

# MUSICIAN

MAY 1995 \$2.95

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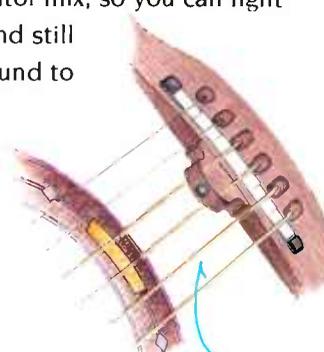
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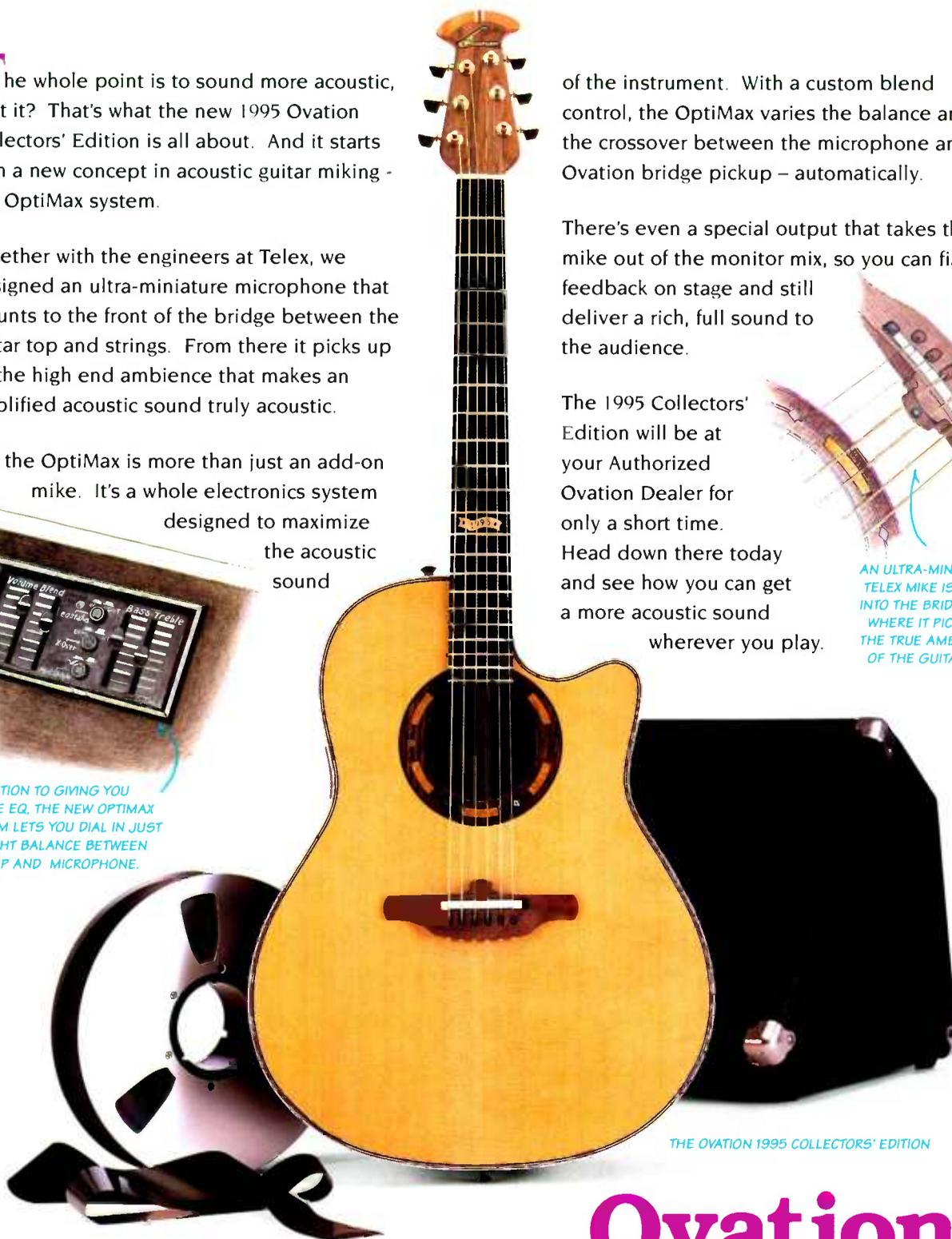
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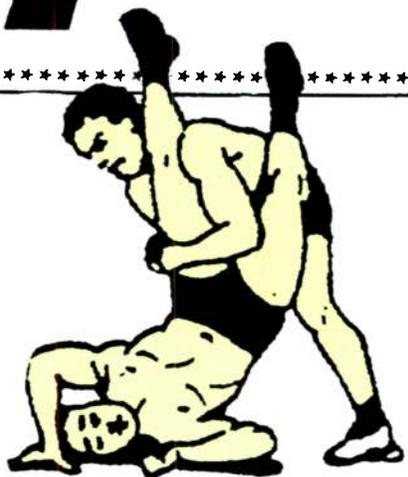
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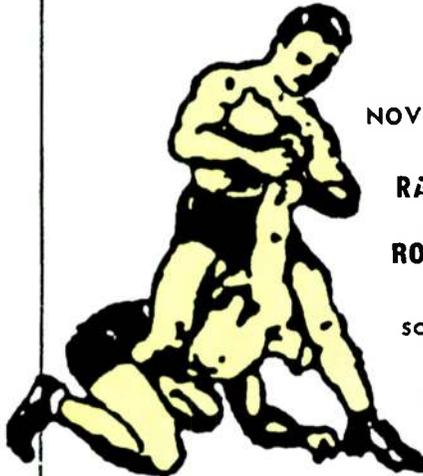
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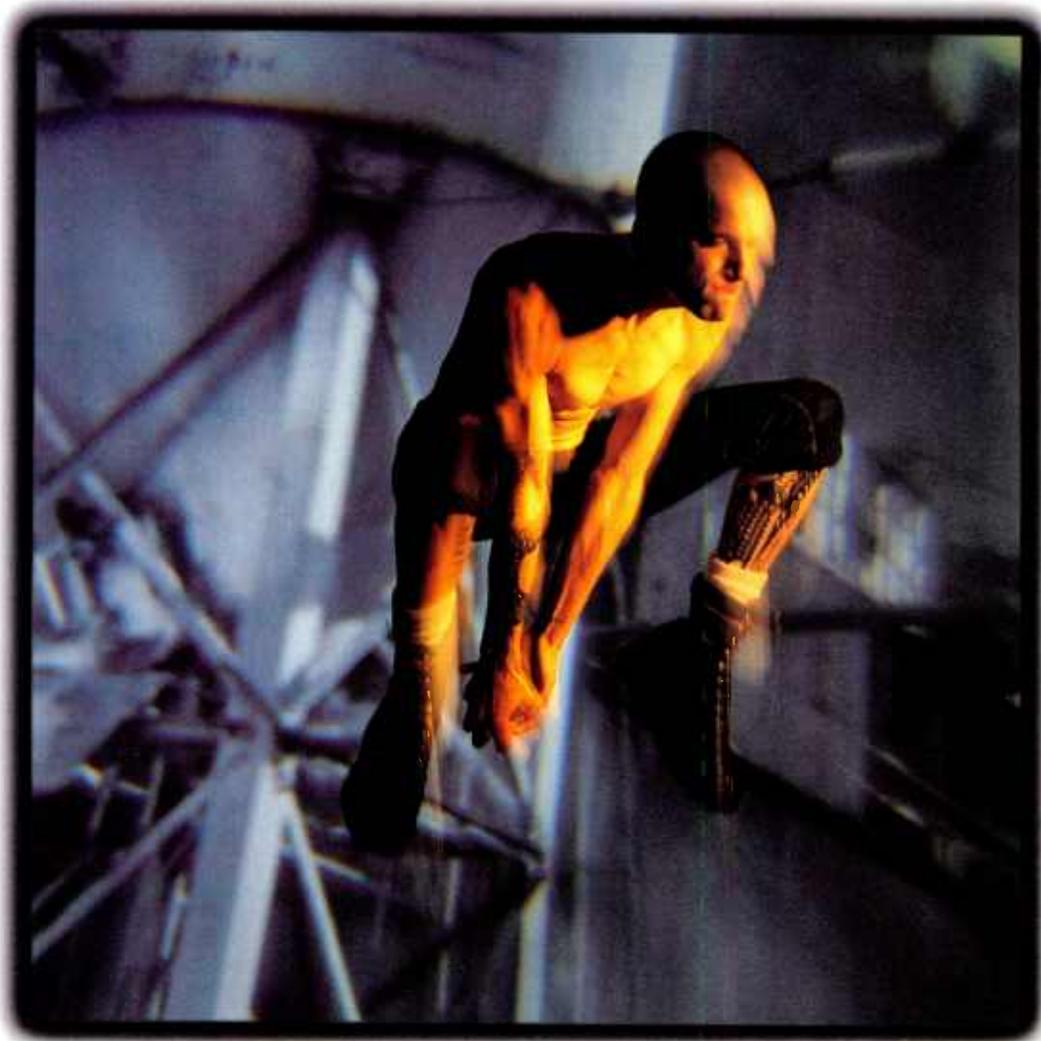
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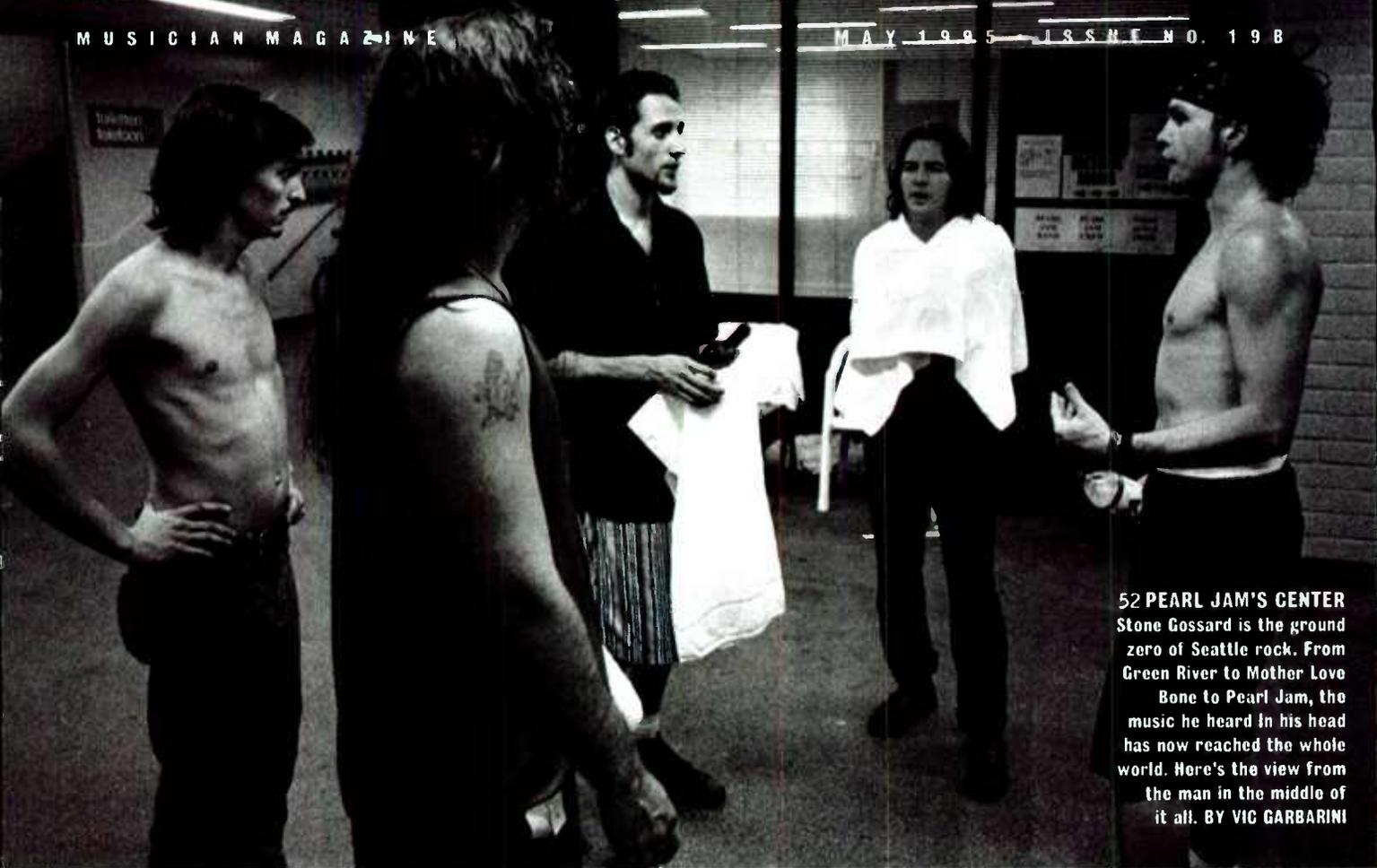
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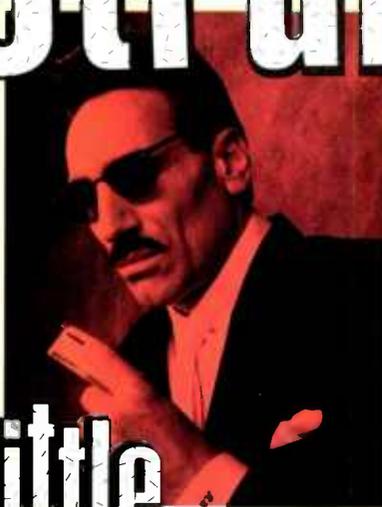
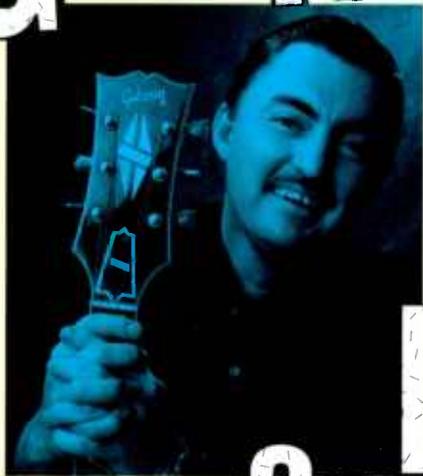
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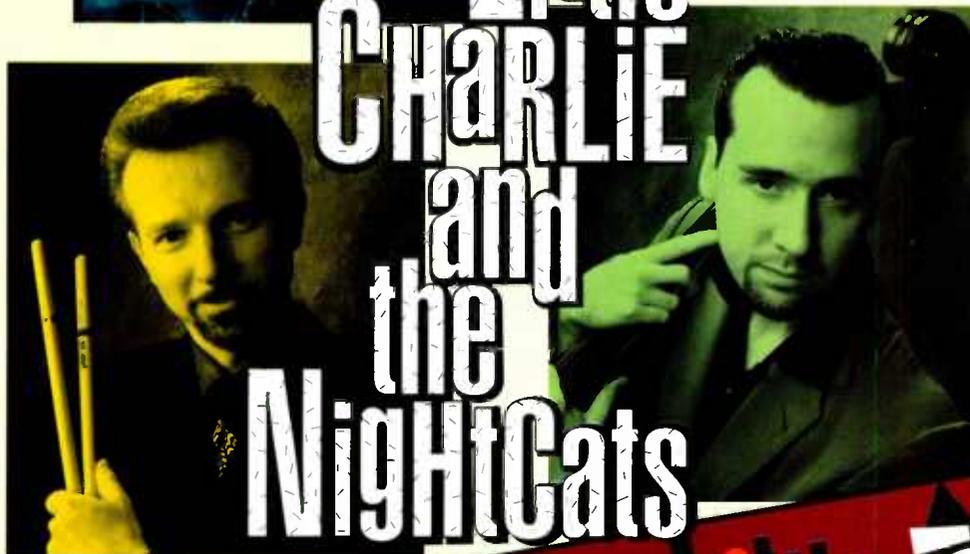
How the handle your parents give you affects your chances of rock stardom. BACKSIDE

# Get it Straight!



**"LITTLE CHARLIE BATY absolutely sizzles on guitar—and is matched lick for lick by Rick Estrin on vocals and harmonica.**

## Little CHARLIE and the NightCats



**The rhythm section swings exquisitely."**

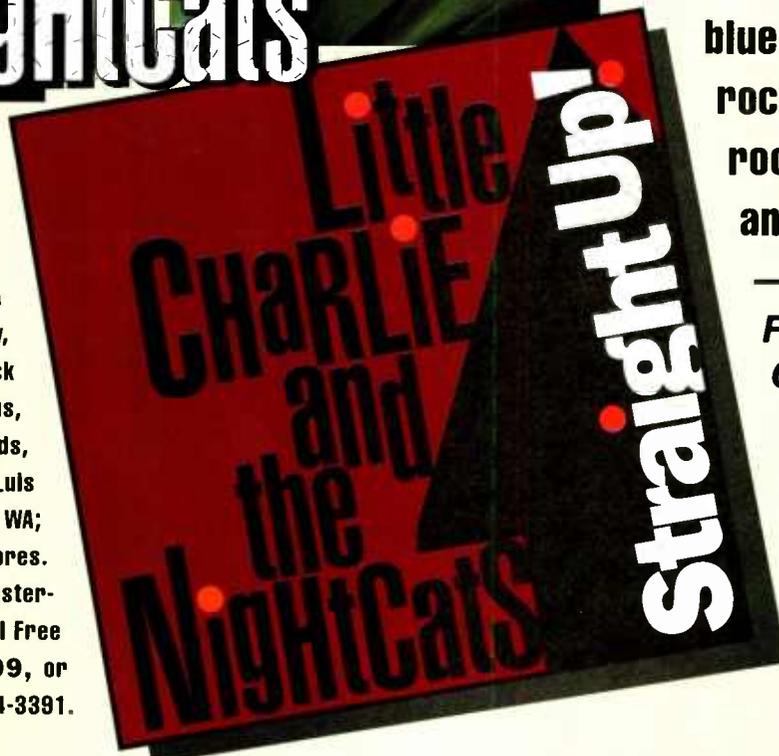
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# FRONTMAN

*Nobody expected Bruce Springsteen to get the E Street Band back together to record new songs. How did you get the word?*

I came home on Friday night, January 6, and my wife Becky said, "There's a message for you." It was Bruce saying he had this idea, it might be fun. He wanted to do this greatest hits record and cut some new tracks. I said, "Well, I got a job. I'd love to play with you under any conditions, but I'm at NBC all day." So we worked every night and weekends. As soon as we all started playing we had it in spades, but *deeper*, because all of us had been through the wringer. Bruce too. All of us had had to learn to fly on our own. People brought in what they had learned during those years. And Bruce had been playing with people like Jeff Porcaro and Randy Jackson, and man, he grew. We made music that had the polish of all those records that we always admired, whether it's "Try a Little Tenderness" or "Back in These Arms." We never had that kind of feeling and precision before.

We tried the song "Blood Brothers" in four different arrangements, different styles. Bruce said, "Alright guys, *Blonde on Blonde!*" and we went right to that style. That wasn't the one used, but it was great. Then he tried it a different way and it fell together immediately. In the middle of

the take Garry and I started playing this part. Bruce heard it and extended the section while we were playing. We were all playing the right thing, simultaneously. The magic was still there.

*Tell me about the band breaking up.*

The word came on October 18, 1989 at 11 o'clock at night. And the last thing I wanted to do was to ever play the drums again. It was all I had done from the time I was a little kid until the age of 39. I wanted to break away. Ringo was very very helpful to me during that period. I discussed the breakup of the E Street Band for five hours with Ringo one night, sitting on the terrace of Bill Wyman's house on the Mediterranean. I was trying to deal with what you do when you're in such a big act and it breaks up. Ringo really took care of me that week. The guy made me breakfast. I'm not at all trying to compare my experience to the Beatles, but when you lose that thing the *emotions* are the same.

*So you went back and finished college, and then started law school.*

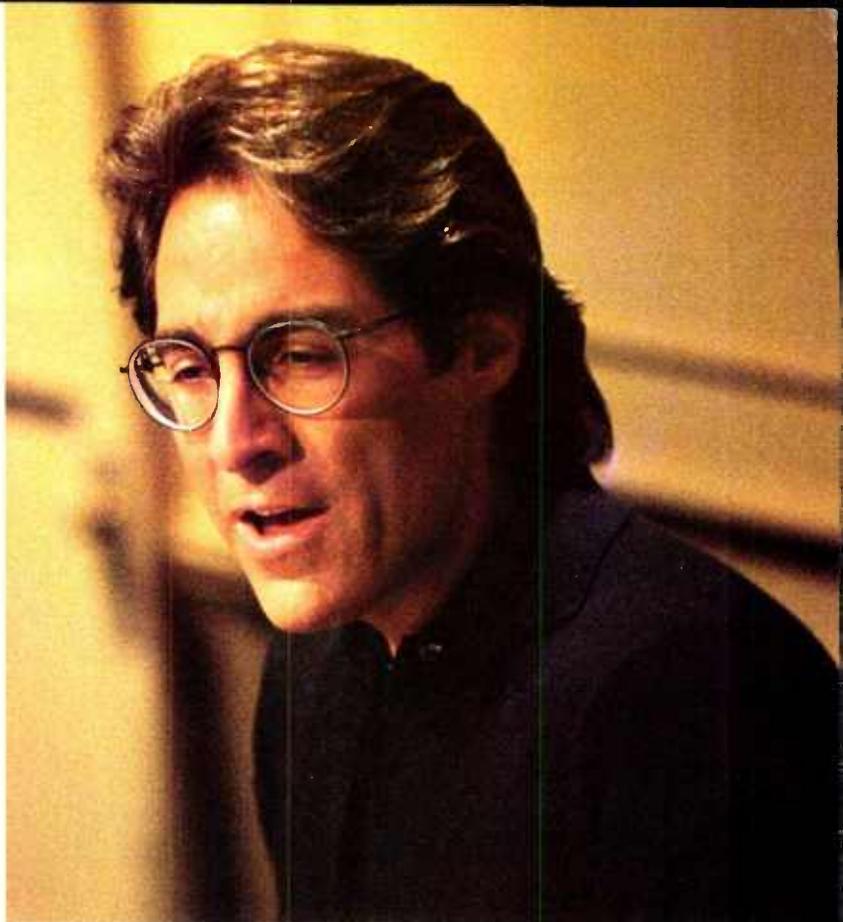
I started law school and after three and a half weeks I got a call from Dave Edmunds to do a concert. Then I agreed to do ten dates in the States and ten in Japan with him. I said, "Gee, I really miss this," and I dropped out of law school. But I wasn't really ready to deal with the music business again. I was playing with Dave and missed the birth of my son.

*So you took an office job.*

Music Masters is the largest independently owned record club in the world. I helped them set up a rock label and assisted in their other operations. For three years I went to an office every day. I was dealing with people in the retail and merchandising end of the record business. It was all right. I was home all the time, I was with my kids, I gained 40 pounds. I'll tell you one story. Bruce opened his '92 tour at the Meadowlands. I was

**"The last thing I wanted to do was play drums again."**

## MAX WEINBERG



driving past the stadium and I saw a huge sign stretched across it that said, "Welcome home, Bruce!" And I got this pain like you get driving past your old girlfriend's house when you're in high school.

I was sitting at my desk one day and I got a call. The drummer in 10,000 Maniacs got hurt in a bicycle accident, could I fill in? I played with them for five weeks and I got good again as a drummer. I realized I couldn't get rock 'n' roll out of my system. I really wanted to play the drums again.

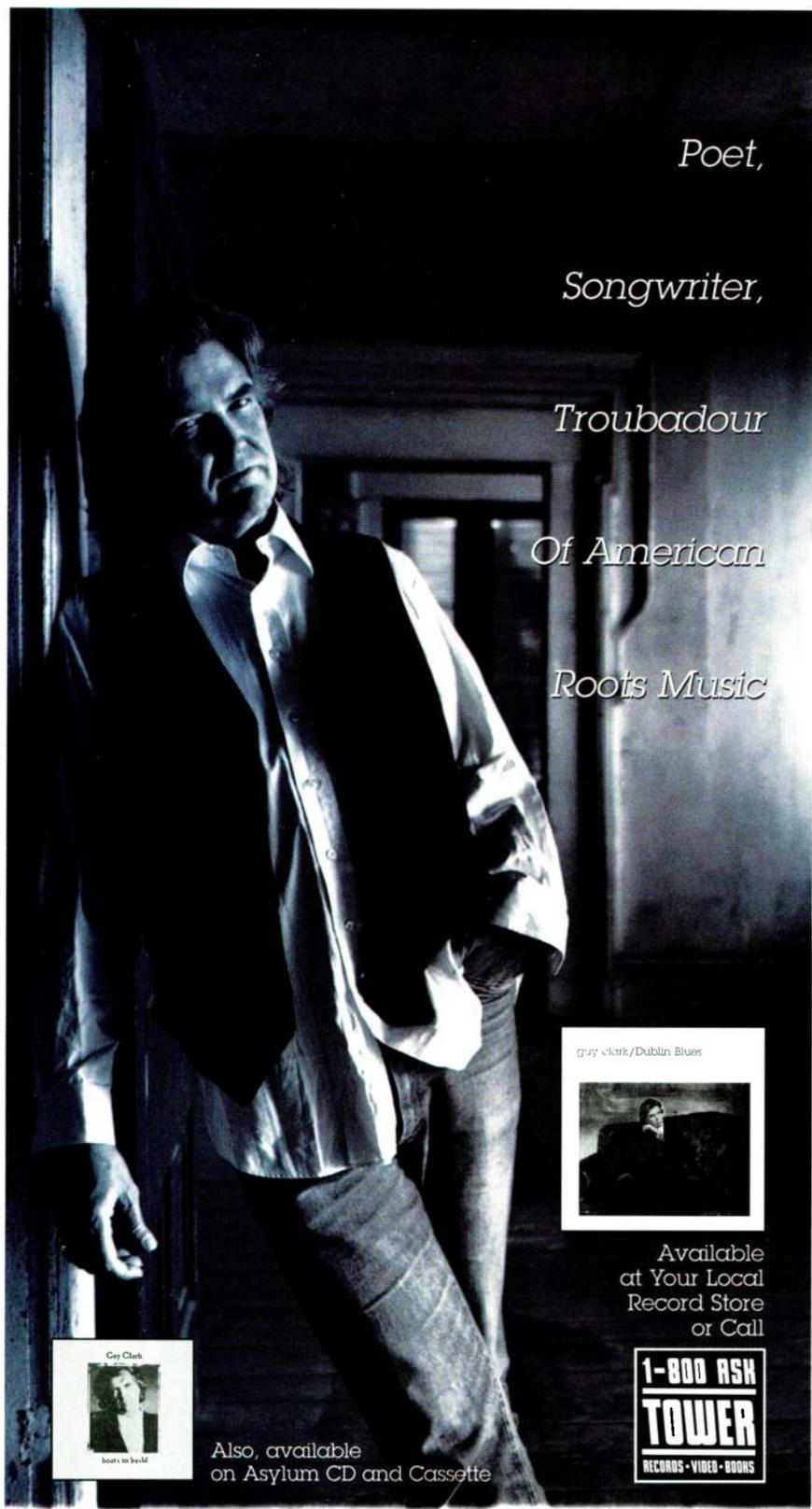
*You had just gotten a job in the pit band of Tommy when "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" came up.*

I heard that Letterman was leaving, Lorne Michaels had been given the 12:30 spot, and I wrote him a letter offering my services as musical director. In April they announced on the "Tonight Show" that Conan was going to host, and I happened to see it. I knew I could do this gig. Then Becky and I were coming from a party, we got out of a taxi at 55th and 7th, and I saw Conan O'Brien standing on the corner. I went over and I said, "Conan! Max Weinberg from the E Street Band." I congratulated him on the gig, and I said "What are you doing for music?" He said, "You got any ideas?" I said, "I have a million ideas. I think I could be a great band leader for the show."

*And now you're on TV five nights a week. It's been a wild trip, Max. How do you look back now on the long break between E Street dates?*

I went through guilt: What did I do wrong? I was bitter at times, you go through everything. And slowly I gained experience. I remember a conversation I had with Bruce shortly after the band broke up. I told him I was going to law school. He said, "Don't let music not be part of your life in some way. I know this is devastating, I know it's easier for me. But don't stop drumming."

BILL FLANAGAN



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# LETTERS

## NO PLUG

In response to Chris Morris's review of Nirvana's *MTV Unplugged in New York*: Expecting the "full-on roar of the band in electric flight" in an unplugged performance will, of course, lead to sheer disappointment. This acoustic presentation was a change of pace for Nirvana, but if one accepts its style it was beautifully brilliant. Electric ferocity is not essential to passion—Nirvana unplugged is proof positive of that. Expand your horizons, Chris Morris.

Jessica Crane  
Holland, PA

I'd like to thank Chris Morris for his excellent review of Nirvana's *MTV Unplugged in New York*. I loved Nirvana, but they sucked at "Unplugged," and it's about time somebody admitted it. After reading that, I was a bit surprised that you chose a picture from "Unplugged" to represent Kurt Cobain on the "Rest in Peace" page.

Kelly D. Kruse  
Janesville, WI

## CHICAGO READERS

Anyone familiar with Bill Wyman's writing for the *Chicago Reader* would have known before reading the article that Wyman was not going to say anything negative about Veruca Salt. Wyman is apparently trying to claim credit for putting his finger on Chicago's rock pulse, yet Chicago's most interesting musicians consistently appear to "seethe" right beneath his major-label vision. The only thing interesting about Veruca Salt is the fact that there was a significant backlash against them before the album was released. And the title *American Thighs* is not the only thing Veruca Salt has in common with AC/DC; Veruca Salt's album all sounds the same, too.

Joshua Klein  
Chicago, IL

Bill Wyman pretends to be just an aw-shucks impartial journalist covering the beat on just another up-and-coming band. In reality, he's the influential music critic for the *Chicago Reader* and cohosts a rock talk show on one of those "powerful rock stations" mentioned in his piece. True to form, Wyman was a major player in the Veruca buzz camp by plugging them week after week in print and on his talk show months before the release of the Nina/Louise

product. Don't you think Chicagoans read *Musician*?

Willie Wonka  
Chicago, IL

## I CAN RELATE

Mark Rowland's interview with Slash/Ed Van Halen (Mar. '95) inspired me to the point of out-loud laughter. I've never liked everything either has played, but I've wept jealous tears to passages each has invented. To read of them thinking thoughts I've had for so long, about individuality, and heartfelt expression, as well as mixed

Instead of reviewing Nirvana's album (Jan./Feb. '95) *MTV Unplugged in New York* for what it is—unplugged—Chris Morris criticizes it for what it isn't: "One finally longs for the febrile snap of electricity...and the full-on roar of the band in electric flight." His problem with the show's basic concept, "the lifeless format of the show," explains why he wants to remember the "band with the amps turned up." Could you imagine Morris reviewing a bowl of vanilla ice cream? He would probably complain that it wasn't chocolatey enough.

Pat Bennett  
Bridgeport, CT

feelings about their own abilities, or lyrics, or even confidence, sent a rush of relief through my entire struggling psyche. My music isn't remotely similar to either of these great artists'. But their thoughts and words are a great influence on me to stay true to my vision. I thank you.

Wild Bill  
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## WE GET LETTERS

There's a nasty streak running through this month's letters (Mar. '95). I thought the music world was becoming more broad-minded, not less. Peter Buck more "wizardly" than Joe Satriani? Page and Plant "perpetuating a myth long gone"? This kind of thinking implies, "If I don't like it, it's trash—if you like it, you're an idiot!" People, I appreciate your passion, but it's just your opinion—the same music evokes totally different feelings in others, you know?

Then there's the letter with the statement

"Any type of music is an artform in its own right." Please! Total nondiscrimination is no more useful than bigotry. Get a grip!

Ben Sherman  
Hanover, PA

## PLAY IT AGAIN...

Had to smile at John Mellencamp's revelation (Jan./Feb. '95) that he has *Voodoo Lounge* still in its shrinkwrap ("I already have the good ones"). A true Stones fan needs only the radio smattering to hear that *Lounge* is yet more of the same four-on-the-floor rock. If nothing else, gentlemen, listen to the early records—more of the same is worse than nothing.

Richard Freeman  
San Francisco, CA

## ASK HAL

I am a poet and musician and an avid reader of *Musician*. After reading "Can Thinking Machines Become Our Creative Partners" in the Jan./Feb. issue, though, I found myself disturbed by the ideals represented. Can a computer lyricist write about life as I can, being deprived of the living experience? Can a computer composer create truly original music, not having emotions? As a musician I respect my art too much, and I would hope that my peers feel this way, too.

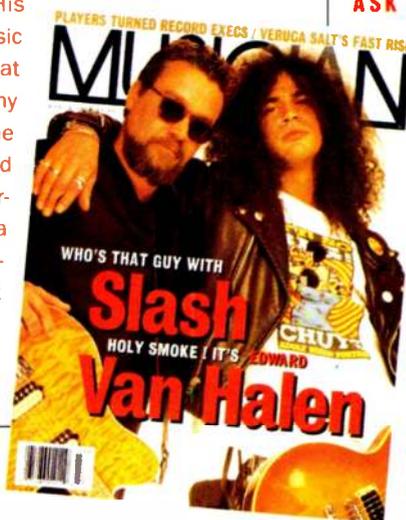
Jonathan Hoefs  
Irvine, CA

## FRATRICIDE

From 1980 to 1986 (with a year off for good behavior) I managed the Blasters. I still manage Dave Alvin. In 1984 I managed Dave Davies for one year. Take it from one who knows. I'd pit the Alvin brothers (*Backside*, Mar. '95) against the Davies boys any day.

Shelly Heber  
Vision Management  
Los Angeles, CA

Send letters to: *Musician*, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. Send E-mail letters to the editor, subscription inquiries and other messages to: [musician.mag@sonicnet.com](mailto:musician.mag@sonicnet.com). E-mail addresses will be printed unless requested otherwise.



THE FINEST IN JAZZ SINCE 1939

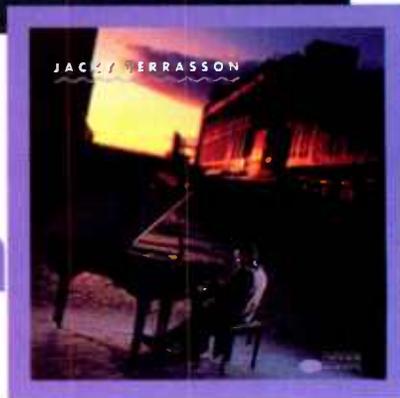
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Discover the most inventive and exciting new pianist in jazz. The winner of the 1993 Thelonious Monk Competition makes his American debut. With bassist **Ugonna Okegwo** and drummer **Leon Parker**.

# Jacky Terrasson

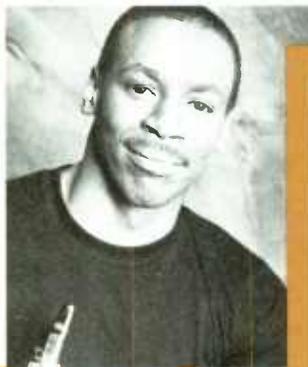
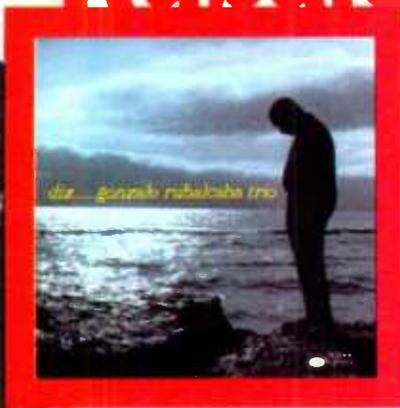
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# Gonzalo Rubalcaba

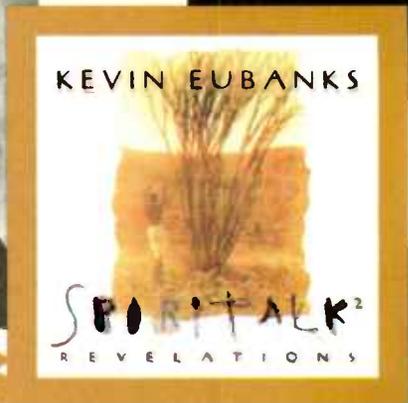
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Gonzalo goes bebop and nearly melts his piano. On this tribute to Dizzy Gillespie, the Cuban-born virtuoso is joined by **Ron Carter** and **Julio Barretto** on drums. A real scorcher.



(30132)

# Kevin Eubanks

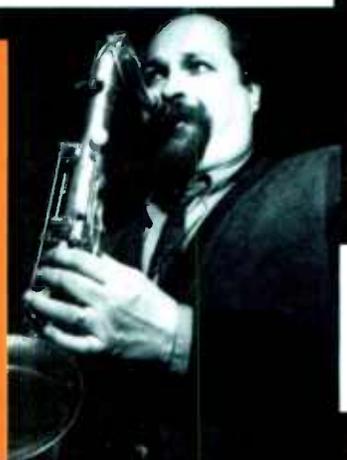
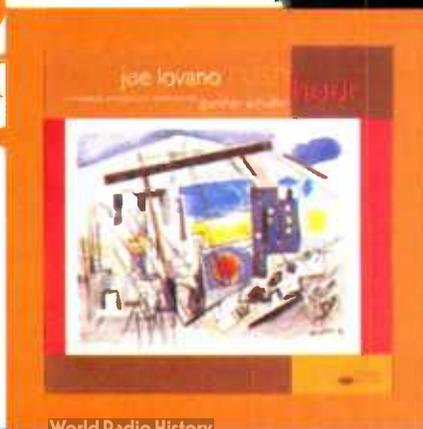


The guitarist for the Tonight Show displays the depth of his amazing talent on his third recording for Blue Note. **Spiritalk 2** features his band of **Kent Jordan** on alto flute, brother **Robin Eubanks** on trombone, **Dave Holland** on bass, **Marvin "Smitty" Smith** on drums and others.

# Joe Lovano and Gunther Schuller

Saxophonist **Joe Lovano** meets the legendary composer and arranger **Gunther Schuller** in this brand new recording of Schuller originals and arrangements of music by Monk, Mingus, Ellington and others. A landmark jazz recording.

(29269)



# WHEN IT COMES TO RECORDING, THE M-2600 WILL PUT YOU IN A CLASS BY ITSELF.

Balanced mic and unbalanced line inputs with phantom power and 20dB pad accommodate the widest range of input signals.

The only console in this price range with true split EQ, each assignable to monitor or channel. High-frequency shelving control at 12 kHz, low-frequency at 80 Hz for smoother, more musical EQ results.

Dual sweepable mids on each channel let you apply 16dB of boost or cut at critical frequencies.

Setting up two independent stereo cue mixes is no problem. Try this with other mixers in this price range, it just won't happen or you'll have to compromise something.

The most versatile AUX section in their class; rivaling expensive high-end consoles. 8 sends total, 2 in stereo. Send signal in stereo or mono, pre- or post-fader. Available all at once. Return signal through any of 6 stereo paths.

Direct channel input switching. Assign to one of eight busses, or direct to tape or disk, or to the master stereo bus. Because the group and direct-out jacks are one and the same, you can select either without repatching. You won't find this kind of speed or flexibility in a "one-size-fits-all" board.

Feel those 100mm faders! Turn those smooth and responsive knobs! They feel and work better than any other in its class. The M-2600's physical design takes the aggravation out of recording and lets you focus on the process of creating music. Everything is "right where it ought to be." Try it for yourself.

Each M-2600 channel features advanced-design mic pre-amps with incredibly low-distortion specs. Plus, you get phantom power on each channel. Feed anything into the M-2600 from condenser microphones to line input from synths and sound modules.

For your personal or project studio, don't settle for anything less than a dedicated recording console. Some may try to convince you that a "multi-purpose mixer" works fine for multitrack recording. But don't take their word for it. The compromises, hassles and workarounds just aren't worth it.

Want proof? Ask your salesperson how a multipurpose mixer handles these common recording situations. But listen carefully for workarounds, repatching schemes and other compromises. Then compare it to how easily the M-2600, a true recording console, sets up and does things.

**SITUATION** Separate headphone mixes for the talent and the producer. The talent wants a reverb-wet mix, but the producer wants it dry. Everyone wants it in stereo.

**Compromise:** Multi-purpose mixers require you to sacrifice 4 AUX sends and tape returns to get 2 stereo headphone mixes; but you need those sends/returns for outboard effects! What a dilemma.

**M-2600 Solution:** With a few buttons, assign up to 2, independent stereo AUXs to be used as headphone mixes. Everyone hears the mix they want — and you've still got 4 AUX sends and returns free for signal processing gear.

**SITUATION** You're EQing tape tracks to get just the right sound. You're using the shelving EQ for the monitor mix, and the sweepable mids for the channel bus. Still, the drummer wants a certain frequency out of his mix — a job for the sweepable mids.

**Compromise:** Few multi-purpose mixers have EQ assignment. You're stuck with the shelving EQ on the monitor mix, and the sweepable mids on the channels (if they even have split EQ). You've got no choice. Good luck trying to explain this to the drummer.

**M-2600 Solution:** Assign the shelving EQ, the sweepable EQ, or both to either the monitor or channel bus as necessary. The entire EQ section is splittable and assignable and can work in tandem.

**SITUATION** Mixdown. You're sending tracks to effects units for added studio polish. You want to take advantage of true stereo effects. How do you do it?

**Compromise:** Most multi-purpose mixers have fewer AUX sends than the M-2600's 8. Usually only in mono. And, some sends are linked, so you can't send them to different signal paths. So you settle for only a few effects, or forego stereo effects altogether.

**M-2600 Solution:** Pick one: 8 mono sends or 1 stereo and 6 mono sends or 2 stereo and 4 mono sends. Each with its own level control and separate output jack. So you can use true stereo effects and still have sends left over for effects. Send the effects signals back via 6 stereo returns.

**That's not all!** The M-2600 doesn't compromise sound, either. You'll appreciate the new TASCAM sound — low-noise circuitry and Absolute Sound Transparency™. It all adds up to the perfect console for any personal or project studio — combining great sound with recording-specific features you'll need when recording, overdubbing and mixing down. Features you can get your hands on for as little as \$2,999 (suggested retail price for the 16-input model).

So forget compromises. Invest in a true recording console. The TASCAM M-2600.



Available with 16, 24 or 32 inputs, the M-2600 is optimized for digital recording. Don't wait till your first session to discover the compromises and hassles other boards will put you through.



# RECORDING, MOST OTHER CONSOLES COMPROMISING SITUATION.

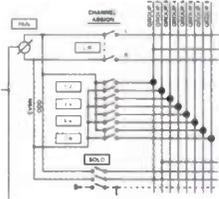
Only the M-2600 provides two independent stereo cue systems. Demanding performers can hear the submix or scratch tracks the way they want, so they'll perform better. Meanwhile, the control room or producer's mix is unaffected. You can accommodate everyone involved in the production — without interrupting the creative flow. Best of all, using the cue mixes doesn't involve tying up your valuable AUX sends.

Use more effects/signal processing gear on more tracks with the M-2600. Use 2 (count 'em) true stereo send/returns to support stereo effects units. Plus, you still have 4 fully assignable AUX sends left over for other gear. A total of 8 AUX sends — more than nearly any other console — anywhere. Better yet, you can use them all at once. No compromises. At mix down, you can actually double your inputs so you can mix in all those virtual tracks. Just press the "FLIP" switch. No repatching. No need to buy expensive and space-eating expansion modules.

The incredibly flexible design of the M-2600 means signal routing is versatile and accomplished by the touch of a button, instead of a tangle of wire.



Our decades of mixer experience has resulted in an ergonomic design that's exactly what you need: a board that speeds and facilitates recording and mix down. Everything is where you intuitively think it should be. Dedicated solo and mute indicator lights on every channel, on master AUX sends, stereo returns, and each of the 8 busses so you always know exactly what you're monitoring. Plus, SmartSwitches™ protect you against redundant or canceling operations.



**TASCAM M-2600: THE CONSOLE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR RECORDING.**

Of course, the M-2600 sounds great. It's got totally redesigned low-noise circuitry, Absolute Sound Transparency™ and tremendous headroom. No coloration and virtually no noise. You will hear the difference. So, even during long mix down marathons, you'll hear an accurate representation of what's been recorded.



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## THE "ROCK"TION

A bathroom sink from John Lennon's Dakota apartment fetched only \$450 out of an expected \$3000, but Guernsey's "40 Years of Rock & Roll" auction in NYC nonetheless attracted vast sums of capital for rock ephemera. Six stereo copies of Vee-Jay's *Introducing the Beatles* changed hands for \$28,000, while Elvis Presley's high school library card sold for \$650. Along with a shattered and blood-stained guitar once belonging to Kurt Cobain (\$20,000), other items for sale included:

■ assorted **Elvis four-track** acetates, including "**Crying in the Chapel**," and

EXPERT WITNESS

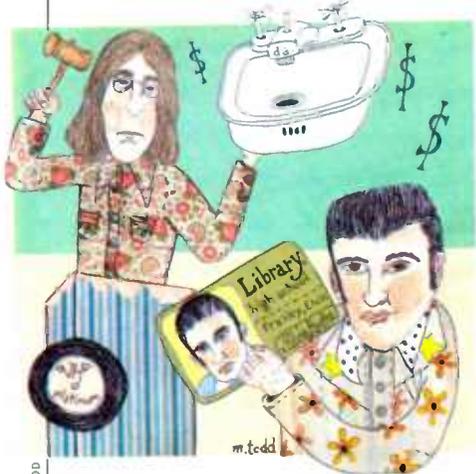
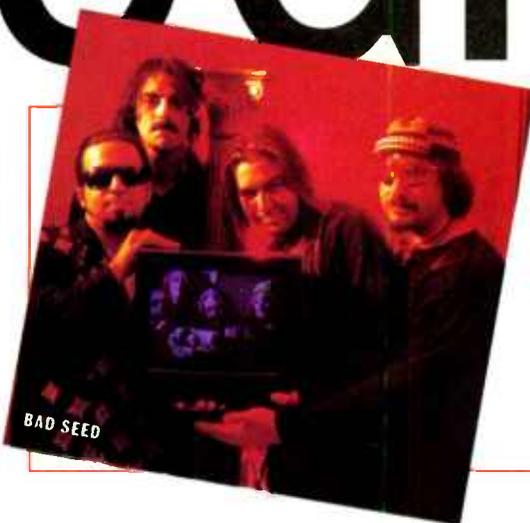


ILLUSTRATION BY MARK TODD

# ROUGH M

a complete set of laminates from one of the **King's '70s tours** emblazoned with the fabled "**TCB/TLC**" logo.

- a platinum record for **Van Halen I** awarded to "**Michael Van Halen**"
- **Jerry Lee Lewis's '62-'67** passport
- autographed sheet music of **Les Paul and Mary Ford's "How High the Moon"**
- **Isaac Hayes' huge velvet cape**, bearing his glowering likeness (\$2000).—R.K.



## RECENT SIGNINGS

**Spain** L.A.-based "sad rock" band fronted by Josh Haden, son of Charlie (Restless)

**Emilio** Tejano (or Tex-Mex) music man from San Antonio (Liberty)

**AZ** Brooklyn rapper who cameoed on Nas album (EMI/Chrysalis)

**Bad Seed** Thrash veterans from the suburbs of NYC (RockWorld/Sony)

# The Secret Life of Booking Agents

by Matthew Sweet

I AM IN rehearsals with my band this month getting ready to tour throughout North America in support of my third album, *100% Fun*. I am actually looking forward to embarking on a tour, in part because it is exciting to have a new album's worth of material to play live but also because I have a good

working relationship with my booking agent. Touring can be both creatively rewarding and financially successful when everything is set up right; it can be a very unpleasant experience when the tour is poorly planned.

It is easy to explain what a *good* agent does by giving examples of problems a *careless* agent gets you into on the road. Here are a few low points in my early touring experiences:

- a) booking a big venue in a small college town during spring break when everyone is at the beach (a guaranteed dead night);
- b) arriving in Minneapolis and learning from the local paper that two bands you have never heard of are on the bill with you;

c) booking a show in Vancouver in January right after a Salt Lake City gig when the band is traveling in a van with a trailer with no chains or snow tires (the drive is impossible);

d) booking a heavy metal club in the wrong part of town when the band has played the appropriate alternative club successfully in the past (beer bottles will fly);

e) catering serves meat stew when the rider calls for vegetarian meals;

f) the itinerary indicates an 11:00 show time but the club owner holds it until 1:30 a.m. to sell more beer.

Frank Riley at Monterey Peninsula Artists began booking me when *Girlfriend* was re-

leased in 1991. Since I was based in New York, I started like most alternative bands in the area do—in a van driving up and down the eastern United States playing venues like Chestnut Cabaret (Philadelphia), TT the Bears (Cambridge), the 9:30 Club (D.C.), CBGB's (N.Y.C.), Toad's Place (New Haven), the 40 Watt Club (Athens), the Point (Atlanta) and the Cabaret Metro (Chicago). If 300 people showed up to see us and we made \$300, we were very happy.

Fortunately, *Girlfriend* began getting a lot of radio airplay and the record started to sell. As a result, more people were interested in seeing us play live and they were familiar with my music. My manager Russell Carter and Frank worked out a strategy to book me as an opening act in big venues and then to double back into markets as a headline act. In most cities we went from small clubs to big clubs and then theaters. The game plan has always been to keep ticket prices down and to book venues that we feel confident we can sell out by the night of the show.

An agent should be good at keeping career goals in mind while at the same time focusing on all the details of the tour. In the end, it is not only what you do, but what your agent does for you that makes the difference between a great night and a nightmare.

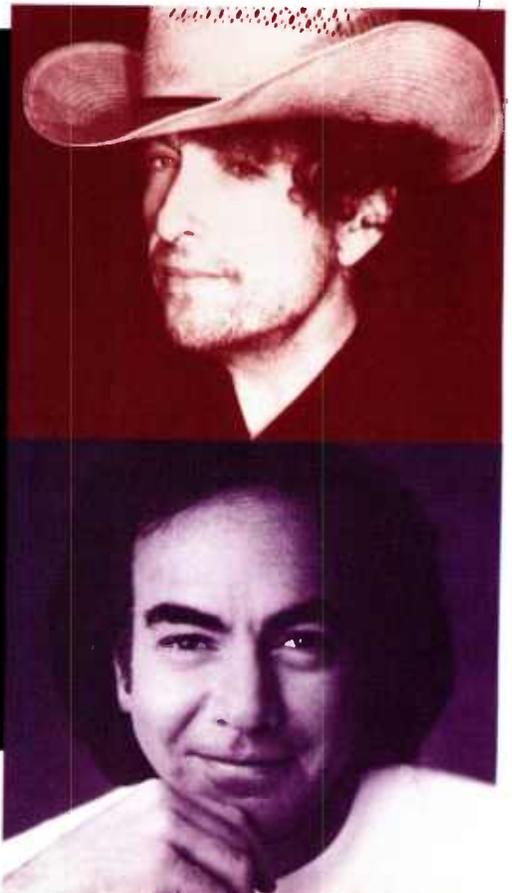
# LX



AZ

## DYLAN AND DIAMOND SHAKE UP THE STATUS QUO

The hegemony of ASCAP and BMI, the two music rights collection agencies that dominate pop song publishing, was shaken in January when Bob Dylan and Neil Diamond announced that they were moving their mighty catalogs from ASCAP to SESAC, a performing rights organization that has been around for 64 years, most of it spent gathering dust. The sudden aggressiveness of SESAC owes to its being purchased by a group of go-getters that includes former SBK architect Stephen Swid. Dylan and Diamond both have huge and lucrative catalogs (who else but Dylan gets songs covered by U2, Guns N' Roses, Bruce Springsteen and Neil Young? Who else but Diamond gets songs covered by Urge Overkill and UB40?). Their defection makes SESAC a third player in a field where some songwriters feel no love for the other two.—B.F.



MUSICIAN

World Radio History



### QUESTIONABLE TALENT

In a recent issue of the British journal *The Psychologist*, several eminent researchers dispute the notion that musical ability is an inborn "talent" rather than a capacity that can be developed by anyone, according to *MuSICA Research Notes* published by the Music and Science Information Computer Archive (MSICA). Supporting evidence includes widespread musical skills in non-Western societies, lack of childhood indicators of adult success in music and the consistently large amount of practice necessary to become proficient on an instrument. Furthermore, the researchers believe that attributions of natural talent are unduly discouraging to those who don't receive them. This inhibits people from making music who might otherwise enjoy it and make positive cultural contributions.—T.G.

ILLUSTRATION BY MELANIE BECK

EXPERT WITNESS

# Retailing Albums Beyond Record Stores

by Dan Storper

ONE DAY in 1991 I walked into one of my Putumayo clothing stores in New York City and found myself listening to three intense hard rock songs. Like many retailers, I'd always felt that music was an important part of creating a successful shopping environ-

ment. My instinct was that folk and world music would be more appropriate in stores like ours, which sell international clothing and accessories to women.

I began to search for music which would make me, and hopefully my employees and customers, feel good. It wasn't an easy process. Subscribing to magazines like *Dirty Linen* and England's *Folk Roots* and asking for opinions from world and folk music fans gradually introduced me to some great music. But I was spending thousands of dollars in the process.

The research paid off when my first few compilation retail tapes transformed the environment in the stores. All of a sudden our salespeople found themselves enjoying work more and customers seemed to bop around the shop.

As a member of Businesses for Social Responsibility, I had gotten to know Richard Foos, the president of Rhino Records, and told him of my experiences. I suggested a collaboration with Rhino whereby we'd choose the music, develop the packaging and liner notes and Rhino would license and manufacture the CDs. We'd split the sales by having Rhino sell to record retail and Putumayo sell to the alternative market.

That market now includes 1200 gift, book, clothing stores

and cafes. The positives working for us were 1) most retailers know how important music is in creating a positive shopping environment (but usually can't be bothered to deal with it), and 2) the ones who play

good music are always asked about the music they play. We offered a chance for them to receive free music to play in their stores and earn money by selling CDs.

Many retailers will help local musicians by either playing or selling their music. Don't underestimate the value of a shop playing your tape. If it's music which creates a positive feeling, it is likely to turn a customer on. If the retailer won't sell the music, you might consider leaving a copy and letting the store know who is selling your music in the area. Who knows? That customer bopping around the store might even be the head of an A&R division.

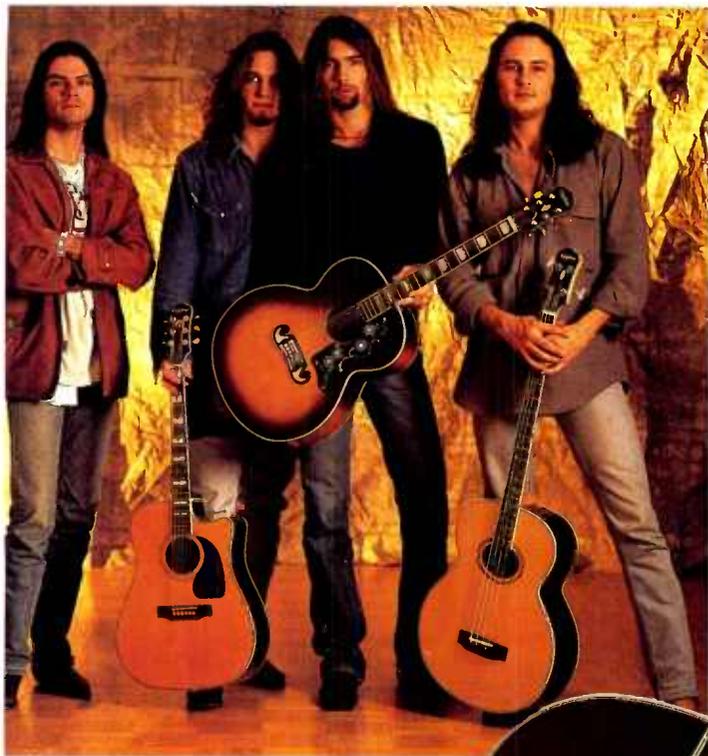


ILLUSTRATION BY RICK SEALOCK

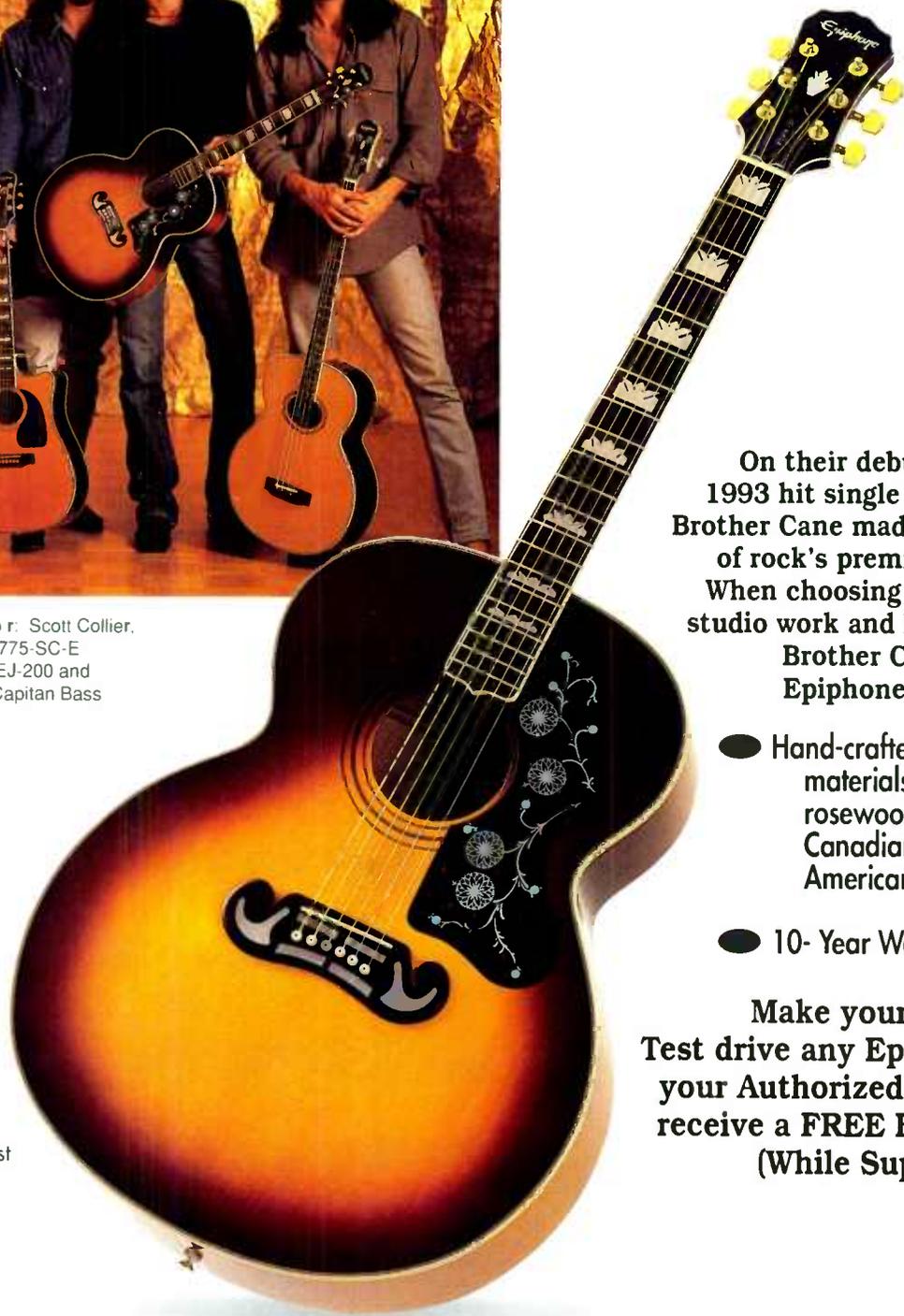
### UNCLE JOHN'S PAD

Jerry Garcia's reputation as a renaissance man continues to grow. First came Hillary Clinton's admission that she had purchased several of Garcia's original-design ties to spice up her husband's wardrobe. Now the Beverly Prescott Hotel in Los Angeles has opened the second "J. Garcia Suite," a hotel room appointed with curtains, bedspreads and framed illustrations by the former art school student and current éminence grise of the Grateful Dead. Rates are \$300 a night—a bit pricey—but San Francisco's Triton Hotel, which debuted the first J. Garcia Suite, reports that it's the most popular room in the place.—B.F.

# The Mark of a Great Guitarist.



**Brother Cane.** l to r: Scott Collier,  
Roman Glick / PR-775-SC-E  
Damon Johnson / EJ-200 and  
Glenn Maxey / El Capitan Bass



On their debut CD with the 1993 hit single "Got No Shame", Brother Cane made their mark as one of rock's premiere new groups. When choosing a guitar for their studio work and live performances, Brother Cane picked Epiphone Acoustics.

- Hand-crafted using the finest materials including solid rosewood, select mahogany, Canadian spruce and North American Maple
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**BUSH** "A vignette is a good thing," concludes Bush singer Gavin Rossdale, "because I like slices. Sometimes the big picture is boring."

The big picture for Rossdale's band is overwhelming rather than boring, thanks to an accessible, thoughtful yet cool vignette-filled album, *Sixteen Stone*. Its late-1994 release, on Trauma/Interscope, features a dozen cuts, led by the infectious "Everything Zen," which has the aura of an edgier, smarter, livelier Psychedelic Furs.

The English quartet, rounded out by guitarist Nigel Pulsford, bassist Dave Parsons and drummer Robin Goodridge, formed nearly three years ago with minor aspirations. "I didn't think about success like you do when you're young and want to jump on the road and screw loads of girls," ruminates Rossdale. "I became a musician late, at 18 or 19. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I always felt a bit, you know, like any person feels...different," he explains.

Actually, Rossdale is a bit different. He segues from Allen Ginsberg imitations to discussing the writing of Arthur Miller to dead-on Barry Manilow impersonations. He uses the adjective "brilliant" to describe everything from witnessing Nirvana at the L.A. Roxy to his beloved Puli dog, Winston. And he uses it, awestruck, to describe his quiet elation over Bush's sudden stateside radio success, which has left the 27-year-old singer/songwriter seemingly embarrassed: "There's much more 'me' than ever before in the world."—K.T.

**THE CRUEL SEA** It was no surprise when the Cruel Sea dashed across town after a New York gig last year to catch Booker T & the MGs. Before acquiring the services of singer Tex Perkins, the Australian group was an all-instrumental unit heavily influenced by the MGs, the Meters and Lee Perry.

"I was reluctant to join at first," Perkins recalls, "because I really liked the fact that they were an instrumental group. I didn't want to be the one to ruin that purity."

But Perkins did sign on in 1990, and over the course of an EP and two albums the Cruel Sea has developed a unique blend of soulful grooves, sprung world beat rhythms, Stones-like aggression and punky attitude. To everyone's surprise

Down Under, the fivesome swept the major categories at last year's Aria Awards, the Oz equivalent of the Grammys, with its '93 set *The Honeymoon Is Over*. That album has since become the Sea's U.S. bow, on A&M; a new set is scheduled for late summer here.

While Perkins and his mates are delighted by the large audiences now flocking to their music, they are less happy about the concurrent embrace of the Australian media.

"All the horrible little ways they can try to turn you into rock stars—that's what the whole system tries to do," Perkins says. "Because there aren't a whole lot of rock stars here. Once they think they see one, they go crazy—'Oh, we got one!'"—C.M.

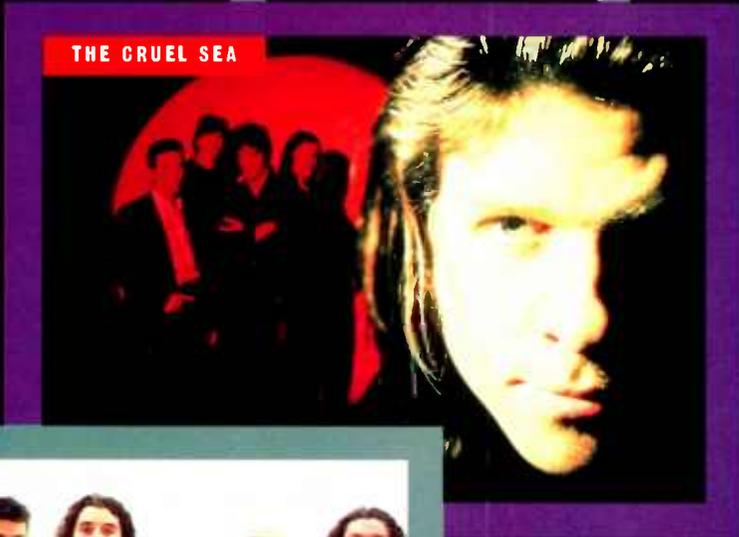
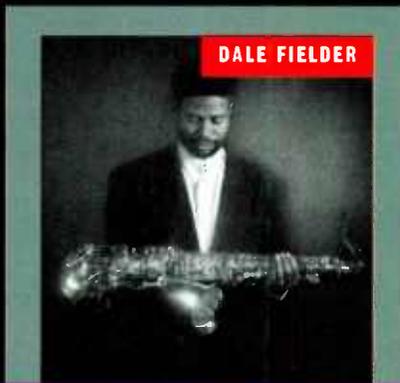
**DALE FIELDER** Decisions, decisions. For saxophonist Dale Fielder, the choice between alto and tenor came down to opportunity, necessity and economic reality.

"In my high school years I played tenor on R&B gigs with some of the bands on the Stax Records circuit," Fielder says, "but when I played jazz or a legit gig I would always use the alto sax."

An encounter with the legendary bebopper Sonny Stitt convinced Fielder he didn't

have to choose between his two loves, and since getting an endorsement deal with Yamaha and procuring a tenor last year, his playing has come together quite nicely, thank you. His latest CD, *Know Thyself*, on his Clarion Jazz label (6245 Bristol Pkwy., Suite 215, Culver City, CA 90230), showcases his writing and features such names to watch for as Greg Kurstin (piano) and Ocie Davis, III (drums). Fielder has developed a strong L.A. following through his long-running weekend gig at Fifth Street Dick's Coffee House, ground zero of the young South Central jazz scene.

"When it comes to writing, above everything would be Wayne Shorter," Fielder says. "Elmo Hope was also a big influence. And Geri Allen—we're like brother and sister and shared an apartment in New York for four years. So I had an opportunity to observe how a real composer works."—A.G.



MARK LEBON

# MICRO SIZE • MINI PRICE • MAGNIFICENT REPUTATION



**OUR** MicroSeries 1202 12-channel mic/line mixer was designed to solve problems. Space problems. Budget problems. Input and submix problems. Impedance and level matching problems.

It was designed to provide anybody with \$399<sup>1</sup> the same low noise and high headroom found on big professional consoles.

**TODAY** the MS1202 is at work in thousands of home studios, video post production facilities, corporate multimedia department, radio stations and film location shoots. We even know several recording engineers who bring an MS1202 along with them on sessions. They use it for submixing effects and for its superior mic preamps — even when the session is being done on a mega expensive console.

In fact, the MS1202 is so successful that it's spawned a host of eager competitors. But only the original has received accolades not just from pro audio magazines, but from video, broadcast and even consumer audio reviewers. Only the MicroSeries 1202 is currently used in facilities as diverse as NASA, CBS Broadcasting, AT&T, Yanni's percussionist and Phillips Interactive Video<sup>2</sup>.

**CALL** us toll-free for more information on the ultra-compact, 12-channel mic/line mixer that pros really use day in and day out.

<sup>2</sup> mention in this ad denotes ownership and/or useage but not official endorsement.

"Overall winner in grading categories" *Keyboard Magazine Under-5600 Mixer Shoot-Out*



"In spite of the unit's diminutive size, it's easy to work all the controls. There's space around each knob for your

fingers... all inputs and outputs are on the top, making it simple to interface with your system. From its military-issue steel construction to top quality electronics, the little board is over-engineered. It offers stunning audio quality, tons of flexibility, sturdy construction and a palatable price tag." *Videomaker Magazine*

"I can't say enough good things about the workhorse Mackie MicroSeries 1202. It is an absolutely essential audio tool in my daily work. I would be at a loss without it. The more I think about it, the MS1202 may just be one of the best audio bargains of all time." *Radio World Magazine*

"This little mixer has the same electronics as Mackie's incredibly popular CR-1604. The 1202 is billed as a 'low noise, high headroom mixer' and it certainly lives up to its word. The board has a very clear, clean, quiet sound. For home and studio recording applications, I can see the board becoming equally popular as a 'starter unit' and as an auxilliary mixer." *Recording Magazine*

"GRADE: A. One of the product wonders of the pro audio world, the MicroSeries 1202 mic/line mixer is priced so ridiculously low that audiophiles can make good use of it for home recording projects. I tried it with a CD player via the tape inputs and found its sound as clean as that of some audiophile stereo preamps costing twice the price." *Audio Magazine*



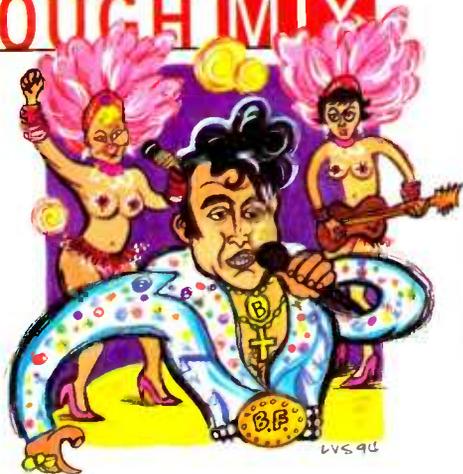
<sup>1</sup> Suggested retail price. Your mileage may vary. Price is slightly higher in Canada and outer reaches of the Spiral Nebulae.

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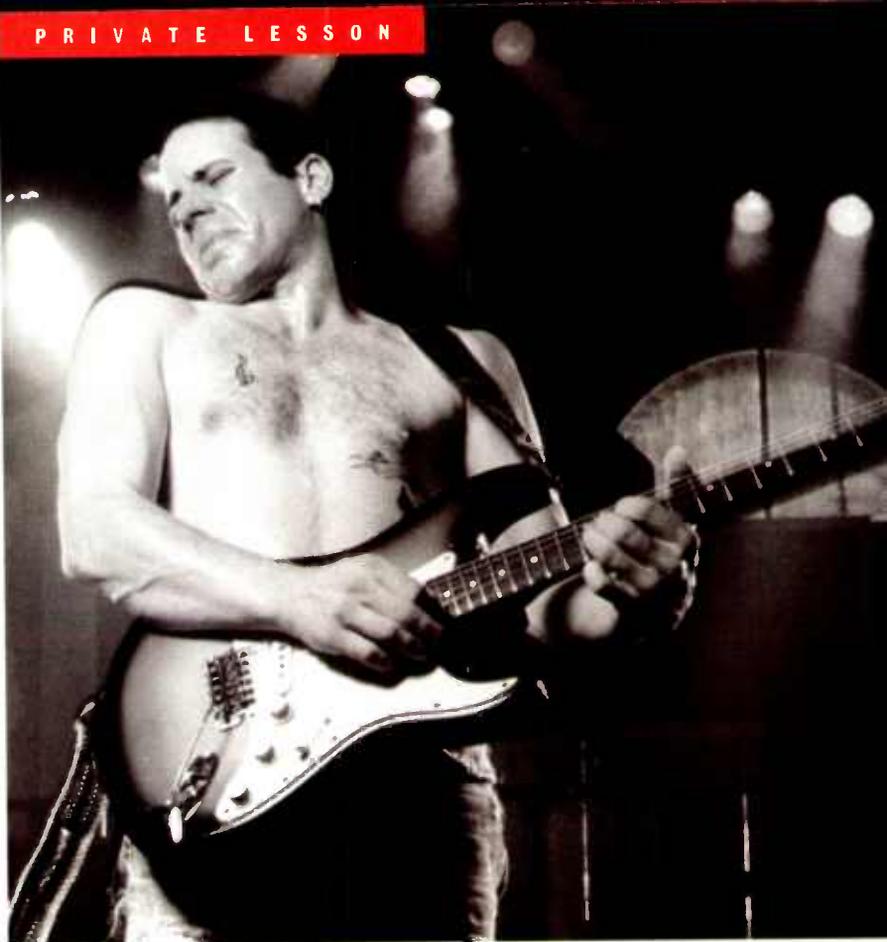
# ROUGH MIX



**POP STARS RECENTLY PLAYING LAS VEGAS**

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- Mary Chapin Carpenter** Alladin Theatre
- Kool & the Gang** The Congo Room
- James Brown** The Congo Room
- Chuck Berry** The Crystal Room
- The Neville Brothers** The Crystal Room
- Wayne Newton** Pharoah's Theater

*This month's Rough Mix was written by Bill Flanagan, Dan Forte, Andrew Gilbert, Ted Greenwald, Rob Kemp, Chris Morris and Katherine Turman.*



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**CHRIS DUARTE**

At 31 Chris Duarte has already been through several evolutions, both musical and personal—from free jazz to blues-rock, from heroin addiction to a touring schedule that would exhaust an athlete. “All it is is being a musician,” he says. “I want to explore every avenue of music I can. I hear something, and I want to go that way. It’s not just a trendy thing; it’s phases in my life. I want to explore Indian music, bop, rock, and I want to take blues another way.”

Disguised as a Double Troublesome trio steamer, Duarte’s Silvertone debut *Texas Sugar-Strat Magik* subtly succeeds in moving the blues forward and sideways, expanding rather than merely aping the legacies of Jimmie and Stevie Ray Vaughan. “I finally discovered real blues in Austin,” the native Texan asserts, “as opposed to San Antonio blues like AC-DC doing ‘I’ve Got the Jack.’ When Jimmie speaks it hits right to my core as much as Trane—whereas someone like Yngwie

Malmsteen ain’t sayin’ nothin’ to me. And Stevie probably hit me even more.”

On the minor-key “Shilo,” dedicated to both Vaughans, Duarte demonstrates his take on the sort of right-hand blur Stevie would display on “Dirty Pool.” “I’m moving around the Bm chord,” he explains (Ex. 1), “moving the upper tensions around while keeping the 1, 3 and 5 the same. I think I have a little more technical knowledge of how the chord moves around. I’m thinking of a melody on top; Stevie would mainly just think of chords (Ex. 2).” To keep his heavy-gauge strings from breaking during bends, Duarte—like Stevie Ray Vaughan—tunes all six strings down a half step.—D.F.

**Ex. 1** NOTE: Tune down a semitone (Low to high E- A- D- G- B E-)

Bm

TAB

7	10	9	10	7	9	10	9	7	10	9	10	12	14	17	16	14
9	9	9	9	7	7	7	7	7	12	12	12	12	15	15	15	15
9	9	9	9	7	7	7	7	7	11	11	11	11	16	16	16	16

**Ex. 2** Bm

TAB

7	9	7	10	9	7	7	7	7	7	10	12	12	10	9	7
9	9	7	10	9	7	7	7	7	7	10	12	12	10	9	7
9	9	7	10	9	7	7	7	7	7	10	12	12	10	9	7

NOTATION BY CHARYLU ROBERTS

# Billy Taylor HOMAGE



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AT A TIME WHEN British pop is struggling to make inroads into the American charts, the stateside success of a South London girl named Des'ree is fairly remarkable. More remarkable still is the fact that her Top 10 single "You Gotta Be"—"it's almost like it's an anthem now," she says—was released in June of last year.

The perseverance of 550 Music/Epic in working the record is a reflection of the label's belief in its upbeat message and in the delivery of that message by a 25-year-old who won't conform to the expectations placed on black female singers. Even so, the fact that "You Gotta Be" has risen to the top with little support from black radio is a strange state of affairs.

"She's a black singer, *very* black," says Ashley Ingram, who co-wrote and co-produced "You Gotta Be." "But she's talking about issues where women

that I can't be a whole, accepted person."

I tell her there must be people out there who are buying her records *and* Mary J. Blige's.

"That's my whole argument," she replies. "Are they saying the ordinary man in the street doesn't have the ears to enjoy Beethoven *and* Miles Davis *and* SWV in their collection all at the same time?"

When Des'ree talks she sounds like the schoolgirl she must have been ten years ago: a precocious and slightly impatient young woman encouraged to work hard by her Guyanese mother, given to few vices and possessed of an inner strength she chooses to call "spiritual." It's not difficult to picture her, attractive though she is, staying indoors to work on her five A-level courses while her friends frittered away their time on boys. She exudes the peculiar sexlessness of the gospel singer.



# Hitting the unexpected note

should be stronger and have more respect for themselves—for their identity, their race, their culture—and some people don't want to hear that."

Sitting in her London publicist's office just hours before leaving for Africa on "the first proper holiday I've had in two years," Des'ree reflects on the predicament of being deemed "not black enough for black radio."

"It's very disconcerting, and I'm very angry about it," she says. "How dare people assume I'm a one-dimensional figure! I'm a black female artist, but I shouldn't have to follow any particular fashion or trend in order to be acceptable."

It's not even as if Des'ree sounds particularly haughty about this. But it remains crucial to her that her music, on one level at least, is perceived as black. "I've always wanted to keep the spirit of my parents' history alive, because I feel that black people, wherever they are, experience some kind of oppression or repression in themselves. I won't allow that to hold me down or make me feel

"I suppose my sister and I were quite hard-working," she concedes. "It wasn't as though that was all you did and there was nothing else, but it was a priority, and once you had that covered then you could afford to enjoy everything else."

Among the things Des'ree enjoyed doing after she'd finished her homework was listening to the music of Stevie Wonder and Bob Marley. "I didn't listen to much music, but I listened to them *all* the time. It's funny that I listened to those two male artists very early on. Then I started listening to Donny Hathaway, Sam Cooke, Gil Scott-Heron and Joan Armatrading. My dad was a big jazz fan, so I had some very strong jazz influences. That was what got me interested in the personality of music—the character of an instrumental piece. I used to sing over jazz records, and just as a saxophone would go to a note that I didn't expect, so vocally I wanted to go to the unexpected note."

In the '80s there were thousands of South London teenagers who could have told you the same story. Some watched





# "It amazes me

**that you can  
walk away from  
a club even more  
of a stranger  
than when you  
walked in."**

For a while it looked as though *I Ain't Movin'*, the follow-up album released last spring, would go the same way as *Mind Adventures*. But in America, the promotion department of 550/Epic refused to let "You Gotta Be" die. "This is a song that a lot of people felt was very special and were very passionate about," 550 president Polly Anthony told *Billboard*. Thanks in great part to the exposure of the song's video on VH1, as well as to a seven-week tour with fellow Brit Seal, the single began its impressive chart ascent in November.

"The Seal tour was very important," says Des'ree, who is about to start her own U.S. club tour. "Every show we did, the record

the growth of a homegrown soul scene while nurturing themselves on a similar diet of American heroes. They monitored the progress of acts such as Linx, Junior Giscombe and Light of the World, and wondered whether maybe they had a chance of making it themselves. One of the Brit Soul acts who made it very big indeed was Imagination, a trio featuring dreadlocked bassist Ashley Ingram.

Imagination's moment was long gone when Ingram walked into CBS's London offices in 1991 to see A&R man Lincoln Elias. (Elias (a protégé of Muff Winwood) had already helped to take Brit Soul one vital stage further with his signings of Terence Trent D'Arby and Roachford—both of whom Des'ree has since worked with—and was at that moment in a state of great excitement over the demo tape Des'ree had brought in.

"Lincoln told me he was thinking of signing this girl," remembers Ingram, "and he played me this very rough demo of the song that later became 'Feel So High.' It's not often that a singer can present a demo tape and expect the powers-that-be to acknowledge the full wonders, but on a creative level she shone. She leapt out of the cassette."

Ingram badgered Elias to give him a chance with Des'ree, and was rewarded with the chance to work with her on "Feel So High." When the record was first played on British radio, its stripped-down authority was immediately startling: Completely free of reverb or any discernible effects, it sounded like a young Anita Baker perched on your shoulder and singing directly into your ear.

"The treatment of 'Feel So High' was very clear," says Ingram. "It was, don't fancy this up. Get it out there, get it pure, get it raw, and let people make their minds up. So it was a very simple, almost invisible production. See, Dezzie has this ability whereby if you put too much around her, her body rejects it."

It's worth recalling the degree to which soul music had been discredited in Britain by 1992. Tired of the vacant over-emoting of so many vocal gymnasts, the public had had enough of soul's glossy implorings and were turning toward the harder edge of rap and techno. Perhaps it wasn't altogether surprising that Des'ree's debut album *Mind Adventures* (1992) failed to repeat the success of its soft, trippy hit single.

seemed to sell a bit more. People were maybe aware of me through VH1, but then they actually got a taste of my music when I showcased about seven songs in 35 minutes. The reaction to performing is very infectious and can become quite addictive. Also, I was able to see more of America. I made an effort to go out and look at places of significance, because otherwise you can just be stuck in your hotel room watching CNN."

Asked if the message of "You Gotta Be" could lead people to perceive her as a kind of role model in America, she says she hopes the song will have some healing effect. "I've had my own share of difficulties, I haven't just sailed through life, but I've noticed that ever since I was a child I was always the one that stood slightly away and was never afraid to be on my own. But it's hard to tell people they can turn their lives around, because I don't want to approach it in that way. You have to be careful not to just be didactic."

How much room is there in the American pop market for this spiritual, soulful black music?

"It's hard, because there isn't that much instant gratification in my music. People don't really want to talk about things of a spiritual nature. We've become so advanced in the technological field that everything we once relied on—dreams, songs, stories—has gone. We've become so hard and so hostile and insular. It always amazes me that you can go to a club and walk away even more of a stranger than when you walked in."

"If Des'ree stays true to what she believes," says Ashley Ingram, "she will have no problems. She's at a level now where she's going to see a lot of change. So many artists seem to lose the plot after the first or second album, but I don't think that'll happen to Des'ree. Like she says, she ain't movin'."

## FUTURE VOICES

**O**n the road, DES'REE uses a Shure Beta-58 mike, and in the studio a Neumann U87. At home, her synthesizer setup includes a Korg M1 and 01/W, a Roland U220, Rhodes MK-80 and Korg X-3, reproduced through JBL speakers.

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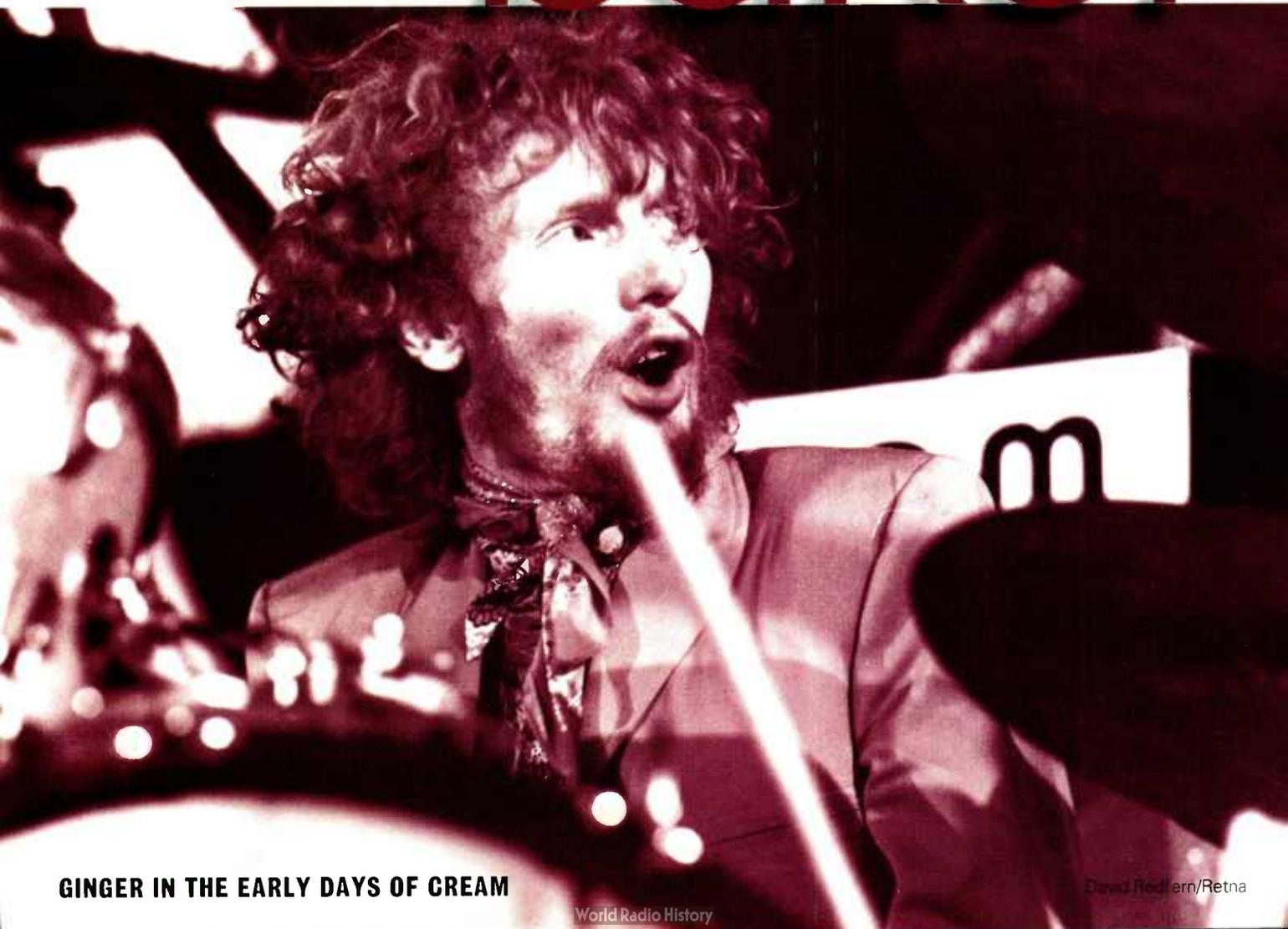
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# once ginger more rises to the top baker



GINGER IN THE EARLY DAYS OF CREAM



IT'S EASY TO SPOT THE STABLES WHERE GINGER BAKER KEEPS HIS HORSES IN THE RANCH country east of Denver, all rolling horizons except where the craggy Rockies shadow the western rims. It's a big white barn with freshly painted blue and green stripes across the doors to the paddocks, an iridescent

## the country gentleman

splash against a palette of earth tones. It's easy to spot Ginger too, his limber, rail-thin frame purposefully striding through the barn in a flannel shirt, jeans and calf boots, attending to the morning chores. There's a whip to the air, but he doesn't seem to notice as he offers a brisk, friendly greeting, says he'll be along shortly and commences to pitch hay into a cart. A moment later he's jumping into a tractor cab and pulling the load off to a corner of his spread.

His house is a modest two-story affair, with comfortable couches in the living room, no sign of a musical career anywhere and a nice view off the back porch. After the chores are done, and Ginger has carefully steeped a pot of tea—"this is how you drink tea, my boy," he enthuses, pouring out a cup—he stands on the landing and watches his horses grazing contentedly below. He can't play them at the moment, having recently separated his

by mark rowland

# The impression was I was only in it for the money. And I was. But that doesn't mean I'm not a good musician.

left shoulder in a polo match, and missing the sport seems to pain him far more than the injury itself. "I can ride," he says, "but I can't play, and it can't do the shoulder much good to ride either." He points with his good arm. "That mare looks pretty good, don't she?" he says with pride. "Twenty-two years old this January. Bit me more times than I can count."

Ginger Baker will be 56 years old this summer. He has a gaunt, ruddy face that can seem as unapproachably grave as a monument; then he'll burst into laughter, and turn into a kid. His once red mane is generously flecked with gray, and his beard is a short rough stubble. It's a look that suggests an English garden, not wild but not exactly domesticated; the look of a practical man with an untamed spirit. Once upon a time he put together a legendary rock trio in England, built a world-class recording studio in Nigeria, tended olive groves in Italy. Now he's in Colorado, caring for his brood of nine horses, playing polo and making music when the muse beckons and the money is right, not necessarily in that order.

"I'm a professional musician," he says laconically. "I play the drums, people give me money. And I'm a polo player. I need to earn money. It's an expensive sport to play.

"I really can't do many things," he goes on. "I'm a good driver—brought the first Range Rover in Nigeria, you know. Riding a bicycle—I was a club junior champion when I was 15. Playing the drums, music in general—and polo. But that's about the limit. Oh—and building."

Uh, actually that seems like a pretty good range.

"It's not bad," he agrees. "But things like organizing—I'm the most untidy person in the world. You see my tools down in the barn? There's a big pile in one corner of the feed room. I envy people who've got them all locked up in racks and in place. And I'm the worst businessman in the world. I just trust people. Someone comes



up, looks me in the eye and says, 'This is this, and we need so much to do it,' and if I've got the money, I'd say, 'Okay.' Ninety-eight percent of the time it's goodbye money. I'm real easy to con. That's a big fault."

But didn't you handle the business end when you formed Cream?

"Yeah, I used to do all the accounts. I used to do every gig, knew exactly how much we earned, and it's all written down in a book. I did that through Blind Faith too. I was married, got a kid—I had to pay the rent. Music was my job. But there again, you see I'd gotten a lot of what you could only call disrespect from people I really loved, because I suppose the impression was I was only *in* it for the money. And I was. But it doesn't mean to say I'm not a good musician. I knew I was a bloody good musician, and if I was, then in my opinion I should earn bloody good money!"

Point made, he sighs and sips his tea reflectively. "Now I know how to earn money. It's keepin' it in me pocket that's my problem."



The Ginger Baker Trio at Ocean Way studio in Hollywood, March 1994: Baker at left, Charlie Haden and Bill Frisell.

CHIP STERN

He speaks with the rueful tone of a survivor who's absorbed many of life's lessons the hard way, but without real bitterness or regret. Maybe, like a character in a Camus novel, he's learned to live without the burdens of hope. Or maybe he's just happy that his rollercoaster life seems to have found a pleasant plateau. Because after years of rock superstardom with Cream and Blind Faith, followed by more than a decade's worth of

impoverished junkiedom, Ginger Baker has slowly but surely embarked on a remarkable artistic renaissance.

First came a series of fine albums in the late '80s produced by Bill Laswell—"he got me back into *wanting* to play"—to remind listeners of Baker's distinctive style, thundering and spacious, a meld of African rhythms and jazz accents propelled with the directness of a heartbeat. Then came a critically acclaimed though otherwise overlooked record with Masters of Reality, the alternative-before-alternative-was-hip *Sunrise on the Sufferbus*, that simply died for lack of marketing savvy.

Next up was the 1993 induction of Cream into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, a ceremony which featured the band's first performance in 25 years: dead-on takes of "Sunshine of Your Love," "Born Under



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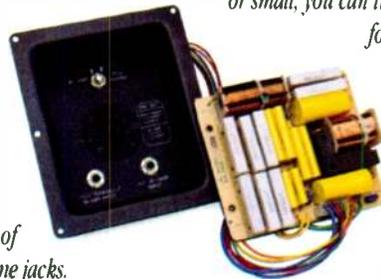
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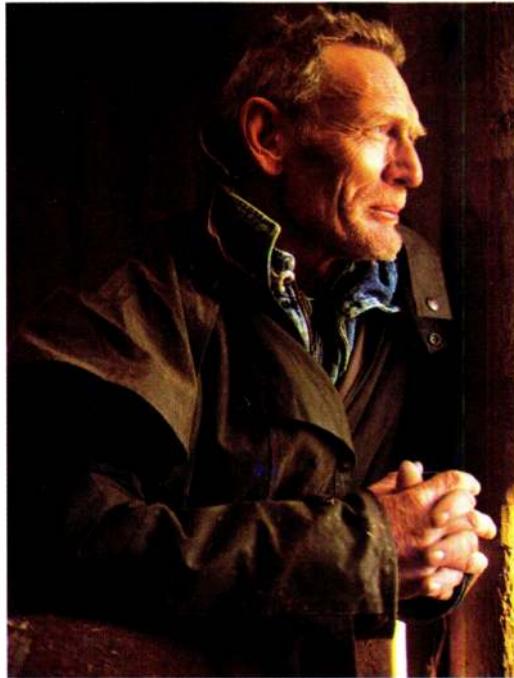
# I think Eric didn't want to play with me after a while 'cause I used to lift him into unknown territory.

a Bad Sign" and "Crossroads" that left that tuxedoed crowd of industry execs and pop superstars gasping. 1994 brought two more trio projects, including a mediocre album with Jack Bruce and Gary Moore (BBM's *Around the Next Dream*) that sold well but begged unflattering comparisons as Cream-lite.

Far more to Baker's liking is *Going Back Home* by the Ginger Baker Trio, an instrumental outing on Atlantic Records with jazz virtuosos Charlie Haden and Bill Frisell. Upon its release last fall, the CD promptly vaulted into the *Billboard* Jazz Top Ten; by year's end it was showing up on several critics' Ten Best lists as well. Produced by *Musician* contributing editor Chip Stern, it's the first record in many years to showcase Baker's talents as a composer of subversively infectious melodies, and to position the drummer the way he sees himself, as a jazz musician who happens to be a rock legend—not the other way round.

"I wasn't sure it was going to work," Baker admits of the recording sessions, which took place over five days in Los Angeles. "Chip came up with the idea and I said, get it together and I'll do it. I wasn't concerned about it: I thought it was either *not* going to happen in a big way, or it was going to be amazing. And it was amazing. I had never played with Bill, and on his tunes I said to him, isn't what I'm playing too busy and annoying you or something? And he said, no, man, play it! I don't think he ever had drum tracks like that before, especially 'Where We Go,' that 12/8 thing. And it was cool, you know. Because playing with some other people"—he laughs—"it's 'Man, can you play straight on this?' And you go, okay, boom-dah, boom-boom-dah, boom-dah, boom-boom-dah..."

He lets his voice trail off in resignation. "If it's just the same rhythm all the time, it's very boring. I love to create something new every time. We're jazz players. What we were playing on that album, to me,



is straightforward, normal jazz. We were, like, doing a gig."

What was especially fulfilling, Baker adds, was getting Haden's and Frisell's support for his own compositions, such as the pretty madrigal-sounding "I Lu Kron."

"That was something that had been going through my head for years," he explains. "But I'd be sitting in the studio with Jack Bruce playing and I'd get this 'Oh, man, get off the piano.' I'm sure Jack heard me play those tunes a hundred times. With Bill and Charlie, I played it once and Charlie said, 'Man, that sounds great, let's do it.' That's the difference—there's no ego thing. It's not 'You're the drummer, you can't write music'—which is a load of crap. I am a complete musician. I was doing big-band arrangements in 1961."

If Ginger's comments toward Jack Bruce suggest a long and complicated relationship with his most famous rhythm-mate, well, that's what it is. Baker's memory is understandably spotty in some respects, but when it comes to past slights he's the elephant who never forgets.

"This is my biggest problem, you see," he observes. "If I speak the truth, people don't like it. I touch nerves. It's very unfortunate. It doesn't make you friends."

"Working with Jack is, you know, not always easy," he says, not without affection. "He tends to pull the pop star thing. But I'm a bit more patient than I was in the past. I don't get angry anymore. I just laugh and let it go."

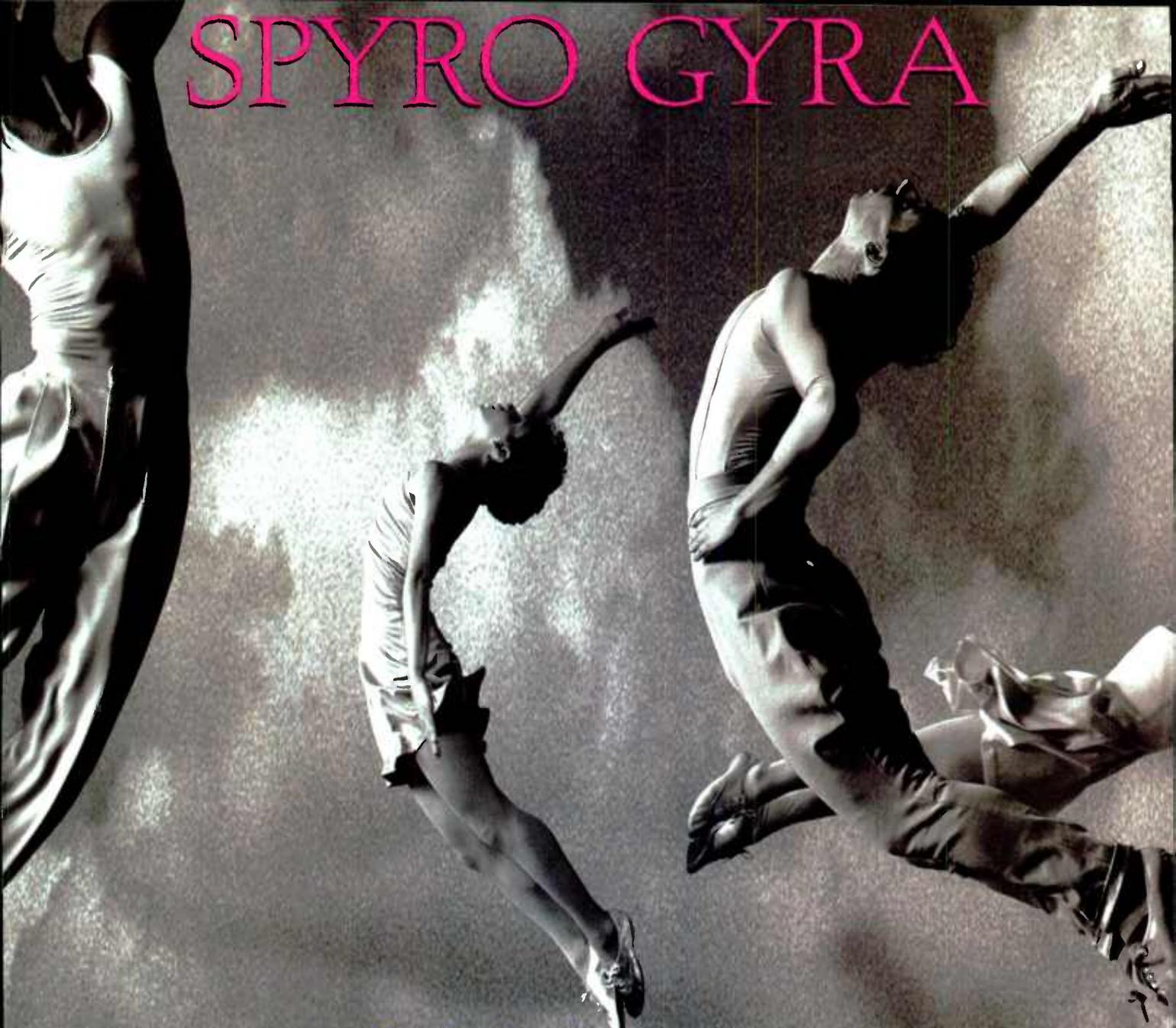
'Twasn't always so. One story surrounding the birth of Cream is that when Eric Clapton showed up at that band's first rehearsal, he discovered his new mates in the throes of a fistfight. In fact, Baker and Bruce had been playing—and quarreling—together for years, key figures in an early-'60s British jazz scene who'd been raised on bebop

## BAKER'S RECIPE

**G**INGER BAKER plays Ludwig Drums and Zildjian cymbals, and he's not shy about explaining why. "I wouldn't use anything else," he declares. "The secret is in the shell. What bothers me is that the drum [kit] is an American invention, and people buy these Asian [made] facsimiles. It's my opinion from practical experience that the only people who can make drums that sound like drums are Americans! Yamaha makes very fine flutes, very fine pianos and they make drum kits that look fantastic. And their fittings are quite good. But the shells don't work.

They've obviously taken the American drums and analyzed them to bits. But it's the way the shells are put together by hand that gives them their resonance. I only wish more drummers would stand by American companies, because I can foresee a situation where drums will only be made in Japan and Germany. I believe their success has to do with economic and business techniques. Unfortunately, you Americans started this sort of thing by destroying the British aircraft industry in the same way. Now the only people who can reverse the situation are the drummers themselves."

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but were looking for ways to make a creative transition toward rock.

"When I was at school, I was listening to Max Roach," Baker says. "Philly Joe Jones, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones. Then I was in a trad jazz band, and they wanted me to play the Baby Dodds parts, so they gave me all these records to listen to. That was a complete revolution to me, 'cause all of the sudden you can see where Max and these guys came from. That had an enormous effect, which still comes out."

Which is one of the reasons Cream's

music remains so enduring. It's rock power with a jazz pulse. Baker, Bruce and Eric Clapton went beyond rock standard time to weave rhythmic as well as melodic improvisations.

"But I think that's why Eric didn't want to play with me after a while," Baker muses, "cause I used to lift him into unknown territory. Quite often he'd come up to me and go, 'Where's the beat?' He's an incredible fucking jazz player but he doesn't think he is! On Blind Faith, 'Do What You Like' in 5/4, Eric played beautiful. But he doesn't

think he did, because he doesn't *want* to go into unknown territory. You start getting into other dimensions. I think Eric got a bit scared, finally.

"Man, he used to just go for it," Baker sighs, slipping into a tone of reverence familiar to many a Clapton fan. "Incredible things were happening, time-wise. The first time we got together, we played for hours and hours. No two gigs were ever the same. But I think the band was doomed early on, when we reached a point where just to appear onstage was enough to get this rapturous applause. That's very weird for a progressive musician. And if we stayed together we'd probably still have to be playing 'Spoonful' and 'Sunshine of Your Love.'

"I get really pissed off when people put Cream and Led Zeppelin on the same level," he admits. "Because Led Zeppelin were nowhere near the level of musician that Cream was, with the exception of maybe Jimmy. Cream did get very loud though. And the louder it got the less I enjoyed it. The other two members had those huge stacks of Marshalls and they'd be trying to catch up with each other. Sometimes my ears would be ringing in the hotel room."

The realization that Cream, like Zeppelin, ultimately helped grandfather heavy metal music continues to rankle. "Volume," Baker says carefully, "is the last resort of scoundrels."

Cream and Blind Faith—the latter is arguably the finest one-album band in pop history—catapulted Baker to the top of the rock pantheon—and with it, unfortunately, a growing dependence on heroin. Yet his musicianship remained in top form. Last year, during the recording sessions for *Going Back Home*, Jim Keltner showed up one night and recalled encamping himself in front of Blind Faith's drum riser during their 1970 tour, astonished by Baker's prowess while engorged on an array of substances that would topple most men. Ginger was intrigued by Keltner's description. "Where did you see us play?" he asked.

Keltner, who was drumming with Delaney and Bonnie at the time, let out a hearty laugh. "Ginger, we were the opening act."

Even in those days, Baker's music ambitions went well beyond rock. Years earlier, his hero, the British drummer Phil Seamen, had heard Baker in a London jazz club and complimented him on his playing. "I was suddenly 20 feet tall, you know?" Baker says,

**Dave Matthews Band**

**Giant Steps**

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still illuminated by the praise. "That night we went back to his flat and he played me all these African records, loads of them. He'd say, 'Okay, what's the beat?' And I'd go, 'One-two-three, one-two-three.' 'No, no, no! It's here—one-two-three-four.' I'd go, 'Holy shit!' It was like the door opened and the sun came in. After that, I'd always wanted to see Africa, to see where this drum thing is coming from."

Following Blind Faith, he put together Ginger Baker's Air Force, a big-band fling that brought together various musicians he'd

played with over the years—Stevie Winwood, Graham Bond, Chris Wood—that was so well received the group stuck together in varied incarnations for two albums and a tour, after which Baker and Air Force percussionist Remi Kabaka traveled to Nigeria. "The day I arrived, Remi's mother died and I got to go to the funeral, which was a pretty incredible experience. The funeral was Saturday morning, the party started that afternoon and it went on to Sunday afternoon. This is a place about a hundred-odd miles northwest of Lagos. The drummers played, and they

had me crying on several occasions. It was just unbelievable. I was the only white person there. And I played with them, and people came up and put money on my head, which they do to all their drummers, but they treated me like..." Baker's eyes begin to well up and his voice cracks at the memory.

Like you belonged there?

"It was pretty amazing," he says. "At the same time it was weird, because as this was going on, I meet Remi's family and he comes up: 'Man, we've got to build a studio, right here in Nigeria!' Which we did. And it was a good fucking studio."

Good enough to record albums like Paul McCartney's *Band on the Run*, among others. But as Baker often observes, finance was never his long suit. Eventually the place went broke, Baker returned to England, ran into substantial tax problems and became very seriously strung out on heroin. Finally, he moved to Italy to get away from it all. He built a home there from an 800-year-old ruin in a town where no one else spoke English, and took work tending a neighbor's olive groves. He lived there for nearly a decade, slowly got straight and fell in love with the beauty of the place; he says he hated to leave. But while he was in Nigeria, he'd developed another, more exhilarating addiction—to polo playing—and rural Italy just wasn't much good for that. "Besides," he says drily, "I'd had a few unfortunate experiences with Italian women."

So after some European jazz gigs helped revive his music career, he took his two horses and moved to California. He married again, and, thanks to monies from a recent settlement with PolyGram regarding Cream's back royalties, bought this spread in Colorado. Things are definitely looking up.

"I've been here, what, six years now?" he asks rhetorically. "And I'm still straight—I've thrown the crutch away. A lot of people, it takes them all the way down, and they never come up. It took me pretty fucking low down, especially that period between 1977 and 1981. There was one whole year in Italy when my kit was in the barn and I never touched it. I did about three gigs in the two previous years. It took me two years to get fucked up and another 18 years to get unfucked up—and I was trying all the time. I kept coming off and going back and coming off and going back; it was horrific. I mean, most of the people I knew in my last period in England have since got AIDS from using the same syringes. Some of them were pretty poor people—and some of them weren't."

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"But polo was the answer. I'd first got straight in Nigeria, with polo and hanging around horses. It was the perfect substitute. And in Italy I thought, shit, now I'm straight, I can handle the States. That's why I came back here. I knew I'd done it." He allows himself a small, proud smile. "So, I'm quite happy to have got this far. I'm quite surprised as well."

Well, at this point you certainly deserve your success.

Baker shrugs. "I'm not sure anybody deserves anything."

The last few years have at least afforded a measure of vindication. *Going Back Home*, besides bringing his career full circle, has helped cement his reputation as a master percussionist and even provide a plausible future as a jazzman, which is what Baker says he's wanted all along. And Cream's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, a no-brainer if ever there was one, helped heal some long-simmering wounds for a trio whose artistic virtues sparked surprising controversy in its time. Baker still chafes over an old article in *Rolling Stone*—"I forget the name of the writer, may he rot in hell"—whose dismissal of Eric Clapton's "long boring solos" helped hasten the band's breakup. "At that time Eric thought that magazine was the most happening in the world, and to be put down that way, I know it had a devastating effect on him."

Of all the legendary rock groups that have embarked on well-publicized "reunions" in recent years, certainly Cream's would have been the most musically enticing—go ahead, name another '60s band whose members all remain creatively vital today. Maybe that's one reason it had never happened. But the day before the Hall of Fame

bash, Baker, Bruce and Clapton found themselves alone together for the first time in 25 years. "The rehearsals were absolute magic," Baker recalls happily. "It was like we hadn't played together for a week. The next night, you know, you're sitting at a table for eight hours listening to these dopey diatribes, and listening to Ahmet Ertegun tell everyone how *he* formed Cream." Ginger snorts. "Ahmet's dream, you know. So that gig wasn't as relaxed as the rehearsals. But it was still okay. Because it was such a joy to play with them."

Can he imagine a more permanent reunion? "Absolutely no chance," he responds quickly. "We did it, and to do it again, I don't think it's a good idea. There was a time when I wanted to," he admits. "But the reason is that I was broke. You're offered 14 million bucks to do a gig...is that the reason to do it?" Baker lets the thought hang in the air, then shakes his head slowly. "Not really. Not really."

He drifts back to the porch, and the view of his horses. "I had 11 years out of the game, from 1978 until I came back to the States. At one point I'd had 40 horses I was keeping, but after I went totally broke I just kept the two young ones—I couldn't sell them because they were too green. Those two I've still got. During that 11 years I rode them every day, and neither of them are easy horses. One of them can buck like crazy and the other one's a runaway. Now I can ride anything," he grins. "I've got a reputation: I play the horses nobody can play. And I play 'em good. You see, with an easy horse, you've got all the time in the world to work out your shot, get everything right. You've got a difficult horse, you don't got time—you've just got to do it.

"You see, horses, they've got a very small brain, but they'll read



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your mind," he goes on, warming to his subject. "And I've got this thing with them. Horses trust me. Charmagne was really ill-treated, scared shitless of everybody—you couldn't stroke her head. I can do anything now with that horse. I guess I'm an animal lover," he admits. "Same with my dogs, I get attached to them, I really do. A lot of people in polo have no feeling for horses at all. Some of the best players in the world give horse whippings. I mean, you will get guys who will kill a horse to win a game, because it's their livelihood. They just go out and buy another horse. For me, no game is worth killing a horse for. I feel that if you give a horse a hundred percent, it will give you a hundred percent back. And they do.

"That old mare over there," he motions happily, "the one I've had the longest, she can be the most difficult thing in the world. But a few weeks ago, we were playing a big tournament—and she'd been an absolute cow the week before. I said to her, 'Now Chrissie, this one's important.' And she played like a dream."

You relate to music and horses in similar ways?

"Well, it's timing. But then timing is everything, really. I like to have fun when I play polo and I like to have fun when I play drums. But I don't need to practice drums anymore. I sit down and it's 'yeah man'—I can play what I want to play and I still soar. What's frustrating about polo is that you need to play every day to keep improving, to really fly. And I'm getting old, you know. It's got to be done soon if it's going to be done at all."

So how do you compose, get ideas? Do you ever listen to the radio?  
 "I don't listen to music very much at all," he laughs. "Especially

the radio. Because they'll play something good and then follow it by something absolutely banal and then something even more banal and then do something good. I can't handle that at all.

"I listen to the music that's in my head. When I'm mucking up the stalls—that's how 'I Lu Kron' came about. Mucking up the stalls and feeling happy. Liking to do it, enjoying it. Keeping the horse's house clean, you know? So I listen to my own music. Because I'm very selfish and egotistical, I suppose. I like feeling like when I'm around my horses, especially playing polo. I mean, that *is* music to me. It's life music. And when it can be played properly, it's magic."

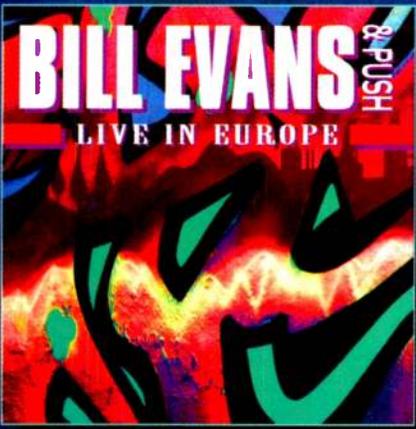
And the interplay between the players is like the interplay between musicians?

"It's something that can only be put like: 'There is a God, because there's a gift that you've got.' When you meet other musicians, you realize you're not the only one with it. All over the world, right? This sort of almost select group, if you like, musicians. And polo is the same thing. There's even less polo players than there are musicians. It's a brotherhood, like the Musicians Union—except some of *them* shouldn't be there. I mean, there's some guys who practice and practice and their technique is...and yet, they don't have real time. When time starts happening, they don't know what's going on."

And what of the drums themselves? Can they lead you into unexpected dimensions? Can they take on a personality of their own, like the horses?

Baker rubs his beard a moment. "Well," he says evenly, "I suppose it depends whose hands are on them." 

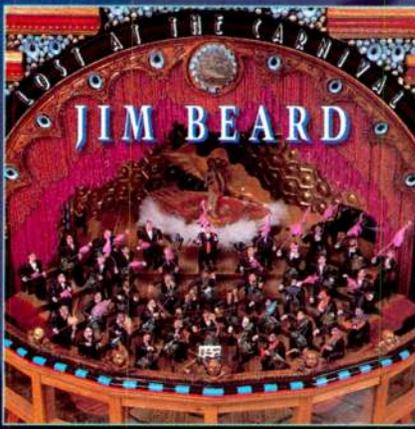
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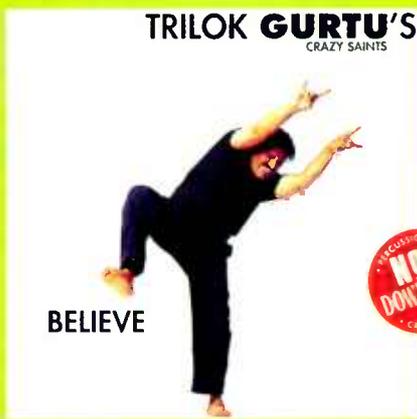
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produce a series of excellent solo releases utilizing such challenging sidemen as Jan Garbarek, Nana Vasconcelos, Pat Metheny and Joe Zawinul. With his 4th venture as band leader, Trilok struts down to the Crazy Saints quartet and delivers a masterful mix of jazz finesse, rock blast and authentic world vision. The authority and unique style showcased on this latest work will inspire you. The concert will convert you. *Believe*.

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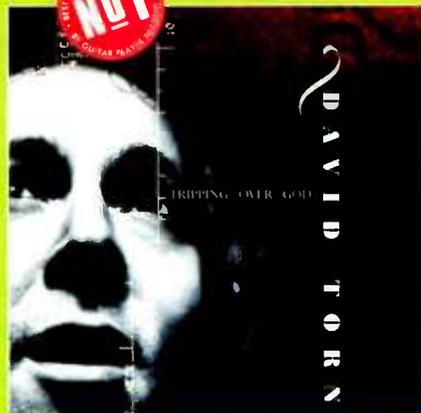
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# WHO KILLED THE HAIR BANDS?

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# BY ALAN DI PERNA



IN JANUARY OF 1992, SINGER VINCE NEIL APPEARED ON the cover of this magazine, lighting a cigar with a thousand-dollar bill. His band, Motley Crue, had just signed a \$25-million, four-album deal with Elektra. Their latest album, *Dr. Feel-good*, had sold quintuple platinum and their high-tech extravaganza live shows were packing stadiums all over the world. Slender, golden-haired and grinning, Neil looked almost a dead ringer for his sexy blonde wife, Sharise.

Cut to November of 1994. Vince Neil, now a solo artist, is appearing at the Electric Ballroom, a rock 'n' roll bar in Phoenix, Arizona. He's playing to a primarily working-class audience of maybe 800 or 900 people. Two women with bad cases of secretarial spread get up on their chairs and scream as Neil hits the stage. The singer has put on a few pounds himself. Sporting a slight gut and the first traces of a double chin, he's starting to resemble Ozzy. He could do with a shave. But his band rocks hard and his voice sounds much the same as always. The first row of punters pressed against the stage salute him with raised fists or the first-finger-and-pinkie "devil" sign. Neil grasps their outstretched hands as if clutching a lifeline.

What a difference two years

can make. But this is no isolated hard-luck story. Neil's tumble from the stadiums to the roadhouses pretty much encapsulates what has happened to all the bands who play what some call "hair metal," "metal lite" or, more kindly, "melodic hard rock"—that heavily produced, fastidiously stylized hard rock subgenre that came to the fore in the mid-'80s. Former spandex titans like Warrant, Winger, Trixter and Slaughter have all suffered drastically reduced record sales. Neil is actually one of the lucky ones. After being ousted from Motley Crue, he was able to go over to Warners, Elektra's sister label, and cut an \$18-million, five-album deal. After all, that's only seven million less than what Motley got.

"Yeah, but it's all mine," jokes the singer, who is in the process of suing his former bandmates for his cut of the money they got from Elektra. Neil's heavy metal colleagues Poison and Cinderella have also been lucky enough to hang on to their major-label deals despite disappointing recent sales. Only Bon Jovi seem to have escaped the "hair band" stigma and held their place

high on the charts, while lesser lights of the spandex universe—acts like Ratt, White Lion, Steel Heart, Spread Eagle, Faster Pussycat and Bang Tango—have long since packed up their pointy guitars and called it a day. Two of the guys from Britny Fox are playing in a cover band now.

Musical styles come and go. What's amazing is how rapidly and thoroughly the hair bands fell from grace. To find a parallel

**NO POPULAR  
MUSICAL STYLE  
HAS EVER  
VANISHED AS  
QUICKLY  
AS THE SPANDEX  
ROCK OF WARRANT,  
TRIXTER, WINGER,  
ETC. WHERE DID  
THEY GO?**

you'd probably have to go all the way back to the decline of '50s pop idols like Fabian and Bobby Rydell. Was there any advance warning? Warrant singer Jani Lane says he saw the writing on the wall. Literally. He recalls two meetings with Columbia Records president Don Ienner, spaced about one year apart. One meeting was to discuss marketing for Warrant's 1991 album *Cherry Pie*, which sold 2.5 million. The second was to discuss marketing for the followup, *Dog Eat Dog*, which barely limped to gold (500,000 copies).

"The first time," says Lane, "I walked into the office and I remember seeing this gigantic poster of our album cover on the wall above the secretary's desk. I thought, 'Wow, I guess we're gonna get a push on this one.' But when it came time to discuss promoting *Dog Eat Dog*, I'll never forget walking into Don Ienner's office seeing this huge poster of Alice in Chains' *Dirt* over his secretary's desk. And I thought, 'Hello Seattle... goodbye Warrant.'"

Shortly thereafter, Warrant found themselves in the midst of a bad-luck streak worthy of Def Leppard or Spinal Tap. The band's manager died, Lane's marriage broke up, the band was dropped from Columbia and ended up being sued by its own merchandising company. Several members, Lane included, ended up declaring bankruptcy. The band split up, but then re-formed with a few different members. Like Vince Neil and other one-time stadium headliners, Warrant are back to playing clubs. Their new album will be on a small indie label.

Who killed the hair bands? Everybody knows the short answer: grunge. But were there any accomplices? Did the major labels abandon the spandex rockers too quickly? Did MTV? Radio? The kids? Or is it possible that hair metal died of natural causes and grunge was just in the right place at the right time?

When did hair begin to fall, anyway? Z Rock Network program director Pat Dawsey feels that 1992 was the genre's black year. Dawsey's network includes some 20 rock stations in markets like Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Spokane and West Palm Beach. These days, Z Rock plays a mixture of grunge and classic hard rock: Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and STP meet Led Zep, Aerosmith and AC/DC. But in the '80s, Dawsey was programming the Motleys, Poisons and Cinderellas of the world quite heavily. He stopped, he says, partially because of an "auditorium test" that Z Rock conducted in '92:

"That's where you get a few hundred listeners, put them together in a room, play them songs and have them grade the songs," Dawsey explains. "We tested in the neighborhood of 500 to 1000 songs that were in our format or loosely related to it—everything from the Rolling Stones to Slayer. There are three categories in this kind of research:

How recognizable is the song? How popular is the song? And how burned out is your audience on hearing the song? And for a number of those so-called 'hair bands' the response was: 'I know who they are, I'm tired of hearing them, and I don't like them anymore.' I talked to a number of my colleagues in a number of different cities who had done the same kind of testing, with much the same result. I remember a guy in Baltimore saying, 'I had to drop half my library!' I had to do the same thing myself. We went from being a radio station playing 900 titles to one playing 450 titles.

"In the mid-to-late 1980s, our format catered to a lot of that [hair band] music, and we shared a lot of success along with those bands. In some cases, I developed personal friendships with people in those bands. But when you're trying to program for music consumers and listeners you've got to be able to reflect their tastes directly."

In Dawsey's view, it was overexposure, more than anything else, that led to the uncannily rapid eclipse of these bands. Certain aspects of the genre—including the insidious "power ballad" and the bands' video-friendly teen appeal—helped make hair metal ubiquitous. "With any of those bands," says Dawsey, "when they were successful, their records would be played on AOR, CHR and Top 40. You would see them on MTV and hear them on movie soundtracks. You'd have them coming through your town on tour three or four times a year. They would even be on the breakaway spot for football games. Of course people burned out on them. When it really comes down to it, I think the hair bands were just a victim of their own success."

But it wasn't only the bands that were hurt by rapidly changing musical tastes in the early '90s. The record labels had invested substantially in hair bands from the mid-'80s right through the first years of this decade. So what happens when you're a record label and you've got a contract with a band doing a style that abruptly goes out of fashion?

"You either continue or you cut your losses," Ron Oberman answers. Oberman is the A&R man who signed Warrant to Columbia, before moving over to MCA as executive VP of A&R. Like many of the majors, MCA basically decided to cut their losses on acts such as Trixter, Steel Heart and Spread Eagle. "And we had to take a [financial] hit on some of them," Oberman adds. "Meaning that in certain cases, with a lot of contracts, you can't just say, 'Okay, we don't want you anymore, and you don't get anything out of this.' We had to make settlements of various sorts, depending on the artists' contract. But I would rather take that kind of hit financially. Because in the end it's going to be a lot less than if we were to continue and



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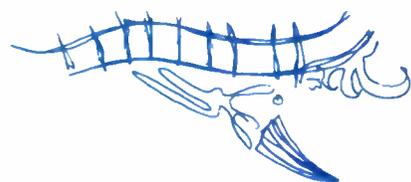
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make another record with the band and put all the necessary money into promotion and everything that goes with it.”

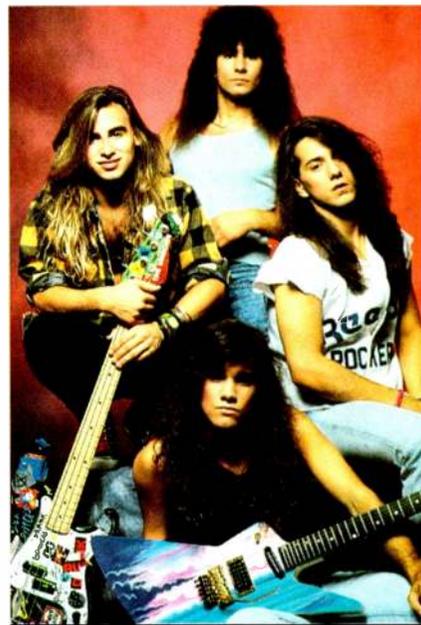
Within the hard rock community, there are those who disagree—who feel that the labels gave up too quickly on some of these acts. It has been suggested that the labels should have stuck with the artists they’d signed, seeing them through what many hair rockers would like to believe is only a temporary bad patch. But Warrant’s Jani Lane dismisses that kind of thinking as simplistic.

“I don’t have any animosity toward Columbia,” he says. “I really don’t know what would have happened if we had gotten more money for support [on *Dog Eat Dog*]. I’m not sure if that would have helped sales or not. I don’t know if that would have been throwing good money after bad on their part. Because I don’t think people wanted to hear that kind of music at that time. You can’t force-feed them.”

A more likely place to lay the blame is on the labels’ age-old tendency toward indiscriminate oversigning at the start of any musical trend. If they had to dump too many hair bands in the ’90s, it’s only because they signed too many in the ’80s. It’s a vicious cycle that many observers see happening all over again with grunge. If word hits the street that the labels are signing “anything in poodle haircuts,” nine out of ten struggling musicians will run out and get poodle haircuts. Lane admits that that was the thinking behind Warrant’s glam image.

“We were encouraged by the fact that that’s what everyone was doing. And it was a very big part of why we got signed. You know how it works. As soon as one band breaks, the labels all go into that area and sign all the other bands that are doing a similar thing. In our case, there were quite a few bands doing a similar thing in the mid-’80s—lookwise, anyway, although with different musical styles. So we did it. I admit it. But we’re not doing it now. And I’m not going to say I regret doing it. It was fun when we were doing it. And people were digging it. Times change and so do your clothes. Big deal.”

Then there’s MTV’s role to consider. The music channel certainly nurtured the hair metal genre in the mid-’80s, and was a key factor in its widespread success. In MTV’s earliest days, it had relied heavily on visual-minded pop acts such as Madonna, Michael Jackson, Culture Club, et al. This was fine for the urban sophists. But the advent of a visually oriented hard rock genre allowed the music channel to



EDDIE MALKIN/RETNA

**“A LOT OF THE KIDS I MET ON THE ROAD WITH TRIXTER ARE INTO SOUNDGARDEN NOW, BECAUSE THAT’S WHAT MTV SPOONFEEDS THEM.”**

reach out in a big way to the great American heartland—where heavy metal has always reigned supreme and probably always will. But beyond that, by putting a new, highly stylized spin on ’70s metal formulas, the hair bands were able to expand on metal’s traditionally male demographic. It’s no secret that bands like Winger, Warrant, Poison and Cinderella found their biggest audience among adolescent girls, not to mention some of their bun-obsessed moms. The kind of cute, air-brushed, nonthreatening sexuality these groups projected made them the Monkees of the ’80s. A guitarist in a multi-platinum hair band once confessed to me that his own father called him “Bambi with a penis.”

Like the Monkees, the hair bands were perfect for the television screen. But as the ’90s got under way, MTV seemed to join the record companies in dropping these hard-rocking lookers like so many hot potatoes.

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World Radio History

Spandex strongholds like the "Hard 30" and "Hard 60" programs disappeared from the music channel. And now there are reportedly plans to turn "Headbangers Ball" into some kind of "alternative ball."

"I think MTV is the prime offender in the demise of the commercial pop rock genre," says Chip Ruggieri. An energetic, 26-year-old publicist and entrepreneur, Ruggieri worked closely with Trixter both during and after their tenure at MCA Records. He has just brought out an EP of cover tunes by Trixter on his own indie label, Backstreet. Ruggieri

has worked with numerous other bands in Trixter's genre as well, and insists that these bands were given a raw deal at MTV.

"You just don't go from playing Bon Jovi, Poison, Warrant, Trixter and Firehouse five times a day, to putting them out in the middle of nowhere. In the past, records by those bands were able to build on MTV. They'd throw a video into overnight rotation, then move it to medium and then heavy rotation. But by the early '90s, all these bands were just being given one shot. MTV would only air [the video for] one single from an album. And

if there wasn't a reaction, they just wouldn't play any of the other singles from the album. Poison's 'Stand,' Bon Jovi's 'Keep the Faith,' Motley Crue's 'Hooligan's Holiday,' Warrant's 'Machine Gun,' Trixter's 'Road of a Thousand Dreams'...a lot of those songs were on MTV for about five minutes and then they just disappeared. I kept in touch with a lot of the kids I met on the road with Trixter, and most of them are into Alice in Chains and Soundgarden now, because that's what MTV spoonfeeds them. The kids are fickle too."

Bret Michaels, lead singer for Poison, agrees that "MTV became less supportive" around the time the band's *Native Tongue* album came out, in 1993. "And radio was tough too, because they were playing all kinds of music—grunge and alternative." And although *Native Tongue* didn't come anywhere near the multiplatinum sales of its predecessors (*Flesh and Blood* and *Open Up and Say...Ahh!*), Michaels says he was "happy to sell a million records with *Native Tongue*—happy that a million people wanted to hear it, considering the situation with MTV and radio."

Vince Neil reports that MTV gave a lukewarm response to 1993's *Exposed*, his first post-Motley album: "They played the first video, 'Sister Pain.' They didn't play it a lot, but they played it enough. The next two videos, they didn't give that much exposure to at all. Their thing was like, 'We don't play hair bands anymore.' Their fuckin' problem over there is that they do these surveys in New York City to see what the fans want to listen to. But those surveys don't give a realistic view of what the rest of America wants to hear and is listening to. New York City is not Boise, Idaho. They have different tastes in everything."

Acting on exactly this premise, Tom Lipsky founded CMC International Records two years ago. Lipsky maintains that there is still a sizable market for the hair bands in heartland America, Europe and Asia. He's the one who signed Warrant after they were dropped from Columbia. Based in North Carolina, Sweden and Germany, CMC International will be bringing out a brand-new Warrant album, *Ultraphobic*, in the first quarter of '95, recorded by the genre's quintessential producer, Beau Hill, architect of Warrant's former multiplatinum hits. Meanwhile, Lipsky says he's been doing very well with records by acts like Widowmaker (fronted by former Twisted Sister singer Dee Snider), Tyketto and Yngwie Malmsteen.

"The corporate side of the music busi-

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ness—radio, MTV and the gurus at the major labels—is very susceptible to fashions and trends,” says Lipsky. “But I’m not convinced the people necessarily are. Which has been our whole angle in signing the groups we’ve been signing. To be honest with you, I’m surprised some of these groups are available. I can’t believe the majors are letting them go, regardless of trends. I doubt there’s ten or five percent of Columbia’s roster that will sell as much as, or more than, the last Warrant album.”

Lipsky “discovered” Warrant on a club tour that the band had booked for themselves after leaving Columbia. “Two things impressed me,” Lipsky says. “One was that they sold out everywhere they went, at 15 and 20 bucks a ticket. The other thing is that I’d pull up Soundscans a week after I’d seen them in an area, and I’d be looking at back-catalog sales on two-, three- and five-year-old records by them that were stronger than most Soundscan numbers on new groups. It just convinced me that, if people were still willing to go see the band, and still interested in buying the back catalog, there was a lot of potential demand there. But the supply was missing. Whenever a trend comes along, people get hooked on it and all of a sudden the supply gets very inflated. It reaches a point where the trend burns out. But people always come back to good, mainstream rock ‘n’ roll. It’s been that way for decades.”

The prospect of going back down to the club level is a fact of life for any professional musician, no matter how successful. It’s what artists like Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard had to do once the Beatles hit big. In treading that path, Warrant and their goldilocked brethren are following a time-honored rock tradition.

“We decided we wanted to keep playing and not get rusty,” says Jani Lane. “And we wanted to get out of L.A., because we’d been brainwashed living there. L.A. and New York are considered the major music cities and people there are jaded. They convinced us we were absolutely dead: ‘You guys are over. There isn’t a soul out there that even remembers your name.’ We got out there and saw those people were absolutely wrong. Granted, we went down to clubs, but I thought that was smart. It was no time to be egotistical and say, ‘If I can’t play an arena, I’m not gonna fuckin’ play at all.’”

Apparently, a national club circuit for this type of music is already in place. “Last year we had Accept touring around to reestablish themselves,” says Tom Lipsky, “and they

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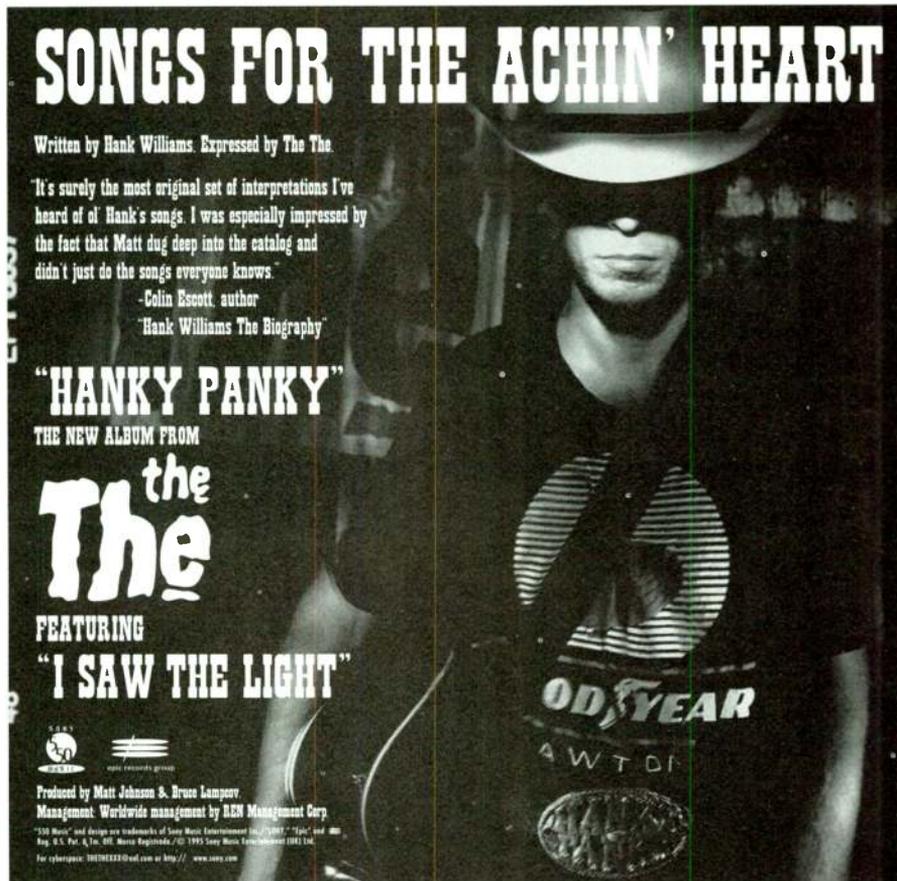
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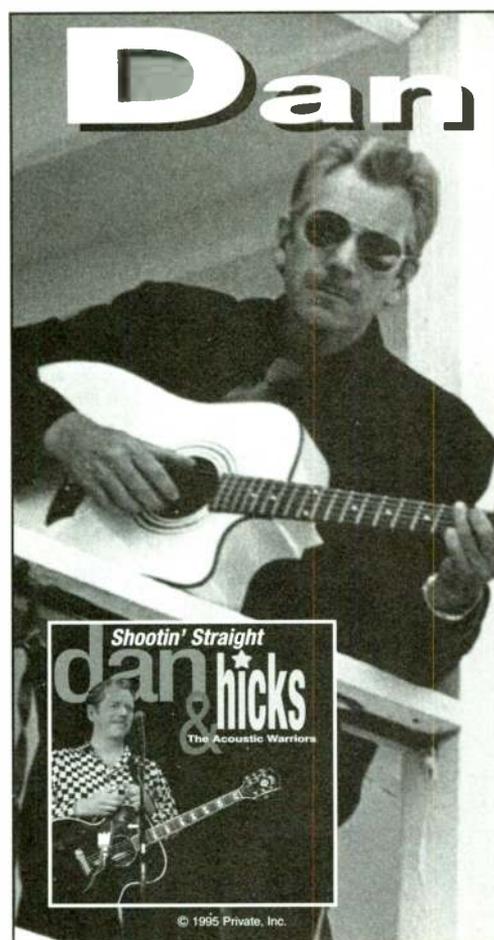
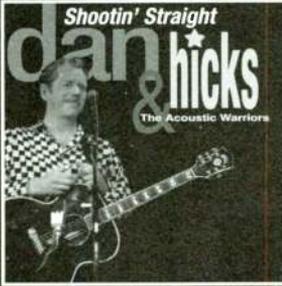
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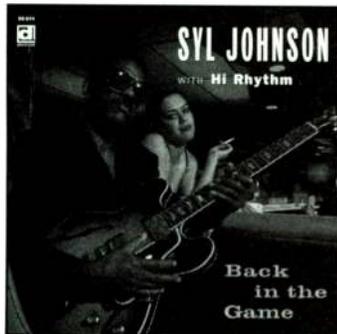
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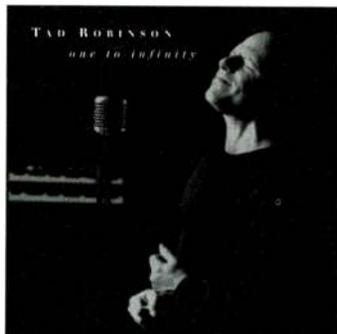
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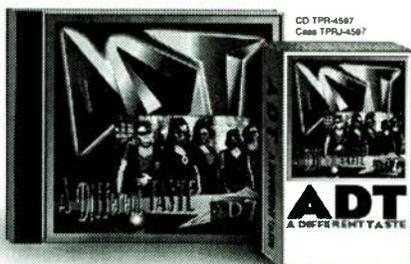
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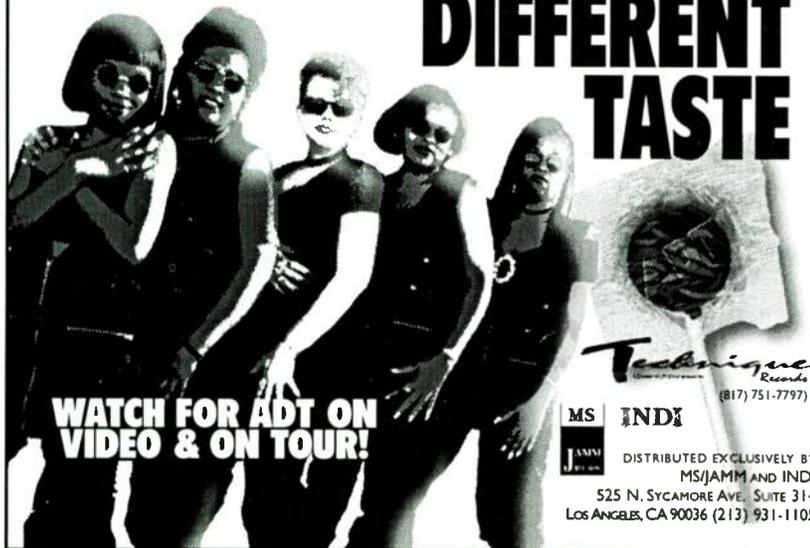
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were going through the same club circuit that Vince Neil and Rob Halford were going through—bigger bands than that too. That was just the circuit that existed. There are no more 2500- and 3000-seaters like there used to be. Either you play an 800-to-1000-seat club or you can fill 10,000 seats. I think the nature of the business has changed."

"Everything's flip-flopped," says Chip Ruggieri. "All the underground bands of the '80s that were on little indie labels—like Suicidal Tendencies and the Chili Peppers—are now the million sellers. And all the bands that were million sellers are now cult bands."

But if acts like Vince Neil, Trixter and Warrant now comprise a new musical underground, it's one that locates itself rather more right than left of center. Marketeers like Lipsky and Ruggieri are intent on positioning this music as a feel-good "alternative" to the numb desperation and anger of artists like Nirvana, Beck or Bad Religion.

"There are still parts of the country that are very resistant to the alternative movement," says Chip Ruggieri. "Because a lot of those radio stations are owned by Christian groups and very conservative parties. So they want to go with more of a positive-message band, rather than a negative-message band."

"I can respect any new form," says Tom Lipsky, "but looking at these alternative bands from a long-term standpoint—like 'How will they be selling five or ten years from now?'—I see something that's basically dark and negative. I don't think there's enough overall entertainment value attached in that music to make people hang onto it as they grow and evolve. That teen angst lasts for a couple of years, but then people outgrow it. They look for something that's a little bit broader based. They always come back home. And home is no-frills, straight-up rock 'n' roll."

Demographically, Lipsky says that the fan base for an act like Warrant "has moved up in age. They're now people in their 20s and even early 30s who grew up on the band. They have to dress up a bit more during the day because they have a real job, but they still like to go out at night and rock 'n' roll. Maybe they don't want to go as crazy as some of the younger people, but they don't want to let go of the rock 'n' roll music they grew up on."

Is it a generation thing? Ask Vince Neil if he thinks grunge has cut into his audience and his answer is, "No, 'cause I'd say that's more for the younger kids: the [cont'd on page 95]"

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# MOTHER PEARL

## THE STONE GOSSARD INTERVIEW

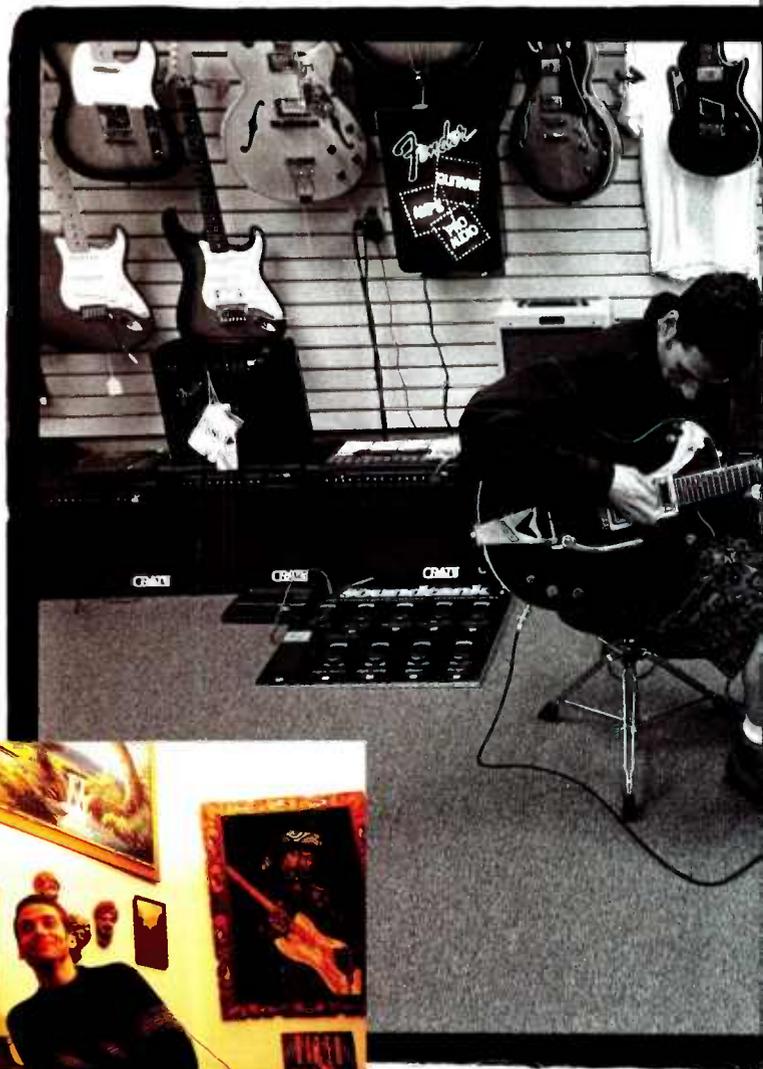
**BY VIC GARBARINI** I DREAMED I SAW ST. AUGUSTINE — AND HE LOOKED A HELLOF A LOT LIKE STONE GOSSARD. **PEARL JAM IS THE BAND, EDDIE IS THE MAN, AND STONE IS WHO? THE STILL POINT AT THE CENTER? THE ALTERED-TUNING, FUNKY-RIFFING MYSTERY MAN OF THE PEARL JAM PHENOMENON? LIKE THE BAND**

itself, Gossard is a work in progress, an evolving and shape-shifting kind of guy. He's self-effacing and proud, shy yet articulate, boldly innovative while plagued (or blessed) with Augustinian self-doubt. He's a soft-spoken visionary who's more wary of his own ego and motivations than he is of others', inside or outside his band. He's Hamlet with a sense of humor.

The sign on the marquee of Seattle's cozy Moore Theater says "The Piss Bucket Boys." It's Pearl Jam's leave-us-alone nom du jour for a rehearsal/free show, performed for the band's fan club prior to their current world tour. Eddie Vedder and Mike McCready are butting heads like two stags in heat as they thrash furiously on their respective guitars. Bassist Jeff Ament is on his back, staring at the ceiling, keeping the pulse, while new drummer Jack Irons hammers out the beat with a swinging ferocity. And Stone Gossard bounces joyously at the center, locking simultaneously into the rhythm section, guitar and vocals, keeping an eye and ear for the groove. But as they pound through the neo-punk numbers from *Vitalogy* something is definitely different. That's Stone, not Mike, tossing out lead lines, and in standard tuning. Now Eddie's churning out the Gossardian chords of "Better Man," which Vedder, in fact, wrote. For Pearl Jam, it's therapeutic role reversal time.

The story behind the story here is Gossard's willingness to forego musical creative control of the band, not because he was forced to, but because of his vision of the band as an organic family unit. If Eddie or Mike need to grab the guitars and jump in the front seat for a while, fine. If the songwriting has gotten simpler and more direct, breaking down to primal riffs and sketchy ideas as part of the process, so be it. Never have I seen a band whose disparate personalities pull them apart more, but whose common consciousness and mutual respect and feeling allow them to hang together so tightly. They'll all tell you that the band has never felt more like a unit. And they'll tell you it could fly apart tomorrow. Gossard will offer the paradox that, as long as they attend to the needs of the moment, they're anchoring the future.

Gossard is as close as you'll get to Ground Zero of the Seattle movement. Born and raised there, he founded Green River with Montana transplant Jeff Ament in the mid-'80s. Their debut album was the first ever released on the now legendary Sub-Pop label. Later they landed in the equally crucial Mother Love Bone. Stone's father is a prominent attorney, his mother worked in city government and the family unit stayed together. He was spared the emotionally shattering childhood that crippled the trust and confidence of so many of his contemporaries. Education at Seattle's progressive Northwestern School of the Arts encouraged his creative impulses. His love of guitar bands like Zeppelin, Kiss, Hendrix and the other usual suspects sustained him as a teenager.



**LEFT: At home ABOVE: Sampling a Seattle store's wares RIGHT: (l. to r.) Vedder, Stone, Jeff Ament**

But it was African-American music, particularly funk and rap, that captured his soul. He became determined to learn and transfer the same sense of groove that had awakened his body and emotions to the guitar. In fact, we'd struck up a relationship a few years back when I apparently became the first journalist to note that those staccato, chattering riffs on "Even Flow" and "Alive" were more Ice Cube than Cream.

Recently, Gossard set up his own label, Loosegroove, to be distributed by Epic. It's a chance for him to indulge his love of mutant funk-punk metal groups like Devilhead, and rap bands such as Prose and Concepts. He sees these bands as part of his extended musical family, many of whom might be bypassed in the Great Seattle Gold Rush. His sister Shelly runs the label.

Before our interview Gossard takes me past his new, custom-built studio—airy and sunny (with windows even)—where the Loosegroove bands, and Pearl Jam itself, plan to record. Later, dressed in a red flannel shirt and looking whippet thin, and with short hair dyed the color of lemon ice, he leads me into the artsy health food restau-

## "ALL THE THINGS KURT COBAIN SAID"



about, it would have been difficult to keep moving forward. Jack's just a very generous and wise drummer. He concentrates on the groove of a song, and that allows everybody's heart to have a place to sit, and yet be part of the whole. He's very conscious of what everybody's playing. He's working to balance out all the elements of the band.

**MUSICIAN:** *A lot of people feel that Dave [Abbruzzese's] Texas, pickup-truck personality clashed with Eddie's sensibilities.*

**GOSSARD:** It's a very complex scenario, and certainly Dave was, and is, not the only person in Pearl Jam with personality flaws. Everybody in this band exhibits some form of neurotic behavior. And we couldn't find a balance, a mutual respect for each other. Because of

that, nobody was really playing with their hearts as open as they could be. But in the process of deciding 1) we still wanted to be a band, and 2) we really did want to work things out, we felt that improving our inner band relationships meant making a decision to find somebody else.

I think your artistic style and your personality are very interrelated. Dave played an important part in our growing, but change occurs. We're more confident now about the band's longevity and our relationships with each other. We may take breaks and do other things, but we feel we'll ultimately have Pearl Jam as a family. It's really comforting for me and Jeff, at least, that after 12 years we finally feel we've reached a place where we can be more honest, real and loving

with each other. And we're finally in a band that we know is good, and deserves the credit it's getting.

**MUSICIAN:** *Vitalogy is a pretty raw album. Most bands start off raw. Then the second album gets a bit more complex, and the third...*

**GOSSARD:** Gets bogged down in a mini-opera. [laughs]

**MUSICIAN:** *But you guys have gone in the opposite direction. Did you have to break things down and start over?*

**GOSSARD:** It really is more of an Eddie record in terms of his influence playing guitar, for instance. The record was symptomatic of the band's state. In fact, it was probably the only record we could have made due to the problems we were going through in relating. We really weren't collaborating with each other at the time very much. So the only way we could make something happen was by going into the studio and deciding on it then and there, in the moment. Eighty percent of the songs were written 20 minutes before they were recorded. Eddie had "Better Man" from a long time ago, but most of the songs were a result of jamming in the studio and coming up with a quick arrangement. It felt like what we needed to do to really break the band open.

**MUSICIAN:** *And did it work, musically and therapeutically? Will the next album be more rounded?*

**GOSSARD:** It's going to be a much different band than on the last record. You'll still hear more of Eddie's songwriting, but there will also be elements that'll enable everybody's personality to shine through.

rant in Seattle's bohemian Belltown district. As we thread our way to the table, I wonder out loud if he agrees with Vedder's statement at a recent pro-choice rally that drummer Jack Irons literally "saved this band." Irons is the ex-Chili Peppers drummer who Stone and Jeff contacted when Mother Love Bone dissolved after the death of singer Andy Wood. At the time, Irons was already working with a new band, Eleven, but yes, he could recommend a singer—this guy named Eddie Vedder... Gossard begins to answer, then stops. A wry, Roger Rabbit smile spreads slowly across his face as he notices someone at the next table. He leads me over to a surprised slight young guy in a crew cut and sweater, with his right hand wrapped in ace bandages. "Meet Jack Irons," he says.

"Hi," says Jack. "I'm sorry about the hand—leaned over a bit too far during the show."

"Kind of poetic, isn't it?" Stone grins, as we sit down to talk.

**MUSICIAN:** *Eddie did say that Jack Irons saved the band. Was there literally a chance that things could have spun apart at that point?*

**GOSSARD:** I really don't know. Coming into this album was the most significant time in the last three years, in the sense that everything was up in the air. If we didn't find a drummer that everyone felt good

## PEARL JAM WERE GUILTY OF—WE WERE."

You'll hear that spontaneity, but I hope to spend more time arranging material and trying to get everybody involved in the songwriting process.

**MUSICIAN:** *Were there songs that you felt captured that balance between structure and spontaneity that compare with your best work?*

**GOSSARD:** "Tremor Christ" seemed to write itself. It was just a riff-and-a-half, basically. On a muggy, beautiful New Orleans afternoon we came into a very cool studio and it poured out. That and "Nothingman," which Jeff wrote, were recorded a day apart. They were very spontaneous, but with a simple yet indescribably beautiful vibe to them.

**MUSICIAN:** *Having founded the band and written most of the first album by yourself, why was it necessary to share songwriting?* "Even Flow," "Alive" and "Black" were pretty incredible compositions.

**GOSSARD:** If it had remained always my band, my natural tendency would have been to get more complex and arrange things more and more. That wouldn't necessarily be good for Eddie, or anyone else in the band. Of course, I enjoy being self-indulgent. [laughs] And I look forward to the time when I can become more indulgent with my songwriting. But this band is a family, and it's a process that we have to grow with together.

**MUSICIAN:** *Eddie is an emotionally intense person who had a difficult family life. Does the Pearl Jam family have to accommodate that? Some people believe he calls all the shots now.*

**GOSSARD:** It's a combination of things. There's no getting around the fact that Eddie is the man. As far as emotional and spiritual energy goes,



Loosegroove ground zero: Stone's home studio

the leader of this band was the most gradual, slow and respectful process that I've ever been involved in. That's not to say Eddie's never done anything malicious. But he never grabbed power for power's sake. His position was gained only because he has that energy, and that's naturally where he ended up. I struggle with my ego every day, all day long. There's no break from that. Every day there's some sort of revelation about how I'm misinterpreting something because I'm thinking of myself as the center of the universe. Once you realize everybody in your band has that problem, it becomes easier.

**MUSICIAN:** *You've spoken of how you admired Mike's fluidity as a player, and wanted to emulate that, while letting him in on the songwriting process. And you have been doing more leads...*

**GOSSARD:** There's been a lot of role reversal going on in the band. The roles people have been playing for a long time will always be there, but everybody's willing to try on different outfits. I think Mike will be trying on the outfit of a songwriter as much as anyone. But he can always still break into a blazing fast lead. It's going to be a different band. In any

he is the leader of this band. But Eddie does not make all the decisions; Eddie can listen to reason; Eddie can be swayed or talked in or out of certain things. Eddie allows other people to lead in this band and to have certain roles that are very fundamental to the decision-making process.

Eddie is a natural leader. Jeff and I have been very much in control of previous bands we've worked in. But the way Eddie grew into being

## SPINNING LOOSEGROOVES

THE ARTISTS on the Loosegroove label "are all people I've had relationships with," Gossard explains. "So it's definitely as much because I really like and

trust the people that I'm working with as the music that's moved me—although that's equally important. I've watched other people be successful because they're going with their guts, you know?" We asked Stone for capsule reviews of some current and upcoming label releases:

**Critters Buggin':** "An amazing group. It's Matt Chamberlain, who we played with before, and Brad Houser—they both used to play with Edie

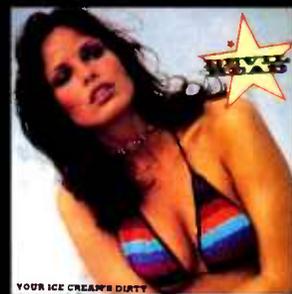
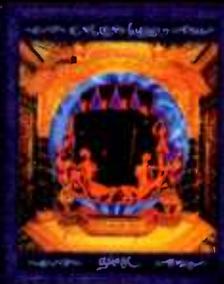
Brickell, but they've done a lot of drugs since then and really expanded their frame of reference. They have their own trippy samplers and tape loops running and it's all instrumental, or a lot of it is, but amazing songs too. It's full-on rhythm-oriented power freak-out rock."

**Prose and Concepts:** "It's a Seattle rap band whose demo I heard two years ago and got to know them as people and really respected their family. They're an interracial rap band so they're faced with, you know, some pretty heavy-duty

outside forces, and I'm down with them. Very talented."  
**Malfunkshun:** "It's an eight-year-old tribute to Andy Wood that's gonna be a

real treat for anyone who was into Mother Love Bone or wanted to know some of the early Seattle inspirational figures, 'cause Andy Wood left an impact on the city and everyone that ever heard his music, I think. Charming and funny and funky and heavy. They do a cover version of 'Wang Dang Sweet Poon Tang' by the Nuge!"

**On Devilhead:** "Brian and Kevin Wood, who are Andy Wood's brothers; John McBain, John Waterman and Luke Kimble are also in the band. It's a real rock band, and they will wear their rock on their sleeve, but they're groovy—they have a great rhythm section."

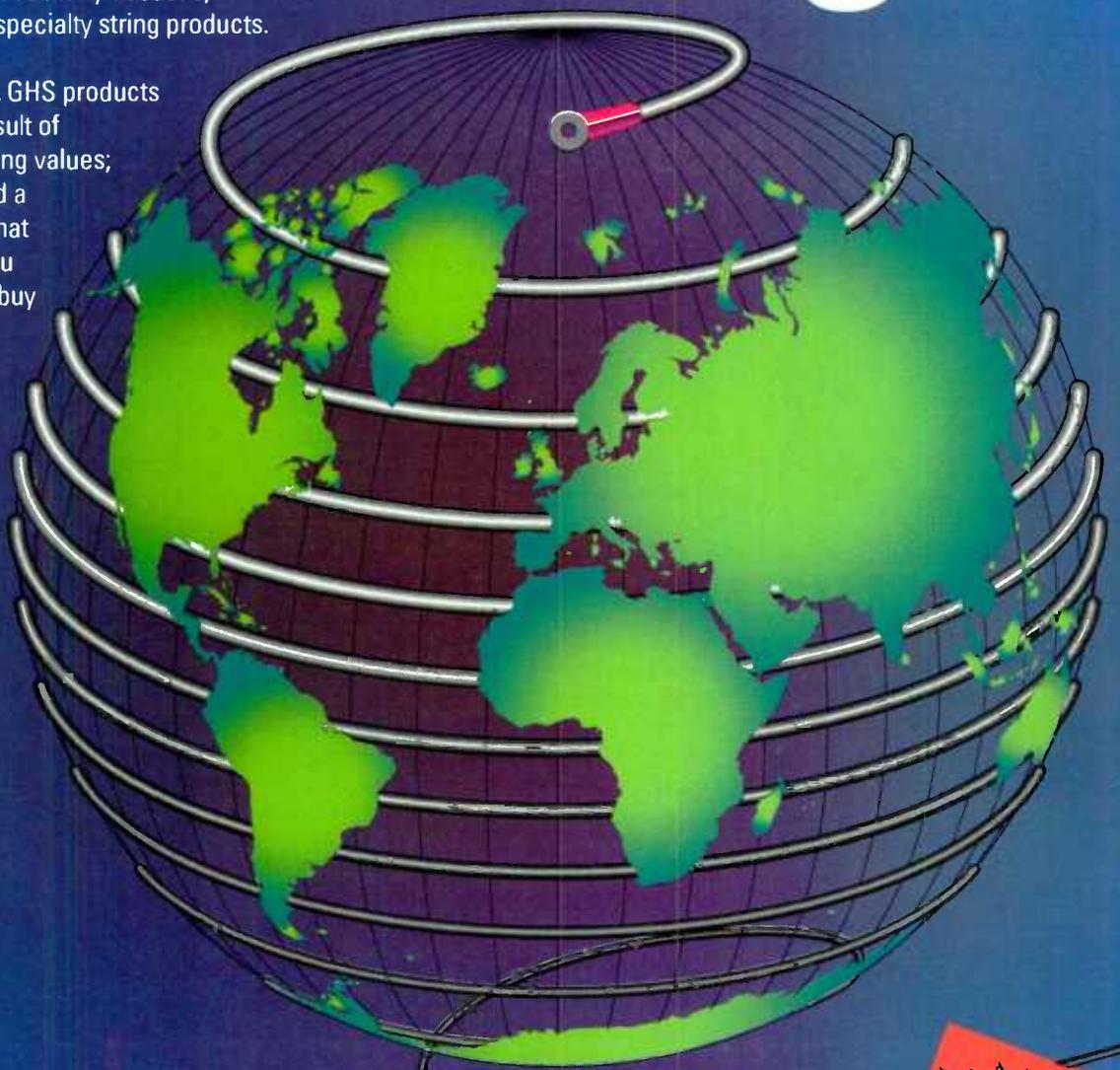


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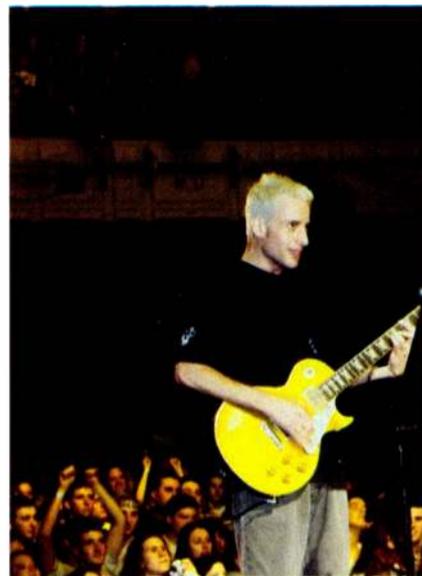
given song there's plenty of opportunities for structure, for improvisation, for both left brain and right brain thinking on the part of everybody. I think that's what we're finally all beginning to understand. Or maybe it's just that I'm finally beginning to understand that. Or maybe I'm just *imagining* that I understand it. [laughs] The point is, it's about balance, and how no one individual can see the whole picture. We need each other's perspectives.

**MUSICIAN:** *You once told me that this was more than a band to you—it was an experiment in faith.*

**GOSSARD:** I think I was on my Gaia kick that week. No, I do think that's a valid comment. Call it holistic or holographic thinking, it's been quite effective imagining the world's problems are all right in front of you on a smaller scale with your band. You deal with those relationships, and that's where real major change begins.

**MUSICIAN:** *So your family's problems get repeated in your band, and in the world. The microcosm in the macrocosm?*

**GOSSARD:** Right, those relationships with your parents and family are the hardest to figure out, and the same patterns get carried



Moore Theater free show, February '95

into a band situation. In Pearl Jam, the cliffs are very high and the chasms very deep. You have to face your own neuroses and problems through your band members. And everything that pisses you off about somebody in your band or your family is something inside yourself that you haven't dealt with. Every time we've realized, okay, we've fucked up about this or that, we've learned to find that space where the group is more important than any individual problem. And we've grown from it.

**MUSICIAN:** *Let's get specific. Mike has been very open about how he's kicked his alcohol habit. How did the band handle that?*

**GOSSARD:** Mike's a pretty awful drunk. Not that he got malicious or mean openly to people, but he would get out of control consistently. It was a difficult situation where you could find yourself blaming Mike for a lot of your own frustrations with the band when he was fucked up or couldn't come to practice. And we're used to loving Mike and knowing how much fun and how talented he is. I got upset that he might throw away a great opportunity to be in a cool band and work it out. He decided to go into treatment and everyone was thrilled. How could you not be? Here was Mike taking responsibility for himself and his own happiness, going to a new level. He's a treat to be around. He's just as raw and fuckin' crazy as he ever was, but he's not drinking. And we're there for him in the long term. We love Mike and nothing's gonna change our feelings about wanting him to be in the band.

**MUSICIAN:** *Many artists start vanity labels. But Loosegroove seems to be more about the community ideals you mentioned.*

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**GOSSARD:** Yeah, the template for the label has been Sub-Pop and people like Rick Rubin that you sense have been inspired to put out the music they love, and watch them become successful. And I hope I can share what I've learned about the business with my friends, and avoid some mistakes. Like one way of helping a first-time band is having my own studio where we can charge what we want to and keep the prices down. It'll just be studio maintenance, basically. If the studio can just stay in the black, that's fine.

**MUSICIAN:** You improve your guitar technique by playing drums with R&B and rap records.

**GOSSARD:** Yeah, particularly the first TLC record. LA and Babyface keep doing great stuff, and the new OutKast record is amazing. The focus of my playing is the groove, and every time I find a new rhythm, I find I can write a bunch of new songs. Learning how to dance, or drum, or to swing my body in a new way is the fundamental way I find a new riff. Because when you learn to swing your body in a new way, you begin to swing with your instrument differently, and it affects where you drop notes in a phrase. That riff dance changes, as you feel drawn to let one note come in a millisecond later, and another drag.

**MUSICIAN:** So it's a new chapter in the old story of the intellectual white boy trying to

*get in touch with his emotions through African-American music?*

**GOSSARD:** That's it. Because a lot of the emotional issues they address are very much things I've been deprived of, growing up in a very left-brain hierarchical culture. What's appealing about any dance music or rhythm and blues is that it includes that right-brain freedom of dance, movement and intuition.

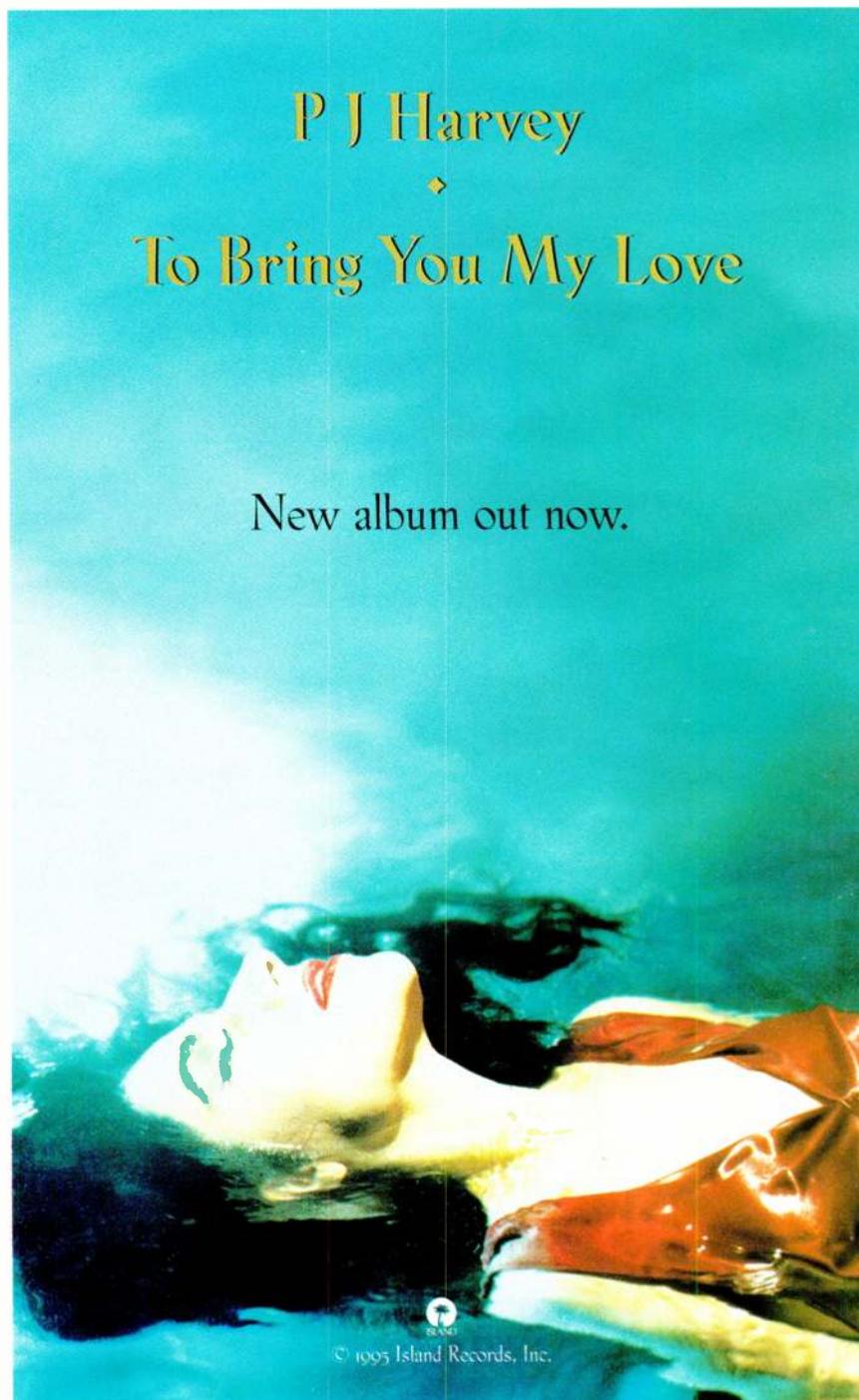
**MUSICIAN:** Speaking of dancing, what's the band's main problems with Ticketmaster, and where does it all stand now?

**GOSSARD:** Basically, they're the largest ticket

distribution company, and they set up contracts with venues. It's a very cozy relationship between the building owners, and promoters and Ticketmaster.

**MUSICIAN:** Are they the only kids on the block, like the old Bell Telephone?

**GOSSARD:** That's what we contend and hope the Justice Department will find. Because there's no real competition for them in terms of how difficult it is to start one of these companies now that Ticketmaster has got a grip on the business. Testifying before Congress about it was a very surreal experience.



#### STONE AGE TOOLS

**S**TONE GOSSARD's guitar of choice varies between a classic '54 Les Paul gold top with PAF humbucking pickups, and a considerably less classic Epiphone: "It's got an f-hole with a little hollow body and a single pickup, like a student model. I don't even know what the model is, but it's funky and it's got a good sound." He also plays a Hamer Duo-Tone acoustic/electric combination: "I'm not even sure they're on the market. They made one for me a long time ago. It's got a piezo pickup in the bridge and two humbucking pickups. It's got a toggle switch so that I can play acoustic, you know, hearing acoustic coming out through the monitors. Then if I put the volume pedal down, it plays electric too, so it really is two very distinct sounds."

Gossard employs GHS strings—"light for the Epiphone"—and cranks them through Fender Deluxe amps and Matchless heads. His effects include a DOD EQ pedal for distortion, along with a delay reverb pedal and a distortion box.

**MUSICIAN:** *Why is the service charge issue so contentious?*

**GOSSARD:** Say we, Pearl Jam, want to sell our tickets for \$18, which is a relatively low price today. So Ticketmaster says, well, Christ, if they want to sell their tickets for \$18 and we know they're going to sell out, let's tack on a \$5 service charge. And there's no standard service charge, they can tack on whatever they feel. They can go low for a family event like a circus or much higher for an Eagles show. One of the issues we're hoping to get the government to act on is to say, "You can't

have a service charge that's more than ten percent of the actual ticket price," or something so you'd know where you were standing. We're a band that's willing to compromise to make things right for both parties. But in [Ticketmaster CEO] Fred Rosen's case, he's not really willing to do that in a way that makes us feel comfortable in terms of knowing he's not screwing us.

**MUSICIAN:** *R.E.M.'s lawyer testified with you, but felt they had to go with Ticketmaster in order to tour, it seems. And Green Day lowered their prices, but I don't believe it*

*involved the service charge issue significantly. Do you understand their situations?*

**GOSSARD:** Sure, it's not weird for us. We picked this fight, and we're going to see it through. How everyone else does their business is their own thing. Green Day and R.E.M. probably got better deals due to the fact that Fred's taken a lot of heat these days and wants to make people happy. So I'd like to think that it's having a ripple effect. And I think it's admirable that Green Day wants to charge a low ticket price.

**MUSICIAN:** *Another group you've had an ambivalent relationship with was Nirvana. How did the loss of Kurt Cobain affect you all?*

**GOSSARD:** [long pause] It was tough... because all the things Kurt Cobain said we were guilty of, we were—on some level. Kurt had us pegged in a lot of ways.

**MUSICIAN:** *In what sense?*

**GOSSARD:** Somebody from the outside can sometimes see the ugliness in our situation more clearly. He saw us in a way that was accurate to him. I can only say that I don't want... I don't think that I'm exclusively what he, at one point, claimed we were! Which was everything bad about rock music in terms of the music not coming first. Jeff and I have been very driven about wanting to be successful—sometimes at the expense of a lot of people's feelings—without even realizing it. Our wanting to get things done has ruffled a lot of feathers and stepped on a few toes. We're still learning how to live life and be true to ourselves and to our spiritual natures, and we've learned a lot of lessons. I feel bad that Kurt's not still writing songs, because he was brilliant and that guy could emotionally twang my heart strings. Every song that he wrote spoke to me.

**MUSICIAN:** *You're recording now with Neil Young, and have cited him and the Grateful Dead as role models for how to deal with your musical careers. What's the main problem these great bands you guys admired ran into that you've tried to learn from?*

**GOSSARD:** To stay together and work it out. And that there's going to be someone who is gonna knock you right on your ass if you're not working it out. I feel like the band finally is a family right now, and that we're in it for the long haul, and that there's nothing we can't work out in terms of being able to play music together. The bottom line is that when we all plug in, Eddie can make us dance and play like little molecules bouncing off the wall. And, for whatever reason, we can make him feel like singing. ♪

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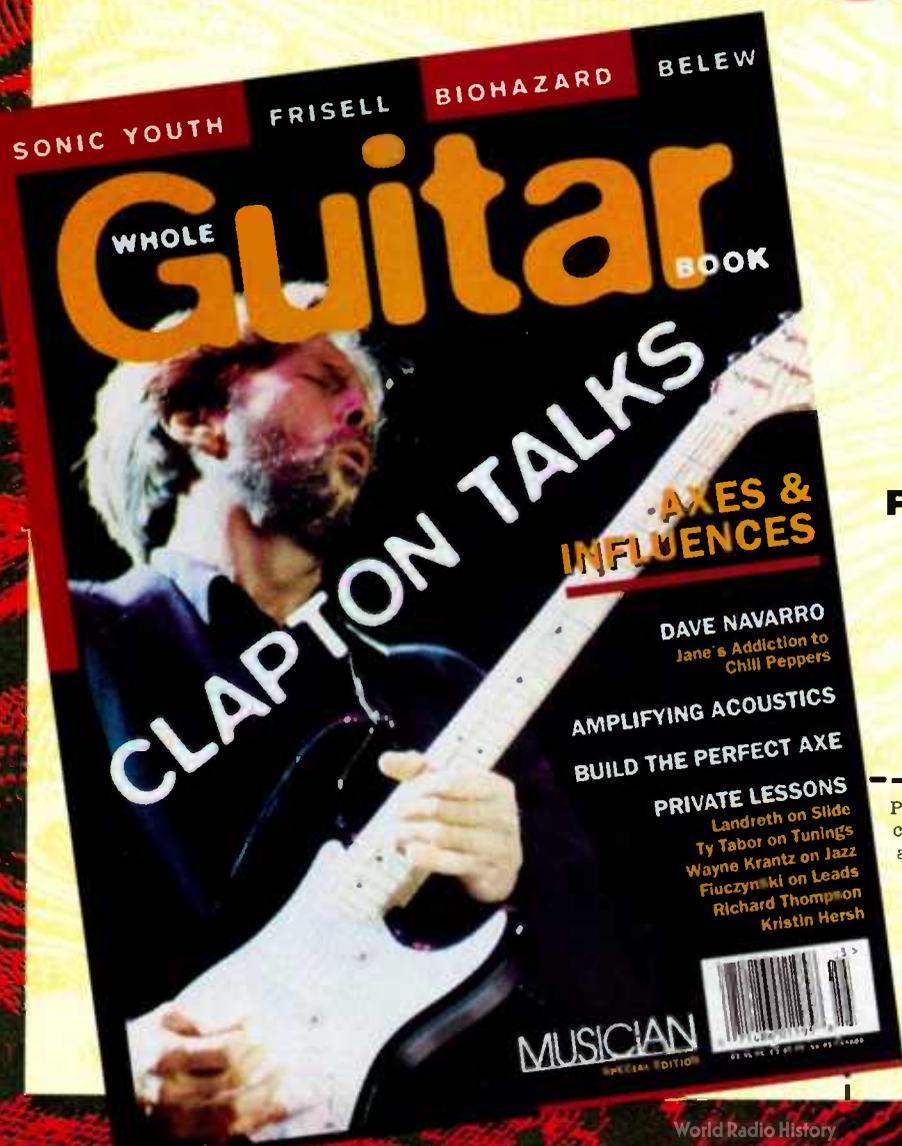
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# A FLOOD OF NEW GEAR FOR

# NAMM

**T** O ANYONE WATCHING THE WEATHER it was an impressive sight: Storm systems were lined up one after another across the Pacific, all heading straight toward the California coast. For weeks newscasts had been showing footage of homeowners canoeing to their front doors and automobiles stranded on impassable freeways. The rain continued, but the waters had begun to recede by late January, when all roads led to the winter convention of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) in Anaheim.

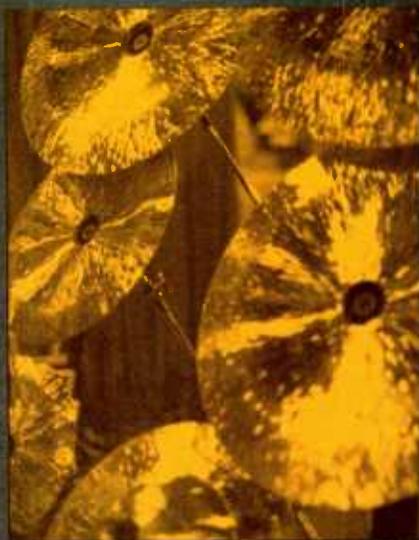
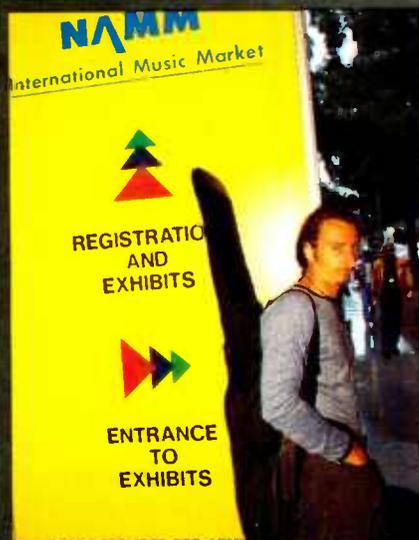
Driving rain and lashing palm fronds seemed an apt metaphor for the show itself. Indeed, the market for musical instruments has been wracked by an endless series of storms at least since the tumultuous arrival of MIDI in the mid-'80s. First computers, then custom DSP chips, then drastic price

reductions, digital tape, retro, unplugged and multimedia have challenged not only musicians but manufacturers and instrument dealers to master new techniques, new sounds and new buzzwords. If it looks as though there's a lull for the moment, rest assured that the gales will be howling again before long.

But challenges spur growth, as the ever-expanding NAMM show demonstrates. Winter NAMM '95 drew 978 exhibitors and 48,000 attendees from 87 countries, filling five cavernous halls, an indoor sports arena and the passageways between. Exhibitors like to maintain a consistent location from year to year, so tracing a path from Hall A to Hall E is like drilling through sedimentary rock: brass, winds and marching band accoutrements yield to guitars and amps, then keyboards, digital processors and computer-based music systems. The outer layer represents a nexus of present and future: This was the second year for the WaveRider brain-wave-to-MIDI converter, the first for indigenous Australians offering hand-carved didgeridoos.

If you're selling musical instruments, music itself is your most potent pitch—for which a truly amazing array of talent was assembled. One obvious high point was Bonnie Raitt's benefit concert for Boys and Girls Clubs of America, organized by Fender. Ticket sales and an auction of Fender axes signed by the likes of Eric Clapton, Bob [cont'd on page 74]

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DON LEWIS



# GITARS

**J**UST HOW DEAD IS BIG-HAIR METAL shred? Consider this: At this year's winter NAMM show, it was actually possible to get near the Ibanez booth. And the old *widdly-widdly-woo* that once filled the Convention Center has been all but totally eclipsed by a kind of a jazzy, snazzy "chuckin'." Unfortunately, this is every bit as obnoxious as shredding.

The retro craze, still going strong, is sure to outlast both. The old Vox Phantom, Teardrop and even the Mandoguitar are back again, thanks to a Portland, Oregon company called Phantom Guitar Works. These instruments have just the right jangle, but \$1000 is pretty steep for a Vox, which always enjoyed the cachet of being the '60s' great cheesy guitar. Gretsch reissued their classic Silver Jet in eye-dazzling sparkle finishes and re-named it the Sparkle Jet (\$1750). And there were lots of great new retro amp entries like the tweedy, 90-watt Electrolux Rocket 90 (combo \$1895, head \$1495, 4x12 cabinet \$695, 2x12 cabinet \$495)—an intriguing side project from Yamaha's pro audio wiz Don Morris.

Although retro still rules, it seems to have entered something of a late, decadent phase. One of the guitar hits of the show was a masterpiece of high-camp nostalgia: Tone King

Amplifiers, looking like furniture from your wild Uncle Mort's bachelor pad, all two-tone Naugahyde and tapered "robot torso" lines. The brand-new, 40-watt Continental (\$2449) even sports spindly wooden legs right from some Philco TV set. But the real surprise is that these swap-meet-chic numbers actually sound great, with all-tube circuitry, an edgy, lucid tone and velvety tremolo.

Decadent retro is a sure sign that yesterday's retro is starting to

get a bit, um, old. Gear designers are becoming fidgety. In guitars, the result is designs that blend retro curves with sharp '80s-style angles. Examples abounded—mostly ill-advised, but some good ones too. Chandler's 555 (\$699 to \$749) is based on

the Rickenbacker 325: slotted machine head, double cutaway, triple pickup. The bridge and overall silhouette, though, are utterly contemporary. The present-day emphasis is even stronger in the Chandler Metro models (\$569 to \$749), which feature Strato-Tele bodies, some in blue sparkle, with angular headstocks. Peavey, too, gave tradition a twist with the upgraded Detonator JX (now with a two-octave fretboard, \$419) and Impact Firenza AX (in alder or swamp ash, \$729).

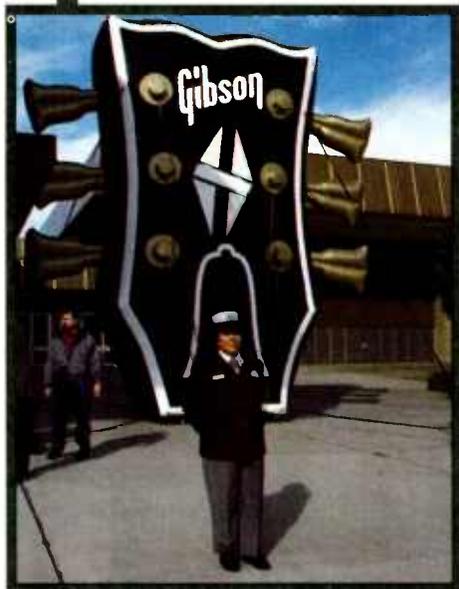
Then again, NAMM had plenty to offer from manufactur-



ers who have steered clear of trends—shred, retro or otherwise. Yamaha put nothing but the best (Warmoth bodies, Wilkinson bridges and so on) into the U.S.-built single-cutaway Pacifica USA 1 and double-cutaway Pacifica USA 2 (\$1495 each), and expanded the Pacifica range with entry-level and midline models. Gibson put a more highly flamed maple top on their new Les Paul Standard Plus (\$2995).

Paul Reed Smith celebrated their first decade with a gorgeous 10th Anniversary model (\$6600), a masterpiece in maple, mahogany, mother-of-pearl and etched gold. Only 100 will be produced. They also reissued one of the models that put them on the map: the Carlos Santana (\$6000). Santana himself was on hand to accept one as a gift and speak a few words about peace, love and harmony. In fact, it was a very good show for artist models. Fender's new Bonnie Raitt Stratocaster (\$1499) is every bit as sassy and poised as the lady herself, and the Eric Clapton signature acoustic from Martin combines the two vintage instruments Slowhand played during his "Unplugged" appearance.

In high-tech, Roland's VG-8 V-Guitar (\$2695) was the obvious high point. The unit derives six separate signals from any axe equipped with a Roland GK-2A pickup (not included)—which means harmonics, bends, pulloffs and other standard techniques are fair game—and applies them to what computer mavens call a "physical model." The VG-8 contains a model of a generic electric guitar (and a few other instruments), with a choice of virtual body woods and [cont'd on page 74]



BY ALAN DI PERNA

Above left: NAMM security; right: (L to R) Kimmy Morgan, Don Bailey, Max and Wynema Cardey of 7th Sanbar with 7th String pressure-sensitive volume controller.

Jim "Boongar" Edwards of Boongar Arts & Crafts Pty. Ltd. from Australia demos one of the lower-tech instruments at the NAMM show—a didgeridoo.

**F ANY SOUND COULD RISE ABOVE THE CON-**stant clamor of the winter NAMM show, it would be the voices of musicians demanding "More! More!" and "Less! Less!" More, as in more performance. Less, as in less expensive. Judging from the new products on the show floor, makers of PA gear are getting the message loud and clear.

Most major PA manufacturers have offered sound equipment aimed at working bands in the past, usually with mixed results. This year's affordable systems, though, tend to be based on high-tech designs adapted from monster touring rigs. They're priced for serious players rather than dilettantes, but in terms of performance they blow away their predecessors.

Electro-Voice blasted the crowd with an outstanding flyable speaker package, System 200 (unpowered \$3136, powered \$3990). Drawing on their MT touring line, System 200 provides a closely matched set of components: the Sx200 mid-high (\$850), Sb120a subwoofer (unpowered \$600, powered \$1050) and Xp200 controller (\$400).

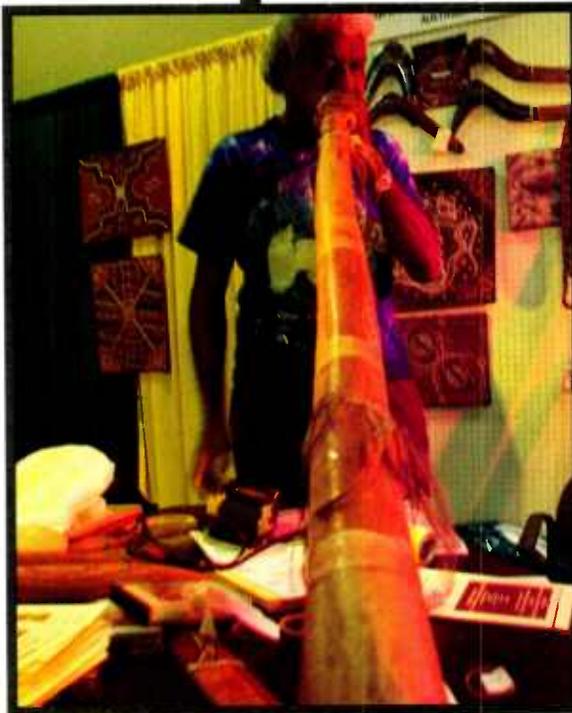
Wisely moving their pro audio display to a quiet room at the Anaheim Hilton, Yamaha epitomized the trend with their Darth Vaderesque Waveforce speaker line (\$549-\$999). Waveforce incorporates a rounded waveguide instead of a conventional square horn, designed to reduce coloration in the high end as well as distortion and uneven response. A good match for Waveforce is the new P series of amps (\$599-\$899) and a nifty compact mixer, the MM 1402 (\$449). It boasts 14 inputs: six mono and four stereo.

The folks at JBL were practically dancing with glee over their EON series, which presents a serious challenge to comparable systems. The futuristic, molded components—available separately or as a complete PA package—are designed from the ground up for plug-and-play operation and roadie-free handling. The EON PowerSystem (\$2177) includes a pair of powered 15" two-way cabinets that sit either flat or tilted (\$749, \$599 unpowered), a streamlined ten-channel mixer (\$679), two mikes and all of the necessary cables. Bucking the trend toward trickle-down engineering, JBL expects EON concepts to trickle up to higher-end products.

Eastern Acoustic Works (EAW), long known for top-shelf PA speakers, introduced its first products targeted at working bands with the LA line. Meanwhile Ramsa's T212

(\$720) and T215 (\$770) cabinets and Yorkville's powerful but compact 1x12 100W (\$499) powered wedge offer higher-end performance at a surprisingly low price.

Amp specialists are also paying more attention to the little guy. QSC, known for challenging rivals with lots of bang for the buck, showed off their Powerlight amps (\$1298-\$1998)—their entry into the lightweight amp arena dominated by Carver and Stewart. These amps aren't exactly cheap, but they do save you the cost of roadies. Crown spotlighted PowerBase III (\$1375) and midline PowerTech III (\$1690), each representing a step up from the II versions with better specs and better prices. Crest Audio debuted the mid-to-high-end CA series (\$790-\$2390), promising the same specs as their upmarket Professional touring line.



for each of eight mono and eight stereo inputs.

Peavey has built a booming business by making gear that just about anyone can afford. But competition in that area is growing ever more fierce as companies get hungry for a broader share of the market and start packing their bottom-of-the-line boxes with tweeky technology. Today, high tech is trickling down to working players. Tomorrow it may well reach garage bands. ☺

## LIVE SOUND

### ► Deep Pockets

t.c. electronic 6032 remote control for their 1128 graphic EQ .....\$14,790

### ► Best Bargains

Aphex 107 Tubessence stereo mike preamp .....\$595

# LIVE SOUND

# DRUMS & PERCUSSION

**C**OLD AND FADES. THESE TWO WORDS epitomized NAMM's drum sector this winter: Around every corner lay familiar models equipped with gold-plated hoops or finishes that fade from one color to another—or both. Unfortunately, the impact of any one of them was negligible



since so many companies were doing the same thing.

Still there was news, especially about companies changing hands. The most dramatic event took place only hours before the show opened when Gibson snatched distribution of Slingerland drums from H.S.S. (owner of Sonor and distributor of Sabian). It was such an unexpected development that Gibson reps were seen lugging Slingerland kits from the H.S.S. enclave.

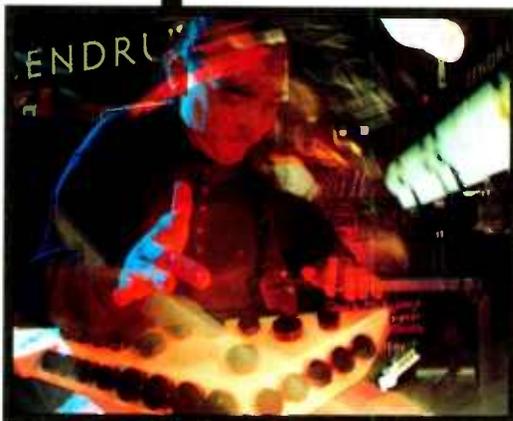
Evidently the maneuver worked to Gibson's advantage; the Slingerland display was mobbed throughout the show. Amid the hoopla Gibson managed to unveil the new Slingerland Studio King series of drum sets, including the Gregg Bissonette eight-piece double-bass set (\$6051). All Studio King models feature American-made maple ply shells fitted with Slingerland Streamline low-mass lugs, die-

cast hoops, drum-key tunable bass drum tension rods, ball-and-socket tom arms and R.I.M.S. drum mounts.

Winter NAMM '95 also marked the rebirth of a legend. After changing hands and brand names a number of times since its '70s heyday, the Fibes Drum Company has been resurrected by Tommy Robertson of Tommy's Drum Shop in Austin, Texas. The company's booth consisted only of a banner, a round table and six director's chairs. Robertson explained that, since acquiring the company, there hasn't been time to build any drums. He promises summer delivery of the classic SFT 690 fiberglass-shell snare, an exact replication of the 5½"×14" ten-lug snare used by Buddy Rich.

Although the staging wasn't quite as dramatic, Premier also announced a surprise change of ownership. Only a couple of years ago Yamaha sold Premier to the company's CEO, Tony Doughty. Now Doughty has sold his interest to Verity, an English electronics company. Premier's new items include an unnamed mid-line lacquer-finish set with birch/mahogany shells and low-mass lugs. Although retail prices weren't available, the company expects to charge under \$2000 for a five-piece kit with a wood snare drum and hardware.

Premier also displayed a prototype free-floating PPS snare drum that allows the player to tune both top and bottom heads from the upper counter-hoop. Other interesting snare drums include Nobel & Cooley's 10 Year Anniversary model, Yamaha's signature models for David Garibaldi (\$800) and Peter Erskine (10" \$480, 12" \$510), and Ocheltree's range of snare drums made of seamless car-



bon steel (\$1025-\$1245) or bell bronze (\$1275-\$1342) milled to a thickness of ⅛".

As usual, the cymbal companies arrived with new designs in tow. Sabian introduced the HH Duo ride (\$267), an interesting hand-hammered hybrid. The outer half is lathed for a softer, wide-spreading stick sound; the inner half is unlathed for a dryer, more severe stick sound. Paiste added a few new cymbals to their existing lines, including the Silk crash/ride (\$290) in their Sound Formula range. Not to be confused with a flat ride, the Silk has an unusual flat-top bell that produces a soft, controlled wash. It comes [cont'd on page 76]

## DRUMS

### ► Deep Pockets

Taos 16-piece kit, all handmade Native American drums with rawhide heads.....\$12,000

### ► Best Bargains

Regal Grips drum stick sheath.....\$5.35  
Evans Bass Drum Patch.....\$9.95

Above left: Kevin Gagnon plays the Roland TD-SK Drum System at the Roland booth; right: Walfredo Reyes, Jr. demos the Zendrum.

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World Radio History

# RECORDING & SOFTWARE

**R**ECORDING AND COMPUTERS ARE MORE entwined than ever before, so the trend among music software companies toward supporting the IBM/Windows platform at the expense of the Macintosh is significant. Driving the change is an installed base of millions of PC-compatible sound cards, many of which combine synthesis, MIDI and hard disk recording. The lesson of this winter's NAMM show was that Windows-based hardware/software systems have the potential to unseat the cassette multitracker as the recording tool of the masses.

Many of these systems bridge the gap between mass-market products and high-end workstations. CreamWare's TripleDAT (card and software, \$1500) provides between two and eight stereo tracks, depending on your PC's speed. The secret to the low price: It requires a DAT deck (not included) for A/D and D/A conversion. A program from Soundspiration called Samplitude Studio (\$398; Midia ProDIF 100 Digital Interface, \$549) also requires DAT for up to 16 tracks of digital audio. Both systems take advantage of DAT for backup as well. Digital Audio Labs announced the V8 card for the IBM (\$1495), boasting eight-track recording and 16-track playback with an optional I/O card (\$395) and MaxTrax software (price TBA).

Passport's tentatively titled Project Avalon for Windows combines MIDI sequencing with multitrack digital audio using a 16-bit audio card. Even Mac diehards Opcode joined the fray; their MIDI product "suite" (Vision sequencer, Galaxy editor/librarian, Studio 4 hardware interface and OMS 2.0 operating system extension) now runs under Windows. Roland even jumped onto the Windows bandwagon, and back in software business, with Singer Song Writer GI (c. \$150), a guitar-oriented sequencer with an onboard chord library plus tab, standard notation and intelligent arranging capabilities.

For serious production work, though, the Macintosh still reigns. The top sequencing/

audio programs (Opcode's StudioVision, Emagic's Logic Audio and Steinberg's Cubase Audio) have all undergone dramatic enhancement. StudioVision 3.0 magically transforms digital audio into analogous MIDI data (i.e., note number, brightness, pitch bend, volume and duration), then converts it back into audio that reflects any editing done to the MIDI data. We



watched David Torn's and Mark Isham's jaws drop as Ben Austin, Opcode's east coast rep, imposed a realistic retard over a formerly steady recording. Logic Audio (\$699) does similar tricks, including "re-grooving" audio according to a groove template and converting monophonic audio tracks into MIDI and notation. Cubase Audio 3.0 now corrects pitch and timing and incorporates notation functions. All three have been updated to accommodate Digidesign's TDM system for compatibility with software "plug-ins" that stretch their capabilities even further. Of particular note: the Protron AudioReality 3D sound plug-in from Crystal River (\$995).

(Speaking of effects, Lexicon announced new algorithms for their PCM 80 delivered on a PCMCIA card that plugs into the front panel. The Dual FX Algorithm card adds 25 multieffect algorithms and 250 new programs.)

Those who would rather do without a computer will be pleased to know that stand-alone hard-disk recording systems continue to evolve. Case in point: Akai's DR8 eight-track recorder (\$4995 with one-gig drive, see p. 78), big brother to the DR4d, for which Mark Of The Unicorn introduced a visual editor, WaveEdit (\$295). Boasting both analog and digital I/O, the DR8 includes a programmable mixer equipped with eight external and eight internal channels. The mixer inside of Island Digital's Touch- [cont'd on page 76]

## RECORDING

### ► Deep Pockets

RSP Technologies Project X all-digital mixer

.....\$20,000-\$25,000

Anthony DeMaria Labs ADL

1500 stereo all-tube com-

pressor .....\$2995

Tascam M-5000 32-channel

mixer .....\$29,999

### ► Best Bargains

Cliff Electronic Components

Sound Check Audio test CD

by Alan Parsons and Steven

Court .....\$40

ART Tube MP 12AX7-based

mike preamp .....\$149

Wildcat Canyon Software

Autoscore audio-to-MIDI con-

version software .....\$150

Posed beneath a wall of adoring video display units, Ray Van Straten demos Yamaha CBX-D3 and CBX-D5 digital recording processors.

BY CRAIG ANDERTON

Skid Marks

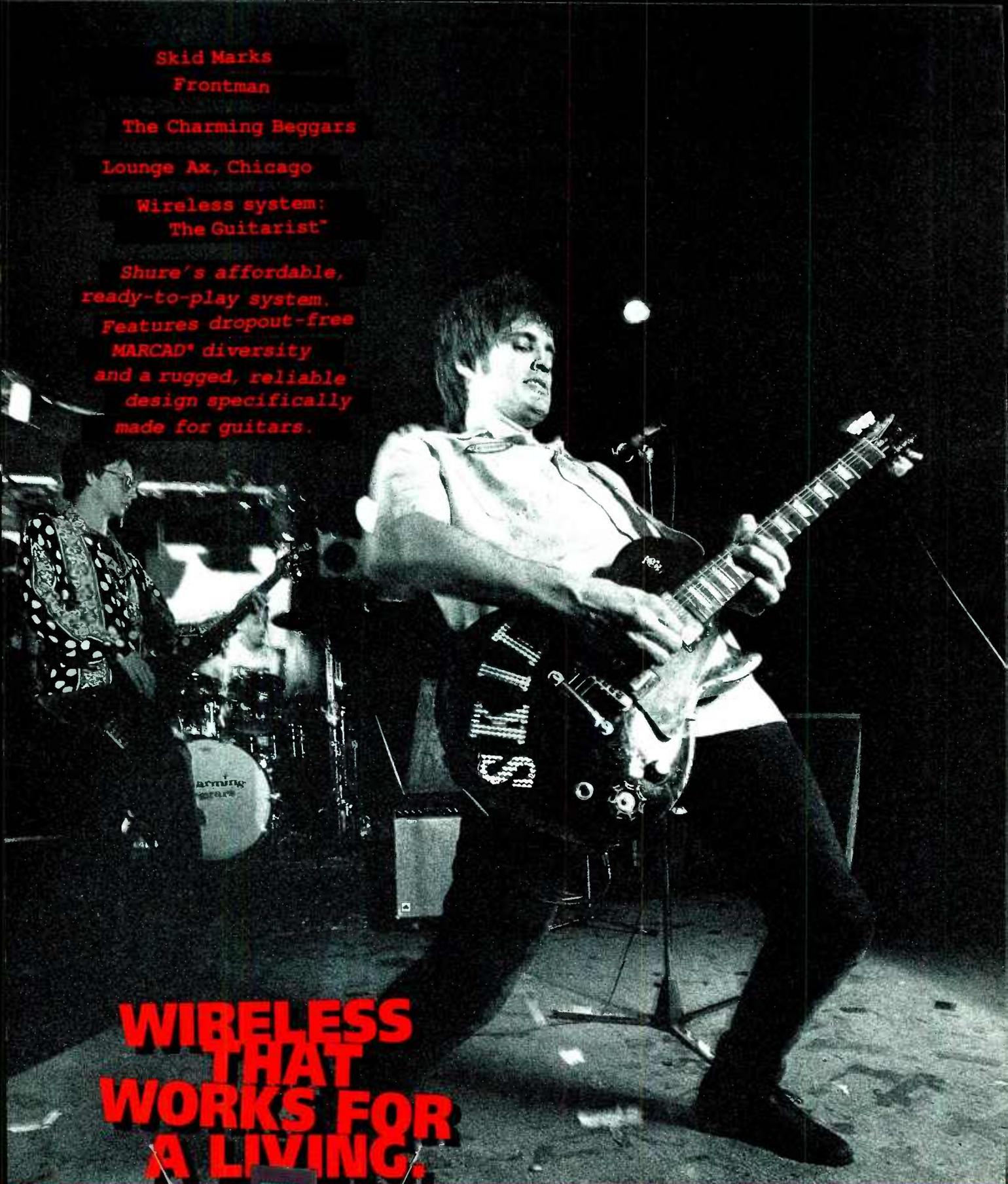
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# KEYBOARDS

**N**O LONGER IS PHYSICAL MODELING SYNTHESIS the wave of the future—it's the wave of the present. Responding to last year's ground breakers, the Yamaha VL1 keyboard and Korg Wave-Drum, Roland unveiled the VG-8 "virtual guitar" (see p. 64). Fed by a special pickup that can be fitted to any guitar, the VG-8's computerized model of an electric guitar enables players to switch among various guitars, amps, even tunings at the touch of a footswitch.

Keyboard players weren't left out of the fun. In a hotel suite apart from the convention floor Korg showed their Open Architecture Synthesis System, or OASYS. Like the Yamaha VL1, OASYS models a variety of acoustic instruments with spectacular realism. But it does so without requiring breath control and with up to 112, not two, voices of polyphony. Moreover Korg's modeling concept embraces the gamut of earlier synthesis methods: analog, FM, additive, vector, sample playback etc. In fact, they can be mixed and matched in any combination

power may not agree with most players' budgets; the price remains unannounced. Meanwhile Yamaha reduced the price of their modeling technology by 60 percent, debuting the rackmount

VL1m (\$2995) and VL7 keyboard (\$2995)—identical with the VL1 but slimmed from two voices to one, which hampers bagpipe simulations but not much else. ddrum displayed the Nord Lead (keyboard \$2750, rack-mount \$2350), a four-voice analog-style synthesizer that models an analog oscillator for true pulse-width modulation and more realistic low-frequen-

## KEYBOARDS

### ► Deep Pockets

- E-mu Emulator IV sampler .....\$5995
- Yamaha P300 digital piano .....\$3995
- Korg OASYS open-architecture synthesizer .....price TBA

### ► Best Bargains

- MIDI Solutions Quadra Thru 1x4 active MIDI thru box .....\$59
- Yamaha MU5 tone generator/MIDI interface .....\$299
- Roland MS-1 sampler .....\$595

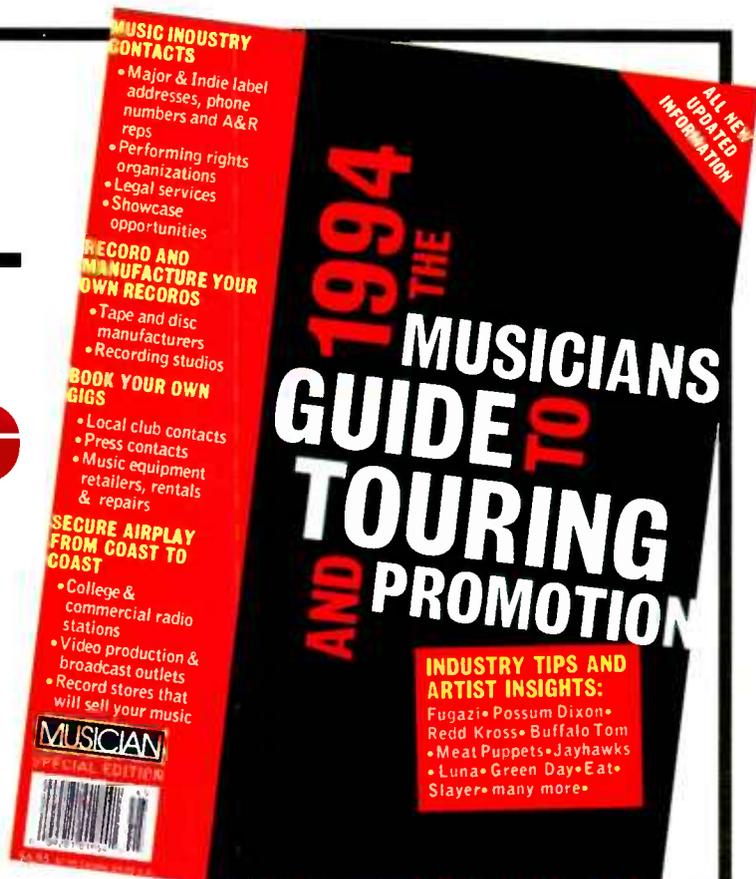
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cy response than the usual wavetable technology.

Despite such aggressive pricing, physical modeling remains expensive compared with sampling, the cost of which has suddenly fallen through the floor. E-mu is asking \$1495 for their ESI-32, essentially an Emulator III with 32 voices, up to 32 megs of RAM, Akai format compatibility, and optional SCSI and S/PDIF. Concurrently Akai slashed prices on their samplers (which now read E-mu, Roland and Akai disks) to pit their S2800 directly against the ESI-32. Roland offered the no-frills MS-1 (\$595) with up to three minutes of 16-bit, 44.1kHz sampling and four-voice polyphony. Both Roland and Akai revamped their DJ samplers, the Roland JS-30 (\$1695) and the Akai Remix 16, better to meet the real-world needs of



dance, rap and R&B musicians.

The most impressive bit of re-vamping is Alesis' QuadraSynth Plus Piano (\$1699), which adds eight megs of ROM-based stereo piano samples, new factory patches and extra effects. Total onboard ROM out of the box: 24 megs! The rack version, the S4 Plus (\$1099), now comes with 20 megs. Other new sample-playback units include Peavey's Spectrum Organ module (\$399), E-

mu's Classic Keys (\$795), Roland's FP-1 88-key digital piano (\$1995) with optional stand/speaker unit (\$395), and Yamaha's P300 digital piano (\$3995), which is nearly identical to the \$10,000 P500.

Last year the QuadraSynth's 64-voice polyphony set a standard now matched by the powerful Roland XP-50 workstation (\$1895), compact Korg X5DR tone module/MIDI interface (\$850) and versatile Yamaha MU80 (\$895). [cont'd on page 74]

Caught up in the feel of things, Yamaha's Tony Escueta explains the mysteries of the Yamaha VL7 Virtual Acoustic synth to an appreciative audience.

BY TED GREENWALD

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# BASS

**T**HE BIGGEST TRENDS IN bass tend to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Consider bass amps, where manufacturers have steadily refined

their capacity to produce humongous volume. Today's models provide not only more Watts but more of them per pound, mostly due to more efficient designs that employ solid-state circuitry instead of bulky tubes, at least in the output stage. The upshot is amps that are frighteningly loud but won't give you a hernia.

Occupying just two rack spaces, Peavey's T-Max head (\$729) uses a single 12AX7 tube in front of a 500-Watt solid-state output stage. Similarly compact but mighty are Gallien-Krueger's 500-Watt stereo 2000RB (\$1699); Trace Elliot's 230-Watt, all-tube V-Type (\$1799); Marshall's 7200 (\$1199) boasting 2000 Watts RMS; and Warwick's Wamp-800 (\$2199) with two 350-Watt channels and a built-in chromatic tuner so you can pummel your audience with greater precision.

Krossroad, rising from the ashes of Kustom (a '60s staple), introduced the 500-Watt solid-state K500 head (\$795). Krossroad's boxes are covered with Kustom's original tuck-and-roll sparkling vinyl—one of the few conspicuously retro vestiges in bass guitar dom.

Speaker cabinets are undergoing a parallel development. Conventional wisdom dictates that bigger speakers are better for bass; but, as Hartke discovered several years ago, you can use 10" speakers to deliver the wham and

slam and let the cabinet itself bring out the bottom. Sonic's B610T (\$679), capable of handling 500 Watts, boasts a sextet of long-throw 10s and a pair of tweeters. Bullfrog's Alumabass S410 (\$699) houses four 10" aluminum-cone speakers and handles 600 Watts RMS. The Genz Benz BD410T (\$550) handles 275 Watts with four aluminum-cone 10s and a tweeter, while SWR's Bigfoot (\$729) has a tweeter and pair of Bag End 12s, handling 500 Watts RMS from behind a "Texas bar proof" metal grille.

All of which is having a big effect on combo amps. In fact, many new models have as much butt-kicking ability as a big rig and still fit easily in the back seat of your car. Ampeg's B2-48 (\$1000) combines 200 Watts and a single 15" speaker, while their B-3 (\$650) simultaneously pushes 100 Watts through a 15" speaker and 50 through an 8" speaker. Hartke's 2155 (\$1099) pounds 200 Watts through a 15" aluminum-cone bass driver and 5" aluminum tweeter; their 1410 squeezes 140 Watts through a pair of 10s. Fender's 200-Watt, 1x15 BXR 200 (\$659) packs similar heat.

What do you play through these beefy beasts? You can go with tried-and-true Fender American Standard, Deluxe and Custom Shop basses (from \$959), variations on classic Fender Jazz and Precision Basses with graphite neck reinforcement. For a more contemporary variation, there's Pedulla's racy, small-bodied Rapture (\$1395). Last show's impressive (and expensive) Yamaha BB5 Nathan East five-string has spun off the alder BBN5A (\$1499), which retains the same active electronics, and the drastically downpriced BBN5 (\$559, see p. 79) featuring the same body style.

Other outstanding five-string alternatives: Peavey's Forum 5 with an extra-long 35" scale and Stuart Spector's CR series (\$1750-\$1850), Czech-made versions of his classic handmade NS line.



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## BASSES

► **Deep Pockets**

Rainsong Power Bass all-graphite hollowbody bass.....\$4250  
Conklin Sidewinder seven-string solidbody bass.....\$2800

► **Best Bargains**

Spectrasonics Bass Legends sampling CD featuring grooves by Marcus Miller, Abraham Laboriel and John Patitucci.....\$99  
DOD Meat Box octave divider bass pedal.....\$109

Marc Spector, marketing manager for JBL Professional

I've never been sure whether to regard the six-string bass, or baritone guitar, as a guitarist's bass or a bassist's guitar. The scale length is shorter than that of a bass, and the string spacing (and tuning in many cases) matches that of a guitar. There were a few at NAMM: Chandler's Metro Baritone (\$1599-\$1699), Veillette's Mk1 Baritone (U.S.-built, \$2550) and Mk1-CR Baritone (Czech, \$875), and the Music Man Silhouette (\$1800). Looking for even more range? Conklin's Sidewinder seven-string (\$2800) offers high C and F strings. The cool-looking top is made from interlocking exotic woods that appear to "melt" together.

Any of the above might be enhanced by the new wave of bass processors, which now includes octave dividers from EBS (Octabass, \$130) and DOD (Meat Box, \$109). Korg debuted two: the AX30B Bass Hyperformance Processor (\$425), an adaptation of



CEB-3 stereo chorus (\$109), the LMB-3 limiter (\$99), the ODB-3 overdrive (\$119) and the GEB-7 seven-band EQ (\$119).

"Unplugged" basses have cooled off since last year, but Rainsong's Acoustic Bass (\$4000) bears attention. It's made entirely of graphite composite so no amount of moisture will make it warp, and it has a remarkably good tone. Their Power Bass (\$4250) is a hollow-body electric made of the same space-age material.

Rainsong's approach represents one of the more drastic steps along the evolutionary path of the bass. Still, unlike the retromania that has transfixed guitarists, bass evolution proceeds consistently in a forward direction. Perhaps it has to do with the willingness of bass players to try new

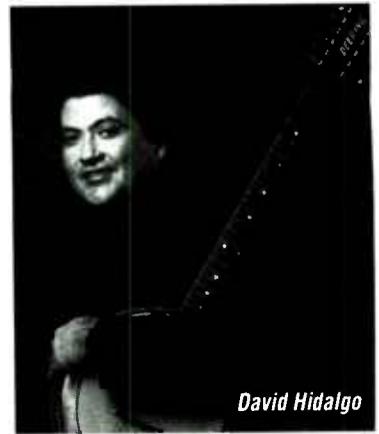
things, or maybe it's because the electric bass is still an emerging instrument. Either way, what matters is that the bass industry continues to look ahead for its future.

BY TOM MULHERN



their AX30 guitar pedal board with five simultaneous effects, and the G5 Bass Synth Processor, which mixes synthesized waveforms with that of your own axe. Also, Boss introduced a bunch of bass stomp boxes: the

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David Hidalgo

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ALPHATEK THE FIRST IN TECHNOLOGY

[cont'd from page 63] Dylan and Jeff Beck brought in \$80,000.

Elsewhere Washburn hosted Nuno Bettencourt, Dimebag Darrell and Craig Chaquico; Hoshino brought Bill Bruford, Kenny Aronoff and Simon Phillips; Community presented Kansas. Maynard Ferguson raised the roof courtesy of Leblanc and Zildjian while lesser known big bands played all night in Cerwin-Vega's outdoor tent. Fishman showcased the startling acoustic guitar techniques of Bill White Acre, Preston Reed and Harvey Reid. *Keyboard* celebrated its 20th anniversary with an all-star cast that included Joe Zawinul, Billy Childs, Bruce Hornsby and a dozen others. *Musician's* own annual bash, sponsored by Shure and Eastern Acoustic Works, was headlined by the incomparable Allan Holdsworth with support from L.A.'s Raging Honkies and John Christ of Danzig.

All told, it was an amazing four days. Look for the fallout in stores, stages, studios and the pages of *Musician* as the storms rage on. (Prices are included wherever possible in the following pages. If you don't see one, it was unannounced at press time.)—T.G.

## GUITARS

[cont'd from page 64] styles, pickup types, configurations and placements, even string tunings, that affect the sound accordingly. By moving icons in the display window, you can position a virtual microphone near or far from a virtual speaker cabinet. And, sure enough, it sounded true blue as product specialist Ike Ueno tore into Jeff Beck's "Diamond Dust" in the Roland demo room. More convincing still was the experience of playing it, which actually *felt* like playing a guitar—an attribute not generally associated with guitar-controlled synths.

Some guitarists will always prefer the non-virtual clout of big amp stacks, and there were some great new ones. Hughes & Kettner weighed in with their new flagship bruiser, the Tri-Amp head (\$2299): three separate amps (as opposed to channels), 13 tubes, stylish transparent face plate and great tone. Having aced the bass and acoustic amp markets, Trace Elliot turned their attention to guitar amps. At the top of their extensive Guitar Works line is the Trident 100-watt head (\$2499) and 50-watt combo (\$2899), all-tube power machines sporting high-end features, three discrete channels and huge tone.

But who's got that much to spend on a guitar

amp? Marshall must have had the same thought in advance given their relatively affordable all-tube combo, the JCM 30 (\$799). No frills or trendy tweed; just a solid 30-watt amp that compares favorably with similar combos that have sprung up since the Vox AC30 was reissued two years ago. Peavey offered their own solution to the tone/affordability equation, the new Transtube series. Ranging from the 15W Rage 158 (\$99) to the 200 W Special 212S (\$549), these solid-state amps boast remarkable warmth and overall muscle.

And then there's the post-Parker Fly syndrome, which has become widespread as

GUITARS

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**Peavey Rage 158 15-Watt combo...\$99**

more manufacturers attempt to build electric guitars capable of sounding like an acoustic. Take the Blair Mutant Twin double-neck. One neck bears an acoustic bridge and piezo, the other an electric bridge and magnetic pickups. If having two necks seems cumbersome, how about one neck that rotates to present either electric-style strings, pickup and bridge or acoustic-style? That's the Roberts Roto-Neck, available in models with two, three or four playing surfaces. Then there were stomp boxes like the Rockman Acoustic Guitar Pedal (\$149) and the Acoustic from ART (\$239). Once upon a time you stomped on a box to make your guitar sound nasty, but these boxes can make any electric produce ringing, full-bodied electro-acoustic tones.

Given the popularity of "unplugged" music in the post-shred era, designers are paying attention to acoustic pickups and amps. Ovation's 1995 Collector's Edition (\$1899) includes something called the OptiMax pickup system, which combines a piezo with a tiny condenser mike mounted near the bridge (but not coupled to it) and outside of the body for greater clarity and less feedback. A new company called Jarrod Lee Amplification (JLA)

showed a very impressive acoustic guitar amp, the Hooker Acoustic (\$2250). A compact box with a clear, concise, natural sound, it would be a fine match for new acoustic models from Fender, Yamaha, Takamine or Alvarez-Yairi.

JLA was one of numerous companies to be found in the secluded basement hall, farther afield than the Beavis and Butt-Head contingent dared to venture. There the seasoned NAMMster could stroll unmolested amid a glittery wonderland of guitar gear—from the bizarre to the truly innovative—offered by a host of start-ups and upstarts. The last time this kind of plucky entrepreneurship could be seen was during the height of the mid-'80s MIDI boom. But there's a fresh tide coming, and guitars seem to be the focus. With the twin evils of economic recession and hair metal on the decline, the guitar horizon looks bright indeed. ♪

## KEYBOARDS

[cont'd from page 68] The latter not only weds a tone module and MIDI interface—an increasingly common configuration in the dawning age of mass-market multimedia—but also includes inputs that make it useful as a multieffect box. Kurzweil doubled the acclaimed K2000's voice count, refining the user interface along the way, in the 48-voice K2500 (76 keys) and K2500X (88 keys), monster workstations that revive the long-forgotten ribbon controller. (We were privileged to witness Patrick Moraz test-driving a K2500X as Keith Emerson sipped a glass of wine a few booths away.) But E-mu posed a new upper limit with their new flagship Emulator IV (\$5995), a power user's delight with 128 voices. The EIV holds up to 128 megs of RAM (including up to 16 megs of nonvolatile "flash RAM") and comes with digital I/O, eight balanced outs and a port enabling a standard ASCII keyboard to control the user interface.

The EIV's ASCII port is part of a broader phenomenon quite visible at the show: innovative user interfaces. For instance, Yamaha excluded patch editing functions from their 32-voice W5 and W7 workstations in order to minimize ROM and keep their prices to \$1995 and \$2495 respectively—but since most power users own computers, visual editing software is available free of charge. More surprising, the EIV, Yamaha MU80, Korg OASYS and Roland VG-8 all feature icon-driven menu displays. Such developments are a necessary step toward enabling musicians to harness the expressive power of technologies like physical modeling—and whatever comes next. ♪



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**DRUMS & PERCUSSION**

[cont'd from page 66] only in a 20" size. Meanwhile Zildjian added a 6" splash (\$91) and a 20" flat-top ride (\$297) to the very musical A. Custom range, designed with input from Vinnie Colaiuta.

Manufacturers also continue to innovate in the areas of heads, sticks and brushes. Remo introduced Fiberskyn 3 heads for both drum set and hand drums (\$16-\$47), which emulate the properties of calfskin, goatskin, fishskin and other natural membranes. Aquarian displayed a new hoop design called Safe-T-Loc that prevents slippage inside the hoop and provides more consistent tuning. Vic Firth introduced the new Dreadlock brush (\$25) with braided heavy-gauge stainless steel wires, as well as the Rute (\$18), a bundle of birch dowels secured in a handle.

Without a doubt, there was plenty of cool stuff for drummers at Winter NAMM '95. But nothing created the kind of excitement generated by Peavey's odd-looking set, Ayotte's gorgeous Wood Hoop drums or Korg's WaveDrum last year—this year we

got gold and fades. Granted, an annual helping of pure innovation is a lot to ask. But I can't help hoping that drum and cymbal companies have something up their sleeves for the summer show.

**RECORDING & SOFTWARE**

[cont'd from page 68] Pro 16 16-track recorder (\$8995 with one-gig drive) can be controlled via touch-screen.

Yamaha put their CBX-D5 in a rackmount case sans AES/EBU and effects, unveiling the CBX-D3 four-track recorder (\$995). Meanwhile, the design for Atari's Falcon030 computer—one of the great digital audio bargains while it was in production—has been licensed to European software pioneers C-Lab. They're touting it as a turnkey system when teamed with products like Cubase Audio.

Interestingly, cassette multitrackers are holding their own against the digital onslaught. Tascam upgraded the eight-track 488 MkII Portastudio (\$1799), adding tape monitors that double as inputs for MIDI-controlled synths. As for four-tracks, Yamaha highlighted their entry-level MT50 (\$449) and step-up MT4X

(\$599). Fostex showed the XR-5 with Dolby B (\$499) and announced the more advanced XR-7 with Dolby C (\$699).

A Portastudio-sized eight-bus mixer turned up at the Allen & Heath booth, the GS-1 with eight mono and eight stereo inputs (\$1500, optional meter bridge \$499). Yamaha introduced the eight-bus RM-800 with 16 inputs for under \$1700, or 24 inputs for \$2400. Both versions offer six aux sends, four stereo returns and three-band mid-sweepable EQ. Soundcraft's K1 analog mixer family (eight-channel \$2995, 16-channel \$3950, 24-channel \$5350) features a modular, four-bus design with four-band EQ and six aux busses. Mackie also introduced a four-bus mixer. Based on their eight-bus designs, the 24-channel SR24\*4 (c. \$1500) is designed to be equally useful in live and studio situations. But the big console surprise was Project X from RSP Technologies (\$20,000-\$25,000), an all-digital 24-input console with scads of onboard DSP and direct digital interfacing to multiple MDMs (modular digital multitracks, i.e., Alesis ADAT, Tascam DA-88 and Fostex RD8).

Supporting MDMs appears to be the new growth industry. The PreSonus DCP-8 (\$1495) is a single-rack box with eight compressors, eight noise gates and eight automated fader channels that respond to MIDI channel volume commands. Complementing their MDM-8L eight-channel limiter (\$599), ART added the Eight Gate (\$899). For control freaks, Tascam's MMC-88 (\$499) slaves up to 16 DA-88s to MIDI messages generated by MMC-capable sequencers such as MOTU's Performer 5 sequencer (\$495). (At Tascam's booth a MOTU demonstrator showed a special version of Performer 5 featuring a DA-88 control window.) The MMC-88 also derives MTC and SMPTE from DA-88 audio, enabling you to slave sequencers to tape without a sync card or a track lost to timecode.

Alesis didn't show a new ADAT as rumored, but they did one-up their best-selling Monitor One speakers with the three-way Monitor Two (\$699/pair). And if you hear any buzzes and hums, check out the Humbuster HB-100 (\$425) and HB-20 (\$539) from MIDI Motor. These multi-trapped isolation transformers provide 10 and 20 outlets respectively to eliminate ground loops.

The bottom line is that there are now three distinct levels of multitrack recording: pro, project and consumer—but the performance differences between them are going to get fuzzier before they get clearer. Until then, enjoy the increased performance at lower prices.

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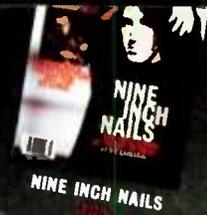
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- 168 10/92 Playing with Elvis Presley, Producer's Special
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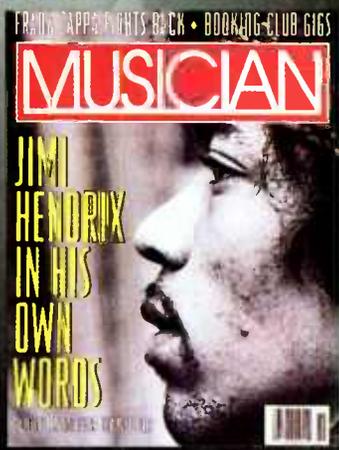
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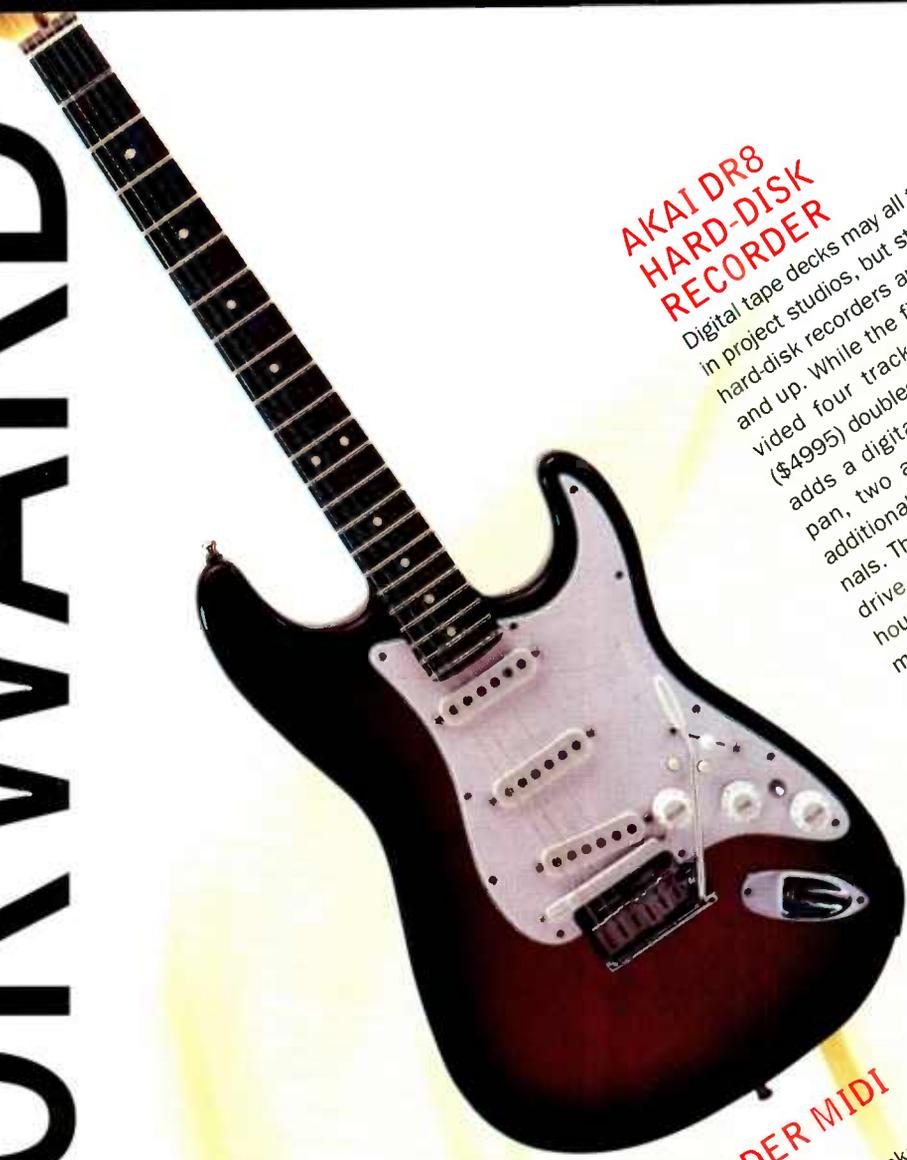
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# FORWARD

# FAST



## AKAI DR8 HARD-DISK RECORDER

Digital tape decks may all the rage in project studios, but stand-alone hard-disk recorders are on the up and up. While the first wave provided four tracks, Akai's DR8 (\$4995) doubles that number and adds a digital mixer with level pan, two aux buses and eight additional inputs for external signals. The internal 1-gigabyte hard drive, which holds over three hours of 18-bit audio, can be augmented via SCSI. SMPTE sync is optional. ♦ Akai, 1316 E. Lancaster, P.O. Box 2344, Fort Worth, TX 76113-2344; voice (817) 336-5114, fax (817) 870-1271.



## FENDER MIDI GUITAR

Roland's GK-2A pickup has been acclaimed as a breakthrough in guitar-to-MIDI technology—but retrofitting one to your Strat can transform a vintage beauty into a time-warp special. The integrated GK-2A in Fender's American Standard Strat GR-Ready (\$1279) is disguised as a third single-coil in the bridge position. Its output connects to any Roland GI-10 synth, or to the new Roland GI-10 Guitar MIDI Interface (from which it can drive any MIDI device on six independent channels). ♦ Fender, 7975 N. Hayden Rd., Suite C-100, Scottsdale, AZ 85258; voice (602) 596-9690, fax (602) 596-1386.

## DEERING SIX- STRING BANJOS

Deering's six-string banjos are tuned like guitars, placing this traditional sound at the fingertips of guitar players. The drumhead of the B-6 (\$398) is mounted on a steel rim while that of the D-6 (\$1584) exchanges the maple with a bell-bronze tone ring. The MB-6 (\$1995) exchanges the mahogany neck and inlays along other two models for maple, and features binding and inlays along the fingerboard. ♦ Deering, 7936-D Lester Ave., Lemon Grove, CA 91945; voice (619) 464-8252, fax (619) 464-0833.



Last year's high-end Nathan East signature bass players reach higher ground with five strings and a full two-octave neck. The new BBN5 (\$559) provides the same extended-range capabilities at nearly one-fifth the price. The BBN5's body—lacking the same shape as East's but tour—is lightweight alder with a maple neck and rosewood pickboard. Each of two volume control pots has its own volume control.

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## NEW TOYS & NEW TOOLS

### GUITARS & BASSES

◆ In addition to new models in the Sigma and Shenandoah lines, **Martin** debuts three limited-edition acoustic guitars for 1995. Classical Backpacker travel guitar has a wide neck and a bridge that accepts either plain- or ball-end classical strings. The 0001 is a small-bodied counterpart to the popular D1, similar to standard Auditorium models but with improved stability and tone. The D-16T is a full-sized dreadnought adaptation of the 1993 D-16H, incorporating many of the features of the D1. Other new models include small-bodied guitars aimed at folk and fingerstyle players desiring a more delicate sound, the 000-16 and 000C-16 Auditorium. ◆ The Rapture bass from **Pedulla**, in four- and five-string models, is designed to produce powerful lows that require minimal EQ. The instrument features a single pickup, four-bolt maple neck, 22-fret rosewood fingerboard and soft curly maple body. ◆ Designed to complement their acoustic guitar pickups, **EMG's** AEQ3 EQ system provides three bands with up to 12dB of boost/cut. EMG also debuts two EQ devices for bass, the EMG-BQ, featuring two concentric pots for bass, mid and treble, and the midrange-only EMG-VMC. ◆ **Fishman's** Acoustic Matrix guitar pickup now comes in a split-pickup version that provides improved dynamic range and frequency response with the split-saddle arrangement found on instruments by Lowden and Takamine. The new model can be installed without drilling any holes. ◆ The Chops Practice Mirror from **T.K. Productions** is a 4"×6" mirror that clips to a music stand, enabling a player to observe hand positions, embouchure and other elements of technique while practicing. Viewing angle is adjustable. ◆ The **Hamatar X-15** is a guitar-like instrument with a body at either end of the neck. Played in horizontal position with a capo at the center of the fretboard, the neck is divided into two full-scale necks for two-handed hammer-on techniques. ◆ **Michael Luis Charvel** offers vintage-style guitar and bass cases in tweed, cream, brown and black tolex, designed for a variety of popular models. ◆ **Stick & Play** is a set of labels and reuseable colored dots that affix to the fretboard to indicate notes and scale patterns. Instructional guides are also available.

### PROCESSORS & EFFECTS

◆ **Rolls** offers two new signal processors, the REQ 215 Dual Equalizer and the RP252 Dual Compressor/Limiter/Gate. The REQ 215, intended for sound reinforcement and recording, includes LED

bar-graph meters as well as high and low shelving filters. The RP252 is designed to provide simple, effective operation at a low price. ◆ Named for Hellecaster Jerry Donahue, the JD-10 from **Morley** is a distortion/overdrive pedal that functions as a direct box, preamp, EQ, amp/speaker/pickup emulator, line driver and headphone amp. ◆ The FBX-Solo packages **Sabine's** "feedback exterminator" technology for a single microphone. The digital unit detects resonances and filters them accordingly. Mike- and line-level models are available. ◆ **Omnidrive** is a programmable digital processor for managing speaker systems from **BSS**. The two-space rack unit provides two channels of four-way crossover, parametric EQ, phase correction, delay and limiting. Sixty memory locations are available for storing venue and system setups.

### AMPS & SPEAKERS

◆ **Carlsbro** announces two additions to the GLX guitar amp series. The GLX150T, a two-channel head that delivers 150 Watts with either 4 Ohm or 8 Ohm loads, features tube-emulation circuitry and a voicing control for enhanced midrange. Spring reverb, line out and an effect loop are included. Boasting the same features, the GLX85 combo delivers 85 Watts through one **Celestion G12** speaker. ◆ The T18 is a compact subwoofer from **Electro-Voice** that combines features of both horn-loaded and vented-box designs. The unit accommodates 400 Watts average power with frequency response of 45-250Hz. ◆ **Beyerdynamic** adds the 200 series to its headphone line. The 200 is available in versions for broadcast or studio monitoring with a choice of dynamic or condenser elements, various ear transducers, and mono or stereo configuration. ◆ **Garwood** introduces the PRSII in-ear monitoring system, including transmitter, receiver with on-board noise reduction and mold-ear pieces, at a lower price than earlier systems.

### MICROPHONES

◆ The MPC 65 Boundary Layer Microphone from **Beyerdynamic** is a low-profile unit whose broad frequency response and quick transient response is suited to live recordings of classical music. Beyer also debuts two wireless mikes, the S 150 non-diversity and S 250 true-diversity systems. Both feature crystal-controlled oscillators for stability and audio and RF indicator lights. Up to 12 channels can be used in a single location. ◆ **Electro-Voice** introduces a dynamic omnidirectional mike,

the RE50N/D, featuring a magnet structure said to result in an even pickup pattern with extended frequency response and sensitivity.

### PERCUSSION

◆ New to **Sabian's** Pro series are 14" Mini Chinese and 18" Chinese cymbals. The smaller model responds with a sudden impact suitable for accents, while the larger produces a dense Oriental sound useful for riding and effects. ◆ **Vintage Sounds** is a drum sound library of 377 sounds for the **ddrum3** including samples from the **ddrum2** and **ddrumAT**.

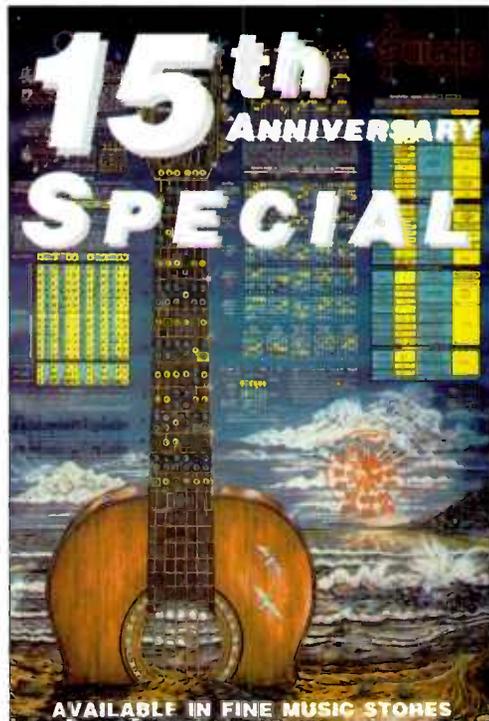
### SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

◆ **Optical Media's** Disc-To-Disk is an IBM/Windows application that ports audio data from a CD-ROM drive directly into the computer via SCSI. Sampling rate can be 11kHz, 22kHz or 44.1kHz, resolution 8- or 16-bit. The resulting audio files can be exported as .WAV, QuickTime, .VOC, PCM or Macintosh AIFF/AIFC files. ◆ **Galaxy**, the universal patch editor/librarian from **Opcode**, now provides librarian functions for Akai S-3000, Yamaha ProMix 01 and Alesis QuadraSynth/S4. Editor and librarian functions have been added for the Yamaha TG5000 and E-mu Morpheus and UltraProteus. The latter instruments are also supported by dedicated Edit One editor/librarians. ◆ **Magnetic Music** offers MIDcat! for IBM/DOS, an editor for standard MIDI files. The program makes it possible to remap notes, track positions and program changes; filter or insert MIDI events; transpose, scale, clip, set, add to or subtract from event values; insert meta events such as copyright notice, tempo and time signature; delete tracks; and related operations. ◆ Intended for educational applications, **Vivace** is an interactive music accompaniment system for Mac or IBM-compatible computers from **Coda**. When the player performs a piece from Vivace's pre-programmed library, the system matches the tempo and generates an accompaniment with appropriate orchestration. ◆ **MIDIman's** Winman 1x1 is a one-in/one-out MIDI interface for IBM compatibles that works with all Windows applications. The unit accommodates up to five interrupts from various I/O peripherals. ◆ The **MIDIEngine 8Port/SE** from **Music Quest** is an eight-port MIDI interface, switcher, thru and processor for IBM compatibles. Eight MIDI ins and outs are included, as well as SMPTE and MTC capabilities. The unit works with any Windows applications.

# The GUITAR POSTER™

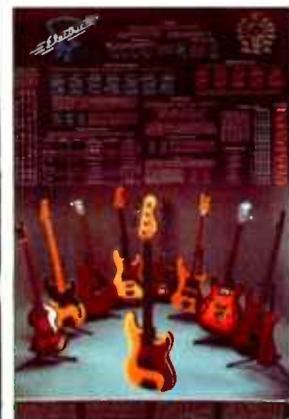
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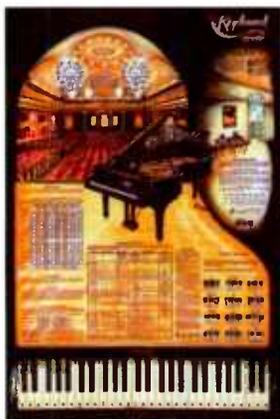


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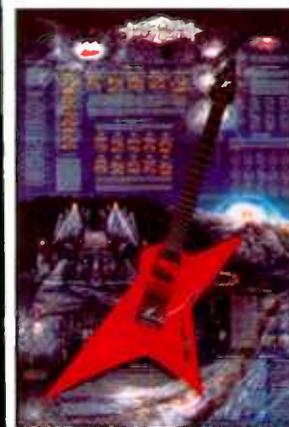
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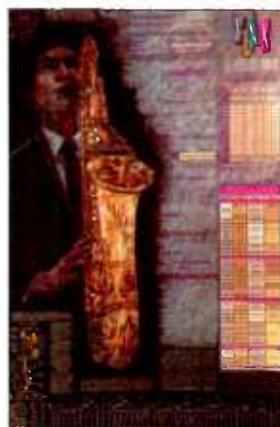
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World Radio History

# JON PETRUCCI'S HOME





# HOME STUDIO

WHAT ARE the minimum requirements for a home studio? Ask John Petrucci, guitarist for progressive-rock wunderkinds Dream Theater. Tucked into a corner of his New Jersey apartment, Petrucci's rig couldn't be simpler: a **Yamaha MT100II** cassette multitracker **1** and **MS101** powered monitors **2**, **Yamaha QY20** sequencer with sounds built in **3**, **Boss Dr. Rhythm** drum machine **4**, **Zoom 2002** guitar processor **5** and any of several custom **Ibanez** guitars **6**. (He has a custom 7-string, but still enjoys his standard **Universe 7**.)

That's all Petrucci needed to compose his share of Dream Theater's East-West release *Awake*, a kaleidoscopic mix of the Dregs, Rush and Yes filtered through latter-day metal. The whole studio takes up only a few square feet of desk space, plus it travels well, allowing Petrucci to compose virtually anywhere.

"I write totally on the go," he says. "I can plug headphones"—**Audio-Technica ATH-909s 8**—"into the Zoom and practice, and it gets great guitar sounds into the four-track without a mike or amp. I use the sequencer all by itself when I'm doing guitar clinics. I can write on an airplane with it. It's like a little musician's laptop.

"When I'm doing something that I want to show the band," he continues, "I usually get more involved. I use the drum machine and put real guitar on it," adding parts with a **Korg X5** synth **9** and mixing to a **JVC TD-W805** cassette deck.

Bassist John Myung, drummer Mike Portnoy and front man James LaBrie also contribute bits and pieces. Then the band hammers them together, recording demos as they go. "For this record," Petrucci says, "we rented a rehearsal studio in Manhattan for three months and did our demos there, straight to an **Alesis ADAT 10** with **LRC** remote **11**. "It sounds amazing." They raided their concert racks for effects, mixing through a **Tascam M-1508 12** and **JBL 4208** monitors **14**.

During those sessions, Petrucci miked a **Mesa Dual Rectifier** head **15** and **Boogie 1x12** cabinet **16** "because it's really simple." For more serious recording and live work he uses a **Mesa/Boogie TriAxis** tube preamp and **Stereo Simul-Class 2:Ninety** power amp. He controls an **Alesis QuadraVerb**, **Lexicon Vortex** and assorted other gear via **Mesa/Boogie Abacus 18** and **FU-2 17** footswitches.

Petrucci's no-frills studio enables him to capture inspiration whenever it strikes with a minimum of distraction. But there are times when even stripped-down is too elaborate, when ideas are so fragile that to render them in sound would shatter their continuity and coherence. At those times, Petrucci says, the best capture medium is pencil and paper. "That's the simplest home studio," he observes. "A piece of manuscript paper."

BY TED GREENWALD

PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTINE LARSEN

# Springsteen Beach Boys, Bob Dylan David Bowie, Sting... 100's More

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World Radio History



# P.J. Harvey Down to the Bone

**T**HE LONGER ROCK 'N' ROLL LIVES, THE MORE resourcefulness it demands. Here is a very simple musical form that proved from its conception to be incredibly compelling. The problem is that since rock is so simple it is hard to keep coming up with original ways to play it without repeating what's already been done. Turn it too far to the right and it turns into country, too far to the left and it's blues. Play rock too carefully and it becomes swing, with too much virtuosity and it crosses into jazz. After rock's initial adrenalin blast petered out in the early '60s, it looked like the form was already kaput—but then the Beatles showed how that old Chuck Berry style could be goosed up harmonically, and Dylan demonstrated how it could be stretched lyrically, and Hendrix blew out all the windows by extending rock electronically.

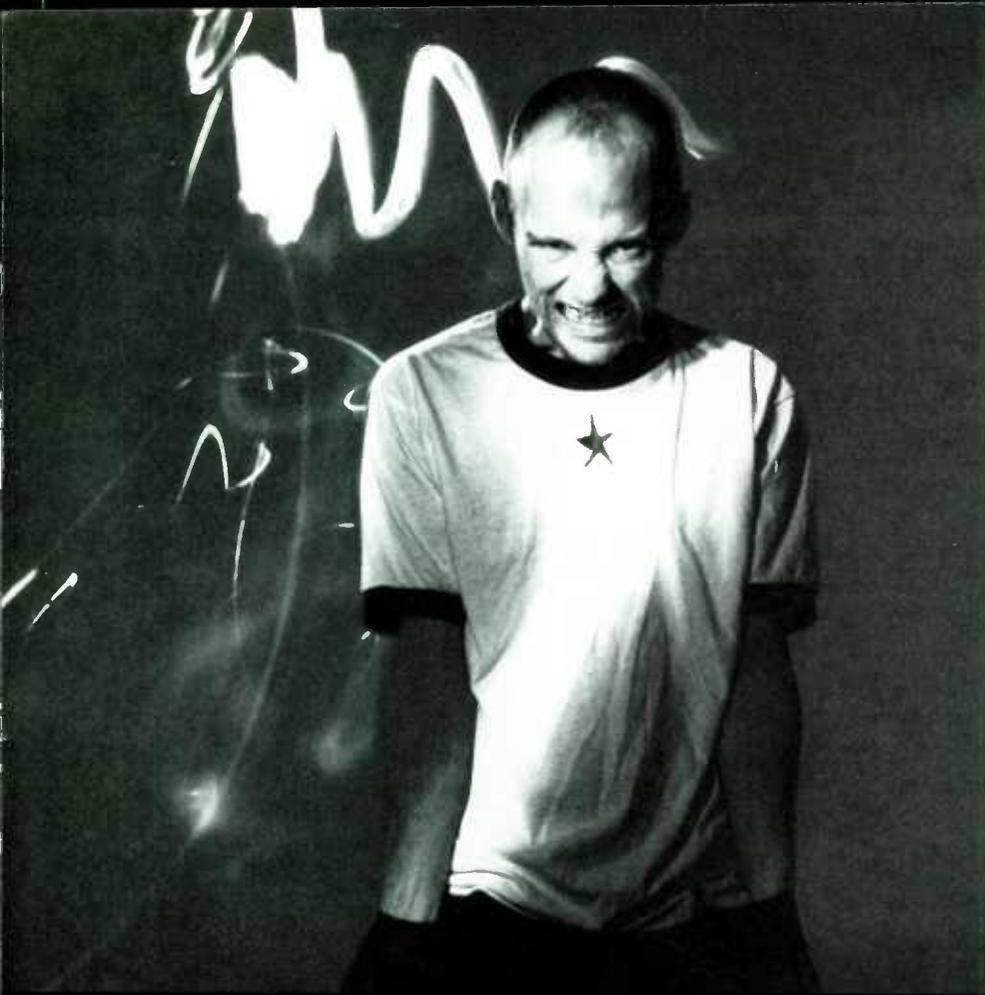
Since then rock has been given new life by innovations both sublime (reggae!) and morbid (the last five sides of *Yessongs*) but that threat of creative extinction is never far off. Without the occasional album that pulls off a new trick, rock would backslide into simple nostalgia.

This year it's P.J. Harvey's turn to save rock 'n' roll. Her new album, *To Bring You My Love*, succeeds on every level—musical, visceral, intellectual. No matter how good her earlier records convinced you Polly Harvey was,

**P.J. HARVEY**  
*To Bring You My Love*  
(ISLAND)

she's lots better. She has pulled off quite a trick: made music that is more direct, focused and aurally appealing than her early work and is at the same time an innovative leap forward. She's written primal blues and country-based songs about love, death and longing and sung them passionately with no irony or distance. And then she's used the aural possibilities of the recording studio to drag that emotional music into new sonic areas.

This is not the same as imposing electronic innovations on conventional structures, as *Monster* and *Achtung Baby* did. Rather Harvey is using microphones and mixing boards to demonstrate and expand on the violent emotional content of the songs. Think of it this way: In *Pulp Fiction* Tarantino used innovative editing not to undercut the gangster movie form, but to stick a firecracker in its butt and make you feel like you'd never seen a gangster movie before. That's what P.J. Harvey has pulled off here. If you've grown so familiar with break-up blues and country death songs that you can no longer hear them clearly, this record will clean out your ears. The only comparable recent album is Tom Waits' *Bone Machine*, and it's worth noting that guitarist Joe Gore contributed to both records. That means either (a) Harvey recognized a kindred spirit in the Waits disc or (b) everybody ought to hire Joe Gore.



## MOBY ON MAKING SURE EVERYTHING IS WRONG

"MY APPROACH to everything is just pragmatism," says techno wizard Moby. "Well, laziness and pragmatism."

Laziness? Hardly the term most people would associate with a music machine like this guy. Apart from the singing, this rave-scene superstar is a hardcore do-it-yourselfer, handling his own engineering, programming and production chores in addition to playing all the keyboards, guitars and drums on his new album, *Everything Is Wrong*. But he isn't such a slave to his muse that he'll kill himself trying to find the perfect sound every time. "A lot of times, I'll have a sound I don't think is particularly great, but it would be easier to use than find something else," he says, explaining where the laziness fits in.

"But the pragmatic side of that is that if I don't have that easy-to-use sound, I'll use anything that works. Whether it's a live bass or a synthetic bass, a \$50 keyboard or a \$5000 keyboard—I don't care where it comes from. To me, the only thing that matters is what comes out of the speakers at the end of the day."

This pragmatism is also reflected in the way

he uses vocals. For instance, several tracks on *Everything Is Wrong* include sampled vocals from dancehall MC Kocchie Banton. "We went into the studio and recorded a bunch of stuff, and I just had it lying around," says Moby. "So I got as much use out of it as I possibly could."

Although Moby's whole reputation lies with techno and ambient, *Everything* includes a little bit of, er, everything, from guitar thrash to Philip Glass-ian minimalism. "It wasn't intentional," he says. "I didn't think to myself, 'I have to write two speed metal songs, three disco songs, some classical things and some ballads.'" It was just that of the 50 or 60 songs I was working on, the ones that survived were the ones that seemed to sit well together, and satisfied me on an emotional level."

That kind of emotional satisfaction may eventually lead Moby away from electronic instruments entirely. "An electronic instrument is satisfying because you can get so many cool sounds out of it," he admits. "But playing drums or piano or guitar is physically really satisfying. Being able to hit something and have it vibrate and resonate through you just feels nice." —J.D. Considine

World Radio History

Here's another surprise. It is on an album where the actual vocal signal often travels through special effects that Polly Harvey reveals herself to be a great singer. It's not just that she brings irresistible conviction to each performance—she also demonstrates considerable technique. Late in the record, on a track called "Send His Love to Me," Harvey drops the effects and sings beautifully *in Patti Smith's voice*. That's not a put-down. Harvey evokes Patti Smith as primal American roots music as easily as she evokes Howlin' Wolf, and in doing so she captures something more elusive than Smith's phrasing or intonation. She is, like Patti, able to sing in a voice that conveys wonder and delight at the beauty of the melody it finds itself forming.

I've only had *To Bring You My Love* for about ten days. I hope it still sounds this exciting in a year. What is certain is that this is deep music. It pulls you in the first time and promises to keep opening forever. —Bill Flanagan

### STEVIE WONDER

*Conversation Peace*  
(MOTOWN)

**N**OBODY EVER SAID BEING A LEGEND was easy. Ignore trends and you can seem passe; hop on them and you can appear desperate. What's a Hall of Famer to do?

If you're Stevie Wonder, it's no sweat. On his first studio collection since 1987, Wonder shows that he's comfortable with reggae and hip-hop rhythms, but he never seems to strain to be con-

### STEVIE WONDER



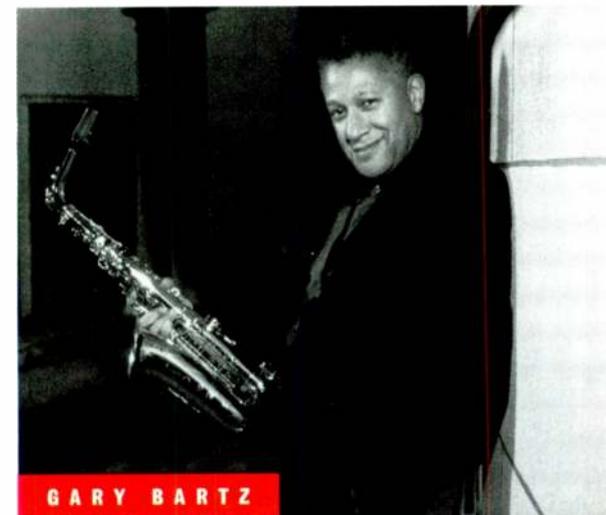
temporary. He incorporates elements of these styles into his music as naturally as he embraces various other forms, from gospel to jazz. The result is an exceptionally diverse album, and one that consistently rings true.

The first single, "For Your Love," is a gorgeous ballad in the tradition of "Lately" and "Overjoyed." Wonder has a great gift for writing plaintive melodies that capture the yearning of the heart. And then he has the good sense to get out of the way: He never showboats, vocally or instrumentally. (His understatement and

grace make even a secondary ballad like "Taboo to Love" seem lovely.) The reggae-spiked "Take the Time Out"—which features Ladysmith Black Mambazo—is a humanitarian anthem with an edge; Wonder moves beyond the usual "Heal the World"-style platitudes and pointedly says that good intentions aren't enough. The galvanizing title track—which recounts atrocities from the Holocaust to slavery—is one of several songs with a strong spiritual dimension. Rousing gospel-shaded backup by Sounds of Blackness gives the song power; cool baroque accents give it class.

Other songs cover topics ranging from crack houses to handguns, yet the album is more than a grim rehash of the 11 p.m. news. "Treat Myself," which combines the themes of Goffin/King's "Up on the Roof" and John Lennon's "Imagine"—not a bad combination—injects a note of hope. It's followed by the upbeat, reggae-flavored "Tomorrow Robins Will Sing," whose lyric ("weather forecast: clear skies") is at once hopelessly corny and almost radical, its blissfulness so out of synch with the anger of the times. "Sensuous Whisper" augments a tight jazz-combo approach with R&B-style horn accents by Branford Marsalis and Terence Blanchard, while "Cold Chill" boasts an irresistible pop-funk groove that Michael Jackson would trade Neverland for.

At 44, Wonder could spend the rest of his career picking up Lifetime Achievement Awards. Happily, *Conversation Peace* shows that he's still too busy living and achieving.



GARY BARTZ

men and then with Firehose, he's stepped out under his own name with an honest-to-goodness all-star (well, more or less) super jamboree. Dig the band on the appealingly dishevelled "Big Train": Nirvana's Dave Grohl, Dinosaur Jr's J Mascis, the Meat Puppets' Curt and Cris Kirkwood, and a certain Edward Vedder on guitar and backing vocals. And that's just track one. The following 16 all feature similarly notable folks. No song's got the same lineup.

With such a cameo surplus, how does the thing hang together? Actually, it doesn't. But thanks to the constant presence of Watt, who plays bass on every cut and wrote all but two, it comes close. Y'see, Watt doesn't just play a low-down instrument; he's also got a voice to match his axe, a gravelly grunt that hits subterranean depths. He doesn't use it much here, but one of

*Ball-Hog or Tugboat's* biggest kicks is hearing other singers attempt to duplicate the Watt rumble. Most convincing: Henry Rollins on the Beefheart-esque "Sexual Military Dynamics" and Evan Dando on the rough pop gem "Piss-Bottle Man." Most cringeworthy: yowlin' Dave Pirner on "Tell 'Em Boy."

*Ball-Hog's* first half is prime, all churning drums and guitar shards, including a spot-on cover of Sonic Youth's "Tuff Gnarl" (with three of the Youth—Thurston Moore, Lee Ranaldo and Steve Shelley—as guests). The second half experiments with funk and jazz, focusing more on Watt's aggressively virtuosic playing; it's less effective, but still offers choice moments—Watt and Flea's twin-bass

groove on "E-Ticket Ride," a phone-machine message from Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill explaining why she doesn't want to be on the record, and about three minutes (out of 12) of Mascis as Eddie Hazel on an excessive slog through Funkadelic's "Maggot Brain." If you like the low end, you'll have a blast. —Mac Randall

## GARY BARTZ

*The Red and Orange Poems*  
(ATLANTIC)

## JAMES CARTER

*The Real Quietstorm*  
(ATLANTIC)

**A**S THE DEBATE OVER JAZZ AS REPERTORY music simmers, James Carter and Gary Bartz—saxophonists of disparate ages and

# HOUSE PARTY

## What Are You Listening to Lately?



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1. *The Best of Jelly Roll Morton*
2. Jellyfish—*Spilt Milk*
3. Johnny Nash—*Guava Jelly*
4. Buster Poindexter—*Buster's Happy Hour*
5. *Best of Mountain Stage Vol. 7*

**MARY J. BLIGE**

1. Method Man—*Tical*
2. Notorious B.I.G.—*Ready to Die*
3. Brandy—*Brandy*
4. Brownstone—*From the Bottom Up*
5. Craig Mack—*Project: Funk da World*



**SEBASTIAN BACH**

1. Skid Row—*Subhuman Race*
2. Demolition—*23*
3. Widowmaker—*Stand By for Pain*
4. Pretenders—*Last of the Independents*
5. Goddo—*12 Gauge Blasts from the Past*



## MIKE WATT

*Ball-Hog or Tugboat?*

(COLUMBIA)

**T**HAT MIKE WATT SURE KNOWS HOW TO kick off a solo career. After 15 years of band membership, first with the legendary Minute-

# REVIEWS

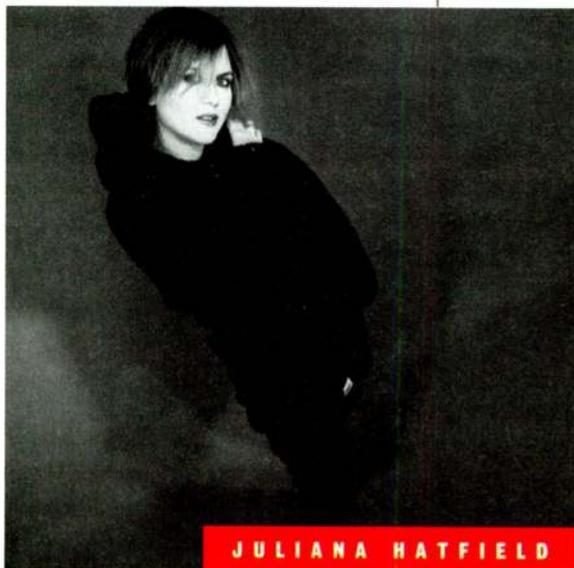
backgrounds who are key elements of Atlantic's latest jazz push—suggest two new ways of approaching the problem of standards. Carter, the newcomer whose 1994 *JC on the Set* announced the arrival of an independent thinker, argues with his Atlantic debut *The Real Quietstorm* that there is a wealth of long-ignored "period" music that can speak to romance and introspection, not just regurgitated barnstorming. Bartz, whose resume includes stints with Miles Davis and McCoy Tyner but has not recorded for a major label in 14 years, alternates last-set standbys with brooding and harmonically rich originals.

Neither album is likely to alter the conventional wisdom, but both artists deserve points for creativity: They're playing to a market that demands familiarity, without submerging their own identities. Restricting himself to ballads and medium-tempo swing, Carter defines "Quietstorm" to mean a music informed by restraint, if not delicacy; he prizes the love call and the mournful sigh. Though he has an encyclopedic jazz history under his fingers, what is most striking is his editing—he favors pre-bop melodies over demonic arpeggiation, and his every phrase is marked by the patience and assurance associated with elder statesmen. Carter may not bring down the house with every solo, but because he's taking his sweet time, he does uncover some important connections: He begins his statement on Ellington's "Stevedores Serenade" with the first eight bars of Basie's "Shiny Stockings," and manages to forge a natural bridge between Ellington's understated theme and the strutting, extroverted swing of the Basie band.

The veteran Bartz, meanwhile, strives to open up standards with tools that have been in the repertoire since Coltrane. His arrangements of "By Myself" and "But Not for Me" incorporate modal interludes and snippets of "Giant Steps" harmonic motion, and these devices help lead pianist Mulgrew Miller and trumpeter Eddie Henderson to bright, cleverly paced improvisations that skirt convention. Bartz himself offers a dramatic Coltrane-conscious treatment of "But Not for Me," but saves his most earthy improvisations for his demanding compositions, as though taking pains to make them accessible. The blowing vehicle "Along the Twelve Tone Row" catches Bartz, whose alto tone is broad but never shrill, scanning the fast-moving harmony for provocative chord tones, and toying with them, in sequence, before moving unhurriedly along. Yet for all his precision, only on the fadeout of the elegiac

"Relentless" does Bartz allow his passion to take center stage. Following a round of thoroughly respectable solos, he begins to chew anew on the melody; soon he's uncoiled and totally wailing, bringing long-overdue blood and guts to the theme, creating the kind of fully immersed musical brio that is practically a relic these days. Makes you wish he'd loosened up sooner.

—Tom Moon



JULIANA HATFIELD

## JULIANA HATFIELD

*Only Everything*

(MAMMOTH/ATLANTIC)

**O**N THE TWO ALBUMS MADE SINCE SHE struck out on her own, former Blake Babies bassist, singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Hatfield has established herself as a writer of smartly dark-tinged indie-rock complaints. With her small but resolute girl-voice set against pithy melodic rock with touches of up-to-date if rather perfunctory guitar raggedness—bubblegrunge—she is nothing if not timely. Album number three is essentially more of the same, with a somewhat fuller production sound.

*Everything's* recurring theme is that life may suck, but one can navigate a path through it and remain—if not unscathed—then at least alive: "A heart that hurts/Is a heart that works" is the tagline of "Universal Heartbeat" (the single), a song whose catchy-ditty status is affirmed by Hatfield's hooky electric piano. Even more optimistically, the acoustic-driven "Live on Tomorrow" asserts that "you can hurt my body/But you can't hurt me," while "You Blues" says that "the lowest low is only the beginning." These kinds of sentiments are rarely convincing, but Hatfield's modishly affectless voice gives them enough ambiguity to make them palatable. There's also plenty of indication here that she sees beyond the

suffering, self-destructive young artist shtick—both "What a Life" and "Dumb Fun" take a clear-eyed view of the "wasted, ruined, tragic" life stance, seeing both the thinness and the dead end of the conceit, just as "Dying Proof" is a de-romanticized look at a junkie friend.

But while she's backing up from the seductive pleasures of prefab angst, she can't resist another sort of pain, that of the alienated creative soul,

and even manages to get an original, slightly haunted song out of it, "Outsider." That Hatfield can put across a potentially cloying idea like that is an indication of her continuing, willful attempt to become guileless, a heroic struggle for one attuned to our corrosively self-conscious age, as she surely is. Or, as she sings on "Congratulations," with a descending melodic shrug, "I don't know what I'd like/Only know what I don't...I know the fire but none of the afterglow/Killing the irony that's ruining rock 'n' roll." I don't think I'd go that far—"ruin-

ing" seems a little strong—but it's nice to know that somebody would.

—Richard C. Walls

## RAY BAILEY

*Satan's Horn*

(ZOO ENTERTAINMENT)

**T**HIS UTTERLY REMARKABLE DEBUT ALBUM reaches most listeners by a circuitous route. Blues singer/guitarist Bailey cut *Satan's Horn* in a single 12-hour session in 1993; the album, issued on a poorly distributed Los Angeles-based indie label, attracted the attention of a Zoo executive. The major-distributed imprint has now re-released it for all to hear, and it should stop most blues fans in their tracks.

Few bows in recent memory have been quite so indelible. *Satan's Horn* is especially notable for a brace of original songs that are radically different from the genre exercises we've come to know as "contemporary blues." These bleak, highly personalized tunes are as *down* as they come, and deal unblinkingly, without melodrama, with the realities of crack addiction ("Satan's Horn"), prostitution ("You Sold Your Love") and homelessness ("Cold to the Bone"). Other numbers like "Back to the Movies" and "Bad Times, Sad Times" reflect the sort of intense pessimism heard in Otis Rush's most profound work.

# ET CETERA

## CREAM

### *Live Cream Vol. 1 and 2*

(MOBILE FIDELITY SOUND LAB)

CREAM'S FINAL two records are its most obscure, first released years after the band's demise and quickly moving to cut-out bins. Now, of course, the LPs are collectibles, which makes this CD package all the more welcome. Another is the improvement in sound quality, which enhances the precision and at times unworldly cohesion among the hardest-rocking blues trio—jazz trio? rock trio?—of its time. Clapton's solos on "N.S.U." and "Politician" will make your hair curl, Bruce's bass is unrelentingly tasty and as for Ginger Baker—well, you already read this month's feature, right? Essential for any fan.—*Mark Rowland*

## BOB WILLS

### *Encore*

(LIBERTY)

THIS THREE-CD package essentially brings together a series of fine overlooked recordings Wills made for the label in 1960 in a reunion with his greatest singer Tommy Duncan, along with such odds and ends as a spirited radio show in 1964, and selected cuts from the Texas Playboys' final, bitter-sweet session in 1973, during which Wills suffered a terminal stroke. Duncan's effort-

less grace is nicely balanced by Wills' wisecracking asides, which throw him out of rhythm more than once, and superlative solos by guitarist Tag Lambert and steelman Gene Crownover. Comprehensive liner notes by Charles Townsend, which include quotes and observations beyond what appear in his excellent Wills biography *San Antonio Rose*, are themselves worth the purchase price.—*Mark Rowland*

## BOB GRIFFIN TRIO

### *Piano, Bass, Drums*

(ROESCH)

THE INSTRUMENTS entitled here are manned by bassist George Porter Jr. and drummer Russell Batiste of New Orleans' incomparable Meters, and by pianist Griffin, a Connecticut native but clearly a composer with French Quarter proclivities. A classic Southern mix of gospel, blues funk and jazz. Griffin's tunes have clear melodic themes, but leave plenty of room for his bright mid-tempo solos and the rest of the trio's deep-ditch grooving. Porter also shows off some funky guitar chops and a nice, reggae-flavored wah-wah solo. Mostly, it's a session that sounds like it was recorded in someone's living room—loose, warm and nice to come home to (phone: 203-838-5023; fax: 203-838-0337).—*Mark Rowland*

Bailey, who is backed here by a capable trio of organ, bass and drums, never overplays his hand or overstates his emotions: He sings the material in a smoky midnight-blue voice, and his dense, sharply picked instrumental work is equally effective on the electric tracks and on three numbers where he flashes an acoustic.

In the end, *Satan's Horn* is very much an old-school blues recording—cut live, played tough, stylistically inimitable. These acrid, potent songs bespeak hard-won experience, and announce the arrival of a talent worthy of wider exposure and more time in a recording studio.

—*Chris Morris*

## MARY KARLZEN

### *Yelling at Mary*

(ATLANTIC)

**N**OW THAT SHERYL CROW HAS TAKEN the woman-in-rock angle beyond social

phenomenon and critical cliché to its inevitable culmination—it's a marketing issue—there'll be no shortage of major-label challengers tossing their debut discs into the ring. The question is, do you favor the L.A. singer/songwriter trip (Crow), the indie-Chicago route (Veruca Salt, Liz Phair) or the "new country" direction (too many to mention)?

Judging from her major-label debut, Mary Karlzen naturally combines all three. A Chicago-area transplant to South Florida, she manages a musical blend that combines melodic, countrified song structures, edgy pop-rock textures and the kind of rueful lyricism that would fit right in with the '70s Troubadour scene. What's remarkable is that none of it sounds slick or packaged. In fact, most of it sounds terrific.

She's also been given a giant boost by the ringers who comprise her backing band here—drummer Kenny Aronoff, bassist Bob Glaub

and especially Mark Goldenberg, who knocks off some of the tastiest guitar fills and solos in recent memory. Still, it's a record whose fate is tied directly to Karlzen's dynamic singing. At once winsome and slightly raspy, hers is not a conventionally appealing voice. But it tends to grow on you with each passing hook, conveying a paradoxical mix of world-weariness and passion for experience that's at the heart of her best songs; the barroom swing of "Anywhere Is Better Than Here," the guitar-driven punch of "Stronger" and a dry-eyed ballad, "Wish You Well." A vocal cameo by Jackson Browne on "The Way I See It" may elicit stylistic comparisons, but if Karlzen can't yet match Browne's graceful lyricism, her singing is more heartfelt, rescuing the corny narrative of "Dimestore Life" and soaring on mid-tempo rockers like "Walk Like You."

The result is a record destined for radio play and a career deservedly headed for bigger things. As they say in marketingville, you can take it to the bank. —*Mark Rowland*



## GRANT MCLENNAN

### *Horsebreaker Star*

(BEGGARS BANQUET/ATLANTIC)

**A**USSIE GRANT MCLENNAN SINGS OF failed hopes and lost love with a serenity so mellifluous he makes the solitary life sound like an absolute joy. Swathed in acoustic guitars, mandolins, banjo, laptop steel and the silvery backing vocals of Syd Straw, *Horsebreaker Star* is a stunner.

Recorded in Athens, Georgia with a cast of players obviously charmed by McLennan's

# REVIEWS

cryptic tales and honeyed melodies, the music swings from solemn confessionals to humorous contempt while spinning a memorable collection of storybook vignettes. Like the late Danny O'Keefe ("Goodtime Charlie's Got the Blues"), McLennan knows how to make sadness sting. Far from his homeland, recording with a group of strangers, he unleashes an instantly engaging torrent of misty-eyed recollections and ill-fated scenarios.

On "What Went Wrong," McLennan revels in a spurned lover's litany of scorn delivered in perfect Dylanesque cadence ("JFK, LBJ, got to learn to tango in the USA"); pulls out finger-plucked nuggets of dark beauty on "Open Invitation" and "All Her Songs"; offers a perfect pop hit with "Put You Down" and eventually wipes the tear from his eye, galloping off into a bluegrass sunset on "Don't You Cry for Me No More."

Many songwriters have endeavored to inte-

grate the legacy of Dylan and the Byrds into a unique vision, but few with results this pleasurable. McLennan's former group, the Go Betweens, produced a catalog of gems, and his first two solo outings, *Watershed* and *Fireboy*, were strong efforts, but *Horsebreaker Star* is that rare find that makes a music critic's job a breeze.

—Ken Micallef

## M PEOPLE

*Bizarre Fruit*

(EPIC)

**T**HE BEST DANCE MUSIC CAN OFFER IS ultimately a fantasy. Whether you fancy yourself a boa-feathered disco queen or some in-demand gigolo, out in clubland everybody is a star. Relentless beats and hard-driving rhythms are intended to push your pelvic buttons and propel you on the dancefloor. The humdrum, routine and problematic melt away, and mantralike lyrics clear the mind. The dancefloor, not the stage, is the focus, a sea of fluid bodies shaking reality out of its limbs.

The latest contender in clubland, the U.K.'s M People, has all the necessary ingredients. Their U.S. debut *Elegant Slumming* spelled out its fantasy—street kids dreaming of the high life, turning their blue-collar lives into extravagant dramas. Fueled by the hearty larynx of Heather Small and the soulful, inventive production of house veteran Mike Pickering, M People celebrate the self-determined—if not self-possessed—spirit. And after conquering the European charts and winning both the U.K.'s Mercury Music Prize and a BRIT Award, M People showed that aiming high is sometimes its greatest reward.

The group's new album, *Bizarre Fruit*, a puzzling reference to the Billie Holiday classic "Strange Fruit," further cements that dream, by being a bit more world-wise without sinking into world-weariness. Whereas *Slumming* had Small lustfully diving into love head-first ("How Can I Love You More?," "One Night in Heaven"), *Bizarre Fruit* shows her once-bitten, twice-shy. She backs out of bad relationships ("Padlock," "Walk Away"), resolves to ask for what she wants ("Precious Pearl," "Sight for Sore Eyes"), endeavors to find "real love" ("Open Up Your Heart"), all the while being the ultimate '90s romantic—a tough girl who doesn't settle for less.

Like C+C Music Factory and Blackbox, consummate mixman Pickering, 37, is no longer

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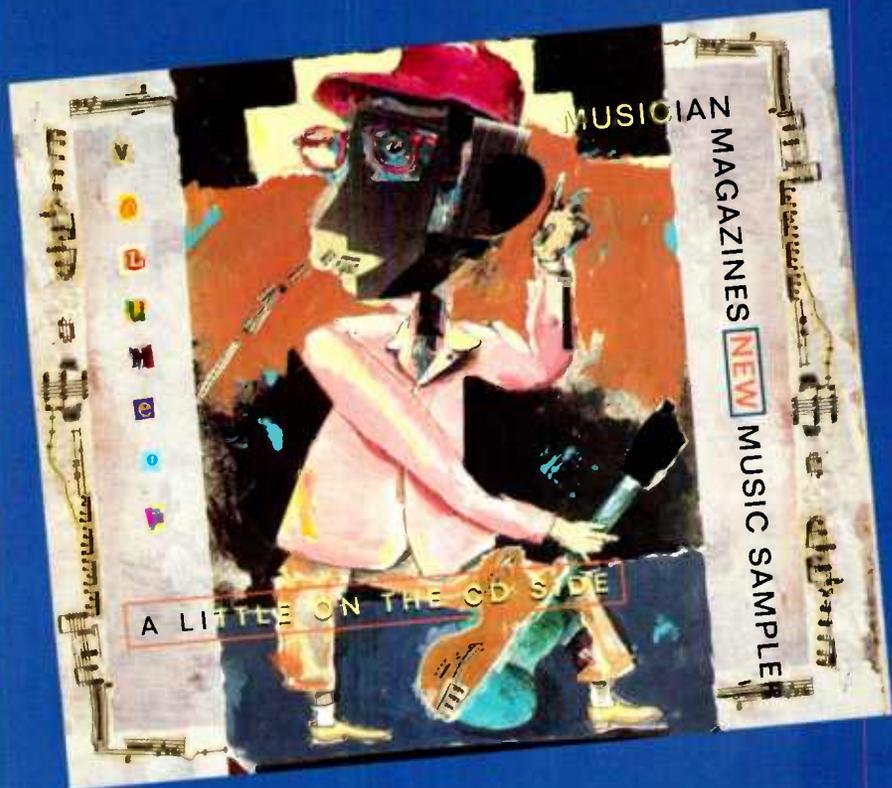
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World Radio History

interested in charting the outer limits of clubland, but rather turning the underground sounds of yesterday—lush disco sweeps with bubbly keyboards, house rhythms with butt-burning basslines, sway-your-arms choruses—into today's hits. New single "Sight for Sore Eyes" and tracks "Love Rendezvous" and "Sugar Town" make for heady, good-time dancefloor stomps with an eye toward Top 40. On "Search for the Hero," the ever-hopeful Small sings, "Search for the hero inside yourself." Unlike Mariah's melodramatic ditty "Hero," however, M People's is a dream you can dance to.

—Marisa Fox

## RONNIE EARL

*Language of the Soul*

(BULLSEYE BLUES)

WITH ERIC CLAPTON REVERTING TO blues cover artist rather than blues interpreter it's ironic that younger bluesmen like Jimmie Vaughan and Ronnie Earl are pushing the envelope of their own visions and of the blues itself—the former with *Strange Pleasure*, the latter with this all-instrumental effort. Earl, poster boy for the shades-and-Strat blues crowd, mentioned in the same breath as Vaughan, let alone Clapton? Well, if having something to say and saying it with soul account for anything, then Earl has all the credentials he'll need. No longer relying on vocalists, the guitarist has staked out a sort of "Magic Sam Meets Blue Note" (or "Grant Green with a Strat") territory all his own. And while Earl doesn't have the chordal vocabulary or harmonic sophistication of, say, Robben Ford, his simple, direct approach is not unlike Albert King's: Find a few effective licks and twist them to fit the surroundings.

*Still River*, Earl's first vocal-less CD, was a pastiche of blues styles. *Language* achieves a more unified sound, thanks to hard-to-pigeon-hole originals like "Eddie's Gospel Groove" and "Barcelona Morning," the latter one of two tributes to Peter Green, and which builds to a Santanaesque crescendo. ("Blue Guitar," Ronnie's slide tribute to Earl Hooker, and the jump blues/swing of "Harvard Square Stomp" do interrupt the continuity a bit.)

Even when he was playing in the shadow of Jimmie Vaughan (his most obvious influence) and Duke Robillard (his predecessor in Roomful of Blues), Earl showed a knack for capturing a rawness in the studio that the Fabulous Thunderbirds and Roomful could only summon onstage. With equal intensity but a cooler groove, Mr. Earl has found his most winning combination yet.

—Dan Forte

# SHORT TAKES

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

## CHRIS WHITLEY

*Din of Ecstasy*

(COLUMBIA)

IF YOU thought the best thing about Whitley's debut was the way his weary drawl and bottleneck guitar evoked a new shade of the blues, this *Din* may prove less than ecstatic. Not only is there less dobro this time around, but the electric stuff is neither as arid nor as majestic as on *Living with the Law*. Still, though *Din* may be a disappointment, it's hardly a let-down. The modal melodies and churning rhythm work Whitley plays off bring out a new side of his slide work—imagine the Edge lost in the purple haze, and you'll have a sense of just how dizzying the solos get. Moreover, the songs are as sharp as ever, from the guilty poetry of "Can't Get Off" ("I ain't got no pride in my pants," shrugs the opening line) to the neopsychelia of "Narcotic Prayer." It may not induce ecstasy, but it'll come close.

## MALCOLM MCLAREN

*Paris*

(GEE STREET)

IF THIS name-dropping, faux chic, would-be extravaganza is McLaren's idea of a tribute to all things Parisian, it's no wonder the French hate the English so.

## THE TRAGICALLY HIP

*Day for Night*

(ATLANTIC)

WHETHER YOU credit Gordon Downie's sharp, vivid lyrics or the deft, poetic playing that frames them, there's no denying that this is a dazzling piece of work, with enough dark color, bright promise and epic vision to live up to the Truffaut allusion in the title. Good as

the songs are, what ultimately carries the album are the arrangements, conveying everything from the ferocity of "Fire in the Hole" to the meditative hush of "Titanic Terrarium" to the hypnotic throb of "Inevitability of Death" with grace and conviction.

## GOO GOO DOLLS

*A Boy Named Goo*

(WARNER BROS.)

BETWEEN ITS bristling, punkish guitars and bright, pop-savvy melodies, this comes on like the greatest album Paul Westerberg never made. The Goos lack Westerberg's taste for navel-gazing ballads, preferring instead to pump out ironically upbeat tunes like the wry, self-deprecating "Impersonality" or the Buzzcocks-style heartbreaker "So Long." But that should work to their advantage—especially when the bulk of the album is given over to giddily infectious fare like "Eyes Wide Open" and "Flat Top."

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Til the Night Is Gone: A Tribute to Doc Pomus*

(RHINO)

EVEN THOUGH the guest list includes such luminaries as Bob Dylan, B.B. King, Brian Wilson and Lou Reed, somehow the songs themselves are the real stars here. In part, that's because Pomus's best efforts, like "This Magic Moment" or "Save the Last Dance for Me," are so ingrained in the rock 'n' roll canon they seem as ever-present as folk-songs. At the same time, they leave so much room for interpretation—anything from the Band's raucous run through "Young Blood" to Shawn Colvin's gorgeously quiet "Viva Las Vegas"—it's no wonder singers love them so.

## SONNY LANDRETH

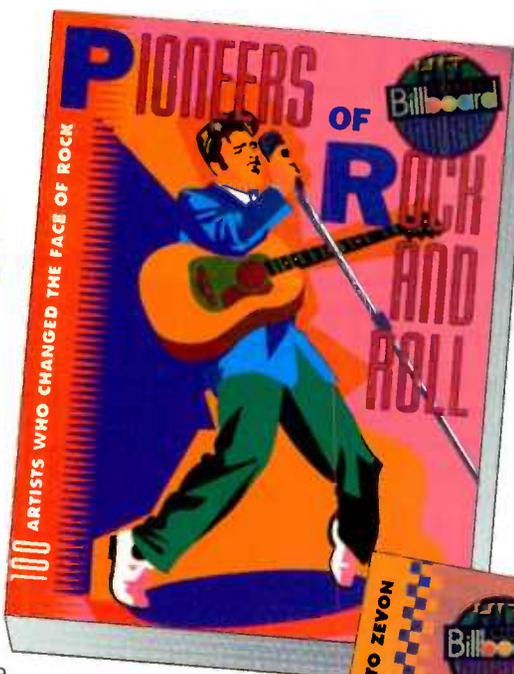
*South of 1-10*

(ZOO/PRAxis/BMG)

HE MAY BE THE HOTTEST THING SINCE Coricidin bottles to slide into the guitar community, but on the follow-up to the impressive *Outward Bound* the king of slydeco places the emphasis on songs rather than solos. At times (particularly "Cajun Waltz" and

"Great Gulf Wind") the result sounds like one solo path Robbie Robertson *might* have taken. Which is ironic because, although he cites Robertson as an influence, Landreth could be a character from one of the Band's vignettes. When he sings, in the title track, of "Clifton's accordion starting to smoke," Landreth is recalling his years on the bandstand with Chenier's Red Hot Louisiana Band.

# Who are pop music's heaviest hitters?



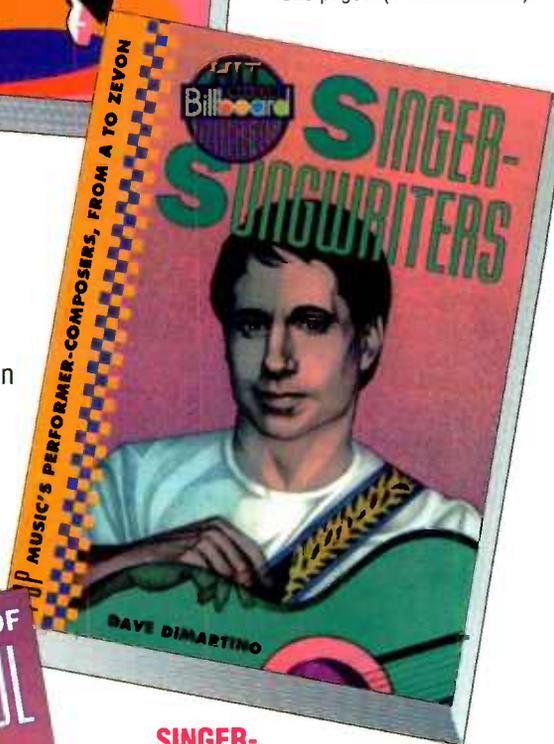
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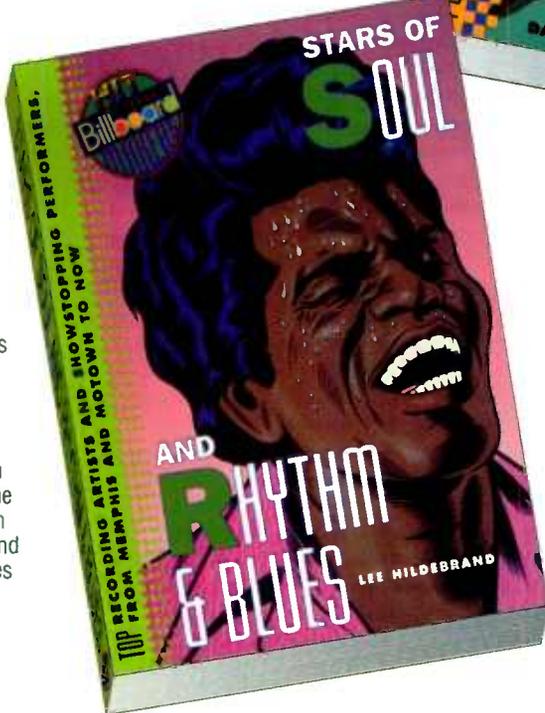


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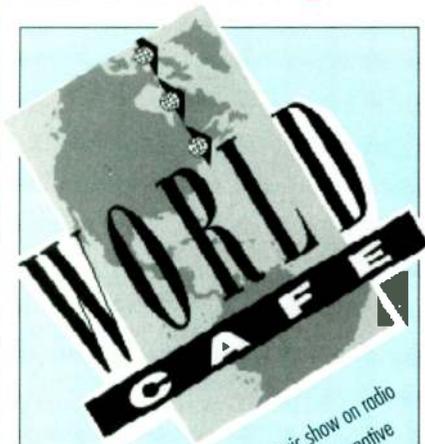


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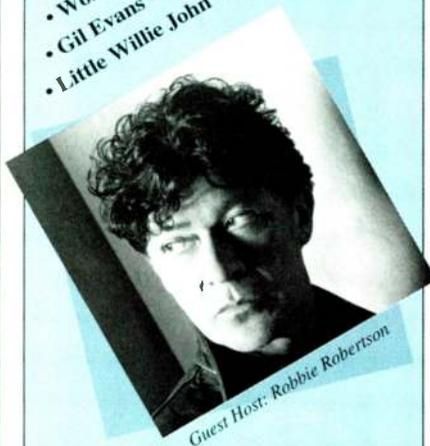
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# REVIEWS



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## MUSICIAN

The more uplifting Band-like originals are balanced with darker, spookier numbers (the hypnotic "Shooting for the Moon" and "Congo Square," recently covered by the Neville Brothers) and party-down kickers such



as "C'est Chaud" and "Creole Angel," with Mark Knopfler on rhythm. The lone cover—an acoustic duet on J.B. Lenoir's "Mojo Boogie" featuring piano legend Allan Toussaint—is actually the CD's only weak point. As promis-

ing as that pairing is, there are others—Ry Cooder and Johnny Winter come to mind—who do this sort of thing better. As with his unorthodox, innovative bottleneck techniques, Sonny is a better creator than curator, and his roots credentials are so obvious they needn't be spelled out.

The greatest compliment for a blues interpreter is to inspire someone to seek out the genuine article. Sonny Landreth is that, and a couple of listens just might inspire you to point your Chevy in the direction of Lafayette, south of I-10. —Dan Forte

### WAYLON JENNINGS

*Waymore's Blues (Part II)*

(RCA)

**W**HO SAYS YOU CAN'T TEACH an old outlaw new tricks? Waylon Jennings' surprising new record shows that there's still some fire in the belly of the legendary hell-raiser. Jennings benefits from the even-handed production of Don (When Do I Ever Sleep?) Was, who keeps Jennings appropriately bottom-heavy and adds such subtle but effective nuances as a spooky slide guitar from Mark Goldenberg and appropriate organ and synth from Heartbreaker Benmont Tench. John Mellencamp drummer Kenny Aronoff keeps time on this effort, and it's apparent that

## VIDEO

**DANNY GOTTLIEB**

*The Complete All-Around Drummer, Vols. 1 and 2*

(HOMESPUN VIDEO)

HOWEVER DESIRABLE specialization might be, the drummers who work the most and have the longest careers are often the ones who can adapt to a variety of genres and playing styles. That has certainly been the case with Danny Gottlieb, whose resume ranges from his power 'n' chops approach with John McLaughlin's '80s version of the Mahavishnu Orchestra to his very simple, laid-back playing with the Blues Brothers Band to his straight-ahead work with the Village Vanguard Orchestra. Indeed, Gottlieb's most notable gig with the original Pat Metheny Group required him to stitch rock and jazz influences together without letting the seams show.

This two-volume video by no means covers "how to play the right beat for any occasion." Rather, Gottlieb discusses and demonstrates some of the techniques and styles that have influenced him, such as the Mel Lewis approach to big band drumming and the use of Indian rhythmic syllables as a basis for the phrasing of fills. A segment featuring Mark Egan gives insight to the drummer/bass player relationship, and Gottlieb's drumset duet with his mentor Joe Morello is pure percussive pleasure. Ultimately this production serves as a drummistic wine-and-cheese tasting that stimulates the imagination, revealing how many flavors are out there and how well they can complement each other. —Rick Mattingly

Waylon feels right at home with all these guys.

Make no mistake: This is truly a Waylon record, and he's seldom sounded better. He wrote or cowrote all but one song (Tony Joe White's "Up in Arkansas," the exception), in the process letting us know that he's not only lived the wild life, he's learned something from it. "Endangered Species" affectionately gives a nod to rounders of old; "Wild Ones" acknowledges the days when Waylon, Willie Nelson and others of their ilk turned Nashville on its ear. "Old Timer (The Song)" shows Jennings at his story-telling best, relating an authentic tale of lost opportunity, delivered in Waylon's inimitable matter-of-fact style. The song not only mourns the loss of a love never realized, but of an all-but-gone way of life as well.

*Waymore's Blues (Part II)* is a triumph for the same reasons that Johnny Cash's last release works so well. It's country music how it's supposed to be: raw, honest and delivered with conviction and style. That's a lesson many of these prefabricated, cookie-cutter Music Row types could learn from this most endearing of hat acts.

—Ray Waddell

## HAIR BANDS

[cont'd from page 48] 14-, 15- and 16-year-olds."

Rather than call it an "underground," it's probably more accurate to think of the currently gelling post-'80s melodic hard rock scene as a submarket. Much like the blues, reggae or roots rock scenes, it's hardly a billion-dollar proposition, but it has the potential to sustain a few indie labels, a club network and of course the artists themselves. Now that these bands are no longer multiplatinum sellers, they've tended to deemphasize the visual side of their presentation and focus instead on solid, riff-oriented hard rock—the kind of stuff that's been middle America's Music McMuffin ever since the first Led Zeppelin album came out.

"Hopefully we've all learned something from the alternative bands," says Warrant's Lane. "I'd like to shake all their hands for bringing back intelligent lyrics. Warrant, Bon Jovi, Motley Crue, Slaughter...I think a lot of us forgot to write intelligent lyrics. And I point the finger at myself too. I think our writing became very much a formula. And when that happens, the music gets stale. It makes me want to step back and ask myself and the other bands, 'What the hell did you expect? Did you think people would continue buying this prepackaged product forever?'"

Now that grunge is peaking, and a backlash is already afoot, there are those who hope hair will rise again in a big way. People within the scene are pinning high hopes on new major-label releases by Cinderella and Poison, not to mention Warrant's new one. They'd like to see these bands regain their hegemony. But it looks like a long shot at best.

"To be honest, I don't think it's going to go back to what it was," says MCA's Ron Oberman.

"The hair bands were basically '70s corporate rock happening all over again ten years later," adds Z Rock's Pat Dawsey. "You don't exactly hear REO Speedwagon, Styx, Foreigner and Journey all that much on the radio anymore either. They didn't necessarily die as badly as some of the '80s hair bands, but maybe that's because corporate rock hadn't quite been invented yet. Maybe we had to wait for the '80s for that to happen."

Retro hipsters of the next century will probably have a hair band revival, much as lava lamps and Karen Carpenter have been recontextualized in our time. Perhaps then these bands will finally attain the one thing that always seemed to elude them throughout their long heyday...cool.

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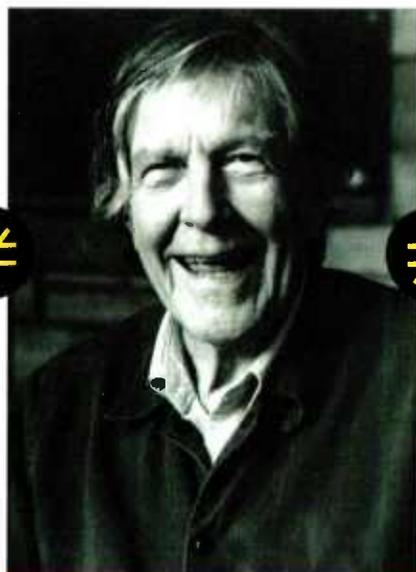
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# NOMENCULTURE



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There used to be a band called the Schemers—ordinary Americans like you and me—whose four members were named Emerson Torey, Mark Cutler, Rene Blaise and Jimmy Berger. Every other band around was jealous of them, because they all were blessed from birth with such cool rock star names. It seemed like they were born to be on record sleeves.

Some time back in the '60s, just after Ringo Starr and just before Art Garfunkel, it became a sign of Hollywood jiveness for a musician to change his name (except to become a Muslim or a punk). Look at poor David Blue, who switched back to David Cohen and then to Blue again and then to Cohen and...it was awful.

Maybe if they'd come along ten years earlier Bruce Springsteen would have been Bruce Byron and Luther Vandross Luther Power. But arriving after the revolutions of the '60s, such glamorizing was out of the question. Ask Joan Armatrading.

After a while the only way to get a great rock 'n' roll name was to be born with one. How important was it to establishing the Band's gothic American image that they had names like Levon, Garth and Jaime? No Montys or Maurices up on cripple creek!

Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young were blessed with short family names. It's hard to imagine a Lipschitz singing "Wooden Ships." You can't christen a child Merle Haggard and expect him to end up anything other than a rough-hewn C&W legend. And how about that flashy Neil Diamond? Such a show-bizzy handle that it took years to establish that he hadn't made it up.

Would the obsessively sacrilegious Madonna have wound up so crucifixed if her parents had baptized her Mabel? Certainly when Mr. Nelson named his baby boy Prince (apparently to the chagrin of Mrs. Nelson) he was making sure his son would never blend into the crowd as firmly as the daddy of the boy named Sue.

A singer called Mick Jagger could never have been as cuddly as other pop stars of the early '60s—his diabolical image was written on his birth certificate. But how sad that his bass player adopted the stage name Bill Wyman; his real name, Bill Perks, was far more impressive. Think how sublime it would have been if the World's Greatest Rock 'n' Roll band had a rhythm section called Watts and Perks. Sparks will fly, indeed!

Of course, some musicians have lived lives in opposition to the dictates of their

names. Was there ever a more mellow picker than the fiercely labeled Richie Furey? Or a cooler cat than Keith Sweat? Or a whiter singer than Clint Black? A blacker singer than Barry White?

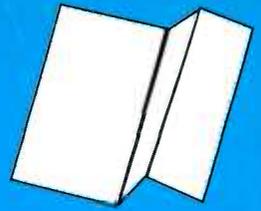
There's also been the curse of having the same name as another entertainer. Remember the other soul singer named Michael Jackson? He had to give up. How about R&B star James "J.T." Taylor, who must have spent his whole career hearing "Fire and Rain" fans demand their money back. Two fathers of punk rock were named Fred Smith. Two guitar players in top British bands of the late '70s were named Mick Jones, though they shared not a single fan, and David Jones of the King Bees had to change his name to get away from the requests for "Valerie." Hard as it is for us to imagine, when Jerry Lee Lewis debuted some people showed up expecting the Nutty Professor.

Which brings up the scariest sub-genre of all: rock critics with the same names as famous musicians! Think of the mix-ups that plagued the careers of the journalists Robert Palmer, Paul Williams, Bill Graham, Bill Wyman, Steve Perry, Robert Smith, Robert Gordon and Steve Morse! On the other hand, they always got their calls returned...

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