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World Radio History

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and Washburn

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[kicks up the treble and
plays the TV theme]

IS THERE ONE GUITAR PLAYER
YOU'D LIKE TO BE?

I already am.

HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START?

Coffee and donuts.

YOU SEEM TO BE MORE
VERSATILE THAN EVER BEFORE.

I grew up.

WHAT DO YOU
THINK ABOUT FLEXIBILITY?

You either have it or you don't.

[goes from shred to vintage blues]

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE
MEANS OF SELF-EXPRESSION?

I'm plugged into it.

[kicks the volume up and
starts to wail]

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World Radio History

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Blues Cube

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We could have simply bought thousands of tubes from the existing factories, thrown away most of them, and sold the ones that happened to accidentally perform well. That system is inherently unpredictable, however, and there is no

way to guarantee that the tubes which do pass will continue to perform after a few hundred hours of use. We also had new designs we wanted to produce.

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WIND



eight. We did that for two weeks. I love that studio. I said to myself, "Let's mix everything there. Then we'll know it's been recorded in Seattle." Unlike in Nigeria, where I'm even busier, here we can deal with it.

In your music you really use the guitar in its original intent, as a pitched percussive instrument.

Yes, definitely. Like, I play open chords, but sometimes I use it for rhythm. Over here, when you start a number, the drummer will hit the sticks—"1, 2, 3, 4"—and before he finishes, you've got the tempo. But with me doing this [*vocally mimics muted, syncopated guitar strumming*], they know the rhythm, the tempo—every-

When I made my music that way [i.e., modernized], it was because of the unlimited areas it could go. Juju itself has different styles. But you must really know your identity, or every one of you will sound alike. It's like when you draw water into your cup; the moment you put in some color, they will ask you, "Is it water, or is it Fanta?" [*Laughs.*] Then it is for you to explain, but the basic theme is the water, the music. You can find three or four styles in my music now and easily recognize the way I combine rhythms and different drums, guitar lines, bass, the vocal system. In Nigeria, nearly every three months, we introduce new dancing and rhythms into the music. And chanting: We have so many festivals. When the Muslims are doing theirs, you can chant but you don't match it completely to one particular religion: You just dance to the music. This integration is the way I modify my own music.

We have trouble getting away with playing three guitars at a time in American pop.

Actually, in the totality of African music,

King Sunny Adé

As the king of juju music, why would you record your first album in ten years, *E Dide/Get Up*, in Seattle? Don't mean to alarm you, but that fad is over.

There's a place we were playing there, on the tiniest stage—imagine a 12'x8' stage with 20 people with instruments, like when you have a group of students waiting to take a picture; there's no room to dance. On our way out, a friend said, "Come see this studio." It [Bob Lang Studios] was more or less an antique-style place, but the sound coming from there was so fantastic, we decided, "Let's do an album." There was no time to sleep: We'd leave the stage at three in the morning, do rehearsals till about six, then back to the hotel to sleep for three hours, then to the studio from ten to six in the evening and straight down to the stage to perform at

"You must know your identity or every one of you will sound alike."

thing's there. This is part of the advantage of using the guitar to pattern the songs. The music is inside; the six strings must breathe the rhythms.

Your music began as a communal art form, with the band scraping the ground with nails hammered into their shoes. Now that juju has adopted a conventional pop/rock format, can you take it even further?

so many instruments sound like guitars. In Nigeria there's one that's more or less like a guitar with one or two strings, and instead of a pick you play it with a piece of leather. From there you play kora, and when you match them they have a particular sound. We're looking to all these—strings and tunes and instruments—because we want to carry ourselves along with modern technology. But your roots must stay within that, or else you are playing a different music entirely. That's part of why we left Island Records. They wanted to rearrange our music, and if I did that I would vanish. I have to bring African music to America, but if I vanish from home, where will I say I'm coming from?—**Matt Resnicoff**

Your résumé suggests a wide range of musical styles.

Once you tell me the style, I've got a general pattern in my mind of what I'm gonna need. There's a lot of similar roots, but the feel changes—some blues cats, you gotta keep that kitchen hot! 'Cause if you ain't cuttin' it and they look across the room and see another drummer they know, that's it. Then that drummer is playing on your set—and don't even think about saying no.

What's the solution?

You give 'em what they want—but give 'em three or four examples to choose from. You can't overdo it, or else you'll confuse them and be gettin' on their nerves: "No man, I just want you to hit that snare." But, if you had that snare triggered for one or two other sounds, you're giving him that single lick but with different tones. Then he's going, "Hey, let's use that fat one," you know? Then he loves you.

So your technique is as much psychological as it is musical.

Hey, one of the biggest ways you get hired is not your playing, it's your ATTITUDE. Put that in big letters. In L.A., you don't even need talent—I know I'm gonna get blacklisted now! [Laughs] It's who you know and how you hang out. It's even your equipment. You come in with a slammin' drum set with triggers galore: "Oh, he's bad." In New York, they play from their guts, but L.A. musicians don't want you to work so hard. You be up there sweating and it's like, "Hey man, what's wrong with you? You're making the same money and making me look bad on top of it." [Laughs] When I first got here, cats hated me! I had to find a way where I still got the job done but didn't look like I was trying to kill it—make it look like it's just a hang.

But a lot of your work now involves programming.

Oh yeah, knowing triggers, knowing sampling, is more important these days. When producers and artists go into the stu-

dio, they're not going to write the songs around what a drummer can't do. They'll write that song with dogs and moons and chickens and stars, and when you get the call, you gotta do it. And when you do, that's when you start getting bonuses and

"In L.A. you don't need talent. It's who you know & how you hang out."

they start calling you back.

How do you overcome that?

You have to stay focused. When you're young you have a dream, but as you get older and get out there to make a name, nine times out of ten you're not on course with that dream any more. Strive to be your own boss. We are leaders, man. Narada Michael Walden got off the drum set. Norman Connors, Buddy Rich, Max Roach, on and on. Be your own boss. 'Cause you always stand the risk of waking up one day and they don't want you no more.—**Mark Rowland**

Cheron Moore



résumé

Dr. Dre
Snoop Doggy Dogg
Albert Collins
James Cotton
General Public
Shirley Dixon
Linda Hopkins
Solomon Burke

photo by Jeffrey Bender

It's 1:00 A.M.

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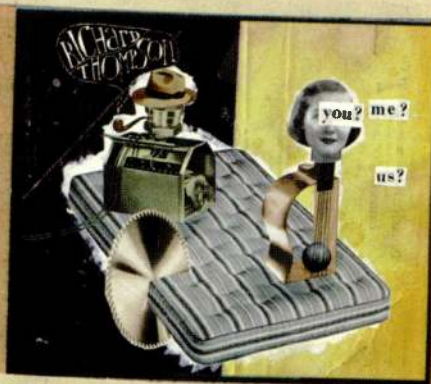


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World Radio History

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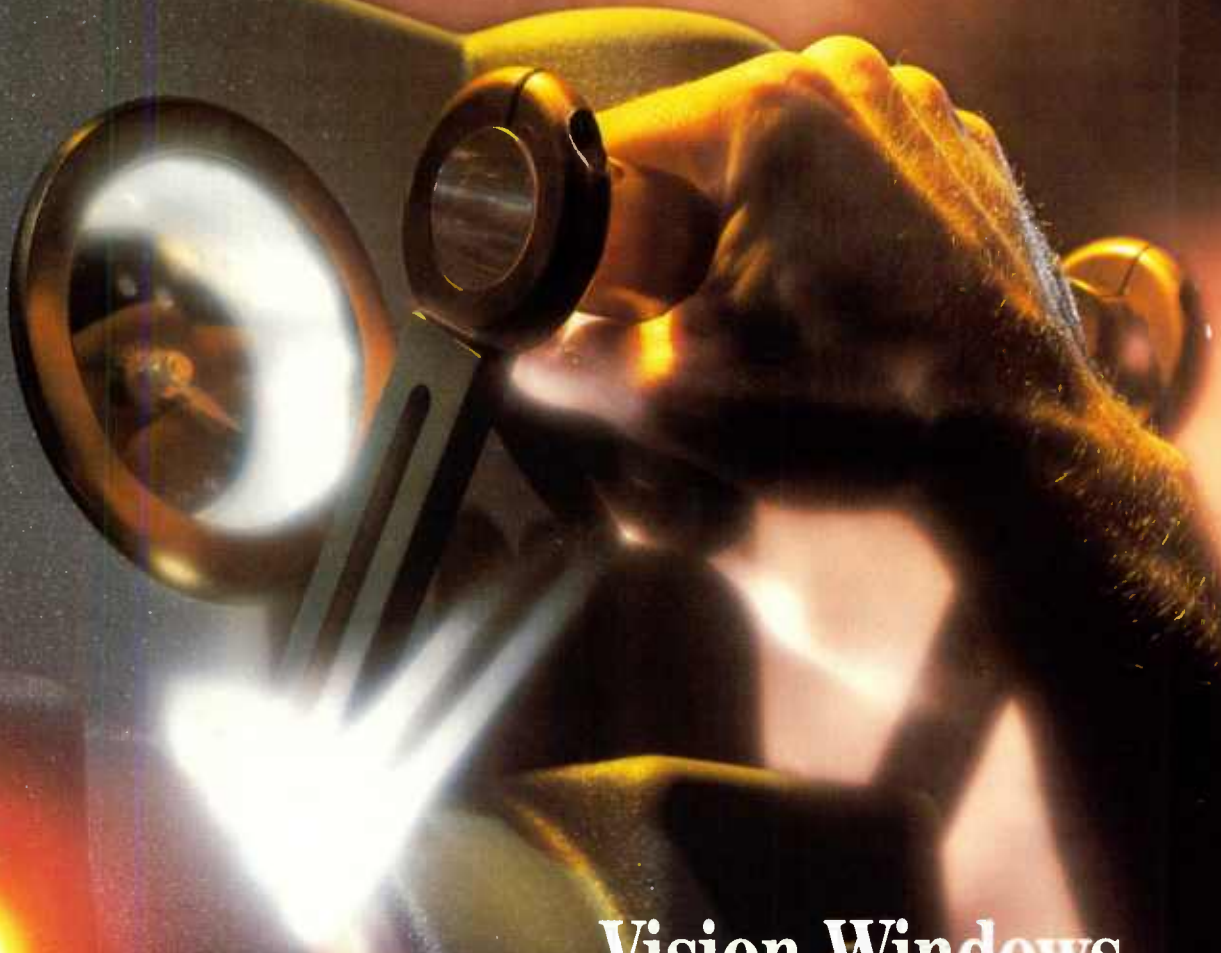
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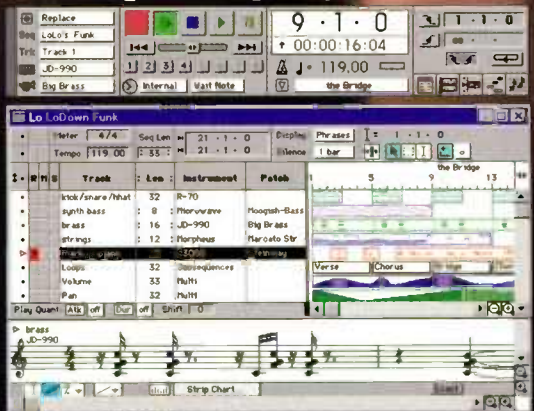
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Hendrix ad infinitum

After reading your report on Jimi Hendrix's last days (Feb. '96), I need to reply to all these false accusations and accounts regarding Jimi and myself. It seems to be an invention from Tony Brown (head of the Jimi Hendrix Archives) that I visited Jimi's family "twice a year" and that this should be the reason why they accepted me as Jimi's fiancée. Apart from the fact that since his death I only went there every two or three years, it was Jimi himself who informed his dad of his intention to marry me at his last stay in Seattle.

It is incorrect that in my book, *The Inner World of Jimi Hendrix*, I described the time after Jimi and I got engaged as "blissful." Rather, I clearly explained the financial and legal pressures he was under. I also wrote about the problems of his last concert tour through Europe a couple of weeks before he died, and especially about how upset he was after Billy Cox's breakdown. But equally I wanted to make clear that Jimi was a fighter, making plans not just for our personal future but also for writing new music, creating videos and films, etc. In fact, he made it unmistakably clear in many interviews that he looked forward very much to this new creative phase.

Jimi and I were invited by three young people on Sept. 17 in the late afternoon. But it is nonsense that we, as it is quoted in your article, stayed there for more than five hours. We only stayed for about an hour, which can be verified by several witnesses who called Jimi at our flat from 8:30 onwards that evening. Apart from that, all the events which are asserted to have taken place in the young people's flat are pure fiction.

You forgot to mention that in 1993 and '94 Scotland Yard started a new investigation into Jimi's death because a former girlfriend of Jimi's had claimed to have found new evidence. She brought forward a Dr. Rufus Crompton, who alleged that Jimi's death occurred around 5:30 on the morning of Sept. 18. But when Scotland Yard completed their investigation, they established through their own pathologist that all speculations were unfounded. Their report ascertained that Jimi had died after his arrival at the hospital, as stated at the coroner's inquest and in the final report delivered by the police after a ten-day investigation in 1970. This is why the case was not reopened by the General Attorney, even though I asked them to do so to find out the truth. Scotland Yard also confirmed that I did everything in my power to save Jimi's life. Statements to the

contrary, as alleged by the ambulanceman John Suau, are incorrect. In fact Suau testified to Scotland Yard that Jimi was still alive when he arrived at the hospital. He told the same to a British newspaper, *The Mail on Sunday*, which correctly wrote that he had always insisted that Jimi died in St. Mary Abbots Hospital.

You are also incorrect in stating that our flat was abandoned when the ambulance crew arrived. Dee Mitchell, who spoke to John Suau, writes that he remembered a "little blonde girl" who let them into the flat and showed them where Jimi was.

contrary attributed to him by a local newspaper (as quoted by Musician) were not what he had said.

You also neglected to quote the full written statements of Dr. Bannister, the doctor who attended to Jimi when he arrived at the hospital. First he stated that an "unconscious patient" was brought in. Then he said that Jimi must have been dead many hours earlier—why then try to revive him? And in his last written statement Dr. Bannister admits that he cannot remember the details anymore. His account that there was a large amount

of red wine in Jimi's body contradicts the findings of the first pathologist; indeed, his written report states that Jimi had only a small amount of alcohol in his system when he died.

Dr. Martin Seifert is right to say that it was against the rules for me to see Jimi in the hospital after his death. What he does not know is that the nurse, realizing how serious and determined I was, eventually gave in and let me see him, breaking the rules. My words, which you quote regarding Gerry Stickells identifying Jimi, refer to a few days later, when I was asked to see him again and refused, as I wanted to keep my last memory of him as I had seen him in the hospital.

Monika Dannemann
Seaford, East Sussex

From The Editor

What does it take to get on the cover of *Musician*? If the answer boiled down to record sales, this month's choice would be a natural. Yet the idea of giving that position to Hootie & the Blowfish precipitated more discussion than any other cover story I've approved here thus far. Why? Because sales is only part of the picture. A band's musical accomplishments and their ability to communicate to the reader are at least as important as popularity. And though the Blowfish were cooperative and candid, some *Musician* staffers doubted whether the Blowfish had the musical chops we consider essential in our cover artists.

For this reason, we took an unusual approach to the story. Unlike almost every interview these guys have done to date, our article approaches the subject from a musical standpoint—then goes beyond that to address a more compelling subject: the extraordinary imprint this band has made on America.

What does Hootiemania mean? Specifically, what does it mean to bands who aspire to build a career in the mainstream American taste, or to A&R reps who dream of replicating the sales Atlantic rang up with the Blowfish? Unlike a personality piece, this month's cover story looks past the veneer of celebrity to dig into the story of how *Cracked Rear View* exploded and what it means to the rest of us working musicians. No matter what you think of this band, their impact is undeniable—and where there's impact, there's a lesson to be learned. Let us know what you think.

And join us in welcoming the legendary Charles M. Young onboard as a regular contributor to our Records section. His review of hot new releases will run each issue as *Chuck's Cuts*. Pass the hot sauce and dig in.

—Robert L. Doerschuk, editor

Suau gave the same testimony to Scotland Yard. He also confirmed to Dee Mitchell that I drove with them in the ambulance to the hospital. Any other statements of Suau and his colleague are products of imagination, created to "prove" that Jimi was the victim of my carelessness. The same goes for the testimony of police officer Ian Smith; he gave a written statement that he never saw Jimi dead at the flat and that statements to the

[Dannemann has yet to declare who the "several witnesses" were who supposedly called Hendrix at the Samarkand Hotel during the time when Philip Harvey and Penelope Ravenshill swore, under oath, that they saw Dannemann and Hendrix arguing at Harvey's flat. The pathologist used by Scotland Yard—the same Rufus Crompton cited in our article—now is on record as saying that it is impossible to ascertain the exact time of Hendrix's death; he has not declared that Hendrix definitely died at the hospital. In taped interviews with journalist Kris Needs, Ian Smith confirms that the ambulance crew had no doubt that Hendrix was dead when they arrived at the Samarkand. Scotland Yard has not issued any statement confirming or denying anyone's fault with respect to Hendrix's death.]

Send letters to: *Musician*, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. We are currently revamping our Email; look for our new Web address in next month's issue.

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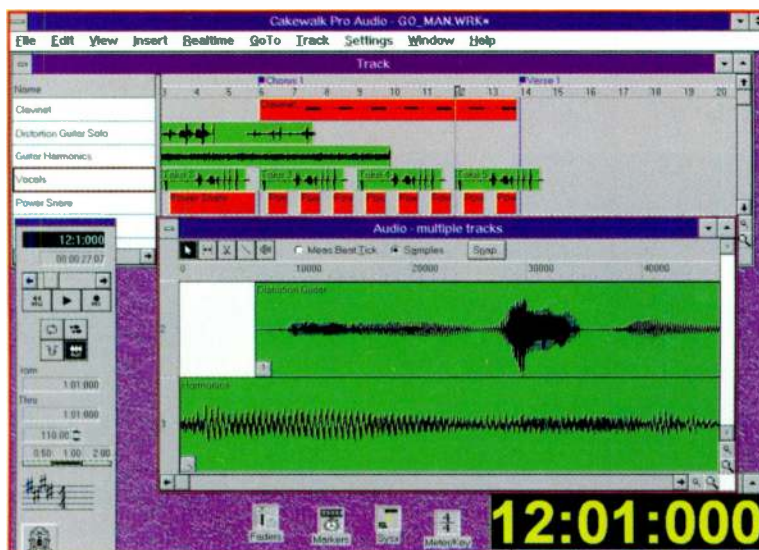


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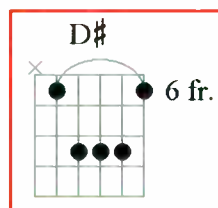
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How We Wrote That Song

"Brown Sugar" by D'Angelo

It was very spontaneous. Everything that's on that track, it was the first time we tried it. What happened was, me and [co-producer] Ali Shaheed Muhammed were in the studio finishing a couple of tracks, and right in the middle I started playing that melody, the chorus. It was like, what was that? I

is a love song: "I get high off her love, I don't know how to behave." In reality, it's about weed and getting lifted.

The talking [in the background of the song], it's just some noise. I wanted the song to have the feel of a club scene, a party. That was the whole atmosphere when we were making it. Wu-Tang was

to it. I've played it so much that I know it in and out, so when I have an idea and I don't want to be pushing a whole lot of buttons, that's the best way. All the songs start with that keyboard but we build from there. On the album I layer a bunch of other keyboards and instruments on top. We use [Hohner] Clavinets a lot, a [Hammond] B-3, and a Rhodes.

The last song I wrote for the record was "Jonz in the Bonz." That's the direction I'm trying to go now—to the dirt, trying to strip it down. "Brown Sugar" to me is more "produced," more buttery. I enjoy the more spontaneous things on the album, the stuff we kept raw. The songs that take forever, I don't even want to deal with them. I don't want to put a song I'm tired of on an album.

A lot of times I think, "This song is too personal." You really have to have courage to hold onto that emotion and put it out there. I respect anybody who writes their emotions down, because that's sacred. But I don't come out and shove an idea down somebody's throat. It's all in the way it's approached, the whole angle. It ain't really what you say, it's how you say it.



Per Gustafsson

couldn't stop playing the melody, couldn't get it out of my head. We stopped what we were doing, and in a couple of hours the track was done.

The track comes first for a majority of my songs. The lyrics came a couple of days later, after the vocal arrangements were done. People think "Brown Sugar"

right across the hall and Tribe was in the room with us, so the vibe was really there. I always say that track is hot 'cause to me it was done under the influence.

I play bass and drums and guitar, but I almost always write on the keyboard. I got one keyboard I really use, the [Ensoniq] EPS, basically because I'm used

rou

Once it was easy to put together a home studio: A recorder or two, a mixer, some mikes, a few direct boxes, monitors, amps, and headphones, and you were rolling. But it's not that simple anymore. The single set of standards that once existed has been shattered, and the new ones can look pretty confusing.

But there's hope. Your studio is still a place to capture your art for posterity and/or dollars. No matter what you're planning to record, your new studio will still have some basic audio building blocks, with ways to capture instruments or voice (mikes, direct lines), capture the sounds (recording device), and listen to what you're doing (speakers, headphones).

John Hersey

Sampling the World

by David Parsons

New Zealander David Parsons began his music career as a jazz/rock drummer, but he was soon seduced by Indian classical music and lured to India to study sitar. Now he spends several months a year engineering field recordings for the Celestial Harmonies label.

We always go for a pure, natural, organic sound. I prefer not to use a recording studio, because many of the musicians I record aren't used to them.

We've just finished a series of recordings in Bali, in which the musicians were sitting in a temple courtyard as we recorded them. There are some quite loud crickets, frogs, and things like that on some of them. In this case I'm going to keep them in because they're natural

and they sound great. Of course, if some big truck drives past, blasting its horn, that's another matter.

We have to travel light, so on location we only use one DAT recorder—a Sony TCD-10—and one stereo microphone, either an AKG or a Sony. The AKG is

New York. But while you'd get a technically wonderful result, you'd lose quite a bit of atmosphere. So what I'm trying to do is compromise between audiophile recordings and field recordings. We have the power to do it these days with the new digital editing systems that are out,



slightly better but it doesn't perform as well in breezy conditions, so I'll use the Sony if the wind's up.

Working with these sorts of conditions is not ideal. I'd love to take these musicians into a state-of-the-art studio in

so why not? Let's make it sound as good as we can without sacrificing any of the atmosphere.

Contributors: Interview by Dev Sherlock, Musician promotion director.

igh mix

The first decisions are about what equipment you'll use. Your choices depend on being honest with yourself about what working style suits you best. If you're an acoustic slide blues player with no computer experience, no matter how seductive that computer/MIDI/hard disk system seems, you might be better off with a more traditional recorder and mixer setup that's a bigger brother to that four-track porta-cassette you've been using for years.

But if you're a synth/MIDI/digital audio musician, a computer-based system with a virtual mixing con-

sole under glass might be just right for you—unless you're sharing your studio with other projects or clients; then the archiving and reloading time for the digital audio hard drives might make some other setup more appro-



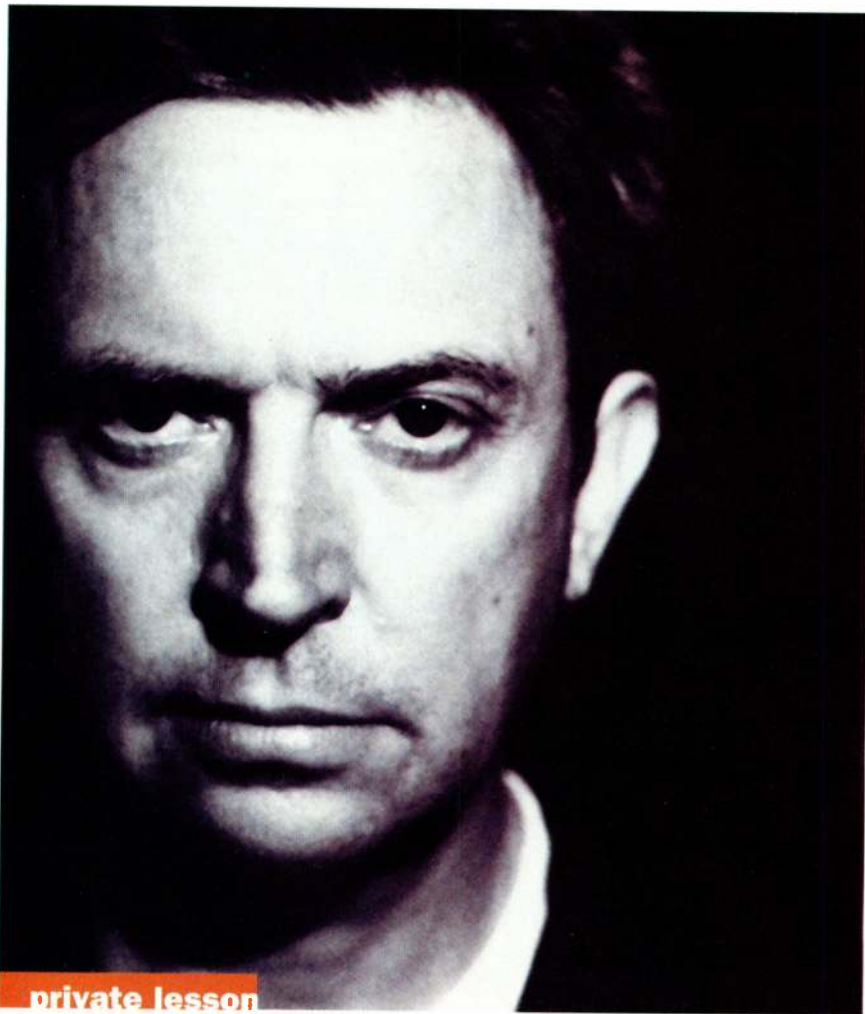
your music in the studio

priate. If you "sculpt" your recordings so that your performance is only the start of the process, then the editing and sound modifying powers of computer-based systems are probably what you

need. The endless possibilities for shaping and refining become part of the performance, and learning about the new possibilities can open up more options.

Defining your goals is the first step in planning your studio. Then the other pieces will fall into place.

Larry Fast is best known for his pioneering electronic music albums recorded under the name Synergy. He has also worked extensively with Peter Gabriel and other top artists, and composed extensively for movies and television. Send your questions to Larry c/o Musician.



private lesson

Andy Summers Gets Synaesthetic

by Mac Randall

Synaesthesia—the mystical blending of the five senses—is a concept that’s been on Andy Summers’ mind for many years, so it’s not surprising that it’s also the title of the guitarist’s lat-

est album on CMP. “The title’s a nod to my past,” he says. “When I was younger, I was very interested in the subject and read a lot about other people who were similarly interested, like [artist Wassily] Kandinsky and [composer Alexander] Scriabin. The idea of this synthesis of the

arts, this high point that one might achieve, has always excited me.”

Of course, actually achieving synaesthesia may be impossible, and even if it can be done, it probably requires special equipment. So Summers concentrated on doing the next best thing: writing music that blended styles and moods the way a synaesthetic experience would ideally combine the senses. “I wanted each piece to be a sort of creative pastiche,” he explains, “where I’d draw from a lot of different sources, put disparate elements together, and not have seamless crossings from one to another but jump-cut from one to another instead.”

“Monk Hangs Ten” is a perfect example of Summers’ method. As the title suggests, the piece combines a driving surf-style backdrop with a deceptively simple melody whose staggered rhythm, pentatonic base and distinctive tritones bear a heavy Thelonious Monk influence. The example below shows how the blend of styles also leads to a blend of tonalities. The song’s central “Batman”-style riff moves down chromatically from B \flat , leading the listener to believe that’s the tonic key. But when the melody comes in over that riff, it’s unambiguously in G major. You may need to pause for a second to readjust your personal tonal center, but Summers insists that’s not necessary. “It’s actually in both keys at once,” he says. “I tried doing it all in the same key, but it sounded better the way it is. The B natural in the melody should clash with the B \flat , but by the time the bassline gets down to G, it works out and there’s no obvious discord.”

The harmonic intricacies of a piece like “Monk Hangs Ten” indicate that, blazing soloist though he is, Summers’ main interest is in the compositional process. “I’m most concerned with creating an intoxicating picture,” he says. “The guitar is only there as a way to serve the music. It’s not about writing vehicles for solos, it’s about writing pieces of music that stand as pieces of music.”

Cynthia Lavine

Ex. 1

B \flat 5 A \flat 5 A \flat 5 G \flat 5 B \flat 5 A \flat 5 A \flat 5 G \flat 5 B \flat 5 A \flat 5 A \flat 5 G \flat 5 B \flat 5 A \flat 5 A \flat 5 G \flat 5 B \flat 5 A \flat 5 A \flat 5 G \flat 5

ff let ring - -

T A B

“Monk Hangs Ten” by Andy Summers, ©1995 Final Curtain Music.

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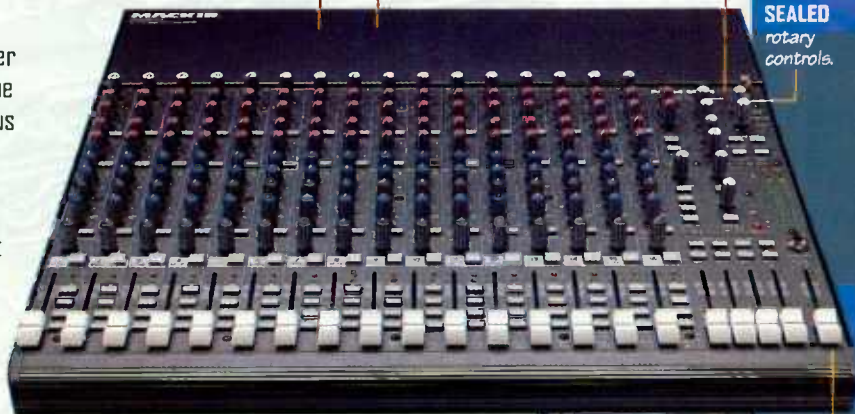
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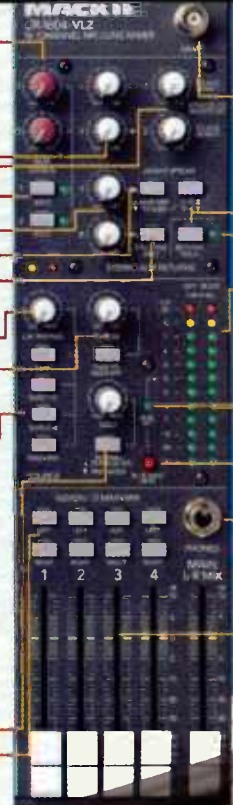
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new signings

Want some cookies?" Katryna Nields, the raven-haired, deep-eyed singer with the band which bears her family name, smiles unsettlingly and offers what turns out to be a tasty, home-baked treat. Each cookie has the same face on it—one that we've seen before, on the cover of the Nields' debut album for Razor & Tie.

Any band that hits the road with a

trayful of happy cookies in its van deserves some notice. Especially if they do music as well as they do pastries.

THE NIELDS

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Cliff Chenfeld and Craig Balsam, the co-founders of Razor & Tie, first heard the Massachusetts- [cont'd on page 24]

Michael Halsband

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ALESIS

talent

daniel tashian The 21-year-old Tashian and producer T-Bone Burnett labored for two years off and on to find the best way of showcasing Tashian's weatherbeaten vocals and stripped-down guitar-rock melodies before reaching a breakthrough on the last week of recording Tashian's Elektra debut *Sweetie*.

"We were down to the wire," Tashian recalls. "We just plugged in and did everything live. In other words, we could have made the record for five grand."

After being cooped up in the studio for so long, Tashian blew out the cobwebs with a cross-country road trip. "I encountered all kinds of interesting sounds," he reports, "and I found myself talking to truck drivers and prostitutes I probably wouldn't have talked to otherwise."

—Melinda Newman

Gerry Gibbs "I really do hate being compared to Spike Jones, because it's not a big influence on me," says Gerry Gibbs, the New York-based drummer whose penchant for employing cowbells, wood-blocks, and whistles gives his sextet a sound somewhere between the Art

Ensemble of Chicago in a funky mood and McCoy Tyner's early '70s band on a zany night. "Just because you squeeze a bike horn once doesn't mean you're Spike Jones."

Son of the great bebop vibesman Terry Gibbs, Gerry has put together a band fully conversant in various jazz styles, but also willing to incorporate more far-flung elements. Under the direction of Stix Hooper at Quincy Jones' Warner Bros. label Qwest, Gibbs' first album as a leader comes out in April and features such heavyweights as pianist Billy Childs, saxophonist Ravi Coltrane, and violinist Mark Feldman. Add Gibbs' swinging-with-everything-and-the-

kitchen sink percussive approach, and you get a band that sounds like no other.

"I think on my album the biggest influence is McCoy Tyner," Gibbs said, "but at the same time I think my music covers a little bit of everything from the '20s and '30s through the '90s. I may use a little section of zither music, but not in a Spike Jones way, trying to throw people off."

—Andrew Gilbert

Rollerskate Skinny While it seems like every indie rock elitist and corporate rock hack nurses an affinity for the music of Brian Wilson, Ireland's *Rollerskate Skinny* achieves its own brand of Wilsonian majesty on *Horsedrawn Wishes* (Warner Bros.), and they don't even like the Beach Boys. In fact, they despise the Wilson clan.

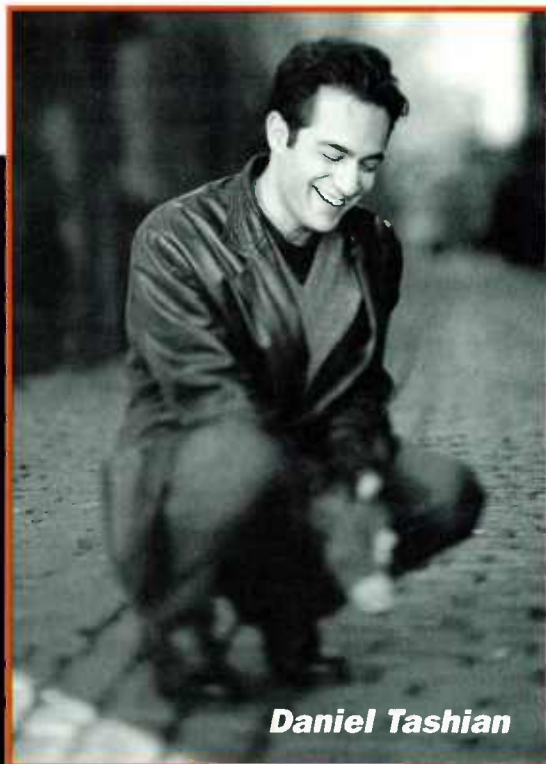
"I used to work in this hardware store where they played *Pet Sounds* con-

stantly," recalls songwriter/vocalist Ken Griffin. "I hated the Beach Boys, because of what they symbolized. I was at work; I didn't want to be there. You can take no record six times a day for two years, whether it's *Pet Sounds* or Neil Diamond."

Through toppling instruments, reverberating vocals and woozy atmospheres, RS creates a dreamily melodic world, then collapses it back on itself. But RS never engage in simple studio foolery.

"Any truly experimental music that works pays respect to tradition while trying to find a new way," explains Griffin. "We didn't approach anything properly. A lot of technology was used but not in the expected way."

RS's cacophonous melodies seem to come from the land of unknowing where reason is suspended. "We wanted the album to create an atmosphere of giving you an answer without your having asked a question. Rather than being isolated from the world, it's coming from a different place. It's about not understanding, rather than coming to an understanding. That in itself creates images." —Ken Micallef

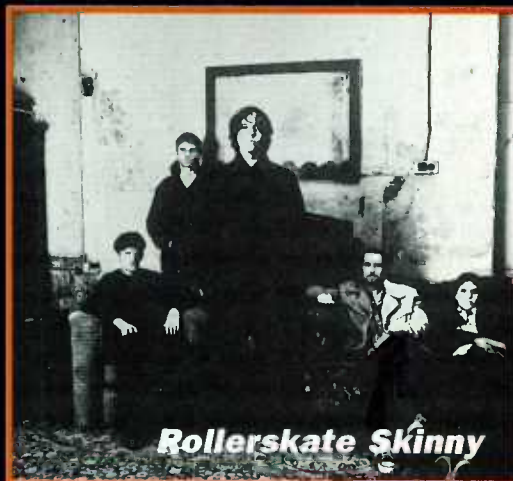


Daniel Tashian



Gerry Gibbs

Rebekah M. Gibbs



Rollerskate Skinny

Paul McCarthy

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World Radio History

new signings

Talent

[cont'd from page 22] waves of echoing distortion.

"Any truly experimental music that works pays respect to tradition while trying to find a new way," explains Griffin. "We didn't approach anything properly. We played everything from dinner gongs to kid's xylophones. A lot of technology was used but not in the expected way."

RS's cacophonous melodies seem to come from the land of unknowing where reason is suspended. "We wanted the album to create an atmosphere of giving you an answer without your having asked a question. Rather than being isolated from the world, it's coming from a different place. It's about not understanding, rather than coming to an understanding. That in itself creates images." **-Ken Micallef**

Contributors: Melinda Newman is a senior editor at Billboard.

Expert Witness

[cont'd from page 17] Sony. The AKG is slightly better but it doesn't perform as well in breezy conditions, so I'll use the Sony if the wind's up. The best way for me to deal with wind or other external noises is with a hard disk editing system. I don't process anything; I just try to get rid of anything that's extraneous to what we're trying to capture. I might add a touch of stereo spatialization to correct or improve what the microphone catches.

Generally, Arab music is the hardest to record. The kind of clapping they do has such a sharp, hard transience, and there's nothing you can do about it in the field. When I come back home I'll spend weeks turning down every handclap so that the

vocals come through it. You don't want a CD that's just all handclaps with some voices off in the distance, which is basically what you get in the field.

Working with these sorts of conditions is not ideal. I'd love to take these musicians into a state-of-the-art studio in New York. But while you'd get a technically wonderful result, you'd lose quite a bit of atmosphere. So what I'm trying to do is compromise between audiophile recordings and field recordings. We have the power to do it these days with the new digital audio editing systems that are available, so why not? Let's make it sound as good as we can without sacrificing any of the atmosphere. **✎**

Contributors: Interview by Dev Sherlock, Musician promotion director.

*He's not your average electric
guitar-wielding, delta-blues
playing, ax-man extraordinaire.
But then, he's not your
average 13-year-old either.*

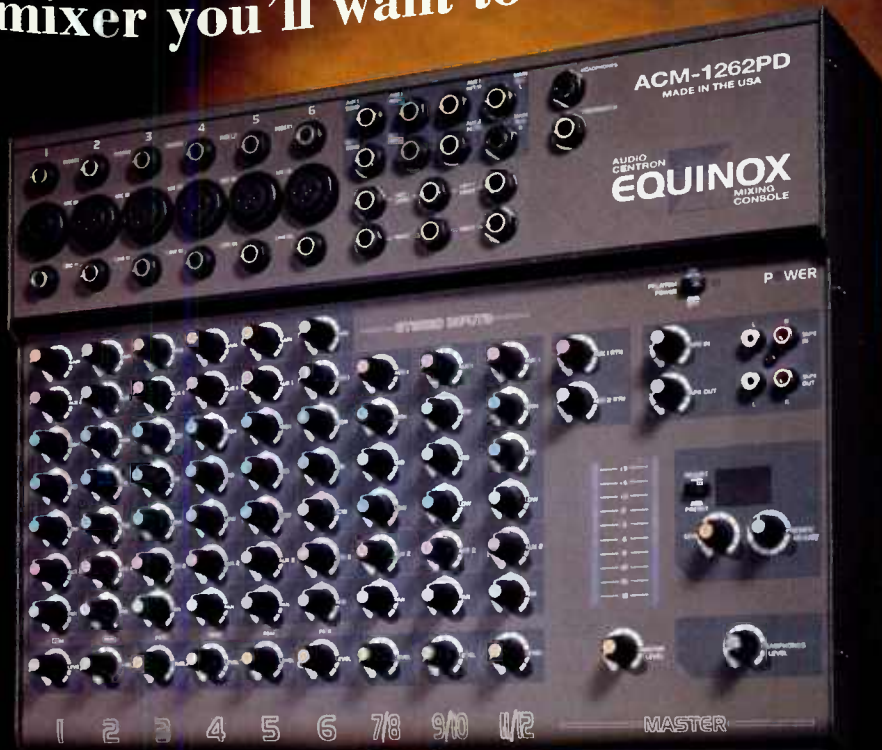
KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD

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So there's obedience to the machine. There's handwringing at the machine. There's holding your nose and cooperating just enough to make a living from the machine. There's holding our nose and cooperating just enough to make a living from the machine. There's watching television in a stupor at the machine. There's endless psychotherapy and new age bromides at the machine. And there's suicidal depression at the machine. Then there's Rage Against the Machine: vocalist Zack de la Rocha, guitarist Tom Morello, bassist Timmy C., and drummer Brad Wilk. Since their self-titled first album came out in 1992 and sold almost four million copies, they have indeed expressed a lot of rage against the machine. In their lyrics as in their name, they've resorted to poetic indirection mainly to stuff a large collage of ideas

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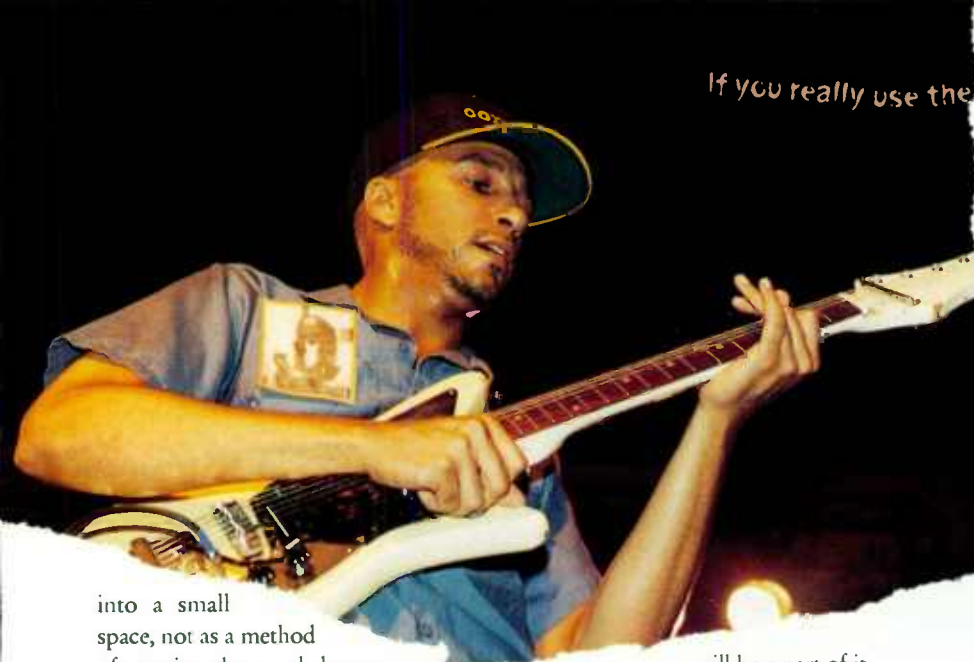


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blacks in specific and young people in general. Had my mother not been radical, I never would have learned about them.

"I hope to make the point that history is an ongoing process which you and I are making right now, like it or not. Whether you're sitting in front of your TV set watching or on the street throwing a Molotov cocktail at the LAPD, you are playing a role in an ongoing historical process. It's the effectiveness of corporate public relations that keeps people atomized and thinking they can play no role other than passive consumer."

The progeny of an improbable marriage between an American school teacher and a Mau Mau revolutionary from Kenya, Morello did most of his growing up in Libertyville, Illinois, a Republican suburb where his mother, a single woman with a child of interracial origin, was nonetheless able to find a job.

"My mother was teaching on military bases. She met my father in Kenya during the insurrection. They were married when Kenya became independent in 1963. He was part of the Kenyan delegation to the UN, and I was born in New York. When they were divorced he went back to Kenya and

into a small space, not as a method of creating the usual dreamscapes onto which the audience can project any meaning it pleases. You might wonder about an occasional reference, but mostly their meaning has all the clarity that anger brings to an issue as it obliterates quibbles and obfuscation.

The cover of their first album was a photograph of a Buddhist monk burning himself to death to protest the American invasion of Vietnam. It's horrible to look at, probably cost them a lot in sales. In the alternative climate of 1992, you might have mistaken it for a sick joke. But it wasn't. It signified that Rage was dead serious in a way that few other bands have tried. Most of those who have tried screwed it up, sounding like heavy-handed essayists in the wrong art form. Rage Against the Machine has created a music so heavy it can bear the weight of their lyrics, giving metal a political content it has mostly lacked since the demise of the MC5.

Their new album, *Evil Empire*, is, if anything, even more animated by a sense of history as a "cancerous mess" metastasizing in our midst. "Vietnow," about terror as a "product," basically makes the point that the war never ended. The single "Bulls on Parade" denounces American militarism, while the video depicts the connection between revolutionary art and revolutionary action. The music careens from brain-rending guitar squonk to monster riffing over a rhythm section that can be measured only on the Richter scale. At this writing they haven't decided how to go about touring, but it's reasonable to assume that benefits for the right causes

will be a part of it.

"Yes, that is an easy way to be an activist," says Tom Morello in an office at the Sony complex in Santa Monica. In the current publicity blitz he's the point man, as de la Rocha, notoriously skittish about interviews, prefers to let his lyrics do the talking. "That's why bands that have convictions beyond a pale belief in human rights need to take it another step. That is why we did that video 'Freedom' for Leonard Peltier [the imprisoned American Indian Movement leader] and got it on MTV. In Europe the major thrust was working with the Anti-Nazi League for two tours. The National Front in England had just elected its first member to Parliament, and we found a great deal of apathy there, as opposed to 15 years ago when the Clash was out there supporting the miners' strike. We did a couple of shows that culminated in street action where the kids in Brixton were demonstrating to the Nazis that their fear tactics wouldn't work. We played a small part in that. And I'm writing a book—25 short biographies of radical figures who have been marginalized in U.S. textbooks. I saw the need for it due to my own academic experience in public high school in Illinois. They had one paragraph about Malcolm X in my history book and nothing about the Black Panthers—two crucially important examples for young

Brian Liu



she went back to Illinois. We went to Kenya for the first time just a couple of years ago, so I met him really for the first time when I was 28.”

What’s your father doing now?

“He owns a tea plantation. He did pretty well after independence. Whatever.”

So he’s not a revolutionary anymore?

“No, sir. Nor are most of them. But I still had some heavy moments in that museum, seeing what was going on in my family just a generation ago, watching my mother search for herself in a photograph of the independence day celebration. And I got some great tapes—music of the Mau Mau. Interestingly, the music shops could

be found only in the seediest sections of town. I don’t speak Swahili, but I was able to get some of the titles translated. It was pretty clear they were very unhappy and something was going to change. Maybe you can hear some of that on the Rage record as well.”

You can also hear his taste for heavy metal, which started in grade school as he became a big fan of Black Sabbath and Kiss, for whom he retains an amused affection. The academics came easy and led straight to an acceptance at Harvard. Music didn’t come so easy, leading to two guitar lessons at the age of 13. The teacher thought he should learn how to tune up and play a major scale, which was a total drag when he just wanted to play “Black Dog.” He didn’t touch the guitar again until discovering the Sex Pistols at the age of 17 in 1981. The very next day, without even knowing how to play an E chord, he was playing in a punk band. This would soon change in college.

“I made the decision to be a guitarist at Harvard when I was 19. Thereafter I had no choice in the career I was going to pursue. And I was doing my best to incorporate my politics into that. The guitar playing got unhealthy, became a real compulsive disorder. I had no natural ability as a guitar player. None. Zero. So I had to fight for every inch of the fretboard. And since I started late, I had to make up for lost time. During school I’d practice two to four hours a day. If I finished studying at one, I practiced until four. If I had a fever of 102, I still practiced until four. When school was out, I practiced eight hours.”

On the last album you had that notification in all caps: NO SAMPLES, KEYBOARDS OR SYNTHESIZERS USED IN THE MAKING OF THIS RECORDING. Is that true of this one too?

“Oh yeah. But first of all, no one in this band has anything against sampling. I think the sampling revolution that came about because of hip hop is every bit as important as the Sex Pistols coming along and convincing people that you didn’t need much technique to make music as powerful as any music ever made. That’s righteous and right on. I love that music, and industrial music. The reason we put that statement on is that we make music that sounds like that but isn’t made like

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The sampling revolution that came about because of hip hop is every bit as important as the Sex Pistols coming

that, so you should know that. It's not an anti-sample manifesto. We're just making those sounds in the context of a punk rock band."

Rage Against the Machine has this weirdly asymmetric setup: One side of the stage groans and sags under megatons of

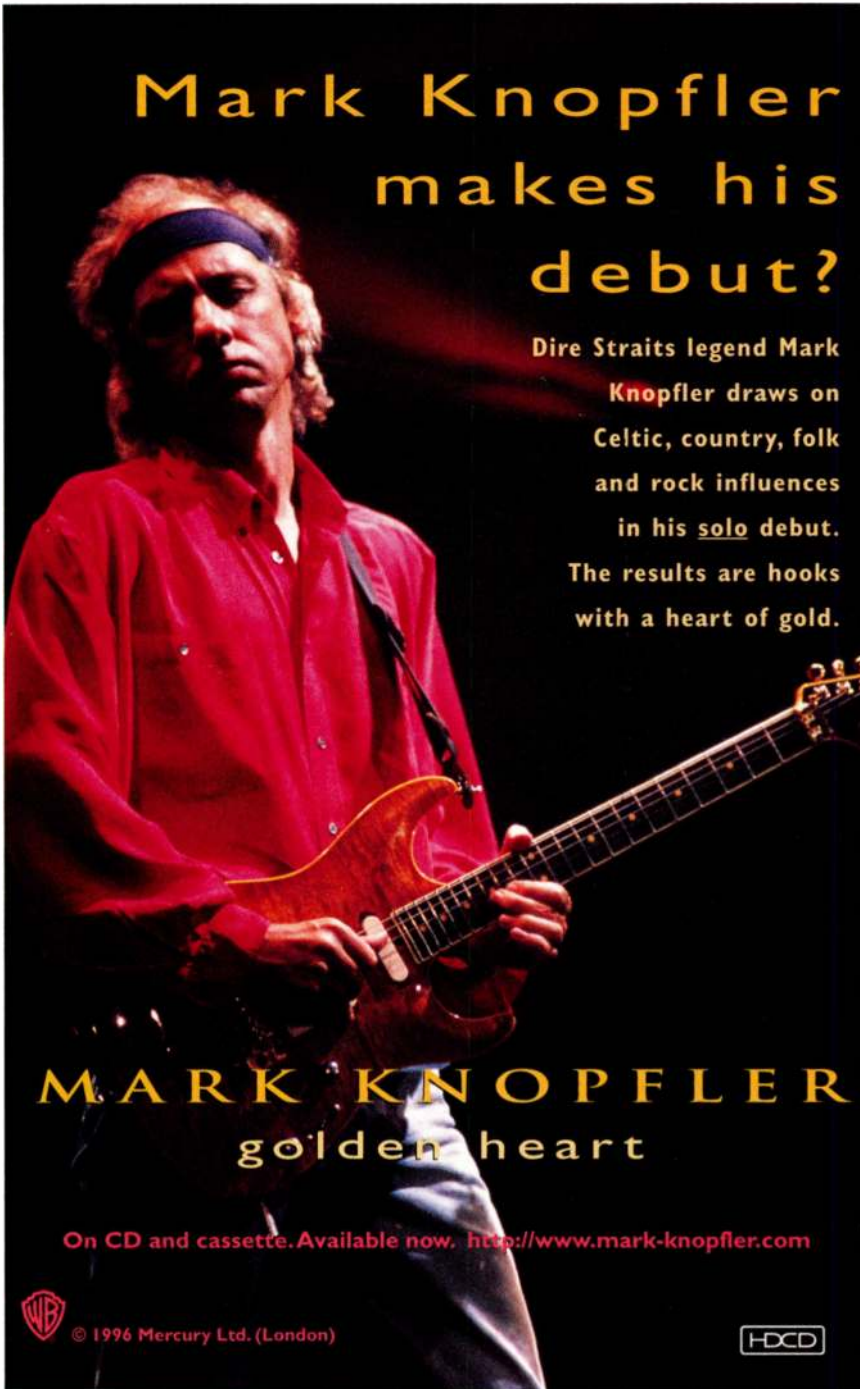
mondo-colossal bass cabinets, and the other side sighs with relief under Morello's frayed 50-watt Marshall head, single dilapidated Peavey cabinet with a few pedals (DOD delay, Ibanez flanger, Crybaby wah, DigiTech whammy, and a customized Ibanez delay) scattered on the floor. His

main guitar has been through so many necks, pickups, and whammy bars that he just calls it a "mongrel."

This works for me. Within the context of those pedals and that head and that speaker cabinet, I'm still able to come up with stuff that's fresh to me. That's how I like to play and I don't want to mess with it. If I had to justify not buying new equipment, I think embracing limitation encourages a more rapid development of your imagination. I just take the same crappy four pedals I've always had and combine that with the wood of the guitar, the properties of the strings, the proximity of the pickups. There are orchestras of music in that, which would go untapped if I just bought some new equipment.

An anarchist in high school, a communist (that's a small c) in college, now a non-sectarian socialist with hopes for a revolution, Morello has always raged against the machine. He and Rage, however, had to absorb the same lessons about the machine in the music biz that every new band learns the hard way. Object of a major bidding war after just a few shows, Rage found itself in the spotlight before the four musicians knew each other well. Touring for two years straight after the first album came in '92, they put off dealing with a lot of personal problems that exploded when it came time to record again.

In October '94 they moved from Los Angeles to a house in Atlanta in hopes of creating some new music. Isolating themselves with one rent-a-car in a town where they knew nobody seemed like a good idea at the time, but it almost tore the band apart as they developed Rage Against the Other Guy's Personal Habits. Meanwhile, they began having severe doubts about their manager, Warren Entner, who had a penchant for flying first class while the band flew in coach. They hadn't heard from him for a year before the Atlanta fiasco, and they got no wise counsel or even a phone call during it. When they played the KROQ Weenie Roast back in L.A., Entner (who declined to be interviewed for this article) played in the radio station golf tournament but didn't attend the concert that night. They discovered that management hadn't been responding to their mail, leaving them with with a backlog of thou-





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and convincing people that you didn't need much technique to make music as powerful as any music ever made.

sands of unanswered fan letters. (They're now sending their cover of NWA's "Fuck Tha Police" to everyone on their mailing list as an apology.) And they had a strong intuition that they weren't taking home as much money as they should.

"We figured that since he obviously wasn't interested in us, we'd just part ways," Morello recalls. "He'd been an absent manager, not a malicious manager. Then after doing nothing for us, he wanted a million dollars to be let out of his contract." Faced with the possibility of difficult litigation, and seeing other bands who were paying a percentage of their income to deadbeat managers after parting ways, they settled by paying him \$400,000.

The important question, though, is: Will we be seeing any more shows like the one in Philadelphia where they opened Lollapalooza by standing onstage naked with "PMRC" painted on their chests?

"I don't know. We'll see. Those things are best a surprise when they happen. Only our touring manager knew beforehand, because we wanted him to have bail money in case we got arrested. The entire show was just us standing their naked for 15 minutes. The crowd seemed to find the spectacle quite titillating for the first five minutes. Then the irritation factor began to set in as the guitars fed back. The last five minutes, they were very hostile. Then we sort of disappeared into the dressing rooms. I think the Philadelphia police were too busy railroading Mumia Abu Jamal to bother arresting us."

What goes through your mind when you're naked in front of 40,000 people?

"Well, we took it very seriously. This was a serious anti-censorship protest. It wasn't like, 'Oh, how embarrassing—I'm naked onstage.' As the crowd got angry, we knew it was working. You need to be angry about your First Amendment rights being eroded, or you will not be allowed to hear the work of dissident artists."

Want me to be perfectly frank with you? The size of my penis—that's what was going through my mind in Philadelphia," says Timmy C., wincing in a juice bar on the Santa Monica promenade. "It looked like I'd just stepped out of the ocean. I swear to

God, it's bigger than that. So I was thinking, 'I wish I'd worn boxer shorts before instead of briefs,' because briefs kinda like constrict me. I took them off and it was this . . . half roll of nickels."

However his equipment behaves under stress, Timmy C. more than makes up in

equipment: The two Ampeg SVT-II Pro heads sitting astride the megatons of mondo-colossal Ampeg cabinets that are to Morello's setup what the World Trade Center is to a Greek diner. But we're talking more than phallic compensation here, though, as his amps [cont'd on page 50]

THE NEW ALBUM

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TIMMY C.

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The Bottom Line

**Bob Cranshaw, George Mraz
& David Williams Bare the
Soul of Jazz Bass.**

When introducing the bass player to the audience, the great Art Blakey often made use of this preface: "And now, the workhorse of our group. . . ." Truth is, the bass is arguably the most underacclaimed instrument in the jazz ensemble. The young lions phenomenon has compounded the problem: Very few middle-aged musicians are treated as prime-time material, no matter what instrument they play. And if you're the guy who's played bass behind Sonny Rollins for 32 years, you're history, right?

In a manner of speaking, yes.

Bob Cranshaw is a seminal part of jazz history, with one of the most impressive résumés of any living musician. He has appeared on more than 3000 albums and toured with hundreds of performers, from Charles Aznavour to Liza Minnelli to Maurice Hines to Judy Collins to Quincy Jones. His bass has been heard in several major films—*E.T.*, *The Anderson Tapes*, *The Pawnbroker*, *For the Love of Ivy*. He has been ceaselessly active in television: Merv Griffin, David Frost, Dick Cavett and *Saturday Night Live* are among his credits, and only recently he retired after 26 years on *Sesame Street*.

"I'll lay a pocket down for you for months," he says affably. "That's what I've been able to do in music. I don't care whether I solo: If it's swingin', if the group feels good, the whole group is noticed. I love—I love—to play time! I'm on the line, I'll block for you, I'll open the hole so you can run the touchdown. You can get the credit, because I don't mind blocking. That's been my

By

Karen Bennett

Photography By

**Patricia
McDonough**



"If someone's not in tune, I can't listen to them. I don't care how great what they're playing is."—David Williams

attitude." Bob Cranshaw is 63 years old and going strong.

David Williams replaced the legendary Sam Jones in a band that has become a central focus in his career: the Cedar Walton Trio. Williams, 49, has been working with Walton regularly since '83; he also plays regularly with the Kenny Barron Quintet. He is a virtuoso player of staggering reach and inventiveness. The mostly straight-ahead formats in which he is featured are broadened by colorful musical allusions



drawn from his wide-ranging experience. Soloing on the Walton composition "Iron-clad," for instance, David quotes a pop hit sung by Billy Preston and Syreeta ("With You I'm Born Again"), Nino Rota ("Theme from *The Godfather II*") and a vocal riff Donny Hathaway often used—all transferred so seamlessly that many jazz purists, unaware of the references, applaud where they might otherwise squawk.

"Most of the time I don't even listen to the stuff I play," says Williams. "I listen to

Luther [Vandross] and Marcus Miller. Earth, Wind & Fire: Soon as I hear them, I perk up. Most of the people who do what I do and who I work with, they don't feel the same. They don't want to hear that stuff, but I love it."

Williams, who has played acoustic bass exclusively for the past 13 years, moved from Trinidad to London to New York to D.C. to L.A. and back to the Apple, playing with artists as diverse as Roberta Flack and Ornette Coleman. His intonation is exceptional, and it's no accident: "I've always been very conscious of being in tune.

Maybe it has to do with having played the violin too, but intonation is the first thing. If someone's not in tune, I can't listen to them, I don't care how great what they're playing is."

George Mraz is a virtuoso whose solos are so musical they seem to function as

songs within a song. He was born, raised and classically trained in Czechoslovakia. Like Williams, he has remarkable intonation: "If you play a lot with the bow, all the little mistakes stand out a bit more. I actually played with the bow every day for a while. It's gotta help," he maintains, "but I'm not happy with my intonation either. I go through Hell with these things some-

**"At a certain point you stay away from the things you respected. Why do something almost as good as someone did 30 years ago?"
—George Mraz**



times."

Mraz was studying at the Prague Conservatory when he won a music competition in Vienna in 1966 that netted him a scholarship to Berklee. He didn't use it right away, and when he did come to the States a few years later his playing was so advanced that he ended up mostly comparing notes with his teacher. And working: He began with a gig the night after his arrival in Boston, then worked his way up to jobs with the likes of Oscar Peterson, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Jimmy Rowles, John Abercrombie, Pepper Adams, Tommy Flanagan and the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band. Mraz, 51, now works fre-

**"The Art Blakeys, the teachers, are gone. How are younger players gonna grow?"
—Bob Cranshaw**

quently with Joe Henderson.

Obviously these three bassists are far apart in terms of background, yet each reveres his role as a group player and views his own ability with a leavening dose of humility. In their stories lie ample evidence to support the contention that the bassist, so long kept from the spotlight, is in fact the central character in the drama of jazz.

Mraz can still remember his jazz epiphany. "I was 12 years old or so. It was a Sunday afternoon. They used to play this light operetta type of music on the radio, but somehow they stuck in an hour of Louis Armstrong. It really stood out, after these trained voices."

From that point George began tuning into Radio Free Europe broadcasts at midnight every night. His diligence persisted; nothing—not even his first encounter with an electric bass at a Boston gig—dissuaded him. "Mick Goodrick was in the band, and I remember him saying, 'George, you're playing your ass off, but would you mind moving your hand down a fret?' I was playing in a different key, but it was so loud I couldn't even hear the notes. That was the end of my electric career."

Williams, whose father was a bassist and a renowned calypso bandleader, left Trinidad to study briefly at the London College of Music. While in England, he heard some of the heavies: Blakey, Rollins, Miles. "I started hearing Ron Carter and Mingus and Paul Chambers," he says. "I saw Jimmy Garrison and Jymie Merritt. Then, one night at a party, one of these cats put on [Lee Morgan's] 'Sidewinder,' and it just flipped me out. I can sing that [bass] solo!"

Which was played by our man Cranshaw, who himself learned invaluable lessons by listening to and observing the elder statesmen of his day. Several times, for example, he followed Milt Hinton to recording sessions. "He wouldn't even know it," laughs Cranshaw. "I'd be stuck over in the corner, pecking like a bitch. When Milt Hinton walked into the room, the energy level in the whole place went up. It was like God coming in."

He also noticed that several players on these dates had TV network gigs as staff musicians. "They were getting paid for a staff gig, and they could still do what they wanted to do. I said, 'I like that!' Ron

Carter and I came here around the same time, and we would stand on 53rd Street and call ourselves 'the Supersubs.' Milt and George Duvivier were doing studio work, opening the way for Ron and Richard Davis and me. I wasn't interested in taking their gigs; I'd just sub. When Paul Chambers would get drunk and fall asleep, I'd tell him, 'Shit, you fall asleep, that's your ass. Come on, be there!' So I got in by being on the scene—maybe not being the best bass player, but good enough."

Williams' second visit to New York, in '69, was pivotal. "I went to the Nucleus Theater. The group was called the 360 Degree Musical Experience, led by Beaver Harris. The first night, no bass player showed up. I was scared to even talk to them, but when the same thing happened the next night, I told Beaver I was a bass player. I ran uptown, grabbed my bass, came back and played the second set. At the end of the night, Beaver said, 'See you tomorrow night, right?' Then, the next night, Ron Carter came in."

Immediately David put down his bass, but Carter urged him to continue, then brought in a cello, which he played alongside him. That did it, Williams remembers. "I didn't want to wake up from that dream. I was listening to Ron with Miles, so I couldn't believe it when he walked in. He was the person I wanted to meet and maybe study with. That sound, that tone. . . He's still my favorite." Williams moved to New York right away: "There was no place else to go," he explains.

But there was. Despite the fact that David spent two years in the Elvin Jones band, the fantasy that he would create the next Earth, Wind & Fire refused to go away. He left for L.A. and plunged into the studio whirlwind of funk, disco and fusion. Pretty soon, though, it brought him down: "The bullshit, the producers, the studio people, the record company people. They had no idea about the music, and they'd sit up there and make the decisions. In a sense they made me run back to New York and this music, which I've always loved."

"I'm worried," admits Cranshaw. "I'm looking at the younger players, like Joshua Redman and Christian McBride, and the industry is taking them in another direction. I don't like [cont'd on page 60]

Tools of the Bass Trade

Bob Cranshaw often plays electric bass, and his model of choice is a Roger Sadowsky. He owns a Yamaha, but "as an old man, I find the Sadowsky lighter, and it's a nice-sounding bass." With both he uses LaBella round wound steel strings. He uses a Walter Woods head and a Hartke 15" speaker with the electric.

Cranshaw's acoustic bass is a 70-year-old Italian model that he bought for \$15 years ago; over time, he has spent a total of \$10,000 to have this bass rebuilt. "I liked the feel of the neck when I bought it, but the bass itself was full of holes," he says. He uses a Barcus-Berry pickup and either a Gallien-Krueger M Series amp or a Walter Woods head and "any 15" speaker they got for me." Bob's strings of choice for the acoustic are LaBella black nylons. Recently he's been using a Fishman Model B transducer interface. His bow is German—no brand name available.

David Williams hasn't played the electric bass professionally for at least 12 years. His acoustic bass is a three-quarter flatback Italian that's over 100 years old. He uses Thomastik Spirocore solo steel-wound strings: "They're a little brighter and thinner than the Reds." He also uses a Gallien-Krueger 200MB amp and an Underwood pickup. His bow is a French-style Dorfler.

George Mraz owns two acoustic basses, both three-quarter size. One is a Bellofi, made in 1803: "It's got a mellow sound, not very loud. I can predict the weather by the way it reacts." The other is a flatback Czech bass which he bought recently in Prague. George uses Thomastik Weich Spirocore steel strings on the Italian bass, and Thomastik Spirocore Red strings on the Czech. His pickups are an Underwood on the Czech bass and a Wilson on the Italian. He runs his instruments through a Gallien-Krueger MBS micro amp, though he'll switch to a Walter Woods head and a Bose speaker. His bow is a German-style Phretchner.

HOOTIE SOUND

By Robert L. Doerschuk

Photograph by Brian Smith

Gamecock

"We don't care if people write that we suck."

IS OFF



he problem is, they're not assholes.

This shouldn't be so surprising. After all, being normal is this band's gimmick. Still, you keep expecting the façade to slip. I mean, how can anyone sell as many records as these guys and *not* be just a bit twisted by the experience?

Instead, hanging out with the Blowfish at the Ed Sullivan Theater in New York, site of their canonization by David Letterman when *Cracked Rear View* was just beginning to grab America by the throat, feels like passing time with the stage crew while waiting for the real stars to come on.

The guys are taping a promotional interview with someone from the Grammys. They're uncomfortably bunched together, singer Darius Rucker and bassist Dean Felder on stools, drummer Jim "Soni" Sonefeld and guitarist Mark Bryan looming from behind. All sport scuffed shoes, worn jeans—the clothes America wears on weekends. Clearly, they're tired; probably they're a little bored. But they're game, answering the lamest inquiries—which ones are married? what do they think of their fans?—with grave consideration.

Then comes the Name Question, prompting groans and flinches from the band, none of whom has ever been known as Hootie. The interviewer backtracks. To show she's in on the joke, she says, "Hey, I won't even ask the Other One."

Which is, of course, the black-guy-in-

"In retrospect, I don't think we were that good. But we weren't unsatisfied with ourselves."—Dean Felder

a-white-band question, the one that concerns so many writers for whom that idea seems dangerously exotic. This makes the band quiet down real fast.

"Which question is that?"

"Oh, you know . . .," the interviewer twitters.

"No, we don't. What question are you talking about?"

This interrogation—which drags out for maybe ten seconds—hints that something is churning deep down in the Blowfish soul. Something that will put up



Brian Smith

with the predictable, the intolerant, and the stupid only for so long before doing something everyone will regret.

Like, I don't know, ordering the Super Size fries instead of regular.

But the moment passes, and now we're talking about the Grammys. The interviewer asks for predictions: Who will take top honors as artist of the year? The band spoons up a few names—TLC, Alanis.

won't buy respect from those who dole it out in the industry's name.

Dean Felder jumps in. "He's just afraid of making a speech," he observes. Everyone kind of laughs. But then Darius adds, "It's better not to win."

Aside from the fact that they *did* score at the Grammys, and that Darius actually delivered an eloquent blast against censorship at the ceremony, the question remains: Better for whom? Perhaps for the

credibility of a band whose image and music reflect the culture of the average guy: the hoop shooters, the Bud guzzlers. This is a demographic that transcends age and ideology. The only ones left out of the picture are on the fringe, where rockers and other misfits lurk. In Hootieville, everyone else can feel at home.

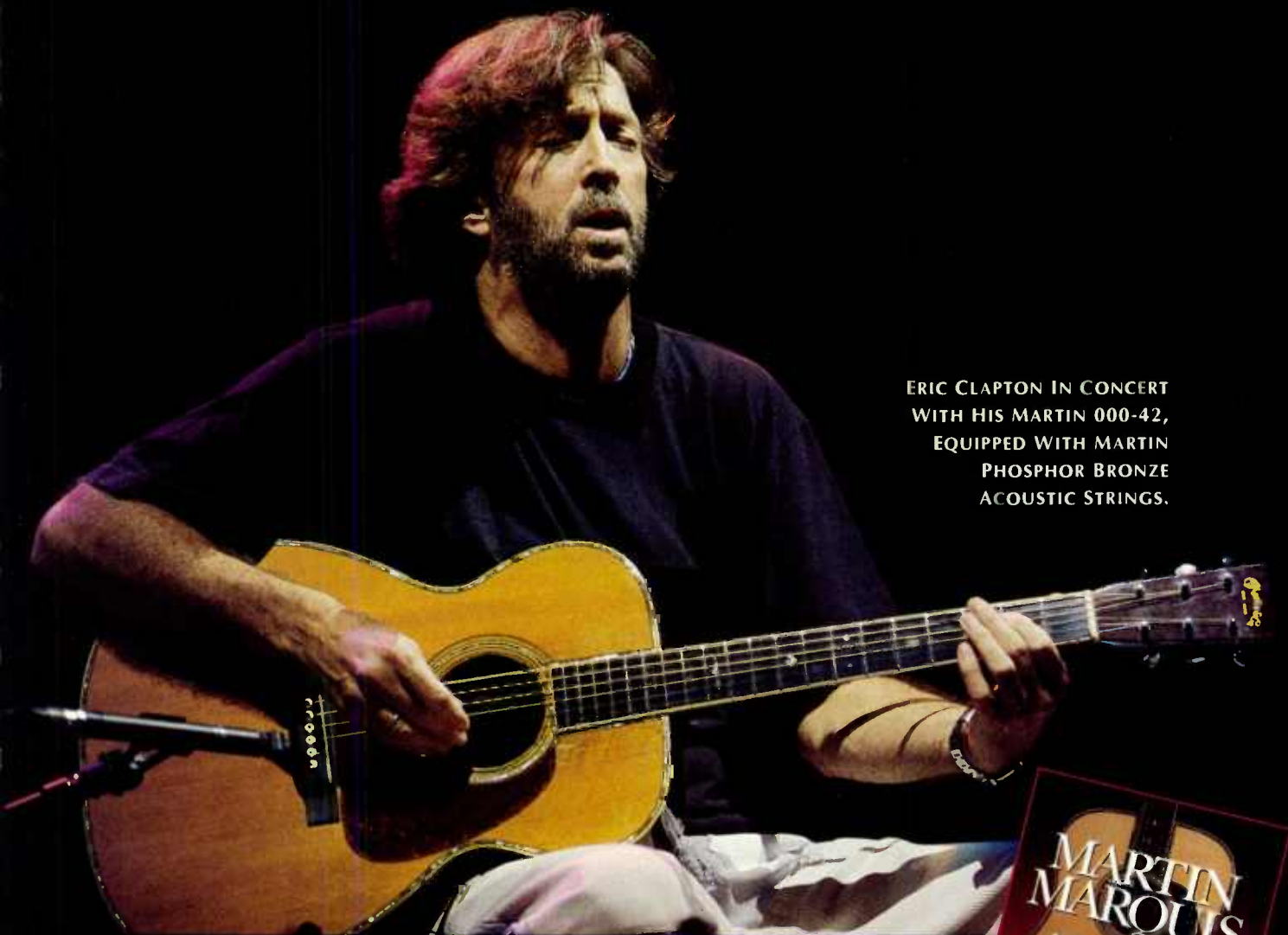
Each nominee, they agree, is terrific. Then Darius mutters, almost under his breath, "We're not gonna win."

"Pardon me?"

He looks up and repeats himself, with more emphasis now. It's not quite modesty talking, it's more a statement: This is the way the world is. This is how it is with this band, whose only friends are millions of normal people. You can score big in these pedestrian times, but twelve million sales

Which is why this band blew the roof off the charts with *Cracked Rear View*. As with fast food, it's not a question of taste.

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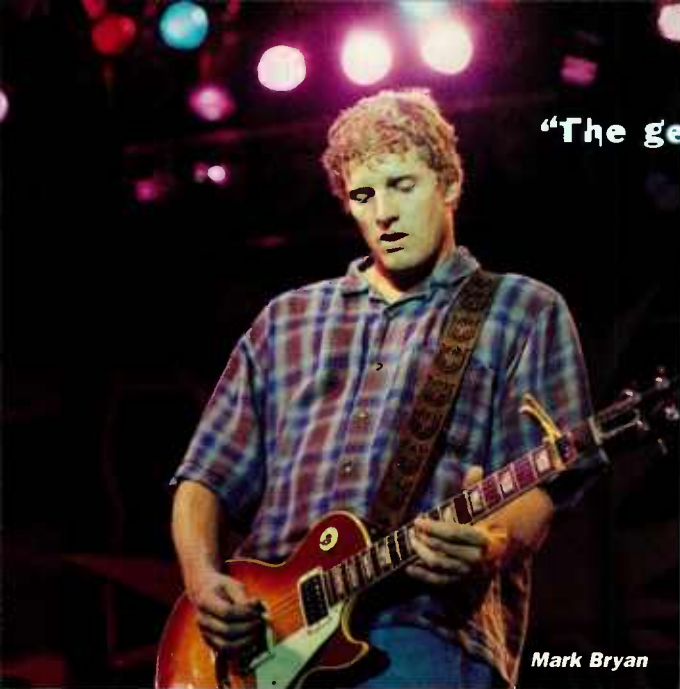
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"The general feeling in the air these days is what we

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So it would seem with the Hooties. They don't freak anybody out. Their music doesn't challenge listeners. They're a natural for the '90s, when presidential hopefuls wear backwards baseball caps instead of diplomatic pinstripes. Their songs, on *Cracked* and their new follow-up, *Fairweather Johnson*, are somehow catchy and forgettable at the same time—disposable pop, tasty time after time.

Ebet Roberts

Everyone plays well enough. Their harmonies, stacked somewhere in the baritone depths that once belonged to the Village People, are clean, even robust. And Rucker's passion as a singer is undeniable, if confined to a somewhat narrow range and punctuated occasionally by hyperventilated gasps.

Music like this would be killer at frat gigs. In *Billboard's* Top Ten, where *Cracked* has nestled for nearly a year and a half, it's one of the inexplicable phenomena of our time. It is evidence that rock music, once the soundtrack for revolution, is now family entertainment. If the importance of this music can be measured by the work of its most successful bands, rock is no longer about defying old attitudes. One can imagine Dylan's Mr. Jones commuting to work with Hootie in his headphones.

And that is where the problem comes in. Tempting as it is to dis this band for its improbable achievement in the charts, none of this is their fault. All they've done, from their nascence at the University of South Carolina in the late '80s to the arenas they pack today, is play music they enjoy. They're the first to agree with the reservations many other musicians express about them. (Says Mark Bryan to *Entertainment Weekly*, "We're about as alternative as John Tesh.") They're really not a

In fact, the more taste there is in fast food, the less it sells. Success in America is often a matter of offending the fewest people. And with the icons of pop music imitating Eva Perón or spending nights with pre-pubes, the door was wide open for whatever act could turn being normal into its

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a one-record band, that we're gonna fall flat on our face."—Darius Rucker

bad band, except when measured by standards they never embraced.

So let's leave it at this: Hootie and the Blowfish. Nice guys. Hard workers, with plenty of van mileage and gut-bucket gigs in their history. As media manipulators, they can't even be compared to the Malcolm McLaren and abdicated Princes. And, no matter how it goes down for you, they're a symbol of what people expect from music today.

To celebrate, mourn, and mull over all of this, we poured a few beers and hooked the 'Fish one afternoon in New York.



You differ from every star of comparable stature in that you celebrate, rather than defy, the status quo in both image and sound. What does this say about what rock music means today?

Soni Sonefeld: That you don't have the kind of icons you used to have, because of the way the press is. You get tired of seeing the same people all the time on TV. If the Beatles were coming to America now, you'd get burned out on them before they even got here.

Mark Bryan: Nowadays Jim Morrison would be blown out of the water on *A Current Affair*. He couldn't be a legend today.

On balance, is this good or bad for rock and roll?

Dean Felder: It does take an option away from bands. You almost have to do like Pearl Jam, not doing press and trying to concentrate on the albums, or you'll get oversaturated. I don't know how we've escaped that so far.

Can you explain why you've been so phenomenally successful?

Bryan: No. I mean, we've been lucky with demographics: A lot of eight-year-olds, as well as 58-year-olds, like the album. But why that is, I don't know. I guess you have an element of the late '80s college rock scene—all that stuff that we covered when we were on that circuit. It never got really big, except for R.E.M. But now you have bands like the Gin Blossoms, who were definitely influenced by that scene, and us as well. If there's any sort of style that we can fit, we've kind of started it ourselves. We're paving our own way.

Darius Rucker: If you really want to give us a chance, don't compare us to Pearl Jam or Stone Temple Pilots; compare us to Petty or Mellencamp.

What do you see as the differences between Cracked Rear View and Fairweather Johnson?

Felder: There's been some growth. There's a couple of songs that were different for us, but ten songs of it were pretty much the

same songwriting style as on *Cracked Rear View*. We were able to take it to a different level, though, because we're better musicians now.

It sounds as if you feel that, as musicians, you don't deserve the kind of success you've gotten.

Sonefeld: Oh, God, you're absolutely right.

Bryan: We're still coming into our own.

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hootie plugs in

During the band's '95 tour, MARK BRYAN switched back and forth between his '73 Les Paul Standard and '93 Chet Atkins model Gretsch Tennessean. At the moment, though, he gives equal time to his '71 ES 335, '71 SG, '71 Fender Thinline Telecaster, and Gretsch Country Gentleman, which Mark describes as "awesome. It's like the Tennessean, but a little more ornate. Obviously the Les Paul is for the rockin' stuff and the SG for the harder, solid-body parts. And the Fender is great because it's the only Tele with two humbuckers." At home Mark does his writing on a '63 Gibson J-45 acoustic. In concert he plays through a Mesa/Boogie head plugged into a 4x12 Mesa/Boogie cabinet and a Mesa/Boogie Mark III combo, which contains one 12" speaker. His pedals include an Ibanez Tube Screamer, a DigTech Double Play chorus/delay pedal, and a Whirlwind selector box. Mark picks his regular Dean Markley .010s with Fender mediums "because they make cool swirly designs on them."

Onstage and on both Hootie albums, DEAN FELDER plays most of his bass parts on a Warwick.

During *Cracked Rear View* sessions, he borrowed a Carvin fretless, which he used to write "Not Even the Trees." That planted the fretless seed, which blossomed when he picked up his Warwick. Dean also owns two Fender Jazz basses, one of which he takes on the road. "I just couldn't get that tone out of anything else," he says. "That's what I fell in love with, along with the feel of the thinner neck." His grueling performance schedule leads Dean to favor D'Addario XL220 strings, whose soft feel is easy on the fingers. After six years with a Gallien-Krueger GK-800 amp, he's moved on to a Trace Elliot 600XMS, biamped to two dbx 166 over-easy compressors and sent to two Mesa/Boogie cabinets, a 1X15 and a 4X10. "You can't give Mesas too much," he explains, "and the Trace likes to put out too much, so it's a great combination."

SONI SONEFELD is convinced that Drum Workshop makes the best drums around. "I never knew what a good drum sounded like until I sat down with John Good of DW. That sold me right there." He's used a variety of heads in recent years, most often Remo Pinstripes for their durability on the road and coated

Remos in the studio. Soni's cymbals are Zildjians—a 14" New Beat hi-hat, two 18" rock crashes, 8" and 10" splashes, and a 22" ride. For size and weight, he uses Vic Firth five-piece nylon tip sticks, which he wields from atop his Roc-N-Soc throne. Don't look for electronic percussion or drum machines at the Sonefeld home: "I wouldn't even know how to turn any of that stuff on."

DARIUS RUCKER applies strict standards when choosing his guitars. He bought a Martin 00-18 last summer "because Nanci Griffith sang about it on 'Listen to the Radio.'" His first electrics were Rickenbackers "because George Harrison looked so cool playing them." And he shows his affection for his Takamine Santa Fe PSF 94 by "beating the hell out of it. I'll play that one for a long time." His strings are Dean Markleys, and his amps are Matchless.

All three string players use Korg tuners and monitor themselves with SES proprietary boxes. Sonefeld's drum monitors are LA325s from Eastern Acoustic Works. A mixture of mikes is used onstage although, the band's equipment guru confides, "an endorsement deal is pending."

Felder: In retrospect, I don't think we were that good. But we weren't unsatisfied with ourselves. At the time we weren't having a confidence problem or anything, although we didn't feel as confident then as we do now.

Rucker: I thought we were good, but I never thought we were *that* good. *Cracked Rear View* was a good album. It should have been successful. But I don't think it was *that* good. To me, the change came in the middle of this last tour, when we realized, "Oh, my goodness, we're really playing well! We've got a good chemistry." Then, going in the studio for the new album, that was the first time I thought we were writing some really great songs.

You're an unusually self-effacing band, especially given how much posturing goes on in this business.

Felder: That doesn't happen around us. If any one of us ever started to do that, he'd get cut down so fast and hard, he might never come back.

Rucker: Even in our area [*i.e.*, the Southern club circuit] there's that

competition thing. But to me, everybody sounds different. There are so many people around, but there are also so many radio stations and so many formats that there's room for everybody. I honestly don't feel competition with any band.

People always compare us to Dave Matthews or Edwin [McCain]. Well, Edwin and Dave are friends of ours. We've been playing on the circuit with these guys forever. Why would I feel in competition with them? I want Dave's next record to do 12 million; I want Edwin's next record to do 12 million. I really, really do. All this talk that creates this competitive frenzy—I hate it.

Bryan: There should be an element of respect for anyone who makes his own music and does things his own way. Even if you don't like that style of music, if someone is doing what they do from their heart, there needs to be some respect there. But it isn't there all the time.

Sonefeld: It really bugs me when I hear people say that some band sucks or that song sucks. Each song is somebody's piece of art, man; I don't think *any* of it sucks. The competition among bands is the same thing: Why would there be any hatred because of somebody's three-minute song versus somebody else's?

So when you see a critical writeup of the band, how does that make you



Soni Sonefeld

Bob Roberts



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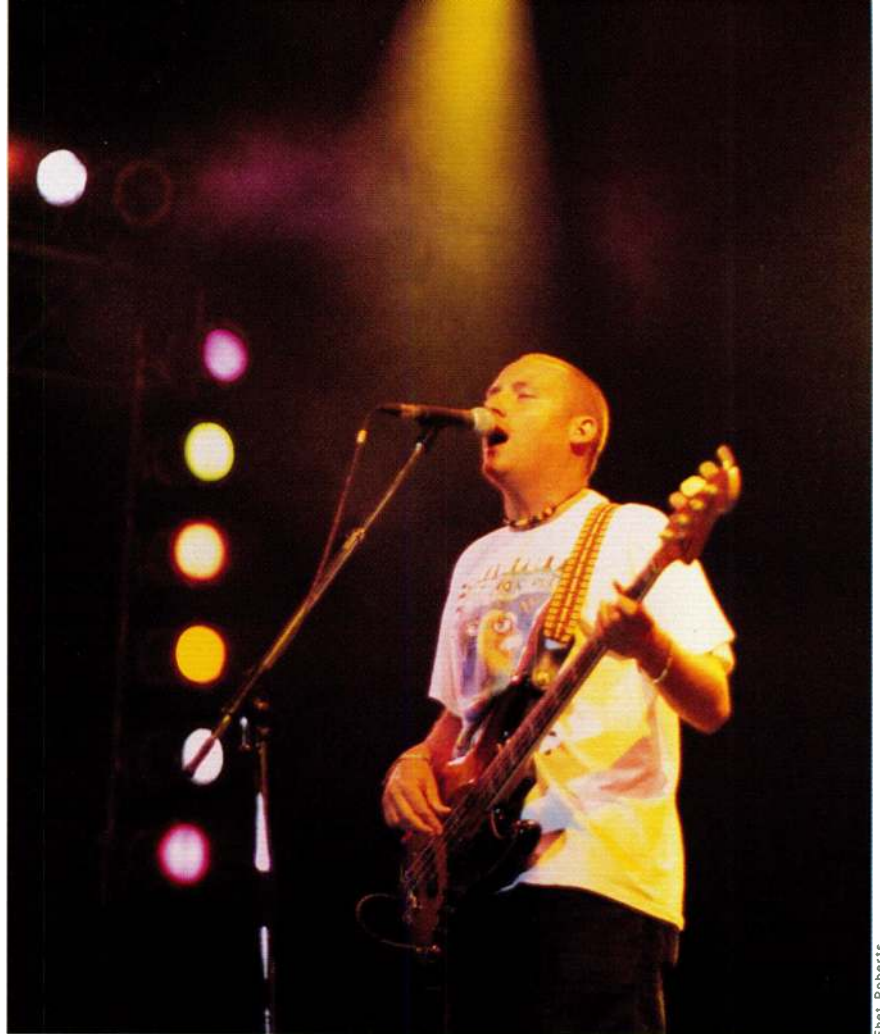
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Ebet Roberts

feel?

Sonefeld: Hey, I don't care if people write that we suck. I just think it's stupid.

Felder: It gets back to what we were saying about respect: You may not like our music, but you have to respect that this is what we do.

Rucker: That's what bothers me, this lack of respect. We love what we do and we're not gonna change. We've been gigging around the clubs of the South and the Southeast for ten years, so when finally something good happens to us, at least they could say, "I don't like the music, but I gotta respect these guys." For people not to say that . . . I mean, I don't care if you hate the record. That's fine. But not to give us the respect that we deserve. . . . [Rucker runs out of words, shakes his head in frustration.]

It's got to be a drag to be aware of how many people don't respect you as a band.

Rucker: Man, I just spent the past year with eight of my best friends, traveling all around the world, playing in front of as

many as 75,000 people and as few as 3,000 people, every night, having a blast. Nothing they can say can bring me down. If it ended today, that's fine, because it's been wonderful.

And yet it obviously isn't going to end today, with the new album coming out.

Rucker: Yeah, but no matter what this record does, no one really expects us to be around. The general feeling in the air is that we're a one-record band. Everybody thinks we're gonna fall flat on our face: *Fairweather Johnson* is gonna be a shitty album, we're a shitty band. I don't think that many bands look up to us.

So maybe you're not a musician's band; you're more of a people's band.

Bryan: Yeah, but my main thought going into this next album is, can we make a really good album musically? That's what it comes down to. As far as our public perception is concerned, none of that is as important as whether we made a good



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record. And I feel that we did.

Rucker: The perception of Hootie and the Blowfish takes away from the band as players. If *Bass Player* magazine really listened to what Dean is doing, there's no way they couldn't put him on the cover. He comes up with amazingly cool parts to my vocals or Mark's guitar. Every time I hear "Sad Caper" [from *Fairweather Johnson*] the bass line just drives! It's so

simple but so perfect for the song.

Sonefeld: The point is, we're a role-player band. Nobody's doing this 15-minute guitar solo or drum solo. We do really well as a foursome: We don't overplay, we respect each player's place in a song. That's the hardest thing to learn as a musician . . .

Bryan: . . . which I think *does* make us a musician's band.

Felder: It took us a while to realize that. It

took us many years of writing bad songs. After writing some good ones, you figure out why the good ones work and the others don't. We figured out that when we got out of each other's way and found our space, the music got much better.

Working the clubs probably made you play tighter as well.

Felder: The biggest thing we got out of it is that we got good. Four years ago we weren't. I mean, we were good for what we were, but we weren't where we needed to be. That extra time in the bars improved us as musicians.

Rucker: The main thing about being out on the road for so long is that we learned how to like each other and what it takes to get along. I feel bad for solo artists who put a band together in the studio and then go on the road. They're all by themselves. Whenever you need something or need to get away from something, there's always somebody in our band who can take the load. It's just so cool to be able to say "Fuck you," and the next day you don't even have to talk about it. You just go on with your life.

During those long years in the clubs, did you ever feel like bailing out and getting a real job?

Felder: No, because we weren't chasing stardom. We just wanted to get a career out of music. So since our goals were different, it was easier to stay on the ground.

Bryan: The bottom line is, we really love music. We love to play together. That's all we were after, I swear. If we had only sold 50,000 copies of *Cracked Rear View*, we'd still be here, still be playing...

Sonefeld: We wouldn't be talking to *Musician* magazine [laughs].


Still, you're all college guys. You could have gotten straight jobs. Why would you want to risk it all to play music?

Felder: It wasn't that hard. Financially it was a tough decision, because none of us had any money. We were making the decision not to make money for a while. *That* was the tough part: Are we ruining our lives here? The easy part was the music, because I'd wanted to be in a band since I was a little kid.

Bryan: Would I rather be sitting in an office from nine to five, or going out and playing clubs five nights a week? The answer is obvious.

Danny Goldberg: How We Broke the Blowfish

Mercury Records President Danny Goldberg was president of Atlantic when Hootie and the Blowfish were signed; it was on his watch that they exploded from regional act to national sensation. How'd it happen? In an interview with Robert L. Doerschuk, he offered his view.

 We had a research department at Atlantic that would call around the country and find out what independently controlled records were selling locally. When this band was brought to my attention, I sent Tim Sommer, an A&R rep in Los Angeles, to see them and let me know if they were doing as well in the Carolinas as they appeared to be. He said he thought they were great, they were nice people, and we ought to sign them. So we did.

"We wanted them to re-record 'Hold My Hand' because that song was generating the sales in the Carolinas. Tim had the idea to get [producer] Don Gehman, and the band asked me to get David Crosby to sing on it. We also had them do a new album, since their independent release wasn't strong enough. The single didn't sell very well, which was confusing because big songs will usually sell singles and albums. But Val [Azzoli, Atlantic general manager at the time and now Goldberg's successor as president] and I felt that something was going on in terms of sales as the song got exposed, so we kept pressuring the promotion department to work it city by city.

"The big break was when they got WDVE in Pittsburgh, because that was the first city outside of the Deep South that played it. VH1 was also enormously helpful two or three months into the record by giving us that pulsebeat of national exposure. But the hardest part of marketing is the first million records. After the first million you need to keep executing and doing the fundamentals, but a record becomes more word-of-mouth and mechanically driven. Basically, you're reacting at that point, and

you've got the income flow to trigger your marketing costs. The horse is already running; you just have to keep it from running off the road.

"It would have been very easy to walk away from Hootie at a couple of hundred thousand records and say, 'This is a regional hit. Now let's have another record.' Radio stations didn't want to play it. Hootie didn't sound like what was happening in rock radio at the time. But we stuck with it. Our promotional budgets were never particularly high on this album, but our budgeting of time and energy to get it on the radio was exceptional.

"The main reason we stuck with Hootie was that they are wonderful live. Early on I got to see them at the Wetlands, and I realized immediately they had this magical thing with their audience. It reminded me of when I was managing Nirvana: Although it was a totally different kind of music, there was a similar sort of communal feeling between the band and its fans, not the kind of separation you normally feel. Here was a band that could satisfy a younger audience that was O.D.ing on grunge; it felt like rock and roll, but they had those classic songwriting elements and a great voice in Darius that could bring people from Nirvana and Whitney Houston together into a common comfort level.

"Hootie and the Blowfish address that yearning in the core rock audience for any kind of optimism and harmony that seems to have an analog in the concert audiences for the Grateful Dead. Their record has to be compared to Fleetwood Mac's or the Eagles' big albums from two decades earlier. Hootie won't start any musical trends, but they will stand the test of time."

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Rage Against The Machine

[con't from page 33] solve a specific artistic problem. Recorded at Cole Rehearsal in L.A. under very live circumstances (meaning minimal separation of the instruments, so everyone had to be happy with his performance on a take), the new album needed some oomph during the instrumental sections. With no rhythm guitar when Morello shifted into soloing, and Tim adamant that adding rhythm guitar later sounded bogus, they needed more noise from the bass. Yet whenever Tim hit his distortion pedal, producer Brendan O'Brien (who also worked with Pearl Jam) would bum out because they'd lose the bottom.

"Why don't you get an A/B box?" O'Brien suggested. It changed Tim's life. When he wants distortion now, he shifts from his normal warm bass tone (A) to both amps playing simultaneously (A and B), the second amp set with the drive knob up so they get distortion with no drop out in the bottom.

"My problems are solved," exults Tim, who favors a couple of Fender Jazz basses with P-Bass necks and Hipshot D-tuners. He's also enthusiastic about his Rickenbacker eight-string. "When I hit the box, it's like a second bass player joining the band. Every other bass player who hears it, they just go, 'Oh, my God, that's the most awesome sound I ever heard.' I swear, it's the best thing I ever did. And it's so loud. I can't turn the volume knob over three. I'm excited to play live, just 'cause of my amp. I only wish I would have done this five years ago."

For a couple of seasons he enjoyed bashing people as a defensive end in high school football, but eventually even that gave way to the bass. He still practices obsessively, aspiring to be an old fat guy with a jazz band someday. He also aspires to move to Denver to be closer to the Broncos; he figures that if he wasn't playing music for a revolutionary socialist rock 'n' roll band, he'd be the Unabomber.

"Everyone should own an AK-47, because someday we may have to use it," he says. "Violent overthrow is the only way there will ever be a revolution in this country. Right

now, people need to speak up. That's why Rage is a cool band. We're getting the message out there, and I hope other bands will be influenced by us to say similar things. It's important to reach kids when they're young, before their minds are made up and they think that history is this bullshit you learn in school."

Tim will hit that A/B switch, and it's louder than loud has ever been," says Brad Wilk, who plays a Pork Pie drumkit with UDW hardware and Zildjian cymbals. "It's like, 'Dude, I love you. I'm not saying anything bad about you. You are the God of Thunder. You're a great musician. But you're scaring everybody. When you're playing ten times louder than everybody else, can you hear what I'm playing even a little bit? I love you. Seriously. But you're blowing my hair off.' I just wish I had an A/B switch for my drums."

Standing in the batting cage during Little League practice in third grade, Wilk heard Steve Miller's "Fly Like an Eagle"; it was one of those defining experiences. He knew he wanted to be a musician, and thereafter found respect and refuge in his drums. Mystically connected to the number three, which has appeared at important turning points in his life, he most admires drummers—Elvin Jones and John Bonham—for their mastery of triplets.

How close did the band come to breaking up in Atlanta?

"I thought it might happen. But there was always a voice in

my head asking why. There was such animosity that breaking up felt like the easy way out. It'll always be day by day. I hope we can stay together because we haven't reached our potential yet."

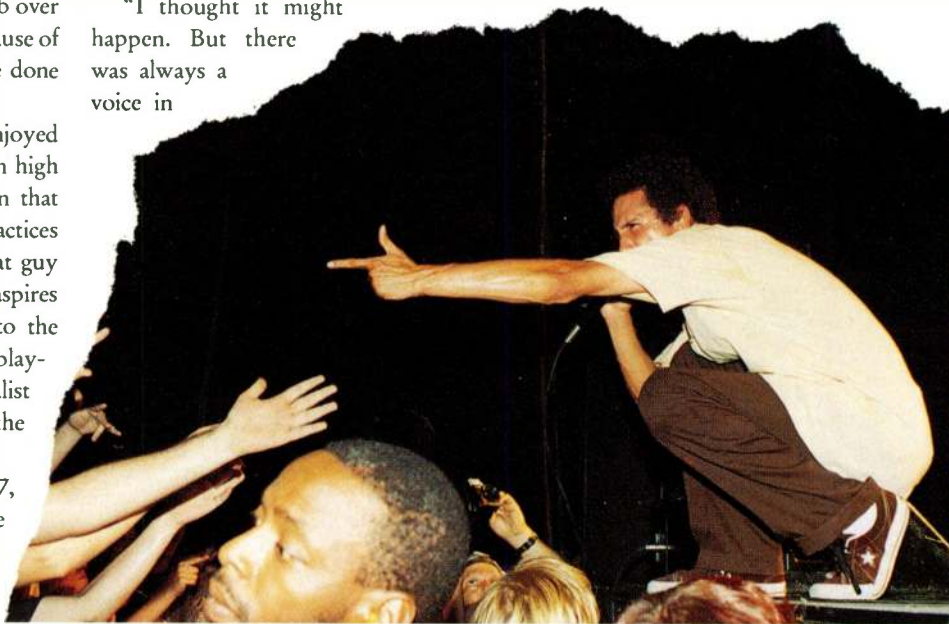
I never thought about anything being censored until I saw a cop show a PMRC film at a PTA meeting," says Mary Morello, mother of Tom, on the phone from Libertyville. "The PTA is just a big network for the PMRC, you know. The cop said anyone could pick up the video at the police station, and it just seemed wrong to me, so I spoke up."

And she continued speaking up, founding Parents for Rock and Rap in 1987 (long before Tom was a star), appearing regularly on radio and television, and publishing a newsletter (Box 53, Libertyville, IL 60048) that keeps tabs on Tipper Gore and her minions in the machine. Winner of this year's Hugh Hefner First Amendment Award and active in numerous community causes, she doesn't talk about her former husband except to say he was "very intelligent. Tom has great genes.

"I raised him to be free. When Tom went to England and got his first framed album, he gave it to me to say thanks for the way I raised him. He's a wonderful person."

How do you raise children to be free?

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The Rights Stuff.

How to keep royalty
disputes from
destroying your band.

When musicians form a band, they sometimes get all starry-eyed and idealistic. That's when they start talking about "creative democracy." The term implies that each member takes on an equal share of responsibilities, from finding a cheap rehearsal space to lining up gigs or lugging your bassist's vintage SVT up five flights of stairs. But when it comes to writing music, the democratic model doesn't always hold up.

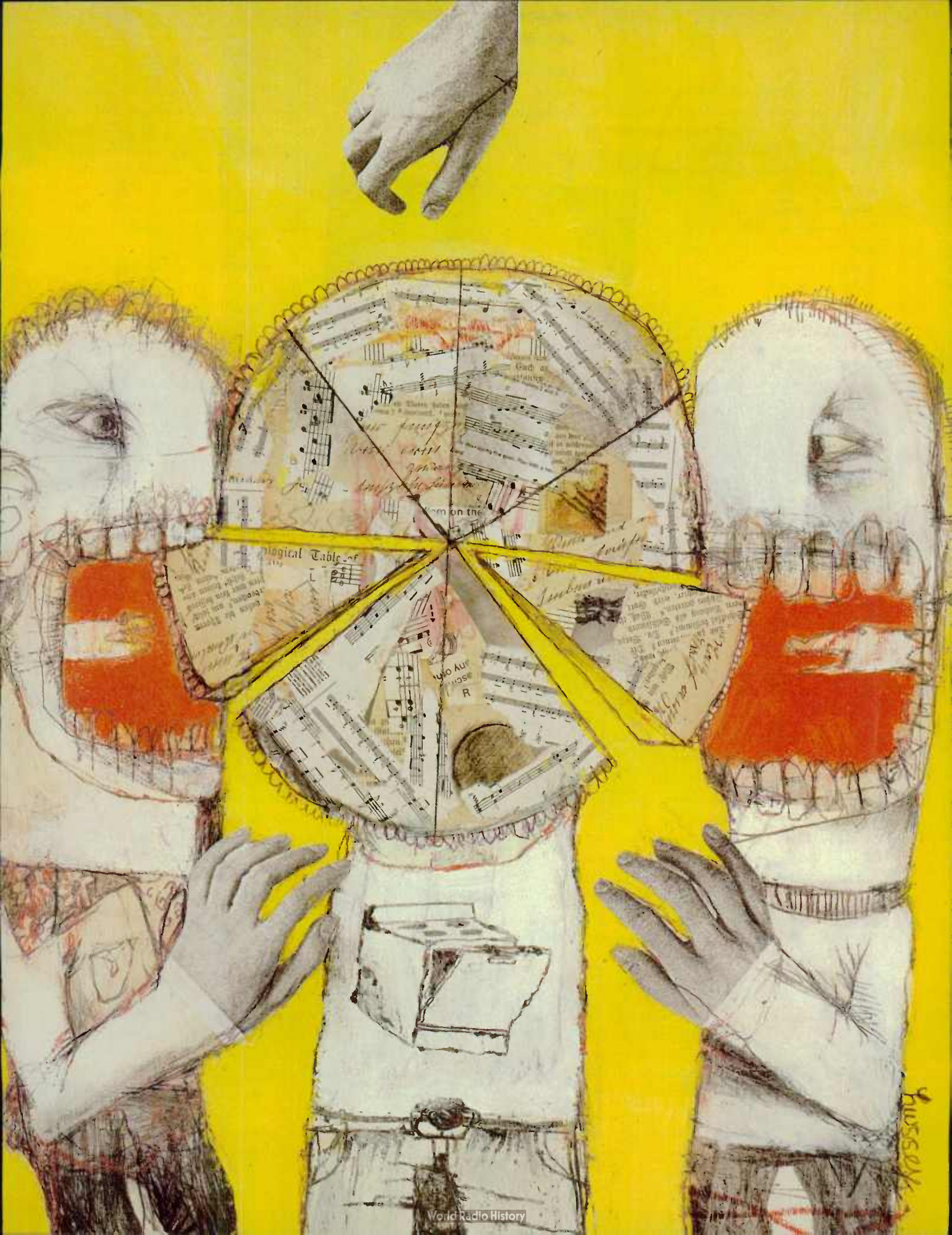
That's because not everyone is a song-



writer. very often one member of a band is more prolific than the others. Unfortunately, the way the music industry works, people who write songs make more money than people who just play instruments. And that can make for real trouble. If your band doesn't talk about sharing the credit—and the burden—for writing music, your internal harmony could be threatened down the line. It's a financial, artistic, and deeply emotional issue that most bands don't address until it's too

by Michael Gelfand

illustration by Tim Hussey



late.

"There's all different kinds of permutations, but usually there are two members in a band, like Edge and Bono or Keith Richards and Mick Jagger, who end up writing all the tunes," says composer and ex-Police/Animal Logic drummer Stewart Copeland. "They can say to themselves, 'Hey, we get the publishing so that we're paid for our extra homework. The rest of the gang just shows up for rehearsals.'

"The songwriters get the extra income from the writing and publishing, which is paid separately from the record royalties," says Copeland. "Sometimes the other players are very jealous of that. Other times the songwriters resent the fact that the other members aren't doing anything, so they think they don't need them around. That's when bands break up."

Bands, like songs, evolve slowly over time, so it would be unfair to say that a single agreement for sharing the writing chores and publishing rights must stick forever. Situations and personnel may change, but it's still best if young bands arrive at some sort of an agreement early on in their development.

"The laws are pretty specific about how if somebody writes lyrics they get a certain percentage, and if somebody writes music they get a certain percentage," says Pretty And Twisted bassist/vocalist Johnette Napolitano. "If you're in a band relationship, you have to assess how important that relationship is. If it's very important and you want to keep your band together, throw the laws out the window and divide it evenly.

"There's no reason for anybody to go through it if they're not getting anything for their efforts," says Napolitano. "It doesn't mean that the writer's share has to be split. You can be honest about what

Contributors: *Michael Gelfand plays bass with Models of Perfection. His articles have appeared in EQ and Pro Sound News.*

you wrote and what you didn't, but the publishing should be split evenly."

Such an agreement may mean bending your own ego, and a lot of musicians don't like to be that flexible. Syd Straw,



"Calling 'feel' a contribution is sort of walking on thin ice."

-Richard Thompson

who's been in many different situations ranging from work with the Golden Palominos to *War and Peace*, her most recent solo effort, says that flexibility and honesty are essential when working with other musicians.

"If you're going to sit down with someone and try to have a musical baby, you might as well agree that it's going to be an even split," says Straw. "Otherwise, you'll be underlining the words you think you wrote and trying to add up your contributions incrementally. That doesn't work for me, but if you're in a band situation it really has got to be split pretty evenly because that's the motivation to go through the rigors of band life together."

Some bands adhere to the "all-for-one, one-for-all" ethic—a noble creed, considering that no band is created equally. Even bands that can agree to divide the writing and publishing credit into relatively equal shares stand a better chance of surviving together than those who reach no agreement at all. But arriving at a formula that works for everyone is easier said than done.

"When we put out our first record, some people in the band wanted to share the credit equally because we're really good friends," says Elizabeth Davis, bassist and main songwriter for Seattle's 7 Year Bitch. "Giving credit to the whole band is more politically correct, but the problem with it is if someone writes 90 percent of the music and doesn't get credit for it, that's going to make them feel like shit.

"In our band it's pretty well defined, but we had to talk about what songwriting is before everyone could agree," she continues. "I was concerned because we had been in this long honeymoon phase and this was our first band spat. It made me feel kind of torn because while I understand why it's cool to give the whole band credit, I'm the primary songwriter and I want credit for that. Eventually I said, 'Look, I want songwriting credit because I'm working hard to write these songs and I consider myself as much of a songwriter as I do a bass player.' But I still felt like a jerk."

The first step toward an amenable agreement comes when band members can openly discuss their working relationship and understand how it will be affected by whatever plan they embrace. In the case of Luna, it was decided from their inception that they'd split the money from publishing. "People have to make a living," says bassist Justin Harwood, "and 90 percent of being in a band and making records is about perseverance. How's everybody supposed to persevere when they're being financially handicapped?"

"The way a song turns out is very much a group effort," says Luna frontman Dean Wareham. "We work out a percent-

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age depending on how we did the song. If Justin and I collaborate on something, maybe he'll take 50 percent, I'll take 35 percent, and the other 25 percent will go to the other guys."

When Juliana Hatfield was in the Blake Babies, the band split their publishing rights evenly. On her second solo record, *Become What You Are*, Hatfield credited herself and her band for arranging but she took all the songwriting credit. "I wanted to give the other players credit for their creative input, but I felt that I was the main songwriter because the songs were whole before I brought them to the band," she explains. "I don't consider arranging songs to be part of it. I write everything on guitar, and I think a song is finished when I can play it on guitar."

The situation becomes murkier when you try to decide whether a player's style or "feel" is inseparable from the song itself or simply helps arrange a song that's complete in itself. A guitarist can come to a band with lyrics and a completed chord progression, but the bassist or drummer may play a line or a beat that turns the progression into a memorable and instantly recognizable song.

"Calling 'feel' a contribution is sort of walking on thin ice," says Richard Thompson, who recently teamed up with Tim Finn to write a song called "Persuasion" with Tim Finn. Thompson supplied the music, while Finn penned the lyrics, but confusion arose when Neil Finn, Tim's brother, contributed to a section of the song.

"Neil didn't want any credit for it," says Thompson, "but if he had, I don't know how we would have split it. Whether it would have been a straight three-way split or between lyrics and music, I don't know. Our agents and management team resolved the issue, but it really can come down to whatever way you want to slice the cake. There are strange stories out of Nashville where the hook writer gets so much, and then the person who actually wrote the song gets so much."

"If you've written the lyrics and the music to a song—even if it doesn't get any further than you braying it into a tape recorder with a piano behind you—that means you've written the song," insists Peter Holsapple, de facto leader of the

ideas on their own, with no help from bandmates. Whether you're roused from sleep with lyrics spinning through your head or jolted by a riff while you're driving to your next gig, the ability to hatch an idea and turn it into a song can create distance between you and other bandmembers who'd rather write by jamming.

"I like to believe that songwriting is just channeling energy that's already there," says Holsapple. "It's just that some of us are better receptors than others." But being a better receptor can create an impression of arrogance or heavy-handedness when a songwriter brings a new piece, complete with arranged parts for every instrument, to the band.

"I don't mean to seem megalomaniacal, but I do have a certain set of standards for a song that I'd like to hear come out in its performance," says Holsapple, "and I'll work as diplomatically as possible to achieve that end without subverting some other goal of the band. The Continental Drifters' repertoire is soulful, countrified, and based on storytelling. Once I can wend my way into that mindset to write, as opposed to writing yet another love song, that gives me enough license to say to the band, 'I've gotten it this far and I hear what I'd like things to be doing. So let me show you, and let's try to get it as close to that as we can.'"

Mark Eitzel, who used to front American Music Club and recently released his first solo album, *60 Watt Silver Lining*, empathizes with Holsapple. "I've had times when AMC completely rearranged a song, and it's the song that's most important. When I'd complain about this, they'd say, 'Mark, you asshole, let's just call the album *Eitzel* and name every song 'Eitzel's Pride,' but I'm sorry. I feel like I gave away so much already. That's why the songwriter gets the songwriter's share. Everything else is

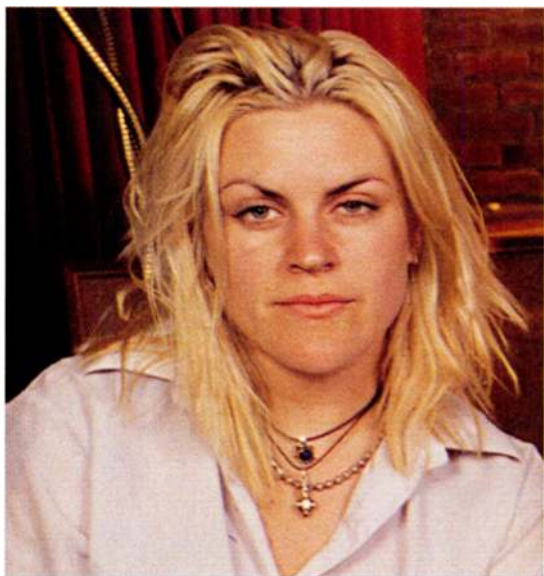


photo by jay blakesberg

"I want credit as the songwriter. But I feel like a jerk."

**-Elizabeth Davis,
7 Year Bitch**

Continental Drifters and the main songwriter behind the mid-'80s power pop group the dB's. "It doesn't matter if Jim Keltner comes in and sprays amazing drums all over it, I don't think that's a part of songwriting; that's arranging. People who write songs know who wrote the song. It's not as fine a line between songwriting and arranging as people are wont to make it appear."

Perhaps contrasts in method underlie the madness that fuels these disagreements. Many songwriters come up with



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Straight Talk On Songwriter Rights:

Avoid B.S. and Know the Law

Curse it as an evil that's unavoidable with commercial success, but you'll need a solid legal understanding of how songwriting and publishing credit affects you if your band is going to work out an agreement where nobody feels like they're getting screwed. Once everyone in the band understands where the money comes from—i.e., mechanical royalties, performance royalties, synchronization income—it's much easier to make a fair decision.

The problem is that you can't always put your finger on what you don't know. There are many helpful books to get started—*Musician's* own legal correspondent Ned Hearn offered a valuable intro to the issue in his March '96 Your Music column. Even so, it's important for bands to seek out a lawyer who can explain the different ways of dividing credit and the possible legal and financial implications each scenario may have.

"I'm not going to tell bands how to divide their copyrights," says Ross Rosen, a Manhattan entertainment lawyer in the firm of

Michael Toorock. "What I will tell the band is there are many different ways for writers to divide the copyright in the composition and share the income. I'll present some of the examples, discuss the implications, and ask them to decide among themselves. When they come to a decision, they should tell me what it is, and no matter what, that decision should then be fully discussed and documented. The important part to remember is that the writers and the band must come to an agreement they can live with."

According to U.S. copyright laws, if your band's song is played on television or radio, all copyright holders for that song are entitled to receive music performance royalty money. Assuming that your band has decided to divide that ownership, each member will then own a certain percentage of an undivided interest in the copyrights for each of its songs. That's where being affiliated with a performing rights society, such as ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC, comes into play. These organizations compute, administer, and collect the earnings from your copy-

right income for you—but don't start looking for your royalty check until your band has an agreement in place.

"You may say to yourself, 'Ah, I'll worry about that later,'" says Jeff Cohen, the senior director of writer/publisher relations at BMI. "But if two people in a band sent in forms to take credit as the songwriter for the same song, we'll put the song in question on hold until the band works out the problem. BMI will pay the bands according to the way they agree the splits are made—and considering that they don't get paid until they figure that out, it's in everyone's best interest to get it done."

Cohen has seen this issue destroy many bands before they begin to reap the rewards of their work, so he advises everyone to lay their cards on the table in discussing songwriting credit. "I've seen too many situations where people start writing and then fight about who did how much after they've done," he says. "If you co-write a song with someone, try to get it straight up front how it's going to get split up. Save the hassles. Avoid the bad blood. And if you can't agree, don't write together."

"The band's really got to function as a viable enterprise," adds Rosen. "If any band in the early stages of its career is at odds over the publishing splits, that's an indication of a definite problem." —**Michael Gelfand**

arrangement."

Like many other artists, Eitzel says that every member of a band should write songs or at least try to collaborate, but he recognizes it's not that simple. "Since the very beginning of AMC," he recalls, "I said we should all write songs, but the rest of the band didn't start until there was money involved. Then they wanted to write songs because they wanted songwriting shares on the record, which is bullshit. Everyone should approach it like they've got to write songs. Take Lennon and McCartney: They weren't a happy team, but they actually sat down and said, 'What can we do together?' That's the way to do it."

Even if one or two members of a band are writing all the material, it's possible to work out a situation that satisfies everyone. Louie Perez and David Hidalgo of Los Lobos share most of the songwriting duties for their band, but the other members receive a part of their publishing. "We

take the writer's share exclusively, but from the 50 percent that's left over, everybody gets a 10 percent share," says Perez. "It's been that way since the very beginning. David and I have been writing songs together for 25 years now, and when we write, we write on our own. When we get an idea for a melody, then the lyrics come, and then we'll sit down and figure out the structure of the song. It's pretty much in shape by the time we get it to the studio in demo form. That doesn't reduce the rest of the band to sidemen: Everybody has their own ideas for their parts, or they'll adhere to what we came up with. But because they've added their signatures to the tune, that's where what we call the 'non-writer override' comes in. It is a percentage. It's not like a work-for-hire situation where they get \$100 for playing and we get \$100,000 if the song's a hit. It's a percentage that grows according to how successful the record is.

"But I can't sit here and say to you that

everything is rosy," he cautions. "As we all know, money ruins everything. I don't think it's gotten to the point where there's animosity, because we talk about it. Basically, we've been together for 22 years, so we have to be big boys about it."

Playing with musicians whose songwriting is stronger than yours can be hard, but playing for your band more than for your own ego will often get you through the frustration. "What's difficult to understand with one's own song is that you hear all of its potential and can't imagine anyone not immediately getting into it," says Stewart Copeland, whose songs usually languished on B-sides during his days with the Police. "Sting wrote fantastic songs and lived to write them, but he'd be very upset if Andy [Summers] or I showed up to record an album and he was the only person who had been working for the last six months. So we'd all show up with tapes full of our songs—but Andy's and mine would be summarily

dismissed anyway.

"We'd end up doing Sting's songs because his were the best. It wasn't a question of someone's ego prevailing. It was," he jokes, "our innate greed: 'If we do this song, we'll be rich!'" Sting's dominance as a songwriter created a lot of stress but, looking back, Copeland concedes that this was just part of the band package.

Graham Maby has spent a lot of time playing the role of sideman, but he doesn't hold any resentment toward the songwriters he's worked with. Having played bass with Joe Jackson, Freedy Johnson, and Marshall Crenshaw, he understands the sanctity of the songwriter's work and how his bass fits in with their material. "Honestly and truthfully, I don't ever feel I should get writing credit," he says. "I'm glad to be working with talented people, but I don't feel like they're milking my ideas and using them for their own profit. I've never been in a situation like that. I've never asked for credit. I'm not saying that the thought has never crossed my mind, but you can sour a relationship by doing that."

Maby cites Jackson as an artist whose knack for writing and arranging complete songs makes his own job that much easier. "Working with someone like Joe, who has tons of ideas in advance, keeps it all very refreshing. It's actually a turn-on when someone's got a concept for a song instead of just floundering around and trying stuff out. That scenario makes you wonder why the songwriter didn't think it out beforehand."

"Making it" in music requires, among other things, lots of luck, tenacity, and talent. But even with those bases covered, many of today's bands can't seem to get out of their own way. The best bands can change the way people think and feel through the music they play, yet when individual bandmembers start concentrating on not getting screwed out of writing credit and lose sight of the group's common welfare, the joy of playing and creating music together disintegrates.

Why can't we all just get along? "Bands are complicated environments," answers Copeland. "The interaction is always a complicated maze, and the songwriting aspect is just another tweak on the track."

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BASS PLAYERS

[cont'd from page 37] the quality of the music now, but I understand why. I know they have to make the money, but we're losing part of the history. I can't blame Joshua, because he didn't get to see all of this and be a part of what we were a part of. The Art Blakeys, the teachers, are gone. How are [younger players] gonna grow?

"I sit in clubs," he continues. "I went to the Vanguard one night, then I went to Sweet Basil. I listened to the groups, and I left feeling nothing. I only got the feeling that these guys up there were all friends of mine, and that everybody could play, but they gave me nothing. I left empty, to the point that I wanted to cry! This is what I hear generally: great musicians, but nothing that will make me excited. When I hear Cedar [Walton] I get excited: Not only is everybody playing, but I can tap my foot and feel good. I get that with very few bands. Ninety percent of what I hear, I hate. I'd rather not have to say that I didn't like it."

From the even-tempered, upbeat Cranshaw, this is a shocking and glum pronouncement. But he's not alone: Mraz and Williams, though not as downcast, share his doubts about the new breed.

"This music will humble your ass," says Williams. "It's already there. All you got to do is step into it, step inside. There are certain nights when I feel a magic Woody Shaw had it. Kenny [Barron] and Billy and Cedar: They're the magic people who bring it out of you, and you give it back



"When Paul Chambers would get drunk, I'd tell him, 'You fall asleep, that's your ass!'"
-Bob Cranshaw

and share it. Givin' it up, that's what it is. A lot of new players don't have to give it up. Some of them did well in school, and they come in with an attitude. It ain't about that. Sometimes you can hear people just waiting to take their solo. But every fucking note is your solo! Some nights I play my baddest shit behind the horn or the piano player."

"There are so many good players coming up now," says Mraz. "When we were young, we respected all the same people they do. That was 25 years ago. But at a

certain point you try to stay away from the things you respected. I mean, why do something almost as good as someone did 30 years ago?"

Just for the record, these guys had plenty more to say. George tells a story about a remark by Mingus that started a riot. Bob has anecdotes about the "Sidewinder" date, his first date with Rollins—and he could talk about Milt Hinton for days. David remembers standing on a little crate to play his first gig, at 13. George still hasn't gotten over the fact that prior commitments forced him to decline the bass spot with Bill Evans 19 years ago. David had to turn down a gig with Rollins one night and is still wondering what Sonny meant by a remark he made as he was hanging up. George can't remember what film scores he's played on. David did a recording with Liberace. Bob's son plays with Steely Dan. Cranshaw, Williams and Mraz are full of jokes, regrets, opinions, stories and hope. That's why they sound the way they do: That's what you hear. ♡

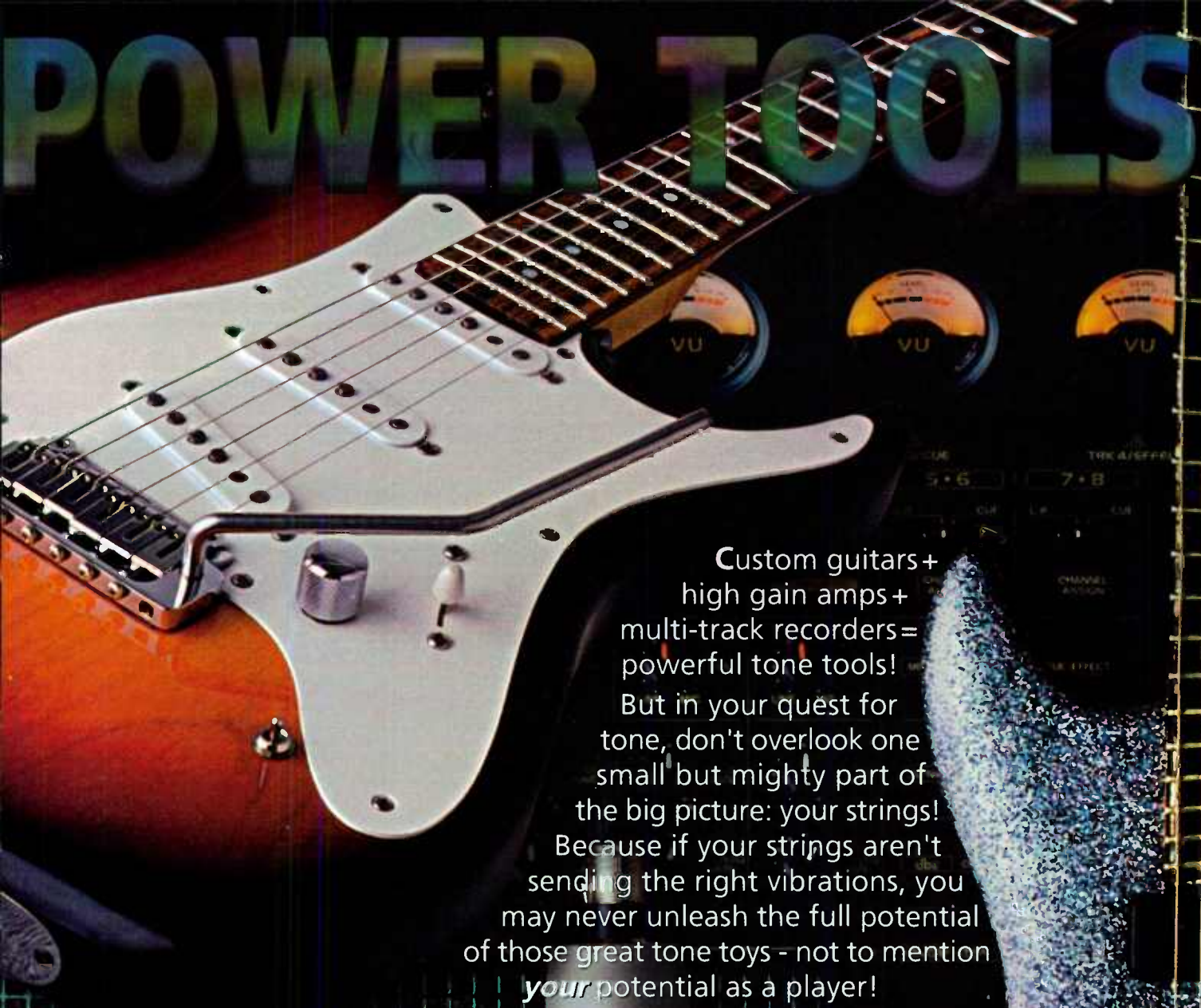
Contributors: Karen Bennett is a freelance writer. She has been published in Interview, Boston Phoenix, The New York Times and The Wire.

DW DRUM ARTISTS

				
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Fergal Lawler <i>(The Cranberries)</i>	Carlos Vega <i>(James Taylor)</i>	Jason Bonham <i>(Bonham)</i>	Robbie MacGruder <i>(Mary Chapin Carpenter)</i>	Ron Tutt <i>(Neil Diamond)</i>

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1 hartke kickback

This month's look at the gear blowout that was NAMM '96 would not be complete without including Hartke's Kickback bass combo amp. The 120-watt/8-ohm Kickback's most intriguing feature is its two-way cabinet design; you can either stand it upright or tilt it back, depending on your mood. But the sound ain't bad either, and the amp's top-notch contour filtering circuitry lets you enhance that sound even more. Its one 12" speaker is available with either a paper (\$549) or aluminum (\$599) cone. • **Hartke, c/o Samson Technologies, Box 9031, Syosset, NY 11791; voice (516) 364-2244, fax (516) 364-3888.**

2 aardvark aardscape

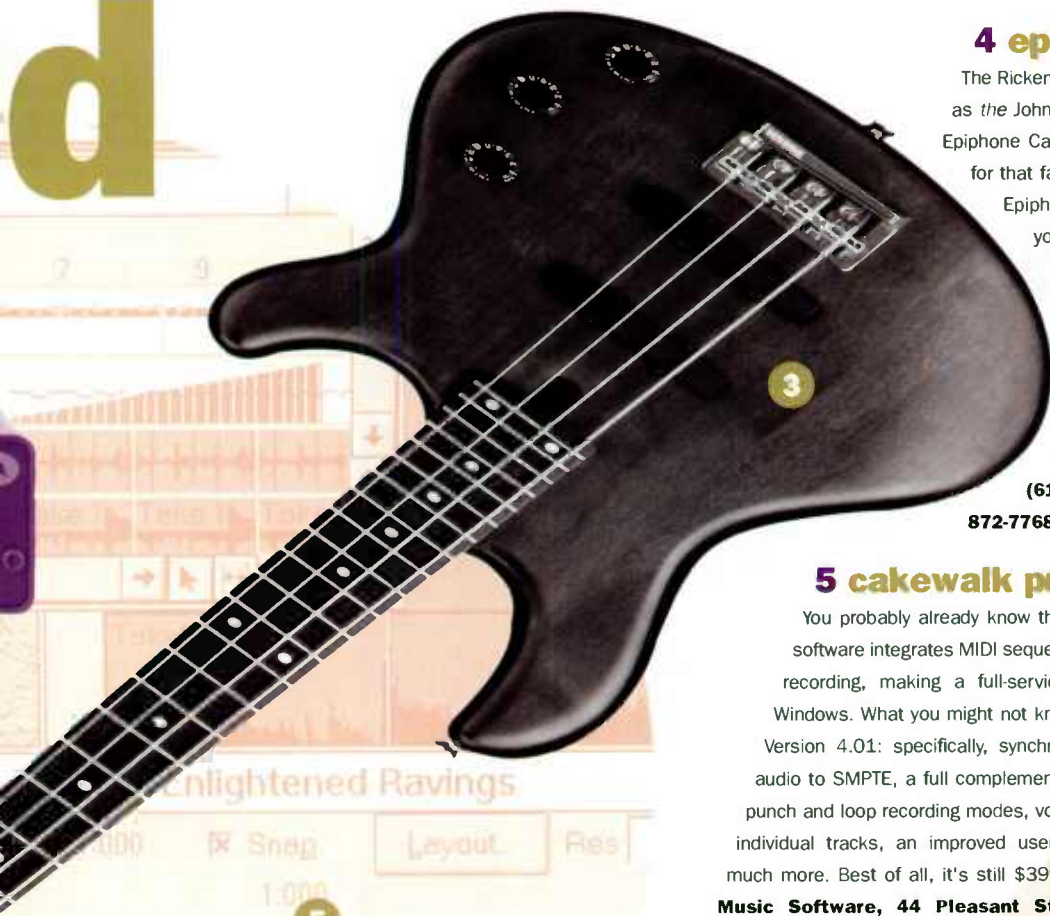
Lots of people love digital recording, but some complain about its "coldness." Aardvark's AardScape analog solid-state processor (\$695) tackles the problem by simulating analog tape characteristics, leaving you with a clear, warm sound and no added hiss. Three separate controls—Saturation, Warmth and Brilliance—are the key to this device, which is designed both for mixdown and tracking instruments and vocals. • **Aardvark Computer Systems, 202 E. Washington, Ste. 306, Ann Arbor, MI 41804; voice (313) 665-8899, fax (313) 665-0694.**

3 yamaha bbn4

It all started with the BBN5, which itself was a more affordable version of Yamaha's Nathan East model. The concept—a pro-worthy five-string bass for shockingly little money—proved quite popular, and so this year Yamaha's bass honchos decided five-stringers shouldn't have all the fun. Result: the four-string BBN4. The double-cutaway solid alder body, maple neck and 24-fret rosewood fingerboard are the same as on the 5; the two single-coil pickups are controlled by two independent volume knobs and a master tone. And the price sure is nice (\$499). • **Yamaha, Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622-6600; voice (714) 522-9011, fax (714) 522-9587.**



d



4 epiphone casino usa

The Rickenbacker 325 may always be remembered as the John Lennon guitar, but let's not forget the Epiphone Casino was the guitar John was playing for that fabled 1969 Apple rooftop show. With Epiphone's new Casino USA (price TBA), you can revisit the past in grand style, courtesy of a mahogany neck, rosewood fingerboard, laminated maple body and two P-90 pickups. Don't let us down; check it out. • **Epiphone, 645 Massman Dr., Nashville, TN 37210; voice (615) 871-4500, fax (615) 872-7768.**

5 cakewalk pro audio

You probably already know that Cakewalk Pro Audio software integrates MIDI sequencing and digital audio recording, making a full-service music studio for Windows. What you might not know is what's new in Version 4.01: specifically, synchronization of digital audio to SMPTE, a full complement of replace, auto-punch and loop recording modes, volume and pan for individual tracks, an improved user interface, and much more. Best of all, it's still \$399. • **Cakewalk Music Software, 44 Pleasant St., Box 760, Watertown, MA 02272; voice (617) 926-2480, fax (617) 924-6657.**

6 motion sound R3-147

How'd you like to be able to stick a Leslie in your effects rack? We know it sounds impossible, but Motion Sound has made the dream a reality with the R3-147 (\$1097), a rackmount tube preamp with a built-in rotating horn. Four adjustable mikes inside the unit pick up the speaker signal, while the front panel offers control over 21 parameters with MIDI control capability of fast, slow and stop functions. • **Motion Sound, 4426 South 450 West, Suite G, Salt Lake City, UT 84123; voice (801) 265-0917, fax (801) 265-0978.**



Totally Tubular

by **howard massey**

It's always struck me as curious how technological innovations can make people nostalgic for the "good old days" when the technology didn't exist. Today's keyboardists, for example, can instantly call up thousands of sounds from a single multi-timbral synthesizer, yet many still long for that vintage Hammond or Rhodes sound that no synth or sampler can truly capture—even though, technically, the new sounds may be much cleaner and more expressive.

That's the case with recording technology, too. The engineer/musician of 1996 has the pick of dozens of powerful digital signal processors, yet many still prefer the sound of older, tube-based devices. This has led to an unprecedented revival in tube products over the past year or so—a subject we'll be delving into in next month's *Musician*.

In last month's Editor's Pick, we took a close-up look at the Alesis ADAT-XT—the latest incarnation of a technology (affordable eight-track digital recorders that use standard S-VHS tape) that has revolutionized the way today's music is composed and recorded. Most everyone agrees that the sound quality of the

ADAT, lots of people are now saying they prefer the "warmer" sound of analog tape (though not many miss the sound of analog tape hiss!).

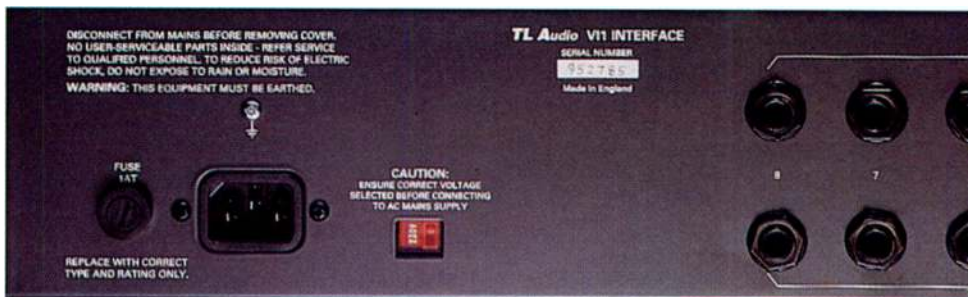
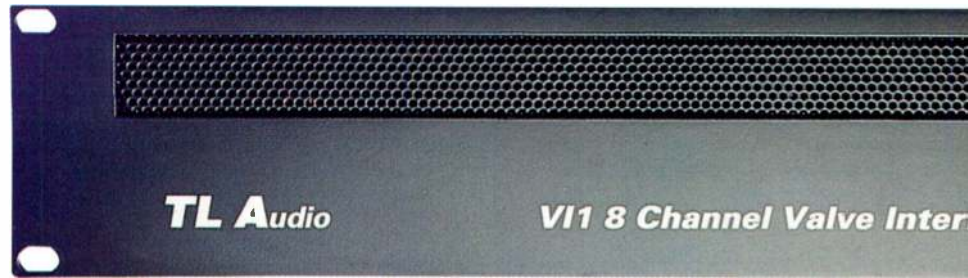
The true test of any recording device is: How closely does what's coming out match what's going in? Today's digital recorders do a measurably better job of accurately reproducing the source signal than analog recorders. But greater accuracy isn't necessarily the same as better sound,

accustomed to the subtle distortions imposed by tube circuitry and analog tape and so many of us prefer that somewhat artificial sound to the greater reality presented us by digital recorders—a reality which critics sometimes characterize (unfairly, in my opinion) as "cold" or "harsh."

This was borne out by a series of

blind listening tests we conducted with an ADAT-XT and this month's Editor's Pick—the TL Audio VI1 eight-channel valve interface, a remarkably simple new device designed to subjectively enhance the sound of digital recorders. (Last month's Editor's Pick promised that we'd be looking at two such devices; unfortunately, the other manufacturer was unable to get us a unit in time for this review.)

The VI1 (list price \$795) is not a signal processor *per se*; it doesn't compress, limit, gate, equalize, slice, dice, fold, spindle, or mutilate. All it does is take up to



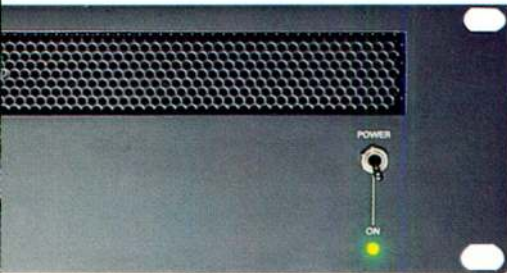
TL Audio's VI1 valve interface warms up

ADAT (and other similar digital tape-based or hard disk recording devices) is phenomenally accurate—easily as good as an audio CD. But, in what might be described as a burst of technological nos-

talgia, lots of people are now saying they prefer the "warmer" sound of analog tape (though not many miss the sound of analog tape hiss!). The true test of any recording device is: How closely does what's coming out match what's going in? Today's digital recorders do a measurably better job of accurately reproducing the source signal than analog recorders. But greater accuracy isn't necessarily the same as better sound,

since the former is an objective technical measurement, while the latter is purely subjective opinion. My theory is that, over more than a century of listening to recorded music, our ears have become eight signals going into or out of your recorder and pass them through four honest-to-goodness 12AX7 vacuum tubes (each independent input passes through one half of a tube). Period. As such, the

VI1 requires absolutely no technical expertise to operate—you simply connect it between your mixer and recorder. The one and only front panel control is an on/off switch, and the only adornments to the rear panel are eight input and eight output jacks (all 1/4" TRS connectors). No displays, no menus, no buttons, no knobs—how refreshing!



All tone, no frills: the VI1's ultra-simple front and back panels

Out of the box, the VI1 is set up to work with professional-level balanced +4 dB signals; however, jumpers are provided to convert any input and/or output signals to unbalanced -10dB (the semi-pro standard), so it can work with pretty much every kind of mixer and recorder. If your studio has a patch bay, simply connect each of the VI1 input/output jacks to a patch point, and you're done. If not, you might want to invest in TL Audio's



as the digits

optional VIS 8-channel switcher (list price \$595), which enables individual channels to be switched in and out during both recording and playback. This makes it easy to pass a signal through the VI1

twice, once during recording and again during playback. Alternatively, you can simply patch the VI1 in and out manually, as needed.

The effect of the VI1 is subtle but perceptible. It adds what many would describe as "warmth"—a slight fattening of the low mid-range and bass frequencies (not so much a boost as a spreading) and a mellowing of the higher frequencies usually associated with "harshness." I also found that it creates a small (roughly 2 dB) increase in level. It's a lot like what analog tape does to a signal (minus the tape hiss, of course), or the rounding that a tube guitar amplifier (as opposed to a solid state amp) adds when played at low volumes. (Since the tubes in the VI1 are being driven at a low

voltage, there's no overt distortion or overdrive.) Figures 1 and 2 show this graphically. Both are harmonic spectrums (as analyzed by Passport's *Alchemy* program) of the same Fender bass guitar note, with Figure 1 showing the original "direct" non-tube signal, and Figure 2 showing the signal after passing through the VI1 tube. You can clearly see the reduction of high frequencies (harmonics 73 and above), as well as a general smoothing in mid- and high mid-range frequency areas.

We conducted our listening tests by recording a variety of instrumental and vocal sounds (which included acoustic piano, acoustic guitar, electric guitar—clean and distorted, Fender bass, Rickenbacker bass, drum samples, a complete "ensemble" of MIDI sampled sounds, and both male and female backing and lead vocals) to an ADAT-XT. All sounds were recorded twice, once directly and once through the VI1. During playback, we used the VIS switcher to listen

to tracks both directly and through the VI1. Thus, there were four playbacks of each of the recordings (with levels adjusted to compensate for the 2 dB increase in gain caused by the VI1):

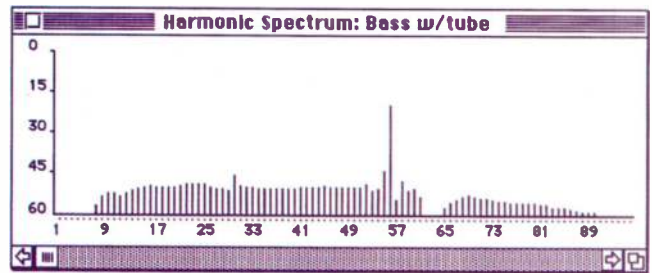
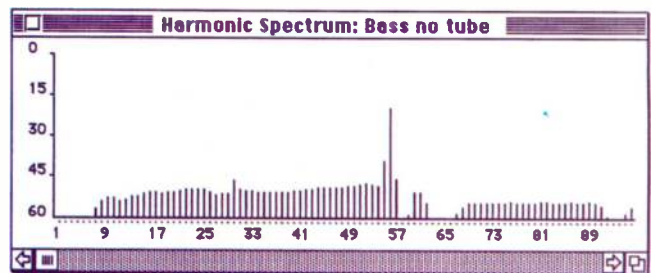
A) A signal which was both recorded and played back directly and never passed through a tube.

B) A signal which was recorded through the VI1 but played back directly; thus, it passed through a tube once.

C) A signal which was recorded directly but was played back through the VI1; thus, it passed through a tube once.

D) A signal which was recorded through the VI1 and was also played back through the VI1, thus passing through a tube twice.

▼ Figure 1



▲ Figure 2


Though our listeners had no idea which was which, they were asked to pick which of the four was their favorite and to write down their general comments about each playback. The result? In almost every instance, the listeners preferred the enhanced sound to the direct one—in different cases, preferring options B, C or D, but only rarely preferring option A (in fact, the only instance where all listeners clearly preferred the direct sound to the tube sound was on male backing vocals). This was somewhat surprising to me. I expected that some signals would be enhanced by

the VI1, but I was also reasonably sure that many would subjectively sound better without passing through a tube at all. All listeners agreed that in no instance did the VI1 seriously degrade the signal; in the best case, it significantly enhanced the signal, and in the worst case, it simply

dulled the signal to a less than acceptable degree. In most cases, they agreed that the effect was positive.

I also expected that options B and C would yield very similar results; interestingly, this was not the case. Most listeners preferred sounds recorded through the

VI1 (option B) to those recorded "dry" and played back through the VI1 (option C). Option D (where the signal passed through the tube twice) was picked as the hands-down favorite in only a few instances (snare drum and ensemble of samples, where it was felt that the tube processing helped meld the sampled sounds together into more of a cohesive whole), though some listeners also preferred the double tube routing on distorted lead guitar and snare sidestick. Of course, if you like this effect, you can always patch a single signal through two or more channels of the VI1 in series, passing it through a tube three or more times. This yields an extremely tubby sound, but one which can work well for particular applications such as reggae bass or hip-hop kick drum.

The conclusion I've come to after playing with this box for several weeks is that the VI1 can subtly but very definitely enhance the sound of many instruments and certain vocal recordings. It tends to have the greatest thickening/mellowing effect on signals with lots of transients (short bursts of sound) and/or those with lots of low frequency content, such as bass. These two phenomena also allow the VI1 to help bind together disparate signals, sort of like applying subtle limiting to a mixer subgroup. Using it sparingly and judiciously, your ADAT or DA-88 tracks will still have that great digital accuracy and cleanliness, but with some of the harsher edges rounded off just a bit. For less than a hundred bucks a track, then, the VI1 can prove to be your secret weapon in the digital recording wars—a weapon that requires no technical know-how to operate! It's a specialist box, to be sure, but one which should find a great deal of appeal among musician/engineers who aren't quite satisfied with the sound of their digital recorders. 

Special thanks to Curt Smith at Sascom, to Jim Mack at Alesis, and to Doug Cook and Martin Goodman at AudioTechniques for their assistance.

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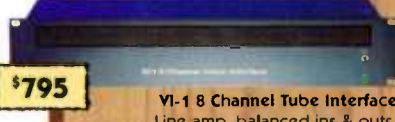



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making it even less expensive than the Alesis ADAT. It's fair to say that dealers and musicians alike were salivating over the VS-880 at NAMM—dealers for the profits they hope to make by selling them, and musicians for the recordings they hope to make by using them.

Other new recording products at NAMM included the Tascam DA-38 (\$3499), a "musician's" version of their DA-88 8-track deck widely used in video post-production environments, and their MD-801R and MD-801P, both of which are four-channel MiniDisc portastudios (the "R" model, priced at \$2499, does both recording and playback, while the "P" model is playback only, for a hundred bucks less). Digidesign had a number of hard disk recording product announcements, including Pro Tools PowerMix (technology that allows their Pro Tools software to run as a stand-



Taylor's Baby model (above) is a nifty travel guitar; Roland's VS-880 (left) ruled the recording roost at Anaheim.

alone on high-end PowerPC-based Macintosh computers); Pro Tools Project (a scaled-down version of the Pro Tools workstation, priced at just \$2495); and the debut of their Audiomedia III card for Windows platforms (bundled with their



Session software, priced at \$995).

There were also quite a few hot new mixers at the show. Countering Yamaha's 02R all-digital console (first shown publicly at AES and still attracting large crowds at NAMM), Korg unveiled their 168RC 8-bus console, which includes two ADAT optical inputs, onboard processing, and (non-moving fader) automation. The board (priced at \$3500) is being marketed as part of their new integrated SoundLink DRS (Digital Recording Systems) line. Behringer (renowned manufacturer of signal processors) made quite a splash with their first ever entry in this market, the 48/24 Eurodesk. Modestly priced at just \$2795, the board offers many professional features, including 48 input channels (with fader flip control), eight subgroups (feeding 24 multitrack outputs), four-band EQ, six aux sends/ returns, channel, group, and mix insert points, and unusually flexible signal routing.

Not to be outdone, Soundcraft showed their 8-bus Ghost console (prices start at under \$4000, depending upon configuration), unique in that it offers

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four dedicated MIDI faders as well as onboard MIDI Machine Control for remote control of tape decks, hard disk recorders, etc. A moving fader version is expected in the near future. And Mackie, who have long dominated the home studio mixer market, are certainly not resting on their laurels. They unveiled the CR1604-VLZ (list price \$1199), a new, improved version of their popular CR1604, as well as the MS1402-VLZ (\$599). They also provided a "sneak preview" of the SR40•8 (price TBA), a large-format sound reinforcement board scheduled to ship in mid-1996.

We also saw a number of intriguing new effects devices at NAMM. t.c. electronics, who manufacture a range of professional-level studio signal processors, made their first entry into the project studio market with their Wizard M2000,

which provides multi-effects and dynamic effects "morphing" (where one effect turns into another as the signal gets louder or softer) for a list price of \$1995. Lexicon's \$2995 PCM90 is a new digital reverb with algorithms that are said to "derive their heritage" from Lex's super-high-end 480L and Model 300 units (as opposed to their PCM80, which is a multi-effects box which derives its reverb algorithms from the PCM70). Zoom raised (and singed) more than a few eyebrows with their new "Fire" (model 7010) programmable guitar effects box, which includes a built-in 10-watt amplifier, flip-up speaker, chromatic tuner, headphone and direct outputs, and a stereo mix input so you can jam with your CDs and tapes—all for just \$349. But wait, there's more: Alesis unveiled their highly affordable (\$179) NanoVerb multieffects

processor; Apex debuted their 108 two-channel Easyrider Auto Compressor (\$349) and 661 Tubessence Expressor (tube compressor/limiter, price \$749); and dbx showed their new 1066 Compressor/Limiter/ Expander/Gate (list price: \$549).

Guitars and Basses

As we mentioned in our last issue, the Peavey EVH Wolfgang, co-designed with Edward Van Halen, was the NAMM axe with the heaviest hype. Hype deserved, for the most part, due to its lightness and easy playability—and just a slight Paul Reed Smith influence, perhaps? For those of you who don't happen to have a copy of the May '96 *Musician* on hand (shame on you), here's the lowdown: single-cutaway, archtop basswood body (optional quilted maple top), single-piece bird's-eye maple neck, two humbuckers wound to

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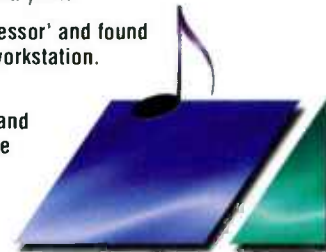
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We've had the pleasure of using Soundscape for sound editing on 'Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls' and 'The Nutty Professor' and found it to be very smooth, very fast and very reliable. Soundscape is the only intelligent choice for your next digital editing workstation. Odin Benitez, Randall Guth, Dimension Sound (Burbank).

It's affordable-it's modular-it's expandable-it's got crash proof reliability!!! We have 3 x 16 track systems at the studio, and we've used the SSHDR1 on almost every project that's come through the facility. Soundscape is fast becoming one of the top systems around in digital audio post production here as well as around the world. Keep it up, guys!"

Frank Serafina, Sound designer on Star Trek, Virtuosity, Lawnmower man, VRS, Hunt for Red October.



Edward's specs, three-way selector switch, master volume, master tone, Floyd Rose-licensed tremolo, and optional Tune-O-Matic bridge that'll drop your E string down to D in no time. Peavey didn't have a price or ETA for the Wolfgang at Anaheim, and at press time

for this issue they still didn't have one, so all we can tell you is to keep your eyes and ears open.

The rebirth of another company closely associated with Mr. Van Halen provided one of the bigger guitar-related surprises at NAMM. Yes, Kramer is back

making guitars once again (Spector basses too), and once again, several models—the Stagemaster, Disciple, Ray Gun, Route 66, Generator, Racer Custom and Jazz King—are sporting aluminum necks. Guitar historians may recall that Kramer first introduced an aluminum T-neck in their guitars and basses in 1976. Now they've tweaked the original design, coming up with a neck that's guaranteed never to bow or warp, can be easily adjusted, and has fine sustaining qualities. Since the metal's encased in wood, everything feels just dandy. Still, purists may be relieved to hear that Kramer's got models with regular wooden necks as well. Prices for the aluminum-neck models range from \$1038 for the Ray Gun to \$1690 for the Jazz King, wooden-neckers are \$1089-\$1414, and Spector basses go from \$996 to \$2850.

Yamaha's Pacifica 303-12 (\$699) doesn't have an aluminum neck—it's maple all the way. But it does sport 12 strings, the first of the company's Pacifica electrics to do so, along with a unique bridge design that runs heavier gauge strings through the body and lighter gauge strings through the bridge, which means the strings can be kept closer together (no wide neck necessary) and intoned independently. Electric guitars aren't much good without pickups, of course, and the most interesting of those came from Actodyne (run by Don Lace, he of the Lace Sensor). The new Lace Transensor (\$49.95) uses a current-based (rather than the usual voltage-based) design. Result: 90% less wire and five times less noise than a typical single-coil pickup.

Over at the Fender booth, the concept of vintage reissues was being taken to bizarre extremes. The Relic series of Telecasters, Stratocasters and basses aren't just modeled after classic '50s and '60s instruments—they're pre-aged to look just like those instruments do today. (Both of the "new" Relic models at NAMM, the '60s Strat and the '60s Jazz Bass, retail for \$2499.) The Fender people weren't too forthcoming about how this aging process works, but believe us, the



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- 158 12/91 Miles Davis, Robbie Robertson, Massive Attack
- 160 2/92 Fear of Rap, Eric Clapton
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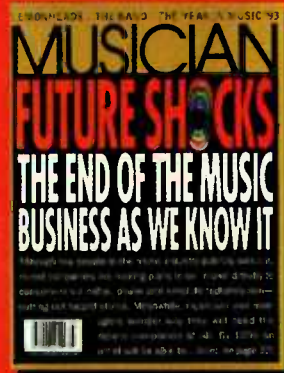
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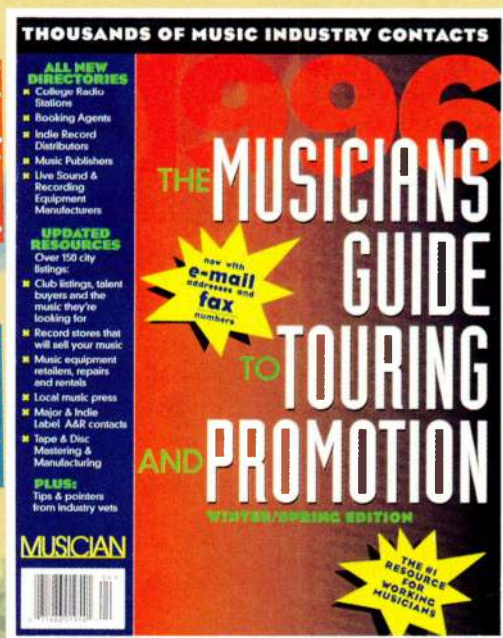
cracked paint, worn fingerboards and rusty bridges are no fakes. There does seem to be something perverse about presenting new instruments as old, but hey, it hasn't stopped the jeans manufacturers, so why should it bother the guitar makers? Fender's most major recent business move was the acquisition of Guild, which

meant that their new acoustic line was firmly ensconced at the Fender booth as well. (How convenient!) High praise goes to their small-body Concert Series, especially the A50 (\$1499 without the optional Fishman transducer), which sports a lovely solid Sitka spruce top and rosewood back and sides.

In other acoustic guitar news, Washburn announced they'd soon be producing a limited-edition acoustic/electric double-neck, the EA220, modeled after the one they custom-built for Jimmy Page; the 220's expected to retail for under \$2000. Martin unveiled its MTV Unplugged model, a striking combination of two woods (mahogany on the treble side, rosewood on the bass) with a gorgeous mother-of-pearl headplate (\$2200 satin finish, \$2400 gloss finish—no pickguard unless you specify, and no electronics; unplugged means unplugged). The folks at Kaman debuted two new finishes for the Ovation Elite Standard (\$1299), Iced Coffee (replacing Root Beer) and Antique Red (replacing Vintage), and a blue-green addition to the Takamine G series, the G-330BG (\$449.50). And Taylor turned our heads with something we thought they'd never make, a tiny (12 1/2" wide, 15 5/8" long) travel guitar, the Baby Taylor (\$398), which sounds—amazingly enough—like a Taylor acoustic guitar.

The bass domain wasn't exactly shaken by new developments at Anaheim, although the Moses KP Series all-graphite upright (covered in last month's Fast Forward) did get plenty of attention, and the Bassolin—an odd electric contraption designed to be played with a bow—raised some eyebrows. The winner this time around in the value-for-money department was most definitely the Yamaha BBN4, but since it wanted to be in this month's Fast Forward new product spread so bad, we decided to leave it there. Page 62, in case you're interested.

Other notables: Warwick's Triumph electric upright (\$2799 4-string, \$3899 5-string), a 3/4 double bass scale model with flamed maple body, arched Bavarian spruce top, maple neck, rosewood fingerboard, and MEC quad pickup/preamp, and the Fernandes APB90 4-string (\$959) and APB100 5-string (\$1049), with EMG-style pickups, ash neck and rosewood fingerboard (the APB90M 4-string throws in a maple neck for the same price as the 90).



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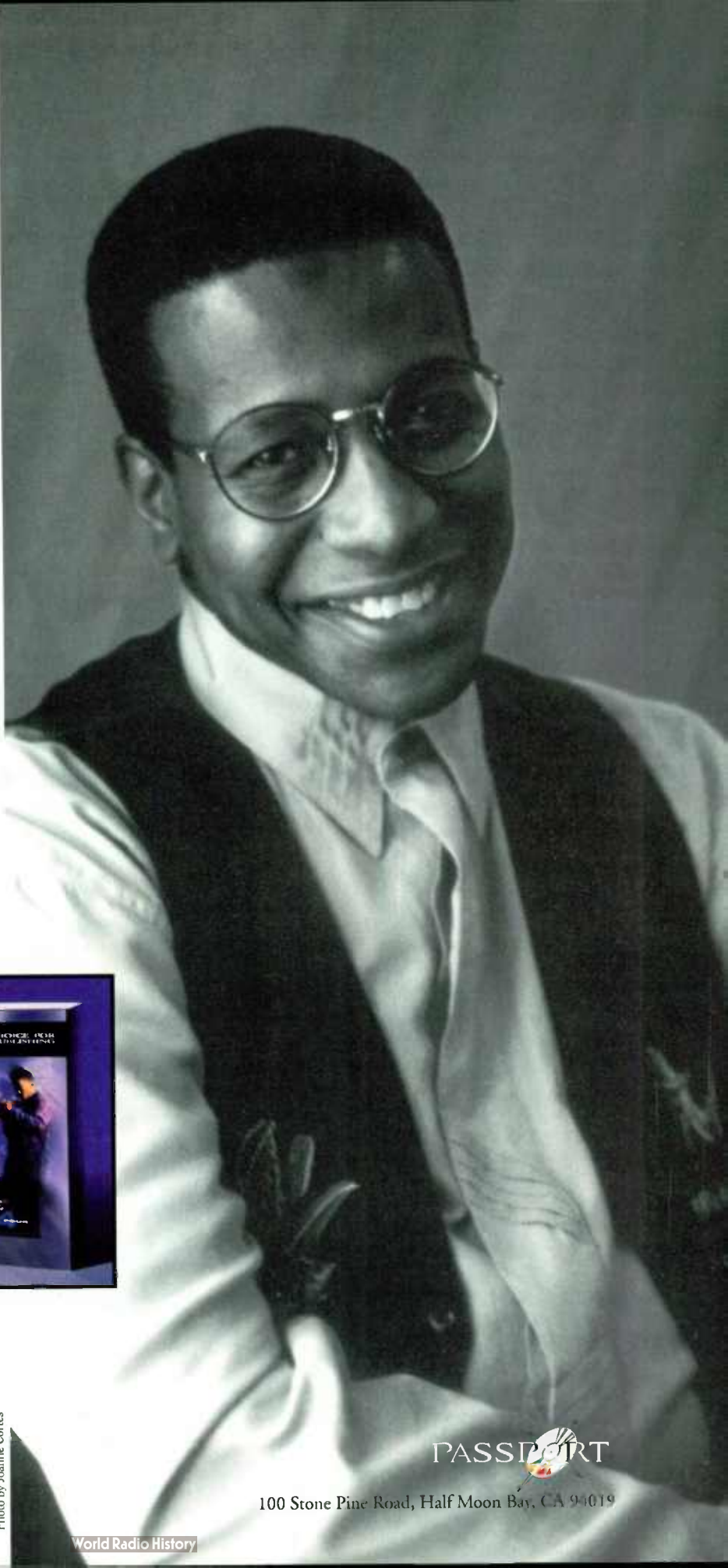
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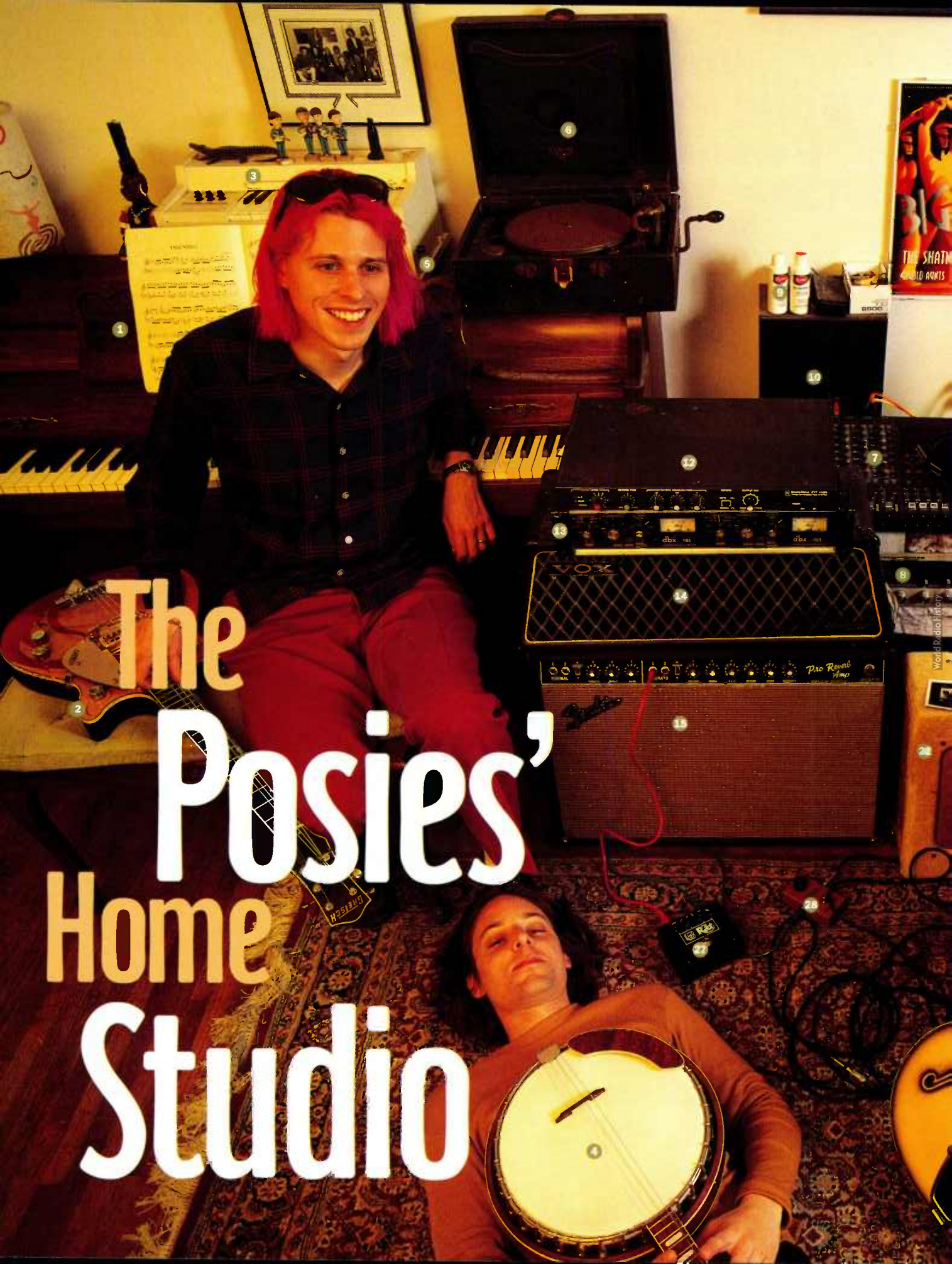


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The Posies' Home Studio

World Radio History



fast forward

From the beginning, the Posies have been home studio creatures. The Seattle popsters' first album, *Failure* (originally released in 1988 on the PopLlama label), was recorded almost entirely in the rec room of singer/songwriter/guitarist Jon Auer's father's house—with occasional trips to the garage for ambient miking. "My dad was a musician himself, was always interested in equipment, and he had a great setup," Auer recalls. "Old Tascam eight-track with dbx, couple of spring reverbs, Tapco board—that's the same people that make Mackie now. You could slide these kitchen panels back and forth for different room ambience." Auer and bandmate Ken Stringfellow played all the instruments, engineered and produced *Failure* on their own, mixing their work to a Revox cassette deck. "The reel-to-reel was broken," explains Stringfellow. "I also remember one Friday night we couldn't record because it was Jon's family's TV night."

"That's a friggin' lie, Stringfellow," Auer shoots back.

"No, it's true," Stringfellow insists. "We got to do one percussion track, then we had to call it quits."

"Well, you got plenty of free dinners anyway," Auer replies. "And it actually made for efficient work in the studio—we recorded the whole record in 85 hours. All the vocals for Side Two were done in about five hours."

The years since that low-budget debut release have seen the Posies ink a major label deal (with DGC) and produce three top-notch albums, the most recent being the just-released *Amazing Disgrace*. All of those albums came out of professional studios, but for Stringfellow and Auer, the home environment is still where it all begins. (And occasionally where it ends too; "Coming Right Along," the closing number on 1993's *Frosting on the Beater*, is in fact a product of Auer's four-track setup, and several Posies B-sides are home creations as well.)

BY MAC RANDALL

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"Our songs seem to get demoed twice now," says Stringfellow. "We'll do a basic one at home and then a more elaborate one at a 16-track studio like Egg."

For the record, the cozy gear-filled room that the lads (L to R: Stringfellow, drummer Brian Young, Auer and bassist Joe Skyward) are cavorting in is part of the apartment Stringfellow's lived in for the past five years, but some of the equipment in this photo actually belongs to Auer. "Since we live three blocks apart from each other, things shuffle back and forth," says Ken. The Baldwin piano ①, though, is definitely a Stringfellow possession. "My parents bought it new in '72," he remembers. "It lived in their house for a while and then they said, 'We don't want this thing here, put it in your apartment.' So I did, played it for a couple of days, and thought, 'This sounds kind of funny.' I opened it up, and all the felt on the hammers was gone. Mice had gone in, taken the felt, and made nests down on the bottom. A guy had to come and rebuild the thing. But now it sounds great. I've actually broken strings on that piano. I didn't know you could do that just by playing hard."

When Ken isn't busy torturing his Baldwin, he might be strumming his custom-painted Gretsch Duo Jet ②, tickling the plastics of his Magnus air-powered toy organ ③ ("If you push two chord buttons at the same time, it sounds cool"), pickin' and grinnin' with a Tempo banjo ④, tooting on a no-name Mexican flute ⑤, or cranking up some tunes on the genuine antique Victrola ⑥. "I bought that in Austin," he comments. "It's a little shaky, but I've also got an RCA Victor gramophone from the '20s which is in really nice shape. I'm totally into them because there's no electricity involved."

The heart of the recording operation, of course, is Ken's Fostex 280 four-track cassette machine ⑦ and Marantz 4230 receiver ⑧. Auer has the exact same model four-track at his place up the street, and he comments, "It's the best-sounding machine and the simplest to use." Behind the Fostex, crowned by bottles of Dr. Stringfellow's guitar polish ⑨ ("No relation, no royalties," Ken remarks), is a speaker "of unknown origin" ⑩. Just one—Ken likes mixing in mono. The pair of Fostex D-20 headphones close by ⑪ also come in handy for tracking

purposes.

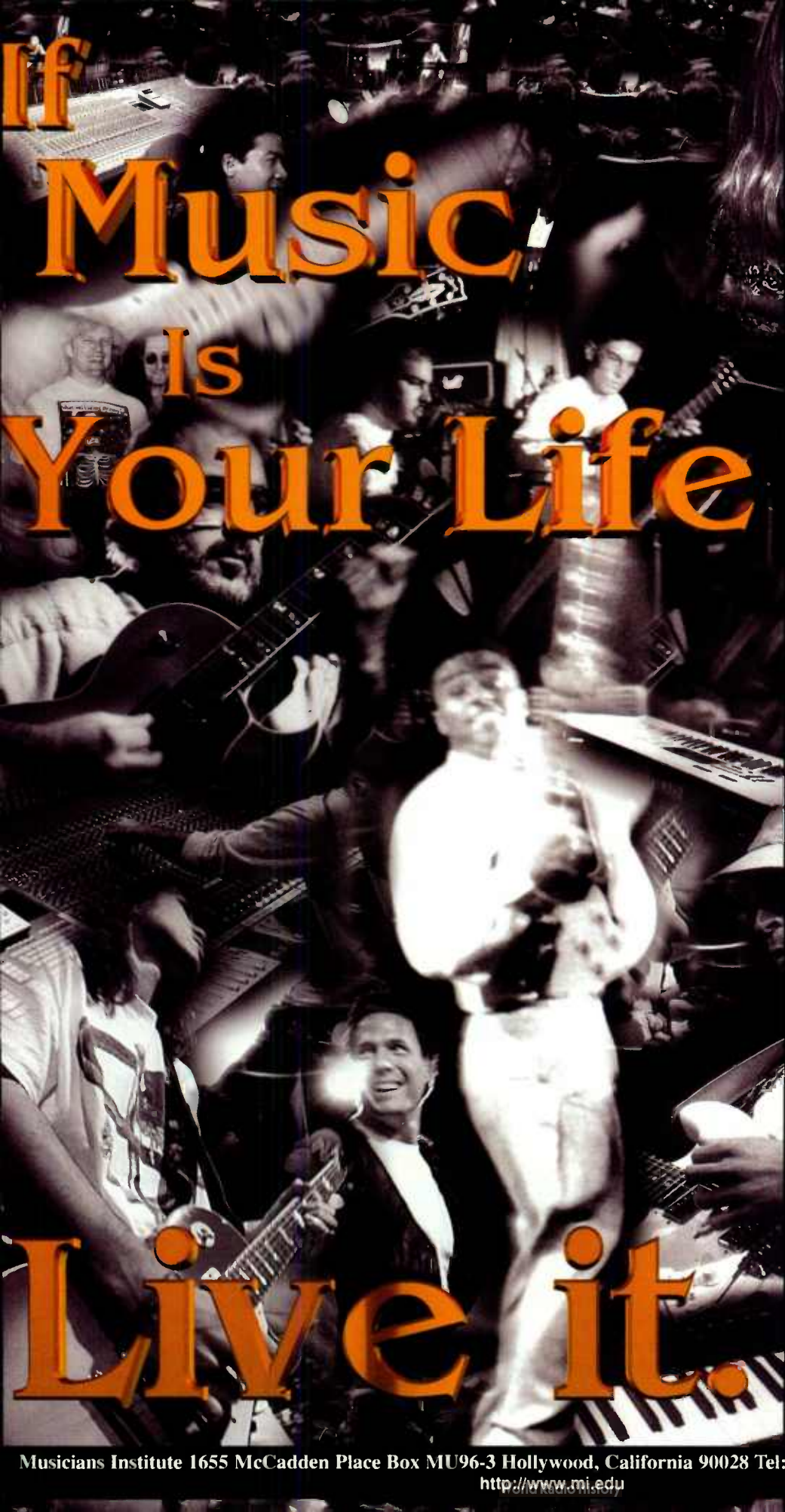
In the processing realm, Auer's Electro-Voice EVT 4500 spring reverb ⑫ gets high marks. "It's from the '80s," Jon explains, "and it's the same kind we used on *Failure*. What's cool about it is that it's got a short spring and a long spring for different types of reverbs." Two dbx 161 compressors ⑬ are underneath the E-V, followed by a Vox Super Beatle head ⑭—"home of the world's fastest tremolo," remarks Stringfellow—and a '64 Fender Pro Reverb ⑮, Ken's amp for the *Amazing Disgrace* sessions.

Next to this pile of gear sits the mysterious Black Box ⑯. "It's an unknown-functioning audio enhancer," Stringfellow says with a grin. "This weird hippie guy named David Jennings, from our hometown of Bellingham, built it. You plug it in like you would a graphic EQ, and then it takes over. Nobody knows what's in it or what it does—a little red light comes on and suddenly your stereo sounds amazing." Below the Black Box are an Alesis Microverb III ⑰, an old Symetrix CL-100 compressor ⑱, and a Sony 59ES DAT machine ⑲ and Kenwood KX-5530 cassette deck ⑳ for mixdown. Also getting into the mixing act is Ken's Sony MiniDisc Walkman ㉑. "Recently, I've been using that more and more to mix and bounce stuff down to, because it's more portable than the DAT."

Rounding out the amp collection are two Fender Deluxes, the first a '52 tweed ㉒ and the second a late-'60s silverface ㉓, and a Sears Silvertone ㉔. Another favorite Posies toy is the Echo Mike ㉕, "basically a small echo chamber that you speak into," according to Auer. A more conventional microphone, the Shure SM57 ㉖, hangs nearby.

Also pictured: ProCo Rat ㉗ and MXR Phase 45 ㉘ pedals, a '60s Fender Coronado ㉙ that Auer bought for use alongside Stringfellow and Alex Chilton in the reformed Big Star, '62 Fender Precision Bass ㉚, and '72 Fender Mustang (in the case) ㉛. Not pictured: Vesta Fire distortion box hidden behind Auer's head, and Jon's Mercury Pro drum kit. "It looks like someone took red, blue and green crayons and melted them all over the kit," says Auer.

Last but by no means least are Ken's cat Punkin ㉜ and a vintage Hoover vacuum cleaner ㉝. "Essential gear," says Stringfellow. "Sounds great. No tubes, though."



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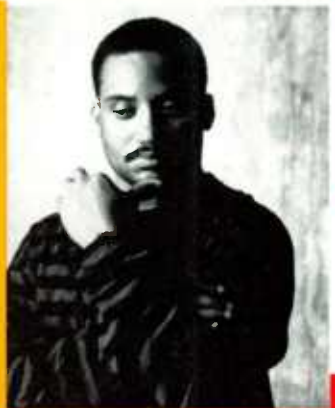
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Permanent Replacement

Paul Westerberg

Eventually
(Reprise/Warner Bros.)

A couple of things most folks may have figured out by now: 1) The Replacements are never coming back, and 2) since then, ex-band-leader Paul Westerberg has taken a very different tack, pushing pop's parameters, critics be damned. That much is plain as day on his new solo foray *Eventually*.

"These Are The Days" opens the set on one of Westerberg's all-time favorite sounds—a pick passing gently over warm acoustic guitar strings—but quickly upgrades to a 'Mats-electric melody which despite the song's dour theme, approaches some sort of jubilation. By the '70s-ish "Century," he's draining test tubes into beakers and mad-scientist stirring; the thing feels like a tribute to the Nicky Chinn/Mike Chapman school, with guitars that echo their star pupil, Sweet,

circa "Ballroom Blitz." And right when you think the affair's getting a tad lowbrow, Westerberg smacks you with a sucker-punch—"Love Untold," one of the more radiant gems in his crowded jewelry box. A razor-sharp drumbeat kicks it off, a chiming chord piggybacks into place, then his voice splinters down—cracked, cigarette-ratty, but alive with nuance. The tale, of course, is woeful. But Westerberg tells it with such practiced panache, it takes on the color of a legend.

As contemporary pop, *Eventually* is about as good as it gets. Horns and a goofy "Dream Weaver"-type bridge (plus old 'Mats alumnus Tommy Stinson) beef up "Trumpet Clip." The percussion beneath the Wenders-weighty "Angels Walk" is sleighbells, and velvety strings segue in to close "Good Day," a pretty piano ballad which finds Westerberg at his most artistically honest. "A good day," he sighs, "is any day that you're alive." —Tom Lanham

Dave Matthews Band

Crash
(RCA)

Regular guy Dave Matthews carries the banner for anyone who's no longer free to indulge the whims of passion, but still feels the urge. That is, anyone who puts kids, mortgage and other obligations first, but constantly battles baser impulses. With a wry, bemused voice similar to Peter Gabriel's, Matthews seems ideally suited for chronicling the tug-of-war between grown-up sobriety and callow thrill-seeking, whether seizing the moment on "Life in Our Graves" or groping for identity in the jaunty "So Much to Say." Restless souls eager for moral support may ultimately feel short-changed, however, since this tepidly proficient album refers to emotions without actually inspiring them.

On many counts, the Matthews Band shines. Blending soul, folk and rock, these well-crafted tunes are solidly catchy in a VH1 way; the players boast tasty chops to spare, especially violinist Boyd Tinsley and sax dude Leroy Moore. Matthews' lyrics artfully chronicle the endless quest to break on through, with "Too Much" articulating a philosophy of excess the younger Iggy Pop would admire.

Too bad dull arrangements keep the band under wraps: Despite the edgy, headlong tempo of "Two Step," for example, the groove is so restrictive there's no opportunity to cook. Crackerjack drummer Carter Beauford sometimes threatens to disrupt the sensible soundscapes, getting raucous near the end of "Crash Into Me," but his unselfish team spirit wins out, alas. Surely producer Steve Lillywhite could have let the musicians breathe a little without threatening the material.

Such lack of zing defuses Matthews' messages. "Say Goodbye" considers a forbidden romance, but the execution is so mournful it comes across as a pathetic, impotent fantasy rather than a genuine expression of desire. Closing the album with a skeptical look at civilization, "Proudest Monkey" strives for an airy Jimmy Buffett vibe, only to evaporate in an inconsequential haze.

Many bands choke when it's time to follow up on a big hit. Matthews and company are too controlled and too competent for that—and too controlled and competent for their own good. A few sloppy mistakes would've made *Crash* a more interesting album.—*Jon Young*

Guided By Voices

Under The Bushes Under The Stars
(Matador)

While recent pop scenesters like Supergrass, Oasis and Cast show up with their '60s goods, spit-shined and attitude-ready, Guided By Voices nostalgic songs fight through indifferent performances and glaring lo-fi production, sounding like cheap homemade demos. That's a shame, because GBV has the depth and maturity missing from many of England's stylish upstarts. They know they're good, but they'd rather be cool, indie-rock underachievers than clean up their act.

Through their lyrics are often nonsensical, GBV's musical references are transparent: This is a group that lives, dreams, and drinks in the past, especially the summer of '66 when the Beatles tossed off reverb-drenched



guided by voices

classics like "Rain" and "I'm Only Sleeping." Singing in fake English accents over murky drums and nonexistent bass, GBV delivers melancholy Beatlemania through the sound of a crummy transistor radio. Still there are gems that resist the band's attempts to camouflage their brilliance: "To Remake A Young Flyer" is a Badfingerish dirge that floats on gorgeously liquid guitars. "Acorns & Orioles" recalls R.E.M. at their most introspective and endearing while "Atom Eyes" is brisk power pop, all Raspberries-esque guitar and trebly cymbals. But what ultimately defines GBV is what they lack. Besides careless production, not one song in this hefty collection has a bridge—ya know, the "middle eight," that spot midway through a song that either creates tension or offers release. GBV don't use them. With their iconoclast rules, GBV seem intent on inhabiting the

Refueling the Mothership: George Clinton & the P-Funk Reunion

It's well into the morning at Soho's Chun King Studios, and George Clinton is keeping everybody up. Engineer David Kennedy, hunched in the same chair since late afternoon, is nodding off. Keyboardist Bernie Worrell is on a sandwich run. Guitarist/singer Garry Shider is helping direct the umpteenth take of the background vocals for "Sloppy Seconds," a salacious grinder from Clinton's next album, *TAPOAFOM*, due from Sony/550 on May 28.

Shider asks, "Should I . . . aaahh"—he offers a gospelly melisma—"like that, you know?"

"Just do what you feel," Clinton says, brushing his trademark technical-weave from his face and leaning back in his chair. Clearly Clinton's production style is, in its own charming way, wearing everybody out.

For *TAPOAFOM* Clinton has assembled his usual roster of nu-funk collaborators and, more importantly, some of P-Funk's original architects. Worrell and

Bootsy Collins have been only peripherally involved with Clinton since the collapse of the original empire, due in no small part to rhubarbs over writing royalties. ("George's eyes start to



twitch when you start talking about that stuff," Bootsy explains.) Getting them all in the same studio at the same time is no small landmark.

"One Nation," says Clinton. "That was the last session with the crew: me, Bernie, Bootsy, Junie (Morrison). There's a lot of history in the stuff we did. It's great to have them all here."

"It took the type of money Sony has to bring us back together," says Collins. "In the end, we realized it took the three of us working together to fuel the Mothership to fly again."

By three in the morning Shider decides he wants to add some extra guitar. He picks up a studio Strat copy and starts warming up. Worrell returns from the winter chill with his sandwich. Bootsy heads out. Clinton calls after him.

"Remember. Bootsy, this summer," he chides. "This summer. Remember to keep it open."—*Tony Green*

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words to their song "Bright Paper Werewolves": "They finally got recognized so they left in obscurity and misery." It's an unfortunate point of view from these talented deconstructionists.—Ken Micallef

Cracker

The Golden Age
(Virgin)

If there's anything more irritating than glib cheeriness, it's glib depression. And yet, as modern rock has grown dominated by middle-class, college-educated young adults infatuated with their own misery and frustration, glib depression pervades the genre. Fortunately, there are still folks like Cracker frontman David Lowery, alum of U.C. Santa Cruz and the unapologetically post-grad outfit Camper Van Beethoven, whose glibly depressive tendencies are redeemed by his healthy irony.

Cracker's *The Golden Age* isn't quite as tautly pop-savvy as its predecessor, 1993's hook-ridden *Kerosene Hat*. That may be partly intentional: *On Golden Age*, the songs are often more loosely structured, and accommodate relatively extended, freewheeling instrumentals. (Lest we forget, Cracker did once open for the Grateful Dead.) Guitarist John Hickman is an especially prominent force on this album, whether laying down sultry blues-grunge licks on "Sweet Thistle Pie" or filtering spooky, resonant country chords into bittersweet ballads like "Bicycle Spaniard" or "Big Dipper." On "I Hate My Generation," the album's most fiercely catchy cut, Hicks' crunching riffs provide the hook.

Lowery is Hickman's wry foil, spitting dark or vexing sentiments from the back of his throat or, on "I Can't Forget You" and the deceptively sunny, sound-

ing title track, conveying tender ambivalence in softer, almost hesitant tones. His flair for self-deprecating humor remains intact. On "Useless Stuff," a satirical young rocker's lament that some of his more petulant peers could learn from, he sings, "If I call you from time to time and say that life is such a drag...will you shut me up?" It's a deal.—Elysa Gardner

Stereolab

Emperor Tomato Ketchup
(Columbia)

It's hard not to love a band that gave their spanking new album such a fabulous title; harder still after actually hearing it. So much has been made of Stereolab's coolness by association—their indebtedness to Krautrock, naming their *Space Age Bachelor Pad Music* I.P. before most hipsters had even heard of Esquivel—you may forget this band absolutely begs to be taken at face value, and should be.

And, on the face of it, *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* is extraordinary. Though two prior singles compilations have pointed the way, never before has this too-prolific combo placed so much of what they're good at in the same place at the same time. *Ketchup* offers everything you'd imagine after reading the press notices: squeaking Vox organs, minimal repeating bass figures, the Euro-tinged vocals of French singer Lætitia Sadler, and, beneath it all, the sheer beauty of simplicity, of machine in motion, bolstered by titles like "Metronomic Underground," "Percolator," and "Motoroller Scalatron."

It doesn't take much talent to press a few buttons here and there—and while some bands do that, Stereolab conspicuously don't. What makes this record so fine



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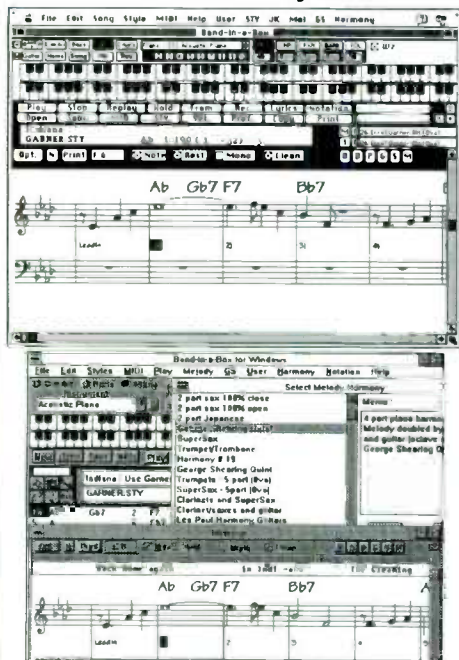
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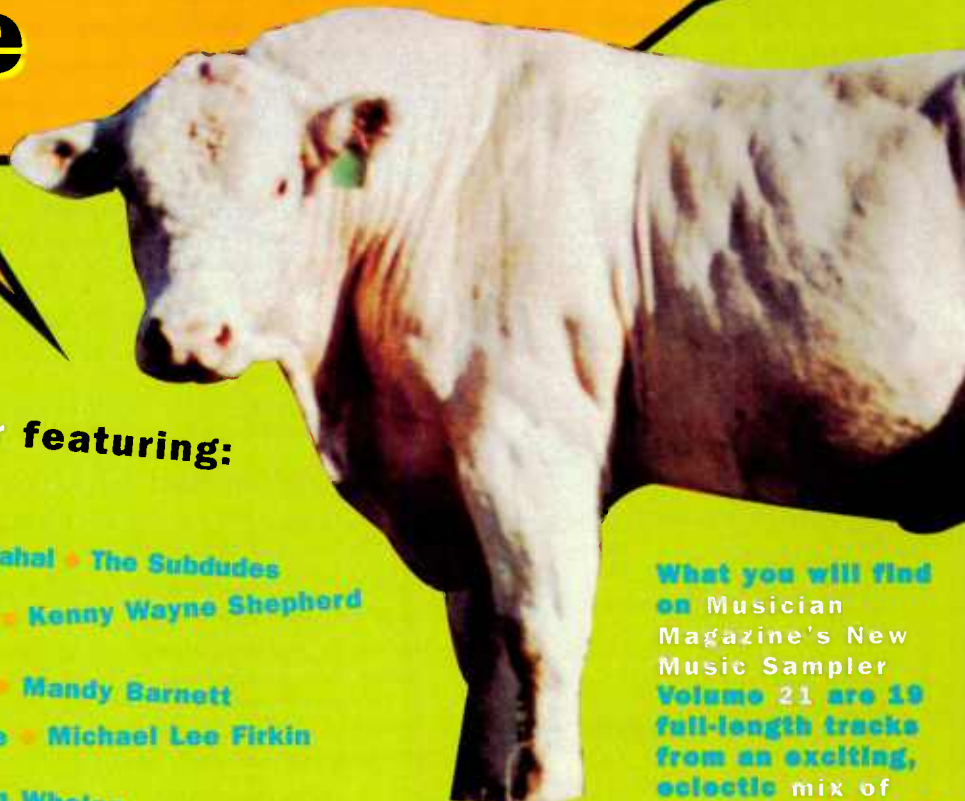
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stereolab

are the numerous flat-out, hook-filled songs. Start with "Cybele's Reverie," which features a half-avant string arrangement by part-time labber (and full-time High Llama) Sean O'Hagen, a sexily accented vocal midway between Nico and that woman from Ivy, and a melody that might've walked off the Youngbloods' *Elephant Mountain*. It may sound like a mess on paper, but blaring out of speakers it sounds like the only natural direction pop music has left in the mid-'90s. Taking everything that's come before them, Stereolab stuffs it all in a bottle, shakes it up, then pours it on your hamburger. Order yours well-done.—*Dave DiMartino*

groove bumps up against Shorter's extended melodic forms). Roney lacks a personal perspective—or as Lester Young might put it, "Lady Roney, you're one hell of a trumpeter, but what is your story?"

Graham Haynes is a more limited player than Roney, but he never bites off more than he can chew, and his cinematic aural collage recalls the avant-garde street beats of *On The Corner* (particularly "Freestylin"), without being beholden to them. *Transition* begins by treating Coltrane's changing theme to a hip-hoppish set of variations, mosh guitar, and DJ-in-

Wallace Roney

The Wallace Roney Quintet
(Warner Bros.)

Graham Haynes

Transition
(Antilles)

Ron Miles

My Cruel Heart
(Gramavision)

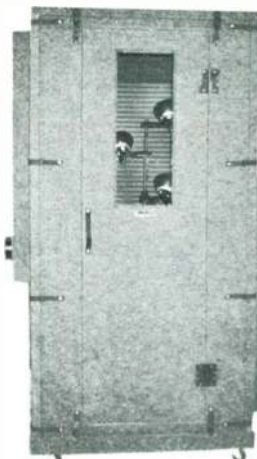
Originality was second nature to Miles Davis, an artist for whom there was nothing so noxious as the notion of repeating himself. And so it was with some curiosity that I approached the work of three talented brass players seeking to extend upon the master's works, with varying results.

Before he died, Miles gave Wallace Roney the nod, employing him as a stunt double during his Montreux reprise of the Gil Evans charts. It's easy to see why: The trumpeter's burnished tone and emphatic articulation, coupled with a steely rhythmic dynamism and enormous stamina, enable him to construct long, flowing melodic lines. Wallace Roney's got everything.

Except a clue. Not that there isn't room for expansion on mid-'60s Miles (although Wynton and Branford did that to death a decade ago), and rhythmically the Wallace Roney Quintet is a powerhouse. But the original experimental, exploratory impulses are reduced here to virtuoso postures, so that the collective assurance of the band's polyrhythmic transitions and polytonal juxtapositions come across as relentlessly derivative, and the listener inevitably falls into a game of name that tune (as on "Spyra," where the "Freedom Jazz Dance"

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2PAC

**All Eyez, On Me
(Death Row)**

Except for insisting on their First Amendment right to use the word "motherfucker," gangsta rappers pretty much share the values of their Republican detractors: the emphasis on making money, the righteousness of bearing arms, the wonderfulness of conspicuous consumption, respect for hierarchy and loyalty to one's own as overriding principles. "I know how to bow down to authority if it's authority that I respect," said 2Pac in a recent *Vibe* interview. "If Colin Powell was president, I'd follow him." This is not radicalism. This album isn't radical either. The grooves are nice, though.

Chet Atkins

**Picks on the Beatles
(RCA/BMG)**

My ears attuned to rock & roll, I never understood just how clever Atkins was until I started playing...er, trying to learn...his songs myself. Guess I mistook the mellow amp tone and service to melody for simplicity. Wrong. As George Harrison says in the liner notes to this reissue, Atkins adds "harmonies and harmonics where you least expect them." And here he's got some of the most memorable melodies in pop history to add them to.

Tommy Castro

**Exception to the Rule
(Blind Pig)**

Like George Thorogood, Castro breaks up his small ensemble blues attack with a saxophone. Unlike Thorogood, he's way more influenced by B.B. King than Chuck Berry, so we have an emphasis on tradition here, not humorous social commentary. The sax is cool, though, adding a bit of honk and sass to Castro's exceptionally fluid Strat. Guitar cultists will swoon for the sting, while blues babes will dig his Pat Riley haircut. If the various music channels would get off their ass and do a regularly scheduled blues hour...with actual blues artists—Castro could be a star.

The Music of Armonia

**Volume One: Sacred Choral Music
(Celestial Harmonies)**

Surrounded by a whole bunch of tribes who don't

like each other, sitting on a major earthquake fault, Armenia has had more than its share of catastrophe. It's also home to one of the most ancient musical traditions on the planet. The choir of the Echmiadzin Cathedral, mostly a capella here, sings something like Gregorian chants crossed with a tragic opera. Neither East nor West, it's ethereal while carrying the weight of all history on its shoulders. Takes me several galaxies beyond the St. Benedictine monks.

Richard Thompson

**you? me? us?
(Capitol)**

Of the nineteen songs on this two-CD set (one moderately electric, one acoustic), Thompson is

transfixed the world until the government finally electrocuted them in 1927. The subject matter was perfect for Guthrie: lots of fascinating personal detail with political implications that stretch back to the propaganda-induced hysteria of World War One and forward to propaganda-induced hysteria of right now. America's greatest folksinger, inspired and inspirational.

The Mr. T Experience

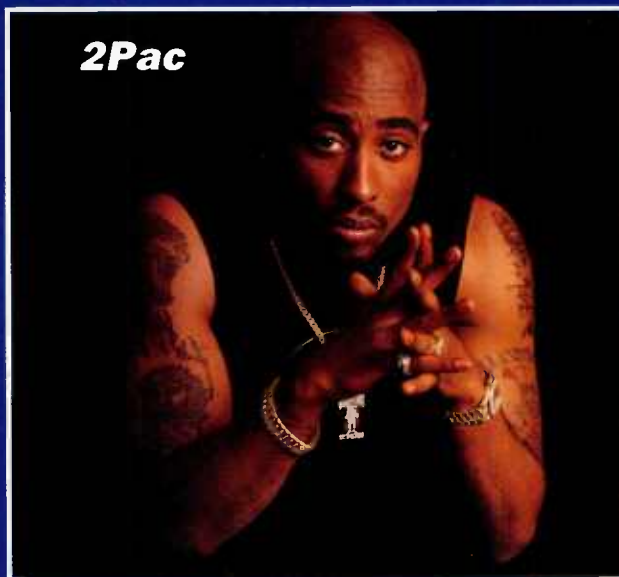
**Love Is Dead
(Lookout)**

I'm often amazed at how few punk bands can get their sound right. Stalwarts in the East Bay scene for the past decade, these guys get the proper midrange guitar roar and a big warm bass tone that's an absolute prerequisite to enjoying their energy, tight playing and humorous songwriting. Contrary to their proclamation of being a "dumb little band" in "Dumb Little Band," I say they're smart, even if they're late cashing in on Green Day's success.

Stuart Swezey

**Amok Journal: Sensurround
Edition
(Amok)**

There's this genre in independent publishing that roughly amounts to Ripley's *Believe It Or Not With Sex And Varying Degrees Of Learned Commentary*, which has a powerful appeal to the overeducated and underemployed. This book, stocked with the oddest historical documents and smart-though-terse clarifications by editor Swezey, is a prime example. If you can stomach



2Pac

depressed, mournful, cranky, embittered, bereft, or angry about something—usually a relationship gone sour—in all of them. So I have to be in a particular mood to listen. When I'm in that mood, Thompson's an introspective pleasure. When I'm not, his impressive guitar moves and lyric literacy (guy's a big fan of the Romantic poets) don't entirely compensate.

Woody Guthrie

**Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti
(Smithsonian/Folkways)**

Italian immigrant anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti made the mistake of carrying guns after one of their anarchist brethren was murdered by the FBI in 1920. They got arrested for a holdup and murder, and their trial

the overwhelmingly macabre sections on auto-erotic fatalities and trepanation (drilling a hole in your head for enlightenment), you may find the theological coordinates of your universe permanently altered by the chapter on cargo cults. The astute music fan will appreciate the section on infrasound (below 20Hz) as a weapon and religious experience. I was most fascinated by the stuff on Neue Slowenische Kunst, the Slovenian art collective whose musical wing Laibach is one of the few bands that can make any claim on uniqueness. Are they satirizing fascism, or are they fascists satirizing everything else? Are they nihilists who like to play with dangerous archetypes, or historians trying to warn us of something we'd rather forget? The answer appears to be more disturbing than I wanted.

products index

Here's our product guide which lists the equipment and page number where the players talk about the gear they use. Feel free to call or fax the manufacturers listed below for specific info on what the best players play.

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flected percussion, and concludes with evocations of Arabic vocal stylings. Haynes' terse commentaries proceed in discrete blocks of melody that echo his fascination with a polyglot of folk sources and dance rhythms, but it's as an arranger that he shines, using synthesizers and samples to invoke a wide array of non-tempered colors, while employing guitars both for frenetic vocal effects and Frisell-styled misterioso (as on "Harmonic Convergence," which features Haynes' most lyric affirmation). Haynes isn't breaking new ground (or breaking

away from the metric regularity of the backbeat), but in an era of acid jazz bosh, *Transition* is a breath of fresh air.

Ron Miles projects an air of fearlessness and originality on *My Cruel Heart* that compels me to overlook the coarse production values, because the trumpeter's rich low-register inflections and colorful vocal phrasing put me in mind of vintage Olu Dara and Lester Bowie (check out his freeform firestorm "Rachel Has A Secret"). Bassist Artie Moore is a stalwart presence (listen to how his woody tone and robust attack support Miles'

gorgeous, plaintive lyricism on "Howard Beach" and "Hosea & Gomer"), while drummer Rudy Royston offers vigorous rhythmic support, though he has yet to embrace the timely silence. But in the rough and ready swelter of multiple melodic lines, crashing cross-rhythms and canny dissonances, Miles' imaginative extended forms suggest a stellar composer and improviser in the making. Not everything works, but Ron Miles is unafraid of failure, and there's a lesson to be learned by some of his more famous brethren.—*Chip Stern*

Merle Haggard

1996

(Curb)

Despite his muttered threats of retirement, Merle Haggard ain't goin' nowhere. Those twin Silver Eagles, or whatever Hag and the Strangers drive these days, are out there as you read this, restlessly plying the four-lanes. In other words, he probably does have a terminal case of "White Line Fever."

One thing he don't have is time for album titles—he named the last one 1994. MCMXCVI, as it were, opens with "Sin City Blues," a lightweight instance of one of Merle's weirder passions: Dixieland. He gives "No Time to Cry," written by his new favorite, Iris Dement, a beautiful reading, sounding alternately youthful and wizened. He kicks up his heels in what may be the album's high point, "Beer Can Hill," an ode to the good-bad old days in Bakersfield.

The trucker tunes "Truck Driver's Blues" and "Too Many Highways" are mellow and sad. Merle sings up a storm on "Untanglin' My Mind," while "Winds of Change," with John Anderson, is a mournful, first-rate ecology anthem.

Great writing days may be gone—you need to be aligned with the Zeitgeist to write bigger-than-life songs like "Mama Tried" and "Big City." But after three-and-a-half decades, who's going to begrudge him these reasonably lesser efforts?

His voice, on the other hand, remains one of popular music's prizes. The urban mandarins who decades ago pronounced Sinatra a genius are still not in the habit of investigating country music, but Haggard is cut from the same cloth. You can't ever say you've counted all the colors in his voice; shade after shade falls away, revealing another—an almost magical flexibility that has only increased with age. Even if his days as the poet of the common man are behind him, he's a greater singer than ever, at 58.—*Tony Scherman*

The Raincoats

Looking In the Shadows

(DGC)

Thank Kurt Cobain for the rebirth of certain seminal British pop bands. After Nirvana employed the Buzzcocks as an opening act, Pete Shelley and the boys released an album (*Trade Test Transmissions*) that stacked up surprisingly well against their late-'70s classics. And when DGC reissued the Raincoats' catalogue (consisting of 1979's *The Raincoats*, 1981's *Odysshape* and 1984's *Moving*), Cobain wrote some liner notes, got the word around that the 'Coats were one of his all-time faves, and next thing you know, they were out on the

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Low Sunday Ghost Machine, PA	Astroboy, IL	The Spectators, AK
Sleeping Giants, PA	Every Hundredth Monkey, IL	Sean Driscoll, MA
The Dirges, PA	Jean D'eau, IL	

road again. Now they've released *Looking in the Shadows*, their first album in 12 years.

That Cobain was influenced by this quirky all-female quartet isn't surprising. In their previous incarnation, the Raincoats were masters at walking that same line between melody and noise, sophistication and primitivism, that Nirvana would later tread so gracefully. On *Looking in the Shadows*, melody far outweighs noise, and the band sounds more restrained than in the past. That's not to say the funny noises are gone entirely. Heavily echoed vocals, twangy guitars, cheesy percolating synths, and drumsticks clattering on rims are all present and accounted for.

Still, the goings-on are often decidedly strange. Both Ana DaSilva and Gina Birch (the two remaining original members of the band, joined by newcomers Anne Wood on violin and Heather Dunn on drums) have unsettlingly idiosyncratic vocal styles. DaSilva is more intimate yet oddly detached, with a mean hiccup; Birch is nasal and whiny, with a delivery that drips sarcasm. On "Don't Be Mean," she chides an inattentive lover: "My name may be Birch, dear, but I'm not a tree." No, this isn't the warmest music in the world, and it's just too weird to recommend wholeheartedly to a general audience. But those with a little patience will be rewarded. Every time the Raincoats threaten to become annoying, a heaven-sent pop chorus ("Only Tonight") or infectious riff ("Love a Loser") comes along.—*Mac Randall*

Bob Mould

Bob Mould
(Rykodisc)

This one is for me," Bob Mould writes in the liner notes for this disquieting solo album, on which the singer-songwriter-guitarist-producer played everything. The overall effect of the record—Mould's first since *File Under: Easy Listening*, the 1994 album by his now-defunct band Sugar—is like watching someone play soccer with his own head. Never the cheeriest of souls, the punk rock vet bursts out in all directions here, and the result is an unnerving psychodrama. It's unsurprising that one song here, "Egoverride," makes use of the lingo of analysis.

Some of the songs, with their blatant distaste for music industry games, reflect Mould's horrible experiences making the last Sugar album. "I Hate Alternative Rock" (in which Mould howls, "I knew you when you had something to say"), "Fort Knox, King Solomon," and "Art Crisis" all shudder with unconcealed contempt for contemporary rock's creative shortcuts and incongruous venality. Much of the rest of *Bob Mould* surveys the dissolution of a relationship, not uncommon terrain for this artist. Many of the tunes take full advantage of Mould's eruptive guitar, but the best of them is "Thumbtack," an acoustic number that uses a simple image—the crumbling of a wall map—as a compelling metaphor for the breakdown of an affair.

Cathartic records like this one always pose a problem for listeners. While it's impossible not to admire the considerable craft and depth of emotion that went into the making of *Bob Mould*, this is not an album that will invite repeated listening. As personal statements go, it ain't no amusement park ride.—*Chris Morris*

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A Field Guide to Watering Hole Wildlife

(Part 1)

Of ye of little faith and inflamed bronchial passages: Here it is, a field guide to a few of the species of wildlife encountered by working musicians everywhere. Study them, memorize them, don't buy them drinks.

Reverend Billy C. Wirtz

Gold Tufted Woo Finch

(*Gluteus Spandexemus*).

Plumage & Coloration:

often mottled blonde with brown extension cranial plumage; bright body coloring tightly fit over rump and reproductive regions.

Characteristics:

piercing call—woo!—often emitted in response to loud music; appears to be incapable of any other communication, except during mating season (see below); often emits woo while engaging in mating dance. **Diet:** high sugar and carbohydrate; highly specialized digestive tract adapts well to luncheon meats. **Habitat:** southeastern states and Texas; may often appear with estranged relatives on afternoon talk shows. **Mating Habits:** reproduces at early age; often favors nest of mobile variety. **Mating Call:** "Ahm drunk!"



Gray-Tufted Dodo

(*Hippus Nottabittus*).

Plumage & Coloration:

gray cranial plumage at times hidden by woven artificial layer; body covered with gray suit; often wears socks with sandals in warmer climates.

Characteristics:

several jabbering calls, including, "Hey, man, you wouldn't believe this, but my hair was longer than yours! Did you see *Woodstock*? Right there, off to the left of Janis? Yours truly, man. Remember Don McLean? My first roomie in college! Any chance of hearing some Billy Joel? Here's my card; call me when you're looking to buy, man." **Diet:** low-fat, low-salt. **Habitat:** aluminum siding ("it's the only way to go, man"). **Mating Habits:** infrequent. **Mating Call:** "SDWM seeks cowgirl in the sand."



Red Throated Peckerwood

(*Bocephus Maximus*).

Plumage & Coloration:

cranial plumage usually hidden under adjustable cap; top half of rump often visible beneath loose-fitting denim legwear; bottom half of abdominal region often protrudes over same legwear.

Characteristics:

large, sometimes aggressive; often associates with Woo Finch. **Distinctive call:** a screeching yee-ha! **Diet:** same as Woo Finch, with addition of certain items indigenous to water hole, particularly sausages and eggs of the pickled variety. **Habitat:** widespread, but will not nest in close proximity to North American Black Bird. **Mating Habits:** also favors mobile nest; interrelated species often found within same nest. **Mating Call:** "Git in the truck, woman!"



Common Vulture

(*Scrotus Chainjerkus*).

Plumage & Coloration:

cranial plumage similar to Gray-Tufted Dodo; upper body often covered with tour jacket or antique deceased bovine; dangling throat jewelry and detachable communication devices often visible.

Characteristics:

preys on younger, vulnerable musical species; often hides behind false coloration. **Distinctive Call:** "Send me a tape." **Diet:** cannibalistic. **Habitat:** variable; often migrates along with other members of species to large gatherings; identified by geographical coordinates. **Mating Habits:** nonselective; will attempt mating with any species possessing a pulse. **Mating Call:** "Trust me."



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