 'Yes, I did know why you were there.'"

Simple Mission works as a rock album because for the first time in three efforts, The Tigers are working from a straight guitar, bass, drums combination instead of filling the holes with layers of keyboards — a trademark of their previous producer, Jim Vallance.

"This is the first album you can play air guitar and air drums too," cracks Reid. "We left spots for the guitar riffs this time. We didn't cover them up."

Vallance, who produced the band's first two releases, was an integral part of the writing team for *Simple Mission*, co-penning six of the album's 13 tracks and helping to shape a more stripped-down sound. "We recorded the demos with Jim, then just lifted those sessions into the studio and recorded the songs the way we had rehearsed them," explains Reid. "We knew there'd be timing imperfections, but that's what you get with live rock 'n' roll. I mean look at the Stones. You can drive a tank through some of their mistakes, but that's what makes them so cool."

Brimming with renewed confidence, *Simple Mission* reflects a more positive attitude, with tracks like "Animal Heart," "Let's Talk," "The Rhythm Of Your Love" and the title track establishing the Tiger's most aggressive stance so far.

"I always thought *Diamond Sun* was too negative," Reid notes. "I guess *Simple Mission* means we had a better year. We certainly feel a lot more positive about things."



Glass Tiger hope to bounce back from the disappointing reaction to their second album with *Simple Mission*, their third.

BY KEITH SHARP



it SIMPLE

Adds Frew: "At the time of *Diamond Sun*, we were on a tour with The Moody Blues, our record was vanishing off the charts, we had a drummer who was threatening to go home any minute and my leg was in a cast from my groin to my ankle [the result of a soccer injury]. Yet we still got through it. We went through a lot of shit but we came out of it with the right attitude, and a lot of that positiveness has come through on the new record."

The merger of the band's U.S. label, Manhattan, with EMI created plenty of confusion, with new people who were unfamiliar with Glass Tiger failing to provide the right marketing support. Internal unrest created by Hansen caused further havoc. "It's hard when you've got a drummer who doesn't want to drum anymore," says Frew. "You're doing a live concert and you've got a guy who doesn't want to be there. It's obviously going to affect things. At least he had the decency to tell us he wanted to leave. It could have been much worse if he'd stuck around and dragged us down."

Operating now as basically a four-piece, with Frew, Reid, guitarist Al Connolly, bassist Wayne Parker and hired hand Randall Coryell, Glass Tiger are optimistic that their new U.S. management, new label and a new focus by Werman will regain for them the popularity earned by their debut.

In Phillips and Stiefel, the Tigers have great management allies. They boast a high-powered roster which includes Stewart, Prince and Michael Jackson, and are well positioned to pull the right plugs to make things happen. Phillips formerly co-managed another Canadian group, The Kings, with Tiger manager Gary King, and first saw Glass Tiger playing local bars as Tokyo.

"Here's guys who did million-dollar deals for Mi-

chael Jackson, who are on the phone daily with presidents of record companies," says Frew. "When your turn comes you hope they're going to pick up the phone for you and things are going to happen."

Frew and co. are aware that the product has to be there to make things happen, and that being a Canadian band can have its drawbacks. "It's a matter of respect," says Frew. "The Americans recognize there's talent up here with the likes of Rush, Bryan Adams and now Alannah Myles, but they're not going to throw the floodgates open. They don't let you through in 10's and 20's—it's more like ones and twos. But it's the same with other places like Australia. They have the same problems that we do."

The Tigers know that Stewart's contribution on "My Town" is their ace card, but they also feel the respect will come when they present a balanced release with a number of potential hits.

"It would be a shame if people geared on 'My Town' and didn't appreciate the other tracks," notes Reid. "It's a tribute to the album's depth that we're not putting out 'My Town' as the first single."

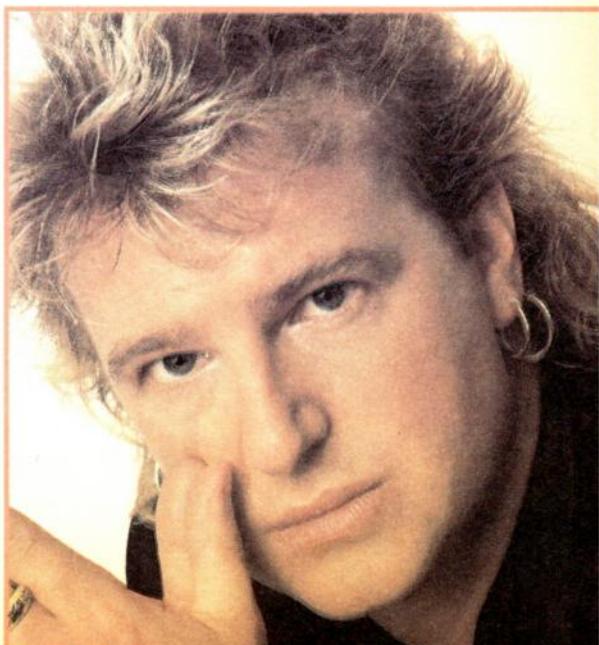
The title of the album, according to Frew, relates to how simple life should be for mankind, but how complicated we actually make things. "You're born, you go through life, get a job, get married, have kids, grow old with your companion and die," he says. "On paper it looks so simple, but of course it never is. We always seem to screw it up."

The negative factors are at a minimum here, though, as song titles like "The Rhythm Of Your Love," "Let's Talk" and "Blinded" score high in the marital and relationship bliss department. Then there's "My Town," Frew's nod to his Scottish heritage, which originally stemmed from a short instrumental piece concocted by Connolly, Parker and

Stewart's songwriting sidekick, Jim Cregan.

"It seems most great songs are those that appear magically in minutes," notes Frew unabashedly. "There was only about 30 seconds of music on the tape, but it hit me right away. I had the chorus down almost immediately."

Glass Tiger are aware that they're not exactly bosom buddies with the critics — their domestic and international success has for the most part been treated with scorn — and they know the only way to fight back is with a hit record. "Maybe this comment will come back to haunt me, but I can honestly say that anyone should be able to put their feet up with a cup of tea and be able to sing along to 'My Town,'" predicts Frew. "If the songs on this album connect with the public, no amount of criticism is going to matter. The only people who matter to us are the true fans who vote with their wallets." ■



IF I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU....

I'd do anything just to be with you. I'd climb mountains, swim oceans, cross deserts... you name it, I'd do it. I'd get to you even if I had to crawl. There's something about you. I don't know what it is, I can't describe it... but there's something about you that makes me feel all right. Better than all right. Like I've never felt before. If I fell in love with you? Who am I kidding? It's way too late for that.



FOR FRESH BREATH
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BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

DID YOU KNOW?

BECAUSE YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

Dentyne



With the Oscars now safely clutched by a new batch of victors, we can look forward to a fresh slate of promising-sounding spring and early summer releases. ? *The Fisher King* marks the return of visionary director Terry Gilliam (*Brazil*, *The Time Bandits*). In this dramatic comedy, **Robin Williams** plays a charismatic New York streetperson who encounters an arrogant shock DJ (**Jeff Bridges**). ? Also due via Tri-Star in early summer is *Hudson Hawk*, an international action-adventure with quite the power-packed cast — **Bruce Willis**, **Andie MacDowell**, **Danny Aiello**, **Sandra Bernhard**, **James Coburn** and **Richard E. Grant**. **Broocie** plays a reformed cat burglar out to foil a dastardly attempt to heist some Da Vinci treasures. ? The very busy **Aiello** is also expected on screen this month in *29th Street*, written and directed by **George Gallo**, who wrote *Midnight Run*. ? *Love Potion* 9 is a romantic comedy in which two shy scientists (**Tate Donovan** and **Sandra Bullock**) find a real love drug. ? One-time teen heartthrob **Matt Dillon** showed his true acting ability in *Drugstore Cowboy*, and he's up next in romantic thriller *A Kiss Before Dying*. Based on the novel by **Ira Levin** (*Rosemary's Baby*), it was written and directed by **James Dearden**, best known for *Fatal Attraction*. **Sean Young** and **Diane Ladd** co-star. ? A similarly stellar cast washes up on-screen in *Soapdish*, a comedy set behind the scenes of a daytime soap opera. The use of such notoriously "over-the-top" actors as **Whoopi Goldberg**, **Sally Field**, and **Kevin Kline** would seem perfect for the theme. ? The new **Neil Simon** comedy vehicle is *The Marrying Man*. This stars hot real-life couple **Alec Baldwin** and **Kim Basinger** as a pair of newlyweds embarking on a long and tempestuous relationship. The on-set tensions during the shooting have already aroused controversy. ? *Stepping Out* is a comedy designed to get the toes a'tappin'. **Liza Minnelli** plays a tap dance teacher who gets very close with her students, who include **Ellen Greene**, **Bill Irwin**, **Julie Walters** and **Andrea Martin**. It was produced and directed by **Lewis Gilbert** (*Educating Rita*, *Alfie*), and boasts some

Left: Orion Pictures Corp. Top: Hollywood Pictures. Bottom: Paramount Pictures



terrific dance scenes (*M.E.* was able to check out some of the filming). ? The theme of American nuclear bomb testing has proved a popular cinematic subject. In *Blue Sky*, a nuclear engineer (**Tommy Lee Jones**) and his wife (**Jennifer Lange**) become involved in a military cover-up. ? TV hunks **Ken Wahl** (*Wiseguy*) and **Matt Frewer** (*Max Headroom*) team up in comic caper *The Taking Of Beverly Hills*. ? **Harrison Ford** has just about the best hits versus misses ratio of any major star, so good things are expected for the summer release *Regarding Henry*. This reunites him with director **Mike Nichols** (*Working Girl*) and co-stars **Annette Bening**. ? **Bening** can currently be seen on-screen in *Guilty By Suspicion*, a thought-provoking look at the '50s witchhunt era in Hollywood.

Kerry Doole



Stepping Out

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F/X2: The Deadly Art of Illusion

By Iain Blair

When *F/X* was released in 1986, the thriller quickly became a sleeper hit and made a star out of Bryan Brown, the handsome Australian actor who portrayed special effects wizard Rollie Tyler. The film also introduced many movie fans to the hidden world of special effects.

Now Brown is back, along with pal Leo McCarthy (again played by Brian Dennehy) and whole new bag of tricks and illusions in the sequel, *F/X 2—The Deadly Art Of Illusion*, directed by Richard Franklin (*Psycho II*). Shot almost entirely on location in Toronto, with some added work in New York and Rome, *F/X 2* also features Rachel Ticotin (last seen opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Total Recall*), Philip Bosco and Joanna Gleason, and picks up five years after the point where the first film left off.

"I think that we were all surprised at just how well the first one did at the box office, and especially on video," Brown comments. "I had no huge profile, but people responded to the film, and over the past five years it's become a real cult classic."

So why did it take five years to complete the sequel? "Simple," answers Brown. "We just couldn't find a good enough script, and I didn't want to make a sequel just for the sake of it. It had to be more exciting and more inventive than the first one, and we all wanted to keep the basic premise of using special effects to overcome a dangerous situation without resorting to some fancy escapade in, say, the South of France.

"The main difference between this film and the first one is that at the end of *F/X*, my character didn't want anything to do with special effects again," Brown continues. "So when we meet him, he's working as a sort of high-tech toymaker—taking toys and inventing added features and further customizing them. That's his life now. He doesn't want to know about special effects, especially as he's happily living with a beautiful woman [Ticotin] and her young son, and minding his own business."

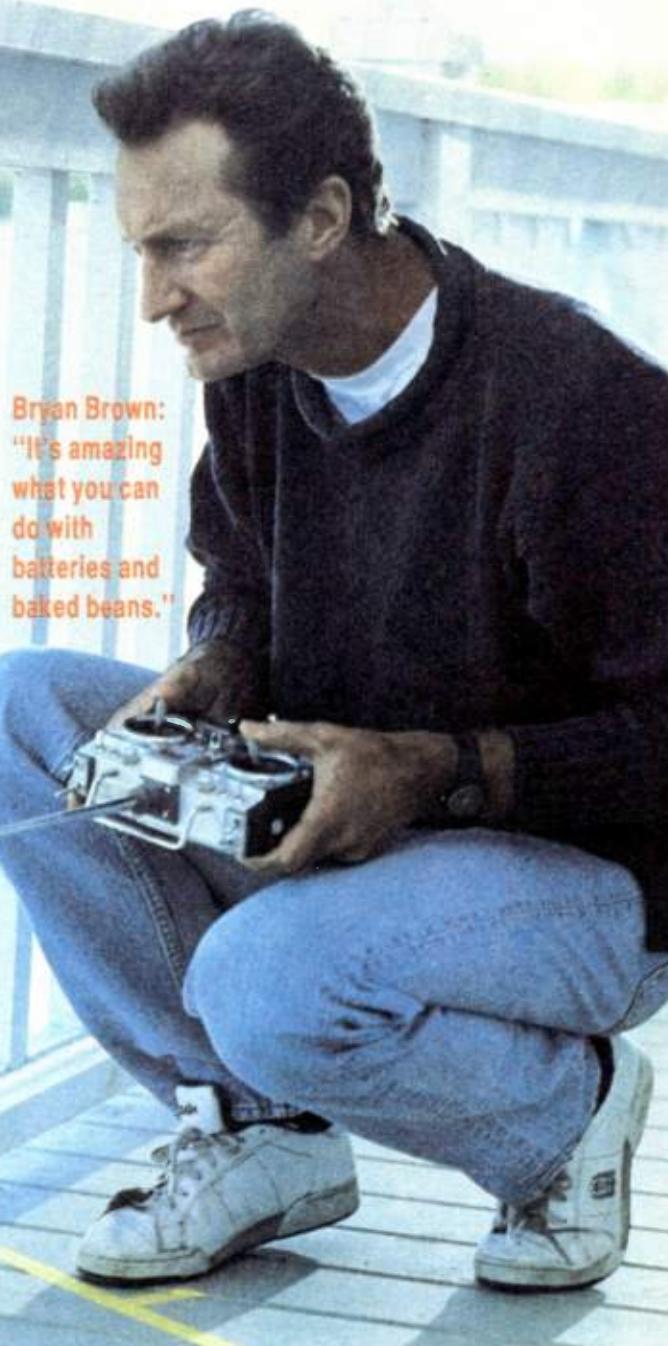
Of course, as this is the movies, Tyler isn't left alone for long. He's asked to help track down a would-be killer by his girlfriend's ex-husband, a cop, and although he doesn't want to become involved, he agrees. "I end up putting all of their lives in danger," reports Brown. "My character then hooks up with Leo McCarthy again, and we have to solve the mystery and catch the villains."

Brown is naturally hesitant to reveal too much of the plot. "Let's just say that there was a theft many years before of a certain Vatican treasure, and that a group in the police department knows about it, and we gradually realize that the villains are also police," he states. "That's really the crux of the plot."

While in the original film Brown and Dennehy shared only two scenes, the actors are teamed almost throughout the sequel. "That's another big change," Brown says. "In the first one, Leo is trying to track me down, and we only meet at the end. But here we have an ongoing relationship, although I wouldn't call it a buddy movie."

"These two guys never wanted to be best friends," he adds, "but they're thrown together by circumstance. And that leads to a certain abrasive humor between us. Rollie and Leo are very different personalities, but their mutual respect makes them work well together, and in that sense they form a great team. Rollie is a bit like a retired gunslinger. The challenge was to put him back in action and give the idea a new twist, and give the audience something fresh. He's also a very fast thinker. He has to get things done quickly, and just make use of whatever's at hand. That sort of ingenuity and sharpness makes him a lot more interesting than a guy who just pulls out a gun and shoots."

Despite his love for the character, Brown says that he personally has no particular interest in special effects, although he says, "When we're working



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on a gag, I start to get very interested in how they all work. I think that's because the film isn't so much about what the effect is as how you can come up with an effect by using something you'd have never thought of. It's not about the explosion, but about how you can create one."

While Brown's character is the expert illusionist in *F/X 2*, it was real-life special effects expert Eric Allard who built and supervised all the effects. Along with screenwriter Bill Condon, Allard, whose credits include *Short Circuit II*, *Max Headroom*, *Alien Nation* and Michael Jackson's *Moonwalker*, conceived and realized such show-stoppers as the homicidal cyborg that appears in the film's opening sequence, a clown robot named Bluey, and an automatic ball machine that fires sausages. As for Tyler's telemetry suit, which was connected by remote control to operate Bluey, it was first developed by NASA engineers and then adapted for use in the various fight sequences.

"I started working with the writer on various gags and ideas about four months before production started," says Allard. "He came over to do some research, along the lines of 'What types of things would a special effects man come up with?' The first scene we worked on was a murder sequence where Rollie has to be able to see what happens to the victim, although he's not physically in the room."

Allard solved that problem by using a combination of rear projection and tiny, state of the art video cameras. "After we'd worked out a few gags like that, it was natural for me to join the production full-time as the special effects coordinator," says Allard, who employed a staff of 60 experts and was given a budget of nearly \$1.5 million to create the elaborate effects.

"I was consulted throughout the filming, because there were so many script changes as we went along," he continues, "especially in the set pieces, such as a chase sequence in a supermarket. Believe it or not, that was all shot in a real supermarket in downtown Toronto. We were all amazed that they gave us permission to film there, but in fact we caused very little damage, because all the stunts were very carefully choreographed. I think the worst complaint was that some of the candy disappeared during the filming."

According to Allard, the main challenge for him was "creating two levels of special effects. There's the level the audience is in on, that Bryan lets them in on, and then of course there are all the *real* special effects that are largely hidden. So when a character gets shot, we rig the effect the same way as when Rollie fakes a death, but it also has to be convincing dramatically."

"The bottom line is that even when it's a film like this, which is all about special effects and how you can manipulate reality, I don't think the audience



Brown and Brian Dennehy in *F/X2*: "It's not about the explosion, but about how you can create one."

realizes just how many effects they are seeing in an average film," he stresses. "Even if a scene is as apparently 'real' and simple as a character going into a bathroom and turning on a faucet, that's a special effect, because it's shot on a soundstage and water is pumped in to complete the illusion."

Allard and his company, All Effects, eventually created "literally hundreds" of effects, ranging from such standard ones as fire, smoke, wind and rain to the tour de force homicidal cyborg sequence, in which what is apparently a transvestite being chased by New York's finest metamorphoses into a rocket-shooting alien.

"That sequence, which lasts 20 or 30 seconds, involved many, many different effects, and cost nearly \$400,000," reveals Allard, who also directed the second unit footage. "We started off with storyboards, because for a complex effect like that you have to be very specific about the images you want to create. So the first step was to take all the various ideas we had and condense them into one set sequence of events. Then you have to go back and satisfy each frame and figure out how many pieces and effects you need to do that. In this case, we had to first design the character, which was done by Jeff Kenmore, our creature sculptor. But as the sequence also called for the cyborg's arms and legs to be blown off, we also had to find an actor to complete the illusion."

The filmmakers hired an amputee actor, James Stacy, who had lost his left arm and leg in an accident, and then designed the type of damage inflicted on the cyborg, especially around the actor.

"So the scene started off with an able-bodied actor wearing the same makeup as James Stacy,

and then we switched to James, who was also fitted with a new prosthetic leg and a fake arm," explains Allard. "Then finally we used a couple of puppets. One was photographed from the waist up from the front, and was designed with an exploding chest and face. The second puppet was shot from the back, and was rigged with exit wounds. To complete the illusion we also used an insert arm for the specific shot where the cyborg fires a missile."

That one sequence took Allard and a crew of nearly 20 effects specialists over three months to design and build. "The toughest part of any complex effect like that is coordinating everything so that it's all ready to go on the day," he sums up.

One of the film's highlights is the chase and fight between Tyler and a fanatical pursuer in the supermarket. "It's how I use what's at hand to defeat the villain that makes it so original," says Brown. "Tyler isn't a kind of James Brown character with tons of fancy gadgets at his disposal. It's very much based in reality, and in that sense it's quite amazing what you can do with such ordinary things as a frozen chicken, tin foil, batteries and baked beans. Wait till you see what happens with those baked beans!"

"The effects here are a bit more devious and thought-out than in the first film but just as surprising and shocking. In fact, I think it's a lot more inventive and exciting than the first one."

Assuming that *F/X 2* is as successful as the original, can Brown see a continuing series based on the characters? "If this film does even better than the first one, then yes," he says. "I feel this one has to be a bona fide commercial success for us to go ahead with more, though. Another cult hit wouldn't be enough. But if audiences really want to see more, sure, I'd love to do a third."

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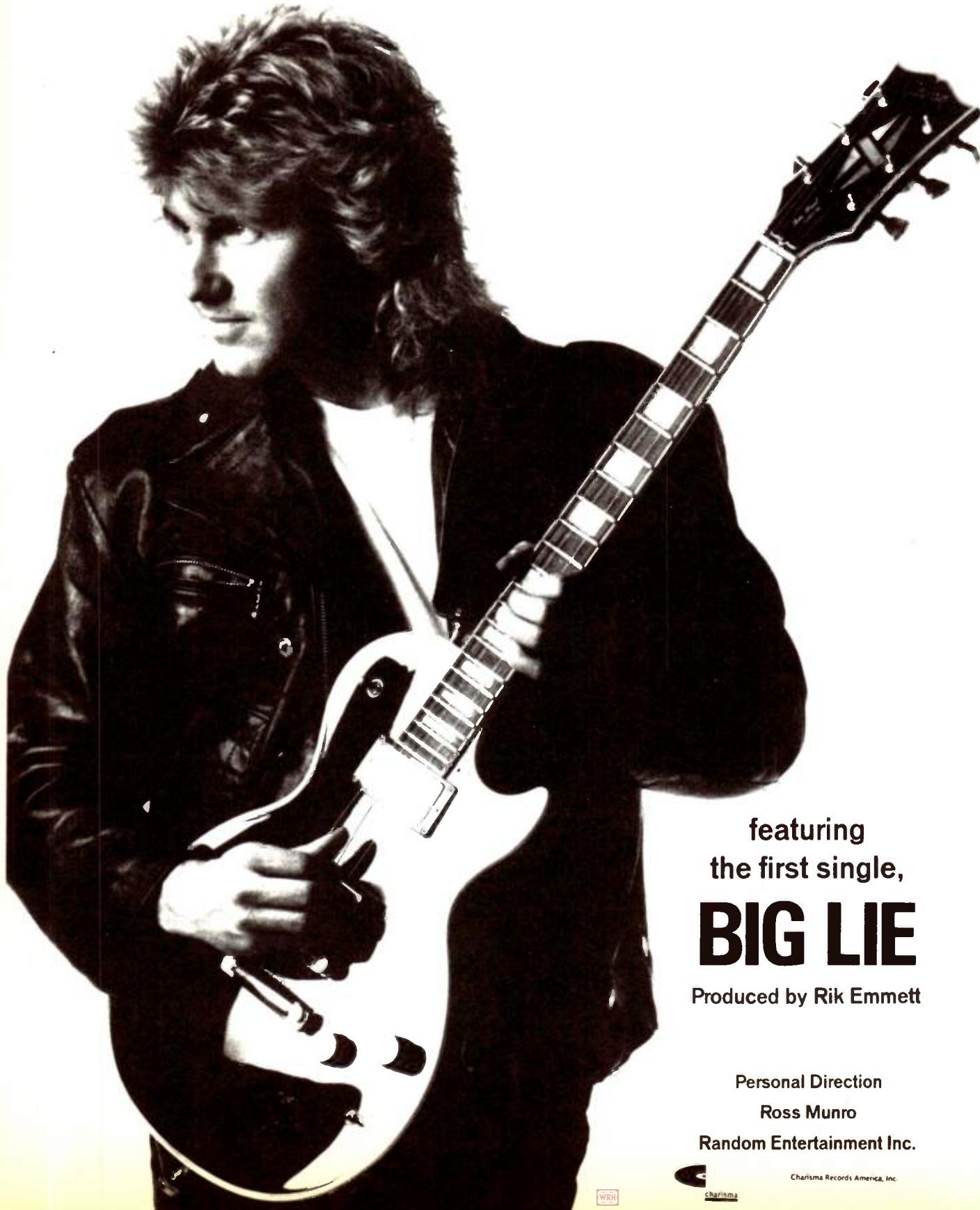
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Few bands have weathered the steady heat of examination and adulation that R.E.M. has endured during its decade of making music; it's been an ego massage that at any juncture in the band's career might have lulled them into an ecstatic state of artistic lethargy or scared them from ever risking recording again. They've been called the best, the hippest, the smartest, the coolest band in the country. Many of their fans treat them with the sort of reverence usually reserved for icons of a more religious nature, inspecting each lyric, attributing a special significance to every chord. The group's detractors are just as vocal, however, equating R.E.M.'s growing popularity with its artistic demise. They claim the band has betrayed the precious values of alternative rock in exchange for mainstream recognition — in other words, that they've sold out.

Somehow, rather than buckling under this intense scrutiny, R.E.M. has remained aloof and intact, impervious to the pressure associated with that rare combination: critical and commercial success. In what has come to be a typically self-effacing manner, Bill Berry (drums), Peter Buck (guitar), Mike Mills (bass) and Michael Stipe (vocals) have predicted the group's imminent popularity nosedive upon the release of every album, yet each new record has outsold its predecessor, bringing the band even more attention.

In spite of the distracting clamor, R.E.M. have managed to record some of the most evocative, memorable pop music of the '80s. Always in perpetual motion, the group has dared to go in directions that have perplexed and infuriated fans, taking risks and damning, or more likely just plain ignoring, the torpedoes.

The Mumbles Mystique

With its whimsical lyrics, lush string arrangements and echoes of Henry Mancini, R.E.M.'s new album, *Out Of Time*, could be described as the antithesis of their last one, *Green*. But for a band that takes pleasure in charting its own course and damning — or at least ignoring — the torpedoes, that's almost to be expected.

BY TINA CLARKE

With the recent release of *Out Of Time*, its seventh album and first release in 2 1/2 years, R.E.M. once again stands on the verge of another round of mind-boggling public examination.

"It's bizarre, the constraints and the levels of criticism that we have to go through whenever we release something, in terms of have we sold out, have we bought the mint, have we finally moved toward the corporate mainstream," Stipe says. "No one questions George Michael about these things — not that I even want to put myself in the same camp as him. But Van Halen doesn't have to worry about that kind of

tively whimsical lyrics, may prove to be a head spinner. The record is the antithesis of *Green*, their jagged-edged previous record, the one that reinforced the band's position on the vanguard of liberal politics.

"But that was kind of the intention," Berry admits. "The idea of taking a lot of time off, taking a completely different approach to the record — even though we didn't know how we were going to approach it differently. As it always does once we get into the studio, it starts working itself out."

"It's a desire to not do the same old thing," Buck adds. "We didn't want our songs to all start sounding

thing — or Milli Vanilli, for God's sake! There are people working within the same context as we're working, but these are never issues for them. Why they're issues for us, I don't know. Maybe there is something they don't touch on, but..."

Ay, there's the rub. In a cultural environment subject to changing fashions, a band that's more concerned with exploring an art form than with making hit records does stand out, and justly so. Perhaps unjustly, this apparently serious approach to making music has also served to cement R.E.M.'s reputation as rock 'n' roll's leading eggheads.

Add Michael Stipe's eccentric appearance, keening vocals and elusive lyrics, Buck's layer upon layer of jangling guitar — a sound that has spawned a thousand imitators — and an active interest in world politics and the environment, and you've got one helluva mystique. But the real key to R.E.M. is simply their music, which, like it or not, is invariably provocative.

For all those who thought they had R.E.M. figured out, *Out Of Time*, with its frankly lush arrangements and decept-

alike, like, 'Oh, God, there's another R.E.M. song.' That's what we were trying to get away from. I like experimenting. To me it's the great thing, messing around. I think that's gone out of music. Prince does it, but you get the feeling that he's getting radio beams from Mars."

To ensure change, R.E.M. gave themselves a peculiar handicap, deliberately making a radical departure in the way they wrote the songs for *Out Of Time*. "We are a guitar band," Berry says. "But these songs were written around the organ or the keyboards for the first time, whereas in the past keyboards have always been an afterthought — like, 'Well, that bridge needs something, let's throw a piano in.' We'd never approached the songs compositionally through keyboards, but this time we did, which also lent itself to strings."

Strings provide a musical leitmotif on *Out Of Time*, recalling the fanciful arrangements of The Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* and particularly the '60s soundtrack recordings of composer Henry Mancini. "'Endgame' sounds especially like that," Buck explains. "I wanted to call it 'End Title Sequence.' It sounds like the movie's over and that's the last theme."

Stipe agrees. "I grew up listening to Mancini; I adore his work," he says. "In fact, Cecil Welch, the man who plays flugelhorn on 'Endgame,' is Mancini's flugelhorn player. I was so thrilled to be able to work with him. The part that I wrote and he performed sounds so much like a Mancini part that it's astonishing."

It's funny that a man whose lyrics provide such a steady source of controversy — they've frequently been deemed indecipherable and with only one exception haven't been included with the album — would be so excited by this virtually wordless, romantic interlude.

"If I was to compose and arrange and write music," says Stipe, who writes the lion's share of the band's lyrics, "I would have voices, but there would not be a lead vocal, and there would be no words. I often feel that imposing a lyric onto a song limits it and moves it away from something that can be taken in any possible way. Music of course has its shifts and ebb and flow, but the minute you put a word on it, you've truncated it, tunnel-visioned it into something and run it through someone's mind, the singer's — and you've lost something. That's why 'Endgame' has no lyrics. I just couldn't stand the idea of writing words to go into that song."

As lead singer, Stipe provides the focal point for the group. He not only anticipates being interpreted ad infinitum, but he also expects to be misunderstood.



"I often feel that imposing a lyric onto a song limits it and moves it away from something that can be taken in any possible way."

Far from his public image as a studied eccentric, up close he seems vulnerable, using his oddball appearance as a shield against an inherent shyness, as well as the burden of his artistic gifts. Sitting in The Grit, his favorite restaurant in Athens, Georgia, dressed in a godawful coat made of some kind of grey fake rat fur with phony black mouton-trimmed lapels, he looks every bit the weirdo he seems to project. But inside this guy lurks a sense of humor.

"We were going to call this album *The Return Of Mumbles*, because there are actually parts of the record where you can't hear me singing," he laughs. "People want to take us very literally; a lot of them don't get the humor in our music."

"My clearest example of that humor is of course the coat I'm wearing," he deadpans. "I've had middle-aged black men stop me in truckstops and ask, 'Where did you get that coat?' It's incredible — I couldn't walk down the streets of Los Angeles because of this coat. People were stopping me in awe. It is perhaps one of the ugliest garments I have seen in my life."

Pausing, Stipe adds, "Hopefully I've moved as a lyricist beyond cleverness, because I'm really tired of

that. Hopefully the '80s buried the hatchet on that one, but there is humor that goes on along with the whole serious side of it. It's the whole black/white thing."

Striking juxtapositions are a hallmark of R.E.M.'s art, whether it is simply words and music or on a grander scale in their visual presentation in concert and on video. "One of my big, dumb philosophies of life is that you can't have one side without the other," Stipe adds, "that utter happiness is not truly achieved until you've seen the saddest and the very darkest. The absolute happiest moments of my life have been tinged with the saddest, and I think that comes through in the music."

Something else that comes through, quite unconsciously, is a spirit of place. Listening to their songs in Athens, their adopted hometown, one is overwhelmed by how much R.E.M.'s music reflects the landscape of this southern college town.

"We don't even realize it at times; we just take it for granted because this is where we live," Berry says. "But when I stop to think about it, I know if we were in Minneapolis, we'd be a good band but the records wouldn't sound anything like they do. There's a thick atmosphere, a more deliberate pace here, and I think that fits us each personality-wise. And it only feeds what we're doing; it doesn't detract from it."

When they first got together as R.E.M. back in April, 1980, having all settled in Athens to go to college, the town was enjoying its first brush with musical fame. The B-52's had just put

this otherwise sleepy town of 80,000, 25,000 of them students, on the map. The B-52's' raucous, quirky sound and playful appearance quickly came to represent the town, and suddenly it started looking like a Mecca for the musically adventurous.

During the '80s Athens provided a launching pad not only for R.E.M., but also for Pylon, Love Tractor, Fetchin' Bones, Guadalcanal Diary, Drivin' N' Cryin' and a score of other college radio darlings. Today it continues to offer opportunities for young musicians, mainly because rents are still comparatively cheap and there's a large captive audience for live entertainment, thanks to the University of Georgia.

"Back in the early '80s it was a lot more insular," Mills recalls. "There was a lot less thought given to what else was going on outside this town because nobody cared — we were having so much fun. Nobody here gave a damn about what was going on in New York or Los Angeles. It was just a lot of people having fun, a lot of kids with nothing better to do than have parties and make music."

Without the restriction of "industry" expectations, R.E.M. quickly developed its own freewheeling style.

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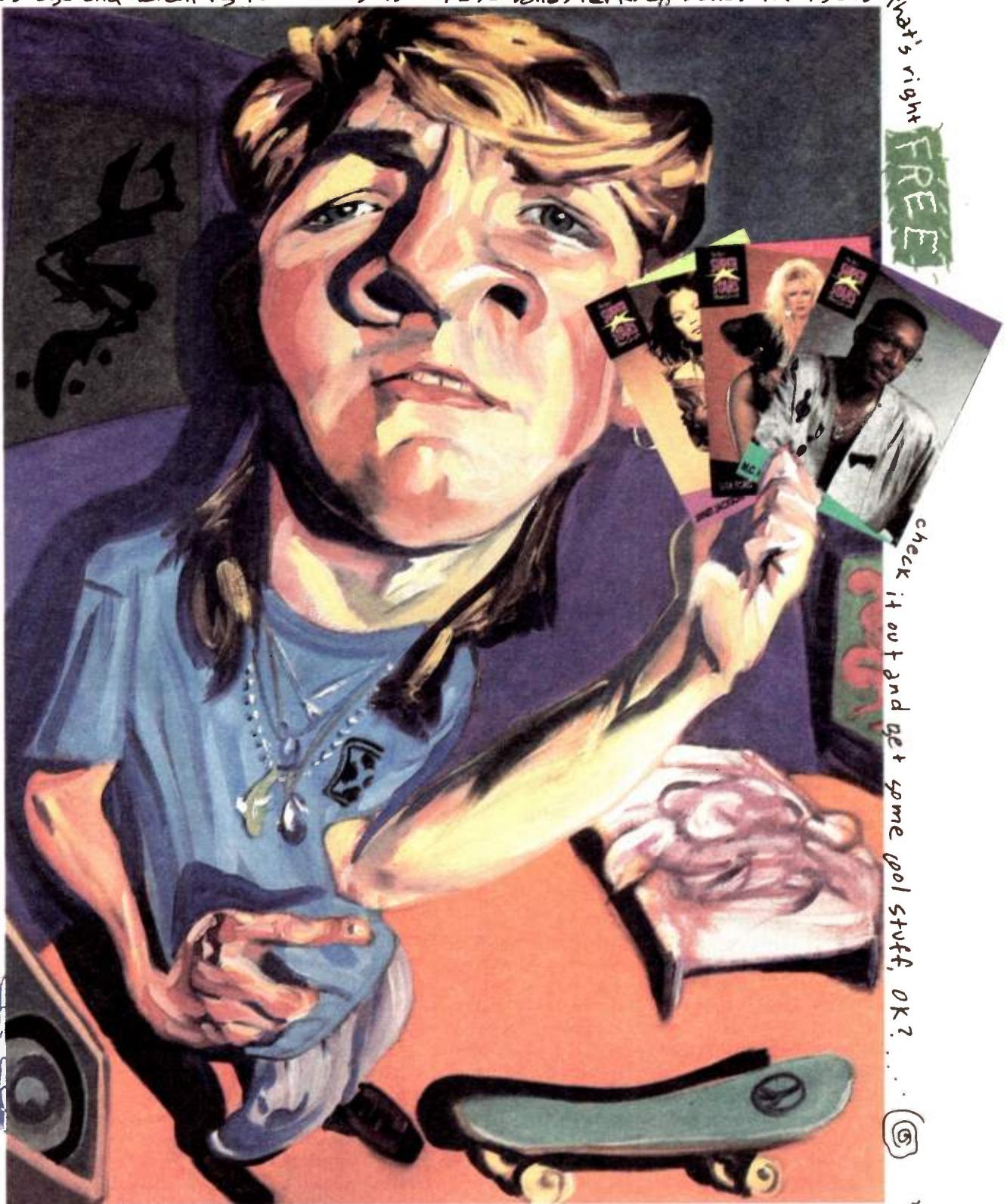
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Recognizing the potential of the burgeoning college radio market, then still in its infancy, the band toured relentlessly and very slowly increased their audience. "I think we showed that it was possible for a band to tour and not lose its shirt, because of college radio," Mills volunteers. "College radio enabled bands like us, Jason And The Scorchers, The Replacements and all those people to go to some place they'd never been before and be guaranteed that 75 to 100 people would come out and see them. It's been a gradual progression."

A preference for moderation is shared by every member of the band. The scale of their lives has changed dramatically since their early days, but their focus remains the same. "I slept on couches and in a rehearsal studio for a while; I lived in my car for a month," Buck remembers. "People are always asking what would have happened if we hadn't become successful. But we were successful when we started writing good songs and being a good band. Everything after that was like, oh, yeah, then money starts accruing. Well, money's never been the reason to do anything."

The only really visible sign of R.E.M.'s affluence is in their dedication to improving Athens. They each own several properties and are active in the restoration of historical buildings. R.E.M.'s office is in a carefully renovated century-old structure that once housed a stable and blacksmith shop.

Their personal lives also seem quite modest by rock star standards. Buck lives with his wife, Barrie, in a spacious antebellum mansion which serves as a home for his thousands of books, records and favored artifacts. "I always wanted to live in a place where I could have my books and records," he says. "I always said that I'd know I was successful when I could afford to build the shelves." It also serves as a well-worn crashpad for visiting friends, mostly musicians. Barrie points out that they can accommodate 14 people overnight, even joking that if R.E.M.'s luck ever changes they could open a bed and breakfast.

Barrie also manages the 40 Watt Club, a bar that offers live music several nights a week. Stipe owns the building that houses The Grit, a lively health food restaurant, and is hoping to open a music venue upstairs as well as a natural food grocery next door.

"Stand in the place where you live," Stipe recites. "It's all there. Think global, act local. In a way, I have to follow my own advice sometimes."

Freedom rather than money is R.E.M.'s most precious commodity, as well as a steady source of motivation. From the beginning they've always committed their most speculative instincts to the music, re-



"People want to take us very literally; a lot of them don't get the humor in our music."

gardless of the consequences. "Like every other band always says, we'll quit when it stops being interesting," Buck states. "But we're all at the point monetarily where we don't have to do this really. We're in kind of a go-to-hell position where we only have to do what we want to do, and that's great. We've always been like that, and it's always pissed people off. We've never had arguments about trying to be successful or trying to make lots of money."

Which is what makes their success even more ironic. Their measured attitude towards fame is only equalled by their methodical approach to work. "We finished the [Green] tour in November of '89, and we started writing at the end of January, coming down here to the studio every day during the week," Mills recalls. "We wrote pretty constantly, we rehearsed almost every day — maybe not for very long, but we'd at least get together and say, 'Do we feel inspired today?' 'Well, no, let's go have a beer.' It's disciplined enough that we'd come down here and pick up our instruments for a little while, but after five minutes, if we didn't feel anything we'd break. You can't force it out."

In addition to experimenting with different instruments on *Out Of Time*, the band added a real wild card in the form of guitarist Peter Holsapple. The former dBs mainman proved to be a useful hired hand on the *Green* tour, and was enlisted for this studio effort, marking the first time R.E.M. has ever brought in an almost fulltime fifth wheel.

"If the dBs had broken up in 1981, I bet he would have been an actual member of the band," Buck says, wryly adding, "He writes so many songs, it would probably be his band now."

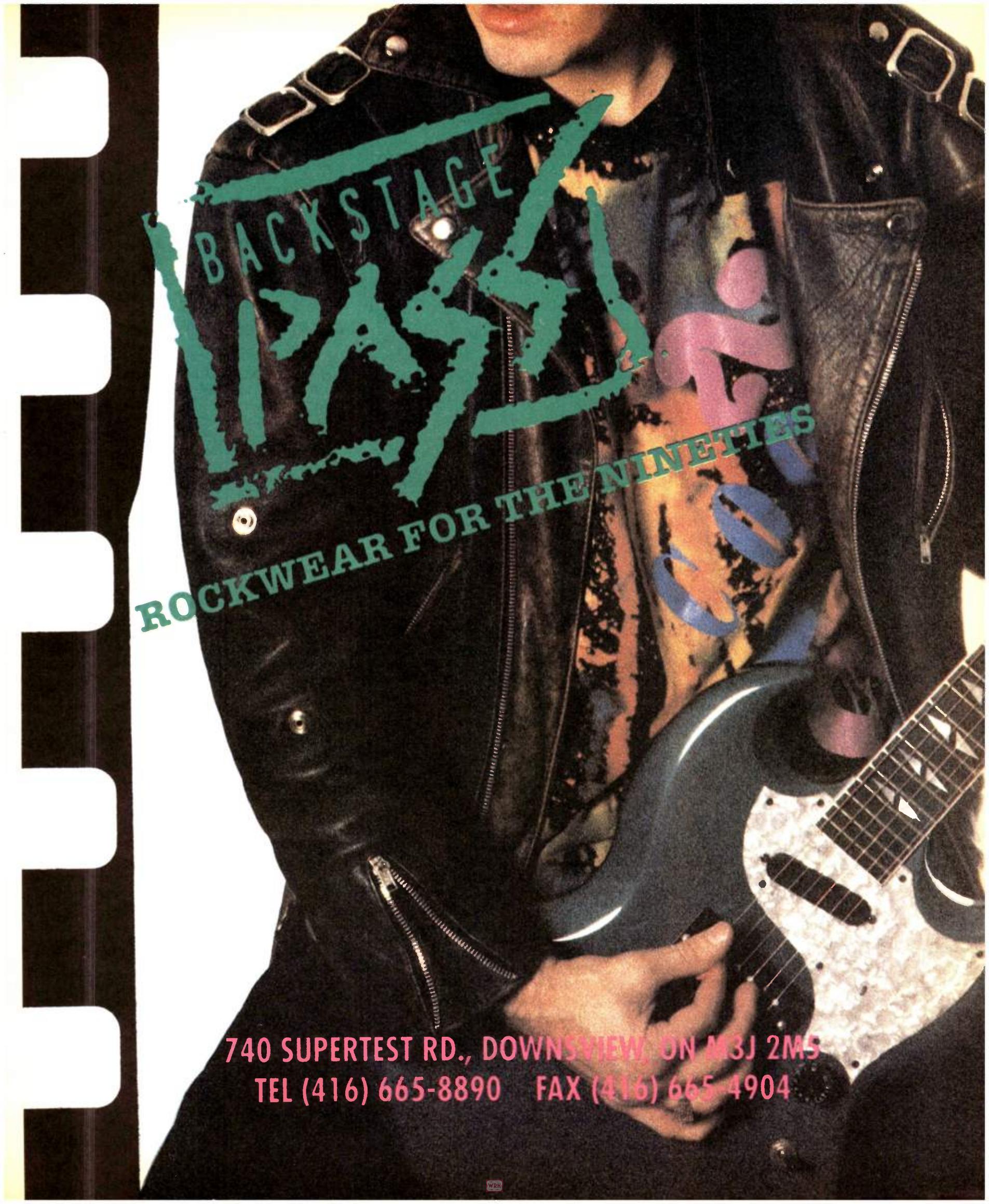
The B-52s' Kate Pierson also makes an appearance on the album, as does rapper KRS-One, who livens up the wickedly funny "Radio Song." "He's one of my favorites, and we're very close in terms of what we're trying to get across outside the music, and sometimes within the music," Stipe notes. "There's a real kinship there. I heard another voice on that song, and he was the first person I thought of. The band was really thrilled with the prospect, and we called him up and he was really excited too. I hope that the humor that is intrinsic to that song has gotten across to not only the programmers but to the people that are hearing it."

R.E.M. has no plans to tour this year; in fact, they're expecting to return to the studio by fall to record another album. "I think it will be very rock 'n' roll, very raw," Stipe opines.

In the meantime, Buck, who frequently records and tours with surrealist British pop musician Robyn Hitchcock — who recently paid him in paintings for his efforts — would like to release an album of covers and instrumentals from the *Out Of Time* sessions, including a sizzling rendition of Leonard Cohen's "First We Take Manhattan," which he describes as a "Gang Of Four version," and The Troggs' "Love Is All Around."

"One of the things I regret about being really popular is that you can't throw out something for fun, because people go, 'Oh, man, they're going to make a million dollars ripping kids off,'" Buck says. "But we have a whole album's worth of stuff just floating around. A companion album."

Stipe is more hopeful about the possibility of the world lightening up about R.E.M. "I'd like to think that my own peer group can still listen to our music and receive something from it, and I think that's the case," he says. "I don't think we're a teenybop band, although I love that idea, that potential is definitely there. We've decided to do a very low-budget video for 'Love Is All Around,' maybe for release in Europe, with exploding daisies and Mike and Peter and Bill and I singing on hilltops with our arms out. That's about as teenybop as it gets."



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Magic Marketers

Contrary to some dearly held myths, success in the music business depends on a lot more than talent and luck. Hard-headed strategists sit down and mold a band—or an audience—to fit a niche, leaving as little as possible to chance.

Take three of last year's "overnight" successes: Slaughter, Deee-Lite and Vanilla Ice...

Smoke and mirrors — it's all a matter of smoke and mirrors. The willing suspension of disbelief is as essential an element of rock 'n' roll as it is for your local high school production of *Oklahoma*. Kidding yourself that the auditorium stage is a cornfield and that the guy who sits beside you in math class is suddenly a bowlegged cowhand is no different from the self-deception involved in believing that Axl Rose and Bruce Springsteen are just two normal guys who happened to have landed really decent jobs.

The truth is, there are no accidents in the music business, no overnight success stories. Years of hard work and meticulous strategic planning go into virtually every performance and recording we hear. Indeed, the fact that we still prefer to believe the myths about rock stars despite the overwhelming evidence debunking them proves just how effectively the music business has sold us on those myths.

"Marketing," according to one major label executive, "is one of those words that can be used to mean anything at any time." From the moment a band enters the public consciousness, marketing skills are at play. How a band dresses, who directs their videos, what kind of typeface will appear on the album cover, who gets to interview them—all the elements that go into taking a band from obscurity to stardom are the province of the marketers. And the trick is in making you think that all of this is as spontaneous and natural as falling off a log.

Last year was a big one for so-called "overnight" successes. New artists, like Mariah Carey and Wilson Phillips, dominated the airwaves as never before. But it's not as though these acts and others merely recorded an album and plunked it down in front of you to buy or ignore as you pleased. The art in marketing is to leave as little as possible to chance. Behind the scenes strategies must be devised and adhered to, not so much to delude the public as to justify the huge expense that goes into launching a musical career. And it's not as though there's only one way to skin a cat, either. Each musical genre has its own peculiarities to contend with. A metal act can't use the same marketing plan as a disco combo and expect success, and vice versa.

In 1990 three vastly different acts each managed to find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Slaughter, Deee-Lite and Vanilla Ice all sold over a million copies of their debut releases, topped the charts of their respective genres (rock, dance and rap, respec-

tively) and, particularly in the case of Vanilla Ice, crossed over to the top of the pop charts as well. Let's blow away the smoke and smash those mirrors, and see how those triumphs were achieved.

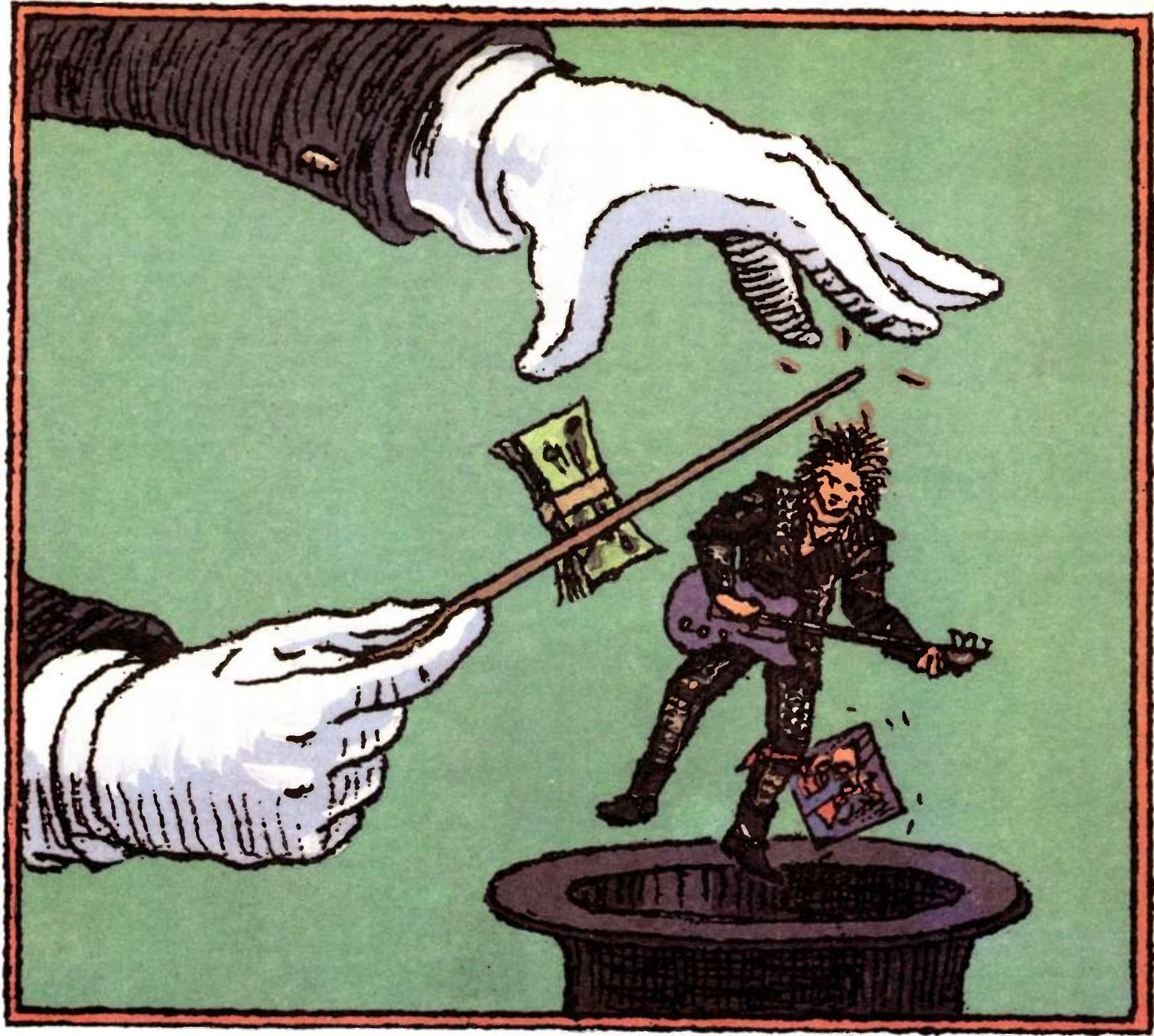
Though seemingly the most basic of the three acts, Slaughter ironically travelled the most complex route to attain their goal. Unlike Deee-Lite and Vanilla Ice, half of the band — Mark Slaughter and Dana Strum — had proven themselves as members of another band, the Vinnie Vincent Invasion, and, to a certain extent, were a known and respected commodity in the rock field. They knew from past experience how important it was to develop grassroots support.

"Hard rock fans are intense," according to Jeff Wagner, the independent publicist whose success with Slaughter helped win him a job with the band's label. "When they decide they're going to back something, they want to be there from the beginning." Unlike pop music, which relies strongly on radio play to reach its audience, hard rock must often rely on word-of-mouth before any chart success is realized. Therefore, the marketing machinery kicked into gear some six months prior to the release of the group's LP, *Stick It To Ya*, in February, 1990.

The hard rock/heavy metal fan base is probably the most attractive and least gullible of them all. Because of the info garnered from hundreds of homegrown fanzines (like *Hard and Fast* from Willow Grove, PA, C.A.M.M. from Chicago and L.A.'s *Crash*), as well as the glut of rock/metal magazines across the country, potential fans can be courted as deliberately and/or relentlessly as a strategist desires. But because radio has begun to turn a deaf ear to rock and because being able to deliver the goods in concert is more critical to a rock fan than to, say, a dance addict, gigging around the country is probably the only assured way to get the word out about your band.

But Slaughter had never performed as a group on stage before their album was released. Even still, the night of their concert debut (opening for KISS) they were awarded a gold record for the album's first 500,000 in sales. They're up over two million by now.

How did Slaughter manage to circumvent the tried-and-true? Mainly through planning. Even as members of V.V.I., Strum and Slaughter were considering their options. As that band's star began to fade (due to frontman Vincent's alleged substance abuse problems), guitarist Slaughter's was beginning to brighten. Always open in interviews, always smil-



ing at before- and aftershow "meet and greets" with the fans, Slaughter and Strum sowed the seeds of their future success. When their album was completed in the summer of '89, the group immediately set about establishing an image and creating a groundswell of support.

Compared to a Top 40 act, "When you know that you have a rock band that's ready to tour, accepted by the press and ready to work and do what it takes, I think you know you've got the initial elements to really sell," says Chrysalis Records' director of artist and product development, Fran Musso. "I also think that rock 'n' roll audiences are the most loyal, and you have the most potential for selling the most amount if everything goes right."

Well before the album ever saw the light of day, the members of Slaughter were posing for publicity shots, making their video, meeting with the press and preparing for the onslaught of near-constant

touring they felt would be necessary. Because of their estimation that the band would probably generate a great deal of grassroots interest, Chrysalis committed themselves to only top drawer packaging, from the design of the band's logo to the cassette cover. (Most tapes have a "J-card" cover, which only rides up part way on the reverse side of the case. Slaughter's album had a more expensive "U-card," which allowed for the cover shot for *Stick It To Ya* on the front and a photo of the band on the back.) "Taking that kind of approach," Musso explains, "is something you do when you're going to sell a lot more than 100,000 records."

By the time the album was released, fan anticipation was already at a fever pitch and Chrysalis could point to massive coverage in the metal press as an indicator to radio programmers as well as more mainstream publications that Slaughter was a candidate for crossover success. Initial singles of the anthemic

"Up All Night" had snippets of the rest of the album on the B-side to entice an album purchase. "Up All Night" promo packages, containing eye masks, ear plugs and over the counter pep pills, were sent to radio stations and magazines. Then, when "Fly To The Angels" was released, little balsa wood airplanes accompanied the promo copies. Subtle reminders, rather than hard-sell techniques, were employed to keep the band on the taste-makers' minds.

And MTV, in spite of itself, supported the band's video. Although initially "Up All Night" was relegated to only the *Headbanger's Ball* metal ghetto, fan response soon earned it a spot in light rotation. That meant that it also qualified for inclusion on *Dial MTV*, the channel's all-request show, and that tipped the hat irreversibly in Slaughter's favor. When the band held that show's top spot for over a month, their triumph was assured.

State of the art image marketing was even more es-



sentential when it came to bringing Deee-Lite, a cosmopolitan funky dance trio from New York's East Village, to the mainstream marketplace. Another "new" act that had a high profile among its particular scene, Deee-Lite had been "standard bearers of a certain look for several years, and were very well known to a certain core audience," according to Elektra Records' vice-president of marketing, David Bither. "As I would define it, especially in the case of Deee-Lite, marketing is really about 'What is the image of this band?'"

There are few scenes less predictable than the trendy dance clubs. With Deee-Lite, the decision was made to let the band follow its instincts in a scene they clearly understood better than their label did. As Bither says, "Elektra is a label that tends not to create stars as much as recognize people who have a special style, a special kind of music, and enable those artists to reach the wider world."

Accordingly, the band's first release was a white-sleeved promo copy of "What Is Love?" that, according to Bither, "didn't look like it had a major label's thumbprints all over it." At the club level DJs generally consider the major labels as fundamentally incapable of recognizing what is hip until long after the hipness has faded. And, to a certain extent, even with Deee-Lite, the DJs were right. While "What Is Love?" was definitely a dancefloor hit, it wasn't until the single was released with "Groove Is In The Heart" on the B-side that the band really took off. "Groove" quickly proved to be a more popular track.

Just as Slaughter had a headstart on the rock press for their album, Deee-Lite took advantage of their profile among the fashion crowd. The group's outrageous day-glo retro-'70s look caught that world by storm and, before their album was even pressed, they were appearing in magazines around the world (including a 12-page layout in *Italian Vogue*). Their magazine clippings worked in lieu of traditional promo devices, so the label concentrated on maintaining a consistent image, "partly because the dance scene is so current that whatever you're making is going to be hopelessly dated by the time you get it out," explains Bither. "In the metal scene they've done the same T-shirts for 20 years," he adds.

Unlike Slaughter, Deee-Lite couldn't rely on a loyal fan base to propel them to crossover fame. "The club and fashion scenes are somewhat ephemeral about what's current and what isn't," says Bither. In order to find a mainstream audience, the group, which had performed only track dates and lip-synched TV appearances, had to rely on their video image to get their message across. Fortunately the video, directed by the Japanese artist Nikano in appropriate neon colors and swirling psychedelic scenes, did the trick.

But after chalking up a major success with "Groove," which went gold, the group would be

hardpressed to make a followup single seem anything less than a disappointment. Standard practice in this case was followed to the letter: the video for "Power Of Love" was similar enough to "Groove's" "so that there was continuity in terms of the visual campaign," as Bither explains.

Unfortunately for Deee-Lite, though, their success appears to be almost too big to handle. As they fly about the globe promoting their album, they may in fact be losing momentum in the U.S. "In an ideal world you would have the band out live at this point in time," Bither concedes. "Unfortunately it's not always an ideal world." Still, the band's appearances with funk flag bearers Bootsy Collins and Bernie Worrell may bridge the traditional gap between black funk fans and trendy dance audiences, which would open up a new market for them — and others.

The Vanilla Ice story is destined to become legendary in the annals of the music business. Within 48 hours of first hearing of the manic white rapper last August, SBK's chairman Charles Koppelman signed him, and a week later the first single was already being distributed. As told by Daniel Glass, senior vice-president of promotion, the Vanilla Ice saga is a case of recognizing a major talent and getting the act into the public's face as quickly and aggressively as possible. That the artist was a white man trying to break into a traditionally black idiom is only a mar-

credibility and we would have gone for macho [imaging], but we never had time." Instead, the label concentrated on bringing the act to industry insiders through showcases and track dates.

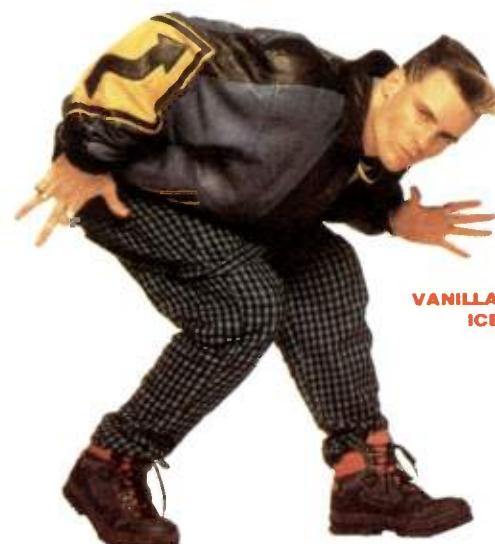
It was the fallout from the hasty rush to the marketplace that threatened to derail the seemingly relentless Vanilla Ice juggernaut (over seven million U.S. sales to date). First of all came the controversy over Ice's bio, which Glass admits changed three times, having Ice (ne Robbie Van Winkel) hailing from the mean streets of Miami and the middle-class suburbs of Houston, depending on who was talking. As Glass explains, "Make believe you're 21 and your record company calls you and says they need a bio 'cause your record's coming out in 48 hours," he says. "We helped write it. Maybe we got a few of the facts wrong... *innocently*."

Glass likens the fiasco to a "Huck Finn story — the two-pound fish becomes nine pounds." Ultimately, however, in spite of the damage to Ice's credibility, the "scandal" barely slowed the album's rise. Then Queen's new label, Hollywood Records, demanded recompense for the unauthorized use of the bass lick from their song "Under Pressure" on "Ice Ice Baby."

There was, too, a certain element of color-consciousness to the story. Why did it take a white artist to get a rap song to the top of the pop charts? Glass thinks that the notion of inherent racism in the music business is a red herring. "There is definitely prejudice out there," he admits, but he thinks other factors had a greater influence on Ice's success. "I think rap is such a confused format," he says. "People think it's a street, black/Hispanic thing, but I think there's more than 50 per cent white people buying the records. It's white college kids that are into the music."

Now Ice's goal is to ride the crest of the wave and try not to falter any more seriously than he has in the past. He already has a paperback autobiography out to counter the "faux-bio" accusations, a film (tentatively titled *Cool As Ice*) is being written for him and a live album is being readied for imminent release — and he makes an appropriate appearance in the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* sequel. In the rap world, unlike the disco and rock worlds, oversaturation is not a problem. Just ask M.C. Hammer.

The key to marketing, like the work of any good magician, is to make it seem as though the impossible has occurred without any of the wires showing. While every label staffer will contend that nothing would have happened to any of their acts unless good, solid music was at the foundation, a hefty bit of marketing savvy goes a long, long way. It's not a matter of pulling the wool over the public's eyes so much as taking away the blinders that prevent new music from getting a fair shake. Or is it?



ginal element of the story.

What caught Koppelman's and Glass' attention from the beginning was the near rabid following Ice engendered in audiences. Signed to the independent Ultrax label, Ice was making a regional splash in epic proportions. Phone calls to radio stations in Florida, Texas and California proved to Glass that Ice had potential crossover appeal. The low-budget video for the breakthrough single, "Ice Ice Baby," shot to No. 1 on the Video Jukebox Network. In fact, things were moving so quickly that the label had to scramble to capitalize on the situation.

After paying Ultrax \$300,000 for the act ("It was a lot at the time, but now it seems like the bargain of the century," Glass says) and doing a modicum of remixing and sample-clearing (something that would come back to haunt them later), Glass and his associates molded Vanilla Ice's album, *To The Extreme*, into a major label release. Conventional wisdom was tossed out the window in the wake of Ice's rise.

"If we could have developed it four months ahead of time," Glass theorizes, "we would have street



SLAUGHTER

PART ONE

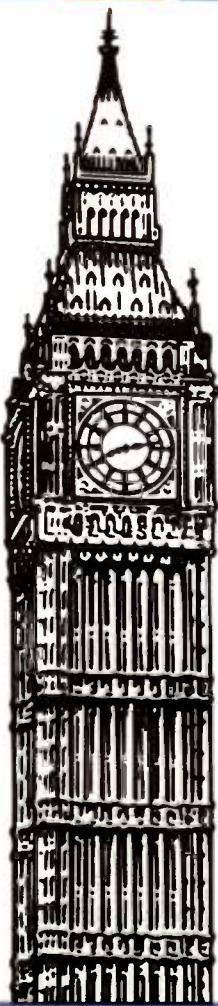
THE ROYALTY OF BRITISH ROCK

MAY 24th - 27th

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PART TWO

ROCK FROM THE U.K. TO THE U.S.A.

JULY 4th - 7th

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The O'Jays are great soul men who deliver the goods on their own terms.

New Releases

THE O'JAYS
Emotionally Yours
EMI

The fact that practically every song on this album has a prominent guitar part is significant. While it's completely contemporary in sound and production, this is not merely an updating of The O'Jays' sound with some new jack producer providing the latest beats and synthesizer lines. *Emotionally Yours* epitomizes the idea of aging with grace, because it is, after all, an O'Jays album in 1991, and these great soul men deliver the goods on

their own terms. Take "Respect," for instance, which features a very '90s-sounding drum machine sequenced groove, and a guest rap by The Jaz. It could've been lame, but the O'Jays' voices carry it and render the context moot. The album sounds slick, but it's good ol' O'Jays, which means it's corny sometimes (like on the ballads "Keep On Loving Me," "That's How Love Is," "So Special Is Your Love To Me," etc). But it's even corny on their own, old-school terms. "Love and Trust," with its string and horn lines, cops some Philly arrangements that made these guys super-large in the '70s, but it includes a sampled breakdown nod to the times. "Don't You Know True Love" kicks funky ballis-

tics, and "If I Find Love Again" is all live instruments with a full string section (and the unfortunate whining of Kenny G. on saxophone); both give Terry Lewis and Jimmy Jam a run for their mid-tempo hit money. "Lies" features a rap by Eddie Levert's son Gerald on a cool new jack workout. Two versions of Dylan's "Emotionally Yours" are classic, one of which features a full gospel chorus hitting some serious peaks. If that wasn't enough, the first single, "Don't Let Me Down," is a virtual masterpiece of soul. And there's guitar throughout, a signpost of the organic, live feel of this marvelous collection of great songs for young and old.

*Peter Wetherbee *****

New Releases

THE DARKSIDE

All That Noise Beggar's Banquet

Populated as it is with defectors from Britain's legendarily opiate-drenched Spacemen 3, The Darkside stands a pretty good chance of being accused of taking drugs to make music to take drugs to. The finger-pointing isn't entirely misplaced — a headphone-ready hallucinogen dubbed "Guitar Voodoo" kicks off *All That Noise* with seven or so instrumental minutes of shifting, ambient sound — but there's a decidedly pop, decidedly soft focus to these tales of love and loss. Even with the emphasis on drone and murmur, Pete Bassman's ethereal vocals glide through these often "borrowed" melodies with all the lissome ease required of any self-created post-Jagger rock icon. Bassman sounds most comfortable sprawled upon the luxurious layers of songs like "Love In A Burning Universe" and "Don't Stop The Rain" — the aggro required to pull off a comparative rocker like "Soul Deep" (not a cover of the Alex Chilton song) is plainly beyond him. Still, anyone in the market for a well-rounded round-trip ticket to the Summer of Love could do a heck of a lot worse than *All That Noise*.

David Sprague ***1/2

MORRISSEY

Kill Uncle Sire

Once again Mrs. Morrissey's son Steven has churned out a flagrantly personal album that is at times brilliant, terrible, inspiring, frustrating, provocative, unpredictable and old hat. Gone, finally, are the off-putting yodels and falsetto yelping that strangled to death several great songs in the past. Gone, too, are the attempts to reproduce a Johnny Marr-like guitar sound and the creepily camp music hall songs that always littered his records, both solo and with The Smiths. Instead, Morrissey has settled into a period of more conventional songwriting, perhaps due to his partnership with ex-Fairground Attraction guitarist Mark Nevin. The first single, "Our Frank," surprises with the novelty of doubled, John Lennon-like vocals (unheard of from the Mozzer in the past) and introduces the piano as

the new dominating instrument in this music. The staccato piano intro to "Mute Witness" eerily echoes the urgency in the lyrics. "Found Found Found," on the other hand, is a triumph of bass playing (provided by Bedders, ex-Madness). A facetious sense of humor still enlivens the lyrics and titles ("I laid down beside you and nothing much happened" in "King Leer"; "There's A Place In Hell Reserved For Me And My Friends"; "I'm The End Of The Family Line" with the lyric "15 generations all honoring nature until I arrive") but, for the most part, he replaces twee cleverness with some realistic observations. "Driving Your Girlfriend Home" in particular is an intuitive comment on human relations. *Kill Uncle* may be uneven, but while Morrissey at his worst is simply ignorable, at his best he's still unbeatable.

Perry Stern ***1/2

ELEVENTH DREAM DAY

Lived To Tell Atlantic

Lived To Tell, Chicago band Eleventh Dream Day's second major label LP, presents its listeners with a sound that incorporates a number of styles, sometimes arguing with each other and sometimes smoothly merging together. First, there's the guitars of Rick Rizzo and Baird Figi, which dominate the group's sound, and can range from jangling Byrds-influenced acoustic rock to dissonant noise, screaming slide leads and basic post-punkish chords. There's also two distinct songwriting styles, however, which come from principal writers Janet Beveridge Bean and Rizzo and give Eleventh Dream Day an interesting edge. Bean's songs, like "Rose Of Jericho" and "You Know What It Is," while Rizzo's, which include "Strung Up And/Or Out" (even his titles are less straightforward), feature sliding, Crazy Horse-influenced guitar, a less defined form and a vocal style that's somewhat reminiscent of The Fall's Mark Smith — or maybe Michael Stipe. When they collaborate, as on "It's All A Game," their styles are in a strange sort of dissonant harmony. The lyrics can sometimes wander into the poetically obscure, but their voices blend well, and for those who love the guitar, this is an album to become addicted to.

Mary Dickie ***



MOTORHEAD

1916

WTG/Sony

Let's face it, you don't come to a Motorhead album expecting subtlety or spiritual guidance or any of that other weenie-head stuff. You come to be assaulted by monster-mash guitar riffs while Lemmy snarls about what a bad-assed, iron-fisted, snaggle-toothed, stone-hearted, built-for-speed road demon he is. But amidst 1916's stock-in-trade moves — the anti-religion anthem "Voices In The Sky," the jailbait ode "Make My Day," the self-explanatory "I'm So Bad (Baby I Don't Care)" — M-head take a few unexpected turns. "Ramones" is a tribute to the band of that name that lasts about a minute-and-a-half and sounds a lot like "Rockaway Beach" — which may not be any more revolutionary than The Ramones are nowadays, but for these guys it's, y'know, a *departure from the norm*. In the dirgy "Nightmare /The Dreamtime," Lemmy waxes gothic, augmenting a Clive Barker-ish tale from the deadzone with backward-masked clips of his own voice (call the exorcist! — or the PMRC). And I'll be damned if that isn't a synthesizer surging away in the background. Weirdest of all is the title song, a woeful ballad of Great War carnage (told from the standpoint of a slaughtered volunteer) in which Lemmy is backed by an organ, drums and — God help us — strings. I started to worry that maybe Mr. Kilmister was getting a little soft in the head, but a glance at the liner notes set me straight: "This Album Is Ozone Hostile." I hope Lemmy will forgive my momentary lapse of faith.

Tim Powis ***1/2

You don't come to a Motorhead album expecting subtlety; you come to be assaulted by monster-bash riffs and a snarling Lemmy.



Arguing guitars and songwriting styles give Eleventh Dream Day an unusual edge.

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TRI-STAR PICTURES

Elektra

New Releases

NILS LOFGREN

Silver Lining

Rykodisc

The career of Nils Lofgren furnishes proof that the rock 'n' roll biz is often unjust. As a young singer/songwriter, Lofgren released a string

in at around six minutes each). The shortest song here, "Little Bit O' Time," is actually the strongest, and proves the benefit of judicious editing. As you'd expect from the stellar cast list, the playing is superb. Lofgren is capable of better albums than this, though, so let's hope he's given the chance.

Kerry Doole ***



Tangier owes more to British blues-based rock than to American metal.

TANGIER
Stranded

Atco

of albums in the '70s (both as leader of Grin and under his own name) that deserved to launch him as a star in his own right, but they never caught fire commercially. Now, Nils is best known as a superb guitarist for the likes of Neil Young, Ringo Starr and, especially, Bruce Springsteen, and he's using that as a trampoline (remember his on-stage gimmick?) for another shot at solo success. While it's not up to the high standard of some earlier efforts, *Silver Lining* is an often entertaining work worthy of attention. The Boss connection is helping out via the first single, "Valentine," to which Bruce adds vocals, while other famous friends like Ringo, Levon Helm, Billy Preston and Clarence Clemons chime in too. Not that Nils needs to hang on to anybody's coat-tails, though. He possesses a highly attractive, melodic voice, and isn't afraid to write affectingly emotional songs. Unfortunately, the cloud in this *Silver Lining* is that his reputation as a guitar-slinger has hurt his songwriting, with many of the tunes here suffering from too much extraneous axework (four numbers clock

The only thing wrong with Tangier is that they seem to have been born in the wrong country. There is very little on *Stranded* that resembles the clone-like haircut metal bands that have been coming out of the States of late. Instead, Philadelphia-based Tangier owes more to the British, blues-based rock of Bad Company, (old) Whitesnake and even Cream. Their closest American relation would have to be the long-gone ZZ Top of the past. Pared down to a quartet with the departure of second guitarist Gari Saint and re-invigorated by new vocalist Mike LeCompte (replacing Bill Mattson), the 1991 Tangier offers a welcome, if not stellar, alternative to the tripe that has become the staple fare of American rock. Guitarist/songwriter Doug Gordon sacrifices flash for function on most of the tracks (a good thing), but bassist Garry Nutt and drummer Bobby Bender don't offer much novelty as the rhythm section. The title track and "If Ya Can't Find Love" are probably the best tracks.

Perry Stern ***

New Releases

COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Spin
Intrepid

Over the past few years, transplanted Winnipeg ensemble Cottage Industry has become one of the most highly regarded bands on the Toronto scene. Given the heady brew they've concocted on *Spin*, it's clear their wares now merit a wider market. This release is a resequenced version of an earlier college favorite, and it shows the band in tighter shape than on previous independent offerings. Led by the gutsy, booming voice of Craig Bryson, Cottage Industry pump out an aggressive, post-punk sound with such authority that they now deserve to be ranked alongside noble compatriots Sons Of Freedom and 13 Engines. Guitarists Bryson and Tom Patterson churn out aggressive riffs that, on a song like "Stuck," teeter on the edge of a sonic precipice without ever falling off, thanks partly to the lifeline supplied by the rhythm section of Neil Ross and Ken Horne. There's a hypnotic, mantra-like quality to much of *Spin*, and the band gets downright psychedelic on "Timothy Leary Says," a song superior to most of the dippy trippy stuff flooding out of Britain. Themes dealt with here range from musings on serious topics like (seemingly) impending parenthood ("ESP") and bizarre friends ("Julie Lives") to light-hearted looks at real-life situations like commuter problems ("Waiting On The 505") and holiday plans ("Talkin' Mexican Vacation"). In all, a tour de force from a band demanding close attention.

K.D. ****

MR. FIDDLER
With Respect
Elektra

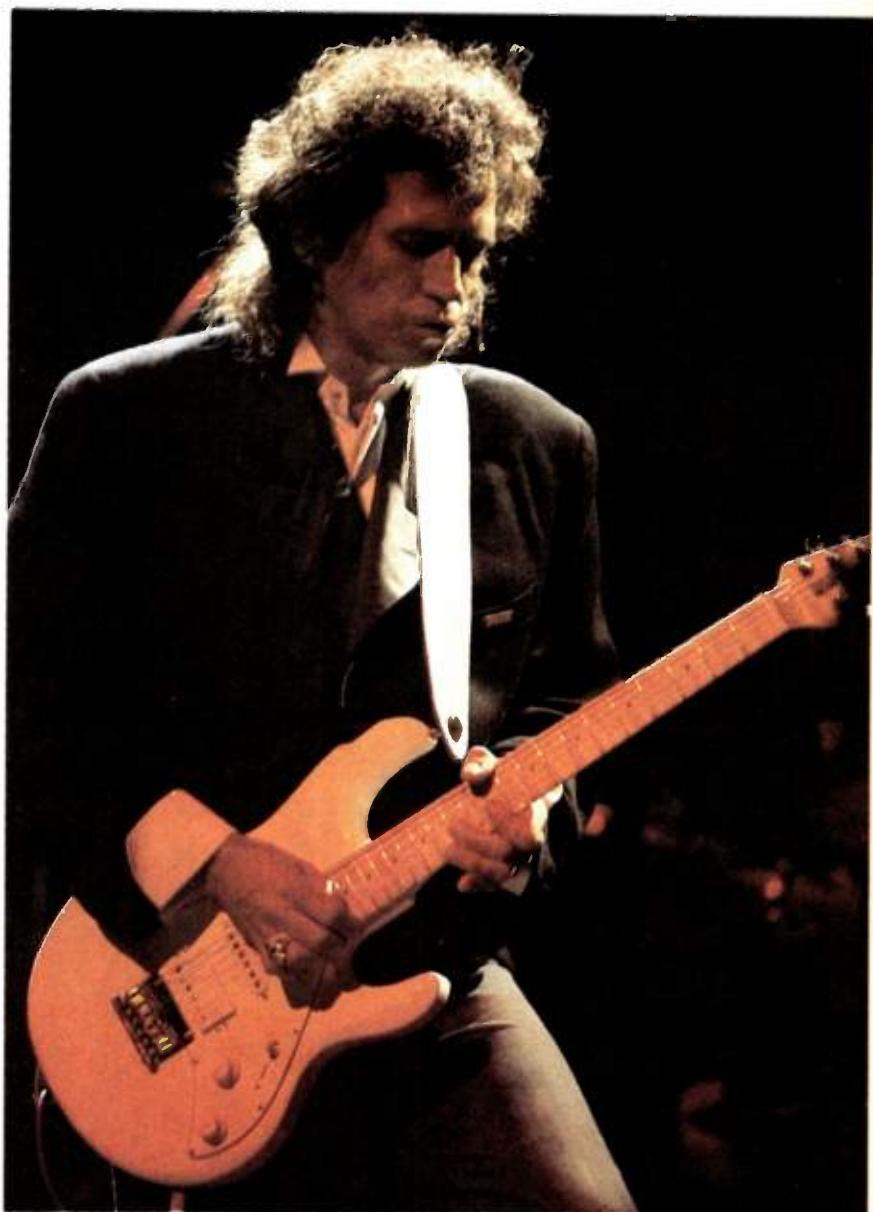
AMP Fiddler is the latest in a distinguished succession of keyboardists for George Clinton that includes Bernie Worrell, Junie Morrison, David (Chong) Spradley and Steve Washington. Fiddler played on Prince's "We Can Funk," and various other projects with Clinton. And the "chant" background arrangements and drawling vocals on *With Respect* sound particularly Clinton-esque — "Cool About It" finds him coping some serious Sly vocal moves, too — but it goes beyond

the merely derivative. *With Respect* exposes the true funk roots of new jack swing, but it ups the ante with a lot of gnarly guitar that refunkifies the fairly typical eats nicely with wah-wah and clean pickin' Strat flavor. Pseudo-jazzy synth melodies and vocal scat lines with Parliament references galore, big, fat Motor Booty bass lines and hilarious lyrics make this album reminiscent of Clinton's *You Shouldn't've Bit Fish*, but it keeps the funk in a sort of R&B radio context and doesn't cater to hip-hop styles. This could, in fact, be a very radio-friendly album, especially if they get the budget for a hip video or two. Left-field song concepts like "Cat In The Hat," dumb-romantic stuff like "Starvin' Like Marvin" and the jive/slick "Cool About It" and "So You Wanna Be A Gangster" could all be adventurous radio picks. This is a true funk album for the '90s, with plenty of dope instrumentation, hilarious if not overly deep lyrics and great singing. "Blackout," which has been released as a single, features a particularly lascivious vocal track, and the chorus is sung to the tune of "Flash Light," which could subliminally seduce seasoned funkateers or hip-hop neophytes alike.

P.W. ****

THE ROLLING STONES
Flashpoint
Columbia/Sony

HERE'S something almost reassuring about a Rolling Stones record in 1991. If Mick and Keef can keep on rocking, then maybe their loyal fans can face their own middle-age traumas with a spark of self-confidence. Who would have thought this band would venture onto the stage with each other after the Jagger/Richards upheavals, never mind cut the highly successful *Steel Wheels* album and pull more than four million fans to their world tour? As a tribute to their longevity, *Flashpoint* works because it shows that the Stones are indeed the world's greatest rock 'n' roll band. From the moment Richards kicks into the opening chords of "Start Me Up," you know the band is as solid and as valid as they ever were. Older, wiser and maybe missing some of their '60s swagger, the Stones still hit home because they are totally in control of their craft. Jagger and Richards possess all the smarts of street-wise urchins, and their well-



oiled support crew of Bill Wyman, Charlie Watts and Ronnie Wood makes the music flow like vintage wine. Yes, the energy of "Jumping Jack Flash" and "Satisfaction" is still there, and the Stones' blues heritage is still reflected in "Little Red Rooster," with Eric Clapton guesting on some tasty guitar licks. As an additional treat, the Stones have lobbed in two new studio tracks; The Gulf War-inspired "High Wire" and the funky, danceable "Sex Drive." The reported absence of Wyman from the two new tracks has caused renewed speculation on the Stones' future. But the forceful nature of this live set indicates that Jagger and co. can still deliver the goods. And as long as they can strut their creaking bodies across the stage, they'll always find an audience to cheer them on.

Keith Sharp ****

Older, wiser and
maybe missing some of
their '60s swagger,
The Rolling Stones still
hit home because they
are totally in
control of their craft.

New Releases

CYCLE SLUTS
FROM HELL
Cycle Sluts From Hell

Epic/Sony

Who can resist the idea of the Cycle Sluts From Hell? They've got names like Venus Penis Crusher and She-Fire Of Ice, Queen Vixen and Honey 1%er, song titles like "Conquress," "Bad Ass Mama," "By The Balls" and — everyone's favorite — "I Wish You Were A Beer," a suitably hard-rocking and raunchy sound and a feisty attitude to match. The risk inherent in all that, however, is in living up to the image. And because they're

women in the macho hard rock arena, they also have to prove that they can really rock — more than any image-heavy male band would have to. But in spite of the fact that their names, image, etc., suggest that they might be little more than a novelty act — a female metal version of The Ramones, or maybe just metal Bangles — they do possess some musical credentials, and they do happen to rock. Their songs are founded on a base of pretty simple power chords and heavy drums, on top of which Venus, She-Fire, Queen and Honey wail and yell more or less in unison, along with some screaming lead guitar. Those vocals are probably the band's weak point, since there's little variation in their tone or style, but perhaps that's beside the point. And these women definitely have a sense of humor to balance their hard-rocking attitude. Those listeners who might have dismissed the Sluts as a dumb all-girl metal band after hearing the deadly serious tone of songs like "Conquress" or "Dark Ships" might be surprised to hear "Speed Queen"'s lyrical bent, which plays the singer's love of sheer velocity against washing machines, not drug addicts ("Get your engines clean!" she rails). And the Cycle Sluts' official anthem, "I Wish You Were A Beer" — a punk-metal hybrid in the style of their mentors, Motorhead — is pretty much self-explanatory. It's about time there was some pure rage music for girls.

M.D. ***

ELECTRONIC
Electronic
Warner Bros.

Electronic is what you get when you put New Order's Bernard Sumner together with former Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr and throw in Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant for good measure. And, far from being a collaboration that enables those three to explore fresh musical ground, by and large this band sounds either like New Order or the Pet Shop Boys (or sometimes like the Pet Shop Order) playing with a skillful but self-effacing guitarist. Granted, while Marr lays down choppy wah-wah chords on *Electronic*'s opener, "Idiot World," Bernard tries his hand at something new (rapping, and he shouldn't quit his day job), but the chorus smacks of something from NO's *Brotherhood* being sung over the chords of the PSBs' "I'm Not Scared."

Tennant's "The Patience Of A Saint" (rhymes with "I'd rather watch drying paint") is quite likeable; it's also indistinguishable from the PSBs in their blase-ballad mode. Except for the short mood-instrumental, "Soviet," everything *Electronic* does is dance-oriented, and some of it doesn't quite cut the mustard on the non-terpsichorean level: "Reality," "Getting Away With It" and "Try All You Want," all underpinned by light-footed house beats and sequenced synths, are on the slight side. When the rhythms get tougher and the instrumentation gets more organic, the songs get better. In "Tighten Up," a pounding drum track gets beefed up by a heavily strummed acoustic guitar, with good results. But "Get The Message" is the *piece de resistance*, a song of unrequited lust addressed by Sumner to a high-living, napalm-sweet femme fatale. It's set to a catchy variant of the "Funky Drummer" beat that's borne everyone from Madonna to Suzanne Vega to George Michael onto the charts in the last year and, once again, Marr's acoustic guitars (and the two taunting wah-wah blurs he plays in the midsection) help lift the song out of the dancers-only doldrums. In other words, *Electronic* hit their stride when they don't take their own name too literally.

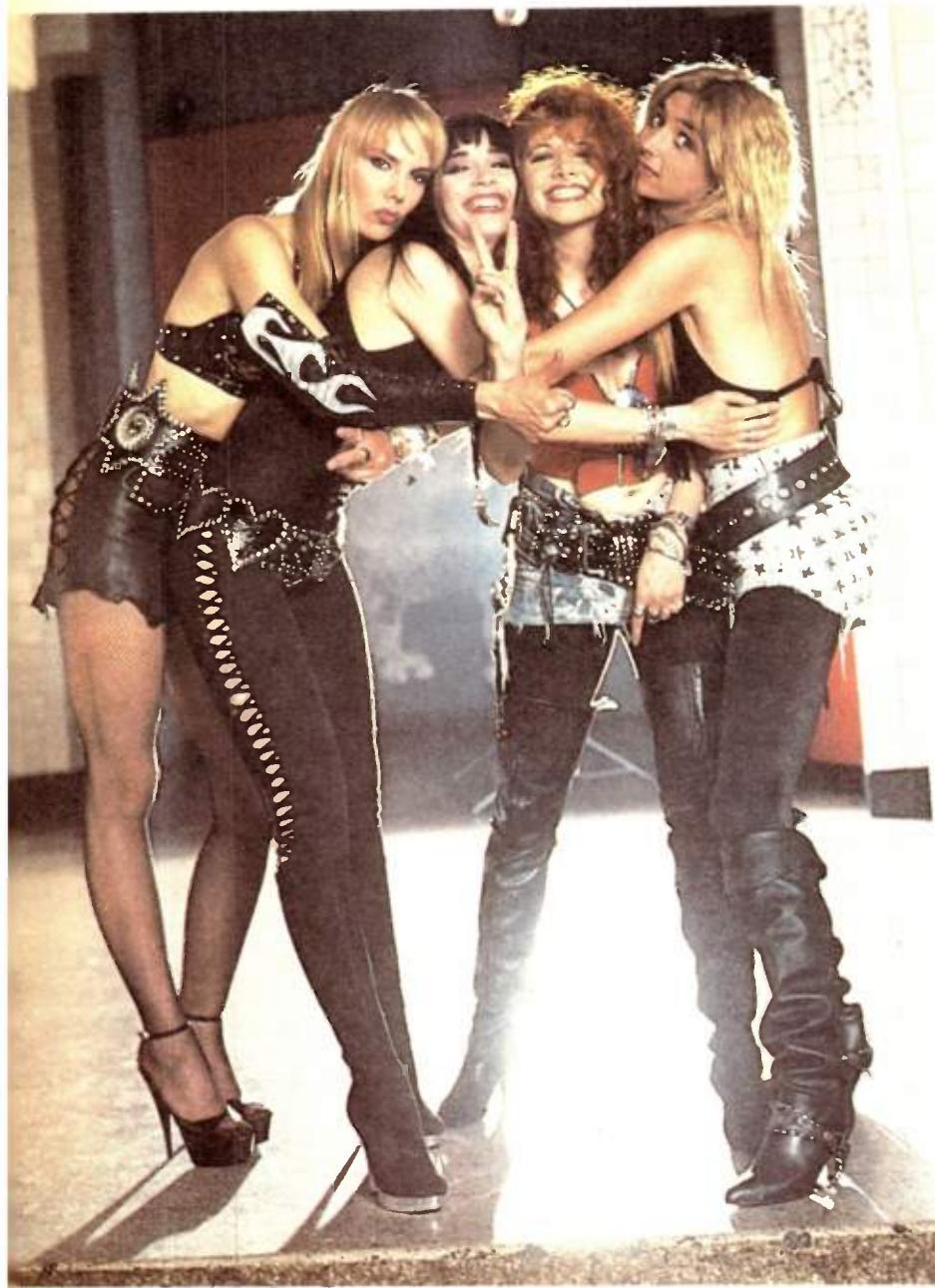
T.P. ***

DIVINYLS
Divinyls
Virgin

Is it still sexist if a woman takes on the role of a person being ruled by her crotch? Every song on *Divinyls*, the Australian duo's fifth album, seems to be about how badly vocalist Christina Amphlett wants to get laid, needs to get laid, *has* to get laid. When Amphlett protests, "I really do," at the end of "I Touch Myself," there's absolutely no way in the world one would ever doubt her. That song is truly the only standout track on the album, though. Propelled by some half-way decent (but no better) guitar playing from partner Mark McEntee, there is a certain primal appeal to these songs of rutting and groping, but a lack of originality pervades. Madonna has proven that there's a sort of declaration of independence inherent in brazen sluttishness, but Amphlett's sub-pornographic longings do nothing but bring out the prude in me.

P.S. **

The Cycle Sluts From Hell
have it all: great names,
great song titles, a
suitably raunchy sound and
a feisty attitude to match.





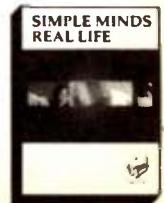
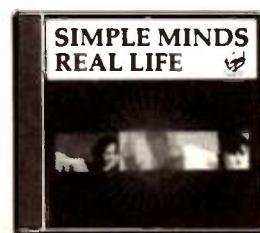
**Lenny Kravitz
Mama Said**

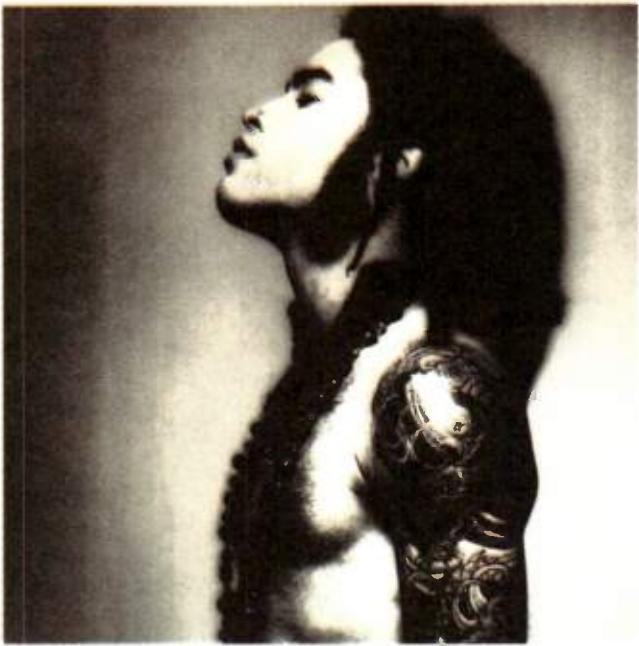


**Good Things
Come in Small Packages...**



**Simple Minds
Real Life**





Playing catch-that-musical-reference is irresistible with Lenny Kravitz, who crosses white rock with black funk/soul and adds in his own latter-day hippie twist.

New Releases

LENNY KRAVITZ

Mama Said

Virgin

Lenny Kravitz is no musical innovator, but he sure knows how to absorb, incorporate, filter and adapt the music of his favorite singers into his own songs — and make them lovable. Playing catch-that-musical-reference is irresistible with Lenny, who crosses white rock from the '60s with black funk/soul from the '70s, and adds in his own latter-day hippie twist. His debut album echoed The Beatles, Prince and Lou Reed, among others. *Mama Said* makes it crystal clear — if it wasn't before — that John Lennon was an enormous influence on the young Lenny, and there are major Lennon homages all over this album, from the post-Beatles piano sound of "All I Ever Wanted" through the thick cloud of "Strawberry Fields" psychedelia on "Fields Of Joy" to the *Abbey Road* ghosts on "The Difference Is Why." That's not all, though: we also have ap-

pearances by Curtis Mayfield, Smokey Robinson, The Spinners, Prince, Otis Redding and Sly Stone, among others — not only in the musical arrangements but also in the vocal styles (particularly when he employs his evocative falsetto, as in "It Ain't Over Till It's Over" and "What Goes Around Comes Around") and the lyrical themes. But there are lots of styles, so it's hard to get too irritated at him for overusing any one of them. Right after "Fields Of Joy" comes "Always On The Run," a very catchy funk number — with horns and everything — and then "Stand By My Woman," which starts out with a dizzyingly immediate Lennon nostalgia trip and then moves into Stax territory. Next up is "It Ain't Over Till It's Over," which takes you back to Smokey, or is it Marvin, or is it the Jackson 5? It's almost like he's actually sampling the original — there's just enough of it to give a listener a rush of recognition, and then it moves on. But after the musical guessing game is over, you're left with the songs indelibly planted in your brain.

M.D. ***1/2

James Calderaro

SONY

New Releases

DINOSAUR JR.

Green Mind

Blanco Y Negro/WEA

In the 2 1/2 years since Dinosaur Jr.'s last album, *Bug*, there's been a tangle of conflicting reports that the band no longer exists, that it's carrying on with a new lineup, that it's now a one-man show starring singer-guitarist-songwriter J. Mascis. Funnily enough, *Green Mind* does little to clear up the confusion. Mascis plays all the instruments (guitar, bass drums) on most of the cuts, but Dino-Jr.'s (former?) drummer, Murph, plays on three songs and Don Fleming (of the Velvet Monkeys), who apparently joined the band for a short time, plays guitar on one cut and acoustic bass on another. (Lou Barlow, the bassist on the first three Dinosaur albums, is definitely gone.) This major-label premiere seems to reflect the shakiness of the whole enterprise. Though the guitars are as loud as ever and the drums are *louder* than ever, the album reeks of

Tom Sheehan/LFI

lethargy, uncertainty and frustration soured into indifference. Never known for exuding good cheer, Mascis' whiney, post-nasal-drip singing has reached a new peak (or sunk to new depths) of despair. Here are some of J.'s latest pearls: "Without a mind/Without a spine/What is it that you wanna find?"; "You stop smiling, remember how everything sucks"; "There never really is a good time/There's always nothing much to say." It would all get tiresome if J. weren't shrugging his scrawny shoulders to such powerful music. "The Wagon" rolls along with enough guitar-crazy abandon to make blowing an emotional fuse seem like fun, until its abrupt final chord sputters into oblivion in a painfully shrill barrage of feedback. In "Thumb," Mascis uses the flute setting on that musical dinosaur, the mello-tron, to supply a ghostly counterpoint to his resigned moan of a vocal, and the song fades out on one of J.'s best-ever guitar improvs (a cross between Neil Young and Robert Quine). The thrash-paced tempo of "How'd You Pin That One On Me" goads Mascis



into sounding more pissed off than resigned; his vocal delivery is spiteful, his guitar solo nothing short of ferocious. The relatively upbeat title song seems to be about hanging out with frogs, and if that strikes you as odd, think about it...Where else are you gonna find a green mind?

Tim Powis ****

Though Dinosaur Jr.'s guitars and drums are as loud as ever, the album reeks of lethargy.

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The Law capture the spirit of Free and Bad Company while managing to sound current.

New Releases

PETER HOLSSAPPLE & CHRIS STAMEY *Mavericks* RNA

North America finally got the chance to catch onto the dBs. During the late '70s and early '80s, they made four records that defined pop craft, but they fell through pop cracks. At a time when Talking Heads and Blondie defined New York rock as cerebral body music, the dBs played clever Beatle-esque, Byrdsy pop. They lost a musical turf war to their more musically aggressive Chicago brethren, bands like The Romantics and Shoes, and were far bigger in England than they ever were in America. But it's a new decade, and two of the dBs' guiding forces, Peter Holsapple and Chris Stamey, decided to tell the world

that in these dancing days, after a year in which no guitar band topped the pop charts, simple pop craft still exists. Holsapple and Stamey have created an album that's more reflective than even their previous work. There is not a synthetic note on *Mavericks*. All the guitars, cello, two-part harmonies and genuinely witty songs might seem anachronistic, but that's part of the point. Since Simon and Garfunkel split, no one seems to want to mine that combination; many thought it moribund. Yet *Mavericks* teems with vitality, adhesive melodies and sharp insights on living. Wry takes like "I Want To Break Your Heart" co-exist with ironic romanticisms like "Taken." Certainly these guys root their sound in the '60s, right down to their cover of the very early Byrds song "Here Without You." While the lyrics to "Geometry" are high-tech, the music is straight Merseybeat, and "Anymore" wouldn't sound out of place on a Jefferson Airplane album. Even they note that "Everything original has been said much better years ago by someone else." But that won't stop them from trying.

Hank Bordowitz ****

THE LAW *The Law* Atlantic

As an addicted Free and Bad Company fan, I could never understand why lead vocalist Paul Rodgers seemingly bailed out on the '80s. Sure, he chalked up two records fronting Jimmy Page's ill-conceived Firm, and he even released a somewhat disappointing solo album, *Cut Loose*. The resolve and commitment appeared to be missing, though — until he bumped into another '80s refugee, former Small Faces and The Who drummer Kenney Jones. Social contact turned into recording sessions, and with a little help from such luminaries as Pink Floyd's David Gilmour and Bryan Adams, the pair have joined forces as The Law to fashion an impressive self-titled debut. The Law works because it serves as a showcase for one of rock's great vocal talents, and Rodgers does not disappoint. Whether blasting out hot R&B-flavoured rockers like "Nature Of The Beast" and "Tough Love" or serving up loquacious blues ballads like "Miss You In A Heartbeat" and "Stone," Rodgers captures all the spirit of Free and Bad Company while still sounding

current and viable. Some fiery guitar leads from Gilmour and Adams' support vocals flesh out the arrangements, and Jones' power drumming rounds out the overall production. With enough hot tracks to deliver significant radio action, *The Law* could well have the same impact as Bad Company's debut release.

K.S. ****1/2

THE BLASTERS

The Blasters Collection Slash/WB

They never even threatened gold, thanks to cloth-eared radio programmers, but The Blasters will be remembered as one of the best, most influential American rock 'n' roll bands of the '80s. Along with kindred spirits Los Lobos (with whom they shared saxman Steve Berlin), these Los Angeles delved deep into roots music and came up with a totally convincing, entertaining hybrid of their own. As they pledged in their early manifesto, "American Music," "We got the Louisiana boogie and the Delta blues. We got country swing and rockabilly too. We got jazz, country-western and Chicago blues. It's the greatest music that you ever knew." Amen! Thanks to the songwriting and instrumental prowess of guitarist Dave Alvin and the versatile vocals of his brother Phil, The Blasters could pay respect to all these genres without ever sounding academic or reverential. At their peak (1981-84), they featured great pianist Gene Taylor and horn players Berlin and Lee Allen — truly a band from honky-tonk heaven — and this fertile period is well represented on this generous 20-song retrospective. Fans will be pleased to note the inclusion of three unreleased tracks, including a raucous cover of the Don & Dewey hit "Justine," featuring guest vocalist John Doe. Some of Dave Alvin's best songs have been covered by the likes of Dwight Yoakam and Joel Sonnier, but it's actually surprising that their quality hasn't been more widely recognized. Anyone belatedly turned onto The Blasters' charms by this compilation is advised to check out Dave's solo album, *Romeo's Escape*, as well. A revised, Dave-less band is still out making the rounds, but not recording. *The Blasters Collection* isn't just a fond look at a fine group; it's a glorious testament to the lasting joys of real American music.

K.D. ****1/2

New Releases

SIMPLE MINDS

Real Life

Virgin

There's an old adage which decrees that nothing is more cleansing than a personal upheaval. In Jim Kerr's case, he's gone through a total carwash. Divorced from ex-mate Chrissie Hynde and seeing his Simple Minds reduced to just himself and guitarist Charlie Burchill, Kerr has responded to the challenge by cutting an album that harkens back to at least some of his glory days. *Real Life* is refreshing because the lyrical messages are poignant, the arrangements are clear and uncluttered and Steve Lippson's production has refocused the band's rhythmic element. Reinforced by drummer Mel Gaynor, bassist Malcolm Foster and keyboardist Peter Viottes, Simple Minds should make up at least some lost ground with tracks like "Traveling Man," "When Two Worlds Collide" and the leadoff single, "See The Lights." The level of consistency here will be encouraging to old fans, and there's enough creative spark to suggest that Simple Minds could be meaningful to a younger generation. Not quite *Spark In The Rain* or *New Gold Dream*, *Real Life* is at least a positive step in the right direction and for that Kerr can be encouraged.

K.S. ***1/2

JACK FROST

Jack Frost

Arista

There is surely no more prolific artist in the "alternative rock" set than Steve Kilbey. He's best known as a singer/lyricist for The Church, but, perhaps as a respite from the tensions inherent in that group, he constantly immerses himself in outside work — solo records, books, production, and two fine albums with Hex. For such a strong-willed soul he's a good collaborator, as proven by this attractive project. Jack Frost unites Kilbey with another literate Australian singer/songwriter, Grant McLennan of the acclaimed, but sadly defunct, Go-Betweens. In just three weeks the duo wrote and recorded *Jack Frost*, but there is nothing slapdash or hurried-sounding about the album. The pair's vocal styles prove nicely complementary — "sometimes I think it's me singing

when it's Steve, even though we don't really sound alike," claims Grant — and the harmonies on songs like "Even As We Speak" and "Providence" evoke the Go-Betweens more than The Church. As suggested by the choice of moniker, a chilly, melancholy mood oft overlays the record, but tempos and textures are varied cleverly. There's a jazzy nightclub feel to "Geneva 4 a.m." that's bolstered by trumpet, string bass, and piano sounds, while "Every Hour God Sends" (the most immediately compelling tune here) features the kind of churning guitar riff Kilbey does so well. The duo's contrasting lyrical perspectives also enhance the mix. McLennan's "Trapeze Boy" is an affectingly narrated song/poem, while the surreal ditty "Birdlover" (about a woman who turns her husbands into caged birds) sounds like the product of Kilbey's feverishly imaginative brain. This may have been a "one-night stand" for the creatively prolific Kilbey, but a work as charming and intelligent as *Jack Frost* deserves a warm reception.

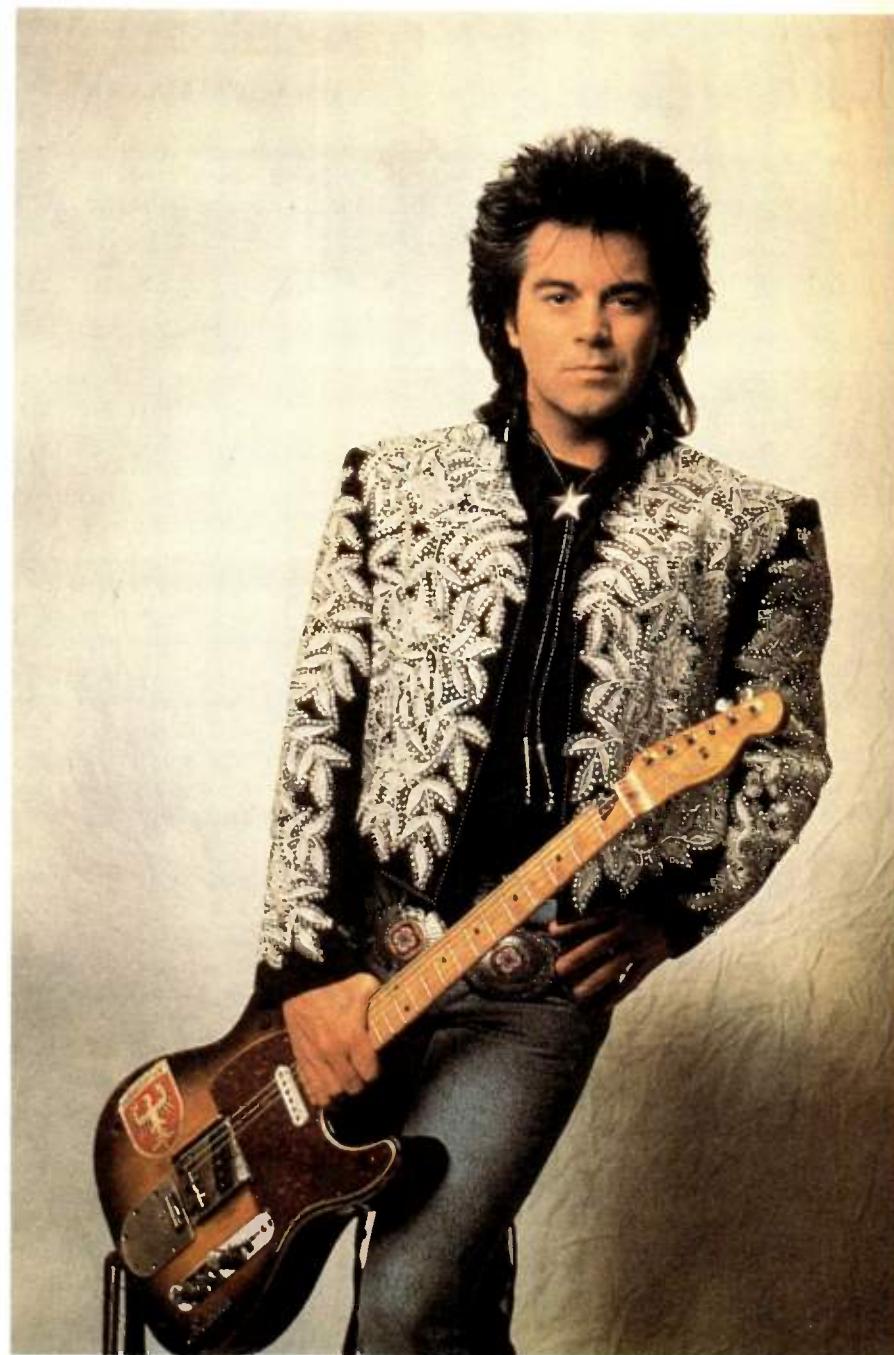
K.D. ****

MARTY STUART

Tempted

MCA

Marty Stuart has all the right credentials for a young honky-tonk hero, and this, his fourth album, deserves to cement that status. He first made his mark as a guitar-picker, playing with Lester Flatt from age 13, then spending six years touring and recording with Johnny Cash. The lessons he learned then are immediately apparent on *Tempted*, a stronger album overall than Stuart's 1989 hit, *Hillbilly Rock*. There's nothing fancy or artistically ambitious here; just a bunch of rockabilly inflected country songs sung and played flawlessly. Marty pledges to keep hillbilly rock 'n' roll alive, and his music often sounds as if it's been lifted straight from the vintage '50s and '60s era of that genre. To his credit, though, Marty makes the form sound fresh and fun. Choosing material from masters like Bill Monroe and Hank Williams ("I'm Blue, I'm Lonesome") and his main mentor Cash ("Blue Train") certainly helps, but, with the aid of top new country songsmiths like Paul Kennerley, Kostas and Hank DeVito, Stuart proves he can write potential classics of his own. The gorgeously catchy "Little Things" is already a hit, and



songs like "Till I Found You" and the title tune will surely follow suit. *Tempted* was recorded on a 32-track digital system, yet co-producers Tony Brown and Richard Bennett somehow capture that spare, echoing sound typical of this genre's golden years. Bennett, Stuart and Ray Flacke perform guitar duties impeccably, while familiar names like Mark O'Connor, Harry Stinson and John Jarvis appear on other instrumental credits. The weakest song here is an unexceptional cover of Neil Young's "Get Back To The Country," but, all in all, you have to rate this a tempting treat.

K.D. ****

Marty Stuart has all the right credentials for a young honky-tonk hero.

Reissues

By RICK CLARK

There's an old saying that a prophet is never given fair recognition in his hometown. In the case of Memphis music, it's not a case of a lack of historical awareness; rather, it's a sense of the populace being overwhelmed into apathy by the glut of so much great music. So leave it to obsessed devotees from anywhere but Memphis to try to make some sense out of Southern culture's wealth of music.

Among those at the forefront of the quest is Rob Bowman from Toronto, whose credits include putting together the Grammy-winning *Otis Redding Story* and *The Band: To Kingdom Come*. Bowman's love affair with the music runs so deep that he packed up and moved to Memphis, landing a job teaching the history

of rock 'n' roll to culturally illiterate music students at Memphis State University.

Thanks to Bowman and WEA International's Steve Greenberg, we now have a 244-song, nine-CD box set titled *The Complete Stax/Volt Singles: 1959-1968*. This collection includes all of the Stax/Volt 45 A-sides ever released during their relationship with Atlantic Records, as well as a few select B-sides that charted or possessed some further merit on their own.

Even though Stax/Volt continued to release some great material after 1968, many consider that the label's classic sound happened during the period represented by this set. "That was the period when Booker T. and the MG's were the house band for the label, so there's a consistency to the material," says Bowman. "Because of that, obscure records by artists that most people have never heard of are as good as the Rufus Thomas, Carla Thomas, Sam & Dave and Otis Redding material."

Stax also boasted a more than impressive in-house songwriter staff, centred around Redding and three partnerships (Isaac Hayes & David Porter, Eddie Floyd & Steve Cropper,

and Booker T. and William Bell).

"That was still a period when the 45 was the medium for R&B records," Bowman explains. "Albums were relatively unimportant. Stax put out nearly 200 singles, but they only released about 25 or 30 albums. Most of this stuff has never been reissued before, because there's no form for it, like existing back catalogue albums. Except for the stars like Sam & Dave and Otis Redding, these tracks were never going to come out any other way."

The consistently great songs and performances found on this collection are testament to Stax/Volt's vision. For any other label, putting out a box of all their A-sides would not only be commercial suicide, but a terribly uneven listening experience. But not this one, which includes immortal songs like "Soul Finger" (The Bar-Kays), "B-A-B-Y" (Carla Thomas), "Knock On Wood" (Eddie Floyd), "Try A Little Tenderness" (Otis Redding), "You Don't Miss Your Water" (William Bell), "Last Night" (The Mar-Keys) and many, many more.

The Complete Stax/Volt Singles was digitally remastered from the original mono single masters using a tape deck with specially modified tube outputs to enable the music to achieve its authentic sound. Included is a richly detailed booklet, written by Bowman, that will without a doubt be one of the definitive sources of information on that period of music.

Bowman was also involved in putting together the definitive Sam & Dave collection, *Sam & Dave: An Anthology Of The Stax Years 1965 To 1968* (Atlantic), along with Warner Canada's Kim Cooke. This is the best Sam & Dave have ever sounded on disc. Very little tape hiss is evident, while it doesn't sacrifice the top end. There is a full, warm sound to the bass end of these recordings as well.

Included are all of the essential hits, like "Soul Man," "Hold On, I'm Comin'," "When Something Is Wrong With My Baby" and "I Thank You." Bowman again provides excellent liner notes. Judging from the results, any fan of Memphis soul would be crazy to miss out on this set.

Fantasy Records has just released five greatest hits CDs of early '70s soul artists on the Detroit-based Hot Wax/Invictus labels. Hot Wax and Invictus were formed in 1969 by the phenomenally successful songwriting/producing team of Eddie Holland, Lamont

Dozier and Brian Holland.

The first group to record for Hot Wax was the female trio **Honey Cone**, who scored big with sassy songs like "Want Ads" (a No. 1 pop/R&B hit), "Stick Up" and "One Monkey Don't Stop No Show."

Hot Wax artist **Laura Lee** took the spirit of the feminist movement and gave it a hard-hitting pop/R&B setting. Assertive titles like "Wedlock Is A Padlock," "Women's Love Rights" and "Rip Off" won her acceptance on R&B stations — but only "Women's Love Rights" dented the Top 40 charts.

Freida Payne, an old childhood friend of Holland and Dozier's, had already worked with Pearl Bailey, Duke Ellington and Quincy Jones when she came to Hot Wax. Payne's biggest claim to fame, "Band Of Gold," eventually sold more than five million copies, and her heartfelt plea to end the Vietnam War, "Bring The Boys Home," hit a nerve with the public, generating her second-biggest hit.

Invictus act **Chairmen Of The Board** scored a handful of hits between 1970 and 1973, culminating in the classic "Give Me Just A Little More Time." And last but not least is **100 Proof (Aged In Soul)**, one of the grittiest-sounding R&B acts on the label's roster. Judging from the fine sides represented in their collection, it's odd that they never achieved more success.

Rhino Records has just dished out an indispensable 10-volume tribute to '70s soul titled *Soul Hits Of The Seventies: Didn't It Blow Your Mind! Vol. 1-10*. Anyone who thought that the best soul music happened in the '60s would do well to check this collection out. True, the bulk of the really great earthy soul tracks came out before 1970, but I could fill up this column with nothing but a list of all the great stuff on this series: "Lean On Me" (Bill Withers), "Whatcha See Is Whatcha Get" (The Dramatics), "Theme From Shaft" (Isaac Hayes), "Have You Seen Her," "Oh Girl" (The Chi-Lites), "Freddie's Dead," "Superfly" (Curtis Mayfield), "I Can See Clearly Now" (Johnny Nash), "Work To Do" (Isley Bros.), "If You Don't Know Me By Now" (Harold Melvin And The Blue Notes), "Clean Up Woman" (Betty Wright), "Back Stabbers" (The O'Jays) and "If Loving You Is Wrong, I Don't Want To Be Right" (Luther Ingram). And what's more, as is usual with most Rhino product, the sound and packaging are first-rate.



Some classic Curtis Mayfield songs are part of an indispensable tribute to '70s soul.

b a c k b e a t

Metal

BY ELIANNE HALBERSBERG



TAD

Tad are everything your parents hate about rock 'n' roll, and if that's not incentive enough to buy their latest album, *8 Way Santa*, read on. The Seattle-based group consists of



Tad embody everything your parents hate about rock 'n' roll.

vocalist Tad Doyle, bassist Kurt Danielson, guitarist Gary Thorstensen and drummer Ray Washam, the newest recruit, and has two other recordings to its credit: *God's Balls* (1988) and *Salt Lick* (1989). As Danielson says, "We'd only been together two weeks when we recorded *God's Balls*, and, like *Salt Lick*, it was recorded in about two days. For this record we had more time, and it is a better representation of what we wanted to do."

"Jinx," the band's latest single, is receiving generous college radio airplay. "Radio is basically confused and scared of us," says Danielson. "There were also a lot of dirty words on the first two records, so they weren't too friendly to our music."

Europe has embraced the Tad mentality, giving the band front-cover features and appreciating their sense of humor. North America, however, is proving to be a tougher nut to crack. The "Wood Goblins" video from *Salt Lick* was banned from MTV. States Danielson: "They said we were too ugly. If we were Madonna, we could have made a stink about it and turned it to our advantage." Tad, however, is not financially set for such action.

"Our image involves beer drinking and chainsaws," Danielson continues, "and I guess the music wasn't acceptable. We believe MTV is the antithesis of rock 'n' roll, and their rejection of 'Wood Goblins' proves it. In the new video, guitars are destroyed, Pine-Sol is guzzled, there's vomiting, lighting doors on fire, and the editor is getting footage of everything offensive he can string together."



JOHNNY LAW

Direct from Austin, Texas, are hard rockers Johnny Law, comprising vocalist/guitarist Erik Larson, guitarist Brady Hughes, bassist Ron McRae and drummer Matt Dunlap. Signed to Metal Blade, Johnny Law's Stones-drenched sound is quite a departure for the label most associated with skull-crushing volume and pulse-racing velocity.

The band recorded its debut with producer Brenden O'Brien, and members of the Georgia Satellites and Kansas sat in. Unlike some of Atlanta's native sons, however, the Texan band has no shame about their roots. "We love being from Texas," Hughes says. "The problem is that it is misleading. People perceive Texas and southern music in a certain way. We have those traits, but there is also a new sound coming out of the scene."

In a strange twist of fate, however, Satellite Rick Richards and former Kansas man Steve Walsh sat in on a cover of Ron Wood's "We All Get Old." Says Hughes: "We're very influenced by The Stones and Woody. They listened to and were inspired by American blues players, and we grew up on them, so we learned indirectly through them. We got everyone who was hanging out to play on the song, and it really worked because it is one of the more southern-sounding tracks on the album, written by an English guy!"



Metal Notes

Just released: albums by Metal Church (*The Human Factor*), The Lost (self-titled), The Godfathers (*Unreal World*), Heads Up! (*Duke*), Venus Beads (*Incision*), Sacrifice (*Soldiers Of Misfortune*), featuring new drummer Mike Rosenthal), Saraya (*When The Black Bird Sings*), and Armored Saint (untitled at presstime). Now recording: Joan Jett, Panic, Atheist, Haunted Garage, Sadus, Obituary, Intruder, Metallica, Tesla and Soundgarden.



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Live

**BLACK WOMEN
IN RAP**
Sports Arena
Los Angeles, CA

That Queen Latifah opened her set with an apology was the first and last acknowledgement that things hadn't gone entirely as planned here. The potential was there, and hearts were in the right place, but the first of what was intended as a series of all-fe-

Lyte, who offered not only the longest set but also the most costume changes. Yo-Yo made some strong feminist points during her brief set, but any educating she did was undermined by Nikki D's reliance on gangster raps and the word "bitch." MC Trouble followed with what seemed to be an effort to prove that a woman could be as foul-mouthed as any male. By the time Harmony took the stage, her two Afrocentric, edutainment raps were largely ignored. Latifah, as always, came on proud and defiant, but by then it was too little, too late. Apparently the organizers are taking this show on the road. If so, some serious soul-searching and rescheduling is in order.

Perry Stern

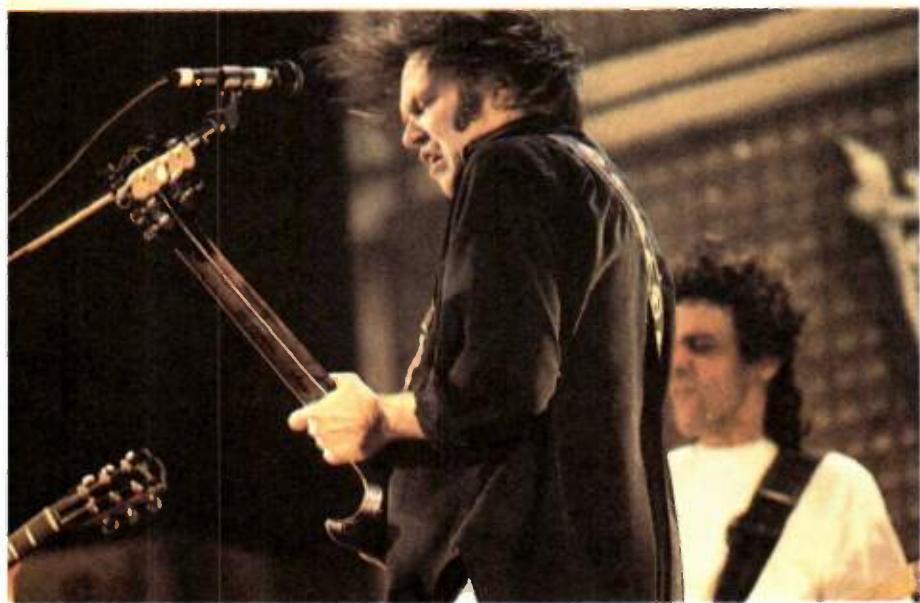
songs like "Mansion On The Hill," "Love To Burn" and "Fuckin' Up" became the logical descendants of "Cinnamon Girl," "Powderfinger," "Like A Hurricane" and even "Cortez The Killer." The only exception to the grunge treatment was a searing cover of "Blowin' In The Wind," the message of which was not lost on the crowd. Apparently oblivious to trend, pretension and commercial pressures, Young and Crazy Horse provide what an arena rock show can and should be.

Mary Dickie

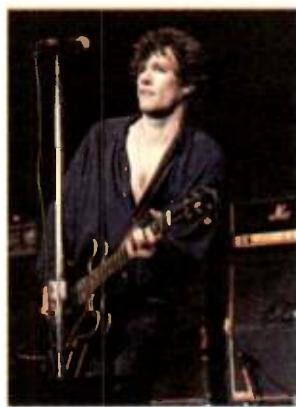
**THE REPLACEMENTS/
THE POSIES**
Foster Auditorium
Tuscaloosa, AL

The Posies draw from the cream of Anglo pop traditions and create a sound that's truly their own. In spite of a spotty mix, singers Jonathon Auer and Kenneth Stringfellow created an almost synergistic level of vocal interplay, and bassist Rick Roberts and drummer Michael Musberger played with solid musical economy. As well as their own songs "Suddenly Mary," "Apology" and "Golden Blunders," the band showed their taste in influences with Chris Bell's "I Am The Cosmos" and Big Star's "Feel." Then The Replacements ambled on stage, plugged in and slammed into a brain-crunching version of "I Don't Know," off *Pleased To Meet Me*. Unlike much of what passes for rock shows these days, The Replacements dispensed with flashy effects and delivered the real thing in a marathon 29-song set that was a perfect blend of loose and tight playing. Both Paul Westerberg and bassist Tommy Stinson were in fine voice. In fact, it was striking how rich their body of work has become, and it was an unexpected pleasure to clearly understand Westerberg's lyrics. New drummer Steve Foley is a powerful addition to the band, delivering the economy and swing of Charlie Watts revved up a few notches. Among the highlights were "Can't Hardly Wait," "Color Me Impressed," "Left Of The Dial" and an achingly beautiful "Skyway." For the encore the band swapped instruments for an appropriately sloppy "Hootenanny," then switched back and finished with "Bastards Of Young." All in all, one of the best shows to come around in a while.

Rick Clark



**Neil Young and Crazy Horse
provided an evening of
glorious garage rock.**



**Replacement Paul Westerberg
was in fine voice, and being able
to understand his lyrics was
an unexpected pleasure.**

male rap extravaganzas was an abysmal failure. Although a stellar lineup was scheduled to appear, only a fraction of the arena's 17,000-plus seats were occupied when the show began, and by the time Latifah took the stage about five hours later, the number had dwindled further. Perhaps organizers will point to the steep ticket price (\$24) or the fact that the last big local rap show was marred by gang violence, but the fact remains that, for the most part, the performances were monotonous and interchangeable. The first wave, including MC Solah, Dana D, Nefertiti, MC Smooth and MC Peaches, was only interesting for Nefertiti's militant Black Muslim posturing (her background dancers were dressed in Farrakhan-esque dark suits and bowties) and the audience's apparent dismissal of it. Canada's Michie Mee offered an alternative with her reggae-influenced raps, but the fact that she sang along to a recorded track didn't sit well with the crowd. The first really serious performance came from MC

L I S T E N T O



Photo by John Loper

me

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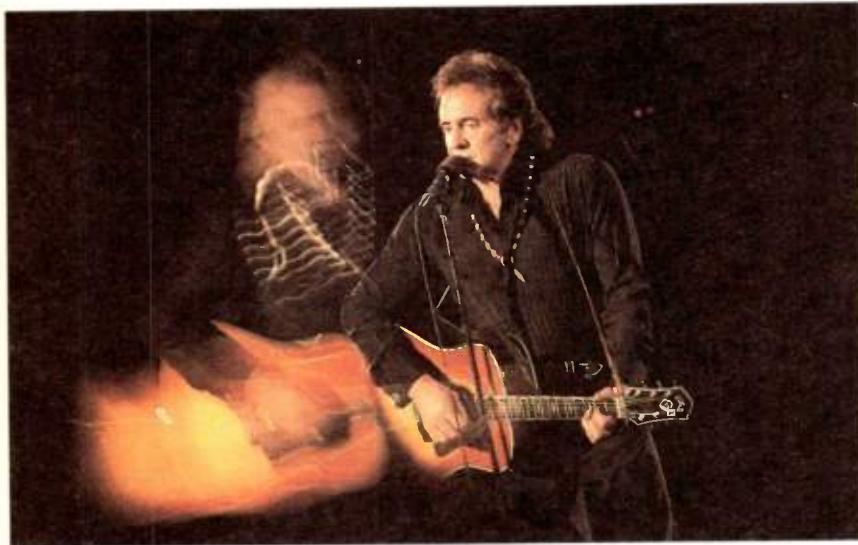
WRH



Country

BY ROMAN MITZ

Buck Owens continues his prolific pace of releases since his career was revitalized with the help of Dwight Yoakam. The really good



Johnny Cash (above)
is enjoying renewed popularity with a prophetic song, while Buck Owens seems to have found his songwriting touch again.



news about Buck's latest album, *Kickin' In*, is that he seems to have found his songwriting touch again. Long considered to be one of country's classic writers, he contributed six tunes to *Kickin' In*, including the instantly memorable "All The Tea In China" and "Did Anybody Get The License Number?"

Another country veteran, **Glen Campbell**, is back with a new album called *Unconditional Love*. While none of the songs on this set is self-written, the quality of the material shows that the singer/master guitarist really has the ability to pick 'em. Drawing from the works of some of the genre's greatest writers, Campbell travels the musical path from the hot licks of Carl Jackson's "I'm Gone This Time" to Bill Anderson's touching "Once A Day," and peaks with **Willie Nelson's** early classic, "Healing Hands of Time." It's also a delight to hear some of the jazz guitar stylings that harken back to Campbell's longtime influence, **Django Reinhardt**.

Another Reinhardt fan is **Asleep At The Wheel** leader **Ray Benson**. Perhaps Ray will figure out a way to reincarnate Django in the special edition cartoon series the band has released to commemorate 20 years in the business and help promote their single, "That's The Way Love Is." **Kinky Friedman**, renowned Texas musician-turned-mystery novelist, was recruited to

write the text, and **James Bennett** of *National Lampoon* fame created the illustrations which trace the Wheel's history. Benson is thrilled to appear in the comic strip, "even if Kinky does make fun of my nose."

Covering subject matter ranging from horsemanship to heavy metal and everything in between, video magazines are becoming the rage for people who would rather curl up with a remote control than a good book. *Inside Country Music*, a Nashville-based bimonthly, has a bit of the fluff we've come to expect with the magazine format, but there are enough informative pieces to keep things stimulating for the show's hour-and-a-half duration. Edition two has features on **Garth Brooks**, who reveals his commitment to his fans and his songwriting, and **Holly Dunn**, who returns to Texas to trace her singing and songwriting roots. There are at least six other interesting vignettes; the remaining five, while a little schmoozy and schmaltzy, are not too difficult to digest because of the congeniality of co-hosts **Rich Mitchell** and **Maria Marx**. Edition three should be on record and video store shelves as you read this, and while a few pale imitations have already cropped up, you'd be well advised to check out the original thing.

Highway 101's latest release, *On With The Show*, is due for release later this month. The album's title is a defiant statement to skeptics who felt that the band may have reached the end of the road with the departure of singer **Paulette Carlson**. However, if the group's recent live shows are any indication, new vocalist/guitarist **Nikki Nelson** has picked up where Paulette left off, and Nelson's more mainstream country approach may broaden the group's appeal.

By the age of 25, **Dean Dillon** had become one of the hottest songwriters on Music Row, penning hits for the likes of **Steve Wariner**, **George Jones** and **Hank Williams Jr.** In the early '80s he teamed up with fellow hillbilly singer **Gary Stewart** on a number of chart singles, after which he turned to writing again and developed the Midas touch on a string of hits for **George Strait**. Now Dean is ready to make his mark as a solo artist, with the release of *Out Of Your Ever Lovin' Mind*, a fine collection of elbow-benders spearheaded by "Holed Up In Some Honky-Tonk."

It's also nice to see **Gene Watson** bounce back with *At Last*, following a bout of business problems. The album was produced by **Gregg Brown**, who last year helmed **Travis Tritt's** breakthrough debut.

Fans of **The Desert Rose Band** who already own their three previous releases may still want to add *A Dozen Roses/Greatest Hits* to their collection. There are two bonus tracks included; one of those, "Price The Pay," is an outstanding duet with **Emmylou Harris** that has become the band's unofficial theme song on its live shows. While it's too early for a **Texas Tornados** greatest hits package yet, they have re-recorded their debut album in Spanish due to popular demand.

Some people will do anything to see **Clint Black**. Enticed by a publicity contest offering a pair of front-row tickets to a Black show to the perpetrator of the zaniest stunt, a Mississippi woman shared a bathtub of steaming noodles with a six-month-old pig to win the prize. Incidentally, congratulations are in order for Black's recent induction into the **Grand Ole Opry**.

Joe Ely's *Live At Liberty Lunch*, a stunning set that captures the essence of Ely's legendary live performances, has generated enough interest to encourage MCA to re-release his first four recordings. The remastered recordings *Joe Ely* (1977), *Honky-Tonk Masquerade* (1978), *Down On The Drag* (1979) and *Musta Notta Gotta Lotta* (1981) sound as pristine as they did when they were first released.

David Frizzell and **Shelly West** are celebrating their 10th anniversary tour. The current tour reunites the pair after several years of solo appearances. While Frizzell and West are a musical item once more, though, we're sad to report the breakup of **The O'Kanes**, **Foster And Lloyd** and **Southern Pacific**. However, solo careers are in the offing for all parties.

Congratulations are also in order for **Johnny Cash**, who is enjoying renewed popularity with his single "Goin' By The Book." Cash describes it as "a prophetic song about the battle of Armageddon, our ecology and prophecy being fulfilled." Finally, on a lighter note, the accolades keep pouring in for **George Strait**, although sometimes they come from the most unexpected places. It seems the **Texas Dental Hygienists Association** honored him for having the biggest smile in Texas.

Jazz

BY ROB REID

As 1991 progresses, we're witnessing a burst of creativity and fine music-making from established artists as well as those who've been on the scene for a relatively short while, but who are definitely coming into their own. If this keeps up, the last decade of the 20th century will be a monster for jazz fans.

Take The 29th Street Saxophone Quartet's latest release, *Underground*. With the exception of a nifty shuttle flight update of "Old Devil Moon" and the doleful "Canto Triste" (with guest star Hugh Masekela on flugelhorn), this quartet sticks to a four-saxophone lineup. The result is a perfect blend of saxes, with no rhythm net of piano-bass-drums to catch 'em if they fall. But their internalized rhythm is so strong, you won't miss a beat.

There's a lot of great jump'n'jive in these performances. "Manteca Freedom" rips out with a delightfully delirious abandon after drafting Eddie Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance" theme. Surprises such as the slippery changes in "What Happened," the four-part harmony foghorn blasts of "The Nasty" and a rave-up rap-up of The Isley Bros.' "It's Your Thing" are just a few of the many highlights. Bobby Watson's fluid alto sax is always a pleasure, but it takes three other musicians to pull off this dynamic affair, and Ed Jackson (alto sax), Rich Rothenberg (tenor) and Jim Hartog (baritone) deserve a truckload of credit.

This is also a big month for multi-threat musicians like James Morrison and Joey DeFrancesco.

For his most recent project, *Snappy Doo*, available on Atlantic Records, Morrison hired vets Ray Brown (bass), Herb Ellis (guitar) and Jeff Hamilton (drums). Multi-instrumentalist Morrison hired himself to cover all the other bases: trumpet, flugelhorn, trombone, tuba, saxophones and piano. The big band on several of the tracks? All Morrison, overdubbed, of course. And Morrison is no dilettante—he's good.

The first half of this outing offers so-



phisticated quartet playing, and using guitar instead of piano allows the music to ride the breezy currents. The "Morrison big band" offers the blasts and arrangements you'd hope for. This is the young Australian's third recording, and barring prejudices against multi-instrumentalists and Australians, it should get Morrison the attention he deserves.

Our other multi-instrumentalist this month has already been reviving the neglected art of organ jazz. Joey DeFrancesco, who turns 20 this month, boogies with the best of 'em, charging up from the earth's core with the roar of his organ bass pedals. But with his *Part III* release on Columbia, DeFrancesco offers some delicate muted trumpet work (owing much to the ballad style of Miles Davis, with whom he recently gigged) and piano as well. A nicely balanced set, with standouts being the uptempo numbers—"Dr. Jekyll," "If I Were A Bell" (courtesy of Miles) and "Rhythm-a-ning" (Thelonious Monk). Saxes and trumpets participate, but the liquefying guitar work of Paul Bollenbeck is especially fine.

R & B

BY OTIS WINTHORPE

In recently made a pilgrimage to one of the meccas of funk, Detroit, Michigan, the home of Westbound Records—the original label of Funkadelic and The Ohio Players (and also home of United Sound Studios, where most P-Funk albums were recorded)—to speak to Westbound president Armen Boladian and Pastor Clarence "Fuzzy" Haskins, founder/lead singer for Funkadelic ever since they were The Parliaments in the late '50s.

The big news is that Fuzzy is coming out with a "funk-gospel" album, featuring spiritual lyrics over funky beats. His band is called Fuzzy Haskins And The Group Manna, and such songs as "Let's Get Busy" (featuring Garry Shider and Bernie Worrell) and "He's Coming Back Again" (sort of traditional gospel meets Snap's "The Power")

sound like radio hits if programmers can get over the fact that it's gospel music.

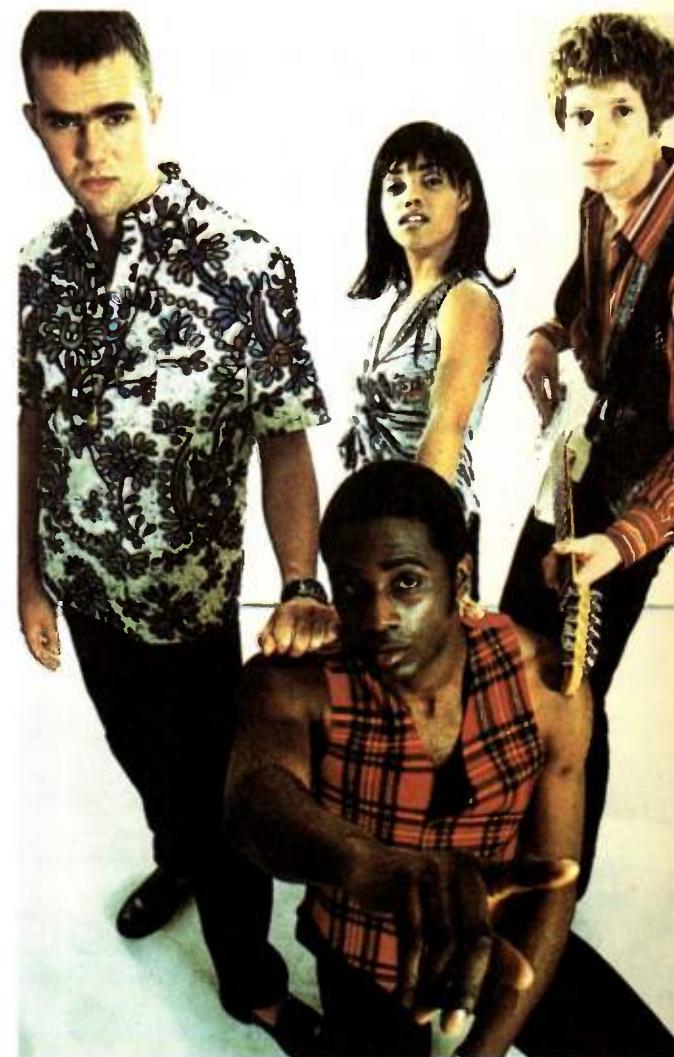
Westbound has been quietly reissuing its catalogue of Funkadelic albums on LP and CD, including *Maggot Brain*, *Free Your Mind And Your Ass Will Follow*, *America Eats Its Young* and the classic *Cosmic Slop*, which should be out as you read this. The Ohio Players' *Pain* and *P-Funk All-Stars Live* (a 1983 concert featuring everything from "Maggot Brain" to "Atomic Dog") are also out on the newly revamped label, and Boladian is obviously happy to be back in the funk after years of concentrating on gospel, caused by his becoming disillusioned with disco in the late '70s.

The Brand New Heavies' debut is coming out on Delicious Vinyl, and goes for down-home funk grooves reminiscent of the Crusaders and The Meters, as seen through the eyes of Brits. It seems that some dope mid-tempo hip-hop-influenced soul is coming out of the British Isles—Loose Ends and Mica Paris in particular—and these guys are definitely doing the right thing in terms of pure live tracking and old-school low-tech production values. But it's still a little stiff—highly derivative and very, uh, British. It's definitely worth checking out—perhaps the potential they're tapping into is so great that too much is expected from them, but they're a band to watch.

Finally, two notable items: a very funky remix of Living Colour's "Love Rears Its Ugly Head," with stripped-down live drums on the hip-hop tip on Epic Records; and Bullseye Blues/Rounder Records' down-home blues releases from Luther "Guitar" Junior" Johnson and Holmes Brothers, in keeping with the high standards of this cool new blues label. Peace.

Joey De Francesco (left)
has been reviving the neglected
art of organ jazz.

The Brand New Heavies
(below) go for down-home
funk grooves, as seen
through British eyes.



Books

BY BILL REYNOLDS

**12 Days On The Road:
The Sex Pistols In America**
By Noel E. Monk and Jimmy Guterman
William Morrow And Co. Inc.

It is fitting that the oddball among the numerous recent rockographies is a detailed account of the infamous, ill-fated January, 1978, American tour by the notorious Sex Pistols.

12 Days On The Road is a collaboration between Pistols' tour manager Noel Monk and high-profile rock writer Jimmy Guterman, who retraced the band's steps with their own 12-day odyssey, staying in the same hotels and talking to many of the principals involved.

Manager Malcolm McLaren's subterfuge caused the first leg of the tour to be sabotaged. He didn't want his charges performing any major venues, or anywhere in the northern states. He wanted the scourge of England to maximize its effect by entering inhospitable clubs in the South.

Monk's task was to make sure the Pistols made it from Atlanta to San Francisco in one piece (McLaren relented and allowed one large venue, Winterland, to be included). But it wasn't easy. His account of the daily lack of routine, especially the mind-boggling incontinence of nominal bass player Sid Vicious, is both humorous and sad.

Guterman says the key question for him remains why the tour was allowed to happen, given Vicious' state of health. Monk had to constantly watch over Sid, who was hooked on heroin, barely able to play a note, liable to cut himself open at any given moment, unable to hold down food and either unable or unwilling to clean himself. "Sid was clearly not in the position to be working this rigorous lifestyle," Guterman says. "By the end of the tour, I'll assume he tied his own bootlaces, but that's about all he did."

After A&R visionary Bob Regehr signed the band, Warners had no idea how to market them. They liked the revenue being generated in England, but were unwilling to meet a group they found so distasteful. As Guterman says, "The Sex Pistols were unprecedented, which made them extremely difficult to market. They were different from all the other punk

bands, too: The Ramones, as great as they were, allowed themselves to be portrayed as cartoon characters; The Clash became a classic rock 'n' roll band."

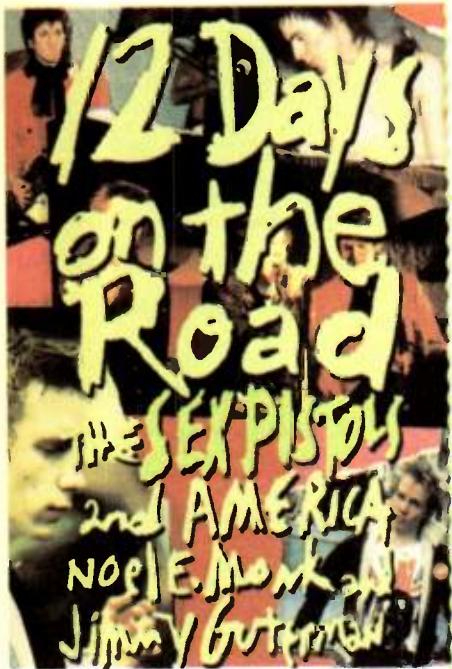
Actually, there was an exploitable future, but only McLaren cashed in, crassly making Vicious into a profitable anti-hero following his drug overdose in '79. But as Guterman points out, "John Ritchie had become Sid Vicious long before Malcolm showed up. He was a real focal point of the early shows. He invented the pogo, and he would create a lot of commotion. He was their number one fan; the perfect choice to join the band."

While Monk tried to get Vicious off junk, singer Johnny Rotten became increasingly disenchanted with both McLaren's devious moves and Vicious' degeneration. The Sex Pistols had spearheaded a new scene, but they had become incapable of writing new material because of Vicious' incapacitating drug abuse. "For Johnny, it was a combination of McLaren's megalomania and his frustration over what

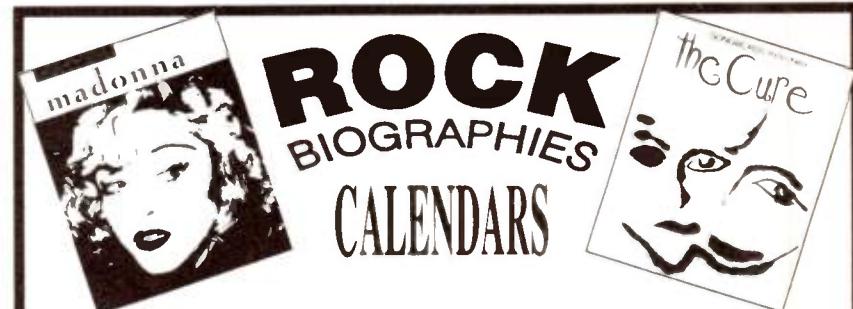
the band was turning into," explains Guterman. "Also, he was very, very angry at Sid — as only a childhood friend could be."

During the Pistols' American sojourn, they played a couple of great shows and a bunch of average ones, but because people had never seen them, all were events to remember. Vicious' disappearances to find smack, juvenile behavior at radio station interviews, trashing of hotel rooms, throwing up on groupies, etc, all cause one to try to gauge the scale of excess, considering other tales of rock lore."

But the Pistols did leave a legacy other than indulgence. They shook up the industry by turning their backs on the accepted route to stardom. Guterman says it is difficult to judge them like a normal rock band. "Music was not really that important to these people," he says. "We refer to their music now as punk rock, but at the time it was called simply punk. It was not considered part of rock 'n' roll. They came to put an end to rock 'n' roll, but in the end they re-energized it."



12 Days On The Road
retraces The Sex Pistols'
infamous, ill-fated 1978
American tour.



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Alternative

BY PERRY STERN

In this Bart Simpson era of the underachiever, perhaps now is the time for The Feelies. The group's debut album, *Crazy Rhythms*, landed in the top half of *Rolling Stone's* Top 100 of the '80s. But they've only made three albums in the ensuing 11 years, the latest being *Time For A Witness*, which may be their best yet.

Speaking from his Haledon, New Jersey, home, with his two young children playing underfoot, co-founder Bill Million is pensive when considering the group's longevity and relative obscurity. There was a six-year gap between *Crazy Rhythms* and their second LP, *The Good Earth*, during which time the band, including co-founder Glenn Mercer (who, like Million, sings, writes and plays guitar), percussionist Dave Weckerman (who replaced original drummer Anton Fier in '78), bassist Brenda Sauter and drummer Stanley Demeski (both of whom joined up in '83) considered breaking up.

"It was really just burning out on playing," Million explains. "To play without any inspiration whatsoever gets to be like going through the motions. I don't think that, for a musician, there's any worse feeling than that."

Feeling and inspiration are essential elements in the emotional, evocative yet still unabashedly unadorned sound that makes The Feelies one of the last remaining standard bearers of pre-punk garage rock. The percussive



pairing of Million's and Mercer's guitars manages to avoid the ubiquitous Byrds-like jangly sound without devolving into a cacophonous mess.

Million implies that their former studio experiences left the group somewhat dissatisfied with their ability to capture their critically acclaimed live sound, a problem he thinks they've finally come to terms with on *Time For A Witness*. "In the past, we would think that once we added overdubs and

mixed it the song would be fine," he says. "It took us three records to figure out that you can't get away with that. We wanted these songs to sound good to us in their very basic state."

New Music News: Although Mike Karn, David Sylvian, Richard Barbieri and Steve Jansen are reportedly recording a new album for Virgin Records in England, apparently they won't be using the *Japan* moniker any longer. The new tag? *Raintree Crow*. Go figure... Happy Mondays' frontman Shaun Ryder recently witnessed the birth of his first child, a baby girl named Jael. The proud father's first words? "Oh my God! She looks like something from outer space!"...With the glut of bootleg *Stone Roses* records apparently flooding the London record store scene without any resistance from their label (Silvertone, which the band is currently fighting to be rid of), it's becoming more and more apparent that the band is unlikely to record as a group again...

MUSIC VIDEO

BY KERRY DOOLE

Beginning with the highbrow, we have a prestigious series of classical music videos just out on PolyGram Music Video. The Berlin Philharmonic, conductor Herbert von Karajan, and pianist Alexis Weissenberg collaborated on performances of Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 6—Pathétique" and "Piano Concerto No. 1," 65 minutes running length. The same composer's opera, *Eugene Onegin*, is also now out on video, and it provides a two-hour feast for the eyes and ears.

Wagner's renowned opera *Tannhäuser* is captured in performance at the Bayreuth festival, with Dame Gwyneth Jones taking dual lead roles. Runs 150 minutes. \$34.95 U.S. list. The new version of Verdi's *Requiem* is seen as definitive, for it stars opera greats Leontyne Price and Luciano Pavarotti.

Fans of the late, lamented Thin Lizzy can relive the glory days of the Irish rockers with *Dedication—The Very Best Of Thin Lizzy*. Featuring lots of rare footage, this collection confirms just how many great songs Phil Lynott and Co. came up with.

Finally from PolyGram, we have Black Uhuru's *Tear It Up—Live!*. This Jamaican outfit was one of the best and toughest reggae acts of the '80s, and they're caught in fine form before a

London audience.

Two stars of the recent Grammys simultaneously released new music videos on Sony. That precocious prodigy Harry Connick Jr. is filmed on tour with his own 16-piece orchestra in *Swinging Out Live*. This 80-minute concert film includes all his hits and many popular standards. Cute crooner Mariah Carey is hotter than Hades right now, and she's just released her debut homevideo. *The First Vision* includes the videos for her first three hit singles, as well as concert performance and interview footage. Considering that her debut album has sold over three million copies, expect this to be a popular title.

A singer/songwriter with a more interesting vision is Rosanne Cash. *Live—The Interiors Tour* is a 70-minute concert film dominated by material from her current and introspective record, *Interiors*, but she leavens the mood with songs like "Tennessee Flat Top Box" and the hilarious "Road Widow."

Rap star L.L. Cool J was never exactly Mr. Modesty, so it's not surprising that he calls his debut homevideo *Future Of The Funk*. The hour-long tape includes clips for four hit singles (including the smash ballad "I Need Love") and the obligatory in-depth interview.

Is any music video worth a million dollars-plus budget? M.C. Hammer clearly thought so, and the result was the eight-minute tape for his "Here Comes The Hammer" single. To recoup some of the obscene cost, this is packaged along with "the making of" documentary footage in a title that is now out for a \$12.98 U.S. list.

The folks at Video Music Inc recently shipped a typically eclectic bunch of new titles. Afro-beat fans should check out *Warrior*, a concert film from innovative Afro/rock/jazz fusionists Osibisa, and *Ju Ju* features some of Nigeria's biggest stars, including King Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey.

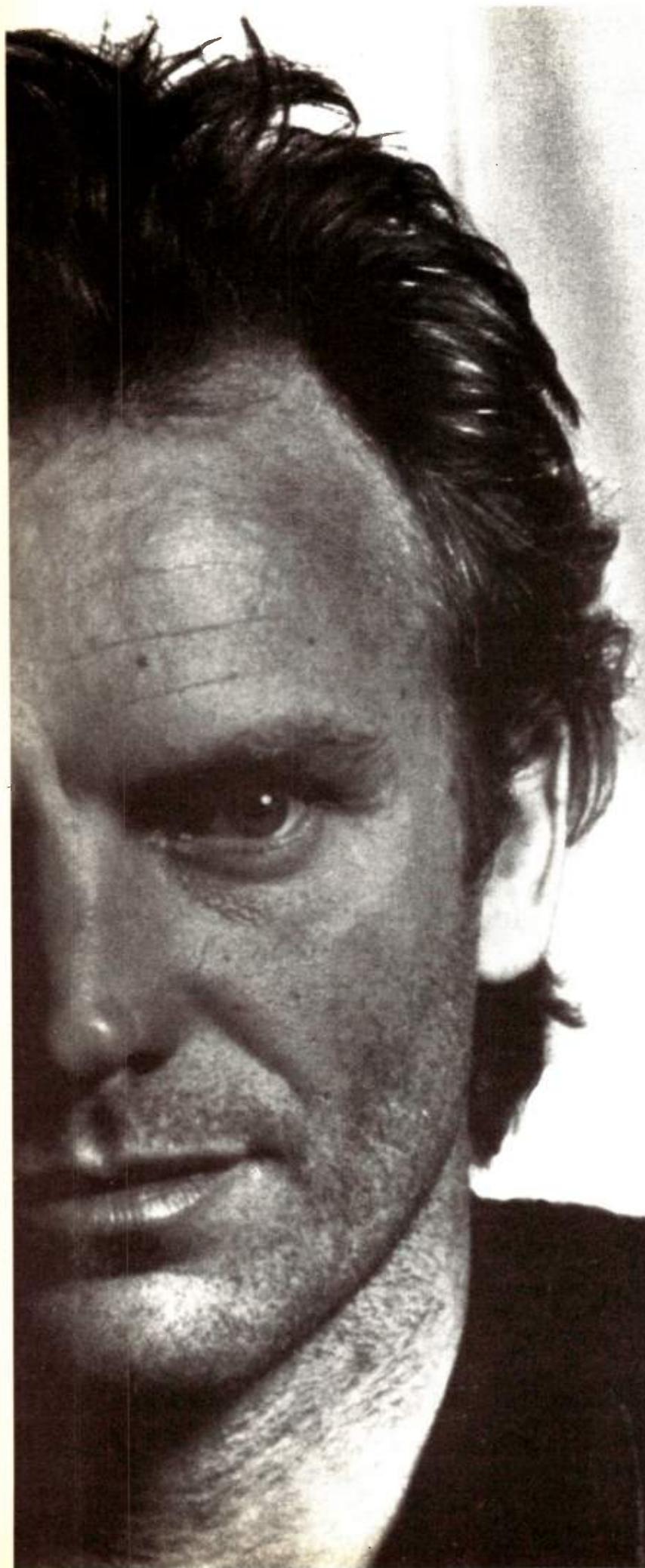
British progressive rock dinosaurs Wishbone Ash and Uriah Heep each have hour-long concert films (*Phoenix* and *Gypsy* respectively) now out on video. Interestingly, both titles feature the bass playing of Trevor Bolder.

Black songwriter/poet Gil Scott Heron is a compelling, strongly political performer, and he's caught in full flight on *Tales Of Gil*. Filmed last year in London, the hour-long video includes favorites "Johannesburg" and "The Bottle."



Not content with chart domination, Mariah Carey and MC Hammer are set to conquer video as well.

The Feelies (left) are one of the last remaining standard bearers of pre-punk garage rock.



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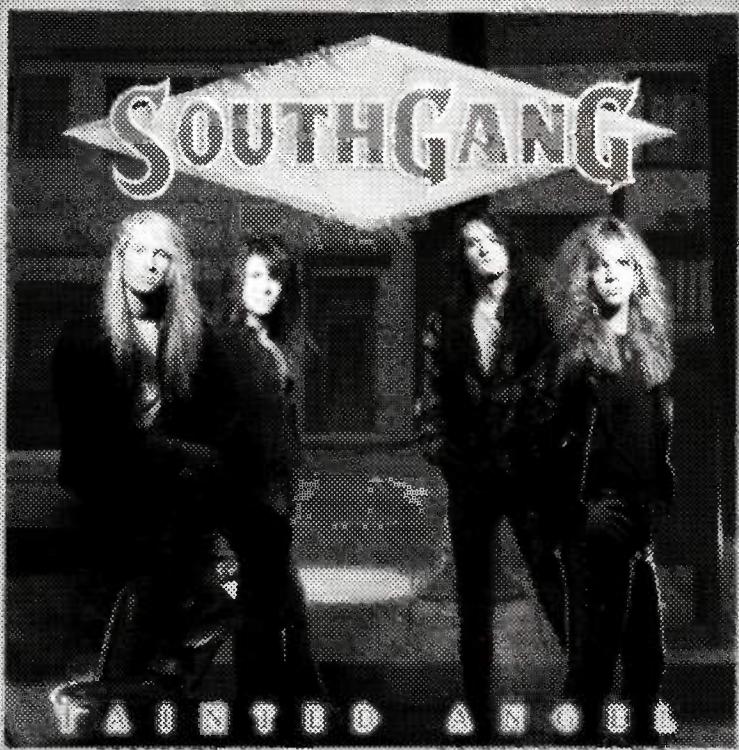


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