

NEW ORDER ▲ SMITHEREENS ▲ SONS OF AEROSMITH ▲ CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN

# MUSICIAN



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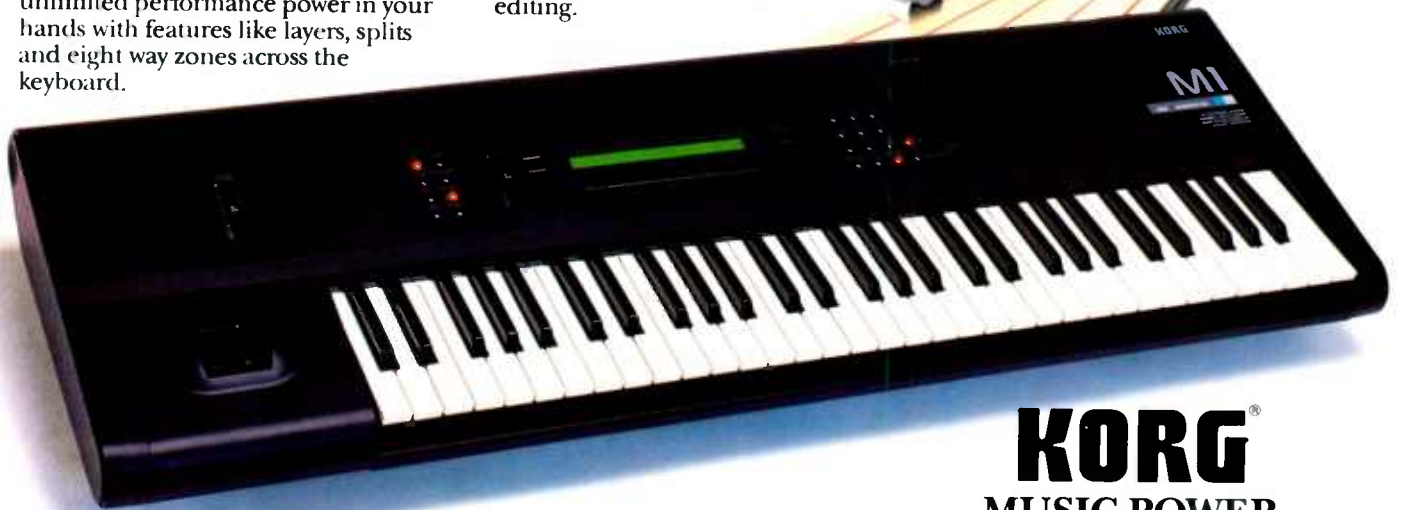
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Joy Division provided background music for '70s nihilism. Its survivors are working on '80s tans.

by Robert Palmer

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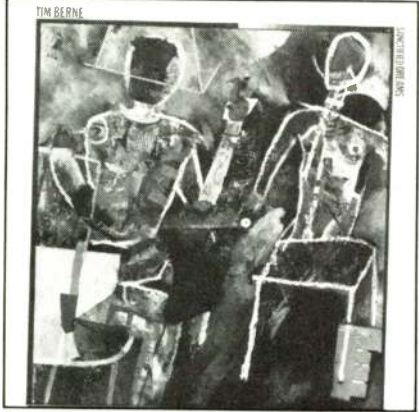
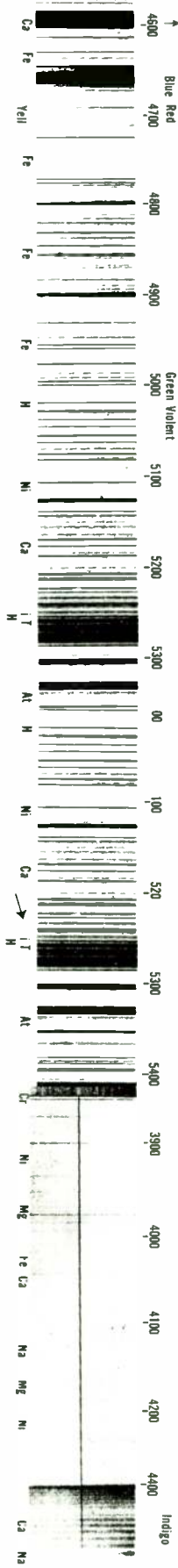
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# MUSICIAN

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AUGUST 1988 NO. 118



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**ADMINISTRATION**  
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**EDITOR**  
JOCK BAIRD  
**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
BILL FLANAGAN  
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SCOTT ISLER

**PACIFIC EDITOR**  
MARK ROWLAND  
(213) 273-7040

**ELECTRONIC MEDIA EDITOR**  
ALAN DI PERNA

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
TED DROZDOWSKI

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**  
J.D. CONSIDINE FREFF VIC GARBARINI  
JOHN HUTCHINSON STEVE PERRY  
STAN SOOCHER CHIP STERN  
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**MAIN OFFICE/PRODUCTION/RETAIL SALES**

33 COMMERCIAL ST., P.O. BOX 701,  
GLOUCESTER, MA 01931-0701  
(617) 281-3110

**NEW YORK ADVERTISING/EDITORIAL**  
MUSICIAN, 1515 BROADWAY, 39TH FL.,  
NEW YORK, NY 10036 (212) 536-5208

**CIRCULATION MANAGER**  
JAMES HALL

**CIRCULATION ASSISTANT**  
JILL GERSHON

**FOUNDERS**  
GORDON BAIRD SAM HOLDSWORTH

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# LET TER

## LEGENDS: JONI

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK *MUSICIAN* and Bill Flanagan for the excellent article on the legendary Joni Mitchell (May '88). I have read entirely too many articles which unjustly and insensitively accused her of arrogance, self-righteousness and several other cruel things. Mr. Flanagan's article explored a very real, serious, sensitive and beautiful artist.

Shannon Pipkin  
Tehachapi, CA

I'VE LONG WONDERED WHY JONI Mitchell is not much more acknowledged for her unparalleled innovations and creations, until I recently realized—with the sale of Van Gogh's paintings—that the world's greatest geniuses are often not recognized until long dead. I just hope that volume-crazed ingrates don't drive her to cut off an ear (unless it belongs to that bastard who hit her guitar with a water balloon during the Conspiracy of Hope concert!).

Jon Eric  
Mendocino, CA

I HAVE A BONE TO PICK WITH Suzanne Vega, who calls Joni's writing "superficial." It's fairly easy to take potshots at someone whose passionate integrity lives to break boundaries and hurdle into the open, especially if it's done with a sensitive, humanistic vision. The risks Joni's taken have helped unlock the doors for others to take their own risks. That is what inspiration is really about, a torch to be passed on.

S.E. Mead  
Albany, NY

THANK YOU, *MUSICIAN*, FOR an article on Joni Mitchell that didn't contain the words "difficult" and "perplexing." The press, as Ms. Mitchell pointed out, are mostly sheep, lazily rewriting the "eccentric Joni leaves pop mainstream behind" article every few years when a new album arrives.

Mitchell's "difficult" and "perplexing" period paved the way for much of what's fresh and exciting in popular music today, and it's past time she got some credit for it. But that period is over. *Chalk Mark in a Rainstorm* and *Eat Dog* would be right at home with albums like Peter Gabriel's *So* and Talking Heads' *Naked* on the artier end of MTV/FM radio playlists. If David Geffen can't sell this music to the masses, the problem is his marketing department, not the artist.

Michael Logan  
Los Angeles, CA

I SYMPATHIZE WITH JONI Mitchell's apprehension about a greatest hits album. It might comfort her to know that this ardent fan wouldn't buy it; as a musical maverick, her lesser known works are often more captivating than the "hits." Besides, so much of her accessible music continues to go entirely ignored on the radio. How many songs actually got airplay aside from one or two from *Court and Spark*, and another from *For the Roses*? I'd be sur-

prised if Geffen Records could come up with enough hits in the strict sales or airplay sense to fill an LP. Perhaps another song dedicated to David Geffen would keep the business wolves at bay. What I'd be interested in seeing instead of a greatest hits album is a complete songbook that contains Mitchell's quirky guitar tunings. Now that could sell!

Robert Silva  
Woodside, CA

*Update: Joni says things are now fine between Geffen Records and her, and they are not threatening to release a "greatest hits" album against her wishes. Geffen says they never were and everybody feels bad. Also, the reason Joni's ex-husband Chuck Mitchell didn't seem much like the loser she portrayed in "The Last Time I Saw Richard" was because that song was not about Chuck. It was about a '60s New York folkie. (Try to guess who...) — Ed.*

## LEGENDS: JOHNNY

THANK YOU FOR A FANTASTIC article/interview with Johnny Cash (May '88). I have never cut an article out of a magazine before, but I did this one, and it's now in my "treasured" file.

David McLachlan  
Toronto, Canada

LONG MINIMIZED AND MUCH misunderstood, Johnny Cash is still hanging heavy on the set with the *real* cats.

Jim Dickinson  
Hernando, MS

MY HEART'S IN ROCK 'N' ROLL, but from now on I'll always love and respect the Man in Black. Long live Johnny Cash!

Nick Fannell  
Roselle Park, NJ

## HAMMER HEADS

THAT JAN HAMMER ARTICLE (May '88) was well-written and informative. (Thanx for acknowledging that Jan did the *My Secret Admirer* sound-

track—but was there an LP with it?) One mistake: Jan toured Japan with Jeff Beck in 1986, not '87. I have the neat tour program and the dates are June 1-11. The tour was broadcast on TV there; I managed to get a tape and have had it since May of 1987.

David Terralavoro  
Poughkeepsie, NY

IN THE MAY ISSUE OF *MUSICIAN* magazine there is a mention of my name in connection with Jan Hammer and "Miami Vice." Aside from my name being misspelled, I was struck by the wording in the paragraph using my name. Although it is true that the transition of composers from Jan to myself was to be as seamless as possible, I was selected on the integrity of my own work; and although I did "borrow" some of the "electronic colors" integral to the "Vice sound," I was totally on my own in the compositional process. I guess what I am trying to relate is that I felt my name was used in such a way as to sound like a Jan Hammer clone, which I am not. I am in awe of Jan's music but I brought new blood to "Miami Vice."

John Petersen  
New York, NY

## SYLVIAN'S SECRETS

I COULD KISS TED DROZDOWSKI for writing that great article on David Sylvian (May '88). I think it's great *MUSICIAN* pays attention to the underground and acknowledges a brilliant artist like Sylvian. That article was enough to make me renew my subscription.

John Novella  
Granada Hills, CA

I WAS HAPPY TO SEE AN ARTICLE about David Sylvian, but your researchers didn't dig very deep. *Secrets of the Beehive* isn't his third album, it's his fourth. You forgot the first instrumental album, *Alchemy: An Index of Possibilities*.

Nils Montag  
Lake Forest, IL

Please send letters to: *MUSICIAN*, 1515 Broadway, 39th floor, New York, NY 10036.





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# FA T S

## TEENA MARIE

### Black Music's Secret Ingredient

I've always been into all kinds of music," Teena Marie explains, "[but] my vocal cords just cry out to sing the blues, you know? They just need it."

You get called a lot of things when you're a white Catholic girl who "needs" to sing the blues: "Casper," "Vanilla Child." Along the canals of Venice, California, where she grew up, white kids called her "nigger lover." In the promotion department of Epic Records—and Motown before that—they probably call Teena a problem.

Nikki Giovanni, just to name a few." Her themes are often painfully intimate. A diary on disc. Does she ever feel that she's baring too much of her soul in her work?

"With the exception of this album, I've always tried to keep a little something for myself. I haven't felt anything that the average woman hasn't felt. I've just been blessed that I have the gift to put the things that I see into lyrics."

The album Teena mentions is called *Naked to the World*. Its lead single, a pretty if inconsequential ballad called "Ooo La



As in, how do you sell white pop radio on a white singer singing black music?

Since no one has been able to solve that puzzle, Teena is left with a problem of her own. She's a big star in the black community, and a virtual unknown in the pop market. It's pop's loss. As a singer, Teena is soaring and expressive. As a composer, she has a literate, poetic style full of teasing allusions to influences as diverse as the Bible, the Beatles, Minnie Riperton, "Shakespeare, Maya Angelou and

La La," topped the black music charts and, like so many of her hits, went unnoticed on the pop side. It's frustrating, Teena concedes, to be black music's best-kept secret, but it has its moments.

"For me to walk out onstage in front of 17,000 people and the majority of them are black, is an amazing feeling to me. They don't care what color my skin is. They just came because they like my voice and they like my songs."

— Leonard Pitts, Jr.



### Cool Cash

**Y'say y'liked our Johnny Cash interview (May '88) but y'never really listened much to the Man in Black? W-e-e-e-e-I, maybe y'should check out 'Til Things Are Brighter: A Tribute to the Music of Johnny Cash (Red Rhino), on which Johnny's pals like Mary Mary of Gaye Bykers on Acid, Marc Almond, Michelle Shocked and Pete Shelley take turns at the Cash songbook. Although the cast of characters (also including members of Cabaret Voltaire, That Petrol Emotion and the Mekons) might feel more at home in Memphis the store than Memphis the city, their versions of Cash standards like "I Walk the Line," "Ring of Fire" and "Folsom Prison Blues" are sincere. The album is a fine introduction to Cash—even if you need no introduction. — Scott Isler**



## JANE'S ADDICTION ▲ An American Success Story

**P**erry Farrell, vocalist/leader of L.A.'s Jane's Addiction, is quick to admit to a certain lack of musical expertise. "I don't know what comes after E; I don't even know what an E is. I've purposely not learned music. The other musicians in the band will tell me what's right or wrong."

What Farrell's doing right is leading the four-piece group through a maelstrom of sound, creating what he terms "time warp rock" that is the aural equivalent of a healthy honk of cleaning fluid. In the process Jane's Addiction just happened to grab a big deal with Warner Bros. Records.

An acclaimed band on the L.A. underground scene, Jane's Addiction's brand of thrash created an intense bidding war among the vinyl barons. All this potential fame and/or glory rests easily upon Farrell's shoulders. "I want to work," he explains pragmatically. "I have ideas in my head. To execute them, I need money. I'm using [Warner Bros.] as a bank. They take a percentage of what I've

got." He's managed to maintain a healthy relationship with the hand that feeds, retaining almost autonomous control over both production and artwork of the forthcoming album.

The rise from cult darlings to tomorrow's superstars has been fairly swift (two-and-a-half years), and has afforded the group the money to "stay in the studio more" where Farrell can hone his production techniques. Onstage he manipulates his voice through a host of flangers and delays to "update the voice," he explains, "and keep it from being sterile." The resulting effects add to the group's psychometal sound.

Long a critics' fave rave, as well as mentioned by Robert Plant, Jane's Addiction has all the earmarks and buzz that herald a Next Big Thing. But Farrell ain't in rock 'n' roll for the long haul. "I'm not planning on this forever," he proclaims. However, when reminded of his band's seven-platter deal, Farrell concedes, "I might just end up really loving this. Who doesn't want to be liked?"

— Amy Linden

## SOCIAL DISTORTION Saved by Country ▼

**I**t's not Mike Ness' style to gloat. But as singer/songwriter/founder of veteran L.A. punk squad Social Distortion, he can be excused for feeling pretty damn happy—not to mention vindicated—about events surrounding the band's new *Prison Bound* LP.

After all, Social Distortion struck many as a hard-luck story that kept turning out disturbing episodes: The band's drinking and drugging excesses were thoroughly chronicled in print and on film (the rockumentary *Another State of Mind*), the original rhythm section bailed, and Ness was occasionally prison bound himself. As the years passed without a follow-up to 1983's *Mommy's Little Monster*, more than a few folks wrote the

we ever got was on alternative campus stations. So to be driving in your car and hear KROQ play you right after Depeche Mode—even though you don't like Depeche Mode—it's like 'Whoa, they're putting us up there with those guys.'

If Ness finds it incongruous that KROQ would segue from Depeche Mode to "Prison Bound"—a tuneful country-ish rocker with a bit of buzzsaw guitar—he may be underestimating the size of Social Distortion's following. The Palomino certainly did. That L.A. country nightspot hosted the band's record-release party, which quickly jammed the room, leaving a mob of several hundred outside while a police helicopter circled overhead.

As you might have guessed by



group off entirely.

Given that recording gap, the arrival of *Prison Bound* is itself notable. But the immediate response to the record—and the band—has staggered many, including Ness.

For one thing, Los Angeles' influential KROQ-FM, which specializes in synth-oriented teeny-popper stuff, put the title track in heavy rotation. "Up until now," Ness says, "the only airplay

now, a country orientation is a running theme of the updated Social Distortion story. "In the last couple of years," Ness explains, "the hardcore fast punk really turned me off. I'm hearing all this country and blues stuff that's really cool, and I wanna play it. We want to be a roots rock 'n' roll band."

Given their tenacity and everything they've overcome, are you going to bet against 'em?

— Duncan Strauss





# WILLEM BREUKER

## Doin' the New Low-Brow

**E**cclecticism may be the watchword of the day, but Dutch bandleader/composer Willem Breuker and his 10-piece Kollektief have offered it as their MO for the last decade and a half. Add up the stylistic switch-offs on their new *Bob's Gallery*: Dixie, chamber music, fandango, old soft shoe, Tin Pan Alley, postmodern minimalism, big-band swing, programmatic Kurt Weill sketches, hoot 'n' holler sax solos, generic TV orchestra stuff, classical etudes and...you got it...jazz.

"I just make an eyewink and we change immediately," Breuker explains. "We like to cut

it up, jump from branch to branch." If you don't like what you hear, wait a minute; something will come along you can grab onto.

The Kollektief are respected renegades, key figures in the usually bracing European avant-garde scene. But their invitation to noninitiates is warm; at no turn does their wry music forbid you entrance. And while they come on in the guise of a trad big band—normal-looking middle-aged men playing reeds/brass/piano/bass/drums—they're actually subversives armed with horns and sardonic wit. Their goal: Crack apart the elements of the norm

by infiltrating it from the inside. During their most crowd-pleasing moments (ha-ha mugging, silly skits), the Kollektief remain incendiary. Yet there are smiles on the faces of band and audience alike. Breuker mocks and celebrates at once; while serving the performance ritual its head, the Kollektief employs its tenets to the max.

"I have a lot of respect for music; that's why I can make fun. When something is real good, you can never do wrong things with it."

This glot of high-brow smarties realizes that high-brow smarties are often insular, stuck-up bores. Presto, enter low-brow doofs...playing their asses off. That's the way the lampooning stays fresh; the band seduces the listener with chops. "Everybody knows what they're doing," Breuker says of the unit. "I like to have people leave the concerts saying, 'I don't believe my ears!'" — *Jim Macnie*

HANS-JOACHIM ZYLLA

# PAUL BRADY

## Top Banana in His Bunch

**T**hough largely unknown in the States, Ireland's Paul Brady boasts a heavy bunch of admirers. Tina Turner included his songs on her last two studio LPs. He's opened for Eric Clapton and worked with Mark Knopfler. And none other than Bob Dylan called him a favorite in the notes to *Biograph*.

"I've been asked, 'If all these people are into you, why aren't you a household name?'" laughs the mild-mannered singer, who's been compared to John Martyn and Van Morrison (though he's less idiosyncratic than either). "I'd like to sell more records, but I don't think there's anything I



could have done differently, careerwise."

Maybe. Still, in his own quiet way, Brady's always been a rebel, never quite in sync with prevailing fashion. In the mid-'60s he cut his teeth on rock, R&B and traditional Irish music, drawing on all three influences when he joined the folk-based Johnstons late in the decade.

"It was a schizophrenic time," Brady recalls. "We were under pressure from our record company to be Ireland's answer to

the Mamas and Papas. We tried to resolve the ambivalence in the band by releasing two albums on the same day: one entirely Irish folk, the other contemporary."

The Johnstons enjoyed minor U.S. chart action with a version of Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now" in 1968 before breaking up in the early '70s. Brady graduated to an 18-month tenure with the more popular traditional group Planxty, then pursued the muse as a solo folk act. By the '80s he'd decided to go electric, leading to

albums like *Hard Station* and *Back to the Centre*, which received favorable reviews and little or no U.S. label support.

However, his peers noticed. Both Clapton and Dire Straits offered him live dates, and Brady collaborated with Knopfler on the soundtrack of the 1984 film *Cal*. In addition to the Turner covers, his songs have been recorded by Santana and Dave Edmunds.

"Having people recognize what you do is gratifying, but it hasn't diminished my desire to have a big album. And I can't see any particular reason why I shouldn't," Brady says firmly.

Not that he's planning an unseemly rush for the filthy lucre. Just as he recently toured here without a U.S. label deal or new LP to promote, Brady doesn't plan on cutting another album until he's good and ready. "I've written quite a few songs in the last six months, but I'm going to write for another year or so before I record again. The more I write, the more I learn to communicate," he explains.

"I was more impatient a few years ago. Now I'm most interested in discovering what's inside me." — *Jon Young*

MARC B. BLAKE

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# ALL THE WAY FROM MEMPHIS

by stanley booth

## *Bad Luck at the Stax Reunion*

**A**t the redbrick Police Athletic League gymnasium on Hill Street in Atlanta, on the mild, rainy Saturday afternoon before Easter, I waited for the Stax Records alumni to arrive. The rehearsal was a typical Memphis music event in that it was happening someplace besides Memphis and was starting late. Bobby Walker, one of three partners whose Aquarius Productions was presenting the Stax Reunion concert the next night at the Civic Center, had told me the day before of “the need for a celebration to honor both Martin Luther King, who was from Atlanta, and Otis Redding, who was from Macon, Georgia, 87 miles south of Atlanta.” The day after Easter would mark the twentieth anniversary of King’s assassination. Redding had been dead 20 years the previous December. Walker had said the rehearsal would be in the afternoon at the PAL, by whom Aquarius partner Sandra Essex is employed. Now it was four o’clock, and there was no one at the PAL but me and some cops in blue sorting baseball uniforms and some kids in sweats shooting pool.

**In Atlanta, daughter Carla Thomas (top) breaks hearts; poppa Rufus does the Dog.**

The kids reminded me of the Bar-Kays, the upcoming second-generation Stax house band that died with Redding when his plane crashed in Lake Monona, near Madison, Wisconsin. On assignment for the *Saturday Evening Post*, I had spent the last week of Redding’s life with him, watched him devise and record “Dock of the Bay,” said goodbye to him on Friday and learned Sunday night of the deaths that would shake the little record company as, a few months later, the death of Martin Luther King would shake the nation.



What became Stax Records began in 1958 with a one-track tape recorder owned by a white brother and sister, Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton, and located in Brunswick, Tennessee, behind the Satellite Dairy, where they sold hamburgers between takes. Estelle was a grammar school teacher and Jim was a bank teller and a country fiddle player. They had little knowledge of what they were getting into, but they had incredible luck. For one example, Estelle’s son Packy rehearsed on weekends at the Dairy with the Royal Spades, a rhythm and blues band of white Messick High School students that would develop into the Mar-Keys, the Stax house band. For another, in 1960 they found an empty movie theater that rented for a hundred dollars a month—the Capitol at 926 East McLemore—in a black South Memphis neighborhood, and Rufus Thomas, who had started out on Beale Street at the age of six playing a frog in a show at the Grand Theatre, had been a Rabbit’s Foot Minstrel, master of ceremonies at the Midnight Rambles, half the dance team of Rufus and Bones, a local radio announcer, and the first person to have a hit on the Sun label, brought the first hit



to Stax. “Cause I Love You,” a regional sensation sung by Rufus and his teenaged daughter Carla, was followed by the first national hit on Stax—“Gee Whiz,” a solo by Carla, who had written it at about 15. “Last Night,” the Mar-Keys’ instrumental; “You Don’t Miss Your Water,” by Memphis band singer William Bell; “Green Onions,” by Booker T. and the MGs, the Mar-Keys’ rhythm section; Rufus’ “The Dog” and “Walkin’ the Dog,” the latter covered by the Rolling Stones complete with whistles by Brian Jones, kept Stax in the pop spotlight.



In October of 1962 Stax released its first Otis Redding record, made in half an hour at the end of a Johnny Jenkins session. At WLAC radio in Nashville, announcer John Richbourg, who wound up with part of the publishing rights to the record, played “These Arms of Mine” night after night for months, until it became a hit. Other hits followed for Otis, among them “I’ve Been Loving You Too Long,” “Try a Little Tenderness” and “Satisfaction” (one of Keith Richards’ proudest days). Atlantic Records, Stax’s distributor, brought Wilson Pickett and the duo Sam Moore and Dave Prater to the label. In 1967 a Stax Revue toured Europe, and at Monterey Pop, as *Esquire* observed, “the most tumultuous reception of the Festival” went to Otis Redding and the Mar-Keys.

There was the feeling in the air that summer—the summer of Monterey, of *Sergeant Pepper*, of LSD—that people were coming together, red and yellow, black and white, in peace and love. The notion was credible to observers of soul music, who had seen young Southern musicians, students from the segregated schools of Memphis, Macon, Muscle Shoals, overcome ignorance and fear—their own and other people’s—in a degrading and often dangerous social environment, to create music that changed people’s lives.

In December I spent the night before Otis Redding died at a WDIA Goodwill Revue watching Bobby Bland, Muddy Waters, Rufus and Carla Thomas, and Sam and Dave, whose “Soul Man” was at the top of the pop charts. None of us knew what was coming.

In the wake of Martin Luther King’s death, the climate for an integrated business in a black neighborhood changed. The front door at Stax, which had always been left open (Carl Cunningham, the Bar-Kays’ drummer, had come in one day with his shoeshine kit and stayed to become a musician) was locked. Then one day it was locked for good. Today Stax is a crumbling shell. It was as if Stax had such good luck in the beginning that when in the end the bad luck came it was annihilating. Parts of the catalog are still available on the Fantasy and Atlantic labels.

It was nearly five o’clock at the PAL gym when the guitarist Leroyal Hadley and several other musicians from the Joe Tex band came in, followed by Eddie Floyd. I had never met Floyd, but I had seen a concert in Memphis where Janis Joplin made the mistake of trying to follow him onstage. He had come to Stax from Washington in 1965 with Al Bell, Jim Stewart’s partner at the time Stax went bankrupt, still a controversial figure in the record company’s history. Floyd, just back from Europe, where he often tours these days, said, “The first time I went to Stax was for a Carla Thomas session, the song was ‘Comfort Me.’ I had started talkin’ about writing in 1965. I wrote ‘Stop—Look What You’re Doin’ to Me,’ then ‘634-5789’ for Wilson Pickett, then ‘Knock on Wood’ I really wrote for Otis, I wanted to submit it for him to sing, and they heard it and put it out, just the demo. One take. It was rainin’ the night we wrote it—you know that part in there, ‘Seems like thunder—lightnin’—it was a rainstorm goin’ on. That song has been recorded now 60 or 61 times.

The last time I was at Stax was about one hour before the federal marshals said, ‘We closin’ this joint.’ I was at the studio, and by the time I got home and called back, a federal marshal answered and said, ‘Stax is closed.’

“I’d like to still be there recording, because of the studio, the people, the atmosphere. Everybody was together, I’d sing background on a Johnny Taylor song, we were real helpful to each other. Toward the end the company brought in a lot of new people, but they weren’t the right people because they drained the company.

“Why are they having this show in Atlanta and not Memphis? You’d have to ask the people in Memphis. You ask me can I see it happening again? William Bell has a label now and we have some new records out. Me, William and Luther Ingram, we’re going to try to make it happen here in Atlanta, Georgia.”

While we had been talking, the band had been setting up and Rufus “Snow White—Bear Cat—The Dog” Thomas, the World’s Oldest Teenager, had come in wearing a blue-and-white warm-up outfit and a red bill-cap. He laid a clutch of manila folders on the wooden bleachers, picked up a stray basketball, dribbled out to the free-throw line and made a few shots as Eddie Floyd began rehearsing with the band, doing his current release “My Baby Loves the Soaps,” which includes a long list: “‘General Hospital’—yeah! ‘The Young and the Restless’—all right!” and so on.

Losing interest in basketball, Rufus Thomas drifted over and sat on a guitar amp, drinking from a quart carton of sweet milk and glaring at Floyd, who was waving his right hand in arcs, directing the horns. Thomas looked really fierce as Floyd did “Dock of the Bay.”

William Bell and Luther Ingram came in. Bell said the concert was like “a family reunion.” Having it take place in Atlanta “is ironic—I was born and grew up in Memphis—but Atlanta is my home now, I’ve lived here 15 years. I think as far as music is concerned, Atlanta will be the next city. Memphis is tied to Atlanta because of the death of Martin Luther King and because some of us, like Isaac Hayes and me, live here now. Atlanta is tops. There’s a good attitude here.”

Eddie Floyd finished rehearsing and some of the musicians began to look over Thomas’ charts. “What instrument is this for?” one asked.

“I have no idea,” an older one said. “I know those are music notes, I remember seein’ that in school.”

As Thomas passed out the sheets he spun around, making gestures behind his

Memphis  
asked Isaac  
Hayes (top)  
to play for  
no pay.

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back, finger symbols representing fines for miscues and bad notes. "You know about that," he said. "Joe Tex did that to you." Some of the musicians laughed. About half of them were veterans of Joe Tex's and other bands, but none of them had played at Stax, and half looked too young to have been with any organization that didn't also have a football team.

Carla Thomas, daughter of The Dog, swept in wearing a blue denim skirt with zippered midi and mini tiers and a wide-brimmed blue straw chapeau, a perfect honeychile. When Otis Redding was the King, Carla Thomas was the Queen. If her work lacked the complexity of Aretha Franklin's, so did her life, and this, one suspects, has been her good fortune. Since the death of Stax she has not released any records, though she still performs and was waiting for the chance to rehearse. She stood by as the tension mounted while her father, starting with "Walkin' the Dog," fought the odds of being among musicians far different from the Mar-Keys.

Ronnie Hawkins has said that in his youth he would advise east-bound Arkansas musicians to "go straight to Nashville, don't even slow down in Memphis, they got garbage collectors there that'll blow you off the stage."

Memphis has so many good musicians—and such is the public's indifference to them—that even the best are often unemployed. Great players come from everywhere, but the products of studios like Sun, Stax, Hi, Goldwax, Sonic, American, Onyx, Fretone, Royal and Ardent demonstrate that the level of blues playing in Memphis is the highest. An old black Memphis musician stood one night in an alley beside a young white guitarist, pointed to the stars, and said, "You don't plays the notes—you plays the molecules." Certain rhythm patterns, certain accents and syncopations, become second nature to a Memphis player as he acquires a stylistic shorthand that in the end becomes a musical language, one that is a bit opaque even to a New Orleans player. Rufus Thomas' act is in essence comedy, and no comedian is more aware than The Dog, a.k.a. The Frog, that old tap dancer, of the need for perfect timing. Over and over he questioned horn players' readings: "Wait on me—*Now*, the time to go up—if you gone squeak, don't make it." He grimaced, listening. Between this venerable minstrel and the young musicians, communication was imperfect. "I can't teach you the blues," he said at last, exasperated. "You got to *know* them."

Luther Ingram rehearsed after Thomas, but instead of giving the band sheet music, he played each song on a small cassette player while sitting slumped and uncommunicative behind his mirror shades. The music was simpler than Thomas' had been, and the band learned their parts quickly. William Bell rehearsed next, with a band from Macon called Danger Zone that included the kids I had seen shooting pool. Behind Bell's warm baritone they sounded strong and precise. By the time Bell had finished, it was too late to get the other band together again, so Carla Thomas, taking the charts written at the PAL by her brother Marvell, went with her sister Vanesse to Smyrna, an Atlanta suburb, where some friends had laid on a soul food feast.

I kept asking everyone I talked to why the concert was taking place in Atlanta rather than Memphis, partly because I knew that earlier this year the Memphis mayor's office had released a press statement announcing a concert, much like the Atlanta one, to honor Martin Luther King and show how far Memphis had come since his death. It sounded like a good idea to David Less, entertainment director of the Peabody Hotels, who called to offer his help and was told

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that all participants would be expected to contribute their services. "But wasn't Martin Luther King in Memphis to help garbage workers get paid?" Less asked. "You intend to honor his memory by not paying musicians?"

Carla Thomas, with a cynicism born of a lifetime begun in a Memphis housing project, attributed the Memphis concert plan to a desire on the mayor's part to recoup some of the face he had lost by resisting the January King holiday for municipal employees. Marvell Thomas told me that when a Memphis Symphony musician called him on behalf of the

mayor's office about the concert, he'd advised the man to drop the matter, and the idea did go away. Of Memphis civic leaders, Marvell said, "Those people think so small. They can't accept that the only value Memphis has in the international community derives from its black music. They want to ignore it."

The next day, standing in a corridor backstage at the Atlanta Civic Center, Isaac Hayes, also speaking of Memphis civic leaders, said, "Those assholes. That's why I left Memphis. They're supposed to be statesmen and leaders and they're so ignorant. There's still

bigotry. It's disgusting and frustrating. They wanted to do a concert to show how far Memphis has come, and not pay anybody. That shows exactly how far."

I mentioned my favorite Isaac Hayes album, the first one. "Oh God, I was drunk. We were all drunk," Hayes said. His new album, the second for CBS, was, he said, just finished, and he was thinking of touring this summer. "Tonight will be my first live show in this country in 10 years," he said, giving a rueful downward glance at the extra 40 pounds over stage weight he had collected. He had gone from a poor Memphis neighborhood and a job cleaning the floor in a slaughterhouse to being a writer of classic hits like "Soul Man" and "Hold On, I'm Comin'" and a star of stage, screen and television. But in his dark shades, red leather fez, red, black and yellow print slacks and red T-shirt, he was nervous. "I'm sweating this rehearsal. I was supposed to do a sound check at three o'clock. Damn, Carla, come on."

Carla Thomas, who had emerged from a white limousine in an apricot silk jumpsuit and matching wide-brimmed straw hat, looking devastating but preoccupied, was onstage working with the band, her manner as painstaking as her father's had been. "Don't forget," she told the horn players, "you got to get right back in there. After the solo I don't go back, I go to 'sigh with the feelin',' back to the beginning and the vamp." Because the musicians were different from the old Stax band, every moment of rehearsal was valuable.

Rain sprinkled and threatened all Easter afternoon. Backstage, singers, musicians, photographers, bodyguards, various kinds of managers and promoters, all mingled. I had time to make the acquaintance of Sam Coplin, from Dallas, Texas, sitting just inside the back door of the Civic Center on a metal folding chair. Coplin, who looked to be maybe 50, was dressed in polyester velour athletic drag, with light brown hair and plastic-rimmed glasses. He said he'd done personal appearance contracts for such people as Muhammad Ali, George Foreman, Joe Frazier, Rod McKuen (what a fighter), Charlie Rich, Joe Tex, Dionne Warwick and Henry Mancini, and told me he was having the concert recorded (on a 24-track mobile unit parked just outside). "To see how many of these people still have it, see if we can do some more of these shows."

At seven-thirty—twilight—Eddie Floyd opened the Stax Reunion show. The Civic Center, a blond brick building two years old at the time of Martin

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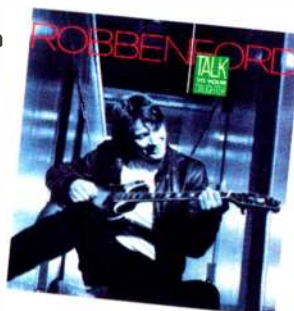
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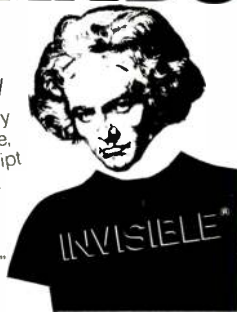
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Luther King's death, held a bit less than its capacity of about 3000, most of whom appeared not young and not white. A six-by-eight-foot picture of Otis Redding hung from the stage's rear curtain. Eddie Floyd was always an effective performer, and he is leaner and better-looking now than when he was at Stax. The audience remembered "Never Found a Girl," "Knock on Wood" and "Dock of the Bay," and seemed to like the new soap-opera song.

Floyd was followed by Rufus Thomas, who came onstage in a red jacket, red knee-length shorts, a red cape and pink suede high-laced boots. It was not quite like playing Switzerland, but the minstrel tradition and the Atlanta Easter crowd seemed distant. Still, "Walkin' the Dog," "The Funky Chicken" and "The Push and Pull" got them going. Rufus Thomas can, as Mama Rose Newborn says Gatemouth Moore used to do at Memphis' Brown Derby, "sing the blues till the hair stand up on your head," but one got the feeling that the audience hadn't had their hair stand up on their heads in a long time.

Next, Carla Thomas, radiant in a white dress and drop earrings, did "Lovey Dovey," "Baby, Let Me Be Good to You," Donny Hathaway's "Someday We'll All Be Free," "B-A-B-Y" and "Gee Whiz," the last of which has been in her repertoire for almost 30 years and still has the power to raise goose bumps. From Carla, who is much given to good works in Memphis for causes like literacy, there emanates a genuine glow of goodness, and something, possibly clean living, has enabled her to maintain an ingenue quality. Atlanta adored her. Is there anyplace besides Memphis where singers like Carla Thomas and Ann Peebles go unrecorded?

The first half of the show was closed by the new Sam and the old Dave. The original Sam and Dave had not performed together in years. These two did "Hold On, I'm Comin'," "When Something Is Wrong with My Baby," "Soul Man," "I Thank You," and for the first time that night, I thought of a performance from 20 years earlier—the real Sam and Dave (not that they were ever as real as, say, Isaac Hayes and David Porter) at that WDIA Goodwill Revue in 1967, all in white, with their band strung out in a line across the stage, all dancing. The comparison to the dirge-like performance in Atlanta was cruel, making even more ironic Dave Prater's death six days later in a car wreck.

After the intermission, spent review-  
*continued on page 82*

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## BOB MUGGE

by karen bennett

### *Documenting the Childlike and the Immortal*

**A**l Green slouches back in the studio chair and toys with his guitar. The scene is Memphis, 1984. As Teenie Hodges picks away in the background, Green recounts an event that took place 10 years earlier:

"She loved me," he says, with more than a tinge of regret. "She didn't tell me she was married, she had three kids. I never knew any of these things until after the incident happened...She asked me if I would marry her. I said, 'I don't think I'm ready to be married, this is 1974, I only been in this two or three years'...I went downstairs and said, 'Why are you boiling water?'...I see this whole pot of boiling water and all of a sudden I'm full of it...you see, you mix

this stuff [grits] in and make it kinda slimy thick...and all of a sudden I'm full of it. I called this girl from next door over to help me; I'm in total pain. All of a sudden you hear [gunshots] and that was the end of that...here's this lady is lyin' on the floor, here's this pistol is in her hand. I said, 'Call the police.'...But the thing I want to ask you today is...did that actually happen? And I'm not jokin', I'm askin' you a question...was that really true? And that's a fact, I'm not just playin' it for the movie; if I focus in on it one on one, I have trouble believing it happened."

The movie Green mentions is the one in which this remarkable confession occurs, a documentary written, directed, produced and edited by the man to whom Green addresses his rhetorical question: 38-year-old filmmaker Bob Mugge, the brains behind *Gospel According to Al Green*.

The film is one of a series of inspired features Mugge has done on music and extraordinary musicians whose lives and work are marked by an uncommon denominator—living on the fringe, so to speak. Green, Sonny Rollins, Sun Ra, Rubén Blades, George Crumb and Gil Scott-Heron are all subjects of Mugge films, six of which will air in a PBS series called "Summer Night Music." Airing in prime time every Saturday night in July and the first Saturday in August, they signify the first time PBS has devoted a series to the work of a single filmmaker.

On meeting Mugge, he appears to be

the antithesis of his subjects. He looks boyish, suburban. He sits in the kitchen of his tidy home/office sipping a 7-Up. He is discomfited today, besieged by pollen. His hazel eyes water. His brain, he claims, is fogged each time the air drifts in. At the mention of a cigarette, he is aghast: In France recently, at a film festival in Digne, he asked a coterie of journalists to stub out their Gauloises.

But below the somewhat fastidious profile, a fire burns. Once the conversation turns to music and film, Mugge suggests a speeding locomotive. "I pick my subjects for a number of reasons," he says. "I pick music I'm interested in because if you're going to spend a year dealing with it, you've gotta love it a lot. I pick artists who have interesting stories to tell, because I'm a storyteller. I also pick artists through whom I can deal with certain issues which are important to me: social, political, cultural and spiritual issues, primarily. I'm very interested in music and art not as something that's important in and of itself, but art as expression of what it is to be human, what it is to live in the world today."

Aside from the budget headaches and technical complexities facing any independent producer, the often eccentric nature of Mugge's chosen demesne presents special problems. Recounting the production of *Sun Ra: A Joyful Noise*, for instance, Mugge notes that "working with someone who claims he is immortal can at times be frustrating.

Mugge making *A Joyful Noise* (top); a volcano dancer from *Hawaiian Rainbow*.

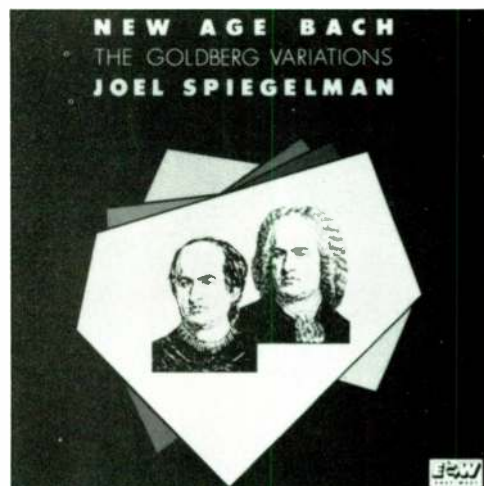
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# E ← → W

## E A S T - W E S T

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"When I was finishing the film," he explains, "I needed to get Sun Ra to sign a release." Loathe to deal with earthly concerns, Sun Ra railed against it. Mugge, in exasperation, made an unthinkable transgression. "I said, 'Sun Ra, you're gonna end up in the graveyard just like everybody else.' He was crushed." Hours of apology followed.

The film is a gem. Mugge shoots Ra in splendid soliloquy in the Egyptian wing of the University of Pennsylvania's anthropological museum. In one sequence, the camera is pointed skyward as Ra moves about the periphery of the frame, an array of angels encrusted in the ceiling

above him. Ra sallies from cosmic rumination: "Human life depends upon the unknown; knowledge is laughable when attributed to a human being"; to quintessential Ra jive: "Some call me Mr. Ra, others call me Mystery"; to political aspersion: "I'm sittin' in front of the White House," he intones in a segment shot in Washington D.C., "lookin' over across the street, but I don't see the Black House."

Capturing Al Green became a literal pursuit for Mugge. "I spent 13 months going after him," he says. "I went to Memphis twice, to New York once and New Orleans once, and he only just said

yes three days before we had to be down in Memphis filming the seventh anniversary of his church.

"He is the most cautious person I have ever met," Mugge reports. "He is often of at least two minds on everything that's going on." While Green and Sun Ra may seem an unlikely comparison, Mugge claims, "Each has one foot on this planet and one foot somewhere else."

The filming of *Cool Runnings: The Reggae Movie*, a genre piece that chronicles the 1983 Sunsplash Festival, provided more bizarre logistical hurdles. "I had sent all my crew people back and I was the last one at this resort, by myself. About four in the morning, there's this pounding on my door...it's some guy who claims to be the night manager, who brings a security man with a guard dog and a gun on his waist. [He says,] 'You're not supposed to be here—how you gonna pay for tonight? Either you have to go or you have to pay us now.' It became clear to me that what he was trying to do was extort money. Finally I said, 'Look, they [the Sunsplash people] are going to pay tomorrow. You either drop this now or you're in big, big trouble.' And finally they did back down.

"The next morning I called the people at the festival office and Tony [Johnson, Sunsplash festival host] and a couple of his guys stormed into the hotel screaming at the top of their lungs, cursing the manager and forcing the day-time manager to apologize to me for what had happened—that's the kind of stuff that was routinely happening in Jamaica."

Payment for the Jamaican film often came by courier: "I would be editing in Springfield [a suburb of Philadelphia] and one of the guys would come up from Jamaica with a suitcase full of cash. We did the sound mix in New York and some guy in dreads showed up one day with a paper bag with \$13,000 in bills!"

Mugge's persistence through these trials stemmed from the same roots as many of his subjects': a passion for music that swept him up from an early age, personal exposure to soul music throughout his youth as he moved with his parents from Chicago's south side to D.C., Atlanta, Raleigh and eventually to Philadelphia, and an unremitting sense of conscience. "I just felt like I had a moral obligation...to make films."

That moral impetus propelled him toward chronicling Sonny Rollins in the film *Saxophone Colossus*. "I always thought how sad it was that there hadn't been cameras when Coltrane performed 'A Love Supreme' publicly or Ellington and the sacred concerts... When I found out about [the world premiere of] Roll-

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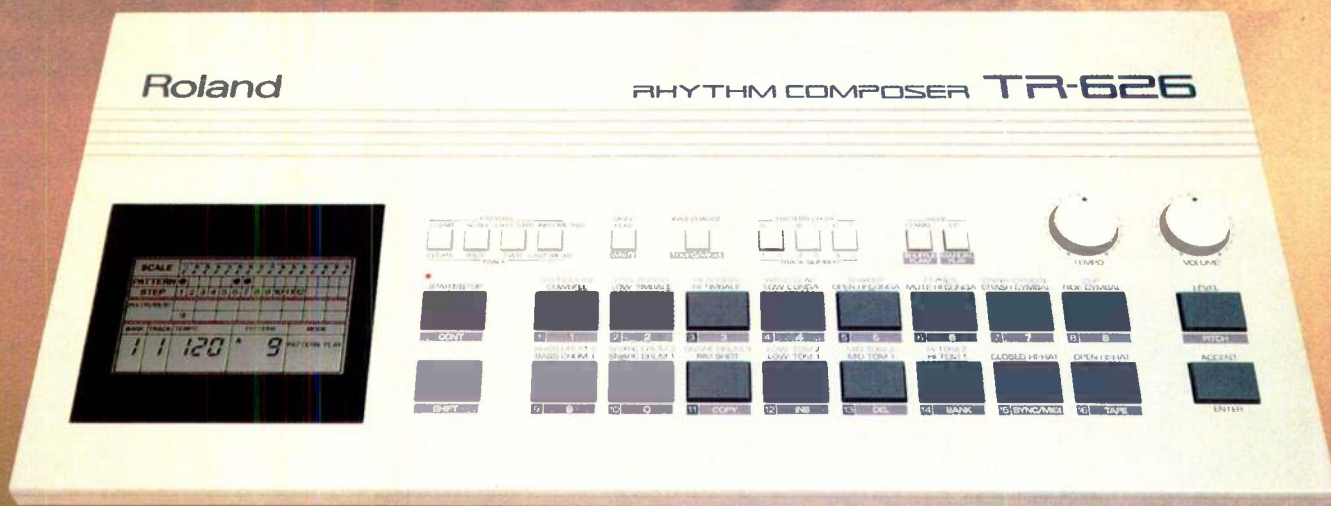
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ins' *Concerto for Tenor Sax and Orchestra*, I thought, 'I have no idea what Rollins' composition will be like, but I'm gonna find a way to capture this on film. At least for once there will be a record of the initial performance of a piece.'" Rollins himself "was not roaring to make the film," Mugge admits. "Lucille [Rollins' wife] is the one who really wanted it made. She believes he's playing better now than he's played his whole life and she wanted this period documented."

Rollins concurs that he took his wife's counsel in proceeding with the film. "I was not actually enthusiastic about it," he says. Some of Rollins' reluctance was "not just about the film, it's about the idiosyncracies of my particular work. I'm the kind of performer who's not going to sound the same each night. With the film, you have to rise and stand by one performance. It bothers me, as a musician. It bothers me when I record."

The movie does capture several rarities besides the world premiere of Rollins' concerto in Tokyo: jazz critics chortling in a harmony of praise for Sonny; Lucille revealing her fantasy of pushing a jazz critic out of a 39-story window; Sonny jumping offstage at a concert in Saugerties, New York, breaking his heel, and continuing to play "Autumn Nocturne" while on his back.

"Sonny had just had his horn lacquered and he was nervous about it," Mugge remembers. "When he started to play, he was getting increasingly upset with the sound. I think the pain he was going through over the horn drove him to create new things, and possibly to jump. I had great footage of him lying there on his back, playing this luscious ballad. But he requested that I not use it because the bass and piano players were so shook up by his accident, they ended up playing the wrong changes. So I agreed to use only a short bit of it."

The opening scene of *The Return of Rubén Blades* shows the singer picking up his master's degree in international law at Harvard. In a typically expansive discourse, Blades reflects on Latin-American musical history, Panamanian politics and his own aspirations. Between lectures, he is seen performing at New York's S.O.B.'s (Sounds of Brazil) nightclub, and at an L.A. recording session with Linda Ronstadt.

"Rubén, when he's able to let his hair down, is a hell of a nice guy," Mugge says, noting that it doesn't happen often. "He seems to be terribly conflicted. He has so many goals, expects so much of himself, that you get the impression that he's constantly on.

"He has a rather anxious, self-pres-

ured personality. At his graduation, he was able to relax, and it was even better when we shot him back in Panama. [But] it was only there, after the final shoot, that he finally listened for once and talked to us as friends." Blades, Mugge says, has "a tendency to speechify."

It is this general tendency toward the didactic that weakens parts of Mugge's own films. It happens when *Blades* runs on, and again when *Black Wax* cuts and recuts to scenes of Gil Scott-Heron delivering political/poetic observations in D.C.'s wax museum storage room, among the imposing figures of John Wayne and Langston Hughes.

Similar problems plague *Hawaiian Rainbow*, a genre study of Hawaiian music. While pertinent historical information is delivered by native musicians, including Raymond Kane, king of the slack-key guitar, too-frequent commentary by ethnomusicologist Dr. Ricardo Trimillos saps energy from the musical performances.

Mugge's philosophical bent, however, serves him well when dealing with temperamental artists. A documentary-in-progress about George Clinton, for example, was finally scrapped when Clinton's crew proved perilously unreliable for a filmmaker on a tight budget.

"All of us, as children, start with creativity," Mugge figures. "A lot of these guys have been able to hold onto that; but in many cases, they've not adopted an adult view of responsibility, dependability and structure in their lives. It's sometimes frustrating to work with childlike personalities."

The unpredictability of Green or Sun Ra, Mugge says, "is what's exciting onstage and maddening in reality: When you're trying to book and fly cameramen and equipment, spending money on someone who may not show up, that's dangerous."

Mugge's subjects credit him for his resourcefulness and style. Al Green says his willingness to talk about painful personal matters was prompted by "knowing Bob Mugge and feeling comfortable with what he would put on tape and what was said. It was the way he put forth the questions." Green also admired Mugge's technical judgment: "He didn't want a 'light me up' type of a film, he wanted the rugged kind: going into a nightclub, smoky room, very natural rhythm and blues setting. And that's what he got."

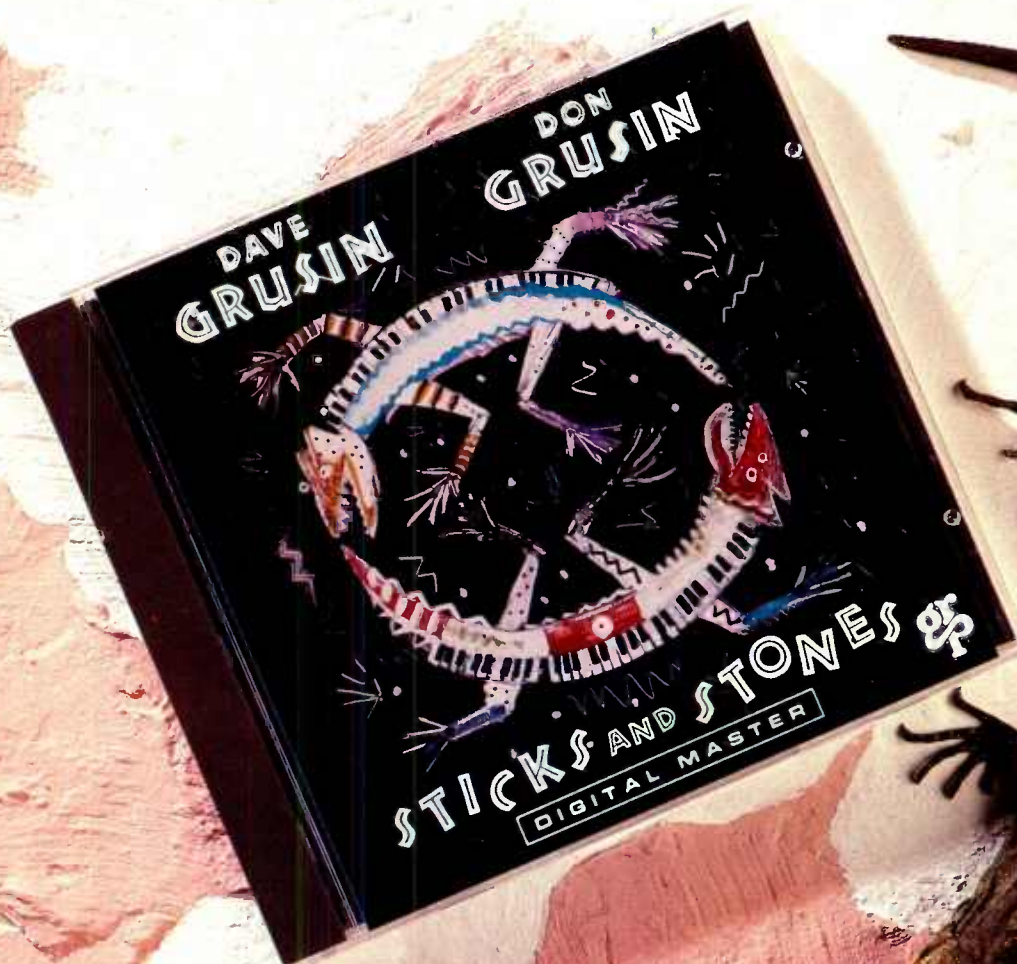
"I think Bob has high ethical standards and social consciousness," adds Sonny Rollins. "He appears to be a very dedicated filmmaker."

continued on page 64

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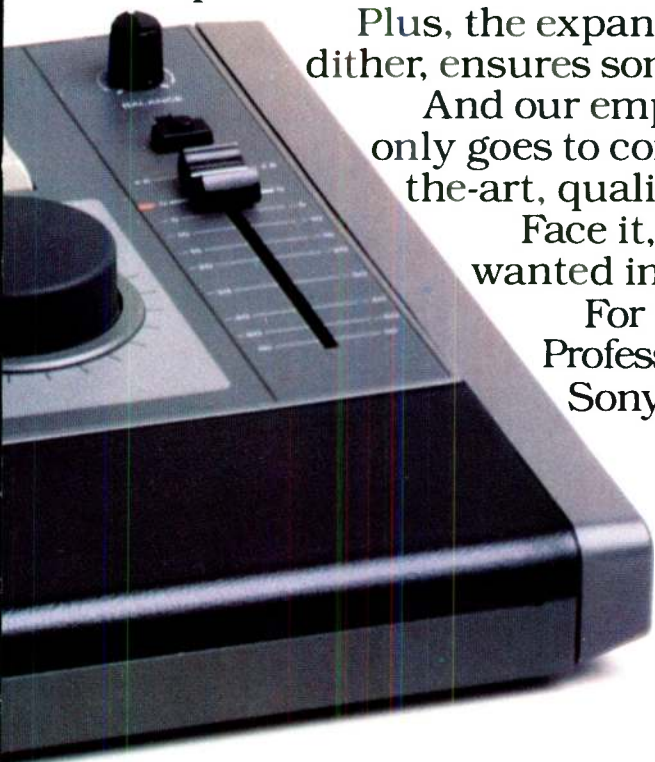
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Steven Tyler

## OR HOW GLAM ROCK PUT THE MENACE INTO MOUSSE

Strangely enough, it was Peter Buck who put it best. Explaining why R.E.M. included a cover of Aerosmith's "Toys in the Attic" on *Dead Letter Office*, the band's B-side compilation, Buck said simply, "If you grew up in the '70s, you liked Aerosmith."

Sure you did. Though the hipsters might have been hesitant about owning up to it (and the critics adamant about denying it), there was something truly wonderful about Aerosmith's snaky, street-wise update of the Rolling Stones' gut-level grunge. True, much of the music was all-too-typical of the times; "Dream On," for example, was just Aerosmith's version of the same hard

rock ballad everyone from Led Zeppelin ("Stairway to Heaven") to Lynyrd Skynyrd ("Free Bird") seemed to be writing back then. Likewise, a certain amount of the band's charm was purely cosmetic; as critic Wayne Robbins complained, Aerosmith's popularity "at first seemed based more on looks than sound."

Maybe so. But when the band kicked into its inimitable Yardbirds-meet-James Brown groove—as they did on "Walk This Way," "Sweet Emotion" or "Back in the Saddle"—the results could only be described as classic.



## SONS OF AEROSMITH

the grocery store, Christmas dinner was a stolen turkey once. Living on the streets.

"W. Axl Rose said he slept in construction sites. There was this period in L.A. where they were building all these new apartment buildings, and when Axl came out here, he didn't have any money for rent or anything, so when the workmen would leave around five o'clock, he and a group of street nomads would move into some half-finished building. And they survived."

What does that have to do with rock 'n' roll, though? As Zutaut puts it, nobody lives that way just for fun. "These guys are sincere about what they're doing," he says. "The one thing about Mötley Crüe back in those days, they were not doing this to become rich rock stars. They were doing it because it was the only thing that they wanted to do. The only thing that mattered to them was making the baddest rock 'n' roll in the world. And the kids knew that they were sincere about it."

That may seem overly simplistic, but think for a moment: Does David Lee Roth strike you as a man who deeply believes in his music? Does Michael Jackson? David Coverdale? George Michael? Does Tiffany look like she

believes in *anything*?

Sincerity has become an appallingly scarce commodity in the pop music market, and that's why when a group comes along with an obvious, deep-seated passion burning beneath their songs, whether it's on the level of a U2 or a Guns N' Roses, they're almost guaranteed a measure of success. And commitment is a common thread among the best of the glam acts. Poison's Bret Michaels remembers that before the band moved out to L.A., "One night, we played in front of three people. Swear to God, and that included my parents." Even so, the band did its whole show, "full explosions, make-up, balls-to-the-wall, leather, spikes, you name it. Whether it's three people, or 300, or 3000, it didn't matter. The four of us just kicked ass, and had a good time. And it showed."

Obviously, it helps if the music has some meat to it, but as Zutaut points out, "There's one important factor that everyone forgets: Rock 'n' roll, regardless of its music, has always been an attitude. Guns N' Roses and Mötley Crüe are the Elvis Presleys of this day and age. They're the rebels, the misfits, the outcasts, the street people. The anti-establishment. Elvis was anti-establish-

ment; Frank Sinatra, when he started, was anti-establishment. Rock has always been anti-establishment, more than anything else.

"That's what the 'heavy metal' bands are now. They're the rebellious kids who say 'fuck you' to the police, to the parents. That's what Elvis did." Of course, Elvis never did so while wearing lipstick and a feather boa (at least not onstage). But then, these are different times.

### DUDE (LOOKS LIKE A LADY)

Flip through the reviews, and it seems as if the rock critic consensus on glam amounts to "It's okay, but these guys are no Aerosmith"—which is amusing, considering that 10 years earlier, Aerosmith itself was being dismissed with a curt "It's okay, but these guys are no Rolling Stones."

Nor is that irony lost on the members of Aerosmith. "What goes around, comes around," chuckles Joe Perry. "It's funny—just by lasting, you start to see bands coming out that you've affected. And it's really good, it really makes me feel good that our music has meant that much to so many people. It's like a little dividend on the side.

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## SONS OF AEROSMITH

"They're doing it just the way we did when we saw the Stones and the Yardbirds, that's all. And the Stones heard the Chuck Berry records, and said, 'We want to do that.' All music is derivative. It's built on what people did before."

Tradition, in short. Like countless rockers before him, Perry got hooked on blues rockers like the Stones and Yardbirds, and then traced the music back to its source, the Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and Elmore James records. But rather than regurgitate what he'd learned, Perry preferred to put the old licks in a new context. Sometimes it

came out relatively straight-up, as with "Big Ten Inch," sometimes it was a bit more subtle, like "Walk This Way."

"We'll give 'em this bit, we'll try that," Perry says, "but then we'll see how gritty we can make it, like with 'Hangman Jury.'" The main thing, he says, is that Aerosmith knows how to take the emotional power of the blues and cut it with an accessible pop sensibility. "If you listen to where 'Hangman Jury' comes from, like a Robert Johnson record, the time changes and syncopation and all that stuff is so...you really gotta be into it to listen to it a lot. ['Hangman'] has just enough of a hook to make it accessible,

but it still hits that really funky nerve.

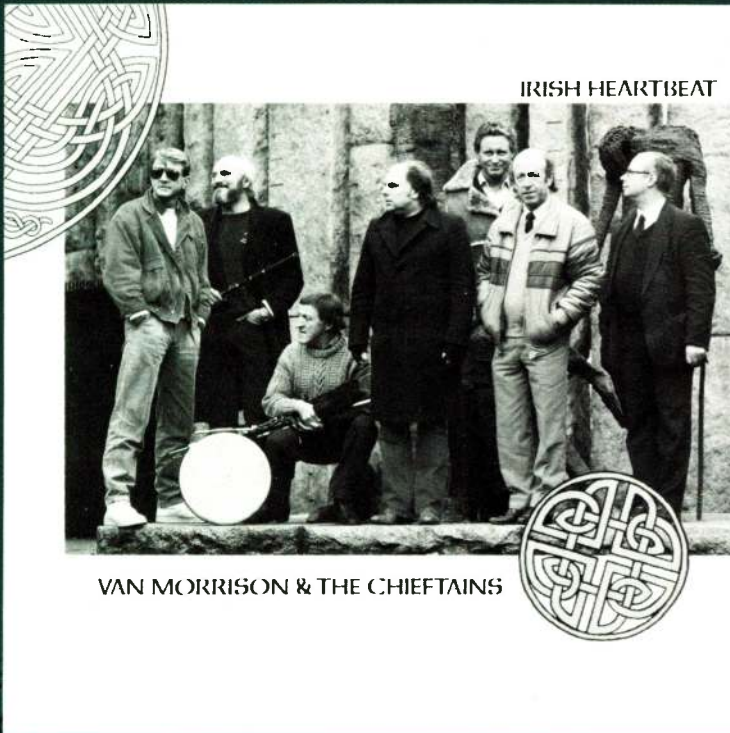
"That's the meat of it. The old blues guys do a rhythm thing with the way they sing. When Steven constructs his lyrics, half of it is for the way the words sound, to affect the rhythm. It's like a rhythm instrument." Which, no doubt, helps explain why "Walk This Way" was a B-boy favorite long before Run-D.M.C. unleashed its version.

It's also a big part of what attracted many of the younger bands to the Aerosmith sound. As Guns N' Roses' Slash explains, "The things that you hear in [an Aerosmith song] are not just the hooks and stuff; there's actually a feel to it. It's such an easy thing to play, but it's hard to get it across right. You want it to have a real solid type of sound to it."

Not to worry, though, Slash. "Guns N' Roses, they're getting to the core of it, they're doing good," is Papa Perry's verdict. "I wouldn't be surprised if they listened to a few Chuck Berry records themselves.

"But I think a lot of the bands don't. There's the Aerosmith attitude, which most of these bands have picked up on, and some parts of the sound. But I think to really, truly rip Aerosmith off, to be influenced by Aerosmith, you have to go back. That's what we did. People have called us a blues band, and we don't do

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Guns N' Roses' **Slash** is a Les Paul man, with two original '59s and three reissues. His pickups are by Seymour Duncan, his strings by Ernie Ball, his wireless is a Nady, and he plays with no effects whatsoever, dammit.

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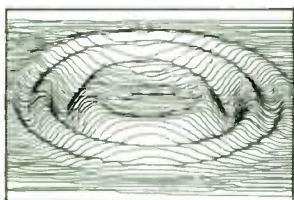
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## CELESTION

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much blues per se, but I guess you can tell that's where our influences are. That's the thing the bands are missing, it's that swing. I don't know how deeply into the blues Guns N' Roses got, but at least they picked up on the end of it that we had."

As for the look, Perry figures his band got a good joke out of that with "Dude (Looks Like a Lady)," which sprang from an incident in which Tyler was in L.A. with Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil, "and he remembered seeing him with all the make-up on and people calling him, 'Dude, dude, dude.'"

For the most part, though, Perry shrugs off the cosmetic aspects of glam. "You see these bands that look great in their video, and also have a good song, and then the rest of the album doesn't even sound like the same band. The music sucks, and they don't look that good when you see them live, or have that good of a show. It's actually the same thing as in the '70s and late '60s, only it's bigger and more commercial."

"The thing is, the business is so keyed up, you've [always] got to be bigger and better than last time." Joe should know, considering how much the relative failure of *Draw the Line* in 1977 hurt Aerosmith after the mega-success of *Rocks*.

But Perry has learned his lesson. "So you have an album that doesn't do quite as well as the last one. Big fucking deal. I just want to play as good as I can tonight, and have as much fun as I can. Tonight. When I walk around on the street, if people don't recognize me, so much the better. I just want to be left alone to do what I want to do, and what I want to do is play guitar."

"Just don't hit me with any bottles, you know?" ☒

**SMITHEREENS** from page 59 that not too many other people at the label were that knocked out by the sound of the band, but in keeping with Enigma's initial philosophy, they decided to re-release it if they felt it could sell 1000 or 2000 copies."

From that moment the breaks started coming. Cannon Pictures chose "Blood and Roses" from the unreleased album as the song heard over the closing credits of *Dangerously Close*, and employed the band in a promotional video for the movie. Mesaros says it almost didn't happen. "They told us they wanted us to wear costumes that this gang in the movie wore. Pat and I went into the bathroom, shook our heads and said, 'We can't do that, we won't do that, and we're

going to have to tell them.' We felt it would destroy the integrity of what we were doing. We went back and told them if we couldn't be ourselves, we couldn't do the video."

Fate was kind to them once again. "The director showed up and said, 'Fine,' so we ended up doing it." The "Blood and Roses" video began to get played on MTV. Enigma decided to press up a promotional single for radio, although the band hadn't originally considered the track as a possible single. WBCN-FM in Boston and WNEW-FM started playing it heavily. Soon the band that was signed because they might sell

a couple of thousand records had sold well into six figures.

If life hasn't exactly been a bed of roses for the Smithereens since then, it's been far from bloody. The success of "Blood and Roses" brought them into contact with the prestigious Premier Talent Agency. The group recently signed with Freddie DeMann Associates, whose other management clients include Madonna and Lionel Richie. Capitol Records picked up *Green Thoughts* for distribution through a co-label deal with Enigma. Could things be any better?

"Well, I think we're a bit misun-

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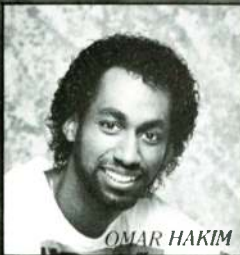
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derstood," DiNizio says. "Like the notion of me being this maudlin sad sack...idiot, beatnik-type guy who's terminally unhappy. It couldn't be further from the truth. There was this thing in *Rolling Stone* that said, 'Pat DiNizio might not be the kind of guy you'd invite to your party,' which again is the furthest thing from the truth. I was always more the type of guy who'd put the lampshade on his head at the party than the guy who wouldn't go..."

"Besides, why should it matter what I'm like personally? As long as you're getting something on an emotional level from the musical or lyrical content of the songs, it's not really relevant. I take a certain offense from articles that talk about what I look like or what they think I am personally. I mean, the main thing has always been the music." 

**Pat DiNizio** plays a black Rickenbacker three-pickup solid-body guitar. "In the studio we use a lot of different guitars. On *Green Thoughts* there's a lot of an old Gretsch

## RICKS, PICKS & STICKS

I have, a lot of Rickenbackers, Guild acoustics and even an Eddie Van Halen Kramer. I don't even know what strings we use, but I know I like Fender thin picks."

**Jim Babjak's** Rickenbacker prototype is an all-white three-pickup semi-hollow-body guitar. Babjak also has a red Rickenbacker three-pickup solid-body and black Guild F-50 acoustic. He and DiNizio both use Roland effects, Samson wireless transmitters and Marshall amps.

Bassist **Mike Mesaros** also plays a Rickenbacker prototype: a limited-edition variation on a 4001, "which was the first good bass I ever had. An old girlfriend bought me a black Rickenbacker because I was a big fan of [ex-Kinks bassist] John Dalton and that's what he played. I use GHS bass Boomers, medium gauge. I have four cabinets of Hartke aluminum-cone speakers with four 10" speakers and I run them through a Gallien-Krueger head. I have a compression and EQ rack. Also, I use cork grease—a lubricant for horn mouthpieces—on my plucking fingers to make my fingers slide off the strings instead of sticking to them. I keep two jars taped to my cabinets onstage."

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# The Great DAT Caper

By Alan di Perna

It was one of those frustrating cases. The kind where it's easy to get all the puzzle pieces, but impossible to make them add up to anything more than an Abstract Expressionist inkblot. And it couldn't have come at a worse time. Summer had descended like a concrete condom over the collection of architectural eyesores that people around here like to call a city. My tiny, littered office was like a steambath; and it seemed that every time I picked up one of those new tech magazines that keep coming out, I found some chintzy hack trying to cop my two-fisted style and horn in on my operation. So I suppose my rough-hewn charm was hewn a little rougher than usual as I acknowledged the timid knock on the translucent glass door of my office.

"I'm looking for Sam Pullover, the high-tech detective who cracked that big Gourmet Sampling case back in the March '87 *Musician*."

"You found him, pal."

My visitor was one of those runty, self-conscious types you meet at record company listening parties. I pegged him as a writer instantly. He told me his name was Alan D. Turner, which I could tell was some kind of smarty-pants literary alias, but I let it pass. As he took the battered seat I offered him, he said he



needed my skills in locating the hard-to-find. "Oh brother," I thought; "another one of these."

"Is it your wife or your girlfriend who's missing?" I got right down to business. "Or shall we just call her your little sister?"

"No. It's nothing like that. I need you to track down a DAT machine for me."

"Look mister, we're all big boys in here. You don't have to spell the naughty words. Just tell me what you want."

"I'm afraid you don't understand. DAT stands for Digital Audio Tape. And a DAT machine is a device for recording digital audio onto this tape. The tape is housed in a plastic cassette about half the size of a conventional analog audio cassette. The recorders are manufactured over in Japan. The full and proper name for the technology is R-DAT, of course. The R stands for 'rotary,' which refers to the rotary—or helical scan—record heads, used in those machines in order to...."

"Do me a favor, pal, and cut the physics lecture. It sounds to me like you need an audio dealer, not a private eye. I mean, if you're lookin' for a tape recorder...."

**SAM PULLOVER RETURNS TO CRACK THE  
CASE OF THE MISSING DIGITAL AUDIO TAPE  
RECORDERS, ONLY TO DISCOVER THEY'RE  
NOT MISSING AT ALL.**

"That's just the thing. You can't buy a DAT recorder anyplace where you'd normally shop for audio gear, like your local department store or audio chain. You see, DAT has made some powerful enemies in high places. The major record labels and the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) have blocked the sale of DAT machines in the U.S. Anyplace else in the world where they've got a free-market economy, you can buy the things. Here, you can't. But I understand there is a way to get DAT machines in the States—on what's called the gray market. People are just buying them in Japan and selling them over here. And that's where your incomparable legwork comes into the picture. I want you to find me a DAT."

"Let me make one thing clear, buddy. Trouble is my business, but I run a strictly legit operation here. And what you're describing doesn't sound like it's completely on the level."

"But it is. I assure you, there's absolutely nothing illegal about buying—or even selling—a gray-market DAT machine. In fact the Supreme Court has recently ruled in favor of gray-market sales of overseas goods."

"Hm... Suppose you tell me why you're so eager to get your mitts on this here DAT thing."

"Well, you see, I moonlight as a musician. And a DAT machine is just what I need for my home studio. With it, I can mix my multi-track recordings down to digital, just like the pros do. Think of it! My tunes on a non-degradable storage medium! They won't wear out, no matter how many times I play them for captive friends and relatives. Beyond that, my DAT tape is a CD-ready digital master, should I talk a record label into releasing the fruits of my labors. You can take it and make a direct, digital-to-digital transfer to a Sony 1630 digital two-track, which is the standard CD mastering machine. And if I get really ambitious, I can run off multiple, D-to-D copies of my DAT master and start my own DAT label. That's right: manufacture and market my own music. Just bypass all the trouble of getting signed to some record company."

"So for aspiring musicians, you see, DAT is a dream come true. Acoustic players and others can make direct-to-digital two-track live recordings. And when they're not mixing down to their DATs, home multi-track recordists can use them for digital bounceds, thereby cutting down on generation drop. Consumer DAT machines sell for around \$1200 to \$2000. So this is really quite an opportunity for the average guy

to get his hands on digital two-track, and—beyond that—the means of disseminating his music straight to the public. Think of what that can mean! Oh, Mr. Pullover, please help me. I must have a DAT machine. I must! You gotta help me... Oh please. You don't know what it's like...."

A few stiff belts of Old Forester helped Turner over his hysterics. I was probably being a chump, but what the hell...the little guy had an honest face. I told him I'd take his case.

### SLUMMING ON THE GRAY MARKET

A tip from a friend brought me to a part of town so bad it made downtown Tijuana look like an upscale condo community with a 10-year waiting list. I kept my eyes peeled as I made my way past the crack dealers and assorted scumbos. I soon found what I was after.

"Pssst...mistuh. Wanna buy a DAT?"

A shadowy figure beckoned to me from a cavernous opening that had been cut into the side of a building. An uglier customer you wouldn't want to meet anywhere.

"You a musician, mistuh? All duh musicians come down heah lookin' fuh a little DAT action. Dey all come see me. An' I fix 'em up good. Just last week, I sold my last Sony tuh Al Koopuh. He just hadta have it. Whaddaya tink uh that?"

I followed him into the foul-smelling basement on the other side of the wall. The guy wasn't fooling around. He had just about every consumer DAT machine that they make over in Japan—all cleverly displayed on the cinder blocks that had been kicked in to form the entrance to this Audio Shooting Gallery. He had battery-powered portable models like the Casio DA-1, Sony DCD-D10 and Technics SV-MD1. And he had full-sized numbers like the JVC XD-Z1100, Sony DTC-1000ES and Technics SV-D1000. Just like Turner told me, the prices on

these tended to nestle around the \$1200 to \$2000 mark.

"See anytin' yuh like, mistuh?"

"Look, pal, I think we'd get along a lot better if you were to drop the bad Ratto Rizzo accent. I could tell it was phony from the first syllable."

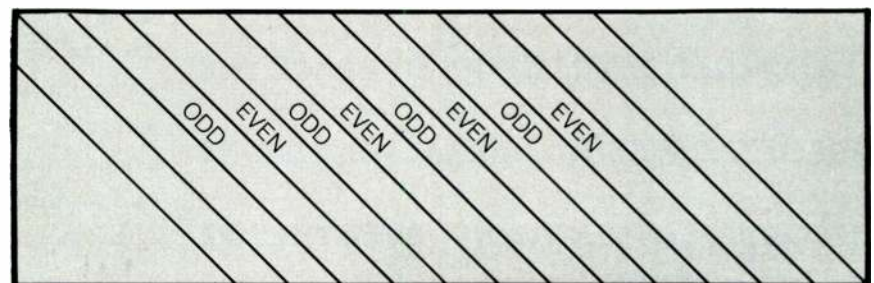
My companion turned six different shades of red and confessed he was really Valentine Meter, a graduate student of Forensic Librarianship at the law school a few blocks away. He admitted that the whole setup—the accent, the sleazy neighborhood, the cinder blocks—was just for the customers.

"They like a bit of adventure, you know? The lure of the forbidden. Since there's nothing illegal about bringing DATs over from Japan and selling them here, I *could* open up a store in a posh part of town. But what kind of thrill would my clients get out of that?"

Drawing on his top-dollar legal training, Meter filled me in on the whole DAT caper. The RIAA and some major labels, it seems, have had it in for DAT from day one. They argue that DAT will increase home taping of records and cut further into artists' royalties. Now some people suggest that the majors and RIAA are acting from less noble motives—like a desire to protect their investment in compact disc. So a lot of these people scent the unpleasant aroma of greed in the RIAA's whole position on DAT; and there's a healthy amount of skepticism over the RIAA's claim that the record industry suffers a 1.5 billion dollar annual loss because of home taping. Where does that figure come from? And what is it based on?

So far, the story was as easy to follow as a good-lookin' dame on Sunset Strip. But soon the plot began to thicken. You see, people started pinning a lot of bum raps and false information on DAT machines. Word spread that you could use them to make a direct, digital-to-digital

### THE SHAPE OF DAT TAPE



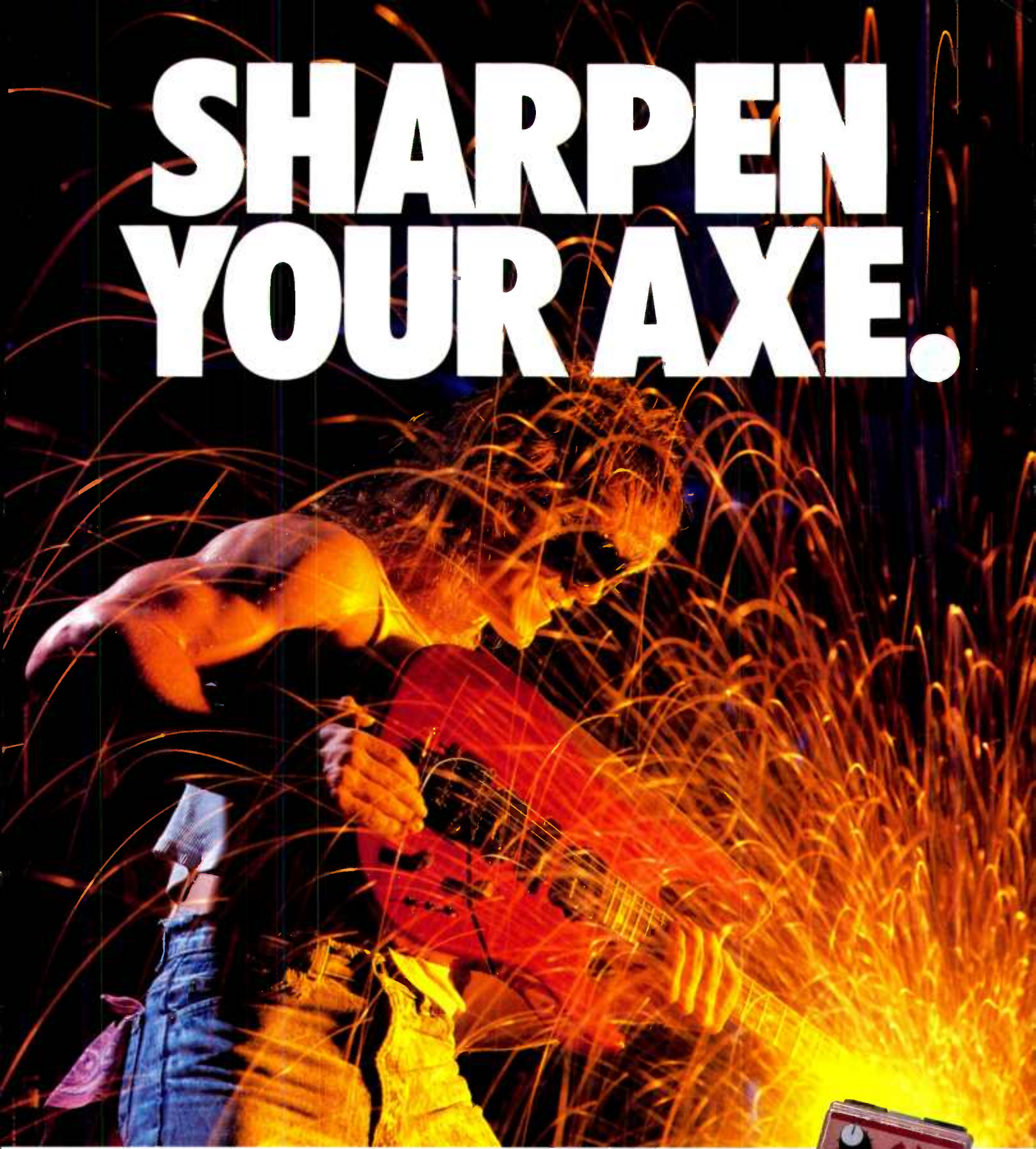
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## DAT

copy of a compact disc. So that the public could, in effect, make exact digital clones of every CD sold.

But this just ain't true. In the first place, as every mug knows, the CD sampling rate is 44.1 kHz. But consumer DAT machines don't let you record at 44.1 kHz, specifically so that you *can't* make a D-to-D copy of a CD. You can *play* back at 44.1, but generally you can only record at 48 or 32 kHz. This means that the only way to tape a CD onto a consumer DAT machine is to convert the audio back into the analog domain as it comes out of your CD player and then resample that analog signal as you record it into your DAT machine. So you're still dealin' with analog generation drop.

"Besides that," Meter continued, slamming his fist into the palm of his hand, "there are copy protection bits that can be enabled on any pre-recorded digital material. It's part of the format for digital audio data. Enable the copy protection bits, and they go down the wire before the audio data, instructing the recorder to cease and desist. The recorder has no choice but to obey. Not only can copy protection bits be used to safeguard CDs, they also protect pre-recorded DATs from unwanted taping.

"So assume a label does put out a record on DAT—as a number of smaller labels like Enigma, Rykodisc, DMP, GRP and Classic Masters are starting to do. All they have to do is enable the copy protection bits and it won't be possible to make a D-to-D copy of that tape on another DAT recorder, even though the record and playback machines are both operating at 48k."

I was beginning to get the big picture. "So all that DAT's opponents can really argue is that DAT poses the same kind of threat as analog cassettes. Because you still have to go into the analog domain to make a copy of pre-recorded material. And to tell you the truth, I don't think the average Joe cares in the least whether he tapes the new Iron Maiden album on analog or digital. All he wants to do is blast it on the tape deck in his mother's Pontiac convertible while he drives down the Pacific Coast Highway with his shirt off. So if we're allowed to have analog cassette recorders, there's no reason why we shouldn't be allowed to have DATs."

"Exactly," Meter replied. "Only these obvious facts seem to have eluded everyone. Well, almost everyone. There's an organization called the Home Record-

ing Rights Coalition (HRRC) that has long been defending our right to have access to home recording equipment. The HRRC maintains that the legal precedent for the whole DAT issue was established with the Sony Betamax case of 1976-84, wherein the Supreme Court ruled that home taping does not constitute copyright infringement.

"The HRRC has spawned two spin-off groups: Musicians for DAT and Independent Labels for DAT. What has happened, you see, is that a number of megabuck, multiplatinum entertainers like Barbara Mandrell and the Oak Ridge Boys have come out against DAT and in support of the RIAA's position. (Although equally—if not more—significant musicians like Stevie Wonder and Frank Zappa have spoken up for DAT.) The major labels have certainly had their say. But the people we haven't really heard from are the up-and-coming musicians and the indie record labels. Their interests have been overlooked in the debate over whether our shirtless friend has more to gain by taping Iron Maiden on analog or digital. It's the old story. I learned the Latin phrase for this phenomenon in law school: *remus poetam*, or—loosely translated—screw the art-

A photograph of a man in a dark suit and hat playing a saxophone. He is positioned in the lower left, with his arms extended and the saxophone held horizontally across the frame. The background is a brick wall with some faint graffiti. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong blue/purple hue. The text "Sony just extended the range of your music." is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

**Sony just extended the range of your music.**

ist. Especially the struggling artist.

"So Musicians for DAT and Independent Labels for DAT speak for these people. The issue all boils down to one question. Who should control the artistic media in the waning years of the twentieth century? Corporate conglomerates or artists? The question is one more variation on the age-old story: the 'haves' versus the 'have-nots.' The major labels versus the small indie labels. The affluent, well-established artists versus the up-and-coming talent. Isn't it odd that it's almost always the little guys who are in favor of DAT and the big boys who are against it? If you're inclined to side with DAT, maybe you should contact the HRRC at their toll-free number: (800) 282-8273.

"And speaking of Mr. Bell's big invention—which we probably wouldn't be allowed to use had the RIAA been around back then—I've spent a lot of time on the phone to RIAA headquarters in Washington. And you know what someone there actually told me? 'If we had known how big analog cassettes were going to get, we would have blocked them too.' That's where these people are coming from. They remind me of those high-ranking medieval cler-

gymen who wanted to keep the peasants from learning to read. Mustn't have the common people getting their hands on anything that might improve their lives now, must we?"

Meter was starting to look a bit wild-eyed at this point, so I figured I'd better get him back to earth quickly. "But what tangible action have DAT opponents taken?" I asked.

"Well, first they proposed what was called the CBS copycode scanning system. This was a protection measure over and above those inherent in the digital medium that I've already told you about. Basically, it involved taking all audio frequencies around the 3.84 kHz range and filtering them out of the signals on all pre-recorded digital releases. DAT machines were to be equipped with 'spoiler chips' designed to detect when this frequency range had been notched out of a pre-recorded signal and to inhibit recording accordingly.

"Fortunately, this idea was nixed by the National Bureau of Standards (NBS) on three counts: 1) recordings with these frequencies notched out tend to sound like El Vomito; 2) the system could easily 'false trigger' and inhibit recording on program material that

hadn't been copycoded; and 3) the spoiler chip was as easy to defeat as a high school locker combination.

"When the copycode became history, the RIAA shifted tactics. They're now threatening to sue any company that markets DAT machines in the U.S. before the issue of their legality is officially settled. And so far, no DAT manufacturer has taken up the gauntlet, although many observers feel that the Sony Betamax precedent would make it easy for a manufacturer to win a suit like this. So, as of now, the whole situation has developed into a stalemate. Meanwhile, guys like me are perfectly free to buy consumer DATs over in Japan and sell them here in the States! So, in a strange way, free enterprise is prevailing after all."

### INSPECTING THE LOOT

Since this DAT thing was such a big deal that even the Feds were getting into the picture, I figured it was high time I moved in for a closer look. Meter obliged by pulling the outer cabinet off one of his floor models. What I saw inside rang a bell instantly.

"Hey, that shiny cylinder looks like the thing I see when I peek inside the tape



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## D A T

door of my VCR at home!"

"It should," Meter replied, quick with the answers as always. "It is the same thing: a rotary recording head. The R in R-DAT! The R-DAT head is actually a refinement of the technology used in digital encoders like the Sony F-1, which, in the days before DAT, were used to convert an analog audio signal to digital data and then store that data on an ordinary videotape recorder."

This was the stuff Turner tried to tell me about back in my office. I now wished I'd listened to the guy, because Meter was coming across with the techno details quicker than I could write them

down in my notebook.

"A rotary head," he lectured, "is really a different creature than the stationary heads we find on analog cassette and reel-to-reel recorders. An analog audio record head sits there like a spectator at a parade and lets the tape pass in review across its surface. But this cylinder thing really gets into the action. It spins at a speed of some 1800 revolutions per minute. The tape is wrapped around the cylinder, which means that the tape is exposed to more head surface at any given time than could ever happen with a stationary audio head. Also, while the cylinder rotates in

one direction, the tape travels across it in the opposite direction.

"Thanks to this two-way rub, you get more tape crossing over the head per second than you do in stationary-head, 15 or 30 i.p.s. analog audio recording systems—even though the actual speed of the videotape itself isn't that fast. What all this means is that whatever you're recording—whether it be video signals or digital audio data—you can pack a heck of a lot of it onto the tape.

"Recording takes place by means of a process called helical scanning. Here too, there's little resemblance to the analog audio recording process, where the signal is printed continuously along the length of the audio tape. Instead, as the videotape moves at an angle across the cylinder, tracks are laid diagonally across the tape. These tracks correspond to the positive and negative fields of the video frames, which make up a television picture.

"So here's what happens in essence. When an analog audio signal enters a DAT machine, it is first converted—in the usual manner—into a stream of digital audio data: 1s and 0s. These are then configured into the diagonal-track format I've just described. Error correction is introduced, so if a tape dropout occurs, there will be duplicate bits on the tape that the system can draw from to reconstruct the original signal. All digital data is then recorded onto the digital audio tape. On playback, this digital data is read from the tape and reconverted into analog audio."

### TURNING PRO

By this point, I'd absorbed just about all the technical data that my own, booze-soaked, semi-stationary head could hold.

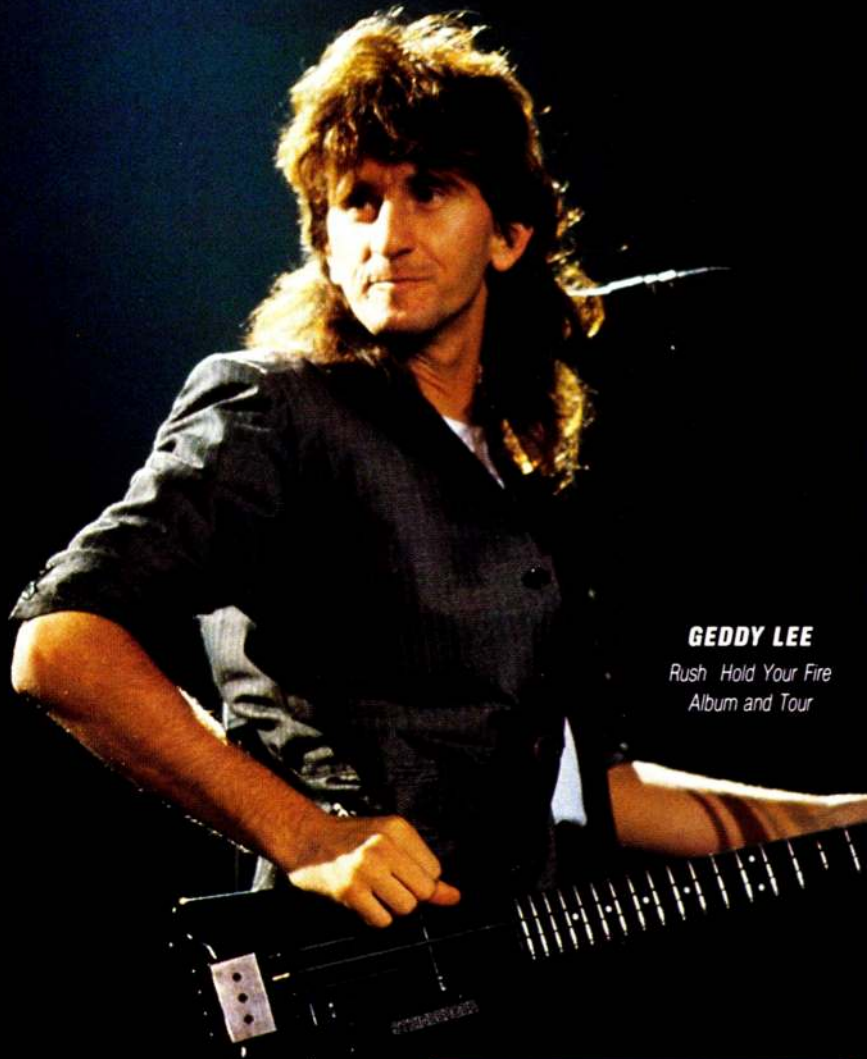
"This is all very interesting, Meter. But what about the poor chump who lives out in Latrine, Nebraska, where there isn't likely to be much gray-market DAT action? Or the guy who's worried about the kind of warranty support he's gonna get if he buys from—no offense, pal—an unauthorized dealer? Isn't there *any* way to get one of these things through officially sanctioned, authorized channels?"

"Well, you could always buy a *professional* DAT machine. A lot of the companies that manufacture consumer DAT recorders also put out souped-up pro models. Sony has the PCM-2500. And Matsushita Electric—the giant corporation that owns Technics and Ramsa, among other companies—has the Ramsa SV-3500 and SV-250 portable. Along with that, Tascam has a pro DAT called

*continued on page 66*

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# The Smithereens

# Get Non-Technical

By Dave Schulps

I think people can identify with us because we're just regular people, we don't come off as stars. We get it in our fan mail: People like the fact that we're real people playing real instruments playing real songs."

A few minutes before the Smithereens are set to tape a live performance on Fox Television's "The Late Show," Dennis Diken, the group's drummer, is trying to put his finger on their appeal. After all, this is a group that spent six years in virtual anonymity, looking for their big break on the merciless New York/New Jersey bar scene and being turned down by every major label. The prospect of anyone with national distribution putting out a Smithereens record was extremely dim.

Just over two years after a seemingly small break turned into that big break, the group is here in Hollywood with four sold-out shows at the Roxy, one nearly-gold album (*Especially for You*) under its belt and a new one (*Green Thoughts*) they have reason to hope will top the success of its predecessor. That Smithereens songs like "Blood and Roses," "Behind the Wall of Sleep" and most recently "Only a Memory" have become staples on AOR and MTV (not to mention college radio) raises the question Zero Mostel as Max Bialistock once asked in the movie *The Producers*: "Where did we go right?"

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INSTRUMENTS AND REAL SONGS**



Meszaros, DiNizio, Diken & Babjak

One thing is for sure on that count: The Smithereens didn't get where they are by adapting to anyone else's conception of what a late-'80s rock 'n' roll band should be. All four of them—Diken, singer/songwriter/rhythm guitarist Pat DiNizio, lead guitarist Jim Babjak and bassist Mike Meszaros—agree that the group's sound remains very close to what it was the first time they played together in 1980. "The only real difference I can hear," Diken says, "is that we're eight years tighter and Pat's songwriting has gotten better."

All four also share a musical vision shaped in great part by large record collections that began—but, importantly, did not end—during the mid-'60s British Invasion. It is an era the Smithereens willingly admit is a major influence on them, but insist they are not trying to revive.

"If anything, we're just trying to recapture some of the spirit we feel has been lost," Babjak offers. "Most songs you hear

on the radio today seem to be written around a drum beat and the song is secondary. With us the song is the primary thing."

Diken thinks "people are getting a lot of this preprogrammed stuff rammed down their throats and they accept it because of the way radio is: The more you hear it, the more you tune your ears to it." The group's own ears are tuned 180 degrees the other way. Many '60s groups embraced, or at the very least dabbled with, the then-new technology; the Smithereens seem determinedly uninterested not only in '80s electronics, but in anything more complex than elec-

tric guitars played through amplifiers.

Ask Babjak about the effects pedals he and DiNizio both use; he'll tell you that the group's technical crew recently "gave them to us and set them," and that "I really haven't experimented with it at all yet." Ask Diken about the set-up of his drum kit and he'll refer you to his roadie because "I really don't know anything about it."

"We're not interested in technique," Mesaros says. "You tend to feel that way if you're self-taught. If I were to speak to some professional musician who's a real stickler for technique, they'd probably tell me I shouldn't play the way I play. I

play down by the bridge, I move the guitar around while I play it. Still, you can't learn energy. You can read all the books and study with Stanley Clarke, but he can't teach you to put feeling into it.

"I started playing the summer I got out of high school. I borrowed a bass and Jimmy showed me 'I Can't Explain' by the Who. Everything I do came from the three notes of that chord progression. I learned how to play with Dennis and Jimmy, and so much of the way they play has influenced the natural instincts of how I play. It's almost like I was inbred as the bass player in this band."

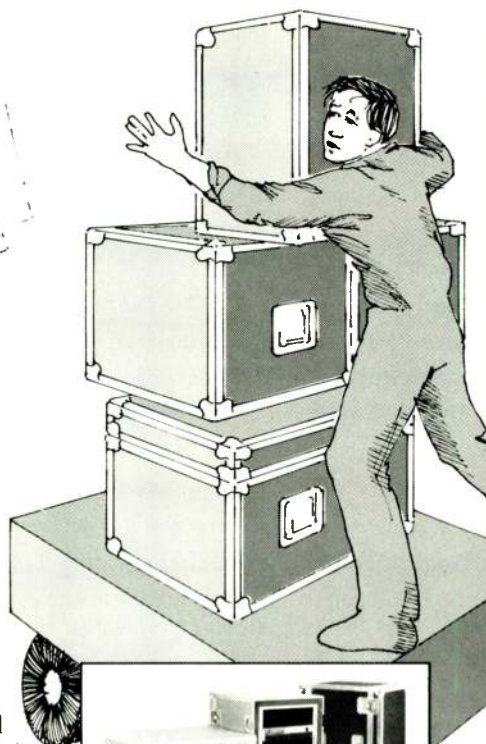
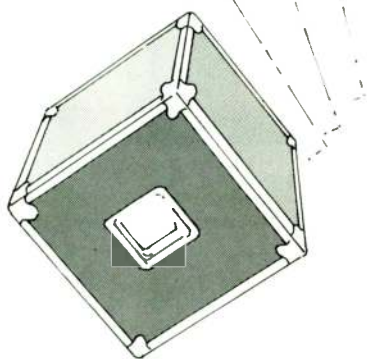
That kind of closeness may be a key to what the Smithereens have achieved in the past couple of years—and a reason why they stuck it out when most bands would have called it quits. Diken, Mesaros and Babjak grew up together in Carteret, New Jersey, and have been friends since elementary school. DiNizio—also from New Jersey—met the other three through a newspaper ad for a singer, and immediately hit it off with them. "I think the strength of this band is that we're all so similar personality-wise and in temperament that we're almost like one person," he says. "The unity between the four of us on a personal and professional level is so strong after eight years together, that I think it's something our audience recognizes immediately now."

DiNizio is by far the most schooled musician in the group. He began playing guitar at seven, though he says his hands weren't yet big enough to form chord shapes. Later he studied upright bass with "a woman who played first chair in the New Jersey Symphony," saxophone and drums—even taking lessons from Tony Williams in the mid-'70s.

While DiNizio was poring over his percussion, the other future Smithereens were hanging out at New York's C.B.G.B. "They would go see the Ramones, Talking Heads and Dictators," DiNizio recalls. "I missed out on that entirely. I was commuting from New Jersey to Williams' brownstone in Harlem. He was always my favorite drummer. But I had a problem because he was a fanatic about technique and I was completely self-taught, playing an orthodox grip style and probably too old already to go back and change. I think I was probably just a fan who wanted to meet him and used that as a vehicle."

Like the others, DiNizio stands by the group's "nontechnical approach," though he does admit that there are technical reasons the group sounds the way it does. "We use Rickenbackers through Marshall amps, which is a contradiction

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in and of itself. There's a kind of paradox in using guitars noted for their jangly sound through amps noted for their crunch. Most bands that use Marshalls these days are metal bands.

"Also, not too many people are aware that one of the things that helps us get our sound is that we tune down to E-flat on everything and use mostly open chord positions. Consequently the strings ring out differently and a lot of really weird sounds get pushed out. We originally did it so I could reach the high notes on some of the early songs I was writing, but we liked the sound and it stuck. Hendrix tuned down to E-flat and Black Sabbath tuned all the way down to D to get that industrial metallic sound."

Now wait a second—where does a guy in a band everyone with a typewriter likes to compare to the Beatles come off knowing how Black Sabbath tuned their instruments? "I saw them 14 times," DiNizio says without a hint of embarrassment. "Tony Iommi was my hero. In fact, 'Behind the Wall of Sleep' is actually an homage to 'Paranoid' by Black Sabbath if you really listen to it, but it comes out differently because it's the Smithereens style."

That style first made it to vinyl in 1980 on a homemade maxi-single: *Girls About Town* featured four songs that not only were about girls, but featured the word in their titles. (One was the Brian Wilson song "Girl Don't Tell Me"; Diken is a major Beach Boys fan and collector.) Babjak felt secure enough that the record would start them toward a successful career in music that he quit college, though he was only four credits short of graduation. He was wrong.

Three years and countless club dates later, they returned to vinyl with the *Beauty and Sadness* EP, produced by Alan Betrock, who had performed a similar service early in the careers of Blondie and Marshall Crenshaw. "It was well-received critically," DiNizio says, "but it did nothing for us in terms of our career. It didn't get us a record deal, booking agency or management."

It did get them an appearance at the Bottom Line in Greenwich Village on a show sponsored by New York's FM warhorse WNEW-FM. That was both a low point and turning point for the group. "A lot of industry-type people came down," DiNizio recalls, "and word got back to us that it was perceived as a really horrible show. We'd been together for about four years and essentially they were telling us we should quit and acknowledge that there was no one interested in us professionally."

But they didn't quit; in fact, the ex-

perience strengthened their resolve. "We decided we weren't going to give in, no matter what." And yet the temptation must've been great. DiNizio shrugs: "You wake up and you're 30 years old and you've been at this six years. You can't get a job of any consequence; you have to sell everything"—including his bass and sax, as well as much of his record collection—"just to keep doing it. I know nobody forced me to do it—we made the decision and knew the consequences—but it became a frightening thing after so many years.

"We'd been turned down so many times by major labels I'd even given up

approaching them. But in the spring of '85 I really felt my writing had started to improve. I came up with the songs I felt ended up being the best ones on *Especially for You*. So I sent a cassette to Enigma with just the name of the band and my name and phone number. By a stroke of luck it hit the absolute right person there, Scott Vanderbilt, who had our previous indie releases and had played them as a college DJ. It could just as easily have gone to anyone else there and been thrown in the dumper.

"Apparently it was a struggle on his part even to get us signed. I've heard  
*continued on page 45*

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World Radio History

# Software City:

# The Amiga Heats Up

By Jock Baird

It's been declared dead more times than Richard Nixon or Rasputin, but somehow it refuses to read its own obituary. Yes, we're talking about the **Commodore Amiga** computer, first introduced in 1985 and the supposed loser in the vaunted "core wars" to the Atari ST. The Amiga has hung in there through the bad times and is now poised to make some real musical inroads. Whether this leaves the Mac, the ST or Big Blue quaking in their boot disks is another issue, but there's no doubt the Big Three have now become the Big Four.

Three major attributes separate the Amiga from its competition. The first is its hefty graphic capability, with literally thousands of colors, pinpoint resolution, rapid animation and ease of video transfer, both coming and going. Not being well-versed in desktop video, I can't share in the excitement, but Amiga partisans all seem to predicate their intense devotion to the computer on the necessity of the video-musical link-up, with vigorous nods to Jean-Michel Jarre, MTV and Max Headroom. More down to earth is the second Amiga extra, four onboard eight-bit voices which can either be samples or synth patches. Amiga fans claim these sounds are studio-ready, even in this 16-bit age, but you'd be wise to use your own ears to make that judgment.

The third and most provocative Amiga attribute is called "multi-tasking," the ability to run two or more software programs simultaneously. This ability is not limited to the same families of software, as in an integrated package that shares the same file formats. Instead, programs from any company can be integrated in the Amiga's operating system, so you can mix and match your favorites of each type (an ability only the new Mac IIs and IBM PS/2s share). This affects how Amiga software companies assemble their products; rather than one all-encompassing package, you'll tend to see groups of smaller programs which can be patched together. Thus a SMPTE interface, patch editor/librarian or MIDI mapper will not be

**MORE THAN THIS YEAR'S TREND,  
THE AMIGA HAS SOME GENUINELY  
NEW WAYS OF MAKING MUSIC.**



Sound Quest's CZ Master editor



Music-X Keymap edit page

folded into the main program, but simply added as modules. This becomes especially important when using the onboard voices, since the hardware add-on digitizer and related editing software can be run right alongside the sequencer. To keep all these programs active, though, you'll need a lot more RAM memory than you may be used to. Fortunately, Amigas can take up to eight megabytes of external RAM expansion.

The original Amiga was called the 1000, and had some unpleasant quirks. One was that it only came with a paltry 256K of memory, internally expandable to 512K. The 1000 also had a hard-wired filter on its internal voices that kept them to a yucky four kHz of bandwidth. The 1000 also had a disk-loaded operating system that slowed its boot-up, had non-standard ports and a list price of \$1200 without monitor. Definitely room for improvement. Commodore has now discontinued the 1000 and split it into two new models, one priced for the lower end (\$700) called the A 500, the other

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targeted for the business/power user, priced at \$2000 and dubbed the A 2000. The latter includes a number of expansion slots, including some that emulate an IBM-PC, while the A 500 only has one expansion slot, best used to bring its 512K of onboard RAM up to a meg (cost: \$200). Figure you'll also spend between three and four hundred on a decent monitor, and another hundred or so for a MIDI interface like the MPU-401. The internal voices now sample at 28 kHz, making them competitive. But even better than the improvements in Amiga hardware is the proliferation of Amiga music software. Here's a quick survey of what's available this summer.

The **MIMETICS Pro MIDI Studio** has been in the field the longest, and by now is probably the most debugged. It's a textbook example of how multi-tasking affects Amiga software design. The basic meat and potatoes of the Pro MIDI Studio is the **SoundScape** sequencer, a basic tape-recorder type which has an icon-based "patch bay" to the left of its main window to route MIDI data. Among the related Pro MIDI Studio modules are a sampling digitizer for the internal voices which enlarges the Amiga's house IFF file format so it can handle more sample data, a mapper/splitter program, a **FrameCounter** program that creates a cue sheet for scoring film or vid (a SMPTE synchronizer is on the way), a system-exclusive librarian, a MIDI

echo, and even a module called **Smooth Clocker**, which stabilizes the MIDI clock. (This last is related to a persistent rumor in the MI world that the Amiga clock is less than reliable; Amiga adherents denounce this as a lie.) One interesting aspect is that when **Mimetics** comes up with a new wrinkle—say the ability to turn the mouse into a continuous MIDI controller—they don't have to issue a new software revision, but merely add it as a utility file. The basic **SoundScape** sequencer is \$180, the two essential utility disks are \$50 apiece, the digitizer goes for \$100 and there's a new super-arpeggiator called **Pattern Splat** that goes for \$50. For more elaboration, call **Mimetics** at (408) 741-0117.

Equally ambitious is a \$300 package from **MICROILLUSIONS** (818-522-2041) called **Music X**. This includes a full-service sequencer (with 192 ppqn resolution), a system-exclusive librarian, MIDI mapper and even a build-it-yourself patch editor construction kit. There's also a **Micro MIDI** interface, a **Micro-SMPTE** synchronizer and even an integrated **Photon Video** animation system available. Another open-ended package called **Dynamic Studio** comes from **NEW WAVE SOFTWARE** (313-771-4465). Its core 16-track sequencer module has some nice refinements like three quantization methods, a randomizing feature for less machine-like feel and the ability to handle 250 sequencers at a whack. A related

**Music X** module is a graphic MIDI event editor. **New Wave** also has a cool little \$80 package called **Dynamic Drums** which turns the Amiga into a self-contained drum machine using the internal voices to play a hundred samples.

If whole systems aren't for you, other Amiga movers and shakers offer individual specialized programs. A series of editor/librarian programs from **SOUND QUEST** (416-234-0347) for standard instruments like the **DX7II**, **CZ**, **D-50**, **MT-32**, **SQ-80** and more have garnered excellent reviews. These all have random patch generators along with a nice variation, generating new patches by weaving two patches together parameter by parameter. One way, **Voice Slide**, consists of taking two sounds and creating 30 shades of one turning into the other. The other, **Voice Mix**, capriciously grabs half the parameters of one and half of the other. My goodness, a new idea? Give this company a cigar. The **Sound Quest** editor/librarians go for around \$175 and will soon be available on the IBM-PC.

Of course, you might feel funny about dealing with Amiga-only companies, in which case you should note that **Texture** and **Dr. T's Keyboard Controlled Sequencer**, both certifiable classics, have recently been ported over to the Amiga. **Texture** was, of course, written by **Utopia's Roger Powell** for IBM-PC and is available for \$200 from **MAGNETIC MUSIC** (914-248-8208). As of this moment, the version available is not Rev. 2.5, which is the latest and greatest, but it's still a solid sequencer. **Dr. T's \$225 KCS** began as a powerful but none-too-friendly C-64 program, but has acquired much humanity in its carry-over to the graphic world of Atari ST. Last year, the good **Doctor Tobenfeld** brought virtually his whole line over to ST and is now bringing them a step further to the Amiga, including other programs he distributes. The **Caged Artist** line of editors (\$150) and a fancy \$200 **CZ** editor from **Deimer Development** called **C-ZAR** are among the other **Dr. T** offerings (617-244-6954). And other big names in composition generators coming to an Amiga near you are **M** by **INTELLIGENT MUSIC** and **Laurie Spiegel's Music Mouse** from **OPCODE**.

I'll pass over the several under-\$100 "toy" sequencers for the Amiga, including **Instant Music**, **Activision's Music Studio**, **Aegis' Sonix** and even dismiss the **Deluxe Music Construction Set**, right now the only pure Amiga program that does notation (if you really need it, wait for **Dr. T's Copyist** to come over). But I will definitely *not* be snooty about the four 8-bit onboard voices. These can sample by using a hardware digitizer that

## Meanwhile, Back on the Atari ST...

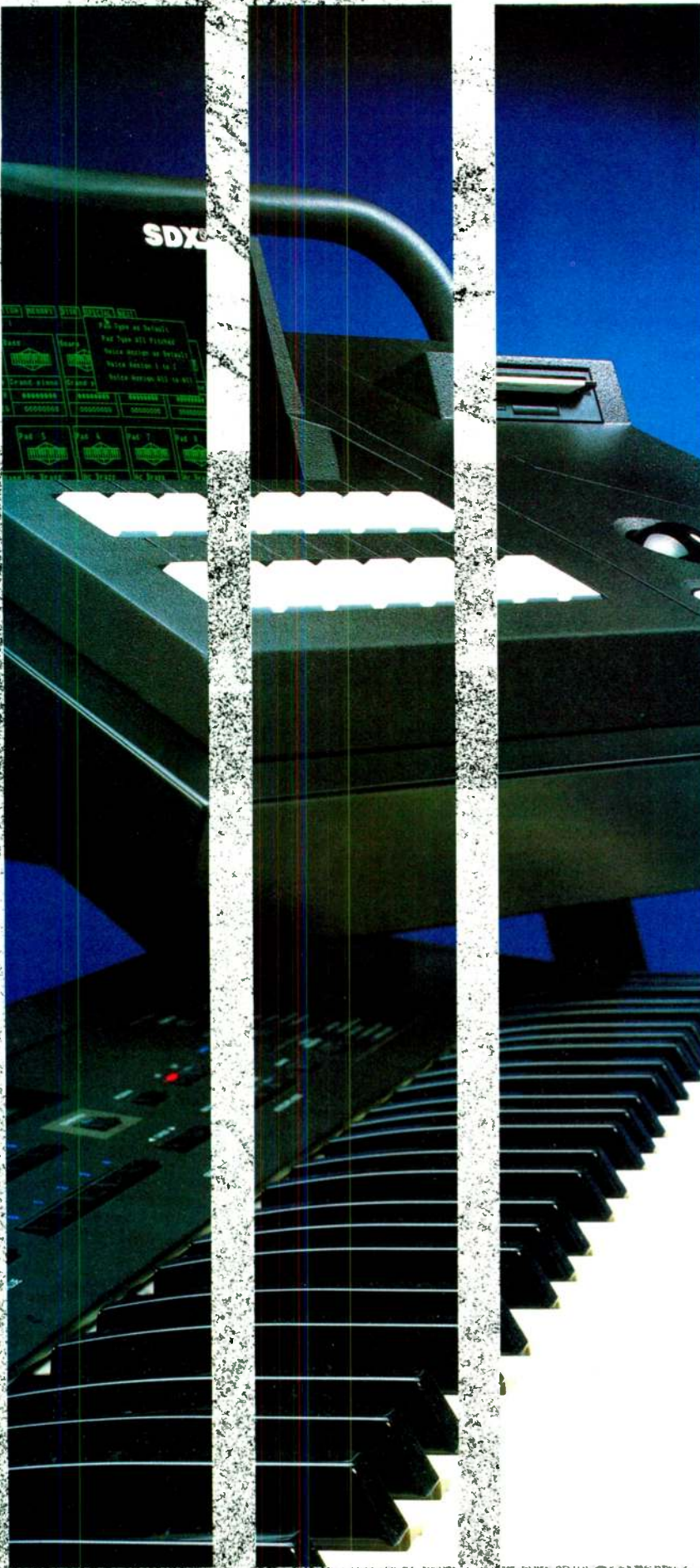
When a Mac Heavy like **Digidesign** starts getting serious about the ST, you know it's time to take notice. Not only has the company ported most of its **Softsynth** programs over to the ST (**Sound Designer ST** is on the way too), it has also begun U.S. distribution of an ST software line from Germany's highly-regarded **C-Lab**. The star of this new lineup is a sequencing program called **Creator**. It's nothing less than the most sophisto ST sequencer to come along yet. In addition to the usual goodies, **Creator** brings multi-tasking to the ST, so you can, for instance, format a disk or save a sequence while recording another sequence. The main screen gives you an ongoing display of MIDI events, which can save you hours of playing "find the clinker on the event list." The looping capabilities let you jam out continuously while a sequence loops around; each pass will be recorded to a fresh track. You can do this up to 16 times and then go back and mix 'n' match your best shots. Also nice is a feature which lets you use the mouse as a continuous fader to record tempo changes or other data.

About the only thing the **Creator** won't do right now is sync to SMPTE (grrrr), but that capability should be available in a

future update. And, as if all this weren't enough, **C-Lab** also has an ST music-printing program called **Notator** on its way to these shores via **Digidesign**. Meanwhile, two new scoring programs to watch are the **Sonus SuperScore ST** and **Dr. T's Copyist III**.

The makers of other top ST sequencers haven't been letting the grass grow under their mouse pads. There's **Version 2.0 of Passport's Master Tracks Pro ST** with spiffed-up punch in/out facilities and a data window for the conductor track, among other enhancements. **Hybrid Arts** has new graphic note-editing capabilities on the **MIDI-Track ST Professional** sequencer and **Dr. T** has a new **Level 2 KCS (Keyboard Controlled Sequencer)** with expanded algorithmic composition features, range-dependent editing capabilities and a new multi-patch environment which allows you to access several **Dr. T** patch editors from within **KCS**. Also new is **Steinberg's Pro 24 III**, which brings new real-time editing capabilities to the **Pro 24** program and which will work in tandem with **Steinberg's new Masterscore** notation program.

**Steinberg** is also fielding a new \$375  
*continued on page 121*



### **SDX KEYBOARD SAMPLER**

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plugs into mouse port #2—an anti-aliasing filter has to be defeated in the Amiga to get the full bandwidth, but this is fairly easy. The most expensive of the hardware digitizers (at \$175) is Future Sound, from APPLIED VISIONS (617-494-5417). SUNRIZE INDUSTRIES (409-846-1311) has a \$90 digitizer called Perfect Sound that records in stereo; sounds can be edited with their \$100 Studio Magic program. A \$60 editing package from Aegis (213-392-9972) called AudioMaster gives you the ability to hand draw your own waveforms and offers the longest sample times of any Amiga editor. MIMETICS SoundScape has a \$100 Sound Sampler module which doubles as

digitizer and editor. And if you want the internal Amiga voices to be synthesized instead of sampled, there's Synthia, a \$100 editing program from THE OTHER GUYS (800-942-9402—great name). Synthia does additive, subtractive and interpolative synthesis as well as your standard issue plucks and thuds, and has some interesting envelope capabilities.

You might have thought to compare the quality of the Amiga internal voices to the good old eight-bit Ensoniq Mirage. BLANK SOFTWARE (415-863-9224) did when they ported over their Soundlab Mirage editor to the Amiga. Blank came up with a way to convert one type of file into the other, making the two 8-bit systems

completely interactive. But by far the most ambitious Amiga editor/processor, from DIGITAL DYNAMICS, is compatible with the Perfect Sound digitizer. Dubbed Snip and costing \$500, it uses 32-bit floating-point sampling to analyze and process sounds, at a resolution of up to 1.5 million points on one screen. No, this is not kid stuff.

Amiga enthusiasts will claim this survey does no justice to the video side of the computer, be it storyboarding, computer animation or live visual effects, and they'll be right. But hey, you gotta start somewhere. By the time you read this, NAMM Atlanta will have surely brought more entries into the Amiga software ranks, unearthed more multi-tasking schemes on other computers and probably shed more light into crossover musical uses for desktop video. And we'll have been there to capture all the action. ☐

## MUGGE

from page 30

"The main thing that's exciting about film is that you never know what's going to happen," Mugge says. "It's important to plan, but also to create a structure that can contain those spontaneous moments." Mugge's films capture not only their central characters, but sidemen and musical "ancestors" as well. Marshall Allen, a 35-year Arkestra veteran, is caught in the frenetic wizardry of the alto-sax solo that has become his signature; trombonist Clifton Anderson quietly beams as Sonny Rollins' "G-Man" solo obviates all other input; the ghost of Louis Armstrong is summoned when Blades teases the audience with a sexy Bobby Darin impersonation of "Mack the Knife," then taunts, ex post facto, "That's not the tune you're gonna hear."

But we do hear it, of course, just as we "hear," with longing, the unquenchable spirit of Marley in some of the lagging performances of Mugge's reggae movie. What we rarely hear, but what informs these films, are the probing questions of Mugge as he draws out his subjects.

"One of the ironies throughout my career has been that I've found the most acceptance overseas, just like the musicians I focus on. So it's perhaps only proper that I've had to go to the U.K. or Japan to get funding for films about artists who themselves had to go to the U.K. and Europe and Japan to get proper recognition and appropriate remuneration for their work. This year, things have finally come around, because I have this series on PBS."

Turn it on, and listen. ☐



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# DAT

from page 54

the DA-50 and Fostex has one called the Digital Master Recorder. Professional DAT machines like these will run you anywhere from \$3500 to \$7000."

"But how come the RIAA isn't blocking the sale of pro DATs?"

"Their position is that there's nothing wrong with using a DAT for professional purposes in the recording studio. The only beef they have is with consumer home taping on DAT."

"So if you've got six grand to spend on a DAT machine, you're a professional. But if you can only afford \$1500 or so,

you're not."

"Exactly. It's just like I said: the 'haves' versus the 'have-nots.' Which is especially ironic when you consider that a lot of your well-heeled, yuppie audiophiles are buying up pro DATs and using them for home taping."

"But what can a musician gain by coming up with the extra bucks for a pro DAT recorder?"

"In terms of bit resolution, A-to-D/D-to-A conversion and all of that, a manufacturer's pro machine will be very much the same as his consumer model. The main advantage you get with a pro DAT is better interfaces. Where con-

sumer DATs usually give you unbalanced RCA plugs for analog inputs and outputs, the pro machines feature balanced +4 dB XLR connectors.

"Professional DAT machines also give you a better variety of digital interfaces for making D-to-D connections with other equipment. On consumer machines, you get one of the standard consumer digital interfaces—generally, a S/P DIF (Sony/Philips Digital Interface) or SDIF-2 (Sony Digital Interface-2). Now, on professional machines you'll get one or both of these, *plus* what is becoming the industry-standard professional digital interface: the AES/EBU (Audio Engineering Society/European Broadcast Union) digital audio interface."

"Yeah, but digital is digital, isn't it? I don't see why you need all this alphabet soup business."

"It's a question of capability, really. As time goes on, we'll be seeing more digital equipment that supports the AES/EBU interface. Yamaha, for example, recently came up with a device that converts the digital cascade interfaces on the DMP7 digital mixer to AES/EBU interfaces. Which means you'll be able to mix directly to an AES/EBU-equipped digital mastering machine and spare your signal the indignities of a conversion to analog and the loss of quality it brings.


"The next step will be digital couplings between consoles and digital synths, effects processors and—for those who can afford such things—digital multi-track. So there'll be no need to convert to analog every time a signal leaves one device and goes into another. Everything will stay in the digital domain, and DAT can make an ideal final link in the virtual studio chain."

Back in my office, Turner's eyes lit up like Luna Park when I handed over the factory-fresh DAT machine I'd procured.

"This is great! Now about your fee, Mr. Pullover... What do I owe you?"

"Awww... skip it. Just remember to put me on the guest list when you tour behind that hit you're gonna cut now."

## POSTSCRIPT

Will the hapless Alan D. Turner find bliss with his new DAT machine? Or will it land him in mischief? How does a DAT recorder work, anyway? Are there any other affordable digital mixdown options? For the answers to these questions and more, see "The Final Mixdown" in *Musician's* new special edition: *More of the Players' Guide to Home Recording*. On sale now. 

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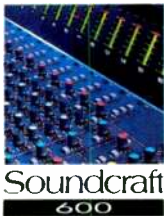


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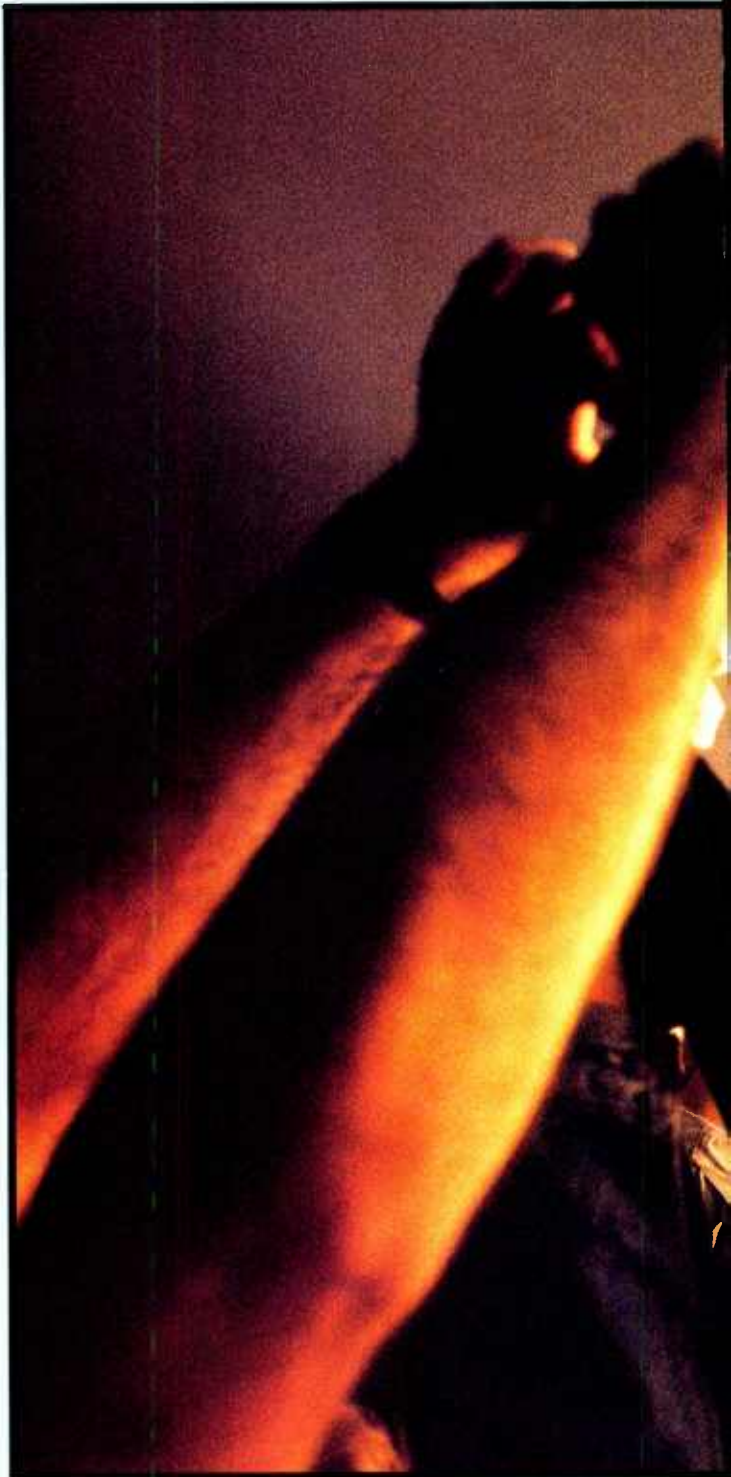


# REPENT, PINK FLOYD IDOLATORS!



BRITISH HORDES INVADE  
AMERICAN HEARTLAND

BY NICHOLAS SCHAFFNER



This is definitely the biggest thing ever to hit Columbus," declares one of the 240 clean-cut Ohio State University students whose good grades qualified them for the coveted position of Pink Floyd usher. For the first time ever, rockophobic school authorities have permitted the staging of a concert at their 66-year-old football stadium, and all tickets were snapped up within hours of going on sale on campus. Though the original plan was merely to give O.S.U.'s 100,000 students first crack at Ohio Stadium's 63,016 seats, any townies wishing to see the show were left with no choice

with no choice but to pay scalpers upwards of \$40.

Throughout the past 24 hours, local stations have been regaling the state capital virtually nonstop with the classic 1970s albums *Dark Side of the Moon*, *Wish You Were Here* and *The Wall*. As the band's police-escorted minibus proceeds through the sprawling campus, groups of jocks—some wearing nothing but, of all things, electric pink shorts—interrupt their volleyball to cheer and shake their fists in approval at the smoked windows. Dormitory windows are festooned with bouquets of pink balloons and announcements of "post-Pink" parties; and at least one campus bar



LENNY BAKER/RETNA LTD



attempts to lure customers with the promise of pink beer. (At the tour's previous university stop, some students went so far as to repaint their dorms pink.)

In the eye of this storm of Pinkmania are three soft-spoken English gentlemen whose graying hair and unprepossessing appearance—and, above all, total lack of airs or pretensions—would seem the absolute antithesis of anyone's idea of rock 'n' roll superstars. Drummer Nick Mason and keyboardist Richard Wright are the remaining founding members of the group whose legendary original leader, Syd Barrett, christened "the Pink Floyd" over 22 years ago. Guitarist and singer David Gilmour—who has inherited the mantle of frontman and main composer following the recent acrimonious split with bassist and singer/songwriter/conceptualist Roger Waters—was originally recruited as a mere stand-in for his old school chum Barrett when the latter began to succumb to the LSD-fueled madness that compel-

**N**ick Mason: "You don't want the world populated *only* with dinosaurs, but it's good to keep *some* of them alive."

led his 1968 departure from the group. Since launching their post-Waters live "comeback" in September 1987, Gilmour, Mason and Wright have been augmented onstage by a trans-Atlantic troupe of five musicians and three female singers—some of whom were barely out of their playpens when the London hippie underground celebrated its Summer of Love to the soundtrack of the Floyd's magical 1967 debut album

*The Piper at the Gates of Dawn.*

Following a string of open-air concerts in the sun belt during which rain was so pervasive that the band had begun calling it the Pink Flood tour, the weather is at last gloriously cooperative. Behind the stadium, thousands of ticketless fans camp out on the playing fields, hoping at least to *hear* the show. The sole discordant note is provided by "Christian" picketers brandishing the signs WORSHIP GOD NOT PINK FLOYD SINNERS and REPENT PINK FLOYD IDOL-ATORS, and chanting slogans linking rock 'n' roll to such ungodly pursuits as homosexuality and drug-taking.

"Have you ever noticed," observes Guy Pratt, the bassist with the pop-star good looks, "that these anally retentive bigots are almost invariably *ugly*?" "They must act like that because they could never get laid," cracks Californian saxophonist Scott Page.

"This is the side of America that really scares me," Pratt says. "I can't even watch television when I'm in this country." The gaunt Rick Wright merely shrugs with the world-weary manner of one who has seen it all many times before.

After the sound check, as the fans begin streaming into their seats, David Gilmour takes a casual tour of the vast stadium. "He's the most aware person," Page remarks. "He won't say much, and half the time you wonder if he notices what's going on. But he sees *everything*, every little detail to do with the lights, whatever."

At first it simply doesn't occur to any of the punters that this stocky 42-year-old wandering the aisles could possibly be the leader of the fabled act they have all come to witness. When he is finally recognized, however, Gilmour signs several rounds of autographs with an air of cheerful resignation. "He can't be bothered with bodyguards and all that business," says second guitarist and longtime friend Tim Renwick. "He despises all the bullshit showbiz razzmatazz

side of things, and has decided not to be trapped in that star syndrome which cuts you off from everyone. I admire him very much for being able to deal with a success like this."

To see Pink Floyd backstage whiling away the moments before the show—reading, stuffing their faces at the lavish buffet, reminiscing about Syd Barrett's cats, and chuckling at the mordant wisecracks supplied by New Yorker Howie Hoffman in his paid capacity of "Ambience Co-ordinator"—you might not suppose that this was the biggest tour in rock history. Biggest, at least, by the measure of its custom-built stage, production effects and quadraphonic PA system (which fill 56 trucks), the personnel involved (over 100), the time spent on the road (nearly 13 months), and the ground covered (some 150 shows on four continents). Not to mention the sizes of the venues and the numbers of tickets sold.

Just after the sun goes down, the Floyd's trademark 32-foot circular screen, now ringed with computer-controlled Vari-Lites, begins to swirl oranges and greens, and the first siren strains of their epic Syd Barrett tribute "Shine on You Crazy Diamond" resound through the billowing dry ice. Despite the music's languid tempo, the audience seems transfixed to a degree almost unheard-of at a 1980s rock concert, and drowns each familiar lick in ecstatic applause. "There is something incredible," Renwick says later, "about looking out at 70,000 people and there's no movement, really intense—not like your normal heavy-metal gig where everyone's milling around and falling and throwing up."

The recent album *A Momentary Lapse of Reason*, which preempts the rest of the show's first half, is enhanced by a sequence of films featuring the handsome young actor Langley Iddens. ("Is he in Pink Floyd?" a teenage girl in the audience asks eagerly.) After rowing down the Thames to appropriately aquatic sound effects from the quad PA, Iddens trades his canoe for a plane that soars out of the screen and across the stadium during "Learning to Fly."

"The idea is always to pull the last kid in the last seat of the stadium into the show," says lighting designer Marc Brickman. "That's also why the stage is so high and wide." Guy Pratt adds after the show, "The psychology of the quad is so wonderful because if you're at the back, you've still got stuff going on behind you. You're *inside* the event."

All the while, computer-operated light banks and four mobile robotic "Floyd droids" cast ever-shifting shapes and colors over the stage. Jets of brilliant laser light shoot over the audience, coalescing into a shining green sea of laser waves for "Terminal Frost."

But it is in the second half that the fans get what they really came to hear and see. On the spacey 1971 instrumental "One of These Days (I'm Going to Cut You into Little Pieces)," the Floyd's famous 40-foot inflatable anatomically correct pig, eyes glowing, lurches over the cheering crowd—whose fervor, if possible, only intensifies when the sounds of alarm bells and ticking clocks announce "Time," the first of five selections from *Dark Side of the Moon*. During "On the Run" Iddens reappears onscreen, strapped to a hospital bed, in a dramatization of the *Lapse of Reason* album cover; when the piece ends, a giant inflatable bed crashes into the stage in flames.

So it goes through "Welcome to the Machine," "Us and Them" and "Money," each illustrated with vintage mind-bending Floyd film footage. And in the show's most poignant moment, the entire stadium, with no incitement from Gilmour, sings along with him throughout the acoustic "Wish You Were Here." The set climaxes with "Comfortably Numb" (the hands-down favorite of everyone involved in the

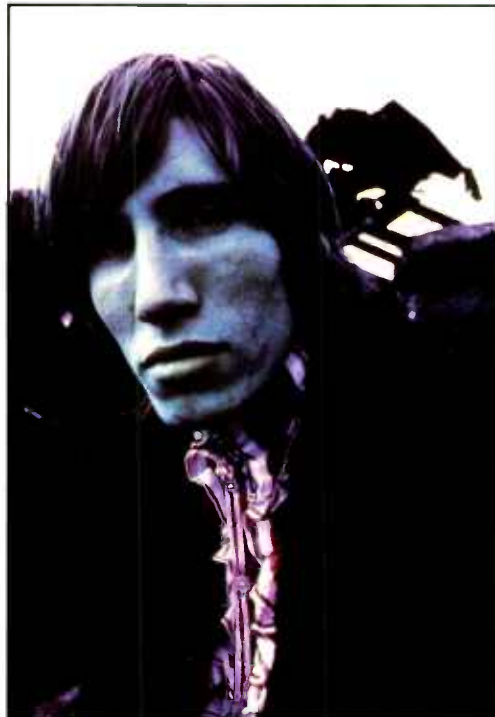
**Roger Waters is one of those people who needs to have control of every facet of what's going on. He got very, very obsessive. Dave Gilmour is almost the exact opposite."**

tour), wherein Brickman inundates the high base of the stage with white smoke—to simulate that moment in the Floyd's famous 1980 concerts when Gilmour played his big solo atop the Wall—and the largest mirrorball in history splits open to flower into dazzling petals.

For the final encore, "Run Like Hell," Brickman and his team, unleashing what he calls "Warp Factor Number 10," pull out all the stops with the special effects: even the near-full moon is briefly dimmed by the fireworks display that lights up the Columbus skies.

Pink Floyd shows were not always so meticulously planned. During the Syd Barrett era they were renowned for their anarchic spontaneity: even in the year or two after the "madcap"'s departure, no two performances were ever quite the same. Tim Renwick fondly recalls one London concert during which the Floyd "built a table with rhythmic hammering and sawing. When it was done the roadies came on with a pot of tea and switched on a transistor radio and put a mike in front of it, with the audience listening to whatever happened to be on the radio at the time while the guys were drinking their tea." Their performance philosophy, like almost everything about Pink Floyd, was to change dramatically over the years—in this instance because in their pioneering work with recording technique, the endless overdubbing process allowed little to be left to chance.

During the course of the Memorial Day weekend, the members of Pink Floyd take time out to review milestones in the band's evolution with an openness that belies their 1970s reputation for being unforthcoming with writers. "We took on this slightly precious feeling," Nick Mason recalls, "that there wasn't much point in doing interviews. It generally became: 'Well, we're not going to do interviews because we always get slagged off,' and then thinking, 'Well, they won't do interviews so we'll just slag them off.'"



All three—not least David Gilmour, who wasn't even on it—evince a special affection for the psychedelic fantasies of the *Piper* album. “Just to listen to Syd's songs, the imagination that he had,” Rick Wright says. “If he hadn't had this complete breakdown, he could easily be one of the greatest songwriters today. I think it's one of the saddest stories in rock 'n' roll, what happened to Syd. He was brilliant—and such a nice guy.” The last time Wright saw Barrett was during—ironically—the recording of *Wish You Were Here*, when a shaven-headed and overweight Syd materialized at the sessions and no one at first knew who he was. Barrett's relatives subsequently asked the Floyd to keep their distance because any contact sends him into a deep depression. “He is aware of what happened,” Wright says. “And what might have been.”

Mason reflects that “one of the reasons Syd is still a legend is the James Dean syndrome, that thing of not fulfilling what seems to be your destiny.” The latest manifestation of that legend—and the closest we're likely to get to a new Syd album—is *Beyond the Wildwood*, a collection of Barrett covers by young British bands, which none of the Floyd has yet heard. “That's excellent news,” Wright says. “More money for Syd.”

“He seems reasonably content living with his mum,” Mason says, “but he's certainly not able to function really and he can't be put back to work. There's a million people out there who'd love to see Syd do another album, come back and all that. I just think it's quite beyond him.”

Most of the second Floyd album, 1968's transitional *Saucerful of Secrets*, was written by Waters or Wright. The latter now dismisses his pieces as “an embarrassment,” adding that “through these songs I learned I wasn't a lyric writer.” He and Gilmour subsequently let Waters assume responsibility for writing the words even to their own music. Says Gilmour: “I've never had the belief in myself in that direction, and I've let myself be dominated by Roger. Never argued with him having his idea for an album and me backing off saying, ‘Okay, you do them, I don't do this, really.’”

Mason calls *Saucerful's* instrumental title suite the key to “helping sort out the direction we were going to move in. It contains ideas that were well ahead of the period, and very much a route that I think we have followed. Even without using a lot of elaborate technique, without being particularly able in our own right, finding something we can do individually that other people haven't tried...like provoking the most extraordinary sounds from a piano by scratching 'round inside it.”

“I still think it's great,” Gilmour says of that track. “That was the first clue to our direction forwards, from there. If you take ‘Saucerful of Secrets,’ the track ‘Atom Heart Mother,’ then ‘Echoes’—all lead quite logically towards *Dark Side of the Moon*.”

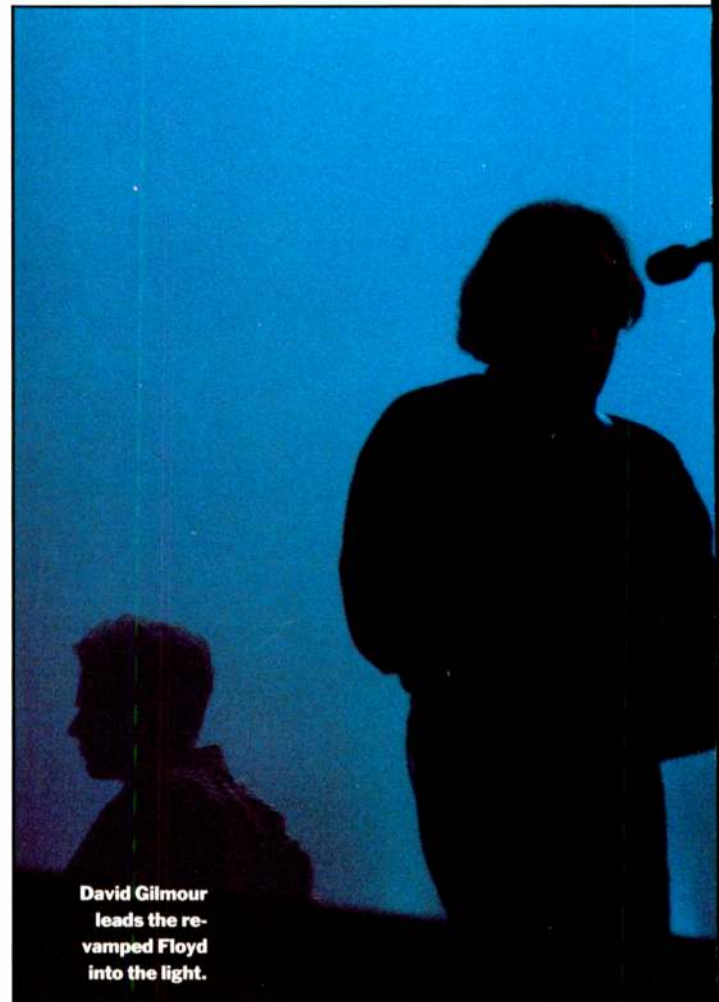
None of the Floyd has a ready explanation for the phenomenal and ongoing success of that 1973 classic, still enjoying a ride on the charts. Mason cites, among other nebulous factors, “that peculiar '60s message” which “still applies to people of whatever age.”

“We always knew,” Gilmour says, “that it would sell more than anything we had done before. Because it was better, more complete and more focused, better cover art. Every detail was well attended to.” Yet both he and Wright seem at least as proud of 1975's *Wish You Were Here*, even though the pressure of following *Dark Side* made its composition and recording excruciatingly difficult for all concerned.

It was around this time that Pink Floyd became a favorite punching bag among the new wave of punk rockers. “I remember it quite well,” Mason says, “because I produced an album by the Damned. Quite illuminating in terms of watching people rediscover the roots of rock 'n' roll, which had become complete techno-flash overkill: Emerson, Lake and Palmer; Pink Floyd; huge massive dinosaurs rumbling across the earth. What punk did was say, ‘We can make records for 20 quid again’; it was about energy and wanting to perform, not who's the greatest musician in the world.”

“Of course,” he maintains, “you don't want the world populated *only* with dinosaurs, but it's a terribly good thing to keep *some* of them alive.”

Coincidentally or not, Waters' writing took a more hard-hitting and overtly topical tack on 1977's *Animals*, which,



David Gilmour leads the re-vamped Floyd into the light.

Wright says, “I'm not very fond of. That was the first one I didn't write anything for and it was the first album where the group was losing its unity. That was where it was beginning where Roger wanted to do everything.” Waters went on to incorporate his political preoccupations into the ambitious autobiographical psychodrama of *The Wall* (1979).

“I love the *Wall* album,” Gilmour emphasizes. “Whatever anyone says, I was there. I have my money on that record, tons and tons of stuff. Myself and [producer Bob] Ezrin. I know lots of people think of that as the first Roger Waters solo album, but it ain't. Roger wouldn't have been able to make that by himself, no way. He's had three other gos at making



solo records, and you can judge for yourself the difference.”

It was at the time of *The Wall* that Rick Wright, in one of the murkier episodes in Pink history, tendered his resignation. According to Wright, “Roger and I just couldn’t get on. Whatever I tried to do, he would say it was wrong. It was impossible for me, really, to work with him.

“Then he said, ‘Either you leave after the album’s made, or I’m going to scrap the whole thing.’ It was an impossible situation. It was a game of bluff, but knowing Roger he might have done what he threatened to do. Which would mean no royalties from the album [to pay off Floyd’s taxes in the wake of an investment scam that left the group near bankruptcy]. So I had to say yes. And in some ways I was happy to get out, because I was fed up with the whole thing. And then, from what I’ve heard, it just got worse and worse for Dave and

him, Wright all but disappeared from the music scene for seven years, much of which he passed in “semi-retirement” on a Greek island.

Gilmour, meanwhile, grew increasingly resentful of the autocratic regime during the recording of Waters’ bleakest and most strident song cycle to date. “Songs in there that we threw off *The Wall*, he brought them back for *The Final Cut*, same songs. I thought, ‘Nobody thought they were that good then, what seems so good now?’ I bet he thought I was being obstructive.” That said, Gilmour calls three of the 12 numbers—“Gunner’s Dream,” “Fletcher’s Memorial Home” and the title track—“really great. I wouldn’t want to knock anything that’s good, whoever it’s by.” But in view of the ill will generated by the *Final Cut* sessions, Waters simply declared Pink Floyd defunct, bringing his thematic and theatrical fixations to bear on a series of solo projects.

Gilmour then recorded his second solo album *About Face*—which, significantly, sounded more “Floydian” than Waters’ *Pros and Cons of Hitch-Hiking*—and undertook a sequence of low-profile gigs as sideman for the likes of Paul McCartney, Bryan Ferry and Pete Townshend. “It’s probably every schoolboy guitar player’s dream,” Gilmour says, “to play things like ‘Won’t Get Fooled Again,’ instead of Pete, with Pete singing it. A seriously fun dream.

“He asked me if I would do the shows with him because he wanted to move away from being the guitar hero. He refused point blank to play electric guitar, and people said, ‘Oh, come on, at least “Won’t Get Fooled Again,” strap on a guitar and do it.’ But he refused, he wanted the whole project to be not ‘Pete Townshend, guitar hero’ but ‘Pete Townshend, singer, writer, band leader.’ It was great.”

By 1986, however, Gilmour—who stresses he had “always made it absolutely clear” to Waters that *he* hadn’t left the group—found himself missing the opportunities afforded by the vehicle of Pink Floyd. Assisted by producer Ezrin and a crack team of outside lyricists and musicians, he and Mason began concocting the *Momentary Lapse of Reason* album. “If I don’t want to throw away 20 years of my hard work and start again with only my solo career, this is what I had to do.” Alluding to the faceless Floyd mystique, he adds: “People don’t know my name. I haven’t spent 20 years building my name, I’ve spent 20 years building up Pink Floyd’s name.”

Among longtime fans, the new Floyd’s credibility was enhanced by the restoration of Rick Wright. “By the time this whole thing started,” Wright says, “I realized I had to get back; I was missing it. I went to Dave and said, ‘If you ever need me or want to work with me, I really want to work with you.’ Halfway through the recording of the album he asked me to come along and play on some tracks.” Still not reinstated as a full-fledged partner in Pink Floyd, Wright has been working on a salary basis—much as had been the case on the *Wall* shows. “Both sides said, we’ll see how it goes. For me, it’s gone extremely well; I’m really happy.”

One person who was not happy about these developments was Waters, who bitterly denounced the new Floyd as a fraud, and even took legal action against Gilmour and Mason in an attempt to block their use of the band’s name. Thus was Pink Floyd’s inscrutable anonymity shattered by the barrage



Nick on *The Final Cut*, which I had nothing to do with.

“I wish Roger all the best in everything he does, but he’s an extremely hard man to work with. It’s a shame he isn’t more open to other people’s ideas, because it makes the music so much better.”

Ironically, Wright ended up the only member of Pink Floyd to make money from the live performances of *The Wall*—which he remembers as “hell to do, but a brilliant concept and an amazing piece of theater”—because Waters had put him on a salary pending his final exit from the group, and the cost of the show (like everything else about it) was so spectacular that the band lost a fortune. *The Wall* behind



of attacks and counterattacks. "If one's kids behaved like that, fought in public like we have," Mason says. "I'd be very cross with them. There would be no pocket money for a week." He contends that Waters "wanted the band to finish, and he could have finished it by staying in it. His big mistake was to leave. Because by leaving suddenly it regenerated."

"Roger said Pink Floyd was creatively dead. Quite right, it was. But by leaving it, the ashes suddenly picked up. Dave had been incredibly repressed by Roger, particularly over the past few years of Roger wanting to do more and more. There was a whole bunch of stuff waiting to get out, which I don't think Dave even realized."

"We could have taken five years to make another album, but Roger looking over the



**The pinkest Floyd (l.-r.): Roger Waters, Syd Barrett, Nick Mason and Rick Wright.**

gunsights at us made it happen in 10 months. There was absolutely no 'maybe we should, maybe we shouldn't.' It was 'let's do it, now, who do we need, how will we do it.' It was galvanizing. I think most bands work best when they're just that bit hungry, when they want to prove themselves. That's why young bands are always so much hotter. The group spirit is there. Everyone wants to get on with it, do it together—not worry about who did what, and who's really the leader of the band, and can they buy another house in the south of France."

While wrapping up work on the album, Gilmour and Mason spent five months devising the staging of the new show with Marc Brickman, production director Robbie Williams and set designer Paul Staples. In the process, Gilmour says, "we typed up lists of titles from the first record onward right through. Every title, we'd tick against them reasons for doing them or not doing them. Like if I sang or co-wrote it, Rick co-wrote it, whatever. Or if we had a great piece of film to go with it. Or if it was a great song." He stresses that all but three of the final choices—"Crazy Diamond," "Another Brick in the Wall" and "Run Like Hell"—originally featured his lead vocal exactly as he performs them now. (Certain moments that *did* spotlight Waters, such as the first part of "Comfortably Numb," are sung onstage by Wright, Guy Pratt and/or Jon Carin.)

Gilmour says he won't let the bad blood between them affect his appreciation for, and identification with, Waters' old lyrics. "Why should I suddenly feel strange about singing a lyric I didn't feel strange about singing for 10 years? They are very good lyrics, that I agree with and can feel for myself. I'd have been proud to write some of those lyrics."

"Even the songs that Roger supposedly wrote by himself," he adds, "it's never the full story. You can never say exactly what happened when that record was made. The whole ending part of 'Another Brick in the Wall Part 2,' he didn't write the guitar solo or the chords in that section. He didn't

make up the drum parts, the rhythm. I'm not going to abandon something I've worked really hard on, or feel I had something major to do with, just because it says Roger Waters wrote it. Life's too short."

Asked about the absence of pre-*Dark Side* music (apart from *Meddle*'s "One of These Days"), Mason responds:

"There's something about a lot of the earlier material that's just a bit *too* early, that feels dated—perhaps lyrically. 'Echoes' is something a lot of people would like to hear, that we did rehearse and did play for a while. But I think Dave didn't really feel comfortable singing about albatrosses and sunshine. It was

just a bit too sort of...hmmm, hmmm...." The droll drummer chuckles and rolls his eyes.

"I love [Syd Barrett's] 'Astronomy Domine.' The trouble is you're right back into the I Ching and interstellar exploration. I think that's something Dave would have some problem with as he approaches dignified middle age, shrieking out this information to the audience. It's easier to talk about how hard life is and how depressed one gets."

Mason says they considered performing *Dark Side of the Moon* in its entirety for certain shows, but it "wasn't satisfactory when you're moving from city to city to do that because it's not a broad enough view of our work. People would have been disappointed to miss out on stuff from *The Wall* and *Wish You Were Here*, and it didn't feel right to switch back. But I still like it as an idea for the future."

*Animals* is not represented at all—in part, Gilmour explains, because "we could do three other great songs" in the time taken up by one of that Orwellian trilogy's rambling compositions. "Sheep" came closest to inclusion "because I had a lot to do with making it come out the way it came out and I feel quite proud of it. But Roger sang it and I don't think I could sing it with the same particular venom."

Waters, to give him his due, has certainly never lacked the courage of his convictions—even if that meant steering Pink Floyd away from what the fans expected, and ultimately abandoning the group altogether. His latest concept album, *Amused to Death*, now nearing completion in London, is said to feature such out-of-character elements as a catchy upbeat tune or two, and—of all things—a happy ending.

Gilmour readily concedes that he would not be where he is today had it not been for Waters, and that Pink Floyd is a lesser entity without him. Invoking the example of the Beatles, he notes that "the whole was greater than the sum of its parts." Fortunately for Gilmour, however, he can sing Waters' lyrics and draw from the Floyd's 1970s arsenal of theatrical effects, and few will notice the difference. Waters, by contrast, is left to manage without not only the Pink Floyd

# THE GEORGIA SATELLITES



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brand name, but also Gilmour's more tangible *musical* contribution. Still, one hopes he will eventually take some pride in the fact that, even in his absence, his old ideas are still reaching such a vast audience.

**W**hen David Gilmour set out to form an expanded live Pink Floyd line-up, Tim Renwick must have seemed as logical a choice for second guitarist as Ron Wood had been for the Rolling Stones. After attending high school with Roger Waters, future Floyd art director Storm Thorgerson (of Hipgnosis) and Syd Barrett—who was also Tim's Boy Scout patrol leader!—Renwick became an avid follower of Gilmour's pre-Floyd Cambridge band Jokers Wild. "I remember the day Dave arrived in this fusty little club in Cambridge called the Alley Club, and told me he'd just been taken on as a member of the Pink Floyd. I remember thinking, 'Wonder if this will ever happen to me.' Very strange now."

In the 1970s his own band Quiver shared manager Steve O'Rourke with the Floyd—of whom Renwick "was always very much in awe"—and often served as their supporting act. After Quiver merged with the Sutherland Brothers, Gilmour produced some of their records, and Renwick ended up strumming an acoustic guitar on the *Wall* film soundtrack. Having accompanied Waters on his first solo tour, he boasts the distinction of being the one musician to have worked with both rival Floyd camps.

"Working with Roger was slightly strained," Renwick recalls. "He's one of these people who needs to have ultimate control of every facet of what's going on; he got very, very obsessive about things. Dave is almost the exact opposite, very, very relaxed. He leaves a lot of things up to you, whereas Roger would have very fixed ideas: 'You are going to do *this!*'"

**"There are advantages to our anonymity, to never having sold ourselves with our faces."** This tour has been much more fun, much more sense of camaraderie, a real group. Roger is a bit of a loner, sets himself apart.

"But when I spent a lot of time with him socially, he was really a very charming bloke. Sometimes he's made out to be too much of an ogre because he's got such strong opinions about things. He tends to thrive on tensions in order to create." (In any event, the Waters tour was ultimately a "wonderful break" for Renwick, insofar as it triggered his long association with Eric Clapton—whose participation in the *Pros and Cons* shows was perhaps the most incongruous move in Slowhand's entire checkered career.)

Guy Pratt, who once played bass with the Dream Academy (which Gilmour also produced), views his present position from the slightly different perspective of a youthful Pink Floyd fan. "When those kids go mad in the front rows, I *know* what it's like—I was one myself." Scott Page, by contrast, had only ever heard one Pink Floyd song—"Another Brick in

the Wall"—when Gilmour invited him to play sax on *Lapse of Reason* and then the tour.

"That's the honest-to-God truth—I must be the only person in the world who'd never even heard *Dark Side of the Moon*," says Page, who previously worked with the likes of Supertramp, Toto, James Brown and Chuck Berry. "But even so I got a kind of buzz that there was something different about Pink Floyd; they've created a mystique that's very special. And now I'm their biggest fan. To me Gilmour's the master of melody. He can kill you with two little notes; every night he's immaculate. Every night the hair stands up on my arm when he plays 'Comfortably Numb.'"

"This is the first gig where I've been able to 'wear my own clothes.' Meaning I can do what I do without someone constantly telling me to be someone else. This is the easiest gig



I've ever had, as far as there's no pressure.

"One night we're on the bandstand, and all the synthesizers go down. You'd think Gilmour would be freaking—but he's *laughing*. There's no tension, the guy's not worried about it at all. Big deal. And that kind of low pressure makes it really easy to work.

"Dave's such a positive-thinking guy. So's Nick Mason. It took a while for some of us to realize that Nick brings something that you just can't buy, a style and feel that's a big part of the Pink Floyd magic. Rick, too."

In light of the futuristic image for which the Floyd became famous, it seems slightly ironic that Mason and Wright are each now shadowed by a young musician schooled in the technological advances that have overtaken their instruments. Like all his colleagues, Gary Wallis—whom Gilmour spotted when the classically trained percussionist was accompanying Nik Kershaw—stresses the tour's relaxed and nurturing ambience. "Dave encourages you to play your own thing within his structure—that's why he employed you, for what *you* do. Some bands, when you fuck up they snarl or give you the bad eye, whereas Dave just laughs. By doing that, you want to correct yourself a lot more."

After meeting synthesizer wizard Jon Carin when both were backing Bryan Ferry at Live Aid, Gilmour invited him to jam at his home, where Carin popped up with the chord progression that inspired "Learning to Fly." Jon was pleasantly surprised when he was credited as co-writer—"just shows you what kind of a guy David is." The proliferation of bylines on *Lapse of Reason* notwithstanding, Carin—who played on the album—characterizes all the songs as "99 percent Dave."

Rounding out the line-up are the seasoned young chanteuses Margaret Taylor and Rachel Fury, and Durga McBroom. Gilmour had never even heard McBroom when he added her to the lineup last November on the strength of her photograph (and the Nile Rogers album cited in her résumé) to fulfill his whim that a black singer bring "a bit of color," as

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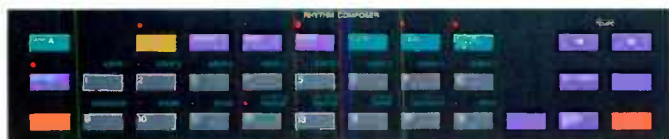
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## Rick Wright: "There'll come a time when people won't accept Mick Jagger as a 60-year-old man prancing around. But I can see Pink Floyd playing into their 70s."

she puts it, to a full-length Floyd concert film. (Though its commercial release remains uncertain, it has yielded videoclips of "On the Turning Away" and "Dogs of War" as well as live tracks on a recent maxi-single.)

If there is one thing this diverse troupe has in common, it is an extraordinary regard for, and fascination with, David Gilmour. "He's a real thrill seeker," the voluble Page says of the author of "Learning to Fly." "Here we are on a big giant tour, and the guy is out jetskiing, cableskiing, hang gliding, flying 757s—he wants to be able to do *everything*."

"Every night when we hang with the crew or in the hotel rooms, the conversation *always* comes back to Gilmour. He really affects everybody, in a strange way."

By the time Pink Floyd hits its next city, the normally smooth-running tour has taken such a farcical turn that the band is now calling it Spinal Tap. Nick Mason's passport and computer have mysteriously vanished from his Columbus hotel room; then at the Pittsburgh airport Rick Wright and the auxiliary musicians and singers are obliged to broil on the tarmac for two hours because someone has forgotten to arrange ground transportation. "This would never happen if Steve were here," Wright sighs. Manager Steve O'Rourke, along with Gilmour and Mason—for whom automobile racing relegates even drumming to second place among his major passions—have taken the day off to attend the Indianapolis 500. "They received us like royalty there," Mason reports later. "On a scale of enjoyment from one to 10, I'd rate the day at least a 15."

Not so for the rest of the musicians. The Floyd's Pittsburgh hotel is hosting, of all things, a convention of blind bowlers, and most of the guests appear to be equipped with metal canes or seeing-eye dogs. In attending to their needs, the hotel staff has neglected to get the Floyd entourage's rooms ready in time for their arrival.

The following afternoon the chauffeur loses his way during the short drive to Three Rivers Stadium, then ends up driving the band to the stage door full-speed in reverse. Even the fan zeal seems to have gone slightly out of hand: Among such customary Floyd totems as silkscreen banners depicting characters from *The Wall* against the album cover's white brick backdrop, a real pig's head, decked out in sunglasses, leans atop a blood-stained pole.

To cap it all off, the power blows during "Sorrow," occasioning an unplanned 10-minute intermission. "That song was getting a bit boring, anyway," Gilmour drily announces when power is restored. "Let's try another one." From there on in, the performance proceeds in its usual spectacular form, and 51,101 mostly-young Pittsburghers respond with rapturous ovations.

The day's mishaps have hardly dented the band's morale. "This is the happiest tour that I've ever been on," Wright


says, "in terms of friendship, and being with the other musicians. After *The Wall*, where the ego trips made life unbearable, this tour is the opposite. You can tell in the way we play, the way the music is sounding onstage. Nick and Dave are playing better than ever before, partly because of the good feelings we have for each other backstage. This year has gone so fast; I know when we finish I'm going to miss it."

After the European finale late this summer, Wright intends to spend three weeks sailing the Aegean on his yacht before buckling down to writing material that he hopes will prove "good enough for Dave to say, 'Yeah, I like that'"—and include on the next Floyd album. He also expresses an interest in composing film scores.

As we talk in the hotel lobby, two teenage boys interrupt to ask if we know which floor Pink Floyd is staying on, saying they'd dreamed for years of getting one of their autographs. When Wright deadpans that he was unaware the Floyd was even at that hotel, the boys wander off disconsolately.

"There are two advantages to our anonymity, to our never having sold ourselves with our faces," Wright says. "One is that you can walk around the street with no problem. The other advantage, which we're now finding out, is that since nobody looks on us as rock stars we can go out at 45 and play our music as long as we want, because people have never come to see us like they'd go to see Mick Jagger or Rod Stewart. There'll come a time when people won't accept Mick Jagger as a 60-year-old man prancing around. But I can see now Pink Floyd playing into their 70s. Because a Pink Floyd show is not the individuals, it's the music and the lights."

Whereupon the two autograph hounds reappear, having gleaned the secret of Wright's identity—only to discover they've left their pens at home. One attempts to stem the embarrassment with, "What do you think of Roger Waters?"

"He's a very clever man," Wright replies. "If you want to know more, buy the next issue of *Musician*." Then he takes it upon himself to borrow paper and pen from the front desk so that the boys might have their Pink Floyd autograph. 

**D**avid Gilmour plays a Fender Stratocaster and Takamine acoustic guitar. He uses a Bob Bradshaw pedalboard, Fender and Hi-Watt amplifiers, and Marshall and WEM speakers. **Richard Wright's** keyboards of choice are a Hammond organ, Kurzweil and Roland Juno Super JX. **Nick Mason** plays Ludwig drums with Remo drum heads, Paiste cymbals and Drum Workshop pedals. He also uses Simmons SDX electronic drums.

Of the Pink Floyd auxiliary, bassist **Guy Pratt** has a Spector NS2, 1953 Fender Jazz, Music Man Sting Ray guitar and Status fretless. He plugs into a Trace Elliot MP-11 preamp and Boss NCC-700 effects board. **Tim Renwick** favors a Fender Stratocaster (Elite and Vintage series), Takamine acoustic and Ovation high-strung. His amps are Fender Pro-Reverb and Twin 2s. Saxophonist **Scott Page** has the Yamaha series 62 soprano, alto, tenor and baritone. He also plays Signature guitars with Heint electronics, Digitech effect pedals, a Morley volume pedal and a Samson wireless. **Jon Carin** tickles the plastics of Kurzweil, Roland, E-max, Yamaha, Sycologic, Korg and Ensoniq synthesizers. Last but hardly least, percussionist **Gary Wallis** comes equipped with a 14" bird's-eye maple snare; 8, 10, 12 and 14" rack toms; a 20" floor kick; 22" mounted gong drum; LP timbalitas (9½-10½"), timbales (14-15") and congas; six mounted cowbells; eight Octabans; a tambourine; two DW trigger kicks; and 12 Simmons pads. But wait! His electric gear includes a Yamaha DMP7, Simmons SDS7, SDS5, MTX9 and MTM; Akai S900 sampler and Yamaha SPX90—not to mention five Detonator Bugs.

THE  
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Photo shot on location in Nashville, TN, 150 Second Ave.

# STAX

from page 24

ing the astonishing outfits in the lobby, I went in to see William Bell and Danger Zone onstage and in command. I had never seen Bell, Stax's pipe-smoking intellectual, perform, and seeing him, relaxed and open in a blue jumpsuit, doing "Everybody Loves a Winner," "Every Day Will Be Like a Holiday" and "You Don't Miss Your Water," I found myself wondering how, even without Otis Redding and the Bar-Kays, a studio with as much talent as Stax had could also have the executive ability to destroy itself. William Bell and Carla Thomas were the best acts I saw all night.

Almost as good, though, was Luther Ingram, who came onstage next, still wearing dark glasses, now with a black velvet suit. Ingram hides behind the glasses and an offhand manner, but onstage he is most accessible, a performer of deep feeling and unexpected humor, with a voice not so different from Al Green's—less acrobatic but no less convincing. He opened wisely with "Stand By Me," building to "If Loving You Is Wrong."

While Ingram was still on I went backstage to congratulate William Bell and Rufus and Carla Thomas, walking into a

controversy over Sam Coplin's taping, which nobody had noticed until the show was well under way. Some of the tapes, cassettes and quarter-inch, had been confiscated from the truck in the midst of threats from the musicians not to go on and from the musicians' union to stop the show. By the time I got back to my seat Johnny Taylor was on. He looked good, in a black sequined jacket, but he was hoarse. Still he stayed on forever, doing an impressive and eventually numbing series of hits—"Who's Making Love," "Disco Lady" and a thousand more.

The technique of staying onstage until there is no audience for the performer following you probably antedates the minstrel days, and all Memphis performers know it. Isaac Hayes' set was late and anticlimactic. It began with a fanfare from behind a closed curtain, long synthesizer chords becoming a boogaloo rhythm pattern, curtain up, the whole thing developing into the Doors' "Light My Fire" and, after a bit, "Never Can Say Goodbye." Then as Hayes, dressed in a black-tie outfit, sat at the baby grand and performed a touching number called "Windows of the World," people who had to get up early in the morning began to walk out. Isaac Hayes' talent is not in question, but that night, the audience

had no energy left to give him. His set closed with "Shaft," from his Oscar-winning film score.

After the show it turned out that all the unauthorized tapes were accounted for except the 24-track master. Most of the performers went to an Atlanta club where there was supposed to be food, a banquet table for the Stax family. The air there turned out to be bad, the lights aggressive, the banquet grim. The performers were herded into the foyer and photographed for the club's celebrity-photo wall. Carla Thomas was waiting for the limo to come back from taking Johnny Taylor to his hotel when closing time came and she found herself standing on the club's steps. She had come from benighted Memphis to progressive Atlanta, where she had worried, she had worked, she had done good. At the club, she had been used and insulted, and at the concert, in her view, perhaps robbed. She was exhausted, and she wanted to sit down. This music is about redemption. A friend, putting an arm around the magnificent shoulders of Carla Thomas, said, "Don't worry, baby. That's why they call it the blues." ☐

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## A Man You Best Be Paying Attention To.

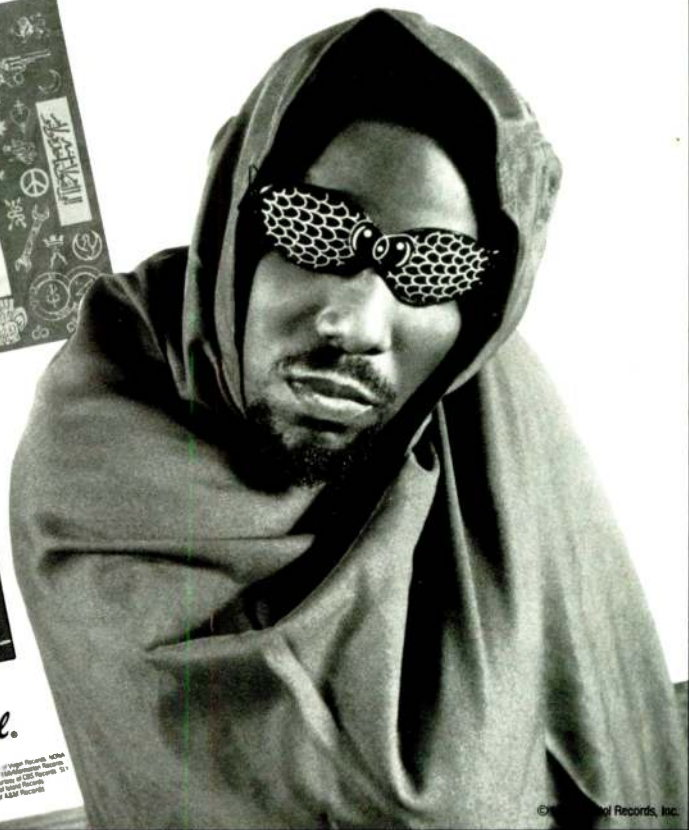


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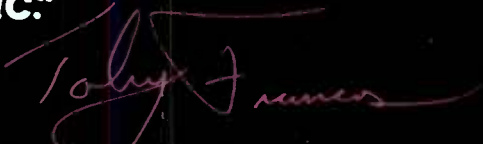
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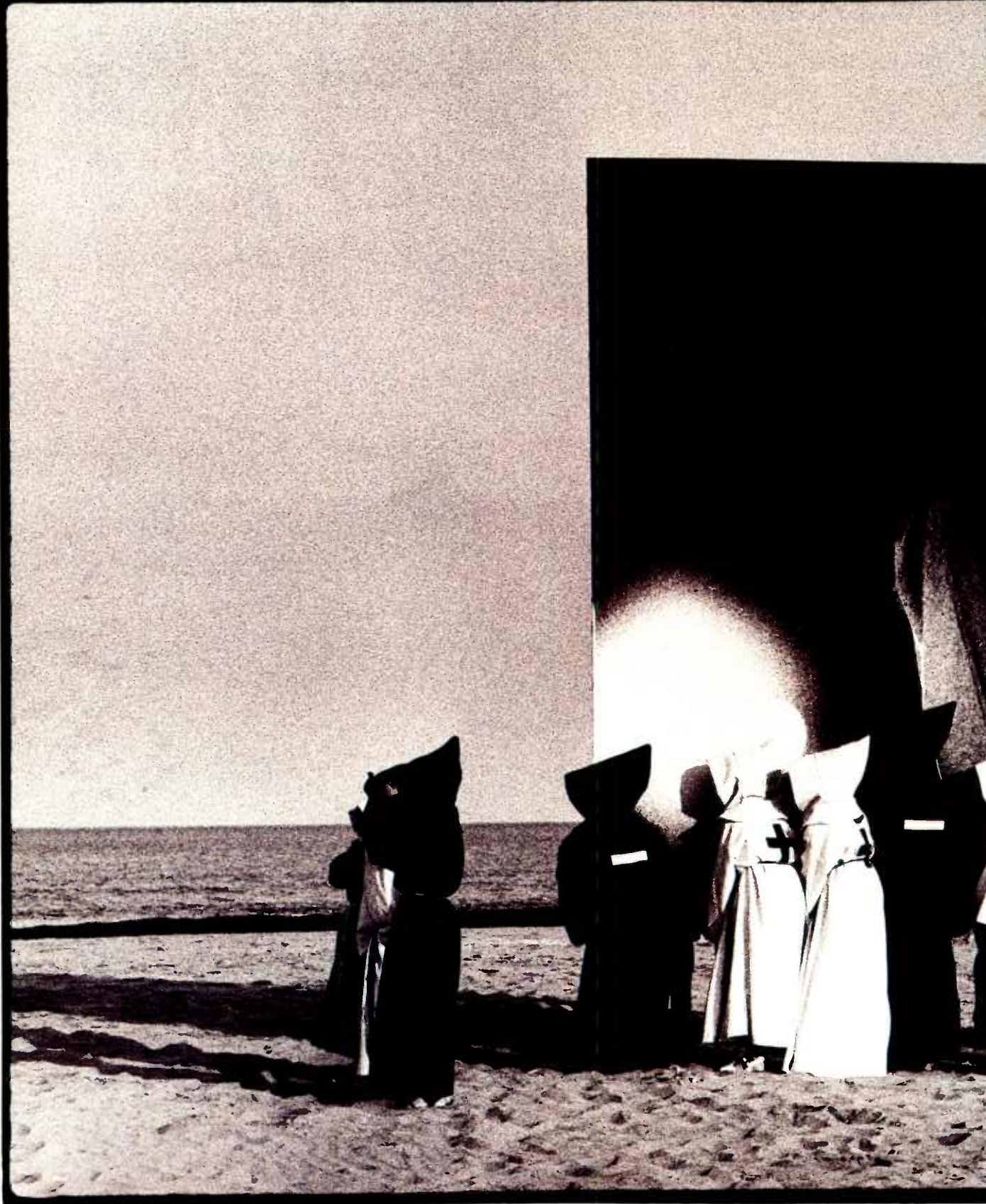
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# THE SUBSTANCE OF



# JOY DIVISION

## A TALK WITH **NEW ORDER**



"Where will it end? Where will it end..."  
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"WHERE WILL IT END?" WE USED TO ASK EACH OTHER, SMILING NERVOUSLY. FOR SOME OF US, IT WOULD END SOON. ONE FRIEND, A BASS PLAYER, BOUGHT A \$10 BAG OF HEROIN AFTER A GIG, WENT BACK TO HIS LOWER EAST SIDE WALK-UP, AND WAS GONE. ANOTHER FRIEND, A CHRONICLER OF THINGS PUNK, CLIMBED THE STAIRS TO HIS APARTMENT ONE AFTERNOON, FLOPPED DOWN ON HIS COUCH, AND NEVER GOT UP. DOWNTOWN NEW YORK, 1979-1980: "WHERE WILL IT END?"

THE SOUNDTRACK WAS AN ALBUM WITH A BLACK, ROUGH-TEXTURED SLEEVE AND, OVER-PRINTED IN WHITE ON THE FRONT COVER, A RECTANGULAR GRAPH OF PEAKS AND VALLEYS. WE THOUGHT IT WAS AN EEG GRAPH, A READOUT OF SOME PSYCHIC EXTREMITY. IN FACT, IT WAS REPRODUCED FROM A TEXT ON RADIO-ASTRONOMY, A GRAPH REPRESENTING "THE SCREAM OF AN EXPLODING STAR." THE REFERENCE WAS FROM THE WRITINGS OF WILLIAM BURROUGHS: "...REEK OF EXPLODED STAR BETWEEN US...."

THE TITLE OF THE BLACK ALBUM WAS, PERHAPS, IRONIC: *UNKNOWN PLEASURES*. THE BAND CALLED ITSELF JOY DIVISION, SLANG FOR THE PROSTITUTES' WING IN A NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP. PEOPLE SAID THE MUSIC WAS DEPRESSING, CALLED THE BAND DOOM-AND-GLOOM MONGERS. WE KNEW BETTER. *UNKNOWN PLEASURES* WAS SIMPLY AC-

BY  
**ROBERT  
PALMER**

PHOTO: ANTON CORBIJN  
World Radio History

curate reportage, a record of the way we lived. And died.

It was a period of musical renaissance; punk rock's original energy and momentum mutating as a second wave of bands grappled with ways to make the music fresher, more inventive, capable of expressing deeper feelings and more complex truths without compromising the pissed-off intensity, jagged edges and plainspoken conciseness of the original. In New York, we danced to the fractured, bellicose rhythms of 8-Eyed Spy and James White. Black Flag, X, Chris D.'s all-star Flesheaters and the nascent Gun Club raged in Los Angeles. From Britain came wave after wave of bands that seemed to offer infinite permutations of rhythm-and-noise: Mekons, Gang of Four, Pop Group, Delta 5, the Fall. Every week brought some beautiful new monstrosity; the scene's one constant seemed to be constant change.

We went out to the clubs because there was genius there: live performances that were often far superior to the bands' vinyl efforts. Exceptions included X's *Wild Gift*, Public Image Ltd.'s monumental *Metal Box* (clamorous machine-shop funk pressed at 45 rpm that never sounded properly corruscating when released in the U.S. at 33⅓), and, especially, *Unknown Pleasures*. Joy Division was booked into Hurrah, on New York's upper west side, for its first American gig in early May 1980. We made the pilgrimage uptown, anticipating something absolutely transcendent, only to discover that there would be no Joy Division show, not that night, not ever. Ian Curtis, the band's singer and lyricist, had hanged himself in his Manchester home.

The remaining members of the band—drummer Stephen Morris, bassist Peter Hook and guitarist Bernard Sumner (a.k.a. Bernard Albrecht, a.k.a. Bernard Dicken, a.k.a. Barney Rubble)—had already announced their intention to regroup as New Order, and to make good on their American performing commitments. And in September, the trio did appear at Hurrah, performing all-new material, taking turns at tentative, almost whispered vocals.

"Sometimes absence can be almost palpable," Debra Rae Cohen wrote soon after in the *Soho News*, articulating the sense of dislocation we all felt that evening; "tonight it takes up center stage. Guitarist Bernard Albrecht hugs the left-hand wall, bassist Peter Hook crowds right, edging away from the center the way that horses shy at phantoms. The darkness in front of drummer Stephen Morris has the impact of a spotlight. Grim-faced, sober-toned, eyes always straight ahead, New Order wind swatches of sound around the space where Ian Curtis isn't." The atmosphere was nearly claustrophobic as Bernard sang, "I wish you were here with me now..."

Later that night, the club DJ played Grace Jones' new dance-music version of the Joy Division anthem "She's Lost Control." We danced to the slick, almost robotic beats as Grace vamped: "She gave away the secrets of her past and said, 'I've lost control again.'" We danced to Joy Division's indelible swan song, "Love Will Tear Us Apart." I thought of a poem a friend had written: "My feet are tiny noises/ What will happen to me?"

## JOY DIVISION ORDER

It's 1988, and Debra and I, now husband and wife, are in Los Angeles. We look up a couple of friends from "the old days" in New York and find them happily ensconced in a house in the hills, with a child on the way. The four members of New Order—keyboardist and guitarist Gillian Gilbert joined the band shortly after that first brief American tour—are in town. They've been cutting some additional tracks for a Quincy Jones

remix of their "Blue Monday" single; giving a royal command performance for "Fergie," the Duchess of York; and breaking with a long-standing tradition by giving interviews. "I talked to 'em today, and they don't seem to mind talking about Joy Division now," my friend tells me as we sprawl comfortably in his hillside home. "They seem like nice people. Kind of quiet." Who could have imagined it would turn out like *this*?

The next day, I meet New Order around the pool at their hotel in Hollywood. Peter Hook looks tanned, fit and a little beefy, befitting the band's proudly unreconstructed "poonk." Bernard Sumner is pale, soft-spoken, shy. Stephen Morris, the drummer, is more voluble; he is skinny and English-winter white. Gillian Gilbert, sitting with him under an umbrella to escape the treacherous L.A. sun, seems an even, sensible lass with skin the texture of porcelain.

Hook seems to be the most articulate of the four, and we discuss something that always puzzled me. Joy Division, as opposed to New Order, derived much of its impact from Ian Curtis' emotional intensity and deeply felt spirituality. But Curtis wouldn't have had that impact if the music he declaimed over had been regulation wham-and-slam punk. In the beginning, performing as Warsaw, the band did play more or less generic punk rock, and there wasn't much about Warsaw to suggest that the band was going to develop any more originality or have any more long-lasting influence than, say, Stiff Little Fingers. Not at first. Then, between the band's 1977 EP *An Ideal for Living* and the mid-1979 release of *Unknown Pleasures*, an extraordinary change took place. The Joy Division of *Unknown Pleasures* displayed a seething, sharply defined uniqueness. Bass playing melodic leads against churning guitar drones; passages of chiseled melodic counterpoint; yawning chasms of emptiness with evanescent clouds of guitar and synth noise hovering, wraith-like, just outside the range of vision; a style so singular that the next, more popular wave of four-piece, atmosphere-guitar bands, from U2 to Echo & the Bunnymen to the Teardrop Explodes, sounded initially like so many Joy Division clones. How did this happen?

"Me and Bernard began together," Hook recalls, a smile tugging at his lips. "We were both 21 when we started and had never played an instrument before in our lives. It was straight after seeing the first Sex Pistols gig in Manchester. I'd been



**Gilbert,  
Morris, Hook  
& Sumner:  
They no longer  
let the demons  
get them  
down.**

reading a lot about them that year in the paper, and I thought, oh, this seems like a lark. We saw the gig advertised in the *Manchester Evening News*—Sex Pistols, 50p, which was about 75 cents—so we went down: me, Bernard and our friend Terry, who's still with us, our road manager. We thought they were *so bad*, but yet it was *so exciting*. God! We could have a go at that.

"We had no musical *education*, really; we just started completely fresh. That's one of the reasons why we chose Gillian later, for New Order; it was basically because she couldn't play. Which is quite a selfish reason, really; that way there's nothing to divert from what *you* are doing at the time.

months and months, and we were just writing songs in a sort of vacuum. We couldn't take the songs out and play them for people and get their reactions; all we did was write them and play them for ourselves.

"Ian was writing poetry, and he had a book full of lyrics. He didn't play, but he'd take a page out and start singing, and we'd jam along with him. He'd work on the lyrics as we were doing the music, it was one process; the songs would just sort of *unfold*. One day he was trying to learn how to play the guitar, and he came in playing 'ding ding ding,' three notes. We said all right, we'll try and do something around those three notes, and out of that came 'Day of the Lords' on *Unknown Pleasures*."

Bernard Sumner remembers an unlikely origin for another song from that album: "Early on, when we were still Warsaw, Ian met this guy at RCA who had a mate in Norwich with a record label, and connections to TK Records in Miami. The guy was into Northern Soul, but he thought he'd like to start a punk label, so we recorded an album." (That early album has since been bootlegged as *Warsaw*. You can hear straightforward, live-in-the-studio versions of some of the classic early Joy Division material on it, the ingenious arrangements already well worked out, but lacking the atmospheric studio sheen later provided by Martin Hannett's production.) "Anyway, this guy had a record, 'Keep On Keepin' On,' and suggested we do a cover of it. He gave us a copy so we could learn how to play it, only we couldn't play it. We tried, and that song turned into 'Interzone'; we used that for the basic riff. We never signed anything when we recorded that Warsaw album. When Rob Gretton started managing us, he said, 'Y'know,



"As for that change in our style you asked me about, I think it was all down to Ian educating me and Bernard and Stephen. Ian was a walking music book. He introduced us to Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground, to Iggy Pop and the Stooges, and to the Doors. When people heard 'No Love Lost,' off *An Ideal for Living*, they said, 'Oh God, that's just a total Doors rip-off.' And, except for Ian, I don't think any of us had yet heard the Doors."

Stephen Morris offers an alternative explanation of the sudden, explosive growth in Joy Division's music. "I think the change occurred basically because we couldn't get any gigs, for

you shouldn't have done that..."

New Order's stability and longevity in the face of changes that would have torn many bands apart can be at least partly attributed to Gretton and to Tony Wilson, the team that manages and records the band. They came together early on. "The punk scene in Manchester was centered around maybe half a dozen clubs, and Rob Gretton used to DJ at the major club, which is called Rafter's," says Peter Hook. "He also promoted his own punk gigs at another club. Tony Wilson, who started Factory Records, was doing his TV program, 'Something Else,' in Manchester, and he had the Sex Pistols, Elvis

## NEW ORDER

Costello, he had everybody on right when they were making an impact. And they were very punky then; it was a great struggle for him to get them on, really.

"Tony also put all these Manchester bands on: the Buzzcocks, Slaughter and the Dogs. He was at Rafter's one night when Ian was really drunk, and Ian went up to him and grabbed him by the collar and said, 'Hey, ya bastard, why doncha put us on ya program?' We had to drag Ian off of him! It was really funny, looking back on it, but I'm sure Tony wasn't amused at the time. Around that time we played a Stiff Records challenge night at Rafter's, and we'd had a load of aggro that night, we were so angry when we went on that the set was a really heavy, intense thing. That was when Rob said, 'I'd like to work with you.' We met Tony Wilson a couple of more times after that, and Rob found out he was interested in setting up his own record label. And he started Factory Records, which is still in exactly the same place. We're still living in the same places *we* were in. Which is quite good. It's nice to be regional, as opposed to playing the game where you have to head for London the minute you start your band. We wouldn't have enjoyed that."

Another thing that hasn't changed is the importance of Peter Hook's bass as a melodic voice in the band's music. "I don't know how to explain it," says Hook. "I *do* know I've never really liked people saying, 'Ah, the New Order sound, as soon as *you* come in, everyone knows immediately it's New Order.' I went through a phase where people would tell me that and I'd feel paranoid about it. I'd go in the practice room and actually try to change the way I played.

Because I thought it must be really bad, I must be sounding exactly the same on every record! In the Joy Division days, I was blissfully unaware of the whole thing. Looking back at the bass riffs on '24 Hours,' 'Love Will Tear Us Apart,' 'She's Lost Control,' I'm sort of amazed I did them, really."

Stephen Morris doesn't take the whole thing quite as seriously. "I think Hooky plays his bass like that because we played so loud in rehearsal," he suggests with a smirk. "We used to rehearse in a big warehouse sort of building, with a punk band in one room, a reggae band next door, and there was a lot of competition as to who could be the loudest. I don't think Hooky could hear his bass unless he played up on the neck. That's probably the reason he plays bass like a lead guitar. We had cheap shitty instruments and cheap shitty amplifiers and the only way we could get a decent sound was to turn the racket up."

After Ian Curtis' death, the decision to carry on as New Order was not a difficult one, the band members say. Figuring out how to reorganize the group and reshuffle the duties of

each member took a while longer. At the time of those first New Order gigs in America, before the addition of Gillian Gilbert, everyone was singing, or trying to, and both Sumner and Morris switched back and forth between their primary instruments and keyboards. "At that point we didn't really know who was going to do what," says Stephen Morris. "We knew we had to start again, with new songs. We knew someone was going to sing, but nobody really wanted to do it. So it was like, well, you do this, I'll do that, but if I'm gonna do this I can't play that at the same time...eventually, it all settled down. It became obvious that Bernard was best suited to singing, for example."

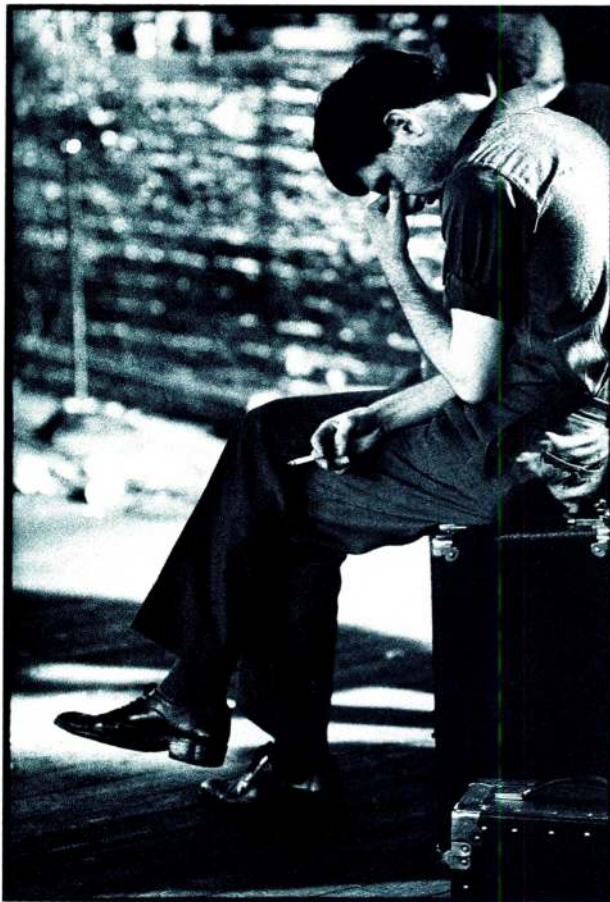
"I'd never done any singing, never even sang backup," recalls Sumner, the most soft-spoken of the lot. "I still have trouble singing while playing guitar or keyboards, although of course it's much easier now. Working with producers, playing live, doing it all over and over, all that has helped me. If you listen to *Substance* [the double-album collection of New Order singles] you hear my voice going from being very frail, through a very definite transition. John Robie taught me a lot about how to breathe at the right time, how to get volume out of my voice without shouting."

When New Order traveled to New York to work with dance music producers John Robie and Arthur Baker in 1984, some longtime fans were nonplussed. Baker and Robie were the masterminds behind the groundbreaking "Planet Rock" by Afrika Bambaataa and Soul Sonic Force, a single whose visionary fusion of funk rhythms with Kraftwerkian electro-pop set the stage for much of the dance music that

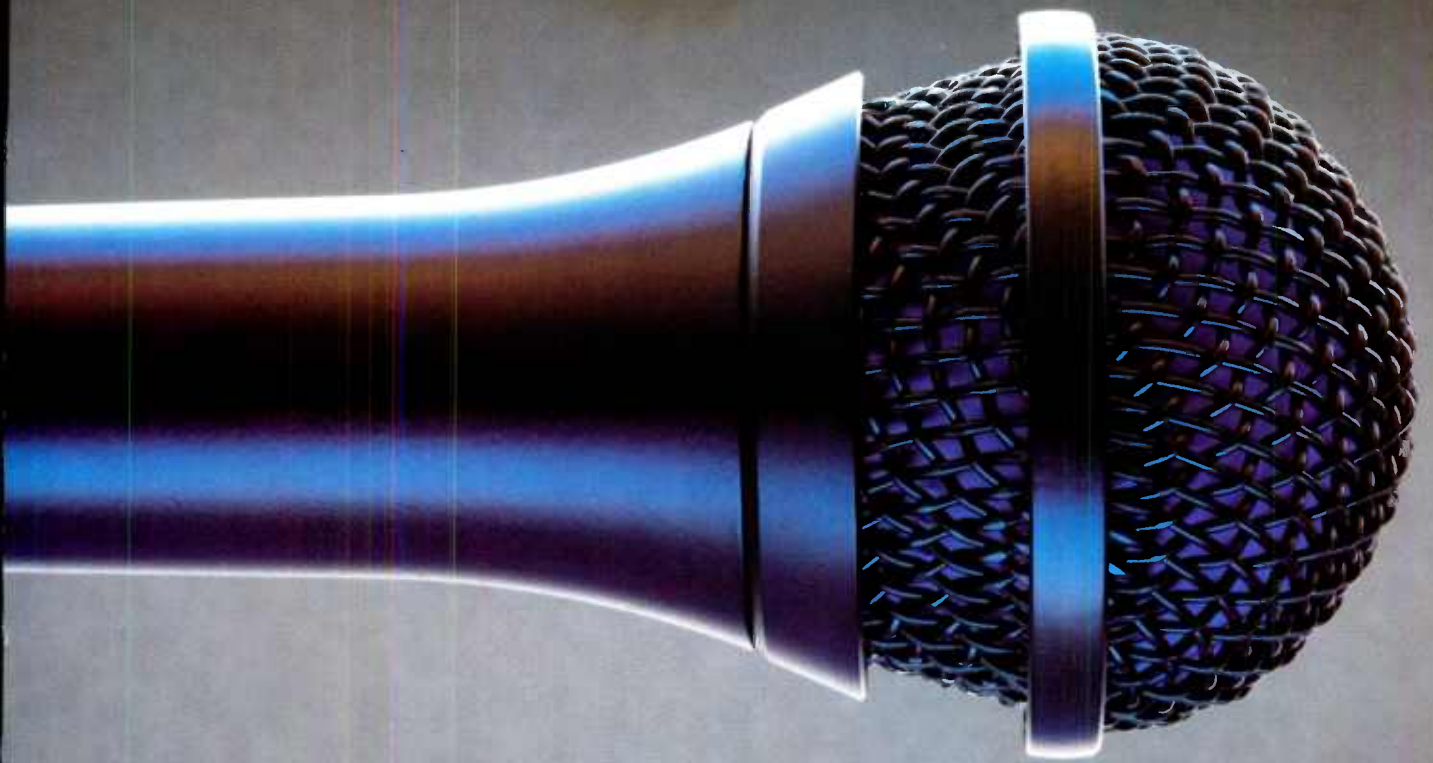
has followed it. There were jibes in the press, suggesting New Order had turned into a "disco band," but a look back at the band's development suggests that the Baker/Robie-produced "Confusion" and subsequent records were anticipated as early as the second Joy Division album, *Closer*. "In Joy Division days, people like us, Pop Group, Gang of Four were all interested in bands like Chic, and in Kraftwerk too," Peter Hook maintains. "It's partly a matter of the technology becoming available—drum machines, synths, sequencers. When we were still Joy Division, Stephen got one of the earliest drum machines, a Dr. Rhythm, and Bernie built our first synth and sequencer, terrible cheap things, from kits." Stephen Morris adds, "The things we're doing now, I'm pretty sure that's what Joy Division would've ended up being."

One thing that hasn't changed in New Order's music is the band's insistence on maintaining a balance, an overall chemistry, between all the elements in a performance. "Bizarre Love Triangle," one of the most emotionally compelling of their recent songs, has been released in two versions, one the

*continued on page 102*



**Ian Curtis  
contemplates  
to be or not to  
be; two weeks  
later he was  
dead.**



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THE TECHNOLOGY THAT PERFORMS

# FIRST flight

Ahem, rock 'n' roll fans and practitioners. We hold this truth to be self-evident: That money can't buy you love, but it can certainly buy you a hit when applied in the right places. And a hit single, as we all know, is the apex of success, the brick and mortar of fame, fortune and a fabulous sex life.

But what if you've rejected that scenario for one you think has more honor: the independent label route, and all that that engenders? What if success to you consists of putting out your own records, playing hard-won gigs around the country, touring in a van, sleeping on floors, getting heard on college radio and mentioned in the *Village Voice*? What kind of money does that sort of career accrue? Is it even worth pursuing, in a purely monetary sense?

illustration by julie ross



**touring america for less than \$12.06 a day, according to camper van beethoven, the dead milkmen and dag nasty**

**by gina arnold**



Well, on the indie-label front, you *can* make money at it, if you are so inclined: enough to live on, enough to pay taxes on, enough to appease your parents, enough—in some cases—even to get your own Visa. But no matter how far you travel on the independent route to success, there'll come a time when the major labels will start looking mighty good to you—even if you've based your entire career ideology, your music and your values on bucking that system. Hey, you think it's funny turning rebellion into money?

Truth is, the independent record industry serves as an unorganized farm team system for the majors—a system whose players have fewer allegiances and make less profit than those in the big leagues. People in the independent and major-label industries have no illusions about how this system works (or is supposed to work): Majors think that by buying the option to a band that's already spent its own artistic development money, they'll get a sure bet with a built-in audience.

In the alternative-music world, though,

## FIRST FLIGHT

bands who sign to majors are considered sell-outs, deserting their fans. But what is selling out and how much money constitutes a sale? Can a band sell itself or its music to the public without the help of a major label? And if it can, should it scorn the big companies?

"There really is less of a difference between independent and major labels than people think," says David Lowery, Camper Van Beethoven's singer and guitarist, and co-owner of the group's Pitch-A-Tent record company. "Both systems are too tied up with what's fashionable and at looking at what's come before to be able to take a risk on signing something totally new and different."

Camper Van Beethoven signed to Virgin Records last summer after releasing three albums that each sold between 30,000 and 40,000 copies. "We probably make more money by selling 45,000 records on our own," Lowery says, "than we will by selling 100,000 on a major. But it's over a longer period of time, and the main saving we're making is on the recording cost of the record."

Pitch-A-Tent and Camper's story is something of a best-case scenario for an independent band, and it leaves out one

untranslatable factor: the music. Every band mentioned herein has bashed out, musically, some notoriety for themselves; without it, they'd never have sold any records at all.

So be prepared for a long, tough haul, nascent rock 'n' roller. Jackson Haring, Camper Van Beethoven's road manager, states, "The glory of rock' is a heavily mythological thing." But the glory is there, if you're willing to look for it in unlikely places—like the truckstop diner on Route 80 that the Dead Milkmen walked into bleary-eyed early one morning, only to see Mojo Nixon stand up on the counter (to the surprise of numerous patrons) and yell, "I knew when I saw those squirts that they had to be *Milkmen!*" Or in Columbus, Ohio, where Camper Van Beethoven, to help out a harassed clubowner, agreed to back up the opening act: Tiny Tim. Even as you read this, bands are criss-crossing the country on the road to rock 'n' roll stardom. They are writing collectively what Haring gleefully refers to as "a modern-day *Iliad* and *Odyssey*."

The real payoff, then, is life and how you live it. That's the part money can't buy. The rest—the selling out, as it were—is as follows.

# DEAD MILK MEN

## 1987 Revenues\*

Gross: \$160,000

Net: \$70,000

In the summer of 1985 the Dead Milkmen were in the midst of their first national tour, busily staging disaster after disaster. In Austin, Texas, they opened for local heroes Glass Eye. When Glass Eye guitarist Kathy McCarty asked the band what was the most they'd been paid for a gig so far, the reply was a measly \$180. She paid them \$181. "We opened for *them* the other night," McCarty now says ruefully. "They took home \$1300 and we made only \$200."

The Dead Milkmen grossed well over \$160,000 last year, netting the four members and their manager about \$15,000 each after expenses and taxes. Half of that is from record royalties and merchandising; the rest is from touring. It's a wildly successful career by alternative-band standards, but success has come almost in spite of the odds. Theirs is not a charmed life, and—like many popular favorites—the Dead Milkmen are not a critics' band.

The group is signed to a label called Fever, which is in turn licensed to Enigma Records in Los Angeles. Fever Records is owned by Colin Camerer, a decision sciences professor at the Wharton School in Philadelphia. (An unrelated Fever Records

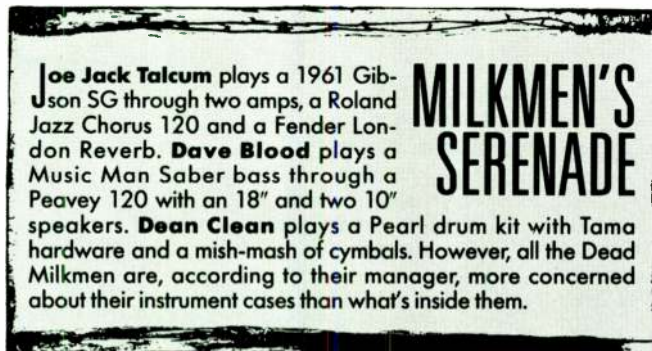
\*All dollar figures in this article are provided by band management and tend to be underestimates for tax purposes.



**cash cow? dean clean, dave blood, joe jack talcum & rodney anonymous**

is based in New York and records the Cover Girls.) Camerer gave the band \$1000 to record material for an album, making their own initial investment a mere \$900.

The record was *Big Lizard in My Back Yard* and the "hit" on it was a lengthy stream-of-consciousness joke called "Bitchin' Camaro." That one song would catapult the Dead Milkmen over the heads of other indie bands. But before that happened, in June of 1985 drummer Dean Clean booked the Dead



Joe Jack Talcum plays a 1961 Gibson SG through two amps, a Roland Jazz Chorus 120 and a Fender London Reverb. Dave Blood plays a Music Man Saber bass through a Peavey 120 with an 18" and two 10" speakers. Dean Clean plays a Pearl drum kit with Tama hardware and a mish-mash of cymbals. However, all the Dead Milkmen are, according to their manager, more concerned about their instrument cases than what's inside them.

## MILKMEN'S SERENADE

Milkmen's first tour. According to current band manager Dave Reckner, this was "the worst experience of my entire life":

"It was miserable from the start. We had booked 42 dates in a 10-week period and played only 23 of them; the rest got cancelled. It took us a month to get to L.A. and once there we played to only four people. But we debuted on *CMJ* [*New Music Report*, a college radio tip sheet] at number 19 the same week, and Enigma was thrilled; it was the highest debut they'd ever had."

*Big Lizard in My Back Yard* has sold 81,000 copies to date. Unfortunately, the Milkmen cut a bad deal on it, earning 65 cents a record for the first 3,000 records sold, and 85 cents a record after that. Camerer gets about one dollar per record, which, considering his initial \$1,000 investment, means an 8100 percent return.

Why is it working for the Dead Milkmen, when so many other bands—even bands with higher profiles—are floundering? "One reason," Reckner says, "is that in the college radio world, buzzes on bands die away too quickly for independent labels to ship enough records to the stores to take advantage of them. Because we had a song whose buzz lasted for six or seven months, we filled that need and managed to capitalize the rest of our careers."

Thanks to Reckner, the band followed up its "Bitchin' Camaro" advantage. Even after the disaster-tour, the Dead Milkmen have grown steadily more popular. Their second LP, *Eat Your Paisley*, released in 1986, sold 59,965 copies as of December 31, 1987; *Bucky Fellini*, 1987's "big-budget" follow-up, is at 69,199; a 12-inch single of "Instant Club Hit (You'll Dance to Anything)" has sold a respectable 28,446 copies. At approximately a dollar a record (on the second two, at least) for the band, that adds up. Call it \$200,000 and you'll be on the safe side.

With that money, the Dead Milkmen fund tours and merchandise sales, as well as pay their rent. According to Reckner, the band spends \$270 a day on the road: \$100 for food (per diems for the band and roadies), \$100 on hotel rooms, and the rest on gas and miscellaneous (strings, equipment, emergencies). The "band" includes four members, a roadie and a road manager (but not Reckner, who hasn't toured with the group since that first time). They are currently commanding guarantees of about \$1500, plus points.

Their van, bought used with 30,000 miles on it, cost \$8000, which Fever lent them outright in cash. Reckner says borrowing money is the main advantage of being on any label not your own: "It's really not a good idea to take out money in your own name. I don't know anyone who's made it that way. For instance, if you're recording your own demo tape, you'll spend about \$2000. Well, if a band can't save \$2000 from playing gigs, they probably shouldn't even be making a demo. They should be able to pay for their own strings and get to gigs without putting themselves in financial jeopardy with a loan.

"The main thing to remember as a band is, the better financial situation you're in, the more you can pay for yourself. The repayment of an advance is a lot easier than the repayment of a loan, because there's no interest. I don't advocate bands taking huge advances, because they're really nothing but a show of faith. You're just piling up deductions. But on the other hand, I don't think that an advance of \$10,000 for a record is unreasonable at all; *Bucky* cost \$12,000, and we could have had it cost \$9000 if we'd recorded in Philly."

*Bucky Fellini* was actually a disappointment to the Milkmen, who hoped to sell 100,000 in the first six months. Instead, Reckner says, "it shipped well but had a hard time 'selling through' [its first pressing]. I think 'Big Time Operator' was a bad choice for a [first] single, for one thing. But it's not doing horribly or anything."

The Dead Milkmen are booked by Bob Lawton in New York. "I used to do it," Reckner says, "but my phone bills cost \$800 a month, and it's cheaper just to give an agent 10 percent." Reckner works closely with Lawton, however, checking out which territories he thinks the band should be in and when, which clubs they should play, and how much they should ask per gig. He also pays the band members' health insurance, bills and rent. He gives them a weekly "allowance" plus expenses for equipment; he also invests the rest of their money.

The Dead Milkmen incorporated for tax purposes in mid-1986. They write off equipment expenses and have no personal financial liability. They have a credit rating, a checking account, and are working on getting a Visa in their name.

One of the band's main sources of income—\$35,000 gross in the past year—is merchandising, both on tour and via mail-order through Enigma (who take one dollar per T-shirt and two dollars per sweatshirt). On the road, Reckner says, the band sells about a gross of T-shirts a week at eight or nine dollars a pop—a three- or four-dollar profit. They can't carry more than 240 shirts at a time, squashed into duffel bags, so Reckner ships full duffel bags to designated airports along the route. "USAir charges \$50 a bag, which is less than Overnight or UPS for the weight."

Sometimes, Reckner says, clubs "ask" for a percentage of the T-shirt take, forcing the band to pass along the expense to the consumer. "It says in our contracts we're supposed to be allowed space and to sell it freely, but sometimes some big fat guy comes up to you and tells you he's taking a percentage or you're not playing."

Reckner says that having two record companies to deal with isn't as bad as it sounds: "Fever is passive and Enigma is conservative, so one can usually play them off each other. I have good feelings toward Enigma; they like us, and we have the right to say no to things. We tried desperately to get off Fever at first, but Colin wanted too much money."

The Dead Milkmen have waived domestic publishing rights, and don't get mechanicals. The latter are 5¼ cents each; with 19 songs on *Lizard*, that's virtually a dollar a record. But, as Reckner explains, "We'd get no royalties if we got our mechanicals. Being uneducated about contracts, we listened when people said, 'Oh, that's standard in independent music.' To renegotiate now would take too much time from the band...so we've decided to live with our mistakes. And I'm not sure how much better off we'd be. If we went into a new contract now we'd get our mechanicals, but why jeopardize our freedom for it?"

When the Dead Milkmen's Fever contract expires they will certainly have lots of options. "I don't think independents are any better than majors," Reckner says. "It really depends on the enthusiasm level of the people involved, either way. The

## FIRST FLIGHT

thing Enigma does well is get us interviews and press. But a major would have a sales person going to each store and each radio station and pushing the album, whereas independents are just answering the phone."

The Dead Milkmen are not considering signing directly to a major after their Fever contract is up—not exactly. For one thing, Reckner considers Enigma a major in terms of distribution. After the band gets off their Fever contract they plan to make their own records and license them to Enigma "or someone else," Reckner says. "We certainly have enough money now to assume the Fever role."

### Dead Milkmen Tour: November 19-25, 1987

- 19 New Orleans, Tower Theater (opening for the Replacements): \$750
- 21 Boston University: \$1200
- 22 Fort Wayne, Indiana: \$862
- 23 Ann Arbor, Michigan: \$1000
- 25 Springfield, Illinois (with Mojo Nixon), arena capacity 18,000: \$2500

TOTAL: \$6312 (minus 10 percent booking fee)

EXPENSES: approx. \$1600 (gas and service, food, hotels, road manager fee, equipment)

NOVEMBER 1987

TOTAL OUTLAY: \$6500; TOTAL INCOME: \$16,386

# CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN

1987 Revenues

Gross: \$180,000

Net: \$90,000



revolutionary sweethearts victor krummenacher, greg lisher, david lowery, chris pedersen & jonathan segel

Camper Van Beethoven has a decidedly hippie reputation thanks to music which limns the term "psychedelic," its members' lank-haired appearances, and the fact that most of them attended the University of California at Santa Cruz—an institution which doesn't give letter grades and whose mascot is the banana slug.

But these five "hippies" have started, along with their rock band, a successful record label and business which has so far released nine albums, none of them losing money. In addition, Camper Van Beethoven has negotiated a six-figure recording contract with Virgin America which will, they hope, take them out of the independent/alternative market (that they calculate they've extended as far as it can reach) and into the big time.

The band's first album, *Telephone Free Landslide Victory* in 1985, required an initial investment of \$1500; it was the cooperative venture of Camper and the L.A.-based Independent Project Records owned by Bruce Licher of the band Savage Republic. Like the Dead Milkmen, Camper's initial reputation in the college market came from a novelty song. "Take the Skinheads Bowling," a simple folk-punk tune about skate rats, was unrepresentative of the band, but struck a

chord with college radio stations and listeners everywhere. Not bad for an album that was barely available, having had a first pressing of 1250 copies.

It soon became obvious that Licher couldn't keep up with the demand for records. By November of 1985, Rough Trade in San Francisco had made a pressing and distribution deal for the album—and singer/guitarist David Lowery decided that his band's next record would be on its own label, distributed by Rough Trade. Pitch-A-Tent Records (the name derives from the un-hippie-esque phrase, "she makes me want to pitch a tent in my pants") was born, Lowery says, "kind of out of necessity: No one was really interested in putting out another record by us right then. Rough Trade said they'd do it, but not that year. So we realized we'd have to do it ourselves."

To start the label, they borrowed \$9000 from a rich acquaintance, paying it back out of the first album's profits. Camper Van Beethoven was then earning—although, thanks to a 90-day delay on accounting from distribution, not yet seeing—over a dollar per record. So was Bruce Licher; and until 1991 Licher will earn that dollar plus 20 percent of the publishing off *Telephone Free Landslide Vic-*

*tory*. To date he's received over \$35,000.

*Telephone* had sold 8000 copies by November of 1985, and Camper Van Beethoven did their first national tour on the strength of it. They contacted Frank Riley of Venture Booking, who normally would not have taken on a band that early in its career. That he did is a credit to Lowery's pestering—and the recommendation of San Francisco club booker Cathy Cohn.

Jackson Haring started working with Camper just before that tour. He began by putting records in plastic covers and stamping them. Soon after, he offered to book the band on a small tour of the Northwest; "being from Portland, I knew the turf," he explains.

He booked a two-week tour to coincide with the release of the second LP, confusingly titled *Camper Van Beethoven II and III*. The band made about \$200 per gig and, under Haring's guidance, paid members \$15 per diem. "That was \$90 a day on per diem," Haring recollects, "plus \$25-\$30 a day on gas, plus strings and miscellaneous expenses...about \$150 a day in expenses. We were definitely on the couch circuit then, depending on meeting people at the gigs to stay with. It's kind of presumptuous, but what else can you do? As it was, we came home with \$600, which went straight into the band fund."

Haring has managed the band ever since, keeping a close watch on booking ("there's definitely some tension between me and Venture," he says) and accompanying them on every tour. He takes great pride in the fact that the band has never missed a gig. "Since I've been to every club, I have an advantage over [booking agencies]. I tell them where I want to be and when, what club, and who we want with us. As a history major, I've always thought of my job as being like a military campaign: You've got the Smithereens on this hill over here, and we're gonna come in through *here* and miss that. Sometimes you just have to retreat. It's all strategic and tactical, and you're successful at touring if you look at it that way."

Camper Van Beethoven's second full U.S. tour, in the summer of 1986, brought home \$6000 after expenses. It was one year exactly since their debut album was released, and six months after *II and III* had hit the stores. The band was playing to about 200 people a night, and pulling in \$450-\$700 per gig. When at home in Santa Cruz, Haring paid each member (and himself) \$250 a month. This money came from publishing and record sales: The band got about \$1.25 a record, and almost \$2 for each cassette sold. In 1986 Camper Van Beethoven took in \$60,000 in revenues.

The third, self-titled album cost \$3000 to record—twice the price of the first two—and was released in November 1986. In a net-profit deal with Rough Trade, manufacturing and distributing costs were subtracted from the band's \$2.68 profit (not counting publishing) on each record sold. Pitch-A-Tent paid for the production costs of the master tapes and camera-ready art; Rough Trade paid for manufacturing and distribution. (This is the same arrangement Pitch-A-Tent has with most of its other bands: San Francisco's Donner Party, Santa Cruz's Spot 1019 and the Wrestling Worms, and Tucson's River Roses.) So far *Camper Van Beethoven* has sold 25,000 copies. "We may sell fewer records than the Milkmen," Haring sniffs, "but we make a lot more per record." (Haring and Reckner are phone friends, though they've never met.)

Coinciding with this album's release, Camper Van Beethoven was invited to open for R.E.M. on the midwestern leg of the latter's *Lifes Rich Pageant* tour. The invitation was not unlooked for, as R.E.M. singer Michael Stipe had included *Telephone Free Landslide Victory* on his list of Top 10 albums for 1985 in *Rolling Stone* magazine. Camper Van Beethoven was

*continued on page 104*



# DAG *nasty*

## 1987 Revenues

Gross: \$75,000 (since inception)

Net: 0



### hardcore cult heroes brian baker and peter cortner

In two years Dag Nasty has sold almost 40,000 copies of two albums on the Dischord label. They might have sold more if more had been available. The world at large has certainly never heard of Dag Nasty, a spin-off from Minor Threat, a quasi-legendary Washington, D.C., hardcore band. Even college radio, which prides itself on the obscurity of its playlists, doesn't play Dag Nasty. Nonetheless, Brian Baker—ex-Minor Threat, ex-Meatmen and current Dag Nasty guitarist—is a

cult hero of sorts; he describes himself as an "incredibly small-scale David Lee Roth of the D.C. punk scene."

The band is already huge in D.C. and Los Angeles (where they recently relocated) among the bleached-blond, skateboard-toting crowd. "But I think we have crossover appeal to the brown-haired portion of the population too," Baker says, "if they'd ever hear us. So far our following, such as it is, comes sheerly from word of mouth and those little smudgy ads in *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*."

"We don't even get reviewed in *Forced Exposure*," adds bassist Doug Carrion, formerly with the Descendents.

Carrion and Baker are sitting in a Redondo Beach Mexican restaurant two blocks from the ocean, eating buck-fifty burritos and discussing their careers. Despite the beach-punk setting, Carrion and Baker are as serious about running a band as, say, the managers of the Ron Wood/Bo Diddley "Gunslingers" tour, or Asia, or the re-formed Pink Floyd. As all the

preceding know, in the word-of-mouth world, one's past can be an excellent advertisement. Minor Threat, with its socialist/straight-edge ideology, was one of those bands whose fans didn't just listen to their music—they lived it. The Descendents also have a niche, and accompanying philosophy, of their own. Dag Nasty is virtually a hardcore supergroup.

Their recently released third album, *Field Day*, is on Giant Records, a new subsidiary of alternative distributors Dutch East India. The label gave them a \$14,000 advance. They spent \$2500 on a three-song single and \$3000 on *Field Day*. The remaining \$8500 has gone in their band account.

That they spent almost as much on a single as on an album can be written off as "an expensive lesson," Carrion says. "We were at Rock Steady studios in Hollywood, where Los Lobos records," Baker giggles, "and I wore my neatest shirt. We were thinking, 'Yeah! All these people work for us tonight!' But after a couple of days that wore off and we realized they were just taking our money and we weren't getting anything. It was more like, push a button, get guitar sound number 23. Push another button, get bass sound number 13. But we did learn a lot because we hadn't realized till then that our music doesn't really lend itself to, like, a Bon Jovi treatment. You always think to yourself, 'If we had that kind of money to spend on the radio, and used all those studio enhancements, we'd be huge too.' And that's not necessarily true."

After the single came out, Dag decided as a group (apparently against Baker's wishes) to replace big-buck studio sounds with a simple expedient: pre-production. "We practiced for 35 days straight," explains Carrion, "till we got every song exactly how we wanted it. And then we went straight in the studio as if we were a

hockey team or something, and just laid all the tapes down. At least half of the record was first takes. We did tracking in 13 hours. Total time for mix, vocals, everything, was 80 hours." "Those 35 days of practice were essential," adds Baker. "I'd already decided which guitar, of my 10 guitars, I'd use where. It saved a lot of time and money."

Financially, Dag Nasty barely breaks even. Each member scrounges rent as best he can, applying to the band for money



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**DAG'S BAG**

**Brian Baker** plays a 1967 Gibson Firebird 12-string, a 1986 Gibson SG with EMG 81 pickups, and a 1988 Charvel Model 4 with EMG 81 pickups. Amps are two Marshall 100-watt heads, four Marshall cabinets with 35-watt Celestion speakers, and a Roland JC-120. He also uses an Alesis Midiverb II, Roland SDE 1000 delay and Samson Stage Series wireless.

**Doug Carrion** plays a Guild Pilot bass and 1969 Fender Precision through two Gallien-Krueger 800 RB heads and six 12" PA speakers in one cabinet, and two 15" PA speakers in another. He too uses a Samson Stage Series wireless.

**Scott Garrett** plays a stainless steel Pearl five-piece kit with a 22" kick, 13" and 14" rack toms, an 18" floor tom, a Pearl free-floating snare and a Tama rack system to hold it all together. Cymbals are 16" Zildjian crashes, an 18" Paiste rude ride and 14" Paiste high-hats. And there's also a big old cowbell.

only in the direst of need. When not touring or recording, vocalist Peter Cortner and drummer Scott Garrett still live in Washington, D.C. When band members fly cross-country, they're careful to book themselves only on flights from which they're certain to be bumped; they then offer up their seats for extra free round-trip fares. (They claim they've turned over almost every fare purchased.)

Doug Carrion lives in his parents' basement in Redondo Beach, spiritual home of hardcore punk rock. Baker, a seven-year music-biz vet at age 22, receives royalty checks from Minor Threat and Meatmen albums amounting to about \$2000 every quarter; he lives in an ornate old apartment building on Hollywood Boulevard, on the wrong side of the Santa Monica Freeway. The lives he and his bandmates lead are typically hardcore: They'll scrounge for rent, eat cheap Mexican food and sleep on friends' floors between tours. But once they've plugged in their guitars (actually, they use wireless guitars, but the idea's the same), they have a seriousness of purpose which belies the ratty image they'd like to project.

"The place where we sacrifice most of our profit margin," says Carrion, who acts as accountant, manager and booking agent for the band, "is on hotels. When we go out on the road, for anywhere from 30 to 60 days, we'll stay in hotels every night. All the bands I've been in before, in order to make a bigger profit, would sacrifice sleep—either by sleeping at someone's house or in the van, or not sleeping at all and just driving straight through. Brian and I have done too many tours like that, and we just won't do it anymore. We don't stay in the Sheraton or anything, but we sleep in clean beds every night and take showers every morning, and sometimes that's up to \$80 a night."

"The reason," Baker says, "isn't that we're stylers, though. It's that it has a real effect on our live show. If you've slept in a bed and had a shower the night before a gig, and you have a roadie who is paid a decent sum of money to drive the van so you don't have to, you play a lot better show than if you've had no sleep, driven the van yourself and lifted your equipment onstage. I mean, everywhere we've gotten so far is due to our live act."

Dag Nasty's other big touring expense, Carrion says, is their roadie. "We pay our helpers really well," he says. "It's much better that way than getting a cheap slouch—or even two cheap slouches, which has been tried."

Baker says their roadie gets \$300 a week plus expenses, food, hotels, etc. "There's a lot of nights when we don't even make \$300, so it's a lot in proportion to what we're making."

They tour in a van with 154,000 miles on it; an attached U-Haul (about \$1500 for a two-month rental) carries equipment and merchandise. They pay themselves \$10 a day on the road.

Changing public perception of the band is Dag Nasty's main objective at the moment, and one reason they changed record labels. (Another is economics: They were getting 48 cents per record sold.) Dischord is, after all, an ideology, and none of the members of Dag Nasty are even straight-edge anymore—at least, not in word. Giant Records, Baker says, offered the band the best short-term contract. The company also plans to advertise Dag Nasty in alternative publications and service college radio with product, something Dischord rarely did.

In addition to touring and royalties, the band does a great deal of merchandising, which often earns them as much as guarantees at any given gig. On their last tour they took with them three styles of T-shirts, bumper stickers, sweat pants and cassettes, which they stuff into the U-Haul rather than ship separately. ("It only costs about \$50 extra to get a larger trailer," Carrion says.)

"What we'd really like to do is get into mail order," Baker says. "We have a mailing list but we haven't got our shit together. It would be a great way to make money while we weren't touring."

If *Field Day* does as well as their last album, however, Dag will be earning about three times as much in royalties right off the bat. Giant label head Steev Riccardo estimates they'll do twice that, minimum: "We thought the single would sell 5000 to 6000 copies and it's over 10,000 right now," he says. "With better distribution and even a tiny bit of press, Dag could easily push 50,000 right off the bat."

"Our great ambition is to get out of the cult and into the cash stage of our careers," Baker laughs. "But if we don't, the worst that can happen is I'll have to go back to college." Like many a punk-rocker, Baker comes from an upper-middle-class background. He was formerly pre-law at Georgetown; his father is a vice-president at Cable News Network; his mother produces the Larry King show for radio, and she was able to get her son hired as production assistant the day King interviewed Baker's hero, David Lee Roth. But Baker respects his parents for non-materialistic reasons. "What they gave me," he says, "isn't so much money, but the courage to do what I want and not worry about the long-term." ☐

**Dag Nasty Tour (first week): November 1987**

Live income: \$2215	←	Roadie: \$350
Merchandise: \$2479		Per diem: \$200
Expenses: \$1600		Hotels: \$500
Profit: \$3094		Equipment: \$150
		Gas: \$50 per day

**EARNINGS**

- Norwalk, Conn. (Anthrax): \$350
- Providence, R.I. (The Living Room): \$863
- Boston, Mass. (T T The Bear's): \$452
- New York, N.Y. (CBGB): \$250  
(opening for Circle Jerks)



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## NEW ORDER from page 88

band's own mix (on the *Brotherhood* album), the other a dance-single remix by Shep Pettibone (collected on the *Substance* anthology); comparing the two can be illuminating. You'd think a remixer like Pettibone would beef up the rhythm, and he did. He also brought Sumner's voice way out front. You'd think *that* would enhance the song's immediacy; instead, the band's mix buries the voice in the instrumental track, making it sound more fragile, and intensifying the impact of the song. You catch certain lyrics, but not all of them; there have never been lyric sheets with

Joy Division or New Order albums.

"If you want to print your lyrics, that must mean you feel you have a message that's very important," says Bernard Sumner. "To us, that sets the lyrics apart from the music and makes them more important than they really are. When I'm writing lyrics, I try to develop an atmosphere with lines that are conducive to the feeling or emotion of the song."

New Order isn't Joy Division, as its members would probably be the first to admit. For one thing, Ian Curtis brought a complex *literary* sensibility to the band. J.G. Ballard's post-scientific romances and William Burroughs' algebra-of-need

**Guitarist Bernard Sumner** plays a Gibson ES-335 guitar and a pair of Tokai Strat copies, EMG pickups and a Vox amp with Vox distortion effects.

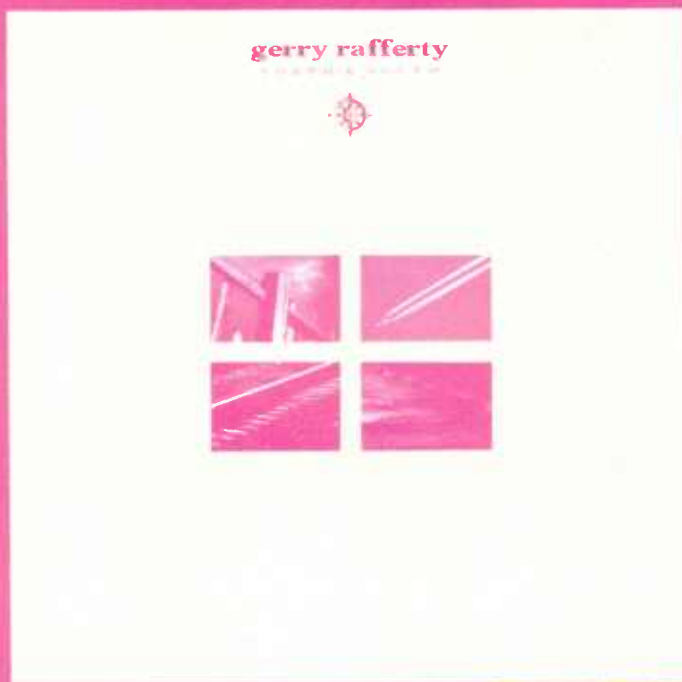
**Bassist Peter Hook** plays an Alembic bass through a Roland bass guitar preamp. He uses rack-mounted Clone pedals into a Drawmer noise gate into Crown DC 300 amps with feeds into custom cabinets. Effects include a Roland SDD3000 DDL.

**Gillian Gilbert** uses an old Casio keyboard and a mini patch bay that's hooked to two Voyetra 8s, two Emulator E-11s (one of which is played by Stephen Morris), four Akai S900 samplers, a Yamaha DX1 sequencer and a Sycologic MIDI switcher.

**Stephen Morris** plays a Ludwig drum kit with Zildjian cymbals. A Simmons SDS9 provides additional sounds.

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shoot-'em-ups are obvious influences; Stephen Morris also remembers Curtis immersing himself in T.S. Eliot.

"Stephen also reads a lot," says Peter Hook, "but me and Bernard, we don't really have that literary involvement. When New Order is making music, writing songs, we very rarely talk about what we do. We tend to just sit there and do it. Lyrically, content-wise, a lot of what we do is subconscious. Other people may write songs on specific subjects, but we don't really work on that level. We write everything from out of the air..."

It's difficult, maybe impossible to square this mature, polite conversation around a Hollywood swimming pool with the sound of a black album on black nights, with music we lived with, and lived for, music our friends died to. If the music is no longer that important, well, maybe it's better that way. And maybe not. It's a moot point, really. We are different people, living in a different time. And Joy Division's time was... something else.

"Those times were very romantic," is the way Peter Hook remembers it. "I feel very lucky that we really achieved something then. It's very nice to know that even if you gave it all up tomorrow, you could still play those records and think, wow, we were great then! We really achieved something. But I mean, I don't really know *why* it happened. I honestly don't know. All I can do is just thank God that it did. Because it's nice to be appreciated, especially in *this* world, for being different." ▣

robbie robertson



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# CVB

from page 97

being heavily courted by I.R.S. Records—then R.E.M.'s label—and simultaneously by F.B.I., an associated booking agency in New York. So Haring had some leverage for getting on the tour.

Camper went out with R.E.M. in October 1986; the experience, according to Haring and Lowery, was decidedly mixed. Less-than-friendly stage crews and long inter-city drives strained the band's good will. And then there were the finances. "At some of the gigs we made \$500 and at some we made \$1000," Haring says. "I found out halfway through the show that they were budgeted for \$1000 every night, and I got all pissed off and made some accusations. [R.E.M. was] making \$10,000 guarantees plus points, they were taking in 30 grand a night. And, granted, they had to spend a lot of it, too, but why cut *our* quarter?" Despite all the hassles, Haring feels the tour did help the band in terms of exposure.

[R.E.M. manager Jefferson Holt replies, "Of course there was never any attempt to screw CVB out of any money—it's simply preposterous. I think most people who know R.E.M. know that we try real hard to make things go well for our support acts—financially and otherwise. We really enjoyed working with CVB and I'm really bummed out that they remember things this way."]

Virgin America got interested in Camper in the spring of 1987, while the band was on its first European tour. By this time Camper was earning well over \$1000 a gig in guarantees alone. Their revenues for 1987 were "extremely close to \$200,000," according to Haring. He and partner David Snow had been trying to interest major labels in the band for over a year. They had definite offers from I.R.S. and Warner Bros. But Virgin America moved quicker: Haring and Snow negotiated with the company in May and signed the deal on August 20. They got a six-figure advance and a creative control clause in their contract.

"The band never really made up their mind to sign to a major until they actually did it," Haring says. "I felt I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't try and get people interested in the band. Over the years there had been some heartbreaks over records not being in the stores when we were in town, or not having an adequate push to make a live show sell out. It just became imperative to have a strong record company. There's a limit where the independent label thing just stops."

Of course, a six-figure advance means a six-figure debt. To make the Virgin deal work, Camper will have to sell about twice as many records than any of its previous LPs, and in a shorter amount of time. "But you only earn 20 cents more per record as an independent than we do in this deal," Haring points out. "I thought six figures would be reasonable to recoup if they do their jobs and we do ours. We've never sold six figures, but we've been hampered by certain things, like distribution. And the record will be better, because we can afford to work in a 24-track studio with beautiful acoustics. And we've never had a producer. You have this whole machine behind you; you can break into commercial stations. You have a promotion staff, a publicity staff... we'll be using the same booking agent, though."

*Our Beloved Revolutionary Sweetheart* cost about \$80,000 and took three months to record. Producer Dennis Herring earned a \$20,000 fee plus points. Camper Van Beethoven took one third of the advance money upon signing the deal, another third halfway through, and the last on delivery. Haring hopes to sell 60,000 copies in the album's first six months of release. "Then we'll have paid off our advance and then some. We may not see any of that money, but our touring revenues will have

## CAMPING EQUIPMENT

**David Lowery** uses a Fender Squire Telecaster run through various effects (delay, ProCo Rat, wah-wah) into a Roland JC 120, a Fender Super Reverb or a Fender Champ, depending on what gnarly tone he desires. For a long time he played an Electra Telecaster copy he would set on fire at the end of the set, but was eventually forced to buy the Squire after all the insulation melted off the wires of that guitar. For pyrotechnic effects, Lowery uses Aquanet hairspray.

**Greg Lisher** has two Strats: One is a 1978 Fender with a Schecter neck, the other is a Schecter body with a Warmoth neck. Both have Kahler tremolo bridges and Seymour Duncan pickups. The guitars go through a wah/volume pedal, a Digitech chorus/flanger and a Yamaha SPX90. Lisher's amp is a Music Man 112 with an Electro-Voice speaker. His acoustic guitar is a Takamine acoustic/electric just like Jerry Garcia's. Hair gel by Sebastian.

**Jonathan Segel's** keyboard is an old Casio 405 with simulated woodgrain. His onstage violin is a nameless Japanese model with a Barcus Berry bridge and stickers all over it. In the studio, however, he uses a 1920s French-made Stradavarius copy, a 1915 Gibson blacktop mandolin and a Takamine 363 acoustic guitar. He also has a blue Rickenbacker 481. On the new Camper album, though, Segel sticks to a 1965 Rickenbacker 450 12-string. Live he plugs everything into a Music Man 112 amp via an A/B switcher. Effects are in a Boss carrying case: compressor, octave box, chorus, analog echo, phase shifter.

**Victor Krummenacher's** "primo" axe is a 1980s Squire P-Bass with a Schaller fine-tuning bridge, EMG PJ pickups and a Warmoth neck. He also has a 1972 Telecaster bass with Seymour Duncan PJ pickups and the Humbucker "all wired together for maximum Frankenstein effect." For recordings, he also has a stock '79 fretless P-Bass. His amp is a Gallien-Krueger 400 RB with an Acoustic 2x15-inch cabinet and Gauss speakers. The basses go through a Boss stereo chorus and bass EQ (to eliminate fret noise). The stereo chorus runs to a Randall RBGO used as a bass monitor.

**Chris Pedersen** plays all Tama hardware with a Tama 22"x16" bass drum, Noble and Cooley 7" snare drum, two Rototoms with shells, Rogers 16" floor tom, Paiste 20" China-type cymbal, Zildjian 20" ride with an "old trashy cymbal on top for that garbage-can-lid sound," a Sabian 18" crash (because "I'm tired of breaking Paiste crashes every eight months") and Zildjian 14" high-hats.

gone up commensurately. Sure, it's a risk. But it's going to be a better record than any of the others. We've been relegated to a specialty market and now we're going to cross over."

Camper Van Beethoven still pays itself a \$250 stipend per month, plus \$25 each per diem per show, plus 10 percent of the profit on each show, plus royalties and publishing mechanicals (most original tunes are credited to the band as a whole). Haring pays himself as if he were a member of the band, plus expenses (phone bill, Telexes, E-Mail, etc.). Camper Van Beethoven pays for equipment out of the band account. And they are still, in their spare time, running Pitch-A-Tent. ❏

### Camper Van Beethoven mid-1986 touring expenses:

46 days of travel, 37 shows, 5 band members, 2 roadies  
 SUPPLIES (strings, sticks, toothbrushes, beer): \$589.39/\$13 per day  
 TRAVEL (motels, gifts, plane flights, beer): \$1700 total/\$37 per day  
 VEHICLES (gas, oil, minor maintenance, beer for two vehicles): 1 1978 Dodge van (15 mpg); 1 1976 Volvo station wagon (18 mpg); \$1600 total/\$34.80 per day  
 CATASTROPHES (one major repair): \$772.11  
 PER DIEMS: 7 × \$25 per day × 46 days: \$8050  
 TOTAL EXPENSE: \$13,861  
 TOTAL INCOME (approx.): \$27,750 (average \$750 per gig)  
 PROFIT: \$13,889

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\*May 1987 Reader Survey

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# RECORDS



## ENTERING THE TEMPLE OF HOWLING CHILDREN

### BUTTHOLE SURFERS

*Hairway to Steven*  
(Touch & Go)

It is difficult to discuss the Butthole Surfers seriously for the obvious reason of their name. Like the Dead Kennedys, they have a perfect name—either shocking or hilarious, depending on your world view. Actually, the Buttholes are both shocking and hilarious. During their last tour, people were throwing up (literally) from the movies of penis skin grafts and highway death scenes playing on their backdrop. Given such overwhelming visual stimuli, the tendency is to forget what they sound like.

To me they sound like large, extinct animals who have found a hole in the morphogenetic field and are snorting and stomping and squealing for another chance at real life. In current music no one has borrowed less from John Bonham yet made their drums sound more like a herd of mastodons. The vocals boil out like lava. The guitar is state-of-the-art acid rock, making use of everything from antique fuzz pedals to the latest in digital gadgetry, all played with true artistry (no joke), which I define as virtuosity combined with a playful let's-press-this-button-and-see-what-it-sounds-like attitude that allows for the happy accident.

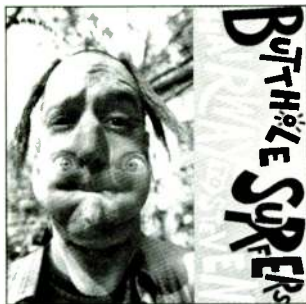
*Hairway to Steven* is perhaps their

most difficult album to discuss seriously because they have dispensed with song titles entirely and instead have identified each track with semi-revolting drawings on the label, many of which are, well, either shocking or hilarious, depending on your world view. The opening cut appears to be "Excreting Man with an Erection Pitching a Baseball to an Excreting Woman Holding a Bat." What this has to do with the song I am at a loss to explain, as the only words I can understand have to do with death, not excretion or baseball. But the preoccupation with bodily functions is typical, if anything can be said to be typical of their free-associated oeuvre.

Why should anyone bother with such

## RECORDS

juvenility? If you don't have an instinct for it, let me lay over some intellectual justification. Whenever I read books about art or New Age-type advice, they always talk about preserving and cherishing the child in yourself. To be artistic, you must have that child-like quality of playfulness. Children are, of course, fascinated by their bodies, not because they are our "personal temples of God," as a good Christian once told me, but because they have orifices and make odd noises and are the source of enormous pleasure and foul smells. Personally speaking, the hardest I ever laughed was sitting in back of my second grade class and making fart noises. To preserve the child in myself, I have to stay in contact with that. After three EPs



and four LPs, the Butthole Surfers still make my child howl with laughter.

Jewish tradition has a saying about how it is one's duty to "speak truth to authority." I think it is even more important to have a butthole in the face of authority. Fart noises in the back of the class are the essence of democracy, and that is why the wives of powerful politicians want them out of class, out of record stores, out of public life. Yet the PMRC has remained oddly silent about the Butthole Surfers, who are at this stage one of the most successful and radically offensive underground bands in the world. Why? Because too many people laugh when they hear the name. People hysterical with laughter cannot be made hysterical with fear. And that is why the Butthole Surfers cannot be discussed seriously: They are too dangerous. — Charles M. Young

### CHARLIE PARKER

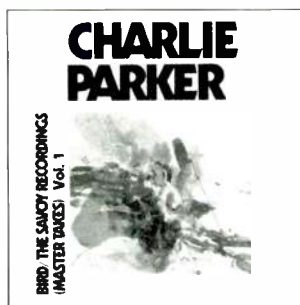
*Birth of the Bebop*  
(Stash)

*Bird—The Complete Savoy Recordings,*  
Volumes 1 and 2

(Savoy)  
*Bird*  
(Columbia)

**C**harlie Parker came out of Kansas City like a pied piper of the blues, and all the musicians who followed—even those who preceded him—were recast in his image. Bird-watchers remain a breed apart, an order bordering on the mystical. Every little photo, stray anecdote and scrap of music is a source of wonder to the saved—those who lived with the music and knew Mr. Parker, and those who know it only through records.

Charlie Parker's legacy is being expanded upon every day, and 1988 looks as if it might be the year of the Bird—for better and for purse. Dan Morgenstern, head of the Institute of Jazz Studies, tells me that an Italian label has supposedly released the famous record-booth acetate of Bird's unaccompanied "Body and Soul" from the late '30s. Charlie Lourie of Mosaic Records just purchased the legendary lost acetates of Dean Benedetti, an alto player who dedicated his life to documenting Bird's every stray tweet on his own portable disc cutting device! Mind you, no one's ever heard this music, but Lourie purchased the masters sight and sound unseen—and has procured the services of redoubtable mastering engineer Jack Towers.



They're aiming for a fall release.

If you want to know what Towers can do with decrepit lacquers, you owe it to yourself to cop *Bird—The Complete Savoy Recordings, Volumes 1 and 2*. It's amazing how much sound a good digital remastering can unmask. Turn to volume one's breakthrough performance of "Ko-Ko" and dig the *interaction* between Bird and the rhythm section. Suddenly you're able to hear the integral components of Max Roach's solo as something other than an undifferentiated buzz. If you've already lived with these records—and especially if you haven't—the Savoy CDs are a revelation.

So, for jazz fans, are Parker's fascinating 1943 home recordings, chronicled on

*Birth of the Bebop* (Stash). Like the Everest *Charlie Christian*, these Bird droppings represent the vernal equinox of swing to bop—a period of history in which the American Federation of Musicians more or less suppressed all recording activity (as if loose hips might sink ships). Bird's *tenor* improvisations with Diz and Oscar Pettiford on "Sweet Georgia Brown" (captured live from the john by Bob Redcross in room 306 of Chicago's Savoy Hotel) justify the purchase price alone, as the conceptual visionaries of bebop switch into overdrive. The influence of both Lester Young and Chu Berry on the young Parker is crystal-clear in this performance.

If *Birth of the Bebop* and the Savoy CDs are "must buys," *Bird*, the forthcoming film's soundtrack, is a why buy, one of the strangest records I've ever been asked to review. Quite simply, audio engineers have cut Parker's solos out of their original accompaniment and pasted them into newly recorded arrangements. This concept isn't really a new trick, having been tried out on Enrico Caruso and more recently with Jimi Hendrix. The question is, why bother?

Perhaps the producers of the movie *Bird* wanted the impact of live musicians playing accompaniments as actor Forrest Whittaker lip-synched to Bird's original solos. Not having seen the movie at press time, I can't comment on Clint Eastwood's direction and conception; nor is it fair to critique the musicians' performances in what is obviously a very demanding studio situation. And after listening to this soundtrack a few times, I don't find it nearly as hateful as when I first slipped it on my Walkman. Nevertheless, I was deeply offended to hear "Ko-Ko" come off like virtuoso disco, and though there are brighter moments (like "All of Me," lifted from an unreleased jam between Bird and Lennie Tristano), it's disturbing to hear Bird's recorded legacy so fundamentally distorted.

Oh, people will argue that this music might "bring a new audience in touch with Bird." Bullshit. Though the movie *Amadeus* took heavy poetic license with Mozart's life, the depiction of his music was glorious and that's what really grooved the uninitiated. Bird's rhythm was so strong he was his *own* rhythm section. The real drama in his music comes from hearing his collaborators writhe, scuffle and piss battery acid as they reach beyond themselves to interact with him and orchestrate his line with some stunning counterpoint.

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# RECORDS

Running the harmonic rapids takes great discipline and dexterity, but in and of itself means nothing. If Bird's original accompanists hadn't been holding on to those changes for dear life, we might have heard some truly "free" music well before the '60s—so for annotator Leonard Feather to assert that "if Bird were among us today, this is unquestionably the way he would want to sound," is nostalgic twaddle. I always thought bebop was a music where the musicians *talked* to each other, not some hyper-drive Music Minus One shtick. The *Bird* soundtrack honors the letter but distorts the spirit of Charlie Parker. These arrangements have about as much internal tension as an organ grinder's song, and if that is what bebop has become, the hell with it. — Chip Stern



## R O D S T E W A R T

*Out of Order*  
(Warner Bros.)

**T**here's nothing on this, Rod the Mod's fifteenth solo LP, to challenge the notion that Bonnie Tyler cut the best Rod Stewart record of the '80s. Rod's whiskey-and-razors voice is strong as ever, he's still got great hair, but somehow the heart went out of his music when his persona metamorphosed from the soccer-loving, pub-brawling lad of his Faces days into that of a fast-lane playboy hooked on high-priced models and tacky necklaces. Too much publicity about too many messy affairs and run-ins with the law have turned him into the Joan Collins of rock.

*Out of Order* isn't measurably better or worse than the music Stewart was making at the height of his *Hot Legs* years, but that kind of mega-success has nothing to do with quality or logic; it's a cultural spasm, and nobody occupies that throne for long before the winds of change render them mortal again. Though Stewart scored a hit single in 1986, his glory days are behind him at this point and it's unlikely that *Out of*

*Order* will change that.

Weak material is the central stumbling block. Stewart's ragged but righteous voice is built for working-class roots music à la "Every Picture Tells a Story," "Mandolin Wind" and "Maggie May," songs he sang with conviction and feeling. But the boy's been off the streets a long time now and the rarefied world he currently lives in has narrowed his range of subject matter considerably.

It's also made it more difficult for us to empathize with the problems he sings about. Most of the 10 songs here (four co-written by Stewart and Andy Taylor) fall into the hot-blooded bag of sexual bragging, threats and promises. Rod's been flogging this weary horse for quite a spell, and the lack of originality he presently brings to the subject suggests that fatigue is beginning to set in. "Lethal Dose of Love," for instance, is a blatant rip of Robert Palmer's "Addicted to Love," while a remake of soul standby "Try a Little Tenderness" is a thoroughly perfunctory reading. As for "Forever Young"—I hate to break it to Rod, but Bob Dylan already wrote the song: Both the title and the sentiment expressed in Stewart's "Forever Young" are identical to Dylan's.

*Out of Order* might suffice as background noise for half-hearted overtures at the singles bar. Those who knew and loved Stewart's early sides won't find it nearly good enough.

— Kristine McKenna



## B O O G I E D O W N P R O D U C T I O N S

*By All Means Necessary*  
(Jive/RCA)

## D J J A Z Z Y J E F F & T H E F R E S H P R I N C E

*He's the DJ, I'm the Rapper*  
(Jive/RCA)

**R**ecently the paper brought news that two men have been arrested for the murder of DJ Scott LaRock last year, giving *By All Means Necessary*

a poignancy it didn't need. Without tears, rapper KRS-One keeps his late partner's name in the forefront of these bulletins from the urban battlefield, describing the fray with terse, brutal authority. Even if his street stories don't relate directly to your own experiences, it's hard not to be moved by 'em.

"In about four seconds a teacher will begin to speak," announces the lead-off track "My Philosophy," dispelling any suspicions Boogie Down Productions is dedicated to party grooves. KRS-One engages in the necessary self-promotion ("I'm Still #1"), but mostly he thunders like a Bible-thumping preacher, condemning sin and exhorting the faithful to straighten up and fly right.

"People have the nerve to take me for a gangster," growls KRS-One, and in an era of disingenuous right-wing moralizing, an angry black man from the South Bronx must be some folks' worst nightmare. (As with last year's *Criminal Minded*, he's brandishing a pistol on the cover.) It's true he offers little solace, barking, "Fuck with KRS and I'll bury you"; the beats are hard and uneasy, yielding little of the catharsis found in traditional funk 'n' soul. But KRS-One has a good ear for institutional hypocrisies; the reggaefied "Illegal Business" notes the establishment's failure to stop drug trafficking, wondering at the difference between legal and illegal substances. The somber "Necessary" rages at the way violence in rock is tolerated, while rap's fans are held to a different standard. "Stop the Violence" is a plea to chill out because "other people want to see/ Another race fight." KRS-One's unwillingness to sugarcoat his poetry underscores the urgency of the message.

Philly's Fresh Prince is a more accommodating MC, a quick-witted youngster who implores, "If you're not into rap, give us a chance to change your mind" on the two-disc *He's the DJ, I'm the Rapper*, his second outing with light-fingered DJ Jazzy Jeff. An ingratiating motormouth, he can turn a tale of high-school humiliation ("Parents Just Don't Understand") into hilarious mock tragedy. Though he seems natural as can be, Prince's routines are tailor-made for suburban teens; touchstones include *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, video games, and the all-important issue of wearing the right clothes. Though "Brand New Funk" (with its cool James Brown cops) overstates his case, crisp, breezy beats keep the guy from stepping in bubblegum. For that he can thank the joyful noise of the aptly-named Jazzy Jeff.

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## VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Personalidade Series:*

*Maria Bethania, Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa,  
Elis Regina, Caetano Veloso,  
Chico Buarque*  
(PolyGram)

**B**razilian music gained international exposure in the early 1960s, thanks in large part to the bossa nova, a fusion of samba with cool jazz. But after the coup in '64 that replaced Brazil's democracy with a military dictatorship—and amidst the political and cultural upheaval sweeping Brazil and the globe in the late '60s—sophisticated odes to bittersweet love were no longer so relevant. A new generation of musicians, worldly and strongly nationalistic, shook and stirred the bossa with north-eastern Brazilian folk, ancient Yoruban rhythms, English rock, avant-garde poetry or visionary protest. For the next 20 years talented Brazilian artists broke new musical ground in a variety of settings, even as they remained masters of the lyric, romantic ballad.

Six legends of this period—Maria Bethania, Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa, Elis Regina, Caetano Veloso and Chico Buarque—are favorably showcased in the PolyGram *Personalidade* retrospective series. Each artist has been both a pop star and a guru to their generation, and their musical paths are no less fascinating to follow than those taken by their Anglo-American contemporaries in Los Angeles and London.

Singer/songwriters Gil, Veloso and Buarque broke into Brazilian pop in a big way in the late '60s, were thrown into jail for their "subversive" music and then forced into exile. After returning in the

early '70s to a more relaxed political climate, they continued to powerfully influence their country's music. Gil is the cosmic keeper of the global beat who comments on Baha'i, racism, Zen and the human condition on top of infectious samba, rock, afoxe, maracatu or reggae dance grooves. His tunes, like "Domingo No Parque," were as groundbreaking in the Brazil of '67 as anything penned across the equator by four lads from Liverpool. Veloso, equally eclectic, fits his challenging lyrics to extraordinary arrangements and vocal phrasings; he's probably the best vocal stylist (other than his hero João Gilberto) in modern bossa. Buarque, a melancholy intellectual with a razor-sharp sense of irony, muses about society, life and love over updated samba, choros and other traditional forms.

Singers Maria Bethania, Gal Costa and Elis Regina have superbly interpreted the best Brazilian songwriters of the last three decades, from Jobim to Djavan. With her strong, perfectly pitched voice—capable of great intensity or the most subtle nuance—Regina was both a great modern bossa vocalist and a diva able to exploit the textural richness of a Nascimento ballad. (Regina died tragically in '82 of a cocaine overdose, just before she was to record an album with Wayne Shorter.) Bethania and Costa both possess near-perfect technical facility (Bethania's voice is sensuous, deep and earthy; Costa's high and bright) that can touch upon the most terrible sadness, evoke the deepest longing or inspire lovers to carnal abandon. With their broad repertoire and even wider popular success (Bethania was the first woman in Brazil to sell one million copies of an album), these three vocalists elevated the role of female singers in Brazil, linking entertainment to conscience and to muse. — **Chris McGowan**

## JOHN CAFFERTY & THE BEAVER BROWN BAND

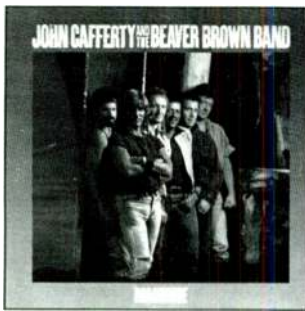
*Roadhouse*  
(Scotti Brothers/CBS)

**I** grew up near Beaver Brown and saw them play all the time, so I pay more attention to them than I otherwise might. Paying attention makes me aware of how badly they've been treated by lots of reviewers, who slag off John Cafferty as a Bruce Springsteen clone. The sound-alike slag seems inconsistent with usual critical standards. After all, you'd be hard pressed to find two more critically

praised new artists than Lyle Lovett and Tracy Chapman, though he sounds exactly like Jesse Winchester and she like Joan Armatrading. As long as Lovett and Chapman write terrific songs, nobody cares.

But sound like Bruce, man, and the roof caves in. When the first Graham Parker record came out I heard a Boston DJ introduce it by saying, "Here's a new guy who's been listening to too much Springsteen." More recently John Mellencamp worked through years of Bruce-clone ridicule to come out the other side a critics' darling. I think John Cafferty is partly a victim of his own ambition to be an *important* songwriter, but mostly a victim of people judging the book by its cover.

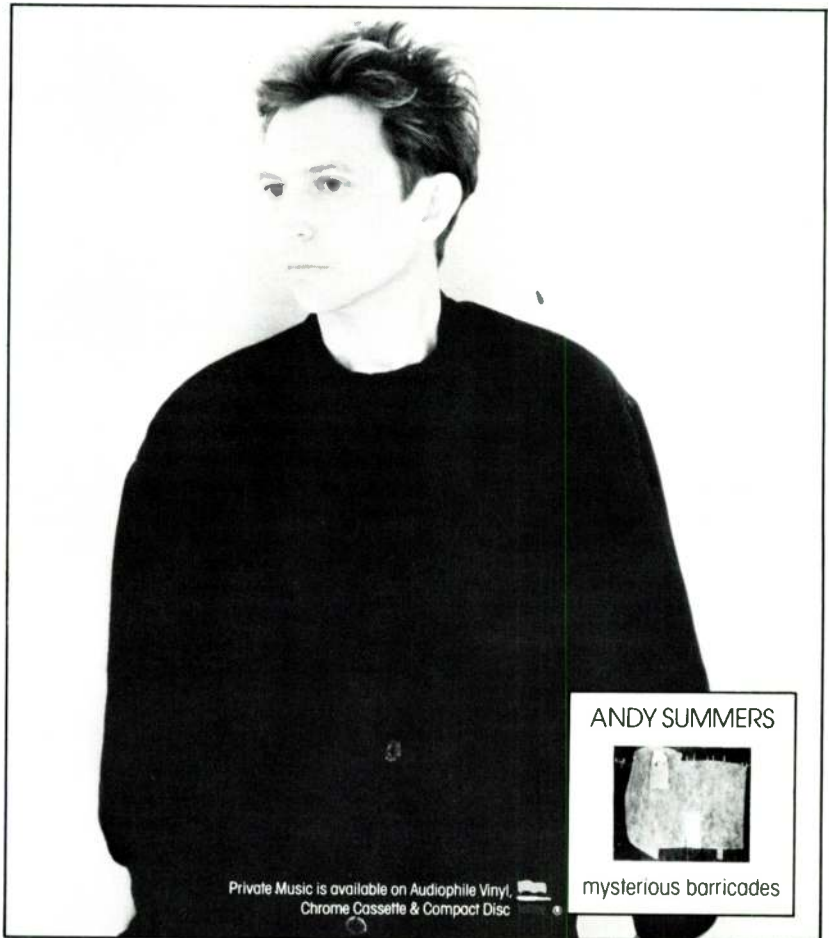
Let's talk about ambition. It's a grievous fault, and grievously has Cafferty answered it. In Beaver Brown's 10 years as a hot local bar band, Cafferty tossed off simple, solid, rock 'n' roll dance tunes with titles like "Some Like It Hot." He had a million of 'em. But he thought those songs weren't important, they didn't say



anything about the Big Subjects. He wrote his first hit, "On the Dark Side," for the *Eddie & the Cruisers* soundtrack in a few minutes. He thought it was just a work for hire and was almost embarrassed when it became his best-known song. To my mind, that's where he was wrong—a good, clear rock tune is the hardest thing in the world to write, and anybody who can do it should. But Cafferty wanted to compose profound songs about the American dream.

Beaver Brown's third album has some fine songs in the great Chuck Berry tradition, and nice grooves like the tropical beach party tune "Victory Dance" (the lyric is about the hunger for validation, but it's easy to ignore over the rhythm). My favorite is "Killing Time," a slowed-down Stones guitar riff fading into dreamy synth chords that perfectly captures the outside-of-time feeling you get when you're drunk at a dance, or when you've been part of a

*continued on page 121*



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# ROCK SHORT TAKES CRK

## JAMES BROWN

*I'm Real* (Scotti Brothers)

EVEN IF FULL FORCE'S PRODUCTION TENDS to self-congratulation as often as adulation, they nonetheless nail a groove that's both grittier and more genuine than what Dan Hartman offered on *Gravity*. Maybe their version of Papa's bag is more modern than Hartman's, taking "Superbad" as a model instead of "Cold Sweat," but it doesn't hurt that Full Force is as demanding in the studio with Brown as he was with his own bands. And that makes it a bit more believable when he boasts that rappers shouldn't sample his old records because "Ain't nobody out there good enough to take the things I have."

## SAM PHILLIPS

*The Indescribable Wow* (Virgin)

ANYBODY WHO EVER HAPPENED ACROSS the Rainy Day album and was disappointed that the Rain Parade/Three O'Clock/Bangles collaboration wasn't

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

the psychedelic pop dream session it could've been will be bowled over by this lovely little gem. Although her singing sometimes sounds a little too much like Belinda Carlisle, Phillips' writing is engagingly quirky and vividly melodic, allowing her to exploit the kaleidoscopic textures of T-Bone Burnett's semi-psychedelic production without disappearing into the (generally purple) haze.

## SOUL ASYLUM

*Hang Time* (A&M/Twin-Tone)

CONSIDERING FOR HOW LONG SOUL Asylum seemed to be little more than Hüsker Dü Jr., it's hard to say which is more astonishing: the tuneful consistency of the writing here, or the brusque individuality of the band's sound. A couple of numbers stray into Replacements territory ("Sometime to Return" in particular), but most of the songs draw from an impressively broad vocabulary of metal and hard-rock riffs—from the jackhammer hook of "Down on Up to Me" to the slow-burning majesty of "Endless Farewell." Addicting.

## SUZANNE CIANI

*Neverland* (Private Music)

AS A PROGRAMMER, CIANI IS A WONDER, coaxing sounds from her synths that are warmer and more resonant than some acoustic instruments. But as a composer, she's a hack, meaning that most of the songs here sound as if they were snipped from *The Thesaurus of Sound-track Clichés*.

## POISON

*Open Up and Say...Ahh!* (Capitol)

THOUGH THE PACKAGING, WITH ITS photofantasy portraits and babes-by-the-pool candid, suggests Poison has already gone Hollywood, the only change in the chemistry here is the big, beefy sound producer Tom Werman has wrenched from the band. Otherwise, the writing is slick, snappy and sexist as ever, demonstrating a melodic economy too seldom seen on the glam scene. But please, *don't let 'em write any more ballads!!!*

## BOZ SCAGGS

*Other Roads* (Columbia)

EIGHT YEARS LATER, SCAGGS' TEXAS twang remains as pungent as ever, lending a bluesy flavor to his phrasing even as it reduces his enunciation to mush. Too bad that down-home delivery doesn't always seem appropriate with these uptown arrangements. "Heart of Mine" might be maudlin enough to exploit his catch-in-the-throat coloring,

but "I Don't Hear You" leaves him lurching across the synth-pulse, while "Crimes of Passion" is just a bad Steely Dan impression.

## VAN MORRISON & THE CHIEFTAINS

*Irish Heartbeat* (Mercury)

MUCH AS MORRISON HAS FLIRTED WITH Irish music before, he's never quite taken such a headlong plunge, nor produced anything as breathtakingly transcendent. This is true Celtic soulman stuff, with Morrison staying close to traditional Irish vocal stylings, even as he unconsciously slips in bluesy asides when so moved. And it's a collaboration in the truest sense; the Chieftains shine as much as Morrison does. Don't wait until St. Patrick's Day.

## THE SUGARCUBES

*Life's Too Good* (Elektra)

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THIS QUIRKY quintet ever being anything but a cult act; these kids enjoy being weird too much. And though that can get tiresome when the 'Cubes play off each other like an Icelandic B-52's, the occasionally exquisite single ("Birthday," "Coldsweat") more than makes up the difference.

## GRAHAM PARKER

*The Mona Lisa's Sister* (RCA)

GIVEN THE AMOUNT OF TIME PARKER has spent as an "angry young man," it's surprising to note the musical conservatism underlying his discontent. Yet that very adherence to tradition has animated his best albums, this one among them. Maybe it's the tempered lucidity of his phrasing, or the easy confidence of his (mostly veteran) backing band, but the performances here connect as readily with Parker's rock and soul roots as with the eloquent rage that fuels his writing.

## GLASS TIGER

*Diamond Sun* (EMI-Manhattan)

AS OFTEN AS GLASS TIGER ENDS UP SOUNDING like an REO Speedwagon for the '80s, they never seem to succumb to that band's glib imbecility. It's hard to say whether that's because Glass Tiger has more to say than Kevin Cronin and company, or because their clichés simply sound fresher. Whatever the reason, "I'm Still Searching" and its ilk are far catchier than they have a right to be.

## SADE

*Stronger Than Pride* (Epic)

...AND FASTER THAN SOMINEX.



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PHIL SOUSSAN  
Bassist with Ozzy Osbourne.  
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Something Better Will Come Along When Hell Freezes Over.

by Chip Stern

**J**MY, WHAT A TASTY LITTLE SUCKER...A couple of new fusion discs with the power to captivate open minds. The **WAYNE SHORTER** record you've wanted to hear may have just slipped into town. Shorter's recent *Joy Rider* (Columbia) is MIDI without the motion sickness, a shifting canvas of keyboard textures and rhythmic motifs that showcases Shorter's piquant blowing and rich orchestral sensibility. Shorter's female collaborators (Patrice

## SHORT TAKES

**L**Rushen, Terri Lyne Carrington and Gerri Allen) are popping throughout, and fill in Shorter's Venus Paradise color-by-numbers travel posters to perfection. **KEVIN EUBANKS'** *Shadow Prophets* (GRP) works because the guitarist never attempts to turn this intimate acoustic jazz-funk into heavy-petting serenades. This is modern salon music—safe, tasteful, understated and accomplished, in the manner of a George Benson record. Most of the miracle whip in this genre is deeply offensive to me—this ain't. I wonder why? Maybe it's the personal shimmer of Eubanks' steel-stringed acoustic. Or because Eubanks translates the thoughtfulness of a bopper to the body language of a funkier and other third-world country sons. Must sound good on CD.

**DANNIE RICHMOND** was enjoying a great second act when he passed on recently at the age of 51. With his elaborate sense of texture, tempo and swing, Richmond was a definitive drum stylist who came to fame as Charles Mingus' alter ego in the mid-'50s. In a sense, Mingus tutored the ex-R&B tenor player to fit his "rotary perception" of the beat: Mingus and Richmond transfigured jazz time into an intuitive, episodic cycle of changing tempi, contrasting polyrhythms, strolling back lines and rolling hosannas—they talked in time. With his graceful touch, Richmond was able to manipulate

the pitch of the drums, to elicit melodic colorations from the cymbals and float forwards-backwards snare figurations against the pulse. In a sense, Dannie Richmond synthesized the differing grooves of Max Roach, Roy Haynes and Philly Joe Jones into a coherent whole, so that you could push and drag the beat at the same time.

The humor and storytelling aspects of his best solo architecture is much in evidence on "Folk Forms Number One" and the previously unreleased "Music From the Drums," from *The Complete Candid Recordings of Charles Mingus* with Eric Dolphy and Ted Curson (Mosaic Records, 197 Strawberry Hill Ave., Stamford, CT 06902). This represents Mingus' "free" period, when he was exploring the concepts of Ornette Coleman, and as a kid these daredevil collective improvisations floored me—especially the way Mingus and Richmond swung. *Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus* and *Mingus* (Candid) have also been re-released for the umpteenth time, now in CD format—and good luck finding them—but then, just about any Mingus/Richmond hit will do the trick for you. Don't neglect Richmond's recent work, though; his collaborations with bassist Cameron Brown in the free-swinging, sanctified *Don Pullen-George Adams Band* are uniformly hot. On their most recent release, *Song Everlasting* (Blue Note), this band took on a mature relaxation and glow—more's the pity it's only a record now. Finally, there's **BENNIE WALLACE'S** *The Art of the Saxophone* (Denon CD), which is more of a blowing session, featuring Dannie, Eddie Gomez and John Scofield, and if Bennie sometimes hyperventilates and blacks out on the rhythm section during one of his harmonic marathons, his tone is always provocative. This is an idealized digital representation of the way Richmond actually sounded, and the accent is on up tempos.

**CD MADNESS:** After an extended siesta of 25 years, RCA jazz has been busy of late with the revitalized Novus and Bluebird

labels. And what have we here? A new, expensive-sounding **HENRY THREADGILL**, *Easily Slip Into Another World* (RCA/Novus), and a digital re-mastering of the classic **AIR**, *Air Lore* (RCA/Bluebird). *Air Lore* was Threadgill's breakthrough, in which he first balanced the post-modernist inclinations of the AACM school with his own affinity for the blues and ragtime of Jelly Roll Morton and Scott Joplin. This new equilibrium was reflected in the subsequent richness of his orchestrations for an expanded septet—a hip variation on the polyphonic brass, string and rhythm ensembles of old New Orleans. Along with Julius Hemphill, Muhal Richard Abrams and Ornette Coleman, Threadgill has created a body of work that marks him as one of the premier jazz composers of the '80s. Never has the avant-garde sounded so down-home as on *Easily Slip Into Another World*. From the country blues of "I Can't Wait Till I Get Home" to the dark, circuitous balladry of "My Rock" (with the great vocalist Aisha Putli), to the peyote parade rhythms of "Award the Squad-tett," Henry Threadgill makes it fun to slip in and out of time.

Some of the Bluebird compilations are a good buy, too. *Artist's Choice* traces vibraphonist **GARY BURTON**'s roots from young phenom to progenitor of modern country jazz/rock. Bassist Steve Swallow was taken aback by this set ("They picked the cuts I would have taken"), and Swallow the composer is well-served. **BUDDY RICH**—*Time Being* clocks in at an hour, and forget about all that world's greatest stuff, just dig the man's heart (the drum solo on the title tune comes up at 7:56 for those CD enthusiasts who simply can't wait). This set chronicles his 1971-72/Pat La Barbera vintage orchestra. It's Buddy at his peak, as he straddles the rock expectations of the then billowing BST/Chicago audience without mitigating his timeless sense of the swing and bop traditions. The big beats of the big bands and the big boppers come together in the drumming of Bernard Richman. ☐



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# IN THE SHORT TAKES

## DEFUNKT

*Avoid the Funk* (Hannibal)

IT'S SURPRISING HOW WELL THESE SIDES have aged in the five-some years since their inception. Joe Bowie was once one of the rising young champions of the trombone, with a muscular bravura that lit up the skies in Henry Threadgill's original Sextet, and these sides resonate with a sense of danger that proved all too real. This is down and nasty funk that Run-D.M.C. fans could readily understand, and if Joe Bowie's "dance of death" brought him perilously close to playing Leon Spinks to brother Lester Bowie's Michael, the genuine elation in *Avoid the Funk* hints at a possible renewal. (Box 667, Rocky Hill, NJ 08553.) — *Chip Stern*

**BY ALL HANDS**

## SONIC YOUTH

"Master-Dik"/"Beat on the Brat" (SST)

THE A-SIDE OF THIS 12-INCH SINGLE IS A vicious blast of grunge-rap 'n' roll steaming with New York pavement hatred. (And if it isn't, it sounds like it anyway.) The album-length flip follows an accurate version of the Ramones oldie with an aural collage that reveals the sense of humor you might have feared from these darlings of the Lower East Side. The inner-sleeve notes attack both band and label. Grab this before it self-destructs. — *Scott Isler*

## GWAR

*Hell-o* (Shimmy Disc)

CLAIMING TO BE A LOST RACE OF SUPERHEROES resurrected from their tomb in Antarctica to destroy the music biz, GWAR combines the costume and sci-fi sense of early Kiss with the operatic sweep of the Meat Men and a liberating contempt for everything. Sonically, they don't venture much beyond loud, fast and distorted, which is fine, but they could really be a big deal next time around if they would bring their creativity to the studio. (JAF, Box 1187, New York, NY 10116.) — *Charles M. Young*

## BOYS OF THE LOUGH

*Sweet Rural Shade* (Shanachie)

THIS IRISH QUINTET'S FOURTEENTH ALBUM offers a few surprises, like a pedal steel guitar winding through "The Hills of Donegal." But the Boys mostly do what they do best: spirited jigs, reels and fiddle tunes. Christy O'Leary's clear tenor breaks your heart on the poignant waltz "Once I Loved"—and that, of course, is part of the tradition too. (1 Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423.) — *Mark Rowland*

## THE BEATNIGS

*The Beatnigs* (Alternative Tentacles)

UNCENSORED PRO-REVOLUTION AND ANTI-traditionalist religion rap that is reminiscent of the Last Poets, and all the more powerful because it's from a band that is mixed racially. Samples, scratching, bass lines and drum machines all throb in nifty arrangements. Makes you wish Run-D.M.C. had more to say. (Box 11458, San Francisco, CA 94101.)

— *Charles M. Young*

## THE COWBOY JUNKIES

*The Trinity Session* (Latent)

ON THEIR DEBUT LP, *WHITES OFF EARTH Now!!*, this Canadian family band (brothers Michael and Peter Timmins, sis Margo and longtime family friend

Alan Anton) fashioned their own highly stylized version of the blues. This time out they tackle country and the results have a creepy beauty reminiscent of the Michael Lesy book, *Wisconsin Death Trip*—there's something vaguely sinister afoot. Lead vocalist Margo Timmins' singing is clear, pure and simple like Emmylou Harris, languid, tormented and strange like Billie Holiday, and she drifts through these 10 hushed, haunted arrangements like a honky-tonk angel on the nod. The Junkies prove themselves masters of post-modern melancholy. (407 The Kingsway, Islington, Ontario, Canada M9A 3W1.) — *Kristine McKenna*

## WHITE ZOMBIE

*Soul-Crusher* (Caroline)

EXCELLENT CHAOS METAL WITH THE UNmistakable feel of true catharsis. Their starting point is the Stooges at their most dissonant—nothing resembling a melody, but the imagination of the psychedelic-crunch guitar adds enough variety that you haven't heard everything after the first minute. Mood music for the great urban riots of the '90s. (5 Crosby St., New York, NY 10013.)

— *Charles M. Young*

## LITTLE RICHARD

*Shut Up!* (Rhino)

A COLLECTION OF GENERALLY OVERLOOKED covers made both before and after the Great Mouth's rise to stardom and subsequent religious bug, it contains only a few true gems, but never disappoints. Late (1964) versions of "Hound Dog" and "Whole Lotta Shakin'" are fairly irresistible, featuring Jimi Hendrix on some decidedly pre-psychedelic guitar. But what really cooks are the juke-joint jumpers "Taxi Blues" and "Little Richard's Boogie," the latter recorded with the Johnny Otis Orchestra (and featuring an Otis vibes solo). Wonderful ephemera by the purest rock 'n' roll singer of them all. — *Mark Rowland*

## BAR-B-Q KILLERS

*Comely* (Fundamental Music)

IN THE HISTORY OF ALBUM COVERS, THESE guys deserve mention for achieving major-league disgust without resorting to obscenity: Photograph of a chickadee pulling the guts out of a mouse impaled on a thorn shows nature to be the unethical terror it is, and what's a punk band to do but scream? Guitar riffs amidst the dissonance are pretty good, but ventures into industrial noise are a shade to the dilettante side. (Box 2309, Covington, GA 30209.) — *Charles M. Young*



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Ronald Shannon Jackson



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# RECORDS

from page 113

local scene so long that it starts to seem like a ghost town, even though all the ghosts are still having a great time. This is what I like about Beaver Brown. What makes me throw a shoe at the speaker is when Cafferty sticks in Bruce-isms like "I know a rockin' little joint off Rt. 95... she really lets it unwind," or remembers a "warm fourth of July" in "this little seaside town." John must know this is all the ammunition skeptics will need to tear into him again. Why does he do it?

Well, I think that this is how he sings 'cause it's how he talks and thinks. Cafferty really is the small-town guy in such songs. He's more like the guy in "No Particular Place to Go" than Chuck Berry is, more like the guy in "Wild Night" than Van Morrison is, more like the guy in "Ramrod" than Bruce Springsteen is. John Cafferty is not an introspective artist who sits in his room imagining a street life; he lives there. And my wish is that he'd forget about trying to be that introspective artist and just rock 'n' roll as freely and happily as he did back when he didn't worry about it so much. Cafferty and the fine musicians in Beaver Brown know how to write and

play straight-ahead, unambitious rock songs that make people want to dance. When John realizes that is his strength and makes a record as joyous as his band on the best nights in the old bars, he'll be the important artist he dreams to be.

- Bill Flanagan

# ATARI ST

from page 62

SMPTE reader/writer for the ST called Time Lock. It handles all SMPTE formats and outputs 24-, 48-, 96- and 192-ppqn drum clocks plus MIDI clock and song position pointer messages. But even more impressive is Steinberg's Desktop Mixing program for the Yamaha DMP7. What it lets you do is gang up to four eight-channel DMP7s for a total of 32 automated channels. Any fader or parameter on any of these DMP7s can be combined in a subgroup which can move the parameters up or down in amounts relative to one another, positively or negatively scaled. Fader and parameter moves can also be placed on a cue list and triggered by incoming SMPTE time code via the Time Lock or Steinberg's more high-end SMP-24 SMPTE/MIDI processor. Heavy business indeed. - Alan di Perna

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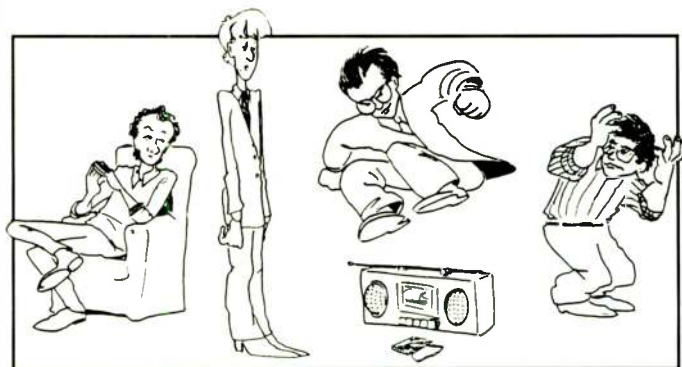
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# THE WINNER

of the 1988  
MUSICIAN  
MAGAZINE

# BEST UNSIGNED BAND

CONTEST IS...The envelope please...



Musician's panel of experts: Knopfler, Burnett, Costello and Froom.



## LONESOME VAL from New York City!

Thank you. Thank you. Now stay seated a minute. The runners up are (in alphabetical order): **Adams House Cat** (from Florence, AL), **the Conversation** (North Hollywood, CA), **Exude** (Anaheim, CA), **the Howland Ensemble** (Vienna, VA), **Idle Hands** (Cambridge, MA), **Tom Pirozzoli** (Mount Sunapee, NH), **the Diane Ponzio Trio** (New York, NY), **Strange Cave** (Hoboken, NJ) and **the Subdudes** (Ft. Collins, CO).

Lonesome Val has won an **Otari MX5050** Mark III 8½-inch eight-channel tape recorder with CB-116 auto locator and CB-110 remote, plus an **MX5050B-11** ¼-inch recorder, **JBL 4412** studio monitors, a **Soundcraft Series 200B** mixing console, a **JBL/UREI 6260** power amplifier and **Beyer Dynamic M88, M260, M201** and **M69** microphones with cables and stands.

The winner and runners up will appear on a record manufactured by Warner Bros. Records and *Musician*, which we hope will win each band a big record deal, critical acclaim, heavy rotation, sell-out crowds, a closing spot at a big charity gig, critical drubbing, a lucrative beer commercial and copy approval from *Rolling Stone*.

About the judging: In April, a dedicated cadre of *Musician* writers and editors listened to all 1,962 entries and narrowed the selection to 20 finalists. Those 20 were played for our judges—**T-Bone Burnett**, **Elvis Costello** and **Mitchell Froom** (who gathered at T-Bone's apartment in Santa Monica) and **Mark Knopfler** (who listened to the tapes in New York).

Those four judges rated each group on a scale of 1 to 10. The lowest a band could score was 4. The highest, 40. Lonesome Val's country-tinged ballad "Front Porch" logged a whopping 31.8. No judge gave any band a 10, but Knopfler and Costello both gave Val a 9. The song earned a 7.8 from T-Bone, whose meticulous decimal system of measuring minute distinctions between bands had Costello in hysterics. Froom held Val to a 6, on grounds that he felt her singing got a little carried away and because "I liked the James Bond chords, but I didn't like it when they went to the relative minor." You won't find this level of criticism on "American Bandstand," folks.

Elvis found Val "far and away the best singer. If Patsy Cline were starting now she'd probably sound more like this than like k.d. lang." Knopfler said of Val's track, "I'd like to have her album! I really like it. Her voice is so easy to listen to, she could play this with just an acoustic guitar and it would still be great. It's a real strong picture, American to the core—historically, sentimentally—almost to the edge."

Val's bio says she grew up in the projects in Troy, New York and had a rock group that opened shows for the Police, Squeeze, XTC and the B-52's. Her New York-based band includes guitarist Stewart Lerman and bassist Steve Cohen. In their three years playing around New York they've supported the Georgia Satellites and Robert Gordon. Congratulations, gang; bet you won't be lonesome for long.

A word to the 10 bands who were eliminated in this final round: There were seven groups within a fraction of a single point of tying for ninth and tenth place. We know that one of these near-misses (Boston's Tribe) impressed Knopfler so much that he's already asked them for tapes of their other material. What can we tell ya—sometimes the judges disagreed. A hundred bands entered the contest for each of the 20 chosen to be a finalist; all the groups who made it to the end can be pretty proud.

T-Bone, still smarting from what he maintains was a *Musician* sucker punch in last year's infamous "First We Kill All the Drummers" interview, went out of his way to say nice things about every drummer on every tape. Costello suggested calling the contest "Kill All the Engineers at Local Demo Studios Who Think They're Phil Spector and Won't Leave the Band's Arrangements Alone."

We thank everyone who entered for taking the time to share their visions with us. No doubt some good musicians got left out. We thank our judges for giving so much attention to the project. It's a measure of their commitment to struggling musicians that they took their duties very seriously and bent their schedules to meet *Musician's* deadlines. Next time we give one of 'em a bad review we won't sleep for a week.

Full disclosure: Idle Hands' Asa Brebner is an old friend of *Musician's* Bill Flanagan, and Brebner once wrote an article for *Musician*. Flanagan didn't know Brebner's band was in the contest until he saw the name on the list of finalists; he did not vote for the tape. The two judges who voted for Idle Hands did not know Idle Hands ever had any connection with the magazine. *Musician* staffers always put integrity before friendship, which is why they are more often invited to be on juries than to go to parties.



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