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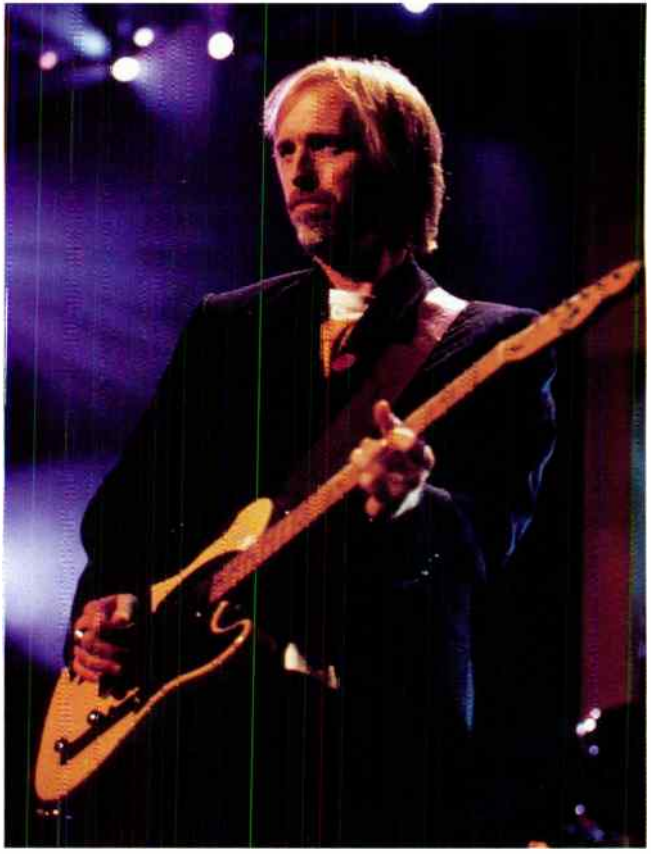

TOM PETTY

Wildflowers** has the sort of ease you got on your other solo album,* **Full Moon Fever.** *The album in between—Into the Great Wide Open***—felt a little constricted, as if you were trying to force Jeff Lynne's production and the Heartbreakers into the same place.*

It was very much like that and those songs probably didn't get their due. It was a logical step to me. Jeff made *Full Moon Fever* and I wanted to see how that style could apply to the Heartbreakers. And truthfully, they're not that kind of band. I like those songs more than I like those recordings.

This time you and Mike Campbell hooked up with Rick Rubin.

Mike and I alone won't *do* anything. We'll sit around talking, we'll quit at five o'clock. We need some authority figure. Jeff Lynne was busy with some personal problems, a divorce, and I thought it would be good to try something new. Mike had met Rick and suggested he'd be good to work with. All I knew by him was a Chili Peppers single that I loved, so I called him up and we got talking. He came over with a bag of CDs. Rick's got the broadest musical taste of anyone I ever met. He has no boundaries. I never did hire him—he just kept coming over! Rick kept pushing me to write more songs. I'd make demos at home on my ADAT and bring them into the studio. I'm not sold on digital but I love these ADATs. The sound is pretty warm and you can take a demo from home into the studio and add to it without losing what's good about it.

"I never did hire Rick Rubin—he would just keep coming over."

The new recording technology actually makes it easier to accurately capture tube amps and other vintage sounds.

Yeah, as long as you're using a mike and it's not just plugged into a keyboard program. Rick made a rule that we wouldn't use any samples or synthesizers or computers on this record. If we wanted strings we brought in a string section. We used all kinds of old instruments—mellotrons.

You could spend your whole budget trying to get a Mellotron in tune.

I think you just have to accept that: "It's a Mellotron, it's *supposed* to be out of tune." We worked on this for two years. We finished 25 songs, recorded and mixed. It was a lot of work. I had always planned it as a double album, but when I was hit with the reality of how much that would cost I got cold feet. So we cut it in half. [*laughs*] It was tough. I had one sort of psychedelic song with Carl Wilson and Ringo that I loved, but it didn't fit. I guess I've got my next album done, too.

Cutting the album in half must have given you a chance to shape it, though. It's a very seductive record—one song flows into another very naturally—but in fact there are all kinds of subtle little left turns. Songs with folk or country roots will go into a Beatles bridge or, in the case of "Only a Broken Heart," a little Ray Davies section.

Right, I tried to pick songs and sequence the album so that whatever you expected to happen next would never happen. There was one song called "Girl on LSD" that I had to take off because it was like a limerick, it had seven or eight verses that all did the same thing. We played it this weekend at the Bridge benefit and it went over better than anything else we did! I thought, "Oh no, I left the most popular song off the album." But as soon as you hear one or two verses you know how the whole song is going to go and I didn't want that on this record.

"Crawling Back to You" is much more powerful for being restrained than if you'd blasted through it like a* Damn the Torpedoes *rocker.

Yeah, we had to unlearn that song to get it. There is a straight rock 'n' roll version on tape. Then Rick said, "Look, just go in and jam, play it any way you want"—and the version on the album is the version we got. It's recorded live, the first time we ever played it that way.

"Wildflowers" sounds like it's been around for a thousand years.

That's the only song that ever came to me complete in one spurt. It was first thing in the morning, I just plugged in the guitar and played it, made up the lyrics as I went. I kept listening back to it trying to figure out if I stole it from somewhere! I wish they'd all come like that.

The first single is "You Don't Know How It Feels." Do you expect any flak over having a chorus that goes, "Let's roll another joint"?

I don't want to be seen as some advocate for dope. It just seemed like something the character in that song would say. They let us sing it on "Letterman." I imagine they'll bleep it on MTV. I don't know how radio will treat it. They run *beer* ads all night.

"It's Good to Be King" is a funny tune—isn't that line from a movie?

It's from a Mel Brooks film. George Harrison says it all the time. In a joking way, I should add.

That character seems like he might be okay until he says that if he were king he'd have "a nice little queen who can't run away."

I was kind of thinking of Princess Di.

When you arrived in L.A. you had a job ghostwriting for Leon Russell. It's been 20 years, Tom—want to tell us which of Leon's songs are yours?

I'd have to see the albums to remember. The way it worked was, I would write a song called "Satisfy Yourself." Leon would rewrite it as "I Wanna Satisfy You" and I'd get *no* credit. [*laughs*] I wrote a song called "Lost in Your Eyes" and he then wrote "Rainbow in Your Eyes" which was very similar. But I could never feel bad about Leon—it was a great learning experience.

BILL FLANAGAN

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LETTERS

BOOTLEG

Thanks for the excellent article on bootlegs (Sept. '94). I plan to Xerox it for all my friends.

Art Moy
City of Industry, CA

When I first discovered bootlegs of Van Halen's early work a few years ago, I felt like I had been swept into a time warp. I've acquired over one hundred recordings that span the Dave period all the way back to the earliest of studio work and club shows. For fans like me, bootleg quantity is much more important than quality. If I got a recording that sounded good, it was a bonus. As far as I'm concerned with bootleg Ed, *how* he did it is much more important than what a recording sounds like.

Randy Shiffrar
Plant City, FL

As a discriminating bootleg collector, I would like to warn those not acquainted with the product about the widespread lack of quality in the bootleg industry. For every crystal-clear, CD-quality transcription of a radio master, there are several recordings made with a built-in mike on a Walkman from section 84, row 4. Other possible bonus features include tape flutter, noticeably altered pitch (speed), Niagara-style hiss and nearby sing-along fans more audible than the vocalist onstage. The worst offenses are on recordings of hard rock acts like Metallica, Pantera or Queensryche. High-quality recordings are indeed becoming available, but perfect recordings are still rare in the bootleg market.

Erik Lyons
Portland, OR

There is a videotape, unauthorized but well circulated among fans, of the Beatles' first American concert, filmed in Washington, D.C. on February 11, 1964. During the last chorus of "Please Please Me," there is a shot of a young lady with a portable tape recorder on her lap, one arm extended holding a microphone, the other operating a home movie camera. The first American Beatle bootlegger caught in action!

Michael Lynch
Garden City, NY

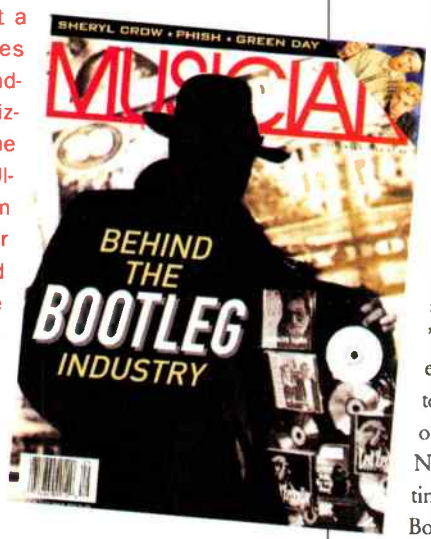
DEPHISHIENT

I wanted to commend you for Charles M. Young's Phish article (Sept. '94). Being a noodle dancer myself, a supposed member of the MTV generation, a Deadhead and an avid Phish lover with a mere 22 shows under my Guatemalan belt, I appreciate Young's open-minded view of Phish's unique talent as improvisational musicians and aesthetic entertainers. Young's brutal honesty is refreshing. From all of us non-mopers, thanks.

Rebecca Quate
Madison, WI

It seems that major performers are asking for it when it comes to unusual material ending up as "bootlegs." McCartney issues material "only" to the Russian market; Clapton performs special concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, and officially releases but a smattering of it. The Beatles and their producer brag endlessly about their studio wizardry, yet scream when the bootleggers sniff out the "Ultra Rare Trax" and make them available. If artists and their labels would develop limited editions geared toward the collector market, I'd certainly stop buying boots in favor of a wider menu of specialty performances. Only a fool lets opportunities get away.

Gary B. Shaw
Glen Ellyn, IL



I had pretty much given up on your magazine when that egomaniac Charles M. Young attempted to rake Jimmy Page over the coals in a supposed "interview." When I saw Phish mentioned on your cover, I thought I'd give you another shot. Imagine my disappointment when I saw the story was written by Mr. Young. Was the purpose of the feature to insult Phish's fans ("drooling morons") and influences ("The Dead suck, and that's all there is to it")? I gave you guys one more chance and you blew it. I have bought my last copy of your magazine.

Sean Duross
Kalamazoo, MI

FROSTY REVIEW

Deborah Frost's review of Liz Phair's new album (Oct. '94) wasn't so much an evaluation as it was a rant about Phair's audience. Apparently it's better to sell 15,000 copies of a CD to really earnest, politically correct folk than 200,000 copies to (gasp!) white college males. By the way, I'm a 35-year-old white male, and I find Liz Phair the most exciting songwriter of the '90s so far. I don't want to jump her bones, I just want to listen to the music. Where do I fit in Frost's demographic?

Tim Cain
Decatur, IL

Liz Phair's *Exile in Guyville* and the new *Whip-Smart* have all of the right elements: well-crafted songs, a great garage-pop sound, insight to the writer's personality, a fuck-you attitude, all sung by a great singer. I suggest Deborah Frost forget about trying to come up with something clever to write and instead just listen.

John Totaro
Dover, MA

CLAPMAN

Well, most of you can recognize God in a Batman suit (*Rough Mix*, p. 12, Oct. '94) posing at a benefit for ex–drug abusers. But thanks to those who guessed (among others) Bruce Willis, Jack Nicholson, Tom Waits, Dustin Hoffman, Neil Young and Boz Scaggs. Our five free subscriptions (current subscriptions will be extended) go to: Barry Simmons, Wallingford, PA; Gary Remy, Palm Bay, FL; Jon Whitney, Reading, MA; Hector Penalosa, San Francisco, CA; Gary Willoughby, Durham, NC.

McCARTNEY CONTEST

PolyGram Video is proud to announce the winner of the "Paul Is Live" world tour video contest: Sue Ullenberg of Brown Deer, WI wins a signed, original framed photograph of Paul at Abbey Road (taken by Linda McCartney). One hundred second prize winners receive a copy of the "Paul Is Live" in-concert world tour video.

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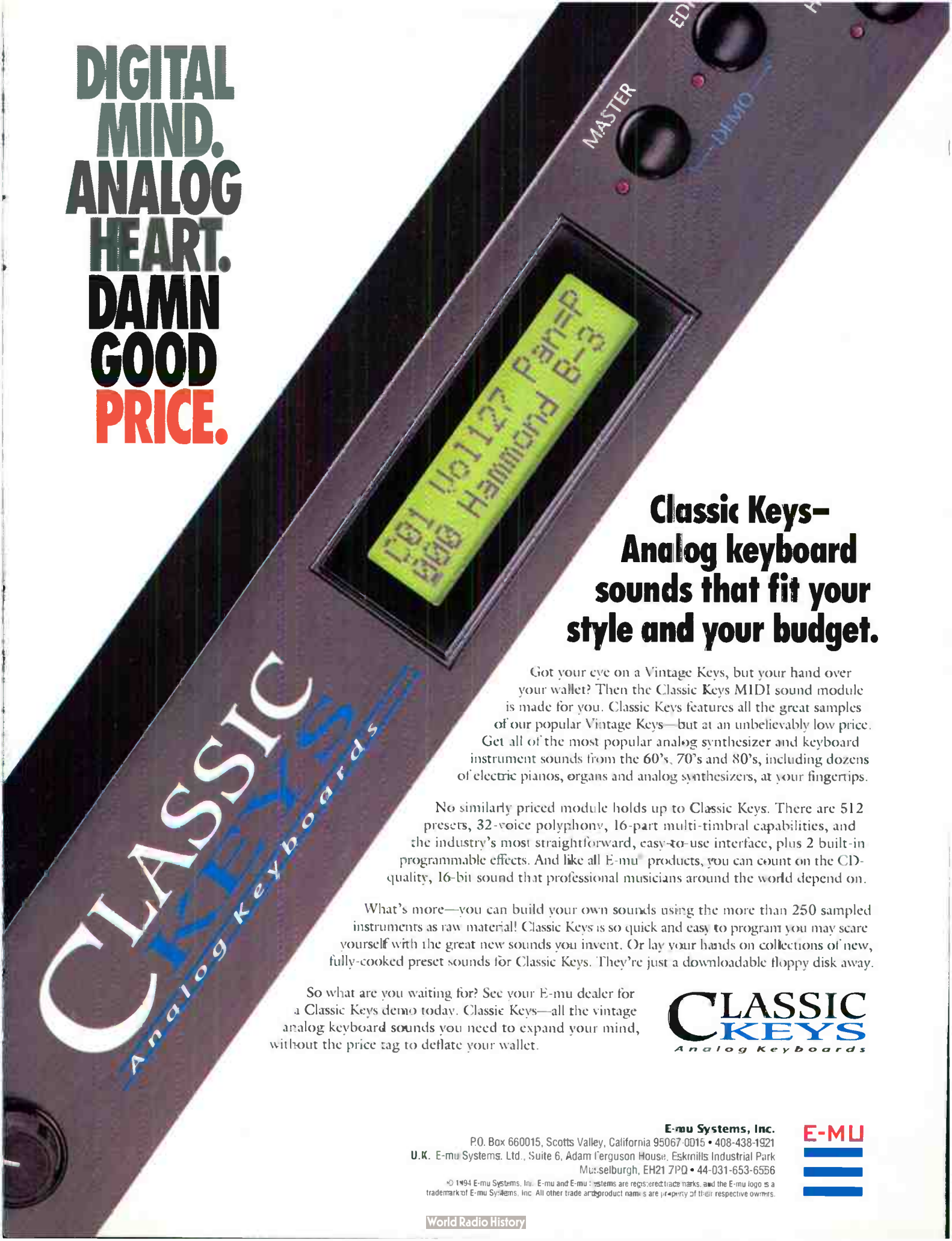

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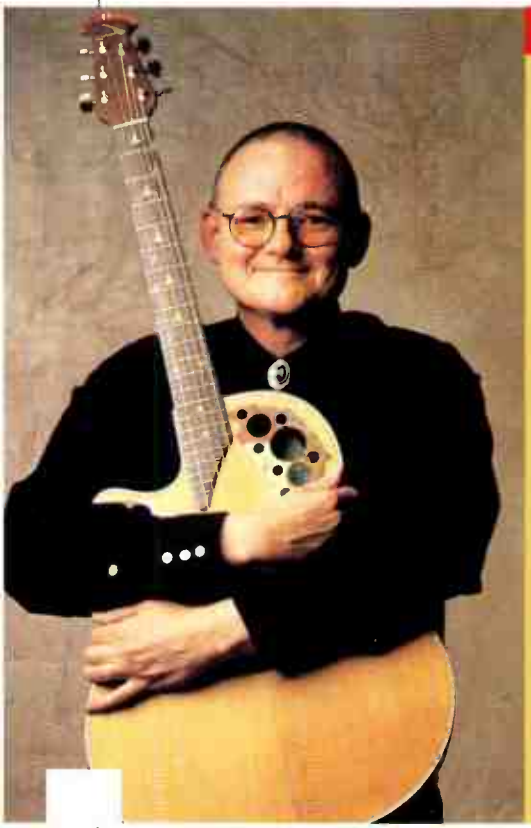

PRIVATE LESSON

ADRIAN LEGG

On his latest album *High Strung Tall Tales* (Relativity), Adrian Legg's always tasty playing is at the forefront. The album's centerpiece, "High Strung Suite," features chops-busting picking patterns, all achieved with a combination of thumb and the first two fingers (no picks). "Basically they're banjo rolls," he says. "The minute you apply banjo techniques to guitar, you break away from the traditional idea that the thumb is the bass; it becomes just another note."

Legg's thumb appears to break out of the pattern with independent lines, but he claims this is "an illusion. I don't believe the thumb can be independent. I wouldn't advise anyone to learn a piece by first dividing it into bassline and chords or melody. Learn it together as a whole. Establish a count, and play everything that happens on every beat. Think of music in terms of vertical slices, complete patterns where the whole hand is involved, rather than parallel lines. You can't do two things separately, but you can do one complex thing."

A GREAT DAY IN HARLEM

This classic 1958 photograph by Art Kane brought together an amazing group of jazz musicians spanning six decades of its history, from Lester Young to Thelonious Monk to Sonny Rollins. Now *A Great Day in Harlem*, an award-winning documentary by Jean Bach, brings that photograph to life, using interviews, photographs, home-movie footage and, of course, music, to chart the personal and musicianly roads which led to this day. Bach did some traveling herself to track down interviews with jazz greats like Horace Silver, Dizzy Gillespie and Art Blakey. "It took me years to catch up to Art," Bach recalls with dry humor. "I was always one woman too late."

A radio producer and lifelong fan of the music, Bach says her agenda was "to get a story told," which she does by letting the musicians talk about each other. Many of these legends have since passed away—"that's the bittersweet part"—but the music lives on. So does Bach's film; she is plotting a CD-ROM edition that can incorporate scenes cut from the 60-minute movie. "Call it *Son of a Great Day*," she laughs.

SIX-STRING SERENADE

DAVID ROBACK plays a 1960-vintage Martin 000-28 guitar made of Brazilian rosewood through an old Fender Vibravero amp—and, he notes, is most fond of older Fender and Ampeg tube amps. Onstage his mid-'60s Fender Telecaster runs through either a Fender or Silvertone amp. "Sometimes I use an old Epiphone guitar, sometimes I use an old Kay," he says. "It depends on the song. If I play slide, I use the Kay. I paid 50 bucks for it. It's a cheap guitar." HOPE SANDOVAL favors AKG microphones and uses a new Jerry Jones guitar, based on the classic Silvertone model with lipstick-tube pickup. "It's a beautiful guitar," says she.

says, "we're considering releasing very soon."

For most fans, of course, Sandoval is the pivotal figure in Mazzy Star. She doesn't seem to like it, herself. She sings, she's ethereal and she's reputed to be romantically linked with William Reid of the Jesus & Mary Chain (she sings on that band's recent single "Sometimes Always"), with whom Mazzy Star began a seven-week tour in October. Not surprisingly, Sandoval doesn't say she's Reid's girlfriend, and she doesn't say she isn't. In fact—I know, I'd been warned—she often doesn't say anything at all. Yet to conclude that Sandoval is bitchy or unresponsive is both a miscalculation and an insult. The better word is shy. Very shy.

Is fronting a band cool, or weird, I ask her toward conversation's end.

"It's weird," she instantly replies.

Gazing out the window, down the street in front of Vesuvio, Sandoval mostly looks like she'd rather be at the dentist's office, or at least in the safe haven of IRS headquarters, getting audited. Occasionally she lets loose with a real head-scratcher; my favorite was her response to a question about comparisons she must have received to her friend Kendra Smith, whom she replaced in the final days of Opal.

"I don't remember *ever* being compared to Kendra," she tells me. "I really have no memory of it." She looks over at Roback. "*Was* I compared to Kendra in the beginning?" She looks down at the table. "I know I was compared a lot in the beginning to that girl from Cowboy Junkies—I don't know her name—and the girl from 10,000 Maniacs. But I don't remember Kendra."

"Patsy Cline, she's been compared to," Roback helpfully adds.

Most fascinating in this conversation with Mazzy Star—or probably any conversation with

Mazzy Star, if you've got a tape recorder and like to ask questions—is the pacing, the dynamics of who says what, and when. At work are three variables: your question, the bandmember who will answer your question and the amount of time that will pass before your question is actually answered. The overall impression, in retrospect, is that Roback can and will sincerely answer any question, but often feels that he's dominating the interview. So he occasionally clams up until his partner speaks. Thus:

MUSICIAN: *Do you think there's a lot of room for growth within the context of Mazzy Star? [four seconds elapse] Are you looking to grow? [five seconds] Are you looking to just further explore what you've got? [six seconds] Do you have ambitions?*

SANDOVAL: [*after 12 full seconds*] I think there's always room for people to grow, just like anybody else.

Speaking with Mazzy Star, those purveyors of icy blue musical melancholia, the most animated moments come not in discussion of music, textures, the record business or other people's music. They occur when I mention a concert where Sandoval had berated an audience for clapping, since they'd just talked through most of her performance.

"I did do that," says Sandoval, about as forcefully as her petite frame can muster. "Because that was the truth. We had just played 'Into Dust,' and I couldn't hear myself because there were so many people talking. And after we finished, everybody applauded. It was obvious that nobody really listened, and everybody was just going through the motions of what you go through when you go see a band that you're told is supposed to be really good." She looks down at her glass of 7-Up and concludes: "I don't like playing live."

Doesn't she think that she'll simply get numb to that eventually?

"I think I've been numb from the beginning," she says. "And I'm still numb. I just try to block everybody out."

Roback, commiserating, adds his two cents. "People always want to fuck with you, no matter what you've done," he says. "No matter how great you've ever been, they always want to fuck with you, because that's the nature of the world. They always want to fuck around with you."

"The frustrating thing is," Sandoval continues, in a rush of feeling, "you play a live show and the audience pays what, ten dollars, and it's like they've *rented* you for the hour and a half you play. It's bullshit. It's bullshit."

So you'd rather just be a studio band, then?

"No," she says. "I would prefer to be able to play live and for them to just come and listen and that's it—and not expect anything else. I don't understand why people expect me to communicate with the audience. They've paid ten dollars to listen to the music live, and that's all it is. And there's nothing wrong with me that I just come out and sing and don't speak, and don't dance."

As Hope concludes her impassioned statement, the Vesuvio P.A. system blares "It's Only Rock 'N' Roll" by notoriously shy rock stars the Rolling Stones.

"We've never been the backdrop to a party," concludes David Roback. "All through the '80s, there was, like, this big party going on. Hope and I were never invited to this party. We certainly aren't going to get up and start entertaining this party we were never invited to. That hasn't changed. We like to play music. We're not trying to make a big *deal* out of it.

"We're just doing it."

Lord, I'm just at my wit's end.'"

Buck chuckles and shrugs. "Score one for Michael. I was sure he made that up himself."

It's oddly reassuring to find that, not only is a lot of what we think *we* know about R.E.M. wrong, but even the band members are often clueless. But they're interconnected on such a profound level that it all converges somehow. Which isn't as odd as it seems. When was the last time you thought about what your arms and legs were doing while you were driving?

"We played each other's instruments so much on the last few albums it's all become a blur," Mike Mills reveals. "On the demo for 'Everybody Hurts' I played the drums and Peter played the bass. I'd swear it was Bill who played the bass part on the final track, but everybody in the band tells me I did it. I can't even remember writing it. Probably because I was working so hard on getting that electric piano part. There's something devilishly hard about about trying to play an electric piano in time on a song that slow." He chuckles. "I still think Bill played the bass, though. I'm getting like that guy in *Sleeper*."

Gentle and urbane, Mills is driving me around Athens, waving to friends and talking about how the town has helped ground the band over the years. "It's hard to come back from New York or L.A. and act like a big shit when you keep running into people you had to scrounge a few bucks off to do your laundry," he points out. He nods toward two women standing idly on the corner. Old friends? "Pretty sure they're hookers, actually."

If Athens didn't exist, R.E.M. would have had to invent it. The small college town tucked in the Georgia mountains seamlessly blends magnolia and brick antebellum quaintness with East Village/Left Bank weirdness. One could easily imagine Andy Griffith and Andy Warhol high-fiving each other as they glide down Jackson Street towards the legendary 40 Watt Club.

But listening to "King of Comedy" on R.E.M.'s scrappy new album, you get a sense of how lucky Michael Stipe has been to have this place for a refuge. "It totally sucks when you realize that people don't have any concept of what you really do," he says. "They just know you as a celebrity, and that's pathetic. It's another self you carry around, and it's not necessarily a club that I would recommend anyone wanting to join.

"To be a celebrity now, all you have to do is be in a car wreck," he continues. "You're right up there with O.J.'s lawyer and who—Tonya Harding's bodyguard? Are these people that you *really* want to be associated with?"

To paraphrase an old Dylan song, you tend to love these guys not just for what they are, but for what they're not. Their lack of rockstar attitude or affectation approaches the miraculous. An industry vet who met them at a recent Warner's party for *Monster* was stunned. "My God," he babbled over the phone. "They're exactly like *real* people!"

Yeah, only more so. And listening to them talk about creating music is a lot like watching those old film clips of collapsing buildings played in reverse. Welcome to part deux.

MUSICIAN: *Okay, class. As a band, R.E.M. are introverted alternative megastars, while U2 are your extrovert counterparts. You're both undergoing major changes, but they're much more self-conscious about discovering, say, irony—which is ironic in itself. Discuss.*

BUCK: Well, they're consciously about making big statements. They wave the flag and want to stand for something. They went for the higher ground. So for them to break out of that, they have to do it just as strongly. They can't do it by just staying home and wearing black T-shirts and doing just fuck-all, like I did. Their nature is to do it in public. They built that platform for themselves, so it has to be a total, huge leap. And of course it's self-conscious. They're a self-conscious band.

BERRY: We have one more letter in our name. [*laughter*] I really like them. I was listening to "One" the other day and that's got to be one of the greatest songs of the last ten years. They're friends of ours, but I don't really think there's a whole lot in common between us. They don't mind having a personality-driven band. They've scaled this Olympus, and there's nothing wrong with that. They've apparently wanted that since they were 17. I was talking to Larry [Mullen] about it, and I guess the difference is that they want to be the biggest and the best band in the world. We just want to be the best band in the world.

MUSICIAN: *Mike, you and Michael played "One" at an awards show last year with the U2 rhythm section. How did it feel?*

MILLS: Honestly? I was up there strumming an acoustic thinking, "I hope Bono and Edge aren't pissed at us for doing this song with their guys." [*laughs*] But I understand what they've been doing. They felt things had gotten too histrionic and heartfelt. So they stood in front of the crowd and took their old piece of paper, tore it in half and threw it in the air. For us, it was more internal on *Monster*—that need to rock again without resorting to the usual clichés, skipping the overdubs.

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of "One," Monster is crawling with ambivalent love songs. Alternative music mostly shied away from the subject until you guys did "The One I Love" and "Losing My Religion," songs that captured the often contradictory layers of love and betrayal, affection and jealousy that occur in real life.*

STIPE: Don't forget obsession. I mean, "Losing My Religion" is nothing if it's not a rewrite of "Every Breath You Take." I thought that was an amazing pop single, and lyrically really incredible. I didn't

ne Mark of a Great Guitaris .

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A GUITAR LESSON WITH PETER BUCK

On a late autumn afternoon, Peter Buck is tuning his Martin acoustic in R.E.M.'s tiny rehearsal space in the basement of their offices on a shady Athens, Georgia street. "I could write 'Driver 8' three times a record, and we try to stay away from that," he muses. "But I love the E minor chord. I could use it till the day I die. And if there's a way to recontextualize it and push it in a different direction, that's fine.

On "Losing My Religion," Buck came up with the original riff on mandolin. "The verse chords are very simple, first position Am to Em [see Fig. 4]. I love that progression and I've used it a lot. That's a real secret of the trade, folks. The Beatles did it, Elvis Costello does it and we do it. Going from Cm to Gm just isn't the same. You need those open strings for that drone."

Fig. 1

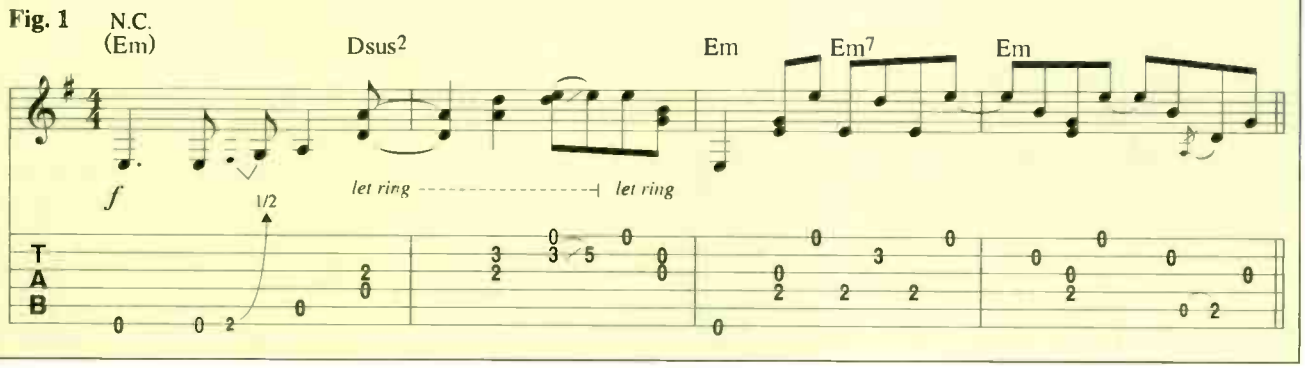
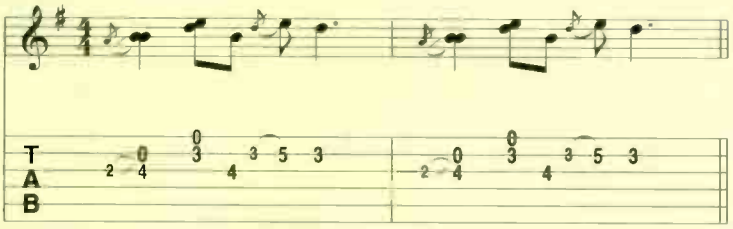


Fig. 2

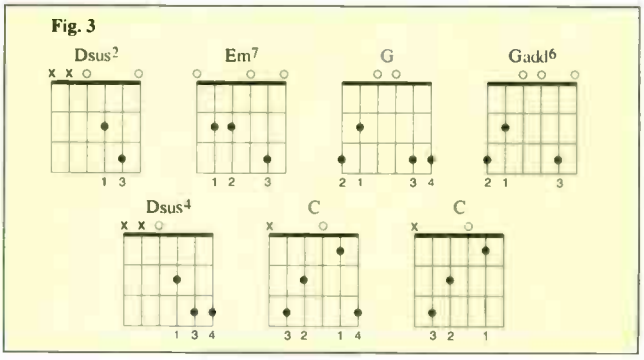


"'The One I Love' originally had kind of an Appalachian folky feel," he points out. He fingerpicks an early version, which sounds somewhat like the Stones' "Play with Fire" crossed with "East Virginia." "Eventually I isolated the main riff on an electric guitar through a Marshall amp, really distorted. Then I finger an open D chord, leaving the high E string open [Dsus2]. Although I'm not a blues player, I think of the next bit as a kind of T-Bone Walker thing. But instead of bending from the D note up to the E, I slide up with my ring finger. So from the beginning, it looks like this [see Fig. 1]. I then come back and make the Em chord an Em7 and pick around it. I usually prefer to write a bridge instead of a solo, but here I took the original fingerpicked section and transformed it into a single-line solo, mostly on the third through fifth frets [see Fig. 2]. The chorus is essentially first-position G, D and C chord shapes [see Fig. 3]."

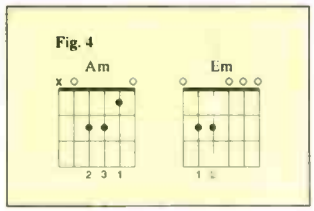
Buck enlisted Peter Holsapple to play acoustic guitar live with the track while Buck played mandolin. "Later I overdubbed myself delicately picking the chords that Peter Holsapple was strumming." Buck plays the opening figure on guitar while fingering the Dsus2 chord we used in the last song and continues through the pattern something like Fig. 5. During the verses, hammer on the Am and Em chords freely, then complete the verse with first position Dm and G chords.

"The bridge of a song is supposed to widen it either emotionally, lyrically or rhythmically," continues Buck. "This song was finished, so rather than come up with a bridge that wasn't going to tell you anything, we needed an instrumental hook. I

Fig. 3



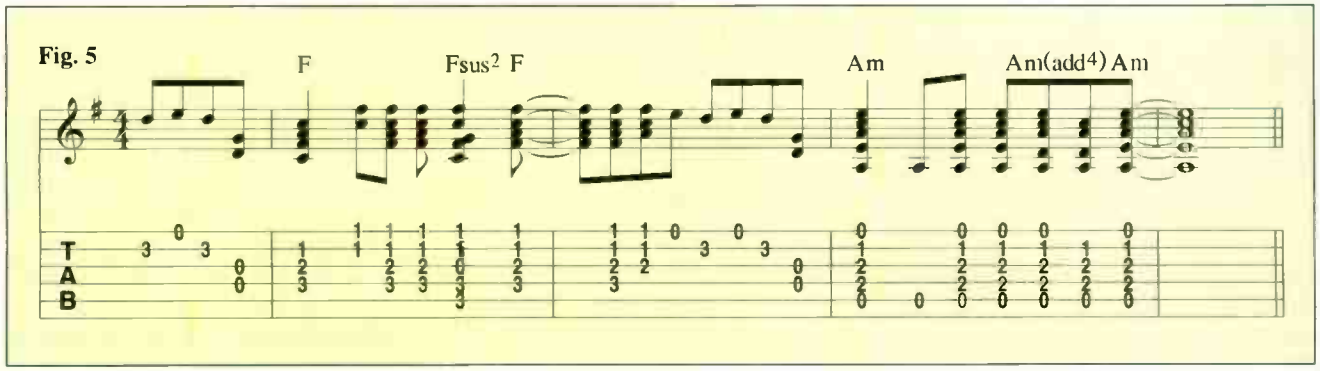
didn't want a solo; a Fleetwood Mac type of breakdown seemed a nice idea. So I did this little riff on the mandolin while Michael hummed over it and re-did one of the vocal lines. It was a nice way to get into the third verse, which finishes the song, without throwing a curve into the lyric process."



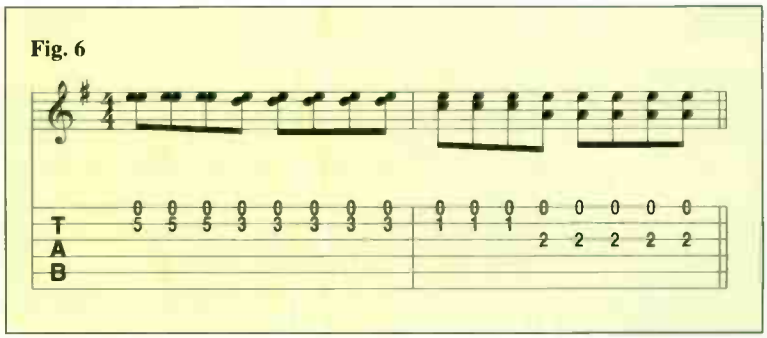
The simplest way to play Buck's mandolin break on guitar is to begin on the B string (see Fig. 6). Make sure you also hit the open high E string each time, and when you finish on the G string. Notice that you're playing in the same E pentatonic box as the previous song's solo.

rough transition, a total change of perception." Buck believes Stipe's lyrics fit his musical intentions like a glove. "In the verses, Michael's lyrics are a gentle, lilting plea, and in the tougher chorus it resolves with a kind of complaint, which seems really appropriate."

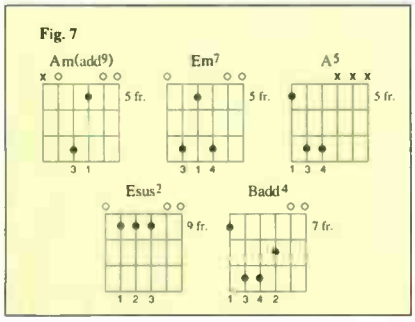
The song is based on the chord shapes in Fig. 7. During the verses, Peter plays the Am and Em "demolished" [Am (add^9) and Em^7], striking the chords once and filtering them through an outboard digital delay. (If you don't have one, you can fake it by upstroking the chords with gently decreasing pressure.) The entire chorus is played by barring and sliding the A^5. Peter



On "Bang and Blame," the current video and single from *Monster*, Buck updates his folksy approach by using sophisticated chord voices in the Police-like verse, slamming Nirvana-style chorus and ringing bridge. The chords are complex yet simple to play. Remember that Buck and the rest of R.E.M. tend to write the music before Michael Stipe comes up with lyrics or melody. "Sometimes he'll have a set of lyrics that fit over a piece of music, which happened on 'I Took Your Name.' Usually he'll move around lyrical ideas and melodies to fit the contours of the music. My idea for a melody was a little more stark during the verses for 'Bang and Blame.' But he came up with something that was just so lilting. I was delighted but surprised, because he wasn't writing things that were so obviously pretty on this record. But it really made sense."



The haunting, echoing verse features Buck's old standby, the alternating Am and Em, dressed up in new clothes. "Yeah, I did manage to get it in there, I can't help it," he chuckles. "But I play that progression up around the fifth fret in a weird set of voicings I call Am and Em *demolished*. You still have those resonating high E and B drone strings that add overtones that aren't in the normal chord."



Buck's intention was to create a stark emotional contrast between the verse and chorus. "The verses had a floating, 'day at the beach' feeling. Without knowing what the lyrics would be, I knew I wanted the chorus to be a very plays it like an incomplete A barre chord, leaving out the third. This lends the chord an emotional ambivalence that sets up the "complaintive" chorus. "If you play the modal version of the chord like this, it doesn't say whether it's major or minor. Your ear sort of hears it as a major, but that's not quite what you're playing," Buck says.

For the chorus, he begins with the A^5 shape at the fifth fret, slides it up to the eighth, back down to the fifth, and down to the third. Then back up to the fifth, then to the eighth, where he finishes by sliding down to the seventh fret and finally to the sixth before returning to the verse. "You're not really supposed to do chromatic, half-step walk-downs in pop songs," explains Buck. "But because it's a kind of wooden-headed way to resolve, I gave Michael the choice to do a wooden-headed 'complaintive' chorus part."

Peter's bridge chords are Esus^2 and Badd^4. Alternate them three times, giving each a full measure, then slide the Badd^4 down two frets to the fifth fret A position. Then return to the verse. During the bridge, Buck plays distortion. "I love distortion, because it's so musical and nontechnical." Remember to play the open high E and B strings throughout all verse and bridge chords. Have fun.

BY VIC GARBARINI/TRANSCRIPTIONS BY DAVE WHITEHILL/MUSIC ENGRAVING BY CHARYLU ROBERTS

They made it sound like we were the Joads from *The Grapes of Wrath*, or something. Anyway, I remember we put on makeup and suits and it seemed pretty great. Lester was there and he was really drunk. I mean, really, really, *really* drunk. You had to walk past him and he had this little Zen phrase for you, like [*growling*] "You rotten cocksucker." And everybody had a different one! I was sure he was divining something in all these people as he cussed us out.

So that's where Michael got the "jelly-beans/Birthday cake/Lester Bangs" bit. I was wondering what the hell Leonard Bernstein and Leonid Brezhnev were doing in there, 'cause they sure weren't at the party. But if you want a glimpse of the Apocalypse, dump someone who's never been to New York in the middle of Times Square on a Friday night. I always tend to think of the end of the world as being kind of an information overkill–brain death thing. So the metaphor kind of evolved.

STIPE: I think memory is a channel through which things that are real—and things that are not real—combine and become one. We saw that very scarily with Ronald Reagan when he was talking about experiences that he thought he'd had as a politician, when in fact, he was referring back to the movies he's acted in. There's also a positive side if you believe that's what dreams are there for, and I think that's really legitimate. I don't really separate the real from the unreal when it comes to writing fiction.

MUSICIAN: *Musically, your songs reconfigure various fragments of tradition that mutate and blend. I think many people are naive about how much cross-pollination goes on. King Sunny Ade of Nigeria once said one of his chief influences was country singer Jim Reeves, for instance.*

BUCK: And I've heard that Howlin' Wolf said his main influence was Jimmie Rodgers, the Hillybilly brakeman. And I can see that weird, blue yodel he does going into Howlin' Wolf's "ah-ooo" thing. Obviously, "End of the World" is related to Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues" by way of Chuck Berry's "Too Much Monkey Business." And he probably got it from some guy in a medicine show in St. Louis in 1945 banging on a pot or something. These things keep evolving—ours has a chorus and Dylan's doesn't. It's partly conscious and partly unconscious.

BUCK: In my brief career at college I had a professor who taped people up in the mountains singing songs that hadn't changed one word since 1750. This one woman played a song that she said had been in her family for hundreds of years. So you hear her tap her foot and go, "One for the money/Two for the show..." and it was "Blue Suede Shoes"! [*chuckles*] Apparently, she'd heard it on the radio and forgotten about it.

MUSICIAN: *Confess. Ever since you guys did "Love Is All Around" live, all your choruses, including "Man on the Moon" and "Everybody Hurts," have been ripoffs of the Troggs.*

MILLS: Not guilty! The Troggs go from G to Am to C up to D. "Man in the Moon" we go up to Bm, then back down to G, Am, and then hit the D chord. Now that you mention it, "Fall on Me" is the same chords as "Love Is All Around"—but I swear we didn't know it at the time. It's funny, a song like "Everybody Hurts" is so absurdly simple that we would never have been comfortable doing it till recently. As you get better at songwriting, you only wind up writing what's necessary for the song. It's not like you set out to write a simple song, but that's what comes out, and you recognize it's complete.

Yet we have enough of an identity as a band to bring something to that song that makes it our own. I was proud we could do something blatantly emotional without it becoming mawkish.

MUSICIAN: *Now that you've become the godfathers of alternative, who do you see coming up that you admire?*

BERRY: One of the most exciting bands we saw was Grant Lee Buffalo. It was at the Roxy and I somehow got thrown out by a large bouncer for no reason whatsoever. But, man, they were great, and they may tour with us. I was the only one in the group who voted to tour last time—I could do it every year. But now that Peter is auditioning for another guitar player to come along and cover parts, I'm going to bring along an extra drummer so I can take a little middle-aged-man break.

BUCK: I saw an amazing band here in L.A. called Guided by Voices, who probably represent what rock 'n' roll is all about. They're our age and they have eight albums out. They do it on the lowest, most basic level. Their records are four-tracky-falling apart. Live, they're an incredible power pop band, big loud guitars. And the lead singer's a schoolteacher, he does it part time. He gets onstage and suddenly he's Mick Jagger. I was so moved by the whole show. It was in this great but dumpy little punk club that I didn't think existed out here anymore. It was way cool to look around and not see acres of silicon, fake breasts and nose jobs.

MUSICIAN: *Michael, Tim Booth of James said that you, he and Morrissey have this private fan club for an obscure Canadian singer who you all feel is the best vocalist since Patti Smith...*

STIPE: That's right. Her name is Mary Margaret O'Hara, and she has one album out [*Queen of America*, on Virgin]. I am such a fan of hers. She's constantly stepping on the hem of her dress and stumbling, barely catching herself musically and vocally. Like Patti Smith, she's not afraid to just step up there and let whatever happens, happen. It's wild and loose, and that's so appealing to me as a listener and a singer. I love that strange sense of meter, rhythm and clunky syntax that really works. It comes across totally uncalculated and fresh. That's something that I strove for on *Monster*. I think in the past I've thought too much about the meter, rhythm and words, whatever. It's more spontaneous—"Kenneth" is such a joy to sing I don't care what the words are about. I know that they're very well written and they get an idea across to a lot of people.

MUSICIAN: *Finally, I want to ask each of you what you would say to someone young and struggling to find some balance and focus.*

BERRY: Have as much faith as you possibly can in your own instincts. I hate to use the word family because it sounds so right-wing, but that's really gone for a lot of kids now. You can join together, in a band or whatever, and follow your gut and don't worry about what people are telling you.

BUCK: I'd agree. One of the reasons I got into this band was my fantasy, or theory, that in a world that doesn't make any sense, you have to make your own sense.

MILLS: The glue is the love that we have for each other. Maybe you're not totally happy with the mix, but what you do becomes such a labor of love that you do what it takes to get along. Because it's worth it.

STIPE: As Ice Cube said, "Do I look like a fucking role model?" [*laughter*] Which was a beautiful statement, because as it turns out he's eating his words years later. He actually is a role model, and a damn good one.

I guess what I respect most about the band is the fact that they can put up with me in such close quarters. That respect, and admiration and love is really universal between the four of us, and I would extend that to our managers. We can be intractable at times, but ultimately at the end of the day we wash our hands and we shake on it.

MUSICIAN: *How do you stay on that beam without getting stuck in external rules and political correctness, which amounts to doing the right thing from the wrong part of yourself?*

STIPE: Yeah, fuck that. Just be true to yourself and if compromise enters into it, you'll know it at the end of the day. And everybody grows in stages, you can't be afraid to be vulnerable. Ultimately, "Shiny Happy People" was probably an abortion of an idea. But it was genuine at the time, and that's that. No regrets, no compromises, no apologies.

MUSICIAN: *This obsession with being hip and correct all the time can just be another form of fear.*

STIPE: I don't know what "correct" is. It's just that everybody wants to be loved and admired by everybody, and there comes a point when you realize that can never happen. Finally, you're just going to have to be loved and admired by yourself, and by the people around you who really matter to you. Then whatever it is you're doing is going to translate to other people.

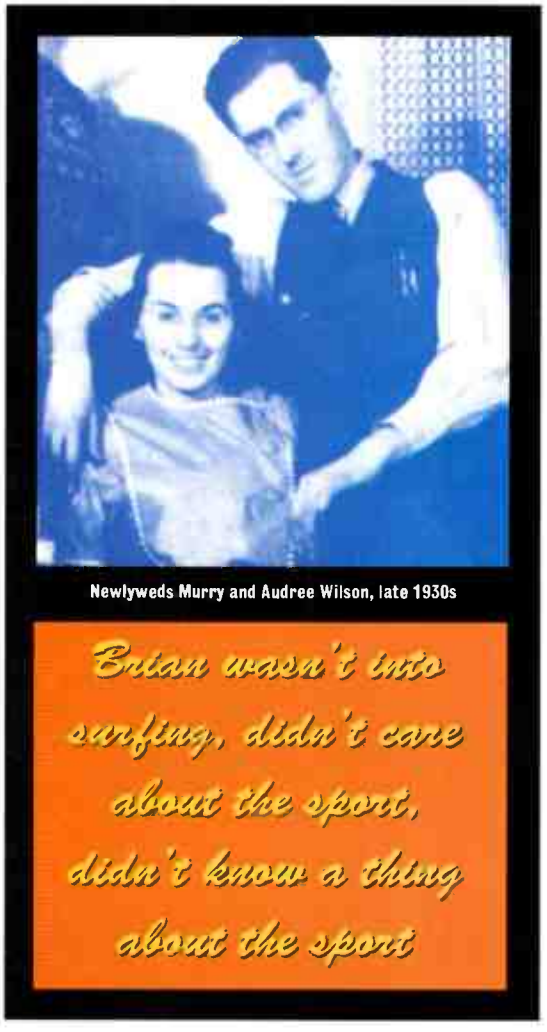
around your head in a tube ride"—that would evolve into crowd pleasers like "Surf Beat," "Surfin' Drums" and "Shake N' Stomp."

Brian Wilson and his Hawthorne High pals had driven to the Rendezvous Ballroom to investigate Dale's tumultuous gigs, awed by the intensity of the kids. Dale's heavier and louder numbers also drew the notice of Clarence Leo Fender, owner of the Fender Electric Instrument Co. in Fullerton, California.

The clean-living and good-natured Dale was a fitting role model for any Southern California teen. As a devotee of the Fender Stratocaster, he was also a perfect candidate to test Fender's new Showman amp, which was intended for exactly the kind of high-volume rock 'n' roll punishment Dale was benignly inflicting on his "Shake N' Stomp" fans.

Brian wanted to learn more about surfing lore, about songwriting and about pleasing the Morgans—and as rapidly as possible. Prior to the tryout at Guild Music/Stereo Masters, Brian had been down on surf music, deeming it a knockoff of the predictable Ventures. Dick Dale was a fantastic live act, Brian felt, but personally he wanted to aim higher with his own music, locating a new plateau midway between Gershwin and the grandest Four Freshmen material.

Yet the Morgans changed his mind. Something in the automatic enthusiasm this mature couple had expressed for Dennis's ideas compelled him to reconsider the entire proposition. Plotting out the song with cousin Mike, Brian restructured the surf tune he'd fashioned for Hawthorne High teacher Fred Morgan's music class, making it into a straightforward, boosterish anthem, embellished with references to morning surf reports, the Stomp and surf "knots" (friction-generated calcium deposits on surfers' knees and insteps). For the vocal arrangement, he lifted the corny "bop" vocal exertions and "di-di-dip" rhythmic chants featured on Jan and Dean's early singles.



Newlyweds Murry and Audree Wilson, late 1930s

Brian wasn't into surfing, didn't care about the sport, didn't know a thing about the sport

Murry and Audree Wilson had planned to spend the Labor Day weekend in Mexico City. The boys would stay behind, adult neighbors agreeing to look in on them. Murry gave Brian nearly $200 in cash, ordering it be reserved for emergencies, and goodbyes were exchanged.

The Wilsons' parents were gone less than half a day when Al Jardine and Brian had hatched a plan to rent musical equipment for the weekend in order to properly polish their new version of "Surfin'." The boys stayed up most of the next three days, playing endless variations of "Surfin'," Brian sometimes taping the best takes on his Wollensak portable tape console.

By the time Audree and Murry came back from Mexico, the spell of the home session and its accomplishments had so consumed the boys that their first impulse was to share it with the two parents. Thus, no one was prepared for Murry's reaction when he saw the clutter of expensive instruments and the explanation of how they'd been obtained. He threw Brian against the living room wall for "disobedience," shouting that the money had been "strictly for emergencies," and insisting it be paid back "within one week!"

It was over an hour before Audree calmed her husband, soothed her boys and their friends, and urged them to play something on the instruments before—at Murry's shrill insistence—they were returned to Wallichs' Music City.

Out came "Surfin'," and Murry got very quiet. As the last notes faded, he cleared his throat with the exaggerated cool of a would-be impresario and stated that the song, though hardly professional, should be recorded. Brian nodded but said nothing; as usual, he was way ahead of his dad. Their song was demoed in a three-track session by Hite Morgan on his Ampex 200 deck at Guild Music on September 15, 1961, a week after *Life* magazine had done a seven-page photo spread on surfin' at Malibu Beach, headlined "THE MAD HAPPY SURFERS, A WAY OF LIFE ON THE WAVETOPS."

Did Morgan like the sound? He looked up and answered that he intended to book formal studio time as soon as possible. On October 3, 1961, the Wilsons, Love and Jardine recorded 12 takes of "Surfin'" at the World-Pacific facilities in Hollywood.

Brian, who had never surfed or thought to, heard the song pouring out of the radio in his '57 Ford just after Christmas '61 as he drove away from the Foster's Freeze with his brothers and local guitarist David Lee Marks. "...Surfin' is the only life, the only way for me..."

Struggling with his composure as his passengers began gagging on their refreshments, hollering to neighbors and pounding on him in spasmodic glee, Brian stopped the Ford and swallowed hard. He felt like he was gonna be sick.

NOTHING WAS turning out as he planned.

The Wilsons were products of pioneer stock, descendants of Henry Wilson of New York State, the first Wilson born in America (circa 1803), whose parents migrated from the British Isles in the wake of American independence. Farmers, stonemasons and master plumbers who plunked pianos and banjos in their spare time, the Wilson clan would trek westward to Meigs County, Ohio and later Hutchinson, Kansas before being lured to Southern California by ads in *The Hutchinson News* for Sunkist oranges and the Santa Fe railway. Fol-

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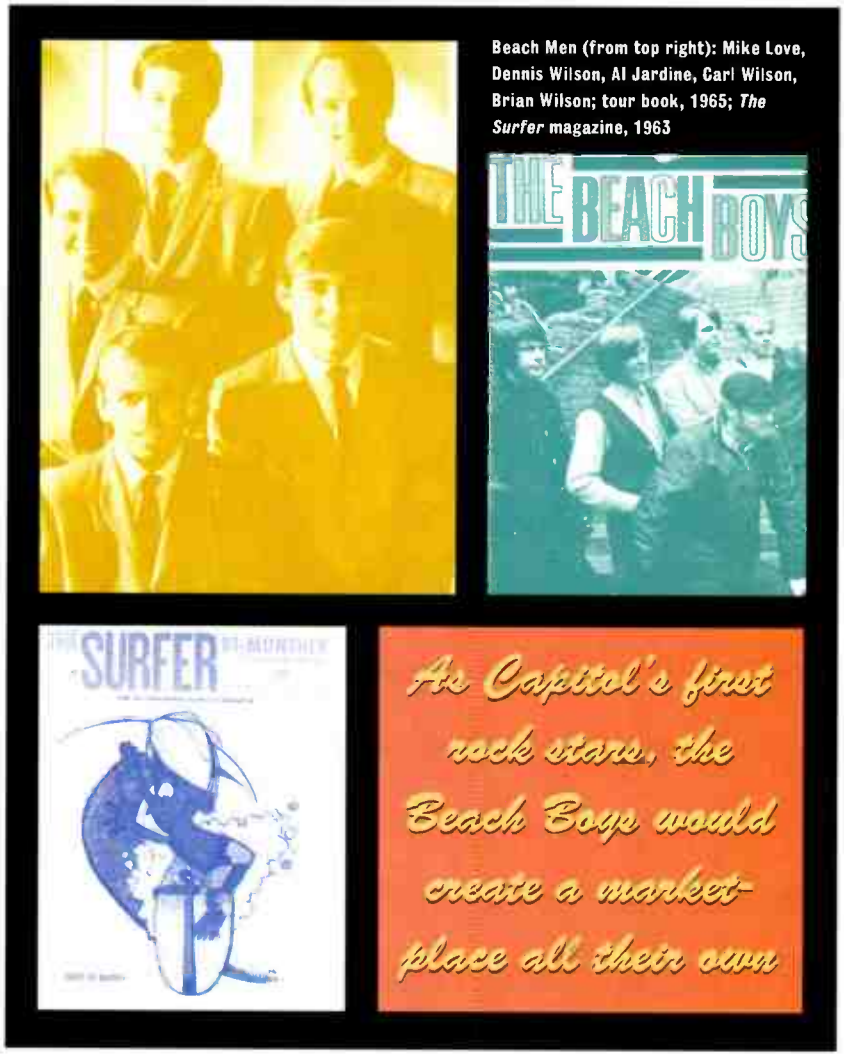
lowing a failed 1904 attempt at running a grape ranch outside Escondido, California, the Wilsons briefly returned to the Plains. The forebears of the brothers and cousins in Brian Wilson's band settled for good in the Los Angeles Basin in 1922. But their offspring shunned planting or pipefitting, putting their fiercest faith in music as an entree to the sunshine idyll once splashed across the pages of *The Hutchinson News*.

Brian always imagined he'd become a songsmith at the high end of the popular idiom. Now, as a result of the cocky outbursts of his brother, he was something called a Beach Boy. But Brian wasn't into the beach, didn't care about wave riding, didn't know a thing about it. He was scared, and the ocean *really* scared him. When his father insisted he at least try surfing to help the group's image, he wouldn't go out. Instead, Dennis told him stories and he made up songs.

Hite Morgan was hoping to assemble enough material for a full-length Beach Boys album on Candix, and was confident "Surfin' Surfari," the second of four songs already recorded, could succeed "Surfin'" on the *Billboard* singles chart, where the latter tune was in the 90s and rising. "Surfin'" was in regular hourly rotation on KFWB (whose morning forecasts of surf conditions made it "The Surfer's Choice"), and rivals KRLA and KFI had followed suit to keep pace with an obvious pop craze. Meanwhile, Love and the Wilsons were asking friends of friends in the South Bay and the San Fernando Valley to phone each station during request times to boost "Surfin'"'s respective playlist rankings.



Beach Men (from top right): Mike Love, Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine, Carl Wilson, Brian Wilson; tour book, 1965; *The Surfer* magazine, 1963

The song topped out at number two locally, but by March 24 "Surfin'" climbed to 75 in *Billboard*'s Hot 100. Candix estimated unit sales at 50,000, but manufacturing demands for the release had pushed the feebly financed label into a grave cash-flow crunch. Hite Morgan stepped in, attempting to induce Herb Newman's Era Records to assume Candix's obligations and distribution. Although the ink was hardly dry on Murry's March 29, 1962 contractual letter of intent with the Morgans, Murry interpreted Morgan's action as a breach of their understanding. And after several labels like Dot had rejected the Boys' demos, Murry told Hite Morgan the role he and Dorinda had played in the Boys' music was done, notwithstanding the publishing rights the Morgans still retained for the band's studio output. Murry then proclaimed his intention to start the group's career all over again.

Believing he could get the Beach Boys a deal with one of the top L.A. record labels, Murry took the Beach Boys into United-Western Recorders on Sunset Boulevard in April 1962 to record a new demo for Capitol Records. Murry nervously added a spoken tagline to the four tracks, directly addressing the Capitol A&R man he'd targeted: "That was a sample of the Beach Boys, Nick...Venet."

When Murry met with Venet, he spent most of the meeting boring the A&R novice with overripe blarney about the wonder of his band's abilities. But the moment Venet heard the opening eight bars of "Surf and Safari" (as titled on Murry's tape box), he knew he was in the presence of a hit. The other tracks had their strengths, and "409" was electrifying. Brian's friend and sometimes lyricist Gary Usher had insisted on recording revved engine noises and whooshing drive-by sound effects for the track, taping the automotive hubbub outside of the Wilsons' house by hooking Brian's Wollensak up to a 100-foot extension cord. Usher made four strident passes up and down West 119th Street in his Chevy, before the entire neighborhood's porch lights sprang on and sirens approached from the distance. The curbside taping session was swiftly halted, but the Beach Boys had the authentic din they needed to give the song a terrific aural hook.

Venet could scarcely wait to get Murry out of his office, minus the tape, so he could run and play it for his boss Voyle Gilmore. Murry wanted a $300 advance per song master, a respectable fee for the period, and Venet had to prevail upon Gilmore's superior to get the check clearance. Venet also wanted the publishing, but Murry insisted everything had to go through his own Sea of Tunes company, newly created to "protect" his underage sons and their group.

Capitol issued "409" and "Surfin' Safari" on June 4, 1962 on the same 45 RPM single, the label's promotion people pushing "409" as the A-side because of its wider perceived appeal in the nonregional

recording studios in the impressive Capitol Tower building in Hollywood to mold their hits. Expected to emerge with masters suitable for an album to be titled *Surfin' Safari*, the Beach Boys entered the Tower's recording sanctum in the autumn of 1962. As *Surfin' Safari* neared completion, Brian felt the need to communicate creatively with other kindred artists outside his immediate sphere: people he could sing with, write with and also produce himself.

The man Brian perceived as the preeminent visionary was Phil Spector, the author of "To Know Him, Is to Love Him." Receiving a guitar at 13 for his Bar Mitzvah, Spector was writing folk songs by 17. He started a short-lived combo called the Sleepwalkers with friends Bruce Johnston and Sandy Nelson. His next group, formed while he was still attending Fairfax High School, was the Teddy Bears.

IN THE exploding post-Elvis world of neighborhood rock 'n' roll, the garages of Southern California became the echoey rehearsal halls and makeshift recording studios for a generation of pop hopefuls. At roughly the same moment the Teddy Bears were getting organized in Donna Kass's car barn, University High students Jan Berry, Dean Torrence and Arnie Ginsburg were in Berry's Bel Air garage taping a demo. When Arnie departed for the Navy and the newly christened duo of Jan and Dean signed to Dore Records. Fairfax High graduate Herb Alpert and his buddy Lou Adler were producer/songwriters for Dore, which had recently signed the Teddy Bears to its tiny teen roster.

In the back of his mind, Brian wanted to build up a body of production credits, but he also needed to establish working alliances beyond his bond with Gary Usher. So Brian reached out to the next acquaintances who might amplify his Muse: Jan Berry and Dean Torrence, aviation student/surf guitarist Dave Nowlen, Hawthorne High drummer Mark Groseclose and KFWB disc jockey Roger Christian.

Roger Christian was a native of Buffalo, New York and an avid hot rod buff who hitchhiked to Los Angeles in the summer of his fourteenth year in search of a vacation job that could help earn him the cash for a 1932 Ford coupe, i.e. a deuce coupe. Christian later found work in broadcasting, and he became a popular late-night DJ on KFWB. He was at his microphone one evening during his regular nine p.m. to midnight shift, illuminating listeners about the automotive subtleties of the 409 on which the Beach Boys had based their latest single, when the night switchboard received a call from Murry Wilson. Christian took the phone and listened as Murry praised his knowledge of car culture and inquired whether he'd ever written any songs on the subject. Christian said he had a whole diary of torsion-bar jottings and drag-strut stanzas, and Murry arranged for Brian and Roger to meet at the jock's earliest convenience. Soon Christian found himself spinning his own collaborative Beach Boys sensation ("Shut Down") for night owls tuned to KFWB.

Jan and Dean's initial professional intersection with the Beach Boys occurred at a teen hop run by a local promoter at a high school in one of the South Bay beach communities. They were the headliners on the bill the promoter had packaged. But the vocal duo lacked a steady band, so the Beach Boys were induced to rehearse a half-dozen songs with J&D and serve as their backing group. The Boys were jazzed to share the stage with the stars, who had charted nationally with 11 singles since 1958.

Jan and Dean had just entered the *Billboard* charts with "Linda," previously a number one and number five hit in 1947 for, respectively, British bandleader Ray Noble with vocalist Buddy Clark and for Charlie Spivak & His Orchestra. The song was penned by songwriter Jack Lawrence in payment for legal fees by show business attorney Lee Eastman, its title in tribute to Eastman's five-year-old daughter. (Sixteen years later, when Jan and Dean re-recorded it, Linda Eastman was 21 and a former student at the University of Arizona, as well as a fan of the Beach Boys, whom she'd met when they roomed in the apartment next to hers while gigging at a U. of Ariz. fraternity house.)

With "Linda" headed toward *Billboard*'s Top 30, Jan and Dean had elected to merge their hit single and Beach Boys–kindled interest in surf pop into a nominal concept album for Liberty called *Jan and Dean Take Linda Surfing*. Prevailed upon for more prospective songs, Brian sat down at the piano and sang several verses of "Surfin' U.S.A.," which Jan and Dean promptly requested permission to cover. Brian shyly declined, explaining it was already slated to be a Beach Boys single, but proffered a half-written ditty named "Two Girls for Every Boy." Jan loved the latter tune's latest working title, exclaiming, "We'll take it!"

With alterations, the song was finished and renamed "Surf City." Jan and Dean were heartened by the surf-pop credibility that Brian Wilson's name afforded them, ensuring their first number one hit in the summer of '63—but Capitol Records proved less enthusiastic. Capitol promo men instinctively phoned radio stations in anger when the single was first aired, assuming jocks had somehow gotten a test pressing of the newest Beach Boys release in advance of them. When they learned the harmony-rich beach anthem was a Jan and Dean release on Liberty in which Brian had played a pivotal role, there was blood on the walls.

Nick Venet tried to dissuade Brian from involvement with Jan and Dean and other non-Capitol artists, but such projects were the essence of Brian's Phil Spector–inspired vision of his career, so any restraints were unthinkable—as well as a legal quagmire due to the Beach Boys' ambiguous boilerplate contract. Although Murry detested Jan and Dean for absconding with Brian's stand-by hits, he threw his support behind his son, battling to keep Brian as independent of Venet's wiles and dictums as possible. Since

Capitol found Murry an intolerable pest, he prevailed.

In his own milieu, on his own terms, Brian Wilson sought to subvert the system by which his deeply felt music was funneled to the outside world. Brian demanded total production authority on the third Beach Boys album. He wanted no staff A&R men vetoing songs, hiring sidemen and meddling with arrangements; no go-betweeners of any kind, except Western Studios chief engineer Chuck Britz, who would toil for *him*.

Capitol bristled. Murry was sent in to make his manic, overweening points on behalf of his boy wonder. And Brian won. For the first time in the history of rock 'n' roll, the artist himself had absolute studio authority over his album-length output.

The craze for surf songs and hot rod music escalated. Murry Wilson had succeeded in pushing out Brian's lyricist, Gary Usher, but Usher found work performing on and/or producing four Decca albums for the Surfaris that appeared between February '64 and February '65. Another Usher-directed act was the Hondells, fronted by the Kickstands' Richard Burns and supported by singer/bassist/guitarist Glen Campbell.

Others absorbed in the high-velocity car recording rage included a band from the Fontana/San Bernardino area, Jim Messina & His Jesters, Messina co-authoring most of the 1964 *The Dragsters* Audio Fidelity album with a transplanted Michigan singer/songwriter named Glenn Frey. Jan and Dean were deep into their own car song phase, their new single being "Dead Man's Curve," a Berry–Wilson–Christian song (on which Brian sang) named for a downhill turn on Sunset Boulevard beside UCLA where noted voice actor Mel "Bugs Bunny" Blanc had just suffered a near-fatal accident.

As 1964 unfolded, the effects of stress on everyone were flagrant.

Brian wasn't getting along with Murry. Murry wasn't getting along with Audree. Capitol wasn't getting along with Murry as the representative of the Beach Boys, who were having trouble getting along with Brian. And Brian knew Capitol could no longer get along financially without rock 'n' roll.

Capitol's annual gross income for 1961–63 was just shy of $50 million, its reliance on the Beach Boys' sales volume taking some pressure off the label's other top sellers: the Kingston Trio, Nat "King" Cole and Al Martino. However, Sir Edward Lewis, head of Capitol's British EMI parent company,

was disgruntled with the sparse licensing and distribution his U.K. product could expect in the indispensable U.S. market. A case in point was the Beatles, a new group out of Liverpool with two albums, an EP and four singles presently ruling the British charts—yet Capitol had shown no interest in picking up its option on Beatles records for the States. Capitol surmised that surf and car music as exemplified by the Beach Boys was *the* most lucrative current route imaginable, with nothing likely to exceed it.

Capitol finally bowed to British corporate pressure on December 26, 1963 and issued a Beatles single of "I Want to Hold Your Hand"/"I Saw Her Standing There," earmarking $50,000 for domestic promotion. Three days later, the U.S. label learned what it had been missing: A quarter of a million copies sold. By January 10, "Hand" was number one and the single's sales were over a million, with purchases in New York stores progressing at a rate of 10,000 units an hour.

Meet the Beatles, originally due in February, was promptly re-scheduled for January 20 release. The Beatles were booked for a two-week February U.S. publicity tour, and four thousand screaming fans and hundreds of press were waiting at New York's Kennedy Airport for Pan American Flight 101 on February 7 when the Clipper *Defiance* landed with the Beatles aboard in first class. Sitting in the aisle seat in front of Paul McCartney—ever in the optimum place at the optimum time—was Phil Spector.

Rattled by the overwhelming reception for the Fab Four, Brian had a meeting with Mike Love at which they shared their qualms and constructed a strategy to cope with the phenomenon. Brian wanted the Liverpool competition to hear Hawthorne's best Top 40 artillery while both bands were still on American turf, because the Beach Boys were due to depart for an Australian tour with the Surfaris and Roy Orbison. The day following the official release of *Shut Down Vol. 2*, the Boys were back in Western Studios to do a German rendition of "In My Room" in emulation of the covers for EMI-Deutschland's Odeon label that the Beatles had done of "I Want to Hold Your Hand" and "She Loves You." The Germans preferred the Beach Boys in English, and the Teutonic "In My Room" was not released.

More bothersome was the ad supplement Capitol designed for publication in national newspapers' Sunday magazine sections starting in April. Pictured below the headline

were all four Beatles hoisting a sign that said: "HEAR THE BEATLES, THE BEACH BOYS AND THE KINGSTON TRIO—NOW!" Of the nine albums shown under the Beatles photo, there were *Meet the Beatles*, the Kingston Trio's *New Frontier*...but no Beach Boys product. Stapled to the back page of the four-page Capitol insert was a free cardboard disc that contained the Beatles' "Roll Over Beethoven," the Boys' "Little Deuce Coupe" and the Kingston Trio's "When the Saints Go Marching in."

The Beach Boys were worth giving away, but not worth billing over the Beatles. Capitol's energies were shifting from the West Coast Yanks to the new blokes in town.

Brian lived alone in an apartment he didn't like to sleep in. He finally had financial and personal freedom but no sense of how to partake of them. And he couldn't bear to be by himself. His girlfriend Marilyn Rovell seemed the anchor for his listless emotions, the remedy for his formless fears. On December 7, 1964, Brian and Marilyn were married in a civil ceremony at the city courthouse in Los Angeles, and she moved into his Hollywood flat.

But Brian's behavior was erratic, his comings and goings unpredictable, his manner uncharacteristically aloof for a newlywed. He admitted smoking marijuana with musician friends and people connected with the talent agencies in town that handled rock 'n' roll bookings. Young and sheltered, Marilyn was distressed by these disclosures. They fought over his behavior, his disregard for her feelings, his lengthy disappearances and marked mood of detachment.

On December 23, Brian was bidding Marilyn goodbye at Los Angeles International Airport when, as he prepared to board a morning plane to Houston for a concert that night, he suddenly sensed she was gazing at Mike Love. Whether her scrutiny of him was mindless or meaningful, he wasn't sure. But he believed something was oddly askew, if not terribly wrong, and that Marilyn's affection for him might be straying. Agitated, feeling clammy, Brian turned away and caught the flight.

Five minutes outside of Los Angeles, the screaming started. And it wasn't for the Beatles.

The tall, dough-faced young man sitting in the forward section, whose manic stares before takeoff had since given way to white-knuckled catatonia, had suddenly begun crying and then making jagged, high-pitched yowls as he grabbed at his airline pillow. His

traveling companions leaped to his side, trying to pry the pillow from his swollen face.

"My God, what's wrong, Brian?" asked Carl Wilson. "Brian, please tell me what's wrong!"

"I can't take it!" hollered Brian, as he rolled and lurched about the plane. "I just can't take it! Don't you understand? I'm not getting off this plane!"

Wilson went on to perform that night, but he woke up at the hotel the next morning with a crippling knot in his stomach. Throughout the day, he burst into tears at half-hour intervals. The group's latest road manager put Brian on the late plane back to Los Angeles, where he was to be met by his mother Audree. Brian had sent word that he did not want to see his father.

The Beach Boys needed a rush replacement for Brian so they could continue their touring through the Southwest, South and Northeast, so a call was placed to Glen Campbell, the versatile studio musician who had just played on the group's session for "Dance, Dance, Dance." The band was lucky to secure the road services of Campbell, who earned $100,000 a year as a first-string session musician, often scheduling recording dates around his morning golf games. Because of Campbell's demanding schedule as a freelance instrumentalist and sometime actor (pressing gigs included a Wayne Newton session at Capitol to cut "Red Roses for a Blue Lady" and a small part in the Steve McQueen movie *Baby, the Rain Must Fall*), Campbell eventually passed Brian's bass and harmony baton to new pinch-hitter Bruce Johnston, whom Mike Love contacted, asking Bruce to rendezvous with the Boys for a concert in New Orleans.

Soon Brian and the Beach Boys reached an accommodation. He would retire from live performances to concentrate on songwriting, recording and producing their albums. Bruce Johnston would replace him onstage.

BRIAN DROPPED his first acid in the spring of 1965. Marilyn was not present when her husband took a dose of the undiluted LSD, Brian later telling his fearful wife that it had been a "spiritual" confrontation with "God." He seemed exhilarated. He seemed distraught. He never seemed the same again.

One of Brian's new drug-taking associates, Santa Barbara College graduate David Van Cortlandt Crosby, was making his own moves on the music front, recording gratis in the late evening at World Pacific Studios with a group called the Jet Set. World Pacific engineer/producer Jim Dickson, an A&R scout for Elektra Records, extended the free demo time to the Jet Set, which also included native Chicago guitarist Jim (later changed to Roger) McGuinn, novice New York drummer Michael Dick a.k.a. Clarke and Missouri guitarist Gene Clark, formerly with a Kansas City act called the Surf Riders.

An audition by the Jet Set for local promoter Benny Shapiro had McGuinn, Crosby and Clark singing along with their demos, the layered live and tape harmonies thrilling Shapiro's daughter Michelle with their Beatlesesque ambience. Columbia Records signed the group on November 10, 1964, and Terry Melcher, now a Columbia staff producer working with Paul Revere and the Raiders, was assigned to guide the Byrds sessions. Their first Columbia recording date was January 20, 1965 for a new arrangement of Bob Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man," Melcher adjusting the tempo to resemble the measured glide of the Beach Boys' "Don't Worry Baby." "Tambourine Man" was released as a single on April 12, 1965. [*cont'd on page 101*]

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'plugged.' I mean, there wasn't anything that was unplugged. But that made it far more interesting and far more of a challenge to ourselves. Because then you can talk about it with enthusiasm, and not feel that it's hackneyed."

Over the years, Page and Plant have steadfastly resisted notions of a true Led Zepp confab (see sidebar, page 60), even while teaming for such disparate one-offs as the Honeydrippers, the Atlantic Records anniversary show and each other's solo records. This time they've finessed the reunion issue by simply not inviting along Zeppelin's other surviving member, bassist John Paul Jones. To hear Plant tell the story, that decision had more to do with communicating with efficiency than protecting a legacy.

"We can reach conclusions musically and decisions very quickly, 'cause the two of us can work it out very fast," he says. "That's probably why there's just two of us doing it, and not three—or four or five or six. Also, we don't have to patronize each other. A decision is a decision, and if you can do it real quick, you can cut a lot of the pleasantries out and say, 'Yeah, that's good,' or 'No, that's not.' Just by having it one-to-one."

At the moment, though, it's two-on-one, as Page and Plant sit on comfortably overstuffed sofas in a posh Manhattan hotel on a clear October afternoon. Plant, his golden curls glinting in the sun and a handful of wrinkles on his well-tanned face the only real evidence that it has been 25 years since he joined Led Zeppelin, looks obscenely healthy. Page looks rather more as a veteran rocker should, but his face retains a familiar cherubic charm. When these two start talking, virtually any musical topic is fair game, from rai star Cheb Khaled to bluesman Sleepy John Estes to French crooner Sacha Distel. "I'd got this complete obsession with Italy, where I believed *I* was going to be the next Sacha Distel," said Plant at one point. "'29 Palms' was a major, major wah out there."

"Sounds a bit more like distant sashaying than Sacha Distel," Page cracked back.

"Yeah, it was a bit of distant sashaying. She wasn't pleased," Plant said. "But I'm sure we'll get there now."

Get there we did. Though what it had to do with Sacha Distel I'm still wondering.

MUSICIAN: *Shall we start with the way you reconfigured the old songs, or should we talk about the new material?*

PAGE: Well, let's start with the new material, I think. When we decided to get back together and see what would happen, Robert had prior to that, maybe, called Martin Meissonnier in Paris, who made up some tape loops for us of North African drums. Which was pretty evocative stuff, really. It was good to be working with these sort of rhythms, which didn't involve a normal drummer as such,

D I D N ' T H A V E A N Y C A R E E R T O G E T H E R

"WE JUST COULDN'T FIND ENOUGH BERBERS."

MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

Well, at least their hair remains the same: Robert Plant, John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page getting the Led out circa 1972.

with bass drum, snare and hi-hats, all this sort of thing.

And it was pretty instant, actually, as far as getting inspiration from these things. Because that's exactly what they were—inspirational. Two of the numbers which were employed on this TV show were things with the tape loops: "Wonderful One" and "Yallah."

PLANT: I think the loops, really, were what gave us the green light. Meissonnier is a French producer who has produced people from Iggy Pop to Cheb Khaled—

MUSICIAN: *He's the guy who introduced King Sunny Adé to America.*

PLANT: Is that right? He's a good guy, a crucial guy. Married to Amina, an excellent Tunisian singer who's had a lot of relatively across-the-board pop success in Paris. And because of his links with Amina, he was invited to the University of Tunis, and he was introduced to the head of music there, who virtually opened every single door for him to go exploring the sort of vast varieties of musical differences in Tunisia.

All across North Africa, you've got this incredibly vibrant music scene that's really exciting. Every street pumping out music at every street corner, loud as loud can be, that's what it's like in the average get-down medina area of a North African city. It's vibrant, and it's happy and it's chattery. He'd been exposed to that, and he got a lot of drum stuff.

I thought that the best thing that we could do, Jimmy and I, was to start without the confines and restrictions of a rock group situation, and just see what we can do. The drum loops, they were like a kind of third party that didn't speak, so we were there in a room with this tape loop and with a huge P.A., and we just turned the whole thing on.

It was kind of a bit odd and uncomfortableish, because we knew that if we couldn't write, we didn't have any career, really, together.

MUSICIAN: *Now I know Robert has spent a lot of time in Morocco; what about you, Jimmy?*

PAGE: I've traveled with Robert there, and then I've been on several occasions during the '80s. But this is the first time that I've actually done anything musically there. There was one time when I went around with a tape recorder and stuff, but we seemed to get sidetracked.

PLANT: That's a very nice way of putting it. [*laughs wickedly*] I think I was there, too. We went all out, thousands of miles, and went without a mains lead!

MUSICIAN: *So you went to Marrakech; what then? "Yalla" looked to be a pretty impromptu performance.*

PAGE: Actually, we were going to do a little soundcheck, and stop and start again, but we didn't. We just did it. Just went for it. And that was it. That was a one-shot.

PLANT: You have to get the picture that the Jamaa l-Fna in Marrakech is one of the most renowned squares in the whole of the world for storytellers, soothsayers, musicians, jugglers, fire-eaters, blokes with snakes. I mean, the whole place is like a mayhem of artisans of one kind or another. I'd been there that many times, and been intimidated into emptying my pockets of dirham, because they've got kids, and as soon as they spot a tourist, they just give the kid a nod and the kid runs over with a hat and asks for money.

So we thought we'd reverse the process, and take our loop, and set up and play. And see if we could get any dirham out of them.

MUSICIAN: *And?*

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Over the years, *Musician* has published many interviews with Robert Plant, Jimmy Page and members of their bands, with the question of a Led Zeppelin reunion inevitably arising. What's interesting, in retrospect, is the consistency of response:

ROBERT PLANT (March 1988): "Page and I get offered everything: women, little boys, money, cocaine, the lot, to just go back and do that again. I don't think it would be a good idea at all. [But] I reserve judgment to change my mind in five years' time."

JIMMY PAGE (November 1990): "I'd be prepared to do it, but who knows? I think you said it: Robert doesn't want to do it, so there you go."

And the winner is...

PLANT'S GUITARIST PHIL JOHNSTONE (March 1988): "If this album [*Now and Zen*] sells as much as *Led Zeppelin III*, the worst-selling record they had, I think you might see Robert and Jimmy back onstage together. It would have to be along the lines of, 'Hey Jimmy, would you like to join my band for a while,' not Led Zeppelin. He's never said it in so many words, but my sense is that he isn't going back unless it's on his terms."

PLANT: We got a lot of claps.

PAGE: Yeah, but there might have been people going 'round with hats. I'm sure there was a bit of that, because at one point, we had these speakers up on stands, with the loop coming through, and the speakers started to move back into the audience. Hurriedly, people ran in and rescued it. So I'm sure, if a speaker was going to disappear and be sold off at the other end of the square, some stray hats went around. Who knows?

MUSICIAN: *Having only heard it once, I couldn't swear to it, but I had the impression that at least some of what Robert was singing was not in English.*

PLANT: No. There were some bits of Arabic here and there.

MUSICIAN: *You know enough Arabic to improvise lyrics?*

PLANT: I know enough Arabic to wind people up a little bit, and get them clapping louder. I don't know how I learned it, but I guess I always wanted people to clap. What a sad boy! [*laughs*] I'd rather have a Scotch now than talk about it, to be honest. But I go there enough now to know that I want to communicate, and the more you can communicate with people in their home, in their natural tongue, the more responsive they are. And they're very, very nice people, the Moroccans, and they're very keen for you to get into their vibe, you know. So "yalla" basically means "this is it, let's go for it."

MUSICIAN: *I'm assuming it was a different situation working with the Gnawa musicians on "Wah Wah." Did you know what you were going to do before you got started?*

PLANT: When we got together with Ibrahim and the other Gnawa, we didn't have a clue what to do. We just arrived. Jimmy had a guitar, I had a vocal. We set the P.A. up. We had some hand-held cameras. We jammed with these guys who we couldn't speak to; we spoke through a translator to begin with, and then we spoke with our eyes after that.

We started doing a song called "Chevrolet," which is an old field holler from North Mississippi, recorded by Alan Lomax in the '60s, and then a record called *The Blues Roll On*, on Atlantic. We tried to take back the blues to these guys who were descendants of black African slaves who were brought up into Morocco. And they responded, and they jammed against us, and they had their own songs that we sang against our songs.

So "Wah Wah" was a development of Jimmy and I having a plot, and them responding with one of their songs. And they're singing about how much they love the Sudan, and how much they miss their homeland, which is great. So they clocked into one of their standard blues, while we were developing the other side of it.

MUSICIAN: *It's interesting that they should have felt it the same way. From a playing standpoint, I notice that you're playing the six-string mainly on the lower strings. Was that to get a similar resonance to the gunbri, or was that something that just felt right?*

PAGE: Well, I mean, just as much as I wanted to fit in and make them feel perfectly comfortable about what they were doing, I checked out what tuning he was playing in, and then accordingly tuned the guitar down to that, you know.

MUSICIAN: *What was he playing in?*

PAGE: Well, it was like an A, so in other words, like the E string went down to an A, which is quite fun.

PLANT: There were a couple of things that aren't on the film or anything, that will probably come to light later on. We brought these girls, these Berber singers. I like Berber female singing because it's so upfront and so

outrageous. It doesn't have any problem with itself, it just comes out and howls. Not in a bluesy way, not in a Staples Singers way, just in a kind of bang-bang-bang-bang.

PAGE: It's dissonant, dangerous. The sound of really dangerous women, let me tell you.

PLANT: Yeah, they would be dangerous if you took 'em home. I said to Mustafa, "What are these people?" He said, "Ah, these are called the free people." They are Berbers from north of the Atlas, not far from Fez. But they've never succumbed to anybody who passed through, never the Arabs nor the French nor anybody at all.

But they howled, and they were howling, I was singing, Jimmy was playing the guitar and the Gnawa were playing. We were doing all this, it was like a spontaneous, it was like three or four express trains crossing each other.

PAGE: Yeah. Rhythmically, everybody was doing these counter-rhythms. The whole train of it was wonderful.

PLANT: It's really out there, but it's not—I mean, you can't put it on a record, really, or whatever this format music follows these days.

MUSICIAN: *So much of the Moroccan influence on your past recordings has been Berber music, I'm surprised there isn't any here. Had you expected to not have any Berber music on this?*

PLANT: It was just the luck of the draw, to be perfectly frank. We just couldn't find enough Berbers. [*laughs*] I mean, if we go back there—

PAGE: We didn't have enough time to work with the Berbers, probably. We only had a short period of time there in which to come out with whatever. If we'd have worked with the women on their own, we might have come up with something. But as it was, we just didn't have time.

But there's always the possibility of the future.

PLANT: You must be aware, on Real World, there's a CD called *Passion Sources*—not the Peter Gabriel thing, but the one where there's Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and all that. I think track nine is a Berber wedding track. And if you listen to the drum intro on that, and that whole thing, that's where we're going next. Into that vibe, I think. 'Cause the drums—I think this whole thing about the drum and the chant and the sort of mantric, tribal thing, if we can make the most of that, it really brings out the best in us two as writers, instantly.

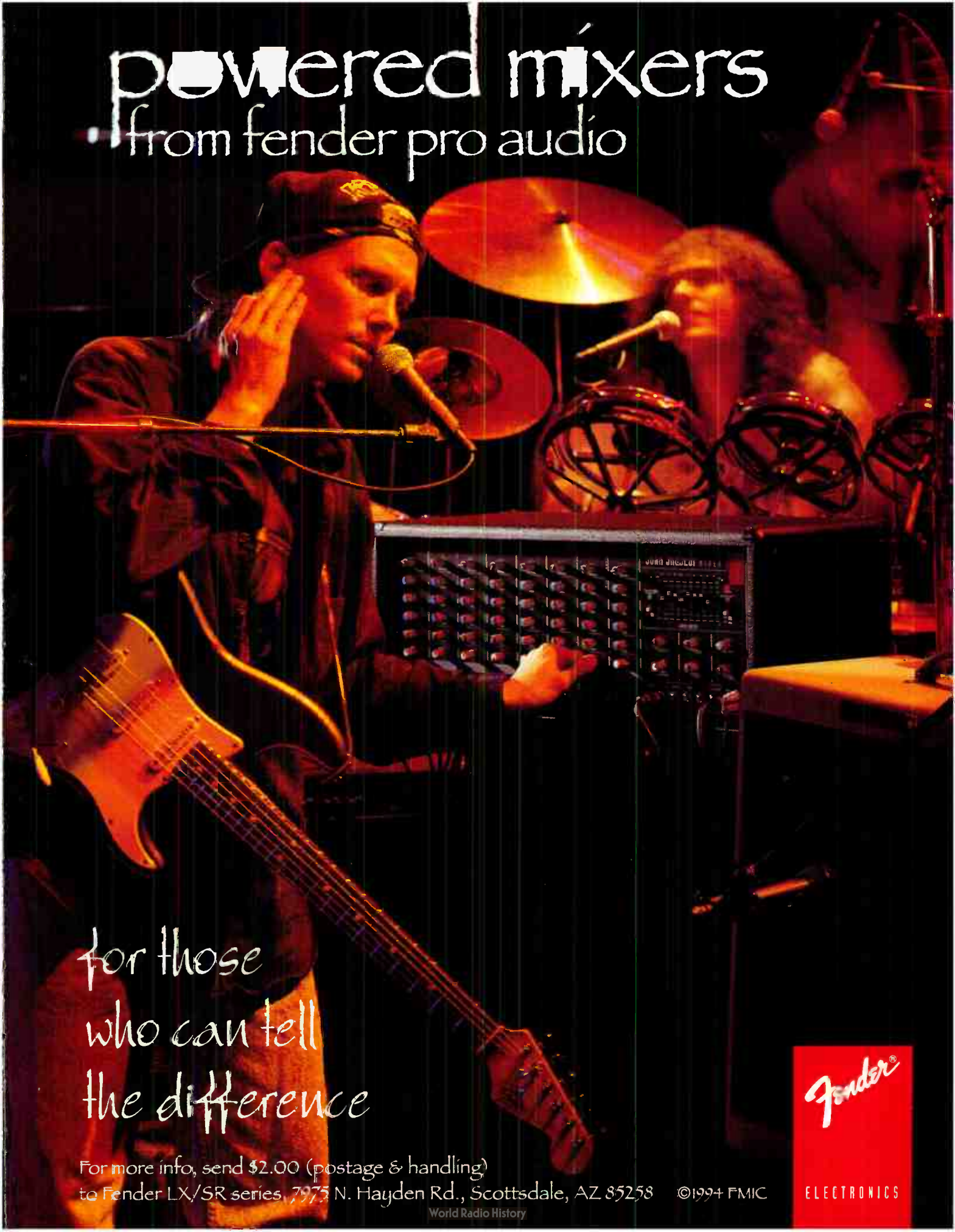
So the Berbers are holding their breath. Unwittingly. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Apart from the Moroccan performances, there's quite a lot of Arabic influence in this music. On "Kashmir," I noticed that Robert does quite a nice Arabic turn during the introduction.*

PLANT: I've been trying to make it a part of my style, where appropriate. The only thing is, I can't include it in a line of lyric yet, I can only use it as a kind of punctuation at the end of a line. I want to try and make it part of the melodic structure of a song, rather than just a sort of afterthought, like an "Ooh yeah" of a blues thing or a Ray Charles shout. Maybe I can do that.

PAGE: I remember when I saw you in Boston at the end of one of the numbers, I can't remember what it was, you did some of these great trills, you know, Arabic trills. I said, "That was great." He said, "Yeah, I've got a lot of that inside me."

PLANT: That's right, yeah. Nadjma, the Indian singer on this project, she rehearses, she practices. It's very serious, the Indian thing. It's far removed from the North African. But she practices against ragas and weaves so much of a voice into these amazing areas. And it's quite amazing that at this point in my singing time that I've got now so much ambi-



tion to expand my ability. I'm really pleased that I've got something that I've got to try and learn to do, which I can't do just like that. [*snaps fingers*] I could learn to sing like a Western singer, you know, the way people mimic other people, but this is different.

MUSICIAN: *The other thing that struck me about hearing Nadjma on "Battle of Evermore" is that it reminded me that the Celts actually started around Scythia before they eventually wound up in Ireland and Wales, and there really does seem to be this connection between Indian music and Celtic music. Was that something you all were aware of?*

PLANT: Well, about three years ago, there was a great Cheb Khaled track from the *Kutché* album with Safy Boutella, which was produced by Meissonnier. I took it and I worked the chords out, and I got Phil Johnstone to play the chords slowly. And when he did, and we put a kind of regimental army drumming on it, and it became a Fairport Convention track. It was exactly the same chord progressions as Sandy Denny might have sung over with Richard Thompson. It's amazing, really. It's exactly the same, the way the chords shifted, where they shifted. The only difference is that voice.

PAGE: Some of that Bengali stuff I was telling you about, the female singers on that, they're very Celtic. Like the Fairport Convention thing. Very similar.

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of odd connections, how did you come up with that treatment of "Nobody's Fault but Mine"? I mean, almost everybody who hears the Blind Willie Johnson record wants to play the bottleneck riff. How did you manage not to play it?*

PAGE: You mean this time around? Well, we went to Wales, really down in the slate quarry there, to do "Gallows Pole." We had a couple takes of "Gallows Pole," then we just started jamming. In fact, that came from a jam. It was no more structured than just jamming, really, was it?

PLANT: No.

PAGE: It was just one of those things that came out that way that day. Another day it comes out somewhere different. But even still, you can leave the bottleneck behind.

PLANT: I think what was great about it was, it reminded me of when I was a kid, I was really into Sleepy John Estes. At that time, in the late '30s, there was Yank Rachell on mandolin and Josh Altimer on piano, Ransom Nolan on bass, and John Estes playing. They did all that stuff like "Milk Cow Blues" and "Drop Down Momma" and loads of Led Zeppelin songs. [*laughs*] And you could hear that kind of sloppy fire about the whole thing, which makes "Nobody's Fault but Mine" a real triumph on the film, because it really is just right in the pocket.

And I think that sometimes, you know, in my time, I've been so concerned with getting things spot on right, and having little places where you can go off and ad lib. But the great thing about it is that working with those guys, it was anybody's game. We let the hurdy-gurdy sort out the drones and stuff and give us a bit of melody, and then we'd give him free range and free wrist to do stuff.

Really, the amount of jams and tapes I've got of stuff in between rehearsals are, they're actually hit singles. Unbelievably commercial. It was amazing, because the more people you bring in, the more of a celebration it is. And they really wanted to work with us, and they colored our music.

MUSICIAN: *Let's talk about the bit in London with string orchestras. How much of those were the old arrangements, and how much of them were done especially for this? Did the Egyptians write that themselves?*

PAGE: During the point of rehearsals with "Friends" and "Four Sticks" and "Kashmir," we were actually rehearsing with separate orchestras. We did some stuff with a Western orchestra, and, you know, got some string arrangements and changed those around. Then we started working with the Egyptians and moved things around there.

There were a couple of rehearsals, three rehearsals into it, into the Egyptians, they actually came along with something that they'd written as an introduction to "Friends." You could see how they'd been caught up in the spirit of the whole vibe. But it wasn't until the day before we actually shot this whole thing on video that we heard the whole thing in its entirety. It was really a bit dangerous. But good.

MUSICIAN: *Kashmir, at the end—*

PAGE: At the end, we're jamming at the end of that.

MUSICIAN: *That's what I thought. The only thing that sounded like it had been planned at all was the bit of "Achilles' Last Stand."*

PLANT: The rhythm section part of that last jam is something that was taken from the *Fate of Nations* tour as well.

PAGE: I haven't heard that, so I did my own bit.

PLANT: That's right, which was great, because you were playing right across it.

MUSICIAN: *The other thing that just floored me was the violin solo.*

PAGE: Oh, yeah. It's moving.

PLANT: I do really hope this comes across to an audience in America that's used to having malleable, pop-formulated music rammed down its throat. Because as you say, that violin solo is so unreal. It's absolutely fantastic. The man is playing for himself, for his style, for his culture, for his country, for his life, and you can see it all. And he's such a nice guy. But man—it's beautiful.

MUSICIAN: *It brings tears to your eyes.*

PLANT: Well, it has done to everybody who's seen it.

MUSICIAN: *I must say, as soon as I saw it, I wanted to rewind the tape and watch it again.*

PLANT: Yeah. Everybody who sees it goes "Wow! Where did he come from?" And he plays nightclubs in London. Starts at four a.m. Plays until nine to Saudis. And hates it.

PAGE: But they usually can't wait to go down there, though. "Must go to the club."

PLANT: Yeah, "Gotta go to the club." It's either that or go home.

PAGE: There's a twinkle in their eyes. We haven't been to the club to witness this. We didn't have time. We're doing other things. But we kept promising to go. I wanted to see what it was that brought the twinkle to their eye. Apart from the music. 'Cause there was something else there, right? [*laughs*]

PLANT: Yeah. And it wasn't the wife.

PAGE: No.

MUSICIAN: *The other question I had about the orchestra, was the string arrangement on "Since I Been Loving You" sounded so Isaac Hayes to me, although what Robert was doing on the vocal seemed more Bobby Bland.*

PLANT: Hm. Well, I don't know. I think we'd have to say that Ed Shearmur, who plays keyboards and was in charge of string arrangements, we'd discussed how to do "Since I Been Loving You," and we were talking about things like "The Thrill Is Gone," where B.B. had a sort of small string section, but it did the job.

PAGE: I mean, we went over the string arrangements for this, like I said, when we were teamed with the Western orchestra, and we heard what he'd got together.

PLANT: We pared down a lot.

PAGE: Yeah, that's right. [*cont'd on page 101*]

THE GEAR REMAINS A PAIN

I have to ask you some gear questions.

PAGE: [*sleepily*] Oh, you don't, do you? Oh, you rotter.

PLANT: Well, I don't use gear. I gave it up. The doctor told me it was bad for me.

Though "Unledded" was conceived as a series of "Unplugged" duets, Page wound up playing acoustic instruments only with UnZepp's larger ensembles—a Martin six-string on "Yalla," an Ovation double-neck (six- and 12-string) on "Gallows Pole" and on "Nobody's Fault but Mine." He also used the Ovation through a Maestro Echoplex (a gadget that on MTV looked as ancient and arcane as Nigel Eaton's hurdy-gurdy) for "Wonderful One" and "No Quarter."

For his electric performances, he played either a Gibson Les Paul with a string bender or a Les Paul Trans Performance DTS-1 guitar, which changes tunings at the touch of a button. Most of the time, the only effect between him and his Vox AC30 is the Echoplex, but "Kashmir" features a DigiTech Whammy pedal during the intro. Only trouble is, no one can see him using it. "I looked at it, and I thought, 'Oh, my God, people are going to think that this is all overdubbed,'" he says. "In fact, it's a Whammy pedal doing it all, so the fingers aren't doing anything."

VERY SUPERSTITIOUS

ADRIAN LEGG WON'T PLAY anything colored green. Right. Eric Johnson says different brands of batteries produce different sounds in his effects boxes. Sure. Michael Hill figures his sound improves by boiling guitar strings. Of course.

Skeptics may dismiss these tales as "guitar voodoo," to adapt a phrase from George Bush's guide to wit and wisdom. But if you ask some of the world's best guitar players, you'll find plenty of believers—and they don't mind calling it voodoo either. A surprising number of players swear that their performances are often influenced by phenomena that simply can't be explained by everyday happenstance.

Some of these occurrences are mundane enough to be familiar to every musician—strange buzzes and hums that appear and disappear for no apparent reason. But others are so dramatically eerie that otherwise worldly guitarists have come to the same conclusion: Supernatural forces are affecting their equipment or their psyches, forces that inhabit the amorphous space where player and music meet. On one crucial point all the players interviewed for this article agree: If you can properly attune yourself to these forces, your tone, technique and attitude will benefit.

Come on now. Can guitar voodoo really exist? Granted, in this strange realm, separating science from fiction is not always easy. Take the aforementioned Eric Johnson, justly famous for the length of his chain of stomp boxes, who claims he's detected a variance in treble response between different brands of nine-volt batteries. "I first noticed it about five years ago when I was doing some experimenting with effects," he recalls. "The high end sounded slightly better with Duracells than with AC adapters or any other battery. It's a subtle change, and I don't think I would notice it unless I were playing. I can't hear it on a stereo system. I think the way that particular battery is constructed creates certain nuances in the way the voltage comes out of it."

For guitarists, making music can be, uh, spiritual

Possible? British acoustic maven Adrian Legg says it is. "Standard non-alkaline batteries decay slowly, while an alkaline holds its charge till the last possible moment and then drops. Even when you buy them new, there's the matter of relative shelf-life and decay over time. You can hear a difference in voltage. I've been able to tell flat batteries in a parametric EQ. I don't see why that isn't reasonable." But Nicky Skopelitis, a session veteran who has worked with Public Image Ltd., Golden Palomino and Material, begs to differ. "I don't believe that. Honestly, I don't think he can hear that well any more."

On the contrary, Johnson's tales suggest an unusually sensitive pair of ears. "I've put new on/off switches in amps, and they make the thing sound different," he says. "The volume knob on my '54 Strat stopped working, and I went through about seven before I found one that brought out the guitar's sweet spots the way I wanted. People contest me on this stuff, but it's true."

Perhaps Johnson has been hit hard by what Pat Metheny once called "option anxiety." Says Nicky Skopelitis, "Guitar players are notorious for getting involved in little traps of their own making. Blaming equipment is just a way to hide a player's insecurity."

But Johnson is hardly alone. "Once you've got your guitar set up the way you want, you should never adjust anything but the truss rod," claims Trey Anastasio of Phish. "Even there you can go too far. My main guitar was built by our sound man Paul, and when anybody else sets it up before a concert, it feels wrong and I get thrown off. Luckily, Paul's with us at every show."

Even when you don't change a thing, a guitar can sound drastically different from one day to the next. As Michael Hill notes, "You can be in the same room with the same gear, and one day there'll be a hum you never noticed before. You say, 'Where's this coming from?' and then when you try to find it, it's gone. Humidity, ground loops, radio waves—they all do something." Steve Kimock of San Francisco's Zero is no stranger to such electrical gremlins. "I've been in clubs where the cash register set off buzzes in the amp, and

BY MAC RANDALL ILLUSTRATION BY HUNGRY DOG STUDIOS

I've rehearsed in a place where the water pump would go on and my effects boxes would stop working. You can figure out what's causing the problem 99 percent of the time, but it's still a pain."

Occasionally, the pain can be life-threatening, as jazzman John Abercrombie recounts. "If you go to Europe, any electrical problems you face at home are at least tripled because of the voltage conversions you have to make," he explains. "I was playing in a duo with a friend in Prague, and at one point he went up to the mike to make an announcement. He started to scream, and I thought, 'This is a weird way to get attention.' Then I realized he was being electrocuted. I tried to pull the mike away from him, but I couldn't. He was stuck to it like a magnet. Finally I gave the stand a big tug, and he came off it with a sound that I can only describe as a small explosion. We never were able to figure out what went wrong, but touching the mike and the guitar strings at the same time obviously triggered something. He was okay, though he had to stay in the hospital overnight. His little finger was burned—on the inside."

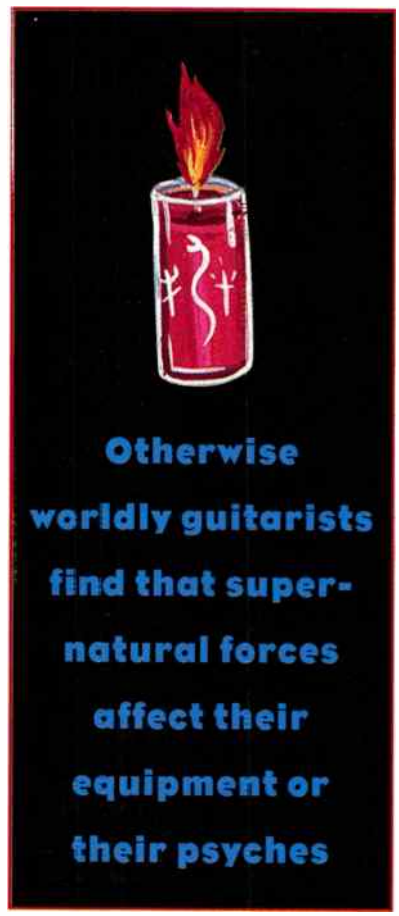
For Adrian Legg, guitar strings inhabit a voodoo dimension all their own. "I talked to someone who worked for a string company once and asked, 'How do you design strings?' He said, 'We make a few. If they work out, we try and remember what we did. If they don't, we forget it.' How's that for empiricism?"

Many players say that dumping old strings in 212-degree water makes them sound like new. Blues Mob's Michael Hill says that boiling has worked for him only occasionally, "but my bassist swears by it. If my strings cost 40 bucks a set, maybe I would too." John Abercrombie prefers a method recommended to him by pal Ralph Towner: wiping a cloth soaked in scalding hot water over the strings. "It makes a horrible screeching noise, but it does brighten up the sound, particularly on the lower strings."

Colors also form their own voodoo subset. "I used to play a garish fire-engine-red guitar synthesizer, which I had a lot of problems with," Abercrombie says. "And now whenever I see a red guitar, my reaction is, 'It's going to sound cold.' I haven't been wrong yet."

Seattle-based fusioneer Scott Lindenmuth also steers clear of the color red, but won't specify the reason: "It's just something I've never done." Adrian Legg shies away from anything green. "That's a superstition I picked up in the clubs in England. I honestly don't know why it developed, but I honor it because so many people believe it. When I play, I always have a milk crate next to me to put things on, and I've told people not to give me green ones. Sometimes there isn't anything but green. In that case, I usually put a cloth over it and hope for the best."

Other tales of equipment voodoo stretch the imagination. The late John Cipollina reportedly kept a nickel wedged between the springs of his Bigsby tremolo unit, for uncertain purpose. And Billy Gibbons exclusively uses another coin, the Mexican peso, as a pick; he once claimed it gave him an "international sound." But was he wearing a straight face at the time?



Apparently voodoo is also present wherever guitarists are preparing for a gig. Michael Hill tries to get in touch with his "feeling tones" before a show. He works on his hands with a pair of Baoding metal balls from China, and he swears by a short pre-gig nap: "You've got to be well-rested to be in touch with what you're playing." Surf-guitar king Dick Dale talks about his attempts to "lose the ego." He also fasts for regular periods. "I work out and keep as fit as I can. I've been doing karate for 30 years. I prepare for the stage like I'm going into battle. It's that intense." Once onstage, Dale likes to be near the edge, "where I can pick up the vibrations of the audience." Adrian Legg likes to sit right in the middle, usually about three feet from the edge. The chair must be without wheels, and at a certain height: "I haven't measured it, but I can feel when it's wrong. I've had some nervous gigs when the chair's been too high."

Room acoustics are always a consideration, of course; any musician knows that every space has a unique sonic character. But sometimes bad-sounding rooms produce much stranger side effects. Adrian Legg: "I've been known to forget my own songs if the sound isn't how I expect it." Dick Dale: "When the sound isn't right, I get nervous, my mouth starts to taste like cotton, and I start breaking strings even more than usual."

Then there's the notion—surprisingly common—that each room has not only its own sound, but its own spirit. According to John Abercrombie, "If someone has been fighting recently near where you're playing, you can tell." The vibe is most obvious when it has been the site of past greatness. Michael Hill singles out New York's Knitting Factory as an example, while Trey Anastasio mentions Tipitina's in New Orleans: "Dr. John, the Neville Brothers—you can just *feel* their presence there."

Even when you've prepared for a gig the best you can, things may not go right. Your playing is uninspired, your fingers feel stiff. What to do? Steve Kimock has a couple of solutions. "I carry about five completely different setups on the road, different guitars with different scale lengths and necks in different tunings, different effects and amps. If one program isn't working right one night, I'll try another one. If things still don't work, I call my familiar. And by that, I don't mean I make a phone call—I open a psychic channel to him. He's a big animal that comes along and helps out.

"But I don't call him unless the problem is really serious."

When everything *does* go right, the effect can be overpowering and, yes, voodoo-like. Trey Anastasio marvels at what can happen in a concert situation. "I'm hearing the music in my ears," he reports, "and at the same time it's coming from my heart and shooting in this huge stream out of my chest and into the audience. At those moments, nothing else in life matters. You've just got to get out of the way and let it happen. The crew and the band both know that anything I say up to 20 minutes after the show should be disregarded because I'm feeling such a rush."

The late Danny Gatton described one particularly memorable encounter with the supernatural: "It was a gig in [*cont'd on page 80*]

NEW TOYS & NEW TOOLS

GUITARS & BASSES

◆ A variety of new acoustic guitars are available from **Peavey** in six- and 12-string models. The CC-37PE compact cutaway has a small body and comes equipped with a piezo pickup. The SP-9P, SP-11P and DD-21P are dreadnoughts made of various laminated woods. Sporting a jumbo body, the CJ-33E is piezo-equipped and built to project a loud, warm sound. ◆ **Zon** offers the Legacy Standard Bass series in four-, five- and six-string models. The instrument features a bolt-on 24-fret or fretless composite neck, satin finish and two-piece body of either ash or figured maple. ◆ **Seymour Duncan** introduces Classic Covers, which add a nickel-plated cover to their regular humbucking pickups. They come in four models: the '59 in neck and bridge versions, the JB and the Jazz, all double-wax potted to reduce feedback. ◆ The sensor portion of **Sabine**'s STL-12 Stealth Tuner mounts inside an acoustic or electric guitar. A row of multicolored LEDs is placed or inlaid on the instrument's top to indicate flat or sharp pitch.

KEYBOARDS & MIDI

◆ **E-mu** introduces their new top-of-the-line Emulator IV sampler, with 128 voices, up to 128 megs of RAM and a Mac-style user interface. Its baby brother is the ESI-32, an affordable 32-voice sampler that incorporates up to 32 megs of RAM. The 32-voice Classic Keys updates the Vintage Keys at a lower price, with eight megs of vintage keyboard samples in one rack space. ◆ The new OS for **Ensoniq**'s ASR-10 sampler (version 2.5) is capable of backing up and restoring data from the hard drive to DAT. ◆ **Kawai**'s AnyTime Piano converts from an acoustic piano into a silent practice unit for use with headphones. A switch mutes the piano strings and activates electronic piano, harpsichord or vibraphone sounds. It also serves as an 88-key MIDI controller. ◆ **Akai** announces a new OS software upgrade, version 2.0, for the S2800, S3000 and S3200 samplers. The revision enables those units to read **Roland** or **E-mu** sound libraries. Also, OS version 1.6 for the CD3000 adds portamento and makes it possible to take advantage of the SB3001P, an optional eight-meg piano ROM board. Another CD3000 option, KIT-CD3000, adds stereo analog inputs. ◆ **Fatar** introduces three 88-key weighted master controller keyboards. The Studio 900 features an expression wheel that can be assigned to any MIDI continuous or switch controller. The Studio 1100 has four programmable zones with independent after-touch, patch change, volume and transposition. The Studio 2001/C features eight zones and an internal 4×4 MIDI mapper, and is available in white gloss or black gloss finishes, as well as flat black or built into a road case.

AMPS & SPEAKERS

◆ The Savage 60 two-channel tube head from **ENGL** features a "hi-range suppressor" and footswitch-controlled volume. ◆ The new acoustic instrument amp from **Crate**, the CA125, features three channels optimized for piezos, mikes and magnetic pickups along with three solid-state 50-Watt power sections, two 8" speakers and a tweeter. EQ, digital and analog effects are included. Extending the Vintage Club line, Crate introduces the VC50H tube guitar head (50 Watts, two channels, tone controls, effects loop) and the VC212E and VC 410E cabinets housing two 12" and four 10" speakers respectively. The VC2110 and VC2110R (with reverb) Vintage Club combos deliver 20 Watts with tone controls and external speaker jack. Also, the BX100L bass combo upgrades the BX80 with 100 Watts, eight-band graphic EQ, effect loop, external speaker jack and balanced XLR output. ◆ Power ratings for the SX series of two-rackspace power amps from **ARX** range between 150 Watts (into 8 Ohms) and 1000 Watts (into 4 Ohms). SX amps boast a large heatsink area. ◆ The Deep Red series of bass cabinets from **Bag End** includes the Q10X-D (4×10) and D10X-D (2×10). ◆ **Ramsa**'s WS-A35 speaker is magnetically shielded for use in proximity to video monitors. Mounting brackets are available for walls or ceiling. ◆ **M&K Sound** celebrates its 20th anniversary with the S-1C satellite speaker system. Two 5¼" woofers mounted in a push-pull configuration and two 1" open-back tweeters are capable of handling between 25 and 400 watts. Frequency response is 77Hz to 20kHz. ◆ **Technomad** presents a line of flyable, stand-mountable, water-tight speakers whose external walls serve as a road case. Individual units lock together when stacked and come in models rated between 300 and 1000 Watts. ◆ The SoundWorks speaker system from **Cambridge SoundWorks** is intended for use with multimedia workstations. It includes two satellite cubes and a 4" woofer with a built-in three-channel amp.

MICROPHONES & MIXERS

◆ The C12VR tube mike from **AKG**, intended for vocal and instrument applications, offers nine polar patterns and a sensitivity control. ◆ **D³ Inc.** offers an automatic microphone switch, the IR-1. The unit eliminates unwanted background noise by activating the mike only when a performer moves into its sensor's range. Unlike a gate, the IR-1 is triggered by the performer's position rather than the audio signal. ◆ **ARX** offers the MIXX and MIXXMaster four-channel mike/line mixers, featuring modular design that allows units to be interconnected, and the MSX four-channel active mike splitter.

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

◆ **Opcode** introduces Audioshop, a Macintosh application that records, edits and plays back Mac-format sounds and controls audio playback of CD-ROM decks. Also, the new version of StudioVision Pro, v2.0.8, is compatible with **Digidesign**'s Session 8 hard-disk recording system. ◆ Version 3.0 of Cakewalk Professional for Windows, by **Twelve Tone**, adds new features such as groove quantization with DNA support, an enhanced staff view with lyrics, additional instrument definitions, percussion editing features and MIDI Machine Control. ◆ **OSC** has upgraded Deck II digital audio workstation software for the Mac to version 2.2. The new version adds Apple Sound Manager support and software plug-in architecture, allowing the program to work with third-party DSP effects that can be patched directly from Deck II's menus. ◆ The Q10 Parametric Equalizer version 1.1 from **K.S. Waves** is a two-channel, ten-band parametric equalizer in software. It operates as a plug-in for **Digidesign** software. ◆ Another **Digidesign**-compatible plug-in, Jupiter Voice Processor, is available from from Jupiter Systems. Functions include de-essing, compression, parametric EQ and multi-tap delay. ◆ D-Verb is **Digidesign**'s own software plug-in, providing 24-bit reverb in conjunction with the DSP Farm processor board. ◆ **Big Noise**'s Seq-Max Lite, a 16-track sequencer and score editor for IBM/Windows, now comes bundled with either **MIDIman**'s MM-401 MIDI interface or Sound Card MIDI Cable (for use with Sound Blaster Pro or compatible sound boards).

Pro for IBM/Windows ($199), the first sequencer designed specifically for guitarists. While using the program doesn't actually involve playing your axe, it features an onscreen fretboard on which you can define chords, picking and strumming patterns, hammer-ons and string bends. Each time you change a fingering position, the new chord's name shows up automatically below the fretboard. The Chord Request function reverses the process, displaying the fingerings of chords selected by name. Furthermore, the onscreen guitar neck is configurable! You can create stringed instruments with up to 12 strings, tuned any way you choose, each transmitting on its own MIDI channel.

Power Chords represents music in terms of modular building blocks: melodies, bass lines, chords and drum patterns. Once you've created a block (using either the onscreen facilities, an external MIDI controller or by importing a Standard MIDI File), you can drag them into place wherever you like to create a composition. (This method of sequencing lends itself to repetitive song-type forms rather than through-composed pieces.) Howling Dog's package is a guitar-friendly alternative to the usual keyboard-oriented approach to sequencing. However, composers of more open-ended music might find it too restrictive.

Wouldn't it be nice to enter MIDI data into Power Chords directly from your guitar? The G-Vox system from Lyrrus provides one way to do it. By attaching the G-Vox belt pack and pickup ($399), you can plug your axe directly into the serial port of an IBM (running Windows) and use various interactive software packages. A program called MIDI Transfer is free; it captures your playing and translates it into a Standard MIDI File. Data from the G-Vox pickup can be routed directly into Power Chords using a program called Bridge ($129), essentially turning your guitar into a full-fledged MIDI controller.

Other G-Vox programs are instructional. Riffs ($79) is a software platform that runs modules called Artist Libraries ($16–$24), interactive lessons with Steve Morse, Adrian Legg and others. These display notation, tab and finger positions as you play and evaluate your accuracy in matching examples. Chords ($79) identifies and notates any chord you play. It also creates leadsheets and provides access to chord dictionary features in the Artist Libraries. All in all, the G-Vox system is a step up in price and performance.

If all of this sounds too rich for your blood, search out Guitar Teacher ($5), a shareware program for DOS and Windows from Software Labs. When you select a chord (from a list of 250), Guitar Teacher simply displays a block diagram. This is a bare-bones product—no sound, no options, no frills. But the price is right, and it's a quick, easy way to check out the burgeoning guitar/computer interface.

◆ **Howling Dog**, Kanata North, PO Box 72071, Kanata, ON Canada K2K 2P4; voice (800) 267-HOWL, fax (613) 599-7926. ◆ **Lyrrus**, 35 N. 3rd St., Philadelphia, PA 19106; voice (215) 922-0880, fax (215) 922-7230. ◆ **PG Music**, 266 Elmwood Ave., Suite 111, Buffalo, NY 14222; voice (800) 268-6272, fax (905) 577-4704. ◆ **SDG Soft**, 4600 Donna Dr., Prescott, AZ 86301; voice (800) 477-7341, fax (602) 717-2298. ◆ **Six String Software**, PO Box 6608, Kent, WA 98064-9914; voice and fax (206) 631-5855. ◆ **Software Labs**, 8700 148th Ave. N.E., Redmond, WA 98052; voice (800) 569-7900, fax (206) 869-1503.

GUITAR VOODOO

[*cont'd from page 72*] this little club in Maryland a few years back. All of a sudden I started pulling out this stuff that was a total mystery to me. I felt like I was possessed by the spirit of Django Reinhardt. I wasn't the only one who noticed it, people were talking about it after the show and on the way home. It's never happened again. Maybe once was enough."

In the end, Scott Lindenmuth says, much of what we've called guitar voodoo "comes down to personal psychology. If I was wearing a clown suit with tennis shoes three sizes too large, it would probably affect the way I play." And despite his general tone of skepticism, Nicky Skopelitis sees a place for voodoo in the life of anyone truly dedicated to playing their instrument.

"It's true," he agrees, "there is guitar voodoo. But really, it's music voodoo. The electric guitar just happens to have been the main vehicle of rock music for the past 40 years or so. The real voodoo is at the source of music itself. That's what you want to reach when you pick up a guitar."

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ADVICE TO DRUMMERS: LET 'EM HANG

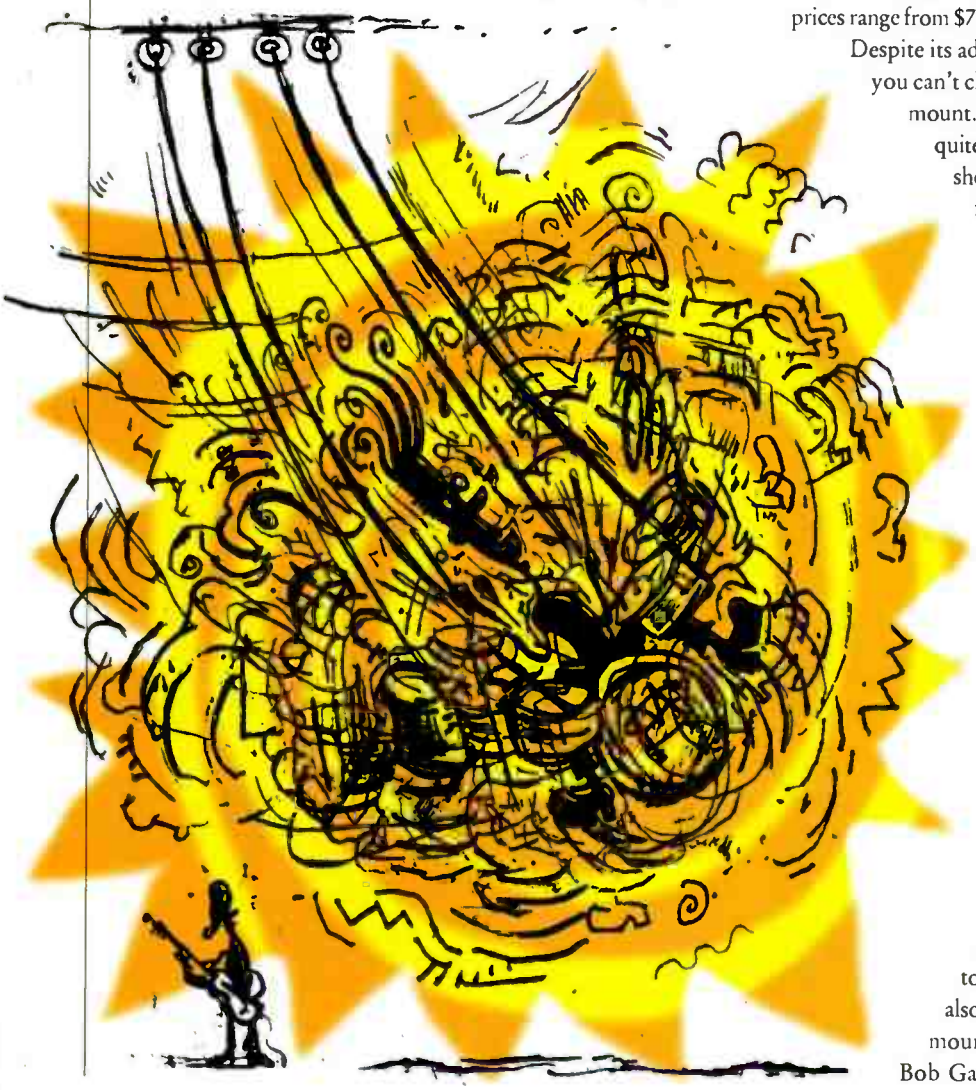
Suspension mounting systems allow drum shells to vibrate freely for better tone.

BY RICK MATTINGLY

OVER THE past couple of years, most drum companies have introduced some type of "suspension" mounting system for tom-toms. The idea is to allow the drum shell to vibrate freely, thereby achieving maximum resonance and sustain. By suspending the drum, you eliminate penetrating hardware (metal tubes that extend into the drum shell and disrupt the flow of vibrations between top and bottom heads) as well as metal plates that bolt onto the shell's sides.

Although many of these systems are new, the idea isn't. PureCussion introduced RIMS (Resonance Isolation Mounting System) over a decade ago, and many prominent drummers swore by them. Some major drum companies swore *at* them. Their endorsers were asking for drums without mounting hardware and then fitting them with RIMS, a situation that wasn't likely to improve public perception of their own products. Eventually some manufacturers, including Drum Workshop, Noble & Cooley, Gretsch, Ludwig and Stingray, accommodated the preference for RIMS by offering them as standard equipment or as an option. Meanwhile, just about everyone else developed their own versions.

RIMS attach underneath a rack tom's top counterhoop by means of a semicircular steel band held in place by four of the drum's tension rods. There is also a RIMS mount for floor toms that encircles the bottom counterhoop, enabling the use of traditional floor-tom legs, and a full-circle model for rack mounting floor toms that attaches underneath the top counterhoop. RIMS mounts come in a variety of sizes to accommodate diameters from 6" to 18" and from four to ten lugs. For rack toms, prices range from $70 to $160. Floor tom mounts cost $140.



Despite its advantages, RIMS presents three problems. First, you can't change the top head without removing the RIMS mount. Second, the system allows the drums to wobble quite a bit. While toms need enough give to accept the shock of a strong blow, too much wobble can interfere with fast, intricate sticking patterns. Third, RIMS can make it difficult to mount toms close together. Some companies have addressed these problems while retaining the basic RIMS design. Others have come up with quite different approaches.

The Star-Cast system from Tama (prices TBA) is so similar to RIMS that Tama pays licensing fees to PureCussion. The difference is that Star-Cast attaches to a die-cast batter-head counterhoop with three extra "ears," providing a little more stability and eliminating pull on the tensioning screws. You still need to detach the mount before you can change heads, though. Star-Cast is standard equipment on Tama's new Starclassic kits, and can be retrofitted to any drum by replacing the top counterhoop. The system is available for drum diameters from 8" to 16".

Noble & Cooley uses an actual RIMS mount attached to the underside of the top lugs. This allows top heads to be changed without detaching the mount, and makes it possible to adjust the amount of wobble. To these ears, it also provides the greatest sustain of any suspension-mount drums on the market. According to designer Bob Gatzen, the secret is that the mounting system

ILLUSTRATION BY WARREN LINN

doesn't pull on the batter head's counterhoop or tension screws, allowing the batter head to resonate more freely. Unfortunately, the system works only on drums with Noble & Cooley tension lugs.

Peavey's approach is similar, with a RIMS mount attached underneath the large wooden collar that encircles the drum and receives the tension screws. As with the Noble & Cooley design, this allows for changing heads without dismounting. It also provides better stability and avoids stress on the tensioning hardware.

Another system that doesn't interfere with tensioning hardware is the Yamaha Enhanced Sustain System (YESS). However, it has little in common with RIMS. For starters, it attaches to the drum shell. The screws are placed at the shell's nodal point, the spot at which it vibrates least. YESS is less bulky than much of the competition, offers better stability than most and fits all sizes, makes and models (assuming you can determine the nodal points of your shells). Price: $55 to retrofit each tom-tom, $100 for set that accepts three floor tom legs.

Pearl and Page offer systems that attach to the counterhoop. Pearl's ISS (Integrated Suspension System) uses a claw-hook bracket. You have to remove it to change heads, but it comes on and off easily and there's a lot less wobble. ISS mounts are included with all Pearl kits except the Export and Forum series, and can be retrofitted onto most drums. The price of an ISS bracket is $30. If you need a Pearl tom bracket to go with it, that's another $14.

Page's system, which is not yet available, attaches to the counterhoop with U-clamps held in place with two adjacent tension rods. It is designed to attach to any drum.

GMS offers a mount similar to RIMS. It attaches via two adjacent tension screws underneath the top counterhoop, which means you can't change top heads without taking the mount off. A stabilizer bar spans the length of the drum and clips onto the bottom counterhoop; the amount of wobble is adjustable. GMS also makes suspension mounts for floor tom legs that clip to the bottom counterhoop. Price: $115–$125 per tom-tom, $240 for a set of three floor tom leg mounts.

Mapex's ITS (Isolation Tom System) attaches to the back of the tension lugs, while Sonor's STARS (Sonor Total Acoustic Resonance System) and the mounts on Premier's Signia kits clamp around the drums' tubular lugs. All three provide good stability and don't interfere with head-tensioning hardware, but are available only as original equipment.

Of course, mounting hardware is only one variable that contributes to a drum's sound. Shell material and construction are also major factors, so comparing various mounting systems properly would require attaching each to the same shell. I was most impressed with systems that don't interfere with the tensioning hardware. For those wishing to retrofit older drums, RIMS are still the best choice, as they can be adapted to just about any company's hardware.

The following companies offer proprietary suspension mounting systems: ◆ **GMS**, 855-C Conklin St., Farmingdale, NY 11735; voice (516) 293-4235, fax (516) 293-4246. ◆ **Mapex**, 1818 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210; voice (615) 871-4500, fax (615) 889-5509. ◆ **Page**, 547 Calle Rolph, Palm Springs, CA 92262; voice (619) 320-5183. ◆ **Pearl**, 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville, TN 37211; voice (615) 833-4477, fax (615) 833-6242. ◆ **Premier**, 1263 Glen Ave., Suite 250, Moorestown, NJ 08057; voice (609) 231-8825, fax (609) 231-8829. ◆ **PureCussion**, 3611 Wooddale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55416; voice (612) 927-2330, fax (612) 927-2333. ◆ **Sonor**, 101 Sycamore Dr., Ashland, VA 23005; voice (804) 550-2700, fax (804) 550-2670. ◆ **Tama**, 1726 Winchester Rd., Bensalem, PA 19020; voice (215) 638-8670, fax (215) 245-8583. ◆ **Yamaha**, 6600 Orangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, CA 90620; voice (714) 522-9011, fax (714) 522-9832. *These companies offer RIMS as standard or optional equipment:* ◆ **Drum Workshop**, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030; voice (805) 485-6999, fax (805) 485-1334. ◆ **Gretsch**, P.O. Box 2468, Savannah, GA 31402; voice (912) 748-1101, fax (912) 748-1106. ◆ **Ludwig**, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515; voice (219) 522-1675, fax (219) 522-0334. ◆ **Noble & Cooley**, 42 Water St., Granville, MA 01034; voice (413) 357-6321, fax (413) 357-6314. ◆ **Peavey**, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301; voice (601) 483-5365, fax (601) 486-1278. ◆ **Stingray**, 1228-B 53rd St., Mangonia Park, FL 33407; voice (407) 848-4489, fax (407) 848-3762.

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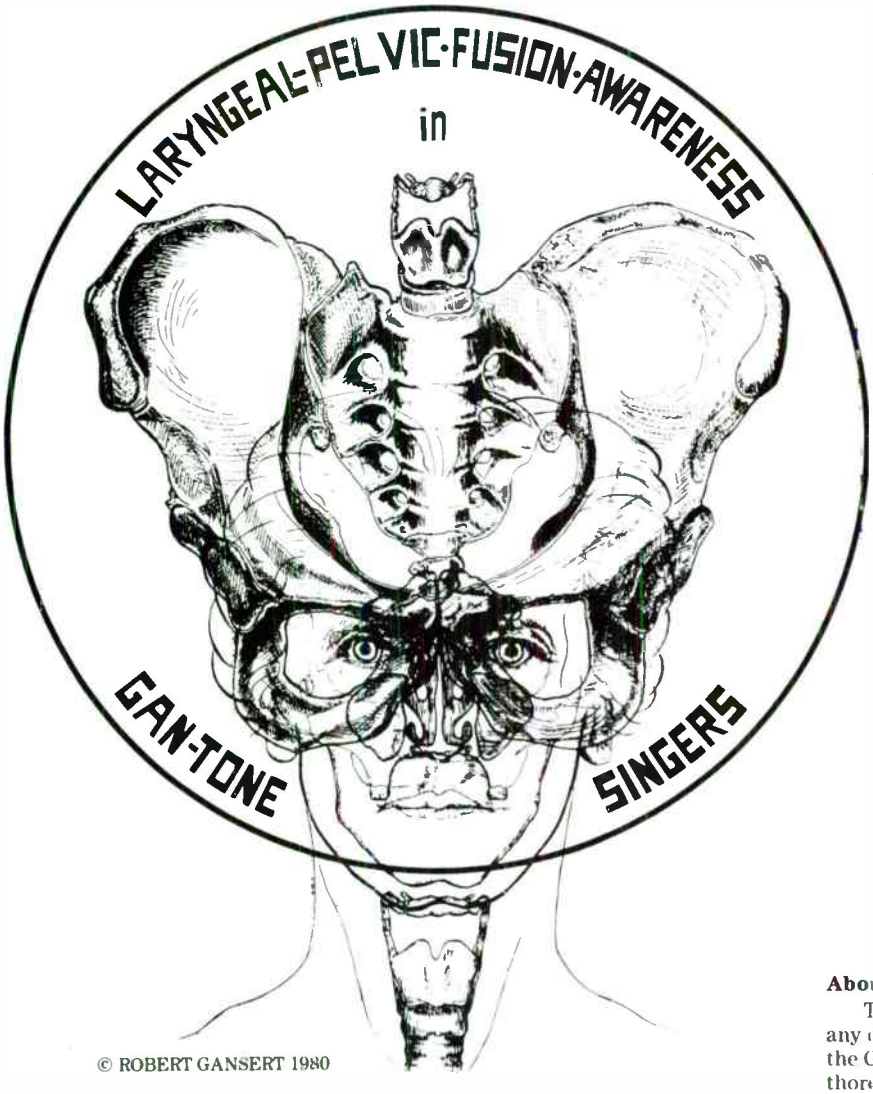

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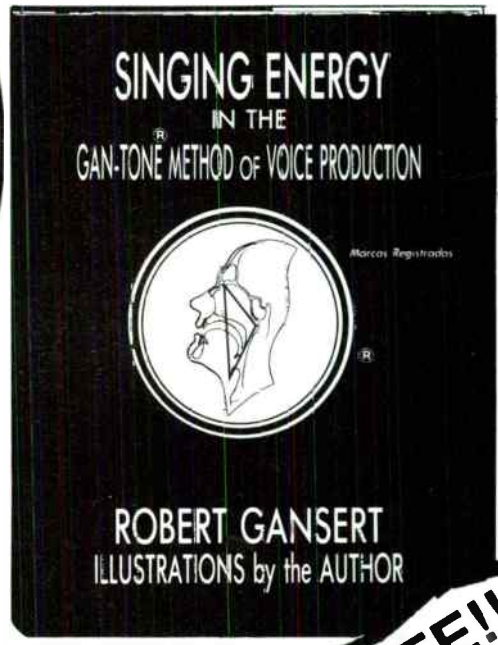

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THE GRATEFUL DEAD GET GRAYFOLDED

LET'S START with the obvious: *Grayfolded* is not your typical Grateful Dead live album. For one thing, it's devoted to a single song, "Dark Star," drawing from 51 performances spread over 25 years. Yet it sounds like no version of "Dark Star" you've heard, because the music has gotten the Plunderphonics treatment: something avant-garde sample-meister John Oswald describes as "taking existing recordings—usually of very familiar music—and changing them around in some sort of radical way."

These recordings were concert tapes from the Grateful Dead vaults. "I've got about 40 hours of digital transfers of stuff from the vaults, all of which is 'Dark Star' or 'Dark Star'–related. After listening to a few of the 100 versions I eventually went through, I would naturally get tired of hearing them do the same thing in the same way again," he explains. "So I wasn't so much interested in the constant parts in the song over the years as in the exceptions."

Given the range of renditions, Oswald was concerned about pitch variance, but to his surprise, little retuning was needed. Time was another matter. "When they started playing it, in late '68, they took off from the tempo of the single, about 93 beats per minute," he explains. "Each performance over the course of '69 was progressively slower than the last one, just in that beginning groove section.

"Then there was a break, when they weren't playing it, and they came back playing it at 61. So the 61 and the 93 relate in a nice way, because the 93 is like a triplet on top of the 61.

"On *Grayfolded*, after the extended 'Dark Star crashes' lyric, there's a transition from the fastest version to the slowest version. Similarly, within a performance, there would be all sorts of accelerandos and things that are completely out of tempo. But that's part of the charm of the music, that the improvisation engenders tempo motion and rhythmic variety."

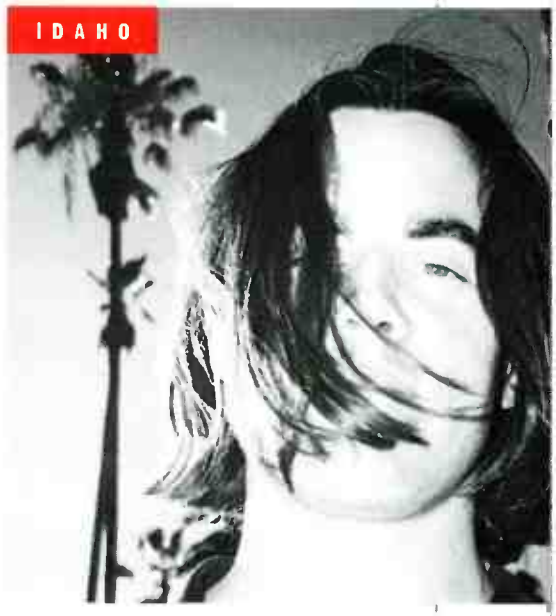
—J.D. Considine

cally speaking. I don't think there's a quotable line in the whole song-fest. Way to go, Glenn.

And now for the surprise ending: The Megadeth CD is actually kind of cool. It's hard not to warm to a guy who delineates his bewilderment with such panache. And the balance has shifted since *Countdown to Extinction*'s doom-wallow—less Big Picture howls of despair, more pages from the Travis Bickle school of introspective musing. And the latter seems tempered by ambiguity; Dave Mustaine writes suicide notes but he doesn't finish them. Having logged some time at the far side of junkiedom, he's no longer half in love with death. Sure there's a few steaming heaps of apocalyptic glop, but the archetypal late-twentieth-century production values will help you step over these—lots of fat melodic guitar riffs and deep-dish thumping from the boys in the back. And, most important of all, not a gal in sight

—Richard C. Walls

IDAHO



IDAHO

This Way Out

(CAROLINE)

THERE'S A SPOT EARLY ON IN JACK Kerouac's *On the Road*, where after traveling the rails through the Midwest for an indeterminate amount of time, the narrator wakes in a strange hotel room at four p.m. and looks out the window through a sunny haze, for an instant not knowing who he is, where he is, where he's come from or where he's going. That odd feeling of adventure and dislocation permeates *This Way Out*.

Singing like a weary beggar or a spoiled child, Los Angeles native Jeff Martin, a.k.a. Idaho, writes still songs on his dissonant four-string

guitars that possess the isolated glow of Kurt Cobain and the sweetness of Neil Young, skewed, perhaps, through the ghost of Hank Williams.

"Nothing to do just getting through a day by day" is the album's opening line and it doesn't get any brighter. Songs like the Satie-like "Sweep," the wobbly "Weird Wood" and the beautifully stark "Taken" show Martin to be a nostalgic loner, distilling the slacker ethic down to a somnambulist art. He sings about "time crawling out of me" and "taking my stupid self from the shelf" as guitars haunt and spiral around him. At times, as in "Forever," you wait for the music to stop altogether to trail off in the echo of a final plucked chord.

Where Cobain was truly *tortured*, Jeff Martin has simply created a style. But knowing that doesn't decrease the pleasure of these carnival-like songs. Childlike and simple, Martin has taken his late-afternoon window's view of L.A. and built an insular environment around it where he can muse and dream. —Ken Micallef

HOUSE PARTY

What Are You Listening to Lately?

VICTORIA WILLIAMS

1. Dan Penn—Cry Like a Man
2. Joni Mitchell—Turbulent Indigo
3. Ted Hawkins—The Last Hundred Years
4. Vic Chestnutt—Drunk
5. Thelonious Monk—Thelonious with John Coltrane

BARRY WHITE

1. Marvin Gaye—What's Goin' On
2. The Temptations—I'll Be in Trouble
3. Nina Simone—Baltimore
4. Wes Montgomery—Down Here on the Ground
5. Barry White—The Icon Is Love

HENRY ROLLINS

1. Astor Piazzolla—El Desbande
2. Mississippi Fred McDowell—Good Morning Little School Girl
3. Bud Powell—1953 Birdland Sessions
4. Jimi Hendrix—Woodstock
5. Hardware—Third Eye Open

BUDDY GUY

Slippin' In

(SILVERTONE)

AT HIS MOST INSPIRED, BLUES-master Buddy Guy resembles a man in danger of spontaneous combustion. Though hardly a masterpiece, *Slippin' In* yields a few choice examples of his genius, including the stomping "Don't Drive Me Away." Guy practically shrieks the lyrics, as if babbling incoherence were just around the bend, while his smouldering guitar solo bypasses flash for a tortured display that conveys real grief. When he finally succumbs to the urge to show off, his soul-on-fire theatrics recall prime Hendrix, although Jimi probably learned the art of intelligent excess from Guy, not the other way around.

The peril of operating at such awesome high intensity is that lesser moments can't begin to satisfy—and this erratic opus contains enough peaks and valleys for a roller coaster. Guy cools the fire of "Don't Drive Me Away" with a tastefully generic reading of Fenton Robinson's brooding "7-11," followed by a glib take on the Jimmy Reed chestnut "Shame Shame Shame," raising suspicions of pop crossover dreams. Then he returns to killer mode for a wonderfully overwrought "Love Her with a Feeling," tearing notes from the strings with almost frightening brutality.

The star gets able assistance from his touring band, as well as Double Trouble, piano god Johnnie Johnson and producer (and Hendrix vet) Eddie Kramer, who favors tough, no-nonsense settings. But Guy needs stronger A&R input. A faithful cover of Charles Brown's elegant "Trouble Blues" fails to utilize his dramatic skills; on the other hand, "Slippin' Out, Slippin' In" approaches brilliance, with Guy's fury and the party groove of Denise LaSalle's cheatin' tune meshing perfectly. His own "Man of Many Words," a pedestrian rewrite of the Otis Redding classic "Hard to Handle," should have remained in the can.

Though a younger blood than B.B. King and John Lee Hooker, Guy's been wailing long enough to qualify for respected elder status. Like those venerable gents, he's reached the point where dignified coasting is allowed, having achieved immortality some time ago. However, the explosive passions that occasionally illuminate *Slippin' In* suggest growing old gracefully shouldn't be an option yet. Buddy Guy's frayed nerves remain one of the great natural wonders of the blues. —Jon Young

MADONNA

Bedtime Stories

(WARNER BROS./ SIRE/MAVERICK)

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO Salt-N-Pepa, let's *not* talk about sex. Instead, let's talk about something Madonna's critics prefer to ignore—her music. Because despite what *Entertainment Weekly* would have us think, the most important aspect of Madonna's career isn't her sexuality or celebrity, but her singing.

And so, to *Bedtime Stories*. Although the album has been touted as Madonna's soul session, thanks to her work with producers Dallas Austin and Babyface, in truth it's actually closer to her first three albums, putting a heavier emphasis on pop and dance content than on straight-up soul.

Not that Ms. M. doesn't get down. "I'd Rather Be Your Lover" is a particularly funky offering, boasting a sturdy '70s-style groove and a sassy rap from Me'shell NdegéOcello,

while "Forbidden Love" is classic slow-jam material, blessed with a sinuous, deep-pulsing bassline and an insinuating, sing-song chorus.

But Madonna doesn't remake her approach to sound more "soulful." Instead, she relies on her standard vocal devices—the breathy, half-whispered croon; the sultry, deep-throated dip into alto range; the husky, girlish upper register—to cast these melodies in her own image, from the well-crafted pop cadences of "Secret" to the dancebeat abandon of "Don't Stop." She even manages to make the title tune her own—no mean feat, given how idiosyncratic the Björk-penned melody is.

Best of all, *Bedtime Stories* doesn't raise hackles or cultivate controversy (unless you count "Human Nature," which answers Madonna's critics with the chorus, "I'm not your bitch don't hang your shit on me"). It simply concentrates on the music—a stratagem that may prove to be the savviest move Madonna has made in years. —J.D. Considine

SMASHING PUMPKINS

Pisces Iscariot

(VIRGIN)

CATHERINE

Sorry

(TVT)

IN THIS POST-*NEVERMIND* ERA WHERE SO many of America's "alternative" bands favor loud volume and discordance, it's easy to forget how truly refreshing the power chords on Smashing Pumpkins' debut, *Gish*, sounded upon its release in 1991 (predating even Nirvana's breakthrough). But unlike Nirvana and the Pumpkins, who both began with a solid songwriting foundation, most of today's heavy rockers have little to show once you strip away the distortion.

Which brings us to the Pumpkins' latest release, a collection of B-sides and outtakes. While an increasing number of artists release premature B-side/demo/outtakes records, challenging a privilege once reserved for more established artists like Townshend, Dylan or the Smiths, the Pumpkins' collection convincingly demonstrates that 1) if not for Corgan's strict quality control, the Pumpkins could've been on their third legitimate LP by now, and 2) when you strip away *their* sonic bombast, there is still a fair amount of substance.

The rich, compressed production of Butch Vig (who produced both of their previous efforts) is naturally in evidence on the majority of these tracks as well. Yet, it's not the Pumpkins' staple *rawk* fare that makes this record so good (though their chunky cover of the Animals' "Girl Named Sandoz" is a highlight). It's when they drift into the gentler, spacier numbers that the album really shines, mining a vein similar to such *Gish* tracks as "Crush" and "Suffer" or their *No Alternative* contribution, "Glynis." Here, Corgan shows how well the elements that drive the Pumpkins' heavier material (darkness, introspection, celebration) can work in this alternate setting.

Of course, in the process they also expose some of their shortcomings: the James Iha–penned "Plume" plods along, and they have a tendency toward overdriven guitar-noise when all else fails. But they're certainly drawing a blueprint for the next generation of alterna-rockers, one which their much-buzzed-about fellow Chicagoans Catherine might have done well to study a little closer.

Of course, by aligning themselves with the Pumpkins in the first place (among other things, Corgan produced their debut EP *Sleepy*), Catherine took a calculated risk that lazy critics would compare the two. But even the most unsuspecting listener couldn't help but hear similarities—most notably the zooming, overdrive- and compression-doused guitars.

The lead tracks deceptively go straight for the pop jugular with tempting harmonies and a wall of guitars (three-fifths of the band are guitarists). From there, the band dissolve into a noisier, less-focused outfit (perhaps a result of the songwriting duties being scattered amongst all five members), often delivering twice the cacophony and only half the spirit of their Pumpkin mentors. —Dev Sherlock

JONI MITCHELL

Turbulent Indigo

(REPRISE)

THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT, BY now, that in the ranks of American music of the past quarter century, Joni Mitchell is one of the Great Ones. In *Turbulent Indigo*, the triumphant veteran of the sensitive songsmith wars has concocted her most compelling album in years, just in time for a return to Reprise, her old label.

Vincent Van Gogh, that icon of tortured artistry, is the subject of the title song—actually one of the brighter-hued songs on a mostly pensive song set. Themes of innocence lost and innocence-never-known trickle through the album, as she contends with mate abuse ("Not to Blame"), chronic alienation ("Sunny Sunday"), the legacy of misogyny ("The Magdelaine Laundries") and the price of separatism ("Borderline"). The message becomes shrill with bumper sticker simplicity on the album's one weak track, "Sex Kills"—also the one digitally overloaded production number. But she has painted a small, languid masterpiece with the closing song, "The Sire of Sorrow (Job's Sad Song)," a turbulent plea for clarity amidst chaos.

If once Mitchell trumpeted change as a mandate and a mantra, here she enjoys the comforts of familiar surroundings, including a collaboration with old friend David Crosby ("Yvette in English"). Most of the tracks re-

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volve around Mitchell's signature guitar needlepoint, with its brooding-sky open tunings, and rhythmic pulses summoned at the palm of her hand.

Meanwhile, dark washes of volume pedal guitar and pedal steel guitar swoop and swell around her. Wayne Shorter coats the surface with his eloquent and elliptical soprano sax. Bassist/producer Larry Klein grounds it all with understated low-end underpainting, with a few choice Jaco references. Old time's sake and present-day angst reign.

The vision Mitchell paints here is not a pretty picture, by and large. But, inescapably, *Turbulent Indigo* is a thing of deep, dark beauty. —Josef Woodard

JAN GARBAREK & THE HILLIARD ENSEMBLE

Officium

(ECM)

BOTH JAN GARBAREK AND THE HILLIARD Ensemble are mainstays of the ECM label. Both issue recordings in a variety of interesting and provocative settings: Garbarek has recorded with everyone from Keith Jarrett and Ralph Towner to Mari Boine Person and R. Shankar, while the Ensemble has done everything from Tallis and Perotin to Bach and Pärt. On *Officium*, saxophonist Garbarek and the Hilliard Ensemble have united in the performance of 13 of 15 selections of ancient and medieval chant and polyphony from the twelfth through sixteenth centuries. In short, the results are breathtaking.

The Hilliard Ensemble has long been practitioners of medieval vocal music that relies primarily on the "emotional" rather than the academic approach to the work. Into this setting, Garbarek enters his recent penchant for stark and simple folk melodies, acting more as a fifth voice than a soloist who soars over the voices.

The centerpiece of the disc is Christobal De Morales' "Parce mihi domine," a stunning work of sixteenth-century polyphony, which appears in three substantially different versions—one solely vocal and two with Garbarek. The saxophonist weaves subtly and dramatically in, around and through the limpid voices in a reading that is as mystically beguiling as it is wonderfully devout and transparent.

In sum, each of the works translated in this collaboration is full of beauty, majesty and mystery. The ECM sound is typically crystal clear, warm and spacious, serving both music and performers well.

Ironically, while chant may be all the rage

ET CETERA

THE CHOCOLATE WATCHBAND

No Way Out
The Inner Mystique
One Step Beyond

(SUNDAZED)

THE CD reissues of three extremely collectible albums aren't great shakes musically, though their slapdash nature—many of the songs don't even feature any of the actual bandmembers—offers an illuminating perspective on how the business of record-making went down in the late '60s. Regardless, some of the spacy instrumentals are appealing in that snack-time at the drive-in mode, and the actual rock tunes ("Sitting There Standing," "Don't Need Your Lovin'," bonus tracks both) are fiercely, engagingly punkish. And though Moby Grape's Jerry Miller is credited with playing on only one track on 1969's *One Step Beyond*, I hear his guitar on much of it. Hear for yourself. —*Dave DiMartino*

SON SEALS

Nothing but the Truth

(ALLIGATOR)

ON HIS seventh Alligator album, blues guitarist/vocalist Seals delivers a neat summation of his two-decade career. He makes deep bows to two late colleagues, Albert King (whose cloudy vocals and burry, horn-bolstered guitar work are recapitulated on "I Can't Hear Nothing but the Blues") and Hound Dog Taylor (who is saluted in an uncharacteristically ebullient version of the slide guitarist's "Sadie"), and adeptly reiterates all that is exciting in his own distinctive playing. Seals has always been the most brooding of Chicago bluesmen, and, on his punchy original "I'm Gonna Take It All Back" and other numbers here, he reaches down and pulls up performances of the most profound emotion. Gruffly sung and bitterly played. *Nothing but the Truth* is a sharp, at times scathing entry by one of the genre's most soulful exorcists. —*Chris Morris*

WOODY GUTHRIE

Long Ways to Travel

(SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS)

ONE SHOULDN'T expect a new "Deportee" or "This Land Is Your Land" among these previously unreleased '40s recordings, but their modesty is still a letdown. Mostly you get Woody and Cisco Houston (with folks like Sonny Terry occasionally sitting in) doing stuff like bird and train imitations on harmonica, with riveting commentary like "that's a rain crow alright" and "mighty pretty country up here." Better are "Budded Roses"—a Carter Family–ish weeper, and "Rocky Mountain Slim and Desert Rat Shorty"—a comedy bit about feuding folksingers on border radio. Recommended to the true believer only, who may find scattered here bits of Guthrie's brilliance, wit and humanitarianism. —*Thomas Anderson*

GOD STREET WINE

$1.99 Romances

(GEFFEN/ELEVEN)

HAILING FROM the glorious town of Ossining, New York (home of Sing Sing prison), GSW's major-label debut smacks of the free and easy (i.e. meandering) jam feel of second generation Allman Brothers/Dead Head/H.O.R.D.E. bands like Widespread Panic with a touch of Steely Dan. Produced by Memphis ace Jim Dickinson, the tunes are based around guitar and keyboard (bonus points for a real Hammond) lines. Not terribly distinctive, but the group has spirit to spare. —*Michael Lipton*

JIMMY SMITH TRIO

The Master

(BLUE NOTE)

ORGANIST SMITH was always a class act. Back in the late '50s and early '60s when funky organ players—sometimes raw and exciting, sometimes just dumb—were a dime a dozen, Smith carried the bop flame smoothly, a bluesy virtuoso. *The Master* has him back at his old label with his old frequent collaborator Kenny Burrell for a live date recorded in Japan. No diminishment of talent or energy is detectable—if anything he sounds looser, more expansive (check out "It's Alright with Me")—though I don't recall him growling along with his playing quite so much: a minor distraction in a well-paced program of standards, blues and Smith-owned favorites. Modern jazz organ *still* starts here. —*Richard C. Walls*

these days, and revisionism is being decried like never before from critics and fans alike, it hasn't been heard as reverently or as glorious as this. —Thom Jurek

THE BLACK CROWES
Amorica
(AMERICAN)

YAS, YAS. AFTER UNTOLD MONTHS O' brotherly (bickering) love/wrapped 'n' scrapped sessions, the Black Crowes return with that difficult third album, *Amorica*, a marked—somewhat self-consciously more experimental—contrast to 1992's grind-it-out-in-a-week mouthful, *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*.

Sometimes this shift works. The ethnic percussion, chop-socky guitar licks and *looong* vocal lines on "Gone" give way to a cut-time chorus, one-note backing vocals and a trashy, *Rough and Ready, Beck-ola* feel. "P. 25 London" recombines the Hendrix 'n' Zappa dou-

SHORT TAKES

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

TOM PETTY
Wildflowers
(WARNER BROS.)

DON'T LET the aw-shucks surface fool you. Along with the laconic melodies and low-key anomie you've come to expect from Petty lurks a darkness and rage that sleeps, possum-like, just beneath the surface of this album. But instead of souring these songs, this bit of bile helps put an edge on the material, adding urgency to the lust of "You Wreck Me" and bringing a believable bitterness to bad-breaks songs like "You Don't Know How It Feels." Best of all is the way that nasty undercurrent affects the music's flow, adding extra bite to the playing without undercutting the rootsy understatement of tunes like "Don't Fade on Me" or "Good to Be King."

ROGER CLINTON
Nothing Good Comes Easy
(PYRAMID)

DESPITE ITS slick production, well-conceived material and obviously heartfelt delivery, what we get from Clinton comes across too empty and contrived to be convincing. Gee—you don't think it's genetic, do you?

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND
Under the Table and Dreaming
(RCA)

BETWEEN THE supple elegance of the rhythm section and the jazzy flavor of Leroi Moore's sax counterpoint, it's easy to understand why Matthews and company are all the rage on the jam band circuit. But what makes *Under the Table* required listening isn't the playing so much as the material. It isn't just that the songs are catchy; Matthews handles the lithe melodies with such ease that the music flows like conversation, drawing the listener in as if he or she were a participant, making the album almost addictive.

LENA WILLEMARK / ALE MÖLLER
Nordan
(ECM)

MEDIEVAL SWEDISH ballads and folk tunes may not seem the most accessible material to build an album around, but somehow Willemark and Möller make these songs seem so inviting that you'll be swept away even if you've never gotten any closer to Sweden than the meatballs. Willemark's rich, expressive voice conveys the same kind of passion and incandescence that Clannad's Máire Brennan delivers, but the real strength is Möller and the other instrumentalists, who use a jazzy sense of interplay and texture to flesh out these tartly tuneful folk melodies.

PARIS
Guerrilla Funk
(PRIORITY)

GIVEN THE nature of his politics, it's unlikely this black nationalist rapper will ever reach the same kind of an audience as such pop-rap cartoons as Da Brat or Bone Thugs N Harmony. More's the pity, though, because not only is Paris's message more intelligent (check "40 Ounces and a Fool" or "Blacks and Blues"), but his music is infinitely deeper, thanks to the synth-bass thump and hardcore funk that powers the likes of "It's Real."

ble helix in blotter form, and "High Head Blues" finds the augmented Atlanta sextet Traffic-king in homegrown, languid/liquid funk psychedelic lollipops.

"Downtown Money Waster" is the obligatory—but far from perfunctory—acoustic country blues from way out in the Georgia woods hand-rolled number. And "Cursed Diamond" is the best o' faux–Muscle Shoals soul ballads—albeit more in a "First Cut Is the Deepest," "Handbags and Gladrags," "My Way of Giving," white lace 'n' wrought iron railings *nouveau retro* English soul bag.

That leaves the lazy, hazy "Nonfiction," the overwrought first single "A Conspiracy," the Faces-go-to-New Orleans "She Gave Good Sunflower," the shufflin' "Wiser Time" and two more testifyin' slowjams, "Ballad in Urgency" and "Descending"—all of which wouldn't sound out of place alongside any of the band's previous recordings or on a Classic Rock station in your hometown.

Solidly consistent—with lyrics devoted to redemption through L-U-V and allthebeautifullosers—this is probably the best album the Black Crowes could make at this time in their fine, fine, superfine (multiplatinum) careers. They work hard, they're not half as stupid as you think and...they're just not terribly original. But they're splittin' their crushed velvet bellbottoms to get there. **—Don Waller**

PAUL KELLY

Wanted Man

(VANGUARD)

THE SAGA OF AUSTRALIAN PAUL KELLY IS a sad testimony to this country's twisted sense of musical values. Dumped from A&M Records after three superb U.S. releases, the consummate singer/songwriter/rocker could easily have become another forgotten casualty. Instead, Kelly's second indie release confirms not only his determination but his stature as one of music's most consistent and accurate songwriters.

Whether accompanied by little more than a piano (the beautiful "Summer Rain") or a full band (the driving and haunting "She's Rare"), Kelly has the distinction of being a writer who is easily identifiable without being predictable. Despite the absence of his former band the Messengers, he can also handily flesh out a tune musically as well as vocally. Borrowing fellow Aussie Nick Cave's poem "God's Hotel," he creates an unlikely gem filled with muscular hooks and soulful harmonies.

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I certify that the statements made by me are correct and complete.
Paul Sacksman, Publisher

Kelly's economical writing style has never been sharper as he writes effortlessly about subjects over which others labor. "Everybody Wants to Touch Me" offers a bit of Dylanesque musing, "You're Still Picking the Same Sore" will ring true for anyone who has ever tried to reunite old friends, and "Just Like Animals," describing several sensual encounters, is sure to kindle vivid memories of old lovers.

With production and musical help from Not Drowning, Waving's David Bridie and former Was (Not Was) guitarist Randy Jacobs, Kelly has indeed found like-minded collaborators. More than 1992's *Comedy, Wanted Man* sounds like the product of a well-rehearsed band with a songwriter who has a limitless well of inspiration. —Michael Lipton

LED UNZEPPELIN

[*cont'd from page 68*] Then we sort of finessed it and honed it.

MUSICIAN: *Also, Jimmy's solo on that was amazing, because it was like how to play a blues without playing the blues. You didn't play all the obvious licks.*

PAGE: Well, I try not to.

PLANT: Well, that's always been Jimmy's forte. If you listen to "Tea for One" on *Presence* or whatever, that's the great thing, for me.

I think it's fair to say that we were suffering quite a bit from nerves when we made this film. Because it was like we had two shots at it—the one on the one night, and the one on the next. And we were a bit jumpy, because there were so many parts that we weren't sure—I mean, it's great to be nervous.

PAGE: But there was so much to remember.

PLANT: So some of our rehearsals were much better, and I think my vocals were better on some songs at rehearsals.

PAGE: My playing was definitely better.

PLANT: And "Since I Been Loving You," one night we did a run-through for the strings, and the introduction—I've never heard Jimmy play like that. I *have*, but not, I didn't ever expect I would again. But it was beyond where it was in the '70s. You know? I mean, we were quite impressive at times way back then, but you know.

PAGE: But that's the luck of the draw of trying to change your playing every night within a solo or an introduction section. So that's the luck of the draw.

PLANT: I mean, if we can keep this whole project exciting enough to entice kind of a quasi-rock public and bring some of this stuff across, man, it's so exciting. Onstage, live, it's so exciting. It's gone way past a four-piece rock band. And that gives us our future.

BEACH BOYS

[*cont'd from page 52*] Within weeks, it was the number one song in the nation, marking the advent of a new-fashioned California sound: folk rock. As well as a rock nobility conjoined by what Byrds manager Ed Tickner called "the magic 'B,' as in Beatles and Beach Boys."

Brian Wilson was taking cues from the Beatles. The Beatles were taking cues from the Byrds, who were taking cues from the Beach Boys, the Beatles and Dylan. Dylan, typically, was taking it all in.

On April 14, 1966, five days after the U.S. chart debut of "Eight Miles High," the Beatles entered Studio Three at EMI's Abbey Road Studio to record "Rain," a John Lennon track written in homage to the Byrds' electrosonic interpretation of Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man."

Brian Wilson was planning to top them all. *Pet Sounds* was to be an analysis of romance, centering on the theme of a young man growing into manhood, falling in love and out again, chasing the wrong partners and disappointing the right ones. The pessimism and dejection that pervaded the album's 13 selections were tied to marital problems Brian and Marilyn were experiencing at the time.

In keeping with Brian's concept of calling the new Beach Boys album *Pet Sounds*—"because we specialized in certain sounds... The songs were our pet *sounds*"—he had taped his two pooches Banana and Louie as they howled, also splicing in the roar of freight cars barreling past a railway crossing signal. The finished album was shipped to stores on May 16, 1966.

The British critics were effusive in their praise and the American musical community almost dumbfounded in admiration. But the words- and image-minded U.S. press were largely silent about *Pet Sounds*, overlooking altogether Brian's fertile use of eight-track recording (one composite track for instruments, the rest for vocals) and hesitant to acknowledge artistic dimensionality from an act it had already dismissed.

Lenny Waronker, promo man and song plugger for his dad's Liberty Records, had an indirect relationship with Brian through Van Dyke Parks, who had met Wilson on the front lawn of Terry Melcher's Cielo Drive home in L.A. in late 1965, Brian immediately bringing Parks into his sphere of studio experimentalism. On April 22, 1966, Waronker left his post, and joined the Warner Bros. Records A&R staff.

Lenny's first two production assignments

were the Mojo Men and the Tikis, the second of which had opened assorted shows for the Beach Boys. Waronker asked Van Dyke Parks to help him groom the two bands, Van arranging material and doing production coordination while Lenny found some material. When the first singles Waronker oversaw became smashes, he had the clout to empower Parks. Parks had also been hired by Brian to write lyrics and arrange music for a project of Brian's to be called *Smile*, which was conceived as a sort of aural free-for-all.

The forces converging herein represented dramatic reversals of fortune for all parties concerned, namely Warner Bros., Waronker, Parks and of course Brian. In each case, because of their fresh affiliations, their lives and business interests would become forever altered—and forever intertwined.

Warner Bros. Records was founded at ten a.m. on March 19, 1958 by Jack L. Warner, Sr., president of Warner Bros. Film Studios. The label's first hit was actor Tab (*Ride the Wild Surf*) Hunter's last hit: a honking-sax remake of the Andrew Sisters' 1941 standard "(I'll Be with You in) Apple Blossom Time." Warners' second hit was by TV's "77 Sunset Strip" star Edd "Kookie" Byrnes and guest Connie Stevens: "Kookie, Kookie (Lend Me Your Comb)." It was in April 1960 that Warners finally took off with the Everly Brothers' first Warners single, the number one "Cathy's Clown," and the classic comedy album *The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart*.

Van Dyke Parks and Brian would hang out, exchange ideas and work on *Smile*, or what Brian called "a teenage symphony to God"—that would weave Wilson's luminous melodies with Parks' ruminous monologues. The rest of the Beach Boys scorned Parks when he couldn't give them a stringent explanation of his elliptical Edith Sitwell–on-sensimilla lyrics. But Van Dyke's contributions were prized by Brian, whose career priorities were undergoing convolution.

Brian ordered new Beach Boys manager Nick Grillo to have carpenters and teamsters come to his house with eight truckloads of refined beach sand, dumping it inside a little wooden wall erected around the periphery of the house's hefty dining room. It was, in effect, an indoor sandbox, into which Brian's Chickering grand piano was set, so he could wiggle his toes in the beach-like grit while he composed *Smile*, never having to glimpse Manhattan Beach again.

Brian's Beverly Hills home and the numerous studios he used for the *Smile* sessions became havens and/or rallying points for a loose group of musicians, friends and hangers-on, some who liked company when they tripped or partners to whom they could pass the hash hooka. The climate around their host was described to others as "carefree" and "very spacey."

Less amused were the other Beach Boys, who returned from a tour of England to discover Brian's world in disarray and their next album overdue. They were by turns ecstatic, confused, disappointed and appalled by the music unveiled in a series of listening sessions. They had many of the same reactions to Brian's advanced dabblings in drugs.

No Beach Boys album had ever gotten more advance publicity than *Smile*, and the appetite it whetted amongst greedy fans for a full-length epic the equal of "Good Vibrations" was tremendous. Some devotees even tried calling the pressing plants to obtain an early copy. But it never came out. Instead, released on September 5, 1967, *Smiley Smile* would make the worst chart showing up to that juncture of any album in Beach Boys history, rising no higher than number 41. The trite, stillborn tracks heard on vinyl were taken by many true believers to be a veritable slap in the face.

During the extended timespan in which Brian and the Beach Boys had engaged in mental/musical hide and seek, the Beatles had seen the U.S. release of their brilliant *Revolver* (August 8, 1966) and their epochal *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (June 2, 1967). The ground rules for rock 'n' roll had been changed once more.

The Monterey Pop Festival was first envisioned by promoter Benny Shapiro and wealthy entrepreneur Alan Pariser, who approached singer/songwriter John Phillips about it in Phillips' home on April 4, 1967, also sharing the idea with Phillips' wife Michelle and their dinner guest, singer Paul Simon. The Phillips' singing group, the Mamas and the Papas, were to be the headliners. The Jimi Hendrix Experience, signed by Warner Bros.' Mo Ostin for $40,000 on April 22, 1967, was scheduled to appear, as were the Grateful Dead, which had been signed by Warner Bros. general manager Joe Smith.

Fifty thousand fans bought the $3.00–$6.50 tickets. The Beach Boys were due to follow the Byrds on Saturday, June 17, the second evening of the festival, but they didn't show, Brian and the Beatles-beleaguered band too demoralized to make it. But the Who did, Pete Townshend smashing his guitar and Keith Moon demolishing his drums for the first time on an American stage at the crescendo of "My Generation."

Jimi Hendrix, who won a backstage coin toss for the right to follow the incendiary Who for his U.S. stage debut, concluded his performance with a feedback-fueled rethinking of the Troggs' 1966 hit "Wild Thing," tossing in a few bars of Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night" as the song barked and scampered to a peak. Then Hendrix rubbed his Stratocaster suggestively against the tall bank of amplifiers, feedback in full shriek, loosed his guitar strap and laid his axe upon the stage, dousing it with lighter fluid. He planted a kiss upon its smooth finish, and then set it aflame, staggering offstage into history.

Hendrix did the final recording for his debut album *Are You Experienced?* in England on April 4, 1967, just as the Beach Boys' U.K. release of the *Surfer Girl* album was climbing the British charts as a last-minute substitute for *Smile*. Hendrix's *Are You Experienced?* reached U.S. stores in August 1967.

It changed pop music forever, as Hendrix understood it would. On "Third Stone from the Sun" the guitarist addressed his listeners above the simmering yowl of the psychedelic music. He said, "You will never hear surf music again."

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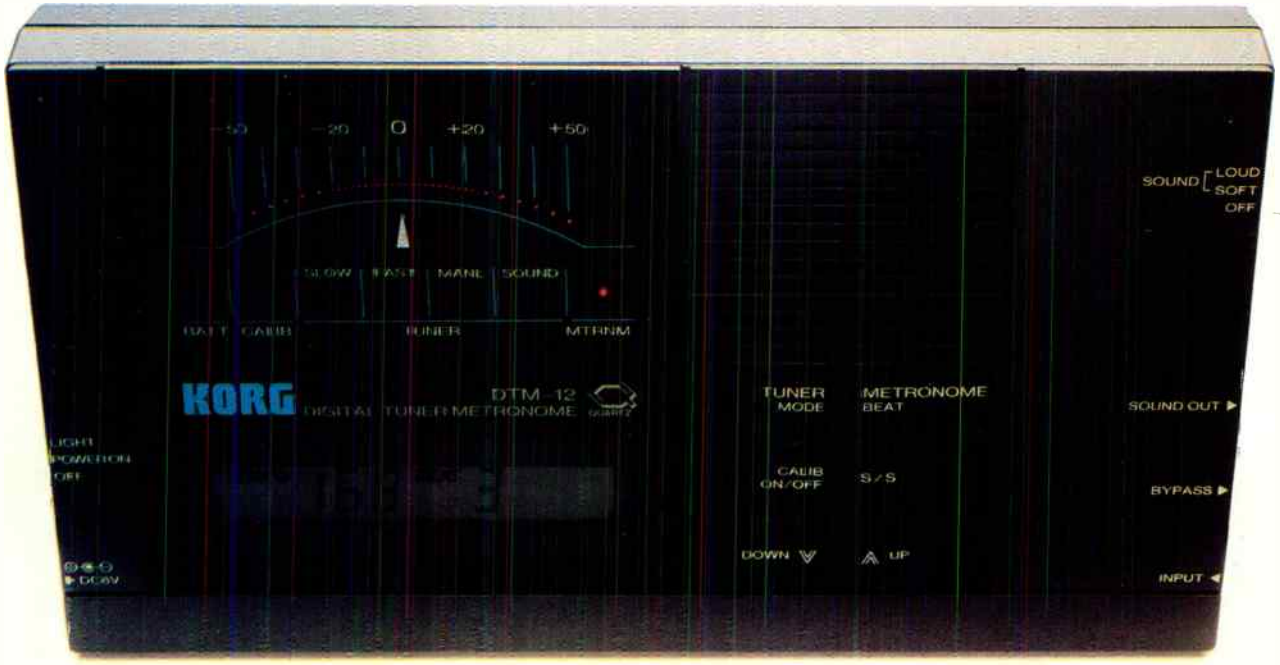

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LETTERS

Rockin' Rollin' Stones

I bought the May issue because the picture of the Stones scared the shit out of me. But after reading the article, not only do I appreciate the cover but the album *Dirty Work* even sounds better. If Keith wants to make rock 'n' roll grow up, I'll be in my rocking chair listening.

Diana Pimento
Brooklyn, NY

When I bought the Stones issue, the girl at the counter pointed to the picture of Keith Richards and said, "He's dead." I insisted that looking

dead is not tantamount to *being* dead and most importantly, he doesn't sound dead. The fact that the new album was created in Mick's absence could be the reason it is so enjoyable; following musical instincts rather than commercial ones result in the inclusion of great songs like "Too Rude." Thanks Keith for still being alive.

Paul Zollo
Hollywood, CA

It's hard to define Ian Stewart's role over the years in the Rolling Stones. Covering the "memorial" by way of Keith's feature, I think you did a fine, "egoless" tribute to the man's meaning to the other Stones. The piece on Stu in the earlier issue was all that was fit to print—and certainly more than other newspapers and magazines bothered with obit-wise.

Ian Stewart was a living, contributing link to the Brian Jones days of their past. There have been a lot of piano players along with the Stones over the many records, tours, blood-changes, etc., but Stu was always *the* blues piano player. His sound was part of their sound like Charlie's drums, Bill's bass and Keith's rhythm. The last thirty seconds of *Dirty Work* is the most beautiful (and haunting) piece of music the Stones have ever put on a winning-ugly album.

A Fan

Thank you for the behind-the-scenes story on the Rolling Stones, which managed to be insightful, ingenuous, revealing, touching and hilarious all in one! Ultimately, it puts to shame any article on them by even the venerable *Rolling Stone* magazine. Perhaps if Bill Flanagan wrote their next, umpteenth, biography, we'd for once learn something *new.*

David Bissonette
Sonic Arts Records
San Francisco, CA

Vic Garbarini's review of the new Rolling Stones' record, *Dirty Work*, read more like a book review of a new philosopher's work than a record review. What comes out the speakers is what counts! But as long as the Stones don't display progress (by the critic's standards), they will be lonely at the top.

Corey Stevens
Los Angeles, CA

Femmes Exposed

Thanks to Scott Isler, the Violent Femmes have been given a chance to show what they are really about. If INXS isn't the world's best live band, then the Violent Femmes are!

Mike Purcell
Milwaukee, WI

Finally the Femmes gain exposure in the proper market, with excellent text! My girlfriend turned me on to the Femmes and now I can't get enough! Your article was just

what I needed to push me over the edge of acceptance with this group. Congratulations to Scott Isler for bringing the Femmes to everyone.

Jay L. Noble
Dayton, OH

Femmes Not Exposed

Why didn't the Bangles, who were featured in a five page spread in your May issue, merit a cover story? Instead, you slapped on the Schlepping, er, I mean, Rolling, Stones, even though Mick was on the cover just last April. In the two years that I've been a subscriber, Joni Mitchell has been the only female musician that I can recall as a *Musician* cover story. Is this supposed to be a genuine reflection of the number of female musicians making news? You've had great interviews recently with people like Joan Armatrading and Kate Bush, but they just don't seem to have what it takes to make it to the cover. Maybe if one of these gals urinated in her swimming pool, like Alex Van Halen did during his interview, or swilled Jack Daniels, like Keith Richards did during his interview, she could achieve the level of class required for a *Musician* cover story.

Dara Monahan
Brooklyn, NY

I would like to set the record straight. I am the founding member of the Bangs (New Jersey). The Bangs have been an original band for seven years, and have never played a song by Lynyrd Skynyrd. We have played in bars, also major clubs and concert halls, and numerous colleges throughout the New England and metropolitan New York area.

It is very hard keeping an unsigned original band going, a struggle to keep it together. But it is so easy to get labeled, especially when it's in print. The Bangles' lawyer contacted me. Neither I nor anyone involved with the Bangs ever sent one letter to them or their lawyers. With my lawyer I met in Manhattan with their lawyer, and we were offered $500.00 for the rights to the name the Bangs. I said "no," and that was that. And that's the honest to goodness truth.

Gary A. Roupenian
a.k.a. Gary Bangs

Old Van Halen News

What is all this crap in the May issue (Letters: New Van Halen News) about Van Halen? Even with Sammy, Van Halen has proved they're still number one. The article on Van Halen was the best thing this magazine ever featured. Please ignore the cries of the pompous wimps who call Van Halen "apes" or "immature," when actually Van Halen is the best thing to ever happen to music. We want more Van Halen!!!

Brian Mulhern
Keith Arsenault

I'd like to address this to all the quick-shot artists who trashed Van Halen. Granted, they came off a little pretentious, but that's only because you and your fine magazine beat all the others to the punch with the story. While everybody else was off chasing ring-master Roth, you went after the heart of the subject. The *musicians*. No wonder you guys have *that* name for your magazine. Good luck to Van Halen, *Musician* magazine, and David Lee Roth, who needs it more than anybody (but always seems to find it).

Brad Boyle
Paulsboro, NJ

Errrata

The vintage Bob Seger shot on page 53 of the June issue should have been credited to the Ken Settle Collection.

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PRINCE

BY STEVE PERRY

THE EARLY YEARS: CREATING THE MINNEAPOLIS MYTH

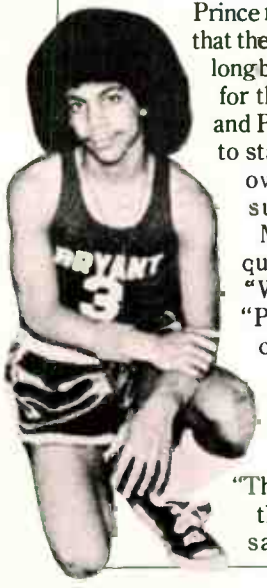
His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about his father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end...but his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain....

— F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

GARY GERSHOFF

Young Prince went into the studio a boy and came out a self-made mystery man.

Ever since *Purple Rain* hit the theaters, the corner of Seventh Street and First Avenue in Minneapolis has been a beacon for pop pilgrimages just a bit less radiant than Graceland and the spot where the Cavern Club stood. More than one awe-struck teenager has been known to gape across the street, Instamatic in hand, at the place where Prince got his start. Too bad it's not where Prince really started. It's true that the First Avenue club has long been a favored hangout for the city's favorite son, and Prince has taken pains to stake out the turf as his own. In the middle of a surprise gig there in March he shouted a question to the crowd: "Whose house is it?" "Prince's house!" the crowd roared back. He repeated the litany several times over, and followed it later with a promise. "There's just a few more things I gotta do," he said, "then I'm gonna come back and build a big clubhouse where we can all hang out every night." Movie plots and cozy communal fantasies aside, though, the bar scene in WASPish Minneapolis was hardly the start of it all for any of the area's funk & soul artists.



Prince, the Time, Alexander O'Neal, Jesse Johnson's Revue, and Mazarati conceived their acts in the studio. In fact, the players who made up the Time weren't even assembled until after the first Time album was recorded; rumor holds that the record itself is all Morris Day and Prince.

Still the battle-of-the-bands scenario played out in *Purple Rain* makes for good myth, as do many of the other stories Prince has told on himself through the years. He's gone out of his way to mystify his age (now twenty-eight, he used to shave off two years to appear even more a prodigy), his identity (he used to maintain that Jamie Starr, his pseudonym for producing other projects, was a real person), and his sexual history (he's told of teenage orgies in pal Andre Cymone's basement; Cymone said privately that he doesn't remember any such orgies). Perhaps more than any other pop star, Prince has strived to recreate himself for the public eye, adding and omitting details as freely as did Jimmy Gatz on the way to Jay Gatsby.

The real story of Prince's musical origins is less dramatic if no less intriguing. As a teenager in North Minneapolis, he played in a succession of youthful funk bands: Grand Central Junction (later the personnel shifted and the name was shortened to Grand Central), then Champagne—a band of future all-stars that featured Prince on guitar, Morris Day on drums, and Andre Cymone on bass. When it came time for Champagne to cut a demo tape, they went to MoonSound, a small recording studio in a gentrified South Minneapolis neighborhood, nestled amid the area lakes. MoonSound was operated by Chris Moon, a British-born twenty-four-year-old mover and shaker who landed in Minneapolis in his teens. A born entrepreneur, he recorded everything from rock bands to ad jingles in his home-made studio, and promoted an occasional rock concert on the side. Moon's easy enthusiasm, gracious British manner, and zeal to make a buck

made for a diverse career; over the years he's had his hand in advertising, professional photography, and real estate.

When I met Moon in late 1984 he was putting together a book about his days with Prince. We collaborated on the project until Moon dropped out of sight. I was told later that he tried to sell the rights to the unpublished book and some unreleased Prince tapes to Prince's mangement company.

At last report, Moon could still be seen cruising around town in his DeLorean.

Prince's self-conception, like Gatsby's, began at seventeen. Near the end of the Champagne demo sessions, Moon said he started to notice the little guitarist with the big Afro. Prince R. Nelson never said anything, just did his job well and stayed out of the way. One day Moon approached Prince with a proposition: How would he like to write and record songs together, with any profits from the relationship split fifty-fifty?

Moon, who couldn't play music but dreamed of becoming a top forty songwriter anyway, chose Prince as a partner for reasons that turned out richly ironic. Quite simply, he liked Prince because he played his guitar well and didn't seem to have much of an ego. That suited Moon, who essentially wanted a talented pushover to take whatever musical direction he gave.

At first, according to Moon, that was how it worked. Prince spent an hour on city buses each day en route to the studio, where he would play the music he had written to accompany Moon's lyrics. If Moon didn't like what he heard, he sent Prince away to try again. Soon they started to lay down basic tracks. To Moon's surprise, the kid could play a number of instruments besides the guitar. Bigger surprises were yet to come.

As Prince gained confidence, he started to struggle for control. First he wanted to play all the instrumental tracks, including drums, his weakest suit at the time. When Moon suggested diplomatically that Prince on bass accompanied by a drummer might make for a tighter rhythm track, Prince called Moon a liar and demanded: "You don't think I can do it, do you?" Soon he began to resent Moon's requests for additional takes on instrumental or vocal tracks. "You can't even play anything," he said once. "Why should you be able to tell *me* what to do?"

According to Moon the conflicts were rarely direct. Instead, a power struggle developed, with the two constantly testing each other's limits. It started over recording issues. Once, in recording a song called "Aces," Prince flatly refused to repeat a track Moon didn't like. He sulked around the studio until he sensed that Moon wouldn't budge, then declared: "Okay this time—but only because you own the studio!"

The rifts caused by their differences in age, race, and background grew deeper over the months, owing both to Prince's resentment and Moon's callow, patronizing attitudes.

"Look at everything you've got here," Prince said, casting his eyes around the studio. "It was all just given to you."

Moon responded with a line straight out of Horatio Alger: He had worked hard to build the studio, anyone who wanted it badly enough could do the same, the world was fair to everyone in time...and so on. It isn't hard to imagine the contempt a kid from North Minneapolis must have felt for such middle class platitudes; he answered with a word that ended more than one discussion between the two:

"Liar!"

The power struggle that started over recording matters soon extended to the entire relationship. Prince never *asked* Moon for anything, but occasionally he made flat demands: a dollar for bus fare, five dollars, ten dollars. Once the patrician Moon took it upon himself to teach him a lesson. He threw a $5 bill on the ground and told Prince that if he wanted

hung-over Moon locked himself in an ad agency recording studio and wrote a lyric that began: "Angora fur/The Aegean Sea/It's a soft wet love/That you have for me." He took "Soft & Wet" home and showed it to Prince. The song eventually became the first single from Prince's first album.

"I told him, 'I think we've got your marketing strategy worked out and a song to go with it. We'll have thousands of thirteen and fourteen year-old girls going crazy over you.' He smiled for once. He liked the idea."

Moon was convinced that "implied naughty sexuality" would put Prince across, especially with adolescent girls. Just how important the advice was to Prince is hard to say. It's scarcely believable that Moon's relatively tame song and suggestion led in a straight line to "Head" and "Darling Nikki." But it is clear that Prince has paid careful attention to his own marketing through the years.

By the end of their nine months together, Prince and Moon had completed the demo tape that would help Prince win his Warner Bros. contract, and Moon had introduced Prince to Owen Husney, his first manager. Moon said Prince's personality changed remarkably over the months, from a shy, introverted kid who could never look anyone in the eye to a budding megalomaniac, full of talent and purpose—who still wouldn't look anyone in the eye. To paraphrase Fitzgerald, he had created just the sort of prince that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to dream up: manipulative and egocentric, tireless and endlessly inventive.

After he signed with Warners, Prince went to California, where he spent several months working on his first album, *For You*. He stopped calling Moon. Moon, out of naiveté or a failure to grasp what was happening to Prince, continued to believe they would write together. On the few occasions when they did talk in ensuing years, the conversations were cordial but distant, as if a connection had been made and broken long ago. Moon said later that the break seemed altogether routine, on Prince's part, without any lingering malice. And maybe that was so: Prince's eyes were already fixed on the next green light. Ⓜ

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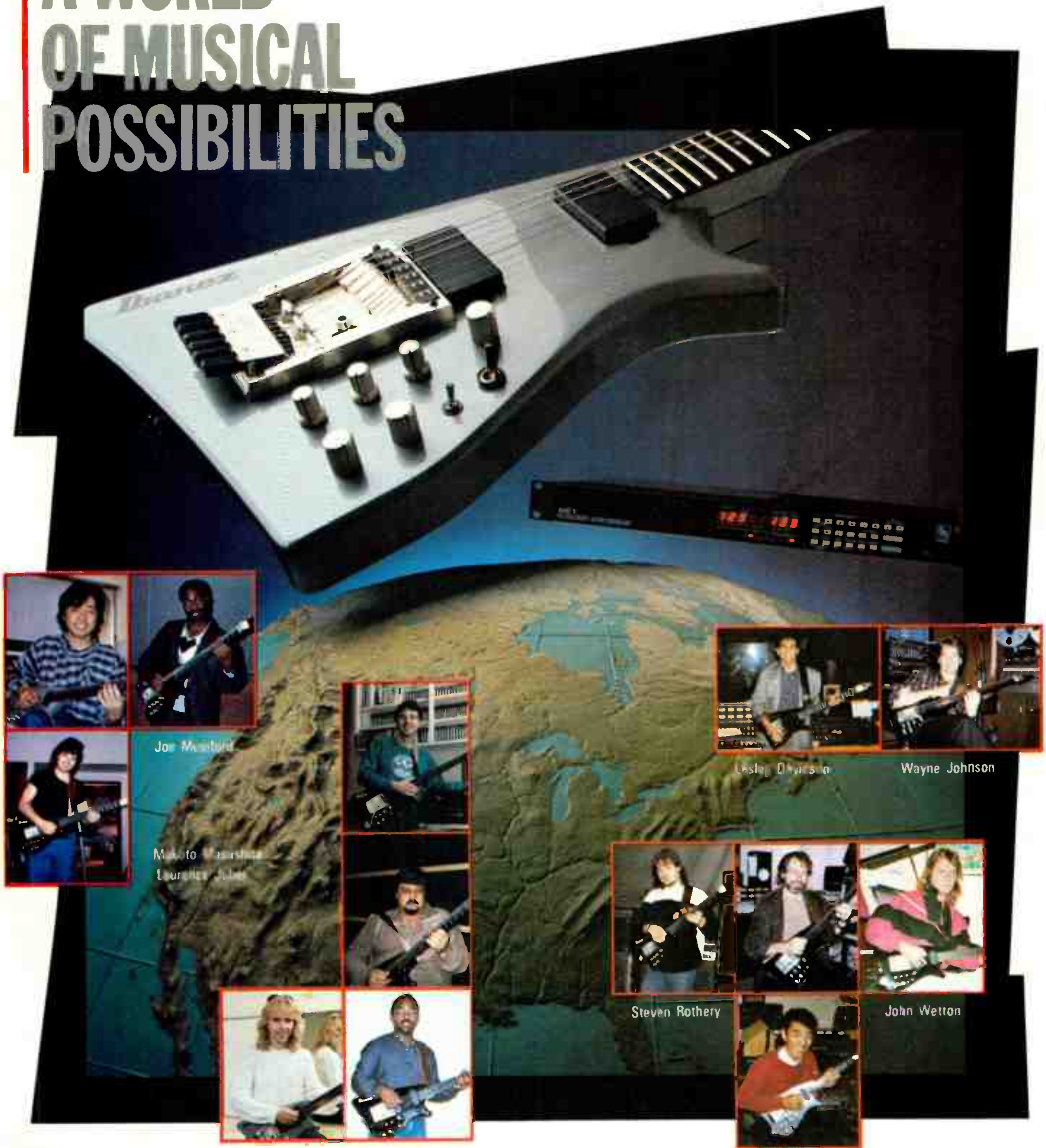

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THE CURE

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

ONTOLOGICAL UNGLUEDATION FOR YOUR DANCING PLEASURE

There's this school of modern singing, founded in certain songs by David Bowie and most prominently practiced by Simon LeBon, where the singer puts this crack into his voice and sounds like he's on the verge of tears, if not actually pulling the drain on his ducts, and you usually can't tell what his problem is 'cause the lyrics are too obscure. I hate this shit too much to figure out who's doing it, so I can't even tell you more names to build my case, but take my word: They are all over the charts. At this moment some professional lachrymoid has grabbed your little sister by the maternal instinct and won't stop squeezing until her allowance plops into his puddle of mewl.

One guy who transcends this neo-Gary Puckett tradition without skimping on the melancholia is Robert Smith of the Cure, a band I have to admit hasn't been under my microscope for most of its ten-year existence. They did, however, catch my attention with their last album, *The Head On The Door*, their first for Elektra who have also put out a greatest hits collection, *Standing On A Beach—The Singles*. I like Smith because he writes good lyrics, artful enough to hold your interest and specific enough so you can figure out what his problem is. His problem is existential despair, metaphysical distress, ontological ungluedation, and cosmic meltdown. You would cry too if it happened to you.

"When you ponder anything fundamental to your existence, you inevitably end up depressed if you don't have a sense of belief, which I've never had," says Smith in his manager's office in London. "I've always ended up in this... well, it's a bottomless pit, really. From time to time I've slipped into it and dragged the group down with me. But I think that what's come out of it is like a soundtrack for a lot of people's lives. Everyone I know has suffered the same sort of doubts and depressions. I've had certain ideas of belief, but they didn't stick around for any length of time. A lot of the things I say I believe are determined by my particular situation at the time. The most difficult thing in a group... ."

Uh, you have a spider in your hair.

"He's crawling around, isn't he?"

Yeah.

"I must have picked him up in the taxi coming over here."

Smith has your basic English rock star Inverted Gorilla Scrotum haircut, ratted to the sky with massive hairspray, and one of the errant strands is not a strand of hair; it is a strand of web, from which this cute little bitty spider (probably a she) is dangling. If this was Ozzie, he'd quench his angst by eating her. But this is Robert Smith, who writes songs about existentially arbitrary murder ("Killing An Arab," based on *The Stranger*) while having no heart for the real deed.

RON DELANY

Smith manifested his powers after being bitten by a radioactive spider.

"Spiders are supposed to be lucky. Not so lucky for the spider if you don't like spiders," he says, brushing the diminutive arachnid gently aside.

This "lucky" business is, I think, a clue to the fundamental contradiction of Robert Smith: On the one hand, he's consciously an atheist colliding with random atoms in an absurd universe, and on the other hand, he's superstitious as hell and his songs are crawling with religious imagery. In the past year, for example, he had a dream and became convinced he was going to get killed by a plateglass window on Valentine's Day—didn't happen, apparently—which to me implies religious thinking somewhere in his mind, a belief in some outside governing force.

"It was a manufactured belief," he says. "I just wanted to believe it, be Nostradamus on a smaller scale."

Any other good dreams lately?

"I find myself murdering a lot in my more recent dreams."

Who? "Rugby players, and I don't know any rugby players. I don't even watch it on television. I don't like it. Maybe that's why I'm murdering them.... Anyway, what I was saying before the spider: The most difficult part of being in a group is justifying to yourself that what you're doing is more than just another record. I really think a lot, 'Does what we're doing matter?' I mean, why spend so much time and energy creating something for other people?"

Well, you just have to convince yourself that someone will find it useful.

"Sometimes the easy way is just to say, 'What else would I do?' I don't actually enjoy vegetating."

Okay, person who is now reading this magazine, ask yourself what sort of bloke would play rock 'n' roll because he doesn't actually enjoy vegetating? What sort of person has to crawl out of the trough of despair every morning and convince himself that rock 'n' roll matters when there's all that money to spend and all those women to chase and that adulation to soak up?

Right. A lapsed Catholic.

"I went to this Catholic middle school and my two years were guinea pig years. It was a very free thinking and multi-denominational kind of school where they treated you like an adult and let you do what you wanted. It was a piss-up, probably the best two years of my life."

You were never tortured by nuns?

"No, I was very lucky. So many people seem to come out with an intense hatred of religion, which I've had too, but for different reasons. I see organized religion as a scourge on humanity, a source of evil along with nationalism."

So it's organized religion that bums you out more than God Himself?

"I don't know. I just read this book by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross where she says you can't believe in your own termination. You always see it in the third person as an act. I've grappled with that for years. You can't intellectualize your own death, and faced with that, it's very difficult to say you don't believe in anything. But I don't. I can't believe in anything except existence. I see no reason that I should exist after I die. At the same time, I can't be rational about it. So what the fuck."

So we are now down to your basic existential dilemma and under the circumstances you might as well dance. Which brings us to the music of the Cure. They play deceptively (ain't it always) simple rock 'n' roll, spare with no snarl in the guitar and just enough synthesizer flourish to avoid sounding either too old or too new. Much as I hate the word taste, Smith has it. The rest of his band apparently has it too, they consisting of Laurence Tolhurst on keyboards, Andy Anderson on drums, Phil Thornalley on bass, and Porl Thompson on guitar and keyboards. None are a threat to Eddie Van Halen but neither do they so aspire.

The first time I set needle to groove on a Cure record it was *The Head On The Door*. I gave it a minute, figured my ears were in the clutches of a genrically sensitive lachrymoid and went off to wash the dishes. But then through the rinse water I heard this flamenco rock tune called "The Blood," referring to the blood of Christ, which seemed to be about religious intoxication, the torment of unbelief, the torment of belief, *and* you could dance to it. The Compleat Works of Dick Clark and Fëdor Dostoevski boiled down to three minutes and forty-two seconds.

"The song has a very banal explanation, actually," says Smith. "'The Blood Of Christ' is just a very rough port wine that the working people drink in Portugal. And I drank it and was beset with visions. The label is actually a madonna, and instead of holding a child, she's holding a bottle. I became Portuguese for a short time and had this idea of using the flamenco guitar. In that type of culture religion is built up into a huge part of life, almost in a medieval sense. I thought it very peculiar, but my nature is susceptible to that sort of thinking."

My other favorite song on the record is "Close To Me," at first listen a simple dollop of pop with some heavy breathing fairly high in the mix that makes it very sexual and a bit tough to listen to on headphones. But give the riff half a chance and you get hypnotized and then you begin to realize certain overtones in the lyric: It works on the level of Smith

CURIOS

Robert Smith is supremely bored by equipment and feels that technical incompetence is essential to keeping his compositions simple and the recording fresh. He nonetheless concedes to playing a Fender Jazzmaster for the past ten years, recently switching to a Telecaster because the Jazzmaster "had become so comfortable it was like a prosthesis." He likes the Telecaster because it's "anonymous," an accolade he drops on Peavey, whose amps the Cure use in concert. He also credits them with sounding "alive and very robust."

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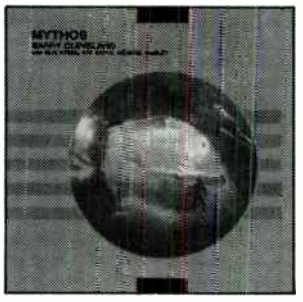

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SIMPLY RED

Carrying Soul from Manchester

Simply Red isn't simply Red Hucknall. The band is an amalgam of vocalist **Mick "Red" Hucknall** and his five compatriots from the dead textile-factory town of Manchester, England. And, judging from their debut album, *Picture Book*, the soul-tinged sextet fully deserves its slow-fuse success.

Picture Book appeared late last year, wandered around for a while, and finally hopped into a top-of-the-charts racecar with "Holding Back The Years." "We were big in Europe right from the start," Bucknall drawls tiredly. "In England, we had one hit and a series of flops, and now we're doing well there again. Now it seems we're a hit in America. I don't understand how the marketing works, but I'm not surprised, really. There are so many untalented musicians in this business that if you have a modicum of talent, you'll do well."

Few interracial R&B bands even exist, let alone score a hit. *Picture Book*'s producer, Stewart Levine, has helped guide the Crusaders, B.B. King and Randy Crawford; here he's helped craft an album smooth as rayon. "R&B is very big in Manchester," Hucknall embellishes, "but we're also lovers of trad jazz and of old reggae—Lee Perry, King Tubby." The mix of influences tickles *Picture Book*'s R&B belly. Then, too, there is Hucknall's amazing voice.

But commercial considerations aren't really on the band's mind. Simply Red plays simply "what we want to do," Hucknall says. He adds, "Most commercial music today, especially from my country, is rubbish, isn't it?" – *Frank Lovece*

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FACES

News Stories by Scott Isler

BODEANS

All Roots, No Moss

Beau BoDean (okay, his real name is Kurt Newmann) has this to say about state-of-the-art recordings: "With technology came *sound*!" He says "sound" like a dirty word. "For the past five or ten years everything's been focused on the *new sound* of records. Someone's got a new snare drum sound! Someone's got a new synthesizer! A new Fairlight! Somewhere people lost track of the *song*. If you just concentrate on the sound you lose a lot."

Easy to say when you've got songs as good as the BoDeans'. The Wisconsin quartet manage to make rootsy rock 'n' roll without sounding either precious or like a 50s revival. Maybe their secret is in not setting up a lot of arbitrary rules for themselves; the BoDeans are not above straying into reggae or even pseudo-Chinese riffs if it serves the almighty Song.

But most of their stuff features the ringing acoustic guitar and big drum rock practiced by John Mellencamp. Singer/guitarist/songwriters Beau and Sammy (Llanas) BoDean started the group as a rocking two-piece too exuberant for folk clubs and too weird for the rock bars. Eventually they hooked up with drummer Guy Hoffman, and then bassist (and old pal) Bob Griffin.

Their demos attracted both Slash/Warners and Rounder/Capitol. The BoDeans went with the former; most of their debut album *Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams* was cut live in the studio, letting the enthusiasm come through.

Still in their mid-twenties (except Hoffman, an ancient thirty-two) the BoDeans play with a young man's noble naiveté—and a young man's impatience with the business side of music. "Radio made me want to live," Sammy declares, "and later on it made me want to cry. Somewhere it went really wrong. I would like the day to come when radio would play *anything*. Because there's just as many good songs being written today as there ever were. People just don't get to hear them." – *Bill Flanagan*

AMERICAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA

A Concert-Hall Controversy

The American Jazz Orchestra should slide down intellectual gullets like cool cream: It's a repertory organization started last year by critic Gary Giddins, conducted by the Modern Jazz Quartet's **John Lewis** and featuring everyone from studio sax king Walt Levinsky to Hank Jones and Jimmy Heath. The intent, Lewis says, is "to preserve the big band's very special contribution to western culture. The AJO has the same purpose the western symphony has: to save and recreate the masterpieces of a specific tradition."

Not exactly a controversial platform. But dissent erupted after the Orchestra's New York debut concert in May (they plan four more in the fall). Francis Davis, in the *Village Voice*, earnestly bludgeoned the performance—which included works by Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson and Count Basie—for being too reserved. Wynton Marsalis, who had demanded free tickets, made a show of walking out during the performance, reportedly mumbling that the Orchestra "was killing Ellington." A few days later, shoving matches broke out among critics. You'd think the Rosenbergs had just shot Sacco and Vanzetti.

But beyond the verbal slugfest, the AJO serves a valuable function. It allows pieces heard only on record to come alive with their original sonic brilliance. The AJO plans to commission new works—Henry Threadgill has already been signed up—and rehabilitate overlooked composers and arrangers like Jimmy Mundy and Hall Overton. With its respectful approach, the Orchestra sets back the idea that America's classical music comes from Europe. And at the concert, the audience, mostly invitees with only a passing familiarity with jazz, gave the orchestra a standing ovation. That bodes well for the AJO and jazz itself, no matter if the critics grumble. – *Peter Watrous*

RCA Gets Hep

Considering that RCA is one of the country's largest record companies, its lack of even one jazz signing is hardly exemplary. Over the last ten years the label has phased out its jazz issues to near-extinction. But that situation is on the upswing. This fall the company will debut a new label presenting jazz—both current and vintage—and "new age" music. (No snickering, please.)

Heading the new division is Steve Backer, who's contracted for about ten new jazz releases, ten "new age" albums and fifteen catalog reissues in his first year. Among the reissues will be a five-record Duke Ellington box, and repackagings (some as twofers) of Coleman Hawkins, Charles Mingus, Sonny Rollins, Louis Armstrong and Bunny Berigan, among others.

As for new jazz, Backer foresees "a fairly eclectic roster. The 80s are about eclecticism in jazz." Besides his three-year arrangement, Backer is encouraged by RCA's recent corporate reorganization; the new regime, after all, gave him the green light. "The cycle is going back up now," Backer says of the jazz scene. "There's a real renaissance." Let's hope that applies to RCA as well.

JOSE PELAEZ LISA HAUN

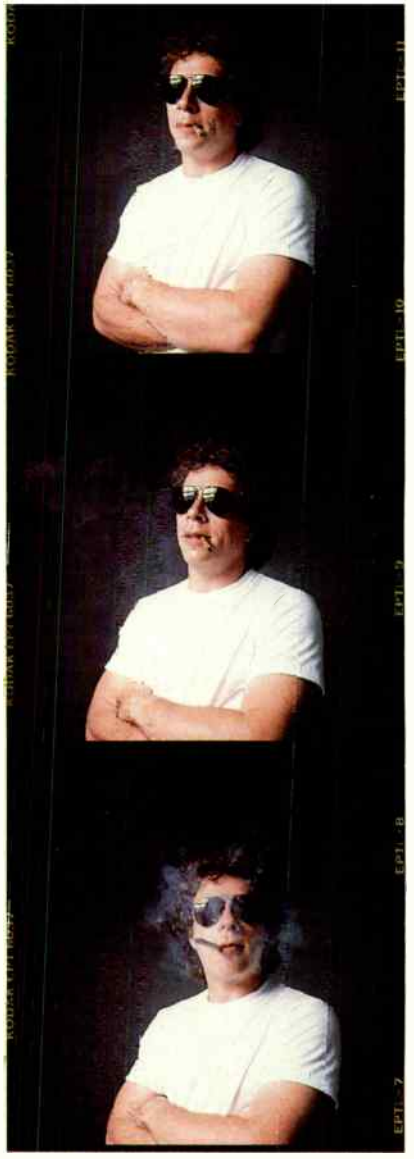
STEVE STEIN

Terrorism on the Dance Floor

He doesn't look or act like the urban terrorist of hip-hop: no suspicious movements, no darting glances, no extra carry-on luggage. To all outward appearances, Steve Stein is a friendly, humorous guy. Why, then, did he create "The Motorcade Sped On," which places a tribal beat alongside Walter Cronkite's newscasts of the John F. Kennedy assassination and its aftermath?

"I just wanted to make something as strong and disturbing as possible," Stein replies with typical candor. "I didn't do it with any reaction in mind other than getting people's attention." Virtually anyone who's heard this four-minute history lesson would say Stein succeeded. "The Motorcade Sped On" opens with a cheery Ed McMahon announcing "heeeere's Johnny!" before the drum program kicks in underneath Cronkite, Kennedy's own voice, police sirens and other effects. "I'd play it for people," Stein says. "*I'm* really into the beat. Then I look up and notice the blood draining from their faces."

The track is merely Stein's latest assault on dance-record conventions. As one-half of Double Dee & Steinski (with former partner Doug DeFranco), he co-produced dizzyingly eclectic mixes for Tommy Boy Records. Unfortunately, none of them could be released commercially; their eclecticism insured that at least one copyright holder would refuse to cooperate. "Motorcade," credited to Steinski & the Mass Media, has a similar problem: CBS refuses to grant clearance on the Cronkite recording. So once again Tommy Boy is pressing promotion-only copies to get the opus on radio, if not in record stores.



CBS's objection, Stein says, is that the cut trivializes Cronkite—a charge Stein, now signed to Island Records, vehemently rejects. "It's B-boy history, man," he asserts, "taking information, cutting it up and combining it with beats. My basic impulse is quite a valid one." Whatever the impulse, the effect is powerful. To hear for yourself, stay glued to your radio—and don't touch that dial. – *Scott Isler*

TROUBLE FUNK

How Far Can Go-Go Go?

The big question for Trouble Funk: How to put its raw, unbridled go-go sound across to the public without musical compromise?

"It's a tough one," says guitarist **James Avery**. "When you go to a party you're looser than when you're riding in your car listening to the radio. We want to keep our live, stripped-down sound, but coordinate

it to the format of the radio. Put some melody in it, but not lose that bottom."

Trouble Funk has already scored on black radio with "Drop The Bomb," but the "bottom" which Avery says gives go-go its individualistic punch is more evident on their latest LP, *Saturday Night Live From Washington, D.C.* The band carries three drummers—a trap player trades rhythms with congas and timbales—but their version of the go-go beat isn't as dictatorial as other modern-day funk. They shift it around so you can get on board in lots of places.

Unfortunately the record also shows the radio problems go-go faces if it wants to stay close to its "extended jam" origins. There are no songs per se, simply a non-stop groove-a-thon conjuring rhythmic images of Tito Puente, early Santana and funk overlord George Clinton. "Percussion is one of our strengths," Avery boasts. "We go back to the African heritage; it's a dominant influence. No matter what you put on top, you're going to identify go-go by that percussion." What Trouble Funk puts on top are razor-blade horns and growling vocalist "Big Tony" Fisher, who grabs the audience in a gospel-flavored call-and-response frenzy.

The band gets some helpful exposure in the go-go film *Good To Go*: They perform the title track. "The trade-off between rhythm and melody is very close to where we want it with 'Good To Go,'" Avery says, "but there's nothing like that live sound. You gotta be there to understand go-go." – *Jim Macnie*

ROBERT TRIPPETT

Kennedys Bust

Dead Kennedys singer Jello Biafra (Eric Boucher) says that on April 15 three Los Angeles police and six San Francisco police broke into his home and searched for evidence that Biafra had been distributing "harmful matter to minors." At issue specifically was the inclusion in the Dead Kennedys' last album, *Frankenchrist*, of a poster of a painting by artist H.R. Giger depicting putrefying genitalia in varying stages of engagement. Biafra describes the poster as "the most effective metaphor for the consumer culture that I've ever seen" and part of a conceptual attack on "Rambo's America."

On June 3 Los Angeles Deputy City Attorney Michael Guarino announced that charges would be brought against Biafra and others for distributing harmful matter to minors—a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and a $2000 fine. Guarino refused to comment on the alleged police break-in of Biafra's home. He further denied allegations that the case was part of a nationwide rightwing campaign to censor rock 'n' roll; the charges were brought, he said, because a Los Angeles housewife complained that her fourteen-year-old daughter had bought *Frankenchrist* as a Christmas present for her eleven-year-old brother.

Asked if the poster were not constitutionally protected political comment, Guarino said the poster would have to be proven "utterly without redeeming social importance for minors," and there was a "tremendous distinction legally and philosophically between 'redeeming social importance' and 'token social importance.'"

Biafra cited recent articles charging the City Attorney's office with lax enforcement of toxic waste laws, and pointed out that cancer was more harmful to minors than any poster. Also charged in the case are the album's label (Alternative Tentacles), distributors and manufacturer. (Contributions can be mailed to No More Censorship Defense Fund, Alternative Tentacles, Box 11458, San Francisco, CA 94101.)

– *Charles M. Young*

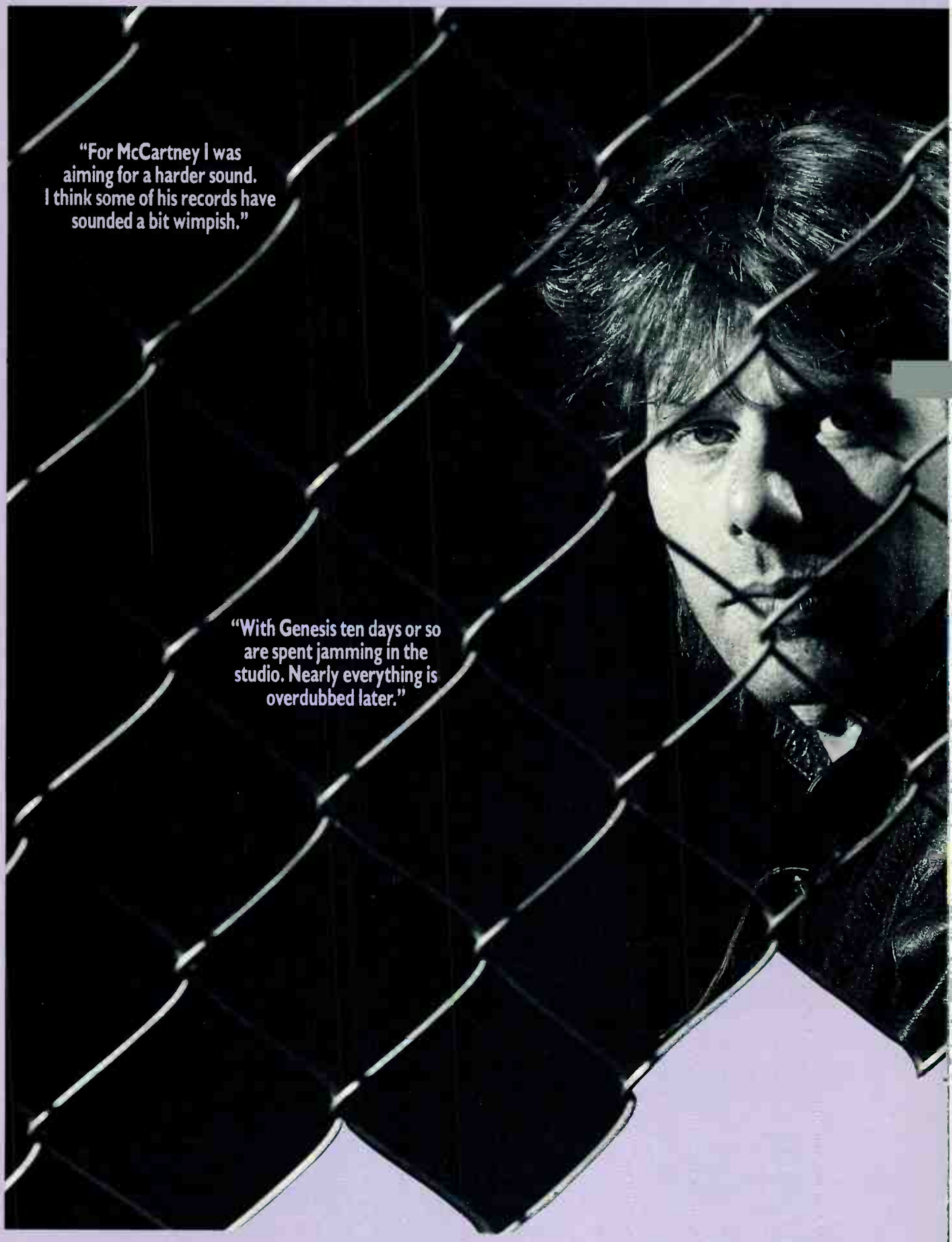
Hailing Taxes

There may be a tape-recorder tax in your future after all. On May 21 the Senate Copyright Subcommittee approved the Home Audio Recording Act (*Faces*, February). The bill now awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

As it now stands, the bill would levy a tax of five percent of wholesale price on tape recorders. Exempted are videocassette recorders, non-recording portable stereos, mono recorders, those without cable inputs, recorders for non-profit organizations, and recorders with anti-duping technology (should any of those ever exist). Dual-transport decks for tape dubbing would get hit with a twenty-five percent (of wholesale) tax. In return, noncommercial audio home taping of copyrighted music will no longer constitute copyright infringement. Significantly, the bill no longer calls for a penny-per-minute tax on blank tape.

Royalties—estimated at $80-$100 million a year—will be distributed to copyright holders, artists, songwriters and others in a manner intended to give fair representation to smaller companies. A two-percent tithe will go to the National Endowment for the Arts.

On the other side of Capitol Hill, the House of Representatives' own recording rights bill is still comatose a year after it was introduced. The House bill proposes a higher tax on recorders than the Senate bill, and includes a blank tape tax.



Modus Operandi

I generally do records in quite weird ways. With Genesis, for instance, we start in the studio on day one with not one note of music! Ten days or two weeks are then spent jamming on drum machines, Phil on a vocal, and the others just messing sometimes around without even bothering to find out what key they are in! Ideas are put onto cassettes and things are then formulated from there. Some would say that is a very decadent way of doing things, but they have their own studio and so they're not wasting £100 an hour. Nearly everything on the Genesis albums that I've done—especially the new one—is overdubbed, although we always retain some parts from a backing track that has been laid down. Say Mike plays a guitar part he may keep some of it, because sometimes when you're playing without caring that's when the best stuff comes out!

"A pretty good thing about the SMPTE code and the SRC now is that if you do lay your backing tracks to a Linn drum machine or whatever—as we do with Genesis and Phil Collins' material—you can always go back and edit, or change things around, and you know that your tempo is correct. Probably what a lot of people don't realize about Phil's and Genesis' records is that the drums actually get overdubbed almost last. Sometimes Phil will play drums on a tune, and two weeks later he'll come back and say, 'No, I don't like that.' Because really he's still a drummer who sings—that's how he likes to think of himself—and so he'll come back and redo the drum track no problem, or even just redo the last chorus or something."

So Who's Hugh Padgham?

Hugh Padgham entered the music business at Advision Studios in London. Later he answered an advertisement for a tape-op at Adrian Kerridge's Landsdowne Studios, and after several years there he left to embark on a five-month tour of Europe with the Jim Capaldi Band. On his return to the capital he joined Townhouse Studios as an engineer, where he helped wire in the first SSL desk to be installed in a commercial studio in Britain, and engineered for a wide variety of upstart artists, including PiL, the Jam, XTC and Spandau Ballet. Another of these was Peter Gabriel, and it was during the production of his album *The Third* that Hugh first met Phil Collins. This led to a fruitful musical collaboration which started with Collins' *Face Value* album in 1981. Thereafter Padgham left Townhouse to commence a freelance career, recruiting the management services of Dennis Muirhead in the process.

BARRY MARSDEN

This was clearly a wise move, as over the last few years his reputation as a producer and engineer has soared due to the quality of his work with a number of major artists in a variety of locations. These include the Police and their Grammy-winning *Synchronicity* in Montserrat (not to mention *Ghost In The Machine*); Bowie's *Tonight* LP in Canada; Frida's *Something's Going On* album in Sweden, and Split Enz' #1 Oz LP *Time And Tide* in Australia, in addition to U.K. collaborations with the likes of Human League and XTC. Most recently, Padgham has produced a single for Howard Jones, as well as the new albums by both Genesis and Paul McCartney.

On Producing Paul

One thing that was sort of difficult to handle was being able to remember making a cardboard cutout of a guitar at the age of seven or eight, and standing in front of the mirror pretending to be Paul McCartney! So to end up twenty years later in a studio with this guy, telling him what to do, was quite weird to start with! Generally, however, the way that I usually work is on a co-production basis, because I like to do all of the engineering as well. I like to get involved in projects in that way, rather than adopt the heavy-duty roles of the Trevor Horns and Ron Nevisons of this life. That's not to say that I won't get my own way if I want it either, but the idea is to work together in harmony in order to get to where you want to get to.

"Obviously Paul does need direction sometimes, like everybody does, and I've worked with enough people not to let someone's fame and reputation worry me. But on the other hand there will also be times when Paul will say something and you're thinking the opposite, and you'll think, 'Hang on, this guy's got a lot more experience than I have,' but you've just got to have a lot of confidence in yourself! I'm not the sort of person who ends up having standing rows with anybody, but if there's any difference of opinion you sit down and talk about it.

"I for one was trying to give him a slightly different overall sound, not being one of his usual associates with Air-Abbey Road-EMI connections. I suppose, in a nutshell, I was aiming for a slightly harder sound. I've listened to some of Paul's records and thought, 'That's a little bit wimpish. I wish he could be a bit harder and rougher in a way.' So if, for instance, someone said, 'Oh, Paul always uses that mike for his vocals,' my first reaction would be 'Okay, well let's try another one!' Not because I didn't like his previous records, but simply because one wants to try something different.

"Paul's not a huge fan of drum machines or sequencers and that particular sort of modern tightness—although on this record we certainly did use drum machines and SRC boxes and all that type of thing—but many of his records in the past have been what I suppose you could call 'slick,' and so this time we've tried to keep away from that. Obviously one of his major assets—and he's got a lot of major assets—is his fantastic sense of melody, and when you've got a really nice ballad it's not that easy to do something to make it sound rougher or heavier; you can't get Eddie Van Halen

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to play guitar solos on it! But there are certain things that can be done, and hopefully when people listen to the ballads on this new record they'll notice the difference.

Who's Going To Play Bass?!

We put down the backing tracks in what I suppose is a fairly strange way for nowadays: When Paul was writing the songs I specifically asked him not to demo them—or at least not to demo them very well—so when we first arrived in the studio with the songs that

he had written on his own or with Eric Stewart [of 10cc], we just had Paul and Eric strumming away on two guitars. Then I got in Jerry Marotta—whom I'd worked with through Peter Gabriel—on drums, and that was basically the rhythm section. Jerry is a very good, solid, hard-hitting drummer, without being flash, and I thought that would be a very good basis to work on.

"Then at one point in the early stages when we were discussing things, Paul asked who was going to play bass. I said, 'What? You're going to play bass!' and he said, 'Oh right, okay.' I couldn't believe it when I learned that some other people had played bass on his last few records. Obviously they were good bass players, but to me if I had to choose a world band Paul would be my bass guitarist...although he'll probably hate me for saying that!

"As the songs were therefore not conceived in any way towards the bass, it needed a little more thought than just going into the studio and putting it down; we wanted to get a sort of band feel to it. So the way in which we put down most of the songs was to have Jerry playing the drums, and Paul or Eric on acoustic or electric guitar or piano, depending on the track. One of the tracks that was supposed to be a real rock song ended up with just two acoustics and drums on the backing track, so it was quite a weird setup!

Million-Dollar Voices

When choosing a microphone for a particular artist I do go on intuition to an extent: I've been doing this for quite a long time now, and so by just sitting in a room with somebody and listening to their voice—whether or not they lisp or have very pronounced 's' sounds, for instance—will help me to choose the right microphone. In the case of Phil Collins, for instance, he has a very definite vocal style and there is a very definite way in which we record this. The mike that we stick with is a Beyer M88, and he feels comfortable with that. We also use some other little bits of equipment which I'll keep a trade secret—I've given away too many secrets for too long—as well as echo and harmonizer through the headphones, and Phil—like any artist—will sing to a sound that he likes. Things like headphone balances are therefore very important when people are singing, in order to get the right feel and vibe onto the tape as quickly as possible.

"I'm not a man who particularly likes working on vocals because you can get bogged down in which take is the right one and whether or not it is good enough. It's magic, therefore, working with people such as Paul McCartney and Phil Collins, because they are so professional! Bowie is another one: He'll sing through a song once in order to remind himself of the lyrics and give a chance to get the sound, and then I swear to God you'll have your vocal take in two passes on the tape! He'll do it just like that!

"My big thing in the studio is not to let the technology of today—and there's a hell of a lot of it—hang up the artists. Sometimes it can be great just keeping things simple. For instance, with the Genesis material where we started without a note and worked it all out as we went along, the actual mixing side of it was not too difficult. A lot of the sound and echoes and things were recorded on the tape as we went along, so that even though we did it on 48-track when we came to mix it, was just a case of pushing up the faders. So it might sound as though there is an awful lot of outboard gear being used, but that actually is not the case.

"I often get the feeling that console manufacturers are making the consoles bigger and bigger because they make more money when they sell them, but whether or not it's actually contributing to the music is another matter! Does the music want the 56-channel desk? In some ways I definitely think that all of this technology slows the record-making process down. It has to. In the old days they just used to go in and bang the song down and off they went! I'm not saying that should happen now, but at the same time I really don't think that records today are any better as a result of all this technology. I mean I love fiddling with knobs and things, but I do wonder whether or not the manufacturers are taking us for a ride really.

All I Want is a Room Somewhere

The most important qualification for a good studio is an efficient recording area. I don't give a damn about the control-room, although it is nice to have a big, airy control-room as is the trend now when you're spending a lot of time in a studio.

"I was shocked when I visited Mayfair Studios [in London] and could see the whole place was designed around drum machines and things, or recording drums and putting digital reverb on them later. I said, 'Well, where is the studio?' and they said, 'This is the studio,' and I find that a lot of places are still left over with this Eastlake thing from the 70s where everything is trapped and there is no sort of acoustic to it at all. I don't like that, and so the only studios I'll record in are those with a pretty decent live-room.

"The way that people record nowadays, always changing things around, means separation comes into it, and of course if you're using big live-areas your separation is reduced. So I start looking for studios where there is a live-room separated by big, thick double-glass doors to the other room, so people can still have visual contact but you've got different areas to put your guitars and drums and whatever in. For my dream studio I'd also like to have a lot of orange and green lights flashing like a disco, and it would all be incredibly psychedelic! Well, maybe not.

"I like to boast that there is little or no digital machinery used for Phil Collins' drum sounds. Occasionally we might use the AMS reverb on the bass drum, or something like that, for a special production sort of thing, but that big walloping drum sound that Phil is known for is really just him playing the drums in a particular room.

The Fade

I've worked very, very hard in the studio for years, and I don't think one can keep that up forever. At the same

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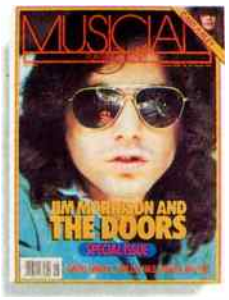

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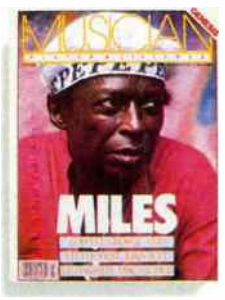

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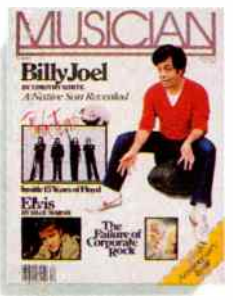

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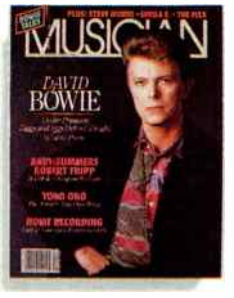

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The World's Baddest Drummer Keeps Growing—in New, Intriguing Ways

By Robin Tolleson

TONY WILLIAMS: THE COMEBACK CONTINUES

Grammy Awards co-host Kenny Rogers had barely finished introducing the expanded jazz segment at this year's show when Tony Williams' four limbs went into a blur of motion, slamming and bouncing and generally throwing perfectly synched caution to the wind. At the end of the short fill, the roused all-star band fell right in. "I was better at rehearsal," the drummer said later with a customary quiet sincerity that sometimes impersonates modesty. "It's kind of a shock when you realize that thirty or fifty million people are watching you. It was fun doing it. I was happy to do it." Of all the marvelous musicians assembled on the Los Angeles stage that night—Dizzy Gillespie, David Sanborn, Stanley Clarke, Buddy Rich, Stanley Jordan, Gary Burton and others—if Tillmon Anthony Williams wasn't the Most Valuable Player, he was certainly the Comeback Player of the Year. Maybe of the Decade.

After successfuly staying out of public eye and earshot for much of the last eight years, Williams came back in 1985 with a mostly acoustic jazz album of his own, *Foreign Intrigue*, and began testing his drumming talents in other waters. He recorded in a big garage on Johnny Lydon's latest PiL project, worked on Yoko's *Starpeace*, lent a hand on Miles Davis' track on *Sun City*, joined guitarist Alan Holdsworth once again in the studio, and sparked a very fine jazz album by pianist George Cables, *Phantom Of The City*. He's even been commuting to Paris to work on a full-length film about ex-patriate American jazz musicians, *'Round Midnight*. But more than his accomplishments on drums or before the cameras, Williams is currently most pleased with his progress as a composer. The well-received *Foreign Intrigue* album was written wholly by the drummer, and is getting him his first fan mail in years.

Williams took a different approach to *Foreign Intrigue* than he'd taken to any album before, concentrating mostly on the compositions, and virtually asking the record company president to find him sidemen. The fact that he had performed some of the music earlier in the year with his long-time musical partners Ron Carter and Bobby Hutcherson made those two choices easy. Co-producer Michael Cuscuna helped land the fine pianist Mulgrew Miller and ex-Art Blakey bandmates Wallace Roney (trumpet) and Donald Harrison (alto sax) to finish out the lineup. "It made me feel as if I had made a lot of progress to be able to write the songs and complete them as easily as I had hoped to. That was a big part of this record for me.

"I react to things emotionally."

"What appeals to me are things I haven't done before," he says. "When people take chances and call me to do different things, I always want to be able to play the best kind of music in the best situations, things that are challenging. But then again, if they offer me a whole bunch of money, that's also a help." It's taken the drummer a long time and a lot of financial anxiety to develop such a cut-and-dry attitude about the music business, and he's still not completely convincing at it.

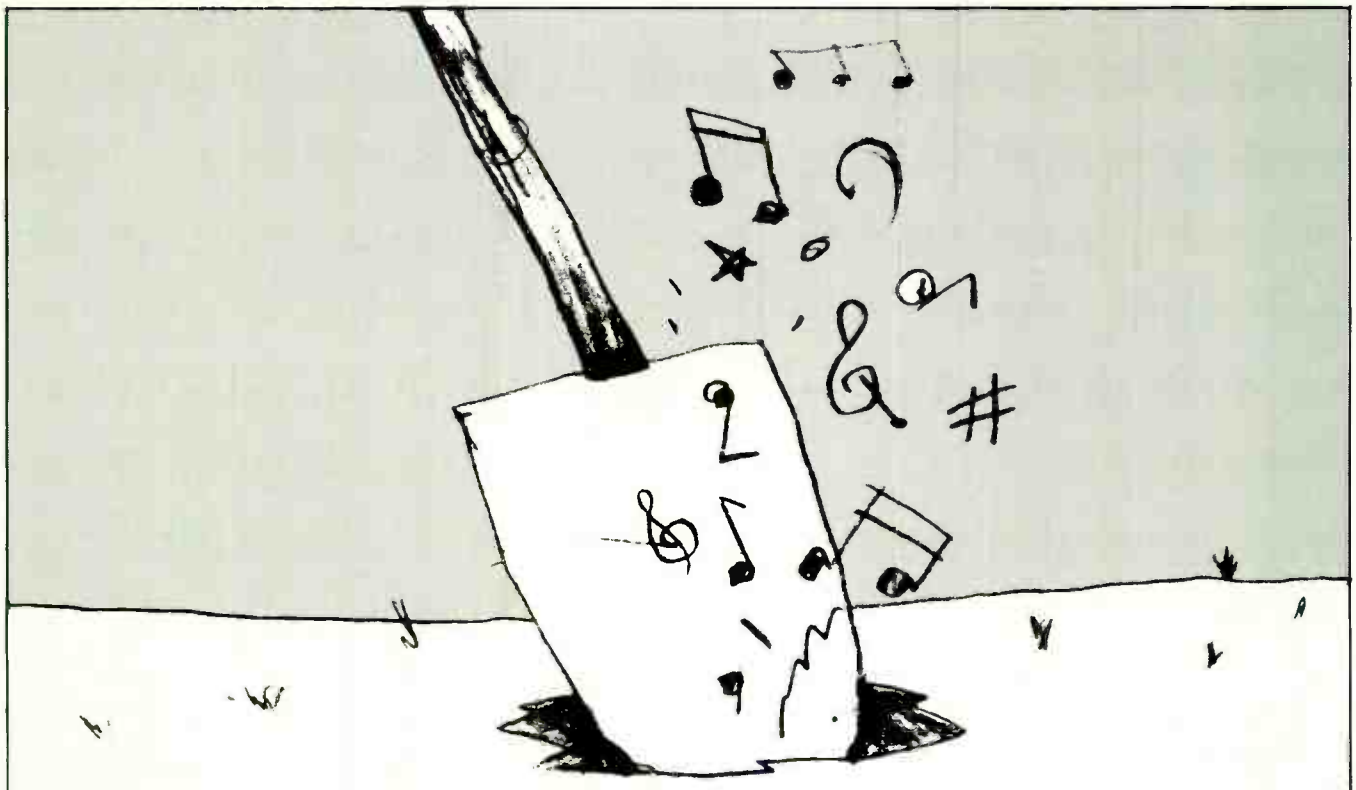
"I react to things emotionally, more so than any other way," he continues. "And in the music business or business of any kind, that's not the way to do things. I haven't been a good businessman in the past. It's been a real dichotomy, because playing drums to me is an emotional thing. That's why people have enjoyed the way I've played. But it's a problem when you deal in social situations."

The Chicago-born drummer's parents divorced when he was ten, and he had no brothers or sisters. He had to grow up fast starting in music so young, without a lot of friends his own age. He got a lot of encouragement from his mom, Alyce Juanez, who exposed Tony to classical music at an early age. His father, Tillmon Williams, a saxophone player in Boston, took Tony to gigs around town, where the youngster would pay close attention.

"When I was a kid there was this guy who I thought was really an insensitive drummer, you know, just like a clod on the drums. And one night he was playing so loudly and so badly that I just started crying. Tears were coming out of my eyes because it was so offensive. Not because it was hurting my ears, but it was just so offensive. I was so emotional about things.

Several years ago the drummer found it was too painful for him to teach drums anymore, because students didn't take time to go back and listen to the masters

MICHELE CLEMENT



GROUNDBREAKERS!

Jackie King "Night Bird"
Jackie King's smooth and soothing guitar style reflects his jazz and classical training, but King has also been influenced by American Indian music and Texas honky-tonks. Clearly, the sound is meant to be enjoyed, not categorized.

Coming Soon!

Rodney Franklin "It Takes Two"
Rodney Franklin's keyboard skills are at their peak on "It Takes Two." Produced by Michel Colombier, the new album takes flight with "Broken Wings," Rodney's innovative instrumental treatment of the Mr. Mister hit, and the single, "Look What's Showing Through," featuring a highly-charged vocal performance by Brenda Russell.

Weather Report "This Is This"*
This is it! "This Is This" is the new Weather Report album that digs deep into new musical terrain. Co-founders Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul are joined by Carlos Santana on the exciting title track and the spectacular "Man With The Copper Fingers."

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of the instrument.

"When you learn how to express ideas that have been around, then you can express yourself," says Williams. "But guys think of themselves as more than drummers. They think of themselves as being more important, and they're just using the drums as a vehicle to make themselves look good. For years and years I played the drums because I wanted to play like someone else. I used to be upset because I couldn't play something like Art Blakey or like Philly Joe Jones or Max Roach. I would hear them play something and I'd work on it and work on it. If it was a Max Roach record I would play no more or no less than what he played on the record. I wouldn't add anything, but I would play everything that he played so that I'd get a sense of *why* he played it. What happened two bars before that made him play that, or what is coming up that he's setting up? Or something just happened and he's reacting to it."

Williams kept up his intense study of the masters from age nine to sixteen,

during which time he watched all the great drummers who came through Boston, studied for about a year with Alan Dawson, and played for two years with saxophonist Sam Rivers. "Miles was a big influence on me," the drummer says, lighting a cigar for a moment, "but his influence was before I met him—just hearing his music, and all the records I used to buy. Sam Rivers was an influence *working* with him, which is a different kind of thing. I learned more from Sam, because it was before I got with Miles. I think playing with Sam prepared me to play with Miles."

Williams was three years into his teens when he played with saxman Jackie McLean for a week at Connelly's in Boston. When McLean left to go back to New York, he had young Tony firmly in tow—maybe in a headlock. By this time the drummer had played *like* so many people, he had a virtual Rolodex full of colors and sounds to choose from, and could pick off a card whenever he pleased. "I was always playing *with* people, which was fortunate," he says, "I wasn't just playing drums at home all the time. I was playing at night from early on as a child, with musicians, in front of an audience. I had a chance to really develop and get people's reactions to what I played. I play drums so that people will like what I play. I don't play just to get off. I play for people. I like playing so that people feel what I'm playing. Early on I realized that I needed to play real clearly, so that you as a listener will hear what I intended you to hear."

From 1963 to '69, Williams kept the Molotov cocktails coming in the Miles Davis Quintet. He left the band in '69 to form the Tony Williams Lifetime—the first edition featured John McLaughlin. Through the 70s, the Lifetime kept up a steady turnover of personnel, including Allan Holdsworth and Tony's father.

But 1979 was a milestone year for Williams, in an odd sort of way. His album *The Joy Of Flying* was released and didn't contain a single tune written by the bandleader. That fact bothered Williams as much or more than the fact that he was shuffled out of CBS' deck during that company's big jazz layoff. "I knew that I wanted to study," says the forty-year-old, "and that I didn't want to do anything until I thought I had the tools to make better music. But some of the time during those years off was spent just paralyzed too, not knowing if I wanted to do this anymore." Had Williams not been successful in increasing his knowledge of counterpoint, he might have opened a meat and produce market near his San Anselmo, California house by now. Instead, he's been driving from his shady, residential nook of Marin County a couple of times a week over the Richmond Bridge to Berkeley to study composition with Dr. Robert Greenberg. "Tony wanted to feel more in control, so that he wasn't just responding out of instinct," says Greenberg, a lecturer on the faculty of U.C. Berkeley.

TONY'S TUBS

When you talk to people in the music industry, all they want to talk about is music. When you talk to drummers, all they want to talk about is drums, equipment, and that's boring stuff to me. I have the equipment I need, but that's it. I've been playing Gretsch drums since I was fourteen—they're real good, the best drums. My snare has eight lugs around the drum, which makes the tension a little denser and makes for a nicer sound. And I order the snare with double lugs, one set on top, the other on the bottom. I play with bottom heads on all my drums, even the bass. It's not a flat, flappy sound—it's very round.

"My toms are a 13-inch and a 14-inch on the rack, 14-inch, 16-inch and 18-inch toms on the floor, and a 24-inch bass drum. The snare is 6½-inches deep. I also used a Simmons SDS 5 on the album—it's something I've wanted to do for a while, adding drum machine and electronic drums in that context, like a straight-ahead, acoustic jazz sound. It seemed like the next step for that kind of music. I just signed with Simmons; I've got their SDS 7 pads, with Selectapad, the rack, the cymbal mounts and the new MTM MIDI triggering thing. The SDS 7 is great! I also want to get an Emulator II sampler.

"My cymbals are Zildjians—mostly Ks, but the high-hats as As. I've got a 20-inch, a 22-inch ride, an 18-inch, and a cymbal in the middle that's a 16-inch. The high hats are 15-inch. They're all medium weights. I've got a couple of sets now; I like to have the same cymbals on each setup I have."

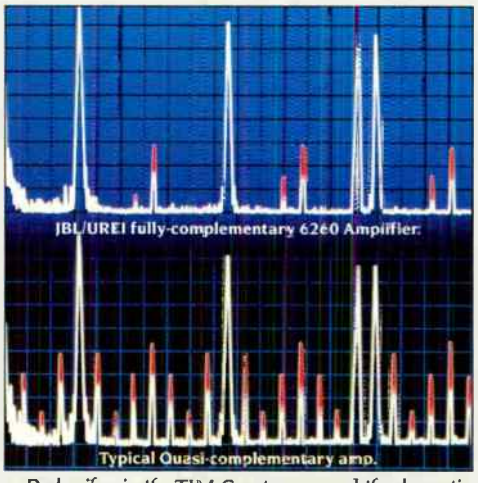
A DRUMMER'S DRUMMER

Often bombastic, certainly flamboyant and with keen dynamic sensitivity, Williams' drumming has caught the ears of jazz and rock fans and fellow trappers alike. "Tony is phenomenal all-round, but especially in his cymbal approach," says **Rod Morgenstein**, drummer with the Steve Morse Band. "His whole approach seemed to revolutionize swing." "I would steal Tony Williams licks and write them down," admits **Terry Bozzio**, of Zappa and Missing Persons fame. "My whole way of learning was to write out licks that I thought were really cool, learn the technique involved, then make up my own licks using those techniques." "Tony Williams showed me, and I'm sure a lot of other drummers, that technically anything you want to do can be done, and with very limited equipment—if you get your technique up to par," says **Ndugu Leon Chancelor**, who has backed up Weather Report and Michael Jackson. And King Crimson's **Bill Bruford** listened to Williams while growing up in England. "The African tribes, the Ghanian master drummers, things the Orient offers—it's all very interesting, but none of it has the speed of reflex or the sheer ability of someone like Tony Williams. It's just staggering what he can do on a drum set."

Carlos Santana, who has been recording with Williams for a future jazz album, has a little different perspective, but equally bold praise. "He's like absolute conviction," says the guitarist. "I don't think question mark or doubt is in Tony Williams' vocabulary. When he hits it, it's just so solid. It's almost scary. I told him that George Lucas could do a movie on one of his solos alone."

MICHELE CLEMENT

What To Look For When You Listen To A Power Amplifier.



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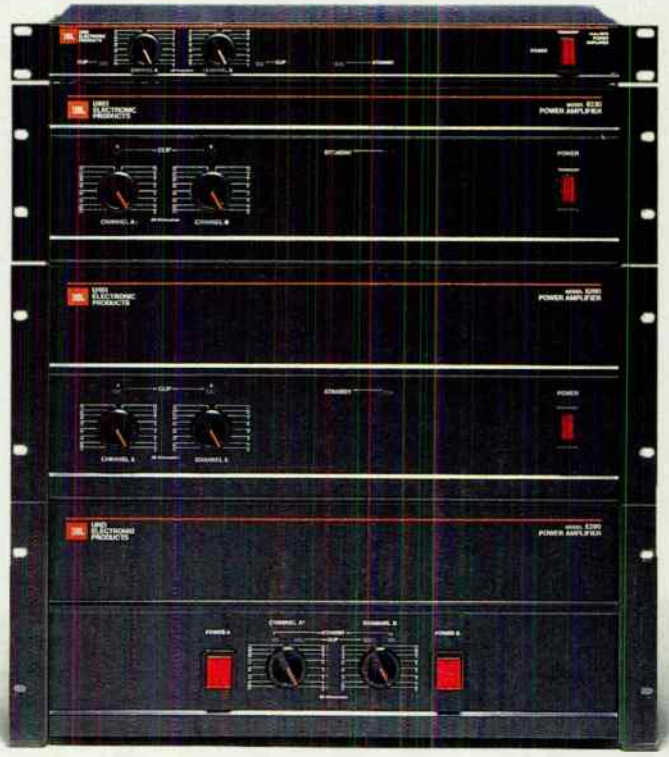

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PRODUCING

By Alan di Perna

SLY FOX: DOO-WOP ENTERS THE 80S

Gary Cooper and Michael Camacho of Sly Fox could easily be the two lead characters in a network detective series. You know, one of those shows where two guys with completely opposite personalities and backgrounds get thrown together and somehow become a great team. Like Crockett and Tubbs or agents Scott and Robinson from *I Spy*, the two men who make up Sly Fox are a trendy bi-racial duo. But the characteristics that set them apart are more than skin deep.

Camacho apparently relishes his role as Sly Fox's resident Romantic. An actor, dancer and mime as well as a singer, he pens most of the ballad material, quotes Shakespeare and deals a lot in Big Abstractions like Love and Art, frequently dropping his voice to an emotive whisper for added emphasis. Gary Cooper, on the other hand, looks you straight in the eye and seems eager to get to the practical side of any question. Camacho's natural ebullience makes the perfect foil for Cooper's understated street cool—gleaned, presumably, from growing up in the inner cities of Baltimore and D.C. and from years of active duty in the P-Funk/Bootsy Collins Army of Funk.

Michael Camacho, Gary Cooper

But different as they are on the surface, Cooper and Camacho share the same ruling passion: singing. Unlike your basic vocal/instrumental duo—Blancmange, OMD or the System, to whom Sly Fox are often compared—Cooper and Camacho are a vocal duo first and foremost. Their debut album, *Let's Go All The Way*, is rife with skillfully layered vocal arrangements, all aimed squarely at the top of the pop charts. And in many territories, the album's title track has hit the mark.

"People always tell us we sound like one voice," says Camacho. "And one thing that makes it a joy to work in this situation is the fact that Gary and I both sing lead *and* background. We both think vocally, in terms of arranging. It's like having a choir, you know. So as a duo, that's what makes us unique. With most duos there's only one featured vocalist."

"We feel we're the pop version of Sam & Dave," Cooper injects.

Both members of Sly Fox have been singing professionally for quite some time. At the tender age of nine, a pint-sized Gary Cooper began regularly climbing on stages and doing a turn as "Baby James Brown." Some time after he'd outgrown his little sequined cape, Cooper became a member of the mad mob that kept Parliament-Funkadelic and Bootsy's Rubber Band on top of the funk scene throughout the 70s. Gary sang and did vocal arrangements. He became a drummer almost by accident, during a vocal session with George Clinton for Parliament's *Chocolate City* LP. The regular drummer had left for the day when funkmeister Clinton decided he needed to lay a drum track against the vocals he was cutting. It was Bootsy Collins who kicked a duly reluctant Gary to the fore.

"I had done some jams on drums with Bootsy down his basement. So he said, 'Why don't you just go out there and lay down the track?' The first recording session I did as a drummer was part of that album. It turned out okay. So after that, they started sticking me on tracks as a drummer *and* a vocalist."

Vocal music (sans drums) played no less of a role in Michael Camacho's musical development. He was only thirteen when he started performing with neighborhood bands around Flatbush, Brooklyn. By age fifteen, he was doing session work at New York's Electric Lady studio, but it wasn't until he was seventeen or so that Michael discovered a cappella doo-wop singing. With characteristic Romantic élan, he calls the genre "my true love; my pride and joy.

"The great thing about singing a cappella out on the street is that you get an immediate and honest response. People are either going to like you or not. And believe me, they'll let you know which way it is. Every time we got out on the street and started doo-wopping, we had two hundred people gathered around.

A slight exaggeration? Well, it was during a street corner rehearsal for a doo wop party that Camacho and his old a cappella group, Change of Pace, were "discovered" by an ambulatory New York casting director. He put them in one of those much-praised TV commercials for Levi's 501 jeans. They wrote and performed the music themselves.

Camacho was introduced to Cooper by Ted Currier, who produced *Let's Go All The Way*. The by now oft-repeated story goes something like this: Upon meeting, Camacho and Cooper and Gary repaired to a nearby ice cream parlor which, as chance would have it, was equipped with a piano. (Do these guys *always* rehearse in public?) Sly Fox was born.

"Let's Go All The Way" furnishes a prime example of what Sly Fox's vocal-oriented approach brings to arranging. Along with the infectious melody and harmony vocals, Cooper and Camacho also used their voices to do what might ordinarily have been a synth part—the "zhum zhum zingingingeee" riffs that are easily the song's best hook. "That was just a natural thing for me," explains Cooper, who wrote the tune. "Coming up in your basic ghetto environment—

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By Jock Baird

DEVELOPMENTS

One pratfall of the musical instrument press is the elevation of the N.A.M.M. show to Olympian proportions—we're always telling you the current show was a turning point or a disaster or a bitchin' party you should be sorry you missed, but rarely do we shrug and say, eh, just another N.A.M.M. show. So when I begin by saying that this summer's show in Chicago is one of the most important in several years, you'll no doubt figure we're up to our old tricks. Especially when one of the reasons is our old coming-next-month pal, the MIDI guitar. But please bear with me, and I'll try to elaborate.

Let's be frank. Despite all the ink we MI writers have been spending telling you about fret-switching and optics, there's still no MIDI guitar in the stores. **Ibanez**, a year after showing a fairly complete prototype, is only now ready to ship its first two hundred guitars. The IVL/**Kramer** seemed swell, but where can I buy one? Why has the universally hailed **Octave Plateau** MIDI guitar which knocked us out last summer been kept under wraps? And if the vaunted **Photon** guitar isn't up and running this time....

In a nutshell, it's time to put up or shut up, not just because we're so tired of waiting, but because we're beginning phase two, Attack of the Majors. We told you about the **Charvel/Akai** MIDI guitar—sure it's behind Ibanez, but a strong charge could put it right in the game. And more importantly, the sleeping giant has finally awakened. **Roland** has been sitting on its guitar synth lead for two years now, and hasn't even bothered to put a MIDI In port onto the GR-700. They are sitting no longer, and all eyes will now be turned on their new GM-70 converter, which converts ordinary guitar and bass signals into MIDI data, and the GK-1 guitar modification kit which MIDIfies any guitar. Roland is also debuting a new rack-mount synth, the MKS-70 Super JX Module designed especially for guitar.

Roland GK-1 Synth kit

So what does this mean? It basically puts a time limit on the whole shooting match. Once the Roland MIDI conversion system is ready to roll, those that haven't found a niche are in big trouble. Sure the Roland system is adapted from the hex pickup, pitch-to-voltage system of the GR series, so it won't be high-tech, sexy and blindingly fast, but at least it will be Here. Already promo for the new Steinberger/Roland bass (a logical next step after the GR-70 bass synth) is emphasizing it'll be available in both regular GR format and/or "MIDI interfaces from Roland, Ibanez and others," so standardization is coming. That means large-scale manufacturing capability much sooner. So let's hear no longer about those shadowy hotel suites with the MIDI guitar that will soon dominate the market. Show it, or throw it.

Chicago N.A.M.M. will also be a new rite of passage for the software brigade. Two companies serve as perfect examples. On the one hand, there's **MusicData**, one of the original computer movers and shakers. Despite two years of refining their C-64 sequencer into one of the best around, the company went out of business at the end of May, a victim of the great non-appearing computer-music wave. Interestingly, MusicData software may not die—company head Ron Wilkerson announced he is presently negotiating with several companies to rerelease some of the programs. That provokes some interesting questions: Here's a program that is already developed, debugged and musician-tested. Can another company pick it up inexpensively and sell it at a profit? And as more software firms drop, who will be picking up those pregnant pieces? Will it be the majors?

But the computer shake-out cuts both ways—witness the incredible resuscitation of Atari under Jack Tramiel and his godchild, the Atari 520ST even as the Commodore Amiga has had a rocky year (it seems only **Mimetics** is still involved in Amiga music products). This has helped propel **Hybrid Arts** into the entrepreneur of the year. Hybrid even sells Ataris with its programs, offering ludicrous package deals just to get people using their software, and it's worked for them. Hybrid's newest wrinkles are two-fold. First, it's joined forces with another underdog company, **Kawai**, in writing voice editing programs for the new Kawai K-3 digital synth we saw at the last show. Kawai plunged into heavy system-exclusive MIDI development for the K-3, and needed a good program to get the most out of its user-generated digital waveforms. Hybrid and Kawai are now selling a 130XS computer, disk drive, interface and Miditrack III sequencer program to go with the K-3. Hybrid is also plunging into a joint development program with Atari itself for 520ST software. Chicago N.A.M.M. will certainly clarify the Amiga-ST contest. Don't bet the farm on the Amiga....

Kawai K3, Atari 130XS, Hybrid Arts MIDImate

Some individual companies are staking a lot on this show. **Kurzweil** is not taking Anaheim's digital sampling explosion lightly. It's coming out with a $3000 expander unit that promises to become a big part of the sampling landscape. The Kurzweil 150 Expander is a 16-channel multi-timbral job with banks of presampled voices aboard—three acoustic pianos, two electrics, harpsichord, two basses, vibes, marimba, organ, steel and nylon string acoustic guitars and four

continued on page 50

PLAY OTARI

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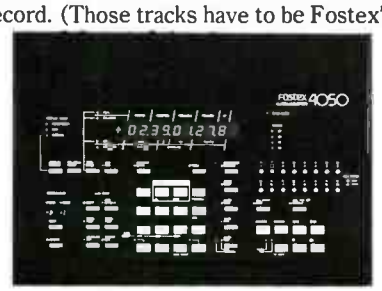
OTARI

TEMPUS FUGIT–ET TU FOSTEX?

By Will Hunt

There's been a great deal of talk in musicianly circles lately about time code and the possibilities it opens up. Tape recorder synchronization is already fairly commonplace in pro studios, allowing 30- or 46-track setups using double decks. This all started, of course, as a spinoff of audio-to-video or audio-to-film synchronization, and was led by Synchronous Technologies' SMPL System. The next generation of SMPTE control systems has started to filter down to the semi-pro market, epitomized by three new Fostex units that are eminently affordable. The time had come to quit the talk and see some action, and soon I had my hands on not only these three units, but a serial-interface-equipped Fostex B-16 ½-inch 16-track and a Model 20 2-track (with center timing track), all nestled in my attic wasteland of wires. Just try and get 'em back, suckers!

So what did I make off with? The centerpiece of the Fostex system is the 4050, a full-function pro autolocator that reads and generates SMPTE time codes and synchronizes MIDI systems to SMPTE recorded on tape—the best of both worlds. In the sixteen hours it took to get the system operational, I learned a number of impressive things about the 4050: it remembers ten locations, loops or repeats between any points, lets you set up to 99 seconds of pre-roll time and basically automates all your punch-ins and punch-outs down to the hundredth of a frame. It also switches up to sixteen tracks in and out of record. (Those tracks have to be Fostex's



4050 Autolocator

though—the 4050 only works with the 20, 80, B-16, E-2 and E-22.)

The rack-mount 4030 synchronizer and the 4035 controller are not so exclusive—there's software to make them compatible with Tascams, Otaris, Studers, Ampexes and all manner of video decks. The 4035's panel is similar to that of the 4050, and it has most of the same memory and control abilities. Its display will read out the time code recorded on either master or slave deck, as well as the difference between the two. This difference is called offset. When both decks are running, the offset can be locked at zero, increased, or decreased. Particularly useful for synching music to video, offset can also be used for fine tuning all the way to wild echo effects when using two tape recorders.

My path into synchronicity was a rocky one and the manual was not a great help at times. One essential point that was blithely ignored and of course seems obvious to me now, is this: *The same stripe of code must be on both decks!!!* When first setting up to run, I generated about four minutes of SMPTE code from the 4050 autolocator onto one tape, then another four minutes onto the tape on my other deck. Since I hadn't zeroed the generator, the first stripe read from three hours, ten minutes, fifty seconds to three hours, fifteen minutes. The second stripe read from three hours, fifteen minutes to three hours, nineteen minutes, ten seconds. When I tried to lock them together, they had nothing in common. Save yourself some tooth-gnashing and take a line out of the first deck into the second and record the same stripe onto both at the same time.

Synchronization made cheaper. Fostex' new synchronizer and synchronizer controller.

Now that I was a little more conversant with time-code, I had a challenging project for the 4030. I wanted to combine two versions of the same song, each recorded on ¼-inch tape. One version was a mixdown of the other, with new parts added. Since the song was recorded over a simple drum machine pattern, I figured that all I had to do was record time code on each tape, synchronize them, and mix away. This wasn't too hard. I managed to find an offset interval of one second, four frames which started off the two versions perfectly in sync. But wait! Twenty seconds later, one version was getting behind. I checked the 4035. Both tapes were locked together. What was wrong? Then I realized the problem. I'd recorded the time code *after* I'd recorded the two songs. A slight difference in speed of the tape recorders had made one version of the four-minute song about three seconds longer than the other. I would have to compensate for *that* if I wanted the songs to play together! Never say die. I divided the three seconds into ten increments of offset, stored them in the 4035's running memory, then activated the chase function every twenty-five seconds as the song rolled. It worked!!

Another area I barely scratched the surface of was interfacing with a MIDI system. The 4050 acts as a master clock as well as gives real-time commands—and you can store tempo changes at specific bars and beats. The on-board metronome even has a little speaker (which you can disable). It can also do requantizing of MIDI tempos—that is, if you write a 22-second piece of music for a 19-second video spot, it will alter the MIDI timing data to make it fit without changing the pitch. Not all MIDI gear is smart enough to work with the 4050, though, so ask before you buy.

One nice bonus to the whole Fostex system is that it's completely software-based, so if you change decks or new improvements are made, you just slap in a new EPROM. The 4050 lists for $1250, while the 4030 and 4035 go as a pair for about $2000. Incidentally, the B16D also surprised me with its overall sound quality. I used to be a "narrow gauge" snob, but now I'm a repentant one. For the moment, though, you'll find me scouring the neighborhood for frustrated video-makers who haven't made the music hook-up yet. Why, a few good jingles and I'll be able to afford the whole system.

ronome with visible downbeats. Nifty.

But you never know. Jimi might have preferred the new Strat copy that the ever-resurgent **Guild** has just debuted. After all, anybody who played the national anthem would dig that this guitar is made in the U.S.A. Called the S-261 and well-priced at six bills, its body and hand-shaped neck are maple, its fingerboard of rosewood. High-output pickups are a humbucker and two single-coils, with Grover tuning pegs and a Kahler Pro tremolo battening down the hatches. All hardware is black chrome. Now I know Jimi would've dug that last part.

Williams from page 40

been the goat. He's been hurt by a lack of support from within the music industry, and half-seriously says he'd prefer to own a grocery store. Williams has engaged himself at getting back into the public eye, and at becoming the more fully balanced musician that he wants to be.

"I don't sit around listening to records from years ago and say, 'Oh man, the good old days.' Anything that I listen to that's old is probably Brahms or Beethoven or something that I have to study," Williams confides. "When I'm driving the car, if I'm listening to the radio for music, it'll probably be a classical station. The only things that I listen to that excite me are in the rock 'n' roll or popular field, just because of the sheer sound of it. I listen to ZZ Top and get up and start dancing. I'm not saying I can't enjoy stuff that doesn't do that, more cerebral kinds of things, but they really have to be magnificently cerebral, almost. I went out to hear Miles' band last year, just because it was Miles. He sounded like he was really playing a lot, and I enjoyed that. But I haven't bought a Miles record since I left the band in 1969. I haven't followed his different bands, just because, I mean, I *know* it. I guess I'm real jaded.

"There were so many groups that I listened to when I was a kid," he says, as if talking about old friends. "Groups like the Clovers and the Orioles, before it was even called rock 'n' roll. Before Bill Haley and way before Elvis. Listening to the radio. And then TV came along and you started watching movies and hearing television music. Or going to the movies and hearing all this orchestra music. Remember that atonal music from the show *Combat*? Remember the theme to the *Alfred Hitchcock Show*? I remember thinking, 'Wow, that's nice music. It makes you feel something. I'd like to be able to do that.'"

dent, 38 Special reluctantly agreed to join the other big Southern bands at a huge rally for the candidate. All the other bands got souvenir belt buckles; 38 Special got squat. They shrugged it off. They liked Ronald Reagan better anyway. Donnie Van Zant says of the president, "He's the only one up there with balls." On the tour bus the band reads football and fishing magazines, watches shoot-em-up movies, and talk about the new rifles they're going to buy when they get home. One can imagine a band poster with the caption: "We are the NRA."

But watch out for stereotypes. That 38 Special are conservative Southerners, doesn't make them simple. Carlisi's father was an ivy leaguer and career naval officer. Jeff finished college in Atlanta before launching 38 Special.

"As far as the press was concerned," Carlisi says, "I think a lot of the negative feelings toward Southern music through the years came from this feeling in the back of everybody's mind that the South was *dumb* because they lost the Civil War. It's like, 'The Industrial Revolution hasn't hit the South yet. They're still pickin' cotton. Good ol' boys and footstompin' music. Ignorant, illiterate people."

Which may be a valid assessment of Northern prejudice: Northerners probably still do expect Southerners to fit a certain cliché—and when they don't they're accused of being ashamed of their roots. But an awful lot of Southerners bought that good ol' boy image, too. And an awful lot of Southern rock bands perpetuated those clichés.

"All these other guys," Don Barnes sighs, "came along and tried to write about swamps and alligators and whiskey and bad women. Well, you can only do that for so long before people get tired of it. Lynyrd Skynyrd's last album, *Street Survivors*, saw them getting away from all that and writing more love songs. They would have been *huge* by now.

"Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers used to have a California image," Barnes says. "Now they are seen as a *rock band from the South*. Groups like R.E.M. make mention that they're from the South. It seems like it's in vogue again."

"It's funny," Carlisi says. "There was all this *Southern camaraderie* between Dickey Betts and Charlie Daniels and Marshall Tucker and all those people—

Don Barnes has the voice radio loves.

We never prostituted ourselves. We've found a way to make something work using some elements that are popular or part of a trend.

the Who's Who of Southern rock. We never really felt we were accepted by them. We felt we were different."

The guitarist's voice takes on an edge as he continues, "It's almost like we were a little kid's band or something. We used to make jokes about it: 'Hey, Charlie didn't mention *our* name in 'The South's Gonna Do It Again'.' It's funny now to look back on the situation. We're here now and you don't hear much about them. One day we won't be here." Carlisi shrugs. "Time goes on."

STUDIO STRENGTH

To make 38 Special's *Strength In Numbers*, Don Barnes and Jeff Carlisi turned their band over to an outside producer for the first time in years. "We adopted a philosophy of 'less is more' from Keith Olson, our producer," Don said. "Jeff and I co-produced the last four albums, and we didn't want to make the same album again. When we were in control we used to put down on tape everything that came into our minds. 'Yeah! This would be great!' We'd pack everything we could think of in there, and then when the mix came around everything was fighting to be heard. It's a real exercise in control to put just little *stabs* of things in there; that creates more dynamics. One rhythm guitar turned up real loud can make the track. Keith taught us it makes a bigger sound if you're not layering all the time. After a while it's like mad bees. A sound spectrum has only so many frequencies; if you've got a guitar in one frequency band, you don't need to add another one there. Add something that's over the top of it."

"Then," Jeff adds, "the songs just about end up mixing themselves. It's an exercise in control," Don continues, "in learning to hold onto the reins of recording. When you put on one power guitar you tend to say, 'Is that powerful enough? Let's add another and make it real powerful!' That defeats your purpose. One power guitar turned up loud enough is going to be powerful."

"It's easy to put everything on and say, 'We'll decide when we mix it,'" says Jeff. "Then when you're mixing you're pressed for time and you try to use everything. You never throw things away: 'I spent so much time on that! Use a little bit of it anyway!'"

On some tracks Carlisi, Barnes and Olsen brought in bassist Mike Porcaro and a couple of drummers.

Don says, "The rhythm guitar tracks were done with this kind of bastardized version of a Telecaster these people in Memphis (St. Blues Guitars) made for me. They made a mistake and turned the pick-up around—it was backwards. For some reason it just rang like a bell. Instead of that distorted break-up that usually happens with power chords, it rang true. It made big Pete Townshend chords sound like bells. It's the rhythm track on every song on the album except 'Hearts On Fire,' which is Jeff's Purple Monster, a customized Explorer with a tremolo bar with a locking system on it."

Jeff says, "If you hear the shimmering acoustics, it's a couple of Strats we thinned out to sound acoustic."

For many of his recorded solos—and onstage—Don plays "the trusty Les Paul Junior I've had since I was sixteen." Onstage Donnie Van Zant strums a Peavey Predator. And that's just the beginning of 38 Special's Peavey loyalty: Larry Junstrom plays a Peavey Dyna-bass and he, Barnes, Carlisi and Van Zant all use Peavey amps: Peavey pre amps, Peavey power amps and Peavey International cabinets—all loaded with JBLs. Drummers Jack Grodin and Steve Brookins both use Tama drums and Paiste cymbals. These guys have some endorsement deals, eh?

Brass Bucket Tavern is across the street from Baity's, but there's something dissuasive about a dress code that warns, "No biker attire."

This town *is* really kind of coming along.

Ah, but there's an aging eyesore next to the Brass Bucket, a peeling white shack called Ziggy's. This is the happening nightspot in this burgeoning burg. There's a tarp over the outdoor stage at Ziggy's, to discourage electrocution in case of rain. Tonight's band is Fetchin' Bones, a local quintet whose *Cabin Flounder* album was recorded at Easter's studio. It's impossible to get more than an infrequent glance at the band, since the stage is at ground level and every hepcat within driving distance is assembled here. Back inside, a sign over the bar proclaims *Occupancy by more than 55 people is unlawful and dangerous.*

Maybe Easter's thinking that about half the people in the audience tonight have recorded EPs at the Drive-In. As locals slalom through the crowd to greet the Captain of Southern Pop, he doesn't seem very comfortable with the modest scenario he helped conceive. So Mitch Easter goes home, where the special Jimmy Page issue of *Guitar World* is waiting for him.

"I'm definitely aware of Southern Pop being a *thing*. There's a time when those labels do you good, because it leads to more exposure. But it gets to be a tired horse. And then a dead horse. I think it's at that point now."

Easter is relaxing the next morning in the Winston-Salem house he shares with Let's Active member Angie Carlson. The house is a bit unruly, since Easter has been in New York, producing his first "real-budget record" with Suzanne Vega.

Southern Pop is supposed to mean you listened to the Velvet Underground for a year, then you learned guitar, but you didn't get too good. Then you formed your band.

"As I interpret it, Southern Pop is supposed to mean that you listened to the Velvet Underground for a year, then you learned guitar, but you didn't get too good, and then you formed your band. The band is kinda dreamy and kinda pop, but not too heavy, and you hate all that guitar posturing, but the word synthesizer makes you run to the toilet. If that's what it is, I don't like it. And I don't think Let's Active is in it."

The whole Southern Pop phenomenon developed under Easter's patronage, yet he now finds himself "tired of that jangly business," and saddled with a reputation he dislikes. Although the bands he's worked with are hardly clones, their styles aren't radically dissimilar either. He admits he's created his own problem. "I was pretty sloppy about running the studio. I had this Communist view of how I wanted it to be: 'for the people, man.' I wanted to do every session that came along, help everybody. So if I got a flood-tide of R.E.M. imitators, I just let that happen. I didn't feel I had to watch my profile. That's been a mistake.

"I've done some sessions that weren't so hot, and if I'd turned them down, I'd have been able to do some better ones. It's strange how self-selecting the clientele has been. It's been such a word-of-mouth scene, so it figures that the bands have similar tastes. And it amazes me that there hasn't been a single heavy metal band or country band to record here." Would Easter agree to produce a metal band? "It'd be fun," he nods, "to record some guys with a balls-to-the-wall ethic."

The metal factor explains Easter's biggest reservation about Southern Pop. "My taste is more...tacky isn't the word, but I'm less worried than most of the Southern Pop bands. They're pretty timid. If they turn up their amp and it gets fuzzy, they go, 'Oh my!' They're just daintier people. There's been a whole lot of politeness in the Southern rock sound that I could do without. As Don Dixon says, one of the great things about the Replacements is that they've got a big, loud, fucking guitar player, man, in the grand tradition. You haven't seen much of that in a long time."

Although Let's Active's new LP, *Big Plans For Everybody*, features its own surprising dose of loud fucking guitar playing, Easter has been a new wave anti-hero for some time. On the band's last tour, he played Led Zeppelin songs during visits to college radio stations "mainly to be offensive and wake up the DJs that thought we lived in Athens." Easter feels that his age gives him a historical perspective that his younger audience lacks. "A lot of our crowd seems to think the guitar was invented by Elvis Costello," he's said.

Easter's ambivalence about the sound he helped found reflects the way Southern Pop has coagulated within its self-imposed structures. In the 70s, the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd inspired a flock of mediocre boogie butchers like Molly Hatchet and Black Oak Arkansas. In much the same way, R.E.M.'s ascension has instigated jangly mediocrity in the 80s.

"There are obvious differences," Easter reflects. "The audience of this New South business aren't bikers. It's actually quite non-macho. As far as it being the sound of the times, you're right. And the mediocrity factor is right, too. It sounds like some old guy complaining how no one sings like Sinatra anymore: 'All those fuckers strumming those chords, they can't do anything like what Duane Allman did, man.' But it's true." Nevertheless, while he was growing up in North Carolina, Easter refused to listen to bands like the Allmans even as he was "regularly threatened with death for having long hair."

On the July 4th weekend of the summer of 1969, fourteen-year-old Mitch Easter and 140,000 others gathered at the Atlanta Pop Festival. Amid a star-packed lineup, the band that caught Mitch's eye was Led Zeppelin. "I was attracted to them because they looked really bitchin'. They had the best hair and the best guitars, and all that equipment." Easter had taken up the guitar, after an unsuccessful stint with the clarinet, and he'd been in bands since the fourth grade. But after the Atlanta Pop Festival, Easter discovered rock's long tradition of playing hot and looking cool.

He bought a Gibson guitar and a stack of 100-watt Marshall amps to get "that big heavy sound," some velvet pants and ruffled shirts, and he grew his hair until his ears had vanished. He joined Sacred Irony, a local band which used a hearse for transportation and frequently opened for Arrogance, Don Dixon's band. At one of his first parties, when all his classmates were requesting the first Allman Brothers album, Mitch kept playing *In The Court Of The Crimson King.* The bands were expected to play covers, and he wanted Sacred Irony to play original material. At fifteen, Easter learned the meaning of "artistic differences."

Easter later formed bands with three of the four future dB's. The demos they sent to record companies in New York were routinely rejected as "too weird." "We had written all these songs that no one could get into except us. We imagined getting a record contract twenty-four hours a day, but none of us felt like there was a hope in hell."

Way down inside; one more; you need...KUDZUUUUU!

Up north, things had begun to change; one weekend, bandmate Chris Stamey came back from New York with a copy of Television's landmark indie 45 "Little Johnny Jewel" and a new punk haircut. "We started buying *Rock Scene*, a real dumb picture magazine, but it had pictures of Johnny Thunders sitting at a table at Max's Kansas City with Wayne Country and David Johansen. Chris started trying to write real songs that people would really like."

But punk never supplanted Easter's boogie affections: "My friends were all hipper than I was. I remember buying Aerosmith's *Rocks* and feeling slightly sheepish about it. I was really glad when the Ramones came along, but it wasn't like, 'That's when I discovered myself.'" When Stamey and company moved to New York and formed the dB's, Easter stayed in Chapel Hill, listening to David Bowie's *Low* and *Heroes* and writing the first songs he was proud of. Later, when the dB's were doing well in Manhattan, Easter sold a house his folks had given him so he could afford to buy studio equipment. Then he and girlfriend Faye Hunter moved to New York and joined the good-ole-boy network.

"But I wasn't willing to pay off a building inspector to give me permission for the studio. I was spending a lot of time walking the dog and driving a van around to make money. And I wasn't getting any songs written. I thought, 'If I move back down there I won't be in the middle of a scene, but I'll have more time to write songs.'"

When he returned to Winston-Salem in the summer of 1980, Easter discovered that a local scene had developed. There were clubs for bands to play in, and local musicians were wearing skinny ties. The Carolinian expatriates in the Big Apple were anxious to come home and make records. And a group called R.E.M. came up from Athens, Georgia to record a 45. "At the time, it wasn't a bigger project than anything else, but you could tell something was gonna happen with them. They had the now sound, and they seemed like stars." "Radio Free Europe" and the *Chronic Town* EP came out, and by 1982, Mitch Easter's reputation was growing.

Easter was still writing and demoing songs, but with his old network committed to other bands, he didn't know how to start his own group. Faye Hunter began learning the bass, and Sara Romweber, a drummer in a Chapel Hill band, jammed with her and Mitch while hanging around R.E.M. sessions. "I knew we could form a weird group together," Easter says. R.E.M. invited them to come play in Athens, which meant the trio needed a name. Easter had seen an article on Japan's craze for meaningless English sweatshirts, and the phrase Let's Active struck him with the force of John Bonham's bass drum.

"Actually, some of the kids here in town started calling us Led Active because we've gotten sorta heavy." He flashes a proud smile most people reserve for the Grammys. "That's pretty great."

The back of Mitch Easter's battered car is littered with unravelled C-90s mailed, thrown, or left on his doorstep by hopeful bands from around the country. Those early R.E.M. records galvanized the American underground just as the Sex Pistols had done in England. "It was like, 'You can join our nice gang,' instead of, 'You can join our window-breaking gang,'" Easter reflects as he makes the short drive from his house to the Drive-In Studio. "R.E.M.'s songs are easy to figure out if you've just started playing. And they can sell more records to the Mr. Mister audience than Hüsker Dü."

Soon, every town big enough to have a Baskin-Robbins also had an R.E.M. clone, and they all wanted to come to the Drive-In. "It was a great image," he says, pulling into the driveway of his parents' 45-acre property. "The sleepy and vaguely enig-

GRETA PRATT

matic South, with its kudzu and easy livin' lifestyle...' And along with that was this comfy, cheap little studio."

Although it's not so cheap anymore, since Easter upgraded much of the equipment, the Drive-In is definitely comfy. The studio occupies three rooms at the back of his parents' house, and because it's not soundproofed, the Cars' "It's Magic" drifts in from Mrs. Easter's kitchen radio. Then the dog walks in. There are lava lamps all over, plus dozens of guitars, Aerosmith stickers, and a handwritten sign which quotes that famed production wizard Ralph Waldo Emerson, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

"I like studios," Easter sighs. "The equipment, all the lights.... It's a great job." Yet he also says, "Hearing another band's record finished is fine. But hearing my record finished is better." After opening for R.E.M. that first night in Georgia, Let's Active spent most of the summer of '83 touring with them and making demos. That led to a contract with IRS Records. The demos were later released as the *afoot* EP. Easter acknowledges that having two women in the band helped Let's Active get signed. "I thought that was really cool," he says, approaching the subject carefully. "I've always had a contrary streak, and there aren't that many women playing rock 'n' roll. Not only were they women, but they were unlikely musicians." Because the band was playing Easter's devious songs, the results were often erratic. "They were both surprisingly good, but it wasn't the same as playing with guys who'd been doing it for ten or fifteen years. We weren't the tightest group in the world, but I enjoyed having a big crazy noise sometimes."

Let's Active went on tour in the midst of Easter's androgynous phase, and the next several months were spent sharing Aero-Lak hairspray with tour headliners Echo & the Bunnymen. "I know some of our fans liked us because we had fluffy hair and you couldn't tell which one was the guy. We were all 5'1", and you couldn't tell how old we were."

Though Easter thought it all in fun, it led to the first of The Two Words That Make Easter Violent: *cute*. A video for "Every Word Means No" which showed the band cavorting with puppies didn't help. While he disliked being compared to the Monkees, Easter understands how *afoot* could be seen as cute: "It's kinda bouncy and the guitars are boingy. 'In Between' has a jolly sound, but it's a grim song about a love triangle. I don't think anyone knows that. There is something in every one of those songs that messes it up a bit, makes it a little cloudier. If you bother listening to the words, you get that glumness, even though the music is sorta *hey!*"

The follow-up album, *Cypress*, suffered from a similar problem. Easter's fragmented, impressionistic lyrics are often inscrutable because he doesn't have the kind of voice that duets with Marilyn McCoo on prime time, and because he dislikes the "Stevie Nicks vibe" of lyric sheets. But as anyone who ever sang "There is a bathroom on the right" knows, mumbling allows for some creative interpretations. Like the reviewer who thought "Easy Does" began, "The Russians are enemy agents / Go home" and praised Easter for being a patriot. Other reviews were equally exasperating, focusing mainly on variations of "cute" or "jangly" (the second of the Two Words That Make Easter Violent. "That's my death word," he grimaces). *Rolling Stone*, for example, likened Easter to "a wispy-voiced Charlie Brown bewildered by the war between boys and girls."

As we pile back into the car to search for a backroad chicken restaurant, Easter reflects on the album: "*Cypress* was hard to make. The sessions were polite, but not very inspired. We weren't communicating. Since we were a band, I couldn't go back and erase Sara and Faye's parts and play them myself." Soon after the following tour had begun, Sara Romweber quit the band. Easter plugged the hole with a couple of musicians who'd recorded at the Drive-In. Although the sound was stronger, he and Faye were in the process of ending their long romance. "Faye stayed in the band anyway," Easter says. "I deliberately didn't want it to be like, 'Okay, now you have to leave my band.'"

But when it came time to make another album, Easter decided to avoid the problem of group politics and record *Big Plans For Everybody* himself, with various contributing musicians called in as needed. His own big plan was to make a strong record no one could mistake for Southern Pop. "I was convinced for a while that if we made a record that sounded like Motorhead, somebody would say it was jangly pop. We'll see if people are listening to the record or not, because I don't think it's the least bit jangly or New South."

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LET'S ACTIVISTS

"We all have lots of stuff we're fond of," says **Mitch Easter**, "but since we don't have a fleet of semis yet, this is all we have room for on this tour. I use a 1968 regular red Gibson SG Special with vibrola, a yellow '62 SG Special, an '82 Rickenbacker 330, and a Robin Octave. The electrics all have GHS Bear Wire strings, a special medium gauge assembled for Sam Moss Guitars in Winston-Salem. I run the guitars into a RAT fuzz, then into a Korg PME-40X pedal thing, which contains an overdrive, chorus, graphic eq, and delay. The amp is a 100-watt Matamp, with an Orange 4 x 12 speaker cabinet with Fane speakers.

"**Angie Carlson** has either the real cool or real silly guitars, depending on your point of view: a 60s Kustom with a metallic blue sunburst finish, and a Takamine flying-V acoustic with a built-in pickup and Adamas strings. She also uses a RAT fuzz box. Her keyboards are the Ensoniq Mirage and Roland Juno 60. All this stuff goes into two Fender Twin Reverb amps from the late 70s, which have been fitted with Electro-Voice EVM speakers, which make the amps sound immensely better and weigh immensely more.

"**Dennis Ambrose** uses a Hamer Cruisebass with GHS Stainless Steel strings, plugged into a Gallien-Krueger 400 RB amp with an Acoustic 2x15 cabinet containing Electro-Voice EVM speakers. And sometimes he uses the band's Dallas Arbiter Trem Face tremolo device.

"**Eric Marshall** plays black Premiers with a 24-inch bass drum, one mounted tom, and two floor toms. This is essentially the John Bonham set, down to the sheet aluminum lining in the bass drum. Cymbals are mostly Zildjian. We also use a Yamaha drum machine on a couple of songs."

Drive-In Studio sports an AMEK Angela console. It's tape deck battery has a 3M M79 24-track, an M56 16-track, an M64 2-track, an M23 4-track, an MCI JH 110 2-track and a TEAC 2340 4-track job. Cassette machines are NADs. Mitch's compressors are a Drawmer 1960 B, a Urei 1178, Allison Gain Brains, a Symetrix 501 and a Universal Audio 175 B. His noise gates are a Roger Mayer RM 68 and a Drawmer dual gate.

The Drive-In digital delay section includes a DeltaLab Effectron 1024, a Lexicon Prime Time, a Maxim and an Audio Instrument Co. tape delays. For better road handling there are Pultec EQP-1 and Biamp 210 graphic equalizers. Reverb is handled by the Eco-plate II plate and Lexicon 200 digital jobs. There's also an Orban/Parasound 3-channel de-esser and a DeltaLab Harmonicomputer around to foil radar.

House monitors are ADS 8 10 IIs, Yamaha NS10s, JBL 4401s and Auratone 5Cs. These are powered by Dynaco, Adcom GFA-1 and Hafler DH 220 amps. Drive-In's trunkful of mikes has an AKG 414 EB, Neumann KM 84, EV CS-15P, EV RE-20, Shure SM-7 and SM57, AKG D-1000 and D-190, Sennheiser 421, and Beyer M201. Somewhere around there's also a lava lite, a Leslie speaker, some odd instruments and an inflatable dinosaur.

STANDING NEXT TO A MOUNTAIN

INSIDE THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

BY NOEL REDDING & CAROL APPLEBY

Twenty years ago this September a scuffling British guitarist strapped on a bass to audition with a scuffling American guitarist. They hit it off. A week later they added a drummer. (A week after *that* they played their first gig.) The birth of the Jimi Hendrix Experience took about as long as the Biblical creation of the world—and has had almost as far-reaching consequences.

Certainly the world of pop music was never the same. The Experience was bound to attract attention: a biracial, binational trio—with a left-handed guitarist, yet—that dressed outrageously and sported electric-frizz hairdos. But the band's appearance was only a come-on. Hendrix, of course, was a musical genius, taking the electric guitar where it had never been before. John "Mitch" Mitchell's furious drums competed with Hendrix as virtually a lead instrument. The daunting task of anchoring this sonic whirlwind fell to bassist Noel Redding.

It was an odd route to stardom for Redding, who'd virtually never played bass before. As a guitarist, though, he was a seasoned pro. Since leaving school at age sixteen he'd developed a hefty rep in his native Kent county. Then he paid his dues touring Britain and Germany the hard way behind singer Neil Landon, and with his own bands, the Lonely Ones and the Loving Kind. By the time he was twenty, Redding had enough experience (and booze and pills) under his belt to be in need of a serious rest. He returned to Kent, recuperated, and auditioned in London for Eric Burdon's new batch of Animals.

Burdon didn't give Redding the nod. But Animals bassist-turned-entrepreneur Chas Chandler approached him about playing bass with a then-unknown guitarist Chandler had brought back from the States. Chandler and his business partner, Animals manager Mike Jeffery, were determined to make Jimi Hendrix a star. Before it was three months old, the Jimi Hendrix Experience had generated interest from the Beatles on down, and released a debut British single which went top ten.

Redding was on his way to fulfilling his dream. But the dream rapidly turned into a nightmare. While the Jimi Hendrix Experience became a recording and concert sensation—first in Britain, then in the U.S.—the band members were on a hellish schedule of nearly non-stop touring interspersed with studio sessions. When they had time to think, they wondered who was getting the money. Redding says he has yet to receive any artist royalties from his Hendrix recordings.

After an increasingly manic three years together, the Jimi Hendrix Experience played its last show. A year later, Hendrix was dead at age twenty-seven. His legacy will remain as long as anyone uses an electric guitar—or, to put it another way, as long as lawsuits are fought over pieces of his financial pie. It's your guess which will last longer.

Nine years ago Redding started organizing his thoughts about Hendrix and the Experience with feelings of revenge for what he considered a thorough rip-off. Fortunately, he had kept a diary throughout the period. Redding and Carol Appleby undertook research and wrote hundreds of letters asking thousands of questions. Redding's advice to aspiring popstars is, "Study hard, get into mathematics and any business course you can, and play as much as you can. If I had to do it over, I'd go to law school and carry a machine gun."

Redding found Hendrix personally to be "a very quiet guy"—at least for the Experience's first three months together. "As the band escalated, it changed a bit," he laughs. "Towards the end of the band we were like strangers, really." Hendrix never communicated very much to his musical partners. Redding says no one knew what the guitarist was thinking about: "If he was on his own, just with us in a room, he was a nice guy and very polite. But when he was in the public eye later on, he became a different person."

JIM MARSHALL

"A black Englishman who played with his teeth."

And Redding continues to be "highly proud" of his recordings with Hendrix, especially *Axis: Bold As Love*. "I didn't play the albums for a while," he admits, "but now I can. They still sound very good to me." Any disagreement?

At the turn of 1967 things were changing so fast that our only constant was lack of money. We were virtually broke; even Jimi borrowed a few shillings from me here and there. There were so many more expenses now: fancy stage clothes and cleaning bills. The accelerating pressure was also accelerating our drinking. After a British radio appearance on January 17, we ran up a bar bill of £2.25; even pooling our money, we couldn't pay it.

On January 11, 1967, Michael Jeffery and Chas Chandler signed a contract with Track Records two months before Track was fully set up. Only Jimi was mentioned in the contract, which was for three years and called for four singles and two LPs each year. There was a £1000 advance and recording costs to a point. Had Mitch Mitchell and I known that Jimi was the only one being signed to contracts (and we didn't even know there were contracts) the Experience would have ended. We always worked on the basis that we were a group and that the business was being done as such.

Costs were forever catching up, so it was no big deal when we got a £20 bonus and a raise to £25 weekly in mid-January. Then up to £30 in mid-February. We hated to complain, but it became obvious that unless we did nothing happened. Like most musicians, we hated to speak up, preferring to avoid any form of upset. It's nearly impossible to play music when you're upset. We'd mumble and complain until we were desperate and forced into confrontation.

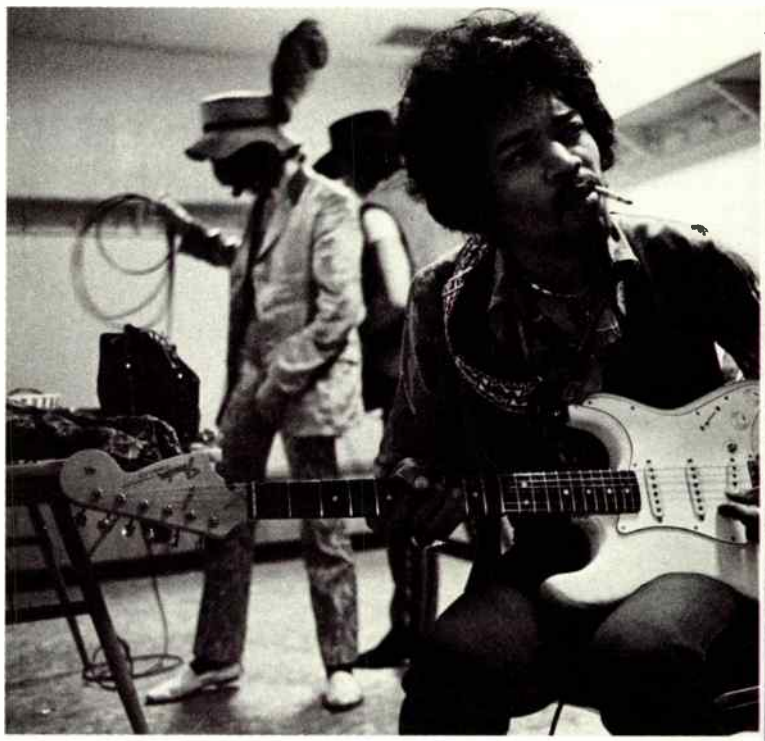
Musically, the group was working away and picking up steam daily. By the end of January, thousands were showing up at gigs. The demands on the gear were incredible. In our efforts to get the proper volume to deliver the music of a three-piece to the crowds, we blew amps left, right and center. Jimi and I would have one of each other's speakers on our side in order to hear each other, and poor Mitch would have to beat his brains out in the middle to keep up with us. The miking of drumkits was unheard of at that time. Our electrical demands were even pressurizing clubs as we fused their mains. Jimi broke his guitar with his strenuous playing, and I had to run around and borrow an old guitar of mine that another group was using so we could play and play and play.

February 1 was a bad gig. We were late. The revolving stage was just set to swing round when Jimi's amp blew up. He plugged into mine and I managed to grab a tiny amp the other group had been using—about a five-watter. The bass buzzed like mad as we swung around. I plugged into the P.A. amp, but then there was no vocal except in the breaks and it sounded like a whisper. At the end as we started to be revolved again the audience grabbed us. I hung on to Jimi, he hung on to Mitch, and we nearly got crushed against the wall as we spun.

The star treatment was overwhelming. Gone were the days of a quiet pint. I'd go to a club and they'd announce my presence—to applause! People rushed up for autographs. It was wonderful and horrifying at the same time. I felt like a split personality: the image, and the one who was surviving by living with two friends, who also fed me for £1 per week. I kept wondering why I had no cash, remembering my earlier bands that made less and took home more. It was costing more and more to hang out every night, but it was necessary in order to relax and unwind from shows. The unwinding soon became a wind-up, as more and more people started hanging around us and we were invited to parties every night. We continued drinking and smoking, and using pills for needed energy—sleep was reduced to two to six hours per night now. So who had time or the frame of mind to ask questions?

Planning the future, Jeffery signed with Warner Brothers Records in America on March 21, 1967: a five year, million-dollar contract. I couldn't get a copy, but I have heard that the advance was $150,000, with eight percent artist royalties and two percent to Jeffery as producer. The advance never showed up

JIM MARSHALL



in the accounts, but there was money around. Chas couldn't set up his new £330 stereo—so I did it for him.

Personally, publicly, it was getting crazy. I tried to go ice-skating and got pulled apart by schoolgirls. We got mauled going to gigs. Girls in the audience started screaming *all* our names, although management allowed the group to be billed as "Jimi Hendrix." That created more ego problems in the group than anything else. Mitch and I began to feel as if we were being put down, when we were playing well and going down just as well as Jimi. It was hard becoming stars and we only had each other to hassle with. To top it off, the exclusiveness back-

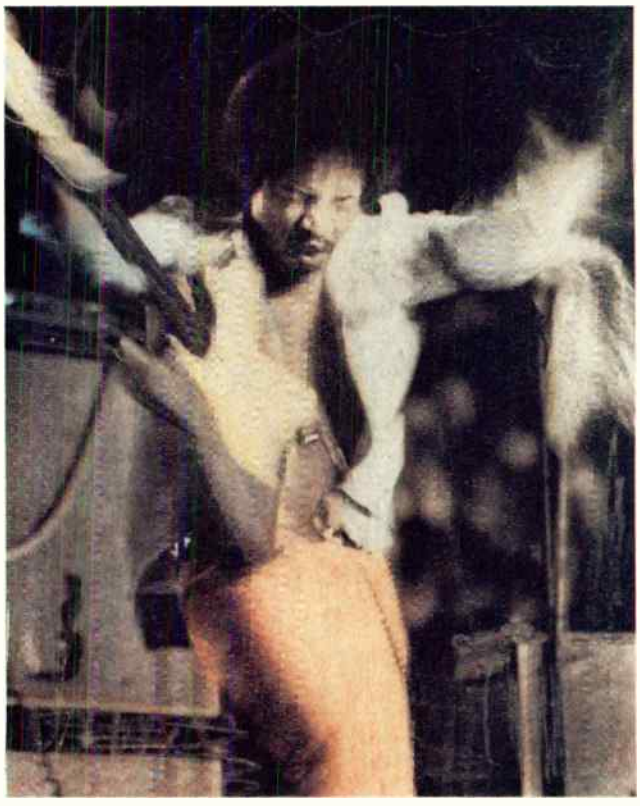
JIM MARSHALL

fired by being hard on Jimi also; he began to feel the pressure.

On March 31 we began a month-long British tour with the Walker Brothers, then the biggest sex symbols in England. Jimi and Chas now began to use the flash act they had been working on. The other groups on the show hated it as we knocked out audience after audience. But if Jimi did a sexy bit one night, the tour managers would be tackled by the theater managers and we would be told to clean up. The first night, *New Musical Express* writer Keith Altham had the idea to set fire to the guitar during "Fire." It was miles more dramatic than anything else on the tour, especially as we could see Jimi was having trouble getting the fluid lit. But it generated a lot of ill feeling and little things began to happen—like the house lights being turned up full in the middle of our set, or Jimi's guitar being found untuned just before we went on.

As the hysteria built up, the "wild man" image Jimi and Chas had been working on began to pay off. It gave the English press something to write about, because they didn't understand the music at all. And a black man in England could stand out and be different with no effort. Jimi's image made it possible for him to "get away with" his sexiness; blatant sex just wasn't "English."

Once the media picked up the image, Jimi and our look became fashionable. The tour sold out between our popularity and the Walkers'. And Jimi began to realize that personally he could be successful, which boosted his confidence. Our egos grew and sometimes clashed. After I went home with a girl he fancied, Jimi freaked out and hit her. But our fights, almost all



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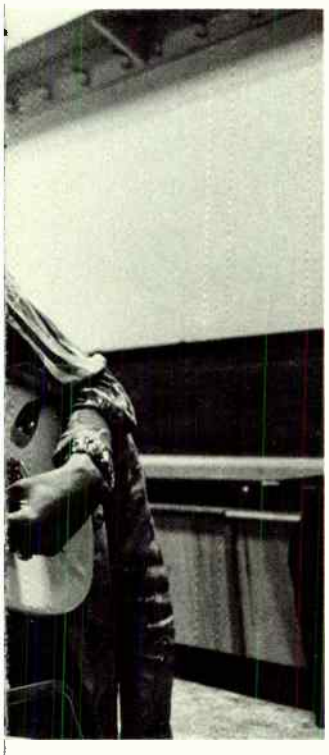


I WALKED OUT OF THE "ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER" SESSION. DAVE MASON PLAYED BASS, AND JIMI PROBABLY REPLAYED IT.

over women, were soon forgotten. A bigger problem was tour hysteria. People climbed onstage during our act. We could no longer go out and cool off between shows. We had no option but to sit around in "dressing rooms" with nothing to do but get smashed.

Our first LP, *Are You Experienced*, was released May 12. We managed to finish it on our "off" days. There was a furor in the press over the barrage of Experience recordings; we'd also released two singles in the previous two months. But Chris Stamp, speaking for Track Records (our British label) said, "We really couldn't wait as advance orders were already at 25,000." Besides, they wanted to be ready for the Experience's bill-topping appearance at the Saville Theatre in London on June 4. And it would be necessary to have an LP in the U.S. before the Monterey Pop Festival, June 18. Record reviewers were at a loss for words to describe our drug-crazed energy, though they tried: "musical nightmare," "raw nerves recorded," "electrical neurosis."

Immediately upon the album release we were off touring Europe for two weeks. Indeed, we worked nearly every day for five months. We were still borrowing spare change to survive. Hangers-on expected us to buy them rounds of drinks, and our own habits were getting expensive. Drink, smoke and pills got us in the right frame of mind for performing, or just to enable us to stay awake long enough to perform. Being the Experience was like making a pact to get at least *that* stoned every night. The music was built around a stoned frame of mind. And you'd have to stay awake long enough to relax with a jam at a club later.

Our changing status was changing us. We got a creeping suspicion that all was not right with our earnings. Mitch and I were cheesed off over the picture on the new single; it wasn't a group shot. We'd all get too stoned. Jimi was out of his head one night in Germany. I apologized, saying he was ill, and even had to tune his guitar. I discovered he'd taken acid just before the show. He couldn't do anything but sit there laughing. It made me angry that he didn't keep himself together for shows; I felt that that was the essence of being professional. We had a serious discussion about the group that night. I found out we were making over £300 per night—a fortune then. Flights were cheap. We'd use average hotels and share rooms.

Back in England, we geared up for the States. Jimi's British work permit was expiring. The "farewell" show at the Saville was bound to be a biggie. We even rehearsed for it and did a special photo session. The show, run by Beatles manager Brian Epstein, was huge: opening with the Stormsville Shakers, then Procol Harum, the Chiffons, Denny Laine and his Electric String Band, and we closed. In spite of amp trouble,

we did a really good show—real loose. Jimi got the idea to roll around onstage and shouted it to me. We wrestled together and fell rolling to the stage. Such freedom! Hundreds were turned away from the door and we were rebooked for whenever we returned. We were definitely out of the small-club circuit. Afterwards there was a party at Epstein's house. I freaked from the moment Paul McCartney opened the door. I felt out of my depth surrounded by "real stars."

People started to hassle me for money. I was asked to guarantee loans, and investments presented themselves regularly. I was glad to get away to the States; I felt I was escaping. On June 8 we did a special photo session at Kew Gardens for the cover of the American LP. Actually we weren't allowed into Kew, and had to stand outside. Photographer Karl Ferris used infrared film.

And someone *gave me* something: Rotosound started sending me strings!

smashing guitars, he'd use the same "breakaway" one each time.) It took ages to calm down the crowd. We'd gone down a bomb! Chas Chandler arrived just in time to rescue us from a terrible tongue-lashing from Mike Jeffery because Jimi had damaged a mike stand. But then Bill Graham offered us a Fillmore stint with the Jefferson Airplane, and we started into the tons of drink and smoke that appeared for the after-gig party.

Next day, it all started to catch up with us. We tried to rest in preparation for our Fillmore gigs—six nights with two shows each—but San Francisco was freaking us out. Mitch and I were seeing hippies for the first time. England was never like this! I wandered out unsuspecting to Haight-Ashbury, coming back smashed on wine and smoke and spiked with acid. It affected me this time.

Jeffery hadn't a clue where our destiny lay. After our run-in with him he flew off to New York, getting in touch only to bring

WE MADE UP A STORY ABOUT THE D.A.R. DEMANDING WE BE PULLED FROM THE MONKEES TOUR.

DAVID SYGALL

First class to New York! I flew next to Brian Jones, who had shown me a taste of the other side of life by taking me around with him in his Rolls. And I do mean flying: Brian had just given me my first two tabs of acid—which I swore didn't affect me. What could be trippier than my real life?

Arriving in San Francisco, we all attended the first two nights of the three-day Monterey Pop Festival as spectators and fans. Paul McCartney and Rolling Stones manager Andrew Oldham had suggested us to the festival committee. Our debut was scheduled for the third day. The excitement was almost unbearable. Everyone knew something big was happening; the whole concept of the concert was such a stupendous idea.

On our day we went over early for a run-through with the Who, the group we were scheduled to follow. That simple fact filled us with more apprehension than anything else. Nobody knew how it would come off. The Who had just taken America by storm with their "smashing act." The only thing we had going was that we were new, Jimi being hyped as "a black 'English' guy who plays with his teeth."

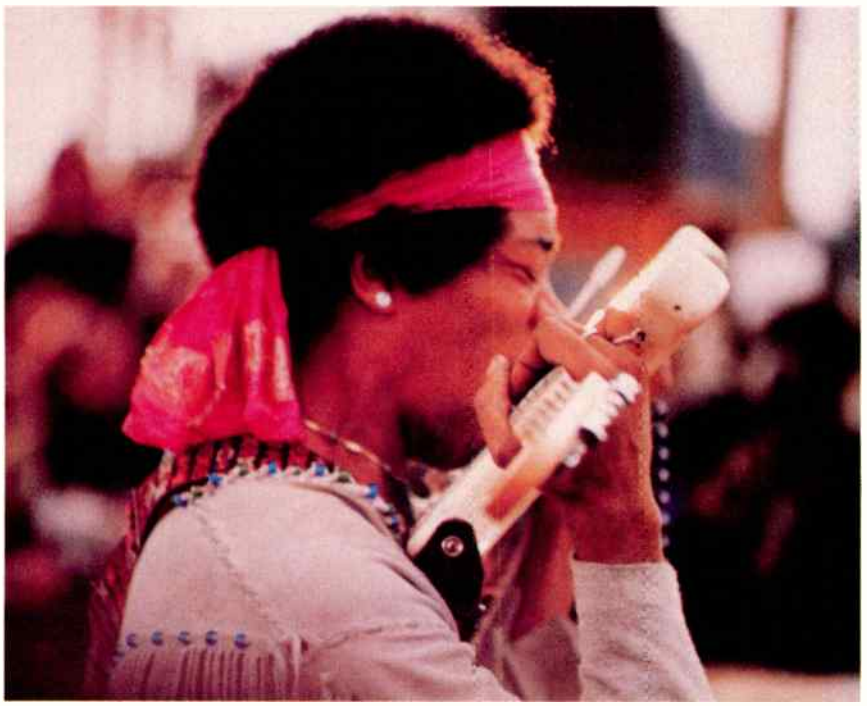
That night Brian introduced us and we took off for our forty-minute set. We were in great form, as was the audience. We always fed on the crowd's enthusiasm and it affected our playing. That night the rapport was great, and we flew through the set. Jimi finished by burning his guitar—for the last time. He had a terrible time getting the lighter fluid ignited. But it finally went and the audience took off. (Later, when he got into

us down again. "I've got a great deal for an American tour. You'll be with the Monkees. They're where it's at." And we were scheduled to tour with them until August 24. When Chas dropped this bomb it was obvious that there was a bit of tension between him and Jeffery, who'd made all the arrangements without consulting anyone else. Chas knew it would never be right. If ever two people saw the same group differently, Chas and Jeffery did!

Our last day in San Francisco, June 25, was a memorable one. In the afternoon we played a free show in Golden Gate Park from the back of a lorry. Thousands of people were freaking in the open air, and we did a strenuous set. As a result we played a weak first set that night at the Fillmore, but we wound up with a good one—all of us being out of our brains. But we were having fun together. Hendrix grabbed me and promised me good food: a small place and great barbequed spareribs—a first for me.

Our gigs were a huge success; Bill Graham gave Chas a $2,000 bonus. During this tour we were on wages of $200 per week, and living close to the line financially. I could never understand how other bands would have thousands in spending money. Jimmy Page would buy antiques to ship back. If I had to spend $100 on stage clothes it was a serious investment. I could never afford new guitars, but found out about pawn shops.

On the 26th we were off to tackle Los Angeles and start



I FULLY ADMIT THAT DRUGS CONTROLLED OUR MUSIC. WE FELT WE HAD TO BE STONED TO PLAY PROPERLY.

work on our second LP. I became terribly intrigued with playing a twelve-string with a wah-wah pedal on a new number, probably the beginnings of "Burning Of The Midnight Lamp." Jimi first used the wah-wah on "I Don't Live Today." Jimi was starting to get into production, but the technical end of recording never did appeal to me. I would get bored with the repetition and waiting. My solution was to buy an acoustic guitar so I could mess around while Jimi and Chas mixed. This messing around was the start of my songwriting career. Chas and Jeffery were very surprised when I started coming up with songs. And of course, I was spending time working on bass technique and style. I ended up chording on my Fender, developing a melodic bass and working out simple or complex riffs according to what Jimi and Mitch were doing.

I really enjoyed creating *Axis: Bold As Love*. We all felt good and positive. It's still my favorite LP though I was concerned that the lyrics weren't as together as the first songs—good ideas but awkward verse. Many lyrics were just word substitutes for the verbal noises with which Jimi would accompany his guitar playing. Our whole outlook on life was highly experimental at that point. That included music, drugs, women...we thrived on experience.

We made our Los Angeles debut at the notorious Whiskey a Go Go on July 2. But this was a flop. We were tired and too stoned to care. We could hardly stand up and it didn't help to know we had a ten a.m. flight to New York the next day. We arrived dog-tired only to be refused admission to the hotel. Sometimes the attitude in America took me by surprise. I had always expected the States to be infinitely hip and groovy. You can imagine my shock at seeing a very fat man, balding, dressed in a gaping patterned shirt and plaid bermuda shorts and sandals standing in an airport pointing and laughing at *me*.

In New York Mike Jeffery was making a lot of heavy connections. The Monkees were "put together" as the American Beatles by a group of businessmen and lawyers to cash in on the scene. Jeffery was into this kind of thinking. We were more than a bit uneasy about it. Chas felt the tour would be a disaster and refused to go with us. But everything was long signed, and on July 8 we picked up Mike and joined the Monkees in Florida.

Our first show was twenty-five minutes. It was a funny audience for us—very young, about seven to twelve years old—but we went down surprisingly well. Then we went out to watch the Monkees. They were awful—not individually, but I couldn't believe they couldn't play without having a "spare" group behind the stage curtain. Definitely the first time we had seen anything like that.

In Charlotte, North Carolina we really died the death. Jimi pulled a moody. (Translation: turned his back on the audience and got unreasonably pissed off when out of tune, or his amp would hum. He'd say, "I can't play with this," and then perform sloppy.) Mitch and I carried on and pulled it through. The next night I was very surprised when we went down well in Greensboro.

The Monkees' tour manager was on Jimi's back to tone down the act. Jimi rebelled by turning the act off completely at Forest Hills in New York. We were told to get off the tour or else. I hated scenes and had to take two sleepers to get to sleep, but at least we were off. Our publicists made up a good press story about the Daughters of the American Revolution demanding we be pulled from the show.

The moment we left the Monkees tour we moved from the Waldorf-Astoria to the Hotel Gorham, a wonderful place with no air conditioning (and little else). We had ten days with no gigs, just a lot of time to kill. We did finish "The Burning Of The Midnight Lamp" and "The Stars That Play With Laughing Sam's Dice." Working with Gary Kellgren as engineer, it took us forty-two hours to complete. Quite a difference from "The Wind Cries Mary" which took six minutes. None of us had any say about what single was put out. Sometimes we approved and sometimes we just grumbled among ourselves.

Money worries—like the nagging suspicion that something was going wrong—started to bother us. The fatigue, the drugs, the plebs following us everywhere, the people who steal our clothing from our hotel rooms made us feel on the edge of screaming. We were getting on each other's nerves. A good distraction was my desire to write songs. On July 29 I tried recording the roots of "Little Miss Strange." I had a cash shortage and began to see that writing was a definite help.

Scheduled to film a promo clip in Los Angeles, we started by my passing out beyond recall. We were tripping, of course. It was acid, acid, acid. We were spaced constantly. Chas stayed

ALLAN KOSS

SOMETHING WENT WRONG IN JIMI'S HEAD AND HE STARTED FREAKING OUT AT SOME QUEER HANGER-ON. IT BUILT UP UNTIL HE STARTED SMASHING EVERY-THING IN HIS ROOM....THEY ARRESTED JIMI AND TOOK HIM AWAY.

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straight. He leaned toward whiskey, his cure for anything, including stage nerves. Jimi would talk to Chas like he disapproved of the whole scene while he was completely out of it. We felt that acid was the great cure, a way to find everything, past and future. Chas at least hoped it might help Jimi's lyrics, which tended to be spaced-out and hard to identify with.

But if acid wrote the lyrics, speed played our music. The combination of everything was making us more tense every day with the scene and the hangers-on. We would take turns losing our tempers in sheer frustration at being stuck where we were in life. A year ago we would have been ecstatic. Eleven months ago the band didn't even exist. As people, we were coming apart. The acid certainly helped. Others were reassembling us as they wanted us to be. We didn't have the time or perspective to analyze the situation. We just kept going.

In October we finished *Axis: Bold As Love*. We loved experimenting with things like "EXP," having fun with noises. Jimi did the speaking bit. Mitch, with his voice speeded up, was the announcer. Then we set up a couple of guitars, turned the volume up full and smashed them against the amps for the background. Other groups relied on using a variety of instruments to keep new, but we relied on Jimi who loved to create new sounds with just his guitar. He liked experimenting so much we doubted he would ever run out of ideas. With my bass turned up on full treble we got a tremendous variety of effects both onstage and recording.

Slowly studios got more advanced and with eight-track it was possible to experiment more. At first we would wait until we had some ideas stored up and semi-worked out, and then book a studio. Then Hendrix got into the habit of just hanging out in the studio and hoping something would come of it. He also got in the habit of recording all jams. Then he could listen back for possible usable bits or ideas. Many people write this way. You never know what's going to come out of a jam that's flowing well.

I felt a bit pushed physically. Maybe it was just depression, but I gave in to the constant supply of insurance brokers that were always trying to sell us something. I took out a life policy. I could never relax anymore. I started passing out in trains, in cars (with others driving), in friends' flats—taking my sleep when I could get it, or maybe when I couldn't put it off any longer. We slipped into a routine of doing a gig and then heading to the studio for a night session. By this time, unless we were

Jimi with electric landladies

JIM MARSHALL

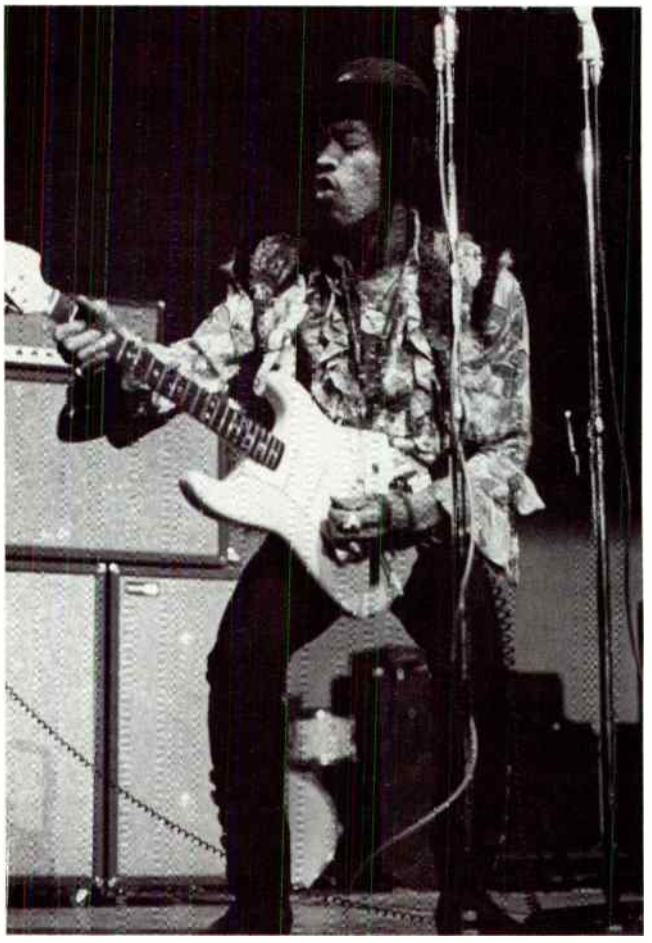
traveling, I rarely got up before two p.m. If I felt *really* bad I'd head for the doctor and a jab of B vitamins. We weren't into eating much; I usually only grabbed a burger or an occasional Chinese meal and a leaper.

Axis had taken so long to record. Jimi knew he needed a break and wanted to take six months off just to write. But besides the material being slow in coming, much of the delay was due to hangers-on. They would infest the studio and make it hard to get anything done. I fully admit that drugs controlled our music. Whether it was true or not, we felt we had to be stoned to play properly. Good dope equalled good music. It was lovely music to get spaced to. A good high allowed you to fuse better and generate a feeling that lived outside the players. This is what the audiences wanted—every night. Not just good music but a good buzz, too.

In lucid moments I was still writing songs. When I felt I had one together, I'd get in a studio and put down a demo. I'd play guitar and bass, or Jimi would play bass, Mitch drums. Guitar was my first love, and I always felt I was playing bass as an interim thing. But it was getting harder to be thought of as a guitarist as my reputation spread as a bassist. I only played guitar once onstage with the Experience, on "Red House" at the Olympia. The era demanded flamboyant guitar lines which isn't my style at all. I like rhythm—without it, what have you got? I feel drummers are the real heart of the group. A good drummer is worth his weight in gold, and should be pampered and looked after. No amount of guitar playing can overcome an unfeeling, repetitious, boring drummer. I can't understand how people can use drum machines so much. In the Experience, Mitch was free like Jimi to do whatever he wanted. He'd have a steady timekeeper in me. We could switch musical roles at will.

A lull in December 1967 was only the eye of the cyclone. The storm started with the new year as we polished off a few European gigs in preparation for a second round in America. On January 4, after performing in Gothenburg, Sweden, we headed for the clubs. Jimi didn't usually come with us when we went drinking. He couldn't handle drinking very well and that night we all got really pissed. Somehow we got back to the hotel and went to Jimi's room. But something went wrong in Jimi's head and he started freaking out at some queer hanger-on. It all got stranger and stranger, with Jimi even making an advance to me (which I passed on). It built up until he started smashing everything in his room. It was terrifying and we didn't know what to do. Jimi outweighed me, but I managed to get him down and sit on him until he began to quiet down. I tried this three times before I gave up and went to my room. The noise finally caused someone to call the police. I wasn't there when they arrived, but you should have heard the noise. They arrested Jimi and took him away about six a.m., charging him with disturbing the peace. No one woke Chas, but they released Jimi because we had to play. They also made us agree to come back to Gothenburg for a hearing after the tour.

The gig went very well in spite of it all; perhaps the scene had cleared whatever had been building up. We did two one-hour sets to a very appreciative audience. But I felt the band was drifting apart and discussed it with Mitch before the next show. As if to accentuate my premonition, Jimi had a sore throat and did only thirty-five minutes when he could easily have jammed instrumentally for much longer. I suppose he was depressed and upset, but his moodiness stretched on and it began to piss me off. We just worked our frustrations out on each other. None of us had anyone close that we could talk to and expect to understand—no one to ask help of, no one we could yell at. The only relief from loneliness were the girls. Every day became depressingly alike: get up, go to the bar and get pissed, feel rough, bathe and get stoned, get drunk, get smashed, collapse shattered.



DAVID SYGALL

"Tire tracks all across your back."

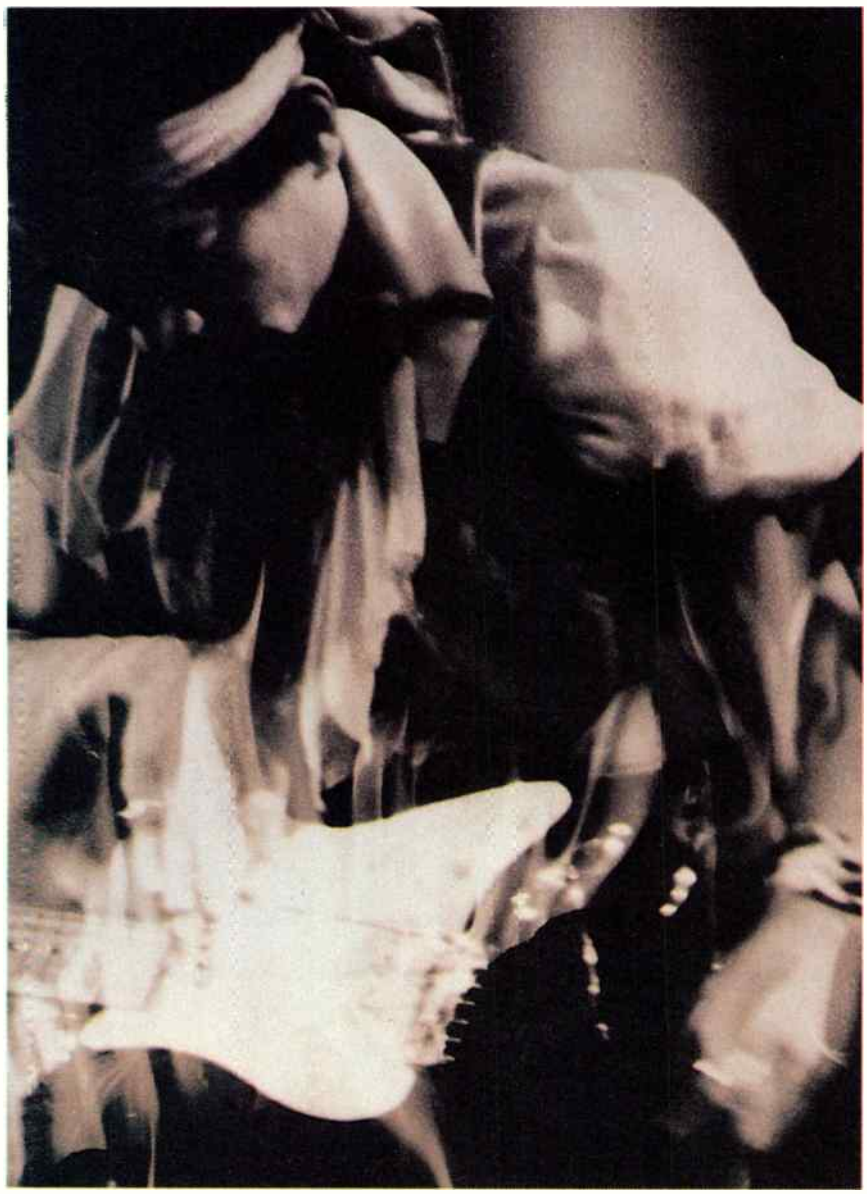
When we returned to Gothenburg, we couldn't find a hotel that would take us. Then we discovered we needn't even have returned; they just wanted someone to pay damages. Jimi was fined £475. We were all furious on hearing this. What we really didn't need was a few extra flights. We caught the first boat back to England.

Interviews were becoming incredibly difficult. We'd done so many that there wasn't much left to say. Most of my free time was spent seeing others play, like Jimmy McGriff. Mitch and I were hanging out together more. Jimi was still living with Chas. The distance was growing at recording sessions. None of us were good at verbalizing our problems. When I got fed up with long, fruitless sessions with too many people, I'd protest by not turning up.

In February we kicked off a three-month U.S. tour with the Alan Price Set, Soft Machine and Eire Apparent—all of us under the same management. As our concerts got bigger and bigger, they became fewer in number as we reached thousands of people at every show. For the management it was less trouble, less expenses and more income.

Things were getting weirder. We were snorting DMT. I started to be horrified by the girls who were constantly forcing themselves on me. But the shows were going well and were packed. Bill Graham gave us each a gift watch. Was he trying to tell us to be on time? Should I retire? Should I take some acid to cheer me up? Of course.

This tour really took it out of us. Jimi and I were a bit at odds.



JIMI FREAKED, SMASHED HIS EQUIPMENT AND SAID TO ME, "I DON'T NEED *ANYONE* TO TALK TO!" JIMI WAS NEVER HEAVY ABOUT BEING *BLACK*. HE WAS INTO BEING JIMI.

I felt he was being temperamental when he fucked up an Anaheim, California show by only half-heartedly singing the occasional word. Even the reviewers noticed that one. I refused to be sympathetic to his star attitude. And I resented him flatly refusing to play "She's So Fine," my song on *Axis*, when people requested it. It made me feel detached and withdrawn. Girls were becoming "groupies" in my mind. People seemed less like people. I began to catch the moodies.

For the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles we had new amps: Sunn. I loved them, and the company was good to me. If an amp blew, with one phone call I'd have one the next day. The stage was beginning to look like a wall of speakers with three midgets playing in front of them. Quite often we'd get police calls and radio stations coming through our amps. Mickey Dolenz and David Crosby were head amp-sitters that night and it was a great show. We celebrated by taking acid. Then I couldn't sleep as even acid was changing: it was cut more and more with methedrine. So besides the ego question-and-answer time, there were hours and hours of bone-tired teeth-grinding in every trip—and paranoia.

In Seattle we met Jimi's family for the first time. They seemed like nice, relaxed people and I got stoned with Jimi's brother Leon. Jimi was awarded the key to the city of Seattle.

In Denver, another moody. If something was bothering Jimi we never did find it out. He wasn't a talker, but his uncaring attitude towards the audience would make me very angry. By San Antonio more than Jimi's moodies were bringing us down. We had management troubles; we *never* saw them. I wanted us all to sit down together and have a good long talk. By this time there was getting to be so much to talk about that you wouldn't know where to start the conversation. Fort Worth, Texas was the beginning of the end of the band. For the first time we had separate dressing rooms. It was like guaranteeing that you went onstage cold.

Still, the shows were going well. We changed the act slightly according to where we played. At a straight middle-American gig we played hits and a couple of new things. But in San Francisco we just jammed all night because the audience was stoned enough to feel what you were trying to do. One night Mitch tried to do a Keith Moon trick: jump up and stand on his tom-tom. Only by this time Mitch was getting rather thin, and when he jumped up he bounced right off the drum.

I had been keeping up the pressure about having a talk. It really rubbed Jimi the wrong way. At one show he freaked, smashing his equipment and saying to me, "I don't need *anyone* to talk to." Chas was at this show, so I talked to him. He agreed

NONA HATAY

that Jimi was getting very irrational. Hendrix's attitude made it harder to work towards that spontaneity we strove for in each set. It was the core of our music; our method depended on feeling and then trying to "play the feeling," how we felt towards the notes the others were playing. Sometimes you wouldn't even play, just leap about. Once the crowd expected us to be spontaneous every time it became impossible. It became a gimmick and died.

In an effort to keep in touch with the outside world, I spent hours writing postcards and letters to everyone I could think of. I wanted to be tied down to something as our group ties weakened. We all felt stifled. We played mind games with each other. Jimi tried to give me bad trips and succeeded. But whenever Jeffery was around, Jimi himself would freak out, becoming tense and nervy.

As we hit the Newark, New Jersey city limits on April 5 we noticed a different kind of tenseness in the air. We couldn't figure out what was going on. There was nothing in the streets except a *tank*. At Symphony Hall we were met by the police! That's when we heard that Martin Luther King had been murdered the day before. Newark was on the edge of a riot. There were only about two hundred people in this huge hall, and everyone was very nervous. So we did one show for the people who had been brave enough to come out. They certainly deserved it. We were sure that King would have preferred the music and good vibes to anything else. By the time we headed back to New York, Newark looked like Berlin.

I suppose the whole black situation hit Jimi in the face at moments like this. Jimi was never heavy about being black. He was into being Jimi. Political-activist types would seek him out for support, but Jimi always distrusted people who attacked him from this angle. He became disillusioned, too, and would wonder about their real angle. People would tell him that he was allowing the Negro culture to be exploited by white people. It didn't have anything to do with culture. Jimi was being personally exploited. And most of the black people hassling him would have been glad to exploit him just the same. Jimi did send $5,000 to the Martin Luther King Memorial Fund; but I think he felt it was a different situation to most of the causes being pushed on him.

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NONA HATAY

WHEN JIMI OFFERED HIS HAND, JERRY LEE DECLINED TO NOTICE IT.

Back in New York we started recording at the Record Plant, then famous for having twelve tracks. At least we could still play music, even though it was getting harder to get beyond that tension level to the enjoyment level. For new songs I liked to have just the tempo and breaks—the basic form. I didn't like having Jimi try to tell me what to play; it would make me terribly uptight. I wanted to work around a framework, but Jimi started getting so hung up with electronics and overdubbing that I got pissed off.

We lost the lovely simplicity of the first songs. There were no rehearsals to get the feel of the song. Jimi would try to explain what he was thinking. We'd do about four bass tracks, then drums and vocals and rhythm guitar. When it got to the thirty-sixth guitar overdub, I'd just lay down and go to sleep—or nip out to a club to pull a chick and come back to find he hadn't even finished tuning his guitar. I told Jimi he was stupid for depending so much on himself to do everything—writer, producer and musician—and always *his* way.

If possible, the hangers-on were getting worse. Chas was getting fed up. Jimi was too easily distracted. And the pressure to complete was on. It was already five months since our last LP. In England Track released *Smash Hits*, a compilation, to fill the gap. We all knew the ship was starting to sink. Chas began arguing with Jimi about drugs and people; Jimi would promise to change until the next person showed up with a smoke/snort/pill. He was incredibly self-centered. Jimi wasn't interested in using my songs, and he wouldn't let anyone make suggestions about his own.

It's a wonder he could create at all as the studio atmosphere got thicker and thicker. Chas, Mike and Jimi were really at odds. It came to a head when Mike tried to criticize the planned

"Will the wind ever remember..."

"nude" cover of the upcoming *Electric Ladyland* album. As gigs got fewer and fewer, my contacts with life in general got less frequent. What to do when not gigging?

Argue. On May 1 I finally said what I thought of the whole scene, of the tons of people getting in the way. It was a party, not a session. Jimi just went, "Relax, man...." "We've been relaxing for months and we've nothing done." I left the studio not caring if I ever saw him again. Luckily our blow-ups never lasted long. But our next studio day was totally shot because it was being filmed, I don't even know by whom. We played only one number all day. I kept trying to talk to everyone about the crowds; the next day I showed up and no one else did.

I talked with Chas about my argument with Jimi. If I had been more drug-free I might have had better insight into the situation, but I was much too involved. Chas was able to look at it with more perspective. It was a matter of seeing how long they could keep us running as a product. I think they knew they were treading a chalk line. They filmed our May 10 Fillmore East shows—more "product." It seemed to me that more and more live gigs were being recorded. Was this for lack of new stuff or just catalog padding? Later several LPs were augmented by judicious use of these live recordings.

Sometimes I think Jimi might have known more about what was going on than he let on. He must have wondered why we were broke. He was the last person anyone wanted to worry; like me, he avoided the business world. But he did sign contracts on his own, unless he thought that on group contracts we all had individual copies. One night at a back room at the Scene club in New York, we were all offered a million dollars to sign with a prominent mob-oriented organization. Did anyone give in?

At the end of May we took off on a European tour. Our equipment was in bits from our U.S. tour which had just ended. Jimi screamed at our roadie constantly. The amp tubes were shot, and the power went up and down like a yoyo. Since we played everything at a volume of ten with bass and treble full up, the amps would last about one show. I found Sunn ever-reliable; Jimi ended up with cranked-up Marshalls. He started out with seventy-five watts and ended up with six 4x12" speaker cabinets and four 100-watt amps. And lots of gadgets like the fuzz, wah-wah and Univibe.

I was now serious about getting a sideline together to supplement my Experience income. I felt highly insecure about my financial position. Michael and Chas were very blasé. I began a long relationship with Mandrax (a sleeping pill).

Chas thought he could help me get something together. That's all I wanted to hear. At times, none of us could imagine the group going on any longer. We were confused about how much we'd worked, how big we were, and how broke we were. And we were getting bored with our shows. Audiences still wanted the same old tunes and same old act we'd been doing for two years. Jimi wanted to change his style of writing and be accepted on a more serious level. Neither of us had that driving energy anymore. And we were losing our sense of humor.

In a funny way, both Jimi and I were heading in basically the same direction: softer, more melodic songs with more instrumentation. But we could see only our individual need for change, and a break seemed the most efficient way to achieve it. If we tried to change the Experience we would get static from the management. They felt our growing (younger) audience wanted to hear hits, not the serious stuff.

The novelty wore off. Screaming girls and persistent

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groupies—who cares? When not playing, I was in a void, but it was safer away from the cons and conmen. Jimi, Mitch and I were rarely hanging out together. Jimi had his own flat now and was making a life of his own.

We went back to the States at the end of July. Waiting for the flight, we met Jerry Lee Lewis. I was thrilled to meet an original rock 'n' roller, and we could hardly wait to shake hands. Only when Jimi offered his hand, Jerry Lee declined to notice it. That moment horrified me. Wasn't life hard enough?

Our resumed American tour began with no messing about. We left New York for New Orleans, and then on by road to Baton Rouge. I made the mistake of expecting to be able to play my new six-string Epiphone without any practice. It was difficult because of the spacing between the strings. I never got a second try as it was stolen instantly. Great start.

The next morning we all missed the plane and had to drive to Shreveport. But this quiet traveling helped us get our old group feeling back. I even had the chance to get an insight into Jimi's black realities. Suffering badly from the stoned hungries, we decided to stop at a cafe near town. Only we were surprised and perplexed that Jimi was *very* hesitant about coming in. We really had to coax him, but once through the door it hit us: The entire cafe went quiet as everyone turned to look at us and at Jimi, who was very black in a very white situation. Mitch and I, in our best English accents, ordered politely. We ate quickly and as nearly invisibly as four people in full popstar attire can. The scene was scary and such a drag. Jimi and I had shared each other's lives so much. I took him to pubs; he took me to rib restaurants. I had never seen this heavy, evil Southern vibe before. But it helped open the doors of a common existence. The barriers that business had been building disappeared as we got to know each other again.

We settled down to the monotony of touring, but the thrill was gone. We were getting bored with the Experience material. Jimi wanted to change styles. I wanted to try my own material. We thought we'd each form our own groups. We'd reunite as the Experience twice a year for tours, with our "solo" bands as opening acts. Mitch's group was to be called the Mind Octopus, mine Fat Mattress and Jimi's the Band of Gypsies—the name was originally planned for an Experience jam-type LP. Everyone liked the idea and it gave us hope for the future.

Near Boston, we sampled our first "grass pills," THC. You can get terribly paranoid on THC, but fortunately we played a good show to a receptive crowd in a circus tent. Then we had to drive back to our New York base. We left at one a.m., with the driver—and myself—too stoned to drive. Only Jimi could keep it together at all—very loosely together. He drove, taking over five hours to do it and borrowing my glasses to see properly. I remembered other occasions when he borrowed them briefly to check on something. I realized he really needed them but wouldn't wear them. Then I remembered all the other times he had driven.

Whenever we had a day off, we still tried to get into the studio. We were taking forever to finish *Electric Ladyland*. On August 27, speeding and coking, we worked from early evening all through the night until ten the next morning. We had to cancel the next day's activities, waking up with a snort of coke in time to go out jamming with Larry Coryell until six a.m. Day has no meaning. We blew out the studio time again and then we were on our way to Salt Lake City. At least we were staying the night; we had a chance to go up into the mountains, look around town and see the Everly Brothers—great! Usually we never saw where we were. We would arrive after dark, go straight to a hotel near the gig (*if* we even stayed), to the gig in a car and right back afterwards.

We returned to the recording studio in Los Angeles in October. Eric Clapton and George Harrison were hanging out in Los Angeles, but we couldn't. We had to concentrate on getting the LP together. First session, we played one song all night. I would get crazy by the 2,000th take. I was always of the mind that if it couldn't be done in three takes it should be put aside for the time being. Perhaps we couldn't get anything done in the studio because Jimi was doing more than he could handle, producing other groups besides his own.

Hendrix before his world turned over

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It was nearly a year now since we'd released an LP of new material. Lee Michaels and Buddy Miles came down to the sessions, which were very casual; we managed only the slightest amount of work in several days. It was totally insane. I walked out of the "All Along The Watchtower" session. Dave Mason played bass, and Jimi most probably replayed it. Jimi wanted to be experimental, but most of the time he was so stoned and confused he didn't know what he wanted to do and changed everything a million times. Sometimes the frustration would get too much for him and he'd go off the deep end—like taking it out on two girls in Los Angeles. I wish he'd taken it out on the creep that showed up at our house and ripped off my six-string Fender and two leather jackets. Sometimes Jimi would just smash a car. When he got like this, you couldn't talk to him.

The chicks he jumped on complained to the police, who decided to raid us at the house. Luckily, I got a tip that the drug squad was planning a party. Jimi wasn't in, so Mitch and I cleaned up the house. The state of Jimi's room knocked us out. We found an amazing amount of everything, in every pocket, every drawer, on the floor, under the bed. Even I was speechless—and eternally thankful to the person who tipped us off. We buried everything in the garden. When the squad showed that night—phew! M

Next month: *The Black Panthers move in; the Experience bids farewell in a cloud of tear gas; the Band of Gypsies; Hendrix's death.*

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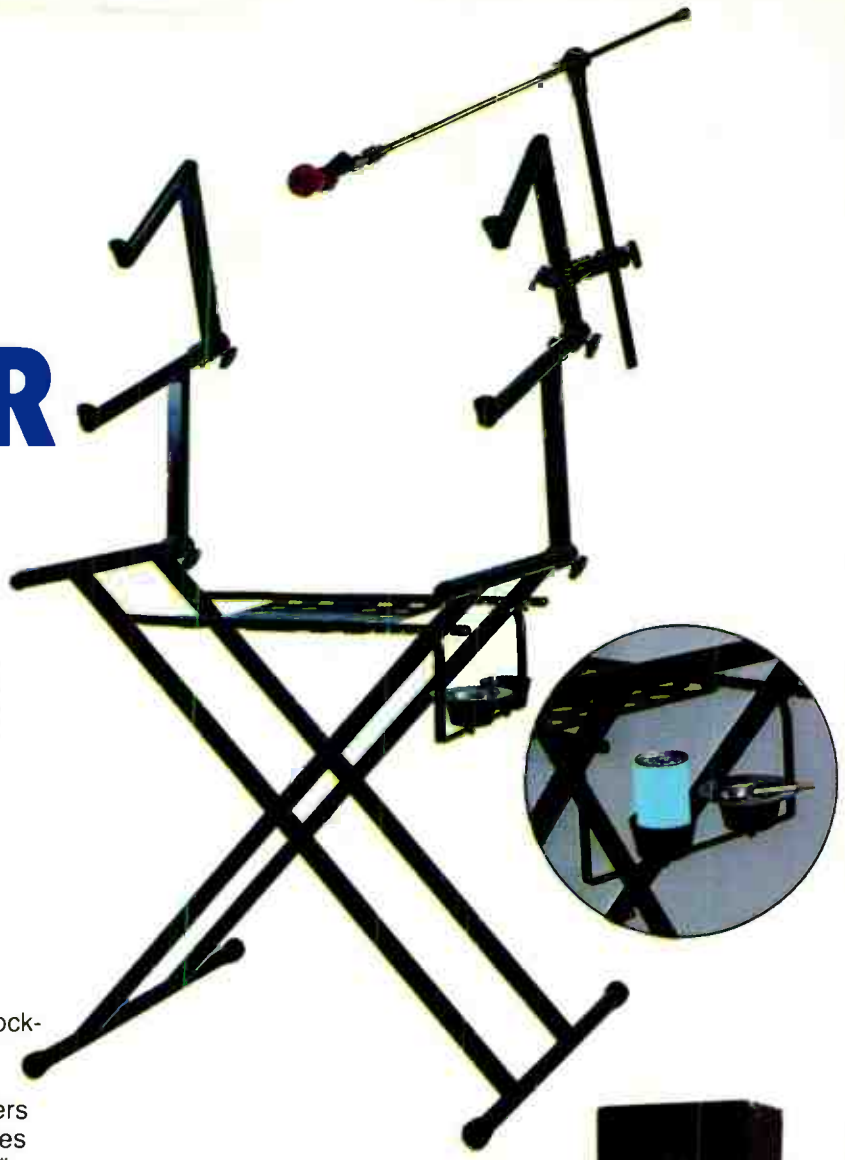

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JAN HAMMER

The Early Years
(Nemperor)

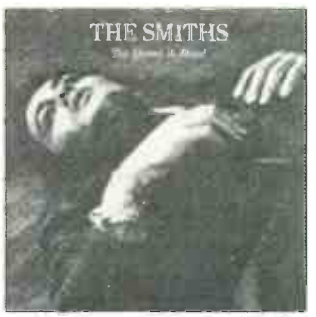
Many are called but few are chosen, and for Czech expatriate Jan Hammer the road to recognition has been a long and circuitous one. It's led from Eastern Europe to America, from acoustic piano to synthesizer (and drums); from classical music to jazz and rock ...and finally, something akin to the sum of those parts as the aural scenic designer for television's most trendsetting show, *Miami Vice*. In the wake of that enormous success, this CBS affiliate has seen fit to repackage a series of instrumental totems from Hammer's Nemperor period (*Like Children, The First Seven Days, Oh, Yeah?, Melodies*), and the result, *The Early Years*, certainly serves to cement Hammer's reputation as a soundcraftsman.

Movies might have been a more appropriate title for this retrospective, because these electro-acoustic tone poems are all vividly imagistic. Their titles suggest thematic moods which the music goes on to evoke ("The Seventh Day," "Plants And Trees," "Bambu Forest," "Oceans And Continents," "Your Love," "Night," "I Remember Me"), the listener filling in the visual blanks on the canvas of his or her mind. Hammer's background as an accompanist and musical director for so accomplished a vocal virtuoso as Miss Sarah Vaughan (or so taut a melodist as Mr. Jeff Beck) has given him a sense of cinematic dimension, and here he creates a shifting cycle of backgrounds, foregrounds and commongrounds with the dominant voice. On "The Seventh Day," for instance, the piano sets the scene while violin takes the main theme, which is then shifted to synth as an escalating number of counter-melodies echo its central idea.

Other miniatures like "Plants And Trees," "Oceans And Continents" and "Your Love" display a sense of structure that suggests a mini piano concerto or piano trios (as in Brahms). Hammer gracefully interpolates shifting harmonic moods in a manner that might evoke Bill Evans for the more traveled listener. It's worth noting that Hammer was, and probably still is, a first-rate jazz pianist. (His emotive work with Elvin Jones at Slugs and the Village Vanguard forms the bedrock of my own early listening experience, and his contributions to Elvin's *On The Mountain* made that one of the drummer's most satisfying albums.)

It's also probably been forgotten that Hammer was the first musician to really put the Mini-Moog on the map, and to find musical uses for synthesizers as improvising and arranging tools. In many ways he was a key architect of the original Mahavishnu Orchestra sound (and a fine drummer as well). So it's instructive that Hammer's programmatic strengths reach full fruition on his electric-rhythmic workouts "Bambu Forest" and "The Animals." On the former Hammer lays claim to Mahavishnu's "Dance Of Maya" odd time cycle, while the latter is a beautiful jungle book of percussion, stereo panning and musical colors, all very funky and subtle.

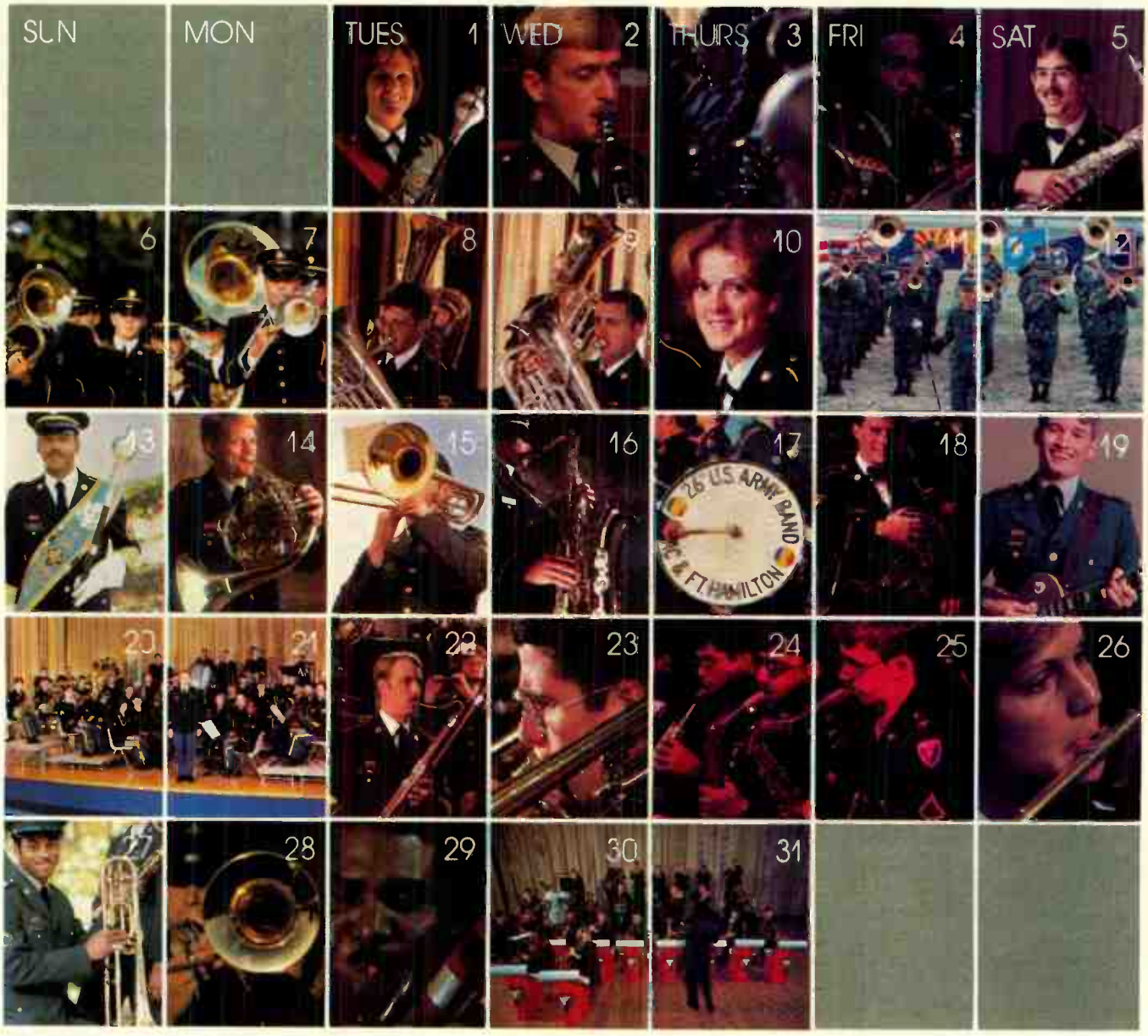
The key word I guess is subtle. *The Early Years* and *Miami Vice* represent a summation of musical learnings and yearnings, as good as his work as a sideman with Beck, Jagger, et al, and considerably better than his group recordings (notable for erratic results, questionable taste and one of the most sexist rock album covers in history). They indicate that somewhere down the line Jan Hammer is more than capable of putting his classical, jazz and rock scenarios together into a coherent vision. When he does, watch out. – **Chip Stern**



THE SMITHS

The Queen Is Dead
(Sire)

Ya gotta say this about the Smiths' hyper-romantic bard Morrissey—he's not afraid of criticism. On the title track of his band's third and most accomplished album, he breaks into the Royal Palace only to be told by her Majesty, "Eh, I know you, and you cannot sing." In the Kinks-like music hall refrain "Frankly, Mr. Shankly," Morrissey takes his own writing to task: "I didn't realize you wrote such *bloody awful* poetry." For



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cute. But pop *is* shiny and cute. If that's where Johnson wants to work, better he manipulates the real thing. That way his effects remain that much more intense. – **Peter Watrous**

EURYTHMICS

Revenge
(RCA)

Master pop craftsmen Dave Stewart and Annie Lennox definitely know how to make records sound good. He uses studio smarts to construct tracks that are models of streamlined efficiency, while she takes firm command of a melody from the very first line. Typically slick and self-assured, *Revenge* neatly sums up the Eurythmics' strengths and weaknesses. Although most of these sparkling cuts could become hits, few of 'em do more than scratch the surface.

Annie Lennox's singing *is* the Eurythmics' identity, of course. Where Stewart delights in defying expectations with ever-changing grooves, she maintains a familiar poise throughout. In fact, Lennox usually seems above it all, which means the affectionate "When Tomorrow Comes" has the same tone as a snarling put-down like "The Last Time." Less politely, she's a bit of a cold fish.

That's why Lennox's soul-mama affectations, however hammy, are so welcome. At least the joyous lust of "Let's Go" and "In This Town"'s desperate blues find her grunting and sweating like a mere mortal. Best of all, "I Remember You" uses storm-tossed strings and an ominous tempo as the backdrop for her unearthly wailing about the end of an affair. Not so coincidentally, perhaps, it's also the album's least commercial song.

Give the Eurythmics high marks for versatility: From the blithe folk-rock shadings of "Thorn In My Side" to the solemnly devotional "Miracle Of Love" to the elegant melodrama of "A Little Of You," Dave 'n' Annie can adapt to just about any style. Rock 'n' roll? Yes, they even do that on "Missionary Man," a crash-bang raveup highlighted by wailing harmonica, big-noise drums, and defiant vocals. (Hard to believe this is the twosome responsible for the turgid "Sweet Dreams.") And given the preponderance of truly witless music elsewhere, it's probably picky to penalize a smart effort like *Revenge* for sounding superficial. Dave 'n' Annie do convey a refreshing enthusiasm that other artists and jaded critics would do well to observe. But somehow, I don't think a hipper Abba is what this duo really had in mind.

– **Jon Young**

JOE HENDERSON

The State Of The Tenor
Live At The Village Vanguard, Volume 1
(Blue Note)

Good record here. To oversimplify for those who came in late (and with apologies to Henderson), in the 60s Joe Henderson was to Sonny Rollins what Wayne Shorter was to John Coltrane, viz an acolyte capable of independent thought and fresh invention. Not that Henderson has had anything like Shorter's impact as soloist or composer. He withdrew a bit early to northern California, which is to flirt with banishment, and sans big conceptual coups proceeded to evolve as an improviser, softening the brawling tone that had helped make his debut so exciting and vastly expanding his technical range and harmonic subtlety in compensation. What do you know, this brings us to the album in hand.

One of the surest indices of Henderson's current mastery of his materials is the enormous amount of *time* he has in which to do what he pleases within the chord changes and the bar lines, which wait for no man; time to play one idea, refinger it, set another beside it, revise both, play a third and fourth and fifth, streak away on a run and then pause on one foot as if to reconsider the beginning from the perspective of the end, all of this in one extended breath, in phrases that parade their exquisite length before you and then bat their eyelashes lengthily in farewell: a trilling experi-

ence. In this he is closer to the voluminous Rollins than ever, but in his softened tone there are more-than-hints of the warmer felicities that Hawkins and Webster and Young blew through the music before the panic of bebop squeezed them partway out. You can get to love this album. I went through three phases, with affection first, love third, and a middle stretch in which I thought it too low-keyed. But I learned.

Henderson's sometime recessiveness opens the way for Ron Carter to do a lot more than superlatively walk; it awakens the contrapuntalist in him, who nearly dominates the album. The brilliant Al Foster does not come off as festively as he can in person, though his fine collection of thumpanbangery here makes me wonder how he would have played behind Monk. The interplay is exemplary, but all the instruments sound muffled, incomprehensibly so since the nonpareil David Baker engineered the session. But anyway, Sonny Rollins' classic 1957 Blue Note, *A Night At The Village Vanguard*, with the same instrumentation, this album's papa, was no sonic marvel in its day. Special thanks to the artists on this date for restoring to common memory Sam Rivers' beautiful tune, "Beatrice." Long may it wave. – **Rafi Zabor**

PHIL ALVIN

Phil Alvin
(Slash)

Throughout his tenure as lead singer with the Blasters, Phil Alvin has managed to avoid the common excrescences of white blues singing—fake ethnicity, overstatement, and specious soulfulness. The elder Alvin brother continues to exude genuine feeling on his first solo outing, and dismantles plenty of other expectations in the process.

Alvin could have played it safe by clinging to the Blasters' familiar repertoire of blues and rockabilly. Instead he opted for a riskier course, interpreting older jazz and pop standards with such unlikely collaborators as the Sun Ra Ar-

kestra and New Orleans' Dirty Dozen Brass Band.

The tracks recorded with Sun Ra are this LP's prime filet. The great bandleader's skewed traditionalism rubs excitingly against Alvin's unmannered, no-nonsense vocal style. The Arkestra romps and stomps on a pair of tunes associated with Cab Calloway (the "Minnie The Moocher" sequel "The Ballad Of Smokey Joe" and "The Old Man Of The Mountain"). On their take of the Depression-era sobber "Brother Can You Spare A Dime," Alvin sings with admirable restraint and emotional power, while the massed horns moan and Ra's fingers skitter across the keyboard. It's a crusher.

The Dirty Dozen track, "Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn," is a hard-swinging brawl. Nearly as effective is the gospel-styled "Death In The Morning" (with sprightly vocal assists from Jubilee Train Singers Bobby King and Herman Johnson) and the countrified "Collins' Cave" (Richard Greene on fiddle). Switching gears, Alvin offers an appealingly straightforward rendition of the gutbucket "Gangster's Blues." Only "Daddy Rolling Stone" suffers from relatively stiff and conservative execution.

Phil Alvin could have become another Blasters album; instead, it's a fascinating corollary, at once respectful of its sources and and daring enough to have fun with them. Best of all, it swings like a muthuh. – **Chris Morris**

Easter from page 60

Asked if he's worried about becoming the world's oldest cult producer, Easter answers, "I may already be that." The mainstream clearly regards him as an outsider: a recent review in *USA Today* called *Big Plans* a "formalist exercise [and] a potential favorite for 60s fans."

"I know what they mean when there's a song like 'Last Chance Town,' which is a composite 1972 T. Rex/Mott the Hoople song," he nods. "But in that case, the entire roots movement is formalist to hell and back. I think my songs are interesting, and beyond the 60s rap they always get. I'm not one of those guys who is slavish to a period.

"But they're not the most obvious things in the world. I probably don't sleep in garbage enough," he says, holding an after-dinner ice cream cone. "If something about us came across as more alcoholic, if there were more stories about us swinging from chandeliers, it would probably get rid of terms like formalist." Easter admits that Let's Active's idea of trashing a hotel room is leaving their beds unmade.

A wiser Mitch Easter is being more selective about his production schedule. Although he admits he's out of touch ("I've heard of the Pogues, but I haven't heard them"), he hasn't been turned on by any "unique and warped vision" lately. "Lots of times, I'll do a record for some indie band and they'll send me some of their other things. They're all terrible. I don't know who buys them and where they get played and what it's all being done for." Still, he's in touch enough to find newer, better musicians: On Let's Active's last tour Easter was flanked by Angie Carlson on keyboards and guitars, bassist Dennis Ambrose on floating loan from Crossfire Choir, and Eric Marshall on drums, clearly his strongest ensemble to date.

With R.E.M.'s upcoming album produced by Don Gehman, it's clear that Southern Pop is outgrowing its Smurf phase. The romanticization of amateurism had threatened to stifle the music, and Mitch Easter isn't nostalgic for the old days. "I do enjoy records that are blissfully incompetent, but those guys are going to get better and want to do slicker things. And that's okay. Bands deserve to develop. A populist scene is a trap if you make the same record over and over and keep using shitty studios and crummy guitars to satisfy some aesthetic. Every era imposes new rules.

"The next time I hear somebody say 'jangly,' I want them to be talking about the keys in my pocket."

Sly Fox from page 44

That's the way they planned it when they first wrote and recorded the album. "We took our time and tried to make each song very good, so that each could have a chance as a single," says the ever-practical Cooper.

Meanwhile, Camacho has done some more ad work and contributed to producer/artist Gerald McMahon's new album. Cooper has been busy on sessions with Mtume, Roy Ayers and Bootsy. But what both of them are really betting on is the well-coordinated Crockett and Tubbs teamwork of Sly Fox.

"Sly Fox is really the freshest thing for me," says Cooper, summing up the feelings of both. "Projects like Mtume's new album are just another aspect of the funk. I really admire that, but it's old-school to me. Once the funk, always the funk, as they say; and I can always go back to that and fall right into place. But Sly Fox is really what has the greatest element of surprise for me. I like that. We both do."

SEE READER SERVICE PAGE 67

SHORT Rock TAKES

Beausoleil
Allons à Lafayette (Arhoolie)

Beausoleil is to Cajun music what K-Paul's is to blackened redfish: authentic enough to be chic, and too devoted to business to really care. The group is polished enough to cover all aspects of the sound—zydeco, waltzes, Creole blues, prairie two-steps—while somehow sounding as rough-hewn as the originals. But the best thing about Beausoleil is the sense that they'd play that way whether in a studio or some roadhouse outside Eunice. Which is all anyone could ask from a Cajun band. (10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530)

Nu Shooz
Poolside (Atlantic)

Between their prefab production and Portland origins, it's tempting to dismiss Nu Shooz as just another Quarterflash in the pan. But "I Can't Wait" is too winning a single to be written off as mere luck, and the best songs here suggest that writer/producer John Smith has more going for him than studio gloss. Can't wait to hear what he has up his sleeve.

El DeBarge
El DeBarge (Gordy)

To call El DeBarge a quintessential Motown talent is a nice way of saying he's a good production vehicle. Which is not to demean "Who's Johnny," a great single by any reckoning, or to ignore the fact that, as a singer, DeBarge offers the perfect compromise between Jeffrey Osborne's suave assurance and Michael Jackson's giddy energy. So how come the album's most interesting moment is Jay Graydon's Stevie Wonder exercise, "Someone"? After all, you'd think El was priority enough to rate the real thing.

Camper Van Beethoven
II & III (Pitch a Tent)

The name is a gag, but the band's no joke. Although the Campers carry on the obligatory flirtation with C&W (on one side) and psychedelia (on the other), they somehow manage to poke fun at California trendies while simultaneously showing how it ought to be done. It's an ideal combination of irreverence and mastery, and so delightfully off-handed that something like "ZZ Top Goes To Egypt" sounds even better than its title. (Rough Trade, 326 Sixth St., San Francisco, CA 94103)

Emerson, Lake & Powell
Emerson, Lake & Powell (Polydor)

They may have a new drummer, but the only audible difference between this and the old ELP is that Keith Emerson gets better "voices" from his Kurzweil than he did from his mellotron. Is that why they call this *progressive* rock?

Microdisney
The Clock Comes Down The Stairs (Big Time)

Microdisney is so delightfully disarming they sound like an underpolished Prefab Sprout, but without the Sprout's smugness. Instead, the lyrics bubble with teasing wit and unsentimental affection, while the music shores things up with loose, jazzy harmonies and an unerring melodic sense, making the likes of "Horse Overboard" or "Genius" utterly irresistible. (6410 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90038)

Hank Williams
Lost Highway (Polydor)

The chronological completeness of this project is almost off-putting—until you start listening. Hank Williams was both genius and journeyman, as at home with the blunt realism of "Mind Your Own Business" as with the high-minded hokum of "I Heard My Mother Praying For Me." This third volume in the series includes much of both, virtually all exceptional, and expertly annotated.

Milton Cardona
Bembe (American Clave)

This exquisite recording finds one of the most gifted percussionists in Latin music today working in what is perhaps his true element—the Santeria liturgy. The spiritual power of this Afro-Caribbean religious ceremony, sung in Yoruba to the accompaniment of a three-man percussion *bata*, is awesome, but it's the intense articulation of rhythm that makes this music so devastating. Incredible. (N.M.D.S., 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10013)

Box Of Frogs
Strange Land (Epic)

From the slick, Graham Parker-ized "Get It While You Can" to the growling, Rory Gallagher blues of "House On Fire," the Frogs bring out the best in their guests. And though a couple of cameos are scene-stealers—like Jimmy Page's incandescent "Asylum"—mostly it's the ensemble that shines.

GTR
GTR (Arista)

SHT.

The Ordinaires
The Ordinaires (Dossier/N.M.D.S.)

This oddball ensemble takes the notion of chamber rock to an alarming extreme, employing not only violins and cello, but indulging in complex time and other arty constructs. Yet it still rocks like the dickens, maintaining melodic ideas and even managing a few hooks despite an utter avoidance of vocals or pop song predictability. Not for eggheads only.

Whodini
Back In Black (Arista/Jive)

No, the title isn't an AC/DC allusion, and there is none of Run-D.M.C.'s heavy metal hip hop here. Nor, aside from the scratch-driven "Funky Beat" and the bass-happy "Last Night," is there much musical muscle. Guess they put all their effort into lines like "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" or "You win some, and then you lose some." Chalk this up to the latter.

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

SHORT JAZZ TAKES

BY CHIP STERN

Duke Ellington/Count Basie
First!—The Count Meets The Duke (Columbia)

Any queries beginning with "What is Jazz?" can be answered by this CBS "Right Price" classic, now available again after a long hiatus on the lost ledger line. Don't even be reading this column if you don't plan to own a copy. This is no "Battle Royal," although *that* opening fanfare is undoubtedly the gaudiest, Dodge City shootout in big band annals: A mastodonish fourteen-piece brass section and the Kansas City vs. Cotton Club rhythm sections face off in delightful early stereo. It's also a compendium of moods, tempos, syncopations, reminiscences, shadings, solo styles, stylistic devices, pianistic temperaments and mutual love, by America's true Kings of Swing. Duke and Basie's vision of life in the 20s, 30s and beyond is now ingrained in the very engrams of our pop unconscious—the way we rhyme, the way we slang, how we sing and shake that thang. America's gift of joy to a downbeat world—long may she wave.

Charlie Parker
Bird At The Roost, The Savoy Years—The Complete Royal Roost Performances, Volumes One & Two (Savoy Jazz)

Ditto! Jack Towers' masterful restoration of these Symphony Sid airchecks is a significant historical event. Now we can *hear* the seminal 1948-49 Quintet with Miles Davis and Kenny Dorham, Max Roach's drum responses, indeed the whole feeling of the rhythm section as they interact with Bird in a live, uninhibited environment (and without the fear of making studio VU meters jump). A distant reminder of post-war America's faster, darker pace, as swing moved to bop on the blue wings of Bird's animated ellisions of hope, rhythmic celebration.

Roy Haynes
We Three (Fantasy/OJC)

Along with the equally magnificent *Out Of The Afternoon* (Impulse), this collaboration with pianist Phineas Newborn and bassist Paul Chambers clearly states the case for the drummer as auteur. Haynes' critical neglect as a stylist and innovator has always baffled me. Coming onto the New York scene around 1945, he played with Luis Russell, Lester Young, Bud Powell, Charlie Parker and others before landing with vocalist par excellence Sarah Vaughan in the mid-50s. Through it all he emerged as the progenitor of displacement schemes, triplet cross-rhythms and funky footworkings, paving the way for personal extensions by Philly Joe (with whom he's often been linked, simplistically), Pete LaRoca, Elvin Jones, Billy Higgins and Jack DeJohnette. This trio stands as a masterpiece with the Roach/Herbie Nichols, Philly/Elmo Hope, Jo Jones/Ray Bryant recordings. Like Bryant, Newborn is a sanctified, bluesy graduate of the Art Tatum school who's often been criticized for excessive playing. That's bullshit; Newborn plays the piano like a mini-orchestra (not a horn player), and Chambers' telepathic basslines complement Haynes' patented snap-crackle-pop to give this record the perfect symmetry of a great after-hours set.

Jimmy Lyons & Sunny Murray Trio
Jump Up—What To Do About It (hat ART)

A spirited, bold, singing voice of modern alto, Jimmy Lyons passed away recently. It's my bittersweet duty to report that these open-ended trios with drummer Murray and bassist John Lindberg perfectly represent his breakthroughs in tone, phrasing and rhythmic figurations both within and without the Cecil Taylor fleet (where he served as first mate for over two decades). The trio skitters meaningfully around time figures and riffs in a pulsing, joyous manner, as Murray's ominous diminuendos, crescendos and personal colorations (he's never been recorded better) provide the momentum for Lyons' splintered subdivisions of the beat and his ascending, heraldic lyricisim—at once Bird-like in motivation, yet completely personal and circular in conception. Jimmy Lyons was an individualist in an era of clones. He'll be missed. (Available through New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)

David Grisman
Acousticity (Zebra Acoustic Records)

Grisman's evocations of turn-of-the-century string bands and Djangoish hotcha never sounded so compelling as in this recent production. He's buoyed by West Coast drum legend Hal Blaine, whose light, funky earth rhythms—understated and canny in emphasis and release—swung everything from Phil Spector and the Byrds to Simon & Garfunkel. Though these sessions are hardly as radical as his extraordinary duets with Andy Statman, Grisman's spring-loaded mandolin flights and loose accompaniments (on a notoriously chunky sounding instrument) are moving in bop, swing, latin and R&B settings as well as modern bluegrass. Fun.

Arthur Blythe
Da-Da (Columbia)

As this big-voiced altoist has become more stylized he's been casting around for appropriate settings to showcase his talents without endlessly repeating himself. Here he reprises his own "Break Tune" in a vaguely reggaeish/New Orleans manner; "Odessa" as an Afro-Middle Eastern incantation, and Coltrane's "Crescent" as a nod to a personal influence. Long-time collaborators John Hicks, Bob Stewart, Cecil McBee and (especially) Olu Dara are most satisfying, and the ballad "After Paris" lingers like a bittersweet memory. Still, while I'm known to be tolerant of fusions, I have little use for contemporary R&B which contains neither rhythm nor blues; so much for "Corners," though "Splain Thang" has a certain EW&F charm. And couldn't they have found a real live drummer to play these tracks? A conservative, lyric voice like Blythe's needs more rhythmic agitation and pure funk to effectively plumb David Sanborn country.

SHORT Indie TAKES

Solomon Burke
A Change Is Gonna Come (Rounder)

The studio sequel to 1984's *Soul Alive!* is old-fashioned in the merriest sense of the word. The crowned King of Rock 'n' Soul shines here, crooning and testifying mightily against the sympathetic backing of a crack New Orleans studio band. In the main, it sounds like one of Burke's classic Atlantic LPs—clean arrangements, sound compositions (some by Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham), and righteous singing. In this day of processed-cheese R&B, ain't that good news, baby? (1 Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02140) – *Chris Morris*

Tito Puente & his Latin Ensemble
On Broadway (Picante)

If Machito was the Ellington of Latin music, then Tito Puente remains its Count Basie, a brilliant bandleader whose arrangements soothe the soul even as his timbales set fire to your dancing feet. His zillion or so LPs are all worth the price, but none meld his salsa-meets-jazz sensibility with quite the élan of this 1982 release, which features a dream ensemble (pianist Jorge Dalto, saxophonist Mario Rivera, and both Gonzalez and Rodriguez brothers, among others) and selections which range from a lilting "Sophisticated Lady" to Milton Nascimento's "Soul Song" to his own blistering "T. P.'s Especial." By turns sweet, spicy and sublime, it's an album for all emotional seasons. (Concord Records, Box 845, Concord, CA 94552) – *Mark Rowland*

E★I★E★I★O
Land Of Opportunity (Frontier)

Countrified new wave bands have become such a cliché that it's hard not to feel guilty raving over another, but E★I★E★I★O is an exception. For one thing, this Milwaukee-area quintet plays well enough to make its allusions work, from the So-Cal country flourishes of "Get Back To Arkansas" to the Appalachian undertones of "Blue Mountaintop"; for another, there's pop sense aplenty in the writing, from the Beatlesque "This Time" to the revisionist Chuck Berry of "Go West Young Man." Mostly, though, E★I★E★I★O rocks, and that's what really makes their influences work, and this record matter. (Box 22, Sun Valley, CA 91353) – *J.D. Considine*

Cover Me
Various Artists (Rhino)

This collection of other singers performing Bruce Springsteen songs plays better than it sounds. The LP not only unveils gems like Dave Edmunds' "From Small Things" and Southside Johnny's "Hearts Of Stone," it also *omits* monstrosities like Manfred Mann's "Blinded By The Light." The compilation includes great songs unrecorded by Springsteen, with incisive covers of more familiar tunes; just listen to Johnny Cash sing "Let 'em shave off my hair and *burn* Johnny 99." There are many bad Bruce imitators on the charts right now; buy this instead. (1201 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90404) – *Bill Flanagan*

Tex Thomas & the Danglin' Wranglers
Dare To Dangle (Pennies From Heaven)

Tex Thomas (Harvey Young, Jr.) is a poignant-yet-twisted lyricist whose gruff singing suggests the vocal merger of Tom Waits and Billy Joe Shaver. *Dare To Dangle* showcases these multiple talents in a lush blend of country, jazz and rock. Thomas' swinging, eccentric songs shine as unique little gems; all that's missing is the hilariously insulting stage patter that's made him an Austin legend. (909 Chote, Austin, TX 78702)
– *Ben Sandmel*

Huey "Piano" Smith & the Clowns
Serious Clownin'–The History Of Huey "Piano" Smith & The Clowns (Rhino)

Those of us who associate "Sea Cruise" with ShaNaNa, "Rockin' Pneumonia And The Boogie Woogie Flu" with Johnny Rivers, or even "We Like Birdland" with Patti Smith, ought to hear these wild-spirited, down and dirty, infinitely superior originals. Smith encapsulates New Orleans pop history on one hand ("Little Liza Jane" harkens to Dixieland) and completely sends it up with the other, a mix of technical aplomb and anarchy that Little Richard could admire. (1201 Olympic Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90404) – *Mark Rowland*

Cootie Williams
Echoes Of Harlem (Affinity)

Most jazz fans know Cootie as the master of mute through his tenure with Ellington's orchestra; less are aware of his own big band, assembled in the early 40s, and which included the bluesy vocal stylings of both Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson and (surprise!) Pearl Bailey, plus a promising young pianist named Bud Powell, whose first vinyl appearances are documented herein. Among this cast Cootie was still king; whether coaxing a ballad like "Sweet Lorraine," interpolating Monk's "'Round Midnight" or breezing through his own "Floogie Boo," his virtuosity and range of expression was matched only by Roy Eldridge among his pre-war peers. (Street Level Trading Company, 5298/1 Valley Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90032) – *Mark Rowland*

Sonny Boy Williamson
The Chess Years (Chess)

Ever wonder where Bob Dylan learned how to phrase? You'll know after a side or two of this wonderfully packaged six-record set, and you probably won't stop listening either. Sonny Boy was a good-not-great Chicago blues man, but his casual command of the idiom is engaging, and the collective musicianship—mostly from house hands like Willie Dixon, Robert J. Lockwood and Otis Spann—purty much defines the genre. (5298/1 Valley Blvd., L.A., CA 90032)
– *Mark Rowland*

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Marley from page 98

land Records states that very little releasable music is left in the Marley vaults ("The *Confrontation* LP was the cream of the material that was left," says Island rep Rob Partridge, "and even some of those tracks required heavy surgery"), Garrick mentions four songs Lee Perry produced which might make it into the audio-visual room: "One track equates politics with the game of dominos." Island has just finished putting together a compilation of previously released political tracks, *Rebel Music*. In the museum, a pattern of bullet scars remind that rebel music seldom escapes some sort of retaliation.

"I remember being blasted at in this house when they tried to assassinate Bob," says Downie. "I'd never swam on the ground before, but I did then, trying to get away. When I came back the next day, there were two bullet holes where I'd been sitting."

These cracks and holes are a more vivid reminder of the power of Marley's music than any souvenir in the house.

The sparsely filled museum/merchandising concern seems at odds with the memory of a man whose music teems with the vigor of the struggle. Are rows of souvenir ganja pipes and Marley Rum in the future? Kingston radio is currently dominated by "Boopsie" songs, a string of novelty hits à la "Roxanne Roxanne."

"The work isn't finished yet," cautions Ziggy. "Not only one man is important; it's the whole people." "Like Bob said, 'Soon we'll find out who are the true revolutionaries,'" Rita says.

"The mentality moves back and forth," she continues. "This 'Boopsie' business is bad. But don't worry, the time will come when the music will swing back to Jah." M

SELLING MARLEY BY THE OUNCE

BY JIM MACNIE

Marley, Marley, Marley," Big Youth laments. "It's a hell of a fix; it's like he's still here." Youth is leaning up against the wall of Gregory Isaacs' record shop on a scorching Kingston afternoon, considering whether or not to attend the opening of the Bob Marley Museum up the street at 56 Hope Road, the original site of Tuff Gong recording studios, and Marley's one-time home.

"Marley is such a foundation of this music," he muses. "He reached people's minds. He spoke the truth, and the system doesn't always like the truth. There used to be a vision in reggae, but now it's gone. And when there's no vision, people perish. Like Yellowman—a guy has a good voice, but he's like a porno star, X-rated. Reggae was a force, but it's slipping into a commercial gimmick; I came back from the States and they were selling Reggae Rum! That's why the music misses someone like Marley; he sung philosophically, he told the truth. Word sound is the greatest power on Earth, and Bob had strong word sound."

"Bob is not gone," claims Rita Marley with reverence in her voice, and to take random samples of Kingston street opinion, or check the sales of the Marley record catalog, it would seem she is right. It's five years since Robert Nesta Marley passed on, but many fans simply don't acknowledge his passing; his music and message are enjoying a brighter spotlight now than when he was alive.

As the museum festivities begin, Big Youth isn't to be found, substantiating his claim to dislike being "where the politicians are." The opening is by invitation only, and the ceremony is inundated with speeches and more speeches. Bureaucrats, local celebs, family members, and administrators of the Marley estate all have something to say, setting the stage for Prime Minister Edward Seaga's address wherein he waxes brotherly with Marley's ghost. As the Prime Minister runs the "I knew him when..." spiel, recounting all *he* had in common with Jamaica's most popular export, strategically situated Rastas shake their heads and shoot off their mouths: "Jahhh, Rastafariiii!" Caustic glances from the front row plead, "Anytime but now." In the back, thirty to forty members of the Nyabingi community, one of the oldest Rasta sects, conduct their own proceedings with ceremonial smoke, engulfing drum rhythms, and low-ebb, high emotion chanting.

"We were told to come here," says John Dred, spokesperson for the group. "Nyabingi were very close to Bob. Most of what he sang was Bible-related; he would come by our headquarters and we would chant and discuss the Bible. It was there that he started, before carrying his thoughts into the reggae scenario." But this night the Nyabingi seem like country cousins, allowed only to chant at the back of the bus. "I don't know what happened," continues Dred. "I thought we were part of the celebration. Nyabingi are more civilized than some think. We're organized now and we're running a vendors' group to help people on the street." Dred believes in the promise that Marley's work shed a light on: fend for yourself, maintain self respect, give thanks to Jah, and your reward of Zion will be prefaced by the reward of dignity.

"I wouldn't be surprised if it turned into a shrine atmosphere," says Neville Garrick—designer of Wailers LP covers and main architect behind the Marley Museum. "The extent of people's love for Bob is amazing. I was getting some supplies for this place last week—aluminum stripping and such—and I said to the shopkeeper, 'Okay, how much?' The guy said, 'Listen, Bob has given so much already, I couldn't charge'; that's the feeling around here."

But the bet on devotion is hedged with dollars. The museum is also out to peddle Marley memorabilia. "We have two goals," Garrick continues. "This is actually the headquarters for the Bob Marley fanclub right now. We receive literally thousands of requests in the mail for info on where to get T-shirts and other paraphernalia; the museum will be the official office for that, providing a service for merchandising. The second thing is to show what Bob's life and lifestyle were all about. It's a growing museum, we must build and build."

Back onstage, the speeches are ending, and a night-long performance by the Wailers and friends finally starts. Both Barrett brothers are present, as well as Tyrone Downie and Junior Murvin. Marley's mother, Cedella Booker, does a gospel-flavored tribute to her son, "Mama Don't Cry (I'll Be Alright)." The other vocals on the all-Marley set list prove why the Wailers were one of the best *backup* bands in the music. Strained vocal attempts by both Murvin and Downie go quickly awry. When Ziggy Marley joins them, they at least find a focus; the timbral similarities between the elder and younger Marleys' voices are striking. "He looks and sounds like his father," says Downie later, "yet he's his own man. But just to hear him emote like that makes me feel something like I used to when I played with Bob. Playing with Ziggy...it's a tease." Everyone wants to get inside the museum, but the ribbon-cutting has been postponed.

Around the grounds multicolored murals depict the various stages of Marleydom: Bob, Rita and the kids; Bob's role as a link between Seaga and his predecessor Michael Manley; Bob's musical roots with the young Wailers; his hobby of soccer; a performance portrait with the Haile Selassie countenance behind him; and finally, Rita alone.

A surge forward signals that the Marley Museum doors are finally opening; the shoving isn't rewarded by much. Inside, only a few rooms are open. Two hold nothing but the wallpaper—made from shellacked newspaper and magazine stories about Marley. The bedroom is a sparse resting place embellished with only the great man's cutchie (clay ganja pipe). Garrick's quote of "It's a growing museum" rings in my ears. An alleged audio-visual room "isn't quite prepared," and the section which houses Marley's gold records is out of bounds.

"There are still quite a few things I'm trying to get from Rita, and Bob's mother," claims Garrick. Although Is-

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