

JOAN ARMATRADING'S SONGWRITING SECRETS

# MUSICIAN

\$2.25 NO. 80 JUNE 1985

ICD 080856

## PHIL COLLINS

**A MUSICIAN BECOMES A STAR**

BY J.D. CONSIDINE



## JOE ZAWINUL BEYOND WEATHER REPORT

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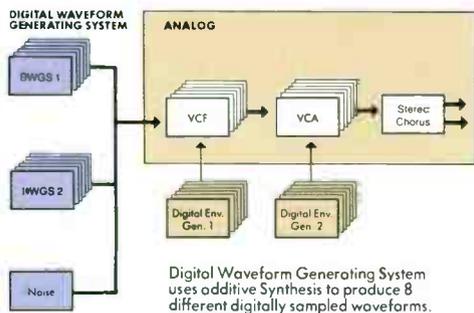
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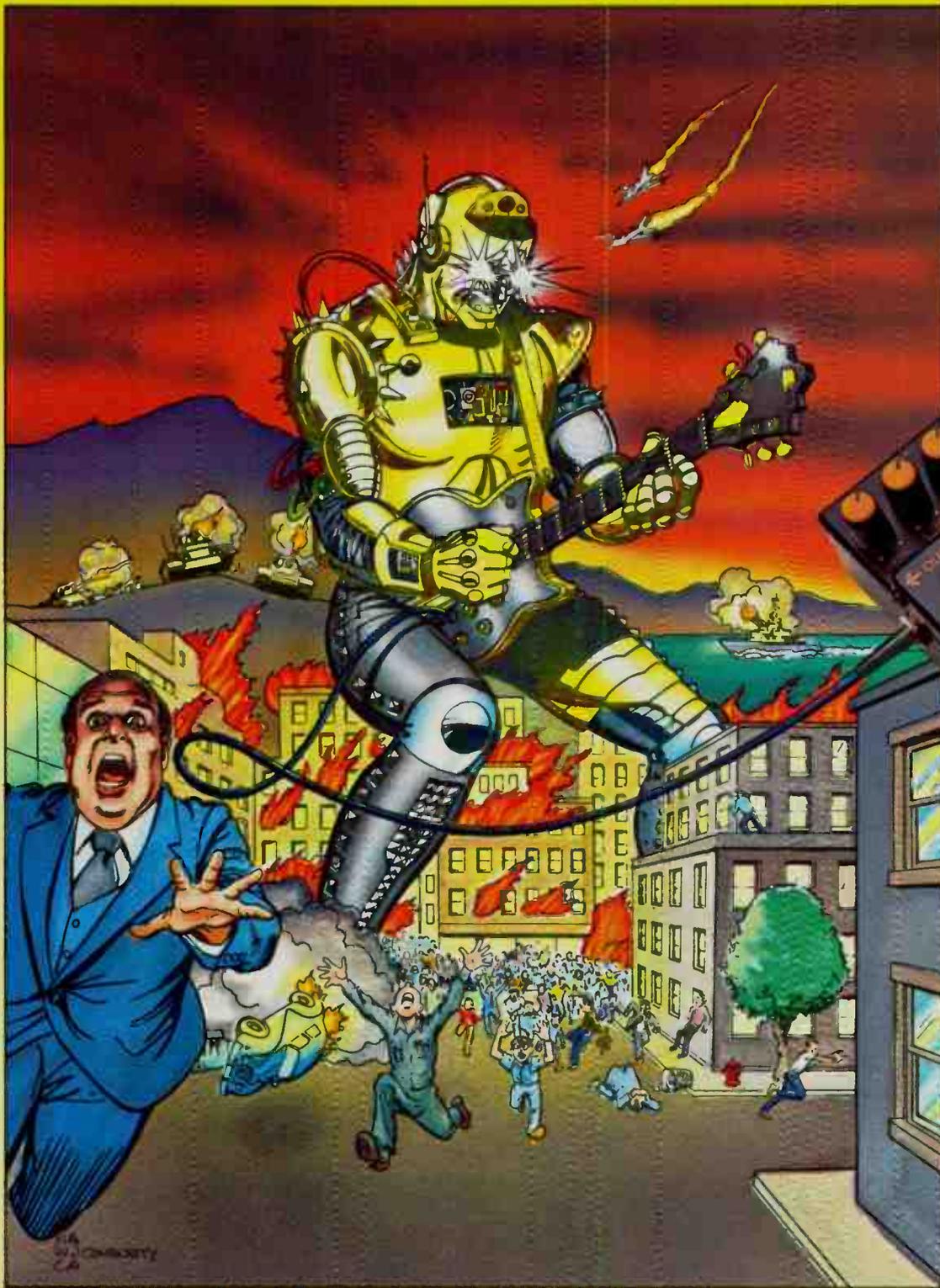
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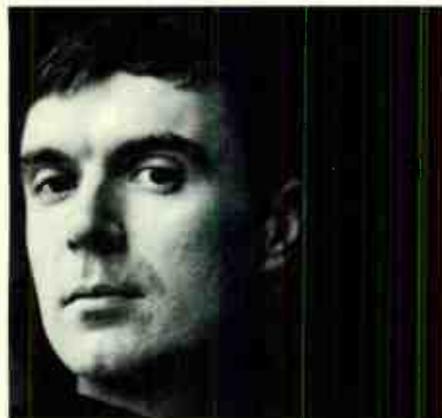
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He revitalized Genesis, reinvented the sound of drums, and is rapidly moving toward world radio domination, most recently with his #1 LP *No Jacket Required*. From steamy, menacing grooves to comic interludes, a visit with Phil on tour in Australia.

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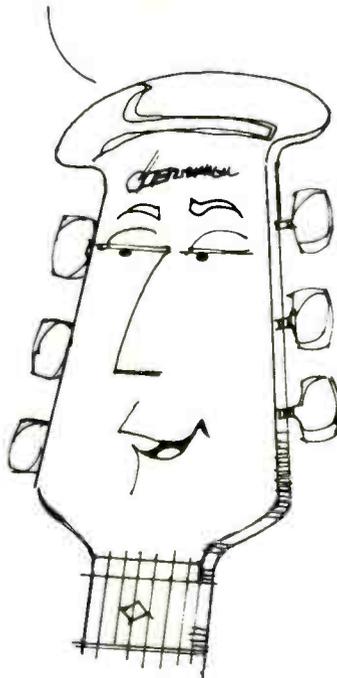
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## Typography

Don Russell

## Assistant to the Publisher

Michelle Nicasro

## Administration

Dee Dee Davis Annette Dion

Christine Tedesco

## Main Office/Production/Retail Sales

31 Commercial St., P.O. Box 701  
Gloucester, MA 01930 (617) 281-3110

## New York Advertising/Editorial

MUSICIAN, 1515 Broadway, 39 fl.  
N.Y.C., NY 10036 (212) 764-7395

## Group Publisher

Gerald S. Hobbs

## Circulation Manager

Barbara Eskin

## Subscriber Service

Gregory Thompson (212) 764-7536

## Founders

Gordon Baird & Sam Holdsworth

MUSICIAN (USPS 431-910) is published monthly by Amordian Press, Inc., P.O. Box 701, 31 Commercial St., Gloucester, MA 01930. (617) 281-3110. Amordian Press, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Billboard Publications, Inc., One Astor Place, 1515 Broadway, New York City NY 10036. MUSICIAN is a trademark of Amordian Press, Inc. © 1985 by Musician, all rights reserved. Second class postage paid at Gloucester, MA 01930 and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions \$20 per year, \$38 for two years, \$52 for three years. Canada and elsewhere, add \$8 per year, U.S. funds only. **Subscription address: Musician, Box 1923, Marion, OH 43305. Postmaster send form 3579 to above address.**

Billboard Publications, Inc. **President and Chief Executive Officer:** Gerald S. Hobbs, **Executive Vice President:** Samuel S. Holdsworth, **Senior Vice President:** Ann Haire, **Vice Presidents:** John B. Babcock, Paul Curran, Martin R. Feely, Rosalee Lovett, Lee Zhit



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### Joni to Rickie

When I was a kid there was a time when Geraldine Campbell chased me with a wood hatchet whenever I passed her house. "This is *my* sidewalk—this is *my* sidewalk!" she would chant, brandishing the hatchet and glowering and pouting ferociously. Rickie Lee—jazz, too, is a public sidewalk—no matter how near you live to it, it belongs to the city and anyone it pleases—it was there before you were born and it will be there long after you move away. "It's a free world—Geraldine!"—I used to say—tipping my beret.

Joni Mitchell  
Los Angeles, CA

### A Centerfield Hit

Scott Isler's interview with John Fogerty put a searchlight on the genius that we knew he had all along. Fogerty is definitely my most valuable player. Don't you think that his picture on the cover has a Dale Murphy essence to it?

Bob Williamson  
Knoxville, TN

The recent release of *Centerfield* combined with your great cover story on John Fogerty was almost too much for this listener/reader to absorb. Scott Isler's obviously inspired interview confirms three things I suspected. One, John uses the best mixing technique available—a car stereo. Two, sadly enough, his music has been severely hampered by his mistreatment at the hands of the very people he had to trust. Three, this is an intelligent guy, and more than that—a nice guy! If it takes John nine or ten more years for his next album, so what?

Joe Brannen  
Houston, TX



Scott Isler's interview with John Fogerty was simply great! Also, your "Hancock/Marsalis" interview was entertaining. Herbie Hancock will always be a musical genius, and as for Wynton Marsalis—you let the man's idiotic attitude speak for itself.

C.L. Carr  
Manassas Park, VA

I was disturbed to hear John Fogerty say he was "not gonna do the old Creedence songs ever again." I can understand his desire not to be perceived as an oldies act, but the purging strains of Creedence's best stuff is strikingly relevant today. "Bad Moon Rising," "Who'll Stop The Rain"—I feel these songs all the time and I want to hear them again, live. And if I may be frank, to not play the tunes to avoid becoming a pitchman for Fantasy's products seems a little childish. Why take it out on the fans?

David Hillis  
Hayward, CA

### Herbie vs. Wynton: Round 2

No, Wynton, the biggest crock of BS in the history of music isn't the one about "It's gotta come from the heart." Maybe it's your contention that hearing a Led Zeppelin influence in black music is a "reaffirmation of prejudice." Or, it could be your penetrating insight that "You can't get 'new' in that type of music." Or perhaps it's your revelation that all pop music is just a "low-level realization of sex." No wait, I know, the biggest crock of all is when you say, "I know a lot about pop music."

Don Reed  
Concord, CA

Wynton Marsalis, you stand accused of as much musical narrow-mindedness as the person adorning his pickup truck with the bumper sticker bearing the slogan: "If it ain't country, it ain't music." How do you plead?

Jim Mitchell  
(who is black and dares to like  
and play both rock and jazz)  
Sacramento, CA

One can only thank Wynton Marsalis for bringing forth the much-needed criticism of music videos (MTV in particular). With its lack of creative originality, constant use of violent themes and street-level sexuality, and failure to present any kind of illuminated or insightful statement, one can only wonder about the mentality of its creators.

Richard Duval  
Mountain View, CA

Wynton is right on top of it. And as young as he is, he's saying what "they" never allowed Bird, Billie, Prez, etc. to verbalize and we are the culturally richer for their musical expressions and legacy. Never mind what Herbie is saying: He's confused as was Miles when he split from Bird. As Wynton says, "Check out the pop-rock scene for your-

self i.e., the sex trip, the musical so-called cross-over, the still ever-present racist mentality, the re-actions to the action." Indeed! Illiterate jazz critics, "hep" lay jazz fans, the California cool school, idiotic and dumb jazz polls such as the recent *Playboy* issue, have all contributed to black music hanging in purgatory through the years.

Black music gets lucky every so often by having an outspoken individual that blows the changes without interference from recording executives, lite-show video rockers and old line Miles-types who stumble around in computer rooms as his clone Herbie does. And I rest my case with Herbie's display of soulless electronic gibberish on the '85 Grammy show.

Warren V. Gilmore  
Mendon, MI

### Life with Father

Many thanks to Vic Garbarini for his excellent Julian Lennon interview. While others continue to compare Julian's work with his father's, Garbarini realizes and states the obvious: "Julian didn't have the fifteen years of anger and self-discovery to bring to *Valotte*." It seems that no other interviewer or publication has been perceptive enough to bring that to their readers' attention.

Lyn Britt  
Huntington Beach, CA

Why couldn't Vic Garbarini have asked Julian Lennon about himself instead of his personal relationship with his father? I'm sure that Julian loved him, but why can't people recognize him for the person he is, not just "John Lennon's son." Sorry, Vic, you're no psychologist.

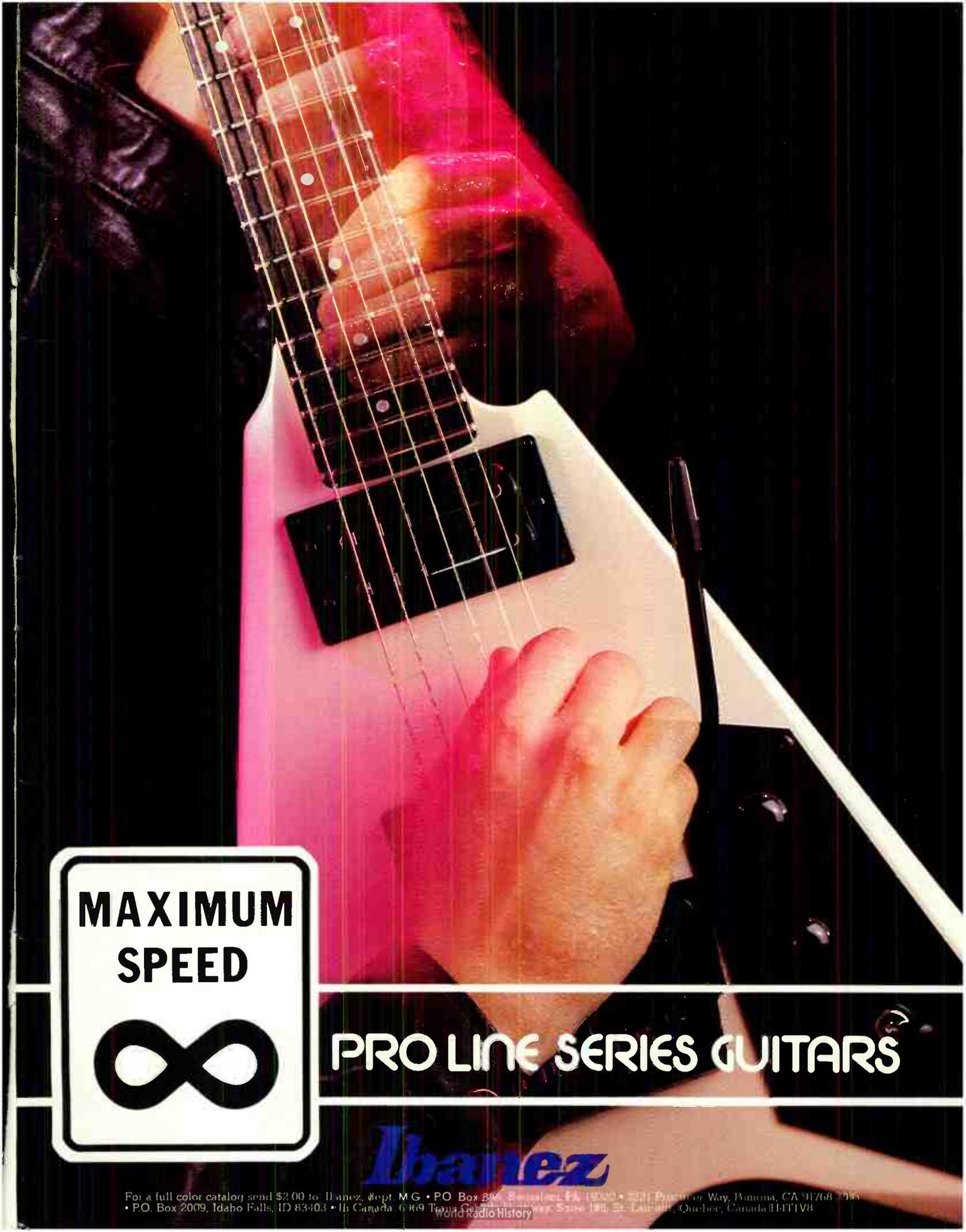
Sharon Third  
Talladega, AL

### Critic Critique

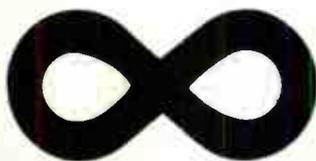
Roy Trakin's review of Richard's and Linda Thompson's respective solo albums started badly, with the loathsome and archaic "man and wife," introduced no fewer than four comparisons with the aid of "-esque" and "-like," and featured more good ol' boy contractions than an episode of "Dallas" ("hurtin'"). The rock may be for adults only, but the critique is strictly kid stuff.

Alexa Conrad  
West Caldwell, NJ

Congratulations to Kirby Malone of Baltimore, MD, winner of the Korg Poly-800, who's performing in Social Amnesia at the Theater Project there.



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# DAVID BYRNE'S *KNEE PLAYS*



Presentational Byrne: "The emotion comes from whatever resonances or personal meanings the listener puts into it."

COMPUTER ART BY MICHA RISS. PHOTO BY A FIELD

## MARK ROWLAND

### MORE CURIOUS CONNECTIONS: NEW ORLEANS BRASS MEETS SPOKEN WORD

**I** like ordinary songs," David Byrne insists. "I like singing Hank Williams. I like a lot of old country songs—people like Ernest Tubb and Tammy Wynette. There are lots of pop songs that I enjoy too, but I guess lately I've disallowed myself from doing that."

And how. The leader and creative force behind Talking Heads, the best American band of the last decade, is no more a regular Joe than he's a regular interviewee. In conversation Byrne almost never makes eye contact, gestures nervously and speaks very slowly with pauses of unpredictable length, as if he's receiving signals from another

planet. But his ideas, verbal *and* musical, are invariably well-organized and articulated, and peppered with surprise.

Back when Byrne was in high school, he sang in college coffee houses, accompanying himself on acoustic guitar. But instead of performing standard folk repertoire, Byrne's selections ranged from Chuck Berry to the Kinks. "I'd play what I thought were good rock songs," he recalls with a smile, "for an audience that had never heard any of them. They really seemed to like them too."

Since that time Byrne has merged African rhythms with American pop, synthesizers with choreographer Twyla Tharp, and starched shirts with CBGB. Best known for his work with Talking Heads, he's also found time for independent collaborations with Tharp, Brian Eno and most recently playwright Robert Wilson. And nearly every signpost along this remarkable musical journey has been marked by a penchant for weaving seemingly irreconcilable strains into a fresh design that confounds his audience's expectations.

Byrne's latest effort, *Music From The Knee Plays* (ECM), is predictably star-

ting. The LP's twelve selections—mostly music for an acoustic brass quintet, alternating with deadpan narratives—sounds a little like what Bach would have written if he'd lived in New Orleans. The *Knee Plays* are "joints" (hence the title) between larger scenes in Wilson's theatrical production *the CIVIL WarS*. Byrne's musical approach remains as minimalist as Wilson's play is ambitious—perhaps so ambitious that it may never be seen in its entirety. But like *The Catherine Wheel*, Byrne's *Knee Plays* music is enjoyable and more than occasionally provocative on its own terms.

"I wanted to work on the *Knee Plays* because it was on a smaller scale than other sections of the play, so I thought it might have a better chance of touring and being seen by more people," Byrne candidly admits. "The nature of the music was also dictated by practical considerations. I wanted it to be live, so the instruments had to be set up and dismantled quickly. I ended up choosing brass, in part because I wanted it to be loud enough to cover the noise of any hammering or moving around of the

sets backstage."

At first Byrne was inclined to utilize sounds more suggestive of Japanese kabuki theater, which he says would have been in keeping with the play's overall aesthetic; but, being David Byrne, he ultimately opted to go "in an opposite direction."

"I'd heard the Dirty Dozen Brass Band in New Orleans, and I thought I'd combine music I'd written with their music for spiritual and gospel numbers. Our collaboration didn't work out that well, but they did prove to be my main inspiration."

Byrne eventually constructed his compositions by simulating individual horn parts through an Emulator,

sequencing them, and then hiring L.A. studio smoothies like Chuck Findley and Ernie Watts to flesh them out and "add warmth, the way real players do." But not too much: "The music is very 'presentational,'" Byrne explains in disquietingly neutral cadences, "in that there's not a lot of emotion put into it. Obviously it could be played more fluidly or jazzy, but in keeping with the play I thought they should be performed in a very 'flat' manner. The emotion comes from whatever resonances or personal meanings the listener puts into it."

Much the same can be said for the five tracks on which Byrne adds his voice to the elegant horn charts; these

cuts elevate the record from cleverly contrapuntal mood music (it is on ECM) to a quirkier, more challenging form. Ironically Byrne's spoken vignettes, their serio-comic tone reminiscent of Laurie Anderson, often create the kind of interlocking call-and-response with the horns one associates with a New Orleans jazz funeral. But their rigidly syncopated rhythms and Byrne's dry, "presentational" phrasing and timbre are rather more suggestive of Konstantin Chernenko's.

Yet the stilted formality seems to work. Or, as David puts it, "There's no telling the audience, 'This is what it *should* mean.' It's more like, 'Maybe you've never looked at this before, or thought about things in this particular way.'"

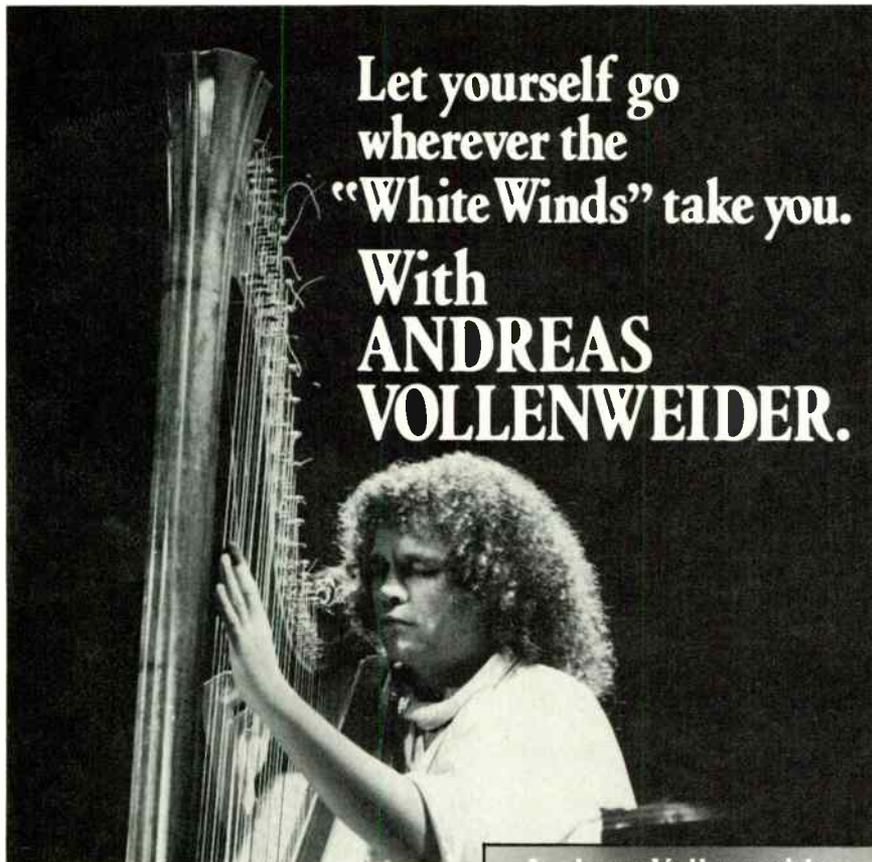
Probably not. On "Tree" and "Social Studies," for instance, Byrne contemplates the relationships between people and their clothes and food, at one point spinning a fantasy about living someone else's life through their groceries. "In The Future" calmly reels off a string of predictions that would shame Jeanne Dixon; a modulating brass fanfare provides soothing relief. The prophecies—by turns bizarre, funny and sinister—appear contradictory at first, but upon further contemplation fall into place like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle.

"When I was writing the words," Byrne explains, "I noticed at some point that I could see myself believing in any of (the predictions). I mean, I could easily believe in an atomic war, and if I *really* stretch my imagination I can believe that everyone will love one another. So I thought, well, there seem to be a lot of opposites here, let's play off that. In the play that scene has kind of an ominous air, so there *is* a serious edge. And yet it's still kind of silly.

"Making fun of the future." Byrne lets out a soft chortle. "It's a lot of fun. I can imagine kids doing it at parties."

Ten or even five years ago, there wasn't much room for "silly" or "fun" in Byrne's music. His persona onstage and off was too self-conscious and neurotically energetic for that. More recently, though, Byrne has taken a quantum leap toward a sound that's warmer, more relaxed, openly embracing—and a hell of a lot more danceable. In concert he's evolved into a natural, self-assured bandleader and star actor. If Byrne is still not as suave a Cary Grant, at least he's a lot less reminiscent of James Woods.

"I've come to accept the artifice of stage performance," he says. "When the band started I wanted to strip that away—and we pretty much did. I still feel that's valid, but there's another way of doing things—and one big advan-



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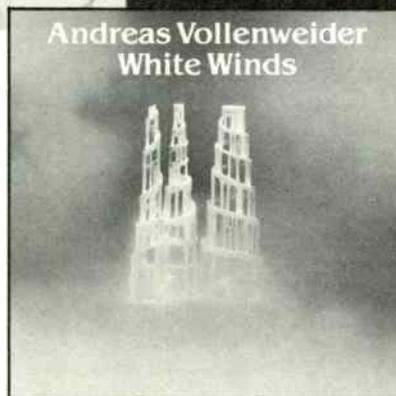
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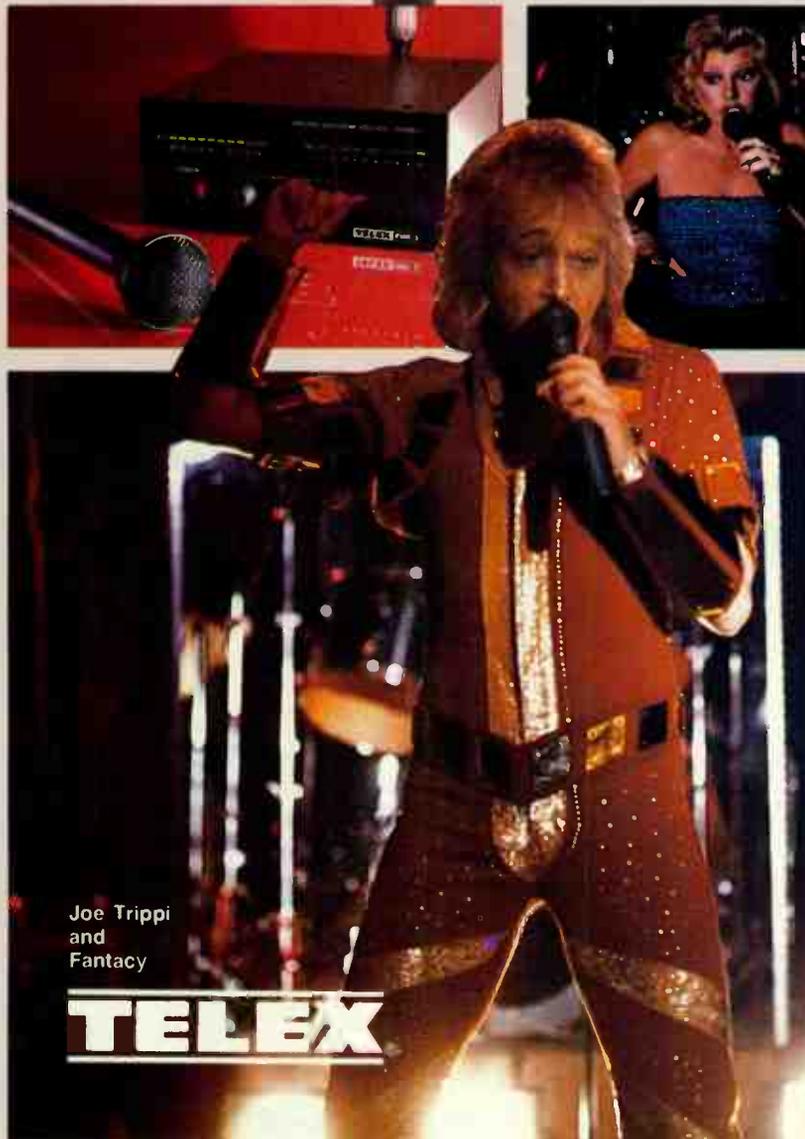
Two years ago, when he began his search for his band's first wireless system he was justifiably skeptical. He had heard some really questionable systems over the years and those that did sound good cost a fortune. Then he discovered Telex, an affordable system that delivered the



BIG sound that Joe had come to expect from his wired system. His doubts about wireless faded when he took the system on the road and gave it a real workout. Joe loves the freedom and excitement that wireless brings to his act, and Telex hasn't let him down yet. He's never had an audio dropout because of the patented Pos-i-Phase Diversity system and his WHM500 has a great frequency response for his close-miking, high sound pressure vocal style.

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Joe Trippi and Fantasy

**TELEX**

tage is simply that a (more stylized) production has larger impact.”

Consequently he gravitated toward African music, which is at once ritualistic and emotionally raw. “I felt that, in an abstract musical way, it reaffirmed the idea of humanity and community in a way that was...*fun* to do. I'd been accustomed to thinking of spiritual things as very personal, and to a large extent they are. But I also discovered that it's possible to have a spiritual experience that's ecstatic, pleasurable, not just academic and dreary.”

Ironically, Byrne declined an invitation to participate in USA for Africa's “We Are The World.” “I do think it's a duty of people to realize they are part of the community and the rest of the world,” he explains, “but by that I don't mean everybody give a dollar, which can be a way of letting experts take care of problems. I do think (USA for Africa) is very well-intentioned, and a fair amount of the money might go where it's intended. But there are very few organizations around like, say, Oxfam, that deal with the long-term causes and effects of disasters. Although a lot of famines are triggered by droughts, I think their root causes are more often human greed. And if that isn't recognized, a famine can occur again next year. So my politics tend to be more individually oriented; they encourage people to make up their own minds.”

So, of course, does his music. Though a forthcoming Talking Heads album will once more feature honest-to-gosh songs, Byrne expects that the record will still leave itself open to various interpretations—and he openly welcomes the possibilities. “Sometimes someone will describe to me their perception of something that I wrote,” he remarks, sounding like one of his *Knee Plays* vignettes. “And it's not at all what I thought it was. But often, after I hear it, I think they're *right*. I have to step back and go, yeahh...I guess so. I didn't see that at all.” ☐

## Byrning Down The House

Onstage **David Byrne** plays a Roland synthesizer guitar, although “I never use the synthesizer part.” Then why play it? “I thought it was a pretty good guitar! And our sound engineer said he was getting a warmer sound than from my Strat, which I use in the studio.” In concert he also uses a rack of pedal effects, including a Boss digital delay, compressor and “a distortion thing,” and an Ibanez Auto filter. The whole band uses Roland Jazz Chorus amps.

For songwriting Byrne relies with increasing frequency on the Emulator, “to see how something will sound, before I end up using the real thing. But the Emulator can be great live.” His home “studio” consists of a Tascam 4-track. His recent “big purchase” was an AMS digital reverb.

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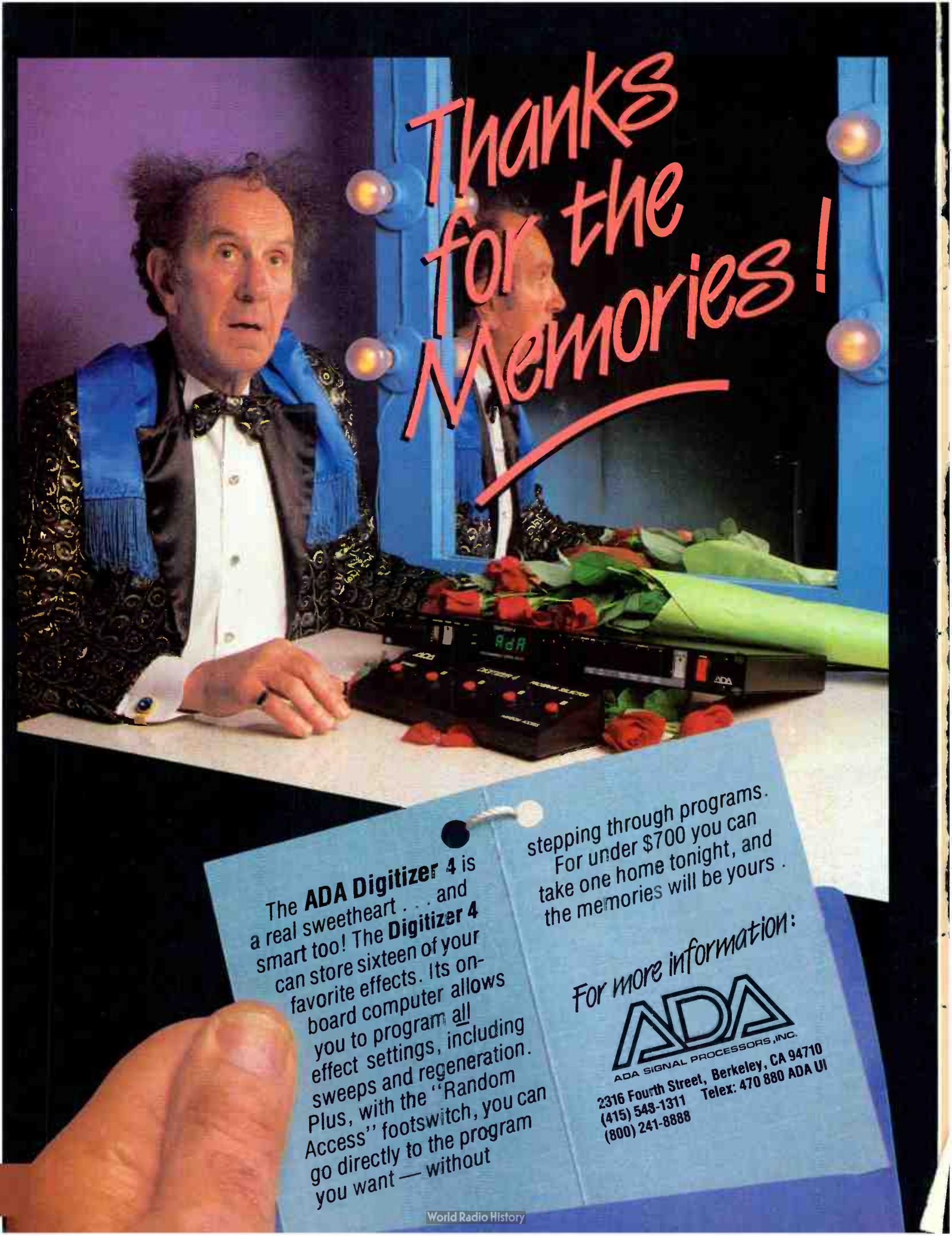
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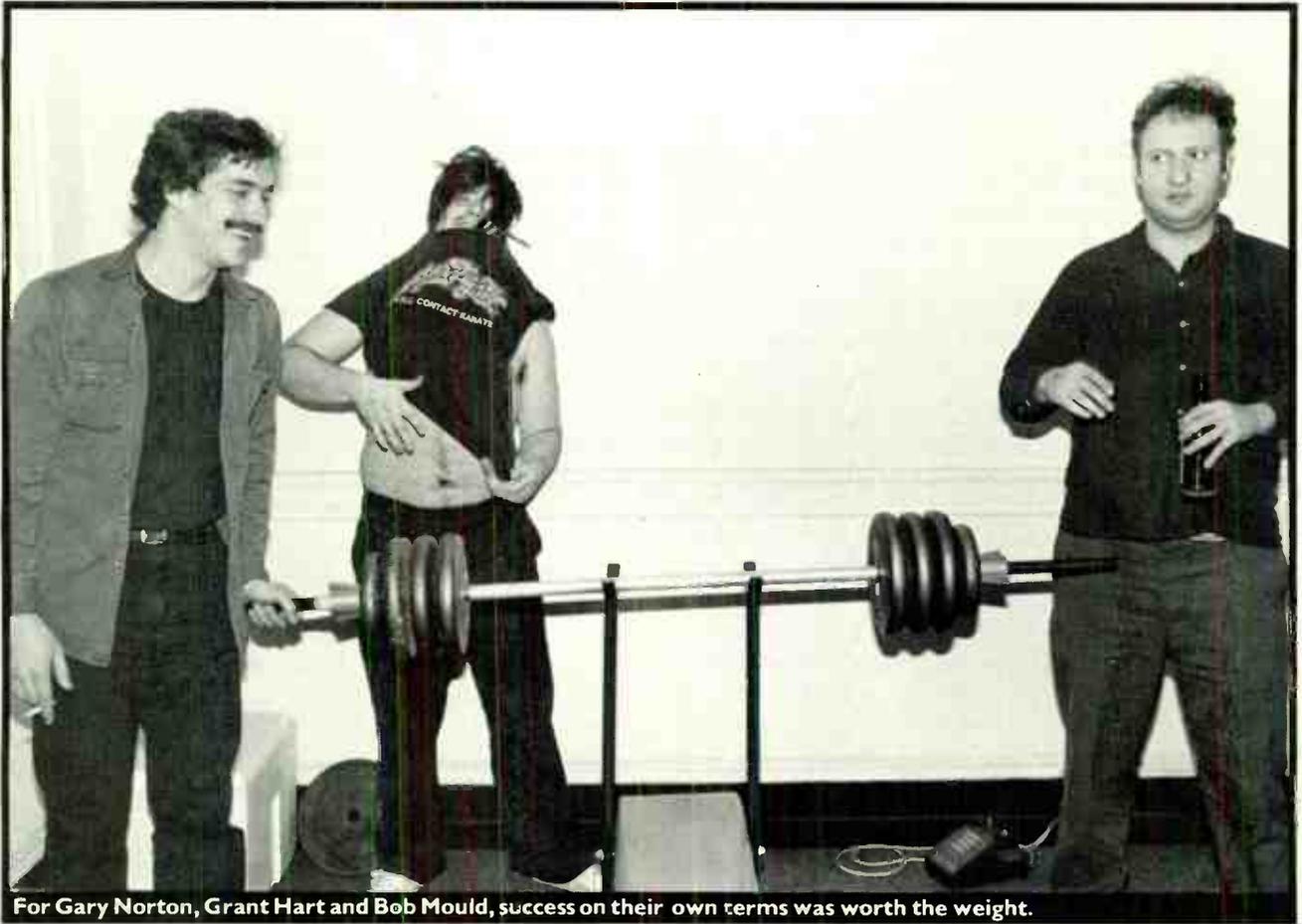
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# HÜSKER DÜ



For Gary Norton, Grant Hart and Bob Mould, success on their own terms was worth the weight.

LAURA LEVINE

## CHRIS MORRIS

### A FRESH VISION OF HARD-CORE-AND-MORE THRIVES IN THE HEARTLAND

Sitting in a large, empty room backstage at UCLA's Ackerman Ballroom, Hüsker Dü's Bob Mould looks like anything but a rocker. In his jeans and long-sleeved American Wrestling Association Cage Match T-shirt, the beefy, moon-faced guitarist/singer resembles a furloughed construction worker. He looks amused when asked about his burgeoning commercial fortune.

"Well, let me get out my wallet and see whose card I got this week," he says in a low, road-raw voice. He fishes out a card embossed with the Warner Brothers shield. "Nah, nobody," he

comments with a wry grin. "That was for the other deal—for cartoons."

Mould is kidding, of course. Hüsker Dü (the name, without umlauts, is Danish and Norwegian for "do you remember?") is presently being wooed by just about every major label in the country—"all the biggies except CBS," the guitarist notes in a more serious moment. But their sudden success has clearly left Mould, drummer Grant Hart and bassist Greg Norton a little dazed. It's been a startling leap toward the big time for a band known mainly to the punk cognoscenti only a year ago.

The Hüskers' rapid rise may have taken the band members by surprise, but few who have followed the group's progress during their six-year history would raise an eyebrow. The fervent trio expressed the anger and angst of the American hardcore punk sector to explosive perfection in their early singles and albums. But last year, in their magnum opus *Zen Arcade*, they brought a breadth of artistic invention, a stylistic versatility, and a heatedly intense technical execution to a form too often strait-jacketed by pared-down structures and

thematic myopia. Hüsker Dü vaulted from the hardcore aggro ranks by offering something that the style delivers far too infrequently: a fresh vision.

*Zen Arcade* is sprawling, surging 'core tempered by strains of neo-psychedelia and folkish acoustic touches. Along with the single that preceded it—a devastating revision of the Byrds' "Eight Miles High"—the album served notice to the press that the band's heady style was worth shouting about. The St. Paul, Minnesota-based group has moved to consolidate last year's advances. The single-disc *New Day Rising*, a speedy follow-up to *Zen Arcade*, came out this January. They also extended an ongoing tour, playing over a hundred gigs in the last eight months. All the activity and attention has made Hüsker Dü the rulers of the roost in the Twin Cities music scene (discounting, of course, Prince's nationwide purple reign). But it wasn't always so. According to the dapper, mustachioed Norton, far blander music held sway in the band's hometown in 1978: "Practically anything that you went out to hear was pop bands with the cute

haircuts. That was the alternative."

Back then, the future members of Hüsker Dü were bedroom musicians of resolutely amateur status. Hart was a closet Al Jolson fan who worked with Norton in a St. Paul record store. Mould, a musician and songwriter from the age of nine, joined the pair after he was drawn into the shop by the punk rock Hart blasted from the sidewalk P.A. system. "The three of us got together in my basement one Friday afternoon and played a bunch of Ramones covers," Norton says. "A week later, on March 30, 1979, we were onstage at Ron's Randolph Inn in St. Paul." Mould adds, "We figured if the Ramones could do it, anybody could do it."

By 1981 they were good enough to release a debut single, "Statues," on their own Reflex label. The band had to play outside the Twin Cities, however, to forge associations that would lead to greater national prominence. A low-budget trip to Chicago that year resulted in a gig at a punk club party honoring Black Flag.

"It was a real nihilistic experience," Mould recalls. "I found a two-gallon can of blue paint and threw it up in the air. It hit the dance floor and blew up everywhere. This girl picked up one of Grant's cymbals, scooped up a bunch of paint and went to pour it on his drums. Grant picked her up and power-slammed her into the paint, and (Black Flag

producer) Spot and (then-singer) Dez (Cadena) picked her up and started bouncing her off the wall, leaving butt prints on the wall. It was like a Busby Berkeley musical gone to hell."

Impressed by the Minnesotans' lashing music and colorful behavior, Black Flag offered the band assistance. Black Flag's SST label nixed a live tape as a first LP from Hüsker Dü, but suggested that New Alliance, the even smaller label run by SST labelmates the Minutemen, might be interested. The result, *Land Speed Record*, offered the first hint of the raging neo-psychedelic hardcore Hüsker Dü would refine over the years. "*Land Speed's* like the bad part of the acid," Mould comments.

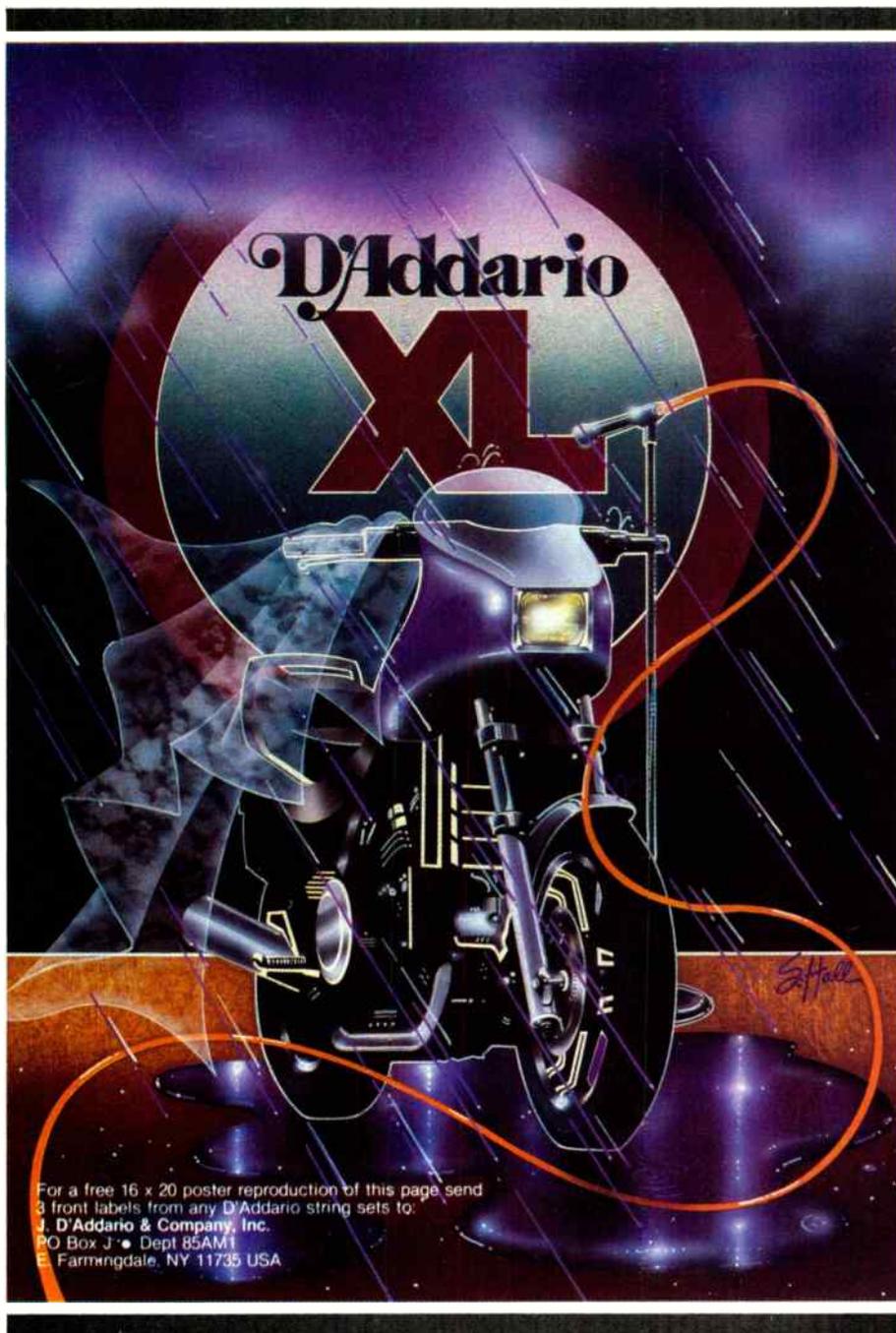
A demonic single on New Alliance, "In A Free Land," and the Reflex album *Everything Falls Apart* followed. Hüsker Dü finally joined the SST fold with the EP *Metal Circus* in 1983, but emerged from the 'core underground only with last year's two-disc opus.

*Zen Arcade* grew out of an experience familiar to ex-hippies everywhere: drugs. "In the months before we left to record *Zen Arcade*, I tripped probably twenty-eight times," Hart admits. "It was the acid bender of my life." It also helped that he was living communally in a church with members of four different bands. That lifestyle had a marked impact on the record's expansiveness.

"People would do like three-hour versions of (the instrumental) 'Reoccurring Dreams,'" Mould says. "You'd watch people get pinned to the wall. Grant and I were practicing just about every day, just jamming and getting into more weirdness and sitting around hyperventilating over lyrics and stuff."

The lunatic methodology involved in creating the music for *Zen Arcade* carried over into its recording: The entire record was made in one marathon eighty-five-hour session, mixing included. Most of the songs are first takes. Mould and Hart describe the end product as "a cross between *Tommy*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Sound of Music* and *Evita*." Whatever its pedigree, *Zen Arcade* struck an immediate chord with critics across the country. In the *Village Voice's* year-end poll of over 200 rock writers, the album placed eighth among the year's best records—an unprecedented showing by this largely ignored trio of heartland rockers.

The follow-up, *New Day Rising*, is a finely-crafted, even rawer distillation of the musical inroads made in *Zen Arcade*. The more detailed sound displays Mould and Hart's songwriting abilities to even greater effect. "We weren't under a deadline this time," Mould says. "All the other records we recorded in the middle of tours, so it wasn't a very comfortable situation. Doing *Metal Circus*, for example, the



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power company came and shut the power off, 'cause the studio hadn't paid their electric bill. We were trying to jump power from other parts of the building. Stuff like that freaks everybody out."

On just about every level, Minneapolis/St. Paul suits Hüsker Dü just fine. In spite of their present notoriety, they're perfectly satisfied to continue recording and playing in their Midwestern base, off the beaten record company path. "In the Twin Cities, you're not as directly affected by all the crap that goes on in the business—all the cut-throat booking and managing, all that stuff," Mould says. "I think that people are basically into good music up there, and not just the trappings."

Yet things aren't as comfy as they used to be in the frozen north. The great acclaim accorded Hüsker Dü in the wake of *Zen Arcade*, and the band's high visibility, combined with the concurrent success of Minneapolis' Replacements, has turned the Twin Cities into a focus of interest for the musical in crowd—a development Mould views with dread. "The town is hip now, unfortunately," he says with a sour frown, "so it's sorta weird. I'm afraid it's gonna become another Boston or Atlanta."

In the face of encroachment by snooping journalists and A&R men, Hüsker Dü are doing what they can to encourage an independent hometown music scene via their own Reflex label.

The company's thirteen-record catalog contains albums and singles by such local talent as Rifle Sport, Mansize Action, Final Conflict, Otto's Chemical Lounge and Articles of Faith. Mould also produced a 1983 album by Soul Asylum on Minneapolis' Twin Tone label.

In spite of their obvious affection for the Twin Cities, Hüsker Dü hasn't ruled out big-label bucks. They make it clear, though, that they will have to dictate the terms. "We're very demanding individuals," Mould says. "We have an idea that things should be done our way. What am I supposed to do—go in and say, 'Well, golly gee, that's really nice'? I'm gonna go in and say, 'Look, man, I've got a real good idea that it's easy for us to get screwed around. Now either play it straight with us or don't bother us.' We would have to pick the producer and engineer and do the artwork, and we would stay self-managed."

"The first time that one of the major label reps called, he asked, 'Well, how many records do you think you can sell?' I was really messed up at the time—like the first time in three years I'd been messed up—and I said, 'Man, I don't care if we sell two million records or two! If I have to play to a wall, I'll play!'"

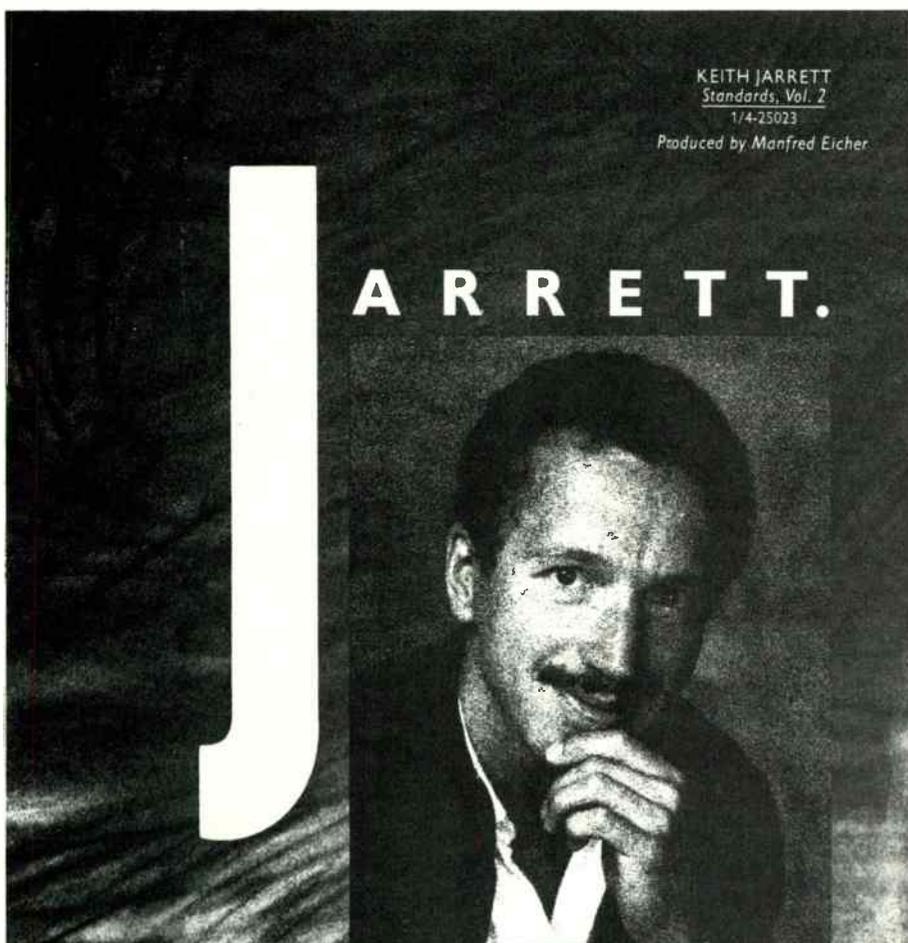
The band members laugh at this tale, and Mould turns the conversation into a discussion of the relative merits of Verne Gagne, Nick Bockwinkel and Hulk Hogan as mat champions. For their part, the three-man tag team known as Hüsker Dü have issued their own challenge to the major U.S. labels. Tune in next week for the battle royale. 

### How The Hüskers Dü It

**Bob Mould** owns two identical 1975 Ibanez Flying V copies. He runs these through a Yamaha G-100 solid state head and a Marshall slant 4x12 cabinet; that signal runs parallel into a British Fender Twin Junior "with about a 25-pound JBL speaker in it." He also utilizes an MXR Distortion Plus, Ibanez Stereo Chorus, and an Electro-Harmonix Small Clone Mini-Chorus. His strings are GHS Boomer Extra Lights; he favors Jim Dunlop picks.

**Greg Norton** plays an Ibanez Roadstar Series II medium-scale bass through a Peavey Mark IV Series III head and an Ampeg V2 4x12 bottom. He's a fan of GHS Super Steel and Boomer strings and Jim Dunlop picks.

**Grant Hart** is a Slingerland man, preferably Radio Kings. His kit features a 26-inch bass drum, 13-inch ride, and a 16-inch rack. He outfits these with heads by Pin-stripe (toms and bass) and Remo (for the snare). His cymbals are Zildjian Impulses, "the Ford Falcon of cymbals—they last longer under the conditions I play them under." He plays with the butt ends of Regal Tip Rock sticks.



"I KNEW GARY (PEACOCK) AND JACK (DEJOHNETTE) HAD GONE THROUGH STANDARDS, AS I HAD... AS A TRIBAL LANGUAGE, A WORLD OF WONDERFUL LITTLE MELODIES. WE HAD DINNER THE NIGHT BEFORE THE SESSION... I TALKED ABOUT OUR SPIRITUAL INVOLVEMENT IN SOMETHING THAT IS NOT OUR OWN, SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL THAT IS NOT OURS."

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MU-JUNE

# BLUE NOTE RESURRECTION



Freddie Hubbard and Joe Henderson go blow for blow.

LARRY BUSACCA

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*If I had known at the time that Blue Note was going to take off like it did, I would have charged you more for the covers.*

— Reid Miles

Why does the resuscitation of the Blue Note catalog from import-bin limbo come anointed in such devotional marketing rapture? And why would EMI chairman Bhaskar Menon and Manhattan/Blue Note president Bruce Lundvall seek to tie their corporate super-turbine to a little red caboose? Certainly the February 22, 1985 Town Hall christen-

ing concert was the "major event" of this or any other jazz season. But was the Blue Note label being revived? No This was *resurrection* (Can I hear an amen, brother) of Blue Note.

Blue Note's mythological status among jazzaholics derives from meaning so many beautiful things to so many different people, and in truth the original label's torrential flow of LPs amalgamated nearly all the major streams of American music: from dixieland, swing and boogie-woogie to bop, hard bop, post-bop, blip bleep and beyond—not to mention modern R&B and funk. People bought Blue Notes because Blue Note meant quality, consistency and visionary outreach. "Jazz with a feeling," in the words of photographer and co-producer Frank Wolff; and Wolff's candid, intimate shots of musicians and sultry, coffee-colored Valkyries, as well as Reid Miles' distinctive Bauhaus-on-fire cubist graphics, gave Blue Note's packaging a distinctive modern aura which complemented Rudy Van Gelder's rich, reverberant "You-Are-There" sonic realism. Even the notion that Blue Note recording scrimmages were fielded by Islamic wirocs and other heroic members of the All-Pharmaceutical team (who would do sessions on the cheap, man, if only they could get the cash out front because, like, there was this guy waiting in the hallway) only added to the label's mystique.

So might the new Manhattan/Blue Note label not merely follow trends, but anticipate them, goose them along, as the old Blue Note did? To date the new label's output more closely resembles

Bruce Lundvall's Elektra/Musician mixed bag or George Butler's "This Bud's For You Lou Rawls" GQ crossover binge of the early 70s when Blue Note's "jazz" became a hot house pop commodity—the Donald Byrds, Deodatos and George Bensons of the world heralding the shift from jazz joints to disco nights, upward mobility being well in sight. But surely the roots of *all* jazz's progressive evolutions and commercial incursions can be found in the Blue Note catalog. The Albert Ammons and Meade Lux Lewis recordings that launched the label bequeathed as much soul to rock, funk and country musicians as they did to jazzmen. And the hard blues of the Horace Silvers and Art Blakeys (along with Ray Charles) helped pave the way for Motown as certainly as they set up the Marsalis brothers for the ultimate "pure artist" pot o' gold. The true Blue Note "sound" ranges from swing to bop to pop (Lee Morgan's hit "The Sidewinder" helped sell cars in the 60s)—and if that's easy for us to forget, it's not hard for Blue Note founder Alfred Lion to remember. How. And why.

"I came very close to the blues, always," Lion remembers fondly, distantly, his English lightly pickled in the vinegar of his native Germany, where he was born April 21, 1908. "It must have had something to do with my childhood. Partly, I was lonely, you know? My mother was a very good looking woman; she was in show business at one time. And she was not really a woman who was really fit to bring up a child so well. Besides, I was hard to



Bruce Lundvall and Alfred Lion.

LARRY BUSACCA

handle, I understand—hyperfrenetic,” he giggles, recalling strict Prussian boarding schools during World War I, little to eat—fifty-seven different ways to prepare turnips—and how he always wanted to come to America.

*“The blues always hit me as something soulful, soothing and spiritual—it had something to do with my nature. The blues, vat vailing sound. The negro people have something, after all, like the spirituals, and rock ‘n’ roll and all that, and the blues is at the bottom of everything they play. Even with Cecil Taylor, I hear the blues in there somewhere. It is one of those basic things, and it is basic with me.”*

“Not that it limits me: I am not stuck in one groove. Michael Jackson, he fascinates me, and Prince for what he is; not an innocent, experienced *mit* the girls. Jimi Hendrix, oh my God, I used to go down in the Village and hear him. And I am fascinated with drummers, all the good ones are close to me—because I like rhythm in there. Art Blakey became a partner, you know, and I became one of his little Messengers, and Art sent me out to preach the good gospel of jazz—and I hope he was satisfied.”

Perhaps the roots of Alfred Lion’s obsession, and the pleasure it afforded so many listeners, can be traced to his parents’ feeling for the early jazz age: with-

out really knowing too much about it—or even knowing that it was jazz. “I remember my mother met a man in the street who was wearing a turban, and had a couple of Afghan dogs, and he looked like a Maharajah or something. She was so fascinated by his looks they somehow became acquainted. And he told her he was a musician and that he was playing at a place in Germany at the time called the International House. Around 1919, 1920. So he invited her to hear him, and she brought me along, and do you know who it was? Sidney Bechet! And my father, strange to say, also liked jazz. When they were married only a year, my father came home and told my mother he heard some kind of a jug band in a circus. And he said he’d like to go back and hear them again. And he didn’t show up at home again for six months—he followed them around for six months! So my feeling for the music, it must be in the family, ya?”

But that doesn’t explain Alfred Lion’s unusual devotion to the cause of black artists and black people in general. “Maybe I felt that for them I should do a little bit more. I wanted to present that talent that they have, because they were always pushed in the background. So my aim was to further what they had to say. And I remember people got down on me. This one critic he tells me,

‘Albert, you such a nice guy, and you make such good music—aren’t you color blind?’ And I say, ‘No—just color conscious.’ That’s the way it is, and that’s the way I feel now.

“Andrew Hill—I treasured him. Like a Miles Davis, who I always admire so much. He have so much flair and so much style and so much taste and he could be such a motherfucker, too—sweet and bitter. And I remember this beautiful evening at his house—all curves, no straight lines or corners—and he cook me this gumbo. And he told me he’d been cookin’ it for two days and it was just now good. What a character. All these musicians I try to help them to get in the door, and that’s why when I found someone I liked, we stuck with him. Tell them, ‘Don’t hit people over the head right away with the music. You have different ideas and new directions, but first you got to get them in the house, let ‘em in easy, sell your program, which is why we always try and begin the albums with something people could groove to, you know. That’s why we put out all those 45s for the jukeboxes—artists have to be heard.”

For all his epic accomplishments, for all the hours he spent in a corner in a rehearsal studio taking notes, Lion reserves praise for others. “You are not alone in what you’re doing. People like

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*a new color in contemporary music*

my boyhood friend Frank Wolff; and Reid Miles and Rudy Van Gelder. And Ike Quebec, I always mention him," he sighs. "He helped me to bridge the times from swing to people like Monk and Bud Powell, and got me to listen to people I wasn't ready for. A very flexible musician, and we became close friends, and I remember he was in this Harlem hospital and he was so sick and dying, and I bring him every morning orange juice, which for some reason he could not get there...." Lion's voice trailed off.

"Which is why it was so emotional for me when they call me for this concert thing after being away seventeen years. I was never expecting anything like this: and they send me first class tickets, a limo to pick me up at the airport, then they bring me to the Plaza, and to the rehearsal at Town Hall, and here are all these people I have not seen in so many years. And all these people who now want to interview me. Why me? It was very emotional."

Town Hall. Fight night crowd.

"...And tonight's referee, Mr. Herbie Hancock. Hello wrestling fans, this is Ray Morgan with tonight's call. Here again to add his own pointed analysis to tonight's ring action—the Robert Christgau of revisionist 'rasslin', that old-fashioned plate, Mr. Freddie Blaise."

"So rip my lungs out if you gotta, Ray, but we're talking thermonuclear heat out on the canvas tonight. Wotta card. And let me just remind all you fans that I've been out there all this time, a voice in the wilderness, documenting the truly important developments in these negro-inflected musics. I'm no carpet-bagger. You can trust my opinions."

"Ira Gitler, eat your heart out. Freddie, there's Walter Davis, Jr., on the piano, the syncopated satyr of the ivories, to pay homage to Monk's 'Criss Cross' and Powell's 'Bud's Bubble.'"

"What a heavyweight, Ray. A high speed shredding machine, slicing and dicing through the clichés of bebop piano, getting to the joyous essence of the composers."

"No arguments here, Freddie. A true original. Not just the letter of the law, but the spirit. And how about that support from Reggie Workman and the mighty Thor himself, Mr. Blue Note, Art Blakey."

"They can't stop grinning, and no wonder. Sounds like a New Orleans parade band. Got some of that old timey feeling in there. And look, Ray, there's 'Moanin', 'Paper Moon' and 'Mosaic,' with three rough and tumble ex-Messengers. What a slam dunk contest between Johnny Griffin and Freddie Hubbard. Hubcaps all over the canvas, he's blowing like Wynton Marsalis french kissing his momma in the front row."

"Now they're reprising 'Hat And



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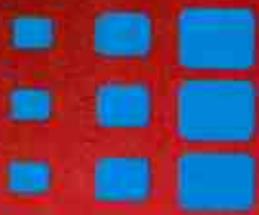
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Beard' with the original *Out To Lunch* bunch: Tony Williams, Bobby Hutcherson, and Ron Carter subbing for Richard Davis."

"That new Blue Note kid James Newton on flute plays more for textural effect than melody, but he's got the power of two flutes in one. Now Hutcherson takes center stage to blow on his own 'Little B's Poem' and 'Boquet.' Listen to those flowers toll. Cathedral elegance."

"In a word, Freddie. And how about the palpable tension between Hubbard and Williams. Ever since Freddie tried to tell the diminutive powerhouse where the ONE was in Europe, they've been trading dropkicks. And tonight's sparring session's no exception. Oooh, Tony slams him into the turnbuckle, and Freddie flies back into his face with the cobra clutch. I call the joust a draw. Joe Henderson's never sounded more mentholated and elliptical than on 'Cantalope Island' and 'Maiden Voyage'—there's some jazz-funk for you fans. And how about Herbie Hancock's oblique comping and soloing. Where's the beat?"

"You might try asking that pianist who came on between bouts, Ray. All the color commentators say Stanley Jordan don't swing. The jury's still out, I say."

"But the court's still in session, Freddie. That's a guitar he's playing with those tapdancing fingers of his. Sounds like a tag team match between George Van Eps—Les Paul—Django Reinhardt vs. Wes Montgomery—Jimi Hendrix—George Benson. When he strides and walks he makes that sucker talk, and when he strings along with 'When You Wish Upon A Star' it's more pure solo guitar music than jazz per se. If the kid walked on water like Jesus, you'd complain he was wearing shoes, Freddie."

"Opinions are like assholes, Ray, everyone has one, but what's the geek show upstage, that Charles Lloyd guy. The white hair and the polyester Nehru suit. Wasn't he once a negro or something?"

"Snake charmer without portfolio, Freddie, riding that riff right into the Ganges. Nice tone on the modal drone. Dave Brubeck of psychedelic collegians and the Alpha Wave crowd. Perfectly harmless. Nice calypso and derivative blues."

"He waves those maracas once more and I gouge his liver out, the Sufi bedwetter. But hey, Cecil McBee and Jack DeJohnette and that gutsy little guy Michel Petrucciani, really put the mustard to those Keith Jarrett/Herbie Hancock changes. But I'll take my Coltrane straight up, thanks. Or like that Chattanooga chain-saw tenor Bennie Wallace. He sure puts old Ben Webster on warp drive—he just inhales that horn. Look at him drive Jack and Cecil. And look, he just drove Leonard Feather right out the hall! Wait, who's that:



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"That's why they make menus, Ray, but for audacious solo piano, how about McCoy Tyner's rolling, oceanic statement and the puckish humour of his Tatumesque stride? Or the way Jackie McLean, Woody Shaw and the McBee-DeJohnette axis team up for the quint-essential Blue Note power swing of 'Appointment In Ghana' or 'Blues On The Corner'? The power of the horns and the way they keep one foot in bop and one eye cocked towards the future?"

"You'll get no arguments from this commentator, Freddie, but watch out. There's the easygoing swing of co-conspirators Kenny Burrell and Grover Washington with Workman and the suede Mr. Grady Tate. Grover's bulbous soprano on 'Summertime,' and Burrell's relaxed bluesy comping. Promising group. Nothing deep, Freddie, but to many oldtimers, *this* is the Blue Note sound. Warm, intimate, ingratiating. Downhome funky like that man, Jimmy Smith, or those two titans of blues alto and tenor, Lou Donaldson and Stanley Turrentine. They still have a magisterial command of the old time blues."

"Still deriding on that old blue note? Aren't you a black saint, Ray? That's the most limp-wristed apologetic revisionism. They're sell-outs. People enjoy them, *party* to those records. What meaning does that have to all these golden gladiators like David Murray and Julius Hemphill and Henry Threadgill and Olu Dara—the new Blue Note generations a comin'? What? Giving each other plaques? The self-congratulatory bastards! Let me at 'em."

"Sweet mother of Satchmo, music fans, the crowd is crying out for retribution. Freddie Blaise has climbed into the ring with Gary Giddins, they're beating Bruce Lundvall upside his head with those cheap awards. Won't anyone help that poor, well-meaning executive....It's bedlam, a battle royal. Mr. Lion has fainted; all those people battling to defend the honor of the blues—which is more than she's ever done for herself...." ☒



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# TÊTES NOIRES

## All Female, but Not a Girl Group

Neither flotsam from the purple rainstorm nor thinking-person's thrash, Têtes Noires repre-

Noires were in business. They played a few gigs around Minneapolis and became a full-fledged group as their audience grew, releasing an acclaimed EP and following it up with the new LP. (The performance art project never got off the ground.)

*American Dream* is Têtes Noires at their eclectic best. Its ditties cover love, hate, war, peace, sex, Moonies, alcoholism, male prostitution and bingo, among other subjects, in musical settings by turns delicate, frenetic and pensive. There's also a medley of the Cookies' "Chains" and "Don't Say Nothin' Bad About My Baby"—but Camille Kayon-Gage insists Têtes Noires are not a girl group.

"It's gotten our foot in the door. But the only reason we keep it there is that people like what we're doing. If the only thing we had going for us was that we're girls, we wouldn't get very far."

—Moira McCormick



KERIPICKETT

sent yet another current in the seemingly bottomless wellspring that is Minneapolis music. The all-female group's mostly percussionless approach to rock 'n' roll blends influences from the Raincoats to the Roches to the Andrews Sisters.

Not quite two years old, this sextet of brunettes—hence the name, French for "black heads"—has been turning more than a few, particularly since their first full-length LP, *American Dream*, appeared on their own Rapunzel label.

The group came together as a performance art project under the direction of singer/songwriter/violinist/free spirit Jennifer Holt. Holt (who admits under pressure to being Miss South Dakota of 1978) recalls, "I wanted to do something that would involve just working with women for a change, to get together with these fun girl musicians I knew around town and do something crazy."

She recruited vocalist Camille Kayon-Gage, bassist/arranger Cynthia Bartell and guitarist Polly Alexander from a brace of local bands; Camille's kid sister Renee Kayon joined in on vocals. Holt's piano-trained roommate Angela Frucci bought a cheap Farfisa, and Têtes

# THE STRANGLERS

## Brassy, but Not Harlots

*Aural Sculpture* may be the Stranglers' slickest album yet, but don't assume they've mellowed. This is still the English band that, at the height of punk, hired strippers to spice up live performances of the raunchy "Nice 'n' Sleazy." That unsavory practice continues today, says singer/guitarist **Hugh Cornwell**.

"When we played 'Nice 'n' Sleazy' last week, we had an Irish stripper onstage with us," he notes, straightfaced. "That's someone who comes out with no clothes on and gets dressed."

Bad jokes aside, *Aural Sculpture* is a serious bid for commercial acceptance. Thanks to the bright packaging of producer Laurie Latham (of Paul Young fame), the once-fearsome foursome now find their characteristic brusqueness sweetened with pop additives. Besides softening the harsher sonic edges, Latham added brass to the aural stew.

"Laurie had a great idea



there," enthuses Cornwell. "I love brass because it's got bite. It's physical, unlike synthesizer music." Synth-pop is Cornwell's current pet peeve; *Aural Sculpture*'s inner sleeve notes observe, "The musicians of our times are harlots and charlatans." Asked to elaborate, he says, "The people in this cold wave of synthesizer music are charlatans because their music is emotionless and soulless. They don't even play songs!"

Will *Aural Sculpture* be the disc that finally gives the Stranglers a grip on America? For once, Cornwell's self-assurance wavers. "Anytime you release a record, it's like playing a slot machine," he muses. "But it looks like it might work out."

—Jon Young



JIM MARSHALL

## Jimi, Others, Go to Hollywood

Pop stars don't die, they just have film biographies made about them. Currently in pre-production are projects on three legendary black music figures. **Jimi Hendrix's** excessive lifestyle makes him a natural for cinematic treatment, and plans for various film bios have circulated for years. The one that seems set to happen first teams producers Elliot Geisinger (*The Amityville Horror*) and Joe Allegro (*The Great Adventure*) with music industry vet Don Kirshner (the Monkees, for whom Hendrix once opened shows). Hendrix clone **Jack Hammer** will portray the late guitarist; singer **Richie Havens** also has a role.

Soul man **Otis Redding** died in a plane crash at the height of his powers—a fact that hasn't escaped A&M Films. The company has a script (by David Bradley, author of *The Chaneyville Incident*) for a Redding biopic, and is shopping it around to film studios. Sarah Black, A&M Films' director of development, says the project is "a tough one to get off the ground," but "a lot of black actors and singers have expressed interest." She hopes the film could be ready before the end of the year.

ERB Productions has film rights for the story of another tragic hero, **Jackie Wilson**. ERB producer Gail Berman, a Wilson fan herself, says the results may be "two years down the line." She views the film as a celebration of a singer who was "caught between two time frames."

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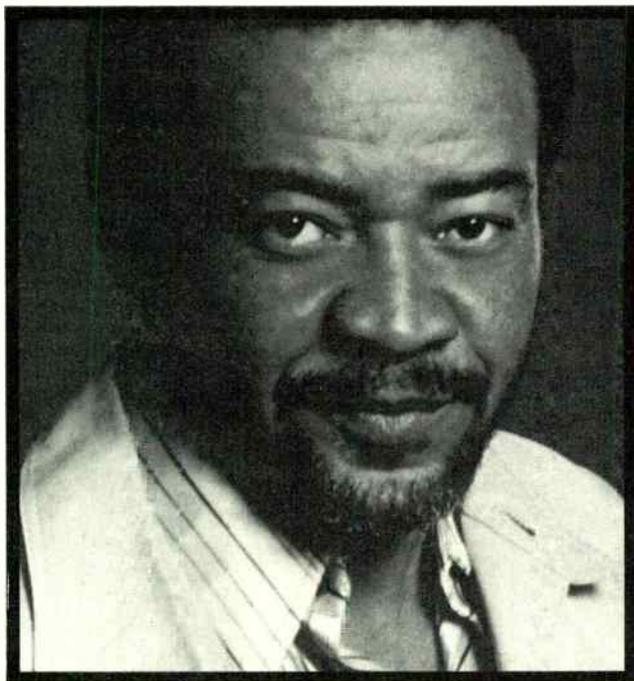
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## BILL WITHERS

### *Still Enigmatic, Still Bill*

**B**ill Withers hasn't changed at all. It's been years since the man made his mark on the charts with simple, unadorned hits like "Grandma's Hands," "Lean On Me" and "Ain't No Sunshine," but he remains the same—almost defiantly so. He's still enigmatic, still plainspoken, still slogging through Hollywood with the dogged determination that, if he must be in it, you can be damned sure he won't be *of* it.

"It," in Withers' estimation, is the "nighttime, freako" lifestyle for which Hollywood in general and the entertainment community in particular are famed. But Withers considers himself a man whose life and music reflect values that have become passé in the days since disco wrecked his career.

"I don't express party-party-party type things because I don't live that kind of life. I don't understand it. I would look ridiculous with green hair, you know what I mean?"

Withers has gotten a little grayer and a little heavier

since disco sidelined him, and he's the first to say that his perspectives are those of a forty-seven-year-old man (which is what he will be in July). Nor has he been chasing music stardom all his life; he's been in the Navy and has also been a milkman, aircraft mechanic and Ford assembly-line worker. He knows about eating off a lunch truck.

After several years off the hit records circuit, Withers is attempting to pick up steam again: He's just released *Watching You Watching Me*, a new album for Columbia. As you would expect, the main thrust of his new music is, as always, blue-collar simplicity.

"I don't think you have enough time in music to get that deep," he says. "You usually have three, four, five minutes at the most, and how much can you say with the added handicap of having to make it rhyme?"

"What comes out of you is what's in you. I'm basically a daytime person; I have a wife, I have some children, and I have things I care about that happen mostly during the day. At night, I sleep."

— Leonard Pitts, Jr.

## Goy Meets Horn

"Here's one from the Ukraine, called 'Johnson's Reel,'" clarinetist **Andy Statman** announced to the audience at New York's Town Hall. Marshall McLuhan would have been proud. Onstage, blowing away together like a Global Village Ensemble, were **DeDanann**, an Irish group, and Statman's Klezmer Orchestra, who play the tunes of East European Jewry. And they made beautiful music together.

The two groups hit Boston, New York and Philadelphia in late March with their cross-cultural fusion. Individual sets by the bands preceded the finale extravaganza, when the eight musicians and singer Maura O'Connell alternated material from their repertoires.

"You take a Jewish tune from the Ukraine," Statman says, "and have people from another tradition playing it, and they bring out certain elements that were dormant in it. The tune blossoms anew. The same with Irish music."

Statman launched the project out of a desire to work with another group of traditional musicians "on the

same level" as his Klezmer Orchestra. "I'd been thinking about doing something with Irish music. There are a number of similarities in the music—in ornamentation, structural organization." DeDanann, currently touring the U.S., was receptive to the idea, and the two bands held joint rehearsals to find common ground. "We carefully chose the tunes," Statman says. "Not everything will work."

Neither band can be called stuffily conservative. DeDanann has recorded "Hey Jude" and includes a Middle-Eastern bouzouki among its instrumentation. Statman has a background in country mandolin, which he still plays. During the groups' "jam," Statman's clarinet doubled DeDanann violinist Frankie Gavin's lines with swooping grace, while Klezmer Orchestra bassist Marty Confurius slapped a firm bottom to the reels and jigs. O'Connell sang in Yiddish. You couldn't tell where the Irish stew left off and the chicken soup began.

"We never looked at it as a novelty," Statman says. "For us it was an experiment in creativity. If we were into commercial music we'd be playing rock 'n' roll."



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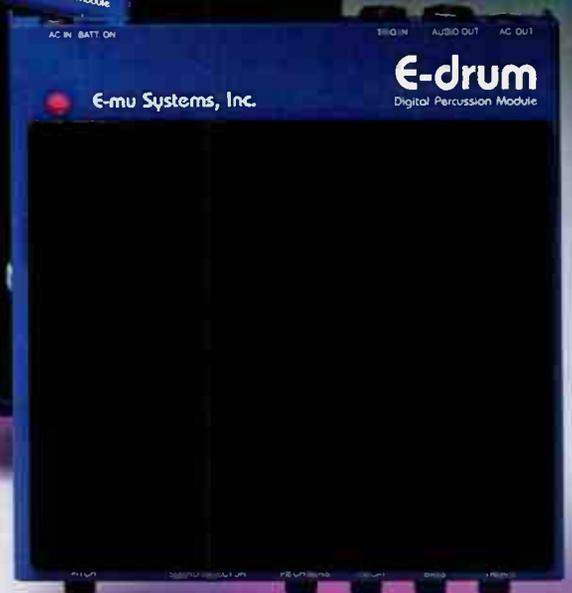
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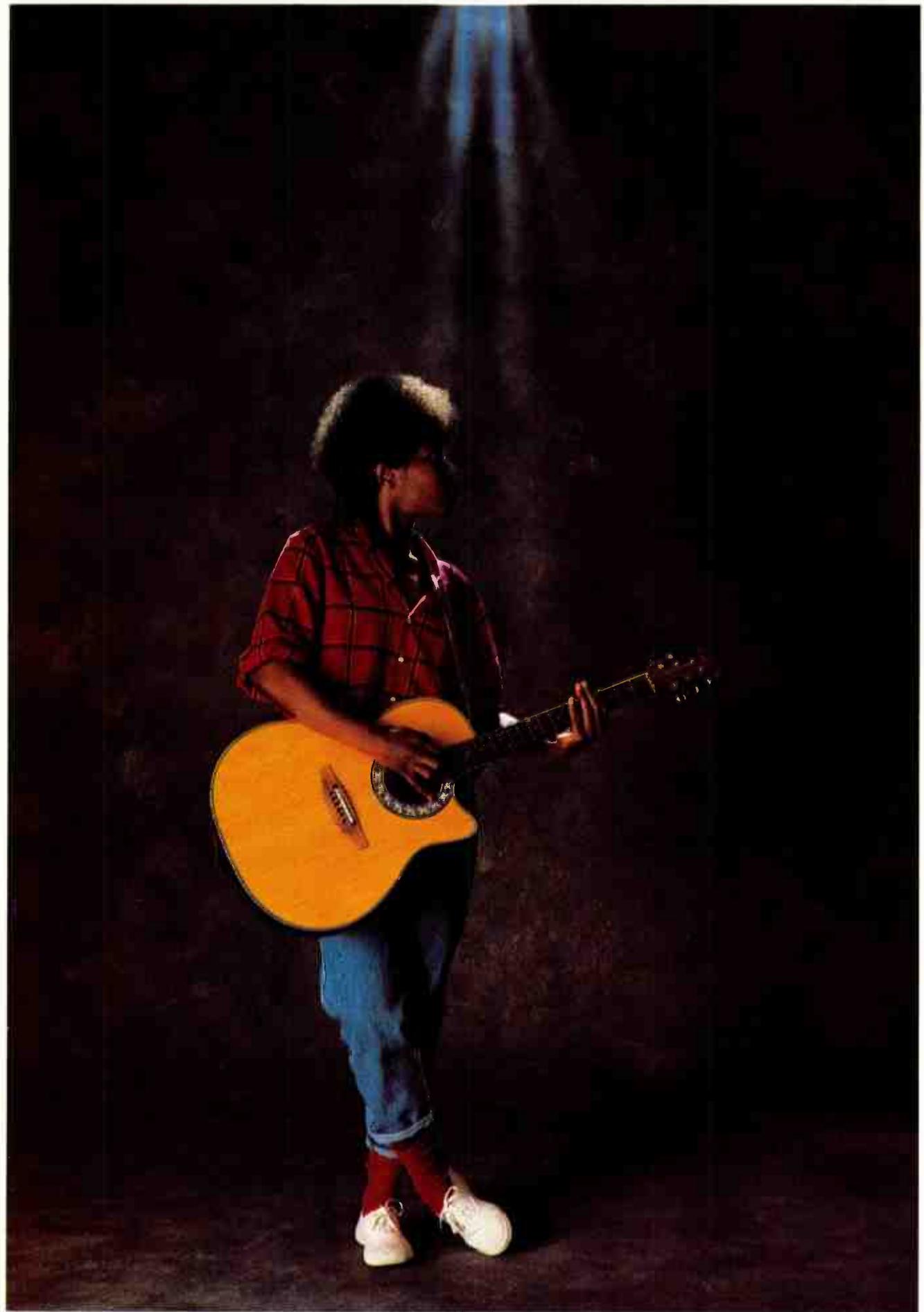
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GERED MANKOWITZ

**“S**ince I’m a songwriter,” Joan Armatrading explains, “I’d like to think I can write lots of different things. I suppose that can confuse people.”

Despite eleven years, ten albums, an EP and a best-of collection, the thirty-four-year-old Armatrading remains a mystery, not only to a general audience that knows her through heavy reputation and slight airplay, but also to long-time fans. Her interviews don’t shed much more light; many of them center on her lyrics, the house key she always wore around her neck (until recently), and more about her lyrics. There are no affairs with other rock stars to ask about, no

## **Surprising Secrets: Forget Folk, Forget Feminism, Forget All The Myths About Joan Armatrading.**

drunken escapades or outrageous proclamations to remind her of, not even any cute stories about family pets. So without revealing interviews, anxious biographers (whether journalists or fans) are left to pull clues from the songs.

But Armatrading claims the characters in the songs aren’t

her. She seems to regard herself as a skilled actress, who inhabits a role, discovers its deepest emotions, and then discards it for another. From the way she tells it, the song closest to autobiography is the title track to her new album, *Secret Secrets*, where she sings, “Everything I want/ I keep it private.”

It could be this distance that lets her pick at emotional scabs so keenly. From the prayerful “Love And Affection” to “When I Get It Right,” which she says is “about when you just can’t seem to do anything right for anybody,” to the piercingly lonely “One Night” (“Cos every night/ I have the same good dream/ You making love/ And the face I see/ Looks like me”), Armatrading’s frankness can seem almost scary. Her songs might make you think she’s a feminist, which she isn’t. And they wouldn’t make you think she’s an avid comic book collector, which she is. As she says, it can get confusing.

Joan Armatrading was born in St. Kitts, a West Indian island with half the population of Grenada, moved with her family to Antigua when she was three, and settled in Birmingham, England four years later. Joan began writing songs when she was fourteen, using her

**By Rob Tannenbaum**

mom's piano and her dad's guitar. At twenty-four she began a recording career that melds jazz and blues and rock, acoustics and electronics, with a grace that belies its complexity.

Joan is disarmingly casual about her songs, claiming "it's very difficult to think of all my (old material). It's hard enough thinking of the new ones." But she also rules her recording sessions with unquestioned authority, and has exacting standards for choosing backing musicians; *Secret Secrets* features another bunch of U.K. all-stars, including bassist Pino Palladino (Don Henley, Paul Young, Difford & Tilbrook), drummer Mel Gaynor (Simple Minds), guitarist David Rhodes (Peter Dinklage), saxophonist Wesley Magoogan (English Beat) and even Joe Jackson.

Paradox in focus: It's an April night in Boston and the Wang Center is filling up with Armatrading fans. There are real ushers in the Victorian-style theater, the kind who show you to your seats rather than frisk you for hidden pints of Tango. I've never seen so many men in ties at an electric concert. I think about a lyric from "Secret Secrets"—"Do you want to join my society/ Well you'll be governed/ By intelligence"—and how apt a description it seems.

I also think about my mom, who likes Joan Armatrading but would wither at the sound of ZZ Top, whose *Eliminator* is playing before Joan's set. How many of these people prefer heavy metal to folk, as Armatrading does? How many like A Flock Of Seagulls, her producer Mike Howlett's best-known credit before Armatrading chose him for *Secret Secrets*? ZZ Top? A Flock Of Seagulls? We did say governed by intelligence, didn't we?

Armatrading's audience is so faithful, they're even polite to the opening band, Cook Da Books. As Joan leads a great sextet of unknowns through a twenty-two-song, two-hour set, the audience responds perfectly—they dance in the aisles during "Drop The Pilot" and "Temptation" (the new single), sing along softly with "All The Way From America" and "Willow," and sit hushed during "One Night" and "Love By You." They cheer appreciatively when the sax player quotes the lick from "Moondance." When the set is over, *Eliminator* comes back on. When Joan Armatrading does her heavy metal album, people will really be confused.

**MUSICIAN:** Was there any particular artist that inspired you to start writing songs?

**ARMATRADING:** No, not really. When I started to write and play, the reason I did it—although like everybody else I listened to the radio—the reason I did it was more because of there being a piano to play in the house, rather than being inspired by the Beatles or whatever. I didn't go through looking

like to go back again.

**MUSICIAN:** It's funny that you mentioned the Beatles. Musicians as different as Rudy Sarzo of Quiet Riot and the Nigerian singer Sonny Okosun have told me they were inspired by the Beatles. But you....

**ARMATRADING:** Well, I wasn't inspired by the Beatles. I wasn't inspired by anybody. I didn't start to write because I heard the Beatles, I started to write because of the piano in the house. And when I was at school, I think I was the only person in the class who didn't have a picture of a pop group in their desk. I just got into music because it was the thing I did to relax and I didn't ever think in terms of doing this for a living. It's a nice living, though. I wouldn't do anything else.

**MUSICIAN:** Then do you understand when someone comes up to you and says, for example, "My girlfriend broke up with me a few months ago and I cried when I heard 'One Night'"?

**ARMATRADING:** I don't like the sadness of breaking up, but I like the idea that you feel a song can help you get over the sadness. I like the idea that it could be one of my songs. I met, just recently, two people who met when they both went to buy one of my songbooks. And they started to go out together. It's brilliant to hear things like that. I also knew another couple who, when they wrote their love letters, they used to include my lyrics. At one point, my lyrics were their love letters. They just sent them back and forth. Which is a huge compliment. You couldn't ask anybody to do that. They have to feel it really strongly themselves.

Now when I say I didn't have anybody that inspired me when I started, that was true. But by the time I was twenty or twenty-one, I heard Van Morrison. And then he was an inspiration, because his music and lyrics and everything, to me, are just too...good. I don't think I've found anybody in all the years who can sort of equal him. I've actually got seventeen Van Morrison albums [*laughs*], although I didn't buy the latest one. But I haven't found anybody that I think has got it all right, the way I feel he does.

**MUSICIAN:** I'm sure it's a big compliment to have people react so strongly to your songs, but isn't it also a bit strange when people you hardly know start to tell you their problems?

**ARMATRADING:** Yes, it is a bit strange. Yes, even now I never quite know how to react to it because I don't really know if I'm supposed to sort of give them the answer to whatever the problem is. I sort of haven't got the answers. But I'm happy to say that most of the people who come and talk to me usually are just telling me the songs mean this and this to them and aren't looking for me to solve their problems for them. But I do get people who come in and tell me a lot about themselves. Like there was this girl who came before a gig to give me a

## I was actually quite surprised when people didn't see the humor in 'Call Me Names'; it's about a great big fat wife beating up her little short husband, a very comic situation.

in the mirror and doing the pop star pose or dreaming that I'd be making records and things like that. I didn't do that—I just wrote songs for my own enjoyment, like a hobby. So when I started there wasn't anybody, no.

**MUSICIAN:** The media often refers to you as being West Indian, but you really grew up in England. Do you consider yourself more British than West Indian?

**ARMATRADING:** Yes. That's where I grew up. My whole influences, not just music but my whole lifestyle is England. And I didn't grow up in a black community, so that has something to do with it as well. I went back to the West Indies quite recently. I left St. Kitts when I was three, and the first time I went back there was 1983. I thought it was really a nice place. I'd

hug and I sort of went like this a little bit [*steps back*], and she said, "But I know you."

**MUSICIAN:** A lot of times we assume that the artists we admire have all the answers. But most of your songs are about dilemmas, rather than solutions.

**ARMATRADING:** Hmm. [*Pause*] Yes, I don't have the answers. Somebody asked me, "What is the meaning of life?" Well, it's chicken soup, innit? What do I know [*laughs*].

**MUSICIAN:** Because the songs sound so personal, people assume they're autobiographical. But there are so many different perspectives on your albums, there's no way all of them could be about you.

**ARMATRADING:** Well, that's what I keep telling them. I think I'd



**Led Zeppelin? Flock Of Seagulls? Leslie West?! Joan, where are the folksingers?**

be a bit schizophrenic or something. And I'm a young person, I would have had to have started this rough life pretty early to have gone through all the things I've written about in the songs. But no, they're generally from looking around and seeing what's happening and trying to put myself in that position, which is why they come out sounding personal. And I'm very happy that they do, because it means I'm writing a good song, that they're believable. If people read the lyrics and go, "Oh, c'mon Joan," well, I've failed, haven't I?

You get a lot of information traveling around the way I do. I don't know if I would have been able to write as many songs as I've written just being in the one place, just being in England. I might not be mixing socially with all these different people, but I'm always meeting people and I'm always seeing people. You can be in an airport and witness a little scene and you can get inspired by all sorts of things.

**MUSICIAN:** Ray Davies has said that he gets a lot of good ideas from just hanging around places anonymously.

**ARMATRADING:** Mmm, it's true. I mean I get things from talking to people. Not talking to them about what I'm doing, but just from conversation, or listening to conversation, or newspapers. People say Joni Mitchell's songs are all very personal and she must be pouring out her whole heart and life. Well, it's a lot of songs to write about yourself. You'd probably feel quite drained if every song you wrote was concerning you.

**MUSICIAN:** Have you ever written anything that's so personal

it's difficult to sing in public?

**ARMATRADING:** No, because if it gets to that stage I just don't do it [laughs].

**MUSICIAN:** There's a lot of dry humor in your songs that people often miss.

**ARMATRADING:** Yeah, a good one of that is "Call Me Names." I was actually quite surprised when people didn't see the humor in that. I was very surprised at the amount of people that thought I was saying it was a good idea for a husband to beat up his wife. Well, all that did was prove to me that they hadn't listened to the song, because in fact it's the wife that's beating up the husband. So straight away they've got that wrong. And it's a very comic situation, because I'm talking about a great, big, fat woman with a little short man, and just the visual thing of that is humorous. I think people got "Rosie," I think they got the humor in that. I think they got the humor in "Ma-Me-O Beach" as well.

**MUSICIAN:** I was a DJ at a radio station when "(I Love It When You) Call Me Names" came out and we got phone calls from people who thought it endorsed the abuse of women. The interesting thing about this misunderstanding happening to you is that you're a symbol to some feminists.

**ARMATRADING:** I don't know why. I could never understand that, because I've never endorsed any of those movements. And as I say, they totally missed the point of that song anyway, because there you are telling me that they're phoning in to say "How can you talk about a wife getting beaten up?" and in fact it's the wife that's doing the beating up. [with disgust] It's really silly and I haven't got time for them.

**MUSICIAN:** To me, it's easy enough to explain why women would admire you. There's a real independence in songs

like "Barefoot And Pregnant," "Me Myself I" and "You Rope You Tie Me" that isn't real common rock. I mean, this was years before Chrissie Hynde.

**ARMATRADING:** Yes, I know. "Me Myself I" and "Barefoot And Pregnant," I see the strength, if you like, in that. But I don't want to limit that music to women's movements, you know? If a little, pretty, feminine woman who wants to stay at home and look after the kids, if she likes that song, I resent a women's movement stopping her. That's the sort of thing I don't like. And I like it if a guy likes that song as well. I don't want my music limited by anybody, really, 'cause I'm not limiting it. But obviously I see the strength in those songs. Like "Barefoot And Pregnant," I wrote it because I could see those sorts of situations where the guy just gives the woman anything she wants as long as she can just be under his thumb.

**MUSICIAN:** Don't you ever have the urge to be active on behalf of the things you....

**ARMATRADING:** [Frustrated] No, no, no. That's not what I do. I'm not...[sighs]. I'm a songwriter, that's what I do. I write songs. I'm not a politician, I'm not the leader of a women's group. The time I've got is to write songs, and if you can't be involved in anything else and really follow it through, then you're doing a disservice to people and you shouldn't get involved. I don't want to. It's different if you're talking about Band-Aid. That's a charity thing that's helping people who are starving and need real help, proper help.

What I concentrate on twenty-four hours a day is writing songs. If you're gonna be a politician, you're doing it to help the community, right? Well, you can't do that for ten minutes a day and then the next day write a song. I don't find that being very helpful. None of the guys who do the political stuff in their songs, do it on a full-time basis. They're doing it as a part of what they're doing. Whereas a politician, if he goes and does a video with somebody, that's the ten minutes of his twenty-four hours. People who want to get involved and be serious should, but they have to be serious.

**MUSICIAN:** Are there any writers who you...

**ARMATRADING:** Well, no one flash. No one fancy. I like Agatha Christie. She's written like seventy-five books and I haven't gotten through all of them. Now I read any and everything, nothing special apart from her. I like reading about the war (World War II) and different facts about people or film stars.

## My songs generally come from looking around and seeing what's happening and trying to put myself in that position, which is why they come out sounding personal.

**MUSICIAN:** I remember seeing you play in Central Park in the summer of 1980 on a bill with Livingston Taylor, which was a total mismatch [she laughs]. You kicked his butt all over the park. For a long time, people seemed to think that, because you were a songwriter with an acoustic guitar, you were as mellow as Carole King.

**ARMATRADING:** He was very acoustic when he played, wasn't he? Sometimes it does work when you have someone very acoustic. A good match this time is the band we brought with us (Cook Da Books, A Flock Of Seagulls-ish quartet from Liverpool). But I enjoyed that (Central Park) gig. Wasn't that the gig it rained right after I finished?

**MUSICIAN:** But you've said that during that time you were a big Led Zeppelin fan. If you had the rocker in you, why didn't you let it out?

**ARMATRADING:** I just wanted to write the songs I was writing at that time. I had an electric guitar but I wasn't playing it a lot. By 1980, by the time *Me Myself I* came out, I was well into playing the electric guitar, which is why everything sounds a lot more rocking. It's like everything—it's the mood. It's just that that mood lasted a long time.

But I've never seen the earlier stuff as being as quiet as other people see it. I suppose that's because when I write, even though I didn't put electric guitars on the album, I did use it at home (on the demos). So it's more familiar to me than it is to other people, it's not such a shock. What might be quite nice is to make an acoustic album. I've never made one, because I've always worked with a band. I write and arrange the songs and I see as a whole. So when I write it and I hear all these things in my head, I put them all down and when I do the albums and work live, I want to hear all those things. I don't want to go out with just me on guitar and piano.

**MUSICIAN:** Do the musicians you choose affect how the song sounds, or does the feel of the songs determine what musicians play on it?

**ARMATRADING:** The songs are written and arranged before I go into the studio, so I'm not going to go into the studio with a song and have the musicians go, "Well, let's do it like this, Joan." [laughs] I'm gonna say, "This is how we're gonna do it." But at the same time, if you give a bass part to Pino (Palladino) and you give the same bass part to Tony Levin, it would sound very different. So obviously, the musicians do play a part in how the thing comes out.

**MUSICIAN:** From Andy Summers on *Back To The Night* to Chris Spedding, Clarence Clemons, Sly & Robbie, Thomas

Dolby, Adrian Belew, and the all-star band on *Secret Secrets*, you've always found great musicians to record with. But you don't seem like the type that hangs in musicians' circles.

**ARMATRADING:** No, I don't. But I suppose I'm just fortunate that when you ask whomever you ask to play on your album, I would think that if they weren't interested, they'd just say so. I'm very happy they say yes, because I'm obviously asking them because they're people I admire. And it's great for me to be able to work with all these people. But I don't hang around, we don't become sort of huge mates, generally.

**MUSICIAN:** Do you keep up with who's good by going to shows or listening to albums or word of mouth?

**ARMATRADING:** A bit of all three. I try and go to gigs but it's very difficult. Every time I want to go see a gig, I'm working at the same time. Like I'd love to see Tina Turner's gigs, but every time, she's in that place and then I move.... And then

you'll hear things on the radio, but you only hear the same song over and over again. Or people will say to me, "Oh, I've heard this and this and you should listen to it." Just all sorts of different ways. Somebody said to me, "How come you always know who's doing what?" I think to myself, "How come I know?" Because I'm not conscious of going out to find out. I'm not conscious of reading the newspapers or listening to the radio for just that purpose. But I seem to get this information somehow.

**MUSICIAN:** You've also got good taste in producers. And given who you've worked with in the past, some people might wonder why you chose *A Flock Of Seagulls*'s producer for *Secret Secrets*.

**ARMATRADING:** [laughs wildly] I like *A Flock Of Seagulls*. And Mike Howlett is very talented. He's got a good sense of...how can I say this? When you work with Steve (Lillywhite), he's got a sound that he works with. And it's not because he can't get any other sound, it's because that's the sound he's cultivated. That's the sound he enjoys so that's the sound he uses.

Mike Howlett has a sound that he likes, but he likes a lot of different sounds as well. So you get change. I think if he wanted to get a Steve Lillywhite sound he could. But it's nice to work with him because you can get this difference. Even though when you listen to the album you get several sounds, you listen to "Talking To The Wall," and there's different drum sounds and bass sounds to, say, "Secret Secrets." Not just because the song's different, but if you listen, one snare's really high and one's a lot fatter. And he'll ask the drummer to do that, so he can get the different sounds. He's pretty versatile. He's not limited.

**MUSICIAN:** You've said that *How Cruel* was a big turning point. But when you recorded that, you did it without a "name" band and you produced it yourself. Why?

**ARMATRADING:** I just wanted to get on with it. It's as simple as that, really. I'd written the songs and played them to Jerry Moss, who is the M in A&M Records, and he said, "Let's get it out." We just went in and did it. And I enjoyed it.

I used to think I wanted to produce myself. Because I write and arrange the songs, it's a huge part of the album. But I don't know if I know enough about sounds. I know a heck of a lot more than I knew in 1980. So I'm probably nearer being able to produce myself today. But it's nice to have this person in the control room just listening, getting the sound right, saying, "The bass drum isn't tight with the bass." Sometimes you think you've done a great take and the producer can hear the

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bass player made a mistake.

**MUSICIAN:** So now that you've said that you like Van Morrison, Led Zeppelin and A Flock Of Seagulls, what's your record collection like?

**ARMATRADING:** Like that. I don't know if you've ever heard of a band called Glencoe, they're very old. I also like Head, Hands & Feet. I like the Pretenders...Led Zeppelin...Mountain...Free...Ultravox...UB40...Nik Kershaw....

**MUSICIAN:** But Joan, where are the folk singers?

**ARMATRADING:** There aren't any. I've never thought of myself as folksy. I've never really followed any of that. Even my first album, it's not a folk album.

**MUSICIAN:** So were you surprised when people started referring to you as a folksy?

**ARMATRADING:** I was surprised. Because I think of folk as...as...well, who can you think of? Can you name anyone?

**MUSICIAN:** What about Fairport Convention?

**ARMATRADING:** But they play folk song folk songs. They play it with an electric guitar and it still sounds like a folk song. But I was never a Fairport fan, even though Jerry Donahue was in my band, and Dave Mattacks and Pat Donaldson.

**MUSICIAN:** You want to do an acoustic album and you also like Mountain. Can you see yourself doing "Mississippi Queen"?

**ARMATRADING:** [reverently] I love "Mississippi Queen." It's brilliant. Leslie West is my guitar hero. His playing and his sound are just brilliant.

**MUSICIAN:** You could get him to produce your next album.

**ARMATRADING:** I'll get him to play on my next album.

**MUSICIAN:** Your songs frequently mix up sex roles in an untraditional way. Most rock songs are "Me Tarzan, you Jane."

**ARMATRADING:** Yes.

**MUSICIAN:** There's "Persona Grata" and "Moves" on the new album, where you refer to yourself as a guy. And there's the line in "Me Myself I," "I want to have a boyfriend and a girl for

laughs." Given the nature of songwriting, that's bound to raise some eyebrows.

**ARMATRADING:** No, in "Me Myself I" it's actually as simple as it sounds. Have you got any girls that are friends of yours? Have you got any boy friends who are gay? But you're not a guy who's going to bed with all your gay friends. Do you know what I'm saying? And it's the same. I have girls that are friends and boys that are friends. And all I'm saying is, it's nice to have friends of both sexes.

**MUSICIAN:** While that's common in real life, it's not very common in pop songs.

**ARMATRADING:** No, but I don't see why it shouldn't be. Which is why I do it. ☐

### Joan's Arms

Since Armatrading records full demos by herself before going into the studio with a band, she has a couple of everything. Her favorite acoustic guitars are an '83 Collector's Model Ovation and a 12-string Ovation. The yellow Les Paul she holds on the cover of *The Key* used to belong to Eric Clapton; he gave it to keyboardist Dick Simms, who gave it to Joan. Her other electrics are an Ovation, a Gibson Melody Maker and a Fender Stratocaster that producer Glyn Johns gave her. She runs her guitars through a Roland JC-120 Jazz Chorus amp, using only a customized compressor (for solos) and some Roland Space Echo. The only thing she could remember about her strings was that "I've just changed them."

Her home studio also has a Prophet 5, a Roland SH-101, a Korg BX-3 organ and a generic piano. Her basses are Ibanez and Ovation. She recently bought a Simmons electric drum kit and a Yamaha tenor sax, both of which she is teaching herself to play. She's never taken voice lessons. And her demos, which she sometimes prefers to her albums, are recorded on a Tascam 8-track with a Revox to mix down onto.

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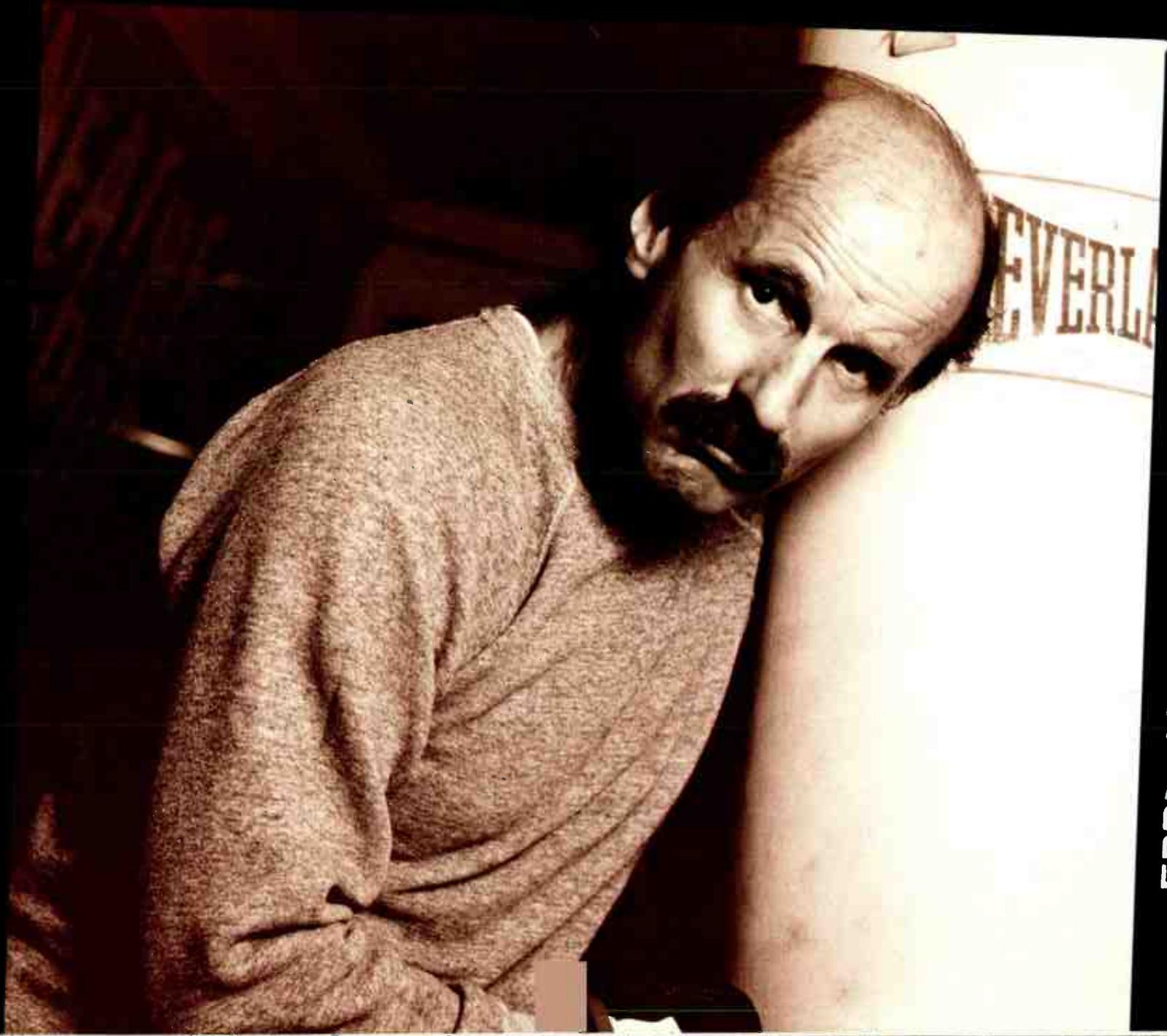
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# Joe Zawinul Spars with the muse

Weather Report delivers a *Sportin'* new LP, but solo albums and tours loom large in its future. Is the band at a crossroads?

By Josef Woodard  
Special guest: Wayne Shorter

Photograph by Chris Cuffaro

When you've got the fighting spirit, the world is a ring and its inhabitants are divided into spectators and worthy opponents. Just ask Josef Zawinul, who can boast at least a couple of mighty musical titles. As the

ringleader of Weather Report—with Wayne Shorter his able comrade—Zawinul has commandeered a band without precedent in jazz: a cellular unit that has long ridden the crest of popular and critical polls and has made fourteen (count 'em) striking albums in as many years together. So much for creative fragility. As a synthesist, his abiding penchant for molding new sounds and functions from an ever-expanding bank of instruments has made him a living legend; a stylist with an uncanny ability to tame and personalize technology.

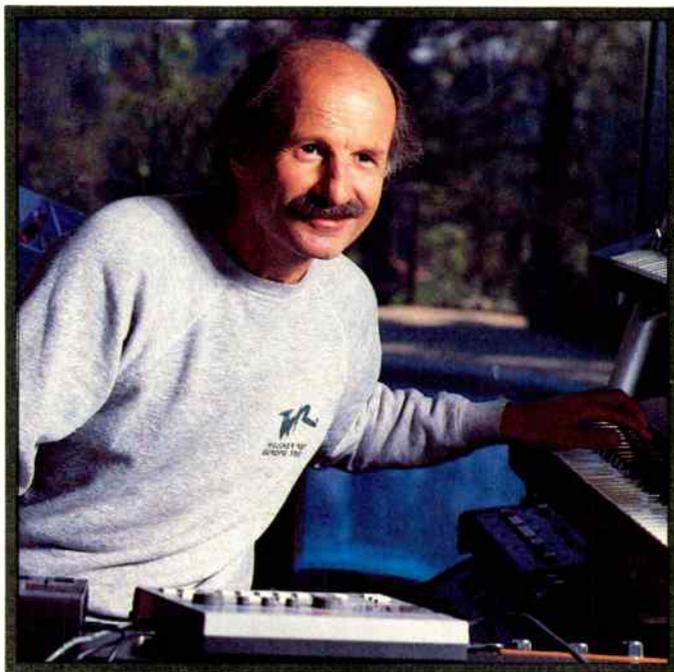
These crowns are not to be taken lightly, especially in the presence of Zawinul, an innovator as self-aware as he is genuine. His formidable reputation not only precedes him, it emboldens and validates him, as when he nakedly states, in his terse accent that sounds Viennese by way of Rio de Janeiro, "Weather Report is the greatest fucking band in the world, man."

Zawinul has no time for idle banter or ersatz humility. Interviews with him can be sparring sessions; he holds fast to his ground, makes assertions like left hooks and gracefully dances around shady topics or else meets them with a jab. Over the phone two years ago, Zawinul didn't euphemize when I brought up the electronics-in-jazz debate: "It's all bullshit. It has nothing to do with music. You can play something on a suitcase, you know, and if it is good music or good rhythm, it is always gonna be valid." Discussing his unique compositional process—a *tête-à-tête* with the muse in which he merely improvises and later notates the aesthetic ephemera—Zawinul said, "I wonder sometimes how it gets there—a perfect composition without even thinking about it. That makes you believe in yourself."

Zawinul is a contender, agile and cunning. He will not be cornered or out-manuevered. And, when all is said and done and fourteen years' worth of musical evidence is measured, Zawinul's bounding hubris is not a program of empty breast-beating gestures. On a clear day, Weather Report comes off like...well, *the greatest fucking band in the world, man*.

Weather Report is testament to a beautiful, symbiotic friendship. Zawinul's balance of emotive powers with Shorter has, at times, gone askew and invoked the ire of some critics, who, in effect, indicted the increasing role of Zawinul's synthetic pigmentation (and the pummeling voice of bassist Jaco Pastorius, during his stint in the group), at the presumed expense of the more reticent Shorter. Monopolizing the space, burying the efforts of a titan of the sax is grounds for court martial in the kangaroo court of the jazz press.

In fact, though, while Shorter may have dimmed for a brief period in the late 70s, his rapport and cross-relationship with Zawinul make for a blessed musical pairing. Shorter—one of the most elegant people ever to have picked up a horn—



**W**Weather Report is a hobby we can no longer afford to just do. We have to branch out to other things at this stage of our lives."

Berklee School of Music in Boston, which led to a gig with Maynard Ferguson. It was there that Zawinul met Shorter. Even then they vowed to one day join forces.

The two went their separate, celebrated ways: Shorter on to fame with Art Blakey and the certifiably classic Miles quintet of the mid-60s, Zawinul on to Dinah Washington and Cannonball Adderley—with whom he did ground-breaking work with a Fender Rhodes piano and penned the soulful anthem "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy." Zawinul had no barriers of cultural assimilation to grapple with. Bolstered by a solid decade of musical muscle-toning, Zawinul and Shorter were fit for action when they next met—in the historically-loaded electric Miles confab of the late 60s, the band that launched a thousand riffs. Of fusion's vinyl cornerstones, *In A Silent Way* and *Bitches' Brew*, Zawinul claims his compositional input was larger than he was credited for. It could be true. In any case, the seeds of Weather Report were sown, as if fate had kindly stepped in.

From the very outset, the group had an aura of exalted significance about it. The earliest albums, particularly *I Sing The Body Electric* (a truncated version of the Japanese pressing *Weather Report, Live In Tokyo*), documented a band pumped up with groove fever, but which also appreciated the beauty of an elliptical melody and improvisatory abandon. A steady succession of albums saw a natural evolution of the formula, with a shifting roster of rhythm sections and a general streamlining of the musical structures. The capstone of this trend came with the group's hit record of 1976; *Heavy Weather*, and specifically with the infectious "Birdland" (which I heard in an elevator the other day), boosted the band to a newfound lofty plane of commercial existence. Far be it for a hardy individualist like Zawinul to capitalize on success, though; the subsequent albums have adhered to a more experimental

mode, with nothing so instantly accessible, eminently hummable as "Birdland."

Weather Report's singular style can be described, in part, by virtue of what it *isn't*. Though ensconced in the environment of Los Angeles—Zawinul in his Pasadena home that doubles as the band's rehearsal and recording headquarters, Shorter in a two-story tract home in Studio City—the group remains detached from the SoCal mainstream. The rhythm sections are generally imported from the East coast (such as the present line-up, drummer Omar Hakim and bassist Victor Bailey). The leaders keep to themselves in more ways than one; their sound bears no resemblance to the glossy, glib pop/jazz that tends to rear its head in L.A. This is no yuppie jazz. Their musical interaction with the recording community is marginal (Shorter has lent his sound to such selective artists as Joni Mitchell and Steely Dan; his solo on "Aja" is suitable for framing. Zawinul is a veritable isolationist in terms of outside studio work).

The "fusion band" tag is also a bit misleading. Unlike the generic, pat traits of most jazz/rock models, Weather Report is a more willfully amorphous bunch. While you detect the vague imprints of funk, Latin and other ethnic music, the "fusion" at issue is a wholly seamless one, not a conscious graft job. And for the athletic energy of much of the band's music, it's hardly an exercise in blind fury; internalized logic and subtlety are the tacit rules of thumb. As Victor Bailey said in an interview about joining the group, "I realized it's not this constant blowing. There's a lot of space. The main thing is to realize how to get your thing in there and still leave that space."

Now, with the recent release of project #14, *Sportin' Life*, this band, so reliable in an industry rooted in rootlessness, may be at something of a crossroads. The annual regimen of record/tour/rehearse/record etc. has left little room for venting the creative overflow contained within Zawinul and Shorter. Thus, the time has come to take stock, to clear the deck for a much-needed self-exploration. Long-awaited solo projects from Zawinul and Shorter are in the works, including a Zawinul solo tour, as well as a number of other peripheral projects yet to be concretized, including rumored liaisons with old bandmate Miles Davis. For all the loose, excited talk, Zawinul insists that Weather Report remains a vital, albeit dormant, entity.

*Sportin' Life*, for the most part, vies with their best work. The celebratory vigor of the enterprise is tinged with eccentric touches; the thorny minor second interval in an otherwise high-spirited melody on "Corner Pocket"; the deceptive formal simplicity of Shorter's funk-bathed "Pearl On The Half-Shell"; the dreamtime interpretation of Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On." The only anomaly here is percussionist Mino Cinelu's "Confians." A symmetrical Latin ballad? Acoustic guitars? Three evenly-spaced chords? What gives here? This is not the Weather Report we've come to know.

Zawinul agreed to come before the press, a body with whom he has had, at best, a halting relationship, and at worst, a spiteful one, as illustrated a few years ago when he demanded equal time after *downbeat's* one-star review of *Mr. Gone*. "We're not capable of making a one-star record," he barked in print, not without just cause. And so Zawinul and Shorter settled into a conference room at the Columbia building in Century City one March day (the original press day had to be rescheduled when Zawinul had a boxing lesson). Settling some scores over sushi and discussing musical prospects within and without Weather Report, the pair (Zawinul, inevitably, spake the lion's share) talked openly and eagerly: artists on the cusp of a second childhood.

**MUSICIAN:** *I should begin by asking about the status of Weather Report as a musical entity. Let's dispel any unfounded rumors. There's been talk of solo projects in the works.*

**SHORTER:** Yeah, that's what we're doing—solo projects, and a lot of things, whatever we feel like we can do. If we continue to tour and make records with Weather Report after fourteen years, still there's a wealth of things—musically and otherwise—that we might just let go by the wayside. I'll tell you—I'm fifty-one.

**ZAWINUL:** That's all, Wayne?

**SHORTER:** I'm going to be fifty-two coming up. My whole music room is full of music papers and a couple of comic books I drew. And Josef's got drawers of music, papers and cassettes....

**ZAWINUL:** In all, I've got 2,000 pieces of music which I've done nothing with. Wayne has written music I remember from two years ago [*turns to him*] when you went to Brazil, you had ninety pages of orchestrated music. If we keep on going like we've been doing, in other words, making records—as well as they might be—and touring all the time, we will be sixty-two and by that time I'm going to have 5,000 pieces of music and Wayne might have 400 pages written, and it is dead.

Let's say Weather Report is a hobby we can no longer afford to continuously *just* do. There are other things at this stage of our lives and we have to branch out. I think we made a great record, but I think we finally can afford to do something we want to do. Wayne hasn't done a solo album in eleven years. I haven't done one in sixteen years. He's in the studio right now. I'm also in the studio ready for a solo project.

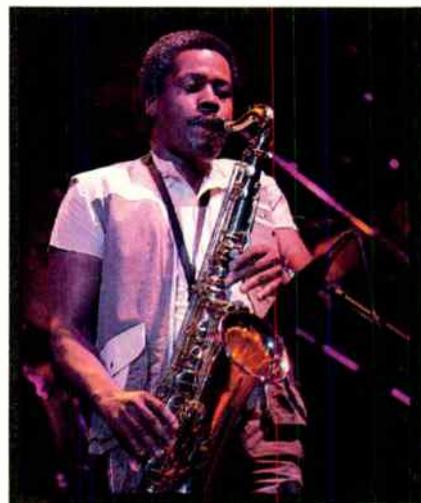
But as for the status of the band—it's still Weather Report, with Omar Hakim, Victor Bailey, Mino Cinelu, Wayne and myself, still existent. We're still going to make records with this band; however, momentarily, we will not travel with the band. I'll go out in the summer to Europe for four weeks by myself—just me and my synthesizers. That's something I've wanted to do for many years, and if I don't do it now, I ain't gonna do it. And now the technologies are such that I can go out as a full orchestra by myself.

It's good; we need that rest from each other as a band and for the people also. The band has been better than ever in the last couple of years, as a working unit it's been an inspiration—everybody's listening to each other. However, that's when you do something else. When you become a champion, that's when you should more or less hang up the gloves for a minute and do something else.

**MUSICIAN:** *So it's time for some creative challenge?*

**ZAWINUL:** Not only a challenge, a personal necessity. Financially to support an orchestra—that's what we are—with some of the most expensive musicians in the world is a very hard thing to do. You can't get an Omar Hakim, making records with David Bowie and Mick Jagger and Sting, you don't get this guy for peanuts. You pay a lot of money, which is totally all right because they deserve it. But what we've more or less been doing—Weather Report—is a hobby, which we made a good living from, but it didn't give us enough.

And we have families, both of us. So you gotta kinda divide your time, and Weather Report is a hobby, like Duke Ellington's band was a hobby. The man didn't make no money from his band. He made a little money from royalties, and the rest of the money he put into his band, and that's what we do. When we go on tour with the expenses we have, we gotta go



**Wayne Shorter unchained.**

ANDY FREIBERG/RETNA

back and call Columbia Records for some money to support the band. You cannot do this but so long.

**MUSICIAN:** *What were the circumstances that made you decide to make the plunge after all this time?*

**ZAWINUL:** There's no plunge, see? That's what it is. There is nothing changed except that we're not going to tour with this record immediately. Next year we'll come out with a Weather Report album, but the only thing we're not doing is going right out with our bags, so that the moment the record hits the streets, we're in Cleveland [laughs].

**MUSICIAN:** *I understand that you're sealing a deal with CBS Masterworks to do a duet album with Wayne.*

**ZAWINUL:** The deal's been sealed. We were supposed to be in the studio already, but we wanted to do the solo projects first, because it was faster to get some money. I'm totally frank with you. What happened was, the digital recording we want to do with the duet was so very expensive that every penny of that money

would have gone into the recording, which is right. But in the fall, we're going to be able to do that.

**MUSICIAN:** *What will be the basic gist of the Masterworks project, a classically-oriented record?*

**ZAWINUL:** Our own. Not classical. Our approach to the human condition in an orchestral style. Not classical, 'cause that has nothing to do with it.

**SHORTER:** Not Béla Bartók....

**ZAWINUL:** Not Béla Bartók and none of this Beethoven stuff, just our own approach to symphonic music. But classical is not the right explanation for it. Classical is just a term of an era rather than a style. And what we're going to do is not even a style. A lot of it will be improvised.

**MUSICIAN:** *Will it be similar to the duets you do in concert?*

**ZAWINUL:** Some.

**MUSICIAN:** *So is it safe to say that there will be a good deal of keyboard layering?*

**ZAWINUL:** Not so many layers, because the way I'm set up, I pretty much do everything in one shot. Like on this new album, there is no harmony or keyboard overdubs. It's done with MIDI (*Musical Instrument Digital Interface*); I play with one keyboard and they all do it in one shot, boom.

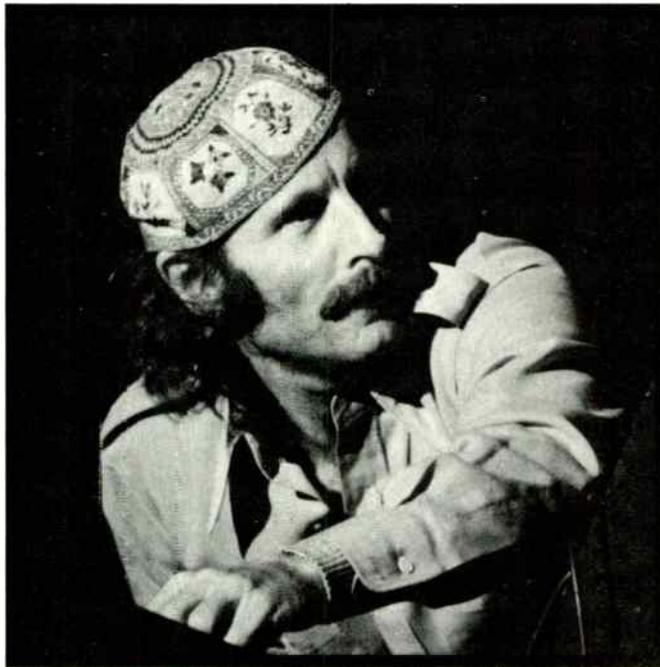
**MUSICIAN:** *With all these extracurricular projects, you basically want to get some creative skeletons out of the closet.*

**ZAWINUL:** Whatever the term is, it is something that has been waiting too long. And this is wonderful that it can be at home.

**SHORTER:** Yeah, most people can't....

**ZAWINUL:** That's one thing, most people cannot do this. I don't have to be away from my family to make a living, which is great. If you want to do something right, man, you gotta take time, even if you're talented and you got your shit together. You gotta live with it. You gotta weigh everything.

This new album is incredible. It's raw but it's well thought



What we do is look at people, and listen. I might go to a market in Milan and just listen to how people talk. You hear a symphony."

editing, and Wayne overdubbed, Omar overdubbed the cymbal and I added the voices at the end and that's it. I personally didn't do any overdubs.

Same thing with "Indiscretions." "Hot Cargo" was totally on MIDI; the only overdubs were Wayne on the melody and Mino on the Simmons drums. This is the way to do it; it is inexpensive and it is totally spontaneous, towards total improvisation. That's what it's all about. We went through so much music, sheets of music, and out of all this, something crystallizes.

**SHORTER:** I'm doing the same thing right now. I'm in the studio this week and the next and then I think I'll take two weeks off to just look at it all. I'm recording, but it's still....

**ZAWINUL:** In the conception stage.

**SHORTER:** Yeah, and I gotta take the time.

**MUSICIAN:** *But did you conceive the album as a long arc or just put together a series of snug pieces?*

**ZAWINUL:** No, it was an arc in that sense. The band last year played as great as ever. We went to Europe to all these resort places. When you see the album cover with the color and everything, you're immediately going to get the message. The sportin' life, easy goin', maybe a little hoodlumism, a little gamblin', women, hangin' out...that's what the whole album is about, the easy life in the good places where people like to go. Palm trees, ocean, places like the French Riviera, where we spent time last summer. Originally, we wanted to have an album cover with a collage of postcards. That's what the music is supposed to be, an international resort album, something really hip. When I grew up, I used to play only in resort places, because I like sports a lot. I skied in the winter, so I played in Innsbruck and in the summer I played somewhere else where I could go mountain climbing. Here we go with the arc on the record in that sense. When you have all that music together, you can fit it in the arc by titling it correctly.

continued on page 56



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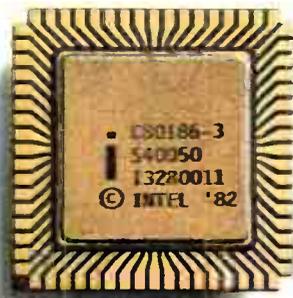
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The 16-bit 80186 microprocessor far out-powers typical 4- and 8-bit units.

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Miles has called me three times since last Friday to tell me how great the album is. He really likes it. He thinks it's gonna be a classic.

**MUSICIAN:** *Have there been any overtures towards working with Miles again?*

**ZAWINUL:** Well, he wants to. He called Wayne and me to write something for the Berlin Philharmonic, but there is some political problem that I don't even want to get into. But anyhow, whenever it will happen, Miles is always ready, whether Wayne wants to do something or I do.

**SHORTER:** Yeah, he calls.

**ZAWINUL:** That's one great musician, there.

**MUSICIAN:** *I get the sense from most of your albums that globetrotting is an important ingredient in the band's identity. You're tapping into a lot of international, ethnic musics....*

**ZAWINUL:** Not really, though; that is one misconception. We never weaved any other ethnic, as far as music is concerned, never have used any other music in style or notes per se. But what we do is look at people, we listen to people. I might go to the market in Milan and just listen to how people talk. You hear a symphony when you're away a little bit, when you're not right in the forest but outside of the forest and can see the trees. You can hear as a whole.

This, for instance, is why I don't listen to no African music or Japanese music, or nothing. So we don't really weave ethnic musics in our music. That's a misunderstanding. It's just maybe because of traveling a lot and because of having a lot of contact with other people of different cultural backgrounds, the way they talk, the way they move...the Japanese walk different than they do in Poland. I think that is what comes out of the music. It is totally, one hundred percent, our original music. It's very important because often people get the wrong idea, that we're using ethnic music. That's a very dangerous thing to say, because we never do and never will.

But be very careful when you write about this ethnic music, you know, because I read this thing and I got very mad. Somebody in New York wrote some dumb fuckin' statement of about we're using African rhythms and all that bullshit. Fuck, I don't listen to nobody, man. We got our own fuckin' rhythms and they be happening for many years. That's all we got is rhythm.

**MUSICIAN:** *It's a question of intent. To me, your music sounds somehow ethnic, but that doesn't mean you pilfered something you heard in Nigeria. It means there's a natural relationship to different cultures, for whatever reason. The new album seems to live up to the title; it's more sportin' and energetic than past albums.*

**ZAWINUL:** We always kinda had a groove. I don't care how great the musicians are we had playing with us, but it takes time for people to learn how to feel certain ways. Some people say somebody can learn how to feel, and that's not so, because it takes time when you play with people. Me and Wayne, we always played well together, but we never played as well together as we play now. We played well together on our first album when we improvised and there was always some magic kinda stuff going on. But I don't think we've ever had a better time than we did on this album.

**SHORTER:** I don't think we've ever had a better time.

**MUSICIAN:** *On previous records I sensed a bit more emotional anxiety and trepidation.*

**ZAWINUL:** Don't forget that *Domino Theory* is essentially a live album, some done in London, some in Osaka. A couple of the tunes were done in the studio, and the last tune "Domino Theory" was done at home, with Wayne overdubbing.

**MUSICIAN:** *And the new one was laid down at home?*

**ZAWINUL:** More or less. No, the first song was done in the studio. The second song ("Indiscretions") was done at home, but I had overdubbed Omar and Mino, just boom, boom, boom, to get the wide bass drum overdub sound. The third song I did totally at home in one shot with the MIDI. Wayne

overdubbed the melody. Mino was overdubbing on that solo part. I had three voices singing on that at the end.

Mino's tune we laid tracks in the studio. One thing we always do, when we use any outside composer's material—which rarely is happening—we do give composers respect. When Wayne brings in a piece of music, I become just the bystander, more or less. I look at this and let the man take care of things. I'm trying to figure out what he likes. And then I'm putting my mustard on it and then I ask him. On the ballad ("Face On The Barroom Floor"), we recorded the whole tune in forty-five minutes. We laid a click track, and then Wayne and me played: I played the acoustic piano and he played the tenor. And then I sent Wayne away, I said "Wayne, let me take care of it." He had the song written out so neatly, the voicing and all that was all written. I took a piece of paper and orchestrated it for me. I hadn't changed a single note of what he had written. I looked at the way the melodies were running. He came back in about an hour, and the piece was like you hear it on the record.

### Sportin' Synths & Shorter Stuff

Along with their other personal and artistic distinctions, Zawinul and Shorter differ drastically in terms of musical arsenal. Sizing up Shorter's equipment is no difficult task: he plays a Selmer tenor and a Yamaha soprano sax, and also owns the Steinerphone wind synthesizer as well as a Korg. But Zawinul's equipment list, by definition and intent, varies from year to year. While ever the scout for the freshest state-of-the-art in keyboard technology, he is not so compulsive as to ignore the utility of older machinery. Thus while he is lunging headlong into the MIDI orbit, Zawinul still swears by such ancient "relics" as an ARP analog sequencer (which his keyboard tech man **Jim Swanson** calls "the hippest analog sequencer ever devised") and a Prophet 5 as well as an Oberheim OB 8-voice both dating back longer than four years.

In fact, it was while Swanson was under the employ of Oberheim that he first linked up with the legendary Austrian; he was called on to modify Zawinul's Oberheim in 1981 and the connection rapidly developed into a symbiotic working relationship. "I'm his right-hand man," notes Swanson. "It's something I've always wanted to do. He's a keyboard player. I'm a synthesist." As he describes their functions, "Joe is not a pure synthesist, who will say, 'I'm going to take this wave-length and form it this way.' He tells me, 'I want this kind of sound,' so I'll roughly get it in the ballpark and he'll take over, tweak and fine tune it from there. That way he's not restricted to set patterns of working. It's the Eureka method—'Wow, this is nice, let's record that.'"

This season, Zawinul's keys consist of the following: a Sequential Circuits T8, Rhodes Chroma, an Ultimate Support rack holding a Korg DW6000 and a Prophet 5 equipped with MIDI, an Oberheim OB 8-voice and an Emulator, aided and abetted by a Linn LN1 drum machine and an Oberheim Xpander module. What with the current holding pattern of the group, Zawinul and Swanson are preparing for a solo tour of Europe and Japan, a self-sufficient one-man-band outing that will require the integral use of sequencers, the ARP as well as a Sequential Polysequencer and Swanson's Oberheim DSX, equipped with Jim Cooper's MIDI-adapting Oberface. Swanson's self-designed MIDI switcher box will enable Zawinul extensive inter-keyboard flexibility. Also, a set of Korg MIDI pedals will ensure that none of Zawinul's limbs lie down on the job. "He can play a sampled drum set sound on the Emulator with the pedals," speculates Swanson.

One prospective Zawinul acquisition will be an Apple computer with Roland composing software, which, with MIDI's help, can provide Zawinul—the improvising composer—with goofproof transcription of his ideas. "We're just taking things one step at a time," says Swanson, "because MIDI is definitely opening a big window to the world. MIDI and Joe are a nice combination, he's been wanting to play all his keyboards for a long time, and *voilà*, here it is. Life is wonderful."

Much of Weather Report's sonic groundwork—including a good deal of what winds up on vinyl—is done at Zawinul's home studio. The recording gear is trifling compared to the keyboard setup, though—an Ampex 24-track, an Otari 2-track and a few compressors and rack effects just about sum it up.

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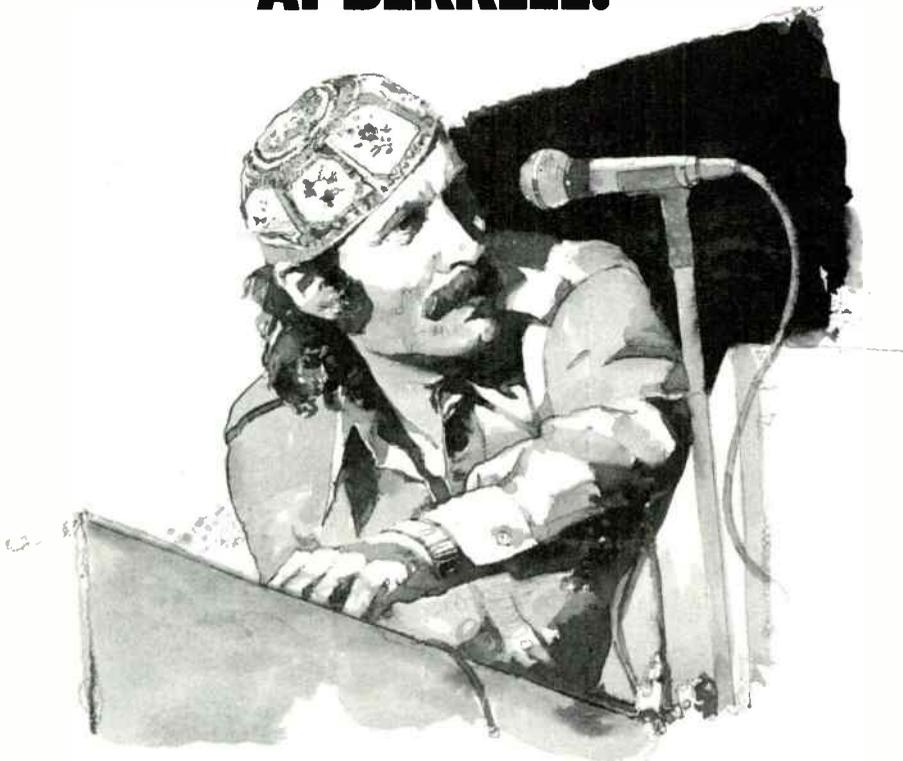
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*Weather Report*

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**SHORTER:** Finished.

**ZAWINUL:** Finished, man. That’s what I like about this record, we just threw it out—no nitpicking or anything.

**MUSICIAN:** How do you view the titling process? Is it a chicken-and-egg proposition, where the title can actually trigger a musical idea?

**ZAWINUL:** Never.

**SHORTER:** It comes near the end, you know. We’ll be talking on the phone, slowly it develops in conversation. But not at the beginning. We didn’t say “Let’s call the album ‘Sportin’ Life.’ Okay, let’s go record it now.”

**ZAWINUL:** I sit in the studio and I do a lot of the work, and Wayne sits in the back with a big book. And he’s writing. He’s the guy with the titles. Eight out of ten titles on every goddam Weather Report album are his. I have a few, but he comes up with the majority of titles. You know, he writes down a hundred and we maybe get only three out of it that really hang in there. “Hot Cargo” is my tune, his title. “Corner Pocket” is his title.

**SHORTER:** No, that’s yours [laughs].

**ZAWINUL:** That’s mine, oh yeah [laughs]. “Ice-Pick Willy” is mine. Actually it’s from a Redd Foxx routine.

**MUSICIAN:** I found it interesting that, while you hardly ever play material from outside the band—with the exception of the Ellington tune you covered a few records ago—you chose to do “What’s Going On.” Is that a tribute to Marvin?

**ZAWINUL:** Well, you could say that, but I’ll tell you also something. It also had to do with the fact that we were approached by Columbia, because of the difficulty of our music—the complexity, I should say, if maybe we could come up with something that people could recognize. I like Marvin Gaye. I thought he was one of the finest pop personas. I can groove with his stuff. And I liked “What’s Going On” when it came out.

So the first day we recorded “Corner Pocket” and Wayne’s song—“Pearl On The Half-Shell.” And then we went out for dinner and came back around ten in the evening. I just said “Let’s sit down and play that song.” The first time we played the song, that’s the recording. The very first time we played, and the last time. I heard the melody and wrote it down to get a little idea of the phrasing so that people know the tune.

**MUSICIAN:** Structurally, his music parallels what you’re doing. Rather than laying down straight pop forms, his tunes were cyclical and spontaneous.

**ZAWINUL:** What we did—that was my idea—was have those international people talking, because on his records he had people doing little raps in the studio—“Hey jack, wuss hapneh?”

**SHORTER:** Right, wuss hapnang [laughs].

**MUSICIAN:** Wayne, how did you conceive “Pearl On The Half-Shell”?

*continued on page 97*

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THE SECOND COMING OF

# Phil Collins

A SEASONED PLAYER ENJOYS CHARTBUSTING  
NEW LIFE AS A SOLO STAR. BY J.D. CONSIDINE

**T**he Melbourne Entertainment Centre is not your average rock venue. For one thing, it started out life as a swimming pool, having been built for the 1956 Summer Olympics and eventually converted when it transpired that swimming wasn't quite the box office pop music is. But then, Phil Collins & the Hot Tub Club, tonight's attraction, is not your average rock band. What, after all, does it say about a band when the major activity by the backstage bar is *knitting*? "I'm sorry you had to see this," says Collins, looking mock-horrified as one of the string players brought on for this Australian tour *crochets* feverishly.



“Just promise to be quiet about it,” he enjoins earnestly. “We don’t want any trouble with the authorities.”

It’s hardly the sort of backstage behavior usually associated with big-time pop stars, but somehow it seems wholly in character for Phil Collins, currently pop’s hottest commodity as a solo artist, producer and drummer. “We also have that with Genesis,” Collins says later of the backstage fibercraft, adding that his wife Jill was one of the ringleaders. “It’s funny. When Roger Waters and Eric Clapton were out on tour, they went out to dinner with Jill. I wasn’t there, I was working. Roger Waters’ wife is a bit of a socialite, and

she said to Jill, 'You go out on tour with Phil, don't you? What do you *do* all the time?' And Jill said, 'Well, I sew.'

"You what?"

Collins laughs some more and adds, "It has its perks. In fact, we've got about a dozen cushions at home that look great." In all seriousness, though, Collins points out that the relatively sedate backstage life has immediate, practical advantages to the music as well. "To be honest, I think that a lot of the decadence and debauchery is so overblown. A lot of bands are far more normal than they'd like people to believe. But I'd rather have people knitting than smoking joints and getting loaded. You can't play this music like that." He laughs. "We've all tried, and you *can't*."

Of course, that doesn't stop Collins from observing the tradition of "the inch." Shortly before the band hits the stage, Malcolm Craggs appears at his side, bearing a glass of Glenfiddich. Collins warms up his voice with a four-note descending figure, then downs the scotch. Trying the exercise a second time, all that escapes his throat is a hollow gasp. "Ah, it works," Craggs smiles.

"My dad was very proud of the fact that I was in the West End as an actor," Collins recalls the next afternoon. Collins, after all, started off his career as a sort of child star, playing the Art-

## "I just had a year of writing all these songs, basically because I was depressed and miserable."

ful Dodger in the London run of *Oliver*, and extending it through bit parts in everything from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* to *A Hard Day's Night*. "You can't see me in *A Hard Day's Night*," he says. "I just happen to like the fact that I was in it because it was a Beatles film."

It was a great start for a teenager, but it wasn't what Collins wanted, and that's what led to trouble at home. Just as he was turning eighteen, he did *Oliver* again, this time in an adult part, but it would be his last role. "I said to my mum and dad, 'I don't want to do acting anymore. I want to be a professional musician.' They said I couldn't do that."

Acting, after all, was a trade at least, but rock music? "His friends would ask, 'What does your son do?' 'Well, actually, he's in the West End,'" Collins recalls. "I mean, 'What's your son do?' 'Well, actually, he's taking drugs in a rock group' doesn't sound as good."

These days, of course, Collins' father has plenty of reason to be proud of his son. Not only is the younger Collins a full-scale pop music success on his own, having delivered his first number one single with "Against All Odds," followed up by the number one LP *No Jacket Required*, but he's also produced hits for others, most notably Philip Bailey, whose *Chinese Wall* yielded the chart-topping duet "Easy Lover."

Back then, though, the senior Collins' doubts seemed well-founded. "I became a professional auditioner," says Collins of his earliest days as a drummer. "I almost went for an audition with Yes, which would have been an interesting turn of events had I got it. Then I auditioned for various bands—Vinegar Joe, which had Robert Palmer, and Manfred Mann's Earth Band, or Chapter Three I think it was called then.

"I never got any auditions, funnily enough. I thought I was pretty good, but there was always somebody better than me." In frustration, Collins put together his own band, which started out as Hickory, but eventually recorded under the name Flaming Youth. But Flaming Youth fizzled despite having recorded, and after a year of no gigs, Collins began combing the music ads once again. "I'd been seeing Genesis in the back pages of the *Melody Maker*. They were playing everywhere and we weren't playing anywhere. Then I happened to see this ad for: 'Tony Stratton Smith requires drummer sensitive to acoustic music and acoustic guitarist.' So me and my mate from Flaming Youth, Ronnie, went down and auditioned and it picked

up from there."

Nonetheless, Collins' days of stagecraft continue to serve him well. Introducing one song in Melbourne, Collins tells the crowd, "This next song is from a film." As the anticipatory cheers swell, Collins smirks, "Not many people know I did the music to *Deep Throat*." Allowing just enough time for the laughter, the singer continues, "Actually, there are only two good things about this film, and they both belong to Rachel Ward.

"Mind you, they were very good..."

Cheap jokes, maybe, but they lend a balance to the show, for Collins' randy wit is just enough to take the edge off his often-melancholy lyrics. More than that, the jokes help convey just how likeable Collins tries to be. "I want to appeal," he admits. "I want people to *like* me, I want people to like the music. That's the bottom line. That's why I go out on tour. If one person out of ten thousand comes back and says he didn't like it, well, that's understandable, given the law of averages. But that's the one person I'm more interested in. I want to know *why* he didn't like it. 'Is there something I'm doing that offends you?'" he chuckles. "Criticism basically doesn't bother me, but I can't help but be interested in why. As soon as they call me 'ex-art-rock drummer Phil Collins,' straight-away I know he's got the wrong end of the stick, because he doesn't know

that Genesis aren't really doing that anymore. We're not like that.

"I'm not like that."

**MUSICIAN:** *It's commonly thought that rock is, if not exactly a young man's game, certainly something in which you make your mark as a creative force while you're still in your teens or twenties. Yet you didn't really start writing until you were almost thirty. Granted, you were well known as a drummer and singer, but why did it take so long for you to come into your own as a songwriter and solo artist?*

**COLLINS:** The only reason I started doing this stuff at all was because of the divorce that I had, and I just ended up with a lot of time on my hands to write. If that hadn't happened to me, and I was still where I was family-wise, maybe I would've done a solo album eventually, but it would've been a little more like a fusion thing. I don't know. Maybe if I hadn't done it for three or four years, I would have been off that area of music, and I'd have tried to do something with singing, but my songs might have been totally different.

My first experience with songwriting proper was under those circumstances. Apart from "Lily-white Lilith," which was on *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, I'd never really finished a song. I did a couple of songs in the band I was in before Genesis, but with Genesis I'd never really written a whole song. I mean, "Ballad Of Big" is mainly mine, bits of "Down And Out" are mine...I've got lots of bits in lots of songs, don't get me wrong. But I'd never really finished a song until I was on my own, in '78-'79, and that's when I wrote all the *Face Value* stuff and some of the songs that surfaced later: "Don't Let Him Steal Your Heart Away," "Why Can't It Wait Till Morning," "Against All Odds," "Misunderstanding." Bits of "Billie" and "Don't Lose My Number" were written during that period. Suddenly, I just had this year of writing all these songs, basically because I was depressed, miserable, and I wanted to try to get my family together again. And also, suddenly I realized I could do it, because suddenly I had the *time* to do it. Before that I was just playing, and then the family, and taking the dog for walks, and playing.

There's no way if someone gave me the choice—if they had said in ten years' time I would either be doing this or I would still be with my family, I would have said I'd rather be doing



USPWL FI

**For Collins the drummer, the song's now the main thing.**

this. I would have said I'd rather be with my family. But the way things developed, the way things happened, really, I think we're all better off now. My kids are fine; I speak to them every weekend. I mean, it's not as good as having dad at home, but as a second best, it's very good. And I'm very happily married to Jill. But that's really why I started writing so late, because up until that moment I was really more interested in the playing, and suddenly this other area opened up, and I dived in.

**MUSICIAN:** *But is it entirely a matter of having to suffer to make your art?*

**COLLINS:** Well, I think that helps bring me out, and force me into a situation emotionally that gets my feelings out. And you can't call this suffering [*looks around hotel room*], and you can't call having everything done for you on the road suffering. I'm not suffering. I dunno. Everyone figures that maybe they're the exception to the rule, but I don't really think that my songwriting has been affected by the fact that I'm not as miserable as I was when I wrote the first album.

**MUSICIAN:** *The trick, then, isn't so much maintaining the pain, but being able to hold on to the essence of your emotional experiences?*

**COLLINS:** Yeah. I'm very proud of things like "If Leaving Me Is Easy"; that hits right on the button how one feels in that situation. "Do You Know What I Mean" is another one. I am capable of going back into that feeling. If I write something like "One More Night," although it's not the same sort of area, I know

what it feels like to feel like that. A song like "Like China," which is basically a sort of flippant song, a fun song, that has the guy being a little aggressive, because that's what you like when you're a teenager. Really, he's a bit hurt that this girl won't take her dress off on the sofa.

It's funny. On one hand, I think if I'm not unhappy that people will think that the unhappy songs I write are not genuine. But really it's all coming from the things that have happened to me, and relating to that experience. I don't want to flush it out. Obviously there are certain ghosts that you want to exorcise, which have gone already. But it's part of your life, you can't just blot it out.

**MUSICIAN:** *Sometimes I wonder if that isn't the key to your popularity, that you sing about a lot of what your audience is going through or has gone through. "Doesn't Anybody Stay Together Anymore" struck me as a most painfully accurate observation.*

**COLLINS:** Hugh Padgham, Tony Smith and I were sitting in the Townhouse one night talking about so-and-so has just left his missus, or so-and-so's wife has left him, and suddenly I started to think about how so many of my friends had gone down in 1984. And Tony the same, and Hugh the same. We started counting—a good two dozen people that we came up with together were separated during that year. Some of them were my best friends, and some of them very close. Extraordinary.

There's a humorous side to the song, really. It's not actually "WHY DOESN'T ANYBODY STAY TOGETHER?!" It's more like, "What's the matter, doesn't anybody stay together anymore?" It was meant to be like that, rather than relating to my circumstances. I was that soldier, but suddenly my friends are dropping like flies around me.

**MUSICIAN:** *Why do you suppose that is?*

**COLLINS:** Who knows? Before the 60s, anything like that was brushed under the carpet once it was found out. Whereas in the 60s, everybody learned that if you don't want it, don't do it. In the Victorian days, you got married, and whether you wanted to or not, you stayed with your wife, and if you wanted a mistress, you did it as subtly as possible. But that has just escalated from then, to the point where people get married now because they think that's it, and then they realize that really, that's *not* it. They get a divorce. So the fatality rate is very high. I know that to certain extent I was relieved when I found Jill. I mean, I went to school with my ex-wife. It's not like we didn't know each other. But chemistry-wise, Jill knows what I need to do with myself. I love to work, and she knows that. We

## "I certainly don't want to get stuck in the role of balladeer. That's why the new album is so up."

have a laugh about it, but every now and then it's, "We should go on holiday." [*laughs*] And I know we should go on holiday.

A lot of people fight within themselves, thinking they should do this, or do that—"No no, I can't do it." Actually, when I was on my own, I started to enjoy myself a bit more. I started to think This Was Good. I could do whatever I wanted. You only get one crack at the whip, you only get one life. And you might as well do it the way you want to do it. To be shackled, manacled together in a situation, and again I don't want it to sound like I was manacled, but to be put into a situation straight-away...you're supposed to be *happy* when you get married. You chose to be with this person because you enhance each other. If that isn't there, then your best thing is to get out.

**MUSICIAN:** *Speaking of getting out, your biggest single so far has been "Against All Odds (Look At Me Now)," yet No Jacket Required, instead of continuing in that vein, pretty much passes over ballads in favor of uptempo material.*

**COLLINS:** Well, this is the same thing as why I'd never do another Motown cover. I've never felt that I've done one particular thing or another. Of course, as soon as you have a number one hit, the tendency is to think, okay, that's what the people want to hear, okay, that's what I'll do. But that's a good enough reason for me *not* to want to do it. I certainly don't want to get stuck in the role of the balladeer. I think Stephen Bishop is a good example of what happens then. He had a couple of hits with ballads, and suddenly he can't do anything else. People don't want to know about his doing anything else.

"Against All Odds" was really a one-off thing. I had that song—I can say this now that the Academy has made its vote—but I had that song, musically at least, when I wrote *Face Value*. I didn't use it, because I had one too many ballads, and that was my least favorite. And then when *Hello! Must Be Going!* came along, I'd written some more songs so I didn't use it again. Then Taylor Hackford came to me and asked if I could write a song for this movie. I said, "I can't, but I've got a song that might be up your street," and I sent him a demo. He loved it, and that's when I wrote the words. So lyrically, it was written for the film.

I didn't have time to produce it, so I had Arif (Mardin) do it, and we did it on two days off, one in New York and one in L.A. To me, it was such a different way of working that I never took it seriously. So there was no way I was suddenly going to change my career for that. When I went to do this album, I just said to myself, "I'd like to try to write some dance songs, try doing something that is different." Because I'm remarried, and I guess the ballad side of me is not coming out so much.

Even "One More Night," the lyrics there are more optimistic in a warm way, rather than depressing in a negative way. I just found that I wasn't writing ballads.

So I set up some uptempo stuff, things that got me excited rhythmically, and I thrashed about on the keyboard until I got something that musically excited me as well. That's why the album is so up.

**MUSICIAN:** *The main thing your solo career has done is show you off as a singer. No Jacket Required though, puts almost equal emphasis on the drums, and uses them quite melodically. Are you trying to achieve a sort of balance between your singing and your drumming?*

**COLLINS:** Well, I've always tried to do that. With early Genesis, I wanted to show everybody I could play. Cobham and all that was happening, and I wanted to show that I could bat myself around the kit like he did. Although I never did anywhere as well as he does. And when I listen back to Genesis, I find that there are songs where I should have laid back a little more than I actually wound up doing. Because I wanted to impress people. Although I didn't feel that at the time; it's just a

thing that you go through. Then, when I started singing, we started doing things like "Squank," etc., I found that I was really playing more for the song and less for me. If something requires no more than *Gung gack gung gung gack*, like in "Trick Of The Tail," you just do that. It's a kind of maturity you get about playing what is required rather than what you want to play.

Taking that to its logical conclusion, you come to things like "In The Air," where I'm happy not to have any drums on it until the right moment. More often than not nowadays, I'm interested in the *sound* of the drums. I find if I've got a sound, then I can make that thing musical. It all goes back to when I was working with Peter Gabriel; a song like "Intruder" was all music. There was no technique involved, apart from knowing what to do and what not to do, with the drum sound formulating the part. "Doesn't Anybody Stay Together" was based on a thing that I did on that Gabriel album, a track that I thought was one of the best things he ever did, but that he never used. I just took the drum part I did—which was mine [*laughs*], I wrote it—and did a song around it.

**MUSICIAN:** *You've mentioned that a lot of your demos are done with drum machines instead of drums; is that a sound thing, too, or just a matter of convenience?*

**COLLINS:** It's convenience, really. When we were in Japan with Genesis, we got three of the first Roland boxes. I'm still using mine; basically, it's the "In The Air Tonight" sound. At first I said I didn't want one, thank you very much. "I don't need a drum machine." Because at that point, when I was at home, I'd sing the song and play the drums, and then I'd go to the piano. And, of course, that way the tempo was all over the place.

Eventually I said, "Okay, I'll try it." Because what happened was, it left a lot of space in the writing. It made it easier for a drummer to play, because there is less rhythm implied by what Tony and Mike played. They'd let chords hang, and things would just stretch, which was why when we did *Duke* and *Abacab*, there was a lot more space all of a sudden.

I used it because it freed my writing. Not being able to get from one chord to the other very quickly, because of my limited technique, it gave me time to think about where I was going to go next, having a drum rhythm in the background.

But apart from that, as the new machines came out, like the (Roland) TR-808 and the 909 and the Linn and the (Oberheim) DMX and all those other ones. I've tried to collect them, because they've all got character. I mean, there are drum machines far more adaptable than the old Roland CR-78, or

whatever it was. But none of them sound like "In The Air." So whenever I do "In The Air," I have to use that one. Whenever I do "In These Walls," I have to use the 808. "Sussudio" was written on the 909. And the DMX has got a little more swing than the Linn, but the Linn sounds different. They've all got their own characteristics, so it's impossible to say that one is better than the other. Which is great. I've got one for whatever mood I want, really.

**MUSICIAN:** *In a way, a lot of drummers are like drum machines, to the extent that they too have a specific character that makes them better suited to certain types of music than others. But you seem to be trying to work out a way of broadening the way your approach affects your playing, specifically with the way you approached R&B on the Philip Bailey album.*

**COLLINS:** I'll always remember when we started doing the stuff with the Phenix horns, they came up to me and said, "We never heard our stuff on different chords like this. These are English chords." "Thunder And Lightning" is the track I'm thinking of. It was taking their essence and putting it on an English chord thing, making it all sound different. Rhythmically, I think it's probably the same. I listen to R&B. It comes in here and it comes out there. I guess my background comes from listening to Ringo. I've got a tape upstairs of unreleased Beatles stuff which has just surfaced in the States, and the drumming is just fantastic! It reminds me of just how good Ringo was at doing that. So there's a bit of that in me, right next door to a bit of Bernard Purdie or (EW&F drummer) Freddie White. And it's that combination that adds up to something a little different.

But as a producer and co-artist on "Easy Lover," I was very proud of the fact that it got to #3 R&B. That was great for me to get over into that area, and since then, people like Al Jarreau and Tina Turner and Ronnie Spector have been interested and asked me if I wanted to produce for them. To me, that's really getting somewhere.

**MUSICIAN:** *How did that album coalesce into the not-quite-R&B, not-quite-rock sound, anyway?*

**COLLINS:** Originally, when Philip talked to me about doing the album, we said we'd do it in London, because he wanted me to give him what I do best, which means musicians of my choice. Now, I chose Peter Robinson and Daryl Stuermer, and Phil said he'd like to use Nathan East as bass player. I said, "Great, I've never played with Nathan; he's a wonderful bass player." We spent the week rehearsing at my house. Peter, when he's sounding things out, doesn't play with much feel. He was just trying to get the chords right, and Philip wasn't happy with that. I said, "Ignore it, it'll be okay, just trust me." But he was a little on edge, so we had to change keyboard players, and got Seth Wilson, who used to play with Chaka Khan until very recently. Daryl stayed and I played drums.

For the first couple of days, Philip was turning to Nathan and saying, "Well, what do you think, Nathan?" And I was, like, "I'm supposed to be the producer here!" We were rehearsing a couple of tunes that should have been done in L.A., because they were traditional R&B, Earth, Wind & Fire type songs. So there I was, trying to get this thing to sound like it had been done in L.A. They weren't using me at my best. Eventually I said to George (Massenburg), "Listen, George, I'll play on this album, but as soon as the playing's done, you



GARY GERSHOFF/RETNA

**Former child actor Phil easily became frontman ham.**

him for what we're paying him for. So Philip came in and we talked about it. He said what we should do is make an album of what we're all best at, as opposed to trying to make the R&B album. And suddenly, the thing changed completely, and we went full power into this. All the tracks were great fun after that.

What I found out later was that Philip had just come from New York and (WBLS programmer/DJ) Frankie Crocker and all those guys had said to him, "Listen, boy, you go to London,

## **"There are Genesis songs where I should've laid back on drums. I was trying to impress people."**

can carry on with Philip, because I don't believe I'm really wanted here. I don't think I'm really needed, because Philip has been confiding more in Nathan than confiding in me."

Well, that got back to Philip and Nathan, and Nathan really wanted to play with me, to do this project. So he said to Philip one night at the hotel, "Listen, you're not taking advantage of the situation. You've got Phil, you've got the studio. Let's use

you don't make a white, honky album. You make an R&B album. Otherwise, we ain't gonna play it." So he's thinking, "What am I gonna do? I want to work with Phil, but if I make a pretty, white album, they're not going to play it." It's amazing that this goes on, because racism is always thought of as coming from our end. But it's like when "I Missed Again" came out, the white stations said, "It's got horns on it—we can't play

it," and the black stations wouldn't play it because I'm not black, so....

Anyway, we just went for the songs we liked. They were the traditional R&B songs like "Show You The Way To Love" and "For Every Heart That's Been Broken," and a few English songs like "Children Of The Ghetto" and "Time Is A Woman." But the very last thing that we did was "Easy Lover." Phil said we should write something together, so the group got together and we wrote the stuff. I wrote the words, and we did a

## "I don't really produce records. What I do is help other people make their own records."

take of it that night after we'd written it in the studio. We wanted to record it the next day, but when we heard the take that we'd done the night before, we said, "That's the one! let's keep it."

It's funny. When we started to do the album, I felt that I was having to play like Freddie White, and while I try to play like Freddie White in my own way, I don't want to be judged as Freddie White. But after we'd talked about all this other shit, I was able to play like me, and that was a lot easier. One of the things I'm kind of proud of—it's not been a vendetta that I've been on—but with things like me and Philip teaming up, this has meant that he's broken into MTV, and with "Easy Lover" being a hit, they'll want to play *Chinese Wall*. Hopefully, anyway. And for me, if one of my records has that thing, it'll be played on R&B stations. So really, this, and McCartney and Michael Jackson, and him and Stevie Wonder, it has its obvious advantages, in terms of getting rid of things musicians don't think about, generally.

**MUSICIAN:** Do you think you're earning a reputation as a producer who can make breakthroughs like that happen?

**COLLINS:** I don't really produce records; I help people make their own records. Philip Bailey's thing, for instance. We got a band together, learned the songs, and put them down. Eric Clapton's album was a whole different thing. *Another Ticket and Money And Cigarettes*, I thought, just left the music laying on the record. It didn't jump out. People had written him off, thinking, "Oh that was Eric ten years ago." I wanted to show that he still *did* do it, and that his enthusiasm for music is still as much as it was. And I think the thing was—and if he reads this, he'll kill me—that he was surrounded by people who would say, "Yeah, that's great," when it wasn't. Not management, but a few people. But far be it from me to say, "You can do better," 'cause when I got in there.... [laughs] Like the first time I pressed the button and said, "That was a good solo, Eric. Why don't you try another one?" You don't do that. I mean, I *had* to do that, I was paid to do that, but it's a very tricky situation the first time you do it.

Probably I didn't have enough courage. Singing-wise, I can say, "That's not right, that doesn't do anything to me." But with the guitar in "Just Like A Prisoner," which I think is one of the best guitar things he's done in a long time, all that stuff on the end is first take, stuff we did on the backing track. That's why it ends so abruptly. And then we went back and added a bit of different sound for the first solo, and a different sound for the other. Actually, all you've got to do is plug him in and he plays great. In the end, all I said was, "You tell me what you want, because it all sounds great to me." I think because I knew him, and he knew me, we couldn't play games with each other.

**MUSICIAN:** What about working with the guys in his band like, for instance, (bassist) "Duck" Dunn?

**COLLINS:** The most amazing thing about Duck, apart from his playing, are his stories. The classic one was when I asked him why he had only two basses, because everyone travels around with a dozen basses, a dozen guitars, and three drum kits, just in case they want that sound. But I said, "Duck, you've only got two basses." And he said, [mimics Memphis accent] "Yup. Usta have three but one went down with Otis."

And some of the strings he's using he hasn't changed since 1958. Duck is an amazing character.

**MUSICIAN:** Why did the label decide to add the tracks produced by Ted Templeman and Lenny Waronker?

**COLLINS:** Warner Bros. said, "There's no guitar on it—it's an Eric Clapton album." Because everybody thinks that an Eric Clapton album has got to have guitar solos all over it. He played on "If Leaving Me Is Easy," and people would come up to me and say, "He didn't play on that! There's no guitar

solo." But he's in the background, if you listen. On this album he was experimenting with the Roland guitar synth, so a lot of the stuff that you think is synthesizer is really guitar, like "Never Make You Cry." He was trying to push himself into another area, and everyone was saying, "Get back there!"

**MUSICIAN:** Given all your current success, do you finally feel that you've found your one, true band?

**COLLINS:** This isn't my band forever. I think everyone here knows that. Next time I come out on the road, I may decide not to use something. I don't know. It's not like we're stuck with it. To be honest, as my albums and my music have done better over the years, I've found that I can do what I want to do, and coincidentally people like it. But at the same time, I can't ignore all those things I like to do. When I'm with Genesis, the most important thing is Genesis, and when I'm producing an album, that's the most important thing. It's really whatever is on at the time. I suppose that my thing is more important to me, but then I go over there and play with Genesis, and when we're together, we're three equal members. There's no way that I pull more weight. It's not like whoever has more money or more success becomes the boss, because we all know each other far too well to take liberties. To be honest, it's nice to submerge yourself into an equal part of a three-man group [laughs]. Suddenly, someone else can do the interviews. ☐

### Phil's Frills, Fills & Thrills

A man of many talents, Phil Collins is also a man of many allegiances, especially when it comes to drums. He remains fiercely loyal to his first love, Gretsch, and is using them more lately. His main concert set is a Premier kit, with concert toms sized 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18 inches. That's the kit he used for his now-famous thunderous entrance on "In The Air Tonight," as well as much of his Genesis work. He also has a double-headed Premier kit that gives him a more ringing sound. For the most recent Genesis LP and on recent Genesis tours, Phil's been using a Pearl set. Under the influence of Robert Plant, he began using Simmons electronic drums a couple of years ago. His enormous snare collection includes several standard Ludwig snares and a custom bronze snare given him by Bill Ludwig. He's also got a Kemper and an old Radio King in his library. His skins are always clear, with Remo Diplomats on the high toms and Premier skins on all the others. His cymbal collection is equally vast and various: over a hundred and fifty Zildjians, Paistes and Sabians. He generally likes to have a 14-inch high-hat, a 14-inch splash, a 22-inch swish with rivets, a 16- and 18-inch crash and a 20-inch upturned Chinese cymbal.

Collins' formidable home studio is based around his 1-inch 8-track Brenell tape deck. His mainstay has been an Allen & Heath mixing desk, but he's just gotten a new Studiomaster 16-input board. His outboard gear includes AMS and Lexicon digital delays, an MXR flanger, and an Ibanez UE400 multi-effects unit. There's also a plate echo and a couple of Kepex noise gates. His extensive romance with keyboards extends to his two Sequential Circuits Prophet 5s, a complete Oberheim system, a Roland RS-09 string synth and SVC-350 Vocoder, and a couple of Yamaha DX7s. He also will trot out an old Fender Rhodes and a Collard & Collard grand piano. Phil will occasionally dabble on guitar, owning an Ovation acoustic and a Shergold electric. In addition to the drum machines elaborated on above, he also owns a Movement drum computer.

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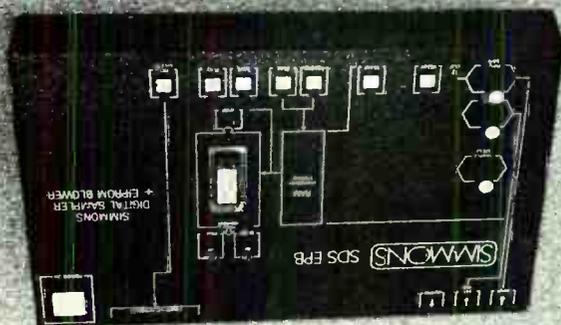
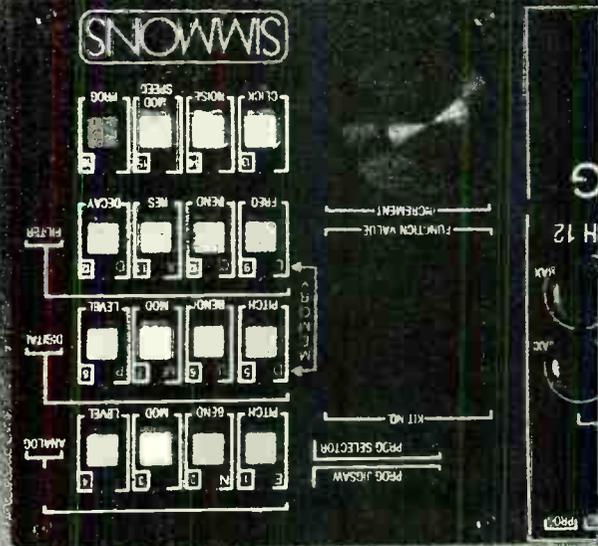
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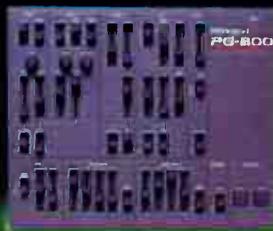
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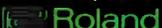
SAMPLE



# EXPRESSIVE EDGE

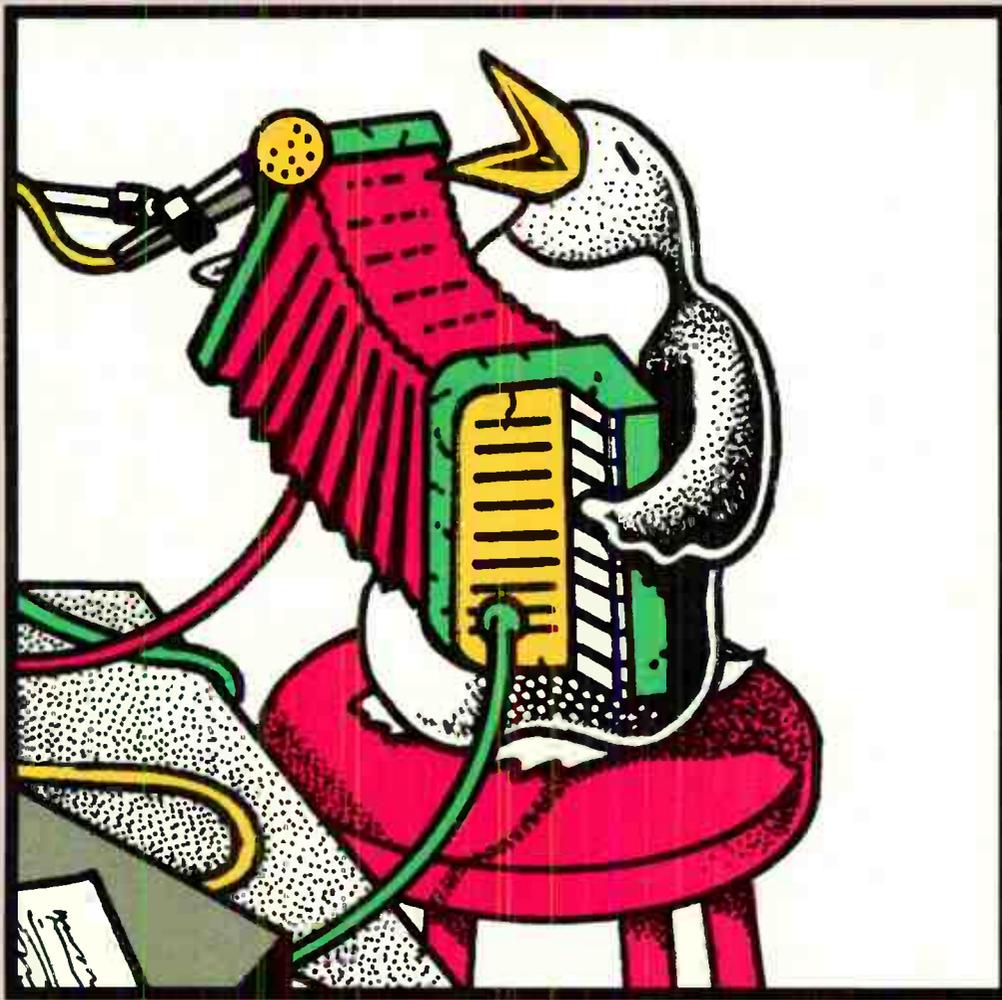
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# MUSICIAN WORKING

## 101 Low-Tech Tricks & Tips

*A home recordist's wet dream: practical, cost-cutting hints to get the most out of your gear, from the most basic cassette deck to sophisticated multi-track hardware.*

### **Carlos Santana . . . . . 76**

*A guitarist for all seasons sails on through the 80s with playing that goes Beyond Appearances.*

### **Dave Stewart & Tom Petty . . . . . 82**

*You got to have friends: an unusual collaboration between two rock mavericks on Petty's new LP.*

### **Fernando Saunders . . . . . 84**

*A pedigreed practitioner of Lead Bass talks about working with some of rock's best & brightest.*

### **Developments . . . . . 88**

### **Software City . . . . . 90**

Hold on to your pan pots and strap down your VU meters,

# 101 Low-Tech

And now, to wrap up our foray into the wonderful world of *Getting Things Done On Next To Nothing*, a mass collection of Useful Stuff! More than a few of these apply across the board, from the lowliest junker two-track to the loftiest digital 48-track. Even the well-heeled are advised to take a look. The most important tip of them all I will, of course, save for last.

By Freff

- 1 The place *not* to stint is in your tape. Buy the good stuff.
- 2 If you use cassettes, stick to chromium dioxide tape for maximum quality and machine-to-machine portability.
- 3 Never use 120-minute cassettes; the mylar backing is too thin and will stretch and/or break quickly. You can get by with the 90-minute format, but 60-minute is preferable for the physical strains of recording.
- 4 If you're recording without noise reduction, try to get the hottest signal you can onto the tape, short of distortion.
- 5 Record tracks with a little high frequency boost. Highs are the first frequencies you'll lose as you work; by boosting them when recording you increase their "durability" as you overdub and bounce. If you have no noise reduction you can cut the boosted highs slightly on playback, which will reduce tape hiss while only lowering the highs to their original level.
- 6 The general rule for the above is to add at least two db at 8 to 10 kHz when recording just about anything.
- 7 Record your bass parts first if you are bouncing tracks. Highs bounce onto lows better than lows bounce onto highs.



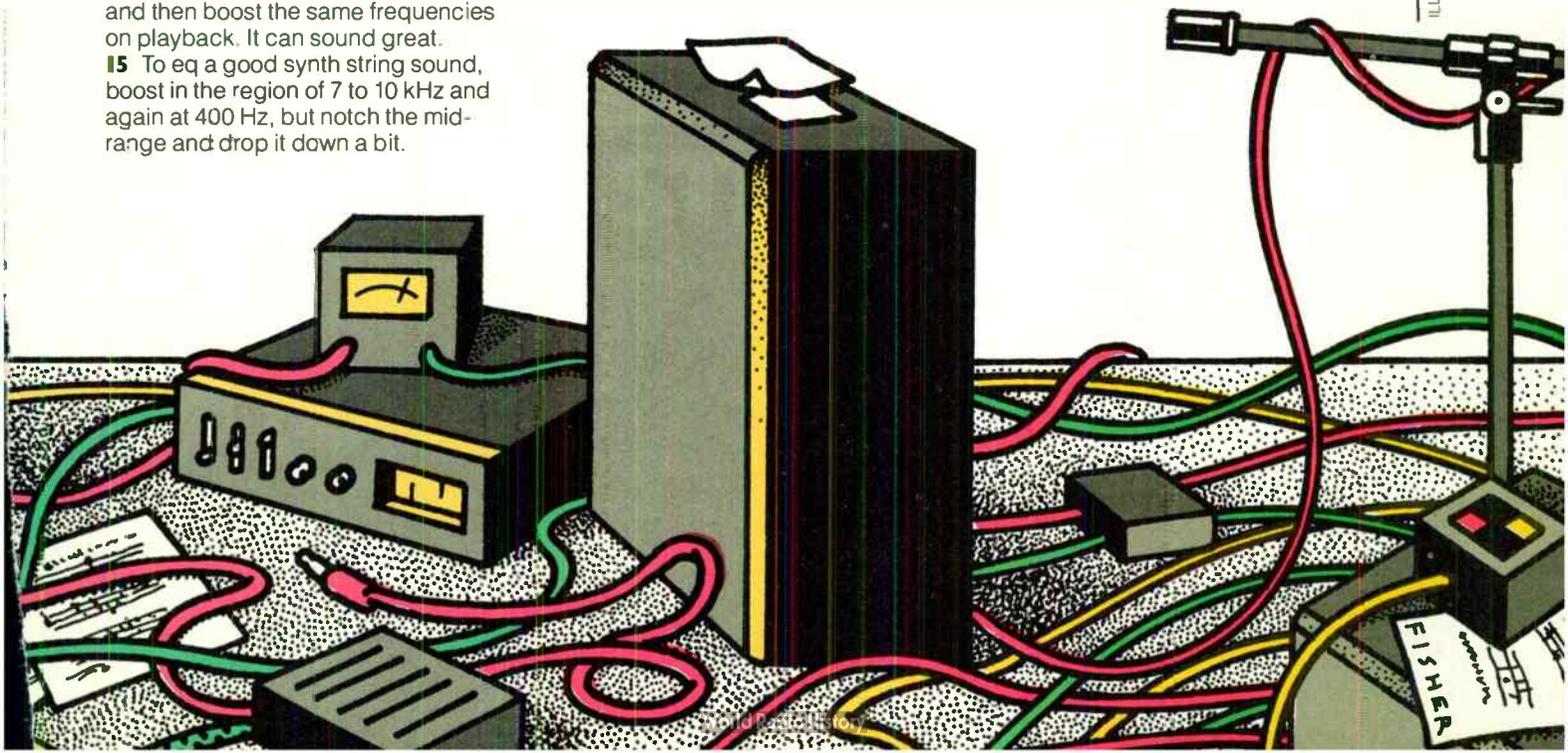
# Tricks & Tips

- 8 Plan your recordings so each track moves up in frequency range.
- 9 Work in groups of frequencies, trying to keep their ranges together. Bass guitar and bass drum together, guitar and mid-to-high keyboard together, etc.
- 10 On the other hand, when doing carefully limited bouncing, it can pay to put opposite frequencies together. Bounce a bass drum and a tight cymbal together and you can manage to eq them "separately" even though they are on the same track. Adding or cutting bass won't affect the cymbal much, but will affect the bass drum; and vice-versa for adding or cutting treble.
- 11 Don't be afraid to eq radically while recording. The sound may not be "natural," but when combined with all the other recorded tracks, it may be what's necessary to make the sound natural.
- 12 To get a good synth sound onto tape, fiddling with a basic 10-band graphic equalizer can work wonders.
- 13 For a good synth brass sound, try a notch set around 1 kHz on a parametric equalizer and then boost or cut as pleases your ears.
- 14 To get good bass sounds, de-emphasize the bass while recording, and then boost the same frequencies on playback. It can sound great.
- 15 To eq a good synth string sound, boost in the region of 7 to 10 kHz and again at 400 Hz, but notch the mid-range and drop it down a bit.

- 16 To achieve that important choir effect, even though you can't afford the Mormon Tabernacle team, try this: get a string synth sound with a low-pass filter set to a narrow bandwidth, high resonance, and no keyboard tracking. By sweeping the filter through various frequencies you can articulate *ah* or *oo* or *ee* sounds. Add chorus if possible, through a second oscillator or DDL. Notching the recording in the 500 to 1k Hz range can add to the effect.
- 17 Even better: If you got the space and the singers, bounce in some real voices and mix them fairly high. Remember to use both male and female for the full choir effect. In a pinch male and falsetto male will do, and in a *real* pinch you can fall back on changing the tape speed. Record your voice at half-speed if you are male, and at double-speed if you're female. Playing it back normally after that will give you a vocal track in the range you're missing.
- 18 Never record a vari-speed track (like the ones just mentioned) first. Always get a reference track down at normal speed, or you could find yourself having to really fight to match the pitch that's already laid down.

- 19 For good guitar, get the best sustain you can out of the instrument and amp, and then take it direct to the board from the amp—if you can. If not, be prepared to move microphones around a lot to capture the sound you want.
- 20 Microphones don't work like ears: To match (or improve) on what you are hearing directly may require that you place the mike, or combination of mikes, in some really bizarre places. Be inventive and tireless.
- 21 Cheap mikes will usually sound cheap. Inexpensive mikes, however, can often sound great. Shop carefully for ones with the flattest possible response curve, out to at least 15 kHz.
- 22 It's a good idea to have at least one matched set of mikes, if you can afford it, to serve as a stereo pair.
- 23 Avoid mikes when you can. They give good effects, but frankly, going direct into the board or recorder cuts noise and increases efficiency.
- 24 Proper reverb is essential. But use it carefully, because it's an additive effect. Three tracks with a little reverb, bounced together, can boom a lot more than you might think. And once it is there you can't remove it.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK FISHER



**25** On the other hand, a great trick for creating massive string or choir sections is to record and bounce multiple tracks, giving each one a slightly different reverb time, amount and eq. Much better than using one reverb on all the tracks at once during mixdown.

**26** First note on reverb: Panning the final "big ambience" track in stereo can simulate a stereo reverb effect, because of the complexity of what is going on in it.

**27** Second note: Don't do it if you plan to do any punch-ins. Correcting errors becomes a lot more difficult as soon as any reverb is added.

**28** Speaking of reverb, the ideal place to do a punch is between notes. But that's not good when there's a lot of reverb. Instead what you want is to punch right on the attack of a note; both the bite of the attack and the effect of the reverb will cover for you...if you catch it.

**29** To improve the smoothness of a punch-in, do *not* stab down at the record button. It's much faster to keep your finger lightly on the button and then sweep it back into your palm (as if you were trying to snap your fingers, but without adding in your thumb).

**30** To improve punch-ins from the player's point of view, get them to play along with the tape playback. This is a little like lip-synching, except that it's for real. The player should concentrate on making the music flow, not on where the punch is. That's the engineer's job.

**31** If you are recording yourself, buy or rig a footpedal for your punch-ins. Otherwise tight punches will be impossible.

**32** The thing to remember about punch-outs is that most recorders have a little lag between releasing the record

button and when recording actually stops. Get to know the way your machine works, because you'll have to do it by "feel." (There is little in recording as annoying as getting the front end of a tight punch right and then blowing the back end.)

**33** Clean early, often and everything. Getting more specific....

**34** Clean your hands before a session, and sometimes during long ones. The oils on hands can be bad for virtually everything in the recording chain.

**35** DON'T SMOKE. The particulate garbage from cigarettes, cigars and pipes may be invisible to you, but by the standards of the tape heads and the tolerances they have to deal with those are *boulders* you are throwing around.

**36** Always start a session by cleaning the tape machines. If the session goes on more than an hour, clean them again. The oxides on tape rub off and have to be removed from the recorders if you want to avoid high frequency loss and dropouts.

**37** Clean everything the tape comes in contact with—heads, tape guides, capstans, pinch rollers...don't skimp.

**38** Pay special attention to the tape guides. Clean them on schedule even if you can't see any dirt. Your eye is a lot less critical than the recording process, and "invisible" dirt can muck it up.

**39** Use commercial head-cleaning fluids or pure isopropyl alcohol. Don't use "rubbing alcohol"—it has a variety of additives you don't want to spread on the heads.

**40** Don't use anything to clean the rubber rollers that isn't specifically marked as safe for rubber.

**41** Go out and buy some commercial rubber conditioner from a hardware store or electrical supply house, and use it, as per instructions, on the pinch rollers. This will increase their working lifespan, especially in dirty or moist environments.

**42** Get actual head-cleaning swabs, the densely-packed kind. Standard Q-tips are too loose for good cleaning, and can leave fibers behind.

**43** If you do much tape-marking and splicing, clean the machines a little more often than otherwise. You will have additional dirt from splicing tape, the tape's cut edges and china markers.

**44** Clean more often if you live in an environment that is smoggy, like L.A., or really moist, like Seattle.

**45** Don't assume that good tape equals little ruboff. One of the very best tapes, Ampex 456, is one of the most prone to friction-wear.

**46** Do everything you can to avoid static build-up. Once a tape gets a static zap, or over-all charge, you can hang it up for quality recording. Worry especially about this in winter or in excessively dry climates. At those times fric-

tion can create a lot of static electricity.

**47** Do everything you can to keep your recording area at an even temperature and humidity, both of them moderate. Thermometers and humidity gauges are cheap investments with enormous safety value.

**48** Store tapes in cool, dry places, away from sunlight or any magnetism.

**49** Keep computer monitors, TVs or telephones well away from all tape. They have powerful magnetic fields—especially a ringing telephone.

**50** When cleaning the recorders, keep the tape away from everything being cleaned, and allow a minute or so for the alcohol to completely evaporate from the heads, guides, rollers and so on, before putting the tape back.

**51** Never have tape near the recorder heads when you turn the recorder on or off. In many machines there will be a field spike generated at those times, sufficient to put a click on the tape you won't be able to erase.

**52** Turn on all your recording gear at least fifteen minutes before you're ready to begin recording. That way they will be at optimum operating temperature.

**53** There is a school of thought that says you should *never* turn off the machines unless they are overheating. Decide this one based on operating environment and ability to pay power bills.

**54** The exception to the above is when demagnetizing the recorders. They should be *off*. Otherwise you will generate current surges in the recorder that can blow circuits.

**55** The further you can keep the tape away when demagnetizing, the better. Six feet or more is the minimum.

**56** Don't actually let the demagnetizer touch the tape heads.

**57** Remember to demagnetize any metal parts the tape comes in contact with, such as the capstan and tape guides.

**58** Approach with the demagnetizer already on, and *slowly*. Retreat just as slowly, and don't turn it off until you are at least four to six feet away.

**59** Demag everything at least once every ten to fifteen hours of use.

**60** Most demagnetizers don't have on/off switches. This is a pain. Install an in-line switch so you don't have to bend down every time you demagnetize.

**61** Keep your power outlets reachable!

**62** Get power strips with circuit breakers, not fuses. You *will* blow them, sooner or later, and who needs to keep going out for fuses?

**63** Choose your monitors carefully. Look for the flattest possible response across the board, and most importantly, choose ones that work well at a lower volume level. Speakers that only sound good loud are poison.

**64** Why? Ear fatigue! You definitely want to record and mix at lower levels,





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or else your ears will be playing you false. They hear fewer and fewer of those critical highs, so you crank the eq up, and soon your tape is tin city. Work low if you plan to work long.

**65** In any case, it's a good idea to take at least a five-minute break every two hours, to keep your ears in tune.

**66** Another often-neglected but very important thing is getting your ears professionally checked and cleaned. If you have a hearing loss in any particular band of the audio spectrum and don't know about it, your tapes will always be off in some critical way. (One warning: if you get your ears cleaned, you are more or less defenseless against LOUD sounds, which can do permanent nerve damage.)

**67** Always have the output volume at zero when turning gear on or off, or plugging and unplugging connections.

**68** There are big magnets in the woofers of your speakers. Keep them at least three feet away from your tape. If you are working in cramped quarters, this can be done by mounting the speakers with the woofers on top. Bass frequencies are pretty diffuse, so it doesn't matter very much.

**69** When you mount your speakers, make sure that they are positioned so they and your head form three points in an equilateral triangle, and that the tweeters are about four to six inches above your ears, aiming slightly down at them.

**70** Use standard speaker cable/lamp cord to attach your speakers. The fancy stuff isn't required.

**71** Be very careful to keep your speakers in phase—i.e., make sure that the negative terminals on your amp are connected to the negative terminals on the speakers, and vice-versa for the positive. Out-of-phase speakers can kill your sound.

**72** Mark things! It's your gear, so go ahead. Fold stickers around cable ends to identify what they are and where they go. Use a china wax marker on preferred recording settings. Paste numbers onto faders or knobs that need them. Anything that helps you keep better track is good.

**73** But use things you can clean up after. Wax pencil will rub off; magic marker won't. Masking tape leaves a really sticky residue; drafting tape doesn't.

**74** NEVER use duct tape on anything. It leaves gummy dreck all over whatever it was on.

**75** You can never have enough available hanging hooks and garbage bag ties. Trust me.

**76** Run your cables loosely instead of in tight bundles, because that helps reduce problems with RF interference and hum.

**77** Keep cables within easy access,

but out from under foot. Tripping and dying is not acceptable recording technique.

**78** Learn to make and repair your own cables. You'll need a lot of them, and being self-sufficient will save you a bundle. Practice your soldering.

**79** Run classes of cables together, and color-code them. If you've got a MIDI network, make it a different color from your effects rack cables, which should be a different color than your recorder cables, and so on.

**80** Don't sweat about the different input and output levels on your gear, as long as you set a standard for yourself that keeps you undistorted. Calibrate to that standard, mark the levels so you can return to them if the controls get bumped, and go to town.

**81** Calibration can be done with reference tapes set to different machines and tape-types. If you can't afford them, set a synth to a bright, buzzy square wave with no filtering, run that into the recorder and find the input level that gives you 0 db on the meter when monitoring output. Then mark that input level and stick to it.

**82** Learn to splice. Take a record, record a song five times onto the tape in a row, and then start cutting and pasting to your heart's content.

**83** The way you find splice points is to rock the tape slowly back and forth across the tape heads, listening to the sound. You can train yourself for what the attacks of different sounds are like. To do this, record a vocal, then a bass, then a guitar, then various drums, etc. one after the other on a tape, and listen to what they sound like when rocked. Kick drums and snares are good signposts to work from.

**84** When you find the point you want to cut, put a china marker line (white or yellow are best for visibility) on the back side of the tape, exactly where the tape crosses the head gap of the head you are monitoring from.

**85** Use a one-sided razor blade, both for your safety and the quality of the splice. Go for the 40-degree angle splice instead of the butt-cut; it will sound smoother. Butt-splices can click, even good ones.

**86** A razor blade is only good for about ten to fifteen cuts before it gets too dull and starts to retain magnetism from contact with the tape, which will put a click on the tape at the splice point. Tapping it against a tabletop before cutting can help slow the buildup of magnetism. But dullness is dullness. Throw the blade away and start with a fresh one.

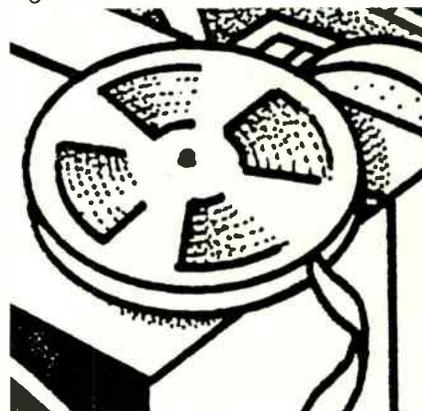
**87** It pays to have a new and dependable splicing block. Old ones can be slightly worn in the cutting grooves, which can result in tape edges which are not quite straight, or microscopically stretched, so that the splice isn't tight.

This can create splice noise and, worse, can let the splicing tape's adhesive through onto the tape heads.

**88** Always use commercial splicing tape. The adhesive in plain old Scotch-tape will seep out from under the tape's edges over time, and make for a horrible mess.

**89** If you are using noise reduction, make sure your machine and the noise reduction are properly calibrated for each other (see each machine's manuals and specs). If they aren't, your noise reduction won't work very well and you will hear it "pumping" the volume on your recorded sound.

**90** If you are using dbx noise reduction, you can record at 3 db less on your VU meter than you normally would (i.e., a -3 db reading is the same as a 0 db reading, in terms of tape hiss.) This gives you 3 db more headroom for those tricky high transients.



**91** VU meters are slow. The peaks on most instruments are 15 to 20 db higher than what the VU meter is actually showing you. Look at the specs for headroom for your recorder to see how much space above 0 db it actually gives you, before hitting distortion.

**92** More eq tips—on vocals, boosting 15 kHz will give a vocal a little air, boosts at 3 to 5 kHz will add presence, and at the bottom end a touch of boost at 100 to 200 cycles can strengthen a weak bass.

**93** To find a frequency that is so annoying that you want to cut it out, use your parametric equalizer like this: first identify the range in wide, general terms (like 5 kHz to 10 kHz, say) and boost it as high as the eq will go. Then sweep the equalizer's range from top to bottom. If whatever you hate is in that range, it will get louder as you approach its frequency, after which you can start narrowing in on it and notch the sucker out.

**94** If you are building your own rack mount supports, use wood, not metal. It's cheaper, easier, and prevents any possibility of ground loops between your rack-mounted devices from internal factory wiring/grounding mistakes.

**95** Don't record or mix in a square room if you can possibly avoid it. It's the worst

*continued on page 88*

It May Be Priced Low . . .  
But It Sure Sounds Good!

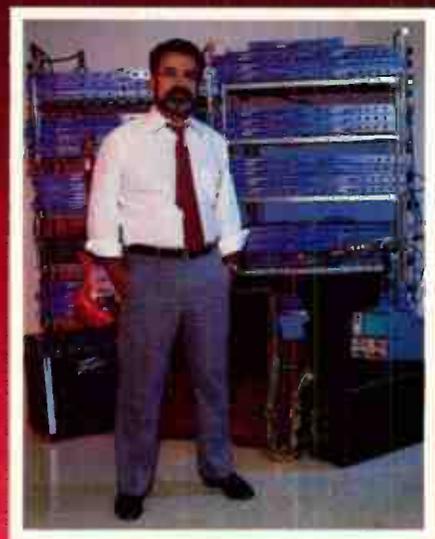
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## SANTANA'S SAILING SWITCHBLADE



Carlos on helium: "Get out of the way mindwise and execute what's in your heart."

## Fighting the "Oh Yeah, Another Santana Album" Syndrome

By Don Snowden

A brisk breeze cools the crisp San Francisco afternoon, but the glaring lights and cumulative body heat of fifty-odd crew members, band friends and label reps have transformed the SIR soundstage where Santana is shooting its "Say It Again" video into a fair approximation of a sauna. Directors bark commands, technicians scurry from task to task and dolly-mounted cameras slowly roll across the room while the band occupies itself with an extended jam. A white-capped Armando Peraza claims center stage to run through a series of dance moves, including a more than passable moonwalk, with a flair no *conguero* nearing

sixty should be able to muster.

The focal point of this midday madness, Carlos Santana, races from timbales to trap drums, only strapping on his guitar to drop a few crystalline single notes over ex-Weather Reporter Alphonso Johnson's speedy walking bass line. The heat has already prompted Santana to strip down to a sleeveless gold John Coltrane T-shirt over blue and green pinstripe pants.

The impromptu rehearsal has been specifically arranged to provide the video crew with performance shots of Carlos to be integrated into the clip of the first single from Santana's new *Beyond Appearances* album on Columbia. Later that afternoon, while the rest of the band endures repeated takes of "Say It Again" to cover all the requisite angles, Carlos Santana will be winging his way home to his wife and two small children. "I can't have one cat come over and tell me to pose and suck my cheeks and be unnatural," he says.

Carlos Santana approaches the media these days as gingerly as...well, a lot of people approach new Santana

records. Fifteen albums and sixteen years since that first eponymous LP electrified the rock world, Santana is an institution and, like most institutions, is experiencing great difficulty in re-capturing that initial revelatory jolt. It's hard to keep springing surprises when people basically know what to expect from you. Santana himself remains such a distinctive instrumental stylist that everyone from Eskimos to aborigines can probably identify one of his solos within eight bars.

The rub with Santana has been one of context. Depending on your perspective, the point of creative no return arrived in 1973 (when Santana went jazzy with *Caravanserai*), 1976 (when Carlos and company returned to clave city and commercial graces on *Amigos*) or 1979 (or whatever year you think signals the phasing out of Latin dance rhythms for the AOR rock foundation of the last few band outings).

The battle between art and commerce most musicians wrestle with has been a particularly violent struggle in Santana's case. Carlos did hit on a

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method to reconcile those opposing forces in the mid-70s—solo albums became the vehicles for his jazzier, creative side while the band LPs afforded the chance to touch base with the masses and brought home the bacon. The schizoid set-up worked well enough on the later score—the *Moonflower*, *Zebop!* and *Shangó* albums all spawned hit singles—but it reinforced the “Oh yeah, another Santana album” syndrome, too.

That’s the way it worked for me, anyway, until I slapped on the opening track of *Havana Moon* and “Watch Your Step” turned me right around to stare slack-jawed at the speakers in shock and...yep, surprise. I had forgotten Carlos Santana was capable of rocking out that furiously.

“Well, here in the 60s in San Francisco the song was ‘Satisfaction,’” reflected Santana during a break in the video shoot. “In the 50s in Tijuana, it was either ‘What’d I Say’ by Ray Charles or ‘Watch Your Step’ because they both have that switchblade kind of effect. Those two songs were the thing to play Saturday night so people will forget about the rent and dance.”

*Havana Moon* was a wildly inconsistent romp with a cavalcade of stars through Carlos’ roots, but its high points are among the best music Santana ever committed to vinyl. Take “Who Do You Love,” wherein Santana and the Fabulous Thunderbirds kiss off the expected piledriver Diddley beat in favor of a light, jaunty shuffle that completely transforms that venerable warhorse.

“I always wanted to blend the Fabulous Thunderbirds with the Afro-Cuban element,” he remarks. “Like with King Sunny Adé, you hear Willie Nelson and you hear Watts and everything is happening in there. That’s what I was trying to do with ‘Who Do You Love,’ create that kind of thing where it doesn’t matter whether it’s a shuffle or a 6/8 or disco. It’s just movin’, you know?”

The wide-open, genre-mixing concert bills of late-60s San Francisco undoubtedly cemented that preference for melding different styles together, but the seeds had already been sown in the streets of Tijuana where Carlos came of musical age in the late 50s. There were radio stations pumping an eclectic pot-pourri of different music into his ears: blues, gospel and early rock ‘n’ roll left the deepest imprint.

Ironically, what he *didn’t* absorb while growing up in that border town exerted the greatest influence on his future direction. The mariachi and *norteño* styles that were the obvious musical legacies of his Mexican heritage left Carlos cold. When the Santana band emerged as an international force, it embraced an entirely different Latin music tradition, the Afro-Cuban style

spotlighting his soaring guitar over the racing foundation provided by multiple percussionists.

“If you’re into sailing, you’ve already got the current with three percussionists and the drummer,” he says now. “Once you start, you can choose from styles like Gabor (Szabo) where he plays three strings and open strings to give it that raga sort of feeling, or you can play staccato like Wayne Shorter, really choppy. Once you’re there, it kind of tells you what to play.”

“The general rule is what Alphonso Johnson says, get out of the way mind-wise to execute what you feel in your heart. That’s a challenge right there because a sound is more than a string and a finger on it, a lot more than the design of the amplifier or guitar. You try to get rid of the licks you’re not really fond of and find the stuff that’s pure, that’s you and nobody else.”

As that reply might indicate, Carlos Santana is far more comfortable talking about music in abstract or metaphorical terms than engaging in nuts and bolts analysis. One question about the amount of rhythmic experimentation when the band hammers its material into shape yielded a reply which boiled down to “The rhythm is like shoes. You can wear any style as long as it’s the same color.”

Queries about specific elements and new wrinkles on *Beyond Appearances*—the flamenco-style acoustic guitar run on “Spirit,” the tripartite structure of “Who Loves You?,” the occasional use of drum machines or keyboards locked into the body of the arrangements—received little beyond the far-from-illuminating “We tried it and it worked” response.

The reason seems to be much less willful evasiveness than the fact that Carlos Santana is a team player who genuinely views music as a collaborative creative process and refuses to step out of character for the benefit of the tape recorder. There are good-natured flashes of individual ego—“(producer) Val Garay’s gonna be spoiled the next time he calls in a guitar or conga player. They’re gonna ask, ‘Where’s the switchblade?’”—but his basic musical outlook falls closest to the jazz ethic, more difficult to capture in words than on the bandstand.

“I do value and put more emphasis on spontaneity,” he maintains. “I was reading this interview with Cecil Taylor and they were asking him what does he practice with these days, harmony, theory or scales or chords. He says he just practices one note until that note plugs into the universe. Some people call it the Spaloosh feeling.”

“We call it helium and it’s those moments when everything is intertwined. You can play almost any key and almost

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any beat you want and it's just happening. That's the something that consciously or unconsciously we're trying to create as much as possible.

"I can claim inspiration and dynamism from just about anybody as long as they're sticking their neck out. I'm not into selling as much as I am expressing because I don't hear the cash register. A lot of people don't listen to music. All they can listen to is the cash register so I'm glad I'm on the other side."

The problem is reconciling those high-minded statements with the fact that *Beyond Appearances* is back to rock business as usual...and Carlos knows it. "The real departures are albums like *Caravanserai* where we spe-

cifically wanted to cool out of the norm. This one we wanted to cool into the norm and bring in some good thoughts."

*Beyond Appearances* cools so far into the norm that it doesn't sound much like a Santana album except for traces of extra percussion and, naturally, those tell-tale guitar tracks. The record does capture the variety of elements in Santana's music in tidy, programmable capsules—but how well you like it depends on your tolerance for slickly produced AOR fare.

"It's pretty easy for me to play 'Say It Again,'" he acknowledges. "I don't want to boast but I could play a solo to the whole song and get off. This album again confines me to playing a solo

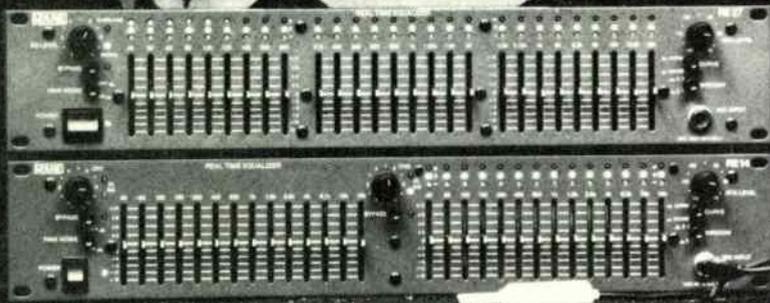
when I'm supposed to and sharing with the singer, but I learned a lot. If I ever get an opportunity to work with Paul McCartney, the format in which they approach songs won't be so foreign to me."

That seems to be the solution Santana has hit on to resolve his creative/commercial dilemma—treat everything as a learning experience, a preparatory step toward the achievement of some long-range future goal. "I don't have any qualms any more about playing old or new songs because the reality is they're just plates," Santana admits. "What you put on 'em is what's important, right? If you put something good on top of 'Mary Had A Little Lamb,' what you can make people get up and dance. I guess it's the essence that matters and being true to that end. Like Armando Peraza says, if you get intoxicated with what you're playing, no matter what it is, they're going to get intoxicated with what you play."

Santana may get more intoxicated in his next project, another 180° shift. It's a collaboration with Tony Williams that's currently brainstormed as a duo affair, perhaps augmented by guest vocals from the unlikely pair of Jimmy Cliff and John Lee Hooker. "I still want to feel like I just got out of high school and know next to nothing. I want to get next to other musicians so I can learn something because I love the way they express life. I'm always trying to get close to everybody so I can find another element of myself. I need catalysts and people to bounce off."

"I'm trying to get close to people I love like McCoy Tyner and John Lee Hooker so I can learn more, express more and make more people aware of other things besides Freddie & the Dreamers or whatever that is today. There's a lot of Freddie & the Dreamers kinds of bands today, you know. I just wanted to bring out more soulfulness and art so that people could choose to like it or not." □

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Carlos Santana's amps are MESA/Boogies and Marshalls; his main guitars a Paul Reed Smith and Yamaha SBG-3000. "The Paul Reed Smith is like a tenor—it has that crunch to it—and the Yamaha is a soprano, more for ballads." The pickups in the Yamaha are Seymour Duncans. Strings for both are Yamahas. His effects are by DOD, including a 565-A chorus and a couple of 585-A digital delays, and a Yamaha Octaver. He's also got an old Mutron wah-wah and a custom-built switching unit to go from Boogie to Marshall amps. Wireless is a Nady VHF-700. He's exploring synthesis by using a Roland GR-707 MIDI'd to a Yamaha DX7.

At home, Carlos uses an Ampex 1" 8-track and a PM-1000 24-input board with Orban reverb and eq equalizer and a Yamaha RE-15 reverb, but spends more time on his Fostex and Tascam Portastudio 4-track cassette decks. Tape of choice is TDK SA.



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**MODERN DRUMMER MAGAZINE**

## TOM PETTY &amp; DAVE STEWART?!

## An Unlikely U.S.-U.K. Summit: Eurythmic Meets Heartbreaker

By Freff

Like most things in Dave Stewart's less-than-predictable existence, co-producing three tracks of Tom Petty's *Southern Accents* was not in the original game plan. "It happened more or less by accident, you know? It was through [L.A. producer] Jimmy Iovine. He met me backstage at the Wilshire Theatre in Los Angeles when Eurythmics played there, and he was really interested in our songwriting. I came down to one of his sessions in the studio and while I was there, he rang up Tom to come down. And I remember we had this bottle of Jack Daniels or some American whiskey, and while Jimmy was doing something else, Tom and I went into the studio where the piano was. We started writing this song together, messing around, and it came out really good."

Stewart's contribution to what became "Don't Come Around Here No More" had been floating through his head for some time; he'd even recorded it: "I already had a tape that I'd made on



Dave brought "difference thinking"...

a (Tascam) Portastudio, with Coral sitar guitar, synth, bass and drums, and that was the whole backing track. So I went to Tom's garage and we started making a little demo of it there, and I just got to be really friendly with him and the rest of the Heartbreakers."

The song perfectly melds the best of two world-class mavericks. Under a classically twisted Petty vocal, "Don't Come Around Here No More" displays a textbook Eurythmics structure, flagged onstage by a bass intro from long-time Stewart associate Dean Garcia, all pulsed drums and demanding drones, and punctuated by dramatic vocal bursts. There's also a few zingers from Stewart's self-taught production bag of tricks: "In the middle I had the idea of doing the bit with the grand piano that starts out forward and ends up backward. It was my idea to bring the cellos in. And it was my idea at the very end to get the girl from Talking Heads to sing that little 'oh yeah' lick."

While at Petty's house, working on that demo and getting to know the Heartbreakers, two more songs came together between the two. "Make It Better (Forget About Me)" is much more in the Petty vein, a quasi-country guitar raveup (that's Stewart sitting in on electric) with a heavy dose of Stax horns on top of the twang. "It Ain't Nothin' To Me," though, is...definitely different.

"I think Tom was a bit depressed about things, and we were talking about them while sitting there on his bedroom floor, and I said, 'Listen, why don't we write something that's like a call-and-response type song, like when somebody's leading a bunch of marching soldiers and he calls out and everybody shouts something back. So we started doing that in his bedroom. He sang 'They put a man on the moon,' and I sang, 'It ain't nothin' to me,' and he sang, 'There's more coming soon,' and I sang 'It ain't nothin' to me!' We did the whole thing like that. All these things were happening in the song, things that are so forced on you by TV, crammed down your throat, so they just don't mean anything anymore."

After doing early mixes of the songs, Stewart went back to England to pursue other projects (no, he wasn't around for Petty's brush with a studio wall). He much admires the finished version of *Southern Accents*. "Actually, this album is Tom's most diverse, his most experimental," says Stewart, "which is good, y'know. Everybody needs to grow, to do

...to Tom Petty's *Southern Accents*.

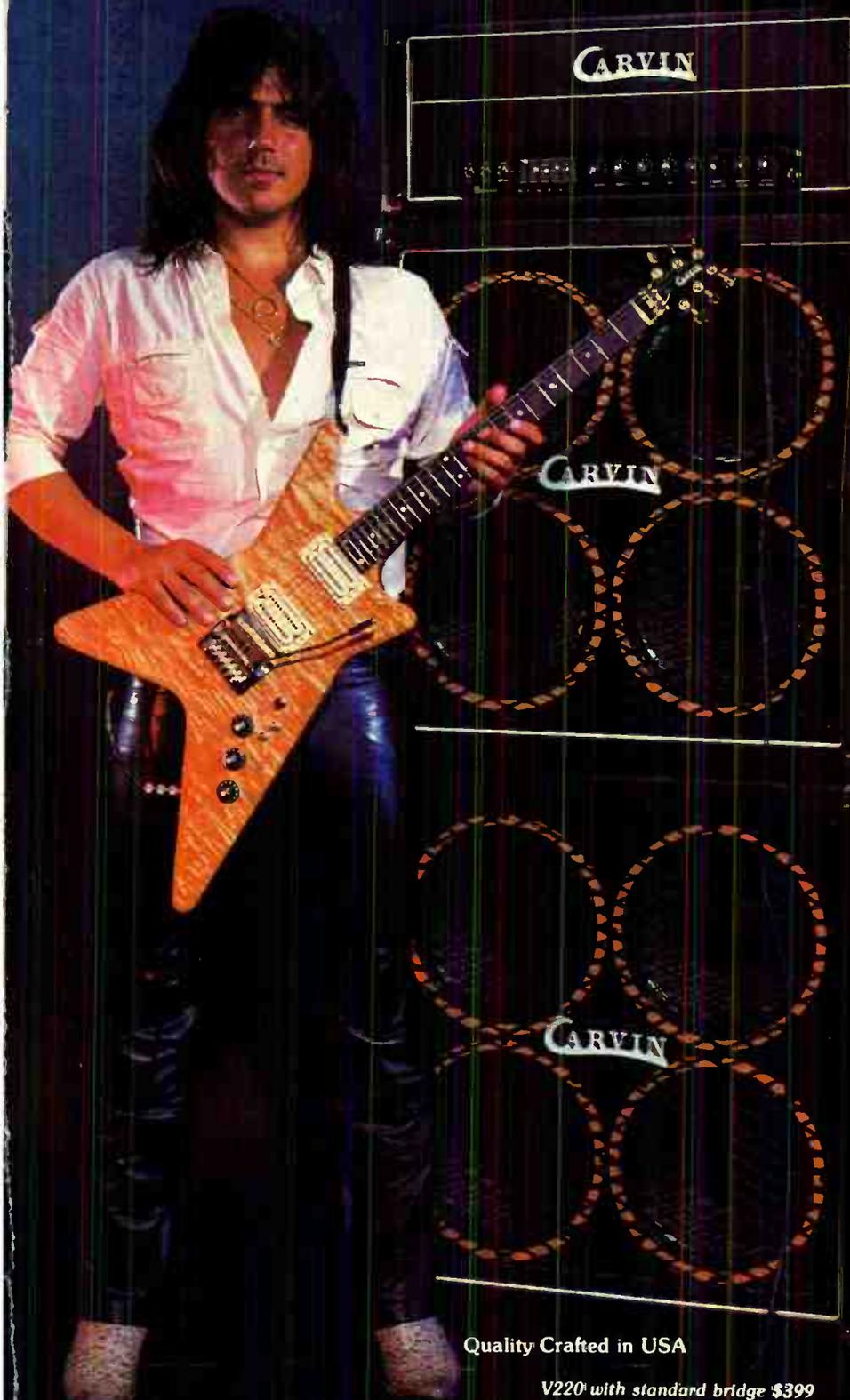
different things. That's why we recorded the new Eurythmics album in Paris instead of London, so we'd have another language around us and a whole new thing to support what we were doing."

Eurythmics' Paris project involved renting a youth club and bringing over equipment from their home-base studio in a London church, then under renovation. They actually used the same Tascam 80-8 they made the *Sweet Dreams* album on to do the basic tracks in their seven-week sojourn—the tracks were then transferred to a 24-track for horns and extra vocals. As to the direction of the new Eurythmics album, entitled *Be Ourselves Tonight*, Stewart allows "It's a little bit of a departure. We're doing even more experimentation with mixing in organic acoustic and synthesizer sounds together and I'm playing a lot more guitar, kind of like a B.B. King thing, not the guitar sound. I'm having the most extreme fun I possibly could."

Despite his specific musical contributions to *Southern Accents*, it's probably Stewart's sense of Extreme Fun that left its biggest mark on Tom Petty: "I think I brought a little of that kind of 'difference thinking' to Tom's work, although he was already going that way himself. I don't think any of our collaborations stick out from the rest of the album, although the album itself certainly may stick out from the rest of Tom's work."

"They were born out of friendship, those songs, instead of it being put together to write hits." ☐

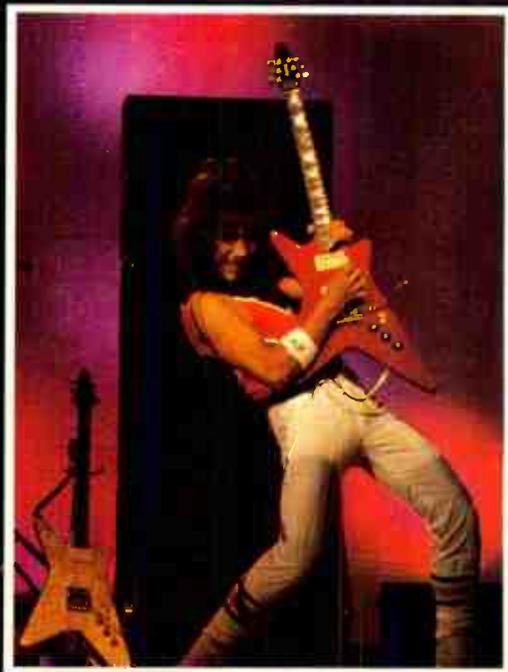
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# FERNANDO SAUNDERS' LEAD BASS

Pop Royalty's First-Call Bassist Is Into More Than Keeping Time.

By Rob Tannenbaum

Imagine this," Fernando Saunders smiles. "I'm sixteen years old and I'm out with my friends on a Saturday night in Detroit, drinking Colt .45 or some other horrible drink and listening to Led Zeppelin albums. And then, a few years later, Jimmy Page comes up to me at the ARMS benefit in London and says, 'Do you know "Stairway To Heaven"?' The slender, stylish bassist cackles at the question. "I said, 'Yeah, Jimmy, I think I know it.'"

Among such rock royalty as Page, Steve Winwood, Lou Reed and Jeff Beck, Fernando Saunders is more popular than a stretch limousine. At a time when many musicians are employing bass synthesizers rather than bass players, the thirty-year-old Saunders has more job offers than he can accept. His inventive technique, developed during 70s stints with influential funk and fusion bands, is a conscious expansion of the role of the bass—and Saunders swears he's only begun his crusade to liberate bass players from the dreary task of time-keeping.

It was nothing less than a divine omen which directed Fernando Saunders toward a four-stringed instrument. He had already won a trumpet scholarship in grade school and also mastered the clarinet when his mother, a professional singer who gave up her career to raise two sons, bought him an acoustic guitar. "I learned it really quickly," Saunders recalls of his fateful epiphany, "but I kept breaking the two little strings all the time. Then my best friend got a guitar, so I figured I'd play the bass."

Saunders took the frets out of his first bass—still an unusual thing to do back in 1970—and used his musical ability to teach himself to play. When he sought some more experienced help, "the teacher I went to said he couldn't teach me because I already had my own technique, and instead he hired me to teach at his school."

That technique was sharpened in the active environs of the Motor City. "Luckily, I started meeting all the best people



Fernando keeps employers like Lou Reed, Jimmy Page & Stevie Winwood happy.

in Detroit, and Motown was just three blocks away from my house. The older musicians in town were really concerned about the younger musicians having an opportunity, so they really worked with us."

There were enough sessions in town to keep Saunders busy, although he's not sure whether he cut any Motown tracks because "at that time, they didn't put the musicians' names on the records." The studio work led to an offer from the Four Tops, which he turned down to stick with his band of high school buddies. "I was really stuck on that, but it seemed like they were all just sitting around. I knew that the only way I was gonna get anywhere was to go out myself, so I decided to take the next offer that came up."

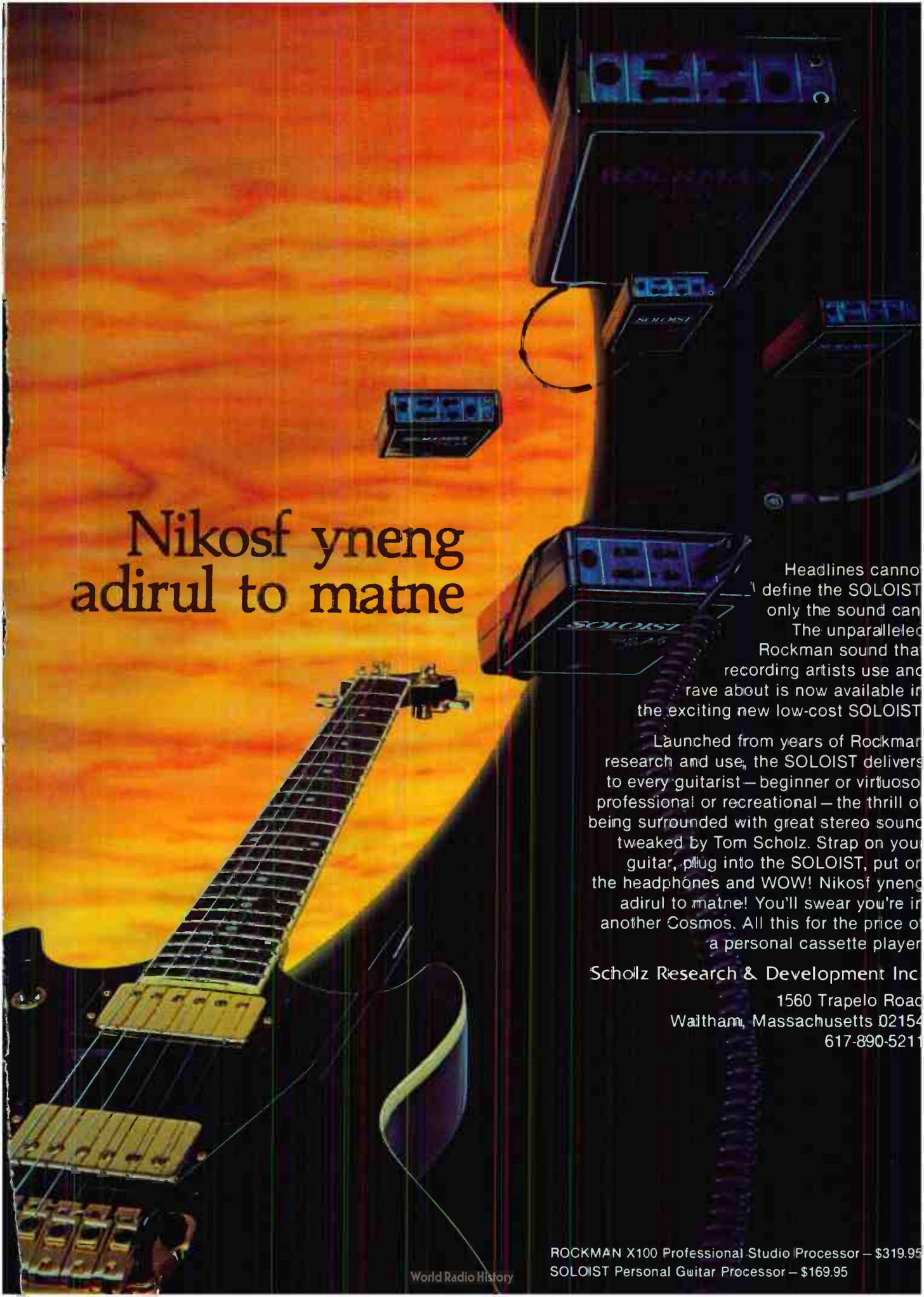
That offer came from Hamilton Bohannon, a former Motown drummer whose eponymous band "pretty much invented disco," Saunders reckons correctly. Bohannon also featured a guitarist named Ray Parker, Jr., who "did a few gigs and then split to California when Motown left. That's when Detroit became a ghost town." Playing in a disco band "got me disciplined I

learned that when I got a note in, it had to say something. I was going through that stage of playing everything I knew as fast as I could." He lasted with Bohannon for two years, but the band's unvarying groove was too restrictive for a guy who rates his employers based on how much they let him solo.

Anxious to leave his moribund hometown, Saunders moved to New York to play with ex-Mahavishnu Orchestra keyboardist Larry Young. "I knew that if I played with a guy like that, who played at places like the Village Gate, someone in New York would see me." It didn't take very long. "At that time, the fusion thing was becoming popular, and I started getting lots of offers."

One of those offers came from drummer Tony Williams, whom Saunders turned down, and another came from keyboardist Jan Hammer, "which I took because he was the closest thing to Mahavishnu I thought I could get." He played with Hammer on *Melodies* and *Oh, Yeah?* (named after Saunders' home-town band), and then toured with the keyboardist when he collaborated with Jeff Beck (documented on the *Live LP*). Although Saunders was writing,

LISA HAUN



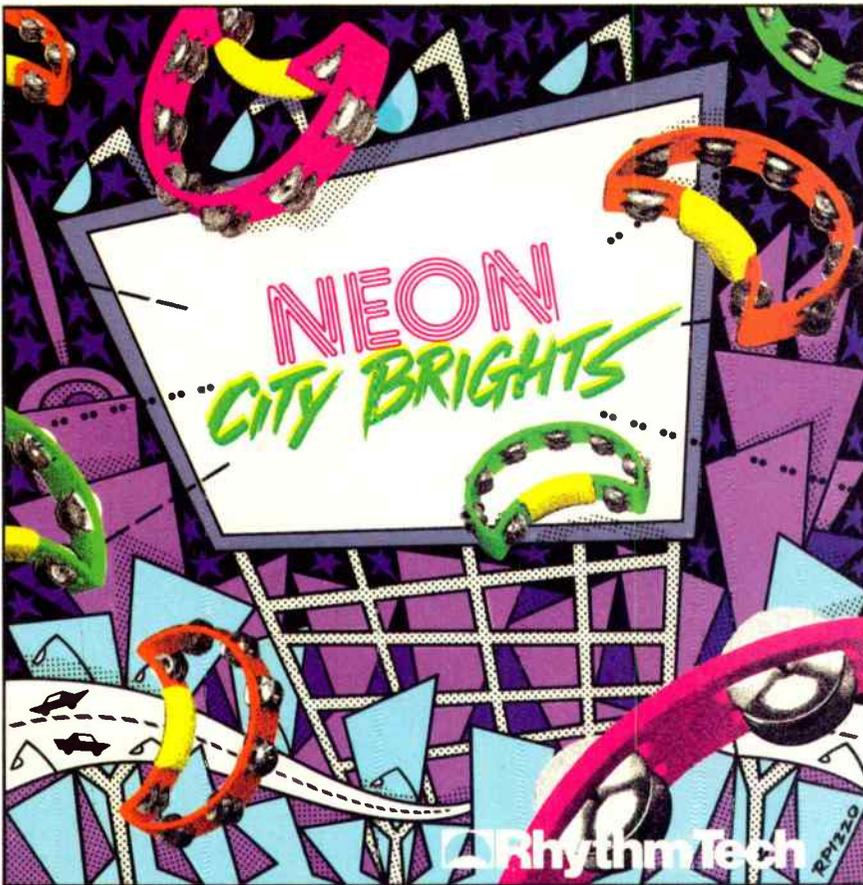
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singing and even playing rhythm guitar with Beck and Hammer, he was still dissatisfied. "I started to feel that I wasn't being fair to myself, musically, that I was suffering with expression of the bass."

His Mahavishnu fantasy came true when guitarist John McLaughlin called him after Jaco Pastorius "broke his hand or something." Saunders played on one track on McLaughlin's *Electric Guitarist*, an LP that also featured bassists Stanley Clarke, Jack Bruce, Neil Jason and Alphonso Johnson. Fernando was the one chosen for the tour, and when McLaughlin selected a band for *Electric Dreams*, Fernando was the sole bassist. "Even though he wouldn't let me do any solos on his records, John was open to a bass player having freedom. In concert, everybody would walk off stage and I would play whatever I wanted. I used to go crazy, playing with my teeth and stuff. But," he sighs, "I knew that was gonna end because of the history of McLaughlin's bands."

When it did end, Saunders found himself "very confused about all the technical things I had learned," so he took a vacation to work on his own songwriting. Oddly, it was his experience with Bohannon, rather than his work with the Founding Fathers of Fusion, which got him his next job, working for a funk fan named Lou Reed.

"Apparently, Lou had checked out Neil Jason and Marcus Miller and all these people, and he wanted something else. He asked me who I had played with and I said Bohannon. He said, 'Wow, Bohannon and James Brown were the few artists I used to listen to.' I gave him all the records I had played on and he said that no one had really exploited my bass sound. He said, 'You can play melody and rhythm at the same time; that's what I want.'"

When Saunders began *The Blue Mask* sessions with Reed, he found that—although he wasn't allowed any solos—"it was like a dream come true. Lou wanted me to play the things no one would ever let me play, the things I would sit in my bedroom and play. Suddenly I was glad I hadn't quit music for my uncle's insurance company."

Although guitarist Robert Quine gets

*continued on page 91*

#### Out Of The Basement

Saunders' favorite bass is a mutt; a Modulus Graphite Basstar fretless neck with a Precision Guitar Man body and EMG pickups. His back-up is a fretless Guitar Man, intact. He uses D'Addario flat-round medium strings, an Ampeg amp and no pick. His guitar is a '62 Stratocaster with a Schecter neck. His remarkably thick tone comes from tuning G-D-G-D and picking with both his thumb and forefinger, and also from going DI in the studio. He uses an MXR doubler, digital delay and an MXR harmonizer.

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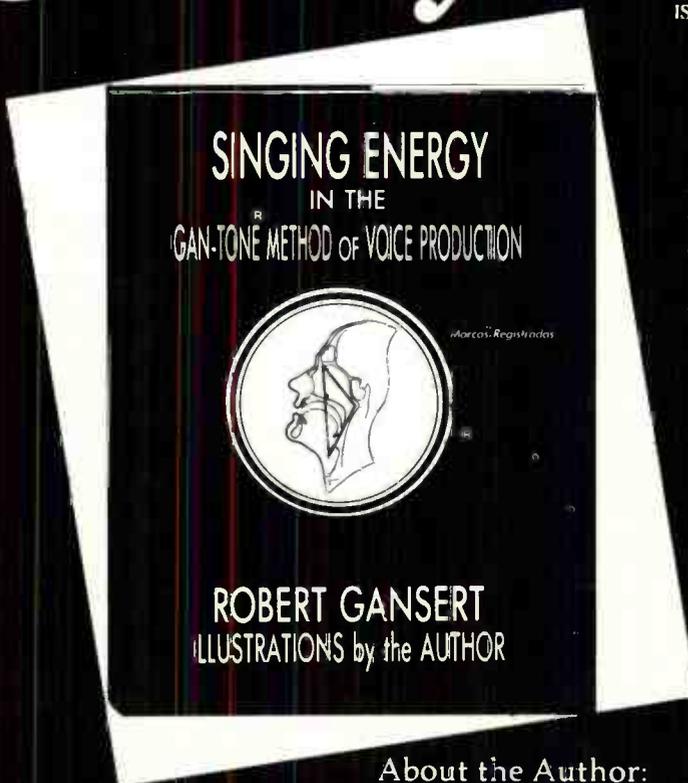
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**About the Author:**  
Robert Gansert has been a performing vocalist for over twenty years, and has been featured in numerous concerts and recordings. His work has been internationally acclaimed. He is currently a noted instructor at the Carnegie Hall studios.



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World Radio History

## Low-Tech from page 74

acoustic environment possible, in terms of generating standing waves and phase problems.

**96** Put a lot of sound-absorptive material on the wall around and behind your monitor speakers. Otherwise, you'll be hearing wall reflections of the sound that will completely wipe out your capacity to judge stereo imaging.

**97** Some older machines roll off—no, call it *shelf-off*, like the Grand Canyon shelves—frequencies above 8 kHz when using their sync functions. So beware of bouncing anything above that level if your recorder works like that.

**98** On some machines you can get better signal-to-noise ratios (at the expense of giving up metering) by taking your tape out signal from the noise-reduction connections rather than the standard outputs. If you know how your levels are running, this can be useful during mixdown, to get the cleanest possible final master tape.

**99** Avoid ground loops! Make certain when wiring that you use two-conductor shielded cable. Always connect positive to positive at both ends; always connect the black to ground at both ends; and the shield...well, always connect it at one end but not the other. Which end? Doesn't matter, as long as you *always* do it that way, with every device. I'd recommend that at every input you connect the shield, and not connect it at any outputs. This will greatly eliminate ground loops. Also, buy yourself a bunch of three-prong-to-two-prong adapters, and use them on every device...only don't connect the ground wires on the adapters. The usual source of ground loop hum and RF interference is through the house wiring. This eliminates that. And since you aren't doing things like drilling holes into the sides of your tape decks or drum machines, you won't be creating safety problems.

**100** The best cleaning tool you can get for general studio maintenance is—tah-dah!—an ostrich feather. An ostrich feather sprayed with Endust. Really. It will get into every nook and cranny, between any knob and slider, and zaps the dust like magic. Lasts a long time, too. And makes a nice conversation piece when people visit your studio. Ostrich feather—really! (Try hat shops, some grocery stores and the Yellow Pages under "feathers.")

There's a lot more, but the title said 101, not 1001. And now, as promised, number **101** THE MOST IMPORTANT TIP IN THE WORLD! Go ask questions of the people who have walked the trail ahead of you, and *listen to their answers*. (To which end I would very much like to thank this article's technical advisors—Mario Salvati, Rob Scalise and Robert Derby—for their many valuable suggestions.)

# DEVELOPMENTS

By Jock Baird

**H**ow do you improve on a product that's already got synthesists slobbering heavily? That's the question **Oberheim** asked itself after it introduced its Xpander synth module

If Freff's tips on notching out or boosting very specific frequencies has got you wondering whether your equalizer is up to the job, may we suggest the new **Rane** PE 15 parametric equalizer/notch



last year. Their answer was to give 'em another one and throw in a high-class keyboard. Thus was born the Matrix-12, so numbered because of its twelve independently programmable voices, each with a pair of oscillators, five envelopes, a 15-mode filter, fifteen VCAs, five LFOs, four ramp generators, three tracking generators, frequency modulation and a lag processor. It retains the page-type display system that eases programming connoisseur fits. The keyboard is velocity- and release velocity-sensitive, and can be split into six zones. The Single Patch/Multi-Patch memory system also controls panning, MIDI channels, volume and voice transposition. The original Xpander (described in detail in our July '84 issue) runs you three grand; the Matrix-12 is only two more, from Oberheim Electronics, (213) 473-6574. Oberheim also introduced a MIDI-equipped \$500 add-

filter. It has five adjustable parametric bands, with independent bandwidth (from 1/30th to 1.3 octaves), frequency and gain controls (from +15 to -20 db for each). On two of the five bands there's the capability of either peaking response or shelving characteristics. Each band is also bypassable, so you can quickly audition your eq setting; there's also a hard-wire bypass for everything and impressive low-noise specs. The PE 15 lists for \$389 from Rane, (206) 774-7309. You may also want to ask them about their new analog Crossover Alignment delay unit, the CD 48, which provides four separate channels to achieve perfect crossover alignment from loudspeaker systems.

A new wrinkle in the world of wireless is the new system from **Telex**. The Telex system features a "smart" digital antenna control circuit to monitor the signals from the system's two antennae. If troublesome negative phase relationships occur, the smart circuit instructs a companion phase shift modifier to alter any signal that approaches an out-of-phase relationship with another. This so-named Pos-i-Phase diversity system has actually been awarded its own patent. Available mikes (with pro-quality shock-mounting) include the WHM-500 condenser, the WHM-410 dynamic, and lapel and headphone versions. Contact Telex Communications, (612) 887-5550. Speaking of wireless systems, we were knocked out by a demonstration of **Samson's** PR-50 "Phase Reflex" Broadcast series wireless at N.A.M.M.—on a floor packed with more interference than the Raiders' defensive secondary, a perfect signal came back from nearly seventy-five yards away. Samson is also doing nicely at the low end with its \$475 single-channel high-band HH-100 Concert series system. Call Samson, (516) 489-2203.

June is the final month of Simmons' 55-city clinic tour—consult your local dealer for details. Another recommended clinic is the Charlie Haden Jazz Workshop, August 5-25 at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, 1414 Art Center Ave., New Smyrna Beach, FL 32069. Register before June 1 by calling (904) 427-6975.



on to their DX drum machine, the Stretch-DX, that adds twelve more drum voices and other editing and memory features.

Getting so creative with your digital delay patches that you're desperate for some *real* memory space? Well, **ADA**, another big-splash maker in 1984 with its 2FX digital multi-effects unit, has brought out the Digitizer 4, a 1-second, 16-program delay that gives you complete setup and storage of sweeps, regeneration, mix, and hang time. The memory also has sixteen factory-loaded "shadow" programs on board you can access anytime. Complete with stereo outputs and a self-diagnostic program during power-up, the Digitizer 4 goes for \$700, with a \$140 pedal unit a useful add-on. from ADA Signal Processors, (415) 548-1311.

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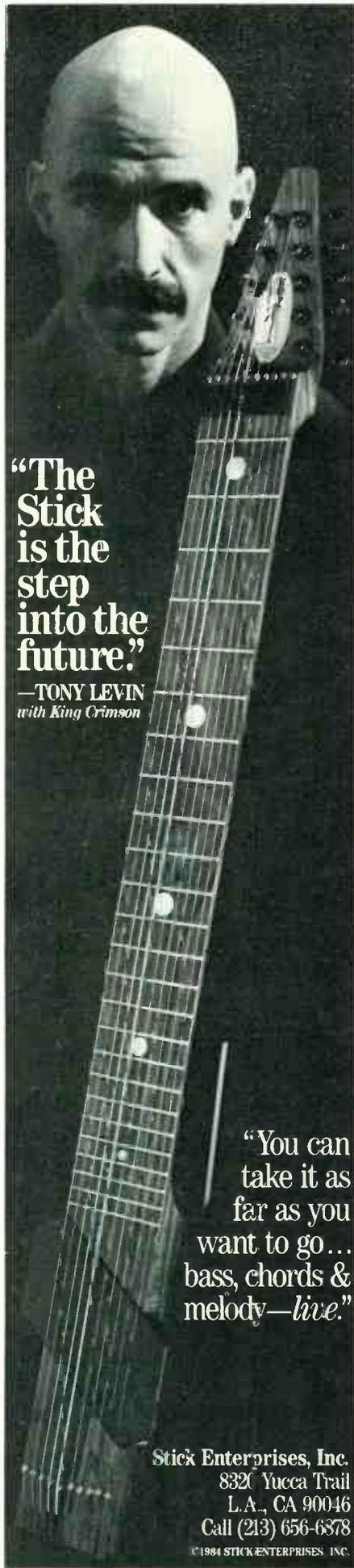
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## SOFTWARE CITY

By John Amaral

**T**he music product that most knocks me out right now is **Music Video Kit** from **Sight & Sound**. It is the **most conceptually sophisticated software product** that I have seen. This package is the precursor of an entire generation of software that will eventually let you create full-blown **MTV productions and feature-length movies** in your own home! As it is, the Music Video Kit is a kind of tinker-toy story board/erector set with canned musical arrangements, background stages, various animated characters, and the ability to enter lyric lines that can appear on the screen like a teleprompter. Although it is accessible to a nine-year old, a savvy user can modify it by following the instructions in the manual to do his own characters, backgrounds and story. The results of your work are **semi-animated story boards** that you can use for fun or some practical purpose.

**Sight & Sound** also did a terrific job on their **Kawasaki Synthesizer** and **Kawasaki Rhythm Rocker** for Commodore 64. **Ryo Kawasaki** is a fusion guitar player who lives and plays in New York who **taught himself programming**. He has captured the spontaneity of playing music in real time on an inexpensive computer without trivializing the creative possibilities. Speaking of the C-64, **Passport's "MacMusic"** for the Commodore looks like an incredible product for the casual user, with **pull down menus and windows**. Passport president Dave Kusek has pulled a brilliant coup by creating a Macintosh-like environment on the Commodore. This is an excellent product, both affordable and useful.

For applications which lean more toward the educational side, **3001 Sound Odyssey**, also by Sight & Sound, is a well done tutor about analog synthesis combined with a user interface to program the **Commodore Sound Interface Device (SID) Chip**. I also like the **Rhythm Master** from **Melodian** very much. This package is the first of what will soon become an avalanche of **music keyboard tutors**. It teaches you to play rhythms and melodies on the keyboard in an effective, video game-like format. You are required to use their special keyboard, but I'm sure that we will be seeing MIDI versions of keyboard tutors soon. **Hot tip:** If you're a DX7 owner, be sure to pick up a copy of the excellent new programming manual from **Music Sales**.

The best all around award has to go to a brand new product: **Music Studio** from **Activision**. This is a very effective update of the Music Construction Set

concept, and I highly recommend it. It contains elements of music notation, timbre colors for orchestration, a fine graphical user interface for the SID Chip, and many, many useful music editing tools. It won't do everything you want, but it's an **excellent composition tool** if you can't quite afford MusicWorks on the Macintosh.

Another hot new kid on the block is **Concertware** from **Great Wave Software** (415 852-2280). This new package has better graphics and longer music file capability than MusicWorks from Hayden Software, and runs on the **Apple Macintosh**. The jukebox function allows you to play musical files with **good sounding instrumental voices** for up to twenty hours of unrepeated music with a 512K Macintosh! The music printing is nearly acceptable (still no beaming). At \$50, this is a hot product. I'm told that they sold four hundred copies in three days at the MacWorld Expo in San Francisco!

Boy oh boy! **Roland** has done it again! Their **traveling seminar** was well attended and professionally run, and hit at the heart of what people need to know right now to make intelligent decisions about the purchase and use of music hardware and MIDI software. Although all of the equipment explained was from Roland (what would you expect?), they make pretty much one of everything, and so were able to cover all the bases. Here's a rundown of the topics they covered: performance systems design, advanced music systems design, recording applications, advanced MIDI techniques, introduction to computers and music software, advanced music software, and **audio-video synchronization**. The seminar included a **2-inch binder** full of information and cassettes that you should try to beg, borrow or buy. There was some talk that Roland might make the materials available through stores. Hats off to Nancy Kewin, Tommy Gear and the Roland Electronic Music Seminar crew!

Roland, by the way, has an exciting new box, the SBH-80, which allows you to synchronize audio or video tape recorders with MIDI, drum machines and real-time audio. That's amazing enough, but the killer feature is a tap switch which lets you conduct a MIDI music performance to the video tape, which is analogous to what you would do in a studio to conduct a movie score and synch it to the movie! Check this one out, if only to understand the concept, as it's going to be with us for a long time. More next time.

Saunders from page 86

more attention, Saunders is the only musician to play on all of Reed's last three albums. From the warm harmonics of "Our House" to the minor-key tremors of "Waves Of Fear," Saunders' elastic tone is an essential part of the emotional construction of those LPs. And since Reed's and Quine's guitars sketch only a coarse, chordal foundation, the bassist also has room to explore a style that is more than just rhythmic support; on "Home Of The Brave," "Average Guy," "My Red Jostick" and, especially, "New Sensations," he plays what can only be called lead bass. "One review said I had more technique than the whole band put together," Saunders blushes. "I was scared to call Lou and say, 'Hey, did you see this review in the *New York Times*?' But he showed it to me and said, 'Hey Fernando, did you see that review? It's great.' Then he took away my solo in 'New Age.'"

Saunders met Marianne Faithfull while recording some of his own demos after *The Blue Mask*, and he played on her *A Child's Adventure* album and tour. That led to a prestigious tour with Steve Winwood in the summer of 1983, the first time in years Winwood had played with  
*continued on page 106*

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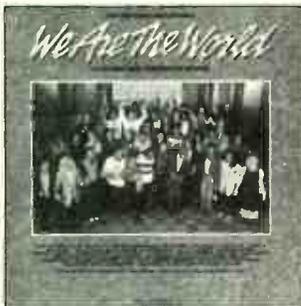


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*We Are The World*  
(Columbia)

**T**here's a joke going around that the next USA for Africa single will be titled "We Are The Industry." To date, USA for Africa has marketed a book, a small flotilla of merchandise, a video, and now this album, which features nine previously unreleased tracks by various mega-stars in addition to the by-now-unforgettable Lionel Richie/Michael Jackson opus, "We Are The World," which sold over three million copies in three weeks. That song's unassailable aim—to feed starving children—along with the novelty of placing forty-six famous mike-fellows on the same track, probably has everything to do with its success; because let's face it, if Michael and Lionel wrote melodies like "We Are The World" for a living, they'd soon be pretty hungry themselves.

But the lesson here—that mediocre pop with a great spirit can be every bit



as popular as hip music with a creepy spirit—is inspiring. So is the proliferation of British Band-Aid spinoff groups in Jamaica, Australia, et al, and the suggestion, mostly out of fashion since the 60s, that music can convey a social message. And so is the moral responsibility and leadership exercised here by certain persons in the music biz, even as our own government leaders spend their time devising new strategies to dismantle school lunch programs.

*We Are The World*, the album, is foremost a laudatory effort to raise money for the cause. It's also a collector's item (when do you think Prince and Kenny Rogers will show up again on the same record?) and a very decent LP on more standard terms. Tracks include throwaway rockers by Huey Lewis & the News and by the Pointer Sisters, a surprisingly stirring vocal by Steve Perry that transcends his material ("If Only For

The Moment, Girl"), infectious country pap from Kenny Rogers, and a spookily atmospheric number by Prince, who apparently leashed his bodyguard long enough to write an original song for the occasion.

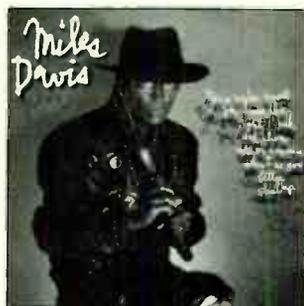
The two best songs here are both cover versions that deal with romantic obsessions, which is typically when singers are at their best. Tina Turner's throbbing vocal on the Motels' minor masterpiece "Total Control" is at once raw and beautifully nuanced (and when Tina says she's ready to sell her soul, *look out*), while Bruce Springsteen's live version of Jimmy Cliff's "Trapped" is invested with the naturalistic vision and gritty will that Bruceaholics know and love.

And yet, for all their treacly melodies, bombastic choruses and overweening sincerity of purpose, the two songs on this disc which still matter most are

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"Tears Are Not Enough," by Northern Lights—a kind of Canada-for-Africa group that includes Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Bryan Adams, Leroy Sibbles, Geddy Lee, etc.—and (gulp) "We Are The World." Both songs may be artless popcraft, but somehow that makes their underlying premise more palpable, and their spirit much more durable. This is music designed to literally save lives. Not that pop should necessarily proselytize, (it shouldn't). Nor is there anything wrong with art for art's sake. But USA for Africa is business as unusual—a rare instance when the musicians, audience and corporate machinery of contemporary pop 'n' roll have helped translate profound ideals into a powerful social action. Maybe this will be but a temporary aberration along our otherwise complacent Reaganist landscape; perhaps a harbinger of a more generous and embracing worldview. That's up to us. We are the industry, after all.

— Mark Rowland



### MILES DAVIS

*You're Under Arrest*  
(Columbia) [CD]

Miles Davis' brilliance is so often attributed to his musical innovations and refusal to coast on past accomplishments that it's easy to overlook his talent for embracing and transforming the music of the moment. For just as Sly Stone and psychedelia yielded records like *A Tribute To Jack Johnson* and *Bitches' Brew*, so does the recent resurrection of the popular song result in *You're Under Arrest*.

Miles' renditions of "Human Nature" and "Time After Time"—the first top forty covers to appear on a Davis LP—are the obvious attention grabbers here, and for good musical reasons; his relatively straight reading of the former captures the fragility of Michael Jackson's vocals in compelling instrumental fashion, while his deceptively simple melodic interpolations of the Cyndi Lauper hit are heartfelt and soulful. Miles' ability to manipulate space and silence has always been his trump(et) card, and the way the tempos and phrasing of his solos contrast with expectations bred

by our familiarity with the tunes lends it a personal, emotional charge. Never the trumpeter with the most chops, Miles' genius is making you hear what he hears, even when he can't play it.

Elsewhere, Miles mixes disparate musical ideas into forms that are at once multi-textural and tightly focused. "One Phone Call," which opens the record, features a reworking of a classic riff from "Jack Johnson" with spoken-word counterpoints (in foreign languages yet). A Bach variation meets Davis' jazz references on a re-recording of "Jean Pierre." Breakneck bebop chorus slaps hardcore funk on the title track. And "Katia," named for a classical pianist, reunites Davis with favorite guitar foil John McLaughlin for a Latin chase that's suggestive of Carlos Santana. The rest of the band provides attractive colorings, notably John Scofield, whose reggaeish rhythms and country fills are clever counterpoints—but the palette is pure Miles.

Despite its title, *You're Under Arrest* is one of Davis' warmest records, ironic now that the open jamming format that defined so many of his 60s and 70s explorations has been supplanted by such a glossier, hi-tech studio approach. A light, airy defection by the Prince of Darkness? Nah, this is a subversive action. — Fred Goodman



### MIDNIGHT OIL

*Red Sails In The Sunset*  
(Columbia)

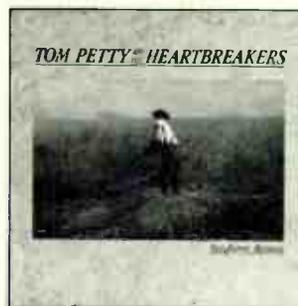
In a situation reminiscent of the celebrated "breath mint/candy mint" controversy, Australia's Midnight Oil is two bands in one. Listen once to *Red Sails In The Sunset* and they're an anti-nuclear, anti-imperialist crew of crusaders in the spirit of 60s folk. Listen again and they're a rip-roaring big-noise group that Judas Priest would be scared to cross.

Actually, the latter incarnation dominates *Red Sails*, which is why it's even more of an acquired taste than the Oils' American debut (following Australia-only efforts), 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1. With a flair for excess Phil Spector can't match, leader Peter Garrett and company take theatrical, disjointed material and pile

on sounds like art-rockers gone insane. "Best Of Both Worlds," for example, begins in a brisk, tuneful groove, then builds to a demented crescendo that finds blaring horns and shrieking guitars locked in deadly combat. The sardonic "Helps Me Helps You" is a veritable three-ring circus of twangy surf guitars, clattering drums and Garrett's fiercely declamatory vocals, all in fourth gear. But if Midnight Oil frequently flirt with cacophony, they rarely succumb to it. In fact, their ability to keep overweight songs moving through sheer force of will is thrilling. Such unfeigned passion packs a real wallop.

It's only when Midnight Oil handle the contents with a bit more care that the limitations of the big bang approach become apparent. With a mournful, low-key arrangement, "Harrisburg" gets under the skin in a way more flamboyant tracks can't. Pondering the effects of radiation, Garrett dourly observes, "When the stuff gets in/ You cannot get it out." You can practically feel the contamination.

By coming on like gangbusters, the Oils prove you don't have to be wimpy to be pro-peace. The irony is that fanatical militarists can delight in the LP's savagery without heeding the message. Because the meaning takes a back seat to the medium, *Red Sails In The Sunset* must be judged a Pyrrhic victory. — Jon Young



### TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS

*Southern Accents*  
(MCA) [CD]

The thing about rebellion is that after your teenage years, it is sensible to figure out what you are rebelling against. If James Dean at the age of thirty-five had still been a rebel without a cause, he would have been more pathological than compelling. Which is sort of the way I feel about the Civil War 120 years post facto. The South shot first, they were fighting to preserve slavery, and they deserved a good butt-kicking. Since then, the South has been winning at politics, economics, sex, religion, football, literature and music. So why is Tom Petty still

pissed off about the "blue-bellied devils" as he walks around in modern northern cities, which he sings about in "Rebels"? It's a real stirring song, don't get me wrong. Mike Campbell's ringing guitar and Petty's chorus of "Hey, hey, hey, I was born a rebel" make me want to fix my bayonet and charge up Cemetery Ridge with General Pickett. But who's up there defending the North these days, Tom? Walter Mondale?

Petty expands on his theme in "Southern Accents," which accent he thinks Yankees consider "dumb." Petty seethes his way through the vocal very convincingly: The cellos and violins make you want to cry, and you get very offended that Yankees think the South sucks. As a statement of cracker emotion the song is accurate, I suppose. As an observation about Yankees, it applies to Albert Goldman and Elvis and very few others of my acquaintance. Must be Tom Petty thinks he sells all his records and concert tickets below the Mason-Dixon line.

The most successful song on the record, in my opinion, is "Spike." Unlike the southern songs, it is clearly a specific character (not Petty) who is singing, and he isn't stereotyping large groups of people that figure in my own cultural identity. This character, probably in middle management and very proud of

his house in the 'burbs, is looking at a punk and he is terrified, not so much of the punk but of the possibility of freedom that the punk represents. Petty is a wonderful character actor (remember "Night Watchman"?), and he has real wisdom when he emphasizes instead of resenting and feeling sorry for himself. Also I gotta add a word about Benmont Tench's understated and witty keyboard riff under the quaking vocal: perfect.

Petty's also been writing with Dave Stewart of Eurythmics and adding horns, a worrisome development to those satisfied with traditional Heart-breaker guitar chiming. It's not so worrisome in execution however, as Stewart and the horns add soul revue flourish without squashing Campbell's guitar. Tench's piano solo toward the end of "It Ain't Nothin' To Me" is the most surprising break I've heard all year. And Dave Stewart's sitar on "Don't Come Around Here No More" is the catchiest drone weirdness since the Lemon Pipers. All in all, a fine album to rebel along with Tom. He'll just have to select some new targets, 'cuz us wimp Yankees ain't gonna take it anymore.

— Charles M. Young

acoustic arsenal of voices, myriad traditional percussion, *sanzas* (the "thumb piano" popularized in the U.S. by Earth, Wind & Fire), and pygmy horn, Bebey blends traditional textures, melodies and rhythms into a completely original music that ranges from personalized art music to the African equivalent of Pharoah Sanders-styled free jazz.

"Akwaaba," for instance, opens with a shimmering sanza solo before percussion and a conversational string bass-line add a more improvisational jazz dimension. "Bissau," a jaunty horn riff interspersed with a melancholy melody, breaks into an astonishing voice drone with the help of an amazing vocal technique that enables one voice to produce two or three notes simultaneously. And "Ngoma Likembe" actually runs its sanza/percussion groove over a drumbeat and bass-line that recalls disco (though Bebey's buzz-sax vocal/chant give it a more menacing edge). The instruments' ragged textures, humming with harmonic overtones, often resemble electronic sounds. Who knows what state-of-the-art production might have wrought?

Toure Kunde, whose smooth blend of African pop, reggae and traditional styles suggests Africa's answer to Third World, take a more conventional tack. The all-acoustic *Casamance* faithfully replicates different Senegambian folk and pop styles in a pleasant, if unmemorable, manner. But *Live* catches them in peak form as they jump from percussion jams to reggae dub-ups to rollicking soca/highlife romps, imbued with energy as well as world-class production values. Though occasionally too facile for their own good, Toure Kunde generates enough pan-African steam to make them the African band to watch this year. — Randall F. Grass

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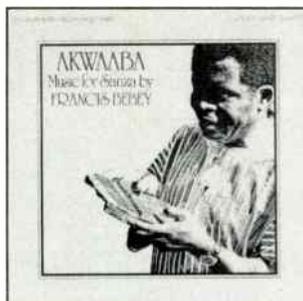
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## FRANCIS BEBEY

*Akwaaba*  
(Original Music)

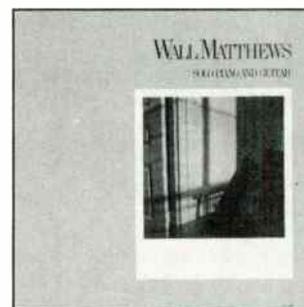
## TOURE KUNDE

*Casamance Au Claire De Lune*

*Live*  
(Celluloid)

Contemporary African music-makers face special problems as they seek to create music that maintains an African identity even as it assimilates the music and technology of other cultures. Through radically different approaches, Cameroonian composer Francis Bebey and the Senegambian Afro-pop fusion band Toure Kunde both create eminently listenable new music that transcends regional styles while remaining indisputably African.

Bebey's *Akwaaba*, bearing the rather formal subtitle *Music For Sanza*, takes the most radical approach. With an all-



## WALL MATTHEWS

*Wall Matthews*  
(Clean Cuts)

Most "new acoustic music" takes the pretty melodies of folk music and warm textures of cocktail jazz, and uses them to sell aural wallpaper. Happily, Wall Matthews, a pianist and guitar-

ist who works the same stylistic ground as much of the Windham Hill stable, takes a markedly different approach to composition. Unlike, say, George Winston, whose moments of inspiration are interspersed with considerable noodling, Matthews' pieces reflect a strong sense of structure and melodic design; there's no awkward reach for ideas, and none of the melodic meandering that makes some solo-acoustic albums sound more like rehearsals than recitals. Matthews' compositions are based on relatively simple themes, allowing ideas to maintain their character while the arrangement does all the work. Thus, "Lion's Tooth" pushes its melody along with the grace of a solo ballerina, gathering and dispersing momentum with ease; "The Procession" is, at root, just an ornamentation on a simple chord progression, but its dramatic development carries an unmistakable majesty.

It doesn't hurt that Matthews is also a phenomenally talented musician—the finger-picked harmonics on one of the guitar pieces, "The Edge Of Sadness," would give most guitarists hives—but in the end, his gifts as a composer and melodicist are what make *Wall Matthews* an album worth listening to, not simply hearing. (Box 16264, Roland Pk. Station, Baltimore, MD 21210)

— J.D. Considine

GARY BURTON QUARTET  
*Real Life Hits*  
1/4-25024  
Produced by Manfred Eicher

# Burton.



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(Gary Burton to *Cadence Magazine*, 1981)

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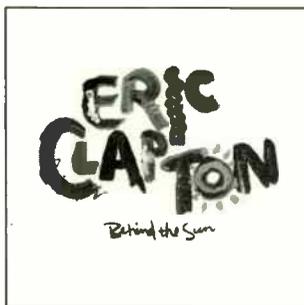
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DIGITAL



## ERIC CLAPTON

*Behind The Sun*  
(Duck/Warner Bros.) [CD]

Eric Clapton's ego is a fragile thing. At forty he is still cowed by his own blues prowess. After years of dozing in J.J. Cale-style funk-pop, his 1983 *Money And Cigarettes* LP with its crisp blues snap and sunny confidence, suggested that he'd finally come out of psychic hiding. But on *Behind The Sun*, Clapton's self-assurance has gone back into eclipse.

This is an album made for Eric Clapton, not by him. On their three tracks, producers Lenny Waronker and Ted Templeman almost pickle Clapton in material like "See What Love Can Do," with a Toto-by-numbers arrangement and stiff Caribbean lilt. "Forever Man" is

a miraculous exception; moved by the song's rubbery core riff and its contagious Latin gallop, Eric bites into the vocal lines with surprising vigor, and in his solo shoots for the high ferocious shriek, before sweeping back down in a slalom of twisted licks and blue notes. It's as close to the captivating surge of "Layla" as he's been in years.

Phil Collins' more solicitous production on the album's other eight tracks is never as inspiring or distressing. For the most part he eschews his trademark rat-a-tat brass and Simmons drum thwack in favor of glossy but standard ballad fare, even allowing Clapton to sub a drippy Roland guitar synth break for the naked sting of his own guitar on "Never Make You Cry." Most of Clapton's new songs are about love's labors losing ("It All Depends," "Just A Prisoner") with occasional twitches of honest pain. But only on the good old three-chord "Same Old Blues" does the conviction in Clapton's growl and the scimitar swipe of his solo licks cancel Collins' drum clutter and the synth-horn blasts.

For anyone other than Eric, this might have marked a welcome return. But *Behind The Sun* suffers from comparisons to the music which made him a legend. Eric Clapton may feel safer in the shadows, but out here his glow is sorely missed. — David Fricke

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The SynthArts courses were written by Steve De Furia, synthesist/programmer with such recording artists as Frank Zappa, Stevie Wonder, John Farrar (Olivia Newton-John), David Paich, Steve Porcaro, and Lee Ritenour. Mr. De Furia is a former faculty member of the Electronic Music Department of Berklee College of Music.



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Zawinul from page 56

**SHORTER:** It went through a metamorphosis. I had put that initial bass line on a cassette from the piano.

**ZAWINUL:** It was slow, originally, right?

**SHORTER:** The first cassette you heard was slow, yeah, because my piano technique is such that I did it real slow for me. Then I wrote those lines that move around later on—I did that on the Yamaha Portatone, on my bed, because I was tired of walking upstairs and downstairs. I stayed in my bedroom and got the melodic flow.

**ZAWINUL:** A beautiful song, man.

**SHORTER:** I was using the suggestion that Joe gave to me, saying "Why don't you try to write the melody on a totally different sounding something?" You don't have to buy a big synthesizer, even a little Casio sound will make you think of something else.

**ZAWINUL:** Sound is composition, in other words. *Sound*. So, naturally, if you write every piece from the same sound, after a while it's going to be the same piece.

**MUSICIAN:** Do you actively consider yourselves to be in the realm of sound pioneers? It seems like you're constantly creating subtle new synthesizer sounds and contexts.

**ZAWINUL:** I think so, yeah. I wouldn't call myself a pioneer like other people

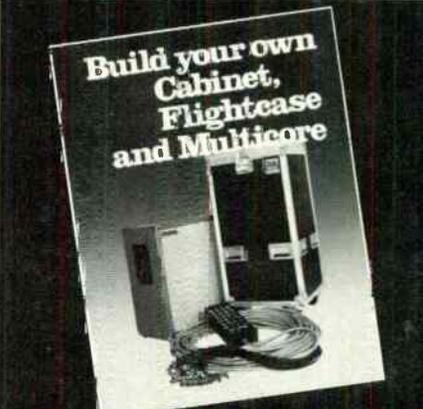
say. I'm not thinking in those terms. I know that I'm coming up with some new sound compared to myself.

**MUSICIAN:** So it's a matter of stretching the limits of what you already know?

**ZAWINUL:** Well, I would be bored, man. I work every day on this stuff, and I have fun doing it. It is not that I say, "Today I'm going to work." For me, it's the greatest fun. I go in and fool around with my instruments and program in new sounds. Everytime I find a new sound, I have a new song.

You hear all this stuff about the acoustic piano; I have nothing against the acoustic piano. It's as beautiful an instrument as any. But by itself, it's like potatoes. I love potatoes, man. But if you had to eat potatoes morning, midday and evening, there'd be fucking potatoes growing out of your ears. You don't want that to happen.

At this point, the publicity traffic manager enters to wind things down and clear entry for the next interrogator. "Is it still going on?" she asks. Zawinul, who ultimately is a lifetime member of the music-speaks-for-itself camp, pipes up, "He has enough, I'm sure." He turns to me and says, firmly but gently, "You know about everything now. I think you got enough. Whatever you don't know, listen to the music and there's the answer." ☐



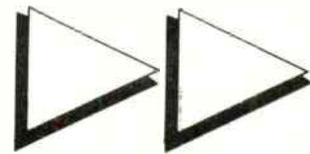
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# ROCK

## S·H·O·R·T T·A·K·E·S



**Jason & the Scorchers** — *Lost & Found* (EMI/America). Country-rock is rarely either, which makes describing Jason & the Scorchers, who are adamantly both, a problem. On the one hand, Jason Ringenberg sings with just enough of a plaintive twang to make the likes of "White Lies" or "Broken Whiskey Glass" reverberate with honky-tonk regret, while on the other, guitarist Warner Hodges puts enough high-voltage enthusiasm into "Last Time Around" and "Lost Highway" to pump his Keith Richards licks up to Clash intensity. Better to forget about labels and simply call this a great record. [CD]

**The Power Station** — *33 1/3* (Capitol). It didn't take a crystal ball to predict that drummer Tony Thompson would be the stand-out player here, but who would have guessed that he'd actually dominate this album? Anonymity is something of a habit for Duranies John and Andy Taylor, but it's odd to find Robert Palmer playing the shrinking violet. Or maybe it's just that the tunes are so slight that anybody would sound invisible singing them. [CD]

**Elvis Presley** — *Reconsider Baby* (RCA). An apt title, especially for those who never expected proof that Elvis was a great blues singer. Not only has producer Greg Geller dug up gems that show the King delivering everything from credible extensions of Arthur Crudup to a "Stranger In My Own Home Town" that'll put you in mind of Bobby Bland, these tracks show improvement as they span seventeen years—which blows a big hole in the He-Lost-It-In-The-Army theory. If this is revisionism, give me more! [CD]

**DeBarge** — *Rhythm Of The Night* (Gordy). Like virtually every worthwhile Motown act, DeBarge has finally fallen

victim to the Gordy machine's trash-masher approach to product. After DeBarge cut the best song in Berry Gordy's *The Last Dragon*, the Big Bosses figured a solo album would pick up what the soundtrack LP didn't. So they padded out some likeably unexceptional Jay Graydon sessions with a handful of leftovers, named it after the movie number, and—*presto schlocko!*—released this.

**Aztec Camera** — *Aztec Camera* (Sire EP). One of life's little pleasures: A ten-inch EP with four live cuts that clearly display the steely edge beneath Roddy Frame's wistful melodies, plus the long-awaited domestic release of Frame's sentimental (and surprisingly apt) version of "Jump."

**Felá Anikúlapo Kutí** — *Army Arrangement* (Celluloid). If you want a sense of just how heartbroken Fela fans were at the cancellation of his American tour last year, give this powerhouse a listen. Not only does *Army Arrangement* manage all the sarcastic bite of *Zombie*, but the addition of Bernie Worrell and Sly Dunbar gives Egypt 80's Afrobeat even more punch than usual. All of which makes it unbearable to wait five years—Fela's prison term—for the next album. (155 W. 29th St., New York City, NY 10001)

**Greg Kihn** — *Citizen Kihn* (EMI/America). When in doubt, wimp out. [CD]

**Original Soundtrack** — *Porky's Revenge!* (Columbia). Forget the movie; the soundtrack, lovingly assembled by Dave Edmunds, is the best ersatz oldies collection you'll ever hear, from the locomotive wail of Clarence Clemons' "Peter Gunn Theme" to the Fabulous Thunderbirds' strutting "Stagger Lee." Best of all, there's the Crawling King Snakes (Robert Plant and pals), who in just 2:15 manage to eclipse the whole of *The Honeydrippers*.

**The Roxanne Chronicles**: A few months back, the rap record everybody wanted was "Roxanne, Roxanne" by **UTFO** (Select 12-inch), an inventively funny routine about how three def rappers gave their best and still lost the girl. It wasn't simply the raps that made the record hot; the way "Roxanne" played against the self-inflating conventions of rap really captured the fans. So much so, in fact, that within weeks there was an answer record, "Roxanne's Revenge" (Pop Art 12-inch), in which the raw-voiced **Roxanne Shanté** demanded, "Why'd you have to make a record 'bout me?" Not to be outdone, UTFO fired

back with their own answer record, "**The Real Roxanne**" (Select 12-inch). 'Course, there was nothing *real* about this Roxanne, what with all her lines supplied by UTFO, and though the record was funny, its parody format couldn't compete with Roxanne Shanté's street-wise cracks. But that didn't stop **Sparky "D"** from putting her two cents in, as her "Sparky's Turn (Roxanne You're Through)" (NIA 12-inch) cattily tells Shanté that UTFO isn't really mad: "They understand that you did it for money." If that weren't enough, in jumped **Dr. Freshh** with "Roxanne's Doctor" (Zakia 12-inch), which presents our girl as a calculating nympho whom the Doc haughtily turns aside (doesn't say much for UTFO's sex appeal, does it?). By this point, "Roxanne, Roxanne" has become the biggest answer-record phenomenon since "Work With Me Annie" spawned its progeny, and doubtless there will be more to come ("Roxanne's Lawyers" anyone?). But for now, it looks like Roxanne Shanté has had the last word, with "Queen Of Rox" (Pop Art 12-inch), which tells her story straight and shows that she is one of the freshest rappers out there.

**Einsturzende Neubauten** — *Einsturzende Neubauten* (PVC). The name is German for "Collapsing New Buildings," a nice joke on their wrecking company methodology and their deconstructionist approach to rock. Their music is the clangor of hard rock, minus the melody but not without the beat; noise you can dance to, the perfect city soundtrack. (3619 Kennedy Road, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080)

**Nik Kershaw** — *The Riddle* (MCA). Say hello to New Muzak, in which atmosphere and electronic color take the place of melodies and rhythmic fortitude. Coming to an elevator near you. [CD]

**Nicolas Collins** — *Let The State Make The Selection* (Lovely). The title isn't a political message but a statement of method. Instead of the composer and performers deciding what sounds the instruments shall make, the electronics here have been arranged so that the instruments determine the resonances, overtones and musical color. It seems ass-backwards, sure, but it results in fresh, roomy soundscapes that capture the excitement of Cageian theoretics as well as the vitality of experimental rock. (325 Spring Street, New York City, NY 10013)

J.D. Considine

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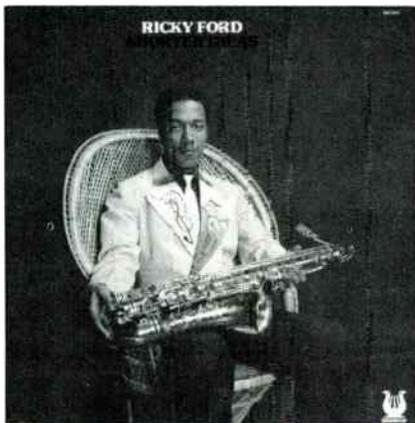
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# JAZZ

## S·H·O·R·T T·A·K·E·S



**Ricky Ford** — *Shorter Ideas* (Muse). The young tenor saxophonist's dynamic work as a sideman with Charles Mingus, George Russell, Gil Evans and Abdullah Ibrahim promises more than he has so far delivered on his own LPs. Still, his sixth album for Muse comes closer to tapping his potential than its predecessors. His sextet scorings capture the motility and intrigue of Shorter's music without resorting to carbon-copy likenesses. Even more encouraging, his two originals (a pensive, semisweet ballad and a stutter calypso à la Sonny Rollins) suggest that he is quickly entering Shorter's league as a writer, and his enlargement of Duke Ellington's "Happy Reunion" (originally a quartet showcase for tenor saxophonist Paul Gonsalves) is a satisfying final touch. The colorful supporting cast includes pianist (and fellow Shorter-phile) Kirk Lightsey, trombonist Jimmy Knepper and the criminally neglected alto saxophonist and flutist James Spaulding.

**Bobby Hutcherson** — *Good Bait* (Landmark). Here's a convenient rule of thumb regarding Bobby Hutcherson LPs. If horns are present and Hutcherson's vibraphone is the only chording instrument involved, expect spacious, churning, sharp-edged music similar to his work behind Eric Dolphy and Jackie McLean on those prescient mid-60s Blue Notes. If a pianist is added to the lineup, expect no more than bland efficiency. The pianist on this new date is the efficient George Cables, and the lone horn is the ultra-efficient saxophonist Branford Marsalis.

**Marty Ehrlich** — *The Welcome* (Sound Aspects, available from North Country Distributors, Cadence Building, Red-

wood, NY 13679). Ehrlich's versatility (he plays alto saxophone, flute, clarinet and bass clarinet with equal authority) has served him well in interpreting the scores of such composers as Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Davis, Leroy Jenkins and George Russell. But on his first outing as a leader (with bassist Anthony Cox and drummer Pheeroan ak Laff), he displays an improvisatory reach that makes versatility seem the least of his virtues. Recommended.

**Ronald Shannon Jackson & the Decoding Society** — *Decode Yourself* (Island). According to the press release, the drummer decided "to further electrify the Decoding Society's sound" by adding a drum computer and Onaje Allan Gumbs' Yamaha DX7 keyboard synthesizer. That was his first mistake. The second was enlisting the services of intellectual hitmaker Bill ("Recontextualize That Funky Music, White Boy") Laswell, whose hyperbolic production values put the chill on whatever natural juices were still left. Is harmolodics an idea whose time has gone?

**Horace Silver** — *Live 1964* (Emerald, PO Box 7000-306, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274). In light of Silver's demonstrated rapport with audiences, it's odd that he's made so few in-person recordings over the years. This previously unissued date featuring the *Song For My Father* band (with trumpeter Carmel Jones and tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson) playing Silver compositions of a slightly earlier vintage ("Filthy McNasty," "Senor Blues," etc.) is therefore quite a find—a live album that kicks almost as hard as the 1962 classic *Doin' The Thing At The Village Gate* (out of print, naturally. Are you listening, EMI?).

**Hank Mobley** — *Far Away Lands*; **Lee Morgan** — *The Rajah* (both Blue Note). The rebirth of the Blue Note label means, among other things, previously unissued bounty from the Blue Note vaults, beginning with these two sessions from the late 60s, one led by tenor saxophonist Mobley, the other featuring him as Morgan's front line accomplice. Both albums are palatable examples of the Blue Note formula of the period, with tricky time signatures, exclamatory blowing, Billy Higgins' irresistible drumming, and bids for "The Sidewinder"-like jukebox hits. If your budget dictates choosing between them, go for the Morgan—the compositions are more far

reaching (particularly Calvin Massey's "A Pilgrim's Funny Farm"), Mobley's solos are even lustier, and Morgan bruises him harder than Donald Byrd, the trumpeter on *Far Away Lands*. Also recommended on Blue Note: *Tippin' The Scales*, powerful Jackie McLean from that fertile transitional period between *Let Freedom Ring* and *One Step Beyond* (previously issued only in Japan).

**Bud Freeman** — *The Real Bud Freeman 1984* (Principally Jazz Productions, available from Swingville Jazz, 3344 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60657). Few soloists Freeman's age (seventy-nine in April) are as harmonically intrepid, and fewer soloists of any age are as ebullient or inventive. Since the tenor saxophonist likes nothing better than for his sidemen to give him a real tussle, the bebopping busyness of the Chicago rhythm section on this new release is no drawback. Indeed, "The Man I Love" boasts one of the juiciest Freeman solos on record, and the rest is nearly as good, particularly the date's two ballads, one a duet with pianist Stu Katz, the other a duet with guitarist Bob Roberts. The Chicago-based label PJP is off to a promising start with this, and with *Conserving NRG* by cornetist/tenor saxophonist/vibist/drummer **Hal Russell** and his **NRG Ensemble**—an album of satisfying post-Coleman eruptions in the best Chicago iconoclastic tradition.

**Joe Newman & Joe Wilder** — *Hangin' Out* (Concord Jazz). Since both of these graybeard trumpeters are masters of the sly retort, it figures that their joint effort would be a battle of wits rather than a stratospheric duel to the finish. It also figures that any album they made together would be delightful, and *Hangin' Out* is—with the erudite Hank Jones interjecting some clever jibes of his own from the piano bench, and bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith making sure the youngbloods also get a say.

**Shankar** — *Song For Everyone* (ECM). The various minimalistic, ethnic and (surprise!) funk influences that have been peeking through on some recent ECMs is even more pronounced here, and it's a welcome development. Saxophonist Jan Garbarek brings much needed lyrical depth to violinist L. Shankar's music, and percussionists Zakir Hussain and Trilok Gurtu offset Garbarek's ruminations nicely. [CD]

Francis Davis

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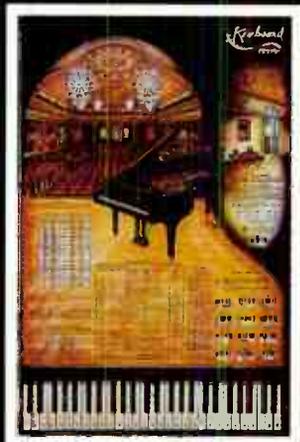
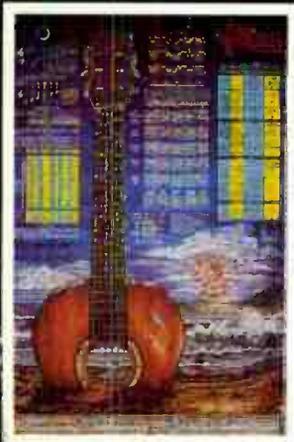
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# VIDEO

# S·H·O·R·T T·A·K·E·S



LISA HAUN

**Bryan Adams—*Reckless*** (A&M Video). Adams is a nice guy who writes and sings jangly, singalongable, sub-Springsteen/Petty rock songs. This video career retrospective makes him a certified MTV star. On the plus side is vet cinematographer Laszlo Kovacs' gorgeous black-and-white work on "This Time." The half-dozen clips flow together nicely, since most deal with love and lust and separation and longing. But Adams lacks the charisma to carry a half-hour video—and if he's so nice, how come the girl in "This Time" is literally nothing more than a great pair of legs?

**Minor Detail—*Minor Detail*** (Sony Video 45). "Canvas Of Life" (I think that's what it's called; no song titles are listed) is clever and nicely done despite its overbearing cuteness. Overall, however, this Irish twosome lives down to its name with bland-out shlock-rock, like an MTV version of Air Supply. The visuals overall aren't nearly enough to make this worth the trouble.

**Cameo—*Cameo*** (Sony Video EP). I dig their nu wave look (wraparound shades for all), robotic soul choreography and self-mocking macho attitude. I dig the political comment of "Talkin' Out The Side Of Your Neck." And I dig the way the program's reverse chronology shows the progress black music videos have made: The earliest, 1980 clips are all from the same studio shoot, while the more recent numbers grow healthily in

production values. Oh, and I dig their hard electro-funk tunes, too.

**The Doors—*Dance On Fire*** (MCA Home Video). If you like the Doors, this is essential. It's the Doors and nothing but the Doors, with no portentous narration. There's bountiful archival footage of Jim Morrison in peak poet/shaman form; Jimbo's bemused, mocking shrug when cops drag him offstage in the anarchic live "Roadhouse Blues"; and the uncensored "Unknown Soldier" promo clip, in which he is tied to a stake, shot and *drools out an endless lunger o' blood in slo-mo!* There are also rock-video archeological finds like the "Break On Through" and "Moonlight Drive" clips, ahead of their time in production values and aesthetic savvy; and a new "Wild.Child" clip, with apposite Indian-ritual imagery. The only drawbacks are the Ray Manzarek-directed "L.A. Woman" clip (a dumb slasher scenario starring X's John Doe), and a crass closing crawl that needlessly recaps and exploits the Doors' legacy. Why not just stick the awesome live performance of "The End" at the end?

**Body Rock** (Sony Video EP). An interesting approach to soft-core rock video porn: artsy stills of lovelies lounging on Ibiza, dressed up with snazzy computer-graphic treatment by Peter ("Atomic Dog") Conn. Too bad it's undone by the horrendously mushy fusion muzak of one Chris Rainbow. Call me sacrilegious, but somebody like Miles Davis would've worked so much better. And I bet Miles would agree.

**Playboy's Girls Of Rock & Roll** (CBS/Fox). This is much more oppressive visually than *Body Rock*, "pretty" "girls" or no. Thoroughly gratuitous nudity only points up the lameness of the sub-MTV videos, and the tacky direction and predictable choreography of David Winters don't help. (Yes, *the* David Winters of *Shindig* fame; how the mighty have fallen.) "Lose Your Mind" is nice AOR power-pop from Dagmar (wife of ex-Cheap Trick bassist Tom Peterson), and Natalie Pace's punque roque is okay. The only musical find here is one Rainey, a flaming white Tina Turner; her "Savage Streets" has no gratuitous nudity at all. I'm still wondering why *Playboy* is trying to get into the *music* video biz.

**Jazz At The Smithsonian: Alberta Hunter** (Sony Video LP). Sure, she and her 1982 concert audience overindulge each other, but who's going to complain

about a respectfully straightforward presentation of one heckuva singer? A few reminiscences with host Willis Conover break up the hour. Hunter's character, dignity and vitality are remarkable throughout.

**Jazz At The Smithsonian: Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers** (Sony Video LP). This is the '82 version, with the Wynton Marsalis/Branford Marsalis/Bill Pierce frontline, straight up and smokin' for nearly an hour. Blakey also relates some tales in his marvelously coarse voice. How nice to report such a tape's existence in this column.

**The Carmine Appice Drum Clinic** (from Carmine Appice Enterprises Inc., P.O. Box 69780, Los Angeles, CA 90069; \$52.95 including postage and handling). This clinic is not for beginners, and Appice's teaching competes with a too-ready impulse to self-congratulation. He alternates explanations and demonstrations of practice routines and tricks-of-the-trade with ostensibly rehearsed-to-seem-spontaneous answers to all-about-Carmine questions. An audience, and the musicians Appice jams with on a couple of fusion workouts, are always off-camera. Weird. But if you like his drumming and its musical contexts, you'll probably like this.

**D-TV — *Rock, Rhythm & Blues* and *Pop & Rock*** (Disney Home Video). The tunes are obviously chosen to go with vintage Walt Disney cartoon footage, but what tunes! *Rock, Rhythm & Blues* includes Jimmy Cliff, Richard Thompson, Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell, Gladys Knight & the Pips and Stevie Wonder. *Pop & Rock* has Little Richard, Elvis, Stevie Wonder, the Four Tops, Tommy Roe and more. Someone at Disney had the exceptional taste to make these compilation videos with completely listenable soundtracks. Someone else (supervising producer Chuck Braverman, perhaps) had the smarts to mock MTV's station-break promos. For the kids that these are ostensibly aimed at, I guess these cassettes offer an entertaining and morally upright alternative to MTV-style sex-and-violence fetishism. Much of the footage synchs cleverly with the music, but Disney's trademark overweening cuteness and the bludgeoningly literal-minded visualizations of the songs trivialize any resonance the music may still have. Maybe Disney's crew doesn't realize just how hip little kids are these days.

Michael Shore

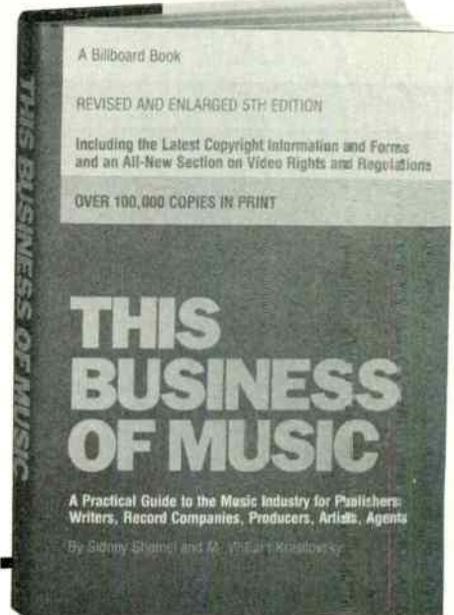
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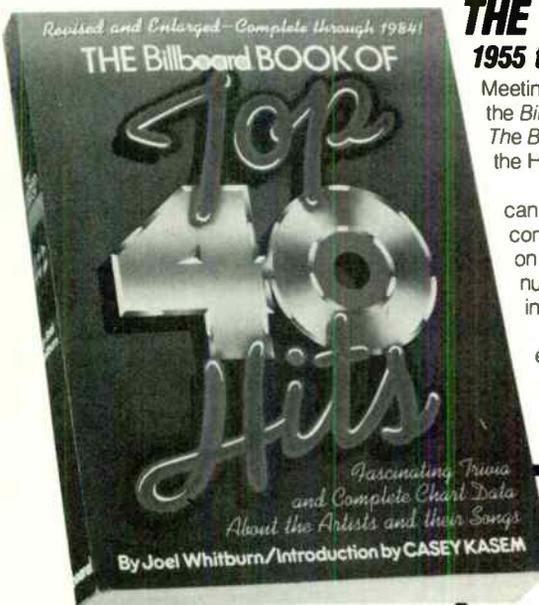
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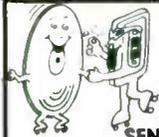
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Saunders from page 91

a band. After recording *Legendary Hearts* with Reed, the band went on tour in Europe (where the import *Live In Italy* was recorded).

The ARMS benefit concerts for Ronnie Lane were being organized in London just then, so Jeff Beck and Steve Winwood asked Saunders to stick around and play in their sets. "Bill Wyman didn't want to do the whole thing by himself, so I said I'd do it. I went to (producer and concert organizer) Glyn Johns' house and met all these people like Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton and Kenney Jones. I was already planning to play with Beck and Winwood and then Page decided he wanted me to play with him, and that meant I would also play with Clapton. I had to play three or four different styles at the same time; it put together all the things I've done."

The latest Reed album, *New Sensations*, has a modern, funky feel, and Reed has been discussing making his next record even more soulful. "The rappers have put ideas in Lou's head," Saunders explains. "He has the whole collection of rap records. He's finally hearing things on the radio which have lyrics he can relate to. And now he wants to get more dance-oriented."

Saunders will be on Reed's next album, to be recorded early this spring, and then he's recording with Winwood and Faithfull. He's turned down recent offers from Peter Wolf and the Firm. But he's most excited about signing a solo deal, so he can more fully experiment with the range of the bass.

"Jaco, Stanley Clarke, Tim Bogert—they opened up the door for bass players, but no one has stepped into that territory yet." If anything, he notes, the bass has become a neglected instrument, replaced by fashionable bass synths or demeaned by the facile funkiness of thumb-popping. "That's a cop-out," he says of the latter. "If you do that, people automatically think that you're good. But that's only playing rhythm. With a guitar, you can play lead and rhythm, so on the bass you can do it too."

"In a symphony, the first thing you write is the movement of the bass. Lou told me to write my songs on the bass and then sing. And it makes sense, because if you can play it on the bass and it makes sense with no chords, you have a lot going right there. I really want to introduce the bass with the voice. You can play a rhythm part, and a harmonic and a moving harmonic at the same time without it being confusing."

Saunders is pretty sure that his own band will not have a guitar player. Is that so there's no one to compete with for solos? "No," he laughs, "but I've played with Ray Parker, Jeff Beck, John McLaughlin, Eric Clapton, Lou Reed and Robert Quine. Who's left?" ☐

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