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In just a few short years **Dire Straits** has recorded three successful albums, scored an international hit single, and gained wide respect for their musicianship. Bruce Pilato discusses the band's past achievements and future prospects with guitarist/writer Mark Knopfler and bassist John Illsley.

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From Vanilla Fudge to Beck, Bogert & Appice to the Rod Stewart band, **Carmine Appice** has survived as one of the most explosive and flamboyant drummers in rock & roll. Appice details his career in this outspoken interview with Ken Kubernik.



Whether it's mainstream jazz, electronic funk, the Mothers Of Invention, or Latin music, **George Duke** is one of the most consistently inventive keyboard stylists. Melodie Bryant talks with the multi-faceted multiple keyboardist.

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Ten years on the road has taken its toll in personnel changes and gasoline bills, but **Asleep At The Wheel** keeps rolling along more strongly than ever. Dan Forte flags down founding member Ray Benson, the driving force of western swing.



Beneath the sanitation suits and flower pot hats lurk serious and adventurous rock musicians, as Bruce Dancis discovered in this rare interview with **DEVO** co-founder Mark Mothersbaugh.

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The same brand of drums that Ringo played with the Beatles is still the most widely used in rock & roll. Rick Walters tours the **Ludwig** factory in Chicago.

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Live:



Jeff Beck reaffirms his positions as rock guitar's kingpin in Los Angeles; **Elton John** regroupes in Toronto; and San Francisco gets the Blues.

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**Publishers**

William I. Laski
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Editor

Dan Forte

Assistant Editor

Bruce Dancis

Contributing Editors

Melodie Bryant
Bruce C. Pilato

**Art Director/
Production Manager**
Skeeter

Art Department

Tim Gleason

Typesetting

Sandy Cann
Susan George

Controller

Mike Stevens

**Advertising
Representatives**

Hillel Resner
Phil Maselli

Traffic

Ellen Goldstein

Distribution

Frank Grygus

editor's NOTES

Well, how do we look? Since M.I. began a year and a half ago, we've continually received very favorable comments and letters regarding our graphics and layout. We've always tried to produce, not only the most readable and informative music magazine in the country, but also the most visually pleasing; and this pursuit has led us from the 11 x 14 newsprint tabloid of the past eight issues to the 8½ x 11 glossy magazine you're now holding. Hopefully, our faithful readers didn't have too much problem finding the new issue; and perhaps the new look caught the eye of readers who haven't previously checked us out. What this change in format means, visually, is better reproduction of photos and ads, and a magazine that's "easier on the eyes." More importantly, to us, it means that M.I. will store more easily and last a lot longer—because we really view the magazine as a reference, one that readers will want to save and refer back to.

The other obvious change in format concerns the cover. Until now we've avoided putting artists on the cover, in favor of still lives of new products. But M.I. has always been against separating the artist from his craft—our artist profiles cover a lot more than picks and strings—and we feel the new covers are a more accurate representation of what's inside our pages.

Our first "cover story" is on Dire Straits, a band that typifies as much as any other this combination of technique and inspiration. Without really following any trends (or starting any of their own, for that matter) Dire Straits has released two platinum albums, with their third, *Making Movies*, just out. "Sultans of Swing," from their debut LP, was an international hit single. And the band's leader, singer, songwriter and guitarist, Mark Knopfler, represents a new breed of Guitar Hero. Employing a totally unorthodox technique, and relying on taste in favor of flash, Knopfler (like Dire Straits) has earned, not only a legion of fans, but the respect of critics and fellow musicians (as evidenced by his album appearances with Steely Dan and Bob Dylan).

One thing that will not change in M.I. is our broad view of the music scene—as evidenced by this issue, which includes everything from western swing to New Wave to jazz-funk to hard rock.

As always we welcome and encourage your comments, regarding the new format and what you'd like to see us cover.

—Dan Forte

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Letters
to the
Editor

Just wrote to tell you I enjoyed the latest issue of your mag, especially the New Wave article. [Joy Johnston, "New Wave Penetrates Major Markets," M.I., Sept/Oct 1980.] I am extremely interested in independent record labels. Would you please tell me where I could get in contact with some of these people? We're both missing out by not knowing each other. Keep up the great work with the magazine; it's the best around.

Cam Weckerley
Bakersfield, California

Here are the addresses for some of the independents discussed in Joy's article: Bomp Records, Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510, (213) 842-8093; Slash Records, 7381 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036, (213) 937-4660; 415 Records, Box 14563, San Francisco, CA 94114, (415) 641-1726; JEM Records, 3619 Kennedy Rd., S. Plainfield, NJ 07080, (201) 753-6100; I.R.S. Records, 1416 N. LaBrea, Hollywood, CA 90028, (213) 469-2411; Ralph Records, 444 Grove St., San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 431-7480. —Ed.

...

Concerning your recent article "Live Dylan" [July/ Aug 1980], I would like to express my opinion. First off, the Old English version of the letter "D" in Dylan was a bit much. People dedicated to a Christian way of life are not "freaks" and most surely not "Jesus freaks." Maybe a dying breed in some parts of this country and in certain social crowds, but not freaks! As far as the "fan" who came to hear rock & roll, Bob had made public his new life style and had announced that future concerts would be of a religious nature. The fan has no gripe! If he is disappointed, it is only because Dylan is not the stereotype rock star that this person wanted him to be. I glory in the new image of Bob Dylan! As for your comment on the upcoming album, *Saved* ("a record filled with blatantly born-again lyrics") your attitude leaves a lot to be desired. Why is it when people get cast into a certain role that fans want to keep them locked in that idealistic (to them) character forever. Bob Dylan, for seeing the spiritual need in his life and turning to Christ, has made the best move in his career. And, yes, he is blatantly born-again. It is certain that people who haven't had the experience of Christ, when they boo and display displeasure with such testimonies as Dylan's, are only showing their carnal nature and pure ignorance of all spiritual matters. Bob doesn't care any longer about the crowds or the hits, he is only trying to convey a message, burning in his heart. That message has to come forth, for Bob could not be born-again and contain it in his heart. If we Christians did not sing His praise, the rocks and the hills would speak out. Believe it, it's true!

One more item, being a Nashville recording engineer, and involved in recording everything from country to hard rock, I get to view a large cross-section of American music. Gospel is coming to the front, and the hard rock is dying. A few rock groups and personalities have done more to promote drug abuse and other related ills, than any other single thing in current history. I am proud to see Dylan take a stand against all of this. As for your magazine, it caters to the rock audience as it should for that's where your income is the greatest; however, for you to attack the gospel music industry was uncalled for. In defense of gospel music, I invite you to listen to such recordings as those made by the Imperials, Andrae Crouch, B.J. Thomas, Evie, Amy Grant, and Andrus-Blackwood and Co. I don't know of greater musical talent from any walks of life. These guys and gals have a God given talent, and they are returning their gratitude for the gift bestowed upon them.

Ben Harris, Chief Engineer
Ronnie Milsap Enterprises
Nashville, Tennessee

Bruce Pilato's review of Dylan's Buffalo concert was not intended as any sort of indictment against gospel music as a whole; and, in fact, was far from an indictment against Dylan. The overall tone of the review was favorable; Pilato only suggested that since Dylan's drawing power was based on his past accomplishments, he should include some of his more familiar songs along with his new material. (Interestingly, this seems to be the course Dylan is taking on his current tour.) As for M.I.'s policy concerning gospel music: We are a music magazine, not a rock magazine, as evidenced by our past features on artists such as Sonny Rollins, Kenny Malone, B.B. King, Pat Metheny and others, as well as our industry- and manufacturer-related articles. M.I. is barely a year and a half old. We intend to cover the widest possible spectrum of musical styles. Just give us time. —Ed.

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SMOOTH SAILING

Dire Straits (from left) John Illsley; rhythm guitarist Hal Linders; Mark Knopfler; Pick Withers; keyboardist Alan Clark.

by Bruce C. Pilato

Dire Straits, and singer/songwriter/guitarist Mark Knopfler in particular, are square pegs in a world of round holes. Nearly everything about the band, from their fairy tale-like, near-instant rise to fame to their desire to travel by train while on tour simply because "It's relaxing," puts them in a space that is far removed from today's accepted rock & roll standards.

"I love New York!" declares Mark Knopfler, seated at Penny Lane Studios, New York's newest 24-track recording house. He is there for no particular reason other than the fact that he feels it's very important to be familiar with all the studios in the Big Apple. "New York's the best. It's alive, it's interesting from every standpoint—politically, economically, culturally. The fact that it is what it is. I mean, it's fucking Rome now!"

Dressed in a white T-shirt and jeans, Knopfler can't seem to say enough wonderful things about the city. New York has had such a profound impact on him that it has even in-

WITH DIRE STRAITS

spired him to write a song, called "Skate Away," which is one of the highlights on the new Dire Straits album, *Making Movies* [Warner Bros., BSK 3480]. And *Making Movies* is unquestionably one of the musical highlights of 1980.

"This album is a big, big departure for them," says Jimmy Iovine, the project's coproducer [Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers,

Graham Parker & the Rumour, Patti Smith, etc.] and the man responsible for its outstanding audio texture. "It's more orchestrated to the songs than the other albums. Mark's a great guitar player, so we used that. He's also a great songwriter and a great singer, and I think that's what the album is based around. It's more of a rock album."

Indeed it is. *Making Movies* takes the spirit of the first two Dire Straits albums and sets it on fire. Featuring the best material the band has ever had to work with, along with the exceptional keyboard playing of Roy Bit-tan (on loan from Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band), it easily reaches the zenith mark for the band. It has the tastefulness of Clap-ton, the energy of Springsteen, and the mys-tery of Dylan, as well as an overall ambience that is only Dire Straits.

"Yeah, it's more dynamic," says Knopfler matter-of-factly. "We like to play loud and we like to play very hard. If you've done a lot of shows, the stuff that you write changes—less groove stuff and more dynam-ic. And you find out more about recording and trying to get that thing on record." He pauses for what seems like an eternity. "You keep trying to get the power of the thing on the record."

"The album was cut with a very live approach," adds Iovine, who was taking a break from sessions for the upcoming Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers album. "It has a very live drum and guitar sound; it's a lot more live than the other stuff, more concert style." The album was recorded and mixed at the Power Station in New York.

Packaged in a very plain blue and red cover, the new album is loaded with seven potent Knopfler originals, among them "Romeo & Juliet," "Solid Rock," "Expresso Love," and "Les Boys," which was inspired when Knopfler witnessed a gay German cabaret act recently.

Side One's opener, "Tunnel Of Love," was recently released in Europe as a single, but because Knopfler refused to edit the eight-minute track it was issued on the A Side for 4:20 and the B Side for 3:40.

Making Movies also marks the debut of Dire Straits as a trio. Just prior to the recording of the album, Mark's younger brother, David, gave up his post as the band's rhythm guitarist to pursue a solo career. "He's going to do his own thing now," said Mark quietly. "He's already been recording and he's been writing songs for years," echoed bassist John Illsley, David's former roommate. Knopfler, Illsley and drummer Pick Withers have added another guitarist and two keyboard players for the current world tour.

And for Dire Straits, touring is what it's all about. "Being in a recording studio is a great experience and all," comments Illsley, "but it's also a great experience to go out and play for people. And if you spend six months or nine months in the studio, you miss all that other stuff. You miss going out and playing for people, which is just as important for us."

The road is something the band has become very used to. In the last two years alone, the band has played over 300 gigs, crossing the world several times. The current tour will last through next Spring.

For Mark Knopfler the last three years have gone by like one big blur. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Mark and his brother David grew up in Newcastle, England. Their mother is an English teacher and their father a Hungarian-born architect. The two brothers used their father's T-squares to live out a rock & roll fantasy of being Elvis. And although both eventually got real guitars, they moved to London and put music aside to pursue "legitimate" careers. Dave became a social worker, while Mark tried journalism, working at the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. "It was my first job," admits Knopfler. "I wouldn't call it a journalist; I'd call it a cub reporter." He eventually wound up as an English professor at Loughton Technical College. At night, however, he could be found in small clubs around London having a ball playing in a rockabilly band called Cafe Racer.

At this point Dave was sharing a \$132-a-month flat with a lumber broker-turned-record shop owner who held a sociology degree from the University of London. His name was John Illsley, and eventually the three of them began spending their nights together playing guitars. When former Dave Ed-

munds drummer and session player, Pick Withers showed up at a jam session one day, Illsley put down his guitar for bass and Dire Straits was born.

They put every spare dime they had together (about \$300) and were able to make a 5-track demo, which Illsley immediately gave to a disc jockey friend, Charlie Gillett. [Gillett is also the author of *Sound Of The City*, a history of the origins of rock & roll.] Gillett played it one night on his popular radio program; among the songs was an odd ditty called "The Sultans Of Swing." By the time the four hour show was over, three record companies had called, asking Gillett where the band could be contacted; listener response was overwhelming.

By December of 1977, just a few months after the tape was aired, Dire Straits had signed in Europe to Phonogram Records and was opening a tour of the Continent for Talking Heads.

Their first album, entitled simply *Dire Straits* [Warner Bros., BSK 3266], was recorded and mixed in fifteen days and cost only \$25,000 to make. The band signed with Warner Bros. in the United States and despite a somewhat slow start soon began to happen worldwide.

Their manager, Ed Bicknell, attributes their instant success to good timing, but whatever it was the words "instant success" are a gross understatement. By mid-1978, "Sultans Of Swing" was a Top Five hit in almost every advanced country in the world. The album went platinum, then double platinum, and eventually hit the six million mark

and is still selling strong. The group's first American tour, of selected major clubs, sold out entirely in advance. They broke Bruce Springsteen's attendance record at New York's Bottom Line simultaneously became the darlings of both the European and American rock press. In fact, one critic after seeing their Bottom Line debut said: "Platinum will be obsolete... Dire Straits is going to be a titanium group."

Amidst it all, the band remained unaffected. Because they felt American TV was "diabolical," on their first tour they turned down TV interviews, *Midnight Special*, and tactfully refused an offer to appear on *Saturday Night Live*. The group decided to concentrate fully on their gigs and the preparation for their second album, recorded in December of 1978 at Compass-point Studios in the Bahamas. Entitled *Communiqué* [Warner Bros., HS 3330], it featured production by Barry Beckett and Jerry Wexler and more of the same style of music found on their debut. "In retrospect," says Knopfler of *Communiqué*, "there was no decision to make it sound like anything in particular. It's what was happening at that place at that time."

Because the first album was released in Europe five months before it came out in the States, and since the second record was released worldwide simultaneously, *Communiqué* did not hit as hard. Radio programmers were still playing "Sultans Of Swing" and the LP did not garner nearly as much airplay as the first. In the end, however, it too became a platinum seller.

Following the sessions for the second



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Cont'd on page 11

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album, Bob Dylan recruited Knopfler and Pick Withers to assist him in recording *Slow Train Coming*, his highly acclaimed, born-again record. Knopfler's only comment on the Dylan sessions is: "It was delightful to be asked to make the record."

Shortly after the Dylan sessions, Steely Dan asked Knopfler to appear on their next release. "Well, that was just one night when we were in New York City. It was just one session," he says, almost apologizing for it. "Again, it was delightful to be asked, especially when you're as green as I was then. I just did the best I could."

"I feel a lot closer to the Ramones than Steely Dan, as far as their approach to music," stresses Knopfler. "I really do. The Ramones are great." Listening to the Ramones, in comparison to Steely Dan, has given Dire Straits a new view of recording for themselves. Although they have become aware of the power of the studio, they do not want to make technically saturated records, or "clinical" records, as they refer to Steely Dan's.

"It's not an obsession with the studio," says Illsley. He is quickly interrupted by Knopfler. "It's not gonna sound much different than it would if you were in a room playing. What you're trying to do is make it more immediate. When you're hearing with your ears and you're hearing something more dimensional than a record, or if you're standing up next to an amp playing, you get a different feel than you do with a record. And what you're trying to do is get that extra dimension on the record. It's like creating an illusion with sound. Records can lay the sound away, and what you're trying to do is bring it out. It's weird."

If Knopfler preferred, he could probably spend the rest of his life in the studio laying down guitar licks for artists like Dylan and the Dan. But he won't, because he sees Dire Straits—the band—as his only major musical concern. In fact, he doesn't consider himself the red hot axeman that everyone has labeled him.

"As far as the guitar side of the thing is concerned," he says with a casual tone, "I don't see myself in that way at all. I mean, it's

like they're talking about someone else. I don't see myself ultimately being bound up as a guitar player, you know, technically. And for me, it's just part of getting the feeling across; it's just something you use. It's not something that I personally bind up with my identity as me. Other people might do that, but that's up to them.

Whether or not he sees himself in that light, the fact remains that Mark Knopfler is an extraordinary guitarist. He is one of the few in rock & roll today who can tastefully intertwine lead guitar licks all the way through a song without making them domineering. When it comes to Dire Straits, the songs are first and foremost, yet they themselves are unavoidably interlocked with Knopfler's guitar work. It is not surprising that the group's logo is a caricature of his red Fender Stratocaster.

Knopfler learned to play the instrument by ear. His first guitar was a red Hofner U2 Strat copy. "It had to be red," he says with a smile; "that was part of the rock & roll fantasy." Mark worked steadily at the instrument until he developed the blues-R&B-rock style for which he is now known. "By the time I was 22 or 23, I was getting a lot closer to the style I have now."

Knopfler seldom uses a pick when playing lead guitar. "I still use the pick a lot for rhythm guitar and for the acoustic guitar, such as on the rhythm guitar tracks on the Dylan album. But I just like wackin' out single notes with me thumb." Sounds great, but also painful.

"I've been using a bit of that plastic skin stuff," he admits. "You can just sort of plaster it on with a little brush, and it doesn't seem to rip your skin away as much. It can get very painful, you know. I remember the first American tour; we did a club tour, two sets a night. And I really get drenched and really into it when I play. After about three weeks my fingers were really in a bad way."

Illsley, on the other hand, started playing bass with a pick and took nine months before he gave it up to play with his fingers. "I realized I had to make the transition in order

Cont'd on next page

John Illsley and Mark Knopfler



Hyde Street Studios

The Staff of Tewksbury Sound Recorders (Richmond) and Rancho Rivera (San Francisco) is proud to announce the merger of our facilities and the opening of The Hyde Street Studios in the heart of San Francisco.

Formerly the home of Wally Heider Recording for the past thirteen years, the studio complex consists of three music studios and a media room (for commercial and audio/video production). Hyde Street features Trident and Helios consoles; a new 24 track Otari MTR 90 recorder; Ampex and Studer recorders; an extensive selection of outboard equipment and microphones; five acoustic echo chambers and complete air conditioning and lighting control.

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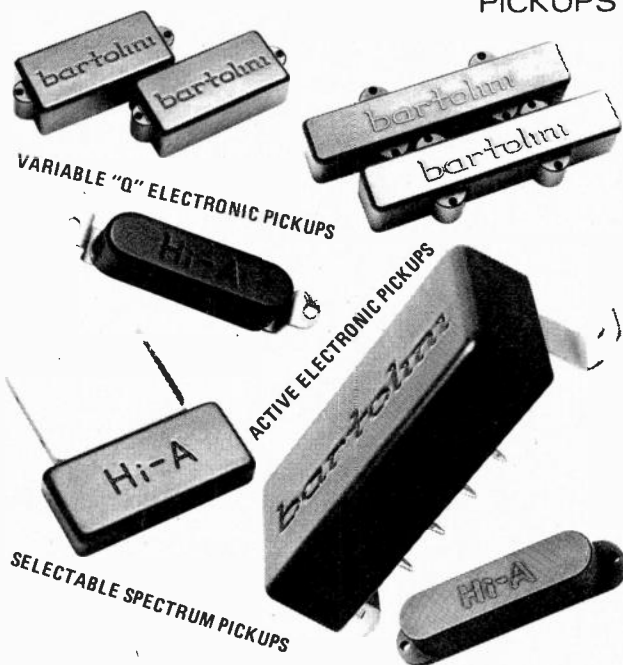
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to get a much better feel," he explains. John currently uses a pre-CBS Fender Precision.

Now that Dire Straits has made it and he has a little cash in his pocket, Knopfler has started to pick and choose the axe he prefers. The red Fender Strat that he is associated with has been in his possession for three and a half years. It's a pre-CBS with a maple neck and Fender pickups. "I've also got another maple neck Strat, which I've played a bit," says Knopfler, smiling. "I bought it as a pre-CBS, but I've got a feeling it's a fake."

"On the new album I play a Schecter Strat. In fact, it's not a Strat, it's actually a full-blown Schecter. Doug Schecter is making me a couple of guitars now. When I was in L.A., Bonnie Raitt lent me one for a few days while I was hanging out, and I like the sound of them. The one I've been using in the studio now is very, very good. They're really beautiful. The woods and materials are very good."

"With Schecter," interjects Illsley, "it's manufacturing with a certain sensitivity towards the materials and things like that."

On stage Knopfler uses a Marshall 4 x 12 cabinet powered by a 130-watt Music Man head, while in the studio he relies on a straight Music Man setup or a 100-watt Marshall top and 4 x 12 Marshall bottom. "Marshall makes good amps, you know!" he says, as if he's discovered the cure for cancer or something equally important.

"I also use a 1930 National steel guitar," he continues; "I've got two of them. I got my first one from a guy in Wales, and then I got the one I use on the records from a friend. Mark also owns three Ovation acoustic guitars—an Adamas 6-string, an Adamas 12-string, and a blonde Legend. "We haven't used acoustic guitars onstage yet," he says disappointedly. "We'd like to, but it's a difficult thing to do at the level we play at."

In a live situation, the band enjoys playing with a reasonable amount of volume, something Illsley says surprises many who see the band for the first time. "Yeah," agrees Knopfler, "people come up and say, 'Hey, it's loud, ain't it?' But if you're in front of five or ten thousand people, you've got a massive area that you're trying to communicate with, so you can't go up there and play like you'd play if you were in a club. You've got to get up there and push it out! Push the sound out and draw the people into what you're doing. I mean, I'm not talking about going way over the top and blasting people out of their ear drums, but you know, it has to have a certain volume and a certain feeling to it."

Feeling. The word comes up often in our discussion. When it comes to Dire Straits, feeling often equals spontaneity. The group, and Knopfler in particular, won't do anything unless it feels right to them. This is especially true when it comes to Knopfler's songs.

"I don't think about writing a single," he says, almost with anger in his voice. "I mean, some guy comes up to me and says, 'Hey, you should write a single!' But what does that mean? You just write a song, and it turns out to be eight minutes long, and it's not a single, you know! Most of the songs are far too long; the songs on this new album are

Cont'd from page 11

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eight minutes, six minutes... they're not singles. You can't write for a market, and you can't write with a motivation that says, 'Hey, this is gonna make money.'"

The subject has obviously touched a sore spot with Knopfler, and his feelings start pouring out: "Usually quite a bit of stuff goes into a song to make it. It varies with the song. There are no laws, no formulas, but sometimes you have to dig very deep—at least I do. Sometimes a song may come out of a really great feeling, other times a song may come out of a lot of pain. But once, one guy in the *Village Voice* in New York said I was mean, basically mean. And I was really hurt. I was angry because I didn't think that was fair, and I don't think it was accurate. And I don't think that guy would have said that to my face. Another time, one guy in England said that the song sounded like I was motivated by money. That hurt."

Knopfler once told a reporter of how he cried after their last tour and how good it felt to him just to be able to do that. "It felt good in the sense that I'd at least remained a human being after all that stuff we'd been through. I was still enough in touch with my feelings and they hadn't totally been dulled. You worry about yourself when you go back home, when you see your folks. I mean, you don't want to lose track of yourself as a guy. You gotta take a piss like every other fucker."

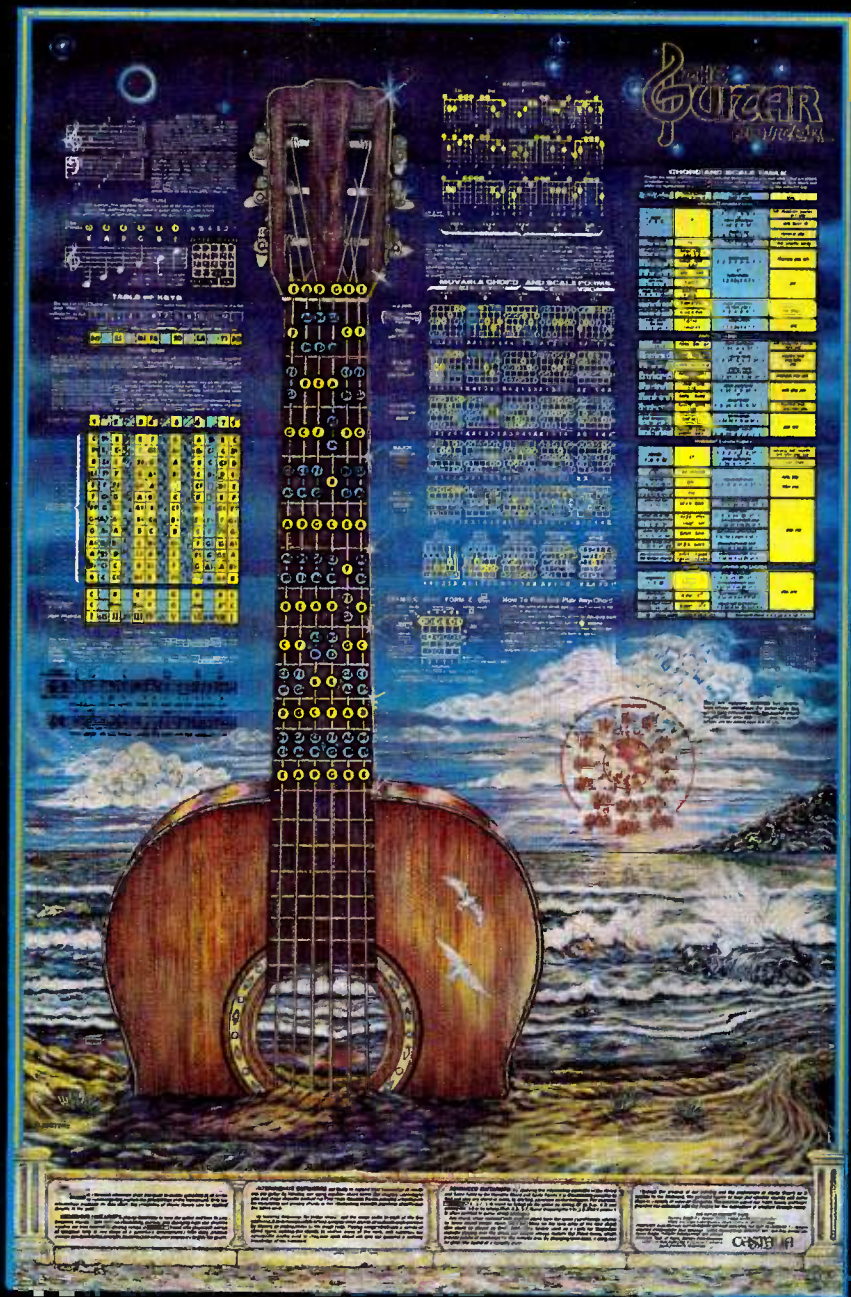
Knopfler now leans over the tape recorder to stress the urgency of his words. "You know, there are some people in this business who go around like their shit is ice cream. And you don't want to become one of those sorts of people, but no one is immune from all of the nonsense. Sometimes I think it's good to be vulnerable to life. I mean, God knows you've got to be strong enough just to do it, anyway. The whole idea of the 'star' thing, most of it is destructive; most of it is a lot of bullshit."

"There's no game playing in this band at all. There's no interest in any of that bullshit; there's no interest in money, particularly. When we go on the road, we don't go out and play to make money. It's not seen as sort of a success machine. There's no interest in the technical side of the matter. It's just a feeling thing! Really, the song dictates. You try and play the song the way you think the song wants to be played, and that's it. And you enjoy being with people."

Illsley explains it all a little more precisely: "Because of the situation we're in now, you automatically become a focal point for interpretation by different people. And those people are also trying to strive for some sense of identity in whatever they're doing. As a journalist, as a broadcaster, or whatever, they're all striving for a personality of their own, because it's seen as the only way they can survive in the situation they're in. I mean, we don't hate the press at all—we'll talk to anybody—but a lot of them tend to interpret things in a way that misses the point entirely."

There is a brief moment of silence, finally broken by Knopfler. "We can't be affected by all that," he states. "I mean, no one is going to spoil our fun."

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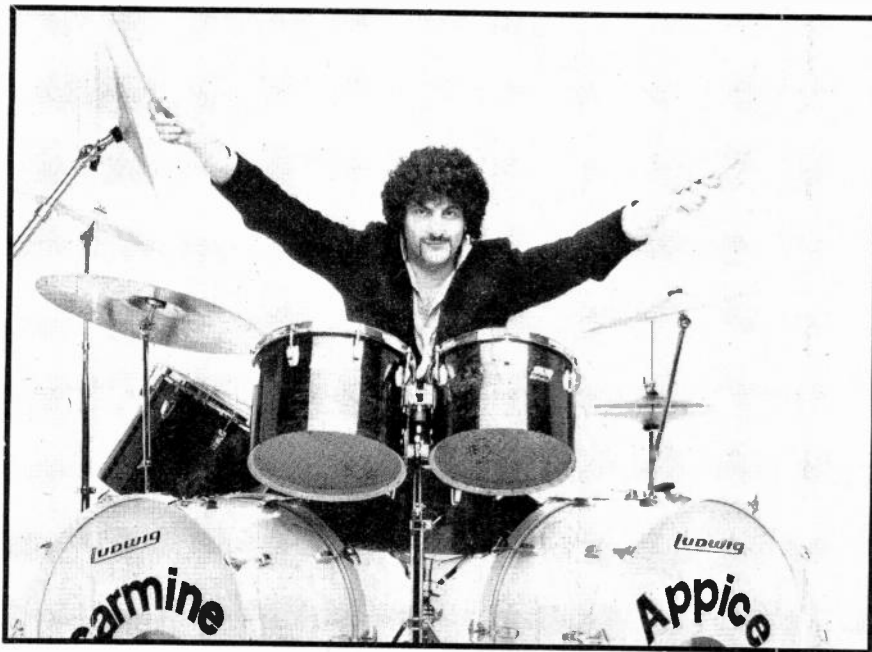


PHOTO: NEIL ZLOZOWER

by Ken Kubernik

Carmine Appice, the venerable rock drummer, educator, and oral percussionist, turns up the stereo to a deafening roar. We're listening to a Japanese import of Beck, Bogert and Appice in concert. Carmine is trading four's with Jeff Beck during a rave-up section of "Morning Dew." The band crackles with energy. I can't help but lament the premature death of this noted power trio.

"It was a loss, to be sure," Appice said earlier, as we talked on the patio of his manager's home in the Hollywood Hills. "Personalities did us in. Timmy primarily. He's a great bassist, but he's too busy playing leads and no bottom. It's a gas for the first six

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

months, but after that the guitarist gets pissed off. That's always been Tim's problem. We blew out a fortune in lost gigs, but hey, that comes with the terrain."

From where he's sitting now, though, Carmine Appice has a pretty nice landscape laid out in front of him. He chairs the rhythm section for Rod Stewart; conducts umpteen drum clinics for Ludwig; fronts his own band, the Rockers, and accepts the odd session date when a project strikes his fancy. Not bad for a Brooklyn native whose initial notoriety came with the early heavy-metal mavens, Vanilla Fudge.

"Vanilla Fudge was the first classical, symphonic rock band," Carmine declares.

CARMINE APPICE

"With that giant drum kit, I used to imitate a whole percussion section."

"I started the fad of making drum kits big and weird," he continues. "Tim Bogert, the bass player, used Dual Showman amps which produced quite a bit of power. I always had a problem hearing my bass drum. So I found an ancient bass drum in a junk shop, hooked it up to my kit and it was as loud as hell. It cut through like crazy. Everywhere I went, England for example, the drummers went crazy when they saw this gargantuan bass drum. Then, when I got my Ludwig sponsorship, they asked me what size did I want my kit. I figured that if it worked for my bass drum, it should work for my whole kit. I ordered two 26 x 14 bass drums, a marching tenor drum and all oversized tom toms. This was 1968; it started the whole fad. When Led Zeppelin came over for their first U.S. tour, they opened for the Fudge. John Bonham fell in love with my kit, so I coerced Ludwig into providing one for this 'struggling new band.' He got the same exact set as mine. Then I started fooling with odd sizes, and it's still going on."

"People are always looking for new things and I've always been lucky enough to come up with these ideas that no one has done before, like the first gong in rock. I tell Ludwig and they put it together. Next thing I know, it all starts to happen."

As to the specifics on Appice's own drum kit, he points out that "it's the most heavy-duty hardware that Ludwig's ever

made. It's built off trees; in other words, off one tree you can have three tom toms, a cymbal holder and a cowbell holder. This cuts down on the amount of clutter around me."

"I've just designed a set of tom toms that go up in the air at a 90° angle rather than the way a tom tom usually sits. It's in arms reach above your head. It's totally unique in that the drummer can adjust the tom to any angle." These two aerial toms are 16 x 18 and 18 x 20. As for his other toms, Appice says, "the ones I'm using now are 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 16 x 18." His toms are double-headed "because you get a more explosive sound out of them."

Appice's snare is a 5½ x 14 Super 400 Ludwig. He doesn't do anything special to it although, he says, "I have a wah-wah snare drum hook-up that I use live." He also plays two Syndrums, custom built into two of his Ludwig toms by Polon Industries. Appice has switched to a smaller bass drum, 24 x 15, "which gives me a punchier, tighter kick drum sound."

Carmine uses Zildjian cymbals. "The high-hats are medium, 15". I've got holes drilled on the bottom high-hat so the air pressure comes out." The crashes are 18" and 20" mediums, and his big ride cymbal is a 22" heavy ride. Appice also uses a 48" Zildjian gong, an 18" Chinese swish, and an 18" Chinese cymbal that actually comes from China.

In terms of sticks the drummer reports that "Ludwig is making my own 'Carmine Ap-

pice' 5/8 sticks. They're each going to have a big bead at the big end of the stick and a little bead at the other end, because I always play with the sticks backwards anyway." Since he started using Peavey drum monitors (which he needs "in order to play with the guitars and Marshall amps"), "I don't go through as many sticks as I used to. I would say that if I go through a pair a night I'm going through a lot. With drum monitors, you don't have to bang yourself silly anymore."

In 1972, Appice, in an unprecedented move for a rock musician, issued *Realistic Rock* [Almo Publications], an instructional book for aspiring drummers. Revised and updated over the years, it has sold in excess of 150,000 copies, placing it among the top three music books in world-wide sales. Carmine's broad, wrestler's frame and menacing fumanchu mustache hardly befits the pedagogic mold, but instruction is serious business for him. He explains: "My books are being used in colleges around the world, which is mind-blowing to me because I've never been to college. It started when I went into a Sam Ash record store in New York and saw some drum books. I'd been reading and learning from them my whole life and they seemed so out of touch with the new music scene. There'd be some short-haired asshole on the cover with the comment, 'Learn to play drums in five easy lessons' or some such shit. I looked at the rhythms and they were ten years old. So, I said to myself, 'Damn it, I'll write a book, just for the hell of it.' I wrote it based on how I



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learned my first rock rhythms. My lawyer helped get it published, I got five hundred dollars as an advance and boom, I'm an author.

"The next thing I want to do is print it in Japanese and take it to that market, then in German, etc. I want to take it around the world. Others are getting into it now—Ginger Baker has done a book. But I was the first to do it, and I was the first major rock drummer to do clinics."

Appice, together with Ludwig drums, works painstakingly to provide stimulating and entertaining clinics, workshops and symposiums for the vast pool of young musicians. "When I first started these clinics," says Carmine, "there would be about fifty to one hundred people present. Then things picked up to three or four hundred for my clinics. Ludwig picked up on this and got after me to do more of them. Gradually, things have escalated to the point where they're now events as opposed to clinics. That's what I learned from Rod. When you go into a city, make it an event rather than just sneaking into town with no one looking. At the various locales, my drums are set up with a PA, a bass player and a guitarist. T-shirts and drum books are available for purchase while a tape is running of my latest recordings. So in this way, it's like a mini-concert. When I do a clinic in New York now, I draw over a thousand kids.

"The clinics usually consist of jams between myself and the other players," Carmine details, "and then a rap with the audience, questions. I demonstrate various rhythms, different time signatures and then bring the band out to demonstrate them. Joe Morello, the great jazz drummer, has helped me immeasurably to sharpen my presentation, and occasionally we have drum battles which are always a treat for myself and the audience. The key to effective teaching is to say simply that it works for me, [but] it might not work for you. There are some clinicians who demand that you do it their way or not at all. I think that's the first way to turn a kid off the playing. That's why, when I assembled *Realistic Rock*, I included pictures and things to make it more fun and appealing. I don't want it to be a dry, tutorial exercise book. The kids should have fun while they're learning. That is critical to sustaining your interest in an instrument.

"Presently, I'm doing clinics for UNICEF, which is really exciting because of the good around the world it's doing. When Rod gave UNICEF his share of the publishing for 'Do Ya Think I'm Sexy' [*Blondes Have More Fun*, Warner Bros., BSK 3261] (which Carmine co-wrote), I felt bad because I didn't. I couldn't afford to. I'm not in Rod's financial bracket. So that's where the drum clinics for UNICEF came together. Half of all the money I earn through them goes to UNICEF. So in my small way I'm trying to give something back, and it makes me feel real good."

Inasmuch as Carmine is a serious student of the drums, it isn't surprising that his prominent influences have been jazz drummers, particularly Gene Krupa. The object of much adulation himself, Appice downright blushes in his heartfelt fondness for Krupa, a

brilliant craftsman riddled by career stifling doubts and insecurities. "Gene Krupa is my main man," he professes. "I'm trying to bring the drums up front like Krupa did. What he did with the big band is what I want to do in rock.

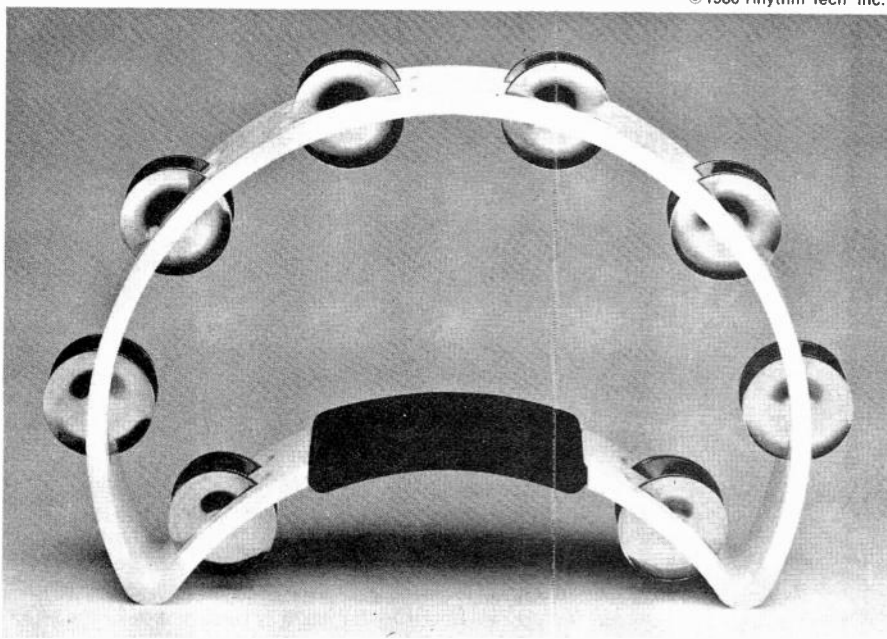
"I've got Gene's life story film on video. Christ, sometimes I feel like my life is patterned after his. I've seen the ups and downs he went through, and hopefully, I've learned from him. I've seen my career follow the same kinds of patterns to the point where you either break out or break down. And though I'm always trying to bring myself up, I'm always looking back.

"I used to borrow my brother's ID to get into Birdland in New York in the early Sixties for Gretsch Drum Night on Mondays," Carmine recalls. "I saw Philly Joe Jones and Chico Hamilton and Buddy Rich and

sometimes Krupa. They'd all come there and jam. "Unfortunately, a lot of the young, aspiring drummers I meet just don't have the diverse background you need to really be a complete drummer. Buddy Rich is the only name they might know, and that has more to do with him being a *Tonight Show* regular than his drum history. Max Roach and Art Blakey are foreign names to them and that's too bad. What about Elvin Jones and Tony Williams? I had a drum studio in New York and a lot of the kids didn't even know who Billy Cobham was. They'd spent all their time just checking out myself and the other rock drummers. At most of the clinics I get asked about the drummer in Rush. Rush! That's fourteenth generation. Who gives a shit!

"Hopefully, I can communicate to the kids the need to go back and check out the history of drums. Recently, I did a drum clinic

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called 'Drummerama' in New York where I drummed against Joe Morello. The Buddy Rich Orchestra came in after we played. Over 2,000 kids showed up. It was a great concept, and I hope it initiated a lot of them to music they would never have heard."

Carmine's travails in rock & roll have carved out quite a legacy, one that he's acutely aware of. "One day soon, I'll sit down and write a book, *The American Guide To Hotel Wrecking*. I've seen it all, been everywhere, started a dozen different fads." His statements aren't empty boasts but rather, the hardened insights of a survivor in a high-fatality industry. "I'm the only one left who's still happening from that initial group of Sixties rock drummers. Keith Moon is dead, Ginger Baker is... well, and Mitch Mitchell is out of the business. I'm working all the time, earning good bucks, but I've made some big mistakes. If I had the head on my shoulders now back in the old Vanilla Fudge days, we'd still be together. We got bored and broke it up. What we should have done is kept the group together but done solo things, worked with Beck when we wanted to, and keep everything loose. When we broke up, we threw away a million dollars worth of gigs."

"By the time I was 23, I was in and out of one of the biggest groups in the world. Then we started Cactus and that was huge. Then came BBA and that was even bigger. But they were always so short-lived. When we were on the road with BBA, I was heavily into the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Billy Cobham. Beck was getting bored with rock & roll, and BBA was very close to jazz-rock fusion. We played a lot of strange time signatures, 9/8 and things like that. So when it broke up, I went to England with Beck to form a new band. That grew into the *Blow by Blow* album. I played on seven tracks, co-wrote two of the songs. 'Scatterbrain' was my riff. Jeff took credit for it and I sued him for it, but things are all straightened out now."

"At first Jeff didn't dig the fusion things at all," Carmine explains. "I took him and Timmy to see the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and they both hated it. But over time he came 'round to it. The second BBA album, which never came out, is filled with fusion music, real kick-ass shit in hip time changes. After BBA blew out, Jeff got together with George Martin and put that package together. At that point in my career, my management was in shambles. I couldn't get it together. [Session drummer] Richard Bailey re-cut my tracks and Jeff had a monster hit album on his hands."

"After that I moved to Los Angeles and joined KGB, which was a useless band," he admits. "That was the low point of my career. But it did get me back into circulation. Prior to that I was doing nothing but clinics and fooling around with a few ideas. Ted Nugent was desperate to have me in his band. But at the time I was playing with Ray Gomez and I felt, 'Who needs Nugent when I can play with Gomez?'"

"I joined Rod's band after his roadie called up, asking me if I knew any drummers. They'd been through about thirty at auditions. I said, 'What, you don't ask me? Aren't I good

enough for you?' And he said, 'Well, you're always so busy.' That's my problem. Everyone thinks I'm so busy doing things that they never consider me for gigs, which is never the case. My name was bandied about to replace Keith Moon when he died, but I think that the Who organization probably felt I couldn't find time for it or something—which is nuts because I would love to play with them. Anyway, I went down to one of Rod's rehearsals and plugged into it real quick. Boom, I was in. Rod told me to keep it real simple, like the way I played in Cactus, a band he loved. And he promised me a drum solo every night to appease my fans in the audience. So everyone is happy."

You don't have to dig deep to fathom the appeal of working with Rod Stewart, but it isn't the never-ending party it's portrayed to be. Rod is a demanding, sometimes obstinate leader, and Carmine, with a mind and a following of his own, takes orders hesitantly. His disdain for ballads exemplifies this unique partnership. "I'd rather not play on them because they bore me," he says flatly. "We bring in a session musician to do them. I just don't get off on playing ballads."

"The new album is a double, with 18 songs, and there are three ballads. I don't play on those. I just played on Eric Carmen's new album which is loaded with ballads, so it's not that I can't play them, it's just that I don't want to. With Rod I played a scaled down kit, five pieces. I don't think I used my double-bass drums at all. But I did some things on Eddie Money's new album where I played my whole kit."

Carmine scored tremendously with "Sexy" from the last Stewart album, but contributed little, compositionally, to the new LP. The lucrative publishing dollars provide little interest for Appice. "I really don't have anything on the new album. Writing tunes with Rod is tough, because his opinion of drummers is that traditional 'He's the big oaf in the back.' It's pretty cliqueish, so I don't bother. I'd rather do a Ludwig clinic to pick up some cash than to hassle over publishing on a tune."

"It's weird, the difference between the English and American attitudes. When Rod's off the road, I've got to work because I love to play. But the rest of the band—his 'mates'—hang out all day, at the pubs at night, waiting for Rod to get it together again. It's like they put all their eggs in one basket. That's why I started the Rockers; I wanted to stay in front of audiences while Rod was off playing soccer."

"Rhythmically, there's a big difference between English and American players also. The English are much more laid back. The English style is to play a little behind the beat, which is almost like being drunk. The Faces always had that kind of sound, that sloppiness. It's simply that the English are drunk a lot more. It's a pub attitude—get pissed and go out and play. The American bands are more drug oriented, but with higher energy outputs so they stay right on top of the beat. It's also a black thing. I grew up listening to R&B. Bernard Purdie was a major influence. I remember meeting him when he was playing with Jeff [1975 tour]. I told him what an influ-

ence he was; I told him straight out that I copped certain rhythms and chops from him. I have no qualms about owning up about things like that. I'll tell anyone to their face that I took their riff if I indeed did. The whole thing about playing is learning from the masters. That's what they're there for."

Appice, whose drum training included stints in his high school orchestra and marching band, credits his singing as a significant aid to his drumming. He explains: "Because I've had a strong singing background, I understand the importance of working with the vocalist so as to not interfere with his vocal line. A lot of drummers just plow right through, oblivious to everything, throwing in fills where they don't belong. But I play around the vocal, not against it. The young drummer should pay extra special attention to the vocals. So many do not, and they suffer from it. The key is to learn where not to play. It's very hard to play simple with all the hardware in front of me. That's why I do a lot of background vocals with Rod, because when I'm singing I concentrate on that and not the drums. It's like my singing edits my drumming and vice versa."

Last September, Appice went on a drum clinic tour of Europe, 25 cities in all. "We use a translator in most of the cities," Carmine explains, "and that leads to a lot of headaches. I can't go to Japan anymore, however, because I've become too popular. The sponsors like a nice, well-behaved, small crowd, and what I get is a full blown riot. The last time I was there it was pure hysteria. A lot of it has to do with the fact that I play with Rod, but I know that a lot of them are my fans."

With that constituency in mind, Carmine has worked to produce that elusive solo album. And to hear him tell it, you'd think there were a half-dozen albums in the can. "I cut one for Columbia last year with Max Middleton, Bobby Tench, Mark Stein and a few other friends. But I didn't think I'd get the support from Columbia that I thought it deserved. And I had some reservations about the music. The thing is that I just don't want to release a record for the hell of it, like a Ralph Humphries. It comes out and it's gone. When I release it I want it to be an event. I've just finished cutting some drum singles with Richie Podolor, who cut those classic Sandy Nelson drum singles in the early Sixties. Then there is some material I recorded with the Rockers. But my commitments to Ludwig and Rod will take up the remainder of the year, so I'm not sure when you'll see a record from me in the stores."

"Sessions are another thing," Appice goes on. "I know I could be working all year 'round in studios if I wanted to, but I don't because I want to save my sound. I don't want to prostitute myself. I don't want to deal with that nine in the morning till midnight crap. And I sure as hell don't want to hassle with the union over payment. I'm primarily a live player. I need to be in front of people."

"Ultimately," he concludes, "I'd like to set up drum clinics like Jack Lalanne has health spas, teaching kids my methods." M.I.

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World Radio History

George Duke

State-of-the-Art Synthesist

by Melodie Bryant

George Duke: musician, composer, synthesist, stylist. A keyboard player who has proven himself more than equal to the task in areas as diverse as straight ahead jazz, rock, funk and Latin, he appears—in person as on vinyl—a man whose style is so distinctive, so convincing, that you're tempted to think it must have always been that way.

But as Duke sits in his ground floor office, his back to the sliding glass door, a strange thing happens. As if out of nowhere, the incongruous figures of Flo and Eddy appear behind him, and begin to jog around the courtyard. What is this—some kind of Zappaesque nightmare?

Not exactly. The ex-Turtles share the office next door and have merely emerged for their midafternoon exercise. But as they alternately bounce by, they serve as a subtle reminder from Frank Zappa by proxy that at least some of the credit for Duke's success lies with him. It was, after all, Zappa's persistent prodding which pushed Duke to try his hand at synthesis. And it was during his time with Zappa that Duke began to forge a musical style of his own—a style at least partially built on the instrument he had been so hesitant to touch.

A graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he put himself through school on a trombone scholarship, Duke was playing jazz piano early on, forming his first trio at age 16. A couple of years later he was holding down a gig at San Francisco's Half Note club with a trio which later included singer Al Jarreau.

Taken by the sound of a tune by Jean-Luc Ponty which he heard by chance on the radio, he talked his way into an audition, recording *Electric Connection* [World Pacific, ST 20168], and playing with Ponty live. It was that night that Zappa saw him.

He played with the Mothers for a year until offered a gig with alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley, a longtime idol. He played and recorded with Adderley for two years, returning to Zappa's group for another three years, before taking off on his own.

Since then, Duke's career has been the crossover musician's dream, including jazz albums like *From Me To You* [Epic, PE 34469], and funk hits like *Reach For It* [Epic, E 34883], as well as work with artists ranging from Harry "Sweets" Edison to Gladys Knight. His latest LP, *A Brazilian Love Affair* [Epic, FE 36483], marks his recent return to Latin music. In this as in all of his albums, Duke remains a unique ar-



tist; one whose insatiable curiosity and careful heed to his own artistic compass have made him a consummate stylist. In the following interview, Duke talks about some of the important steps he took getting there.

There's a great recording available on MPS reissue called *The Primal George Duke* (5CO64-61170), which you recorded at the Half Note club, in 1966. What were your influences at that time?

That record is really kind of sad for me because I think I really wasn't ready to record when I was offered the deal. Up to that point, I had been into Wynton Kelly and Les McCann and had gone through the Bill Evans school, and started getting into Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea, who—believe it or not—are older than me [34]. But then I heard John Coltrane and started thinking, maybe I can use that and apply it to piano. But I didn't really understand what John Coltrane was about. All I knew was, he played a lot of notes. So I started playing too much. That's why that record kind of bugs me, but that was me at the time...

You had played acoustic piano for a long time before switching to Rhodes. What made you change?

It was after the *Electric Connection* date, and Jean-Luc had come to the U.S. by himself. I brought my trio down from San Francisco, and we played in L.A. at Donte's. Dick Bock, who was president of World Pacific—Ponty's label—had recorded it, but he said he thought we could do better at a rock club. And both of us said, "You've got to be kidding. No!" Now this was during the hippie movement and everybody was drugged out on reds and LSD. But he had this idea it would go over because of the energy we had. So we went. And all of a sudden it was, like, everybody was sitting on the floor. No bras, no suits. No tables—and *no acoustic piano*. They had a Rhodes, and that was the first time I had ever *seen* one of those things. I said, "Dick, you're out of your mind. I'm not playing. There's no piano here." He says, "There's a piano." I said, "That's not a piano, that's a toy." But there was nothing I could do. There were 150 kids out there, and all I could do was hit it. So I did—and I fell in love with it. And amazingly, the show went over, too. People would get up and walk around and dance when they wanted to. And that was the record that came out—*The Jean-Luc Ponty Experience With The George Duke Trio*

PHOTO: MARK MANDER

[World Pacific, ST 20168]—and it made some noise in the jazz world.

Your joining up with Ponty was more or less a natural extension of jazz. How did you feel about playing with Zappa?

I never knew why I was in that band. All I knew was that he was paying me more money than I'd ever seen in my life, so I figured there must be some good coming out of it. And I was always curious to see what it would be like to work with a big rock band—you know, limousines, people setting up my equipment—I'd never experienced that; the whole bit of traveling around with a big white group. We went to Europe—it was real freaky. But it was also real strange, because one night we'd be at the Pauley Pavilion playing some sort of avant-garde music with the L.A. Philharmonic, and the next night we'd be doing Fifties rock & roll. All that stuff I could care less for. But I had a feeling there was something I could learn from Frank, something that kept me there—until I was offered the gig with Cannonball. And then there was just no way. But it's funny, because Cannonball used to come down to the Half Note club when I was there, and he told me later that when he and [brother] Nat heard me, they thought I was the worst sounding Ramsey Lewis they had ever heard in their lives! Who would ever think I'd eventually be working with the guy? But I took a cut in pay, set up my own equipment again—the whole hardship trip again—just to be part of that man's experience.

Why did you go back with Zappa?

I wasn't making that much money with Cannon, even though I was enjoying myself. And the two years I was with him, Frank was offering me more money, trying to get me back, so it got to be a pressure. Also, I had begun to record. I had done two records—*Inner Source* [MPS/BASF, 29-20912-1] and *Save The Country* [Liberty, LST 11004]—which were jazz oriented. And I had just signed an agreement to record a couple of albums a year for MPS, in 1973. It didn't pay much, but it was an outlet. So I figured, since I had that outlet, I wouldn't mind going back. And I lasted another three years doing that, until I knew it was time to leave. And I knew then that I'd never rejoin the group; I knew that would be it. Frank knew it too—he never asked me to come back.

It was during that time that Zappa introduced you to the synthesizer, wasn't it?

Yeah. Ian Underwood, who was the other keyboardist in the band, used to have an ARP 2600, and that had too many knobs for me. So Frank said, "Well, I'm going to have Don Preston come down and show you how to play the instrument." Don came down and brought a Minimoog, and he was showing me, and I didn't learn nothin'. But just to be different, I said I wanted an ARP Odyssey. They were smaller, you know. So Frank bought one and just put it on my piano and left it there. He'd have it on every day, and he'd say, "Come on, hit it, play it." And I'd say, "No man, I can't play it." I even took it home to try to get something out of it. Nothin'. But over the course of time, I'd be movin' around and I'd bump into it and it would make a noise. So eventually I got the attitude, I'm gonna learn how to play this thing, but not by lookin' in a book. I've got to learn it like I learned how to play jazz—just sit down and start turning knobs until I find a sound I like, and then figure out what I did. And I finally got a little group of sounds together.

Your own music began to change a lot around that time. What caused that?

All the jazz critics were putting me down *horribly*. Here I was working with a rock artist anyway. And after working with Jean-Luc, they could stand the one year I was with the Mothers. Then I got the gig with Cannonball, and he was okay. But when I went back with Frank, I don't know one jazz critic that didn't put me down for it. So I got real adamant. I said, "Why should I do what they want me to do? That's silly. I should be doin' what I want to do." So I decided, I'm not going to do it anymore. I'm going to play what I want to play, call it what you want. And I did the *Fee!* album [MPS/BASF, ME25355], which was a real departure for me. It marked the first step in my career where I decided I didn't necessarily want to be known strictly as a jazz musician. It was a conglomeration of styles, and it was really that

record that started me on the way to doing what I'm doing now.

I saw you with a trio around that time, and then later around the time *Reach For It* came out. Your show had changed quite a lot. What prompted that?

Well, the "Reach For It" single wasn't designed to be a big hit. If you listen to the album, it's the only song of its kind on there. In fact, when I heard I had a hit, I was in Europe doing a *dying* tour, and my manager called and told me. He said, "We just sold 80,000 records last week!" So I came back, and all of a sudden I was playing my first big concert by myself in front of 40,000 people in Detroit. Sold out. We could have sold out the second show too, but we decided to come back and do it another time. And it's a good thing, because we *died*. We only had one hit, and I had no idea how to put on a show for those kinds of people. They were used to seeing Earth Wind and Fire and LTD—acts with showmanship that dressed, moved, danced. And we were just sitting up there playing the same tunes we played at jazz clubs, and at the end of the night, we played "Reach For It." It wasn't enough. So after that show, my whole perspective changed. I started wearing all white—because when I play in front of 40,000 people (and up to 70,000 people) I look like a dot on stage, as big as I am. And I started buying stage gear, and had all my keyboards done in plexiglass. The whole bit changed. And I got the Dukey Stick.

How did that work?

It was a wand that lit up, and it was a trigger for several things on stage, one of which was a scrim that covered my speakers and lit up when I pointed at them. It also lit up the piano, and it also opened this globe, and at that time, fire came out of it. In the globe, I kept a Moog which was designed to be worn around my neck, made of frosted plexiglass, and it changed colors. It could be blue or green or red—a real nice amber. I would be playing and just push a button, and it would turn another color. And it used to wig people out, because you couldn't really see it. All you saw were the keyboards and this hue around my crotch area. But in the case of the song "Pluck," I put champagne in the globe. Listen, I have a sense of humor, and I've always been involved in that. I always tell people that Dizzy Gillespie and Fats Waller had a sense of humor, too, and so did Cannonball. So when I'm on stage, I like to do crazy silly things. The last time I was in Los Angeles, I had a row of glasses and this big bottle of champagne, and when the globe opened, I just uncorked the bottle in the middle of the song and gave champagne to everybody in the band.

What does your equipment consist of these days?

The plexiglass keyboard in front of me on stage is a Rhodes, and it's always undergoing changes. It has a three-way split harp, with outputs for bass, midrange and treble, and that's cleaned the sound up a bit. I also have completely unique pickups I got from a guy at CBS in Fullerton [California]. They never came out on the market; I don't know why. They pick up the overtones better. And I have a completely different hammer structure than most people. I traded in all the neoprene tips and put the hardest tips I could find on there. They're actually the normal ones, but they're the ones from the top. And that gives me more harmonics. A lot of people don't like the sound. Quincy Jones wasn't particularly interested in it. It's percussive. But I feel that piano is a percussion instrument, and I use it as such in my music. On top of that is a Hohner Clavinet/Pianet, also in plexiglass.

What about the other piano? It has some synthesizers built into the case, doesn't it?

Yeah, it's basically a Yamaha CP 70 with the Odyssey and Minimoog—the same ones I've been using for years—built into the case. It's also got the switching network for the Clavitar.

How does that work?

It's basically just a keyboard trigger, which is why it's so light. It was designed by a guy named Wayne Yentis. The people from Toto and I were the first to have them. I spent some time with Wayne, telling him what I needed on it. And it was a god-send for me, because I needed to get out in front, and I wanted to be able to play. Jan Ham-

mer had this instrument he was messing around with, and it never worked, so I didn't want what he had, and there was Wayne with this instrument. I asked him if he could put a wheel on it, and he said no, so I told him I didn't want it. Because I've got to be able to bend notes, and I can't do it with a button or a knob that I have to shift back and forth. It's got to be a wheel. So he designed it and fixed it up, and put all kinds of stuff on there. It's monophonic now, but I'm having a thing designed for it that will make it polyphonic, to interface with the Prophet and all the programs.

Are you satisfied with the Prophet?

Yeah, but I talked with some people at Sequential Circuits about trading my old one in for one of the new models with cassette interface—the Prophet 5-3. The tuning is also supposed to be a lot better, and it's more road-worthy. But they're not out yet.

Do you have any other keyboards?

I have an Oberheim 4-voice and a string machine. But I don't carry everything with me anymore. It's not necessary. The Oberheim is too large to try to use live, so I just use it in the studio.

Any special pedals?

Oberheim filter pedals on everything but the Odyssey. For that I use the pedal that came with it. And for the Clavinet, I use a Color-sound wah-wah. It's an English pedal, and it breaks down all the time, but it's the only one that ever worked for me. I used to have five or six of them, because they would break every two or three gigs.

You've talked about some of your influences as a piano player. Who are your influences as a synthesist?

Well, Jan Hammer was the first one I ever heard play the shit out of the instrument. He had a unique style that I liked, and he managed to make the sound of the synthesizer warm. A lot of synthesists I'd heard had this nasal quality about them—this *ihhhh* sound—that used to bug me. And I often wondered, much as I loved Chick Corea, when he would ever get rid of that Sahara sound. Neither Jan Hammer nor Don Preston got that sound. They had a lot more wood—more lute, flute, guitar. Also, Chick didn't use the natural vibrato. There's a big difference between using the mechanical vibrato—which I used when I first got the instrument, because I didn't have the technique to use the wheel. But I finally figured, there's got to be another way for me to play this and make it sound like it's coming from me. So I got a technique using the wheel, and of course Jan Hammer and Don Preston do the same thing. Plus, Don Preston was one of the only people I ever heard who changed the sound in the middle of a solo, and made the instrument do something. Most people would just stay on one thing and that would be it. And it seemed like there were a lot more possibilities for the instrument.

When you first started playing synthesizer, you were more creative than most people with the Odyssey, but you seem to have turned more to the Minimoog. Why?

They're just different. There are certain things you could do on the ARP, because of the knob, that you couldn't do on the Moog and vice versa. Physically, it's just a totally different sound. But there are some sounds that I got—especially on *The Aura Will Prevail* [MPS/BASF, MC 25613]—that I liked the ARP more, and I never could duplicate them on the Moog. Whereas now, the ARP doesn't have the knob anymore. They have this thing on there, a button, which I can't use. I can't even get them to put a knob on for me at the factory. And my old one's really warped now. But I'll find somebody to do it...

I've also noticed that when you play piano, your lead lines can be theoretically very intricate; but when you go to the synthesizer, you stick almost exclusively to pentatonic scales. Why is that?

I always try to play simple, and I approach every instrument differently. I don't play Clavinet the way I play Rhodes. Technically I have to change. Also, playing a synthesizer vertically as opposed to horizontally is a little different. So it depends on what song I'm playing. But if I'm playing something that's got some blues in it, then I do something else, and it's generally based around pentatonic scales. But

I think what distinguishes me most as a synthesizer player is the way I use the filter pedal, or the way in which I move the mod wheel. Basically, what I try to do is use the filter pedal as if I were talking. And I've developed a technique on it that's personal to me.

Do you ever practice anymore?

I can't remember the last time I practiced. At one time, I used to practice just playing fast, just to loosen up my hands to get used to playing notes. With Zappa, for instance, you'd wind up having to practice lines that were written out, just so you could execute them when the time came. And I also used to practice playing light. Generally, I'm a very hard player; but when it comes time to play something that's fast, you have to lighten up. But I practice feelings more than anything else, because feelings are more important than playing notes to try and impress someone.

How do you practice a feeling?

I just don't think about anything else. It's almost like mind to mind contact. But the best practice is with an audience—being intuitive. You can tell if something's dying. Sometimes you have to step in and change it. And sometimes it's better just to stop everything.

How long have you wanted to do this latest album?

Forever. I used to go see Brazil '65 in Sausalito when they were at the Trident. The music was just so mellow and had a thing about it calling me to be involved in it. But I didn't want to do a Brazilian album and have it die. So my manager got CBS International to let me do it based on the strength of *Reach For It, Don't Let Go* [Epic, JE 35366], and *Follow The Rainbow* [Epic, JE 35701], which were all successful records. And I thought, now's the time to see if the funk-blasters come with me. If I don't do it now, it will be too late. And it looks like a fair amount of them did, because it's already doing better than the previous one—*Master Of The Game* [Epic, JE 36263], which had a huge airplay single. Either that, or they bought the album by mistake, and now they're unhappy!

You were once quoted as saying that without the synthesizer, you'd be just another keyboard player. Do you still feel that way?

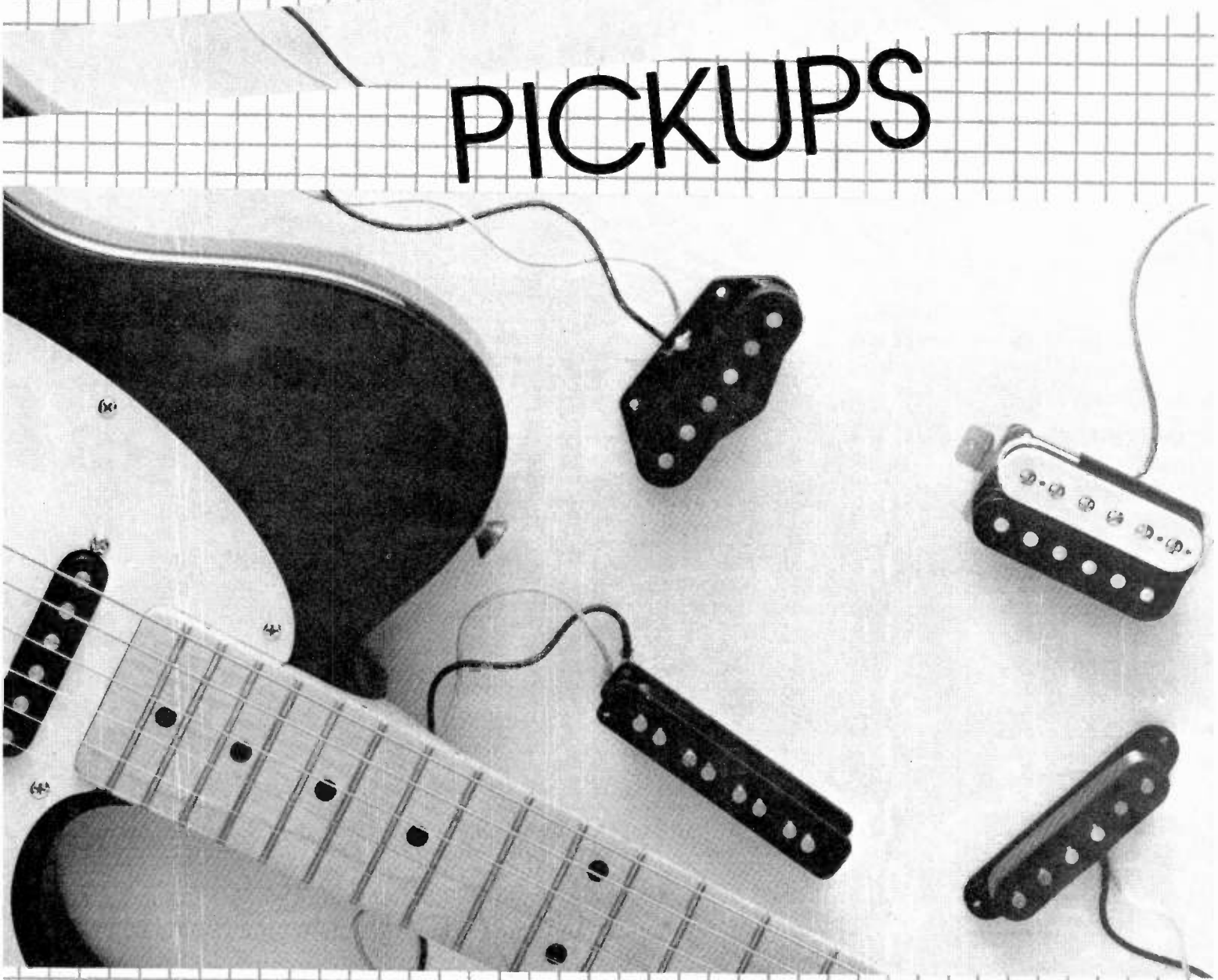
In a way, yeah, and in a way, no. I know that I have a certain special thing that I bring to the instrument, which is basically, my gospel upbringing. I have a lot of funk and a lot of feeling in what I'm playing. A lot of earthiness. But that instrument did bring me to a different level of expression that I would not have been able to get out of the piano. And in that sense, it made me different from everybody else.

M.I.



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World Radio History

Asleep at the Wheel KINGS OF THE ROAD

Story and photos by Dan Forte

At 5:00 in the afternoon, as soundmen tap microphones and waitresses wipe off tables, the seven-piece band assembled on stage loosens up with "Come Dance With Me," a samba written by jazz saxophonist Eddie Harris. The group's volume is perhaps a tad higher than the average jazz combo's—filling the empty dance hall, not to mention the parking lot and entire block outside—but their musicianship is obviously first-rate. At center stage the band's beanstalk of a guitarist conducts the jam session as each member solos in turn—first the soprano sax, then the piano, the violin, the pedal steel guitar.

An appropriate caption to the scene described above might be, "What's wrong with this picture?" A nightclub... soundcheck... waitresses, soundmen... jazz septet... piano, sax, steel guitar... Ah ha! What sort of "jazz" band has a fiddle and a steel guitar?

As with many seemingly incongruous pictures, the one above makes better sense if viewed from a different vantage point. A wide angle shot reveals a Greyhound bus parked behind the club, with a group's name painted on the side: Asleep At The Wheel.

The Wheel has been called (by *Hustler* magazine, among other sources) America's hottest country band. So what business do these cowboys have playing a jazz samba in a rock club? Well, once again, there's the problem of seeing things in context. Asleep At The Wheel is without doubt one of the country's foremost proponents of country music, more specifically western swing, of which they are champions by virtue as well as by default. But they are also a lot more. To many of its fans Asleep At The Wheel is a state of mind.

"What Asleep At The Wheel has always been," explains Ray Benson, the group's singer, guitarist, and leader of ten years, "is western swing instrumentation. Horn, fiddle, steel, guitar, piano, bass, drums—that's a western swing band. So no matter what kind

of music we do, we're considered a western swing band. We could be playing funk music, but it's still a 'western swing band doing funk.' Therein lies the thread of Asleep At The Wheel."

Benson's suspicions were confirmed when the Wheel's 1979 recording of "One O'Clock Jump" won them a Grammy award under the category of Best Country Instrumental Performance. The only things remotely country about the Wheel's version of the Count Basie standard are, as Benson points out, the group's instrumentation and, more importantly, their cowboy bar-band image.

For Asleep At The Wheel, the road that led them to the Grammys has been up and down, and most of all long. For Benson, it has spanned more than ten years and stretched in excess of a million miles. "That's by car or bus," he points out, "not counting air miles. The bus we've got right now, we bought from Commander Cody in '76. We've put half a million miles on it. This year we'll spend \$75,000 in gas and oil."

The red-bearded, 6' 6" bandleader is in a familiar setting—a room at the Holiday Inn, where he is practicing his new-found avocation, juggling. "But things keep picking up" he says, only half optimistically. "We're playing to more people now than ever before."

The road has obviously taken its toll. Ray Benson is 29, but his perennially blood-shot eyes make him look considerably older. And although five-sixths of the group pictured on their 1972 debut album remained the band's nucleus through the first six LPs—Benson, pianist Floyd Domino, steel guitarist Lucky Oceans, singer Chris O'Connell, and rhythm guitarist Leroy Preston—Benson is now the only surviving original. "I'll tell you, to keep a thing on the road like this is a monster job," he declares. "To keep all these people happy, in tune, on stage. We've had about 45 people in the band. All I can say is, nobody's died yet. It's just too much road work; after a while it gets to everyone. I'm the only one who likes it—and I'm dead tired of it. And you don't make any money; we're al-



"Am I

ways just at break-even. You pay somebody off, and go in debt somewhere else. You need a good accountant to shuffle things around. We're probably about \$25,000 in debt right now. Ten years of bustin' ass and this is what you've got to show for it. Materially, nothing."

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Asleep At The Wheel has been its consistently fine calibre of musicianship, in spite of the grueling tour schedule and personnel changes that have plagued them in recent years. Vocally, instrumentally, and compositionally, the current line-up is one of the strongest the band has ever boasted. "Wally Murphy is one of the top steel guitar players in the country," Benson brags, "probably the top one of the young guys. Paul Anastasio [from Merle Haggard's Strangers] is one of the best fiddlers around, period—for country and jazz. The rhythm section [featuring the jazz inflected piano of Faulkner Evans, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the recently acquired Rick Allegrio, former drummer with Maria Muldaur] is as tight as a drum. Dean DeMerritt used to play bass with the Tulsa Philharmonic. Taco [Pat Ryan] is a goddamn virtuoso sax player. And I've got two of the greatest and most distinctive female singers around [former Hot Lick Maryann Price and Brenda Burns, formerly with Dottie West]."

But Asleep At The Wheel is one of those rare cases where the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts, thanks to each player's ability to function not only as a soloist but as a member of the band. And the key ingredient to the Wheel's sound is that undefinable quality called swing. As pianist Floyd Domino recalls, "People were calling us a western swing band before we



High?"

even knew what western swing was about. We thought of ourselves more or less as a country group, but we always had that jazzier side."

Asleep At The Wheel started in 1969 when Ray Benson, fellow Philadelphian Reuben "Lucky Oceans" Gosfield, and a musical acquaintance from Boston, Leroy Preston, moved to a farm in West Virginia and began playing country music. "We wanted to be a country-rock group," states Benson. "That's all we knew—country and rock & roll. I'd always loved jazz, but didn't know how to play it then. After a while we decided we didn't want to do rock & roll, because it competed too much with the country part. So we started playing country and eventually western swing, and more and more people got into it. When I started the group, I was trying to put a band together kind of like the Band, but with more country and less rock & roll. Roots music."

The band was soon joined by singer/guitarist Chris O'Connell, from Virginia. Ray recalls, "She heard about these hippies who had a band, and she found us. I said, 'If you want to join, just move into the house here and chop wood with the rest of us.' I was 19 then; she'd gotten out of school, turned 18, and was working as a secretary. Later we moved to Oakland for three years [where Jim "Floyd Domino" Haber joined the group]. We were still kids, and musically we were infants. Being in Oakland, we heard a lot of blues, had a lot of blues [laughs]. It was great, because of the kind of musicians we'd meet—Tower of Power, Commander Cody, Charlie Musselwhite, Van Morrison. We met a bunch of musically-heavy people in areas other than country."

The band eventually settled in Austin,

Texas, an appropriate home for the heirs to the throne of Bob Wills & his Texas Playboys. But while they soon became the undisputed kings of western swing, Asleep At The Wheel never limited themselves to a single category or, a particular type of audience. Whether it's Austin or Boston, the Wheel can pack any 500- to 1,000-seat hall with a dance floor.

The club owner's dream band has at times been the marketing department's nightmare, because of their unwillingness to be pigeonholed or become slaves to fashion. First and foremost the Wheel is a dance band, but that doesn't always come across well on vinyl or translate into record sales. The group's eighth album, *Framed*, finds them on their fourth record label, MCA.

Like most previous efforts, the LP is a mixture of styles—jazz, blues, country, rock & roll—but with the trademark western swing conspicuous in its absence. The type of swing found on *Framed* is more along the lines of Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks. Hicks, in fact, contributed one tune, as did former Hot Lick guitarist John Girtton. And the Wheel has adopted the Hot Licks format of two female singers—one a former Lickette herself. "The Hot Licks were a swing band," Benson feels. "I really wanted to get that light vocal sound. I wanted to say, 'This is my western swing.'"

"As a singer, a guitarist, and a songwriter, I went as far as I could with western swing and country music. That's not because of the limitations of the music; it's because of me. Personally, I didn't want to pursue it anymore."

Framed was Benson's second outing as producer, although, as he points out, he's had a hand in the production of all eight albums. "The sound on the new album is the finest we ever got," he states without reservation. "I also wanted the freedom to work with other people, when it didn't work within the band, so I used Jamie Oldaker on drums and Bonnie



Raitt. I'm taking more and more control of the thing, and will continue to, because I have to. It's my vision, my band."

With the current media blitz of the Urban Cowboy image—in clothes, in music, in dance styles—it would seem to be prime time for the kings of western swing to make their big push. Benson doesn't seem to be interested. "Look, I could put out a cosmic cowboy, western swing record right now and make a fortune, but I'm not into that anymore. We already did those records. That's the price you pay for being ahead of your time." Realizing the irony in his statement, he adds, "or thirty years behind it."

M.I.





DEVO (L to R) Jerry Casale, Alan Myers, Bob Mothersbaugh, Mark Mothersbaugh, Bob Casale

Are We Not

AN INTERVIEW WITH

DEVO's Mark Mothersbaugh

by Bruce Dancis
Photos by Nick Allen

"Five years ago we had all these references to spuds and potatoes, and no one knew what they meant. We were the heaviest band. We were the freakiest band. We were the craziest band. We were the most obscure band. But you can be too artsy and too obscure. You have no influence, you're not important, and no one cares. It got to the point where if I just wanted to masturbate with sound and with music, I would have stayed in my bedroom in Akron, Ohio and kept managing an apartment building."

Mark Mothersbaugh, lead singer and synthesizer player for DEVO, is telling why he and his comrades-in-artificial-limbs decided to put "Girl U Want" instead of "Hob Nob With The Slobs" on their most recent and biggest selling album, *Freedom Of Choice* [Warner Bros., BSK 3435]. It's not that DEVO is growing soft, Mothersbaugh explains, it's just that "we were very careful with this album as far as what part of our aesthetic we let through."

Indeed, DEVO's strange costumes, robot-like movements, and "de-evolutionary" perspective (an imprecisely defined term suggesting a world that is regressing) led some to conclude that DEVO was only a one idea band. DEVO's stage image seemed to be distracting people from appreciating their talents as an innovative, modern rock group. "Yeah," admits Mothersbaugh, "that really

was our problem early on," pointing out that some people were even comparing DEVO to Kiss.

This rather silly comparison no doubt arose because DEVO members have always worn uniforms (of sorts) and used expert choreography in their live shows. In practice, DEVO tries to refute the assumption that if you pay that much attention to visual presentation, it must be because of a lack of musical ability: "We've always tried to make our stage show as interesting as possible so it's not like coming and hearing a bad version of the album," says Mark. In addition, non-musical influences—movies in particular—were there from the beginning. As students at Kent State University in Ohio, Mothersbaugh and DEVO co-founder and bassist Jerry Casale, were film buffs; in fact, the now famous line from "Jocko Homo" —"Are we not men?" (also the title of DEVO's first album)—came directly from a 1933 movie, *Island Of Lost Souls*. The fascination with films goes back even further with Mothersbaugh. While in high school in Akron, he was in a short-lived band with Chrissie Hynde (of the Pretenders) known as Satsumat, short for Saturday Sunday Matinee.

Casale and Mothersbaugh, who had been friends since junior high school, started working together musically in 1973, though DEVO in its present line-up emerged in



World Radio History

1975-76. (The other members are younger brothers Bob Mothersbaugh, guitar, and Bob Casale, guitar; and Alan Myers, drums. Everyone in DEVO plays synthesizer at one time or another.) The costumes that helped gain them attention originated back then, as Casale worked for a time as a graphic designer for a janitorial firm. "As a matter of fact," laughs Mothersbaugh, "in one of our first jobs together, we were models, [wearing] non-corrosive rubberware, with trash containers."

Also present since the beginning has been a fascination with electronic music. Mothersbaugh, who had learned to play the organ as a child—"because my parents wanted me to play 'Autumn Leaves'"—developed a keen interest in synthesizers, and obtained an early Minimoog. His younger brother Jim, now DEVO's multi-purpose electronics wiz but then their drummer, played all-electronic drums that he had built himself. Although the Akron/Cleveland area was at that time producing a number of avant-garde rock bands, such as Pere Ubu and Tin Huey, Mothersbaugh recalls that "we were always

daring, including the early Roxy Music, David Bowie, certain movie soundtracks, and an Anacin commercial that used synthesizers.

With their bottom-of-the-line equipment ("We'd find what the cheapest things were," says Mothersbaugh, "and try to make them work") helping to make a metallic, disjointed sound that brought together a newly emerging hard rocking minimalism with the electronic sounds of experimental music, DEVO began to attract attention. Not all of it was positive. Mothersbaugh says that some "people hated us at the time," though he admits that "we were kind of into that. We'd do 'Jocko Homo' for 30 minutes where we kept chanting, 'We are not men; we are DEVO' until we were so hoarse we couldn't do it anymore. It was kind of like some exorcism rite."

DEVO self-produced their first single, "Jocko Homo"/"Mongoloid," in an Akron garage. This and their second independent 45, "Satisfaction"/"Sloppy," garnered a great deal of interest, as hip journalists and record company representatives made the sojourn to Akron to find out what all the underground

album and be buried quickly."

The band decided to move to Los Angeles so that more labels could see them, and also because of their interest in movies. Yet they encountered the same problem: record companies which wanted to jump onto something new, but lacked an affinity for the band. Mothersbaugh remembers that "we didn't want to become what we saw other bands in the music industry becoming. We didn't want to become a bogus band. We wanted to make an impression, to keep our aesthetic intact."

Consequently, DEVO sent a demo tape to one of the people they most admired—David Bowie. Bowie liked what he heard and agreed to produce the band in Cologne, West Germany, where he had been doing some recording and performing in a movie, *Just A Gigolo*. Bowie, however, got so involved with his movie that he did no work on DEVO's album; instead his frequent collaborator Brian Eno, who had been a founding member of Roxy Music, maker of several experimental solo albums, and a budding producer, took his place, even lending DEVO

musicians?

sort of isolated from everyone else and on our own. It wasn't until we played a few clubs that we found out there were other bands that couldn't get jobs." Mothersbaugh's early musical influences were also appropriately

noise was about. Mothersbaugh explains that although many record companies were interested, they didn't really understand DEVO and didn't like the music. "We were afraid that if we stayed in Akron we would get one

\$30,000 to pay the recording bills. At the time DEVO still had no record contract in America, although their 45's and some songs on tape were being distributed in Europe by Virgin and Stiff Records.



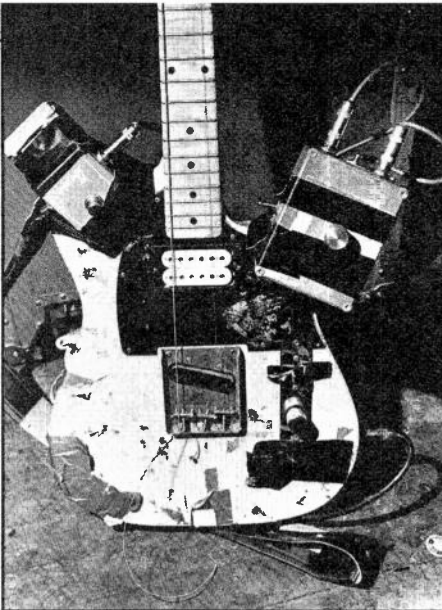
The Eno/DEVO partnership didn't work out to the band's satisfaction. "I think the album [Q: *Are We Not Men?* A: *We Are DEVO!* (Warner Bros., BSK 3239)] suffered a lot from the style of production that was done on it," says Mothersbaugh. A "frictional relationship" developed between Eno and the band, because DEVO knew what they wanted, having played the songs for well over a year, whereas Eno "kept wanting to mutate things and add weirder synthesizer and drum sounds." Mothersbaugh feels that "the bass was overlooked and sounds muddy," and that overall "the album doesn't sound as strong as those exact same songs do live, which is just the opposite of what you do an album for." Still, he refuses to put all the blame on Eno, saying that "our inexperience with working in studios" was partly responsible. "Eno's an artist," Mothersbaugh continues. "He's great for people without a lot of personal ideas and with a lot of room for them to be worked on."

Despite DEVO's disappointment with their debut album, the Eno/Bowie connection plus the reputation built by their independent singles, made them a major new item in trend-sniffing Great Britain. In fact, Akron-era photos of DEVO appeared, without any prior word to the group, on the cover of *Melody Maker* at the same time as they were recording in Cologne. This proved to be a mixed blessing, as it was partially the result of a confusing hyping contest between Virgin and Stiff, both of whom DEVO had given distribution rights to (different) previously recorded songs.

By 1978, DEVO had signed with Warner Bros. in the U.S. During the fall of that year the band scored their most important early triumph, a yellow-suited appearance on *Saturday Night Live* in which the group performed their spasmodic revisionist interpretation of the Stones' "Satisfaction." Although Mothersbaugh acknowledges that this appearance helped lock DEVO into a particular popular image, it marked the first time that most American rock fans had either seen or heard the band. "None of the mainstream FM and absolutely no AM stations played DEVO at that time," he recalls. The show "helped get people interested in the album and in concerts"; without it, Mothersbaugh believes, "DEVO could have passed away without anybody knowing who we were."

The television show also illustrated what people attending DEVO concerts were learning: DEVO was one of the most exciting live bands around, expending a tremendous amount of effort to make each appearance a stimulating multi-media event. Concerts opened with the band's first film, *The Truth About DE-EVOLUTION*, which quickly became a hilariously popular part of each DEVO show; additional short movies have been added ever since.

Mothersbaugh and the band thought that most groups on stage "looked boring and ridiculous—guys standing there sweating and gritting their teeth." One way they changed that was to outfit the band with wireless guitars, bass and microphones "so we could do formations and move around without hav-



ing that umbilical chord." Frequent costume changes—from their familiar yellow industrial sanitation suits to absurdly funny red smocks over black T-shirts and shorts, with red knee pads—also kept their audiences visually entertained.

DEVO also used intriguing looking and sounding equipment. Early on, they were best known for their bizarre guitars. Mothersbaugh plays perhaps the weirdest, a three-stringed-copy of a Fender Telecaster which has attached to its body a few sound mutators, an Electro-Harmonix frequency analyzer ("It makes guitars sound ugly"), a fuzz-tone, and a noise gate. Mark's younger brother Bob plays several customized guitars, including an actual 2 by 4 plank of wood. For the most part, Bob uses a custom-made Ibanez with a built-in fuzz-tone. Bassist Jerry Casale plays a 10-year old Gibson EB3 that has been cut and shaped like a hatchet, with a piece of orange plexiglass installed over it.

In the past few years, however, DEVO has been moving away from guitars—"I'm tired of guitar sounds and guitar-dominated music," says Mothersbaugh—and placing much more reliance on synthesizers. In fact, at times four people on stage are playing synthesizers, and in the studio all five band members have used them simultaneously. At first, the band had only Mothersbaugh's Minimoog, borrowing Eno's for their debut album. The demands of touring forced them to buy new equipment, particularly because, as Mothersbaugh puts it, "We found that our homemade, modified pieces of equipment were impossible to get serviced on the road."

Jerry Casale alternates between his custom bass guitar and a new Minimoog. Before that he used a Wasp, a small British-made synthesizer which unfortunately had the habit of starting to play by itself when stage lights heated up its touch-sensitive keyboard. Jerry settled on the Minimoog because, Mark explains, "it had a good, reliable, fat sound, and the oscillators were incredibly stable."

Mothersbaugh, the main keyboardist, still uses the old Minimoog, now modified to

carry an EML Polybox, which he describes as "basically kind of a chording machine." He bought an early Prophet 5 polyphonic synthesizer, "the first one I could get off their line," but it turned out to be "a breakdown machine, not roadworthy at all." Eventually, he replaced that synthesizer with an updated Prophet 5 which worked much better. Mothersbaugh also plays an EML 500 synthesizer, largely for sound effects like mortar shells and bazookas, and an ARP Odyssey, which, among other things, makes the whip snaps on "Whip It."

Despite all the problems Mothersbaugh and DEVO have had with synthesizers—"Let's face it," he laments, "synthesizers are still pretty primitive"—he likes their sounds better than a guitar's. "We've heard everything a guitar can do. It's time for more Eighties-related sounds."

Another regular feature of a DEVO live show has been their path-breaking lighting and stage set. Most recently, Jerry Casale designed, with suggestions from other band members, a remarkable lighting set based around a series of seven-foot tall boxes with grating in front of them. The lights are inexpensive aircraft landing lights in fluorescent tubes, and the coverings are, in Mothersbaugh's words, "hi-tech modern injection-molded forklift pallets bolted onto a box that we built ourselves." Dominic Seals of Gaslights, the British lighting firm that works on Gary Numan's live shows, worked with DEVO in setting up their system. The visuals have also been enhanced by the elimination of all onstage amps.

Considering the power of DEVO live, the band and many of their fans have felt that the group's first two albums failed to capture the same energy and excitement. For their second album, 1979's *Duty Now For The Future* [Warner Bros., BSK 3337], DEVO switched producers from Brian Eno to veteran Ken Scott (the Beatles, Bowie, etc.). "Ken is almost perversely clinical," laughs Mothersbaugh. "I respect what he does, and I think he's great at what he does. Everything was very clean and very precise. But I think for about half the songs that was just the thing we didn't need. We needed dirtier mixes and more raunchy drum sounds." Mothersbaugh came to the conclusion that "being technically right isn't always being right."

As a result of these disappointments, DEVO decided to produce *Freedom of Choice* themselves (with the assistance of engineer Robert Margouleff). In contrast to the layered sound of *Duty Now For The Future*, on the new album Mothersbaugh reports that "we ended up playing a number of songs live—everybody in the room performing at the same time, either in the console or mixing room, or people standing out in the drum room and playing directly into the board." Interestingly, two of the most dynamic rock songs DEVO has ever done, "Freedom Of Choice" and "Girl U Want," were recorded in this way (with the exception of the pounding synthesizer sound on "Freedom Of Choice" which was recorded separately). Another reason Mothersbaugh feels the new album is

Cont'd on page 32

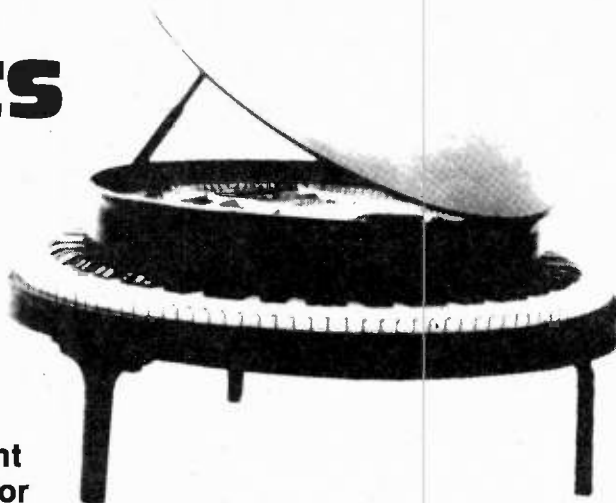
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so successful is that they had a lot of fun putting "new electronic sounds over old rock & roll rhythms." A good example of this is "That's Pep," which is based on a Bo Diddley beat. As Mothersbaugh explains it, "We like beats. That's one of our primary interests, other than new sounds."

In addition to the increased danceability of DEVO's new songs—"Whip It" even went Top 10 on the disco charts!—*Freedom Of Choice* nearly overflows with catchy, intriguingly modern-sounding hooks. The riveting opening riff of "Girl U Want," for example, gains much of its power because the band had a Prophet 5 and a guitar playing the same line simultaneously, a doubling technique they used throughout the album.

Mothersbaugh feels that making *Freedom of Choice* was more enjoyable for DEVO than past recording sessions "because a lot of the creative process took place in the studio." Basically, the initial ideas come from either Mothersbaugh or Jerry Casale, the main writers. Mark will construct an idea on a home synthesizer, using a 4-track TEAC recorder, then bring it in for the band. Ideas may be totally rejected or accepted, but more often snatches will be "borrowed" and fitted together. Mothersbaugh explains: "The music for 'Whip It,' for instance, was a mutation of two different things I had written on synthesizer. Jerry didn't think the song was strong enough on its own. Then he heard this other piece I had written and suggested that we put the pieces together."

DEVO also continues to be a very political rock band, not only in the sense of having a perspective on conventional politics (a recent concert found them fooling around with Reagan and Carter caricature masks while performing "Freedom Of Choice"), but in promoting what Mothersbaugh calls "anti-stupidity." This stands, he believes, in sharp contrast to bands like the Knack: "Basically, their politics are, 'We're young, we're stupid, we're horny, and we're proud of it.'" Mothersbaugh is also extremely critical of rock groups like Molly Hatchett, which he feels promote overindulgence in drugs and liquor, and rock stars like Bob Seger, whose lyrics Mothersbaugh believes are "sexist" and "anti-female."

Following the completion of a highly successful tour in support of their latest album, DEVO has already begun, or resumed, work on new projects. For the next album, Mothersbaugh predicts, "If we find the right instruments we might end up eliminating guitar altogether. If we had the right drum box, we'd eliminate a lot more acoustic drums." They'd like to continue to improve their live shows, perhaps by using headsets with a monitor mix in them in order to dispense with onstage speaker cabinets. And although DEVO has had some legal problems with their film and video projects—a one-hour videocassette done with Time-Life has never been released—Mothersbaugh mentions a new film project, "a full-length feature film of our own that'll include hundreds of scenes that we've always wanted to see in movies, lots of nightmares of Jerry's and



mine."

One question about DEVO's future was not so easily answered. With one exception, DEVO has not performed without wearing outlandish costumes. (During the *Duty Now For The Future* tour, they did a number of shows as "DOVE," a parody of a born-again Christian rock band in which they dressed in mustard yellow, double-knit suits and wore pasted-on sideburns.) Could they ever drop or step out of character? After pausing for a long time, Mothersbaugh replies "I could see us doing it," then adds cryptically, "We'd be laughing all the time."

In the meantime, Mothersbaugh is ob-

viously enjoying DEVO's growing popularity. He attributes this to there being "a lot of levels that you can get off on DEVO: we've got good beats, lyrics that are interesting and often have more than one meaning, good shows, and good movements on stage." He takes particular delight in DEVO's youthful supporters, citing kids who write the band to say, "I'm so glad there's a band like DEVO—I thought I was the only one in the world who felt like a robot."

"Our interest," Mothersbaugh says, "is for a long-range lifetime for DEVO. We can see it developing and devolving much further than the first three albums have shown." M.I.



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INSIDE LUDWIG



PHOTO: LISA ASHER

Bill Ludwig III (L) with William Ludwig, Jr.

by Rick Walters

The company that is today known as Ludwig Industries began in 1909, in a garage on the west side of Chicago. Today the company's catalogue offers literally hundreds of items ranging from the smallest wooden percussion products to coveted Ringer tympani. In addition to dominating the educational and marching band markets, Ludwig is a household word among rock musicians, and the list of major artists that use and endorse their products is substantial. Throughout its history, the company's success has been a reflection of the efforts of three generations of the Ludwig family—founder William F. Ludwig, Sr., today's president William F. Ludwig, Jr., and advertising director William F. Ludwig III.

The company began, like many others, when an individual who knew what he wanted discovered that it wasn't available in the marketplace. In 1908, William Ludwig, Sr., a working drummer, was performing in the orchestra of the Auditorium Theater in Chicago when the Folies arrived from New York. The show introduced jazz and ragtime to the Chicago area, and Ludwig's old circus-type wood pedal was just not fast enough to handle the syncopation of the new music. When manufacturers proved less than responsive to his requests for a faster pedal, he designed and built one himself, and with the help of brother Theo the partnership of Ludwig & Ludwig was born.

The following year found Ludwig Sr. playing with the Pittsburgh Symphony, and his dissatisfaction with the tuning mechanism of his tympani again prompted his quest for something better. This time the result was the first pedal tuning mechanism for tympani that was both reliable and lent itself to manufacture. With these items as their mainstays, the Ludwig brothers were off and running.

In the late 1920's, however, trouble came to the music industry. The advent of talking pictures had all but eliminated the need for theater orchestras, and hence for musicians and the tools of their trade. Business began to fall, and the arrival of the Depression compounded the problem. The result was a merger with C.G. Conn, with Ludwig Sr. acting as manager. Dissatisfied with the course of his

career, in 1936 he struck out on his own again, forming the WFL Drum Company, which soon became the major competitor to his former employer. In the years that followed, the new company continued to grow and prosper, and in 1955 purchased the entire drum division from Conn, prompting another name change to Ludwig Drum Company.

Throughout the Sixties, the company conducted a series of quiet acquisitions, picking up companies whose products filled out the Ludwig line. They now manufacture everything in the percussion field that is struck with stick, mallet, or hand.

On his way to Ashland, Kentucky, where he was to perform a commissioned work with 90-piece orchestra, William Ludwig, Jr. discussed his company's history, the art of drum making, and the future of percussion.

Where does the bulk of Ludwig Industries' business come from?

We've always been a major educational house. We started out as suppliers to the professional musicians, but with the crash of '29 and the Depression that followed, the school market became very attractive. In the Thirties, we laid the foundation for the Eighties, where we are a dominant force in the educational market. Our secondary market is the rock business, but that's growing to the point where it may eventually equal the school business. The professional market accounts for the smallest part of our business, but it's definitely the most prestigious.

Is there a problem in the percussion industry with dwindling supplies of materials?

You have to qualify that. There are problems from time to time with different kinds of woods. Quality woods have always been difficult; just any wood is no problem to get your hands on, but we won't compromise the quality. Humidity content is often a problem, so we have facilities here to alter the moisture level, both to dry the wood or to put some water back in.

Are the majority of drums today made with wood shells, or have synthetic materials become dominant?

Over the last three or four years, the trend has definitely been back to wood and away from synthetic. We had a good decade and a half of synthetic—our trade name for it was Vistalite. We sold tens of thousands of sets. Now, apparently, the market has decided once again the tone is better with wood, back where we were forty years ago.

Is all of your manufacturing done here?

Here in the city. We have four plants now, and this is the largest, the main plant. We make the membranonic percussion here and at a satellite plant, which supports this one. The idiophonic, or tuned, percussion is made in LaGrange, Illinois.

Has there been much work done with synthetic material for sticks?

Oh yes, definitely. Carbon, graphite... there was a big push about fifteen years ago for fiberglass. We sold about 20,000 sets, but unfortunately no one had thought to test them on cymbals. The edge of the cymbal would cut the fibers, and the furring of the fibers soon spreads. We'd love to see someone come up with a synthetic that worked. The problem is in getting the vibrance, the feel of the wood shaft. If someone walks through that door with a synthetic that works, and has that feel, I'd never buy another dowel in my life.

How long does the manufacturing process take for the average drum, from raw material to finished product?

About three weeks—you have to allow for drying time. We buy the wood in veneers, and manufacture our own plys. We're probably the only drum company that makes our own shells, heads, sticks, stands, accessories, everything. That gives us complete control over quality, unlike other companies who buy their components.

I've noticed some of your drums have a diagonal cut-off on the shell. Does that serve a specific purpose?

That's primarily a visual thing, just a snappier look. Some say the tone escapes faster, but then others say the tone is thinner, too.

Do you notice any significant difference in the tone of the drum when you put a decorative material on the outside?

No, I've always felt that the tension of the heads—by that I mean even tension, all the way around—is the most important component of tone. Different levels of tension in the head, to me, are what produce different tones, but I don't argue the point too much, because it's a matter of opinion. You just may not want to hear exactly the same sound that I do. I don't hear that much of a difference between wood and acrylic shells, for that matter. I do with metal shells, most definitely—they seem to be more sharp, more precise, more definitive than the wood drums, but that isn't always what the rock or jazz drummer wants. Something of a blend is often what they're looking for. I find it very difficult to tell the difference between materials used in the shell, but I can definitely tell when a head is too tight or too loose, or not under even tension.

As a result of the acquisitions, it appears that Ludwig is now a fairly comprehensive source for the percussionist.

Yes, and we've stayed with percussion. We've tried a few other things—we tried Ludwig Electronics, and the products we made were either ahead of their time, behind the time, or not right for the market. We came up with a means of electrifying the vibe and marimba pickups—we did it with a system of contact gauges which originate in the aircraft industry. They're gauges used in the wings of airplanes to measure vibration when the wings flex. The gauges then produce an electric signal; an engineer brought it to our attention for its possibilities for our applications. We made several sets, but we couldn't service them adequately. And in electronics, after-sale service is as important as the sale itself. We also made a guitar synthesizer, which altered the signal of the guitar pickup into a series of undulating lows and piercing highs, to "muck up" the sound of the guitar. The kids loved it, but the engineers allowed themselves free rein, and it grew from a \$69.95 unit to a \$450.00 unit, and that killed it. So Ludwig diversified, all right, and some of the diversifications worked and some didn't.

So essentially, you've found your highest percentage of success to be in the basic percussion field?

We do what we do well—we know this business, we do it best, and if we stay in it, we're on solid ground. When we try to get out and away from it, we find the terrain treacherous indeed.

Is Ludwig involved at all in the electronic percussion market, such as the new percussion synthesizers?

Yes, very definitely. We intend to get involved, but at the right time and the right opportunity. We're in correspondence constantly with the presidents of the two companies, Synare and Syndrum. We're watching it very closely—the progress, the penetration. We're attempting to see if it is penetration or an add-on.

Do you see the synthesizer as a secondary instrument for the working percussionist?

The Synare people in Connecticut feel that electronic percussion may ultimately replace conventional percussion, and that by the year 2000 percussion will be completely electronic, including tympani, except in the major symphony orchestras. If that's true, we certainly want to become part of it. We have to, either as a distributor for one of the manufacturers, as a manufacturer ourselves, or as an acquisition or merger possibility for us. Yes, we're watching it, and very, very carefully.

Is the percussion industry competitive throughout, or do certain manufacturers fairly well dominate "their" segment of the market?

All areas of the market are up for grabs. We were the first to enter the school field and we've paid close attention to it ever since, so I think we're still predominant in the school field. There's more of a scramble raging in the drum set field for the rock and jazz players. Then there's the accessory field, which is a very big part of a percussion manufacturer's business—that's a very competitive field. It's not at all uncommon for a player to buy one company's drums and another company's stands, or hardware, or other accessories.

I realize this next subject is somewhat of a dirty word in some segments of the music industry, but do you have any comments on the competition from the Japanese?

They're very tough, unrelenting, uncompromising, ubiquitous, difficult competitors. They are tireless in their efforts. They are clever and formidable.

Have they made significant inroads into the American percussion market?

Oh indeed yes! They are making significant inroads in every industry, not just ours. And they're hot, wherever they go.

What developments or trends do you find the most exciting in the percussion industry today?

I get enthused about the possibilities of substituting synthetic materials for wood, for one thing. More and more, we're getting into wonderful compressed plastic materials that have high tensile strength, are crack-proof and long lasting. Wood is a problem all over... I get excited over new weights of plastic drum heads, new designs, dots that reinforce the center of the head to prevent denting and breaking. We're constantly searching for ways to reduce the tears, the rips, the breaks... I get excited over hoops that can be built to be slip-proof, and sustain today's high-torque tension without bending and twisting. In fact, we patented one recently that does exactly that. The research and development continues today at Ludwig, if anything on a more accelerated scale than in the past. There are just so many new materials to work with, to try out. We're also very excited about the development of the educational and marching band markets in the developing countries abroad—we may be seeing a duplication of the initial school movement that occurred in this country decades ago, and that constitutes a tremendous opportunity for the whole industry.

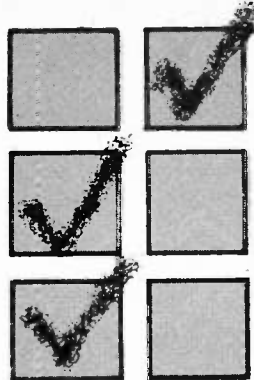
Do you feel this new market potential will encourage new manufacturers to get into the business?

Sure! It always does. It also encourages old manufacturers to get out if they can't keep up, and some are. This is a fluctuating field, and these are changing times. There are new manufacturers starting up all the time, particularly in the accessory field; but when they try to get into drums, that takes a lot of capital.

The start-up costs are substantially lower in the accessory field, aren't they?

Exactly, and to specialize in one thing is much easier. A lot of these people just genuinely love percussion, and they want to better it, to improve the state of the art. We welcome them. However, there aren't many big, full-line companies, because it takes millions of dollars for plants, machinery, and personnel. We were lucky. We were in it early and stayed with it as a family, generation after generation, and it's been good for us.

M.I.



SPEC CHECK

The Gibson ES ARTIST



by Tim Kaihatsu

The elegantly appointed Gibson ES Artist slimline hollowbody electric is the latest in a distinguished line of workhorse instruments that first appeared in 1958, producing in subsequent years the ES 335, 345, 355, 335 Pro, and 347. In physical appearance, this model closely resembles its siblings except for one glaring aberration: look ma, no f-holes. Other differences include an ebony fingerboard inlaid with mother-of-pearl dot position markers; a standard brass fingerboard nut; a new type of stop tailpiece; and a set of controls that give a big clue to the biggest difference in this guitar—active pre-amp circuitry.

Dramatic advances in solid-state electronics in the Seventies have made it possible to incorporate circuitry on board an

instrument that formerly would have been far too bulky and/or current-draining. The ES Artist, following the innovative lead of guitar makers like Ibanez and Music Man, has a built-in, battery-powered pre-amp that utilizes "active" electronics to obtain tone and volume ranges far beyond standard "passive" systems.

The 3-position pickup selector switch is the same as in previous ES models (bass, both, treble), but there is only one master volume knob (controlling both pickups), one knob for bass, and one for treble. Below the knobs are three small toggle switches—for compression, expansion, and bright modes.

The tone knobs are marked from -5 to +5. The "0" setting, according to Gibson, is the maximum gain available with passive controls. From 0 to +5, the bass and treble frequencies are electronically boosted, giving wide tonal variations and mixing possibilities that ordinarily require changing settings on your amplifier.

The compression switch compresses the output signal into a narrowed range, increasing sustain. It also puts a "ceiling" on output level regardless of how hard the note is struck. The expansion switch improves response, allowing the player to attack fast and viciously at high volumes without notes collapsing. The bright mode is self-explanatory—hit the switch and high frequencies are emphasized.

All sounds terrific, but how does this handsomely-accountered axe actually play? I started by plugging it into the cheapest Mesa/Boogie, setting the amp's tone knobs at 5, and cranking it up without altering Gibson's factory setup. With what felt like regular Slinkies (.010 top, .046 bottom), the guitar played very smoothly, strings bending easily, although the action was set a bit low for my personal taste.

Reaching for the tone knobs was also a little odd. If you've played a 335 or a Les Paul, you'll miss the middle, both-pickups-on position and its option to mix volumes and tones with the double set of controls. On the ES Artist, the pickup mix is factory pre-set. The good news is that the active electronics really

do give a swell in the bass and treble ranges far beyond standard controls. So much so, in fact, that care must be taken when changing tones so as not to allow the amount of boost to get out of control. A by-product of the boosted signal is that you are louder at the same amp volume than a passively outfitted guitar. I plugged a Les Paul Standard into the same Mesa—no contest, the Artist was louder at the same setting.

Now for those effects switches. The compression was very useful, sounding an awful lot like the metal box you've already paid 75 bucks for. The expansion mode was as advertised; cranking the Boogie way up, the response was extremely sensitive with the notes almost exploding out of the guitar, but decaying rapidly. Even with ferocious attack, the notes popped out firmly and cleanly. The bright switch gives you a dry, pinched sound not unlike a Fender—a nice tone for percussive comping.

Combining switches gives even more variety. With compression and expansion both on, response is admirable, notes singing for as long as you want them to. Fiddling with various settings made the reason for the absent f-holes apparent—unwanted, uncontrollable feedback because of the tremendous amount of boost and sustain. (Many players already resort to covering the f-holes up or stuffing the hollow body on other ES models.)

One negative trait that this instrument shares with others of its species must be mentioned. Those wonderful knobs and switches don't do doodly squat if you don't have a fresh battery. No juice, no sound—although Gibson claims an in-guitar life of 150 to 200 hours for a 9-volt alkaline cell.

Other features of note are the new gold-plated TP-6 stop tail-piece, with adjustment screws for fine-tuning individual strings, and a set of gold-plated Schaller tuning machines.

All things considered, the ES Artist is a beautifully-made, versatile, carefully thought-out instrument, a worthy addition to the ES line, and deserving of serious attention from the player seeking a quality guitar (\$1,399.00 list) with on-board electronic capabilities. **M.I.**

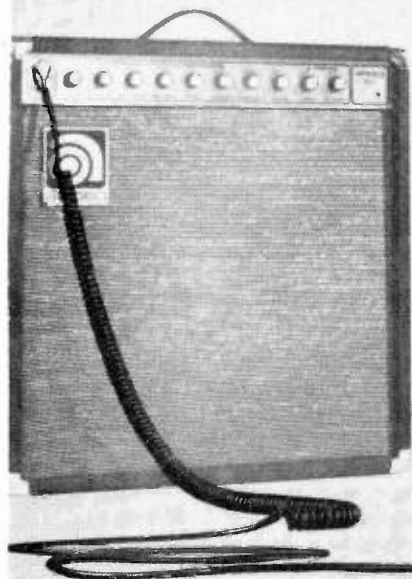
The augmented cord.

If you think you still have to choose between either a straight cord or a coiled cord, think again. Because now the best of both is wrapped into one...the Constrictor by Whirlwind.

Constrictor's revolutionary, versatile design combines almost two feet of retractile cord (extending up to 10 feet) with an additional 10 feet of basic straight cord. So you have freedom of movement on stage when you need it...and a compact, organized cord when you don't.

Made from rugged, cured neoprene cable by Belden, the Constrictor passes signal quietly, with exceptional fidelity. Like all Whirlwind precision products, the Constrictor is backed by a two-year guarantee.

So when you need a straight cord as much as you need a coiled cord, plug into the Constrictor...the augmented cord.



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PICKUP SELECTOR

Magnet Wire

by Seymour Duncan

A lot of the "mystique" surrounding guitar pickups centers on the types of magnet wire used—the color and type of insulation, old wire versus new wire, number of turns, etc. In this month's column I will list some of the specifications of magnet wire used in pickups.

Magnet wire is normally made from "electrolytic tough pitch copper" drawn from 1/4" rods. The manufacturer uses standards of the NEMA (National Electrical Manufacturers Association), which gives specific guidelines and requirements for the industry standards, such as:

- 1) **Mechanical properties.** Wire size; AWG (American Wire Gauge); the copper softness; dimensional uniformity; abrasion resistance; windability and surface condition of film; solderability; and film concentricity.
- 2) **Electrical properties.** Dielectric strength; insulation continuity; insulation resistance; dissipation factor.
- 3) **Chemical properties.** The film insulation's compatibility with solvents and environmental conditions.
- 4) **Thermal properties.** Thermal rating; thermal life; heat shock resistance.

In building guitar pickups there are many turns of the fine, film-insulated copper wire. The bare copper wire generally used in making high-impedance pickups is from 41 to 46 AWG. The higher the number for the magnet wire, the smaller the diameter. Bare copper wire is listed under three sizes: MIN (smallest diameter for the given gauge); NOM (average diameter for given gauge); and MAX (largest diameter).

If we use 42 AWG, which is probably one of the most used gauges of magnet wire by the guitar industry, we start with the three allowable diameters for the bare copper wire before the film insulation is put on: MIN-diameter of 42 AWG .0024"; NOM-diameter of 42 AWG .0025"; MAX-diameter of 42 AWG .0026"; (NEMA requires that magnet wire with the above diameters be listed as 42 AWG.)

After the bare copper wire is drawn to the desired diameter, there are several types of insulation that can be used. The film insulation will keep the turns of copper wire from shorting out—without the insulation the whole coil would completely short out and you would get no output or signal from the pickup. The film insulation can be either a single-build, heavy- or double-build, and up to triple-build. As you increase the insulation's thickness, you will increase the resistance, and decrease the treble of the pickup. Having thicker insulation will, of course, give better protection to the copper wire. There are several types of film insulations, each with its own thermal rating. 42 PE 105°C means 42 AWG wire diameter, plain enamel insulation with a thermal rating of 105, which is the degrees in

centigrade that the film insulation will melt at.

Pickup manufacturers usually use the film insulations listed below:

- 1) Enamel (Oleo-Resinous)—normally a dark maroon color.
- 2) Polyurethane—comes in a variety of colors (clear, red, green, blue).
- 3) Formvar (Polyvinyl Formvar).
- 4) Bondable Polyurethane—has a film of thermoplastic adhesive.

Most all manufacturers of magnet wire also lubricate the film insulation on the wire, and this aids in even layering.

When winding the pickup coils, proper tension must be maintained. Tension that is too loose can make the coil spongy and can increase the microphonics in the coils. Too tight and the wire may become stretched, increasing resistance capacitance. It can also stretch the film insulation, exposing the bare copper wire, which can short out with other exposed turns, decreasing the output of the pickup. Below are a few magnet wire gauges and some recommended tensions:

AWG	Tension (in oz.)	Tension (in grams)
40	1.9	53
41	1.5	42
42	1.2	33
43	.9	26
44	.74	21
45	.6	17
46	.46	13

There are still some pickup manufacturers that hand-wind pickups to control the tension of the coils. This also insures a good tight coil, but the resultant coils can sound differently from one to the next, as the layering will never be exactly the same. The way the magnet wire is layered is important to the induced voltage coming from the pickup, and machine winding and layering with proper tension devices give a more consistent sound from coil to coil.

The information below is given to the magnet wire users to be used with coil design:

**42 gauge magnet wire
with a single-build film insulation**
nominal ohms per 1,000 feet: 1,659
nominal ohms per pound: 84,510
pounds per 1,000 feet: .0196
feet per pound: 50,940
nominal turns per liner inch: 357.1
diameters: MIN .0026; NOM .0028; MAX .0030.

Readers interested in receiving detailed charts on diameter, weight, resistance, and suggested tension of the various gauges of magnet wire can send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Seymour Duncan, c/o Magnet Wire, Box 4746, Santa Barbara, CA 93103.

M.I.

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WHO are YOU?

M.I. is interested in finding out who our readers are. We'd appreciate it if you would fill out the form below and return it to us so we can learn more about you and what you like. To show our appreciation, we will send you a free copy of our next issue of M.I. Thanks for your time.

1. What is your age?
☐ 15-25 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-50 ☐ over 50

2. Are you ☐ male or ☐ female?

3. What is your occupation?

A. MUSICIAN

☐ Full Time

☐ Part Time

☐ On Contract to record label

B. Other _____

4. How long have you been an active musician?

5. Do you own ☐ guitar _____
 Or Play ☐ bass _____

(How many of each)

☐ keyboard instrument _____

☐ synthesizer

☐ percussion instrument _____

☐ brass or woodwind instr. _____

☐ pickups/transducers _____

☐ instrument accessories _____

☐ special effects devices _____

☐ amplifiers _____

6. Do you play ☐ Rock

☐ Jazz

☐ Fusion

☐ Country & Western

☐ Folk

☐ Blues

7. How much time do you spend in recording studios in one month? _____

8. What other music publications do you read?

9. How did you find out about M.I.? _____

10. What other listings, features, or articles would you like to see in future issues of M.I.? Any comments? _____

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SOUND

ON STAGE

Working Concerts

PART ONE

by Jim Coe

For this and the next couple of issues I'll be writing about the nitty-gritty of working a concert tour from the point of view of the soundperson. Leaving aside the musicians themselves, there are three things that will control the quality of your upcoming concerts:

- 1) The environment performed in (see previous columns for info on room acoustics).
- 2) The personnel working the show.
- 3) The audio equipment.

Let's assume you work as a freelance soundperson. You get a phone call from the manager of "Permanent Wave," a new five-piece electric band. He's heard good words about your work. He asks if you can do a state-wide tour in six weeks? The tour looks like four shows a week for three weeks. The rooms will range from 500 seat night clubs to 1,000 seat college field houses. The band has no sound crew of their own and no soundsystem. You arrange to meet the manager and band at their rented rehearsal hall to talk and catch a rehearsal.

You like the players. You like the music. The manager makes sense. The money necessary to put a tour together seems to be there, and everyone's hot to go. So far, so good. Now what?

Getting Paid

Be sure to make an arrangement that will change with the amount of show work you do. A fixed rate per show plus a fixed rate per week is good. If shows are added or dropped, your income stays honest. If the tour is delayed, you won't be stuck cooling your heels sans income.

You should also get paid for doing organizational and advance work at home or in the band office and for rehearsals.

Don't accept a low rate on a promise that the band will take good care of you if

they "make it big." Chances are they mean well but won't end up doing either. If you really think it's the greatest group since bands went electric and you want to help out with such an arrangement, get it down on paper in gruesome detail and signed by all.

Expenses

Find out about your tour expenses. Will there be a daily dole or "per diem"? Just what is supposed to come out of your per diem? Will you get to keep what you don't spend? Does the band furnish: 1) hotel room and reservation (share or your own); 2) rental car, fuel and reservation (you'll need to go places the band doesn't, and drive ahead of them to the shows); 3) travel and reservations; 4) food; 5) phone service for the many band related calls you'll make; 6) miscellaneous personal things, like calls home and laundry; 7) show related stuff, like cassettes, microphone windscreen disinfectant (such as 151 rum), etc.

Tasks

Just what are your duties? Of course you'll do "the sound," but here are a few details you'll want to know: Does "sound" mean stage monitors or house mains or both? Will you be expected to manage a crew from the sound company supplying the sound gear? Are you supposed to drive a truck? Will you set up and tear down the system—or is it just walk in, take off your white gloves and use those golden ears? Who will maintain the system when something fails? Who will supply all those sophisticated audio tools you want to use? Will you do the advance work or someone else?

You should write a simple letter of agreement to the band manager with all of this spelled out, and have the manager sign it.

Next issue we'll talk about "advancing" a show.

M.I.



Silence. The Step Beyond.

Even more important than what an effect adds to your performance is what it doesn't add. Noise—pops, clicks, and hiss can make a good effect virtually unusable in a performance. That's where BOSS effects are different, and it's a difference you'll notice from the moment you turn them on.

You see, all the different effects on the market share the same noisy problem—they all use the same kind of mechanical footswitch, and no matter who makes it, it still has the same problem—it makes an audible "click." That can be a pain in the studio where you have live mikes, but even worse is that a mechanical switch is prone to make popping noises in the signal when it's engaged, and that's a real problem no matter where you are.

BOSS effects have been designed differently. We incorporate what is called F.E.T. switching. This means that there are no mechanical contacts in the signal path, so it won't make an audible click—and it can't make a pop. The switching is done totally electronically and cleanly.

But that's only the beginning of the beauty of BOSS pedals. You'll find a host of other features the competition has yet to catch up with. Features like battery eliminator jacks on every pedal, skid pads that work, and a unique design that allows you to change the battery without exposing the circuit board. And, back on the subject of silence, you'll find BOSS pedals to be the quietest pedals on the market with signal to noise ratio consistently better than 80 dB.

You'll find a BOSS pedal to fit any need—from phasers to flangers, to equalizers to compressors to the new CE-2 Chorus Ensemble, a compact version of our legendary CE-1.

None of the BOSS pedals make noise. No clicks, no pops, no hiss. And that's pretty important. Cause if you're serious about your music you know that what you leave out is as important as what you put in.

BOSS products are designed and manufactured by Roland, 2401 Saybrook Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90040. (213) 685-5141.

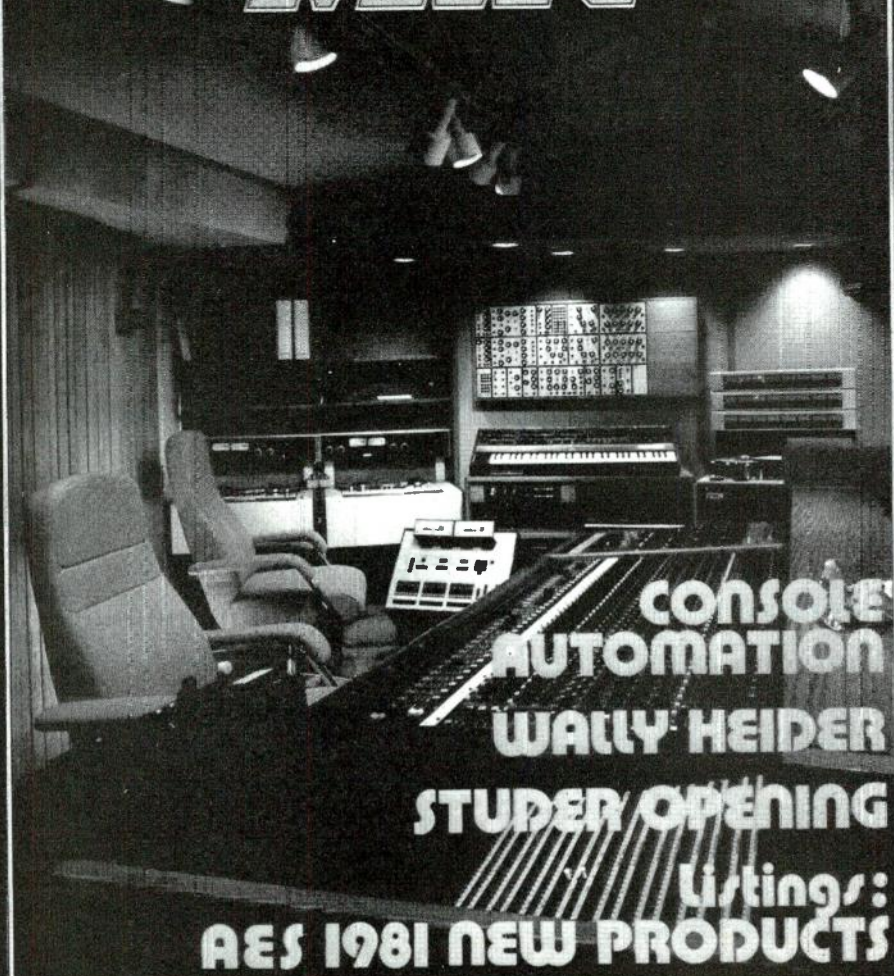
 **BOSS**

NOVEMBER 1980

THE RECORDING INDUSTRY DIRECTORY

VOL. 4 NO. 10

Mix



CONSOLE
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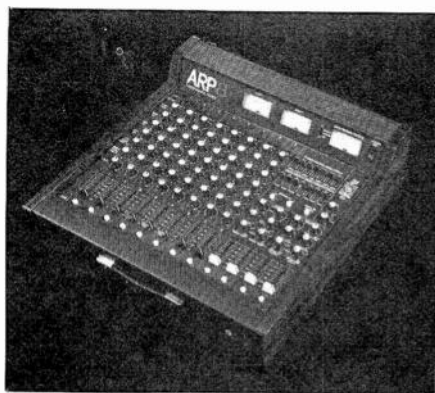
AES 1981 NEW PRODUCTS

...ask your favorite musical instrument or pro audio dealer

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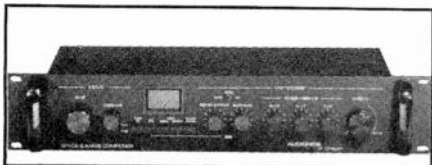
ARP Instruments, Inc. recently brought out its new ARP8 Performance Series mixer. Some of the features of the ARP8 are: 8 channels; stereo outputs; monitor and effects submix bus; built-in analog delay to provide the desired echo effect; two 7-band graphic equalizers (one stereo for program left and right; one mono for the monitor submix) for balance among all the instruments in use; three bands of equalizers on each of the eight channels; three VU meters (for program left, right and submix), headphone, cue and talkback features; auxiliary, direct bus, and stacking inputs; and effects send and receive. For information, write ARP Instruments, Inc., 45 Hartwell Ave., Lexington, MA 02173.



Audionics of Oregon has announced the Series II version of its Space and Image Composer. Externally the unit is the same, but according to Audionics, the addition of new integrated circuits significantly improve the level of performance.

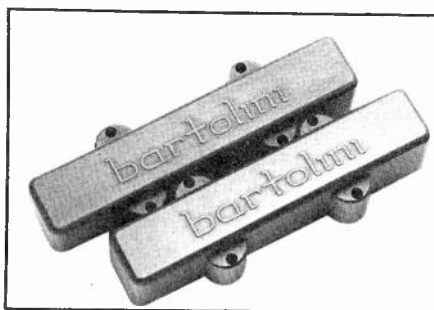
The Composer can decode SQ quadrophonic discs with speed and accuracy that provide almost identical performance on an A/B comparison with a 4-channel discreet tape. In addition, the stereo enhance mode allows the use of conventional stereo program material from disc, FM stereo or live sources to create "surround-sound" effects.

According to Audionics, the Composer responds in spectacular fashion to electronic and panned effects used on most rock and pop recordings. For information contact Audionics of Oregon, 10950 SW 5th, Bldg. 160, Beaverton, OR 97005.



The 94J is a quadraphonic pickup set put out by **Bartolini Guitars** for the Fender Jazz Bass*. Each unit of the pair has individual outputs for each string. In each pickup unit the outputs of the E and A strings and those of the D and G strings can be joined to form humbucking pairs. By joining these humbucking pairs each pickup unit can also be wired to a monophonic (single output) humbucking unit. Internally the pickups match the string spacing and fingerboard arch of the stock instrument so that for light or medium gauge string sets the output is balanced for equal fret-to-string heights. The output level is equal to that of the stock units. The list price is \$140 for the pair. Box 934, Livermore, CA 94550.

*"Jazz Bass" is a registered trademark of CBS Inc. Bartolini Guitars is not in any way affiliated with CBS Inc.



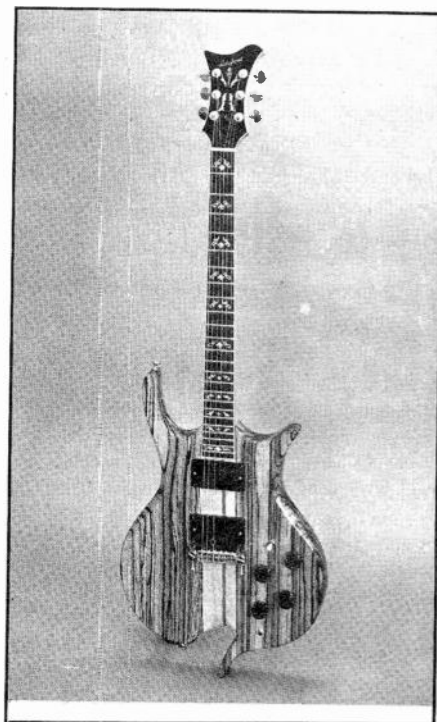
The Envelope Controlled Filter by **Beigel Sound Lab** combines a parametric envelope follower, a versatile parametric voltage-controlled filter, and an external effects loop in one unit. The envelope filter features independent onset and decay controls; linear or logarithmic response switch; and sensitivity control with overrange indicator LED. The voltage controlled filter features a range switch to determine filter sweep characteristics and excursion; a mode switch to select Lowpass, Bandpass or Highpass characteristics; and a peak control, which varies the filter's resonance, either manually or by envelope voltage. The envelope has an attack time of 5 milliseconds to 2.5 seconds, and a decay time of 10 milliseconds to 5 seconds. For more information, write Beigel Sound Lab, 24 Main St., Warwick, NY 10990.

GHS Strings (2813 Wilber Ave., Battle Creek, MI 49015), has added two new sets to its line of classic guitar strings. The sets are the same except for the treble strings. The #2370 set contains regular high-grade clear nylon trebles. The #2370G set contains ground trebles, which are made of clear nylon mono-

filament processed through a micro-grit grinding machine. The grinding process trues the string so it is the same exact thickness from one end to the other. As a result, these strings play more perfectly in tune and have a brighter tone than regular nylon trebles, according to the manufacturer. Both sets are designated high tension; the cover wire is Winter Silver™ alloy. Suggested retail price is \$7.50 per set.

Infinity Systems (7930 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91304) introduces the RS_e, a two-way, 8" speaker system. The new model employs a polypropylene woofer in a newly designed geometric cone configuration. It provides a lightweight (28 lbs.), rigid and acoustically inert vehicle. The RS_e can be used with amplifiers and receivers that deliver 25 to 100 watts per channel continuous power. It measures 20" x 13" x 9 1/2". Suggested retail price is \$160.00.

Lakefront Handcrafted Instruments has added the Awakener Guitar to their line of handmade string instruments. The Awakener features a 24-fret neck with ebony fingerboard; Grover machine heads; Bad Ass bridge; and a choice of DiMarzio, Overland, Schecter, or Seymour Duncan pickups. The body of the guitar can be made with rosewood, oak, koa, curly maple, mahogany, ash, walnut, or zebra (as shown). A new 2-band parametric EQ system, by Jim Williams, is available as an option. Lakefront Handcrafted Instrument, Box 48, Mossville, IL 61552.



Opus 3 is **Moog Music's** (2500 Walden Ave., Buffalo, NY 14225) new 49-note polyphonic synthesizer, creating strings, organ and brass voices either individually or in any desired combination. The string voice has a separate

prō'file

a short, vivid biography, briefly outlining the most outstanding characteristics of the subject

equalization section consisting of a 3-mode filter with variable frequency and resonance. The organ voice provides a mix of five footages with a separate tone filter. The brass voice is switchable over a three-octave range. The VCF has both preset and variable modes, permitting instant switching from a preset brass voice to full programmability of the patented Moog 24 dB/Octave filter. In the variable mode, the user may determine filter contour, contour amount, and filter response to achieve powerful polyphonic synthesizer effects. The Opus 3 also has an articulator mode switch which provides either a "canceling" mode which re-triggers new notes and cancels sustaining tones or an "overlapping" mode where notes with long release times continue to sound regardless of any additional notes played. This enables the user to create "layered" sound with brass and strings retaining independent articulation. The Moog pitch wheel is included for monophonic or polyphonic pitch bending, and a front panel built-in switchable stereo panning mixer provides spatial placement of the three principal outlets. The Opus 3 is 29 3/4" wide, 5 5/8" high and 15" deep, and weighs 20 lbs. Suggested price is \$1,195.



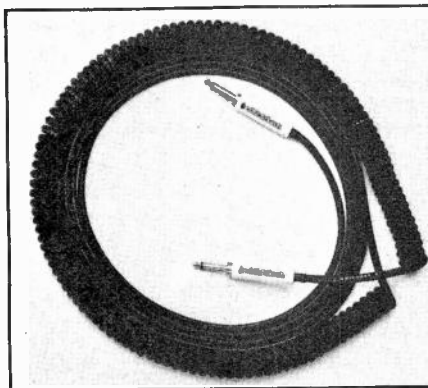
PAIA Electronics (1020 W. Wilshire Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73116) has brought out a low-power redesign of its Programmable Drum Set. The improved design extends the time that rhythm patterns may be stored to over one year, and extends battery life. The original model's memory organization, which provides simultaneous storage of two separate rhythm patterns, has been retained. Bridges are activated either from a control panel touch plate or optional foot-switch, and are automatically synchronized to the main rhythm. Price is \$99.95 in kit form, \$159.95 assembled.



MXR's new Loop Selector, the latest addition to the company's Accessory line of products, enables the user to switch instantaneously between two effects chains and return to only one amplifier. This device is comprised of a switchable A-B section and a Y-connector section. The two sections function independently, permitting each to be used separately with high or low-level signals. The Loop Selector can also be used for switching between speakers. It requires no power and has special circuitry to reduce "switch-pop" noise to well below the average system level. Suggested retail price is \$25.00. For further information, contact MXR Innovations, Inc., 740 Driving Park Ave., Rochester, NY 14613.

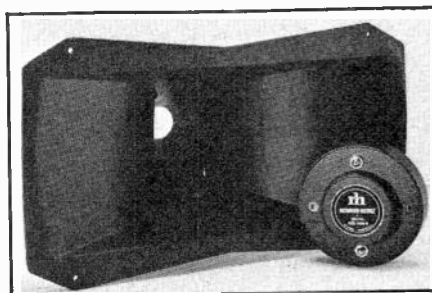


Whirlwind Music has introduced the Constrictor, an instrument cord combining ten feet of straight cord with a 20" coiled, expandable body. It provides musicians with the neatness of retractile cords and the freedom of movement offered by straight connecting cords. Fully extended, the Constrictor allows a length exceeding 20 feet. Manufactured with Belden cable, at its straight end the Constrictor is tipped with Whirlwind's Ultra Snake plug, and at the coiled end is a Switchcraft right-angle jack. For further information, contact Bob Martin, Whirlwind Music, Inc., Box 1075, Rochester, N.Y.

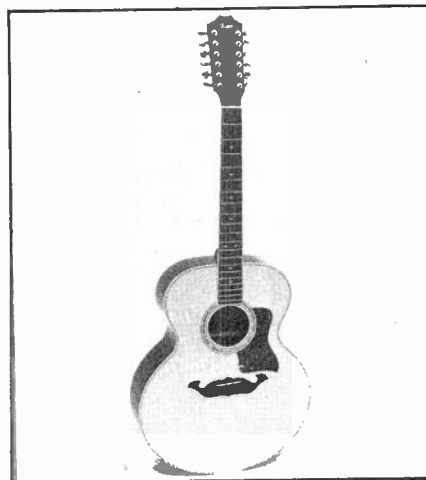


The Bottom Line Pedal Bass, from **Peterson Electro-Musical Products**, incorporates a completely programmable bass sound with adjustable controls for volume, sustain and voice. The control panel can either clip onto the key-strip of a piano or be held by the carrying case of the unit. This package comes completely housed for carrying in a wood leatherette-covered case. The extremely small size of the bass pedals (8" x 19 1/8" x 1 1/4" high) permits them to be placed in front of any keyboard or used on a crowded stage. The list price for the Bottom Line is \$595.00; from Peterson Electro-Musical Products, 11601 S. Mayfield Ave., Worth, IL 60482.

Renkus-Heinz, Inc. has introduced the SSD-3300 high frequency compression driver. The 2" throat driver was expressly designed for high-power applications where optimum sound reinforcement is imperative. According to Renkus-Heinz "the SSD-3300 is capable of delivering a full 15 watts of acoustical power continuously (50 watts RMS) with incomparably low distortion and consistently faithful high-frequency reproduction." For more information contact Renkus-Heinz, Inc., 17891 Sky Park Circle, Irvine, CA 92714.

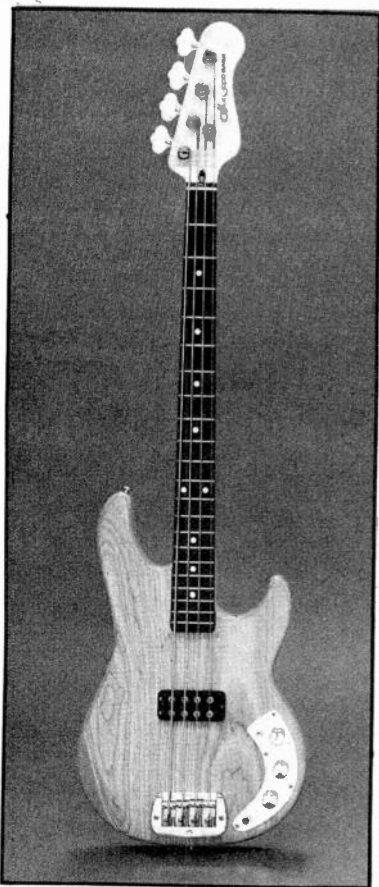


Taylor Guitars offers a new, improved version of its Model 855 12-string. The thin, wide neck is removable. Features of the new 855 include: Indian rosewood back and sides, fine-grained Sitka spruce top, abalone soundhole rosette, black ebony fingerboard and bridge, a laminated brass/bone nut, a compensated saddle, and two adjustable truss rods. For more information, contact Kurt Listug, Taylor Guitars, 7936 Lester Ave., Lemon Grove, CA 92045.



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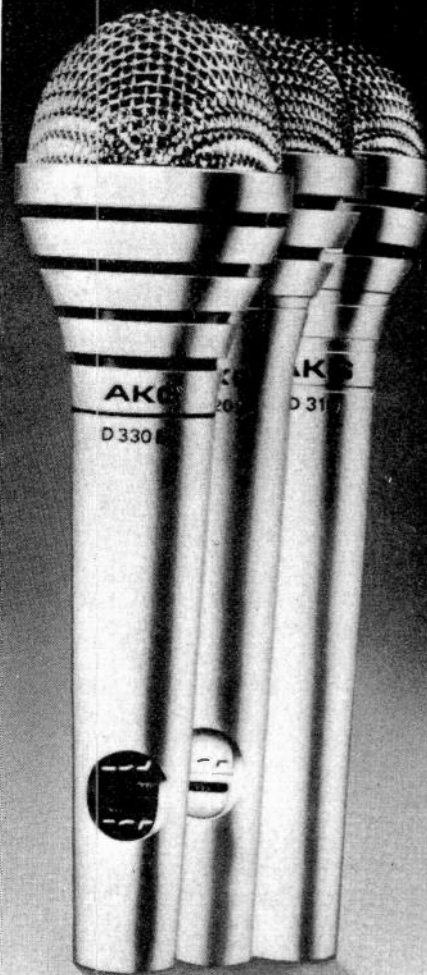
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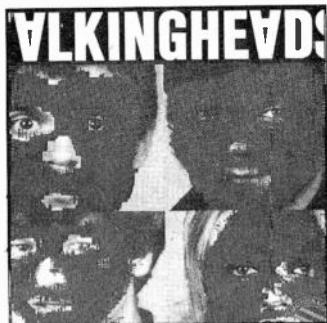
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Off the Record



Remain In Light Talking Heads Sire, SRK 6095

Produced by Brian Eno; engineered by David Jerden; recorded at Compass Point Studios, Nassau, The Bahamas; vocals and additional tracks recorded at Sigma Sound, New York.

After three albums which brought the greatest critical acclaim accorded any American New Wave band and a Top 20 charting for 1979's *Fear Of Music*, Talking Heads makes a daring departure on their new release. Guided by producer Brian Eno, who also co-wrote most of the songs with lead singer/guitarist David Byrne, the band moves squarely into funk rhythms and African percussion. The mixing of these new elements—brought about with the addition of several new musicians, including guitarist Adrian Belew, vocalist Nona Hendryx, and trumpeter Jon Hassell, to the old line-up of Byrne, drummer Chris Frantz, bassist Tina Weymouth, and keyboardist/guitarist Jerry Harrison—with Eno's studio "treatments" and Byrne's always original vocal style, makes for one of the year's most stunning LPs.

With "Born Under Punches (The Heat Goes On)" the band comes out smoking. A twanging funk bass, lots of sharp percussion, and metallic, chicken-pecking guitar work immediately set a fast pace. Eno repeatedly weaves little electronic beeps and shrieks and short guitar phrases into the mix, playing off the dynamic rhythm and Byrne's vocals.

The next two cuts, also superb, build upon Talking Heads' earlier work. "Crosseyed and Painless" is New Wave funk, a driving, relentless bass line making it a direct descendent of last year's brilliant "Life During Wartime." Byrne's singing remains among the most idiosyncratic in

popular music—jumpy, nervous, sometimes nearly hysterical, then switching to rich, almost sweet harmonies. "The Great Curve" follows, throwing off another startling beat (the entire first side is fantastic dance music) to go with Byrne's odd cadences. The song features two aurally dazzling guitar breaks—it sounds like a mutated fuzz-tone, but with Eno producing one never knows for sure—and some marvelous guitar interplay.

Following the nonstop movement of Side One's three lengthy cuts, the remaining five songs shift the emphasis once again. Rich sonic and percussive textures abound, with intriguing tones appearing and disappearing unexpectedly. Each of these songs is slower and not as rhythmically dynamic as the first side's; but as a group they make a subtle counterpart to the others. The title of "Seen And Not Seen," for example, adequately describes the way in which synthesizer and guitar parts blip and stream into the mix on top of a simple African drum beat.

Like Eno's frequent collaborator, David Bowie, Talking Heads has shown an ability to shift gears without losing their way. They deserve considerable respect for even attempting the changes on *Remain In Light*; that the band succeeded in arriving at a compelling synthesis of rock, funk, and African music makes their achievement all the more remarkable.

—Bruce Dancis



Autumn George Winston Windham Hill, C-1012

Produced by William Ackerman; engineered by Harn Soper and Russell Bond; recorded at the Music Annex, Menlo Park, CA.

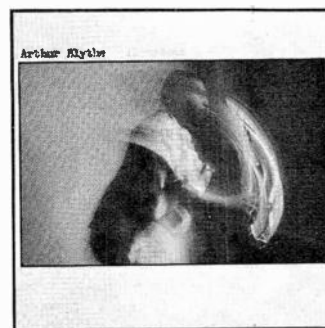
This one really gets inside you. It sounds a lot like what I'd imagined Lyle

Mays' first solo LP would be like. Although Winston can hardly be classified as a jazz pianist, he shares with the Pat Metheny Group's pianist qualities such as structure, melody, economy, and clarity. And both evoke memories of the late Bill Evans' lyrical solo recordings.

As indicated by his song titles ("Moon," "Sea," "Stars," "Woods"), Winston plays moods rather than songs. But while listeners may occasionally find themselves daydreaming, Winston never seems to get lost. The opening "Colors/Dance" (ten minutes worth) could provide the perfect film score for the perfect love scene—although I can't recall ever seeing a love scene filmed with such beauty and taste.

Keith Jarrett may be the premier solo pianist of his generation, but he's never made a solo LP this consistent. *Autumn* is easily one of the best produced, best engineered, and most musically satisfying albums I've heard in years.

—Dan Forte



Illusions Arthur Blythe Columbia, JC 36583

Produced by Arthur Blythe and Jim Fishel; engineered by Don Pulase, with Nancy Byers and Lou Schlossberg; recorded at CBS Studios, NY.

With three major label albums to his credit, as well as stints with Gil Evans, McCoy Tyner, Lester Bowie, and Jack DeJohnette, alto saxophonist Arthur Blythe is on his way to much-deserved recognition. *Illusions*, Blythe's third CBS release, is in part a merging of ideas contained on the earlier two albums. Part of Blythe's illusion is that he uses two totally different line-ups of players and instruments, performing interchangeable material.

The album's opener, "Bush Baby," is loose and free funk in ¾ time, played by a band similar to that of his *Lenox Avenue Breakdown* album; alto, electric guitar, cello, tuba, and trap drums. Blythe's sax playing is highly charged in this setting, and offset by the darting and percussive guitar lines of James "Blood" Ulmer. The title track goes through several rhythmic changes, with tuba player Bob Stewart and drummer Bobby Battle swinging furiously or doubling on odd-time staccato parts. Cellist Abdul Wadud's haunting background screeches during a brilliant Blythe solo add

unusual color to the song. Wadud and Blythe join forces on the melody to "Carespin' With Mamie," and the loose playing of Wadud is again a most interesting contrast. Stewart's bass lines on tuba are exceptional, and Ulmer's comping is unpredictable and imaginative.

The other band represented on *Illusions* is the same as on Blythe's *In The Tradition* album, featuring alto, piano, bass, and drums. Fred Hopkins and Steve McCall, bassist and drummer for the group Air, are a perpetual motion machine on Blythe's tune "Miss Nancy." Hopkins' acoustic bass roars underneath a tastefully blown Blythe solo, and McCall kicks up dust during solo space of his own.

The album's only ballad, "My Son Ra," sounds a bit like a nursery rhyme at first, then switches to a slow 7/4 time and features a delicate piano solo by John Hicks, along with some equally sensitive playing from Blythe. "As Of Yet" could almost be considered "mainstream" jazz, as Hopkins and McCall swing hard, and Blythe and Hicks take impassioned solos.

Blythe's concept of alternating instrumentation is very effective here, almost spellbinding. His composing seems to have no boundaries or pre-supposed limits. And his playing combines untamed energy and a reflective soulfulness. —Robin Tolleson



Musical Shapes Carlene Carter

Warner Bros., BSK 3465

Produced by Nick Lowe; engineered by Will Reid-Dick, Neil Hornby, Paul Bassman Riley, Rob Keylock, and Matt Hyde; recorded at Rampart Studios, Battersea, UK Pro Studios, Shepherds Bush, and Jennyfudy Studios, N. Hollywood.

Growing up in Nashville as the grandchild of Mother Maybelle Carter, daughter of June Carter, and step-daughter of Johnny Cash, Carlene Carter's country music roots are as deeply grounded as they come. Yet on her third album, as was the case with its predecessors, *Carlene Carter* and *Two Sides To Every Woman*, the singer/songwriter again refuses to rest on her heritage. Produced by her husband (and New Wave rocker) Nick Lowe, *Musical Shapes* bends easily between straightforward rock, rockabilly, and progressive country.

Carter's strong, clear voice lends a

delightful twang to every song she touches. On "Too Bad About Sandy" she sounds necessarily tough and sincere, while on the driving rock & roll of "I'm So Cool" her deadpan delivery works perfectly with the song's sarcastic lyrics. Perhaps the standout vocal is Carter's affectionate duet with Dave Edmunds on "Baby Ride Easy," in which the Welshman sounds as naturally "Southern" as Carter herself.

One of the best things about this album is the instrumental support provided by Lowe on bass, Edmunds and Billy Bremner on guitars, and Terry Williams on drums. Collectively known as Rockpile (they perform on Lowe and Edmunds' "solo" albums as well), the band's subtle accompaniment is the kind that always enhances Carter's performance without overshadowing the vocalist. In particular, Edmunds' short and impeccable lead guitar fills and his interaction with Bremner sparkle throughout.

Musical Shapes isn't perfect—the overblown arrangement on "Too Proud" (one of the two non-Rockpile-backed cuts) undermines an excellent vocal, and a somewhat funky version of "Ring Of Fire" seems like a misguided way to honor a Carter-Cash family treasure. But for the most part, Carlene Carter provides further evidence of why she is one of the most engaging singers operating in both the rock and country fields. —Brian LoCicero



Shadows And Light Joni Mitchell

Asylum, BB-704

Recorded at the Santa Barbara County Bowl using the remote facilities of the Record Plant; engineered by Andy Johns and Henry Lewy.

Question: Put Joni Mitchell on tour singing her own lyrics to the compositions of Charles Mingus (along with some of her own hits) backed by a quintet comprised of some of the hottest young jazz musicians in the country (with vocal support from the *Persuasions*) and what have you got?

Answer: Another live Joni Mitchell album.

Granted, Mitchell has grown considerably as an artist in recent years as her tastes have grown more eclectic. And her music has always been among the most complex and unpredictable, both lyrically and structurally, in pop. And if she hasn't quite broken down the barriers existing be-

tween jazz and pop, she has at least obscured them somewhat.

But she is still Joni Mitchell, folk-rock's foremost romantic. And as admirable a gesture as her *Mingus* tribute of a year ago was, that material simply does not hold up alongside the live renditions from *Hissing Of Summer Lawns* and *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* contained here. It becomes a matter of doing what one does best.

Joni's failings as a "jazz" (or as some reviewers prefer, "jazz-pop") singer are all the more amplified by the presence of players like Michael Brecker, Pat Metheny, and Jaco Pastorius. Her vocal entry on "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," immediately following a poignant sax intro by Brecker, sounds weak and self-conscious, and as inappropriate as the lyrics she wrote to the classic Mingus melody. I can't help thinking that Charles Mingus, one of the most powerful bassists, composers and personalities in jazz history, the man who wrote "The Shoes Of The Fisherman's Wife Are Some Jive Ass Slippers," would feel embarrassed by trite and sentimental lyrics about "a dark age when the bandstands has a thousand ways of refusing a black man admission."

Oddly enough, it is when Mitchell is at her least serious ("We'd like to, uh, rock and roo!!! you now," she tells the audience) that she delivers her most convincing performance. With the *Persuasions* in the role of the Teenagers, Joni sounds so much like 13-year-old Frankie Lymon, singing "Why Do Fools Fall In Love," it is both funny and somehow uplifting. It's reassuring—not only because Mitchell reveals that she knows how to simply have fun with music but because it proves that in rock one needn't be heavy to be valid. Who knows, maybe Joni's next LP will be titled *Lymon*. —D.F.



Gospel Nights Maria Muldaur Takoma, TAK 7084

Produced by Jon Monday and Maria Muldaur; recorded live at McCabes Guitar Shop, Santa Monica, CA, by Gingerbread Studio.

Maria Muldaur's gospel numbers (usually reserved for encores in concert) have always been the highlight of her repertoire and one key element separating her from other female rock singers. Unfortunately, her recorded efforts in this vein have been limited to not quite one per LP, and

those usually seemed dulled by studio technology. When Muldaur had occasion to give a complete gospel concert in an intimate setting, she had the good taste to invite the Chambers Brothers, the Burns Sisters, and some fine backing musicians along—and Takoma Records had the foresight to record and release the results.

The program here is split into three styles of gospel music: white rural tunes dating back to the Carter Family and beyond, sung by Maria and the Burns Sisters; traditional gospel by the Chambers Brothers; and slightly more contemporary numbers à la the Staple Singers, sung by all. The Chambers Brothers (Joe, George, Willie and Lester) reestablish their position as one of the great family vocal groups of all-time, with three selections, including another stirring reading of Curtis Mayfield's classic "People Get Ready." Like the Brothers, the Burns Sisters (Brenda, Beth and Becky) reveal that special quality found only in family groups—the Carter Family, the Mills Brothers, the Andrews Sisters, the Staple Singers, and on and on—the ability to make three voices sound more like 300. When the Chamberses, the Burnses and Muldaur all get together (as on "Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody"), the results are astounding.

Muldaur sounds most confident and at home on the Carter Family numbers, like "Trials, Troubles, Tribulations" and "Daniel Prayed" (with an added vocal assist from drummer Ronnie Tutt, late of Elvis Presley's TCB Band), but sounds a bit strained, both musically and physically, on the Staples' "Just As An Eagle" and "Brothers and Sisters."

My only criticism is that T-Bone Burnett's poetic liner notes, while a nice gesture, could have been replaced with something more informative on the subject of gospel music and the derivations of the individual songs. —D.F.



Chronicle Miles Davis

Prestige, P-012

Reissue produced by Orrin Keepnews; original recordings produced by Bob Weinstock or Ira Gitler; tape assembly and re-recording by Eddie Bill Harris.

Right here in this 12-LP boxed, profusely annotated set, everything Miles Davis ever recorded for Prestige between 1951 and 1956!

You're right, bebop breath! Even with

a list price of \$125.00 (you can probably find it at most major chain stores for under a hundred), this one's a must for any dedicated jazz buff. And this edition is limited to 10,000 copies, so don't delay.

Chronicle covers the period after the historic *Birth Of The Cool* sessions (for Capitol) and prior to the monumental *Kind Of Blue* album (Columbia). As such, nothing here could possibly be as startling or innovative. But these 24 sides document an important period of transition in the career of jazz' most constantly evolving artist.

Davis' bands have always included (often introduced) players of the highest calibre, as evidenced by the list present on these dates—John Coltrane, Paul Chambers, Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, Thelonius Monk, Sonny Rollins, Zoot Sims, Horace Silver, Milt Jackson, Percy Heath, John Lewis, J.J. Johnson, Red Garland, Lee Konitz, Al Cohn, Max Roach, Charles Mingus, Charlie Parker and others.

Among the set's 94 tracks can be found such gems as "Round About Midnight," "Four," "Walkin'," "Night In Tunisia," "Bags' Groove," "Oleo," and "My Funny Valentine." Unlike the various Charlie Parker reissues, *Chronicle* includes only a couple of alternate takes and duplicate titles (recorded years apart), making this one of the most listenable jazz collections available—even at nine-plus hours.

—Dean Danielson



Minimum Wage Rock & Roll The Bus Boys

Arista, AB 4280

Produced by Brian O'Neal, Kevin O'Neal and Robert Margouleff; engineered by Howard Siegel; basic tracks recorded at Filmways/Heider Studio "A" in Los Angeles.

Stereotypes may never be the same after being exposed to the debut album by the Los Angeles-based Bus Boys. With an abundance of satire, a keen-eyed and critical perspective on society, and some strong instrumental and vocal chops, this black rock & roll band (there's a token Chicano drummer) makes good on their claim in "Did You See Me": "I bet you never heard music like this by spades."

In fact, we haven't—at least not for a long time. Considering rock's rhythm and blues roots and the centrality of figures like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Jimi Hendrix, and Sly Stone in shaping the sound of rock for over 25 years, there are few black

rockers today. To their credit, the Bus Boys openly address and have fun with that state of affairs. One of their strongest songs is a Berry-style rocker entitled "Johnny Soul'd Out" (with "ooohs" via John, Paul, George and Ringo), whose key line is, "He's into rock and roll and he's given up the rhythm and blues."

Led by the brothers O'Neal (Brian and Kevin), who write all of the band's material, the Bus Boys roll out a strong vocal attack featuring five singers harmonizing and trading off leads. Although the album can't visualize the band's phrenetic movements or sardonic Stepin' Fetchit shuffles during their live performances, their enthusiasm and vitality does come through on vinyl.

Stylistically, the Bus Boys are all over the place. They're at their best when they turn up the tempo and rock out: "KKK" and "Did You See Me" are in a New Wave mode, while "Johnny Soul'd Out" shows that they have a solid grip on classic rock & roll. One of the most imaginative songs on the LP, and the one that forms the basis for their slogan and album title, is "Minimum Wage." Built upon a very catchy, rolling guitar and bass line, its lilting rhythm grabs a listener's attention, as do the tongue-in-cheek lyrics.

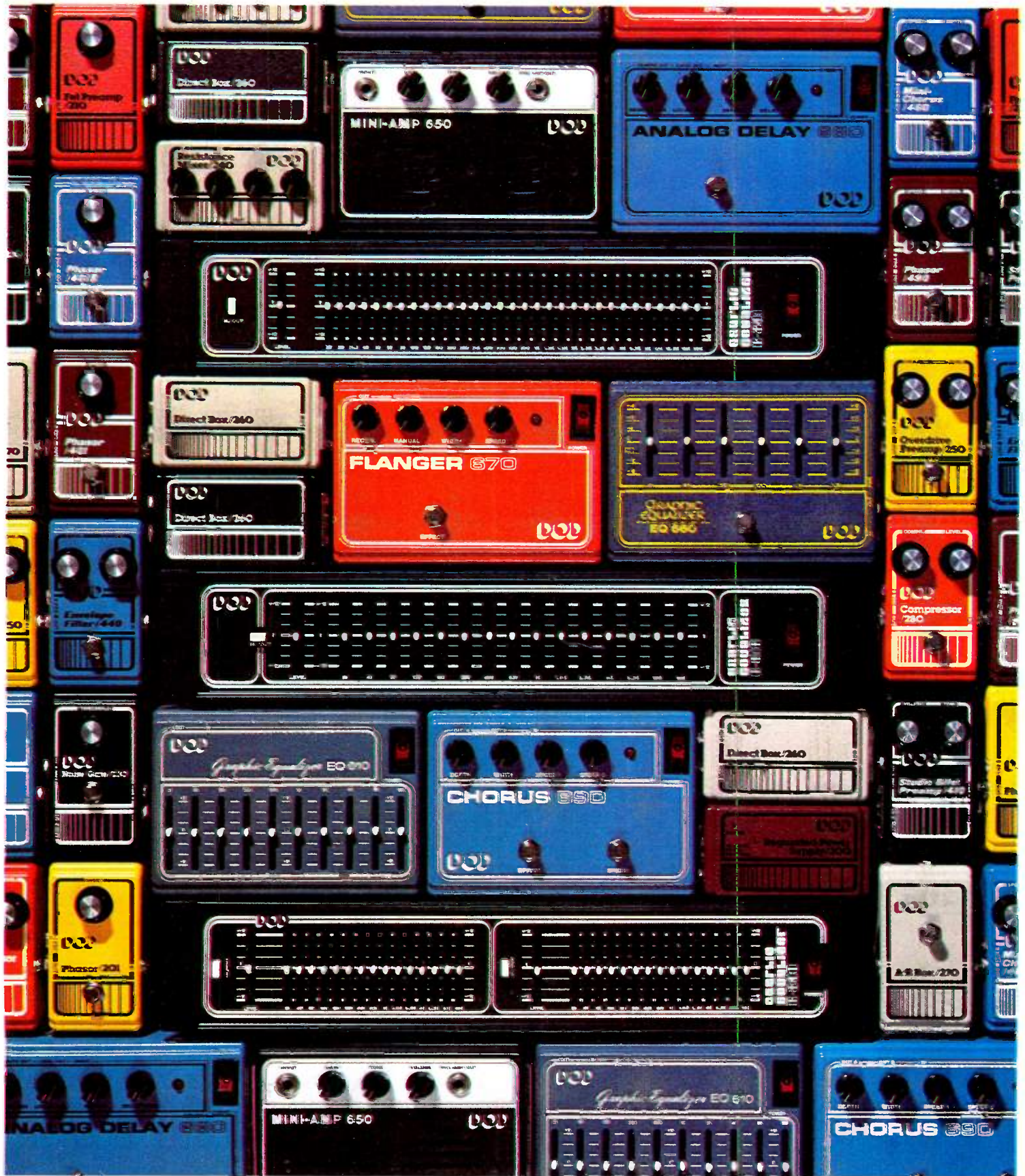
Some of the group's occasional departures from rock work quite well. "There Goes The Neighborhood" plays out its humorous role reversal on top of a loose and funky rhythm. But others illustrate a certain absence of definition. "Tell The Coach" and "Anggie" are pretty enough, but indistinguishable from many black MOR songs. Still, they do illustrate the band's range.

The fact that the Bus Boys are a black rock & roll band will initially cause people to pay attention; the fact that they are a wonderfully witty and sparkling rock & roll band should make their attractiveness more than skin deep. —B.D.

Alternate Take

Since David Grisman's much acclaimed pioneering of "Dawg music"—his unique blend of bluegrass, jazz, and ethnic styles—it seems like every bluegrass LP the mailman brings contains at least one Grisman cover or unsuccessful attempt at getting "outside." (Bob Clarke's *One Legged Gypsy*, on Ridge Runner, could justifiably be dubbed "Dawg doo.") The **Tim Ware Group's** self-titled debut [Kaleidoscope, F-13] proves that there is room for more than one innovator within the young genre. What Ware and Grisman share, and most others lack, are the compositional (as well as mandolin) chops to make this acoustic instrumental music interesting and exciting. —D.F.

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Live:

Blues by the Bay

by Dan Forte
SAN FRANCISCO

Next to Chicago, San Francisco is probably the most active blues center in the country. Ordinarily, it takes a bit of digging to unearth these 12-bar treasures, but the music is there—in out of the way bars like Eli's Mile Hi in Oakland, the It Club in El Cerrito, and Mooney's in San Francisco. But every summer, R&B rears its funky head when the Neighborhood Arts Program sponsors the annual San Francisco Blues Festival in Golden Gate Park.

The best thing about the yearly festival—besides the fact that it consists of two overbooked afternoons worth of fine talent, free of charge—is that the bands that gravitate to the City usually make their trips worthwhile by playing as many club dates as possible. This September/October's nonstop blues bill was enough to cost the more dedicated aficionados their day jobs. The festival (September 13 and 14) featured such luminaries as Pee Wee Crayton, Percy Mayfield, and John Lee Hooker, along with local favorites like J.J. Malone, the Houserockers, the Blues Survivors, and Little Charlie & the Nightcaps. Also in town were probably the idiom's two most popular contemporary artists, B.B. King and Muddy Waters, as well as James Cotton and the Hollywood Fats Band, who both appeared at the Monterey Jazz Festival's traditional Saturday afternoon of blues, September 20.

Gearing up a week before the festival, the Old Waldorf presented Charlie Musselwhite, Mark Naftalin's Rhythm & Blues Revue, and Queen Ida's Bon Ton Zydeco Band. Offering a mini-sampler of what they do almost nightly around the bay, Naftalin's fine quartet provided tasteful backing in a variety of R&B styles, exhibited by Little Frankie Lee, Buddy Ace, Sonny Rhodes, and Charles Houff, who shouted out a soulful "Since I Fell For You," with Dr. Wild Willie Moore on honking tenor. Next up, Charlie Musselwhite showed why he is still the yardstick by which other harmonica players are measured. In spite of the fact that he was nursing two cracked ribs sustained in a recent auto accident, Charlie nevertheless displayed

his patented tone and mastery of the Hohner. The highlight of the set, however, came before Musselwhite took the stage, when drummer Walter Shufflesworth hammed his way through Chuck Berry's "No Money Down." The evening ended with some fine bayou blues by the always danceable Bon Ton Zydeco Band.

The opening day of the Blues Festival was highlighted by two young out-of-town bands, the Cobras (from Austin, Texas) and the Nighthawks (from D.C.). Sparked by a tenor/baritone sax "section" and the expressive vocals of Junior Bedlow, the Cobras offered the most polished, uptown sounds of the afternoon. This proved a bit too slick

would have taken on the challenge of following the Nighthawks' high-energy set and most likely given them a lesson in *real* showmanship. But these days Muddy seems to take less pride in his work than the man who made "Hoochie Coochie Man" and "Got My Mojo Working" blues standards. This was evident in the absolutely abysmal group of rag-tags Muddy now calls his band. (Considering that the Waters band of the Fifties virtually cast the mold for all future blues bands—introducing such giants as James Cotton, Little Walter, Otis Spann, and Jimmy Rogers—this aggregation was especially disappointing.) B.B. King, on the other hand, refuses to rest on his reputation. With the Mark Naftalin group sup-

Jimmie
Vaughan (L)
with Carlos
Santana (R)

Charlie
Musselwhite
(below)



PHOTO: SHERMAN THOMPSON, JR.



PHOTO: MERIDITH CRIERSON

when the group was billed alongside the Hollywood Fats Band two nights later at Keystone Palo Alto. Although only in his mid-twenties, Hollywood Fats is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding blues guitarists in the country, with a list of sideman credits a mile long. His band mixes West Coast jump and Memphis-styled blues with just the right touch of rockabilly for an irresistibly swinging sound. The Cobras' polish proved no match for Fats' grit.

The Nighthawks, who closed the festival Saturday, also played several club dates in town, opening for Muddy Waters. While the Hawks rely heavily on showmanship (tricks, if you will), they definitely have the musician-ship to back up their antics. At S.F.'s The Stone, September 14, guitarist Jim Thackery played with one hand, with his teeth, and behind his head; on "Nine Below Zero," he stepped off the stage, strolled through the dancefloor and out to the box office (thanks to his Nady wireless transmitter). But all the while, the blues licks streaming out of his amp on stage were first-rate.

Not so many years ago, Muddy Waters

plying the back-up, the King of the Blues made a surprise appearance at the closing day of the Blues Festival, delivering a short but spirited "How Blue Can You Get" to the delight of the crowd. With his own band, King appeared weeks later at the Bread & Roses Festival, at Berkeley's Greek Theater, October 4. Here again, B.B. was a total professional; unfortunately, the same cannot be said for his much-advertised "special guest" of the set, Joni Mitchell. Not only was Mitchell's vocal on "Thrill Is Gone" a bad joke alongside B.B.'s, she didn't even appear to know the lyrics. B.B. even seemed better rehearsed backing Joni on her own "Coyote." A spur of the moment jam is one thing, but when it's used as a lure to sell tickets, this sort of media event is inexcusable.

The boogies and shuffles continued to rock the city by the bay well into October, when the Fabulous Thunderbirds hit town. On their way to recording their third Chrysalis LP in Los Angeles, the boys from Texas played to three consecutive full houses, at Santa Cruz' Catalyst, Keystone Palo Alto, and the Old Waldorf (October 10-12). Following a blistering 90-minute set at the Waldorf, the band was joined by none other than Devadip Carlos Santana for three encores—including a 12-bar treatment of "Hawaiian Eye," the theme from the old TV show. Unlike Joni Mitchell, Santana is a blues player first and rock star second. Grinning from ear to ear, Carlos took on the T-birds' Jimmie Vaughan in a guitar battle that had all the intensity of the Duran-Leonard title fight with none of the hostility. Hopefully, there will someday be a rematch.

ELTON JOHN

by Bruce C. Pilato
TORONTO

Within minutes after the spacey opening of "Funeral For A Friend/Love Lies Bleeding," it was obvious that Elton John had recaptured his position as one of rock's superstars. The 20,000-seat Maple Leaf Gardens was sold out, and the crowd cheered and stomped enthusiastically as Elton appeared onstage dressed in a satin football outfit and white cowboy hat.

John brought with him the best band he's ever performed with, a combination of new and old. From his original band were bassist Dee Murray and drummer Nigel Olsson. Keyboardist James Newton Howard returned from Elton's 1976 line-up, and new members included guitarists Tim Renwick from the Sutherland Brothers and Ritchie Zito, a session musician and former member of Billy Joel's band.

Onstage for nearly two and a half hours, Elton & Co. played with tremendous skill and vitality. After the beginning song, Elton went into "Tiny Dancer" alone, making the gentle Pop ballad sound as good as it did in 1971 when he first introduced it.

John played a number of songs from the classic *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* album, including the title track, "All The Young Girls Love Alice," "Harmony," "Benny & The Jets," and, of course, "Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting," complete with Elton kicking over his piano stool and climbing all over the Steinway a la Jerry Lee Lewis. Other highlights included a recent John/Taupin original, "Ego"; a cover of John Lennon's "Imagine"; and an outstanding version of "Rocket Man," with strong harmonies from Olsson and Murray.

Halfway through the show John left for a costume change and handed the stage over to Olsson for the drummer's own mini-set, which included his new single, entitled (oddly enough) "Saturday Night," as well as a new ballad called "All I Want Is You."

Elton returned with his latest hit, "Little Jeannie," from the recent *21 at 33* album. The remainder of the show included "Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word," "Philadelphia Freedom," "Have Mercy On The Criminal," and two more selections from the new LP, "White Lady—White Powder" and "Satirical Elegance," a ballad John co-wrote with British rocker Tom Robinson.

The show closed rather weakly with the 1975 hit "Someone Saved My Life Tonight," but Elton made up for it when he encored with the beautiful "Your Song."

Acoustically and visually, this was a stunning show. The massive, elevated sound system featured 21 cabinets, each holding six 12" speakers. Hundreds of spotlights formed a perfect V in five layers above the stage. Each accent, each movement was showered

with a colorfully different array of lights.

John performed entirely at a white Steinway grand piano. James Newton Howard commanded a massive bank of keyboards that included a Yamaha electric grand piano, a Prophet, and a Minimoog. The guitarists switched between Gibson Les Pauls, Schecter Strats, and Ovation acoustics. Both used wireless mikes and played out of small Music Man amps positioned off stage. Dee Murray used a pre-CBS Fender Precision bass, while Olsson employed his standard all-maple, custom-made 10-piece Slingerland drum kit.

Elton John had indeed proved he still had it. Whether or not you appreciate his brand of multi-styled contemporary Pop, the fact remains, he did 145 minutes worth of short songs and nearly all of them had been Top Ten hits. One can count on a single hand the number of artists still around who can do that.

"Now we're back on a different level and it's fabulous," Nigel Olsson said backstage. "We're all going to do our separate things too, and there's no ego problems. It's very relaxed. The first day of rehearsals was like we were never apart."

Jeff Beck

by Ken Kubernik
LOS ANGELES

My earliest recollections of Pop music revolve around the frantic pursuit of the latest singles by the Stones and the Yardbirds. The latter, particularly, had a great impact on me: very mysterious and very English.



Their 1965 release, *Having A Rave Up*, ravaged the ears of the listener expecting more cutesy, upbeat Pop from the English invasion. The opening track, "Mister, You're A Better Man Than I," was gifted with perhaps the most revolutionary guitar solo of its time. Effortlessly soaring, dramatic, pruned of excess, this 30-second epiphany recast the mold from which all guitar acrobatics were to come. Their brooding, strident guitarist became my instant favorite. Jeff Beck—the name reeked of rock & roll guitar. It still does.

It's been a hefty four years since El Becko's last studio LP, *Wired*, and while pretenders to the throne tug anxiously on his sword there are no new princes to crown. There is simply Beck against himself. All the poses, all the chops, all the "classicism" that is most cherished among guitar aficionados is the ripe fruit from the seeds that Beck planted.

He has a new album out and decides to tour. Thank God for small favors.

While the new album, *There And Back*, doesn't have the deft hand of George Martin to craft impeccable settings for Beck's infinite phrasings, as on *Blow By Blow*, it does capture a revitalized Beck—gutsy, belligerent, and LOUD. And that temperament was carried over into his recent tour.

On a cool yet invigorating evening at the Greek Amphitheater, Beck reasserted his claim to the title of rock's most menacing musician. The sound was rich and bouyant, beautifully capturing the piercing leads, the low-end contortions, the punishing chordal assaults. The familiar Strat (sunburst this time around) was replaced on occasion with a blonde Telecaster. (And who says Jeff isn't sentimental?) His back-up band featured the seasoned young veteran Simon Phillips on drums; Moe Foster, bass; and Tony Hymas, keyboards. For the most part they provided a clean, full-bodied framework for Beck's guitar excursions. Only during their solo passages did they reveal their polished but pedestrian character.

Beck's repertoire focused primarily on the new album, with a handful from the last two albums thrown in for good measure. Stevie Wonder's touching ballad "Cause We Ended As Lovers" featured Beck in a tour de force of technical and emotional range. Softly caressing the fretboard, he fingered an assortment of blues-tinged lines that fully captured the poignant character of the tune. The aptly titled "Space Boogie" from the new LP, with its fiery keyboard/guitar exchanges and feisty time changes, brought the sold-out crowd to a feverish pitch.

In a flash the aisles were full of young admirers, anxious to crowd the stage area and view the surgeon's technique from up close. The overwhelmingly teenage audience, nurtured on the histrionics of the new guitar heroes—Pat Travers and the Molly Hatchett brood, among others—were offered the finest sort of history lesson, even for those fans schooled with his early primers on *Truth*. The second and final encore (and the evening's only vocal) was "Going Down," a nice, nostalgic gesture but hardly "Shapes Of Things." M.I.

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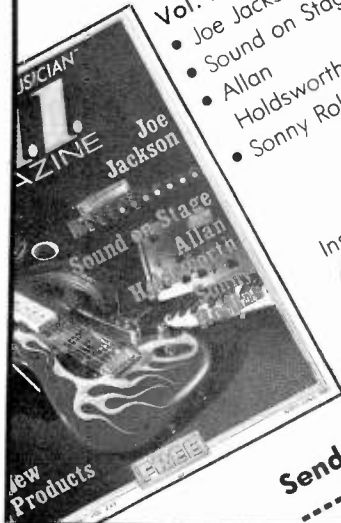
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A photograph of Alan Gratzer, a member of the band REO Speedwagon, standing next to his Ludwig drum set. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, a red tie, and blue trousers. He is pointing towards the drum set with his right hand. The drum set is a Ludwig 6-ply wood shell drum set with a white bass drum head featuring the Ludwig logo. The background is dark and out of focus.

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