

MUSICIAN

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Tom Petty

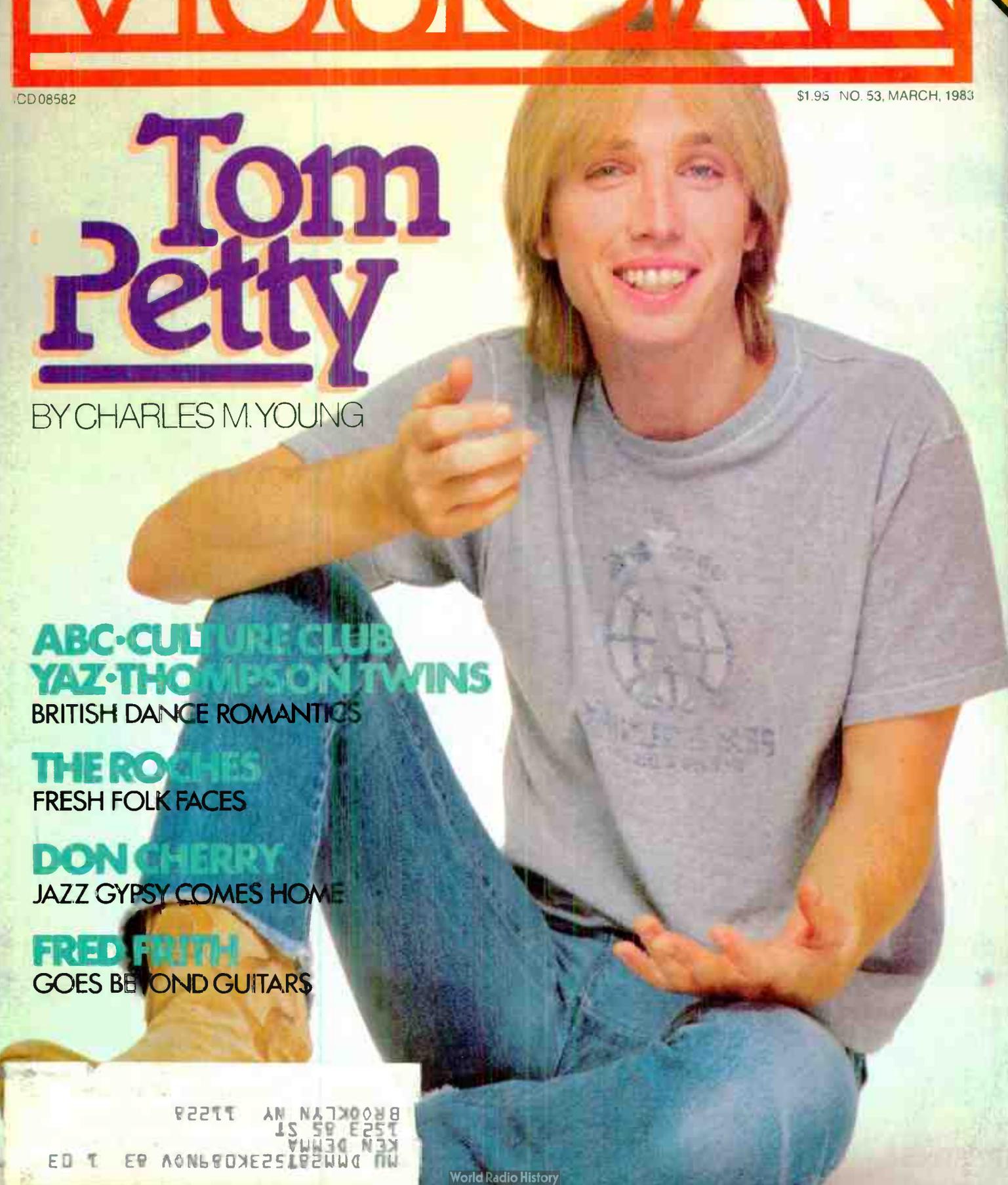
BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

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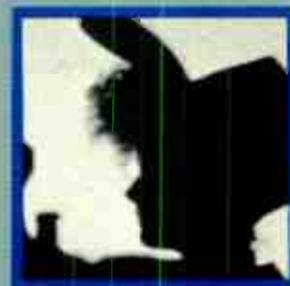
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MUSICIAN

Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, those North Florida punks still playing rock 'n' roll in the supermarket parking lot, have put their legal struggles behind them and gone full speed ahead back into making punchy, unsynthetic, smart rock. Charles M. Young visits the Heartbreakers at work and discovers that a few unexpected religious metaphors best explain the energetic enigma of Tom Petty. Page 42



ABC, Culture Club, Yaz and the Thompson Twins are part of the new dance romantic wave from Britain. All skillfully appropriate disco, funk, reggae and electro-ethnic for rhythm backdrops and sing oddly impassioned cinematic odes to pure love. But despite these bands' technical virtue and their abundance of good songs, something has been subverted by a cold intelligence. A look at dance-floor sweat and cynical synth ice. Page 34



Don Cherry, the most brilliant of his generation, has helped shape free jazz since his pioneering work with Ornette Coleman in 1959. Since then, he has become a man of the world—literally. His music is full not only of what he has learned from Third World cultures, but what he has given them. Cherry's cycle now is homecoming: back to New York and back to Old & New Dreams and the New Liberation Music Orchestra. Situation is simply music. Page 52



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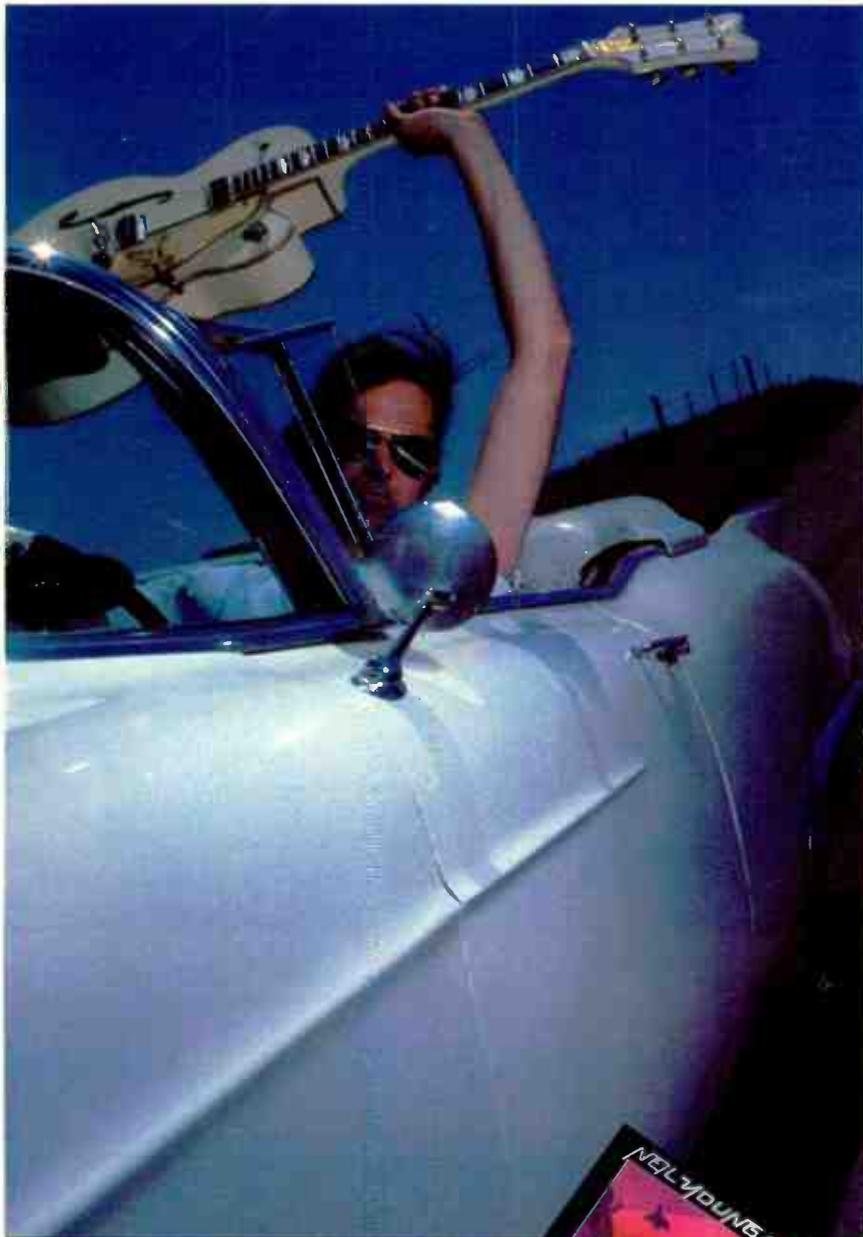
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STEVE GADD. HOT ON ZILDJIAN.

The man is hot! And he should be. No less than Chick Corea put it this way: "Every drummer wants to play like Steve Gadd because he plays great. He plays everything well. He could very well go on to become one of the greatest drummers the world has ever seen." As you can imagine, between his touring and recording, Steve's not the easiest guy in the world to pin down. But he did stop for a breather the other day and we got a chance to talk with him.

On Practice. "I've been playing since I was a kid. As long as I keep my muscles loose, I don't have to practice a lot every day. When I do practice, I just sort of let things happen naturally and then later on try to work it into my playing. Like on '50 Ways to Leave Your Lover... I used my left hand on the high hat for the whole section—it was a little thing I'd been practicing and it just worked out."

On Control. "Sometimes I use light, medium and heavy sticks to do the same drills because the sticks affect my muscles in different ways. You have to use your hand and arm muscles differently to control your playing. It's a subtle thing but it helps me tremendously."

On Effects. "After I graduated from Eastman, I played in a rock 'n roll band. It was keyboard, bass, drums and a lot of homemade stuff. I bought 6 big artillery shells, sawed them into different lengths and hung them on



Steve Gadd, one of the world's most innovative musicians, has paved the way toward new playing techniques for today's drummers.

a rack that I built. I'd use them for the free sections in the music."

On K's. "Art Blakey gave me my first set of K. Zildjian's a long time ago. I love the feel of them. There's something about the way the stick reacts to the surface...it almost becomes part of the cymbal. They're not cold or edgy. They have a very warm and deep feeling. They've got real character. I use a 20" Ride and an 18" Crash Ride with 14" Hi Hats for recording and live sessions."

On A's. "I love to use A. Zildjian's when I play rock 'n roll. When I want to play louder, I add a 16" Thin Crash and an 18" Crash Ride for a full crash sound. The bells on the A's really project the sound in a clear natural tone."

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LETTERS

AERONAUTICAL INSIGHT

Kudos and thanks to Vic Garbarini for his sensitive and insightful interview with Joni Mitchell. Like many, I've followed Joni's music since her "skittish, intense, folk princess days" and continually admire and marvel at her tasteful craftsmanship, musical courage and the personal dynamics involved in her incredible, almost mystical creative process. Mr. Garbarini has very skillfully given us a close-up look, a prismatic view of this great lady's fragile, yet beautiful musical wings.

Don E. Tush
Pittsburgh, PA

TWO OUT OF THREE ARE BAD

Like Andy Summers of the Police, I too enjoy many of the twentieth century classical composers. Perhaps the typesetting [*and/or editing*] gremlins wanted to bring in the new year with a little mischief, but on page 60 of issue #51, Karlheinz Stockhausen remained unscathed but the names of Olivier Messiaen and Arnold Schoenberg were both misspelled. Perhaps John Cage, with his love of random choice might have enjoyed a misplaced letter, but I think the other members of the classical avant-garde should enjoy the care shown in the rest of your publication. What makes *Musician* so good is its unerring taste with respect to a broad range of music and that's the way one's ear's should be.

Ben Dwyer
Peoria, IL

DON'T FIGHT THE FUNK, IRONMAN

Enjoyed Gregory Tate's piece on Tacuma and Ulmer. Not as funky as "Ironman" generally gets, but a useful harmolodic update, nonetheless. Thanks. By the way, am I the only one to detect a shift away from jazz/new music coverage in *Musician*? There seem to be fewer feature stories and record reviews covering the latest projects of such musicians as Steve Lacy, Cecil Taylor, Kip Hanrahan, Glenn Branca, Lamonte Young and the many others who continue to revitalize and redefine the music of our time.

Robert Hoff
Co-host, *All That Jazz*, WQLN-FM
Erie, PA

GOOD OL' ROCK 'N' GREED

Regarding "Corporate Rock":

As long as vacant technocrats synthesize garbage in the name of fame and fortune, radio programmers will continue to rotate refined tedium in the name of good old greed. My twenty years as a professional rock 'n' roller

have taught me, among many things, that the music business has little to do with the spirit music once was. The future of contemporary popular music is mainly in the hands of accountants and pimps. Have a nice day.

Mendelson Joe
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

FALSE CONFRONTATION

Concerning "Corporate Rock":

Humblest apologies but the industry is not "following the audience"; just the opposite; the audience is trying to follow the industry. You rather clumsily avoided this explanation; radio in cooperation with its corporations tries to manipulate supply and demand by creating demands on unsuspecting and basically vulnerable people (those who have a limited opportunity for real alternatives in music and other views). Although you almost revealed this concept (accidentally?), "The Failure of Corporate Rock" is a classic example of false confrontation with an extremely important issue. But funny, I don't think you're the ones to really blame, for some odd reason.... Anyway, congratulations on your fifth anniversary.

Bill Boyer (The Blanks)
Bloomfield Hills, MI

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGGMAN?

Last night I accidentally convinced my girlfriend, over a joint, that Billy Joel's "Scandinavian Skies" was a rediscovered Beatles song. She even listened twice. Laughing, I finally told her the truth.

It's sad to think my kids will hear "Strawberry Fields Forever" and say, "Daddy, they're ripping off Billy Joel." Eddie Whalen
Fairfield, CA

HE DON'T GET NO RESPECT

I found "Elvis" by Dave Marsh to be the best article written about the late King since his death. It mirrors closely my own opinions; I think it's time everyone respected this man for the many things he contributed to the music industry.

Dennis Petilli
Smithtown, NY

CHOCOLATIER CHIPWICH

Your pieces on Quincy Jones and Luther Vandross were way overdue, but were consumed by this reader faster than a Chipwich in a hot sun. However, would it be too much to ask to see a cover story, if not an entire issue, devoted to producers and artists like Berry Gordy, Thom Bell, Leon Huff, Kenny Gamble, Holland-Dozier-Holland, Norman Whitfield, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Chuck Berry, the Womacks, Ray Charles, Chic, Aretha Franklin or Marvin Gaye? I like my Chipwich with a lot of chocolate! Let's put an end to all

those letters that say that *Musician* doesn't have enough black in the mix.

David Rowe
Yardley, PA

TONEMASTER ART

Overlooking the fact that your December issue was great, I'd like to comment on Mr. Forte's "El Cheapo Guitars." All I can say is, "MORE!" The pictures and description of that "Tonemaster" were great—as a work of art if nothing else. With all the status guitars around, it's nice to know simpler things exist and work. Why not make "El Cheapo Guitars" a monthly column? It could be called "Gallery of the Strange." One question though: on the "Tonemaster," which button is "pulverize"?

Jay L. Mazur
Brooklyn, NY

PRO-NOUN

Labeling the use of proper nouns "gimmicky," as Bill Flanagan did in his review of Donald Fagan's *The Nightfly*, is like complaining about Picasso's use of colors other than black and white. Mr. Fagan's images mean more to us in color than in coffee and cigarettes. Next you'll be onto his extensive use of those other crazy poetical gimmicks, rhyme and rhythm.

Thad Taylor
San Antonio, TX

ATTACK OF THE DINOSAURS

This is in response to a note in Music Industry News about a new group being formed called the Dinosaurs. In the San Francisco Bay area, there has been a band playing several gigs with the same name. But hold on to your hats! The members of this group are: Peter Albin (Big Brother), John Cipollino (Quicksilver), Spencer Dryden (Jefferson Airplane), Robert Hunter (Grateful Dead) and Barry Melton (Country Joe).

So...will the real Dinosaurs please stand up?

Ted Hatsushi
Oakland, CA

Trends Department:

The response to Brian Cullman's "Letter From New Orleans" became a genuine *Musician* mail room phenomenon. Virtually without exception, the letters were eloquent, detailed in their criticism and, despite their obvious outrage, possessed of a pained dignity. Some writers were so reasonable, they even conceded portions of Cullman's argument before laying into him. Cullman, of course, is a loving student of Big Easy's music and, in fact, wrote a detailed positive account of the entire festival for *The Record*. He's sorry, *New Orleans... can he please come back?*

— Ed.

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Steve Morse
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By Jock Baird

Shocks & Aftershocks: Elektra & Chrysalis Face the Music

A major industry earthquake struck the West Coast on January 10 as Elektra/Asylum shut down ninety percent of its Los Angeles office's operations, shifting its seat of power to New York. Label president **Joe Smith** was sent to run a sports division of parent corporation Warner Communications, his place filled by senior vice president **Bruce Lundvall** (the guiding light of Elektra/Musician). **Bob Krasnow**, a senior Atlantic vice president in New York, will become chairman of the board. Most of the staff of 150 will be transferred or fired, the biggest mass industry layoff since the August Massacre. Details are still sketchy at press time.

Elektra/Asylum certainly had a duff year on the charts. Despite strong performances by their top sellers, the Cars and Richard Simmons, E/A's next biggest guns were Grover Washington, Jr. and Patrice Rushen, with a puzzling fizzle by Queen's two releases. E/A did get good results on the country charts (Hank Williams, Jr., Eddie Rabbitt, Conway Twitty), maintained a strong presence on the jazz charts (Pieces of a Dream, Lee Ritenour, Donald Byrd) and had some late-inning help from Linda Ronstadt and two former bread-and-butter Eagles, Don Henley and Glenn Frey, but Elektra's 1982 take was apparently not enough to keep two major offices afloat.

This M.I. shocker comes on the heels of an ongoing shake-up at Chrysalis Records, which ended its six-year career as a major label with independent distribution and signed a distribution deal with CBS. Behind this move lay a major change of course for Chrysalis, one which cleared the top executive suites, left about twenty-

five (with more to come) holding pink slips and has left a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the label even as it banks hit LPs by Pat Benatar and Toni Basil.

Chrysalis was originally in the Warners fold when in 1976 co-founders **Terry Ellis** and **Chris Wright** complained they "couldn't control their own destiny" with WEA and gave the manufacturing and shipping of their catalog to independent distributors. At the time, much was made by Ellis of the importance of these smaller, progressive-oriented, flexible companies. Ellis and Wright brought in **Sal Licata** as president, a strong believer in indie distributors.

With only a weak showing by Blondie and ineffective backup by Huey Lewis & the News and Billy Idol, Chrysalis' 1982 made Elektra look like Exxon. Despite the cash flow problems engendered by this gloomy roster, some Chrysalis insiders believe that Ellis and Wright's move was rooted more in their desire to concentrate on video than in poor sales. In any case, rumors of Chrysalis' return to branch distribution suddenly appeared in early December. Licata announced he would leave if the fifteen indie distributors who handle Chrysalis product were replaced with a major. Then, still without any Chrysalis confirmation of persistent reports that a deal with CBS was imminent, Licata announced his resignation. Promo chief **Jack Forsythe** rejected a place in the proposed new management team and quit with his old friend Licata, as did sales chief **Stan Layton**.

The first round of twenty-five layoffs proceeded just before Christmas.

Meanwhile, Chrysalis is ditching its L.A. offices and renting new office space in Manhattan, presumably to be closer to Ellis and Wright's British music/video activities. No replacements for the top brass have been announced, but two likely in-house candidates are A&R man **Jeff Aldrich** and **John Monday**, director of marketing. New releases, and most other activity, stayed on hold. One unresolved issue in the Chrysalis-CBS deal is said to be disagreement over whether Ellis and Wright can get a "most-favored-nation" status in the CBS group under the Epic/Portrait/Associated umbrella.

Chrysalis was one of three remaining major labels with independent distribution (the other two are Arista and Motown) and their departure to CBS means a major loss in the market share for indies. (There have even been whisperings that Arista has explored going to a branch major.) The trend over the last two decades away from independently-distributed labels has a great deal to do with the sell-gold-or-go-home sales philosophy now in practice, since the branch-majors need lots of volume in the pipeline to pay for a national network of warehouses, sales offices, pressing plants, etc. The independent distributors, like their record label cousins, are traditionally known for their feistiness and interest in the experimental. True to their rough-and-tumble nature, most indies vowed to survive and restore the lost Chrysalis volume, claiming the loss of A&M to RCA four years ago was a bigger blow. The trend of the moment, however, is unfortunately toward centralization, as the six branch majors (CBS, WEA, Capitol, RCA, PolyGram and MCA, if you're keeping score) now distribute ninety percent of the top 200 LPs.

One final irony: Washington D.C. radio station WWDC-FM ("DC-101"), which answered Chrysalis' request not to play Pat Benatar's *Get Nervous* in its entirety by banning the LP, is currently doing a promotional giveaway in tandem with—you guessed it—CBS Records.

Al Jarreau has finished his new LP, *Jarreau* and says it includes a scat solo on a jazz cut that he feels is his best recorded performance to date... Island's Compass Point studios have been busy, busy, busy: **Eric Clapton**, **Talking Heads**, **Spandau Ballet**, **Gwen Guthrie** and **Black Uhuru** have all been laying tracks... **The Tubes** and **Paul Kantnor** (produced by Durocs **Ron Nagle** and **Scott Matthews**) are finishing up new projects... **Blondie** has quietly dissipated into solo careers and another band, *Checkered Past*.

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L U N C H

1982's Best and Worst Music Books

BY BRIAN CULLMAN

A few nights ago at the Lone Star Cafe, I ran into a guitar hero from the 60s. Now fat, bald and pontificating, he looked confusedly at his hands. "Guitar," he thought, "frets...notes..."...and then, "music." The thought was too much. He returned to yelling into his beer, "Hey you...beer! How ya' doin'? You like it down there?" Man's a living legend. He wants to talk to his beer, he's entitled. He looked up after a few minutes. "Hey," he said, "guess what? I'm writing a book."

Why not? In 1982, books on music lagged behind books on cats, preppies and quick weight loss, but not by much. Everyone who wasn't designing exercise programs or MX missiles was either making an album or writing about one. As usual, a few lame archeologists went digging for the tomb of Jim Morrison or some other lost sultan, but the year's good books were good: *Hellfire*; *Black Beauty*; *White Heat*; *Girl Groups*; Dave Marsh's *Elvis*; *African Rhythm*; *African Sensibility*. The following is a listing of some of the year's best and worst.

Walk on Glass — Lisa Robinson (Newmarket Press \$14.95). A trashy, clumsily written novel about high stakes rock 'n' roll and the music industry of the mid-70s. The characters are barely one-dimensional and, when in doubt, Robinson simply name-drops for pages on end; but Robinson understands and loves three things: the star-making machinery, the backstage scene and the power of gossip. For all its faults, the book is luridly fascinating, and if the story isn't particularly convincing, the background is.

Jackson Browne: The Story of a Hold Out — Rich Wiseman (Dolphin/Doubleday \$10.95). Over-researched and under-informed. Wiseman has done all of his homework and has lots of facts and information, but no insight or imagination and the book reads like a devoted fan's love letter to his idol. Not only was

Wiseman unable to talk directly with Browne, but he was also stonewalled by David Lindley, David Geffen, Warren Zevon, Greg Copeland, Jon Landau, Joni Mitchell, Nico, Danny Kortchmar, Linda Ronstandt, Bonnie Raitt, Glenn Frey, J.D. Souther and just about anyone else that Browne has ever worked with. Most pertinent data: Jackson's first name is actually Clyde.



Keith Richards: Life as a Rolling Stone — Barbara Charone (Dolphin/Doubleday \$10.95). Aging socialite Richards talks about the traumas of getting his ear pierced and of just how hard it is to get "really first-rate" earrings these days. A gripping document.

The Roots Of The Blues: An African Search — Samuel Charters (Perigree \$5.95). A quiet, gracefully written book about Charter's travels through West Africa to try to find the connections between certain African folk musics and American blues. But it's also about the role of music in different societies, the way musicians see themselves in relation to the world, and about both the language and the silence that exists between different cultures. "I can tell you the history of everything, Africa, India, China, everything," a singer tells Charters. "But you must come when you have time to listen." There's quite a lot of

understanding and information in this small book but it's a slow and a careful book, come when you have time to listen.

Black Music of Two Worlds — John Storm Roberts (Morrow/Original Recordings \$9.95). An overwhelmingly ambitious, informative and scholarly book. Roberts offers an introduction to black music of South and Central America, the West Indies, the U.S. and Africa, throwing in more facts, comments, insights, comparisons and ideas than you can shake a talking drum at. Roberts is a bona fide fanatic, running amok amidst his scholarship, hurling unhinged bits of information, forgotten records, obscure styles and, most of all, his own unbridled enthusiasm at the unsuspecting reader. There is simply too much information for one book, but taken in small doses this is a gold mine. Long out of print, Roberts has recently reissued his book through Original Music (123 Congress Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201).

Death of a Rolling Stone: the Brian Jones Story — Mandy Aftel (Delilah \$8.95). Nobel prize winning physicist and beautician reveals that Brian Jones is still dead. Not quite as carefully written as the classic *I Ate Buddy Holly's Foot*, but still a genuine achievement. Profusely illustrated.

Bodies & Soul — Al Young (Creative Arts Book Co. \$6.95). "If, from the time I was born to the days of my departure, I could assemble and sample all the music that has affected my life—the sublime, the bewitching, the entertaining, the adequate, the functional, the tedious and the forgettable—I know that it would be the perfect way to relive this fleet, uncertain residence on Earth." That's how poet, novelist and screenwriter Al Young begins this series of musical memoirs, meditations on the music that has affected him the most, from Coleman Hawkins' "Body And Soul" and Stevie Wonder's "Fingertips Part 1" to Rossini's "Barber Of Seville," replaying bits of his life against an interior radio. Young is a gifted storyteller

IT'S MORE THAN ELECTRIC.

The original electric guitar was a chunky piece of solid wood with a magnetic pickup and a few wires, knobs and switches. Unfortunately, those simple wires, knobs and switches offered very little in terms of tonality. To get a different sound you had to get a different guitar.

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Rock Diary 1983 — Dave Fudger & Pete Silverton (Proteus Press \$10.95). A daily calendar, listing the birthdays of rock, blues and jazz musicians, odd information and blessed events. Clever, well laid-out, and very well documented (nice to know that *Astral Weeks* was originally released on my birthday)... similar to *The Rolling Stone Book of Days* but more comprehensive and more fun.

Miles Davis — Ian Carr (Morrow \$14.95). A meticulously researched, carefully written biography, especially strong on Davis' early work in New York and first important records. Carr works hard, but the effort shows and the book is frequently as dry as it is informative.

Hellfire: the Jerry Lee Lewis Story — Nick Tosches (Dell \$6.95). The jury is still out on whether this is a work of genius, the best book ever written on rock 'n' roll or simply a very good biography. My vote is for it being an extraordinarily good biography with occasional lapses into genius and just as occasional lapses into self-indulgence. Highly recommended.

Me & Big Joe — Michael Bloomfield (Re/Search Productions \$2.95). This monograph, written just before Bloomfield's death last year, is a labor of love, a series of reminiscences about playing and traveling around with Big Joe Williams in the early 1960s. Bloomfield is a wide-eyed fan and disciple, eagerly playing Flakey Foont to Big Joe's Mr. Natural, and his stories are wonderfully bawdy and absurd. Here's Bloomfield after a night of serious drinking:

"I woke up on a bed the next morning to find Joe standing over me. He had stayed up all night drinking and he was more than just drunk—he was on a bender. His nostrils were flared and his eyes were red and runny. A barbecue fork was in his hand and on it was a pig nose, and hot grease from the nose was dripping on my chest. He opened his mouth and his Schnaps breath hit me in a wave. 'Snoots, snoots!' he shouted, 'I promised you a barbecue, an' fine snoots is what we got!' My head was throbbing and my stomach was still queasy, and when I looked up and saw this horribly fat and greasy pig nose an inch from my face, I lurched out of bed and threw up again. Joe began to curse me. 'Man, you done puked all the damn night into the mornin' an' now you pukin' up again!'"

continued on page 93

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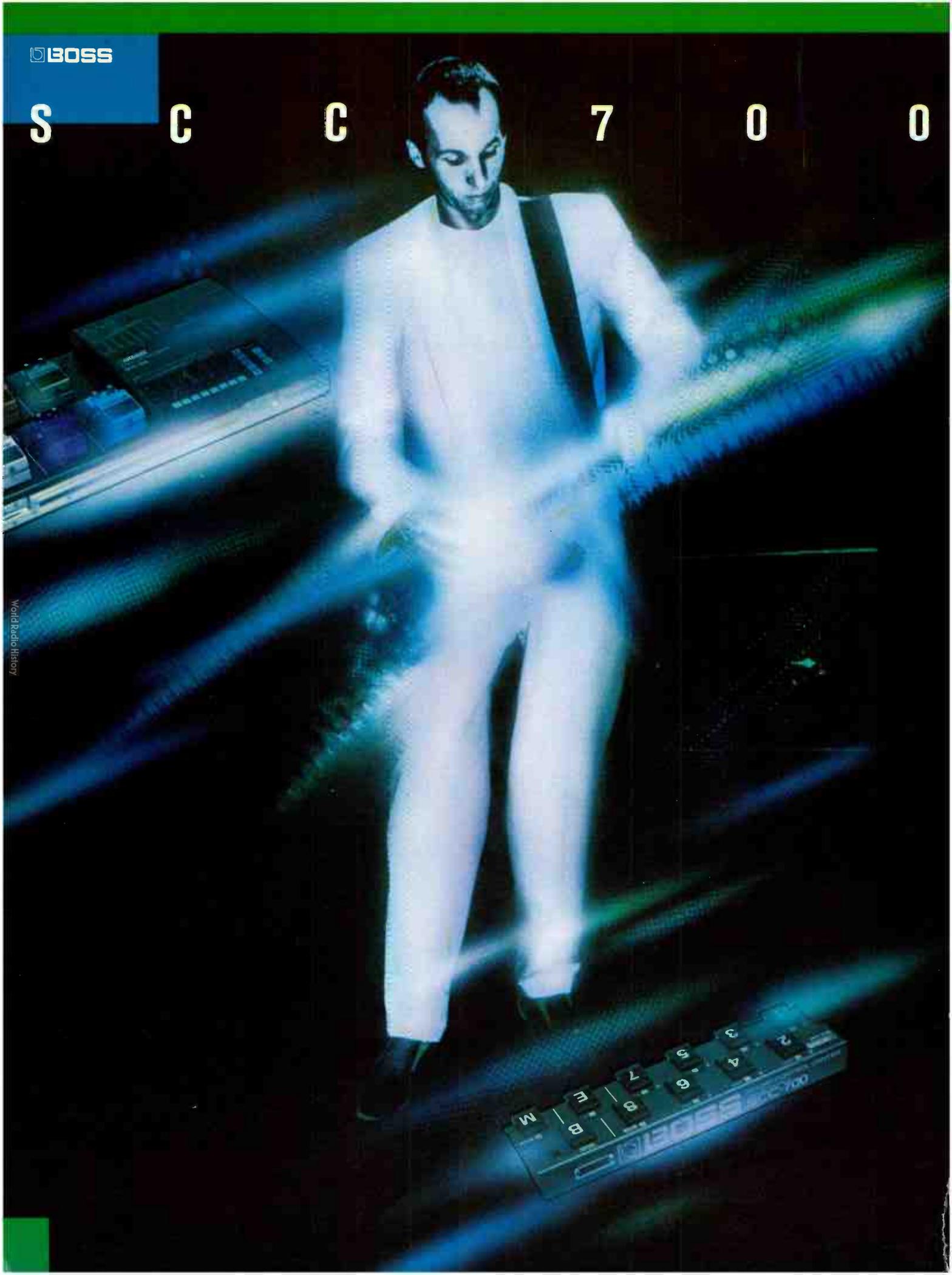
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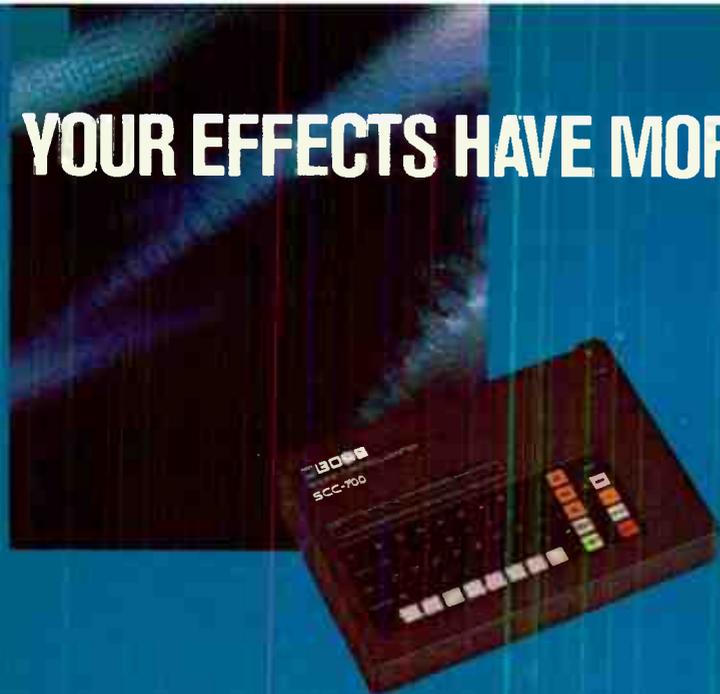
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The SCC-700 can control any kind of effects, from any manufacturer, rack-mount effects, pedal effects, rocker effects can all be programmed to turn on and off in any combination you can think of. The SCC-700 electrically disconnects and reconnects your effects for each patch, allowing effects combinations and changes that would be physically impossible to produce.

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There are three parts to the SCC-700 system, which can be purchased separately or together depending on your own needs. The first part is the SCC-700C Controller itself, which contains all that is needed to program the effects, and also supplies DC power to seven effects. The SCC-700F is a remote Foot Controller which

connects to the main unit by a multi-core connecting cord. The third part is the SCC-700B, which is a case designed to house up to seven compact effects and connect them to the SCC-700C.

The SCC-700C is the central programmer unit, and can be used by itself without any other components to program your effects. The inputs and outputs for each effect plug directly into the rear of the SCC-700C, and the effect is run in the "effect on" condition at all times. The programmer of the SCC-700C actually decides whether or not the effect is placed in the signal path.

Programming effects are accomplished simply by touching the switches on the SCC-700C in the order you want the effects to play. Each switch (A-G) corresponds to an effect. This operation can also be executed live on stage from the remote footswitch controller SCC-700F. In performance, touching only one button calls up the patch, exactly as you had programmed it.

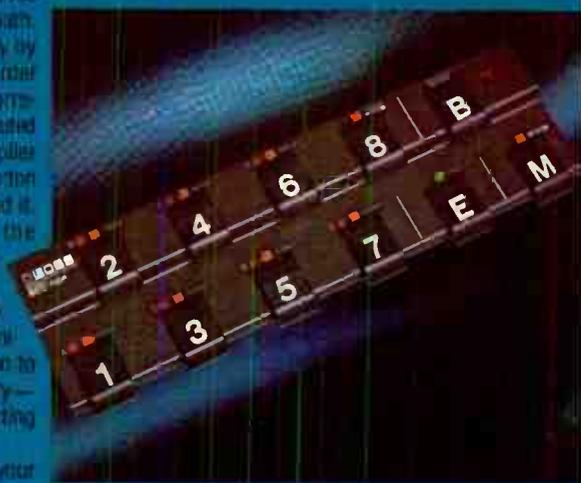
There are four modes of operation for the SCC-700C: Write—where patch programs are written into computer memory; Play—where patch programs are played by choosing the bank number (A, B, C, D) and the patch number (1-8); Monitor—where you can reference a patch combination to see what it is before you switch it in; and Modify—where you can add new effects to modify an existing patch.

Using the BOSS Sound Control Center allows all your effects to be kept together in a clean, organized fashion through the addition of either the SCC-700B Case, or the BOSS BC3-B Carrying Box. Your effects can now be kept at table-top height, where their controls can be easily changed and where they are less subject to abuse.

The SCC-700F is a remote footswitch-type controller for the SCC-700 System. With the SCC-700F it is possible to perform all the selection and writing functions of

the SCC-700 simply by pushing footswitches. The addition of this option to the SCC-700 is a powerful assist to the guitarist or bassist, who does not have his hands free to select programs on the main unit. LED readouts on the SCC-700F allow the guitarist to monitor his patch settings from right on stage.

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the

roches

Three Sides to Every Situation



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

BY GEOFFREY HIMES

at

times, the three Roche sisters seem blissfully oblivious to how the rest of the world operates. Take their clothes. Backstage at Washington's Wax Museum, Maggie Roche wears a green-sequined blouse and garish housewife slacks, while her sister Terre sports black disco pants and a red peasant blouse. Suzzy (rhymes with fuzzy) wears gold glitter basketball shoes, scarlet tights and a short, striped beach dress. When a reporter gingerly raises the question of their attire, though, Suzzy seems genuinely puzzled. "People

always ask us about the way we dress," she maintains, "and I never know what they're talking about. Sometimes I think I look perfectly normal, and people will say, 'Oh, you're so kooky.' These are just the clothes I always wear. You have to admit that sneakers are the most comfortable shoes."

This blithe attitude has often worked to the sisters' advantage. When they were still teenagers in the New Jersey suburbs, Maggie and Terre read that their hero, Paul Simon, was giving a songwriting class at NYU. Never mind that the class was only open to NYU students; never mind that even NYU students had to audition for the scant ten spaces (Melissa Manchester was one of the lucky ones), Maggie and Terre barged into the class and asked Simon to listen to their songs. "He said, 'Sure, come back next week and play your songs,'" Terre says, chuckling at her own naivete. "So we came back, played our five songs and he said we could join the class. Then he gave us a ride up to the George Washington bridge so we could catch our bus home. As we approached the bridge, 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' came on the radio. It

was so-o-o exciting. I was so nervous that when he asked my name, I couldn't remember."

Simon was, in fact, so taken with the two older sisters that he had them sing harmony on "Was A Sunny Day" (you can see them grinning from under a floppy hat inside the album *There Goes Rhymin' Simon*). Simon also helped them get a publishing contract and a record deal, and he even produced one song on Maggie and Terre Roche's 1975 album, *Seductive Reasoning* (Columbia). That's when the fairy tale ended, when the real world intruded roughly. Though the album was quite good (and is well worth hunting bargain bins for today), it was greeted with universal apathy.

"We always liked the way the record turned out," Terre claims. "It's what happened when the record was done that hurt. It was just blatantly obvious that the record company was doing a favor for Paul to sign us and that no one was into us or the record. We'd have meetings where they'd try to get us to dress differently and to make an image for us that would be somebody else. We did three dates. We flew to Denver to open for Tom Rush, and his manager said, 'Who are these people? We don't want these people.' We went to a college in California, and ten people showed up.

"We were humiliated. We wanted to get out of the whole situation. We had a friend in Hammond, Louisiana who was running a kung fu school. We gave up our apartment, and told the record company, 'We're not going to promote the record anymore; we're going away for a while.' This was two weeks after the record came out. It was generally felt that the record was our big break, and if we didn't do something about it, we'd be making a big mistake. Maggie wrote the 'Hammond Song' about the whole experience, about if you go away, forget it."

When the Roches reemerged on record four years later as a trio, "Hammond Song" was the highlight of the album, *The Roches* (Warner Bros.). Rather than trying to rationalize or justify her flight to Louisiana, Maggie presents both sides of the argument, with some verses presenting the parents' view ("We'll always love you, but that's not the



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point") and other verses presenting the daughters' side ("Why don't you face the fact, you old upstart: we fall apart.") So accurately does she present each side that the conflict transcends right and wrong and becomes a fateful, unavoidable collision between generations. The song ends with the parental admonition, "If you go down to Hammond, you'll never come back."

They came back, though, bolstered by the sisterly strength evident in the song's thick, twisting, three-part harmonies. Everything Maggie sang was immediately echoed and thus affirmed by her two sisters. It was as if they had learned that you can only live outside the world's usual rules if you have the right allies. As Terre sings, "Well, I went

down to Hammond/ I did as I pleased/ I ain't the only one/ Who's got this disease."

These strengths are more evident than ever on the Roches' new Warner Bros. album (their third as a trio): *Keep On Doing*. Musically, their vocal harmonies have a jazz sophistication as they are bunched at close, ever-changing intervals. Emotionally, the harmonies give the sense that every feeling is a shared one. The lyrics—full of puns and wicked wordplay—still try to faithfully represent both sides of every conflict. In a world where unsynthesized guitars are considered primitive, the three sisters stubbornly stick to austere arrangements of three voices and three acoustic guitars. On the new record, the

Roches are reunited with Robert Fripp, the producer of *The Roches*. Fripp adds an occasional humming guitar lead, but is mostly content to let the sisters record their unadorned stage arrangements in "audio verité."

Back at the Wax Museum, the Roches are performing "I Fell In Love," a high point of the new album. Terre's piercing soprano rains down over her stop-and-go guitar figure. She makes this personal admission to a man: "I knew there was something about you that I liked." Her sisters quickly support her with a resounding "Yeah!" in a triple-voiced triad chord. By the time Terre reaches the title line, her voice has risen to a vibrating falsetto; Maggie's husky alto is tracing a darting downward scat phrase and Suzzy's clean soprano has suffused through the background. The arrangement reflects how their experiences with falling in love are different but basically the same. As so often happens in the Roches' songs, an individual confession is expanded into a three-part harmony, thus transforming an intimate doubt into a communal affirmation. The Roches are their own antidote to the narcissism that afflicts so many singer/songwriters.

"In musically arranging things," Suzzy explains, "we like to approach a song from as many different points of view as possible, because a song can mean a lot of different things. Like in 'I Fell In Love,' that 'Yeah!' is a comment that if one person is thinking about the guy, there's probably a bunch more girls sitting around going, 'Yeah, you know, I feel the same way.' Or it could be one person's mind, with all the different voices going on in there."

"A lot of times," Terre adds, "I see our group as almost three parts of the same person. You have your high voice, your middle voice and your low voice. One of the exciting things that happens in performance is I'll hear Maggie's voice, and I'll get it confused with my own voice. I'll think, 'That's the way I feel now, even though my voice is saying something else.'"

"It's very important to collaborate successfully," Maggie agreed. "It's rewarding every time you can manage it. I hate to use the word 'share,' because it's so overused, but whenever you can share anything with someone else and not feel like you got ripped off, it's very exhilarating. That's what I get out of recording and performing. I hope that's what other people get out of it."

Just the same, Terre and Suzzy's "I Fell In Love" is not a simple valentine. Accompanying Terre's confession of love is a sharp criticism of the man's macho motorcycle posture that he only drops when he goes to visit his mom. Also included is the fear that she might lose him to a nearby "motorcycle blonde." The song ends on an ambivalent note as Terre sings, "I fell in love, "

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and her sisters answer, "You fell in what?" Sharing in the same rich ambiguity is Maggie's "Losing True," a chillingly detached look at loss and the new album's best song. Maggie carefully examines each aspect of her loss—agony, ache, anger, relief—as her two sisters closely parallel her long, sustained vowels and descending melodies with an elegant majesty. Instead of the expected bitterness or self-pity, there's a deadpan quality to the voices that removes the crutch of subjective emotions and forces one to confront loss.

"I think that would be something to look forward to," suggests Maggie, "to be able to regard loss without anger, to have enough clarity to understand it. I'm angry a lot, but I don't particularly like it. I'm a strong-willed person, and I don't like to be opposed. You get to a point in the cycle where you realize that you can't do anything about it. That's the point where the anger subsides, and you can begin to see clearly. That's what I'm looking for."

"The exciting thing about having three voices to work with," Terre ventures, "is obvious on a very personal song like 'Losing True.' You're obviously talking about something that's very painful, and yet you have all these different voices inside you dealing with that pain: the one that's going to get over it and the one that's not going to get over it. When I listen to those harmonies, I hear the dif-

ferent voices representing the different aspects of it."

"I think it's a question of survival," insists Maggie, "to be able to see the point of view of someone on the other side." One of her best songs, "Married Men" from *The Roches*, is a perfect example. It tackles the painful subject of extramarital affairs not as a sexual libertine, a forlorn victim or a bitter feminist, but as one who sees all too well the perspective of the husband, the mistress and the wife. "I don't think you can afford to be too one-sided," Maggie continues. "Then you start making mistakes, and you'll be defeated by something you didn't take into account. With three different voices, maybe we can bring out those different sides. It would be great if we did."

"The reason I can't get into a lot of music I hear," admits Suzy, "is you'll hear someone talking from a point of view that puts the other person as the bad guy. 'I'm so hurt,' they'll sing, or, 'I've been done wrong.' I've never been in a situation where someone has purposefully and for no reason done something evil. I've never been in a situation where there aren't two sides to the story, or more than two different sides. I mean, you can be angry at someone, but that's not where the song should come from. It should be balanced lyrically as well as musically. It may not be as emotionally satisfying to have that, but it's really more truthful, I think."

"The danger of the two-sided approach," Maggie concedes, "is that you might wind up with just total indecision where you can't make a move, which is a problem. I'm not saying that a one-sided song can't be good, just look at a lot of Dylan songs. It's just a different thing. There certainly are a lot more of them. Maybe we're just trying to balance things out."

One of the unrecorded songs that the sisters sing in concert is "Clothesline Saga" from Bob Dylan's *Basement Tapes*. It is an atypical Dylan song: a deadpan, Zen look at two neighbors chatting amiably about the world's problems as they take the wash off the line. "That's my favorite song in the world," Suzy exclaims. "I feel it describes life perfectly. It has that quality of not making judgments; it just *is*. That's the way things seem to me: they just *are*. It's funny. A lot of our songs have that effect of just saying the way that it is without emotion almost. It has this weird haunting effect. It's like when someone's mad at you, if they scream at you it's easier to take than if they're totally calm."

After their debacle with Columbia Records, Maggie and Terre began what Terre calls "Maggie's march to the sea" with a scorched earth policy. Maggie gathered up all her tapes and notebooks and dramatically threw them down the incinerator of their Greenwich Village



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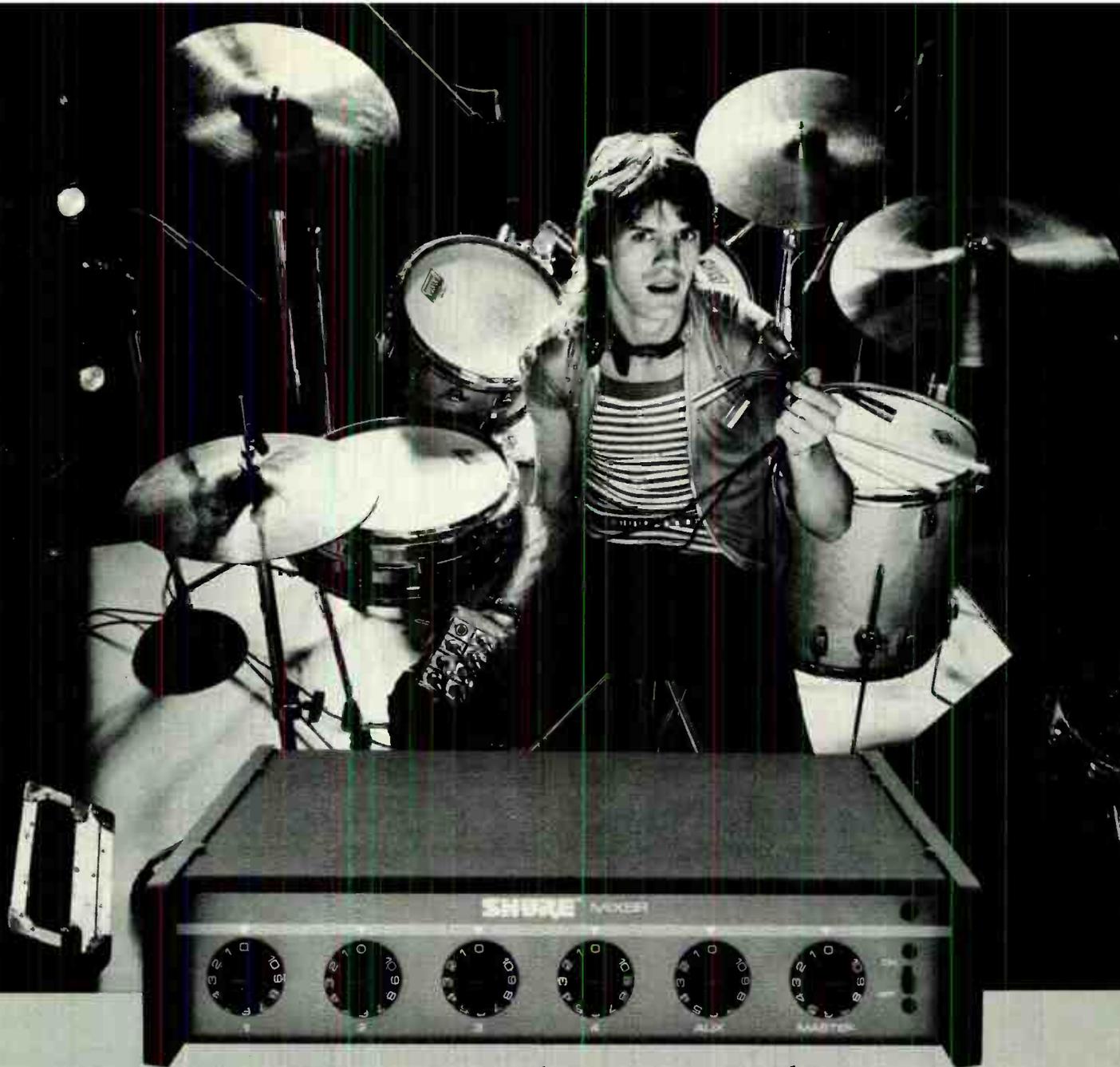
apartment. (Terre now issues this plea: if anyone out there has surviving tapes of the duo's early songs, please send them to her, care of Warner Bros.) In Louisiana, they served coffee to state troopers in the local diner. Between shifts they practiced their side kicks at the kung fu temple. Eventually they tired of being Yankee salts around a lot of Southern crackers and made their way back to New York, where they took day jobs, still dubious about a music career.

It was their little sister, who had gone to drama school, who put them back on track. "I had always been very intimidated by their abilities," Suzzy reveals, "because I couldn't play or sing that well, and I was substantially younger than both of them. (Maggie is now thirty, Terre is twenty-nine and Suzzy is twenty-six.) I sang a little with them, but I was more of an audience. But going to college had built my confidence up, and I hadn't gone through that awful experience with the record. I had watched it happen to them, and my anger at it was so deeply implanted, I was sure it wasn't going to happen to me. I was young.

"I kept saying to them, 'Let's do something here; we could do something with this. In a way, I was a catalyst just by my sheer enthusiasm. It was getting to be Christmas time, and we'd always done carols all our lives. The difference was that this time we decided to work out three different parts and get it really right.'" So the three of them would pop up on a snowy street corner in the West Village, with floppy felt hat in hand, and burst out with a jazz-arranged version of "Silent Night" until the cops came and chased them away. They'd slip around the corner and start again in the subway station. It was "hit-and-run, guerrilla Christmas caroling," says Terre. The "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah* was always the favorite, and they kept it for their later nightclub shows and finally recorded it on *Keep On Doing*. It sounds more like Lambert, Hendricks & Ross than the St. Patrick's Cathedral Choir.

By 1976, the famous Greenwich Village folk scene had withered up and blown away. The Roches were ten years too late. "In some ways, it was a good thing," Maggie notes. "When you show up ten years too late, you get to be in on the ground floor of the next thing, rather than the tail end of the last thing. Folk City got rolling again, so you could work." The three sisters developed a devoted coterie of followers. One of them was Karen Berg, A&R director at Warner Bros., who signed them to a record contract. Another was Robert Fripp, who asked to produce their first album. *The Roches* made many ten-best lists in 1979.

In 1980, the Roches released *Nurds* with a three-piece rhythm section and
continued on page 90



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VENI, VIDEO, VICI

IT CAME, WE SAW, WE BOUGHT.

BY LAURA FOTI

After years of reading about the music-video revolution, by now you've probably done one of two things: (a) decided the whole thing is another contrived scheme to separate you from your dwindling cash, or (b) plugged into the video party by purchasing a videocassette recorder (VCR), or a videodisc player, or at least hot-wired your TV with cable. If you have not yet done either (a) or (b), this first installment of Video Short Takes will offer a brief consumer guide to the four types of video hardware presently available. If you have already bought in, you can fast forward ahead to the software portion of our program, including regular reviews of the latest, the greatest and the dreck of music video. If you have already given up on the music-video revolution, have fun watching the *Solid Gold* dancers and a host of makeup and jeans commercials as the visual accompaniment to your music, and we'll see you at the Smithsonian.

Hardware Wars

Basically, you must first decide between two types of video players, using either

cassettes or discs, and then you must choose again between two types of each, a total of four separate, non-compatible formats. In the beginning, there were videocassette recorders, specifically the Beta, designed by Sony, followed by the Video Home System (VHS), developed by JVC. (A JVC VHS VCR?!) Both formats are available in stereo versions from various manufacturers, which you should insist on for music; stereo is naturally more expensive than mono, but offers all kinds of luxury special features that add to convenience and enjoyment.

Choosing between the Sony and the JVC is not easy; according to *Consumer Reports*, the technological level of both is relatively equal. But the Beta system has lost its early lead in recent years, a trend which may prove irreversible. Sony and its licensees—Sanyo, Toshiba and Zenith—have fought back with improved stereo machinery (including quad sound), but VHS's lead is still evident to Sony Beta owners who are having some problems finding software, since retailers are reticent to keep product in stock that does not move quickly. Beta is estimated to have less than twenty percent of the home vid market, and that share is still declining.

The basic videodisc format plays a grooved disc, called a Capacitance Electronic Disc (CED), with a stylus. Sound familiar? It's a variation on the system that's been playing (and wearing out) your audio records for decades. The CED players were developed by RCA and are now available from Zenith, Radio Shack, Hitachi, Sanyo and others; in a stereo model, they cost about \$500.

Laser disc players, called LaserVision or LV by patent holders Philips and MCA, add a space-age wrinkle to CED by making the disc silvery and indestructible and use a laser beam as a stylus. The LVs, made by Magnavox, Pioneer and others, have clearer pictures, more features, greater ease of operation and, sur-



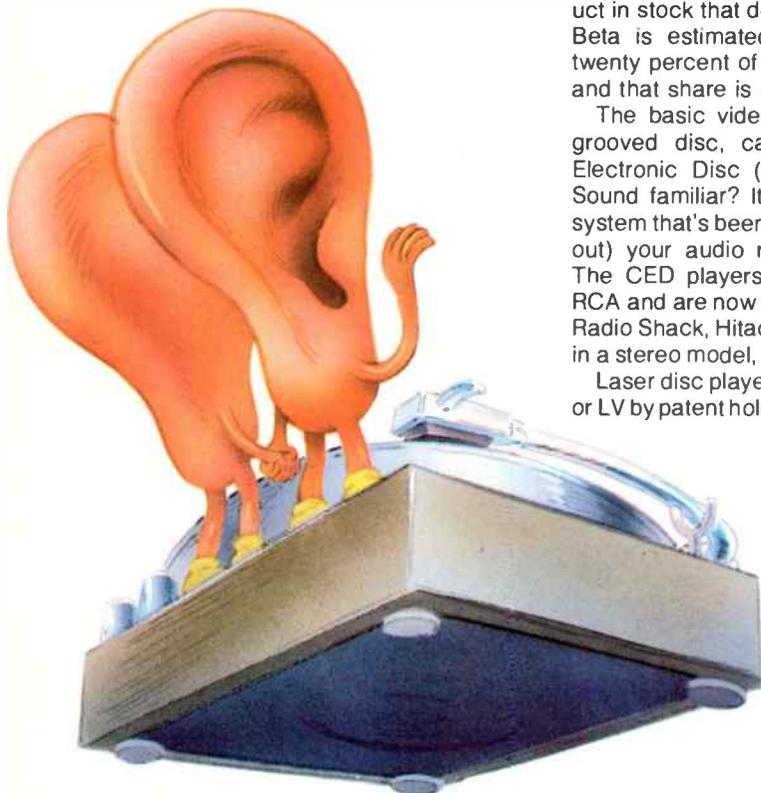
prise, a bigger price tag, \$750. For all their clarity, though, videodisc players do not allow recording off your TV, a necessity for the early riser who can't otherwise see late night rock and comedy shows. VCRs also have a distinct advantage in that practically every movie ever made can be bought on videocassette, but discs lag behind in numbers of titles available. Moreover, many programs, particularly music ones, are available only in one disc format. Sooner or later, though, most programs will find their way into all formats.

New Music Software

Over the past few years, the amount of one- and two-hour music programming for home video use has been increasing rapidly. One of the reasons is that software companies recognize they must offer more than movies to attract buyers. After all, how many times can one watch the average movie? But music... aah, now *that* bears repeating. And the manufacturers want you to buy, not rent.

So far, the majority of producer/directors who have stepped forward to meet the music video challenge have done so by taping a straight concert performance, or by adding overblown, somewhat ridiculous scenes. Often the visuals are a direct literal translation of the lyric. The music may bear repeating, but the video often doesn't.

All that seems to be changing, how-



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The Drumulator's enhanced programmability gives you precise digital control over virtually every musical parameter. With its programmable mixer you can store and instantly recall a completely different mix for each rhythm track that you create. The tempo of each track can also be programmed, along with tempo changes within the track.

The Drumulator's unique programmable dynamics offer expressive capabilities never before possible with an electronic drum machine. You have access to normal and accented versions of every sound, with the accent levels independently programmable for each drum, cymbal, and percussion instrument. What's more, these accent levels can be programmed differently for each song and, like the mix, stored in memory for instant recall.

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Add to all these features the ability to sync to tape or other sequencers, assignable play buttons, external triggering from drum synthesizer pads, and individual channel outputs, and you have a digital drum computer that would be an amazing value at \$1990.00. But what's even more amazing is that for \$1990.00 you would get something that you probably wouldn't expect.

Two Drumulators.

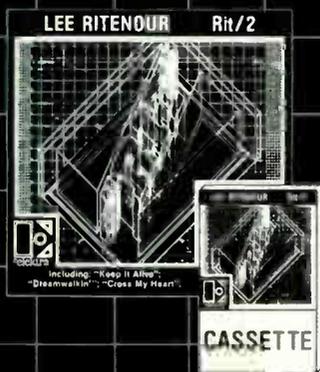
The Drumulator's suggested list price in the United States is \$995.00.

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ever. Every month sees several new music titles, and, for the most part, the quality is definitely improving. Titles such as *The Compleat Beatles*, *Elton John: Visions* and *The Tubes Video* take a step beyond the norm. Movies such as *Hair*, *Gimme Shelter*, *Woodstock*, *Tommy*, *The Kids Are Alright*, *Sympathy for the Devil*, *Rust Never Sleeps* and *Paul McCartney & Wings Rockshow* are also available.

Elsewhere on the music video front, Sony, which just introduced its first stereo Betamax VCR, looked at MTV's success and decided to launch its new hardware with a complement of music programming to make it even more appealing. Hoping to boost the Beta format's sagging market share, Sony developed the concept of the "video single"—two or three songs with video accompaniment for between ten and twenty dollars. Artists available include Elton John (selections from *Visions*, reviewed in its totality below), Rod Stewart, Duran Duran and Scottish video artist Jesse Rae.

And now, the meat and potatoes of our program, which will become a regular feature in *Musician*: reviews of commercially available rock videos.

The Beatles — *The Compleat Beatles* (MGM/UA Home Video); available in Beta (mono), VHS (stereo), LV (stereo) and CED (stereo) formats; 2 hours.

Here it is, everything you always wanted to know about the Beatles but were afraid to ask for on video. This program is more than simply a documentary of a musical group. It traces the group's development against a beautifully defined background of the 60s, capturing the feel of the times. And naturally, there's the music: more than fifty Beatles songs are represented, as well as a couple dozen by other artists of that era.

Editing is superb, and the program moves smoothly from background on group members' childhoods, their first instruments, their musical influences, through the early, struggling days and onto the era of Beatlemania. The early footage is particularly insightful. In fact, footage throughout the program is extremely rare, and program developers MGM/UA and Delilah Films obviously went to great lengths to get a wide variety of never-seen-before segments.

One note about formats: for a program of this type, the LV (laser videodisc) format is absolutely ideal. It allows you to skip around the disc and find exactly the moment you seek. And, although *The Compleat Beatles* works as a total program from beginning to end, individual segments are bound to become favorites. No music video library should be without this superb work. — *Laura Foti*

Elton John — *Elton John: Visions*

(Embassy Home Entertainment); available in Beta (mono) and VHS (stereo) formats; 45 minutes.

Russell Mulcahy, the current "boy wonder" of rock video directors, was handed a plum assignment with this one: video to illustrate songs from Elton John's 1981 album *The Fox*. The tunes on this album all boast strong imagery, which had begged to be realized on the screen.

On *The Fox*—and on *Visions*—John and co-composers Gary Osborne, Bernie Taupin and Tom Robinson tackle such subjects as a conscienceless gossip columnist, garden-variety fascists and the budding love of one schoolboy for another. The melodies and lyrics function beautifully as a soundtrack for a series of lush and cleverly executed scenarios.

The clip illustrating "Elton's Song," a bittersweet tale of unrequited love set in the ivied halls of a British public school, shows a serious freckle-faced lad longing for an older schoolboy. The stately British setting and understatement of the visual narrative enhance the music's simple eloquence.

For "Heels Of The Wind," a rollicking upbeat roll in bucolia, Mulcahy abandons his usual misty, surreal signature and gives us pure primary colored pop art. Cartoon balloons surround the characters' dialogue and arrows are superimposed on the action to emphasize props such as home-baked apple pies and John's gingham-dressed lady love.

Those two clips and others bear repeated viewings: "Fascist Faces" and "My Heart's In The Right Place," where tarantulas and snakes are the external manifestations of a venomous gossip's internal life.

Tying the whole package together is an unusual ingredient: a beautiful young man, shown between clips picking up shattered pieces, which one may assume are the pieces of Elton John's life. As he picks up each fragment, a new chroma-keyed form, and a new clip, takes life. An ambitious and successful video project. — *Pat Wadsley*

Joni Mitchell — *Shadows And Light* (Pioneer Artists); available in LV (stereo) format; 58 minutes.

This is basically a film of Mitchell's 1980 concert in Santa Barbara, California, in which she was backed by an all-star band including Jaco Pastorius, Pat Metheny and the Persuasions. The top tracks include "Coyote," "Raised On Robbery," "Free Man In Paris," "In France They Kiss On Main Street," "Furry Sings The Blues," "The High And The Mighty" and "Dry Cleaner From Des Moines."

While most of the program is straight-ahead concert footage, director Joni Mitchell did unleash her multimedia sensibilities on several songs, resulting



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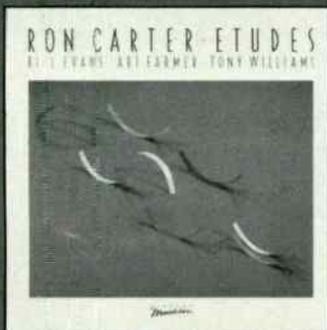
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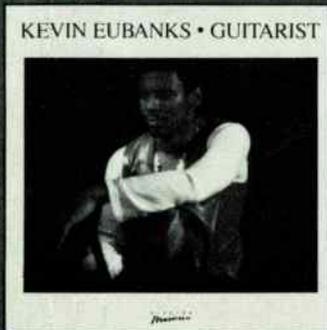
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RON CARTER/ETUDES 60214
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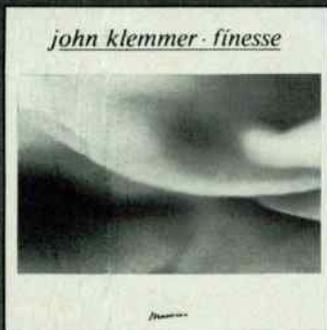
CHICK COREA/AGAIN & AGAIN (THE JOBURG SESSIONS) 60167
Chick's current touring quartet features Steve Kujala on flute, Don Alias on percussion, Carlos Benavent on bass and Tom Brechtlein on drums. This fine band recorded a fascinating studio album while on tour in South Africa including "Again & Again," "Twang" and "Quartet #3."



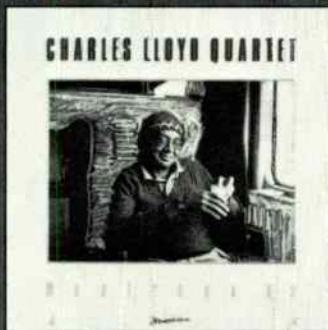
KEVIN EUBANKS/GUITARIST 60213
The solo debut of blazing 24-year-old virtuoso, Kevin Eubanks on both electric and acoustic guitar. Features Roy Haynes, Robin Eubanks, Ronnie Burrage and others on such tunes as "Innervisions," "Novice Bounce" and "Evidence."



BILL EVANS/THE PARIS CONCERT, EDITION ONE 60184
Never-before-released performances of Bill at the peak of his genius with Joe LaBarbera on drums and Marc Johnson on bass. "My Romance," "Up With The Lark," and "I Love You Porgy" are some of the highlights of Bill's triumphant 1979 Paris concert.

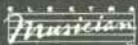


JOHN KLEMMER/FINESSE 60197
A beautiful audiophile recording of original compositions by saxophone wizard Klemmer and his Open Skies group featuring Roy McCurdy on drums, Bob Magnusson on bass, Russel Ferrante on keyboards and Steve Forman on percussion.



CHARLES LLOYD QUARTET/MONTREUX '82 60220
The return of a contemporary saxophone legend in the performance that was THE highlight of the '82 Montreux Festival. Features the brilliant young pianist Michel Petruccianni, Sun Ship on drums and Paule Danielsson on bass for superb concert playing of "The Forest Flower," "The Call," "Wind In The Trees" and others.

"PRESENTING OUR 'DECADENT' NEW RELEASE FOR JANUARY 1983." Musically, Bruce Lundvall



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in some of the best video work we've seen to date. The treatment of "Amelia," her ode to aviator Amelia Earhart, is particularly stunning, as Joni delicately interweaves old newsreel footage with the concert shots. Such directorial skills bode well for her future in the video medium; in fact, Joni Mitchell may yet become one of rock's first great audio-visual poets. You mean you're surprised? — *Jim McCullaugh*

Bob Welch — *Bob Welch And Friends: Live From The Roxy* (RCA VideoDiscs); available in CED (stereo) format; 1 hour.

The liner notes call this 1981 Bob Welch concert "one of the major rock events of the year, which had been hyped for weeks in the Hollywood trade papers." Well, hyped it was, but now that the results are in, they can only be called disappointing.

Welch is joined onstage at various times by the Mac's Mick Fleetwood, Christine & John McVie and Stevie Nicks (whose lead vocal on "Gold Dust Woman" is the best track here), Carmine Appice and Heart's Ann Wilson. These names are drawing cards and do aid the songs they assist on, but there seems to be an insufferable air of self-consciousness surrounding the proceedings and the musicianship never becomes inspired.

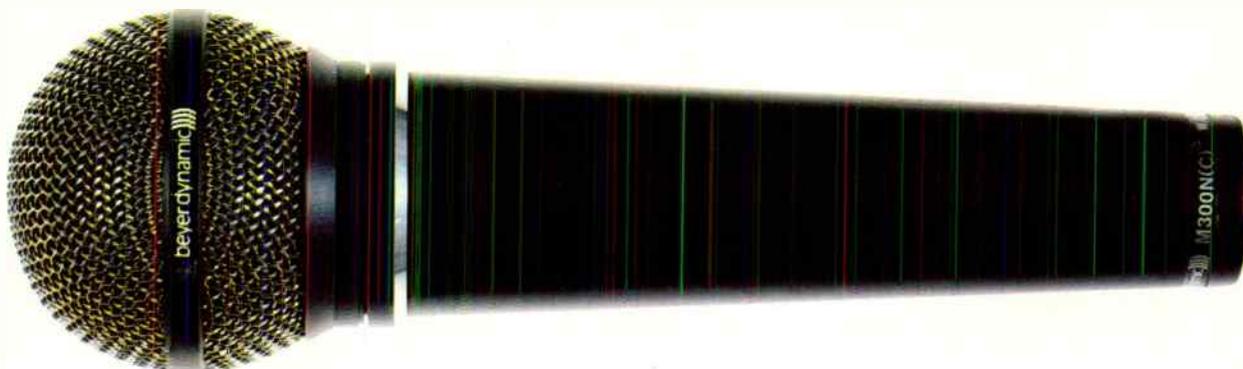
The choicest cuts include "Hypnotized," "Sentimental Lady," "Ebony Eyes," "Blues In A" and "Bend Me Shake Me," all strong musically but rather dull visually. Ego also makes an unwelcome appearance in an interview segment, as Welch discusses his career in embarrassingly glowing terms and plays up the fact that his co-stars are there only as his "friends." All in all, there is some good music here, but an hour's worth of close-ups of Bob Welch's face is a bit much to handle. — *Laura Foti*

Grover Washington, Jr. — *In Concert* (Pioneer Artists); available in LV (stereo) format; 53 minutes.

Native Philadelphian Grover Washington, Jr. returns to play before an enthusiastic hometown crowd. The setting is intimate and the lighting is living room perfect. Grover plays only a relatively small sampling of his ample catalog: "Winelight," "Come Morning," "Let It Flow," "Just The Two Of Us" and a few others. Each tune is long, and no solos are unnaturally clipped for brevity.

Outstanding is the presentation of "Let It Flow," visually embellished by scenes of 76er basketball great "Dr." Julius Erving running gazelle-like across the Spectrum floor, slam-dunking, making twisting layups and guiding his agile body through startling gymnastic contortions. This is perfect pop-jazz ballet. A very dynamic program from an artist whose LPs are often a shade too mellow. — *Jim McCullaugh* ☐

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Microphones like the Shure SM58 have been described as industry "traditions"* based on a variety of reasons including durability and a practical ball-end design. But now there are new vocal mics offering many of these standard features in addition to updated design approaches with certain advantages implicit in the newer technology.

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FACES

PSYCHEDELIC FURS

Richard Butler stalks to his microphone, a vision in beige. While the other six Psychedelic Furs take their places decked out in the standard postpunk mufti, ranging from guitarist Ron Ashton's new romantic gypsy getup to cellist Anne Sheldon's Nico-black dress and stockings, Butler comes out in an imitation Burberry trench coat, matching double-breasted suit, red ballet slippers, nearly opaque sunglasses, elaborately unkempt hair and an expression that's equal parts lordly disdain and punkish arrogance. Slinging his arm rakishly over the mike stand, Butler smiles wickedly at the expectant horde, who, only seconds into the furious roar of "Into You Like A Train," are already screaming their approval.

It's a star's entrance, and Butler makes the most of it. With just three albums under their belts, the Psychedelic Furs have already risen to a level of cultish popularity reminiscent of the *Sirens*-era Roxy Music, and show every indication of continuing their upward trajectory. The fans assembled for this show at New York's Ritz are perhaps a little more rabid than most, but not by much. The PsyFurs' blend of punkish guitar drones and a four-on-the-floor dance pulse was

tailor-made for America's under-factionalized new wave audience, bringing in listeners from both the hard-core and dance-rock camps.

Tonight at the Ritz, however, Richard Butler seems to be the band's most outstanding hook. Although his voice, a dark rasping tenor that sounds like Jeremy Irons after ten years of chain-smoking Camels, has been compared to both David Bowie and John Lydon's, it's his physical presence that most deserves such comparison. Like Bowie, there is an elegant hauteur to his stage movement, as well as a purposeful sexual ambiguity; like Lydon, however, Butler is not above flaunting these qualities or his audience's expectations of them. To put it bluntly, he is an incorrigible tease.

Not that the assembled multitude wasn't eager to be teased. Once the droning pulse of "Into You Like A Train" had drawn the crowd's energies into its wake, the PsyFurs did a remarkable job of pacing the fans. The set was arranged in a slow acceleration, with slightly plodding versions of "President Gas" and "Pretty In Pink" feeding into more exuberant versions of "Dumb Waiters" and "Danger," until the band barreled headlong through "Mr. Jones" and "Forever Now." Yet the snowbaling momentum wasn't

The Psychedelic Furs



Devo

simply the result of a well-planned set. It followed an organic, almost irrational pattern of growth. Part of this was no doubt due to the curious version of stage sound the PsyFurs practice, an almost amorphous roar that manages to single out a few pertinent instrumental details at a time while keeping the rest of the mix neck-deep in noise.

As the music pulled and prodded, Richard Butler continued to flirt, falling into the audience, kissing hands, even miming masturbation with his hand-held mike at the close of "Only You & I."

Unfortunately, Butler has yet to develop the knack of guessing just how far he can incite an audience before being unable to pull back, and the two-song encore almost ended in disaster because of it. After a breathlessly savage "Imitation Of Christ," the PsyFurs charged into "India," again with the assistance of John Cale. Midway through, Butler descended onto the dance floor to soak up the adulation, and instead nearly got raped by the voracious fans. One woman kissed him with such intensity that it looked as if she wanted to remove his esophagus with her tongue, while another gentleman seized the microphone and briefly serenaded the rest of us. No sooner did Butler pull himself out (with the aid of a couple of security guards) than brother Tim did a repeat on the other side of the stage. Obviously less than pleased by his reception, Richard Butler kicked some klieg lights into his monitors and stormed offstage.

Too bad. The Psychedelic Furs could well develop into one of the most exciting live acts in rock; they could also come to a fairly unpleasant end as a live act, if they continue as they did at the Ritz. Perhaps what they need most is for someone to explain to Butler just what his enormous charisma can do. Until then, the PsyFurs will be as likely to frustrate their fans as elate them. — J.D. Considine

DEVO

Contrary to the prevailing opinion, when these five Akron androids pose

the rhetorical question, "Are we not men?," they don't mean, "We are not men," but simply, "We are Devo," and almost incidentally, "We are men, too." This random thought occurred to me about midway through Devo's hypnotic technoset at New York's Palladium, shortly after singer Mark Mothersbaugh suddenly appeared in the theater's balcony, sliding down a rope and straddling over the bemused audience of Devotees to get back onstage. Only a rock band very secure in the basic good-naturedness of its fans would ever attempt such a brave gesture of contact. Climbing on the seats, Mothersbaugh shoved his cordless mike into the sea of humanity. "Are we not men?" he asked. "We are Devo," came the response. As his alter-ego, the Boogie Boy might have put it in his squeaky whine, "We're all Devo!"

For their current tour, Devo have finally figured out how to integrate their well-documented video expertise into the live performance. The first half of the show is a meticulously synchronized set-piece featuring songs from their new album, *Oh, No! It's Devo*, juxtaposed against a huge video screen with an array of computer graphics and typically Devo images. The members of the band interact with the action on the screen, creating a multimedia "Is it live or is it Memorex" effect that rivals Laurie Anderson on the one hand, and *Beatlemania* on the other. Video may be an already over-rated tool and futurism might not be everyone's idea of where rock 'n' roll should be headed, but Devo's development in this area is anything but devolutionary.

Devo's nursery rhyme infantilism, which comes out in child's play songs like "Peek-A-Boo" and "Jocko Homo," is not all cynical calculation, either. The group's fans include a goodly portion of sub-teens, who didn't seem to mind one bit the Freudian graphic of a pole entering a doughnut which accompanied "That's Good." Instead of reading the song as an ode to the "Big O," the kids ignored the sexual implications and grooved

on the pure kinetics of it all.

After the dazzling video/live display, the group returned to the stage with minimal apparatus to show that, after all, Devo's just another rock band, albeit with funny costumes. While the first half featured an all-synthesizer lineup with supplementary pre-recorded tapes, Devo II showed off guitarist Bob Mothersbaugh's heavy metal histrionics and Alan Myers' precision drumbeat. Old faves like "Girl U Want," "Spud Patrol" and "Uncontrollable Urge" were given the kind of workouts that prove Devo is one of the few bands that can combine synthetics with honest-to-goodness rock 'n' roll.

And, while some may quarrel with the band's refusal to let down their guard and be regular guys, few realize that the group is composed at its core of two pairs of brothers, so that their rallying cry, "We are Devo!" could just as easily be "We are Familiee!" As the Boogie Boy bids us adieu with the mournful "Beautiful World," he tells the crowd, "It's a beautiful world for you, but not for me." You think these spudboys enjoy dressing up everyday as if it were Halloween and duplicating their shtick every night like robots? "We must repeat," they once told us; it's their biological destiny to entertain while things deteriorate steadily. But Devo's not making fun of or condescending to the audience. By letting us in on the joke, they merely emphasize our similarities and allow participation in the ritual. "We're all Devo" means nothing less than "We're all human," with the added fillip of an elaborate sense of humor. — Roy Trakin

R. SHANNON JACKSON

I once thought that Ronald Shannon Jackson & the Decoding Society would become the Art Ensemble of Chicago of the 80s, because, like the AEC, the Decoding Society strives to create eclectic, essentially populist and wry music. But, after a year of transitions and streamlining, Shannon Jackson's ambitious concept is manifesting itself with a disappointing lack of clarity. The Decoding Society's sound is a contrapuntal melange of folk and popular melodies—anthems, Eastern drones, R&B shouts, black electro-pop and delta barnyard shuffles—layered over African march and ferocious funk rhythms and infused with the energy of the Coltrane/Taylor/Coleman/Ayler avant-garde. This, combined with new technology (such as synthesized guitar, fretless bass and echoplex) and a bewildering ability to switch tempos, splicing rather than dovetailing distinct passages, gives the Decoding Society the potential to produce a futuristic jazz that is trans-cultural and trans-historical.

Although this synthesis has improved on each of the three Decoding Society albums, their concert at New York's Public Theatre in late October was an inconsistent hodgepodge, more flash than content. The arrange-

DEBORAH FEINGOLD



Ronald Shannon Jackson

ments were tight, with mournful horn lines by Zane Massey and Henry Scott suspended over the busy rhythms of Jackson and guitarist Vernon Reid and bassists Melvin Gibbs and Bruce Johnson, which were in turn punctuated by Massey and Scott's showy shrieks. But the music rarely breathed outside this ensemble context. Neither Massey nor Scott adequately developed independent melodic motives to contrast their enthusiastic but emotionally shallow unison riffs. Consequently, the rhythm section dominated, and with Jackson coming down off the cymbals they swung with the distinctive heaviness of a Chick Webb-meets-African drum ensemble boogie-woogie. On several occasions, the rhythm section smothered the horns with heavy funk vamps that sounded like early Grand Funk or Mountain.

The greatest problem Jackson faced at the Public Theatre was the lack of good solos. Only Reid, with fast-fingered bluesy runs and stuttered note placement, offered convincing solos on "Man Dance" and "Spanking." His trebly chords and slurs and barjo provided levity and humor to "Iola" and "Dancers of Joy." Trumpeter Scott, who has grown more confident in recent months, produced a haunting *cappella* Milesian incantation on the sultry "August Nights." Unfortunately Massey's best reed work was little more than repetition of Coltrane licks. Jackson, who is the most gifted soloist in the band, seemed satisfied to direct the rhythm section. His solos were restricted to short breaks that showcased his most physical, though not necessarily most inspired, playing. All too often, the band resorted to ready-mades rather than making fresh use of vernacular sounds and rhythms, a technique responsible for the emotional depth, lyricism and arresting harmonic/melodic/rhythmic fusion of their previous work. The result was a cluttered performance that was neither intriguingly arcane as the AEC, as passionate as Miles or Ulmer, nor as melancholic or enjoyable as Coleman. — Don Palmer

RANK AND FILE

The last thing the world needs is another bunch of drugstore cowboys, a fact Rank and File recognizes even as it flirts with the image. One of them goes so far as to wear a huge sombrero-like thing, so it is with a disinterested shrug that many novices will decide to check out the band's club act. What they will hear will likely be something of a shock: the tall, dark bassist plays and sings more darkly than anyone could expect; the frisky blond guy jumps around a lot and riffs away like James Burton's illegitimate heir; and the rhythm guitarist and drummer lay down a hopalong two-beat you can set your watch to Rank and File is, it emerges, the first group in a dog's age to do this rocking country thing right.

Rank and File stakes out its territory as a modern country band in a fashion roughly analogous to Brave Combo and its weird take on polka, or REM and its intriguing version of melodic psychedelia. Sounding roughly like the Everly Brothers with a Johnny Cash backbeat and generous helpings of Lefty Frizell, Buck Owens, Moby Grape, Merle Haggard and even the Beach Boys thrown in, Rank and File rejects modernist pretensions while recognizing that modernity itself is inescapable.

And for all that, Rank and File is terrific fun. The aforementioned backbeat is endlessly conceivable, and it anchors a richly exciting live sound. Perhaps more unusual is that the band is fronted by two brothers, Tony and Chip Kinman; they sing at different ends of the scale, and they write in styles complementary to each other. A typical Rank and File set at Raul's, Austin's original punk bar, balances cheery resignation with brash chord changes and linear hooks; on *Sundown*, there are good laughs to be had from "I Don't Go Out Much Anymore," "Amanda Ruth" or "I Went Walking," while "Conductor" sets stoic wit against furious music. Only "Coyote," a wrathful drama about a young Mexican left in the desert by the man who

smuggled him over the border, serves its tragedy straight.

Oddly and appropriately enough, the group itself started in the midst of a scene no one associated with country music—West Coast punk. "Here was a scene that had exhausted its hard rock basis, so it started drawing on reggae, rockabilly, African rhythms, the avant-garde, all of that—but for some reason this kind of music was a taboo thing," Tony Kinman offered by way of explaining the responses—ranging from "Huh?" to "Lord, no! Not country rock again!"—that first greeted Rank and File.

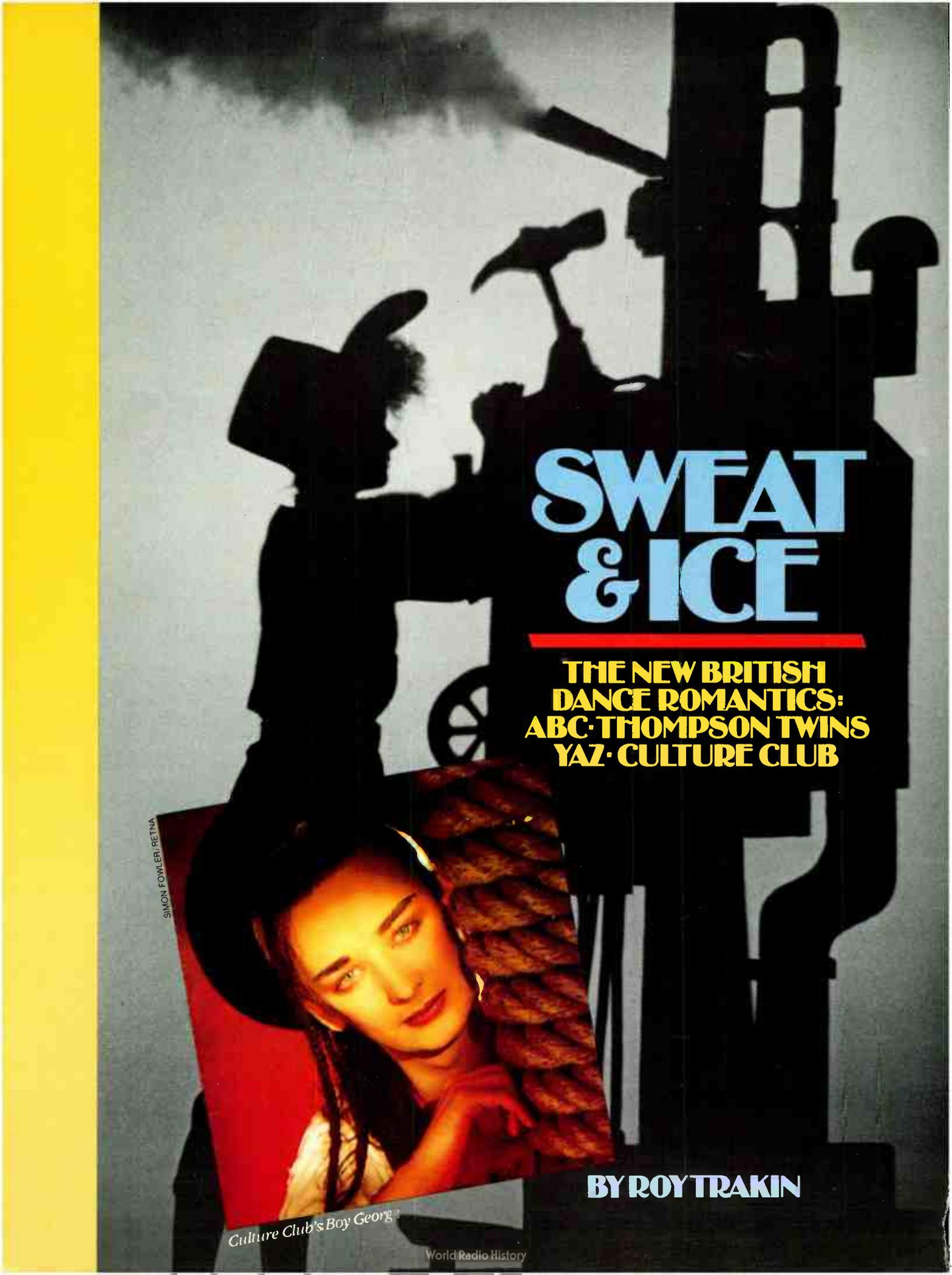
"People had their noses so high in the air trying to sniff out trends that they missed was already around," the baritone Chip Kinman concluded. What was already around for Tony and Chip was an affection for country music, and it was starting to outstrip the commitment to punk they shared from 1977-79 as two-thirds of the Dils, probably best known for "I Hate The Rich" (not to mention the impenetrable "Class War"). The Kinman brothers linked up with guitarist Alejandro Escovedo and other members of the bay area punk group the Nuns, to form Rank and File in 1978 as an informal alternative to doctrinaire punk.

Their adopted hometown of Austin had a reputation for a low cost of living and an abundance of venues. What Rank and File found was a booming Sun Belt city with an increasingly factionalized, nearly moribund music scene. They recruited a drummer—Jim Evans, formerly with STB and the Chicadesels—and the problem of which clique to play for was solved by playing for them all. By the time another year had passed, Rank and File was known to the customers of country joints, hippie bars, mainstream rock events and new wave clubs alike. When a confident sound materialized, so did a record contract with L.A.'s Slash Records. Rank and File has already managed to show that, as Tony Kinman put it, "You can break the mold in the weirdest way, so it can't be put back together." — Chris Walters

Rank and File



DEBORAH FEINGOLD



SWEAT & ICE

**THE NEW BRITISH
DANCE ROMANTICS:
ABC · THOMPSON TWINS
YAZ · CULTURE CLUB**

SIMON FOWLER/RETNA

BY ROY TRAKIN

Culture Club's Boy George



Blame it on the Beatles, Bowie and the bossa nova. The latest British invasion to storm American dance floors features a typically eccentric cast of characters: an androgynous cross between a white Rasta and a Hasidic Talmud student named Boy George (Culture Club), a blues-belting earth mother fronting a two-person synth outfit (Yaz), a straw-haired young crooner in gold lame'

who takes "Young Americans" to heart (ABC) and a multi-national dance band that boasts a front line linking England's industrial Northland to the South Pacific and the heart of Africa (the Thompson Twins).

"We keep getting lumped in with all these other up-and-coming British groups, and I keep saying the only thing we have in common is we're English," complains the Thompson Twins' Tom Bailey, whose "In The Name Of Love" is one of the songs storming stateside disco charts. Nonetheless, these Anglo bands share many similarities. ABC, Culture Club, Yaz and the Thompson Twins have all arrived on our shores via the new wave/dance club route, which includes striking images, 12-inch disco remixes and the obligatory videos. They are products of the marriage between punk and high tech, melding the extreme sensibility of the Sex Pistols to the disco-flash of Giorgio Moroder. Love and romance are inflated to the point where the beautiful meets the grotesque, with all the passion saved for technique rather than vulgar lust.

Musically, the bands make no attempts to hide their debts to American R&B, Caribbean rhythms and Third World thrust. Yaz and the Thompson Twins favor the minimal modernism of the synth and rhythm machine, while ABC and Culture Club use more conventional instrumentation to create lush, confident melodies on top of skilled human drummers. Despite these variations, though, all four bands avoid the pitfalls of aimless ethnic riffing by writing tuneful, well-constructed songs, many of which are presently infesting more creative American radio formats. And they all sing about finding true romance, but with a cheeky knowingness that borders on cynicism.

1

ABC SUBVERTS THE PREMISE

"I'm not a cynical person, but I'm often painted that way," says ABC's Martin Fry, a tall, thin, awkward twenty-four-year-old from Sheffield, an industrial town north of London. ABC hit big with "The Look Of Love" and "Poison Arrow," both glitzy, lush, over-the-top odes to the thrill of romance, complete with swelling strings, soaring vocal flights and a wide-screen gloss. The band is currently on tour in the States with a sixteen-piece orchestra, including a six-person string section, red velvet curtains and a pair of costume changes. Even the roadies are in tuxedos.

Of all these groups, ABC is the most ambitious. Their over-dubbed layers of sound create a larger than life pop tableau that puts Fry's lovelorn barker into Brechtian comic relief. The dense string arrangements saw away over the top while the rhythm section punches in with a variety of infectious signatures; disparate influences, from Motown and Tin Pan Alley to punk and Africa, clash, crash and reconcile. ABC's plan is audacious even if its cunning tends to short circuit any potential emotion.

"It's a mixture of spontaneous combustion and plan," explains Fry, whose parted wheat-colored hair hanging over his forehead makes him look like Bowie in his "Thin White Duke" days. "The formal and the informal. Even though we wear jackets and trousers onstage, we can still dance around like we're the J. Geils Band. We're fully aware that people look at our stage set and think 'Vegas' or 'Tom Jones.' But that's the gag. We take the basic premise and subvert it."

But for all ABC's hyper-romanticism and throwaway irony,

there is an earnestness about Martin Fry that has to do more with the idea of love than the thing itself.

"It's not parody," he insists. "It's not burlesque or camp. There's a mixture of fiction and fact in our songs. It's like having private emotional incidents in your life and making them public. As far as intimacy goes, anybody standing on a stage in front of 2,000 people knows it's an unnatural situation. Dwelling on the artifice is too journalistic. At the heart of it is the songs. When we started out, the idea of a love song was out of synch. So was having a polished, sophisticated sound. We wanted to go against the prevailing climate."

Agents provocateurs of romance, ABC: Martin Fry (top left), Stephen Singleton, Mark White and David Palmer.



2

CULTURE CLUB'S GENDER GAMES

Like Martin Fry, Culture Club's Boy George, with his long, plaited dreads, plucked eyebrows, lipstick and sweet Smokey Robinson falsetto, has always found himself on the fringe.

"People constantly think I've carefully planned what I'm doing," says the former George O'Dowd, a twenty-one-year-old who originally made a name for himself as Mad George in London pop circles by dressing outrageously. "I used to wear six-inch stiletto heels and straw hats covered with birds and fruit. I looked like Carmen Miranda. I had my picture in every

magazine. Every day on the train I'd come from suburbia like that."

Originally tapped by Malcolm McLaren to replace Annabella in Bow Wow Wow, Boy George eventually formed his own group to serve as a vehicle for a plaintive voice that has stormed the charts in such light calypso-flavored pop as "Do You Really Want To Hurt Me" and "White Boy." Surprisingly, George is not just another pop-exploited freak; his love of sweet soul music apparently comes naturally and his music is similarly easy to take, with a relaxed breezy feel that melts in your ears. Onstage, a three-piece horn section carries Culture Club's melodies like an island wind gently rustling through the palms, with Boy George's guileless vocals fitting like a grass skirt.

"I always wanted to be a singer," explains George, "but when I started with this band, it was dreadful. I sounded like Siouxsie & the Banshees. I didn't realize I could sing. At first, I imitated Lou Reed and Bowie, everyone but myself. But that's one of the great things about this band—although we steal other people's ideas, we're quite honest about it. We don't try

"Sometimes I may be chilly, but it's 1982, y'know. I don't think you can pretend it's an age of innocence. We've had twenty years of rock music."

to deny it."

The band's appropriation of Caribbean and reggae rhythms has also spurred criticism, but George shrugs it off. "As long as you make it into a popular sort of sound, then you're succeeding. People think that being successful is a cop out. But it's much harder to write a pop song for millions of people than it is for a roomful of kids in miniskirts and stilettos. I wanted people to look at me in mock horror. I love the challenge of winning the public over. I like things being not what they seem."

But Boy George's gender games ultimately empty his romance of all passion. He comes across less like David Bowie than like a sexless, but witty, Quentin Crisp. His love is so idealized, it has no substance, even with a voice that can evoke classic crooners like Smokey, Clyde McPhatter or Junior Murvin.

"My image is like, 'Is it a boy or is it a girl?'" acknowledges George. "It's like making a joke out of the whole sex thing, taking the piss out of the situation. When people don't know what to call you, they can't really slag you. I'm not a transvestite, I'm an extrovert. People live by their own standards, so why inflict those standards on me? I don't like to sing to either a boy or a girl. I prefer songs where anyone can listen—a man, a queer, a lesbian. Anyone can get into what I'm singing about. I don't believe in the generation gap, which is why a lot of housewives in England buy our records. I'd rather have Frank Sinatra's fans than Siouxsie Banshees's."

By poking fun at his own sexual identity, Boy George points out the tyranny of beauty, something ABC's Martin Fry also tried to tackle in "The Look Of Love." "It's like observing people walking down the street hand in hand," Fry says about his hit, "and opening these magazines and seeing all those images of love and pictorial tableaux about love. It's thrown at you constantly day by day. The song deals with how love looks. From a distance."

YAZ'S GIRL IN THE MACHINE



LAURA LEVINE

The dynamic synth-blooze duo, Yaz: Vince Clarke and Alf Moyet.

Alison Moyet is one-half of the synthesizer duo Yaz, along with ex-Depeche Mode member Vince Clarke. Moyet's husky vocals add surprising warmth and humanity to Yaz's crisp electropop dance beat, shown to best effect in the stateside disco smashes, "Situation" and "Don't Go." Unlike Human League's miniskirted ingenues, "Alf," as she's known, is from the Janis Joplin or Maggie Bell school, her attraction stems directly from her abilities, and her sensuous, bloozey voice grounds Yaz's modern sound with unexpected roots.

Boy George respects Moyet for that. "She's not up there as a sex symbol. Those pop stereotypes are really ugly. There are a lot of girls out there, who, if they're going to believe in that ideal of beauty, are going to be disappointed. It's superficial. If you stay on your own level and understand yourself, you'll always be happy."

"I'm just the girl-next-door, just like a million other girls-next-door," is how Moyet describes her appeal.

Yaz was formed when Vince Clarke answered Alf's ad in a national paper for a London-based blues band along the lines of the Fabulous Thunderbirds. The result turned out to be a band which offers a dynamic contrast between Clark's synth ice sculptures and Moyet's smoldering humanity. Unlike the

deathless futurism of most Eurosynth bands, Yaz cuts through to the soul inside the machine because Alf puts flesh on the group's bones.

"I hated synthesizer music," she says. "I still haven't completely changed my mind about computers, though I have more respect for them now. I used to regard them as little more than fad gadgets. But as a musician, the most important thing is to get work," sighs Moyet. "I'd rather be a working singer with synthesizers than a non-working blues singer."

Helped along by Mute Records' Daniel Miller (of Normal and Silicon Teens fame), Yaz came from nowhere to break through on the U.S. club scene, their percolating synth sound and smoke-filled vocals crossing over to become popular on black radio.

"We don't have that sort of segregation in England," says Alf. "To me, an audience is an audience, no matter where they come from. I never listen to a group because they're black or white. I listen to a group because I like their music," she adds, even though her own influences are people such as Al Green, Willie Mae Thornton and Muddy Waters.

"It's strange, but the grass is always greener on the other side," she says. "There are lots of Americans who are really impressed with the English music scene, yet most of the British bands I know are influenced by American acts, specifically black American acts. But I don't analyze music that much. Taste is so personal, who can explain it?"

Indeed, all these groups look to American music—from Stephen Foster, to Scott Joplin, to John Lee Hooker, to Jackie Wilson, to Sly Stone to Kid Creole—which makes for an ironic and frustrating situation. Why does it take the British to turn us on to musical forms which are right under our noses? Are Americans so hung up about the racial origin of their music that they'll take R&B only when filtered through the European experience?

4

THOMPSON TWINS' CONTEXT

The Thompson Twins may have come together in the same Sheffield melting pot that produced ABC and Human League, but their three main members boast an international background. Leader Tom Bailey is from northern England, percussionist Alannah Currie hails from New Zealand, and Joe Leeway's roots are in Nigeria. This goes a long way toward explaining the group's eclectic ethnicity, which started out as Anglo art-rock until it was stripped down to its current rhythm-machine-and-percussion dub-beat.

Live, Bailey, Currie and Leeway, along with a shifting coterie of synth players and percussionists, create an electronic brew of overlapping, contrapuntal rhythms with metallic sound effects and industrial *musique concrete*, making them the most overtly progressive of the bands mentioned here. They are enamored of the possibilities of machines, maybe too much so, though they steadfastly maintain a grounding in Third World communalism.

"Where we lived in the south of London, in Brixton, all the groups play reggae," explains Currie, her frizzy blond hair piled on top of her head in Rasta fashion. "We didn't move in a white society any more."

"We were right on the wall where we could see both sides at once," continues Tom Bailey, whose two-tone rust-colored coif is characterized by a long thin red strand of hair that hangs

"Everyone thought 'In The Name Of Love' was just a love song, when it was really about all the horrible things we do under its sway."

in the back like a Chinaman's queue. "On one side there'd be a reggae group; on the other, a punk group. It was a very natural thing. In America, because of the black and South American cultures here, the situation is very similar."

Tom offers one theory as to why so much new music seems to be coming to America from the English: "There's still a big gap here between having a record deal and having nothing at all. In England, there's an independent label thing happening, with zillions of groups having a couple of singles out. It's sort of a midway opportunity, which you can't get over here."

"People start playing music in England because there's nothing else to do," adds Alannah.

All the bands credit the late 70s British punk explosion with encouraging them to enter the pop field. Yaz's Alf admits that listening to Poly Styrene gave her the inspiration to sing, while Tom Bailey calls it a "negative revolution, which kicked out all the old stuff, though it didn't really replace it with anything of lasting value. There was a yawning gap to be filled."

ABC's Martin Fry says, "The idea of punk rock was to take something and make it your own. To take the freedom to express yourself. That whole Sex Pistols/Clash doctrine was to do what you believed in. Words like spontaneity, commitment and honesty are words people use time and time again to cover up their sins. I'm just trying to express the idea that a great deal of rock 'n' roll is cabaret."

For the Thompson Twins' Alannah Currie, punk meant a trip to her native upbringing in the South Seas. "It wasn't until punk, when anybody could play anything, that all that stuff started to come back to me. I grew up with those traditional Maori songs, chants and stick-clicking. It was always there and I think it's in everybody. You have to be prepared to get rid of your ego and be five years old again so you can regurgitate it all."

The Thompson Twins have taken that spirit of communal

Thompson Twins: Tom Bailey, Joe Leeway and Alannah Currie.



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participation and created a synthetic, yet seductive backdrop to go with it. "Our next album deals with illusion and deception, lyrically and emotionally," says Alannah. "Everyone thought 'In The Name Of Love' was just a love song, when it was really about all the horrible things we do under its sway. We want people to actively join in the creative process. At some of our earlier gigs, we handed out percussion instruments and invited people onstage."

As for the charge that their initial flash of inspiration had long since hardened into mannered product, the Thompsons' Bailey makes no apologies. "It's like the movie *Blade Runner*," he says. "The lasting effect of that film was not the plot or the content, it was the director's vision of the future. The context he created for the action was as important as anything that actually happened. And that's the way I feel about my music. There's a greater context within which things happen. We've found what I guess you can call a formula."

"We've changed so many bleeding times that we're happy to have one that works," sighs Alannah.

ROCK 'N' ROLL BANANA PEEL

Of course, ABC, Culture Club, Yaz and the Thompson Twins have all hit on successful approaches which have proved perfectly translatable into universal experience. But there's still the nagging afterthought that these groups are triumphs of style over substance—and they're only too willing to admit it.

"Just like concerts or videos, fashion is a way of communication," says Bailey. "It makes a statement the record alone doesn't, it's part of the context, and if that context works, then what happens inside it works more efficiently, too."

"If you want three minutes of music to reflect what happens every day, you're going to get three minutes going by with nothing happening," says ABC's Martin Fry. "There has to be an element of stylizing, focusing and projecting. I don't think we're guilty of writing love songs without any feeling of love. The music we do is a mixture of ancient and modern, acoustic instruments and technology, physical dance beat and cerebral...it goes from one extreme to the other. But it's not like Madame Toussaud's wax museum. Our sound is not the result of going into the supermarket and putting in a little of this and a little of that.

"Part of it is seeing if we can pull it off, if we can play a cowboy club in Texas with a six-piece string section and get a reaction. It's just audacity and cheek and ambition. We want to see how far we can push our ideas. It's great to win over an audience of kids wearing Led Zeppelin and Van Halen T-shirts.

"Sometimes I may be chilly, but it's 1982, y'know. I don't think you can pretend it's an age of innocence. We've had twenty years of rock music. I hold to the same values you do, but I believe most rock groups know nothing about spontaneity. They've just been repeating the same idea since 1962. I mean, Bob Dylan has existed, Elvis Presley has existed, Bill Haley has existed... so many people come on like they want to re-create rock 'n' roll. New things are happening all the time. It's like humor. Just when you think all the jokes in the world have been told, someone will slip on a banana peel, fall on his ass and everybody'll laugh. The primary elements are always there and always will be. But there will always be new jokes. And I see music in the same way."

IS IT REEL OR IS IT MEMOREX?

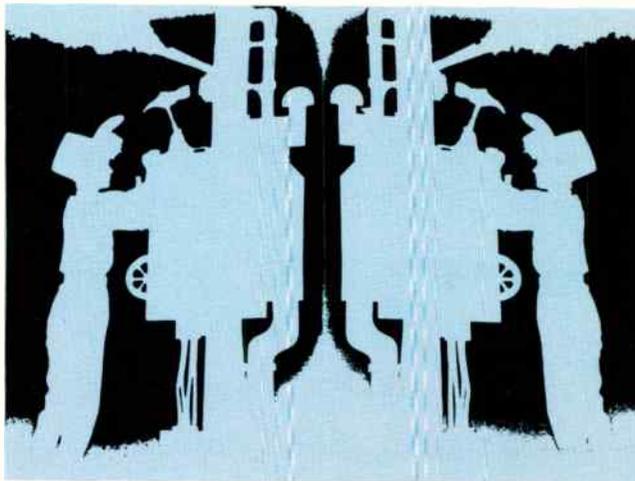
ABC, Culture Club, Yaz and the Thompson Twins, for all their talents, cannot hope to approach the cultural impact of the original British Invasion. Yet there are moments of pop epiphany in each of their songs. It's Martin Fry yodeling "Yip-ee-ay-yay" breathlessly against his Spectroesque wash of sound. It's Boy George tugging at your heartstrings and purse strings with his impish query, "Do you really want to hurt me?" It's Yaz's Alf Moyet stolidly holding on to her lover over the pulsating tug of "Don't Go." And it's the Thompson Twins listing our foibles to the nonstop punk-salsa beat of "In The Name Of Love." Whether these groups will be more than one-hit wonders, only time will tell. Is their lust for life real or just another way for us to get fooled again?

"Most people never get the chance to work at something they enjoy," says Boy George. "Money's important, but it's only as important as you make it. Jewels and diamonds can make you ugly as well as beautiful. Do what you want, but do it naturally. As far as I'm concerned, I just want to get across to people. You can call me what you want, let people take what they want from me. I just want to write good songs."

Okay, but the lingering feeling is it's all been done before. Elegant in his gold lamé suit and glittering under the hot spotlights, ABC's Martin Fry leads his big band through its paces like Lily Tomlin's imitation Teddy Pendergrass as the horns punch up his stiff nonchalance and turn his gangliness into something resembling personal style. Haven't I seen this all another time, another place? Isn't this elegant, larger-than-life pop dream merely a hazy *deja vu*, a Xerox copy for kids who are only faintly aware of Roxy Music and David Bowie? I posed that very question to Martin Fry and he didn't hesitate.

"Never judge a book by its cover," he grinned.

Or, as Bowie himself once put it, "There's a taste in my mouth, and it's no taste at all."



THE END?

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DOD

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

In religion, there are Catholics and there are Protestants. Catholics believe that by doing enough good works, you can earn grace. Protestants believe that good works are okay, but nobody earns anything from God. Either He decides to drop grace on you or He doesn't, and the most you can do is be ready for it when it happens.

In the recording studio, there are Catholics and there are Protestants. Catholics believe that by accumulating enough overdubs, you can earn a good song. Protestants believe that overdubs are okay, but nobody can will anything onto tape. Either your unconscious drops a good song on you or it doesn't, and the most you can do is wait for that mystical union that musicians achieve only at moments unpredictable by humans.

The regrettably defunct Eagles probably qualify as the Popes of Overdub, going over the same tape five million times until it became (on their last few albums) a race between the right combination of tracks emerging and the tape wearing out. Tom Petty ranks among the top Protestant theologians in the Church of Rock 'n' Roll Verité, going through about five million miles of new tape waiting for God to pop with that optimum raw take.

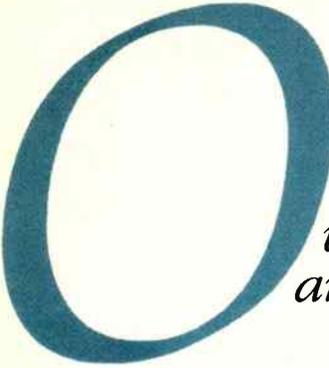
"Working a song to death is pointless," says Petty, who bears no responsibility for the above analogy, and may throw up when he reads



TOM PETTY

IS SORTA LIKE GOD
AND SORTA LIKE
THE REST OF US,
AND OTHER
THEOLOGICAL
INSIGHTS





Our goal is to be a good, high energy rock band that won't offend anyone's intelligence."

it. "You do a take and it has the magic or it doesn't. If you start listening to each instrument for what's wrong, it becomes sterile. Instead, you come back to the song later in a different frame of mind. You wait for the magic to happen rather than forcing it."

For example, take "A Wasted Life," the only slow song on Petty's latest album, *Long After Dark* (eighty percent live vocals). One night Petty was messing around in his basement, turned on his drum machine and tape deck, played a few chords on his synthesizer and started free associating lyrics. About fifteen minutes into the cassette, lo, there was grace: one complete verse and most of the chorus. Then one night the Heartbreakers were messing around in the studio. Stan Lynch hit the exact groove with his brushes, Benmont Tench hopped on it with the keyboard progression, Petty started singing, and pretty soon there was the song for the first time sounding the way it ought to outside of Petty's head. Grace again. Fortunately, the tape was rolling for most of it (they had to do a little doctoring) and the world is now blessed with one of those uniquely Tom Petty how-in-creation-did-he-twist-his-vocal-cords-around-that-emotion performances.

"We fire engineers for missing those moments on tape," says Petty, slumped in a lounge chair during a rehearsal break at a Universal soundstage. "They only happen once. At the end of an album, we have rooms and rooms full of tape. Sometimes we sell it back to the studio and have them bulk-erase it. We really have to explore songs to find out what's there, and that takes a lot of time (a year in studio rentals for *Long After Dark* at a cost of \$400,000). The band is almost too smart for its own good. That self-consciousness can take over, so you almost have to trick them onto the record."

As you might expect, those rooms and rooms full of tape contain a lot of songs that no outsiders have heard: "We ended up with nineteen tracks, of which we used ten. Someday I'd like to release *The Worst Of Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers* with the outtakes. They're all good songs, but they didn't fit moodwise. Personally, I don't care what comes next when I'm listening to music. I can go from Led Zeppelin to George Jones, but most people don't like that kind of juxtaposition."

George Jones?

"Maybe the best singer in the world. The more believable singing is the better. In fact, that's the *only* thing that matters—believability—and George Jones has it."

In interviewing, there are Catholics and there are Protestants. Catholics (usually investigative reporters) believe that if you do your homework and ask good questions, you can browbeat your way into some interesting quotes. Protestants (usually profile writers) believe that homework and good questions are okay, but good interviews drop on you as a matter of mystical chemistry between two personalities.

The correct Biblical precedent for the mystical chemistry between Tom Petty and journalist is actually back one Testament in the Book of Job. Job is an okay guy—observes the Sabbath, follows the commandments, gives no backsass to Yahweh. Yet no matter what he does, there's no predicting

whether Yahweh will reward him with a herd of camels or scourge him with a plague of boils.

Ask Tom Petty a reasonable question about studio technique and you might get a herd of camels in the form of the above stuff on the creative process. Ask a reasonable question about how he balances his career and his personal life (who doesn't have this crummy problem?) and you get a plague of boils in the form of panicked phone calls from his manager and PR guy: "He hates talking about his family. Figure out some more music questions." Ask a humdinger music question, one that takes ten minutes to get out of your mouth, about how a lot of his song narrators seem poised on the edge of rationality and ready to leap into emotion (sounded smart at the time, anyway) and you get, "Yeah."

Hence the essential paradox of Tom Petty: on the one hand, he's like the rest of us because he spends a lot of time waiting for something to happen; and on the other hand, he's like Yahweh because he's creative and moody as hell.

"If you want to keep some of your life for yourself, you have to be fairly blunt sometimes—just tell people to leave," says Petty in his mellifluous North Florida lilt. "But there's a fine line between doing what needs to be done and being an asshole. I guess right about fifty percent of the time."

At the age of thirty-one, Tom Petty doesn't look like God but is nonetheless pretty spectacular. His skull structure ranks second only to Carly Simon for Overbite Interestingness. And he recently tied Mick Jagger for number one in Sneers That Release Most Female Pheromones Per Square Inch Of Music Venue Air. Their sneers are, however, different. Where Jagger's seems to be saying, "Pork off, bitch, I lead my own life," Petty's is more along the lines of "I dare you to tuck my shirt in, but if you try, I won't break your jaw, because girls were the first sex to figure out that the proper response to rock 'n' roll was to scream and dance and carry on, for which I'm really grateful, and therefore they deserve better than the usual misogyny." Women seem to appreciate this benign approach (when Petty sings an oldie like "Shake, Rattle And Roll," he *means* it) so much that one might assume that being Tom Petty or one of his Heartbreakers is Heterosexual Heaven on Earth.

"Yeah, it probably is," nods Petty, leaving it at that.

Did he have any theory on why he and the Heartbreakers were the hardest rocking band with a predominantly female following?

"We're better looking," Petty laughs, then grows more thoughtful. "I enjoy girls immensely, and I think they're part of what a rock concert should be. Whenever I go to a punk show and it's all boys on the dance floor, I think, 'Hey, there's something missing here. Where's the sex?'"

"We also draw the guitar hero fans and college kids. They're always good audiences, that's the weird thing. We play anything and they love it, which makes me worry that we rely on them too much. You end up having to play for yourself. Ultimately only you know when you're putting it down. Our goal is just to be a good, high energy rock band that won't offend anyone's intelligence. We have no pretense other than being musicians. For some reason, that constantly confuses people. At first we were punks, then Springsteen clones. Most bands from the South are what they are, like Lynyrd Skynyrd. They lived what they played."

Rehearsal is probably the best place to interview Tom Petty because while you're worrying about whether you're due for camels or boils, you can listen to all this wonderful music. Barely a handful of rock 'n' roll songwriters can be described as in their prime these days and Petty is one of them. "Strangered In The Night," "Breakdown," "I Need To Know," "Listen To Her Heart," "Refugee," "What Are You Doin' In My Life," "The Waiting," "Nightwatchman"—try counting the songwriters now in their prime who can bat in that league and see if you can get past your fingers. (Petty himself attributes the current depression in record sales to a lack of great songwriting;

"Where's John Fogerty? Where's John Sebastian?") *Long After Dark* continues in this tradition of excellence—particularly "Deliver Me," "Change Of Heart" and "Straight Into Darkness"—with a slightly harder edge to the Heartbreakers and even greater power in Petty's voice, creating the impression of Buddy Holly being strangled over early Bad Company. Then there are oldies: "So Ya Wanna Be A Rock 'N' Roll Star," "Needles And Pins," "Anyway You Want It," "I'm Cryin'," "Girls Are Made To Love." Whatever the band feels like playing, it seems all Petty has to do is stroke a couple of chords to jog his memory and the complete lyrics to Everything That's Good Since 1955 are at his command. Someday he and Springsteen ought to have a battle of the bands in a supermarket parking lot just to see who's got the all-time greatest covers.

"Those Animals, man," enthuses Petty after a terrifically, well, sexy version of "Boom Boom Boom." "They were great, the way everything counted."

Weren't the Heartbreakers also in that tradition of non-wasted-notes? "We can't waste 'em, 'cause we don't know that many," Petty laughs.

Doesn't he have an album's worth of new songs to rehearse? Why's he screwing around with the oldies?

"Anything you play is going to pay off. When the band is playing well off each other, everything falls into place. Besides, I like doing oldies."

Surprisingly non-ideological in his taste, Petty follows the top ten but is also a big fan of the more experimental end of rock. "Without the lunatic fringe, nothing changes. It was a shame what happened to the Ramones. They were the Robert Johnsons of punk, and they really got dumped on. I saw them at the Roxy five or six years ago and everything they were doing then has become commonplace."

The guitars are so heavy on *Long After Dark*—could he also have been listening to AC/DC lately?

"Yeah, we did listen to them," says Petty. "I like all that power. I'm glad we did *Hard Promises*, with its more conceptual orientation, but I didn't want to repeat it. The sound on *Long After Dark* is more the touring side of the band."

Does he have a favorite AC/DC song?

"Probably 'You Shock Me.'"

See? Pick a band, any band, and Tom Petty will know their best song. And that's sort of how he leads the Heartbreakers. He doesn't order anyone around during rehearsal. If you didn't know who he was, it would take you awhile to figure out who's in charge. His is an organic authority, flowing naturally from the guy who knows what needs to be known and has the most hormones to act on it.

The niftiest thing about rehearsal, however, is the firsthand proof that Petty really doesn't need four hundred overdubs to sing that way. Every time he opens his mouth, some phrasing you never even suspected pops out.

"I used to think I couldn't sing at all," says Petty. "It's taken me a couple of years to get used to being up front. I finally developed the confidence to see that if I wasn't so weird, I wouldn't be interesting."

Any special preparation for his voice?

"No, I just get up and start screaming. I don't smoke too much after the show."

Yeah, but half the time it sounds like he's getting the garrote. Surely he must do something to protect the vocal cords.

"I try not to make too big a deal of it," says Petty with a hint of exasperation, in this case a considerate hint to let up before a plague of boils descends. "If you think about something too much, it will happen."

The Heartbreakers: new guy Howie Epstein, large happy guy Stan Lynch, quiet thoughtful guy Mike Campbell, short brooding guy Tom Petty and eternally angry guy Benmont Tench.



The situation I was in was like blood in the water for a shark. Lawyers... you gotta hate them."

"The great thing about these guys is that there's no cocaine," says Jim Hoskins, percussion engineer and black belt security expert, between tunes. "They learned years ago that you can't get anything done with that stuff. I've been working with bands for fifteen years and this is the first one I've seen to understand that cocaine doesn't lead to anything but trouble."

"There have been so many deaths that it's well documented what people can do and can't do," says Petty later. "I'd be a fool to die of an overdose or mess up my brain now."

Don't rock stars have to live two lives? One as a rock star and one as a human being?

"Two lives—that's a lot of rubbish," Petty spits. "I'm not two people, I'm me. That's all I've ever presented. I don't have some character I put on for the public."

Don't your fans have an image that they expect you to live up to?

"People who meet me when I'm drunk and out of control seem not to be disappointed," says Petty, suddenly pensive. "If they meet me when I'm sober and quiet, it's, 'Come on Tom, do "Breakdown."' People who expect you to perform all the time can be a total drag. Can you imagine being a comedian? People expecting you to tell jokes all the time? That has to be the worst gig going."

The past year has been an exceptional one in Tom Petty's life because he has spent no time in the wilderness battling the forces of Conglomerate Darkness. This is too bad for the rest of us because when Tom Petty broke an unfair recording contract with MCA and then forced them to back down on an album price rise, it was highly inspirational.

"Most of the last few years, I was ready to throw up my dukes at anything," says Petty, not cringing at any painful memory that might summon up. "Mike Campbell (Heartbreakers' guitarist) says I have trouble with authority, but I don't know. The attitude of give-somebody-a-badge-and-they-automatically-become-an-asshole, I hate that. I don't find it fun to be mean or hold a grudge. Me and MCA have developed a mutual respect. We can both be hardasses. They've treated me very fairly in the past year, but I do have my eye on them."

"Lawyers, you gotta hate them. The situation I was in was like blood on the water for a shark. I spent too much time with them in a feeding frenzy—my own lawyer's okay, though. A lot of my songwriting notebooks were stamped into evidence during the trial, and the lawyers had to read everything in them, so I wrote a song called 'Reptiles' about what scumsuckers lawyers are."

On "A One Story Town," the first song on *Long After Dark*, the word "shit" appears prominently in the lyrics and is not buried in the mix. Is Petty spoiling for a fight with the FCC, which (especially under Reagan, one would assume) still bars four-letter words?

"Jimmy (Irvine, his producer) may have mentioned that toward the end of the album, but no one in radio has said anything. If people are offended by that, they need to be offended. You can't have much to do if that's working you up. We do have a knack for staying in trouble, but it's nice right now to play music for awhile with no outside interference."

Some critics have felt that *Long After Dark* lacked the emotional depth of *Damn The Torpedoes* and *Hard Promises*, perhaps because he wasn't being afflicted with any major torment lately.

"It's not hard finding things to write about, if that's what you mean," says Petty. "I never thought about that much, but if I'm bummed out, I don't pick up a guitar and write about it. It's only later when I'm in a good mood that I can write about hard times. Then I can pick up a guitar and bum myself out all night."

It has been widely observed, for example, that John Lennon sang with more intensity when he was unhappy.

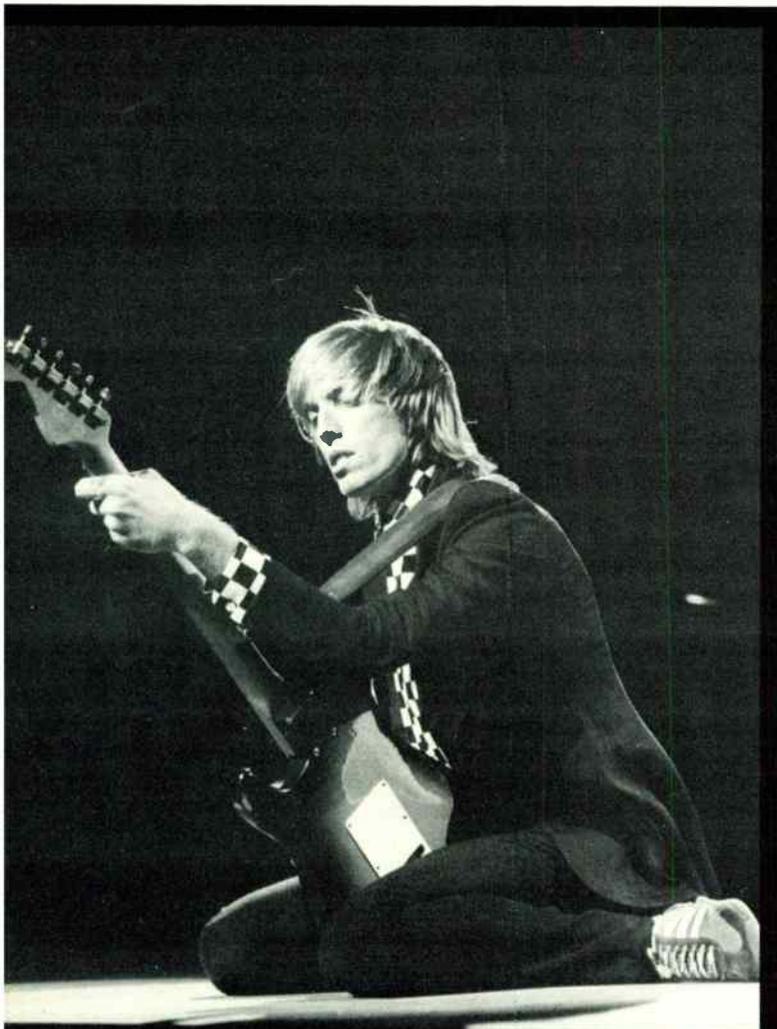
"I was glad that John Lennon could be happy for a few years," says Petty, a plague of boils rising in his voice. "If that made people nervous, so what?"

How about the impression that Lennon and a lot of guys seem to sing best when they're angry at women?

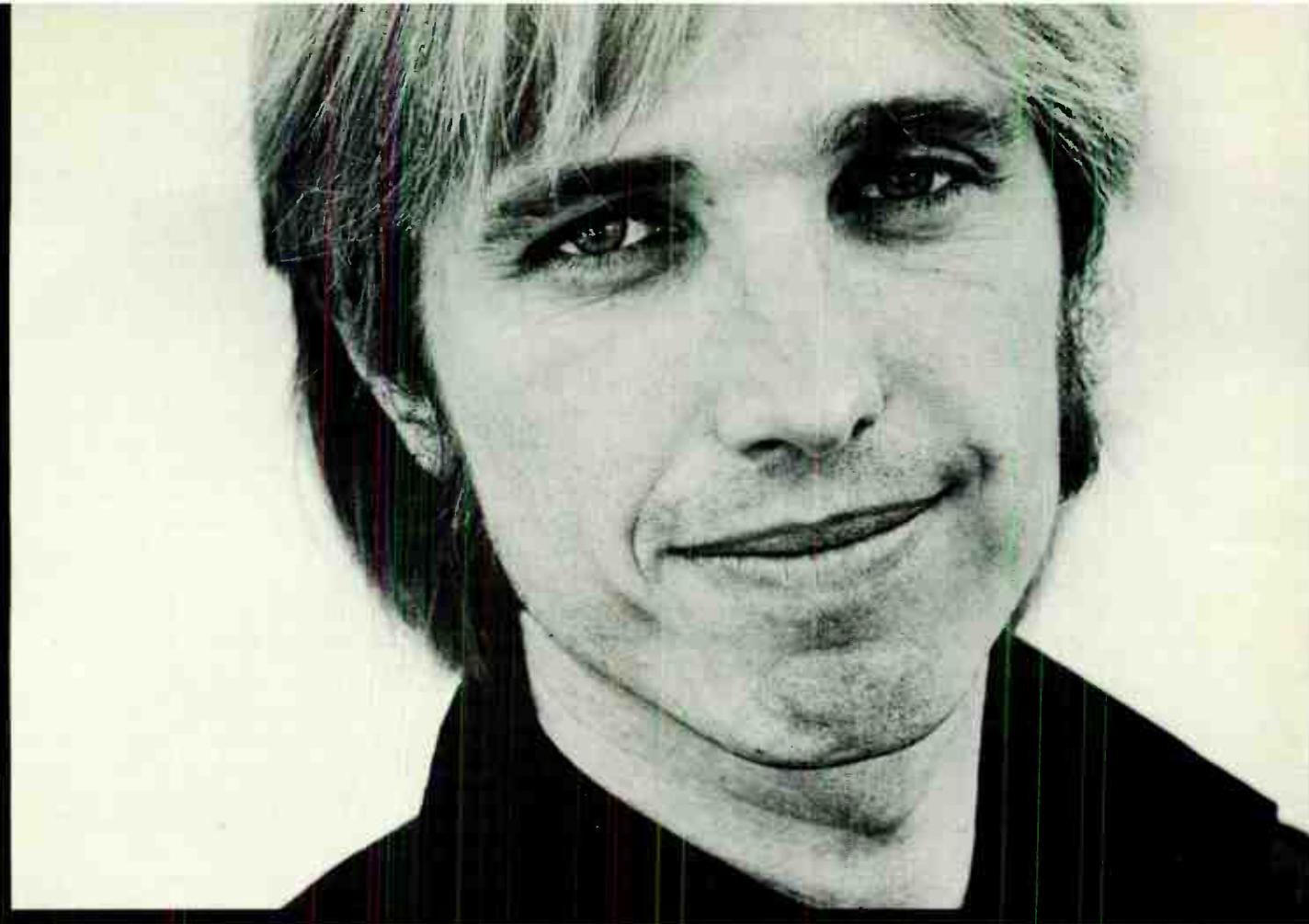
"If men could get along with women all the time, why would anyone bother with art?"

"L.A. chicks weird me out," says Stan Lynch, explaining why he lives in Florida and commutes to Los Angeles to play drums for the Heartbreakers. "They've seen so much, so they expect a lot more. Florida chicks haven't seen as much, so their expectations are lower. They're more like a bunch of dudes. Whether you have a house or a tent, a Mercedes or a VW, it doesn't matter."

In the Drumming Mass Spectrometer, Lynch falls more toward the Starr/Watts end of the scale than the Moon/Bonham end, although he does favor T-shirts emblazoned with the RAF symbol as Moon did. On the Heartbreakers Multiphase



PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE



Potential petulance: what'll it be today, Tom, a herd of camels or a plague of boils?

Personality Inventory, Lynch plays large happy guy to Petty's short brooding guy.

Now twenty-seven, Lynch took up the drums in junior high. His parents then took up tennis and his band teacher told him he had no future in music. "He was right," says Lynch earnestly. "At the time, I had no attention span or perseverance." Despite such drawbacks, he was invited to join the Heartbreakers, at the age of nineteen. "In my first band, we used to beat on each other all the time, but when you're younger, you heal faster. When I joined these guys, I was told not to hit anyone. We've had our problems over the years, but we're united to make Tom's songs work. Hey, we're lucky. We got a guy who can write a cool tune. How many bands can say that?"

After awhile, the discerning journalist/theologian will shut up and let Petty/Yahweh talk about whatever's on his mind, in this case fan mail. "We get some pretty weird letters sometimes," says Petty during yet another rehearsal break. "One we got was from this kid who hitchhiked to one of our concerts and the guy who picked him up almost raped his girlfriend. Another kid wanted two tickets to one of our shows because he was dying in a couple of weeks. We tried to check that one out, but it didn't seem too authentic. The letters are either weird like that, or they want to know why Benmont always looks so angry."

Petty bursts out laughing and it appears an opportune moment to ask keyboardist Benmont Tench why *does* he always look so angry?

"You aren't really going to ask that, are you?" growls Tench, looking so angry that he immediately leaps ten spots to second place (just behind Johnny Rotten) on the All-Time List Of Guys Who Make Interviewers Feel Stupid.

Three other Benmont Tench facts of mild interest but gleaned at high risk to feelings of self-worth: (1) Benmont Tench's father is a judge; (2) Benmont Tench had a good piano

teacher when he was little, and (3) Benmont Tench listens to Little Walter on his car stereo.

"High school was great for me," says Stan Lynch during a post-rehearsal bull session. "I went to all five of them in Gainesville and did whatever I wanted. I moved out on my parents and was living with the guitar player in my band."

How'd he get away with that?

"My parents were getting divorced and I played them off against each other. I was horrible. If my kid ever pulled that on me, I'd beat him senseless."

Petty came close to that fate on several occasions with his own father, a Gainesville insurance salesman. "My father thought I had the devil in me. I can understand him being a little concerned. I was kinda failing at school. I got this report card with all Fs, except for one D minus in crafts, and he broke all my records. What gets me is I showed up enough to get Fs instead of incompletes."

"They're still talking about him at that school," says Jim Lenehan, a classmate of Petty's then, and now one of several smart roadies around the Heartbreakers (the guy just sold a screenplay to Walt Disney).

"Yeah, I was a problem to society," Petty smiles with such charm that you feel you're getting 8,000 camels. "My crafts teacher, the one who gave me the D minus, she wanted me to stop hanging out with musicians. 'Look at Elvis Presley,' she said. 'If he hadn't the talent and a good manager, he wouldn't have had a job to fall back on.' I always thought Elvis was kind of a poor example to prove her point."

Petty's academic career was further distinguished by a minor flirtation with vandalism. "We weren't the city toughs or anything," reminisces Petty. "A lotta guys could have whipped our ass, but we had this contest stealing hood ornaments. Ten points for a star off a Continental or a Mercedes down to half a point for any letter in the word Rambler. We never knew how

many of us there were until they arrested us all in school one day. It's real hard explaining to your father why you just kicked off all the hood ornaments in a parking lot. They put me on probation. It was then that I took up guitar seriously."

Does he have any theories on why he had the strength to stand up to a crushing education system when most people just get crushed?

"Maybe it was getting my ass beat all the time for having long hair," says Petty. "I don't know, really. Some people just don't hit it off in school. It's not necessarily wrong for everybody. Being ignorant is nothing to be proud of. There's nothing more dangerous than being ignorant."

North Florida was a good place to take up guitar seriously in the late 60s and early 70s. Don Felder and Bernie Leadon (later Eagles) were kings of the heap in Gainesville and Duane Allman was tearing it up in Daytona. And when Tom Petty turned eighteen, there was Mudcrutch.

"My first gig with the band was in a bar backing these two topless dancers named Bubbles and Laura," Mike Campbell remembers. "Bubbles looked like Buck Owens. Laura looked okay but had terminal syph or something. I remember thinking, 'This isn't what rock 'n' roll is supposed to be.'"

Campbell's feeling proved prescient. Mudcrutch disbanded after a lot of futility and one single, "Depot Street," a reggae tune recorded before anyone in white America knew what reggae was. But it did bring together Petty, Campbell and Tench who later regrouped with a couple of other Gainesville natives (Lynch and bassist Ron Blair) as the Heartbreakers. This time, though, the lines of authority were clearly drawn.

"Tom is just a natural leader," says Campbell. "He has the vision and he's mentally dominant. He's like Dylan. He can walk into a room full of strangers and nail them all on their bullshit. Like the lawyers. They thought they were dealing with a bunch of dummies. And we didn't know much legal language, but Tom could cut to the heart of the issue better than anybody."

Nine months older than Petty, Campbell is probably the least known ace guitarist in the top echelons of rock 'n' roll, probably because he doesn't look the part, other than being skinny. His eyes are sad and thoughtful, his manner quiet, but his lead licks burn with the best. He is also coming into his own as a

composer, having contributed the music to four tunes on *Long After Dark* and the transcendent "Refugee" from *Damn The Torpedoes*.

"I just gave Tom the cassette one day and he came back with these amazing lyrics," says Campbell. "I'm real proud of the song, but whatever I write now, the automatic reaction is, 'Well, it's good, but it's not "Refugee."' And they're right. After you've said, 'Everybody's got to fight to be free,' what else is there?"

If anyone could say anything after that, it would be Jimmy Iovine, who's been engineering and then producing albums (with Springsteen, Seger, Nicks, Stewart and Petty, among others) with a single-minded dedication that would shame Vince Lombardi. He doesn't drink or smoke or take drugs, he hasn't had a vacation in ten years (since he was nineteen), and when he wants to discuss something, he's been known to telephone a guy three times during the same shower.

"He's a prodigy and his credits are excellent," says Howie Epstein, the newest Heartbreaker, with something akin to fear in his eyes. Epstein took over from Ron Blair (now running a bikini store with his wife) at the beginning of the new album after gigs with John Hiatt and Del Shannon. "But he takes some getting used to. If something stinks, he tells you."

"He got his head taken off the minute he walked in," says Iovine, sitting in Pietro's Pizza Parlor at the top of Mulholland Drive. "He was real nervous at first and I wanted him to play like he'd been in the band for a long time, so I came on like a tornado. We had no time for him to be nervous. He was intimidated but the growing period was shorter. It was basically a confrontation. 'Here's this wonderful job, how you handle it is up to you. Win or lose, it's your decision.' And Howie came through with flying colors."

"If what you decide at any given moment in a situation is right, that's the mark of a good producer. I'm not talking about deciding on guitar sounds—I have no patience for sounds—but about how to handle people. Shelly Yakus (Petty's long-time producer), he has patience for sounds. I have patience for, maybe not people, but songwriting."

Iovine's relationship with Petty (roughly Yoda's to Luke Skywalker) goes back to the lawsuit with MCA. Iovine called out of the blue to offer a little moral support (he'd seen Springsteen go through the same mess) and the two became friends, co-producing *Damn The Torpedoes*, *Hard Promises* and *Long After Dark*.

"Some artists you have to walk around the block," says Iovine. "Tom wants total honesty at all times. The point is to be what the artist needs. Producers who come in like a bulldozer and want to put their stamp on the artist will last maybe two and a half years on the basis of their first hit. I always remember I'm working for the artist—the moment you forget that, you lose. I only work with people because I want their instincts to come out as purely as possible. In Tom's case, he wants to be pushed, so I torture him on the writing. I call him every day and squeeze and squeeze until he's got every song out of him that he possibly could in a given period of time."

Does he agree with Tom's assessment of "tricking" the band onto the record?

"You keep them playing until the moment comes, yeah," says Iovine. "The recording studio is a very unnatural place to make music. It's dark, it's dead sounding, and someone is saying, 'This is take four, please be a genius.' The producer has to create the illusion of a good atmosphere for music."

Being a natural if unschooled psychologist, does he have any theories on where Petty gets his courage? Was it grace?

"It's what he ate for breakfast in the eighth grade," says Iovine. "Who knows? But if he wasn't like that, he wouldn't be here. He doesn't write his songs because he heard something similar on the radio. No one could write songs like that from that place in his head. He writes those songs out of commitment and courage. There's nothing calculated about Tom Petty." ☐

Hardware Promises

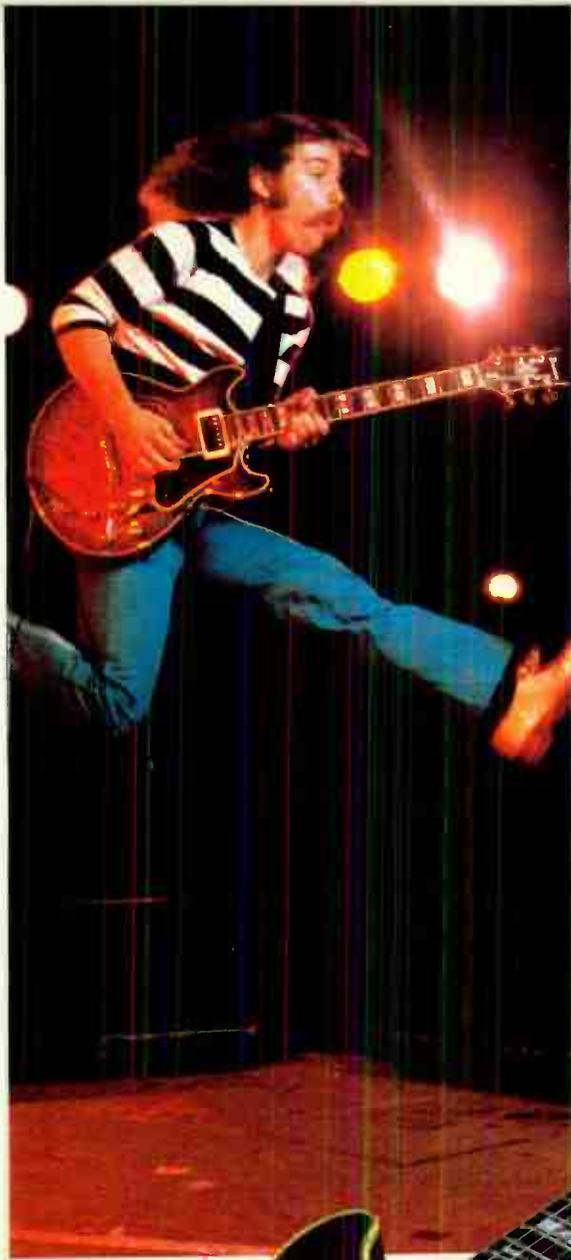
Tom Petty and Mike Campbell change guitars like some people change radio stations—after damned near every song, but they do have certain favorites that they keep returning to: Les Paul Gold Top, Fender Strat, California Classic Telecaster and three (count 'em) Rickenbacker twelve-strings. Pickups and insides are standard. The strings, which they change "only if they break," according to equipment man Bugs, are Ernie Ball Regular Slinky. Ever loyal to their roots, both Petty and Campbell play through very cool looking Vox Super Beatle amps, jazzed up with Echoplex and MXR Dyna Comp.

Stan Lynch claims to have "about twenty-five" drum sets but prefers a black Tama outfit with which he's been monogamous for several years: 24-by-18-inch bass drum, 13-by-9-inch and 14-by-10-inch rack toms, 16-by-18-inch floor tom. Over these he stretches Remo Ambassador Batter drumheads, which he beats with Bunken Stan Lynch model sticks. For some crash with his boom, he beats Zildjian cymbals: 15-inch hi-hats, 18-inch crash, 24-inch ride, 24-inch Paiste Chinese.

Benmont Tench surrounds himself with: Hammond C3, Keyboard Products Leslie, Wurlitzer piano, ARP String Ensemble, Oberheim OBX-A (Petty has one of these, too).

They all use Shure SM57s, are mixed through a Davey Bryson console and are heard through Jensen Bulldogs.

Percussionist Phil Jones helps out in concert with Valje congas and a dimestore aggregation of bongos, timbales, duck calls, tambourines and shakers.



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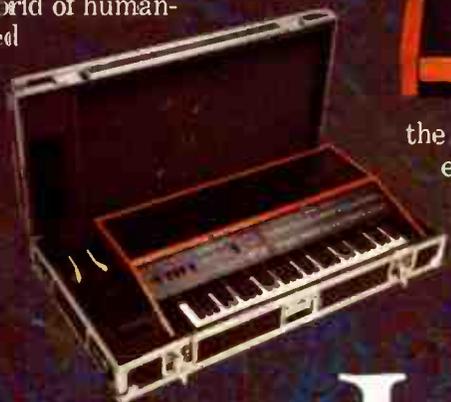
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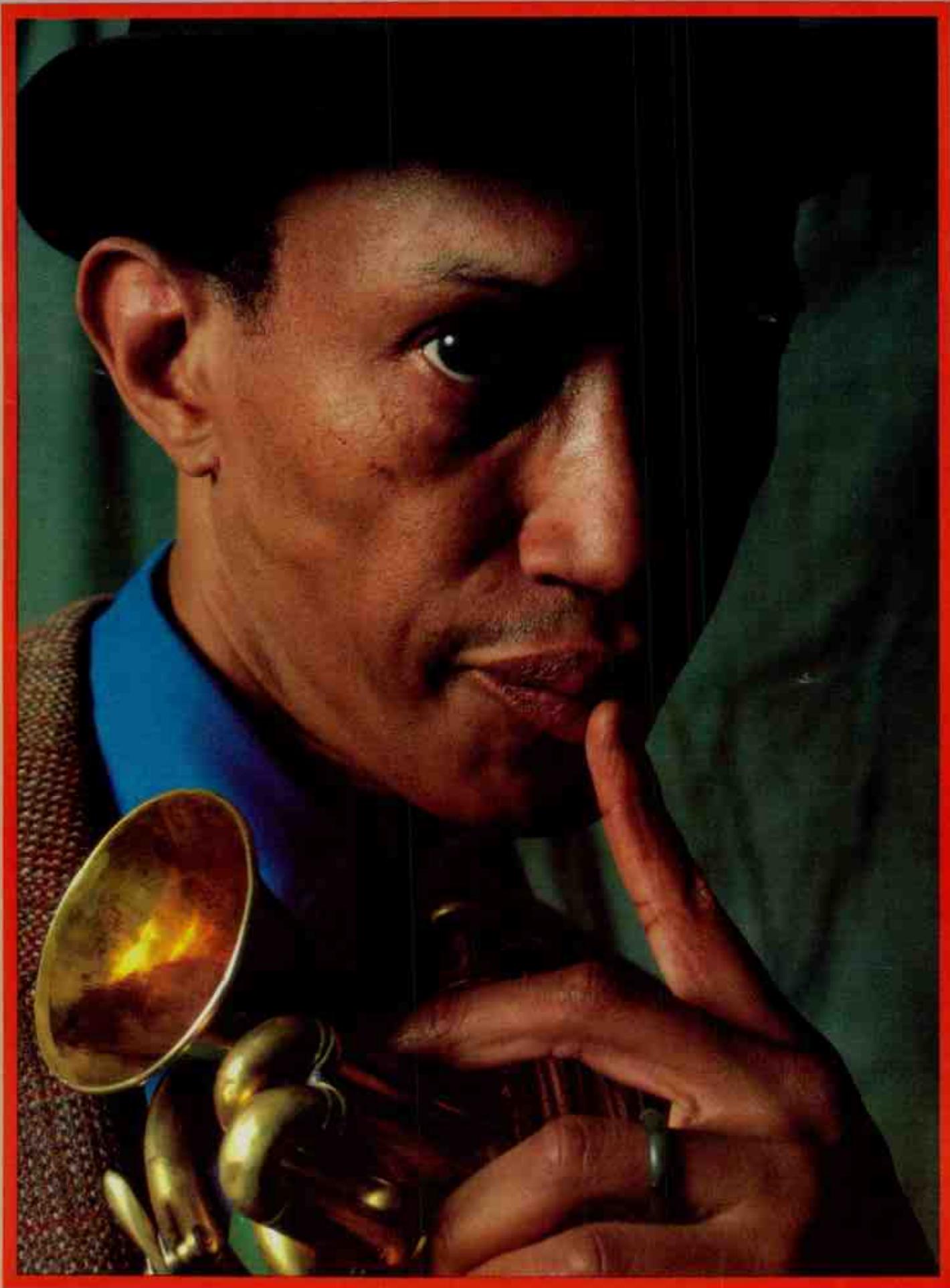
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DEBORAH FEINGOLD

BY FRANCIS DAVIS

I went to Morocco in 1964. That was my first big adventure, the first time I entered a foreign land and felt like I was entering an earlier period of history." The peripatetic pocket trumpeter Don Cherry is recalling for me some of the far-off places his travels have taken him, as he sits eating a breakfast of scrambled eggs on toast in a downtown Manhattan diner the morning following his forty-sixth birthday. "No, I didn't have any jobs lined up when I went. I just went, and that's the way to do it if you're going to meet all the musicians and learn melodies and rhythms from them, if you're going to see all there is to see.

"Two years ago, I did a State Department tour of West Africa. I played concerts, did workshops, but I didn't get to see anything." He scoops the ice out of his water glass, then drops in a crescent-shaped multivitamin he says is manufactured in West Germany. It fizzes like Bromo, looks like Tang, and Cherry reports it tastes like mango, sadly adding that he has only two more tablets left. "I did that tour because I just had to get to Mali," he continues, "because that's where the guitar I've been playing the last five years—the *doussn' gouni*—comes from. A master had shown me the traditional rhythms, but I hadn't been there, so, you see, I had to go.

"When I got there, all the *doussn' gouni* players were in the bush! It was

their season for hunting, and if I had gone there on my own and gotten there two weeks earlier, I could have gone on the hunt with them. I met many *kora* players, many *balafon* players, but not one *doussn' gouni* player, so I'll go back there someday soon.

"But anyway, at the first concert, as soon as I started playing that guitar, right away the people recognized that sound and started clapping the rhythm. Then, all of a sudden, they slowed it down, and their mouths just opened. They were looking at me and wondering, 'But how is it possible for him to be playing this if he's from America?' Then after awhile, they just started clapping along again anyway," Cherry laughs. "They didn't care. It was so incredible!"

It's momentarily disconcerting to hear Don Cherry say that he and his Swedish wife Moqui live with their youngest son Eagle Eye "right between the tunnel and the bridge, next to the river in Long Island City," even if he's not exactly telling me anything I don't already know. It's just that based on everything else I know about him I find it difficult to imagine this limber and wiry reddish brown string figure living any one place in the world in particular.

Like most musicians, Cherry—born

Don Cherry

A JAZZ GYPSY COMES HOME

in rural Oklahoma and raised on Material Highway in Watts—has spent the greater portion of his adult life on the run. He first arrived in New York in 1959 as the diffidently lyrical trumpeter in the quartet with which Ornette Coleman forever distended the shape of jazz to come, and he gradually emerged as a confident if still cautious harbinger of change himself, serving as the sweet voice of moderation to Albert Ayler and Archie Shepp during their angry rampages through Europe and America in the early days of free jazz in the early 60s. Presently, Cherry divides his road time almost evenly between the superb Coleman alumni band Old and New Dreams and the world music trio Codona. There are also special projects such as the tour of Europe with Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra which he's just returned from, and the tour of

own food. Then I ate nothing but brown rice for a while, to remind myself there were starving people in the world. I'm still careful of what I eat, and I think you assimilate more energy by eating very little. But it's difficult to remain a vegetarian when you're on the road all the time, unless you're traveling the way we were in the camper.

"So I'm always adjusting to the pace of wherever I am at the time," Cherry sighs. "The impressions of being in the city are totally different, and I can hear that even in my compositions. Why I moved back here, it's difficult to say, except that I seemed to be here all the time anyway doing different musical projects around '74 or '75, and New York has always seemed like home to me, in a funny way, from the first day I came here with Ornette."



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

"This pocket trumpet is like a tonsil. I use it to sing—the timbre's close to the sound of my voice. I wouldn't want the trumpet to control me."

France with African pop star Manu Dibango which will begin in two days. Not too long ago, Cherry even made all the stops on the rock circuit, in support of Lou Reed.

Most musicians are happy enough to go wherever business takes them, but Cherry has made a conscientious effort to see the world. Moving to Sweden in 1970, for instance, and setting up residence in an abandoned schoolhouse, he purchased a camper and embarked on what he describes as "an acoustic expedition" of Europe and the Middle East.

"I wanted to play different instruments in environments not man-made for music—natural settings like a catacomb or on a mountaintop or by the side of a lake. I wasn't playing for jazz audiences then, you realize. I was playing for goat herders who would take out their flutes and join me and for anyone else who wanted to listen or to sing and play along. It was the whole idea of organic music—music as a natural part of your day. Moqui and the children and I would sing and play and camp out and live in the bus. We were never stationary the four years we were in Sweden."

Given such a utopian, back-to-the-land philosophy, Long Island City seems like an especially incongruous place for Cherry finally to hang his hat. "I still live in Sweden three months each summer," he points out, "but living in Sweden to me is like living in the forest. Because that's what it comes down to, no matter where you live—either you're living in the forest or you're living in a metropolis, and I guess I need the balance of living in both. Everyone thinks of Long Island as a suburb, but the part I live in is more like an industrial city, and Manhattan is right outside my window.

"But if you were to go to our schoolhouse in Togarp and then come out to our loft, you'd see it was just like walking from one room of a house into another, because Moqui is a designer, and she creates the same environment no matter where we are. But, yes, it is hard adjusting all the time. At first, whenever you come back to New York, you get diarrhea!" A smile reapportions the furrows and long planes of his handsome, angular face, and his dark, prominent eyes dart quickly around, as they do whenever he realizes he has said something funny or he wishes to underline a point.

"I became very conscious of diet in Sweden. I was a vegetarian the four years we lived there year-round. I planted all my

We're in a basement dressing room in the Public Theatre now; Cherry is due upstairs in an hour or so to begin rehearsal for the Liberation Music Orchestra's American premiere this evening. In the meantime, he's mugging for the *Musician* photographer, using his battered, tarnished horn as a prop—tucking the pocket trumpet in the pocket of his coat so that it appears to be shyly peeking out; holding it up lengthwise to his chin and stroking it gently, rather as if he half-expected a playful, purring kitten to come pawing up out of the bell. Between rolls of film, he puffs his cheeks into giant bubbles and blows a few bars of Ornette Coleman's "Beauty Is A Rare Thing" through the horn. All the twisting motion and running colors of Coleman's classic meditation for quartet are hauntingly encapsulated in this impromptu solo rendition.

"I think of it as a tonsil," he says of the truncated horn. "I use it to *sing*. I mean, I wouldn't want to be thinking of playing trumpet to the point where the instrument begins to control *me*. This horn's a light instrument, and its timbre's close to the sound of my own voice.

"The first pocket trumpet I owned I got in the San Fernando Valley around the time I met Ornette. It felt good for my size and the kind of music I was playing. It was made in Pakistan, and I remember it cost a hundred dollars, and I only had twenty-five. But Red Mitchell, the bass player, loaned me the rest. I'll always be grateful to Red for that.

"This pocket trumpet I have now was made in France and used in a spectacular that Josephine Baker was in. Its bell is even smaller than other pocket trumpets, and you can see it has jade on the top. The first trumpet I ever owned was a Sears Silvertone—I guess everything Sears sells is named Silvertone! Fats Navarro and Clifford Brown were the trumpeters I adored around that time, but I realized that I'd never be strong enough to get a big, full sound like theirs. Miles Davis became very special to me—he didn't need vibrato, his tone was so pure. And Sweets Edison impressed me a lot too; I especially liked his humor and his approach to accompanying singers."

Cherry was caught up in music even before settling upon these favorite trumpeters. As youngsters, he and his sister would roll back the living room carpet and jitterbug to the hits of the 40s, and on Sundays, the entire family would sing in the Baptist church. His grandmother had played piano in a silent

movie house before he was born, and his father tended bar in a Central Avenue jazz club. Still, Cherry's decision to become a professional musician met with some family disapproval. "From what he saw on the job, my father believed playing jazz was the first step to drug addiction," he affectionately jests.

Cherry was not so easily deterred, however. He learned chord changes from a bassist named Harper Crosby. "I was just improvising from the melody until Harper hipped me there was more. He taught me so well that Ornette used to call me the chord man, because I was always so fascinated by chord patterns.

"It was Jayne Cortez who introduced me to Ornette. Jayne was my guru when I was a kid, the one who would turn me on to the latest records and books. She later became Ornette's first wife, and now she's a highly regarded poet. Ornette was being persecuted even back then, and not just because of his music either. He was the first man I ever saw, white or black, with long hair. There's resistance to him even now, even from some black musicians, because of his electric band. It's amazing, isn't it?"

It's nothing compared to the controversy that circled over Coleman's head during his tenure at the Half Note in 1959. This was probably the closest jazz has ever come to Beatlemania: everyone in New York it seemed, jazz fan or not, had something to say pro or con about Coleman's potential effect on jazz and on Western civilization in general (there's a funny, fictionalized account of the hysteria in Thomas Pynchon's first novel, *V*). If little of the debate surrounding Coleman extended to Cherry at first, it was because the trumpeter was initially deemed unworthy either of such approbation or advocacy. Understandably, Cherry let the leader dominate their unison skirmishes, and, to some listeners, Cherry's solos often sounded like timid paraphrases of the Coleman solos that preceded them. It became apparent only in retrospect that Cherry was commendably striving to maintain "the intensity and brilliance of Ornette's solos and his written lines, that sparkle Ornette's music has that is almost like a shining diamond and that you have to keep going from the beginning of the piece until the end," as he astutely puts it. It has also become obvious in retrospect that Cherry succeeded in this objective more often than not.

Following an altercation long since forgotten by both men, Cherry left Coleman's group and returned to Los Angeles. "And it was Sonny Rollins who rescued me, who got me out of L.A. and took me to Europe for the first time. When I was in Paris with Sonny in 1963, I'd go sit in with the gypsies and play the standards Django Reinhardt had recorded. I'd find the Dixieland groups and play with them too. And when we went to Denmark, I looked up Don Byas and Dexter Gordon, and I heard Albert Ayler for the first time there too.

"My willingness to play different kinds of jazz is what led to my interest in ethnic musics, I guess. I've had so many wonderful experiences playing music in Europe, Asia, India, Africa and South America. and I've been fortunate to study with the masters in all those places too. You know, to study with a man like Ustad Zia M'Digar in India, you have to humble yourself in a certain way. You have to demonstrate your respect for him and for the tradition that's been handed down in his family for two thousand years. It's like fine wine—you don't offer it to someone who isn't going to savor it, who can't tell the difference.

"It's funny. In many of the countries I've visited, the young people are more interested in Western music than in the music of their own culture. That's why it's important for me to go to Africa, say, and play the *doussn' gouni*. The young people realize the importance of their own music if they hear a Western musician playing it. It's happening here in America, too, with young black kids. If you look at the schools teaching improvisation, you'll see the students are mostly white. That's why I applied for a grant from the NEA last spring and went to work with the kids growing up now where I grew up in Watts. I tried to expose them to Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk,

both of whom I revered as a kid, and to Ornette Coleman, whose music I was able to contribute to.

"You asked me how it is that my kids are involved in music?" Cherry's eighteen-year-old daughter Nonah sings with the British punk band Rip, Rig and Panic, and his other three offspring all play instruments. "It's because they've been taught they're part of a culture and that they have a responsibility to keep it alive. Same thing with Jim Pepper, the saxophonist who went to West Africa with me. Jim's an Indian whose father is a singer in the pow wows," says Cherry, who is one-quarter Choctaw himself. "The response in Africa was tremendous when Jim would play one of the pow wow pieces he had written—from the people in the Embassy, especially. They realized that *here* was something truly American."

Western musicians have been infatuated with the musics of the Third World at least since the Great Mystical Awakening of the 60s, but few ever have been able to resist the urge to conquer and colonize. Don Cherry has been a notable exception. A kind of musical Marco Polo, he has introduced many exotic fabrics and spices to jazz. But it is not in Cherry's nature to plunder. He is determined always to offer something of equal value in trade for whatever bounty he decides to take on board. And most important of all, recognizing that a people's music is but one strand in the web of ceremony and custom that makes their experience unique, he is careful to leave that web intact.

Inevitably, some of what Cherry wants to tell us about the world is garbled in the translation. Sometimes he and his colleagues in Codona (Colin Walcott and Nan Vasconcelos) remind me of small children cupping seashells to their ears: they mistake the rush of their own hearts' excitement for the roar of the great ocean that washed such a treasure up. There are times when the sense of one-world optimism they labor to convey strikes me as wishful and self-deluded. And it's difficult for me to shake the longstanding prejudice that musicians like Cherry shortchange themselves and their audiences in those moments when they eschew their natural instruments and discipline for dabbings with ethnic instruments and doctrines.

But it's possible to forgive the most brilliant trumpeter of his generation any amount of good-natured doodling the moment he finally lifts the trumpet to his lips. Blessed with an immaculate sense of form from the very beginning, Cherry's solos have gained even greater compression, I think, as a result of his examinations of musics in which the rules of improvisation are far more constricting than the make-it-up-as-you-go-along philosophy governing self-expression in too much contemporary jazz. If it seems that Cherry has been adrift on a musical odyssey these last twenty years, it's good to remember that an odyssey is a round trip, after all.

Homecoming is the theme that pervades his music now. One of the many pleasures of hearing *Old and New Dreams*, for example, is sensing the obvious pleasure Cherry, Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden and Ed Blackwell still take from hearing each other, even after having played together off and on in various combinations for close to twenty-five years now. Each member of O&ND is an Ornette Coleman alumnus, and classic Coleman still accounts for roughly half of the band's live repertoire. "And some of those pieces I was playing with Ornette in California, long before we ever recorded," Cherry says. It is unlikely Coleman would ever have changed jazz as profoundly as he has, had he not enlisted players as sympathetic to his cause as Cherry and the others. Coleman's music is *their* music too, and they perform it with a keening edge of heart and purpose that can literally make you tingle.

Tonight's concert is something of a reunion too, of course. Few records of the era conveyed the musical and political upheaval of the late 60s as powerfully as Charlie Haden's *Liberation Music Orchestra* date did; now, many of Haden's original co-conspirators have begun to reassemble in this small room. Looking at them now, it's discouraging to think

continued on page 91

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MUSICIAN

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The Instruments, The People, The Process

60 RIC OCASEK

Leader of pop-moderne superstars the Cars, prospecting producer of unhousebroken new bands and now a solo artist sporting a fine LP of spontaneous combustion, "Beatitude," Ric Ocasek is a hard-working Renaissance man for our times.



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LYNN GOLDSMITH

Ric Ocasek swings back and forth to some imaginary rhythm in his swivel chair in the control room of Syncro Sound Studios in Boston, his gangly giraffe legs drawn up jackknife-style under his pointed chin. In black-and-white op-art threads with his thick black hair drawn back like a plumed helmet from his long oval face, he sits at the 24-track mixing desk with its knobs, lights and jumping needles like some praying beatnik mantis at the helm of an intergalactic space ship. On the other side of the studio window, vocalist Alan Vega is preparing his band for take-off.

The song is called "Video Babe," a pumping rockabilly drone that marries the primal minimalism of Vega's work in the electronic duo Suicide with ripsnorting Sun Sessions twang. While his backing trio—all heavy hitters on guitar, bass and drums—hammer down the beat, Vega whispers, coos, screams and grunts about the "video babe" and the "neutron raiders, uh-huh!" like Iggy Presley. Back at the desk, Ocasek almost imperceptibly tweaks the echo and delay on Vega's voice and the drums,

"Don't worry, Alan. If it gets too good"—he gestures at his engineer and tape operator—"we'll screw it up."

But there will be none of that tonight. Not only will Ocasek cut four songs with Vega and his band before calling it quits at 5:00 a.m., but he will also spring on Vega seven new instrumental tracks he recorded himself the night before with a Korg synth and a live drummer—real rock 'n' roll Suicide stuff—to which he wants Vega to add lyrics and vocals. Alan Vega came to Boston to cut a four-track EP. Ocasek will send him home a couple of days later with an album.

Ric Ocasek gets a lot of work done—writing and recording with flash popsters the Cars, producing the likes of Vega and Romeo Void and cutting his own solo LP *Beatitude*—because he does not spend a lot of time worrying about what critics say about him. He is not offended by complaints that the Cars are a soulless hit machine whose tenuous connections with the new wave are an embarrassment to the real thing; that his songs and

RIC OCASEK

already mapping out a potential mix while the band records a few takes live.

But Vega is not happy and the oppressive heat inside the studio (the building's ventilation is on the fritz) is not helping. Buzzing around the control room like a bee on speed, Vega listens to the takes of "Video Babe" and complains that the beat is just not right, that it is not what he calls "in that *place*." Ocasek thinks the takes are good, almost there. To ease the tension, he gives the band an encouraging word and then turns to Vega with a sly grin.

sound draw on a dwindling supply of Roxy Music and Velvet Underground clichés set off by top-forty sparkle; that his *outré* production projects are his penance for raking in millions with the Cars. He simply doesn't understand them.

"It's like the Cars are supposed to be my AM personality and the other stuff is my underground personality," he smiles between drags on a cigarette in the basement lounge of Syncro, the Cars' jointly owned studio/clubhouse. "But it's basically the same. The Cars material is just

BY DAVID FRICKE



LYNN GOLDSMITH

approached in maybe more of a pop fashion. Yet the Cars are a thinking band. They all dig Alan Vega."

Ocasek concedes that fans who love sleek Cars singles like "My Best Friend's Girl," "Shake It Up" and even *Panorama's* "Touch And Go" with its booby-trap 5/4-4/4 rhythm may not fall head over heels for recent Ocasek productions by Boston art-punks the Dark or Washington, D.C. Rasta hard-core thrash band the Bad Brains. "But that just goes to show you how we use those influences. I'm inspired by those alternatives."

In fact, he encourages them. A kind of pop philanthropist, he usually brings maverick talents like the Bad Brains, pop tart Bebe Buell, Boston band New Models and Romeo Void (whose Ocasek-produced "Never Say Never" was one of '82's great dance-club spins) into Syncro Sound at drastically reduced rates, often absorbing all the costs until the band or artist places the record with a label who will foot the bill. In the case of the Bad Brains, Ocasek even assumed the group's hotel and food expenses while they were in Boston cutting their record. At the same time, he has turned down major label offers to produce A Flock of Seagulls and German punk diva Nina Hagen.

"I feel kind of a responsibility to these other groups," he insists. "Like, Jesus, this person or group is too good to be ignored. And it's also the excitement of not having to just listen to a record after it's been done, but actually being there to watch it done.

"I pretty much pick these groups when they're pretty unique within themselves *already*," he adds when pressed on his production technique. "I don't like to have to enforce anything extra on them. What I often do is just sort of guide them, to make sure that the sounds are interesting and different."

A good example of his discreet influence is the second Suicide album, simply entitled *Alan Vega-Martin Rev-Suicide* and issued by Ze/Antilles in 1980. Previously, keyboard player Rev had been egging on Vega's vocal hysteria with nothing more than a battered Univox organ ("with maybe three or four different sounds," according to Ocasek) and a rusty rhythm

hour lecture out in the middle of Boston Common on his Rasta philosophy before he would do his vocals.) "It was almost a mono mix," Ocasek recalls, although he recorded the band on 24-track. "We worked on sounds for a couple of hours and when it felt like the power was there, I just said, 'Go!' They all stood in a circle, looked at each other, and then bang-bang-bang, that was it."

The Bad Brains cut sixteen basic tracks, "all the fast hard-core stuff," in one day with a little extra time allotted for the reggae dub numbers. (Four of those songs are now out on a twelve-inch EP *I And I Survive/Destroy Babylon* through Important Records in New York.) The only reason the vocals took longer was that when H.R. came in to sing the next day, no one noticed the vari-speed switch on the tape machine was slipped on. The backing tracks ran half a key higher and H.R., Ocasek moans, "left his voice all over the walls." He recut H.R.'s vocals a few days later—only one take per song—at a studio in Washington, D.C.

"In recording, you can spend a lot of time to make sure every sound is the way it's supposed to be," Ocasek shrugs, acknowledging the speed and surprising ease with which he makes records, the Cars included. Both 1978's *The Cars* and the followup *Candy-O* were finished inside two weeks, from setup to final mix. "I think it's a matter of focusing energy quickly. I just put the energy in the right place to get out of it what I want."

During a brief discussion of his favorite producers, Ocasek mentions Germany's Conny Plank and his work with electropop pioneers Kraftwerk, more recent synth experimentalists Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft and primal British post-punk dance band Killing Joke. "All those one-line keyboard touches in the Killing Joke records are Conny Plank's ideas. They're so minimal and yet they're so right. I like the rawness of those records, yet it still sounds so *real*."

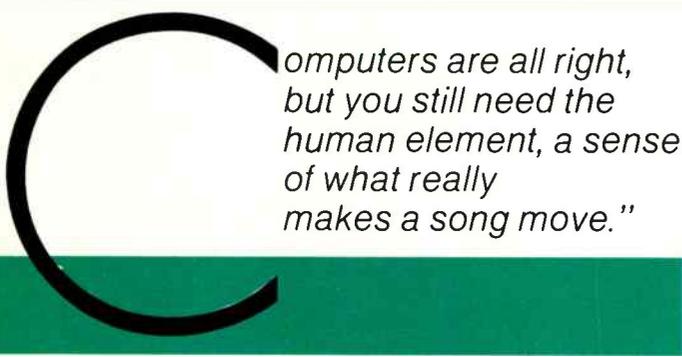
In a sense, *Beatitude*—Ric Ocasek's debut solo album and now out on Geffen Records—is quite raw. The ten songs were all conceived and, for the most part, recorded solo in Ocasek's 8-track home studio, with extra parts and mixing done on the 24-track at Syncro. There are actually a couple of rather entertaining mistakes left intact. You may catch Ocasek singing the word "flucked," for example, amid the mantric synthesizers and electronic eggbeater percussion of "Out Of Control." He explains that before recording that vocal at home, he toyed with the idea of changing the line "you fucked around and waited" to "you fooled around..." to spare Geffen airplay headaches. He still hadn't made up his mind when he laid down the vocal and in his indecision came up with "flucked."

"I just left it like that because that vocal had the feeling, you know?" he says without apology. "I didn't even try to sing it over. I could have done it right, but I could not have done it better."

Raw, blemished in spots, *Beatitude* sounds all the more real for it, an inviting, involving record in spite of all the synthesizers and the dark shadows crossing many of the songs. Part of it may be the double teaming of a Linn drum machine with a live drummer, impressive newcomer Stephen George of the Midwest electro-funk band Ministry. Part of it may be Ocasek's use of first-take home-recorded vocals on half the songs.

But there is something about *Beatitude* quite contrary to the electronic robot sterility critics seem to hear in Ocasek's work with the Cars. With the intonations of nervous paranoia in his almost conversational vocal over the electronic locomotion of "Jimmy Jimmy" and the sultry techno-disco come-on of "Prove" (try playing this side-by-side with Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing"), he is flirting with that point of no return where the synthesized becomes the anesthetized, seeing just how far a little human feeling can go.

"I'm all for the computers and technology in music," he insists. "But the human element, of figuring out what particular line to play, the way to play it, that's something you can't compute. You still need a sense of what really makes a song



Computers are all right,
but you still need the
human element, a sense
of what really
makes a song move."

machine that sounded like it was running on squirrel-power. Ocasek modestly accepts only part of the credit for *Suicide II's* rich keyboard orchestration and weird cathedral synth grandeur, saying it was originally Rev's idea to add a Prophet and some Moog bass lines to the basic *Suicide* pulse. But in fact it was Ocasek who filtered out all of Rev's possible counter-lines and counter-rhythms, brightening and enriching *Suicide's* stark minimalism without compromising their awesome aggression.

"Well, he would run through a gamut of sounds and then I would stop him and say, 'Wait a minute, don't lose that one.' Or maybe, 'Let's use that sound for this part.' He would be trying all these different lines and I would just be the other ear, to say, 'I think *that* one fits instead of all those others.'"

More recently, he offered his services to the Bad Brains after being transfixed by the raw spirituality of their Reach Out International cassette release *Bad Brains*. (The band, acknowledged leaders of America's outlaw punk community, were naturally suspicious. Singer H.R. gave Ocasek a three-

move. That's the hardest part. Programming the stuff is simple." (Note: all of the synthesizers on *Beatitude* were manually played with the sole exception of a sequencer, which makes a brief appearance in "Connect Up To Me.")

Ocasek further complicated the man/machine tug of wills and wires by introducing a few extra human elements on the album. In Stephen George he found a drummer who could play "really hard" but with the meticulous syncopation of a drum machine. For the six *Beatitude* tracks on which he plays (the rest are credited to a "Miss Linn"—geddit?), George usually copied the original drum machine rhythm from Ocasek's demo while adding his own stylish muscle in collaboration with guest bassist Darryl Jenifer of the Bad Brains, who chipped in his own punky soul. On a few tracks, Ocasek mixed the drum overdubs with LinnDrum fills in counterpoint to the already rhythmic clip of his synthesizer lines.

Another neat trick was inviting several outside players to contribute parts to a song and then pick from their various throws of the dice. Ocasek would pass tapes of a basic track on to local Boston guitarists like Fuzzbee Morse from his old band Richard & the Rabbits, Roger Greenawalt of the Dark (whose nifty Ocasek-produced *Darkworld* EP is just out) and New Models' Casey Lindstrom and tell them to write additional parts for the song without allowing them to hear the others' ideas.

"For instance, Roger of the Dark came in with a few guitar parts for 'Prove.' The one I used was a little clicky part (a scratchy guitar figure with a disorienting rhythm of its own). But he also put a chordal thing on it that was so strange I couldn't even use it. The chordal thing changed the key and the notes in the song so when I would sing the chorus, the melody was totally different. That was great, though, because I knew if I wanted something really different, I could get Roger to play it. I knew his parts would be real off, definitely from another place."

From yet another place is the brainbusting guitar break by Fuzzbee Morse during the heavy metallic climax of "Time Bomb." "That," Ocasek recalls, "was a one-take guitar part. And he also did the feedback track that goes underneath that part of the song. I said to him, 'I just want total feedback in A, just let it ring and don't ever let it go down.' So he was out there in front of his Marshall amp doing this feedback stuff and I think he knocked off his headphones. But he didn't want to stop, so he just sat there with the thing feeding back right in his ear. He didn't even know if he was playing to the backing track anymore." The final result, according to Ocasek, "sounds like dogs crying or something."

Only three songs on *Beatitude*—"Time Bomb," the plucky Cars-like "Something To Grab For" and "A Quick One," which is distinguished by a chunka-chunka guitar rhythm often at the heart of Ocasek's poppier numbers—were wholly recorded at Syncro Sound. "Out Of Control" is a home 8-track number recorded with Cars synth specialist Greg Hawkes that didn't make the cut for *Shake It Up*. "Jimmy Jimmy" is all 8-track except for an additional keyboard played by Stephen Hague of Jules & the Polar Bears and an atmospheric female vocal. Everything else features at least keyboard or vocal parts first laid down at home and transferred to 24-track for overdubs.

"For me, the 8-track stuff is done at the real point of inspiration, things that you can never get again. At the point of inspiration, you make mistakes. But they're not really mistakes sometimes but alternative ideas, things that just pop into your head that are interesting. Something like when I wrote 'Panorama'—you're in that 'Panorama' mood for a day or so, engulfed with it. And so there's a certain feeling in it. To come in and dissect it, relearn the parts and do 'em over could just sterilize it.

"'Jimmy Jimmy' was an 8-track tape I used to listen to while I would ride around in my car. And I liked listening to it in the car. I always thought, 'God, I'm just going to keep it just like this. And that was one track done.'"

"Jimmy Jimmy" started life as a bass line played on a Korg



and the tick-tock of the LinnDrum machine. Ocasek says he tried adding drums to the song later, discovering instead that the monotonous click of the Linn highlighted the sparseness of the arrangement and forced more attention to the lyrics. Over the Korg and Linn he next laid his vocal, followed by synth strings swelling up from his Roland Jupiter 8 synthesizer.

"That was basically it, except for a guitar in there that just plays little notes. The background vocal drone on the Vocorder (an electronic chorus device that sounds like a bunch of hammy R2D2s doing Rudy Vallee impressions) was the main part for me. I had the attack set real slow so that when



While he's comfortable behind Synchro Sound's 24-track board, Ric prefers to work on his home 8-track.

I was singing the Jimmys, the Vocorder would swell on the off-beat for a counter-rhythm. I would put my hand down on the Vocorder, say the Jimmys, and then the chorus would swell up after it. I like doing little things like that."

Ocasek suspects his *Beatitude* adventures will strongly influence the outcome of the next Cars album, due to be recorded in the spring. "I'm really excited about us coming back and doing another record. Everybody will be much more expanded because they have had time off to do quite a few alternative projects." Which is to say Greg Hawkes, singer/bassist Ben Orr and guitarist Elliot Easton all have solo albums in the pipeline while drummer David Robinson busies himself producing young Boston talent. When questioned about it, Ocasek admits he fears the Cars' five turbulent years together have led to an inbred programming, a dangerous predictability, in their creative responses to each other. There is a danger that the Cars have simply come to know themselves too well.

"But that's the way it works with a band," he objects. "It always will be that way. That's not to say you can't consistently come up with new things. It just depends on how far out you want to go. It depends on if you're just doing it for the sake of change. I mean anybody can make a real strange record, if you just want to go out on a limb. And it's not to say it would make everyone happy. Except yourself."

The Ric Ocasek story is not exactly one of rags-to-riches; it's more like the Poor Farm-to-his-chauffeur's bedroom. The Poor Farm was the honest-to-gawd name of a Boston area studio where in 1971, shortly after moving east from Cleveland, Ocasek first got his hands on quality studio gear, trading sweat and elbow grease while the room was being renovated for free recording time. He made tapes of his pre-Cars band Richard & the Rabbits and started his outside production career cutting demo tracks for local Boston acts. In the bar located just downstairs from the studio, he and Ben Orr also picked up spare change playing as an acoustic duo.

The chauffeur's bedroom is a tiny studio apartment under the garage of his large, stylishly furnished home (two original Warhol portraits of Ocasek greet you as you enter the foyer) in

the high-brow Brookline section of Boston. Since he has no use for a chauffeur (the previous owners apparently did), Ocasek has instead cluttered the room with a surprisingly modest collection—at least given his income—of electronic toys and studio curios with which he has recorded Cars song demos and most of *Beatitude*. He can't tell you much about his guitars except whether they are Gibsons or Fenders—the former for leads and core riffs, the latter for rhythms. In addition to using a Roland Space Echo, he is fond of the slapback he gets in the adjacent bathroom by filling the bathtub with varying amounts of water. And he absolutely refuses to move from 8-track up to 16.

"I like all the new stuff that's out," he explains, "but there's really only a few things I need. Like, eighty percent of all effects work on some sort of delay system, whether it's flanged or phased or whatever. Even harmonizers work on delay principles. Then there's your synthesized keyboards. The most refined seem to be the Prophet and the Jupiter 8. I'm not into the Fairlight or the Synclavier, which are basically 16-track tape recorders and that's eight more than I need.

"I could get bogged down with all those sounds and all the keyboard variations. I'm not really a keyboard player anyway—I only play with my right hand so I can move the controls with the other. And when it comes to writing songs, I'm basically a purist. I just usually write it on a guitar, bare, on a cassette or sometimes on my 8-track machine with a couple of instruments."

That seems strange anti-tech talk from someone who spent his teenage years in the family basement building 2,000-watt ham radio transmitters and by age sixteen had passed the grueling FCC examination for a First Class Engineer's license. But Ocasek says he did not get his first cassette machine until he was in college, and although he and Ben Orr noodled around in a couple of Cleveland recording studios in their early days, he claims the Poor Farm experience was his first real interface with multitrack recording. And even then he didn't go equipment-crazy. Ocasek confesses that the 1977 Cars demos (including a prototype "Just What I Needed"), which received saturation airplay on Boston's WBCN and later led to their Elektra contract, were unmixed live 2-track tapes cut at the Poor Farm.

"Back then, it was all totally off the cuff. I considered everything a demo. It was just to hear what we were doing. But there was quite a bit of fooling around with the songs, to try to get some kind of a sound. I remember trying to get as much ambience in a room as I could on drums, just putting mikes way far away and putting a lot of compression on the ambient mikes. There were different echo effects to elongate the sound on the snare drums.

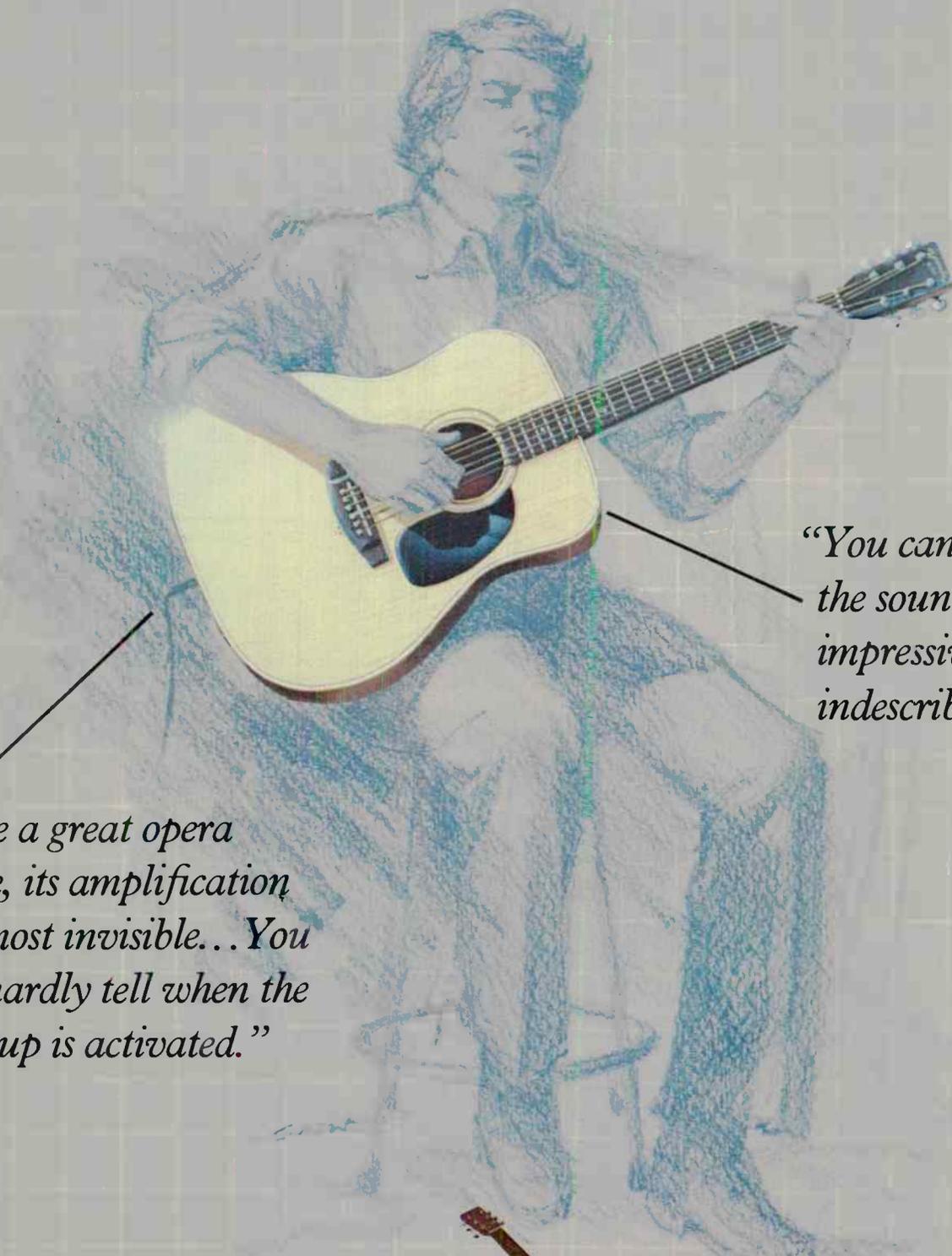
"At that point, it was more messing around than even caring about the songs. Then it sort of reversed itself, where I got more into the songs and that recording experience just fell into place."

These days Ocasek busies himself while at home with a TEAC 88 8-track tape machine connected to a Sound Workshop 1280B board in turn hooked up with two Orban 622B equalizers (the board is also equipped with its own parametric equalizers). For keyboards he swears by his Prophet 5 and Roland Jupiter 8, using a Korg Lambda for orchestral coloring and often calling in an assortment of little Casiotones for reinforcement. He probably has more drum machines than anything else—both the old Linn LM-1 Drum Computer and the new LinnDrum, a Korg KR55, five Roland units (including a TR808, CR8000 and a Dr. Rhythm), some old Univox rhythm gizmos and a drum machine yanked out of a Hammond organ "that has the Liverpool beat," the kind of insect clicking you hear in organ shops in suburban shopping malls.

"Guitars? My favorite ones are always Gibsons. Fenders like the Jaguar I'll use on stuff like 'My Best Friend's Girl,' clicky stuff where I'm just playing eighth notes. The Gibsons I like for more distorted, bigger, raw kinds of sounds." One of them is a

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D E V E L O P M E N T S

ACOUSTIC GUITARS: AFTER THE BOOM

Bold Ideas for Lean Times

BY J.C. COSTA



The spruce-top, mahogany-back Guild D-40C.

There was a time when, during the height of what Martin Mull has forever immortalized as the "folk scare" of the early-middle 60s, it seemed like *everyone* was torturing an acoustic guitar with some new quasi-Appalachian lick teeming with rural grit. The classic C.F. Martin "dreadnought"-style acoustic guitar with emblematic pick guard shape lingers as a crucial symbol of that era. For the first time, respectable, college-educated, upper-middle class solid citizens of the future embraced the guitar and chased male and female role models like the Kingston Trio, New Christy Minstrels, Joan Baez, Dylan, Judy Collins, Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs and so many more. The Martin Company, a venerable family firm known for its superlative acoustic instruments dating back to the early 1800s, expanded their facilities in 1964 to meet the demand, retooling their production

to turn out an ever increasing number of high quality acoustics peaking in 1971 with a total production of 22,367 guitars.

Looking back now with nearly twenty years' hindsight, in what is euphemistically called a "soft" musical instrument market, it appears the across-the-board popularity of the acoustic flat-top steel string guitar—as opposed to classical or flamenco guitars, which are another story in another hemisphere—has long since peaked. Opinions on where the acoustic may be headed from here differ. Stan Jay, owner and resident scolar of the Staten Island-based Mandolin Brothers, well known for their expertise in classic American acoustic guitars, banjos and mandolins, is more hopeful than most: "The vintage acoustic guitar market has never changed, it's always been very solid, very consistent. The more expensive the guitar, the harder it is to sell. But sales of intermediate guitars like the Ovation Custom Legend have picked up."

A passion for the great American flat-tops like the Martin D-28 Herringbone also grew out of the folk boom. Urban folkies could spend days debating the virtues of a two-piece rosewood back (again, the D-28) versus the three-piece back that replaced it. A complex oral history was developed from the most finite details of purfling, inlay, rosettes, headstocks, serial numbers, body shape, logo and date on older acoustic instruments. Matt Umanov, whose Greenwich Village guitar store is still a focal point for what's left of this movement, doesn't mince words when the topic of the vintage acoustic craze comes up.

"The collector or 'vintage freak' thing is definitely over. Sales of the new upper end acoustics have dropped tremendously. The better stuff like Martin is now bought by two kinds of people: the ones who play for themselves and finally decide to go for it, and rockers in established bands who want a good acoustic. Electric may be their bread and butter but an acoustic is still the *real thing*."

Umanov's purist sentiments about the acoustic instrument may strike younger musicians as being antiquated, if not a bit ludicrous, in today's barrage of naked electric metal and synth-pop. But for the



Ovation Classic and Country Artist cutaways.

impassioned folkster, purism was the whole trip. Authentic roots music could only be played on authentic American fretted instruments. And speaking of purism, no discussion of acoustics could be complete without the admittedly dour but profound insights of George Gruhn, respected by many as *the* leading authority on acoustic fretted instruments.

"Well, I tend to be quite pessimistic, but sales in general are severely off, electric and acoustic. This is particularly true on a worldwide basis. After the worldwide guitar market opened up in the 70s, companies like Martin and Gibson depended on it because as much as sixty percent of their business was overseas. Now it has dried to a virtual halt. And the domestic market is not good either."

Fully acknowledging the reduced visibility of acoustic guitars in live concert situations and the absence of role models to stimulate the sales of particular models, Gruhn is particularly disheartened by the modern player's attitudes toward acoustics. "No market can be any more stable or sophisticated than its clientele. In the case of musical instruments, no market can be more stable or sophisticated than the type of music for which the instrument is utilized and the type of clientele to which that music appeals. In the case of punk, how far can you take that? Bluegrass you can take further. The guitar market in general is very youth-oriented. Almost eighty percent of the market is between

P L A Y E R S

RICHARD GREENE, VIOLINIST & FIDDLER

Quality in the Musical Melting Pot

BY DAN FORTE

twenty and thirty-five years of age. Every five years you lose one third of your clientele and you gain a new third on the bottom end. However, my generation's knowledge of acoustic instruments seems to be lost. In the early 70s my customers knew all of the different Martin models. Now, they barely know or care what a Martin is. How can you sell a prewar Gibson Advanced Jumbo to someone who's never heard of the model?"

Grim prophecy aside, the new acoustic market proceeds apace, more and more streamlined as the guitar makers benefit from the new technology to make these instruments more accessible and flexible for recording and live concert work. Most of the industry agrees on the two major design innovations for acoustics in recent years: on-board pickup systems for amplification without feedback, and bodies with cutaways for easier access to the upper registers. Ovation guitars have played a major role in acoustic pickup technology, not to mention setting the purists on their collective ears with guitars made of space age materials like Lyrachord and carbon graphite.

The exact origin of the cutaway is harder to pin down, but the recently introduced Martin MC-28 with cutaway and oval soundhole, also available with specially designed Barcus-Berry transducer and active electronics to "maintain the acoustic response of the guitar," seems to be one of the more finely



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

While adept at "old time bounce," Greene aspires to "searing, original, white hot intensity."

Richard is totally unique," declares Margaret Wooten-Greene, "because he can dive into both worlds, bluegrass or classical, with great feeling."

One can forgive Margaret for being a little biased in favor of Richard Greene's versatile talents; she is, after all, married to him. But she also plays violin herself—quite well, thank you. When she's not playing "second fiddle" to her husband in his progressive acoustic band, she plays violin in the Los Angeles Philharmonic and does her share of studio work. She met Richard, in fact, at a string section studio date and admits, "It really surprised me that he was doing that kind of date. But Richard had a great influence on me ten or twelve years before I met him, because I was a fan of Seatrain."

"The people who have me pegged as a string section concertmaster—which I do a lot of—would never think of me on country fiddle," Greene laughs. "They'd hire someone else who can't play half of what I can play. And the people who think of me as a country fiddler would never hire me to lead a string section. I'm trying to get all these people educated that I do both," he says, pointing to a business card that reads "Richard Greene, Violinist & Fiddler."

Greene's remarkable career is ample

evidence that he can indeed play classical, bluegrass and a whole lot more. From hanging out at Los Angeles' legendary folk haven, the Ash Grove, and playing with old-timey bands like the Mad Mountain Ramblers and the Dry City Scat Band (both with David Lindley), Greene graduated to a seat in Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys (playing with the father of the genre). Following a stint with the Jim Kweskin Jug Band, Richard became the pioneer of electric rock violin with the group Seatrain. After some frustrating years of feedback, Greene went all-acoustic, forming the groundbreaking Great American Music Band with mandolinist David Grisman. One lengthy and lucrative tour with Loggins & Messina later, Richard settled down to the L.A. studio scene—playing on numerous TV and film scores and the occasional album date (he's the violin soloist on "You're In My Heart" by Rod Stewart)—and began forming his dream band, featuring two violins (Richard and Margaret) and one viola (Jimbo Ross) backed by acoustic guitar, upright bass, vibes and percussion.

Blue Rondo, Greene's latest album on Sierra Records, illustrates where the violinist started (classical training), where he's been (rock and bluegrass) and where he's heading (jazz). "I think I



Martin's MC-28, available with Barcus-Berry transducer and active electronics.

have a good idea here," he offers, "with the three strings taking the place of what would traditionally be three horns in a jazz group. It's not Coltrane, it's not Charlie Parker, it's not Miles Davis—it's my brand of jazz, which consists of some classical music reinterpreted, my interpretations of some classic jazz tunes and some original tunes."

As might be expected, Richard's list of inspirational violinists runs the gamut from Jascha Heifetz to Vassar Clements. Mike Seeger's fiddling with the New Lost City Ramblers was Richard's earliest influence, and then Scott Stoneman literally changed Greene's life. "Because of Scott Stoneman, I became a professional musician. The Stoneman Family came to the Ash Grove, and there was Scott sitting out in the front room by himself, just fiddling. That was enough for me. He showed me that the fiddle could do things other than just play cute, bouncy old-time music. It could play intense, original, searing, white-hot stuff. I saw that emotional expression that I'd never thought was possible before."

Greene's favorite "jazz" violinist is a classical player from New York named Harry Lookofsky. "He's probably the most jazz violinist I've ever heard. He's phenomenal, just mind-blowing. He's the only guy who really took the acoustic violin and made it sound like a horn."

One of the original champions of the electric violin, Richard prefers to play his 1942 Mario Frosali violin acoustically, although he also owns a fiddle with a Barcus-Berry pickup in the bridge. "The electric violin is not equipped for playing most types of music. It doesn't turn my intellect on like trying to make a beautiful tone does. It was always a real struggle amplifying the violin with Seatrain. Back then it was the DeArmond pickup and feedback city. By the time I toured with Loggins & Messina, Barcus-Berry had come along, fortunately. Their bridge pickup is the *only* one; all of the stick-on and clip-on things are just crap."

The electric fiddle he occasionally uses these days has gut strings and is a traditional violin in every other way. But there was a time when he used metal strings and a viola bow (sometimes even an aluminum bow) to get a stronger signal to the amplifier. One of his specialties with Seatrain and Loggins & Messina was a show-stopping unaccompanied Echoplex violin solo. In retrospect, though, he feels "I have nothing more to say with the Echoplex and all that. It was a lot of fun, but the other night I saw Jean-Luc Ponty play an unaccompanied Echoplex solo—just like I used to—and I can't think of anything I could add to that."

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FRED FRITH'S EXPLORATIONS

A Guitarist Tries Anything & Everything

BY FREF



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Unable to "go any further" on the guitar, Frith now works with homemade instruments.

Let's start by giving the purists a heart attack, and back and fill from there, snail! we?

Fred Frith likes Van Halen.

If you've never heard of Fred Frith, that statement won't surprise you. On the other hand, if you have at least a nodding acquaintance with this thirty-three-year-old Englishman's music (his ten years with Henry Cow, guest appearances with Material and Brian Eno and the Residents, improvisational solo concerts that have made his rep as "that guy who does really strange things to guitars"), then that twinge you're feeling is your preconceptions being kicked. A good thing, too. Because preconceptions—of any kind—just aren't what this guy and his music are about.

Creativity tempered by practicality, yes. Turning loss into gain, equipment

"failure" into new tonality, going wrong to get it right—that's Fred Frith.

Take the lineup of his current band, Skeleton Crew. Frith plays electric guitar, violin, Fender six-string bass, tape deck, metronome and bass drum. His partner, Tom Cora, plays cello, bass, tape deck, bass drum, high-hat and electric motors. Note: no drummer. There was one, once, but he split to become an architecture student. With gigs pending, most people would find this cause for panic. Fred Frith saw it as an opportunity.

"The whole point of not having a drummer was to do something a little different rhythmically. There are drum machines now that are sophisticated enough, but they're economically beyond our means. And it seems to me that one should use one's economic problems creatively. So we use lots of low-tech ways of making rhythms. The bass drums have different sizes and tunings. If you superamplify the metronome and put it through a Mu-Tron octave divider you get three or four tones instead of one, and by flicking the bass part of the divider in and out you can simulate the effect of a bass drum and snare. And we have a library of looped cassettes, rhythmic sounds and cut-up stuff from commercials, which we operate from our onstage decks. That's kind of the root of the group; I fade things in and out using a lot of volume pedals, and over the top of all that we do the melodic material."

Ingenious and fascinating, and a hell of a lot of work onstage ("Someone who saw us in Italy said it was like watching a boat slowly sinking, that *somehow* we always got into port for a hero's welcome"). But not at all surprising, considering Frith's history.

In 1963, after years of violin lessons and church choirs, Frith heard the Shadows, Django Reinhardt and English bluesman Alexis Korner all in one week. It hit the young Yorkshire lad hard; he even learned to play "Guitar Boogie Shuffle" on plucked violin. Guitar became everything, and Frith wasn't particular as to style. Folk, blues, flamenco, rock 'n' roll—he tried to absorb them all. After moving to Cambridge to go to university, he played acoustic gui-

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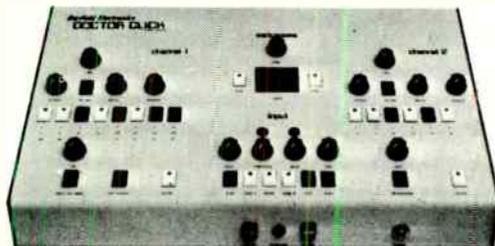
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The ability of the Doctor Click to read live tracks allows sequencers, drum machines and synthesizers to play in sync with the varying tempos of a human drummer or a built click track.

The ability of the Doctor Click to accept external clocking or either of the types of FSK sync to tape codes allows sequencers, drum machines and synthesizers to be synced to any existing track.

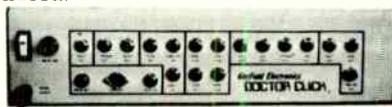
The pulse shaper circuit turns a pulse from an instrument into a trigger waveform allowing synthesizers to sync to a drum fill.

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tar in folk clubs, bass and harmonica in blues bands, and composed for experimental theater. He even gave his first (and last) Spanish guitar recital. Henry Cow, arguably the most musically and professionally radical band of the 70s, started up back then in a series of violin/saxophone improvisations between Frith and Tim Hodgkinson.

It was also at that time that Frith took his first small step out of the realm of normal guitar playing.

"You know that irritating note that you hear when you play acoustic guitar, the one being generated on the wrong side of your left hand? I kept wanting to hear it louder. So I started taking telephones to pieces and attaching the phone mikes to the wrong end of the guitar, trying to amplify that note...once you start on that kind of exploration, I guess, you more or less go on forever. It's very logical."

Frith feels a little trapped when people pigeonhole him as a guitar player (on record he's played keyboards, violin, bass and percussion as much or more than guitar). But there's no denying that what he began with that phone mike has helped to totally redefine the electric guitar's possibilities. Since then he has tried countless experiments. He's bowed his strings, put alligator clips on them to pull out shifting harmonics, used a prism with differently ground edges as a pick to create timbral effects, inserted chopsticks between strings and then struck the chopsticks with small hammers ("It sounds like steel drums.")... anything. Everything.

His basic gear consists of a Gibson 345, more or less reserved for playing written things, and two guitars used extensively in improvisations: a custom-made Charles Fletcher double-neck, one neck fretless and the other eight-stringed, and a 1961 Burns Black Bison. The key to Frith's sound, though, is the one unit he says he cannot do without—his HH MA200 power mixer. Chopsticks and prisms may come and go, but its switching flexibility, portability and built-in delay and flanging units make the MA200 invaluable.

"There are no failures in these approaches. Most of the things I rejected in the end were things that had to do with virtuosity, because I felt that virtuosity was actually getting in the way of making the music. I became very proficient at playing with a two-handed approach, for example, very percussively. But I felt that my hands were doing the playing and not me."

Fans of Frith have been able to hear the results of his experiments on the *Guitar Solos* series, and on recordings done with Henry Cow, the Art Bears,

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STAN LYNCH, MISTER CLEAN

A Heartbreaker's Perfect Gig

BY DAVID LEVINE



LYNN GOLDSMITH

Lynch's drumming weds simplicity and understatement with boundless energy.

To say that the drums are important but the drummer's not is true in a lot of bands," declares Stan Lynch, twenty-seven-year-old timekeeper with blond heartthrob Tom Petty and his Heartbreakers. "But I know that guys like Charlie Watts, John Bonham and Mick Fleetwood do make a difference. The drummer's job is to play the music. But he has to play it his own way."

Lynch plays it no other way. Sitting in the middle of a vast, perfectly manicured croquet court in Malibu, surrounded by hot-and-cold running women and a fleet of Porsches (he's actually just "house sitting" for a friend), he nevertheless talks and acts like an unaffected Gainesville, Florida punk who's only in it for pocket money and some good times. His drumming is just as simple, yet convincing. A graduate of the Ringo Starr-Mick Fleetwood school of Less-Is-More, he plays with boundless energy but not excess flash, his fills articulate yet simple, his contribution obvious but understated.

"My approach to drumming," he says, "is to be clean. Don't take up too much space, look for your spots. Charlie Watts is an example of a simple drummer. He doesn't play the high-hat on two and

four, so the snare drum will be cleaner. That's clean. I approve of that."

What Tom Petty apparently approves of is the way Lynch's percussive clarity is fired up by his elemental garage-rock enthusiasm and energetic personality. His strident stylish playing on classic Petty tunes like "American Girl," "Listen To Her Heart" and "Refugee" underlines the crackling chime of the group's Byrds-like guitars and Petty's poignant whine. Ditto his tight but unsympathetic slam on Stevie Nicks' hit collaboration with the Heartbreakers—"Stop Draggin' My Heart Around."

"If you want *me* to play on a song, the first thing I'm going to do is ask you to play it on the piano or the acoustic guitar while you sing it just so I can hear the essence of the tune. The first part I'll hear is the backbeat—the snare drum. Is it on the back of the beat, the front of the beat or right down the middle? On 'Here Comes My Girl,' Tommy's obviously singing in back. On 'Don't Do Me Like That,' I've got to be in front of it.

"The next thing I'll hear is the kick drum, where and how many. Once the kick and snare are there I don't float with that too much. I don't really listen to the bass player that much. I think that whole concept of harmonized bass drum is overrated. That's controlled playing. You wouldn't play that way unless you worked it out. I like to *play*. If it doesn't work, then we bust it down. But if it works, it's wild. The Stones' 'Respectable' has that kind of excitement. Who cares why it works?"

For some guys "boom-whack, boom-boom-whack" always seems to work. Lynch is one of those players where it's not just the notes; it's the attitude. And the sound has to be right, too. When the drums are a big part of the mix, the drum sound is a big part of the band's identity. (Imagine Cream with Stewart Copeland's drum sound.) The player's sound becomes the band's sound. The Stan Lynch sound is Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers' sound; not the other way around.

Check out the drums on the last chorus of "Even The Losers" from *Damn The Torpedoes*. The ever-present kick and snare combination grinds it out and the big, big, big tom-toms make your

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ears stand up and pay attention. But Lynch's sound was not always so full. As a matter of fact, he was less than thrilled with the way the drum tracks on the first two Petty albums came out. "I could hear the drums but I didn't hear what I thought drums sounded like," he admitted. "I mean, there was a drum sound but not the sound of drums. The fact was that I had made two records and never learned how to tune my drums."

When the band went in to record *Damn The Torpedoes*, producer Jimmy Iovine and engineer Shelly Yakus were called in. Together, Lynch and Yakus began their own research project into drums and drum sounds. "The best sound I had ever gotten was from a Roto-tom," Stan explained. "It had a sustaining tone none of my other drums had. Shelly's impression of what I was after was like an old Krupa kind of sound. That kind of tone was cool but I knew that high pitched sounds weren't going to make it in a rock band. To get a deeper sound we figured we'd have to use bigger drums and thicker heads."

"The set I used on both *Damn The Torpedoes* and *Hard Promises* was a Tama Imperialstar kit with a 24-inch kick, 10-by-14-inch rack, 16-by-16-inch and 16-by-18-inch floor toms, and a 6½-by-14-inch metal snare. The cymbals were Zildjian Brilliant 14-inch high-hats, and Paiste 22-inch ride, 18-inch crash and 22-inch china-type. We also experimented with different head combinations and ended up going with Remo Pinstripes on the top and thin coated heads on the bottom of the toms. I used two coated heads with a hole cut out of the front on the kick and a CS Black Dot on the snare."

Where the study time really paid off was in tuning. To get the biggest sound possible, Lynch threw away his roll of duct tape, tuned the drums lower and made sure that each tension point was the same all around the drum.

When Stan heard the songs for the Heartbreakers' new album *Long After Dark*, he decided that the drums would better fit the music if they sounded brighter. He put coated heads on the top and bottom, tuning them both to the same pitch. He also traded in the 18-inch floor tom for a 9-by-13-inch rack tom and used smaller cymbals (Zildjian 20-inch ride and 16-inch crash).

"I don't view myself as a sideman," Lynch concludes, as the California sun sets over the croquet court, the women and the fleet of Porsches. "I'm one of the Heartbreakers. But however it's billed, it's still cool," he adds with typical non-chalance. "I've never felt insecure about it. Hey, I get paid and I get laid. The gig couldn't be more perfect."

[Is this guy for real?—Ed]

Acoustic from pg. 67

wrought examples of newer acoustic technology. Describing the evolution of this model, the genial Mike Longworth, Martin's resident historian and keeper of the flame, traces the origins back to the popular acoustic player David Bromberg. "Matty (Umanov) had taken an F-Series Martin arch-top and put a flat top on it for David. A lot of people were requesting it because it had a good tone without the boominess that annoys soundmen. That led to the Martin M-36 and M-38 guitars. As far as the cutaway, people had been bugging us about that for years. When we got into a guitar made for the stage and recording, the next step in the evolution was to offer a cutaway version for people who play high up on the neck.

"The cutaway required a significant change in the Martin bracing. Halfway up between the soundhole and the upper shoulder of the guitar there's a heavy brace that contributes to the solidity of the neck and body joint. Because of the cutaway, this had to be lowered, which accounts for the oval soundhole. It's not a question of copying or an oval soundhole sounding better than a round soundhole. The pickup system was designed to provide the best of both worlds to the Martin player."

C.F. Martin continues on largely because of its excellent Sigma and Sigma-Martin import lines, instruments made to their specifications in Japan and Korea, which they either set up or assemble and finish in Martin's factory in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. The classic C.F. Martin instruments sell to those fortunates who can afford them, and Martin's Custom Shop, where vintage acoustic buffs can truly indulge themselves, is a popular addition to the factory. After all, how many family companies founded over a century and a half ago are still flourishing anywhere?

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The Washburn Company introduced a line of acoustic electric wooden body guitars with cutaways and a pickup system a few years back. These come in both reduced body and standard dimension sizes and feature exotic names like Woodstock, Monterey and Tanglewood. Designed by Americans and built by the Japanese, these instruments have solid spruce or cedar tops with backs and sides of rosewood, mahogany, macafara and flame maple. The piezo electric

continued on next page

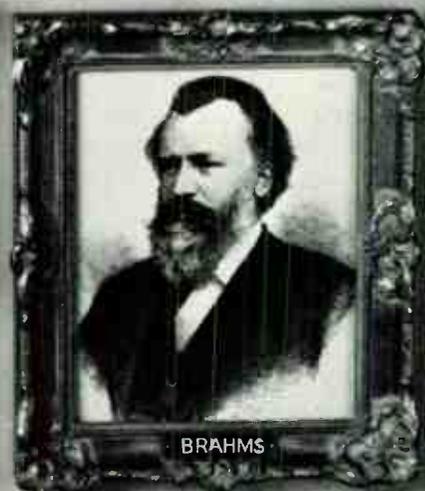
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Although not precisely in the category of flat-top acoustic guitars, Gibson's Chet Atkins solid body classical instrument—with its ported mahogany body, a transducer system mounted in the bridge, and individual trim pots for the pickups, plus the choice of a standard width fingerboard made of ebony or a narrower width rosewood fingerboard for electric and flat-top players, represents a major step forward for a company whose acoustics have had an erratic history since the glorious originals by Orville Gibson and Lloyd Loar. Guild, whose reputation for fine acoustic instruments is right up there with Martin, continues to offer a variety of models with more emphasis on cutaway models like the D-40C (spruce top, mahogany back and sides, Florentine cutaway), the new Hank Williams Junior model and the forthcoming electric-acoustic F-45 cutaway of late. Fender has recently made a bold step back into the acoustic race with a revamped line highlighted by the new acoustic electric cutaway F-270SCE.

Japanese manufacturers have definitely cut back on production in a shrinking market, but all of the prominent companies continue to offer a varied selection of competitive guitars at a wide variety of price points. Yamaha's lower-priced line outsells its more expensive handcrafted folk models, but the company has been developing a small body Jumbo-style acoustic with pickup system which should be introduced sometime this year. Other firms like B.C. Rich, Ibanez, Morris, Takamine and Alvarez-Yairi continue to astound observers with the variety of their acoustic offerings and the excellent construction and finishing standards they continue to adhere to.

So with all of this, it's less a problem of the acoustic guitar fading away than whether a contracting musical instrument market can expand in an intelligent way to support the profusion of acoustic and electric instruments in the pipeline. With any luck, we may soon be tripping over acoustic guitarists at parties again.

Frith from pg. 70

Henry Kaiser and others. The newest, a two-disc set from Recommended, *Live In Japan*, represents not only a record of what his live "guitars on the table" approach is like, but also a kind of conclusion to that era. In improvisation, anyway, Fred Frith feels he has taken the

guitar as far as he currently can.

"Improvising is very direct. It's as close as you can get to having your audience figure things out more or less at the same time you do. But it's also frustrating, because you can't improvise freshly forever. At least, I can't. My development of guitar languages over the past three years got to the point where I couldn't go any further. That's why I'm only playing homemade instruments in improvisations now. Kind of small, square, stringed instruments and things made out of kitchen utensils. What interests me with these is putting them into kind of a rock context, because I see myself as basically a rock musician." (Of course, Frith's definition of a "rock context" is typically his own. In recent performance he has drilled holes in the wooden base of one of his constructions, letting the drill's vibrations drive the strings.)

Given all that, it's not surprising to find that Frith is as creative a composer and producer as he is a guitarist. And his stylistic range is incredible. *Gravity*, on Ralph Records, is an album of what Frith calls "various kinds of dance music"; on it are pieces as different as the lyric, wistfully happy "Spring Any Day Now" and the bitter dissonant snarl of "What A Dilemma." On *Speechless*, the tune "Balance" seems held together almost by magic (a bizarre aural effect created by recording the drum track in three separate takes, against three different but rhythmically-related click tracks—Frith calls the effect "stretching"—and then overdubbing with reference to only one drum track at a time). In the hilariously sober/disturbing "The Dignity Of Labour," on the Art Bears' *The World As It Is Today*, an assembly line speeds up beyond a worker's ability to cope. To do that, Frith gradually slowed the tape recorder while laying down the piano tracks, so that when played back they run faster and faster and faster, finally blending into a chink-and-roar sound provided by, of all things, a radically-slowed recording of a lawn mower.

Anything goes, as long as it works and adds to Frith's musical language. His current recording project, to be released by Ralph, will be a record made entirely with his homemade instruments, recorded on nothing more complicated than a 4-track. ("I'm a little nervous about that. I've never had fewer than eight tracks before. Even on *Guitar Solos* I often had nine or ten tracks of guitar being laid down at once, from different pickups and such.") This kind of approach won't bring David Geffen knocking on his door—*Gravity* is Frith's best-selling solo record to date, at 12,000 copies—but then, he doesn't

continued on page 94

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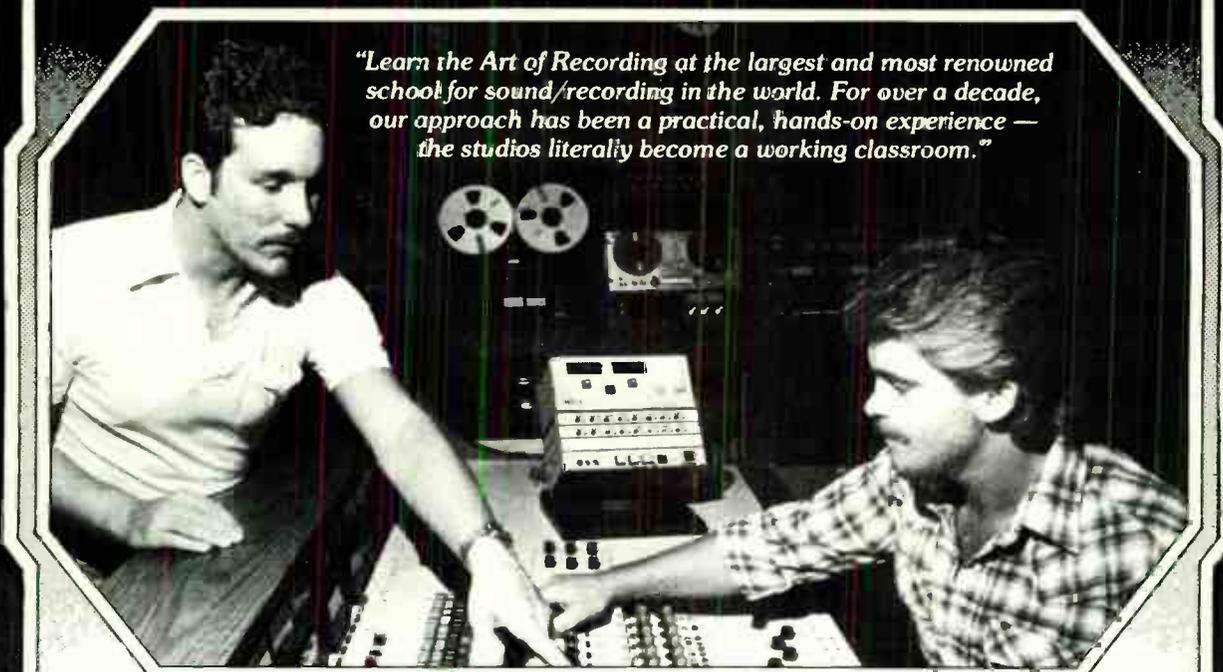
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RECORD REVIEWS

Ric Ocasek *Beatitude* (Geffen)



When Pete Townshend started having hits for one record company as a solo artist and another with the Who, light bulbs must

have started flashing in the air over record executive heads from coast to coast. The fact that a songwriter already has his own band doesn't mean he can't sign a second album deal as a single! Geffen Records discovered that although the Cars were signed to Elektra as a band, none of them—including leader/songwriter/rhythm guitarist/sometime singer Ric Ocasek—was signed as a solo. As a result, Ocasek will now try to do one LP a year with the Cars for Elektra and another under his own name for Geffen. Can solo deals for Ray Davies, Mark Knopfler and Sting be far away?

Whether Ocasek will eventually evolve two different voices for his band and solo work (as Townshend seems to be doing) is unknown. For now we can only judge *Beatitude* against the Cars. It measures up well: less commercial than *Shake It Up* but less difficult than the self-consciously experimental *Panorama*.

Almost all of the musicians on the album are from Boston's underground rock scene, and though many have Ocasek-produced independent records, few have ever played on a major label release. It was generous of Ocasek to use these players and they have repaid his trust with performances full of the sort of ideas and enthusiasm not often available from the union.

Fuzzbee Morse (a veteran of Richard & the Rabbits, one of Ocasek's pre-Cars bands) turns in a guitar solo on "Time Bomb" pregnant with the slow-burning nuthouse intensity of Tom Verlaine or Zuma-era Neil Young. Bassist Darryl Jenifer of Bad Brains provides edgy punky funk rhythm throughout, and the Dark's Roger Greenawalt comes up with some guitar sounds that may get him institutionalized.

Although Ocasek uses black rhythms, they often come out of programmed drums and keyboard bass with a metallic edginess quite different from the listless funk of the Soft Cell/Human League school. This hyper quality—a de-emphasis on groove in favor of snap—is to funk a bit like what the brittle rhythms of the Sex Pistols and early Clash were to rock 'n' roll: structurally similar but a lot more sharp and tense.

Ocasek cools out some of that tension with synthesized bells and glockenspiel, adding a shimmer over the sharpness. On many of the tracks the dreamlike keyboards of *Shake It Up* are laid over this sort of frantic bottom. The effect (reiterated in the lyrics of songs like "Take A Walk" and "Jimmy Jimmy") is of the contrast between the world inside the singer's head and the world outside. These songs describe both anxious people in boring environments and spacey people in frantic surroundings.

Ocasek plays the tension for effect. The urban dream feeling of "Connect Me Up" absorbs a counter-rhythm at the song's bridge. When it finally all resolves into one steady beat, there's a rush of release.

Only occasionally (on the Buddy Holly-like pop song "I Can't Wait" and the romantic ballad "A Quick One") does Ocasek seem to dress ordinary songs in impressive effects for the sake of disguising their ordinariness. Most of the songs depend on the audio environment created by the unusual sounds to fill out their meaning. The chilling irony of "Sneak Attack" (a song about satellites that Russia and the U.S. use to plan nuclear wars) would be lost without the childlike keyboard sounds and the production's video game/daydream mood.

On the album's conclusion Ocasek's subliminal message is made plain. "Time Bomb" describes many of the world's miseries and a few pleasures and incidentals before concluding—almost as an afterthought—that we're "sitting on a time bomb." This track summarizes all the earlier implications of tension amid the dreaminess.

Ocasek has proved in the past—on "Candy-O" and "Since You've Gone" that he is capable of affecting singing. Yet on much of *Beatitude* his vocals are

flattened and depersonalized by special effects. Although this approach makes a certain thematic sense in the context of the recording, I'd prefer to hear the warmth and humanity of a more natural voice in the midst of all this high tech futurama. This does not seriously interfere with the enjoyment of *Beatitude*, but had it been done differently a fine album might be even better. — Bill Flanagan

Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band *The Distance* (Capitol)



It would be both easy and unfair to write off Bob Seger's followup to *Against The Wind* as a bid for the widest possible audience. Granted

the grizzled Motor City rocker has sacrificed his shoulder length locks for a trimmer, blown-dry cut, and likewise trimmed his Silver Bullet Band to allow a host of familiar studio heavies to supply much of the instrumental muscle here, but Seger's performances and the themes of these new songs still testify to an earnest rock sensibility. The problem rests with the familiarity of Seger's mission, which undercuts the portentous trappings.

The Distance offers yet another distillation of Seger's persona as a beautiful loser, one increasingly defused by his recent stature as superstar. That's hardly his fault, yet the long shadow cast by his late 70s emergence as a major presence suffers from the very bedrock values that made *Night Moves* so affecting: a rock 'n' roll conservative, Seger continues to rework the same themes that reached their very essence on that hit, but what once sounded defiant in its sense of tradition now sounds increasingly formulaic.

Ironically, it's the album's choice of embellishments that clinches that impression rather than any outright self-plagiarism. Producer Jimmy Iovine has roped in some impressive ringers to give new weight to the rhythm section and greater delicacy to the solos, augmenting Silver Bullet survivors Craig Frost

(organ), Chris Campbell (bass) and Alto Reed (you guessed it) with drummer Russ Kunkel, pianist Bill Payne and Roy Bittan, guitarists Waddy Wachtel and Danny Kortchmar and a host of other blue chip studio veterans to provide high-tech punch to the tracks. Lovine's sonic *mien* predictably offers a fat but lucid bottom and sharp presence to the upper registers, and in that sense this may well be Seger's most polished recording.

Unfortunately, soul, not polish, has been the man's main suit until now. That emotional core still rings true on the set's best songs, yet the burnished finish tends to diminish much of the potency; the precision of the players eclipses their spontaneity to challenge the conversational tone of Seger's best lyrics, and their command of fashionable rock filigree never really compensates for the lack of a genuine ensemble feel to the playing.

Only when Seger's writing steps beyond familiar paeans to the lure of the open road and the loneliness of the renegade does he truly go the distance. Moments like those, exemplified by the bittersweet assembly-line reverie of "Makin' Thunderbirds," are depressingly few and far between here, arguing that Seger's very respectability may now represent a kind of joke. — *Sam Sutherland*

Neil Young
Trans (Geffen)



If it's better to burn out than it is to rust, it's now even better to plug in. In a radical artistic change-up that rivals his scrappy '73 live album

Time Fades Away and the brutal frankness of *Tonight's The Night* for undisguised audacity, Neil Young discovers synthesizers with a vengeance on *Trans*. It's only natural, really; he shares management with Devo and, God help him, the Residents. For someone who has invested so much time and energy in cultivating an image as the Loner, the cool isolation and fingertip control of making one-man music even on a kindergarten Casiotone is just desserts. (Cue the sound of a few million *After The Goldrush* albums cracking with old age.)

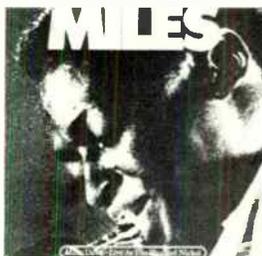
But *Trans* is no more a denial of his past than it is a pledge of blind allegiance to the future according to Soft Cell. If the sound of Young's cracked tenor altered by electronic vocal devices (the result is usually robot ranting or the kind of unearthly glassine soprano used in the *Star Trek* TV theme) is rather uneasy listening, the imagination and sensitivity with which he tries to wed the

organic and the synthetic is certainly exhilarating in its daring, and generally successful in its execution. There is no better demonstration of his way with extremes here than the drastic overhaul of the Buffalo Springfield's "Mr. Soul": Young's voice sealed in fat electronic folds by a Vocorder, the Springfield's coltish kick slicked back into a drum machine march while the guitar solo erupts note-for-note in that same freak fuzztone of the original, a slap of raw emotion against the frosty chrome synth.

Trans thrives on that tension. Trivial but sincere sentiments like the cowboy stroller "Little Thing Called Love" ("What makes you hypnotized?/ What puts a tear in your eye?") and the gently swaying "Hold On To Your Love," with its lightly comping electric piano and Ben Keith's singing steel guitar, open each side of the album, shy pop jewels set in bright relief against the Kraftwerkian android get-down of the "We R In Control" and "Transformer Man." Later Young undercuts the smug inhumanity of microchip sex in "Sample And Hold" with the grungy chainsaw guitars of his heartiest Crazy Horse records while sending a simulated cattle stampede (more slicing fuzz guitars and Crazy Horse drummer Ralph Molina's locomotive rumble) tearing through "Computer Cowboy," a nervy sketch of a marauding twenty-first century devil cowpoke who "trods beneath the floodlights/ And of course the rhythm is perfect."

This album is not. The almost casual perversity with which Young deploys his toys and addresses us half the time in compu-speak suggests the touch of a dilettante. But *Trans* comes at a crucial time, the very week *Time* named the computer its Man of the Year. This is music for a new struggle—how to welcome the computer age without suffering its potential Orwellian conclusions—captured even in the subtle unnerving contrast between Nils Lofgren's alien metallic guitar flutters and the wishful primitivism of Young's fragile braying vocal in "Like An Inca." Sure, rust never sleeps. But now we have *Trans* to keep us awake at night. — *David Fricke*

Miles Davis
Live At The Plugged Nickel (Columbia)



Tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter was running all his light tones together so you couldn't distinguish one from the next, but you'd marvel at the sleek, sculpted flow. Tony Williams, twenty, was eager to go!!—hear his wrist action against the cymbals and the dynamic rumble of his foot kick.

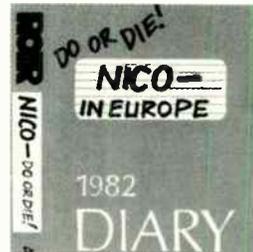
Bassist Ron Carter held tempos and changes steady, no matter how Williams pumped the pulse or Herbie Hancock abstracted piano chords into sophisticated notions....

Given this youthful band, his own inherent restlessness, and a time of radical change in jazz, it's no surprise Miles Davis had precious little use for his old book of tunes by ice cold December, 1965, when he played a Chicago bar and recorded two nights for this double album. Long available from Japanese CBS/Sony but only now released state-side, *Live At The Plugged Nickel* zeroes in on Miles just before his great leap forward. The trumpeter's sound—wounded and vengeful, daring, smeared and smart—was totally formed. He could take off from standards in any direction. The only question was where to land.

Ballads—"Round About Midnight," "Stella By Starlight," "Yesterdays"—still held their mysteries. But familiarity—as with "Green Dolphin Street"—could breed performances that were polished but no longer provocative. So Miles snapped off "Walkin'," "So What" and "All Blues" at alarming speeds, only to leave their melodies immediately and sort through their possibilities. The master of inference was after finer nuances.

There's only one song here—"Agitation"—that would appear on the band's debut studio recording, *ESP*, released in '66. Still, Shorter in his expansive solos was already quoting lines he'd soon contribute to Miles' new book, and the rhythm section was loose, expectant, looking ahead. Not even the crowd you hear gasping and sighing could have guessed that Miles would soon go electric, dance the boogaloo, chase the voodoo down. But hearing these takes, you know something was up, and if we'd heard him in 1965, we'd have all been that much hipper, sooner. — *Howard Mandel*

Television
The Blow Up (ROIR Cassette)
Various Artists
Singles (ROIR Cassette)
Nico
Do Or Die! (ROIR Cassette)



What's your favorite Lost Golden Age of Rock? Liverpool in 1960-62? Memphis 1955-57? Ann Arbor 1968-70? For many post-punk rock fans, the New York scene of the mid-70s, when CBGB's and Max's were the twin axes on which the rock world turned, was the best possible time to have been in with the in-crowd.

Of course, if we all *had* been there it



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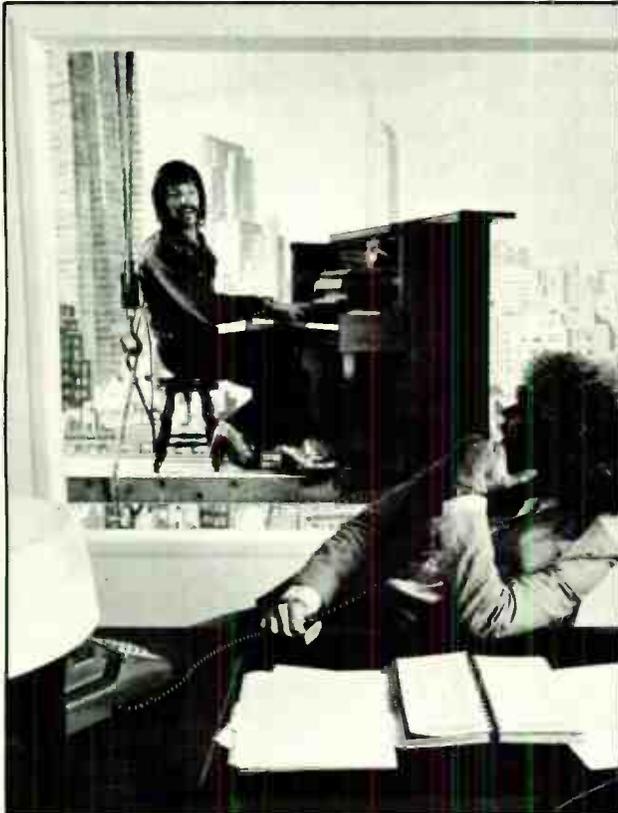
wouldn't have been a *Lost Golden Age*, and items like the live Television set, *The Blow Up*, would be without most of its audience. Instead, the mystique alone will be enough to excuse the sub-bootleg sound quality and maybe even the general sloppiness of the performances. After all, this is *history*, the fans will say—what're a few bum notes and an occasional chopped ending when the listening habits of future generations are at stake?

True, *The Blow Up* offers the average rock fan the best evidence yet to support the claim that Tom Verlaine has the stuff of which guitar heroes are made. Unfortunately, it does not do the same for Television as a whole; if the unbiased listener escapes the conclusion that Television was just an East Coast punk version of the Grateful Dead, he or she will no doubt conclude that you had to have been there. It isn't just that the tape is uneven—that almost gives it a sort of ragged verisimilitude—but that Verlaine and the boys are often rather inept (check out their "Satisfaction," if you dare). Legends are made of sterner stuff.

A much more valid document for the scenester-come-lately is *Singles*, a handy compilation of almost all the best New York punk indie singles. From the startlingly jazzy "Piss Factory," in which Patti Smith leaps headlong into rock and poetry, to the maliciously catchy "U.S. Millie," a seemingly unlikely proving ground for Glen Branca, this cassette presents a New York scene that was at once deeper and more idiosyncratic than the better-publicized British scene of the late 70s. Amazingly enough, it does this even without including bands like Talking Heads, Blondie or the Ramones, all of whom debuted with the majors. Besides, where else can you find "Piss Factory," Television's "Little Johnny Jewel" and the original "Blank Generation" by Richard Hell & the Voidoids, not to mention tracks by Nervus Rex, Model Citizens, Speedies or U.S. Ape?

Still, keep in mind that those who do not learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them, and there's no better example of just what is in store for the hard-core revivalist than Nico's *Do Or Die!* Nico, a tall, blank-looking German who was put in front of the Velvet Underground by their producer at the time, Andy Warhol, has been considered one of rock's great enigmas for years. In truth, the only mystery about Nico is why people still pay money to hear her croak Lou Reed tunes or warble her own dreary odes to misery while accompanying herself on harmonium. *Do Or Die!* is almost painfully accurate in its depiction of Nico as an artist trapped by her fans' dreams, and makes me wonder why frustrated Velvet Underground fans haven't devoted themselves to something more worthwhile, like maybe a

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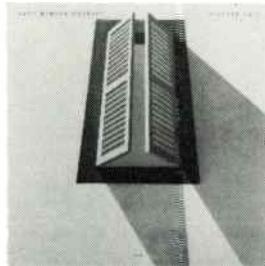
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Sterling Morrison revival. — J.D. Considine

George Clinton *Computer Games* (Capitol)



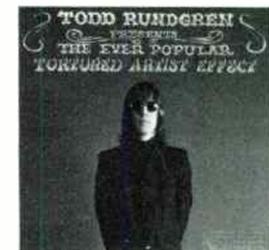
There are times when I think George Clinton puts out uneven albums just to piss the rest of the world off. I mean, there are two,

maybe three solid singles here, but to get to them you have to sit through some of the most half-assed concept mongering anyone's heard since Hawkwind finally overdosed. This batch, in case you're wondering, has to do with video games, great black radio and something about man-as-dog that has a lot of puns in it on "Woofers," plus the obligatory doo-doo song. In short, all the usual crap.

So much for meaningful content. As usual, what Clinton is really up to has more to do with cartoon characterizations and catch-phrases that double as hooks than any sort of coherent narrative; the only problem this time around is that too many of his one-liners arrive as non sequiturs. "Atomic Dog" boasts some clever turns of phrase and a great "Bow-wow-wow" chorus, and the title track includes a comment from "Mother Funkenstein" that is by itself worth the whole album. But "Loopzilla" is presented in an absurdly jumbled version that fails to do the single justice, and the other numbers seem to evaporate on their way to your ear.

Which ultimately leads me to believe that the real weakness to *Computer Games* is musical, not thematic. Unlike the more memorable P-Funk cuts, most of the jams here have no grounding or direction, and tend to wander off into pointless asides. Perhaps Clinton should take a pointer or two from the recent success of Bootsy Collins, who understands the value of staggering musical ideas instead of piling them one atop the other. Until then, Clinton's program needs to be rebooted. — J.D. Considine

Todd Rundgren *The Ever-Popular Tortured Artist Effect* (Bearsville)



The very things a lot of people don't like about Todd Rundgren—his arrogant cheek; the disorienting blend of cynicism and spirituality in his lyrics; the way he sings exhilarating, faultlessly crafted pop 'n' roll songs out

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of one side of his mouth while declaring the death of rock 'n' roll out of the other—are the ones I find so irresistible. He tests the limits and patience of the mass pop audience with audacious concepts (the quilted '73 operetta *A Wizard, A True Star*, the Mahavishnu space punk of the original Utopia) and sly gags (*Deface The Music's* smug Beatles inversions) actually as a test of his own ability and imagination. His cross to bear is that most people are only interested in the beckoning song hooks, ding-dong guitars and cheery vocal harmonies of his swinging singles "I Saw The Light" and "Hello It's Me." His revenge is to give it to them the hard way.

Rundgren's latest black plastic cocktail is a typically intoxicating mix of irony and charm. Take the title, for instance, a deliberate dig at pop hero worship and the inflated egos of hopelessly ordinary hacks. Besides, Rundgren can make these one-man all-singing, all-playing, all-engineering records with his hands tied behind his back. Another clever jape is the expert mimicry of his cover of the Small Faces' old mod burner "Tin Soldier," right down to the original sloppy Kenney Jones drum rolls at the end. Like the carbon copy oldies side of his '77 LP *Faithful*, it is at once a sincere bow to roots and a snide look-Ma-no-hands demonstration of just how easy it is for him to manufacture hits, even someone else's.

The charm takes a slight lead on side one with the Philly-of-soul ballad "Don't Hurt Yourself," with its whipped cream Human League keyboards and an impassioned Rundgren vocal against his own Delfonics-style harmonies, and the silky samba "There Goes Your Bay-bay" (and even then he can't resist goofing up the title). "Influenza" sucks you right in with a breezy romantic rhythm and swooning chorus that plays on the word's rolling pronunciation. But even a seemingly innocent tune like the bouncy bubblegum ska raver "Bang The Drum All Day," a hearty party combo of early Mitch Ryder and Toots & the Maytals, can trip you up. It wasn't until the fifth listening that I deciphered this bit of inspirational verse: "Everyday when I get home from work/ I feel so frustrated, the boss is a jerk/ I get my sticks and go out to the shed/ And I pound that drum like it was the boss' head."

The Ever-Popular Tortured Artist Effect is more accessible than some of Rundgren's wayward epics but it's not pushover entertainment. He actually dares you to like his records and the fun of listening to them is in the daring. For every "Chant" (an electro-pop slice of spiritual release a la "Just One Victory," his Utopian anthem) you get an "Emperor Of The Highway" (a fit of Gilbert & Sullivan-like giggles) with slippery patches of wit and wicked whimsy in

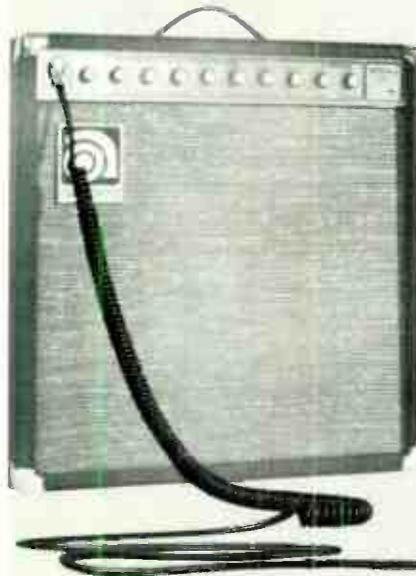
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between. So torture yourself with a little Todd. It's not as painful as you think. — David Fricke

Cecil Taylor *Garden* (hat ART)



The image of Cecil Taylor that keeps taking hold of my thoughts as I listen to this two-disc digital recording of his 1981 Swiss solo concert is Whitney Balliet's depiction of him as a kind of musical blacksmith rolling up his sleeves and ringing out chorus after anvil chorus upon the keyboard. The manly smelter of Taylor's music, its jackhammer speed and intensity, the mythopoeic energy that goes into it—these are qualities celebrated in every description of Taylor at work. But the justice of Balliet's image is that it also recognizes the perfect symmetry of the music Taylor forges and the craft and economy of purpose with which he goes about the task.

For all its furious activity, there's no wasted motion in Taylor's art. If his sense of organization is most evident here on the shorter pieces making up side four (the arialike "Pemmican," with its icy trills, its torrid tremolos and its parenthetical allusions to Monk is espe-

cially well wrought), an impressive strategy of tonal permutation also unifies the set's lengthier, more convulsive performances—the twenty-five minute "Elell," and "Garden," which embodies several themes and flowers across two complete sides. The tension and thrill of hearing Taylor balance discipline and abandon so precariously for so great a length of time are exhilarating and almost sexual in their impact, but it would be a mistake to praise such performances on the basis of their duration alone, because their length, in combination with their complexity and lack of dynamic variety, creates, at times, needless difficulty. I've always wondered how many listeners possess the celerity and stamina to go the distance with Taylor and now that he's become more popular, I sometimes wonder if some of his advocates (not to mention Taylor himself, on occasion) value the ritualistic, orgiastic, purely physical aspects of his work at the expense of the rationality which is more to the point of his accomplishment and is what finally links him to Morton, Ellington and Monk. But on whatever level one ultimately comprehends it, Taylor's music rings with the clang of greatness, a fact reaffirmed by this vividly recorded, handsomely packaged, utterly indispensable document, which is available from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012. — Francis Davis

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**Anthony Davis/James Newton/
Abdul Wadud**

I've Known Rivers (Gramavision)

In attempting to expand the horizons of jazz through a synthesis of composition and improvisation, pianist Anthony Davis, flutist James

Newton and cellist Abdu Wadud have also extended the expressive ranges of their respective instruments. Newton breathes generations of styles into a single phrase, sometimes ranging from a clear piercing tone through glissandi and a wide vibrato to half-sung shrieks like those of a fife player at a country hoedown. Wadud draws upon the rich vernacular of African-American music to produce a wealth of sounds; his vamps and expansive melodic statements incorporate guttural moans, swift hornlike phrases, percussive pianolike clusters, twangy blues guitar riffs and nerve-tingling fiddle licks. Through a considered distillation of Ellington, Powell, Monk and Taylor, Davis brings startling brittleness, spry percussiveness and songful lyricism to this group.

The four compositions on *I've Known Rivers* (the title refers to a Langston Hughes poem) are dramatic and pre-

cariously balanced. Newton's "June-teenth" (the day commemorating the freeing of the slaves in Texas—June 19, 1863) begins with a series of loose rhythmic statements that resolve into a swingin'-singin'-and-bein'-merry blues. His "After You've Said Yes" is an elegant ballad as lush and romantic in tone as it is instrumentally sparse. Davis' "Still Waters" is an introspective piece based on the Twenty-third Psalm, with several themes fastidiously repeated and developed. It moves from an introduction marked by unpredictable intervals and insistent piano through a series of solos and duets climaxing in group improvisation. Without either familiar harmonic structures or swinging rhythms to guide them, piano, flute and cello achieve a tenuous balance between placid deliberation and frenetic despair. Wadud's "Tawaafa"—a concoction of prepared piano, strummed cello and swooping flute—is the most outgoing and ethnic offering, sounding like what I imagine a shaman working magic in his cave sounds like.

All of these pieces are tonally engaging and successfully spotlight the individual skills of the musicians, but the attention to detail sometimes prevents the music as a whole from going anywhere. And despite Davis' percussive piano, the group lacks the spark a drummer might have supplied. Still, this

continued on page 94

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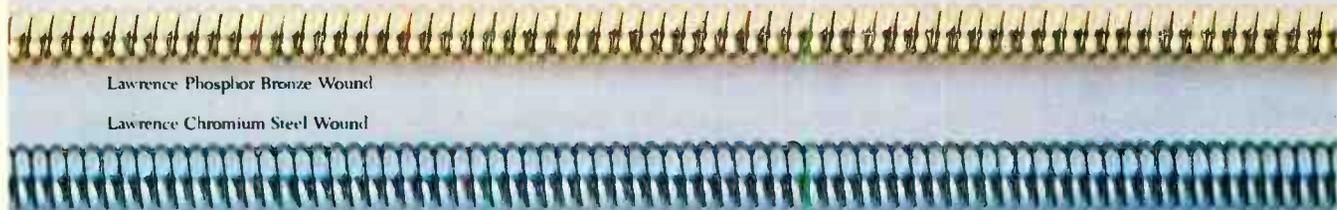
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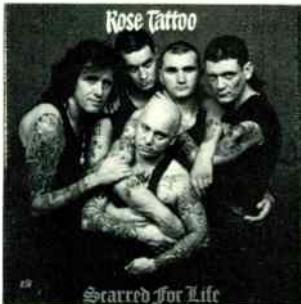


ROCK

By J.D. Considine

S H O R T T A K E S

Rose Tattoo



Party Party



Musical Youth



Grace Jones



Rose Tattoo — *Scarred For Life* (Mirage). Remember back when hard rock wasn't such a foregone conclusion, when instead of arena-sized moves and megawatt clichés you had larger-than-life blues riffs and singers who sounded like they meant it? Well, put down that Led Zeppelin record and pay attention. Rose Tattoo manage to be in 1983 everything the Faces were in 1971, only with ZZ Top's blues smarts and AC/DC's brash hookishness added for extra punch. And, amazingly enough, Rose Tattoo even has something to say beyond the usual get-drunk, get-laid, get-rowdy rant so fashionable on the stadium circuit. Not for metal maniacs only.

Various Artists — *Party Party* (A&M). Here's a record that lives up to its title. Aside from the Elvis Costello title song, which matches *Imperial Bedroom*'s sense of scale to *Get Happy*'s Stax verve, there's little here of any consequence, but that doesn't keep these trifles from being more fun than a week in Murray the K's jukebox. Among the standouts: Dave Edmunds' "Run, Rudolf, Run"; "Driving In My Car" by Madness; a rollicking "Tutti Frutti" from Sting; Bad Manners' "Elizabethan Reggae"; and a wacky "Auld Lang Syne" by Chas & Dave.

Musical Youth — *The Youth Of Today* (MCA). Cute little buggers, aren't they? Even if they don't turn out to be British reggae's Jackson Five, they have at least proven with "Pass The Dutchie" that reggae can be as mainstream-catchy as the next popstyle. Which, if you'll excuse the pun, is no minor achievement.

John Cale — *Music For A New Society* (Ze/Passport). Great stuff if you're plan-

ning on sticking your head in the oven and turning on the gas, but a trifle down-beat otherwise. Cale is convincingly somber as he intones his dreary ditties over a fashionably stark instrumental bed, and the whole thing fairly reeks of art and high purpose. But if this is Cale's idea of a "new society," he must be recruiting for the Republicans.

Grace Jones — *Living My Life* (Island). Even without the pop content of *Nightclubbing*, the fact that Grace Jones can finally carry a tune makes this a miracle of accessibility. Perhaps that's why the songs hit so much harder than before, from the get-outta-my-life assertion of "Nipple To The Bottle"—a song which features a pulse every bit as sure as "Pull Up To The Bumper" and twice as mean—to the shock violence of "Everybody Hold Still." The rhythm section is superb, as always.

Blanket of Secrecy — *Ears Have Walls* (Warner Bros.). If Blanket of Secrecy sound rather like the Searchers by way of Elvis Costello, don't be too surprised. Produced by and featuring Costello engineer Roger Bechirian with occasional Godly & Creme cohort Pete Marsh, Blanket of Secrecy is really just the F-Beat studio sound condensed into a dozen pop songs and twice as many hooks. A few more like "Say You Will," and they won't be a secret for long.

Merle Haggard — *Going Where The Lonely Go* (Epic). It would be remarkable enough if Merle Haggard were only writing better than ever these days; that he's also singing and playing better to boot is almost enough to invite disbelief. But if this collection of ballads and broken-heart songs doesn't convince you that Haggard & the Strangers are to country what Al Green & the Hi rhythm

section were to soul, you're beyond help.

Dr. Demento — *Demento's Mementos* (Eccentric/PVC). All novelty records worth pressing are good for one laugh; the best of these provide dozens. "Swedish Western" by Steve Lisenby is a genre jumble that describes what happens when a bunch of bored Swedes start acting "just like that guy Yohn Wayne"; John Cristensen's "I Get Weird" drags Napoleon XIV kicking and screaming into a home studio age; and "My Wife Left Town With A Banana" tells how a "six-inch Latin lover" slipped Carlos Borzenie up. Consult your physician before using.

The Fixx — *The Shattered Room* (MCA). With a sure combination of punkish energy and cool, techno-rock textures, the Fixx manage to get the best out of both new romanticism and good old rock 'n' roll. That is, they sound up to date without coming off as effete or trendy. Unfortunately, they also end up sounding a bit shallow—playing it safe may be good for airplay, but it doesn't bear up under extensive relistening. Then again, that never stopped Foreigner....

Trio — *Trio* (Mercury). Trio is the new rock equivalent of early Golden Earring, working with retread Flying Lizards and Flash & the Pan instead of second-hand Deep Purple and Grand Funk. Which means I should probably know better than to fall for something as blissfully stupid as "Da Da Da." But what the hell—I bought "Radar Love," too.

The Spongetones — *Beat Music* (Ripete). This Charlotte, North Carolina quartet makes a strong case for the argument that originality isn't everything. The reason their British Invasion-

style songs sound so completely authentic is precisely because they're pasted together from real Beatisms and the like, right down to the production ideas. Of course, the Spongetones get away with it largely because they're so shameless about what they've taken, not because the writing is of Lennon-McCartney caliber. Still, what did you expect—the Knickerbockers? (1111 South Main Street, Elliott, SC 29406.)

Modern English — "I Melt With You" (Sire Maxi Single). Strong dance rock, upgrading the guitar/synth overdrive of Pete Shelley's "Homosapien" to the clean poppishness of the Records. Fun while you remember it.

Girlschool — *Screaming Blue Murder* (Mercury). This may be lightweight as heavy rock goes, but that doesn't mean it's lacking in punch. Girlschool can crank it up and grind 'em out, but always remembers to leave room for the melody, an approach that leaves you humming long after your ears have stopped ringing. Still, that's not to say that "It Turns Your Head Around" is any less anthemic than a Judas Priest number, or that their version of "Live With Me" is any cleaner than the Stones'.

Dexy's Midnight Runners — *Too-Rye-Ay* (Mercury). Forget the "Celtic soul brothers" conceit—Kevin Rowland makes the Blues Brothers look like Sam & Dave. The best moments on this album are not the R&B bits but the ones

where Rowland applies his Philly Soul arrangements to traditional Irish melodic ideas, so forget the clunky remake of "Jackie Wilson Says" and dig into "Come On, Eileen." Now if only Rowland didn't sing like he had adenoids the size of tomatoes.

John Martyn — *Well Kept Secret* (Duke). Speaking of misguided soul singers, who was the idiot who told John Martyn to pretend he was Michael McDonald for an album? The same guy who told Phil Collins he sounded like Maurice White.

Sammy Hagar — *Three Lock Box* (Geffen). Although Sammy Hager has never been long on content, he's usually good for enough hard-rock candy to make his albums worth a listen or two, and last year's *Standing Hampton* even went so far as to have a hit. So how come this one is all leaden riffs and dreary posturing? Is Hagar only good for one hit per decade? Or did the folks at Geffen take a hint from Asia and decide that hooks really aren't as important as a good eq?

The Members — *Up Rhythm, Down Beat* (Arista). A bit of a disappointment after the heady *Radio* EP, this mix of reggae/funk stompers and midtempo ballads is too likely to fall apart on the slow ones to be entirely satisfying. Particularly annoying is "Working Girl," which tries very hard to be a maudlin Joe Jackson single. **M**

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JAZZ

By Francis Davis

S H O R T T A K E S

Anthony Braxton — *Open Aspects '82* (hat ART). Two discs of absorbing, associative duets successfully integrating Braxton's stoic saxophones and Richard Teitelbaum's dramatic live electronics. Braxton's fretful preoccupation with squiggly geometrical lines and fractional multiphonics pays off for him in this context in a way it seldom does anymore on his solo and small group LPs. (Available from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012.)

John Lewis — *Kansas City Breaks* (Finesse/CBS). The MJQ's music director now also leads a sextet with an unusual front line of flute and violin. Some of his writing for the combination is prissy and overdressed, but his solos are as shapely and as slyly propulsive as ever. And Joe Kennedy's weeping gypsy violin contrasts nicely with Lewis' economical piano, the way Milt Jackson's vibes do in the MJQ.

Ricky Ford — *Interpretations* (Muse). The presence of two other horns should have made this the best showcase so far for the young tenor saxophonist's often tricky but always catching writing. Too bad that trumpeter Wallace Roney and altoist Robert Watson sound hesitant and more than a little mechanical on the sextet cuts. Still, Ford himself plays splendidly both with the expanded group and on the bossa, the blues, the Ellington ballad and the hard bop line, which feature just his brawny tenor plus rhythm.

Art Pepper & George Cables — *Goin' Home* (Galaxy). Pepper's valedictory statement is hardly one of the fiery orations I'll remember him best for, but it has its power. Pepper stutters some on alto and wobbles a bit on clarinet, but his favorite pianist is always there to lead him back on track, and the results are frequently haunting.

Ted Dunbar — *Jazz Guitarist* (Xanadu). Dunbar is a Montgomery-influenced guitarist with a melodic bent and a pleasing muffled tone, and this fine solo record should finally win him some of the recognition he has long deserved. Quietly inquisitive readings of songful originals, abstractions of pop standards and jazz classics by Weston, Silver and Monk.

A. Spencer Barefield/Anthony Holland/Tani Tabbal — *Trans-Dimensional Space Window* (Trans-African/NMDS). Like many musicians of their post-AACM orientation, they have a tendency to blather and a tendency to mistake exotica for authenticity, but Barefield and Tabbal—the guitarist and percussionist in the Roscoe Mitchell Sound Ensemble, respectively—and Holland—an abrasive, skeptical-sounding saxophonist in the Braxton mold—all show a good deal of promise here, both on the speculative material and the infectious vamps. (From NMDS.)

Art Blakey — *Keystone 3* (Concord Jazz). More proof that Art Blakey builds men. This hard-charging club date was probably one of the last the Marsalis brothers did as Messengers. They'll go on to bigger and better things, but it's unlikely they'll ever find another drummer who'll dog them as ruthlessly and as much for their own good as the revitalized Blakey did.

Harvie Swartz — *Underneath It All* (Gramavision). Bassist Swartz's first as a leader shares some of the strengths and weaknesses of the similarly string-and-trumpet-dominated Cecil McBee LP reviewed here last month. The heads are deeply planted, with cello and bass twining around each other luxuriantly, but the improvised solos mostly occur over common-property two-chord vamps.

Pee Wee Russell — *Over The Rainbow* (Xanadu). The great clarinetist, a master of the art of taking chances, was willing to play with anyone, but he always sounded best walking the tightrope above a superb swing rhythm section like the one that breaks his falls so gently throughout most of this collection of previously unissued tracks from '58 and '63, a period when he was at his zenith in any case.

Air — *Air Song*. **Muhai Richard Abrams** — *Afrisong* (both India Navigation). Two key sessions from the mid-70s, both previously available only as Japanese imports. Air's first date featured some of Henry Threadgill's wittiest and most stimulating writing and playing, and if it's palled at all (I don't think it has, really) it's palled only in light of what Threadgill and the group have subse-

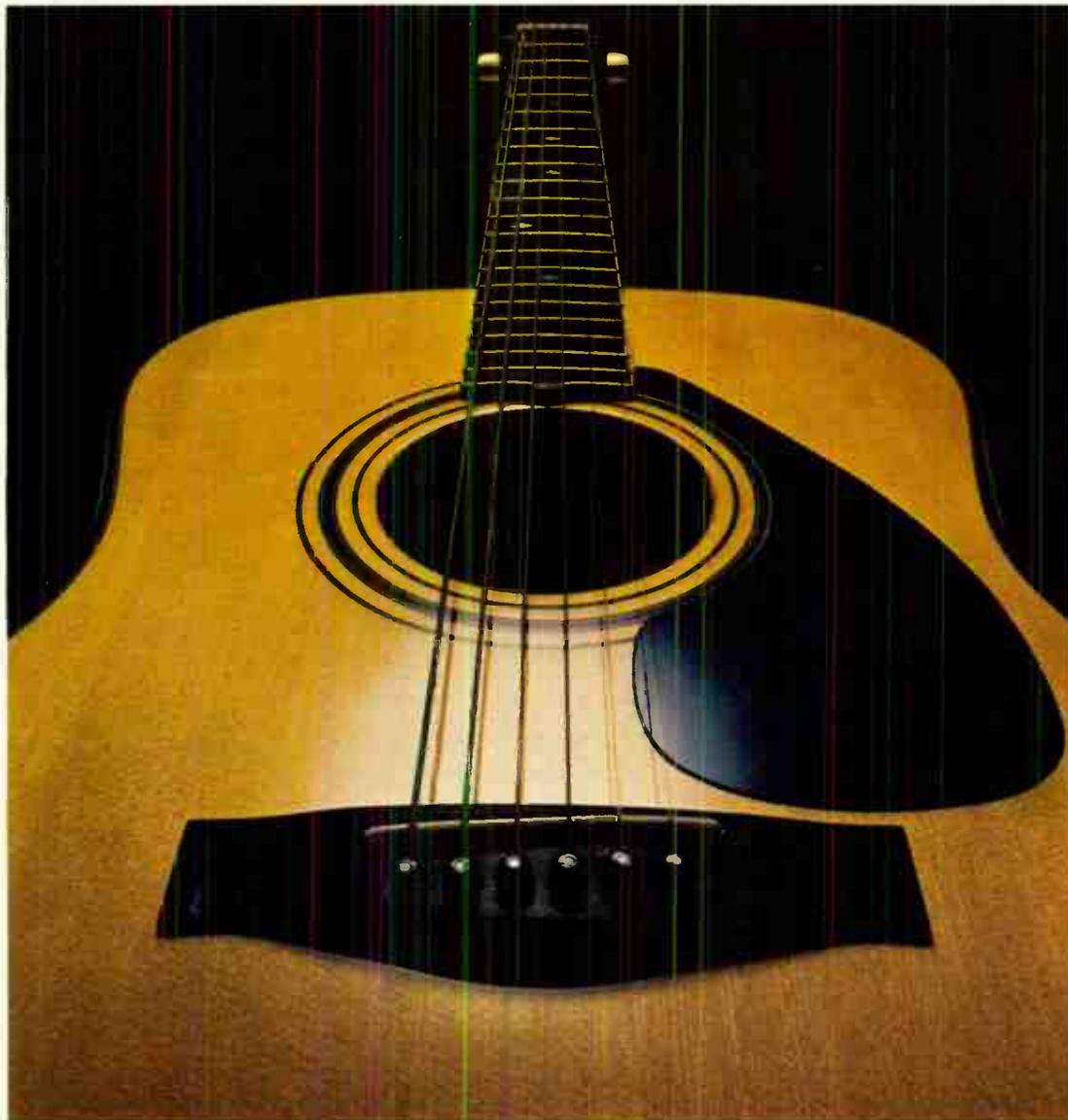
quently accomplished. The Abrams remains his most satisfying offering as a solo pianist, revealing a lyrical, to-the-point aspect of his nature seldom captured on record.

Material — *One Down* (Elektra). Despite the presence of Oliver Lake and a gloriously lowdown Archie Shepp (one track each), there's less jazz here than on last year's *Memory Serves*, but I think that Nona Hendryx and R. Bernard Fowler's raps and vocals, together with Beinhorn and Laswell's sleeker synth and bass grooves, make this the better record. It's fun, though I could do without the intellectual posturing, the fashionable angst. Even as basic human values topple around me and I retreat deeper and deeper into the gloom of middle age, fun hasn't become that precious a commodity that I have to look for it in this out-of-the-way a place.

Meanwhile, I know I'm getting old because I remember hearing at least five of the new entries in the Atlantic Jazzlore reissue series their first time around. When **Rashaan Roland Kirk's** *The Inflated Tear* came out in '68, it struck me as rather contrived. Now I think it's one of the few records to capture the protean multi-reedman in all his many directions. I haven't changed my mind about **John Coltrane & Don Cherry's** *The Avant Garde*, **The Art Ensemble of Chicago's** *Fantare For The Warriors* or **Gil Evans' Svengali**. Each of them seems as provocative to me now as when I first heard it, especially the Coltrane, which finds him debuting on soprano and playing mostly Ornette Coleman compositions in the company of Coleman sidemen and benefactors. Muhai Richard Abrams is an added starter on the Art Ensemble date, one of their brothiest and most streamlined of the early 70s, and the Evans is the usual unsettling, satisfying mix of tense rhythms and languorous harmonies. I'm still ambivalent about **Jay McShann's** *The Big Apple Bash*. McShann himself is a treasure, both as a singer and as a pianist, but here he sometimes gets lost in the shuffle of incompatible guest stars.

The other new Atlantic reissues date from the 50s. **Lee Konitz** *With Warner*
continued on next page

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Marsh is one of the little noticed mile-stones of that decade, cool jazz with an anxious, argumentative edge from Lenie Tristano's leading disciples. Clarinetist **Jimmy Giuffre** is the special guest on *The Modern Jazz Quartet Live At Music Inn*, a typically elegant, typically somber, typically excellent set by that venerable group; and he is a valuable sideman on **Shorty Rogers' The Swinging Mr. Rogers**, an example of West Coast jazz at its brightest and most relaxed. **Woody Herman Live At Monterey** presents the charismatic bandleader with all he's ever asked for out of life—an appreciative audience and a big band loaded with good soloists and capable section men.

PolyGram offers five new twofer reissues. The **Ella Fitzgerald** who sings so beautifully on *The Duke Ellington Songbook Volume 2: The Small Group Sessions* is the Ella I happen to prefer: the girlish-voiced interpreter of ballads who would never think of imposing herself on a song, yet somehow manages to make it completely hers. Ben Webster, Barney Kessel and Krazy Kat violinist **Stuff Smith** are among those providing huggy accompaniment. *The Cool Rage* is a delightful collection of early-50s brimstone and treacle by **Illinois Jacquet**, the daddy of all tough tenors. *Paradise Squat* focuses upon the riproaring **Count Basie** big band of 1952 and offers more than the usual glimpse of Basie, the chipping piano stylist. Hopefully, it's only the first in what should be an invaluable chronological series. The orchestra **Lionel Hampton** led about the same time never achieved the Basie band's level of power and sophistication, but *The Blues Ain't New To Me* has its moments whenever the spotlight falls on the leader's vibes. *California Here I Come* is a previously unissued Village Vanguard date by a **Bill Evans** trio (with Eddie Gomez and Philly Joe Jones) that otherwise went unrecorded. The expected sparks never fly, but how very good this group might've become.

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Roches from pg. 24

producer Roy Halee (who co-produced Simon & Garfunkel's albums). It was a dark, difficult album that put off many fans of their accessible good humor on the first record. Maggie's songs were filled with smart, complicated wordplay that was only rewarding if one worked hard at untangling the puns and images. Terre and Suzzy's songs were a reaction against their limited dose of fame and their awkward position in the music industry. The most accessible songs were a jazzy version of Cole Porter's suitably ironic "It's Bad For Me" and a haunting version of an Irish folk song, "Factory Girl."

The new album, *Keep On Doing*, combines the humor and accessibility of the first with the challenging ambitions of the second. It also reunites the three

sisters with Fripp. "What Robert does," explains Suzzy, "is he hears our arrangements; most people don't *hear* what we're doing. He brings out those arrangements. He adds subtle things to them, but he does what we want. He considers a singer as just like a musician, playing an instrument. All you're doing is playing your voice. Sometimes I feel inhuman, as if I were an instrument instead of a person—I just give my voice to the song."

Fripp has also been giving guitar lessons to Terre and Suzzy. These lessons have paid off in the Roches' first instrumental, "Sex Is For Children," a hypnotic cycle of multi-layered scat vocals and buzzing guitars. Though they bear Fripp's style, all the guitar parts were played by Terre. "Robert's very disciplined," Terre points out. "He disciplines himself on the instrument until he has this bank of options and he can really let himself go. That's what I'm striving for. I don't know if I have as much capacity for discipline as he does. I could wind up being an axe murderer with too much discipline. But it's definitely been a great influence on me; it helped me to stop drinking."

"This new album is definitely the most well performed of all the albums," argues Suzzy. "I really love the arrangements, because you can hear them, and they're more developed. The parts that we figure out are not easy. We don't go for the most normal-sounding chord. Most of the time, we go out of our way to find a more interesting alternative note. Or sometimes we go around and around and pick all different notes and then come back to the major chord."

"There are certain times on the record," Terre picks up, "when Maggie's harmony will be slightly out in front, and then Suzzy's harmony will grab your ear from her harmony, and then mine will take it away from Suzzy, then Robert's guitar comes in, which is a whole different tone. For me, it's really emotional. I feel like we're all barreling down the highway in a tug-of-war with each other, grabbing, stealing the bacon from each other." 

Cherry from pg. 55

how little the world has changed for the better in the intervening years, but heartening all the same to see that the rebels have aged so well. Obviously eager to greet old acquaintances and perhaps to have a few moments to himself before rehearsal, Cherry is growing restless with his interviewer, who asks one final question. Has Cherry ever played music indigenous to the part of the world he was in and gotten an angry or indifferent response?

"Yes, yes! With this very band in Spain, when we played one of the Spanish folk tunes that Charlie and Carla had arranged."

"The audience sat there thinking, 'We hear this crap on the radio all day, man. We came to hear jazz,'" explains Carla Bley, who walks in on the conversation as if on cue.

"After it was over, someone yelled, 'SHIT!,'" laughs Cherry, and something—perhaps the political content of the music he will perform this evening—reminds him of another story, which he tells us as he gathers his belongings to take upstairs. "I played a left wing festival in Milano once, and Gary Rubin?... Jerry Rubin?... Abby Hoffman?... one of them... jumped onstage in his birthday suit just as we were ready to go on and started babbling for an hour at least. The promoters told us, 'Wait, wait,' but the audience—90,000 kids in a stadium, man, and some of them had been

roughed up by the cops outside—started chanting, 'Play! Play! Play!' So I went up to the microphone and said in my best Italian. '*Senti, senti*, my name is Don Cherry... situation is simply music.' We started playing this lilting melody Nana Vasconcelos had written, and everyone out there started lighting pieces of paper and holding them up like torches. The whole stadium was *glowing!* It was one of the most beautiful reactions I've ever had, much better than people just applauding, you know?"

"Then there was another episode in Italy when Moqui and I were wounded by the police during a student riot. But that's another story. I'll tell you about it next time I see you...." And before I can register shock or curiosity, he is out the door and on the go again. 

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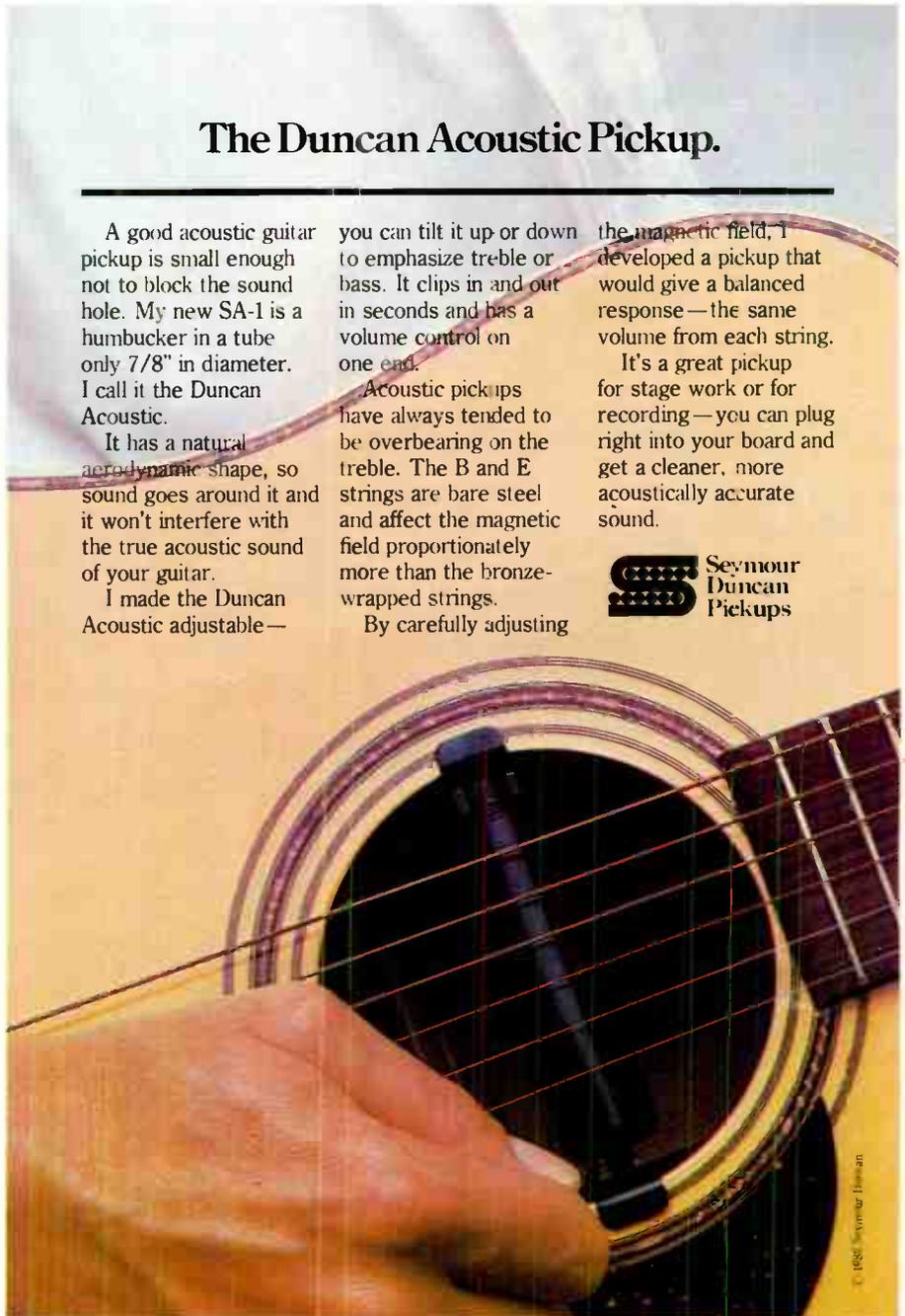
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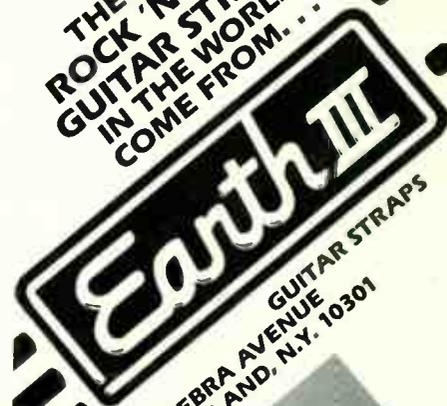
Ocasek from pg. 64

'54 Fretless Wonder; the others are mostly late 50s and early 60s Les Paul TV models he picked up on various Cars tours. Curiously, Ocasek's guitars all come in red, white or black finishes, except for a lone acoustic Martin. "I can't use a guitar with a natural finish. I don't like the look of wood guitars." Whatever their color, they all go through a 50-watt Marshall amp. Everything else is plugged straight into the board.

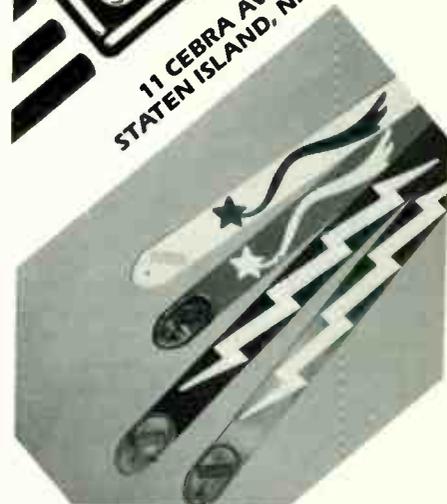
(More guitar gab: he doesn't usually play it, but Ocasek is really in love with a bizarre orange Gretsch model outfitted with leather binding and little bows and arrows and guns inlaid in the wood in a rockabilly cowboy motif. For a time he played a Dean Elite onstage and Elliot Easton also designed a black-and-white Dean for him that came with tiny light-emitting diodes in the fretboard so that on a pitch-black stage "you can tell exactly where your hands should go for the next chord.")

Outboard gear consists of the Roland Space Echo, the Eventide 949 harmonizer, a Lexicon Prime Time, a digital reverb by Ursa Major called the Space Station and an MXR digital delay, "which is great for putting drum machines through, turning it out of phase so it makes swishy sounds in the background." Speakers are a mixed bag of Ureis, JBLs and Auratones while Ocasek can't even remember what mi-

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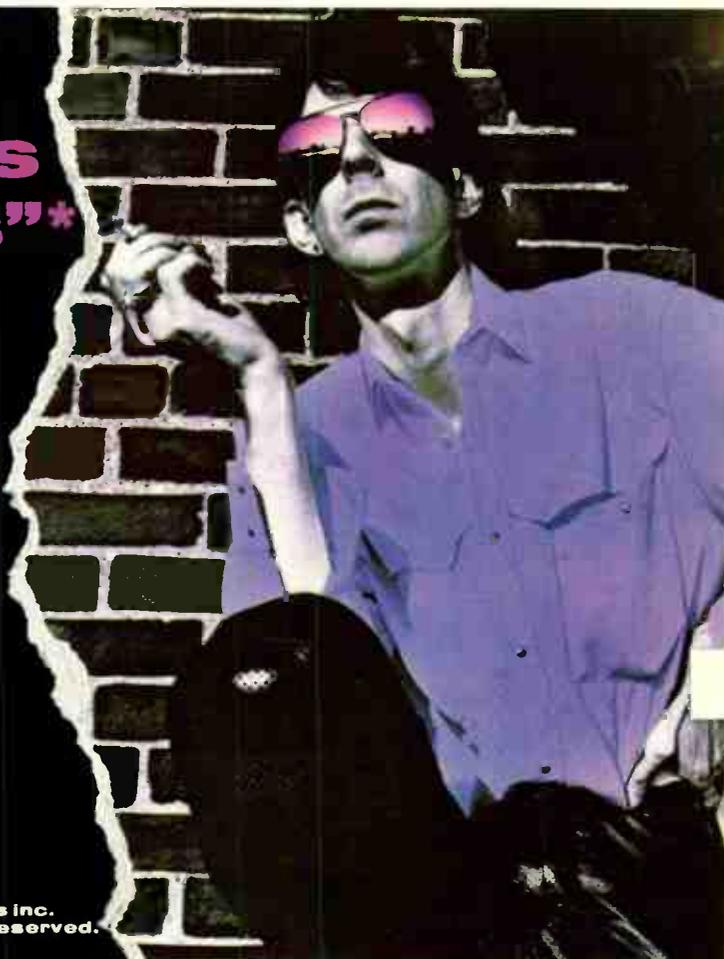
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crophones he's got. "I generally just end up using the same mike for everything. And," he laughs, "a compressor over easy. There's a couple of noise gates, an Otari half-track, and"—he pauses thoughtfully—"a mood. And away I go."

Beatitude aside, Ocasek should share his 8-track tapes with the public more often. I remember being particularly transported by the original demo of "Panorama," an even darker, more intimate version with a black velvet wrap-around synth and stuttering guitar that Ocasek popped into a tape player during a 1980 interview. He admits he occasionally prefers his own home versions of Cars songs, citing "This Could Be Love" from *Shake It Up* as one example.

But there is something in Ocasek's soft whispery speech and quiet churchmouse demeanor, in the anonymous way he goes about his Cars and production business, that suggests what goes on in that chauffeur's apartment is very intense, deeply private business. For someone who is likely to record a complete 8-track demo in one night or lay down six or seven new Cars songs at a time on cassette, whipping off a couple of Bad Brains and Alan Vega records must seem like a regular vacation.

"Actually, I use those outside things as a way of escape from working at home, from writing. It's good for me to get away like that and get totally involved in some other project. And then when I come back, I feel full of ideas. Some may be inspired by groups that I work with, some just inspired by not doing any work."

He smiles brightly, as if another good song idea has just gone off in his head. "I'm always anxious to do something constructive. 

Books from pg. 14

Riding on a Blue Note — Gary Giddins (Oxford University Press). Giddins is infuriatingly knowledgeable and is a consistently involved listener and critic. *Riding on a Blue Note* collects the best of ten years' thoughtful writing for the *Village Voice* and includes a fine piece on Red Rodney as well as clear-eyed observations on Joe Venuti, Professor Longhair, Bing Crosby, Ornette Coleman, Ethel Waters and a host of others. Giddins is good enough that I keep expecting more from him—he somehow manages to be stuffy at the same time that he's most passionate, and his own sense of history keeps getting in his way and keeping him from soaring. Nonetheless, this is a valuable collection.

Black Beauty, White Heat: A Pictorial History of Classic Jazz, 1920-1950 — Frank Driggs & Harris Lewine (Morrow). A dream of a book, even at its \$39.95 ticket. Over 1,500 rare, beautifully reproduced photos, posters, handbills, clippings, record jackets and labels from the

era. The photos are accompanied by short, witty reminiscences and anecdotes. (A photo of an especially dapper Duke Ellington is captioned with a note on one of Duke's residencies at the Cotton Club: "Jack 'Legs' Diamond with girlfriend Kiki Roberts to Ellington: 'Play "St. Louis Blues."' He played it. Diamond danced by the bandstand, repeating his request all night. Ellington continued to play 'St. Louis Blues.' Diamond gave Duke a \$1,000 bill. 'Buy yourself a cigar.' Then another \$1,000 bill and he walked off into the dawn. It was that kind of time.")

Frank Driggs produced classic albums by Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Leadbelly and

Robert Johnson, among others. Lewine was art director for Riverside Records and art directed *Harlem on My Mind* and *Stomping the Blues*. This book is in a league with their past work.

The Who; Maximum R&B — Richard Barnes (St. Martin's Press). John Lennon once said something to the effect that every chauffeur, gardener and aide gets at least one book. Sure, most insider bios are usually ninety percent gossip—fragmentary accounts by one-time gophers who concentrate on what the Anointed Ones put up their noses and where they go to have their blood changed. But author Richard Barnes has raised the genre to a new level, becoming, in the process, rock's answer

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to Boswell. As Pete Townshend's roommate from his Ealing art school days, Barnes was there from the beginning. (As the guy who thought up the name, "the Who," you might say he was the beginning.) Working with the band's full cooperation, Barnes sets out to document every gig, argument, fist fight, recording session and tea break the Who ever bounced their way through. Though short on analysis and rather stylistically prosaic, the result is one of the most revealing, informative and entertaining books about rock ever written. — (V.G.)

Making Tracks; The Rise of Blondie — Debbie Harry, Chris Stein and Victor Bockris (Dell). Wherein we discover that

Diva Deb was, shall we say, a tad funkier back when she was still buying her jeans off the rack at Korvettes. Debbie and Chris should be commended for giving us an unvarnished glimpse into the world that became the CBGB scene, though surprisingly, living out that Warholesque trash/ennui effect led to some truly moving moments of spiritual and emotional catharsis. To wit: "We lived on the Bowery for a year, surrounded by the symbols of our struggle. One time Clem and Chris went out to the store and rushed back in yelling, 'Hey, there's a dead bum outside!' He was frozen in the snow. Somebody had seen him walking around in the snow with no shoes on earlier in the day. His eyes were open,

he had a little white beard and he had turned blue. Everyone ran into the street to look at the frozen bum until an ambulance came to scrape him up." Yucky. — (V.G.)

New Orleans Jazz: A Family Album — Al Rose & Edmond Souchon (Louisiana State University Press). A more regional companion to *Black Beauty, White Heat*, a scrapbook of photos of early New Orleans jazz greats with encyclopedic listings and short descriptions of all the players, brass bands, clubs, riverboats and bordellos. Updated edition features a rare, unretouched photo of Slow Drag Pavageau running me out of town on a rail after my last article. ☒

Greene from pg. 68

Whether he's fiddling with wires or catgut, Greene is not concerned with the problem of playing not only different but seemingly opposite styles of music. "In order to do both," he explains, "you have to have real training in both. Playing with Bill Monroe was a real training in bluegrass. I've also been really trained in classical music, since the age of five, and I'm continuing that training. Coming from classical to jazz, like Jean-Luc Ponty or even Joe Venuti, okay, we know that can happen. Even classical to rock.

"But none of these guys can play a lick of country music. I'm not aware of anyone that can play classical music and know what it's all about and can also really saw and play country fiddle with the right inflection."

"No one," Margaret Wooten-Greene points out, "but Richard Greene." ☒

Frith from pg. 74

define success that way.

"When I began I wanted to be a star, just like everybody else. But you start making your music, and it takes a certain shape... you have to make a conscious decision to abandon that shape in order to do something more commercial, and that's not a choice I've cared to make—but I have no qualms about commercial rock music if it's good. People assume I must despise it. Not true."

Which brings us, full circle, to Van Halen. The purists among you have hopefully recovered. For the rest, the ones without preconceptions, I suggest that you find *Gravity*, or *Speechless*, or the Henry Cow stuff, and give it a good listen. Because somewhere in Fred Frith's music you're likely to find a piece of you. ☒

Davis/Newton/Wadud from pg. 85

leaderless, nameless, drummerless trio represents the ongoing challenge to wed elements of jazz and the European classical tradition without entirely subjugating the swing and emotion of the former to the structural rigors of the latter. — *Don Palmer*

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PICK HITS 82

Now that 1982 is safely behind us, we asked some of our merry crew to engage in a bit of Listomania regarding the year's best releases. Each victim was asked to surrender to the authorities the following information: (1) the Top Five Albums, (2) the Best Singles or Album Cuts, (3) the Best Music Video or Film, (4) the Rookie of the Year, (5) the Hype of the Year, (6) the Most Underrated, (7) the Dance Record of the Year, (8) the Best Reissue, (9) the Biggest Disappointment and (10) the Best Live Show or Concert.

J.D. CONSIDINE

ALBUMS: **Michael Jackson** — *Thriller* (Epic), **Bruce Springsteen** — *Nebraska* (Columbia), **ABC** — *The Lexicon Of Love* (PolyGram), **King Sunny Ade** — *Juju Music* (Mango), **Thomas Dolby** — *The Golden Age Of Radio* (EMI)
 SINGLES/CUTS: **Human League** — "Don't You Want Me Baby," **Jam** — "A Town Called Malice," **Fabulous Thunderbirds** — "How Do You Spell Love?"
 VIDEO/FILM: **Van Halen** — "Pretty Woman"
 ROOKIE: **Marshall Crenshaw**
 HYPE: **the Doors**
 UNDERRATED: **Rose Tattoo**
 DANCE: **Bootsy Collins** — "Body Slam!"
 REISSUE: **Coasters** — *Youngblood* (Atlantic/Deluxe)
 DISAPPOINTMENT: **ABC** cancel their Washington D.C. date
 LIVE: **King Crimson**, Columbia, Maryland

VIC GARBARINI

ALBUMS: **English Beat** — *Special Beat Service* (IRS), **Steel Pulse** — *True Democracy* (Elektra), **Human League** — *Dare* (A&M), **Marshall Crenshaw** — *Marshall Crenshaw* (Warner Bros.), **David Lindley** — *Win This Record* (Elektra)
 SINGLES/CUTS: **Steel Pulse** — "Chant A Psalm," **Joni Mitchell** — "Underneath The Streetlights," **Jimi Hendrix** — "Hear My Train A Coming"
 VIDEO/FILM: *Gandhi*
 ROOKIE: **Marshall Crenshaw**
 HYPE: **Elvis Costello** — *Imperial Bedroom* (Columbia)
 UNDERRATED: **Clash** — "Rock The Casbah" (dub version)
 REISSUE: **Charles Mingus** — *Mingus Plays Piano* (MCA/Impulse)
 DISAPPOINTMENT: Production on the **Go-Go's** *Vacation*
 LIVE: **Marshall Crenshaw**, the Ritz, New York City

TIMOTHY WHITE

ALBUMS: **Joni Mitchell** — *Wild Things Run Fast* (Geffen), **Men at Work** — *Business As Usual* (Columbia), **Billy Joel** — *The Nylon Curtain* (Columbia), **Fleetwood Mac** — *Mirage* (Warners), **Steel Pulse** — *True Democracy* (E/A)
 SINGLES/CUTS: **Men at Work** — "Down Under," **Melody Makers** — "What A Plot," **Rita Marley** — "One Draw"
 VIDEO/FILM: **Toni Basil** — "Mickey" (from the series *Word of Mouth*)
 HYPE: **the Go-Go's**
 UNDERRATED: **Joe Cocker** — *Sheffield Steel*
 DANCE: **Yazoo** — "Don't Go"
 REISSUE: **Bob Marley & the Wailers** — *The Box Set* (Limited edition) nine LPs
 DISAPPOINTMENT: **the Who** — *It's Hard*
 LIVE: **Marshall Crenshaw** at the old Peppermint Lounge

DAVID FRICKE

ALBUMS: **Bruce Springsteen** — *Nebraska* (Columbia), **Elvis Costello & the Attractions** — *Imperial Bedroom* (Columbia), **Captain Beefheart & the Magic Band** — *Ice Cream For Crow* (Virgin), **R.E.M.** — *Chronic Town* (I.R.S.), **the Clash** — *Combat Rock* (Epic).
 SINGLES/CUTS: **Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five** — "The Message" (Sugarhill), **Human League** — "Don't You Want Me" (A&M), **Translator** — "Everywhere But I'm Not" (415)
 VIDEO/FILM: *Starstruck*, directed by Gillian Armstrong
 ROOKIE: **Men at Work**
 HYPE: **the Who's** "Farewell" U.S. Tour
 UNDERRATED: **the Glenn Phillips Band**
 DANCE: **Peter Gabriel** — "Shock The Monkey"
 REISSUE: *Michigan Brand Nuggets* (Belvedere — 60s Detroit garage rock compilation)
 DISAPPOINTMENT: **the Residents'** tour never got to New York
 LIVE: **Peter Gabriel**, Palladium, New York City

DAVE MARSH

ALBUMS: **Bruce Springsteen** — *Nebraska* (Columbia), **Richard & Linda Thompson** — *Shoot Out The Lights* (Hannibal), **Michael Jackson** — *Thriller* (Epic), **Jeff Todd Titon** — *Sacred Speech, Chant and Song in an Appalachian Baptist Church* (University of North Carolina Press Records), **Betty Lavette** — *Tell Me A Lie* (Motown).
 SINGLES/CUTS: **Richard "Dimples" Fields** — "If It Ain't One Thing It's Another," **John Anderson** — "Wild And Blue," **David Lasley** — "Treat Willie Good."
 VIDEO/FILM: **Musical Youth** — "Pass The Dutchie"
 ROOKIE: **Little Steven & the Disciples of Soul**
 HYPE: MTV
 UNDERRATED: **Steve Winwood** — *Talking Back To The Night*
 DANCE: **the English Beat** — *Special Beat Service* (A&M)
 REISSUE: **the Contours** — "Do You Love Me?" (Gordy)
 DISAPPOINTMENT: Schlitz Rocks America
 LIVE: **Richard & Linda Thompson**, Dominion Theatre, London

BRIAN CULLMAN

ALBUMS: **Roxy Music** — *Avalon* (E.G./Warners), **Richard & Linda Thompson** — *Shoot Out The Lights* (Hannibal), **King Sunny Ade** — *Juju Music* (Mango), **UB-40** — *UB-44* (Import), **Ted Hawkins** — *Watch Your Step* (Rounder).
 SINGLES/CUTS: **the English Beat** — "Save It For Later," **Marvin Gaye** — "Sexual Healing," **the Clash** — "Radio Clash"
 VIDEO/FILM: *Diva*
 ROOKIE: **T-Bone Burnett**
 HYPE: MTV
 UNDERRATED: **UB-40**
 DANCE: **Grandmaster Flash** — "The Message"
 REISSUE: **Ray Charles** — *A Life In Music*
 DISAPPOINTMENT: **John Fogerty's** continued absence
 LIVE: **Richard & Linda Thompson**, the Bottom Line, New York

FRANCIS DAVIS

ALBUMS: **Ornette Coleman** — *Of Human Feelings* (Antilles), **Roscoe Mitchell** — *Snurdy McGurdy And Her Dancing Shoes* (Nessa), **Muhai Richard Abrams** — *Blues Forever* (Black Saint), **Henry Threadgill** — *When Was That?* (About Time), **Philip Glass** — *Glassworks* (CBS).
 SINGLES/CUTS: **Grandmaster Flash** — "The Message," **Romeo Void** — "Never Say Never," **Allen Ginsberg** — "Birdbrain."
 VIDEO/FILM: **Art Pepper** — *Notes From A Jazz Survivor*
 ROOKIE: **Odeon Pope**
 HYPE: Here at the Jazz Desk we're seldom bothered by hype.
 UNDERRATED: **Henry Threadgill**
 DANCE: Jazz critics don't dance.
 REISSUE: **Roy Eldridge** — *The Early Years*
 LIVE: **Old and New Dreams**, anywhere.

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A carbon graphite top—stronger, lighter, thinner than ordinary spruce—gives the Adamas II a virtually flat response throughout its entire range. Twenty-two soundholes, scientifically positioned and matched to our famous Lyrachord® Roundback bowl, reflect every note clearly and precisely. A unique neck reinforcing system called the Kaman Bar™ allows the Adamas II neck to achieve the maximum rigidity possible at the lowest

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