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MUSIC EXPRESS MAGAZINE

MARCH 1992 / VOLUME 16 / ISSUE 169 / \$2.95

NIRVANA

Too Legit To Quit?

ICE CUBE
RICK RUBIN
THE LUNATIC



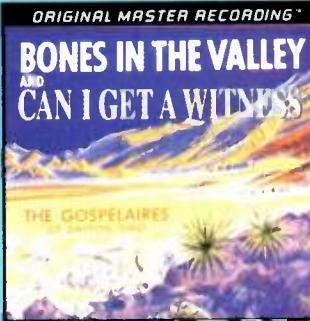
COMPLIMENTS OF

SOUND WAREHOUSE

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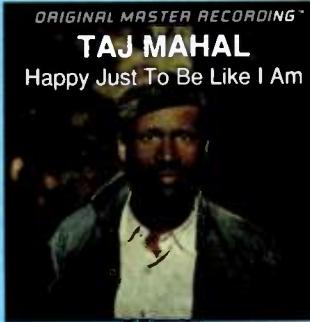
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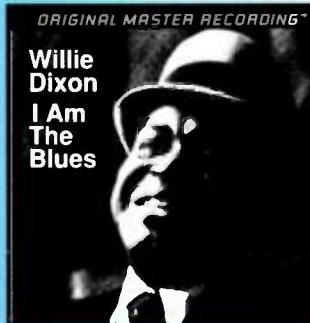
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Passionate Proof

In Sheryl Hunter's review of George Michael's concert (M.E. 167) she says, "Michael performed with conviction, but he did nothing to make the songs his own." I've been to four George Michael concerts in 1991, and I agree that he has conviction. I don't know how she came to the conclusion that the covers don't sound like his songs!

George Michael: listening with prejudice?

Those covers he sang sounded very much like George Michael. On songs like "Tonight" and "Victims" he delivered much more powerful vocals than were on the originals. His soulful rendition of "They Won't Go" was undeniable proof that he is incredibly talented and passionate.

I speak for all his fans when I say to Ms. Hunter, At the next concert, why don't you take out the earplugs and listen without prejudice?

Lise Robichaud
Meteghan, NS

A Regular Guy

I could not help but respond to two of your letters in the December issue of your magazine (M.E. 166). First, I must respond to John Bradley, who says that Bryan Adams has "catapulted

into the ranks of Mellencamp and Springsteen." It may be that he would prefer not to, as he has proven himself many times, and it is not necessary to compare him to the likes of anyone.

Bryan, or he would know that not only is he extremely friendly, but he is far from distant. Also, does it ever occur to people that he is entitled to his privacy as much as the rest of us?



If the song "Everything I Do (I Do It For You)" is just the result of a well-greased publicity machine, then it has certainly worked. Don't give the man credit for having just a little talent. After reading part of the article on John Mellencamp in the same issue, I find that he has little to say after his string of obscenities. He shouldn't be so self-absorbed and try to learn a bit of class from someone like Adams.

As for the letter from Jeff Stacy, I would say I don't blame Bryan or anyone else for "hating the press." Mr. Stacy is wrong to comment that Bryan is "distant" and "unapproachable." It is obvious that he has never approached

If you feel he acts like a "prima donna rock star," then you have him confused with someone else. Adams has earned the right to act like a rock star, but thankfully he is as he was 10 years ago... a regular guy.

Yvonne Parmley
London, ON

Forgetting Freddie

I'd like to comment on the article M.E. magazine had written on Freddie Mercury of Queen (M.E. 167). Besides Brian May's guitar technique, Queen had another distinctive feature: Freddie Mercury on vocals. Even today, famous artists praise Mercury's vocals.

If Queen had never

been formed, many of today's artists wouldn't have gotten a closer look at the art of music. Freddie and the rest of the members of Queen showed us a different way of learning how to listen to music.

What was most moving was Freddie Mercury leaving his fortune to AIDS research in hope that a cure will be found. Let's hope that in future years people will not forget Freddie Mercury and his contributions to music.

R.J.R.
San Antonio, TX

Not Crazy

I'm a Guns N'Roses fan, and I don't like it when you call them jerks (M.E. 167). It may be your opinion, but personally, I like their attitude. I might sound crazy, but I'm not.

I loved the article you did on Metallica (167), and the one on The Cult (166) and the one on Nirvana (166). Please do an interview with Guns N'Roses. I know they might swear a lot, but do the article just this once.

Shaima Al-Khalili
Montreal, QU

Editor's note: Guns N'Roses' attitude toward doing interviews is one of the reasons why they get called jerks. But check out M.E. 163 for a memorable interview with Slash, and make your own decision.

Our Error: Omitted from the January Metallica cover shot credits was the following line: Makeup by Stacey Gains/Civello Agency/MAC Cosmetics.

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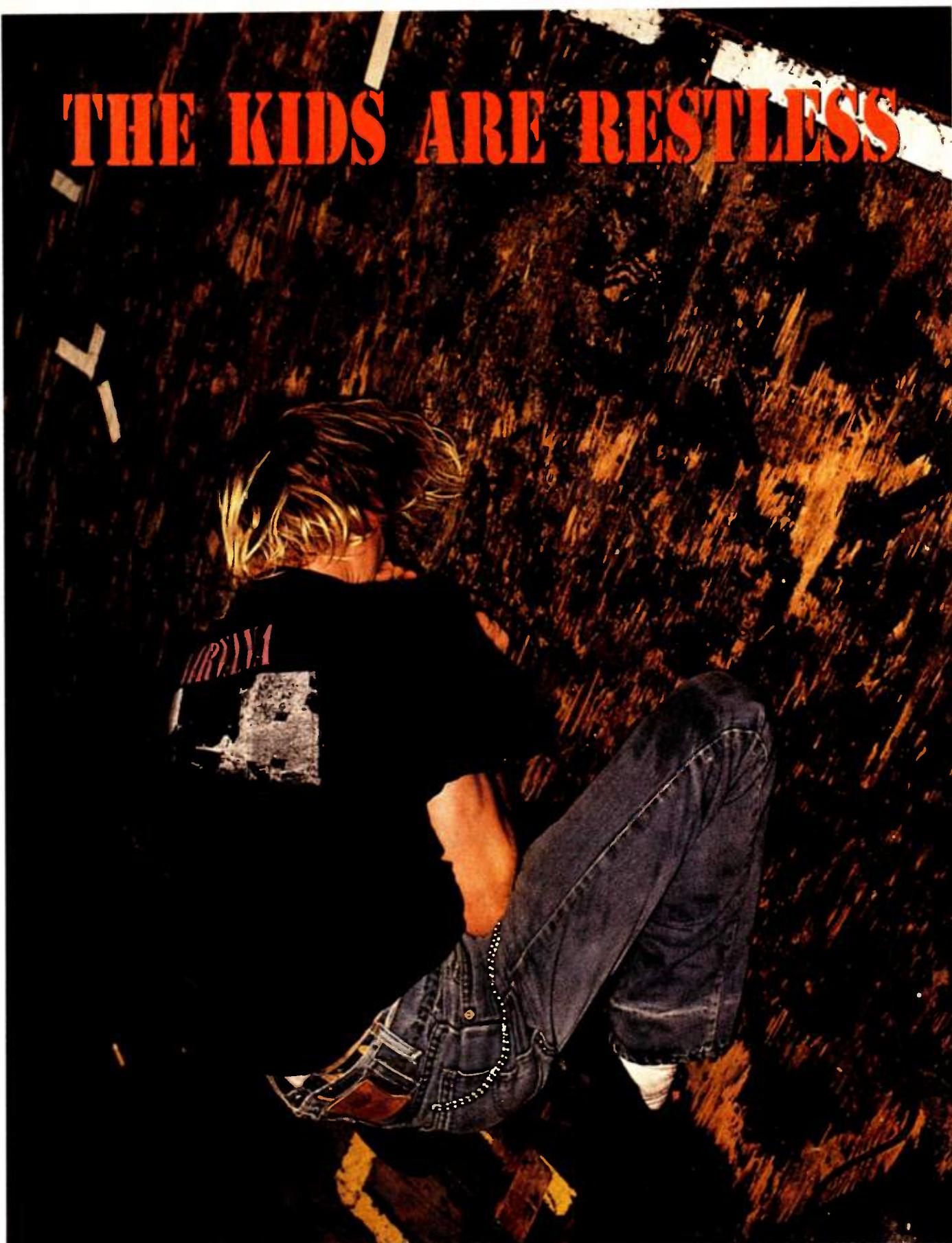


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THE KIDS ARE RESTLESS



1991 had been that kind of year; just ask Saddam Hussein or Mikhail Gorbachev. An unprecedented six-week military blitz forced Iraq to cough up Kuwait, but left its brutal regime intact. Then Gorby triumphantly survived a bungled coup, only to find himself ruler of an extinct empire.

And so it made perfect sense when the usually predictable world of pop music rang in 1992 with a few startling changes. On the *Billboard* album chart, Michael Jackson (the self-proclaimed "King Of Pop"), Guns N' Roses (the oft-hyped "Only Band That Matters") and Garth Brooks all had one thing in common: the notches immediately below chart-toppers Nirvana.

Just over a year ago, the trio of guitarist/singer/songwriter Kurt Cobain, bassist/tall person Chris Novoselic and drummer/newcomer Dave Grohl were still riding the ripples of success generated by *Bleach*, their 1989 debut on the Seattle-based indie label Sub Pop. As critics' darlings and alternative/college radio favorites, they found themselves point men for the much-heralded "Seattle Scene," just as, a decade earlier, R.E.M. had come to symbolize the "Athens (Georgia) Sound" to a music press eager to explore greener pastures.

But then came a record deal with DGC (initially rumored to be for \$750,000, apparently closer to a third of that over two records) and the resulting album, *Nevermind*. Its first single, "Smells Like Teen Spirit," has made a mockery of whatever shreds of the "alternative" label that still remain attached to the band by crossing over from college radio to become a format-busting breakthrough hit on a dizzying array of Top 40, AOR and Modern Rock outlets. It's a textbook example of how pop success is supposed to work (young band makes great record; public responds...like crazy!), but one that is all too rare in a marketplace subject to the high-stakes tug-of-war between well-oiled record promoters and commercial-radio program directors shackled by restrictive playlists and enslaved by the bottom line of ratings shares.

In light of that reality, Nirvana's success seems like nothing so much as a modern miracle.

"I can't stand it when people come up to me to say, 'Congratulations on your success!'" Meet Kurt Cobain. Sitting with his bandmates in their dressing room at the Los Angeles Sports Arena (where they're opening for the

Red Hot Chili Peppers in a couple of hours), the frail, purple-coifed Cobain tugs at the sleeves of his ratty, well-worn sweater and vents his frustration at the parade of well-wishers he's endured in recent weeks. "Success" may have become his least favorite seven-letter word.

"I want to ask them, 'Do you like the album?' Selling two million records isn't successful to me unless it's good." It's not exactly what Cobain envisioned when he launched his career. "I wanted to at least sell enough records to be able to eat macaroni and cheese so I didn't have to have a job," he says in a sarcastic near-whisper that's in dead contrast to the venomous snarl he employs onstage.

Chris Novoselic rises to his feet and begins

Nirvana went from relative obscurity to ousting Michael Jackson from the top of the charts at a speed that would make even the most level of heads spin. Can they deal with success without falling apart? And how do they stay true to an anti-mainstream punk esthetic when they are the mainstream?

● BY J. D. McCULLEY

to pace around the room, his nervous energy fueling a notoriously punky demeanor. "All the attention can be kind of tiresome," he groused. "We just made that record last April."

But wouldn't 10,000 other musicians sell their souls to be in Nirvana's shoes? "It's nice to have an opportunity to expose the kind of music we've been listening to to a mainstream audience," replies Cobain with all the diplomacy he can muster. "It doesn't happen much."

And what of that "alternative" label? Hasn't their, uh, success rendered it meaningless? Novoselic, for one, hasn't much use for the mainstream. "It's a shame that crappy bands like Warrant get all the attention," he says. "They are rock 'n' roll, and it's just garbage."

"What's wrong with quality music being offered?" asks Cobain rhetorically. He may not be completely comfortable with the notion, but at least he'll acknowledge it: Nirvana is the mainstream now. "It's not our fault we sold two million records. We didn't try very hard. The general public really does like quality music. They're just not offered it

very often. They'll take whatever's being shoved down their throats because there isn't quality being shoved."

Cobain finishes the thought with what sounds like prophecy being fulfilled. "The kids are restless. The kids will have their say."

Nevermind picks up the threads of *Bleach* and weaves them into a consistently riveting collection of songs forged from an unlikely amalgam of guilt, apathy, unrelenting thrash energy and an intuitive flair for the melodic pop hook. It's The Knack and Bay City Rollers being molested by Black Flag and Black Sabbath...or so says their "official" record-company bio.

That scrap of paper also describes the chance meeting of Cobain and Novoselic at a Washington State art institute, where they had gone to hone their skills at saw-blade painting and burlap-and-seashell collage. "Some of it is true," says Novoselic of the bio. "I've got Carpal Tunnel Syndrome from doing all the needlepoint," adds Cobain, nearly maintaining a straight face.

Cobain grew up in the tiny logging town of Aberdeen, an hour-and-a-half out of Seattle, "in a two-story house, lower middle class family," before spending a couple of years living in a trailer park when his parents divorced. Born in Compton, a suburb southwest of Los Angeles, to Yugoslavian-immigrant parents, Novoselic found himself uprooted from Southern California and transported to the damp, wooded confines of Aberdeen at 15. "It was a big culture shock for him," says Cobain of his friend's migration, "cause he was listening to Devo at the time."

"I didn't meet Chris until after high school," Cobain continues. "We met through The Melvins, mutual punk-rock friends. We started going to punk-rock shows in Tacoma and Seattle, watched The Melvins practice every day and hung out. He never had an interest to be in a band, I don't think. But I'd been looking for years for people to jam with."

Cobain openly expresses the affection that he and Novoselic shared for the rollercoaster punk-rock scene of the early '80s, though he is quick to point out that he "never wanted Henry Rollins' autograph. I just wanted to talk to him. I don't understand why people have to have a keepsake to show their friends."

"I was a KISS fan," admits Novoselic with uncharacteristic sheepishness. "And then, when I got older, I got into punk rock."



"It's not our fault we sold two million records. We didn't try very hard. The general public really does like quality music. They're just not offered it very often."

Cobain got his first guitar in his early teens and quickly discovered a gift for composing. "I started working on songwriting right away, rather than learn a bunch of Van Halen covers," says the weary-looking 24-year-old. "I had to develop my own style. I only know a couple of cover songs to this day, and they're the same ones I learned when I got my guitar: 'My Best Friend's Girl' by The Cars and 'Communication Breakdown' by Led Zeppelin; some Lou Reed chords."

Cobain and Novoselic formed the core of Nirvana in 1987 and went through the obligatory procession of temporary drummers before signing with Sub Pop and recording *Bleach* in three days for a reported \$600. Virginia native Dave Grohl signed on in time for a 1990 European tour with Sonic Youth and the serious "Seattle Buzz" that made the rounds in publications on both sides of the Atlantic.

But Cobain plays iconoclast regarding any loyalty to the vaunted Northwest music community. "I have no desire to be part of the 'Seattle Scene,'" he insists. "We don't live there. I can't really think of any bands that still exist in Seattle, except Mudhoney and Tad. We've always felt friendly with those bands, 'cause we started out together. But everybody goes their separate ways. For some reason, it's still vital."

Adds the ever-cynical Novoselic: "The press has to sustain themselves so they'll always

create something new."

The band's cynicism has quite naturally spread to the phenomenal success of "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Midway through their 40-minute set a blistering, feedback-drenched rendition of "Spirit" is greeted by the impressive sound of 16,000 kids on their feet, roaring their approval for a song that's become a bona fide teen anthem. "I feel stupid and contagious/Here we are now, entertain us" goes the refrain, Cobain spitting out the words in a scabrous howl.

But in conversation the band expresses mixed opinions about the strange company they now find themselves in on the airwaves. "I was driving and ['Teen Spirit'] came on the radio," recalls a bemused Dave Grohl, "and I thought, 'God, that really sounds like shit!' And then, right after it, came that Boston song: [sings] 'Smokin'! Smokin'!....'"

"That's why I'm not excited about 'Hey, we're Number One!' with Garth Brooks and all that other shit," adds Novoselic with a scowl. "I don't give a shit about that."

"I don't find it very flattering," says Cobain of the response to his monster hit. "It's tolerable. I was listening to the radio and there were all these industrial disco songs, and then all of a sudden our song came on and it seemed completely foreign by comparison. When I look back at 'Teen Spirit' it's semi-commercial, it's powerful. But then you're up

against the majority of what they play on the radio."

And then there's the public over-analysis that accompanies success on such a scale. Cobain recalls a television program "where they went out into the streets and asked people what they thought our lyrics were!"

"I was reading some musician's magazine and 'Teen Spirit' is transcribed note-for-note," he says. "No way!" blurts a wide-eyed Grohl. "Yeah," Kurt continues. "It was the most ridiculous technical description of the guitar solo. It's beyond explaining. *Guitar Jerk-Off* magazine or something."

Grohl and Novoselic are soon called away to their soundcheck and cautiously avoid further interrogation when they return. It's possible that this is some sort of payback for several interview sessions that Cobain has skipped out on recently. The guitarist quickly wraps up his own sound chores and stops by the caterers, returning to his dressing room to pick at a small slab of roast beef and a dollop of mashed potatoes.

He chuckles when he's reminded that a New York writer accused the band of betraying its "alternative" principles because Cobain dared to chow on cow. "Chris is a vegetarian," he says between fork-fulls. "If I eat strictly vegetables, I'll die within a month. I don't like very many vegetables."

But as Cobain fields questions alone, it's clear that something other than diet is affecting him. He occasionally nods off in mid-sentence, apologizing blearily that he's had but an hour's sleep. But the pinned pupils, sunken cheeks and scabbed, sallow skin suggest something more serious than mere fatigue. Cobain's haggard visage and frail frame make him appear more like 40 than 24.

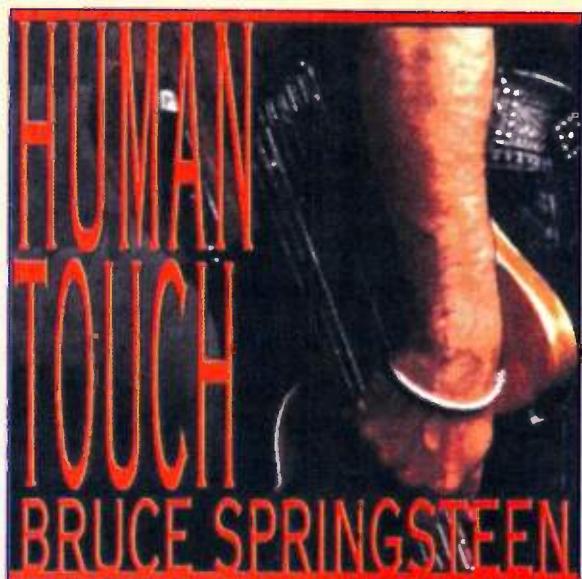
One on one, Kurt slips out of the almost self-consciously punky demeanor of his bandmates and expresses himself with gentle-humored articulation. The introspective self-deprecation of his songs comes quickly to the fore in what can be a perplexing mix of seeming contradictions. One moment he'll be expressing his disgust at the complacency around him; the next he's effusing rapturously about his marriage to Courtney Love, leader of the L.A. band Hole.

"That's a total revelation," he says. "I've never felt so secure in my life, and so happy. It's like I have no inhibitions any more. I'm drained of feeling insecure. I guess getting married has a lot to do with security and keeping your mind straight."

Can this be the singer who's been dubbed by many as this year's nihilistic spokesman for a disaffected generation? Be advised that it's a role he has no interest in playing.

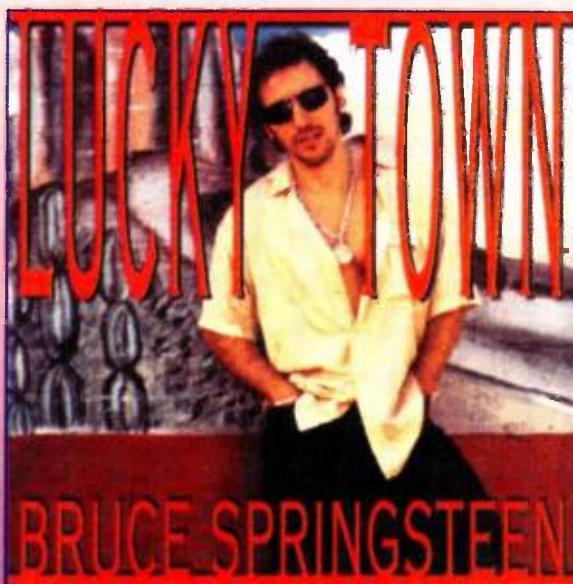
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SOUND WAREHOUSE



"Hope I die before I turn into Pete Townshend. It would look ridiculous to do what we're doing now when I'm 40. That's why I want to destroy my career before it's too late."

"I think there's a lot of passion in the songs," he acknowledges. "But at the same time, there's a lot of sarcasm. I don't want to be classified as some anally poetic visionary — this dark star who does nothing but sit around and brood. It seems like [rock allows you] only two personalities — you're gloomy and a poet, like Robert Smith or Morrissey, or you're some mindless dork."

"But I am totally paranoid of being thought of as a political person, 'cause it's so exhausted. No matter how intelligently you go about it, you're still going to be the butt-end of most jokes. To me, mundane, everyday things are more personal because people can relate to them. If I were to talk about apartheid in a song it just doesn't seem real to most people. Personal experiences are political to me; it's a personal therapy."

But as Cobain relates the details of his small-town upbringing, it's easy to see where the "disaffected" perception came from. "At a pretty young age, I felt alienated," he confesses. "Right around the age of nine I started feeling more confused. I couldn't understand why I didn't want to hang out with the kids at school. Years later I realized why: I didn't relate to them because they didn't appreciate anything artistic or cultural."

"In Aberdeen, 99 per cent of the people had no idea what music was. Or art. It was their bread to become loggers. That's it. I think the fact that I'm physically small — I was a *really* small kid — had a lot to do with why I didn't want to go into the logging industry."

It's hardly surprising to learn that one of Cobain's early career choices was one cherished by many loners. "I was a Master of the Custodial Arts," he recounts with mock pride. "I was in charge of driving the truck around to all these doctors' and dentists' offices and cleaning them. I was my own boss. I'd never clean the toilets, though. I just poured bleach in the toilets every night."

All the while, Cobain immersed himself in an eclectic collection of pop music. "I owned all the Stooges albums," he recites, "all the early-'80s punk stuff — not necessarily the hardcore stuff, but the anti-hardcore stuff that was going on at the time, like Flipper, The Butthole Surfers and Scratch Acid."

That accounts for Nirvana's sizable thrash quotient, but what of Cobain's seemingly intuitive flair for melody? "I think The Beatles are responsible for most of the melody," he responds without hesitation. "For the first seven years of my life, I listened to nothing but The Beatles. I had a Monkees album, which

could be classified as Beatlesque. And *The Chipmunks Sing The Beatles* album. I actually preferred The Chipmunks to The Beatles."

"I've kept myself musically uneducated for years. I don't know much about The Rolling Stones, though I've heard every one of their songs a dozen times. I still couldn't name a song off of *Satanic Majesties Request*. I just don't think of myself as that much of a musical historian. I expect to deal with that aspect of it later on, when I'm an old man."

It's dealing with Nirvana's sudden, massive, unexpected popularity that gives Cobain pause for thought. "I don't know if success would be the downfall, why I'd want to quit," he says, bravely for a man on the brink of going triple-platinum. "I want to quit when I'm not having fun any more. Especially if I wasn't writing good songs any more."

"But it's such a cliche thing to say: 'Once we're not having fun anymore we're just going to quit.' Everyone says that and then, you know, The Who get sponsored by Budweiser. The music business is so incestuous that people like David Bowie are entrenched in the lifestyle and have cultivated relationships within the industry for years — and they're his friends and he doesn't want to offend them, so he just keeps going. Keeps milking it for all it's worth, because it's his life and that's all he knows. I suppose if the music was a bit more raw — if it was good at least — it would be better. But nobody's buying that Tin Machine shit."

"It just happens when you reach a certain age. But there's still people like Neil Young; a handful of people who haven't lost their sights. To mature, to me, to use examples of other bands, is to wimp out. To put up an image that isn't sincere any more. I mean, Pete Townshend can't possibly do what he did in his early 20s now."

"Hope I die before I turn into Pete Townshend," he adds with a smirk. Later that night the band opens its set with a joyously loopy rendition of Who's Next's "Baba O'Riley." So much for teenage wastelands.

"I can't see myself living off this career for the rest of my life," he says. "No way. It would look ridiculous to try to do exactly what we're doing now when I'm 40. I'm not going to be jumping around, diving into drumsets and screaming at the top of my lungs."

"That's why I want to destroy my career before it's too late. Before I look ridiculous. There are plenty of things I would like to do when I'm older. At least have a family. That would satisfy me."

The questioning over, the reluctant voice of a generation curls up on the dressing-room couch, and within minutes he's asleep. **me**

T-BOZ, LEFT EYE & CHILLI ARE

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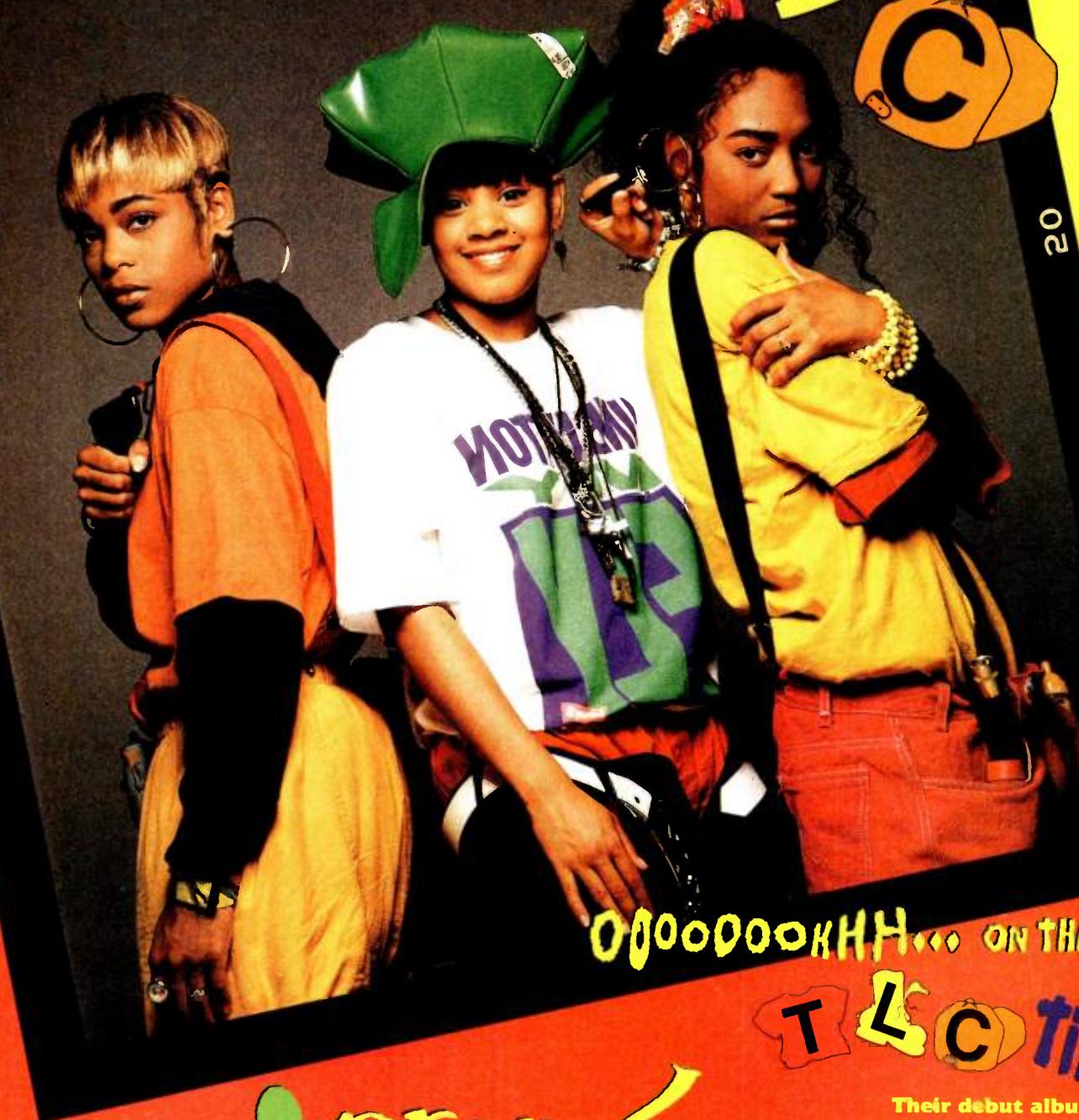
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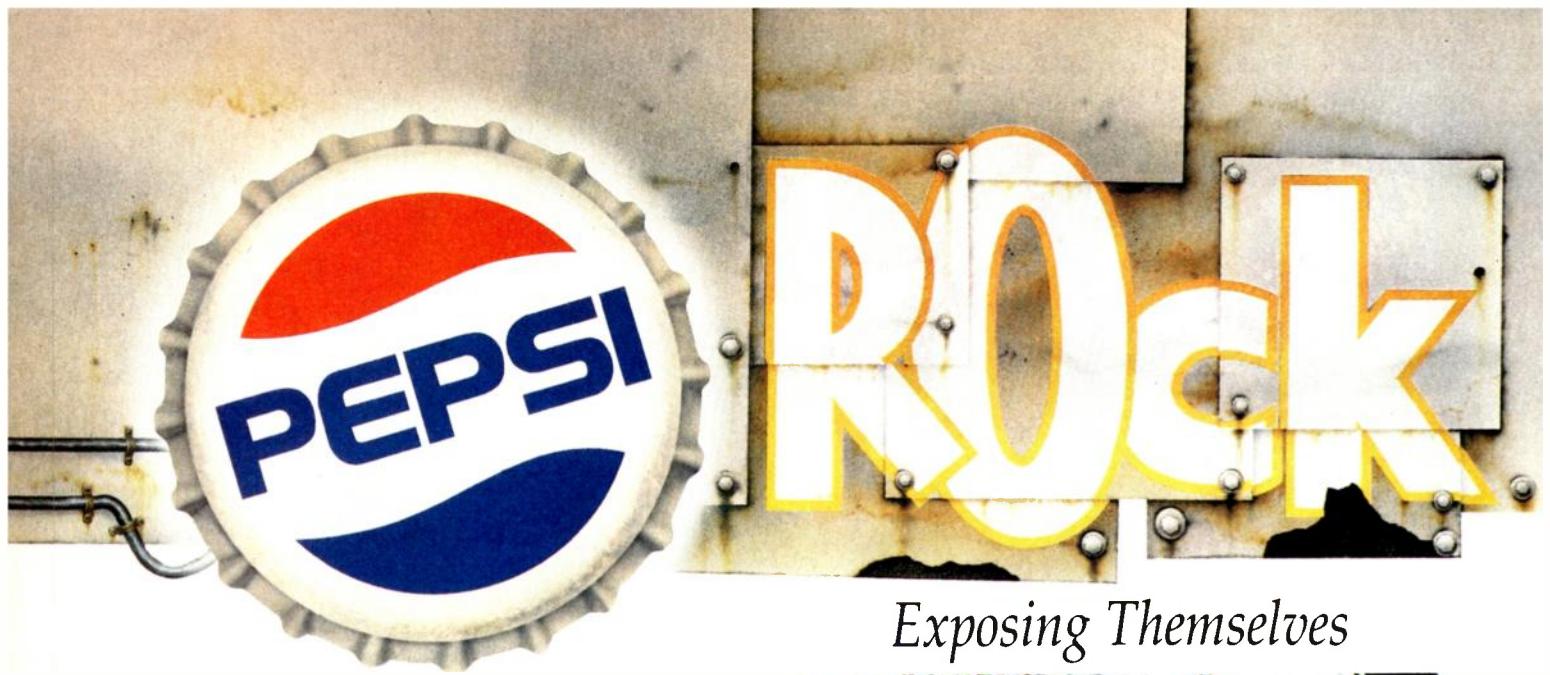
Produced by: Dallas Austin
LA Reid & Babyface
Morley Marl
Beyoncé, Michelle & Keya
Jacqueline Digard
Executive Producers: Antoinette M. Reid
and Kenneth B. Bellmore

Manager: P.T. Entertainment

Satisfaction is the name of this game...

ON LAFACE CHROME CASSETTES AND COMPACT DISCS

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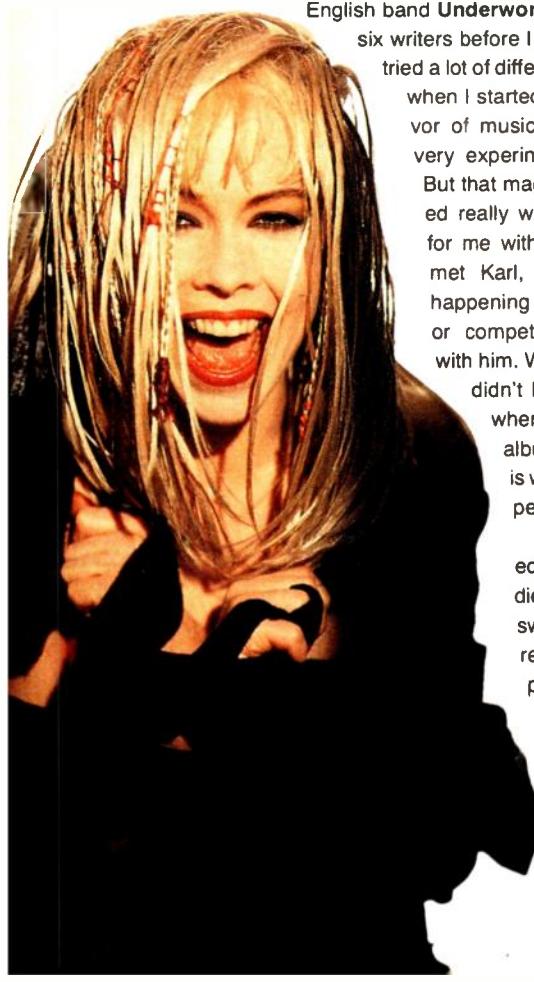
RECAPTURING THE MAGIC

Despite several Top 40 hits and an Academy Award for the No. 1 single "Take My Breath Away," from the movie *Top Gun*, it's been four years since Terri Nunn's sultry vocals have graced an album. Berlin's former lead singer is finally back with her first solo recording, *Moment Of Truth*.

"I was spoiled with [Berlin songwriting partner and bassist] John Crawford, because I was only 19 when I joined that band and I thought great partnerships grew on trees," Nunn reflects. "I thought it would take me a year, tops, to find somebody, write the songs and get another album out on my own and I was hitting myself, because those things are magic. That something that happens that's bigger than us is really special and really wonderful, and it took me a long time to find it."

The search ended when she met Karl Hyde, guitarist for the English band **Underworld**. "I wrote with five or six writers before I met Karl," she says. "I tried a lot of different styles. I went crazy when I started. I tried a folk-style flavor of music and harder rock and very experimental kinds of things. But that magic that I took for granted really with John didn't happen for me with any of them. When I met Karl, there was something happening that was beyond good or competent. It just happened with him. We worked hard, but we didn't have to force it. That's when I realized this is the album I want to make, this is what I want to put out for people to hear."

Moment Of Truth is raw edges and rocking melodies, a break from Berlin's sweeping style. "Nobody really knew what to expect about it," says Nunn. "It was kind of fun, because I could go anywhere that I wanted."



Exposing Themselves



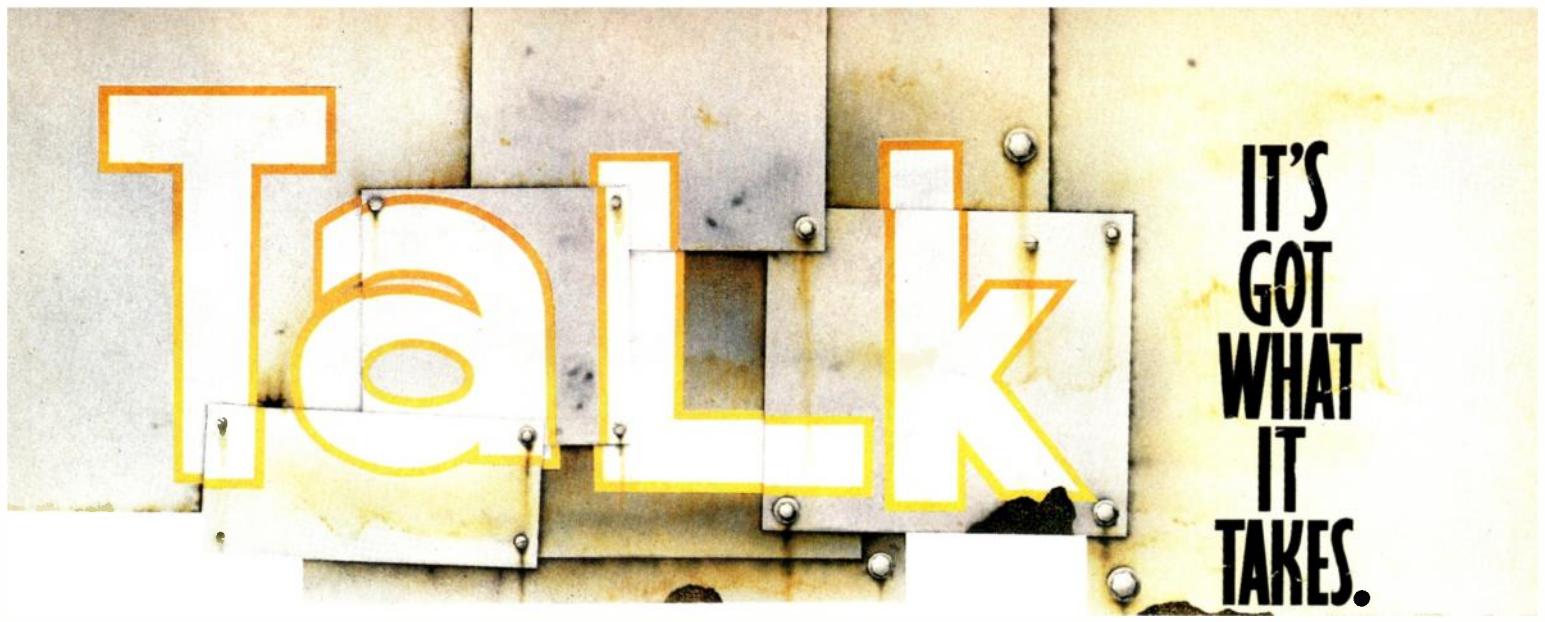
They made their musical debut as children on their Uncle Andy's network TV show — followed by an appearance on *The Partridge Family* — but it took another 20 years before twin brothers **David and Andrew Williams** were really ready for showbiz.

"It seems like for the first time we were in control and really loving what we were doing," David says about the **Williams Brothers'** recently released, self-titled album. "Singing about things that mean something to us and standing for things. There's a lot of songs that are a direct result of things that we've been through. I think that is what is great about any artist — they're exposing themselves. It's taken us 32 years, but better late than never."

David admits that their teenage brush with fame might have been detrimental. "If we got famous as kids, it could sabotage our future," he says. Instead, the pair got serious, going to music college and honing their skills.

"We kind of got back into it through **Peter Case and the Plimsouls**," David says about their reentry into the public domain. "He encouraged us to get into the music he was into, roots stuff. We reconnected back to **The Everly Brothers**, which was an influence growing up." The twins soon became regulars on the L.A. club circuit and performed on T-Bone Burnett's 1983 *Proof Through The Night* album tour, as well as lending musical support to records by **The Cruzados**, **Joe Ely** and **Brian Setzer**.

The Williams Brothers' album, with its confidently crafted melodies, gorgeous harmonies and optimistic lyrics, is evidence of two decades well spent. "I am a bit idealistic and have a pretty positive outlook," says David. "All of the hard times have been productive, because we've learned from it all."



Revenge Is Sweet



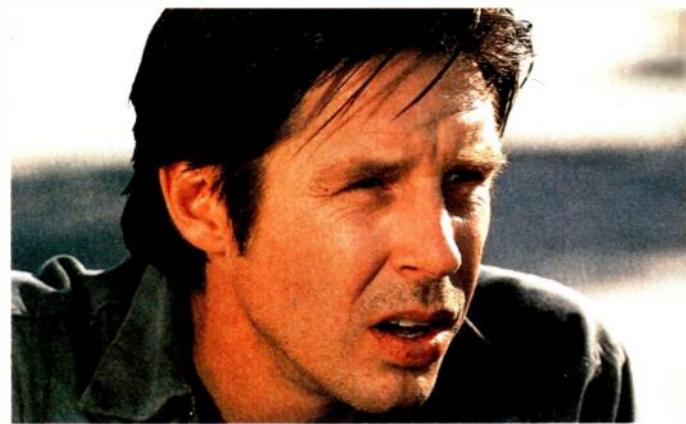
"It was like starting all over again," **New Order's Peter Hook** says about his other band, **Revenge**. "I'd produced, but I had never played with anybody else and you felt like you were cheating on your wife."

The affair must still be hot. **Revenge** just released a new EP, titled *Gun World Porn*, a follow-up to their 1990 album, *One True Passion*. Harder and more guitar-oriented than that first effort, *Gun World Porn* is antagonistic, blistering rock. "It's [Peter's] heavy-metal influence," explains keyboardist **Chris "CJ" Jones**. "That's the way we should have sounded on our first LP. It's a shame our guitarist couldn't play. Our original guitarist [Dave Hicks] was pretty hopeless, so we ended up putting loads of keyboards on it, but now we have a 21-year-old guitarist [David Potts] who's pretty good, so it's all gone rocky again. It's quite nice."

Despite two years of illicit pleasure, Hook expects to be recording a new **New Order** album later this year. "In many ways there is a conflict, because now I enjoy doing [Revenge] and it's much more rewarding," he says. "You want to do both and it's very hard to switch off."

"But having a break from [New Order] has actually made me want to see them, and I thought I'd never say that in my life. I'm sure they feel exactly the same way about me."

"You need to get back to yourself a little bit, plus everybody was really tired of each other and everything," Hook adds. "So it came at the best possible time, otherwise we'd all be up there with [Joy Division bandmate and suicide victim] Ian Curtis, I think."



BAD, BUT NOT BRATTY

The road movie is a longstanding tradition in popular culture. For decades it's had a steady appeal for filmmakers and audiences alike. Screenwriter **Abbe Wool**, whose credits include *Sid And Nancy*, makes her directorial debut this month with *Roadside Prophets*, another spin on the highway tale. The disarmingly funny yet poignant film stars X singer/guitarist **John Doe** and Beastie Boy **Adam Horovitz**, with cameo appearances by **David Carradine**, **Timothy Leary**, **Arlo Guthrie** and **John Cusack** as Casper, a hilariously hyperactive dime-and-dash con artist.

Doe, currently working on X's first album in four years, met **Wool** six years ago, when director **Alex Cox** invited him to read the part of **Sex Pistol Sid Vicious** for *Sid And Nancy*. "Instead of king for a day, I was Sid for a day," he laughs. "Alex had called up and asked if I would do it. I said, 'Sure, what's the problem?' and he said, 'I can't read Sid any more. I'll become him if I read him any more.'"

Roadside Prophets traces **Doe's** character Jon Mosley's motorcycle journey, undertaken in memory of a friend, from California to a casino in the wilds of Nevada. Early in his adventure he notices he's being tailed by **Horovitz**, who plays Sam, an obsessive, irritatingly enthusiastic fellow.

"I was a little sceptical because of the Beastie Boys' public image," punk rocker **Doe** admits of his first encounter with rapper **Horovitz**. "They seemed so bratty. We may have been bad, but not bratty. But when we met we had a lot in common."

One thing they shared was a lack of experience with that quintessential road-movie prop — the motorbike. "Adam was pretty scary when he got on that motorcycle," **Doe** recalls. "He didn't know how to ride either."

COMPILED BY TINA CLARKE

THE COWBOY JUNKIES

The Way They Groove Together

BY LIZA FINLAY

Sun comes up, it's Sunday morning. Well, it's almost noon, really, but it feels more like six

one by acclamation, having befriended the family back when he and Michael were in kindergarten). "When we bring people into the band, we emphasize that style to them. They have to understand us and appreciate what we're doing to fit in musically."

What the Junkies were doing, by telling us tales in such sad, soft renderings, was seduction. Margo Timmins can make the angriest dirge sound like a lullaby, and while we snoozed, the Junkie sound escaped

from our speakers and filled our minds in slow, timed release.

The Junkies' new album, *Black-Eyed Man*, while remaining true to this principle of gentle persuasion, has a slightly harder edge that's evident in the moments of departure from the usual ethereal vibration that seems to emanate from Margo's vocal cords and be emitted from the mists of her hair. On songs like "Oregon Hill," for instance, Michael picks up the pace and the not-so-meek Margo really belts it out.

"With every record we've all sat down to talk about what changes or improvements we want to make," Michael says. "With this one there were two areas we wanted to explore. I wanted to explore musical structure; time shifts and tempo shifts. Margo wanted to expand her singing style, her range. We also wanted to approach each song individually rather than the whole album being one long song. I wanted this one to have

different perspectives in each song."

As sole producer and chief songwriter, Michael was able to ensure that that vision was translated to vinyl. And in fact, each song on *Black-Eyed Man* does tell a different story. But, consistent with the band's unobtrusive sound, Michael's songwriting style does not shove messages of morality in your face, but instead entices individual thought and feeling by telling us stories through the eyes of a variety of onlookers. And for the Junkies, this is a much more effective way of communicating than that of the musical majority.

"I personally really hate message songs," Michael says. "I find them insulting because there's only one point of view. I don't like being preached at. I like songs that make you think and maybe talk about things with other people, get their point of view too."

"All I really try to do is get people to come away with a feeling of inspiration," he continues. "I really want people to be inspired either to pick up a phone or a pen or anything, and just communicate with another person. In a storytelling song people are much more likely to both enjoy the song and hear your message."

But make no mistake; *Black-Eyed Man* is not a collection of bedtime stories. The album ends with what, for the Junkies, could be considered an uptempo tune. It's not a dance track, but it sure is toe-tapping. Junkie junkies be warned: this one may be too much for the Sunday morning reverie of laid-back listening with brain firmly planted in the fields of oblivion. This one may pierce the fog a little. Maybe they should put a warning on this album. Surprises can be tough to take, especially on Sundays.



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I really hate message songs. I find them insulting because there's only one point of view.

99

a.m. What I need at times like these is music that can be absorbed with eyes closed and mind idling in a blissed-out semi-conscious state. So I put on The Cowboy Junkies.

Since *The Trinity Session* was released in 1988, the Cowboy Junkies have become notorious for their slow, smooth and of course soft sound. Margo Timmins' low, lush musings resound like a mantra, lulling listeners into Junkie-style somnolence. With their acclaimed followup album, *The Caution Horses*, and songs like "Sun Comes Up (It's Tuesday Morning)," the Junkie sound was entrenched. Junkie style, it seemed, did not evolve so much as it was reincarnated on each album.

"Our style is purposeful; it's a conscious thing, but it stems from the way we play together, the way we groove together," says Michael Timmins, band leader and big brother to bandmates Margo and Peter (Alan Anton, while not a Timmins by birth, is



TOM COCHRANE Armed And Ready

BY KEITH SHARP

Tom Cochrane calls it his "John Irwin World According To Garp" theory — the clash between critical acclaim and popular success.

As frontman for Toronto-based Red Rider, Cochrane enjoyed critical success in the late '70s and early '80s, spinning yarns about gun runners in Tanzania ("White Hot") and tapping into the writings of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda ("Napoleon Sheds His Skin"). It was heady stuff, but not exactly Top 40 radio. So having divested himself of Red Rider and pushed forward as a solo act, the 38-year-old Cochrane has done the unthinkable: written a bona fide, chart-topping pop song!

"Life Is A Highway," the lead-off track from Cochrane's latest album, *Mad Mad World*, has already topped Canada's AOR

charts and helped push domestic album sales past the half a million mark. Those are feats Cochrane hopes to duplicate Stateside when Capitol U.S. releases the single and album this month.

"My first reaction was, 'Red Rider fans are going to hate this,'" laughs Cochrane. "But when I saw all the attention the song was attracting, I started to kick myself for not having done it before."

"Life Is A Highway" was conceived during a tour of Africa in November, 1990, and was written as a message of hope for the people he met there.

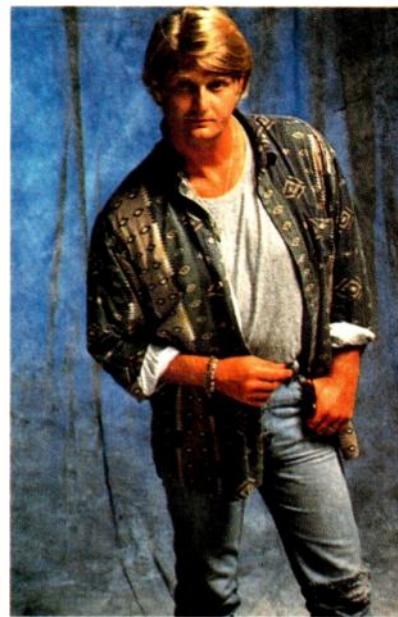
"I could have done another 'We Are The World,'" says Cochrane. "But I realized you can't sit there and analyze their plight to the point of being debilitating. They are not all one-dimensional

characters, dying of starvation. The message I try to convey is to move on, try to enjoy the ride but don't expect too much because you'll be disappointed."

A veteran Canadian performer who's enjoyed a reasonable amount of U.S. success, ("Lunatic Fringe" being his biggest hit), Cochrane admits Red Rider's live show was at times lacking, but he claims that weakness has been corrected with a new lineup that features ex-Loverboy Matt Frenette on drums, former Streetheart bassist Ken (Spider) Sinnaeve, Rik Emmett Band guitarist Syl Simone and ex-Kim Mitchell sidekick Peter Fredette.

"There's a toughness about this band that Red Rider could never deliver," Cochrane says.

With new management in Danny Goldberg's Gold Mountain operation and a return to Capitol after one album with BMG, Cochrane feels he's finally got the right ammunition to attack



the U.S. market. "The operative word with *Mad Mad World* is that it's 'radio friendly,'" Cochrane enthuses. "I feel I can reach a larger audience with these songs and I'm not afraid to admit it."

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away called Boise, there lived a boy who longed for nothing but to sing the blues. His name was Curtis Stigers.

These days, Curtis Stigers' life is as much a fairytale to him as it is to the rest of us. At 25, he's got a record contract, he's got an album (*Curtis Stigers*), he's got the hit-making Wilson Phillips production team behind him (the first single, "I Wonder Why," went to No. 9 on the *Billboard* chart), he got Brill Building giant Barry Mann ("You've Lost That Loving Feeling") to write with him and, to top things off, he got the girl. "I don't have to dream any more," says Stigers. "I'm living it. I'm in love, I've got a career, I've got a record. The possibilities are endless. I'm in the position I always wanted to be in."

Like every good fairytale, though, Stigers' story has the requisite element of trial and hardship — at least enough to give the boy in never-never land a hard

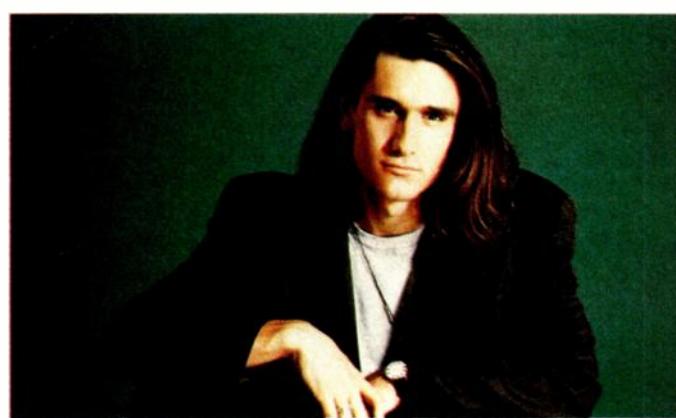
earned, worn-out note that, he hopes, injects a blue note into the light pastel tones of pop culture. "I write emotional songs," he says. "I'm striving to be more personal all the time, although that's hard to do in the framework of a pop song. But it's all down there. I was a confused, timid kid. I got along with adults better than

children and became more interested in adult themes. As a child of a broken home you tend to grow up pretty quick. So I can dredge up any melancholy you need me to. I kind of take joy wallowing in melancholy."

These days, Stigers has to dig down beneath piles of interview schedules, flight plans, singing

CURTIS STIGERS Little Boy Blue

BY LIZA FINLAY



engagements and Arsenio Hall appearances to dredge up memories of his Kraft Dinner Days. Leaving Boise, Idaho when he was 21, Stigers packed his basketball and saxophone and hopped the next Greyhound to New York City. After a few weeks of sleeping on floors and hiding in bathrooms he started jamming at an uptown blues bar, where he had to compete with the veal parmesan for the patrons' interest. Stigers won, the veal lost, and in a matter of months the place was hopping with fans of the band and record company execs. Two years after arriving in NYC he had a record contract.

Which brings us to the happy-ever-after. Now that he's conquered the Big Apple, triumphed over Arista and won the girl of his dreams, what's left? "Well," muses Stigers, "I dream about owning a car. No, I'm just kidding. But seriously, you want to know what one dream is left for me? Dunking a basketball."



JOHN PRINE Between The Cracks

BY ROMAN MITZ

After 20 years, people are finally catching up with John Prine. Though he has written a

most having a hoedown.

"Sometimes I think if there's one particular aspect of writing that I hit every once in a while, it's the ability to walk that line between things that are goofy and things that are sad, and it's something when I'm able to walk that line and not go too much to either side."

Prine scored a No. 1 country hit for Don Williams, and his material has also been covered by artists ranging from the veteran Highwaymen to newcomers like The Wild Jimbos. It's a mystery as to why he hasn't made an appearance on the country charts with his own renditions.

"I don't quite get it myself," he laughs. "I've been living in Nashville for 11 years, and I see what goes on and which songs become hits and which don't. I'm not all that far away, but I'm about as far away as I am from rock 'n' roll. I just kind of fall in between the cracks, but I've been falling in between the cracks for 20 years and I can do it for another 20."

What will likely keep *The Missing Years* from falling between the cracks is the fact that it is being tapped for singles, which will bring him some much-needed radio exposure. Helping out are backup vocalists, including Tom Petty on the first single, "Picture Show," Bruce Springsteen, Bonnie Raitt and the Divinyls' Christina Amphlett. Even with all that heavyweight talent, however, it remains Prine's show.

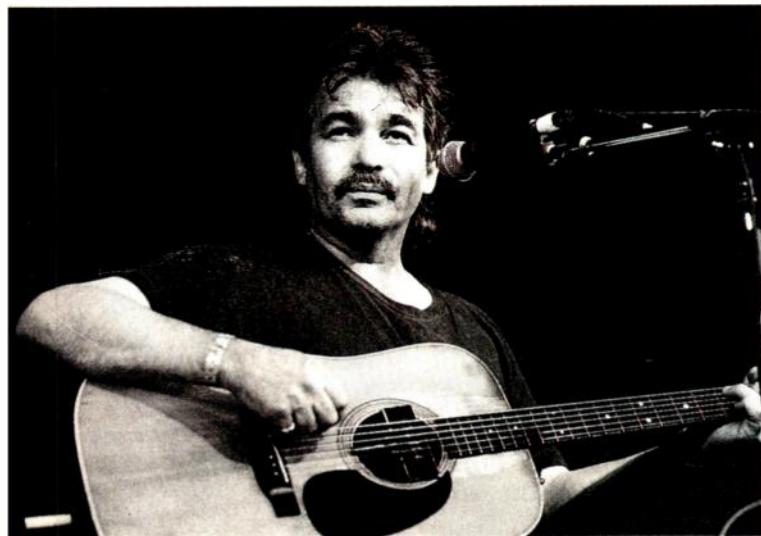
"The sound of my voice is a little unusual, so we wanted people with character in their voices to sing with me," he says. "That way we thought they might have a better chance to blend with me. I bumped into Springsteen the night before I started, and he was committed from the start. Petty's

voice blended well, and Bonnie and I have sung together for years. Although we were originally thinking of using more of a country person for the Lefty Frizzell song ['I Want To Be With You Always'], Christina Amphlett worked out really well. I like her voice; that rough quality reminds me of Marianne Faithfull."

You can also find John dueting with Margo Timmins on "If I Were The Woman And You Were The Man," a track from the Cowboy Junkies' new album. He's even cutting a song with Roger Waters. "The way it's turning out, I may be the new Julio Iglesias," he laughs. "I love to sing, but nobody ever asked me to come in and croon on their records before. With Roger, there was all of this Pink Floyd stuff in the background, but up front it's basically a country song. He even sang it like his idea of what I sound like. I had to straighten him out about that, but once we started trading back and forth it didn't seem all that odd."

John also teamed with Dwight Yoakam, Joe Ely, Larry McMurtry and John Mellencamp for a song from the soundtrack for the film *Falling From Grace*, in which he has a role as brother-in-law of a singer played by Mellencamp.

But if the stars appear to be lining up for Prine, it comes on the heels of a year of emotional upheaval which found him going through his second divorce. "With *Bruised Orange* I had just finished going through my first divorce," he says. "But it's not a plan to get a divorce and then write 10 good songs, because that's a tough way to go about making a record. I write not so much autobiographically but rather what I know about, and if I don't know that my marriage just fell apart, then I'm an idiot."



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**If you took everything
in the universe
and took it apart
to its most basic
elements, you would
eventually break it
down into energy
forms. That's what
it was all about.**

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string of classic songs and his acoustic shows have garnered him critical acclaim, widespread success has always eluded him.

Prine's latest album, appropriately titled *The Missing Years*, is making up for a lot of lost ground, and its rapid sales are moving him from the folkie circuit into the mainstream. And hardcore fans needn't worry; while the album has its share of bells and whistles, songs like "It's A Big Old Goofy World" show that his writing remains at its bittersweet best.

"I had 'Goofy World' on the back burner for a long while," he explains. "I collected all of these phrases like 'She smokes like a chimney and drinks like a fish,' and eventually put a little story together. It's a little like 'That's The Way That The World Goes 'Round,' which was a sad song when I originally wrote it. As soon as I started singing it, I could see the reaction in crowds' faces and it became a happier song. Today I play it and people are al-

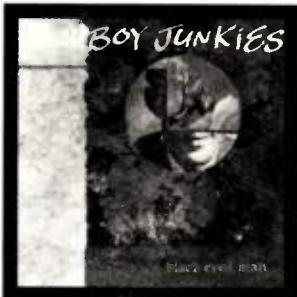
COWBOY JUNKIES

black eyed man



the new album

★★★★
"EXCELLENT"
- Rolling Stone



COWBOY JUNKIES

black eyed man

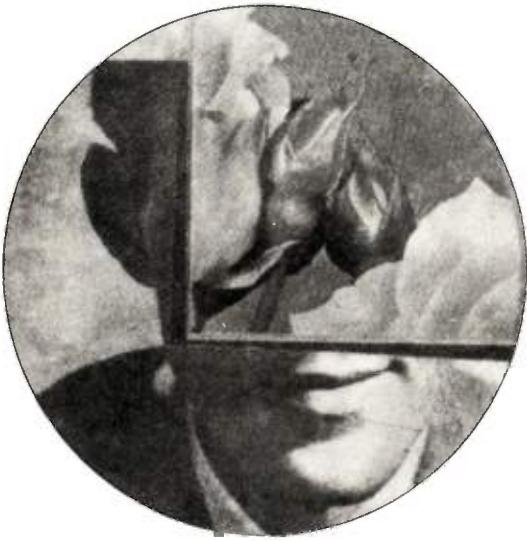
"Black Eyed Man," the new album from
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COWBOY JUNKIES

black eyed man

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★★★★★
"EXCELLENT"
- Rolling Stone

THE BAND

LIVE

THE ALBUM

MENTAL JEWELRY

"HEARD
ABOUT
IT ON
THE RADIO"

PRODUCED BY JERRY HARRISON

OF THE TALKING HEADS,

THE ASTONISHING DEBUT

OF THIS YOUNG PENNSYLVANIA QUARTET

FEATURES THE SONGS

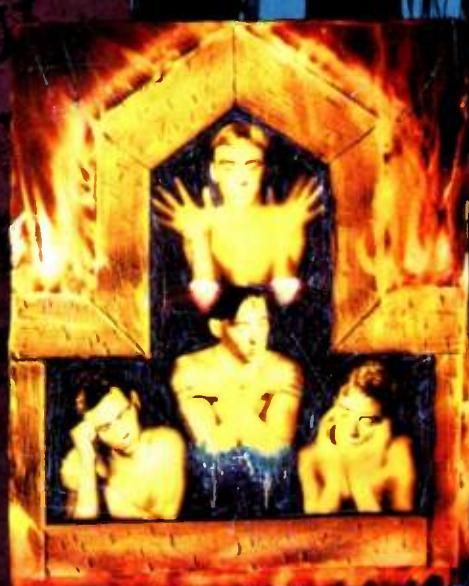
"OPERATION SPIRIT" AND

"PAIN LIES ON THE RIVERSIDE."

ON RADIOACTIVE COMPACT DISCS AND HIQ CASSETTES



radioactive



THE PIXIES

That's Time Travel

BY MARY DICKIE

As almost everybody knows, the Pixies are a brilliant guitar band whose songs balance roaring guitar and hummable melodies with lyrics that mean nothing. Or do they? In a conversation with Black Francis, otherwise known as Charles, that was just one of the assumptions blown up like an exploding super nova. In fact, if you dig a little into the Black Francis songwriting process you can get a whole education about space and time travel, physics, history, UFOs, biology.... lots of things. And to think that people say he uses any word that sounds good!

"Well, I won't deny that I do that," he says. "But I don't do that 100 per cent of the time."

Even a cursory glance at *Trompe Le Monde*'s lyrics will reveal that travel, science and outer space occupy Charles' mind, which can't help playing with words, rhyming "communist" with "get us pissed," "no beer" with "atmosphere" and, most memorably, "phallic" with "smart aleck," in "Alec Eiffel," a song about the creator of the tower.

"Someone thought I'd rhymed phallic with panoramic!" he says indignantly. "Actually, I was rhyming panoramic with aerodynamic. I went to the Burbank Library to learn a bit about Alexander Eiffel, and it turns out he was connected with travel via the tower, 'cause it was a place where they used to do experiments which laid the foundation for what is known today as aerodynamics."

OK, let's move on to "Distance Equals Rate Times Time." "That's about...um, I hate to bring it up, but it's, you know, the ozone layer. But I'm not trying to get ecological here. I'm just talking about the thing occurring, almost in a science fiction kind of way."

And what about "The Sad Punk"? "Well, that's a song about the extinction of the dinosaurs, I guess, and also about using fossil fuels. When you're a kid they teach you dinosaurs are gone, but their bones are melted into oil. So every tank of gas is like a Tyrannosaurus Rex. And even the tire and the tar on the road, it's all them, and it's kind of funny."

Next, "Planet Of Sound." "Basically an alien guy hears radio frequencies and goes looking for the source," Charles explains, "and ends up on Mars and then the Moon [where the "guy in the Rover" is, of course]. The idea is that maybe sound doesn't exist anywhere else but here. And by the end he's there, at the planet of sound." So it's a happy ending? "Yeah, unless he's like a strange monster who while trying to express his love destroys the planet or something."

As for "Bird Dream Of The Olympus Mons," Charles says, "Well, the title says it all! A bird dreams, perhaps astrally projects to Olympus Mons, the largest mountain on Mars." And "The Navajo Know"? "All I had was 'Some people say that the Navajo know a way of walking high above the ground, fearless of looking down.' Anyway, it's really the Mohawks. So I had to write a second verse. But since the Navajo experimented with peyote they could have their own, you know, above-ground experience. It all made perfect sense to me."

"Palace Of The Brine" is about those sea monkeys you can order from the back pages of comic books. "Yeah, the brine shrimp, the lone inhabitants of Great Salt Lake in Nevada. I don't know if they extract them from that lake, but it's someplace like that."

"Motorway To Roswell" is a sort of fictional recounting of the



1947 Roswell incident, talked about in UFO literature. It's a place where there was a crash of an alien spaceship, and there were alien bodies retrieved and a big coverup and everything."

And "Letter To Memphis" is "uh, a love song, about a girl from Memphis." Not Tennessee, though. "No, no, ancient Egypt. I'm talking across time and space, that kind of travelling!" "Lovely Day" may seem like another love song. But no. "It's about the colonization of Mars. The old way, where the man goes and then sends for the women, which I suppose is totally inaccurate."

To prevent things from being too neatly tied together, there's a few non sequiturs like "U-Mass" (a college radio "in" song) and a Jesus And Mary Chain cover, "Head On." And though Charles says he's been talking with Billy Bragg about crop circles, there won't be a song about them, even though it would have fit in perfectly. "Yes," he says. "A little too perfectly."

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It all made
perfect sense
to me.

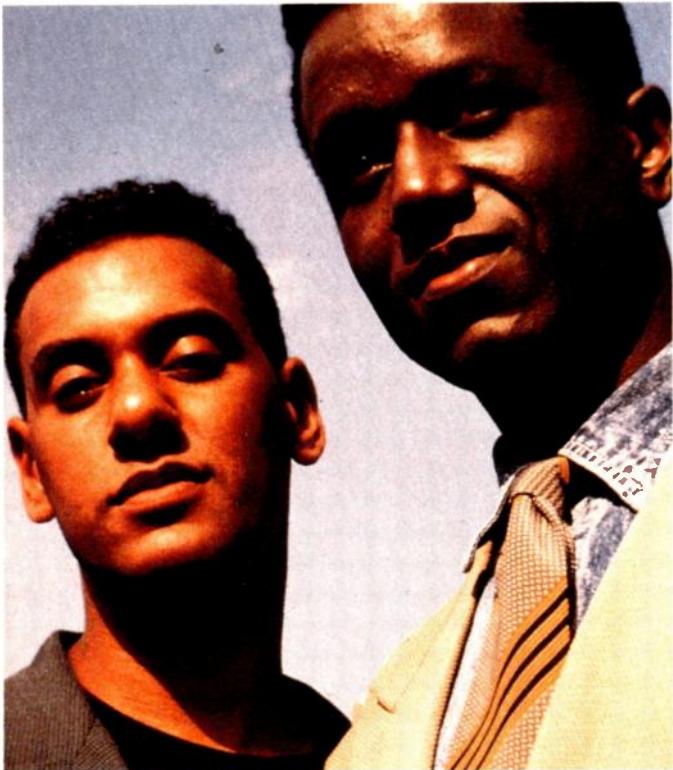
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A.R. KANE

Pop Goes The Dream

BY TIM POWIS

A few years back, A.R. Kane decided to coin a name for the kind of music they make.



They dubbed it "driampop." The English duo's music has changed considerably in the meantime, but they stand by that label.

"Driampop's still very much the focus," says Alex Ayuli, A.R. Kane's "A." "It's such a large and generic term. There are many things that we think fit into driampop — things by other people, things that we do, things that'll happen in the future..."

Asked for examples of other people's driampop, Alex cites "Flamenco Sketches" on Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue*, Davis' proto-fusion album *In A Silent Way*, Hendrix's "Little Wing," "See Emily Play" by Syd Barrett's Pink Floyd and "some Cocteau Twins tracks."

A.R. Kane's own evolving

driampop vision is well documented on their first non-import North American release, *Americana*, a 16-track anthology on David Byrne's Luaka Bop label culled mostly from two British EPs (*Up Home!* and *Love-Sick*) and a pair of albums (69 and the last LP, 1989's "i"). The more recent tracks — "A Love From Outer Space," "Snow Joke" and "Miles Apart" — are high-tech, extraterrestrial dance music. Earlier, less beat-driven pieces like "Up," "Baby Milk Snatcher" and "Spermwhale Trip Over" — woozy sonic excursions that replenish the mental ozone layer by dissolving the border between noisy and atmospheric — are more organically generated, although the Kanes' dub-influenced studio trickery often obscures that fact.

"On 'i,'" there was more kind of rhythmic stuff," concedes Rudy Tambala, A.R. Kane's "R." "We'd started experimenting with sampling technology and sequencers. Before, we didn't know how to do that. We just really knew about guitars and things at that stage. We didn't have anyone to do our programming, because we were quite pig-headed and wanted to do it ourselves. But we learned, and when we started doing 'i', we had the capability, we had the technology, so we started experimenting more with dance music and trying to shape it to an A.R. Kane theme."

As Rudy makes clear, his and Alex's terpsichorean credentials go back at least to 1987, when they collaborated with 4AD label-mates Colourbox as M/A/R/R/S on the surprise dancefloor smash "Pump Up The Volume."

Though that single's mega-sales seemed to bode well for everyone, it wound up generating more acrimony than goodwill (or,

in A.R. Kane's case, money). Alex and Rudy defected to Rough Trade, which remains their label in the U.K. and Europe.

"It was a very complicated story," says Alex. "If it had been an underground hit and sold 10,000 or 20,000, everything might have been fine. But when it sold a couple of million, I guess some people got a bit greedy and a lot of egos started to clash. It just seemed that 4AD was being very unfair, so we left."

If M/A/R/R/S had continued, A.R. Kane may have gotten a lot richer, but Alex and Rudy are soft-spoken, pensive types who likely wouldn't have relished the attendant commercial pressures. In fact, since '89, they've taken a sabbatical to pursue other interests. Alex has been living in California, studying, of all things, Chinese furniture. Rudy has been busy setting up and running H.Ark, which started as a production company and has metamorphosed into a small record label, releasing highly praised EPs by kindred driampop spirits Papa Sprain and Butterfly Child.

A.R. Kane reunited musically a while back to record "Water," the token new cut on *Americana*; now they're working on an entire album of fresh material. Chances are this one will be less tech-reliant than "i" was, but A.R. Kane prefer to leave things open-ended. "We have some ideas now, but the studio brings a lot of things into our vision," notes Alex. "We use the studio like an instrument. There's always unexpected things happening that make us change our minds at the last moment. But this one's gonna be a departure from what we've done." In a career already characterized by departures, it seems that dreaming on is the same as moving on.

"

We use the studio like an instrument. There's always unexpected things happening that make us change our minds at the last moment.

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BAILEYS

BREAKING TRADITION



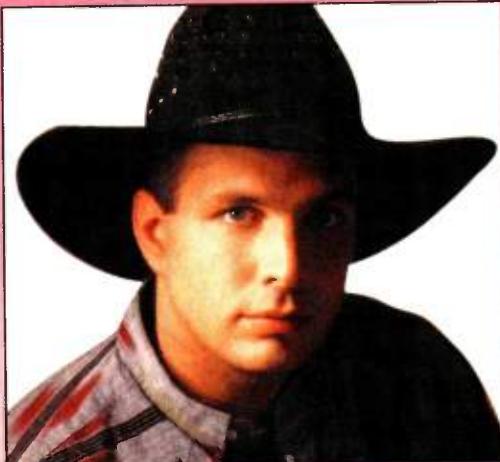
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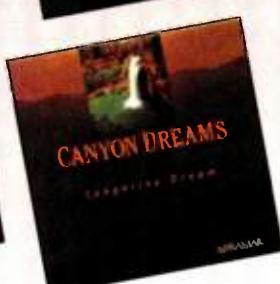
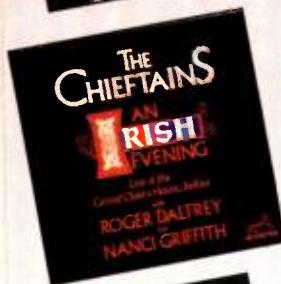
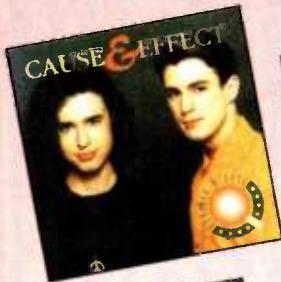


Garth Brooks

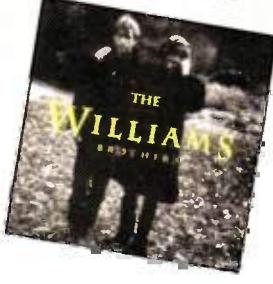


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HANK SHOCKLEE

The Sound Of *Juice*

BY MARY DICKIE

As producer of albums by Public Enemy and Ice Cube, Hank Shocklee has been responsible for some of the most interesting and innovative hip-hop music ever recorded. With his production group The Bomb Squad, Shocklee has pretty well perfected the art of mixing sampled bits of music with raps — cleverly and judiciously enough to avoid the impression of riding the back of some earlier hit without proper acknowledgment.

Now, Shocklee has taken another step — executive-producing the soundtrack (with Kathy Nelson) and writing the score for the movie *Juice*, a coming-of-age drama set in Harlem that uses mostly novice actors (including Omar Epps, Khalil Khan, Jermaine Hopkins, Digital Underground's 2Pac and En Vogue's Cindy Herron). In fact, *Juice* marks the directorial debut of Ernest Dickerson, previously known for his cinematography for Spike Lee.

Shocklee's *Juice* soundtrack incorporates a variety of contemporary R&B and rap styles, with tracks by Naughty By Nature, Eric B And Rakim, Teddy Riley, MC Pooh, Big Daddy Kane, Too Short, EPMD, The Brand New Heavies, Son Of Bazerk and Salt N'Pepa. "I produced a couple of them initially, like Son Of Bazerk and Big Daddy Kane," he says. "But my job was kind of overseeing it to make sure the artist did the best they could do. I kind of had a dialogue with everyone."

Shocklee says the Bomb Squad (which also includes Keith Shocklee, Carl Ryder and Gary G-Wiz) functions as more than a production unit — it builds the track even to the point of having input into the raps themselves. "I believe in creative freedom," he says. "I'm here to basically help the artist shape their ideas and

push those ideas to the level they want to reach. Most people have a vision, but sometimes it can be a little shallow, or in the wrong direction, or they could be doing too much to it. So I come in. I allow them the freedom to pick the topics, but at the same time I want to help them. If I think the flow or the feel or the transition from verse to chorus isn't good enough, I help them rework it. I basically act as a song doctor."

And there's no source of music that Shocklee wouldn't use. "I don't have any barriers, like, 'OK, I'm only going to use R&B records from the years 1972-75,'" he says. "I use rock 'n' roll records, new age records, Hungarian folk chants... It doesn't matter, as long as it works well."

"Basically, I'm a researcher and developer. I'm a person who archives sounds. That's what this business is about — it's a collection of data, of records and tapes. It's like archeologists; they don't care what it is — it's remains, and it's been in the dirt for X amount of years. Same thing here."

Generally speaking, the Bomb Squad tracks are put together not unlike a building, from the ground up. "We start with the rhythm track," Shocklee begins, "and we build around it, and then we put the rhyme on top and then we build around *that*. So it's kind of like a two- or three-part process. You start out with your foundation, then you put the lyrics on top, then you put all your window dressing on it. And sometimes you gotta redo the foundation in order to make it work with the lyrics."

As for *Juice*'s score, Shocklee says, "It's my first, and it was different to approach, because most scores use orchestras or synthesizers. This is the first sampled score. We did a lot of sampling,



and created a mood with it.

"It was a lot of hard work — things that we'd never done before, and the people who worked with us, who'd worked on other films, had never done either. It's kind of a first — a film that utilizes the technology of hip-hop, which is sampling."

Asked if the film might suffer with comparisons to the critically acclaimed *Boyz N' The Hood*, Shocklee says *Juice* is actually more realistic. "It's a different type of movie. This is the first movie that doesn't narrate, that doesn't have any preconceptions that you don't know what's going on," he explains. "This is the first up to the minute teenage movie that uses the lingo, you know, the whole nine."

"If you don't know what's going on in the rap community, or in the teenage community that has to do with rap culture, you can still appreciate the movie, but it's not going to hit you the same way as it's going to hit the kids that live it. *Boyz N' The Hood* was more of a universal movie, with the message thing. This is different; it's like you're joining the movie in progress."

This is the first movie that doesn't have any preconceptions that you don't know what's going on.

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SWERVEDRIVER

Wah-Wah Pop

BY TINA CLARKE

It's no accident that British rockers Swervedriver called their debut album *Raise*. "We got this idea about the word," guitarist

lapse but it's the brilliance of suddenly clicking in and it all comes shooting forward again. It's really anything goes as far as song endings and stuff."

The band formed three years ago in Oxford, but soon moved to London. Though its university is world-renowned, evidently Oxford is not much of a college town. According to the members of Swervedriver, Oxford's transient young inhabitants are more concerned with their social status than with supporting the local music scene. That's not exactly the most conducive environment for the development of an alter-

native rock band with brash guitars and hardcore harmonics.

"In theory students are supposed to be kind of poor, but the Oxford student is a lot different than your average truck driver's son who's going to Glasgow Polytechnic," says bassist Adi Vines. "You find yourself getting booted out of pubs that you used to go drinking in because they don't want that kind of element. They want to appeal to the students who have more money to spend."

"Oxford is also low on arts," Franklin adds. "They would rather teach Greek or Latin or business."

When Franklin, Vines and guitarist Jimmy Hartridge first started playing together five years ago as Shake Appeal, the Stooges, the Velvet Underground and punk figured a lot higher in the equation than square roots and classical languages. "When I was 14 I was a real massive Damned fan for two years," Vines recalls. "I used to dress like Captain Sensi-

ble for about six months. I think my mother has a photo of me in one of those big furry jumpers."

"I was more into sort of indie pop bands," Franklin adds. "Discovering those bands I actually got a wah-wah peddle. With Swervedriver we consciously tried to cross the pop melodies with that kind of wah-wah sort of row. It's like pop songs played with abandon. We never quite lose sight of the melodies."

Or a song's meaning, even if the lyrics are often buried under a barrage of guitars. "A few people have said, 'Did you deliberately bury the vocals so the words can't be understood?'" Vines says. "When we rehearse I don't think we deliberately bury, like [British band] Loop — compared to that we're out there loud and clear! But I'm actually thinking that people should know what the lyrics are."

Swervedriver's songs are modern cautionary tales, well constructed and defined. "'Rave Down' is about small town boredom, various little lines in there have to do with racial equality," Franklin reveals. "'Son Of Mustang Ford' on the surface is just about going for a cruise in your car. [It's about] getting away from something, striving for new, better things, I suppose."

In the few months since *Raise* was released, terrific album reviews and a growing reputation as a live outfit suggest that Swervedriver is off to a roaring start, but the group is convinced that the best is yet to come.

"We may come upon the perfect Swervedriver sound on album three or four," Vines says.

"But *Raise* is a pretty good document of what we've done so far," Franklin adds. "I think it's a pretty good idea of what we're about."



“

I'm actually thinking that people should know what the lyrics are.

”

Adam Franklin remarks. "Like you can raise things up or raze walls down — just the opposite. When it comes down to it, you've got to write it down. We had to sort out which spelling we would use, but it's open to interpretation."

Whatever the intent, Swervedriver's music — spurred by swirling, thrashing guitars and crashing cymbals — is an explosion of melody; a tornado's force twisted into song. Like Lush, Dinosaur Jr., My Bloody Valentine and other currently hot neo-psychedelic guitar-based bands, Swervedriver offers up an enticing aural environment. It's especially sensational live, when the group's skilful use of overtones creates a stunning wall of sound, enveloping the listener like quicksand.

"We've really gotten into our stride as far as playing live is concerned," Franklin notes. "Some songs, we're really struggling. It's almost like it's on the brink of col-

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MATTHEW SWEET/GIRLFRIEND



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JAMES

Faith And Luck

BY JOAN TARSHIS

James has always been a band with a healthy ego. Its members never doubted that they were

continued to sing the song over and over after the band had left the stage, that the James Boys were finally able to take a deep breath.

"I think there were moments in the past where we could have finished," says Booth, with a quiet tone in his voice. "To one person's perspective, that would have been an unhappy ending — so maybe our confidence was a bit blind."

Bassist Jim

Glennie (chosen

as the band's namesake when Tim sounded too weak, Gavin too metallic and Paul...just not right) adds, "We never thought we were stagnating. There was never any doubt we'd make it, if we'd only survive the battle."

James' trademark has always been mix-and-match metaphors paired with opposing musical textures, and *Seven*, their latest collection, is true to form. The dreamy "Next Lover," whose musical themes conjure up bold and mysterious images of romance while also being a hungry come-on, is a perfect example. "Bring A Gun," a tribute to T. Rex's "Bang A Gong" and another juxtaposition of light and dark, is intended to prick our consciences with a sarcastic call to arms. However, the majority of their songs are spiritual in nature, and because James has decided not to include the lyrics, you really have to listen hard to get the message.

"Only 'Ring The Bells' will have its lyrics printed," says Booth. "That means the album

can't be digested in one sitting by greedy critics. But it's not all meaning, anyway." Then he adds, "I'm still trying to figure out the lyrics. I don't want anyone else to, 'til I have."

It is when he's talking or writing about spiritual matters that Booth comes alive. "Religion," he says, "is based upon the idea of 'I'm in touch with God and you're not so follow me.' I know a lot of people who have experienced things naturally and that's what I think human life is about."

"In 'Ring The Bells' 'I no longer feel my God is watching over me' is a positive statement. The finger-pointing, big white guilt God is no longer watching over me."

Booth says the best way to explain the song is through the idea they had of a video they would make for it. "We wanted to go to Mexico during their religious festivals," he explains, "the ones where they have those Christs with blood dripping out of them. And the bell would be in one of them lovely, little white churches. Then some nutter would be coming out of the desert going, 'Ring the bells. Ring the bells. I've had a revelation.' And nobody would know whether he's gone completely crazy or whether he's actually had a revelation."

Though Booth's spiritual path has been a star-crossed one (his Guru, who preached the importance of celibacy, was caught "in the sack"), he still believes there is something to be learned from all institutions. "I have a total cynicism about what happens to people when they get into groups," he says. "I've learned that having ideas about how you should live your life is a joke. That seems to be one of those Golden Rules. If you have an idea about how you're meant to live, your life will make you live a different way."



"

I've learned that having ideas about how you should live your life is a joke.

"

going to succeed; they just didn't know when. Never, even after almost a decade of panting and struggling for breath, was there a loss of faith, because faith is the cornerstone for this James gang. And though they staggered audiences and critics alike with their mesmerizing live show (particularly in their native Britain), it seemed not to matter. Their career vaulted every which way imaginable, except over the top.

Since the release of the band's first EP, *Jimcone*, in November of 1984, James has suffered the loss of members, the loss of label interest, the loss (and return) of management, distortion of their identity, near bankruptcy and bad luck. The band's faith and its philosophy, according to lyricist/lead singer Tim Booth ("The longer it took, the bigger we'd be") was all they had to hold onto at times. It wasn't until January of 1991, when they closed a set with "Sit Down" — their most accessible anthem to date — and the audience actually *did* sit down and

Sony Tape

CONCERT GUIDE

RUSH

RUSH

MAR. 3 ORLANDO • TBA

5 COLUMBIA • TBA

7 CHAPEL HILL • TBA

8 HAMPTON • TBA

10 RICHMOND • TBA

11 BALTIMORE • TBA

THE GRATEFUL DEAD

MAR. 1-3 ATLANTA • THE OMNI

8-9 LANDOVER • CAPITOL CTR.

11-13 UNIONDALE • NASSAU COL.

16-18 PHILADELPHIA • THE SPECTRUM

20-21 HAMILTON • COPPS COLISEUM

23-24 AUBURN HILLS • PALACE OF AUBURN

HILLS



JOHN MELLENCAMP

JOHN MELLENCAMP
MAR. 3 EDMONTON • NORTHLANDS COL.
7 MINNEAPOLIS • TARGET CTR.
10 TORONTO • SKYDOME
12 MONTREAL • MONTREAL FORUM

BROOKS & DUNN
MAR. 5 TERRE HAUTE • HULMAN CIVIC CENTER

6 MEMPHIS • MID-SOUTH COLISEUM
11-12 PHOENIX • CELEBRITY THEATRE
13 YUMA • YUMA SPEEDWAY
14 ANAHEIM • CELEBRITY THEATRE
15 SAN CARLOS • CIRCLE STAR CENTER
19 KNOXVILLE • THOMPSON-BOILING ARENA
20 HAMPTON • HAMPTON COL.
21 CHARLOTTE • CHARLOTTE COL.

MARKY MARK & THE FUNKY BUNCH
MAR. 1 TALLAHASSEE • LEON CO. CIVIC CENTER

5 AUSTIN • OPERA HOUSE
6 SAN ANTONIO • MAJESTIC THEATRE
7 ARLINGTON • SIX FLAGS
8 HOUSTON • TOWER THEATRE
11 TUCSON • EXHIBITION HALL
12 LOS ANGELES • WILTERN THEATRE
13 ANAHEIM • CELEBRITY THEATRE
14 SAN DIEGO • OPEN AIR THEATRE
15 PHOENIX • CELEBRITY THEATRE

REBA MCENTIRE
MAR. 5 TERRE HAUTE • HULLMAN CIVIC CENTER

6 MEMPHIS • MID-SOUTH COL.
19 KNOXVILLE • THOMPSON-BOLLING ARENA
20 HAMPTON • HAMPTON COL.
21 CHARLOTTE • CHARLOTTE COL.

DIAMOND RIO

MAR. 7 JACKSONVILLE • VETERANS COL.
14 CHANDLER • OSTRICH FESTIVAL
20 AUSTIN • HERITAGE CTR.
21 SALISBURY • WICOMOCO YOUTH CTR.
22 FAIRFAX • PATRIOT CTR.
27 BATESVILLE • COUNTY FAIRGROUND

ROXETTE

MAR. 1 FAIRFAX • PATRIOT CTR.
3 TORONTO • MAPLE LEAF GARDENS
4 MONTREAL • MONTREAL FORUM
5 NEW YORK • RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL
7 BOSTON • ORPHEUM THEATRE
8 UPPER DARBY • TOWER THEATRE
10 ATLANTA • FOX THEATRE
12 HOUSTON • BACK ALLEY
13 DALLAS • FAIR PARK MUSIC HALL
15 MESA • MESA AMPHITHEATRE
17 SAN FRANCISCO • SAN FRANCISCO CIVIC AUD.
18 SAN DIEGO • GOLDEN HALL
20-21 UNIVERSAL CITY • UNIVERSAL AMPH.

Paul Natkin



DIRE STRAITS

MAR. 1 PROVIDENCE • PROVIDENCE CIVIC CTR.
2 PHILADELPHIA • THE SPECTRUM
6 HARTFORD • HARTFORD CIVIC CENTER
7 WORCESTER • THE CENTRUM
9-10 HALIFAX • METRO CTR.
12 QUEBEC CITY • COLISEE DE QUEBEC
13 MONTREAL • MONTREAL FORUM
14 OTTAWA • OTTAWA CIVIC CTR.
17 HAMILTON • COPPS COL.
19-20 TORONTO • MAPLE LEAF GARDENS
21 SUDBURY • SUDBURY ARENA
24 WINNIPEG • WINNIPEG ARENA
26 REGINA • REGINA AGIDOME
27 SASKATOON • SASKATCHEWAN PLACE
28 EDMONTON • NORTHLANDS COL.
29 CALGARY • OLYMPIC SADDLEDOME

CHERYL WHEELER

MAR. 4 VIENNA • BARNS OF WOLF TRAP
5 PIERMONT • TURNING POINT
6 BETHLEHEM • GODFREY DANIEL'S
21 CAMBRIDGE • HARVARD UNIVERSITY
27 MONTCLAIR • THE OUTPOST
28 SARATOGA SPG. • CAFE LENA

RICKY SKAGGS

MAR. 6 OMAHA • OMAHA CIVIC AUD.
7 WICHITA • KANSAS COL.
8 SPRINGFIELD • HAMMONS STUDENT CTR.

JOHN HAMMOND

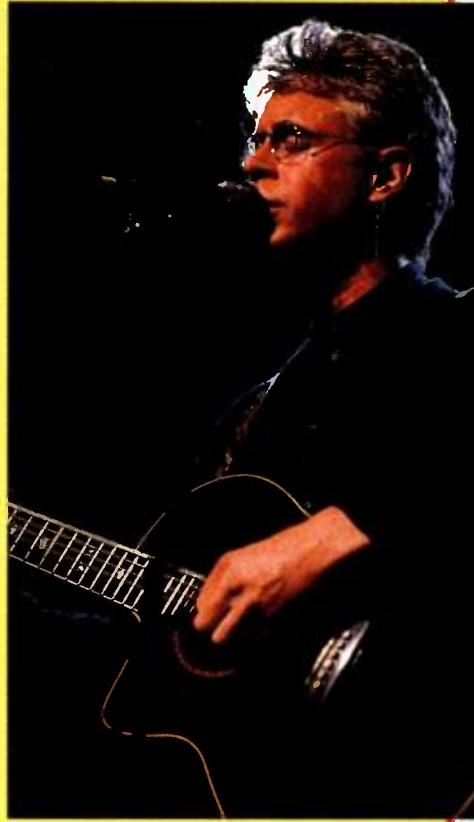
MAR. 2 AUSTIN • ANTOINE'S
3 HOUSTON • ROCKEFELLER'S
5 TUCSON • CUSHING STREET
6 SANTA MONICA • McCABE'S
8 SAN FRANCISCO • LEGION OF HONOR

RESTLESS HEART

MAR. 6 MINNEAPOLIS • GUTHRIE THEATRE
7 GRAND FORKS • CHESTER FRITZ AUD.
8 WINNIPEG • PANTAGES THEATRE
10 EDMONTON • JUBILEE AUDITORIUM
11 SASKATOON • CENTENNIAL AUD.
12 REGINA • CENTER FOR THE ARTS
14 RED DEER • CENTRUM
15 CALGARY • SINGER CONCERT HALL
17 VANCOUVER • ORPHEUM THEATRE
18 KAMLOOPS • KAMLOOPS MEM. ARENA

BRUCE COCKBURN

MAR. 1 SACRAMENTO • CREST THEATRE
2 SANTA CRUZ • THE CATALYST
4 S.J. CAPISTRANO • THE COACH HOUSE
6 LOS ANGELES • VARIETY ARTS CENTER
7 VENTURA • VENTURA THEATRE
8 SAN DIEGO • SOUND FX
9 TEMPE • AFTER THE GOLD RUSH
12 DENVER • PARAMOUNT THEATRE
13 FT. COLLINS • LINCOLN CENTER
14 ASPEN • TBA
21 AUSTIN • AUSTIN CITY LIMITS AIR DATE

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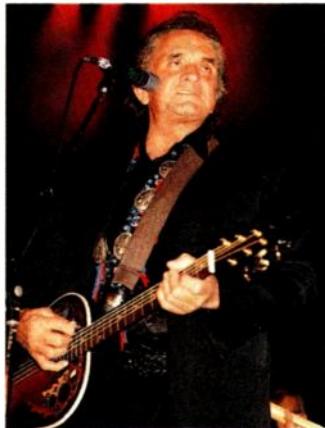


TELEVISION • ATOM SAID • R+R HALL OF FAME...

Tom Verlaine and Richard Lloyd have reformed the seminal punk band Television with original members Billy Ficca and Fred Smith to record their first album together in 14 years.



Hall Of Fame revellers:
Noel Redding,
Neil Young and
James Allen Hendrix
(Jimi's dad); Johnny
Cash (right).



Although the group only released two albums during its short tenure in the late '70s, both *Marquee Moon* and *Adventure* continue to be influential. Verlaine went on to a marginally successful solo career, as did Lloyd, who recently added lively noise to Matthew Sweet's *Girlfriend* album. The group started recording at the end of January with Verlaine producing, but no release date has been set. Verlaine also expects to release an all-instrumental solo album late this month.

Now that *Tin Machine* is on hiatus, guitarist Reeves Gabrels has been devoting his time to his

other band, Atom Said. The four-piece Boston-based group recently performed to a SRO industry crowd at CBGB. The band, a power trio fronted by soul vocalist Gabrielle Travis, tends toward art school grunge mixed with Living Colour funky reverie. A personal highlight was an unusually minimalist, hard rock cover of The Beatles' "Blackbird."

A thousand well-dressed fans recently crammed the Waldorf Astoria's Grand Ballroom for the seventh annual Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame induction dinner. This year's star-studded fete celebrated the musical contributions of Johnny Cash, The Yardbirds, Sam And Dave, The Isley Brothers, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Booker T And The MGs and Bobby "Blue" Bland, as well as electric guitar pioneer Leo Fender, songwriter Doc Pomus and blues greats Elmore James and Professor Longhair. It was a night touched with bittersweet memories, as so many of the inductees were long gone.

Keith Richards was on hand to honor the late Fender. Apart from explaining Fender's impact on rock, Richards proved for all that after almost 30 years with the Rolling Stones his sense of humor is still intact. "I hope this is going to be coherent," he said by way of introduction. "Leo Fender, the armorer of rock 'n' roll. He gave us the weapons. I think the stroke of genius is that not only did he make the [solid body electric] guitar, but he made the amplifier to go with it." He closed with what he termed the "Guitar Player's Prayer," solemnly saying, "Caress it. Don't squeeze it."

Aaron Neville inducted Professor Longhair, the most influential pianist to emerge from New Orleans, while Robbie Robertson honored Elmore James. John Fogerty and Carlos Santana gave a special presentation honoring the late Bill Graham and Johnny

Cash joked with Phil Spector, Billy Joel and Richards. Kathleen Turner and Oliver Stone were also among the gathered throng, as were Lyle Lovett, B.B. King, Little Richard and The Edge.

Neil Young offered a heartfelt tribute to Jimi Hendrix. "When you play guitar you can play or you can transcend," he remarked. "There are no boundaries as far as you can go in your own body or how far your mind can expand while you're playing, and Jimi showed me that. He was at one with his instrument, truly one thing was happening: no technique that you could take note of, no chords that I could recognize, no hand movements where I could go, 'This is what that is.' I didn't know what any of it was."

"I just looked at it and I heard it and I felt it and I wanted to do it," he added sweetly. "I said to myself, 'Maybe someday I could go to that neighborhood and feel what that's like.'"

All the former Yardbirds, with the notable exception of Eric Clapton, reconvened for the occasion. During an early evening press conference, Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck traded quips regarding the group's legacy. Queried about the group's greatest contribution, Beck responded: "We sort of laid the way for barbarism in music. We broke down the barriers of verse chorus verse, which I thought was the best thing ever. Not to have to sing *Monkees* type songs, have 20-minute guitar solos and set fire to things." Page demurred when asked about a *Led Zeppelin* reunion but admitted that if the group was named to the Hall of Fame he would attend the ceremony.

Construction of the I.M. Pei-designed Hall will begin in Cleveland this year, with an opening set for 1994 — almost 10 years after the concept was struck.

Tina Clarke

BLUE RODEO • SHADY MEN • 13 ENGINES...

We may have entered '92 with peals of doom ringing in our ears, but it's heartening to note the independent artists around who soldier on regardless.

Some fab indie offerings reached our desk recently. Retro garage-rockers **The Ten Commandments** turn back the clock with a *real* retro format, a seven-inch colored vinyl single. "Revolution Man"/"Dark Angel" is out on Sensible Records in a very limited edition. Windsor's finest, **Lost Patrol**, also have a new single out, "On The Other Side." They'll soon appear on a **Bobby Fuller Four** tribute CD.

Melodic Toronto rockers **The Lowest Of The Low** have released a highly impressive debut CD, *Shakespeare My Butt*. The Bard would likely approve of the literate pop of songs like "The Eternal Fatalist" and "The Taming Of Carolyn," and we applaud lines like "Remember that I know who's your favorite Pogue."

Also attracting attention around Ontario are **All Good Children**, a Hamilton quartet of real potential. Their self-titled indie cassette features cameos from **Kim Deschamps** (Cowboy Junkies) and **Colin Cripps** (Crash Vegas).

That pair were among the special guests at a **Blue Rodeo** New Year's Party at Toronto's Phoenix club. The band generously shared the spotlight with such fine local performers as **Jack De Keyzer**, **Lori Yates**, **Crash Vegas** and **Miguel Salas**, and the result was a fun, memorable night. One poignant note was that it marked the farewell of fine Rodeo drummer **Mark French**, replaced by **Glenn Milchem**. The lads have begun work on a new, self-produced album.

Coolest CanCon platter of the month has to be *Dim The Lights, Chill The Ham*, the second full album from offbeat instrumental-

ists **Shadowy Men On A Shady Planet**. Mixed in with original tunes with such evocative titles as "Ben Hur Picked Off In A Gazebo" and "Hunter S. Thompson's Younger Brother" are Shady versions of "Bang Bang" and "In My Room." Out on Cargo Records, this is scoring rave reviews in the States.

Speaking of Stateside success, Toronto singer/performance artist **Melyn Cadell** has been signed to a deal with Sire Records, and her *Angel Food For Thought* will be coming out in the U.S. this spring.

Gearing up for a new world tour, **Bruce Cockburn** and band played a surprise gig at Toronto's Horseshoe under the moniker of **Bambi and the Deerhunters**. To see this "conscience of a generation" loosening up and rockin' out on classics like "Bony Moronie" and "Mystery Train" was an unexpected pleasure. Great band he's got, too.

Caught showcasing for biz types at Ultrasound Showbar recently were **The Headhunters** and **Jonathan M.** The former are promising gritty rockers, the latter a Halifax singer/songwriter whose indie CD, *Following Yesterday*, reveals an *Images In Vogue* bent.

The same venue also witnessed **13 Engines** play a full set of brand new material that confirmed them as one of the best rock 'n' roll bands — anywhere! Word from mainman **John Critchley** is that they've been dropped (foolishly) by their U.S. label SBK, but will soon begin recording another album. Can't wait. Another favorite T.O. rootsy ensemble, **The Lawn**, have been recording a much-anticipated album with **Tom Treumuth** at the controls for **Hypnotic/A & M**.

On the other end of the musical spectrum, romantic troubadour **Dan Hill** is doing well with his new Quality release. The ballad "I

Fall All Over Again" was an adult pop hit in the States, and he's now on a Canadian tour.

The best news filtering over from the West Coast in ages is that **Joe Keithley**, leader of the be-



Lowest Of The Low:
Shakespearean
approval.

Melyn Cadell:
American Angel Food.

loved but defunct **D.O.A.**, has a record deal with Restless for his new band, **Instinct**. Expect an international release from them in the fall. Equally wonderful B.C. rockers **NoMeansNo** continue the process of world domination with planned summer shows in Canada, the U.S., Scandinavia and the former Soviet Union. 'Til next.

Kerry Doole



LAST GENTLEMEN • BAD EXAMPLES • MAYBE/DEFINITELY...

Tami Show:
aggressively easy.

blues legend Buddy Guy continues his winning ways. *Damn Right I've Got The Blues* garnered the great one his second consecutive W.C. Handy National Blues Awards for "Entertainer of the Year" and "Top Instrumentalist — Guitar," and a nomination for the "Best Contemporary Blues Album" Grammy.

Set for April is the long-awaited Zoo release, *The World Behind Your Back* by The Lastgentlemen. Named for a 1966 Walker Percy novel, the band is noted for its rampant ability to blur the timelines separating The Beatles and Badfinger from today's edgiest hip-hop, rock and pop. "We're not content to just think," said the group's Tommy Garza. "We fiddle with the atomic structure of our songs."

Bad Examples has signed a contract with one of Europe's largest independent record com-

panies, CNR. The Examples' initial outing, *Bad Is Beautiful*, has been shipped in the States by the Chicago-based Waterdog. "Not Dead Yet," the opening cut, was covered by Styx on *Edge Of The Century*.

Tami Show, the Chicago area's first rock band to make the Top 40 since the early-'80s heyday of Survivor, Styx and Cheap Trick, has had a second single issued off its debut, *Wanderlust*. "'Did He Do It To You' is made for the '90s," says the group's guitarist, Tom Gawenda. "It's aggressive and guitar-driven, but it goes down easy."

They're a no-frills, aggressive, alternative act. They're also egoless. Promo photos for Reaction Formation showcase torsos, tushes and toes — no faces. "Why bother?" says the band's Brian Steele. "Most bands are not that good looking."

New and noisy are Maybe/Def-

initely. Fronted by Michael Yerke, talent co-ordinator for cutting-edge nitespot the Avalon, the band opened recently for Aztec Camera, The Tragically Hip and Material Issue, and is receiving Midwest airplay with "All I Want" and "Tired Of The Run-around" from the self-issued album *A Stone's Throw*.

With care thrown to the wind, March Records' John McFadden said of his label's *Uncharted*, a compilation of unsigned heartland bands, "If we put 18 pretty cool bands on a CD, someone will dig something, and we'll all live happily ever after. It's best, you know, not to get too serious about these things. Besides, our CDs make great coffee-table coasters." Included on *Uncharted* are area faves Big Hat, Tuesday's Child, Beat Generation, The Burning Giraffes and Crossed Fire.

Wayne Jancik

San Francisco

Fungo Mungo:
fetchingly frolicsome.

FAITH NO MORE • DISPOSABLE HEROES OF HIPHOPRISY...

how about that fee-fi-fo-fab new disc from Fungo Mungo? These kids, all in their early 20s, have won a slobber-jowled following throughout the Bay Area with a sound that's funky, forceful and fetchingly frolicsome. Following in the footsteps of Primus and Faith No More, Fungo Mungo give off a Chili Peppers-style energy that marks them as potential stars. Check out their gut-pummelling *Humongous* on Island — this ain't no Wild Cherry, chums. "We named it after the guy in *Road Warrior*," boasts wiry heart-throb vocalist Damian Gallegos, breaking into an imitation of the character: "Chust valk away...dere has been too much violence." Does that give you a handle on this band? They're downright mad, max, and will be racing across America on a breakneck tour by the time you read this.

Speaking of Faith No More, that outfit has been literally all over San Francisco of late, putting the finishing touches on a new album, tentatively set for release April 28 on Slash/Reprise. As of this writing, guitar tracks were just being completed, but an FNM insider promises a "great, great record. Mike Patton's vocals are much better, and so are the lyrics. Honest Injun, it's excellent."

Also on the docket are new releases from The Sextants (hip urban songwriters on Impact), ex-Monkey Rhythm members reformed as The Spent Poets on Geffen, and the wonderfully countrified purebred angst of MCA's The Birdkillers, whose guitarist looks a lot like a werewolf. Pre-transformation, that is.

And — for those of you who remember punk and all it used to stand for — Flipper, God bless their miscreant atavistic souls, are

back and giggling, working up new material for a Def American "comeback" album, possibly to be produced by Rick Rubin his bad self. Haven't heard of 'em, you say? Rest easy. Def American will re-release Flipper's great godhead decade-old debut, *Generic*, to whet your appetite. Be warned: strange things are bound to happen when you play this bone-cruncher loud.

A tip of the backwards baseball cap to The Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprivity for their new single, "Language Of Violence," on Island. It's the first anti-gay-bashing rap song, and a giant step towards a non-violent, non-racist, non-homophobic musical future. Is such a thing possible? As long as groups have enough courage to confront controversial issues instead of cowering from them, you can bet on it.

Tom Lanham



BRIAN WILSON • WAX • THELONIOUS MONSTER...

Controversy continues to dog the original Beach Boy, Brian Wilson, along his 25-year comeback trail. A court settlement was reached in the conservatorship battle in which Wilson's family tried to wrest control over Brian's life from his longtime therapist and business partner, Eugene Landy. In the agreement, it was decided to appoint an independent arbiter while Brian also gave in to demands that he sever his professional and personal relationship with Landy for a period of up to two years. The case precipitated a media feud between *Billboard* editor Timothy White and *BAM* editor Bill Holdship as the two traded accusations in their respective publications, with White on the anti-Landy tip and Holdship defending the controversial shrink. White demanded a retraction from Holdship, threatening him with a libel suit. Meanwhile, producer Don Was has signed Wilson to his MCA-distributed Karambalge label, and is setting him up with fellow musicians like Carole King for songwriting sessions leading up to a gala, all-star "Tribute" concert like that one that resurrected the late Roy Orbison's career. Was won't put out the now-shelved *Sweet Insanity* record, which was turned down by Sire/Warner Bros. That incredible disc is currently being shopped around to interested parties, among them Def American's Rick Rubin.

Following on the heels of last year's successful "Rock The Choice" benefit at the Palace, which included Nirvana, Hole, Sister Double Happiness and L7, the Feminist Majority held another show at the Palladium to coincide with the 19th anniversary of the landmark Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Leaders of the hardcore punk underground band Fugazi topped the bill, with Pearl Jam, highly touted New York all girl

band The Lunachicks and L7 providing support. Femme power popsters L7 were celebrating the completion of their major label debut on Slash/Warner Bros., *Bricks Are Heavy*, which was produced by Butch Vig, the same guy behind the boards for Nirvana's breakthrough *Nevermind*. With that connection, plus the fact that they'd released an EP on the same Seattle-based indie Sub Pop, the wise-cracking foursome were busy fending off any "next big thing" queries with self-deprecating humor. "We'll be able to buy more thrift store clothes," says the band's deadpan singer/guitarist, Suzy Gardner, about any impending success.

Meanwhile, in other Nirvana news, lead singer/guitarist Kurt Cobain got hitched to Hole leader Courtney Love, who used to play with L7's Jennifer Finch in the San Francisco band Sugar Baby, yet another L7 link with the current PoMo pop metal crossover darlings.

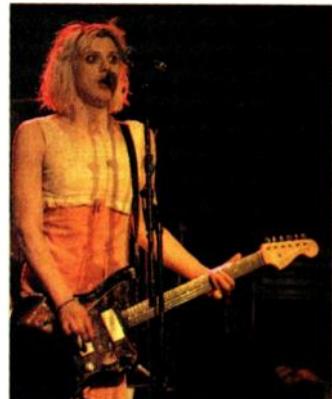
One more aggro-pop L.A. outfit that is generating some impressive word of mouth and industry attention is Wax, which cancelled a show at the local Club With No Name, where they were booked without being told, in favor of a special gig at a Del Taco smack in the middle of Hollywood. Fans and label weasels washed down sub-dollar fast-food burritos with Cokes while enjoying the hour-long set. The band subsequently took a meeting with an A&R executive at Capitol "just so they could climb on the roof of the Tower." Refreshing, ain't it?

Among the visitors to Metallica's SRO four-night run at the Forum was Los Angeles Raider "Robo-QB" Todd Marinovich.

After two years, local punk-funk aggregate Thelonious Monster will finally release a new album — not for RCA, which has dropped leader Bob Forrest and company, but for L.A. indie Rest-

less.

What currently red-hot rock group's gun-shy leader is dabbling in the hard stuff as he reacts to the band's incredible success by running out on interviews at



L7 (above) and Hole: part of the Feminist Majority.

the last minute?

Gross-out metal band GWAR's new Metal Blade/WB movie/record is dubbed *Phallus In Wonderland*.

The recession-ridden concert market has spawned some interesting bedfellows. Local rockers Dillinger recently performed a free concert at the Motorsport Expo, adjacent to Anaheim Stadium, as part of the Mickey Thompson Off-Road Championship Grand Prix, the premiere event in off-road racing. At least no one could tell 'em they were playing too loud.

Roy Trakin



ANDREW STRONG • JAMES • ROLLERCOASTER • THE LA'S...



Malcolm McLaren:
why would
record companies
be suspicious?

mitments, you'd certainly know the face and voice. Strong was the 16-year-old lead vocalist with the chubby face and whisky-soaked blues larynx. Although his set was drawn largely from the film's repertoire — kicking off with "Mustang Sally" and climaxing with "Try A Little Tenderness" — that was exactly what the audience wanted, and the few originals he showcased sounded like '60s soul retreads anyway. But what the hell, with a voice like that — and a five-album deal with MCA — what does he care?

Punk Svengali **Malcolm McLaren** — the man responsible for **The Sex Pistols** — was back in

Andrew Strong recently made his London debut to a packed house at the Town & Country club. You may not recognize the name, but if you saw **Alan Parker's** hit movie *The Com-*

*town to promote his TV musical *Ghosts Of Oxford Street*, which features an impressive array of guests, including **Tom Jones**, **Sinead O'Connor** and **The Happy Mondays**. He took time off to explain how **Madonna** "stole" his idea for "Vogue" — "She's the lady with an eye for the main chance" — and how he's treated like an outsider by record companies ("They've never liked me. They're always suspicious. I remember strangling **Richard Branson** [boss of Virgin Records] against the railings outside his office. Wonderful!").*

Bob Geldof — Saint Bob of Live Aid fame — was arrested when his arrival at London's Stansted Airport was delayed by fog. Geldof lost his temper when he was told he couldn't disembark, and had to be escorted from the plane by police, who put him in a patrol car to "cool off." He was later "de-arrested," but was unavailable for comment.

Bruce Springsteen fans have been tipped off in a criminal hoax where promoters advertised a nonexistent U.K. tour by The Boss, charging \$30 a ticket. Police seized over \$2000 in advance orders and had to advise disappointed fans that they'd been duped. Springsteen is planning a visit to the U.K. in the fall.

Manchester rock gods **James** are following the overnight success (after five years of hard slog) of the singles "Sit Down" and "Sound" with a new album, *Seven*, and a whole lot of the U.K.'s brightest lights are also releasing albums this spring: **Ride** have *Going Blank Again* on Creation; **Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine** follow their "Rubbish" hit single with their 1991 LP; highly rated duo **Curve** release *Doppelganger*; and even **Lush** finally finished their second album, *Spooky*!

Inspired by the **Jane's Addiction**-led Lollapalooza package tour, **The Jesus And Mary Chain**

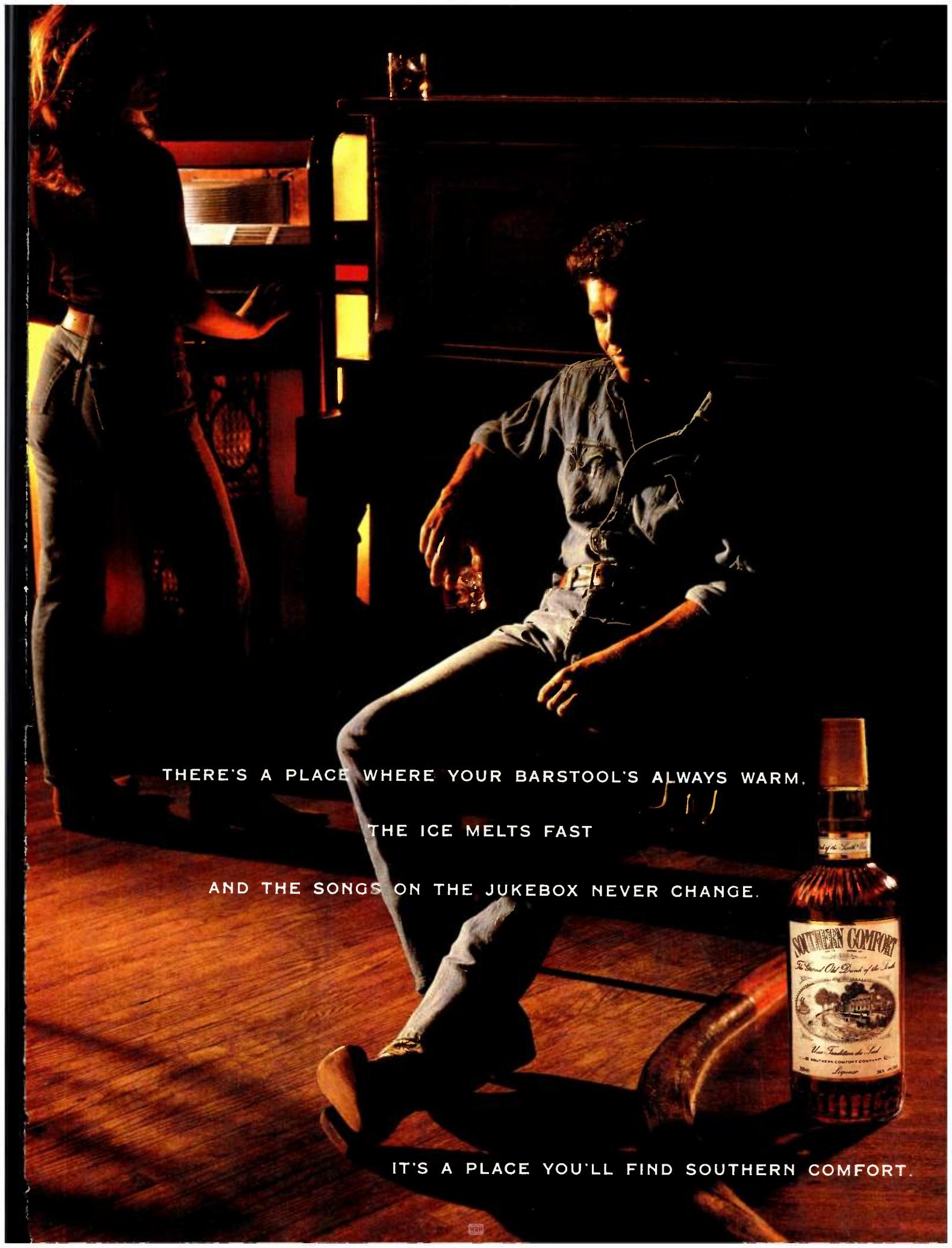
have organized their own version, going under the banner of **Rollercoaster**. The **Mary Chain** will headline each evening, with three other acts — **My Bloody Valentine**, **Dinosaur Jr.** and **Blur** — rotating their order of appearance earlier.

The **La's**, the Liverpool beat combo whose "There She Goes" was one of the best singles of 1991, have lost their bassist, **John Power**, which leaves vocalist/songwriter **Lee Mavers** as the only original member. The split is said to be amicable, and indeed Power recently turned up to watch the band play a show in Manchester.

Punk revivalists **Manic Street Preachers** seem to be taking the **Guns N'Roses** route to the top. Not only are they releasing a double album — entitled *Generation Terrorists* — but their recent single, "You Love Us," also featured a cover of GNR's "It's So Easy."

Rock journalists have long suffered the jibe of being called failed musicians, though the success of former reporters **Bob Geldof**, **Chrissie Hynde** and **Neil Tennant** has given us hacks a ready retort. Hoping to join the ranks of such exalted ex-typewriter bashers are **Chris Roberts** of *Melody Maker* and **Simon Dudfield** of *New Musical Express*. Roberts has emerged from a recent sabbatical under the name **Catwalk**, whose "Damascus" EP has drawn comparisons with **Bryan Ferry**. Dudfield, meanwhile, fronts the aggressively cocky **Fabulous**, who delight in media scandal — they stole a carpet from the offices of EMI — and full-tilt heroic rock 'n' roll, where they combine elements of their favorite bands, **Japan**, **Simple Minds** and **The Mamas And Papas**. So far they're a touch too derivative, but any band whose maxim is "We're living on a diet of sex and vegetable soup" need careful watching.

Johnny Waller/S.I.N.



THERE'S A PLACE WHERE YOUR BARSTOOL'S ALWAYS WARM.

THE ICE MELTS FAST

AND THE SONGS ON THE JUKEBOX NEVER CHANGE.



IT'S A PLACE YOU'LL FIND SOUTHERN COMFORT.



SOUND CHECK

CORROSION OF CONFORMITY

Nearly 10 years old, COC has always been one of the biggest, angriest draws on the hardcore/thrash-metal circuit. Two years ago they took their anger directly into the political arena, leading a campaign to oppose the re-election of censorship advocate Senator Jesse Helms. In February '91, COC signed a multi-record deal with Relativity. *Blind*, the band's first album on that label, is proof that COC has lost none of its ferocity through the years and personnel changes. "Musically, *Blind* is 1972 mixed with 1982 played in 1992," says drummer Reed Mullin. "*Blind* is America drowning in apathy, standing tall but rotting at the knees."

CAUSE & EFFECT

Having made a mark on college radio with the single "You Think You Know Her," then scoring a Top 10 *Billboard* dance hit with "What Do You See," the time is ripe for Cause & Effect's debut album, *Another Minute*. This Northern California-based duo consists of keyboardist Sean Rowley and British-born singer-guitarist Robert Rowe. Rowley has played keyboards for most of his life and got into high-tech music after hearing Human League and Depeche Mode. Rowe was inspired by British punk rock. What that adds up to, as Rowley says, is "an alternative sound with a mainstream flavor."



THE CHIEFTAINS

In the immediate wake of last year's best-selling Christmas album, *The Bells Of Dublin*, comes The Chieftains' *An Irish Evening*, a live album on RCA, recorded last summer during two dates at Belfast's Grand Opera House. Joining Paddy Moloney and his rollicking troupe of Irish-music veterans for those shows were Roger Daltrey, who sang an all-acoustic version of The Who's "Behind Blue Eyes" (the first single), and Nanci Griffith.

TOAD THE WET SPROCKET

January 16, 1991, was the day Gulf War started. It was also the day Santa Barbara's alternative folk-rockers Toad The Wet Sprocket entered the studio with producer Gavin MacKillop (P.I.L., Simple Minds, Shriekback) to lay down *Fear*. It's the first album TTWS have recorded since signing with Columbia (their third overall) and the first on which, as singer/guitarist Glen Phillips puts it, "we didn't want to use the studio like a nightclub — we wanted to do a lot of pre-production and really think about the arrangements." The end result is a broadening of the band's sound which will please old fans and reel in new ones.

LIVE

"Music has a way of moving people," says Live's singer Ed Kowalczyk. Upon first hearing the young Pennsylvanian foursome, Talking Head Jerry Harrison was moved enough to have the band fly to Milwaukee and record their Radioactive/MCA debut album, *Mental Jewelry*, at his own studio. As song titles like "Operation Spirit (The Tyranny Of Tradition)" and "10,000 Years (Peace Is Now)" suggest, Live are very serious about their music, setting high-minded, passionately spiritual lyrics to powerful, guitar-propelled rock 'n' roll.

MINT CONDITION

Formed almost a decade ago, Mint Condition have paid plenty of dues en route to their debut album, *Meant To Be Mint* (the second release on Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis's A & M-distributed Perspective label). The Minnesota band's six members bring a passel of African-American influences — African rhythms, hip-hop, jazz, gospel, funk, blues, rock 'n' roll — to the table, all of which contribute to a distinctive overall sound that's classified as R&B only because marketing departments need labels.

JOE PUBLIC

Though Joe Public's four members appreciate — and utilize — the innovations of hip-hop, one of this Buffalo band's missions is to get people appreciating live music again. Mixing influences like Sly Stone, Parliament-Funkadelic, Prince and Cameo together with the odd bit of sampling, scratching and rapping (all done by the band), JP's self-titled debut, on Columbia, ranges from the hip-hopish "This One's For You" to the superfunky "I Like It" to the thunder-sampling ballad "When I Look In Your Eyes" to the eyebrow-raising "Do You Everynite."

WILLIAMS BROTHERS

A few chromosomes and a love of music are about all twin brothers David and Andrew Williams have in common with their Uncle Andy "Moon River" Williams. Many years ago, as kids, they appeared on *unc's* TV show, but more recently they've been rediscovering the Everly Brothers and consorting with the likes of Peter Case, T-Bone Burnett, The Cruzados and Joe Ely. Their new, self-titled Warner Bros. album finds them headlining once again and pushing their vocal talents to the limit.

TANGERINE DREAM

Born in 1967, Edgar Froese's Tangerine Dream has become more of an inescapable presence than a band, lending its atmospheric synth-scapes to innumerable film soundtracks. Now featuring Edgar's guitarist son, Jerome, for its second Miramar album, *Rockoon*, Tangerine Dream takes a sharp turn into harder-rocking territory than it normally explores. The 11 songs, all co-written by Edgar and son, are dominated as never before by guitar, bass and drums. The Dream isn't over, it's just toughening up.



WAR BABIES

The Seattle onslaught continues with War Babies' self-titled debut album on Columbia. This five-man, very electrical band converged in 1989, drawing its membership from such metal-maniacal Washington State bands as The Fastbacks, Suicide Squad and Slaughterhaus 5. The band rocks out full-on with songs like "Sea Of Madness," "Big Big Sun" and "Sweetwater," and gets sensitive on the power ballad "Cry Yourself To Sleep." Says singer and newest member Brad Sinsel: "We don't do anything but play kick-ass rock 'n' roll." That just about says it all.

THE LIGHTNING SEEDS

After the alternative-radio success of their debut album, 1990's *Cloudcuckooland*, what else could England's Lightning Seeds do but start making *Sense*? The band's thusly titled second MCA album continues in the synth-pop vein so fruitfully explored the first time out. Terry Hall of The Specials co-wrote a number of tracks and The Icicle Works' Ian McNabb sings some guest back-up vocals.

COMPILED BY TIM POWIS



DEFFER THAN EVER

By Roy Trakin

From L.L. Cool J and Run-D.M.C. to the Cult, the Black Crowes and Slayer, producer/label owner/music fan Rick Rubin has had his hand in a lot of different projects. As he severs his ties with Def Jam, the label with which he integrated rap into the mainstream, he shares his opinions on rap and metal, the music business, running a label and freedom of expression...



“H my god, Becky, look at her butt. It is so big. She looks like one of those rap guys’ girlfriends. Who understands those rap guys? They only talk to her because she looks like a total prostitute, OK? I mean, her butt is just so big. I can’t believe it’s just so round. It’s like out there. I mean, gross...”

Sitting in front of a rough edit of Seattle rapper Sir Mix-A-Lot’s new video, “Baby Got Back,” taking notes on his yellow legal pad, 28-year-old Def American founder/owner Rick Rubin doesn’t look like a record company president worth more than \$100 million. In fact, with his wrap-around Ray-Bans, shoulder-length hair and flowing beard, he seems more like a member of ZZ Top or perhaps the Satanic warlord for such devil-worshiping rock acts as Slayer and Danzig.

But appearances can be deceiving. Tooling around town in his brand-new Rolls Royce, listening to his favorite album, Neil Young’s *After the Gold Rush*, the Long Island-born only child of a shoe salesman father and housewife mother is both soft-spoken and reflective, an intellectual who’s equally at home discussing muscle cars and Italian renaissance fresco painting. Like many of the acts he has discovered and/or worked with over the years, including the Beastie Boys, Public Enemy, L.L. Cool J and Andrew Dice Clay, Rubin is essentially a middle-class artist who is fascinated with street culture.

We have just come from a health food restaurant in Brantwood, where Rick has put his signature on the papers divesting his involvement in Def Jam Records, the label he started in his New York University dorm with his seminal “reduction” of L.L. Cool J’s “I Need A Beat.” Alongside his then partner, Russell Simmons, Rubin was one of the first people to make explicit the connection between rock and rap, bringing a stripped-down punk sensibility to hip-hop by adding a minimal thwacking bass beat and heavy metal guitar to such records as Run-D.M.C. and Aerosmith’s “Walk This Way” and the Beastie Boys’ anthemic Zep/rap fusion, “(You’ve Got To) Fight For Your Right To Party.” Rubin turns nostalgic, realizing that a chapter in his life is now complete.

“In leaving Def Jam, my vision was always to start again,” he explains. “Part of that decision meant knowing I was giving up a really successful part of my past.

“It would have been really easy to stay with Def Jam and make that work well, but

it seemed like this was a better thing to do. It wasn’t until I was a year into Def American that I realized how much work went into building a label from scratch, and how I had to give up what I’d worked so hard to build.”

Rick insists that he and Russell Simmons have never gotten along better than they do these days, even though he says the two have different approaches to business. “Russell prefers taking large advances,” he explains, “while I would rather bet on myself by making money if my projects succeed.”

That savvy business sense has been part of Rubin’s make-up since he was a kid growing up in Lido Beach, listening to the Beatles and Monkees, then turning to comedy albums by Richard Pryor, Robert Klein, Cheech & Chong, Chris Rush and even Allan Sherman.

And his parents never discouraged his musical exploits. “They were really cool,” he says. “While they always stressed I should be as good as I could be at whatever I did, there was not a great deal of stress on having to support myself or make money. I think that really benefited me artistically because so many people are concerned with paying their bills, they try to come up with different ways to make money. And that was never a necessity for me. I never had the feeling I ever had to make a dime doing anything.”

Responding to the nascent punk scene, Rubin was driven by his folks to rehearsals with bands like the Pricks and Hose, for whom he played guitar. Still, when he entered NYU, he planned on entering law school...until rap replaced punk in his passions.

“I started hearing things in the music,” he recalls. “I never had any aspirations to be a rapper myself, but I would go out to the clubs and hear stuff that wasn’t reflected on the rap records you could buy. The rap records at the time were really disco records, with funk horns and stuff on them. If Gloria Gaynor was singing over them, they’d be disco records.”

“Coming from rock ‘n’ roll, I understood those elements within rap, which maybe even a lot of the rappers themselves didn’t hear. To this day, people don’t see the connection between heavy metal and rap.”

But Rubin certainly did, especially on his production of the groundbreaking Run-D.M.C. collaboration with Aerosmith on the latter’s “Walk This Way.” “We didn’t do very much to ‘Walk This

Way’ to make it into a rap version,” admits Rubin. “But that’s what it was about. Everyone looked at rap like it was some foreign thing.”

“I remember having dinner at one label executive’s house, and he made a comment about some of the groups I was working on at the time. He said, ‘What do you attribute the success of these records to? It’s not music.’ And he was on my side! He was trying to be nice to me! ‘Walk This Way’ showed rap was music. The only difference was, black faces were singing the words instead of white faces.”

With such acts as L.L. Cool J, the Beastie Boys and Public Enemy on the Def Jam label, Rubin and Simmons secured a distribution deal with CBS, and Rubin mailed a Xerox of the \$600,000 advance check he received from the label to his folks as his way of saying he was putting law school on hold for the time being.

Rubin’s troubles with Def Jam started when CBS refused to release the Slayer album *Reign In Blood* in 1986. The record was subsequently picked up by Geffen, and Rick decided to split with Simmons, move to L.A. and start a new label, Def American, which was subsequently distributed by Geffen. His roster included Slayer, Danzig, a comedian who’d been plying his trade at comedy clubs for a while with little success named Andrew Dice Clay and the Geto Boys, a Houston-based gangsta rap group fronted by a dwarf named Bushwick Bill. Rubin’s love of roots rock and blues then led him to sign an Atlanta group called the Black Crowes, who were compared by many to an early version of the Faces or Stones.

“I just try to make good records I believe in and hope they can sell as many as they can possibly sell for the kind of records they are,” he offers. “Sometimes, as in the case of the Black Crowes, we can do that. But it can take a long time. I’m very happy with the records we’ve made. I think we’re in a very different business than so much of the rest of the industry. Sometimes I feel like an outsider. It’s difficult to get through barriers that are created by this other way of doing business.”

Despite the multi-platinum success of the Black Crowes, Rubin eventually ran into hot water with the powers-that-be at Geffen over such controversial acts as Andrew Dice Clay and the Geto Boys. In fact, when a WEA pressing plant refused to manufacture the Geto Boys album, Rick and the label parted ways.



RICK RUBIN



DANZIG



THE BLACK CROWES

"I was thrown out," he says without bitterness. "I woke up on a Monday and got a call from my publicist, who told me she got a call from the *L.A. Times* asking if we knew that our label was getting dropped. That was how I found out. The next day, I got a fax saying that our relationship was over."

Although most reports attributed the split to Geffen's refusal to distribute the Geto Boys, Rubin insists that there were other important reasons behind the break-up. "I was very vocal about Geffen going to MCA for distribution," he says. "I was against the move for me. One of the reasons I made the deal with Geffen was because I wanted to be in the WEA family. At the time of the switch, it wasn't as vital a time in Geffen's development as it was for Def American."

"Geffen was a powerful record company that could be distributed by anybody," he continues. "Def American was a brand-new label in its infant stages, and moving distribution would have had a tremendous impact on our company. It could've destroyed us. I was very vocal about my unhappiness. And if I had bailed at that point, it would not have been good for the morale at Geffen."

riding high with the success of the Black Crowes, Rubin began negotiating a highly complex distribution deal with Warner Bros., which reflected what he had learned the hard way in his experiences at CBS and Geffen. After months of negotiations, Def American signed a lucrative pact in the nine-figure range.

"The best thing about it is that there's funding for me to build a really full-scale, free-standing company to rival any in the business," exults Rubin as his driver Matt cruises to our next appointment, a Danzig rehearsal in Hollywood. "Of course, my vision of how to do that may be quite different than a lot of other people's. I'm not going to go out and hire 60 people tomorrow. I have a small staff with whom I've done well. I'm building slowly, based on what's needed as our roster grows. The company follows the roster, whereas so many new labels are started up by building these huge organizations without any records to back them up."

Def American now boasts 16 employees, not counting Rubin, and a slate of artists which includes the Black Crowes, Slayer, Danzig, Andrew Dice Clay, Sir Mix-A-Lot, ex-Georgia Satellite Dan Baird, Neil Young-like Minneapolis coun-

try rockers the Jayhawks, the Beatles-esque Chicago group Trouble, English booze-bangers Wolfsbane, L.A. R&B neo-traditionalists the Red Devils, launch-meisters the Four Horsemen and N.Y.C. gangsta rapper Pretty Tone Capone. The lineup reflects Rubin's wide-ranging tastes in music, from early pop faves like the Beatles and the Monkees to blues-rockers Aerosmith and AC/DC and punks such as the Ramones and Black Flag.

With the addition of ex-Triad Artists agent Marc Geiger, the mastermind behind last summer's Lollapalooza tour, Rubin has started to build an alternative roster by inking Scottish wall-of-noise progenitors Jesus And Mary Chain and San Francisco drone-punkers Flipper.

Rubin maintains that his artists dictate the label's business agenda. "That's the way all the great record companies that exist today were built," he says. "At one time, Warner Bros. was not Warner Bros. and Elektra was not Elektra. So many people are in this industry with the wrong motivation — whether it's financial or egotistical. The great record labels were established by real fans of music, whether it be Ahmet Ertegun at Atlantic or Jac Holzman at Elektra. Now, it's become such a big business that, for many people, that comes before music. Which is why you have accountants running record labels."

Rubin disagrees with the notion that a record label, like a shark, must continue to move forward to survive. "There's nothing wrong with getting big, but it has to be done the right way," he says. "It has to happen naturally and be rooted in the artists. If you have 30 great artists instead of 10, your company is three times as big. But it's not about staff, bottom line or gross billing. It's about quality, not quantity, but the more great records you can make, the better."

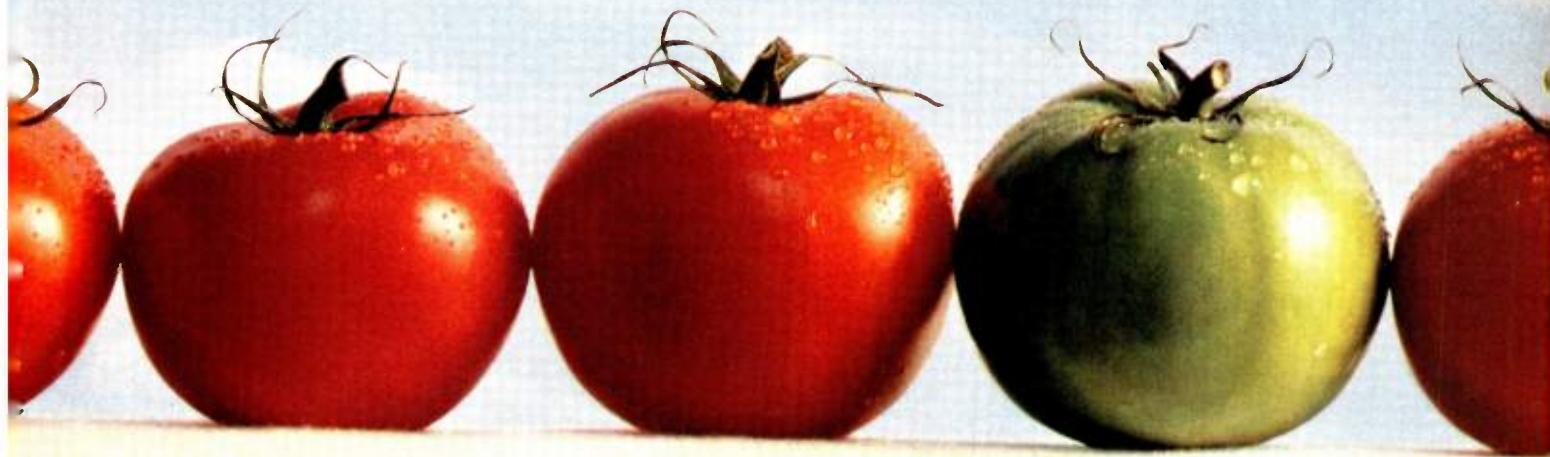
We finally arrive at Danzig's rehearsal, where Rubin's ability to communicate with his artists is in full effect. Putting on his producer's hat, he listens intently to a shatteringly loud guitar solo, making subtle musical suggestions that are enthusiastically received in the middle of a conversation about Thai kick-boxing and pro-wrestling, of which Rubin is a huge fan. As a matter of fact, he's even gone so far as investing in an entire regional pro-wrestling circuit based in the South.

And even though Def American's growth has curtailed Rick's time to pursue such activities as directing films (the Run-D.M.C. flick *Tougher Than Leather*), putting

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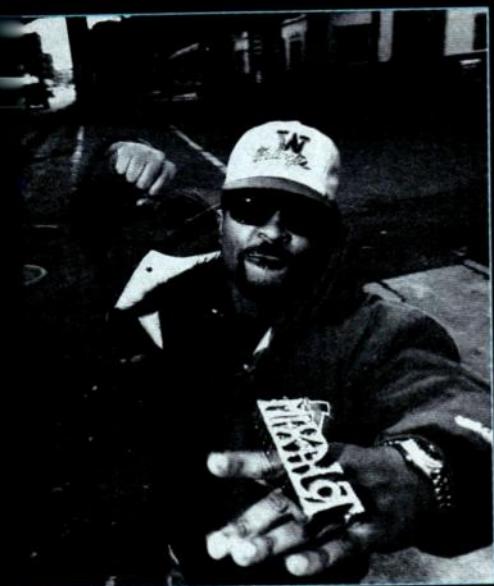
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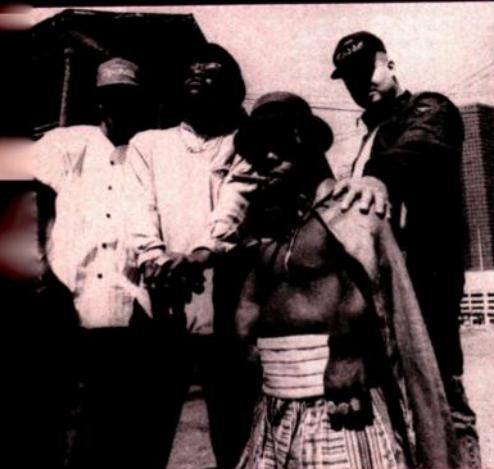
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together movie soundtracks (*Less Than Zero*) and producing other bands, like The Cult and The Red Hot Chili Peppers, he still reserves the right to follow his muse wherever it takes him.

"I've been very true to myself in wanting to be associated with what I like. Period," he says. "I'm involved with everything that comes out of this company. I don't try to keep a thread running through it, but there is, and it's me."

"As different as the records I make are — from Slayer to the Beastie Boys to The Cult — I believe they're very good representations of the artists through the way I perceive them. I don't try to put my sound on anybody. I try to help the band achieve what they're trying to achieve. I toss out all my suggestions, everything I'm thinking, and they can say, 'That's a really good idea, let's do it,' or 'That idea sucks, we're not doing it.' Some of my work very much reflects my taste, while some points out the fact I'm more of a fan of what the artist does, so I take less of a role."

A

fervent free speech advocate who doesn't shrink from controversy, whether it be the supposed Satanism of bands like Slayer and Danzig or the misogynist profanity and violence of the Geto Boys, Rubin defends artists such as Ice Cube, who speak their minds on record.

"In no way is he making racist comments," says Rick about Ice Cube. "And even if he was, that would be OK, too. People have to say what they think, whether they're politically correct or not."

"These people are not running for office," he adds pointedly. "This is not politics, it's entertainment. If you can't speak your mind in art, regardless of whether you're right or wrong, where can you? If you say 'No' to a Nazi, then you're saying 'No' to the opera. It's everything or nothing. On the one hand, I want to say, 'It's only art, it's not that important.' On the other hand, I want to say, 'It's art, it's the most important thing in the world.' The only right anyone has to comment about art is, 'I like it, I want to hear more,' or 'I don't like it, I want to shut it off.' Period. It's a personal decision."

Rubin also says the fact that he's Jewish never presented a problem in working with bands like Public Enemy. "At the time I signed them, Professor Griff was not in the group," he says. "Chuck D hosted a local radio rap show at Adelphi University and was not yet the political

spokesman he's since become. Not that I was against him getting politicized; he just wasn't when I was involved. I was a year out of the Jewish Defense League coming to my house with baseball bats."

And while he continues to defend the Geto Boys, Rubin remembers when the early rappers sought to escape from the ghetto rather than glorify it. "Afrika Bambaataa and Kurtis Blow didn't want to rap about gangsta stuff," he says. "Because they lived it every day, it wasn't anything to celebrate. They wanted to get out of there, so they rapped about partying, outer space or themselves. You can't really be in the street to talk about it. To people who are there, it's not glamorous. People there are fighting for their lives, but for us looking in, it's this exciting dark world, like a Clint Eastwood movie."

But what thrills Rubin the most is watching bands he's nurtured turn into arena-level acts, usually from the streets up, without MTV or press support.

"It's very exciting to see Slayer, whom I first saw at this tiny club in Brooklyn called L'Amour's, go on to play the Sports Arena here in L.A. without changing what they do. Word of mouth plays such a small role in the music business today, especially with the advent of video. Bands have such a short career span today. I believe a lot of the things I'm working with now stand to have a longer life. Slayer could go on being Slayer for a very long time. Most of the groups I've worked with have had the ability to have long careers, but again, so much of it comes from the artists."

As we emerge from the Danzig rehearsal, a thick pea-soup fog descends on Hollywood, which seems weirdly appropriate. The discussion turns to Rubin's current hot group, the Black Crowes, which many pundits have criticized as a revivalist band, the same old music packaged for a new generation that thinks the Faces and the Stones are ancient dinosaurs. Suddenly, Rick Rubin isn't such an anomaly after all, but merely the latest in a long line of rock 'n' roll pioneers, putting out music he loves and hoping someone else out there will love it just as much as he does.

"Passing the torch is one of the best things about music," he enthuses. "My favorite new acts are always ridiculed as being something old. But then again, everything comes from somewhere. What's new? What's different? The good stuff stays good. It's timeless."

And Neil Young continues to play on Rick Rubin's Rolls stereo. **me**

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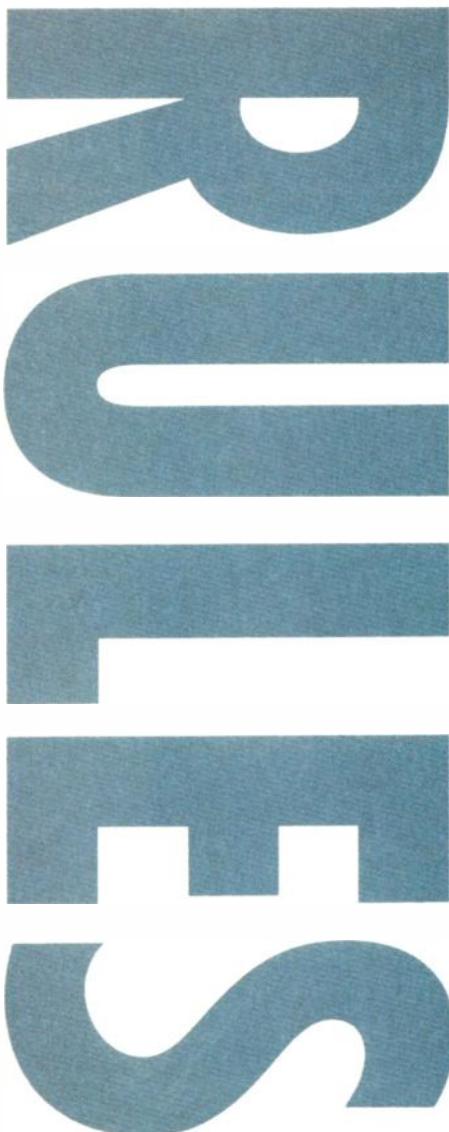
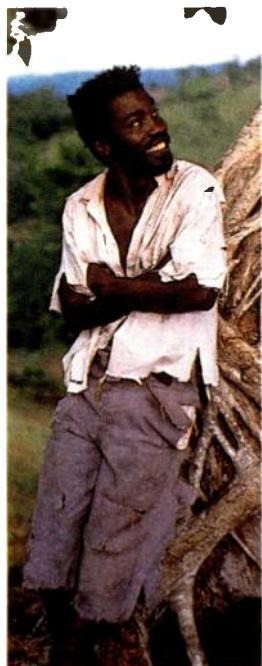


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***The Lunatic*, the first feature film by renowned musician/videomaker Lol Creme, promises everything one could want in a winter movie: sex, drugs, dramatics, a tropical setting and lots of reggae. And if the title character talks to trees, at least they're Jamaican red orchid trees...**

By Alastair Sutherland

Aloysius is not your typical motion picture hero. To begin with, he's mad. He lives in the woods, and his closest friend is a tree. He's also on speaking terms with bushes, cows, the stars and the moon.

But Aloysius leads a peaceful existence, and is tolerated by the townspeople, partly because he plays an excellent game of cricket. He's also tolerated because his home is Jamaica, and in Jamaica there are worse things than being crazy.

One day, though, Aloysius has a fateful encounter with Inga Schmidt, a large, manic German tourist who wants to experience the "real Jamaica." The two strike up a relationship—"Pum-pum meets hood," as the Jamaicans say—but the alliance leads to trouble, especially when the local butcher, Service Johnson, enters the picture. Johnson, who isn't mad but is definitely dangerous, persuades Aloysius and Inga to attempt a burglary at the home of Busha McIntosh, a rich white landowner who spends most of his time searching for a fitting mausoleum in which to be buried.

Such is the premise of *The Lunatic*, a new film from Island Pictures that's as different from the standard Hollywood vehicle as Aloysius (played by Paul Campbell) is from Tom Cruise.

Based on a book by the Jamaican writer Tony Winkler, *The Lunatic*, the first feature by Lol Creme, better known as a member of the groups Godley and Creme and 10cc, is full of lush scenery, thick Jamaican-accented dialogue and engaging humor. There's also reggae music (of course) and a sly social message. It's a movie that had to be made in Jamaica, and was, thanks to \$2 million (a shockingly low budget) and a colorful assortment of Jamaicans, Britons and Americans.

"Thank God they laughed," says director Creme, sitting poolside at the Sans Souci hotel in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, the day after *The Lunatic*.



tic's world premiere screening. "It would have been terrible if they hadn't. Terrible."

Creme, 43, has reason to be relieved. The night before, hundreds of Jamaicans had attended the screening at the Carib Theatre in Kingston. Promotion had been heavy, and speculation was rampant: would the movie be true to the spirit of the book? Would it be true to the spirit of Jamaica? Luckily, the audience's reaction was favorable, with howls of laughter, boisterous yells and lots of spontaneous applause. In other words, even if *The Lunatic* never plays in Peoria, it at least played well in Kingston. Strike one blow for authenticity.

"It was like losing my cherry," says Creme, poking, in fact, at a cherry floating atop his tall rum punch. "We thought the movie was good, but you can never really tell until it plays in front of a crowd, especially a hometown crowd."

"If it hadn't worked, I would have been devastated, but I would at least have had the consolation of knowing I'm leaving the island," he adds. "It would've been worse for the local people who worked on the movie who live here."

Actually, if the movie had flopped, it would have been surprising: Creme has been successful at most things he has tried his hand at. Born in Manchester, England, he was, with his former partner, Kevin Godley, a founding member of 10cc, the melodic pop group that had a slew of hits in the '70s and '80s ("I'm Not In Love," "I'm Mandy, Fly Me," etc.).

That alone would probably be enough to garner Godley and Creme a place in rock 'n' roll history, but when they moved into another medium — the previously untested field of music video — the results were equally outstanding: their directorial credits include award-winning videos like Herbie Hancock's "Rockit," Duran Duran's "Girls On Film" and The Police's "Every Breath You Take."

Finally, in 1988, after winning Golden Lion awards for their television commercials, the duo separated. "It was, after 29 years together, a very traumatic time," says Creme.

Godley became involved in environmental projects, while Creme moved to Los Angeles

to work in advertising. It was there that he first read the script of *The Lunatic*, courtesy of producers Paul Heller (*My Left Foot*), John Pringle (a Jamaican entrepreneur) and Chris Blackwell, head of Island Records and Pictures (his Jamaican business legacy includes the work of Bob Marley and the 1971 cult movie *The Harder They Come*, which starred Jimmy Cliff).

Creme liked the script and was familiar with the West Indies, although he'd never been to Jamaica (it was actually Eric Chapman and Graham Gouldman who wrote and sang the popular 10cc song "Dreadlock Holiday," which contained the memorable lyrics, "Don't like Jamaica — I LOVE it").

"When I read the script I felt like I already knew the characters," says Creme. "But when I finally did go to Jamaica, I fell in love with the country right away — the music, the style and especially the humor."

The movie took four months to make. The rugged Jamaican countryside posed a few logistical problems for the production crew, such as negotiating the sometimes treacherous roads and living and working in small, remote villages.

Finding beautiful locations was not difficult, however: among the sites chosen were the waters of Ocho Rios harbor; a little church in the village of Bamboo; the beach at Silver Spray Resort; the courtroom at the island's first port, Falmouth; and Hummingbird Hill, an estate overlooking St. Ann's Bay that once belonged to the late actor Peter Finch.

When it came to the cast, the initial impulse was to hire actors from England or the U.S., but principal investor Chris Blackwell put his foot down. "Chris was adamant that we use an almost entirely Jamaican cast, that this would be a true product of Jamaica," says Creme. "He said, 'If we can't do that, then let's not do the picture at all.'"

Blackwell, it seems, had been stung by the failure of *Countryman*, a 1981 picture that was filmed in Jamaica but used mostly imported talent, and he didn't want to make the same mistake twice. Thus the word Jamaica appears on the resumes of nearly all the actors in the film. Paul Campbell, the lunatic himself, was born in Kingston. (A singer and painter as well, he studied drama in Washington and worked as an artist in London.)

Carl Bradshaw, who plays the brooding butcher Service Johnson, is affectionately known as the "original bad boy of Kingston"; a veteran stage actor, he has also appeared in videos for Bob Marley, Aswad and Sly and Robbie. Reggie Carter, who plays the landowner, has extensive experience in Jamaican radio and television, not to mention one brief

but memorable bit of international exposure: a death-by-cyanide-laced-cigarette scene in the 1962 Jamaica-set James Bond film *Dr. No*.

Inga, the sex-crazed German tourist, is the only major part played by a foreigner, namely Julie T. Wallace, who's famous in her native Britain for playing the title role in the BBC miniseries *The Life And Loves Of A She-Devil*. Wallace, who insists that in real life she is "quite prudish, actually," says the hardest part of the role was mastering the German accent the character called for.

Then there was the pivotal role of the Tree, mad Aloysius' best friend. The Tree had to be near water, and it had to stand out from the other bushes and trees that the Lunatic converses with. "We must have looked at 300 trees," says producer Paul Heller. Finally a gnarled red orchid tree was selected (actually, it's two intertwined red orchid trees), and, after still more auditions, Reggie Carter was chosen to provide its voice.

Selecting the music for the soundtrack was another matter, and as strange as it may seem, given the credits of Blackwell and Creme, it provided *The Lunatic's* biggest controversy.

Island recording artist Wally Badarou compiled the songs, which include a mixture of old and new reggae ("Fire" by Aswad with Shabba Ranks, "Dancin' Mood" by Arrow, "Beautiful Woman" by Toots & The Maytals, "The Youth Of Eglington" by Black Uhuru, "Workey Workey" by Burning Flames) as well as Badarou's own instrumental theme song.

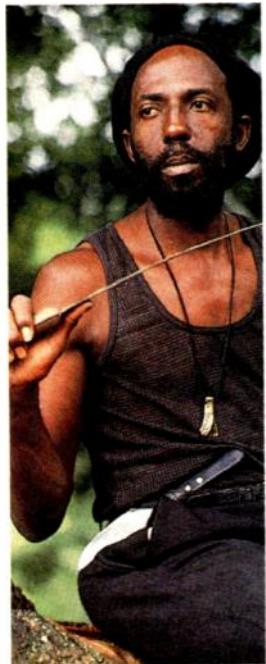
After the film's debut screening, though, virtually the only criticism from people in the audience was that there wasn't enough reggae. So it was back to the sound boards, where, in the words of Island Pictures executive Dan Genetti, the music was "pushed up and pumped out."

"We were a bit conservative with the music at first," Genetti says. "We didn't want it to affect the flow, or interfere with the dialogue. But Wally felt that it should be at higher levels and, after seeing the reaction of the Jamaican audiences, we took his advice."

The Lunatic is unlikely to knock the Hollywood heavyweights off the box office block this winter. But northern moviegoers longing for a taste of the islands and an offbeat slice of Jamaican life will not be disappointed.

Or, as coproducer John Pringle, a somewhat notorious Jamaican entrepreneur (his resume proudly points out that he has retired four times in his career, starting at "the early age of 34"), put it in an interview with the Jamaican newspaper *The Daily Gleaner*, "I think the film has everything...it has sex...it has dope...and it has all the dramatics of a robbery!"

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MOVIE ReVIEW

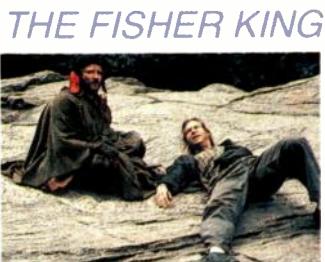
By Kerry Doole and Mary Dickie

GUILTY BY SUSPICION

• The charge? Making a bad and boring movie, wilfully wasting major acting talent and mistreating a fascinating historical era. The verdict? Guilty. First time writer/director Irwin Winkler should be sentenced to a life-long return to the job he can actually do, producing. He produced such classics as *Raging Bull*, *The Right Stuff* and *GoodFellas*, but foolishly decided to tackle this look at the Hollywood witch-hunt of the early '50s solo. How can you make such a time and place so deadly dull? How can you make the peerless Robert De Niro apparently sleepwalk his way through such a potentially powerful role — a film director who refuses to rat on his left-leaning pals? No easy achievement, but Winkler manages, largely through a ham-fisted script of the kind you'd expect from a TV movie. What a waste! (KD)



• I hate to say it, but I agree. The cast could have been great and the story is rich with possibilities, but this movie has a sluggish pacing that saps the scenes of any power. Why use Robert De Niro for a bland good guy role with no intriguing depths, and why waste a slew of good characters on a boring script? Even the sets and clothes have that fake feeling that prevents viewers from being drawn in. (MD)



THE FISHER KING

• *The Fisher King* proves that, with a director like Terry Gilliam, Hollywood can still come up with films that are both thought-provoking and heartwarming. Robin Williams has been reaping praise as the derelict haunted by demons, but Jeff Bridges, Amanda Plummer and Mercedes Ruehl are equally powerful. The strong female roles help prevent it from turning into a "New Men bonding" turn-off, although the naked frolics in Central Park approach that. The Holy Grail premise should have been left in Gilliam's *Monty Python* past, for the real richness lies in its character portraits and the morality tale they play out. There is the occasional slip into sentimentality, but that is easily forgiven. (KD)

• Terry Gilliam is a brilliant director, but why does he have to do the Holy Grail story in every movie he makes? In *Monty Python And The Holy Grail* it was obvious, in *Time Bandits* it was appropriate, but here it's just another confusing layer stuck on top of a complicated fall and redemption fantasy comedy (not to mention definite undercurrents of that male movement thing). It's a sweet story, and the acting is good (although I bet that both Amanda Plummer and Mercedes Ruehl will be overlooked while everyone lauds Jeff Bridges' and Robin Williams' over-the-top emoting), but Gilliam has loaded the film with too much baggage, and it collapses. (MD)

Top Left: Warner Bros. . Bottom Left: John Clifford Tri-Star Pictures . Right: Peter Sorel Paramount Pictures

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DEAD AGAIN

• Virtuoso British director/actor Kenneth Branagh (*Henry V*) claims he wanted *Dead Again* to be "classy in an old-fashioned way," and he succeeds in this totally entertaining murder mystery. Inevitably, an "old-fashioned thriller" is going to evoke references to Alfred Hitchcock, but Branagh's homage is far more convincing than, say, Brian De Palma's. He has two roles, one as a modern-day detective, the other as a celebrity in '40s L.A. Branagh's wife, Emma Thompson, also plays two roles, 40 years apart, and if this sounds confusing, you're right. Like the best whodunits, *Dead Again* keeps you guessing until the end. Romance spices the action, and the result is a reminder of how satisfying intelligent escapism (not necessarily a contradiction in terms) can be. (KD)



• This is a very clever mystery-within-a-mystery that works as yet another showcase for the considerable talents of Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson. This time they each play two roles, alternating between British and American accents and contemporary and '40s settings, and are highly impressive in both. The plot has a few sly twists that don't quite hold up when you're thinking about it afterward, but no matter: just enjoy the ride while it lasts. (MD)

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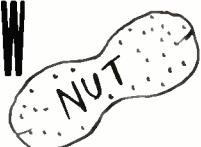
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Under Suspicion

By Iain Blair



It's Christmas 1959 and Tony Aaron (Liam Neeson), a divorce detective who sets up fake adultery cases with the help of his wife, is plying his trade as usual. But something goes wrong with one of his routine cases: he finds his wife murdered, along with a client who is a famous artist.

In the resulting scandal, suspicion falls on the detective and the two women closest to the dead man — his mistress, Angeline (Laura San Giacomo), and Selina (Alphonsia Emmanuel), his estranged wife. Helped by his only remaining friend in the police department, Tony sets out to clear his name. But the situation soon becomes complicated when he gets entangled in a passionate affair with Angeline.

That's the setup for *Under Suspicion*, a film noir-type thriller

written and directed by Simon Moore. Set in Brighton, England, and Miami, Florida, *Under Suspicion* makes good use of the antiquated English divorce laws of the era, which only permitted divorce on grounds of adultery, desertion, cruelty or incurable insanity, and which led, according to the director, "to this extraordinary situation where people had to arrange to go on 'dirty weekends' and be photographed, not with the person they were longing to leave their wives or husbands for, but with a complete stranger hired for this specific purpose.

"I thought the difference in morality between that time and ours would make an enticing backdrop to a thriller," he adds. "It has a lot of sexual overtones, and yet the idea itself is very unsexual."

"I think audiences will be gripped and fascinated by the story," says Neeson. "After all, there's sex, there's murder, there's crime, there's intrigue, there's double-bluffing and even triple-bluffing."

The stars and the director set out to capture the mood of the private-detective films of the '40s and '50s. Neeson and San Giacomo researched the period by watching lots of Cary Grant and Humphrey Bogart movies, as well as such film noir classics as *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and *Double Indemnity*.

"We were looking at those male/female relationships," explains Neeson, "and *Double Indemnity*, with Fred MacMurray and Barbara Stanwyck, was a classic where there is this definite mistrust between the characters. And yet they're playing off each other all the time, teasing each other and enjoying that sexual tennis match."

San Giacomo, who made such an impressive film debut in *sex, lies and videotape* and co-starred with Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, reports, "It was very helpful for me to watch the old murder mysteries and dramas to get a feel for the genre, especially as I haven't done anything like this before.

"They all had a very direct, bouncy dialogue. The characters don't necessarily think too much before they speak. They're very eloquent and they know what they want to say. It's a real sharp style."

"Those old thrillers told stories wonderfully and they were very literary," agrees Neeson, the busy Irish actor who most recently appeared in *Shining Through* opposite Melanie Griffith and Michael Douglas. "In scripts now, you're lucky to get a few lines. *Under Suspicion* also has a very strong narrative and a storyline that intrigued me."

The actor, who has known Moore for "about five years now," describes the script as "really wonderful. It really holds its own with any of the classic films of that genre, along with Hitchcock and more recent movies like *Body Heat*, say, or *Jagged Edge*." Neeson happily admits to being a fan of film

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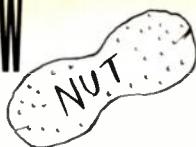


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Dentyne



Dentyne TWO FOR THE SHOW



noir. "I think we've all been groomed on them, subconsciously or consciously, and I think the more I've gotten involved in the film business, the more I appreciate them, because I see what went into them as regards lighting and the interplay between characters and how they tell the story.

"It's very much about dialogue, and there's not a great degree of characterization. You certainly have characters who play the roles, like Bogart and Peter Lorre and Sydney Greenstreet, but they didn't enact the characterization. They were who they were, and that's what kind of made them work, too. So I tried to do the same with this role. My character's Liam Neeson and what he stands for as a human being, to a certain extent."

Neeson sees women as his character's downfall. "He has a weakness for them, he simply cannot deny them," he laughs. "Tony is a charmer, a fly-by-night, and when he does fall in love, it's with someone he can't have. To me, he's someone who's perhaps a jack-of-all-trades, who gets by on a wing and a prayer. Literally, I think, Tony lives from day to day."

He fully sympathizes with his character, though. "I do feel sorry for people who get stuck in a rut and can't get out because they have no money or willpower," he says. "When Tony meets Angeline, I think his heart does begin to melt a little, even though he realizes he can't afford to give too much of himself."

San Giacomo describes Angeline as "a woman who is caged by her own choice. She puts up a lot of walls to protect herself from herself, as well as from other people. She struggles with being in love and not being in love and she doesn't make very good choices with the men she is with. So to suddenly find Tony Aaron — someone who wants to break through all those walls a little bit, who cares about her and wants to know how she feels about things — makes her think in a whole new way."

Since the success of *sex, lies and videotape* San Giacomo has been much in demand, appearing in *Quigley Down Under* opposite Tom Selleck, *Vital Signs* opposite Jimmy Smits and *Once Around* with Holly Hunter and Richard Dreyfuss. "I think the characters I play have something in common in that they're strong women and they speak their minds whether

people like it or not," she says.

How did San Giacomo, who grew up in New Jersey and studied her trade in the '80s at Carnegie Melon University in Pennsylvania, relate to a woman living in England in the '50s?

"I touched on several different sources in my research," she says. "One aspect was the social attitude of the period. It was very important to be normal, to go along with the crowd, and that's exactly what Angeline doesn't do. She becomes an art student, lives with men without marrying them, meets a famous artist who wants her to model for him, and then becomes his mistress."

She was also intrigued by the fact that *Under Suspicion* is set in a time that was "on the very edge of a social revolution that's just beginning. So she's living out what will become the dreams of people, part of the social revolution, to live this kind of bohemian life."

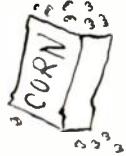
San Giacomo says she can relate to such sentiments, given her own background (her father works at a paper mill, her mother at an insurance company). "How did I get involved in showbiz? I think, when I was younger, I really liked to tell stories, and one of my theories about actors is that they're basically storytellers. In fact, I guess everybody who's involved in film loves to tell stories, because they're all part of it and working so hard."

For his part, Neeson, who began his acting career with the Lyric Players in Belfast and whose credits include *Excalibur*, *The Bounty*, *The Mission*, *The Good Mother* and *Darkman*, also stresses the need for "good stories." He finds it depressing that today's audiences "seem to have the attention span of hamsters — not only in America but in Britain, too. It's very worrying and I think it's got a lot to do with television and education. People don't seem to read books any more, and time is like a sort of MTV encapsulated moment — it's all so fast, boom boom boom boom."

Yet Neeson seems optimistic about the future of films that demand the audience's attention. "I think human beings still love stories and need them and always will. And stories have to be told, whether they be film noir or thrillers like *Under Suspicion* or westerns or whatever. It's important to keep telling stories."



Keith Hamshere/Columbia Pictures



Dentyne TWO FOR THE SHOW

WRH



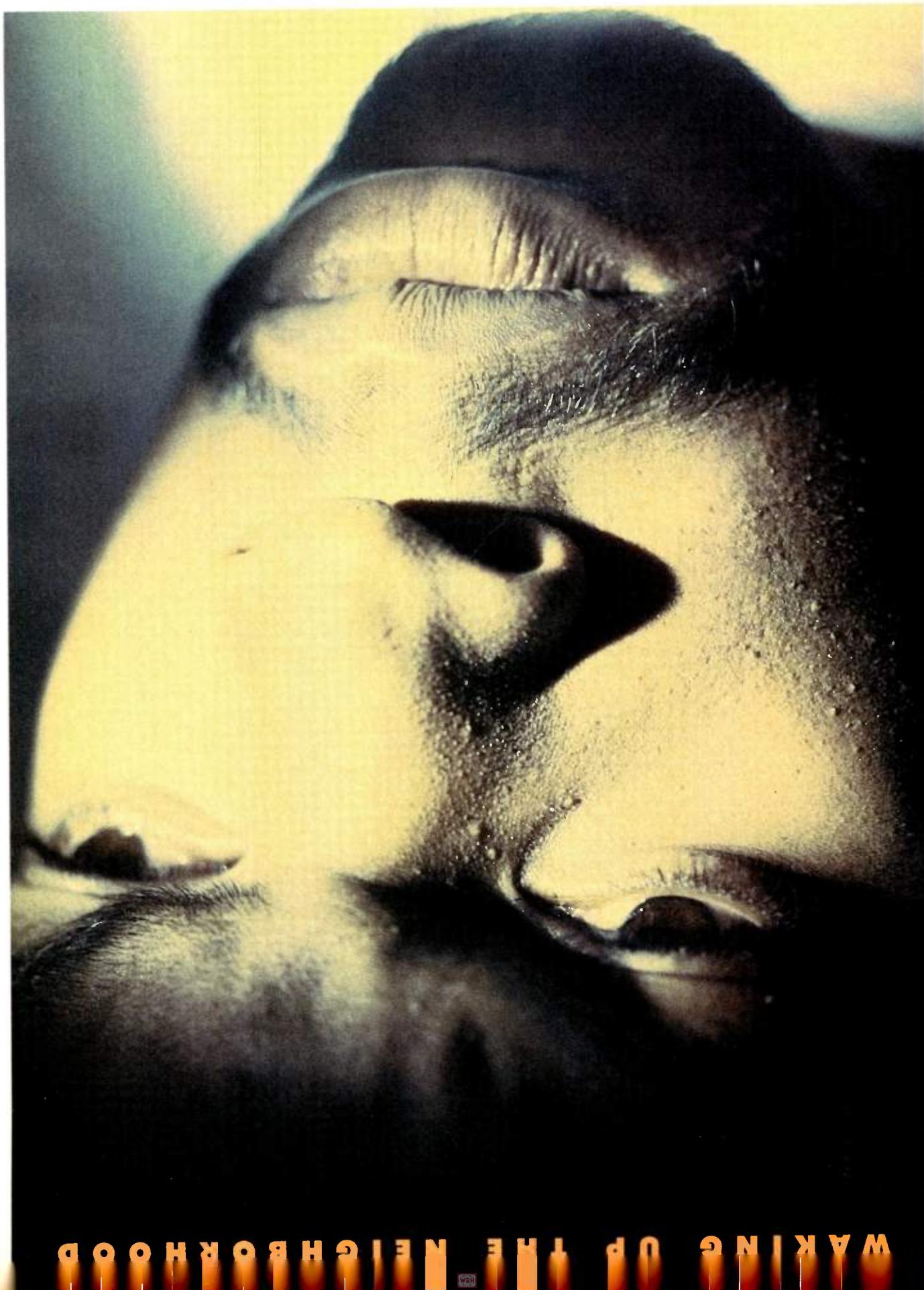
Dentyne TWO FOR THE SHOW



Dentyne TWO FOR THE SHOW



B Y R O V T R A K I N



W A K I N G U P T H E N E I G H B O R H O O D

WHD

He is, as he so bluntly puts it, "The Wrong Nigga To Fuck With," and Ice Cube has certainly ruffled a few feathers with his most recent album, *Death Certificate*. While his first two efforts after leaving N.W.A. — *AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted* and the *Kill At Will* EP — were both praised for their no-holds-barred view of the anger raging in the inner city, Ice Cube's latest has put him smack dab in the centre of a shitstorm.

Two songs have formed the basis of the attacks — "Black Korea," an invective against Asian storeowners, and "No Vaseline," a poison-pen letter to N.W.A. that takes a vicious anti-Semitic shot at their manager Jerry Heller, who reportedly ripped Cube and the band off for hundreds of thousands of dollars in royalties ("Get rid of that devil, real simple/Put a bullet in his temple/Cause you can't be a nigger for life crew/With a white Jew tellin' you what to do").

The outrage was immediate and widespread. The Simon Weisenthal Center, a Jewish human-rights organization, called for a boycott of the album, while *Billboard*, in an unprecedented editorial, said the rapper's "unabashed espousal of violence against Koreans, Jews and other whites crosses the line that divides art from the advocacy of crime," calling for "each of us [to] decide whether or not Ice Cube's record is fit to sell or purchase." Of course, that didn't prevent the magazine from taking the money for a full-page ad from the album's label, Priority, which clearly underlines the dilemma. Ice Cube's message is big business, and a lot of people agree with him. Whether that's cause for elation or despair depends on what side of the fence you're on.

Meanwhile, 22-year-old O'Shea

Jackson isn't letting the heat prevent him from getting on with his career. He was in Memphis and Atlanta in December and January filming *The Looters*, an action movie directed by Walter Hill (*48 Hours*) and co-starring fellow rapper Ice-T. The photos show the two Ices glaring out, Uzis cocked at their shoulders — just one more violent image of blacks set to invade a hostile environment on the brink of race war. Or is it just another make-believe diversion, another reason to munch popcorn and yell at the screen? In any event, it seems a disappointment on the heels of Cube's much-lauded acting debut in John Singleton's powerful *Boyz N' The Hood*, a role that had many touting him for an Oscar nomination.

"Hey, that's the part I don't worry about," says Cube coolly of any potential awards. "It's all politics anyway. It's just cool to have my homeboys come up to me likin' the movie. All that other stuff is hype."

No one who's seen *Boyz* can forget the film's final shot, with Ice Cube's character vanishing from the landscape, a victim of gang violence. The novice actor plays the character as if he knows what his own fate is going to be. It's a strong message, applicable to anyone trying to escape a cycle of failure and oppression. "When I read the script," says Cube, "I knew if we did it right it would be somethin'."

As for the new film, Cube has no apologies. "Walter Hill's real cool," he says. "Anything I felt uncomfortable with, he was willing to fix. Some of the lines for the black characters were kinda corny, so I had to put 'em in my own words and add some flavor. But, man, this is make-believe, know what I'm sayin'? It ain't real."

If the movies are just entertainment, then what are the records? Certainly we're meant to distance ourselves from the Ice Cube character's feelings and recognize them for what they are — anger packaged as product, frustration-fueled art, a warning that what's being described

is happening now and will keep happening if we don't do something.

"The records are different, because I'm in total control of them," he explains. "You can't take every single line I say to heart. There's some entertainment and there's some commentating [sic] about what's going on. I wouldn't want to lower it to that standard, but my records are kinda like television in that there are the actual programs, which are for the most part fake, and the news."

But these days, in the wake of *America's Most Wanted* and *JFK*, that line's getting awfully blurry. "It's like getting caught up in a movie," he nods. "You don't think: 'Damn, this is fake, they're reading lines.' You think it's real. But it's still only entertainment."

Which is precisely what makes it so easy to get caught thinking the attitudes Ice Cube expresses — which some would call misogynist and racist — are real.

"The larger story is, there's a problem and this is our only network to express it," says Cube, echoing Chuck D's proclamation that rap is black youth's CNN. "This is our only uncensored media for young black kids to get exactly what we want to see out on record. Though rap music is entertainment, some rappers put their political statements on record in an entertaining fashion, so the message still gets out, but it doesn't end up like school or something."

Unlike the victim of violence he portrayed in *Boyz*, Ice Cube was raised in a two-parent family in South Central L.A. "I had both my mother and father there, and that had an impact on me," he recalls. "Every time I went the wrong way, ever time I did dumb shit, my pops was there to go, 'Wait a minute.'"

So he got into sports, then music. He joined some other boyz in the 'hood to form the seminal gangsta rap group N.W.A., whose *Straight Outta Compton* album hit the streets in 1988 like a molotov cocktail. Cube wrote or co-wrote nine of the album's 13 tracks, including "Gangsta Gangsta" and the notorious slam at L.A.P.D. violence against blacks, "Fuck Tha Police." Was it prescience or prophecy that the song was followed two years later by the infamous Rodney King beating incident?

"The only way my records are self-fulfilling is that what they say gonna come true sooner or later," insists Cube. "That's why you predict things — because you think they're going to come true. If you see something bad that's about to happen, do you say, 'Yo, this is gonna happen,' or do you just hold it in and think, 'If I say this is gonna happen, are they gonna call me racist?'"

If *Straight Outta Compton* stirred the shit, though, it really hit the fan on *Death Certificate*. Divided into two sides — a vision of how things are (death) and one of how they might be (life) — the album has a definite agenda, with Cube urging his fellow African-Americans to unite as a people and succeed on their own before attempting to tackle the white world. That separatist message has been influenced by Ice's recent conversion to Louis Farrakhan's controversial Nation of Islam, an organization whose allegedly anti-white and anti-Semitic bias has fueled the debate over the new album.

"I hang out with the brothers," he acknowledges. "We go here and there, we talk, we look at tapes. It's an educational process. I get something from them I can't get in school — that they're scared to teach at school. Everybody wants to say something negative about them, because they are speaking things that not every person in America cares to hear. It's not like people wanna see us get up. Or wake up. That ain't new world order. Let 'em sleep."

In "Black Korea," Ice Cube raps: "So don't follow me up and down your market/Or your little chop suey ass'll be a target/Of a nationwide boycott/So pay respect to the black fist/Or we'll burn your store right down to a crisp."

Cube insists that's merely a warning: if Asian shopowners in black neighborhoods don't start treating their customers with respect, the community will respond with a boycott...or worse. But how are those sentiments any different than, say, David Duke's notions of segregation and racial purity?

"I knew the record was gonna stir up a lot of dialogue," he admits. "But the accusations of me being anti-this or anti-that came as a shock. To compare me to David Duke is a total insult. I'm nothing like that. What I'm saying is this: I have no problem with Koreans coming into black neighborhoods. But if we shop at their stores, put their kids through college and bring their relatives over to live from money we spend there, at least pay us back with respect. That's all I'm saying: 'Pay respect to the black fist or we'll help you move.'"

Shortly after he cut the track, a young black girl was shot to death by a Korean grocer.

"I wouldn't want to lower it to that standard, but my records are kinda like television in that there are the programs, which are fake, and the news."

Cube doesn't take responsibility for the incident; he argues that it just proves his point. "All I ask for is to be treated as a customer," he says. "That's all black people have been asking for for years. Respect us as human beings. It's just like in *Do The Right Thing*, where they burn the pizzeria. All those kids wanted was some respect."

Violence begets violence, though, and it's no surprise that Ice Cube sees a race war looming. "People have been racists all along," he insists. "It's like trying to put a water balloon inside a cup. It just keeps expanding until, sooner or later, it explodes."

"I just tell it like it is, how I see it. Americans want us to play fair while they still have a foot on our neck. They wanna say, 'It's OK. We're not racist any more. Everything is cool. Everything is fair. Sorry for what we did.' You gotta not only bandage the wound, but heal it. Then we can be equal."

Many people have accused Ice Cube of making that process impossible with his vitriol. "On my first two albums it was cool, because people thought it was reality rap," he says. "But when people outside the black community start seeing themselves in my

records, they maybe don't like what they see. Now it's not reality any more, but racism."

"If I don't respect you, your criticism has no effect on me. If the kids like the record, the kids are gonna buy the record. They're the ones coming up to me, sayin' they love what I do. Most of these journalists got the record for free anyway. Their opinion has no effect on me or my fans."

As for the controversy over "No Vaseline," which along with "Black Korea" has been removed from copies of the album to be sold in Britain by the record's U.K. distributor, Cube insists the song is more of a jab at N.W.A. and its manager than it is at Jews.

"I had to describe him in some way, and my lawyers told me if I used his name, he had grounds to sue me," explains Cube. "So I thought of another way to describe him, so everybody would know who I'm talking about. He is Jewish. I don't get offended when

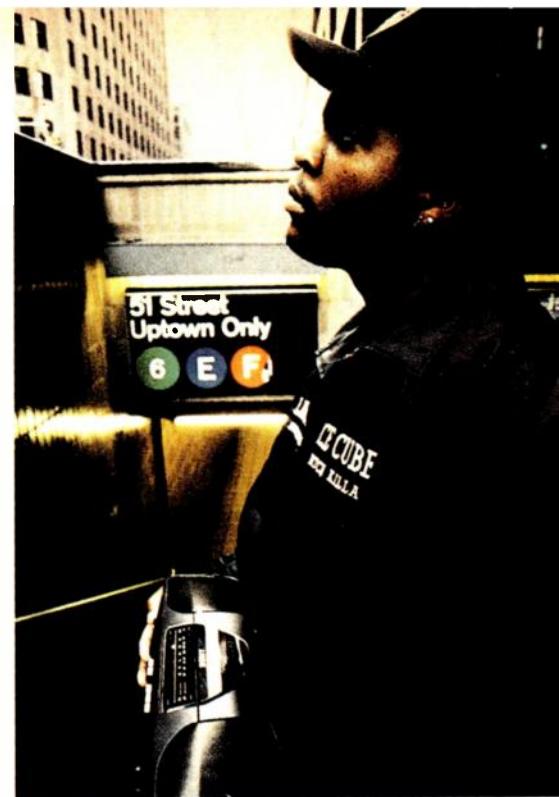
someone calls me black."

"I don't see how people can get mad over that unless they're guilty of the same thing. Why didn't they complain about all that stuff I said about Eazy-E? I mean, their manager doesn't even care about what I said. Anyone who's followed the history of hip-hop records knows dis records have been made ever since 'Roxanne Roxanne.' This is part of rap and it's gonna continue being part of it."

"Y'see, no one follows their history. Nobody looked into what Jerry Heller said about me, or how N.W.A. dissed me. But when I make statements about them on record, everybody says I hate Jews. How could I hate Jews when I'm talking about N.W.A.? It doesn't make sense. If there's a real grudge, it's probably about competition."

Anyway, there's a world of difference between the cartoon-violence mentality of N.W.A. and the documentary-style neo-realism of Ice Cube. "If I'm gonna tell a story, I'm gonna tell it real," Cube says. "N.W.A.'s all shooting and no substance. My records are like picking up the newspaper."

Of course, no newspaper uses Ice Cube's wonderfully inventive wordplay, which coats



the bitter pill of its anger with street humor. "It's entertainment," agrees Ice. "If we had the media outlets to talk about things, you wouldn't have records like this."

There is another side of Ice Cube, one the public doesn't see as much of. During last winter's holidays, he handed out turkeys to the poor of South Central. Recently, he contributed \$25,000 to a hospital in the community which the county refused to fund. Despite accusations of misogyny, he's boosted the career of female rappers such as Yo-Yo and engaged in public debates with the likes of '60s black activist Angela Davis. After his much-criticized spots for St. Ides Malt Liquor — the company accused of exploiting alcoholism among young blacks with its rap-oriented marketing campaign — he agreed to donate a portion of the income to a Korean grocer's association to help smooth over the outrage generated by "Black Korea." He still lives near the Crenshaw district where he grew up, and while he's made it in a white man's world, he puts some of those earnings back into his home turf.

"I have no problem with blacks going into a white power structure and gaining," he says. "It's when they don't put back that it becomes a problem. We have to strive for unity."

"Ice Cube is not about getting out of the neighborhood. I'm about trying to change the neighborhood. What I'm tryin' to say to kids is that it's harder to be on the streets hustlin' than it is to go to school. The opportunities are there. It's just that certain people are going for 'em and certain people aren't."

Count Ice Cube among the former.

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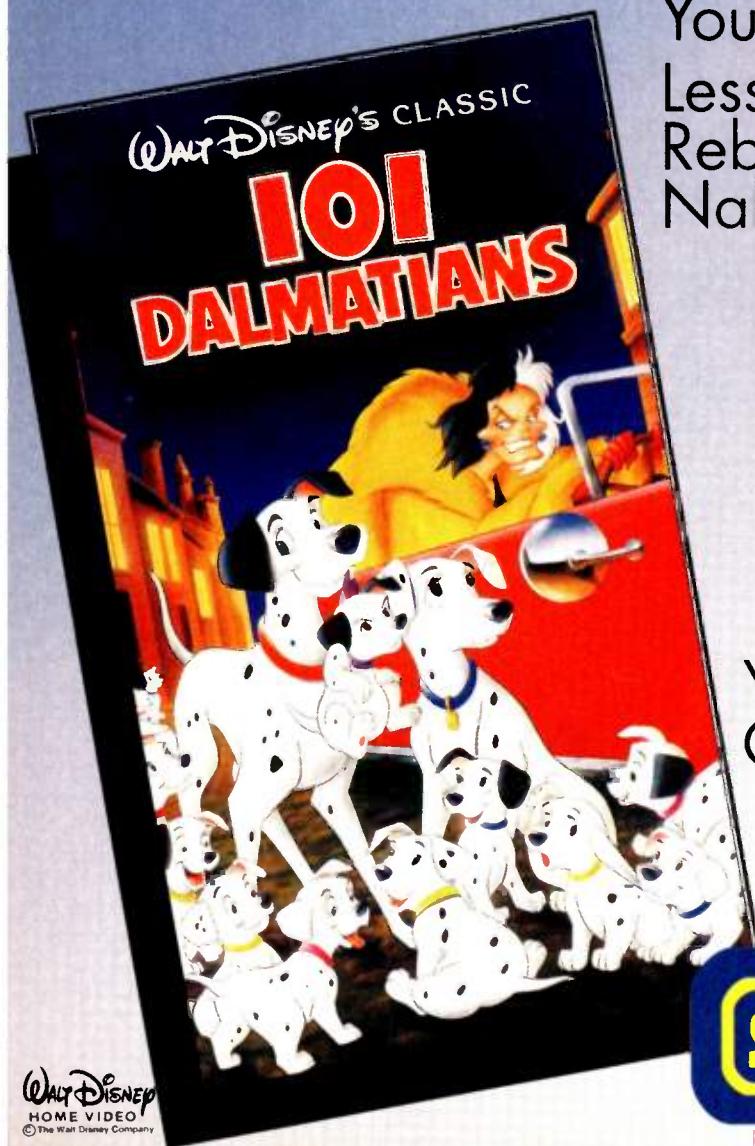
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New Releases

(E)

A Man Called (E)

Polydor

In spite of evidence to the contrary, there are people who think Elvis is alive, probably in Kalamazoo serving up jelly doughnuts and beer at a 7-11. Brian Wilson, on the other hand, appears to be alive, but the songwriting genius behind Beach Boys classics like "Good Vibrations" hasn't been heard from in quite a while. At the risk of sounding like I'm buying into a cosmic Brian Wilson equivalent to the Elvis 7-11 theory, I'll propose a bit of evidence to support the notion that Brian Wilson's creative spirit has quite possibly taken residence elsewhere, in an artist who calls himself (E). On his debut effort, simply titled *A Man Called (E)*, Wilson's wistful melancholy and tainted hopefulness, as well as his delicately quirky melodicism and dense production smarts, are stamped everywhere as primary sources of inspiration. Not only that, but (E)'s persona is a humorously idiosyncratic loser Woody Allen-meets-Brian Wilson in the sandbox mentality. (E) has also tapped into the soul of *White Album* Beatles, *Tumbleweed Connection*-period Elton John and early Todd Rundgren. Whatever it is, I'm glad to know that there is someone out there who has absorbed the work of these pop geniuses enough to not only personify their spirit, but maintain an artistic voice of his own. So who is this (E)? And what does he stand for? Enigmatic? First off, record label people insist that he's only known by that moniker (sure!). Secondly, he's described as this compulsively creative guy from Virginia who has operated for a long time in some kind of self-imposed therapeutic musical woodshedding, and has been rejected by practically every record label. Thirdly, he played practically every instrument on this impres-



sive collection, including toy piano on the "Symphony For Toy Piano In G Minor." For all I know, he's an L.A. session-head knocking off a closet vanity project. Regardless, the effort in creating this pop gem has paid off handsomely, with wonderfully crafted pop songs like "Hello Cruel World,"

"Fitting In With The Misfits," "Are You And Me Gonna Happen," "Nowheresville" and... Good lord, I'm going to end up listing whole album. All I can say is that it's going to take a hell of a strong year to knock *A Man Called (E)* off my Top 10 for '92.

Rick Clark ****1/2

(E): something cool
is happening.

New Releases

THE CHURCH

Priest = Aura

Arista

The only real surprise with this fine album is that The Church stayed together to record



The Church: it would be easy to laugh at their pretension, but they do it so well!



Wendy MaHarry: screaming to be discovered.

yet somewhat haunting voice again complements the extravagantly colorful lyrics and evocative soaring guitars, and the result is unconventionally entertaining. It would be easy to laugh at The Church's literary and musical pretension (song titles here include "Aura," "Lustre," "Paradox," "Chaos") if not for the fact that they do this stuff so well. Besides, a line like "the best impression of a succubus I have ever seen" is damn educational. Did you know a succubus is "a female demon that has sexual intercourse with sleeping men"? Me neither, 'til now! And isn't it more fun to chant along to a chorus that goes "they say that he's famous from the waist down, but the top half of his body is a corpse" than to all that "work your body, party all night" crap? This ain't a cult for everybody, but it's good to have The Church around.

*Kerry Doolittle *****

CHARLIE PATTON
King Of The Delta Blues

Yazoo

Charlie Patton was the Mississippi Delta's first blues celebrity. In his brief recording career, from 1929 until his death in 1934, Patton left a musical legacy that was unequalled in the blues. His hard-swinging, percussive guitar playing and dramatic, sonorous baritone, combined with a penchant for clownish behavior while performing, made Patton an unparalleled entertainer. This 23-track disc, which includes both blues and religious songs, is an essential companion to Yazoo's classic *Charlie Patton: Founder Of The Delta Blues*. The same company has also released *Masters Of The Delta Blues*, an all-star compilation of material from some of Patton's friends, among them Son House and Tommy Johnson. Though Patton played the same plantation parties as other bluesmen, he was a more innovative, sophisticated artist. Blues was dance music, and when Patton

used syncopated rhythm in his songs, a revolutionary recasting of black music was forged. His contemporaries neither understood nor mastered this style. Further distancing himself from the rigid playing patterns of his competition, Patton created jagged counter-rhythms by pounding on his guitar and stomping his feet. Yazoo's remastering of Patton's old 78s has yielded spectacular results, even though the recordings remain rough, full of crackles and omnipresent hiss. As both dance music and a historical document of American popular music, Charlie Patton's harsh, beautiful blues and compositional genius are indispensable.

*Allan Wood ******

WENDY MAHARRY
Fountain Of Youth

A&M

Fountain Of Youth is the kind of album that overwhelms you with its simplicity. A talented artist as well as a prolific songwriter, MaHarry paints a form of aural imagery which contrasts between color and starkness, depending on the mood of her song. Like Sinead O'Connor and Joni Mitchell, MaHarry relies mainly on her voice to carry a song's impact, occasionally embellishing the arrangements with simple piano accompaniment but rarely overpowering the tracks with instrumental clutter. The almost fragile opening of "Don't Let My Heart Break" effectively sets the album's tone, and although she switches moods with a couple of uptempo numbers like "Too Busy Looking Out My Window" and "How Do I Get Over You," it's the more subtle arrangements on "Don't Ask Me," "Until Now" and "Brother" that really sparkle. A newcomer who sings and performs with real conviction, MaHarry has fashioned a gem of a record which literally screams to be discovered.

*Keith Sharp ****



New Releases

BOOTSauce

Bull

PolyGram

Just what the music world needs, right? Another band stirring up chunks of funk and rock and seeing what sticks to the pot. This genre is already overpopulated and overblown, yet Bootsauce is able to spice it up with a genuinely refreshing, entertaining effort — and that's no *Bull*. The Montreal quintet won friends and sold a decent amount in Canada with its *The Brown Album* debut, and *Bull* marks the band as ready-for-prime-time international players. Their hometown is a place where sex oozes from the cracks in the sidewalk, and there's a fittingly sleazy, sensual side to Bootsauce's music. Singer Drew Ling has a deep, somewhat sinister voice (and visage), and his comrades have enough chops to level a small forest. The fact that they produced the bulk of *Bull* themselves is testimony to their self-confidence, and the result is a bravely versatile work. When you read the credits and spot guest appearances from Lemmy and Phil of Motörhead, Mike Howe from Metal Church and the Heavy Metal Horns, you brace yourself for a sonic storm, but, aside from the manic "Hold Tight," the feel is more foreplay than aggravated assault. A song like "Watcha Need" has a melodic, hypnotic pop sound that begs for airplay, while "Rollercoaster's Child" borrows from and pays homage to the 1976 Ohio Players smash, "Love Roller Coaster." Given that Bootsauce scored with an earlier cover of another disco-era hit, Hot Chocolate's "Everyone's A Winner," this could connect, while "Love Monkey No. 9" another potential winner. This record marks Bootsauce's crucial opportunity, and they seize the *Bull* by the horns in fine style.

Kerry Doole ****

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Palatine

Factory/PolyGram

When Factory undertook the ambitious task of opening FAC 51 — Manchester's now-notorious Hacienda nightclub — their slogan was elegantly simple: "The Hacienda Must Be Built." A similar comment might be made about FAC 400: "Palatine — The Story Must be Told." Just as the Hacienda is an integral part of Britain's — in particular Manchester's — musical life, so is Factory the record label. *Palatine* is Factory's story spread over four thematically divided albums: Vol. 1: *Tears In Their Eyes* deals with the label's earliest post-punk releases; Vol. 2: *Life's A Beach* is dance tracks from the mid-'80s; Vol. 3: *The Beat Groups* collects the label's guitar bands and Vol. 4: *Selling Out* covers Factory's recent history. Inevitably, for a label based in a city where the line between rock and dance was blurred before "Manchester" was even a spot on the media's horizon, there's some overlap. (New Order make all four discs.) Also inevitably for a label with a 12-year history, there are some bloody awful moments. But far from making *Palatine* unlistenable, its occasional unevenness helps put the best moments in context. Thus, the four Joy Division cuts serve not only as a reminder that the band's studio work relied heavily on the tension between the late Martin Hannett's chilling production and the band's collective passion, but also contrast with the bands it influenced. Away from the JD/New Order/Electronic/Revenge connections, Happy Mondays' Shaun Ryder shows why he's the best lyricist of his generation with "Kuff Dam" and the early manifesto "24 Hour Party People." James contribute the early tracks "Folklore" and "Hymn From A Village." Meanwhile, in a parallel universe, A Certain Ratio reinvent funk with "Flight" and "Shack Up." These are the high-

lights, but *Palatine* also finds room for Cabaret Voltaire, Cath Carroll, Northside, Durutti Column, OMD, The Railway Children and such forgotten gems as The Distractions' '79 single "Time Goes By So Slow." *Palatine* comes as close as any one-label set is likely to in conveying the spirit of British pop's last 12 years.

Jonathan Wright ***

THE WEDDING PRESENT

Seamonsters

First Warning/BMG

Love, it seems, ain't been very good to The Wedding Present's singer, David Gedge. On *Seamonsters*, Gedge applies his shaky baritone to 13 songs about love's tangled web of longing, lies, resentment, guilt, betrayal, recriminations, broken hearts... all the stuff that hurts. As current vogue dictates, every tune here has an enigmatically terse name like "Suck," "Love-nest," "Corduroy," "Octopussy" or "Niagara." As current vogue also dictates (in Britain, anyway), the guitar sound is drony, ragged and BIG. "Dare" winds up with an instrumental blitz that sounds much like the rave-up in the middle of Sonic Youth's "Expressway To Yr Skull." Elsewhere, the band seems indebted to My Bloody Valentine and, especially in "Dalliance" and "Rotterdam," to the Velvet Underground. The recipe is tasty, if not very original, getting extra zing on the album's first half from Yankee noise-palooka Steve "Rapeman" Albini's aggro-rock production job. But from "Carolyn" on, the music flattens, bringing the shticky flavor of Gedge's painsong vocals into irritating relief. It's as if, after netting seven compelling sea monsters, The Wedding Present grew tired of trolling the ocean and headed home, scooping a few bottom-feeders out of the Thames to pad the catch.

Tim Powis ***



Bootsauce:
enough chops to level
a small forest.



Northside: the Factory story must be told.



New Releases

PUBLIC IMAGE LTD.

That What Is Not

Virgin

This is not rap, this is not metal, this is not "acid," this is not post-punk, this is not a love song, this is *That What Is Not* — a fearless rock 'n' roll album from John Lydon, the man they used to call Johnny Rotten. For more than a decade, the former frontman of the seminal Sex Pistols has been the creative force behind PiL, making a habit of not repeating himself through nine albums. And the pattern is not shattered on his 10th release. Lydon sidesteps the vituperative assault of early albums (*Public Image* (1978), *The Flowers Of Romance* (1981)) and the practically popular smarts of *Album* (1986) — or *Cassette or Compact Disc* — for a tough, live, pared down...well...rock 'n' roll sound, not without surprises, of course. The steadfast elements of PiL are, thankfully, still present: the aggressive rhythmic attack and Lydon's biting, impressionistic lyrics, delivered in his unmistakable high-pitched wail from the urban wilderness. The savage opening cut, "Acid Drops," is a rock song from a distant era, bursting out of a time capsule in some future millennium; in one of the most eerie song endings, Lydon mixes in a repeated sample from Sex Pistols days that sounds more like a needle stuck on a severely scratched vinyl platter. "QP33" has the quirky feel of PiL contemporaries Pere Ubu (strangely), with Lydon's strident vocals played against John McGeoch's raw yet melodic guitar work — excellent through the album.



**Public Image Ltd.:
that what is rock.**



**Jules Shear:
artistic smarts.**

"Covered" incorporates harmonica and not just any horn section, but The Tower Of Power to flush out the apocalyptic mood. "Unfair Ground" moves from a sad, weird guitar riff into a wild near-funk flangified body of the song, with plenty of clever key changes and sonic booms. Bassist Allan Dias, drummer Curt Bisquera and rhythm guitarist Gregg Arreguin are a solid unit behind McGeoch and Lydon. Johnny continues to ride boldly into the wide open frontier. If this is what you want, this is what you get.

*Jennie Punter ****

JULES SHEAR

The Great Puzzle

Polydor

Jules Shear has long been known as a consummate writer of smart pop songs. Among the artists who have cut his material are The Bangles ("If She Knew What She Wants") and Roger McGuinn ("If We Never Meet Again"). Over the past 15 years Shear has also enjoyed a cult following in his various artistic endeavors, beginning with The Funky Kings and on through Jules & The Polar Bears, Reckless Sleepers, various solo projects and a collaboration with Marty Willson-Piper of The Church. Produced by Shear and Stewart Lerman, *The Great Puzzle* is Shear's first album with a full band in years, and it's worth the wait. "The Trap Door," the opening track, shows his artistic smarts to great advantage. Other highlights include the Byrds' 12-string jangle of "The Sad Sound Of The Wind," "Dreams Dissolve In Tears" (co-written with his wife, Pat Shazar, formerly of Slow Children) and "We Were Only Making Love," which sounds like a great middle-period Jackson Browne song. In fact, Shear's voice possesses some of Browne's plaintive vocal qualities. However, Browne could make a song sound like it came from within better than Shear, who some-

times sounds like he's listening to the way he's singing, rather than risking the naked vulnerability of the song's soul. Maybe that is why other artists have had more success with his material. Nevertheless, Shear can be an affecting singer. And with a talent like his, why do we never hear him on the radio? Can *The Great Puzzle* solve that great riddle?

*Rick Clark ***1/2*

JIM LAUDERDALE

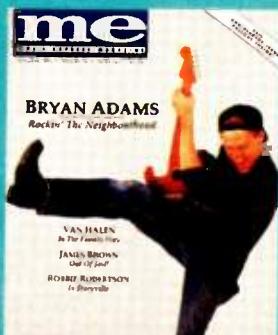
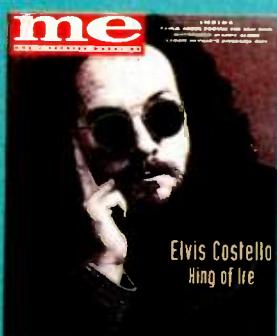
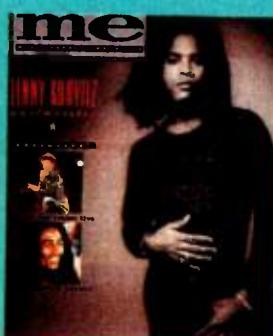
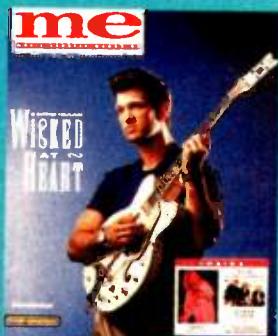
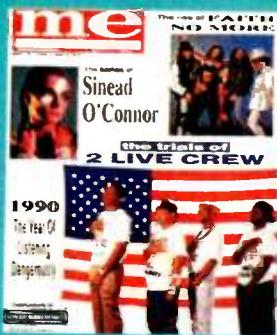
Planet Of Love

Reprise

For the current boom in country music to continue, the scene has to nurture the talents of its young singer-songwriters, rather than exclusively concentrating on crooners in hats. One such developing artist is Jim Lauderdale, and this, his debut album, deserves more recognition than it has received to date. As a songwriter, Lauderdale's skill has been endorsed by the likes of Vince Gill, Kelly Willis and Shelby Lynne, all of whom have recorded his material. *Planet Of Love* was co-produced by Rodney Crowell and John Leventhal (who also co-wrote many of the songs and plays guitar throughout), and it reflects the eclectic, "progressive country" approach for which Crowell is known. Pop, rock and folk strains are all present, and Lauderdale's gently melodic voice easily covers the wide playing field he has chosen. There's a nice jazzy lilt to "Planet Of Love" and "Wake Up Screaming," while "The King Of Broken Hearts" is a potential classic country loser's lament that is enriched by a sublime harmony vocal from Emmylou Harris. Backing vocals are also supplied by Shawn Colvin, Marc Cohn and Crowell, while session players Glen D. Hardin, Larrie Londin and Al Perkins ensure that the musicianship throughout is of the first order. This album may not be totally "out of this world," but there's plenty to like.

*Kerry Doole ***1/2*

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Live

CATHY DENNIS Dominion Theatre, London

Harvey Goldsmith

A relentless and prolonged media blitz has been constantly reminding Brits of Cathy Dennis' accomplishments in the U.S., where her four Top 10 singles set a record for British female vocalists. The fact that "the 23-year-old from Norwich" co-writes and co-produces her material lends some needed substance to the hype. If musical credibility is rare for young, visually oriented dance pop artists, then live credibility is almost unheard of. Wisely, Dennis broke in her live band during a recent series of dates in Australia and the Far East, and she was relaxed, confident and energetic. The lighting and stage set successfully created a club-like ambience, appropriate for the lightweight but still dance-credible tracks. The backup dancers were more prominently featured than the musicians, and there were more costume changes than guitar solos. If the emphasis was on the visual, though, at least it was not at the expense of the music. The band played with more force than expected, with apparently no pre-recorded instrumental tracks. From the opening "Just Another Dream" to the inevitable "Touch Me (All Night Long)" encore, the set list was predictable (as a one-album artist could only be), save for a new and as yet unreleased D-Mob track. Ultimately, Dennis' ballad "Too Many Walls" registered the strongest emotional impact with the audience. That track provides an indication of the more mature material that will appear on her next album, due this spring. That is, unless her record company decides in the meantime to repackage her six-hit *Move To This* album as a greatest hits offering.

David Hazan

SKID ROW UNO Lakefront Arena, New Orleans *Beaver Productions*

A fter practising the arena rock game as a support act for Bon Jovi, Aerosmith and Guns N'Roses, Skid Row has taken the inevitable headlining plunge. That the third show of the band's debut North American tour fell in New Orleans on New Year's Eve offered the ultimate opportunity for an over-the-top, triumphant blowout. The suburban kids who opted for Skid Row's coming out party over Dick Clark's annual Times Square TV shindig were suitable amped: throughout the night they set off firecrackers and sent bottle rockets arching into the Arena's rafters, in defiance of both the venue's pyrotechnics ban and common sense. Early on, vocalist Sebastian Bach's efforts to get the party started were hampered by his struggle to keep his pants up; the crisis peaked when, after plunging into the crowd during "Piece Of Me," he was hauled back onstage with his pants below his knees (eventually someone tracked down a pair of suspenders). With the volume capable of deafening humans and killing dogs, Skid Row served up faithful renditions of the hits. The picturesque Bach demonstrated his considerable vocal skills during "Quicksand Jesus," the only number for which he remained stationary. The evening as a whole, though, offered little in terms of virtuosity or spontaneity; the nonmusical antics were far more amusing. Scotti Hill rallied from a fall off a ramp to unstrap his guitar in mid-song and use it to gently "persuade" a security guard to release a captured stage-diver. Guitarist Dave "The Snake" Sabo rewarded another uninvited onstage guest with a beer before ushering him off the front of the stage. Bach mercifully interrupted Rob Affuso's all-too-typical drum solo by playing Santa with a tray of iced Budweiser.

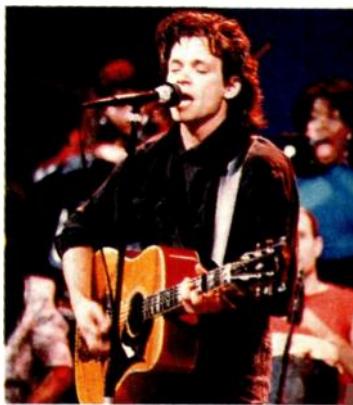
A sers. "Last time I did this, I got sued for \$400,000," he announced (an apparent reference to the infamous bottle-throwing incident two years ago). "You've gotta catch this, all right?" Near midnight, after a passable reading of "Train Kept A'Rollin'" and some confusion as to what time it actually was, the audience was showered with confetti and life-size, anatomically correct inflatable dolls...a fitting finale for a concert that was, if you ignored the emptiness, a pretty good time.

Keith Spera

JOHN MELLENCAMP Brendan Byrne Arena, East Rutherford, NJ *Metropolitan*

T hree years ago, disillusioned by the vacuity of pop stardom, John Mellencamp considered leaving the music business, complaining that he felt like a "human jukebox." Now, while Mellencamp's recent album, *Whenever We Wanted*, is an invigorating kick in the pants, his current tour holds him in the quandary that he sought to escape. For two hours, Mellencamp and his band entertained the crowd with his most famous material — still trapped inside that jukebox, apparently resigned to the role and unwilling to change. It's unfortunate that Mellencamp feels obliged to perform songs he has outgrown, like "Jack And Diane" and "Play Guitar." Virtually ignoring his outstanding new record, Mellencamp concentrated on the hits that secured his fame and fortune; the second hour featured only two songs recorded after 1985. The predictability of the concert vanished during "R-O-C-K In The U.S.A.," as Mellencamp invited a fan onstage, gave him the microphone and got out of the way. During that man's stage debut and as the two men embraced, the show held a brief palpable excitement. But, sadly, that feeling was fleeting.

Allan Wood



**John Mellencamp:
trapped in the jukebox.**



**Skid Row: the
nonmusical antics were
far more amusing.**

Alternative

BY JENNIE PUNTER

No matter what genre of music or hairdo, most bands see a little of themselves in the legendary *Spinal Tap* — or if they don't, they should. "That film wasn't a joke," states **Miracle Legion's** Mr. Ray Neal. "It was funny, but it was also kind of scary. I mean, a lot of it

has happened to us." Forget about puppet shows; these guys once opened for a giant burrito.

"We set up for the show, and afterwards we find out that after us is the burrito," Mr. Ray recalls. But what did it do? "Nothing. We played and then everyone ate this 500-yard-long burrito."

Needless to say, the world's largest burrito didn't survive. But the opening act did. After a two-year recording hiatus, Connecticut's **Miracle Legion** has resurfaced with a new label and an appetizing new record, *Drenched*, that sounds like the band never skipped a beat.

The last time the band committed its melodic folk-rock to vinyl, the rank and file was pared down to a duo. The acclaimed *Me And Mr. Ray* — that's singer and lyricist **Mark Mulcahy** and guitarist Mr. Ray to the rest of us — was their final album on *Rough Trade*, released in '89. After returning from a European tour with **Pere Ubu** that summer, Mark and Mr. Ray hooked up with bassist **Dave McCaffrey** and drummer **Spot** and toured the States.

But it became clear the American counterpart of the infamous British indie label was doomed. Mr. Ray explains, "I think everyone thought *Me And Mr. Ray*

should have done better than it did. But [Rough Trade] gave it their best shot and we went as far as we could together. So we actually mutually split." The band never ceased to exist, however. "There was a long period when we couldn't effectively do anything. We carried on writing songs, playing gigs. While we were apart we had sent out a cassette that was circulating around. And every time a label was interested we'd talk to them...and most of them sounded horrible. But Morgan Creek came along, and they sounded great."

At the suggestion of the label, **Miracle Legion** enlisted **John Porter** (**Smiths**, **School Of Fish**) to produce *Drenched*, their fifth record. "We had a list of producers, and looking back I can't believe that he wasn't on it. For one thing, I'm a huge **Smiths** fan," Mr. Ray says. With its jangling guitars, intelligent, biting lyrics and rich arrangements, which move comfortably from uninhibited rock to bittersweet, folk-inspired ballads, *Drenched* is an album that reflects a mature approach to the art of songwriting.

"I'm sure there will be a lot of **Nirvana** bands, but the time they come out, they're going to look idiotic," Mr. Ray says. "I think you have to stick with what's really you. Mark and I have been writing songs for about six years now, and I think that's how to do it. It may be a longer way, but it rings true."

Mark Mulcahy and Mr. Ray were both involved the New Haven music scene when they decided to try and write a song. "That was the beginning, and that's how it still is," Mr. Ray explains. "More and more, Spot and Dave are adding to our thing. So now we're trying to let people know we're a band again; we've been one for three years."

Miracle Legion's previous albums are also a joy to discover; *The Backyard EP* ('87), *Surprise, Surprise, Surprise* ('87) and the

half-studio, half-live *Glad* ('88) are filled with carefully crafted, often astonishingly beautiful songs. But on their latest effort, the band was finally able to realize many of the musical ideas previously beyond their means.

"For the first time...I think because of John and because we had a label that could provide us with two months to record...we were able to do things we'd wanted to do for years," Mr. Ray explains. They brought in the 17-piece **Friendship Choir**, from South Central L.A., for the moving "Waiting Room," and ex-Faces pianist **Ian MacLagan**, a buddy of Porter's, sparkles up "Sea Hag."

Mr. Ray, a self-taught guitarist, cites punk rock as the musical force that urged him to pick up a guitar and learn how to play. "I played a little in high school, but all the bands I liked were really far removed from reality," he says. "Then in the late '70s, a club called Ron's Place in New Haven started having local bands. It was a revelation to me. Suddenly rock 'n' roll wasn't something millionaires did far away. It was happening right in your own town; in a week you could get a band together and play Ron's Place." It's a miracle!!

Breaking Up Is Hard To Do
Dept.: Nashville's hot 'n' heavy jazz-rock fusion **MEISTERS**, **Clockhammer**, released their second amazing full album, *Kilnefelter*, and promptly parted ways....only seconds short of killing each other, according to the First Warning bio. By the time this column comes out, let's hope they've kissed and made up, because *Kilnefelter* is a memorable musical odyssey, a virtual melting pot of styles. **Clockhammer** are musical warriors, a trio held together by the complex rhythms of drummer **Ken Coomer** and bassist **Matt Swanson**, with the airy yet powerful voice and agile guitar of **Byron Bailey** holding the listener captive until the last note is struck.



Miracle Legion:
drenched.

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Reissues

BY RICK CLARK

During the late '60s, while **The Rolling Stones**, **John Mayall** and a load of other artists sought release through the primal soul of the blues, another movement was taking place that incorporated European formal classicism and flashes of sophisticated jazz into what would eventually be called art rock and fusion.

Through the focus of guitarist **Robert Fripp**, **King Crimson** gunned for the horizons and created a sensation from the outset, with wildly dynamic material and adventurous performances. Crimson's presence on the music scene forced critics on both sides of the Atlantic to either love or hate the band.

Caroline Records has released the aptly titled box set *The Essential King Crimson: Frame By Frame*, assembled by Fripp himself. This set gives fans and the uninitiated the perfect opportunity to ingest Crimson's body of work and decide if Fripp's vision still holds up. From my perspective, *Frame By Frame* not only does a good job of providing great samples from each period of the band's work, but sonically it is the best its music has ever sounded.

Fripp provides a richly detailed diary of the band's history, as well as published interviews with band members and both glowing and hateful reviews. It's a very entertaining read, and (at times) an indictment against the small-mindedness of the critical community.

The set's first three discs are broken down chronologically into the band's three different periods; the fourth is an impressive display of live performances from throughout the band's history. Precious little of the music on this set would qualify for casual listening. In fact, the assertive nature of Crimson's sound demands active participation. Even then, most of

the tracks aren't even remotely geared for the faint of heart.

If the **Moody Blues** provide a soundtrack for taking trips to the heavens for millions of listeners, King Crimson's dark jarring soundscapes and lyrical imagery (which at times borders on the scatological) are capable of inducing harrowing journeys into the dark side of the psyche. Compared to Crimson, The Moodies are the stuff of dentist office background music.

The Essential King Crimson: Frame By Frame should provide a new generation of listeners with a convincing case that Crimson was a truly innovative players' band. Despite the fact that many of these tracks are between 15 and 20 years old, fans of **Metallica**, **Primus**, **Ministry** or any number of aggressively dense bands should check this out for sheer dissonant assault power. As Fripp correctly states, Crimson "could shred wallpaper at three miles."

Music Video

BY KERRY DOOLE

There's no denying that **Lenny Kravitz**'s distinctive visual presence has helped him make a strong impact over the course of just two albums, and he has become known for interesting and appealing music videos. Virgin's *Video Retrospective* features nine of Kravitz's best songs, and they include "Mr Cab Driver" and "I Build This Garden For Us" (off his *Let Love Rule* debut) plus recent hits "It Ain't Over 'Til It's Over" and "Always On The Run."

The collection also includes two previously unavailable live concert excerpts — renditions of "Stop Draggin' Around" and "More Than Anything In This World" — recorded at a show in London last year. There's also some frank interview footage. Lenny's smart enough to use some of the best directors around

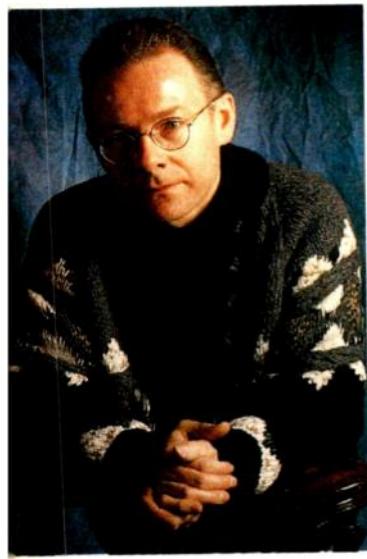
(**Jean-Baptiste Mondino**, **Geoff Barish**, **Jesse Dylan**), while former wife **Lisa Bonet** filmed the "Let Love Rule" clip. A classy package. Now if only he'd lose that nose ring!

If your budget doesn't stretch to a tropical vacation this winter, console yourself with some sights and sounds from the Third World. *The Rhythms Of The World Anthology* is a superb compilation of World Beat music featuring some of the best known artists working in this eclectic field. It comprises prime footage from an acclaimed BBC TV series, and is hosted by **Peter Gabriel** (long a supporter of world music) and **Bobby McFerrin**. Performers include **King Sunny Ade**, **Fela Kuti** and **Salif Keita**, and the two hosts offer informative insights into the musical styles and origins of all the artists featured. The hour-long tape is out on Island.

The same company brings us *Buried Treasures, Volume 2: Reggae Classics*, a real treat for reggae lovers. It features rare videos for such favorite hits as "Reggae Got Soul" by **Toots and the Maytals**, "Now That We've Found Love" by **Third World** and **Bob Marley and the Wailers**' "Could You Be Loved." A sunny half-hour's watching and listening here.

Classical music buffs can rejoice in some fine new releases out on PolyGram Video. *Quartet* is an illustrated performance film that sets the lyrical drama of **Schubert's Rosamunde** to a montage of concert footage, music engraving and bow and violin making. This recently won the top prize at the Chicago International Film Festival.

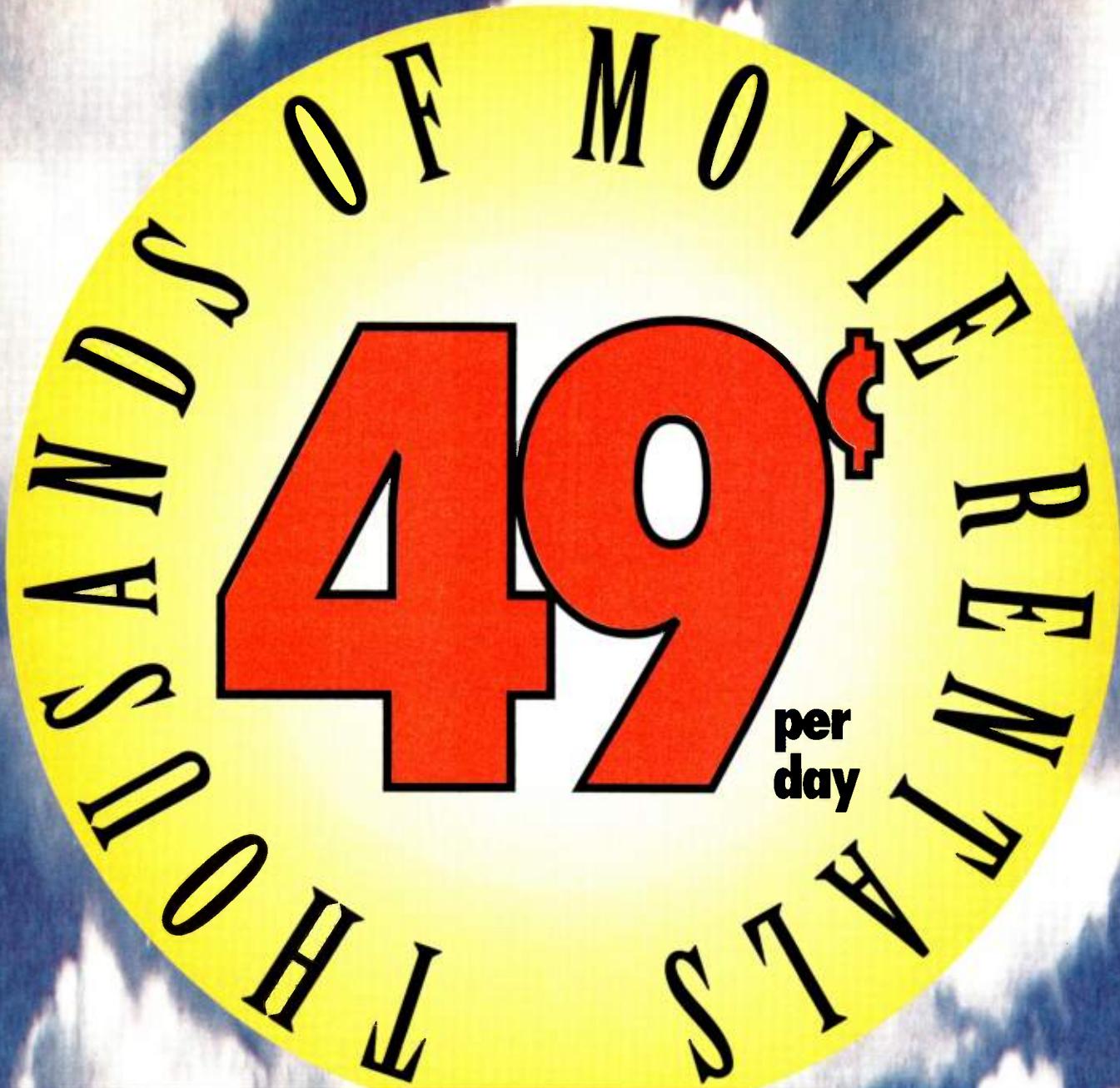
Fans of hardcore gangster rap will be keen to pick up *Straight From The Hood*, a 65-minute compilation on Priority. The 11 clips include **N.W.A.**'s "Alwayz Into Something" and **Ice Cube**'s "Jackin' For Beats," while **N.W.A.** members link the clips with interview footage decrying the censorship of rap.



Robert Fripp:
does his vision still
hold up?



Lenny Kravitz:
video-savvy.



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R&B

BY OTIS WINTHORPE

With roots in black rock, traditional and progressive jazz, funky hip-hop and '70s grit grooves and just about everything else between and beyond, it's surprising how much of Eye & I sounds like MOR pop along the lines of Whitney Houston and Heart. Eye & I's debut on Epic runs a serious gamut of styles that approaches at times the intensity and eclecticism of their live show, which is legendary in New York.

Basically Eye & I is a slamin' rock band with a lot of depth and talent. Melvin Gibbs is a bass player who has worked with Ronald Shannon Jackson, Sonny Sharrock and Vernon Reid. But while Gibbs likes to hunch introspectively over his bass, his wife, singer D.K. Dyson, rules the space in which she performs like no one else. Her voice is truly powerful, and my only complaint is that in some instances she goes for power instead of the weirdness she is capable of. But Eye & I is playing it smart, and it's the kind of band that MTV was made for. Reid and Bernie Worrell guest, and the first single will be a cover of the Velvet Underground's "Venus In Furs." Watch these guys.

One of my all-time drugs of choice is the combination of fat bass synths, clean rhythm guitars and voice box that Roger Troutman introduced in the mid-'70s with Zapp's "More Bounce To The Ounce." Since then Troutman's career (with Zapp, Shirley Murdock and others) has followed a rocky road of high peaks (such as 1987's dope ballad "Computer Love"), shallow valleys of rehashes of "More Bounce" (such as "I Can Make You Dance," which went to No. 1 anyway) and an all-time low that was the solo record he produced for Ohio Players mainman Leroy "Sugarfoot" Bonner. Troutman, like

Prince, is incredibly talented, powerful and innovative, but at his worst something to avoid.

Bridging The Gap, by Roger, is, thankfully, a solid album that includes five collaborations with Scritti Politti mastermind David Gamson, another high-tech stylist with a unique sound. The first single, "(Everybody) Get Up," is a tight, funky update on the signature sounds of both producers, as is the equally hot "You Should Be Mine." The corny ballads sound great, Troutman's jazzy guitar modes enhance unexpectedly and this album has the fat, funky, quality feel that Troutman can put together when he wants to. *Bridging The Gap* is fun and funky, with strengths for the dancefloor and home, and brings funk into the '90s with panache.

Jazz

BY ROB REID

Let's get this straight. The **Dirty Dozen Brass Band** is not a group of 12 ornery movie characters who've decided to make a great record. And the eight guys who do make up the band don't all play brass instruments — there are a couple of drummers. But the name of this group derives from one of the vestigial deep Southern black social clubs that survived into the 1970s. Most importantly, this band's exciting evolution of the New Orleans funeral and street parade tradition results in an album that's guaranteed to be a bad mood buster in these dark and nefarious times we live in.

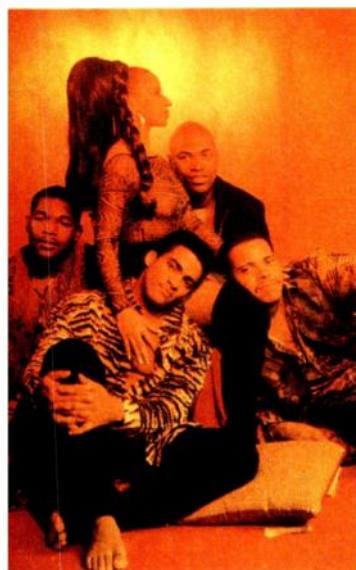
The DDBB's fifth album, *Open Up*, available on Columbia Records, is perhaps the group's most satisfying overall to date. Always a group to set up a get-up-and-dance groove (which is why this band is best seen in a venue where you can do just that), the DDBB has also tapped into its jazz soloing and compositional prowess to make this a well-rounded

winner with no compromise.

The sizzling, powerful rhythm comes by way of the band's two drummers, **Jennell Marshall** and **Lionel Batiste**, and the bass anchor, sousaphonist **Kirk Joseph**, who also provides some of the most slippery brass work to slither off a disk. Baritone saxman **Roger Lewis** brings up much of the group's R&B color, **Kevin Harris** stalks modern jazz territory on tenor saxophone, while trumpeters **Gregory Davis** and **Efram Towns** and trombonist **Charles Joseph** move well with the established flow. At this stage, the DDBB's music has achieved a most successful stylistic blend, and the New Orleans roots guarantee a damn good time.

Most other current releases are not as consistently strong as the DDBB's, but within many albums a few gems can always be found. Pianist **Ellis Marsalis**' Columbia album *Heart Of Gold* is an example of the nonthreatening mainstream records that are flooding the jazz market these days. I call them "standards-to-go" and although they offer an occasional original, they are identified by the bulk of jazz standards covered. As do many of these recordings, Marsalis' album has the panache that makes for elegant background music. But only the nuances of handling in "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," the coy treatment of "Sweet Georgia Brown" and the pluck of Jelly Roll Morton's "Dr. Jazz" truly kept my mind with this one.

With a bit more aggression and some more recent standards, pianist **Dave Catney** achieves about the same effect with his *Jade Visions* for the Justice Records label. Catney has bassist **Marc Johnson** and drummer **Peter Erskine** along for the ride, and the three work well together, particularly on the **Gary Burton** composition "Gentle Wind And Falling Tear," as well as the Catney original "Fool Moon."



Eye & I:
a serious gamut
of styles.



The Dirty Dozen
Brass Band: evolution
of the street parade.

Metal

BY ADRIANNE STONE

There was a song that got heavy play on the Los Angeles airwaves last summer called "Wild On The Run." It wasn't an especially *heavy* tune; one would be hard-pressed to find a gang of folks who might choose to mosh to it. But it was sufficiently heavy insofar as it boasted a driving rhythm and a serious lyrical content.

At first listen I thought it was one of your typical semi-slick pop/rock productions. It took a conversation with three-quarters of the band Tall Stories (bassist Kevin Totoian, lead guitarist Jack Morer and drummer Tom DeFaris; vocalist Steve Augeri was absent) to set me straight.

"One day last year I stopped at the corner deli and the guy behind the counter started telling me that I had just missed a 'wilding' episode," says Jack. "All these kids came off the subway and started knocking people down and stealing their money. So I went up to my apartment and I was sitting there saying, 'When I was 15 or 16 I did silly stuff, but why are these kids just hurting people? What makes these guys want to do this?' And I came up with the basic riffs. I brought it into a rehearsal and Kevin came up with 'Busted, bleeding, nothing to believe in,' then Steven added a part and Kevin changed some of the melody. And that was the song."

Also fueling the band is an unbridled passion for their music—an aggressively melodic collection of power tunes, as evidenced on their debut self-titled disc—and a rightful sense of indignation at their mislabeling by music industry powers that be. "We wanted to have an edge, but we didn't want to sound corporate," says Jack. "We try to keep it down in terms of getting too slick and having too many background vocals.

I mean, we're not a garage band."

Still, it seemed as if they were damned if they stuck to their sound and damned if they didn't. "There's two stations on the East Coast that are not playing the record," Jack continues. "One is in a big city up north, and the other is in Connecticut. In the big city they decided that we were a 'hair band,' so they weren't going to play us. Well, that's a drag, but the real irony is that the station in Connecticut decided that we weren't a 'hair band' and therefore they weren't going to play us either!"

When Firehouse played in Miami on New Year's Eve, the odds were against them. Across town, **Guns N'Roses** was playing to a sold-out house. Still, the Firemen packed their arena with devoted fans. Well, most of them were devoted: sometime *after* the strike of midnight, the band finally went onstage, and had to host their own mock countdown to midnight. Perhaps as a result of their tardiness, perhaps as a result of too much partying, perhaps because there's always a couple of meatheads in every bunch, bassist Perry Richardson was slammed in the leg with a bottle and vocalist C.J. Snare was bonked on the beanie with a can.

Never ones to let a bunch of bad apples ruin their fun, some of the band continued frolicking at a nearby rock club. And who should show up? The illustrious **W. Axl Rose** and his bodyguard. We can only assume that the **Guns** vocalist was in his "I Want To Be Alone" mood, since he wouldn't deign to speak to the **Firehouse** guys. (He goes to a crowded nightclub and puts 300 lbs. of muscleman between him and everybody else. Go figure!)

Talk about musical chairs! In the same week, L.A. **Guns** drummer Steve Riley and **Cinderella** percussionist Freddie Coury parted ways with their respective bands. Although the logical solution is for the two to swap places,

that option has been ruled out. At presstime, both bands were reportedly interested in finding lesser-known musicians (does that rule out **Steven Adler**?).

Just when you thought every female rocker was cut from the same moldy mold, along comes Canadian vocalist **Sass Jordan**. I can only assume that **Sass** is short for **Sassy**, as this outspoken singer has a way of bandying about colorful language in a way that would make a truck driver proud. In fact, **Sass** is proud of this blue-lingual talent. "The press think I'm an absolute pig because I say such vulgar things," she says. "My friends have called me **Crass Jordan** for years. I am a pig—which I take as a compliment!"

With a voice that's one part sultry blues, one part ballbreaker and one part sawdust (probably the result of overinhalation while working her construction job a few years back), **Sass**' model-like looks belie her ballsy performance. Her latest album, **Racine** (Impact), is a blaster, packed with tunes that recall a **Rolling Stones/Aerosmith** meshing, with a menacing "broad"'s 'tude. Hope the abovementioned acts consider the acid-tongued chanteuse as an opening act next time they hit the road.

And now, for the latest in material excess: **Guns N'Roses** guitarist **Slash** has recently purchased actress **Nell Carter**'s home in the hills over Hollywood. For a price of a bit under \$1,495,000, **Slash** gets a gated home, situated on a little more than an acre of land, three bedrooms, maid's quarters (would you want to clean up **his** mess?), a large recreation room, swimming pool and courtyard. But what of his *other* house, high above Laurel Canyon? He plans to keep it for his 16 snakes, eight cats and two Rottweilers....



Tall Stories:
are they or are they not
a hair band?

A TOUCH OF JAZZ

A BIT OF THE BLUES

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**"SHE'S ALREADY
MADE UP HER MIND"**

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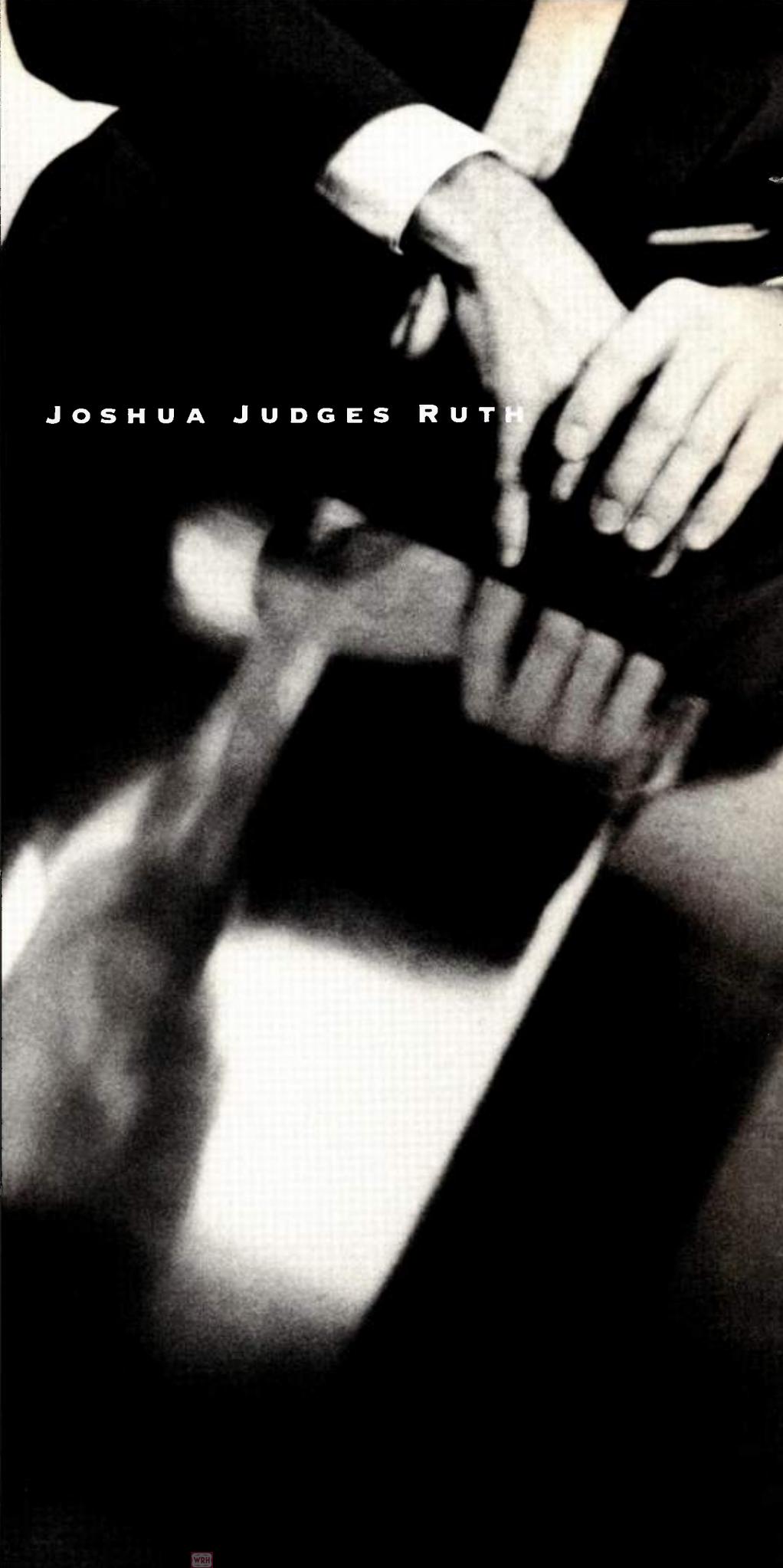
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JOSHUA JUDGES RUTH



Country

BY ROMAN MITZ

With Garthmania running rampant these days, let's hope that all those other talented up and comers out there aren't ignored. Like **Mark Chestnutt**, for instance. *Longnecks And Short Stories* is this Beaumont, Texas, native's second release, and on it he proves once again that he can rival the best with his traditional vocal expressions and excellent song selection.

Early favorites are Mark's rendition of **Steve Earle's** "I'm Not Getting Any Better At Goodbyes" and his duet with **George Jones** on "Talking To Hank." The keyboard work on this album is particularly strong, and **Dire Straits' David Briggs** and legendary session man **Pig Robbins** share the duties.

"We wanted to make a record that really reflects the spirit of what we love," says **Russell de Carle**, lead singer and bass player for Canada's **Prairie Oyster**, about the band's goal for its latest release, *Everybody Knows*. One listen proves that they hit the mark, as the album is a tight yet rowdy mix of old and new tunes that have the distinctive honky tonk edge that has become the band's calling card. Whether it's an original song like "Will I Do," an **Elvis-meets-Ray Price** jumper or a cover of the **Johnny Horton** chestnut "Goodbye Lonesome," the group oysterizes every number.

Another Canadian band that pays homage to some of the performers who helped launch country music is **The Gizzards**. Using acoustic stringed instruments and straight-ahead three-part harmonies, the group mixes country/folk/swing originals with cover material from sources as disparate as **Dan Hicks and The Sons Of The Pioneers**. And as a final note from Canada, we're happy to report that **Hank Snow** has recuper-

ated from a knee injury that resulted from a recent auto accident. Snow traces his colorful career in his upcoming autobiography.

Speaking of autobiographies, congratulations to **Ralph Emery**, whose *Memories: The Autobiography Of Ralph Emery* catapulted into *The New York Times'* best seller list. The book, co-written by **Tom Carter**, traces Emery's life from growing up in the South to becoming a major cable television personality and contains inside stories on **Barbara Mandrell**, **Johnny Cash** and the late **Hank Williams**.

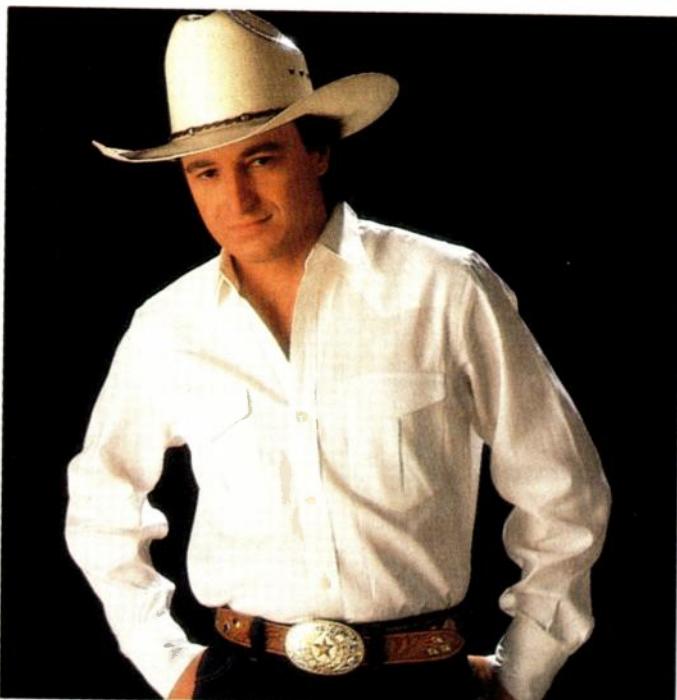
George Strait remains the king of the hat acts, and his recently released *Ten Strait Hits* capsulizes the best of his songs over the past four years. The collection begins with 1988's "Famous Last Words Of A Fool," and carries through to last year's chart-topping single "I've Come To Expect It From You." We can expect even bigger things from George in the near future, as he begins filming a feature film.

Stealin' Horses is back with a new release entitled *Mesas And Mandolins*. While their self-titled debut commanded respectable sales, lead singer **Kiya Heartwood** felt the album was too slick, and the studio musicians deprived the music of the honesty she was looking for. Well, she and other Stealin' Horse mainstay **Kopana Terry** have found three new players "who believe in their music and will not compromise," and the result is a genuine back-to-the-roots album with folk and bluegrass overtones.

While country is America's hottest music at present, the Far East is also starting to do the Western swing. Radio station KTYO in Tokyo recently switched its format to become the first all-country broadcast source in Japan. One of the Orient's best exports to date is **Shoji Tabushi**, a fiddle wizard whom you can catch every day at his dinner theatre in Branson,

Missouri.

Kris Kristofferson's *Singer/Songwriter* album is a two CD/cassette greatest hits package with a twist; on the first part he sings his own hits, and on the second we are treated to covers of his hits by performers like **Janis Joplin**,



Johnny Cash and Sammi Smith.

Another excellent collection is the *Hank Williams Songbook*. These performances of Williams' songs go back quite a bit, beginning with **Molly O'Day's** rendition of "When God Comes And Gathers His Jewels." Other artists featured include a very young-sounding **Marty Robbins** and **Ray Price**.

After mounting a successful comeback that began with a duet on "Streets Of Bakersfield" with **Dwight Yoakam**, followed by a couple of successful solo albums, **Buck Owens** recently announced his retirement from the concert stage. Owens, who started his career in Texas, wrapped things up in the same state after a performance at **Billy Bob's** nightclub in Fort Worth.

Mark Chestnutt:
rivaling the best.



Prairie Oyster:
that distinctive honky
tonk edge.



Books

BY BILL REYNOLDS

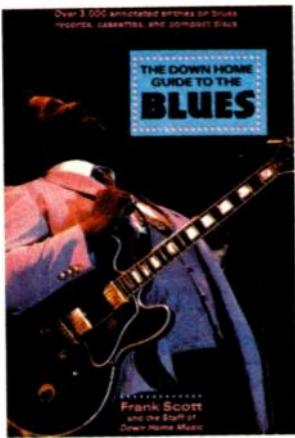
THE DOWN HOME GUIDE TO THE BLUES

By Frank Scott

A Capella Books/Chicago
Review Press

AMAZING GRACE

Introduction By Judy Collins
Hyperion Books



Here's a couple of "pop" books for those people who like nothing better than to blow 20 bucks or so on suspect reading materials.

Frank Scott and his editorial cohorts at the mail-order company called Down Home Music give an object lesson in how to turn a loss leader into a profit-oriented venture. *The Down Home Guide To The Blues* is actually a catalogue of blues recordings that happens to compile what Scott's El Cerrito, CA, company carries in stock.

It is also — so claims Scott — the most comprehensive list of blues recordings currently available. I'm not sure about this, but I can tell you a couple of flaws. For instance, if you turn to just about any page in this mutated catalogue, you'll find album listings that have no information other than perhaps who played on the album and a brief description of its contents.

Let's say, for example, it's Bobby "Blue" Bland you're interested in, specifically the two albums he recorded with B.B. King: *Together For The First Time* and *Together Again*. Scott lists 23 of Bland's albums currently available in the U.S. Of those, two get paragraph-long descriptions, four get one sentence and the rest get nothing except song-lists and something to indicate whether the album is a reissue. Of the King-Bland collaborations, nothing is said. Are they good? Dunno! Are they bad? Beats me! But they exist at Down Home Mail

Order, OK?

Scott mentions in his introduction that succeeding editions will provide more detailed analysis. The question arises: why did they put out the *Guide* now, without providing all the entries with nuggets of opinion? That's why we're paying money for the book — because Scott and the editors are supposed to be experts.

Granted, there are lots of blues fanatics out there who already know the quality of most of the standard recordings. For them, the *Guide* is a useful tool to organize their buying habits. Unfortunately, Scott doesn't list the original year of issue for each recording, but throughout the guide he does provide "Essential Selection" indicators that highlight a Hot 100 of the blues. If he'd recompiled them into a list at the back, it could have been called "How To Fool Your Friends Into Believing You're A Blues Expert."

Instead, the back of the book contains an excellent round-up of various-artists compilations available, which is a helpful service since the sheer number on the market is daunting. Scott breaks them down into neat geographical areas like Memphis or Chicago, as well as into genres like zydeco, urban or country.

Folks, do you like "Amazing Grace"? You know, the old spiritual written in 1789 by a white slave trader who became a preacher man after his pangs of guilt became too great? Well, have we got a deal for you!

For only 20, yes 20, dollars you can own this wonderful special edition called, amazingly enough, *Amazing Grace*, complete with an introduction by noted '60s folkie, environmentalist and activist Judy Collins.

Here's an example from Collins' wonderful confession: "When you are weary and without recourse, did you ever notice that just at the moment you can't go on, something happens, some other force takes over, some

power greater than yourself, moving you to do the impossible or the unimaginable? 'Amazing Grace' reverberates with this truth." Hallelujah!

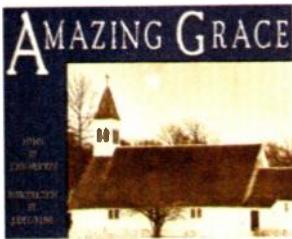
Actually, Collins' mini-essay about her love for 'Amazing Grace' (recorded for her *Whales And Nightingales* album, released in 1970) is interesting in that it sheds light on an era when people (oh heck, let's call 'em hippies, OK?) were just beginning to discover and record the music of humpback whales, a time when the rebelliousness of the '60s was in the process of being replaced by the new folk movement. New Age wasn't yet a concept, but it was already being embodied in the music of Collins, Crosby, Stills and Nash, Seals and Crofts, James Taylor, Carly Simon and Phoebe Snow.

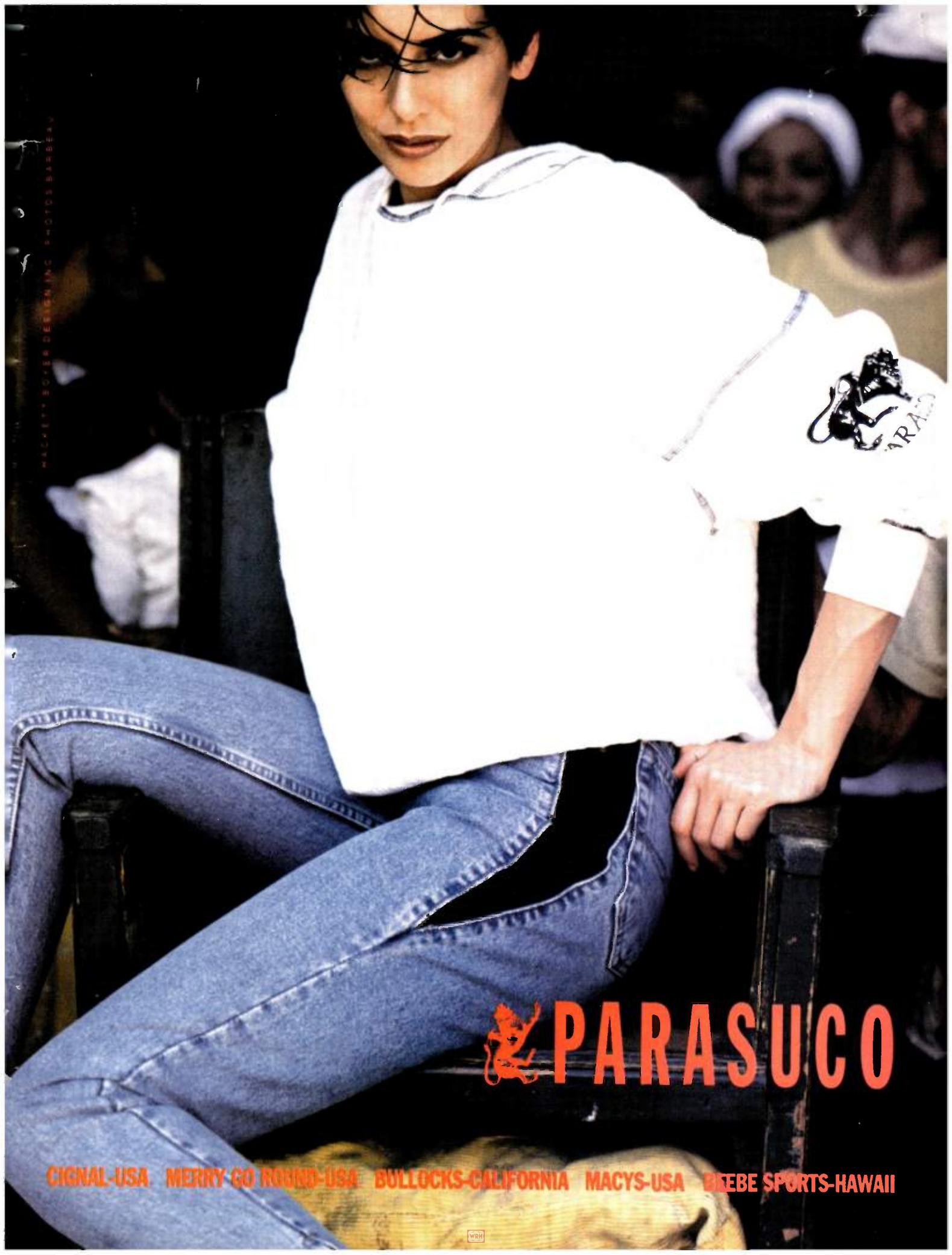
Collins also provides a quick overview of "Amazing Grace" author John Newton (1725-1806), who seems to have been quite a party animal until he saw the light of God while manning a ship in the midst of a violent storm and hanging on for dear life.

Otherwise, *Amazing Grace* features one lyric line per page, with black and white photographs opposite each. The pictures are of poor people, black people, white people, white people and black people together, old people, etc. Except one, which depicts the infamous Ku Klux Klan in one of their cross-burning sessions, opposite the line: "Through many dangers, toils, and snares."

Hyperion has issued this book about "Amazing Grace" after the success of the recent PBS special of the same name. If you saw the special, you can buy the book. And only if you buy the book will you find the valuable coupon that enables you to "Bring Home the Video!"

Yessir, for only \$19.95, *Amazing Grace with Bill Moyers* can be yours. Order by credit. Please allow four to six weeks for delivery.





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Tom
Cochrane

M A D M A D W O R L D

This Canadian rocker and former Red Rider

member prepares for stateside stardom with

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the same tough, bluesy nuances of his rock

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