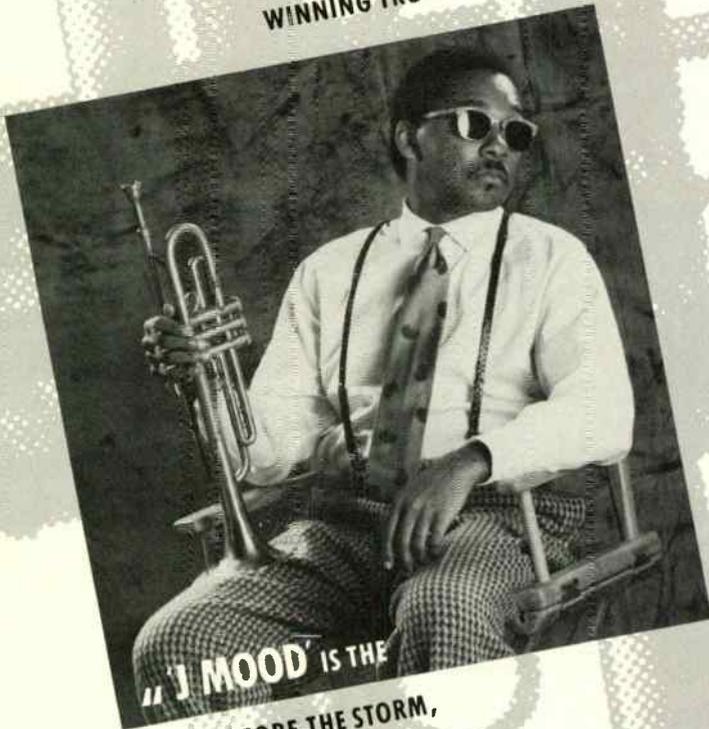


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So So

Peter Gabriel copying Phil Collins indeed! As if "In The Air Tonight" is anything more than a regurgitation of "Biko," with jumbled, nonsensical lyrics added. The musical world should applaud the "egghead" who still brings power to rock 'n' roll. In "Sledgehammer" he uses horns as they are meant to be, not perverting them to



augment fluff disco like "Susudio." At a time when Genesis has become no more than another vehicle for Phil Collins to push out his trademark top forty junk (will the man ever come up with a new melody?), Peter Gabriel is obviously the best thing that's ever come out of them.

*Chris de Francisco
East Brunswick, NJ*

I was abysmally disappointed by your cover story on Peter Gabriel. Why no discussion of Gabriel's individual videos, particularly since "Sledgehammer" is one of the few innovative offerings on MTV? Why not a closer look at the musicians Gabriel chose to

However, having also played with Peter Gabriel, I didn't expect it in your cover article and review on him. What a way to blow a wonderful opportunity. I can hear your editor now: "Let's get writers embarrassed by their educational background to review and interview Peter. Then they can concentrate on their own malaise and ignore Peter's amazing music-making. Let's especially ignore his widespread influence on pop music. Oh, and be sure the first question you ask him is about Phil Collins."

Nevertheless, Peter came off very well. I am worried about you boys, though. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.

*Philip Aaberg
Oakland, CA*

Strike Back

As a former Berklee administrative staff member, I read with great interest Jock Baird's account of the faculty strike. Dean Warrick Carter's comments comparing the teachers to plumbers and implying that what they do is not worth a decent wage brought back a flood of unpleasant memories about what it was like to work there.

Berklee claims to be the leading jazz institution in the nation, yet the administra-

ter spellers.—*Stephen Fricker, Annapolis MD.* You're review of GTR was GRT.—*Bill Perry, Gainesville, FL.* I just wish JD would put as much thought in his listening of these albums as he does his clever digs of them.—*Bob Wagner, Long Beach, CA.* You're magazine is too good to let something like this ruin parts of an otherwise fine publication.—*Scott Amori, E. Stroudsburg, PA.* Frankly, the fact that Mr. Considine makes a living doing this makes me ill.—*Jeffrey G. Mudd, St. Louis, MO.* If you said what you hated about it, I would have thought your sleazy comment was justified.—*Linda Gomez.* It should have read "BUL-SHT."—*Marty Martinez, Saddle Brook, NJ.* Aw, c'mon, would everybody lay off J.D. Considine already?—*Shari York, Toledo, OH.*

Review Review

The individual who wrote the one paragraph review of the new Sonny Boy Williamson collection on Chess Records termed him a "good but not great" blues harpist. Either this person is deaf, would prefer to spell "The Blues," "The Blooz," or must, in the fashion of all petty minds, diminish the importance of that which he doesn't understand. By this person's "standards"

Musician for giving it to him. Rob Tannenbaum's article was an insightful look at a brilliant boy and his band. I do have one question, though: Who was the older gent pictured with the band and where did he get that great looking watermelon?

*John McElligott, Jr.
Anaheim, CA*

We'd like to throw some tapes at Mitch Easter... with a brick attached—what a snob!

*Ruthie and John
West Palm Beach, FL*

In Bloom

Pam Bloom's piece on Milton Nascimento was a poetic and interesting journey through the environments that have shaped both Milton and his music. I think Ms. Bloom's style of writing is a fine credit to your publication!

*Kim Dumont
Rego Park, NY*

Walk On The Riled Side

I have always enjoyed Lou Reed's stuff but after reading the interview I have one question: What the hell is he talking about?

*Mark Wallace
St. Louis, MO*

Lou Reed? John Prine? Peter Gabriel? Steve Winwood? All in one issue? Adult music for adult people?? Could this be a trend? Please?

*Jay Eklond
Knox, NY*

Big Plans For Somebody

Congratulations to Vince Waldron of N. Hollywood, CA., winner of the *Musician*, Tower Records, IRS "Mitch Easter Guitar Giveaway." Vince now promises to record his self-composed epic rock opera action musical comedy, and practice his scales.

Eraata

Credit is due to Claudia Thompson for the fine black and white of Milton Nascimento in our Sept. issue.

LETTERS

work with, such as Stewart Copeland? What topics of interest *did* get covered were half-obscured by Hutchinson's less-than-incisive style of questioning. Bad job, folks.

*Kate De Groot
Watertown, NY*

The *smirk* has never been my favorite form of expression, but it seems to have become yours. Having recorded on Windham Hill for a year, I quite expected it in your article on that label.

tion's attitude toward its employees remains the same as it always has been: "We're the best, no thanks to you."

Name withheld

Re: JD

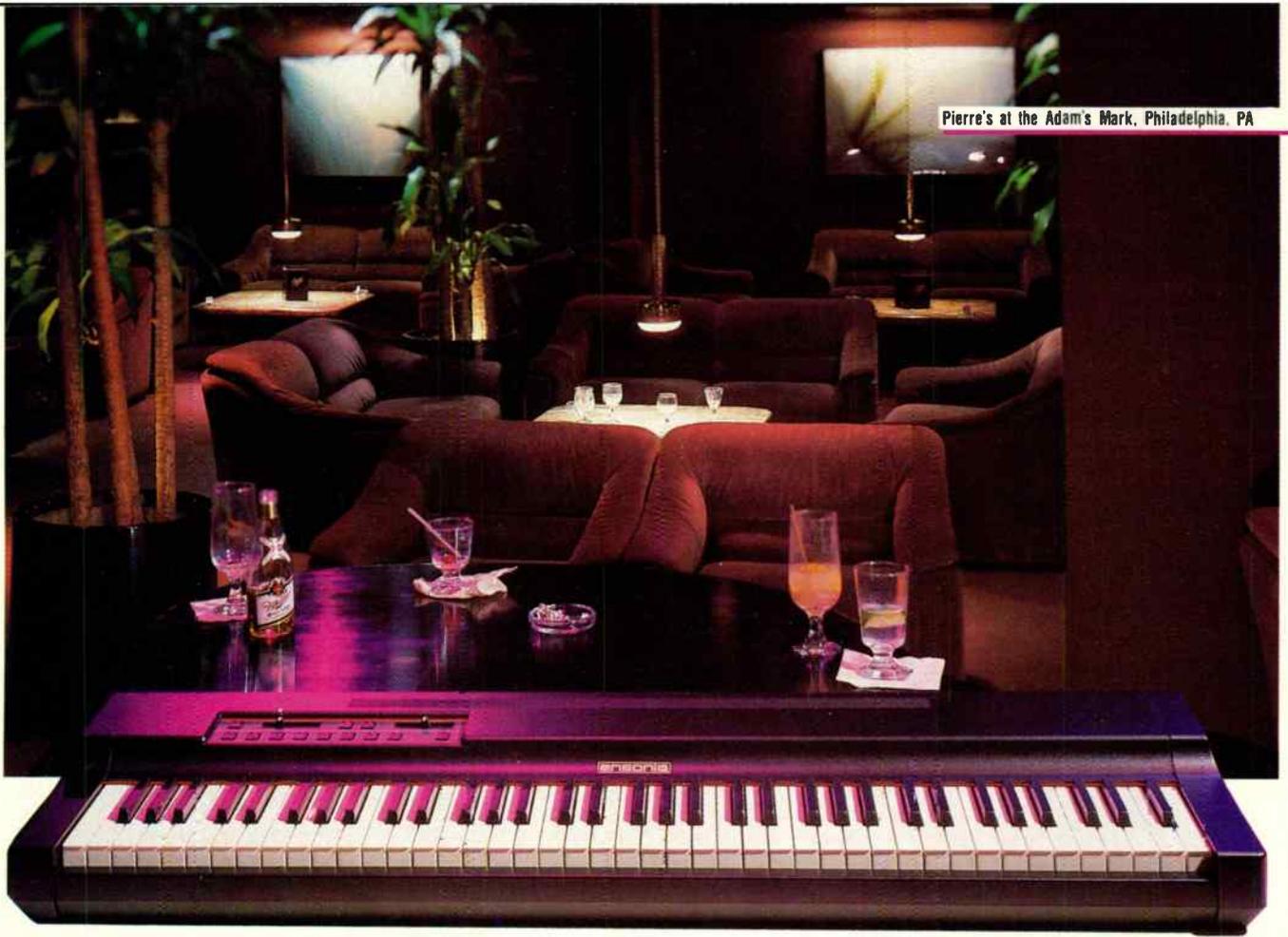
Ha, ha, ha. That sure was some review Considine did on GTR. "SHT." Ho, ho, ho. How pithy. How incisive. How moronic. If that's your idea of a review, I know several grade-school kids who share Considine's flair for journalism. And they're bet-

(and I use the term most loosely), Pablo Casals and John Coltrane also possessed only mediocre chops. Or perhaps the reviewer isn't acquainted with these players either?

*Emily D. Burton
New Haven, CT*

Mitch Pitch

Wake the kids and call the neighbors. Mitch Easter is finally getting the major-league press he has deserved for so long—and leave it to



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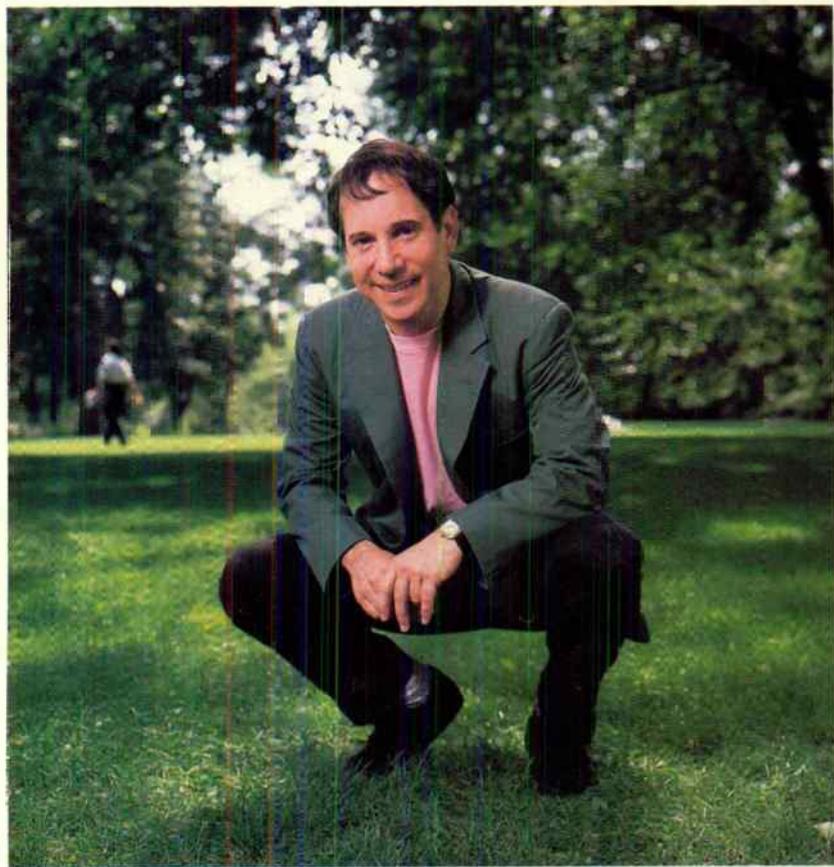
BY NELSON GEORGE

A SOUTH AFRICAN SEARCH FOR PEOPLE, NOT POLITICS

I am bored with the top forty. The fringes are much more interesting to me." Paul Simon is sitting in the offices of Warner Bros. Records high over that corporate temple known as Rockefeller Center. He's quite in earnest, though; *Graceland*, his marvelous new album, was recorded in such trendy pop music hot spots as Crowley, Louisiana and, most importantly, Johannesburg, South Africa.

"I've been recording since I was fifteen years old and I have been through a lot of different phases of rock 'n' roll and pop. There were times I was really into pop music and there have been times when I was less interested. This is a time when I am less interested. I've always been interested in music in different parts of the world. Even back in the '60s when I was perfectly in tune with what was going on I was interested in ska and blue-beat. I just liked it. It just took me a long time to realize that if you really liked it you can't imitate it; you can't take a bunch of studio musicians that you work with and give them a record and say, 'Here, play like this.' It doesn't work. If you love it and you want it to be real, you gotta go there. In the case of South Africa, when I heard this music was South African I said, 'Life would be easier if this music came from Zimbabwe or Kenya.' I thought after a while, 'Isn't that really illogical thinking?' This is where the music came from. What am I supposed to say, 'I don't love it because it comes from a country that happens to be ruled by a proto-fascist government?' Why should I love it less?"

So Simon, the forty-four-year-old writer of pop-folk anthems "Bridge Over Troubled Water," "The Sound Of Silence," etc., etc.—and creator of rich, varied and increasingly un-commercial solo albums (you don't remember *Hearts And Bones*? You are not alone)—em-



Trailblazing musician or boycott scab?

barked on the most musically ambitious and politically dangerous venture of his long career: recording South African pop music in South Africa in the face of communication roadblocks and a cultural boycott.

The inspiration for this journey into the heart of apartheid was *Gumboots: Accordion Jive Hits, Vol. II*, a compilation of South African bands Simon fell in love with in the summer of 1984. To most people weaned on American pop, the accordion is an overweight sponge packed with soap suds from Lawrence Welk's kitchen. But it's as central to the rhythmic and harmonic strengths of South African music as electric keyboards and guitar are here. For "township jive" or *mbaqanga*, "Sotho traditional" and "gum boots" (the name is derived from the heavy boots worn by black miners and railroad workers), you can't party in South Africa without an accordion player. Simon felt there was a kinship between the music on the *Gumboots* album and the '50s music he still treasures, like the Bobbettes' "Mr. Lee" and Laverne Baker's "Jim Dandy";

both are light, happy, danceable and more melodic than most contemporary black pop. After months of intense listening Simon was determined to record in the heart of Botha's land of darkness.

In February 1985 he and engineer Roy Halee flew to Johannesburg and a dinner at the home of Hilton Rosenthal, a record producer best known in the United States for his work with Juluka, an integrated South African band. "I didn't want to say anything until anyone asked me," Simon recalls. "There were three main guys that were the power in the black musicians' union. Two of them were at the party. They told me that before I came they took a vote as to whether they thought it would be a good or bad thing for them. They voted to have me come because they felt they had a music scene that was really ready to make a statement in international music. I would be somebody that could get their music heard. So it was to their advantage for me to come. I didn't know anything about this vote. I didn't know anyone was judging me or debating me. It was well thought out on their part. They didn't

know what I was going to do or how I was going to do it."

Neither did Simon. Upon his arrival he had only a few items on his agenda: He would pay the musicians triple scale in U.S. dollars (known in the trade as "Steve Gadd money"); he'd split songwriter revenues on all songs he wrote based on tracks cut in Johannesburg; and he'd seek out some musicians he heard on the *Gumboots* album. Otherwise he and Halee winged it.

"I didn't really know how I was going to record," Simon admits. "I was just gonna go into the studio. The way I did it was they played and I'd sing. The words didn't make sense. They'd play until they found a groove that I liked. I'd say, 'Let's

stay with that,' and I'd sing and try to put the thing into the shape of a song. For a lot of them you couldn't talk in terms of bars and keys. I was cut off in communication because I didn't know how to explain myself except this way. So I'd sing and try to show them the pattern—which was hard because the pattern of African music is different from the pattern of our music. I was trying to keep the essence of that form and still put a shape to it. I didn't have any words or anything. I listened to the music over and over again and tried to write words that were in the feel of music. I wasn't trying to write South African songs, I was trying to write Paul Simon songs without emasculating the essence of that music.

I'm not an expert on South African life. I got into the music as much as I could and I wrote about the stuff on my mind. For months I listened to South African music and I lived my life. I felt that it was part of my life."

Occasionally this approach led to some self-conscious incongruity between music and lyrics. On "I Know What I Know," General M.D. Shirinda & the Gaza Sisters *shangana* music from northern South Africa—marked by circular, swirling guitar lines and sassy female choral vocals—is the backdrop for a decidedly Western lyric with references to Fulbright scholarships and "the cinematographer's party." But other songs mesh beautifully. The eerie accordion-driven grooves of the band Lion of Matsekha counterpoint "Boy In The Bubble," a sharply observed look at technology in the third world. "Graceland," a rockabilly-flavored meditation on the contemporary desire for a sense of community, even if only at Elvis' grave, benefits from the expert play of guitarist Ray Phiri and bassist Baghiti Khumalo. Indeed, throughout the album Khumalo's fluid and inventive playing recalls the melodic brilliance of Motown's James Jamerson and the flamboyance of Stanley Clarke. Simon was so impressed that he is sponsoring the self-taught musician in this country, where he moved in September.

While Khumalo is Simon's biggest discovery, the prime beneficiary of *Graceland* will surely be the ten-member vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo. The group, led by Joseph Shabalala, has already had several albums released in the U.S., appeared in clubs here and was featured in the widely-seen documentary film *Rhythm Of Resistance: The Music of South Africa*. Ladysmith performed with Simon in May 1986 on *Saturday Night Live*, wearing traditional South African garb and providing harmonies so deep and strong as to make the Temptations weep. With six voices and a wonderful blend of doo-wop, Christian church harmonies and tribal phrasing, Ladysmith are already stars in South Africa; their contributions to *Graceland's* two most beautiful songs, "Diamonds On The Soles Of Her Shoes" and the haunting "Homeless," leave no doubt they'll be at least a major "semicult" act in the U.S.

Simon knew only one Ladysmith song, "Hello, Baby," when he arrived in Johannesburg. After Shabalala was introduced to him he found out about their local popularity and artistry. "He [Shabalala] brought me about twenty cassettes of



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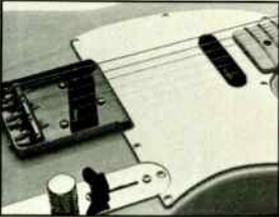
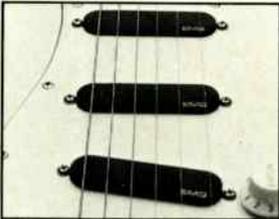
ON GEFEN RECORDS, CASSETTES AND COMPACT DISCS. © 1986 AMUSE AMERICA, INC.

their music," Simon says, "so I started listening to their stuff and found myself listening to Ladysmith constantly. I finally got up enough nerve to ask them to record with me. Then I had to write a song which was the only song I had to write in advance. Eventually I did my imitation of Ladysmith and sent them a tape, and told them to make any changes they wanted." Simon and Ladysmith met in London after the group had altered the harmony, added a verse in Zulu and part of another verse in English, which Simon completed with them. "All their albums are distinguished by the endings on the songs," Simon says. "I picked all the endings I liked and asked if I could use one." He used one of the group's endings and then Ladysmith's members wrote a special introduction for the song.

The result, "Homeless," is a four-part a cappella suite that Simon calls "the most collaborative thing on the album and the most original." It's hard to disagree. The closest thing to it in pop music is Crosby, Stills & Nash's "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," but that has none of the majesty or poignancy of this cross-cultural collaboration. Who needs Art Garfunkel when you can sing with ten guys who sound like funky angels? In contrast, the two songs recorded in the U.S.—"That Was Your Mother" with the zydeco band Rockin' Dopsie & his Cajun Twisters, and "All Around The World Or The Myth Of Fingerprints" with East Los Angeles rockers Los Lobos—while pleasing, don't resonate with the excitement of exploring new territory that energizes the South African songs.

Graceland is more than a meeting of two musical cultures; it is also a potential political football. Suppose the African National Congress accused Simon of exploiting politically naive musicians for his own mercenary ends? Of violating a cultural boycott in the process? Of making the trip as a propaganda tool to legitimize the South African government in the West? "I can categorically deny that I have anything to do with the South African government," the singer says quietly but firmly in the back of a limo heading through the crowded streets of Spanish Harlem on the way to LaGuardia airport. "I have nothing to do with that and I'm not in the least bit hesitant to repudiate that government. As far as the exploiting: I don't see that there is any. These guys voted for me to come there, and I'm paying a royalty to them and shared my writer's credit and brought them here. I love them and their music. I have deep respect for them. I don't see what the case is and I don't believe the

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African National Congress would say that. As far as I'm concerned, I think that what I'm doing can be in no way damaging. I don't think that anyone gets harmed by music, and if the music is good, then that's it."

Miami Steve Van Zandt approached Simon about appearing on the *Sun City* record. Simon turned him down, although he himself had refused a million-dollar offer to perform there. According to Simon, the demo of the Van Zandt-Arthur Baker collaboration, which mentioned the artists who *had* played there, turned him off: "I didn't think that was right." Not surprising when you notice that Linda Ronstadt, who sings background vocals on "Under African Skies," was one of the artists ridiculed on that original "Sun City" tape. Simon also notes that "Sun City" was being recorded while he was in the middle of *Graceland*; he feared reprisals against his collaborators if he participated in such a blatantly anti-South African effort.

"What I'm dealing with on a musical basis is just real interesting and good," he says quietly as the limo glides through Queens, not far from his native Forest Hills. "When you get outside of that and into the world and politics of it, it gets touchy. I can't make an overt attack on that government without having to consider the consequences to those guys who are living there.... This is a strange thing, but when you come back and try to say what you saw and what you did, people don't want to hear about anything that doesn't fit what they already have down as their perception. I go back again to why this music is important: because it's not about the political situation, it's about people."

Ultimately Simon, like most creative artists, attempts to put his art outside the swirl of history and friction of politics—in large part because authoritarian governments of the right and left have historically had little patience with the artistic temperament. Simon talks optimistically about a peaceful transfer of power, but is fearful of the bloody revolution many feel is inevitable in South Africa. "My personal belief is that the revolution always screws the artist," he says, standing in front of the twin-engine plane terminal at LaGuardia as the chauffeur checks his bags. "An artist by definition is supposed to wander freely into the areas of ambiguity and investigate the gray areas. I don't think they would be tolerated by a violent revolutionary government any more than by a militarist government. My true opinion is that artists get screwed over." ❏

HANK MOBLEY

BY STEVE BLOOM

REQUIEM FOR A BLUE NOTE HEAVYWEIGHT

February 22, 1985 promised to be a special night. The family was flying in from all over the country and Europe to participate in a much-awaited reunion. Blue Note, the seminal jazz label, was back, and over at Town Hall Manhattan Records president Bruce Lundvall was throwing the party. Everyone, from Jimmy Smith to Stanley Jordan, was invited. Would Hank Mobley be there too? Several days earlier I'd asked the concert's producer, Michael Cuscuna. "Sure he's going to play with the Jazz Messengers," he said.

I didn't know whether to believe him. Mobley, the quintessential Blue Note tenor saxophonist of the 50s and 60s, hadn't been heard from in at least a decade. Critic John Litweiler had spoken to him in 1979 while researching the liner notes for *A Slice Of The Top*, one of four never-issued Mobley masters Liberty/United Records was preparing for release. "Two lung operations rendered him musically inactive for long periods," Litweiler had discovered. "He's had two tenor saxophones stolen, and his remaining tenor leaks. As of this writing, he lacks the funds to purchase a new, adequate saxophone."

The show opened with a trio consisting of Walter Davis, Jr., Reggie Workman and Art Blakey. Soon they were joined by Freddie Hubbard, Johnnie Griffin and Curtis Fuller, all Jazz Messenger alumni. Had Mobley ever arrived? "Yeah, he was eight hours late and was stumbling around...you know," Cuscuna explained during intermission. "He may come out for the last number."

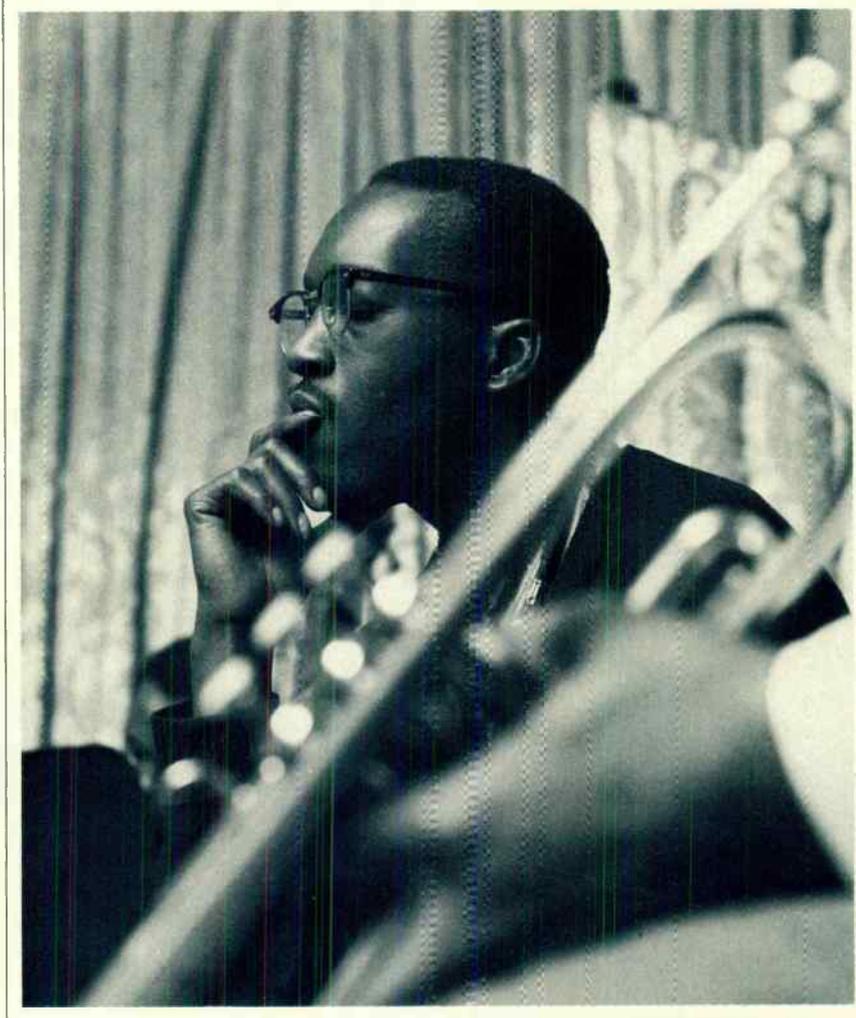
Five minutes past midnight, Mobley walked onstage. He was dressed to kill: burnt orange leisure suit, bright blue shirt open at the collar, and an oversized cap. But no horn. Hank reached for the mike and the crowd hushed. "Sometimes you can't get in contact with people in time," he muttered almost apologeti-

cally. Then he smiled. "I told Lou Donaldson he's the oldest person for Blue Note who plays saxophone. I thought it was me, but it's Lou. Thank you. Good night."

Mobley didn't play that night, nor very often before he succumbed to pneumonia last May. He was only fifty-five. And the sad truth about Hank Mobley is that he died a pauper and slave to the bottle.

innovator. He never hurt anyone but himself."

Hank Mobley was born in Eastman, Georgia in 1930, but his parents migrated to Newark two years later. His uncle Danny Mobley, a pianist and sometime bandleader, gave Hank the impetus to pick up the horn. In 1949 he auditioned for the Paul Gayten Orchestra. "He played alto, tenor and baritone, and did a lot of writing," Gayten told Leonard



"Sometimes you can't get in contact with people in time."

"He abused himself, he overdid it," says Max Roach, who hired Mobley in 1951. "What happened to Bird happened to Hank. It was alcohol more than drugs. It was painful to see."

"I'll remember him as a sweet, kind, loving man," says Horace Silver, who recruited Mobley into the original Jazz Messengers (along with Kenny Dorham, Art Blakey and Doug Watkins) in 1954. "He was a great musician, a thinker, an

Feather. "The band had to play mostly R&B. Whenever we got the chance, though, we'd stretch out on something like [Miles Davis'] 'Half Nelson,' and you could really hear that exciting things were going to happen with Hank. He was one of the greatest sidemen I ever had."

Though Mobley would eventually record more than thirty albums under his own name, he would always be considered the consummate sideman, not a

leader. After his two-year stint with Gayten, Mobley toured and recorded with Roach, Dizzy Gillespie and Silver. "He was consistent," says Silver. "Whenever he put the horn in his mouth he was playing something...not like the young guys today who are hot one minute, cold the next."

"Hank was a romanticist," says his childhood friend and bandmate with Roach, Walter Davis, Jr. "He loved tunes like 'I'm A Fool To Want You' and 'The Night Has A Thousand Eyes.' He played pretty even when he was playing bebop. Hank was a melodic person. But he grieved a lot. He was too sensitive. He found his remedies in the bottle and drugs."

Silver found that out in 1957. He and Mobley had left the Messengers and both were recording solo albums for various labels while touring together. (*Six Pieces Of Silver*, including "Señor Blues," is one of their more impressive Blue Note collaborations.) Recalls Silver, "Hank was heavily into drugs by then. Everyone in the band was clean except for him. I was afraid of getting busted. Philadelphia was especially hot; cops would come into a club and make you roll up your sleeves on the spot. I never fired Hank and he never quit on

me; it was mutual. I was relieved when he left."

Why was Mobley, like so many other jazz musicians at the time, attracted to heroin? Everyone I spoke to pointed the finger at Charles "Yardbird" Parker. "Bird was doin' it," says drummer Art Taylor. "He was doing a big experiment with music and drugs. It was the hip thing to do." But Walter Davis also explains that Bird was concerned about younger musicians mimicking his habit. "Me and Hank used to meet Bird at Max's house every afternoon. I remember Bird saying, 'I don't mind them copying my music, but I don't like them copying my getting high. They don't know *why* I'm getting high.'

"I didn't understand the *why* any more than anyone else," Davis admits. "To us it was a fad. It helped us get into the music."

Consider this stat: From November 25, 1956 to April 28, 1958—a period of seventeen months—Mobley recorded ten solo albums and played on twelve more. Few of these dates, however, are considered among Mobley's best. Silver suggests the reason: "I always had the feeling that he wrote the tunes the night before the session so he could pay for his junk the next day. The chord changes

were there, but the melodies weren't."

Taylor, who played on Kenny Burrell's *All Night Long* session with Mobley, offers this story: "Mal Waldron brought in one tune and Hank was supposed to bring in two, but didn't. Instead he went to a far corner of the studio after his arrival and wrote the tunes out in about ten minutes. I was amazed. I saw him do this on many record dates."

Mobley's addiction caught up to him in 1959 when he was arrested and sentenced to a year in prison. But in 1960 Mobley rejoined the Jazz Messengers, now led by Blakey and featuring Lee Morgan, whom Mobley would work closely with for most of the decade. Then he hired Miles Davis' rhythm section of Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones, and went to work on four albums (*Soul Station*, *Roll Call*, *Workout* and *Another Workout*) that Blue Note producer Cuscuna has said "capture him at his most brilliant period, fully charged without losing any of his subtlety or grace."

Perhaps more important to Mobley was the gig he landed between these recordings. By late 1960 he'd replaced Sonny Stitt in the Miles Davis Quintet. For the next two years he toured with Davis, who arguably never sounded bet-



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ter. Together they recorded *Someday My Prince Will Come, In Person At The Blackhawk* and *At Carnegie Hall*. But Eric Nisenson, author of the Davis biography *'Round About Midnight*, has painted an unfavorable portrait of the Davis-Mobley relationship.

"Miles was not altogether satisfied with Mobley," he reports. "Often, in the middle of one of his solos, Mobley could hear Miles' hoarse whisper telling some bystander how 'I wish I could get Sonny Rollins back in the group.' This might have been another of Miles' attempts at psych-manipulation, but its effect was merely to depress and discourage Mobley." In 1962, Mobley was replaced by George Coleman.

Nisenson goes on to say, in Davis' defense, that *"Friday And Saturday Night At The Blackhawk"* shows not only how uninspired Mobley was in Miles' group, but also how a less than exciting sideman could dispirit Miles' playing." But in Mobley's defense, he had never had to deal with someone who could be as devastating as Davis. Plus, John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins, both former stablemates of Miles, were tough acts to follow. Though cast as a hard bop player, Mobley was never really comfortable with that role. As he once said about his playing, "Not a big sound, not a small sound, but a round sound." Judging by his previous selections, Davis wanted the big sound.

Regardless of how active he was, Mobley never drew the attention and praise regularly lavished upon Rollins and Coltrane. "Sonny was always there," says Walter Davis, "playing his ass off. He had that New York style; it was the hippest tenor style of the day. But Sonny wasn't playing *all* the tenor in the world. Being overshadowed like that affected Hank."

Roach disagrees. "Hank never impressed me as being aggressive about recognition. He was a peer of Trane and Sonny; so was Jimmy Heath. A lot depends on where you are at a particular time. None of this bothered Hank. He was bigger than all that."

Parallels between Mobley and Coltrane are striking. Trane was born four years earlier than Mobley in North Carolina, but would move to Philadelphia—a short distance from Mobley's Newark. Both had their starts in R&B—Trane played with Earl Bostic, among others. Both apprenticed with Gillespie, became junkies, and played with Miles (a former junkie himself). In fact, Coltrane and Mobley can be heard together on one version of "Someday My Prince Will

Come," Trane as always aiming upwards, burning a path toward unexplored octaves, while Mobley laid back, content to jockey between the big and the small sound.

But by 1964, Mobley was sitting out as a result of his second drug bust. Coltrane, who'd dispensed with drugs, was now seeking spiritual enlightenment through his music. Recorded in December of that year, Trane's *A Love Supreme* would become the jazz album of 1965. Clearly, he had left Mobley in the dust.

Mobley entered the third phase of his career in 1965 with the aptly titled *The Turnaround*. Before suffering his last drug setback in 1968, he worked steadily for Blue Note, contributing to eighteen dates, of which half were his own. He spent most of 1969 and 1970 in Paris, recording *The Flip* and several dates with Archie Shepp. In 1972, he made his last album; titled *Breakthrough*, it was anything but.

The 70s were not good to Hank Mobley. He began drinking heavily. Then he lost a lung. It became increasingly difficult for him to blow. Silver remembers meeting Mobley at the Village Vanguard in New York shortly after he had had the lung removed. "We were sitting at the bar so I offered to buy him something to drink. He ordered a double of hard liquor. I said, 'C'mon, Hank—you shouldn't be drinking that.' But he ordered it and I paid for it. If you won't reach out to help yourself how can people help you?"

In conversations with friends and associates of Mobley's this was a constant refrain: alcohol and a man too stubborn to change his ways. But why was Mobley so prone to addiction? What was missing in his life that had to be replaced by the haze of drugs and drink?

Mobley grew up in Elizabeth, New Jersey (near Newark) with his mother; his father had moved to Philadelphia and remarried. Mobley had no siblings and never married or had any children of his own. His mother died in the 50s, before she could see her son "make it" with Miles Davis. "That hurt him, it really got to him," says Walter Davis. With his mother gone, Mobley had "no roots, no support." Women came in and out of his life, but none stayed very long. "He wanted something from these ladies that he didn't get," Davis says. "That might have had a lot to do with his problems."

Mobley preferred Philadelphia to New York, opting for the former's slower pace. In his last years he was living in a boarding house where he practiced occasionally. But, according to Don Sickler,

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one of his closest friends and a trumpet player, Mobley's heart wasn't in it. "He knew damn well if he came up to New York I could've got him a record date. I had invitations waiting for him. We'd talk about him coming up all the time. He'd say he'd call me, then he wouldn't. He never had himself together. He couldn't get off the booze."

In addition to the lung and alcohol problems, Mobley had tuberculosis. "He was in and out of the hospital," Sickler says. "We never knew where he was. Many times he would just do a disappearing act. We'd call and his number had been changed. Then we'd start calling all over Philadelphia—to Wilbur Ware, Philly Joe. A number of times Eloise (Philly Joe's wife) had to go out and find him.

"Hank was a very private person. Very independent. You couldn't push him. But he was not a strong person. Hank didn't want to fight back enough. It wasn't important enough to him, so he sloughed off the music. One time he asked me, 'Don't you think I've made enough records?'"

"I used to get him talking about the old days," Sickler continues. "When we first met he was sour on the whole musical thing. He couldn't remember a lot of song titles. He'd totally forgotten about the *Someday My Prince Will Come* album. I asked him if he was intimidated playing with Trane. He said, 'I never thought about that. I just played like Hank Mobley.'"

Sickler tried to get him playing again. When Mobley would stay at Sickler's loft/studio in New York, musicians like Walter Bishop, Jr. and Michael Carvin would stop by and jam with him. But, Sickler grimaces, "Hank sounded out of shape. He had shortness of breath. And his horn was in bad condition."

Finally, in January of this year, Mobley agreed to perform at the Angry Squire, a New York club. I saw the flyer and made sure I attended the gig. Everything Sickler said about Mobley was true. He sounded like someone just learning how to play. "He sounded better the next night," Sickler says, "but it was still not where it was supposed to be. Hank couldn't drink and play. He was going to have to lay off if he ever was going to get it happening again."

Mobley returned to Philadelphia. Says Michael Cuscuna, "Philly Joe's death left him isolated. He had no one to turn to down there. Every time he went back to Philadelphia was another setback."

Sweet, sensitive, humble Hank Mobley died in a Philadelphia hospital four months later. ☐

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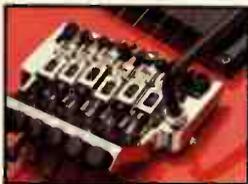
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RODNEY CROWELL

BY BEN SANDMEL

PROGRESSIVE COUNTRY'S LEADING LIGHT IS READY TO ROCK

I'm not the savior of country music," Rodney Crowell states with quiet conviction. "I never thought I was, and I don't plan to be." Such sentiments might surprise those fans and critics who have lionized Crowell as a back-to-basics purist. Crowell's fourth album, *Street Language*, which he co-produced with Booker T. Jones, may really jolt his admirers: the country influence is still evident, but it shares equal time with both a big rock sound and unabashed mainstream pop. Some of the material lacks the strong stamp of personality which distinguishes Crowell's best work, but there are also several gems. The vocals are far more passionate than anything he has ever recorded.

"I feel great," Crowell says, sitting back in a comfortable chair in his honey Nashville office. "Usually when I finish an album I feel drained." Crowell is soft-spoken, friendly and direct, with a distinct aura of surplus energy. He gives the light-footed impression of an alert shortstop who's keyed-up and ready for action. This quiet intensity suggests equal levels of street savvy and artistic abstraction; his demeanor is urbane and hip, with a south Texas accent the only hint of 'country.' "Eventually," Crowell reflects, "I'd like to make all my statements on record or onstage. But in the adult world there are certain things, like this interview, that you've just got to do."

"In a way I feel like *Street Language* is my first record. It's been five years since my last one, and I've changed a lot since

then. What I wanted to do on this one was to be as aggressive as I could be, and be sure that my performance was intense, and true, and up in the listener's face." Crowell laughs now about his earlier fears of being too eclectic. "Actually," he says, "I think I'm more eclectic now than I ever was."

Eclecticism has been a mixed blessing for Crowell all along. He's been lauded as a major creative force in progressive country since emerging ten years ago as a guitarist in Emmylou Harris' Hot Band. It's not as an instrumentalist that Crowell made his mark, though, but as a producer, vocalist and, especially, a songwriter. "I'm an upheaval kind of guy," Crowell says with a grin about his penchant for on-the-edge themes. His articulate, often anguished lyrics transcend Nash-Vegas fluff with earthy imagery and wry world-weariness; his catalog of songs—including "Ain't Livin' Long Like This," "Til I Can Gain Control Again," "Leavin' Louisiana In The Broad Daylight" and "Shame On The Moon"—

livered in a bittersweet baritone, set him apart as a uniquely honest and affecting singer.

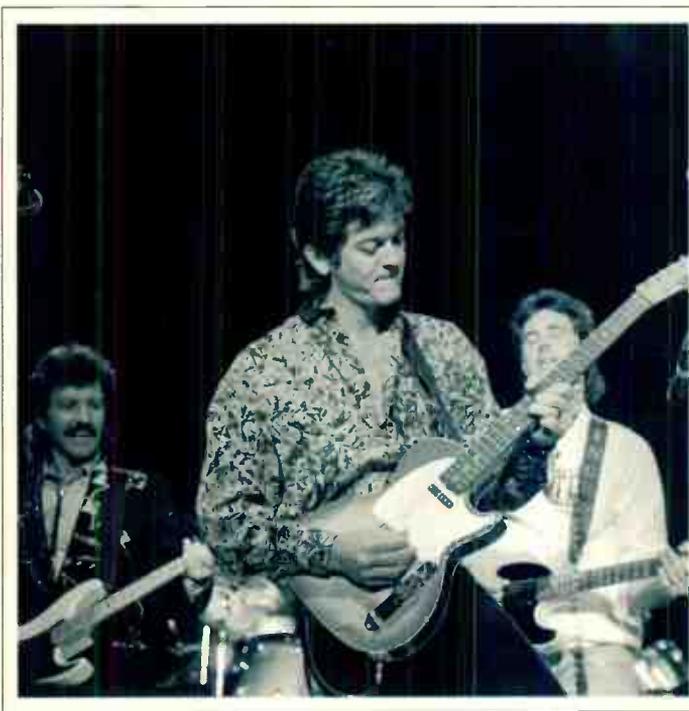
Calling Crowell a master of all trades would not really be too far off. His contribution to contemporary music is already substantial, and still evolving. Nevertheless, Crowell has yet to succeed as a solo artist. Since leaving the Hot Band in '78, he has cut three albums; all were critically praised, but none sold well. The first (*Ain't Livin' Long Like This*, produced by Harris mentor Brian Ahern) was stiff and constrained. But thanks to Crowell's production involvement, the next two—*But What Will The Neighbors Think* (1980) and *Rodney Crowell* (1981)—succeeded as multi-faceted country gems.

And therein lies the problem. The albums were simply too good—too diverse, too challenging—for mass-market appeal. Crowell's music, like that of such rugged individualists as Joe Ely and John Prine, has been coming from a commercial netherworld that's excessively cerebral for mainstream country, but overly countrified for mainstream rock. "Take someone like Ricky Skaggs," Crowell comments. "He's an honest guy making honest music, and he deserves success. Ricky's music is soothing, so you open the door and let him in, whereas Joe Ely is out there on the edge where you gotta take a chance with the guy. Personally I prefer that dark edge, that nighttime thing, but the public doesn't want to take that chance."

In 1984 Crowell hired producer David Malloy, whose credits would later include Rosanne Cash's Grammy-winning "I Don't Know Why You Don't Want Me." "Had I been working with an outside producer who had a good commercial ear," Crowell said at the time, "he might have done for me what I was doing for

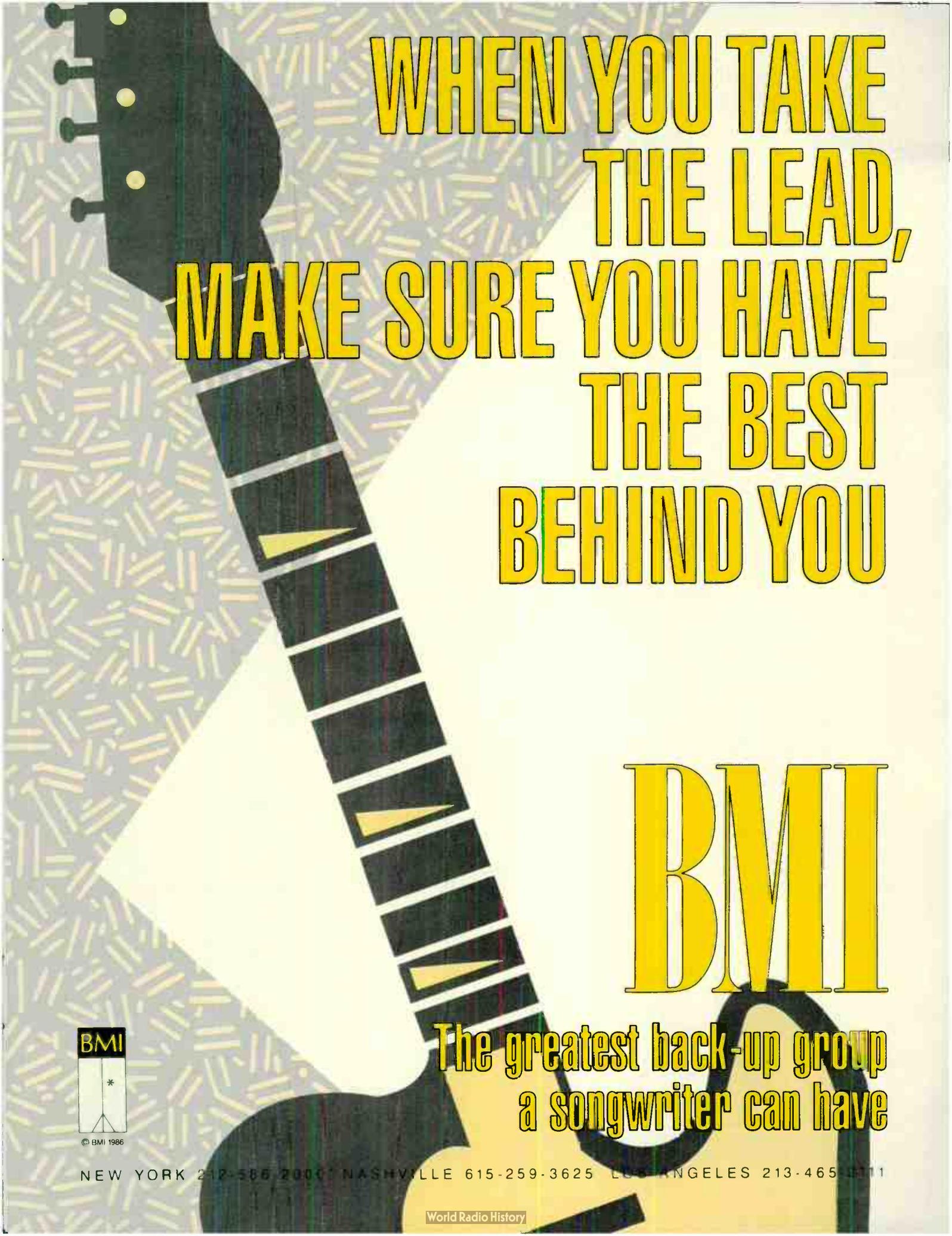
other people, like Rosanne. He might have pulled the right things out of me, and made me perform more dynamically. I feel like there was a veil between me and my audience on those records."

With Malloy at the console, Crowell made what he then called "my best, most voluptuous record ever." Like *Street*



"Performing for me is the kick."

has been tapped by artists like Harris, Waylon Jennings and Bob Seger. Crowell's productions—most notably for his wife, Rosanne Cash, whose *Seven Year Ache* album was a C&W smash—have been acclaimed for their streamlined, live-in-the-studio small-band sound. And Crowell's soulful vocals, de-



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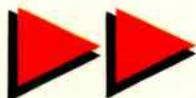
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real deep Southern country root music. I played drums with my dad; he had a little group that played beer joints and honky-tonks in Houston, where I grew up. I started with him when I was eleven, back in 1961.

"If the Depression hadn't forced my dad to work construction, he might have tried his talent as a full-time musician. He knew a million old country songs. In a spiritual sense, Hank Williams was like one of our family. So I understand that music better than any other kind, and I understand the people too. Then the Beatles came along and just blew me away. Those two sources are a big part of where I'm coming from, along with Chuck Berry, Dylan, J.J. Cale, Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt. I never saw myself as purely country to begin with." Sixties soul music was also a factor; on the new album's "When The Blue Hour Comes," Crowell told the band, "What we're trying to do here is 'Percy Sledge meets the Beatles.'"

"While I was working on *Street Language*," Crowell says, "I really only listened to two things—Dylan's *Infidels* and *Brothers In Arms* by Dire Straits. So I am moving away from country in a sense, but I'm not trying to kick dirt in country's face; it's just that your tastes change. 'When I'm Free Again' is as country as anything I've ever recorded, and 'Oh King Richard' could be worked as a country record. I'd still be tickled to death if George Jones recorded one of my songs—that'd be like hearing my lyrics sung by a '57 Chevy. But my basic attitude these days, is 'Hey—I want to play! Give me a stage and some people to play to.'" 

MACHINE LANGUAGE

I've got a '63 Fender Stratocaster that I love, that's my main electric instrument, and I have two Fender Twin Reverb amps that I use, beefed up. I record my acoustic guitars through a Scholz Rockman. I have an old 1949 Martin D-18, an old Martin New Yorker that I use for writing, and a Gibson J-200 acoustic that I use onstage. I got a bunch of other guitars, but those are the ones I really work with.

"As far as studio equipment, though I'm not a slave to technology, I do know more than I might always let on, as far as using all the latest stuff. I prefer either a Neve or a Trident console, preferably the A-800 Studer analog machine, with mainly AMS outboard equipment, any variation of digital delay stuff, and of course some good old 15 ips slapback. One piece of equipment I like is the Yamaha REV-7, for echo."

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FREDDIE JACKSON

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When Freddie Jackson talks about singing, it's with the wide-eyed wonderment of the neighborhood religious zealot. "For me," he says reverently of his art form, "it's something that takes place on the inside. It's an inner, emotional feeling." Then he switches gears and starts talking about the regimen of "keeping my vocal cords clean, getting the run of my breath, knowing how to condition myself." Suddenly the religious zealot has become a finely tuned athlete, pumping it up for the final game of a tough NBA championship series.

You can't blame Jackson for taking such an intense, active interest in his voice.

That voice, along with no small amount of marketing savvy, pushed his debut album, *Rock Me Tonight*, over the top and into platinum territory. And he's counting on that voice for a repeat of last year's success as he prepares his follow-up album.

So Jackson understandably takes good care of his warm, airy tenor—a task he says becomes quite difficult when he has to work every night. "When you're touring, your voice has a tendency sometimes to get a little deeper. You become a little tired. When I started on my new album, I had just gotten off an eighty-nine-city tour. My voice was real raspy. I was locking into the songs, but I didn't have that edge that I really wanted. Eventually, it all started coming into place when I had more time to relax myself."

Jackson says his voice is also the occasional victim of his own moods. "There was one situation where I went in

to do a track and some things had happened with my family and it really just depressed me. My whole vocal... I just locked up. I wasn't able to perform the way I would've if I felt jubilant or happy."

For all that, though, he is happy to be riding a wave.. The recent successes of Luther Vandross, Melis'a Morgan, Bobby Womack and

Jackson attest that good, solid R&B singing is back with a vengeance. Not so long ago, Jackson quips, if a producer had a really hot track he'd step into the hallway and say, "'Excuse me, miss, can you sing? Come on in.' Now it's a little more crucial than that. I'm glad good singing has come back."

— Leonard Pitts, Jr.

KBC BAND

Doing Their Bit For Unemployment

Marty [Balin] and I had been getting together to write a song or two even before I left the Starship, so it was something to fall back on." Paul Kantner, one third of the new KBC Band, snickers and shrugs. "When I finally left [the Starship], working on those tunes was the next logical step. What it came down to was that I was unemployed, and it was something to do. It was that simple."

As Balin and Kantner worked on the new material, bassist Jack Casady came

kind of friction makes for good songwriting."

After a year and a half of rehearsing and sifting the local pool of musical talent, the band (with additional guitar, sax, keyboards and drums) played their first date as KBC in March, 1985. By December they had a flashy multi-media presentation. ("We're interested in a more interactive approach," Kantner says.) This June the KBC Band signed with Arista Records; Kantner cites Arista president Clive Davis' involvement as influencing the group's choice of label.

"It was a nice change to work with someone who knows music, and knows what you're trying to do. When Clive criticizes us it's not like some record execs who come in and offer pointless suggestions, just 'cause



back into the fold; the new group evolved, as they say in California, in a fairly organic manner. "We all write, both together and on our own," Kantner says, "and we're also looking at material from outside the band. We still have our differences, but that

they think that's what they're getting paid for. Clive does his homework. Even if we think he's wrong on something, he'll have a good reason for wanting the change. I like working with people who are daring enough to stick their nose in." — j. poet

THE B-52's

Back, But Not Really

It seems absurd to go out on tour and do 'Rock Lobster' without Ricky," drummer/guitarist/keyboard player Keith

Wilson's death. "We realized we couldn't tour," singer keyboardist Kate Pierson says, "so we decided to promote this album and then see what we *could* do."

Evidently the B-52's' confidence in their audience exceeds their label's. "The record company thought that fans might think [the LP] is too different," Pierson notes. "They were shocked; they thought it was really a depar-

song, more or less," Pierson recalls. "Ricky, Keith and Cindy collaborated on a few, Fred did one and I did a song." The rest were traditional group affairs.

The B-52's have done no group recording for a year, and only one concert (at the Rock in Rio festival, joined onstage by Talking Heads' Tina Weymouth and Chris Frantz) since 1983. They have no sure plans to go back

RIAA Goes To Washington

The New York-based Recording Industry Association of America is moving to Washington, D.C., but not to scope out the go-go scene. In late August the group's executive committee decided to relocate in keeping with the RIAA's increased lobbying activities.

The heightened political consciousness is more than a matter of civic virtue. The RIAA has been pushing for federal home-taping legislation (i.e. a tax on blank tape or tape recorders). The Association will also undoubtedly be interested in an imminent Senate investigation of the record industry. Leading that investigation will be Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), one of the senators at the infamous "Hearing on Record Labeling" last September. Gore's even more infamous wife Tipper is a vice president of the Parents Music Resource Center, the group that raised the specter of song censorship last year.

RIAA president Stanley



FACES

Strickland says, explaining why the B-52's won't be coming to your town soon; the October, 1985 death of guitarist Ricky Wilson hit the close-knit band very hard. "It's not a question of getting another guitarist and pressing on," Strickland notes. At this stage the B-52's are being, in his word, "careful," only committing to release *Bouncing Off The Satellites*, the LP that British producer Tony Mansfield completed before

ture." The album's song sequence was changed to give prominence to "Summer Of Love" (the LP's first single) and "Girl From Ipanema Goes To Greenland"; there's no sign of Fred Schneider's vocals until the fourth cut.

In 1984 Schneider's own record fueled rumors of a B-52's split. Instead, they approached *Bouncing Off The Satellites* as an egalitarian creative effort. "We each decided to be responsible for a

in the studio. They're caught in a bind between those who want them to change and those who would have them re-record variants on "Rock Lobster." Using the new LP as a ballot, they've put their fate to a vote of confidence. Does America want four more years of delicious tackiness? Or have circumstances and the national mood done in these fine young patriots? Stay tuned for the results.

— Ira Robbins

Gortikov was less than convincing in his testimony before the senators at the record-labeling hearing. Coincidentally or not, Gortikov will not relocate to Washington. The RIAA is seeking a political specialist to take over as president. Gortikov, who's held that position for fourteen years, will become chairperson of the board. The RIAA should be established in the nation's capital by early next year.



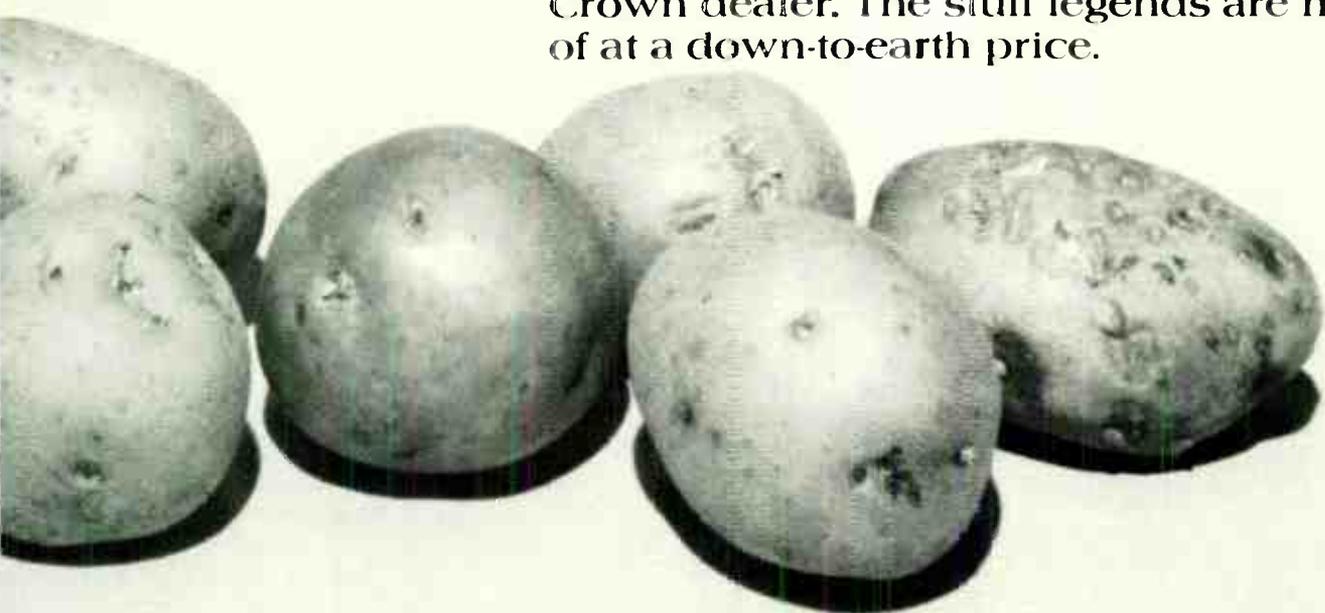
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commands attention with his missile-silo pompadour. Prince Andrew and Tina Turner look-alikes (plus some ex-girlfriends of the real Prince A.) hobnob with rock-star friends of the band. In all, 700 winners and diners create a circus spectacle, complete with fireworks display. Queen likes to do things big. As ringleaders of this little gathering, they've reportedly forked out £70,000.

The band has plenty to celebrate. They just finished back-to-back sellouts at Wembley Stadium. They can relax before the next sold-out venue on their eight-week tour. And if ever a band needed to unwind, it was Queen. True, *A Kind Of Magic*, their fourteenth LP and first in two years, had entered the British charts at number one. Yet at the soundcheck the night before the July 11 and 12 Wembley dates, there was a palpable tension backstage in the Queen encampment, a blue funk darkened by the pouring rain.

Their magic homecoming had so far resembled a curse. The stage crew's plans were off four feet from the actual stadium dimensions—which meant an all-nighter to get the ramps, stairs and overhead 20x30-foot Starvision screen (counterbalanced by a huge reservoir of water) into place. The soundcheck started late and had to be cut short without properly testing the p.a. Rock 'n' roll at Wembley after ten p.m. earns the offender a princely £10,000 fine.

Freddie Mercury (Bulsara) disappeared. John Deacon hustled away for an interview. Roger Taylor retired to a trailer with his kids. Brian May, Queen's worrier, looked as if he'd lost his last friend in the world. "If only tomorrow were over," the guitarist mused, fidgeting with his mineral water. "It's like everyone I've ever known will be here."

The story had a happy ending. Queen couldn't stop the rain, which unmercifully drenched only their headlining portion of the six-hour Friday concert, but then stopped magically right before they went on Saturday evening. They could and did wow a sea of 144,000 fans in two nights with a flashy, high-tech production that left little doubt as to their champion status—at least in these quarters.

Queen is perhaps the biggest anomaly in rock: a once dubiously androgynous glitter band, formed when spectacle was everything, alive and well fifteen years later. Serious Queen dethroners, understandably nauseated by frilly clothes, crowns spewing dry ice and nude-chicks-on-bicycles posters, have missed the point. The indulgent theatrics are part of the band's extravagant sense of humor.

Intentional outrageousness and camp carried to the max create a comic-book world that counterpoints the music, which can stand on its own, if four platinum and nine gold albums mean anything. Queen, guilty as charged, yet so misunderstood, has laughed all the way to the bank.

Bigger and better. That's the Queen live credo according to Mercury, who once crowed, "We're the Cecil B. De Mille of rock 'n' roll." Arrogant? Sure. But Queen has the intelligence to pull it off and put us on.

Check their degrees: May—physics; Mercury—illustration and graphic design; Taylor—biology; Deacon—electronics. But



Gary Glitter, Samantha Fox and Mercury at post-Wembley party.

brains alone aren't enough. The key to survival is adaptability, and Queen has somehow managed to navigate among musical waves to build an enormous, unbelievably loyal following of all ages (judging from the Wembley crowd). They routinely break and re-set attendance records around the globe. And they do it despite a volatile ego mix that would splinter a dozen lesser groups.

"We have a few common aims," May admits. "But apart from that, we're totally different in personality. It's luck and because we worked at it that we've managed to find an equilibrium."

There's flamboyant singer Mercury, the elder statesman at age forty. His posturings are a lightning rod that attracts Queen's most passionate love/hate factions. He cavorts, dances, does push-ups, bares his soul and chest working the audience like a master showman/shaman. Offstage he's off limits to the press, and a Praetorian phalanx keeps unfamiliar faces away. The word is Freddie is painfully shy. Hmmm....

May, a former Ph.D. candidate in astronomy, is the tall, soft-spoken musical heart of Queen—a Mr. Class and Consciousness who takes his role very seriously. He appears to have aged about five minutes in the last ten years. His thick, tip-dyed locks are today's look; the white clogs he favors are from another pre-sensible-shoes era. Taylor, the jovial drummer and car fanatic, is smooth, unflappable, a cool high-harmony specialist and writer of recent Queen hits. Bassist Deacon seems a bit of a wag, with a voice that marks him as either a charmer or a blarneymonger. All have residences in the area; May and Taylor, though, haven't decamped just

because they're back home. The idea is, if you're on the road, stay there.

So their suite at the Mayfair Hotel serves as a meeting spot to discuss individually Queen's fortunes and the "Magic" show. It's an off day before the Wembley gigs. Both are a tad weary from the "raw energy" expended last night in Newcastle, an industrial city they hadn't visited in six years. With only a few hours until the soundcheck, they catch their second wind once the talk turns to "One Vision," Queen's first group collaboration and the dramatic concert opener.

"It was one of those times when we went into the studio on spec," May explains. "I had a couple of riffs, Roger had a sequence of words. We started playing around and putting things together... There was a moment when we turned it up loud, and it sounded great. We knew then we had the germ of something exciting."

The "solidarity" lyrics might be construed as a Queen rallying anthem.



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May, Queen's designated worrier.

Speculation was that their acclaimed 1985 Live Aid appearance at Wembley provided the impetus. May dismisses this notion. "One Vision' was inspired by our travels around the world in visits to Rio and Argentina at a time just before the conflict [with Great Britain] became overt." Taylor later adds that a song he'd written about Martin Luther King, "One Man, One Soul, One Vision," went into "Vision" and his hit, "A Kind Of Magic."

Queen's attempt at a single artistic vision was one royal pain. "It was very strange," Taylor admits incredulously. "We swore afterwards we'd never do it again. There were so many arguments. I had a two-day argument with Brian that it should be all in one tempo, instead of slowing down."

Like the single, the new album is their most democratic to date. Each member contributed two tunes. (Mercury and Deacon share credits on two songs and have one solo apiece.) It's also the closest they've come to a soundtrack record since *Flash Gordon*: Six of the nine cuts were used in movies.

Consequently *A Kind Of Magic* is a kind of patchwork. Obvious single material exists alongside riff-ridden marginal filler. The LP's diffuseness shows how equality invites inconsistency. Yet, as May sees it, letting everyone have a "crack of the whip" promotes stability.

"More groups break up through arguments over authorship of songs than anything else," he says. "You're a performer in a band, you get to play an instrument, but you also have ideas you want to put across. If the situation comes about where you're frustrated in that way, then it's a big thing, a terminal frustration. There's no cure for that."

Except to step outside the band. After Queen's previous LP *The Works* and tour dates that found them kicking off the Rock in Rio festival before 250,000 in

BRIAN MAY ON ROCK GUITAR PLAYING

On Gestalt: If true rock guitar playing is to be taught in school alongside, say the piano, the violin, or even the classical guitar, it needs a very careful approach. There is a grave danger of institutionalizing it, robbing it of much of its living character, and worse still, removing its very appeal to the student as a means of purely personal expression and escape, which would be a tragedy.

The technique of rock guitar playing has now grown up over a generation, to such a point that it would be quite possible to lay down a whole system of rules regarding fingering, bending, position of the hands, and so on. However, it is my experience that most important rock guitarists have developed their style of playing by "breaking the rules" and finding their own ways. I would not suggest that a totally formal training cannot produce a great rock player, only that I have never seen it happen.

Of course, to decorously ignore the sexual side of rock music is to put it absurdly out of context. There is no doubt that something about the guitar's sound, feel and shape make it uniquely suitable for evoking the physical side of love, though it is capable also of expressing much more subtle emotions. It is very often the boy who would blush and stammer if faced with the prospect of making an erotic suggestion to the girl sitting beside him, who will glory in screaming the same suggestion onstage with a guitar slung around his neck.

On Necks: Most rock guitarists have a cambered fingerboard; the frets are slightly curved, giving a slight easing of fingering. Many, but not all players prefer a fairly wide neck with a thin profile. If the width across the strings is too narrow, string "bending" can be awkward. The finish on the fingerboard is quite important if the frets are low, since the skin of the fingers is in contact while pushing a string across the fingerboard. A "slippery" surface can be an advantage—say polished ebony or rosewood. A different solution to this particular problem has been adopted by such guitarists as Richie Blackmore, Tony Iommi and Yngwie Malmsteen (noticeably all highly fluid players). They have had the material between the frets routed out. A light touch is obviously necessary, but all problems of friction disappear since the finger ends are never in contact with the fingerboard surface. Commercial manufacturers please note!

On Technology: Some guitars have volume controls for each pick-up, but most players I have met prefer a single "master" volume control. It is debatable whether any tone control is necessary (for instance Edward Van Halen takes them out!) but most models have a variable treble cut which will remove excess harshness for certain passages if necessary. Simplicity is a cardinal virtue for live work, and in my opinion any fancy controls such as slides, or worse still, electronic touch controls, are best avoided.

On Picks: A thin pliable pick gives a speedy

right hand action which is little impeded by contact with the strings. A somewhat pointed corner emphasizes this, and produces a wiry sound. Such a pick is often favored by rhythm (chord) players. The opposite end of the spectrum is a completely rigid object, rounded at the playing end. Such a pick is held more loosely, and all movements associated with the contact, deflection and release of the string are transmitted directly to the fingers. This gives an infinite feel, preferred by many players, and more variety of tones. One variation, used by the author, is a small coin, which depending on the angle at which it is held, can produce a smooth tone, or a rasping attack. This is also the cheapest pick on the market!

On Sound: Special pick grips have been developed by many players to produce harmonics on fretted notes. To produce the first harmonic (octave) a favorite technique is to move the picking position to a point half-way along the currently vibrating length of string and incorporate into the picking action a light brushing of the string with the finger following the impact of the pick. The touch of the finger damps out the fundamental note, and leaves the octave harmonic ringing. Applying this technique to different points on the string produces different harmonics, and the power of these shrill notes can be enhanced by using a pick-up combination which picks them up strongly (e.g. the fingerboard and center pick-ups switched out of phase, or the bridge pick-up on its own). Harmonics can also be produced by separately damping at a different point from the picking position.

When the amplifier is driven into saturation, the guitar is no longer truly polyphonic—that is, many chords become hopelessly messy, as their component notes and their associated harmonics interfere with each other, producing sum and difference frequencies which merge as notes unrelated to the intended chord. The vocabulary of high level guitar chords has evolved by a (perhaps partly unconscious) selection of those intervals which sound the best. A perfect fifth sounds pleasantly thick and is acceptable with any degree of distortion (since the sum and difference notes generated in this case are "fifths" themselves). The guitar, of course, has an equal temperament scale as does the piano, and so cannot in theory make perfect fifths, and striking a fifth may produce a slow beating. However, if one of the strings is fine-tuned by slightly pulling it to one side, the beats can be eliminated. Again this sometimes becomes an unconscious correction.

Octaves and fourths also work well, but thirds and sixths are noticeably discordant. Similar considerations apply to whole chords—for instance the simple A chord in the first position is more often than not played with the second string damped with the left hand or simply not struck, to eliminate the troublesome "third."

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January, 1985, then trekking to Australia and Japan, solo projects emerged from each corner. Mercury released an album, *Mr. Bad Guy*, which disappeared as permanently as Jimmy Hoffa. (Columbia plans to issue his second record in early 1987.) Deacon opened a twenty-four track studio in North London. Taylor stepped into the booth to produce Feargal Sharkey ("Loving You") among many others. May was probably busiest of all. He wrote the chapter on electric guitar within a rock context for the Oxford University Press book, *Guide for Guitar Teachers*. (See excerpt on page 42.) He contributed an instructional video to the *Star Licks* series, a guide to the techniques used by guitar heroes.

May also was design and technical consultant for the Guild BHM-1, a direct copy of May's homemade "Big Red," his number one axe for over twenty years. Guild's model, like the original, has a flat response and sort of "talks," according to May. Unlike "Big Red," which cost him and his father "about eight pounds to build" back in 1964, the BM-1 wears a hefty \$1,200 price tag. May is put off by the cost but impressed by the craftsmanship and feel of the instrument. Now he has some worthy spares should "Big Red" ever fail him. That's as likely as Queen suddenly losing its fan support.

Their music tends to incite these fans. This usually means good vibes, even

when throngs reach epic proportions. At São Paulo, Brazil in 1981, they played to 131,000—the largest paying audience to see one band at a single performance. May still can't believe that Beatlemania-type mayhem. Nor can he account for the hoopla surrounding Queen concerts today. "It's amazing," he says, shaking his thick curls in disbelief. "Somewhere in the course of the last couple of years, something clicked and we reached a new level. We weren't only a pop group anymore. We sort of got written in as one of the things people have to see."

These scenes can turn ugly. Less than a week earlier, as Taylor describes it, both the attendance record and many heads were broken when Queen played Dublin's Slane Castle. "There were ten or twenty thousand people down in the front, drunk. Some were breaking down the barriers and hitting each other with bricks." A mixture of hard cider and aspirins had 'em hopped up good, Taylor claims. Queen had to stop the show and pacify the rowdies. The firehoses were readied. Security did its part by heaving bricks themselves. So much for crowd control.

Overall, though, Queen fans are a tolerant lot. They can always count on Mercury's voice and May's guitar, no matter what style the band explores or the producer involved. There have been colossal studio creations (notably "Bohemian

Rhapsody") under Roy Thomas Baker; *Magic* juxtaposes R&B inflections in "Pain Is So Very Close To Pleasure" with the power-chording behind "One Vision," overseen by Mack, a Queen associate for seven years.

"We really start with a clean slate each time," May declares. "No matter the producer, no matter the song, it's still Queen. We don't have to reproduce any formulas. And we've never had an audience that hemmed us in."

Nor has Queen felt constrained by political systems. In 1984 they ignored a Musician's Union ban and played Sun City, South Africa. May defended Queen's position, condemning apartheid and insisting that the audiences were integrated: "We finally had a chance to take our music to fans who had been buying our records and playing in a non-segregated situation... It is still our view that music is not a weapon, it should be used as a bridge between people...."

The biggest cloud over Queen's head these days is the persistent rumor about their demise. It started with a quote by Deacon in the *Evening Mail* that the Wembley gigs were it for hometown fans, and that outside projects would put Queen in suspended animation indefinitely. The famished British press took the bait; Deacon later denied everything. During both Wembley dates Mer-

continued on page 66

EQUIPMENT REGALIA

Brian May won't leave home without his one—and once only—guitar, "Big Red," which he built between the ages of fifteen and seventeen with his father. The body is small and intentionally asymmetrical to allow easy access to all twenty-four frets. "Red"'s neck was once part of an old fireplace. The three Tri-Sonic pickups are by Burns, the tremolo tailpiece is a low-friction original design (now widely copied) with a special bridge that has rollers so the strings stay in tune. He strings Red with Rotosound round wounds (.036, .032, .022, .011, .010, .009). His back-ups are a prototype and a production model Guild BHM-1. During "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" he switches to stock Fender Telecaster. For acoustic numbers he uses an Ovation Pacemaker (steel) twelve-string and a Gibson Chet Atkins (nylon) six-string. In the studio, May plugs straight into Vox AC-30 tube amps or Gallien-Kreuger amps. Live, his guitar line goes into a custom board built by Peter Cornish. In sequence are a treble booster, an Ibanez auto-filter (heard on "I Want To Break Free"), a Foxx phase pedal and another

treble booster with foot switch. The signal is then split. One goes directly into a Vox AC-30, the other is split three ways, each into its own AC-30: one through a Boss Chorus, the other two into MXR Delays set at .8 second and 1.6 second repeats. He also has a NADY Diversity wireless guitar system for the Telecaster, and plays a Yamaha DX7 keyboard on "Who Wants To Live Forever." His pick is a British sixpence, no longer in production. For backing vocals onstage May sings into a Sennheiser 421.

On live dates, **John Deacon** plucks (with a Martin heavy-gauge plectrum) one of three Fender Precision basses or a Music Man Sting Ray, all with Rotosound roundwounds (.090, .075, .060, .045). He's powered by Turner A-300 amps. Speakers include three Sunn 2x15" cabinets, three Sunn 4x12" cabinets, and three JBL 2441 horn units. Peter Cornish designed Deacon's custom rack, containing an Alembic stereo pre-amp, DBX stereo limiter, two Klark-Tekniks three-octave graphic equalizers and Clair Brothers crossovers. The NADY Diversity Wireless system keeps him foot-loose. For recording, Deacon plugs into the studio board.

To lay down a Queen-sized beat, **Roger**

Taylor has a Yamaha kit with a twenty-four-inch bass drum; twelve, thirteen and fourteen-inch tom-toms; sixteen and eighteen-inch floor toms, and a fourteen-inch snare. Cymbals, by Zildjian, are fourteen-inch high-hats, an eighteen-inch crash medium, two nineteen-inch high crashes, a twenty-inch China high crash, a twenty-two-inch China low crash, and twenty-two-inch medium ride. For extra punch he turns to a Roland P8 Octapad, an E-mu SP-12 Drum Sampler and a CDUCER Trigger. His Premiere CC sticks have his name on them. Deacon and May both have Peterson strobe tuners.

Freddie Mercury is free to roam the stage with Sony wireless mikes. He straps on a Fender Tele for "Crazy Little Thing Called Love"; "this guitar plays me," he jokes. On ballads he sits behind a nine-foot Steinway grand with a five-element Helpinstill pickup. His monitors are two Clair Brothers two-way units.

The fifth Queen in the deck, **Spice Edney**, helps out on the road playing two E-mu Emulator II+'s, a Yamaha DX5, a Roland Jupiter 8 (pre-MIDI) and Roland Vocoder. He joins May for a guitar rave-up with a 1961 Les Paul Jr. strung with medium-gauge Rotosounds and connected to Gallien-Kreuger amps.

Back in the Reggae Marketplace, an original Wailer is performing, producing and stirring up new controversies

P L A Y E R S

By Alan Di Perna

BUNNY WAILER ON THE MAINLAND

Where's Bunny...? That's the question of the hour—or, more precisely, the past two-and-a-half hours—for the group of journalists and assorted admirers who have been promised an audience with Bunny Wailer. Bunny is late. Real late. I've heard of soon-come but this is getting ridiculous late. On this sweltering L.A. afternoon, we're gathered at the home of Bunny's publicist, reggae disc jockey Roger Steffens, who makes an increasingly desperate series of phone calls trying to track down the elusive Mr. Neville O'Riley Livingston. That, of course, is the given name of the man who has been called "Bunny" ever since the boyhood days in Jamaica when he was pals with one Robert Nesta Marley. And who has proudly called himself "Wailer" ever since the early 60s, when he, Marley and another local named Peter MacIntosh (a.k.a. Peter Tosh) decided to name their newly-formed group the Wailers.

Meanwhile, someone from the David Letterman show phones to offer Bunny a spot on the program. "We'll ask him when he gets here," is the reply.

....If he ever gets here.

But most of the people on hand are hardcore Bunny Wailer fans, more than willing to wait. After all, this is Bunny's first time out of Jamaica in fourteen reclusive years. And the previous Saturday, he'd certainly given us a brilliant three hours of *his* time, in a concert that reprised his entire solo career, from 1976's *Blackheart Man* right up to this year's *Marketplace* LP. Now, the lucky few who have secured an interview with Bunny gather in expectant little groups to compare notes on the show and rehearse the oft-told litany of Bunny Wailer stories—as central to reggae lore as the doings of Zeus, Aphrodite and Apollo were to the ancient Greeks: Bunny's fourteen month sentence in a Jamaican prison for a trumped-up ganja charge during the late 60s. His angry 1974 exit from the Wailers—just on the brink of international notoriety—when Island Records chief Chris Blackwell called him a

"nobody." Or more recently, Bunny's legal battle with Bob's widow, Rita Marley, for control of Tuff Gong Records, the label Bunny, Bob and Peter started in 1970. While the stories go around like a communal spliff, Bunny quietly appears at the door, smiling but unapologetic for his lateness.

The burly Rasta bodyguards who surround him accentuate the man's own

all his records, books his own infrequent concerts and makes his own videos. Self-sufficiency is an idea that clearly appeals to Mr. Livingston. The guy even grows his own ital food on his farm out in the rural Jamaican village of Swift River.

Dressed in earth-stained denims and a wash-faded "Bunny Wailer" T-shirt, a broad-brimmed straw hat partially covering his long, tightly-knotted dread-



"Trying to correct that fault of losing the real musical sense of reggae."

diminutive stature. But his coruscating black-rimmed eyes have a gently commanding power that you can feel from across the room. The first order of business is that offer to appear on the Letterman show. Doing the show would entail taking a night flight to New York that evening. But Bunny has little love for airplanes, even in the full light of day.

"No. No night flight," he insists. "They gotta see where they're going."

Ah well, so much for national television exposure....

Make no mistake, Bunny Wailer does things his way and in his own good time...or he doesn't do them at all. For the past decade he has headed up his own company, Solomonic Productions, through which he produces and releases

locks, Bunny has the weathered, healthy look of a man who has been cultivating the soil for fourteen years. But while doing so, he has kept very close tabs on the current reggae scene. And he's not too pleased with much of what he hears. He's particularly short of patience with the current string of derivative DJs (reggae's rappers, more or less) who do their parrot thang over instrumental backing tracks (or rhythms in Jamaican usage) from other songs.

"Each DJ repeats what the other DJs say; and you get twenty-five DJs all on one rhythm. They're not on key. They're not DJ-ing to the same chords as the song. So it's not good for the taste of the music. At the same time, it will mess up people who are not really acquainted

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standing of envelopes, which are so important to CZs, and allow you to copy and separately save individual envelopes from a sound. It can even make graphic renditions of those envelopes, or convert the rates to actual milliseconds to turn numbers into shapes and time, things we humans know more about. And it can give you the fastest education you can get on CZ programming, not only by letting you fool around faster and with more variables, but by letting you make better sense of other people's voices that turn you on.

Librarians

Virtually all editors are librarians, but not all librarians are editors. Of course, since memory has to be taken up with the editing functions, some pure librarians are better librarians than editors. But some editors still make better librarians than pure librarians because sounds are available in their format from outside programmers. Got that? No? Well, maybe it'll become clearer when we boot up a few programs.

First make sure you have a MIDI interface, which plugs into the cartridge slot on the back of the C-64. These run anywhere from \$75 to \$200, depending on their clock and sync capabilities, and are easily obtainable from most major software makers. Plug the MIDI OUT from the CZ into the interface's MIDI IN and vice versa. Most of the programs work only on channel one, but some will



Voice list from Sonus' CZ/PL.

allow you to address any channel. Now you type in a simple BASIC load command (the only BASIC you'll use) and, when asked, enter in which interface you're using. Then you will meet your menu.

Before we do that, though, let's first see what it's supposed to help you do. The C-64 has a block of memory space in which it holds groups (or "banks" or "cartridges") of sixteen voices—two or

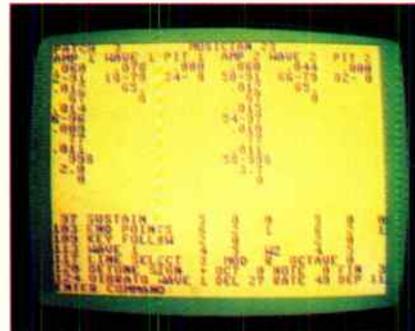
three are typical. All voices from these are listed; from these, you can access either the on-board memory of the CZ or floppy disks upon which you've permanently stored your collection of voices. Thus the active memory of the computer serves as way station and reshuffling mechanism for your disk library. All the programs allow you to move individual voices around in the computer's memory, so if you want to take two separate banks and create a third combo bank, it's very quick and easy. They'll also let you send single voices to synth or save them to disk.

Other standard librarian functions involve naming or renaming voices, printing out hard copy of voice lists (a must once you get into the hundreds of voices), displaying disk directories, and formatting blank disks. This last will keep you from having to tortuously type complex BASIC commands every time you use a new disk. Then the editors have a separate mode and display for editing a sound, and a special buffer (or buffers) in which the patch can be operated on, then returned to one of the librarian banks. Not too complicated, right? So how did the programs we tested come up with four completely different operating schemes to do the same thing?

The most obvious menu system is numbered choices like 1. Get bank from Casio, 2. Send bank to Casio, 3. See list of voices, etc. Then after you choose an item, follow-up questions ask you which bank or voice you want to load, view, receive, bend, staple or mutilate. Single voices in the computer are assigned temporary numbers, with bank one being 1-16, bank two being 17-32, and bank three being 33-48, so you might copy the voice in spot #21 to spot #47. This is the menu system used both in **Dr. T's CZ Patch Librarian** and in **CZ Dumpstor**, written by Dean Richard, a Wisconsin musician/programmer. Richard sells a line of Dumpstors, including a general-purpose Data Dumpstor for the system exclusive commands on most MIDI instruments, then specialty Dumpstors for Roland TR-707, Yamaha DX7 and CZ, which need more complex "handshaking" routines to exchange data. I like the Dumpstors because they are true generic, no frills librarians; the CZ one is only \$55, lowest price on the board.

But there are some limitations to this kind of menu: to go through several sets of key punches to view only sixteen voices at a time tends to be clumsy, especially when you want to move a voice and forget your address numbers.

The **Passport MIDI Voice Librarian** for CZ solves that problem by having the voice list on the screen at all times, and using a two-page help screen to prompt you on all the necessary commands. And since the Passport holds *six banks* (wow!), the list is actually three pages of thirty-two voices, quickly accessed by the slash key (the colors are different on each page, a nice touch to combat com-



User hostile: Dr. T edit screen.

puter fatigue). It loads in six banks of your choosing on startup, a definite timesaver. When a MIDI data exchange is underway, the border color flashes so you know something actually occurred. I also liked the more discreet use of "Are You Sure" prompts—it tends to really slow a bank reshuffle down when you add that step.

But the best part about the Passport Librarian is that when you put the cursor on an individual voice, it automatically sends it to the Casio play buffer, so as you step through all ninety-six sounds, you hear them immediately. All other librarians make you send the voice to the Casio's internal or cartridge banks to hear them. This means it's perfect for gigging—instant access to six banks, plus three more on the CZ! (Of course, if you're going to gig *hard* with it, I'd recommend getting a backup C-64 and disk drive to keep in the trunk of your car—you never know....) The \$70 Passport CZ librarian is part of a series that includes the DX7 and TX 816, Korg DW-8000, OB-8, and Roland JX8P and Juno 106, and we can probably assume equally good things about its brethren.

Another way to have the voice lists front and center and still have a complex menu involves putting them at the bottom of the screen in four little rectangles that represent the four function keys to the right of the C-64 keyboard. Using the SHIFT and/or CONTROL keys then gives you sixteen options. It's advan-

tageous because it replaces a lot of manual reading and eliminates the need for a cheat sheet. Its only real disadvantage is that cursor movements are also put on the function keys, and it's hard enough to adjust to the two normal C-64 cursor keys (two instead of four, so you have to shift to go left and up—yuk!).

This system is used in an editor by Tim Ryan and Marshall Otwell of Calliope Software. The exact same program with



User friendly: Sonus' edit screen.

two different names was submitted by both Syntech and Sonus. Should we call it the Sontech or the Synus? Actually this is one manifestation of an ugly legal battle that began when a group of Syntech people led by Don Taylor walked out and started Sonus at the end of 1985. Let's call it the Calliope program from here on; then you can consult your local MI dealer or the I Ching whether to buy it from Sonus, who sells it for \$130, or Syntech, who asks \$150.

There is one more kind of menu system, the one on CZ-Rider, and in many ways it's the best suited for the musician. I'm talking about using a joystick and *never* touching the C-64 keyboard—hey, isn't one enough? (This is related to the Big New Thing in C-64-land called GEOS, a new icon-based operating system similar to the Macintosh's.) CZ-Rider was written by Bob Melvin, and has been around for a year, originally a Cherry Lane staple and now sold by Dr. T for \$99. The voice list is also the main screen, but a window-style menu shares it. You choose options by moving the cursor with the joystick to the desired command and then hitting the Fire button. To move a voice, for example, you fire on MOVE, then move the cursor to the source voice and press the button, then the destination and press the button. Once you get used to it, it's a very fast system, but tends to appear dreadfully chaotic when you first work with it.

It also holds only two banks of sixteen voices (as does the Calliope), and although serviceable, is not terribly impressive as a librarian. But just wait until we come to editing....

All the aforementioned programs are very cost-efficient library-building investments, by the way. How much is a sound worth? Well, via telecommunication lines, MusicNet charges \$20 per bank, while Synth-Bank hits you up for about a buck a patch. By comparison, Dumpstor gives you eight banks, about .43 a voice, while Dr. T throws in fifteen banks at .41 a voice. At nearly a dollar a patch, the Calliope is less of a steal.

Will each librarian read each other's disks? No. To get at the sounds, you have to load them into the Casio, boot the next program, and then collect and rename them. This means companies that want to sell voice disks have to pick a format to write for, and Dr. T and CZ-Rider seem to have the edge. Who cares about these little gadflies? Well, one little company called MIDI Mouse (503-622-5451) sells 120-sound disks for \$32 a pop. Twenty-seven cents a voice?! That makes Dr. T and CZ-Rider strong librarian entries even if you never use the editing features.

Editors

All right, now let's move on to the heavy-tech portion of our program, and do some serious voice editing. I began by putting up the Dr. T editing page and getting a good dose of confusion. Here was a screen filled nearly to the brim with numbers and letters, with no attempt to group or divide them. Some of the values had decimal points, which is not part of the Casio programming system. And even locating important basics like the waveform numbers was difficult. This went far beyond user-friendly and all the way into user-hostile. Time to retreat and regroup.

I next put up the Calliope edit screen, and the contrast was extraordinary. Subtle colors and layout served as sublime organizers of the data. Instead of cramming the six envelopes for both oscillators on one page, there were two edit screens you could toggle back and forth between using the space bar, with common data at the top. The little menu boxes remained at the bottom of the page, and I could put the cursor anywhere on the screen, rather than being limited to a command line on the bottom. Best of all, the envelope parameters, the most involved part of the CZ system, were grouped in their own rectangles,

with each step numbered and the sustain point neatly marked with a little red S. Comprehension dawned, followed quickly by enjoyable experimentation.

All the editors throw any voice in the edit buffer right into the CZ's play buffer, so any on-screen change is heard instantly. The Calliope program raises and lowers values by one from the function keys, but uses the plus and minus keys to make changes of ten. To set sustain or end points you put the cursor on the correct step and just hit the appropriate control, shift and function key combo. One extra bonus is Calliope's use of the A, Z and Q keys on the C-64 to play notes, so while editing you never have to lean over and hit the Casio keyboard just to hear your changes. There are also functions to copy the envelope of one oscillator into the corresponding envelope of another, or to copy one whole line into the other for exploiting the CZ's stacking capabilities; you can also initialize (start from scratch) the common values or either oscillator. As we'll see, these are not all the advanced editing features one could hope for, but the Calliope program's superior organization and pronounced user-friendliness make it the clear choice for the techno-timid.



CZ-Rider's color-drenched edit page.

Fortified with confidence, I then proceeded to boot up CZ Rider and move a voice into one of its *four* (yeah!) edit buffers. CZ Rider puts all six envelopes and everything else on one screen, but uses a barrage of bright colors to organize them. Once in edit mode, the joystick menu system reveals a new wrinkle: the Fire button toggles between Move, which simply lets you place the cursor on any parameter value, and Change, which allows you to raise or lower that value by moving the stick up or down. This also eliminates the need for two rates of change, since bumping the stick gives small increments while slamming it hard

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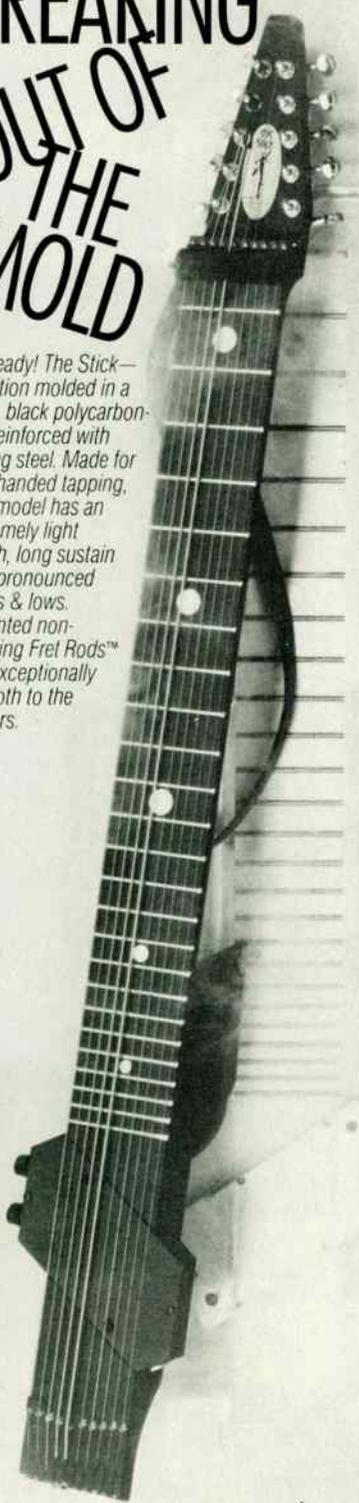
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shoots the values up. Moving the cursor to the lower right reveals another one of those little pop-up menu windows, and in addition to a help screen, a number of more advanced editing options become available, including the ability to insert and delete steps in envelopes, and to copy envelopes from voice to voice instead of only within one voice.

This alone would certainly make CZ Rider a decent buy, but there's one more editing feature that is going to knock your socks off: Go to the Graph 1 or Graph 2 items on the menu, and CZ Rider draws graphs of the three envelopes of either oscillator. Changing the rate and level values either on the edit screen or right next to the graphs will instantly redraw them to the new shapes. But CZ Rider goes even further: if you move the cursor to one of the step points and hit the Fire button to go to Change, you can actually redraw the shape of the envelope by picking up and moving the point. For example, if you want the envelope to attack more slowly, just take the first point and pull it to the right. When you do this, the numerical data changes too, and is instantly entered onto the master edit screen. To me, this is far and away the easiest way to work with envelopes—even the CZ manual recommends graphing them on paper. I was impressed when Opcode wrote a program that would do this on the Mac, but being able to do it on the C-64 takes me all the way to ecstatic. This is one giant leap for Commodore Power.

Ah, but even that's not all. The graph function of CZ Rider also has a changeable scale for the time of the envelope, so you can look at close-ups or the whole ADSR shape. Just move the cursor to Time and you can shift all the way from a thirty-second of a second scale all the way through a whopping 64 seconds! Even the strangest envelopes will become readily apparent. I don't know what more anyone could ask of an editor that sells for \$99.

So thinking, I booted up Dr. T's CZ Librarian again, which is also \$99, and was surprised to discover that after learning to read the color-coordinated displays of Calliope and CZ Rider, Dr. T's display was no longer so chaotic. I slowly warmed to the entering system of having all parameters numbered and changed by entering a parameter number, a hyphen and the new value. I even got enthusiastic about the fast edit mode, which puts the cursor on the parameter and lets you use the four function keys in a more logical way than the Calliope: the two middle ones are one value up and down, while

the top and bottom change up and down by eight. But the envelope insert, delete, copy functions are still pretty clunky. The placing of key follow values and sustain and end points so far from the envelope parameters also bugged me, as did the capricious reversal of envelope orders from the CZ's natural analog-like pitch, filter/waveshaper and amplitude sequence. And even in a crowd of programs where poor documentation is standard, there's simply no excuse for not telling us how to get out of edit mode (type in X and return—I lost a lot of hair on that one).

So if this is so unfriendly a system, why touch it? Because Emile Tobenfeld, a.k.a. Dr. T, doesn't give a damn about the rookies among us. His C-64 programs, particularly the now-legendary Keyboard Controlled Sequencer, have no pretty graphics or spoon-fed help systems because these eat up memory that could be used for performance. He most likely figures you'd rather have a slightly harder time learning how to use his programs, since that's a one-time experience, and get more power out of them once you learn how to use them. And in raw editing power, Dr. T's CZ Librarian is simply the king of the hill.

For example, those decimal fractions that turned me off when I first looked at the program were time values in milliseconds—the program instantly toggles between conventional Casio rates and time, converting changes in one to the other. Although unfamiliar at first, time in milliseconds is a much more real-world value for rate, and far more useful. Then there are the provisions for storing an individual envelope to disk, separate from the voice it was taken from—there are up to sixteen memory locations. If you've worked out some of the strange envelopes available on these librarians, why go through the horror of reentering them? Dr. T will also copy any envelope or line to any other envelope or line in any voice (although copying a filter envelope to, say, an amplitude one, will accomplish very different things).

And how about this—if you want to set a new maximum level and scale the other levels in the same envelope to the new value so that the overall time is the same, the Dr. T program will do it; it will also scale all the rates to keep the levels the same while changing the time. These are the kind of things that you'd be silly to attempt without a computer. And just to rub it in (and take care of his own customers), Dr. T added the play portion of the Keyboard Controlled Sequencer, so

continued on page 100

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P L A Y E R S

By Josef Woodard

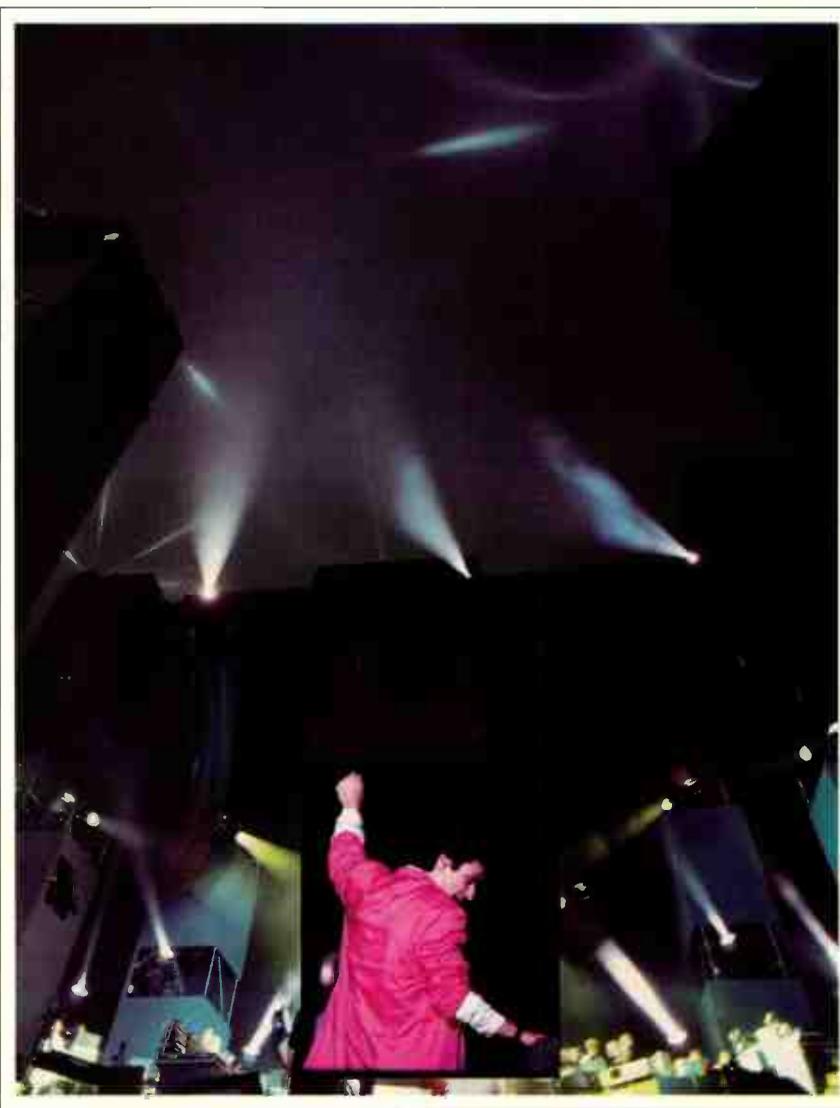
JEAN-MICHEL JARRE: MEGA-SYNTHESIST

Electronic music, in the classical sense, has had a checkered past in relation to the listening masses. Nurtured in various academic circles and played to handfuls of devotees in darkened halls, the medium has encouraged not only quantum technological leaps but musical mutiny. To the public's chagrin, or plain indifference, the apocalyptic abstractions of oscillator- and computer-mad researchers trampled all over the cherished vocabularies of western music. On the road to modernism, they left slimy trails of cacophony and sci-fi noises behind.

Then, some years ago, the synthesizer escaped from the lab into the lap of the populace. Clearly one of the men most responsible for this shift of affinities was the French synthesist and grand-scaled conceptualist Jean Michel Jarre. Since the whopping and unexpected success of his 1976 album, *Oxygene* (eight, count 'em, million sales of the instrumental album), the handsome keyboard whiz has fashioned sleek, abidingly tonal and lucrative projects for the consumption of Everyperson.

If Jarre has a finger on the pulse of mass musical taste and knows well enough the power of a simple melody—especially in the era of New Age and *Miami Vice*—his contextual ambitions are outward bound. Grandeur is a contagion. The man who, in 1979 concertized to a millionfold French audience—a Guinness world record—and was the first Western pop musician to play Red China, can't help but continue to think *big*.

Witness last spring's multi-media extravaganza, *Rendezvous Houston*. What better spot for a testimonial to media largesse than in the state of bigness? In honor of the sesquicentennial of Texas (and Houston) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of NASA, Jarre assembled a behemoth aural-visual downtown spectacular the magnitude of which only statistics can suggest. One and a half million observers and listeners (it was both amplified from the city center and broadcast over the FM band), fireworks, la-



Jarre sets Houston alight: "The rock show format is starting to fade out."

sers, sky lighting, 2000 projectors harnessing 1,000 kilowatts of power lighting the downtown skyline, a two million dollar bill... this was no standard issue light show.

A month later, Jarre was in Los Angeles helping director Bob Giraldi

make editorial sense of this grand pop opus. After a long day looking at footage, Jarre showed up in designer sweats at the swank L'Hermitage hotel to discuss his latest brainchild. "We have to recognize these days that what we may call a kind of extravaganza today may well be-

0-120 in 3.6 seconds



If you're interested in a high-performance synth, it's time to test drive an Ensoniq ESQ-1 Digital Wave Synthesizer. It puts 120 sounds at your fingertips as fast as you can switch it on and plug in a cartridge. But that's only the beginning.

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Comparable high performance digital waveform synthesizers and MIDI sequencers can easily exceed the legal limits of your cash on hand. But the good news is that the ESQ-1 comes from Ensoniq—at a sane price of just \$1395. For a glimpse of technology that's earned the name "advanced", put an ESQ-1 through its paces at your authorized Ensoniq dealer today.

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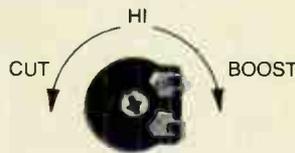
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A Combo MIDI Product That Could Be Big—Plus New Power Amp Action

DEVELOPMENTS

By Jock Baird

SEQUENTIAL'S SEQUENCER / SAMPLING GAMBLE

Combo products can be both enticing and dangerous to a company. On the one hand, putting two different products a manufacturer already makes into the same package can offer tremendous economies of scale, bringing down the cost of each. On the other hand, when too much is going on in the same package, there can be corresponding complexities of scale, especially when the manufacturer can't resist adding just one more little feature to help in its marketing. The classic paradigm of this was the Linn 9000, a MIDI sequencer/drum machine which tried to do so much, its central processing unit started taking sudden vacations in the Sahara.

The end of the Linn 9000 left a big gap in the MIDI market, and to date no company has been ambitious enough to fill it. Now **Sequential Circuits** has seen that bet and upped the ante by offering a 12-bit sampler and a SMPTE-based post-production editing system to a 40,000-note sequencer and a drum machine, and even more incredibly plans to sell it for \$4000, over a grand less than the 9000.

The specs on all aspects of the 440 are right up there—the sampler will give 16.8 seconds of 21kHz bandwidth at a sampling rate of 31.25 kHz—with faster and slower rates available. There's also VCFs and VCAs for further changes. It has eight voices, each with its own separate line out. A voice can be triggered from an external MIDI controller, from one of eight velocity-sensitive on-board pads, a trigger input (meaning a drummer won't need a MIDI interface) or the internal sequencer. The 440 stores thirty-two different sounds in a fairly unique organization system that's adapted to either drum machine-type keyboard or sampler-type use. There's also a whole set of so-called Sound Parameters and Performance Parameters to get quite a lot out of those pads.

The eight-track sequencer has two discrete MIDI outputs, so it'll handle thirty-two channels. It has a 3½-inch disk drive and a computer interface to incorporate hard disks or CD-ROMs.

There's real- and step-time recording with full editing, a manual tap tempo feature (the programmable tempo goes down to tenths of a BPM!) and beefed up MIDI implementation using Multi-Mode, the new whiter, brighter MIDI Mode 4. The 440 also slaves to all four types of SMPTE code and incorporates a new MIDI Time Code protocol that encodes SMPTE and sends it over MIDI (it will not, however, generate SMPTE time code). And all these post-production goodies will work even better with a new Mac program Digidesign is writing for the 440.



Too good to be true?
Sequential's Studio 440.

Is this all too good to be true? Maybe. There is absolutely no precedent for a combo MI product of this magnitude (well, there's the Fairlight and the Synclavier, but I mean something that costs less than a new Mercedes). That means we should approach the Studio 440 with some skepticism, because if it really does all that it claims, Sequential Circuits has come up with the music product of the decade.

Amp Action

One thing you all are doing in record numbers is starting your own home studio setups, and sooner or later you come to buy a power amp for your monitor system. This has really heated up the power amp market, especially in the under \$800 realm, and the summer of '86 has shown quite a bit of infighting at the price level, especially in the under-\$800 realm, and to date only **QSC** has re-

ally exploited it. Now get ready for some heavy infighting. **Crown** was the first anpmaker to react; their attention had been on its impressive Micro-tech series for the last year or so and the D-75 and D-150 were supposed to be holding the budget front. Now that that's weakened, Crown is releasing the Power Base-1, a \$729 200/400 watt stereo/mono 3.5-inch rack mount job that incorporates many of the Micro-tech lessons. It still has a fair number of features, like two mono modes, parallel and bridge, to best match speaker to amp, a dual input sensitivity switch (2.2 or .775 volts), short, mismatch and overload protection, and an efficient new heat sink and cooling fan setup. No, the fan is not reversible like it is on the Micro-tech, but if you're worried, Crown offers a three-year warranty that even covers shipping.

Another quality anpmaker to fish these waters is **Carver**, whose Magnetic Field technology made the PM-1.5 such a sensation. Now please welcome the PM-1.75 and PM-350, at \$650 and \$850 respectively. Both adapt Bob Carver's system of storing energy in a compact magnetic field instead of massive transformers and capacitors. The PM-1.75 can pump as much as 500 watts in bridged mono, as well as 175 into 8 ohms and 250 into 4 ohms. The PM-350 will kick out 850 watts in bridged mono—think that'll get your p.a. vibrating?—or 350 watts into 8 ohms, 450 into 4 ohms. The two new Carvers have a "slow start-up" and input muting feature to eliminate current surges when you switch them on, very sophisticated protection circuits, and plug-in module slots to bring eq, crossover, noise gate or compressor/limiter functions onboard. The PM-350 also has a clipping eliminator. And just in case anyone suspects Carver of watering down their products, there's a top-of-the-line addition as well, the \$1500 PM-2.0. It's small but brutal, and is going to turn a lot of pro audio heads.

A third power amp entry comes from **Ramsa**, their debut in this endeavor. This is actually three new units, the \$475

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WP-9055, the \$700 WP-9110, and the \$900 WP-9220. The 9055 is fairly lightweight at 50 watts a side, but the 9110 will do 150 watts a side at 4 ohms, and the kick-ass 9220 will do 300 watts a side at 4 ohms. Even better, the Ramsa amps have pretty full rear panel features, including a connector that supports a remote VU meter and indicator/alarm light (enabling quick diagnosis of multi-amp system problems), plus three types of input jacks: balanced connectors, male and female XLRs and phone jack. The cooling fan is variable-speed, and there are the usual protection systems. Related to the 9000 amps is a new Ramsa offensive into speaker cabinets, from small club pairs to large reflex jobs, and the absorption of five former Fender mikes into the line. And this may not be all the audio news we'll hear from Ramsa in the next few months. ☐

QUEEN from page 44

cury brings up the issue, turns his back to the audience and smacks his hams to show from whence those rumors flew.

All of this is long forgotten by the encore at Wembley. Taylor's "Radio Ga Ga" has everybody clapping and fist-pumping like a well-oiled machine. May's "We Will Rock You" makes a savage con-

nection to "Friends Will Be Friends" from *Magic*. Mercury illustrates his final pronouncement, "We Are The Champions," in lavish detail by donning a red velvet robe trimmed in ermine, and a metal crown encrusted with *faux* jewels.

Champions of the world? Well, not quite. There's a crazy little thing called the United States that has eluded Queen's imperialistic grasp. They haven't toured here since 1982. Their last U.S. hit, "Radio Ga Ga," only reached number sixteen while topping the charts in nineteen other countries, according to Taylor. He's put off by the States' reception of late, and has a cautious attitude about returning. But the Queen-sized ego reigns: If *Magic* happens here, he's all for a U.S. tour.

May is much more emphatic. "There's one material goal. We'd like to get America back. America now for us is an island. We have every territory around it, but we don't have that big corner of the world."

In the meantime the band can bask in its staying power and an ability to sell out megaseat sites in minutes. For Queen's first Eastern Bloc Party in Budapest, 80,000 tickets were gobbled up in forty-five minutes. Wembley went almost as fast, making Queen the only act besides

the Rolling Stones and Bruce Springsteen to sell out the stadium two consecutive nights.

Queen is cut down to size at the Roof Garden. Manager Jim Beach has set up equipment in the main room on the off chance the band will perform. Surprisingly, they do. It's roots-rocking time as "Dicky Hart & the Pacemakers" lash into some Little Richard. Mercury departs to hold court for selected well-wishers, safe behind his human cordon.

Gary Glitter takes the mike for a helping of Eddie Floyd's "Knock On Wood," then knifes his way through the crowd with the warning, "I'm not as young as I look." (No one argues.) May confronts one of his early influences, Jeff Beck, and jokingly berates him for not jamming with the Pacemakers. Beck confesses he was "spellbound" and couldn't make it to the stage.

The sight of world-class kings of arena rock doing it to death as a rough and ready club band is ludicrous, even anachronistic. Or is it? Five hours earlier, Queen really had done a rock 'n' roll medley featuring "Tutti Frutti," "Hello Mary Lou" and "Baby I Don't Care." Mercury quipped at one point, "Not bad for four aging Queens, are we?"

You said it. ☐

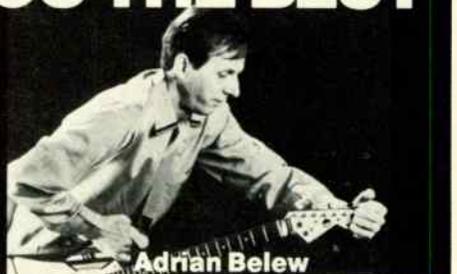
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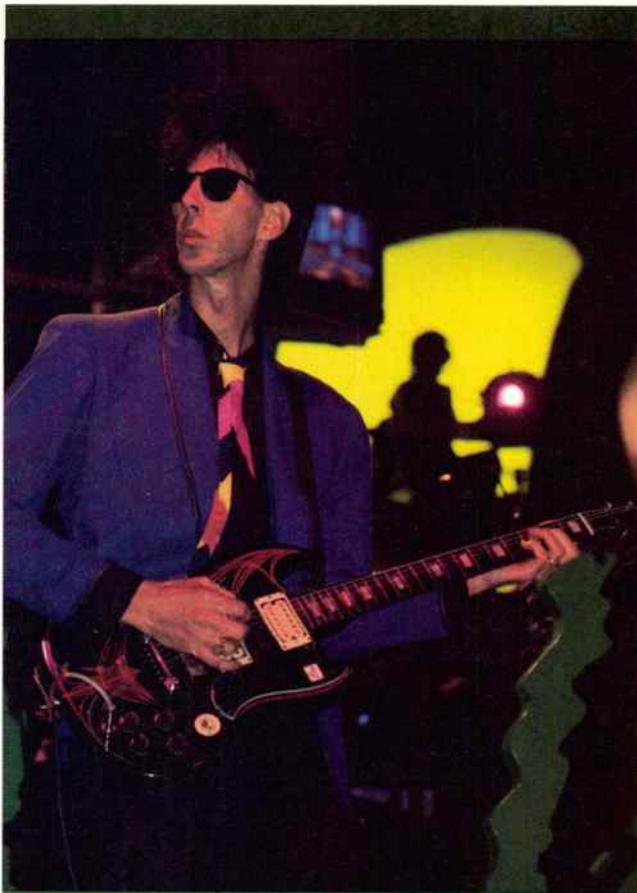
Without Reservations

By Scott Isler

The doors open to reveal daylight, and a gaggle of teenyboppers assembled outside Electric Lady Sound Studios in New York's Greenwich Village. Their patience is rewarded: Out strides the unmistakable figure of Ric Ocasek, the tall, lanky leader of the Cars. "It's Ric!" one of the kids gasps, but he and his friends are too overcome and/or shy to pursue their prey. Ocasek ignores them and heads west down the block. A construction worker stops, smiles and greets Ocasek like an old friend; the singer/guitarist shakes the proffered hand. At least one other fan interrupts Ocasek's thoughts during a 200-foot stroll. He disappears into a bookstore, no doubt to be accosted there by more well-wishers.

The unlikely but distinctive-looking object of adulation is a pop-music success story: The Cars' six albums have sold over eight million copies. Ocasek, both frontman and auteur, has entered the pantheon of rock celebrities. Unlike some other familiar faces, though, he seems to have a hard time adjusting to the requirements of fame. He once asked Mick Jagger if he did his own shopping. "He said, 'Yeah, I go to the supermarket.' I said, 'You go by yourself?'"

Ocasek goes to the supermarket by himself. Instead of a bodyguard he trusts to a thick emotional plating for protection. (An early tactic, bug-eye sunglasses, probably only called attention to the wearer.) Outside of his creative activities—besides songwriting, Ocasek writes poetry and prose, takes photos and draws—he displays profound reserve. Soft-spoken almost to



“There was a trend in my mind to hide the emotional things—maybe because I didn’t feel there was too much emotion in relationships.”

inaudibility, he is affable—punctuating his remarks with smiles and chuckles—but hard to fathom, with the opaque reticence of a Cars lyric. His slowly-developed phrases not infrequently wind up contradicting themselves. He smokes cigarettes with a nervous relentlessness; pauses demarcate his sentences. If he finds himself outside neutral territory, he might just cut himself off short. He’s vague about his age (over forty), and has even started clipping years off the Cars’ highly public chronology. Sitting in an Electric Lady control booth (birthplace of *This Side Of Paradise*, his second solo album) Ocasek pulls his knees up to his chin, clasps his arms around his ankles, and addresses his interviewer behind a wall of leg.

Although the Cars were seemingly an overnight success, Richard Ocasek—born in Baltimore, transplanted to Cleveland as a teenager—had been writing songs for some time. He’d also gone through at least ten (by his count) pre-Cars outfits, with bassist/singer Ben Orr (Orzechowski) the main constant. Once established as commercial draws, individual Cars lost little time negotiating for solo albums. The results prove the band should stay together for some time. Even Ocasek’s *Beatitude* couldn’t sell half a million copies.

His luck might change with *This Side Of Paradise*. A year in the making, the record has the hit potential of this year’s Cars substitute—thanks to the heavy involvement of Cars keyboardist Greg Hawkes, not to mention cameos by Orr and Cars guitarist Elliot Easton (ex-Steinberg). Billy Idol axeman Steve Stevens is the main guitar voice; Tom Verlaine (ex-Television) and G.E. Smith (Hall & Oates) also put in appearances.

Any personal quirks pale before the contributions Ocasek has made to pop culture. The Cars’ brittle music and ambiguous love themes are obviously appropriate to the times. Still, their huge success is a pleasant exception to the triteness that rules the airwaves. As musical mastermind, Ocasek could be a reclusive superstar; instead he chooses to help those less fortunate commercially, producing Iggy Pop, Romeo Void, Bad Brains and Suicide, among others. He regrets that work on his own album prevented him from producing Lou Reed’s *Mistrial*. As these names show, Ocasek’s musical preferences take a sharp left turn from the deceptively mainstream Cars. (He even smuggled Suicide onto *Saturday Night Live* when the Cars were guest hosts.) He’s certainly the best friend avant-rockers have in the top ten.

If you see him walking down the street, try not to hassle him. He gaud at the studio.

MUSICIAN: *How do you compare This Side Of Paradise to Beatitude, your previous solo album?*

OCASEK: The previous one was a lot of my eight-track tapes made in the late-night hours transferred to twenty-four and embellished slightly. I played eighty percent of it myself. It was much more...low-tech, and a lot of the lyrics were left over from a book I was writing—different. It had more of a flavor to it than this record. I almost felt like it was underproduced, and I wasn’t sure if it was going to be a record that had singles. I didn’t much care. I didn’t have high expectations. Whereas this one I tried to make sound technically nice. This took me in a different direction than I’m used to—maybe more refined, more meticulous, more carefully put together. It was a great year’s experience. I just finished it two weeks ago; I haven’t even had a chance to forget the parts yet. I know every little cymbal and high-hat pattern, so I can’t overview it at all. I just know the pain and pleasure of wanting to do it.

This one is done like a normal record. I demoed all the songs. A couple were older songs; “Pink Flag Joe,” the funny one, has been around forever. “True Love” could have been on [the Cars’] *Heartbeat City*. The rest were all written since. I wrote quite a few. There’s not too many left, about eight or ten songs. One thing about doing a record in a few months or a year is that you almost grow with the record just as you grow in life for a year, even if you’re locked in a room. Basically a year’s worth of moodiness and thought went into it. There’s a bit of withdrawal right now. [Co-producer] Chris [Hughes] is not a fast worker; he’s very meticulous. So that has something to do with your time.

MUSICIAN: *Were you compatible?*

OCASEK: Very compatible, for being with each other every day for a year.

MUSICIAN: *Didn’t you start out with another producer?*

OCASEK: Jimmy Iovine. He got me started: “C’mon, let’s do it!” I might have waited another few months. Jimmy was great; I just didn’t know if I wanted to do it quite so live. I didn’t know the players Jimmy brought in; when I did some tracks I found I didn’t want to work with those guys. Greg [Hawkes] was involved from the beginning. They might have been the same songs but it might not have had the finesse this LP has.

I also felt at a certain point that I wanted to write more songs. So after about three weeks I stopped, wrote another

dozen songs and used about six of them. So that was actually good to do. Then I wanted to have a producer, so I looked around a bit. Chris was available, so we went into it again. We lost at least two months.

It took longer to make than any other record I've done. There were crazy things going on the whole time: stopping with one producer and going with another, taking a break here, having three or four engineers mix it—all that shit-trauma. Maybe I went overboard, even if it was just to explore possibilities; that's probably why I learned a lot. There are a lot of computer things, which I'm a bit impatient with sometimes. Everything was MIDI'd. Chris pretty much did all the drum programming on his own. I think we had a university seminar going with that stuff, between Chris and Greg. There were a few things invented while we were recording, I think! But it's all down to just sound anyway.

MUSICIAN: *Did Geffen Records start panicking at any point?*

OCASEK: Yeah, they panicked from day one! [Laughs] They panicked when we said we were gonna use Chris Hughes. He's a legend for taking a lot of time. I thought, well, it couldn't be as long as Mutt [Lange, *Heartbeat City* co-producer] took. But Chris was there all the time, every second. He was great. So I let it take time. I felt like, I'll see if time is quality.

MUSICIAN: *What happened to your master plan of releasing one Cars album and one solo album a year?*

OCASEK: That's what I've been doing, sort of [smiles]. I didn't do a Cars record this time because the record company actually wanted to do a greatest-hits record before a Cars album; they didn't even want a studio album. Also, I wouldn't have toured last summer on the *Heartbeat City* album again.

MUSICIAN: *Most of the songs on this album sound like they could have been done by the Cars.*

OCASEK: I think any song I write could be done by the Cars; there would be no problem at all [smiles]. They wouldn't have sounded like this but they could have been done. Half the songs on this record are love songs, or songs about relationships. It's hard to tell lyrically where things come from. I wouldn't be able to tell you the main difference lyrically between the *Beatitude* lyrics and this.

MUSICIAN: *You're not using the solo album as a chance to explore different song themes?*

OCASEK: I feel you write the same song for your whole life, and you just try to get that one song better. I feel like that about every record: They're all the same song with a different look at it. I don't think this sounds Carsy at all, except possibly for "True To You." I don't know if the Cars could play the things I wrote on this. I hardly hear it. But you do have Greg and myself, which is a pretty strong element of the Cars, so I could see it sounding somewhat like that—also because the songs are written by the same person. But I feel like I did explore other things.

MUSICIAN: *Why record solo albums at all?*

OCASEK: I don't know if I see a difference, I just do it [laughs]—just to keep making records. I don't want to be tied into a company of people; I want to feel like I can stand on my own feet. It's just working on more than one thing. It would be silly to do my solo record just so I could totally turn everything opposite to what the Cars would be. I'd really have to be schizophrenic to do that. It's just an outlet to keep making records and music, and writing.

The reason you do a solo record is to get out from under the democracy, so you can say to yourself, "I don't have to be associated with the Cars." It's an assurance to yourself that you don't necessarily have to collaborate with those people to do something good. There's no bad vibrations in the Cars. It's just that I wanted to try other people.



"I love people who notice you from a block away and make sure the whole street knows you're coming... It's not a very private life."

I'm doin' this to learn more, to learn something without having to learn collectively. I've learned lots of things in the last year. I've at least learned that you should always keep your freedom. Not everybody wants to go the same way you want to go.

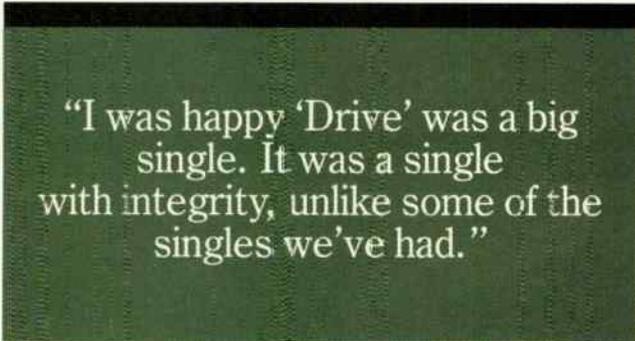
MUSICIAN: *Starting with Heartbeat City, your lyric writing seems more direct and emotional. Do you feel that way yourself?*

OCASEK: Yeah, I do. It's a constant puzzle to me. I look at love a lot of different ways, or try to, and I write about it a lot. I don't know what the lyrics are gonna be till I start to write a song. It's whatever comes out with the music; it comes out usually at the same time. Most of my songs are about relationships. Some go the other way. I love a lot of kinds of poetry—it's the main thing I read, besides magazines—so I can feel comfortable with lyrics being abstract; people can turn 'em any way they want. Which is why I don't like to interpret them, ever. Which is almost why I don't like to do videos. I like the medium; I really don't like when they try to storyboard a song to mean what it is. I also don't like everybody seeing everybody on a daily basis: Every new band you see immediately. There's no chance for a radical change in someone's looks or

even music because you see it so much. It was better when you almost didn't know as much what was going on. 'Cause then it was more of a shock when you saw somebody that was really pretty out there. But I do like doing videos. I like the camera almost more than live—maybe because it's not as real as live.

MUSICIAN: *Were you aware when writing the Heartbeat City songs that you were on a new tack?*

OCASEK: It's funny. I wrote a lot of the songs for *Heartbeat City* on Cape Cod in a little cabin with simple equipment. I took one of those teeny Yamaha keyboards which I wrote "Drive" on, which is three chords, just a three-note change. I took a



"I was happy 'Drive' was a big single. It was a single with integrity, unlike some of the singles we've had."

drum machine, a keyboard, one guitar and a small amp. I decided I would record everything on a mono tape deck. I wrote a bunch of songs that way, like "Heartbeat City," "Drive" and "You Might Think." I pretty much did the same thing on this, only I used a four-track. But a lot of demos are just a few parts. I think maybe the songs that are about love are more to the point since *Heartbeat City*, and more revealing about myself than the other ones, because I felt maybe there was a trend in my mind to hide the emotional things. Maybe because I didn't feel like there was too much emotion in relationships. Or maybe—I don't know, it sounds like I'm losing a button. I feel like I've almost taken a "I don't care what they think" attitude about it now. Which makes 'em simpler lyrically but harder to say and write. Some think it's more heartfelt, when I can be just as heartfelt abstractly but nobody would quite understand it; it wouldn't sound emotional. So yeah, I guess you could say they're opening up a little bit.

I think it's still a kind of poetry, or some sort of poetic form with music. Mutt Lange used to say, "Nobody ever listens to the lyrics anyway, so who gives a shit?" I like Mutt, but he just has firm beliefs about things like that.

MUSICIAN: *Your taste is rather extreme in terms of who you're listening to and who you're producing. But the music you make yourself tends to be fairly mainstream.*

OCASEK: Well, you think I should make the kind of music I listen to? Andy Warhol could paint anything, but he doesn't collect paintings by Roy Lichtenstein; he collects fine art. It looks nothing like any of his stuff. You collect, and you get influenced and inspired by things. And if you think you're going to try to depict what inspires you, you probably won't, if a lot of yourself is in it.

I just don't know how to be weird. I just do *this*. Even if I think I'm breaking out of it, I almost have no control. It's not predetermined or anything. Sometimes I think something's extremely out there; it's not as out-there as other people's, it seems to me. I never wanted it to be like a performance-art piece musically. When it comes down to writing songs, they come out like this. Maybe by producing other acts that have those elements I'm mentally supporting their task of trying to

change music a bit. "This Side Of Paradise," "Pink Flag Joe" and "Coming For You" sound slickish but not mainstream to me. "Pink Flag Joe" was one of my "I'm in touch with your world" type of songs. That was just another loser's story.

I look for things that are inspiring, and I just don't think a lot of normal radio pop music is good at all. We make pop records, and they go on there, and I don't know if they're good either. If you wrote a book, and thought it was totally off the wall and a real contribution to the literary scene—and it sold like fucking forty million books—you would have to think, "Why do all these common people understand this thing that I thought was so heavy?" [Laughs] You almost don't want the public. The Cars have been around long enough now that it's a staple. I could say, "American radio sounds like the Cars," or the Police, or six to ten groups.

It's also a challenge to make a record that people would accept. I couldn't have told you what the single was [on *This Side Of Paradise*] until numerous people said, "That one song." How come everybody notices five or six in particular? They're all the same to me. When I notice a lot of people always mention the same three or four, I have to say, "What is it about those that they like? What makes them stand out?"

"Drive" was a simple song, direct. I thought it was kinda weird for a single. It was all two, three chords and droning; the subject matter was kind of depressing. But Mutt always said, "It's a big single." I always went, "Sure." [Laughs] But I was happy it was a big single. Because it was a single with some integrity, unlike some of the singles we've had. The cuts people always think are singles are the ones I always think are the simplest cuts, melodically and lyrically.

THIS SIDE OF CONTROL-ROOM PARADISE

You name it, **Ric Ocasek** probably used it on *This Side Of Paradise*, his new solo album: Yamaha DX7 and DX9, Fairlight, PPG Wave, Emulator II, Synclavier for computer control, BBC and Apple computers. In contrast, Ocasek's own guitar list is surprisingly modest. He played two Fenders—a Jaguar and a Jazzmaster—and three pre-60s Gibsons: a one-pickup TV model, a 335 and a Les Paul solid-body. All went into Marshall amps. "The only thing I really use the Fenders for is that 'click' rhythm," Ocasek says. "I don't like 'em for chords. Gibsons to me are a little fuller." He adds, "I haven't bought a guitar in years." His acoustic axes are a Martin D28 and Guild twelve-string. A home studio includes a Teac four-track and Otari eight-track with a Sound Workshop board; he covets Greg Hawkes' Akai twelve-track. His mike is a Neumann U-87.

Joe Barbaria, who mixed *This Side Of Paradise*, had fun playing with a Lexicon Prime Time 2 flanger, Eventide 969 harmonizer, MXR phasers and flangers, and lots of reverb units: two Yamaha REV-7s, AMS, DDL, Lexicon 224X with Larc remote, Ursa Major Space Station and Lexicon PCM-70. For delay Barbaria used two digital Lexicon PCM 42s, and a Prime Time 1. He worked in Electric Lady's studio B, which has an SSL 4000 series board for automated mixing, and its own gates and compressor/expanders. Mix-down was from Studer 800 Mark 3 tape machines to a Studer 880 half-inch half-track. Recording tape was Ampex 456. Ten Pultec tube units provided equalization. Compressors were Teletronic LA2A and LA3As, Urei 1176s and Neve. Tape delay was via a Studer B-67 with varispeed. Microphones were "mostly Neumann U-87s." Barbaria heard the mix over a five-way Westlake system with Crown amps and towers. He also used two-way Yamaha NS-10s and AR10s for cross-reference. And let's not forget about the Panscan, an automated panning device. "A couple of songs had 'em all going," Barbaria says of this impressive array. "All the lights were flashing."

GOOD NEWS FROM

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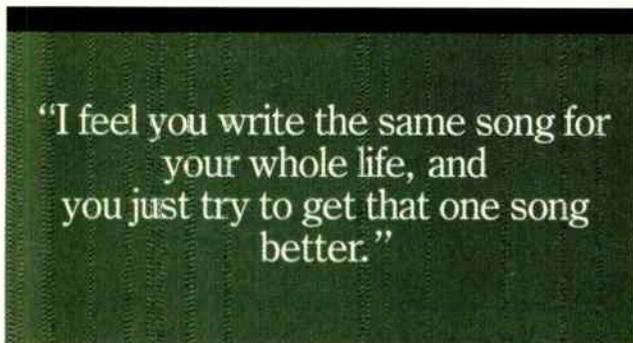
**ON ATLANTIC RECORDS, CASSETTES
AND COMPACT DISCS**

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MUSICIAN: *How have your attitudes toward pop music changed over the years?*

OCASEK: To me, pop songs are for people to check out times of their lives with: "God, every time I hear that song on radio I think of...." It's gotten more keyboard-oriented. There's not a lot of stylists around, people who are unique vocally or have a real different sound. This year I haven't heard anything in the charts that I've really liked. It's the fault of all mass communication, maybe.

I'd like to produce more. I feel I could be in the studio twenty-four hours a day. I don't feel like it's a prison. I quite enjoy it. I could get hung up living in this; put a bed over there.



But you can't always do that, otherwise you won't adapt. I want to grow.

MUSICIAN: *So you force yourself to get out of the studio?*

OCASEK: I get overcome by it and I have to get out of it. But my main love in life is to write songs, more than the studio even.

MUSICIAN: *Why do you find that so satisfying?*

OCASEK: It's something that wasn't there before it was written and is now. It went from blank to something. When I do it I feel like that's all I've ever done, it's all I really ever feel like. It's sort of a natural thing to do, even though I labor over it, either musically or lyrically. It can become extremely frustrating. I still love the labor of it, and the result—maybe because I decided a long time ago I would do that, and I've been fortunate enough to be able to do exactly what I wanted and be somewhat successful at it.

MUSICIAN: *How do you reconcile living outside the studio when it seems your whole life is inside the studio?*

OCASEK: It's very difficult. It's worse than being a doctor, I think.

MUSICIAN: *Does that create problems in your personal life? What you really want to do is in here?*

OCASEK: Sometimes. But then I get into a guilt trip of whether I'm being selfish or not. Then I have to decide whether I have to have that kind of obsession to do it the way I think it should be. At this point in my life it usually ends with my being selfish with my work. When I get outside of it I feel I'm in the wrong world. But I think that's because people stare at me! [Laughs] I walk around the city. I do every normal thing everybody does.

But it's almost like being a fucking politician. "Yeah, Ric!" Slaps on the back. Some people get totally fuckin' crazed about the whole thing and I just don't understand it. I love people who notice you from a block away and make sure the whole street knows you're coming. Announcements like tapping old men and ladies on the shoulder and saying, "You know who that is?" And they're going, "Who gives a fuck?" So it's a little hairy, and sometimes it's even a little scary. So maybe that's why I made that comment about walking down the street, why it feels weird. Maybe because I'm big. It's not a very private life; I'm

not crazed about it. When you're in a bad mood, or have a headache, or just don't feel like dealing with others, it can be a drag. You feel like you should shake everybody's hand who bought your records. In America it's like, "You must give back what we gave you." I have to give back twice: once with the songs, and I have to go to dinner with them too. All I really want to do is listen and write songs.

I got kinda spoiled in the beginning. I wish maybe we had a slower rise. The first record was so successful that almost anything after that would have been downhill. If I would sell less than a million records I'd almost think it was a commercial failure. Some people would think 250,000 would be a big success. If our first record had sold 30-40,000, I would have thought, "pretty successful record!"

When I listen to tapes new bands send to me, I can quickly decide whether they're floundering or focused—'cause I remember all the bands I had that weren't focused. With a lot of bands you'll hear tons of playing but no real content—just people learning their craft, learning how to play but never really stylized at all. The songs don't go anywhere or come back to anything, just meander about. Or they sound contrived in the wrong way.

MUSICIAN: *What constitutes focus?*

OCASEK: Things that fall into place naturally, have a reason for being there. "Focused" sounds like everybody playing together, everybody has the same idea rather than just scattered styles. If it's completely out of whack, that can be fine too, if it's done right.

MUSICIAN: *What about songwriting?*

OCASEK: That took a long time for me to learn [chuckles]. I have a couple of philosophies about it. One is that if it's a pop song it must be pretty melodic and also should go back to a theme. You just get it from doing it, from your mistakes, from knowing which songs never did sound focused and sounded like they were just floating around in the air. "Focus" can be good strong hooks throughout any kind of song. If it wasn't that way it'd be more jazz than rock.

MUSICIAN: *How do you decide what to write about?*

OCASEK: I don't think, "Well, I should really write a song about that." While I'm writing a song I usually get a line, or a couple of 'em. I'll have a tape full of themes; sometimes I just sit around and write small parts of songs. I might do a lot of different parts, verses or choruses—or I just get hung up on something instrumentally and write something with it. I'll get tapes with maybe fifty, a hundred things on it. When I'm ready to write I go through those tapes and find things to pick up on. I'll finish mostly all the strong things I think are in there—as many as I can finish without running out of lyric ideas. Music I could do forever. But there is a point, after you've written about seven songs, you just—I do, anyway—feel too drained to do anything else. It's kinda easy once the "idea" tapes are done. The hardest thing is to get an original idea going.

MUSICIAN: *Do you wonder if people want to hear your lyrics?*

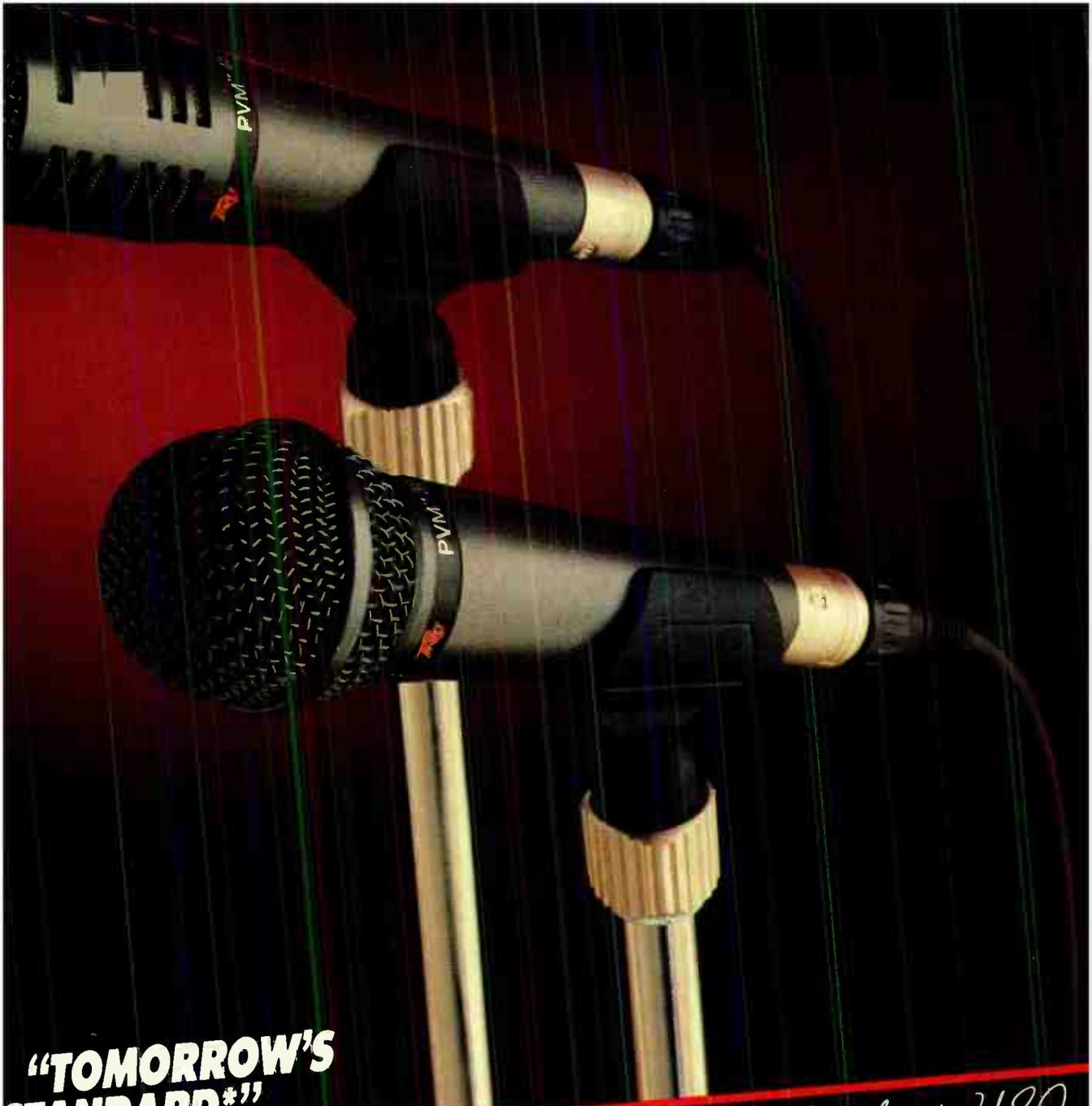
OCASEK: I just plow through anyway. Once I'm in the mood to write songs, I forget the people I'm writing for, I forget everything. Usually if I'm writing I think of one person hearing it—nobody in particular. I also feel that this song's for me and not for them; that gets me over the hump of trying to be impressive. I'll decide later if I like 'em. Lyrics are the hardest; music isn't so hard.

MUSICIAN: *You draw from your own experiences?*

OCASEK: I do, and observations. A lot can be fictitious. The themes apply to everybody, 'cause I'm just like everybody.

MUSICIAN: *A little taller....*

OCASEK: A little taller, and maybe I spent more time doing my one thing than the next person. ☐



"TOMORROW'S STANDARD"

***STAND-ARD** (stan'dērd), *n.* 1. Something established as a rule or basis of comparison in measuring or judging quality, value, capacity, extent, etc. 2. Something used by general agreement as a type, model, or pattern

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His client roster straddled both sides of the fence; Engel represented both Norman Mailer and Grosset & Dunlap. In 1977 his wife Judith—the other Engel in the firm's name—convinced him to move to California. Building his new practice with West Coast work from some of his former New York associates, Engel first made his mark in the record industry in 1979, when a former colleague recommended he represent Olivia Newton-John in a royalty case against MCA. (Aside from recording artists, his clients have included film mogul Dino De Laurentiis.)

"Why is it my little office handled most of the injunctions [against record companies] in the last ten years?" Engel asks. "The problem is that a lot of the legal expertise resides in the large entertainment law firms, and they get the bulk of their work from the entertainment conglomerates. I've known of situations where attorneys will represent an artist for contract negotiation but tell the client they won't sue a record company on his behalf. And even if they don't say that, a lot of smaller law firms would give their eye-teeth to get one big record company as a client."

Engel charges that the ability of record and entertainment companies to give work to law firms undermines the ability of artists to challenge contracts and business practices.

"Record companies have come to me during litigations and said, 'Look, Don, why are you knocking yourself out? In eighteen months no one will remember this kid and you'll still be here.' Some attorneys do subvert their clients by yielding to temptation."

Engel has used professional forums to chastize labels and attorneys who undermine contract negotiations through a hand-in-glove relationship. When *COMMENT Law Journal*, a communications and entertainment periodical published by the University of California's Hastings College of the Law, honored him in April, Engel spoke out on the issue.

"Many record companies negotiate with artists who either are not represented by attorneys or are represented by attorneys who are 'friendly' to the recording companies," he said at the time. "The mentality in the recording industry appears to be to make the very lowest possible deal with each and every young artist so as to maximize the companies' profits at the performer's expense. Artists' representatives often look the other way, anticipating their next deal with the record company."

Engel also terms record contracts "onerous." One of his pet peeves is the practice of making virtually all production costs recoupable against royalties. The standard recording contract allows a record company to deduct the cost of producing an album out of royalties before the artist receives any of those earnings. A recording budget—including the producer's advance—can easily top the \$100,000 mark; cash-strapped new artists can also find themselves owing a label for money advanced for videoclip production, tour support, special projects, or a subsistence allowance. For some developing bands, royalty debt can prove an almost bottomless hole.

Don Rose, manager of Mercury recording group Rubber Rodeo, says his group has already racked up \$500,000 in royalty debt after just two albums. It will be a long time—if ever—before the band shows a profit on its recordings. "We'd have to go platinum to get out of debt," Rose says.

Engel terms the recoupment clauses "a reverse income tax," and says the arrangement is unique to the record industry. "In no other industry does the artist pay the entire cost of producing his work. If you start out with production costs of \$125,000 and the artist is receiving a royalty rate of one dollar per record, you're talking about making zip on the first record. I've had clients selling in the 100,000-200,000 album range for five albums who are not making a living. And paying for a rec-

ord out of an artist's pocket is simply an unsound way to structure an industry."

Engel says there is "no question" that a label can make significant money on albums that sell in this range before artists see any income. "You don't have to spend the same kind of money to launch a record that you do to launch a film," he says. "Once a disk is out there, a label makes almost as much money on the 150,000th copy as they do on the millionth. At that point they're making \$2 a record and the artist still hasn't broken even." Engel says he would rather see artists forego advances and begin earning royalties on the first record.

Some young artists make even worse deals. In 1976 Teena Marie signed contracts with Motown Records and its song publishing house, Jobete. Teena Marie's professional experience consisted of playing in local bands at weddings and parties. The exclusive contracts she signed were for standard lengths of time, each running for an initial period of one year and granting the companies six options to renew the agreements for one-year periods on the same terms.

Although Teena Marie's output for Motown included the gold album *It Must Be Magic*, which reportedly netted the label a profit of \$1.7 million, her contract called for her to be paid minimum union scale for ten masters per year, resulting in a guarantee of \$600 to \$900 annually. The Jobete agreement provided only for royalties. Engel says she received under \$70,000 for all her years with the label.

In the final option year of her contract, Teena Marie told Motown she was leaving and signing with another label. Motown filed an injunction in California to bar the move, charging her with breach of contract. The action relied on invoking a California labor statute which allows minimum annual compensation of \$6,000, which Motown moved to pay her. But the court found that Motown's intent was to comply with the injunctive statute in the event Teena Marie sought to breach the exclusivity clause, and that the clause was intended to "allow record companies to avoid payment of minimum compensation while retaining the power of economic coercion over the artist." Entertainment law journals predicted the Teena Marie case would have far-reaching implications for recording contracts.

Freed from her Motown contract, Teena Marie signed with Epic. One might expect this to have made Engel a hero at the CBS-owned label. Ironically, Epic and Engel have been embroiled in a longstanding and acrimonious suit over another recording act, Boston.

The group, whose self-titled late-70s album is generally recognized as the biggest-selling debut album in history, was slapped with a \$20 million breach of contract suit by CBS in 1983 for failing to deliver two contracted albums a year over five years. The initial suit—yet to be settled—has been joined by several other side actions, including the above-mentioned action against Engel for representing the band, and a cease-and-desist action against the group to block the release of their new album for MCA Records. The cease-and-desist was voided by the same court that threw out the claim against Engel.

"Attorneys will represent an artist for contract negotiation but tell the client they won't sue a record company on their behalf."

As of press time, Engel's malicious-prosecution suit was scheduled to be heard before the end of September. Sources on both sides admit that it's rare for a case like this not to be settled out of court, but the bad feelings run deep. "No one's going to settle," according to one CBS staffer. Adds Engel: "I felt I had to sue them to vindicate my profession. Of course," he adds, "I'm not averse to collecting a lot of money."

Nor does Boston's initial breach-of-contract suit appear to be any closer to a settlement. CBS, which had reportedly been willing to let the band walk away from their contract for \$1 million five years ago, now appears to be angling to hold onto an investment fund in which they've been placing Boston's back royalties; the fund could be worth as much as \$5 million. The money in the escrow account could grow considerably this year if Boston's MCA album is a hit, since hit albums tend to stimulate back catalog sales. Even if the new album stiffs, Boston's first two Epic albums have demonstrated plenty of life, selling about 100,000 copies annually at frontline prices.

But if Engel feels the contracts young artists sign are patently unfair, he really bristles when discussing the enforceability of clauses designed to protect the artists. One of the worst areas, he says, are the audit provisions.

"Instead of becoming more liberal the record companies are becoming more onerous. Their audit clauses are just plain unfair, and they are adamant about them." Unlike book publishers, record companies universally insist that artists must cover the costs of any audit they request. Additionally, artists must take a label at its word regarding how many records and tapes are produced, and auditors must agree to keep all findings confidential, a situation that Engel says forces every artist who audits a label to start at square one.

"The first \$15,000 you spend on an audit reveals the same information about a company's accounting procedures each time," he says. "But you have to spend another \$15,000 every time to find this out because an auditor must sign an agreement saying he won't use the same information for a separate audit. I think the only solution is for artists to get together and form an organization to audit companies. Together they can certainly set standards and hire auditors."

And Engel is convinced that audits are essential as a matter of course. "Cutting corners and hiding sales has become an art in the recording industry," he told the audience at the *COMMENT* dinner. "In some twenty-five years of dealing in the book industry, I have yet to recommend that an author conduct a

general audit of one of the major book companies. In contrast, we always recommend that our major recording artists regularly conduct full audits of all royalty statements rendered by recording companies. I have yet to be involved in, or learn of, an audit which did not show a substantial underpayment."

Even with an audit, Engel says, artists can lose significant income from free goods or cut-outs, which he terms "a scandal. That information never gets into the [record company's] computer, and the audit means nothing without it. It's an unconscionable and adamant refusal on the part of the labels. It's the artist's performance; is the performer not entitled to know how many copies of his work you've pressed?"

Engel's gadfly tendencies go beyond representing his clients. He recently lobbied—unsuccessfully—to stop a new record-industry-only amendment to the California labor code that makes it more difficult for an artist to break with a record company. And, when U.S. Senator Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) announced his investigations into record industry practices this past spring, Engel sent a copy of his *COMMENT* remarks to the Senator's office.

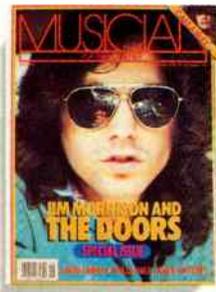
"I've been annoyed reading that it's a Mafia connection that's moved anyone off the spot to investigate the industry," he says. "It's amazing to me that no one's done anything before. I also represent some of the companies in the industry—but it still enrages me that it takes a yellow scandal with the word 'Mafia' in it to get anyone moving." 



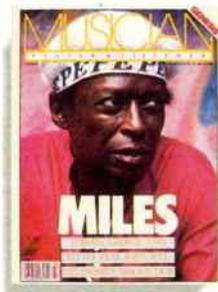
CHRIS CUFFAROVISAGE

"Record companies have come to me and said, 'Why are you knocking yourself out? In eighteen months no one will remember this kid.'"

"We always recommend a full audit. I have yet to be involved in an artist audit that did not show a substantial underpayment."



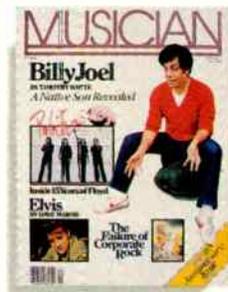
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MDL61

Eric Clapton Is Not GOD.

And He Knows It.

In the beginning, there was the word, and the word was good. A young guitarist, born in the English countryside and at work in the nightclubs of London, was developing an instrumental voice that seemed to cry out in the wilderness of the British blues scene. He was fast, he was confident, he was a true guitar hero. He was Eric Clapton, and, said the fans, "CLAPTON IS GOD."

And so it came to be written, on the walls of London and in the music papers, until finally it had been proclaimed throughout the land: "CLAPTON IS GOD." No one knows who first scrawled the phrase, but soon everyone took it up, for it was a persuasive argument, and made for a pervasive myth.

According to legend, Clapton's godhead was hard-won. He endured an unhappy childhood, finding salvation in the blues and disciples in the Yardbirds. But they abandoned him for the false god of popdom, so he spent a year in desertion, honing his technique in the solitude of a locked room. Finally, he came to be baptized by the prophet John Mayall, and, ultimately, ascended into the holy power trio, Cream.

There was more to the saga, of course—his loss of Blind Faith, his tortured longing for an unattainable love, his seduction by the dark gods Heroin and Alcohol—but the course of his story had been set, until the legend of the guitar hero seemed almost to supersede the guitarist behind it.

But at forty-one, Eric Clapton is not god, and no one is more aware of it than the man himself. Seated in his manager's London office, he made the very un-godlike confession that there are parts of his own repertoire that even he can't play.

"The old 'Layla' riff," he said, humming the sixteenth-note figure that became a 70s standard. "I can't do that and sing, 'Laaay-laaah.' It's actually *beyond* me. I may never get it. They

By J.D. Considine

both hit the beat at the same time, but your fingers are doing something fast, while your voice is holding something, and then timing it at the end to break a little differently.

"It's a nightmare," he laughed. "I'd love to be able to do it, because it would save me the trouble of always having to get another guitar player for the band. If nothing else, I always have to bring one guitar player on for that song."

So much for musical omnipotence, and so much the better for Eric Clapton. For someone considered to be one of rock's greatest guitarists, he's often appallingly modest. In the course of this interview he owned up to a string of insecurities, from the sense that his solos are too cluttered, to his misgivings about moral responsibility. Yet it wasn't mere self-deprecation, for throughout it all Clapton remained unblushingly conscious of his history, and utterly frank about his potential.

That lent a certain matter-of-factness to his remarks, making his ambivalent embrace of his guitar-hero status all the more affecting. Who else could seem so charming when admitting absolute terror at visiting music shops? "I can't do it," he said, explaining that asking about new equipment was beyond him. "I hate the idea of appearing ignorant, I really do, because I *am* ignorant. And that's really admitting it, to go up and ask, 'Well, what's new?' You're supposed to be showing *them*!"

But what Eric Clapton knows about guitar playing has less to do with gizmos and gewgaws than with spirit and serenity, qualities of the soul, not technological trickery. Which, perhaps, was one reason why, at the end of the interview, he seemed pleased that the conversation regularly drifted away from the specifics of guitar playing. "It doesn't necessarily have to be about music," he said. "In fact, music is only a reflection of what we're talking about."

member going to see a lot of films in my late teens, and creating for myself a kind of cool, a deliberate approach to what I was going to do. I mean, whatever I was going to do, I wanted to wear shades and not say anything, be very laid back.

Did you ever see a Cassavetes film called *Faces*? It was an underground film that they made up as they went along, a beat generation kind of thing. I saw that, and I was very impressed with the whole macho bit, but without pulling any strokes. I thought, "This is a great way to be, and whatever I do, if I incorporate that into it, it'll be different."

But as far as being the first guitar hero, to me, Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly and Bo Diddley were guitar heroes. I mean, they sang as well, but they were mainly guitar men for me. And I thought they were pretty cool, too, although Buddy Holly, now that I've seen some home-movie footage, I see that he was quite a lad, actually. Just one of the guys.

MUSICIAN: *Berry, Holly and Diddley may have been great guitarists, but still, they never really had the virtuoso-soloist air associated with guitar heroes. Mainly, what they played were 12-bar breaks, and some were quite simple. For instance, you can play almost the entire "Peggy Sue" solo in the same position with simple barre chords.*

CLAPTON: Well, I was impressed by the sound of that, and I didn't know that it was that easy. When you hear it, it doesn't sound like it's that easy. That's the great thing, the deception.

But Holly did get cleverer and cleverer. I mean, "It's So Easy" had a fantastic solo on it. At first I didn't think it was him, and I'm still not sure that it was. But if it is—and I think it was—that was how much he'd grown, how far he'd taken the guitar. So he was definitely a guitar hero.

But I suppose...see, what I was doing was taking the blues, from Chicago and everywhere, and using it to start something that was fairly unique in this country. In this country there was nothing else happening like that. There may have been two or three other players aware of it, but they weren't really trying very hard. So I was very lucky, that at the time I discovered that I was able to break through with it.

MUSICIAN: *Of course, you could have channeled your ambition in the direction of jazz.*

CLAPTON: Well, yeah, I was actually tempted at one point. When I started buying John Lee Hooker records, they were coming out on Riverside, and in the same rack in the record shop, there was like Blue Mitchell and Coltrane, people like that who were being released at the same time. I did buy those albums, and there were some guitar players, like Gabor Szabo, who interested me slightly because they were bending strings.

But they didn't seem really to have it covered, and they weren't ever going to be the frontmen. The only one was Jim Hall, but what he did was too mellow, it didn't have any bite. I could've gone in that direction, but there was no one to follow. I wanted to follow, for a while.

MUSICIAN: *The people you're identified with—Albert King, Freddie King, B.B. King...*

CLAPTON: ...And Buddy Guy.

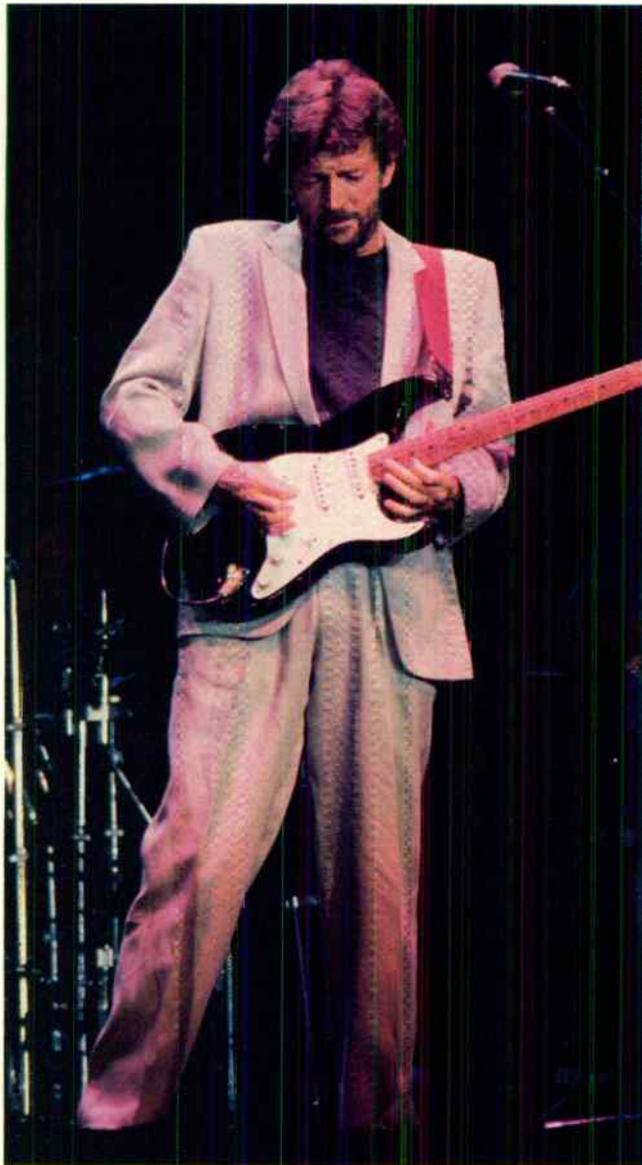
MUSICIAN: *Obviously they were very exciting players, but what was it about them that grabbed you?*



Cream, the Holy power trio: Jack Bruce, Ginger Baker & Clapton.

MUSICIAN: *In a lot of ways, you were the first actual guitar hero, which means, among other things, you didn't have much in the way of historical precedents. So how did you feel when you started to see the "Clapton Is God" graffiti going up around London?*

CLAPTON: Well, I deliberately set out to be that, I think. I re-



“People who think I invented this stuff have got it wrong.”

CLAPTON: I think it was something to do with the confidence they had. We know now that the “Peggy Sue” solo wasn’t, technically, anything special, but the confidence in that *made* it sound special, and it was there in those guys’ playing, too. I mean, they would hit a note and, without any doubt, bend it to exactly where they wanted it to be. Without any doubt whatsoever. Total confidence, and I think that’s what drew me to them—because they knew exactly what they were doing. Therefore, if I followed them, I couldn’t go wrong.

MUSICIAN: *Billy Gibbons pointed out that one of the first signs of a bad blues imitator is that he doesn’t know when to stop bending the string.*

CLAPTON: It’s because they’re not confident. I mean, it’s not because they’re tone-deaf or anything; it’s because they’re just not sure enough of themselves. Once they start bending, they just start to panic, because they may not get it as far as they want, or they may get it too far, and by that time, it’s already over.

MUSICIAN: *You keep stressing confidence; in a funny way, I’m*

reminded of Pete Townshend confessing that one of the reasons he took up guitar was because if people noticed his playing, they wouldn’t notice the size of his nose.

CLAPTON: [Laughs] I never heard that one. That’s very honest.

MUSICIAN: *But that—the shy teenager with a limited sense of self-worth—is a big part of the guitar hero myth. Were you like that?*

CLAPTON: Oh, all the worst things of adolescence, I went through. You know, the falling in love and getting hurt, all that kind of thing. Constantly going after women who were out of my reach.

And, yeah, I think it’s exactly that. I mean, guitar playing—it’s like a bluff. Covers up all your wimp things. If you can get that down... I mean, the first recognition I ever got amongst the crowd I used to hang out with was for my guitar playing. I tried to dress like them, I tried to get my hair right and look good, but I was lacking in these departments. So the guitar... I mean, I think I was probably lucky, and was gifted in that way, because it didn’t seem as hard as it should be. That was what got me through, covered up for all these...

MUSICIAN: *This was when you were how old?*

CLAPTON: Oh, sixteen, seventeen.

MUSICIAN: *And you started off playing folk stuff?*

CLAPTON: Yeah, but it was still blues. It was things like Jesse Fuller and Big Bill Broonzy and Blind Boy Fuller. Almost like a ragtime thing. You could play that kind of music in a pub, be the hero of all your friends, and get free drinks. And finally I’d something I could do that no one else could do.

MUSICIAN: *You were singing too?*

CLAPTON: No, not then. I did at home, and sometimes in the pubs, but it wasn’t serious, y’know? I wasn’t really developing my voice.

MUSICIAN: *So who sang?*

CLAPTON: A guy called Dave Brock, who ended up with a group called Hawkwind. I haven’t seen him since we were in the pubs together.

MUSICIAN: *Still, wasn’t that part of the whole guitar hero cool, that these guys played but didn’t sing?*

CLAPTON: Unfortunately yeah, and I think they should all be able to sing, even if it’s just as a back-up to guitar playing. Robbie Robertson’s a good case in point; he’s a great singer, and I’ve heard a couple tracks on the old Band records where his voice is actually the one that you think is someone else.

MUSICIAN: *One of the most interesting things about your early work was that not only did you have a unique approach, you also had a quite distinct sound. In fact, Edward Van Halen, who was heavily influenced by you in his early days, once said that what attracted him most to your playing was that you “reminded me of a tenor sax.”*

CLAPTON: Yeah, well, I’m glad that someone picked up on that at least [laughs].

MUSICIAN: *You were trying for that?*

CLAPTON: Oh, yeah. I always wanted something other than the guitar. I mean, I hate the sound of just a straight guitar. I don’t mind it in other people’s playing, but when I pick up a guitar and it just sounds like a guitar, to me that’s boring.

I think, first of all, I wanted to sound like Little Walter. I wanted to play the guitar and make it sound like an harmonica. And then, I wanted it to sound, for a long time, like Jr. Walker. I think if you can get a guitar to play like his saxophone, you were off and running somewhere else.

Ray Charles is another one. He plays the piano like a guitar. It’s almost like he’s thinking, “I wish I could make this sound like a guitar.” ‘Cause he plays guitar riffs. And really, there is a sort of series of phrases that all those musicians use, and what-

ever instrument you play has nothing to do with it. You just go for those phrases.

MUSICIAN: *I can see what you mean about the phrasing, but to me, a big difference is that the saxophone has a much more fluid sound than a guitar, making it easier to do things with inflection. Whereas a guitar line, especially on acoustic, just doesn't flow the same way.*

CLAPTON: I think that's maybe one of the reasons people started bending notes. I don't know what or who; maybe it was Charlie Christian, maybe even Django Reinhardt. Whoever it was, they were probably going after that. They may have had a sax player in the band and thought, "Christ, he can do things that I'm not allowed to do because of the restrictions of this instrument."

It's still the same thing. You've still got the restrictions, and trying to get it to sound like a saxophone is breaking the law of the guitar, really. But that's the great thing about it, to try to make it sound like another instrument.

MUSICIAN: *It strikes me that articulation and tone may be the two most important things about playing a musical instrument that the average player ignores.*

CLAPTON: Well, you know, if you can do it on an acoustic guitar, then you can do it with anything. The whole thing with MIDI and guitar synthesizers is that they're really almost destroying that avenue now. Because you can plug in, and set it up to sound like something else, without actually having to do much work on the guitar itself. Now, if you unplugged them and then tried to achieve those things—that's what I'm saying. If you can get an acoustic guitar to play and phrase like a saxophone or harmonica, then you don't need to MIDI up. And it's actually better not to, I think.

MUSICIAN: *Well, aside from some whang-bar or string-bending things, most of what I've heard on MIDI guitar could as easily have come from a keyboard.*

CLAPTON: Yeah, exactly. And that's where it's gone wrong, because you actually get lured into making it sound like a DX-7, really. Whereas in actual fact, the real art is to make the guitar sound like one of those things, or one of the instruments it's trying to imitate, *without* being MIDI'd.

MUSICIAN: *I know you used some Roland guitar synth on your last album, Behind The Sun. Was there any on the new album?*

CLAPTON: No, because the good stuff never got onto *Behind The Sun*. We did three or four tracks where I actually got an alto or soprano sax sound on the Roland, and played lead guitar. For all intents and purposes, to the person on the street, it was a sax solo. And they never would have known it was me playing. I could've fooled anyone with it.

When it was sent to the record company, they didn't like it. Their objection was, "Why didn't you play the solo, instead of getting a horn player in to play?" [laughs]

So the whole purpose was defeated. It would be much better if it sounded almost like a saxophone, but you knew it was the guitar. And that's what the synthesizer is doing, taking it so far that it defeats the purpose.

MUSICIAN: *Was the thing with synth guitar the only problem with Behind The Sun? I'd heard that you had cut an entire album with Phil Collins, but that Warner Bros. made you drop a few tracks in favor of the cuts with Ted Templeman. Considering that your new album, One More Car, One More Rider, was produced by Collins, I assume that the problems, whatever they were, have been ironed out.*

CLAPTON: Well, it was the choice of material they objected to. It was a little bit self-indulgent, really. There were a couple of songs that would never have made it as singles, and were only interesting because of my approach to them. So they're only interesting to the ready fans. And Warner Bros. wanted a

whole album of stronger stuff, so that's why I went to L.A. But it wasn't anything to do with Phil's production.

MUSICIAN: *Considering how different One More Car sounds, though, it's probably safe to assume you didn't decide to bring back Collins for the same reasons.*

CLAPTON: This time, what I went for was choice of musicians more than anything else. You see, I'd done *Behind The Sun* with my touring band, which was very comfortable, but wasn't very adventurous. They would sit behind me and wait for me to make all the moves, and then follow. So what I did was to choose people I'd met during the L.A. sessions, when I had to update *Behind The Sun*. I'd met Greg Pillinganes and Nathan East, and they were what they called the "A Team" in L.A., the top session players.

There were other guys, like the Porcaro brothers and Steve Lukather, who were also on those sessions, but these two guys particularly impressed me, because they seemed to be good as well as being session men. In the studio, I could tell that they were far more creative than they were allowed to be.

So when I thought about making this album, I thought if I get those two guys, I'm really going to put myself in a hard bind, because I'll have to come up with the goods, too. And I'll enjoy doing it, because the musical companionship will be there.

So we ended up with Phil, Nathan, Greg and me. The material we got sort of filtered in from all over the place, and I wasn't really that concerned with what the lyrics or the form of the songs were. Just what the band would make of it. And we did something like twenty-one tracks in three or four weeks. Just get a song into us, and we'd play it, and *take it*, it was that good.

MUSICIAN: *Historically, your band have either been English or southern American, which makes this line-up a bit odd, as neither Nathan nor Greg fall into either category.*

CLAPTON: Oh, yeah. But, you know, the *root* of that kind of playing is where I came from. They think in the same kind of way. Whether they would admit it—or even know it—it all goes back to the blues.

And they both play that, and don't even know it, this is the crazy thing. In Montreux we did "Same Old Blues," which is

"The pain is always going to be with you. Every day, in some respect or another, I find something I'm going to suffer about. And if I don't, I wonder why."

on *Behind The Sun*, and they loved that song. They didn't really know why or anything, they just loved it. And when we played, they both got solos. After the show, they said, "Something's happening to us. You've woken up something, and we don't know what it is."

It was like they were playing the blues naturally—doing it beautifully, and better than anyone could imagine—and they hadn't realized that was there. Because they'd been playing jingles or slick stuff. But that was at the bottom, at the root.

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of roots, does it bother you that there are guitarists whose blues knowledge comes primarily from you?*

CLAPTON: It depends on the limit of their influence. When I get *Guitar Player* magazine, I always look through and see if any-

one's mentioned my name. You know, it's the old feeling: "Oh, no one's mentioned me this week!"

If I read that someone's listened to me and then moved on to something else, I like that. But people who think I invented the stuff, they've got it wrong. I think, considering the time that I've been around and the importance I've had, you'd be crazy not to be aware of the fact that I was there, and was worth checking out, at least. Because I was picking up on all the good sources; I mean, Jimi [Hendrix] and I were hanging out together, and there was a lot of things being traded around that were crucial to the way that guitar playing was happening.

So Eddie Van Halen went over the top; it's crazy for him to have learned that much from me. I mean, he could have just been aware of what I was doing, and then said, "Oh yeah, well, that's a bit like Buddy Guy," or, "That's a bit like so-and-so." Put it all in perspective. To get obsessive about one person...

MUSICIAN: *Frankly, from what I can tell, I don't think he would know who Buddy Guy was even today.*

CLAPTON: Well, he should. He should check him out. To illustrate that, I did a tour a couple of years ago where we'd been on the road for about a month, and it was getting slightly stale. You get to the point where it's great, and then it goes into a dip, and then it comes up.

We dropped into Chicago, and I went down to see [Buddy Guy] at the Checkerboard. We got up and played, and I came to life again. It was like being with Muddy for half an hour; the whole thing was revitalized.

Buddy's still got that. I mean, for he's by far and without a doubt the best guitar player alive. I don't know what it is—it doesn't stand up in a recording studio, you couldn't put him on a hit record, but if you see him in person, the way he plays is beyond anyone. Total freedom of spirit, I guess. It would be important for anyone who wants to play guitar to find out about that aspect of it.

Records can't do that, you know. If I'd never met Buddy Guy, I'd probably think that all he could do was what I'd heard on record, and I'd be sadly mistaken. And that goes for B.B. and Freddie and all those guys, too, because they came alive much more onstage than they ever did on record.

MUSICIAN: *Still, there must have been something on the records that attracted you in the first place.*

CLAPTON: In the first place, yeah, but then it's up to you to take it one step further. Unfortunately a lot of musicians, a lot of songwriters and performers today settle for what they hear first time. They don't go looking. I think you should, I think it's part of your responsibility, to get to the bottom of it.

MUSICIAN: *I don't know, though. The night before I flew out here I saw Van Halen, and one of the things they did in their set was a blues jam. Which was funny, because although things started out predictably enough, once Edward got going, it wasn't blues at all. It was Edward Van Halen, which left me thinking that the blues is somehow foreign to his way of playing.*

CLAPTON: That's funny, isn't it? That is very funny to me, because if he was that tuned into me and missed that point, then he missed the whole point. And funnily enough, he and Brian May had made a record a couple of years ago. One side was a kind of a fusion thing—really very interesting, great to listen to—and the other side was a blues jam. It was so horrible. And they dedicated it to me. They sent me a copy, and I put it on, expecting something, and, you know, I was almost insulted that they should send this to me, because they both...they can't play! They took turns to play solos, and just went head-at-it, with everything they knew. And there was no dynamics, no build-up, no sensitivity. I was very disappointed.

Though, actually, it did me a little good, because I realized that, although I'd been accepting the fact that all these players

knew exactly what it was about on the surface of things, underneath, they didn't.

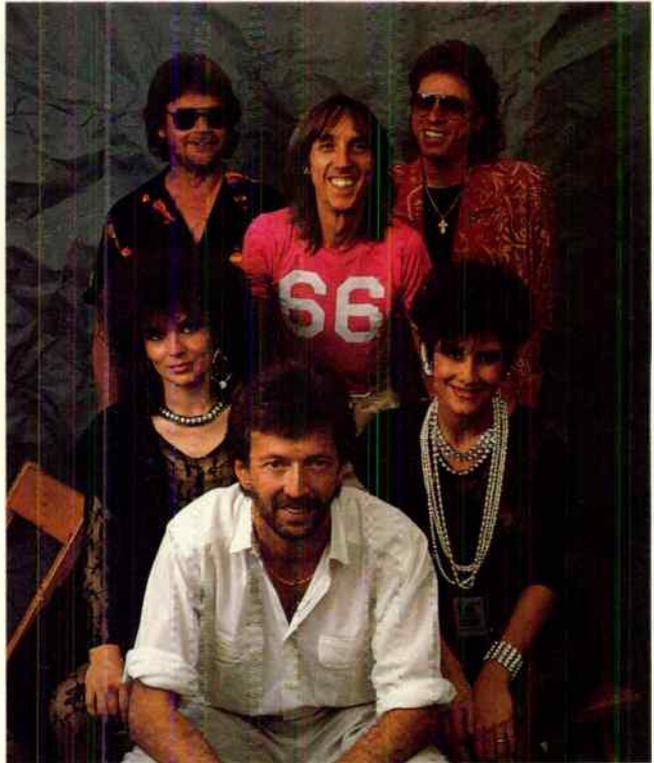
MUSICIAN: *In a sense, though, isn't it simply a matter of style? It's as hard to imagine Edward Van Halen playing blues as it would be to imagine you playing his stuff.*

CLAPTON: No, I couldn't. I couldn't.

MUSICIAN: *Even though you probably have the technique, and then some.*

CLAPTON: No, I don't think so. I think it's a separate technique, and just as important, in its way. It involves the use of things which I have no idea of, like the whang bar. I mean, Jeff Beck is probably closer to that style, and to watch Jeff play, I know I'm never going to get to that.

The question is whether or not I would want to, really. I often think, "Well, when I get into the studio, I'll have a go at



Clapton & touring band: "comfortable, not adventurous."

it." But what's going to make it any different when you get into the studio? The fact that you can use gadgets? And if you rely on gadgets you're getting nowhere, because it still is down to what you do with your two hands, and that's definitely beyond me, what Eddie does. It's well beyond me.

The thing is, if he wants to play blues, he has to look at it as a style. It's got rules. It's like Japanese kabuki theatre or something; it's got certain things which you do, and other things which you don't do. If someone came to town—like, if he were still alive, Sonny Boy Williamson—and you thought, "Well, he's a bluesman, so therefore, it's all going to be 12-bar blues." Fine. Most players think they can play a 12-bar blues. But every 12-bar blues is different. Sonny Boy Williamson would have an intro on certain songs, and if you didn't know that, then he would be *disgusted* with you. And I know this from experience, because he was disgusted with me! Because that was my attitude, when I was with the Yardbirds. I thought, "A 12-bar blues means it goes: one, two, three, four, *dahn-duh-duhn....*" Of course, it isn't that. There'd be an intro, and



“Oh no, no one’s mentioned me in *Guitar Player*....”

there’d be a riff that he’d want. And if you didn’t know it from the record, he’d be disgusted with you.

So, it’s just like everything—it’s got rules. To play the blues, you’d have to have listened to all his records, all Muddy Waters’ records, all Bobby Bland’s records. All of them, to know which one is which. It’s a huge songbook.

If you got all the best musicians in a room, and said, “Let’s do a blues,” it would be very difficult to start without someone actually quoting something. In actual fact, what you’re talking about is a *song*, and if you were to say, “Let’s do a blues,” someone would have to say, “Well, what song are we going to do?” And you’d go on from there.

[Laughs] Depending on whether or not everyone knew the bloody song.

MUSICIAN: *To get back to the matter of style, one thing that strikes me as ironic is that, despite your reputation for virtuosity, the guitarists who play most like you tend to be incredibly laid back soloists, like Mark Knopfler or Jimmy Vaughan.*

CLAPTON: Well, they’re the people whom I do see as being my true peers, and I’m very comfortable with that. I mean, it’s a very secure feeling. They are great players of taste, and I think that’s what you’re talking about, taste, really.

MUSICIAN: *Calling it taste, though, seems a little too much a part of somebody’s thought-process. Most players I’ve talked to have said that their solos aren’t thought out, but just seem to pop in from the blue. Is that the case with you?*

CLAPTON: Onstage—this is the best way I’m thinking—almost from the first verse I’ve started to think about what I’m going to do when the solo comes up, which is a good minute or two away. I’ll get flashes of what I should do, so when the point in time arrives, I’ve already developed an attitude, a kind of a

character.

And then I’ll go for it, and it goes completely out the window. [Laughs] So, I’ll know what I want to do, but when you actually go “Bang! This is the moment,” it usually goes completely the other way, totally opposite to what I want.

MUSICIAN: *Is this because of what the band is playing?*

CLAPTON: It is very much driven by what is happening around you, because you don’t want to shock anyone in the band. I mean, if you were to do what you truly wanted, you might start a little mini-revolution onstage or something, where everyone would be upset. I mean, I’ve always thought that the ideal solo would be one where you don’t actually do anything. So everyone’s holding, waiting, saying, “What the hell?” And then, after maybe eight bars, you hit.

But try doing that, because the rest of the band would think that something had gone wrong with your equipment, and the moment would be lost. So that would be the kind of thing that you’d have to deliberately plan, inform the rest of the band about. “Tonight, guys, I’m not going to play for about eight bars.” So the spontaneity is already gone in that part.

And the other thing is, I always overplay. Whenever I listen back to stuff, I’m always disappointed. I mean, I hate listening to cassettes of shows. I listen sometimes, and think, “I could have done three notes to those ten. Just halved it, and made it more meaningful.” But it’s very difficult.

MUSICIAN: *But honing your solos like that doesn’t always pay off, though. The Fabulous Thunderbirds did a lot of touring with Stevie Ray Vaughan, and even though Jimmy Vaughan played some incredible things—brilliant, concise, expressive solos—it was always Stevie Ray’s flash that got the most applause.*

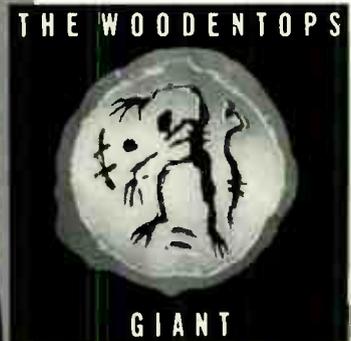
CLAPTON: Well, there’s some kind of fine line in the middle,

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THE WOODENTOPS



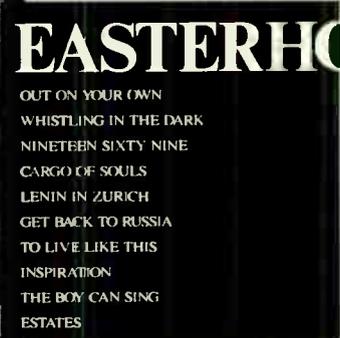
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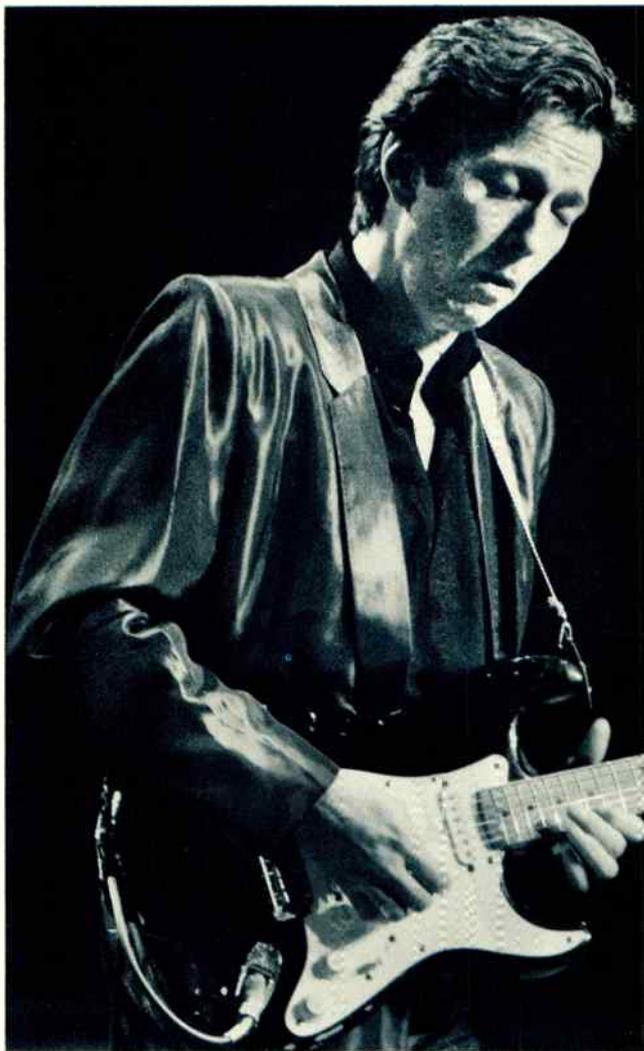


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The Best New Bands From Britain—Bar None. on Columbia Records and Cassettes.





“I hate the sound of just a straight guitar.”

where what you're doing is so good that it goes over everyone's head. In Jimmy's case—and I think he's, without a doubt, one of the greatest players of all time—only a few people in the audience will realize what's happening. On the other hand, Stevie Ray, where there's so much that everyone is just swamped by it. There's somewhere in the middle, where you can actually please yourself and please the audience.

MUSICIAN: *Is it hard to get to that?*

CLAPTON: Yeah, very hard. It means you've got to have the facility to play as fast as anyone, and not use it. You know, that's the great thing about Jimmy—you *know* that he could play as fast as his brother if he wanted to. That's the Zen kind of thing about it, and that's what great about the fact he's holding back, or being subtle. The thing is, you have to have the technique, or you have to refine your technique and work at it, and then not use it, in a way.

MUSICIAN: *You, though, started out with the Yardbirds, a band that went after audience response in much the same way Stevie Ray does. Does that make it hard for you to deal with an audience when you're playing?*

CLAPTON: I'm really dependent on them, I'm afraid. To this very day, if I haven't reached them within the first number with whatever I'm going to do, then I tend to sour quite easily. So there's a lot of that crowd-pleaser in me. I don't mind that too

much, because it means if I do get them, we can go somewhere really special. If I don't, that's the sad thing. If I don't, then I'm really up shit creek, can't go anywhere.

MUSICIAN: *A certain aspect to Western culture assumes there's some sort of gap between intellect and instinct. It's always struck me that one of the great things about rock is that, by intermingling Western and African musical traditions, it presents a situation where people who are inclined to be analytical learn to play off their instincts, and vice versa. Would I be right in assuming that this relationship is a big thing in your playing?*

CLAPTON: Well, mine is the other way around. I mean, my thing is based on feeling, and then realizing that I have to think as well. But European music is very strange. Very strange, indeed. I think that's why I often feel very isolated here, and very “anti-.” I find it very difficult to find things in English and European music that I like. Something comes up every now and then which seems to gel between them both—or, at least, the emotion of it is the most important thing.

MUSICIAN: *Why do you suppose you're that way?*

CLAPTON: Because that's what I learned that I liked, that's what I wanted out of the music I listened to when I was young. And even now, the only thing I've been listening to in the last few months has been Stevie Winwood's new album, and his is the same sort of thing. I mean, phonetically, it wouldn't matter what he was saying a lot of the time. It wouldn't matter at all. It's just what, emotionally, his voice is doing to you, making you either well up in tears or feel really good.

MUSICIAN: *Having grown up in America, where the music you're talking about is like the air we breathe, it's hard to imagine how you must have felt when you were growing up. The closest I can come is to think of friends who are into imported records, and who try to be the first to get the latest, most obscure English stuff. Was that part of it for you when you were buying blues records?*

CLAPTON: You picked it there, with, “Let's get the latest Jimmy Reed single.” I went through that phase in my early twenties. But at the same time I would, deliberately almost, seek out opera and classical music, too, to balance it out. I was keeping a perspective on what I was listening to. It wasn't all going into some kind of purist tunnel that I'd never come out of. I had to be aware of how important the Muddy Waters feeling was to Verdi, you know, or something like that. What was it in both of these things that made them important, made them move me?

And I can't really put into words, I suppose, what it was, or what it is. Just something that starts *physically*, something that makes your body reverberate and the hairs on your neck stand up. There may be scientific ways of measuring that or describing it, but I can't imagine what they are. It's probably a deeply spiritual thing.

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of spirituality, a lot of musicians seem easily attracted to gurus, teachers and such, spiritual movements outside the standard church-going experience. I've always suspected that this is because many musicians have spiritual impulses, but no real means to articulate them.*

CLAPTON: That's very true, very true. I think a lot of us are given that gift for that very reason, that we cannot make use of it in terms of power. Up to a point you can, but it's limited. You can't lead continents to war [laughs] or anything like that, because you don't have the wherewithal to put it to practical use.

And another thing is that I think you get so brought down by the material side of what happens to your music. I find that more and more all the time now. As the knife gets sharper in the industry, to actually toe the line becomes more and more self-deprecating.

I mean, making this last record, I would often go into little despairs about, “Why am I so concerned about whether this



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sells or not?" And I'd realize it was because I want to please the record company. I want to please the people they sell the records to. But that makes you yearn for something deeper.

MUSICIAN: Yes, but if, say, you were to make up 100,000 cassettes of the stuff Warners didn't want on *Behind The Sun*, I doubt you'd have much trouble finding 100,000 hard-core Clapton fans who would buy them.

CLAPTON: You may be right, yeah.

MUSICIAN: Which is what seems really strange, because, in effect, what the record company is saying is that 100,000 people are too few to trifle over.

CLAPTON: Which is very blind, in a way. But then again, unless I was someone like Bob Geldof, who actually does a lot of the wheeling and dealing himself, and had that kind of ambition or drive...and not many of us have it. We're much too lazy. I mean, I tend to think of going to the studio as going to work, and when I come home, I forget all about it. And the idea of doing promotion is really a nightmare for me.

"I was almost insulted that Eddie Van Halen and Brian May should send me this horrible blues jam dedicated to me, because they both ...they can't play!"

Whereas someone like Phil [Collins] looks forward to it, and gets his teeth into it. But musicians are, for the most part, a lot like me, and just like to enjoy life, and have a peaceful time when they're not making records. Then it's really up to the companies, and they always will be in the majority.

MUSICIAN: But to get back to the earlier point, a lot of guitar heroes have had gurus: Pete Townshend with Meher Baba, for instance, or Carlos Santana with Sri Chimnoy. You, though, have never been identified with anyone.

CLAPTON: Well, yeah, as close as I came was with Muddy, and we spent a good amount of time together, considering what was available. I think that was as close as I ever got to having a guru, and it was all unspoken. It was all just listening and watching, and taking examples. Which I probably abused most of the time.

But I did get an insight of what it was all about, simply by that kind of serenity and hidden power he had. And the great thing was, it was in the music I loved. I didn't have to go outside of what I was doing to find something else.

I don't know, I've always been a little bit wary of getting into something that would mean I'd have to give up what I've got. I felt that with Carlos, that maybe he, at times, felt a little bit ashamed of the kind of good life he got into, you know? When he was on the road, we hung out, and one night we had a session where I said, "Okay, I'll pray with you if you'll drink a bottle of Tequila with me tomorrow night." And it was a funny deal, really. We went through with it, but I don't know if he got anything out of it. Or I did, really. 'Cause it was so separate.

But to be able to observe Muddy and learn from him in that way meant that I was staying within a familiar camp.

MUSICIAN: It's funny, because Muddy Waters is often described as looking like a black Buddha.

CLAPTON: Exactly, exactly. And that was very real, it wasn't

just an image. It was actually there. The power of the man. The peace of the man. It was *real*. Muddy would often say that he was trapped—that wouldn't be his words, but he would say, "Well, these guys can't play." And he was talking about first-rate blues musicians who were in his bands. "You know, I could do this much better on my own, it would be truer to what I really am, but here we are." He had a kind of peaceful attitude to that. He wasn't bitter. There was not a *sign* of that in him. He was very peaceful and very content, and very happy with what he had. But he knew that it could be twice as good, if he did it on his own. Whereas a lot of guys would be railing against it.

MUSICIAN: Do you ever find yourself feeling that way?

CLAPTON: Yeah, but it's not a realistic way of looking at it, really. Sometimes when we get into soundchecks and rehearsals, I'll start playing something on my own, and think, "Yeah, you could do this." But it doesn't last very long, that feeling.

MUSICIAN: Earlier, you mentioned wanting sometimes just to lay out for eight bars in a solo, but felt it impractical because it would upset the band. But there are some jazz groups, where the members have played so closely for so long, who could pull a trick like that without fazing anyone. But that kind of connectedness seems rare in rock.

CLAPTON: Jazz is a more intelligent kind of music. It's much more intelligent, and it's also a lot ballsier. Most musicians in that, the really fine musicians, don't give a shit. That probably would be their attitude: "Well, I'm going to stop playing now, and that's that." They actually *don't care* about what effect it will have on the rest of the band, because they're intellectually so together, they realize it would survive. But a rock musician is, on the whole, a lot more insecure about his tenure with his peers. You know, he may think he could lose his job, or they'll look down on him, or something like that.

MUSICIAN: Even you? You're the leader! You shouldn't worry about losing your job.

CLAPTON: But I do. [Laughs] That's ridiculous, I know, but it's the old merry-go-round. It's hard to get off. Of course, it's also a safeguard, too, because it stops you from being the total, ultimate leader. If you were to take those risks, you'd be out there in front, and that would be it. You'd have no place to hide. And I still often like to think that I should be back in the band, and obeying someone else's orders. So, you know, I have all that insecurity, too.

MUSICIAN: To get back to that the point about connectedness. I can't help but wonder if that insecurity isn't a part of it. I mean, when you think of somebody like Muddy Waters, part of the dynamic of his music had to do with the fact that not only did he know Little Walter or Jimmy Rogers as musicians, he knew them as people, knew their families, their girlfriends, knew who they were. Because that was a part of that scene in Chicago then.

In rock today, though, you don't seem to have any of that. Rock musicians, on the whole don't seem to want the permanency of family—hell, a lot of them can't handle having wives—but the convenience of having someone there, whether for playing music, or companionship, or whatever. And I wonder if that isn't one reason that great moments in rock seem so fleeting.

CLAPTON: Yes, I think so. [Pause] Very deep, what you're getting into here.

MUSICIAN: Well, I don't want to make you feel...

CLAPTON: No, no. It's just thought-provoking, isn't it? I think with someone like Muddy, when he made those records, in fact, all his records, he wasn't under the kind of stress that rock stars are under. I mean, the whole thing of touring the world. And it feels, for me, even to this day, that when I'm starting a new album, I'm starting a new life, in a way. I start out with new likes and dislikes and things. And so, the whole thing of anything permanent goes out the window. I tend to forget my

family, I tend to forget my mother and my grandmother and my uncles, forget all about them, and almost go looking for new stuff. Which, I think, is very much what you're getting at, is the...striving for something new even in our personal relationships. Like trying to get rid of the old stuff, really.

Musicians get *ecstatic* about being in hotel rooms, being away from home. They look forward to getting away. It's nonreal, isn't it? It's getting away from the reality of everyday life. The things that start to collect and drive you mad at home—suddenly they're gone, and you've got yourself in a situation where you can unpack for a day, pack, and move on somewhere else. And none of it can touch you.

MUSICIAN: *True, but neither can it touch you the other way, give you any of the benefits of home and permanency.*

CLAPTON: That's true. But you're not looking for that. You're looking for cheap thrills, y'see.

MUSICIAN: *Okay. You take a guy who's eighteen, twenty, twenty-two years old, put him on the road for the first couple times, sure he's going to take advantage of it, going to go and screw his brains out for six months. But you've been touring for how many years now?*

CLAPTON: Twenty-five.

MUSICIAN: *Twenty-five years. So do you still...*

CLAPTON: Screw my brains out? [Laughs]

MUSICIAN: *I wasn't quite going to put it like that....*

CLAPTON: [Laughs] No, I don't, and it gets harder and harder each time to really find.... I think when it first hit me, actually, was when I gave up drinking. Which was about six years ago. I went out, almost prematurely, with the band I had at the time, in America. And there were no more parties—you know, it was play the show, go to bed, get up the next day, and pack. And I thought, "What am I doing this for?"

I'd actually go through onstage, thinking, "What am I doing at this gig? This *noise*, all these *loud* instruments and everything?" And suddenly a lightbulb went on in my head: "You can make the most of this. You know, this is what you've been paid to do, and you can enjoy it, or you can hate it. It's your choice."

It was a big struggle to find things about it to enjoy, but I did it, and enjoyed the tour by the time we got to the end of it. But it was the first time I'd really gone out there to do my job, instead of going out to have a good time. And since then it's become increasingly harder to actually find things about it to enjoy. 'Cause it's.... You're up on the stage for two hours, and that can be enjoyable. But those hours in between, to use them constructively is impossible, really impossible. 'Cause there's no foundation at all.

MUSICIAN: *You said that was six years ago; I remember that about that time you simply collapsed in the middle of a tour....*

CLAPTON: That was when I was still drinking. Right after that, I went into treatment for about a month, in America. And they said to me, "You're going to have to learn to live without booze, and without all the other things, so you have to take some time off before you make any decisions."

I took about two or three months off, doing nothing, just sitting and fly-fishing. And I just got bored, so I said, "Well, let's go on the road." It may have been premature, but not very much so. I mean, I had to get back, sooner or later. And when I did get back, and found it was all very different from what it had been without, when I'd had all the, you know, stuff....

MUSICIAN: *If you found yourself wondering "Why am I doing this?" when you were sober, weren't you saying much the same thing—for different reasons—when you were still drinking?*

CLAPTON: Well, no. My mind was pretty shut-down. I was so overtaken by booze and dope, I was like a zombie. I'd shut down safety valves, and was really pushing myself. And what I

did collapse from was ulcers, in fact. I should have known I had ulcers, but I was taking so many things to kill the pain that I'd blotted it out. Even then, I still carried on drinking. Actually, what stopped me doing it was the idea that I was going mad. And I was definitely on the verge of total insanity, because that's where it would take you.

But if I didn't play the guitar, I don't think I would be talking to you about it now. If I didn't play guitar to the point that it was my main thing in life, more than family, more than anything, I would have gone on to some other thing. I suppose that will always be the situation, I will always come back to that as my main love.

That's what held me together, really. I think doing that tour, I *thought* was going to be easy. Because I'd be playing straight, without anything to make it sound good. I thought, "This is going to be great. It's going to be so clean." It was such *hard* work, because I had to draw on my reserves, what was inside me, and not what I was putting into me.

MUSICIAN: *What did you do to get around that? After all, once you've gotten used to turning to alcohol or dope to numb the pain of reaching into yourself, it can't be easy to dive in unassisted.*

CLAPTON: Well, it's practice, isn't it? Like anything else. If you do it gently, a little bit at a time, it doesn't hurt so much. I got, actually, into psychotherapy for a bit, because with the aid of someone else you could look at yourself and not feel so ashamed. Because you could see from talking to this fellow that he'd heard it all before, there was nothing really disgusting about what you had hidden. And sooner or later you don't have anything hidden. There's not much in me now that I think you could call a real skeleton. It's pretty much out in the open, what I get up to.

MUSICIAN: *Like most people, I know that at least part of what was troubling you through the 70s was your relationship with Patti Boyd, a woman who was the love of your life, but also your best friend's wife. Granted, you got one of the greatest songs of that era—"Layla"—by going through that. But from where you stand now, do you think it was worth it?*

CLAPTON: I wouldn't change a thing. I suppose, if I was given the alternative of another life, with someone more plain, less invigorating, like a normal wife with a normal, you know, two or three kids, and a normal.... But I never had that, I mean I never had that from the word go. My life has always been fairly extraordinary, and I've come to terms with that. And it always will be. I'm driven by things that happened to me early in my life, and I recognize it. So it's impossible for me to try to live any other way. I just have to be aware of what I'm doing.

MUSICIAN: *What was it about your childhood?*

CLAPTON: I was raised by my grandparents, *thinking* that they were my parents, up until I was nine years old. That's when the shock came up, when I found out—from outside sources—that they weren't my parents, they were my grandparents. I went into a kind of... shock, which lasted through my teens, really, and started to turn me into the kind of person I am now.

Which is...[sighs] I think it's impossible for me to say, but I'm fairly secretive, and insecure, and madly driven by the ability to impress people or be the best in certain areas. I mean, all of this I've come to terms with in the last five years or so. But up until then, I wasn't really aware of *what* was driving me along.

MUSICIAN: *To get back to your romance with Patti Boyd, you said you wouldn't change a thing. To an extent, Phil Collins had a similar situation with his divorce, inasmuch as he realizes he probably would have never started writing if he hadn't gone through that trauma. But, at the same time, he said that a part of him really wishes he hadn't had to go through all that pain to get*

to that point.

CLAPTON: Well, that's impossible, isn't it? I mean [laughs], that's utopia. It wouldn't be anything if you didn't have the pain. Another thing is that, in Phil's case, he probably thinks it's all gone away. But the pain is always going to be with you. I mean, every day, in some respect or another, I find something I'm going to *suffer* about. And if I don't, I wonder why. Because you can't have one without the other.

When I made this last record [*Behind The Sun*], my marriage was going through another rocky period, and it was very painful. And the great thing about these musicians was that this all came out in the making. Not necessarily lyrically, or any other way, but in terms of the feeling that would happen in the studio. If I was to say, "Oh, man, I had a terrible phone call with the missus last night," I could talk to them about it, and then we'd play. And they would lift me, you know? It all comes out, and it's an awful kind of sharing, almost like group therapy.

I think back on the making of the record as, "God, that was painful." Most records usually are, in some respect or another, very painful experiences. Because you go down, and you bring it out, and everyone looks at it, to the point where when you put it on tape, you don't want to hear it! And then, months later.... On the way to town today, I had the cassette in the car, and I put it in, thinking, "This is just the radio." And I got caught along with it, it's great, a great record to listen to, especially driving. And you think, "God, yeah, it's worth it, whatever it was, to go through."

MUSICIAN: Well, then, do you think that, to that extent, what made Derek & the Dominos great was also what destroyed it?

CLAPTON: [Mumbles] I dunno. [long pause] Well, yeah, I guess so, because it was a make-believe band. It wasn't me, it was another band. We were all hiding inside it. Derek & the

Dominos—the whole thing was... *assumed*. So it couldn't last. I had to come out and admit that I was being me. I mean, being Derek was a cover for the fact that I was trying to steal someone else's wife. That was one of the reasons for doing it, so that I could write the song, and even use another name for Patti. So Derek and Layla—it wasn't real at all. And a lot of our marriage problems have come down to the fact that we often have trouble facing the real people we are. We're still caught up with the kind of pretension, the romantic cover-up for it all.

But we've been together for so long that the friendship has actually become far more important. So, [laughs] whatever happens, that is the great thing, and experience can only provide you with that.

MUSICIAN: What we've been talking about has been Eric Clapton, the person. But a lot of people only think about Eric Clapton: *Guitar Hero*, and so much of what they associate with him is the bad stuff. Take a song like J.J. Cale's "Cocaine." Now, I know that the reason you recorded that song was because it's a great groove tune. But at the same time, I also understand that when you perform the song and the audience screams out the chorus, they're celebrating the drug, not the groove. Considering your own history with drugs, I'd imagine that would make performing the song a bit awkward.

CLAPTON: No.

MUSICIAN: No?

CLAPTON: Thank God, J.J. wrote a very ambivalent song there: "If you wanna hang out/You gotta take her out/If you wanna get down/Down on the ground...." I mean, he's written a song that is so two-way; it's either pro- or anti-, depending on which you want to be. So, I can sing that song now, and be anti-cocaine. In myself. What the audience makes of it is *their* prerogative. Because I would never want to be a preacher, really,

BOSS SPECIAL SET-UPS/2



who was on TV about a week ago, saying that heroin is one of the finest medicines in the world, if used for what it's used for, properly. And she's right. Alcohol is a killer. I mean, people die from it. Not many people do actually die from heroin. You gotta go wrong, really go wrong. People die from alcohol. I read in the paper the other day about a guy who normally drinks a bottle of vodka a day; he drank two bottles one day, and died. And so, my moral responsibility at the moment is a bit upset, because of this witch-hunt to do with drugs. It's gotten out of proportion, and all the other things are kind of slipping by. People aren't really looking at the truth, they're being whip-

ped up into a frenzy.

MUSICIAN: *It's funny. We started out talking about the notion of the guitar hero, and what we've ended up talking about is as diametrically opposed to that notion as could be imagined.*

CLAPTON: You think so?

MUSICIAN: *Sure, because the received idea of the guitar hero is someone who is not only the ultimate guitarist but also...*

CLAPTON: A raving loony.

MUSICIAN: *Not that, but the epitome of ego.*

CLAPTON: Well, there have been a lot of good things introduced to our culture from the East, you know. I was really taken with the original TV thing, *Kung*

Fu, just for the odd little snippet of wisdom that would come in. And I think that the ultimate guitar hero should be a dispenser of wisdom, as well as anything else. That should come through in the playing. If it doesn't come through in the playing, then it should come through in his lifestyle. I don't have a great deal of that, but I, that's the one thing I will say that I'm still striving after, outside of perfection as a musician: the attainment of wisdom, in any amount. And I think that's a really worthy cause.

I don't mean "dispense wisdom," really. I don't want to give you the idea that I think that I should be passing anything on, other than by example. If that helps people...and I know it does in certain situations. I get great letters from people who say, "Thank you for your music, I've just been through a very hard patch, and you helped me out." And I can't imagine what it is like, except that I know the same thing has happened to me with other people's music, so I can echo it there.

But that's what I mean. My search for wisdom is really for me, you know. It's just for *me*. ☐

CZ/C64 from page 56

if you have KCS files on disk, the CZ program will play about 1900 notes of them. That means you can actually audition your patches in the piece of music you want them for. Considering the CZ's multi-timbral capabilities, that can be really helpful.

So what we're really talking about here is What Price Friendliness? I would never throw a novice into the pool with Dr. T, and would even be reticent to recommend CZ Rider. By the same token, the things that make the Calliope program perfect for beginners weaken its appeal for the seasoned veteran. And if you have trouble choosing between the CZ Rider's graphics and Dr. T's power, I should mention Dr. T has just finished a CZ editor for the Atari ST that combines the best of both. And also on Atari ST, Hybrid Arts is readying a CZ version of its splendid DX Droid that will definitely be worth a look. But that will be next year's mature technology. Until then, I'll be sticking with my trusty old C-64 and finding new ways to use all these fabulous voices. I've been completely inundated with them, hundreds upon hundreds. It's as if the collective unconscious of all those CZ owners has entered that little CZ-101 in my basement, and increased its usefulness by quantum leaps. If that's what being "mature" means in 1986, then I'm for it. ☐

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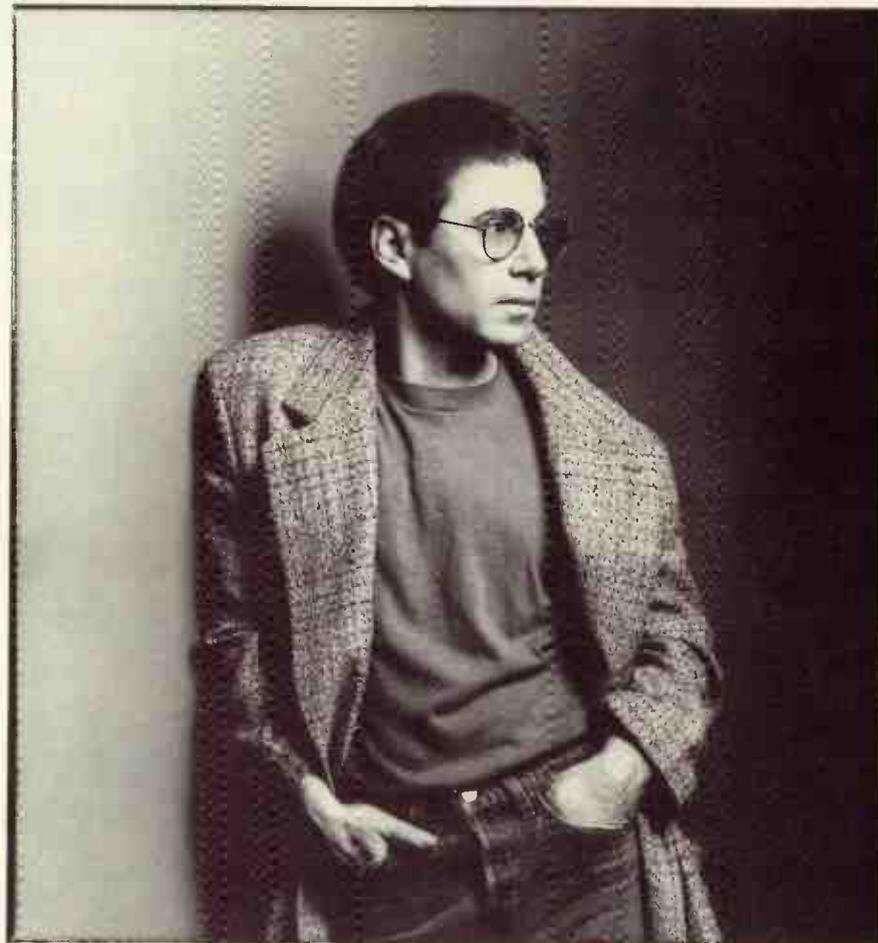


PAUL SIMON

Graceland
(Warner Bros.)

The keystones of Paul Simon's musical and lyrical style have been set for so long that surprise is almost unthinkable. Since the 60s, Simon has been the poet laureate of the neurotic urban romantic; his tense, introverted music is the height of pop self-reference.

It's our immense set of expectations about Simon's music that makes *Graceland* such a startling and invigorating listening experience. On this brilliantly executed, frequently powerful album, Simon takes the carefully constructed edifice of his art and blows it to smithereens. Instead of the polite studio-bred murmurings of his previous work, he's collaborating with master musicians from South Africa and Nigeria, along with native talents working in the zydeco and Tex-Mex styles. The result is a rec-



ord as thoroughly unexpected and fascinating as any likely to be released by a major talent this year.

Simon has used unfamiliar musical formats for novel coloring before, on "Mother And Child Reunion" and Simon and Garfunkel's "El Condor Pasa." But on *Graceland*, his entire approach to songwriting is dictated by the swirling guitars, chest-thumping bass patterns, and monolithic vocal chorales of the Zulu musicians featured on most of the tracks. The crackling rhythms of "township jive" have awakened something in Simon; his new songs are more potent and deeply felt than any of his work in the last decade.

"Graceland" proves particularly heart-rending. Simon's narrative of a recently divorced man's pilgrimage to the Presley mansion with his nine-year-old son is a devastating portrait of a confused search for the literal heart of grace, enlivened by the slithering key shifts of Ray Phiri and Demola Adepoju's guitars. Almost as thrilling are "The Boy In The Bubble," a skin-prickling vision of the global village in panic pumped along by Forere Motloheloa's accordion and

Baghiti Khumalo's bass; the jubilant "I Know What I Know," with charging vocals of the Gaza Sisters; "Under African Skies," a parallel biography of a pair of African and American singers, with sensitive accompaniment by one of its subjects, Linda Ronstadt; and the overpowering "Homeless," sung in English and Zulu by Simon and the great South African vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Less deep, but no less enjoyable, are "That Was Your Mother," with zydeco great Good Rockin' Dopsie, and "All Around The World Or The Myth Of Fingerprints," a border stomp with East L.A.'s Los Lobos.

Graceland goes beyond cultural imperialism and the hip appropriation of unfamiliar musical turf. Simon's songs, usually dour and fussy, have gained formal elegance from his experimentation; beyond that, his play among fresh styles suggests a generosity of spirit and a deepening of emotion that heretofore had seemed unlikely. Commercially risky, artistically daring, *Graceland* is surely one of 1986's terrific pleasures and finest pop achievements.

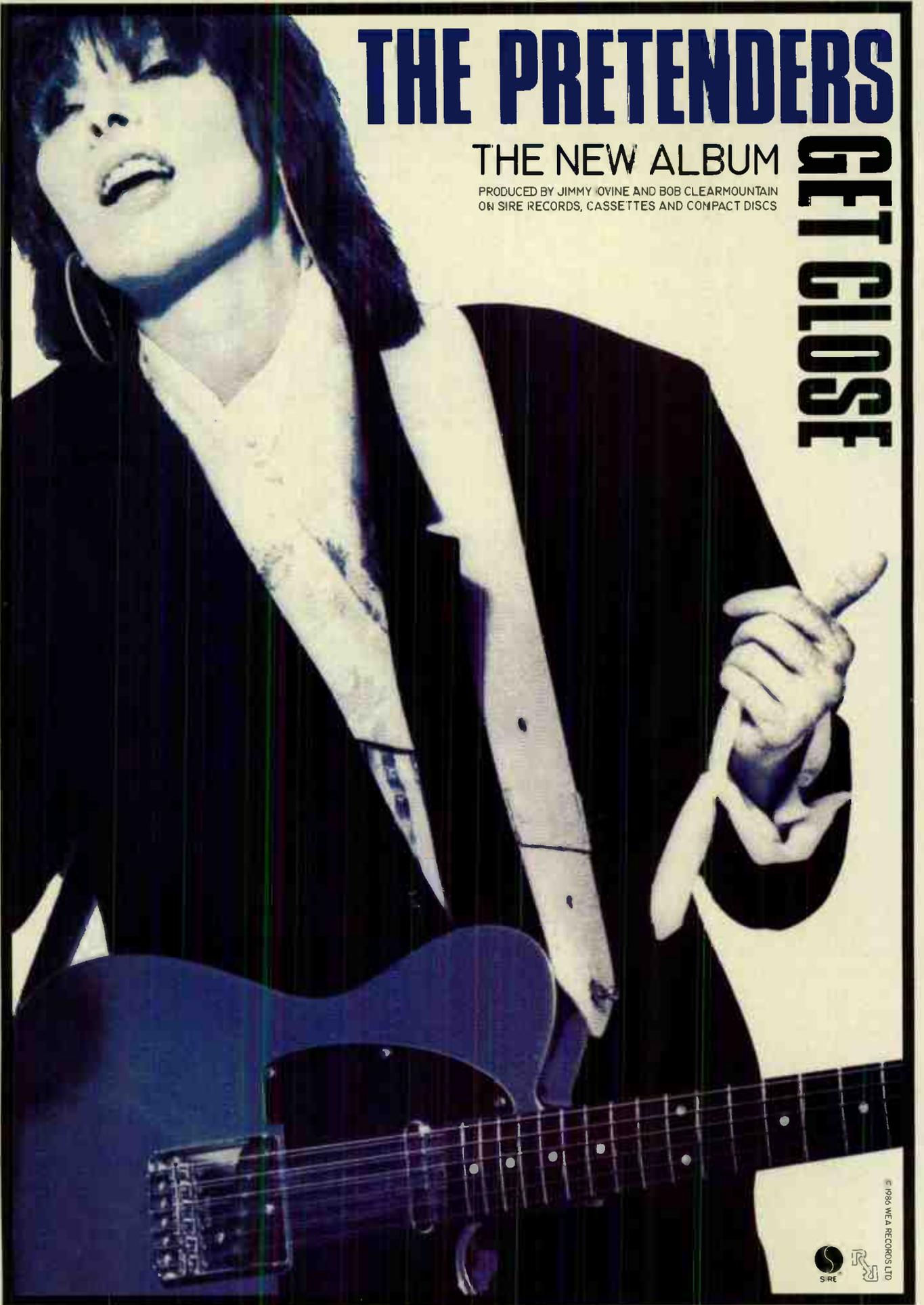
— Chris Morris

THE PRETENDERS

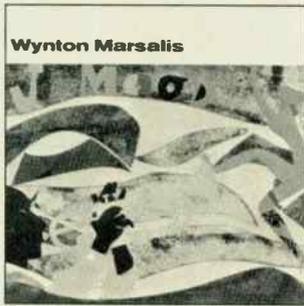
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WYNTON MARSALIS

J Mood
(Columbia)

Would but that we could enjoy the music of Wynton Marsalis sequestered in some acoustic jury room far from the din of critical blather. Rarely have so many axes been so occupied searching for a likely grind. It's not enough that this youthful New Orleans virtuoso is one of the most gifted, disciplined brass voices to emerge in the past twenty years; nor even that he glides with Grammy-winning élan between the fields of European concert music and the improvising jazz ensemble. No. To his detractors, he is a bloodless technician, while advocates have turned him into a litmus test for "jazz" credibility, the Sir Galahad of post-modernist conservatism.

Expectations do run high for knights of the jazz grail, and to confirm some is to confound others. I'm never sure which Wynton is going to stand up. But *J Mood* is (to me) his most sublime, personal statement; and while it doesn't fulminate like his previous *Black Codes From The Underground*, the understated intensity of his new quartet (pianist Marcus "J Master" Roberts, bassist Robert Leslie Hurst III and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts) belies their burnished calm.

As a leader Wynton is still sidestepping the hot rhythm section with the blazing frontman style that so captivated listeners as the enfant terrible of the Jazz Messengers. "J Mood," a modern blues at a medium bounce, links strands of meter changes and modulations to suggest overlays of moods; Marsalis' reflective architecture is mirrored in his patient development of the melody, twisting and sweetening a phrase until he punctuates it with a triplet episode and then unwinds a long, harmonic ellipsis that wafts across the bar lines, beginning in the turnaround and culminating a few bars into Roberts' opening chorus. All

the while, Roberts levitates bulbous blocks of sound, and solos as if the ghost of Monk and Wynton Kelly were murmuring softly in his ear. And on ballads "Melodique" and father Ellis Marsalis' "After" the trumpeter shows his true strength, while spectral slurs and vibrato effects suggest the virtues of one who preceded Miles and still serves as their common influence—Clark Terry.

Of the jump tunes, "Insane Asylum" is the most satisfying, and shows off Jeff Watts' pivotal role in the band, never more evident than when his accents overtake the pianist's chorus, and he solos, not over a vamp, but straight through Roberts' chord changes. The other jump tune, "Much Later," extends the 60s domains of Miles, Shorter and company, and Wynton will just have to weather the comparisons. Or put it this way: The mid-60s forms announced by the Davis Quintet have become part of our current acoustic mainstream. Music that began as a five-way search party is now a style, open to extension, but a frozen piece of history nevertheless. This neither trivializes Marsalis' music nor invests it with crusading significance.

Recently I heard Marsalis atomize several brilliant young trumpeters at an Apollo Theater Art Blakey retrospective with an overwhelming display of wit, chops and emotion: Here was Wynton Marsalis *unedited*, and Bubba, the sky was the limit.

J Mood opts for a more subtractive approach, where excitement is implicit in the orchestrations of the rhythm section and inferred in Wynton's lines. But Wynton has the talent, and the star quality, to manage both. When technique becomes his means to channel emotions without sacrificing that admirable refinement of ideas, that's when Marsalis will vindicate his admirers and smite the Philistines. Or at least give everyone something new to talk about. — Chip Stern

TALKING HEADS

True Stories
(Sire)

It's not easy being objective about a band when you're a fan; one tends to either overrate new output, or feel personally let down. And like R.E.M.'s latest, this new LP by one of our best American pop bands is an elegant holding action. The major difference is, there's a David Byrne-directed movie

to go with it.

These *True Stories* represent Talking Heads' version of the tunes sung by actors in Byrne's film, which is set deep in the heart of Texas. That southwestern, Tex-Mex feel comes through on a number of tracks, as does a jaunty, martial Cajun reel feel first explored on last year's "Road To Nowhere."

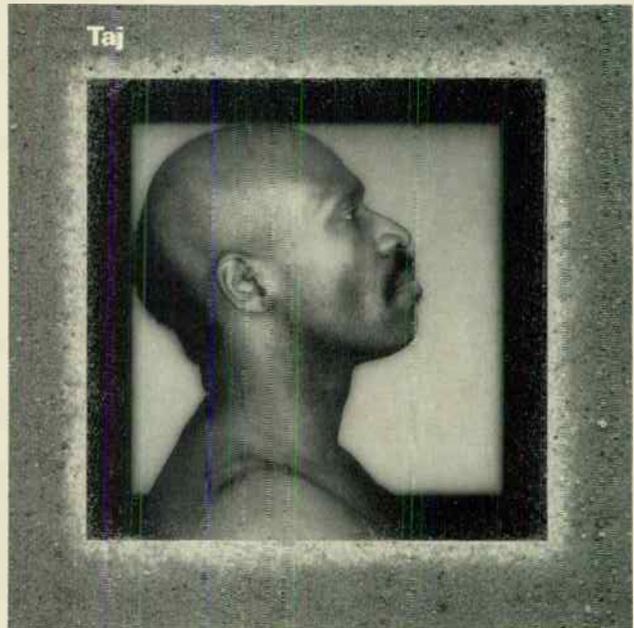
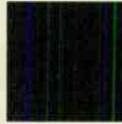
There are other echoes of older material on *True Stories*, with familiar riffs repeated in the pulsing Devo synths of "Love For Sale" (cf. "Television Man"), and the single, "Wild Wild Life," whose clipped, syncopated intro recalls "Pulled Up" before a refrain borrows the yearning hook from Catherine Wheel's "What A Day That Was."



True Stories also resembles David Byrne's collaboration with dancer Twyla Tharp in that the focus is on dramatic situations and fictional characters. While more coherent than ninety percent of what passes as movie soundtracks, these songs are still incomplete as narratives. Byrne's concerns do seem consistent with Talking Heads' past work, especially on the yuppie anthem, "People Like Us," which evokes the homey steel guitar twang of "Big Country" in its paean to bourgeois normalcy (though apparently without that cut's tongue-in-cheek irony). And while Byrne may be *True Stories'* omniscient narrator, the music here is still a group effort; check the reggae *cum* "Iko Iko" celebration of "Hey Now" or the white-eyed blues of "Papa Legma," wherein Byrne gurgles a Mexican love chant—*en Español!*

Without the movie, *True Stories* stands on its own musically, if not thematically. Let's hope its cinematic companion will deliver a Heads' version of the rock musical Ray Davies and his Kinks promised, but never quite fulfilled. — Roy Trakin

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CROWDED HOUSE

Crowded House
(Capitol)

The vast majority of albums that come in the mail I can't figure any reason to like or dislike. And when I do find a reason, it bears no correlation to what record companies decide to promote or what radio programmers rotate. So this review, this magazine, and my life have no purpose whatsoever. Don't get me wrong: I'm not feeling sorry for myself. I'm feeling sorry for Crowded House, who have written five (out of ten) songs on their debut album that Paul McCartney should sell his children to have written. We're talking your basic gorgeous melodies here, melodies that almost no one is writing anymore because almost everyone is concentrating on recycling old riffs through all the latest technotwaddle.

So I'm just telling you for the permanent written record that "Don't Dream It's Over" is the best ballad of the year, with no expectation that anyone is going to do anything about it. The lyric is about being in love with someone in spite of all the evil stuff out there that conspires to drive people apart. I have played it several times a day for the past three weeks just to remind myself that this review, this magazine and my life really do have a purpose. Which is to make you buy Crowded House. And if you do, you will experience the equally beautiful but faster "World Where You Live," about the mystery of somebody else's mind. Not to mention the almost equally beautiful "Now We're Getting Somewhere," "Mean To Me" and "Tombstone."

Other stuff of relevance: Crowded House hails from Tasmania and is led by Neil Finn, formerly of Split Enz, a band that didn't do much for me. Crowded House is more conventional than Split Enz. They are a three-piece and they are very sharp with their arrangements and playing, as all three-pieces without a distortion pedal must be. Everything is

clear in the mix and they rely only occasionally on a flourish from an outside musician. They don't need much more than Finn's sense of melody. I also like his sense of harmony. Buy it and give this review, this magazine and my life meaning. — Charles M. Young



HUMAN LEAGUE

Crash
(A&M/Virgin)

As the first pop (read "white") project produced by soul/funk auteurs Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, *Crash* is bound to draw scrutiny. The question isn't whether they can cross over, a point settled by Janet Jackson's multi-platinum *Control*; the real issue is how they'll fare with acts that have already established a musical identity. Because aside from the SOS Band, Jam and Lewis have specialized in full-blown Svengali treatments, consistently turning away acts that didn't offer them that chance (including Lionel Richie, Whitney Houston and Robert Palmer).

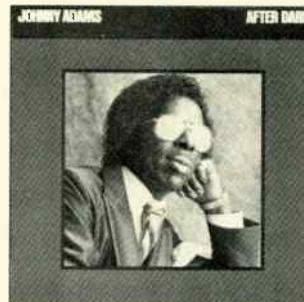
So you might expect the album to suffer from an identity crisis: Is it a Human League record, or a Jam and Lewis record? The dense and varied *Crash* gets to have it both ways, largely because the basis of the Human League sound—synthesizers, drum machines, vocal harmonies—is the basis of the Flyte Tyme sound. Accordingly, the best songs here redeem Jimmy Jam's seemingly absurd observation that "the Human League struck us as a very funky group." "Swang" and "I Need Your Lovin'" dress up Jam and Lewis' trademark big-beat funk with overtones of psychedelic pop, resulting in two of the toughest jams they've created. And "Human," the first single, belongs in a league with their best soul balladry.

Crash should also redeem the sagging fortunes of the Human League, whose last album, *Hysteria*, might as well have been titled *Phillip Oakey Presents Tales*

Of A Boy And His Synthesizer. Just as surely as that record underlined the poverty of musical ideas at the root of the early-80s British synthpop explosion, this one proves that synthesizers weren't the problem: They're as pervasive as ever. The difference is in the richer musical textures; in the hooks, which are tastier; and in historical savvy. One reason the best of *Crash* makes so much sense is that it unscrambles the roots of contemporary Britpop in 1970s American black pop.

Which is not to call this wall-to-wall heat; the Time they ain't. A couple of songs flunk out altogether ("Party" and "Jam"), and the self-compositions generally suffer by comparison to the Flyte Tyme songs (exception: "The Real Thing"). But *Crash* is still far and away the Human League's best record. It manages to revitalize a stalled career without compromising either artist or producer's identity. For that reason, it's an important step for both.

— Steve Perry



JOHNNY ADAMS

After Dark
(Rouner)

Raise your heads and howl at the moon, underdogs; Johnny Adams is the soul man for you. Though ranked alongside Aaron Neville as one of New Orleans' two finest singers, Adams has never received his rightful share of adulation. Perhaps that's because he's best appreciated live: Try one of his intimate late-night interludes at Dorothy's Gold Medallion in the Crescent City, where, backed by Walter "Wolfman" Washington's Solar System, he croons the coolest of jazz, soul and R&B into the tiny hours of the morning. With his impeccable sartorial sense and downtown familiarity, there's no show quite like it.

On *After Dark*, Adams' massive vocal talents are set against another competent gaggle of sidemen, where Wash-

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MUS 1

ington would have been preferred. Adams does the deed nonetheless, applying his free-ranging tenor to the vicissitudes of romantic disappointment. An adaptable stylist, he's equally comfortable with soul, jazz, R&B and pop, though Adams sings with as much secular lasciviousness as Al Green (who he sometimes resembles) applies to his own mode of holy hollering.

Nice tunes for the most part; two of the best are supplied by (short moment of unexpected delight) John Hiatt. From dire blues (Doc Pomus-Mac Rebennack's "I Don't Know You") to the inevitably missed chart chance (Paul Kelly's "Missing You"), Adams scats, growls and wails, even throwing in a few bars of his patented mouth trombone on "Snap Your Fingers." The most representative number, though, is probably Willie Hammond's "Garbage Man" blues, which perversely equates refuse with sex. Seems Adams' lady left him for the trash collector, and he wants her back 'cause his "garbage can is overflowin'." It'll never happen; he's too cool a loser.

— Richard Gehr

RESTLESS ROUND-UP

DESCENDENTS

Enjoy

DEAD MILKMEN

Eat Your Paisley

JET BLACK BERRIES

Desperate Fires

JOHNSONS

Break Tomorrow's Day

EFFIGIES

Ink

(Restless/Pink Dust Records)

In the past month, I got two whole packages from Restless Records, who also seem to be Pink Dust Records. (And if they aren't, someone should spring for another p.o. box.) These R and/or PD guys appear to have more personality than the average small label, so I'm just gonna review everything, and you can take your choice.

What can a critic say about a band who opens their album with an ode(r) to flatulence, and then a couple cuts later (literally) are wondering why New Wave chicks won't have sex with them, and then on another song are calling Motley Crue stupid? Well, they're the Descendents, and their singer is the only punk I've seen in several years who wears glasses. My guess is they had high SAT scores but their guidance counselor gave

'em a "Needs Work" in Social Skills. I give 'em a "College Bound" in Attitude.

The Dead Milkmen have arrived at a formula of ninety percent snot and ten percent guitar bashing, which is just about right because most bands these days hide their dearth of snot under a great pile of bash. They claim to be ripping off the Butthole Surfers in one song, but they aren't, thus making *Eat Your Paisley* unique in my album collection as the only false confession of plagiarism. These guys need to eat about a thousand more tabs of LSD before they can imitate the Buttholes. But in the meantime, the song "Moron" and the name of their singer—Rodney Anonymous Melloncamp—makes me happy.

The Jet Black Berries sound like a cross between Count Five & the Outlaws and the Cramps. Their singer sounds like Joey Ramone. Their songwriting ("Tomb Of Love," "The Flesh Element") is a shade eerie and catchy enough for major label attention, and they play guitar like it ought to: low on the neck with lotsa echo and vibrato.

The Johnsons have a much cleaner sound, less echo and vibrato, are maybe a tad R.E.M. influenced in that they are almost folk rock and do not aspire to snot. Solid liberal arts grad songwriting ("Break Tomorrow's Day"), enough power for most boys, enough sensitivity for most girls, and the smartest cover I've heard for a long time in Peter Laughner's " Sylvia Plath."

Hard to figure the Effigies' audience. They got a guitar virtuoso in Robert O'Connor who is obviously punk-influenced but has not taken it into thrash metal like everyone else. And they got a real intelligent singer/lyricist in John Kezdy who can propound with the best (Hey guys, if the Dead Milkmen can get a lyric sheet, why not you?)...I figure this may be a whole new musical form: thrash Mensa. My one complaint is that amongst all this minor-key dissonance—even if we do live in a minor-key dissonant world—there is nothing that makes me laugh. Maybe they could take gas lessons from the Descendents next time around. (1750 East Holly Avenue, P.O. Box 2428, El Segundo, CA 90245-1528) — Charles M. Young

PLATTERS THAT MATTER

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Beat Rodeo — *Home In The Heart*

Of The Beat (IRS)

Ricky Skaggs — *Love's Gonna Get Ya* (Epic)

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— Peter Cronin

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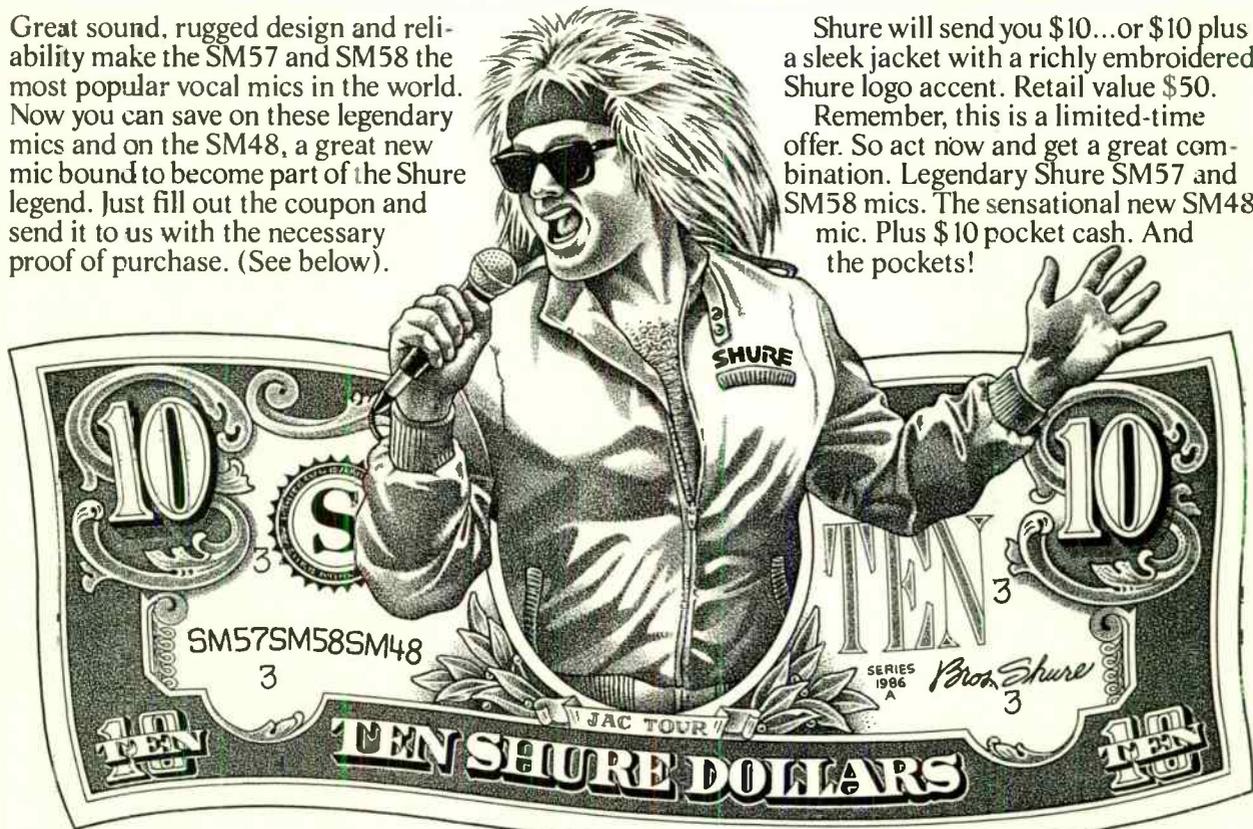
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SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY & THE JUKES

At Least We Got Shoes
(Atlantic)

Ever since I started listening to rock 'n' roll three years ago, I've been fascinated by Southside Johnny. John Lyon is like one of those characters from a brilliant 1920s novel that no one reads: A master craftsman content to record in New Jersey, shuffled from one record company to another, until he dies, happy and unwanted, and is then appreciated.

At Least We Got Shoes is strong evidence, for the future if not now, that Lyon is indeed an *auteur*. Wasting no time, he establishes his credentials with the first two self-penned songs, "Hard To Find" and "Tell Me (That Our Love's Still Strong)," that should definitely prove just who actually developed the so-called "Motown" sound. The Jukes' brass section erupts with thrilling fanfares, while Lyon emotes with "soul" intensity. It is all quite loud, I assure you!

But there is more to this album than the first two songs. The brass "take five" (don't play) on "I Can't Wait," which reveals a superb "hard rock" band at work. "Lorraine," with its avant-garde piano and drums that sound like what Puerto Ricans play, is a little too "jazzy" for my taste, but I'm sure it's done very well, and further indicates the eclecticism of this non-pareil aggregation. As for tunes worthy of release as a little record with the big hole in the centre, I hear a couple eminently deserving to be auditioned on the "radio" (wireless), "Walk Away Renee" (a beautiful ballad) and the jolly "I Only Want To Be With You."

Yes, you can have your Little Stevens and Bruce Springsteins. They're all very good in their way, I suppose, but I prefer my popular music undiluted by political pretense or poetic puffery. I shall keep my copy of *At Least We Got Shoes* near my gramophone, and when I get around to plugging it in, it shall be one of the first discs I play. — Jann Guccione

JARRE from page 62

mainly France, are like scientists making music in labcoats and I'm not so convinced by that."

In the 60s, Jarre played guitar in rock bands while delving ever deeper into the dimensions of voltage controlled sound. Apart from isolated production and soundtrack work, his synth patchwork wasn't granted much attention until 1976; Jarre earned his own sweet vindication when his instrumental record *Oxygene* skyrocketed on the charts, and a new genre of listener-friendly electronic music was born. The similarly warm response to 1979's *Equinoxe* bolstered Jarre's confidence and conceptual chutzpah; he played for a cast of a million on Bastille Day.

Ethnic considerations colored his music for a special Chinese concert tour, documented on an LP, *Concerts In China*, released in 1982. "The feedback from the audience was something really unique," he recalls of his jaunt in the Far East. "I'll remember it forever. They've been cut off for so long, but at the same time they had such a very sophisticated cultural tradition." He feels that indigenous Chinese music is not so alien as one might think. "It's strange because at the same time it's close to our music and yet it's very far away in timbre and color because they're using other instruments."

After such globally tinged endeavors, Jarre reeled in his sights to execute a concept definitely intimate in scale. His *Music For Supermarkets* was designed as a severely limited edition album—one copy, to be exact. Having burned the lacquers and the masters, the certified one real McCoy was auctioned off to benefit a vanguard gallery in Paris. In an industry that thrives on volume, on the infinite repeatability of the vinyl artifact, Jarre was playing the insurgent.

"It was a radical statement," Jarre says of his stunt, "Vis-à-vis some of the record companies. What's actually quite funny is the fact that so many record companies reacted in a violent way. People said, 'You're not allowed to do that.' I've always been fascinated by the record as an object. Ten years ago, I remember the record was really an event in itself. The smell of it, the artwork on the cover, the credits—all that was a pleasure. It's actually changing at the moment because of CDs."

One of Jarre's more progressive projects was the brashly rhythmic *Zoolook*. Using only a few phonemes as the "lyrical" text, Jarre banked heavily on sampled sounds (on a Fairlight) and Laurie

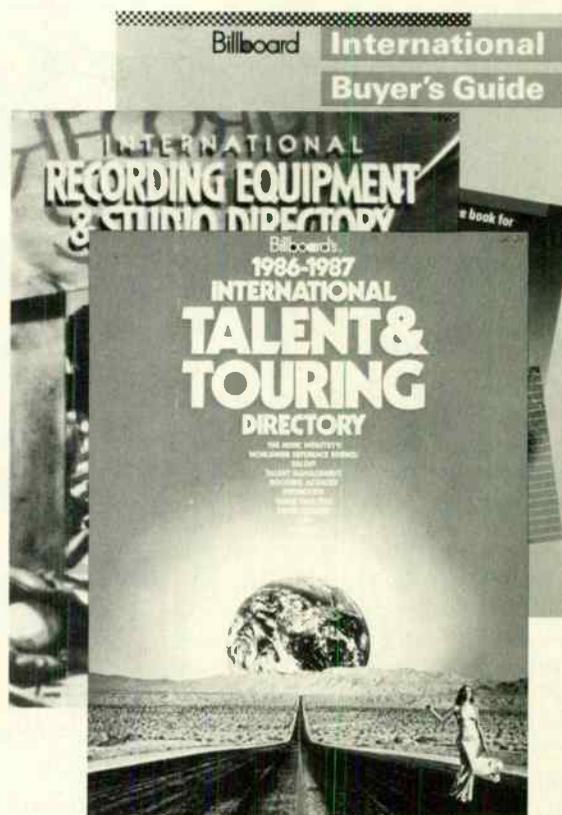
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Hunters & Collectors
Human Frailty (IRS)

To call Hunters & Collectors a groove band seems effete, for this band's rhythms lumber and throb with tribal intensity. It's a bone-shaking pulse, from the tom-tom swagger of "99th Home Position" to the post-nuclear fever of "Is There Anybody In There?" H&C manages to match its rhythmic hooks with melodic lines of equivalent intensity. That's impressive enough on an anguished rocker like "Say Goodbye," but positively devastating when applied to the rough-hewn balladry of "Throw Your Arms Around Me" or "Everything's On Fire."

Huey Lewis & the News
Fore! (Chrysalis)

So what if they're the yuppiest band in the world: Some of us actually *like* quiche, kiwi fruit and tuneful, traditional rock records. Sure, the songs get a bit sappy at times—"Stuck With You," for instance, sounds like the theme from an as-yet-undeveloped Gary Marshall sitcom—and they do get a bit carried away with the harmony vocals. But the band's writing is generally solid, its instincts unquestionable. Now *that's* upwardly-mobile professionalism.

Game Theory
The Big Shot Chronicles (Enigma)

Producer Mitch Easter breaks off from the ornate intricacies of "Real Night-time," which works wonderfully to bring out the bite in this band's sound. Scott Miller, after all, is not just another wimp-voiced New American Popster; there's enough anger in his "miserable whine" (his phrase) to make "I've Tried Subtlety" fiercely affecting, and enough warmth to make "Regenisraen" sweetly uplifting. What could be a better balance?

Skipworth & Turner
Skipworth And Turner (Warner Bros.)

The duo's piano-and-voice approach is strong enough to warrant comparisons

to Ashford & Simpson, particularly the way Rodney Skipworth's keyboard vamps set the groundwork for Phil Turner's falsetto fireworks. As intoxicating as that chemistry might seem on "Can't Give Her Up" or "Thinking About Your Love," it's the writing that ultimately holds things together, for these two have stumbled on the perfect bridge between the infectious pop of classic Philly Soul and the rhythmic economy of hip-hop.

Queen
A Kind Of Magic (Capitol)

Glitzy, schizy and totally over-the-top, this hodge-podge of everything from metal to Motown is almost crazy enough to be listenable. Unfortunately, the operative word here is "almost."

Christmas
In Excelsior Dayglo (Big Time)

Quirky bands are all the rage these days, but the cool thing about Christmas is that its weirdness usually makes sense. Though firmly grounded in the guitar pop tradition, this trio eschews traditional pop progressions in favor of odd, angular modulations that set their melodies noticeably askew. The funny thing is, the band never plays dissonance for its own sake, instead delivering intricate and idiosyncratic harmony parts that sound Beatlesque (in the best sense). (6777 Hollywood Blvd., 7th fl., Hollywood, CA 90028)

Toto
Fahrenheit (Columbia)

They may have a new singer, but it's the same old story: weak writing. Even a cameo by Miles Davis won't help that.

Gerald Trimble
Crosscurrents (Green Linnet)

This is pretty and atmospheric enough to please almost any Windham Hill addict, but Trimble is too obsessed with melody to leave it at that. Although his technique on cittern (a ten-string Irish instrument

similar to the bouzouki), guitar and mandolin makes it easy for him to flit from fiddle tunes to jazzy chord extensions, it's his loyalty to the Celtic tradition of melodic improvisation that keeps his solos from wandering too far afield. As a result, this is a record that rewards close listening on all levels. (70 Turner Hill Rd., New Canaan, CT 06840)

Don Johnson
Heart Beat (Epic)

Don Johnson sings as well as Glenn Frey acts.

Playmates
Long Sweet Dreams (What Goes On)

Like so many guitar bands, Sweden's Playmates owe the farm to the Beatles and the Stones, but that never seems a liability. Partly it's the way they've diluted that influence with lessons learned off everyone from the Raspberries to Television, but mostly, it's because the band plays back those tricks as if they'd invented them from scratch. And when they get to a chorus as catchy as "Someone To Save," it's hard to doubt that they did. (Dutch East India, Box 570, Rockville Centre, NY 11571-0570)

James
Stutter (Sire)

What keeps this band from becoming just another precious English guitar act is its combination of melodic wit and lyrical whimsy, a blend that neither tumbles into pretentiousness nor dallies in juvenilia. At its best, James is more tuneful than the Smiths and more invigorating than the Bunnymen, and though that best is limited to only a couple cuts—"So Many Ways" and "Why So Close"—this is undoubtedly only the beginning.

Lionel Richie
Dancing On The Ceiling (Motown)

The problem with this record isn't that it's overblown, overarranged and over-produced. The real problem is that the songs stink.

**Lawrence Marable**

Tenorman, Featuring James Clay
(Fresh Sound/Tower)

A reissue of a 1956 release that had collectors shooting each other in fits of jealousy. Some reasons: One, legend has it only about a thousand were printed up. Two, underground fave pianist Sonny Clarke plays on it and contributes three slick tunes. Three, James Clay, then twenty years old, has rarely brought his luxuriantly coarse Dexter Gordon/Sonny Rollins mix to records. Four, it's a perfectly relaxed quartet date—no frills, just pristine hard-bopping. (800-648-4844)

Eric Dolphy

Conversations/Iron Man (Celluloid)

These two discs, recorded in 1963, precede *Out To Lunch* by almost a year, and though they do suggest a warm-up—intellectually and musically—there's stuff here which comes close to *Out To Lunch's* angular clarity. "Jitterbug Waltz" and Dolphy's unaccompanied saxophone solo, "Love Me," both from *Conversations*, are justly famous. But less hallowed tunes like "Iron Man" and "Mandrake" feature a group that included Bobby Hutcherson (Dolphy's co-leader at the time), Woody Shaw, Clifford Jordan, and a rhythm section of Richard Davis or Eddie Kahn bass, and J.C. Moses on drums, and they're every bit as good as Dolphy got.

Cecil Payne

Patterns (Savoy)

Here's a minor classic from '56 masquerading as a blowing date. Payne, a second generation bopper, obviously prepped for his vinyl debut: His articulation, tonguing and musical ideas inspire awe and fear. This record could be used as a textbook on small group arranging—stop-time, piano/horn interaction, pedal points and gently rising ballad tempos abound. Kenny Dorham guests on side two.

Jackie McLean

Jackie's Pal (Fantasy OJC)

Alone among the McLean records on Prestige, this one—recorded in 1956, obviously a good year—gives me as much of a thrill as his classic late 50s, early 60s Blue Notes. The reason: tight arrangements and a nail-chewing rhythm section (Paul Chambers and the grand cubist of the drums, Philly Joe Jones) which just happens to be clicking. McLean speaks in paragraphs instead of phrases, putting together long, structure-conscious solos. His tone drips of acid as he scours the great tunes. It's part of a limited edition series (like get them now or they'll be gone for another thirty years) Fantasy is putting out, also including the late great Budd Johnson's *Let's Swing*, a blowing date which showcases the semi-gruff, semi-smooth tenor he's displayed with everyone from Gil Evans to the Earl Hines Grand Terrace band of 1938. *Winchester Special*, by vibes-playing policeman Lem Winchester, features a robust Benny Golson. *Giants Of Small-Band Swing, Vol. 1/2*, has just that—Ellingtonians Russell Procope, Harold Baker and Buster Bailey, plus Budd Johnson, Dicky Wells, Billy Kyle, and the great Brick Fleagle on guitar. Check catalog for further listings.

Oliver Lake

Dance Vision (Blue Heron)

Though Lake is one of my favorite saxophonists, Jump Up isn't one of my favorite bands. More reggae, pop/soul dabbling.

Khan Jamal

The Traveller (SteepleChase)

Vibist Jamal regularly cranks out terrific records, and here's no exception. This hard-swinging trio—Johnny Dyani thumping big-toned grooves on bass, and Leroy Lowe on drums—goes from a smart, happy tribute to Monk, to Coltrane's "Equinox," to a free piece. The whole album has a happy, satisfied feel.

Why anybody would make happy art in the age of mendacious Supreme Court justices is beyond me, but I believe him, and it feels good.

Daniel Mott

Electric Jungle (Hamagi/N.D.M.S.)

Lumbering deep-funk rhythm section overlaid with Miles-like snippets of melody. Four horns (Mott plays trumpet), plus Baird Hersey on computers, LinnDrum and guitar. Heavy on drum machine and grinding guitar. Washes of electric sound, like a soundtrack but with better solos. Your feet can get close to it, too.

Don Pullen & George Adams

Breakthrough (Blue Note)

Breakthrough's tunes seem chosen for variety—a beautiful ballad, an Eastern European-sounding tune, a relaxed vamp—and the record attracts; you want to hear it again. What makes it even better are the solos, with Pullen splashing bright clusters and Adams quivering and moaning his way through changes. Ultimately, this music is about soloists and their personalities, and Adams and Pullen are loaded in that department. Still, the tunes feel skeletal, they beg orchestration—listen to Pullen's *The 6th Sense* or his work with 360 Degree Experience for examples—and without that, this very good record never achieves greatness.

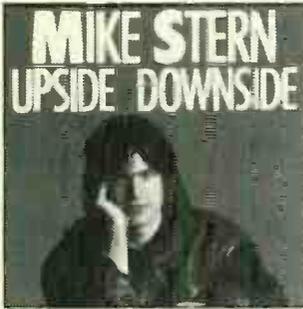
Paris Reunion Band

French Cooking (Gazelle/Rounder)

Boy, here's something that's gone the way of responsible government: a mainstream octet flaunting big leaguers Woody Shaw, Dizzy Reece, Slide Hampton, Johnny Griffin, Kenny Drew and more. Mostly ex-expatriates from the mid-60s Paris scene, they can still really howl. The arrangements are a bit stolid, and the band isn't as tight as it might be. But when the soloists put their knuckles on the proceedings, exuberance wins the battle.

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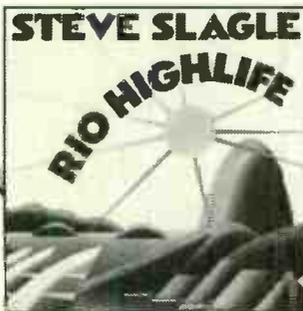
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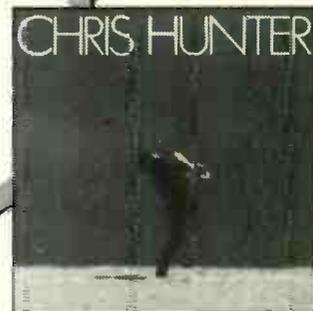
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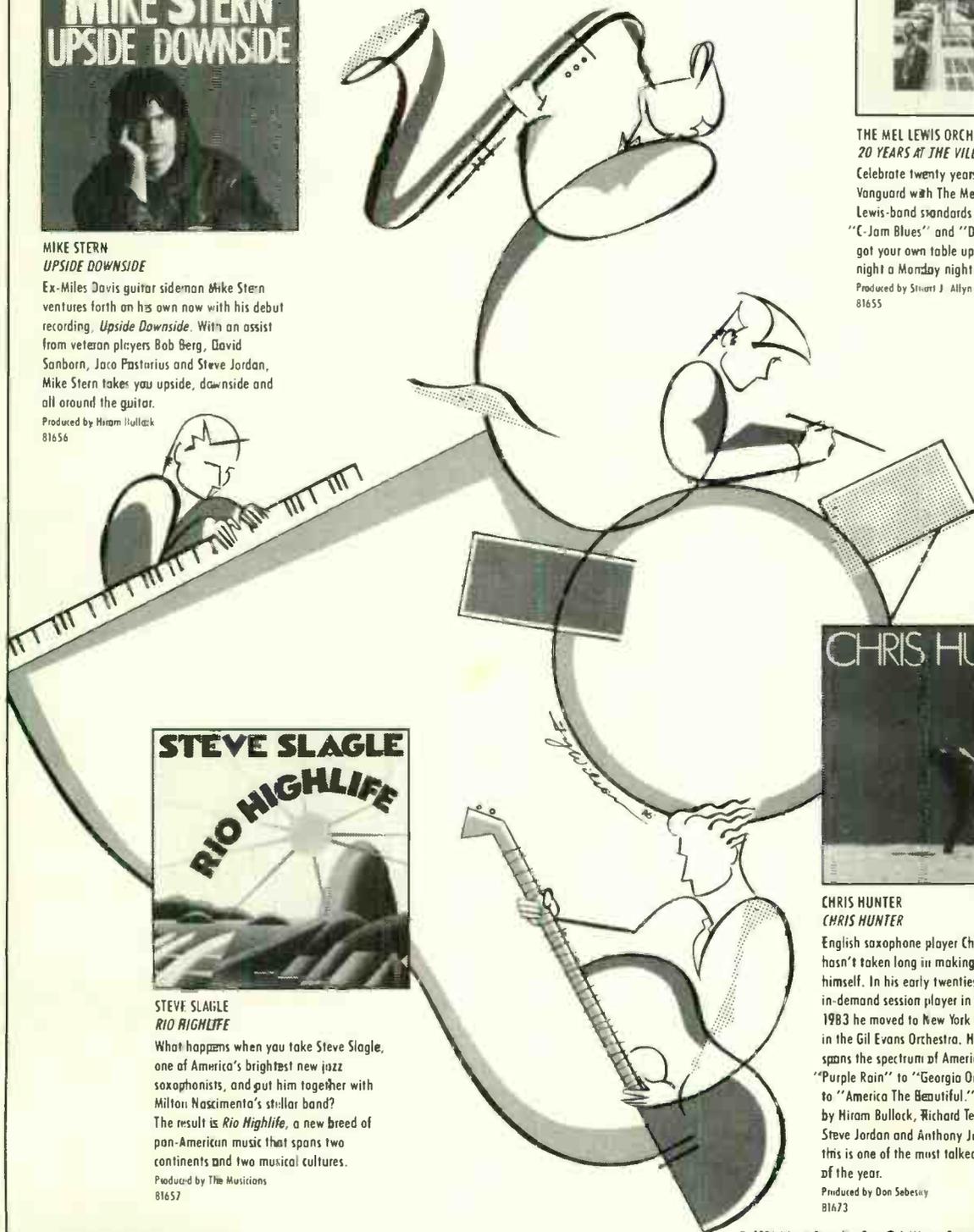
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CHRIS HUNTER
CHRIS HUNTER

English saxophone player Chris Hunter hasn't taken long in making a name for himself. In his early twenties, he was a much in-demand session player in London. Then in 1983 he moved to New York to accept a place in the Gil Evans Orchestra. His debut LP spans the spectrum of American music: from "Purple Rain" to "Georgia On My Mind" to "America The Beautiful." Accompanied by Miram Bullock, Richard Tee, Steve Jordan and Anthony Jackson, this is one of the most talked-about debuts of the year.

Produced by Don Sebesky
81673



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Indie

The Cramps

A Date With Elvis (Big Beat)

The Best Rock 'n' Roll Band in the U.S. (no letters, please) can't or won't get a record deal in their native country, so their first recording in over two years comes to you via non-parallel import. For the faithful, it was worth the wait: *A Date With Elvis* shudders with contemplation of the Cramps' twin gods of sex and the primordial twelve-bar. The songs are even fairly well arranged, a shockingly novel touch. If you're not a fan, though, this might just sound like a gasping, reverb-laden mess. — *Scott Isler*

Various Artists

Battin' The Boogie (Charly)

This collection of truly obscure late 40s and early 50s singles establishes saxophonist Willie Restin as a honker 'n' screamer par excellence, while Paul Williams' "Rock It Davy Crockett" wins a sure niche in novelty tune heaven. But the real find here are the two numbers (including title tune) by K.C. boogie master Joshua Johnson, with the legendary Baby Lovett on drums. If this man's right hand don't shake your limbs, better call for the WD-40. (Street Level Trading Company, 5298/1 Valley Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90032) — *Mark Rowland*

Richard Thompson

Gloom And Doom From The Tomb (Flypaper)

Lovingly compiled by Thompson's fan club, this cassette offers ninety minutes of live tracks and demos from as far back as 1968 (with Fairport Convention), all in surprisingly clear sound. The material is chosen with a zealot's idea of importance, so although it may not be accessible enough for novices, it is a fair demonstration of Thompson's tripartite genius. His guitar playing is probably the only thing John Coltrane and Mark Knopfler will ever have in common, and the craggy, droning, hopeful voice, often in harmony with ex-wife Linda, illuminates songs which John Cougar Mellencamp

has observed "say more in a line than I ever said in a whole song." (Box 7095, New York, NY 10116) — *Rob Tannenbaum*

Big Black

Atomizer (Homestead)

This anthology of urban nausea, propelled by a scraping drum machine and a barrage of high-volume guitar, is frequently overwrought and incoherent. Yet, when Chicagoan Steve Albini's brute vision and blunderbuss technique fuse to perfection—as in the relentless "Kerosene" and "Bazooka Joe"—the result is manic brain-death of the highest order. Caveat: How many tales of self-immolation, child molestation and big-city sleaze do you really need? (Box 570, Rockville Centre, NY 11571-0570) — *Chris Morris*

The Staple Singers

Pray On (Charly)

The springy, coiled lines of Pop Staples' legendary guitar float the Staples' roiling mass of blues-drenched singing. Their gospel material has the deep blues feeling of field hollers, the ethereality and austerity of people singing things they really mean. Whether they're really praising the Lord or just thinking about hamburgers is inconsequential; such emotional efficiency most musicians dream about and never reach. The record's got a pre-Stones version of "The Last Time," that's, let's say, instructive.

— *Peter Watrous*

Dave Bartholomew

Shrimp And Gumbo (Pathe Marconi)

Let's put it simply: you can't know all about New Orleans without knowing all about Dave Bartholomew. Spanning 1949-62, this LP also suggests how the music of the Crescent City kept up with the times. There's the odd, blue and lonesome tone of "No More Lonely Nights," the tongue-in-cheek R&B sex of "The Ice Man," even the cousin-of-"Java" pop stance of "Honky Tonk Trumpet." (Did Bartholomew invent Herb Alpert?) My fave is the title track,

which boasts Earl Palmer's polyrhythms and the orchestra's non-orchestral funk. (Rounder, 1 Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02140) — *Jim Macnie*

Chris Thomas

The Beginning (Arhoolie)

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, hosts a self-contained blues scene; famous alumni include Buddy Guy and the late Slim Harpo. Now comes young guitarist Chris Thomas, whose influences range from the classics to Jimi Hendrix. But Thomas is also his own man—a sharp lyricist, an exciting player, and a menacing, understated vocalist. In short, a name to watch. (10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530) — *Ben Sandmel*

Malamini Jobareth & Dembo Konte

Jaliya (Rounder)

New Age fans could take a lesson from some old age ideas: These incandescent kora duets from Gambia achieve pristine tones that sound anything but clinical. Konte's father, Alhaji Bai Konte, is an undisputed master of this tribal axe, and Malamini and Dembo have learned their lessons well; their nimble runs are gripping in their exactitude, flowing in their construction. Move over Vollenweider, tell Will Ackerman the news.

— *Jim Macnie*

Eliot Sharp

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— *Peter Watrous*

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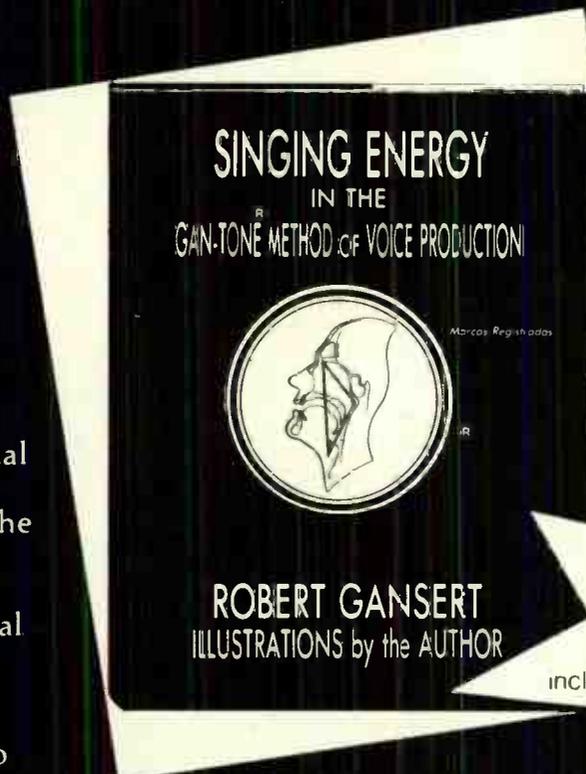
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Console: Harrison 2824 with 8 extra return channels

Outboard: AMS, Lexicon, Quantec, Drawmer, Yamaha.

Instruments: Emulator II+, SP-12, TX816, Simmons, Linn and 20 more synthesizers.

INNER EAR RECORDING

118-17 97th Ave., Queens, NY 11419

(718) 849-5725

Owner: Steve Vavagiakis

Studio Manager: Jane Fuller

Engineers: Steve Vavagiakis, independents

Dimensions of Studio: 24 x 20 with drum isolation booth

Dimensions of Control Room: 20 x 15 with lounge area

Tape Recorders: MCI JH-16 16-track, Otari 5050 8-track

ALLAN STUDIOS

21 Whitman Ave., Syosset, NY 11791

(516) 921-6564

Owner: Allan Kashkin

Dimensions of Studio: 23 x 15

Dimensions of Control Room: 12 x 10

Equipment: Audioarts 8x, Tascam 85-16B rec., Urie 809, Rev7, SPX90, Linn, DX7m MIDI

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IRIS SOUND/THE GEODESIC DOME STUDIO

237 Main St., Royersford, PA 19468

(215) 948-3448

Owner: David Ivory

Studio Manager: Darrah Ribbie

Engineers: David Ivory, Jason Lyle

Dimensions of Dome: 44 x 22 x 18

Keyboards: E-mu Emulator II, DX7, Juno 106

Outboard: Lexicon, Yamaha, Urie, Orban, more

CECCA SOUND

3196 Royal Lane Ste. 104, Dallas, TX 75229

(214) 358-6945

Owner: Charley Pride

Studio Manager: Bob Pickering

Engineers: Bob Pickering, Rick Webb

Dimensions of Studios: 20 x 20

Dimensions of Control Rooms: 28 x 14

Tape Recorders: MCI JH-24, 24-track; MCI JH-108,

MUSICIAN PRODUCT INFORMATION HOTLINE

1-800-241-9111

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SEE PAGE 43.

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