

# MUSICIAN

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NO. 120 OCTOBER 1988

## KEITH RICHARDS' REVENGE

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

CROWDED  
HOUSE

STEVE  
FORBERT'S  
NIGHTMARE

BEATLES '66



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by Mark Lewisohn

ROBERT FREEMAN



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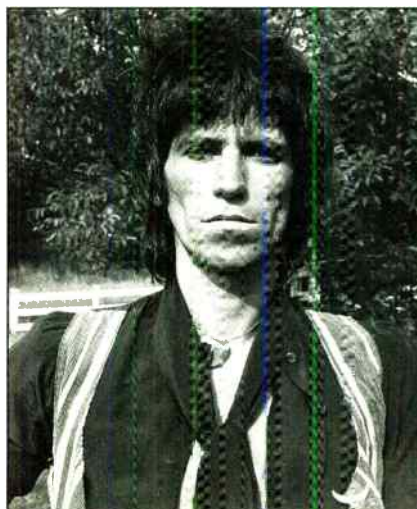
After being put on the shelf for more than five years, a feisty folk-rocker storms back with perhaps the strongest album of his career. A behind-the-scenes look at record-business warfare.  
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Australia's overnight sensations—give or take a few years—prove that odd men aren't necessarily out.  
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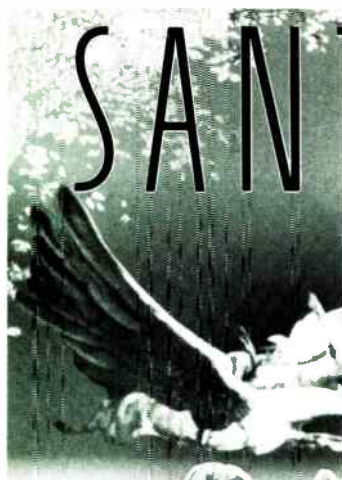
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A BILLBOARD PUBLICATION  
OCTOBER 1988 NO. 120

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E S S E N T I A L

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# LET TER

## PAGE: AFTER THIS...

THANK YOU FOR THE INTERVIEW with Jimmy Page (July '88). His riffs have, over the years, been responsible for the shape of my brain, and I was afraid he might reveal himself to be nasty, stupid or wasted. Thank heaven he didn't—I was charmed by his very English manner and wit.

Stacey Rogers  
Toronto, Canada

## THE DELUGE

I WAS HORRIFIED, TO SAY THE LEAST, by Charles M. Young's lack of class in his interview with Jimmy Page. Instead of an informative article about the current interests and solo project of a brilliant musician, Young took the much-traveled road, harassing Page with a bunch of dusty old Led Zep questions answered hundreds of times before. Although Young laced his interview with just enough questions about Page's solo album to break the ice, and served up his final product between a flowery description of Page's living-room and a concluding paragraph which attempted to end things on a very "brown" good note, his thirst

for dirt dominated the article. I, as a reader, feel cheated. Nice cover.

Brad Bannister  
Kinston, NC

AFTER READING CHARLES M. Young's article, I can see why Jimmy Page does not do very many interviews. Why insist on asking questions concerning Led Zeppelin? Why couldn't there have been more questions concerning Jimmy's new album, the upcoming tour and/or future projects? Instead, we got obviously painful questions concerning John Bonham, Jimmy's alleged heroin addiction and whether his parents are Christians or not. I wouldn't blame him if he never granted another interview!

Doris Tate  
Albuquerque, NM

IN YOUR INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY Page, Charles Young asked about an incident in San Francisco concerning an "alleged" beating of a stagehand. Since I too was a stagehand at that show, and a friend of the guy involved in the incident, I felt obliged to write. If Page had stuck to his first answer—"I don't know what happened because I wasn't there"—I wouldn't take issue. But when pressed further he says, "I don't think it was as bad as what it was built up to be.... If you sneeze on someone, they'll sue you." Horse-shit, Jimmy.

Nothing was "blown out of proportion." I remember what my friend's face looked like after Peter Grant and his entourage were through with it. I'd bet that if it were Page's teeth that had been knocked out, if his face had been beaten to a pulp, and if it were his eyes that someone had tried to gouge out, he wouldn't pass off such behavior so lightly.

Respectfully tell Mr. Young he can screw the mystique.

R.P. Hatcher  
Atlanta, GA

I'M SORRY TO SEE THAT CHARLES M. Young has got such an

acute case of rectal-cranial inversion. "I read you had a reputation for being cheap." What a comment to toss off to one of a handful of rock's truly pioneering and influential guitarists! It's no wonder Page scorns journalists.

Brian Briscoe  
Angleton, TX

YOUNG'S NOSY DELVING INTO John Bonham's habits was cruel. Imagine how Jimmy Page regards the death of his bandmate! How can a reporter expect any less than an "arrogant snout" when he asks personal questions that don't have anything to do with the artist's current music plan?

Betsy Becker  
Seneca Falls, NY

I HAD TO KEEP TURNING BACK to the cover to be sure I was reading *Musician* and not *People*. The *Enquirer* or the *Star* could use a talent like you, Chuck!

John Zander  
Downey, CA

HOW COULD A RARE AND WONDERFUL opportunity to interview Jimmy Page be allowed to turn into such a horrendous embarrassment?

Jocelyne Lanois  
Hamilton, Ont., Canada

CHARLES M. YOUNG GETS HARMED by the god.

Terry Brown  
Mobile, AL

## COHEN HEADS

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR fine interview with Leonard Cohen (July '88). It was witty, well-written, humorous and, above all, revealing. After reading about the behind-the-scenes agony that went into the making of *I'm Your Man*, I find the album more compelling than ever. Mark Rowland did a terrific job.

Bob Reichers  
Hyannis, MA

NICE LEONARD COHEN INTERVIEW. Who else but *Musician*? (Though I will say, *Various Positions* was released

domestically, albeit sparsely, by Passport Records.)

T. S. Hunter  
Branchville, MD

## GRAHAM: CRACKERS?

I WAS SURPRISED TO READ about Graham Parker's bitterness over the lack of response he received from some labels in soliciting a new record deal, including Rhino: "Even independents like Rhino and Slash said, 'We've got to hear something first.'"

Last fall Ernest Chapman, Graham's manager, contacted Harold Bronson, our managing director, mentioning the possibility of a Graham Parker project. Harold expressed enthusiasm and informed Ernest that there were several hardcore GP fans at our label, but cautioned him that we were a small label and Rhino couldn't offer a budget commensurate with what a major label might offer. *Never* was it stated that there would be a finished master that we could make an offer on. Besides, when did it become a sin to want to hear something that is going to cost you \$60,000? By industry standards this may seem like a drop in the bucket, but it's a hell of a lot of money for labels like Rhino.

I would have given my eye teeth for a chance to have *The Mona Lisa's Sister* on Rhino. I'd be lying if I said we didn't keep an eye on the bottom line, but we always pride ourselves on caring about the music. Give us a break, Graham; we're really not that insensitive.

Gary Stewart  
Rhino Records Inc.  
Santa Monica, CA

## EVERHARDT IS GOD?

Scott Everhardt of Walbridge, Ohio, is the winner of a Fender Eric Clapton signature series Stratocaster guitar, given as grand prize in a contest sponsored by *Musician*, PolyGram Records and Fender marking the release of the *Crossroads* collection. Who says it's a mean old world?

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



# Everybody's Talkin' 'Bout...



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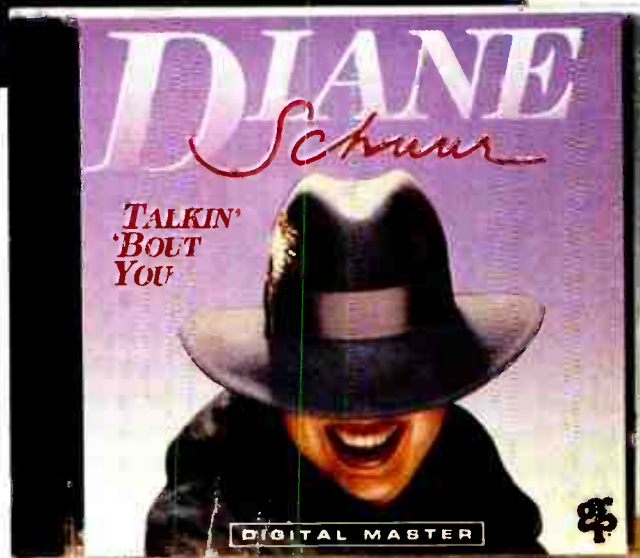
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# FA T S

## ▼ TAKE 6 Their God Is Fresh

**H**ave you heard Take 6 yet? It's a question music industry professionals are asking one another quite a bit lately. You know the tone of voice: *Please* say no so I can be the one who enlightens you.

Say no, and they look at you as if you've just inquired after John Kennedy's health. Then they shove a tape at you and say, "Listen." And you can't help but wonder, as you crack the shrink wrap, if you're about to discover the next Beatles/visdylanmichaeljackson-stevewonder here.

But what you'll find is that this ain't rock or R&B. It's gospel. Acapella gospel. Acapella gospel that sounds like jazz. World-class harmonies. Extraordinary arrangements. You'll be taken aback. Which, by the way, seems to be Claude McKnight's current favorite expression. "It has taken people aback," he says of Take 6's music, "but it's something we've been doing for about eight years."

McKnight is one of the six voices that make up Take 6. The group originated as a quartet at Oakwood College in Alabama.

But why acapella gospel with jazz overtones? McKnight says, "Everybody in the group plays an instrument and it seems like we were all instrumentalists before we became vocalists. Everybody had a pretty good jazz background and being that there were six parts to this, it just seemed natural to have extended jazz chords throughout the music. To make acapella music really fresh and exciting, you really have to get into a lot of the intricate rhythms and things that characterize jazz."

McKnight says when people usually think acapella, "they think there's no sound happening. We, in our arrangements, try to fill up every space. Anything you can think of a band doing, we try to do in our arrangements so that you're not missing the guitars and the backbeat."

McKnight admits that conservative church folk were initially "taken aback" by the group. Gospel labels refused to attend their initial showcase. Live audiences, too, view Take 6 with suspicion when they arrive onstage without instruments. But, as McKnight points out, "About halfway into the first song, they realize that this is real."

— Leonard Pitts, Jr.



World Radio History

## VANISHING SONGS

**Compact discs occasionally carry "bonus" tracks, as compared to their LP and cassette counterparts—partly to ease the pain of the medium's heftier price tags. But at least one record company has applied this economic theory in reverse. Anyone who's recently bought a new LP copy of *The Band* has received a rude shock: Two of that classic album's songs, "When You Awake" and "King Harvest (Has Surely Come)," are missing.**

**As you might expect, money is the reason for this Cripple Creek massacre. The Band's second album, released in 1969, is now a budget-priced reissue LP. To cut down on publishing costs that have risen three times in the 1980s alone, Capitol Records sliced out two of *The Band's* 12 songs.**

## JOHNNY CLEGG

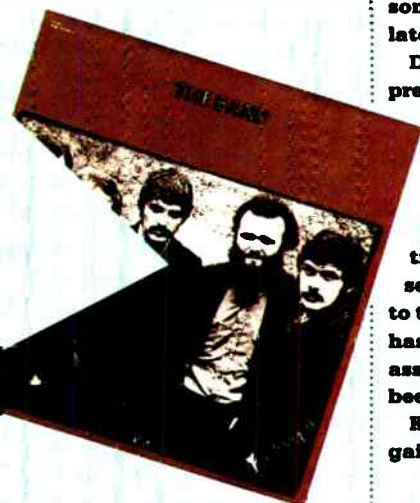
**C**ornered, most pop musicians would admit a desire to make megabucks and/or great art. White South African Johnny Clegg and his band Savuka pursue a different agenda. "We have a strong commitment to the progressive multi-racial culture that is developing here under very harsh conditions," he explains. "I believe the solution to our problems lies in a fusion of western and African cultures, value systems and political traditions."

A tall order, obviously, but Clegg is doing his part. The biracial Savuka (Zulu for "we





Nothing personal; it could have been any two of *The Band's* songs.



Capitol's been doing this for years with their budget reissues; the back covers carry a statement noting their abridged status. Sometimes a chopped-down version of an out-of-print collector's item (*Lothar and the Hand People*, for example) is better than nothing at all. Sometimes a budget price seems a fair exchange for losing a couple of tracks;

does anyone miss Beach Boys filler like "Bull Session with the 'Big Daddy'"? And sometimes Capitol mutilates a masterpiece.

David Berman, Capitol president since last year, doesn't seem too pleased to have the Band situation called to his attention. "To the extent that it was arbitrarily imposed without serious A&R decision given to the process, the practice has stopped," he says. "Re-assessment has already been made for all reissues."

Keep watching the bargain bins. — *Scott Isler*

## VANISHING SONGWRITERS

Used to be, if you wanted to know who wrote that song you liked, you could just check the record label. But with cassette tapes and compact discs increasingly becoming the music media of choice, more and more songwriters are finding themselves being written out of history. Miniaturized

sound carriers too often can't find room to credit the lowly slobs who only write the stuff.

Songwriters aren't the only ones getting lost in the shuffle: Rhino Records' CD of the dB's' *Like This* omits a personnel list, which included guest musicians. (An embarrassed Gary Stewart, Rhino's vice-president of A&R, admits, "We blew it, and we'll try to be more careful in the future.") But songwriters—who often were credited only on record labels—are more conveniently forgotten when album-cover graphics are reduced for cassette and compact-disc artwork.

Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller wrote six Top 10 hits for Elvis Presley; they, and El's other songwriters, went uncredited on tape and CD when RCA Records issued collections last year of the King's biggest recordings. Warner Bros. Records also denied Leiber and Stoller (among others) credit on the tape and CD of the two-million-selling *La Bamba* soundtrack album. "To deny

a creative person credit for what he does," Stoller says, "is a form of thievery."

The Hollywood-based National Academy of Songwriters has been keeping track of the situation. Last year the group estimated that less than half of all pre-recorded cassettes listed songwriters—although other contributions, like "hand claps" (on Joe Cocker's *Unchain My Heart*), are duly noted. "It's not an economic backbreaker," says NAS executive director Kevin Odegard. "It's a matter of neglect. Songwriters are not being considered as new technology enters the marketplace."

The NAS has received written pledges of cooperation from record companies. More effectively, it's trying to standardize songwriter credits for all formats. Newer writers in particular, Odegard says, lack the clout necessary to negotiate their names onto a cassette J-card or CD insert.

You mean Ritchie Valens *didn't* write "Summertime Blues"? — *Scott Isler*

## Looking for Fusion... in South Africa

have arisen") symbolizes harmony between realms often at odds. The group blends Zulu and English lyrics, lively African guitar, big rock drums and the British folk inflections of Clegg's melodies and vocals. Though he eschews doctrinaire statements about his homeland, there's no denying the undercurrent of urgency in tunes like "Human Rainbow" and "Talk to the People."

Clegg has inhabited two

worlds much of his life. Born in England, he lived in Zambia and Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) as a child before settling in Johannesburg. By age 14, he'd discovered "emotional similarities" between traditional Celtic and Zulu street music, and was spending weekends in black areas of the city, risking arrest to learn the basics of Zulu songwriting and dancing.

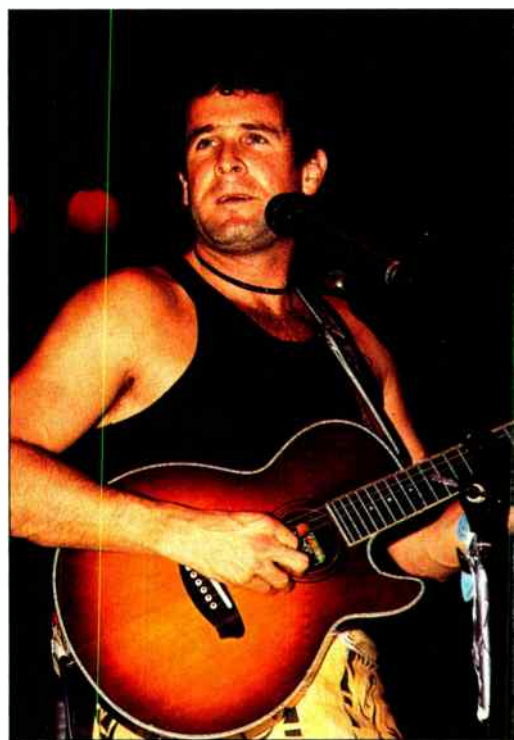
His obsession led to the 1979 formation of Juluka, a group constructed along the same lines as Savuka. Before disbanding in 1985, Juluka released two unappreciated LPs in the U.S. on Warner Bros., later the home of Paul Simon's *Graceland*. Insisting he isn't resentful, Clegg sighs, "The world isn't fair. We know that. It's an irony that I was signed to the same label and they couldn't sell my records. But I think the people who break new ground are never the ones who bring

home the prize."

Recently, Clegg's been caught in a controversy. Despite support from Winnie Mandela, Harry Belafonte *et al.*, he wasn't invited to perform at London's Freedomfest concert honoring Nelson Mandela, due to a dispute with the British Musicians Union, who recently expelled Clegg from its ranks.

Why? "In May '87, I got a letter from the BMU saying membership was incompatible with playing in South Africa—but being a permanent resident there, it's impossible for me not to," he notes. "The African National Congress has called for a reexamination of the union's cultural boycott, but the BMU says it won't accept pressure from anybody."

"I was finally kicked out summarily without a hearing. Now I'm trying to appeal so we can settle this matter amicably." To be continued... — *Jon Young*



# ▼ LENE LOVICH

## New Wave Hits the Lounges

If the recent surfacing of Lene Lovich seems like a startling blast from the past, what's really surprising is how much she's still operating there. New wave nostalgia, anyone?

Lovich emerged a decade ago, but it's been six years since her last album. That gap was largely attributable to a soured relationship with Stiff Records: "We were having a hard time with the record company for a long time," she says. "At first, of course, we were optimistic that things would get better."

To hear Lovich tell it, things didn't get better, but she didn't sit idle during the struggle with Stiff. "We kept presenting them with material, but they were not interested," she sighs.

Finally freed about two years ago, she may have maintained an extremely low profile, but she maintains that her *output* hasn't been that low. And she doesn't just mean the two daughters she's had with husband/guitarist/longtime collaborator Les Chappell. "I've been working with Peter Hammill, who's been writing

an opera based on 'The Fall of the House of Usher' by Edgar Allan Poe," she explains, adding that they hope to perform it next year at an opera festival in Spain.

Her friend Nina Hagen got Lovich interested in the animal-rights movement, which led to the pair collaborating on "Don't Kill

the Animals," a song on last year's *Liberate the Animals* compilation LP. In turn, a large animal-rights festival in Washington, D.C., brought Lovich back to this country, enabling her to return to club stages. A low-budget 16-date tour was undertaken, in part, to generate record company interest.

Her approach to these shows, however, reflected an odd, slightly counterproductive strategy. Lovich remains an eccentric, endearing performer, given to vocal flights of fancy and occasional sax honks. But rather than

present herself as a free agent who's one hot prospect—with a large batch of new songs and an updated sound—the show consisted almost exclusively of old quirk-pop tunes like "Lucky Number," "Home" and "New Toy," all wrapped in a thin, lounge-wave package.

Asked before one of the final shows if she was encouraged about the tour wooing a record company, Lovich laughs. "I would just like somebody to be encouraged about *me*." Understandable, but this approach doesn't seem the way to do it.

— Duncan Strauss



## PRIMITIVES

### Very Now, ► Very Then

With their dense musical textures and short, accessible pop melodies, the Primitives sound like a cross between Blondie and the Jesus & Mary Chain, with a little Madonna thrown in. That augurs well for the success of their first RCA LP, *Lovely*, on American college radio. And it makes them sound like Martians in their native Britain, where

they're one of few bands these days to negotiate the nether reaches between Stock-Aitken-Waterman dance stylings and hiphop beatsmanship.

But their label in the British pop press as an anti-disco band misses the mark, says lead singer Tracey Tracey. "It wasn't in reaction to disco that we formed the Primitives," she says. "It was just a lot of bored people

sick of being on the dole who decided to do something they enjoyed. And we happened to be successful." Not that she endorses the current wave of British dance-synth music: "It's just sort of turned out, let's-make-another-record music."

The Primitives' combination of innocence, introspection and iconoclasm has drawn favorable notices from that other

doyen of the British alternative scene, Morrissey. His patronage aside, a string of indie hits on their own Lazy Records brought the Primitives to the attention of BMG/RCA Records. And right now "Crash," a two-minute shot of pure pop exhilaration, is getting them noticed on both sides of the Atlantic.

"'Crash' was written within six weeks of the band getting together," Tracey recalls. "We just went into the studio and recorded it as part of a six-song demo. It was very instant, very spontaneous." Which is as close to a formula as the Primitives come: "Our songs are very immediate. It's not something we go out of our way to do; it's just right. Straight to the point and instant. You hear them once, and you want to hear them again." — Steve Perry



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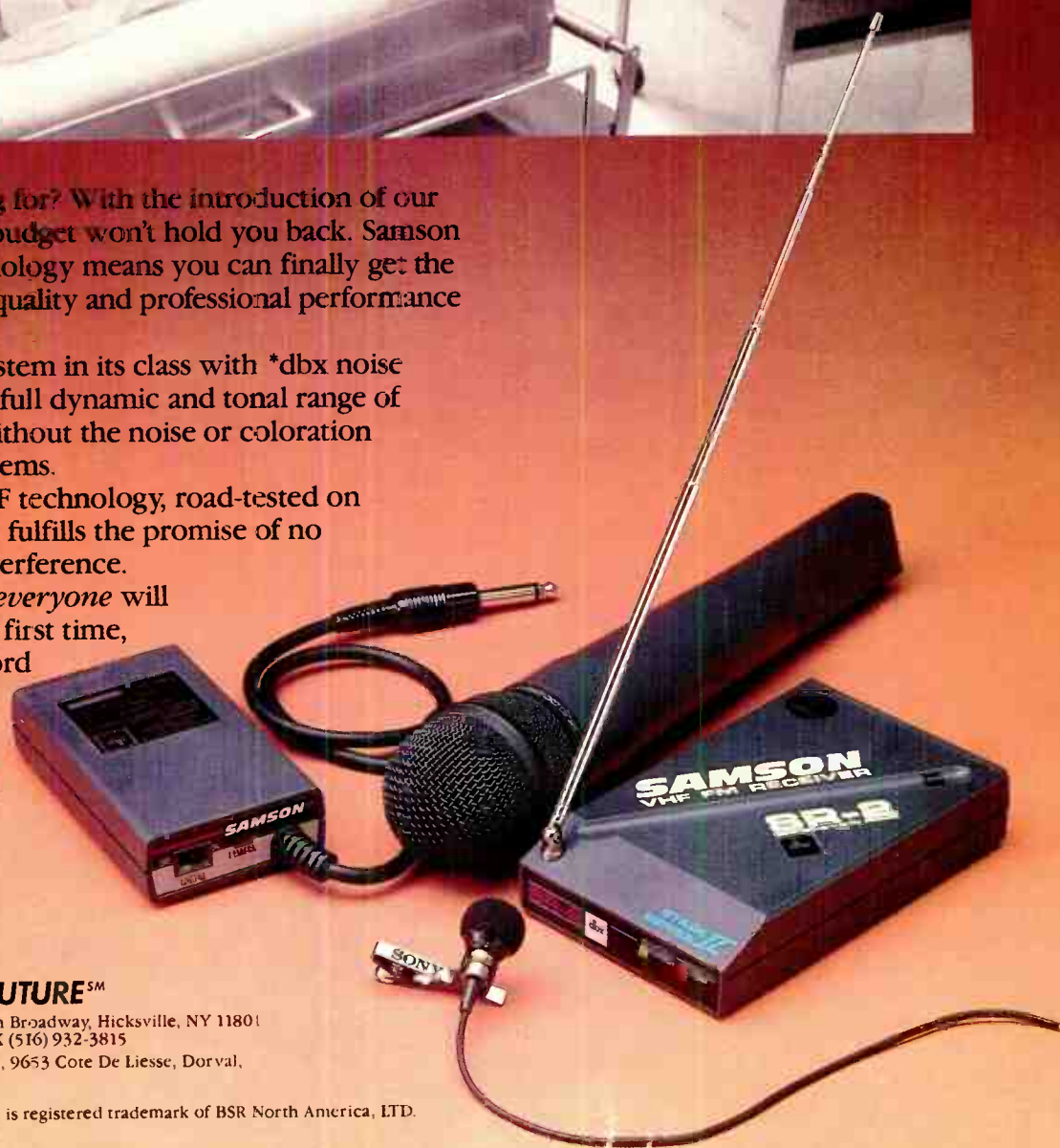
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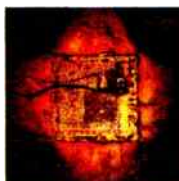
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# THE SUGARCUBES

by amy linden

*Iceland's  
"Little People"  
Make a Big Noise*

**T**he Sugarcubes are not only a new band, and a very good band, but they are probably (no, let us make that definitely) the only band to come out of Iceland and get an American recording contract. Iceland. Maybe you've heard of it. They hold US-USSR summits there, and big international chess matches. It's remote, it's somewhere near Finland, or maybe Greenland. Anyhow, it's not what you would call your typical breeding ground for a rock 'n' roll group. They have *long* winters. It's small and isolated. It is also a relatively young land, and filled with a prehistoric beauty and pureness that borders on the mystical. There are active volcanos, and the whole country is situated right on top of the cracks that hold the Atlantic Ocean. Suffice to say, Iceland is like no other place you've ever been to before.

**Not in awe of the creative process: "We just think, life, what a brilliant idea."** Conversely, the conference room of Elektra Records, in the heart of midtown Manhattan, is like no place the Sugarcubes have ever been to either. This is the group's first trip to the Big Apple, and to make the transition from desolate and magical to dirty and maniacal even more intense, the temperature is topping off at 96 degrees. You could say that the Cubes were melting. [*Please don't.* — Ed.]

The band began, according to singer/trumpeter/lyricist Einar Örn, on June 8, 1986 at 2:50 p.m.—"Greenwich Mean Time," he smiles. Actually, the date is the birthday of singer/lyricist Björk Guðmundsdóttir's baby, but the group—which prefers using their first names only—chose to celebrate the birth of a band and a child at the same time. The Sugarcubes talk a lot about Life, Celebration and Joy.



"We approach everything with an open mind," Björk says. "We just think, life, what a brilliant idea, life," Einar continues. Their sincere, almost childlike optimism balances a blunt, (pardon the expression) chilling sound. The Sugarcubes are a fresh, challenging mixture of early Wire, Siouxsie and the Banshees (without either's more art/doom aspects), the B-52's and the Slits. While the group is not doing anything startlingly original, they capture the thrust and rush of '70s punk, adding a sense of melody and humor. But if you want to stay clear of an international incident, don't mention "influences."

"I grew up listening to my mother and my father," Einar laughs. "You have to understand, Iceland is a place where our nannies were humans, telling us stories. We weren't brought up by gadgets or radios." "I never saw a music TV program until six years ago," Björk offers. Asked if her homeland shaped their distinctive sound, she shrugs: "We don't know any other place."

"We are not musicians," Einar says. "We are not playing music for music's sake, we are playing it for enjoyment. People think music is some sort of god, the ultimate ecstasy; it's not." "We can't even do a cover version," Björk sighs. "We tried some Stones song. We weren't bright enough."

This is not a group in awe of the creative process. Songwriting consists of "getting together in a room, somebody starts, we build it from there," Björk explains. For "Delicious Demon," on their American debut *Life's Too Good*, guitarist Thor took random sentences from a textbook on Egyptian hieroglyphics. "Then he discovered that they were all about money!" Einar smiles. "It's our Egyptian money song!" What the songs do have is a free spirit. Most of the lyrics are hard to decipher, due to the accented vocals, but they set a mood, be it funny like "Delicious Demon" or ominous like "Mama" and "Motorcrash." But the band resolutely resists any self-analysis. "The last thing we discuss is music," Björk says. "Our musical influences are our life."

So far, life *has* been pretty good. On the strength of three singles, the band became the rage of the fickle British indie charts. America is next, and the Sugarcubes are a little amazed at the speed at which success is coming.

"We are small people in a big place now," Einar remarks. For a group that considers themselves a garage band—albeit with Iceland's high standard of living, perhaps a two-car garage band—all the hoopla is strange indeed. Being primed as a Next Big Thing doesn't sit too well with them.

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**TAKING THEIR LUMPS**  
Guitarist **Thor** uses a pre-CBS Fender Telecaster with a maple neck, and a Yamaha semi-acoustic SGS400. He plays through various foot pedals (distortion, overdrive, etc.) and into a Peavey SCH400 amp. Keyboard-player **Magga** has a Roland D50, E-Max and Roland Cube60 amp. **Bragi** plays Fender Precision and Jazz basses through a Trace Elliot 250 head and two speaker cabinets (1x15" and 4x10"). Drummer **Siggi**'s kit includes a Ludwig 20" kick; Premier 14x7" wooden snare; and 13" and 14" Gretsch Power Toms. His Sabian cymbals are an 18" high bell crash ride; 18" fast Chinese; 16" 8+; 12" Leopard splash; 13" flat; and bottomed high-hats with air holes. Singer **Björk** prefers a Shure microphone, and **Einar** plays a Jupiter pocket trumpet.

"What was the last big thing? U2," Einar thinks out loud. "Do we look like U2, do we sound like U2? It's not in our nature. We are little people"—a phrase used almost self-mockingly throughout the interview. Despite the group's golly-gosh attitude, the Sugarcubes are by no means simple kids. They are aware of their novelty, and while not exploiting it, know how to use their uniqueness.

What these little people do want, though, is to meet one of America's leading figures. "Mike Tyson," Björk beams. "We love him." Why the fascination with Iron Mike? "Some writer told me that I had a voice like a Mike Tyson..." Björk gestures with her hands. Uppercut? "Yes! That's it, a Mike Tyson uppercut."

While the Sugarcubes haven't obtained Tyson's stature yet, they share in his ability and desire to appeal to a wide audience. "Underground bands [in Iceland] don't understand our attitude," Einar says. "They think that they must be strange to be taken seriously. We have always treated our music as not strange or weird. We like our record." Einar leans back in his chair. "We want everyone to hear our record." 

## KNEEL!

*Yes, in the same issue in which we ran a letter chastising us for misspelling Neil Peart's name, we managed to misspell Neal Schon (Santana/Shorter interview, Sept. '88). Hopefully we got Neal Finn's name right in this month's Crowded House piece.*



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# THE CHURCH

by **steve perry**

*Uplifted and  
Sadly Triumphant  
at Last*

**P**eter Koppes is reclining against the foot of his unmade Minneapolis hotel bed when he finally comes up with a name for what the Church does. Contemporary Intelligent Rock, he calls it. Yeah, Marty Willson-Piper agrees, and amends the emphasis a little: Contemporary *Intelligent* Rock. The designation may be unduly precious, but you don't have to buy into the Church guitarists' implicit elitism to see that the recent success of bands like theirs does indeed portend something new. For years the college/alternative rock scene has been small-scale and notoriously cultish; now a growing cadre of bands are stepping forward from its ranks into the mainstream, and beginning to change what the mainstream sounds like.

These days even the most calcified AOR stations are playing U2, R.E.M. and the Church, and the breadth of their exposure is uniting a lot of previously isolated audiences. Consider some of the

**Shiver-up-the-spine: Marty Willson-Piper, Steve Kilbey, Richard Ploog and Peter Koppes.** T-shirts that popped up in the crowd at a recent Church show: New Order, INXS, Echo & the Bunnymen, XTC, the Cure, OMD, U2, Sisters of Mercy, the Jesus & Mary Chain, Love and Rockets, Depeche Mode—college/alternative mavens one and all. It looked like post-punk rock's coming-out party; as if to seal the symbolism of the event, the winners of my impromptu T-shirt-counting contest were two bookends of the whole post-1976 odyssey to date, Johnny Rotten and R.E.M.

"I think the Church can straddle the sort of gothic doom-and-gloom bands as well as a lot of other things," acknowledges Steve Kilbey, the band's

bassist, singer, lyricist and semi-grudging mouthpiece. "Our audience can like those bands, like us, and like Dire Straits as well. Though when I see some of the T-shirts at these shows, I sometimes think, 'God, how could they like these bands and like us too?' But they do."

Kilbey gives some measure of credit to R.E.M. for preparing American audiences to accept the Church's brand of guitar rock. "It must have helped," he says, "although I don't see any great similarity between them and us, aside from the fact that someone in R.E.M. has got a Rickenbacker and someone in our band has got a Rickenbacker. But I think R.E.M. did open the door for a few people who might have been considered too left-of-field."

Somebody certainly opened the door, because by mid-June the Church had a Top 30 single ("Under the Milky Way") and a Top 40 album (*Starfish*), and the audience at their live shows was expanding to include many who'd first heard the band when "Milky Way" debuted on AOR and CHR radio. Granted, we're not talking Bon Jovi numbers here, but it's still a quantum leap forward for a band that's labored in semi-obscurity since the beginning of this decade, releasing five previous albums in their native Australia (only two of which got released in America) and playing to near-empty halls in many parts of the world.

Is sudden success disquieting? Have they been on the outside so long that coming in feels perversely like a betrayal (the Paul Westerberg perplex)? "Not for

one miserable second! Never! Anybody who thinks that's negative is ridiculous," declaims Willson-Piper. Kilbey is more taciturn on the matter of success: "It's nothing. It hasn't made me happy, it hasn't made me sad, it hasn't daunted me. It's as hollow as I thought it would be—though it's much nicer to play to a full house than an empty house."

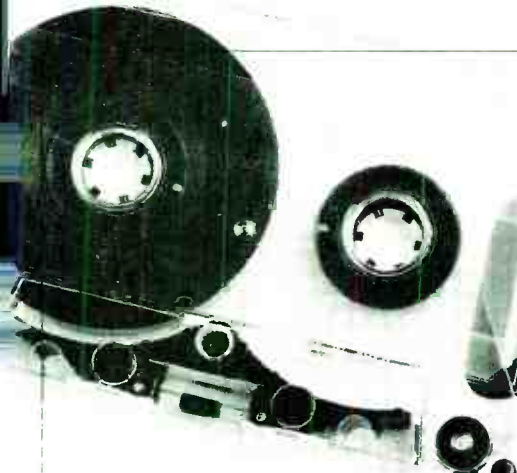
Maybe the reason Kilbey is so unfazed by it all is that he devotes a lot of time and energy to insulating himself from it. The last track on *Starfish*, an album in which the theme of travel figures prominently, is called "Hotel Womb," and at Minneapolis' Guthrie Theatre he spat out one line with particular ferocity: "God-dammitall, I wish I was back in my hotel womb!" Come on—is touring *that* emotionally traumatic? "Well, I like playing live, but I don't like touring. It's a very disturbing experience in all the ways people can imagine.

"Especially for sensitive chaps like us." He manages a self-deprecating smirk at this, which is about as emotionally unguarded—regarding his music, himself, anything—as Kilbey is likely to get in an interview. "I eventually don't want to do any more interviews," he says. "I think that will add a lot of mystery when we make a record. And people like a good mystery. The more they can find out, the less they enjoy it."

Accordingly, Kilbey doesn't want to talk about what he and the others were doing before they formed the Church. He won't even say how old he is. "I'm a surrealist," he pronounces at one point.







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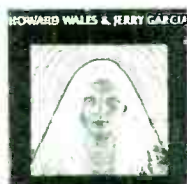
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## THE CHURCH

"I'm anti-logic. As a private individual I'm interested in having some money, because I'd like to live in a nice house and drive a big car and all that. But as far as discussing it, it's not part of my *persona*, you know?" For someone who claims little interest in self-marketing and even less in self-mythology, that's a pretty arch formulation, but so far as Kilbey is concerned it probably all serves the end of keeping an aura of mystery around the Church's music.

"We try to go for that shiver-up-the-spine feeling, that sort of otherworldly thing—uplifting, sadly triumphant. It's so hard to put into words. If you could do

that, you'd have a blueprint for doing it. But it's a very nebulous thing, and it won't be pinned down. All you can do is take a song you've written and say, yeah, this does it, or no, this doesn't.

"I just want that *feeling*. I don't know what that feeling is. It's like saying to a cigarette smoker, 'Why do you smoke?' It's just that hit you get. Some records give me that hit, and others don't. I can say, 'Well, I like intelligence, melody, good lyrics, good playing, originality'—but maybe Joe Smith's record has got all those elements and I still don't like it. Music is this intangible thing. I don't think anyone's attempted to work out

why music makes us feel good. And it'll be a sorry day when they do find out that it stimulates some chemical here that in turn stimulates...I don't want to know about that."

After some consideration, he adds, "My lyrics aren't nonsense, but I think there's something between nonsense and statement, and most people don't explore that area. It's very important to rationalize our whole existence, because we're not just day-to-day creatures. There's something else going on. I don't know what it is; I have no more idea than anybody else. But that's what my lyrics try to come to terms with."

Philosophy of art aside, Kilbey's reticence also reflects a lifelong, passionate and generally very private connection to rock music. As a kid, he says, "I lived in my own world, which was a world created by rock 'n' roll music, and records. It didn't matter a fuck to me where I was; all I wanted to do was get down to the import record shop and get the latest record by so-and-so. Then I'd come home, shut my bedroom door, and listen to it until I could write my own song to imitate it.

"I only hung around with people who liked the same kind of music that I liked. And there weren't many of them. We thought we were a real avant-garde clique. So it didn't matter to me that I was in Canberra, which is the capital of Australia and about as inspiring as Ottawa or Washington or something. All I wanted was that record player and that record shop. Everything else was totally irrelevant.

"Rock 'n' roll was all I cared about, and if somebody didn't like the music I did, then I wasn't interested in them. I still think music is a very important reference point for friends. I have friends that I'd

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The list of gear **Steve Kilbey** used on *Starfish* is short and sweet: "I had a Fender Coronado bass, a Gallien-Krueger amplifier and an SVT cabinet. And that's it." Guitarists **Peter Koppes** and **Marty Willson-Piper** swear they can't remember any particulars about their guitars. "They're Rickenbackers," says Willson-Piper. "But Peter and I have custom guitars that were assembled from components of two different models—what do you call those?" Mutants, Marty. In the Church's live show, some of Willson-Piper's most memorable solos are on his custom Rickenbacker electric 12-string. Both guitarists use Vox AC-30 amps. **Richard Ploog** plays D.W. drums and Paiste cymbals.



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## THE CHURCH

hate otherwise, but we like the same music, and that's where we intersect."

And with the people who don't share his musical passions, "I'm not Mr. Popularity," Kilbey concedes. "It's hard to maintain friendships doing this. You go away for six months and then come back, and it's like, I've just toured the world and done this and that, and my record is at this place on the American charts. And these people are saying, we've painted our bedroom green and got a new cat. So you tend to drift away, and people think, well, he's a pretty stuck-up guy. And you're thinking, *they're* pretty dull."

**A**s far as describing the Church's musical signature, suffice to say that if Phil Spector's was a wall-of-sound, the Church's on *Starfish* might best be called a nice-hot-bath-

of-sound. And that's not a putdown. The Church have been working toward that sound ever since *of skins and heart*, their 1981 debut. But at the time, says Kilbey, he wasn't so much inspired to pursue something as to trash something. "I hated all the stuff that was happening, and it made us want to do the Church even harder and stronger. I didn't like new wave—all the sort of goofy, jerky things that were happening around the turn of the decade. I don't want to point fingers, because those bands are all broken up and gone now. But we wanted to do something that had substance and soul to it, and strike a blow for guitars again."

The Church was a critics'-choice band from the beginning, and they quickly built a following in their native Australia. But despite a sizable American cult built

over the years, *Starfish* is their first bona fide hit here. Which is one reason why Arista is their third American label in as many albums. "There was a pressure from our point of view [to produce a hit this time]," admits guitarist Peter Kopes, "though not from the record company's. They were willing to wait for two records to build up this band."

But no one is disappointed by the gradualness of the Church's climb. Kilbey calls it an outright blessing, in fact. "It didn't seem like it at the time, but now that I look back I can see that if this had happened on the first record, several members of the band would be dead, and the others would be in the asylum. My ego would have burst; I would have done every drug under the sun and done all the other naughty things one shouldn't do. My next record would have been terri-

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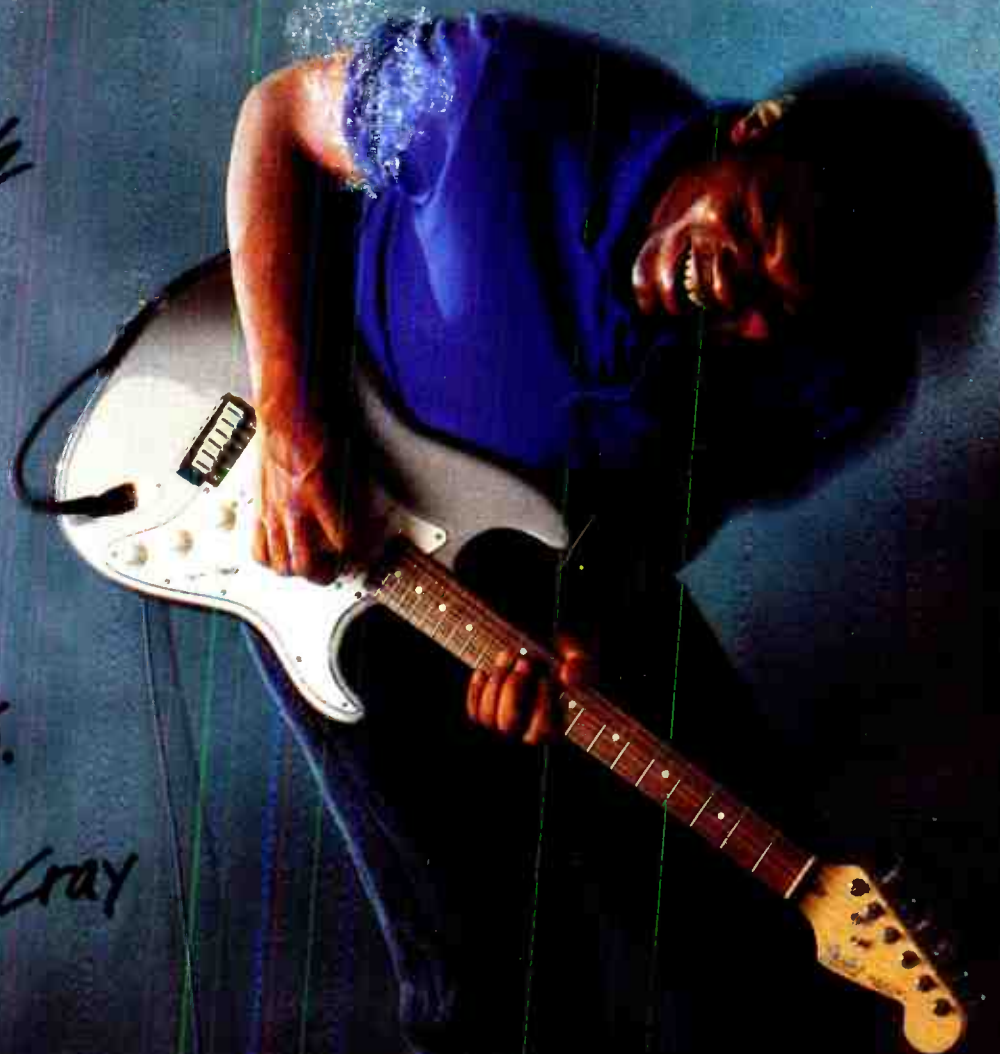
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ble, and I would probably be in a clinic outside Los Angeles now.

"But the way it's happened, I've paced myself. That stuff doesn't bother me. Sometimes I walk onstage and there's a big crowd and they roar and I think, 'Great!' My ego gets a rush. But I'm just an average sort of guy who happened to get lucky strumming a guitar. I think anyone who does this and thinks anything else is a fucking idiot. Elvis Presley was an ordinary guy. Sting is an ordinary guy. Maybe they're particularly talented, but you should never believe your own publicity, your own myth. When that starts happening, it's dangerous."

Their gradual ascent has held other benefits, too. Because the Church was known as a band with a small but doggedly loyal following, the CD-only label Rykodisc was willing to sign three of its four members—Kilbey, Willson-Piper and Koppes—to solo deals. It's an unconventional arrangement to say the least, but since it was cut before the band signed with Arista, Arista will have to grin and bear it. As a result, everyone in the band save drummer Richard Ploog has a new solo CD out at the same time as the album.

"It's funny that some people say, 'Ah, look at all these solo projects—their days are numbered,'" says Willson-Piper. "In fact it holds the band together. Nobody's got any reason to leave now. Nobody's frustrated creatively."

"Everyone says it must have taken guts to stick together all these years," Kilbey offers later. "But what else could we do? I think it was almost cowardice to stay together. I mean, if you break up your band, you have to start all over with another one. We were just like the guy at the roulette wheel who stands there and keeps betting on number 13. Eventually it's gonna come up." ❏

## DEVELOPMENTS from page 50

for their digital pianos and ensembles. It might pay to try it out, because Technics is running a big \$40,000-plus-Digital Ensemble sweepstakes at their dealers this fall, with 15 keyboards up as runner-up prizes.

The software community had one notable Atlanta debut: CODA. Their Macintosh-based Finale program, presented in a big booth complete with fern-bar decor, has stepped right in as a genuine alternative to the Mac's Big Four (Op-code, Performer, Southworth and MasterTracks Pro, if you're keeping score). This sequencer environment is best suited to regular notation-centered players who prefer to work on piano

*continued on page 39*

staves rather than bar graphs. Overall, Finale has completely rethought the sequencing environment as we've come to use it, making it more comfortable for the trained composer. Just to wet your whistle, here are three things it'll do that are unique. If you have trouble playing to a metronome, it will take its tempo from a foot pedal, so you can slow up for the hard sections and speed up for the easy ones and afterwards have a continuous performance (and you should see the variety of ritards!). Finale also has a scoring mode called "Igor," which gives you a complete score sideways in one continuous printout, the way Igor

Stravinsky liked it. And it has a secondary memory buffer that preserves everything, so if you go ahead and do something seemingly irrevocable like erase a perfect solo, you can actually go in and recover it.

We're about out of time, but before I go, I should stand up and be counted on this summer NAMM deal. Let's cut the crap and bring it to New York City. We want to keep the big-name players involved, we want some excitement, we want summer NAMM to matter again. Bring it to the Big Apple, if not every year, then every third year. Only then will the cheap jokes stop for good. ❏

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M10



World Radio History

ROBERT FREEMAN



# Beatles '66

## THE REVOLVER SESSIONS

Sometimes history gets lucky. The Beatles did all their studio recording in one place: EMI's Abbey Road Studios. That fact makes possible the publication of *The Beatles: Recording Sessions*, a detailed look at exactly what went on when the band was inside Abbey Road. Thanks to logbooks, session tapes and his own interviewing, Mark Lewisohn has fashioned a definitive account of the Fab Four at work from 1962 to 1970. Our excerpt concentrates on the making of what many Beatles scholars consider their best album: no, not *Sgt. Pepper*, but *Revolver*. ►►►



From *The Beatles: Recording Sessions (The Official Abbey Road Studio Session Notes 1962-1970)* by Mark Lewisohn. © 1988 by EMI Records Ltd. To be published in October by Harmony Books, a division of Crown Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Wednesday, April 6, 1966

Studio Three: 8:00 p.m.-1:15 a.m. Recording: "Mark I" (working title of "Tomorrow Never Knows") (takes 1-3).

The first session for what was to become the significant album *Revolver*. Here was a set of recordings destined to rock the rock world and change the course of popular music. And its momentous closing song "Tomorrow Never Knows" was the first to be taped. What a start!

It took just three takes—one of them a breakdown—to record "Tomorrow Never Knows," although by its very essence the song was also the result of innumerable overdubs, especially of tape loops. (These were superimposed on April 7.) On this first day the Beatles recorded only the song's rhythm track. (Only?) It was take three which was chosen for the overdubbing of the loops and for the record release, and take two was the breakdown. But take one was a sensational, apocalyptic version, loop-less so to speak, which is very close to defying adequate description.

Take one of "Mark I," the working title of "Tomorrow Never Knows" (the latter being a Ringo-ism seized by John as the ideal title for his masterpiece), was a heavy metal recording of enormous proportion, with thundering echo and booming, quivering, ocean-bed vibrations. And peeking out from under the squall was John Lennon's voice, supremely eerie, as if it were being broadcast through the cheapest transistor radio from your local market, and delivering the most bizarre Beatles lyric yet, including one line taken directly from Dr. Timothy Leary's version of the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*.

The released version was a somewhat lighter take of the song, although it was still unlikely to rival "Yesterday" in the ballad stakes. Ringo's drums carried a hypnotic and mournful thud. Paul's bass, high up on the fretboard, matched Ringo note for mesmerizing note. There was another eerily live Lennon vocal, a tambourine, one note of an organ playing continuously, two guitar solos—one fuzzed and played backwards, the other put through a Leslie organ speaker—and a jolly honky-tonk piano. All in all, a quite remarkable day's work. Coming less than three years after "She Loves You," "Tomorrow Never Knows" reveals an unrivaled musical progression and the Beatles' willingness to first observe the boundaries and then smash right through them.

It would be wrong to assume that the Beatles alone were responsible for this remarkable recording, or for the progressiveness which would be the hallmark of much of their future output. Producer George Martin was, as ever, a vital ingredient in the process, always innovative himself, a tireless seeker of new sounds and willing translator of the Beatles' frequently vague requirements. Now he was joined by engineer Geoff Emerick, promoted to replace Norman Smith.

Emerick's promotion was a shrewd move by the studio management, particularly Bob Beckett, the man in charge of disc-cutters, the job in which Emerick had latterly been employed. "Geoff walked in green but because he knew no rules he tried different techniques," says tape operator Jerry Boys. "And because the Beatles were very creative and very adventurous, they would say yes to everything. The chemistry of George and Geoff was perfect and they made a formidable team. With another producer and another engineer things would have turned out quite differently." Engineer Ron Pender notes, "Geoff started off by following Norman Smith's approach because he'd been Norman's assistant for a while. But he rapidly started to change things around, the way to mike drums or bass, for example. He was always experimenting."

One major reason for Emerick's promotion to what was, at

this time, probably the most enviable position in the recording world, seems to have been his very inexperience. Here was a young man—a mere 20—with not only the best-tuned ears in the business and a head full of fresh ideas but, very importantly, no preconceived or irreversible techniques. What he could and would learn from George Martin and the Beatles he could and would repay.

Emerick recalls the circumstances of his promotion. "The studio manager called me to his office and asked whether I'd like to be the Beatles' engineer. That took me a little bit by surprise! In fact it terrified me. I remember playing a game in my head, eeny meeny miney mo, shall I say yes, shall I say no? The responsibility was enormous but I said yes, thinking that I'd accept the blows as they came..."

It wasn't only the personnel which was changing at Abbey Road. The technical boffins were having to respond quickly to the Beatles' needs. "They would relate what sounds they wanted and we then had to go away and come back with a solution," recalls Ken Townsend, now general manager at Abbey Road Studios. "For example, they often liked to double-track their vocals, but it's quite a laborious process and they soon got fed up with it. So after one particularly trying night-time session doing just that, I was driving home and I suddenly had an idea..."

Townsend's idea was to affect not just most of the Beatles' future recordings, but recording techniques everywhere. Balance engineer Stuart Eltham realized it needed a name, and christened it Artificial Double Tracking, ADT for short. George Harrison told Townsend he should get a medal for inventing it. In layman's terms, ADT is a process whereby a recording signal is taken from the playback head of a tape machine, recorded onto a separate machine which has a variable oscillator (enabling the speed to be altered) and then fed back into the first machine to be combined with the original signal. In photography, the placement of a negative directly over another does not alter the image. The two become one. But move one slightly and the image widens. ADT does this with tape. One voice laid perfectly on top of another produces







one image. But move the second voice by just a few milliseconds and two separate images emerge.

Second engineer Phil McDonald remembers that John Lennon was the prime motivation behind Townsend's invention. "After Ken invented ADT, John used to say, 'Well I've sung it once, lads, just track it for me.' He didn't really want to sing something again." Peter Vince, another engineer, concurs. "John was a one or two take man. If you didn't get him then, or if you didn't put the right amount of echo into his cans [headphones], you just wouldn't get the performance from him."

So John, like the others, was very impressed with ADT. But he was no technical genius and made just one attempt to find out how it worked. "I knew he'd never understand it," says George Martin, "so I said, 'Now listen, it's very simple. We take the original image and we split it through a double vibrocated splashing flange with double negative feedback...' He said, 'You're pulling my leg. Aren't you?' I replied, 'Well, let's flange it again and see.' From that moment on, whenever he wanted ADT he would ask for his voice to be flanged, or call out for 'Ken's flanger.'" The Beatles' influence was so vast that the term "flanging" is still in use today, more than 20 years on.

#### Thursday, April 7, 1966

Studio Three: 2:30-7:15 p.m. Recording: "Mark I" (working title of "Tomorrow Never Knows") (overdub onto take 3). Studio Three: 8:15 p.m.-1:30 a.m. Recording: "Got to Get You into My Life" (takes 1-5).

Perhaps the most striking sound on "Tomorrow Never Knows" is one of tape loops, the sound achieved by tape saturation: removing the erase head of a machine and then recording over and over on the same piece of tape. "The tape loop idea started because they all had Brennell machines," recalls Geoff Emerick. "Paul in particular used to make his own loops at home and walk into the studio with bags full of little reels saying, 'Listen to this!' The seagull-like noise on 'Tomorrow Never Knows' is really a distorted guitar." (According to studio documentation, other loops used included the sounds of a speeded up guitar and a wine glass.) "We did a live mix of all the loops," says George Martin. "All over the studios we had people spooling them onto the machines with pencils while Geoff did the balancing. There were many other hands controlling the panning." "We had five machines running," says Phil McDonald. "Geoff would say, 'Okay, let's lift that fader, that sounds good.' It was done totally off the cuff. The control room was as full of loops as it was people." "I laid all of the loops onto the multi-track and played the faders like a modern-day synthesizer," says Emerick.

"Tomorrow Never Knows" was a groundbreaker in so many ways. No John Lennon vocal had ever sounded like *that* before. *That* was the sound of a voice being fed through a revolving Leslie speaker inside a Hammond organ. Organ notes played through it are given the Hammond swirling effect; voices put through a Leslie emerge in much the same way. "It meant actually breaking into the circuitry," says Emerick. "I remember the surprise on our faces when the voice came out of the speaker. It was just one of sheer amazement. After that they wanted *everything* shoved through the Leslie: pianos, guitars, drums, vocals, you name it!" (Note: The "Leslie'd" Lennon vocal on "Tomorrow Never Knows" begins 87 seconds into the song. Prior to that it was just treated with ADT.)

This new discovery was again prompted by John Lennon, in conveying his vocal requirement for "Tomorrow Never



Mick drops by to hear *Revolver's* early mixes.

Knows." George Martin remembers, "John said to me, 'I want to sound as though I'm the Dalai Lama singing from the highest mountain top. And yet I still want to hear the words I'm singing.'" Others recall John also requesting that the song have the sound of 4,000 monks chanting in the background.

"John was so impressed by the sound of a Leslie that he hit upon the reverse idea," recalls Emerick. "He suggested we suspend him from a rope in the middle of the studio ceiling, put a mike in the middle of the floor, give him a push and he'd sing as he went around and around. That was one idea that *didn't* come off although they were always said to be 'looking into it!'"

Another distinctive element of "Tomorrow Never Knows" was Ringo's hypnotic drum sound. "I moved the bass drum microphone much closer to the drum than had been done before," says Emerick. "There's an early picture of the Beatles wearing a woollen jumper with four necks. I stuffed that inside the drum to deaden the sound. Then we put the sound through Fairchild 660 valve limiters and compressors. It became the sound of *Revolver* and *Pepper*, really. Drums had never been heard like that before." And Ringo's reaction? "He loved it, there's no question of that. They all loved the sounds. It was exactly what they wanted."

And all this was just one afternoon's work. The remainder of the day saw the group start work on Paul's superb Tamla-Motown inspired "Got to Get You into My Life," takes one to five. It was to change a great deal before it ended up on disc. Take one of the song, although only a rhythm track, had a one-note organ introduction (played by George Martin) supplemented by Ringo's hi-hat, paving the way for a very acoustic number. Before take four the Beatles and George Martin discussed alternative ideas. Take five had the organ and then a full drum intro, heavily limited, and it was also the first to feature vocals. These were not only superb, Paul being backed by John and George, they were different too, Paul singing "Got to get you into my life, somehow, someway" at the instrumental breaks and John and George offering the chant "I need your love" four times over in the refrain. This take was marked "best" on the tape box, if only temporarily.

#### Monday, April 11, 1966

Studio Two: 2:30-7:00 p.m. Recording: "Got to Get You into My Life" (overdub onto take 8); "Granny Smith" (working title of "Love You To") (takes 1-3). Studio Two: 8:00 p.m.-12:45 a.m. Recording: "Granny Smith" (takes 4-6). Studio Two (control room only): 12:45-1:00 a.m. Mono mixing: "Granny Smith" (remix 1, from take 6).

continued on page 105





OFFICIAL NEWS FROM THE YAMAHA USERS GROUP

## Drum machine gives musicians new creative license.

**W**ith the announcement of the RX7 Digital Rhythm Programmer, Yamaha has provided musicians with a powerful tool for writing.

The RX7 comes with 100 built-in PCM samples, providing access to a range of drum sounds, from acoustic to electronic. It offers a wide choice of percussion instruments and cymbals (including  $\frac{1}{4}$ -open and pedal hi-hat sounds)—as well as an assortment of instrument samples, such as electric guitars, basses, clavinet, marimba and brass.

Individual voices are assignable to any of the RX7's 24 keys, and can be edited for pitch, volume, pan and decay. There's also an effects feature that lets you add up to 3 delayed repeats of the sound, each with its own pitch, level and pan setting. There are 10 "drum kit" preset key assignments that can be called up instantly, including 5 that are user-programmable.



YAMAHA RX7 DIGITAL RHYTHM PROGRAMMER.

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In composing, you can create up to 100 patterns (99 measures in each), 20 songs and 3 chains. You can insert gradual tempo and volume changes into songs, and mark any part of a song for instant location. Plus, you're free to save all your patterns, songs

and chains to cassette, RAM4 cartridge or computer.

The RX7 is available now at a suggested USA list price of \$895.00 at authorized Yamaha Digital Musical Instrument dealers.

## Hot Tips

**Using the DX7IIFD to store data from an RX5.** The RX5's bulk data dump is larger than the 20K buffer of the DX7IIFD. So it isn't possible to directly download RX5 bulk data onto a disk in the synthesizer. There is, however, a simple alternate method.

Save the memory of the RX5 onto a formatted RAM4 cartridge, then put it into the cartridge slot on the DX. Enter Edit mode on the DX and call up the Disk function via button #16. Select the CRT disk library and save the contents of the RAM4 cartridge to disk—effectively bypassing the DX's internal buffer.

To use your stored data from disk, just put an RX5-formatted RAM4 cartridge in the DX and transfer the file you want from disk to cartridge. Then use that cartridge in the RX5.

## Questions

**I have a QX1, and I'm using Step Time Entry to type in music that's beyond what I can play live. But how do I get it to sound more like a person and less like a computer?**

The most obvious approach is to make alterations in your QX1 Banks after you've entered them in Step Time Record. Use Edit mode to make small changes in the Clock value for some of the notes. Just keep in mind that "human" feel isn't easy to define, and it may take a number of tries to find the approach that works best for you. Whatever you do, make sure you copy your original, unedited tracks. That way, you can always compare. And if you have to, you can create new copies for further experimentation.

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You can't stop  
the beating of  
a human heart

Depeche Mode has survived the Ice Age of synth-pop to emerge as the last techno-lizard to prowl the Top 40 tundra. Which proves that a little bit of blasphemy, black leather, by ted drozdowski Because be-  
sampling and sado-masoch-  
ism can get you through anything. But it took more than style, weird taste and technology to keep this eight-year-old group from Basildon, England, out of the keyboard-band boneyard. After all, Heaven 17, Soft Cell, Yaz, Devo, the Human League, Bronski Beat, the Flying Lizards and the Buggles all had as much, and yet they're fossils of an era when a beat, texture and tony hair were all it took to win MTV.

So why is Depeche Mode packing

the world's arenas and spreading depression and decadence to progressive pop radio while most of its contemporaries are rocking with the smilodons?

Because beneath the band's cool, modern exoskeleton beats a warm, human heart. "I try to express a great deal of real feelings within the songs; I try to put a lot of real emotion in. It's crucial," vouches Martin Gore, the band's chief penman.

That's the fabric of hits like "Fly on a Windscreen," "Blasphemous Rumors" and "Never Let Me Down Again," the neo-psychedelic ditty that anchors the recent *Music for the Masses*, Depeche Mode's eighth



Andrew Fletcher



David Gahan

Photos: ANTON CORBLIN

depeche mode's



album. They're songs fraught with loneliness, mortality, mystery, imbalance and sexual tension. Headly stuff abetted by some of the craftiest combinations of hooks, melodies and otherworldly soundscapes since Brian Wilson's heyday—all primed for the young and sensitive.

Which makes Gore one of the more eloquent spokesmen for a generation of romantically disaffected post-nuclear adolescents who stare into the abyss of adulthood with fear—or at least rightful trepidation—in their black-lined eyes. “I think there are a lot of people who are disenchanted with the world who actually find something in our music,” Gore suggests, “because it’s more realistic than most of the

stuff that’s being played on the radio, and it’s dealing with its topics in a pop way, in a somewhat uplifting way. A lot of music that deals with these topics is so depressing itself. But as a band, we’ve always placed great importance on our songs, which is something a lot of electronic bands don’t do.”

“It’s very difficult to keep writing good songs,” adds Alan Wilder, whom Gore calls the band’s “only real musician.” “We’re lucky to have Martin, who, in my mind, is still improving as a songwriter. I always quite liked Human League, for example, but what happened to them? They dried up. They couldn’t write any more good songs. I don’t blame them for that. That’s just the way it

happened. But I think that, in the end, you’ve got to be able to keep writing good songs, because you can’t pull the wool over people’s eyes.”

I think another reason a lot of electronic bands have fallen is that they lost their electronic roots and became very conventional,” Gore offers. “We thought it was a real pity when the last Human League album jacket stated ‘No sequencers used on this record.’ The early electronic bands were an extension of the punk scene, moving away from bands like Queen who used to say, ‘No synthesizers used on this record.’ Now they’ve gone full circle.”

Traitors. Of course Gore isn’t



Wilder



Martin Gore

synthetic survival

"A lot of electronic bands have lost their roots."



**Martin Gore:**  
"If you call yourself a pop band in England you can get away with murder."

above using a guitar himself occasionally. But more often than not it's sampled, shuffled, sliced and diced before it reemerges from the band's synthetic Cuisinart. A necessity, because the only thing Depeche Mode values as much as its songs is its sounds.

"A lot of modern bands are losing their originality, because they use factory presets, so you hear the same sounds popping up on everyone's records," says Alan Wilder, who's dressed in a black leather jacket with matching pants, boots, T-shirt and watchband. "Some of the presets are very rich and good, but they don't have the stamp of personality. That's what we strive for.

**I**n the studio we use a whole array of things: Synclaviers, Fairlights, Emulators—our sampling instruments, and then we have a collection of analog equipment. We prefer older analog synths, like Mini-Moogs, a Roland rack-mounted system, old sequencers. We're not too keen on modern digital synthesizers because they tend to be immediately impressive, but haven't got a lot of capability for altering sounds. The DX7, for example, is very difficult to change sounds on. A good analog synthesizer sound is incredibly pure and has a very high sort of frequency range, so it's easy to create really interesting sounds. Of course most people don't bother to do that when they're given the easier options of modern equipment.

"One of our favorite synths now is the PPG, because it's so weird," he continues. "It's really frustrating to use. The moment you try to change a sound

you get lost in its system. The manual's a complete joke. You can't follow it and it's written in German. But it's got such a nice, strange, rich sound.

**O**ur producer, Daniel Miller, has a collection of old analog synthesizers that we also use for recording. He's got an EMS, one of the suitcase-type keyboards. It's not good for melodies, but it's great for sound effects. I like his Moog Series 3, and the great big old Oberheims. Analog synths that are old tend to go out of tune all the time, so we get some really good sounds and sample them to overcome that problem."

But the record-making process actually begins with programming, after songs are demoed in Gore's or Wilder's home studios. "For some reason," says Gore, "I get designated the job of programming the computers. I think the others find it boring. After that, when we get to the studio, we usually spend three

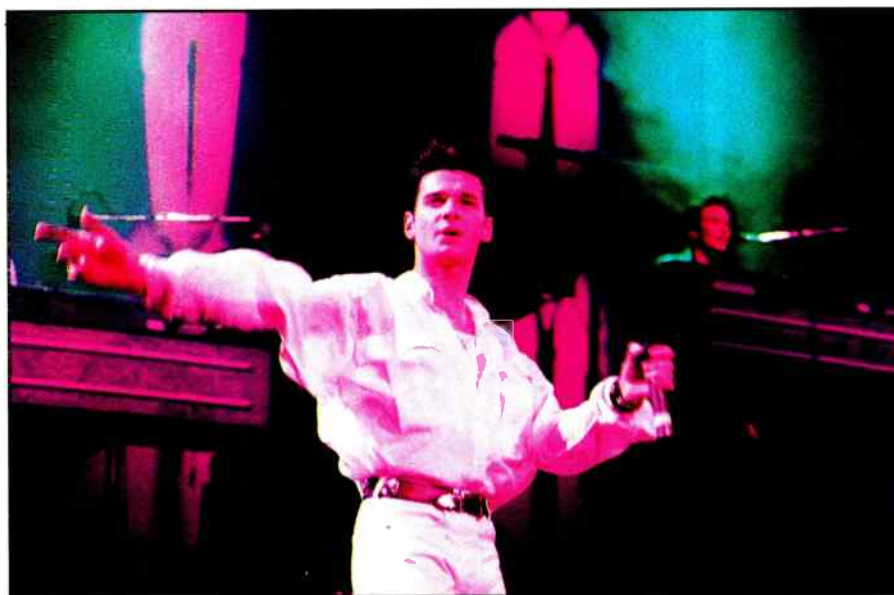
days or so just sampling to collect a library of sounds that might be used on some of the songs. Then when it comes time to record a particular melody or part that we don't feel our library is appropriate for, we'll do more sampling with that part in mind."

Banged metal has been a pet sound of Gore's since 1983's *Construction Time Again*, which featured the hit "Everything Counts." "At the time, we were recording in the East End of London and there was a lot of construction going on," he explains. "We went down to a site near some railway tracks with a hammer and tape recorder and started pounding things: sheets of metal, corrugated iron. We got a very unusual sample when we hit a fence around one site that had a watchman. It was like, 'CREEESH'—'OY!'"

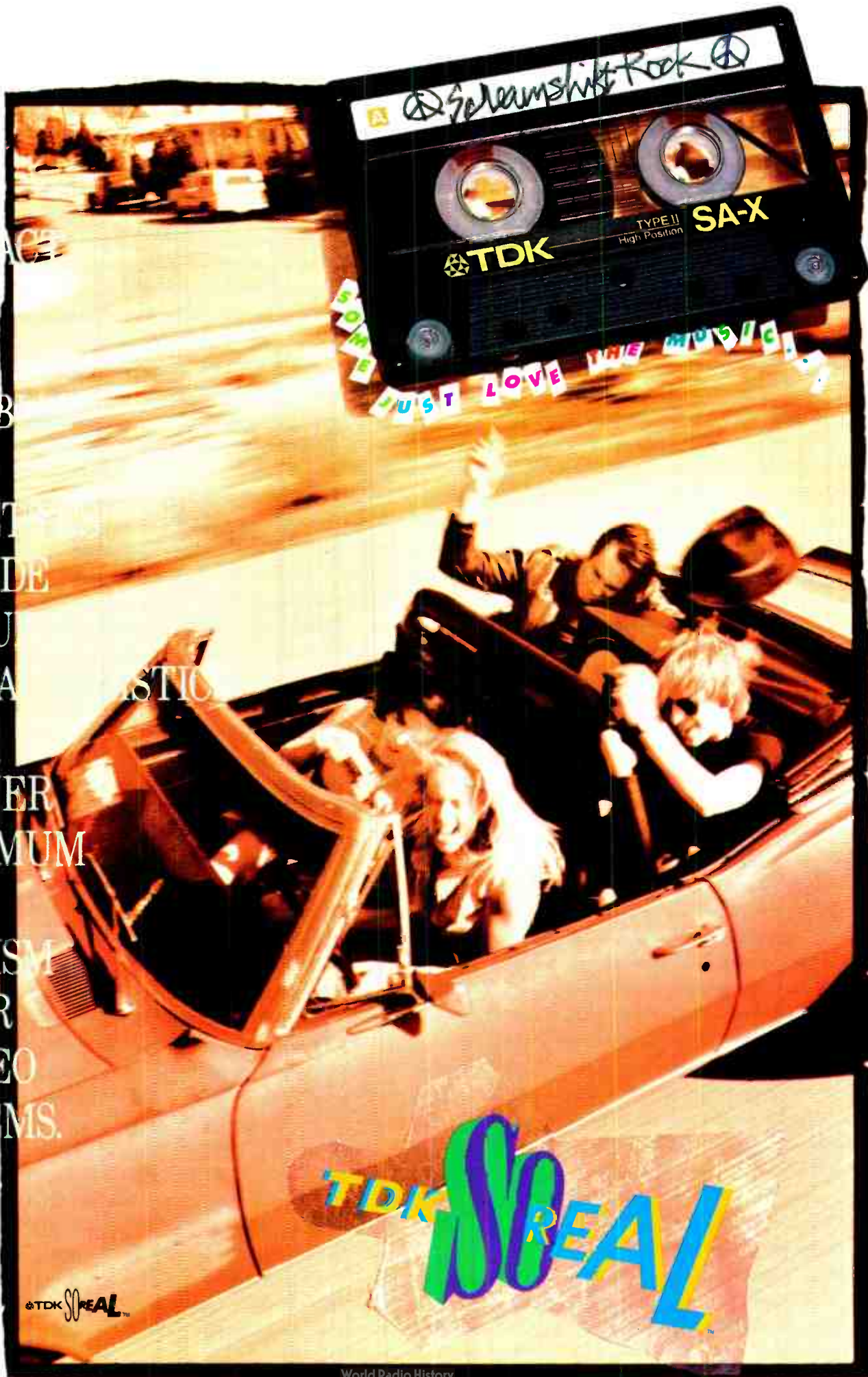
"I like the idea of using samples in a less obvious way, rather than just reproducing the sound something actually makes," says Wilder. "For example, one of the sounds we use for bass is only a part of a sound, its percussive edge, which came from a Hoover being kicked. So if you think of sampling a Hoover, don't just sample the sound of it vacuuming. Sample a part of its machinery, take it a step further.

**W**e also do a lot of reversing and looping, so by the time you've used a sound, like the loon, which is some kind of animal, on 'Strangelove,' you sometimes can't remember what it was when you started. We've gone to the toy shop and bought loads of toy instruments and sampled them. You can put them through an amp, add cheap reverb, gate them, distort them and by the time you

**Singer David Gahan keeps the smilodons at bay while keyboard player Andrew Fletcher emulates.**







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bring them back, they have a whole new dimension.

"We also use real instruments unconventionally," he continues. "There's a sound at the beginning of 'I Want You Now' that's like heavy breathing. It's an accordion being played with none of the keys down. There's another sample we keep using that's an acoustic guitar plucked with a German coin. And another that sounds like a guitar, but it's actually [singer David Gahan's] voice. It was a long sustained note, and we chopped into it and looped it, then ran it through an amplifier."

Now that's progress, considering that

in 1980 school chums Gore, Gahan, Andrew Fletcher and Vince Clarke had just started pecking out pop on cheap monophonic synthesizers. "None of us had any musical training whatsoever," maintains Gore. (Although Wilder, who joined in '82, took piano lessons as a kid.) "It was just a hobby until a lot of punks started moving into what was called the futurist scene, which centered around clubs where people were dressing up in lots of make-up and flamboyant clothes, and listening to electronic music."

"There were very few bands in our area, but there was quite a good club, Croc's, just outside of Basildon, and we

managed to get a residency there. We played for a few hundred people every week, which was a good start." Depeche Mode, whose name is French for fast fashion, quickly moved on to London's clubs and shopped demo tapes, but no contracts were offered until Daniel Miller, founder of Mute Records, saw the band open for Fad Gadget at the Bridgehouse in Canning Town.

Miller became Depeche Mode's producer; and Mute released three singles and the first album, 1981's *Speak & Spell*, within a year. But shortly after the LP wedged in the British Top 10, Vince Clarke quit. "Vince's departure was a real turning point," says Gore. "He wrote 95 percent of the first album and he's really into pure pop, which he's shown in his later projects like Yaz and Erasure. With *A Broken Flame*, our next album, we were just thrown into the deep end and had to shove together a pile of songs that were written over a very long time. Some of them, like 'See You,' I'd written when I was 17. So that album was a mish-mash. It wasn't until *Construction Time Again*, and perhaps 'Everything Counts' in particular, that we really took control of things and realized the direction we wanted to take."

"Everything Counts" is a classic pop parable about greed: tuneful, upbeat, cleverly textured, yet it slams the grab-all-I-can mentality that's pervasive in the '80s with the force of a falling Steinway. "We realized," reflects Wilder, "that you have a duty not to write nonsense. You do have a duty to say something that can make people question what they've thought about a particular subject, or just think in general."

Of course that kind of attitude was bound to get the band in trouble. And it has. "Blasphemous Rumors," from 1984's *Some Great Reward*, tells the story of a girl who survives a suicide attempt and finds Jesus, only to be cut down by a car while a bemused God watches. Born-again censors who heard the tune wanted to slip off their Bible belts and give the boys from Basildon a good stropping. Parents, deeply concerned about little Muffy's world view, have ruffled at the sense of fatalism in songs like "Black Celebration" and "Fly on a Windscreen." And the real pros, Maggie Thatcher's scissormen, took umbrage at the S&M overtones of "Master & Servant" and tried pulling the song from BBC radio.

"I don't think it was that big a fuss," says Gore, running a hand over his short yellow dreadlocks. "I mean, all I did was use a sexual theme to get across political ideas. If you call yourself a pop band in

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England you can get away with murder. Actually, there are quite a few of our songs that tend to deal with a domination theme over the last few albums, like 'Dressed in Black' on *Black Celebration*. 'Strangelove' on the new record. I was surprised at the lack of reaction that one got." He chuckles.

And what do these songs say about their author, Martin? "I don't think people should take them too literally," he replies, "and I don't think they do. Having said that, I do really like the kind of mystique about the domination theme. I mean, my favorite clubs in London are the domination clubs. I find it really interesting to go there and watch things." Uh-huh.

Americans had their chance to watch Gore do his thing when Depeche Mode writhed through its first arena tour of the States in late spring. The extremely successful sojourn culminated in a sold-out show at Pasadena, California's 78,000-seat Rose Bowl that featured Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, Thomas Dolby and Wire as opening acts. D.A. Pennebaker, who made the documentary *Monterey Pop*, filmed that date and much of the tour for a movie the band may call *A Brief Period of Rejoicing*.

As Gore gratefully recollects, much has changed since the band's first trip to the U.S. "When we came to New York to do two shows at the Ritz and interviews, just after Vince had left, we were used to being accepted. Here it was a different matter. Just a few stations were

playing our records, and we had a very hard time with the critics. Being an electronic band was still fairly unusual, so in every interview we were asked, 'Why don't you use guitars?' Some interviewers got really pushy about it. They couldn't believe we'd want to be an all-electronic band.

"And there was a real rockist attitude that we kept running into. 'Springsteen is God,' that kind of thing." Of course large men who can play the "Crossroads" guitar solo with their nostril hairs resented Depeche Mode's sound and look. And still do.

"After that we'd really given up on

America," Gore says. "We thought our music must be too European and that there was no point in coming here. Even releasing records seemed hardly worth the effort.

"But while we were away, the new music thing had taken off in America in a big way. Bands like the Cure, New Order... When we returned in 1985, we couldn't believe the change that had taken place. Radio stations played our records. We were playing big theaters. We couldn't do a thing wrong. And now," Gore smiles, looking into his half-filled teacup, "we seem to be really respected. Which is very nice." ☐

## KORG from page 52

pattern section back into the song, or just to leave the instruction to play the pattern as is. Had this been combined with a multi-track pattern section, it would've been a breakthrough in hardware sequencer design. As it is, it's still very strong. And even the sequencer gets its own effects section—too bad their parameter changes couldn't be recordable as one of the sequences. Maybe I'm asking too much.

There is one significant fly in the sequencing ointment—there's no disk drive. Memory disappears on that baby like beer at a ball game, even after you disengage the aftertouch. Where to dump it? Right now, Korg has only two ways, one being RAM cards. All well and good until you learn the blank cards go for a hundred bucks apiece—Korg projected them as cheaper, but has had nagging supply problems. Since the internal sequencer can really only hold two fully developed songs and a card can only hold twice that, you can foresee big library costs at that rate. That leaves MIDI system exclusive as the only way—the dump works great; mine sent out about 18,000 bytes in roughly two seconds—but if you had your own computer, why would you need this sequencer? For the computerless, you'll need a MIDI disk drive from the likes of J.L. Cooper or Yamaha, but forget the cards. Other gripes about the M1 sequencer? At times it seems to not retain certain

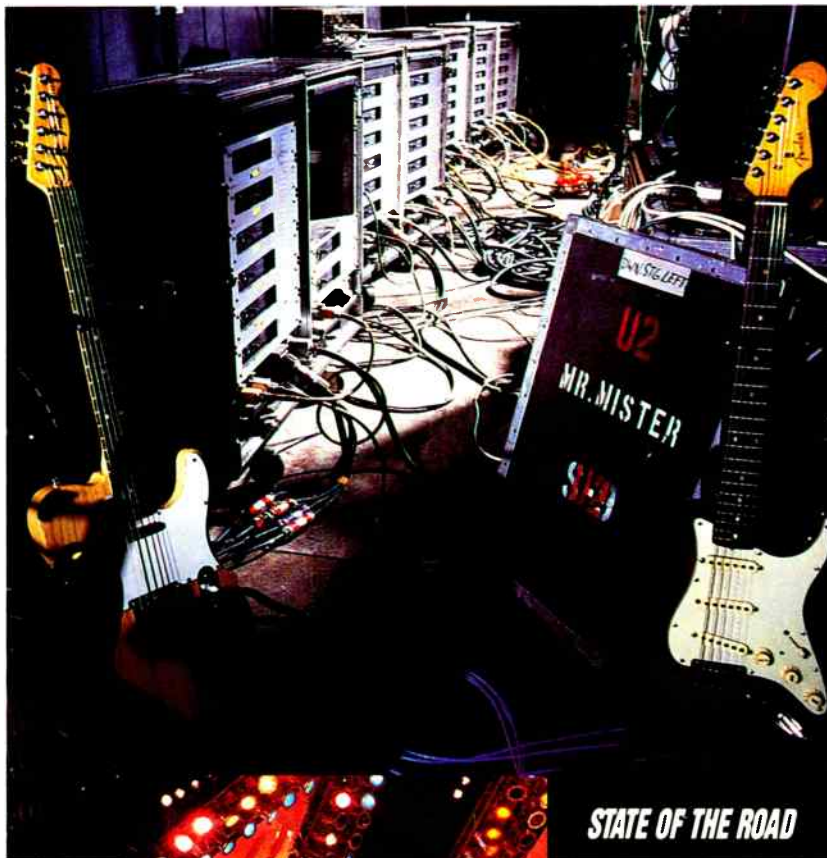
changes like volume or tempo. It has no way to set a point to roll from—unless you manually reset the start bar each time, it always goes to the beginning. I wish I could apply the effects separately to each track rather than to the mix as a whole. And you can't make changes (other than tempo) while the sequence is playing—bummer. But how much are we asking it to do?

Well, that begs this whole question of what a "workstation" is, especially now that Ensoniq is said to be repositioning its EPS as a workstation. Come on, guys. Clearly the M1 is not a Synclavier or Fairlight or WaveFrame, or even a digital sampler/editor like the Lexicon Opus or new Mellotron. Its sequencer is pretty all right but isn't going to put Atari or Apple out of business. Its mighty effects can't be used for any external inputs like vocals or guitar, so you still gotta buy a good reverb. And the M1 is more than competitive as a performance stage instrument—the keyboard has a good feel, for instance—and works great as a master controller/tone module in any MIDI studio. So why all the big marketing fuss about workstations? It's time to tell the whole sordid truth. Maybe the way the M1 is all pulled together is worth a bravo or two, but I'd have to say it's really only a superb-sounding samplid synth-cum-drum box with a better-than-average onboard sequencer and a pair of versatile signal processors, all for \$2400. But start calling this thing a workstation, and you're on your own, pal. — Jock Baird

**Depeche Mode never attends a black celebration without the proper gear. This means Alan Wilder, Martin Gore and Andrew Fletcher each must have an Emulator E-Max sampler, a Yamaha YMM2 MIDI merger and YME8 Midi Expander, and a Simmons TMI percussion trigger. If a keyboard fails, all have spare Yamaha DX7s or Korg DW-8000s available at the stomp of a volume pedal. The three keysmen also each have a pair of custom percussion pads, which use BSS DI boxes and YMM2s and YME8s to pound their message home. Melodicas are by Hohner, of course, and all stands and microphones are custom-made. Onstage the band uses some taped backing tracks which reel off a Tascam 58 via a dbx noise reduction unit, and a Tascam 38 deck is trucked along for backup. When Gore strums a guitar, it's usually a Gibson Byrdland or Gretsch Anniversary model with a Gallien-Krueger 250 ML or Fender Stage Lead amp. And BSS AC line conditioners keep the spikes out.**

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shot in the arm; and when we crash, we'll really crash good."

"Eden Alley," which the duo co-wrote, is one of the album's pivot points, anchoring and amplifying the "Paradise Lost" theme. Melodically and lyrically, the song's roots lie deep in the folk tradition that centers around classic bluegrass laments like "East Virginia Blues." Which isn't surprising. Listen to just about any Timbuk 3 song and you'll hear the solid folk grounding in Barbara's fluid fiddle and mandolin work, Pat's bluesy, chicken-fried harmonica playing or the duo's modal harmonies. Hey, these ain't kids who were in a hardcore band last week.

"For a long time I just listened to and played that kind of old-timey music," says Pat. "I just loved the stuff: bluegrass and early string band music. Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers. So a lot of that melody and harmony stuff is ingrained in me. But I hope that it's mixed up in there well enough so that, if it does come out, it'll be one line of one melody and another line of another one—all jumbled up, but all sounding natural together."

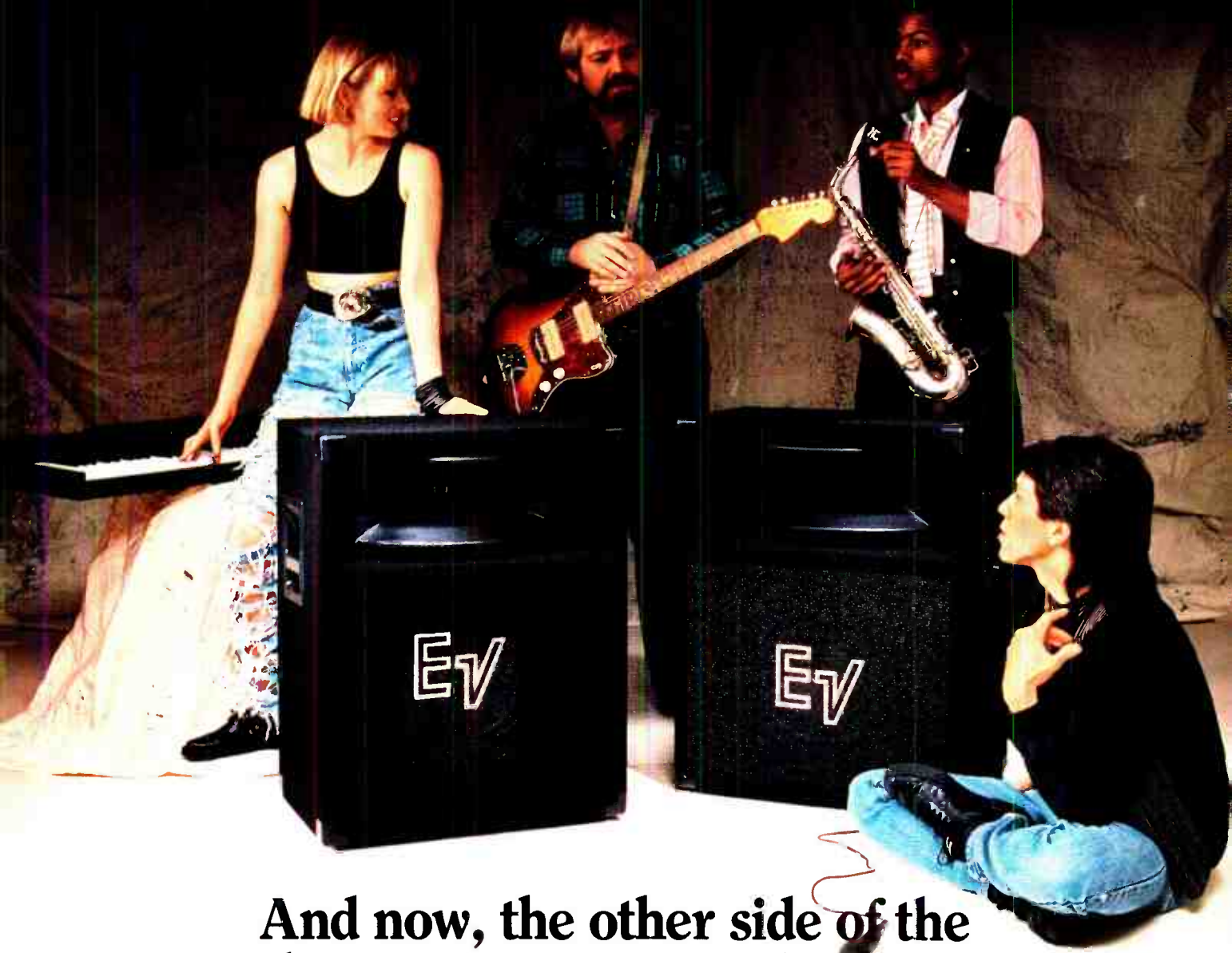
The lifestyle mags have worked every possible variation on the "making beautiful music together" cliché, but there's no denying that Pat and Barbara's relationship provides much raw material for their work. *Eden Alley's* central metaphor implicitly casts the artists as a contemporary Adam and Eve—just an ordinary couple trying to make their way in a world that's no garden. Couples have always figured predominantly in Timbuk 3's work: in straightforward love songs like "I Need You" on *Greetings from Timbuk 3*, and in portraits of less-than-complete relationships—like *Eden Alley's* "Dance Fever" and "Cheap Black & White" from *Greetings*, where emotional voids are filled by TV and fatuous daydreaming. These, too, are a little autobiographical, Pat owns.

"Even the best of relationships have some of that element. It creeps in. I mean we've watched some TV!"

Above all, the MacDonalds try to avoid seeming smug about their relationship. "I feel the same way about flaunting that as I do about flaunting material wealth," Pat adds. "Because a lot of people don't have a great relationship with somebody. You can only do so much of the personal love song type of thing before it starts sounding like nyah-nyah nyah-nyah-nyah. That ain't going to make anybody feel good."

But still, maintaining a good marriage and a successful artistic partnership is no mean feat. And the MacDonalds have





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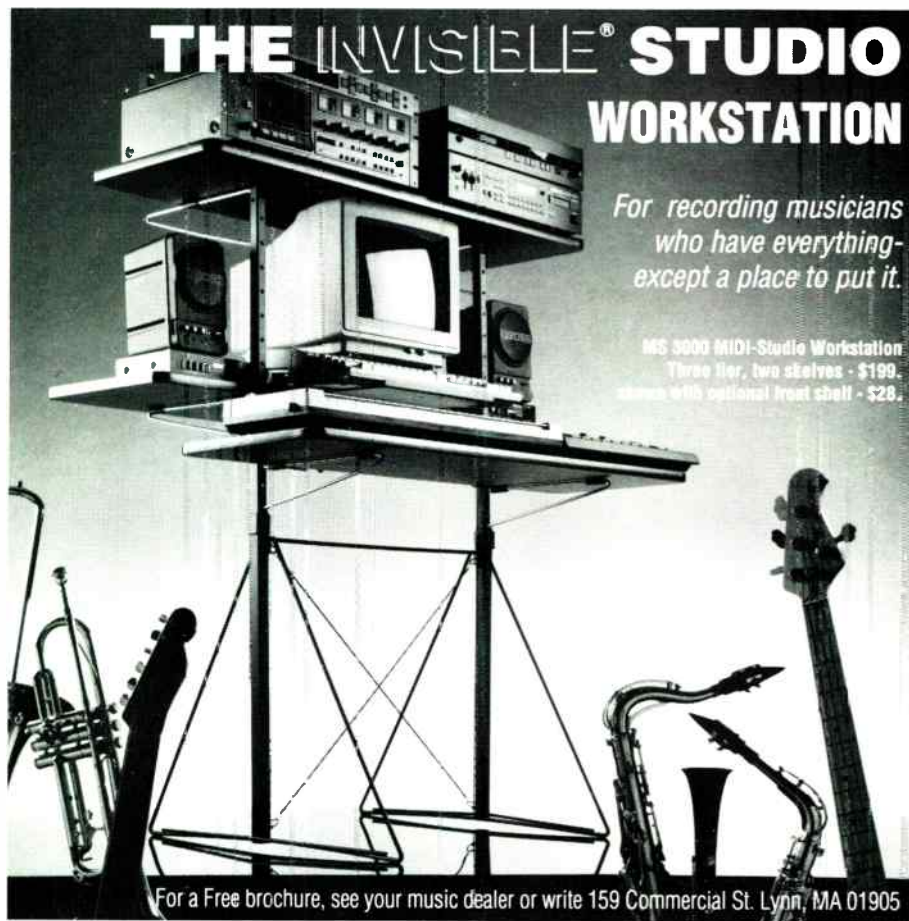
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been doing it for some time now. Married in 1978, their musical alliance began in 1982, when Barbara joined Pat's band the Essentials. Based in Madison, Wisconsin, where the couple met (Pat was born in Green Bay, WI), the group put out one indie album on the folk-oriented Mountain Railroad Records during its four-year tenure.

"I was playing solo," Pat says of the group's origins, "and then decided that I wanted to have a band playing my tunes. The Essentials started as a four-piece. At one point, there was a vacancy in the

*continued on page 106*

Onstage, Pat MacDonald plays Gibson's "The Paul" guitar and a Fender Precision bass through a rack-mounted Galien-Krueger stereo preamp and a Roland DEP-5 multi-effects unit. The preamp feeds the house board and Pat's onstage monitoring system: a Crown D60 power amp and Yamaha 110 speaker cabinet.

## TIMBUK TOOLS

The male half of Timbuk 3 primarily plays Hohner Golden Melody harmonicas (also used by Barbara during the show), supplemented by the occasional Special 20 or Lee Oskar. The harps go through a Symetrix preamp, Rane five-band EQ and another Roland DEP-5 multi-effects unit. Pat's vocals and harmonicas get picked up by a Electro-Voice BK-1 microphone connected to a custom switch for sending the signal either straight to the board or through the harmonica rig.

Pat also stomps on a Drum Workshop 5000 kick drum pedal, connected to a Yamaha drum pad which triggers a Boss Dr. Pad unit.

Barbara K records with a Gibson Howard Roberts model guitar, but her onstage guitar is a solid-body Gibson prototype with one humbucker and two single-coil pickups. This goes through a Dumble Overdrive Special amp and yet another Roland DEP-5. Her speaker cabinet is a 1x12" Electro-Voice enclosure. Her 1920s vintage violin is routed through a t.c. electronics parametric EQ and then through her guitar set-up.

Rhythm tracks are provided by a Tascam 234 four-track cassette machine, with stereo drums on two tracks and bass on a third (either a Precision Bass or a DX7 bass patch sampled on an Akai S612 sampler). The drums on the tape, and on the records, were programmed by the band on a Yamaha CX5M computer, running Yamaha's RX Editor software and using a KX5 keyboard to record velocity data. The computer drives a Yamaha RX11 drum machine, a LinnDrum (via the RX11) and the Akai S612.



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# Developments

Onward and upward we continue in our coverage of this summer's doze-in at Atlanta NAMM. Oops, there I go again, making fun of an invalid. From here on, I'll refrain from the cheap shot, which is easy enough because there was still more good stuff at Atlanta. Earth-shaking? No. Intriguing? Um.... Useful? Hey, no doubt about it.

The Tascam MIDiizer was the most foreshadowed, but the surprise was how high-end it was. Unlike the little MTS-30 sync box of winter NAMM, the MTS-1000 is a full-service pro synchronizer. Sure it'll slave MIDI to taped SMPTE code, but will do the opposite as well, including navigating the tape deck through tempo maps or song chains. It's also an auto-locator or two-transport synchronizer. Connections can be made to either serial or parallel ports of any kind of deck, it includes 1/100th subframe resolution, and has all sorts of memory to keep cue points for punch-ins, pre/post-rolls, etc. The MIDiizer also has memory-storage via card slot and MIDI bulk dumps, and more than its share of buttons, alpha dials and matrices to simplify hellish synching tasks. A lot of machine for \$2000.

There was much more surprise in the appearance of the Yamaha C1 laptop music computer. Was the market really clamoring for a \$3000 IBM-PC compatible computer, even if it had its own interface and SMPTE connections? Gosh, maybe, but this seems almost like a prestige product, built for the honor of having the best. Consider what's in it: a meg of RAM memory, with 1.5 more available; a new interface with two MIDI-ins and eight MIDI-outs; SMPTE jacks coming and going; a special System Timer chip dedicated to keeping smooth tempo; front panel sliders on the main keyboard which can become MIDI controllers; and even ROM-based music fonts (you know, man,

notes, rests, that stuff) to do notation. A true hot-rodded IBM-PC. But why IBM? Why now? I guess because it's there.

What's of secondary interest is whether this is the newer, bluer, faster MIDI interface IBM software writers have been clamoring for. Maybe—frontrunners Voyetra and Bacchus were ready with compatible programs, giving rise to one show rumor Yamaha was buying up software companies. Wrong. See, even the best rumors at this show didn't pan out. Something else that didn't pan out, by the way, was Gibson's purchase of Guild—although Gibson was very interested in acquiring Guild's acoustic guitar talents, the engagement never became a marriage. And speaking of Gibson properties, if anyone's seen a Photon MIDI guitar, call this office immediately.

A careful search of the floor did reveal two little boxes from Oberheim that could find a niche in lots of MIDI systems out there. One is a fairly versatile \$250 mapper, named the Systemizer and endowed by its creator with the ability to do splits, layers, crossfades, big system setups, controller remaps, whatever. No, it's no Axxess Mapper, but at a third the price, you could tolerate some shortcomings.

More ambitious is the Oberheim Cyclone, which does much to advance the concept of an arpeggiator. The Cyclone allows you to record your own arpeggiated rhythms, then add note data separately. Oh sure, that will allow you to play all those incredibly difficult lines you didn't think you could, but don't just use it to show off. This is a very open-ended implementation—the word arpeggiator doesn't describe how many different musical ingredients can be stirred in and controlled. The Cyclone, like the Systemizer, uses analog footswitches for swift onstage patch changes, and also goes for \$250.

We're well into a trend I've come to term



(Above) Yamaha's C1; Tascam MTS-1000 MIDiizer.

## More Newsmakers from Atlanta NAMM



by Jock Baird





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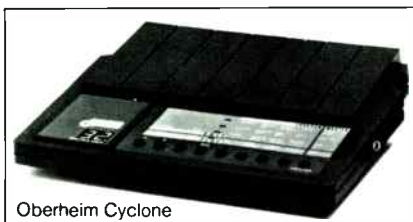


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## DEVELOPMENTS

"half-rack fever." First there were the little dbx modules and the SCHOLZ boxes. Then there was the ALESIS phenomenon. Lately more and more companies are chopping 'em down to size, including VALLEY PEOPLE and even LEXICON. Now comes a more organized effort from a group of companies to establish a pro standard for the half-rack (HR) format, led by RANE, FURMAN, ART, ASHLY and SYMETRIX. Not only will it allow for two half-racks to lay side-by-side, but also has a vertical array—10 racks in a five-rack space. Power is provided through a small plug similar to a telephone jack, with all HR gear using the same power specs. An external AC converter feeds up to 10 units. Yay, no more adaptor clusters!

The most visible HR prototypes at Atlanta NAMM were from RANE, FMI-14 stereo mixer modules (with four-band EQ and two aux busses, thank you) and an FAC 28 crossover that could best be described as steep. Expensive, you say? No, it crosses over at a slope of 48 dB per octave, which is damn steep and just what you want a crossover to do. As for the mixers, they're being targeted more at commercial sound companies than you or me, but are a very cost-effective way to build your board up bit by bit. More HR Rane boxes, called the Flex series, are on the way, specifically a parametric



Oberheim Cyclone

EQ, compressor/limiter and headphone amp, and other more live-sound-oriented utilities.

Atlanta NAMM brought new evidence that mixing synth sounds with PCM samples, as the D-50, SQ-80 and Korg M1 do (see box), is the hot synthesizer format of '88. Now comes TECHNICS with their version—which makes sense, since they've got so much play-only sampling hardware from their Digital Ensemble Series to trickle down. These new samplid babies, numbered the SX-AX7, 5 and 3 respectively, use what Technics calls PCM<sup>2</sup> tone generation to mix their synth patches with sampled thuds, twacks and burbs, as well as more staid samples. One nice variation is an idiot-friendly programming aid called One-Touch Synth, which gives you a kind of joystick-based timbre control. Technics also came to Atlanta flaunting a new weighted keyboard action system

*continued on page 27*

## Korg's M1 "Workstation"

*A synth by any other name...*



One of the biggest newsmakers of the summer was a NAMM no-show: the Korg M1. This is the first of a number of products unveiled at winter NAMM and promptly dubbed "Workstations Under Glass" by the trade press for their look-but-you-better-not-touch display motif. Well, one of them at least is up and working and creating quite a stir in the music stores. Essentially it combines a very adaptable 16-bit PCM play-only sampler with a drum machine, two-section signal processor and an on-board sequencer that'll do most anything—all for around \$2400. Too good to be true? We decided to get our hands on one and see.

At its most basic, the M1 belongs in that burgeoning category we call samplid synths, such as the D-50, SQ-80, KZ-1000. These use fairly simple waveforms permanently written into memory and then mix and modulate them to make them more complex sounds. The M1 calls its version Advanced Integrated Synthesis, and uses 100 basic sound types. The first 20 are fairly conventional multi-samples, while the next 20 are synth-tweaked multi-samples from the DSS-1 library. Then toss in 10 odd-ball loops and another 20 attacks and effects. An alternate section has 44 percussion sounds. So far so good, but nothing groundbreaking. What gives the M1 internal waves a strong finish are its 30 synth sounds, some generated from their house DWGS system used in the DW-8000, others just the old analog standards. The M1 may be billed as a

sampler, but these Hot 30 make it a killer synth. Should these 100 building blocks prove insufficient, 100 more can be accessed through a card socket.

These waves get built into 100 programs using "fancy filters" galore, doubled oscillators, detuning and the two independent internal stereo effects units. Suffice to say you would scarcely recognize them in their made-up state. The effects are more than a few limpid reverbs—we're talking 33 halls, rooms, stages, early reflection schemes, delays, flanges, choruses, distortions, and even a rotary speaker, parametric EQ and exciter. And as many as eight parameters can be adjusted on each. Better still, they can be run chained together (in serial) or separately (in parallel) with 4x4 routing schemes as part of each program. And there are four separate outputs in the back to send any sound to, wet or dry.

Then these 100 programs can be assembled in a higher combination mode. These can consist of simple







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layers and splits, or can include velocity crossfades—you know, when one sound plays when you hit a key softly, and a completely different one plays when you hit it hard. Combo mode is also where you can quickly map the keyboard and set up the M1 to play multi-timbrally, with up to 16 voices split up to eight different ways. The M1's 80-character display then becomes an eight-channel mixing window, controlling programs, levels, MIDI channels and still more effects setup options. As you edit both programs and combo programs, you enter a vast labyrinth of menus made navigable by the numeric keypad—there'll be three submenus for six, five submenus for key seven, etc. At first I would step through them all to find the one I needed, then got used to looking for effects on key eight, for example. In general, it's a very unconfining setup that's pretty darn easy to scope out.

I wish I could say the sequencer part was as easy, but it took at least six hours for me to finally not feel like an idiot with it. Having gone through this humiliating ordeal, I can attest that the M1's sequencer really is useful, with most of the control and editing features I got used to

on my C-64. The only serious absence is transposition. As far as clipping out bars and sticking them on other sections, tracks or even songs, as far as bouncing, copying, punching-in and -out, or just recording program and tempo changes, it'll do 'em all. And it even has an event editor for fixing a few clunkers—though I wouldn't try to do too much with it, if I were you. It also has a step editor, although no magazine could pay me enough to try it out.

Most intriguing is a separate "pattern" section of the sequencer, a subunit of the "song" structure. This is analogous to having a drum machine on the side. You can loop up to eight-bar phrases and overdub instruments just like you'd build a drum part; then you can just tell the M1 to play the pattern over and over, conserving memory. Up to a hundred patterns can be chained together this way. This can also be used for any instrument, although since it doesn't play more than one part, you'd do better to play your best performance in the song, then copy the repeatable sections into the pattern editor. Interestingly, it has the ability to either copy all the note data from the

*continued on page 91*

# The Resurrection Of Pigboy Crabshaw



Let's just say that like any good Tulsa kid, certainly one known by the nickname Pigboy Crabshaw, Elvin Bishop went fishing. Though he never stopped performing, "Big Fun" is his first album in 10 years.

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BY SCOTT ISLER

# The Ant-Man Cometh

*Neil Finn's  
Crowded House  
Does the Australian  
Crawl to Stardom*

## HOW THE MUSIC BIZ WORKS:

In 1986 Capitol Records released Crowded House's first album. Conceivably as a sales inducement, Capitol pasted the cover with a sticker noting that frontman Neil Finn was "formerly of Split Enz"—a band whose most popular U.S. album, six years earlier, had just grazed the Top 40.

In 1987 A&M Records released a Split Enz "best-of" compilation. *Its* sticker read, "Featuring Neil Finn." Crowded House had arrived.

"I hate those stickers," Neil Finn says.







PHOTO BY LYNN GOLDSMITH

**T**his April the mild-mannered, 30-year-old cynosure of Crowded House was in New York for the mixing of the band's second album. The rhythm tracks were recorded in Melbourne, Australia, where they live (though Finn is a native New Zealander); overdubs in Los Angeles; mixing in New York. "We're working eastwards," the singer/songwriter/guitarist noted. The drift continued when Crowded House kicked off a world tour in Europe—and then Japan—that will keep them on the road until February 1989.

It's hardly the lifestyle for a self-described trio of stay-at-homes, but then Crowded House's career has been a dizzying series of lurches and turnarounds. That description could apply to their music as well: Deceptively neo-conservative pop on the surface, the pretty melodies hide squirming phrases and unflinchingly probing lyrics. Their popularity itself is a surprise—not only as a rare example of good taste triumphant, but coming after that self-titled debut LP had seemingly been dead-filed in the record-company limbo known as Nice Tries.

"It really looked like it was going to be a very obscure album, the first six months of its release," Finn admitted from his New York hotel room. He was surrounded by the detritus of a musician and family away from home: suitcases, a package of British cigarettes, portable tape player, American Express receipt, a Wee Sing cassette. "It's good to have an audience out there and to feel that people responded to it as much as an album as one single."

That one single is "Don't Dream It's Over," an enchanting tune that "broke" Crowded House in the U.S. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. To understand Crowded House, first it's necessary to understand Split Enz. Although something of nonentities in this country, in Australia Split Enz was hot stuff—especially by the time of *True Colours*, the band's fifth album. That 1980 release went nearly quadruple-platinum in Australia, and lodged in the down-under charts at number one for two-and-a-half months.

Finn believes that Split Enz "should have happened" in this country too, and blames "our own attitude. We were pretty perverse about certain things which might have helped. Spending a lot of time in America was something we didn't want to do at all." The band's U.S. record company, he adds, "would be really into it while we were here for four or five weeks. Then we would go, and really get the feeling the whole thing had slid onto the back burners. Also, we were a bit hard to pigeonhole. We had a cumbersome management situation. There were lots of factors."

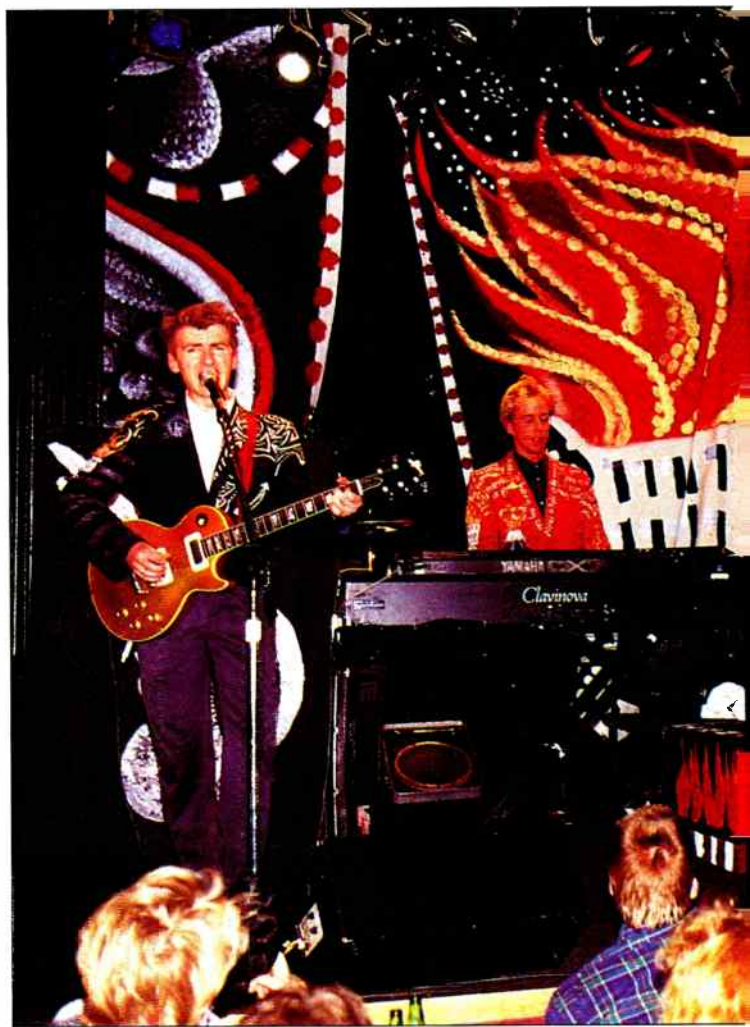
One factor Finn always discounts is a personal one: His older brother Tim co-founded Split Enz in 1972. Neil joined in 1977.

**Crowded stage:**  
**Neil Finn, guest**  
**keyboardist**  
**Eddie Rayner,**  
**Paul Hester and**  
**Nick Seymour.**

"I Got You," the single that lit *True Colours'* fuse, is a Neil Finn song. A couple of albums later, the younger Finn was writing most of Split Enz's material. Then Tim Finn left the band. "We argue a lot sometimes," the elder Finn said in 1981, "and we can be very antagonistic towards each other." And that was

before Crowded House's success.

"He found it hard, I think, when our record happened," Neil Finn says. "And I felt conscious of it, too. We did share so much time, and all of a sudden this happens for me when I break away. He was quite honest about it in certain interviews: He said he was envious and thought it should have happened to Split Enz. I would have felt the same way. It's slightly harder possibly for him because I'm the younger brother." (For an update on Tim Finn's career, see sidebar.) But we're getting



ahead of ourselves.

Neil Finn hung in with Split Enz after his brother left, but not for long; he decided to pull the plug on the group while they were still respectable. There was a farewell tour of Australia in 1984. Two Americans in the audience at the very last show would loom large in Neil Finn's future: Gary Stampler and Tom Whalley. But we might be getting ahead of ourselves.

Finn took Split Enz drummer Paul Hester with him to start a new, more stripped-down band as a vehicle for his songs. They added mutual acquaintance Nick Seymour on bass, and, briefly, Craig Hooper on guitar, and began life as the Mullanies—christened after Finn's mother's maiden name. And so, like ten zillion gillion other musicians—albeit with Finn's background in Split Enz as considerable insurance—they cut demos.

Tom Whalley had just started at Capitol Records' A&R department, and wanted to prove himself. He heard Finn's demo tape and was immediately taken with it. Whalley recommended that Finn contact Stamler, a Los Angeles attorney, for representation. Stamler, who was impressed by Finn's new songs at the last Split Enz show, recalls that Don Grierson, then vice-president of A&R at Capitol, didn't want to sign the band. But Grierson (now A&R head at Epic Records) remembers differently: "I thought the music was really intriguing," he says. "I didn't know if they'd be a major pop band. They're *not* a pop band. They're a classy act with a unique style." There was some difficulty with the group's country of origin—"at the time we had stringent rules about not signing acts outside your home territory," Whalley says—





*“In Split Enz, Neil was likened to an ant, always setting off in some direction without first finding out where he was going to go. He’s probably become more frantic.” — Paul Hester*

record cover for a first album”; Seymour had gone to art school and worked as an art director and set dresser in films and television. “Secondly, they thought my ideas were not commercial enough. They think Americans think about girls and cars when they listen to music. It finally took Neil, who they took most seriously because he could write songs, to say the record company would spoil their relationship with the band quite drastically if we didn’t use my album cover.”

Capitol released *Crowded House* in July 1986. It got great reviews and promptly disappeared off the face of the earth (figuratively speaking). According to Stamler, this problem boiled down to Capitol’s insistence that the hit single was “World Where You Live,” the LP’s first cut. The medium-tempo song about a couple growing apart makes a low-key introduction to the album. Capitol’s strategy was to establish *Crowded House* at album-oriented radio stations with this song, only AOR wasn’t buying.

Stamler felt the song Capitol should be pushing was “Don’t Dream It’s Over,” an entrancing, slow tune with plaintive sevenths in the verses, a soaring chorus and ambiguous lyrics. The label objected, Stamler says, for the “usual textbook reasons”: You don’t make a ballad your debut single. A Hammond B-3 organ solo just isn’t done. And what, no electronic percussion? Still, Capitol issued a 45 of “Don’t Dream It’s Over” in late August 1986.

In retrospect, Grierson says, Capitol didn’t “really put themselves on the line” for “Don’t Dream It’s Over” the first time around. He blames a “conflicting internal” situation, with promotion working AOR and Top 40 to cross-purposes. “It took time for the company to get a grip on what they had,” Whalley agrees. Seymour is less charitable. “They thought we had blown it,” he says. “They didn’t know how to market us because they didn’t think we knew what we were about. We didn’t have long hair teased up and tipped.”

But all was not lost. Downtrodden rock journalists, if nobody else, noticed *Crowded House*’s virtues, and Capitol’s publicity department was quick to pass the word: More than one critic termed it “the best record I’ve heard this year.” Capitol then got the band—which had yet to play in the U.S.—to come over for a promotional acoustic mini-tour of ethnic restaurants. Whalley says this strategy “put them over the hump. It created a buzz, and got radio adds.” Seymour says that what really put *Crowded House* over on these industry showcases was that “we made them laugh!” He mimics an American accent with painful accuracy: “‘Oh, they’re *funny*!’ They realized there was an element of warmth that was part of the music.”

but he worked out an agreement with Capitol’s Australian arm. *Crowded House*’s troubles could now safely begin.

First problem was the group’s name. No offense to mother Finn, but “the Mullaners” just doesn’t have the authoritative ring of a chart-topping outfit. “The record company balked at it a bit,” Hester says, so the band proposed some alternates: the Largest Living Things (sure), the Record Company (Stamler: “too corporate”). In desperation, they gave themselves the working title of their album, *Crowded House*—a reference to their cramped living conditions while recording in Los Angeles.

Second problem was finding a producer. “Virtually everybody we approached” turned them down, Stamler says. David Kahne wasn’t interested, Keith Forsey was always in the shower, etc., etc. The choice narrowed to David Tickle, who had worked with Split Enz, and Mitchell Froom. The latter was something of an unknown quantity; his only prior production was the Del Fuegos. But Whalley, who had heard the Del Fuegos’ demos, was very impressed with Froom’s polishing of the band. Froom got the job.

Third problem was the album cover art, a fanciful group portrait painted by Seymour. Capitol preferred a photo of the trio in their “acoustic” guise: Seymour with upright bass, Hester with snare. The band does play some songs this way, but they objected to their debut album giving the impression they were an Australian Stray Cats.

Seymour says he “fought tooth and nail” with the record company about his artwork. “First of all, they couldn’t understand how a musician could be an artist, or design a

In December 1986, New York's "Z100"—WHTZ-FM, a key Top 40 radio station—began playing "Don't Dream It's Over." Another influential New York station, WPLJ-FM, followed. Capitol started pushing the single all over again during a time of year—Christmas season, with its traditional record-industry concentration on back catalog—that rarely generates hits. The label didn't know that Stampler had hired independent promoters to work the record.

The subject of "indie" promotion is a touchy one in the record business—all the major labels officially severed their ties following a 1986 Senate committee investigation—but, whatever their methods, the indies did get results. Capitol "was very supportive," Stampler says, but "the indies gave it the extra nudge to get it over." When the label saw "Don't Dream It's Over" starting to happen, he says, they ran with it.

Seven months after its release, *Crowded House* experienced a miraculous resurrection. The album finally entered *Billboard*'s top 200 chart—at number 180—in February 1987; it eventually reached number 12. "Don't Dream It's Over" became a colossal spring hit, going all the way up to number two on *Billboard*'s Hot 100.

Now the issue was merely staying a hit. For a follow-up single to "Don't Dream It's Over," Capitol proposed "World Where You Live." Stampler groaned. He argued that after a slow, complex song the next pick from the album should be simple and sunny, like "Something So Strong." He got his way, and his instincts were correct: "Something So Strong" followed "Don't Dream It's Over" into the top 10. After that, Capitol proposed as the next single: "World Where You Live." Stampler, having proven his point, went along. "World Where You Live" still stiffed. But *Crowded House* has now sold almost 800,000 copies.

For its second album, the band reunited with producer Froom. "He's great with pre-production," Finn says, "working songs through and honing them down." "We both got a lot better" between the two albums, Froom says, noting that the group's earlier record suffered from "a lot more anxiety. We used quite a few engineers. [Crowded House had] never really

**Bassist Seymour: "We are very much a band. Sometimes Neil takes the focal point."**

performed as a group; we had to define a band sound and we didn't know what it was." Also making this year's album more pleasurable was the familiarity between band and producer—and it didn't hurt to have success under their collective belt.

Crowded House's recording s.o.p. starts with Froom and Finn going over the latter's songs for a few weeks. "We're mainly working on the arrangements," Froom says, "and deciding what's the strongest material—before we even go into band rehearsal. We usually have a drum machine, and he plays guitar and I play keyboard. We come up with ideas and listen to each other."

For the next step, pre-production rehearsals, "Mitchell basically joins the band for six weeks," Hester says. At this stage, Froom says, "We're concentrating on bass and drums, to make sure the grooves are right. By the time we get into the studio, quite a few keyboard parts are already written." Froom

tries to save his keyboard playing, though, for the end of the recording so as not to get in the way of the trio proper.

The intensive pre-production means that the actual recording can be a breeze. "By the time we get to the studio," Hester says, "we're pretty relaxed and we can just go for a dynamic performance." The band put down all the basic tracks for *Temple of Low Men*, Crowded House's second album, in eight days.

"This record is a more sophisticated production than the last one," Finn says of the new album. "It's got a bit more depth in terms of atmosphere. It's still a pretty simple album. There's a certain purity to it which I was concerned about. One of the most important things these days is you feel a human presence on a record, and that people's personalities come through."

Finn claims his songs are simple, but it's a deceptive simplicity that doesn't come easily to him. "No matter how many songs I've got around," he says, "I always feel like two months before an album I've got to sit down and really work on it. Often those months feel quite frustrating. You get to pre-production and you realize you've written a lot of bits and pieces, if not finished songs."

He composes via "untidy" notes for lyrics, and tapes of musical ideas. "I forget what's on them half the time. Before I go to each album I listen to a few I haven't heard in a while and pick up on any bits that strike me. But

mostly a song needs to lodge itself in my brain for me to take it seriously.

"In a majority of cases, I get a melody and lyric together—very rarely all the lyric. The 'Don't Dream It's Over' lyric came all at once. The lyrics to 'Into Temptation' on the new album came all at once. Generally, in order to feel I've got something substantial, I'll need to have a melody that's married to at least a few lines which are an intrinsic part of the song. For instance, the chorus of 'I Feel Possessed' came all at once. A phrase comes out with a tune, you suddenly realize it's kind of locked in the brain. You sing it again and again and start fishing around for things that feed off that. You get your verse pattern, maybe, and a few central lines in the verse pattern.

"That's a classic time to say, 'Great, I wrote a song,' put your guitar down and walk out. Which is a mistake. And I'm getting better at not doing that. Because the next time you come back to that, even if you can recreate the atmosphere that you had when you first wrote the song, there's still something that's not quite as fresh.

"When you're finishing off your verses, which I usually have to do, it takes a long time to get into the right frame of mind for a good natural flow of lyric. There's a lot of hard work involved in finishing a song for me, but there's moments of, you could say, enlightenment with a melody where you suddenly get a couple of phrases which just feel right. They often don't even make a lot of sense, but you feel there's something right about them. At that point you've gotta look at them and say, 'What does this say, and what am I saying? What is this about?' I look for lines which have a similar kind of feeling as the ones I've already got."

His bandmates aren't shy about asking Finn what his lyrics





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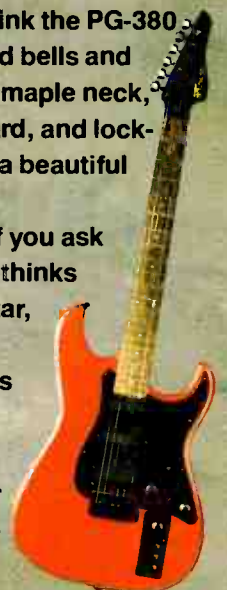
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## Neil's Brother: Tim Is On His Side

Tim and Neil Finn



By all rights, Tim Finn should be very bitter. He has spent much of the last 15 years wrapped in the cloak of cultdom as the lead singer of Split Enz and releasing neglected solo albums—while his younger brother Neil has blossomed into a massive pop hero/heartthrob as the leader of Crowded House. It wouldn't seem to help matters that Finn the younger, himself initially a non-songwriting member of Split Enz, had to rescue his older brother from record company indifference by getting him a deal with Capitol, Crowded House's home. Capitol in turn paired him with Crowded House producer Mitchell Froom.

"It is all a bit ironic," Finn admits good-naturedly, taking a break from recording his self-titled Capitol debut at Hollywood's Sunset Sound Studio. "But it was always Neil who got us our breaks in Split Enz. After all, it was Neil who wrote 'I Got You.'"

A mesmerizing slice of giddy power-pop, "I Got You" was meant to be the Enz's ticket to fame and fortune when it was released in 1981. New Zealand-spawned Split Enz were already mega in their adopted Australia; here, however, the single and *True Colours* album saw only mild success. "There are lots of people you can blame in situations like that," Finn reflects, "but it's all a bit late now."

More Split Enz albums followed, each selling less than the last. By 1983 Finn was restless. He recorded two very different solo albums, but neither received much attention. He hopes to change all that with *Tim Finn*, crafted with the help of brother/guitarist Neil and such ace studio vets as bassist Tony Levin and drummer Jerry Marotta: "I was initially a bit leery because they're such studio musicians, but they play with such fire." The new album, he adds, strikes a balance between the emotional extremes of his earlier solo records.

Finn is in such good spirits these days that he's toying with the long-shot idea of touring with Crowded House and Schnell Fenster, the new group (also signed to EMI/Capitol internationally) featuring three former Enz, including singer/guitarist Phil Judd. Among Enz fans, the feud between Finn and Judd is well-known. "Phil is the only person I've ever punched in my life," Finn says. "But we get along now. When we're together, though, we don't make much small talk. We play a lot of golf together. I guess that's where we get our aggressions out." — *Cary Darling*

mean. "Sometimes he can tell us," Hester says, "and sometimes he's not sure. We like to know what he means by songs like 'Into Temptation' or 'Sister Madly' or 'Kill Eye.' We're a very nosy, very gossip-oriented group of people."

Anyone who's read Finn's lyrics printed on the Crowded House albums must have noticed a pronounced tendency toward the darker emotions. "There are times where I'm really up," Finn says, "but it's always balanced by melancholy and a slightly morbid touch. That's what I'm attracted to."

Froom notes that while "a lot of people have commented on the darkness" of *Temple of Low Men*, "not many people have said how funny it is. It strikes me as funny, even if it is a bit on the black side." He's thinking of "Sister Madly," a lounge-swinging tale of a greedy striver, and "Kill Eye," which—like the album title—reflects a certain fascination with Jimmy Swaggart. Swaggart's voice ("I beg you forgive me") opens the track, although the song was written before the evangelist's fall from moneyed grace. For Froom, the song deals with "the perversity of that sort of power." Hardly sitcom material, but Froom did say it was black humor.

Crowded House's most powerful songs, however, deal with more direct emotions. "Into Temptation"'s seductive melody becomes a metaphor for its poetic evocation of infidelity. Finn says the song is about guilt as much as being unfaithful. "If I was Prince, I'd be writing, 'Baby, baby, I'm gonna fuck you all night long!' Because I'm a little guy from a small town in New Zealand, I write about feeling guilty about it." "Into Temptation" sounds a little too convincing for Finn's wife, but Finn

There's a striking keyboard sound on Crowded House's *Temple of Low Men* album. It sounds like saxophones on "Kill Eye"—not just any saxophones, but specifically the crunching saxes on the Beatles' "Good Morning Good Morning." It sounds like both flutes and a string section on "Into Temptation"—but specifically the flutes of "Strawberry Fields Forever" and the string section of an early Moody Blues record. A Mellotron!

**LOW  
TECH**

Wrong, but close. The versatile instrument with a period sound is a Chamberlain, the Mellotron's slightly larger American cousin. "I was thrilled to get it," Mitchell Froom says of his musical collector's item. He found one that had been used only in a recording studio, sparing it the rigors of the road. Like the Mellotron, the Chamberlain's keyboard activates tape recordings of various instrumental sounds. "Maybe because it's tapes playing, it has a real powerful edge to it," Froom says. "It's an amazingly emotional instrument."

On *Low Men* Froom enhanced the Chamberlain with analog synthesizers, but without detracting from its charming inconsistencies. "It's all wobbly," Neil Finn says, "with weird, wacked-out sounds. We ended up using it a lot. You couldn't play the same thing twice 'cause the notes wouldn't work sometimes. It had a lot of limitations and we were attracted to that."

**Neil Finn** has a sunburst Fender Telecaster, sunburst 1963 Fender Stratocaster and a reissue gold-top Gibson Les Paul. He runs them through a Hotcake distortion pedal and Yamaha SPX90, then splits the signal into a Roland JC 160 and Vox AC30. Finn also has a Nady 1200 wireless unit, and a Kramer acoustic guitar. **Nick Seymour** prefers Spector basses with their small bodies and long necks—"they look real sexy"—but mostly because they're lightweight.

**Paul Hester** has never liked using too many drums because he used to have to pack them up himself. His current kit, "the best one money can hire," is a Pearl with "the old Ringo Starr set-up": three-inch piccolo snare, 12" rack tom and a 14" deep-mounted rack tom in place of a floor tom—"if you get my drift." His Zildjian cymbals are two 12" splashes, 17" and 18" crashes, and 22" ride. He has a Paiste bell cymbal and a cowbell, uses brushes and wooden drumsticks, and wears shoes with rubber soles.



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claims artistic license: "I like the idea of being able to write something and exaggerating life, my own life, within a song—imbue it with some real personality, but create a fiction for myself. Anyway, once a song's written it has its own life."

Finn speaks while propped up on his hotel bed, nervously pulling apart a ballpoint pen. As he talks, he reclines further and further until he's fully recumbent. I start to feel I should charge him by the hour. "He's certainly an intense person," Froom says of Finn. Hester, who's played with Finn for six years now, observes that "he's probably become more frantic." In Split Enz, the drummer says, everyone had an animal counterpart. "Neil was likened to an ant, because he was always setting off in some direction to do something without first finding out where he was gonna go. He gets pretty wound-up about things." Seymour says Finn can feel insecure and is slow in warming up to people: "It's probably because he's from such a small country; New Zealand always regards the world as such an incredibly big place. But he weathers fairly well amongst the whole stupidity of the rock industry."

His high-vis leadership position in Crowded House undoubtedly contributes to Finn's nerves. He says he's aware of "the burn-out rate of people who become incredibly famous; their best work is almost always in the past. That scares me. There's not many exceptions, not many people who get better as time goes on. Writers often do, artists often do—if not get better, at least change, evolve. But it doesn't seem to happen in music very often."

A good dose of common sense, coupled with his Split Enz experience, keeps Finn's feet on the ground. "It's great to have people enjoy your music. But one thing I know about

America is people are very willing to tell you how great you are. If you start believing it, you can start losing touch with your system of self-criticism.

"At the end of every album there's a few things you listen to

*"We had to define a band sound, and we didn't know what it was."*

— Mitchell Froom

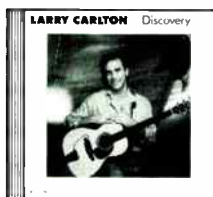
and you're let down by a couple of lines that don't ring true or don't seem as real as the others. I feel there's more songs on this album which are more fully realized than I ever felt before. But I still have my moments of intense doubt and panic about certain things. I get incredibly nervous and precious. It's good to be liked. I don't want to wallow in obscurity."

*Temple of Low Men* blasted into the album charts much faster than *Crowded House* did—and Capitol didn't even bug the band about the cover art this time. "They say they love it," Seymour says, adding with a laugh, "but if you look at the way they decorate their own homes..." More seriously, after just a few weeks the lead single—the reassuring "Better Be Home Soon"—showed signs of trouble; *Low Men* "may be patterned after the first record," Whalley laughs. "Top 40 radio is resisting," Stamler says. Playlists are "even tighter now than they were a year and a half ago." The single "doesn't fit a four-on-the-floor format."

The manager sounds more proud than disturbed; he's seen it happen before. "Neil Finn doesn't write songs for Top 40 radio," Stamler says defiantly. "I think that's admirable." ▮

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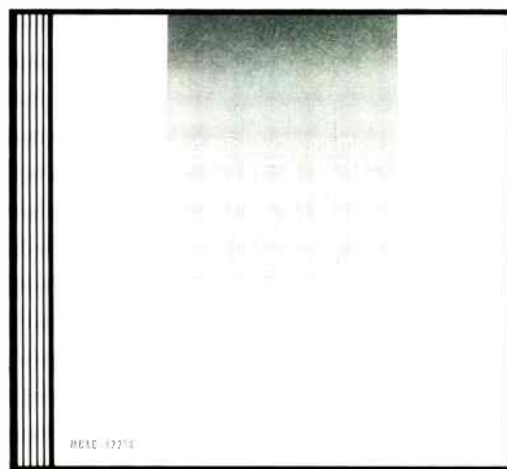
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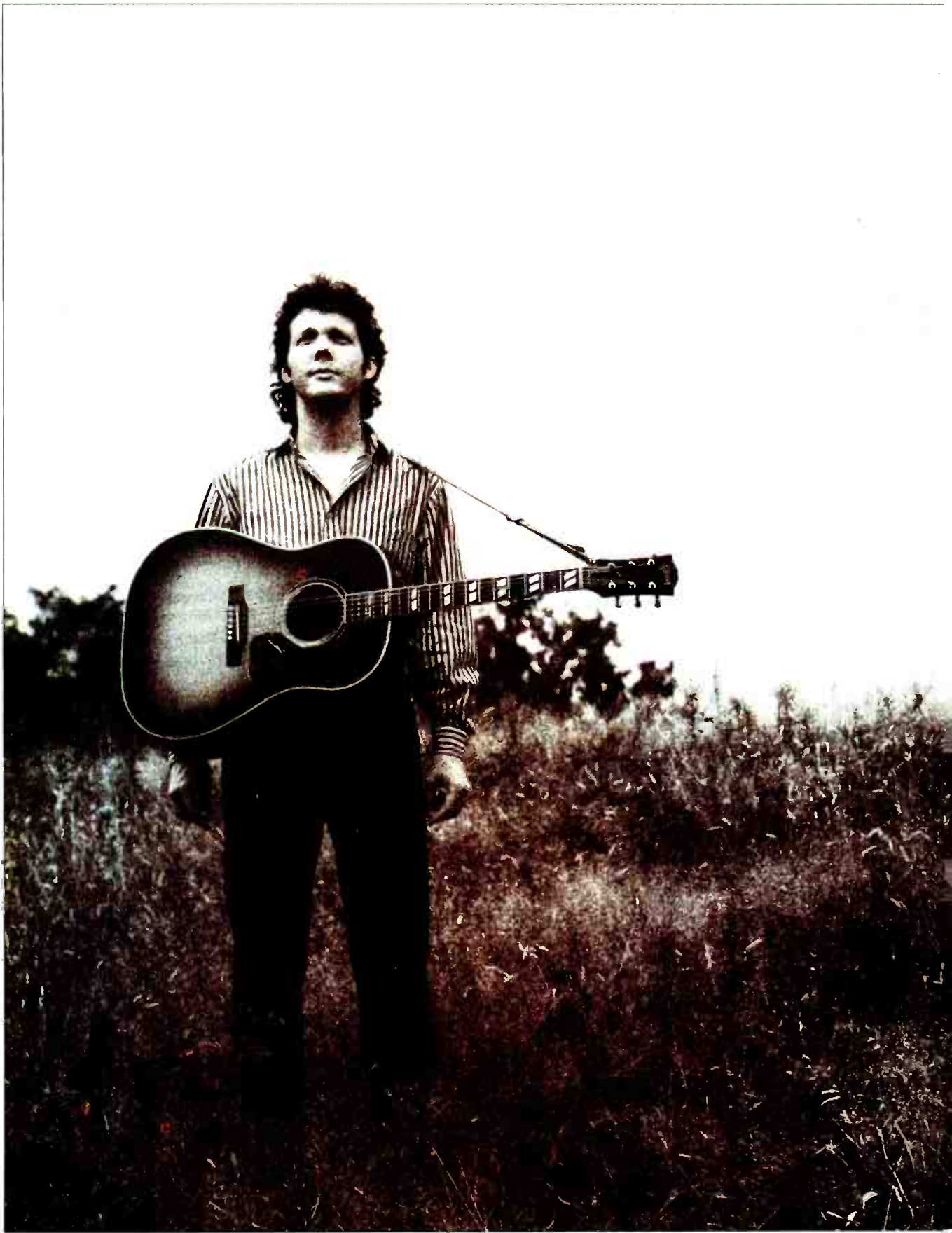


PHOTO BY LAURA LEVINE





# STEVE FORBERT ESCAPES FROM HELL

**The Frighteningly True Story of a Rock 'n' Roll  
Singer/Songman Who Endured the Musician's  
Worst Nightmare ►►►►► BY BILL FLANAGAN**

It's January 1988 and we're in Long Branch, New Jersey—at Garry Tallent's Shorefire recording studio. Steve Forbert and his band have driven up from Nashville with a new song, "Running on Love," that came to Forbert in a burst of inspiration while he was driving home from a show. Now Steve is performing the song on one side of the glass while Tallent thinks *dynamics* and engineer Jan Topoleski thinks *levels*. Keyboard player Paul Errico tries all sorts of sounds, from roller rink to foghorn. Something is keeping the song from taking off. It could be the cross-stick C&W drum pattern Bobby Lloyd Hicks is playing—it's making the song lopsided where it should kick. But nobody's asking my opinion. Halfway through the take Tallent gets up from behind the board and walks over to the corner of the studio window. At his right, behind one glass, is Hicks in the drum booth. In front of him, through the bigger window, is Forbert and the rest of the band. Tallent moves over to where only Hicks can see him and starts playing a straight-ahead rock pattern on air drums. Hicks switches in mid-song, to the confusion of Forbert, who starts mouthing "What are you *doing*?" But Tallent's right, Hicks sticks with it, and "Running on Love," the last song for *Streets of This Town*, Steve Forbert's first album in five years, is finished.

People assume Steve Forbert was dropped by his record company five years ago. What a joke. This is the story of a guy who couldn't get himself dropped, no matter how hard he tried. Forbert has spent the time from 1982 to 1987 fighting business battles on two fronts. First he jumped from Nemperor Records—where he made two successful albums and two flops—to Columbia, where his position deteriorated from rough to tense to under siege. During the same time, he went through *four* sets of managers, leaving piles of animosity and lawsuits in his wake. Only in the latter part of 1987 did Forbert wrap up all the litigation and become a free agent, and he's renewed an old acquaintance with Tallent, the E Street Band bassist who's lately established himself as a smart, no-frills producer with Evan Johns & the H-Bombs. Tallent and Forbert have recorded all of *Streets of This Town* at Shorefire with Forbert's road band—and no label. Now that it's done, the bidding will begin in earnest.

It's March. Forbert's mixing at Manhattan's Power Station. These days Tallent is flying back to New York to mix on his days off from Springsteen's *Tunnel of Love* tour. Forbert is coming up from Nashville for each burst of work. Steve and his wife Jill have new twin sons, Sam and Dave. Both Forbert and Tallent are bearing down hard to get the album finished. Around 3 a.m., when Forbert leaves the mixing room to get a soda, I mention to Tallent that I'm surprised the album does not include "All the Mistakes I Once Made," a melancholy country song Forbert wrote at the depth of his exile. It's about a no-longer-young musician who sits in the corner watching the latest Next Big Thing do all the silly things he used to do. "I never heard that one," Tallent says. "He's real careful about what he plays me. He keeps a lot to himself."

Forbert later confirms the song's absence is definitely intentional: "The guy singing that song is *removed*," Forbert insists. "He's an older person, maybe of Waylon Jennings' or Guy Clark's generation. It wouldn't have fit into this album. He's looking back. I'm *in* it. I wrote a lot of songs, all kinds of different things, but there were certain ones that were particularly autobiographical, regarding the past few years. They were the same style, basically folk rock, and I knew they were the ones I wanted to use. Then we got out there playing little places way off the beaten path and—not to be too arty about it but—I began to see what was going on out in Kansas

and Louisiana, and I felt it would be justified to bitch about these things and try to draw a conclusion, that it was more than just my personal story, that it wouldn't be entirely self-indulgent.

"Hopefully the album's not just my little problems. 'On the Streets of This Town' is the low point of the narrative. I'm really happy with that song. I got real lucky on the internal rhymes on that one: 'I fit your crazy norm and wore your uniform where you told me to go/ And got back in return this here feelin' that I've learned what the Indians know.' The way people are living in some of these places is a far cry from sitting here in New York worrying about which sushi restaurant to go to tonight."

A month later Forbert, Tallent and engineer Topoleski are squeezed into a tiny room at New York's Sterling Sound, mastering the record—now successfully shipped to Geffen—with high-tech wizard George Marino. Artist and producer are now so deeply into the project that they seem to be able to finish each other's sentences. They're arguing over a fractional difference in the speed at which to press "Running on Love" with the obstinance of two campers who've spent a whole summer together in a small tent. Forbert insists on the marginally faster version, Tallent thinks it makes one note sound out of tune. No one else can tell the difference. Finally Tallent orders both versions repeated again, and while they are playing Forbert starts chatting with a visitor. Tallent, cold-eyed, lets Steve talk, lets the track play out, and then says, "Okay, what did you think?" Forbert looks up like the kid caught passing notes in class. "Uh—sorry Garry, I wasn't paying attention." "Okay, let's do it again."

That evening Forbert, Tallent, Tallent's girlfriend Chris Eriksen and Topoleski convene at a Mexican restaurant to celebrate the completion of the album. The tensions of the day—and of the last nine months—are buried in nachos, beer and jokes. Some preppies at the next table are pontificating in loud voices about the meaning of the *Tunnel of Love* tour, and everyone hushes to eavesdrop. "You know what," one of them concludes. "Someday we'll be old, too, and we'll care about marriage and all that stuff, and then I'll bet these songs will sound as good to us as his old ones." Tallent and Forbert look at each other and bust out laughing. "God," Chris smiles. "I can't believe this album is really finished."

It's now June. I meet Forbert at his New York apartment for an interview. He's been talking to the press for two weeks and has his rap down. His new album is not even in the stores yet and already the critics are salivating, calling it Forbert's best record. Forbert and I are in an awkward position; we're friends. I can't rave about his work; I'm not objective. But I do know all sorts of things about his five lost years that I'm determined to get on the record. He views that approach the way a small boy views a trip to the dentist.

"It's just that some people come back and all they do is complain about everything everybody *else* did that messed them up," Forbert says. "I don't want to do that. Even if some people were maybe not the best, I decided to work with them, I made that decision. I wasn't 14. And that is the truth. I signed those contracts."

Well, I say, it's an important story, an insight into how the music business really works, and someone should tell it. Besides, I'm not going to print anything libelous. The magazine's attorneys wouldn't let me. So don't worry, if





anything comes up that could get us in legal trouble... "You'll protect your ass and throw me to the wolves," Forbert laughs. But he means it. Five years with lawyers has had its effect. Still, he motions to the tape recorder and says go ahead.

**MUSICIAN:** *A fellow at MCA told me that they tried to sign you for this album and lost out. Suddenly everybody loves you.*

was very bewildering! It was a hard dose of Something's Not Right. You realize you don't know as much as you thought you did when you were young and saying, "I'm just gonna do what I want from now on." It can throw you into a sort of whirlpool. And it was around then that I started to get into a management problem, a legal thing with Danny Fields and Linda Stein, who actually had accomplished some good things. Undeniably.



**FORBERT:** They're all saying so. Some of the stations here in New York have started playing a sampler CD Warners sent out. So it's very promising. I have reason to be optimistic. But I also have the experience to be cautious.

I'm so glad we've done something people seem to think is as good or better than my accursed first album. Not to be arrogant, but it's been like *This Side of Paradise*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's first book; after that they hated everything he did by comparison until *The Great Gatsby*. When we made that first record I insisted on no overdubs. There was a lot of pressure against that. A lot. I thought at one point there I was going to have a nervous breakdown just to make a record! I'm still proud of that record. I got a CD player a couple of weeks ago and I heard it again. It was good, I liked it. But I had no radio or, dare I say, *competitive* spirit about the record. The bass sound was very un-bassy, not a round punchy sound by any means.

Not to sound like I've sold out, but I was able to make this record with more of a realization that trying to survive in the music business is something I want to do my whole life. I couldn't have known that at 23, that just wasn't my concern. In 1979 I told *Rolling Stone*, "From now on I'm just gonna do what I want to do." I've seen that article lately and it's like, [laughs] okay, I did—and a lot it got me! "Great, do what you want to do. Just do it somewhere else."

**MUSICIAN:** *Your third album, Little Stevie Orbit (1980), was your first failure.*

**FORBERT:** We put too much stuff on it for vinyl. We couldn't get any volume out of it. It was a very mixed bag; some of it worked, some of it didn't. Some of it I recorded in too high a key. It was a point of reality really hitting. "The last record did that but this one only did *this*! We'll have to stop the tour." It

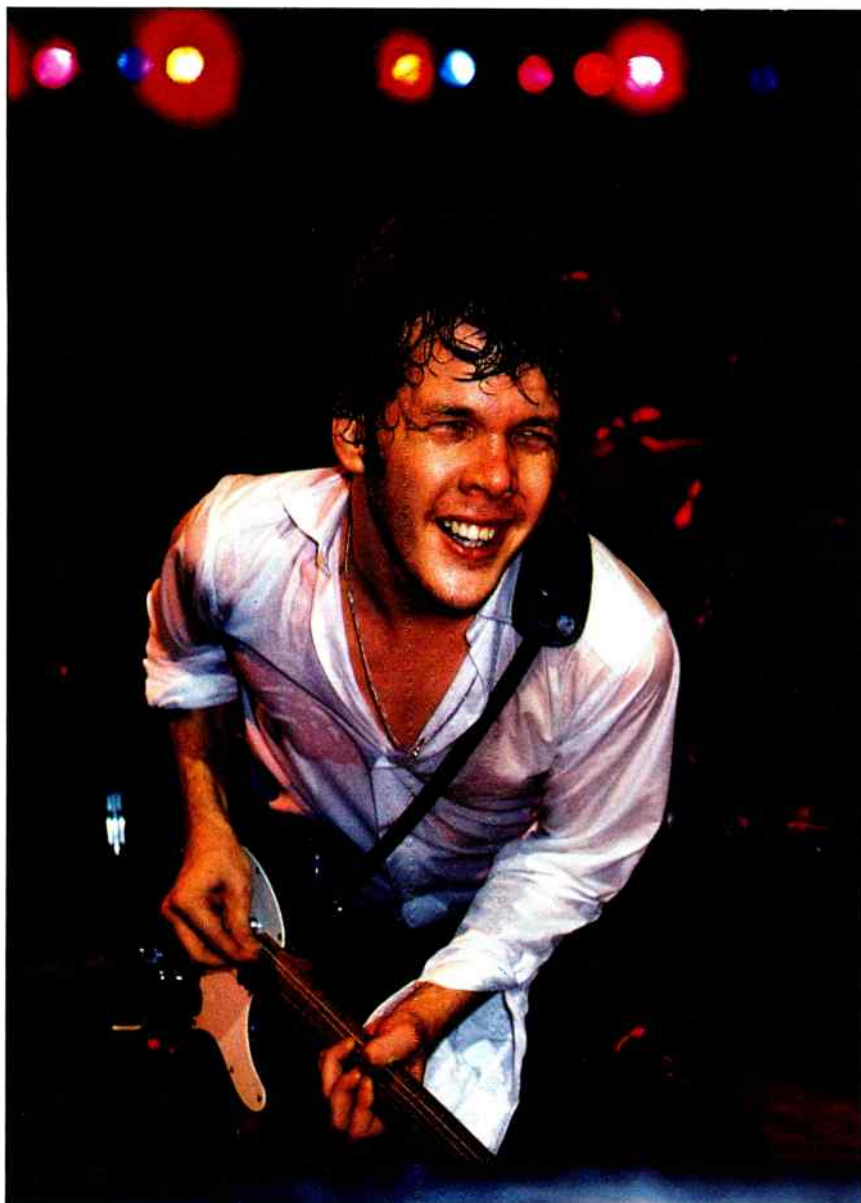
**It was terrible! A no-win thing. Record companies can put you in something called *suspension*, which means time is going by, but not by their clock. Your hands are virtually tied.**

**MUSICIAN:** *They were your first managers?*

**FORBERT:** In a sense Danny Fields discovered me. I think he's said that. He was at CBGB one night when I was playing and started talking to me about management. I liked him and I still like Danny. He was one of the most entertaining people and a caustic dry wit. I haven't talked to him in a while, but I have good feelings toward him.

**MUSICIAN:** *What went wrong?*

**FORBERT:** The *Orbit* thing started a whirlpool. It was like, "Wait a second, we did particularly well for a new act. The first record sold quite respectably and created a good little buzz, we toured Europe and did well. The second record had a hit! Third record—*nothing*." As it began to set in, I got a little paranoid, a little confused. It was funny to me that it should just be over that quick! "Aren't we gonna put out another single?" I'm not saying the record was perfect; I'm not saying we did everything we could have done. In fact, when we finished the record I had a chance to tour with Sonny Terry for three weeks in a



van and I jumped at it. We went to some blues festivals and I got to live with Sonny Terry for two or three weeks! I had to take that opportunity and I don't regret it entirely. It was great. But it might have done me better to be listening more carefully to the mixes.

When I started making the fourth record, I switched managers. The people I went with were managing Pat Benatar, who was getting a lot of things done at the time. His name was Rick Newman, his partner was Richard Fields [*no relation to Danny*]. I went through an out-of-court settlement with Danny and Linda. I was always very *jumpy* in my youth. A different producer every album! Boom! Jump! I would advise young musicians against that: Try not to get too jumpy. When there's not a whole lot of time left on contracts, try to stick it out till it's over. It's such a hassle getting out of them and it's not a good thing to make a habit of.

Anyway, the fourth record (*Steve Forbert*) was released in 1982. I had new management and some good expectations. And it was worse! For all I went through and what was accomplished, I felt I went from the frying pan into the fire. Well, word was that it was Epic's fault [*Epic distributed*

*Nemperor Records*]. That's the word I was getting. Managers are the liaison between you and the record company and they have to do that well, and you have to understand that everybody in this business is putting their life, their time, their energy into what they're doing. You can't, with a blanket remark, say all record company guys are this or all radio guys are this or even all rock 'n' rollers are the other thing. You can't! I feel like that was a problem at that time: not establishing and nurturing a good rapport with the record company. And I'm not so sure that there was so much wrong with Epic Records *at all*. Let me just say that. But then came the suggestion that we switch to Columbia.

**MUSICIAN:** *Was that your idea or your new managers'?*

**FORBERT:** I think it's accurate to say it came from management. [*pauses*]\* This is very difficult for me to talk about. For one thing it's painful, and for another thing I just don't really want to say a lot about it. It's not real constructive and it's very much in the past.

**MUSICIAN:** *But you know, for the last five years you've been in limbo, and nobody wrote about it. Maybe music magazines, including Musician, do players a disservice; we always write about winners. Everybody we interview is doing well, and that does not represent how things really are for most musicians. If you're a young player coming up and looking for information about how the music business works, you can read 20 books about the careers of the Beatles and the Stones, but you can't read a book about the career of Jesse Winchester. And there's a lot more Jesse Winchesters than there are Beatles and Stones. So I'm glad you're doing well and*

**was always very jumpy in my youth. A different producer every album! Boom! Jump! I would advise young musicians against that—try to stick out contracts till they're over.**

*want to put all the problems behind you, but forgive me for wanting to get this story told.*

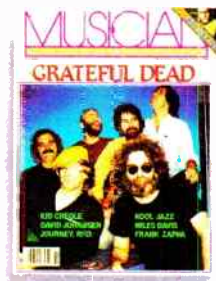
**FORBERT:** "Everybody loves a winner and when you lose, you lose alone." No one wants to know the story 'cause there's no way it can fit into the industry machine. But when you're back and you have a record that everybody's interested in, then you can fit into the whole multi-faceted complex. If we didn't have

\*Richard Fields denies this and claims Forbert's relationship with Nemperor was "already unwinding" when they became his managers.





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**The Clash**  
Ronald Shannon Jackson



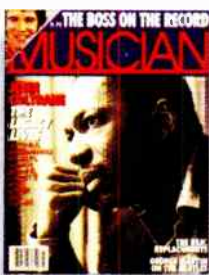
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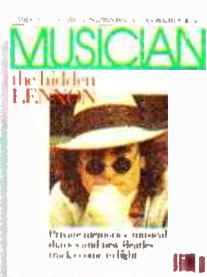
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**Sin ad O'Connor**  
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a record coming out on a major label it wouldn't be worth your while to write any more about the record than maybe a small review. And I understand that. It's like touring without an album. I keep saying in these interviews, "Harry made a bareback rider" [a line from Dire Straits' *"In the Gallery,"* a song about artists who die unknown]. You can paint and paint but until you're in the gallery you're not *really* a painter, are you? That's the way it is. The dead-end stories are never told. No one wants to write them because they can't really help sell records or radio advertising time or magazines. You learn that it's all a big working engine, and you've got to have a record to fit into that engine—then everyone else can get involved.

**MUSICIAN:** Then let's use the fact that you have a new album on a major label to tell the whole story.

**FORBERT:** Then we're going into it in a lot of detail. [sighs] "Frying Pan into the Fire" would be the next chapter. We went to Columbia Records and talked to a few producers. We decided to work with Neil Geraldo [husband and collaborator of Pat Benatar, who was managed by Newman and Fields]. I brought my own band in and we worked real hard. Then I went to California where we worked real hard again, doing the mixes and some vocals.

On the one hand, I'm a guy who's real jumpy, but I can also stick with things. I got into this thing with Neil Geraldo and I just thought, "Dammit, we'll complete it." It was work, you know, but we completed it and we sent it to the record company. Anyway, things turned into a stalemate. The record company, CBS, was not pleased about our process. They had said, "Cut nine things and let us listen to them before you do any fleshing out. Don't cut any more than that, and we'll listen and see how they sound." Well, we didn't do that! I'd always just made my records and turned them in, and Neil Geraldo—working with Pat Benatar—certainly didn't know from a limited budget. That just wasn't one of his concerns. We were working and working, and the dish ran away with the spoon. It just wasn't handled properly. In all fairness, I can understand CBS' disenchantment with that element of the project. It creates a very definite prejudice. They're running a business and they asked us to adhere to certain guidelines. But I really wasn't aware of those guidelines! That's the truth. [Richard Fields says he did inform Forbert of CBS' guidelines.]

The thing that made me mad with CBS was that when it all hit the brick wall, I said to the person I was dealing with, "Look, you're not happy with the record, you don't want to put it out, suppose I write some more songs? Suppose I demo those songs and see what you think and add to the record? Let's try to agree, to work it out." I spent a long time trying to do *that*. It meant remixing some of the things we did, writing new songs, singing demos of those songs to the company, to the guy that signed me, Rick Chertoff. He was busy with other things. I'm just saying this for the benefit of the people who are reading this who are in this rat race/snake pit that they call the music business. It's the way things are handled. You can't make people mad and then expect to have their undivided attention! I was just the little engine that couldn't!

So we remixed a thing that we thought was the single and I

paid for that. We mastered it and I paid for that. We sent them an acetate. Couple of weeks later we hear a reply: "Nah." We sent 'em songs. Very little comment, very little guidance, very little interest. That's when the whirlpool began to carry me further out into the ocean.

I began to realize that not a damn thing I was doing was right. It's just not working, nothing's working out right, and I didn't think it was the *songs*. I was being very flexible about recording new material. I didn't want out, I wanted to get a record together. I really tried—honestly—to be as helpful as I could. Well, no way! The next thing I know I'm running into a situation where I can't record anymore... [pauses] I don't really want to talk about this a lot, because certain artists right now complain too much about their record companies and their problems! I've been through it; I did it with lawyers pretty much all by myself; I deserve an introductory music law degree and diploma. I do! But I don't want to harp on it because it's in the past and I did it and I feel good about where I am now. If I were 65 years old that might not be so cool, but I'm 33, my dreams are intact and I've still got a lot I want to do and feel I can do it. I feel good about now! I don't want to talk a lot about the mess.

**MUSICIAN:** Am I too hung up on this?

**FORBERT:** It was terrible! CBS said, "We won't release what you've delivered, we won't record anymore, and we won't release you!" A no-win thing. Record companies can put you in something called *suspension*, which means time is going by but *not by their clock*. Your hands are virtually tied. Talk about, "I want the heart, I want the soul, I want control right now!" It was "Badlands," absolutely. My version is "Don't Tell Me (I Know)." "Sometimes you feel so weak you want to explode." I completely understand that emotion.

Management became a problem. I can't harp enough on how badly an artist needs his manager to be his liaison with the record company. "Coordinate, help, make everybody understand what I'm doing! They think I'm being disagreeable! If they only knew! Call me!" These people had my phone number. I didn't get free from CBS until late '87, okay? This is '84, '85, '86, '87. Not a phone call! "Are you alive? Have you written anything you like? What's happening?" Nothing!

**MUSICIAN:** At one point someone at CBS [not Chertoff] said, "If you insist we'll put your album out—but we won't promote it?"

**FORBERT:** Yes, they said that very early on. Having had two albums that didn't do well, I really thought that was the last thing I needed. That would just be another step away from a good beginning. So I said no, and I tried to find some way that we could all begin to get enthusiastic about a record.

Some people may read this and think, "Well, for one thing, Steve Forbert and Pat Benatar don't have that much in common! Didn't anybody think of that?" Well, they're right. But I was just coming from a very frustrated situation, thinking, "Things aren't getting done for me, who's getting things done?" That became my criteria. I still had a lot to learn at that point. I went from having a record that didn't do well to having records that didn't even come out! Okay, the fire was getting hot!

**MUSICIAN:** There was a point when you told me that you said to CBS, "Look, neither of us are happy, if you're not going to put out my records, you have to let me go," and they said, "Go ahead and sue. We're CBS, we've got a lot of lawyers, we can tie you up for years." [Chertoff insists he was not the person who said this.]

**FORBERT:** Well, you know... Paul Simon sued them for a couple

**It's the way things are handled in this rat-race/snake pit they call the music business. You can't make people mad and then expect to have their undivided attention!**



# "3-3-3 TIMES BR-BRR-BRIGHTER T-THAN R-RO TO SCAND!"



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## STEVE FORBERT

**FORBERT:** Well, you know... Paul Simon sued them for a couple of million dollars. He finally settled, but it took him a long time to get his two million. Do you know how much interest a million dollars makes in a year? Forget it! They probably wish the suit had taken longer. What's it to them? They've got so many people. I dare to say that at points they've had people on that label they didn't know they had. We got in that kind of mess.

**MUSICIAN:** *Let's put a little blame on you. When you quit Nat Weiss' Nemperor Records after the fourth album failed, did you feel bad about deserting Weiss, who had signed you in '78?*

**FORBERT:** Yes.

**MUSICIAN:** *So to be fair—you saw what you thought was a chance to do better by switching to Columbia, the mother label, and you went for it.*

**FORBERT:** Yeah, I was confused, angry. I was like a blind snake, striking at anything. And one of my managers had a very good relationship with Rick Chertoff, on a friendly basis, and it looked like we would get some personal, first-rate, in-house treatment, as opposed to things I was thinking about being on a satellite label. But there *are* no blanket rules—some things work great the way they are. That's important. A lot of people think, "Let's move to the major label," but maybe they got to where they could make that move because of certain good things that are happening that they're not looking at. They're not seeing that the glass is half-full.

**MUSICIAN:** *So you had reached an impasse with CBS, and you decided to leave Fields and Newman.*

**FORBERT:** They split up. I began to talk more with Richard Fields. I trusted this guy. That's all there is to it. I trusted Richard Fields and it didn't work out. It was unproductive. And after we tried a number of things it still wasn't working. Years were going by! Please don't think, "This fickle guy Forbert is

just leaping around." I really just stuck with this guy as long as I could hold my breath. But then I had to come up for air.

**MUSICIAN:** *Did anybody at CBS suggest to you that Richard Fields was part of the problem?*

**FORBERT:** This is getting tricky. I can't answer that.

**MUSICIAN:** *Anyway, you said to Richard Fields, "Look, we have to go our separate ways."*

**FORBERT:** That was in November '85. It had been pretty near two years since I knew the record was not going to be released. That's a long time! I do not want people to think I'm just a leapfrog.

**MUSICIAN:** *How come when you said to Richard Fields, "This isn't working, let's part ways," you couldn't just shake hands and walk away clean?*

**FORBERT:** I would have liked to. But what happens is, people make certain efforts on your behalf, whether they succeed or fail. And they feel, "Hey, you may talk to so-and-so next week, but I spoke to him last July! I could have planted a seed in his brain, man!" "Well, how come we didn't get a record deal?" "Well, I don't know, but he may still just be thinking about it! You don't know! He could be calling me Tuesday!"

These are some of the thoughts that go through people's minds. Legally it will hold a bit of water. I think it'll hold four teaspoons. So it is often very hard for both parties to just walk away. It's not that tidy. Especially if your name is on a piece of paper somewhere. Or a 70-page document.

[Fields replies: "Not only were we functioning as his managers, we were trying to keep him alive. We were responsible for insisting that he move out of New York City. I sent somebody full-time with him down to Nashville. We spent an enormous amount of time and effort introducing him to every record company, every publisher in Nashville. We put him in the studio.



We secured a record deal for him, and I spent over \$100,000 of my own money to save his life. You're talking about a kid that was going down the drain for the count. So I felt he had a responsibility to us. My suggestion was, find another manager. We'll take a payout of the money that's owed to us over years. We'll take a reduced fee, we'll take an override. But his position was, because he was really on the edge, 'I want to end my relationships with everybody.' He fired his lawyer, he fired his agent, and he fired us. That's your prerogative. But I think you have certain moral obligations. So we wouldn't just walk away. Finally we

kept a very small override, a small amount of money. It was a matter of principle."]

**MUSICIAN:** An odd thing happened after you fell out with Richard Fields and before you hooked up with Praxis, your current management team: You were briefly managed by Ira Fraitag, a Woodstock intellectual who worked with the Persuasions.

**FORBERT:** It was part of going back to square one, another drastic swing of the pendulum. I looked at the people with the big corporation, big name, big acts and a big office on 52nd Street and said, "It's real cold here; I think I'll go to the equator." It was a sort of reactionary time for me.

**MUSICIAN:** My impression was that Ira was a gentleman, a great guy—but not the one to send into battle against the CBS lawyers.

**FORBERT:** But I never asked him to do that. He knew about it, he looked into it a little bit, but I handled that stuff. The whole thing was my problem and I felt responsible for it. It was my mess. I didn't ask my new managers to get involved in it. I had to take care of it and get free of it. I got free. No, I didn't come out unscathed, but I did better than a lot of people have.

**MUSICIAN:** When you were in the middle of this, you quoted a line from Lou Reed: "Heroes all learn to swim through mud..."

**FORBERT:** "...and they got boots caked with dirty soles from squashing bugs." Yeah. Lou's a little more...frank. [laughs] I'm Southern. To get into the music field you not only have to love it—and I mean love it—but you also have to really feel you have something to contribute. I myself doggedly believe that, and a few other people do, but there's been no great following. It's not like I could sell out the Garden for a few nights. But I just felt I had something to contribute and I think that's a lot of what kept me going. Just a stubborn feeling that, "Yeah, it's terrible and all but I don't think I should quit. I really think I have something worthwhile to contribute."

**Steve Forbert** plays a 35-year-old Gibson Southern Jumbo (SJ) acoustic guitar with a Takamine pickup through one of his two 20-year-old Fender Super Reverb amps. He strums light-gauge D'Addario strings and blows Hohner harmonicas.

## ROMEO'S TUNINGS

**Clay Barnes** picks a '76 Fender Strat through a '66 Fender Deluxe Reverb amp, souped up with an Alesis digital reverb unit, D'Addario strings (.010-.052) and has been known to resort to a Peavey Triumph 60. **Danny Counts** blasts his Ibanez MC800 bass ("It's small," enthuses Forbert, "like Bill Wyman's!") through a Groovetube preamp, a Roland DEP-5 effects unit, and an Art IEQ equalizer and a Carver power amp. And dig those Hartke cabinets. Danny, too, uses D'Addario strings.

**Bobby Lloyd Hicks** builds his kit around a three-piece set of 1970 Rogers drums. Added to that is a Ludwig Acrolite snare, a Ludwig Speed King foot pedal, Sabian cymbals and Remo Pin Stripe drum heads. What's that in his hands? Looks like Pro Mark 5B sticks. **Paul Errico's** flashing fingers fly up his Yamaha DX7, his Kurzweil 1000 piano, his Royal Artist accordion and—it goes without saying—a Hammond B3. On the new album Paul played Garry Tallent's Yamaha grand piano, too.

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## STEVE FORBERT

**MUSICIAN:** *How'd you hook up with Praxis, the Georgia Satellites' managers?*

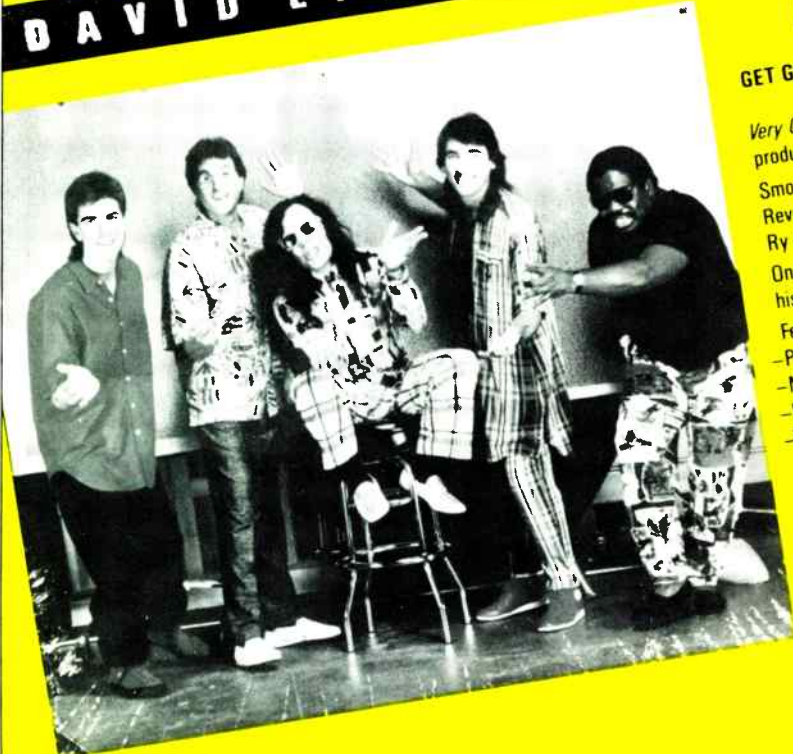
**FORBERT:** Andy McLendon and Jack Emerson [of Praxis] were friends of mine. I moved down to Nashville in the spring of '85. I was ready for a break from the city; I had been here nine years. Well, it was all country music down there, there weren't many people who listened to "Sunny Afternoon" or *Music from Big Pink*. I met these guys who actually liked the Kinks a whole lot and we hit it off. They would finish a hard day of all kinds of terrible hassles in the management field and actually go home and listen to a doggone Mitch Ryder record. So we became friends. That was all well and good but I was certainly going to make a thorough search of what my next management thing would be. I sent tapes out, made phone calls. This was probably the lowest point for me, because my self-esteem was not very good. I thought I had something to offer but I didn't really think anybody else felt that way. I was able to call certain people and, "Wow! They got on the phone! Now what do I say?" In a shaky, uncertain way I'd say, "I've got some songs and a tape and I'm looking for management." It was some pretty rough demos, I might add. And it turned out of the people who were interested, my friends in Nashville were the most perceptive about it. And they already had my records, it wasn't like I had to buy a few down at the store and ship 'em out. They knew what that record did and what that one didn't do, and they had some thoughts on why. And frankly they started doing real well with the Georgia Satellites and some other things. Aside from being my friends, I began to see that they were getting it together, too.

My band is another element in this picture. I was playing solo all of '86, paying the rent and taking it back to square one. I had a nice little following that would come to these clubs and it was

great fun. But I began to hear that backbeat. I had a tape of a five-week tour I did in '81, after the *Orbit* record flopped. I started thinking about the guys in that band and how they were very simple, supportive players. Clay Barnes has played guitar with me off and on since we were kids. Danny Counts played a good simple bass. I got in touch with these guys and they were up for it. And you had to be there. Forget all this other stuff! [laughs] We got in my van with our entire crew—Amos Jones—and we did what work was there. Even if we could have afforded a keyboard player we didn't have room for him. We had our equipment, our luggage and ourselves in a van. We would get to the place and pull into the cheapest motel we could find. We never knew where we were staying. It didn't matter; no one wanted to reach us anyway, there were no interviews or photo sessions or radio ID's. No way! We're playing Greenville, Mississippi, in the corner of this bar/restaurant. Then we'd get a good gig, maybe play Tipitina's in New Orleans. But then it would be up to Ruston, Louisiana, and "Okay, this is ordinarily a disco, just set up right here in front of the mirrored wall, under the big chrome ball." Fine. I'm playing road manager and the whole bit.

But we probably enjoyed it. I know I did. It was a challenge. I felt I had to do it. It wasn't like this is it for the rest of my life, I had a plan in mind and I felt we should *earn* some good luck. Everything happened so quick when I started out that I wasn't at the time feeling really secure in it, justified that I'd earned a place in this thing. At the time of my second album they even talked about putting my picture on the cover of *Rolling Stone* and I said, "I don't know who else you can put on there that week instead, but it shouldn't be me." I just said no, because, man, I was a little uneasy. So they put Bob Hope on. I know he's not uneasy.

# DAVID LINDLEY & EL RAYO - X



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Clay says the worst gig was the Rodeo Clowns Dressing Room and Beer Bar in Billy Bob's Complex in Fort Worth. It wasn't the big room, it was the beer bar. The whole room's covered in dust. You couldn't put your jacket down in that room! We got consistent work at a restaurant in Florida. They had a deck out there and a little tiki hut where they featured live music. They said, "Sure, we'll have you!" So we played time and time again in the tiki hut. We liked that. At least they were real nice to us and, you know, it was Florida.

I've been working every day on this for the last five years, be it talking to lawyers, putting a band together, writing songs, road managing, booking the dates or whistling "Romeo's Tune" into the phone to some club owner in Birmingham, Alabama! Then I got a call asking me to do a couple of nights with the Crickets at the Lone Star in New York. My Buddy Holly stand-in wasn't that great, but it was fun to meet those guys and I met Garry Tallent again at that gig. He said, "What are you doing? I have a studio, I'd like to hear some of your songs, I'll call you." I figured, "Yeah, sure. Back to the tiki hut." But he called a couple of weeks later. He was really sincere. So I sent him a tape and he said, "I like it, I like these particular songs, let's do it, bring your group in."

Everybody was happy with what we got, so we started going back. We weren't doing *demos*. We had a 24-track windfall, gifthorse, great thing courtesy of Garry. Bob Clearmountain did us a favor and mixed a couple of things. We could take this around to people and if they didn't like it, they didn't like it, but if they did it wasn't a case of "These are the demos, we'd like to work with this producer and have this guy engineer." This was *it* and if you liked it, you liked us. That was a luxury, especially in this day and age when it can get so complicated. A nice demo becomes a never-heard album.

**MUSICIAN:** Okay, you were a free agent, you finished your record, MCA was interested, Capitol wanted it. Capitol said let's put this out, you said okay, nothing was signed. Then while you and Capitol were flirting, you turned around and jumped into bed with Geffen.

**FORBERT:** Those were the three main bites. For a while I didn't know if it would come out on a small independent label. I was proud of it and I wanted to put it out. I figured, I'm working toward a goal and if that's the next step, so be it. But I had good representation and a few people heard the tape and one made us a better offer than the others, in a very serious situation. That's all there is to it. And it was a *lot* better. It wasn't just a few minor details. But we don't know what will happen; this record might not sell any copies and it won't be any skeleton in the closet of anyone who let it go. Or maybe it will.

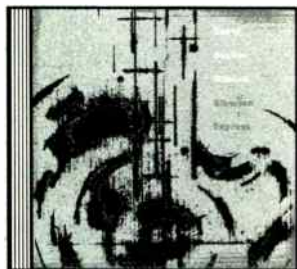
**MUSICIAN:** For today, the hard luck story has a happy ending.

**FORBERT:** It has a *natural* quality to it. Jack and Andy were my friends, it began to look more feasible that we work together professionally. Then we ate humble pie for a year. Luckily when I met Garry again he made good on his offer and meant what he said. And luckily I had a group together that was ready.

It's real hard to sit on the sidelines and watch cats run touchdowns and make 90-yard returns and 60-yard field goals. And yes, I've been jealous of certain people and I've always got my own opinion of music and who I like. But when you go through a lot of this stuff you begin to develop a certain kind of respect for anybody who can stay in this, with all of its potholes and pitfalls, and keep it together and move along. Whatever kind of music they're making, at a certain point you've got to hand it to them. You may not like Conway Twitty but holy smoke, you have to respect that. And I didn't used to. What did I know? [M]

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# KEITH RICHARDS TAKES UNLIMITED ACTION

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

**I**n every generation, a few Zen monks decide they have received their fair share of satori doing orthodox meditation and opt for lives of “unlimited action”; that is, they leave the monastery and break all their vows according to their own inner calling. The most prominent such renegade in current times is probably Jung-kwang, a monk artist whose slashing and whimsical style with traditional painting implements has earned him the reputation as the Picasso of Korea, and whose behavior has inspired joy, consternation and outrage. Jung-kwang paints in







PHOTO BY LYNN GOLDSMITH

a trance sometimes achieved with the aid of alcohol and drugs and rock 'n' roll. When not painting, he wanders the countryside, consorting with all levels of society, sleeping at odd hours if at all, and having sex with vast numbers of sentient beings at all levels of the food chain.

Once, when a particularly lurid profile of the "mad monk" appeared in a magazine, a visiting American professor asked Jung-kwang why he had admitted in such detail to all this odd behavior. "A man of unlimited action must never lie, does not cover up. That would be limiting," replied Jung-kwang. "I am pleased with the article. He tells the things I told him."

On another occasion, a young monk asked if he should follow in Jung-kwang's footsteps. Jung-kwang said if he had to ask, he should stay in normal Zen: "If a person who is not ready practices this way, it is draining; he will fade and grow ill within a few weeks. I have practiced 'unlimited action' for years and I am always rested. Had I pretended, I would have died long ago."

Brian Jones died long ago. Countless others grew ill within a few weeks of drifting into the orbit of the Rolling Stones. The sun at the center of that dangerous and wonderful and extremely-well-documented-in-lurid-articles solar system is Keith Richards, guitarist of almost unlimited action, who has come as close to not lying as anyone in show biz. If any fans doubted it was Richards' nuclear furnace fueling the world's greatest rock 'n' roll band, they have now only to compare Keith's first solo album, *Talk Is Cheap*, with Mick Jagger's two solo albums. Keith's sounds like a great Stones album without Mick Jagger, and both of Mick's sound like he's up studio musician creek without a paddle.



"Hitler dumped a V-1 on my bed. He was after my ass."

"When you look him in the eye, you know you're not going to bullshit this man," says Steve Jordan, once Paul Shaffer's drummer on *Late Night*, now co-writer and co-producer with Richards on *Talk Is Cheap*. "And when you're going to bullshit him, do *not* look him in the eye. There's only one way he likes to say things, and that's brutally honest. He's not going to preach to you, but he does have this moral code of honesty and loyalty and sincerity."

Jordan and Richards first met nine years ago at the Blues

Bar, a semi-secret hangout for the original cast of *Saturday Night Live*. One night Dan Aykroyd insisted on debuting the rough mix of the Blues Brothers' *Made in America* and Keith, even more honest than usual due to copious consumption of Jack Daniels, ripped Jordan's drumming. Jordan was crushed but willing to try again in 1984 while in Paris recording with Arcadia, one of the Duran Duran offshoots. The Stones were also in town recording *Dirty Work*, and Jordan dropped by for a visit. In need of some extra percussion, they asked him to play a tambourine the first night. The second night he got a tambourine and a bass drum. The third night they added a high-hat. And on the fourth night he knew he'd made the big leagues when they graduated him to a snare. It was a particular thrill for Jordan, because they were trusting him with almost half of Charlie Watts' previous drum kit, the famous black Gretsch seen on the cover of *Ya-Ya's*, which they'd taken out of storage.

Jordan returned to New York, where he grew increasingly frustrated with the creative constraints of playing old hits during commercial breaks for David Letterman. Richards also returned to New York, where he grew increasingly frustrated with Mick Jagger, who declined to tour in support of *Dirty Work*, an album Richards had designed specifically to be performed live. Keith and Steve spent a lot of time together venting spleen, and upon Jordan forsaking the lucrative bucks of TV, they backed Aretha Franklin on her version of "Jumpin' Jack Flash." Flying from Detroit back to New York, Richards managed to crush Jordan again by telling him he wasn't the right guy for the Chuck Berry concert/documentary film then under discussion.

The ever obtuse Berry then asked specifically for Jordan, and Keith was forced to make an embarrassing phone call asking if Steve was still interested in the gig. They tempered their friendship in the trial by fire that *Chuck Berry Hail! Hail! Rock 'N' Roll* became.

"It really didn't matter what Chuck put him through, because Keith was going to pay that debt, no matter what it took," says Jordan. "It was something that plagued Keith. He *had* to document the real thing before Chuck died, and he did. Maybe I'm reading too much into it, but having played with Keith before and after, I think he's more himself now, more comfortable, like he feels entitled to make his own mark."

The next natural step was writing songs together, recording them and—if it all works out—maybe do a tour of medium-sized, quality halls with the nucleus of the studio band: Jordan on drums, Charlie Drayton on bass (the two switch instruments on the single "Take It So Hard"), Waddy Wachtel on guitar and Ivan Neville on keyboards. Although the sounds and styles vary greatly from cut to cut on the album, I found myself writing "Keith riff" a lot when I took notes. As a vocalist, Richards manages a smoky imitation of Bobby Short on "Make No Mistake" and otherwise sounds a little like Bob Marley when not sounding exactly like himself.

We talked for three hours in the office of his manager (with the Stones, one takes the setting one gets). More accurately, he talked and I occasionally wedged in part of a thought. When I interviewed Jimmy Page a few months ago, I felt that I had my hands firmly on the steering wheel while Page was stomping on the brake pedal every few feet. With Richards I felt strapped in the baby seat as Keith drove way past the speed limit to whatever conversational terrain he chose. I didn't even look at my list of questions until the last 15 minutes. Physically, he appeared up to peregrinating around the Korean peninsula with Jung-kwang, despite (because of?) his considerable consumption of cigarettes and alcohol. I just hope his occasional little white lies don't limit his action.



**MUSICIAN:** *I heard the word "lie" in four or five different songs on the album, and all the songs seem to have the problem of maintaining one's honesty at least as a subtext.*

**RICHARDS:** Yeah, I only realized that in retrospect, all the "lies." You're the first one to pick up on it other than me and Steve. I just find a lot of duplicity going on and people don't even know they're lying. It's all so unnecessary. Most people are such bad liars anyway. If you want to tell lies, you better be really good at it. I know a couple guys who are born liars and I admire them because it's artistry, almost. But as a means of getting along in the world, it's just destructive. We all do it. I do it still. It has to be recognized for what it is. Sometimes I lie just to get out of a situation. That's called a white lie, as opposed to outright duplicity. All these fine moral gradations. "Do you remember me?" "Oh, I remember you." The truth is, I don't remember the cat. It's just easier to say yeah. And you get the payback right away: You know you've been lying.


**MUSICIAN:** *What about when loyalty and honesty come in conflict? What do you tell a friend who's done a crummy album and you know it's the end of a friendship if you tell him the truth?*

**RICHARDS:** Or you might think it's going to be the end. But in actual fact, it's just hard to be brutal. Sometimes the truth, no matter how you try to soften it, is brutal. But what I've usually found is that it's harder for you to say it than it is for the cat who's going to hear it. If he's a friend, he's going to know it's not easy for you to say. And he's going to know instantly if you're trying to fluff him off. Suddenly he's going to be looking at you like a stranger because he knows you're lying to him. It is hard to tell people how you feel sometimes, but it's only how you feel and it's only one opinion. It doesn't have to kill him. To me, that's what friends are about, when you can tell some guy that you love dearly that he's just full of shit. And has been for a while.

**MUSICIAN:** *Is that why the Stones have lasted so long?*

**RICHARDS:** Probably has a lot to do with it. There weren't many secrets in the Stones, anyway. There wasn't a chance for any secrets. One way or another, you get to know everything after living in each other's laps for years and years. All my garbage has been splashed in the newspapers. There's nothing that can be said about me that everybody doesn't know. You can't have a worse reputation than mine. The junkie gunrunner. I realized in the '70s that I had no reason to lie, that everyone was going to believe far worse anyway. I had nothing left to cover up. To me the hardest thing to do is watch one guy lie to another guy and I know the cat is lying and I know that the cat who's being lied to knows that the cat is lying. And I have to watch it go down. Weird interactions I've seen. There's nothing to lie about. There's nothing *worth* lying about.

**MUSICIAN:** *When you reinvented the Stones sound for Beggar's Banquet, there was that*



**"I fought against making this record, because to me it meant admitting I couldn't keep my band together, that I *had* to work on my own. My sense of failure."**

*exhilaration from discovery and new creativity. I think there's some of that feeling on this record too.*

**RICHARDS:** I've had that feeling too, but it's not something I can say, so it's nice to hear it from somebody else. This one has an identity to it that with the Stones is impossible to keep all the time, for God knows what reason. It's an elusive thing. Every now and then it gels. I had the feeling this one might be special as we were progressing. It was incredibly easy to make. Those are usually the ones that come out best. The ones you really work at, and you tear it to bits, stay up for days at a time, those are the ones that you somehow miss. You can't expect it always to flow. You try for it, but if it's not there you start thinking, and I think one of the worst things you can do in rock 'n' roll is think about it.

**MUSICIAN:** *I always liked your quote about sticking your finger in the air and being a receptor for songs floating in the ether. Is that how it was working with Steve?*

**RICHARDS:** Very much so. We didn't even know we were gonna write together. He figured I'd write them all, but the more we got into it, we both had our fingers in the air at the same time. The ideas just started to flow and we didn't need an outside producer. When we did the Chuck Berry movie together, I figured we could handle anything. And through that movie I found the guys I wanted to play with. You see, you get one great band together, and you think, "Well, that's it: I've struck paydirt. It'll never happen twice." Through the movie I discovered I could put a disparate bunch of guys together and within a week have them feeling like a band. And they became very protective of it. For instance, these guys never let me stop. With the Stones, especially in the studio, it kinda developed over the years that I would lead the proceedings. If I stopped, everybody stopped. It's an old club. You can fall into a rut without realizing it. Whereas these guys, if I stopped, they'd just carry on playing. "Where are you going? Come on, pick it up!" It was great, such enthusiasm. Nobody's kicked me up the ass for years.

**MUSICIAN:** *Could you compare working with Steve as opposed to working with Mick?*

**RICHARDS:** Well, Steve is a lot more fun. [laughs] Actually,



"I'm not going to do time just to slit Mick's throat."

comparisons are difficult because I'm fulfilling a different role in this band as the front man. To me playing in a band is holding a big mattress that the front guy can fall back on and not have to worry. That's my idea of a great band. The front guy can just take it away and if he drops the microphone, there's something happening behind him. It's no joke being a lead vocalist. It twists the minds of loads of people, as you can imagine.

**MUSICIAN:** *I met Mick once several years ago at a Christmas party where my band, the Dry Heaves, was playing. I went up to him afterwards and said, "I don't know how you can do it for two hours. I ran out of moves after two songs." And he said, "I know, man, it's fuckin' hard, isn't it?"*

**RICHARDS:** It is hard. You're the focal point. The idea of a band is to support that, never detract from it, especially in larger and larger venues. In front of a hundred thousand people, the band has to make the singer feel that much more confident. He has to know that no matter what goes wrong, no matter if he sprains an ankle, the show goes on. Of course, what happens over the years is you give him so much confidence that he thinks he doesn't need you anymore. But that's another story.

**MUSICIAN:** *In "You Don't Move Me," you accuse someone of being greedy, seedy, seamy, friendless and without principles. Certain other details indicate it's Mick. Has he heard it yet?*

**RICHARDS:** Yeah, he's heard it. Whether he's listened to it is another thing. I don't think it's that important. What is so glaringly obvious to other people didn't strike me until afterwards. To me it was a mixture of various feelings about various times and various people. It's not so pointed in actual fact. Songs are funny things. They wake you in the middle of the night and say, "I go like this." And then you put it down on tape and it says, "Now we go to Memphis." I have no choice in the matter; it needs horns. So you just follow these songs around. Once you've started them off, you're not in control of them. They control you, until you've done the right thing by them. They're like precocious little children. "Now I wanna go here... Now you put this on me..." You humor them until they come out right.

**MUSICIAN:** *Steve told me you felt a lot of guilt over being unable to keep the Stones together.*

**RICHARDS:** Yeah. At the outset. I enjoyed making this record, but I fought against the idea because to me it meant admitting I couldn't keep my band together, that I *had* to work on my own. My sense of failure.

**MUSICIAN:** *It wasn't your decision that Mick made a solo album.*

**RICHARDS:** No, I know that. But I felt I should have been able to override it. The Stones have been through hell and high water, and I should have been able to keep it together. Maybe that's unreasonable, but it's my point of view.

**MUSICIAN:** *Are you past hell and high water now?*

**RICHARDS:** The Stones are now calling and they want to put it back together again and I tell them, "Well, you'll have to wait now. I'm enjoying myself."

**MUSICIAN:** *Mick wants to get it back together?*

**RICHARDS:** Next year we probably will.

**MUSICIAN:** *For the 25th anniversary of the first American tour?*

**RICHARDS:** Is it that long? I doubt anyone in the Stones can remember.

**MUSICIAN:** *I read somewhere that Bill Wyman's book is going to be timed for the anniversary.*

**RICHARDS:** Maybe the first volume. I can't imagine getting everything he knows into one book. Maybe the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

**MUSICIAN:** *Does that worry you?*

**RICHARDS:** Not in the least. I'd like to know what I was doing in August 1965, and I'll find out from Bill. I'll read the story of my life.





**MUSICIAN:** *You and Mick have discussed all this?*

**RICHARDS:** Mick and I talk about everything. Our battles are far different from what people imagine they are. All people hear is that we're pissed off at each other, but Mick and I have known each other too long. I've known him 41 years. Our battles are personal and people should understand that we're just sparring. When you know somebody that long, it's not a simple matter to dissect. It's not just two rock 'n' roll superstars arguing about who runs the Rolling Stones. It's many other things, all of them complicated.

**MUSICIAN:** *If people on the outside are getting the wrong impression, whose fault is that? You did say in '86 that if Mick toured without the Stones, you'd slit his throat.*

**RICHARDS:** Yeah, yeah. I did. That was to let him know how strongly I felt about it. But I'm not going to do time just to slit his throat. If they ever find him dead, it won't be me that did it. I've already opened my mouth too much, but yeah, he does get me that pissed off. And I get him that pissed off. *[long pause]* It's a matter of honesty. I have a problem with Mick on that. And that's all I'm going to talk about it. Honesty and loyalty. We're back on that subject again.

**MUSICIAN:** *Maybe we could talk about it from another angle. Mick is a different personality type.*

**RICHARDS:** You have to be to do that gig.

**MUSICIAN:** *Well, in great bands, you have different types in different jobs.*

**RICHARDS:** And being tied to each other forever.

**MUSICIAN:** *Mick's archetype is the trickster, I think. Honesty isn't high in their priorities. From a journalistic standpoint, I've never read an interview with you that wasn't interesting. And it's rare that I've read an interview with Mick that was interesting, because he's...*

**RICHARDS:** Evasive. Flip. *[laughs]* Yeah, that drives every-

body batty. But to me, that isn't Mick. That's Mick's defense mechanism coming into play. He's not about to give away anything for free.

**MUSICIAN:** *Sounds like another character you've been working with lately.*

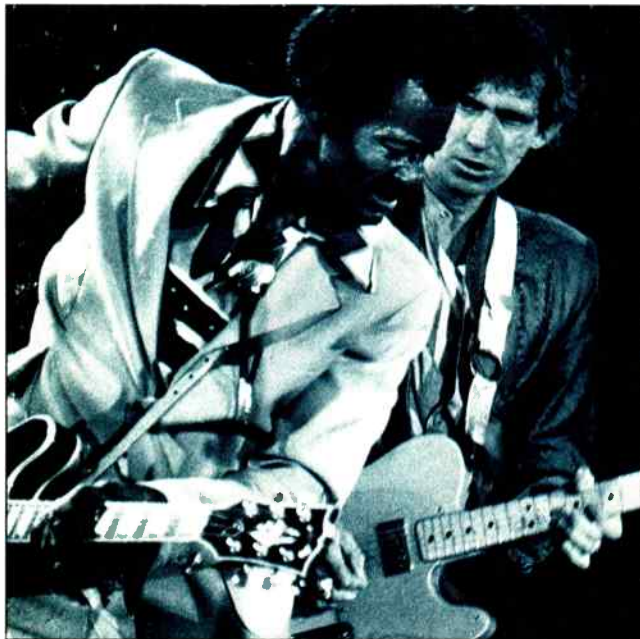
**RICHARDS:** Chuck Berry. I've worked with two of the toughest bitches of all time. *[laughs]* That's why I could handle Chuck. "You know who I've been working with for the last 25 years? You're chicken feed!" So many guys said to me that if

**"Nobody liked Brian Jones. And the more successful the Stones got, the more obnoxious he got. It was hard to shed a tear at his demise."**

they were offered the same job, they'd have turned it down. For me, there just wasn't that much difference between working with this one or that one.

**MUSICIAN:** *Hail! Hail! Rock 'N' Roll was the best profile I've seen of a musician in a movie. It sounds kinda corny, but in essence it was about love, about you paying your karmic debt to Chuck no matter what.*

**RICHARDS:** Even if it killed him. Whether he liked it or not. Asshole that he can be, I still love him. I'm still fascinated by what he does. I wouldn't have missed it for the world.



**"It was something that plagued Keith. He *had* to document the real thing before Chuck died. I think he's more himself now."**

**MUSICIAN:** *I heard from somebody near the show that you had another amp wired to Chuck's for the show.*

**RICHARDS:** Yes, it was in the basement of the Fox Theater. This may be the first time he finds out, if he reads this article. He's got to be the loudest guy in the room, so he's always going back to his amplifier and cranking it up. We just couldn't get a good sound off that amp for the film. So we ran a wire off it down to the sub-sub-sub-basement where we put his guitar through a Boogie that we had set just right. So no matter what he did onstage, we had the right sound recorded for the movie. I think it's probably the best Chuck Berry live you're ever going to get. I can't see him doing it again.

**MUSICIAN:** *Steve said that Chuck never understood that the rehearsals were for him as well.*

**RICHARDS:** Oh no. It was just to whip this bunch of kids into shape. [big laugh]

**MUSICIAN:** *He probably hadn't rehearsed with anyone for 25 years.*

**RICHARDS:** Probably. Maybe once or twice for a TV show. Even that I doubt. Rehearsals were totally alien for him, which I can understand, because it was the way he'd always worked and you get into a rut. But for a movie, this is *you*, you're going to be captured forever. It's your life. You live or die on this.

**MUSICIAN:** *I howled when he was showing you how to do the guitar bend on "Carol."*

**RICHARDS:** I was eating bullets, yeah. I figured that if I showed that I can go through that, then nobody else could complain. Nobody else could say I didn't do the job, finish the gig. Chuck Berry is the only cat who can do that to me. I had to show the rest of the band that I was serious. They're sitting there

thinking Chuck's got a knife in me and I'm going to whack him over the head with my guitar. "No, I'm not. I'm responsible. I'll show you how serious I am about this gig."

**MUSICIAN:** *The other scene that got a huge laugh was the interview after the show and all you do is raise your eyes. It was like Dracula rising from the grave or something.*

**RICHARDS:** I was incapable of moving at the time. We'd been onstage for six hours by then. And that's not just playing. That's with those movie lights. I was amazed that Chuck made it. He was 60 years old that week. Johnny Johnson was 68. It was punishing under those lights. We didn't even stop between breaks, because we had to keep the audience in the theater entertained while they were changing film every couple of songs. Sometimes we did a number two or three times. Go back and do the introduction three or four times. And you were supposed to look good the whole time. I lost 10 pounds. Our suits didn't fit by the end.

**MUSICIAN:** *Have you seen Chuck since?*

**RICHARDS:** I watched the movie with him when it played the New York Film Festival. I was sitting in the balcony with Patti, my wife, and Chuck. Just the three of us. I suddenly realized we were coming to the point in the movie where I suggested that maybe Chuck didn't write the music, that Johnny Johnson actually provided the melodies, which I'm still firmly convinced of. Even though Johnny doesn't realize it. He said, "No, Chuck would come in with the lyrics, and I'd just play something." Which means to me that he wrote the music. 'Cause Chuck is a lyricist, one of the most brilliant lyricists since Shakespeare. I'm an Englishman and I love the English language. His use of it is amazing, his precision with words, the beauty of his flow. I can listen to him talk for hours. He'll come out with the most amazing phrases. But I don't think he ever dreamt up a song or a chord sequence. So I'm sitting there in the balcony and I realize that I want a parachute, 'cause I'm about to suggest that Chuck did not write the songs. I wanted to get the hell out of there. But he thought it all was great. Loved the fight, saw it for what it was. And in the end, he did take Johnny Johnson with him for a tour of Europe. Not that he paid him. Johnny told me that. Chuck said to the promoters that he wanted to bring his piano player, but only if they pay him. Chuck's about bucks.

**MUSICIAN:** *That was ultimately the source of the comedy and the tragedy in that film. His obsession with money makes it impossible for him to see what an artist he is.*

**RICHARDS:** No, he doesn't see it. "If you pay me better than for my carpentry, I'll play my guitar." In a way, that's the beauty of it. He has no conception of his talent, of his stature. That's kind of beautiful. Such a mixture of spoiled, moody brat and innocent, prolific artist. It's almost impossible to fit the two guys into the same frame. But he has to live with it. So I guess he's paid the price.

**MUSICIAN:** *He did pay a terrible price.*

**RICHARDS:** Yes, he did. He didn't take shit from anybody. And they let him know they weren't going to take shit from him. He was arrested many more times than is known. All the trouble he had playing small towns in the South when he was starting out. Because the other thing he can't resist is a piece of white tail. This can give you a whole lot of problems, especially in those days.

**MUSICIAN:** *The Stones had some prosecutions as well.*

**RICHARDS:** We both understand the hard end of the law. But he spent more time in jail. I spent more time in courtrooms. Apparently he was a lot more amiable, a lot more free and easy before the first record, although he's always been money-oriented, and quite rightly so. The only way you're going to get out of East St. Louis is to make some bucks.

**MUSICIAN:** *In entertainment, every time you turn around, you're*



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getting screwed by somebody.

**RICHARDS:** Yes, but it's your only road out of town. So you go down that road and get screwed. But it gets you out of town.

**MUSICIAN:** Do you follow the activities of the Parents Music Resource Center, the rise of the new censorship?

**RICHARDS:** Not much. I have infinite faith in music. Whether they know it or not, it's a necessity. It's just the shit you play it on that's an expensive luxury. No matter what form it comes in, music is as important as air and food and water for staying alive. People need it in order for them not to go mad. That's why rhythm was invented, why all art was invented.

**MUSICIAN:** Is your approach to fatherhood different now?

**RICHARDS:** Yeah, it's weird, I've got two families now. Luckily they all get along. I figured I was done with that by the middle '70s. The kids were growing up, they were fine, and that was that. Marlon was born in '69 and Angela in '72, a very intense period. We had to move out of England, because they were trying to bust us everywhere. My current family is far more stable than the first. Children are like songs to me. You don't bring them up. They kind of show you what they need, and you provide it. Children are far too intractable for you to impose yourself on them. There's no point in having fights, because they beat you every time. Especially girls.

**MUSICIAN:** What's Marlon doing these days?

**RICHARDS:** He's gone back to London to get the credits he needs for art college. He wants to be an illustrator. He really wants to do it, so go for it. My kids are so straight. He likes champagne. Angela just left school in England. She rides horses, been winning a few things, been teaching kids to ride. I don't believe I'm the father of a horsewoman. And now I've got these two other girls. I live in a house full of women. I start to understand the idea of harems, where you just keep them in

one room and you lock it and you can go in but they can't come out. There's women everywhere I look.

**MUSICIAN:** I've always wanted to know more about your own childhood. I grew up culture-bound in the middle class and if it hadn't been for the Stones and a few other bands, I think I'd be in an asylum today. Your parents must have been pretty libertarian.

**RICHARDS:** My mother's family was very artistic, all musicians and actresses. My grandparents [Augustus Theodore Dupree and wife Emily] had seven daughters and the house was filled with music and skits all the time. My grandfather told me to

Keith says he doesn't know what guitar he's playing most of the time, but he does remember that a year ago Music Man gave him a couple of new ones which he has used a lot on *Talk Is Cheap*. "What it's called I don't know," says Keith. "It doesn't have a name on it. It's got a nice compact neck, quite small with two octaves, and it's all modular. Within 10 minutes you can change the configuration of the pick-ups, just unscrew the things and get a whole new sound."

Among his many Telecasters, he currently favors one made of rosewood, "the heaviest I ever had. I'd rather sit down to play it, although if the balance is right you don't notice it that much when you're standing up. Guitars that are bottom-heavy, that's when you notice. After 20 years of lugging these things around and performing acrobatics with them, I'm sure we could all use a chiropractor."

Depending on the track, Keith will use a Boogie or old Fender Champ or Twin Reverb with the all-important tubes. Sometimes he'll tie the Fender and Boogie together. Most of the time he retains his sentimental attachment to old Fender guitars and old Fender amplifiers.

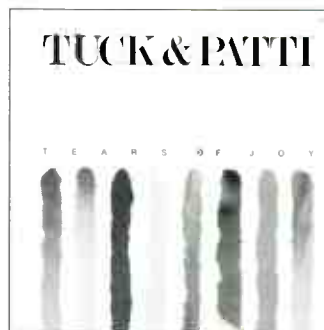
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play the guitar. I always thought it lived on top of his piano, but later I found out he only took it out of the case when I visited. After five or six years of this, I finally asked if I could touch it when I was about 12. He never forced it on me, just let me discover how beautiful that guitar was. I don't know what he saw in me. Actually, whatever it was, he created it in me. He was a saxophone player before he took up guitar. He got gassed in World War I and couldn't blow anymore.

My father's father [Ernest Richards] was the mayor of Walthamstow, a working-class borough in East London. They liked him so much they made my grandmother [Elizabeth] mayor after he died. They were solid socialists, helped organize the Labour Party in England. The Red Banner and all that. It wasn't cool to be a socialist back then. The Tories used to hire thugs to beat and assassinate people. So I come from a weird mixture. Very stern on one side, and very frivolous, gay, artistic on the other.

**MUSICIAN:** *How about religion?*

**RICHARDS:** My family was agnostic. Religion only came in for me as a singer in a very cool choir. I was a boy soprano and if you were in the choir, you could get out of physics and chemistry. That's all it meant to me. The three biggest hoods in school were the best singers. I'd watch the various procedures go down in church while waiting for the gig, but it never came from home. My mother thought all vicars were dirty old men.

**MUSICIAN:** *And your parents?*

**RICHARDS:** This is another thing I just realized lately. My father [Bert Richards] knows all about tubes, what they call valves in England. He worked for General Electric. He knows what good amplifiers have inside them. So I've been showing him what I've been doing for the last 20 years. I left home in '62

and we only got back together in '82. Hadn't seen him in all that time. My mother [Doris] and him split up, and I took care of Ma. And he went his merry way. Eventually I wrote him and he wrote back and I forgot about it, 'cause I had my own problems. But once I cleaned up at the end of the '70s, I wrote again. We finally met and now I got a guy who I can pump for information about tubes. He came over here in '83 and lives on Long Island now. We get together every Friday night and have a bottle of rum and a game of dominos.

**MUSICIAN:** *Do you remember World War II at all?*

**RICHARDS:** Nothing except the sirens. I can hear them now in old movies on TV and the hair on the back of my neck goes right up. Nothing I can do about it. I have no visual memory, but I was born with those sirens. Hitler dumped one of his V-1's on my bed. He was after my ass, you know that. I was out shopping with my Ma. Apparently she was pushing me back in the pram and no house was left when we returned. The rocket went straight into my room. Hitler had me marked.

The thing about World War II in England was that it didn't end until 1954. That was the end of rationing. I was 11 before I could buy candy whenever I wanted. Before, you had this book with stamps and you were allowed one bag a week. I think this is why England had such a brilliant explosion of rock 'n' roll. It hit like Hiroshima there, and it coincided with England finally throwing off the effects of the war. There was this incredible exhilaration, this feeling that life might be worth living. The world went from black and white to color in 1956. We became fiercely jealous of rock 'n' roll in the late '50s when suddenly Elvis was in the Army, Chuck was in jail, Buddy was dead, Jerry Lee was disgraced. When Fabian and Bobby Vee and those easily controlled teen idols came along, it seemed like rock 'n' roll was on rationing. There was only one thing to do:



## BLUES FOR COLTRANE

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**MUSICIAN:** *Why did you call it rhythm and blues, then?*

**RICHARDS:** Because rock 'n' roll at the time was very light, all arranged, a few violins to keep the guys in the union working. The Brill Building ran the whole store. Rock 'n' roll became a business controlled by some very nasty people in England. Promoters who ruled the ballroom circuit and would break your leg if you showed up late for a gig. And then you had to play Bobby Vee's latest hit. These jazz clubs got started as a reaction and it was easier to break in. We decided to do it our way rather than deal with some pimp of a promoter. We'd call a club owner, offer to play a night for free, get the house rocking, and two weeks later they'd call us back and pay us, too. Fantastic. So that's why rock 'n' roll and rhythm and blues became split up.

**MUSICIAN:** *What's your perspective on Brian Jones almost 20 years after his death?*

## "The Stones are an old club. You can fall into a rut without realizing it."

**RICHARDS:** Brian played guitar on very few Rolling Stones records. He was very uninterested in guitar. He could play "Dust My Broom" better than anyone except Elmore James, but you can only do that once. He had to find a new niche. Mostly he did coloring around the edges. Very good coloring, I might add. He was amazingly adept at picking up whatever was lying around in the studio and getting something out of it. [Hums riff from "Under My Thumb"] Marimbas, chimes, vibes, tabla, sitar. But Brian was far from being the...from this distance, it might seem he was more spiritually inclined than...Brian was very much an opportunist. Um. Actually, all he wanted was pussy and money. Just like the rest of us. And he wasn't a very pleasant guy, either. This sounds brutal, right, 'cause I'm telling you the truth. Nobody liked Brian. And the more successful the Stones got, the more obnoxious he got. And it was hard to shed a tear at his demise, quite honestly. It was like, "Wow, he's gone, thank God." Cold-blooded as that sounds, he was a passenger for us. We had to cover his ass. On the road, he would get so stoned that he'd be in the hospital for three weeks. And I'd be working the Midwest with one guitar. So you won't find a lot of sympathy for Brian amongst the Stones. We all revere his memory. And nobody deserves to go that young. But if anybody asked for it, he did.

**MUSICIAN:** *From what I hear, Charlie Watts is a guy who would share your preoccupation with honesty.*

**RICHARDS:** Charlie is incredibly honest, brutally honest. Lying bores him. He just sees right through you to start with. And he's not even that interested in knowing, he just does. That's Charlie Watts. He just knows you immediately. If he likes you, he'll tell you things, give you things, and you'll leave feeling like you've been talking to Jesus Christ. They say he's a dying breed, but with people like Charlie, they must always have been rare. Genuinely eccentric in the sense of having his own way of doing things. Just to put it on a very physical plane: At the end of a show, he'll leave the stage, and the sirens will be going, and the limousines waiting, and Charlie will walk back to his drumkit and change the position of his drumsticks by two millimeters. Then he'll look at it. Then if it looks good, he'll leave. He has this preoccupation with aesthetics, this vision of how things should be that nobody will ever know about except Charlie. The drums are about to be stripped down and put in the back of a truck, and he *cannot* leave if he's got it in his mind

that he's left his sticks in a displeasing way. It's so Zen. So you see what I mean about who the hell can I possibly play with after this guy with such a sense of space and touch. The only word I can use for Charlie is "deep." I was so lucky to find Steve, who's almost as deep, and probably will be as deep, given a little time.

**MUSICIAN:** *What's Charlie doing now?*

**RICHARDS:** Waiting for me to get this shit over with so he can work again.

**MUSICIAN:** *Really? He wants to go out with the Stones?*

**RICHARDS:** Yeah. Charlie wants to work. He hasn't played for a year. I'm trying to get the boys to practice if they're serious about next year. Maybe I could use this to transmit the message once again about how important it is that *Bill and Charlie start playing now!* Because it'll be so much easier next year if they start practicing now. They've heard this speech before, and they'll hear it again. I've got Ronnie working them, if he can just pull the moral weight to get them together and start juicing them up.

**MUSICIAN:** *They're all in England now?*

**RICHARDS:** Yeah, Ronnie moved back a year-and-a-half ago. He's doing very well. Always the same. The miracle to me is that you put such a weird mixture of guys together in one room and expect them to come out with something. That will always be a mystery. It's the weirdest chemistry in the world. And it's changed over time. The person that was the actual dynamo of the Stones—especially in the early days when everybody wanted to quit and say "Sod it!"—was Ian Stewart [the "sixth Stone" who often played piano for them]. There was the heart and soul of the Stones. And probably the reason that...See, I made *Dirty Work* to take on the road, and then Stu died [of a heart attack] in the making of the record. And the glue came out. He was the glue. Everybody's still in shock about it.

**MUSICIAN:** *How was he the glue?*

**RICHARDS:** His quiet reasoning, his flippancy fuck-offs to you. "Ello, Angel Drawers." "Ello, Golden Bollocks, when are you going to start playing something decent?" "Not another piece of tripe like that. I can't stand it." That was the glue, and it was always there. The first rehearsal I ever went to for the Stones, I walked up three flights of stairs on top of this pub on Wardour Street in Soho. The only guy there was Stu at his piano. He was the first guy, I was the second guy. He was wearing a little pair of leather shorts and he was watching his bike out the window so no one tries to steal it. And he's sitting at the piano, and he's commenting on the whores walking by on the street. To me that was the beginning of the Stones. And his first words to me were, "So you're the Chuck Berry expert, are you?" Nailed me the second I walked in the room.

**MUSICIAN:** *One final Chuck Berry question: That semi-legendary time he punched you out, was that how your nose got rearranged?*

**RICHARDS:** No, it just grew that way. If anything rearranged it, it was a time when I'd been up for nine days. I was working on something in the studio and I put a tape in the machine to hear the latest blast I'd gotten. I turned around and fell asleep for a millisecond and I collapsed into the corner of a JBL speaker. You know what noses are like. Great nap, waking to this red shower. I think that gave it a slight curve to the left.

**MUSICIAN:** *Nine days?*

**RICHARDS:** Don't take my word for it. I was past counting after four or five. Other people told me it was nine.

**MUSICIAN:** *I can't imagine staying awake for nine days.*

**RICHARDS:** It's not something you imagine. I can't imagine it. It's something that happens. I don't plan these things. It was just that life was so interesting for nine days that I couldn't give it up. Not even for a minute. ■



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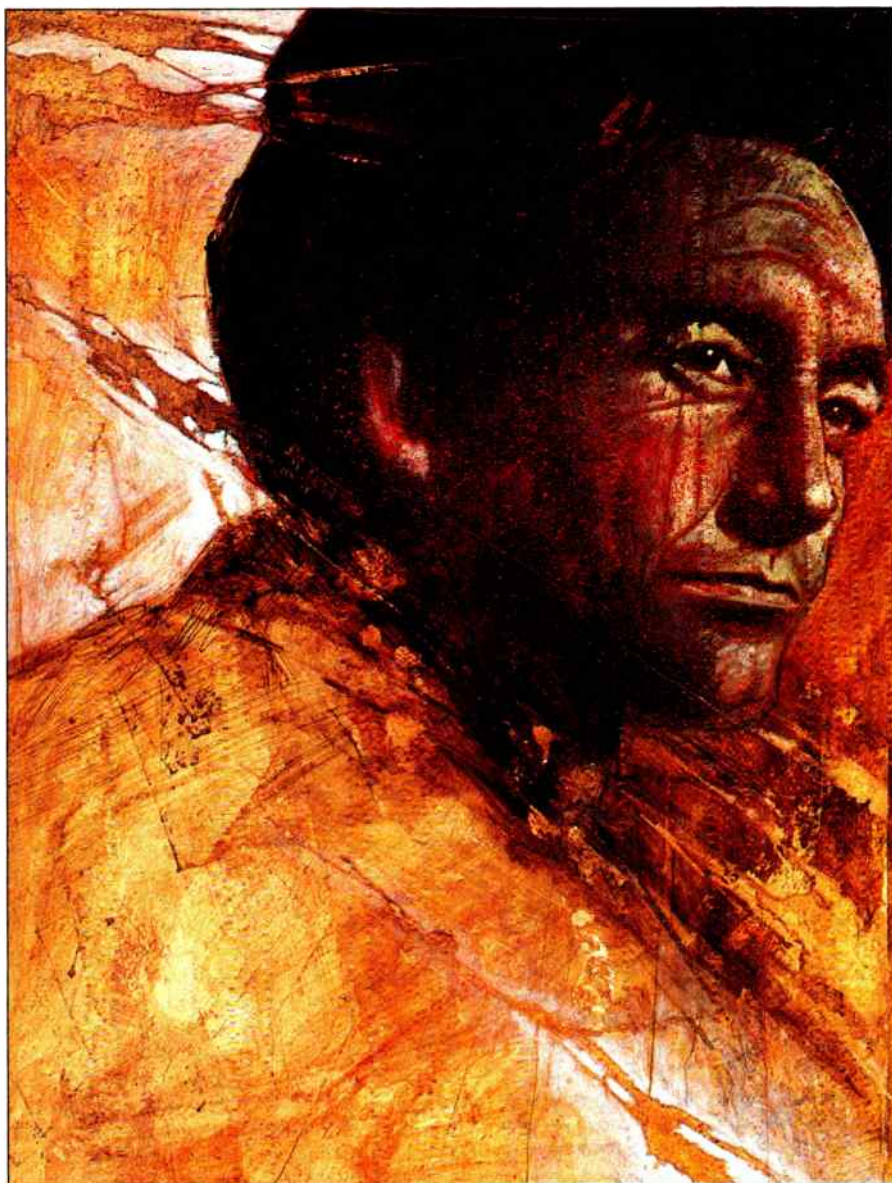
## LEADBELLY, WOODY: TWO PROMISING NEW SONGWRITERS

### VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Folkways: A Vision Shared  
A Tribute to Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly*  
(Columbia)

**F**orget "folk music"; that is a term used by the enemy. Folk, jazz, rock, hip-hop, baroque, country—these are all after-the-fact labelings at best, divisive sneers too much of the rest of the time. The trick is to realize it's all notes on a page, sounds in the air, and find the common ground.

The late Moses Asch must have realized this. Asch was Folkways Records, an idiosyncratic operation whose catalog embraced a globe of music and refused to allow any of it to go out of print. Eskimos, Nepalese, South American Indians, Africans and Afro-Americans, Appalachian mountain-dwellers—all were Folkways artists. When Asch died last year, the Smithsonian Institution took over his cultural patrimony. Columbia Records is doing its part with this benefit album to cover the acquisition costs. The record's theme is the work of two of Folkways' few "name" artists, Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly. (Neither wrote one song, "Hobo's Lullaby," but it's associated with Guthrie.)



Guthrie and Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter): The names ring down the hallways of twentieth-century America with such authority that it's easy to forget their art. *Folkways: A Vision Shared* comes draped in the glitter of its superstar contributors, but the songs are too strong to cave in under the weight. They also repel ornamentation; consequently, most of these tracks have fairly simple arrangements.

The exceptions veer towards Leadbelly's tunes, perhaps to replace his own powerful vocal charisma. Little Richard, who knows a thing or two about charisma himself, socks out a flag-waving "Rock Island Line" backed by a rollicking Fishbone. Brian Wilson smothers "Goodnight Irene" in a viscous stop-time that recalls the Beach Boys' version of "Sloop John B"; as in other neo-Brian

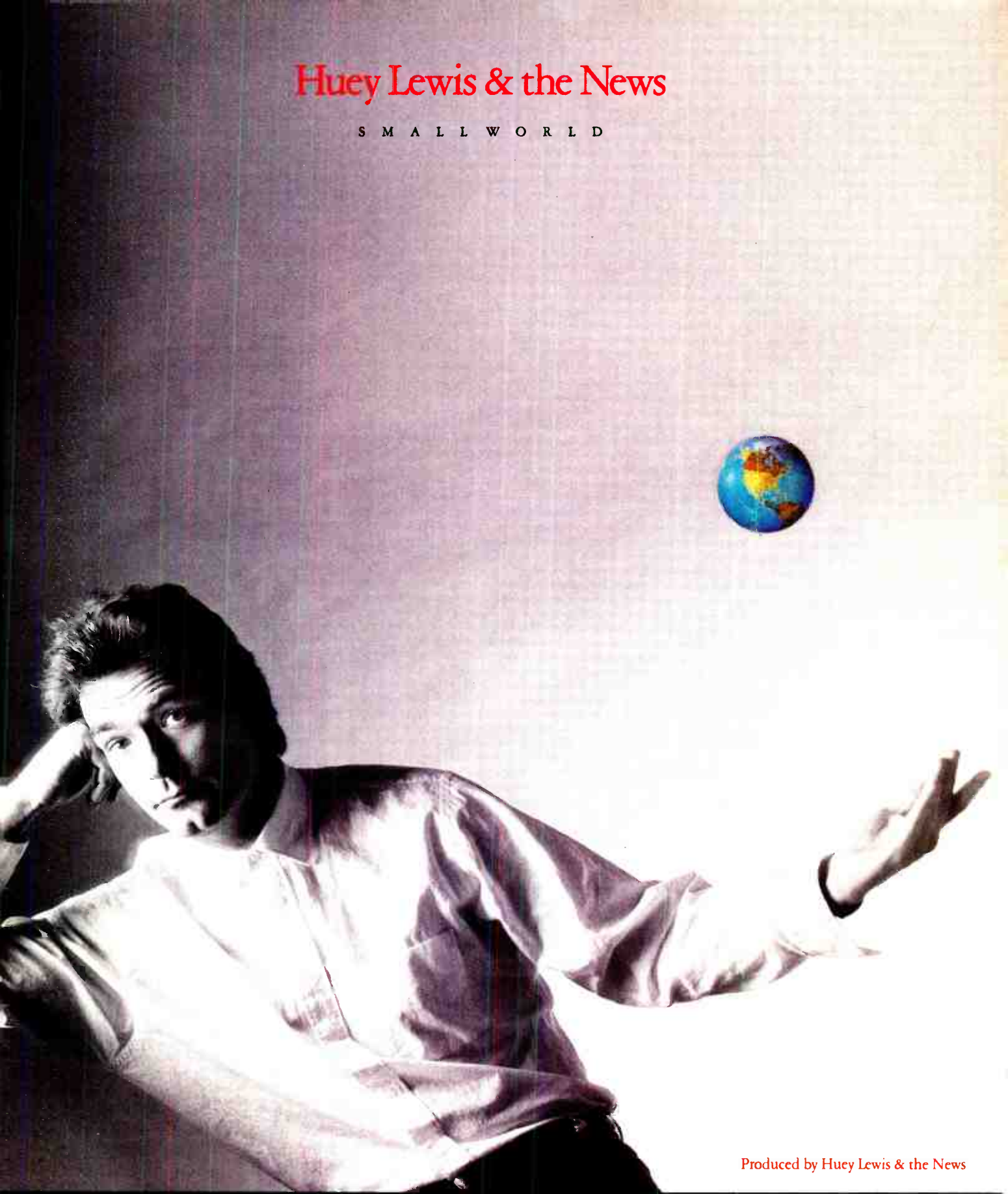
recordings, he tends to sing as if the brain doesn't quite comprehend what the mouth is saying. On the other end of the scale, there are Sweet Honey In the Rock's pretty acapella readings of "Sylvie" and "Gray Goose."

Guthrie's songs are more episodic, discouraging clutter. Bob Dylan's solo "Pretty Boy Floyd" is a compelling performance of the musical forefather to "John Wesley Harding." Bruce Springsteen's haunted, fragile vocal on "I Ain't Got No Home" takes the displaced out of the Hoovervilles and deposits them on the streets of today's cities. Springsteen further updates "Vigilante Man" with a squealing, sustained electric-guitar solo. U2, displaying what one hopes is a sense of humor, chose "Jesus Christ"; they deliver it—humorously—like rabble-rousing missionaries, with rat-a-tat



# Huey Lewis & the News

S M A L L W O R L D



Produced by Huey Lewis & the News

Small World. The album you've been waiting for. From Huey Lewis and the News. Featuring the first single "Perfect World" plus nine other World Class tracks.

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# RECORDS

drumming and a female vocal chorus.

Of course, there's more: John Mellen-camp with accordion and string band on "Do Re Mi"; Taj Mahal and jumping mandolins for Leadbelly's "Bourgeois Blues"; Pete Seeger leading a chorus on



"This Land Is Your Land." The point is that the songs still count, right down to the dubious morality of Guthrie's "East Texas Red" (sung by Arlo Guthrie) and "Philadelphia Lawyer" (Willie Nelson). While it would have been nice to hear a black voice interpret at least one Guthrie number, *Folkways: A Vision Shared* makes an excellent case for two singer/songwriters whose effectiveness didn't

stop at the grave. The proof is not only on this album, but wherever their own Folkways recordings are played. Remember, this is only a sampler.

— Scott Isler

## HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS

*Small World*  
(Chrysalis)

**B**randed with a name usually reserved for animated ducks, Huey Lewis has risen above that handicap to prove himself the reigning master chef of Rock-Lite. Half the calories of real rock and none of the bad vibes, Rock-Lite provides the kind of perky yet mellow groove the thirtysomething crowd needs in order to get out there and shop, aerobicize and color-coordinate their lives. Homogenized and all-American as theme restaurants, and utterly satisfying in its predictability, this is music Tipper Gore could love.

Not that you need be a hysterical conservative to dig Huey Lewis. Unthreatening and irresistible as the cute

boxboy at the local A&P, Lewis is so cheerfully masculine and unpretentious, it's icing on the cake that he has a knack for devising unforgettable riffs. "Heart and Soul," "I Want a New Drug," "Power of Love"—mainstream pop doesn't come any catchier than this. And yes, Huey the Hook came up with a few gems for this, his fifth LP.

Espousing the somewhat simplistic message of let's all relax and get along, *Small World* is a series of good-time pep talks. Though flawed with deeply unimaginative lyrics, the title track is a classic Lewis groove built around a vocal double-tracked with a harmony that lends it a buzz; a big, bright horn section; an upbeat coffee achiever tempo; and a killer hook. Lewis must have known *Small World* was the strongest cut on the LP because he repeats it twice, letting the band stretch out on the sec-



## You may not know it, but you know Katie Webster.

You may have heard her playing piano on the 1950s classic "Sea of Love" or on Otis Redding's "Try a Little Tenderness."

You may have heard her on records by Slim Harpo or Mason Ruffner, Clifton Chenier or Ivory Joe Hunter, or even on "The Wrestling Album," thanks to friend and fan Cyndi Lauper.

She's made several records on her own too, for small labels on even smaller

budgets, but not until now has the Louisiana barrelhouse soul of Katie Webster been so fully depicted and widely available.



Hear why she is known worldwide as the "Swamp Boogie Queen" on her Alligator Records, Casettes and Compact Discs debut, featuring appearances by Robert Cray, Bonnie Raitt, Fabulous Thunderbird Kim Wilson and the Memphis Horns.



ond version. This feels like padding, as does "Slammin'," a funky instrumental evocative of the Average White Band. An homage to zydeco titled "Old Antone's" lacks true zydeco grit, but "Walking with the Kid," a song Lewis wrote to his son, should go down well with baby-booming record buyers, many of whom are now discovering the joys of parenthood. (I once saw Lewis playing with his kid by the pool at the Sunset Marquis Hotel and he seemed like an excellent father, really attentive and patient. That Huey—what a great guy.)

Featuring guest shots by Stan Getz and Bruce Hornsby, and incorporating flourishes of reggae, jazz and zydeco, *Small World* is being touted as a musical departure, but those exotic accents wind up being overpowered by Lewis' boogie machine. The News is a bar band par excellence, but regardless of how well they do their thing, they basically do one thing only; reggae and zydeco have never sounded so middle-American. But that's what we love Huey for, that's what we expect from him. Once again he delivers the goods, in all their bland and buoyant glory. — Kristine McKenna

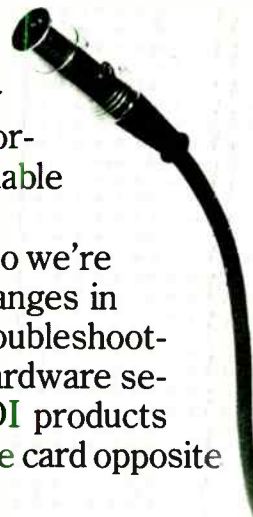


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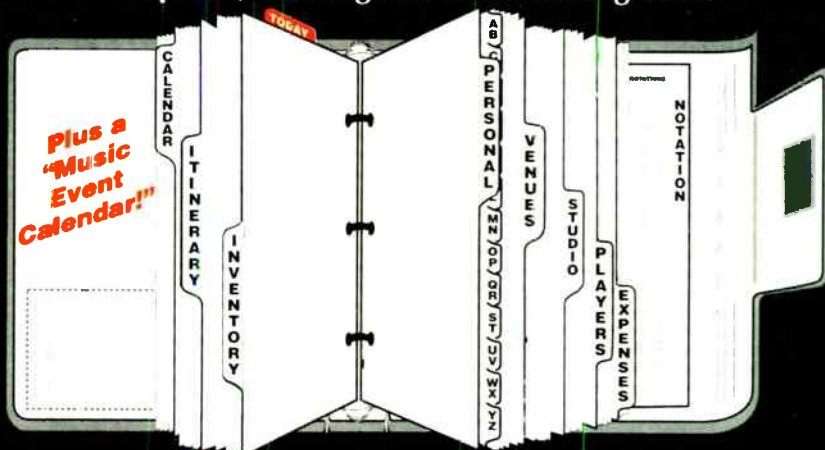


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# RECORDS



## KIP HANRAHAN

*Days and Nights of Blue Luck Inverted*  
(Pangaea)

**K**ip Hanrahan constructs his records the way a director puts a movie together, personality by personality, scene by scene, marking off space within space. Fitted neatly into a slot labeled Eccentric, Hanrahan, whose five LPs constitute a weighty body of cultural conjugation, sums up exactly the romance and strangeness and humor and pretense of contemporary America.

His records, and *Days and Nights* is no exception, circle around Hanrahan's main obsession—sensuality and where it comes from—like a dog around a fire hydrant. *Days and Nights* starts out with "Love Is Like a Cigarette," a tune once recorded by Duke Ellington and Ivie Anderson, and much despised at the time. A bass introduces the tune as a saxophone solos, late-night style, and a medium-sized big band comes in, murmuring. Cut to Carmen Lundy, who sings unaccompanied; the listener is involuntarily put in the position of a voyeur. The next track, sung by Fernando Saunders, bassist for Lou Reed, is dense with Latin percussion. After which comes "Gender," featuring Leo Nocentelli of the lost and much missed Meters, evoking New Orleans, and more.

I suppose this mix-and-match stuff isn't over yet; mainstream music hasn't really even discovered it. From this end it's looking a bit tired. Yet Hanrahan avoids the mold; his records constitute one of the more fruitful experiments of the '80s, an experiment that people will want to listen to for a long time. It's also music that sums up the intelligent side of our age, inquisitive, open-minded, sensuous. That it existed in the era of Reagan will be one of the mysteries to be debated by social historians.

— Peter Watrous

## ROBERT CRAY

*Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*  
(Mercury/Hightone)

**H**as success spoiled Robert Cray? After unexpectedly going gold with his major-label debut, *Strong Persuader*, has this handsome guitarist and singer decided to grab for the gusto and become a pop star like Eric Clapton—or at least George Thorogood?

Get serious. Far from seeming like some sort of sell-out, *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* finds Cray continuing as if nothing had happened. Admittedly, the recording budget has expanded enough to allow Cray and company to bring in the Memphis horns for a few songs, and David Sanborn to boot. On a couple of tunes, he even sounds happy. But there's a big difference between being successful and betraying the blues, and Cray isn't crossing that line. He understands how to expand upon the blues' song form without losing touch with its emotional essence; how else could a song like "Laugh Out Loud" use an almost pop-style chord progression and still deliver a vocal that aches like a broken promise?

Because Cray approaches the blues as a mode of expression more than a compositional style, he's able to play with your expectations in a way few bluesmen can. Sometimes it's as simple as placing



a skittering, squirrely guitar lead over a ploddingly deliberate pulse, as he does on "Don't You Even Care?"; at other times, it can be as structurally ingenious as when, on the title tune, Cray's guitar solo begins across the VII chord, leaving the listener hanging for four bars before it resolves to the tonic.

Perhaps the best thing about *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* is that it shows how much Cray has absorbed the vocabulary of '60s soul into his sound. That may simply be related to working with horns—who wouldn't sound soulful singing against David Sanborn's solo in

"Acting This Way"?—but mainly, it's a matter of Cray's relationship with his rhythm section. Listen to them push Cray into an Otis Redding-like frenzy on "Change the Rules": You know it will take something stronger than success to spoil this band. — J.D. Considine



## STETSASONIC

*In Full Gear*  
(Tommy Boy)

## MASTERS OF CEREMONY

*Dynamite*  
(4th & Broadway)

## ERIC B. & RAKIM

*Follow the Leader*  
(UNI)

## SALT 'N' PEPA

*A Salt with a Deadly Pepa*  
(Next Plateau)

**T**his summer down in Ocean City, Maryland, I watched blond teenage boys booming rap music out of their vans; I mean, has rap arrived? For 10 years now, rap/hip-hop has been growing past every limitation imagined by its legion of critics. Tabbed as music for urban teens, it's now fodder for commercials and pop charts, thanks to Run-D.M.C., Salt 'N' Pepa, the Beastie Boys and, yes, the Fat Boys. Even with limited airplay, the stuff sells major numbers. Hip-hop aesthetic—cut-up techniques, sampling, minimalism—is permeating the larger pop landscape, and we also have rap to thank for re-injecting funky beats—especially James Brown—into pop's increasingly rigid 4/4. Which is not to say there hasn't also been a slew of numbingly dull rap records. But in the hands of a new breed of savvy auteurs, the music's potential is being developed in several directions at once.

Take politics: Challenging social commentary has been relatively rare during the last 15 years of pop, but an intrinsic component of rap. Public Enemy, for instance, whose abrasive, often half-baked black nationalism harks back to

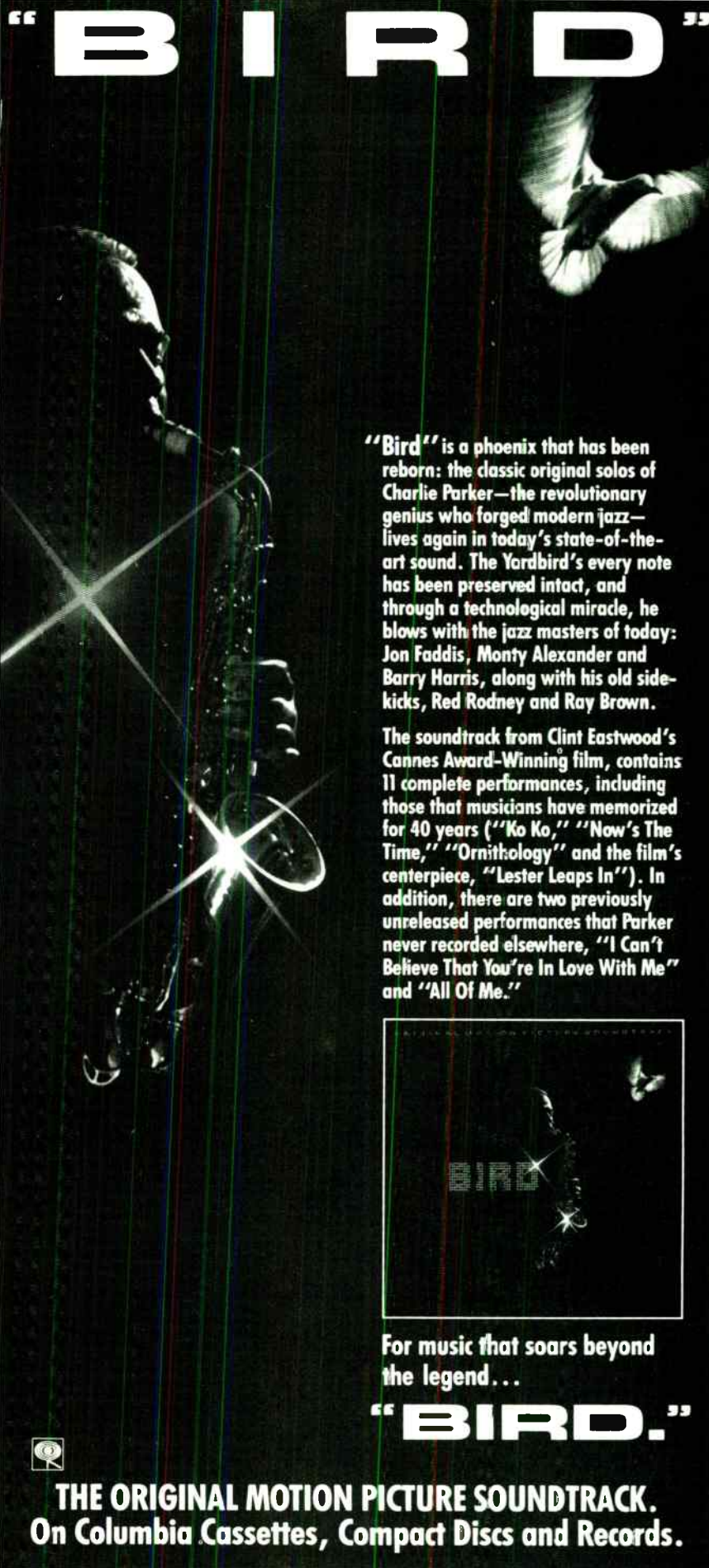


revolutionary stances of the '60s, raised issues of media manipulation, systematic oppression, black cultural awareness and more, all delivered with a super-hard alloy of metal, funk, hardcore and free jazz. Stetsasonic, on *In Full Gear*, their second LP, makes political connections in less confrontational ways; their "A.F.R.I.C.A." single from last year featured Olatunji's African drumming and words from Jesse Jackson. Musically they touch on Miami hip-hop, Sly Stone, balladry (a fairly straight re-make of the ethereally daft "Float On") and reggae (a hip-hop version of the "Boops" riddim). Lyrically Stetsasonic defends sampling techniques ("JB was old before Eric B. and Rakim"), hair-extensions and the experience of loving a social outcast. Creative, listenable, diverting.

Reggae and rap have been cross-pollinating since the mid-'70s, so it's no surprise to see a new wave of reggae hip-hop. Masters of Ceremony's "Sexy," from their debut LP *Dynamite*, fuses reggae and rap riddims; several cuts use reggae riffs as part of a very dense, scratch-heavy approach. "Keep On Moving" interpolates Yellowman's "Zungguzung" into dissonant horn-like squawls, distorted scratching and JB's guitar samples in a manner which cries out for some free-jazz blowing. Strong and monolithic.

A peak of JB mania was achieved by Eric B. and Rakim's transcendent "I Know You Got Soul" and "Paid in Full" singles. *Follow the Leader*, their second LP, maintains their high standards with rock-solid rhythms and some of the fastest, most lyrical rapping around. The lyrics don't often transcend self-promotion, but inspired lines abound ("don't sell me no dreams 'cause I don't sleep"). Without really breaking new ground, the music adroitly shifts textures, licks and beats with jujitsu-like precision.

Coming from another place entirely are Salt 'N' Pepa, female rappers who promise nothing but an ebullient pop/rap confection. They and their astute producer, Herby Azor, shamelessly but effectively plunder classic R&B—Otis and Carla (on last year's "Tramp") and the Isley Brothers ("Shake Your Thing"), which melds E.U.'s go-go to Isley funk and Salt 'N' Pepa's sassy rapping. Miscalculated thrusts at heavy metal ("I Gotcha") and oldies ("Twist and Shout") are merely embarrassing. But when Salt 'N' Pepa are on, they make eminent party music. No, rap has not peaked; as Salt 'N' Pepa put it, "Let the Rhythm Run." — **Randall F. Grass**



**"Bird"** is a phoenix that has been reborn: the classic original solos of Charlie Parker—the revolutionary genius who forged modern jazz—lives again in today's state-of-the-art sound. The *Yardbird's* every note has been preserved intact, and through a technological miracle, he blows with the jazz masters of today: Jon Faddis, Monty Alexander and Barry Harris, along with his old sidekicks, Red Rodney and Ray Brown.

The soundtrack from Clint Eastwood's Cannes Award-Winning film, contains 11 complete performances, including those that musicians have memorized for 40 years ("Ko Ko," "Now's The Time," "Ornithology" and the film's centerpiece, "Lester Leaps In"). In addition, there are two previously unreleased performances that Parker never recorded elsewhere, "I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me" and "All Of Me."

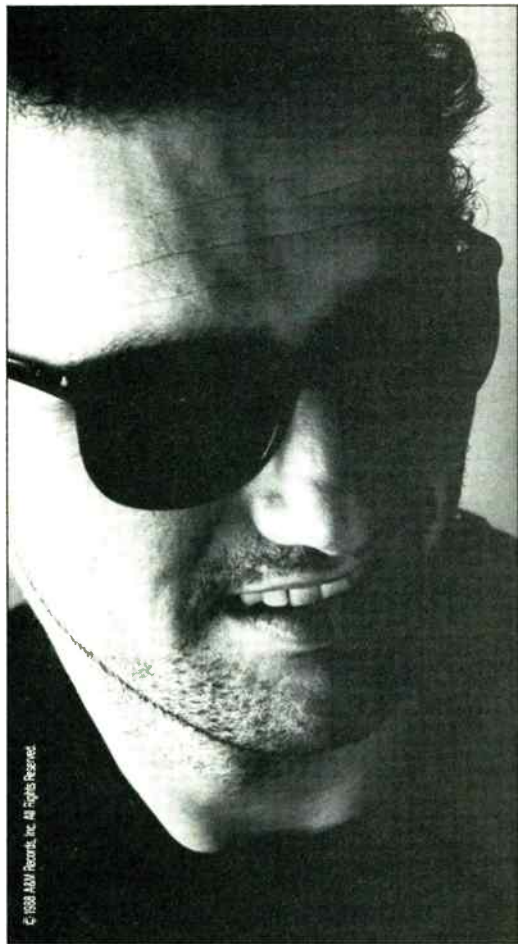
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# Paul Kelly and the Messengers Under the Sun

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Except "Dumb Things" produced by Martin Armiger & Paul Kelly.

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## RECORDS



### MILTON NASCIMENTO

*Yauaretê*  
(CBS)

In Brazil, they say Milton Nascimento went down to the cross-roads one dark night in '69 and made a bargain with the devil: For as long as the decade lasted, he would own the '70s. Once they were over, though, the '70s would own him—for the rest of eternity!

Well, no, they don't say that, actually. But the scenario might explain a thing or two: Nascimento's subsequent rise to the top of the Brazilian pop heap, for example. His music was subtle, difficult even, but he had the critics in the palm of his hand, and he filled stadiums. That success rested on a mix of jazzy sophistication and folky simplicity that uncannily echoed the mid-'70s sounds of Paul Simon, Janis Ian, Joni Mitchell, et al., yet put all of them to shame in the arty melodies and soaring vocals departments. In the age of the singer/songwriter, this one reigned supreme.

Unfortunately, Nascimento's indebtedness to that era seems to have bound him to front depressing concerts like the one he just toured the States with, a snooze-fest featuring Milton on autopilot while his band did Santana-plays-the-best-of-the-Doobie-Brothers impressions. On the other hand, it might guarantee that he keeps making records like *Yauaretê*. This small treat doesn't live up to the lump-in-your-throat transcendence of his halcyon product, but it does remain faithful to the other values that gave him his lease on the Brazilian '70s: childlike playfulness, unabashed lyricism, accessibility disguised as complexity.

What's crucially missing, I guess, is the old voice-that-can-do-no-wrong. It's lost some of the assurance it used to have; it doesn't leap as dazzlingly into its trademark falsetto as it once did. But "Enchanted City (Cidade Encantada)" shows Nascimento can still make it soar

## SESSION MASTERS.

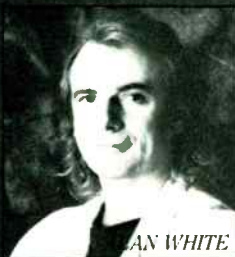
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when he puts his mind to it. And when he brings in Paul Simon for a duet on "Dream Merchant (Vendedor de Sonhos)," it's enough to make you fantasize about an Art-less re-recording of the entire S&G catalogue, with Milton in the driver's seat.

Part of the secret of Nascimento's native popularity was the way his songs idealized Brazil (especially rural Brazil), both in their lyrics and in their use of folk styles. *Yauaretê* takes a stab at that kind of topicality in "Letter to the Republic (Carta à Republica)," which bemoans the current sad state of Brazil's political affairs, but it's a listless stab, with the album's most forgettable melody. The LP eschews recognizably Brazilian forms in favor of a slick international pop feel. It's telling that the record's best cut, "Heart Is My Master (Meu Mestre Coração)," is a samba.

But if this music is ultimately just a pleasant shadow of the past, it also shows Nascimento could do worse than be a slave to the '70s. *Yauaretê* won't tell you anything new, but it'll sure remind you—as a lot of things seem to these days—that those pre-punk dark ages weren't so dark after all.

— Julian Dibbell



## BOBBY KING & TERRY EVANS

*Live and Let Live!*  
(Rounder)

In the last 14 months Ry Cooder has given us three big chunks of music, including a long-awaited solo outing. His best stuff's on the two that don't bear his name: John Hiatt's *Bring the Family* (wherein Cooder's the ultimate sideman) and now this, a Ry-produced collaboration between vocalists King and Evans, long-standing residents of Cooderville.

Even more than *Bring the Family*, this album frees producer/lead guitarist Cooder from the constricting agonies of

*continued on page 106*

# TOM WAITS



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# ROCK SHORT TAKES

## IN TUA NUA

*The Long Acre* (Virgin)

THOUGH IT'S EASY TO FIND PARALLELS WITH U2 and Clannad, In Tua Nua has enough originality to go beyond mere musical resemblances. It isn't just the way the band blends rock and traditional Irish instruments, or the ease with which Leslie Dowdall handles the songs' soaring, triumphant refrains, although both help; mainly, it's that In Tua Nua does a better job of conveying what it's like to be young, Irish and aware than any band currently recording. From the inspiring "The Innocent and the Honest Ones" to the irresistible "All I Wanted," this is an album to cherish.

## PAUL KELLY & THE MESSENGERS

*Under the Sun* (A&M)

TO SAY THAT PAUL KELLY HAS A WAY WITH words is like suggesting that Dennis Johnson is good with a basketball—it belabors the obvious. It's hard to imagine another songwriter capturing how

**BY J.D. CONSIDINE**

furtive desire smoulders as succinctly as Kelly does in "Same Old Walk," or sketching a broken marriage as handily as "To Her Door." The surprising thing about these songs isn't the eloquence of the lyrics, but that the music so perfectly captures the flow of good conversation that you're left hanging on every word.

## LITTLE FEAT

*Let It Roll* (Warner Bros.)

ROCK STARS DON'T EVER COME BACK FROM the dead, but rock bands sometimes do. *Let It Roll* misses Lowell George's inspired insanity, but that's about all it lacks; from the road-weary balladry of "Hangin' On to the Good Times" to the funky gumbo of "Hate to Lose Your Lovin'," it sounds as much like Little Feat as anything in the back catalog. Even when singer Craig Fuller can't quite get the prairie purity out of his voice, the rest of the band remains so gritty and groove-savvy it's doubtful anyone will mind.

## RANKING ROGER

*Radical Departure* (IRS)

IT'S A DEPARTURE, ALL RIGHT, BUT HARDLY for the better. Adept as Roger might be at finding real melody in the sing-song cadences of reggae toasting, he's ham-handed when it comes to translating his ideas into contemporary dance pop; this is cursed with some of the worst drum programming in recent memory. As a result, "So Excited" isn't, "Falling Down" does, and "Your Problems" are mostly his.

## ROY ORBISON

*For the Lonely: A Roy Orbison Anthology, 1956-1965* (Rhino)

UNLIKE THE WONDERFULLY REMADE *IN Dreams*, this set compiles the real thing, from the gawky gimmickry of "Ooby Dooby" to the incandescent desire of "Blue Bayou" and "It's Over." And though Orbison may sing better now than he did then, these performances are possessed of a sense of time and place that goes beyond mere history.

## GLASS EYE

*Bent by Nature* (Bar None)

WITH A BEAT SO BARE-BONES IT VERGES ON the abstract and instrumental interplay tight enough to be telepathic, Glass Eye sounds like white funk boiled down to its essence. In fact, the material is so lean and melodic, from the dark narration of "Living with Reptiles" to the brooding hurt of "Kicking the Dog," it'll leave you wondering: Why isn't this band famous

yet? (Box 1704, Hoboken, NJ 07030.)

## IGGY POP

*Instinct* (A&M)

AFTER A TOO-LENGTHY FLIRTATION WITH art, respectability and David Bowie, Iggy gets back to basics with his toughest album since *Lust for Life*. Between ex-Pistol Steve Jones' power guitar and current-PsyFur Paul Garisto's floor-shaking drums, Pop's songs have more muscle behind them than a Mike Tyson punch. And now that Iggy can conduct that energy, instead of letting it fry him like a psychic short circuit, he spits sparks like the live wire we know he is.

## SLY & ROBBIE

*The Summit* (RAS)

EVEN MORE SO THAN LAST YEAR'S LASWELL-ized *Rhythm Killers*, this LP is pure pulse. There are no vocals or solos to break the mood, but, this being a reggae session, such single-mindedness seems appropriate, enhancing the trance-like regularity of the beat and emphasizing the dark physicality of the sound. If 100-proof groove is your intoxicant, go to it. (Box 3032, Washington, DC 20015.)

## KOOL & THE GANG

*Everything Is Kool & the Gang: Greatest Hits* (De-Lite)

DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE TITLE. THOUGH three of the 14 selections are new tunes, apparently included to prove that the Gang's new singers are as sharp as "J.T." Taylor was—fair enough—five of the remaining 11 oldies are drab, discofied remakes that suck all the funk from the likes of "Jungle Boogie" and "Hollywood Swingin'." That's not only unfair, it's stupid.

## JOAN ARMATRADING

*The Shouting Stage* (A&M)

CONSIDERING THE THEME OF THESE SONGS—what happens when love is no longer lovely—this ought to be Armatrading's darkest album to date. It isn't; some songs, like "Stronger Love" or "Dark Truths," might brood a bit, but most of the album is vibrantly alive, from the brassy "Living for You" to the razor-edged title tune. As much as the wordplay defines the action here, it's Armatrading's way with a melody that provides the power.

## CINDERELLA

*Long Cold Winter* (Mercury)

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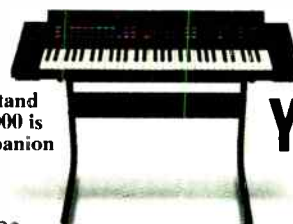
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**ILLINOIS JACQUET BIG BAND***Jacquet's Got It!* (Atlantic)**JULIUS HEMPHILL BIG BAND***Julius Hemphill Big Band* (Nonesuch)

THE IDEA OF A JAZZ ORCHESTRA REFUSES TO die, and these two saxophone showcases are back-to-school bonanzas for ambitious college radio programmers. They make me think less of jazz's past than of her future, though in both cases the common denominator is the mythical heritage of Texas.

**SHORT TAKES**

Illinois Jacquet is the last of the great swing-era tenor titans, and he's finally gotten the opportunity to document his ferocious, brassy orchestra in a good old-fashioned Atlantic jazz session (remember *those?*). From the opening blast-furnace of "Tickletoe," this band is in tune, intense and in your face, like the '50s juggernauts of Basie and Ellington. Mixing veterans like Eddie Barefield, Rudy Rutherford and Marshall Royal with young firebrands like Jon Faddis and Frank Lacy maintains continuity with the post-bop millennium and an era when jazz was *popular music*. And for young reed players who aspire to something deeper than the emasculated soul minstrelsy of today's fusion, flip to Jacquet's ballad features ("More Than You Know" and "You Left Me All Alone") and dig the blossoming array of overtones—every note sculpted just so.

Hemphill's orchestra is a breakthrough in big band composition: a multi-tribal weaving of spirits and ghosts, peyote rituals and transformations, deep-fried in southwestern swing and the hard blues, served up writhing and alive on the altar of a Hendrixian sky church. Hemphill's writing here is marvelously rich and varied, walking the line between so many American dance and swing traditions it makes the World Saxophone Quartet sound like the Four Freshmen. Instant treasures like the sleepy southwestern blues "Border

Town" and the hard-blowing bop of "C-Saw" balance the bardic flights and transmutations of "Drunk on God" (with rousing text by poet K. Curtis Lyle) and the mysterious minuets of "Leora." On "At Harmony" and "For Billie," Hemphill takes the bebop and cool notions of the Gillespie/Evans big band to another level; it's so satisfying to finally hear this altoist's fiery improvisations and amoebic harmonies fleshed out on such a gigantic canvas.

Hemphill is still sorting out ideas and personnel, getting a core of desperados to play his charts so his distinctive polytonality sounds purposeful—not like some lucky accident. But whatever this ensemble lacks in precision, they make up for in intuition and interplay. The surreal richness of Hemphill's electric-acoustic blend—juxtaposing double guitars (Jack Wilkins and Wild Bill Frisell), double percussion (Ronnie Burrage and Gordon Gottlieb) and Steinberger Bass (Jerome Harris) against a deep brass sextet and a multi-reed quintet—is pure cinemascopia. Anybody who wants to know what the music of the '90s will sound like, come on down.

**BOOKER LITTLE***Out Front* (Candid)

THIS GREAT LOST TRUMPETER HAD THE vision and the discipline to pull off a Wynton Marsalis synthesis 25 years ago, when he passed on at 23. This rarity is back in print on CD (along with the entire Candid catalog), distributed by Black Lion Records. Little's soaring incantations always seem to be reaching for some unattainable resolution, but his lyric balance (consonance and dissonance), and the decisive originality of Eric Dolphy, Max Roach and Art Davis, invigorate the searching quality of these post-modernist elegies.

**EARL HINES**

*Up to Date* (RCA/Bluebird)  
*The Legendary Little Theatre Concert of 1964, Volumes 1 & 2* (Muse)

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT EARL Hines was the first great piano virtuoso in recorded jazz (meaning no disrespect to Mr. Jelly Roll, our first great composer). Hines' orchestral use of both

hands, sassy voicings and sparkling horn figurations were always modern, always reaching forward, and *Up to Date* is a dandy series of small group settings (featuring Budd Johnson and Ray Nance) from his great revival of the '60s. *The Legendary Little Theatre Concert* documents the concert showcase that rescued him from piano lounge limbo.

**JOE HENDERSON, CHARLIE HADEN, AL FOSTER**

*An Evening with Joe Henderson – Charlie Haden – Al Foster*  
 (Red/PolyGram Imports)

HENDERSON'S VOLUMINOUS HARMONIC flights are so carefully constructed, yet so self-contained in tone and detail as to suggest a pianist. Yet always there's that singing melodic logic, which busts loose and screams on "Serenity." This record documents a particularly serendipitous Italian trio concert, where Henderson's tenor enunciates a different kind of cool in the context of this free-grooving rhythm section—it's one of the few recordings that really captures the offbeat syncopations and Monkish cross-rhythms of the inimitable Al Foster.

**BENNY GOLSON***Stardust* (Denon CD)

THIS IS NOT SO TIGHTLY STRUCTURED AS Golson's work with Art Farmer, but the integrity of their designs prevails in the context of this exquisitely detailed, digital blowing session with Freddie Hubbard. The richness of their reed and brass signatures, and the way they blend, is what gives this swinging date its *raison d'être*.

**BOBBY ENRIQUEZ***Wild Piano* (Portrait/Epic)

THIS FILIPINO MUSICIAN IS A NEW NAME TO me, but he plays a lot of piano in a mercurial barrelhouse style that expounds on ground laid down by Garner and Monk, funksters Horace Silver and Milt Buckner, and all those rollicking two-handed salsa players. Sometimes he gets a little too enthusiastic for his own good, but there's an elation to everything he plays; his "Four in One" is great fun. Eddie Gomez and Al Foster keep it swinging.

**BY CHIP STERN**





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# BEATLES from page 32

George Harrison's "Love You To," his first Indian-flavored composition, was untitled at first, then was dubbed "Granny Smith" after the apple. The song grew more complex with each take. The first, the basic track, had George singing to his own acoustic guitar accompaniment, with Paul supplying backing vocals. The sitar came in at take three and again as an overdub onto take six along with a tabla, bass and fuzz guitar.

George played the sitar, but an outside musician, Anil Bhagwat, was recruited to play the tabla. "The session came out of the blue," recalls Anil. "A chap called Angardi called me and asked if I was free that evening to work with George. I didn't know who he meant—he didn't say it was Harrison. It was only when a Rolls-Royce came to pick me up that I realized I'd be playing on a Beatles session. When I arrived at Abbey Road there were girls everywhere with thermos flasks, cakes, sandwiches, waiting for the Beatles to come out.

"George told me what he wanted and I tuned the tabla with him. He suggested I play something in the Ravi Shankar style, 16-beats, though he agreed that I should improvise. Indian music is all improvisation. I was very lucky, they put my name on the record sleeve. I'm proud of that, they were the greatest ever and my name is on the sleeve. It was one of the most exciting times of my life."

A rough mono remix of the song was made for George to take away. Also taped on this day was a guitar overdub for "Got to Get You into My Life."

## Tuesday, April 26, 1966

Studio Two: 2:30 p.m.-2:45 a.m. Recording: "And Your Bird Can Sing" [re-make] (takes 3-13, overdub onto take 10).

"Okay boys, quite brisk, moderato, foxtrot!" Under this somewhat confusing directive from maestro John Lennon, the Beatles launched into the re-make of "And Your Bird Can Sing." The first attempt, take three, although only a rhythm track, was a *very* heavy recording but the song grew progressively lighter after that, although guitars were always well to the fore. A playback at the end of the 13th take revealed that take 10 had been the best. With Phil McDonald having spooled back the tape, the remainder of the session was then spent overdubbing John's lead vocal, with Paul and George backing.

An interesting blend of lead guitar

strumming and Paul's bass guitar notes ended the song, and the best version of this section came at the conclusion of take six. Future remixes for the album were edits of the two elements.

## Thursday, June 2, 1966

Studio Two: 7:00 p.m.-3:30 a.m. Recording: "Laxton's Superb" (working title of "I Don't Know," a working title of "I Want to Tell You") (takes 1-5, overdub onto take 3, tape reduction take 3 into take 4). Mono mixing: "Yellow Submarine" (remix 1, from take 5).

George Harrison, in securing an unprecedented three compositions on a 14-song Beatles album, was clearly having problems with his song titles. What was in the end to become "Love You To," itself a title not mentioned in the lyric, had the working title of "Granny Smith," after the brand of apple. Now, for the song "I Want to Tell You," the problem evidently arose again. Hence this burst of chat on the session tape prior to the recording of take one:

George Martin: "What are you going to call it, George?"

Harrison: "I don't know."

Lennon: "'Granny Smith Part Friggin' Two!' [To Harrison:] You've never had a title for any of your songs!"

In a burst of laconic wit, Emerick came up with a title, "Laxton's Superb," another type of British apple. If it was to be "Granny Smith Part Friggin' Two," then "Laxton's Superb" fitted the bill perfectly. But midway through the June 3 session the title changed again, this time to the more appropriate "I Don't Know," humorously based on George's answer to George Martin's original question. By the June 6 remix it had become "I Want to Tell You."

As for the recording, five takes of the rhythm track (piano, drums, guitars) were taped before George chose the third as being best and went back to overdub his lead vocal, backed by John and Paul. More instruments—tambourine, maracas and more piano—were also added. A tape-to-tape reduction copy was then made and numbered (somewhat confusingly) take four. Handclaps were added to this and the song was complete except for a final overdub on June 3. A quick recording.

"One really got the impression that George was being given a certain amount of time to do his tracks, whereas the others could spend as long as they wanted," Emerick says. "One felt under more pressure when doing one of George's songs." ❧

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## TIMBUK 3 from page 46

band and Barbara filled it. The Essentials were together four years, and she was in it for the last two. By the time that was over with [around 1984], we knew we wanted to concentrate on our musical relationship without the constraints of having to deal with a band."

"But also without giving up the rhythmic elements that are a part of playing with a band," adds Barbara.

Working with a drum machine seemed the obvious direction to take. After a brief sortie on the Manhattan scene, Pat and Barbara relocated to Austin, Texas, and began developing what would become the Timbuk 3 sound—an inspired melange of folk, funk, blues, rockabilly and Caribbean styles played on a variety of traditional and electronic instruments. Their rhythmic, dual-guitar style—which generally jettisons the usual lead/rhythm roles in favor of collective, clipped, interlocking lines—proved the perfect complement for drum machine grooves. And drum part writing was something that came to them fairly naturally, according to Barbara.

"In the Essentials, we played with so many different drummers—maybe like

15 of them in one year. And when you teach all these drummers your tunes, you get to know where the kicks are. You learn a lot about drumming.

"One thing that we had a lot of fun with in the studio [making *Eden Alley*] was choosing drum sounds to go with the different songs," says Barbara. "For 'Reckless Driver' we spent a day with a Sony Pro Walkman at a Pick-A-Part, which is an auto salvage yard. They have all these cars up on blocks. You pay a buck to go in, and you can take all the parts you want off the cars. So we paid our buck and went around slamming things and recording them. Dennis, our producer, had a lot of fun with that."

"I'm really into the possibilities of mouth percussion," says Pat. "You can do amazing things using the proximity effect of a microphone. Which goes to show that you can be really progressive and stretch musical boundaries without using much technology at all. One thing I really do *not* want is for Timbuk 3 to become an advertisement for technology. I don't want to become a contradiction. Because our music is anti-materialism. And technology gets you real materialistic. But I think there is a real balance you can establish, where the

tools serve your purpose, but they don't *become* the purpose.

"I've got nothing against playing stuff to make people feel good. It's fun doing that. But sometimes it's really frustrating when people who think they're experts on what makes a good song try to pretend that escapism is the only thing that makes people feel good. What makes me feel good in a song is the sense that I'm on to something that might be real. That maybe *this* is reality." 🎧

## RECORDS from page 99

"How we gonna sell this puppy?" We ain't; we just gonna book time, play great music, move on. Guitar-based R&B made by and for adults don't have much sales potential today (R. Cray notwithstanding)—but I'm here to say that if there's a drummer as masterfully limber as Jim Keltner on "Just a Little Bit," I ain't heard him; that if the guitarist exists who can approach Cooder's sad bottleneck solo on James Carr's "Dark End of the Street" so beautifully *legato* it sounds poured, then I don't know his name. And I'm here, folks, to indicate that that's Memphis session legend Spooner Oldham on piano except when—look out!—Jim Dickinson strolls in on "Bald Head" and "Got to Keep Movin'." How many R&B duos can boast the Replacements' producer merrily bashing out bar-  
relhouse piano?

Instrumental wizardry aside, it's Evans who's *Live and Let Live!*'s revelation. Relaxed and athletic, this baritone can growl, scream, grunt and soar to falsetto. Ain't *complaining* about King, but Evans has made his mark here, even if he never cuts another record.

So what we've got is a smallish but nearly perfect album, short on hairstyles and attitude and long on chops. That's the way uh-huh uh-huh I like 'em.

— Tony Scherman

## PETER KOPPES *Manchild & Myth* (Rykodisc)

SOLO CD BY CHURCH GUITARIST KOPPES features far more melodic and textural imagination than his band currently evidences. At times the sound gets a little too soft and Moody Bluesy, which is my idea of a guilty pleasure. But overall, Koppes' update of '60s folk psychedelia is more suggestive of the Zombies, which is my idea of a real pleasure, and includes enough spacey instrumentals—like the Middle Eastern flavored "Sahara"—to cut the ear sugar. — Mark Rowland



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