

SPECIAL LIVE ISSUE

MUSICIAN

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"How I Wrote Flaming Pie"

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OF THE
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TOUR

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INCOGNITO *Beneath the Surface*

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Best known for a dreamy, sensual approach that showcases his trumpet like a voice, Chris Botti gracefully walks the line between jazz and pop sensibilities. Includes guest vocals from Paul Buchanan (The Blue Nile) and Jonatha Brooke (The Story). "Botti has created the instrumental jazz answer to alternative rock." — *JazzTimes*



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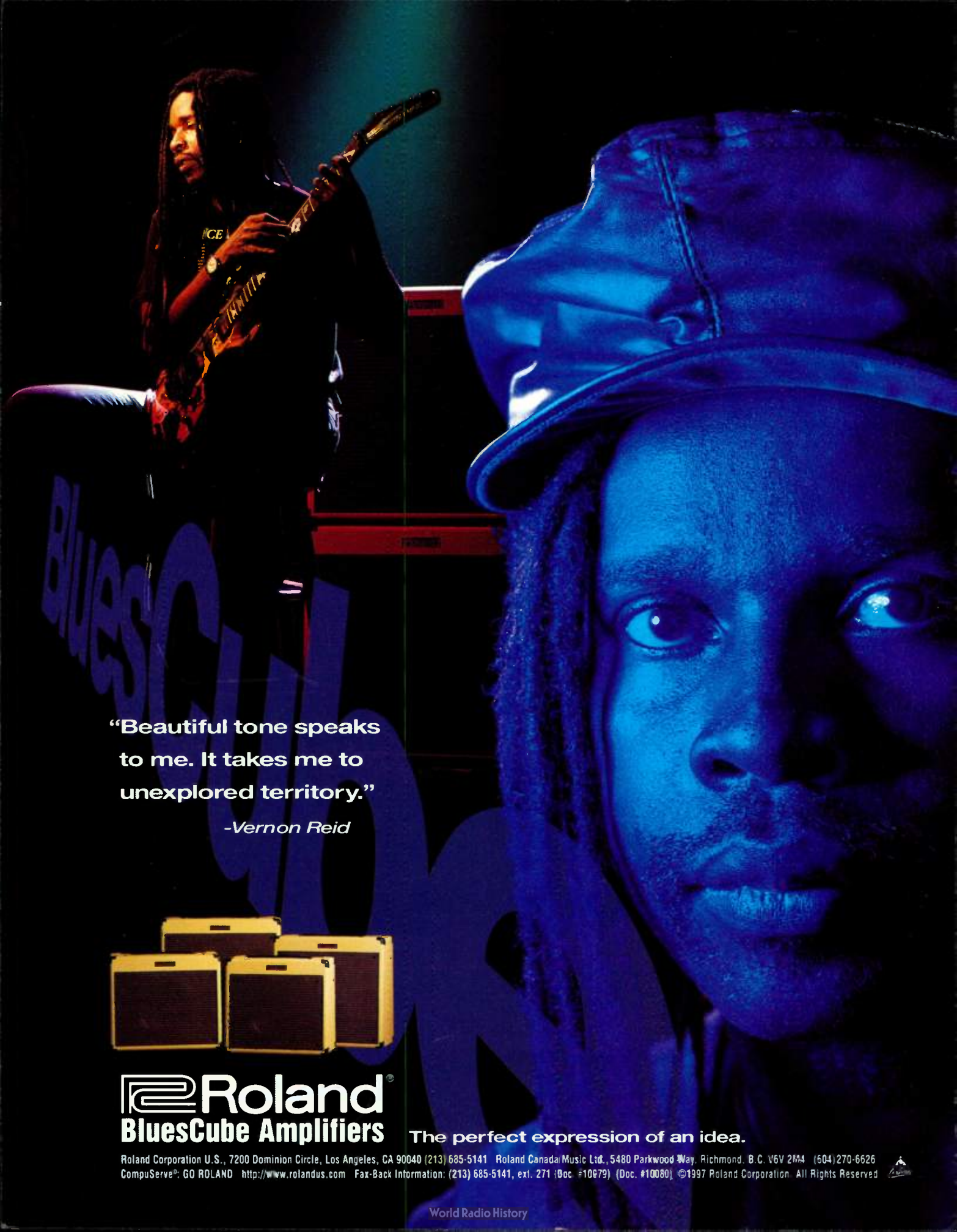


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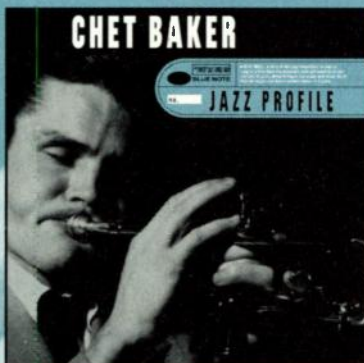
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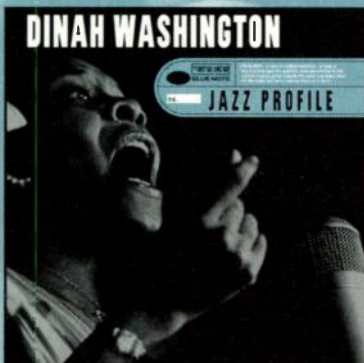
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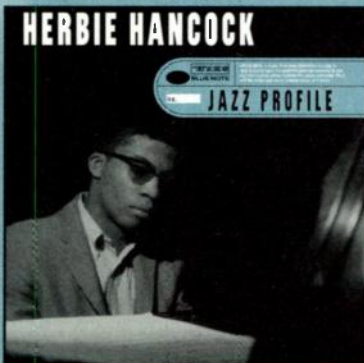
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world radio history

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dissein' the biz

In response to your June '97 cover story: Has anyone thought to ask the real experts—the consumers—why they aren't buying records? Can anyone define what draws someone to a song? My guess would be a quality that couples good songwriting and great lyrics with an evocative emotional statement, and I sure haven't heard a lot of that this year. As much as I wanted to support old faves Pearl Jam and Counting Crows, their recent releases just didn't have that quality, whatever it is. Most of the stuff I'm hearing now is cute or fun but kinda like bubble gum: no staying power. Does that mean that record people are going to throw modern/alt rock out the window? I sure hope not. You've just got to find that "quality" and let us hear it. If you do, we'll buy it. I promise.

c. f. renn
c.f.Renn@ix.netcom.com

While it behooves no one to complain about the quality of the current crop of musical trash that the geniuses at the majors have decided to foist upon the public, this composer, lyricist, player and performer predicted four years ago, in a lengthy letter to Epic's then A&R chief Michael Rosenblatt, that the biz would flop due to the dreck (rhymes with "Beck") and crap (rhymes with "rap") that now alienates those with the *real* dollars to purchase new software and the hardware to play the stuff.

In any business, marketing studies determine the sales potential of new items. Do majors do this? I doubt it, big time. Record companies must be accomplices in the conspiracy to dumb-down America. Since Picasso, shit painter that he was, decided to become outrageous and make a good living (and thereby treat no-talent garbage like Madonna and offshoots like Dennis Rodman to a ride on the billionaire bicycle), the "businessmen" have realized that it's hard to find talented folks to record. So we'll just invent the belief that these jackasses must be good cuz they got CDs out!

I know a thousand phenomenally talented musicians who are disgusted because no one will listen to their work. One friend of mine is the best arranger, writer, keyboardist, and singer around, yet he's working as a \$7.50-an-hour security guard because there's one ability he lacks: the ability to be out of work. If talented folks like these were on CDs, people would spend their money on entertainment like they did before they broke the machine.

paul santa maria
miami, FL

Part of the drop in domestic CD sales can be blamed on Japan. I've stopped buying a lot of discs in the U.S. because of Japanese bonus tracks. Why should I shell out fifteen bucks for an incomplete CD? For around thirty dollars I get the disc plus an average of two bonus tracks. American companies can solve this problem by releasing CD-5 (CD singles) with the extra tracks.

curveboy@aol.com

I'm not surprised that the record industry is a bit nervous at the prospect that their business practices over the last decade are finally beginning to backfire ("Bad Times in the Music Biz," June '97). In their frenzied search for the next shallow catchy tune that can be neatly tied in a genre box and forced down the throats of consumers, the industry has eroded the foundations of good long-term investment: musicianship, originality, artistic development, meaningful lyrics, and cross/multiple genre appeal.

When I first stepped into the commercial music arena, my entertainment attorney and producer both told me I would have to make a decision that would affect the rest of my career: Did I wish to compromise my artistic statement to fit the short-sighted demands of the major labels just to increase my chances of signing a contract that isn't designed with the artist's needs in mind? The answer was no. Instead, I started my own management firm, independent label, and publishing company. The road I've chosen is long and hard, but ultimately more fulfilling because I can keep faith in myself and my work. I strongly encourage other artists to stop waiting for the "big deal." Get your music out to the people who want to hear it. Only hard work and dedication to what you love will bring your true rewards.

angel west
cambierent@aol.com

Record chains charge \$13 to \$17 per CD, but in the back of your magazine I see that I can have a very small quantity of CDs of my own material manufactured for between \$1 and \$3 each. The industry can do its song and dance about middlemen and overhead, but these items are overpriced—not at retail but on the industry side. Otherwise, all these chains wouldn't be going under.

rick fisher
rfishjr@erols.com

joseph arthur's diary

The journal entry you published by Joseph Arthur (June '97) was one of the cooler things you guys have ever printed. Being from Atlanta, I've read a lot of press on Joseph that's only conjured up the usual skepticism. Also, reading about the company he's been keeping has tended to make me feel equal shades of curiosity and envy—curiosity because there's only a number of famous modern rockers who have the ability to offer music that remains true to their artistic vision, and envy because I spent a good portion of my life "living it" but missing it. What got me was Joseph's way of interpreting his circumstance through the artistic eye. His success proves to me that the good shit somehow does shine through. I'm a computer geek now, but I still write music and keep up with—still need—the "good shit."

michael courter
mcourter@mindspring.com

doo who?

Bravo for your piece on Doo Ramalama. I came home from playing a session tonight at about one in the morning. The bowels were clenching, so I hit the can immediately. I took your June '97 issue with me. Just as I had almost finished my business I turned to the Backside page and read the article. Halfway through I started laughing out loud and waking up the household, my voice echoing and my ass farting. Keep up the good work!

mike loce
revere, MA

I was saddened to read of the passing of one of the forgotten greats: Doo Ramalama. Way back in 1970, as a teenager trying to cope with the post-Beatles era, I was fortunate to attend a Masked Marauders show at the now defunct Roosevelt Stadium in Jersey City. I was not aware at the time that the opening act was an even rarer event: Doo Ramalama and his brother Boom Shakalaka together onstage for the first time! Needless to say, their performance immediately filled my musical void, and I have been a disciple ever since. My personal favorite, by the way, is "Da Doo Doo Doo Da Ram Ram Ram(alama)."

avid_peters@wmg.com

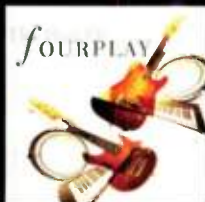
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Apologies to Jah Wobble for misspelling his name in our June '97 Studio Techniques piece.

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Boney James Sweet Thing



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Produced by Paul Brown and Boney James.

World Radio History

George Duke Is Love Enough?

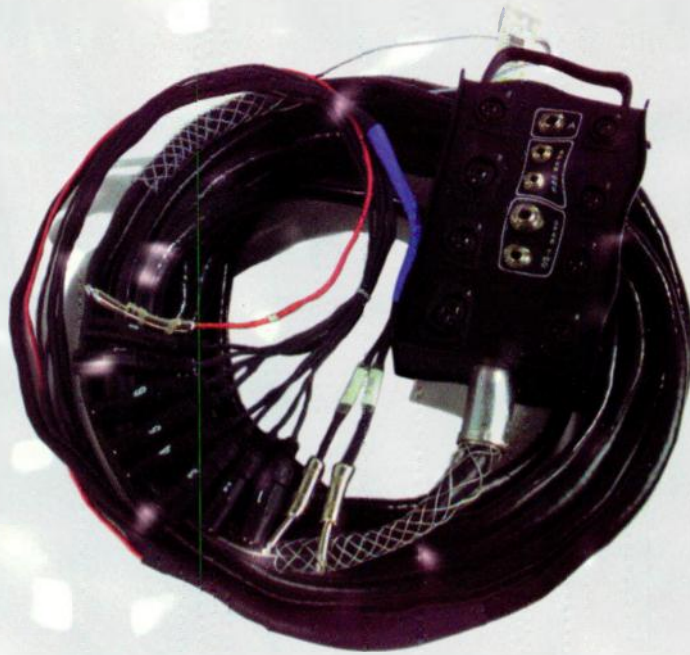


Featuring vocal performances by Dianne Reeves, Jonathan Butler, Rachelle Ferrell and Duke himself. Providing instrumental support is an A-list of musician's musicians, including Everett Harp, Gerald Albright, Doc Powell and Airtio Moreira among others.

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On your new album, *Flaming Pie*, there's a great sense of simplicity and spontaneity in the songwriting and performance. After all these years, was it difficult to recapture that kind of feeling?

It was very easy this time to get back to, and I'm not sure why. I think probably listening to a lot of early Beatles stuff, seeing how quick we were, hearing the directness of it and all that. But in recent years, it has been hard, because one tends to equate complexity with goodness.

You tried to avoid musical comparisons to the Beatles for many years in your own work.

The natural thing in a career is to view it as a progression, so you do tend to think, "Well, I've done the Beatles, now let's do something else. Let's have my own sound now that's not like the Beatles." Which is always a little bit of a loser idea because you tend to end up like whoever's the flavor of the month.

*You wrote much of the material on *Flaming Pie* while on vacation with your family. Do you travel with any recording equipment?*

Nah, [just] a little cassette. I always write the words down and hope to remember the tune. I may forget it by the evening but I always remember it the next morning. Something about sleeping on it.

Although you recorded these songs with Jeff Lynne, Steve Miller, and Ringo Starr, you played most of the basic parts—guitars, keyboards, bass, and drums—yourself.

Linda is always saying to me—not just Linda but the kids, they're always saying, "We want to hear you on a record, and other people do too. They don't want to hear you and lots of other people." Elvis Costello also warmed me up a bit. He said, "There are some great drummers who have a feel. There's Ringo and you. ..." And I said, "Oh, well, great, I think I'll drum then," because I'd done it before, on *Band on the Run*.

*The keyboards on *Flaming Pie* include harmonium, harpsichord, Hammond organ, and Mellotron, but no synthesizers. A bit old-fashioned, wouldn't you say?*

I'm purposefully old-fashioned. But it's so old-fashioned it's in fashion. I got all the synths when they came out. The overall string bank is quite good on a synth. But synths are severely limited in my book, particularly when they're trying to emulate real instruments.

What do you think of the young Britpop bands?

The songs tend to be along the lines of the Beatles, the Kinks, and those kind of groups. There's always some good voices, like Jarvis Cocker or the Oasis guys. I mean, it's very derivative. Okay, but having said that, it's derivative of me and the lads' style, so I don't mind. I'd rather they tributed us than anyone else. —**Thom Duffy**

Paul McCartney

"I'm so old-fashioned I'm in fashion."

sideman

résumé

U2
Garbage
L7
The Jayhawks
House of Pain
EMF
Paw
Gary Glitter

Are you often called to do remedial repair on rhythm tracks?

Many times, because the drummer can't be in that pocket and play the whole song correctly. There are times when they'll keep a band's drum part, but I'll come in and lay down some tambourine tracks to cover up tempo fluctuations.

What's behind the sounds you used for the remixes of U2's "Daddy's Going to Pay for Your Crashed Car" and "Dirty Day"?

Well, as a producer, Butch Vig definitely knows what he wants, and on "Crashed Car" he wanted this really loose shaker sound. So we laid down a few tracks of really loose shakers and tambourines. U2 has always had a sort of patterned tambourine rhythm, and we were trying to adhere to the *Achtung Baby/Zooropa* feel. I think we were being a little refined, actually, on "Dirty Day." We could have gone crazier on the mixes.

Are you the "Mr. Anonymous" who coined the name for Vig's band Garbage?

Yes, your honor [laughs]. Butch, Duke, and Steve were in the studio, mixing a song. It was late at night, as I recall. I walked in and said, "Jesus Christ, you guys. This shit sounds like fucking garbage!" It sort of jolted them, so the reaction was, "This is true. This *is* garbage. It's a whole plethora of sounds, a mix of everything."

How do your approaches to playing live and doing sessions differ?

Experimentation is important to me when I'm playing live. In the studio, it's a bit scary to walk into a new situation cold turkey. You don't know the players. You have to quickly develop a rapport with the band. You need to be a salesperson, a musician, and a perfectionist. You have to stay focused, because you're expected to be right on.

You took a little longer than usual to do your parts in sessions for L7's Bricks Are Heavy. Did something cause you to lose that focus?

L7 was recording in the newly remodeled Smart Studios during the dog days of summer. The studio was very hot; we didn't yet have adequate AC. I was in this little isolation booth, and it was about 104 degrees. I had to do my part six or seven times. I was down to my skivvies, drenched in sweat in my underwear. The conga heads were becoming loose as a result of the humidity. But another reason it took so long to finish this track was that [L7 singer/guitarist] Donita Sparks was dancing in front of me wildly, almost exotically, enticing me to get into this solo. In fact, you can hear a little fluctuation of my tempo in the song ["Mr. Integrity"] because there was one moment where my eyebrows just went straight into my forehead as I watched Donita dance.

How do you juggle the demands of playing in four or five bands, working at Smart, and doing sessions around the world?

My boss is very flexible—and he's usually on the road with a band called Garbage [laughs].

You make the life of a sideman sound pretty easy.

It's not all glamor. But I wouldn't want to be doing anything else. —Jim Berkenstadt



Pauli Ryan

"Donita Sparks was dancing in front of me, exotically enticing me to get into this solo ..."

David Leeb

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LOREN ALLDRIN, PRO AUDIO REVIEW.

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MAY 1997, KEYBOARD MAGAZINE.

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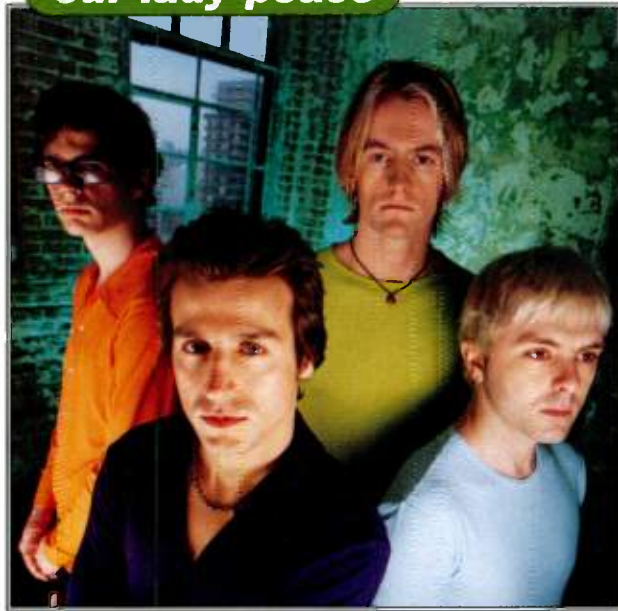
SONY

talents

When Robert Plant heard *Our Lady Peace's* 1995 debut album, *Naveed*, he had his people contact their people and the band soon found themselves opening for Page and Plant on what ended up being a fairy-tale tour for the young band from Toronto. Though they took their good fortune in stride at the time, it was a different story about three months later. "That's when it [the shock] really began to set in," lead singer Raine Maida recalls. "Not only was it a dream come true, but at the first sound-check where we all met, Robert said he hadn't heard anything with as much conviction as our first album in nearly five years. That is the nicest and most positive thing anyone has ever said to us."

If there's one word to describe the OLP sound, it is conviction. Maida's singing can cut

our lady peace



Dennis Klamann

through a crowded concert hall like a buzz-saw through cardboard, and his intensity's equalled by the instrumental side of the band (guitarist Mike Turner, bassist Duncan Coutts, and drummer Jeremy Taggart). They've carved a niche for themselves with their heavy, drone-oriented sound, making them hot on the Canadian circuit.

Because their record company (Sony) didn't push for a speedy followup to the successful *Naveed*, OLP had plenty of time to work on new material. The resulting album, *Clumsy*, goes a long way toward beating the fabled sophomore jinx. "We're sort of lucky that we had about two years to work on the second album," Maida explains. "The time span will appear shorter to the American audience as well, because there was only one year between the release of *Naveed* and *Clumsy*."

Sophomore album or not, OLP have what appears to be a bright future. As for goals: "What we would really like to accomplish is to write a song or two that will outlive the band." —**Brian Rabey**

There's no fear of going back to my day job," insists *Cinamon's* Jiri Novak. "I'm still working it!" As guitarist/songwriter for this Stockholm, Sweden-based band, Jiri recently found himself in Los Angeles recording tracks for the band's U.S. debut. (His partner, Frida Diesen, co-writes, sings, and plays the occasional synth.) But once there, he had to work out the time difference between L.A. and Stockholm to perfectly time his calling into work sick each morning, since he was unable to get time off from the bookstore where he's employed.

Meanwhile, the band was having a bad time in the studio. "The producers and engineers would say things like, 'Hey, I've been doing

We slept together when we were five or six," Bill Priddle reveals. "Our parents knew each other, so we used to go on vacations together." Then as boyhood friends, now as bandmates in Toronto's *Treble Charger*, Priddle and Greig Nori have built a relationship strong enough to endure years of growth. With Nori as the band's showy frontman and Priddle as the studio alchemist, the two are well-matched. "Our stuff comes from different places, but it always ends up colliding," says Priddle.

Along with bassist Rosie Martin and drummer Trevor MacGregor, Nori and Priddle collide on *Maybe It's Me* (RCA), a modern take on vintage power pop that combines the breathy intensity of the Zombies' vocals with the hooks of the Raspberries and the power-chord throttle of the Pixies and Dinosaur Jr.

"We're into vintage rock because it's hard to find good new music," explains Nori. "Alice [Cooper] was the rock that got me rollin' when I was about fourteen," he says. "Then I went through a Rolling Stones period where I was obsessed with Keith Richards. I even befriended this random kid who looked exactly like Keith just because I thought it'd bring me closer to Keith."

Recorded by Lou Giordano at Boston's Fort Apache Studios, *Maybe It's Me* crashes and hums with crunchy-on-the-outside, tender-on-the-inside pop, top-heavy with overdriven guitars and spiced with Farfisa, Mellotron, trumpet, and synth. It's fanciful, in a muscular, roaring way.

"Our early stuff was a lot more jangly," says Nori. "But we both bought distortion pedals, going from the yellow ones to the big ugly black ones, and we haven't been the same band since." —**Bob Gulla**



treble charger

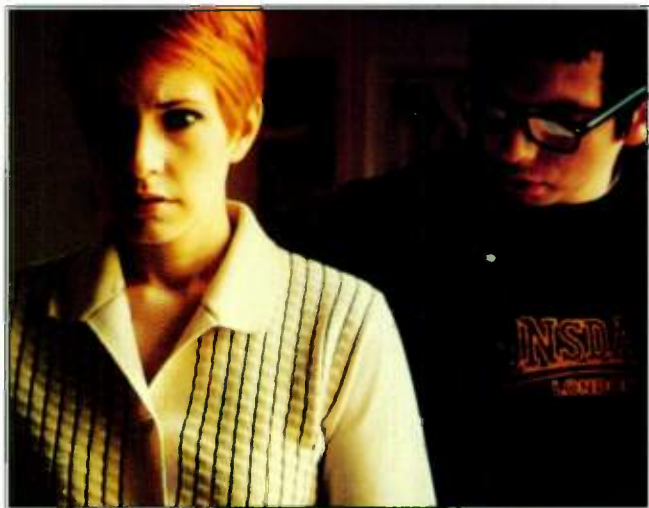
Dennis Klamann

this for thirty years...," laughs Jiri. "The classic one is, 'I was making records before you were born,'" adds Frida, 23. But when Jiri heard the results, he stormed from the studio in protest. "I returned later and erased everything so the record company couldn't get them."

Eventually, the band was paired with a new producer and allowed to co-produce, finishing their album,

bands like Orange Juice, and French singer Serge Gainsbourg. Their upbeat sound and Frida's frosty voice would draw comparisons to St. Etienne and the Cardigans.

Still, not everything went smoothly the second time around. Their synth of choice—an old analog Roland Juno-101—was severely affected by the voltage in the studio. "It kept changing the pitch, so we had to keep retuning it, which is



Tove Lamm

The Courier (Island),

cinnamon

almost impossible," back in Sweden. The result is a sweet, meticulously arranged collection of songs influenced by the pair's favorite artists, including cult hero Momus, Eighties U.K. indie pop

Jiri explains. "If you can imagine us trying to do these synth sweeps at three in the morning and keep them in tune ... I almost went mad!"

—Dev Sherlock

Why doesn't anybody sing songs anymore?" It's a question singer/songwriter Stuart Murdoch used to ask himself quite frequently. Of course that was before he met bassist Stuart David in an all-night café in Glasgow. The two quickly recruited the first five musicians they found, and **Belle and Sebastian** was born. Soon after, they spent three days recording *Tigermilk*, an album that caught the attention of both British and American labels.

Now, a year and a half later, Belle and Sebastian have released their stateside debut, *If You're Feeling Sinister* (The Enclave). On one track, "Get Me Away From Here, I'm Dying," Murdoch answers his own question: "Sing me a song to set me free/Nobody writes them like they used to/So it may as well be me."

"For the past ten years there has been this preciousness about the Sixties. Until very recently it was as if all the best music had been made and so why even bother to try?" Rather than be discouraged



Hayley Madden

belle and sebastian

by this. Belle and Sebastian seem inspired by the challenge.

Comparisons to Sixties darlings like Donovan and Love are often enriched by the band's more contemporary influences. Still, it's difficult to pigeonhole the Belle and Sebastian sound. And though he writes and sings all the songs, Stuart insists that "each individual is equally important to our sound. When I take the songs to the band, that's when they come alive. It's all about playing off people."

"Songs are an incredible indulgence. The good ones just sort of happen in the spaces between whatever it is you have to do to get along. It's like sitting back with a Hershey bar and just letting it melt in your mouth."

—Kris Nicholson

My whole life people have said to me, 'Hey, it wouldn't kill you to smile,'" says **Lauren Hoffman**. "I guess I walk around looking like I'm going to kill myself even when I'm in a perfectly good mood. I don't really understand it."

On her Virgin debut *Megiddo* (named for the supposed site of Armageddon), the twenty-year-old gives vent to her turbulent life's experiences, culled from ashrams. Crescent City wild times, and restless years spent in the desolate town of Charlottesville, Virginia. Throughout, Hoffman infuses her atmospheric, swampy rock & roll with spooky sensibilities and mesmerizing melodies. Produced by Cracker's David Lowery, with Ethan Johns engineering, *Megiddo* delves into crusty topics like underage sex ("Lolita"), fame ("Rock Star"), and blood (the Marc Bolanish "Alive").

"I think I'm obsessed with blood as

lauren hoffman

a metaphor," she explains. "Everytime I use it, it means something different. In 'Blood' it's about the more violent perspective of killing but it also means life. And in 'Alive,' when I say 'I came in bloody and screaming,' that's about birth."

"Persephone," named after the Greek goddess of the underworld, speaks of "kissing me with your forever lips, eyes closed in the love of blood" over humming Chamberlin and a solemn beatbox. The soft-spoken Hoffman insists the song is *not* about vampires. "It's about being freaked out in New Orleans. All those vices down there brought up my demons. I practically killed myself with irresponsibility."

Raised by a yoga instructor and a musician, Lauren Hoffman seems a true rock & roll chile pushing life's boundaries. Has it ever gotten her into trouble? "Well," she laughs, "I don't like to push it that much." —Ken Micallef



Sam Erickson

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World Radio History

newsigning

The mechanics in the curious signing of Florida-bred eccentric Jim White are really quite simple. No mystery at all, in fact. The reclusive warbler initially sang his songs alone in his room, just to please himself. A friend overheard him one day and urged the shy artist to record. So after stumbling across a cheap four-track and an even crummier microphone at a garage sale, he started taping

His chum sent the tape to his L.A. girlfriend, who passed it on to Melanie Ciccone, wife of Joe Henry, manager of Daniel Lanois... "and, oh yeah," White coughs. "A certain somebody's sister." She encouraged him to mail copies to major record labels. Yale Evelev, president of David Byrne's adventurous Luaka Bop imprint, picks up the thread.

"I had called Melanie because [Luaka Bop signing] Zap Mama was wondering if

Daniel Lanois would produce them. We talked, and I asked her what she'd been listening to.

She said, 'Actually, this guy's tape I got... Are you interested in hearing it?' I said yes, so

Jim sends me this tape

with no phone number on it. I really liked it on a musical level, thought it was interesting and challenging. Then David [Byrne] heard it, and he really liked the words. It was a perfect situation. Basically, how we sign things around here is, we play it, discuss it, think about it, then just do it."

White, on the other hand, is still flummoxed. "I play that tape for musicians who've been trying to get deals for years," he chuckles. "They just laugh and say, 'You got signed offa this?' It's the worst-quality tape you've ever heard!"

JIM WHITE

DEBUT ALBUM:

WRONG-EYED JESUS

LABEL:

LUAKA BOP/WARNER

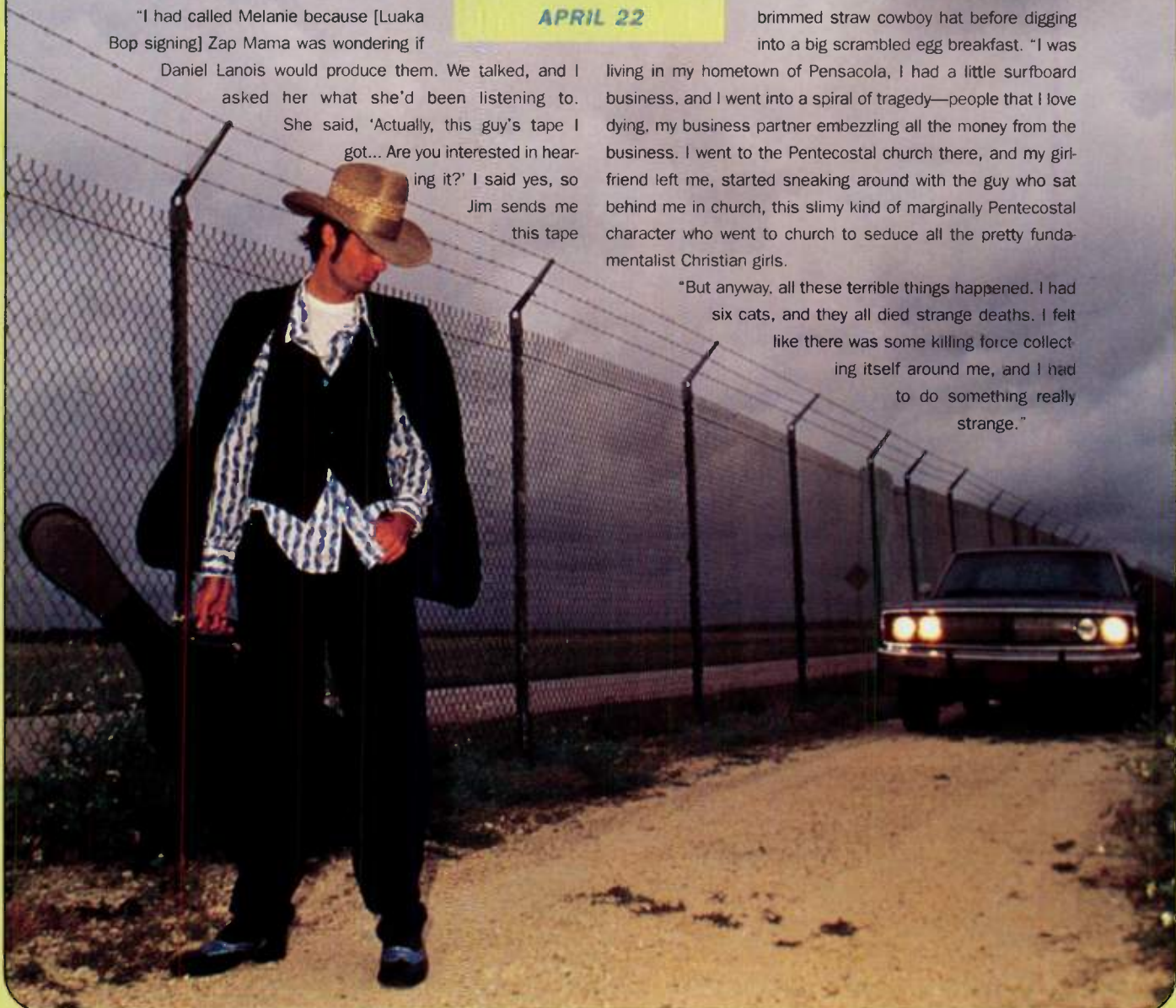
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Sitting down with White to map the tangled trail leading to his debut release *Wrong-Eyed Jesus* is like pulling up a rocking chair in the swampside shack of Uncle Remus. See, it starts like this, draws the whimsical White, removing his limp-brimmed straw cowboy hat before digging into a big scrambled egg breakfast. "I was

living in my hometown of Pensacola, I had a little surfboard business, and I went into a spiral of tragedy—people that I love dying, my business partner embezzling all the money from the business. I went to the Pentecostal church there, and my girlfriend left me, started sneaking around with the guy who sat behind me in church, this slimy kind of marginally Pentecostal character who went to church to seduce all the pretty fundamentalist Christian girls.

"But anyway, all these terrible things happened. I had six cats, and they all died strange deaths. I felt like there was some killing force collecting itself around me, and I had to do something really strange."



So, at his sister's urging, the tall, ruggedly handsome singer moved to New York to test his luck in, of all things, modeling. Soon White wound up in Milan, Zurich, and Amsterdam, the toast of the frou-frou fashion set. "When I was overseas, the three years I was a model, I never went out on a date or anything," he states, almost happily. "I kept to myself. I was unraveling this complicated theology which I'd put together in my brain, so I'd just sit in my

room and read books and play my guitar. I think I had an ascetic mentality: I avoided pleasure at all costs, pursued pleasure wherever I could. Lots of people with money were inviting me to Monte Carlo and London for the horse races, but I never went. My perplexing philosophy was, If I said no to everybody about everything, somehow all the no's would accumulate into one aggregate yes.

"What brought me back was that I saw a lot

of thirty-year-old modeling guys with nowhere to go in the world, so I decided to come back to America and pursue a path that offered me satisfaction in terms of my potential as a human being."

Music, right? Nope. NYU film school, where White completed a feature-length flick called *It's a Beautiful World*, which tells the somber story of an elderly homeless man who, in his romantic correspondence with a French woman, creates the illusion that he's young and good-looking. White financed the movie by driving a cab. Without insurance, he "fell so ill with infections and things" that he nearly died during this period. "And that's when I started doing music again," he declares, finally arriving at our topical destination.

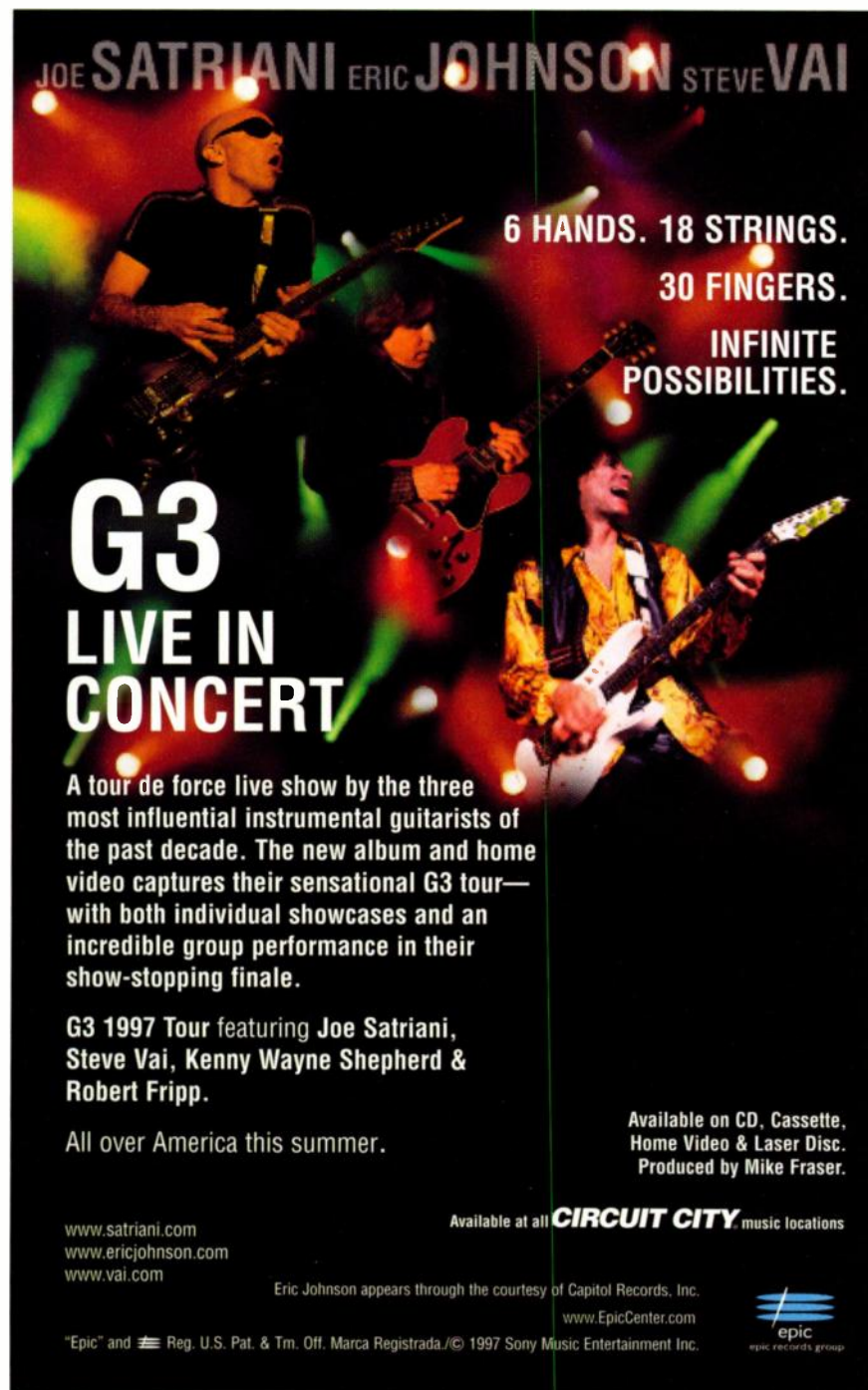
But we don't stay there for long. "I quit music for ten years because of my hand. Got it all chewed up in a bandsaw. See?" He holds up his left hand; its third and fourth digits are markedly thinner, a tad more tendril-like, than the others. "See, I was cutting grooves in these peach lounges at a friend of mine's factory ..." And *poof*, the man is off on another tangent.

Paddling down White's stream of consciousness gives us a hint of what to expect from *Wrong-Eyed Jesus*. It's a record you can't dive into without preparation. His supple, otherworldly, often falsetto-fluffy singing and skewed, weird-chorded acoustic melodies provide the album's miasmic foundation. He runs through lyrical novellas that are part Southern Gothic and part pulpit-pounding religious metaphor. If *Wise Blood's* Hazel Motes sang folk songs, they'd probably come out sounding like this.

White says he's "appropriated the symbols of Southern Pentecostal Christianity and tried to honor them as well as transcend them." Both his film and his music bear witness to one of his prime theological theories, he adds. "Which is that when you have a destiny, it's your destiny. If you try to change it, you will only accelerate your destiny. At any given moment there are a million possible futures. Now, some of those possible futures lead you to a car wreck in Texas and you die six months later, while other futures lead you to great fame and success."

And for White to reach his destiny, "I had to get my feet wet in a very dirty river."

—Tom Lanham



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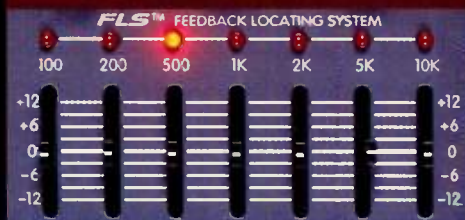


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The Poetry and Passion of ***Laura Nyro***

By Suzanne Vega

I was eleven years old when I fell passionately in love with Laura Nyro. I never knew much about her in real life—how old she was, what her nationality was, that kind of thing. I stared at her album covers and saw a voluptuous woman with a serious face, dark eyes and skin, a full mouth, and a mane of lustrous brown hair pouring over her shoulders. I loved her for the weariness I saw in her face. There she was, sadly smoking a cigarette in the shadows, hugging an old man with a beard, or wearing a black dress and fishnet stockings while some guy hugged her ample hips. There were other pictures too, of city children in a playground in the rain, a young teenage girl with her arms folded as she walked in the street. It looked just like my neighborhood and those kids looked just like us. So she was singing to us.

Her music could be like jazz, or like gospel, with the feel of Broadway show tunes thrown in, or the dissonance of Satie or Berg or Debussy. It wasn't like anything else I'd ever heard. It made you feel happy and wise and sad all at once.

What were her songs about? Love and politics, like most songs, but written in almost a private language of idiosyncratic poetry. She sang about drugs, poverty, sex, love, freedom, and street life, with references to landlords and hustlers and the buying and selling of things. She inhabited a sensual world; you sensed she was a woman of uninhibited appetites, singing of "mainstream marzipan sweet" and the "superride inside my lovething."

Some words seemed to have a special meaning for her. For example, I think the word "stone" described a spiritually barren condition she would find herself in, an unfeeling and cold place, as in "going down the stoney end." The word "devil" appeared frequently too, not as an abstraction but as someone who "is smiling at me, I heard my bones cry, Devil why's it got to be, Devil played with my brother, Devil drove my mother, now the tears in the gutter are flooding the sea." In other words, the Devil was someone you saw every day, who lived on your street, who you battled with on a daily basis and sometimes lost to.

The opposite of this dark place was a place of "glory," and "fury" was the way to get there. "Glory" was a world of love, of peace, of freedom, and of a religious exaltation that you could achieve through being high ("Stoned Soul Picnic"), drinking ("Down By the

David Gahr

Grapevine"), being in love ("Time and Love"), or loving your fellow man ("Save the Country").

"Save the Country" was one of her better-known political songs, where she reflected the issues of the Sixties and Seventies but with personal and unpredictable methods. She wrote no tiresome diatribes against a faceless "establishment" but built her message on the allegorical qualities of specific people:

Come on people/Sons and mothers/Keep the dream/Of the two young brothers/And the pre-

cious king/He loved the people to sing/Babes in the blinking sun/Sang we shall overcome

These lines obviously refer to the Kennedy brothers and to Martin Luther King, but here she transforms them into characters in her inner world by not referring to them by name. Which is what she seemed to do with the men in her life as well, transforming them according to their roles in her life as "Luckie," "Captain Saint Lucifer," "Tom Cat," and various lords, masters, and captains. When she did give them

names they were ordinary ones: Joe, Bill, Tom. Eli was as exotic as she got.

For a woman who wrote "confessional" music (her second album was called *Eli and the Thirteenth Confession*), she left us remarkably few of the kind of petty details that define people's personal lives. Who was she sleeping with? Was he famous? Did she like women too? You never knew for sure from the music.

She did two things for me. She recognized and named me in her music ("sweet kid in hunger slums"). She wrote about the world I lived in but infused it with so much passion that ordinary things—the weather, the river, the streets, the kids—glowed with a spiritual energy. Though we were plain ordinary nasty kids, when she sang she made us beautiful. New York was as wild and romantic in her sight as the moors were to Emily Brontë: "Now the fury and the broken thunder's come to match my raging soul."

And she expressed things I knew and felt but couldn't express for myself: the fear and shame of illicit sex ("Gibson Street"), the expectations and cocky confidence of being a teenage girl ("Blackpatch"), the thrill of desiring someone ("Blowin' Away"), the hope for peace for humanity ("Save the Country"), the wish to face death without fear and the desire to be free ("And When I Die"), the urgent need to be a whole human being in this life ("The Confession").

I can hear my mama crying

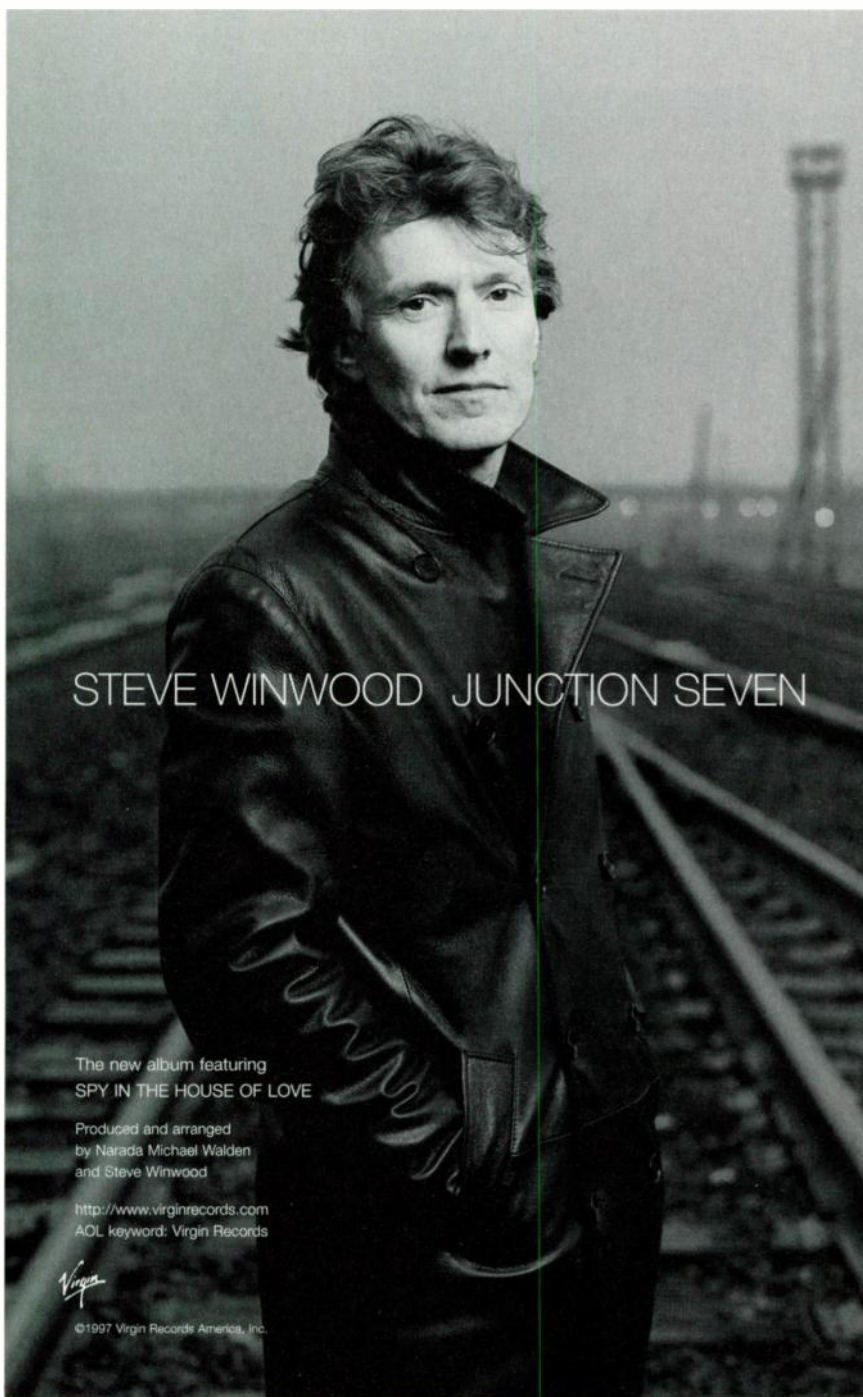
I can hear my daddy through his grave

Little girl of all the daughters

You were born a woman not a slave

I never met her. After *Christmas and the Beads of Sweat* I lost track of her career, though I would hear that she played in this club or that venue and saw her picture on the wall here and there. I heard rumors that she had moved to Connecticut and had a lot of children, though the newspapers, when she died, reported only one, a son. I was shocked to read how young she was. She was 49, which means that back when I was twelve she was only 24. She was so much wiser than her years, a sage maternal figure even then.

Contributors: Suzanne Vega, like Laura Nyro, graduated from New York's High School of the Performing Arts. She has recorded a number of critically acclaimed albums. Laura Nyro succumbed to ovarian cancer on April 8, 1997.



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The idea of Chick Corea, senior statesman, just doesn't register. Yet there he was at the Blue Note last April, distinguished in his black shirt with the buttoned collar, an enigmatic Cheshire smile on his face, dropping juicy chords and sprinkly little runs behind solos from trumpeter Wallace Roney, saxophonist Kenny Garrett, and bassist Christian McBride. No writhing, groaning, or gasping; none of those contortions he executed behind his Minimoog in the early days of RTF. Back then the idea of jolting jazz with the energy and electricity of rock was daring enough to offend some old-guard snoots.

But Chick has settled down. Like many of today's young players, he probes the past for insight into the jazz of the future. *Remembering Bud Powell*, Corea's newest release on his own Stretch/Concord label, harks back to one of his childhood inspirations.

This retrenchment reverses the old RTF method of tapping contemporary sources. It is, however, easier to grouse about this when you're not actually listening to these guys play. At the Blue Note we found ourselves being blown away by Corea's quintet. Who could complain about "direction" or "unhealthy archival tendencies" with Roney and Garrett burning and Roy Haynes churning?

We came away most impressed by Corea himself, underplaying in the somewhat infrequent spaces left by the other musicians. Chick knows this road well, and while it might not feel as exotic as avant-garde or fusion routes, it still gets you just about anywhere you want to go.

What are the lessons of Bud Powell? We asked Chick late the following afternoon as he greeted us at the Blue Note with a cappuccino in hand and a cheerful "Good morning."

**Chick Corea
Examines the Message
of a Master**

The Meaning of Bud Powell

by **robert L. doerschuk**

Now that you've researched Bud Powell so extensively, can you reflect on what distinguishes him as a composer?

He tried a lot of different things. For instance, he wrote tunes based on standard structures to be elaborated upon in the usual improvising style of theme and variations. And the way he elaborated his compositions showed that he was interested in trying out other structures. If you analyze the tune "Mediocre," from the Verve set, it's almost a free approach. He's got a little melodic motif that he gets going, and a sort of movement of harmony: You can tell on that particular track that the bass player was trying to keep the same harmonies in each eight-bar phrase, while Bud was moving them around, trying different stuff each time. Even on standard material, the way he improvised opened a lot of musical doors toward things to come.

Do any recordings of standards come to mind as an example?

His rendition of "Like Someone in Love" was one of the first times Bud played what some people call a plodding ballad, although when I hear that said that tells me those people didn't quite get it. It was an approach to playing a romantic piece with incredible depth. One of the mechanical factors was that the tempo was extremely slow, the embellishments were kept to a minimum, and the attack on the piano created this wonderful darkness.

With so many of his contemporaries seeking expression at incredibly up tempos, this makes it clear how original Bud's approach could be.

Exactly so. He never placed technique before communication. His lyricism always showed through, even though it's very hard to hold a note on a piano during a slow piece. On the piano, like the vibraphone or the drums, you can't push air through a reed or a vocal cord to become lyrical, but there are various ways of overcoming that to become lyrical. Bud did this the most direct way, which was to play that note with so much passion that the emotion could seep through without your having to add other notes.

This isn't as simple as just playing the melody. You're talking about being selective and spare in your improvisation as well.

Right. When I say that Bud played melodically, I'm referring to every note he plays, not just the theme of the song. Everything is melodic. I find that very often people who are accustomed to listening to classical music or pop music will get a little confused with jazz. Sometimes they're trying to identify a melody, something they can whistle or hum along with. In fact, whistling along to jazz takes quite an educated ear. You can get to the point where you can hear the lyricism in every note of John Coltrane's "A Love



Supreme." The way to get there is to notice how the group plays together, how the drums and the bass work with one another, and realize that most of what you're hearing is not set down with notes. If you get into that, it can lead you inside that process of making up your own statements in music.

When you're improvising with a drummer who can interact with you in real-time, how do you think differently than if you were playing against a fixed rhythm?

Well, first of all, even a rhythm that has a backbeat doesn't have to be "fixed." Really good funk and rock drummers will have nuance. No one can tolerate the same thing over and over again; there's got to be some variation. Now, machine music does fulfill some kind of a need for dancers. You hear boom, boom, boom, boom, and that gets your body going. But when you come away from that experience, what you remember isn't the boom, boom, boom, boom but the fun you had while you were dancing.

As a player, though, don't you take a different approach to playing over that kind of a beat than you would in playing interactively with a more jazz-oriented drummer?

In both cases you have to play from points of alignment. That's what the composition does: It brings the group together on points of alignment, which can get more or less elaborate. Very generally, the act of composition serves no other purpose than to bring musicians together to play. In orchestral classical music, Béla Bartók sits there with an orchestra in his mind. That's his vehicle; his pencil is wagging down the page, and he's blowing, and he constructs it like a scientist. In jazz you take it the other way: You use the composition as a starting point for improvisation.

So what role does the song take in guiding an extended improvisation? It isn't a source for the kind of theme-and-variation that guided composers and improvisers in the classical tradition.

That's true. A variation is a change, so you've got to change from something that's been established. The way we improvise in this group, even though we use a cyclical form, is as a straight line, from beginning to end. It uses the form as a platform to agree where the phrase ends. It's more rhythmic than anything else, actually. If we're playing a 12-bar form, the downbeats are different than if we

about? The fact is that art culture is not developmental; it's really individual to individual. That drummer who's playing in 1940 will be different from that other drummer who's also playing in 1940. Just compare the way rhythm is pulsed by Max Roach and Elvin Jones; they're pretty close in age. So it's not so much about the age of these guys; it's the individual.

But what if you go back to the early Twenties? There's no way anyone could have played back then the way Roy Haynes does now; the style had to evolve from what Baby Dodds was doing to what drummers are doing today.

That's true, but the method you use to evaluate these things determines what kind of reward you'll get. When you evaluate in terms of evolution, that puts you into culture rather than individuals. You can analyze Baby Dodds as an individual artist or as a part of the society he lived in. I've settled on the non-evolutionary way of looking at things because it gives me more truth. People tend to look at things in terms of evolution because it's easier. But if I look at the artist individually I can say, "This guy sees life this way. He made these choices." Then I can add the evolutionary look, like, "Monk listened to Duke Ellington, and Bud listened to Monk, and Chick listened to Bud, Monk, and Duke."

With all the work you've put into understanding Bud Powell, have you ever done a similar examination of the Chick Corea style?

You know, I avoid doing that, because it would have an introverting effect—something like trying to figure out how you walk. My constant effort is to try to find something new, to construct whatever I'm playing spontaneously, in the moment. That, to me, is what music is all about.



play a 32-bar form. If we play a piece that has A-A-B-A construction, it'll have different stress points than if we play something that has an A-A-B form.

With the exceptions of you and Roy Haynes, the guys in this band represent the youngest generation of jazz performers. Does their playing differ from that of musicians who date from the Bud Powell era?

My thoughts on that subject are that we're trained to think in terms of evolution, like this generation passes this tradition on to the next, then that changed when TV came in, and blah, blah, blah. But if you study history on a broad scale, you'll find that we're stuck with a lot of old ideas that I consider quite unworkable—the ideas of Darwin and evolution, for example. How does this relate to what we're talking

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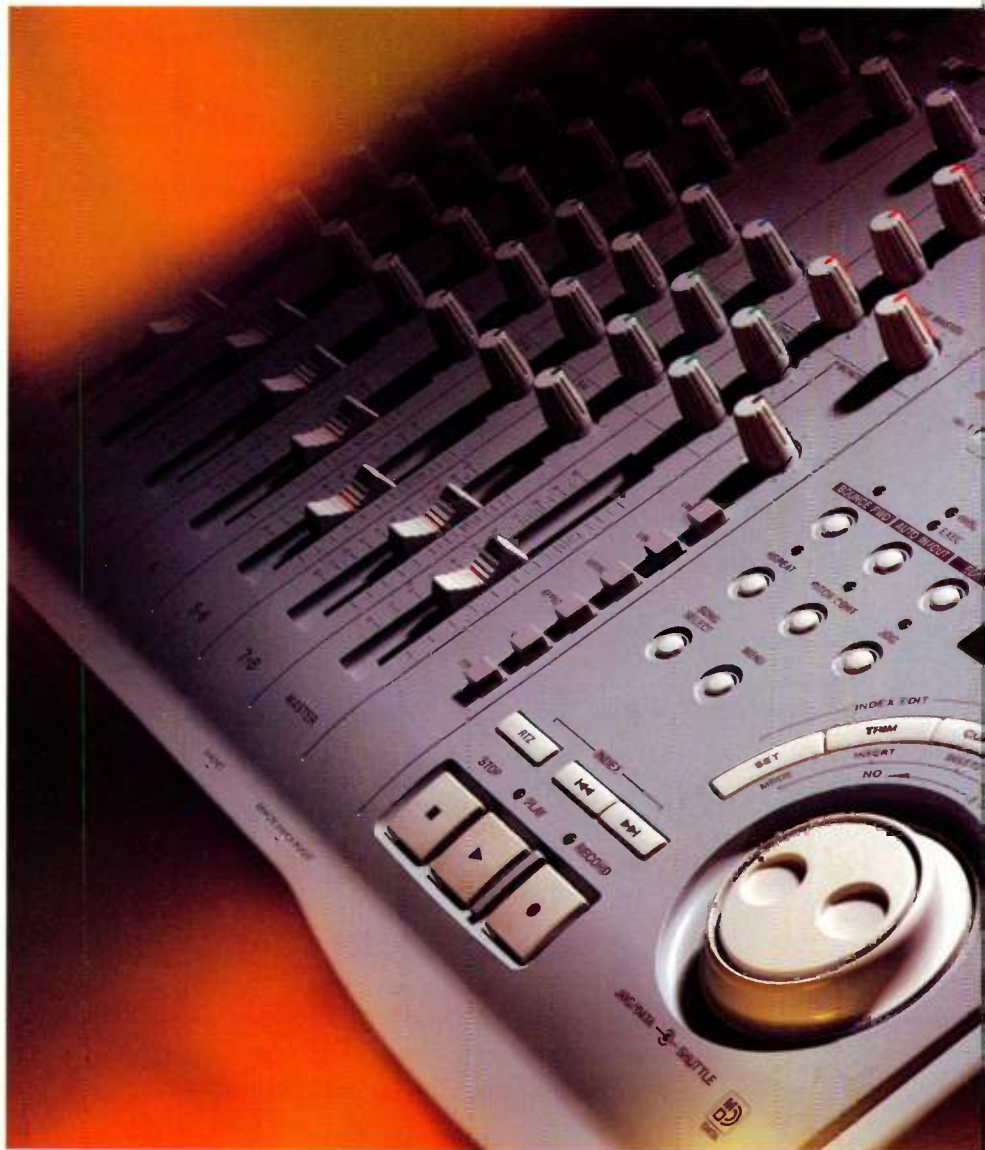


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Onstage, Backstage, and Behind the Scenes
with the AEROSMITH Road Show

ANATOMY of a TOUR

OVER THE RIVERS AND THROUGH THE WOODS, TO JOE PERRY'S HOUSE WE GO. The white and drifting snow has recently given way to a shimmering New England spring, and the large Cape-style shingled wood home where Perry resides in a small, pretty town south of Boston, with a pond and a grassy lawn surrounded by trees with budding leaves, is all sooth and serenity. • Inside the house, however, all is Aerosmith. Upstairs a dead sea cucumber has lodged itself in the filter system of a tropical aquarium, poisoning the water, and fish tank guys are struggling manfully to save some of the family pets. Down in Perry's basement home studio, the analog equivalent of an erotic dream, Joe is slumped in a chair by a classic Neve board while his voluble alter ego Steven Tyler marshals the phone to stave off the latest attack from angry Hindus. Seems the cover of *Nine Lives*, featuring a figure with a cat's head dancing on the heads of several snakes, and which had been contracted as an original art work, has turned out to be a knockoff of a religious icon, and certain representa-

By Mark Rowland Photos by Kevin Mazur

tives of said religion have declared themselves un-flattered. The Hare Krishnas were mollified by a large chunk of change, but now more orthodox types want the album cover withdrawn. Tyler and Perry, who genuinely dig Indian art, are at once stunned and mortified.

"We're getting hate mail over the Net and death threats to Sony," Perry says. "They say it's like putting a cat head on Christ on the cross and then putting a bikini on him. I mean, is that a religious icon?"

he asks, pointing to an antique wall tapestry that sure enough features a figure dancing on the head of some snakes. "It's part of the art I have hanging around the house." He shrugs a quick surrender. "So the records are collectors' items now."

Tyler hangs up the phone and shakes his head. "It's not enough to write the songs and work your body out so you look like an Adonis—now you gotta be a lawyer," he says. "But I really don't want to offend anybody."

Maybe not, but you sure have a way of attracting drama.

"You don't know the half of it," Tyler shoots back. "It's like a wall burning and here's one flame I can see shooting over the top. But it still comes back to this," he brightens up. "Gee, I didn't have to get high today—it's been ten years—and gee, we made a good album. These days we're into workaholism."

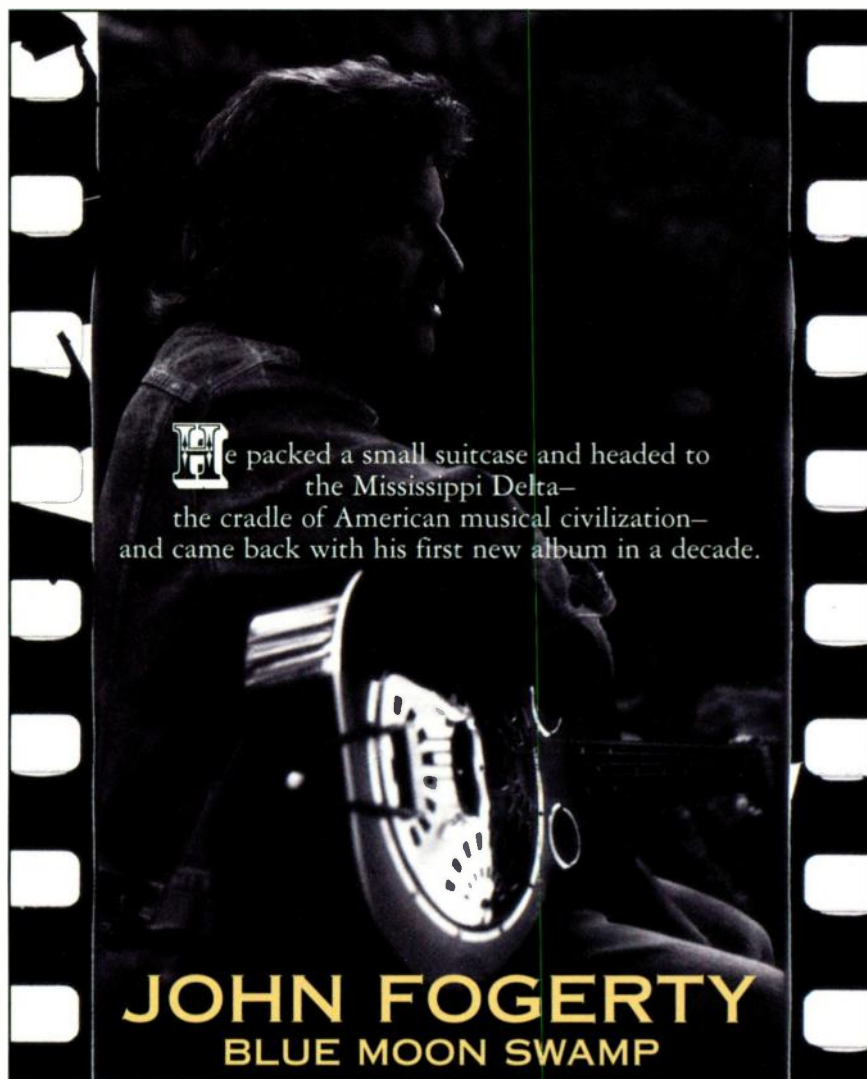
"Never stops," Perry agrees, with a wan smile. "And all I want to do is play my guitar."

He'll soon be doing plenty of that. In seven days Perry's and Tyler's band, which of course also includes guitarist Brad Whitford, bassist Tom Hamilton, and drummer Joey Kramer, will go to Europe for a tour scheduled to traverse four or five continents and close to two years. And the band is ready. After all, *Nine Lives* entailed the making of not one but two versions of the album, first with producer Glen Ballard, then Kevin Shirley; the temporary loss of drummer Kramer to a severe bout of depression; and the expectations of a major label which signed them to a multi-zillion dollar deal five years ago, back when smart guys in the biz figured Aerosmith would be way too old to ever deliver it, and has since been waiting, sometimes less than patiently, for the first platinum-sized return on that advance. Not to mention the hiring of a new manager and fighting allegations from the old one that they'd strayed back into the kind of drug-related habits that had nearly sunk the band once before.

But after 25 years together, Aerosmith seems naturally attuned to that philosophy once espoused by Ike and Tina Turner: They never do anything nice and easy, they do it nice and rough. At least on the road, where Aerosmith has long since made its rep as one of the great live rock experiences, nice and rough makes good sense.

"Everyone in the band may be someone else by themselves," says Tyler, "but as a band we make this incredible machine. The fact that he's someone else at home with his wife is irrelevant to the big machine. That's the beauty of being in a band. And," he adds modestly, "Aerosmith at their least is better than most bands at their best."

"There is a certain magic," Perry agrees.



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"I don't think of any of us as a 'musician's musician,' you know. But we learned to play together. Steven and I play with a lot of great drummers when we jam, but nobody makes the machine like Joey. Whether it's because we've been together so many years or we're able to capitalize on our best qualities, you can tell the difference between that and a bunch of studio musicians who get together for a tour—they're all competent, but here there's an energy.

"Plus, we are fans of rock & roll. We know what it's like to be sitting in the audience and hearing that first clang of an electric guitar, boot heels walking under the curtain, and all that drive and excitement; the goose bumps when you hear that first drum hit. One of the most amazing things I ever saw was when Jimmy Page did 'Dazed and Confused' and the lasers made a pyramid over him. It's hokey but it's amazing. So sure, we could just go out there and play. But we want to give people

a show."

When it comes to putting on a show, Aerosmith is not like you and me. For one thing, theirs costs more money. For another, it's a beast which has evolved into its present form over decades of learn-and-burn experience. Stadium/ Arenarock may well be a dinosaur on the verge of extinction, but as any major paleontologist'll tell you, the most spectacular dinosaurs were the ones who came last.

And unlike some of Aerosmith's brethren, this year's model is largely self-conceived.

"All shows have elements that are the same," observes tour production manager Mark Hogue. "You have trucks, you have sound, you have lights. What's unique about Aerosmith is that they all have insight about what they want to see in their production. Most of the time with a band you call up three or four set designers, lighting designers, and you say, 'We're going on the road,' and they give you designs and you pick one. This is different—it's a team effort to get the band their vision."

For Aerosmith, the vision stemmed naturally from the Indian motifs and relatively exotic musical flavors of *Nine Lives* ("I'd like to say we planned it that way from the start," Perry admits, "but it's just knowing when to go with the flow"), while their hands-on approach stems partly from frustrations on their previous tour in support of the album *Get A Grip*. On that one, the visual centerpiece—a four-hundred-thousand-dollar lighting truss that was supposed to turn itself into a giant logo at the climax of each performance—turned out to be a clanking, dangerous mess. "Every time we tried to use it the pieces would start swinging around and banging against each other and stuff would fall out over the stage," Tom Hamilton remembers. "Finally one night Joe was out there cranking away and little bits of metal were falling around him. It was like, okay, that's the end of that."

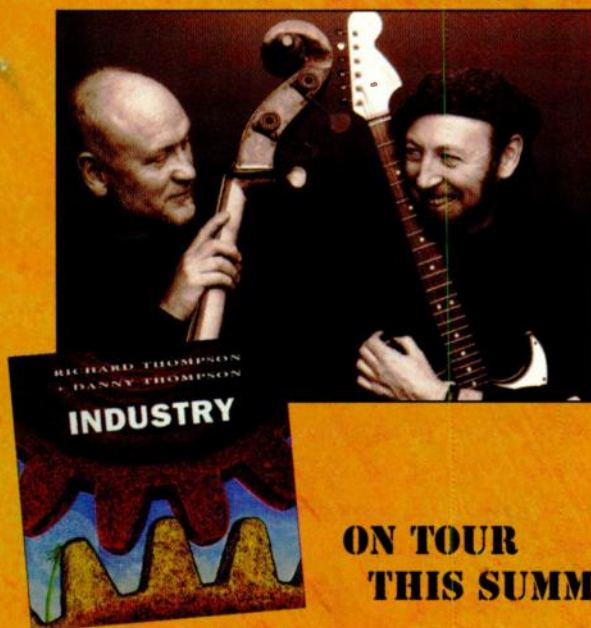
"The phrase that came to me at that time was 'sold a bill a goods,' Tyler adds. "I realized that in the past, we were trying to write songs and record and mix and master them, and by the way, while your son was just born and your house burned down,

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can you come in between six-thirty and seven and go through some designs for the stage? So the only solution is to have enough time to watch it being built every juncture of the way. 'Cause if the stage is the house we'll be living in for the next two years, I'd like the window to be near where I can see through it and the toilet to be near the bed."

For the stage design, Aerosmith enlisted Marla Winehoff, a designer who'd put together a lavish, nine-room concept for the band's album release party in New York. "We'd already put it out to guys who'd done [stage designs] for other bands like the Rolling Stones, but Marla really captured the vibe—not just the Indian motif but the sense of macabre and other things," Tyler says. "We still keep our hand in it, but the trick is to attract talented people and let them have their say."

Winehoff describes the stage setup as "their idea of an Indian boudoir," with props including Sari fabrics, hand-painted motifs, Kama Sutra cats, giant inflatable snakes, and "the hugest tassel in the world, which Steven gets to play with." Her mis-

TIPS

from the pros

Even your garden-variety garage band can learn something from the heavyweights on the Aerosmith crew. Here's what some of the key techs have to say: • **Marla Winehoff, set designer:** "People are sick of the same old thing: Don't be restricted by what's typical for rock shows. Last night I saw Morphine at a club, and they had these two big urns with a queer flower arrangement, almost the type you'd use at a funeral. It was so simple, yet nice—they might have spent \$100—and it suited them." • **Chris Roberts, stage manager & club owner:** "One of my pet peeves is bands turning up late. Nothing pisses off a club owner more. You may have a day job, but if you get there early you will sound better. Don't be doing the sound check

sion is to balance the need for large-scale stuff that can grab the attention of arena fans in the nosebleed sections with "packa-

during your set." • **Mark Hogue, production manager:** "Don't believe everything you read. You see all these ads about the greatest whiz-bang toy that you need to do this or that, and it's not necessarily true. Good music is made by good players on good equipment. Master the basics, then move on." • **Kevin Elson, sound man, producer:** "Be able to reproduce what you do in the studio when you play live. Bands sometimes think of themselves too much and not the crowd. You want to reproduce the excitement of your record, not limp through versions of songs. Also, when you play a lot, everyone improves—so get out and play!" • **Tom Hamilton, musician:** "Soundwise, you've got to accept the weather you're sailing in. It won't always be a bright sunny day through perfect sound. I see people get flustered trying to get the sound perfect. Get it where you're playing tight, but let it also be about all those other things: communication with the audience, enthusiasm, and celebration. Look at all these people who are in a room because they love music."

bility—taking it all down and putting it all together for two years. I think that's why people do inflatables, even though most of them are kind of hideous. Of course ours will be cool," she adds quickly. "But everything has to break down into 45-inch increments and fit into a trunk."

So the Spinal Tap version of Stonehenge was actually a good thing?

"Yeah, the whole time I looked at the specs I kept thinking, now is that 18 feet or 18 inches?" she laughs. "And it takes time to put it all together properly. You don't want another Spinal Tap where the pod doesn't open. You know, they're so sensitive, maybe you shouldn't quote Spinal Tap in this article, you know what I mean?"

Sure, no problem.

"But I think looks do count, and hopefully the advice isn't coming from the girlfriend with bad taste. In the end it's all for the musicians, and fans the next day will say, 'Oh yeah, did ya hear "Dude (Looks Like A Lady)"'—but they'll also talk about the giant snakes. And out of New York, people don't get a chance to see much live theater or opera; in a strange way these shows are really the only live sets you get to experience growing up. So it's great if we can come up with something amazing and wonderful and give them their money's worth. Eye food is as important as ear

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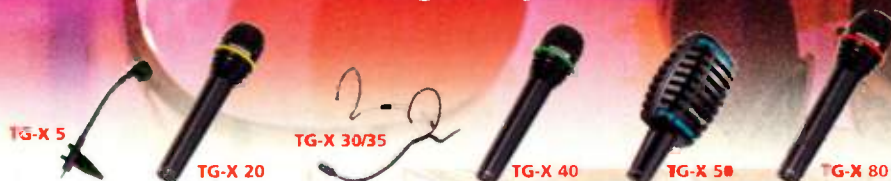
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food.”

To fine-tune the visuals, Winehoff has been working with the band's lighting director Jim Chapman at a large sound stage in Hartford, Connecticut, where the band's rehearsing. It's part of an attempt to duplicate the dynamics of an arena show, in which ever more complex light and sound systems do battle with spacious, reverberating barns. Movable trusses and computerized Vari-Lites allow for more range and sophistication than before (though

Chapman notes there will still be a place in the show for spare, Kabuki-like simplicity), and as production manager Hogue points out, computer-directed lighting allows for a more consistent show from stop to stop.

But getting the sound right can be tricky. That chore falls to Kevin Elson, a producer and engineer who took over the sound board in the middle of the *Get A Grip* tour after people noticed that the band he was working for, Mr. Big, was getting a better tone than the headliners. “We’d hear,

‘It’s the P.A.’ and we’d wonder how come Mr. Big sounds so good before we go on,” Brad Whitford recalls. “Of course, in the early days we were famous for having bad sound. It’s still impossible in most buildings to get it near right, but we’re making a better effort.”

From Elson's point of view, “mixing the songs is the easy part.” The tough part is trying to enhance what took months to create in the studio. “A lot of vocals on a record you just can’t cover live, so you try to do other things, make something jump with an echo or a delay, so that it will come up in a different way. Some things that are dry on the record I’ll make completely wet.” For a live “Taste of India,” for instance, Elson gives the guitars and drums a heavier sound to replace some of the textures that Indian musicians contribute on the recording. For older songs like “Sweet Emotion,” he stays more true to form, “but you start paring things in the midst of the songs, just to make it different for people that have been hearing the band live for 15 or 20 years.”

Elson praises the development of newer speaker systems: “Since the Eighties the companies are hiring better people and the processing is much cleaner.” For this tour, he’ll oversee an EAW system with about eighty or ninety boxes in a 360 setup, with two large rows in front and clusters in the rear and on the sides. “In a really bad hall I’ll concentrate on the rhythm of the drum kit and the vocals, because that’s where you start to get some clarification of what the song is. And Steven says just put me in there, you know, I just want to be part of the band. Which is the way they are on the records—maybe even lower there than I’d put him. He wants to make sure it won’t be a vocal-oriented concert, and I try to make the songs sound like they’re coming off the record as much as possible.” Keyboardist Robert Irwin has been hired to augment the band onstage, but there are no tapes or sequences: “This is a live rock & roll show.”

For Elson, new sheds tend to sound better than old: “There aren’t the big gaps there used to be. But it’s tough. A lot of times you’re mixing it on the floor and by the time it gets up to the rafters there’s no low end and things are bouncing around. And of course the sound changes when people file in; it’s more bright when it’s cool



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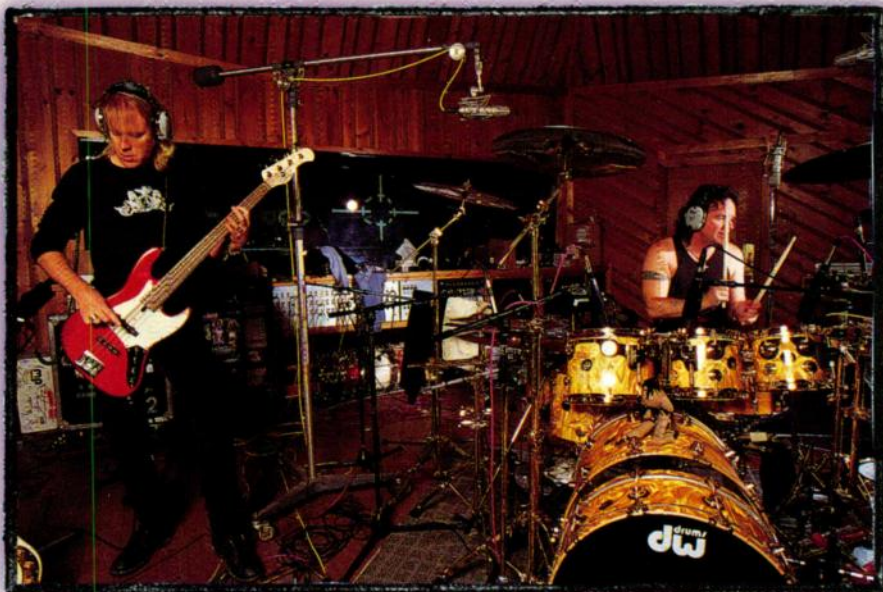
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and empty. You can make some adjustments during the support act. Usually by the first two songs you're pretty much squared up."

Elson heads a six-man sound crew, part of about 30 full-time roadies and supplemented by another 24 local hires to assist on each setup. On a typical show day, stage manager Chris Roberts arrives at the venue around eight in the morning, meets the local crew chief, and allocates the local crew to assist lights, sound, carpentry—T-shirt colors I.D. each department. "The rigging will come in first, then light rigs, orchestra sound—the carpenters an hour later, and last but not least our equipment." For Roberts, the trick is keeping a flow without clogging the lanes or sacrificing safety. "It's like conducting a symphony, and when everyone works together you have a nice overture."

The band members have their own techs—Joe Perry plays at least a dozen different guitars a night, for instance, and his tech, Jim Survis, changes all the strings before each show—who perform together in the early afternoon to help Elson get his



sound levels. Around four, Aerosmith arrives for a sound check, and Roberts walks them around the stage. "By then you want it ready for the show. I point out anything Steven should know and they let us know what they want. And then we bend as far backwards as we can to make it happen," he laughs. Meanwhile, he points out,

"Mark Hogue is advancing other shows. You've got to stay about three shows ahead of the shows you're doing. You do everything you can to make life smooth."

And what's the key to that?

"I think that we're all adults on this tour," Roberts responds. "A lot of us have worked together with other bands, so you foresee the usual problems. This is my first time working with Aerosmith, and these guys are good because they'll listen to you. So you still have a good time. You all become a family. Which is important—cause we'll be working and socializing and traveling together for the next eighteen months to two years."

So what's the biggest misconception about the Aerosmith of today?

"That we're Stones lookalikes," says Steven Tyler.

"That we're this crusading health band," says Joe Perry. "Give me a break."

"That we're stupid," says Tom Hamilton. "That when people write about our records they say it's crotch-rock, dumb, cheap and trashy. Of course," he adds, "part of that is cool."

In other words, too much warm and fuzzy talk about Aerosmith's maturity misses the point. Yeah, they've survived by adopting a certain semblance of adult behavior over the years, or vice-versa. But they've also hung on to their inner brat, the one that thrives on conflict. So Tyler bristles at rumors of renewed drug use, while Perry chafes at the notion they've gone vegetarian; and they're both still rankled

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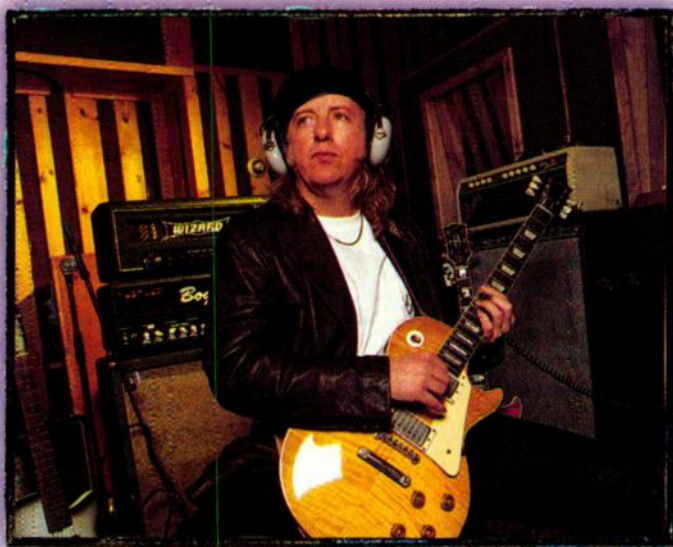
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about getting dissed by critics while they were filling arenas back in the Seventies, even as they're being lionized as legends while filling arenas in the Nineties. It's part of the fuel that keeps them burning. That, and some surprisingly restless ambition.

"Keeping it together is probably the healthy result of some not too-healthy compulsions," offers Tom Hamilton. "It's probably the result of a childhood thing of wanting to duplicate what was heroic in the bands we grew up listening to; maybe the feeling of not quite having done it yet is what keeps us wanting to make another album."

"There were a lot of things we didn't like about the last record," Perry admits. "A lot of songs that just didn't do it," he says drily, "and nobody asked us to. So this time I felt like we had to stand behind

everything. It isn't just, if it has a good beat and you can dance to it—we can sit here and write five of those right now. It has to



go through a lot of things before we feel it's good enough for a record. That's why we're down here writing so many songs."

And why writing partners Tyler and Perry spent more time collaborating with

several other songwriting pros, including Glen Ballard, Mark Hudson, and Desmond Child, the result being that every song on *Nine Lives* carries at least one outside co-credit. Shaking up the partnership was a means to getting out of familiar grooves that could turn into ruts. "I can eat peanut butter and jelly forever, but there are other things," says Tyler, whose adventurous approach to melody was always more Beatles than Stones. "Mark Hudson brought the garlic and the cardamom."

"Some of the interviews we *don't* do are about how drugs were wonderful," he goes on. "The Yaqui Way of Knowledge—getting out of your own way. You know how, when a song is fading sometimes you'll hear an instrument doing something different than in the song? You know why? Because he knows the song is over, and now he's taking risks—he's *playing*."

One appraisal of *Nine Lives* is that the original Glen Ballard-produced sessions in Florida, recorded with Steven Ferrone on drums, pushed the band into new directions but ultimately didn't sound like Aerosmith. So the tracks were scrapped, Joey Kramer came back, and producer Kevin Shirley returned the focus to what Aerosmith did best—hard rockin' in rhythm. "They don't call Kevin 'Caveman' for nothin'," Perry notes. "Where most people would use a stiletto, he uses a two-by-four. Which is good if you're trying to record the live energy in the room, that hair on the back of your neck vibe."

"They were two radically different approaches," Brad Whitford observes. "Glen's was more complex—a lot of tracks in digital, some in analog, he had three or four assistants. Plus, Joey wasn't there. Kevin's was the garage approach with a 24-track machine and old Neve console—just set up the mics and start playing. No effects, no samples. It's more of what the band really sounds like."

But Tyler, while giving Shirley his due, expresses sharp reservations about the finished product. "All this shows me is that

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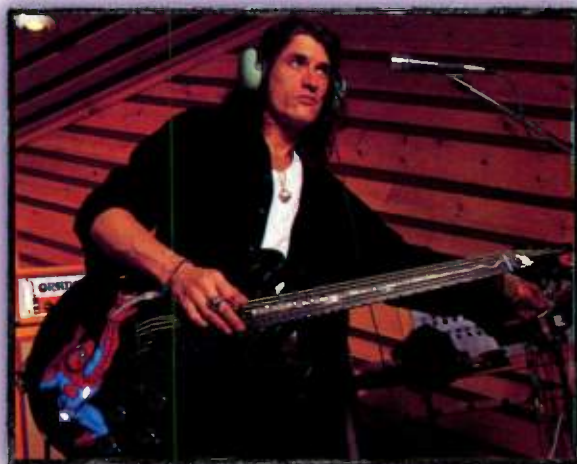
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Aerosmith can still go out in their underwear and be great," he says. "My rub with Kevin Shirley is that there's more to us than raw energy—if that's what you want, just don't put gates on the drums, all right? Let's work on the harmony and get some loops in there and be something other than what Aerosmith used to be—but see, that's what everyone was afraid of. I was willing to take the risk. For me, some of the great parts that aren't on the album are on those Florida sessions; the joints going from part to part were a lot smoother."

"There were four songs Kevin was totally right on, 'Nine Lives' being one of them; that needed everyone in the room from the get go. But 'Kiss Your Past Goodbye,' which is more ethereal and takes you into outer space, didn't need that application. I felt a little constrained by the process. But it leaves a little something for the next record."

In other words, a conflict to look forward to. Then again, as a description of this band's career, the title *Nine Lives* seems like an understatement.

"I'd say twenty," Perry figures.



"Way past nine," Tyler agrees. "But the things that come to those who wait may be the things left by those who got there first. We've already come full circle. Now we're

picking up our dregs, and somebody found it and polished up the turd."

"You know, we made the demo for 'Living on the Edge' over there at that board," Perry says, pointing to a small, adjoining room in the basement studio. "And at the end of the day I brought Billie [his wife] downstairs and she was crying because to think that a song that heavy could come out of the basement...to write a song that people are gonna be singing in Japan is a pretty amazing thing, and that doesn't escape us when we're on stage and looking around—that this was another spew from the basement from a year ago. Just playing your guitars like a thousand other musicians. So where does it come from?"

"I don't think we ever feel like we got it totally right," he says. "This time, I think we got closer than we have in a while."

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PLAYING

on the edge

by Mark Rowland

JOE PERRY expects to take about 30 guitars on the road, but perhaps not too surprisingly, he expresses a particular fondness for Gibson's Joe Perry signature Les Paul guitar. "The amount of money I get is negligible," he assures. "But I took the best of all the Les Pauls that I've played, different feels and neck sizes and fret sizes, and put them all into one." Those features include pickups wound to his specifications, a fatter neck, and tone circuitry built into the guitar for a wah-wah effect which can be triggered onboard. Other axes include a Les Paul Custom with gold sparkle, a '59 flame top, and a Standard model with a swirly green paint job, Fender Strats of various vintage, a custom Washburn archtop with snake inlay on the finger-

board, a Gibson Firebird 7 with three pickups—all with Gibson strings—and a Chandler lap steel, for that famous Aerosmith Hawaiian thing. Effects include a DigiTech Whammy pedal, a couple of Chandler digital delays, a Crybaby wah-wah, and a ProCo Rat distortion box. They'll be played through Wizard amplifiers ("a really good cross between a Fender and a Marshall"), along with Fender ToneMasters and '65 black-faced Fender Twins, and connected up via Monster Cables: "We used them all during the recording and it really makes a big difference." • **TOM HAMILTON** plays Sadowsky basses, including a five-string: "it has a long scale so the string tension is loose and doesn't beat up on my fingers." He employs an Aguilar preamp ("very sweet sounding") and Trace Elliot heads: "My signal chain is very weird this time. I'm obviously going to a DI and somewhere in there is a [Tech 21] Sansamp PSA 1, which I'm using for sort of a distortion sound; also at some point in the chain I'm going through a Summit tube limiter to equalize all the different basses, and a Demeter direct out. I'm using ear monitors and to kind of boost the fun I've got a side line to a SansAmp overdrive pedal so I can hear the overdrive even when I'm not mixing it out to the house, just to make it juicier." He prefers Hartke speakers on stage: "I need a punchy, trebly sound cause I have a problem with low end overtones from the P.A. sub-woofers. In a big hall the bass amp has a different function than in a club." He also plays a Fender fretless and a Chapman Stick. • **JOEY KRAMER** plays DW drums: an 18

x 22" kick, 8", 10" and 12" rack toms, 14" and 15" floor toms, and all DW hardware: "The product is top of the line, and what I really like is that they're American-made." He's been playing Zildjian cymbals "forever. There are no other cymbals." Sizes include four 20" crashes, a 14" high hat left, 13" auxiliary hi hat and a 20" earth ride. Sticks are a Zildjian signature model: "They sell lots of them and I make no money." • **BRAD WHITFORD** waxes ecstatic over Bogner Ecstasy 100 amps with a 4x12 Bogner cabinet—"The moment I plugged in I just sat in front of it for hours. I've never had an amp like that except maybe one of my ancient Marshalls. They're incredible." He'll

also use Wizard 50 watt models on the road. He's currently experimenting with choruses and delays—"I want a really clear repro, I don't want it colored"—and suggests he may return to last tour's model, a Lexicon LXP15. Guitars include a Tele-style built by Nashville luthier Jim Shriggs "that cuts like a knife," and a new Les Paul Catalina he recently picked up at the Guitar Center in L.A. "I tried out two, and one was astounding and one might as well have been a boat oar. That always amazes me. The

difference is in the wood, I guess, and a little bit of magic." On the electronic side, there's a Roland VG-8 Guitar Synthesizer: "I use it in addition to what I'm doing through the Bogner." Effects include a Boss DD5 digital delay pedal, a Boss Dimension C chorus pedal, chorus and a Centaur overdrive, and Monster cables for everything. • **STEVEN TYLER** "can use any microphone," according to Joe Perry. "He'll often use a [Shure] 57, the kind you'd put in front of an amplifier. But in the booth we'll put up [Neumann] 87s, 47s, [AKG] C12s, and he sounds good on all of them." He also uses a Shure wireless onstage and a Fender Vibroverb amp when playing harmonica. • "You can get a good idea of what's going on with a microphone by listening through a good set of headphones," Tyler adds. "It's a lot like picking up a girl. It's all in how you approach it, and coming up with the right line."



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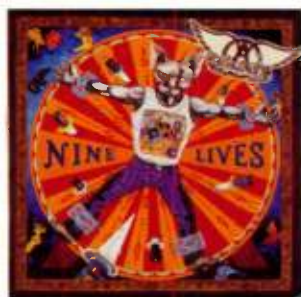
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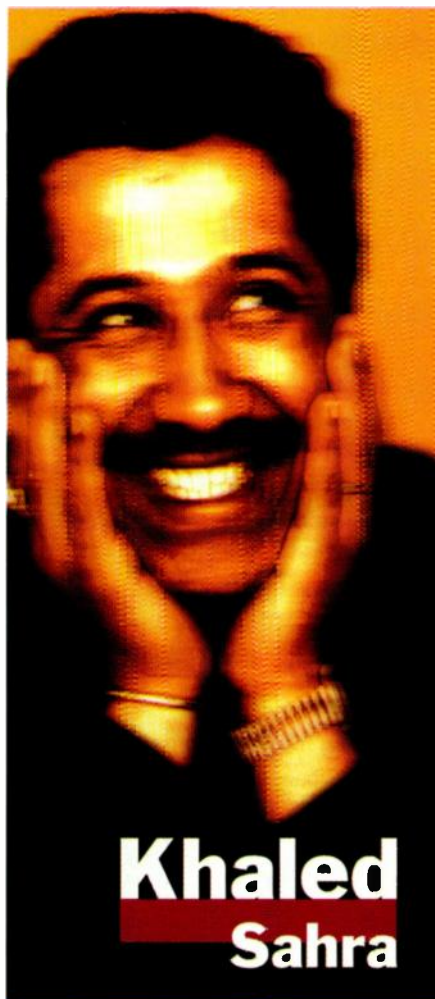
RASZKA

*Will concert and club
dates survive in the Internet age?*

The DEATH of Live Music

LIVE MUSIC IS DESTINED FOR THE JURASSIC PARK of extinct media, if William Gibson is right. "Touring seems like a dinosaur thing," observed the man who coined the word "cyberspace." "I wonder how long people will continue to go to enormous stadiums to see flea-sized figures capering a mile away. I gave up on going to big concerts after an evening watching David Bowie on a giant television screen. You didn't really need him there, physically; he could have been in Singapore." • Gibson isn't alone in his premonition of the death of live music in a world where we spend more and more of our lives staring at screens of one sort or another, and where the interface (voicemail, email, fax) is fast replacing face-to-face. In a dyspeptic review of the 1995 Macintosh Music Festival, a performance series at fifteen Manhattan clubs whose Internet connections enabled users around the world to listen in, *New York Times* critic Neil Strauss took wry

By Mark Dery Illustration by Brian Rasko



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note of the postmodern irony of “club goers craning their necks to stare at a screen pulled down over the stage” to facilitate CD-ROM and video projections. “In trying to portray the future of rock performances these clubs are also paving the way for their own extinction,” he wrote. “Who wants to pay to go to a smoky, crowded club to watch a band on a two-dimensional screen when people can just stay home? ... And what bands will want to spend two hundred nights a year touring when they can just perform once at home and transmit it to computer screens around the globe?”

For once, the future has arrived ahead of schedule. In 1994 the ambient trip-hop duo Future Sound of London “toured” Europe and New York without leaving their London studio, broadcasting live performances in real time via ISDN (a high-speed digital phone line) to radio stations and the Internet, where fans “downloaded images while listening to the corresponding sounds,” according to a press release. This May the group performed in digitally disembodied form at the Essential Music Festival in Brighton, England, by blipping live music and video

imagery across the wires, “appearing” on a bill that also included the Chemical Brothers, the Orb, and 808 State.

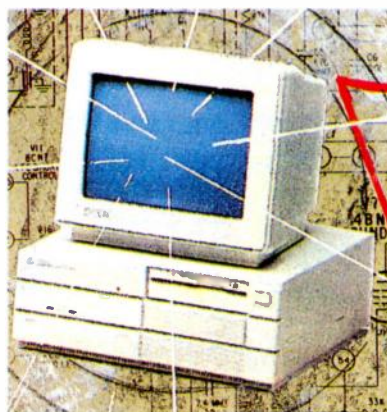
In the liner notes to their “live” album recorded on “tour,” FSOL’s Gary Cobain and Brian Dougans imply that such performances constellate a brief-lived community of fellow travelers, a Woodstock Nation for the age of electronic solipsism, with “millions of people being touched as remote units.” Like the radio theater of the Forties and the avant-garde *Hörspiel* (“ear plays”) of German audio artists in the late Sixties, the band’s cyberdelic soundtracks

are interactive in the pre-Screen Age sense, inviting listeners to use them as scores for their own free-associated mental movies. And by liberating music made mostly by pointing and clicking from the image of the musicians creating it, FSOL’s phoned-in concerts shifted the emphasis from the cult of the personality to the music itself. According to the *ISDN* notes, the broadcasts are about “getting away from the great bastion of the music industry: the performance. Journalists who wanted to watch us perform were missing the point. We were evolving a new mechanism, [one]

not based on the spectacle.” The *ISDN* shows reminded listeners (albeit obliquely) of the thumping irony, amidst the pervasive unreality of tabloid TV simulations and digitally manipulated photos, of concessions to naturalism such as the shopworn MTV cliché of musicians pantomiming to their songs.

Portents of live music’s eventual demise can also be glimpsed in the still-novel medium of Webcasting, which enables sites such as HotWired to transmit live events over the World Wide Web, and in the “killer app,” still just a gleaming

dollar sign in corporate eyes, of recorded music and live concerts available on a pay-per-view basis via interactive “smart” televisions. Both phenomena, like the mail-order catalog boom that saw more than half of America’s adult population shopping by mail in 1996, betoken a growing retreat from communal life into the comfort zones of our wired-to-the-gills electronic cottages. Corporate trendspotter Faith Popcorn calls this flight from public space “cocooning”—the tendency to hunker down and order in, basking in the reassuring glow of a favorite sitcom.



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Please read all rules carefully, and then sign your name in the space provided. If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.

Each entry must consist of:

- Completed and signed entry form (or photocopy). All signatures must be original.
- Audio cassette(s) containing one song only, five (5) minutes or less in length.
- Lyric sheet typed or printed legibly (please include English translation if applicable).
- Check or money order for \$30.00 per song (U.S. currency only) payable to: John Lennon Songwriting Contest. If paying by credit card, \$30.00 per song will be charged to your account.

Entries must be postmarked no later than 8/15/97.

1. Each song submitted must be contestant's original work. Songs may not exceed five (5) minutes in length. No song previously recorded and released through national distribution in any country will be eligible. Contestant may submit as many songs in as many categories as he/she wishes, but each entry requires a separate cassette, entry form, lyric sheet, and entrance fee. One check or money order for multiple entries/categories is permitted. Entrance fee is non-refundable. JLSC is not responsible for rule, lost, damaged, misdirected, postage due, stolen, or misappropriated entries.
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3. Contest is open to amateur and professional songwriters. Employees of JLSC, their families, subsidiaries, and affiliates are not eligible.
4. Winners will be chosen by a select panel of judges comprised of noted songwriters, producers and music industry professionals. Songs will be judged based upon originality, lyrics (when applicable), melody and composition. The quality of performance and production will not be considered. Prizes will be awarded solely to all authors of any song; division of prizes is responsibility of winners. Void where prohibited. All federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply.
5. Winners will be notified by mail and must sign and return an affidavit of eligibility/recording rights/publicity release within 14 days of notification date. The affidavit will state that winner's song is original work and he/she holds all rights to song. Failure to sign and return such affidavit within 14 days or provision of false/inaccurate information therein will result in immediate disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Affidavits of winners under 18 years of age at time of award must be countersigned by parent or legal guardian. Affidavits subject to verification by JLSC and its agents. Entry constitutes permission to use winners' names, likenesses, and voices for future advertising and publicity purposes without additional compensation.
6. To insure anonymity for judging purposes, entrant's name should appear only on the entry form. Do not put name or address on cassette or lyric sheet. Cassettes and lyrics will not be returned. Winners will be determined by December 15, 1997.

I have read and understand the rules of The John Lennon Songwriting Contest and I accept the terms and conditions of participation. (If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.)

Signature _____ Date _____

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Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich has identified a parallel trend in the top fifth of our increasingly two-tiered society, which he calls "the secession of the successful"—an economic (think "private schools") and even geographic (think "gated communities") segregation of the Information Age elite.

The cultural dynamics behind our desertion of the commons are complex and synergistic. In growing numbers of

cities there's no commons to desert: Fear of violent crime, fanned by ratings-hungry news shows, has made the mall food court our new town square. Then, too, the "time famine" experienced by chronically exhausted, frantically multitasking Americans juggling work, family, and information overload makes the schlep to a smoky, crowded club or concert hall a grim prospect. Cable TV, the VCR, computer games, online chat rooms, role-

playing environments such as MUDs, and the Web have made staying home more like going out, minus the aggravations of fellow humans.

In addition, hypothetical technologies, though still in the "vaporware" stage, lend a ring of truth to reports of the impending death of live music. For example, virtual reality that lived up to its heady press would be mind-wrenching: Linked to live events by ultra-high-speed Internet connections, couchbound cybernauts could step into music videos, luxuriate in front-row seats at the concert du jour, or even sit in with the band on any performance ever captured on film, from Elvis on Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town* to Hendrix at Woodstock to the Sex Pistols' last show.

In her cyberpunk novel *Synners*, Pat Cadigan imagines a warp-drive version of just such a scenario, in which the rock gods of the near future are virtual-reality synthesizers, or "synners," who plug their brains directly into the global computer network, immersing jacked-in fans in a full-sensory journey to the center of the mind. Visual Mark, a virtuoso synner, recalls the death rattle of live music: "He'd been there the day the Beater had sold the old tour bus for scrap. Touring was nowhere, video was everywhere. ... It was getting better all the time, all the stuff you could do, hotsuits and artificial-fucking-reality, shit, you could finally *be* the music."

While we're waiting for technology to insert us, à la Forrest Gump in JFK's Oval Office, into music history, perhaps we'll make do with real-time holographic transmissions that conjure 3-D images out of thin air in our living rooms. Nicholas Negroponte, who sells corporate-friendly visions of the future to prospective investors at MIT's Media Lab, imagines such a technology in his book *Being Digital*: "Sometime in the next millennium our grandchildren or great-grandchildren will watch a football game (if they call it that) by moving aside the coffee table (if they call it that) and letting eight-inch-high players run around the living room (if they call it that), passing a half-inch football back and forth."

Nonetheless, there's a Newtonian

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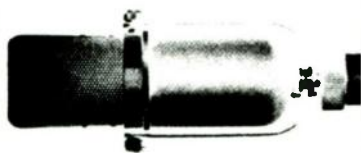
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| | 13 | Louisville KY |
| | 14 | Henderson KY |
| | 18 | Washington DC |
| | 20 | Providence RI |
| | 21 | Misquamicut Beach RI |
| July | 22 | Northampton MA |
| | 27 | Denver CO |
| | 28 | Aspen CO |
| | 29 | Beaver Creek CO |
| | 3 | Portland OR |
| | 5 | Seattle WA |
| August | 6 | Eugene OR |
| | 9 | Long Beach CA |
| | 29 | Lakeside CT |
| | 9 | Turin NY |
| | 13 | Edgartown MA |
| | 14 | Groton CT |
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roots.
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mechanics to popular culture that holds forth a glimmer of hope for the future of live music. The cultural momentum carrying us away from public space has already produced an equal and opposite reaction, in carnivalesque mainstream events such as the Lollapalooza festival, adrenal frenzy such as the mosh pit, and techno/tribal bacchanals such as the Burning Man festival and, paradigmatically, the rave. To varying degrees, these hit-and-run utopias are animated by fantasies of recapturing a lost sense of community, of Dionysian abandon in the age of AIDS, of sweet surrender to enveloping sound and the press of hot bodies at a historical moment typified by growing isolation, whether in the home offices of the self-employed or the corporate cubicles of *Dilbert* cartoons.

The wiring of our lives that has made electronic cocooning possible has also brought us a world in which the sort of unscripted pleasures promised by live music, as opposed to the manufactured fun delivered by the screen, the mall, and the theme park, are beginning to seem rich and strange. Also, it's a commonplace among pop pundits that the material fabric of everyday Reality As We Know It is woven, more and more, from mass-mediated information rather than firsthand experience—"man-made messages" rather than "personal observation of raw, 'uncoded' events," as Alvin Toffler put it in *Future Shock*. In an increasingly virtual reality, the viscosity



Portents of live music's demise betoken a retreat into our wired- to-the-gills electronic cottages.

of live music is a precious commodity. The world view of the Information Age is undergirded by a reverence for the mind and a contempt for the "meat" (cyberpunk jargon for the obsolescent flesh), from the Progress & Freedom Foundation's hubristic declaration that matter has been "overthrown" and "the powers of the mind are everywhere ascendant" to the Heaven's Gate cultists' belief in an *X-Files* apotheosis that would beam their minds out of their encumbering "vehicles" at long last. As we come to look (at least metaphorically) more and more like the mega-brained, frail-bodied aliens of B-movie myth, the sweaty physicality of live music, be it a rave or a rock concert, may prove an important social ritual for reconnecting our free-floating, online minds with our inescapably off-line bodies—bodies fated to remain, at least for the foreseeable future, anchored in the here and now by the laws of physics and the cold facts of mortality.

Contributors: Mark Dery (markderywell.com) is a cultural critic whose byline has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times*, *Wired*, and *The Discovery Channel Online*. He is the author of *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century* and editor of the essay collection *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture*. He's currently at work on *The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium*, a book about madness and mayhem in millennial America.

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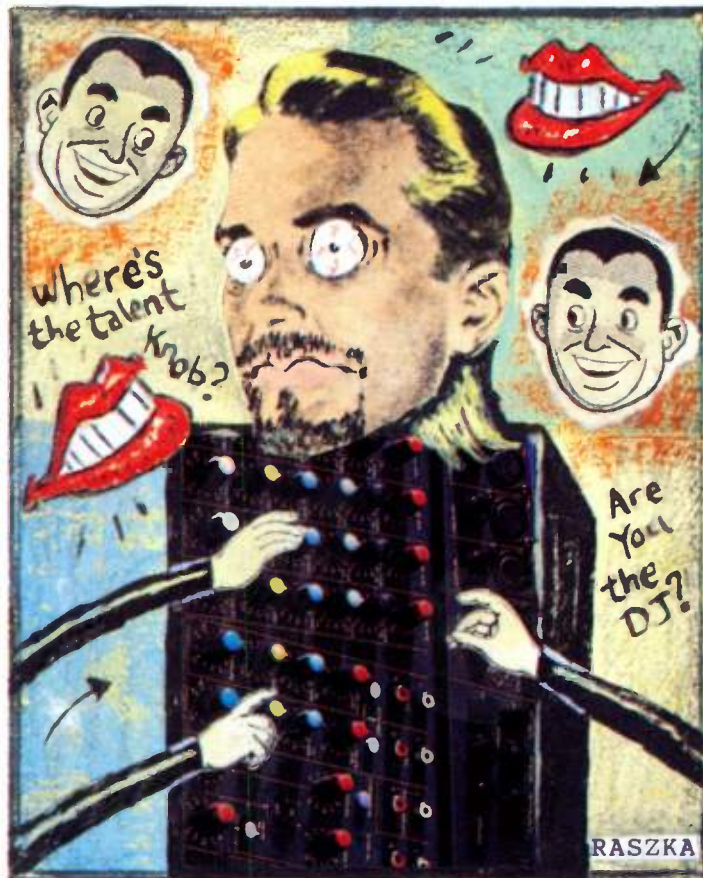
15 Ways to Drive
Sound Engineers Crazy

HANDS OFF my knobs!

Concert sound engineers usually keep to themselves behind their consoles while we musicians prance around in the spotlight. It seems only fair, then, that they have a chance to ... sound off. What bugs them about the biz? We asked David Norman, who has done stage sound for the Neville Brothers, Peabo Bryson, Arrested Development, the '94 WOMAD

tour, and the '94 Woodstock festival, to find out for us. He polled his peers, and came up with the following beefs:

1 Lighting guys. **2** Two-minute set changes. **3** Elevator or stair load-ins. **4** Volunteer (or prison) stagehands. **5** People who sit in front of the P.A. and then complain that it's too loud or want to know if we can turn off just the speakers in front of them. **6** Sound companies that don't zero out the console before you use it and still have the last show's labeling tape on the console.



7 Companies that say, "Oh, yeah, we have a 40-channel console," and when you get to the venue it turns out to be two 20-channel consoles slaved together. **8** Sound companies that contend, "We've got all the best stuff. I don't know why it sounds like this tonight. It always sounds great to me." **9** Mixing monitors from FOH (front-of-house). **10** System engineers who try to "help" mix the show. **11** Companies that bring inadequate gear because they bid too low in order to get the gig. **12** Speakers in extreme positions—i.e., under balconies, behind a column, against a wall to the extreme left or right, next to the kitchen. **13** Running short of channels because the headliner won't let you use them and

there's no additional console from the opening act. **14** Audience comments, such as: "What do all these knobs do?" "Do you get to meet the band?" "Can you get me their autographs?" "Are you the DJ?" "Can you turn the lights down a little bit?" "Can I keep my coat back there?" "Where's the talent knob?" **15** Famous last words, such as: "Sure, you can get T-shirts at the end of the gig." "Of course the monitors sound just like the house mix!" "Uh oh. Have you checked out this rider?" And the classic line, delivered by the promoter just as you've finished setting up the entire system: "You're at the wrong stage."

By David Norman Illustration by Brian Raszka

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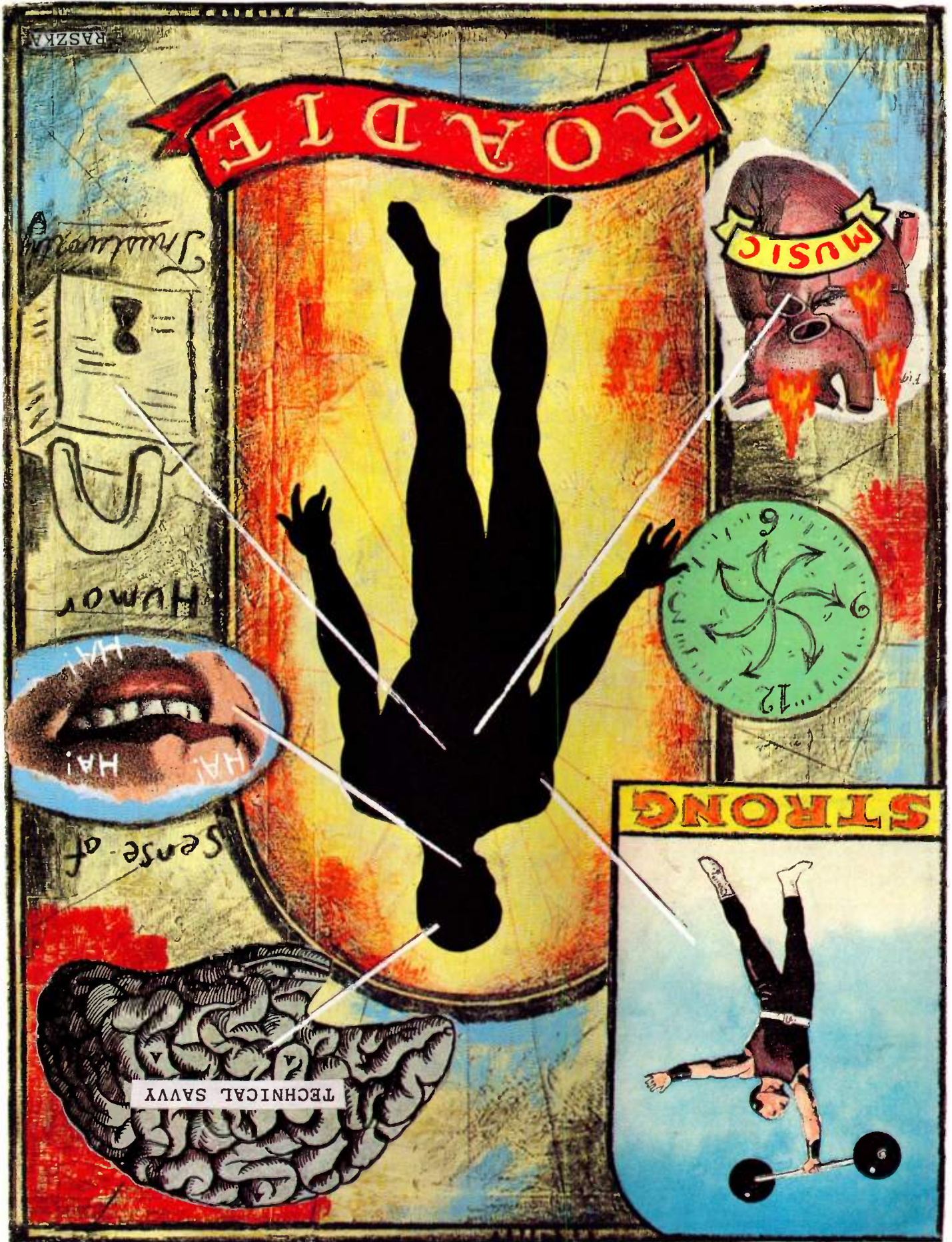
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**How To Be
Your Own Roadie**

LOAD

in, Load out

YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING WITH YOUR NEW BAND for months, getting ready for your first gigs, when gradually it dawns on you: You've got a lot of equipment, including a small P.A. and some lights. You've even got a Marshall stack left over from that stint you'd rather forget with a heavy metal band. The booking agent said that the venue where you'll be making your debut has no lights or sound, and you're the only act on the bill.

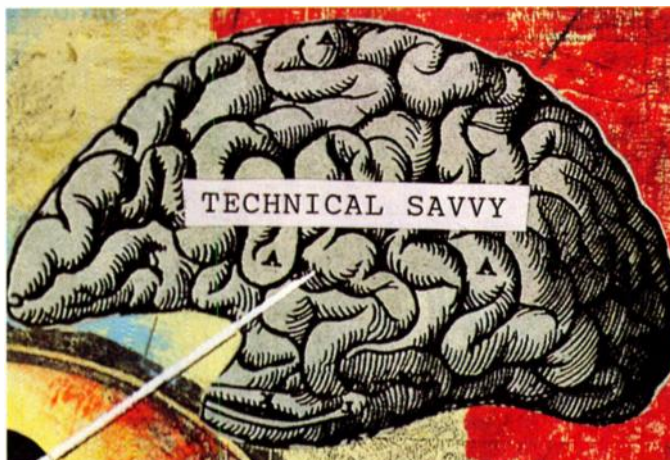
• What do you take with you to the gig? And how do you get it there? • Time for a band meeting. As the leader, you have to be not only creative but practical. Your last band had a roadie to help with the gear, but he's moved on to a job that actually pays money. So you decide you'll divide his work among your band members. But there's more involved than just dumping stuff in and out of the van. Here, for those of you who'll be schlepping it yourself, are the essential rules of the road. • First, although everyone should load and unload his or her own gear, mark your equipment before you leave your rehearsal

By Dinky Dawson Illustration by Brian Raskin

space; this saves you from having to sort it all out at the club. Mark the drum rug with the placement of the drums, cymbal stands, and the position of the throne. Mark the height of the cymbal stands with electrical tape. Color-code each musician's cables, using an assortment of colored tape (not all red or black). And while you're at it, make sure each cable is working—better to check it now than at the gig. Start with the amplifier AC cables. Don't forget to check the microphone cables, especially if your singer likes to sling the mic around.

Remember, too, that it makes sense to bring spares: extra guitar and bass strings, drum sticks and heads, amp fuses, batteries, screwdrivers, mics,

mic stands and bases, speakers, light gels, and if possible a spare amp and guitar. And lots of that invaluable musician's



The hardest thing for any band is to not mic instruments in a small room.

tool, duct tape. When you set up, try to keep this gear near to where it might be used—extra drum heads and sticks near the drummer, for instance. A good trick is to shove spare sticks down the lug nuts of the kick drums.

(Sometimes even this list isn't enough; player/roadies often find themselves having to improvise solutions to unexpected problems. The editor of this magazine once found himself stuck with a broken key on a synth keyboard at one gig. With audience and band members waiting, it took a minute or so of frantic creative thinking to come up with the solution: a popsicle

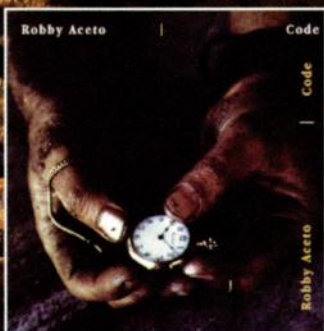
stick and a bottle of glue. With the fragments of the key joined together on the underside by glue and stick, the crisis passed and the show was on again.)

When you're identifying equipment, mark your drum cases and, if you have them, amp cases by applying duct tape and writing on it with a Sharpie-type permanent marker. Tagging your gear will save you lots of hassle, especially when the other band points to your setup and yells, "Hey! That's *my* amp!"

Packaging your equipment can be as simple as using the cardboard box it came in. Beginning bands can put their cables into a milk crate; this saves money and gets the job done. If you're too embarrassed to haul your gear in cardboard boxes, you can buy bags for guitars and drums until you've saved up enough to buy custom-built ATA flight cases. If you don't have a drum case, remember to take all your cymbals off their stands before moving them. Never put them into your car or van while they're still attached. It's dangerous—remember, the edges of those cymbals are sharp.

So now you're at the gig with your gear in a borrowed van. Remember not to block the load-in doors or fire lanes. Assign one band member to track down the house or production manager, then mobilize everyone in the group to unload

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as quickly and efficiently as possible, and start setting it up onstage. Be flexible and use common sense: No matter what kind of setup you have, it's got to conform to the area you have.

An important part of setting up involves establishing good relations with the house management. The band's designated contact should ask the manager if you can do anything to help his or her staff make the evening more successful. Don't forget the little courtesies: Store your empty cases and boxes in your van if space is limited in the hall. And *don't* jeopardize a venue's liquor license by bringing underage friends into a club that serves alcohol.

When you're setting up, it's always easiest to begin with the drums. (A word to the wise: Nailing drums and cymbal stands into the stage ruins the floor and doesn't amuse the venue manager. Use duct tape instead.) Once you're done with the drums, get the bass rig ready, and then the guitars and keyboards. If the

space is small, you can always face your amps out and position the musicians so that they face each other. (Think: "Garage.") Take a minute to look at the stage setup from the audience's perspective. Walk around the venue to make sure you look the way you want to look.

Check with the venue about available electrical power, either before you get to the gig or before you set up. If you're lucky, a couple of AC boxes, hopefully on 20-amp circuits, will be available onstage. Bring at least 100 feet of industrial-strength AC cable (and enough duct tape to secure it to the floor), since most 20-amp circuits will have breakers in places, such as kitchens and bars.

With everything plugged in, be sure that your amplifiers are grounded. An easy way to check is to hold your guitar around its neck and, with the *back* of your hand, touch the vocal mic. *Never grab the mic!* If you get a shock, you don't want your hand wrapped around the source of electricity.

These days most amplifiers come with a three-prong cable, the round prong being the ground. But lots of in-line effects are still two-pronged. *Be very careful with these.* Not only can they shock and generate a hum, but if you're using a direct box out to a mixing console, you may have a grounding problem between the amplifier and the sound system. If you get a hum, use that battery that's inside your direct box, not AC or the phantom power from your mixing console, to power the direct box.

Now that the band is set up, it's time to work on the sound and lights. Remember that most halls and clubs were built without consideration for how bands would sound in them. If you must place any of your equipment offstage, check with the house manager, who will be familiar with local laws and the idiosyncrasies of the venue; this saves you the drudgery of having to reset your equipment to stay in compliance. Most stages will be too small to fit more than the band's gear, but if you contact the venue in advance you'll probably be able to arrange ways of fitting your P.A. stacks and lighting poles offstage on both sides. Edge your speakers as close to the stage as possible, aiming them toward the back



Packing your equipment can be as simple as using the cardboard box it came in.

center of the room, and always try to get your light trees up high, with cans adjusted to wash the whole band.

The usual mic stand configuration is booms for the guitarists, bassist, drummer, and keyboard player, with a straight stand for lead singers. Every sound engineer knows to set the levels with one mic at a time, starting with the number one input. It's best to bring the volume up on each mic until it's on the verge of feedback from the speakers, and at that point turn it down a bit. Once you're satisfied with the level, continue with input number two and so on until finished.

After everyone is happy with his or her levels, bring all the mics up and have everyone sing something from your set

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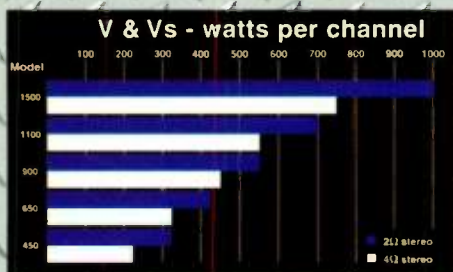
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list. Remember that audiences can get turned off by a mix that sends the instruments roaring over the vocals. Probably the hardest thing for any band is to *not* mic instruments in a small room, but my advice is to resist the temptation: Small rooms rarely require mics on the instrument amplifiers or even the drums. You may even want to check sound levels with the house manager if he or she is familiar with the room—and it's always helpful to let the staff at the venue know that you're working *with* them.

Now it's time for a light check. Have a band member or the house manager stand in the audience. Aim the lights so that the band can be seen without everyone in the room being blinded. And be sure to check the gels so that no one appears too green or some other strange color.

After the show, no matter how drained you are, pack up and load the van as quickly as you can. Make sure you have everything; list and check off each

item. This kind of idiot routine may seem tedious, but it will save you from losing gear or having to make a return trip to retrieve some forgotten equipment.

Okay. You've done it all, the glamour and the grunt work. Makes you appreciate the value of the roadie more than ever, right? So how do you find a good one? Begin by checking your local clubs, where roadies who are not on tour often find work as stage hands or loaders. Listen to word-of-mouth recommendations from other musicians. Look for jacks of all trades, roadies who can hump gear as well as deal with technical considerations. Your roadie also has to be responsible and trustworthy, with the kind of personality that fits well with your band. Gear hogs are probably a better bet than wannabe rock stars, although some of the best roadies I've worked with were frustrated musicians who managed to adapt to the eighteen-hour days that typify the roadie routine. And don't overlook women; lots of them are

breaking into this competitive business and more than holding their own.

Most of all, a good roadie loves the gig and loves music. That's why we do it all: load the trucks, drive, set up the gear, work the gig, take care of the player's needs, listen to your complaints, and work our butts off, all the while being responsible and keeping a sense of humor. It's our goal to affect the band in a positive way. That's why I laughed when Pete Townshend, when asked in an interview who his greatest influence was, replied, "Bob Pridden"—the Who's roadie.

Contributors: *Dinky Dawson has worked as a roadie for Chris Whitley, the original Fleetwood Mac, Steely Dan, Lou Reed, Joan Baez, Warren Zevon, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Weather Report, and countless other acts. He has lectured on touring and tour management at Berklee, and has several books in progress on the pitfalls and pleasures of touring.*

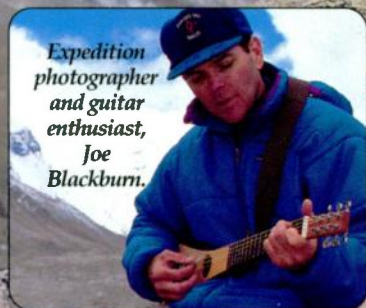
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World Radio History

A Tribute to Legendary Roadies of Past & Present

Using HEROES

Driving down the highway, seven days a week. Looking for a number one, looking rather bleak. Well, I'm a roadie. What a job, being a roadie. Yes, I'm a roadie. B. B. Class Road. I wrote these lyrics in 1971 with Gene Parsons. Recorded on the Byrds' *Farther Along* album, it's an appreciation of roadies everywhere. In those days, we roadies were family, literally living with our bands. Now groups only see their roadies when they tour; often roadies are provided as part of the production package, like so much gear. But back in the day, they were as essential to rock & roll as oil and axle grease are to a touring van. • Who were these great figures? Like the best musicians of that era, they were larger than life and to those of us who were there, they're as much the stuff of legend as the stars with whom they worked. Here are a few of them—my nominations for the rock roadie hall of fame!

By Dinky Dawson

Charlie Watkins. No one affected English rock & roll more than my old mentor Charlie. Practically every major British group of the Sixties benefited from his skills and sound advice. With the Rolling Stones and Slade, among others, he trucked his WEM (Watkins Electric Music) sound systems to small clubs and large festivals. His factory in London was a roadie hangout for more than ten years. It was Charlie who invented the first portable tape echo unit, the Copycat, which is the father of all digital echo. Pink Floyd's quad sound also owed a lot to Charlie. To this day his zeal and inventiveness are undiminished. When I last saw him, in the late Eighties, he showed me his new MIDIed accordions. And he's just designed a new, compact digital and analog mixing console.

Bobby Pridden. An old-school, do-it-all roadie, renowned for his resilience with the Who. Bobby was with them at the beginning. From the side of the stage, he mixed the house, monitors, and special effects at their shows; in fact, he was one of the first stage techs to ever use onstage monitors. You can check out his handiwork on *The Who Live at Leeds*—that's all Bobby. For physical stamina alone he deserves a medal: Pete Townshend put him in the hospital during the *Quadrophenia* tour, pulling him over the console when Pete realized that the tape feed to

Keith Moon's headphone monitors were a tad late. But the band learned its lesson: With Bobby out of commission, they had to cancel the rest of their tour.

Andy Topinka. The ideal roadie's technician. Although he loaded and drove 24-foot Ryder trucks, nobody kept back line equipment in better electronic shape than Andy. When I first met him, he was a quiet, long-haired, chain-smoking kid with lots of electronic savvy, and a great heart. He kept my acoustic suspension sound system working through tough tours with the Kinks, Mahavishnu Orchestra, and Lou Reed. Once, in Paris, he came up to me after hooking up the AC in the cellar of a hall, looking ashen and wild. Not reading or speaking French, he wasn't sure which of the hanging wires was hot, so he touched the ends to find out. Shocked but persistent, he came upstairs and worked on the keyboards as if nothing had happened. Andy died a year and a half ago, and we all miss him.

Chris Adamson, Phil McDonnell, Keith "the Snail" Robertson. My English mates, with whom I lugged gear, fixed amps, drove lorries, and worked twenty-hour days while still finding time to hoist a pint or two. Chris (Fleetwood Mac, Pink Floyd, Bryan Ferry), a lad from Hull, once made the pub rounds with David Bowie (then David Jones, a bricklayer), and is now production manager for ITB in London. Phil (Rory Gallagher, Van Morrison, Clannad) now heads the entertainment division of Horizon Air Freight. And Keith (Donna Summer, Billy Joel)

works with Phil when he's not trainspotting.

Who could forget **Stanley Owsley III**? More people remember him for his chemistry, but he was a formidable roadie for the Grateful Dead as well. Other faces in the crowd: **David Grey**, now of Dolby Labs but once a roadie with Lou Reed, Orleans, and Frank Zappa, and the late **Kenny Pickett**, a musician in his own right and former leader of Creation, but also Led Zeppelin's premier roadie.

A nod to the specialists, such as **Bob See**, lighting director extraordinaire, of See Industries; **Chip Monck** of Woodstock fame, and also lighting director for the Newport Folk Festival and touring veteran with the Stones; and **Glen McKay** of Headlights, who made those remarkable light shows for the Jefferson Airplane and the Fillmore West.

Finally, the honorary roadies, **Don Law, Jack Boyle**, and **Manny Greenhill**, promoters who got into trucks, rolled up their executive sleeves, and loaded gear when their stagehands disappeared after shows. I even saw **Irving Azoff** pulling band gear off an airport carousel in Providence, years before the Eagles and Jimmy Buffett were filling stadiums.

My apologies to those I forgot to mention. And to all roadies everywhere, I tip my fisherman's cap!



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1 peavey axcelerator 6

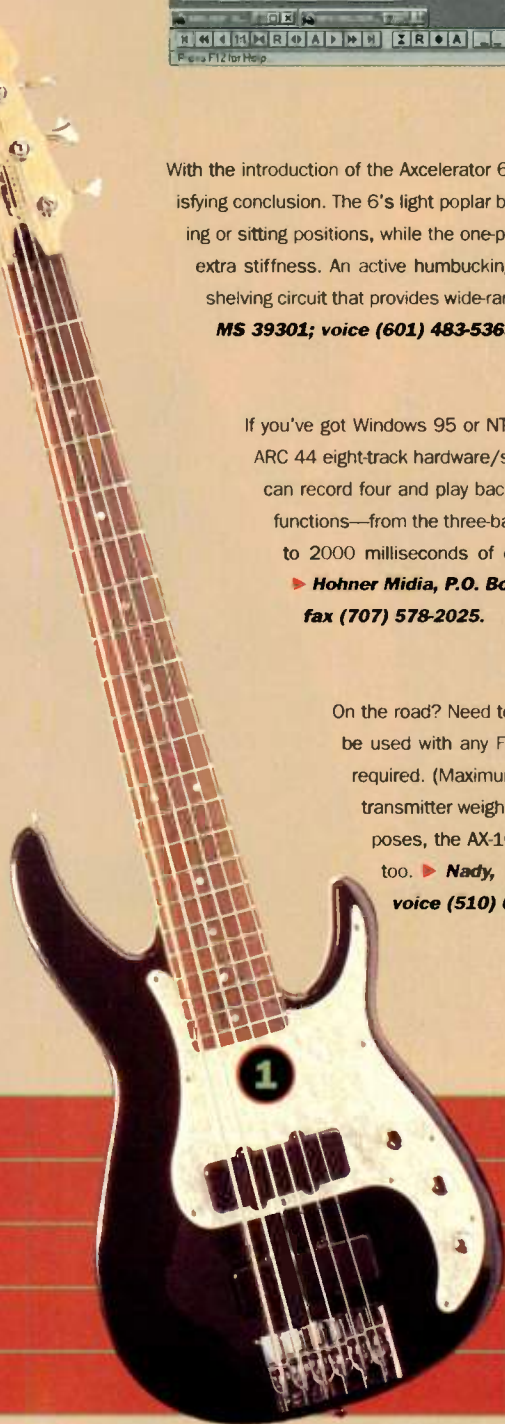
With the introduction of the Axcelerator 6 six-string bass (\$1118.99), Peavey's Axcelerator line comes to a satisfying conclusion. The 6's light poplar body features an extended upper horn to improve balance in either standing or sitting positions, while the one-piece, 35-inch scale maple neck is capped with a pau ferro fingerboard for extra stiffness. An active humbucking pickup, developed especially for the Axcelerator, feeds its signal into a shelving circuit that provides wide-range response for one and all. ► **Peavey Electronics, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301; voice (601) 483-5365, fax (601) 486-1278.**

2 hohner midia arc 44

If you've got Windows 95 or NT and want to get in on this hard disk recording thing, check out Hohner Midia's ARC 44 eight-track hardware/software package (\$899). The hardware's an ISA card with four analog I/Os, which can record four and play back eight tracks at once. And the software's loaded to the gills, as it were, with DSP functions—from the three-band parametric EQ (with all settings storable and recallable) to the echo processor (up to 2000 milliseconds of delay time) and real-time compression (adjusted with the twist of a virtual knob). ► **Hohner Midia, P.O. Box 5497, 3321 Industrial Dr., Santa Rosa, CA 95403-2075; voice (707) 578-2023, fax (707) 578-2025.**

3 nady ax-1000

On the road? Need to practice? Consider Nady's AX-1000 wireless guitar transmitter (\$79.95). The AX-1000 can be used with any FM radio—a personal or car stereo, even a boom box—and no extra receiver or amplifier is required. (Maximum range is 100 feet.) Powered by a nine-volt alkaline battery with up to 12 hours of life, the transmitter weighs less than five ounces and fits easily into a guitar case. Though meant primarily for practice purposes, the AX-1000 can also be used for gigs as a backup wireless. All this and adjustable echo and distortion too. ► **Nady, 6701 Bay St., Emeryville, CA 94608; voice (510) 652-2411, fax (510) 652-5075.**





Forward

4 crown k2

It's long been one of those facts of life that you just resign yourself to: Power amplifiers generate a lot of heat. The result: They need fans built in to keep them cool. The problem: Fans make noise. Well, folks, this unfortunate situation has now changed. Crown's K2 power amp (\$1795) uses no fan, and its proprietary patent-pending BCA (Balanced Current Amplifier) circuitry enables it to generate virtually no heat, even while pumping out 2500 watts (1250 per channel into 2 ohms). Efficient in more ways than one, the K2's just two rack spaces high. ► **Crown, 1718 Mishawaka Rd., Elkhart, IN 46517; voice (847) 998-0600, fax (847) 998-0260.**



5 guild starfire II

The reissue of the Guild Starfire II (\$1599), which was originally manufactured from 1961 to 1972, looks at first like another example of everything old being new again. But in this case, it's not quite true. The reissue has two SD-1 humbuckers, which definitely beefs up the sound; if Guild had really wanted to be old-style, they'd have put in the single-coils that marked the first year of production. In most other respects—the elegant single-cutaway thinline hollow body of laminated maple or mahogany, the one-piece mahogany neck, the floating rosewood bridge—the Starfire hasn't changed, thankfully. ► **Guild, 7975 N. Hayden Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85258; voice (602) 596-9690, fax (602) 596-1384.**

6 panasonic mda-1

Moving further into the realm of professional recording, Panasonic has come up with its first eight-track digital tape machine, the MDA-1 (\$3495 list). The machine uses the ADAT S-VHS tape format, and addresses the transport problems some ADAT users have complained about in the past with new technology. An electronic interface constantly monitors the transport's status, memorizing appropriate locate points for optimum response, while a dynamic braking system eliminates the possibility of overshooting or undershooting specific time references. ► **Panasonic, 6550 Katella Ave., Cypress, CA 90630; voice (714) 373-7277, fax (714) 373-7903.**



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editor's pick

I generally take a dim view of products that try to be all things to all people. My experience is that they invariably fall short in one or more important areas, since by their very nature corners have to be cut in the pursuit of universality. But I gotta admit, the Lexicon MPX 1 Multiprocessor has made me think again: The designers of this little gem have in fact done a remarkable job of covering all the bases. Here are the reasons why I love this box: (1) It sounds great; (2)

about all musicians.

Lexicon, of course, is famous for its reverbs. From their \$8,000+ model 480L (a staple in virtually all high-end recording studios) to their older PCM60 and PCM70, to the newer, mid-priced PCM80 and PCM90, all the way to the budget-priced LXP series and Reflex, Lexicon signal processors have always delivered a uniquely smooth-sounding, rich reverb. The MPX 1 follows in that tradition (in fact, many of its reverb presets sound very much like those in the PCM80), but it goes a step further. That's because it contains two processors (hence the name "Multiprocessor"), one of which is dedicated solely to producing those beautiful reverbs, while a second one devotes itself to creating pitch shift, chorusing, equalization, modu-

"Another Brick" (which absolutely nails the echo/chorus effect used on the kiddie backing vocals in the Floyd hit) and "Miked Room" (which places any sound source inside a good-sized high-ceilinged virtual room with virtual mics up in the virtual rafters) rapidly became two of my favorite MPX 1 presets. To aid you in your search, there's a built-in database that can sort presets by their effect type or by the source type. (For example, you can look

**Lexicon
MPX 1**



LEXICON

by howard massey

LEAPS INTO

MULTIPROCESSING

it's versatile, with a spate of features that make it eminently suitable for both live performance and recording; (3) it's affordable (list price is \$1299); and (4) it's easy to use, although (5) it provides an enormous amount of programming power, which only has to be accessed if you want to. The bottom line: If you can only afford one signal processor, this is the one to get, because it really does succeed in being just about all things to just

lation, and/or delay effects. This not only explains why the MPX 1 is capable of delivering such intensely complex multi-effects, it also means that reverb is always available, no matter how computationally taxing the other effects are on the second processor.

Out of the box, the MPX 1 delivers no less than 200 factory presets, and if all you need to do is to find a great reverb, echo, chorus, Harmonizer, Leslie, wah-wah, phase shift, flange, or auto-panning effect (or combination thereof), just spin the front-panel Value knob and you're bound to find one or more that will work just fine. Amongst the smorgasbord is just about every kind of musically useful signal processing except distortion—there is a nominal overdrive effect but power guitarists will still want to haul out the old fuzz box or Marshall stack to get the listener's hair standing on end.

Their MPX 1 succeeds in being just about all things to just about all musicians.

for all effects that are optimized for keyboards or for all those that are more useful for live PA work than in recording.) If you disagree with the factory decisions in this database (say, you find the "Snare Plate" pre-



set more useful on guitar than drums), you can change it, freely adding presets to or removing them from the various categories.

In addition, there are fifty slots in which you can store your own custom effects; these can also be added to categories in the database as desired. One of the most thoughtful features here (also found in some of Lexicon's other recent products) is that the MPX 1 always suggests the first empty "available" slot in which to store your data. There are several different levels of editing and programming operations—and the good news is that you only have to dive into the deep end if you want to. The most basic editing technique is to simply turn the effects blocks within a preset (Pitch, Chorus, EQ, Modulation, Delay, or Reverb) on or off, and there are dedicated illuminated buttons for that purpose. If you want to tweak a little more, hit the Value button to edit the so-called "Soft Row" parameters—essentially a "top ten" list of parameters that will change the effect in a musically useful way. If that doesn't satisfy your needs, you can hit the Edit button and access *all* of the parameters associated with the preset. But if you really want to blaze new trails, you can call up a preset called "Clean Slate" and start programming your own effect from scratch. This involves assigning various effects types to each of the six blocks (there are 57 in all, including five different kinds of reverb), arranging them in the order you wish (a flanged reverb, for example, sounds a lot different than a reverb receiving a flanged signal), and then choosing from the myriad of routing options for mono, stereo, serial, parallel, or other kinds of configurations. There's also a very comprehensive level of modulation "patches" that allow for real-time interactive control. These allow one or more effects parameter(s) to be altered by the front-panel physical knobs or switches, or by an internal signal (such as the onboard envelope generator, random number generator, sample-and-hold circuit or either of the two LFOs), or by an external MIDI message—you can even scale the range or linearity of the source signal. Each preset can have up to five patches associated with it, plus you can create up to ten global patches that can be applied to all presets.

On the rear panel of the MPX 1 you'll find the usual MIDI in, out, and thru jacks; these allow it to interface with other gear in all the usual ways—and in a number of unique ways

too. Like every other signal processor with MIDI jacks, the MPX 1 responds to incoming program change messages so that as you call up a new sound on your synth, a new effect automatically loads as well. To make this even more useful, you can create and store three different custom program maps so that, for example, calling up patch #52 on your synth causes the MPX 1 to load in its patch #46. As if that weren't enough, you can also create ten internal program chains, each containing up to ten "links." You can then use any source (say, a footpedal or a MIDI switch) to step through the links in the chain, a terrific boon in one-man-band gigs

ing systems. You'll also find input jacks that can accommodate a foot switch and foot pedal (great for live use). The MPX 1 can even calibrate itself automatically to the response of any pedal plugged in. And, in a welcome touch, there are both input and output level control knobs on the front panel, along with a dedicated Mix switch that allows you to quickly and easily set the wet/dry balance. A pair of six-segment LED meters normally show input levels, although they can be changed to show overall output level or any of a variety of internal signal levels (including, interestingly, the input and/or output level of signal entering or leaving each of

The MPX 1 delivers intensely complex multi-effects, with reverb always available.

where you'll only need to access a handful of effects each night. In addition, many of the MPX 1 presets respond to incoming MIDI clock so that you can easily synchronize echoes or other time-dependent parameters with the tempo of a MIDI sequence. (Even if you're not running a sequence, there's a handy Tap button on the front panel that enables you to manually set the tempo in real time, on the fly.) But the unique interfacing comes not only from the patch function described in the preceding paragraph (where virtually any incoming MIDI message can act as a modulation source) but with an option that allows the MPX 1 to transmit MIDI system exclusive messages as parameters are adjusted, enabling full automation (with the use of any MIDI sequencer) of all editing functions. For those of you into the techno thing, there's even a fairly full-featured MIDI arpeggiator built right in: Play chords on a connected keyboard and the MPX 1 will spit out up/down, down/up, forward, backward or random arpeggiations in sync with an internal LFO or incoming MIDI clock.

Speaking of interfacing, the MPX 1 sports a variety of input and output connectors that make it easy to integrate it into any live rig or recording studio setup. There are dual sets of balanced inputs and outputs, using both XLR and 1/4" TRS jacks. (The TRS jacks can also accept unbalanced inputs, and there's a switch that changes input level from +4 to -10 dB.) There's also an S/PDIF digital input/output so you can interface the MPX 1 directly with DAT or with most hard disk or digital multitrack record-

ing systems. You'll also find input jacks that can accommodate a foot switch and foot pedal (great for live use). The MPX 1 can even calibrate itself automatically to the response of any pedal plugged in. And, in a welcome touch, there are both input and output level control knobs on the front panel, along with a dedicated Mix switch that allows you to quickly and easily set the wet/dry balance. A pair of six-segment LED meters normally show input levels, although they can be changed to show overall output level or any of a variety of internal signal levels (including, interestingly, the input and/or output level of signal entering or leaving each of

A hot buzzword in the world of signal processing is *morphing* (that is, smooth crossfading between effects), and the MPX 1 has this ability too. This is accomplished with the use of a dedicated front-panel "A/B" switch and the patching system described above. Pressing the switch changes the effect from an "A" variation to a "B" variation, and you can specify the amount of time it takes to "morph" from A to B or from B to A. You can also use controllers such as a footpedal or MIDI message—even input signal level itself—to trigger the morph. For example, the "Rotary Cab" preset does a masterful job of emulating a rotating Leslie speaker. The "A" version has the Leslie spinning at a slow speed, while the "B" version causes it to shift to high speed, with a morph time that accurately replicates the inertia of the actual mechanical system in a Leslie, where it actually takes longer to accelerate from slow to fast than it does to decelerate from fast back to slow.

It's this kind of attention to detail, combined with an innovative design and superior sonic quality, that makes the MPX 1 a solid addition to any live rig or recording studio. In the current universe of signal processing, I don't think you can spend 1299 of your hard-earned bucks any better way.

Special thanks to Steve DeFuria, Joel Silverman and Gregg Perry.

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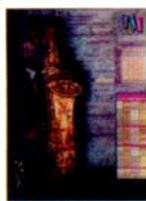


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by matt ashare
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studio

Papas Fritas





The members of the Boston-based pop trio Papas Fritas weren't being too subtle when they christened their home studio "The Columnated Ruins." As any Beach Boys fanatic will tell you, the name's taken from a line in the *Smile*-era Brian Wilson tune "Surf's Up." Fittingly, Columnated Ruins, where Papas Fritas recorded their latest album *Helioself* (Minty Fresh), is located only a mile or two from where the cold Atlantic surf crashes up against the rocky shores of Gloucester, Massachusetts, in part of a building that once housed a Montessori school on 18 acres of wooded land. The structure even features a couple of columns and the ruins of what looks to be a long-abandoned construction project. You can imagine that Wilson and Van Dyke

Parks might have had a setting like this in mind when they penned "Surf's Up." But the inspiration for the location Papas Fritas singer/guitarist Tony Goddess chose for his live-in studio/rehearsal space owes more to the legacy of another revered Sixties ensemble, namely the Band.

"My father always used to tell me stories about Big Pink, the place where the Band lived and recorded the *Basement Tapes* with Bob Dylan," Goddess recalls. "He'd say, 'When you get your band together you should just go out to a shack in the woods and practice your ass off.' So to me the ideal was always doing music as an organic thing, creating it in cool surroundings. I mean, the vibe here is great for recording. We can wake up when we wake up, figure

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out what we want to do that day, eat breakfast, start tracking, make lunch, go out and play Frisbee, come back and listen to what we recorded."

After recording their eponymous Minty Fresh debut in the basement of a house in Somerville, Massachusetts, Goddess and his bandmates, bassist Keith Gendel and drummer Shivika Asthana, have taken full advantage of the space afforded at Goddess' new abode. They rehearse and record basic tracks in the large, open living room, where they've constructed a makeshift isolation booth for drums and vocals. Today Goddess' vintage **Fender Rhodes** keyboard ① a **Hammond M2** organ ② that he picked up for \$75, and his **Mesa/Boogie Fifty Caliber** guitar amp ③ are set up near Gendel's **Kustom 250** bass amp ④ and pieces of Asthana's drum kit ⑤ (dismantled for a gig), which she says is "not even worth mentioning." ("There really is no brand name and I don't know how it's lasted as long as it has.") Goddess' guitar is an early **Kramer** (serial number 22) from

the Seventies with an aluminum neck; Gendel plays a 1971 **Gibson EB-3** bass. (The **Peavey** keyboard amp in the background ⑥ is used solely as a speaker stand.)

A worn-looking **Vose and Sons** upright piano from the Twenties ⑦ stands in the middle of the living room, close to an **Epiphone Cortez** acoustic guitar ⑧ and an Indian sitar (built by "Madhu B. Mirajkar, satar [sic] maker") ⑨; a door leads out to a rustic deck overlooking the property. To find the nerve center of the Columnated Ruins, you have go upstairs to a tidy room which houses an **Otari MX 5050** half-inch 8-track machine ⑩, a **TAS-CAM M-520** mixing console ⑪, and very little in the way of outboard effects or processing equipment. There are two **Furman** patch bays ⑫, an **Aphex 107 Tubessence** preamp for microphones ⑬ ("You can plug directly in there and go straight into the machine"), a **Behringer Composer** compressor ⑭, and a **Bellari Dual Tube** compressor/limiter ⑮. The band relied on the **Ashly Audio SC-66** stereo

parametric equalizer ⑯ back when they were still using a now packed-away Mackie CR 1604 board to record 1995's *Papas Fritas*, but haven't had to use it since they got the M-520. A pair of **Yamaha NS-10Ms** ⑰ serve as the main monitors, powered by an old **Harman/ Kardon 330B** amp ⑱ that was handed down to Goddess from his father and subsequently knocked around a bit. "Someone knocked it over in a subway station when I set it down to get my change," is how Goddess tells the story. "But it still works and it gives off a really nice glow when it's on."

"We don't have much in terms of gear," Goddess admits, "so we approach getting sounds from a physical standpoint. If we want a deep drum sound we put T-shirts over the drums or tune the drums lower. Or say you don't want a real resonant sound on an acoustic guitar track, you just want to get the strumming sound: We do that by putting note cards over the sound hole and a towel around [cont'd on page 80]

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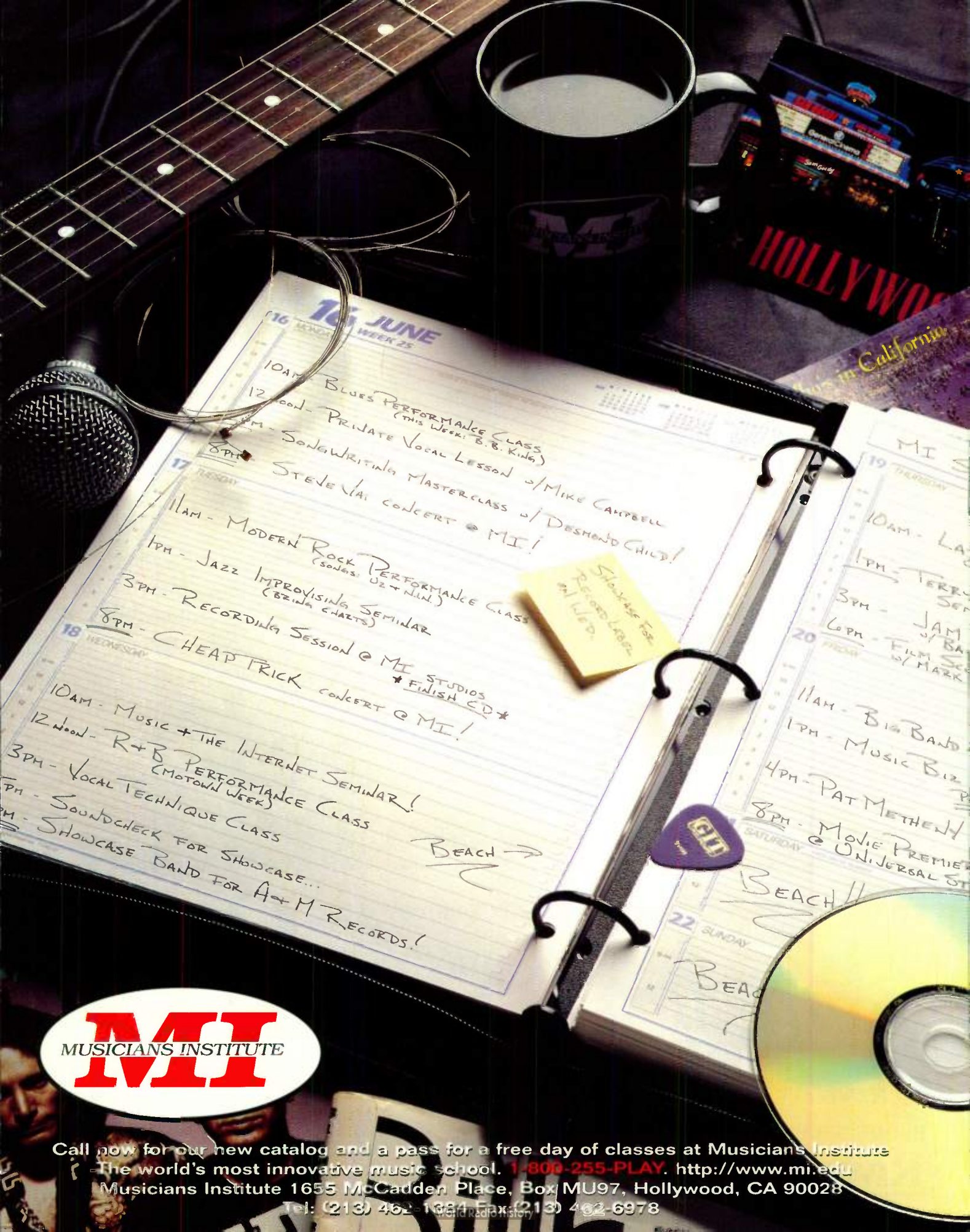


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The 1996 Fall AES and Winter NAMM conventions had a profusion of PC sound cards with features such as great-sounding onboard samples, digital and analog inputs/outputs, 24-bit signal paths, multiple sample rates, and a lot more. There's increased specialization as well, such as cards that interface specifically with multichannel digital tape recorders. Yes, the Power Macs have credible onboard audio, but the amount of new product support for the PC is enough to give any Macophile the jitters.

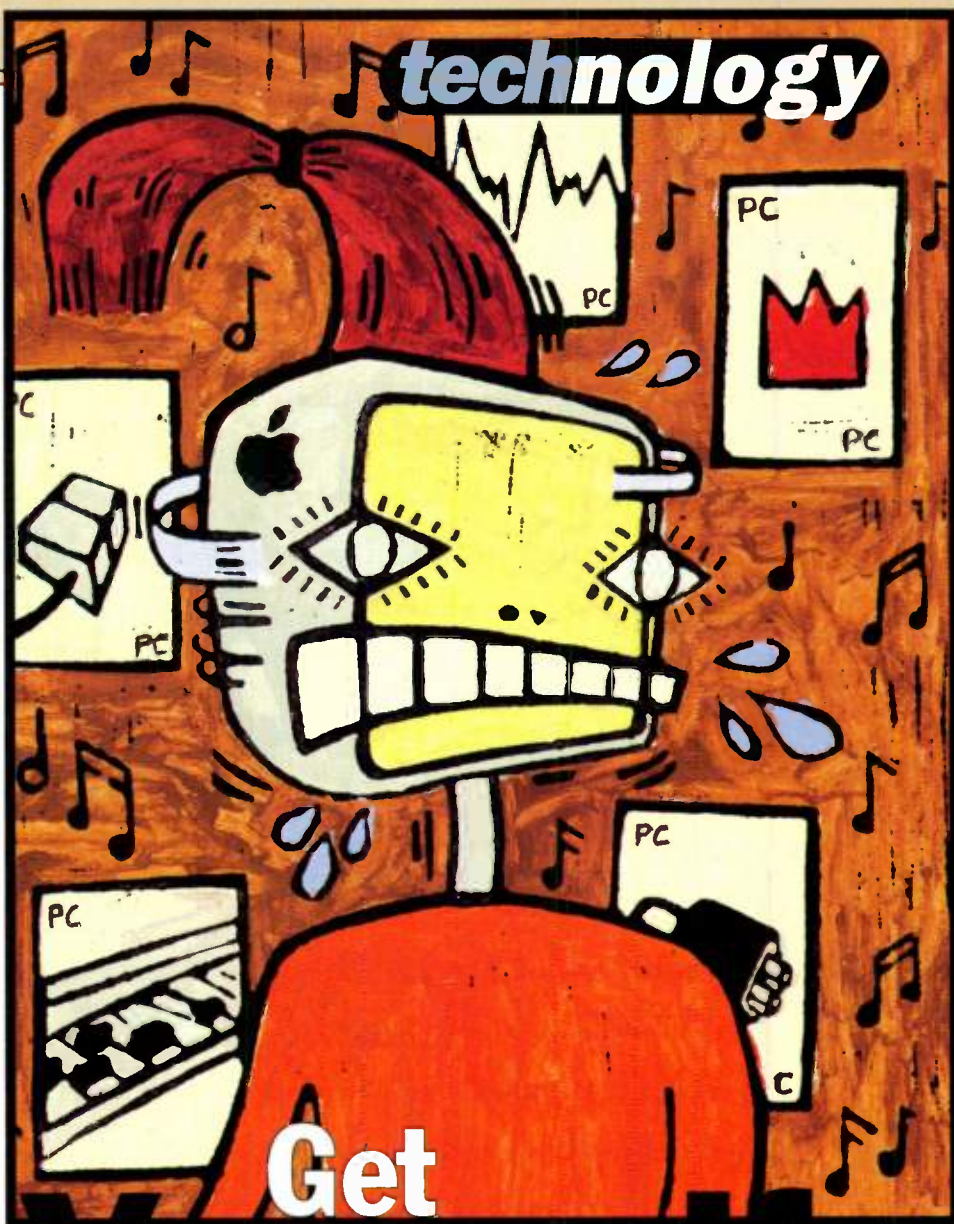
In fact, you can now sequence a tune using sample-playback sounds plus several—if not several dozen—tracks of equally high-quality digital audio. When you're done, you can save the whole mix as a sound file to your hard drive, then burn your own one-off CD, all without budging from your computer. But before you can do any of this, you'll need a sound card.

Part of the art of finding the right one involves looking at the specs and deciding which features are most important for you. For example, if you work with DAT, being able to transfer digital audio between computer and DAT is helpful. If you're just recording your band during rehearsal, a simpler card with a few analog inputs may be all you need.

Here are some of the most common specs and features you'll encounter, with an explanation of what they mean in real-world applications.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Some cards plug into the older ISA bus, while others mate with the newer PCI bus. Since Power Macs also use the PCI bus, many sound cards accommodate both Mac and PC by providing different software drivers. (Drivers allow the computer's processor to recognize and communicate with the card.) Most modern PCs have slots for both bus types. If you plan to use both Mac and PC or need Mac compatibility, PCI-based cards are your best bet. They're not too common yet, but they're picking up momentum.



Get Yourself Carded

Also check for the minimum supported processor and operating system compatibility. If the card wants a Pentium and you have a 386, forget it. Several sound cards include separate drivers for Windows 3.1, 95, and NT, but some work with only one specific operating system. Most of the good stuff works with Windows 95, although some pundits think that Windows NT will eventually become the system of choice for pro audio.

Sound cards may also require a

**PC
Sound Cards
Deal a
Full House**

by craig anderton

minimum amount of RAM, but if you're running digital audio under Windows 95 you really need 32MB anyway—more than enough for any application. Also check whether a card is "plug-and-play," as this can simplify installation. Actually, installing cards on the PC isn't as difficult as claimed, and non-plug-and-play cards can be relatively easy to install. But for computerphobes, plug-and-play is the way to go.

DIGITAL AUDIO I/O

To avoid picking up computer-generated noise, most pros try to keep analog audio out of the computer, and feed everything in and out digitally. Not all sound cards have digital audio inputs and outputs built-in, although some allow an accessory digital I/O daughter-board.

The commonest digital I/O is the consumer-oriented S/PDIF interface, with either RCA phone jacks for electrical connections or TOS link connectors for fiber-optic cables. Other I/O options are AES/EBU, the pro standard for digital audio interfacing, and two multichannel protocols: ADAT, for transferring signals to and from ADAT multitrack digital tape recorders, and TDIF, the TASCAM equivalent. (Thankfully, pro sound cards generally ignore SCMS copy protection data when using the S/PDIF ports, so you can make unlimited copies and back-ups of your work.)

Digital-only cards need an analog-to-digital converter to translate analog signals into digital data, and a digital-to-analog converter to turn the data back into something we can hear. Typically, the converters in a DAT (or an ADAT or DA-88 for multichannel applications) will work, but some cards include an analog output for monitoring. Also look into the number of bits the card's I/O can handle. 16 bits is the norm today, but 20 and 24 bits will soon be the dominant life form in digital land. All things being equal, sound cards capable of this resolution will have a longer life expectancy.

ANALOG INS AND OUTS

If analog I/O is present, the minimum configuration will be stereo 1/8" minijacks for stereo in and out. But some sound cards also have speaker outputs and mic inputs. (One tip: Forget about using the sound card's generally

low-grade onboard mic preamps; patch through an external preamp, and feed the line input.) Next step up on the I/O food chain is 1/4" phone or RCA audio connectors, while top-of-the-line models have balanced XLR outputs, which are the pro standard and suitable for long cable runs. Generally, more inputs and outputs is a Good Thing. You'll need multiple inputs if you want to record something like a drum kit with several mics; multiple outlets let you assign different instruments to different audio channels, should they need external processing.

A card's sound quality depends mainly on the converters being used and the electrical design. Inexpensive sound cards use consumer-grade 16-bit converters, while better ones use longer word lengths (such as 20 bits) and audiophile-grade converters. Since CDs use only 16

bits of resolution, it might seem like anything greater would be wasted, but that's not so. 16-bit converters can't really give a full 16 bits of resolution, but a 20-bit converter can handle 16 bits with ease. Also, DVD allows for 24-word lengths, and this is supposedly the wave of the future. Work with more than 16 bits now, and you'll be ready for tomorrow.

Electrical design involves shielding and other processes to keep computer noise out of the card. Be careful not to plug a sound card next to an electrically "noisy" card; try different slots to see if any one induces less noise. But current thinking is to abandon analog connections entirely for digital. You can always use outboard converters, which can be upgraded if needed while still keeping the same sound card.

BREAKOUT BOXES

With either analog or digital I/O, it's a pain to fumble around the computer's rear to change connections. A breakout box attaches to the card through an umbilical cable and puts the I/O connectors in something more user-friendly, such as an external rack-mount box. For pro applications, pro boxes make for a neater and easier-to-use setup.

MIDI I/O AND SYNC

Who needs MIDI in a digital audio world? You do. Sequencers are still a great way to augment digital tracks inexpensively, and most sync is done through MIDI (particularly MIDI Time Code). For example, suppose you took an 8-track tape machine to a rehearsal and captured a once-in-a-lifetime performance ... with just a few little errors. If you want to transfer the tracks to a multichannel hard disk program for editing but your sound card has only two channels of I/O, you can

sync the tape recorder to the hard disk program via MIDI Time Code and transfer two tracks at a time. Because the two machines are locked in sync, each of the track pairs will begin and end at the same time.

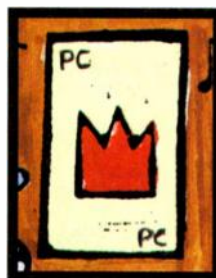
There are two main sync types: trigger and chase. With trigger, one device tells another

when to start, and the two run concurrently. But since there's no feedback (e.g., if one machine slows down, the other won't know it), this requires stable devices, such as digital tape recorders and computers. With chase, if there are speed fluctuations (like what happens with analog tape), one device follows the other, variations and all, so they stay in sync. In theory this is a good idea, but the processing required to stretch or squeeze the digital audio's timing to match an unstable reference can make your audio sound like a warped record. For short tunes and digital devices, trigger sync is fine.

Heavy-duty pro sound cards can sometimes read SMPTE time code, as generated by video decks, high-level sequencers, and other pro audio gear. While this can be useful, for most project studios MIDI is all you really need.

SUPPORTED SAMPLE RATES

Sound cards should support at least 44.1kHz and 48kHz sample rates (the former is the CD standard, while some DATs use the latter), although 32kHz is useful for multimedia. In Web publishing, 22kHz and 11kHz sample rates are common. But if you need a low sample rate and your card doesn't support it, you can always work at a high sample rate, then use a sample rate converter to downshift, though this will tend to degrade the audio signal somewhat.



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Onboard digital signal processing (DSP) hardware simplifies adding effects like EQ and reverb, provided there's software to take advantage of the hardware. If the same company that makes the sound card also makes software, you can bet it will use the DSP; third-party support is another matter. Some cards allow adding DSP as a separate add-on.

BUNDLED SOFTWARE & GOODIES

The sound card's package might include anything from demo programs to "lite" versions of pro programs to a full-function MIDI+digital audio sequencer. Also check for other accessories, such as breakout cables (handy if weird connectors are used). You can always get these separately, but those with less patience will appreciate having everything ready to go out of the box.

ONBOARD SYNTHESIS

Early sound cards used two-operator FM, which is the technical term for "cheesy-sounding." Newer sound cards have vastly better synthesis, thanks to chip sets based on sample playback technology, just like most of today's synths. (In fact, some chip sets even come from respected manufacturers, such as E-mu, Ensoniq, Kurzweil, Roland, and Yamaha.) Sounds are usually arranged in the General MIDI format, where specific instruments correspond to specific program numbers; others are additionally compatible with Roland's GS and/or Yamaha's XG standards, both of which are expanded versions of General MIDI. (One limitation of General MIDI is about to be overcome with a downloadable sample protocol that allows users to add custom sounds in RAM to supplement the standard GM set.)

Sound quality can equal outboard tone modules, although a card doesn't really replace a synth. Yet the difference good sounds make for games, or for proofing sequences with a sequencer program, is phenomenal. Even if you have an arsenal of synths, a decent sound card makes for a very convenient "all-in-one" solution for sketchpad work.

PC sound cards have come a long, long way. The Mac may rise again, but for now the PC is in the spotlight. If you can't find a card that fits your needs, you're not looking hard enough.

Contributors: Craig Anderton is the author of *Home Recording for Musicians*, published by AMSCO, and the host of the *Sound, Studio, and Stage* site on AOL (keyword: SSS).

home studio

[cont'd from page 72] the guitar so there's no reverberation."

Papas Fritas can get by without having much outboard gear because they don't rely on Columnated Ruins for their final mixes. Both *Papas Fritas* and *Helioself* were mixed at Fort Apache Studios in Cambridge, the latter by the successful production team of Sean Slade and Paul Kolderie. (If the band wants to make a reference mix at home, they turn to a "bottom-of-the-line" Sony cassette player.) Since they can't very well fix anything in the mix while working at Columnated Ruins, Papas Fritas have learned to put not just good, but great sounds to tape. Without digital outboard gear, that usually means using the natural reverb of different rooms, and experimenting with the placement of microphones. The modest Papas Fritas mic collection includes several **Shure SM57s** ¹⁹ and **SM58s** ²⁰, a **Sennheiser MD 421** ²¹ which Goddess prefers for guitar amps, an **AKG C414** for background vocals, a couple of **Realistic PZMs** used for drums ("We just put one on the floor under the snare," says Goddess), and an **Audio-Technica 4033** for vocals and acoustic guitar. One of Goddess' prize possessions is an old **Electro-Voice 664** mic from the Forties ²², which he found at his grandfather's house. He says it gets a crappy sound, but it's perfect for recording harmonica.

As Goddess describes it, the **Tech 21 SansAmp GT-2** preamp/amp simulator ²³ (perched on top of the upstairs room's rack near a **Dunlop Crybaby** wah pedal ²⁴) is Papas Fritas' secret studio weapon. "Since I record a lot of the guitar tracks all by myself, it's really helpful. I can't really be moving back and forth between the guitar amp and board, messing around with mics and all that."

Necessity has clearly been the mother of invention for Papas Fritas, and inventiveness has helped them define their own sound. "I love learning how to do things on our own, moving mics around a room to get the right sound, and trying different arrangements for a song," admits Goddess as he settles in behind the Fender Rhodes, plays a few bars of "Surf's Up," and reflects.

Gendel adds, "We're control freaks. We don't want to go into a studio and have someone else tell us what to do before we've first tried to do it ourselves."

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 220 3/97 Metallica, Soundgarden, 311, Bush, Ray Davies
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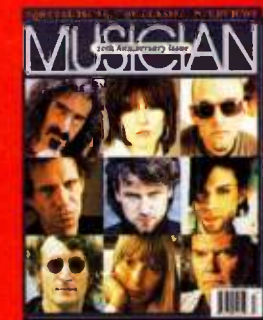
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Coldcut's Bodacious Waxploitations

by **ken micallef**

The Ninja felt there must be more to life than ... listening to Popular music, and decided to bust loose in search of the First Beat. In a dream a wise old man with two headz and a sampler appeared in a flood of smoke. The man was known as Oldcut, and He fed the Ninja the elixir of Froots 'n' culture. Enlightened, the Ninja woke, found a spade, and started digging; thus was discovered the Underground."

This whimsical excerpt is from the biography of the Ninjatune label, as founded by Matt Black and Jonathan More, a.k.a. Coldcut ("musical magi, scientists of stupid sound, and primordial dancefloor hooligans"). With a stable of artists spanning the globe of scratch-friendly, downtempo funk and self-described "funk-jazz-tickle-tricknology," Ninjatune is renowned for trail-blazing fractured sampling techniques through cutting-edge technology. A former biochemist and silver-smith, Black and More lift Seventies jazz and funk sources like many other mixologists, but Coldcut temper their "scratch-mological waxploitation" with unique wit, cryptic references, and warm production values.

Recent releases such as *Coldcut: Journeys by DJ*, *Cold Krush Cuts*, and a single, "Atomic Moog/Boot the System" (with CD-ROM), show the duo both remixing older

***They're on a mission
to rescue rock
music from guitars.***

tracks to a glistening sheen and trading off turntable and remix duties with other Ninjatune DJs. "Journey by DJ is a turntable outing," says More, in New York for an ongoing project involving one of Coldcut's heroes, Grandmaster Flash. "We recorded sections of mixes onto DATs from different records, from Mantronix to Harold Budd to Jello Biafra. We used a turntable with samplers and CD players with special speech samples, so you can just throw in a phrase, use a CD player like an instrument by shuttling it over a point or looping it. In the studio we use everything. One person is on a turntable doing the basic mix, and another person is on the sampler adding stuff over that, all live to tape. Then we might sequence Roland TB-303 synth bass, TR-909 or R-8 drum machine, or MC-202 analog synth."

Adding Ninjatune artists PC and Strictly Kev, Coldcut becomes DJ Flood, a "beat juggling" collective that often improvises on multiple hardware. A *Recipe for Disaster*, released in 1995, and five volumes of *Breaks* albums show their

Photo: Chris

technique to full effect.

"We started this four-turntable and two-mixers business when we did our radio show [on London's KISS FM]," More continues. "We call it 'driving,' which is basically laying the beats, doing the basic mix, and directing the overall course. If PC is driving, Kev might mix an a cappella part over the top, or scratch some stuff. I might add an ambient wash of electronic effects or spoken word. Or PC will be mixing a beat, centering on a bass drum pattern. Then Kev will find a snare and, together, they'll play a new beat. Me and Matt lay more stuff over the top of that, using computer, CDs, and keyboards. That's beat juggling."

For the Coldcut collaboration with Grandmaster Flash, which will ultimately appear as separate mixes on records by both artists, Black and More painstakingly toy with samples from floppy disk or from a large roadcase of vinyl. A quick scan unearths a cache of LP treasures: *Music for Robots*, *Dr. X's Hip Hop Experiments Escape from the Lab* and *Go on the Rampage* by Mad Doctor X, Gershon Kingsley's *First Moog Album*, *Chariots of the Gods* by the Peter Thomas Sound Orchestra, and *The Generation Gap Plays the Theme from Shaft*.

At one point Grandmaster Flash calls the studio and asks, "Is the mix done yet?" This elicits a Coldcut chuckle. "We're inspired by Flash's classic *Adventures on the Wheels of Steel*," explains Black. "That record created a new art form. Our approach is to make loops of samples which work together, then actually cut them onto a record, then mix and arrange the track from vinyl. We let Flash cut that up, then take that performance into the hard disk and manipulate it. Or we get scratching from him over an electro backing track, then process that scratching heavily. Flash was talking about getting out the old beatbox that he used on older tracks and doing some jungle programming. And we want him to see what breaks he can find in his exclusive collection of stuff. We might also do brutal stuff, like pulling the power plug out and putting it back in during the mix, really making some odd noises—all the horrible things that drive the studio mad."

Still in the pre-production stage, Coldcut

experiment with sample lengths, going from lap-top to sampler to sequencing keyboard, looping a flea market of Art Blakeyish drum grooves, coughing noises, screaming bleeps, cocktail piano, spoken word, electro squishes, and wah-wah guitars. Using software like Steinberg's *Recycle!*, Macromedia's *SoundEdit*, and shareware like James McCartney's *SuperCollider* and Alberto Ricci's *SoundEffects* (both available over the Internet), the duo affect and chop up their loops into tidy sound chunks ready for the ultimate MIDI mix. *Recycle!* is a particularly popular tool with the U.K. drum and bass crowd.

"*Recycle!* highlights sample peaks with a slider control," explains More. "It chops a break into tiny little sections and dumps that across to the sampler with a MIDI song patch. You can reprogram it, send the MIDI information to your sequencer so you can fire all the pieces as one whole loop again."



Another practice, used by everyone from Goldie to Photek, is timestretching, where the speed of a sample loop is increased while the pitch remains the same. "Timestretching actually makes little copies of each sample," explains More. "It's like taking a photograph and drawing a grid on it, photocopying that and cutting it up, then stretching it out by taking six photocopies of the same thing, slicing them up into strips, and putting them together over and over again. You use a facility on the Akai samplers to either shorten or lengthen the sample. That's the next stage after you've sliced it up and reprogrammed it. Say you want to take it from 100 bpm to 182. You speed your sequencer up to 182 and it will play that break. There will be gaps then within the little spaces, so you can then do timestretching; stretch those sounds out so they fit. Technically, you can do it all correctly, stretching on the intelligent facility, using a mathematical formula to get it right. But people like to abuse it."

While they admit to a fondness for the latest toys, the Coldcut crew are far from computer geeks. Like more traditional musicians, they

prefer cultivating a soulful feel to polishing technical skills. "If you have a sequencer with all these facilities, you'll probably spend too long farting about with it instead of just getting on and making the music," says More. "It can be a trap. Too many artists lose that ignorance of the equipment, which is a very essential part of the process. Matt and I are always looking for the ignorant in a way, trying to balance that between the musicianship."

America is slowly picking up on the trip-hop sampling scent, but the genre is commonplace in Europe, where electronica has a long history stretching from Kraftwerk through acid hardcore and techno to today's drum-and-bass. But Black insists that even the U.K. press actually longs for the halcyon days of rock. "While the music press spout about jungle, they really want to get back to the good old days of the guitar. But the guitar is simply not the most effective instru-

ment for self-expression anymore. It's now merely one of a number of exciting tools. People wonder why music sales have declined, and that is the reason. It's like a herd of cattle that have exhausted the available nutrition.

They've grazed it to death and are too stupid to go explore any of the neighboring territories."

Statements like these will probably anger those busy learning their scales and fingering positions, but as you might imagine, Coldcut aren't particularly concerned about that. "We're like sculptors," says More. "If I've got an idea, I can hack it out using a hammer and chisel, which is the correct way and I'd probably learn more about form and function, and all that bollocks. But I'd rather whip out my power tools and *vroom!* I want my idea and I want it now. That's the driving force behind all this stuff. I see it as a tool and us as the painters, decorators of sound."

"The kind of technology we're dealing with is powerful," Black concludes, "and people who ignore that are on a desert island that's slowly being washed away. Jon and I are arty hooligans in a way. We don't play instruments but we try to bring out that joy of sound. Whether sampling is right or wrong, it's about making sounds, which is the birthright of every human being, to express himself and make a joyful sound to the Creator."

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE'S 1997 BEST UNSIGNED BAND COMPETITION

SEMIFINALISTS

ROUND 4

Drum roll, please! Below is the fourth and final round of the Best Unsigned Bands for 1997. These semifinalists, plus those of the past three issues, have earned the prestige and recognition of moving to the highly competitive finalist round. There, their music will be scrutinized by the most sophisticated and objective music journalists, editors, and critics. Join us here at Musician next month, as we announce those finalists who could indeed go all the way to the top!

THE DELTA ANGELS, GA
ANDRE LAFOSSE, CA
ANDREW SOLOMON, NY
THE ANDALUSIAN DOGS, IL
PROPELLER, MN
PIMP CARRIAGE, MA
BOBBY LEE ROGERS AND THE
HERD, MA
BRENT BOWMAN, PA
SHED, TX
BRILLIANT FISH MUSIC, ONT
LIVE BAIT, SC
CALVIN BYRD, PA
ISHKABIBBLE, OH
CHRIS TAYLOR TRIO, FL
DIE LAUGHING, NY
DAVE GERARD/SAVOY, NH
DAVE KING AND DA JAMOKES, NY
JOHN DOE, KS
ROGUE, MA
PLANET NEMO, CA
JAIMIE LILLY, FRANCE
THE VERONICA SPEEDWELL, MI
JASON WEBER, WI
ALLEY SWAY, RI
BLUE YARD GARDEN, MD
LAUNCHING LYDIA, CO
BIG BROWN BOWL, SC

GRACEWAVE, PA
THE EXCENTRICS, NY
TETHERED FRINGE, CT
BIG CREEK, OH
JOE, MARC'S BROTHER, TN
JOE MOITZOZO, CA
SPOOGE, NY
SALIVA, WV
THE MO'FESSIONALS, CA
LIVING PROOF, NE
QUOTING JEFFERSON, NY
JOHN C DANLEY, AL
PETER DC, NY
SILVER TONGUED DEVILS, NY
JABBER, BC
GROWING GILLS, TN
ON, PA
THE CASUALTIES, LA
BLACK RIVER CIRCUS, FL
JEFF ARUNDEL, TN
MARLA BB AND HER SASSY MAMA
BLUES BAND, NY
PAIN, AL
MARTIN DANIELS BAND, MA
AVISO, GA
PORCINE, WI
MICHAEL A RUELAS, NM
MIKE GUERRERO, CA

MIKE HOSTY TRIO, OK
GENIUS SPECIES, NY
BLISTER, NC
HUCKLEBERRY, KS
NOLA ROSE AND THE THORNS, MA
BOONE, KS
CLARKE WRIGHT, BC
O U NO U, CA
CRASH LANDING, OK
RIVERS EDGE, WV
WALRUS, NC
RUBY'S TATTOO, CA
FRICTION, TX
THE VIBE, CA
BOWMAN ARROW, FL
MARKET, NJ
CALAMITY JANE, MI
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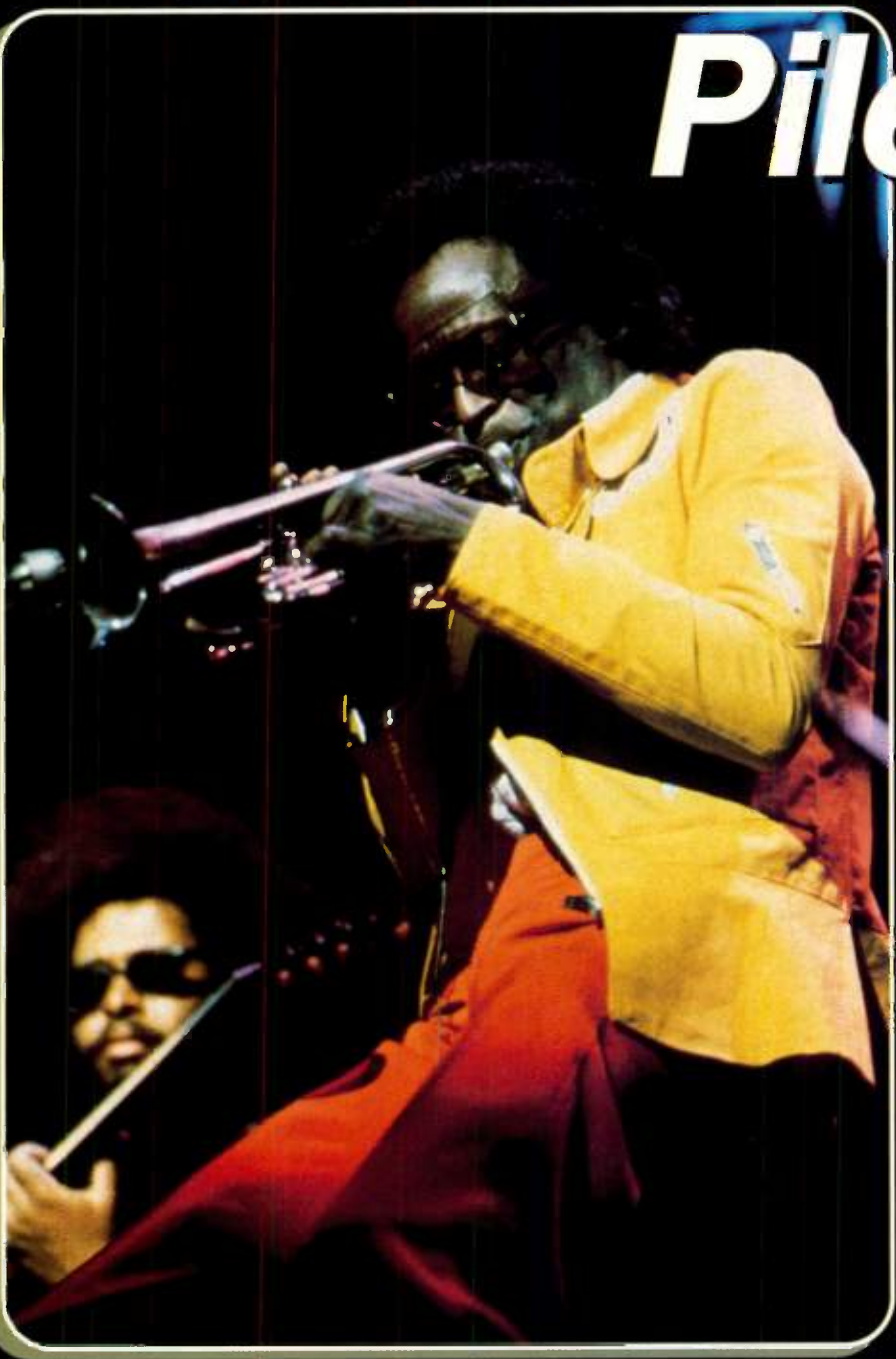
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MILES DAVIS

**In Concert-Live At Philharmonic Hall;
Dark Magus; Live-Evil; At The Fillmore;
Black Beauty
(Columbia)**

spelled by equally riveting solo statements. By the time he recorded *Black Beauty* and *Live Evil* in 1970, Davis was fully comfortable with the wah-wah pedal; he teases out majestic phrases by mulling over a single note, and employs blue-note pitch bends and varied articulations to conjure a vibe the trumpet alone cannot. Among the other highlights on the absolutely essential *Live-Evil*, recorded at Washington, D.C.'s Cellar Door: The chattering crosstalk between Corea and Jarrett, and the incredibly fluid solos of a guest, guitarist John McLaughlin, who sounds like he'd been wrestling with this unique approach to improvisation for years rather than a few nights. The list of highlights from these humbling titles goes on and on, and the more of this stuff you hear, the more depressing the current state of music becomes: Though many have followed the daring directions that Miles Davis mapped, nobody even comes close to this thrill-ride level of intensity anymore. —Tom Moon

And now, a moment of appreciation for the tag line "Directions In Music by Miles Davis." Stripped above the titles of his albums of the late Sixties and early Seventies, it was more than mere advertising. It was a mission statement, the kind of bold assertion you almost never see anymore: Whether you liked the particular direction or not, you had to admit that Miles Davis, jazz prophet, had earned the right to call his experiments "directions." He was committed to taking the music somewhere.

The really scary thing: His directions in music then are still ours now. The Davis electric era, that period from *Bitches Brew* and *In A Silent Way* through these magnificently cleaned-up live recordings and into his later works, remains eerily alive, as seeds for some of the most important current musical styles. The repetitive, entrancing, loop-like basslines of *Live-Evil* and *Dark Magus* can be viewed as a primary source in the history of techno. The efficient backbeats offer lessons in patient groovetending no jam band can afford to miss. The ears-open interactivity of Davis' ensembles—that ability to engage in serious musical conversation while flying in the upper atmosphere—is enough to shame any current bebop-babbling jazz automaton.

These live documents are not wall-to-wall genius. There are dreadful lulls that fail to fully coalesce. But those scattered downers, no doubt minimized by producer Teo Macero's cut-and-paste editing, help magnify the remarkable peaks. When his ensembles were fired up, as they are throughout *Live-Evil* and the Philharmonic Hall dates, Davis and crew were responsible for some of the heaviest spontaneously orchestrated music of all time. There are blistering boogie shuffles ("Theme From Jack Johnson" from *Philharmonic Hall*) and contemplative tone poems ("Masqualero" from *Black Beauty*) and eruptions of collective frenzy (like *Live-Evil*'s "Funky Tonk" or "Sivad") that sound like ten arguments going on simultaneously.

Because these bands were peopled by such future leaders as Chick Corea, Al Foster, and Keith Jarrett, the episodes of percussion-spiked ensemble interaction are



“My Dog Ate the Cable” PRIMUS ON THE PERILS OF RECORDING

Up in the verdant wilderness of northern California, out where emus and llamas are the pets du jour, sits Les Claypool's sprawling estate, Rancho Relaxo, and its tandem twin-gazebo recording studio, The Corn. But beware! The premises are guarded by two barrel-chested yellow Labradors named Corn and Capone who are as strong as the fabled Cerberus. So strong, in fact, that they recently forced their way into the main recording room. Their master arrived home to find his dogs happily gnawing on a tangle of thick equipment cords. A minor setback in the completion of Claypool's latest self-produced, bass-blasted sideshow with Primus. *The Brown Album*, he's titled it. Soundwise, he says, "It's sort of like Led Zeppelin's *Physical Graffiti* meets T-Neck-period Isley Brothers."

In the corner of this small, windowed room sit several of Claypool's countless basses—acoustic, fretless, electric upright, you name it. All of which play a part in the album's fat, all-analog mix, which sounds—on psychotic new funkpunk stompers like "Bob's Party Time Lounge"—as sludgy and visceral as, say Rush's *2112*, maybe Robin Trower's *Bridge of Sighs*.

"No more of that digital crap!" Claypool declares with a charismatic cackle. Why? Blame it on new Primus drummer and ex-Limbomaniacs mainstay Brain. For this latest home session Claypool was considering "getting [Digidesign] Pro Tools and doing it all on the computer. Originally I wanted automation which would have total recall: Whatever mixes we did, it would

remember where the settings were. I got tired of resetting the board all the time; it was too much work. Then Brain comes along and says, 'Fuck that, dude! We gotta go analog!'"

Brain beams proudly over his accomplishment. "I was always working with people who had Pro Tools," he explains. "And it just sounded so thin. Every time they'd bounce the mix back to ADAT, and then bounce it back to Pro Tools, it'd get smaller and smaller, until it was almost one-dimensional." So Claypool decided to conduct a little experiment: "I had this TASCAM 388, the same machine we did our first record on, and I recorded some drums, bass, and guitar with it, then did the exact same thing with an [Alesis] ADAT. Then I mixed it, put it on cassette, and played both for a bunch of people." Surprise. "Everyone picked the 388 over the ADAT immediately, picked the analog over digital."

Not that all new technology is bad. Claypool and guitarist Larry "Ler" Lalonde have just bought top-of-the-line Macintoshes, which they used to design the *Brown Album* cover art—basically an elaborate composite of popular chocolate bar wrappers. Get it? "Brown"? Still, the Primus main directive seems to remain "simplify," even down to Claypool's more mature lyrical stance. He swears it "isn't intentional, but I'm finding that my characters are a little more grounded in reality. They're still out there, but it's like the difference between a Coen Brothers film and a Terry Gilliam film. We're going from *Baron Munchausen* to *Fargo*." —Tom Lanham

Jay Blakesberg

Katell Keineg

Jet (Elektra)

Big sounds, big ideas, big thrills. On her second album, Katell Keineg has the nerve to promise a cosmic experience and the skills to deliver. Though the sweetly graceful vocals echo such civilized folks as Joni Mitchell and Natalie Merchant, Keineg's friskier than either of 'em, and her knack for turning simple tunes into breathtaking epics can be flat-out dazzling. In other words: Wow!

While the album's concerns include such vexing matters as mortality and loneliness, *Jet* makes it hard not to smile, because raging passion illuminates every note. Though the spooky "Ole Conquistador" scoffs at the "patriarchal order," and the soaring "Lemon" celebrates a real-life free spirit of the Surrealist era, Keineg's flair for the dramatic is usually its own message, an inspirational display of exuberant will.

That's just as well, since her headlong delivery and the dynamic waves of sound can make it impossible to figure out exactly what's going on. Better simply to savor the breezy cool of "Veni, Vidi, Vici" or surrender to the vortex of "Marietta," highlighted by Keineg's exotic Yoko-like ef-

fects. Wailing, sighing, and generally wringing every drop of emotion from the colorful melodies, she often seems on the verge of babbling in tongues, consumed by rapture and loving every second of it.

Keineg makes lousy background music, because she can't be ignored. Consider "Smile," a standout among many stellar tracks. Beginning as an insistent whisper, it slowly builds to an electrifying, primal shriek chorus; meanwhile, the dense, finely detailed production (by Keineg, Eric Drew Feldman, and John Holbrook) reveals exciting facets with each listen. More than a well-crafted piece of product, *Jet* will intoxicate anyone who still believes pop music can transcend dreary reality.

—Jon Young

Ron Sexsmith

Other Songs (Interscope)

It's Ron Sexsmith's voice that one notices first, an angelic tenor reminiscent of Roy Orbison, anchored by a modest rural drawl and an endearing tendency to idle slightly flat. His songs have a timeless quality, as if they never were written at all but had simply been waiting all these years for the right singer. They're at peace with themselves, content to break bread over simple tales concerning simple feelings, and with a naiveté that subsumes their true maturity. Sexsmith's style is complemented nicely by producers Mitchell Froom and Tchad Blake, who create a warm, organic vibe, kept fresh with tastefully applied accordion and keyboards.

"Thinking out loud," Sexsmith sings in a manifesto of sorts, "is all I'm doin'." Rendered in loving watercolors, his grade-school "Strawberry Blonde" is a mystery girl, unknown and unknowable; as the lyric alludes to a troubled and tragic home life, a gentle acoustic groove underscores the emerging portrait of a woman of quiet strength. Melodic simplicity lends each sketch in "Pretty Little Cemetery" a remarkable sense of completeness while "Nothing Good" frames a lyric about a callous womanizer with ironically chiming Byrds-like guitar lines, complete with McGuinn-style solo and sighing backing vocals. More than a demonstration of talent, *Other Songs* offers Sexsmith as proof that human hearts still beat beneath the increasingly dehumanized facade of the music business, as sure as rain in April, or thinking out loud. —David Reitzes

Del Amitri

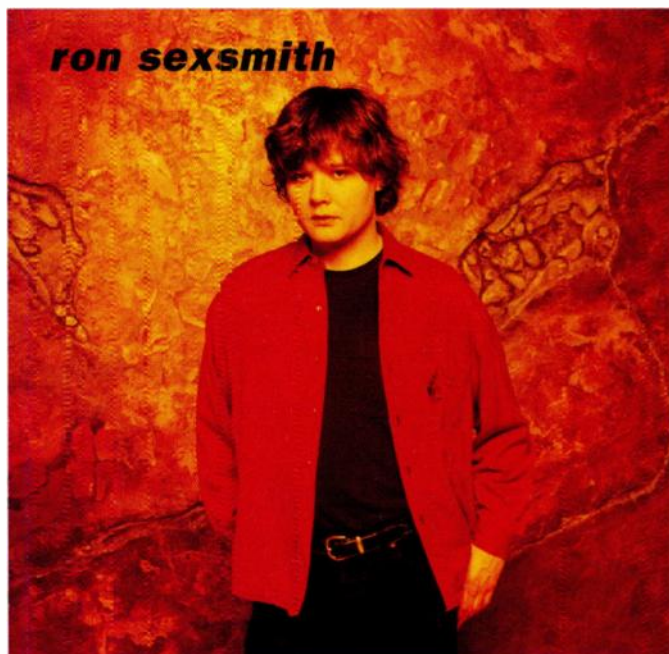
Some Other Sucker's Parade (A&M)

There's something neat about Del Amitri—and whatever it is: (1) doesn't sound especially hip, (2) offers nothing in the way of cutting-edge sampling techniques, and (3) will not send the hearts of Pavement fans aflutter.

Richard Thompson & Danny Thompson

Industry (Hannibal/Ryk)

I'm tempted to describe this album as long-awaited, but not sure if that's really the case. Most people, faced with the prospect of a rather grim song cycle dealing with the slow



katell keineg



chuck's cuts

by charles m. young

John Fahey
The Transfiguration of
Blind Joe Death
(Takoma/Fantasy)

On December 16, 1972—the anniversary of which I celebrate every year with loud gongs and bonfires—I lost my virginity with this record on the stereo. So when I say that *Transfiguration* is the greatest album ever recorded in the history of music, you should know that the norm of pristine objectivity to which I have unfailingly aspired in this column is here somewhat clouded by slaving gratitude and Pavlovian tightness in my blue jeans. For those without such associations, I can say that this reissue approximately corresponds to *Rubber Soul* in the Fahey oeuvre of solo steel-string guitar, a summation of all that had gone before and a pointed to all the stylistic departures that would follow. His renditions of traditional songs ("Bicycle Built for Two"), sacred music ("Saint Patrick's Hymn"), and original compositions ("On the Sunny Side of the Ocean") manage to balance whimsy and dignity, melody and dissonance, in a wholly original and very bent manner. New liner notes by George Winston provide further insight and all keys and tunings. Legendary old liner notes, astonishingly free-associated as only Fahey can free-associate, are available by sending an SASE to Fantasy. Finally, I second Winston's motion that we get a John Fahey Appreciation Society started. Be it hereby resolved that the first meeting is held on December 16.

Blessid Union of Souls
(EMI)

Eugene McCarthy, I vaguely recall, once said that to be a baseball manager you had to be smart enough to play the game and dumb enough to think it important. You can say the same about any human endeavor (especially rock criticism), but it does take a very specific level of intelligence to produce Bread-level schmaltz: smart enough to play your instrument

and dumb enough to mean the clichés. If you know you're singing schmaltz, the pressure of lying usually leaks through to the audience and they'll sense your contempt. Like Boyz II Men, these guys mean it and make Hootie

always seemed to me a possible exception to the rule. I cite this anthology of Irish artists, operating mostly in the areas of folk and new age with occasional rock and jazz overtones, as a more than possible exception to the rule. Yeats



sound like Johnny Rotten. Confession: During the summer of 1972 I liked Bread.

Various Artists
Now and In Time to Be:
A Musical Celebration of the
Works of W. B. Yeats
(Grapevine)

Poems and lyrics are different arts, the former rarely making good latter, and vice-versa. Because of his concision of insight and willingness to say something (take note, ye songwriters who merely string together images and proclaim meaning to be the sole province of your audience), Yeats

could yearn deeply and not offend you with schmaltz, which is why he's taught in college and Bread isn't. Christy Moore nails that yearning in "The Song of Wandering Aengus" with a simple guitar accompaniment, while the Waterboys and Cranberries offer more complicated arrangements to address politics and mortality. Confession: The girlfriend implied in the first review once gave me a stuffed hippopotamus and a Yeats anthology. ("Why, what could she have done, being what she is?/Was there another Troy for her to burn?") Suggestion: Somebody ought to do a concept album built

on Yeats' "Crazy Jane" series of poems.

Mansun
Attack of the Grey Lantern
(Epic)

Suspiciously, they're from England and play synthesizers. But the songs have structure and hooks. Prog house pop, anyone? Also reminiscent of early-Eighties coming-of-age soundtracks. Singer yearns closer to Bread than Yeats.

The Muffs
happy birthday to me
(Reprise)

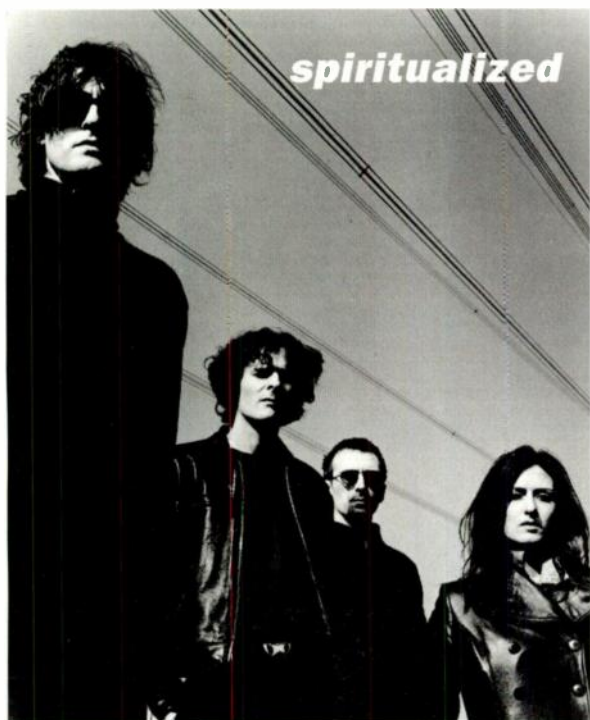
Suspiciously, they're from America and play guitars. But the songs have structure and hooks. Punk bounce pop, anyone? When they listen to the Ramones, they like Joey's songs more than Dee Dee's. So they yearn but probably haven't heard of Bread or Yeats.

Mötley Crüe
Generation Swine
(Elektra)

Suspiciously, they're Mötley Crüe. But the songs have structure and hooks. Metal sludge pop, anyone? I kinda liked the version of them without Vince Neil, so the good news is that they've undermixed the vocals and overmixed Mars and Sixx, who have a fair number of good ideas to place in the fore-ear. The biggest putz in the history of Hollywood putzdom, Tommy Lee can nonetheless play drums. Influences range from psychedelic era Beatles to Motörhead.

Tish Hinojosa
The Best of Sandler:
Watermelon 1991-92
(Watermelon)

Fine introduction to folk country soprano, who hits both notes and emotions with conviction that I don't hear much in her cutesy peers. Tish is not a twit. I especially respond when she yearns in Spanish, which I don't understand, so I can forget about placing her on the Yeats-Bread continuum. More marketing, please.



the term "pig iron." Now that's what I call rock and roll.
—Mac Randall

Bill Frisell

Nashville (Nonesuch)

While no one was looking, post-modernist anti-hero Bill Frisell transmogrified into Burl Ives, stubbornly paring at his technique, pursuing simpler structures yet growing more expressive with each release. Nashville finds Mr. Bill in the company of some superb acoustic musicians, drawn from the bands of Lyle Lovett and Alison Krauss' Union Station, who contribute mightily to the rich fabric of rustic sources which make up this exquisite set of chamber music. This is not a country album in the manner of the big rock candy mountains of corn you hear at suburban malls, but an evocation of folk traditions that have been gathering steam

death of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, would run the other way. That's their loss: Unattractive as that sketch may seem, the music of *Industry* is lovely stuff.

It's also the first creative collaboration between the otherwise unrelated R. Thompson—perhaps the greatest living English singer/songwriter/guitarist—and his bassist of choice for most of the Nineties, D. Thompson, who's played with everyone from Everything But the Girl back to Pentangle. Of the eleven tracks here, six are written and sung by Richard, who wisely shies from making blanket political statements in favor of compassionate, detailed vignettes. Focusing on the lives of ordinary people—the lovers whose lives are changed by a strike in "Sweetheart on the Barricade" or the old man who sees the factory where he once worked turned into a historical theme park in "Lottery Land"—Thompson masterfully conveys a sense of the damage that Big Industry has done to his native land. Most important, he does it with exquisite tunefulness and his usual knack for making new compositions sound like traditional ballads.

The other five tracks are instrumentals written by Danny, which blend plaintive, rustic melodies with sophisticated city arrangements. A rippling soprano sax converges on a lush string section only to be dispelled by scrapyard percussion—this is the most complex "folk" music you're likely to hear. Of particular note is the bell-like tone of Richard's Strat. His playing reaches a new peak during the solo on "Kitty Tommy," as he rips through speedy single-note lines with nearly McLaughlin-esque intensity.

And while *Industry* doesn't rock much overall, "Big Chimney" features a heavy riff, a splendid vocal, and the only chorus I can think of that repeats

under the heading of Americana.

Surely Burl would feel right at home with the graceful waltzing lullabies of "Shucks." Likewise, John Fahey would understand Frisell's mysterious tolling chords and Jerry Douglas' keening dobro rejoinders on "Brother," while Ry Cooder would positively plotz in the presence of the heartbreakingly tender border-town airs of "Keep Your Eyes Open." Frisell ranges far and wide to evoke retro visions of drive-in movies, endless highways, and lost innocence, from the expressive blues of "Pipe Down" and "We're Not From Around Here" to the bluegrass-inflected hoedown of "Go Jake" and the children's humalong "Family." Even more satisfying are the three selections featuring Robin Holcomb, whose roasted chestnut of a voice lends immediacy to Neil Young's "One Of These Days" and reaches an emotional peak on "Will Jesus Wash the Blood Stains From Your Hands," a track which could have fit quite neatly onto *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*.

Nashville is among the earthiest and deeply felt of Frisell's many fine recordings. All that remains now is to see how he can bring such folksy wisdom to bear on the jazz improviser's art. Stay tuned.—Chip Stern

Spiritualized

Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space (Arista)

Jason Pierce and Spiritualized have never hidden their fondness for R&B, drama, and drugs, but on *Ladies And Gentlemen...* the music soars to the clouds while the band crawls on its belly, giving the trancey grooves and angelic choirs a deathly pallor. Self-recriminating to the

core, the former Spaceman 3 guitarist seems to be screaming for rehab in the simplest terms: "So little Jason, fucked-up boy, who dulled the pain but killed the joy," Pierce sings on one of several boldly revealing songs. Elsewhere he describes "forms of dope running down my spine" and "[having] my breakfast right off of the mirror," lost in dope-hazed satisfaction.

Drug revelations aside, this is an often gripping and adventurous record, oozing bluesy slide guitar, wailing harmonica, hymnal organ and strings, drenched in churning rock blowouts and anthemic gospel epics. More deranged than 1995's *Electric Mainline*, the album bridges wailing feedback tirades on "The Individual" with the orchestral beauty of "Broken Heart." Pierce opens with a heavenly version of "Can't Help Falling in Love With You" as if reaching for perfection, then ends the record, disillusioned, with sixteen minutes of doped sound-clash.

Somewhere in his fragile state, however, Pierce has crafted a masterpiece of equal parts sonic exploration and resplendent inner madness. Gifted enough to realize his ambitions even in the depths of abuse, Pierce is the final Twentieth Century spaceman, lost in an idyllic, damaged world with the hellhound on his trail.

—Ken Micallef

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productindex

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.

AQUILAR AMPLIFICATION 1600 Broadway, Ste. 1004T, New York, NY 10019, (212)757-2823: preamp, **44**

AKAI 7010 Soquel Dr., Aptos, CA 95003, (800)433-5627: samplers, **84**

AKG 1449 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN 37217, (615)399-2199: C12 microphone, **44**; C414 microphone, **80**

ALESIS 3630 Holdredge Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90016, (310)558-4530: ADAT, **78**; ADAT, **88**

APHEX 11068 Randall St., Sun Valley, CA 91352, (818)767-2929: **107** Tubessence pre-amp, **74**

APPLE 1 Infinite Loop, Cupertino, CA 95014: Macintosh, **88**

ASHLY AUDIO 100 Fernwood Ave., Rochester, NY 14621, (716)544-5191: SC-66 stereo parametric equalizer, **74**

AUDIO-TECHNICA 1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, OH 44224, (216)686-2600: 4033 microphone, **80**

AVEDIS ZILDJIAN CO. 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061, (617)871-2200: cymbals, drumsticks, **44**

BEHRINGER P.O. Box 9031, 575 Underhill Blvd., Syosset, NY 11791-9031, (516)364-2244: Composer compressor, **74**

BELLARI 5143 S Main St., Salt Lake City, UT 84107, (801)263-9053: Dual Tube compressor/limiter, **74**

BOSS 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA 90040, (213)685-5141: DD5 digital delay pedal, Dimension C chorus pedal, chorus pedal, Centaur overdrive, **44**

CHANDLER GUITARS 370 Lang Rd., Burlingame, CA 94010, (415)342-1490: lap steel, digital delay, **44**

CROWN INT'L 1718 W Mishwaka Rd., Elkhart, IN 46517, (219)294-8000: K2 power amp, **67**

DEMETER 2912 Colorado Ave., #204, Santa Monica, CA 90404, (310)829-4383: direct out, **44**

DIGIDESIGN 1360 Willow Rd., Ste. 101, Menlo Park, CA 94025, (800)333-2137: Pro Tools, **88**

DIGITECH/DOD 8760 South Sandy Pkwy., Sandy, UT 84070, (801)566-8919: Whammy pedal, **44**

DRUM WORKSHOP 101 Bernoulli Cir., Oxnard, CA 93030, (805)485-6999: drums and hardware, **44**

DUNLOP MFG 150 Industrial Way, P.O. Box 846, Benicia, CA 94510, (800)722-3434: Crybaby Wah pedal, **44 & 80**

EASTERN ACOUSTIC WORKS 1 Main St., Whitinsville, MA 01588, (508)234-6158: pro speaker systems, **36**

ELECTRO-VOICE 600 Cecil St., Buchanan, MI 49107, (800) 234-6831: 664 microphone, **80**

EPHPHONE 1818 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210-3781, (615)871-4500: Cortez acoustic, **74**

FENDER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS 7975 N Hayden Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85258, (602)596-9690: Stratocasters, Tonemasters, '65 Fender

Twin, fretless bass, Vibroverb amp, **44**; Rhodes keyboard, **74**

FURMAN SOUND 30 Rich St., Greenbrae, CA 94904, (415)927-1225: patch bays, **74**

GIBSON 641 Massman Dr., Nashville, TN 37210, (800)283-7135: Joe Perry signature Les Paul, Les Paul Custom, '59 flame-top Les Paul, Les Paul Standard, Firebird **7**, guitar strings, Les Paul Catalina, 44; EB-3 bass, **74**

GUILD 7975 N. Hayden Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85258, (602)596-9690: Starfire II, **67**

HAMMOND SUZUKI 733 Annoreno Dr., Addison, IL 60101, (630)543-0277: M2 organ, **74**

HONNER MIDIA 15800 NW 48th Ave., Miami, FL 33026, (800)327-7643: ARC 44 eight-track hardware/software package, **66**

KUSTOM 415 Greenwell Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45238, (513)451-5000: 250 bass amp, **74**

LEXICON 3 Oak Park Rd., Bedford, MA 01730-1441, (617)280-0300: LXP15, 44; MPX 1, **68 & 70**

MACKIE DESIGNS 16220 Wood-Red Rd. NE, Woodinville, WA 98072, (800)258-6883: CR 1604 board, **74**

MESA ENGINEERING 1317 Ross St., Petaluma, CA 94954, (707)778-6565: Fifty Caliber amp, **74**

MONSTER CABLE 274 Wattis Way, S. San Francisco, CA 94080, (415)871-6000: cables, **44**

NADY SYSTEMS 6701 Bay St., Emeryville, CA 94608-1023, (510)652-2411: AX-1000 wireless guitar transmitter, **66**

NEUMANN USA 6 Vista Drive, Old Lyme, CT 06371, (203)434-5220: 87's, 47's, **44**

OTARI 378 Vintage Park Drive, Foster City, CA 94404, (415)341-5900: MX 5050 8-track machine, **74**

PANASONIC/RAMSA 6550 Katella Ave. 17-47, Cypress, CA 90630, (714)373-7903: MDA-1, **67**

PEAVEY ELECTRONICS 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301, (601)483-5365: Axcelerator 6 six-string bass, **66**

PRO CO SOUND 135 E Kalamazoo Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007, (616)388-9675: Rat, **44**

ROLAND 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040, (213)685-5141: Juno-101, 15; VG-8 guitar synth, **44**; TB-303 synth bass, TR-909, R-8 drum machine, MC-202 analog synth, **83**

SENNHEISER 6 Vista Dr., P.O. Box 987, Old Lyme CT, 06371, (203)434-9190: MD 421, **80**

SHURE BROTHERS 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60202, (800)257-4873: SM57, 44; SM57, SM58, **80**

STEINBERG/JONES 17700 Raymer St., Ste. 1001, Northridge, CA 91325, (818)993-4091: Recycle!, **84**

SUMMIT AUDIO PO Box 1678, Los Gatos, CA 95031, (408)395-2448: tube limiter, **44**

TASCAM 7733 Telegraph Rd., Montebello, CA 90640,

(213)726-0303: M-520 mixing console, **74**; DA-88, 78; 388, **88**

TECH 21 1600 Broadway, New York, NY 10019-7413, (212)315-1116: SansAmp PSA **1**, Sansamp overdrive pedal, **44**; SansAmp GT-2, **80**

TRACE ELLIOTT P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002-0507, (800)647-2244: bass heads, **44**

WASHBURN INT'L 255 Corporate Woods Pkwy.,

Vernon Hills, IL 60061-3109, (800)877-6863: custom archtop, **44**

WIZARD AMPLIFICATION 123-1450 Johnston Rd., White Rock, BC V4B 5E9, CANADA, (604)536-5700: amplifiers, **44**

YAMAHA 6600 Orangethorpe Blvd., Buena Park, CA 90622, (714)522-9011: NS-10M monitors, **74**

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Alchemy—61 Surrey Dr., Cohasset, MA 02025 (800) 292-6932.....**58**

Alesis—3630 Holdredge Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90016 (310) 558-4530.....**7**

American DJ—4295 Charter St., Los Angeles, CA 90058.....**Cover III**

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beyerdynamic—56 Central Ave., Farmingdale, NY 11735 (516) 293-3200.....**35**

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CD Sampler—c/o *Musician*, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.....**79**

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Gibson Guitar Corp.—641 Massman Dr., Nashville, TN 37210-3781 (800) 444-2760.....**45**

Imi Records—541 N. Fairbanks Ct. Suite 2040 Chicago, IL, 60611.....**86**

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Korg—316 South Service Rd., Melville, NY 11747 (800) 335-0800.....**20**

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Modulus Guitars—575 7th St., San Francisco, CA 94103 (800) 758-2918.....**63**

Monster Cable—274 Wattis Way, South San Francisco, CA 91361 (415) 871-6000.....**43**

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Nonesuch Records—1290 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10104.....**38**

Peavey—711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301 (601) 483-5365.....**19**

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Rane—10802 47th Ave. W., Mukilteo, WA 98275 (206) 355-6000.....**37**

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Warner Bros.—3300 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505, (818) 846-9090.....**9,30**

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Yamaha—6600 Orangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, CA 90620 (714) 522-9011.....**51**

Zebra Records—200 Bel Canyon Rd. Bell Canyon, CA 91307-1110 (818) 346-6666.....**50**

THREE For The ROAD

Recommended reading for burned-out bands

It's springtime as I write this, and that means the average musician is only a few rained-out wedding receptions away from the summer tour season. Ah, summer touring—the chance for big acts to travel in air-conditioned luxury and play to hordes of admirers under the stars, while the rest of us cram into sweltering vans and play chicken with Winnebagos packed with Promise Keepers on our way to beach gigs.

It's also time to catch up on summer reading. If you're tired of the skin mags, self-help books, and bad rock star bios that make up most band libraries, here are three titles you may want to hunt down. (But remember, whenever possible, avoid reading while driving.)

***Really the Blues*,
by Milton Mezzrow & Bernard Wolfe,
Carol Publishing**

Milton Mezzrow, a.k.a. the Mezz, Poppa Mezz, and He Who Diggeth the Digger, was equal parts jazzman, reefer dealer, and street scholar, and *Really the Blues* is his autobiography. In it, he takes us from his upper-middle-class Jewish childhood through reform school (where he first heard jazz and learned to play the clarinet) into Al Capone's warehouses and speakeasies, on hair-raising road trips, into opium dens, and finally to "the corner" in Harlem during that neighborhood's fabled "renaissance" of the 1930s. *Really the Blues* is not only the story of a traditional player who turned his back on society, commerciality, and even his race, it's a look at the early years of jazz by one of its most devoted disciples. Told

in rapid-fire triplet hipster rhythms, it even includes (should you lose the groove) a dictionary of jive in the appendix.

***Beneath the Underdog*,
by Charles Mingus, Vintage Press**

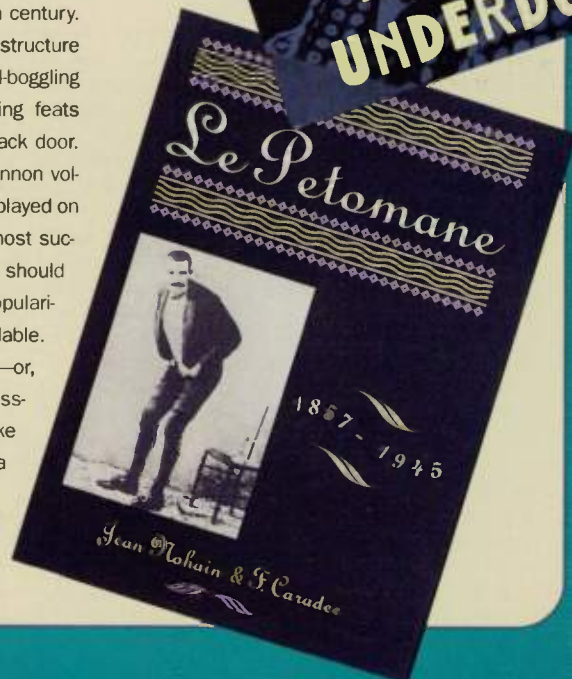
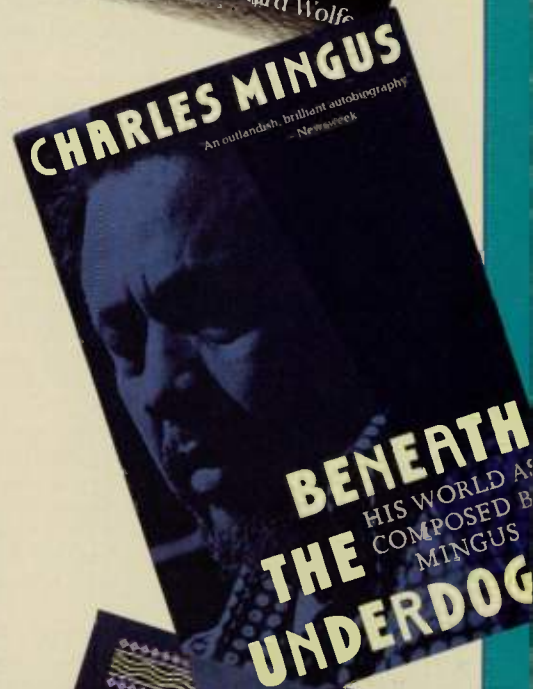
A tortured soul, a great book. Using three different narrative voices, Mingus delivers a frank, unapologetic, 350-page stream-of-consciousness monolog on jazz, sex, and survival in a racist society. It's raw, extremely graphic, and—especially during a goodbye scene with the dying Fats Navarro—painfully honest. Part fiction, mostly fact, totally unforgettable.

***Le Petomane*,
by Jean Nohain & F. Caradec,
Dorset Press**

You'll need this one to help lighten you up after reading the Mingus book. Despite all evidence to the contrary, this is not a lost episode of *Beavis & Butthead*. It is the bio of one Joseph Pujol, a famous French musician and entertainer of the late nineteenth century. Pujol possessed a freak abdominal structure that enabled him to produce a mind-boggling array of sounds and perform amazing feats with his ... er, uh ... let's call it his back door. These sounds included dog barks, cannon volleys, and a replication of *Clair de lune* played on an ocarina. At one time he was the most successful performer in France, which should explain the mystery of Jerry Lewis' popularity over there. No audio version is available.

These books may be tough to find—or, in the case of *Le Petomane*, embarrassing to ask for. But they will help make those long, un-air-conditioned drives a little more tolerable. Big heart, tortured soul, musical butt: The choice is yours.

—Reverend Billy C. Wirtz



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