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# MUSICIAN

NO. 84

*The Mellencamp Interview*

\$2.25 OCTOBER 1985

## JOHN COUGAR GROWS UP

BY MARK ROWLAND

## BRYAN FERRY OPENS UP

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

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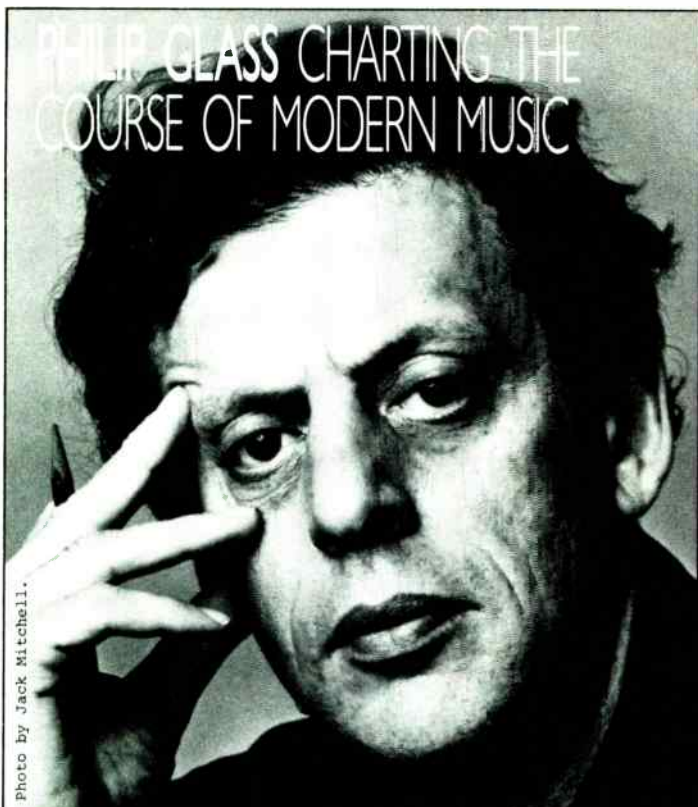
Now read about the formative years of an incurable romantic.

*By Timothy White* 52



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N.Y.C., NY 10036 (212) 764-7395

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Gordon Baird & Sam Holdsworth

Musician (USPS 431-910) is published monthly by Amordian Press, Inc., P.O. Box 701, 31 Commercial St., Gloucester, MA 01930 (617) 281-3110. Amordian Press, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Billboard Publications, Inc., One Astor Place, 1515 Broadway, New York City, NY 10036. Musician is a trademark of Amordian Press, Inc. © 1985 by Musician, all rights reserved. Second class postage paid at Gloucester, MA 01930 and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions \$20 per year, \$38 for two years, \$54 for three years. Canada and elsewhere, add \$8 per year, U.S. funds only. **Subscription address: Musician, Box 1923, Marion, OH 43305.** Postmaster send form 3579 to above address.

Current and back issues are available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

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





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## Sting Solos

From the Everly Brothers to James Brown, Stevie Wonder to Sting, good is good no matter what it is. Besides being one of the most consistent writers in the last decade, he has raised the standard of pop music almost single-handedly. Even Wynton would have to agree with that. After hearing *Blue Turtle*s, I really could care less if the Police record again.

Douglas Pryor  
Riverside, CA



In "Sting's Swing Shift," he says "...the waltz...There's real tension in the way that three pushes against the four." Try as I may, I just can't see those quarter notes pushing three beats to the measure any more tensely than any other type of note. It wouldn't make a bit of difference if it was 3/8 time slower instead of 3/4 time faster. The tension, as we all know, comes from somewhere else.

Now that I'm started, I am tired of his pronouncements that the Police had done all they could. I never thought Summers or Copeland had reached the peak of their abilities in this particular ensemble; perhaps Mr. Sumner should speak more of himself and not be always laying off his own limitations on others.

Oh well, with a name like Sting, it's *caveat emptor* anyway, isn't it?

Evelyn M. Parke  
San Francisco, CA

I couldn't agree more with what Branford Marsalis said about the restricted way the saxophone is used in rock (with all due respect to King Curtis, Jr. Walker, Sanborn, et al). In vocal-centered

music, horn players have to be careful not to crowd the singer. I'm glad that a talented musician like Branford is on the case.

Also, I love "Russians" but I think Sting is giving Robert Oppenheimer a bum rap. The much more hawkish Edward Teller would have been more appropriate.

Nice job, Vic. Just don't let your heady vantage point go to your head, if you know what I mean.

Russ Gershon  
Cambridge, MA

Re Vic Garbarini's statement to Sting: "I think what you are looking for are some of the younger generation of black jazz musicians who have grown up listening to funk and rock." Vic, why not just "musicians"? Why perpetuate such dreadfully outdated Crow-jimistic thinking? Musicians have been gradually breaking down racial barriers throughout this century. Please, a little more responsibility in the future.

Fred Smith  
Costa Mesa, CA

## Wowowowowowowo

Over the centuries many books about Nyuk Rock have been published: the *I Ching* and *Tao* of Lao Tzu in China; the *Nag Hammadi* of the early Christians; the writings of Davy Crockett and Petroleum V. Nasby in the nineteenth century. But you miss the most important facet of the Stooges when you limit their influence to the twentieth century. If one were to examine the issue a little further, I am sure you would find the Three Stooges are nothing less than a divine manifestation of the cosmic funny bone. I cite by example the similiarity between Larry's locks and the father of our country, Geo. Washington. The Three Stooges appear here and there to this one and to that one throughout eternity, in both directions in time simultaneously.

I as one of many, will suffer major disappointment if your book isn't ever published.

Mark Preston  
Santa Monica, CA

[Last of the Moe Haircuts will indeed be made manifest in the spring from Contemporary Books, Chicago. — Ed.]

Re: "Nyuk Rock" by Bill Flanagan: "If the new music was mothered by country and the blues, it was fathered by the Three Stooges in a riotous gang-bang of post-Hiroshima rebellion."

What? Somehow I find it difficult to appreciate Flanagan's prosaic wizardry, or the literary gymnastics required to spew out a line which conjures forth horrifying visions of Hiroshima while comparing the Stooges' talent to a riotous gang-rape. To describe America's catharsis following the horror and devastation inflicted on Hiroshima as a "riotous gang-bang," and to then suggest that such sick, violent behavior is in any way related to the Three Stooges, is both ludicrous and highly offensive.

Maggy Antebi-Wilson  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Bill Flanagan replies: Oh—a troublemaker, eh? Let's see if we can explicate this complex syntax. 1) "Post-Hiroshima rebellion" refers to the budding radicalism of youth in America after World War II. That the rebellion was post-Hiroshima is a simple fact, a fact not especially related to the "riotous gang-bang." 2) A "gang-bang" is not the same as a "gang rape." The difference—the willingness of the woman to participate—is not insignificant. 3) There's no way three guys can—even in metaphor—father the same child without gang-banging. 4) I resent your implication that the Stooges were not sick and violent.

## Idol Chat

I recently revelled in yet

another excellent issue of your magazine, with the sole exception of your article on Steve Stevens. What the fuck does he mean jazz has no heritage? Has Mr. Stevens ever heard of Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Charlie Christian, Billie Holiday, Stan Getz, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Max Roach, King Oliver, Dave Brubeck, Chet Baker, the Nat King Cole Trio, or Clifford Brown? Steven's uninformed and absurd remarks are an obvious ignorance of music history. Ignorance breeds self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction is ignorance.

Mabusha Masekela

I've heard corporate rockers put down jazz because "it won't sell," "it's too complex" and "the kids wanna rock." But Steve Stevens' comment about jazz having no heritage stops the presses. I suppose he's never heard the contributions Freddie Green, Charlie Christian, Django Reinhardt and Wes Montgomery have made to jazz guitars. Wake up, Steve!

Richard Anton  
New York City, NY

## Apologies

To give you the benefit of the doubt, perhaps there was no one you could ask about the word "abo" that you used to describe the aboriginal reggae band No Fixed Address (May 85). However I notice you don't use the word nigger in your magazine.

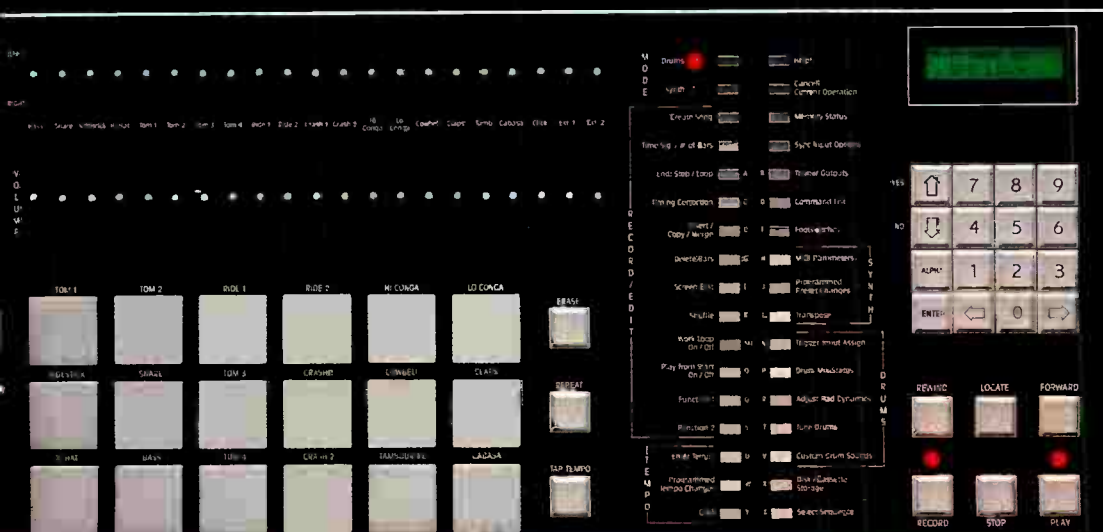
Sally Ford  
Fitzroy, Australia.

## Eraata

Such nice work in our July issue and no credit: Photo on pages 30/31, Daniel Quatrochii/RETNA; illustration by Micha Riss on page 61; and photo by Brian Aris/Outline on page 69.

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World Radio History



# ORCHESTRAL MANOEUVRES IN THE DARK

BY IRA ROBBINS

## TWO GUYS AND A TAPE DECK BECOME A "REAL BAND."

Only one of the following two statements is true. Which? A) *Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark* is a synthesizer duo, a pair of chilly intellectual technocrats playing electro-pop for eggheads. B) An O.M.D. concert is a high-voltage, kinetic rock 'n' roll event, more conducive to non-stop dancing than detached observation.

"A," right? Wrong. But you've just confirmed the band's serious image problem in this country, in contrast to their full-scale European success. Far from producing highbrow pomp for stationary consideration, O.M.D.'s records are warmly engaging; live, they're a dynamic dance band unafraid of high volume, velocity and energy. And while the quartet of Liverpudlians do use electronic instruments prominently, they also incorporate electric bass, guitar, acoustic drums and real horns in their music. They've expanded steadily from bouncy synth-pop, experimenting with various styles, artsy to aggressive, whimsical to dead serious.

To be sure, the problems onstage at New York's Beacon Theatre during the tour kickoff are computerized: Halfway through the gig Paul Humphreys, low-key master of a modest collection of keyboards and a tape deck, finds he can't generate the band's high-tech effects. Bassist/vocalist Andy McCluskey, an extroverted rocker, appears frustrated about the cock-up but doesn't lose his cool. He prunes the now-unreproducible openings of several tunes, and abbreviates the set. Returning from an early exit, McCluskey announces to the wildly enthusiastic sell-out crowd, "We've run out of songs—here's a *real* encore!" O.M.D. launches into the evening's second run-

through of "Enola Gay," which is once again well-received.

Earlier in the day—following an endless, troublesome soundcheck with unfamiliar audio equipment hired for the tour—an unhappy but controlled McCluskey talked about the group he and Humphreys began as teenagers during the punk revolution. "Our musical tastes and feelings grew up in the mid-70s; we hated lead guitar solos and big drum kits and all the clichés of rock."

Even then their perspective was different. "We'd gotten interested in German music like Kraftwerk as an alternative to what was around in '75/'76, so we'd already developed our musical influences before the punk explosion." Instead of going the loud-fast guitar route, they embraced synthesizers.

After passing through several genealogically interesting but otherwise minor outfits, the grandly-named *Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark*—a duo joined by Winston, a tape deck—hit the club circuit. "At the end of '78, when we started to be O.M.D. and play our songs live, there were openings for bands like ourselves. The great thing about punk, even though we didn't want to sound like a punk band, was that it opened loads of clubs all over the country." Despite an unorthodox bass/keyboards/

backing tapes lineup, "There was no resistance, perhaps because it was just the two of us belting out dancy pop songs, strong melodies and strong rhythms. We weren't standing onstage being poseurs."

After a year as a duo, "We got sick of the confines of the tape playing all the drums and everything and we invited Malcolm Holmes—our drummer from the old days when we'd been in youth club bands—back into the band. He started off with a completely electronic kit, but it broke down so many times that he went back to his acoustic kit." He now plays a mixture. Martin Cooper joined on keyboards and saxophone in 1980; the basic lineup hasn't changed since. For the new *Crush* LP and tour, brothers Graham and Neil Weir add horns and guitar.

O.M.D.'s first recording, the single "Electricity," appeared in May 1979 on Factory, the pioneering Manchester independent label. Typical of their early work, the song had offbeat subject matter and a memorable synth riff winding through a bouncy beat. A few months later O.M.D. signed to DinDisc, a new Virgin Records subsidiary which re-issued the debut. A series of chart-bound singles followed, capped in late 1980 with a chilling pop song about the



Andy McCluskey, Paul Humphreys and other brass.

bombing of Hiroshima: "Enola Gay" went number one all over Europe, and eventually sold two-and-a-half million copies worldwide.

They'd located a viable sound verging on formula, but the pair's creativity pulled them in new directions. *Architecture & Morality* (1981) opens with an angry, dissonant shouter, "The New Stone Age," but generally has a placid, hauntingly beautiful sound. The album demonstrated O.M.D.'s growing artistic ambition and sophistication, covering themes like "Joan Of Arc (Maid Of Orleans)."

McCluskey explains their songwriting modus operandi. "We get interested in

things and they become part of our music. This started when we were sixteen, just kids. It seemed much more logical for us to write about the telephone box near our house than boring 'I love you/You love me' songs, which were clichés we'd had enough of. We'd get interested in airplanes and write about Enola Gay; we'd get interested in Joan of Arc and write about her."

He admits no master plan guides O.M.D.'s evolution. "On the whole, the changes have been quite subconscious. The differences in sound from album to album really reflect differences in our attitudes and personalities as we've grown up from the ages of

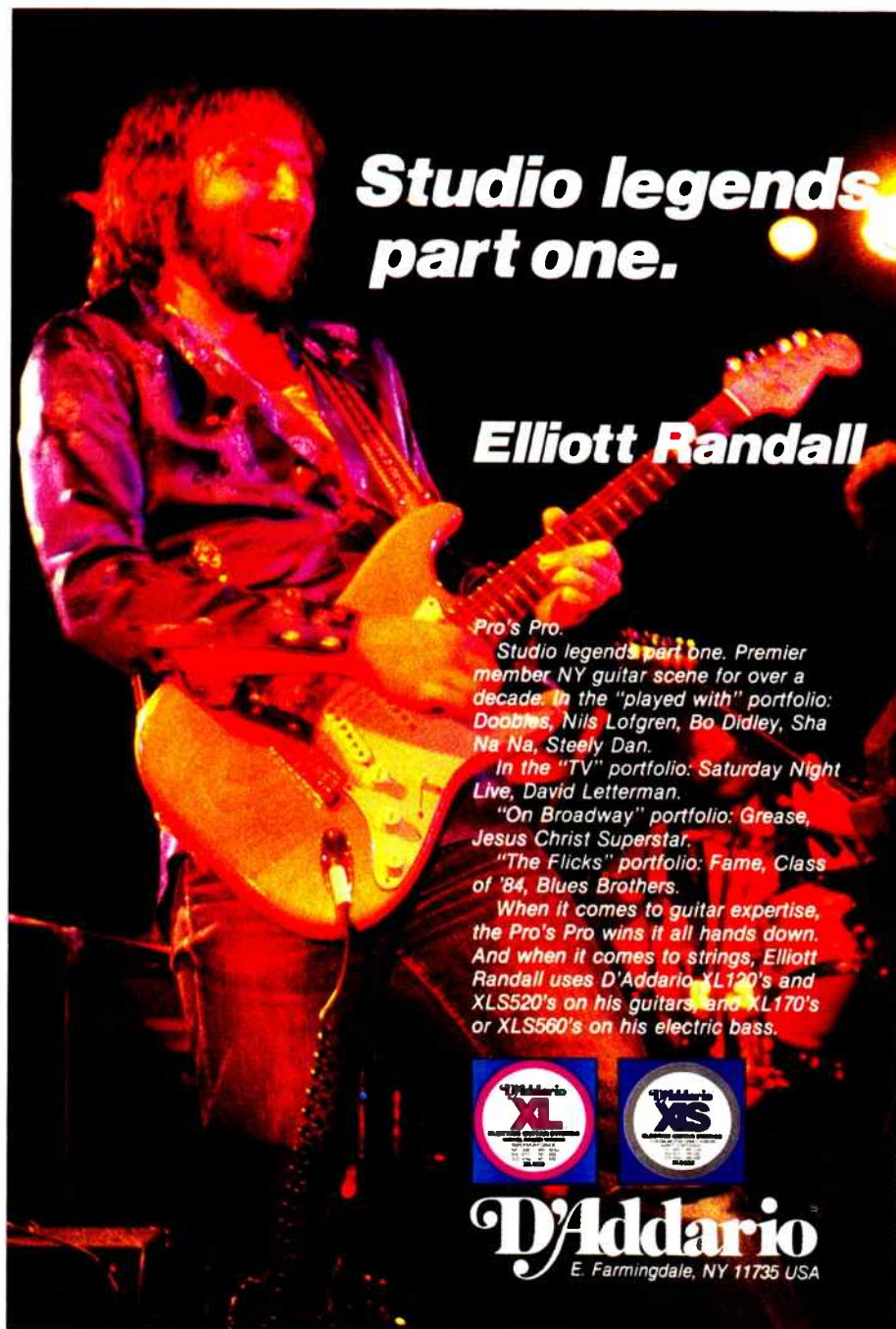
nineteen to twenty-five. Our first album is very much boys on synthesizers. As we developed, we dropped our loathing for some of the acoustic instruments which we'd refused to play in the early days. Also, we built our own sixteen-track studio, the Gramophone Suite, from the advance on the first album. One of the reasons we initially moved away from the zippy pop stuff was because we had this chance to sit down and pick over things. *Architecture & Morality* was where we really took our time to build things very properly on the tape."

O.M.D.'s 1983 album, the intriguing *Dazzle Ships*, was symptomatic of the band's studio preoccupation. An adventurous concept LP of sorts, it includes a spoken-word tape collage about "Time Zones" and a found-sound piece of ship noises (the title track). Despite a number of straightforward tracks, fans and critics were bewildered. "In hindsight, I now understand why it was so difficult for people to like it, but at the time we were in quite a bizarre state of mind. We'd achieved almost all the goals we could have ever had for ourselves, even abstract goals we weren't aware of. We began to look for something else."

They subsequently abandoned their beloved Liverpool studio. "We got really bored going to the same place every day. After four and a half years, it was like going to the office." O.M.D. recorded the more down-to-earth *Junk Culture* in Montserrat. *Crush*, produced by American Stephen Hague, is similarly eclectic.

The new album's most striking lyric is "88 Seconds In Greensboro," concerning the fatal 1979 confrontation in North Carolina between the Ku Klux Klan and a communist organization. "I'd seen a TV program about the incident," McCluskey recalls. "I was stunned—an average suburban setting with all this carnage suddenly transpiring. I felt it must be almost inevitable that that kind of rally was going to get that kind of treatment in that part of the USA. I didn't want to point any fingers or assign guilt or ask why it happened. I was more interested in the feelings of the people involved. Their husbands and brothers were gunned down and nothing was going to get done about it. I was interested in this awful feeling of inevitable ultimate frustration."

Women's roles are explored in several of *Crush*'s songs. "I'm more aware of women within society than I used to be," McCluskey explains. "When you're growing up, your mum is your mum and your sisters are your sisters and girls are for chatting up and taking to bed. Now I'm beginning to see people within a social context. 'Women III' is not trying



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**Elliott Randall**



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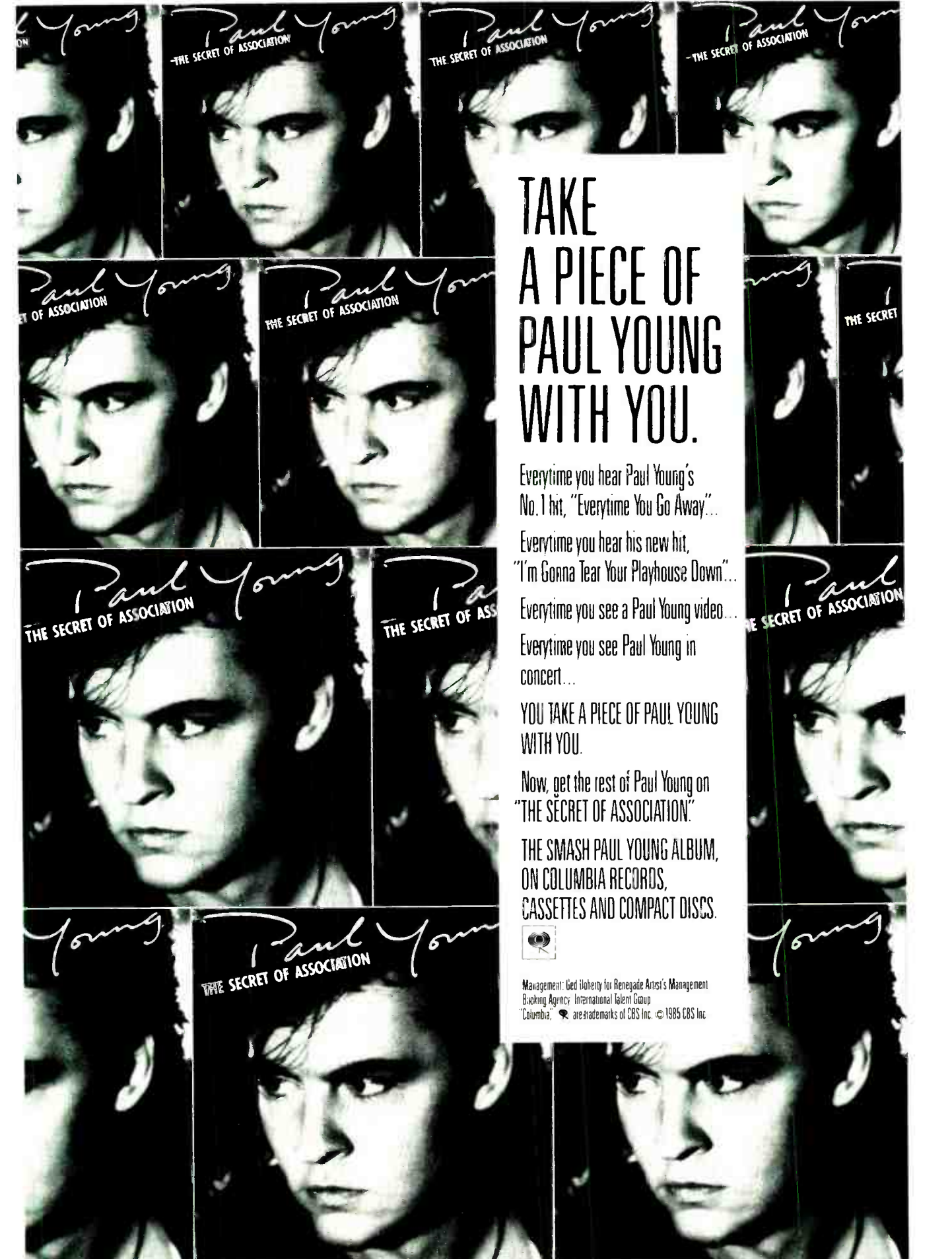
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to fly a flag for liberating women from the kitchen sink; the character is caught between the good things and the bad things. 'The Native Daughters Of The Golden West' is the other side of it, the cheerfully small-minded attitude of women who grow up to believe they're going to be wives, have children and live in houses. That's their holy grail."

He allows that some of his songs, despite such clear topics, "have ended up lyrically being quite abstract." In his defense he adds, "Songs do tend to take on a life of their own once you start to write them. Very often a nice lyric springs into your mind and you can't be logical about it, you can't say this means very much, it just fits. Our songs have always been strongly emotional, whether a love song or about the Ku Klux Klan killing people."

Having found the U.S.A. thus far more confused than converted, O.M.D. can only hope that this lengthy tour will re-

move misconceptions and generate enthusiasm for what they are now rather than what they used to be. Their unplanned plan risks leaving most of their potential audience wondering what O.M.D. is really about. But McCluskey won't have it any other way, and he doesn't believe that the band's willful-  
*continued on page 96*

### Field Manoeuvres

On tour, **Andrew McCluskey** plays Ibanez Artist and Aria Pro hollow-body electric guitars with Dean Markley strings (regular and heavy bottom). His Fender Jazz bass has Dean Markley Strings (medium). McCluskey also uses an Ibanez compressor pedal and Nady True Diversity wireless guitar transmitter/receiver. His amplifier is a Fender Twin Reverb.

**Paul Humphreys** travels with a Fairlight CMI, Emulator II, Korg M100, three Roland SDE-2000 digital delays and one Roland SDE-1000. The Fairlight takes a Fostex eight-channel mixer.

**Martin Cooper** has a Jupiter 8, Emulator II and three Roland SDE-2000 digital delays. His saxophones are by Yamaha (soprano) and Selmer (tenor).

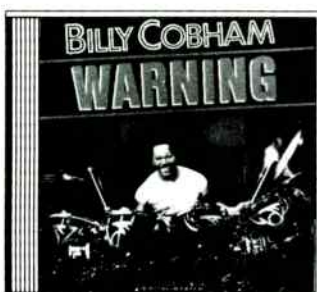
**Malcolm Holmes** keeps time with the Sonor Signature series: 22-inch kick drum, 15-inch floor tom, 14x8-inch snare. Heads are by Remo, cymbals are Sabians. Holmes also puts five Simmons pads through a Simmons SDS 7; one pad operates a Claptrap. One of Holmes' two Pearl Syncussion electric high-hats also operates a Claptrap. He has a custom-built trigger unit for the Syncussion, and a Roland CR80 Compu-Rhythm. **Graham Weir** plays not only trumpet and Bach trombone, but also an Ibanez Roadstar electric guitar through a Roland JC120 amplifier.

Besides the above, O.M.D. is traveling with a Roland Q20 tune-up amp, Korg AT12 tuner, and Dysan and Datalife floppy discs. The band doesn't take its own P.A. on long tours; for the U.S. *Crush* jaunt, they're using an RS1200 bin system.



Grusin/Ritenour/Harlequin

GRP D 9522



Billy Cobham/Warning

GRP D 9528



Dizzy Gillespie/New Faces

GRP D 9512



Lee Ritenour/On The Line

GRP D 9525



GRP Digital Jazz Sampler/Vol. II

GRP D 9529



Dave Grusin/Night Lines

GRP D 9504

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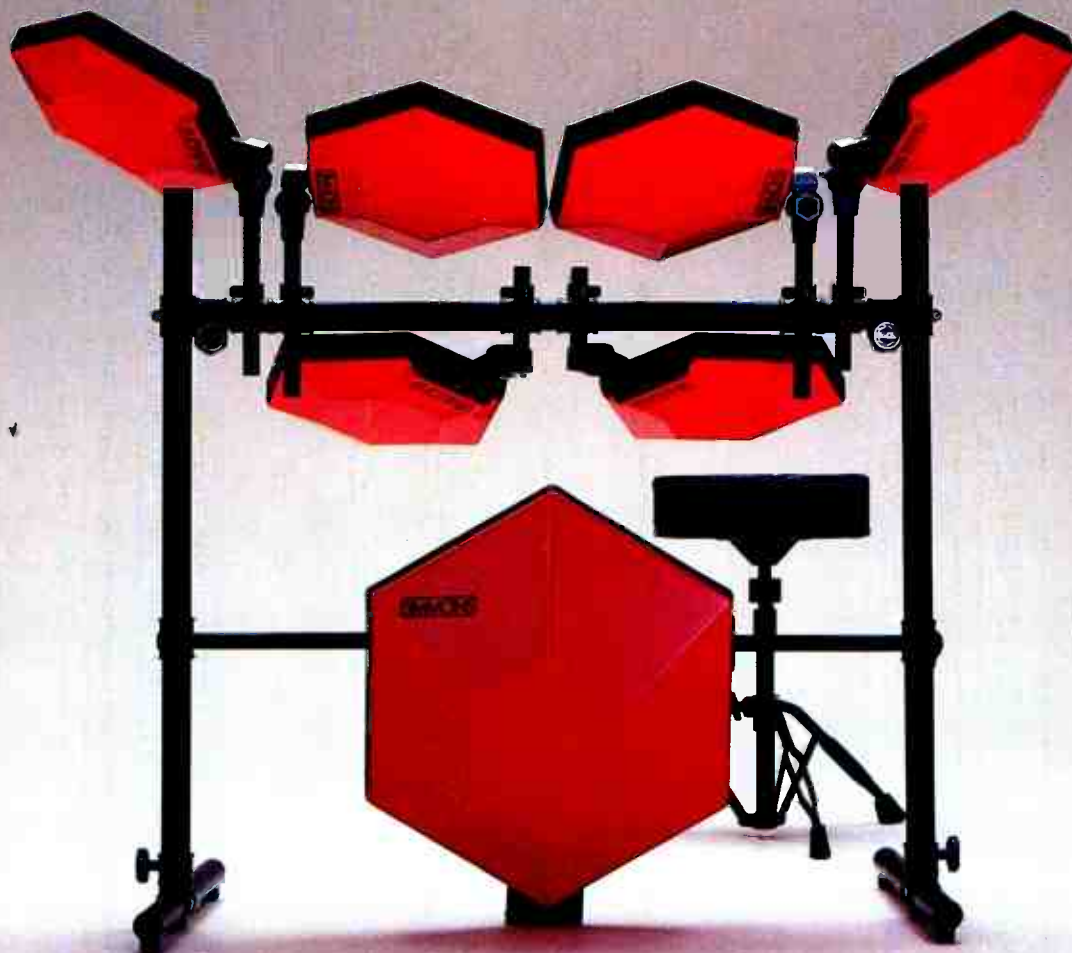
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# DIZZY GILLESPIE

BY FRED GOODMAN

## A BEBOP REVOLUTIONARY KEEPS ON GROWING AND BLOWING

Dizzy Gillespie is played across a couch in a Georgetown hotel room. A cigar is riding between his battered lips, battered because they have discovered and pushed jazz through the bell of a trumpet for fifty years. He is conjuring the ghostly images of another hotel, this one in the Harlem of the 40s, where a music he could call his own and detractors would name bebop was probed and agreed upon but never codified because that would be to lose it. He pauses in the middle of a story about Thelonious Monk, a classmate during those late-night jams at Minton's, and reaches for a cardboard container filled with a goop that looks like wallpaper paste. "I got something," he says in a tone of voice a huckster might use to bait a rube, rubbing the mix into the cracks of his calloused, swollen

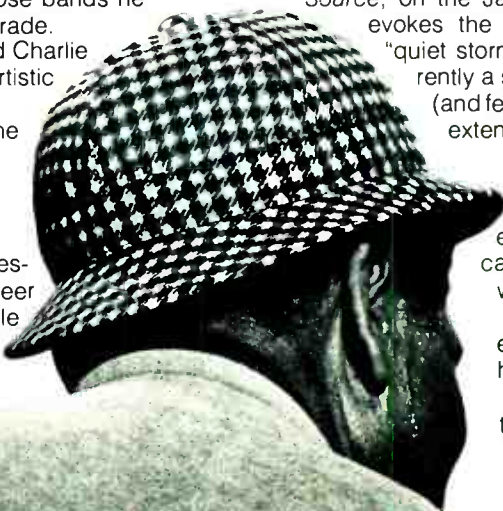
feet. "This stuff is a motherfucker that'll scare anything away." Later, talking on the telephone, he tells someone that he has diabetes. "Just a touch," he says. He is closing in on seventy.

It's only moments like this, when his body betrays him, that there is any hint of mortality in a man who, four decades after playing mother and mid-wife to jazz during its stylistic rebirth, could lay claim to being the living embodiment of black art in modern America. He shows no hint of self importance, though, even with fifty years on the road cracking his feet. Maybe that's because Dizzy Gillespie remains an artist and an entertainer, a revolutionary as well as a popularizer. Bebop did once signify cultural revolution after all, and with Monk and Charlie Parker, Gillespie was one of its great theoreticians and practitioners, a young man who helped upset the old order. But he also carried within himself the black vaude-villian traditions of mentors like Cab Calloway, in whose bands he learned his trade.

Heroin killed Charlie Parker. The artistic silence that punctuated the last years of Monk's life seemed the natural, purposeful expression of a career that found little satisfaction or under-

standing because he was that ultimate oddity: someone who is just too different from the rest of us. And yet here is this trumpeter, still on the road, in a hotel room dotted with wet clothes he has washed by hand in the kitchenette sink. Still the clown, still the fox. The Diz.

Although he will forever and ever be linked to bebop, he's never lost his musical curiosity, and that much remains as evident on his records as it is around his eyes. "I can think of no better time than when I'm physically and mentally ready [to play]," he says. "I can't think of a better feeling." There's savvy in the slow, raspy voice that still carries the inflections of a South Carolina childhood. Lately he has been making music with young juppies like Branford Marsalis, Kenny Kirkland and Marcus Miller. *New Faces* on GRP Records chronicles a recent relaxed, straightahead session when those younger players met the master on his home field, while Dizzy's *Closer To The Source*, on the Japanese King label, evokes the slick, sophisticated "quiet storm" sound that's currently a staple of black radio (and features an incredible, extended harmonica solo by Stevie Wonder on the title track). For Dizzy, musical exploration and education is always a two-way street. "Branford is the oldest-youngest musician I know," he says. Initially the band had difficulty tackling some of the older tunes Dizzy pulled for the GRP date, he admits, but the problems were easily overcome.



"Branford is so hip. I sat down at the piano and said, 'This music is fundamental, y'know, in a classical sense.' Branford knows the work of Coltrane, Don Byas and Ben Webster, and he's on the verge of establishing a viable identity himself. He played some beautiful things on those records. Some of the notes were very, very unusual in their particular chords."

Dizzy can relate to that. During bebop's mid-40s incubation at Minton's and Clarke Monroe's Uptown House, "We were interested in developing other means of expressing chords," he says. "I used to call up Monk and say, 'Hey man, look what I found.' And he'd call

me up in the daytime, and we'd try it out that night at Minton's. But Monk is the most unorthodox; in the beginning, it would be like 'Uh-oh, here comes that wrong-note guy.' On my compositions, I would stick to fundamentalism. I notice I use the cycle of fourths most of the time. My compositions seem to stand. Monk has a lot of minor sixth chords. Now they call it half-diminished. But I hear the top [chord], you dig? And when I play, I play on that."

Ironically, Dizzy's own playing, like his style as an entertainer, is rooted in tradition. "When I was coming up, Roy Eldridge was the cupbearer," he recalls. "We always tried to pattern our-

selves after Roy. There were a lot of trumpet players that I admired: Hot Lips Page, Red Allen, some nobody knows about like Little Willie who used to play with Buddy Johnson. When I changed in my inspiration and Charlie Parker came on the scene, that never diminished my respect for Roy Eldridge."

Gillespie's regard for his elders was not always reciprocated though. "They felt threatened," he remembers. "Roy had been the bellwether for all the guys, and then all the young trumpet players were trying to play like me. And sometimes he'd act funny."

"So one day we were in Philadelphia, having a couple of drinks, and I just accosted him. I said, 'Roy you have nothing to fear from me or Miles or Fats Navarro or Kenny Dorham or none of the cats. Your contribution is safe, it has been notarized with a stamp. And if you don't believe it, just go and get some of your records out and listen to them. You'll see you're firmly established and don't have to worry about me or nobody else.' And since that time we've been tight."


These days, Gillespie says, "I don't feel threatened at all. Not because I think I'm better, but because music is always in a state of evolution." And "you don't go backwards by acknowledging the fundamentals of music," he points out. "That only adds to your repertoire. Sometimes it's necessary to know what other stylists have done so that you can better adapt to creating around a style."

But even as Gillespie's own style explores relatively sophisticated musical frontiers, he paradoxically cultivates his image as an entertainer. Onstage he projects a warmth and good humor that often wins over audiences that would otherwise be daunted by a jazz musician of his stature.

"I found out early that to make somebody laugh is to make [music] more accessible," he explains. "And sometimes you get a lot of flack from the critics, but I go right on. I came up under some very talented people in show business. Lucky Millinder, Cab Calloway, Tiny Bradshaw—show business supreme. I learned a lot from them and I use it."

For all his calculated "Dizzyness," however, Gillespie can also be a down-to-earth and resolute character. His financial acumen is well-known in the jazz community. And throughout a half-century of "the jazz life" he's also managed to avoid a drug habit, a particular *bête noire* of the bebop generation. That escape is all the more remarkable considering the image and artifice of that scene, a scene in which Gillespie was very much a central character.

"People were picking up on image things like berets and goatees," he re-



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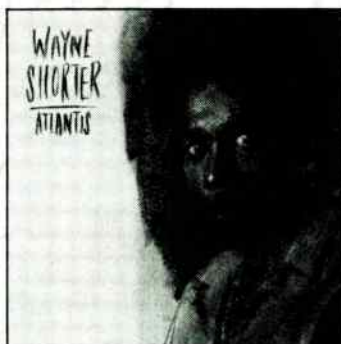


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**DJAVAN "DJAVAN."\*** Pronounced "Ja-Von," and called "one of the greatest artists in the world" by Quincy Jones, singer/composer/guitarist Djavan is the current rage of Brazil. His sensual, innovative music has endeared him to musicians the world over. You've never heard anything like it.

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calls. "I guess young people, they go all the way, and that's part of it. Some of the guys used drugs, probably on account of Charlie Parker.

"But I was married, and I knew my wife didn't want no shit. I was more interested in keeping my wife than I was in getting involved with things that, if she found out, would be the end. I smoked a little pot, snorted a little coke, but never had no big desire to become this regular seeker of dope."

Beyond his association with bebop, Dizzy has led some of the finest big bands in jazz and pioneered the fusion of Latin and jazz musics. His fiery ensemble of the late 40s, featuring Cuban percussion master Chano Pozo, is for my money the best big band of the bebop era. Although the drummer was cut down in a barroom gunfight not long after he teamed with Gillespie, the music they made together has since proved to be an important milestone in the development of modern Latin jazz.

Gillespie, who says his interest extends beyond Cuban to West Indian and Brazilian music, credits trumpeter Mario Bauza—a section-mate in the Cab Calloway orchestra, and later an associate of the great Cuban bandleader Machito—with igniting his interest. "He took me under his wing and got me the job with Cab," Dizzy says. "He knew I was interested in Cuban music and he cut me into Chano Pozo. Pozo couldn't speak English; I provided something for him because he didn't understand jazz too much. But what he knows about Cuban music, boy!" he says, whistling in appreciation.

"I think one day Cuban, West Indian and Brazilian and American music will be one," Gillespie predicts. "They got different beats, but it comes together."

Beyond his own tastes and special interests, Dizzy remains a tireless, even voracious musical explorer. He recently received a synthesizer from Quincy Jones, and claims that his next purchase will be a drum machine.

"I'm forever seeking something," he says. "You get tired of playing the same thing all the time, and there are so many things that I haven't done extensively that I would like to do, such as teaching. I've got a system of teaching rhythm with the hands so students can hear all the things that we do. It can be taught. But you can't do too much with harmony because the classical guys have almost done it all. I hear some things sometimes that I thought I'd thought of first and, lo and behold, here's a guy like Ravel who did it in 1868." Dizzy Gillespie is laughing now, that dangerous twinkle again in his eyes. "I say, 'Wow! He's grabbed my music, dagnabbit!'"

**SEE READER SERVICE ON PAGE 104**



# The Fender<sup>®</sup> Story.

## Fender rolls out the Model T.

Originally released in 1948 as the Broadcaster, and renamed in 1950, the Telecaster® guitar was the first solidbody electric Spanish guitar ever to go into commercial production. With the assistance of a team that included Jimmy Bryant, Fender® put the first Telecaster guitar in the hands of the skeptical, but soon to be convinced, American musician. It was championed by legendary country guitarist Luther Perkins, and later by quintessential session player James Burton.

**It's got a good sound, but you can't dance to it.**

There are a number of things you can't do with an acoustic bass. You can't fit it in a Morris Minor. You can't play it just because you can play the guitar. You can't hear it very well when everyone else is electric and their amps are set on 10 (or 11 in the case of Nigel Tufnel). And you can't dance with it. All of which got Fender to create the Precision Bass® electric bass in 1951.

The P-Bass® bass, as it later became known, was the first electric bass guitar, and it dramatically increased the intonation precision of the bass player due to its frets. The Jazz Bass® electric bass was introduced in 1960 as an alternative model, and the two of them have remained the foundation of popular music throughout the world ever since.

## The birth of a legend.

Initially designed as a country and western instrument, the Telecaster guitar

proved to be the perfect starting place for the development of the ultimate rock and roll guitar. Working with Southern California musicians like Rex Galien, as well as Freddie Tavares and Bill Carson who are still with the company today, Fender designed a new guitar with a contoured body, six individual bridges, three pickups, three-way switching and a unique tremolo design. The Stratocaster® guitar made its debut in 1954 and paved the way for a guitar virtuosity made possible by its immensely improved playability. And with visionaries like Buddy Holly turning to the Stratocaster guitar, it was fated to serve as the voice of what was to become a revolution.

**Loud, please.**

Fender started it all off in the late '40s with the Super and Pro amps, road-tested by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys as they criss-crossed America in their bus from the Panhandle to Hollywood. It was followed by the Champ® in 1948, the Bassman® in 1952 and the Bandmaster in 1953. The Twin® amp came along in 1953—later

changed to the Twin Reverb® in 1963—and became the most dropped-around, kicked-in, and spilled-on amp in the history of music. And through its illustrious career, it's amplified every instrument that could possibly be amplified. Trumpets, harmonicas and yes, even accordions. The Concert™ amp was introduced in 1960;

followed in 1961 by the Showman®—the very first piggyback amplifier.



Through the years, the classic Fender amp designs have endured, retaining their tremendous popularity. It's a remarkable evolution that continues its rich heritage to this day.

**Jazz musicians prefer to hit bars.**

When the Rhodes® electric piano was introduced in 1963, it was

popular music, and it has gone on to become the most recorded, and largest selling electric piano in the world.

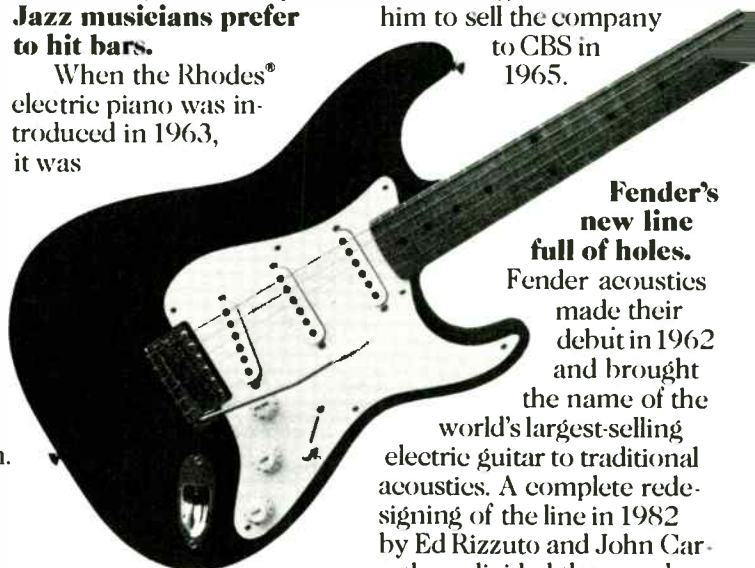
## Key change at Fender.

In 1964, Leo found himself with 17 buildings, about 600 employees, and a back order of approximately \$9 million in guitars and amps. The overwhelming demands of the company coupled with his often debilitating illness forced him to sell the company to CBS in 1965.

## Fender's new line full of holes.

Fender acoustics made their debut in 1962 and brought the name of the

world's largest-selling electric guitar to traditional acoustics. A complete redesigning of the line in 1982 by Ed Rizzuto and John Caruthers divided the popular guitars into the Standard Series™ and California Series™ of acoustic, acoustic/electric, and classic guitars.



anything but an overnight sensation. Harold Rhodes had been working on an electric piano that used



## The music world turns upside down.

The early '60s were dominated by the twangy surf sounds of The Ventures, Dick Dale and The Del-Tones, and The Beach Boys playing Fender guitars like the

Strat, Jaguar and Jazzmaster. But in 1967, a young man from Seattle returned from a triumphant six months in England to



tone bars instead of strings since the late '40s. He faced tremendous opposition from keyboard players: "If it's electric, it must be a toy." But it was the advocacy of jazz giants such as Miles Davis that finally earned the Rhodes a most esteemed position in musical history where it virtually defined the sound of the "new" jazz. Its influence inevitably reached





completely redefine the outer limits of the electric guitar. With the 1967 release of his *Are You Experienced?* album and a pivotal performance at the Monterey Pop Festival, Jimi Hendrix began a massive Strat® guitar

revival that continues to this day. It's estimated that

during his short career, Hendrix owned, played and destroyed more than 100 Fender guitars—most of which were made between 1965 and 1970.

And most of which have mysteriously disappeared from the face of the earth. **Fender snares Rogers.**

In 1967, Fender acquired Rogers® Drums, the oldest drum company in America. They began an aggressive product development program which resulted in the development of the Dyna-Sonic® Floating Snare, and Memriloc™ hardware which quickly became the most copied hardware design in the world.

Fender also acquired V.C. Squier, a string manufacturer, in the late '60s. As Fender Strings, they've grown to become the most widely distributed strings in the world.

### Rock steady.

During the '70s, Fender provided instruments for more

musicians in

more countries than any other manufacturer. With the development of an

international network of dealers, Fender became the sound of music throughout the world.

### CBS means business.

In 1981, Bill Schultz and a well-respected product development team were brought aboard to increase Fender's presence in the marketplace. They started by working to improve the quality of all Fender products. They fired up research and development, virtually doubling the R&D staff overnight.

During the first year they introduced the Vintage Series, faithful recreations of the classic Fender designs of the '50s and '60s.

Within three years the Schultz team updated and expanded the Fender line of tube and solid state amplifiers. They also introduced a new

Pro Sound Products division that released a series of mics, mixers, power mixers and amps, and speaker systems. They unveiled the Elite Series, a new generation of guitars and basses with completely redesigned electronics and features.

And they introduced all of them to widespread critical and popular acclaim.

### Raiders of the Lost ARP.

In 1981, Fender acquired ARP, the most influential force in the development of the synthesizer. Included was a synth already in

development—The Chroma™. Its warm analog sound and sophisticated digital circuitry made it an immediate favorite of such keyboard artists as Joe Zawinul and Herbie Hancock.

### Bride of Chroma.

The sequel to the Chroma synthesizer surfaced in 1984—The Polaris™. Smaller than the Chroma, but packed with even more features, its rich sound, tremendous versatility and superior interface capabilities have made it the perfect nerve center for any set-up.

### Fenders for the garage.

Fender's original intent was to get instruments into the hands of as many people as possible. In 1982, Fender founded Fender Japan to produce instruments that would

be more affordable to more people. With the introduction of Squier® guitars and basses, Sidekick™ amps, and the Rogers® R-Series™ drums, the people at Fender rededicated themselves to young players. The kids. The next Eric Clapton. And while these low-priced Fender instruments are often heard on music videos, in studios and

on stages, we're especially proud that they're also heard in garage bands up and down the street.

### Mastering the art of cooking.

With a newly formed association with world-

renowned guitar luthier James D'Aquisto in 1984, Fender released a series of hollowbody guitars. The

Master Series™ instruments also included semi-hollowbody guitars designed by Fender to complete the musical circle by providing a wider range of sounds than had ever been available from Fender before, from the classic tones of the jazz box to the heaviest of metal screams.

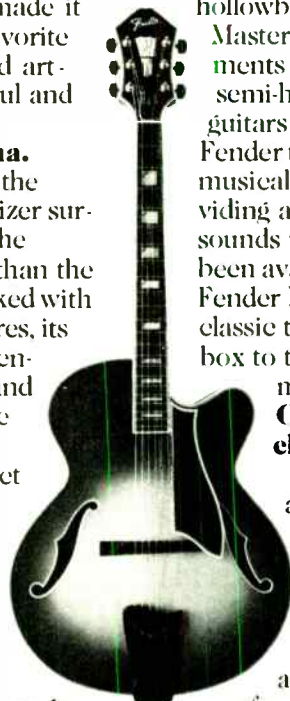
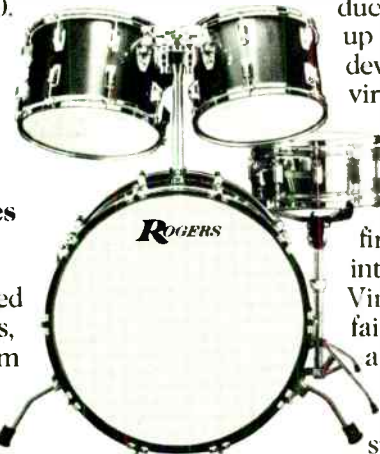
### Change of hands, change of heart.

Early in 1985, a group led by Bill Schultz purchased the company from CBS. This sale put Fender once again in the hands of a small group of

people who have dedicated their lives—and their futures—to their love of music. Yesterday's music and tomorrow's music. Benefitting from CBS's extensive efforts in research and development which began in 1981, Bill and his

colleagues are directing Fender's future with a new vision. And with the support of such musicians as

Elliot Easton, Chick Corea, Tommy Tedesco and Eric Clapton, they look ahead to creating instruments that will make Fender's future as rich and as vital as its past.



The story of Fender is the story of music today. Perhaps no other manufacturer of instruments and equipment has had a greater influence on the way we compose, play and hear music. It's a remarkable legacy with an unmatched history. But what's most exciting about Fender is not its past. But its future.



Bandmaster, Bassman, Champ, Chroma, Concert, Dyna-Sonic, Fender, J Bass, Jazz Bass, Master Series, Memrho, P Bass, Polaris, Precision Bass, R-Series, Rhodes, Rogers, Showman, Sidekick, Squier, Strat, Stratocaster, Tele, Telecaster, and Twin Reverb are trademarks of Fender Musical Instruments Corp. © 1985 Fender Musical Instruments Corp. 1130 Columbia Street, Brea, CA 92621



# T-BONE BURNETT'S THREE YEAR PLAN

BY BILL FLANAGAN

'83: RECORDING ARTIST

'84: TROUBADOUR

'85: HOTSHOT  
PRODUCER

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"He might be the best songwriter in America right now." — *Rolling Stone*.

"He's a great songwriter, but even more than that I love the *sound* of his records." — Mark Knopfler.

"He has a peculiar quality of craziness about him. He's the only one on the [Rolling Thunder] tour I'm not sure has relative control over his violent dark side." — Sam Shepard.

Rock 'n' roll has always been about what's going on in the town," T-Bone maintains. "It always had a lot to do with journalism. Rock 'n' roll is a form of folk music. It came from a very American idea of 'All people are welcome here.' White people tried to sing black music. The earliest mention I've heard of rock 'n' roll was in a Bing Crosby song from the 1920s, when he was a hot dance band singer. That was the urban jazz version, when the white kids started getting up and doing the dance band stuff. Jimmie Rodgers, the father of country music, was another version of a white kid singing black music, and it got passed on through Hank Williams and Elvis Presley and Dylan and John Fogerty into today. Now we have, in the U.K., U2 and Big Country and the Alarm.

"The Violent Femmes have a song called 'Country Death Song.' It's a very hip piece, 'cause there's a whole Appalachian tradition of 'I left my babies at the house while I ran down to the store to get some groceries. When I came back the house had burned down and all my babies are dead. It's God punishing me.' The Violent Femmes

song is in that tradition.

"Lyrically, rock 'n' roll has always been very tied to what's going on. Chuck Berry's 'School Days' is a straight piece of journalism. He wasn't a kid, but was writing about what he saw—the mood of the country, the town. It's about what people are going through. It started out much more simply with Jimmie Rodgers singing, 'When it's peach picking time in Georgia' or Hank Williams saying, 'Let's get in my car, I know a place where they've got some soda pop and some dancin'.'

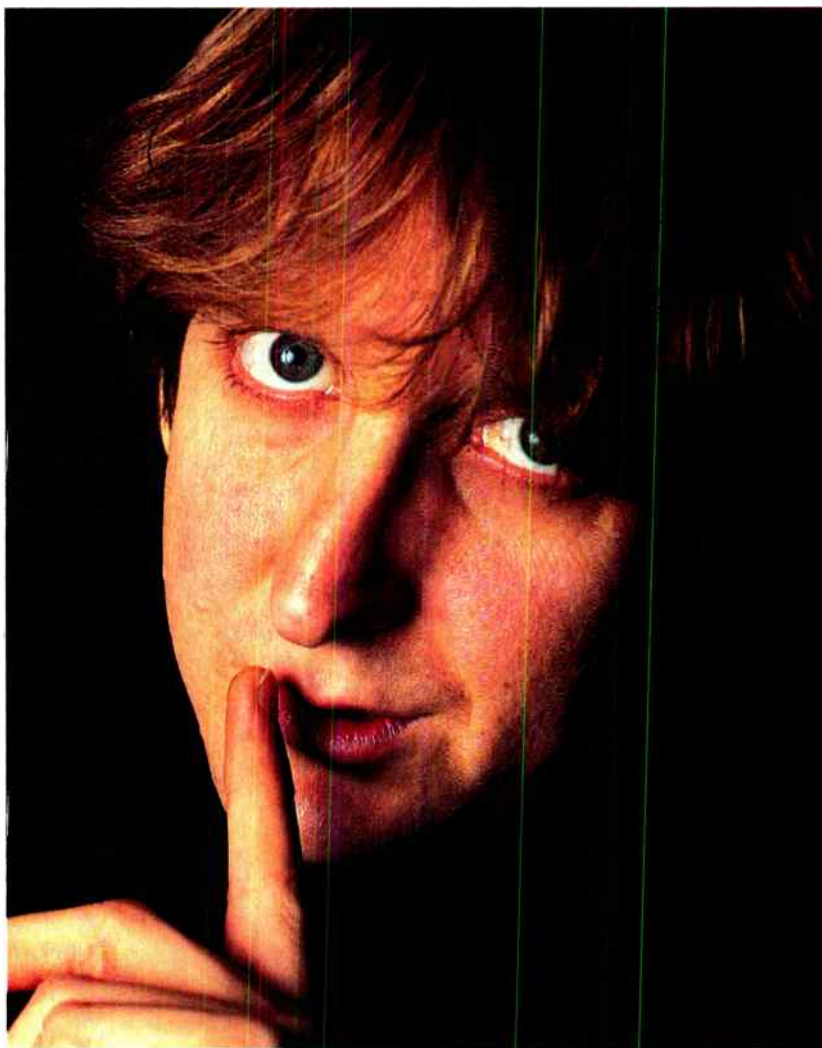
"Elvis Costello's a really good example of a modern day folk artist. 'Peace In Our Time.' His lyrics are very complex but that's appropriate. Because the world is so complex right now."

T-Bone Burnett is in a hotel in Boston. It's the spring of 1984 and he's opening for Costello on a two-man acoustic tour. Burnett and Costello are just getting to know each other, just discovering how

much a lanky, sociable Texan and a smaller, more introverted Englishman can have in common.

Cut to the summer of 1985 and a small theatre near London's Covent Garden. Many in the audience wandered in out of the sunlight and paid five pounds to see this performance by the Coward Brothers, a lunatic version of the Everlys. Henry and Howard Coward offer sweet country harmonies and a string of gags about their separate backstage suites, which brother's smarter, and how quickly this latest British reunion tour had to be thrown together when the money from the last one ran out.

Most people in the audience probably know that the tall Texan and the wise-cracking Brit aren't really brothers. Most people know the Coward Brothers are really Elvis Costello and T-Bone Burnett. Maybe a few even own the Cowards' British single, "The People's



**Ssshh! Nobody likes a critics' darling!**

Limosine" on Imp (as in "imposter") Records. T-Bone and Elvis have written a whole album's worth of songs together. In late July they headed out to Los Angeles where T-Bone started producing Costello's next album.

Yeah, producing. This is 1985, T-Bone's year of productions; 1984 was his year as a solo troubadour. Burnett's work falls into year-long cycles. Most of his fans are still waiting for a sequel to 1983, his last year of making albums and touring with a band. T-Bone figures it'll be time for that stuff again in '86. This year he's a producer. Already having knocked off Los Lobos, Marshall Crenshaw and ex-Plimsoul Peter Case,

Burnett comes back after the all-star game with Costello and, maybe, one more real big name before Christmas.

Then he figures he'll have enough money to cover his family back in Texas while he goes off on another of those expensive years of album-making and band-fronting.

*I can see I'm starting wrong; let me begin again.*—"The Sixties"

Let's backtrack for those who still aren't sure which T-Bone we're talking about; not the old blues man, not the bassist with Hall & Oates. J. Henry Burnett grew up in Texas and learned his way around a mixing board while run-

ning a little recording studio there. He released an album of his own songs that didn't get too far, but his knack for being in the right place at the right time paid off when a long night in Greenwich Village found him in on the formation of Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue. T-Bone was one of the small army of guitar players who got to step out of the background to sing one song per show. That was T-Bone's first band.

His second was a spin-off. Arista Records gave a deal to three Rolling Thunder vets under the name the Alpha Band. T-Bone was the center of attention through the Alpha's three LPs. The material he wrote for that group was quirky and erratic. Little was as honest or powerful as the songs Burnett introduced on *Truth Decay*, his 1979 solo album. That hard-to-find disc won him a cult following (T-Bone sometimes steps down from the stage to ask his audience, "Are you a cult?") and reams of critical praise. That led to an EP on Warners, a bigger cult, more reams, and finally, in 1983, *Proof Through The Night*, the only major-label T-Bone Burnett album and a masterpiece. Pete Townshend and Richard Thompson joined in to help T-Bone fashion an album of uplifting folk rock with Beatles harmonies and Byrds sonic shimmer. Burnett recreated the songs brilliantly onstage with a backing band that included Heartbreakers drummer/singer Stan Lynch and two sons of Andy Williams (and they were good!).

Burnett's lyrics fit his own criterion: they were about what was going on in the town, in America. In his songs weak men blackened their souls lusting after wealth, glamour, and unattainable women. Strong men fought off loneliness while refusing to be immobilized by life's contradictions. Even Burnett's funniest lyrics had poignant flip sides. The creeps in his songs weren't Randy Newman caricatures—they were so real that onstage Burnett (not wanting to condescend) often switched their stories into the first person and some listeners thought him sincere. "The Sixties" was a scathing portrait of a materialist who used the jargon of liberation as an excuse for hedonism. But it was so perfectly realized that dimmer members of Burnett's audience sometimes cheered the character's vices, thinking T-Bone was extolling the protagonist's sleazy pastimes. That song contained a line that could make half a generation wince: "Here's your brave new world...on the mirror."

Obviously Burnett was right on top of his game. So of course Warners dropped him in their great artist purge of '84. After a lot of argument within the company, the bottom line won and T-Bone went.

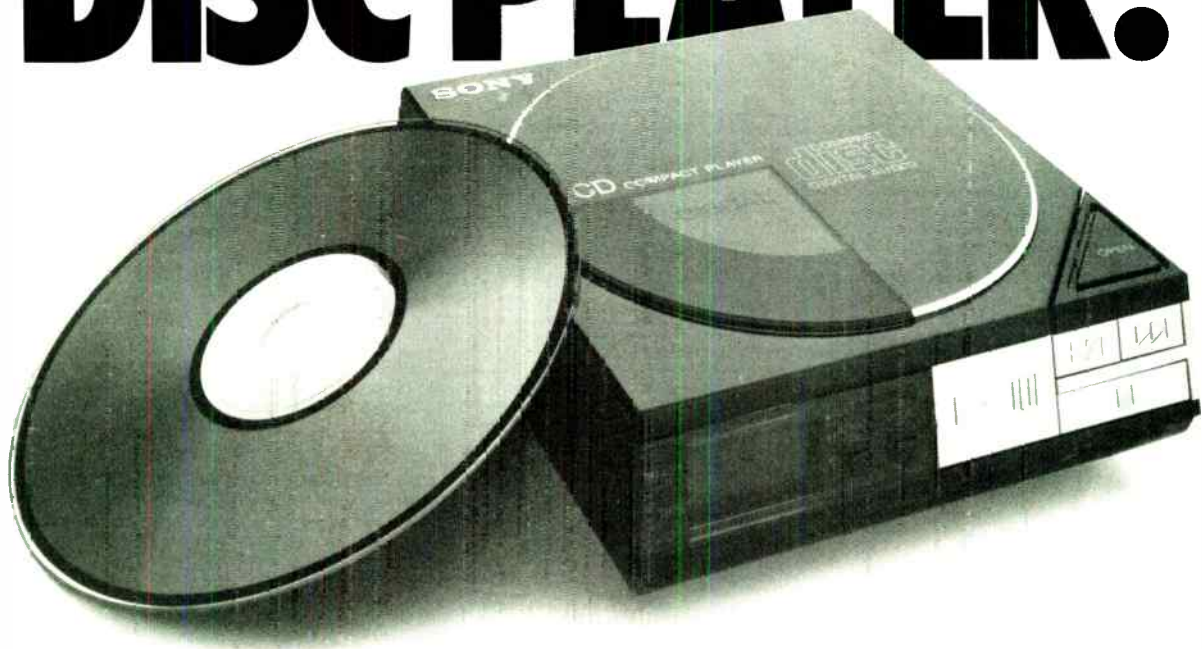


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But when that happened Burnett was already into his year as a troubadour. T-Bone would pull into town alone on a train and bring his suitcase and guitar over to the best hotel. He'd go to the local club without soundman or roadie and perform. Then he'd collect the money and go on to the next town.

Playing without a band, Burnett squeezed unexpected dynamics out of his 1938 Gibson J-45. He played all of "My Life And The Women Who Lived It" on the low E string; he'd sing at least one song without any guitar at all, relying on the audience to provide back-up parts; when he got to the solo section of "Trap Door" T-Bone stopped playing chords and switched to lead. When he finished his solo and went back to chords and vocals, people cheered.

"Playing with just one guitar lets you get into all the subtleties," Burnett said. "A stop with one guitar becomes gigantic. It's a real joy of playing to be allowed to play very quietly and draw people in. In bigger places an audience often won't let you do that."

Hard to believe that the Alpha Band's early gigs were so loud that even those with greatly diminished hearing sat with fingers in their ears.

"I saw an article where Keith Richards said, 'Charlie Watts is the Rolling Stones,'" T-Bone offered. "I thought, good grief, has it really come to that? Charlie Watts is great, but would people actually pay twenty-five bucks to go see a drummer for an hour and a half? In swing bands the drums just came out at appropriate times and were very exciting. Chuck Berry records just grooved; the drums weren't loud at all. Drums have taken way too big a piece of what rock 'n' roll is these days. Who said that had to be? When you go into a studio they spend two days getting a drum sound and an hour on the guitar. It's gotten so far removed from Duke Ellington's band. The drums were there to supply the pulse, but what people were really interested in hearing was Paul Gonsalves *wail* for 13 choruses—and all the harmonies, the complexities.

"And lyrics are *gone*. When you go to a big rock 'n' roll show you never hear a word. When the audience wants too much, all the sensitivity goes. In my next band I'll make sure I don't lose what I've learned from the solo shows."

The solo shows were indeed personal in a way modern rock rarely manages. In every town, T-Bone seemed to connect straight into a network of like-minded musicians. Often they'd join him onstage. If the town were London, the guests might be stars like Townshend and U2. If the town were, say, Providence, T-Bone would find the best local rock 'n' roll songwriters and get them up with acoustic guitars to share his





In the early morning hours of November 15, 1984 tragedy struck the Bethany Lutheran Church of Cherry Hills, Colorado. A faulty electric organ was blamed for a multiple alarm fire that claimed much of the structure. Thankfully no one was injured in the blaze that caused over one million dollars in damage.

In the ensuing clean-up operation a Crown amplifier was discovered under charred timbers. Owing to the intense heat of the fire the chassis had warped and the AC cord was a puddle of wire and rubber.

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spotlight. In addition to performing with the locals, Burnett would come down off the stage and hang out at the bar with fans when the performance was over. When T-Bone got on his next train, he'd leave the local scene buzzing with fresh ideas, new friendships, and what the hippies used to call good vibes. Burnett's troubadour year generated a lot of warmth. It was a million miles from being part of a big hype on a major record label, Burnett's past and almost certainly his future.

His year of production, by contrast, is generating more business. In the spring of '85, Burnett sits in a Manhattan recording studio while Marshall Crenshaw leads NRBQ's rhythm section—Joey Spampinato and Tommy Ardolino—through the third take of a new tune. T-Bone and visitor Skeeter Davis vote for keeping the first version, full of energy and high spirits. Crenshaw wants the second, saying the musicians were tighter. Everyone agrees the third take's too sterile, so there's a deadlock over which of the first two was better. The whole time the point is debated, Spampinato sits with headphones on, unaware of the argument. Finally T-Bone and Crenshaw signal him to take off his cans and tell them which take he prefers. "I like the third one," Joey says. (Moans all around.) Finally T-Bone offers to edit the best parts of the different takes together to make an acceptable whole. It's a compromise that allows work to continue, though not necessarily one he'll stick to.

"I'm getting really interested in making hits," Burnett explains. The success of his Los Lobos production, together with these votes of professional confidence from Crenshaw, Costello and others, have made Burnett a popular guy in some of the very corporate corridors that once equated T-Bone with that bane of commerce, art. Burnett's hooked up with U2's management, and even old Warners is starting to hint that they'd still sort of like first crack at T-Bone's next LP.

Brings to mind something Burnett said right after Warners gave him his walking papers last year: He was philosophical about losing that deal.

"Warners just don't know what to do right now," Burnett said. "If these big record companies put out an album that sells 200,000 copies, it doesn't put a blip on their computer. They're not really making money on it. Not when you figure in all the salaries and expense accounts. They have to sell a million records to start really showing a profit. Which is death to an artist."

Burnett sighed and then summed up the whole dilemma in one line: "If an artist doesn't have the freedom to fail, he has no freedom at all." ☐



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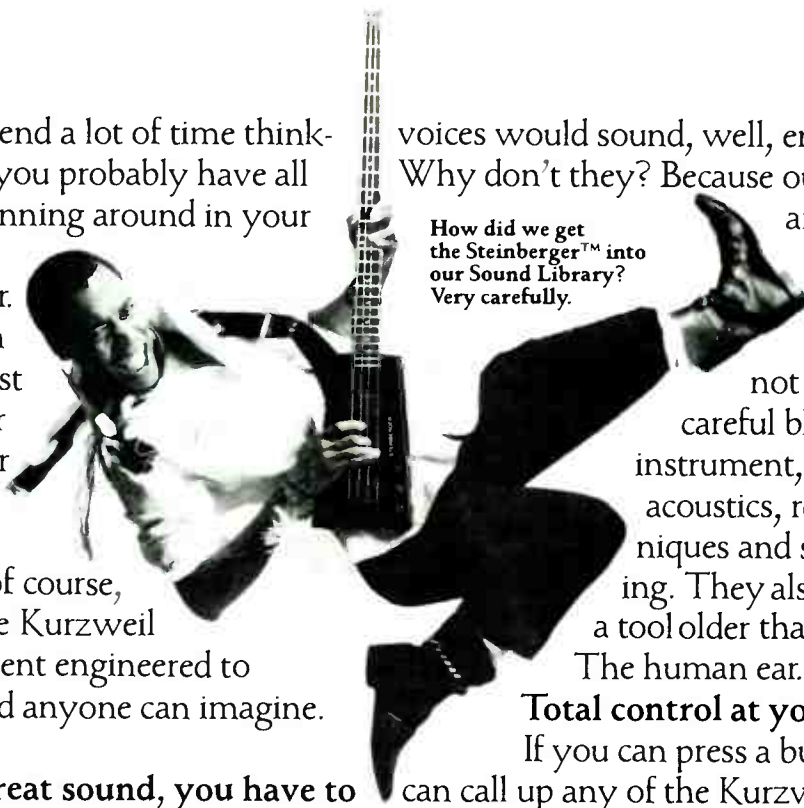
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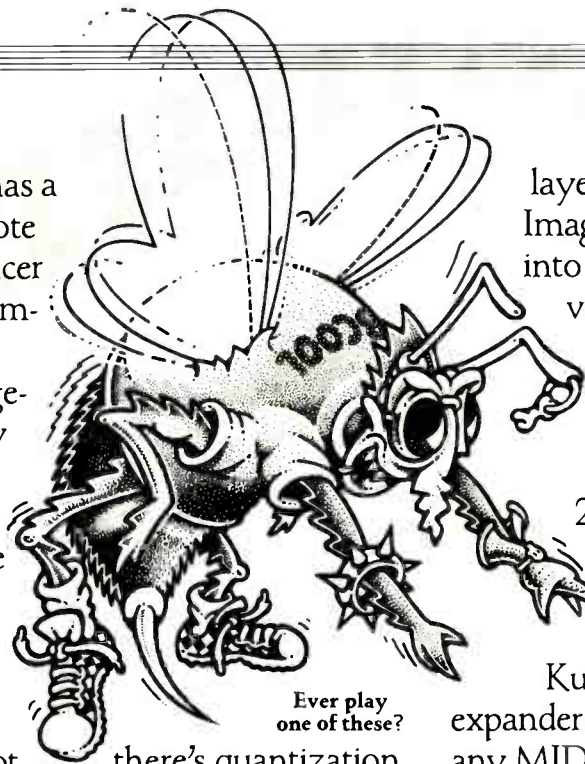
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## GUADALCANAL DIARY

### *The South Rises Again, Yet*

**G**uadalcana! Diary make their home in Marietta, Georgia, a place in the shadow of three things: the Civil War, Jesus, and the giant model of a chicken that looms over a Kentucky Fried fast food outlet and the rest of the town. "Instead of naming our album *Walking In The Shadow Of The Big Man*, guitarist **Jeff Walls** jokes, "people have suggested that we should have used *Big Bird*."

Their music is flavored by the downhome Southern suburb where all the band members grew up. Guadalcana! Diary's acoustic guitars, fervent vocal harmonies, tambourines and plain bass/drums pulse descend from hootenannies held on warm Saturday

taneous human combustion, sex, Texas cowboys meeting Watusi natives, and Jesus. "It's not that we're particularly religious," Walls explains, "it's just that where we come from that's what you hear a lot about." "Why Do The Heathens Rage?"—a headline for a local church advertisement—became a band expression for "people tearin' up and actin' wild" and then a song title. "We just don't sing about being poor, like Bruce Springsteen, something that's very real to me and too painful to sing about," Walls grins.

The band took its name from a World War II movie none of them have sat through without falling asleep. Onstage, though, they kick up the floorboards, careening from eccentric rock to a walloping version of the folk song "Kumbayah." Formerly on the indie DB label, they signed with Elektra in May and will march



### *Prince Throws a Party*

Prince didn't want to be alone on his twenty-seventh birthday, so he invited 800 friends to celebrate with him in a huge, rollicking masquerade party in St. Paul on June 7.

In keeping with Prince's new, toned-down image, the fete resembled more a high school prom than a rock star's birthday bash. (The party was even held at the Prom Center.) Chiffon streamers billowed above the dance floor where belly dancers and fairy princesses tripped the light fantastic with cowboys and Indian chiefs amid balloons, tinsel and thousands of fresh flowers. Two brass beds and an antique-style bathtub, relics of Prince's stage set, were prominently displayed but remained unused. Several doves cooed in cages hanging throughout the four party rooms. (One dove did more than cry, however. She keeled over and died.) Starchily uniformed waiters and waitresses with stifled grins and darting eyes bustled about as the invited guests, including Apollonia, Dez Dickerson, Jerome Benton and Andre Cymone,

dined on a buffet feast featuring creole, seafood, Chinese and soul food selections.

The guest of honor arrived a little before midnight. He was dressed as a pirate in white tunic, white tights and white high-heeled ankle boots, a large sword dangling from his thick black leather belt. The "new Prince" is no longer petulant and pouting, but smiling and winsome with a short haircut and no makeup. He grinned as the crowd broke into a robust chorus of "Happy Birthday" and responded with a ninety-minute jam session featuring the Revolution, Sheila E. and two new additions to the Royal Court, Mazerati and the Family.

The set consisted of mostly new material, including the haunting ballad "Sometimes It Snows In April," with a smattering of older songs, such as "Irresistible Bitch." Between songs, Prince chatted amiably with the audience, begged his father to stop taking pictures (Papa Nelson was the only guest permitted to bring a camera inside), and awarded the Best Costume prize to Sheila E. who was virtually unrecognizable as a man, complete with mustache, sideburns and a rolled-up sock in her under-shorts.

Finally, after bringing his mother and little brother onstage for an impromptu stomp, Prince waved good-night and danced offstage. But his party was still not over. Unlike the "old Prince," who did his thing and split, the birthday boy stuck around until most of his guests had departed. Then he made his way out to the lobby where he and a few aides gathered up his many gifts, loaded them into his car and sped away into the night. — *Stephanie Jones*



nights, or spirituals on Sunday mornings. But the spirits behind the Rickenbackers are Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, the Byrds and the Beatles. Guadalcana! Diary plays rock 'n' roll.

And sings about spon-

into the studio this fall to record a new album. Guadalcana! Diary may well prove, as Walls and bassist Rhett Crowe swear, "the only truly American music has been produced in the South."

— *Julie Panebianco*



# CAMEO

## From Apollo to Juilliard

**T**his is a business of borrowing, I find. What could be original, as long as you've lived and heard music? I'm inspired by other people taking little things from what we do and doing something else with it. I'm happy for them, because our chances in this country of making it very, very successful in other things are not as great as in some of the creative arts, which we have a natural connection for."

That's **Larry Blackmon**, drummer and leader of Cameo, speaking. And if you think you hear several different things coming together there as he talks, feel free to pat yourself on the back. Blackmon's slightly convoluted, Stevie Wonderful phrasing marks him as one of those "cosmic-consciousness" musicians who sometimes sound like an est manual. That "we" and "us" talk

means he's a young black man discontented, as so many are, with what he calls America's "black justice." And when he mentions musicians who copy—well, Blackmon himself was roundly accused of doing the same when Cameo made the scene back in 1977 with a pair of George Clintonesque hits, "Rigor Mortis" and "Funk, Funk."

Things have changed since then. Cameo has developed an eccentric funk sound that is quite identifiably its own. And Harlem-born Larry Blackmon is living a childhood dream come true.

He says the "thrill of live music" at the Apollo, which he attended after church on Sundays, made him want to play. "I went to Juilliard for a while on an extension course, but Juilliard didn't offer me anything that relates to what I'm doing today. When it came down to it, all of our hit songs that I wrote and co-wrote had very little to do with anything I learned at Juilliard."

With Juilliard and a trail of hit singles behind him, Blackmon is making plans. He's considering a solo album as well as burgeoning sociopolitical concerns. He also has Atlanta Artists; his Georgia-based "new artists" record company synthesizes his frustrations with Juilliard and a record industry he sees as monolithic and closed to new ideas.

"People in this country," he complains, "expect you to make it first, before they want to listen to you. The industry should be about developing that perception for new talent. And I think I have the eye and ear for that. I believe in new artists. A lot of artists, that have had a good chance but didn't necessarily make it as big as they wanted, carry a lot of war wounds with them. It gets in the way of the creative process, working in the studio and other places. I find with new artists there is an openness, a willingness to try everything. What I see is myself in them."

— Leonard Pitts, Jr.



## PAT METHENY

### Live in Poland: *This Is Not America*

**J**azz guitarist/composer Fat Metheny, winner of three Grammy awards, recently went to Poland in search of an audience. It's not that he doesn't have plenty of devotees in the rest of the world. But he was looking for a particular audience which, he had heard, exists only in down-trodden music-hungry countries like Poland.

"There was this level of appreciation for detail that you just never run across," Metheny says of his Polish fans. "We would get standing ovations for things in the music we take for granted."

Jazz radio stations in Poland play Metheny's albums; the single he made with David Bowie, "This Is Not America," was a number one song there. But his records, like those of most other Western artists, are unavailable to Poles. One girl told him she had driven 200 miles to the East German border and paid around 13,000 zlotys—two months' wages for a Polish worker—to get a copy of his double album, *Travels*.

That kind of devotion is hard to find anywhere. Al-



EBET ROBERTS

though they're neither overtly political nor a rabble-rousing heavy metal band, the Pat Metheny Group nearly set off riots at their concerts, Metheny says. "There were always thirty or forty police guys with guns hanging around" as a visual tranquilizer.

Why such a strong reaction? Besides the exotic appeal of Western music, Metheny mentions the political significance of improvisation. "There's something about what we do that's extremely American. It's absolutely about freedom and all those values that we as Americans have grown up with. I don't think you could find Polish listeners who wouldn't have picked up on that." — Steven Reynolds

## BEAT RODEO

### *Not Weird, Only Different*

People have a hard time pigeonholing us," Beat Rodeo singer/songwriter **Steve Almaas** grins broadly. "Are we a country band? Not really. A pop band? Not exactly. What we do isn't weird, but I hope it's different."

Depends where you're coming from. Like R.E.M., Let's Active and the Bongos,

### *Here Comes the "Toot Toot!"*

"Don't mess with my toot toot," the lyric warns, but a lot of people have been messing with—recording, that is—"My Toot Toot." The bouncing zydeco ditty looks to become South Louisiana's biggest contribution to pop music since Paul McCartney booked Professor Longhair on the *Queen Mary*.

The "Toot Toot" saga begins with **Rockin' Sidney** Simien, a forty-seven-year-old singer/songwriter/musician from Lake Charles who's been recording since 1957. Sidney composed the

Almaas and his fellow Rodeo hands play bright, melodic pop-rock derived from such classic groups as the Byrds and Beatles. However, their debut LP, *Staying Out Late With Beat Rodeo*, also has a strong country strain and a preoccupation with broken romance. Some songs are

solution, Almaas drifted east to New York and formed the poppier Crackers, which briefly included future Let's Active chief Mitch Easter. When the Crackers crumbled after an EP, Almaas signed on as a temp in Richard Barone's Bongos for a 1981 tour.

tion for me at the time." Beat Rodeo the band was born when Almaas recruited hot-pickin' lead guitarist Bill Schunk and a rhythm section to play his songs live.

An earlier edition of *Staying Out Late* was well received in Germany in '84; the blond, boyish Almaas hopes



FRAN VOGEL

as sorrowful as the worst Nashville tear-jerker.

Nothing so weird about that, until you consider Almaas' roots. He first recorded in 1978 as one-third of the Minneapolis punk trio the Suicide Commandos. Following the group's dis-

catchy song "about five or six years ago," he says, and recorded it for an album just before last Christmas in his living room. Released as a single, "My Toot Toot" quickly became a regional success. Singer Jean Knight then cut a cover version for a local label, with a synthesized "accordion" replacing Sidney's accordion (this is progress); the recording was later picked up by Mirage Records. Mississippi-based Malaco Records, who had hoped to lease Knight's recording, retaliated with their own cover, by Denise LaSalle. Both versions duked it out on the black record charts, with Knight crossing

With Barone and Easter he subsequently cut a solo EP, titled *Beat Rodeo* "because it was a perfect description of the sound, which was jumpin' country music. I'd developed a huge Everly Brothers fixation, so that just seemed like the right direc-

over to *Billboard*'s top fifty.

Meanwhile, John Fogerty heard Rockin' Sidney's single at the Warner Bros. Records offices and was taken by "the craziness of it." Bitten by the toot-toot bug, the Berkeley swamp fox repaired to Crowley, Louisiana and recorded *his* version, with Sidney and other area musicians helping out. (The proceedings were videotaped for *John Fogerty's All Stars*, a Showtime cable TV special in June.) And that's not all; Cajun warbler Jimmy C. Newman and Fats Domino with Doug Kershaw have recorded the song. "I'm just waitin' for ZZ Top now," Sidney says.

the U.S. version of the LP will provide a similar boost to his "slow but steady" career. He won't even complain if Beat Rodeo gets pigeonholed as country rock. "I don't care what people call us," he smiles, "as long as they call!" — Jon Young

The happy ending for "My Toot Toot"'s creator is that Epic Records signed Rockin' Sidney in June and rereleased his own recording, pitching it at the country market. Three weeks later Rockin' Sidney was a top forty country artist.

"Everybody wants to know what a 'toot toot' is," Sidney says in explaining the song's popularity. He's taking the competing "Toot Toot"'s in stride: "I'm a better singer than all of them!" he laughs.

No false modesty here. But no false expectations either. "I have 1200 songs," Sidney explains his law of averages, "I should have three more good ones."





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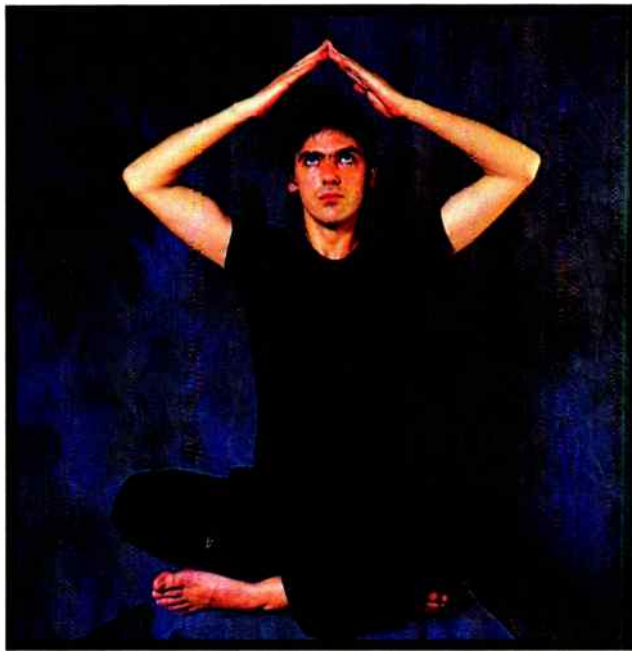


# ROBYN HITCHCOCK & THE EGYPTIANS

## *Psycho, not Psychedelic*

**T**he Sex Pistols didn't change my life, *man*," Robyn Hitchcock snorts on his first trip to the States since appearing with the Soft Boys in 1980. "Plus I already knew how to play when punk came along and so did the band, so it wasn't relevant to us. Hence our lack of success."

The Soft Boys split shortly thereafter. Guitarist Kimberly Rew reformed his old band the Waves, while fellow guitarist/songwriter extraordinaire Hitchcock pursued a desultory solo career. This time around he's touring and recording with the Egyptians, including two former Soft Boys. Their *Fegmania* is one of two albums cut after a long period of "brooding."



It's verbally playful, vividly melodic and unstintingly odd—a summation of the 60s-based sensibility that

has driven Hitchcock to record faithful cover versions of songs by the Byrds and Pink Floyd's Syd Barrett.

But don't get him wrong: "Psychedelia destroyed itself. What was good about Syd Barrett also destroyed him. Having seen that happen to other people, I'm not keen to follow the same path. I want to go on writing songs." Call it "psycho rock," if you want a definition, as opposed to psychedelic rock. I am not a drug poet or drug messiah. I *am* acid, but I'm certainly not on it. I'm prepared to be a drug; I'll go down anyone's throat."

Apart from disavowing hallucinogens, "My message to the general public would probably be to make love in the rain till dawn and see if they can avoid getting a cold. Or failing that, cycle around in a large hat, vigorously, using up energy in some way or other. And make sure you have the right babies."

—Mark Fleischmann

# ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM / GILBERTO GIL

## *Two Flavors from Brazil*

**I** love the ultimate liberty of walking alone, which I can have in New York because my face was not too exposed and has been forgotten," claims Antonio Carlos Jobim. Far from forgotten almost twenty years since his last U.S. performance, the Brazilian composer sold out Carnegie Hall twice this spring on the fame of "The Girl From Ipanema," "One Note Samba," "Desafinado," "Wave" and other bossa nova standards he wrote in the 60s.

Gilberto Gil, who sold out Carnegie just weeks after Jobim, *wants* instant recognition—not just for himself, but for his co-founders of Brazil's "tropicalia" movement of the 70s, and their followers who exploit the pop lexicon without losing the samba spirit. "By American standards, I am not a star," the singer/songwriter/guitarist admits. "If Brazil

was an English-speaking country, no problem, it would be easy to cross over, and we would have at least ten big international stars."

The differences between fifty-eight-year-old Jobim and forty-two-year-old Gil could hardly be more pronounced. The elder man is a Rio de Janeiro native of French extraction, a longtime fan of U.S. jazz and Cole Porter. The wiry, coffee-colored Gil, from a remote mountain town, was under the spell of the Beatles, the Stones and Bob Dylan before Jobim colleague João Gilberto turned him back to indigenous Brazilian styles.

Onstage Jobim exuded bittersweet melancholy, croaking English and Portuguese lyrics to subtly pulsing melodies he tinkled on a white grand piano. Five female singers (his second wife Ana and daughter Elizabeth among them), chic in asymmetrical fashions, and his backup band, including Jobim's thirty-four-year-old guitarist son Paulo, were elegantly subdued.

Gil, though plagued by tech problems in New York, joked, shimmied and sang like a magpie. His young band rocked out on reggae rhythms; by the show's end, Gil's fans were partying in the aisles.

Still, Jobim and Gil are simpatico, having shared



some frustrations as well as an understanding of their musical roots. Both were harassed by the military government that ruled Brazil until earlier this year. Both have suffered semi-successful records aimed at the North American market. Both believe Brazil's culture is a treasure, though not without

disadvantages.

"I never would have dreamed that songs in Portuguese with carioca slang would mean anything here," Jobim shrugs, still amused that Stan Getz made him famous. "This kind of samba comes from Brazil's blend of African blacks and Gallicos from northwest Spain and northern Portugal. Bossa nova became big because it added something unique to the panorama of U.S. pop music."

"Samba is going to become like race music, like the blues," Gil predicts. "It's a raw material that comes from an under-developed area, and gets processed and sold as product. But as the world's culture becomes more international through television satellites and the whole network of communications, the sub-cultures will get more exposure. And no matter how thinned out it is for international consumption, the Brazilian flavor of our music will come through."

— Howard Mandel



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# John Cougar Mellencamp

It's a lonely ol' night in Bloomington, a southern Indiana college town of rolling hills and solid frame houses with a flag on every front porch and a basketball hoop at the end of each driveway. Summer means school's out, and the streets around the stately courthouse square are nearly deserted. Diversions don't get much racier than the scene a few blocks away at Kevin Brady's All-American Tattoo Studio. That's where you'll find John Cougar Mellencamp, casually shooting the breeze and lending moral support to pal A.J. Correale, as Brady, an amiable tattooed giant, meticulously traces the skyline of Manhattan into A.J.'s arm.

"Will you look at that?"

John marvels, as Brady carefully replicates in miniature the gilded deco carapace atop the Chrysler Building. A.J. turns his arm for a better look and chortles happily: "Hey, you can even see the guy wires." John shuffles across the room, plops back in a chair, surveys the small flock of friends and curiosity seekers who've gathered in the tattoo parlor—a well-lit, carpeted office that's about as exotic as the inside of a barbershop—and flashes a wide smile. "Everybody having a good time?"

Sure enough John is, swigging on a can of soda and trading wisecracks with the customers. In another time and place it's not hard to imagine the Coke machine as a crackerbarrel, and Brady's Tattoo Studio a general store. But as the evening hours slip by (it takes time to tattoo Manhattan, y'know), his serenity and good humor also seem a little puzzling. This is John Cougar on a Friday night? The restless troubadour and heir to the tradition of small-

## Comes of Age



*(Sort of)*

By Mark Rowland

town Indiana anarchy, who sings about holding onto sixteen as long as you can?

"I have been the eternal teenager," Cougar admits. "But now—oh, I hate to say this," he shrugs in a way that shows he doesn't really. "In the last couple of years I've kind of quit being that, and I'm not sure why. I am glad I did all the crazy things I've done since I was a kid; at least I've experienced the craziness—the evil—in oneself. But I see myself much more as an observer now."

He takes a moment to ponder the thought. "I guess I feel more comfortable with myself. I told my wife the other day, 'You know, I don't feel so anxiety-ridden about making a record now.' When I used to make albums I'd feel so anxious I'd almost pass out. Now that it doesn't happen, I start to wonder, 'Uh-oh, maybe this one ain't so good.'"

"For me it's like drinking. It never dawns on me to have a drink anymore if I get nervous, never dawns on me to take a pill. Why make yourself dizzy? I guess kids do enjoy that—I look at my little daughter and she loves going around in circles. That carries you to a certain age, and after that...well, I guess there's maturity."

So there it is; at thirty-three, John Cougar Mellencamp is ready to grow up. He's no longer the wild kid who, on the crest of his first great success a few years ago, stalked off the set in the middle of a CBS-TV interview because he didn't like the tone of the woman asking him questions, and later, in a burst of good-natured exuberance, tossed his publicist into a cake. He's trimmed the quantity of obscenities which habitually sprinkle his conversation, and which, in the midst of that season's concert tour, led to several warrants for his arrest. Perhaps he's even toned down the daredevil nature that, a few years previous, culminated in a motorcycle accident four days before his wedding. John still owns a motorcycle, mind you—three Harley Davidsons to be exact, including a pink one he bought for his wife—along with a very cool Corvette and another, souped-up Chevrolet. He still wears jeans and a T-shirt nearly everywhere, and when that shock of unruly dark hair falls into his face, it still belies the innocence of those angelic blue eyes.

But John Cougar has changed. You can hear the difference in his music. You can feel the difference in his relaxed presence. More telling, you can see the difference in his tattoos. On one arm near his shoulder, there's a Woody Woodpecker cartoon, symbol of the "nothing matters and what if it did" wiseguy Cougarwatchers have come to know and not always love. Down near the elbow, however, is a more somber figure—a cracked heart with the words "forgive us" scripted beneath. Like John's new album *Scarecrow*, it's evidence that he's become more serious and introspective, and that the compassion which first surfaced on songs like "Golden Gates" and "Pink Houses" has become a guiding force in his music. It's also a reminder that, for all his cocky insouciance, John Cougar Mellencamp isn't really such a tough guy. After all, he still wears his heart on his sleeve.

## The Once And Future Mellencamp

**T**hese days, John Mellencamp lives in a house off the old state road a few miles from the center of town. He lives there with his wife Vicky (a pretty blonde whose demeanor is so down-home Midwest it's hard to believe she's really from L.A.) and their three-year-old daughter Teddi Jo (who like her father can be equally adept at playing charmer and brat). Once again in the family way, Vicky says her friends advise her to hope for a boy, "because both John's daughters turned out to be just like him." She laughs affectionately: "I suspect that a

"I have been the eternal teenager. But I see myself more as an observer now."

boy'll just be worse though." John shares custody of his teenage daughter with his first wife Priscilla, who also lives in town. Vicky says she and Priscilla are close friends.

John's family life wasn't always this close-knit. "My father used to say to me, 'When I was your age...', and I used to say back, 'What are you talking about? You was never my age!'" Growing up the second of five kids in Seymour, a sleepy working-class town about fifty miles east of Bloomington, John spent a large portion of his teenage years on a B-movie spree of drinking, driving around, girl-chasing, work-dodging, swearing, drinking and girl-chasing while driving around swearing and dodging work; and fighting peers, parents and any other handy symbol of the authority that always wins. John's welterweight physique did not always serve him in good stead in fights with contemporaries who were capable of pulling plows, but he did cultivate the cool-guy poses of movie icons like Brando and James Dean, the latter another causeless rebel from smalltown Indiana. His career as a teenager probably climaxed at age seventeen when he surreptitiously drove his sweetheart across the border to Kentucky and married her. For that one his parents promptly kicked him out of the house.

"Didn't speak to me for years," John says. "No, actually once I was standing around downtown and my mom came by in a car and rolled down the window. She goes 'You taking drugs John?' I said 'Yup.' And she rolled up the window and drove away."

In fact, John's personality wasn't all that unfamiliar. "Know how my father met my mother?" he asks rhetorically. "His brother had gotten into a fight, and then my father knocked my mother down as he was running away from the police. I remember when my mom told me that story I wondered, 'What did he have on?' 'Oh,' she says, 'jeans and a T-shirt and tennis shoes.' I looked down and that's what I was wearing. That's when I began to think we might have something in common."

These days John's family relations are considerably smoother; his father, now semi-retired, even helps out with some of the business aspects of John's career. Cougar's grandmother makes her recording debut on *Scarecrow* by singing an old folk lullaby as a prelude to "Small Town," the most personal and possibly the best song Cougar has ever written. "She's eighty-five now," says John. "She was like, 'Are you sure you want me to do this?' And we said, 'Oh grandma, just sing it.' It worked great—we put the mikes real far away and it sounds just like an old record."

"I think any musical ability I have came from her," he ex-



plains. "She can sing, play piano and some stringed instruments. That's on my dad's side—my ability to lie I got from my mom's," he cracks. "But she sang that song to us when we were kids, and it seemed to tie in with the feeling of growing up in a small town." He starts to sing, "but I've seen it all in a small town..." then lets the verse trail off.

"I think that's true. You can experience the world in smaller places. Maybe we weren't as sophisticated, but hey—we all drank, we all got educated, we all were taught to 'fear Jesus.' When I was a kid I used to complain, 'There's a lot of hypocrites in church.' And my grandpa would say, 'There's a lot of hypocrites in bars, and you still go there.'"

Early marriage did not spur Mellencamp toward adulthood.

"Those were the days," John says fondly. "Priscilla worked at the phone company, and we lived with her parents. I collected unemployment and lived the life of Riley. I mean, I was *busy* doing nothing you understand—I could recreate like crazy. I'd get up at the crack of noon, and Priscilla's mother would fix breakfast for her brother and me. Then we'd throw around the frisbee, smoke pot, go into town and look for girls—with, you know, the brother of my wife.... At night we'd get money to go to the movies and have a drink. What a great life. Finally her parents kicked us out—to do us a favor they said, so we'd support ourselves. I said hey, don't do me no favors! They did anyway," he sighs. "So I figured maybe I ought to go back to school—anything to avoid the draft."

What's amazing is that, for all the distance he's traveled since that time, he remains remarkably non-judgmental, reluctant either to pat himself on the back or to criticize others' lack of ambition. "I know guys that I grew up with who still do nothing," he points out. "They don't really work—just hang around in the afternoons. And if they're happy with that, secure enough, so they don't have to prove themselves in that way, well who am I to criticize it?"

"Sometimes people around here see me differently now," he admits. "Maybe it's the money, I don't know. But to me, it's no big deal. I'm not aware of really being different."

Not different—just unique. John first tried his luck as a singer in high school, imitating James Brown with typical chutzpah. In college he shed his stoned-hippie image after noting that "every other guy in my classroom looked just like me. I felt like a dumb-ass." So he cut his hair, quit smoking pot, started performing in a band called Trash, streaked his hair, and took to wearing a dress onstage—an unusual gambit for the time among Indiana rockers. He began to write songs with a childhood friend, George Green, who fancied himself a lyricist. Their ambition was for Mellencamp to "fly to New York and make a demo," which they figured would cost a few hundred dollars.

Unfortunately both were broke. At this point John, Priscilla and their young daughter were living above a garage, and selling their record collections at twenty-five and fifty cents a pop simply didn't meet the nut. Perhaps that's where the

John Mellencamp story would have ended, were it not for sudden financial salvation from an unexpected source: Bunny Bread.

George had a job delivering Bunny Bread to area supermarkets, all of which were participating in a cash giveaway contest. "Every card a winner," went the contest promo, and technically it was true—each card could theoretically provide a lucky customer with \$2,000. All you had to do was scratch off the right letter combination. The odds against this happening were, of course, astronomical.

"But I'd pick up hundreds of these cards from the cashiers at the supermarket every day," George recalled. "We figured there were probably a finite number of combinations printed,



**"Even a blind pig finds an acorn once in a while."**

and with enough cards to work on, I could crack the code." It took him about a week. One day John received a call from his buddy: "You are about to receive \$2,000." "I've always looked for another contest like that," George muses dreamily. "But I never found one."

John flew to New York, made his demo, and arrived at the doorstep of Tony DeFries, then manager of John's hero David Bowie. DeFries, a legend in his own mind, believed himself responsible for transforming David Jones, a kid from the London streets, into Ziggy Superstar. Still thirsting for another

“I was insecure enough to listen to anybody who’d been in the business awhile.”

opportunity to play Svengali, he sized up Mellencamp and decided he liked the cut of his jib. “He wanted to make a star out of someone from the Midwest,” George Green opines, “but he had no understanding of us or what we did.”

So began the nightmare. DeFries arranged a record deal with MCA and advanced Mellencamp several thousand dollars to make a record using local Bloomington musicians. Some of these players were of dubious talent; he had to take away the drummer’s cymbals during one session. John put together several raw tapes, mostly covers of 60s tunes like “Oh Pretty Woman.” He sent them to DeFries who, far more interested in marketing an image than an album, promptly released the tapes as an LP under the name “Johnny Cougar.” The record, *Chestnut Street Incident*, was, John admits, “terrible.” Worse, DeFries had embarked on a strategy of keeping “Johnny Cougar” from the press. For Bowie, an obviously glamorous pop idol, this snob strategy had worked to perfection. This time, however, most observers understandably perceived DeFries’ client as a no-talent hype. And the quotes manufactured on John’s behalf didn’t make things any better. “He had me saying things like, ‘Anybody who can get headlines for an orange-haired, no-talent limey faggot like David Bowie can do anything,’” John recalls, shaking his head. “Meanwhile I’m living in Bloomington with no idea of what’s happening.”

“We figured all we had to do now was sit back and the money from the record would start pouring in,” adds George Green. “We thought the music business was great. We didn’t know anything.”

“Johnny Cougar” and DeFries soon parted company, though Mellencamp’s never quite shaken off either the name or the reputation. But something about being knocked on his face inspired him to come back for more. Dropped by MCA, he found a new manager, put together an all-Indiana band that included his current guitarists, Larry Crane and Mike Wanchic, kept writing songs and kept playing clubs. For years. And a funny thing happened. His music got better.

Mellencamp’s first break occurred in 1979, when his single “I Need A Lover” (from the *John Cougar* LP) cracked the top thirty, and a cover version by Pat Benatar became a much bigger hit. *Nothing Matters And What If It Did*, (1980) featured strong melodies and vignettes about growing up crazy in the great Midwest, but was generally overwritten and over-produced. So Cougar opted for his roots, which in his case meant the Rolling Stones. *American Fool*, with its stripped-down guitars and crackling drums, again examined the passions and pains of a wayward youth, this time sung from the

heart. John’s own record company didn’t like the album much; they wanted him to re-record it with the Memphis Horns. But he and George Green had co-written one song, “Hurt So Good,” that “I just knew was a hit.” “Hurt So Good” helped make *American Fool* become the best-selling album of 1982, while “Jack And Diane,” a song John himself had wanted to pull from the album, became a #1 hit. Today he laughs at that last irony: “Hell, even a blind pig finds an acorn once in a while.”

Becoming a star is only the second-hardest thing to do in popular music. The hardest thing is to make rock critics change their minds. Cougar’s old foes in the East Coast pop intelligentsia weren’t quite ready to lay down the sword. A few excerpts from *American Fool*’s reviews:

“Not close enough for rock ‘n’ roll—or anything else except cynical marketability.”—Dave Marsh, *Philadelphia Daily News*.

“The guy is a phony on the face of it and not in a fun way.”—Robert Christgau in the *Village Voice*.

“Trite material...distorted and over-modulated drums...pretentious album title.”—*Stereo Review*.

“John Cougar Mellencamp can’t help it. All he has to do is open his mouth and out oozes insincerity.”—*Rolling Stone*.

But money and record sales talk too. Shortly after the *Rolling Stone* review appeared, Cougar recalls, Stone mogul Jann Wenner called him up to express apologies, declare himself a fan, and promise to thereafter ban negative Cougar copy in his magazine. A flattering article appeared in the next issue. By the time *Uh-Huh* came out the next year, with its unabashedly grainy, *Exile On Main Street* sound, populist anthems (“Pink Houses”), delightfully bratty rock ‘n’ roll (“Crumblin’ Down,” “Authority Song”) and a distorted and over-modulated drum sound that Charlie Watts should kill for, most of Cougar’s former detractors were churning out revisionist critiques faster than you can say “domino theory.” And Cougar’s primitivist, deceptively savvy studio technique had, along with his commercial clout, made him an in-demand producer as well.

He’s chosen projects sparingly—a comeback LP for old fave Mitch Ryder, the song “Colored Lights,” for the Blasters *Hardline* LP (he did it for free because “I liked those guys and figure they couldn’t afford it”). A chance to work with Richard Thompson is tempting, he says, because Thompson’s music pushed him to work harder on his own lyrics. “I could never quite figure out,” he reflects, “how that guy could manage to say more in a line than I ever said in a whole song.”

In the past, Cougar admits, “I really didn’t have any handle on my career. I was just insecure enough to listen to anybody who’d been in the business a long time—I figured they knew more. I hated making that record, *Nothing Matters*,” he suddenly exclaims with a flash of old anger, “it cost so much to make and it sounds so horrible, and I didn’t care enough to do anything about it. *That* was the real problem. Everywhere I turned people were ridiculing me and I tried to say it didn’t matter, to cover my ass. But of course it did.

“But I’ll tell you something,” he says. “It was good all that happened to me. Because otherwise, I just might have stayed that way forever.”

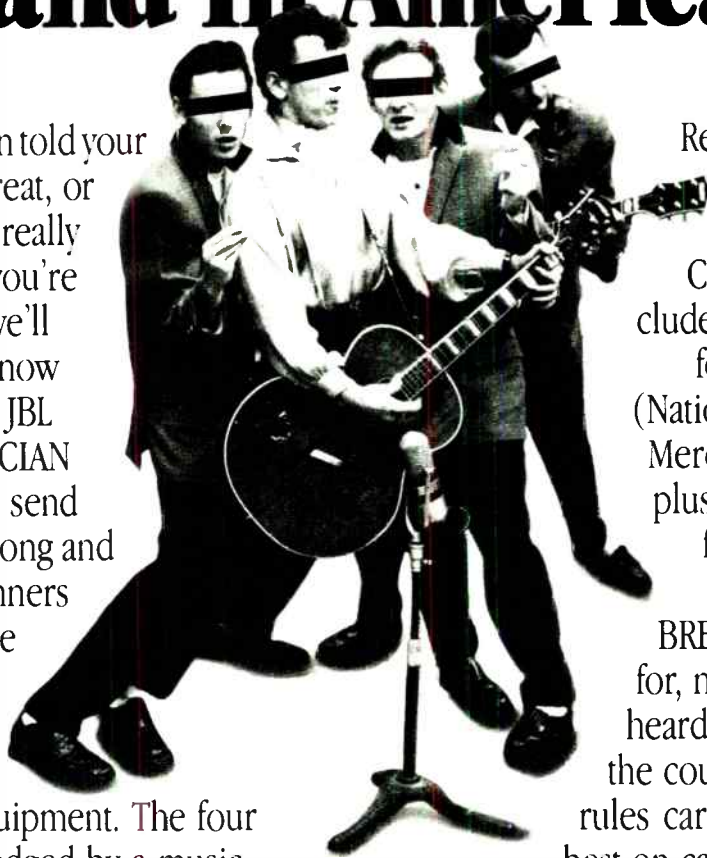
## From A Laugh To A Tear

**T**he morning following the Night of the Gotham Tattoo, Cougar drives by in a mint-condition ‘56 black and silver trim Chevy Bel-Air with an engine that sounds like it was lifted from a V-2 rocket. Just to make things not too boring, the transmission sticks between second and third as John tries to pass some petrified prisoner of a Plymouth on a blind curve along one



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of Bloomington's picturesque country blacktops. The car's other noteworthy feature is a multi-component stereo system (including an equalizer) out of which rumbles voices from the 60s—the Lovin' Spoonful, the Buckingham, Eddie Floyd, the Beau Brummels, the Seeds. The sun has broken through a patch of clouds, the air is crisp and sweet, the foliage luminescent. It's a fine day.

Cougar carries these homemade tapes of 60s singles—he has hundreds—wherever he travels. He genuinely loves the songs; at his Radio City concert in New York last year, he began the show with a medley that included renditions of "Pretty Ballerina" by the Left Banke, "Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" by the Animals, and Lee Dorsey's "Ya-Ya." Cougar is a true child of that era. In many ways, he still lives there.

"For a while I was scared off by the 60s—by anything that had to do with ideals," he is saying. "The 60s were like a big firecracker that fizzled for a long time and never went off. There was no climax. So I guess I turned my back on it.

"But what the 60s finally taught me," he goes on, "is that everything has to be more personal. We have to believe what we're doing, feel it in our heart and mind, before what we do has any real impact. I'm not saying you have to totally understand every issue, but if you have enough information to believe in your decisions, well, that's something to work with. You can't hurry ideals, whether it's communism or democracy—it's like trying to have a baby in four months. The 60s were about emotions, and the media helped play on that. I don't have anything against being eighteen," he smiles, "but let's face it, at that point it didn't take much to get me to jump on a fence and start throwing things."

In a clearing surrounded by forest at the end of a long driveway stands an attractive frame house, which turns out to be Cougar's home studio. The furnishings inside are comfortable, the equipment flexibly functional, but what's most impressive is the vibe of the place—it feels like a home. Even the recording rooms have large windows to gaze out at the surrounding woodscape. There's about 5,000 knobs on the mixing board and... "Nah, here's the best thing about the place," Cougar insists, heading toward the kitchenette. "Check this out." He turns on the tap, and steaming water pours into a cup. "One hundred-ninety degree water *right now*. The only way to drink tea. Now is that an item or what?" He sighs contentedly.

Cougar may have missed his calling in TV commercials; he won't do endorsements. "Say someone wants to sponsor your tour for a million bucks," he explains. "Well, I could use a million bucks, couldn't you? But the things you have to do for these guys: They want tickets for every show, you gotta go backstage and greet their people—before you know it you've become their employee. Sorry, I got into this business so I *wouldn't* have to work in a factory.

"I think anybody who is popular, there's someone who wants to give them money," he goes on. "Others see it as a way to make dough; to me it's kind of prostitution. Lou Reed's about the only one who can pull it off, and let's face it, that guy's been screwed his whole career. *Transformer* and *Berlin* were so great," he exclaims, a fan once more. "I turned friends on to them—I'd say, 'Listen, *this record will make you ill*.' Not that I really want to feel ill, but can you imagine a record that can do that? So hell, if Lou wants to stand in front of a scooter he wouldn't ride in a thousand years, it's okay by me.

"There's still two or three people I'm a fan of," he later reveals. "There's Lou, Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan—and I don't ever want to meet any of them." Recently, Joni Mitchell did call Cougar and ask him to contribute a vocal track (since scrapped) for her next record. "I said to her, 'Let's do this: cut the track with your own vocal on it, send it to me, and I'll cut my vocal and send it back'—and that's what happened. I did it that way because I really didn't want to meet

her. I didn't want to lose that fantasy."

It's ironic that, for all John's problems with the press, his own musical favorites—Reed, Dylan, Mitchell, Bowie, Prince—are all critic's pets. "Hey," Cougar responds, drawing himself up proudly, "I may have been making some shitty music, but that doesn't mean I was listening to it!"

He cues the tape for *Scarecrow*. There's nothing more potentially awkward than listening to a record for the first time in the same room with the person who made it, but as Cougar puts it, "for the first time, there's nothing on my album that I'd be embarrassed for you to hear." He has a right to feel confident. Each song is constructed simply but powerfully, and without resorting to glitzy technology. Cougar's veteran band—besides Crane and Wanchic, bassist Toby Meyers and drummer Ken Aronoff—crafts a sound that's sometimes pretty and occasionally explosive. There's nothing fancy here—no special effects, no more than a handful of chords. Cougar's voice has become deeper and more, uh, mature, and the lyrics have been cut to the bone. That's what makes *Scarecrow* so good. Every sound matters.

"I don't want my records to sound slick," he points out. "That's not where I'm at. I don't want my songs to be too hard to play if you want to play them. I remember when I was a kid I told my parents that I'd written Donovan's 'The Universal Soldier.' That's how much *that* song meant to me. Now you give a kid a guitar and out comes 'Stairway To Heaven,' and I think that's great. As opposed to say, 'Fragile' by Yes. Who can play *that* song? Who identifies with it? I don't ever want to sound that complicated. The thirty-five-year-old guy who comes home after work to his family—he doesn't need to know about 13th passing chords. Now they have *schools* to teach you how to play rock 'n' roll," he laughs. "That's a sad state of affairs if you have to go to school to learn something even I could figure out.

"Anyway, it's not in the notes," he goes on. "I feel a song in the space between. People have said that before—it's what you don't play that counts—but until now I didn't understand that. Kenny, for instance, can do anything, he's had great training. But he loves to play in time, and he sounds great. He's the only guy I know who can lay down his drum part without listening to the song. With him it's like driving on the Interstate with a race driver. Sure, he *could* go faster. But don't it make you feel relaxed? Because to him it's all in slow motion."

It's easy to underrate Cougar's band, whose fervor and—except for Aronoff—lack of extraordinary technique sometimes make his music seem raw, even ragged. There have been times, John notes, when musical advisors and business associates have told Cougar that he ought to get rid of them. When that's happened, he says, "I decided, 'No buddy, I ought to get rid of *you*.'"

"When a sound is that naked," Cougar insists, "it has to be just right. If I had seven or eight guitars to layer, it might sound like something you never heard before. With two guitars and a bass and drums, it all better sound like you're kicking ass with some authority. You learn pretty quickly the capabilities and incapacities of the musicians. And that's not scary, that's a challenge. It's fun.

"Sometimes in the middle of a show Larry will start changing stuff around and I'll have to look at him, like, 'Larry!'" Cougar sighs in mock exasperation. "He gets bored. But it's easy for me to write a song for him—he thinks like I do on guitar, only better. He'll fill in the melodies and embellish the rhythm." Cougar claims that his favorite song on the new album is "Face The Nation," not because he thinks it's the best, but because "the band sounds like Eric Burdon and the Animals. And Larry plays a great guitar solo."

The title song, a scorching Cougar rocker that eloquently details the plight of Midwest farmers who've been forced to give up their land, is more likely to attract notoriety; so will "Justice And Independence '85," an allegorical fable that



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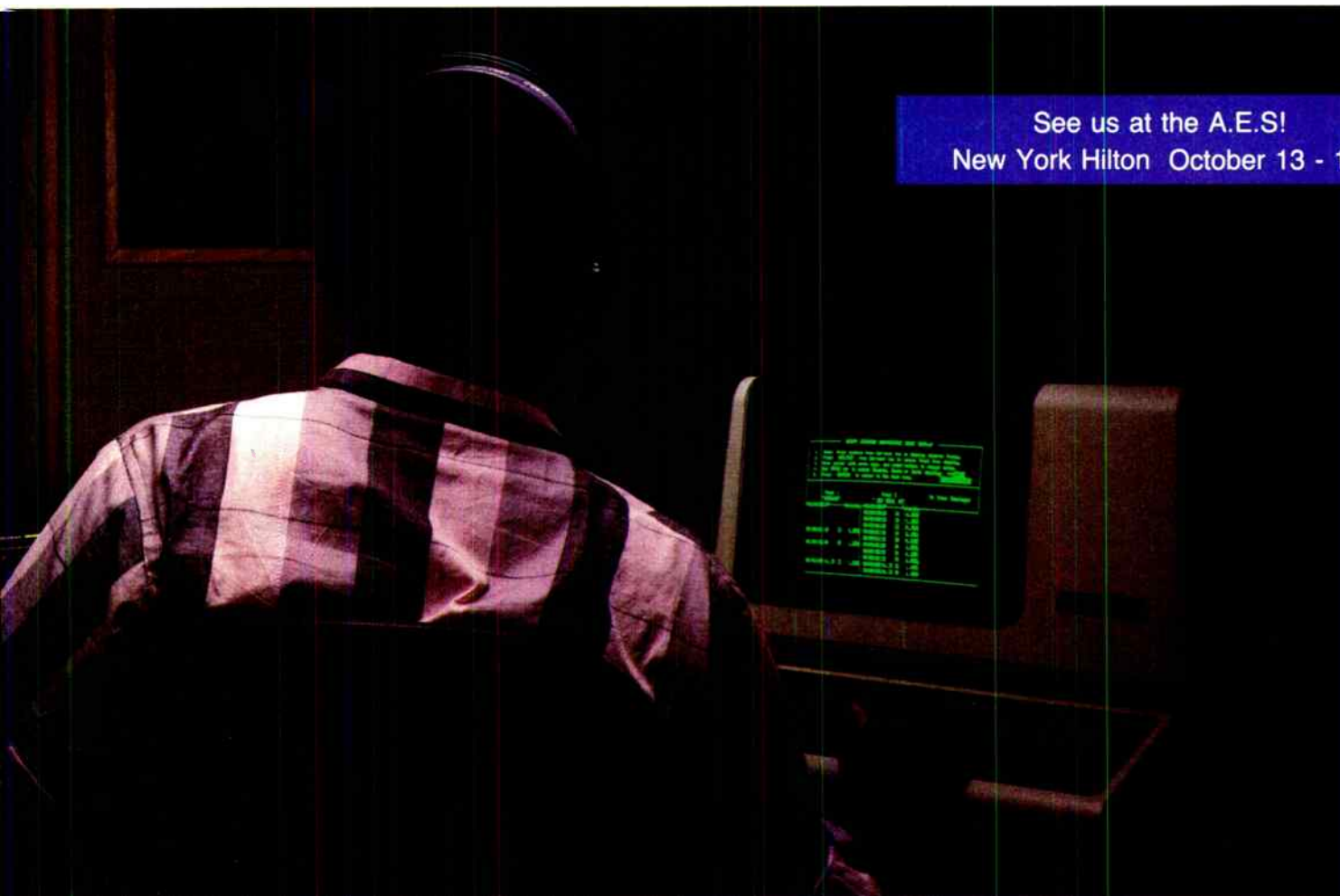
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The Importance of Being

# BRYAN FERRY

Three hundred thousand bewildered Britons were surging down the darkened Strand, trying to get their bearings. Panic and violence erupted in various pockets as people, many of them small children, were toppled or swept away by the surly hordes and thrown against park railings and cars.

It was approximately 10:30 p.m. on an atypically balmy and unclouded July night in London, 1981, and the throng was attempting to distance itself from Hyde Park, site of a massive fireworks display mounted on the eve of the Royal Wedding. The panic in the streets had been growing for half an hour, when disgruntled spectators had begun to leave early after realizing that most of the highly touted pyrotechnics display would be taking place at a forty-foot facade *on the ground*—hence, out of their view. Now they were discovering that no arrangements had been made by the police or the Palace to guide them home, and most of the entrances to the Underground were barred and locked as on a normal evening. Large numbers of petrified tots became separated from their parents in the ugly melee, with more than a hundred still unclaimed by the following morning. It was a royal mess.

IN EVERY  
DREAM HOME A  
HEARTACHE

"It's all very depressing in England now," commented Bryan Ferry, a debonaire sentinel in an impeccable tuxedo, as he took small sips from a sweaty, vine-stemmed glass of Bollinger. He was standing in the shadows of an English garden, taking the night air under a stately tree while twenty yards away, beneath a striped, circus-sized tent, dozens of titled gentlemen in Turnbull & Asser eveningwear spun bejeweled ladies to the strains of "Cabaret," courtesy Lester Lanin's society orchestra.

The two sharply contrasting London crowd scenes were at that moment unfolding simultaneously only a short limousine drive from each other, but they could

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

# **M**y music has always been very deeply felt. It's the only thing I can vouch for as being of any value in what I do."

have been taking place on different planets. Ferry shifted his elegant stance, ran his fingers through his gleaming black hair and scanned the faces of London's *jeunesse d'orée* and added, with the merest trace of his trademark irony, "The British people desperately need an evening out on the town, a humble bit of fun to break up the drearies." He was a guest at the ultra-exclusive pre-Wedding romp being thrown in a fine home off Fulham Road in the Little Boltons by Serena Balfour, the Duke of Marlborough's niece and daughter of Lady Sarah Spencer-Churchill. The great brick mansion and garden, originally built by Lord Beaverbrook for his mistress, was a far cry indeed from the cramped cottage Ferry knew as a child, born September 26, 1945 and growing up in the farming and mining country of Washington, County Durham. Yet he suited the refined setting with greater elan than the majority of those assembled.

How Bryan Ferry, who has never made the slightest attempt to conceal or downplay his hardscrabble working class beginnings, could rise to take his place among England's leading fashion plates, become one of its most celebrated pop figures, and be accorded toast-of-the-town status among the most tony movers of aristocratic British society, is no small riddle. He is not a fawning fop, nor the sort of fellow who could be content with his narrow nose pressed up against the glass for a glimpse of the high life. With considerable ease he has achieved intimate access but preserved his distance—and his balance. Not even when girlfriend Jerry Hall, the famed model and social butterfly, left him in 1978 for Mick Jagger, did he allow his uncanny dignity to be in any way diminished.

On the contrary, he kept his own counsel and put a temporarily uncertain solo career on hold to reform Roxy Music, the distinguished British pop group he'd founded in 1971 to record six consecutively successful albums of, in the main, his own incomparable songs. From the appearance of *Roxy Music* (1972) onward, Ferry treated the hyper-critical Anglo-rock scene to an eerie/magical music that fused a sublime primitivism with a coolly disquieting brand of avant-garde cocktail lounge blues. And on such solo outings as *These Foolish Things* (1973) he cut a reverse-camp figure of saloon-crooning surrealism, a Dada Sinatra—who sounded utterly sincere! It provided more head-scratching magnetism for the already-enthralled—plus an intriguingly sophisticated step beyond the painted, preening pop culture puppetry a leering Bowie embodied.

At the time of the Royal Wedding, *The First Seven Albums*, a handsome boxed set of the Roxy catalog, was selling briskly. *Manifesto* and *Flesh And Blood*, the first LPs following the band's reunion, were both extremely well-received, and Roxy had also recently scored a number one U.K. hit with "Jealous Guy," a tribute cover of the late John Lennon's classic soliloquy. Once the Wedding Week festivities had faded, Ferry toiled on with his then-current work-in-progress: *Avalon*, the ghostly and poetic Roxy masterpiece that would yield a sizable British hit with "More Than This" and a top thirty U.S. single with the title track—the group's first since "Love Is The Drug" clicked in the States in 1975. Ultimately, Roxy Music was disbanded in 1983 after an extended, much-lauded and artistically draining tour.

Now Bryan Ferry is again on his own—for good, he assures—with the new *Boys And Girls*. He sidestepped the fast life to marry three years ago, and he and wife Lucy have two baby boys, one of whom is named Otis (as in Redding), but the proud father's enigmatic self survives intact.

Yet, his newfound personal happiness, coupled with an unexpected personal sorrow (the death of his father) that prompted an introspective reevaluation, have for a brief period of time conspired to make this uncommonly private and elusive man more accessible than ever before. On the breezy summer afternoon we met and talked, Bryan Ferry had just arrived in New York City from England by way of Toronto. He showed the jaunty and slightly light-headed bonhomie of a jetlagged tourist too overtired to sleep, and seemed pleased and excited to be back in the Apple. A tall, slim man with a boyish stride, he explored the Manhattan streets dressed in white cotton slacks and matching shirt and shoes, an outsized blue blazer completing the sporty look, and selected a sedate Italian restaurant on East 52nd Street for what proved to be a very leisurely late lunch.

Hunched over a steaming plate of pasta with pesto, his chiseled features bent in a many-angled smile, he was witty, genial company, his soft, sonorous voice often erupting in throaty mirth. Poised and thoughtful, Bryan sipped lightly at his wine as he had in the summer of 1981, emerging shyly but surely from the shadows.

**MUSICIAN:** *It's a question you have always dodged, but how would you describe your music?*

**FERRY:** My music has always been very deeply felt. That's the only thing that I can vouch for as being of any value in what I do. I've done some rubbishy things in my career, mainly on my solo albums, although recently I think everything I've done has been good.

**MUSICIAN:** *The early Roxy output had a hard edge, flirting almost with the sinister. But *Flesh And Blood*, *Avalon*, *Boys And Girls*, are in a much different vein. They are warm, sensual but vaguely eerie music that can transform the mood of a room.*

**FERRY:** [smiling] For my part, I wouldn't dare play my records with anyone else in the room. I don't play my own music much anyhow. I actually meant to listen to everything of mine before I began work on this album, thinking, "I must get a day to take stock..." but I never got around to it.

**MUSICIAN:** *You broke up Roxy Music after the *Avalon* tour that resulted in the live *The High Road EP*, yet *Boys And Girls* expands on the *Avalon* aura.*

**FERRY:** I didn't want the album to be *Avalon, Part Two*, but it does have a continuity in that at least ten of the musicians on both records are the same. And I'm the same composing-wise that I was on the previous album. But it has some differences as well. I've always seen my Roxy catalog as my main body of work, as opposed to my solo career, and I do see *Boys And Girls* as coming from my Roxy work.

**MUSICIAN:** *Was this record done recently, or in dribs and drabs following the breakup of Roxy Music?*

**FERRY:** It was an ongoing drab. Sometimes I'd take a week or two weeks off to work on the lyrics. I'd do the verses at night, go to bed thinking, "Leave it in the typewriter, I've got it now," and the next day: "Ohh, hell!" I usually write freehand, but when it's looking right I put it in the typewriter to make it more real.

Most of the work on *Boys And Girls* was done in The White House, a little demo studio on Kings Road in London owned by Mark Fennick, my manager, and E.G. Records, Ltd., the people I've been with for all of my career.

**MUSICIAN:** *Let's run through the history of the project.*

**FERRY:** I'd been working on this record since July of 1983. All the tracks were started on an eight-track system that I



rented—not having a studio of my own—and brought into my home in Sussex. They all were started on keyboards with my chief engineer Rhett Davies programming a rhythm machine. And then Andy Newmark or Omar Hakim or a combination of both would play with it at a later date to get some sort of human element.

The guitar at the end of “Slave To Love,” with all that spiky stuff and those little licks, is Neil Hubbard, and the backwards stuff in the beginning and in the central solo is Keith Scott, who plays with Bryan Adams’ band. Bob Clearmountain suggested him during a time when the Adams band was in London doing concerts.

“Sensation” was begun six to nine months before the last Roxy tour. Guy Fletcher, a keyboard player who was on the road with Roxy, and who has since been snatched up by Dire Straits, played on that track at Phil Manzanera’s Gallery Studio in England. What you hear there, with all those changes and settings that sound like steel drums, is his audition!

“The Chosen One” was started as a kind of raga thing, with Chester Kaman playing acoustic guitar because I’d thought it’d be unusual to have a dance beat set by such an instrument. The chords of “Valentine” to me always had the feeling of a Brecht-Weill Berlin cabaret thing with the la-la-la-la chorus of European street songs, and I deliberately contrasted it with a reggae mood. “A Wasteland” was a reprise of “Valentine” and I kind of moved it away from that song and gave it space of its own. I like “Windswept” for the South American rhythmic elements, and it’s Mark Knopfler’s semi-acoustic guitar that provides the heavy, beautiful solo there, although it doesn’t sound like him. And I get to play a keyboard solo, finally, after several years, on “Stone Woman,” and it sounds a bit like a guitar, interestingly. “Don’t Stop The Dance” began with a chord sequence that Rhett Davies devised and I wrote to it. That’s how collaborations with Roxy always were, and I used to like that.

David Gilmour adds the strong licks on “Boys And Girls,” and I want to play with him more in the future. I made it the title track because I thought it was the central piece, the meat and bones, musically and thematically, of the record. The principal song, for me, is never the single, yet I name the record after it to spotlight in people’s minds when they think of the album as whole cloth.

Overall, to me it has a steamy feeling, of the jungle almost, the concrete jungle. It has a sensuality thing, like a snake, which I like very much. A vividness.

**MUSICIAN:** *Speaking of things vivid, do you still paint as you did back in the mid-60s as an art student at the University of Newcastle?*

**FERRY:** No, not at all, but possibly in the future. I don’t see any point in doing it if I don’t do it seriously, and I really don’t have enough time to shift my artistic field to that one now; I think it would dilute my energy. The one thing I have always been involved in was the designing of the LP sleeves. I especially like the covers for *Roxy Music* and *For Your Pleasure*. But I have trouble with sudden creative shifts, as a rule.

When I was on the last lap of mixing on the record last year, a songwriter in L.A. sent me a tape of a certain song, asking if I’d like to record the track as the theme tune for a film called *The Breakfast Club*. I heard the tape, thought the song was great, a sure hit, but I couldn’t bring myself to change gears to record it. So Simple Minds picked it up and it became huge in America! But that’s the way I am. I can’t adapt or adjust quickly to new input or whatever.



I'm the best daydreamer. I'm quite happy sitting and drifting away. I need something specific to do. Studio discipline is very good for me."

**MUSICIAN:** *You also seem to work more slowly, perhaps more carefully, on your records than ever before.*

**FERRY:** It took a while to get started on this go-round because I was trying to finish off this special office-study-workroom room in my house in Sussex. It's a funny house I've got; all the windows face south, the north side is all bricked over. I had to build a big wing off the back of the house, and it has huge floor-to-ceiling Venetian windows, and a skylight. I built it so I could put all my things in it because previously all my stuff, my cassettes and papers, had been scattered all over the place.

I'm the best daydreamer; I'm quite happy sitting and drifting away. I do like when I have something specific to do. Going to the studio means that I can go to work. I like that feeling of doing a day's work. I'm not one of those people who likes his own company, and the discipline of going to the studio is very good for me.

**MUSICIAN:** *Do you prefer country living to city living?*

**FERRY:** My wife and I are attempting to divide the two, spending more time in New York in order to appreciate the differences and contrasts between the two settings. I'd like to do some fishing this year. My wife Lucy was brought up fishing; her father was always off in Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, on fishing trips with the family. So she taught me to fish while I was doing the *Avalon* album.

The region shown on the cover is where I conjured up some of the songs; it's near Galway, on the west coast of Ireland. It's a very old-fashioned corner of the world, fifty years behind the times. It's very austere, very rocky, barren, but relaxing. And you hear wonderful Irish folk music on the radio, these Celtic pipes and fiddles skipping around and interweaving. I was there last year and had hoped to get there again this year.

[Somber] I took my dad and mother to Ireland last year for a week. They'd never been on a holiday before. He caught the flu...and then he died four days later, of a heart attack. Most of my father's people are dead, and what family is left came down to the funeral, a big gathering of the clans in Sussex, and I saw people I hadn't seen for thirty years.

I haven't been back to Galway since I buried my father.

**MUSICIAN:** *Boys And Girls has a dedication: "For my father, Frederick Charles Ferry, 1908-1984." There's so little known about your upbringing, your background. Let's talk about the Ferry family.*

**FERRY:** I must tell you straightaway that I've never been too good at intimate talk per se; I'm a withdrawn type, but the wine, which is good, may help. I'd like to try, frankly, because I've been thinking about my life a great deal over the last year since losing my father.

He was seventy-six. The strangest man; I loved him very much. He was unique because he was so simple in his ways. According to the popular press and the rock encyclopedias, he was a miner, but he wasn't at all, really. Actually, he was a farmer, as his father, Alfred, was a farmer. They worked some land for a man in Penshaw, about four miles from Washington, where I was born. My dad, who was one of nine children, used to get up every day at four a.m.

In the northeast of England, you see, there were and still are networks of mining villages, with lots of green belts of farmland around them. It was interesting to have this industrialized society and these Thomas Hardy-type villages existing side-by-side. My mother worked in a chemicals factory in the region. She and my father met on a blind date; they went out for ten years.

He was born in 1908, so he would have been twenty, and she was a year younger. They got married and moved into this farm cottage without any electricity. She was scared of the rural environment, with the cows putting their heads through the windows and that sort of thing, but she adjusted. They didn't have any money and wanted children, so he found he could make extra money—by looking after the horses that used to pull the coal carts underground in the nearby mines. His position as horsekeeper was a rural job, yet underground, and for thirty-odd years, he worked shoeing and grooming and caring after the teams. As a young lad, he used to box in a bar for money; once, a miner made the mistake of physically mistreating one of the horses and my father knocked his teeth out!

**MUSICIAN:** *Sounds like he was as tough as his environment.*

**FERRY:** Tough but gentle and quiet when not provoked. When he worked in the pit, he got little money, because it wasn't a highly skilled industrial type job like even drilling. It was a curious profession for someone who loved the outdoors as much as he did.

He kept a vegetable garden; he used to spend much of his free time over at his allotment—a designated section in the housing development. He would give my mother his wages every Friday, and she would give him a pound out of which he had to buy his tobacco. He smoked that thick, ropy twist of tobacco, the cheap stuff that you cut a plug from with a knife, until his dying day. But he had to smoke it outside because my mother wouldn't allow it indoors. He also kept racing pigeons there, which were his only luxury.

When he died, he was still as simple in his personal ways as ever. He couldn't and didn't use the telephone, and he couldn't drive a car or anything. My parents lived with me for the last eight years, in a cottage next to my house in Sussex. They would look after things while I was away, and it was great. If I had said, "I'm going to live on Mars. Would you like to come and look after things with me?" they would have said, "Sure!" My mother has always lived through me, and my incredible father, he was so calm and at one with nature. He didn't know anything about music, we never discussed it. It was a different world he had no conception of, yet he was a big influence on my work.

**MUSICIAN:** *Tell me about the house you grew up in.*

**FERRY:** The first house, which I lived in until I was five, was called No. 5 Model Dwelling. It was a terraced, connected house like the row houses in the British *Coronation Street* television program shown in the States. Then we moved to a development, a council-house estate, which was a step up. It was a semi-detached house with a garden on Gainsborough Avenue in the town in County Durham, about eight miles from Newcastle.

I've two sisters: Ann, who's older and played classical piano, and Enid. I was a quiet kid, not a lot of friends, and I read a lot. Later on we got a phonograph record player, which was always in the living room, which we all shared. Later on, when I was thirteen, we also got a television, so we took turns with the one or the other. At night, I always listened to Radio Luxembourg before bed. My bedroom was very small, and I had poems on the walls, things I cut out of the *Sunday Times*, like Sylvia Plath. I don't know why they printed poems in the newspapers, but they did. I also taped up these postcards of famous paintings, or reproductions from art magazines.

**MUSICIAN:** *Who are some of your favorite poets or authors?*

**FERRY:** Someone I go back to again and again is T.S. Eliot.





**The Chicago crackdown on abusers of greasy kid stuff.**

That was possibly reinforced when I discovered we shared the same birthday. He was one of these American anglophiles, who'd worked in a bank in London, not secure in the belief in his own powers. The first thing I read of him was *The Wasteland*, when I was in school in Newcastle; I was sixteen and had become absorbed in literature, poetry and art more or less at the same time.

Prior to that I'd just been bobbing along. I was a Boy Scout in the 1st Washington Troop, Curlew Patrol—that's a kind of bird with a long, thin down-curved beak. I remember carrying the flag about, going camping. I stayed with the troop for two years and got a badge for woodsmanship, chopping trees in the correct way and so forth. There was quite a bit of adventure in all that in my young mind; as we told our fireside stories I saw myself akin to David Livingstone and the great explorers and missionaries.

**MUSICIAN:** *How, then, did you accomplish the jump from scouting to the arts?*

**FERRY:** Through music—reading about Charlie Parker and his drugs when I was about eleven. I started buying records at twelve; a Charlie Parker EP was the first record I remember being crazy about. It was *The Immortal Charlie Parker*, and it had four tracks: "K.C. Blues," "She Rote," "Star Eyes," and "Au Privave." I used to go around singing all the solos by him and the young Miles Davis. There was something strange and difficult and beautiful about him.

**MUSICIAN:** *What did you imagine Charlie Parker to be like?*

**FERRY:** Someone unlike anybody I knew—which was enough then, I suppose—and sad most of the time, because you can't be *hot* all the time, and when he was creating and on a good run, a good solo that was soaring somewhere, how could the rest of his life match up to that? And the rest of his life, with the drugs and all, was so tawdry in comparison to when he was up onstage cutting it. The same with Coltrane. I believe that a performer sometimes lives in this netherworld for the benefit of those who can't go there; the listeners' lives are made richer by getting the feeling from the artist but they can't join him at his source.

I can recall sitting in a booth at J.G. Window's record store in Newcastle and trembling as I first heard this music, wondering, "Why do I get this sensation. Why do I positively shiver? *Why? Why?*" I got a similar thing when listening to old blues people like Leadbelly, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Big Bill Broonzy, and then later, with Billie Holiday. Her sound was a painful thing, steeped in an awful stress and yet exquisitely beautiful as well. I was touched by it, whereas pop music meant nothing.

**MUSICIAN:** *Were you listening to any live music?*

**FERRY:** Oh yes! When I was eleven, I remember clearly the day I won a ticket for a show, because it was the day I had to take my exams to determine if I would go to a grammar school or a secondary modern. If you passed your exam you went to a grammar school; if you didn't, things were going to be hard for you. That morning, I had won two tickets from Radio Luxembourg to see Bill Haley, and a Bill Haley album. So after the exam, I went to the Empire Theater in nearby Sunderland to see Haley, who was decked out in his tartan jacket. And his saxophonist, Rudy Pompilli, was leaping about wildly.

**MUSICIAN:** *But did you pass that exam?*

**FERRY:** Yes, yes. So I went to the Washington Grammar School and got a really good education, provided by these old characters, many of them ex-Army officers. The enrollment was boys and girls, thank God, boys and girls together. Academically, it was good and if you worked hard you had a good shot at going to university—and if you *did* get into university then you had made it out of the working-class malaise. You had taken a step toward becoming classless, which was the ideal. Only then could you start creating your own life, as opposed to being a bricklayer who lives his life on building sites, or a fitter in some steel factory.

You see, for six weeks during each summer holiday I would go to work on a building site or in the local steel factory. I also had two paper routes, delivering both papers and magazines. I covered one route in the morning before school and the other in the evening. Also, I would go around to the pubs on Saturdays selling the special pink football sheets.

On Saturdays, after I had done my morning paper route, I would put on my smartest suit and get on the bus for the ten-mile ride to Newcastle, where I worked in a tailor's shop, Jackson the Tailor, on Northumberland Street, the main street in Newcastle. I was expected to write down measurements and fetch bolts of cloth and the like.

[*Laughter*] I guess that's where I got interested in clothes. I used to love to look through the shop's old catalogs of clothes, each of them filled with wonderful drawings of fine suits, pictures of vintage sartorial elegance. Later, I'd go over to the local billiards room, where all the Teddy Boys used to hang out, and they had these remarkable clothes: bright peacock-blue or deep scarlet suits with velvet-collared jackets that ran down to their knees, and thick, crepe-soled shoes. I stood there in my school blazer, amazed.

**MUSICIAN:** *Were you spending your wages on records or clothes?*

**FERRY:** Both, but later on I spent them on bicycle parts. I'd joined a racing club of the Tour de France sort, meaning these were not motorbikes. The bike thing was a scene I explored for about two years, beginning when I was fifteen. I had to have the best bike, and the only way to do that was to send away for these special parts. As in mod culture, where you had to have exactly the right length of hair and type of shoe, in cycling there was only one sort of brake you

**T**he only time I have strong religious feelings is when I'm writing. People say a religious mood comes through in my later work."

could have, only one sort of ten-gear unit. You had to have a very short crew cut, a certain cap, short white socks, perforated black racing shoes, and tight-fitting black racing shorts. I was quite dedicated and used to do a lot of training after school.

**MUSICIAN:** *Were you any good at the sport?*

**FERRY:** Good? I was utterly useless! *[Huge burst of laughter]* Never any good at all.

**MUSICIAN:** *After cycling, then, your next predilection was rock 'n' roll?*

**FERRY:** *[wide grin, shaking his head]* No, no. Next was rock climbing. I formed a mountaineering society in my school when I was seventeen. Four of us used to do our climbing in the Lake District, in the Cumbrians; they have some very good crags there. Also in Northumberland, near the famous Roman Wall which runs for some hundred miles or so. I did the climbing thing to the limit, with the whole Matterhorn esthetic: camping out on various summits in mountaineering tents, dressed in leather boots and heavy corduroy breeches, smoking a clay pipe and reading poetry. Ridiculous.

**MUSICIAN:** *So where the hell was rock 'n' roll when all this was going on?*

**FERRY:** I really don't know. I think it was hardly there at all. The big thing was passing my exams and interview for university. But during the ten-week break between leaving school and going to university, as I was contemplating the usual building site/factory work stint, I bumped into this guy in the street who used to be in the old cycling club.

He said, "Can you sing?" I said, "Sure I can sing!" *[chuckles]* having never done it in my life. He said, "I've got a group. Do you want to get together with us?" So I went up and this fellow had a back-to-back fish and chips shop and hairdressing salon, and the band, the Banshees, was rehearsing in the back room. So I joined up with these guys, who were factory laborers who did this in the evenings, and we began playing an itinerary of ballrooms and workingmen's clubs. We played R&B, Chuck Berry, all that, and the workingmen loved us. We finally graduated to a hip club in Newcastle, the Club Au Go Go, a legendary place where Cream, Jimi Hendrix, Captain Beefheart and others played. Then it was time for me to go to university and I said goodbye and began a new chapter.

**MUSICIAN:** *Were you a big man on campus?*

**FERRY:** Not as such. Everyone wanted me to go to Oxford to study English, because I'd acted in this Shakespeare production at school, playing Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, and got rave reviews. It was my first stage experience and though it was very scary I quite enjoyed it—I'd do it again. People are always telling me to get into acting, but I wasn't interested in Oxford or the theater. So in 1964 I went to Newcastle University, and I had various rows there, because they wanted me to be the head boy there if I'd cut my hair, but I said absolutely not because I was still into this poetic, Byronic nineteenth-century Romantic mountaineering phase.

After I'd been there a month or two I found people from different parts of the country who wanted to form a group and started the Gas Board with a bass player friend, Graham Simpson, who would later be on the first Roxy Music album. He had a wonderful collection of jazz records, every Blue Note album ever, each in immaculate condition. But we didn't play jazz, though ours was more sophisticated material than the Banshees: Bobby Bland, Otis Redding, B.B. King, Freddie King, Albert King. Our guitarist, Ian Watts, a physics student, was quite good and helped make us a hot band.

We all lived in a house on Cheltenham Terrace in Newcastle. We bought a van, got publicity shots taken, the whole thing. We continued for my first year and part of my second, and they went on to become professional while I decided to stay and finish my courses. I was too much into art at the time, studying with a gifted conceptual artist named Richard Hamilton, and though I enjoyed the music greatly it wasn't an expression of myself.

In 1968 I graduated and moved down to London, where I got work driving delivery vans, working in an antiques restoration shop on Walton Street, driving a truck for a removal company, moving people's furniture and taking pianos down steep stairways—plus teaching art. Eventually I got myself an old piano and tried to teach myself a few chords, and started writing songs. I also tried to meet other people interested in the same thing.

After about a year, I had enough people to form a group, and that was Roxy Music. After a few months of odd little gigs I had enough songs, like "Ladytron" and "Psalm"—which didn't turn up on record until *Stranded*—to do a first album. I started carrying the tapes around, and I sent one to Richard Williams, who worked for *Melody Maker*. He called me back the same day, and said, "Great! Can I do an interview with you?" John Peel, the big underground DJ for the BBC, he got one of the same tapes, and asked me to come on the show. It all happened so quickly it was like, *zoom*. I started writing songs seriously in 1970, and now I've been at it for fifteen years!

**MUSICIAN:** *Throughout, there's always been a churchy aura to your music. Are you religious? Do you pray in times of stress and loss?*

**FERRY:** I was raised in the Church of England and sent to Sunday School. My wife's a Catholic; we were married in a Catholic church. I don't go to church at all, but I'm somehow sure I'll become more interested in it later in my life, as that seems to be the general way things go as you age.

The only time I have strong feelings about religion is when I'm writing, and people have always said to me that there's a strong, oddly religious mood that comes through in much of my later work, which I don't consciously generate or put into it. What I'm trying to do is reduce words and images and sounds down to the bone.

**MUSICIAN:** *And yet, you've long been identified as a leading trend setter in the decidedly unaustere cult-of-fashion scene in England.*

**FERRY:** I've always gone through different phases of style consciousness. While in my teens, the idea of being an artist appealed to me long before I was an artist, the whole image of the bohemian Left Bank painter wearing a black cloak and calling for "more wine!" Later, I switched to the Jackson Pollack New York loft-look, with his T-shirt and jeans.

England is a fertile place for fashion; it's a small country, it's an island, it has hordes of young people, it has a great past, and there is a genuine depth to its culture. From America, it's seen as being provincial, but information passes through its borders very quickly because it's very tightly focused, especially in terms of music. When Roxy first appeared in England in 1972, everybody in the country knew about it at once, whereas in America there still are regions where the band's music is on the outskirts of radioland.

I suppose the network of the English art schools, which now sadly are being phased out, were very important to the growth of the British music scene. So many future rockers attended them before and during my time—and many kids





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don't listen to what anybody else is doing in music because so many things remind me of what I've done. It gets incestuous."

followed suit afterward *because* of us. The attraction was obvious when you consider that, in a society where a traditional trade is customarily *the* thing, young people could leave a conventional school, get a government grant to go to an art college—due to my parents' limited resources I got a full grant—and spend a few years being trained as sculptors or painters. And each town had an art school even if it was just part of a technical college.

Actually, I assumed that everybody had art schools. They've always been a hotbed of talent, where the influence is greater than what they make out of it themselves. A lot of the fashion ideas come out of these colleges and into British street culture among the young but the money is never there to capitalize on the ideas, so they're pinched by Paris, New York and Japan. One of the most significant individual fashion exponents is Antony Price, one of my oldest and most eccentric friends, who took the pictures for the sleeve of *Boys And Girls* in his living room, and has done artwork for Roxy albums. He's been a huge influence as a designer on a vast number of people, whether it's been with his women's tube dresses with the spiral zippers, or the squarish, big-shouldered suits adapted from 1940s men's clothing—so many, many things.

With my own musical and performance work, I've always been asked why so many people are influenced by me. But actually, both with Roxy and on my own, I was always *implying* a lot of things. I would hint at and suggest but never entirely pursue an idea, an attitude in making music, a visual image or a sense of style to its conclusion, so they were all rich avenues that were there to be explored further by others. For someone starting out in the music business, all these slices of stimulation proved to be attractive directions to take.

I guess it's been a kind of philosophy on my part, but there have been times [*laughter*] when it's crossed my mind to go back to one of those avenues to explore it more, and I've discovered, "Oh, oh. Too late. Someone else is well on with it now."

Currently, I don't listen to what anybody else is doing in music because there are so many things that seem to remind me a bit of what I do or have done. It gets incestuous. [*laughter*] At the end of the day, you just have to know that no one can be you, and at best there can only be superficial similarities. I'm just getting further and further into myself.

**MUSICIAN:** *Maybe you've come full circle from the early, struggling years when you were trying to isolate time to think for yourself.*

**FERRY:** It does feel cyclical, in a sense. Back then, around 1970, I felt I was getting nowhere, spending all my time at jobs I didn't like, so I applied to the London Education Authority for a part-time job as an art teacher. I did it three days a week and it gave me enough money to live on. On my days free, I began to write songs in a flat I shared with my girlfriend Susie on Kensington High Street. Then I took them around on cassettes to record companies.

The demos were made on a big gray tape recorder that Brian Eno owned. I'd met him through Andy Mackay, and he'd come over to the apartment on Kensington High Street with it, and he'd tape Andy fooling with his oboe, and me on keyboards, and him twiddling on synthesizer. We advertised in *Melody Maker* for a guitarist and drummer and got Roger Bunn and Dexter Lloyd. And then they were replaced by Paul Thompson and David O'List—a lot of shuffling about!

One of our first gigs was in 1971 at a pub on Kensington High Street called the Hand and Flower, playing all the songs from the first album. After a few more personnel changes

we were a band making a record, with Phil Manzanera on guitar and Pete Sinfield producing, of course.

I fell in love with the idea of something called Roxy Music. I had sat down one day to write and had fancifully made out a list of the names of cinemas—like Plaza, Odeon, Regal, Ritz, Rivoli—because I liked the idea that they were important sounding but didn't really mean anything. When I got to Roxy I stopped, and mused: "Roxy...Rox-y...Rox...Rock." I thought it'd make a fine name for the band. For a couple of months we were just Roxy and then someone said there'd been a band in America with that name so we added "Music," which seemed even better.

And then John Peel at the BBC and Richard Williams at *Melody Maker* pitched in with their critical enthusiasm. That kind of thing could never have happened in America. People read the piece in the *Melody Maker*, heard the session we did on the BBC, and we were off and running. E.G. Management gave us an audition in a cinema in South London, and they asked me if I wanted to sign by myself and use better musicians. Being very retiring by nature, I was terrified of being onstage alone anyhow.

**MUSICIAN:** *You conquered your reserve quickly, however. Because it was less than two years before you were building a solo career.*

**FERRY:** The first two Roxy albums had been hits in England and most of Europe, and the whole thing was going great. But I was exhausted from the work, particularly on the *For Your Pleasure* album. I'd felt I'd made a reputation as a songwriter playing fairly weird music, and I thought it'd be interesting to do an old-style Sinatra-like album of standards and material I'd admired from Goffin & King, Lieber & Stoller, the Beatles and the Stones. I felt that the songs I like aren't really ever going to get out there to the mass public, and you get a bit bored being limited to a cult audience. I was hungry to make more records, but also hungry to learn more as well, and *These Foolish Things* fit those ambitions. The solo would just be a one-off record on which I was just a singer/stylist/arranger. Some of the songs were more successful than others, but that record was also a European hit. In America it just confused the issue, since the Roxy Music thing was complex and odd to begin with. Nonetheless, I realized, "Gee, I've now got two careers!"

*These Foolish Things* influenced Roxy's *Stranded*, both of which, like *For Your Pleasure*, had been completed during 1973; I was moving very fast, learning very fast. And then I did *Another Time, Another Place*, which showed me in the white tuxedo, which it was so strong, that image, that it stuck to me for years and years. Previously, I had been wearing these vaguely futuristic, showy, neo-1950s costumes with lurex and tiger stripes, which Antony Price had done for me. We felt that the music *needed* some kind of presentation to attract attention, and also it made it easier for us to perform, since we weren't particularly showy people. To get dressed up in a different guise made it much easier to carry it off.

The solo thing went on in tandem through the mid-1970s, with Roxy's *Country Life*, *Siren*, *Viva!* and my *Let's Stick Together* and *In Your Mind*. My solo career grew so big there was a lot of friction from the band and it became a very unpleasant place in which to work. I went on a world solo tour and then lived in L.A. for six months in 1977 just as the punk movement was coming on. I took a combination of English and American players to Montreux, Switzerland to do *The Bride Stripped Bare*.

**MUSICIAN:** *And that's when your luck ran out.*



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**FERRY:** [Nodding sheepishly] Precisely. But I must say that up to this point the previous *In Your Mind* album had been my least favorite record and I was looking for a dynamic new combination of elements. None of the musicians I'd brought along with me had ever worked with each other and it was all very weird. We were in Switzerland in the winter, with a lot of snow, everything very bleak—the perfect environment for what became a cold, bleak record. [He shudders.] Uhh! My girlfriend [Jerry Hall] ran off with somebody [Mick Jagger], and the music turned into blues, very sad.

I was after a kind of Duchamp thing, inspired by one of his most famous works, "The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even," known popularly as "The Large Glass." Richard Hamilton, my teacher at Newcastle, had done a reconstruction of it in 1964, and I had always loved the mystical, intellectually convoluted qualities of Duchamp's work. I also liked the idea that after being one of the most important artists of the twentieth century, with his dadaist brilliance, and then jumping into cubism, futurism and all that, Duchamp finally gave up and played chess for the rest of his life, until he died in his eighties. [Laughter] He used to do things he called "ready-mades," which was signing bicycle wheels and urinals and objects that were already made. I felt I was doing the same thing on the album by putting my signature, if you will, on other people's songs.

And suddenly, I was faced with my first commercial failure. It was a bunch of firsts: my first time with American players; the first time I tried for a laid-back, behind the beat sense of space on a record; the first time I had no single; the first time I had a flop.

Therefore, partly due to the punk thing, and partly because I felt my image had gotten so out of control, I decided I'd better put Roxy back together again. So we did it with Manzanera and Andy Mackay and a few people who'd also been

on *Bride*. It felt like a whole new phase and I decided I'd make a go of it under the group name, and *Manifesto*, *Flesh & Blood* and *Avalon* were the results, along with what was a lot of touring for us.

In truth, I find each album to be exhausting, because I don't consider what I do to be disposable pop music. I get very serious about it. I want to *share* it in the present. I may even start out trying to make the song difficult, but then melody overtakes me, and funky guitar, and traditional body rhythms. So I figure that while I can still groove, I should, while I can still feel this sensuality, which is a part of me. And I'll maybe wait for the day when I'm in a wheelchair before I get into non-rhythmic atonality. Although I'm a white, European, very English sort of person, I do understand and love the rhythms of black music. The combination of rock 'n' roll, Celtic things and black music that I've been experimenting with lately has been quite good, I think, so I'll keep with it.

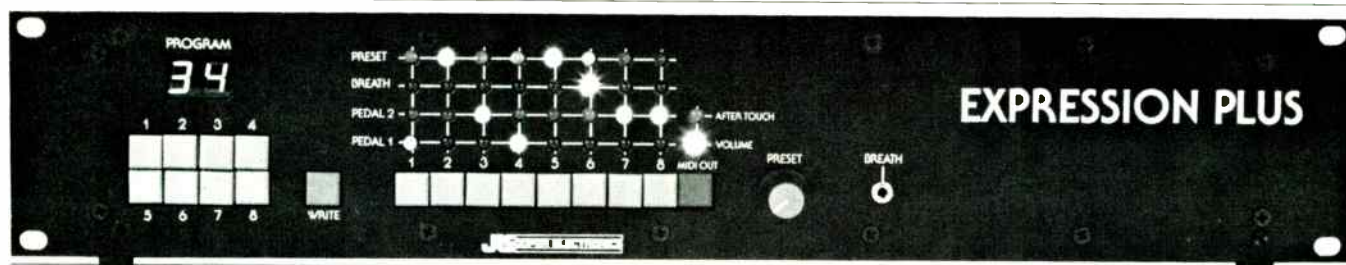
**MUSICIAN:** *Frequently people expect the artist to be the embodiment of his work. The fan and devotee look forward to meeting someone they admire because they expect to see his art in him, but that's never so. What you paint or compose or write is never who you are. Rather it's an expression of who you would like to become, the growth you hope for, the personal reach you envision. It's always a full length ahead of who you know yourself to be.*

**FERRY:** Yes, yes! That's exactly it. My work is *not* me. Creating is a touching thing, it's a hurting thing. You're trying to discover how you *really* regard things and there's pain in that, an intensity, because with that recognition as the starting point, you're then trying to make something that is extra to yourself, that is *better* than yourself.

**MUSICIAN:** *Did Boys And Girls live up to your own revised expectations?*

*continued on page 113*

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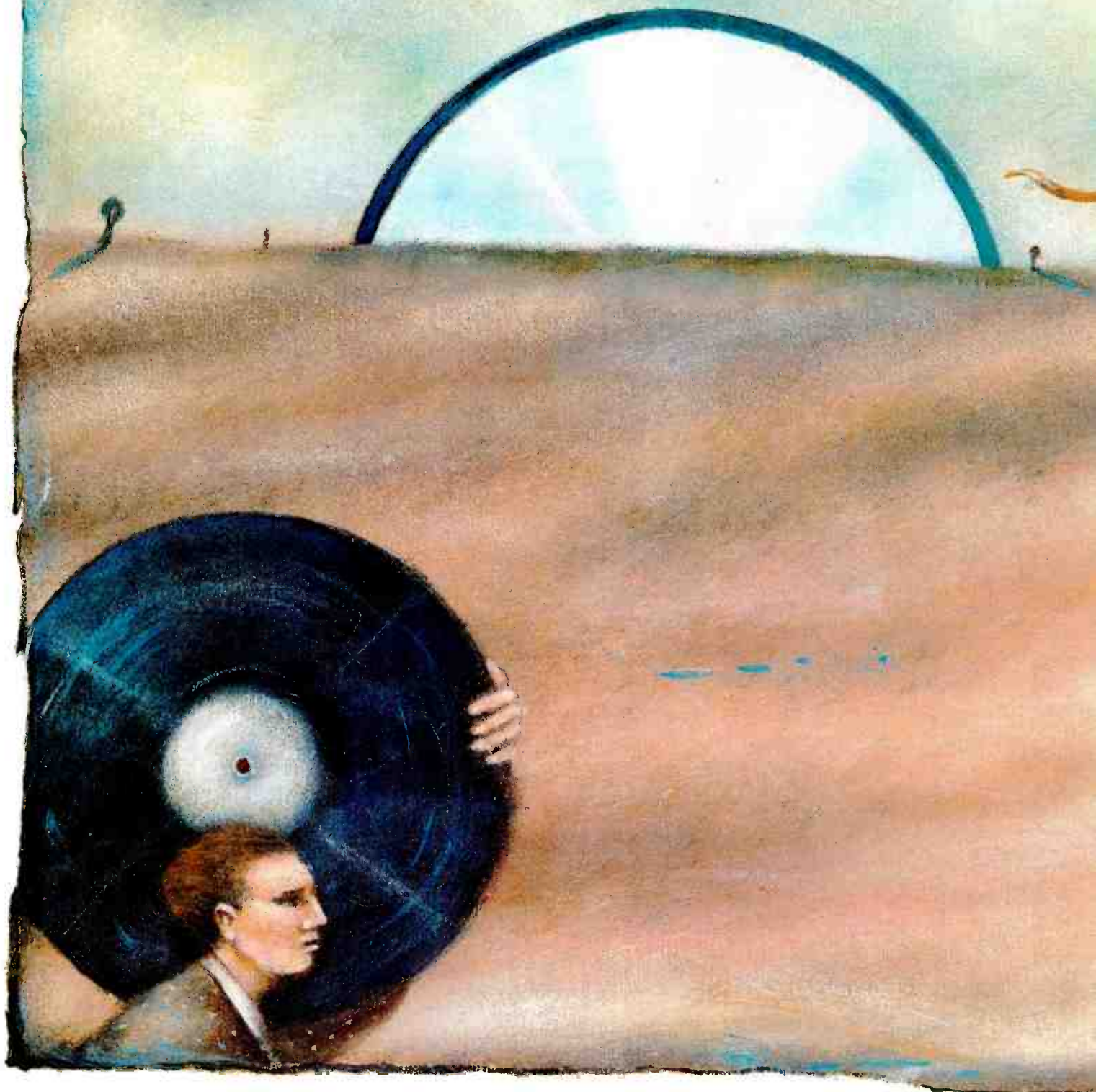
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# HOOKED ON DIGITAL?

BY SCOTT ISLER



These are the talking rings?" Rod Taylor holds up a small, shiny item and examines it. He looks puzzled. "They talk." Inconceivable—but true! Sure enough, Yvette Mimieux spins the ring on a glass table top, the surface glows, and a voice is heard on the movie soundtrack. As the ring slows down the voice lowers in pitch. So much for sound reproduction in the 8028th century.

The scene above is from *The Time Machine*, the 1960 film of H.G. Wells' 1895 novel. Wells' turn-of-the-century protagonist would surely have been familiar with the cylinder phonograph; he was probably also aware of the then-recently-introduced disc record, a seemingly dubious improvement. The movie appeared three years after the launch of stereo records. In between the book and the film, of course, were such audio innovations as electrical recording (1925), the long-playing disc (1948) and magnetic tape

ILLUSTRATION BY WARREN GEBERT.

in the recording studio (1949).

All these refinements—and let's not forget the early-70s Edsel of recording innovation, quadrophonic sound—kept within a philosophical tenet of converting sound waves to an analogous storage medium: the spiraling wavy groove of a disc, the flowing magnetic field of tape. Problem is, these media add their own message to the original signal in the form of tape hiss and surface noise. The technical limitations of tape and vinyl disc, meanwhile, require engineering maneuvers that constrain the sound. Is there a better way?

How about this: A silvery disc four-and-three-quarters inches in diameter that looks like something you should run a necklace through and wear to a disco—that delivers its signal against a background not of tape hiss, clicks, pops or scratches, but *total silence*—that can play over an hour without interruption—that costs nearly twice as much as an LP record—and that is currently so difficult to mass-produce that you're lucky to find what you want anyway?

The recording industry is betting on the Compact Disc, a system developed by a partnership of Philips in Holland and Sony in Japan. Unlike last decade's quadrophonic debacle, the gamble appears to be paying off. According to the Electronic Industries Association, in 1983 there were 35,000 CD players sold to U.S. dealers. Last year that figure leaped to 208,000. This year the E.I.A. estimates sales of 600,000 with another 900,000 projected for 1986. Okay, so it's small

## **It's easier to make Compact Disc players than Compact Discs themselves. At present, manufacturing the discs is an expensive, clinical affair.**

potatoes compared to the sixty to eighty million turntables in this country. But it took videocassette recorders six years, and color television sets eleven years, to score what CD players may hit in three years: annual sales of a million units.

The Compact Disc itself is a marvel of the computer age. The disc is a handmaiden of the digital recording process, which, like other technological great leaps forward, represents a break in conventional thinking. Unlike analog recording systems, the digital method samples an incoming signal discontinuously. Each "sample" is electronically converted into a sixteen-bit code—a number—stored on tape, then transferred to the CD master as a series of microscopic pits. A CD player "reads" the pits on a Compact Disc 44,100 times a second with a low-power laser beam and converts them into the fluctuating voltage known and loved by all audiophiles. CD specs—notably for flat frequency response, signal-to-noise ratio and distortion—are mind-bogglingly utopian.

Great, huh? Well, how would you like to throw out your entire collection of LPs, singles and cassettes to make way for this obviously superior medium? "The turntable business is going to hell in a handbasket fast," says Robert Heiblim, vice-president of sales and marketing for Denon America. Marc Finer, product communications manager of Sony's consumer audio division, agrees: "There's been a tremendous de-emphasis on the turntable market since the Compact Disc became in-demand." (Both Sony and Denon make turntables as well as CD players.) Heiblim cites market research showing that CD fans stop buying vinyl records. Emiel Pe-

trone, senior vice-president, Compact Discs, for PolyGram Records, sees "manufacturing plants of LPs phasing out in the 80s."

The vinyl disc's terminal illness began in October, 1982 in Japan, when and where the CD was introduced. The following March, Europe got its first taste of the new technology, and by August of 1983 CDs were available in the U.S. The recording industry has been virtually unanimous in its praise for the new format, and why not—it's an economic godsend.

When introduced, Compact Discs retailed for around twenty dollars. Prices have since fallen to the twelve-to-fifteen dollar bracket; PolyGram has a budget line for under ten dollars a disc. Although a CD can play uninterrupted for over seventy minutes, the vast majority of Compact Discs are simply high-tech editions of LPs with running times of about forty minutes. Technics product manager Rick Del Guidice points out another benefit (to manufacturers): the CD's "domino effect on other components," leading to upgrading of amplifiers and speakers to realize the new knockout sound.

CD players are dropping in price fairly rapidly, contributing to the feeding frenzy. Sony's first player listed at \$900; industry spokespersons now talk about cracking the \$200 barrier by the end of the year, with a \$100 player predicted for next year. Not only have prices gone down, successive generations of players have been smaller, lighter and better able to track CDs even when subjected to vibration or shock. Sony and Technics have portable players; Sony introduced a car CD unit last year, and more are expected this fall.

"The big concern," Heiblim says, "is where the product is going to come from to support the sales of hardware." He compares the industry to a roller coaster, with the hardware and software manufacturers never quite matching up. "The market is highly stimulated. It's going too crazy, outrunning the horse."

The problem is that it's easier to make CD players than CDs themselves. At present, Compact Disc manufacture is an expensive, clinical affair. A CD plant costs at least twenty million dollars, takes a year or two to start up, and, for custom pressing, isn't terrifically profitable. "This is perhaps one of the most romantic investment issues you can raise right now," Heiblim states. "The return on the investment is not that impressive. It can be five years before you get a return on custom pressing. Most venture capitalists are not interested."

Consequently, there is just one CD pressing plant operating in the U.S.: Digital Audio Disc Corporation in Terre Haute, Indiana, a joint venture between CBS Records and Sony. Outside of that, all CDs are made in Japan or Europe. Heiblim says Denon's Japanese CD plant is booked solid through next spring. Denon is reportedly opening a U.S. plant; Heiblim is reluctant to discuss the project for fear of reverberations on the volatile Japanese stock market. A Virginia custom CD plant, Digital Images, was planned but never materialized. Technical difficulties plagued Digital Audio, limiting its usefulness to small labels desperate for CD pressing facilities.

Ryko is one such independent label, a CD-only company scrambling for plant time. "It's a constant juggling act," says partner Rob Simonds, "using different manufacturers, trying to cover yourself at all times." His Japanese manufacturer was promising February delivery on orders taken in July.

Simonds is also president of East Side Digital, a Minneapolis-based CD wholesaler and CD-only retailer. The store began as an outlet for gourmet LP pressings. Then, Simonds says, "Compact Discs came along and I saw the high-quality record market was going to go right down the tubes!" He lists an estimated 4,500 CD titles in his catalogue—considerably more than the 3,300 available CDs claimed by Leslie Rosen of the Compact Disc Group, an industry organization. The difference may be attributable to CDs released by foreign record companies but officially unavailable here.

The British Decca Record Company, for example, has CDs



of the Rolling Stones' *Aftermath*, *Between The Buttons* and *Beggar's Banquet* albums, among others. The Compact Disc Group's semi-annual catalogue lists only *Still Life* and *Re-wind*. Record companies have to renegotiate royalty agreements with their artists for CDs, creating a patchwork situation from country to country. Labels plead that Compact Discs cost three times as much as records to produce, and try to get artists to agree to the same dollar amount as they get on records. This doesn't always work. Columbia Records deleted, then reinstated, CDs of Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here* and *The Final Cut* albums after legal difficulties arose and were negotiated.

The thorny issue of royalties means there are no CDs by surefire names like Frank Sinatra, the Beach Boys or the Beatles. Toshiba EMI did issue a CD of the Beatles' *Abbey Road* for sale in Japan only. "They kept a very tight rein," Simonds says, "and still seventy-five percent of 'em ended up outside Japan." The company withdrew the title after Beatles representatives complained.

(Coincidentally or not, the Beatles, Beach Boys and Frank Sinatra all have the bulk of their work on Capitol Records in the U.S. Capitol is the only major label not part of the Compact Disc Group. Simonds says Capitol/EMI, without any plants or manufacturing arrangements, is "pretty much closed out" of the CD business; instead, the company has been pushing its XDR cassette tape processing. One theory is that Thorn EMI, Capitol's British corporate parent, was hoping the CD format, pioneered by a European rival who owns PolyGram, would bomb. Capitol executives could not be reached for comment. In July, Thorn EMI announced construction of a Compact Disc plant in the U.K.)

Whether you allow for 3,300 or 4,500 different CDs, that's some distance behind the roughly 85,000 different LPs in print. Compact Discs are still a seller's market, which is why smaller record companies are sniffing for open slots in CD plant schedules. GRP, a jazz label, started recording digitally in 1979, and now does about thirty percent of its sales in the new format. Ryko may not have the superstars, but if you want to hear Irish traditional music on a CD, you'll have to buy theirs—for the time being. If you can find it.

"It has never ceased to be difficult to get Compact Discs,"

## **E**arly acceptance of one standard for CD prevented rival formats from dividing the market. But no such agreement exists on how to package them.

declares Art Shulman, director of stores for Chicago-based Laury's. In June CDs accounted for over thirty-five percent of total sales in the four full-line shops. Just over two years ago, Laury's became the first store in the U.S. to carry CDs in depth. Now they have 3,100 titles in stock, Shulman claims, selling at \$15.98 and \$16.98—but he's not satisfied. "The demand far outstrips the production capacity. I can't get enough to sell. Some major record companies are only filling thirty percent of the line items we order." His advice to shoppers: "If you see it in a store, *buy it then*. I can't promise you'll see it again."

Shulman cites "astronomical" price cuts in CD players as spreading the medium's popularity—"it's no longer an elitist item"—but sees prices stabilizing for the discs themselves.



"It doesn't make any economic sense. Prices are as low as they are now for marketing reasons. Warner Communications decided they wanted to spread Compact Discs, so they reduced the price." Most other record companies have followed suit. Shulman says players can be assembled like microwave ovens—cheaply, if not always carefully—but stringent manufacturing tolerances on the discs prevent similar cost-cutting.

The early acceptance of the Sony-Philips standard for Compact Discs prevented rival formats from setting the market against itself. Unfortunately, no such agreement exists on how to package the things. The one advantage LP records have over CDs is that big twelve-inch-square cover for self-promotion. CDs are generally kept in a clear plastic "jewel box" similar to the standard Norelco case for cassette tapes. It's a fine, classy container, but it's also too...too compact. Record companies don't want retailers hiding CDs behind lock and key; retailers don't want shoplifters helping themselves to costly, pocketable merchandise. The uneasy solution has been a 6x12-inch package—either molded plastic or cardboard—housing the disc, jewel box and booklet with album-cover graphics.

This spring, Warner Bros. committed digital apostasy; The CD of Prince's *Around The World In A Day* shipped in a cardboard sleeve inside a cardboard box. Outraged CD enthusiasts sputtered about the insult of keeping a state-of-the-art, last-a-lifetime *objet* in a cheap, flimsy cover. Undeterred, Elektra Records (a Warner sister label) issued Motley Crue's *Theatre Of Pain* in a modified cardboard sleeve, and Warner Bros. announced more of their CDs would be "going cardboard."

The cardboard sleeve is about one-third the cost of a plastic jewel box—a patented design, but available free of charge to all manufacturers. Hale Milgrim, Elektra's vice-president of creative services, says marketing, not economics, dictated the switch; the thinner cardboard jacket is more portable, and designed to pry CDs away from audiophiles and into the mass market.

Simonds remains skeptical. He observes that the cardboard industry is "scared shitless about the popularity of the Compact Disc in a jewel box. They see their business dropping very quickly if, as many predict, the Compact Disc

replaces the LP. They're trying everything to get the major labels interested in an all-cardboard package." Heiblim thinks Warner Bros. goofed by charging the same as for jewel-box CDs. Denon in Japan issued cardboard-jacketed CDs of teenybopper music at a budget price.

Prince and Motley Crue fans, though, can't choose their CD packaging, unless they buy an empty jewel box afterward. Warner Bros. claims the CD of *Around The World In A Day*, cardboard or no cardboard, has sold over 60,000 copies. Simonds has found that Prince "does not sell on CD, not in the top ten level"—a comment on the still-skewed Compact Disc market. "Heavy metal does better than you'd think" on CD. One of Simonds' big sellers is Peter Gabriel's 1982 *Security* album, "one of the first all-digital recordings to be released, and probably the most impressive-sounding pop Compact Disc."

## **A**ll-digital classical-music productions far outnumber all-digital pop CDs. Dynamic range and lack of interruption matter more with "serious" music than pop.

All-digital pop CDs—albums recorded and mixed and/or edited, as well as mastered, on digital equipment—are presently far outnumbered by all-digital productions of classical music. Broad dynamic range and lack of interruption, the CD's most obvious advantages over LP and cassette, matter much more with "serious" compositions than pop songs. (Legend has Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* determining the new format's maximum running time.) In the 1970s some audiophile classical-music labels mastered in digital, soon followed by the majors. This backlog of digital classical recordings, plus the expense involved in buying a CD player, assured that the medium originally catered to fine-arts tastes.

To overtake the tape/record market, CD has to be more than a yuppie toy. The players are currently more accessible (in quantity and relative pricing) than the discs, but record companies are trying to spew out CDs as fast as their sputtering machines will sputter. With our priceless cultural heritage of pop music recorded on analog tape, digital remastering assumes crucial importance for "breaking" the CD. Ideal analog-to-digital transfers bring the equivalent of the original studio master tape to your home. Historical material—whether a 1957 performance by Billie Holiday, or 1956 mono recordings by Elvis Presley—become so vivid as to shatter time as effectively as anything H.G. Wells could think of. But transfers can also be disastrous, reeking of tape hiss or worse.

Even digitally recorded material can yield substandard CDs. When engineer Roger Nichols recorded Donald Fagen's *The Nightfly*, "we took great pains to place everything just right"—the Compact Disc offers much better stereo imaging than the LP. The CD version, however, "was just a blur," Nichols says. "We found out the CD had been transferred accidentally from an analog tape. When they fixed it, you could compare the two Compact Discs and really hear the difference." The problem is not with the CD medium, which is virtually invisible, but the source provided for the CD.

"In the beginning," Nichols explains, "the people responsible for making the decision for what to use on Compact Disc were not familiar with the technology. They have a standard procedure: Run an eq tape copy from the master mix,

then a production master, then tape copies for cassettes from the production master. By now you're into a fourth-generation analog tape copy. Even with a digital mix the record company always required an analog eq copy."

Tapes and records need eq, or equalization, to compensate for shortcomings in reproducing parts of the sound spectrum. The CD laughs at those limits (metaphorically speaking, that is), but the joke's on the consumer who gets stuck with a carelessly mastered Compact Disc.

Nichols, house engineer for Steely Dan, first got involved with digital while working on *Gaucho* in 1979. "There was a Soundstream machine in the studio to play with, but I didn't think it was quite ready yet." He still wasn't sure when recording *The Nightfly* in 1982, so he cut the basic tracks in analog but used a 3M 32-track digital machine for back-up. Listening to the digital playback, Nichols thought something was wrong with the equipment. "It took us a little while to realize we were hearing the deficiencies with analog on a digital machine." *The Nightfly* was finished in digital, and Nichols hasn't returned to analog since.

Jim Boyer, who often works with producer Phil Ramone, engineered the putative first Compact Disc, Billy Joel's *52nd Street* (1978). "Digital tape is more exciting but it requires a little more cautiousness," he warns. "You can't overload it. Eq translates differently than in the analog medium. You find yourself being more timid." The danger is ending up with too harsh or sibilant a sound. Boyer hasn't changed his miking methods, "just how I equalize." He also suggests altering monitor systems "to be more discriminating to the high end."

Analog tape masters have to be re-eq'd for the digital tape master. "The process is ill-defined," Boyer admits. "Sometimes digital copies sound worse than analog. It reproduces your mistakes exactly. If you didn't have the azimuth correct, it reproduces that. It's a little more forgiving when you're recording."

Engineer Bruce Botnick, who's also hooked on digital, points out an additional problem with transfers. "A lot of these old tapes from the 50s and 60s have lost a lot of shine. High-frequency particles are very minute patterns, and in time they revert to an inert state."

Another black mark against analog tape. Indeed, Botnick enumerates four big hurdles between analog input and what the record-buyer hears: the studio cutting amplifier, the cutting head, the home playback stylus and cartridge, and the home preamp. The preamp is still yours, but digital's eliminating three out of four ain't bad.

Editing digital isn't as easy as analog, and the expensive equipment boosts production costs. As studios feel compelled to "go digital," though, competition will drive (and is driving) down rental fees. Electronic editors hook one machine to another, like video editing—only with no generational loss from one copy to another.

Is there nothing wrong, then, with digital recording technology? Enter Doug Sax, a feisty curmudgeon where CD is concerned. President of Sheffield Lab and the Mastering Lab, Sax releases audiophile LP pressings. Lately he's also issued some CDs, which he says are very good, but he's not happy about it.

"In resolution and musicality, digital is a backward step for audio," Sax declares. "If you feed it a mediocre signal, as ninety-nine percent of them are, it does a pretty good job. But as you get more nuance in the electrical signal it becomes more and more unsatisfactory in capturing that signal. It doesn't have a low level, it has very poor transient response and no detail. When one or two instruments are playing it does a good job; when the music is complex, the system falls apart."

Sax acknowledges the CD is "a fantastic home system, and it offers freedom from wear and noise. The only thing it won't do at the present time is offer sound comparable to the best on analog." When the latter category can mean

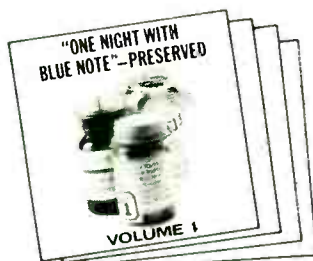


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BOX SET



dropping a couple of thou on a cartridge alone, you're forgiven for settling for a CD player—but not by Sax.

"With all of its good numbers, it's still not sounding as good as analog to critical people, and I'm one of them. Why? The sampling rates are too low, the filters are aberrant. There's no nuance or accurate attack. You can't pick out the instruments you want to listen to; it becomes an indistinct blur."

This isn't all subjective impression. Dennis Drake, PolyGram Records' studio manager and chief engineer, admits that "there were certain compromises with the sampling rate to make it cost-effective." He's not complaining, though; "you can get a \$200 CD player, hook it into your system and increase the quality of your system tenfold."

"The uniformity of players from different manufacturers has to be tightened up. We're seeing an influx now of players from all countries; some of them are using analog circuits to save bucks. Manufacturers have to hold up their end of the bargain. The same disc sounds different on different players."

That's probably not what you first heard about Compact Disc players. Then again, you probably also heard that the discs were impervious to everything short of a direct nuclear hit. True, CDs don't relay audible scratches, but if you let your cat sharpen her claws on one—or if you fingerprint a CD with peanut butter—you may cause the laser beam to mistrack. If so, you should also exchange your CD player for a mudpie mold kit and forget about high tech for a while.

It's easier to believe that the Compact Disc really will supplant the analog record as a preferred medium of storing sound. Retailers, engineers and manufacturers give the LP until 1990 at the latest to clear up and get out; by then they expect the CD will have supplanted the black vinyl record.

Is there no hope, then, for us millions of turntable owners? Heiblim is slightly reassuring. "I don't think they'll ever eliminate records," he says, citing that medium's low production costs versus CD. The LP could survive as an "underground" medium for those without access to a Compact Disc pressing

plant. Conversely, Sax and Petrone, who's also chairman of the Compact Disc Group, agree the LP will linger on only as a high-end curio for audiophiles willing to drop a couple of thou on a cartridge alone. The 78 rpm record staggered along for ten years after the introduction of the LP, so the 1990 deadline for LP doesn't seem that unrealistic.

And you ain't seen nothin' yet! PolyGram has joined forces with Warner Bros. to develop a compact video disc the same size as a CD but storing digital video as well as audio information. (Pioneer already has a player that accommodates both CDs and the company's analog video LaserDisc system.) The proposed "CV" would use a CD's subcode tracks to generate computer-style graphics. A full video image, requiring much more information, reduces the disc's playing time to several minutes—in effect, a video single. If this sounds like something out of *The Time Machine*, look for the video-image output port on the next generation of CD players.

Nor is video the CD's only future application. With the format's computer-information storage capability (read-only memory), a single Compact Disc can hold the equivalent of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Or, using a limited bandwidth to cover only a vocal range, three to four days' worth of spoken-word material can fit on one CD "talking book."

The optical disc clearly isn't going away. The industry has too much riding on it: a shot in the arm for sales, a format free (so far) from suicidal cost-cutting, and maybe even a formidable barrier to the home-taping bugbear. You must have noticed you can't record on a Compact Disc. Naysayers? Let them talk:

"The exaggeration of sibilants by the new method is abominable, and there is often a harshness which recalls some of the worst excesses of the past. The recording of massed strings is atrocious...." Doug Sax again? No, that's Compton Mackenzie, editor of *The Gramophone*, writing about the new electrical recording process in 1925. Too bad he didn't have a time machine. ☐

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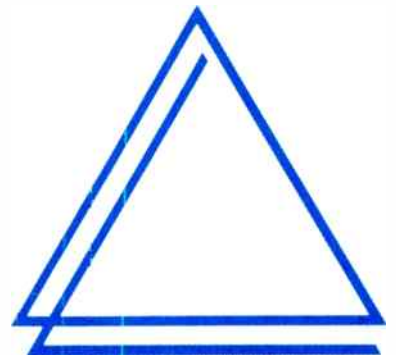
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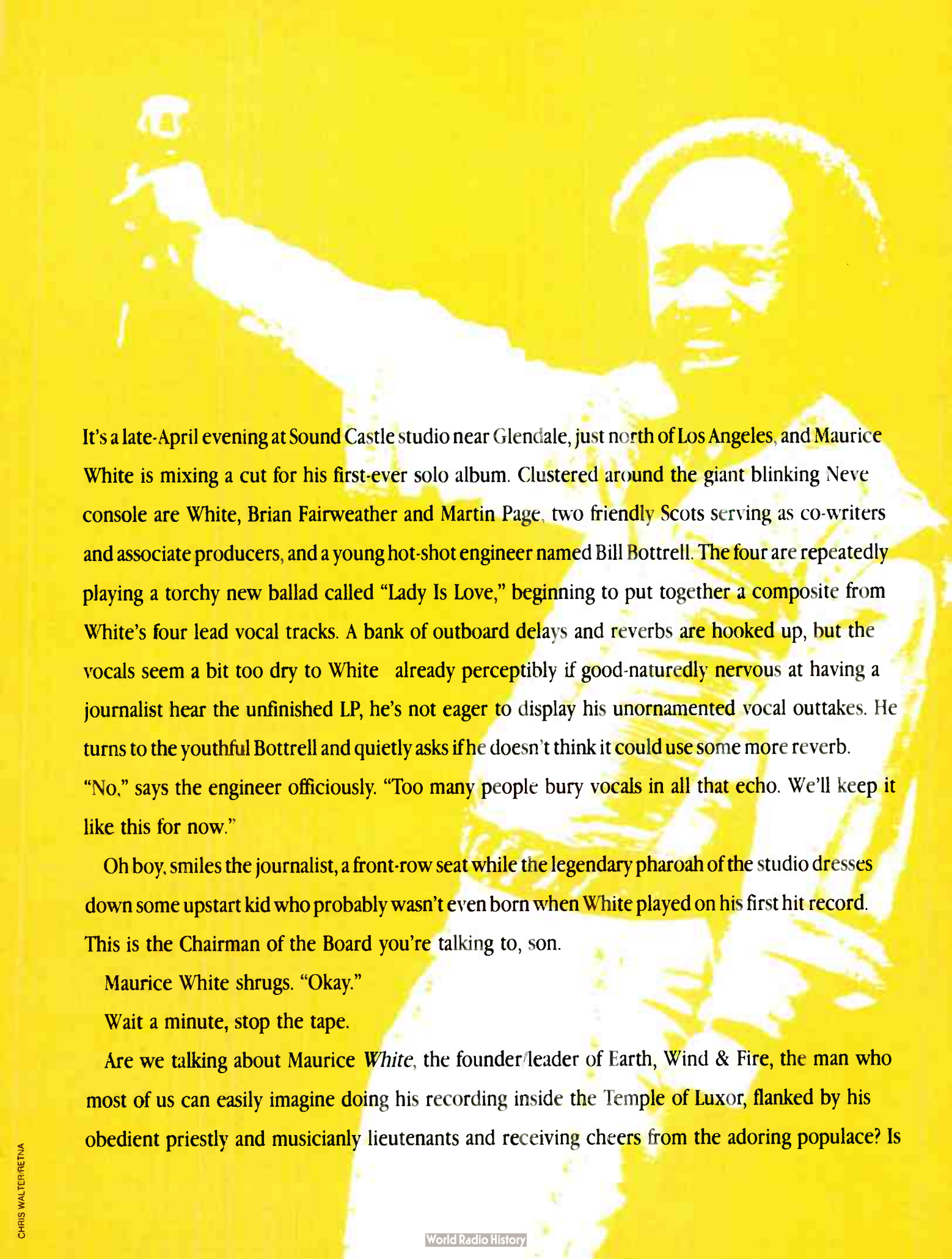
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Maurice  
White  
Was So  
Much Older  
Then  
He's Younger  
Than That  
Now.**

**By Jock Baird**





It's a late-April evening at Sound Castle studio near Glendale, just north of Los Angeles, and Maurice White is mixing a cut for his first-ever solo album. Clustered around the giant blinking Neve console are White, Brian Fairweather and Martin Page, two friendly Scots serving as co-writers and associate producers, and a young hot-shot engineer named Bill Bottrell. The four are repeatedly playing a torchy new ballad called "Lady Is Love," beginning to put together a composite from White's four lead vocal tracks. A bank of outboard delays and reverbs are hooked up, but the vocals seem a bit too dry to White—already perceptibly if good-naturedly nervous at having a journalist hear the unfinished LP, he's not eager to display his unornamented vocal outtakes. He turns to the youthful Bottrell and quietly asks if he doesn't think it could use some more reverb. "No," says the engineer officiously. "Too many people bury vocals in all that echo. We'll keep it like this for now."

Oh boy, smiles the journalist, a front-row seat while the legendary pharoah of the studio dresses down some upstart kid who probably wasn't even born when White played on his first hit record. This is the Chairman of the Board you're talking to, son.

Maurice White shrugs. "Okay."

Wait a minute, stop the tape.

Are we talking about Maurice *White*, the founder/leader of Earth, Wind & Fire, the man who most of us can easily imagine doing his recording inside the Temple of Luxor, flanked by his obedient priestly and musicianly lieutenants and receiving cheers from the adoring populace? Is

this the mysterious Howard Hughes-like tycoon who once lorded over a small corporate empire from his imposingly stark, white office? The person in the control room tonight is either a changed man, or the bearer of a bum rap. Or a little of both.

Meeting Maurice White for the first time in the waxed-linoleum-with-ping-pong-table decor of the rec room at Sound

a heavy dose of church-going gospel, but who instilled the strong moral current that pervades his music. The young White frequently visited his parents in Chicago and moved there after finishing high school. He intended to be a doctor like his father, "but that didn't last"; he went instead to music school and then spent three years at the Chicago Music Conservatory. His goal of being a music teacher was short-cir-

more vocal vein, and moved over to Columbia (where he's stayed for twelve years). There Earth, Wind & Fire showed they could sell albums in outrageous quantities. "I think we were the wedge," White reflects. "People like us, Stevie, the Commodores opened the pop music door for black acts."

By the 80s, the sales were cooling out: after silencing the doubters with 1981's platinum *Raise!*, the band's 1982 follow-up *Powerlight* dipped to gold. Their last album, *Electric Universe*, was made in a climate clouded by solo projects and overextended commercial expectations. Decidedly disappointing musically, it also garnered no metallic designation whatsoever, breaking a streak that went all the way back to their first LPs. White now agrees *Electric Universe* was seriously flawed: "Sometimes after working with one entity for a long time, stagnation sets in. You have the same ingredients all the time, the same people and the same problems."

"And when I look back on it, I should've taken a little more time to think about the songs and be a little freer in my mind. But there were too many things on me, emotionally. I had to rush the mixes, couldn't take my time, all this pressure. And at the same time, I think some guys in the group were pushing too hard, trying to do solo records and this, that and the other. And some guys were not being serious enough about their careers. Now I have nothing against solo records, but as a unit we weren't functioning properly."

"After *Electric Universe*, I had to take a little look at myself, say, 'Wow, what's happening here?' I just started to redefine the music, see it from a different space, see what I wasn't doing." White took his first year off in two decades, and assessed his situation.

"All this time I'd been carrying responsibilities, making sure Earth, Wind & Fire continued, taking care of this and that, helping everybody live from day to day. You know, being Big Brother. Suddenly I had an opportunity to look at 'Reece for a second, a chance to think about myself for a change. I had accomplished so much, I hadn't had a chance to even sit back and check out a whole bunch of successful records that I'd done. Now that I've taken time to do that, I've watched a new man emerge, someone who's very happy and very loving. So I have changed."

White had another revelation about the sales figures that supposedly proved him a loser in the 80s: "The thing that I had never really come to grips with was that our later records by normal standards were selling great numbers, but here people were saying that they were failures. I'm still selling gold and platinum, yet I'm a failure? There's lots of guys out there who wish they



**The Wizard of Oz leaves his throne room: "I got tired of being Big Brother."**

Castle is a bit like meeting the Wizard of Oz off the set. In the flesh, the star of wide-screen LP epics and stage spectacles is of moderate stature and slight build, a pleasantly ordinary, mild-mannered and, well, nice person. Now beardless, his tennis game sharpened and a health food enthusiast, he wears his forty years well. There's less aura of the Great Teacher about him, fewer pronouncements and more conversation. Maurice, or 'Reece, as he calls himself, laughs easily and often. One of his loudest came at the mention of the ill-fated Bee Gees movie *Sgt. Pepper's*, for which EWF adapted a Beatles song. White groaned, covered his eyes and shook with mirth as he muttered, "Uh, what a film! Oh boy, that was really something! Augh." At another point, he dissolved in hilarity upon pondering the idea of people making records without a live drummer.

There's a small trace left of the accent he acquired growing up in Memphis under the strict supervision of his grandmother, who not only gave White

coited when he "lucked out" and got a job as the house drummer at Chess Records—"That was the university I needed." White played for four and a half years on hits by Jackie Wilson, Chuck Berry, the Dells, Little Milton, the Impressions, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Etta James, Fontella Bass and Billy Stewart, among others.

In 1966 White caught the ear of Chess artist Ramsey Lewis and joined his trio, an experience which "taught me how to present myself to an audience. The whole band was just three guys, no vocals, so you had to be doing something of interest. I learned how to get up in front of twelve thousand people and turn 'em out!" White moved briefly to the Bay Area in the spring of 1970, then to Los Angeles where he put together "a real fusion band. We played a lot of jazz. We were trying to show record companies that black acts could sell albums." Signed to Warners, they showed they could sell albums in moderate quantities, but after eighteen months White reformed the band in a



could get a gold record or even sell three hundred thousand. So I had to start looking at that. You can really get swept off your feet, right out of the real world, by listening to all this marketing bullshit. I had to get myself to a point of seeing what's real. All my better records were made when I was in touch with myself and not just going off on what the media was saying."

Thus in the spring of 1984 did Maurice White resolve to do a solo album. How did it feel, making that decision, the presumably over-confident White is asked. "Scary. Very scary. I'd had so much success with the group. Now it was Maurice who? My new manager, Shep Gordon, just told me he's finding I'm the best-kept secret in the world. Just to think about doing something alone: 'I'm going to be onstage all by myself!' But what you never think about is every time you're onstage doing something great, you're by yourself anyway."

White, however, didn't want to be quite as much by himself as he was in the Complex, his West Los Angeles record label (America Recording Company)/production company/office/studio fortress across town. "The last three or four years, I would normally record in the Complex. And I was primarily isolated—I would isolate myself. I really wasn't aware of what was going on around town. Making my solo record got me out of the Complex and out into the streets again. It was like letting go of who I'd been and saying 'Okay, I'm willing to start over, whatever I gotta do, I'll do it.'"

White assembled an all-star band, including drummer JR Robinson, bassist Abraham Laboriel, keyboardists Robbie Buchanan and Mike Boddicker, and guitarists David Williams and Paul Jackson. "It was wonderful. I had my pick of the guys! Everybody wanted to work with me—it turned out we had all admired each other from a distance. They gave the record a band sound, which has always turned me on."

White played traps on all the EWF albums through *I Am*, but decided to forego the drum chair for his solo shot, playing only "a lot of percussion. I really didn't want the responsibility of being four or five people. I wanted to concentrate on setting a direction for the record and then just performing." White sang from the middle of the studio floor while building the rhythm sections, a process he characterizes as "a lot of trial and error. I'll suggest things, we'll play 'em, change 'em around. Sometimes it doesn't happen right away, but being a musician, I can go in and work with the guys, hang in there till we get it."

"The main thing that's brought me through all these years is my ability to communicate to the musicians in the

studio the same emotion I'm feeling. That's the key to making great records. I'll have a guy playing something he didn't know he could play—I've seen it many times. A certain power comes in the room and it just happens. I don't really know what that's all about, but it's been that way for me."

White is asked about the already described Case of the Uppity Engineer, and how unlike his legend the incident seemed. White furrows his ample brow in perplexed annoyance: "I don't know where the idea or impression of me being a general in the studio came from. I've never worked like that. You won't get good product, it'll never come out right, it'll be real tense. The only way

you can really bring about creativity is by allowing people to create, to contribute to what you're doing. That's why I gave that engineer full rein for a long period of time, let him do what he does, just to get his full input."

"Of course," White adds ever so subtly, "we would not settle for what you heard at the beginning of the night."

So where does he think he got this manipulative, power-centered image? "Let me tell you something," White sighs. "When you're real successful, when you create an aura around yourself, when people walk in the door and see you, they have all these basic ideas in their heads. If you tend to be a little bit out of the norm, in any way different,

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then people's ideas seem to gravitate to an even bigger space, and they create more of a wall. Especially if you did an interview with me at the Complex. You'd come into this great big office in this great big building, and here I am at this desk, looking down at you...." White chuckles delightedly at the arrangement. "You're going, 'DAMN! Who is this guy?'"

"Basically, though, I'm the same person now that I've always been, a very open-minded guy, a pretty happy guy. There may have been times when I've been under more pressure or more isolated, but I feel just like I always have."

Hmmm. Score one for the bad rap theory. Still, there must be something to

the fact White dissolved his ARC label and plans to forego further Organization Man activity: "I can't go in with a shirt and tie every day, be an executive for four hours and a musician the rest of the day. I can't do that anymore. I'm a musician; I'm going to stay in music."

A good listen to *Maurice White*, the album, reflects the difficulty of deciding just how new is the "new" Maurice White, the person. It definitely sounds like Earth, Wind & Fire (just in case there was any doubt who got the children in this trial separation), but a fresh, focused, and synth-informed Earth, Wind & Fire. The harmonic changes reach further than recent EWF, and the pacing

of the nine songs and two segues (a residue of his conservatory years) has a broader sweep. There's also a more relaxed, bubbly feel to the grooves, but White is clearly a man who is leaving nothing to chance, serving up an impressive volley of special effects, chord lifts, dynamic shifts and other crafty ways of keeping listeners' attention. Perhaps the biggest surprise was that he had so many vocal styles that weren't heard in EWF, where the need to keep Philip Bailey's angelic soprano employed tended to make 'Reece the more one-dimensional "other guy."

So what would he release as a single? White had assembled a number of very contemporary tracks, like the flat-out funk of the LP opener, "Switch On Your Radio," the giddy percussion celebration of "Children Of Afrika," the technopunky "Invitation" and three top-shelf ballads (one of which is "Lady Is Love" with considerably more reverberation on the voice). But for the single, he chose something as retro as they come, Ben E. King's 1961 classic, "Stand By Me," complete with a full complement of rhythm change-ups and hidden ball tricks. This is the "new" Maurice White?

Nonetheless, he had good reasons. His "Stand By Me" vocal performance is possibly the best of his career, embracing pleas to his old listeners to still believe in him as an artist and to his doubting lover to stay with him (certainly for more intimate activity). Then, in an inspiring coda, he delivers a fragile hope that "all the world/come together/live in harmony." That last is, of course, the same sermon the White of old preached, but the floodtide of emotion he brings to it now makes it seem far more than bland utopianism. However old, however new, however its commercial fortunes, *Maurice White* is hands-down the R&B album of the year.

It reaffirms White's most enduring skill, his ability to keep ferocious grooves and a cast-of-thousands sound from overwhelming the melodic and chordal core of his music. "The most important thing is finding that right song," he nods. "If you have that, all the rest of the elements come together. Naturally I always heard rhythm, being a drummer, but coming from a more structured, melodic understanding of music, having a jazz and classical background, the melodies would fly. And that will always be in my music."

White mostly writes with collaborators, especially up-and-coming keyboard players—an unknown kid named David Foster helped him write "After The Love Is Gone," for example. Does White himself play piano? "I play at piano," he smiles. "I play pretty much what I need to play as a songwriter. I can lay it down, but I'm not a pianist."

# COREA ON CHROMA POLARIS.



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I'm a percussionist and a singer. And an organizer, I put it together. The advantage is that if I could just sit there and pump it out, I probably would write worse songs. Songs'd probably be awful! What I'll basically do when I'm working with someone is sing the notes I want—I can actually sing the notes in the chord."

White's chief collaborators for the new album were two young Scots, guitarist Brian Fairweather and keyboardist Martin Page. Page and Fairweather worked their way from Scotland to Liverpool and thence to London, where they formed a band called Q-Feel and tossed a number one hit into the U.S. dance charts, "Dancing In Heaven." New age Tin Pan Alley types, they also placed tunes with artists like Raydio and Kim Carnes. In 1983 they migrated to Los Angeles, where they met White and "hit it off," though the Scots' dance-hit calling card did not particularly impress 'Reece: "'Dancing In Heaven' was not really my taste—it was a *disco* song." White says the word *disco* with noticeable disdain, "Boogie Wonderland" notwithstanding.

"But they had a lot of potential as writers. They were also very involved with synthesizers, while I'm from an acoustic background. Together we have the acoustic approach with more of a synthesized underlay. It's emotional and electronic too. In dealing with electronics, we're really interpreting acoustic instruments. They may be new sounds, but they relate to something that we've already experienced. In my new music, for example, synthesizers have the same reference as horns."

White, himself a veteran producer who learned at the side of George Massenburg, surprised some by sharing production duties with the pair, but he insists that should raise no eyebrows: "I'm always been more comfortable working out of a group, a combination of people bouncing ideas off each other. I don't like to be isolated." Was it tough to get the younger Scots to tell the old master when something was stinko? "In the beginning it was kind of hard for them to criticize me, but after we had a long talk and I told them what we were there for, it all worked out. I told them, 'If you hear something, make sure it's right, because if I come out of the studio and hear it wrong, I'm going to go back in and do it anyway, so it might as well be then.'"

White shares a propensity for production with another percussionist/singer, Phil Collins ("He and I are very, very similar"). Is being a drummer a good head start in approaching production? "Well, it's helped me tremendously in putting instruments together in order, in stacking them. Everything has a place,

and I think you learn a lot from being a master of time, the way syncopation is set together. It's structure, layers on top of layers. The studio's a dream for me because I can take six hundred tracks and just layer stuff all day. We filled up all forty-eight tracks on some of the stuff for the new record."

During his year in limbo and the year spent making his record, White cut way back on his producing work ("I used to do twenty albums a year"), limiting it to Jennifer Holliday and four songs for Barbra Streisand. *Barbra Streisand*? "See, I'm an adventurer," 'Reece chuckles. "I'm up for *anything*...You know, *bring it on*, let me check it out, draw some experience from this. She had a

chance to do something different and so did I. I learned a lot, especially because it got me involved with different writers, musicians, arrangers.... I couldn't use *Earth, Wind & Fire* on her!"

How does White approach a new production project? "I usually sit down and ask them, 'Where do you want to go? What do you hear?' It's important to disconcert myself with technical trips and to find out what the artist is trying to communicate. After I find that, I start to look for songs. Then the songs pretty much dictate the sound—I see a lot of people misuse that, only because they don't get in touch with what the song has to say. Each song is basically a story, a mini-movie."

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White is asked for some specific examples from EWF: "Well, 'Let's Groove' is very animated, it takes your mind to a place where this guy is having a good time. It's an electronic kind of sound, but it's heart-throbbing too. 'In The Stone'? If you think of the stone, it's ageless, magic, majestic, this whole big thing. So it's strong, a big orchestra that comes on—BLAM! 'Fantasy' has this whole ethereal vibe, harpsichords swimming around in your head. It's simple, but true: the song should dictate the sound—the sound shouldn't dictate the song."

The first thing you notice about White's unassuming L.A. digs (he's got a bigger

place up in Carmel) are the records. Framed gold, platinum and double-platinum singles and albums seem to be *everywhere*. A few sentimental favorites are in privileged positions on the walls, like Ramsey Lewis' "Wade In The Water," the first gold single White played on, and *Spirit*, not his first double-platinum album, but "the first one that went double platinum right away." The rest are casually piled in kitchen corners and on bottom shelves, and White professes embarrassment at not having a proper place to display the more than thirty-five records—"One of these days I got to get me a room."

The other thing you notice right away are all the books, most of them new

hardcovers that White devours and then stuffs into his overpopulated shelves. On the elegant coffee table in front of the fireplace are two histories he's in the middle of, one on the 1948 creation of Israel, the other on the American Civil War. "Reading, that's *my* downfall," White smiles. "If I didn't read so much, I'd have more time for working. And I've got a lot more books than what you see—there's a whole room of just metaphysics."

The mention of metaphysics and the presence of so many beautiful art objects from ancient Egypt and Africa throughout the Bel Air canyon house raise the subject of White's song lyrics. The mass of books drives home the fact that despite the very general, nebulous nature of his on-record message, White's mind revels in the specific, in concrete details of historical and religious subjects. Given the sheer scholarly weight of the raw material for his songs, why weaken his insights by simplifying them so much? "Sometimes you can go a little beyond, where it's unreachable and people can't get to you," White responds. "I have to be very careful with that. Even though there are a lot of things I'd love to talk about, a lot of times I have to stay real plain, real simple, so people can follow me. Because I've been really criticized for that, getting a little too esoteric, a little too outside, taking it a little too far."

White's gotten used to criticism. He reads most of his bad press, the frequent critical clubbings of his idealized lyrics, his relentless positivism, and his still-unshaken belief in things "universal." "I heard that shit," he frowns. "I read all kinds of stuff. People have said my lyrics were pretentious, that I'm not living in the real world.... Hey, your world is whatever you create. I'd rather say something positive and give somebody some hope rather than paint a dark picture. I don't want kids singing a dark song—there's no light in that. So the new album is still pretty positive. I don't think I could say anything else. It's a habit with me now," he laughs.

Given the preeminence of Doom, Despair and Destruction in current rock lyricism, is there a place for Maurice White's brand of Pollyanna positivism? "We live in such an instant society, instant coffee, instant cameras, everything happens so fast that people don't have time to appreciate the art. Some of us are still hung up in a lot of sensationalism. And a lot of people aren't very musical right now. There's a lot of great commerciality going on, but as far as innovative music, there's only a

"The 70s was an exciting time for music because we saw change, we saw people taking chances. I think that will happen too in the 80s, once we start to

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experience some kind of emotional crisis, something we all share. Inwardly, individually, we really do care, but we haven't learned how to care collectively. Everything might look very dim and very negative, but the higher part of us really doesn't want to fail. We will survive this." White shrugs. "I can't look at it any other way. Hey, man, if you can't see life as being positive, why you here? What're you doing here?"

A major part of Maurice White really doesn't want to fail either, and if his tenacious optimism seems undimmed, his nervousness about the fate of his solo venture seems uncharacteristically high. He remained extremely secretive about the project throughout the spring and early summer, finally submitted the finished masters to a delighted Columbia Records (who could badly use a Christmas hit LP), and then abruptly decided to replace two of the songs. Despite his disclaimers, he undoubtedly senses that his viability as a major recording artist may depend on his adding one more platinum album to that big pile—and this one will go up on the wall. Did returning to "new kid on the

block" status give White any final insights a younger musician could use?

"One thing—it's worth staying in it, worth believing in yourself. Don't be discouraged by the big marketing act—and I know it's very discouraging. Try to listen to and study as much music as you can, as many types as you can, because then your reservoir is very large and you'll never get bored with yourself. Some guys don't. They learn how to play guitar out of book one, go out and have a great career for two records, and then it's all over because they don't have anything more to draw from. They're lost. If you have a lot to draw from, then your longevity is there.

"I've experienced the record thing for

many years and I've done very well. But I'd also like to check out working on films and I've been talking to people about some different projects. It's like continual growth, new avenues, and if you have the capability to do it, what the hell. It's always wide open. One thing I'd like to do now is some things with symphony orchestras, more of a combination of contemporary sounds with acoustic sounds. I like bigness. I'd like to go experiment with a thousand trumpets, a thousand trombones! Actually, I've always thought of having a trombone band—I'd like to see the possibilities of that." White smiles and shakes his head. "It'd be great, just be powerful." 

### 'Reece's Pieces

Most of Maurice White's songwriting and demoing is done in the second floor studio in his Bel Air home. "We've made some great demos up here, a lot of hit records. Now it's so easy, it's all synthesizers and drum machines, we just run it right through, I go in and do the vocal and we got it."

The studio's main desk is a British-made AMEX board, recording into an Ampex 16-track (there's a second one, along with excess synths over at a Complex locker, if 'Reece starts *really* stacking tracks). The monitor speakers are old JBL 4311s and he just got a pair of big new 4318s. His bare-bones outboard gear is a dbx 160 compressor/limiter, an MXR digital delay and a Sound Workshop vocal doubler that White says he doesn't use much. An Aiwa cassette deck shares the rack. In the vocal booth are a couple of Sennheiser protopower microphones, which White also uses onstage, a pair of AKG headphones and a huge bass kalimba. His more used keyboards are a Fender Rhodes, a Memorymoog, a Yamaha DX7, and a Roland Super Jupiter rack mount synth module he's really big on. He's about to buy a Linn 9000 drum machine/keyboard recorder, but until then his LinnDrum, DMX and older Roland boxes will do. A Yamaha 50-watt combo amp with a 12-inch speaker sits in the corner.

The mixdown at Sound Castle studio was done simultaneously on digital and analog machines, a Mitsubishi X-80 and two Studer A-800s wired together. The console was a Neve. Outboard gear used included a Yamaha REV-1 digital reverb, an EMT 521 digital reverb, an AMS digital delay and a Urei 1176 compressor/limiter. House monitors are Tannoy SRM 10Bs.

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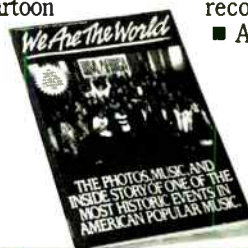
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## STEWART COPELAND: LANDING ON IT



The great white hunter as Lord Jim—or is it Jungle Jim?—soaks up some ambience.

LESLIE FRATKIN

## Police Drummer Takes An Extended Rhythm Safari

By Bob Giusti

**T**he first time I saw the Police was in the winter of '78 at a small, but prestigious, basement nightclub called The Rat located in Boston's Kenmore Square. Because they had cropped, bleached-blond hair and enthusiastic energy they were immediately tagged as another of the British punk-underground wonders. With roughly two hundred lucky patrons rocking to a steamy set already in progress, the band was jumping and pounding their way through an old B-side, "Dead End Job." The drummer pummeled and slapped his drums with the precision of Billy Cobham and the abandon of Keith Moon; I yelled into a friend's

ear, "This guy ain't no punk drummer."

Seven years later, with the Police a cultural pop institution, Stewart Copeland remains a far cry from your run-of-the-mill undereducated British ghetto kid who decided to pound his frustrations from 'life on the dole' into a quick fling with the British music press. Just ask him, for example, about the TWA hostage crisis which was at its peak when we met over dinner. Beirut was Stewart's old hometown—seems his Dad (an agent of the CIA) was heading the Lebanon office during Copeland's formative years before the family moved to London. What was his opinion on the crisis? "Well I know one thing, you don't threaten violence to a Muslim culture that's already pretty macho-oriented," Copeland offers. "Especially when they're holding the lives of innocent people. These people get more aggressive when they're threatened, no matter what the consequences; if we just stick with solid diplomatic channels long enough, the State Department will prove their point and resolve this problem."

Copeland is a great believer in the

theory that if one sticks with a goal long enough, success in that area is an extremely high possibility. He calls it "landing on it" and equates this phenomenon with patterns found in music and rhythms. As he explains it, "Supposing you have one pattern that beats every three seconds and one that beats every four. Put them together and every twelfth beat they'll land at the same time, which is a simplified version of what happens in our world. Every so many beats, it'll all land."

Like I said, the guy ain't no punk drummer.

This is, of course, the era of Police extra-curricular activities, what with Sting's solo LP exploits and the friendship of frets shared by Andy Summers and Robert Fripp. But Copeland has been doing outside projects all along. Even while The Police were struggling for recognition in those early days, Copeland was busy producing solo work under the secret identity of Klark Kent and managed to chart high in the British top forty (single "I Don't Care" reached #28) after "Roxanne"



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World Radio History

How about doing the soundtrack for Francis Coppola's *Rumblefish*? More unspent energy? "Well, I'm still not quite sure about the origins of that one. Initially he was phoning me as a sort of technical adviser because he was concerned with this underlying theme of time running out, ticking away, and he

Stewart is still up to his neck in extra work. There's a twenty-five-minute music score for the San Francisco Ballet's production of *Lear*. There's an LP of songs for a thirteen-part cartoon series based on the Droid and Ewok characters from *Star Wars*. And then there's his new one-hour video LP project called *The Rhythmatis* (on A&M Video along with a soundtrack LP).

ing along Belgian director, V.P. Dutilleux (a filmmaker who specializes in first contact with primitive tribes). The one-hour film resembles what would occur if MTV commissioned their own version of *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom*, with Copeland the perfect Marlon Perkins in his calm, matter-of-fact narrative style. Aside from the usual panoramic shots of the beautiful African landscape, Dutilleux's expertise in communicating with the tribes provides unique opportunities for Copeland to use his percussion skills to cross over language and cultural barriers.

During filming, an incident occurred which received a fair amount of attention over the wire services: while crossing through Zaire, Copeland and Dutilleux were found without necessary visas. Soldiers detained the pair and escorted them, handcuffed, to the local slammer. During the evening, conversation began between the guards and Copeland about a popular local music form known as Lingala. He was shown various fanzines and listened to a few examples on the local radio broadcasts. Stewart was immediately entranced with the unique mixture of primitive tribe music with westernized pop flair. Upon his release the next day he

*continued on page 104*

Stewart Copeland is a satisfied Tama endorsee. The drumhead on his 22-inch kick is a Remo Black Dot; all the rest are Remo Ambassadors. He also uses Paiste Rude and 2002 cymbals. His home studio has an Otari MTR 90 and MTR-12, a Fostex B-16, a Harrison desk, a Q-Lock synchronizer, Valley People and dbx compressor/limiters, AMS, Deltalab and Roland SDE-2000 digital delays, a Fairlight and a Kurzweil, with an SRC to drive both of them, and a bank of half-inch video records. His favorite tape is Ampex 456. Copeland's latest gig is for American TV: it's called *The Equalizer*, a 15-part "cops and robbers shoot 'em up, guaranteed three fistfights and two car chases per episode."

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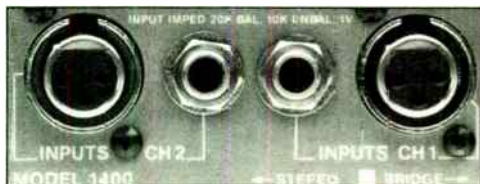
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# PINO PALLADINO DOESN'T FRET

## Paul Young's Bassist Shines Through The Screaming Hordes

By Rob Tannenbaum

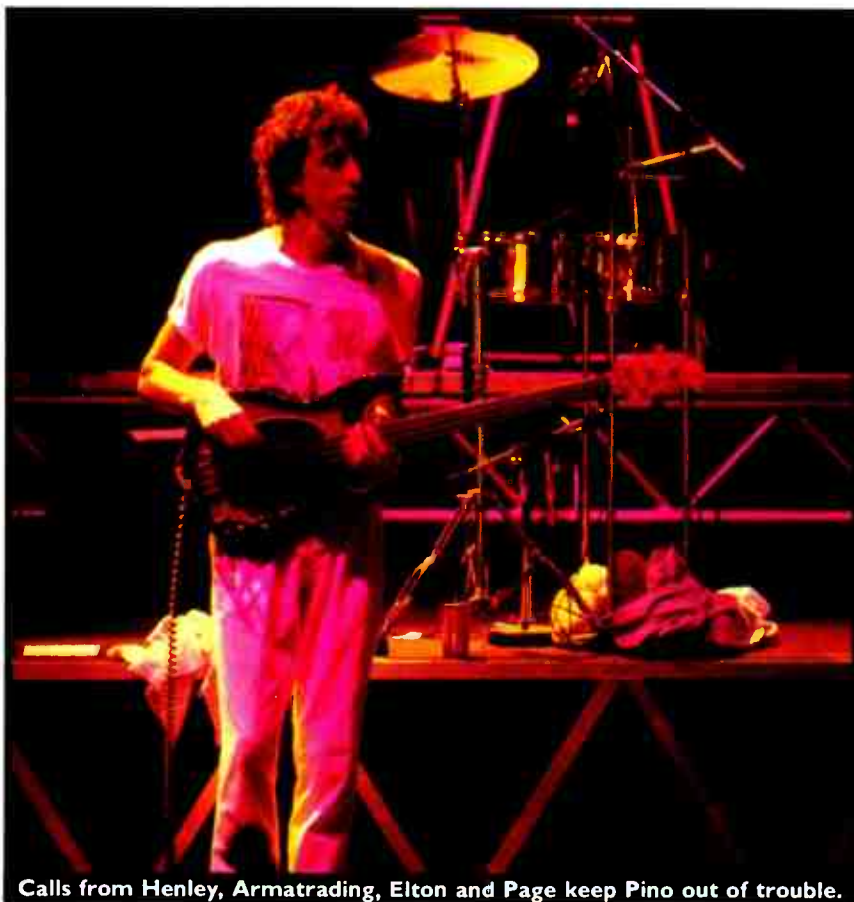
**A** full five hours before the concert in Boston, a gaggle of brightly-dressed young women are keeping alive the early detection tradition of Paul Revere. There's no lighthouse to pass the warning to a waiting horseman, just a wireless relay from street corner to street corner, spreading the word with a rapidity AT&T would envy: Paul Young has been spotted on Beacon Street.

And he doesn't look pleased. What with "Everytime You Go Away" zapping up the charts and gaining steady MTV play, Paul hasn't had much time to window shop on his tour of the States. Everywhere he goes, fans scream and throw roses and generally reenact his new video. But now instead of smiling and crooning at them, the way he does on MTV, Paul Young is trotting away, towards the safety of the Orpheum.

Inside the theater, bassist Pino Palladino warns a guest that the hysteria will continue *during* the show. "It's the way he's been promoted, unfortunately. We have a lot of teenyboppers in the first ten rows. They just scream all night; they don't listen, but I'm sure there's people in the back who want to hear the band."

A tall Welshman with an oval face and lanky body, Palladino is clearly overjoyed with the success he's had in the last few years: international tours with Paul Young, sessions with Joan Armatrading, Don Henley and Elton John, and an offer from Jimmy Page to join the Firm, which he turned down. But the bassist bristles at seeing Young grouped in with Duran and Spandau and Wham, just because his boss has a pretty face. "It pisses me off. He's a good-looking guy, so they put him on the teen magazines. But they buy the album, so they must like the music. Or maybe they just like to see Paul." Palladino shrugs. "Hopefully this album will get to an older audience."

Although Pino's father is Italian ("Palladino is like Jones in Italy. It's very common in Cleveland, too.") his mother is Welsh and their son was born in the



Calls from Henley, Armatrading, Elton and Page keep Pino out of trouble.

capital city of Cardiff.

"In Catholic school, there was a priest who played guitar. He used to do these folk nights in church. So I started with C and D, and then decided to take classical guitar lessons. I loved the sound of it."

As he grew older, Palladino discovered the wonders of the amplifier. "I was more into T. Rex than the Beatles," he says, but it was Led Zeppelin that really made him forget Sor. "*Led Zeppelin III* was one of my favorites. I could probably sing every song they ever did." His first band, Trapper, did Zep covers—a memory Palladino blushes at. "You always hear people say they listened to Coltrane when they were kids, but I think a lot of people started with Zeppelin."

Pino naturally was drawn to fusion, which was in many ways a revolution led by bored bassists. "I bought Jaco's first album, and I didn't know what to make of it. There was some unbelievable playing on it. I also used to listen to John Martyn's guitar playing. He had a bass player in the old days, Danny Thompson, who played the double-bass. That had a lot of influence on me."

He also discovered old blues records, mainly Stax releases and Otis Redding. "I loved it all, but I didn't know it was Duck Dunn I was listening to."

While playing in a three-piece blues band with guitarist Mickey Gee (known for his work with Dave Edmunds), he decided to leave Wales. "There's a lot of music there, there's even Welsh reggae. But a lot of the stuff is sung in Welsh, which makes it hard to market anywhere else in the world." Jools Holland, the former Squeeze keyboardist, was forming a boogie-woogie band, and when he offered Pino a flat in London and a "small but reasonable wage" in 1979, the bassist gladly relocated.

He stayed with Holland for a year and a half, playing on the band's disappointing debut. "That was an odd thing," Palladino says carefully. "We did the album with [producer] Glyn Johns, which was a great experience, but I don't know if that's what Jools had in mind."

On the cover of *Jools Holland And His Millionaires*, Palladino is shown holding that sainted icon of boogie-woogie, the upright bass. But he admits he never played the thing, and that he



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had to borrow it from a friend for the photo. His next job came on another instrument he had little experience with, though it's now his calling card—the fretless bass.

"Gary Numan wanted someone who could play fretless. I heard this from his drummer Chris Slade [now of the Firm], another Welshman. I had played it a bit, but hadn't touched it in a long time. So I put some strings on it and auditioned. I was probably out of tune," he laughs, "but once you get the pitch in, it's much easier to play. There are no frets in the way, so it's like a bottleneck guitar."

Palladino couldn't have been too out of tune—he got the job with Numan, playing on the *I Assassin* album and tour. In the meantime, he was called in to a session with a British singer whose previous band, the Q-Tips, had brief and modest success. He was introduced to Paul Young, who was struggling with a remake of Marvin Gaye's "Wherever I Lay My Hat." "It was just a drum machine, a guide keyboard and a guide vocal," Palladino recalls. "The producer, Laurie Latham, said, 'Do something melodic in the beginning.' We tried to put a Weather Report vibe on it." Pino picked up his fretless and played a silky, startling intro that set up Young's beautiful vocal. He played on four or five other songs, and didn't think

too much more about it.

"Then I left Numan because I was gonna join up with Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook, after Squeeze broke up. We rehearsed for two or three weeks, the whole band, but it was taking a long time and when Paul's single took off ("Wherever" soared to #1 in England and peaked at #70 in the U.S.), he said, 'Let's get a band together.'"

The success of "Wherever I Lay My Hat," still Young's best moment, quickly established Palladino's reputation. He was invited to join Joan Armatrading's *Secret Secrets* band, a who's who of young British talent that included guitarist David Rhodes, keyboardist Nick Plytas and Simple Minds drummer Mel Gaynor. From those recordings, Palladino learned that Armatrading's reputation as a dominant session leader is accurate. "She knows what she wants and how to get it. She made us rehearse four or five numbers before we went into the studio. And after two hours in the studio, it was happening. That was a great record."

The next call was from Don Henley and his guitarist/collaborator Danny Kortchmar, who had been knocked out by Palladino's part in Young's hit single. "I didn't know what to expect when I went to the session, because I'd only met Henley once, briefly, and I was in

awe of him because of the Eagles. So when I got in the studio, it took me a few hours to realize they're normal people." The ice was broken by a mutual love for old blues records. "I played some lick and Danny said, 'I know that. That's Robert Johnson.' I said, 'Ang on a minute. I didn't do it on purpose.' After that, it was very creative."

On "Sunset Grill," Palladino's slippery fretless lines echo the dank, sleazy bar-room setting so well, you can almost smell the stale Budweiser. "There wasn't a lot of room left around the bass frequency, because there's a lot of syn-

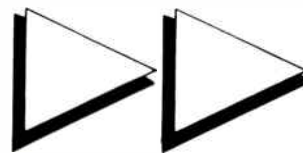
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## Pinotes

"I have a lot of different basses, but the fretless Music Man Stingray is the only one I use. I bought it second-hand about four years ago, and they didn't make many of them. It's got Rotosound strings—.040, .060, .075, .095. My backup is a Pedulla fretless. That's the bass on 'Sunset Grill.' My fretted basses are a Yamaha, a JD and a Precision.

"For effects, I use an MXR pitch-shifter on two numbers and Ibanez multi-effects, mainly for the compressor. The amp is a Trace Elliott, an English amp that just got distributed in the States. It's got a 500-watt head. It's the most reliable gear I've ever used—it's never broken down and it's loud."

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# POWER AMPS: SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

## New Ideas in the Old Struggle to Cool Down & Lighten Up

By Alan di Perna

**H**ot and heavy" may be desirable qualities in this week's heavy metal discovery, but they're lousy attributes for a power amplifier to have. In many respects, the evolution of power amps has been one long quest to cool down and lighten up. Replacing bulky, heat-emitting vacuum tubes with lightweight, efficient transistors was a big step along the way. But in the past few years, we've seen increasingly complex solutions to old amplification problems, and a new generation of discrete power amps for studio monitoring, sound reinforcement, or even that rack-mount system for guitar or keyboard you keep saying you're going to get.

### A Few Powerful Basics

Essentially, an amplifier is a *transducer*—a conversion device. It takes small AC voltages from a microphone or other audio input and converts them into large DC voltages. These are passed on to loudspeakers or head-



**Crown Micro-Tech 1000**

phones, where this electrical energy is converted into the physical energy we call sound. Ideally, the output signal's waveform should have the exact same shape and proportions as the input signal's waveform, but be bigger in size. The extent to which an amplifier can reproduce the exact proportions of the input signal determines its fidelity.

In order to amplify the input signal, it's necessary to add power, which comes from ordinary AC wall current. A transformer takes it, turns it into usable DC power and passes it along. This part of the amp, the DC power supply, is the focal point in designers' attempts to put the modern power amp on a diet.

Here's the problem. The amplifier must provide enough power to handle the most extreme volume (or amplitude)

peaks in the audio signal. This requires large, heavy transformers. If there isn't enough power, the tops of these peaks will be cut off, in which case you get what's known as clipping. But even with the loudest, raunchiest sound you can imagine, these extreme peaks only occur once in a while. Most of the time the amp is using less than half of its available DC power. Where does the rest of this energy go? It's dissipated as waste heat. To deal with this heat, manufacturers have typically had to use bulky heat sinks and cumbersome fans, further increasing the size and weight of the amplifier. How could all that wasted power be avoided?

### The Split-Level Solution

One answer was to come up with multi-level or "intelligent" DC power supplies that could "read" the input signal and provide only as much power as the signal required at any given moment. One of the pioneers in this field was Bob Carver, who set the industry buzzing a few years back when he came out with a little six-inch cube that was actually a 200-watt power amp. It was a suitably dramatic introduction for what Carver calls his magnetic field power supply, so called because it stores energy in the electrical field of filter capacitors *and* in the magnetic field that exists in the transformer coil.

Carver used a series of bridge rectifiers and a duty-cycle control circuit to tap the magnetic field coil at three different power levels. The result is three different ranges of DC power supply voltage:  $\pm 50V$ ,  $\pm 80V$  and  $\pm 125V$ . A circuit called the commutator senses the input signal to the amplifier and engages the supply voltage level that will provide just enough power to adequately amplify the signal.



**Carver PM-1.5**

Carver compares the commutator to a rotary pot that turns the DC voltage up or down based on cues from the input signal. This, of course, makes for less waste energy to be dissipated as heat. The latest Carver magnetic field

model is the PM-1.5. Weighing twenty-one pounds and taking up just two rack spaces (which means that it's 3½ inches high), it delivers 450 watts into eight ohms.

### The Fifty Percent Solution

QSC Audio went another route in creating their multi-level DC power supply, using conventional transformers and rectifiers. The two different power levels are achieved via a parallel structure of



### QSC Series Three

half-voltage and full-voltage transistors. In effect, this creates two separate power supplies. Output voltages of zero to fifty percent of the amp's total power capacity are drawn from the half-voltage power supply, which cuts down considerably on waste energy. When the output voltage demand exceeds fifty percent, the signal is switched to the full-voltage supply.

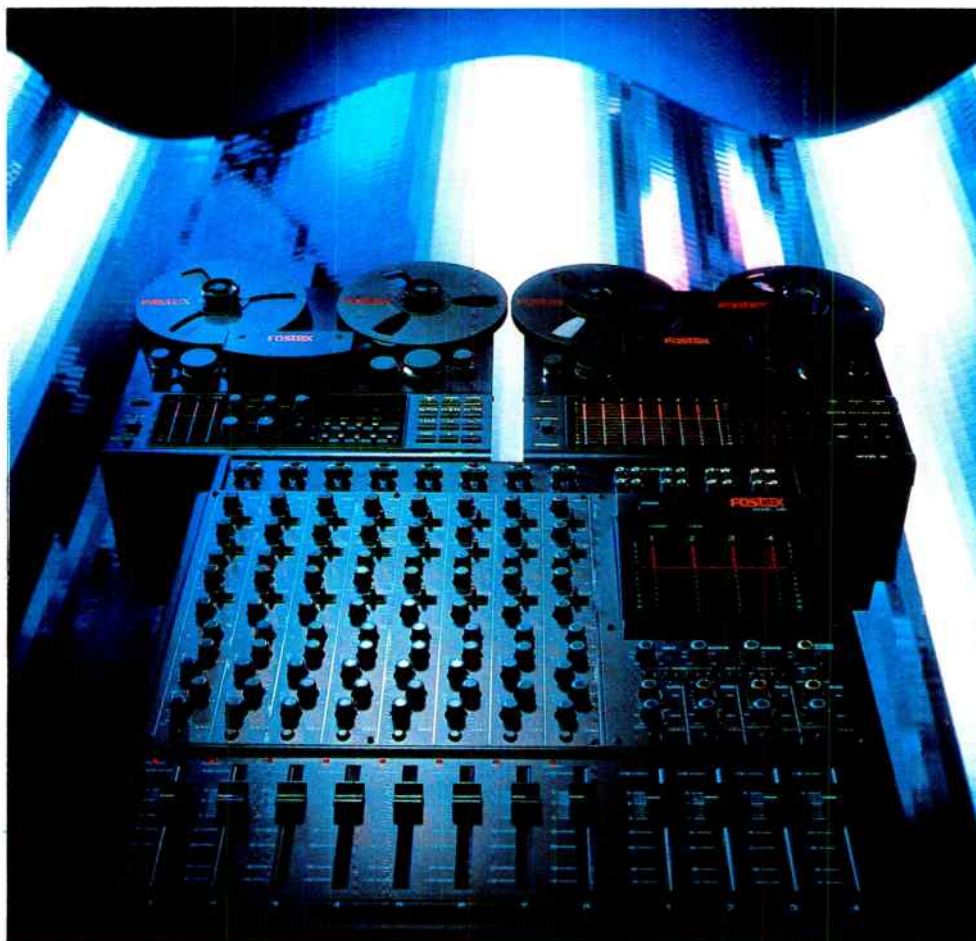
QSC's Patrick Quilter compares this kind of power supply to a small efficient car engine with a turbocharger for peak power demands. (Power amp manufacturers seem to love analogies.) This, he explains, is better than a large inefficient engine chugging along at a fraction of its power capacity and wasting gas. QSC's latest version of the half-voltage design grace their Series Three amplifiers, which range from 110- to 285-watt models (into eight ohms) and use a passive cooling system (no fan).

### The Smart-Ass Solution

Soundcraftsmen's Phase Controlled Regulation (PCR) is another notable variation on the theme of "smart" power supplies. In the PCR scheme, the output DC voltage is sensed and compared to a fixed reference voltage on a continuous basis. Based on fluctuations in the output voltage, an error-correcting signal is sent to Soundcraftsmen's phase controlled regulator. This, in turn, regulates the conduction time of two silicon controlled rectifiers (SCRs) connected



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to the transformer. The SCRs allow the phase control regulator to determine how much of the AC voltage coming in from the wall will be converted to DC power—all, of course, in accordance with the demands of the final output of the amp.

The PCR system was introduced last year in Soundcraftsmen's PCR-800 amplifier. A second model, the PCR-1200 has just been added. It's rated at 375 watts (into eight ohms).

## The Floating Center Solution

A common objection raised against multi-level power supplies is that they can produce distortion as they switch between power levels, although experts

disagree on just how audible—if at all—this distortion is. This is part of the reason why Crown opted for a different type of design for their recent entry into the high power/low profile market, the Micro-Tech 1000.

"In most amplifiers, the center path of your transformer is grounded and the output stage is floating," explains Crown's Doug Engstrom. "In the case

of the MT-1000, it's just the opposite. The center tap is floating and the low side of the (two-sided) output stage is grounded. This arrangement gives us a large voltage swing (overall output) with lower voltage across each individual output stage. We've got two sections of the outputs conducting at the same time. This way, we have avoided a 'totem pole' output stage, where you're switching between different power supplies connected in series. This is how we avoid the problem of switch distortion or notch distortion."

## The Digital Solution

As in every other audio field, digital technology is making its impact on power amps, notably Randall's PWM series and Peavey's DECA series. While both use digital techniques, the two are actually quite different. The Randall PWM (Pulse Width Modulation) design uses high speed digital switching between DC output supply rails to generate a constant 150 kHz pulse wave. The variations in the width of the wave correspond to level changes in the audio input. The 150 kHz wave is then filtered off and the audio signal is represented as a series of DC shifts in the final output.

"When you're switching the outputs to the power rails, the efficiency is very high," says Randall vp/engineering Gary Sunda. "No power is dissipated by the switch itself. Virtually all the energy is converted to audio power, which goes down the speaker wire. The switcher is 93 to 95% efficient."

Randall's PWM series presently includes 250- and 1000-watt models. According to Sunda, the company is now working on new compact digital power amps that will deliver 1.5 and 1.8 kilowatts of power. There's also a line of digital bass amps on the way.

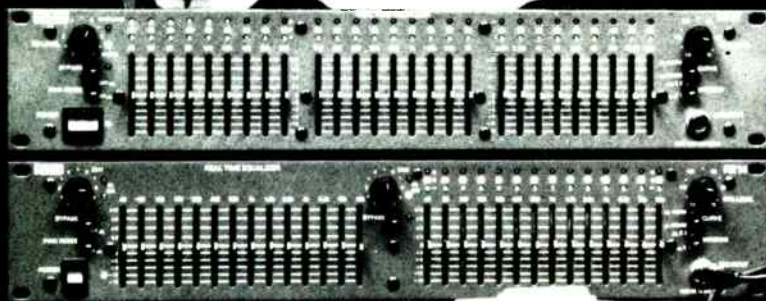
Peavey's digital power amp is called the DECA, which stands for Digital Energy Conversion Amplification. Unlike Randall's PWM design, the DECA works by actually taking the audio signal and digitally sampling it. The sampling frequency is about 500 kHz, according to company president Hartley Peavey. The system, however, does not use the Pulse Code Modulation (PCM) digital format used in many other audio applications.

"We do a level slice on the input sig-



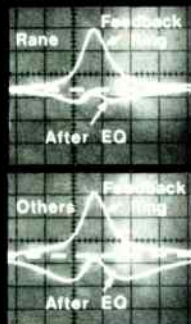
Peavey Digital Energy Conversion Amp

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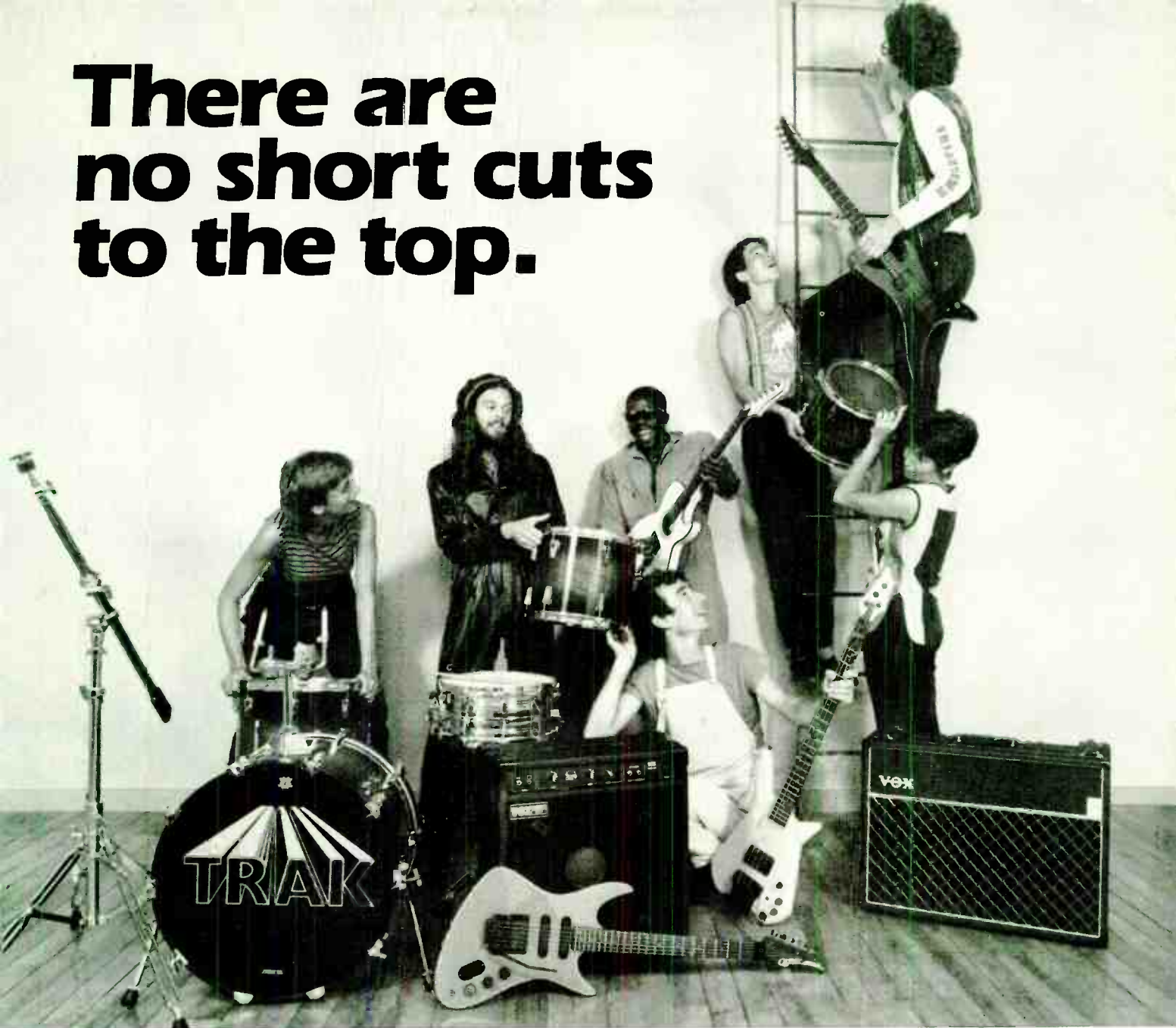
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nal and encode that into digital pulses," explains Peavey design engineer Skip Taylor. "It's not a PCM type of sampling, but it is a strict 0/1 type of digital pulse. After the audio input is changed into a pulse representation of the signal, we step up the energy, or power, of the signal digitally. We're actually doing the power conversion—or power amplification—in the digital domain. We convert the signal back to analog just before it goes out to the speakers."

By doing their amplification in the digital domain, the company is able to use smaller and lighter transformers for a compact design. According to Peavey, the DECA system makes for ninety percent efficiency, as compared with the thirty to forty percent efficiency of conventional linear (analog) power amps. Peavey DECAs come in 700- and 1200-watt models (both into eight ohms).

## The Ultimate Solution

Still in its infancy, digital power amp technology has yet to prove itself in extensive field experience. If the manufacturers' claims are all true, it would seem that digital can solve the classic power amp design problems more efficiently than analog "split level" approaches. But the ultimate test of any amplifier is not how well it converts wall current to DC power—or how light, compact or cool running it is. The *most* important question is how it sounds. In the long run, the answer to which of these new high-tech solutions is best is in your ears.

### Developments from page 103

nica had a small new electret condenser, the AT853, that sure didn't sound small. Electro-Voice also debuted a cardioid condenser shrimpie, the PL10, with virtually no proximity effect and thus perfect for close-miking. E-V also had a miniature omni condenser, the PL4. Upstairs at TOA was an attractive but tough new condenser line with indicator LEDs to remind you the power's on. Best of all was TOA's nifty little headphone mike with a control on the phantom power box to mix up a direct signal if the line feed your soundman's giving you isn't loud enough to hear your own vocals. Will guitarists ever sing with headphone mikes, or do you think it's too un-manly?

Three more unusual instruments close our tour of summer N.A.M.M. (which as everybody tends to forget, stands for National Association of Music Merchants). One was over at Fairlight, where Todd Rundgren held court and the Voicetracker MIDI vocal controller drew crowds; it's a wild little video effects system called the Computer Video

Instrument that's half what a conventional system costs. Another was the answer to every harmonica player's prayers: a \$3000 MIDI harp synthesizer called by its British inventor the Millionizer 2000 because "it can do a million and one things." Last, maybe best, was the "Bass Schizotron with Picking Droids," a bass guitar and MIDI keyboard spliced together, made by Guess Musical Instruments of Baton Rouge, LA, self-described as "the leader in multiple-identity robotic musical instruments." I'm not even going to ask about the "automatic weapons gunsmith with music degree" who co-designed it. Some things are best left to the imagination. ☐

OMD from page 30  
ness has hurt.

"To get a large following that's going to make you a fortune and help you to retire, you need to do the same thing for long enough that people can pick up on you and then always buy the next LP because they know it's going to be a minor variation on the previous one they like so much. We haven't done that. But because we've never been fashionable, and just do what the hell we feel like doing, we've never really gone out of fashion in a big way. One year we'll do some things that people don't like, but that doesn't mean next year they're going to dislike what we do." Come back O.M.D.—all is forgiven! ☐

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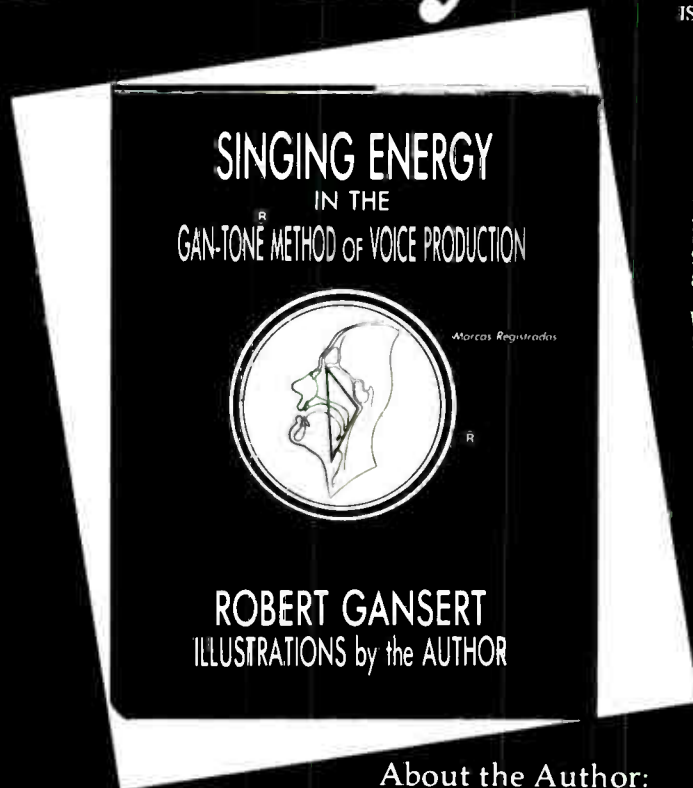
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About the Author:  
Robert Gansert has been a performing vocalist for over twenty years, and has been featured in numerous concerts and recordings. His work has been internationally acclaimed. He is currently a noted instructor at the Carnegie Hall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

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# CASIO'S ABOUT-PHASE

The New CZ-5000 Will Turn Some Professional Heads.

By Jock Baird



**W**hen last we left Casio, "toy-keyboard" maker for the millions, they had punched their way into the pro musician synthesizer market with the CZ-101, a \$500 MIDI-fluent digital synth based on their own Phase Distortion sound generation system. The next step in Casio's plot to win the hearts and minds of America's professionals, the CZ-5000, is now upon us, and an extended visit with the synth/sequencer is convincing evidence resistance may prove short-lived.

One big goal of the CZ-5000 was to bring Phase Distortion synthesis to a no-compromises unit: the five-octave keyboard is full-scale (but not velocity-sensitive), and when its sixteen voices are arranged in two separate lines, a key strength of the PD system, you still get 8-note polyphony instead of the CZ-101's 4-note variety. Then the CZ-5000 throws in an 8-track sequencer that—ta da!—can drive any external MIDI instrument. Now how much would you pay for the dicer, the grater, the Statue of Liberty pin, the AM/FM radio? But wait! We'll give you a stereo chorus, a ring modulator! Well, the CZ-5000 may not work *that* well for a TV hard sell (though a fall ad campaign is in the works) but at just under \$1200, this is a lot of instrument for the ingots.

Phase Distortion synthesis is a process of digitally jimmying what's called the "read phase angles" of yer basic sine and cosine waves, converting them to eight different waveforms you mix and match into thirty-three different combos. While the CZ is no breeze to program (ah, the mixed joys of digital synthesis), it does have a block configuration analogous to analog's VCO-VCF-VCA arrangement, so you ancient mariners don't have to throw away what you already know. The CZs use two lines of three sections each, and melding the two lines together gives the most compelling sounds. (This two-lines-per-preset setup shouldn't be confused with the Tone Mix function that on the CZ-5000 mixes two presets to four voices.)

A secret weapon in sound sculpting is an 8-step envelope generator for *each* section of both lines—six in all. That's an awful lot of step-programming, and fooling around on them is best accompanied by sketches of

exactly what envelope shapes you want, but otherwise the six EGs are a sleeping giant of parameter control. Programming for the CZ family has already become an art form among the software companies: Cherry Lane's CZ-RIDER has terrific sounds, and Music-Data and Hybrid Arts are preparing some of their own. Another nice improvement in the CZ-5000 is off-loading to tape as well as the Casio RAM cartridges which are now hard to get, due to spreading CZ fever.

Now check out the sequencer. It'll put eight voices in any combination on eight tracks, but when driving external MIDI-connected instruments, there's no limit on the number of polyphonic voices. The on-board memory is 3,500 notes in real-time, but if you step-program, you can double that number. Be advised, though: step-programming the CZ-5000 is not for the squeamish. The sequencer controls resemble a tape machine's, and you can punch in (but not out!) in the real-time mode. To expedite mixing, there's a Track Check function that can change levels and timbres and kick in and out the portamento and glide. The MIDI interface has its own sophisticated send/receive traffic cop programming section to accommodate even the most bizarre juxtaposition of instruments.

Unless you cling spinelessly to the presets, the CZ-5000 requires an owner who is ready to learn some fairly involved computer-related programming. That one little liquid crystal display—two lines of sixteen characters each, with cursor—is what tells you what those eighty-two pushbutton controls on the CZ-5000 are doing, and they do enough to fill a full-size terminal. But it's nothing a bit of faith and manual-reading shouldn't cure.

The CZ-5000 will probably be making big inroads this fall at two levels of the working musician class. The moderately well-endowed player will find it a potent addition to his front-line keyboard stack. The extremely well-endowed player who gigs with Fairlights will still fall in love with it for hotel-room writing and demoing. Either way, a significant number of pros may soon be saying, "Casio? Didn't they used to make all those toy synths?" ☐



# One Step Beyond

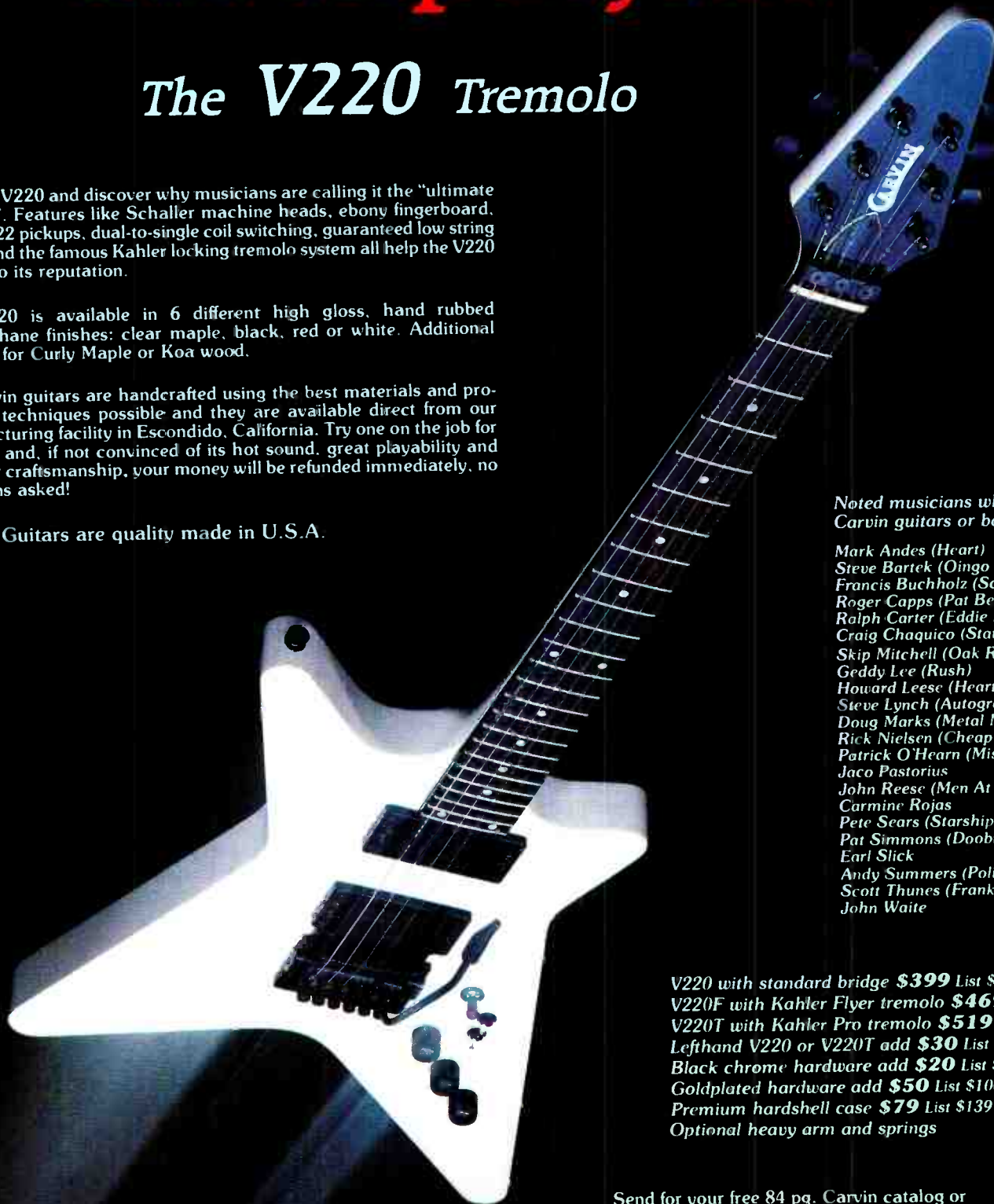
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# DEVELOPMENTS

## Recording, Percussion & Reinforcement News at New Orleans NAMM

By Jock Baird

**F**or this second installment of our New Orleans N.A.M.M. wrap, it wasn't at all hard choosing where to begin. Tascam, who's been somewhat low-key the last few shows, traveled some big miles on the "narrow gauge" recording railroad (narrow gauge means reducing the width of the tape needed). Tascam's top news-maker was an 8-track mixer melded to an 8-track 1/4-inch reel-to-reel deck, called the Studio 8. The tape transport section is about two inches thin—a major design hurdle—and once the plastic cover is on it, it looks and acts like a big cassette. The Studio 8 has all



**Tascam Studio 8**

kinds of upper-end working features like SMPTE and MIDI interfaces, a noise reduction defeat on track eight only for recording sync code, and a smart set of transport functions for the three motors, including Return to Zero, Search to Cue, and an automatic stop at the end of the reel so you don't accidentally unwind in the heat of recording. The stereo mixer is totally flexible, has separate monitor control, and can be used for reinforcement. Best of all, the Studio 8 will sell for \$3500.

Tascam also put some of the Studio 8 features, and attractive cosmetics into a remake of their famed Portastudio, now numbered the 246, but kept the price at \$1300. But their biggest push for narrow gauge was squishing sixteen tracks onto one-inch tape with superb specs. Called the MS-16, the deck uses "micro-radii" heads and matched ultra-low-noise FETs throughout. Punch-ins

are eased by identical Record/Sync and Repro head performance and Record/Function switches for each track. SMPTE/EBU interface, time code reading during fast forward and rewind, a tough Omega Lock servo transport, a sophisticated remote unit...the MS-16 has virtually all the features and sound

dbx's first appearance at N.A.M.M. in a while, celebrated by the introduction of a \$149 version of their kick-ass compressor/limiters, the 163X. Incorporating dbx's OverEasy compression system, the 163X has a "One-Knob Squeezer," a 1/4-inch jack on the front for direct input of instruments or mikes,



**dbx's \$149 163X compressor/limiter**

quality on two-inch jobs for \$9000. As if that weren't enough, Tascam brought out road-tough mixing boards for recording and reinforcement, the 200 and 300 series, and showed prototypes of—gasp—a digital delay and reverb.

Across the not-exactly-overflowing floor, Fostex was sporting a new \$1000 2-track mixdown deck with a third center channel control track for—you guessed it—time code. The so-called Model 20 can thus be used for mastering music video clips. Fostex also wasn't taking Tascam's 8-track offensive lying down. First they modernized their popular A-8, the first 1/4-inch 8-track deck out, renaming it the Model 80 and adding a microprocessor-controlled transport, keeping Dolby C, and promising a controller/autolocator option for automation and potent SMPTE/MIDI capability. Then they added a new 8-track board, called the model 450, for \$2000. Presto! An 8-track studio for \$4000. One reason for all this increased 8-track activity is Akai's MG1212 12-track mixer-recorder. A year after it was introduced, the predicted problems of Akai inventing their own Beta-video-cassette-like format have not materialized, and the 1212 has impressively penetrated the home studio market.

A less expected area of hot competition was the around-\$1500 digital reverb sweepstakes. Most people didn't know such a market existed until Lexicon's superb PCM 60 appeared a year ago; now Roland and Yamaha are diving in with both feet with MIDI-equipped units, Roland with their SRV-2000 and Yamaha with its REV-7. Roland also added MIDI to their new \$800 SDE-2500 digital delay. In the wake of Akai's under-\$1000 sampling delay (which added a disk drive this show), Korg and Ibanez have gotten into the game with strong offerings.

Another big outboard splash was

and is stereo-strappable in pairs.

As far as what's to come in recording technology, TOA offered one of the most daring predictions in displaying a few channels of a new type of switchless mixing board that would be controlled from a computer terminal, with only LEDs on the board indicating what had been done. TOA predicts such a board could be made more cheaply, since traditional mechanical switches wouldn't be needed, and you'd already be three-quarters of the way to automated mixing. Stay tuned on this idea. TOA also made a lot of friends with its little rack-mounted super-flexible MIDI/whatever stereo mixer, the D-4. It takes four inputs, but it's expandable to ten, and is a 1x8 MIDI through-box, all for around \$275.

In the realm of electronic drums, it was Simmons' decision to take the mass market by storm that will now decide how much room for competition there will ultimately be. There are so many features packed into its new \$1850 SDS 9, it's hard to see who's going to catch them. The best shot seemed to belong to Roland's very well thought-out DDR-30 digital drum kit, selling for about the same price as the

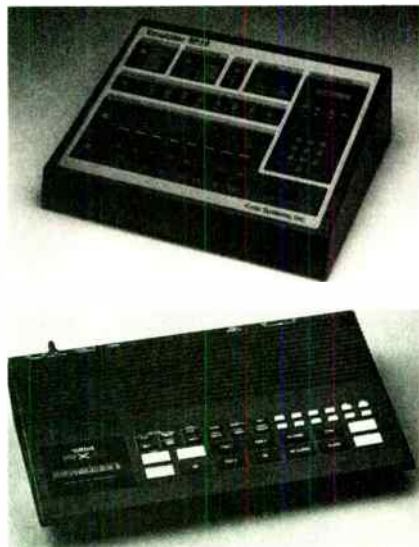


**Roland's DDR-30 drum kit**



SDS 9. Roland came up with separate snare and kick units—with their own hardware—as well as the basic triangular pad. The setup has six voices with four presets per voice and extensive editing capabilities. It also takes more preset voices through a memory cartridge. Roland shows growing expertise in getting good drum samples, as evidenced by their TR-727 drum machine with on-board Latin percussion presets. Pearl was hanging in on the electro-drum chase too, selling their analog programmable Drum-X kit a bit lower on the price front at \$1300. Rookie of the year in the drum-chip division: DST's LinnDrum library, (Digital Sound Technologies of High Point, NC).

Two first-time digital drum entries had a rather unusual relationship—one costs ten times the other. At the upper end, weighing in at \$2750, is E-mu's 12-bit sampling percussion system, the SP-12. This is certainly upper-end stuff: touch-sensitive play buttons, enhanced programmability, user sampling (you



**One will get you ten: \$2750 Emulator SP-12 and Yamaha RX21.**

knew E-mu had to get *that* in there), MIDI, disk drive options and SMPTE reader/generator. But the SP-12's strongest calling card as it sallies forth against the LinnDrum and the Oberheim DMX is its increased sampling rate and 12-bit data format, giving it fabulous digital fidelity. And weighing in at \$275 is Yamaha's RX21. But don't laugh: the PCM-generated voices sound damn fine, there's plenty of program memory, it has accent and balance controls, can interface with MIDI instruments, saves to cassette and even has a stereo output. Now if you bought ten RX21s and hooked them all together, would it sound better than one SP-12? We'll probably never know.

Some of the best news for drummers comes from a British maker of blue-chip

bass amps, Trace Elliot. Having solved bass reinforcement problems sufficiently well enough to have won over most of the U.K.'s pop royalty, Trace Elliot saw a need for a no-compromise drum reinforcement system—you know, ultra-wide frequency spectrum and humongous dynamic range, staggering power peaks.... The result was their Electronic Percussion Amplification System, with a head that has computer grade capacitors, MOSFET output devices, a headphone output and transformers you could convert into condos; and a pair of speaker cabinets (available in stereo or mono/biamped) that use an 18-inch speaker for the lows, a 10-incher for the mids and a bullet tweeter for highs. That's a lot of diameter for earthquake kick drums and artillery snares. The EPAS, by no means inexpensive, and the rest of the Trace Elliot/Status bass line now have an American distributor, Soundwave, located at 24835 Jacob Hamblin Road, Hidden Hills, CA 91302.

Now that we've broached the subject of reinforcement, would somebody please tell me why everybody is going power amp mad? Sure, I read about the new-technology types mentioned in the article a few pages back, but what about all the others? Cerwin-Vega started making amps last winter and had several very muscular models driving, among others, a fine new 2-way \$200 studio monitor, the CM-10. JBL's Urei arm debuted the 300-watt Model 6290 amidst a wall of new Cabaret, Time Align and JBL monitor and P.A. cabinets. Roland came in with two new SRA Series stereo workhorses. Yamaha blitzed with four new P-Series amps, and piled on with a new speaker system, the S4115H II, and a new floor monitor, the S2115H II. And Peavey fielded a megawatt brute of a unit, the CS-1200. Speaking of Hartley Peavey, he and wife Melia were featured in a recent *Inc* magazine article in which Hartley says this about being a small American firm up against all those Japanese big guys: "Remember Gettysburg. Us Southern boys have learned not to frontally attack fortified entrenchments."

Among the microphone contingent, Sennheiser came out from under the wing of its old distribution deal with Uni-cord and manned a good-size booth of their own. Although most of the changes on their mike line were either cosmetic or reviving old favorites, there wasn't that much of this top-pro German line that needed changing. Nearby at Shure, there was a new mid-priced condenser, the SM94, and a slightly modified version of the SM58 at a highly modified price, the SM48. Audio-Tech-

*continued on page 96*

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**Copeland** from page 86

traveled to Brazzaville where he scoffed up bootleg cassettes of popular recording acts in that genre. When he returned to Europe, Copeland went to Paris, where colonies of Zairians and Congolese have immigrated. There he met a singer named Ray Lema, an ex-director of the Zairian Ballet, and enlisted Lema's vocals to make the soundtrack LP for *The Rhythmist*.

Copeland's first task was boiling all that raw material into a coherent ten-song album. "As it turns out, they don't settle for the twelve-minute dance mix and most of their stuff can add up to a few hours. When I got home and listened back, it didn't have quite the same effect as it did out there in the environment with them all dancing around you and the sights and the smell and everything. So I got out the scissors and cut them up. I used them as colors on my palette, just editing and Scotch taping it together.

"Another technique I used was collecting one-second samples with a Sony F-1 and the PCM system. I got quite a variety of different samples together and put them in the Fairlight CMI computer and then fiddled around with it in such a way that I got my own melodies together with the multi-sampled sounds that I had recorded. Also I took Ray Lema's vocals and recorded them straight on the three Lingala tunes."

Copeland's arranging and multi-instrumental performing skills date from his first musical forays—he's so at home in a recording studio, he tends to think of it as another instrument. "It's really funny how the music thing was such a private, at-home outlet," he reflects. "My first instrument was not the drums; it was actually the trombone. I started drums when I was ten or eleven. My brother Ian had a set and I would sneak in and play them while he was out riding around on his motorcycle. He was a big man on campus, he was the most popular kid in town, he had personality, charm, he could ride a motorcycle faster than anybody else. I was such a wimp. I was taking school seriously, I didn't start growing 'til I was eighteen, I was an undernourished kid, not particularly good at anything. But Ian would take off to do his thing and I would play the drums and noticed I could do things he would spend hours struggling with just by thinking about it before I sat down to play!

"So I became really involved with amusing myself at home. My parents had a reel-to-reel tape recorder and in those days the record head and the playback head were the same on cheap decks. Using the stereo buttons I was able to switch and record on side A and

then rewind and record on side B and they would play back in sync. Then I would bounce the tracks back and forth. I was fascinated by recording techniques. The tape recorder is my second instrument. It led me to everything else because I learned how to play guitar and other instruments so I'd have something to play to when I recorded."

Copeland's first band was called Curved Air: "It was a genuine education," he sighs, "a great example of getting signed to a label, getting a decent advance, touring, and basically always being in debt and going nowhere. My brother Miles was our manager and I asked him one day, 'Miles, we got a twenty-five-thousand-pound advance for this album, how many records do we have to sell to make that money back?' He said, 'Oh, fifty thousand albums or something like that.'

"And I said, 'Really? How many albums did we sell?' And he answered, 'Ten thousand.' And suddenly we started realizing that the music industry was sick and dying at that point. Miles had scored us this money from the record company and it was the same way right down the line, record companies were throwing large advances at bands that were not making it back. It was because, in order to develop new talent, the middlemen involved, agents and managers, were working on too large a scale. Their operational costs and expectations had far exceeded the possibilities for a young band to make it in a sluggish British economy. Bands were touring and promoting themselves on a scale way beyond their means of supply from fans.


"I used to daydream about how nice it would be to take half the money advanced, cut out all the middlemen, and deal with the funds ourselves. By 1977 the whole punk thing had exploded to a point where you didn't have to play these huge halls with elaborate productions. You didn't need high-priced agents to secure these gigs. You could call up a club owner and talk directly with him about a gig and earn a chance at smaller exposure first. People were buying independent recordings. Everyone became aware alternatives existed.

"The funny thing is that a lot of the punk groups' organization was pretty flaky. They didn't know anything about organizing a gig, planning what kind of sound and light system you could get away with, paying the right price and getting all there and back on time. The Police organization, which included my brothers and friends and myself, had experience. For that reason most of the Police's first gigs were as substitutes at Clash or Sex Pistols concerts that didn't get pulled off. The punk fans resented that and it took us a while to get our



own following. It wasn't until we came back from that first tour of the States that we began to find support in London. But hey, we were ready and able to play and it was worth some of the bullshit to get out there and do it ourselves without the big machinery behind it all." Indeed, the band's first LP was self-produced and financed by them for fifteen thousand pounds, fairly inexpensive when considering how successful *Outlandos D'Amour* became.

For those of you who wonder if the Police will ever get back together, here's Copeland's emphatic reply: "Look, no matter how intelligent and talented we are as individuals, no matter how great our individual solo efforts get, I don't think the sum of the parts could ever be as great as the whole. We are just too important to each other musically. No three guys make music and contribute to the form the way we do. I've never played with a better guitarist or singer-songwriter before and I don't expect to in the near future. The Police have a lot more to say and do and I think we're all going to see that happen." Copeland's comments are buttressed by a report the Police are planning a tour next spring.

Copeland never considered being a musician as a plausible career plan. "I never thought I was actually gonna play drums for a living. I always figured I would get a job in banking or a business field where I knew you could make a living. Even being a road manager seemed easier than actually going on-stage and making it on sweat. I knew that musicians have to 'get wet' and I just thought that I would never be prepared to 'get wet.' But it came out and grabbed me and I didn't really have much choice in it. All these years later I look around and say to myself, 'Shit, I'm a musician.'" 

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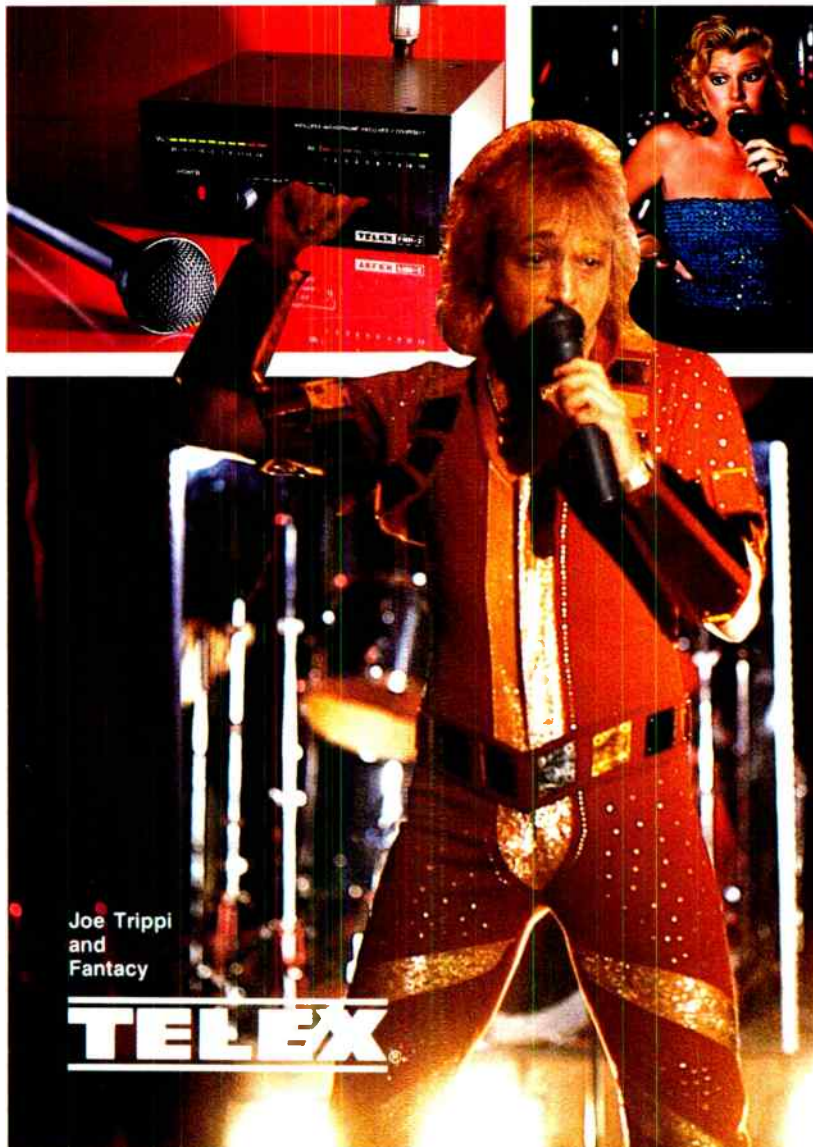
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L U D W I G



# RECORD REVIEWS

**J**ust a li'l ole country punk band from L.A. cleans up its act.



X

*Ain't Love Grand*  
(Elektra)

**D**epending upon your perspective, *Ain't Love Grand* is: A) A heavy metal record. B) X's most polished performance. C) A sell-out to MTV-land. D) The strangest C&W album of all time.

Let's try each view. Heavy metal? Well, *Ain't Love Grand* was produced by Michael Wagener, who has recorded quite a lot of the stuff. He got his first stab at X with the single "Wild Thing," and the band certainly has learned from the experience. Billy Zoom's guitar is big and beefy, filling out the band's sound but without the clangor that cluttered the band's early recordings, while D.J. Bonebrake's drums now pack enough punch to power X's sound instead of merely driving it.

Notice that Exene Cervenka and John Doe are singing better than ever—smoother harmonies, fewer clunkers—and you've got a powerful argument for choice B. But this isn't mere professionalism, despite the ease with which

John and Exene's new-found facility allows them to execute the sudden stylistic shifts that add zing to "What's Wrong With Me." By clearing up the band's sound, the inner strengths of X's songs—previously obscured—are allowed to shine. Notice how Zoom's guitar carefully rounds out each phrase in "Around My Heart," or how the band's shifting dynamics turn "I'll Stand Up For You" from a pleasant tune to a credible love song. This is genuine punkcraft.

It's also really commercial, which might leave some listeners arguing that this album is a sell-out to MTV. Frankly, I think they're overreacting, for while studio sheen does make X more approachable to mainstream pop fans, it doesn't mute the edges or eccentricities that made this band matter in the first place. "Little Honey," for instance, could as easily have fit on *Under The Big Black Sun*, while "Love Shack," despite its boogie guitar hook, borrows its perspective from *More Fun*

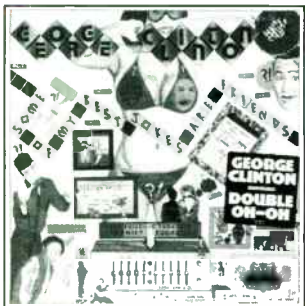
*In The New World*. And if MTV ever shows a video of "What's Wrong With Me," I'll sit in for Martha Quinn.

But the possibility that most intrigues is the notion that *Ain't Love Grand* is really a C&W album in heavy metal chaps. It isn't simply that Doe and Cervenka prefer Johnny Cash/June Carter harmonies; it's the underlying twang and easy simplicity that characterize most of this album's melodies, especially "Burning House Of Love" and "My Goodness." Working country music song structures into rock 'n' roll is hardly unusual—Springsteen does it through much of *Born In The USA*—but few bands have heretofore attempted such an extreme application.

Which is why I'd argue that, A, B, C or D, this is clearly X's most important record, and one that deserves hearing. Who knows? Maybe after a few careful listens, you'll decide that *Ain't Love Grand* is: E) X's best record yet.

— J.D. Considine





## GEORGE CLINTON

*Some Of My Best Jokes Are Friends*  
(Capitol)

To the uninitiated, George Clinton is the Frank Zappa of black music with all the pros and cons that comparison implies. Clinton, like Zappa, glories in satirical humor (both brilliant and simple-minded), cartoon-like LP jackets and even more cartoonish vocal textures, whiz-bang theatrics, and sensibilities supercharged by politics, bathroom humor and sex. Where Zappa's musical obsessions devolve from Stravinsky, Varèse, avant-jazz, and doo wop, Clinton's focus is on James Brown, psychedelia, roadhouse funk, and street-corner harmonies. Lord knows, both men can make interesting music out of extremely tedious concepts—and vice versa.

If Clinton's had a rougher ride than Zappa, it may be that an intelligent, willfully weird black man is less acceptable than one who is white. (Clinton's often been too perverse for black folk yet too "black" for white folk.) Still, he's never abandoned his (lately) one-man funk crusade—funk for Clinton being the essence of improvised, naturally-kinetic, communally-imaginative black creativity. He's survived disco, creative burn-out and financial problems, and even, at least since the inspired lunacy of "Atomic Dog," the spectre of success.

*Some Of My Best Jokes Are Friends*, his third solo venture, harkens to the glorious early-70s prime of progressive black pop, when Earth, Wind, & Fire, War, Kool & The Gang, Curtis Mayfield, the Meters and, yes, Clinton himself (in his Parliament and Funkadelic guises) stretched everyone's ears, but remains, at the same time, totally up-to-date. Gorgeous George not only tames banks of synthesizers, but dares to mix them with, gasp, real instruments! The result is surprising and sonically spectral.

On "Double Oh Oh," for instance, a popping snare sound and stuttering bass drum map fresh rhythmic territory while falsetto yelps, gospel growls, group chants and harmonized choruses recall the glories of Sly. "Plea-

tures of Exhaustion" offers a rollicking gong-driven groove with jitter-bugging synth licks, a percolating flute solo and a sticky, slinky ode to sweaty love-making, while a *real* drummer lays down enough tricky off-beat accents to make you wish the electronic handclaps had been obliterated. And on "Bangladesh," a soppy, languorous ballad, slightly hysterical looney-tune vocals breathe a descending chromatic melody, followed in succession by mock-symphonic violins, a squealing guitar solo and a keening sax break. Yet for all his rococo harmonic tendencies, Clinton's music still sounds fresh, arranged with a sophisticated ear and a minimum of bullshit.

Make no mistake—*Jokes* is mostly killer, not filler. 'Twould be a shame if its lack of commercial crossover merely reinforced Clinton's reputation as a great, neglected pop artist. Isn't it time America gave it up for the funk?

— Randall F. Grass



## THE MICROSCOPIC SEPTET

*Let's Flip!*  
(Osmosis)

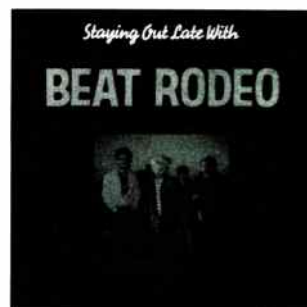
The Microscopic Septet attacks its music with a healthy and at times outrageous sense of humor. But that doesn't mean that the Micros play "fake jazz" (John Lurie's unfortunate coinage). In fact, their music is as serious as a heart attack; it just happens to be the kind of heart attack that tickles.

*Let's Flip!*, recorded live in Rotterdam, doesn't deliver quite the manic punch of the Micros' first album, *Take The Z Train*, but does confirm what that record suggested: This is an original band, with the chops to handle the jazz vocabulary and the irreverence to stand it occasionally on its head. It's also eclectic without resorting to hodge-podgery. Sure, pianist Joel Forrester's Latin-tinged "The Lobster Parade" segues into the closing vamp from "Hey Jude," but the way these guys play it, it actually sounds appropriate.

At the heart of the Microscopic Septet is an unusual four-saxophone front line.

None are particularly brilliant soloists, although Don Davis on alto and Phillip Johnston on soprano have their moments. But their ensemble work is exquisite, and they know how to play to their strengths. Johnston's "Why Not?" is three-and-a-half minutes of gorgeous melody with nary a solo to be heard. On several other selections, improvisation takes a back seat to composition and teamwork.

The Micros' humor can be bracing (the oddball backbeat of Forrester's "Boo Boo Coming"); it can also annoy (a cloying Middle European melody line of Johnston's "Lazlo's Lament," repeated ad nauseam.) But you never doubt that this group is awake, and you never know what they'll do next. Of few bands can either of these claims be made with confidence. (Available from N.M.D.S., 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012). — Peter Keepnews



## BEAT RODEO

*Staying Out Late With Beat Rodeo*  
(I.R.S.)

Beat Rodeo, Rubber Rodeo, Rank & File, Jason & the Scorchers—bet you can't remember when rock musicians identified more with Indians than cowboys. Beat Rodeo presents an especially suspicious case: singer/guitarist/songwriter Steve Almaas is a former punk-rockero who saw the light after Reagan was elected.

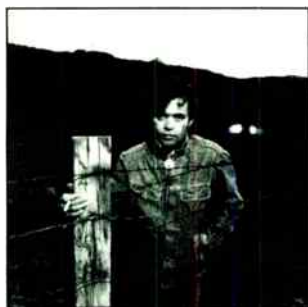
But the delightful *Staying Out Late With Beat Rodeo* makes it easy to ignore shifts in ideology. The album's dozen, mostly brief originals reveal a solid tunesmith at work. Almaas sometimes veers into country pastiche; there's flutter echo (on "Mimi"), slide dobro in 3/4 time ("Who's Gonna Be Around"), burping rhythm guitar à la vintage Johnny Cash ("You're The Only Reason") and a melodramatic best-friend's-girlfriend situation descended from Lefty Frizzell's "Long Black Veil" ("Heart Attack"). Then he'll turn around and play jangly power-pop ("Just Friends"), or come up with a suspended melodic phrase ("Not The Girl Loves Me"). "Pet Project" and the



Rockpilis "Falling Out Of Love" imply Beat Rodeo learned about American country music from Dave Edmunds—an unsettling proposition. But "Mistake," the record's most adventurous cut, sucks in the listener with its slow tempo and thumbnail analysis of a failed relationship.

Almaas' winsome singing recalls Squeeze's Glenn Tilbrook, while guitarist Bill Schunk's elegant solos are models of Telecaster economy. The songs are singlemindedly devoted to luv, and Almaas has a near-religious devotion to fundamental chord changes. Add simple but effective rhythm backing, and you get an album that's built to last.

There is not one note of keyboard on this record. — **Scott Isler**



## JOHN MELLENCAMP

*Scarecrow*  
(PolyGram)

**S**carecrow is as bold, austere, ominous as the imagery of its title song, "Rain On The Scarecrow," which tells the wrenching story of small family farms in the Midwest facing foreclosure. The track opens with a jangled metronome of a ghostly guitar figure that, as it grows more harsh, reveals itself with cinematic clarity as the sound of an approaching storm. After a jolting percussive thunderclap, a harsh-voiced phantom speaks through the torrential downpour: "Scarecrow on a wooden cross/ Blackbirds in the barn/ Four hundred empty acres/ That used to be my farm." The spooky religious imagery seems like a near-Biblical indictment of Reaganomics, but is in fact neither a political cant nor a sentimental sermonette. Rather, the song is an anthem calling for courage at a funeral for a lost heritage.

With "Rain On The Scarecrow" as its leitmotif, the rest of the album explores themes of loss and acceptance within the context of John Cougar Mellencamp's southern Indiana legacy. The intensely autobiographical "Small Town" is preceded by a haunting snippet of a Depression-era lullaby sung by

Laura Mellenkamp, John's grandmother. Then a celebratory acoustic guitar rings out as John reflects on his own rearing in a matchbox-sized burg, marked by a heavy commitment to Christian fundamentalism, and a strained effort to see the world through a wider lens.

Musically, the record is the diary of a man raised on 1960s rock and roll. On buoyant tracks like "Rumbleseat," "Lonely Ol' Night," and the exhilarating bonus track on the LP's CD and cassette, "R.O.C.K. in the U.S.A.," Mellenkamp's music suggests the winning sparseness of numberless car radio singles by the Rascals, the Music Machine, and the Standells, and his band percolates with the kind of peculiar strengths that bygone garage and bar band personnel always let serve as their signatures. But while Larry Crane's broody, agitated guitar on *Scarecrow* pays homage to the Animals and Dick Dale, his playing is utterly contemporary, and Crane's blustery style entirely his own.

*Scarecrow's* production values are striking. The *Uh-Huh* team of Mellenkamp and Don Gehman have achieved a crisp spaciousness from John's standard rock five-piece that must be heard to be believed. Kenny Aronoff's bright, ultra-rich drums are literally mixed like lead vocals, often dueting with Mellenkamp. And John's resonant, lower register singing adds compelling coloration, especially on his bittersweet ballad with guest star Rickie Lee Jones, "Between A Laugh And A Tear."

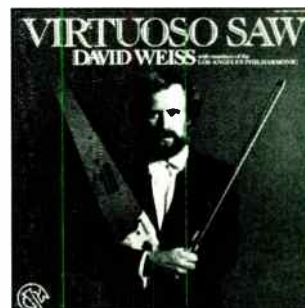
Some might feel that Heartland Rock has become a trend in the last few years. More accurately it's the sound of certain mature, third-generation American rockers who have uniquely personal stories to tell about themselves and their previously unsung working-class constituencies. *Scarecrow* ranks with *Night Moves* and *The River* as an inspired and unflinching musical testament, and on Cougar Mellencamp's broadest and most vivid canvas thus far. It's a rock 'n' roll "Grapes Of Wrath." — **Timothy White**

## DAVID WEISS

*Virtuoso Saw*  
(Cut Time)

**D**avid Weiss has been the principal oboist in the Los Angeles Philharmonic for twelve years, but let's face it, if this LP contained classical oboe music it probably wouldn't be reviewed here. Like the audiences on Johnny Carson, where Weiss occasionally ap-

pears, we're easily bored with grand traditions and suckers for musical novelty, and on this album Weiss has certainly provided one—elegant, graceful renditions of standards from "Summertime" to "Eleanor Rigby" played on, well, a saw. Yes, the same tool that can turn a broken-down shack



into a handyman's delight displays, at least in Weiss' dextrous hands, a light timbre, and a melodic range that puts your clumsy wooden axes to shame.

Weiss bows his saw like a violin, and receives ample accompaniment from a splinter group of L.A. Philharmonic musicians who are doubtlessly thrilled to get away from their tiresome repertoire of Brahms and Mahler to play tunes they and Weiss can really sink some teeth into. My only caveat is the lack of popular song titles that might have given this project greater thematic unity—surely favorites like "If I Were A Carpenter," "Woodchopper's Ball," "I Saw Her Standing There" and "Tree-monisha" would be more appropriate. In any event Weiss' wide vibrato and harmonic imagination are delights, his technique on this otherwise humble tool inspiring. And his record provides proof of a wise musical axiom—woodshedding pays off. Available from: Cut Time Records, P.O. Box 65361, Los Angeles CA. 90064 — **Mark Rowland**



## NICK LOWE

*The Rose of England*  
(Columbia)

**W**ise guy Nick Lowe has spent so much of his career daring us to take him seriously that it can be hard to see beyond

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his flip facade. Remember, this is the man who sang about a dachshund devouring its owner, the rascal who celebrated disposable pop music by making it a cornerstone of his work. Sometimes overlooked are his numerous triumphs as a producer, for Elvis Costello and others, or compositions like "Without Love," which eloquently restates familiar truths without resorting to cliché.

*The Rose Of England* doesn't resolve this tension between the old boy's silly and serious selves in the slightest, but it does provide further evidence of his renewed artistic vitality, first observed on last year's *Nick Lowe And His Cowboy Outfit*. Lowe (vocals, bass) and drinking buddies Paul Carrack (keyboards), Martin Belmont (guitar), and Bobby Irwin (drums) epitomize the best aspects of pub rock, playing fast, foot-loose, and on the beat. Fans of fun will gravitate to "7 Nights Of Rock," a roadhouse raveup performed by hillbilly shouter Moon Mullican thirty years ago, and "Long Walk Back," a greasy instrumental in the mold of 50s classics like "Raunchy" and "Honky Tonk." Contemporary top forty receives a sharp salute in "I Knew The Bride," thanks to crisp backing from Huey Lewis & the News.

However, Lowe spends much time here exploring various permutations of amour, giving *The Rose Of England* an unexpected emotional punch. "I Can Be The One You Love" and "Lucky Dog" affectionately offer a shoulder to cry on. Other tracks are less encouraging: the pall cast by John Hiatt's "She Don't Love Nobody" is merely intensified by Lowe's bubbly delivery, while his own "(Hope To God) I'm Right" finds Nick anxiously waiting for the perfect soulmate. Never known for vocal prowess, he nonetheless sparkles on Elvis Costello's "Indoor Fireworks," inflecting a wordy ballad depicting love as a theatre of conflict with a hushed reading that's simply haunting.

If you're not up for feeling intense, never fear—*The Rose Of England* doesn't require a crying towel. Costello's opus aside, this wonderful platter has a sassy zing, and it's easy to ignore the angst. Besides, anyone who closes his LP with "Bobo Ska Diddle Diddle" couldn't be serious, right? — Jon Young

DAVE BARTHOLEMEW

*The Monkey*  
SMILEY LEWIS

*Ooh La La*

New Orleans, land of a thousand dances and creole mystique, is also home for the wacko novelty song: "Ya Ya," "Te Ta Te Ta Ta," "Ay La Ay," "Ooh La La," "Do



Re Mi" and "Tee Nah Nah," to name just a few profoundly senseless titles. Over the years New Orleans musicians have done their best to quench their fans' thirst for musical looniness, be it



ripping off Louis Jordan or putting carnival Indian chants to an R&B back-up. During the 50s most of this musical tinkering was done by Dave Bartholomew—talent scout and producer for Imperial Records, leader of a band that backed up Fats Domino and recorded with just about anyone who blew through New Orleans, and writer of that Freudian paean to lending a helping hand, "My Ding A Ling."

By the mid-50s, R&B was slouching towards R&R, and on *The Monkey*, a reissue of Bartholomew's singles on Imperial, and Smiley Lewis' *Ooh La La*—where Lewis is backed by Bartholomew—the music covers a lot of ground.

On "That's How You Got Killed Before," recorded in 1949, Bartholomew and his band blast-off like any late-40s jump band—tight, funny, swinging. Bartholomew's lyrics feature urbane crooning, while he plays trumpet with all the growling animation of Louis Armstrong. By 1955, however, guitars had begun bumping horns off to the R&B graveyard. On "The Monkey," one of the weirdest New Orleans tunes I've ever heard (and according to John Broven, N.O. authority, an influence on Jamaica's Bluebeat scene), an ominous, leering Bartholomew sings about the relative virtues of fuzzy primates vs. man, over a one chord vamp shoved along by harsh, metallic guitar. And on the raucous tenor bust-out "Hard Times," the first feedback-coated note of Justin Adam's solo more or less sums up the next fifteen years of guitar rock.

Smiley Lewis had a big, open-throated voice that would have sounded as at home singing field hollers as slick R&B, and his 50s singles are some of the best produced in the Crescent City. *Ooh La La* doesn't include all of his better known tunes (relative term—none broke nationally), but does boast consistently swinging, "second-line" backdrops for his yodeling, and deep, bluesy vocal style. Like *The Monkey*, *Ooh La La* is a far from perfect collection, several singles are wasted attempts to cash in on someone else's

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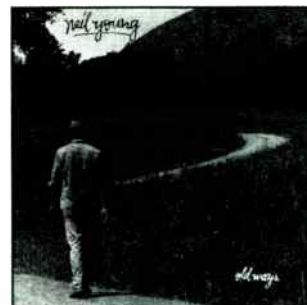


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— Peter Watrous



## NEIL YOUNG

*Old Ways*  
(Geffen)

Is Neil Young's return to country a crass attempt to win back an audience alienated by *Trans* or *Everybody's Rockin'*, or does it mark a genuine return to his roots? Probably both. Young hasn't sounded this committed to his material since *Rust Never Sleeps*—he connects to this low-key music far more earnestly than to synth-pop or rockabilly. But his intensity is squandered on ten offerings that say more about Young's standing as a country music fan than as songwriter.

Superficially, *Old Ways* marks an encouraging return to form. “Wayward Wind,” “My Boy,” and the title track wear traditional values like badges of honor, while their traditional musical and lyric motifs evoke a warm, comfortable setting. Unfortunately, Young's defensive attitude belies that spirit. In “Get Back To The Country,” Young rewrites his own “Are You Ready For The Country,” by replacing rural seduction with smug self-righteousness. “When I was a younger man/ Got lucky with a rock and roll band/ Struck gold in Hollywood/ All that time I knew I would/ Get back to the country,” Young sings, deprecating and disowning his past. Young may yet evolve from a competent to a clever country songwriter, but cutting himself off from the rock-oriented work that insures his position as a major artist seems foolish.

Not that Young has completely abandoned his old ways. With characteristic disregard for straight narrative, “Misfits” shifts between relaxing astronauts in a space station and a sneezing prostitute in a Texas hotel lobby. A direct descen-

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dant of Young's most ambitious mid-70s songs, it lacks the focus or turbulent guitar work that energized, say, "Cortez The Killer." Young has also retained the reactionary streak that stained *Hawks & Doves* and re-ac-tor: "Working Cowboys" is a jingoistic paean to the West that could have been a Reagan campaign song, "California Sunset" a distressingly chauvinistic Chamber of Commerce commercial. Neil Young's desire to make real country music may be sincere, but succumbing to formula isn't how to do it. "Old ways can be a ball and chain," Young sings. So can new beginnings.

— Jimmy Guterman

**Ferry** from page 64

**FERRY:** I was nervous until it went into the charts at number one in England, but over here, I get a bit of the "Who do you think you are?" reaction, being asked why I'm not more successful here, but I'm game to make an even greater go of it. It's been a fascinating journey thus far, and I suppose I've taken a crack at just about every goal I can think of.

**MUSICIAN:** *Except acting, interestingly enough. It's curious that someone as image-aware as yourself wouldn't want to expand your suave persona on, say, the big screen.*

**FERRY:** [Brooding] I don't know that I'm cut out for it. I'd love to surprise myself by doing it well, but it would have to be a very special project, because it's an art form that has become too subject to commercial pressure. I wouldn't want to trivialize a lot of the heartfelt effort of the past by doing it badly. That would crush me.

I guess it's a matter of someone imagining me doing something in film that would be a natural and perfect fit.

**MUSICIAN:** *Hmmmm. I could see you as a great, very spectral romantic lead playing opposite some haunted beauty, you a shadowy figure of desire who has absolutely no dialogue.*

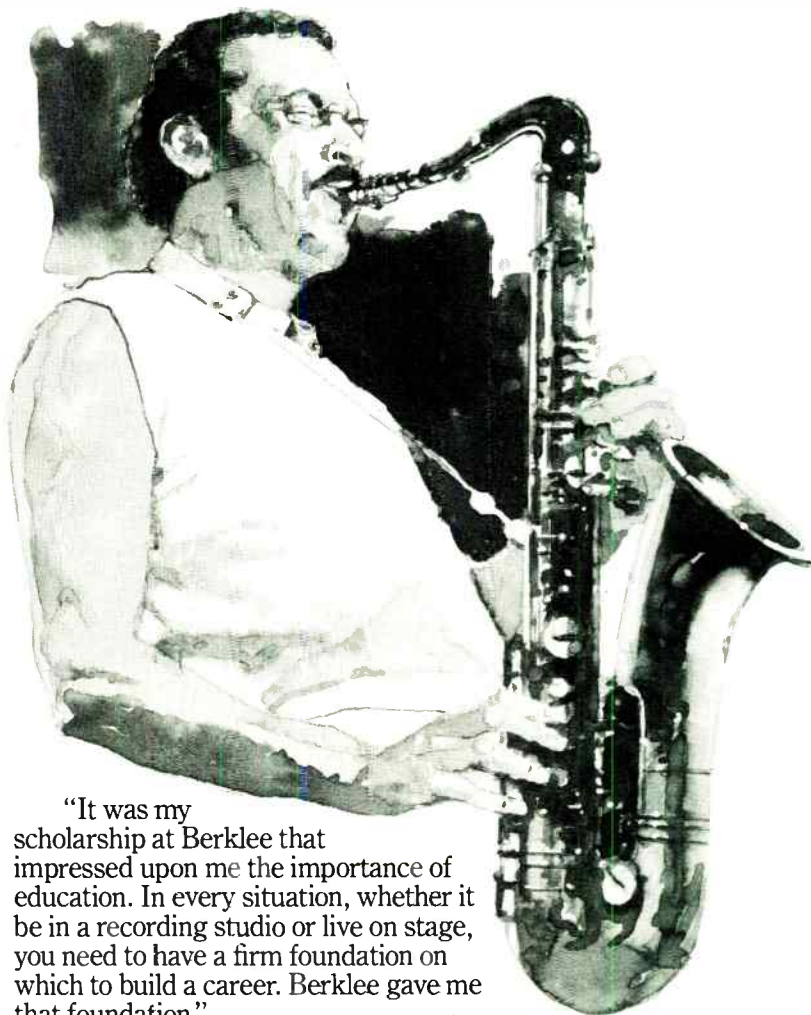
**FERRY:** [Face brightens; he grins slyly] Ahh! See, that's why I never say a total no to the prospect! So now, have you any more ideas on how we can bring off this inspired little role? ☐

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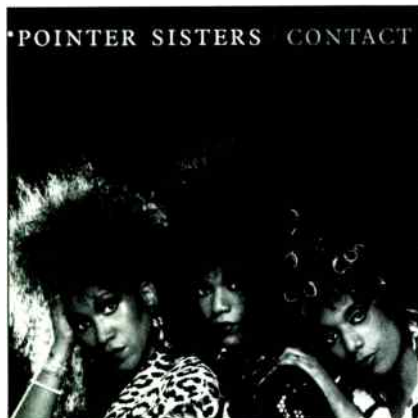
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—Ernie Watts

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## Pointer Sisters

*Contact (RCA)*

The Pointers never downplay their gospel roots, they underplay them, allowing all that vocal power to sneak up through the melody. Meanwhile, Richard Perry's slick production, with its cool synth-pop bop, makes the contrast even more delicious. So even though this album is purely pop product, what counts is that the songs here really *do* make contact. How many other hit machines can you say that about?

## UB40

*Little Baggarriddim (A&M)*

"I've Got You, Babe" may not be the reggae cover the world has been waiting for, but playing Ali Campbell's tart tenor off Chrissie Hynde's weary alto is such a perfect send-up of the original's dippy optimism it would have worked even as a polka. Of course, UB40 has always let melodic sense outstretch its sense of "riddim," and that's why even a toast like "Mi Spliff" is infectious instead of merely hypnotic.

## Godley & Creme

*The History Mix Volume 1 (Polydor)*

Calling this *History Repeats* would have been too obvious, but you get the point. Having Trevor Horn boil old 10cc tracks into "Wet Rubber Soup" makes sense—gimmick begets gimcrack—even though its strongest hooks are its most ephemeral, like the murmured "Big boys don't cry" from "I'm Not In Love." But who knows? Maybe they're just plugging "Cry," the single. You can never tell with wise guys.

## The Blue Nile

*A Walk Across The Rooftops (A&M)*

"Tinseltown In The Rain" is a stunning bit of tunelessness, because its images and obsessive repetition pull the lis-

tener as surely as any hook. It's hard to say whether the assemblages of epigrammatic chants and circular instrumental fragments that make up the bulk of this album count as songs. But it is worth noting that the closer this band gets to standard song structure (e.g. "Stay"), the less interesting they become.

## Patti Labelle

*Patti (Philadelphia International)*

As expected, Patti Labelle's "last" Philly Int. album is really just studio leftovers, although with a difference. Instead of settling for vintage rhythm beds, Reggie Griffin and Shameek the Mix tinker with the tracks, add synths, drum machines and hip-hop splices so these songs sound newer than they are. *Caveat emptor.*

## Shriekback

*Oil And Gold (Island)*

Is this what Gang of Four might have become? It isn't just the way David Allen's busy basslines ground the music's funk foundation, either, for Shriekback follows through with everything from female back-up singers to the unreadable but culturally neutral phonetic lyric sheet. Too bad they duplicated the inadequate lead vocals as well; otherwise, *Oil And Gold* would have been as alluring as it is abrasive.

## I Am Siam

*She Went Pop (Columbia)*

Abba in Chic clothing.

## Dwight Yoakum

*Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc. (Oak)*

No sane person takes L.A. cowboys seriously anymore, which may be why Yoakum's hick credibility comes as a shock. It's one thing to cut a "Ring Of Fire" that makes the man in black sound like a city slicker; quite another to write "Miner's Prayer," a genuinely affecting Kentucky lament. And once you hear how his voice breaks throughout "It Won't Hurt," you may wonder what you ever saw in Ricky Skaggs. (6201 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90038)

## Robert Fripp

*Network (with the League of Gentlemen) God Save The King (Editions EG)*

Who can blame Robert Fripp for feeling ahead of his time? Now that King Crimson imploded yet again, here come two re-issues that suddenly make a lot more sense. Side one of *Network* is a

cleaned-up sampler that ought to send listeners scurrying back to the sorely-underrated *Exposure*, while side two ironically rethinks the first side of *God Save The Queen* (a vast improvement). *God Save The King* repeats that rethink, and adds enough League of Gentlemen to show what a good sketchbook it was. (Jem Records, So. Plainfield NJ 07080)

## Motley Crue

*Theatre Of Pain (Elektra)*

Finally, the most heavily-painted band in America adds some punch to its sound. Still, that doesn't stop "Smokin' In The Boys Room" from sounding like a slick cover-band's club demo.

## Earle Mankey

*Real World (Happy Hermit)*

As a producer, Mankey has always had a genius for vivid sound and quirky effects, so it should come as no surprise that both are in abundance here. But he pushes well beyond mere sound effects here, demonstrating a pop sensibility that's alluringly hermetic. Mitch Easter isn't the only independent studio maven worth hearing, y'know. (6520 Selma Ave., #567, Hollywood CA 90028)

## Alex Chilton

*Feudalist Tarts (Big Time)*

If soul legends die hard, it seems only fair that would-be soul legends should do the same. Chilton's blue-eyed croon, so affecting with the Box Tops, is now so utterly fey that it's charming in spite of itself. But it's hard not to wonder if the ragged backing tracks were cut because there was no budget to correct them, or because Chilton figured the instrumental clams would cover his own. (6410 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90038)

## The Knitters

*Poor Little Critter On The Road (Slash)*

It's nice to know that the members of X and the Blasters love the old songs. If only they could learn to sing them.

## Various Artists

*Sleepers (Finnadar)*

Not all avant-garde music grates, you know. This collection of drones, trance pieces and homemade mantras is a wonderland of sounds in sympathy, and makes for far better (and less deadening) background music than the Windham Hill line of aural wallpaper. That doesn't say much for the music's content, but then, that's the point.



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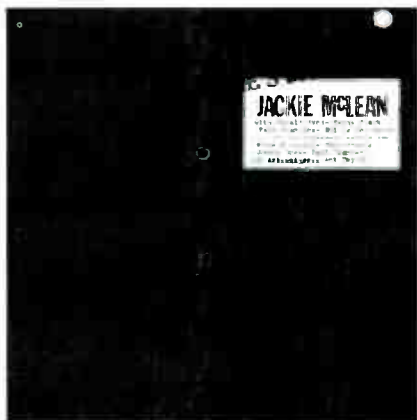
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### Jackie McLean

*Jackie's Bag* (Blue Note)

Featuring two of McLean's trickiest compositions ("Quadrangle" and "Appointment In Ghana"), this is a key document from 1959-60, a period when the great alto saxophonist was shoving off the formal restrictions of hard bop. It's the prize item in EMI's second batch of Blue Note facsimile reissues. Also recommended: Lee Morgan's *The Sidewinder*, Kenny Dorham's *Trumpet Toccata*, Bobby Hutcherson's *Total Eclipse*, McCoy Tyner's *Tender Moments*, Tony Williams' *Spring*, Dexter Gordon's *Doin' Alright*, Donald Byrd's *Byrd In Hand*, Herbie Hancock's *Speak Like A Child* (not one I'm particularly fond of, but its influence is undeniable), *Introducing Johnny Griffin*, *Horace Silver And The Jazz Messengers* (with Kenny Dorham and Hank Mobley), *The Fabulous Fats Navarro Volume 2*, *Bud Powell Volume 2*, *Miles Davis Volume 2*, and *Sonny Rollins Volume 2* (one of Monk's final appearances as a sideman). The material on *Thelonious Monk Genius Of Modern Music Volume 2*, *A Night At Birdland Volume 2*, and *Clifford Brown Memorial Album* you presumably already own on Mosaic boxes—and shame on you if you don't. Blue Note also recently brought out five more previously unissued albums. The real treasure is guitarist Grant Green's *Born To Be Blue*, also featuring tenor saxophonist Ike Quebec and pianist Sonny Clark. Hank Mobley's *Another Workout* is his typically excellent jazz; and Stanley Turrentine's *27's Blues* is far superior to his recent *Straight Ahead*. Bud Powell's *Alternate Takes* is manna for Powell completists, and Freddie Hubbard's *Here To Stay*, previously available on a 70s twofer, is a must for Blue Notephiles if only for striking Reid Miles graphics.

### Craig Harris

*Tributes* (OTC)

The prodigious trombonist's third album as a leader is the first to capture his full measure as a soloist, bandleader and composer. He forsakes trombone for didjeridoo on one track—a pointless self-indulgence—but everything else is fabulous: an elongated bop line, an African highlife in march formation, an inspired bit of tomfoolery dubbed "24 Days An Hour," and two sweet-and-sour ballads that reveal the normally extroverted Harris' unsuspected flair for the reflective. The topnotch supporting cast includes bassist Dave Holland; drummers Billy Higgins and Famoudou Don Moye accenting the rhythmic acuity of Harris' writing; and Vincent Chancy's French horn adding just the right pinch of vinegar to an all-brass front line that also includes trumpeter Junior Vega and cornetist Olu Dara. (North Country Distributors, Cadence Bldg., Redwood, NY 13679)

### Kip Hanrahan

*Vertical's Currency*  
(American Clave/N.M.D.S.)

I distrust the jejune existential oneupsmanship of Hanrahan's lyrics, and I've always found Jack Bruce's melodramatic vocal delivery difficult to bear. Still, there is so much here to admire—David Murray's booting tenor solos, Arto Lindsay's corrosive guitar licks, Steve Swallow's supple bass lines, Ignacio Bertoa, Milton Cadona and Pontilla Orlando Rios' percussive *brio*—that I find myself tabling my objections, especially when the infectious "Shadow Song (Mario's In)" comes on.

### Woody Shaw

*Setting Standards* (Muse)

Shaw has matured into a contemporary Kenny Dorham; the similarity isn't in his phrasing or timbre but rather in masterful improvising too often taken for granted in the rush to crown new trumpet kings. This quartet album with pianist Cedar Walton is Shaw's *Quiet Kenny*—an exemplary program of ballads and near-ballads without an ounce of fat or sentimentality.

### Ron Carter & Jim Hall

*Telephone* (Concord Jazz)

Both of these supreme improvisers are also thoughtful accompanists, which is the secret to their success as a duo. This is their third album of quiet, empathetic guitar-and-bass conversations. The twelve-years-old *Alone To*

*gether* remains the definitive example of their teamwork, but this new one has its share of special moments.

### John Lewis

*J.S. Bach: Preludes And Fugues From The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1* (Philips)

Though he doesn't play it entirely straight, the MJQ's august music director approaches Bach with a sense of modesty reflecting his own tidiness as a pianist and composer. What his tactful embellishments sacrifice in fidelity, they more than compensate for in charm and harmonic discernment.

### Kevin Eubanks

*Opening Night* (GRP)

The young guitarist's third album as leader can't be faulted for a lack of variety. He's variously unaccompanied, in duet with percussionist Big Black, and in combo jousts with flutist Kent Jordan and saxophonist Branford Marsalis. All it lacks is what Eubanks himself still lacks: consistency and individuality.

### Fred Hersch

*Horizons* (Concord Jazz)

### Mike Abene

*You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby* (Stash)

Hersch is a relative newcomer. Abene is a Maynard Ferguson alumnus (don't hold that against him) who has spent the better part of his career accompanying singers. Both have an expansive touch and commendably broad taste in composers: Thelonious Monk, Billy Strayhorn, Fats Waller, Steve Swallow and Harry Warren in Abene's case; Duke Ellington, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Alec Wilder and Richard Rodgers in Hersch's.

### Widespread Jazz Orchestra

*Paris Blues* (Columbia)

In concert this nonet revives some of the glories of the swing era, along with some of the mere pleasantries. Happily, their major-label debut emphasizes the glories, even though vocalist Ronnie Wells' exaggerated soulfulness is all wrong in this anachronistic setting.

### Geri Allen

*The Printmakers* (Minor Music/PSI)

She's rapidly becoming the most in-demand young pianist in New York; the taut lyricism of her debut album (with bassist Anthony Cox and drummer Andrew Cyrille) makes it easy to hear why.



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# SHORT *Video* TAKES

Michael Shore

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## Stewart Copeland

*The Rhythmist* (A&M Video)

His drumming with the Police adeptly integrates ethno-rhythm into Western pop, so you'd expect this African documentary to offer a substantive peek into the deep polyrhythmic secrets of the jungle telegraph. Instead, we get a hideously self-indulgent travesty that's a smirking, cultural-imperialist monument to Copeland's own elephantine ego. Copeland reduces great close-up footage of polyrhythmic pagan rituals to local color (repugnantly racist pun fully intended) subservient to the dominant motif of Copeland the Rhythmist as macho-mysterioso Eastwoodian figure among the savages. What an inexcusable waste of time and money! You could learn more about Africa and its rhythms by buying an issue of *National Geographic* and a field-recording LP—and you'd spend a lot less money, too.

## Prime Cuts: Jazz And Beyond

(CBS/Fox)

The first various jazz artists video compilation (to my knowledge) has a cute between-clips continuity device: a scrap-metal beatnik with goatee and beret, punching up each clip on a computer. And it's got two instant classics of the nascent jazz-promo genre: Miles Davis' "Decoy," with the maestro shot by Cucumber Studios in glistening hard-lit black and white, spinning abstract/geometric full-color forms out of his horn and the air; and Chuck Mangione's "Diana D," a horribly limp Barry White update more than saved by director Zbigniew Rybczynski's Nam June Paik burlesque/tribute. The Clarke-Duke project's "Heroes" is a neat little Republic serial take-off, and Hiroshima's "San Say" has a mildly intriguing urban Kung Fu scenario that just rolls over and

dies at the end. The rest is eye-and-ear candy of varying quality, generally low—from the sub-Koyaanisqatsi backdrops for Andreas Vollenweider's watercolor harping to the computer-age martial-arts bombast of Al DiMeola's "Sequencer." Still, worth owning for the Miles and Mangione clips.

## Marc Bolan On Video

(Passport)

It's nice to know that someone remembers Marc Bolan and T. Rex, now that Power Station has butchered the classic "Bang A Gong (Get It On)." Most of these archival clips are tossed-off German TV lip-synchs, with the occasional low-budget promo clip thrown in. "Ride A White Swan" quaintly reminds us how low a priority rock video was in Bolan's heyday: He appears onstage, yes, riding a white swan. It's really tragic that Bolan died before the video age; his androgynous good looks and fey, sexy charm shine through as much as his gift for the disposable pop hook in the classics "Metal Guru," "Telegram Sam" and "Jeepster." Adam Ant's narration compares Bolan to the Beatles and calls him a punk progenitor—neither claim is appropriate. But let's hope today's young pop fans care enough about Bolan's legacy to provide a market for this tape.

## Benny Carter

(Sony Video LP)

"The key word for me is 'enjoyable,'" jazz giant Carter says in this fine installment of the *Jazz At The Smithsonian* series. "If it's not gonna be fun, let's not do it." "Fun" or not, *Benny Carter* is certainly enjoyable. Accompanied by violinist Joe Kennedy and a Kenny Barron-Georges Duvivier-Ronnie Bedford rhythm team, Carter swings through standards like "Take The A Train" and "Honeysuckle Rose." One small complaint is that he plays only alto sax, not trumpet or clarinet. The interview with Willis "Voice of America" Conover is, as usual in this series, too brief and insubstantive.

## Bass Guitar Master Class With John Entwistle

Finally, an instructional home music video review from someone besides Drummers Collective; Hot Licks had several guitar tapes featuring Arlen Roth before this came out. Here you can learn all about fingering, plectrum-playing, octave technique, chords, solos, hammer-ons and pull-offs (Ent-

wistle is the original Eddie Van Halen of the bass), phrasing, walking bass lines, harmonics, string-bending and more from one of rock's most innovative and respected bassists. The first half has Entwistle alone, playing and chatting; he's a bit uncomfortable, but his trademark deadpan drollery and sheer skill get him through. Things pick up when he's drawn out for jamming and dissection-through-discussion by guitarist Roth, obviously an old hand at such encounters. On-screen notation and an accompanying booklet make this as instructive as it is insightful. Didja know the guy was influenced not by bassists but guitarists—Duane Eddy in particular? (\$53.45 including postage and handling from Hot Licks Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 337, Pound Ridge, NY 10576)

## Tina Turner

*Live Private Dancer* (Sony Video LP)

Another consumer warning: This is the same show HBO ran as a special earlier this year. But if you didn't catch it then, check this out by all means. David Bowie's longtime video director David Mallet shot this last December in Birmingham, England, and in his usual razzle-dazzle style. A beaming Bowie emerges from backstage dry ice to duet with the Turner on "Tonight" and two versions of "Let's Dance" (the Chris Montez oldie and the Bowie newie). There's also a duet with Bryan Adams, Turner's opening act. Add her committed performance of superb *Private Dancer* material, and you've got an exceptional concert video.

**News:** Plenty of stuff coming soon: *Prince And The Revolution In Concert*, nearly two hours of the "Purple Rain" tour for just \$29.98 list (Warner Music Video)...*One Night With Blue Note* (Sony), a document of the all-star rebirth of the grand old jazz label...from RCA/Columbia MusicVision, *Bob Marley: Legend*, a collection of promo clips, concert footage and interviews; Go-Go's *Wild At The Greek*; and none other than *Mad Dogs And Englishmen...The Cars: Live 1984-85* from Vestron...Can you believe Godley and Creme spent \$200,000 on Sting's rather boring "Set Them Free" video clip? Seems they shot each band member in performance separately, then layered them all with Ultimatte to make it look like they were all playing onstage together—sort of. The justly renowned G&C have started their own video label called, cleverly enough, the Video Label.



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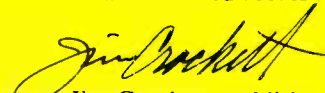
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**Palladino** from page 90

thesizers and drum machine. So I approached it in a more melodic way." It ranks as another of his best moments, and it also earned him a tour offer from Henley, which he turned down to record a second album with Young.

The same dedication led him to turn down Jimmy Page, who was looking for a fretless bassist for the Firm. A mutual friend had been trying to introduce Palladino to his boyhood idol for a while, and the meeting was finally arranged. "So I went for a blow with him and it turned out to be an audition. We just played 12-bar blues, and a few songs that he'd written with Paul Rodgers. We played 'Radioactive.' I really enjoyed it. Playing with Jimmy was fantastic."

There was the additional bonus of an all-Welsh rhythm section with drummer Chris Slade. "I thought about it for a week and decided not to do it."

Next, Pino showed up to do one track with the British duo Go West, "because they wanted to do something different. We just started redoing a few of the other ones, so I ended up on a couple of tracks." "Missing Persons" offered a chance to revive his Welsh reggae talent, and on the dance hit "Call Me," he drove the beat with some fancy, double-time thumb-slapping. But most of the tracks used drum machines, which Palladino finds limiting. "They're hard to play with, because you have to stay on the beat and you can't put a lot of feel into it. A machine doesn't have any

heart, and you can't get a groove."

As busy as he's been, Pino found time to play on a track for Elton John's next album. With even Chicago using a fretless bass, the instrument has snuck its way into the mainstream. "Before it was mainly jazz guys, Jaco and Mark Egan. But a lot more people are using it in pop music now. It's a lot more lyrical, and it sympathizes well with the vocals." Is that why Palladino plays exclusively fretless? "I get asked to play exclusively fretless. I take my fretted basses out at sessions and they say, 'But we don't want fretted bass. That's why we got you.'"

Palladino's latest goal is to master the Chapman Stick. "I went to see the guy who invented it, and he demonstrated it for fifteen minutes. I bought one, but I haven't had enough time for it. It's a bastard of an instrument."

He does play it a bit on *The Secret Of Association*, the new Paul Young album. Palladino's bass cuts through the ornate arrangements with a distinctive simplicity, from the staccato funk lines of "Tear Your Playhouse Down" to the gelatinous slapping of "Bite The Hand That Feeds" ("I was trying to get that Larry Graham sound"). Compared to the first album, Palladino says, *Secret* is "more serious, a lot less novelty." Young has his moments, particularly his cover of Tom Waits' disturbing "A Soldier's Things," but there are still some suggestions that the singer is a soul pretender, the Robert Palmer of the 80s.

"Paul's a great singer," Palladino insists. "He's got The Voice, which very few people have. There's more in America than in England. In fact, Danny Kootch said to me one day, about the Band Aid record, 'Tell me why every English singer except Paul has to go 'ooh-ah-ooh-ah-ooh' with their voice.' It's all Bryan Ferry and David Bowie. They're both fantastic, but I think they took a lot of their stuff from the old soul singers and then gilded it their own way. You have to look deeper than that, and pull your own style from it."

That's a good description of Palladino's uniqueness. He says his style is very traditional—"real roots stuff, mostly blues." But he still shops around for new inspiration. "I bought a tape today of guitarist Stanley Jordan. And it's just fantastic, beautiful playing. I get inspiration from all sorts of instruments. If you want to learn to solo in the Jaco fashion, you have to really get into bebop saxophone—Charlie Parker and all that. I'm not seriously into it. I just listen to everything and draw from whatever I can."

"The bass is still a supportive instrument," Palladino concludes. "It's great to anchor everything down, but if you can throw in a few licks, why not?"



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